Chapter 2
Paradigm Lost? Three Dimensions of Morality and Social Movements

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Abstract In this chapter, focusing on the position of the concept of morality, we briefly review the evolution of the field of social movements from the first formulations of the phenomena of protest, mass, and collective action in classical sociology, through the formation of social movement studies as proper field of research in the 1970s, to its contemporary state. We argue that while morality was central to the classical tradition's understanding of movements, it lost prominence when the field was established, and still today, morality does not receive much attention. There are, of course, notable exceptions like the work of Jeffrey Alexander, Hans Joas, and the new social movement tradition in Europe. Relatively recently, morality has received increasing attention from scholars studying movements from the perspective of culture. We discuss the role of morality in three of the most prominent theories in this tradition, namely, collective identity, frame alignment, and emotion theory. We argue that they all present promising avenues for developing our understanding of morality and movements while we also point to limitations and inadequacies in each theory or the way they have been applied. We then turn to the constructive work of reorganizing the concept of morality's relationship with civic action and social movement by developing three dimensions of morality that we argue which are of particular relevance to social movements: *selves in interaction*, *rationalization and justification*, and *culture and tradition*. We trace each dimension from its origin in moral philosophy through its formulation in classical sociology and finally into contemporary theories of civic action. Before closing, we reflect on how the different dimensions intersect and can be applied to the analysis of contemporary empirical cases of social movements and political protest.

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Long before a research field of social movement studies emerged in the 1970s, masses, civic protest, and social movements had already been formulated as a research object in the social sciences. In these early conceptualizations, movements were seen as intrinsically linked to the question of society's moral order. In general, the view was not exactly positive, with the notable exception of Marxists who saw the workers' movement as the expression of the coming morally superior social order that would finally form society's ideational superstructure and the distribution of goods in accordance with how they believed economic value was created (Marx & Engels, 2008 [1848]; Lenin, 2012 [1902]). Beyond Marxist circles, movements were predominantly viewed as irrational masses (Park, 1972 [1903]; Le Bon, 2009 [1896]; Tarde, 1903 [1890], Tarde, 2009 [1898]), which by virtue of their irrationality were seen as morally inferior. In all cases, morality was what it was all about. From the French and Scottish Enlightenment, Hegel and Marx to Weber, Durkheim, and Dewey, the founders of sociology were acutely aware that the existing forms of solidarity and morality needed to find new expressions under the conditions of the "Machine Age," *Gesellschaft*, increased division of labor, or however the authors diagnosed the newly emerging society.

Weber was concerned with "the quality of man" and late in his life found that perhaps the institutions of civil society, especially the "club," could help "select and breed" the new leaders of society (Kim, 2004). Of course, the international solidarity of workers was central to Marx in his efforts not only to describe but also to change the world along the principle "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs" (Marx, 1989 [1875]). Similarly, the American pragmatists cannot be fully understood if one does not consider them as part of the progressive movement (Feffer, 1993), and, to Durkheim, the human "homo duplex" was fundamentally split between its existence as a biological being and individual exemplar and member of the moral collective of humanity (Durkheim, 1975a, 1975b).

Building on Enlightenment and Romantic moral philosophers' ideas, these early sociologists started an empirical research agenda that would enable them to trace the signs of these new forms of morality. While these authors mostly ignored social movements, they did offer rich analyses for interpreting how new forms of collective action may come about facilitated by experience, ideas, and culture. However, as argued in the preceding chapter (Chap. 1), despite being indebted to classic sociological tradition (Tarrow, 2011), morality was placed at the margin when the field of social movement studies emerged in the 1970s. This is an oddity that we are not the first to notice (e.g., Jasper, 1997; Walder, 2009; see also Tilly, 1998), but which nonetheless is characteristic of the bulk of social movement studies.

In this chapter, we will go on the hunt for what is left of morality in social movement studies and reconstruct the question of morality in relation to movements along

overall and overlapping empirically rather than philosophically oriented dimensions: *selves in interaction*, *rationalization and justification*, and *culture and tradition*. We ground this heuristic framework in classical distinctions in moral philosophy and their expression in classical sociology and contemporary social movement theories. The aim is to demonstrate the centrality of morality to social movements and civic life, formulate a tentative framework for how to think about morality in social movement and civil society studies, and point to the need for treating morality as an explicit dimension of social movement theory that may benefit the field.

Morality in Contemporary Social Movement Studies

Doug McAdam and Hilary Boudet (2012) argue that the subfield of social movement studies has increasingly become inward-looking, isolating itself from the wider fields of political and historical studies from which it originated. Preceding this self-critical diagnosis of the field, Andrew G. Walder (2009) criticized that this trend results in losing sight of social movements' relationship to, and role in, the wider societal configurations and historical dynamics. In particular, the question of social movements' relationship with ideologies and society's fundamental values has been neglected in favor of a narrow focus on mechanisms and processes of mobilization, critics argue. In this landscape, the question of morality loses importance as morality only figures as a backdrop for mobilization factors like moral shocks, predispositions, frames, and narratives. Thus, morality's role has been relegated to the role of a factor in the mobilization machinery, and the question of whether substantial moral differences between movements and their constituency might result in different mobilization patterns, not to mention morality's relevance to movement outcomes, has been neglected.

The overall picture of the present state of the field painted by these diagnoses seems valid. However, there are notable exceptions. Not so long ago, a group of scholars formulated the so-called new social movement theories that assume an intimate link between movements and the major conflicts of society. According to these scholars, the shift from modern industrialized to post-industrial society associated with a major shift from material to post-material values also changed the role and constitution of social movements (Touraine, 1974, 1992; Melucci, 1989; Habermas, 1975, 1984). From instrumental movements with a distinct class, estate, or gender-based constituency, new social movements drew their constituency from a mixed set of positions in society that came together to articulate new collective identities addressing society's major challenges, like threats to the environment, peace, and, recently, climate. Walder (2009) appears to ignore this influential strand of theory that, in many respects, exactly represents what he asks for, and it is true that this tradition's influence has declined in the past decades.

