

Course description

Social movements, political protest and civil society, 7.5 credits

Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Södertörn University

Fall 2023 (October–November)

Course aims

The course aims to provide an overview of central theories and concepts within the contemporary field of social movement studies, focusing on social movements' role in society, how movements emerge and develop, who takes part in movements, how movements are organized, what methods movements use to influence politics and society, how the political context affect movements, and what role emotions and collective identity play within movements. These perspectives are then applied to selected case studies. Great emphasis is put on critically examining the various perspectives and connecting them to empirical issues of current interest. Strong emphasis is put on critically examining the different perspectives and linking them to empirical questions. The course highlights different perspectives on the role of social movements, civil society, and political protests in modern societies. The course also discusses social movements in the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe.

The course consists of lectures and mandatory discussion seminars based on active reading of the course literature.

After completing the course, you should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- describe, explain, and reflect on central theories and concepts within the contemporary field of social movements studies,
- explain and reflect on the role of social movements, political protests, and civil society in modern societies.

Competence and skills

- in an independent, critical, and reflective manner, examine the assumptions and empirical underpinnings of the various theories and concepts,
- independently analyze contemporary or historical social movements using central theories and concepts of the research field,
- independently produce synthesizing knowledge reviews based on literature in the research field,
- independently formulate research problems and questions based on different theoretical perspectives within the research field of social movements.

Judgement and approach

- independently and critically review and evaluate advanced research results within the research field of social movements,
- independently and critically reflect on the merits and shortcomings of the central theories and concepts within the research field of social movements.

Course content and structure

The overall aim of the course is to provide an overview of contemporary social movement theories and their relevance for better understanding both contemporary and historical social movements and related civil society phenomena. The course is structured so that you will choose a case that you will return to in the seminar discussions and that your paper will address. You should preferably select a case that is related to your thesis project, e.g. about a specific social movement (in a specific location, in a specific country, or in several countries; during a specific period), specific movement organizations (one or more), a specific movement mobilization (a campaign, a specific event, etc.), episodes of movement interaction with the state, market, media or other external actors, or something else that is relevant in relation to the course literature.

Each lecture presents some key theories and concepts in contemporary social movement research, in relation to an overall theme and based on concrete examples of movements and mobilizations. Prior to each lecture, you are expected to read the assigned texts (see readings further down in this document). Before each lecture, chapters are read from a main textbook (by Sidney Tarrow), which both presents the theories and concepts of the field and applies them to historical and more recent cases, as well as a mix of texts (articles, book chapters, and shorter excerpts from books) that are more theoretically oriented or analyze specific cases of movements, organizations, or mobilizations.

One or two lectures are followed by a seminar, where the theme of the lecture and literature are discussed. Before each seminar, you should write a “learning memo” that is sent to the seminar leader at latest the day before the seminar (see further instructions under “examination”). At the seminars, we then discuss the issues highlighted in the learning memos that have been submitted.

Examination

The course is examined through active participation in seminars, writing learning memos before the seminars, and a course paper to be discussed at the examination seminar. Missed attendance at seminars or missed learning memos can, after consultation with the course coordinator, be compensated by additional written assignments.

Learning memos

Learning memos should be written prior to seminars 1–4 and submitted no later than 10:00 the day before the seminar, to the teacher conducting the seminar. Each learning memo should be 700–1,200 words long and in some way address the following points, in relation to the theories and concepts that have been central to the literature of the lecture on which the seminar is based:

1. What are the key points of the theories?
2. Based on the empirical case you have chosen, use one or more of the theories to discuss one or more concrete examples.
3. In relation to your empirical case, reflect on what you find most interesting or problematic about the theories.

Course paper

The final assignment of the course is to write a paper based on the case you have selected. In the paper, you should use theories and concepts found in the course literature to analyze and reflect on your case. The paper should in some way apply a comparative approach, e.g., by making comparisons between countries or within a country, or over time. The scope of the paper should be 4,500–5,500 words excluding the literature list. The paper is sent to the course coordinator no later than 24 November.

At the seminar you will make a short presentation of your case and the conclusions of your paper, and you are also expected to participate in the discussions of other students' papers. You will also be assigned to give more specific comments on another doctoral student's paper, which you will receive for reading a few days before the examination seminar.

