

Ethnicity, Repression, and Fields of Action in Movement Mobilization

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European and American studies of protest came into dialogue through the overt efforts of bridge-builders, particularly Bert Klandermans. These studies focused on the dynamics of protest mobilization in the democratic contexts of North America and Western Europe and developed cumulative research showing how mobilization actually happens in political and organizational contexts. Mobilization happens through social networks and social networks are changed in the process of mobilization; identities shape mobilization and mobilization changes identities; political and organizational structures constrain mobilization and mobilization changes political and organizational structures. Focusing on the protesters has led to tremendous advances in understanding protest.

But this focus on overt intentional protest mobilization has come at a cost. First, it has led to a relative neglect of theorizing the other actors, forces and types of action in the field. Second, it has led to a relative neglect of theorizing the differences between different social groups in their prospects for mobilization and the ways in which ethnic divisions affect mobilization. The issue of the mass incarceration of African Americans illustrates some of the gaps left by protest-centered research, the usefulness of a broader evolutionary perspective, and the importance of theorizing group differences within and between social movements.

The field of action, i.e. the political opportunity structure, is never the same for every movement in the same field. Some groups have more influence; some groups are repressed more. In particular, the political opportunities available to members of majority ethnic groups are different from those available to isolated disadvantaged ethnic minorities. Opportunities for resourceful ethnic minorities are different from those for resourceful ethnic majorities. General social movement theory should incorporate these distinctions into its core. Otherwise it risks marginalizing itself by claiming that a "general" theory is the theory of affluent majorities and relegating movements by oppressed minorities to the periphery of theoretical concern.

The Case of Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice

My thoughts on these issues have been influenced by the movement to reduce racial disparities in imprisonment in the US. I have participated in this movement as a public sociologist and participant in advocacy and governmental organizations (see Oliver 2009 for details). My own research is focused on analyzing and presenting the disparities themselves and on theorizing the interplay between repression, ethnic conflict and social control. This essay draws both on both my sociological research and my informal observations as a participant in the movement.

African Americans have extraordinarily high incarceration rates. The gross Black incarceration rate in 2006 was the equivalent of 2.5%. The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated that in 2008, over 10% of Black men aged 25-40 were incarcerated. Black Americans are seven times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Hispanic White Americans.¹ However non-Hispanic Whites also have very high incarceration rates by world standards: the 2006 rate of 410 (.4%) was higher than that of all of the world's nations except Russia and two other former Soviet republics, plus 10 small island nations with high tourism (Walmsley 2007).²

Although the details of this case are peculiarly American, they point to principles relevant to Europe today as it faces increased immigration and cultural diversity. Some sort of ethnic, racial, religious or

nationality disparity in arrest and incarceration is the norm, not the exception (Tonry 1997). Blacks in the USA and the UK and indigenous people in Canada and Australia have comparable disparities in incarceration (Tonry 1994), as do the Maori in New Zealand (Marie 2010). The Roma are widely viewed as criminal in much of Europe, and disparate incarceration of Roma has been documented in Bulgaria (Gounev and Bezlov 2006). Muslim immigrants or their children are also viewed as dangerous in much of Europe and are disproportionately incarcerated. Quoting from Tonry's summary introduction to an edited volume of research about Europe:

In Every Country, Crime and Incarceration Rates for Members of Some Minority Groups Greatly Exceed Those for the Majority Population. Perhaps most important, comparable disparities exist both for racial and ethnic minorities and for national origin minorities who are not visible racial minorities. In England and Wales, and the United States, black residents are seven-to-eight times more likely than whites to be confined in prisons, and the black/white imprisonment disparities in the Canadian province of Ontario are greater (Roberts and Doob). In Australia and Canada, arrest and imprisonment disparities affecting Aborigines and natives are even greater than black/white disparities in the other English-speaking countries. In the Netherlands, however, the greatest disparities affect people from Morocco and Surinam (Junger-Tas). In Sweden, Finns have higher rates than Swedes, and the highest disproportions in arrests affect immigrants from Arab countries, South America (notably Chileans, of whom those in Sweden are mostly of European descent), and Eastern Europe (Martens). In the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia in 1993, Romanians experienced by far the highest arrest rates (nearly 740 per year per 1,000 people, 44 times the German arrest rate) and the most disproportionate imprisonment rate (1608 per 100,000 population, 21 times the German rate) (Albrecht). In France, the highest imprisonment rates characterize people from the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia (Tournier). (Tonry 1997, p. 12, includes minor edits, citations in quote are to chapters)

Tonry's introduction adds additional generalizations from research on criminal justice disparities: groups with high criminal justice disparities are always disadvantaged but not all disadvantaged groups have high disparities; most (but not all) of observed racial or ethnic disparity is due to differential offending; disparities are generated by the routine operation of seemingly-ethnicity-blind routines and procedures; and sub-cultural differences in dress or mannerisms or language become treated as proxies for criminality by the majority public and by actors in the criminal justice system. Official rules against recording ethnic information do not eliminate it from consideration by officials. Culturally salient ethnic differences are generally readily identified through physical appearance, clothing, names, or accents, regardless of whether they are officially recorded. Albrecht (1997) describes how German police use euphemisms to identify "Gypsies" in their records despite the ban on recording ethnicity. Junger-Tas (1997) considers the extremely disproportionate confinement of immigrants in the Netherlands, and discusses the ways in which cultural stereotypes feed into the treatment of offenders. Although ethnicity is taboo, nationality is often recorded in European records, and there is frequently a high incarceration disparity for "aliens," as they are called in the European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (Crutchfield and Pettinicchio 2011; Killias et al. 2010). Officials' actions and perceptions can also be influenced by factors they choose not to record in their official records.

There is great resistance in many quarters, including among many social scientists, to viewing racial or ethnic disparities in arrest and incarceration as anything other than a simple response to criminality. However, criminologists have long studied the factors that lead to more or less punitive social control responses to any given amount of crime, and have long recognized the importance of ethnic and class factors in differential treatment. My own calculations indicate that the ratio of prison sentences to

crimes varies greatly between US states with the most punitive states having a ratio up to ten times higher than the least punitive states; the ratio of prison sentences to arrests is similarly variable across states and, in addition, varies across race, with substantially higher ratios for Blacks than Whites in most states.

