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Individual Participation in Street Demonstrations

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Introduction

Protest participation has been surging throughout the world. In most countries, political protest has become the modal repertoire citizens employ to demand political changes or to express indignation (Meyer and Tarrow 1998). Protest participation has become normalized and all sorts of people resort to protest to demand social and political change (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Norris, Walgrave, and van Aelst 2005; van Aelst and Walgrave 2001). This is empirically confirmed by Granberg (2013), who argues that contention is even resurging. Granberg analyzed data from the Cross-National Time-Series (CNTS) on general strikes, riots, anti-government demonstrations, and revolts spanning the 1919–2012 period in 18 western democracies (Figure 21.1). These data not only show that, since 2009, contention spiked to the level of the 1960s, but also that the type of contention has changed in recent years. While in the 1960s rioting was prevalent, (anti-government) demonstrations are at present by far the most employed repertoire of contention.

People can undertake a whole variety of different kinds of political activities ranging from signing a petition, to taking part in a strike or a demonstration, or more violent political activities. Contention is a multifaceted phenomenon. Although the underlying motivational dynamics may differ considerably (Saunders 2014), these distinct political activities are often lumped together. In this chapter, rather than lumping different forms of participation together, we choose to zoom in on one particular type of protest, namely, street demonstrations. Participation in street demonstrations is *the* prototypical protest activity of citizens today, at least, in Western societies. However, demonstrations come in different forms and sizes and, for

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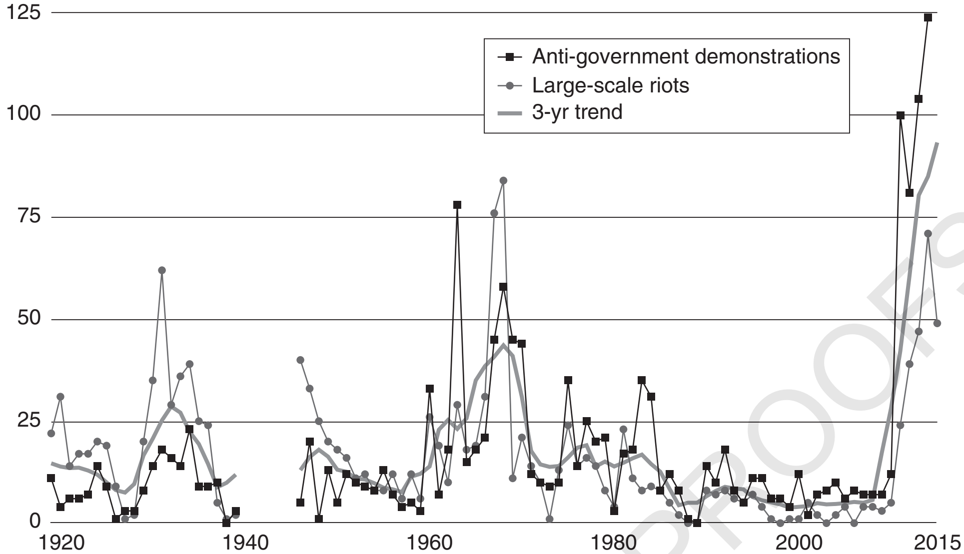

Figure 21.1 Anti-government demonstrations, revolts, riots, and general strikes in 18 western democracies from 1919–2012.

example, the costs and risks involved are dissimilar and highly context-dependent. Compare, for instance, demonstrating LGTBs in Amsterdam or Moscow. Whereas demonstrators in Amsterdam come across as a cheerful party (van Leeuwen, van Stekelenburg, and Klandermans 2015), LGBT demonstrators in Moscow have been known to be beaten by antigay demonstrators and arrested by the police. As a consequence of these differences, there is no uniform, "generalized demonstrator" but rather many types of demonstrators. Verhulst (2011: 213) criticizes the social movement literature for treating demonstrators indiscriminately: "Should we just assume that a routinized peace protester and a worried factory worker have a lot in common, just because they are both protesters?" he rhetorically asks. "Of course not," he replies. A variety of types of people demonstrate, but this is hidden from view because studies of movement participation tend to compare participants with non-participants instead of considering differences among protesters. Consequently, we know relatively little about how demonstrators differ within and between demonstrations.

