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The religious field and the path-dependent transformation of popular politics in the Anglo-American world, 1770-1840

Abstract: This article examines the formative influence of the organizational field of religion on emerging modern forms of popular political mobilization in Britain and the United States in the early nineteenth century when a transition towards enduring campaigns of extended geographical scale occurred. The temporal ordering of mobilization activities reveals the strong presence of religious constituencies and religious organizational models in the mobilizatory sequences that first instituted a mass-produced popular politics. Two related yet analytically distinct generative effects of the religious field can be discerned. First, in both cases the transition toward modern forms of popular mobilization was driven by the religious institutionalization of organizational forms of centralized voluntarism that facilitated extensive collective action. Second, the adoption of different varieties of the same organizational forms led to important divergences. The spread in the United States of societies for moral reformation—in contrast to their non-survival in Britain—steered popular politics there towards a more moralistic framing of public issues. These findings indicate the importance of the organizational field of religion for the configuration of modern forms of popular collective action and confirm the analytical importance of religion's organizational aspects for the study of collective action.

Keywords: organizational structure, petitions, religion, sequence, social movements, social change

Ordinary people have mobilized and expressed collectively political claims directed at their rulers throughout history (Te Brake 1998). Yet their ability to do so increased dramatically in the nineteenth century. Alongside a general opening of electoral politics to a wider franchise, citizens engaged in increasingly systematized efforts to influence and change policies, legislation, and cultural values. In the process, social movements and popular political advocacy became a standard part of the political landscape.

This transformation was deeply enmeshed in the complex set of epochal changes that structured Western modernity: the rise of capitalism, of the new middle classes, and of the democratic nation-state, to name just a few. While aware of this complexity, this article focuses on one often neglected factor in the transformation of popular politics: the organizational field of religion. Indeed, as I will show, the first extensive popular campaigns in Britain and the United States in the early nineteenth century arose out of the mobilization of constituencies defined by their religious identity. The creation and mobilization of these constituencies was, in turn, made possible by the organizational resources of the religious field where widely adopted associational forms facilitated the successful and effective production of geographically extensive collective action. Superimposed on this common dynamics was a partial variance in the course of popular politics in the two contexts as substantively different, if often overlapping, traditions of religious associationalism steered popular politics into divergent paths. The presence in the United States of religious societies for moral reformation—in contrast to the insignificance of their British counterparts—produced a markedly more moralistic framing and selection of public issues.

Explaining the rise and origins of modern forms of politicized collective action

Historians and sociologists have offered numerous accounts of the transformation of popular politics in European modernity focusing on concepts and phenomena like the public sphere, civil society, associationalism, and sociability (Clark 2000; Dülmen 1992; Habermas 1989; Morris 1990; Skocpol 2003). Perhaps the most systematic treatment of this transformation is contained in the work of Charles Tilly who documented a far-reaching change of the historically and culturally specific sets of routines employed in politicized collective action. This change included the expansion of the scale of previously localized "parochial" collective mobilization, the concomitant widening of the array of issues around which people mobilize, the consolidation of transferable organizational forms of mobilization, and the resulting ability of ordinary people to take initiative instead of relying on powerful intermediaries. As a result, the typical modern social movement emerged with its distinctive characteristics and largely replaced alternative pre-modern forms in the organizational ecology of collective action (See, e.g., Tilly 2004b:16-37).

In a monograph highlighting nineteenth-century Britain as the birthplace of modern forms of popular politics, Tilly (1995) offered his most detailed explanation of why and how this transformation occurred. He singles out two interrelated processes: first, changing political, economic, and social structures, and second, a relatively autonomous and path-dependent history of popular mobilization itself. On the structural side, a series of interdependent developments changed the conditions under which people made collective political claims: the expansion of the state and the parliamentarization of politics (caused themselves by the need to finance wars) as well as the concentration of capital and the concomitant polarization of economic interests and urbanization. In Tilly's own words, "within Great Britain, durable mass national politics came into being, perhaps for the first time anywhere in the world, as capital-concentrated industrialization proceeded, proletarianization accelerated, and a war-making state expanded its power" (Tilly 1995:340). Constrained—yet not determined—by these large-scale social changes (Tilly 1995:367) is the other process: the path-dependent history of change and innovation within the field of popular protest itself. The typical ways in which politicized collective action is organized change as people experiment with new forms of mobilization which, in turn, become codified in prevailing "repertoires of contention."

Tilly's prolific work developed within a post-Marxist "regime of knowledge" in which industrialization and class formation were the most salient features of historical development and "material" interests reigned supreme as the ultimate cause of social action (Adams, Clemens and Orloff 2005). There was little interest in this paradigm to engage religion as an important causal factor irreducible to putatively "deeper" material causes (Blaschke 2000; Gorski 2005). A strong secularist bias in the study of social movements (documented by Smith 1996) went hand in hand with a historical sensibility which typified the nineteenth century—the defining period of modern forms of popular politics—as the onset of an inherently secularizing age. Important works did attest to the continuing political relevance of religion in the two centuries following the Reformation (Te Brake 1998; Walzer 1965; Zaret 1985). Yet for students of collective action all this changed from the eighteenth century on as the age of the Enlightenment, of Voltairean

anticlericalism, and of Painite Deism introduced completely different—and predominantly secular—social dynamics.

This secularist stereotype has been challenged by works documenting the continuing relevance of religious ideas and organizations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Far from retreating under the onslaught of secularization, movements like Jansenism, Pietism, British Dissent, and American Evangelicalism continued to influence politics and to mobilize non-elites for collective action (Bradley 1990; Bradley and Van Kley 2001; Carwardine 1993a; Fulbrook 1983; Graf 1993; Howe 1991; Rutz 2001; Stamatov 2010; Van Kley 1996) Yet little of this continuing relevance of religion is acknowledged in the post-Marxist paradigm. Tilly's own work exemplifies the strategies deployed to avoid a serious engagement with the causal importance of religion: an exclusive focus on secular agents and ideas, a priori dismissal of evidence that does not fit the secularist framework, and, finally, selective attention exclusively to religious issues and conflicts that lend themselves to explanation by "deeper" material forces.

Avoiding religion

An important aspect of Tilly's reconstruction of British popular politics is the relatively autonomous history of tactical innovation as new repertoires of contention are introduced and diffused. The organizational and ideological sources of this innovation (with one exception to which I will return) are represented as exclusively secular. Only in passing does Tilly admits that churches "frequently served as nurseries for principled collective action" and that "Nonconformist churches had … been conducting much of their collective work" through the distinctively modern forms of "assemblies and associations for a century before 1790." A logical conclusion would be to inquire if and how churches made a contribution to evolving patterns of popular political mobilization. Yet Tilly does not pursue this question, explaining religious activities with the fact that churches were tolerated by the British state (Tilly 1995:199). Unlike "real" secular associations, churches were simply the recipients of traditional rights of assembly and enjoyed "exceptional freedoms" (e.g., Tilly 1995:272, 275). Nor does he consider political associations with explicit religious agendas since, in contrast to "real" secular movements, they were "elite" organizations (e.g., Tilly 1995:199, 272), which after gaining power abandoned political contention for "routine political negotiations, influence-wielding, and maneuvering within government channels" (Tilly 1995:69).[1]

Tilly's dismissal of plausible religious causes is rather puzzling when contrasted with the consistent emphasis on the "material" causes of state expansion, militarization, and capitalist development—even in the face of contrary evidence. How exactly these structural developments constrained or shaped popular collective action is not spelled out clearly. Indeed, as Tilly himself admits, he cannot "prove all the book's causal assertions," pointing out instead to "probable connections between large social changes

[1] Similarly, in her loving reconstruction of nineteenth century U.S. voluntary organizations, Skocpol (2003) does not thematize religion even if many of the organizations she discusses, such as the temperance movement, were driven by religious concerns. When discussing the reasons for the rise of such organizations, she devotes ten pages to the formative influence of the Civil War and only a brief paragraph to religion (Skocpol 2003:37, 46-57). There, too, the important factor is not religion as such but rather the competitive religious market created by the state where, after disestablishment, "each denomination had to organize and attract devoted congregants or risk eclipse."

and alterations in the character of British public claim-making" (Tilly 1995:53). And when these assertions are not supported by evidence, Tilly makes ad hoc exceptions. If instances of economically determined working class mobilization are not as prominently represented in the record as expected, it is because they are not captured adequately by the reports of public contentious meetings he uses. Proletarianization mattered nevertheless, Tilly concludes, because workers participated in politics not simply as workers but "in other guises: as members of the local citizenry, as parishioners, as users of local markets, as participants in political association, as representatives of various creeds" (Tilly 1995:369). Yet the reasoning here is circular: one cannot assume that one identity is by definition more important for collective action that other competing identifications (Gould 1995).[2] Similarly, when predicted levels of protest against increasing taxation by the expanding state fail to materialize, Tilly attributes it to the specifics of the economic situation which made "Britain's large fiscal burden more bearable, less incendiary as a political issue" (Tilly 1995:227-28). On the other hand, the realization that sources verifiably underreport "religious meetings in which congregants made contentious claims" does not lead to a more careful examination of religious politics (Tilly 1995:69)

Tilly acknowledges the influence of religion on popular politics only implicitly when discussing the political cleavage between Catholics and Protestants. The government needs to recruit Quebec Catholics to the army and gives them concessions in the 1770s, which leads to a Protestant backlash and the formation of Lord Gordon's Protestant Association (Tilly 1995:159-60). The denial of political rights to Irish Catholics is exploited by reformers and results in the formation of Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association in the 1820s (Tilly 1995:274-75). The Catholic Association then assumes an unrivaled prominence in Tilly's version of the development of modern forms of political protest. It is the very first truly national mass-membership association which, because of its unprecedented success, becomes the example on which all subsequent mobilizations are invariably modeled (Tilly 1995:278, 321-22). But note that despite the prominent display of religious qualifiers in the titles of these organizations, Tilly does not examine religion as a causal factor, explaining their existence instead as the result of military and class conflicts, such as "an increasing reliance on Catholic and Dissenting populations for military manpower" (Tilly 1995:360).

