From separatism to violence: A typology of interactions between the citizen and the state establishment

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Abstract: This paper suggests two new theoretical contributions: The first such contribution is a typology of interactions between the people and the authorities (central government, local municipalities, company managements, others). Looking inductively at various case studies dealing with this kind of relationship, the proposed continuum moves from separatism at one end (Catalunya, 2017, as an instance) to violence at the other end of the scale, while between the two poles other patterns of activity are indifference, identification, and protest. The second contribution is a model of four independent variables (policy; scale of policy's implementation; external occasions relevant to the protest group; decision-making of group's leadership) for explaining political violence. Additionally, political aspirations, ideologies, leader's decisions, and responses from the authorities influence the final choice that any given group makes. Empirical case studies from different states (USA, Spain, Israel) illustrate the theoretical framework of this study.

Subjects: Social Sciences; Social Sciences; Sociology & Social Policy; Arts & Humanities; Humanities; Philosophy; Cultural Studies

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

How do people formulate their positions towards the incumbent regime's policy? When do they decide to support it or to resist it? And how far they are ready to go and what are they ready to do in order to achieve their goals? Looking inductively at various case studies dealing with this kind of relationship, this study suggests a typology of interactions between the people and the authorities. The proposed continuum has five options: separatism; indifference; identity; protest; and violence. The study concludes that political aspirations, ideologies, leader's decisions, and responses from the authorities influence the final choice that any given group makes. Empirical case studies from different states (USA, Spain, Israel) illustrate the theoretical framework of this study.

Zooming in on social-political violence, the study offers a new model combined from four independent variables (policy; scale of policy's implementation; external occasions relevant to the protest group; decision-making of group's leadership) for explaining this phenomenon.
1. Introduction
How do people all over the world formulate their positions towards the incumbent regime? When do they decide to support it or to resist it? How far are they ready to go and what are they ready to do in order to maintain the social-political status quo or to change it? What if a group of people with a different identity—based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or being a minority—does not want to be a part of the social-political order and prefers to separate?

Relationships between the state and the regime on the one hand, and the people – civilians, residents, illegal immigrants, and foreigners – on the other hand, are among prominent topics that have been studied in recent decades. The existing literature from sociology, political science, anthropology, and law delineates and analyzes case studies of confrontations between the parties all over the world. When case studies of mass protest or collective violence are discussed, the relevant questions are why, when, or what led to the clash between the state and the people, and what leads to an escalation. Gurr developed the theory of relative deprivation in the 1960s, following the Civil Rights Movement in the USA (Gurr, 1968). Diani mapped various types of protest movements, focusing on informal interactions between the protesters and the establishment (Diani, 1992). Conteh-Morgan offered different approaches for analyzing political violence Conteh-Morgan (2004) and Sprinzak (1999) focused on internal political violence among Jews from 1940 to 1995 (Sprinzak, 1999). Finally, Hitman suggested a new perspective for analyzing political violence by the Arab national minority within Israeli society, focusing on patterns of activity rather than on ideologies (Hitman, 2013).

Every group of people has more than two options (protest/violence) when it is forced to respond to a regime’s policy, or when it strives to achieve its goals through self-initiative. The methodological problem is that if a scholar wishes to find previous studies relating to three of the five options, he or she has to look outside the political science discipline, which consistently seeks behavior patterns of social protest movements or of people who turn to violence in order to fulfill political interests. Instead, one needs to import other theoretical tools, especially from a variety of disciplines, as this paper will argue below.

From a theoretical perspective, this study classifies five different options that groups of people have when they are facing challenges as a result of authorities’ decisions. There are cases when the subject in question is relevant to all of the citizens, but there may also be a situation where the disagreement is between a specific (sometimes narrow) sector within a given society and the official establishment. This sector can be a workers’ union, a national minority, a different ethnic group, a gender group, or a geographical region.

The following scheme will facilitate the analysis below of the typology for explaining various social-political behavior patterns of the people towards the authorities:

- Separatism
- Apathy
- Identification
- Protest
- Violence

1.1. Separatism
Separatism means an aspiration of a group to secede from the country and to form a new, independent, and if possible, sovereign entity. Various theories, mostly from the school of international relations, try to understand the conditions for claiming separation from the union state, mostly in the context of ethnic conflict (Gorenburg, 1999; Hale, 2000; Treisman, 1997). It seems
that such theories are relevant, not only when ethnicity is involved, but also when there are different ideologies between groups of similar origins, as in the Jewish case study of the ultra-orthodox persuasion and the non-religious Jewish majority.¹

When the state adopts a policy and acts to implement it, one of the options for people who opposed this policy is separatism. There are seven key factors helping to assess whether the separation option occurs:

(a) Regional wealth
(b) Regional autonomy
(c) Ethnic distinctiveness
(d) Group skill sets
(e) Elite upward mobility
(f) Symbolic historical resources
(g) Demonstration effects (Hale, 2000, p. 33).