In this chapter, we first define and conceptualize the phenomenon of a street demonstration; what is a street demonstration and how can it be distinguished from other collective gatherings, such as riots and hooliganism? Next, we shift our focus to the individual demonstrator: who is s/he, why does s/he participate, and how is s/he mobilized? We will use the model of Klandermans (2004) regarding the demand, supply, and mobilization of participation in demonstrations. Then we turn to the question how to investigate participation in street demonstrations. In doing so, we distinguish between methods that focus on the study of protest events, and methods that focus on participants. In the conclusion we raise some methodological issues and challenge how scholars have studied the motives and recruitment techniques that bring individuals to a demonstration.

Defining and Conceptualizing Street Demonstrations[1]

Pierre Favre (1990) – among the first to systematically study street demonstrations – describes how demonstrations, their composition, their participants' motives and mobilization trajectories are social phenomena that develop in multiple interactions between different actors. These different actors are either directly present or involved at a distance in the *moment manifestant* (ibid. see also Fillieule 1997; Fillieule and Tartakowsky 2013). Continuing Favre's pioneering work, Olivier Fillieule compared street demonstrations in various French cities. He defined street demonstrations as "any temporary occupation by a number of people of an open space, public or private, which directly or indirectly includes the expression of political opinions" (1997: 44; our translation). Nine years later, Casquete (2006: 47) defined street demonstrations as "collective gatherings in a public space whose aim it is to exert political, social and/or cultural influence on authorities, public opinion and participants through the disciplined and peaceful expression of an opinion or demand."

Street demonstrations are vehicles for expressing political opinions, ideas, and beliefs; they aim their political communication at authorities, the media, and the public. Casquete (2006) and Eyerman (2006) argue that demonstrations are ritual performances. Eyerman (ibid.: 209) argues that street demonstrations are ritual political street theatre. In the expressive dramatization, he argues, the values, images, and desires of the movement are revealed and membership solidified. The ritual practices help to "frame" understanding by linking present events and practices to those of the past and the future.

To understand how street demonstrations are different from other crowds, gatherings, and riots, we turn to the work of McPhail and Wohlstein (1983). These authors argue that the traditional term "crowd" frequently conveys an "illusion of unanimity," instead, they use the term "gathering" to refer to two or more persons present at one time in a public place, e.g. on sidewalks. If these gatherings protest, it is a demonstration, if it is a festivity or celebration, it is called a parade (e.g. May Day Parade). The term "riots," finally, they describe as gatherings consisting of individual or collective violence against persons or property. Note that gatherings may turn into demonstrations (on spontaneity, see Snow and Moss 2014) and demonstrations may turn into riots (McPhail and McCarthy 2005). To complicate issues even further, hooliganism – violence committed by sport fans – may be very close to riots. This is because hooligans not only use violence in their attempts to humiliate competing gangs who support other club teams, but also to attract attention to their social background and to express grievances related to their social position (Dunning, Murphy, and Waddington 2002, cited by Vliegenthart 2013).

Street demonstrations are the same and different every time they occur. The late Charles Tilly would have seconded that. Street demonstrations, according to Tilly, are examples of contentious performances (2008) obeying the rules of what Tilly called "strong repertoires." Participants are "enacting existing scripts within which they innovate, mostly only in small ways" (ibid.: 17). Wright's (1978) fieldwork observations of crowds, including demonstrations and riots, are of interest here. He differentiates between two broad categories of crowd behaviors: crowd activities and task activities. "Crowd activities" refer to the redundant behavior seemingly common to all incidents of crowds, such as assembling, milling, and departure. McPhail and Wohlstein drill down even deeper, identifying collective locomotion, collective orientation, collective gesticulation, and collective vocalization among the types of crowd behaviors "repeatedly observed across a variety of gatherings, demonstrations, and some riots" (1983: 595). To get at the variation in types of crowds, attention must be turned to what Wright conceptualized as "task activities." These refer to joint activities that are particular to and necessary for the attainment of a specific goal or the resolution of a specific problem. Examples of task activities include mass assembly with speechmaking, picketing, temporary occupations of premises, lynching, taunting and harassment, property destruction, looting, and sniping (Snow and Owens 2013). It is the similarity of crowd activities and the variation in task activities that make that street demonstrations the same and different every time they occur.