American religious beginnings?

Aware of the impossibility to explain fully changing patterns of collective action by the structural factors foundational to the post-Marxist narrative, Tilly is sensitive to the relatively autonomous interactional dynamics of popular contention. Yet, while opening in this way new avenues for analysis, he stops short of exploring the questions that these interactional dynamics raise. For addressing such questions properly would undermine the very foundations of post-Marxian "normal science": the primacy of material causes.

[2] A similar interpretive move is used by Drescher (1987) to explain the sources of popular mobilization against colonial slavery. Starting from the observation of a remarkably strong presence of Methodists in antislavery campaigns, he concludes that the underlying cause must have been artisans' distinctive attitudes towards labor, since the majority of the Methodists were artisans. The possibility that Methodists engaged in a political mobilization as members of a religious organization is not even entertained.

The only recent work to engage extensively the causal influence of religion in these processes is Young's (2006) discussion of antebellum North American social movements. Focusing on antislavery and temperance and describing them as the very first movements of a truly national scope that burst onto the scene suddenly in the 1820s and 1830s, Young asks why and how a new type of national social movement appeared then (Young 2006:4-6). Since—he argues—there was no strong centralized state in the United States in the period, he immediately dismisses one of the main determinants of modern forms of collective action in Tilly's account, the growth and consolidation of the state. This opens the field for serious consideration of religion: a uniquely strong evangelical Christianity, completely different from its European roots and counterparts, forms "the most compelling and popular form of voluntary association in the United States," "the only intermediary institution that connected large numbers of American to a nation with its weak central state, decentering political party politics, and restless market" (Young 2006:50). In this context, modern forms of popular politics arose out of the combination of two previously unrelated religious "schemas": the schema of "national sin" and the schema of "public confession"

The schema of "national sin" comes from the privileged "orthodox" religious bodies in the American context, Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. National in their scope, they are elitist and traditionalist yet politically and culturally interventionist. Reacting to unsettling social and religious change—decline of traditional deferential politics, rising free market economy, disestablishment of religion, and increasing competition from what Young describes as "populist sects"—they embark on creating the first truly national network of interdenominational national voluntary associations (Young 2006:56-57). In the process, a pre-existing schema of "general sin" is transformed into a schema of "particular sin": the specific social problems that these reforming and improving societies set out to combat. This particularization of the schema of sin, in turn, has far-reaching if somewhat contradictory consequences. It makes the sin more abstract, removed from particular settings, and more relevant to an "imagined community" of adherents. At the same time, sins become more "focused and attention grabbing," which makes "pervasive feelings of guilt actionable," and "shifts the sense of responsibility from the general to the immediate." This produces a new type of uncompromising reformer who projects "personal struggles against sin onto particular social issues" (Young 2006:201-204).

The "populist sects" against whom the orthodox compete—Methodists and Baptists—are the carriers of the second schema, the schema of "public confession." Unlike the "orthodox," they are intensely local in orientation, devoid of any ambitions for political or cultural intervention, and rather focused on the believer's self (Young 2006:51-53). Yet by inventing new "social techniques of mass recruitment" (Young 2006:50) such as the revival meeting, they transform the presumably private experience of confession of sin "by making it public" (Young 2006:203).

National social movements emerged when and because these two schemas "combined," producing a "schema" of public (and not private) confession of particular and national (and not diffuse and personal) sins. "Orthodox" political interventionism and "sectarian" personal religiosity when combined proved combustible: "a cultural mechanism combining schemas of the evangelical cosmos launched and sustained these movements by mobilizing human and material resources within parachurch institutions to

new and startling purposes" (Young 2006:17). More concretely, the merger of the previously disjoined schemas created new modular forms of collective action (Young 2006:203) "that fused the reform of society and the self" (Young 2006:119), spread these new forms of mobilization across the nation ensuring their truly national character (Young 2006:199), and secured the commitment of activists by tapping a deep seated evangelical sense of guilt in their innermost core (Young 2006:201).

New questions

While foregrounding religion, Young does not address the question of the scope and validity of his alternative religious explanation. Tilly (e. g., 2006) sought to apply the mechanisms he identified in the British case to other settings, especially as they are mediated by a recursive relationship between properties of political regimes and forms of politicized collective action. Young, on the other hand, does not indicate if and how his religious model can be applied outside of his specific case. In a "minimalist" reading, his argument does not contradict but rather supplements Tilly's account. There were simply two distinct dynamics at play that produced the same outcome. Tilly's increasingly consolidating British state gives rise to distinctively secular modern forms of protest, with the working class (and Irishmen) leading the charge. Across the Atlantic, Young's uniquely powerful evangelicalism with its schemas and its guilt shapes modern popular politics in the vacuum left by the decentralized and unconsolidated North American state.

Yet while it is not impossible that two distinct and unrelated processes should produce remarkably similar outcomes, it is rather unlikely that these North American and European developments were radically different and unconnected. As we saw, there are indications of an important if unrecognized religious presence in the formation of modern forms of popular contention in Britain. Furthermore, as Young (2006: 56, 161, 176) occasionally admits, a strong transatlantic connection with Britain provided models and actors for the American processes he describes. If this is so, what would be the outline of a general account that is attentive to religious determinants while covering developments outside of the US?

Change in sequences: Britain, 1770-1833

"From donkeying to demonstrating" is how Tilly captures the change in popular politics in Britain between the 1750s and 1830s, "a decisive shift from spur-of-the-moment provocation and violent retribution toward planned gatherings aimed at declaring collective positions with regard to public issues" (Tilly 1995:344). More technically, he describes this change as the transition from a "parochial, particular, and bifurcated" to "cosmopolitan, autonomous, and modular" repertoires of contention. While the traditional "pre-modern" type of contentious gathering is usually a local and one-time occurrence, modern forms of popular mobilization produce campaigns that not only are extensive in scope (as expressed in the number of people and localities they encompass), but also are continuous and enduring affairs, involving "orchestration of like performances in widely dispersed settings" (Tilly 1995:349). This is, in a sense, the difference between the workshop and the factory: if "pre-modern" forms of political mobilization were hand-crafted, modern forms are mass produced.

How and where exactly did this change in the mode of production of protest occur? Tilly represents it as a global change valid across the entire population of events. The interpretation of his data set of "contentious gatherings" is based on what Abbott (2001) calls the "general linear reality" model. Each occurrence of such gathering, whether of the "parochial" or of the "cosmopolitan" variety, is an independent data point or case. What really matters is the relative distribution of such analytically equivalent cases over time. This distribution captures the outlines of a global transformation in the ecology of popular politics as newer "cosmopolitan" forms gain an increased presence therein. Because this is a global change, theoretically it should apply across the board and the particulars of the specific mobilizations in which this change occur are not analytically relevant.

Yet not all contentious gatherings are independent events. At least some of them are of recurrent character: they are produced repeatedly by largely the same personnel and are continuously oriented towards the same issue. What is more, as we will see, each of the British and American campaigns in which the conclusive change to new forms of mobilization occurred in the 1820s and 1830s was a link in longer historical chain of mobilization around these issues.

This patterning of change within specific mobilizatory sequences provides important information that remains obscured when only the temporal distribution of allegedly unconnected and analytically equivalent events is examined. The trajectories of such sequences, for example, reveal temporal clues about the mechanics of creation, introduction, and adoption of new forms of popular mobilization, affording thus an opportunity to assess more carefully the importance of various causal factors without invoking factors endogenous to the data set. Important, for example, is the precise timing of "turning points" or transitions when the respective sequence adopted and successfully institutionalized distinctively modern forms of mobilization (Abbott 2001). The relative timing of such turning points allows us to establish precedence: if the turning point occurs earlier in one mobilizatory sequence compared to others, we can reasonably conclude that a property of this specific sequence accounts for the earlier adoption of modern forms of mobilization.

In the context of nineteenth-century Britain, a reliable indicator of such turning point signaling the successful adoption of modern extensive forms of mobilization is the mass production of petitions. An important instrument of popular politics in the period, the petition was a hybrid phenomenon. There was nothing particularly modern about petitioning, a traditional guaranteed right and a standard procedure of supplicating authority. Yet from the eighteenth century on, petitions gradually turned into a weapon of popular politics insofar as they could be produced in quantity: a large number of petitions with a large numbers of individual signatures produced simultaneously to address the same issue (Jephson 1892:10-11; Smellie 1947; Zaeske 2003:13-15). A comprehensive "system" of petitioning emerged that involved "public meetings on a national scale, the collaboration of parliamentary leaders with outside bodies of opinion, and the use of the platform, in close cooperation with debates in parliament, as a means of propaganda" (Fraser 1961:200). In this sense, numbers of petitions and signatures produced by a specific mobilizatory sequence is a good indicator of the relative scope of popular mobilization.

Four sets of issues dominated British popular politics in the 1820s and 1830s as modern forms of political mobilization gained ascendance: repeal of Dissenting "disabilities," Catholic "emancipation," reform of parliament, and the abolition of colonial slavery. The popular movements around these issues were the vehicles of new forms of political engagement as they mobilized significant popular support and achieved important legislative victories: the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts that discriminated against Dissenters (1828), the Catholic Relief Bill (1829), the Second Reform Act that extended political rights and made parliament more representative (1832), and the abolition of slavery (1833). When we consider the continuous history of these mobilizatory sequences since their inception, the turning point toward mass mobilization as measured by the mass production of petitions occurred in the following chronological order: the antislavery movement, followed by the movement for dissenting rights, the movement of catholic rights in Ireland, and, finally, the movement for political reform.