Some scholars argue that the poorest and least developed ethnically distinct regions are the most disposed to secede (Hechter, 1992), while the opposite applies to others, meaning that the richest regions will be the most separatist.² Both Brass and Hechter discovered that if a certain region is already enjoying autonomy, inhabitants of that region prefer to stay in the union state.³ By contrast, Treisman argued in the context of bargaining, that groups in possession of greater power will make more radical claims for separatism, since they use their resources and strength as pressure on the state, as was the case of Catalunya in 2017.

Checking some case studies from the past reveals that ethnic minority groups choose separatism as their modus operandi during conflicts with the authorities. Following are a few examples that demonstrate and support this point: The Alawite minority in Syria, at least until 1946, was in favor of secession from Syria’s territory. This aspiration was supported by France, which saw an opportunity in separating the Alawites as part of their ambition for a major role in the region (Goldsmith, 2013). Another example is the northern branch of the Islamic movement within Israel, which is consistently striving to establish autarchic institutions for the Arab minority. In the past, its senior speakers often declared that they did not recognize the state of Israel and wished to separate. The Kurds have the same vision. Over 30 million of them have been striving for more than a century to secede from Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. One may challenge this by claiming that some political frameworks within the Kurdish population prefer to maintain the status quo, and yet there are Kurds with political power who call—constantly—for establishing self-determination and having their own sovereign political entity. Finally, in short, Catalunya’s 2017 referendum is another case study of separatism, and it fits with Hale’s argument that the richest regions tend to secede.

1.2. Apathy/Indifference

Apathy is the second option for a response by an individual or group to its government’s policy and its implementation. Apathy is a lack of feeling, emotion, interest, and concern. It is a mental state of indifference, or the suppression of emotions such as concern, excitement, motivation, and/or passion. An apathetic individual has an absence of interest in or concern about emotional, social, spiritual, philosophical, and/or physical life and the world. In positive psychology, apathy is described as a result of the individual feeling they do not possess the level of skill required to confront a challenge.⁴ Apathy, in the context of this study, can be relevant to many topics, such as political, cultural, economic, military, and majority–minority relationships. Choosing apathy has its advantages since he/she does not have to pay a personal price in case of a clash with the state. The chance of being arrested, hurt, or even killed is not threatening.
Nearly half a million people, most of them women, marched in January 2017 protesting Donald Trump’s inauguration. The relevant question is where were all the masses (Republicans and Democrats) who opposed Trump’s policies toward women? The same question is appropriate when scholars look at other societies. Israel’s public sphere (and press) closely followed the disengagement process of Israel from the Gaza Strip during summer 2005. Not surprisingly, at the apex of the campaign to put pressure on the Israeli Government not to leave Gaza unilaterally, no more than a few thousand marched against the Government’s decision. Still in the Israeli arena, 2019–2020 have been witness to three rounds of general elections. The political impasse has left most Israelis at home. They did not take to the streets to protest against elected officials, who are perceived as self-serving and not acting in the public interest. Expressions of protest remained, almost fully, in the social networking space. The yellow vests movement or yellow jackets movement is a populist grassroots political movement for economic justice that began in France in October 2018. After a posted online petition had attracted nearly a million signatures, mass demonstrations began on November 17. The protest began on the website in May 2018, when 300,000 people signed a petition calling for the French government to change its economic policy. When the protest moved from the social media to the streets, at its peak nearly 300,000 French citizens joined, 0.5% of France’s population (Dianara, 2018).

Obviously, one can challenge this analysis, claiming that it is not logical to expect most citizens to take to the streets when they are not pleased with the government’s policy. Yet, when people want to accomplish their ends and to force the authorities to change its policy, the number of people who share the demand is important. When the number of participants is high, the establishment considers this, as in the case of the African American Civil Rights Movement in the USA from 1954 to 1968 (see below regarding protests).