In the US, a history of overt racial discrimination against racial minorities and of movements of liberation by racial/ethnic minorities creates a meaningful context for movement mobilization around the idea that statistical disparities in criminal justice are unjust and discriminatory. Although most European nations lack a similar meaning-making context, they face similar problems of ethnic conflict and stigmatization of some ethnic or national groups as criminal. Beckett and Godoy (2008), among many others, argue that support among majorities for punitive policies is paradoxically a response to expansions of democracy as crime talk typically involves coded references to inter-group hostilities. Although European incarceration rates remain low relative to the US, they did increase in the 1990s (Walmsley 2003) amid tensions around immigration and cultural conflict. Thus, both the criminal justice disparity itself and the movements against such disparities point to theoretical issues of broader generality for scholars of social movements.

Cultural integration and inequality in mobilization: A typology of movement actors

Too little attention has been given in social movement theorizing to the significance of ethnic divisions. "Globalization" has led to greater ethnic diversity in most nations. One consequence of both the older globalization of European colonialism and the slave trade and the newer globalization of immigration and international labor markets is the mixing of and conflicts among people of different ethnicities. Social movements have a dual character. On the one hand, they are defined by their goals or issues, by a set of preferences for change or a belief system. (Marwell and Oliver 1984; McCarthy and Zald 1977). On the other hand, they are defined by the people who take part in actions or advance the goals. These people are never a random sample of society but are rather have a particular social location: they have a specific class, ethnic and gender constellation. There has been relatively little attention paid to the importance of the social location of the people who make up a movement as affecting its mobilization. Morris and Braine (2001) argue that the social position of the carriers of a movement matter, and specifically that movements "whose carriers have a historically subordinate position within an ongoing system of social stratification" (p. 34) should be distinguished from movements whose carriers are not from historically subordinate or oppressed groups.

Figure 1 builds on Morris and Braine to typologize the social location of ethnic groups in a society and provides the basis for a more abstract typology of "types" of collective actors.

***** FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE *****

The hierarchical or vertical dimension is the class position of a movement's carriers, its position in the overall stratification system The horizontal dimension is the extent to which a group is socially and culturally integrated with—has network ties to—the wider society, reflecting both its relative size and the degree of its social and political integration with other fractions of society. In democratic societies, numerical dominance is typically tied to political dominance. Figure 1 includes examples of different parts of the space.

A group's location in this two-dimensional space has a large influence on the type of contentious politics it can pursue and on mobilization processes. Social movements tend to arise from groups on the right-hand (socially integrated, majority) side of the space.

Groups in the upper right corner are both powerful and well-integrated: they are affluent and part of the ethnic/cultural majority of a country. They have ready access to resources for mobilization, have network ties that reach to power-holders, and are unlikely to encounter significant repression. Examples of such movements abound in most democratic countries across a wide range of issues both liberal and conservative, including pro- and anti-abortion groups, pro- and anti-war groups, pro- and anti-health insurance reform groups, etc. Affluent well-integrated groups tend to be the carriers of "social responsibility movements" (Morris and Braine 2001) that address conditions affecting the general population. They also may be the "conscience constituents" (McCarthy and Zald 1977) for movements on behalf of other groups.

Groups in the lower right corner are economically-disadvantaged ethnic majorities. This subdivides into two cases depending on whether the economic elites are of the same or different ethnicity as the majority. Lower class members of a dominant ethnic group have historically often organized around class politics versus the upper classes of their own group, but they also have historically often organized around hostile anti-minority or anti-immigrant or nativist movements; it is not uncommon for the same people to do both. This cell would include Europe and countries with European-descent majorities, India, and China. In these countries, especially if they are democratic, disadvantaged majorities typically have ties to affluent and powerful co-ethnics that foster mobilization.

The second sub-case includes many Asian, African and Latin American countries with a disadvantaged ethnic majority that has electoral political control while an ethnic minority has economic power such as Black South Africans, indigenous people in Central America, Javanese in Indonesia, or Malays in Malaysia. In some cases the affluent minority keeps power through coercive control, although in many cases, a popular majority revolution has ultimately expelled the dominant minority. When the majority rules, ethnic violence against the wealthy minority has often occurred in such countries, frequently in a context of encouragement from majority-ethnic political elites.

Ethnic minorities on the left side are less likely to be able to support mass mobilizations. Groups in the upper left corner are powerful and economically dominant but not well integrated into the larger society, such as White South Africans, Chinese Indonesians, Chinese Malaysians, or Euro-Americans in Central America. These groups either maintain dominance by coercion or reach some kind of political settlement with the majority. They are rarely the carriers of any kind of social movement, and are often at risk of ethnic violence if they lack political control (as in Indonesia and Malaysia). They are unlikely to use mass mobilization as a strategy and are thus unlikely to show up in protest-centered research. Instead, they are more likely to use professionalized tactics that require resources and influence, but not numbers such as quieter "insider" channels of influence or lobbying to accomplish their goals.

The lower left corner represents economically disadvantaged minorities like Blacks or Hispanics in the US, non-European immigrants in Europe, and illegal immigrants everywhere. These groups combine weak political influence with a disadvantaged economic position. They are likely to face repression when they protest. Immigrants are typically socially isolated by language and culture, and are politically weakened by limits on citizenship. Illegal immigrants are particularly vulnerable. It is rare for immigrants to be able to sustain strong collective mobilizations. Insurgency or violence by immigrants, especially illegal immigrants, is typically met by severe repression. Historically oppressed minorities can also be disenfranchised through restrictions on voting. Their segregation may permit them to form an organizational infrastructure to support mobilization, but they are unlikely to succeed unless they can attract outside support. Scholarship about African Americans has stressed the importance of Black-

controlled spaces where Blacks organize themselves and be relatively free of White surveillance (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984) and electoral realignments that made Blacks significant “swing” votes in key areas. This period of mass mobilization and success in the Civil Rights era should not obscure the long history of unsuccessful struggle by African Americans. As the political tides turned, the relative isolation and political weakness of African Americans is why the late 1980s “drug war” could be targeted on them. Other minority groups in the United States—indigenous people, Latinos, Asians, religious minorities—have had substantially less success in winning victories through protest mobilization.

Examples of intermediate positions are given in Figure 1 to indicate that the vertical dimension of hierarchy and the horizontal dimension of cultural and social integration are both continua. The dimension of cultural integration originates in the idea of ethnicity but could be understood more broadly to track any social boundary that tends to reduce connections and communication between groups of people. For example, White conservative Christians in the US are socially, culturally and spatially isolated from Whites who are secular and liberal. They meet most academic definitions of subcultures, and there is a non-trivial sense in which they could be considered proto-ethnic groups. There is research evidence to suggest that there are similar political subcultures in some European nations as well. This paper cannot develop or defend this argument empirically, but I do believe this suggestion is worth further exploration as a way of tying important advances in understanding culture and identity in movements with studies of the network underpinnings of movements.