Antislavery, 1792

Acknowledged in retrospect by Tilly (2004a:155) as possibly the very first full-fledged modern social movement, organized antislavery emerged in the 1770s when Quakers began petitioning legislatures in the American colonies. A long-standing antislavery commitment within the Society of Friends and an Anglo-American transatlantic network of activists resulted in the first campaign against the colonial slave trade in 1787 (Anstey 1975; Brown 2006; Drake 1950; James 1963). The turning point, however, was the next campaign in 1792 when 519 petitions were produced, "the largest number ever submitted to the House on a single subject or in a single session" (Drescher 1987:80). While most of the petitions came from the North of England, this was a truly national effort covering the most of England, Scotland, and Wales. By a conservative estimate, 390,000 adult males lent their signatures to petitions (Drescher 1987:82), or approximately "thirteen percent of the adult male population" of England, Scotland, and Wales (Oldfield 1995:114).

Dissenting Rights, 1811

The next mass threshold was reached in the sequence for political rights for Dissenters in 1811. Dissenters, a catch-all label for those belonging to Protestant religious bodies other than the established Church of England, had emerged as a category with the religious settlement of the Restoration in the 1660s when a series of laws were enacted to penalize them. Although outright persecution of Dissent had ceased by 1686, the Toleration Act of 1689 only suspended and did not abolish most of the discriminatory legislation. Ever since, Dissenters mobilized politically for reform and repeal of these statutes (Wykes 2005). By 1732, a Committee of Dissenting Deputies began coordinating such activities and mobilization intensified in the late eighteenth century (Bradley 2005; Crowther-Hunt 1961; Manning 1952).

The turning point of mass-produced petitions was reached in 1811 and was directed against legislation proposed by the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, to restrict the licensing of Dissenting preachers. Reacting on the ecclesiastical and political establishment's fears that the explosive growth of Dissent and the increasing numbers of

a new type of preacher of humble lower-class origins would spell the demise of the existing political order, Sidmouth sought to halt these processes by requiring a stricter regulation of the preaching licenses dispensed by magistrates under the Toleration Act. For Dissenters and their Whig allies in politics, however, this was, “one of the most insidious attempts against religious liberty that has appeared for some time” (Monthly Repository 1811:311). Public opposition was organized in a hasty effort to take advantage of a brief postponement of the Bill’s second reading engineered in cooperation with legislative allies in the House of Lords (Parliament 1812:196). Within less than two weeks, the Methodist Committee of Privileges, the Body of Dissenting Ministers, and a larger coalition of Dissenters, Methodists, and Anglican sympathizers organized about 600 petitions with 100,000 signatures (Baptist Magazine 1811; Davis 1971:150-69; Lovegrove 1988:135-41; Protestant Dissenting Deputies 1814:130-31; Rutz 2001). As an ally in the Lords testified, the spectacle was overwhelming:

> For some days no places were to be had in the stage coaches and diligences of the kingdom; all were occupied with petitions to Parliament against the measure proposed by Lord Sidmouth. On the day fixed for the debate such innumerable petitions were presented … that not only the table was filled, but the House was filled with parchment. The peers could hardly get to the doors, the avenues were so crowded with men of grave deportment and puritanical aspect; when there, they had almost equal difficulty in gaining their seats, for loads of parchment encumbered and obstructed their way to them (Holland 1905:101)

Catholic Emancipation, 1828

The next campaign to reach a mass threshold was organized by the Catholic Association in Ireland. Traditionally, negotiating changes in legislation discriminating against Catholics in Ireland had been the Catholic gentry’s prerogative. The first break into their monopoly came with the formation of a middle-class Catholic Committee in 1759. While the Committee gained political prominence after 1782, class divisions and disagreements over goals and tactics prevented unified collective action until the formation of the Catholic Association in 1823 (O'Ferrall 1985; O'Flaherty 1985). Almost from the very beginning the main architect of the Association, Daniel O’Connell, envisioned local structures “through Ireland” that would “simultaneously send forward a petition to parliament every fortnight” (O'Connell 1854:vol. 2, 235). The goal was finally accomplished in 1828 when simultaneous meetings were held in two thirds of Irish parishes (O'Ferrall 1985:175-76). By the end of March, 859 petitions were sent to allies in parliament. The majority of these were the work of the Catholic Association, yet Dissenters also contributed more then a tenth of the petitions (Reynolds 1954:89-90).

Parliamentary Reform, 1831

Finally, the last campaign to reach a turning point in the period was the movement for parliamentary reform. Reform of parliament had been agitated at least since the mid-seventeenth century. These efforts gained a new prominence in the 1760s as various campaigns worked for the "radical" transformation of the existing political system, seeking to make parliament more representative and extend political rights to wider segments of the population (Cannon 1972; Christie 1963; Royle and Walvin 1982). Because these movements for political reform conform most readily to the Marxist scheme of class-based politics, scholars have singled out their various manifestations as the most important vector of popular politics in the period. Indeed, the impetus for political reform manifested itself in a variety of organizations and campaigns: the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights in the 1770s, Christopher Wyvill's Yorkshire Association and the Society for Promoting Constitutional Information in the 1780s, the Constitutional Societies and the London Corresponding Society in the 1790s, the Hampden Clubs, Union Societies, and Societies of Political Protestants in the 1810s (Christie 1963; Prothero 1979; Read 1964; Royle and Walvin 1982). Yet compared to the other three sequences considered here, political radicalism reached the mass threshold relatively late. Partly, this was the effect of official repression; but equally important was the inability of various factions to form a common front and mobilize a mass audience. In 1819, for example, the same Viscount Sidmouth who had attempted to pass legislation restricting independent preaching introduced the so-called Six Acts aimed at restricting political activities. In stark contrast to the strong religious reaction against the 1811 bill, radical reformers were unable to organize for coordinated protest and the Acts passed easily in parliament. When, a year later, radicals succeeded in suppressing division in their ranks and influencing legislation to a limited degree, it was around the rather marginal issue of the rights of Queen Caroline, estranged wife of the new king George IV (See Hone 1982:305-18; Laqueur 1982; Prothero 1979; Read 1958:155-63; 1964:65-77; Stevenson 1977).

It is only with the surge of Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League in the 1840s that radicals were able to truly mass-produce petitions on a national scale (Jones 1975:83-88; McCord 1968). A more modest turning point within this mobilizatory sequence occurred in 1831 and 1832 with petitions for parliamentary reform. They were organized by two types of associations. One type, of a middle-class provenance, was exemplified by the Political Unions formed on the model of the Birmigham Political Union. The more radical working-class variety was spearheaded since 1831 by two London-based unions: the National Political Union and the National Union of the Working Classes (LoPatin 1999; Prothero 1979:268-99; Read 1964:87-110).

Religious constituencies

Reaching the turning point of mass petitioning at different times, these mobilizatory sequences cumulatively affected a change in popular politics. Underlying this change was a gradually increasing organizational sophistication leading to a veritable petitioning race as different campaigns tried to outperform the precedent set by immediate predecessors. If 880 petitions to the Commons had been presented between 1775 and 1789, in the corresponding five year period ending in 1831 the number was 24,492

(Select Committee on Public Petitions 1832:3). Since the traditional right to petition provided an opportunity for sympathetic members of parliament to address the Commons and initiate a debate on the petitioners' issue, these increasing numbers testify to an expanding ability of otherwise disenfranchised people to influence legislative agendas. At that same time, the increase was so dramatic that it became practically impossible to debate all the petitions as members jockeyed for position to be able to present the petitions entrusted to them (Leys 1955).

The escalating production of mass petitions between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries and the increasing organizational sophistication behind it confirm Tilly's insight of a path-dependent evolution of forms of popular politics in the period as political entrepreneurs gradually honed their skills while simultaneously competing with and finding inspiration in the activities of other entrepreneurs. Yet the specifics of popular mobilization within each of these sequences and their unfolding in time do not fit easily the rest of Tilly's model. In all the four cases discussed here, the achievement of extensive mobilization resulting in the mass production of petitions relied on the contribution of popular constituencies defined by a religious identity, while religious organizations of different level of formal organizing provided the conduits along which political mobilization occurred.

The movement against the colonial slave trade was initiated by Quakers and the breakthrough in the 1790s was made possible by their alliance with Dissenters, Methodists, and evangelical Anglicans (Briggs 2007; Brown 2006:333-89; Clarkson 1839: vol. 1, 442-43; Drescher 1987:124-5; Jennings 1997; Oldfield 1995). The importance of religious constituencies is self-evident in the case of the continuous mobilization for Dissenting rights that reached a critical threshold in 1811. While Quakers, who had their own separate structures for political lobbying, were notably absent, all Dissenting denominations, Methodist and sympathetic Anglicans formed the networks of this mobilization. Religious constituencies shaped also the course of the mobilization for political reform. When an extra-parliamentary movement for political reform began gaining strength in the late eighteenth century, it was simultaneously a movement for religious rights. The heirs of a long-standing tradition of radical religion, many Dissenters remained actively involved in radical causes at least until the late nineteenth century (See Bonwick 1977; Bradley 1990; 2001; Dickinson 1977:202-3; 1995:227, 277-78; Goodwin 1979; Robbins 1959; Seed 1985; Watts 1995:394-96; Winstanley 1993; Yeo 1981).