1.3. Identification
Identification has various meanings. The scope of this paper is too narrow to present all of them; however, a succinct mention of it here will help to provide a clear perspective for perceiving identification in the context of this study. In sociology, it means the acceptance as one’s own of the values, ethics, and interests of a social group. It seems that the right angle comes from psychoanalytic theory, which sees identification as the transference or reaction to one person with the feelings or responses relevant to another (Bowlby, 2008).

When the subject is the relationship between the formal establishment and the citizens, identification with policies or values that the establishment seeks to promote is manifested in several ways: organizing rallies and demonstrations of support for the regime, signing petitions, or publishing its policies in various media. While exploring case studies, it is important to discern between an authentic identification, which is typical under democratic regimes, and an artificial one in non-democratic states. If people or a specific group accepts the policy or value, the reaction will be identification. In democracies, identification can be in response to a decision by the official establishment or to an initiative by parts of the public who support an existing policy and who seek to prevent changes.

Some Greeks support the government line from mid-2015, refusing to accept European Union terms in exchange for assistance to save the Greek economy. Some Egyptians backed the incumbent president, ‘Abed al-Fatah al-Sisi, when he led a military action to remove President Mohammad Morsi (June 2013), who had been democratically elected. They went out to the streets and expressed their identification with the regime, and did so as well on many Internet websites. Others, most of them Muslim Brothers activists, resisted this move because Morsi is a prominent leader of their movement. In Israel, from the beginning of 2017 until late 2019, hundreds have protested in front of the General Attorney’s residence, calling on him to file charges against the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. In response, Prime Minister’s Netanyahu supporters arranged a series of rallies in order to express their solidarity with the leader. Finally for this section, right-wing activists took to the streets in Charlottesville, Virginia.
(mid-2017) demanding that the bronze statue of a Confederate general not be removed, as the city council (for this study this body is the authority) had decided to do earlier this year. This topic divided the Charlottesville community of residents into two groups and led to violent actions. One group (white nationalist–supremacists) was opposed to that decision, while the other group identified with it. Not surprisingly, despite the fact that the topic in question was relevant for all US citizens, the harsh violence that erupted in Charlottesville (one dead, 19 injured) did not spread to other places, and most American citizens remained indifferent.

1.4. Protest
Social protest movements have been studied by authors from various disciplines. Each of them categorized social movements according to various parameters, such as types of activity, numbers of participants, and how strong the group’s cohesion is. Sociologists have developed four leading approaches that are relevant for the discussion: (1) collective behavior; (2) recruit resources; (3) political process; (4) new social movements.

Some scholars argued that protest as a preferred mode of action for a particular group requires mainly stability and leadership that all of the group’s members must accept. If such leadership exists, the odds of a certain group achieving its goals are improved. In addition, most previous studies suggested three major theoretical approaches when trying to explain the behavior of the protesters (Herman, 1995).

Zald and McCarthy developed the resources mobilization theory, arguing that no social movement can act without a number of components. They both defined a social protest movement as an array of beliefs and ideas which aim at changing the social structure (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1217). They focused their study on the conditions that make ideas into a tangible activity, and emphasized, as others do, that the existence of an experienced and accepted leadership makes it easier for the social movement to achieve its goals (Diani, 1992, p. 4). The required components are material, moral, social-organizational, human, and cultural resources.

Tilly sees the protest movement as a political process, and defines it as an ongoing series of contacts between power holders—the regime—and people who usually speak on behalf of a constituency that does not have any official representation. The speakers (or the leaders) of the protest movement strive to change the distribution of power through rallies and demonstrations. According to Tilly’s study, the establishment of a social movement is a rational choice, based on cost-benefit calculation. Since the focus here is on the interaction between the movement and the authorities, if the latter forbids any form of protest, the activists as well as their supporters cannot realize their objectives.

Touraine addresses the protest as an outcome of a collective and organized behavior of a certain group. The basic idea is to struggle over social dominance and to define moral values within the community (Alain, 1981). This definition asserts that a social movement is a frame for creating identity, mainly that of opposition against the existence of the social-political order.

Melucci characterized the social movement as a special form of collective phenomenon composed of three components: (1) a collective action based on solidarity; (2) the existence of an opponent who claims ownership of the very same values; (3) a social frame that crosses behind the norms and the conventions without changing the society (Melucci, 1989, p. 29). In contrast to previous scholars, he did not see political conflict as necessary for the existence of a social movement. If the movement acts to create values or new codes of culture, that is sufficient to call it a social movement.