Despite this decline, the perspective is reflected in Jeffrey Alexander and Hans Joas' prominent theories of the formation of society's general values and morality,

which, however, depart from very different theoretical traditions than the new social movement strand. Alexander builds on the Durkheimian and Parsonian heritage, according to which there are certain core values in any society that constitute a symbolic "civil sphere." He shows how excluded groups, such as African Americans and Jews, struggle to gain societal acceptance by representing their particular group identity in the categories and codes accepted as universal in the civic sphere's symbolic order (Alexander, 2006). Joas sees social movements as emblematic of creative action that can reshape normative orders (Joas, 1996), just as he has shown how experiences of sacrality have historically moved and shaped the struggle for human rights, for example in the antislavery movement, and generally have served as a source of both legitimation of and challenges to rulers (Joas, 2013, 2017). Here, movements figure prominently, but these theories are much more comprehensive than just explanations of social movements. Social movements are relegated to what McAdam and Boudet (2012) consider their proper place as one—important—element in a more general theory of society. However, few social movement studies are concerned with these issues, as documented by McAdam and Boudet. Thus, while recently formulated theories and the prominent tradition of new social movements all are deeply concerned with movements' relation to the overall moral questions at the institutional or macro-level of society, this is not the central concern of the field of social movement studies and civic action. Here, the question of mobilization dominates, and to the extent such "grand" theories are taken into account, they are used to account for mobilizations' dependence on certain (un)favorable structural conditions. The new social movement question of whether certain kinds of movements arise in relation to certain moral and material conflicts in society, or the question of how movements shape such conflicts and the history of society, is rarely addressed. Rather, the focus is on the inner dynamics of mobilization, mainly on micro- and meso-level dynamics. Our point is not that we should stop studying the dynamics of mobilizations, far from it. The point is rather that the field should also preoccupy itself with the question of how movements shape history and vice versa; that is, the category of historical influences and outcomes. Here, morality figures as a central, yet contested, category in new social movement theories and Joas' and Alexander's work. Thus, there seems to be good reason why the field should integrate more with existing theories and maybe consider revitalizing the heuristics of the new social movement tradition.

Looking at the literature preoccupied with the question of mobilization, we do find a range of concepts like moral shocks (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995), injustice symbols (Olesen, 2017), narratives (Polletta, 1998; Ganz, 2009), value predispositions (van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995; Gundelach, 1995; Gundelach & Toubøl, 2019), emotional batteries and liberation (Jasper, 2018), framing (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1992), collective identity (Melucci, 1989, 1995, 1996; Tilly, 2005), and political altruism (Giugni & Passy, 2001; Tilly, 2001; Passy, 2013; Jacobsson & Lindblom, 2016; Carlsen et al., 2020), where moral distinctions and evaluations constitute the central object studied. These concepts may, however, (1) focus on the structural elements of relations and networks central to explaining mobilization mechanisms. This sidesteps and glosses over the moral identity formation

happening at the micro-level of interaction connecting the mobilization to society's morality. The latter (2) may result in the reification of the dynamic aspects of the phenomenon, disconnecting it from the wider moral configuration in society's institutions and culture. Finally, (3) they may suffer from not defining the assumed moral or ethical drivers at play. We will expand on these criticisms below.

However, differently approached—and often more in line with their authors' original intent, these concepts are promising avenues for connecting the internal dynamics of mobilization more profoundly to society's moral questions. In relation to the first and second critique, paying more attention to the dynamic and interactional aspects would allow us to study how moral dynamics relating to the surroundings of social movements, for example, moral "templates" and institutions, develop and condition mobilization as well as influence actors interacting with movement actors. In relation to the third point of critique, this can be achieved either by defining the moral basis of the mechanisms or processes identified by the concepts, which would allow for connecting them to the wider moral struggles and divides in society.

The three critiques can be exemplified by shortly considering three prominent theories in this area, namely, (1) the concept of *collective identity* and relational explanations of *political altruism* related to the tendency to focus on the structural properties and not paying attention to the interactional basis where the moral meanings are created, (2) the theory of *framing* in relation to the problem of reification, and (3) the concept of *moral shocks* in relation to the problem of not defining the moral basis of emotions.

Morality in Interaction

The first critique, concerning the need to study the interactional basis of relationships in order to capture their moral content, departs from the most influential single contribution from the new social movement tradition, namely Alberto Melucci's concept of collective identity (Melucci, 1989, 1995; Melucci, 1996). Melucci intended for the concept to encapsulate how social movements, through identity formation based on meaning-making and negotiations at the micro-level of interactions, enable both collective action and mobilization. More importantly, the formation of collective identity also provides shared interpretations of society and historic moments in relations to the past and future. Therefore, collective identities link movements to society's overall moral struggles and in this way influence society's future social, economic, political, and moral development. This was also the case with the "old" movements where divisions fixed identities by class, estate, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religion. What was striking about the new social movements was that such divisions had lost their grip on society, if not altogether disappeared, moving the task of negotiating, inventing, and stabilizing collective identities to the center of the so-called new social movements' activities. In the formation of such new collective identities, formulating new moral templates takes the center

stage as students of radicalization and socialization have shown (e.g., della Porta, 2018; van Stekelenburg, 2017; Klandermans, 2014).