This typology elides some important distinctions. The visual display does not capture the amount of network ties among groups. A better display would have at least three dimensions: a network ties map on the X-axis, economic resources on the Y-axis and coercive power on the Z-axis. But even my oversimplified display points to the dimensions of difference in movements’ social locations. In particular, this typology illuminates some of the core concerns of this volume. It specifically addresses the impact of ethnic diversity on mobilization and provides some tools for theorizing the difference between movements by racial-ethnic minorities versus the nativist or xenophobic movements by working- or lower-class people who are members of ethnic majorities (as in the current wave of anti-immigrant movements that are discussed in other chapters in this volume), and in comparing these movements with “new social movements” such as environmentalism, peace, and gay/lesbian rights along with the “old” working class movements.

Social Location and the Coevolution of Repression and Protest

A general coevolutionary approach to theorizing movements (Koopmans 2005; Koopmans 2004; Oliver and Myers 2003) can accommodate social cleavages and locate protest within a broader field of action. This approach views continuity and change as arising from the same underlying processes of strategic action and mutual adaptation by a multiple actors in multi-actor fields. Specific protest forms are one part of a larger stream of actions by specific groups oriented to promoting or resisting social change. These actions are constrained by physical limits and by the actions of others. Outcomes are created by the ongoing interactions of multiple actors in a context of structural constraints and random external events. Actors choose actions for their expected outcomes but no single actor can control outcomes. Movements and regimes mutually adapt to each other, with movements repeating tactics that succeed and regimes changing their policies in response to movements or finding new ways to repress (e.g. Koopmans 1997; Moore 1998)(McAdam 1983).

Movements also evolve in interaction with other movements as they compete for resources, cooperate around shared goals, and learn from others' successes and failures (see, e.g., Meyer and Whittier 1994; Oliver and Myers 2003; Rucht 2004). Channels of communication, particularly the mass media, are often actors in their own right, pursuing agendas as they decide which information to pass on, sometimes

speaking "for" movements, other times speaking "for" regimes, other times constructing themselves as the arena within which "significant" events are defined (e.g. McCarthy, McPhail and Smith 1996; Oliver and Maney 2000; Oliver and Myers 1999; Rucht 2004).

Social location and the coevolution of repression and mobilization

Social movement dynamics can be understood only by viewing protest forms in a broader field of types of action and recognizing the importance of social location. Well-integrated groups with political and economic power usually pursue their goals through regular political channels with no need of protest. Aggrieved majorities often pursue exclusionary or hostile agendas without resort to protest because of their control of political or coercive systems. Police surveillance and arrest have long been used in the US as an important tool for preserving racial segregation; all-White communities historically had overt practices of police stopping and harassing Blacks who entered their areas, and these practices continue covertly today in many areas. (Loewen 2005) The move in the US toward gentrifying the central cities has been augmented by well-documented patterns of policing to keep poor, minority, mentally ill and other "disruptive" persons out of areas frequented by the affluent (Beckett and Herbert 2010; Wilson 2007)

When dominant majorities do protest, they often do so as a demonstration of strength and suffer little repression. US history is rife with instances in which the police supported or permitted violent White mob attacks on Black, Mexican and Chinese communities. One of Gamson's (1975) main findings in his quantitative study of US social movements is that violence-using movements tend to be those of strong majorities, who typically gain benefits from their violence use.

By contrast, disadvantaged minorities are both less able to exert routine control over political or economic systems and more likely to be subject to repression that inhibits their capacity to mobilize. Protests by disadvantaged minorities are inhibited by repression, but protest-centric research has blinded researchers to the full range of repressive strategies. The mass incarceration of Blacks in the US calls attention to the overlap of ordinary policing and repression. Substantial historical evidence indicates that a major factor in the escalation of social control in the US was the Black riots of the late 1960s (Beckett 1997; Weaver 2007). Formal social control agencies have always been concerned with both ordinary crime and illegal dissent. Formal police departments in Europe developed to solve the dual problems of controlling urban riots by poor and working class people and protecting the middle class from property crimes. (Gurr 1976; Gurr, Grabosky and Hula 1977). "Ordinary crime" and "illegal dissent" overlap in practice, especially for populations in rebellion, and police repression can work to control both at the same time (Oliver 2008).

Repression reduces the capacity for mobilizing dissent via incapacitation by killing, disabling, or incarcerating them. Repression does not have to be justified in political terms to produce the effect of political repression: consequences matter more than intent. Police generally view their actions as controlling crime, not as suppressing dissent. Many Black Americans supported punitive policies in Black areas. Regardless of intent, the repressive consequences of mass incarceration and intensive policing have a major impact on community mobilization.

Incapacitation indirectly affects the mobilization potential of whole communities as those who remain must take on the extra burdens of everyday life and have less time and fewer resources for political mobilization. The combination of mass incarceration of poor men and the removal of long-term income supplements from poor women has dramatically reduced the reservoir of discretionary free time among adults in low income communities in the US. African Americans who return from incarceration face poor job opportunities through the double burden of racial discrimination and criminal stigma: they frequently either add an unemployed burden to their families or return to crime as a source of income.

Community institutions such as churches or voluntary associations are also inhibited from providing an organizational base for collective action as more of their efforts are spent in supporting the families and children stressed by economic decline, substance abuse, and the loss of young adults to incarceration and crime.

Repression also works indirectly through deterrence. The threat of sanctions such as incarceration, monetary fines, job loss, expulsion from school, and debarment from public housing or welfare works indirectly to deter people from undesired activities by raising the costs associated with defiance. People who live where many have suffered these sanctions are often fearful of challenging authorities and convinced that taking the risk is unlikely to be effective.

Beyond this, extensive surveillance and monitoring of the "criminal" population further reduces political capacity. The extensive undercover operations and day-to-day intensive monitoring of low income Black communities in the name of the "drug war" and crime control tends to break up meetings and mobilizations before they happen. Bonds of social trust and neighborliness are weakened by policies that encourage offenders to fabricate charges against others to get their own otherwise-draconian penalties reduced (Brown 2007). People who have been convicted of serious crimes are barred from voting for some period (in some cases permanently) in most states of the US. People who are on community supervision (i.e. probation or parole³) are subject to a wide variety of rules about their behavior that are supposed to contribute to their rehabilitation and avoidance of further crime, but also have the effect of incapacitating them from any kind of challenging collective action. People on probation or parole cannot risk arrest at a disruptive protest, and the terms of supervision frequently require the parole officer's permission to attend any kind of group meeting. People on supervision – and their families – justly fear incarceration as retaliation for any challenge to the political system.