Demonstrations may have different functions. Casquete (2006) mentions three functions: (1) demonstrations are staged to *persuade* authorities, e.g. politicians, employers or CEOs, directors, and to acquire and exert influence for social or political change by influencing decision-making processes; (2) demonstrations also allow actors to *vent* frustration. Participants benefit from demonstrating by publicly voicing their anger, indignation, or moral discontent; and (3) demonstrations also serve to *consolidate* participants. Ritual behavior such as protest demonstrations serves to build, convey, and conserve a sense of "we" and fosters sustained commitment among participants in a social movement. Most demonstrations fulfill all three functions, but some functions will likely prevail under specific circumstances. For example, if targeted government actors are ready to make concessions, the persuasive function will probably dominate.

All in all, there is both similarity and variation in how street demonstrations look and feel in their atmosphere (e.g. Eyerman 2006; Van Leeuwen et al. 2015), how they are organized (Boekkooi et al. 2011; Boekkooi 2012; Klandermans et al. 1988), the composition of the crowd (Walgrave and Rucht 2010), their crowd and task activities (McPhail and Wohlstein 1983; Wright 1978) and who they are targeting (Verhulst 2011). Also, protest venues and even weather conditions lead to variance across demonstrations, as does media coverage of the issue at stake. Moreover, demonstrations can be ritualized, peaceful, or violent, with or without a permit, and with or without peaceful interactions with the police. Demonstrations are usually staged by a coalition of organizers, but the composition of the coalition varies and the composition of the crowd on the streets varies with the coalition (Boekkooi 2012). For example, in Spain, the coalition that organized the demonstrations against the war in Iraq in 2003 consisted of major political and social organizations (Walgrave and Rucht 2010), while the coalition staging the same events in the Netherlands consisted of small radical left organizations. As a consequence, the composition of the crowds demonstrating in the two countries differed significantly (Boekkooi, Klandermans, and van Stekelenburg 2011).

Demand, Supply, and Mobilization

Individual participation in demonstrations is the consequence of an interaction between individuals and collective actors such as parties, interest groups, and movement organizations. The more individuals are embedded in such organizations and networks, the more they get involved in their activities. The interaction is shaped by the wider political and socioeconomic conditions prevailing in a country, such as the maturity of a democracy and the current economic circumstances. In Figure 21.2, the process is displayed in a schematic fashion.

Klandermans (2004) decomposes the dynamics of participation in demonstrations into the dynamics of demand, supply, and mobilization. Figure 21.2 visualizes the roadmap of our theoretical exercise. *Demand* refers to the potential of participation in a given society for a certain demonstration on a certain issue; it relates to grievances, efficacy, identity, emotions, and social embeddedness of individuals who may be more or less willing to demonstrate for a given issue or problem. Yet, even if many people are willing to demonstrate, this does not mean that there will be demonstrations. There must be demonstration opportunities. This is where the *supply* side of the equation comes in. It refers mostly to social movements staging demonstrations and, thereby, generating opportunities for individuals to demonstrate. Supply relates to the characteristics of the movement. What issues do the organizers mobilize for? Is the movement strong, is there a densely organized multiorganizational field? Are many people identifying with the staging organizations? Demand and supply do not automatically come together. *Mobilization* is the process that links demand and supply. It is the marketing mechanism of social movements. The mobilizing structure that organizers assemble is the connecting tissue between supply and demand. Mobilization refers to the techniques and mechanisms that organizers

