

Women's Movements and Countermovements

Women's Movements and Countermovements:
The Quest for Gender Equality in Southeast Asia
and the Middle East

Edited by

Claudia Derichs
in cooperation with Dana Fennert

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P U B L I S H I N G

Women's Movements and Countermovements:
The Quest for Gender Equality in Southeast Asia and the Middle East,
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This book first published 2014

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-5993-1, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5993-6

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PREFACE

A workshop held in July 2012 at the University of Marburg forms the background to the articles compiled for this volume. Workshop participants met to discuss the relationships between transnational Muslim feminist networks, as well as the challenges they face—particularly with regard to those who oppose the idea of gender equality and instead prefer the concept of gender equity. The international participants were activists and scholars with varying experiences but sharing a first-hand knowledge of Muslim women's movements and activism. During the discussion, it turned out that Muslim women's movements and their countermovements were a particularly interesting and seemingly understudied topic—on the national and transnational level alike. The concept for the present volume evolved as a way to promote academic discussion about the dynamics between women's movements and corresponding countermovements.

The articles collected here give an impression of a multifaceted feminist activism and its challengers, in two world regions where Islam is the prevailing religion and coalesces with both state and society: the MENA region (the Middle East and North Africa) and Southeast Asia. The commitment to gender equality, which was established as an international norm in 1981—as defined by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and brought into force by the United Nations—is the shared aim of feminist activism in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia. Challengers of this concept of equality are often identified as Islamists, who reject that concept and try to preserve a traditional role allocation—which is allegedly spelled out in the Qur'an and regarded as the will of God. The repertoires of contention that unfold when the international norm of gender equality is either defended or rejected differ from one nation-state to another. Yet the dynamics that characterize the relationships between pro and contra movements in specific empirical cases suggest certain underlying patterns of interaction. The latter, in turn, inform the theoretical debate on social movements, advocacy networks and collective action formations. We thus hope to enhance this debate and nurture it with empirical studies from North Africa and Southeast Asia.

Among those we would like to thank are the participants of the workshop, as well as the Gerda Henkel Foundation, whose financial support made this international gathering possible. Christian Scheinert, Elena Kuhley and Wayne Yung deserve special thanks for their tireless efforts in the back offices of both the workshop and the book production. We would also like to express our thanks to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for contacting and motivating us to compile this volume.

Claudia Derichs and Dana Fennert

INTRODUCTION

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND COUNTERMOVEMENTS: THE QUEST FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

CLAUDIA DERICHS

Ever since social movement studies began developing theoretical approaches to analysing the genesis, expansion, and end of a movement, empirical investigations have been strongly informed by case studies localized within particular nation-states. Moreover, a movement was rarely examined in relation to its countermovement, but rather conceived of as a collective actor vis-à-vis the state. A movement's resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, and framing processes absorbed scholars' attentions to a great extent. It is barely two decades ago that the focus shifted, and the phenomenon of countermovements, among others, gained more attention. While a plethora of movements served as case studies, the attempt to examine the dynamics of women's movements (along with other forms of collective action such as women's networks) and their countermovements, however, has not been a prominent scholarly endeavour thus far. Therefore, we believe that this relationship merits more intensive study. A first step in this direction is this volume, which addresses the issue of gender equality by looking at women's movements promoting equal rights for both sexes and at movements opposing this idea.

Women's movements and NGOs advocating gender equality face resistance in several regards. Among those who oppose a comprehensive concept of equality are the proponents of equity—often arguing on the basis of a religiously backed interpretation of the principle of gender equity and thereby claiming complementary roles for men and women.

The demand by women's rights activists for equal rights is countered by a religious establishment that frequently finds itself accompanied by conservative activists or politicians who tend to support or at least tolerate discriminatory if not misogynistic attitudes. The idea that equal rights for men and women are not in line with "God's will" is frequently based on a complementary view of gender roles. In accordance with sacred sources, husbands are recognized as superior to wives; *he* is the head of the family and regarded as the breadwinner. Wives should be obedient to their husbands, devoting themselves to house and home while attending to their children. Such a role allocation is, for instance, grounded in many family laws that are state-endorsed but originally based on religion (e.g. Christianity, Islam or Judaism). In the case of Islamic family laws, transnational advocacy networks for reforming these legal codes are pushing for concerted action. Women's activists and NGOs coalesce across nations and regions, united by the desire for universal recognition of equal rights for men and women in the Muslim family. In some countries, these initiatives are facing countermovements. From a normative perspective that subscribes to full equality between the sexes, a countermovement's rationale can be characterized as conservative in the sense of preserving the status quo, and as retrograde when it intends to implement laws that would further restrict women's rights. Retrograde tendencies are visible, for instance, in the draft constitution of post-Ben-Ali Tunisia, which was introduced in August 2012 by the National Constituent Assembly and stipulated that women are "complementary" to men—quite in contrast to the 1956 constitution which regards women as equal to men. In post-Gaddafi Libya, the head of the National Transitional Council, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, announced that polygamy, which was banned under the Gaddafi regime, should be allowed again for men. In Egypt, the draft constitution that was endorsed by the Muslim Brotherhood did not meet the consent of the majority of Egypt's female citizens, as many of them feared it could result in Islamist interpretations that curb women's rights.