Because of the pride of place Tilly gives to the Catholic Association in the genesis of modern social movements it is worth outlining in more detail the distinctly religious dynamics of its rise. While a nationalist historiography has consolidated an interpretation of the Association as the precocious burst of true popular democracy against English oppression under the valiant guidance of the "Liberator" Daniel O'Connell, the dynamics of popular mobilization was much more complex—and much less gloriously egalitarian. The rise of the Catholic Association was, in a sense, the making of a new politically mobilized Irish Catholic constituency, while the successful recruitment of the organizational resources of the Catholic Church was an important reason for the success of this mobilization. The mass production of protest was only made possible by the cooperation of Catholic bishops and local priests who assumed the function of ideologues and local enforcers of the Association and its fundraising (O'Ferrall 1985). What pushed

this newer and more assertive generation of bishops and priests into this alliance was their reaction against the perceived threat of evangelical Protestants who had run bible-distributing and education societies in Ireland since the beginning of the century and had enjoyed an increasing support from Protestant gentry (Whelan 2005).

O'Connell himself was not just a democratic nationalist but also a sincere Catholic who died while on pilgrimage to Rome and in a letter to Jeremy Bentham in 1828 declared himself—at the risk of provoking the sneers of "the *liberaux* of France who hate religion much more than they do tyranny"—a "sincere votary" of the creed of liberal Catholicism driven by "the stimulant … of religious duty and spiritual reward" (O'Connell 1980:204). He both fueled Catholic-Protestant hostilities and took advantage of them to build and recruit for his Association. In the first decade of the century, O'Connell rose to prominence in the Irish Catholic elite as member of a new generation of middle-class leaders from the provinces who wrestled the political representation of their co-religionists from the hands of the more cautious gentry. The issue around which this younger generation coalesced was an intransigent opposition against the British government's plans to grant political rights to Catholics in exchange for the monarch's veto power over the appointments of Catholic bishops—a practice otherwise tolerated by the Papacy in an impeccably Catholic state like Austria (O'Brien 1987). Later, O'Connell became a leading voice in the Catholic opposition to Protestant religious societies perceived as the shock troops of anti-Catholic aggression. The major issue around which Catholic anti-evangelicalism crystallized was the distribution and use of the Bible "without note and comment," an evangelical commitment devised, ironically, to promote interdenominational cooperation in religious activities on the least common denominator. By the 1820s, the Catholic clergy had withdrawn from cooperation with evangelical societies and the distribution of Bibles "without note or comment" had acquired the heavily loaded symbolic status of a Protestant tool for conversion that undermined the authority of the Catholic Church. Finally, the Association drew on a rampant popular Catholic millennialism, especially the wide-spread "Pastorini prophecy" of an imminent demise of Protestantism in 1825, in which O'Connell was often portrayed as the valiant deliverer of the Catholic nation (Donnelly 1983; O'Ferrall 1985; Whelan 2005).

Religious models and influences

There were, thus, important religious constituencies in all four mobilizatory sequences that dominated popular politics in the 1820s and introduced distinctively modern forms of political mass mobilization. The religious field provided two important causal factors for the trajectory of collective action: formal organizations and "participation identities" through which ordinary people engaged in popular politics (cf. Gould 1995). Within the network of partly overlapping religious constituencies various coalitions and alliances arose that formed an important organizational foundation for emerging models of modern popular politics.

There is also a correlation between the scope of these alliances and the scope and success of the respective campaigns in which they were involved. The more religious constituencies were involved in a mobilization sequence, the earlier and more extensive the public mobilization was. The sequence for political rights from which several crucial constituencies, such as Quakers and Methodists, were largely absent, was the latest to reach a turning point of true mass participation. By contrast, waves of antislavery

campaigns that included the widest variety of religious groups between the 1780s and 1830s consistently produced the most petitions, culminating in a total of over 4,000 petitions presented in the 1830s (Drescher 1999:63-64).

The temporal ordering of turning points towards mass petitioning is also important because it indicates causality within a path-dependent history. The earlier a campaign reached a turning point towards the mass production of popular protest, the more likely it was to influence subsequent developments, its perceived success giving incentives to potential adopters to model their own campaigns on a precedent that has proven its efficacy.

For Tilly, the critical step in the transition towards modern forms of popular politics happened in the late 1820s with the activities of the Catholic Association and the movement for parliamentary reform. He does note that the larger cycle of political contention at the time was initiated by the Dissenters' campaign for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1827. Yet, in contrast to the central place allotted the Catholic Association, this campaign is simply characterized as "considerable popular clamor," even if the petitions it produced outnumbered the Catholic Association's petitions (Tilly 1995:310-11). By the benchmark of mass production of petitions, however, both the Catholic Association and the movement for political reform were relative late comers compared to the two other sequences, the mobilization against the slave trade and slavery and the mobilization for Dissenting rights, that had acquire truly extensive dimensions by 1791 and 1811 respectively. Because of their temporal precedence, these latter campaigns and the religious constituencies that formed them exercised a substantial influence on the course and organizational forms of popular politics.

It is true that after the success of his Association Daniel O'Connell was hailed as an expert in political organizing and his "consulting" services were requested by reformers building their own organizations (O'Ferrall 1985:272). Yet one should keep in mind that the specific techniques he implemented in the 1820s, including the successful establishment of a "Catholic rent" for the financing of political activities and the holding of mass public meetings, were in fact identical to what Protestant religious organizations had practiced at least since the mid-eighteenth century. It was at Protestants' suggestion that O'Connell had tried unsuccessfully to start a mass subscription as early as 1812 (McDowell 1952:98; O'Ferrall 1981:32-33). Nor is it a coincidence that this happened exactly as Protestant evangelical Bible and education societies were spreading into Ireland with their model of subscribers' democracy.[3]

O'Connell and his associates should be thus credited not with the invention of new organizational models, but rather with the successful importation, into the Catholic context, of organizing techniques that before that had been the trademark of Protestants. The only evidence for the importance of the Catholic Association "as a model, legal precedent, and source of organization for subsequent political mobilization" (Tilly 1995:331) that Tilly provides is the call for "Union, such as the Irish exhibited" in a 1829 speech by Thomas Attwood, founder of the Birmingham Political Union that spearheaded

[3] As the first historian of the Catholic Association wrote, in this early period of interdenominational cooperation, when Catholics—including O'Connell—were still involved in the administration of these societies, "men who had never met before, and are not likely so soon to meet again, were found seated at the same committee board, devising sublime changes, organizing magnificent revolutions, for the instantaneous getting up of a new manufacture of intellect in the country" (Wyse 1829: vol. 1, p. 232).

the mobilization for political reform (Attwood 1829:17; Tilly 1995:322). Yet the Catholic Association model was just one among the guiding examples, a significant number of which derived from religious precedents. In 1831, for instance, the speakers at the first meetings of the National Union of the Working Classes, another organization active in the mobilization for political reform, evoked extensively the need to follow the organizational example of Methodism (Poor Man's Guardian 1831).

Such religious examples, furthermore, were evoked and put to practice long before the ascendance of O'Connell's Association and continued for long afterwards. The revival of the radical reform movement in 1818, for instance, was led by two organizations, the Union Societies and the Union of Political Protestants, that like their counterpart in the 1830s were explicitly based on the organizational trademark of Methodism: class meetings of twelve members under the authority of class leader (Read 1958:47-52; Union of Political Protestants 1818; Wearmouth 1948:31-49; Wooler 1818a). An appeal on behalf of the Political Protestants argued, for example, that propaganda and protest meetings are insufficient without the infrastructural foundations of small local clubs. The author urged reformers to emulate "the patient resolution of Quakers" who "have conquered by union" (Wooler 1818b:571). Two years later the same publication appealed for a "co-operative union" on the model of religious networks (Wooler 1820:74-75). In 1819, a Methodist preacher was dismayed to see prominent male and female members take up a leading role in the movement for parliamentary reform which, as he observed, "adopted the whole Methodist economy" of organizing (Letter quoted in Bunting 1887:527). Major John Cartwright, the political entrepreneur who almost single-handedly revived the movement for parliamentary reform in the 1810s was encouraged by the success of the campaign for abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and styled himself a "political missionary" who followed the example of itinerant preachers (Miller 1968).

The evocation and adoption of religious models continued after the campaign for the the Reform Act in the early 1830s. From 1839 on, the Chartist movement adopted widely such models: class and camp meetings with hymns, prayers, and "political sermons" (Epstein 1982:250-55; Jones 1975:49-57; Morris 1968:94; Watts 1995:511-25; Wearmouth 1937:217-18; Yeo 1981). The *Sheffield Mercury* (1839:4) scornfully remarked, for example, that "some of the forms of religion" to which "renegade Methodists among the Chartists … may have been accustomed … were prostituted to give colour to their proceedings." As late as the 1860s and 1870s, the leadership of the emerging union movements among mining and agriculture workers similarly "borrowed" Methodist organizational models (Griffin 1955:21; Morris 1968:97-98; Scotland 1981).

Religious centralized voluntarism

The symbolic prestige of religious organizational forms was an acknowledgment of the prominence of religious constituencies in the changing world of popular politics. What, in turn, made possible the successful mobilization of these constituencies and the mass production of collective action was the specific configuration of the organizational field of religion as it crystallized around the turn of the nineteenth century. At that time, in consequence of several developments, this field was increasingly dominated by organizational forms that can be described, more generally, as "centralized voluntarism" in that they both relied on the voluntary commitment of ordinary lay people and

coordinated their activity on an extensive national and transnational scale. One can distinguish two stages in the introduction and spread of such organizational forms: first, a more limited institutionalization within the Quaker organization in the late seventeenth century, and then a wider spread across the religious field under the isomorphic pressure of Methodism since the late eighteenth century.

