

Example Discussion Questions
Political Opportunities / Almeida (2003)

1. What might be potential factors that undermine acting upon political opportunities? Can we really identify opportunities for mobilization that are not acted upon?
2. How might the foci of protests differ in liberal and authoritarian contexts? Are some more diverse than others?
3. In what ways would longitudinal or cross-sectional analyses undermine or uphold the conceptual vision that we have about political opportunities (or political opportunity structures – P.O.S.)?
4. Considering the difficulties testing POS in research, is it possible to achieve some kind of “general” definition of what political opportunity structure *is* with common dimensions applicable to all research? Is there a way of refining the theory, instead of amassing variables?
5. In thinking about the curvilinear political opportunity model, how would we conceptualize the level of disruptiveness of protests, rather than its frequency?
6. How might threat be differentially directed and conceptualized in a different context? Is it the same in more or less democratic contexts?
7. Is there any difference in movements’ agency when directed at either political contexts or businesses/firms?
8. Almeida does a good job of demonstrating the POS conditions under which protest declines. What is a possible alternative explanation of decline?
9. How do interactions between opposing movements shape state responses? Are countermovements more concerned with generating contrary claims or competing for state attention?
10. Should movements suspend action/taking advantage of victories in one venue to respond to countermovements in another? What are the payoffs?
11. What role do media play in structuring opportunities for movements?