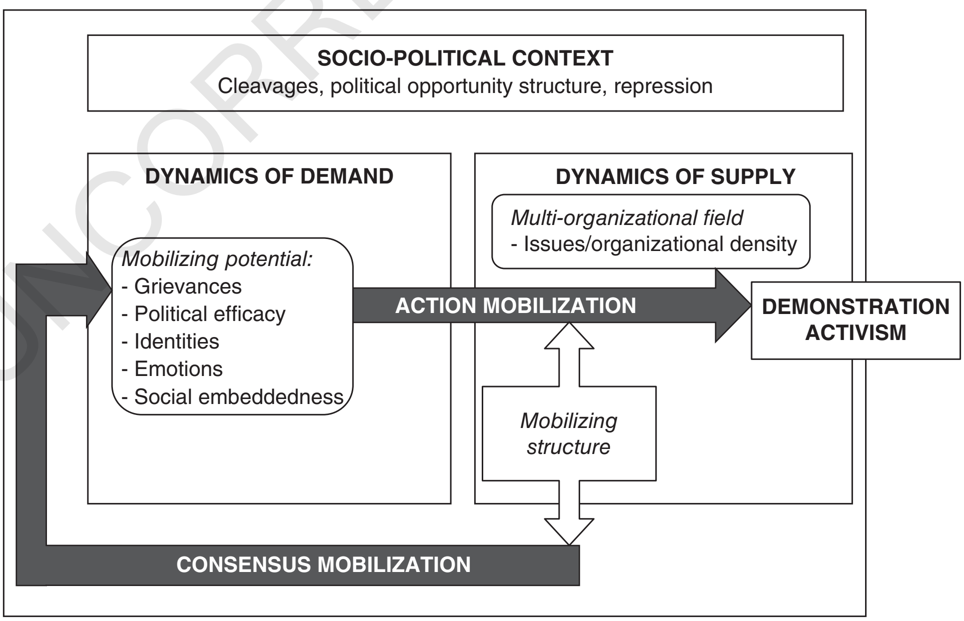

Figure 21.2 Demand, supply, and mobilization.

use to build a mobilizing structure that links a demand for protest to a supply of protest (Boekkooi 2012; Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow 1988; Van Stekelenburg and Boekkooi 2013). This makes it highly dynamic. For example, a fit – or misfit – between motives and appeals can make for success or failure (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2014; Walgrave and Rucht 2010).

Dynamics of demand

Little is known about how demand is formed. A few decades ago, Klandermans introduced the distinction between *consensus mobilization* and *consensus formation* (1984; 1988). While consensus mobilization concerns "the deliberate attempts to spread the view of a social actor among parts of the population," consensus formation concerns "the unplanned convergence of meaning in social networks and subcultures" (Klandermans, 1988: 175). Both these processes can come about via the use of several information and persuasion channels (Gamson 1992), Nowadays, it can be expected that the Internet and social media will play a crucial role in consensus mobilization and formation (Earl and Kimport, 2011; van Stekelenburg et al. 2013) (on the role of the media and the Internet in relation to social movements, see Chapter 7 by Rohlinger and Corrigall-Brown, and Chapter 16 by Earl, in this volume). For example, employing time-series analysis, Vliegenthart (2007) demonstrated regarding the issues of immigration and integration in the Netherlands that, in a complex interplay between real-life events, media attention, debates in the parliament, and debates between politicians, public opinion was formed and converted into anti-immigrant party support.

The social-psychological core of the demand-side of protest consists of grievances, efficacy perceptions, identification, emotions, and social embeddedness (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013).

- *Grievances*. At the heart of every protest lie grievances, be it the experience of illegitimate inequality, feelings of relative deprivation, feelings of injustice, moral indignation about some state of affairs, or a suddenly imposed grievance (Klandermans 1997). Illegitimate inequality is what relative deprivation and social justice theories are about. Suddenly imposed grievances refer to an unexpected threat or inroad upon people's rights or circumstances (Walsh 1981). Feelings of relative deprivation result from comparison of one's situation with a standard, be it one's past, someone else's situation, or a cognitive standard such as equity or justice (Folger 1986; Klandermans 2015). If the comparison results in the conclusion that one is not receiving what one deserves, a person experiences relative deprivation. Runciman (1966) referred to relative deprivation based on personal comparisons as egoistic deprivation and to relative deprivation based on group comparisons as fraternalistic deprivation. Research suggests that fraternalistic deprivation is particularly important for engagement in protest (Major 1994; Martin 1986). On the basis of a meta-analysis, Van Zomeren and colleagues (2008) conclude that the cognitive component of relative deprivation (as reflected in the observation that one receives less than the standard of comparison) has less influence on participation than the affective component (as expressed by such feelings as dissatisfaction, indignation, and discontent about these outcomes). In thinking about the importance of grievances to participation in street demonstrations, it is analytically useful to distinguish between *individual* and *mobilizing* grievances (Snow and Soule 2010). Individual grievances are experienced individually rather than collectively. Mobilizing grievances, however, are grievances that are shared, and that are felt to be sufficiently serious to warrant not only collective complaint but also some kind of corrective collective action. Thus, it is mobilizing grievances, rather than individual grievances, that provide the primary motivational impetus for participation in street demonstrations (ibid.).