Despite this detailed and substantive theory, the concept of collective identity has often been reified into a question of static us/them relations (e.g., Tilly, 2005; Tarrow, 2011). Here, the focus is on the definitions of the in-group members and how they are distinct from the out-group members who are perceived as the opponents in contentious struggles. This approach to collective identity loses sight of the aspect of negotiating new meanings and identities at the interactional level and envisioning new moral orders, which, if successful, may play a vital role in recreating society and the course of history. Instead, the relational perspective focuses on the us/them relationship's functional role in mobilization. For example, for certain purposes, analyses at aggregated levels of historical or country comparison can be fully justified, but for analyses of collective identity proper, it is not. For instance, if the purpose is to understand a movement's role in the wider political struggles over distribution, recognition, institutions, and values in society at large, a functionalist us/them approach is of little help in answering questions such as the following: What are the moral claims of the movement? What injustices and wrongs are targeted and what institutional changes struggled for? Who are considered opposed to the movement's aims? What cultural repertoires are mobilized in one context, what repertoires are available in another context, and how may they transform the collective identity and its moral contents? As Passy and Monsch (2020) show, taking a closer look at these elements of collective identity appears crucial if we are to link the movement to the wider moral struggles of society and perhaps identify what causal agency is exerted by movement actors. Also, employing the overlapping concepts of group and scene style, Eliasoph and Lichterman have demonstrated how interactional styles of movement cultures strongly influence aims and repertoires of movements (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003; Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014), which in turn have implications for what moral claims movements can make (Lichterman & Dasgupta, 2020; Carlsen et al., 2021).

The relational approach has also been central to the explanation of political altruism and solidarity activism, a very moral kind of activism indeed (Passy, 2001). Tilly (2001) argues that what motivates altruistic activism toward out-group individuals is the moral identities of the in-group network of activists and their shared collective identity. Here, altruism is a by-product of in-group commitments and identities. To the extent the goal is to explain the mechanism of mobilization, this explanation might suffice, but if we are interested in understanding how such altruistic acts entail moral visions, we need to understand the interaction that created and sustained the in-group network ties, commitments, and identities in the first place (Passy & Monsch, 2020; Monsch & Passy, 2018; Passy & Monsch, 2014). Such perspectives enable us to inquire into how activism might alter our worldviews and moral beliefs (Passy & Giugni, 2000, 2001). Challenging Tilly's assertion that political altruism is simply a by-product of in-group commitments and identities, a recent study even suggests that the interaction and relationship between the activist and the out-group individual puts ethical demands (Løgstrup, 1997) on the activist and becomes a moral experience with wide-ranging consequences for the ebb and

flow of activism as well as the overall future life course of activists (Carlsen et al., 2020), a phenomenon also observed by others (e.g., McAdam, 1988).

Disconnected Moralities

The second critique is in many ways an extension of the first and concerns how reification of the dynamic aspects of social movement processes disconnects them from the wider moral configuration in society's institutions and culture in which they are embedded. As in the case of collective identity and structural approaches to networks, the reified versions of the theories may still be useful in explaining the mechanisms of mobilization in an abstract analytical manner, but the substantial moral contents of the collective action and social movements are easily lost. Questions of how movements are expressions of certain particular moral struggles and how they might inform and influence future ones—the very reason why we study these movements at all—are pushed to the margins in such analyses. To be clear, our point is not to do away with analysis and theories of mobilization processes—this is a crucial part of understanding movements—but to motivate a renewed interest in how movements relate to moral struggles, institutions, and historical change (McAdam & Boudet, 2012; Walder, 2009).

The consequences of reification can be illustrated by the framing theory. The framing concept was originally designed to draw attention to the importance of the particular moral contents of social movements and how movements were embedded in and dependent upon specific cultures and moral orders. Based on Erving Goffman's interactionist framework (Goffman, 1974) and Antonio Gramsci's dynamic and relational theory of hegemonic struggles (Gramsci, 1971), the theory initially aimed for careful analyses of the dynamic development and consequences of movements' framing of their ideological goals in relation to specific topics and events (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988). The theory's ambition was to take into account how both interactional processes, internally among movement actors and relations, and interaction with external actors, competing political forces, influenced and shaped this process. Thereby the theory convincingly argued that a successful mobilization of a movement did not rely solely on its ability to mobilize resources and navigate the political opportunity structures but also on its ability to formulate its goals and strategies in ways that resonated with the pressing issues and problems of the intended audience's lifeworlds (Snow & Benford, 1992). This interaction between movement, audience, and other actors was perceived as dynamic. Therefore, the on-going interaction, formulations, and interpretations of moral claims, feelings, and political opportunities were in theory perceived as the central object of study that would have consequences for the success or failure of the movement.

However, as in the case of collective identity, this theoretical program, despite the concept's huge success (Benford & Snow, 2000), has turned out somewhat differently. Robert D. Benford (1997) criticizes that, in the application of framing

theory reification, static and elite bias tendencies have crippled the original dynamic and interactionist ambitions. In many ways similar to the fate of the collective identity concept, this implies losing focus on how new moral ideas and ideologies are developed and how they interact. In particular, the Gramscian aspects directly linking framing to the struggles over political hegemony tend to have been disconnected. A reconnection, we shall later argue, might constitute an avenue for revitalizing framing for the purpose of studying movements' dependence on, and influence on, society's morality. However, the tendency in the use of framing theory is that moral ideas are primarily evaluated for their role in the process of mobilizing.

Moral Foundations

We exemplify the third criticism of not conceptualizing the assumed moral or ethical theoretical foundation by James Jasper's work on the moral shock theory (1995) and *The Art of Moral Protest* (Jasper, 1997). Jasper's contribution constitutes one of the most influential cornerstones of the cultural turn within social movement studies that has contributed to bringing culture and tradition back into social movement studies and political sociology (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Goodwin et al., 2000; Goodwin & Jasper, 2004). In particular, the theory has reintroduced moral emotions as a factor in the process of mobilization. However, we will argue that the theory, paradoxically, is somewhat limited when it comes to analyzing how moral developments shape and are shaped by social movements. This limitation has its roots in the theory's failure to conceptualize morality as something separate from emotions.