These effects can be complex: removal of a small percentage of people who prey on their families and neighbors can improve life for others, but incapacitation of those whose victims are outside the community or whose crimes involve illegal market activities (e.g. drug sales) reduces community resources. Repression of certain kinds of crimes can simultaneously benefit people in one social location while hurting those in another (Oliver 2008). It is impossible adequately to analyze the impacts of repression on mobilization without considering social cleavages.

Grievance and the mobilizing effects of repression

Even if the overall level of repression is low enough to avoid destabilizing and demobilizing communities, racial, ethnic or national disparities in social control may still increase ethnic conflict. Political scientists have long emphasized the two-sided nature of repression. Groups that are themselves targets of repression almost inevitably reduce their support for the regime and almost always increase their sense of grievance and injustice. Unless the repression is strong enough to be truly incapacitating, the short-term (and sometimes long-term) consequence of repression is typically a reinvigoration of the will to resist among those repressed. For this reason, there has been extensive discussion and research on the issue of whether repression has positive or negative effects on mobilization (Earl 2003; Earl 2004).

Recognizing that groups vary in their social location is one way to bring some order to this issue. Repression of dissident majorities or those socially tied to dissident majorities often fuels grievance and rebellion in the wider society. It is in repressing majorities that a regime going down a repressive path paves the way for its own destruction. Once on the coercive path, regimes that rely on repressing majorities have to maintain the coercive apparatus to survive, and the easing of coercion often opens the door to mass mobilization and rapid regime change.

But repression of stigmatized isolated minorities is often ignored or even celebrated by the majority. Stigmatized isolated minorities have often been expelled or exterminated by regimes with the support of the majority, precisely because the minority has been defined as dangerous and criminal by the majority.

If they are not killed or expelled, minorities that are subject to high levels of repression are likely to have a higher sense of grievance and injustice, as are the people tied to them by social networks. They are less likely to assimilate and more likely to develop or maintain oppositional subcultures. Thus, extensive repression of minorities (whether for political dissent or for criminality) is quite likely produce a feedback loop like that in Figure 2:

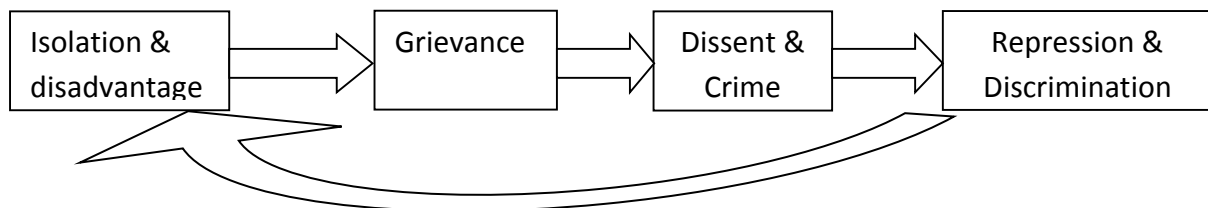


Figure 2: Repression feedbacks for disadvantaged isolated minorities

When the object of grievance is itself excessive repression by police and the criminal justice system, the object of protest (the repression) itself inhibits overt protest against it, but exacerbates rather than reduces grievance. Crime or dissent may be repressed by coercive incapacitation, but the repression itself fuels the isolation and disadvantage that contribute to crime.

Although repressed minorities can and do protest against repression, this protest is itself often ignored or repressed. Successful movements against repression of disadvantaged minorities typically have to have strong support from or be carried by outsiders who are not themselves repressed. This tends to lead to a strong involvement of professional reformers and outside allies. The strategies and tactics people use in this context are tied both to who they are and to their perceptions of what might work to affect change. Protest-centric research can miss much this entire dynamic.

Coevolution and Mobilization in a Complex Multi-dimensional Field of Action

Social movements are embedded in a much larger field of actors (e.g., Klandermans 1990; Rucht 2004). The coevolutionary perspective emphasizes the importance of this whole field as all these different actors mobilize for action in interaction with all the others. Again, the racial disparity movement is instructive. Like many other ongoing social divisions, today's mass incarceration regime in the US is a consequence of past movements and counter-movements. Law enforcement institutions and extra-legal violence by White people were overtly used to maintain White domination over Black people within the memory of people still living today. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the riots of the 1960s led to profound political changes and partisan realignments. Control of crime and control of dissent were confounded in the rise of punitive social control after the 1960s. In short, the "Black" idea that criminal justice institutions are agents of White domination and the "White" idea that Blacks are a threatening group who need to be controlled represent an ongoing social and political cleavage within which a debate about criminal justice policy is understood in the United States.

My analysis of data from the 1980s and 1990s distinguishing prison admissions by offense indicates that the rise in the racial disparity in imprisonment arose almost entirely from the late 1980s “drug war,” not ordinary crime. Between 1988 and 1992, the vast majority of people sent to prison on drug charges were Black, even though the rate of illegal drug use is roughly comparable by race. Even for crack cocaine, which was disproportionately used by Blacks, the majority of users were White. This “war” arose in partisan political jockeying for votes amid an actual problem of increased crack cocaine use and sensationalist media coverage that both overstated the pharmacological dangers of the drug and was highly used only Black images of drug addicts (Beckett and Sasson 2004). Many Blacks supported the punitive turn because their neighborhoods were disproportionately impacted by crime and illegal drugs.

But the racial cleavage is not the only ongoing movement-counter-movement dynamic in US criminal justice policy. My own analysis of data from the 1970s finds no rise in the Black/White disparity before the mid-1980s, although prison admissions overall rose steadily. Other sources of collective political turmoil in the United States in the 1960s fueled the rise in punitive social control. The student-centered and predominantly White anti-war movement became increasingly radical and also engaged in property riots and street battles with police, and repression escalated against all movements. Ordinary street crime was also at historically high levels. Gottschalk (2006) argues that the victim's rights movement with ties to the women's movement played another key role. Garland (2001) argues that the escalation in punitiveness was a worldwide phenomenon tied to global cultural shifts. The “nothing works” movement among criminologists provided intellectual justification for abandoning rehabilitative programs and substituting incarceration under the logic of incapacitation (Braithwaite, Felson and McCord 1993; Bushway and Paternoster 2009).

