4. A Middle-level Model of Collective Protest in Canada

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This research communication is intended to offer a profile of collective behaviour in Ontario and Quebec between 1963 and 1975. In accordance with Charles Tilly's conception violence has been defined here as "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged in spite of resistance" (1977 MSS: 197). Implicit in this definition is the exclusion of psychological forms of violence e.g. repression and discrimination. This is more a result of measurement problems involved than a judgement of their significance. Also excluded from this analysis are games where the nature and scope of the violence is strictly controlled. Furthermore, due to the emphasis on collective action, individual and small group action such as terrorism and sabotage have also been omitted. Collective violence in this case has been operationally defined as an interaction of 50 or more people.

The focus of this study is Ontario and Quebec and our primary intention is to examine to what extent violent interactions within these two communities share the same characteristics and to what extent they differ. These comparisons are conducted within the scope of a theoretical model, based on the work of Charles Tilly (1975 and 1977

1 We wish to thank Charles Tilly and Ken Hart for their advice.
2 Psychological injuries can only be measured by excessively costly and time-consuming survey research. Furthermore, it would be difficult to define the exact source or cause of these injuries on a general level without becoming involved in an unending dialectical dispute, i.e. the value judgements inherent in trying to define social repression or injustice. The resultant measurements would thus be unreliable.
3 The precise cutoff point for "collective varies considerably in the empirical literature. The figure "20" is used by Michael Stohl (1975: 387). The number "50" is used by Yoshio Sugimoto (1975: 28). "One hundred" participants or more is used by Tilly (1975) as well as Gurr (1969: 626).
MSS), William A. Gamson (1975) and to a lesser extent Anthony Obershall (1973). All three authors treat collective violence as an integral part of the struggle for power in a political community. All three have also refrained from dwelling on monocausal explanations of collective strife which until recently have dominated the literature. Our own research has found (1977) no significant association between traditional economic indicators such as unemployment rates and inflation and the frequency and intensity of collective violence in Ontario and Quebec during the period 1963 to 1973. Comparable results have been demonstrated by others using similar economic indicators (Snyder and Tilly 1972: 520-532). Nor have such catch-all explanatory devices as relative deprivation (Gurr—1970; Davies-1969) proven empirically useful in such analyses. Moreover, macro-analytic approaches typically involve a number of serious methodological and conceptual problems. Foremost among these is the problem of reductionism or as it is more commonly called the level of analysis problem.

The inability of research to date to provide a satisfactory explanation of the etiology of collective violence has persuaded us to follow the direction set by Charles Tilly whose current work concentrates on some of the mobilizational and organizational factors in the dynamics of collective conflict. This change in orientation involves a switch in focus from remote causal factors to more proximate variables such as group organization, political status, objectives, etc.

Tilly's approach is oriented toward two levels of analysis, each involving a different slice of social reality. The most comprehensive of Tilly's theories focuses on the relationship (an interaction) between groups (challengers and defenders) who are competing for membership in and control of the polity (Tilly: 1975). Within this wider context he has developed at a lower level a model which focuses on the actual process of inter-group competition for power outlined in the general theory. These two are linked together by the idea of competition for power as groups mobilize, organize and commit resources in their struggle to reach the top of the power structure, then stay there and modify the polity's rules to suit their interests (Tilly 1977 MSS: IV/41). In his "Mobilization Model" (Tilly 1977 MSS: IV/3-4, 5, 6, 7), Tilly sees collective action emerging from a complex interplay of several factors including organization, interest, mobilization level, relative power, the tactics of opportunity and threat, and the possibility of repression or facilitation by the authorities and their allies.

The model that we intend to use here centers on the idea that collective violence is an integral part of the political process, in which groups compete for influence and in some cases control of the state's decision-making apparatus. Groups are engaged in a struggle. They organize, mobilize and maneuver to improve their status vis à vis the center of power. Improving a group's political status is the name of the game.

A group's relative success in this political competition depends on the interplay of several factors that are incorporated into this model. These variables include the form of the group or its degree of organization, the current political status of each group, the group's goals or objectives, its chosen form of collective action, and finally the mobilization cost resulting from the intensity of repression. A group's success in the competitive process is thus dependent on the outcome of the interplay between five variables. The variables used in this model consists of four dichotomies and a trichotomy. The first variable, form of group, reflects the group's level of role specification, its detailed decision-making procedures, and the bureaucratic structures that support its activities. Using the organizational level of the groups as the main criterion, we divided our groups into two broad categories. Highly organized groups