In Jasper's culturalist version, morality, on the one hand, refers to already established principles, values, and visions available in the culture and, on the other hand, moral intuitions (Jasper, 1997) that form the basis of moral judgment and motivate action. This is also the case with the concept of moral shocks that may motivate individuals without any history of activism, or personal or organizational ties to social movements, to engage in protest—either individually or by joining already established movements (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995). Jasper defines moral shocks as "the vertiginous feeling that results when an event or information shows that the world is not what one had expected, which can sometimes lead to articulation or rethinking of moral principles" (Jasper, 2011). Here, an idea surfaces regarding how moral protest might involve rethinking and potentially changing moral principles.

The distinction between morality and emotions is also evident when Jasper states, "Even the most fleeting emotions are firmly rooted in moral and cognitive beliefs that are more stable" (Jasper, 1997, 113). However, it is not unfolded how such moral beliefs are constituted, what foundation lends them more stability than emotions, and how we sense something is allegedly morally wrong. The concept, which comes closest to offering any such explanation, is that of moral intuitions, which, however, ends being equated with moral emotions "such as shame, guilt, pride, indignation, outrage, and compassion" (Jasper, 2011). Again, we are sent

back to emotions, and the normativity of such emotions is simply assumed, but the moral origins and foundations of this normativity are not explained.

To be clear, this does not cripple the theory's usefulness as an analytical tool for describing how moral emotions play a role in the processes of mobilization and protest. But, while description is important, such a constructivist epistemology of emotions and culture comes with some limitations, as Barbalet pinpoints: "The constructionist conception of emotion, by incorporating the *explanans* of the theory (culture) in the definition of the *explanandum* (emotion), can at best offer descriptions of emotions, rather than explanations of them" (Barbalet, 1998, 24). If one substitutes "culture" with "morality" in the preceding quote, it becomes clear why we need to take morality seriously as an independent category. Otherwise, many questions are left unanswered. Are all emotions moral and what are the sources of the moral informing the emotion? Does an emotional reaction equal a moral action? What is the relationship between moral orders and emotional reactions? These questions need answering if we are to analyze the role of social movements in the transformation of society's morality.

This oversight of the field demonstrates, on the one hand, morality's centrality to social movements, but on the other hand, it also shows that the concept is often treated ad hoc, with a few exceptions that feature the question of morality at their center—often in reified or underdeveloped guises, however. It also shows that, in the past, interest in movements' relationship with major moral conflicts in society and the historical development had much more weight than presently, which calls for a revitalization of such perspectives as well as for developing novel approaches.

We are not going to solve these identified shortcomings of some prominent theoretical strands in the field of social movements. This volume does not intend to provide a complete moral theory of social movements and civic action. Instead, in the following section, we will re-examine the many potentials of morality for the study of civic action by opening up the concept along three dimensions: *selves in interaction*, *rationalization and justification*, and *culture and tradition*—dimensions that we trace from their emergence in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century moral philosophy through the founders of sociology and up until today. In doing so, we will shortly touch upon how each dimension relates to the three problems identified in the existing literature and how they might offer inspiration for potential solutions.

Three Dimensions of Morality in Movements

In the following sections, we will perform a modest genealogy of how the relationship between movements and morality has been interpreted in social thought. This exercise is not intended as a full "historical review" but as a way of understanding our present situation as well as an inspiration for social movement scholars. Now, clearly, it would be anachronistic to talk about social movements in the eighteenth

century; therefore, the genealogy will trace the connection between morality and action rather than movements as such.

The concept of morality is itself defined in varying ways in the literature: formal universal principles (Kant), bourgeois half solutions to structural problems (Hegel and Marx), moral content versus ethical form (Habermas), or moral experience versus ethical content (Bauman). Further, there is a wide semantic field that, besides morality, encompasses norms, values, ideals, ethics, normative principles, rules, and conventions. Rather than laying bare in painstaking detail how different research traditions have defined and redefined these concepts, we will pursue the concept of morality along central dimensions that we claim to find in the tradition.

We will focus on three overall dimensions of the relationship between morality and collective action, which will constitute an organizing heuristic structuring of the genealogy and the book: (1) *selves in interaction*, (2) *rationalization and justification*, and (3) *culture and tradition*. More often than not, all three dimensions will be pertinent in empirical analyses. Only analytically can they be distinguished, and they are not developed to be mutually exclusive but rather as sensitizing concepts or theoretical perspectives that help scholars become aware of, and thus able to analyze, different aspects of empirical phenomena. In this way, they can guide our inquiry into the relationship between morality and movements. *Selves in interaction* concerns questions about how moral ideas may motivate action, individual- or group-level interpretation and meaning-making, how moral agents may act creatively to change norms of society, or how individual and collective selves may change their moral outlooks as part of a process of mobilization. *Rationalization and justification* deals with the Enlightenment tradition of social research, and its critics, and addresses issues of framing, dialogue, negotiation of principles, and justification and valuation practices in movements. Conversely, *culture and tradition* focuses on how emotions, narratives, and everyday moral routines inform and underlie collective action. Movements may emerge from what is seen as a breach of culturally established norms and, similarly, work to change traditional ways of interpreting issues.

As mentioned, the three dimensions sensitize us to different aspects of a given phenomenon, and in empirical research they will overlap. Culture shapes selves, but individuals and groups struggle to change or conserve culture, just as moral selves are shaped by rational appeals to moral principles or through justificatory practices. Certain aspects of culture may be made objects of public discussion or are cognitively framed in specific ways to achieve certain ends. Certain frames are, in turn, sedimented into traditions and routine behavior.