The pan-racial movement toward greater punitiveness always had opposition among professionals and academics who favored rehabilitative strategies for crime control or social and redistributive programs to address the underlying problems of job loss in economic restructuring, family instability, and drug addiction. The movements for criminal justice reform in a more rehabilitative direction and against racial disparities in criminal justice were never absent as the tide ran the other way in between 1970 and the late 1990s, but they were waging a largely losing battle.

Picking up the situation in the late 2000s, we find a field dominated by three main movement-counter-movement oppositions. The first axis is racial. Institutionalized Black movement organizations advocate for a broad range of policies against racial discrimination and in favor of programs to benefit Blacks and other racial/ethnic minorities, and locate racial disparities in criminal justice within this frame. Opponents along this axis deny that racial discrimination exists, resist collecting or analyzing data on racial patterns, and claim that racial patterns that do exist simply track Black criminality. Although overt White racist groups continue to exist, they are politically marginalized. Whites rarely advocate for racial discrimination in criminal justice or any other field. Instead, the politics of the White majority is dominated by an ideology referred to as “colorblind racism” by its critics that declares that any political action that seeks to better the conditions of racial minorities is, itself, inherently racist.

The second polarity is between the anti-crime movement (and the associated anti-drug, anti-drunk driving and victim rights movements) and those who advocate less punitive policies. This is a very different kind of counter-movement pair. Much of the polarity is carried by professional reformers and academics with dueling theories of social control and careers to be made in advocating particular policies. Private businesses (both for-profit and nonprofit) also lobby for policies that will create a need and funding for their services in the criminal justice system, ranging from private prisons at the punitive end of the spectrum to treatment and restoration projects at the non-punitive end. Non-professional mobilization tends to be reactive. The anti-crime pro-punitive side tends to mobilize around specific incidents or problems, especially violent crimes, drug dealers and drunk drivers. Popular mobilization for

less punitive policies is often carried by families of people incarcerated on drug charges. Other mobilization comes from groups with a broader ideology who add criminal justice issues to their menu of issues, including leftists concerned with the "prison industrial complex," human rights activists concerned with the inhumane treatment of prisoners in US prisons, and religious activists concerned with social justice.

The third axis of conflict is the partisan battle between Democrats and Republicans for political control. Both parties make "tough on crime" statements to gain votes and much of the escalation in punitiveness can be traced to partisan jockeying as Republicans (who do not try to win Black votes) would seek to gain White votes through racially coded messages while Democrats (who rely on both Black and White votes) sought ways to appear equally tough on crime without alienating voters of either race. Politicians are typically more attentive to claims of racial discrimination in jurisdictions where Blacks are a significant fraction of the electorate, but not necessarily any less punitive.

These three polarities overlap, but the lines are not simple. Activists specifically concerned about racial disparities in criminal justice typically advocate less punitive policies overall, but not always: some advocate more aggressive and punitive policies towards Whites to even the balance. Racial politics were central to the party realignment after the 1960s, and discussions of crime and drugs are deeply racialized, often at a nonverbal emotional level. But imprisoned drunk drivers are overwhelmingly White, as was the anti-drunk driving movement. Many Black Americans have punitive attitudes towards crime and drugs and strongly backed punitive approaches to drug dealing and urban crime, even as they simultaneously believed that the police unfairly targeted Black people and that policing was a tool of White dominance.

Through the 2000s, there was relatively little sustained popular mobilization or protest in any of the camps, although there are strong sentiment pools of public opinion backing the different parts of the field. Instead, the field of contention is heavily dominated by professional politicians, reformers and service providers who are simultaneously pursuing social change goals and their own professional advancement or organizational survival. The field also includes ongoing White-dominated leftist political groups and ongoing multi-issue Black (and occasionally Hispanic) SMOs which pick up the "prison issue" as one of many, and local ad hoc grassroots organizations and individual activists who have no professional agenda. These sometimes adopt traditional protest forms, but protests are typically targeted toward very specific incidents or policies and are typically short-lived and ineffective. One advocacy group I am involved with is dominated by long-time activists who have a history of protesting around many issues. When I first became involved with it, the group regularly recruited people for protests at the Super-Max prison or at the Capitol. The group rarely protests now, not because its members have any aversion to protest tactics, but because protest had no impact. Instead the group has put on informational conferences, worked to influence public officials, and participated in providing services to returning offenders.

Adding to movement complexity is the complex structure of governance in the United States and, thus, of the targets of movement action. Crime control in the US is generally a "state" (i.e. non-federal) or local (municipal or county) function. City mayors appoint and control police chiefs. Local county sheriffs, district attorneys and judges are frequently elected and, thus, have independent power bases and autonomy to set their own policies. Government actors who affect imprisonment rates include legislators who set penalties; police who determine where and how they will patrol, what crimes they will react to with arrest; district attorneys who make charging decisions and make the plea bargains that account for more than 95% of the adjudications in the US; defense attorneys and especially the public defenders whose job is to represent indigent defendants while carrying high caseloads for relatively little remuneration; judges who ratify plea bargains and make the final sentence determinations (within

the bounds set by legislation); sheriffs who act as police outside cities and control conditions in jails (local confinement facilities in the US); and departments of correction who supervise prison and conditions of confinement and make decisions about release to and revocation from probation and parole. At the same time, federal government policies have also had large impacts. Drugs became the political issue of choice for Republican presidents because it could claim jurisdiction over an illegal trade that crosses state boundaries. Federal legislation and regulations have provided substantial financial incentives to states to bring local practices into line with federal policies both by tying the receipt of federal funds to the adoption of particular programs and, in the drug war, by encouraging forfeiture laws that permit police departments to confiscate for their own use automobiles and other valuable goods that are deemed to have been used in the drug trade.

All this complexity means that activists seeking to influence policy both have many points of entry and many different types of targets. On the "movement" side, the field of actors is similarly diverse, both in terms of the "kind" of actor and the level at which they act (federal, state, local). Anti-crime pressures often have a local grassroots base as citizens generate ad hoc mobilizations in response to crime waves, while the public discourses that fueled punitive rhetoric and national policy typically originated with federal- or state-level politicians and national- or state-level media outlets. The pro-drug legalization movement has conducted civil disobedience protests like smoke-ins, but these have been overwhelmingly dominated by young White – and frequently affluent – participants who felt relatively immune from the possible consequences of arrest. It is exceedingly rare to have any sustained grassroots protest against crime control or unfair policing in general, although ad hoc protests do sometimes emerge around particular cases in which the behavior of authorities is especially egregious. Most of the non-punitive grassroots activism is focused on efforts to rehabilitate offenders or provide services to and support for their families. There is generally more popular support for rehabilitative efforts for young offenders.