When countermovements emerge, the logic of social movement dynamics suggests that the "original" movement is forced to coordinate its methods and strategies in line with the countermovement. What is brought into motion is a dynamic interplay of both movements; they draw from a similar repertoire of norms and principles, but interpret them in mostly different ways. This book discusses four cases of such an interplay of Muslim women's movements, networks, NGOs and their respective countermovements, namely in Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia and Tunisia. The fifth case, Morocco, presents a somewhat deviant case since the

conflictual constellation of movements and countermovements seems to be weaker there, and both currents are even siding with one another in order to pursue their goals. This is perhaps also reflected by a mutual agreement to strive for gender equity instead of gender equality.

An opening theoretical chapter will first provide an introduction to the analysis of social movements, advocacy networks and their countermovements. The central argument put forward in this book is that social movements in general, and women's rights movements in particular, have to be analysed with reference to the dynamics between movement and countermovement. The utilization of resource mobilization strategies and political opportunity structures is constantly adjusted to the wider contestation that occurs between movement and countermovement. The surrounding forces adapt accordingly. Consequently, movements' interplays can be seen as cascades of mutual influence. The women's movement is a particular case in point for the observation of such dynamic interplay: From the very beginning, women's movements have been proactive and reactive at the same time, namely proactively pursuing their goals while also reacting to an environment that is negatively discriminating against women's equal rights or even openly violating them. To take an example from this volume, the women's movement in Indonesia illustrates how secular and Islamist women's organizations found themselves at odds with each other, but then came to adjust their strategies to the given conditions in national politics. For issue-oriented movements, the rules of a "politics of contestation" (Tarrow) apply, regardless of whether a regime is authoritarian or democratic.

All five empirical case studies share an important feature. They look at countries that are in the beginning, in the midst or at the end of political transition. Malaysia and Morocco are the most stable cases in terms of sustainable authoritarian regimes, whereas Egypt, Indonesia and Tunisia have experienced public uprisings that resulted in the ousting of Presidents Mubarak, Suharto and Ben Ali respectively. The context of transition has definitely shaped the opportunity structures for social movements and their countermovements alike. In all five countries, the countermovements to feminist and women's rights movements are predominantly represented by activists and organizations with an Islamist worldview. Quite contrary to conventional expectations, processes of political liberalization have not automatically led to an enhancement of policy formulation in favour of women's interests. Rather than opening a space for the articulation of women's rights and the demand for gender equality, "liberalization" has resulted in a fierce contestation between proponents of gender equality and proponents of gender equity. In terms of political opportunity structures,

windows of opportunity have apparently been opened wider for the political participation of Islamist currents in society than for those with an integrative and “progressive” gender orientation. This has rendered the mobilization of resources and support for any movement a highly competitive business. The framing of a movement’s goal (equality or equity) has become adjusted accordingly—highly visible, for instance, in the modified conduct of “progressive” or secular women’s NGOs in Malaysia. The case studies of this book provide ample proof of the need to apply a trans-theoretical and trans-conceptual approach to analyses of political transition, social movements and the interplay between social movements and countermovements. They also reveal a transnational zeitgeist that permeates the different forms of activism on the national and local level.

This book is composed of six chapters. The first one, by Simin Fadaee, is theoretical in its orientation. Fadaee looks at the concepts of social movement theories, and leads us through the jungle of conceptions that relate to movements, networks, organizations and their counterparts. Her chapter is followed by the five empirical case studies of Egypt (Sherifa Zuhur), Malaysia (Frederik Holst and Saskia Schäfer), Indonesia (Susanne Schröter), Tunisia (Ingrid El Masry), and Morocco (Moha Ennaji).