To summarize the main points relating to collective political protest as a type of action, all four leading approaches listed above share and stress four dimensions:
(a) Informal interaction between rival parties takes place.
(b) The movement's activists share a system of beliefs and values.
(c) Collective action is carried out when there is a conflict over political topics.
(d) Most of the activity takes place outside of the establishment sphere (Diani, 1992, p. 7).

This article suggests a new perspective centering on the last point. The theoretic contribution, based on analyzing protests in Israel, Egypt Bolivia, Poland and Burkina Faso is that protest movements and protest actions can emerge within the establishment, civilian, and military alike. Workers in Poland (1980), policemen in Bolivia (2004), soldiers in Egypt (2011), a massive gathering in Greece (2011), and a nurses union in Israel (2017)—they all protested against the authorities, demanding salary increases and to have human, social, economic, and political rights. All these case studies meet the criteria of social protest movements, amorphic or expressive as Blumer classified them (Blumer, 1951), or because they all have resources, they all share collective identities, and they all have—on different scales—opportunities to express their grievances.

Eventually, different forms of protest, whether they are formally organized or not organized into formal movements, strive to influence authorities' decisions. This effect can be achieved through various patterns of activity. The nature of the regime (democracy, authoritarian, other) determines whether the activities are legal and legitimate.\(^6\)

1.5. Violence
Collective political violence is a longstanding historical phenomenon. Over the course of time, various models of violence in a group framework have developed, arising out of backgrounds of religious, ethnic, national, and political struggle ultimately aimed at gaining control over resources and values.

A great number of studies have been written on political violence, suggesting eight different theories to explain what leads to a collective outbreak by people trying to change the existing social-political order (Gamson, 1975; Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000; Ted, 1970; Sprinzak, 1995).

Yet, none of these theories are useful for analyzing every case study of collective political violence. Although a few of them deal with variables such as government policy and the role of protest movement leaderships, they do not offer a comprehensive explanation or a solid framework for understanding this phenomenon. This part of the paper suggests an original perspective for analyzing the question of what brings people to use force and to jeopardize personal interests—sometimes their lives—to instigate a real social and political change. The suggested model is composed of four independent variables as follows: (1) government policy; (2) scale of policy's implementation; (3) external occasions relevant to the protest group; (4) decision-making by group's leadership.

Political violence has many forms and hence there is more than one common definition of this term. If scholars agree that phenomena like terror or civil war are forms of political violence, consensus over one definition becomes complicated and hard to reach, even more so when one tries to argue that demonstrations and protest are also cases of the phenomena in question. The reason is simple: different interpretations derive from different cultures and types of regimes. As a rule, democracies are more open to allowing protests, while the same occurrences in non-democratic states are perceived by the regime as threats to their stability—protests are therefore forbidden since they are a type of political violence, and the protesters are classified as terrorists (Syria, Libya, Iran, China, Myanmar). The interpretation of political violence is different from one state to another, from one society or community to another, and so forth, and these different interpretations lean on different ideologies.
The Contingency theory argues that every case study of political violence depends on unusual developments which create a potential for significant change compared to the current situation in any given society (Conteh-Morgan, 2019, pp. 13–14). This theory seeks to understand both the factors and the circumstances that led to certain developments such as war, revolution, economic crisis, or earthquakes. A group uses violence in order to ensure its interests, after considering non-violent actions and internalizing the idea that only violence will achieve the goal. However, a contingency approach is not effective in analyzing every outbreak; moreover, this approach cannot explain why in some states that experience an unusual development, people’s reactions are not violent. Also, it is not the appropriate method for analyzing case studies of collective political violence, when the status quo remains.

Inherent theory perceives using violence as a natural choice of a group, movement, or community to get political influence over policy decision-makers. Turning to violence comes after a process of net assessment and evaluation that finds that it is the most effective way to gain political power and resources. This theory rejects the use of the term extremism since violent action is part of social norms. Looking deep into the conflicts in places like the Balkans or in Rwanda during the last decade of the twentieth century, or Iraq since 2003 and Syria since 2011, this theory can be used to analyze political violence, which these regions have seen. Long after the fight over political influence was determined and one side took control over resources (national, regional, or local), the killing of thousands continued in these arenas without any justified cause and without the winning side indicating a political objective that required killing. The reason for the continued killing (or murdering) was an inherent norm in those societies. One may argue that the continuation of killing serves the interests of the group that acts violently, but at the same time, it can be claimed that the same interests can be achieved through other types of action, especially when it clear that the winning side takes all. Inherent theory cannot explain every case study – certainly not when the conflict is not over resources, or when it occurs in societies in which force is not a common phenomenon.