The ideological work of articulating and advocating policies has been done within government agencies (especially the federal Department of Justice and its state counterparts), with academics and independent "think tanks" playing major roles in generating research studies that support various punitive and non-punitive approaches. Black civil rights organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League, as well as local Black organizations, frequently raise issues about policing or incarceration as part of their broader agendas. Many NGOs concerned about criminal justice reform more generally have picked up on the racial disparities of the system as a way of gaining purchase for a broader critique. People with official roles in the criminal justice system such as police, judges, public defenders, or district attorneys may play a significant role in some sort of reform movement in their locales. Many – but not all – of the reformers inside the system are Black or members of other ethnic/racial minorities. These reformers take a lead in trying to combat racial disparities in their departments or trying to pull in outside resources, and often end up on special commissions or task forces to address the issue. There are also a wide variety of Black and liberal White religious organizations who provide services to released inmates and (sometimes) seek to educate their members about the issues, social service groups advocating less punitive policies and greater funding for social services, anti-capitalist and radical groups who link the issues to their broader ideological agendas, families of prisoners (frequently the more affluent families who have more time to work on the issues), human rights groups concerned about conditions of confinement, groups advocating liberalization of drug laws, and an assortment special-purpose groups advocating particular policies.

Non-profit "think tanks" often employ social scientists to generate studies and reports. Web sites make it possible to disseminate this information more widely than was possible with paper reports. One tactic that has proved useful is generating rankings of US states by some new target criterion. This increases

the political pressure on an issue within states that score badly. For example, the political pressure to "do something" about the racial disparity in imprisonment in Wisconsin followed Wisconsin's #1 ranking in Black incarceration in 2004 and the ensuing publicity when an article in an on-line magazine called Wisconsin the worst state in America to be Black (Dixon 2005). Professional reformers publicize phrases like "driving while Black" and engage in campaigns to require that data be collected by police and other agencies on the race of people arrested, charged or sentenced so that other professional reformers can analyze the data and use it as a tool for pressuring for change. One reform group, the Vera Institute, promotes change by persuading District Attorneys' offices to hire them to analyze prosecution data: the selling point is that the DA will simultaneously have an improved data system for managing caseloads while also identifying sources of racial disparity in the prosecution process. A variety of foundations and federal agencies have prepared guidelines and provided funding for local agencies to study their own racial disparity patterns and develop programs to remedy them.

As these examples indicate, professionalized movements, like all movements, are continually coevolving with the other actors in their environments, looking for successful tactical innovations and responding to the success or failure of past actions. The absence of sustained mass protest around racial disparities in criminal justice does not mean that there is no aggrieved group, nor that there is no mobilization. Rather, the repression itself has suppressed mobilization within the most aggrieved groups, and political conditions have been such that protest has been ineffective as a tactic for promoting movement goals.

Intra-movement conflicts

As many of the contributions to this volume attest, increased immigration has highlighted the problems of organizing in ethnically diverse contexts. Recognition of the difficult and tense dynamics between what McCarthy and Zald (1977) called "beneficiary constituents" and "conscience constituents" was a major topic of concern arising from the 1960s experiences of Whites working in the Black civil rights movement (e.g. McAdam 1988) and White middle-class radicals working in Black, Latino and White poor neighborhoods. These dynamics have received less attention in the literature since 1980, but they remain a major problem for social movements seeking to cross the boundaries of social cleavages. As McCarthy and Zald hypothesized, tensions and conflicts abound between oppressed beneficiary constituents and their relatively privileged conscience allies. Tensions also arise among beneficiary constituents who differ along a major social cleavage. For example, there is significant discussion of the problems of racism and classism within the gay rights movement, and of anti-gay attitudes among Blacks.

Race and class divides permeate work on criminal justice issues in the United States. The targets of punitive policies are disproportionately ill-educated racial minorities; the reformers are disproportionately professionals. Ethnic and class differences and antagonisms can hinder common action among people who are nominally on the same side of an issue. Cultural differences in customs of organizing meetings, exerting leadership, and speaking publically can lead to irritation and offense. Patterns of domination and subordination in the larger society tend to be replicated even among people who are trying to treat each other as equals: members of dominant groups tend to make tacit assumptions that their ideas and ways of doing things are right and that they should take the lead. The antagonism is typically mutual. Members of ethnic majorities often blame the problems on the minorities who are "different" and wonder why minorities do not participate more. Members of ethnic minorities typically view majority people as being domineering and culturally insensitive.

Differences in class and privilege also impact intra-group relations. More educated group members find it easier to do research and write reports and speak and write in ways that signal competence to officials or politicians. Coordinating meetings or circulating draft documents via email shuts out members who do not own personal computers. People who are the frequent targets of abrupt or aggressive or even

insulting behavior by police or officials tend to believe that discrimination and oppression are common and the products of racism or classism. People from higher class positions, especially those occupying professional roles, are more likely to sympathize with the external pressures on police or officials that contribute to their behavior and are likely to question the standing of a convicted criminal to offer testimony in public debate.

There are also divisions and conflicts of interest among people who have basically the same agenda. Among professional reformers whose agenda is increasing social services for crime prevention, there are deep divisions about the allocation of public money among reform agencies. A longstanding grievance in my community is that the majority of "at risk" youth in the community are people of color, but the nonprofit organizations that receive the bulk of local funding for social service provision are large and White-dominated, such as Lutheran Social Services. Social workers and teachers of color feel that White-dominated social services agencies tend to prefer White employees and that organizations controlled by people of color are discriminated against in local funding for social services. Professionals of color often complain that minority communities are effectively providing job opportunities for White social service providers, and complain that White service providers do a poor job of providing intervention and rehabilitative programs for minority clients. White service providers find these accusations hurtful, and are convinced that the ability to provide therapy and services does not depend on cultural matching between providers and clients but more on professional qualifications and credentials.

Social hierarchies from the larger society find their way into every interstice of a movement. The racial hierarchy itself means that Whites are treated as "unbiased" neutral observers on racial issues, while Blacks and other minorities are lack standing because they are seen as pursuing an agenda. Similarly, convicted criminals are often ignored when they speak about punishment. And, of course, illegal immigrants have to maintain silence or risk deportation.