Chapter Outline

Theoretical background: Social Movements, Countermovements, and Their Dynamic Interplay

Simin Fadaee

This theoretical chapter will first clarify what a social movement is (following social science definitions) and how it differs from other types of collective action. It draws clear lines between social movements and contrasting yet similar forms of collective action. It elaborates on related theoretical debates concerning the emergence, development and end (or continuing permanence) of social movements. Specific dynamics of a social movement under certain circumstances may lead to the emergence of an opposing movement, i.e. a countermovement. By addressing the different theoretical frameworks related to the formation and dynamics of a countermovement, the objective of this chapter is to contribute to the discussion of countermovements as well as to show how movements and countermovements interact and influence each other. Understanding the

dialectics of movements and countermovements is a key to understanding their impact on processes of social transformation.

Women's Quest for Equality in Post-Revolutionary Egypt

Sherifa Zuhur

Despite Egypt's lengthy history of activities on behalf of women, and a well-established state feminism, a lack of feminist connectivity, continuity and legitimacy together with a backlash to feminism divided "the" movement into many. Likewise, the countermovement is diffused rather than unitary. Patriarchal practices impinge on political struggles in post-revolutionary Egypt, where advocates for women's rights challenge newly empowered Islamists to act on behalf of women. The revolution, as a mantra for liberation, accountability and justice, figures into movement and countermovements' discourses, even as women continue to struggle against physical violence, harassment and lack of representation. Liberals lost a battle against a draft constitution which contained aspects injurious to women and minorities, but have received promises from the new coalition government to not further erode women's status.

Anti-Feminist Discourses and Islam in Malaysia—A Critical Enquiry

Frederik Holst and Saskia Schäfer

This chapter addresses the transformative challenges faced by women's rights movements in Malaysia. For several decades, the debate on women's rights in Malaysia and elsewhere has centred on the advancement of the position of women in society. But while openly misogynistic lines of argumentation are becoming less convincing even in conservative sections of society, the challengers of women's rights are employing innovative means to advance their position. This backlash against women's rights can be identified in many societies and is connected to different actors. In Malaysia, where women's rights are legally and politically intertwined with the role of Islam in the country, anti-women's rights discourses are increasingly fought along the normative lines of "proper" and "improper" religious (that is: Islamic) behaviour. In this context, a number of achievements in terms of women's rights are now subject to public debate, among them sexual liberties and aspects of family law. "Progressive" women's NGOs are thus fighting on several fronts at the same time, and have to address the contradictions that surface in this regard.

The empirical part of this chapter deals with the accusations levelled against Sisters in Islam (SIS), one of the most prominent women's rights groups both in Malaysia and internationally. It shows how the discourse on women's rights has transformed and affected SIS' performance and limited their scope of action, making the political opportunity structures for women's rights activists less favourable.

Progressive and Conservative Women's Movements in Indonesia

Susanne Schröter

The rise of Islamism in Indonesia displays some similarities to its development in the neighbouring country of Malaysia. Yet the relationship of politics, religion and women's rights is different in Indonesia, where democratization has altered the political opportunity structures for women's rights movements. Following the ouster of president Suharto in 1998 and the subsequent political transition, Indonesia is now widely regarded as an established democracy. This view, however, is lopsided in that it neglects to take a closer look at the impact of democratization policies (e.g. decentralization) on Indonesia's female population. Women's demands for equal rights were already being challenged in the 1980s by orthodox Islamic actors, but became even more challenged after 1998. Gender equality is seen as a transgression of Islamic rules by religious leaders. Democracy has not changed this framing of gender roles; on the contrary, the expanded space for political manoeuvre has encouraged the assertion of retrograde visions of gender relations and women's rights. This chapter traces the interplay of pro and contra movements in reference to women's rights, gender equality and political transition.

Women's Movements and Countermovements in Tunisia

Ingrid El Masry

While women's equality rights have been achieved in other countries as bottom-up processes during long and difficult battles, Tunisian women received them as a kind of "national independence present". However, this present was like a Trojan horse, as pre-existing autonomous women's movements lost their independence under the politics of an authoritarian modernization policy and had to subscribe to state-defined and state-sponsored women's rights. Decades before the popular overthrow of the Ben Ali regime in 2011, an autonomous women's movement and an

Islamist (counter) movement were already sharing their disapproval of the authoritarian regime. Both movements, however, differed in their ideas of gender relations and gender equality. While the Islamist movement became formally suppressed until 2011, the autonomous women's movement became torn between authoritarian pressure and conservative identities in society. The overthrow of the Ben Ali regime in 2011 pushed the question of gender relations into the core of Tunisian political debate and opened avenues for redefining equality. In this process, the dynamics of "movement and countermovement" surfaced once again. Questions of gender relations have become part of broader political projects and are rarely treated as single political agenda items. In the Tunisian case, conservative traditional Islamist currents have thus far succeeded in bringing more women into positions of formal political representation than so-called liberal or progressive movements. This chapter argues that this phenomenon relates to historical continuities rather than discontinuities.

