

# HISTORY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Žydrūnas Stankevičius

Researcher

Vilnius

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## 1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Social relations have been very conflictive permanently. There is a theory that points to conflict as the basis of social relations. Starting from this theory, it can be seen that the conflict is and has been very varied (workers, businessmen, etc.). In conflicts there are not always pairs of rivals, but in any facet of social life we can find conflicts (clash of interests, emotions). This clash does not mean that the conflicts lead to confrontations since there are different responses from the protagonists. The most common is that of people who do not realize that they are facing a conflict in the social relations in which they are immersed. We must highlight the important role of beliefs or circumstances (Stockholm Syndrome, prisoners, etc.). In addition, religious beliefs make it difficult to understand a situation as unfair.

Apart from these groups that do not realize it, there are many more responses to conflicts, and not all of them produce confrontation. It is very difficult for clashes to take place openly, collectively and publicly.

Other possible answers are the following:

- a) Resignation: it is more common than confrontation. The lack of mechanisms to respond to the conflict plays an important role. They realize the unjust life but resign themselves to living it due to beliefs or other types of circumstances ("Los Santos Inocentes"! resignation of the cacique's employees).
- b) Exit from the conflict: this activity is carried out in the form of emigration in the face of unfair situations such as hunger, epidemics, etc. Many people have opted for these exits (emigration from the countryside to the city and to other cities).
- c) Individual resistance: people or social groups understand that they are facing an unjust situation but do not have the necessary resources to produce a confrontation. What they do is try to solve the conflict without giving up and without running away. It is a hidden solution, with nocturnality and with forms of resistance that are not very visible, such as certain actions that are only known by those responsible for the conflict and the one who provokes them. It is a form of resistance that avoids repression, that overcomes the lack of collective organization and the use of different resources. It occurs very commonly among peasants given their economic, social and political difficulties in dealing with conflicts; but also in circumstances of high political repression, such as in totalitarian regimes, or in those sectors of the population with difficulties to act in groups, as was the case of the Quintas in the 19th century. This answer is very difficult to study given its characteristic concealment.
- d) Hooliganism: occurs mainly in the nineteenth. It has been a situation and a type of response to conflicts fundamentally characterized by being generated outside the law, but caused by an unjust situation (maquis). It is more minority than the previous ones and can be both collective and individual, although it almost always manifests itself in the second way. It can also be said that it has some collective resistance and it may be possible to act on behalf of a social group.
- e) Mobilization: it is a public, collective and open action. It supposes the solution of the conflict through collective pressure. It is impossible to calculate, but it can be said that it would only represent 1% of the total possible answers.

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It should be noted that in order for there to be protests, an injustice is not necessary; those who protest do so because they can.

Before analyzing collective action, certain qualifications must be made about the following concepts:

- a) Protest: carried out by groups that initiate a conflict or take initiative in it. It is a defensive reaction.
- b) Mobilization: when it is said that people mobilize, it seems that they are referring to a physical situation, that is, to the act of moving, grouping, etc. This is a very restrictive term.
- c) Collective action: it is very different from social action. It refers to positive actions, protests or mobilizations that are not the product of reaction, but may be the product of initiatives. It is related to everything necessary for the protest dealing with why a situation is unfair, what are the circumstances that lead to action, the forms of mobilization, etc. It is a concept that encompasses the entire world of protest, although it is less well known than the rest. A definition of collective action could be the following: "they are joint challenges to influence the existing distribution of power".

Explanation of the definition:

- "joint challenges": joint efforts or initiatives since it is a collective action, which requires some kind of connection between people.

- "for ... power": collective action influences the existing power in social relations. To rebalance the situation, collective action is an effective mechanism. Its success does not occur when a rectification is achieved, but rather when explanations are given or when a discussion about the conflict occurs. But the fact that collective actions are generally used by people without social power does not mean that they are used by powerful groups. There have been historical situations in which even the elites acted through these actions (Church and faithful, patrons and associates, rulers, Nazis, etc.). • Confictive collective action: the conflict is born or produced. Not all collective actions are conflictive (Tuna). What matters are the collective actions that damage interests, beliefs, etc. and that give rise to conflicts. On the other hand, it can be understood that collective action is a way of doing politics referring to social groups whose actions modify social relations not in their essence but in their characteristics. The public vindication of any situation means doing politics. Therefore, it corresponds to the political field with features that differentiate it from any other collective action.

Collective action would be divided as a synonym of politics in the aspect of analysis in 2 areas of action:

- a) Institutional dimension: it would be equal to the political scope of the institutions: political parties, German governments and pressure groups. Collective action is highly regulated, being very restricted even for the elites, which are the entire population given their position with respect to the institutions. Political parties are specialized in this dimension, although they mobilize and act in different ways. As for pressure groups, something similar happens, being regulated by laws and institutional mechanisms (committees, etc.), having permanent representation with the unions. And lastly, the governments are the ones that make politics and try to achieve their objectives through different organisms.
- b) Non-institutional dimension: made up of people or groups that do not have access to institutions and that need other channels of intervention and pressure. These groups also do politics. Given the lack of direct and permanent access to politics, strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, etc. are carried out. This is how you can influence the distribution of power.