The Society of Friends of the Truth, the members of which became known by the initially derogatory term "Quakers," emerged in the North of England in mid-seventeenth century as one of the several radical sects proliferating during the Civil War and Interregnum. The "elementary unit" of both collective devotion and administration in the Society was the distinctively voluntary form of the open public meeting where active participation was encouraged and decisions were made with the consensus of all present. In the 1670s, these business meetings already formed a nation-wide integrated pyramidal structure of representation connected by itinerant "ministers" who were not trained officials but rather activist rank-and-file members (Braithwaite 1961:251-89; Ingle 1994; Moore 2000). By the eighteenth century, the Society of Friends was the only non-established religious body to have meetings in every single English county (Watts 1978:285). The extensive organizational structures of Quakerism provided an efficient mechanism for the production of collective action and political advocacy even in the period of religious persecution under the Restoration. Its standard operations included a monetary fund ("National Stock"), legal challenges to the prosecution of Quakers, the lobbying of authorities, the targeted collection and dissemination of information, and the mobilization of votes in elections (Braithwaite 1955 (1912); Cole 1956; Crowther-Hunt 1961; Greaves 1992; Horle 1988; Lloyd 1950; Moore 2000; Vann 1969).

Incidentally, this puts in perspective the contribution of Walzer's (1965) ardent Puritans of the other branches of the radical Reformation. While their strong religious convictions might as well have been at the origins of modern political activism, for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth century they lacked the organizational foundations for an extensive political mobilization. Their organizational capacities weakened after the disastrous "ejection" of the Puritans from the Church of England with the Act of Uniformity of 1662, General and Particular Baptists, Presbyterians and Independents never established a strong corporate identity and working national organization comparable to the Society of Friends (Abernathy 1965; Cragg 1957; Spalding 1959; Spurr 1998; Watts 1978; White 1996). Unable to overcome the obstacles geographical remoteness and isolation presented for unified collective action, these churches underwent a steady decline throughout the eighteenth century. They began to organize extensively and mobilize political constituencies only towards the end of the century, after embracing organizational forms comparable to the centralized voluntarism of the Quakers—a profound transformation of the religious field commonly described as the "Evangelical Revival." The catalyst was the meteoric rise of Methodist Societies whose success virtually all religious organizations sought to emulate.

Methodism itself started as a series of local religious renewals mostly in the North of England, where various informal meetings and societies of committed lay Christians emerged to supplement existing ecclesiastical structures. From 1739 on, John Wesley, in a tireless itinerancy to both localities with such pre-existing societies and previously "unevangelized" areas, consolidated these groups into a centrally coordinated "connexion" under his authority. When ten years later Wesley and his lieutenants

decided to formally unite the societies throughout England, they set the foundation of an organizational structure, which, with the "exactly right proportions of democracy and discipline" (Thompson 1963:37-38), both promoted the active participation of ordinary people and steered their activities on an extensive national and even transatlantic scale.[4] On the top, the Methodist conference and the subordinate regional bodies coordinated the local religious societies, now grouped in circuits assigned to rotating itinerant ministers who ensured the constant flow of information and resources between localities. At grass roots, the societies, divided into the even smaller cells of intensely participatory class meetings, were open to anyone to join and their affairs were managed by unordained ordinary men who acted as lay preachers, class leaders, stewards, and building trustees (Baker 1965; Davies 1989; Rack 2002; Wearmouth 1937).

Methodism helped transform the organizational field of religion in two ways. First, numerous secessions of Methodists dissatisfied with the policies and politics of the Wesleyan leadership founded new connexions—a "multiplication by division" (Wearmouth 1937:15) of the Methodist brand. While signaling thus a separate corporate identity and weakening the Wesleyan movement from within, the new connexions invariably preserved and further institutionalized the basic organizational chart of supralocal religious associationalism (Currie 1968; Gowland 1979).[5] More important, however, was the enduring adoption of the organizational forms of centralized voluntarism practiced by Methodism across the field of religion. Baptists and Congregationalists adopted Methodist organizational techniques, such as class meetings. While their official doctrines continued to emphasize the full independence of the local congregation, around the turn of the nineteenth century they increasingly created structures that coordinated activities across space: associations for the promotion of itinerant preaching, "General Unions" that connected congregations across England, and interdenominational evangelistic associations (Briggs 1994:203-9; Jones 1962:174-75; Lovegrove 1988; Martin 1978; Nuttall 1971; Walsh 1965:295-96; Watts 1995:135-36, 190). As the traditionally voluntaristic and decentralized congregations of Dissenters began to unite in more centralized associations under Methodist influence, the other important religious body, the national Church of England moved in the opposite direction as evangelical clergy built voluntaristic structures within the centralized diocesan and parochial system of the Church, if only to prevent defections to the increasingly attractive Methodism (Walsh 1986:295-96).

Why religious specialists, rather unimpressed by Quaker models earlier, were rushing to copy Methodist designs by the end of the eighteenth century is partly explained by the different contexts of two waves of religious centralized voluntarism. After an initial period of growth, the Society of Friends became uninterested in active recruitment of members and precisely because of the relative effectiveness of its organizational structures preferred to pursue its politics on its own. By contrast, Methodist societies, designed, at least initially, as additional worship opportunities for

[4] This is why Young's claim that Methodism was a "sect" with an intensely local and "centrifugal" character is rather puzzling.

[5] The most important secessionist organizations were the Methodist New Connexion (1797), the Independent Methodists (1806), the Bible Christians (1819), the Primitive Methodist Church (1820), the Tent Methodists (1822), the Protestant Methodists (1829), the Arminian Methodists (1833), and Wesleyan Reformers (1850).

committed Christians outside of their organizational "home," offered a meeting ground for members of virtually all Protestant churches who brokered Methodist models into their organizations. Furthermore, the spectacular growth in "prodigious numbers" of what an observer in 1800 characterized as "perhaps … the most powerful affiliated society in existence" (Cursitor 1800:20), lent an additional appeal to Methodist practices. If in 1767 Wesleyan Methodism had embraced in its ranks approximately 0.5 percent of the English population over fifteen, by 1845 the Wesleyan Conference and the different Methodist connexions that seceded from it had grown to incorporate 4.5 percent.[6] The vibrancy of Methodist societies made their distinctive organizational techniques particularly attractive to religious specialists searching for institutional means to ensure the religious commitment of their "flocks."

The end result was an isomorphic reordering of the religious field (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) in which virtually all Protestant churches, despite doctrinal differences, reconfigured themselves to adopt the organizational forms of centralized voluntarism popularized by Methodism. One effect of this isomorphism was the capacity it provided reconfigured religious organizations to mobilize people and resources with greater efficiency and over an extensive geographical scale. Centralized voluntarism was not inherently political—it was adopted strictly for the purposes of evangelization and religious disciplines. Yet once institutionalized, the organizational resources it provided were easily retrieved and utilized for the purposes of political mobilization.

British Conclusions

Religious constituencies were an important driving force in the first campaigns that institutionalized the mass production of popular protest and this was clearly acknowledged by contemporary political entrepreneurs who valued religious organizational forms. These developments were made possible by the organizational field of religion which, by instituting widely a centralized voluntarism, granted religious organizations and entrepreneurs the ability to mobilize extensively, including for the purposes of popular politics. A causal account that incorporates these developments explains the path-dependent transformation of popular politics in early nineteenth-century Britain better than an exclusive focus on structural determinants such as the expansion of the state and the polarization of economic inequalities. A relatively autonomous organizational field of religion refracted causal pressures from structural factors through its own distinctive logic, exercising in the process an important formative influence on emerging modern forms of popular politics.

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[6] If these numbers in the single digits appear less than overwhelming, one must keep in mind that they underestimate the impact of Methodism by counting only those who met the strict requirement of formal membership and leaving out more casual attendees. As late as 1853, Horace Mann (1853:lxxviii) suggested that the total attendance of Wesleyan societies was no less than three times the number of registered members. Furthermore, the growth of Methodist membership must be considered in light of the declining rates of commitment to the established Church of England. There the proportion of those who "passed" the far less costly ritual of loyalty, Easter Day communion, in the same period fell from 9.9 to 7.9 of the adult population (Rates computed by Gilbert 1976:27-32). By contrast, Quaker membership peaked at around 60,000 in the seventeenth century, a number smaller than the number of Wesleyan Methodist members in 1796 (Vann 1969:159-60).

Seen in this light, British developments appear significantly less distinct from their American counterparts. Yet while religious concerns were much more important in the formation of modern popular politics in Britain than Tilly was ready to admit, there is little indication that the causal account offered by Young for the North American case, the emergence of a schema of "public confession of sin," was at work at the other side of the ocean. It is true that from the very beginning the propaganda of the pioneering antislavery movement in Britain did often frame slavery and the slave trade as a "national sin" that would provoke divine retribution (Davis 1986:238-57). The other three mobilizatory sequences in the period did not display, however, any interest in framing their issues as "sins." Nor did British religious constituencies, in all four sequences, initiate or insist on public confessions. Nevertheless, these constituencies were able to engage in the mass production of protest before their counterparts in North America could rely on the schema of "public confession of sin" in the 1820s. This raises two related questions. Were these differences the outcome of distinctly different causal processes in the American case? And was the combination of religious schemas indeed the foundation of this putatively different causality?

American sequences and turning points

The main exhibits for Young's argument are temperance and abolitionism that, according to him, burst into the public arena suddenly in the 1820s. Yet like their British counterparts these developments were embedded in a larger temporal horizon. Not only had both movements a longer historical trajectory, but their turning points towards a mass production of protest occurred at different times within a complex field of popular politics.