Women's NGOs and Social Change in Morocco

Moha Ennaji

This chapter deals with gender, activism and development by using a broader sociopolitical approach. The emergence of the feminist movement is an answer to the gender-based discrimination of the state and society. Women's NGOs participate actively in the feminization and democratization of public life to ensure sustainable development. They influence social dynamics through the mobilization and participation of the masses. Their modes of action raise new challenges for governmental development policies and open up new ways of thinking about issues of gender and sustainability. For an understanding of the significance of Moroccan women's activism, it is essential to relate it to the rise of Islamism in the region and to the role of human rights organizations that treat women's rights as human rights. The role of women's NGOs (liberal and Islamist alike) in the struggle against gender inequalities has been remarkable in regards to their efforts to consolidate democracy and social justice, and also to challenge traditional thinking and practices of governance. In Morocco, one can speak of "the" Moroccan women's movement, in contrast to other countries where there seems to be no such united activism. While secular women's organisations struggle for a liberal society, Islamist women's associations work within the framework of Islam and aim for the Islamization of society. The Moroccan women's movement endeavours to promote women's empowerment through education, awareness, and knowledge of new legal rights; it also

propagates information about the new family law and new labour code through its associations and community-based groups. The women's movement is essential to modernization and democracy, for it has significantly contributed to the advancement of civil society and democratic culture. One cannot imagine the success of democracy in Morocco without the full emancipation of women.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, COUNTERMOVEMENTS, AND THEIR DYNAMIC INTERPLAY

SIMIN FADAAE

Introduction

My main objective in this chapter is to present a general and broad theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of relations between movements and their opposing movements (i.e. countermovements). In order to do this, I will first attend to some essential features of social movements and the circumstances under which they emerge. Then I will turn to core elements of countermovements and the conditions which give rise to their emergence.

Social movement studies have been and continue to be a significant theoretical and empirical field in social and political sciences; they have helped to answer a number of significant questions about the nature of social transformation. Scholars of social movements have focused on many different aspects of this diverse and complex field over the years. Questions such as what kind of entities social movements are, how individuals get together and build a collective identity within a movement, how broader processes of framing a movement unfold, how social movements transform society, along with many other questions, have been at the centre of social movement analysis.

Social movements have a variety of effects on society at different institutional and individual levels, including the creation of allies and oppositions. While social movements can generate the emergence of allies in different areas—for example among other social movements and civil society organizations, among political parties, governmental organizations, etc.—they can also generate various kinds of opposition. Opposition can give rise to other social movements which focus on the same issue but entertain an alternative agenda and pursue quite a different goal (e.g. the

abortion-rights and anti-abortion movements). Opposing movements are referred to as countermovements in this volume. They arise in reaction to “original” movements and define their goals in relation to the goals of the “other” movement. In many situations, the movement-countermovement interaction gains importance and becomes influential because inter-movement dynamics play such a crucial role in processes of social and political change and transformation. It is the interaction between movements and their countermovements which occupies centre stage in this chapter.

Although the importance of countermovements in the analysis of social movements and processes of social and political change has increased over the years, scholars have paid comparatively little attention to this significant and crucial aspect of social movement studies. Single-movement analyses and cross-border comparisons have formed the bulk of movement studies, while the study of movement-countermovement interactions and their dynamics is a rather recent field. A more comprehensive analysis within social movement studies would integrate both the comparative perspective and inter-movement relations in order to better match empirical realities and translate observations into appropriate conceptual and analytical approaches.

As Dixon (2008, 477) has argued with regard to the neglected field of inter-movement analysis, “this omission is surprising given that countermovements and other non-state antagonists likewise engage in a wide range of political mobilization, take framing tasks seriously, turn to grassroots efforts, and otherwise affect the political prospects of social movement challengers”. Movement-countermovement interactions thus merit some attention.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first section I will address two fundamental questions: What is a social movement, and how does it emerge? I will briefly illustrate how social movements differ from other types of collective action, drawing clear lines between social movements and other similar forms of collective action. I will continue by addressing related theoretical debates concerning the emergence and development of social movements. In the second section, I will address similar questions with regard to countermovements. By addressing the distinct theoretical frameworks related to the emergence and dynamics of a countermovement, my objective in this section is to point out different circumstances under which the emergence of countermovements in opposition to initial or “original” movements becomes possible. The relevant literature reveals divergent perspectives on this issue, which will be discussed. In the third section, I will show how movements and

countermovements interact and influence each other. Understanding the dialectics of movements and countermovements helps us realize their impact not only on each other's persistence and continuity, but also on larger processes of social transformation and change on the national, transnational and global levels.