The functionalism approach sees human society as an orchestra, meaning that every institution, like a musical instrument, knows its role. When everything is functioning properly, it is like a finely tuned system in which each component knows what to do and how to act. Food companies are taking care of a steady supply of sustenance and beverages, banks are responsible for money, a system of medicine is busy with its duties, and so forth. When something goes wrong due to an earthquake, bankruptcy of the state, or severe political crisis, for instance, and the state institutions and mechanism cannot solve the problems, political violence may break out (Della Porta, 1995). For functionalists, lack of balance is a necessary condition for protest, even collective violence. There are two major problems with this theory: One, it cannot explain every case study of collective political violence, since the phenomenon has occurred in places where all systems were functioning properly, among them Israel (minorities, ultra-orthodox Jews), Northern Ireland (sectarian grievances), Greece, and Iran (economy). Two, there are societies that experienced dramatic and sudden crises of dysfunction and the population’s response was not violent, as case studies of earthquakes in Peru (2007), Colombia (2008), and Nepal (2015), as well as a tsunami in Japan (2011) have proved.

Rational theory focuses on the individual’s interests while he is making a decision about whether to act violently or not. It argues that the individual is concentrated on himself and will not join the activity unless he can confirm that his benefits are guaranteed. As a result, the bigger the protest movement, the greater the chance of seeing people join in the protest. Without real incentives, people are not ready to endanger themselves—that is, to ignore the possibilities of being arrested, injured, or killed during harsh conflict (Olson, 1965). The theory also claims that it is difficult, maybe impossible, to identify who leads the violence.

The rational approach has its limitations. First, going back through history, it is easy to point out leaders who chose to use violence for political goals. Famous cases include Michael Collins in
Northern Ireland, who led the IRA terror attacks and recruited people to support the struggle against England, and Malcolm X, who, together with Stokely Carmichael, preached on behalf of black supremacy, and called explicitly to use violence. Their fiery speeches had an influence on young American blacks, who broke the public order, leading to severe riots across the United States in the sixties. These two instances – and there are more in human history – provide salient cases for enhancing this argument. Second, in no case of political violence was personal interest the main focus, although some people, namely leaders, achieved personal profits. Third, there have been plenty of cases in which people have acted violently without expecting to gain from their participation as individuals. Such was the case with student violence in France (1968), the Israeli Arab minority on Land Day (1976), monks in Myanmar (2007), and the protestors in Tibet against the Olympics in China (2008). Yet, people took to the streets in order to protest and to confront security forces that in response also used force to contain the outbreaks.

**Instrumental theory** perceives political violence as an outcome of the growth of inequality. This theory stresses the role of political actors who seek to promote their agenda through gaining (or regaining) control over resources. These actors are using social, economic, and political inequality to recruit support and to consolidate identity with their ideology and interests (Hasenclever and Rittberger, 2000). This approach can be used to analyze situations of violence in multicultural societies, or where two different patterns of ideological platforms contradict each other. However, this theory cannot be a comprehensive answer to all political violence case studies. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 was a case in which both social and economic gaps had increased. It was, however, a quiet revolution, while political violence was used later in order to defend the new theological regime. Arab Spring events from December 2010 onward also makes the validity of this approach questionable, when its focus is political actors rather than the public or the “street,” which has been dominant in Arab countries in recent years. The very simple fact is that upheavals in Middle East countries like Syria, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, and Tunisia started without any intervention or involvement of institutionalized political frames. The “Arab street,” a general term for the young generation or sometimes students, wanted a change, and was still far from the political sphere when it all began (Sanin Francisco & Wood, 2014). Can anyone really argue that the masses who fled Cairo, Manama, Tunis, or Sana’a thought instrumentally when they broke the “barrier of fear,” demanding to topple the tyrannies? Did they see themselves as part of a political system at the beginning of the protests – or did they maybe, at first, just want to see a new, different social-political order?