For each of the dimensions, in the genealogy, we will pick out an "ancestor" in moral philosophy and trace the history of the dimension through the founders of sociology to the emergence and development of present-day social movement theory. We start the section on selves in interaction with Hume (Scottish Enlightenment), rationalization and justification with Kant (German Enlightenment/Idealism), and we have chosen Hegel (German Idealism) as the representative of culture and tradition. The three dimensions can all be found in the works of the founders of sociology. Building on the legacy of moral philosophy, these authors sought to

operationalize the philosophers' ideas of morality into more empirical research agendas. In turn, these perspectives would lay the foundation for the way recent social movement literature deals with—or does not deal with—morality.

Selves in Interaction

The moral experience that may lead to mobilization is today mainly described by the culturalist strand focusing on emotions. By revisiting the broader philosophical and sociological tradition, which also the culturalists draw on, we do, however, encounter a varied set of moral experiences that can inspire us: New forms of action may emerge from the experience of the suffering of the other, collective "effervescence," or processes of moral "decentering." This tradition points to new ways to connect the moral content of interactions with morality at the level of social movements and institutions and how such moral experiences sustain, revitalize, and transform our values and moral principles.

David Hume (1711–1776), most consequently and consequentially among the eighteenth-century moral philosophers, emphasized how morality emerged from *experience*. Hume set out to do away with all metaphysics in favor of following an empiricist and naturalist approach to the study of human nature, based on fact and observation in an "anatomy of the mind" (Hume, 1990 [1739], 212). He famously stressed that, in moral matters, reason could only be the "slave of the passions" (Ibid., 266). "Ideas," he argued, would always be secondary to experience. For Hume, perception consists of both impressions and ideas. Impressions are immediate feelings, desires, passions, and emotions, while ideas only recollect these primary impressions.

Hume found the source of morality to be essentially social: Feelings of approval or disapproval, love or hate, behavior, and motives stem from the human capacity for *sympathy*. Sympathy designates a process whereby the idea of someone else's feelings becomes one's own feelings through the association of oneself with the other through the resemblance to, or proximity of, the other person. In this way, morality is explained in the same way that causality is explained, namely, through the principle of association: In the same way that we associate causes with effects in experience, we also associate our feelings with the idea of the feelings of others, and in this way, the force and vivacity that characterizes our feelings are conveyed to the experience of the other person.

However, how does one relate to the other that is not proximate or does not resemble oneself? This, to Hume, is a question of government and public interest. Arguing against Hobbes's idea that government came about out of the necessity to set boundaries for individuals' natural self-interest, Hume finds that human beings' natural tendency is cooperation. Similar to his distinction between impressions and ideas, Hume distinguishes natural virtues (kindness and being charitable) that are inherently human from artificial virtues (respect of rights and contractual relations) that are the result of social conventions. Artificial virtues, like natural virtues, are

the result of our capacity to cooperate. Conventions about basic rights are prior to the formation of governments that enforce these conventions. They are the result of cooperation and the recognition that public virtues are beneficial to us. While self-interest is at the heart of the motive to establish a society regulated by law, sympathy is the cause of our moral judgment of just institutions—sympathy with the public interest and not just the good that we get from having public institutions in place.

Among the *founders of sociology*, we see the Humean theme of experience as the root of morality play out as investigations into the experiential roots of solidarity and altruism. Arguably, the most "Humean" of the early sociologists was Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) (A. W. Rawls, 1996). In his later works, Durkheim pursued an experiential approach, showing how collective and ritualized religious experiences were central in bolstering the core beliefs in a community through elevated states of collective "effervescence" or ecstasy (Durkheim, 2008 [1912]). These extraordinary experiences of self-loss are attributed to a higher power, and the world is consequently divided into the spheres of the sacred and the profane. Durkheim finds that revolutionary periods are similarly characterized by such elevated collective states of self-loss and experiences of "sacredness."

While this analysis has been interpreted as a constructivist account of religion, it is probably more accurate to view it as an analysis of collective processes of value formation (Joas, 2000, 54–68). This experiential approach has most prominently been taken up by Hans Joas to show how the experience of cultural trauma, such as the atrocities of the National Socialist regime in Germany, can lead to the encoding of universal human rights in national and international law (Joas, 2013). Drawing more extensively and explicitly on the later Durkheim helps account for the relation between emotions and culture that the culturalist accounts of social movement engagement and moral shocks struggle to clarify.

Mobilization may, however, not only emerge from elevated experiences of effervescence but also from common experiences of degradation. Marx described how class consciousness emerges from common experiences of, and struggle against, oppression (cf. G. A. Cohen, 2009; Gilabert, 2017). The young Marx saw class solidarity emerging from the experience of alienation caused by the capitalist mode of production, where the worker under capitalism is not only separated from his product and his self as a productive and creative animal but also from the larger community, where relations are dominated by market exchanges rather than mutual satisfaction of need (Marx & Engels, 1988 [1932]).

As an ideal segue to the next section on cognition, the American pragmatists have shown how morality, experience, and cognition are intrinsically linked. Like Hume, they seek to describe empirically how values emerge from experience. Unlike Hume, they do not give precedence to immediate emotions over secondary ideas. Conversely, they seek to overcome such dichotomies by taking the action situation as the starting point of their analyses: Values emerge as the result of our attempt to adapt to situations. As new situations arise, we need to act differently, and thus we need new interpretations of the world that can help us make sense of it. Action and morality are, therefore, inseparable. John Dewey (1859–1952), in his work *A Common Faith* (Dewey, 2013 [1934]), distinguishes between three types of

situation and three relations with the world: First, a relation where the actor *accommodates* behavior to an unchangeable world; second, *adaption* of the world to the actor's needs and desires; and, third, the religious experience that is characterized by an *adjustment* to the world, a "passive voluntarism," and a change not *in* will but *of* will, as a holistic experience of self-transformation. This complete transformation of goals and desires into a perceived unity is simply the effect that Dewey calls "religion." Dewey sees this uniting of the self through religious experience as an imaginary relation to oneself. It is an accomplishment where imagination opens up the inherent possibilities *in* reality (Ibid., 15–18). Thus, the religious experience is about experiencing and creating a moral content—a principle or an ideal as possessing authority over the way we live our lives. Since "God" is simply a label that is put on this object of experience, other ideals can take its place, such as science, art, or democracy. Such experiences are inherently creative since ideals are not simply "out there" but are realized through this active-passive process. Put concisely, the emergence of values and ideals can be understood as "*creative processes in which contingent possibilities are idealized*" (Joas, 2000, 114) (Joas' italics).