Temperance

North American religious organizations had been concerned with the consumption of alcohol and its negative consequences at least since the early years of the nineteenth century (Bernard 1993; Rohrer 1990). A temperance movement of national proportions emerged, however, only after clergymen associated with the Andover Seminary founded the American Temperance Society in 1826 with the goal of supporting those who have given up the use of distilled liquor. In the following years, the itinerating agents of the Society connected with existing local societies and established new auxiliaries (Murphy 2008). The result was an extensive and rapidly growing network. By early 1829 the Society reported 222 local and state societies in at least 17 states (American Temperance Society 1829:9). The 1831 report was boasting of more than 3,000 societies with over 300,000 members (American Temperance Society 1835:39)

Sabbatarianism

By the end of the decade—and before the growth of abolitionism—temperance was complemented by two other instances of mass protest: Sabbatarianism and the campaign against the removal of the Cherokee from Georgia. The origins of Sabbatarianism can be traced back, again, to the first decade of the century when a Presbyterian postmaster in Pennsylvania was refused communion by his Synod for distributing mail on Sunday. Public protests emerged in reaction to Congress's affirmation in 1810 of the legality of

Sunday mail transportation and distribution, both of which offended the sanctity of the Sabbath in the eyes of religious activists. A truly national mass protest against the "profanation" of the holy day crystallized in 1829 when the recently founded General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath presented 467 petitions to Congress, leading the Chairman of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads to note that "the history of legislation in this country affords not instance in which a stronger experession has been made, if regard be had to the numbers, the wealth, or the intelligence of the petitioners" (Post Office Department 1829:219). By the end of this wave of mobilization in 1831, 935 petitions have been sent to Congress (John 1995).

Anti-Removal

In 1829, simultaneously with the Sabbatarian campaign, a strong public mobilization emerged against legislation to remove the Cherokee from their land in Georgia. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 itself was the delayed consequence of a 1802 compact in which the federal government purchased the western lands of Georgia and promised to remove Native Americans from the state. While in the following decades the federal government transferred significant territories to white settlers through unequal treaties with the Cherokee, it did not initiate the promised removal. This changed with the election for president in 1828 of Andrew Jackson, an "Indian fighter." With Georgian planters hungry for land, the state legislature meanwhile enacted discriminatory measures against Native Americans and expropriated more territory from them. The final stage of this process was the introduction in 1829 of a bill that authorized the federal authorities to organize the removal. The anti-Cherokee policies of Georgia state authorities and of the Jackson administration provoked public uneasiness, especially among those involved in the support of the missionary societies active in Cherokee lands. A wave of protests resulted in yet another outpouring of petitions to Congress. A journalist, noting that "there is a mighty movement in the land on this subject," reported that the "tables of the members are covered with pamphlets devoted to the discussion of the Indian question" (Boston Recorder 1830). This was also the first time that women—otherwise relegated to the role of silent supporters of men in public campaigns—produced and circulated their own petition (Hershberger 1999; Prucha 1985).

Abolitionism

Finally, the abolitionist campaign that reached a turning point towards mass protest in the 1830s was similarly of longer historical provenance. Both British and North American popular protests against the slave trade originated in the second half of the eighteenth century from the same common trans-Atlantic network that coalesced around Quakers. From the very beginning, both wings of the network used the same tactics: the formation of associations and the solicitation and presentation of petitions (Brown 2006; DiGiacomantonio 1995; Drake 1950; Fladeland 1972). Yet if in the British context petitioning against the slave trade reached an important mass threshold in 1792, it was only in the 1830s that antislavery petitioning of comparable proportions materialized in the United States. A new generation of abolitionist organizations, spearheaded by the New England Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1832 and then, a year later, linked in the

American Antislavery Society, carried a new program of immediate (and not gradual) abolition of all slavery in the United States (Dumond 1961; Filler 1960; Zorn 1957).

While the almost total absence of auxiliary societies in Southern states prevented this wave of abolitionism from being a truly national movement in the strict sense of the word, the strong associational structures in the North led to an intensified petitioning, especially from 1835 on, when women took a prominent role in the movement. By 1838, petitions deluged the Congress (Jeffrey 1998; Zaeske 2003). During the four months of the short congressional session of 1838-39, 1,496 petitions were presented (Dumond 1961:245-6). Barnes (1933:266) estimates that the average number of signatories per petition grew from 32 in 1836-7 to 107 in 1839-40. Just on one day, February 14, 1838, John Quincy Adams presented in the House about 350 petitions with almost 35,000 signatures (Congressional Globe 1838:180).

The majority of the petitions were careful to pray for issues that were clearly in the Congress's jurisdiction and did not touch on individual states' power to legislate slavery. Yet even more aggressively than its British counterpart, the US Congress tried to stem the stream of petitions. Southern legislators' attempt to prevent the presentation and reception of petitions resulted in the adoption by both houses of "gag" rules. This, however, failed to thwart contentious debates in the House, where several congressmen continued to evade the rules and argue for unlimited right to petition. In fact, the gag rule, especially its House version, transformed the issue of the legality of slavery into an issue of freedom of expression and undoubtedly enhanced the popular appeal of abolitionism (Ludlum 1941; Wirls 2007).

American and British sequences compared

As in Britain, religious constituencies were important for the major campaigns that diffused modern forms of political organizing in North America in the 1820s and 1830s. These campaigns addressed issues framed in religious terms and were organized by religious political entrepreneurs. Furthermore, they used exactly the same tactics as their British counterparts: building associational structures for collective action and—with the notable exception of the temperance movement that only engaged in direct political action later in the century—producing petitions to influence the national legislature.

At the same time, there were important differences. Whereas in Britain the transition towards the mass production of protest occurred over several decades between the anti-slave-trade campaign of 1792 and the campaign for political reform of the 1830s, the corresponding transformation in the United States took place later and in a more compact time frame starting in the second half of the 1820s. With the partial exception of antislavery, the issues around which American campaigns crystallized were different from the British issues. While preoccupations with consumption of alcohol and the profanation of the Sabbath were clearly on the radar of moral reformers in Britain, full-fledged temperance and "Sunday closing" movements emerged there only after—and on the model of—the American precedents (Roberts 2004).

The similarities and commonalities between the two national contexts are not surprising given a continuous shared history. American popular politics drew on a common set of practices of British origin (Young 1991). An identical restructuring of the religious field occurred in the course of the American equivalent of the British Evangelical Revival, the "Second Great Awakening," when the Methodists' spectacular

growth prompted other denominations to adopt their organizational forms despite persisting theological differences (Carwardine 1978; Mathews 1969). Finally, the same mobilizatory sequences that reached the national turning point in Britain were present in the colonial and post-colonial American context, even if their trajectories were often markedly different. The attack on the slave trade originated with a transatlantic network in second half of the eighteenth century. Mobilization for the rights of religious dissenters—with the definition of "Dissent" varying across the different colonies and states—occurred continuously in Virginia and New England at least until the disestablishment of the Congregational Standing Order in Connecticut in 1818 (Grenda 2003; McLoughlin 1969; Ragosta 2010; Sassi 2001:119; Singleton 1966). Political reform was, of course, an important strand in complex fabric of the American revolution and erupted again, on the federal level, with the protests and petitions against the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1799 (Bradburn 2008; Maier 1963).[7] Throughout, there were multiple connections between reformers, including immigrating British radicals who, ironically, found themselves persecuted by the Federalist government in the early nineteenth century (Bradley 1990; Twomey 1991).

American path-dependencies

Along with these similarities and commonalities, what accounts then for the differences between the two cases and to what extent were these differences the result of transforming evangelical schemas? The different American trajectory of popular mobilization arose partly out of the interaction of the same mobilizatory sequences and religious constituencies with a different landscape of political authority. Constitutional arrangements in the US delegated the issue of dissenting and voting rights to state legislatures and it is these bodies that formed the natural target for mobilizatory pressure. Territorially dispersed political authority helps explain also the different temporalities of transitions towards extensive forms of popular mobilization in the two cases. The earlier British start came at least partly because of the relatively clear jurisdiction of national authorities over the issues for which people mobilized. By contrast, the "sprawling" nature of American state power worked to delay national mobilization efforts by offering a more diffuse set of political jurisdictions (Novak 2008). Consequently, mobilizatory sequences comparable to the British sequences on dissenting rights or political reform did not reach the turning points towards mass national mobilization. For the same reasons, abolitionists in the 1830s had to be careful to word their petitions around issues deemed appropriate for Congress to legislate, such as slavery in the District of Columbia and the

[7] Although the Revolution itself has been hailed as a major innovation in politicized collective action (Tarrow 1998:37-8), its effects on popular politics were complex and often contradictory, sometimes antithetical to genuine popular mobilization. While the various revolutionary struggles opened possibilities for ordinary people to enter politics as they mobilized against colonial elites (Jensen 1970), these mass struggles were eclipsed by mobilization orchestrated through already constituted and coercive authorities, such as town meetings or provincial and colonial assemblies. Although employing the rhetoric of associationalism, the various associations, committees, and societies created by these authorities were typically bodies of vigilantes who enforced conformity and punished non-compliance. In this sense, they were less of an innovation than an intensification of Tilly's "parochial" repertoires of communal violence (Champagne 1967; Countryman 1981:138-48; Irvin 2003; Rapoport 2008). On the marked difference between coercive revolutionary committees and post-revolutionary voluntary associations, see Countryman (1981:294).

inter-state slave trade. Note however that the salient difference was the different configuration of political authority in the North American case, not the alleged weakness of the federal state which, presumably, opened the space for religion to be the only adhesive for a national civil society (cf. John 1997).