**Primordialism**, in short, means to be part of a certain group from the moment a human being is born. The family, along with ethnic, religious, linguistic, territorial, and national linkages are the fundamental basis for creating a joint communal life. Primordial scholars see conflicts as clashes of civilizations like that between Islam and the West, and perceive cultural and religious differences as insoluble unless the winning side takes all (Huntington, 1993). A compromise with the enemy is not an option, since according to a divine order, the enemy excluded himself from the “right community.” This theory is relevant for collective political violence between Muslims and Christians in the Balkan region during the 1990s, and in the cases of Global Jihad versus the infidels and civil war in Sudan – which eventually was split into two different political entities in 2011.

But what about collective political violence when it occurs inside a homogenous community, as happened in Thailand (2009), Egypt and Tunisia (2011)? What about terror attacks that Sunni extremists, affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, carry out against other Sunnis? In these cases, using primordial theory for analyzing violence is problematic. The same argument can be valid for student protests in China back in 1989 or for Myanmar priests’ protest for more human rights in 2007.

**Constructivism** sees a process of building knowledge through thinking. It can be one person or a group that starts to think abstractly, and after a process of forging “team spirit,” the next stage is how to make an idea a reality. The hard core of this theory is a combination of norms and ideas,
because people strive to test different attitudes and to pour into them new meaning (Weber, 2017). This theory can explain collective political violence, especially as a result of a long progression of a thought process. Although the theory can identify where it all started, it cannot explain how the social-political reality leads people to use violence, why this happens at a given time, and why violence does not occur in other cases. Constructivism also does not help us to understand what leads people to join a protest movement.

Last, but not least, is relative deprivation theory. It defines the gap between the present state of an individual or group and the desired situation – the one they seek to be in. It emphasizes the dissatisfaction of a certain group, and argues that such a feeling can be translated into violence when members of the group believe that there is a gap between their current situation and what they are entitled to in their collective mind. The potential for using violence increases if members of the group perceive an external factor, usually the government, as responsible for and guilty of creating their situation (Gurr, 1968, p. 1104). Feelings of deprivation in any individual or a group (movement, community, tribe or nation) are always compared to three different situations:

(a) What “we” as a community have compared to what we had in the past.
(b) What “we” have compared to what we could have achieved.
(c) What “we” have, or our status, compared to another group.

Perceptions of deprivation can be real or imagined, and they can be related to political, social, or economic status. Enhanced feelings of discrimination increase collective identity among members of the group, whether it is homogeneous or heterogeneous. Here we can mention poor and rich people, national minorities, excluded communities, or workers unions.

Relative deprivation theory sees three relevant variables that can influence choosing violence as a political tool. The first variable is how much violence is normative in a given society. Second, consideration of whether using violence achieves group ends (cost-benefit), and third is the effectiveness of balance of power between the group and the state. The weaker the state is, the greater the chance of a violent occurrence (Gamson, 1975, p. 75).

Like all seven grand theories above, relative deprivation is not perfect. If we choose for instance, any deprived group, how can we explain the fact that most of the time the group does not use violence? To put it differently, why are there long gaps between from one case study and the next? There are instances of deprived groups, such as national minorities (Kurds, Arab Palestinians within Israel, Catalans), which cannot achieve their ends for decades. Despite continuous grievances, these groups do not turn automatically to violence, so in order to explain why at a certain point they choose to use force, something else is needed for a holistic analysis. It can be a dramatic event (contingency) or a long period of preparations to recruit resources and garner wide support (constructivism). It also can be somebody who will be the initiator and a leader of the group’s members (instrumentalism).

1.6. A new model for analyzing collective political violence

The suggested model for explaining political violence is composed of four independent variables as follows: (1) government’s policy; (2) scale of policy’s implementation; (3) external occasions relevant to the protest group; (4) decision-making of group’s leadership.

Scholars from different disciplines agree on basic terminology, ideas, and dictums that are needed for understanding human society. Focusing on the nation-state, there is an agreement that it needs three components: society, sovereignty, and territory. Policymaking and its implementation, which make up one of the variables of the model, are related to governments and interwoven with sovereignty. It is also agreed that the state is the only mechanism that has the right and authority to use power. Dealing with political violence means interaction between rulers and citizens, and with
the policy that the former reinforces through laws, decrees and regulations. If the policy of decision-makers is not acceptable to a collective, which believes that it violates its rights, the response of that collective may be to use violence in order to attain political achievements.