A significant research agenda emerges here that can help address the problem of reifying morality in interaction that we identified in the literature review, specifically in relation to the theory of collective identity and political altruism. For instance, how do rituals bolster a grassroots group's collective identity? By paying attention to the contents of both mass rituals in the Durkheimian sense and everyday interaction rituals at the micro-level, we can perhaps revitalize the original agenda of Melucci's theory and, by focusing on the interactional contents of collective identity formation, study how new moral visions emerge in social movements and how they relate to the moral orders at the institutional level.

The agenda also points toward new avenues in the study of political altruism where we can ask how experiences of elevation, degradation, or violation of norms of justice lead to mobilization of political altruism. For instance, both Ann Rawls, elaborating on Goffman's analysis of the interaction order (A. W. Rawls, 1987, 1990), and most significantly K. E. Løgstrup (Løgstrup, 1997; Løgstrup, 1976) have pointed to how the interaction order places ethical demands on the participants to care for the other participants in situated interaction. In relation to solidarity activism and political altruism, such ethical demands to care arise from the experience of the situated suffering of the deprived Other (Toubøl, 2017). Recent research has indicated that, in solidarity movements, interaction with the deprived other constitutes a strong driver of activist persistence (Carlsen et al., 2020). This focus on how our capacity for sympathy with the suffering of the Other places ethical demands on participants in specific situations takes us back to the Humean starting point but places it in a new context via the symbolic interactionists' focus on the semi-autonomous interaction order. From here, we can benefit further by following Hume's lead and ask how such experiences of suffering relate to moral cognitions. Perhaps more crucial, how do the individual's perceived suffering and injustice relate and inform more general moral principles and agendas (Boltanski, 1999)?

These are open questions to which we have no readily available answers. Nevertheless, they point toward pending research questions concerned with

connecting the individual's moral experiences with morality at the institutional level. The above discussion of the moral self's foundation in interactional experience clarifies that—to answer these questions—we need to go beyond the structural content of relationships and collective identity and focus on the interactional content of rituals and solidary relationships, which are among the foci of Chaps. 4–6.

Rationalization and Justification

The second tension laid out in the review regards the status of rationality: On the one hand, the framing perspective has led to an increased focus on the role of ideas in movements, while on the other hand, this perspective has been reified, rendering the issue of ideas in movements as mostly a question of messaging. Especially set against the richness of the intellectual tradition on this issue, this seems unnecessarily reductivist.

Genealogically speaking, the most important root to thinking about the relation between reason, morality, and action is Immanuel Kant. To the Prussian Enlightenment thinker, reason enables us to autonomously create moral laws that bind the will. The categorical imperative famously encapsulates this principle: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (Kant, 2006 [1785], 57). The maxim is also called the universal law of nature and establishes the universal and a priori principles of morality that apply to all humans across time and culture.

To Kant, only the person that is motivated by *duty* to such a universal law can be considered moral. Acts done out of love or compassion cannot be said to be moral, even if they may be commendable. Only when a moral principle restricts us from doing something we were otherwise inclined to do can we say that the motivation was moral. To Kant, to act on a sense of moral duty is to act in accordance with universal law. The categorical imperative binds us unconditionally, even if, and indeed because, we are free not to follow it (cf. J. Rawls, 1980).

Broadly speaking, social sciences have had a complicated relationship with their Enlightenment heritage. One the one hand, they are bound by the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy and independent knowledge seeking. On the other hand, empirically, rationality is a slippery concept and often fails to inform action.

Max Weber and Karl Marx would both dedicate themselves to the task of showing how universalist and rationalized morality historically had been used to legitimize the position of the powerful in society. Weber argued against Nietzsche that there had never existed a class of rulers in society who did not need to legitimize their position through rationalized universal morality. Not only bad fortune but also good fortune needed legitimization (Weber, 1946). Moreover, under modern conditions, rationalized universal ethics would not lead to autonomous action, but rather to self-enslavement under the empty work ethic of capitalism (Weber, 2001). Marx perceived the problem of rational moral action in terms of class. Rational morality could only ever present itself as ideology—as a complex of ideas about the state of

the world including the correct moral order of things that would present itself as universal but served the interests of society's dominant class. Marx especially, but also Weber to a degree, can be said to have pursued an "unveiling" approach to show how universalist ideology is at the heart of class oppression (Marx & Engels, 2016 [1846])—a strategy that still inspires social movement studies, not least related to so-called backlash movements (McAdam & Kloos, 2014; Norris & Inglehart, 2018). Still, the role of rational ideals' positive and progressive contribution to collective action was largely neglected by the critical tradition.

However, a couple of generations down the road, Antonio Gramsci would place the question of morality at the center of the Marxian tradition: The task was not only to unveil bourgeois ideology to expose the fragility of the hegemony. If the workers' movement should successfully transform society and install a new hegemony, ideas, cultures, and indeed a morality of its own making had to be developed to raise the consciousness of the oppressed and form the historic block that by means of both organization and intellectual "trench warfare" would transform society's hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

Gramsci's development of morality, ideology, and identity into central matters of concern for the very formation of social movement as well as their ability to exert political impact has, in crucial ways, influenced social movement studies and inspired both new social movement scholars like Melucci but also, perhaps most profoundly, the frame alignment tradition fusing insights from Gramsci and Goffman (Snow & Benford, 1988). While this tradition has focused mostly on the rational and cognitive aspects of morality, the Gramscian source of inspiration was just as preoccupied with the role of culture and traditions, which the intellectuals need to understand in order to frame the struggle in a way that resonates with the lived experiences of ordinary people whose consciousness is what the frames aim to raise and alter.