- *Efficacy perceptions*. Efficacy refers to an individual's perception that conditions or policies can be altered through protest (Gamson 1992). For the perception of the possibility of change to take hold, people need to perceive the group as being able to unite and fight and they must perceive the political context as receptive to their claims. The former refers to *group* efficacy – the belief that group-related problems can be solved by collective efforts (Bandura 1997) while the latter refers to *political* efficacy – the feeling that political actions of citizens can impact the political process (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller 1954).
- *Identification*. Sociologists were among the first to emphasize the importance of collective identity in protest participation. They argued that the production of a collective identity is crucial for a movement to emerge (Melucci 1989; Taylor and Whittier 1992). Similarly, social psychological studies consistently report that the more people identify with a group. the more they are inclined to protest on behalf of that group (e.g. Reicher 1984; Simon et al. 1998; Stryker, Owens, and White 2000; van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2008). Why is group identification such a powerful push to protest? First, identification with others is accompanied by an awareness of similarity and shared fate with those who belong to the same category. Furthermore, the "strength" of an identity comes from its affective component (see Ellemers 1993, for a similar argument); the more "the group is in me," the more "I feel for us" (Yzerbyt et al. 2003) and the stronger "I am motivated to act on behalf of the group." Collective identification, especially the more politicized forms of it, also intensifies perceptions of efficacy (see Simon et al., 1998, Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Identification with involved others also generates a felt inner social obligation to behave as a "good" group member (Stürmer et al. 2003). The more one identifies with the group, the more weight the group norm will carry and the more it will result in an "inner felt obligation" to act on behalf of the group. Typically, politicization of identities begins with the awareness of shared grievances. Next, an external enemy is blamed for the group's predicament, and claims for compensation are leveled against this enemy. Unless appropriate compensation is granted, the power struggle continues and gradually the group's relationship to its social environment transforms. If in the course of this struggle the group seeks to win the support of third parties such as more powerful authorities (e.g. the national government) or the general public, identities further politicize (Simon and Klandermans 2001).

- *Emotions.* The study of emotions has become a popular research area in the social psychology of protest. That was not always the case. Emotions were often regarded as some peripheral "error term" in motivational theories. For those of us who have observed protest events or watched reports on protest events in the news media, this is hard to believe. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of protest detached from emotions. Anger is seen as *the* prototypical protest emotion (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007). Van Zomeren et al. (2008) show that group-based anger is an important motivator of protest participation. There exists a relation to efficacy: people who perceive the ingroup as strong are more likely to feel angry and willing to fight; people who perceive the ingroup as weak are more likely to feel fearful and wish flight (Devos, Silver, and Mackie 2002; Klandermans, Van der Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg 2008). (See Chapter 23 by Van Ness and Summers-Effler, in this volume, for a discussion of emotions.)
- *Social embeddedness.* Social embeddedness, whether it is based on formal, informal, or virtual networks, plays a pivotal role in the context of protest (Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and Akkerman 2016). Apart from the fact that networks play a pivotal role in action mobilization (see below), it is within these networks that consensus formation and consensus mobilization take place(Klandermans and Stekelenburg 2013).Taylor (2013) proposes the concept of discursive communities to indicate settings in which consensus formation takes place. It is within these networks that processes such as grievance formation, empowerment, identification, and group-based emotions all synthesize into a motivational constellation preparing people for action and building mobilization potential. In fact, the effect of interaction in networks on the propensity to participate in politics is contingent on the amount of political discussion that occurs in social networks and the information that people are able to gather about politics as a result (McClurg 2003). Klandermans et al. (2008) provide evidence for such mechanisms: immigrants who felt efficacious were more likely to participate in protest provided that they were embedded in social networks, especially ethnic networks, which offer an opportunity to discuss and learn about politics. (See Chapter 8 by Crossley and Diani, in this volume, for further discussion of networks.)