People in different social locations may react personally to things said by people in other social locations even when the issue is not about them. For example, one Latino community member testified at a public hearing that he had recently experienced a flurry of unwarranted traffic stops in the months after a pro-immigration rally. A police representative took offense at this making the police sound bad and tried to get this testimony excised from the report, even though an internal police department analysis supported the claim: their data had identified a "rogue" police officer who was harassing Latinos and had personally accounted for 1/3 of the suspicious traffic stops by the department. The White police representative genuinely advocated reducing racial disparities (and was backed by our Black police chief who was outspoken on the issue), but still was unhappy with anything that made the Police Department look bad. In another incident, several White members of a task force took offense and complained when a Black member who works with returning prisoners complained that the all-White construction crews on government projects were racist. It is possible that the offended people thought the Black speaker was accusing the White workers of being racist, although this would entail a rather high level of racial cluelessness, as the topic of conversation was the problem of job opportunities for returning prisoners and the speaker's intent clearly referenced the problem of racial discrimination in the labor market, especially in the construction trades. It appeared that it was the word "racist" itself that offended them. This kind of interaction makes it almost impossible for people to work together along racial lines, and the only reason this particular meeting did not explode was that the Black speaker was patient and polite and had a great deal of experience dealing with Whites.

Conclusions

I wrote this paper in 2009, amid concerns about the right-wing Tea Party Movement in the US and nativist anti-immigrant movements in Europe and before the new wave of insurgency in the US and the

Middle East. I know too little about the Middle East to suggest how attention to social location and looking beyond protest events would inform those revolts, but paying attention to the social location of movement carriers is essential to understanding both the Tea Party mobilization of 2009-10 and the Wisconsin Uprising and the Occupy movement of 2011 in the United States.

A typology of the ethnic integration and economic/political standing of carriers of movements helps to identify the contexts in which different kinds of actions are likely to arise. Mass actions are generally the tools of groups that are large enough or connected enough to expect to avoid or overcome repression. Ethnic majorities are the most common carriers of popular mobilizations. Disadvantaged ethnic majorities often support exclusionary class movements that advocate for worker issues while also seeking to attack or exclude ethnic minorities. Disadvantaged majorities can be extremely dangerous for minorities in times of social turmoil. Their nativism and nationalism are typically fanned by politicians seeking to gain political power through their votes.

Both European anti-immigrant movements and the US Tea Party are movements of ethnic majorities that overtly and covertly express hostility to immigrants and ethnic minorities, attract significant support from the economically disadvantaged sectors of the ethnic majority, have significant ties to elites and are intertwined with partisan political maneuvering. There are disputes in US empirical research about the mix of economic advantage and disadvantage among Tea Party activists and supporters, and complex patterns of relationship between Tea Party activists and the Republican Party, but it is clear that protest mobilization and partisan electoral politics are closely intertwined in the movement. Nativist anti-immigrant and anti-minority discourse is a prominent part of the movement, and overt White racist organizations are known to have attempted to influence Tea Party actions and recruit new members at Tea Party events. Ethnic majority movements that target minorities as part of their agendas are a longstanding part of the political scene in many countries and have often been the source of violence, although there has been relatively little mass collective violence in the US so far.

Disadvantaged ethnic minorities may have the internal solidary capacity for collective action, but have little social influence and face substantial risk of repression if they seem to threaten the majority. Repression inhibits mobilization and especially inhibits mobilization against repression, but a protest-centric approach can ignore both the repression and the movements against it. Protest-centric research in the US and Europe in the current era is all too often research focused on the agendas and issues of the White ethnic majority who are most likely to support and sustain protest movements in the current political environment. The only way to avoid the problems of protest-centric research is to identify the full range of groups in society, ask what their grievances or disadvantages are, and then look to see whether and how they are acting to address those grievances.

The bulk of this paper focused on the movement to address racial disparities in the wake of extreme repression in Black communities, and emphasized why the repression itself makes mobilization against the repression extremely difficult. In this repressive context, professional reformers play an important role. I emphasized the complexity of the movement field and the interplay of different kinds of actors with different kinds of agendas, as well as the racial-ethnic and class tensions within the movement. I stressed that an emphasis on protest alone would miss and has missed most of the important action in this arena. I also revisited the problem of conscience constituents and the intra-movement conflicts that arise as more advantaged outsiders dominate the field of reform on behalf of a repressed and disadvantaged minority. I also stressed how hard it is for disadvantaged minorities to bring their issues center stage in the absence of elite allies.

In the wake of the Tea Party movement, Republicans won many elections in 2010, including in Wisconsin, where the newly-elected Republican governor announced Draconian policies—including huge compensation cuts and an end to collective bargaining for all public employees—that led to a huge

sustained protest in the state capital of Madison early in 2011. This protest, coupled with similar initiatives by Republican governors in many states, sparked a wave of pro-union protests all over the country. Later in the year, the Occupy Wall Street movement began in New York, and the Occupy movement spread throughout the US. These movements serve to illustrate the importance of the social locations of the carriers of movements.

The Wisconsin protest was primarily carried by ethnic majority White middle class public workers and their friends, families and neighbors. The protest had no central organization, but was a genuine upsurge of reaction centered in unionized public workers (especially teachers), with deep involvement of unions and people who vote Democratic. Young people and racial/ethnic minorities were underrepresented at the protests. The protest was deeply partisan, with core protesters having daily strategy discussion with Democratic representatives. As is typical, national news coverage tended to stress the “national” implications of the protest and to ignore or misunderstand many of the state-level issues and actors. The protests and news coverage stressed the grievances of public workers, although the Governor’s bill also contained many direct threats to programs for low income people.

Except for particular times when busloads of African Americans from Milwaukee arrived to protest cuts to social programs, African Americans and Latinos were generally seen as underrepresented at the rallies, even though a higher percentage of African Americans than Whites are public workers, and they would be disproportionately impacted by the cuts to Medicaid and other elements of the bill. There was discussion about why more minorities were not generally at the rallies with little certainly about the answers in the face of the complexity of unfolding events. The state is 92% non-Hispanic White and most of the state’s African Americans live in Milwaukee, 80 miles from Madison, so some argued that the composition of the rallies essentially reflected the composition of the pool of people available to come to the rallies, adjusting for distance. However, many of the White protesters came on buses from much farther away. Many Black and Latino people commented that they felt less safe at a protest and feared arrest or police harassment. People on probation or parole could not safely attend rallies, as this would violate the terms of their supervision. Many perceived that this was a protest by Whites about their own issues. One Black man, and ex-prisoner, speaking during the first week of protests at a previously-planned event about racial disparities held at a White church said to the predominantly-White audience: “I know you people let him be elected. You didn’t think they would come after YOU. You just thought they would come after black and brown and poor people.”