The Gramscian approach to movements is mirrored in E. P. Thompson's analysis of "food riots" in the eighteenth-century England. He shows how this term is laden with what he calls a "spasmodic" view of popular history (Thompson, 1971). "Riots" and "the mob" are terms used to describe contentious collective action in a degrading way that denies the common people any type of agency and objectifies them as a loose collection of individuals that lose their inhibitions in the crowd and act purely emotionally (or spasmodically). Thompson instead finds that the riots were a *rational* reaction to rises in food prices beyond what was *traditionally* considered a "just" price and the riots often targeted *symbolic* venues such as the mills where flour was made. In other words, they were rational reactions to a breach of norms embedded in local moral economies.

Broadening the Gramscian approach, Jürgen Habermas, in general, and Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, in particular, developed a still more explicit argument for the role of reasoned morality in social movements. By appropriating Habermas' discourse ethics and his concepts of lifeworld and systems to the field of civil society (Arato & Cohen, 1988; J. L. Cohen & Arato, 1992), Cohen and Arato propose that the principles of discourse ethics are at the basis of social movements, that is, the "equal participation of everyone concerned in public discussions of contested

political norms" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 345). They concur with Habermas in locating the proper place for a truly democratic project in the lifeworld of collective everyday experiences, and they recognize voluntary associations and the public sphere as the two key institutions of civil society (Ibid., 412). They add to Habermas that an important aspect of the recent developments in civil society is the self-limiting by and of movements: In contrast to earlier revolutionary projects, the aim is not to defeat other social groups but to enable the growth of a pluralistic society. Social movements thus come close to the ideals of discourse ethics: equal access to participation in deliberative processes that allow the "unforced force of the better argument" to work. According to Cohen and Arato, progressive social movements must have a dual purpose: a defensive aim of protecting and developing the communicative infrastructure of the lifeworld by setting up "barriers" for state intervention in the form of rights, and an offensive aim of collective action to mediate between systems and the lifeworld (Ibid., 530ff). These authors use metaphors such as antennas or sensors to characterize the role of movements and civil society organizations (Ibid., 1992, 526; Habermas, 2001, 300; 359; 365). Such antennas are supposed to amplify grievances in the lifeworld and put them on the agenda for systems to address. Cohen and Arato's prime example is the feminist movement, especially the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s. This movement had a dual strategy that targeted both the lifeworld and systems. They mobilized around issues of abortion, contraception, rape, and violence against women in order to influence the norms of the lifeworld (what is acceptable behavior, changing gender roles, etc.), and they acted as "antennas," relaying the grievances in everyday life in order to claim rights from the political system as well as to overcome inequality in the economic system—not through political violence, but through the use of arguments in the public sphere (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 551f).

The critical tradition continues to struggle with the status of the Enlightenment heritage. Post-structuralists explore universalist ethics as a ghost or a necessary illusion (Butler et al., 2000), while others seek to develop a more grounded "sociology of critique" that reconstructs rational ideals from the bottom-up and explores their roles in justificatory practices (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). These classical discussions within the Enlightenment and critical tradition inform the contributions of this volume's Chapters 7–10.

Culture and Tradition

As laid out in the review above, culturalist social movement scholars tend to equate emotion and morality, leading to confusion about the definition of, and relation between, the two, as well as the danger of moral relativism. Arguably, G. W. F. Hegel was the first to relativize our conceptions of morality thoroughly. He did so, however, by distinguishing different dimensions of morality and relating them to societal structures.

While Hume emphasized sentiment, and Kant held fast to reason as the source of morality, Hegel introduced a more thoroughly social and cultural conception of morality. Hegel famously argued against the formalism of Kant's moral philosophy and found it to be the expression of a bourgeois worldview that neglected the role of societal institutionalized norms (Wood, 1990). Morality in the Kantian sense was an abstraction that failed to see how individuals are always embedded in social contexts. This type of morality was behind arbitrary acts, such as charity toward the needy, that showed no sign of any thorough understanding of social relations or cultural embeddedness. This is basically the critique that communitarians have since launched at liberal moral philosophers (Taylor, 1985).

In *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel showed how contractual relations could not be understood properly as an agreement between free individuals. Rather, contracts are entered into within the larger framework of a culturally formed economy. In this way, an exchange of commodities also involves a *recognition* of the other party as having a specific role within a larger social system. Abstract morality and abstract right are in this way embedded in *sittlichkeit* or ethical life that sanctions specific types of relations. Ethical life encompasses life in the family, characterized by immediate emotional bonds that individuals are absorbed by, as well as the modern contrast to the family, market-based civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) where individuals consider themselves free agents that may or may not enter into contractual relations (or decide to hand out charity). In the end, the state secures that these two contrasting principles do not simply negate each other but are *aufgehoben* or mediated. Civil society in Hegel's account may thus encompass both the particular and the universal insofar as it is part of ethical life. Here, the particular interests of an individual or a group are reflected upon in relation to the wider community (Pinkard, 1999). Ethical life emerges when individual or group interests are not simply pursued in an atomistically individual way, as a contract is entered into by two otherwise unaffiliated parties. Only when individuals and groups are recognized by others, through established social categories, may their particular interests reflect the universal common good (Pinkard, 1986). What these categories should look like, or what the universal common good is, is then a matter of contention, struggle, negotiation, and translation.