Dynamics of supply

The supply side of protest is affected by the characteristics of the social movement sector in a country, its strength, its diversity, and its contentiousness. The social movement sector is often conceived of as a conglomerate of movement organizations (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) providing the infrastructure on which protest is built (Diani and McAdam 2003). Increasingly, people seem to avoid long-term engagements and instead opt for loose engagements in informal, often ephemeral, networks embedded in liquid communities (Roggeband and Duyvendak 2013; Van Stekelenburg and Boekkooi 2013). This decreases the role of social movement organizations in producing protest supply. At the same time, we witness the emergence of a "global social movement sector" (Smith and Fetner 2007), implying that organizations still play a role in creating a supply of protest events.

Movement organizations work hard to turn grievances into claims, to point out addressable targets, to create moral outrage and anger, and to stage events where all this can be vented. They weave together a moral, cognitive, ideological, and emotional framework communicating their appraisal of the situation to the movement's constituency. In doing so, movement organizations play a significant role in the construction and reconstruction of collective beliefs and in the transformation of individual discontent into collective action. Grievances can be framed in terms of *emotional connections* or violated *interests* and violated *principles*. Organizers try to build collective identities, a shared sense of "we-ness" and "collective agency." In fact, in their review of collective identity, Polletta and Jasper (2001: 284) define collective identity as an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connections. It is these connections that organizers try to emphasize. Organizers can frame grievances in terms of emotional connections, I feel for us, which most likely resonates with identity motives. In addition to trying to mobilize people by emphasizing emotional connections, organizers also attempt to promote a sense of outrage about violated interests and principles. Campaigns that emphasize the violation of interests more likely resonate with instrumental motives, i.e. in order to accomplish social change, while campaigns that emphasize the violation of principles more likely resonate with expressive motives, i.e. in order to express one's views (van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and van Dijk 2009).

- *Issue*. The most prominent supply factor is, obviously, the issue of the demonstration chosen by the organizing organizations (Verhulst 2011). Verhulst defines issues as "subjects, processes or situations that affect particular groups in society and which, through these groups' shared interpretations of these problems and the grievances they evoke, have the potential to mobilize these groups into action" (ibid.: 20). He proposes a two-dimensional distinction between old, new, and consensual issues, on the one hand, and particularistic and universalistic issues, on the other. Old and new issues differ on the survival vs. self-expression value cleavage (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Many old issues are related to material, socioeconomic factors, such as inequality, social security, and industrial relations while newer issues often deal with moral, cultural, and lifestyle issues, such as sexual orientation, abortion, animal rights, and peace and war issues. But often it is the direction of an issue (pro or against abortion, or pro or against environmental measures) as defined by the organizers which really matters and which allows them to be placed in the "old" or the "new" category. Consensual issues are in essence "cleavageless," they are valence issues, such as opposition to drunk driving or random violence. Nobody is in favor of drunken driving or random violence; these issues do not imply opposing political positions and there is no counter-movment on these issues. Issues differ in the way and degree to which they appeal to, and potentially activate, relevant publics. Universalistic issues are those that, at least in theory, concern the entire population, such as global warming, while particularistic issues concern a specific group. Taking action on an issue like global warming requires different motivations and mobilization techniques than does taking action on a particular issue, for example, protesting against a factory closure. Different people are affected by different issues leading to different motivations and often also to different ways in which they end up demonstrating (e.g. van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2014).

- *Organizational density*. A second supply factor, next to the issue of the demonstration, is the density of the relevant organizational field (Walgrave and Klandermans 2010). In densely organized fields, more individuals are embedded in the organizer's social network, and this makes establishing a collective identity more likely, which suggests that participants embedded in densely organized fields are more likely to identify with the organizers and the other participants than those embedded in low density fields (Klandermans et al. 2014; Walgrave and Klandermans 2010; Walgrave and Wouters 2014).