The configuration of political authorities does not explain, of course, another difference: the presence of moral issues such as drinking or Sabbath observance in the first extensive popular campaigns in the 1820s. More so than in Britain, religious political entrepreneurs infused their campaigns with the rhetoric of sin and repentance. Yet there are no indications that a schema of "public confession of national sin" was the causal factor behind the growth in scale of popular politics. The distinctive moralistic concerns of the first American mass campaigns were rather the result of developments within the organizational field of religion in the United States where—unlike in Britain—a religious associationalism focused on the communal suppression of "vice" was firmly institutionalized in the 1810s.

Measures, Old and New

Perhaps the most controversial religious development in late 1820s America was the spread of the "new measures" revivalism connected with the name of Charles Grandison Finney. It involved the deliberate and even "scientific" engineering of revivals, the use of a strongly emotional language by the preacher, an extended duration over several days, and the use of the "anxious seat" where individuals ready and likely to convert were separated spatially and exposed to the pressure of the preacher and the community. First employed systematically in the "Great Revival" in the South around the turn of the century, this revivalist style was then introduced by Methodists into urban centers in the East and codified by the Congregationalist Finney, initially against the opposition of the leading Congregationalist clergy that was accustomed to a more restrained, gentle, and learned version of revival production. By around 1830 the initially acrimonious debate between champions and detractors had subsided. Congregationalist leaders warmed up to the "new measures," if only because they were obviously productive, while Finney toned down somewhat his extravagant evangelicalism for the more urban environment of the East (Boles 1993; Carwardine 1978).

It is probably this process of rapprochement between traditionalist clergy and religious innovators that is the empirical equivalent of Young's "combination" of schemas of national sin and public confession. These complex developments, however, cannot be reduced to the adoption of a new "schema" of public confession as the practice or cultural model of public confession was not a central element therein. The spread and institutionalization of "new measures" revivalism was certainly not the transformation of a previously private ritual of confession into a public display. Religious revivals that occurred cyclically both before and after Finney's "new measures" were inherently public events. These revivals—whether of the "old" restrained variety or of the new more ostentatious kind—also involved much more than the confession of sin. For religious specialists, revivals were a useful technology of evangelism not only because they provided a setting for laypeople to confess, but mainly because they were a means towards conversion and increased holiness of life that, at least in principle, was to be maintained consistently *after* the revival.

Given the relatively subordinate role of "public confessions" in the religious economy of revivalism, it is not surprising that the temperance and abolitionist campaigns were far less "confessional" than Young implies. There is, in fact, remarkably little confessing involved in the few examples of specific protest activities that he mentions (Young 2006:142-53). The definition of "confession" is here stretched to include public statements of political advocacy and pledges of abstention from alcohol—not the pronouncements of people who confessed sin, but of people who publicly committed to action against sin.

The aggressive evangelistic technology of "new measures" revivalism—well documented and often romanticized—has left many traces in American culture, shaping, among other things, typical practices of political mobilization as revivalist techniques were applied for more explicitly political purposes (Boles 1993). Furthermore, the spread and institutionalization of new measures revivalism did coincide with the transformation of popular politics towards extensive forms in the 1820s. Yet a closer look at the organizational growth of temperance and abolitionism finds no support for the claim that revivalism or combinations of evangelical schemas were the main catalyst for this growth.

The growth of temperance

The transformation of temperance into a nationwide movement consisted of the consolidation of a network of local societies under the auspices of the American Temperance Society founded in 1826. While the consumption of alcohol and its deleterious effects had been a long-standing concern for religious specialists, a more strident religious reaction against alcohol consumption emerged with the spread in the 1810 of religious "moral societies" which, as we will see, exercised an important if not immediately visible influence on the trajectory of popular politics. Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the East were becoming increasingly preoccupied with the abuse of distilled liquor while Quakers and Methodists were reaffirming their customary pledge to abstinence (Bernard 1993; Rohrer 1990). One Methodist itinerating in the West, for example, boasted of converting entire congregations to "the pledge of total abstinence" (Strickland 1853:251). A coordinated mass movement emerged, however, only after Congregational clergymen in Andover, Massachusetts, dissatisfied with the progress of temperance so far and drawing on their experience with other successful religious associations decided to launch a more "systematic" effort in 1826. The Society they created appointed agents who itinerated throughout the Northeast, creating societies and connecting existing local groups under its auspices until by 1830 it stood at the head of a national network (Murphy 2008).

Initially, the goal was to create voluntary societies that promoted abstinence among their members. Soon, with successful expansion, this evolved into the more ambitious goal of fighting "intemperance" through the promotion of "personal reformation" of habitual "drunkards" (American Temperance Society 1829:23-24). Yet the Society was not necessarily concerned with public confessions. Its founders came from the "New Divinity" school of Congregationalism that greeted Finney's "new measures" with ambivalence and suspicion (Shiels 1985). For them, "drunkenness" was not just a sin, but also—more pragmatically—a major obstacle to evangelization and adequate religious performance. Simply put, "habitual drunkards" could not be a good

Christians. According to a lay member of the executive committee of the Temperance Society, reaching out to them would be like reaching out "to the congregation of the dead" (American Temperance Society 1828:33). The main concern, therefore, was not just the acknowledgment of vice but—more importantly—the maintenance of a consistently virtuous life-conduct without distilled liquor. As "old school" revivalist Asahel Nettleton made it clear in an 1822 letter reprinted continuously for the purposes of temperance propaganda,

> "a public confession for intemperance … is about nothing, and ought to go for nothing. *The only evidence of repentance in such case is*, A CONTINUED COURSE OF ENTIRE ABSTINENCE FROM ARDENT SPIRITS OF EVERY KIND" (American Temperance Society 1829:52, emphasis in the original).

The complex origins of immediatist abolitionism

The influence of confession and revivalism has to be qualified even further in the case of the national takeoff of the immediatist abolitionist movement in the early 1830s. Among many others, Loveland (1966) has argued strongly for the derivation of the ideology of immediate abolition of slavery from the evangelical idea of repentance and conversion. Yet while the parallels are interesting, they do not necessarily warrant conclusions of causal influence. Indeed, the overemphasis on evangelical obsession with sin and guilt has tended to flatten abolitionists into a caricature. It is true that by 1836 abolitionists who argued that slavery was "sin" prevailed upon those who framed it as a mere "evil" (Barnes 1933:103) But the official adoption of the "sin" frame while maybe ensuring the support of an evangelical minority also alienated religious moderates and Southerners (Staiger 1949). Throughout, while frequent, evocations of sin and repentance were just one theme in the rich set of discursive productions and practical activities of the abolitionist movement. Consistently the emphasis was not on confession, but on "reforming" both individuals and public opinion through a variety of means.[8] More generally, evangelical religion did not automatically transform practitioners into committed abolitionists. Even in Massachusetts, the heartland of immediatist antislavery, local hostility to abolitionist agents remained typical and no more than three percent of the population joined abolitionist societies in the 1830s (Newman 2002:153). While, in absolute numbers, the resulting constituency was still impressive, this was hardly a sweeping wave of public confessions of sin. In the South, where revivalism had become such an integral part of culture, it coexisted easily with staunch pro-slavery sentiment, prompting Frederick Douglass to bitterly remark that "revivals in religion and in the slave trade go hand in hand together" (Carwardine 1978:42-3; Quarles 1988:157).

[8] The Constitution of the New England Anti-Slavery Society—where the words "sin" or "confession" were never mentioned—put it in the following way: "we consider it our imperious duty to diffuse, as widely as possible, a knowledge of just and correct principles on the subject of slavery; to arouse the consciences of the wise; to enlighten the understanding of the ignorant; and incessantly to appeal to every principle of humanity, benevolence, justice and natural affection, in behalf of that degraded and wretched class of our colored brethren, who are retained in ignominious and cruel bondage" (New-England Anti-Slavery Society 1832:25).

The point is not to deny the links between abolitionism and revivalist practices—such links clearly existed. Revivalism was not, however, the decisive factor behind the takeoff of abolitionist mobilization in the North in the 1830s which presented an important turning point towards mass mobilization within the longer sequence of American antislavery. This sequence itself had started simultaneously and in cooperation with its British counterpart in the 1770s. Ever since, the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society had been the most important center of abolitionist petitioning and in 1817 it had initiated another round of petitioning for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia that persisted throughout the 1820s. At that time, however, the popularity of such activities had been eclipsed by the rise of an alternative program of antislavery represented by the American Colonization Society which arranged for the manumission of slaves and their resettlement in Liberia. The new mass abolitionism of the 1830s was in this sense simultaneously a continuation of older trends, a reaction against the traditional gradualist approach, and a repudiation of the racism of the colonization model. In contrast to these alternative programs of action, it urged the complete and immediate destruction of the institution of slavery in the South.

The rise of this new abolitionism occurred as the result of a series of interconnected developments both within the United States and in Britain. In the 1820s, African-American activists and their newspapers and organizations increasingly condemned colonization schemes as racist and unjust. While petitions were being organized by the Pennsylvania Society, Quaker Benjamin Lundy embarked on a tour in 1828 visiting as many as 7,000 local antislavery societies and converting some of the future leading abolitionists to the cause. Simultaneously, in Britain a new generation of antislavery activists, dissatisfied with the gradualist tactics of the older antislavery cohort and with their government's temporizing on the issue of abolition, created a network of immediatist societies that included a growing number of women's organizations. The massive British campaign, which, as William Lloyd Garrison put it, "absolutely put to shame everything that is doing in this country on the subject" (Genius of Universal Emancipation 1829), provided an organizational model and—especially after the British abolition of colonial slavery in 1833—personnel and financial support for the Americans. It is in this context that since 1831 Garrison sought to establish a new immediatist organization on the British example. After a first abortive attempt, he succeeded the following year by founding the New England Antislavery Society. In the face of initial public apathy, relentless publicity, staged controversies with representatives of the Colonization Society, agents who spread the immediatist gospel and started local auxiliary societies, and the foundation of the American Antislavery Society in 1833 all led toward a turning point of mass mobilization with the petitioning drive of 1837 (Barker 1986; Blackett 1983; Davis 1986; Dumond 1961; Filler 1960; Fladeland 1972; Midgley 1992; Newman 2002; Zaeske 2003; Zorn 1957).