Social movements

Scholars have been debating the definition of social movements for quite some time. Scholarly debates have centred on what social movements are and what characteristics they bear. A comprehensive definition of a social movement first needs to acknowledge that a social movement is a kind of collective behaviour. The conceptualization of collective behaviour was discussed by Neil Smelser in the early 1960s, when it had a strong connotation of deviant and abnormal behaviour. For Smelser (1962, 3), collective behaviour “refers to the behavior of two or more individuals who are acting together or collectively”. As there are many different kinds of collective behaviour, in order to distinguish social movements from similar kinds of collective behaviours or collective actions, it is necessary to clarify the differences between them.

The boundaries between social movements and other forms of collective action can be clearly delineated when we try to distinguish the former from “political parties” and “interest groups”. Political parties are groups of people whose rights to pursue their objectives and goals are recognized in society and are endorsed by law. Moreover, political parties in many cases opt for governmental representation. Interest groups, on the other hand, are a diverse range of organizations which build a bridge between individuals and public institutions. Their main objective is to influence public policy (Smelser and Baltes 2001). A social movement can be distinguished from a political party in that social movement activism is rarely concerned with the nomination of a person for any political position—although political parties may be linked to certain social movements. Moreover, unlike the activities of political parties, the activities of social movements are not arranged for by law. Often, they are not even recognized or acknowledged by society. Social movements can also be distinguished from interest groups by their level of organization. Interest groups are more closely organized than social movements. Compared with interest groups, it is much easier for members of social movements to join or leave. The term “membership” itself is already misleading to a certain extent, because social movements do not formally host participants as members. This renders a social movement a rather

fluid phenomenon in comparison with political parties or interest groups. Moreover, a social movement is not limited to a certain form of association, but instead comprises different kinds of groups, organizations, media, etc. (Smelser and Baltes 2001).

Scholars of social movements have employed different definitions over the years. Turner and Killian (1972, 246), for instance, focus on the collectivity of action, continuity, and opposition to or support for change as main factors in defining the social movement. They refer to social movements as: “a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part”. For Wilson, besides the collectivity of the act and the importance of resistance to or support for change, the consciousness of actors and the actual organization of a movement also play an important role. He defines a social movement as “a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large-scale change in the social order by non-institutionalized means” (Wilson 1973, 8). Sidney Tarrow’s definition has four elements: collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity and sustained interaction (Tarrow 2011 [1994], 9). He proposes a definition of social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities” (ibid.). This comes close to Charles Tilly’s (2004) definition of social movements, which takes the same direction. Tilly recognizes three major elements for a movement: campaign, social movement repertoire, and what he calls “WUNC” displays. By “campaign” he refers to “a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities” (Tilly 2004, 3). “Social movement repertoires” refer to the “employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering” (Tilly 2004, 3). “WUNC” displays are “participants’ concerted public representation of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment [WUNC] on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies” (Tilly 2004, 4).

At any rate, the scholarly definitions of a social movement include various phenomena and dimensions and are highly useful for an analysis of social movements in different contexts. However, for the purpose of our discussion, it suffices to select a few general characteristics which can serve as a working definition and basic framework for distinguishing social movements from other kinds of collective action: Social movements are systems of collective action by people who are consciously aiming for or against a particular change; furthermore, social movements follow a

certain level of organization, i.e. they are more organized than mobs or crowds, but less organized than formal and bureaucratic organizations (Fadaee 2012, 13).

How does a social movement emerge?

Although different kinds of protest have occurred throughout history, social movements (as we know them today) came into being only after the emergence of nation-states (Tilly 1984). The term was first introduced in 1850 by the German sociologist Lorenz von Stein, who referred to social movements as contentious and unitary processes which led to the self-consciousness and power of the working class (cf. Tilly 2004, 5). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, industrialization started to profoundly influence and transform the social, political, economic and cultural structures of Europe. In the wake of this process, many Western European societies experienced a polarization between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. The emergence of labour movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had its origin in these transformations.

The dominant analytical approach to social movements of this period was hence related to class struggle and class-oriented conceptions of the labour movement. According to Marx and Engels (1976a; 1976b), the process of industrialization would eventually bring the two major classes of society into opposition and conflict: the bourgeoisie (the owners of the means of the production, the factories and the land) and the proletariat (the working class that provides the necessary labour force for the extraction of surplus value). Within the Marxist paradigm, the conflict between labour and capital came to be seen as the basis for the emergence of social movements in general, and the labour movement in particular.