Mobilization dynamics

Mobilization is the process that links a specific demand for protest on a certain issue to a protest opportunity around that same issue offered by a social movement organization. Organizers have to build mobilizing structures. *Mobilizing structures* are defined as "those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996: 3). This includes all formal and informal networks that exist both inside and outside a social movement sector. At any time, all kinds of groups, organizations, and networks that exist in a society can become part of a mobilizing structure. However, none can be assumed to automatically become part of it. Networks need to be adapted, appropriated, assembled, and activated by organizers in order to function as mobilizing structures (Boekkooi et al. 2011).

Assembling a mobilizing structure is an important step in the process of micromobilization. Which organizations join the mobilizing coalition is an important predictor of who will participate in protest (e.g. Heaney and Rojas 2008). Most studies show that organizations predominantly mobilize their own members. Similarly, networks tend to reach those who are embedded in their structures. Thus, organizers who assemble different mobilizing structures reach different subsets of a movement's mobilization potential (Boekkooi et al. 2011). Demonstrators who are affiliated with the organizers are mobilized in different manners than unaffiliated demonstrators; moreover, patterns of identification differ, as do the strength and nature of their motivation (Klandermans et al. 2014).

Social networks are indispensable in the mobilization process. Many studies have shown that networks are important in explaining differential participation (e.g. Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980; Walgrave and Klandermans 2010). For instance, Walgrave and Klandermans (2010) demonstrate how open and closed communication channels and weak and strong ties weave a web of connections to a movement's mobilization potential. It is important to distinguish between formal, informal and virtual networks, as it is interpersonal networks in particular that play an important role in mobilization (Walgrave and Wouters 2014).

Yet, sometimes, the demand for protest can be so overwhelming that very little in terms of mobilization is needed to bring large numbers onto the streets. The mobilization process happens then bottom-up and hardly any organization is necessary. For example, in the context of the massive indignation regarding the kidnapping and serial killing of children by Dutroux and judicial errors in Belgium, television and newspapers sufficed as mobilizing actors without the presence of formal organizers (Walgrave and Manssens 2000). Similarly, Walgrave and Klandermans (2010) report findings from a demonstration against the Iraq War revealing that appeals via mass media were more effective in countries with high levels of opposition to the war. Mobilization with minimal or no organization has become more effective with the appearance of virtual networks and social media (Klandermans et al. 2014).

Polletta and colleagues (2013) suggest that the Internet plays an important role in mobilization (see Chapter 16 by Earl, in this volume). Mobilization for so-called connective action (cf. Bennett and Segerberg 2012) moves from one person to another individually, as part of a larger email list, a listserv, or a social network such as Facebook or Twitter. In a process that continues to reproduce itself, the message is copied and redistributed. This matches van Stekelenburg and Klandermans' (2017) observation that technologies such as mobile phones, the Internet, and Facebook played a crucial role in the mobilization of high school students in the Netherlands in a protest campaign against educational policy (van Stekelenburg and Boekkooi 2013; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2017). However, empirical analyses reveal that organizational channels are still important (Klandermans et al. 2014). Thus, the organized character of mobilization remains a continuing topic of debate among social movement scholars.

Mobilization is a complicated process that can be broken down into several conceptually distinct steps. Klandermans (1988) proposes breaking the process of mobilization down into consensus and action mobilization. *Consensus mobilization*, as we have discussed, refers to dissemination of the views of the movement organization, while *action mobilization* refers to the transformation of sympathizers into participants. The more successful consensus mobilization is, the larger the pool of sympathizers a mobilizing movement organization can draw upon for action mobilization. In their frame alignment approach to mobilization, Snow, Benford, and their colleagues elaborate consensus mobilization much further (see Benford, 1997, for a critical review; and Snow, 2004, for an overview). In turn, Klandermans and Oegema (1987) detail the process of action mobilization further into four separate steps: (1) people need to *sympathize* with the cause; (2) people need to *know* about the upcoming event; (3) people must be *willing* to participate; and (4) people must be *able* to participate (see Figure 21.3).