Hegel's culturalist approach encompasses socioeconomic cleavages and struggles for recognition and does thus in no way reduce actors to cultural dopes. This, however, is closer to what the young Durkheim sought to do. In his view, the morality question emerged as individuals and groups sought to adapt to changing social structures. To Durkheim, the ultimately moral question of suicide was a question of degree of solidarity and integration of individuals into society. Egoistic, altruistic, and anomic types of suicide reflected the lack of encompassing morality, excessive pressures of morality, and the general disturbance of the norms of society, respectively. Especially the latter model was adopted by social movement scholars who saw discrepancies between socioeconomic developments and norm systems as the explanation for the emergence of protests and social movements. The perhaps most influential of these is the theory of "relative deprivation" that argues that political

violence emerges from a psychological process, through a discrepancy between individual's norm-based expectations of their just share of society's resources and what they receive (Gurr, 2016 [1970]). The disappearance of morality from the social movement research agenda probably has a lot to do with the discrediting of this one-sided reading of Durkheim (Tilly, 1978).

Recently, the Durkheimian approach has been taken up in a more Hegelian fashion by Jeffrey Alexander, who relates culturally mediated morality to the overall fault lines in society; he points to the centrality of the "civil sphere" in mediating struggles over recognition in modern society. To Alexander, every society can be divided into two spheres: civil and uncivil. The civil sphere is built on a language of universalism that particular experiences must use in order to gain acceptance in the larger community (Alexander, 2006). Society continuously develops codes for who and what is inside and outside, pure and impure, and civil and uncivil: "(T)here is no civil discourse that does not conceptualize the world into those who deserve inclusion and those who do not" (Ibid., 55). In Alexander's view, this distinction covers motives (active vs. passive, autonomous vs. dependent, rational vs. irrational, etc.), relationships (open vs. secretive, trusting vs. suspicious, altruistic vs. greedy, etc.), and institutions (rule regulated vs. arbitrary, law vs. power, equality vs. hierarchy, etc.). Alexander goes on to show how excluded groups, such as the Jewish community and African Americans, historically have fought to be accepted into the civil sphere through means of performative acts, translation work, and "civil repair" processes. In this way, the civil sphere contracts and expands, as groups are included or excluded, but in any society, it remains a necessity to be accepted into this universal symbolic sphere in order to be accepted as a full citizen.

In a sense, the processes Alexander describes mirror-image the mechanism of moral panic in which a strong moral reaction from the public emerges as moral entrepreneurs and mass media present a group as dangerous to the core values of society (Cohen, 1972). Here, too, recognition is granted or denied based on symbolic codes and narratives that paint certain groups as threatening "devils."

Similarly, in the vicinity of social movement studies, Robert Bellah and his collaborators aimed to show how the collective biblical and republican "second languages" had presumably been almost forgotten in the USA, leaving only expressive and utilitarian individualist languages as symbolic reservoirs for justifying moral actions (Bellah et al., 1985). In contrast, authors such as Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman have shown that a focus on languages in the abstract neglects how language is applied situationally (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003). In their studies, Eliasoph and Lichterman have found that when the language of individualism was applied, what the participant actually meant was civic engagement. Collective representations are actively developed as groups work out who they are and how they relate to the world around them. In this way, it is only seemingly a contradiction when individualism is used to advance civic action. In the local context of activist groups, the language of individualism can sustain individuals' empowerment to speak up and voice their opinions (Ibid., 756). Just as certain frames can be

amplified or bridged in processes of mobilization, actors interact on patterned and socially recognized "scene styles" (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014).

It seems that there is plenty of theoretical inspiration out there for approaches to the study of the interplay of culture, movements, and morality that go beyond either the abandoned rigid Durkheimian relative deprivation paradigm or the culturalism that in a circular fashion equates morality, culture, and mobilization. In Chapters 11–13 of this volume, this dimension of morality is explored and further developed in three original studies.

The three dimensions of morality in movements, or the three genealogical roots, that we have teased out in this chapter are, of course, analytical distinctions. In any empirical phenomenon, these dimensions will all be present to some extent. Returning to the agenda-setting movements of today introduced in the first chapter, we now clearly see how the three dimensions are relevant for understanding the contention dynamics involved. In the struggles over climate, gender and minority rights, nationalism, and democracy, mobilization occurs with reference to certain experiences with a moral content, for example, injustice, degradation, or loss of status. Similarly, cultural tropes are invoked and reinvented, from the Christian idea of a man's custodial relationship with nature (Chaplin, 2016) to inherited notions of gender roles—tropes that are in turn rationalized, framed, and justified in public discourse to be viable as part of the moral struggle in the public sphere.

Globally, the probably most conspicuous recent event, the Capitol Hill insurrection in the USA on 6 January 2021, crystallizes the interrelation of the dimensions. While we are still awaiting academic scrutiny of the movement(s) involved, a preliminary diagnosis would suggest that the event was born out of experiences of deprivation and cultural grievances that were the result of decades of changing demography (educated urbanites vs. manual laborers in the countryside) and economic globalization, as well as changing gender norms and diversity ideals. These experiences seem to have been interpreted through the cultural lenses of two "civil religions": on the one hand linked to the cultural schemas of white supremacy that have survived the abolition of slavery in the USA and, on the other hand, to a strong popular democratic tradition where the trope—or perhaps *meme*—of the Second American Revolution was reiterated. At the same time, elaborate frames have continually been developed online in relation to the QAnon conspiracy theory: rationalizations and justifications—"trust the plan"—for why Q's predictions did not come to pass, abound in a way that is more than reminiscent of how Weber portrayed the routinization of charismatic leadership or the transition from magical to monotheistic religion.

The contributions in this book all demonstrate the continued relevance of morality to all aspects of social movements, the spanning internal negotiations over strategy and identity, the process of mobilization, and the historical impact of movements and their relation to moral battles of their time.

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