In reality, this differentiation is not possible since the elites can mobilize; Although it is true, they cannot give rise to a mobilization because they are a fairly small number. In addition, there are times when institutional and non-institutional collective action are mixed, as in the case of revolutions. The institutions of the old order fall giving way to new ones of non-institutional collective action. It is common for armies to be formed made up of soldiers and militants from non-institutional organizations.

Along with this descent of the elites there are 3 traits:

- 1° People with power are constantly looking at institutional politics trying to influence it through any form of mobilization.
- 2° the institutions respond with refusals, negotiations, etc.
- 3° we must not forget the law, which regulates aspects of non-institutional movements.

Although these are two completely different dimensions, in practice they communicate constantly.

Collective action is not a matter of one person since it is a social relationship and, therefore, it is a social interaction between at least two parties: the aggrieved and the one who aggravates. Almost always a third party intervenes, generally the State through laws, the government...

Collective action is so difficult to produce for the simple fact of being collective; because of the difficulty involved in putting individuals in agreement. You have to get people to understand that to solve problems you have to mobilize. In short, it is difficult to form groups seeking the same solution.

For its realization, it is necessary the existence of a set of requirements or essential dimensions for a collective action with certain guarantees: a) communication networks: there must be a degree of communication between those who are going to act. The grouping is produced by formal and informal networks. It is a communication group of unions, parties, etc. All networks can communicate to the people who are inside them, so joint criteria can be adopted about what is happening. People stop being isolated and start commenting, sharing, etc. information about what is happening to other people. If there were no networks, we would speak of isolated people who could not act collectively. Examples of this are the following cases:

1º beggars: on the one hand they can join charities, kitchens, etc. while on the other they can act on their own.

2nd immigrants: for the transition from social networks to urban networks to take place, an integration process is necessary.

3rd unemployed: they have lost their fundamental network: work.

Groups do not occur by aggregation spontaneously. When they are created like this it is because they have a problem that is solved in a certain way. To find that joint solution, individuals must be integrated.

There are different types of networks, within which there are parties, large political organizations, etc., but they are not the only form of grouping. In fact, before the unions there were the so-called taverns, in which workers' politics were carried out.

b) shared definitions of reality: reality is seen through different prisms. For there to be collective action, it is necessary that the different impressions be common. This is something that was taken for granted in all the analyzes until 1980. The workers suffered from exploitation, however, currently the idea of exploitation is not available to everyone. To act against it, workers must realize their exploited situation. Today, exploitation is a social construction. Those who believe they are company people do not think about exploitation.

From this explanation one can pass to complex definitions. There may be a diagnosis of reality with the information received. By not living in isolation, one contrasts with others to have collective definitions of reality. This is what happens with political culture. c) political opportunities: foreign, to a certain extent, to the protagonists. The circumstances that favor or not those who mobilize are not proclaimed by them, but come from the environment. These circumstances are almost always granted by a political context such as political regimes, since they do not influence everyone in the same way:

1st dictatorship: prohibits the expression of citizenship rights. You cannot have a habitual or routine collective action because the costs are high and people withdraw from seeking other forms of action. The more dictatorial, the more prohibitions there will be, however, the more citizenship rights, the more population will be considered as citizens. If there are no demonstrations in the authoritarians, it would be necessary to look for forms of protest hidden from the eyes of the authorities. There would be violent collective actions more easily than in other regimes.

Political crises close to the revolution are sweet moments for mobilization. Political crises such as regime changes must also be taken into account, where there is competition between the elites for power, for which they need to seek support.

Another political crisis is the elections that, although they are not spontaneous, are important. They signify the struggle between part of the collective action where the elites promise certain aspects at the same time that offers and demands are produced.

Another political crisis is the so-called cycle of protest: it begins with the movement of a few. This movement is increasing and no one exercises clear control, so other groups take advantage of that moment, giving rise to a wave of different

movements. This happened in the so-called May 68. It started with the strike of the university students and ended with a France totally on strike. Almost all social groups that had something to say were mobilized. As they could not by themselves, they took advantage of this situation to carry out their demands.

Another example like this occurred in Portugal in 1974. However, a year before the conflicts were the same but the difference was that no one mobilized. This shows how revolutions have nothing to do with the reasons for mobilizing, but with the historical context that is lived at that time (economy, society, politics...).

## 2. CONCLUSIONS

The war between states, like the 2 world wars, inhibit collective action because there is a priority promoted by the Government, which is none other than to win the war. The movements of 1914, 1915 and 1916 were of nationalist support, especially in the German sphere. But instead of conflicts when the war ends, World War II arises. Those who lose the war see how the sacrifices of their governments take their toll on their population, giving rise to Revolutions.

d) various forms of action and rituals: over the centuries there has been a tendency to rely on the very limited non-spontaneous activities of forms of action recognized as useful. There has been an evolution in these forms that implies that it is verified that the forms of mobilization of the social groups of the eighteenth century are not the same as the current ones, at least in Europe. The forms of action have changed, producing a revolution. That traditional repertoire of forms of action, as time progressed, was disappearing and leading to a new repertoire. Both sets of forms of action imply 2 totally different cultures of mobilization and carried out under economic, social, etc. conditions. that suppose a change in the protest.

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