Local Varieties of Religious Associationalism

The American takeoff of mass-produced popular protest thus emerged at the interstices of complex, temporally extended, and interlocking social processes. Moralistic framings of issues dominated these first mass campaigns, marking thus a substantive difference with corresponding British developments. Yet despite this difference in orientation, the fundamental mechanics of popular mobilization was the same. In America, as in Britain,

the restructuring of the organizational field of religion provided the resources for the effective mobilization of extensive collective action. What gave a distinctive moralistic tint to American campaigns was a different configuration of the same organizational resources.

The organizational field of American religion was in many ways similar to its British counterpart, if only because the same churches provided the basic organizational units. The organizational landscape was, of course, far more complex, with institutional arrangements differing significantly across colonies and later states and territories. Yet before the second half of the eighteenth century British and American churches, with few exceptions, shared a similar incapacity to coordinate geographically extensive collective action. What brought a change was again the growth of Methodism that made centralized voluntarism appealing across the religious field (Carwardine 1993b; Mathews 1969). As a result, since the 1790s US religion entered a path of steady organizational growth that found expression in new state and regional associations of clergy, cross-denominational alliances of Calvinist clergy, and finally—at least since the foundation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810—mixed lay-clerical associations for evangelistic purposes. The resulting web of interlocking associational structures transformed religious organizations traditionally characterized by a "parochial" orientation and gave them enhanced capacities for geographically extensive collective action (Sassi 2001; Shurden 1980).

A good use of these capacities was made by the Congregationalist and Presbyterian clergy in the Northeast where their vision of a continuous godly reformation of the community was now undermined not only by the rise of Dissent and deism, but also by the fall from power of the Federalist Party with whom they had cast their lot. Disappointment with magistrates and politicians who failed to ensure a godly national community made Calvinist clergy all the more willing to take over the project of reform in their own hands and develop a new politically assertive "public Christianity" (Sassi 2001). This reformist stance intensified even further in opposition to the war of 1812 which, in the chiliastic imagination of the time, aligned perversely the United States with the antichrist of Catholic Napoleonic France against Britain, the bulwark of Protestantism and the center of the missionary revival with which the new associational structures were intimately connected. In this context, Calvinist clergy resurrected the language of the jeremiad, denounced national sins in sermons and called for urgent public action (Cress 1987; Gribbin 1973).

Moral societies and the Great American Profession of Virtue

One important outcome of these developments was the spread of "moral societies" which attempted to enforce godly behavior in local communities. Over a hundred such local and state societies were formed in the 1810s to promote a "reformation" of manners by urging both personal reform of "immoral" individuals and lobbying authorities for stricter enforcement of existing statutes and new legislation against vice. Starting first in New England and New York, by 1815 they had spread into the West and the South, forming an incipient national network of pious activism (Bernard 1993; Sassi 2001:140-44).

The organizational template of this communal moral vigilantism was of British provenance. Voluntary societies for the "suppression of vice" and "reformation of manners" first emerged in England and spread as far as the American colonies in the last

decade of the seventeenth century. Yet while some of these persisted until the 1730s, popular opposition to their methods of enforcing morals made them a spent force by the beginning of the new century (Bahlman 1957; Dabhoiwala 2007; Duffy 1977; Isaacs 1982). Like in America, the ideal and practice of communal reformation of manners was revived in the unsettled times of the French Revolution and the war with France, most notably by the Society for the Suppression of Vice founded in 1802. Yet despite its national ambitions, the Society only founded thirteen local societies outside of London. By 1810, when American moral societies began their growth, it was largely inactive (Roberts 2004).

The failure of voluntary "moral reformation" in Britain was not for the lack of popular demand. There, too, a widespread popular mindset interpreted current military, economic, and social upheavals as a sure sign of divine retribution and of the need for godly reform of British society (Roberts 2004:75). Yet the Society for Suppression of Vice never spread as widely as the American moral societies a decade later. Partly that was due to popular hostility to its agents and informers. But most importantly, the Society never tapped onto the networks of Dissenters who from the very beginning were excluded from membership. Unlike the American moral societies that were an expression of religious opposition to the Republican-Democratic government, the British Vice Society allied itself with loyalist pro-government forces. It was deeply connected with a rampant conservative loyalism that feared a replication of the French revolutionary upheaval in Britain and rose to defend the traditional order (Dickinson 1989; Philp 1995; Schofield 1986). In this context, Dissenters, some of whom had greeted enthusiastically the American and French revolutions, were inherently untrustworthy to the Church of England men who initiated the eventually unsuccessful "moral reformation" in the first decade of the century.

For all these reasons, the associational variety of voluntary moral vigilantism never gained a firm grounding in Britain while finding a rich soil in America. True, most of the American "moral societies" did not last into the 1820s. Yet their robust spread in the previous decade left an important mark on the subsequent trajectory of religious activism. It is from the networks they had created that at least two of the important pioneering campaigns of the 1820s emerged: temperance and Sabbatarianism.

In their appeal to supporters urging the formation the American Antislavery Society, Arthur Tappan, Joshua Levitt, and Elizur Wright singled out two guiding examples of "organizations, which, though feeble and obscure, and condemned by public opinion in the outset, have speadily risen to great influence": the British Anti-Slavery Society and the American Temperance Society (Barnes and Dumond 1934:vol. 1, 118). In a nutshell, this statement captures two important formative influences in the history of American popular politics. Its transformation in the early nineteenth century was very similar to and, often, dependent on corresponding British developments. Yet the first mass-produced popular campaigns also relied on a strong local tradition of voluntary moral perfectionism and communal policing of vice that was absent in Britain.

The organizations that emerged out of this tradition encouraged practices that were, in a sense, the exact opposite to the "confession of sin." These organizations provided a meeting ground for the religiously advanced, for those who, after their personal victory in the spiritual struggle, were increasingly pushing this struggle forward

to purify their larger community. These individuals came together not to confess their sins, but to profess their virtue and instill it in others.

More generally, then, the specifics of American developments—when compared with their British counterparts—are best understood as responses to a different landscape of political power, the nature of these response determined strongly by the local peculiarities of religious associationalism. As in Britain, the organizational field of religion provided an important formative influence on practices of popular mobilization. Yet the different configuration of the otherwise identical organizational structures of religion resulted in a different substantive orientation of the campaigns that introduced new forms of mass mobilization.

Conclusion

The seemingly obvious difference between a predominantly secular British "contentious politics" and an inherently religious American "confessional protest" dissolves upon closer examination. Religion made a difference in British popular politics—even before an organized religion of allegedly unmatched strength left its mark on American social movements. In both Britain and the United States, the rise of modern mass-produced popular politics was contingent on an organizational reconfiguration of the religious field, which endowed religious organizations with the ability to mobilize extensive constituencies for public campaigns. A centralized voluntarism thus institutionalized provided the foundation for the growth of mass popular politics.

At the same time, different national configurations of religious associationalism operating in different landscapes of political authority pushed popular mobilization into divergent trajectories. The successful institutionalization in America of a religious organizational form that had disappeared in Britain, the societies for moral reformation, resulted in a different substantive focus of the first mass-produced campaigns there and gave them a distinctive moralistic flavor.

In equal measure, both cross-national commonalities and national divergences highlight the importance of the organizational field of religion for the transformation of popular politics. Within the two states and in the common cross-Atlantic context, this transformation was an inherently path-dependent process to which the religious field provided formative inputs, determining thus its trajectory and outcomes.

More generally, this article suggests that the historical transformation of popular politics resulting in the emergence of modern extensive and mass-produced forms of political mobilization can be usefully seen as occurring at the intersection of two other temporalities of change of different time-scale: change within specific reiterative sequences of mobilizatory events and activities and the organizational reordering of the religious field. Changing organizational models in the field of religion provided political entrepreneurs with a new set of organizational resources. The deployment and incorporation of these resources at different points changed the trajectory of mobilizatory sequences and then, cumulatively, reconfigured the socially available technologies of popular mobilization.

Sociologists, of course, have drawn attention to the importance of religious organizations as institutional repositories of cultural and organizational resources for political mobilization (Morris 1984; Zald and McCarthy 1998). The formative period of modern forms of popular politics in the early nineteenth century reveals an even more

substantial causal connection: the religious field was not only a useful auxiliary to popular mobilization but also shaped its course and provided the typical organizational forms that were to enter the standard toolkit of extra-parliamentary politics.

Of primary analytical importance here are the organizational aspects of religion not as doctrine but as a historically specific set of practices and institutions. I began by noting the currently contested dominance of a post-Marxist regime of knowledge in historical sociology. This regime of knowledge followed, with various refinements, Marx's anti-Hegelian precept that material conditions influence consciousness—and not vice versa. The procedure was simple: after filing religion safely into the "ideology" folder, search for the real material causes of social processes. Yet recognizing that religion involves not only doctrine but also practices reminds us that the underlying distinction between "material" and "ideal" factors simplifies an unruly reality. Even the most secular of organizations subscribes to a foundational theology of rationality and encourages practices which enact the theology ceremonially and ritualistically (Meyer and Rowan 1991). *Ceteris paribus*, the non-sacral "rational" organizational aspects of religious organizations are equally important. Acknowledging and studying religion as a causal factor, therefore, involves not simply the reinstatement of idealism in a field traditionally dominated by materialist habits of thought, but rather—to use a pregnant term—the dialectical transcendence of unhelpful distinctions.

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