In the middle of the twentieth century, communist and fascist movements were transforming the societies of Europe. The collective behaviour paradigm emerged as sociology's response to the new political context (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). Unlike Marxist analysis, the collective behaviour approach stresses abnormalities, pathologies and deviant behaviour within society. Herbert Blumer and the above-mentioned Neil Smelser were among the most influential theorists of this paradigm. Marxist analysis and the collective behaviour approach dominated the framework for the analysis of social movements up to the events of the 1960s.

The social upheavals of the late 1960s, which saw the emergence of different movements focused on issues of women's rights, black rights, gay rights, environmental protection, etc., mostly in Europe and the USA,

sparked two new trends in the study of social movements. Resource mobilization theory emphasized the importance of the availability of material and immaterial resources for social movement activists. It replaced the collective behaviour approach in the United States. Unlike the collective behaviour approach, which views social movements as deviant phenomena, resource mobilization theory says that social movements are formed by rational social actors. In this approach, the origins of social movements are linked to the existence of grievances in a society. However, it is the availability of resources and opportunities for shaping a social movement (for instance money, supporters, attention of media, alliances with the elite) which counts as the most important factor in social movement mobilization. As McCarthy and Zald (1977, 1215) argue, “we want to move from a strong assumption about the centrality of deprivation and grievances to a weak one, which makes them a component, indeed, sometimes a secondary component in the generation of social movements”. This means that in situations where people experience discontent in society and develop a collective consciousness about their discontent, it requires the effective organization of resources to make people’s involvement in a social movement possible. The mere existence of grievances and frustration in a given society (and even the collective consciousness of it) does not automatically lead to the mobilization of people and the forming of a social movement. A variant of this approach became known as political opportunity theory (also known as political opportunity structure or political process theory), which analyses social movements with reference to the political opportunities available to them. It refers to resources which are external to the group (Tarrow 2011 [1994], 33). The underlying hypothesis behind this theory is that political opportunities which might allow for the mobilization of social movements are an essential component of movement formation. These political opportunities can vary from the existence of a relatively less repressed situation to the emergence of increased pluralism and stronger participatory institutions. A “window of opportunity” expands the general prospects for the mobilization of social movements. Hence, the presence or absence of specific political opportunities can influence the actions of activists and have repercussions on the success or failure of social movements. However, one must bear in mind that the political opportunities are not only dependent on political structures, but also on the social setting and the cultural environment of a society. Mayer Zald, John D. McCarthy, Sidney G. Tarrow and Charles Tilly are major proponents of this approach.

Another influential framework which was developed by the theorists of social movement alongside resource mobilization theory and political opportunity structure was framing theory. According to the framing approach, social movements are not only carriers of ideologies and beliefs that emerge automatically, but movement activists are themselves agents who are actively engaged in the construction of meanings for the movement (Snow and Benford 1988). The focus is therefore on the creation of shared beliefs, and on the importance of agency in shaping the activities of the movement's organizations and activists.

All the approaches mentioned thus far (resource mobilization, political opportunity structures and framing) originated in the United States of America and were mainly discussed by "Western" scholars with an Anglo-Saxon background. The empirical cases that served the formulation of such theories were also taken from this part of the world. Later, other regions such as Europe contributed to the discourse on social movements by presenting varying approaches which were, not surprisingly, based primarily on empirical case studies of European countries. Similarities could still be found—in the rise of the second women's movement, peace movements (e.g. anti-Vietnam-war movements), or the student movements of the late 1960s.

In Europe, the new social movement theory was introduced to provide a framework for explaining the social upheavals of the 1960s. The major assumption of this theory rested on the fact that there is a clear distinction between the movements which emerged after the 1960s and the previous ones. The post-1960s movements were referred to as "new" in contrast to "old" movements such as the "classical" labour and union movements. It was argued that the movements which emerged (mostly) in Europe and North America around the issues of women's rights, gay rights, civil rights, the environment, etc., were fundamentally different from previous movements which had been mostly centred on labour issues and production relations. According to the proponents of the new social movement theory, the essence of the old labour movements was linked to the structures of industrial societies and economies. In the same manner, the emergence of the "new" social movements was linked to a shift from industrial to post-industrial society. In other words, it was the structural changes towards a new type of society (a post-industrial one) which could generate new demands and therefore, new types of social movements. Scholars believed that the new movements of the 60s and 70s were not focused on economic and material issues, which had been the rallying point of the labour movement for many years. Rather, the "new" movements were geared towards recognition of individual rights and

identities (e.g. women's rights, equality for homosexuals, equal opportunities regardless of sex, race or religion).