Teachers

Magnus Wennerhag (also course coordinator), Steven Saxonberg, and Zhanna Kravchenko.

Lectures and seminars

Thursday 5 October

13.00–14.00 Introduction

14.00–16.00 *Lecture 1*: Why do social movements emerge, what influences their development over time, and how do they affect society and politics? An introduction of the contemporary research field of social movements and its roots in older theories of social movements and collective behavior.

Friday 6 October

10.00–12.00 *Lecture 2*: Who becomes involved in social movements – and how do they sustain and are affected by their activism?

13.00–15.00 *Seminar 1*: Short presentation of own thesis project and the case that will be in focus in the paper to be written during the course. Discussion based on learning memos submitted in advance that relate to the issues addressed in lecture 2.

Thursday 19 October

13.00–15.00 *Lecture 3*: What methods do social movements use to influence politics and society?

Friday 20 October

11.00–12.00 *Lecture 4*: How does the political and social environment affect social movements' ability to mobilize and influence politics and society?

13.00–15.00 *Seminar 2*: Discussion based on learning memos submitted in advance that relate to the issues addressed in lectures 3 and 4.

Thursday 2 November

13.00–15.00 *Lecture 5*: How are social movements organized – and how do different forms of organization and movements' access to resources affect their ability to mobilize and influence society?

Friday 3 November

10.00–12.00 *Seminar 3*: Discussion based on learning memos submitted in advance that relate to the issues addressed in lecture 5.

Thursday 16 November

13.00–15.00 *Lecture 6*: What role do collective identity, culture and emotions play in social movements?

Friday 17 November

10.00–12.00 *Seminar 4*: Discussion based on learning memos submitted in advance that relate to the issues addressed in lecture 6.

Thursday 30 November

14.00–16.00 *Examination seminar*: Presentation and discussion of papers.

Minor changes of the exact timing of the lectures and seminars may be made before the course starts.

Readings

Main textbook for the entire course:

Tarrow, Sidney G. (2022). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*. Revised and updated fourth edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In total, 300 pages.

Specified reading instructions for each lecture:

Lecture 1: Why do social movements emerge, what influences their development over time, and how do they affect society and politics?

Tarrow (2022): “Introduction” (pp. 1–21), “Where did movements come from?” (pp. 25–48), “Capitalism, states, and social movements” (pp. 49–72), “Struggling to reform” (pp. 168–190), “Cycles of Contention” (pp. 193–210), “Democracy, movements, and undemocracy” (pp. 234–258).

Langman, Lauren (2022). “Marx on Social Movements”, pp. 300–336 in David Fasenfest (Ed.) *Marx Matters*. Leiden: Brill.

McAdam, Doug (1982). “The classical model of social movements examined”, pp. 5–19 in *Political process and the development of Black insurgency, 1930–1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gamson, William A. (1990) “Defining Movement ‘Success’”, pp. 383–385 in Goodwin, Jeff & Jasper, James M. (Eds.) (2014). *The social movements reader: Cases and concepts*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lecture 2: Who becomes involved in social movements – and how do they sustain and are affected by their activism?

- McAdam, Doug (1986). "Recruitment to High-risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer". *American Journal of Sociology* 92 (1): 64–90.
- Klandermans, Bert, & Dirk Oegema (1987). "Potentials, networks, motivations, and barriers: Steps towards participation in social movements". *American Sociological Review* 52 (4): 519–531.
- Passy, Florence & Marco Giugni (2000). "Life-Spheres, Networks, and Sustained Participation in Social Movements: A Phenomenological Approach to Political Commitment." *Sociological Forum* 15 (1): 117–144.
- Wennerhag, Magnus & Anders Hylmö (2022). "Social class and environmental movements", pp. 355–373 in Maria Grasso & Marco Giugni (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Movements*. London: Routledge.

Lecture 3: What methods do social movements use to influence politics and society?