A policy rule divides into two sub-terms: one is the policy itself, meaning the basic principles by which a government is guided. The second part is the implementation of the policy. Here the spectrum is wide, from light enforcement to a strict one. Another important and relevant point is a scenario in which the government simultaneously uses differential policies pertaining to the same issue, towards separate communities and different groups. One salient example from the Israeli case study can illustrate this point. The Israeli authorities decided to confiscate lands from both Jews and non-Jews in the second half of the twentieth century for public needs (roads, schools, housing). This policy was severely enforced against non-Jews, while at the same time the state was prone to relinquish land to Jews, not to mention government decisions to build new cities only for Jewish populations. Another instance, this time towards the same group, over the same issue, comes from Jordan. The late King Hussein outlawed Muslim Brothers in 1957, but changed his policy (due to both internal and external influences) in 1988, allowing them to participate in Parliament general elections. These instances lead to the following insights: (1) there can be situations where different policies are applied towards different groups that live under one authority at one particular point in time; (2) a policy towards a specific group can be modified through time.

Policies of regimes are subject to changes from one state to another, and from time to time in any given state – due to changes of government, as well as internal or external constraints. Democracies allow their citizens more leeway to express their will than non-democratic regimes. This is a crucial point for analyzing policy changes, not only between different forms of regime, but within a specific state. Hence, in regard to political protest, it may be forbidden under non-tolerant administrations, which define the process as violence or mainly terror against the regime. At the same time, it is permitted at different times or in different states (or both) to protest. This is why we can distinguish between protests for human rights in France (1968), the United States (1960s), and protests that turned to violence in non-democratic states such as China (1989), Myanmar (2007), Iran (2009), Syria, and Yemen (2011).

Basically, the implementation of a policy is interpreted subjectively, even when the topic in question is political protest or violence. Every social protest movement, whether it is a national minority, workers union, or human rights organization, always tests the Modus Operandi of the government’s policy towards the group per se or towards other groups that are part of the same society. A leniency policy may be perceived as weaknesses of the regime (and not as a policy of containment), while a harsh policy may be seen as imposition of fear that leaves the protest group to use violent tools as a last resort.

The turmoil and upheavals in the Arab world since December 2010, the uncompromising policy of the US administration against the Japanese during the Second World War, the massive killings of students in China (1989), monks in Myanmar (2007), and students in Iran (2009), are no more than little drops in a sea of harsh lines against social-political opponents. Once a regime decides to use force against an opposition group that is considered by the ruler as a threat to the political stability (namely to his political and physical survival), then the options it has are countless: arrests, showcase trials for opposition or community leaders, executions, torching, killing civilians of various ethnic or national identities, confiscating lands and property, restricting the movement of opposition leaders and activists, and placing opponents under constant surveillance (Fox, 2000). A rigid enforcement of policies can lead to two opposing reactions: one, it can deter the protest group because its members are unwilling to pay a price for the protest or violence they engage in; second, it can encourage the protesters to increase the threshold of violence in order to convey determination until the goals are achieved.
The second independent variable is the influence of relevant external events on a group’s patterns of activity. Such occurrences of external influence can be from within the state where the group’s members live, or outside of the state. It is a necessary condition that these events are or will be relevant for a given group in terms of ethnicity, nationality, religion, or status, in order to motivate its members to react. External events inside the state may include conflict between the state and certain groups due to implementation of the government’s policy or because of continuous grievances from the groups against the regime. It can be economic, political, cultural, or military disagreements that affect the group under discussion. Events outside of the state can be a war, a high intensity conflict, or a political shift which harms members of the same ethnic, national, or religious group that lives across the state borders. All of these may lead to violent responses, as history shows in various places all over the world. Naturally, the larger the number of external cycles, the greater is the possibility that external occurrences will lead to collective political violence.

The third independent variable relates to a group’s leadership characteristics, meaning whether the leader or leaders are motivated to use violence to promote political ends. Naturally, when one mentions leadership, we need to clarify what exactly the leadership is—if it has the capacity and tools to recruit backing for violent actions, and how its decision-making process works.

The term leadership encompasses sociological, behavioral, and cognitive aspects. There are an enormous number of studies that try to define what a leader is, let alone the fact that some scholars tend to confuse leadership with authority. This confusion is reflected especially in studies that deal with appointed (not elected) supervisors at schools, in the armed forces, or at workplaces (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002b).