Furthermore, these movements were multiple in issue orientation and composition, as the monolithic class struggle of modernity gave way to the multiplicity of postmodernity's identity struggles. The analytical framework for the study of these movements shifted accordingly, i.e. from a framework oriented around class and social structure to a focus on "rights" and "quality of life". There emerged a new generation of social movement scholars who argued that the labour movement had lost its relevance. Hence, new social movements started to be regarded as successors of the labour movement. The new movements' objectives and goals were seen in harmony with the new postindustrial society. Among the most important contributors to this field are Alain Tourain, Jürgen Habermas and Alberto Melluci.

The theoretical and discursive currents of social movement analysis developed a complementary relationship over the years. The importance of acknowledging collective identities and moral principles (new social movement theory) and the importance of the availability of resources and opportunities (resource mobilization and political opportunities theory) have remained at the centre of many academic discussions surrounding social movements.

However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, with the growth of transnational movements, the trend of movement activity beyond nation-state borders and the transnational dimensions of social movements started to be taken into account. Expansion of this complex set of movements as a result of the acceleration of global integration processes went hand in hand with the emergence of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs), international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and transnational networks. Hence, social movement research started to engage with the ways transnational processes shape transnational mobilizations.

Moreover, with the emergence of a new wave of social movements over the past few years—from the *indignados* movement in Spain, anti-austerity movements across Europe, student movements in Chile, the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East, and the Occupy movements worldwide—scholars have started challenging the existing paradigms of social movement theory, calling for new theories of social movements (see Fadaee and Schindler 2014).

Countermovements

The concept of countermovement started to gain academic attention in the aftermath of the emergence of a series of movements in (mostly) Europe and the US in the 1960s, which had addressed issues of women's rights, civil rights, gay rights, environment, etc. It became apparent for scholars of social movements that those opposed to the movements of the 1960s had not kept silent in the background, but had also been organizing themselves in the form of social movements—thereby employing strategies, frameworks and mobilizing tools that were very similar to those of the initial “60s movements”. However, it took some years for scholars to recognize these movements in relation to the original movements to which they were opposed. Prior to this shift, these countermovements were viewed as independent movements. Their relationship to (and sometimes dependence on) an original movement was registered on a phenomenological level, but was not conceptualized from a perspective of reciprocity and mutual influence (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1632; Lo 1982; Zald and Useem 1987). Yet empirical examples like the anti-abortion movement (which came about in response to an increasingly popular abortion-rights movement) made it difficult to neglect the dynamics and interrelationships between opposing movements.

Although the phenomenon of countermovements is a commonly acknowledged issue in scholarly discussion, different definitions of a countermovement have been presented. For Mottl (1980, 620) and Zald (1979), countermovements are movements which oppose social change rather than another social movement. In other words, countermovements form to resist and defy change but they do not necessarily subscribe to the label of a movement that opposes an already existing one. Meyer and Staggenborg (1996, 1631) have referred to countermovements as movements whose claims are contrary to those of an original movement. In the present article, a more comprehensive definition is being adopted where a countermovement is defined as a social movement which is mobilized against another social movement (Turner and Killian 1972, 317; Lo 1982, 118). In this definition, countermovements can be for or against change. They do not necessarily utter contradictory claims to those of the original movement, but they nonetheless pursue goals and objectives that are not compatible with those of the original movement. A case in point is the polarization that exists between two movements in Germany. In this example, a fascist-inspired right-wing political movement is pursuing the implementation of strongly nationalist policies which are meant to rid society of ethnic and racial pluralism. In recent years, activists of this

movement have emerged in reaction to an increasingly strong movement advocating tolerance and the promotion of multicultural integration. While the multicultural set-up of a society such as Germany is an effect of global migration, European integration and the opening of labour markets, its infrastructure for accommodating immigrants has not always kept up with the reality on the ground. The oftentimes bitter situation of migrants in Germany led to the formation of support groups and advocacy networks offering legal aid and other assistance to those in need. These groups and networks have become influential lobbyists for tolerance, integration, and affirmative action—and thus suspect for those who prefer to protect national borders from being crossed by “non-nationals” and subscribe to an extremely racist ideology.

Although countermovements oppose the respective “other” movement, their framing tactics and terminology can be quite similar to those of the original movement (Turner and Killian 1972, 319; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). An illustrative example of this is when each movement claims to respect women’s rights. Whereas feminist movements associate this principle with gender equality in all spheres, other movements may argue that respect for women’s rights is ultimately connected to the principle of protecting women—which may include “protecting” women from appearing in public or working outside the home. Hence, the interaction between the movement and the countermovement may lead to some level of similarity in the framing of goals and values (Lo 1982, 119).