The Occupy protests have similarly been disproportionately White. There have been critics of the White-centric character of the protests, and some development of Occupy the Hood and other minority-centered spinoff movements.

Overall, the Madison and Occupy protests demonstrate the point that a group’s social location affects the mobilization potential and that members of ethnic majorities have the resources and political ties that make mobilization easier, as well as a dramatically lower fear of repression for their actions, and a lower fear of the long-term consequences for them of being arrested or repressed. The Madison uprising had close ties to partisan politics and turned itself into an electoral movement to recall the governor. The Occupy movement is both critical of Democratic politicians and playing to partisan politics in seeking different economic policies.

The ongoing evolution of social movements and their opponents in the 21st Century reveals the new outcomes of old principles. The specific types of actions that came to be recognized as “protest” by movement scholars never stood apart from other action forms but were always embedded in fields of routine political actions and the communication of ideas. This is still so. There is much that is new. But the ways in which the new is created from the old—the principles of coevolution—seem ongoing. Agentic actors seek ways to pursue social change goals within particular contexts created by the prior

actions of themselves and others. New issues are defined and new forms of action evolve as people modify old forms in new contexts. Successful forms of action spread, unsuccessful forms are abandoned. Groups with more favorable social locations carry most movements, and disadvantaged minorities are more easily repressed and find mobilization more difficult.

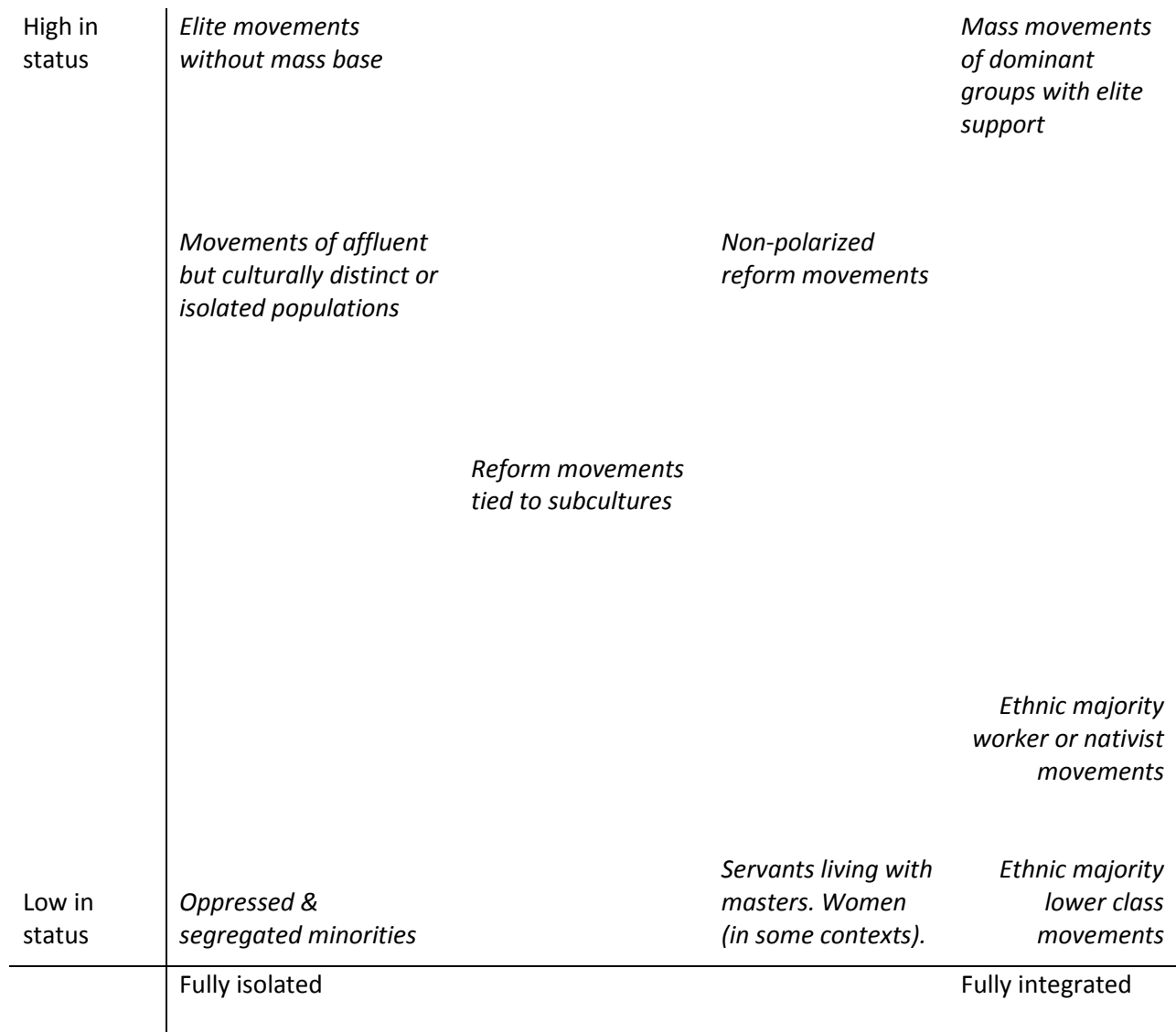


Figure 1. Conceptual space for distinguish movements by participants' status and degree of integration with the dominant cultural/ethnic group in a society.

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Notes

¹ Hispanics are also a disadvantaged minority who are often classified as White, so the baseline for all comparisons is non-Hispanic Whites; this is the usual convention in the US.

² The US rates of incarceration for Hispanics/Latinos and American Indians are generally substantially higher than for non-Hispanic Whites but substantially lower than for Blacks. They also frequently perceive the criminal justice system as discriminatory and oppressive and sometimes mobilize around the issue, even as they only infrequently form tight alliances with Black groups around criminal justice issues. These groups are much more difficult to provide statistics for due to great between-place and between-ethnicity variability as well as complex classification issues in public data that would require an extended tangent to explain.

³ Probation is a term of community supervision in lieu of a prison term; a person on probation can be sent to prison for violating the terms of that probation. Parole and related statuses that go by other names such as extended supervision refer to a period of community supervision after imprisonment; again, violating the terms of this supervision can result in a return to prison and, often, "re-setting the clock" so that a new period of supervision will ensue the next time the person is released from prison.