There are three different types of leader: First, there is the traditional leader who draws authority from traditional societies, from the family and the tribal cell. The second type of leader is a charismatic one, due to inborn features and a public perception of him as a captivating personality. The last type is legal—a formal leader who comes into a position of power after being elected or appointed. This study suggests a new theoretical distinction between the three types of leadership, which can be traditional, charismatic, or legal:

(1) National-level, which is defined by a political framework, having the potential to recruit and direct people from all over the country.

(2) Local-level leadership, such as heads of municipalities, states (governors in the USA, Canada, and China), rabbis, muftis, priests.

(3) Field-leadership, which applies potentially to every individual; a few also aspire to be legal-formal leaders. Environments and situations on the ground have an impact on people’s patterns of activity, and anyone might perform a deed that could be the spark for others to follow his/her lead. One may challenge this assertion claiming that the person himself did not see himself as a leader, but in this kind of situation, tagging him as a leader is possible after analyzing other people’s responses to his actions.

2. Conclusions
The theoretical contribution of this study has four main aspects: First, it offers a wider spectrum of options than previously existed that people can adopt whenever they attempt to challenge the authorities, which comprises five different possibilities — separatism, indifference, identification, protest, and violence. Obviously, each instance of decision-making by the people has different implications and consequences for the people themselves and for their interaction with the official authority (government, management). Second, the analysis is systematic; third, it supplies the reader with empiric instances from different regions, different societies and under different types of regimes; and four, it suggests a new method to explain political violence as a social phenomenon, arguing that all previous grand theories can explain this only partially.
Except for indifference, all the other options require that the individual or the collective take action in order to change reality. The choice of any option, mostly made by leadership, is a result of ideology, resources, collective identity, willingness to pay the price, whether it is personal or collective, and assessing the state of balance of power between the protesting collective and the establishment regarding the likelihood that violence will lead to social and political achievements.

Analyzing case studies from various states, under different types of regimes, suggests that most of the people in most of the cases are indifferent. Unless the government’s policy has a direct influence on their routine, people are inclined to remain passive. However, if people decide to respond, their decisions and actions are the outcome of a motivation to change the status quo and to create a different reality for the sake of their private and collective interests. For example, looking again at Catalunya’s referendum results (October 2017), the conclusion is that voters identified with the idea that Catalunya should leave Spain, but following the harsh response of the Spanish regime they were not ready to pay the price (personally and collectively), and to implement the separation move. The fact that Carles Puigdemont, the Catalan President, sought asylum in Belgium was in fact the ending chord of the protest. Puigdemont’s arrest by Spanish police in March 2018 decreased the possibility of a new protest.

Finally, one should be aware of the fact that the suggested typology can be examined under every type of regime; selecting one of these theoretical options has different ramifications, depending on whether the case study of any given group on which the study is conducted is under democracy, monarchy, authoritarian, or another type of reign.

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Notes
1. Ultra-orthodox adherents do not recognize the state of Israel and they strive, consistently, to isolate themselves from the state. Despite this, they do not wish to secede; they are willing to be separated from the Zionist idea and to handle their lives alone.
2. Hale, Russia, 33. Hechter’s and Hale’s articles elaborate on the reasons for their theories. For this article it is important to mention them, since the option of demanding to secede is relevant for analyzing relationships between states and ethnic groups, whether these groups are minorities or majorities.
3. Hechter, The Parade, 276.
4. For more see: Hutchins (1952). One of its most famous citations is: “The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment.”
5. For collective behavior see: Turner and Killian (1957); for recruit resources see: McCarthy and Zald (1977); for political process see: Tilly (1978); for new social movements see: Mellucci (1989).
6. For more see: Hile (2012) and Schmidt (2002).
7. The earthquakes in Nepal in April 2015, Mexico in 2017, and tornadoes in the USA in 2017 are salient examples for my argument.
8. Political violence in cases of claiming self-determination by Basques or human rights in China or Iran are examples for that argument.
9. My discussion here focuses on the central regime, but theoretically can be expanded to other authorities both in the public and the private sector.
10. One example is Egyptian policy toward Coptic minority. Other cases are: Greek policy regarding Muslim Albanians, US treatment of Japanese during WW2, and China’s attitude towards Muslim Uyghur minority.
11. Anti-racist protests in Charlottesville, Virginia (2017), a disabled protest in Israel (2017), the Arab Spring upheaval in Tunisia and Egypt (2010–2011), and the financial crisis in Greece (2010 onwards) are a few salient instances from recent years.

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