For the conceptualization of the countermovement, it is important to bear in mind that movements and countermovements both display the characteristics of social movements, i.e. they should fit the definition of a social movement (as discussed in the previous section). Sporadic collective actions against a movement do not qualify as a social movement. Protests, spontaneous crowds, mobs and other forms of collective action which might emerge in opposition to a social movement do not provide an example of a countermovement.

How does a countermovement emerge?

The emergence of countermovements is subject to different factors. Meyer and Staggenborg (1996, 1635) suggest three conditions for the emergence of countermovements: if the original movement shows signs of success; if the goals of the original movement threaten the interests of a group or groups of people; and if political allies are available to facilitate the organization of oppositional mobilization. Furthermore, they emphasize that “the likelihood that opposition to a movement will take the

form of a sustained countermovement is directly related to the opposition's ability to portray the conflict as one that entails larger value cleavages in society" (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 1639). Zald and Useem propose similar prerequisites for the emergence of countermovements:

Movements of any visibility and impact create the conditions for the mobilization of counter movements. By advocating change, by attacking the established interests, by mobilizing symbols and raising costs to others, they create grievances and political opportunities for organizational entrepreneurs to define counter movement goals and issues. Movements also have a "demonstration effect" for political counter movements, showing that collective action can affect (or resist) change in particular aspects of society. (Zald and Useem 1987, 247-48)

Likewise, Turner and Killian (1972, 317-8) cite the presence of any interest group that is being threatened by the original movement as a primary trigger for the emergence of a countermovement. They emphasize that the perceived strength of an initial movement can instigate a countermovement. The possibility of countermovements emerging in contexts where the original movement addresses widely recognized issues in society is much higher. For instance, the abortion-rights movement gave rise to an anti-abortion movement primarily because abortion is an issue that had become widely recognized in many societies of the world, being variously framed by policy recommendations for family planning, poverty reduction or reproductive health (to name but a few). Debates concerning its legalization or criminalization are still part of national discourses today, touching upon medical, ethical and religious aspects alike.

"Unsuccessful" movements are not very likely to trigger any organized kind of opposition. If a given movement appears unlikely to reach its objectives, the chances of being challenged by a countermovement are low simply because it does not pose a threat to those in disagreement with its aims and aspirations. Political opportunity structures can play a decisive role in this context. Managing to raise public attention to certain demands and issues, gaining access to media (especially positive media coverage), and getting an issue onto the agenda of parliamentary debate, for instance, are indicators for the potential success of a movement. This suffices to put opponents on alert. If the given movement is perceived to threaten the dominant values of a group or of society in general, then the formation of an influential countermovement gains high probability.

However, as Whittier (2004) has succinctly argued, countermovements are not simply spin-offs of their opponents. "They emerge not because they are supported by the other movement's organizational infrastructure,

but in response to its gains. Their origins, thus, are largely interpretive, as a movement's success and visibility galvanize opposition" (Whittier 2004, 535-6). Men's rights movements, for instance, emerged in response to women's rights movements and their successful campaigns in the 1970s. They cannot be seen as spin-offs of the women's rights movement, since they opposed feminism and did not receive any support from women's rights activists; nonetheless they emerged as a countermovement.

Movements and countermovements: an interplay

The central task of this section is to explain the interaction between social movements and their countermovements, and to show why studying this interaction is significant. When a countermovement has formed, the original movement and the countermovement react to and influence each other. Zald and Useem (1987, 247) have referred to this interaction as "a sometimes loosely coupled tango of mobilization and demobilization".

The interaction between movement and countermovement creates a dynamic relationship between the two. From an analytical perspective, the understanding of social movements lacks an important dimension if countermovements are not taken into account. The characteristics and typological features of countermovements, their influence on the original movements and in a broader sense the dynamic between the two types is essential for the analysis of the phenomenon of social movements in general. This is particularly vital because several studies have revealed the potential of countermovements to influence the original movements' progress not only positively (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), but also negatively (Lind and Stepan-Norris 2011, Andrews 2001, Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). The emergence of a countermovement can strengthen the strategy, tactics, aims and general performance of a movement when its activists face a threat, thereby often remobilizing them. For example, countermovement mobilization can provide the impetus for social movement organizations¹ to mobilize resources and oppose the strategies of the countermovement. However, a countermovement might also influence the original movement negatively, because in its attempts to stop the original movement, it might undermine the values and objectives of the original movement. Furthermore, in their competition for resources such as political influence and money, countermovements could challenge the dynamics of the original movement. For instance, after the successful mobilization of a countermovement, the original movement might fail to develop the necessary tactics for maintaining its position, and therefore