- Tarrow (2022): "Acting contentiously" (pp. 73–100)
- della Porta, Donatella & Mario Diani (2020). "Eventful protest", pp. 161–187 in *Social movements: An introduction*. Third edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- McAdam, Doug (1983). "Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency". *American Sociological Review* 48 (6): 735–754.
- della Porta, Donatella (2008). "Research on Social Movements and Political Violence". *Qualitative Sociology* 31 (3): 221–230.
- Bennett, W. Lance & Alexandra Segerberg (2012). "The Logic of Connective Action", *Information, Communication & Society*, 15 (5): 739–768.
- della Porta, Donatella & Sidney Tarrow (1986). "Unwanted children: Political violence and the cycle of protest in Italy, 1966–1973". *European Journal of Political Research*, 14 (5–6): 607–632.
- Piotrowski, Grzegorz & Magnus Wennerhag (2015). "Always against the state?: An analysis of Polish and Swedish radical left-libertarian activists' interaction with institutionalized politics". *Partecipazione e conflitto* 8 (3): 845–875.

Lecture 4: How does the political and social environment affect social movements' ability to mobilize and influence politics and society?

- Tarrow (2022): "Regimes, opportunities, and threats" (pp. 168–190).
- Kriesi, Hanspeter (2015). "Party Systems, Electoral Systems, and Social Movements", pp. 667–680 in Donatella della Porta & Mario Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holzacker, Ronald (2012). "National and transnational strategies of LGBT civil society organizations in different political environments: Modes of interaction in Western and Eastern Europe for equality". *Comparative European Politics* 10 (1): 23–47.
- Peterson, Abby, Håkan Thörn & Mattias Wahlström (2018). "Sweden 1950–2015: Contentious Politics and Social Movements between Confrontation and Conditioned Cooperation", pp. 377–432 in Flemming Mikkelsen, Knut Kjeldstadli & Stefan Nyzell (Eds.) *Popular*

Struggle and Democracy in Scandinavia. Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lecture 5: How are social movements organized – and how do different forms of organization and movements' access to resources affect their ability to mobilize and influence society?

- Tarrow (2022): "Organizations, networks, and hybrids" (pp. 101–120)
- den Hond, Frank, Frank G.A. de Bakker, & Nikolai Smith (2015). "Social Movements and Organizational Analysis", pp. 291–305 in Donatella della Porta & Mario Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCarthy, John D. & Mayer N. Zald (1977). "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (6): 1212–1241.
- Skokova, Yulia, & Christian Fröhlich (2022). "Domestic funding for civil society in a non-democratic context: The example of the Presidential Grants in Russia", pp. 67–91 in Zhanna Kravchenko, Lisa Kings & Katarzyna Jezierska (Eds.), *Resourceful Civil Society: Navigating the Changing Landscape of Civil Society Organizations*. London: Palgrave.
- Forsberg, Anette (2022). "Rural community development in Sweden: From challenging to mainstream?", pp. 121–142 in Zhanna Kravchenko, Lisa Kings & Katarzyna Jezierska (Eds.), *Resourceful Civil Society: Navigating the Changing Landscape of Civil Society Organizations*. London: Palgrave.
- Kravchenko, Zhanna (2022). "Liberty, loyalty, and solidarity: The role of transnational, national, and local resources in voluntary organizations in Russia", pp. 269–294 in Zhanna Kravchenko, Lisa Kings & Katarzyna Jezierska (Eds.), *Resourceful Civil Society: Navigating the Changing Landscape of Civil Society Organizations*. London: Palgrave.

Lecture 6: What role do collective identity, culture and emotions play in social movements?

- Tarrow (2022): "How social movements make meanings" (pp. 121–139).
- Jasper, James M. (1998). "The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements." *Sociological Forum* 13(3): 397–424.
- Benford, Robert D. & David A. Snow (2000). "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment". *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611–639.
- Ferree, Myra Marx (2003). "Resonance and Radicalism: Feminist Framing in the Abortion Debates of the United States and Germany." *American Journal of Sociology* 109 (2): 304–344.
- Louis, Dima, & Michelle Mielly (2023). "People on the tweets: Online collective identity narratives and temporality in the #LebaneseRevolution". *Organization*, 30 (1): 89–115.
- Qiaoan, Runya & Steven Saxonberg (2022). "Framing in the Authoritarian Context: Policy Advocacy by Environmental Movement Organisations in China", *Social Movement Studies*, Published online.
- Saxonberg, Steven (2013). *Transitions and non-transitions from communism: Regime survival in China, Cuba, North Korea, and Vietnam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Excerpt, pp. 207–227.