Each step brings the supply and demand of protest closer together until an individual eventually takes the final step to participate in a demonstration. The first step accounts for the results of consensus mobilization. It divides the general public into those who sympathize with the cause and those who do not (see Figure 21.3). A large pool of sympathizers is of strategic importance, because many a sympathizer never turns into a demonstrator. The second step is crucial as well; it divides the sympathizers into those who have been the target of mobilization attempts and those who have not. The third step concerns the social psychological core of the process. It divides the sympathizers who have been targeted into those who are motivated to

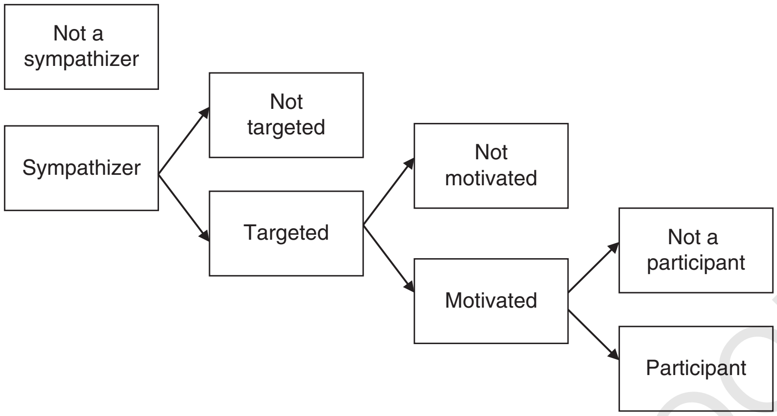

Figure 21.3 Four steps toward participation.

participate and those who are not. Finally, the fourth step differentiates the people who are motivated into those who end up participating and those who do not. With each step, a number of potential participants drop out, but the better the fit between demand and supply, the smaller the number of dropouts.

How to Study Participation in Demonstrations?

Few areas in political behavior research are plagued by such methodological difficulties as the study of participation in political protest (Finkel and Muller 1998). For instance, protest participation usually happens quite spontaneously or at least on short notice, so that researchers cannot plan a well-thought-out study in advance. Moreover, scholars have to come up with creative solutions to avoid problems of reliability and validity. Much of what we know about protest participation comes from studies that roughly can be divided into those that take the protest event as the unit of analysis and those that take the individual as the unit of analysis. In short, there are: (1) studies of *protest events*; and (2) studies of *protest participants*.

Studying protest events

Protest event analysis has been developed to systematically map, analyze, and interpret the occurrence and characteristics of large numbers of protests by means of content analysis, using sources such as newspaper reports, news agencies, police archives, and/or television (e.g. Earl et al. 2004; Koopmans 1993; Wouters 2013). Protest event studies have considerably advanced our understanding of protest waves (Koopmans 1993), social movement outcomes (e.g. see King and Soule 2007; McAdam and Su 2002; Soule and Olzak 2004), and state-opponent interactions (e.g. see Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl et al. 2004).

Over the years, two main concerns have been raised about studying protest events based upon newspaper coverage and police records (e.g. Beyerlein et al, 2016; Earl et al. 2004). The first focuses on *selection bias*. Studies show that media coverage captures only a small subset of the universe of protests, for instance, in Belgium, only

11% of protests recorded in police records make it onto the television screen (Wouters 2013). Newspapers, on the other hand, disproportionately select events deemed to be "newsworthy," such as those larger in size or involving conflicts (e.g. see Earl et al. 2004). But police archives miss events as well, namely, those that do not require permits or demonstrations for which activists refuse to file one (McCarthy et al. 1996). The second concern deals with *description bias*. As far as objective characteristics of events are concerned (e.g. when or where they occurred), the problem seems to be with the lack of information collected rather than its accuracy (Earl et al. 2004). Police and journalists report only a limited number of all the possible event characteristics. Roughly half or more of police records and journalists' coverage of protests in the USA fail to report such important characteristics as date and size (e.g. McCarthy et al. 1996). Moreover, newspaper articles do not delve into protesters' identities, motivations, and emotions. Date and place of a demonstration can be reported accurately and reliable, yet motivations, emotions, and identities are much more difficult to "read" by journalists/policemen.

Due to these biases, Beyerlein and colleagues (2016) argue that the field of contentious politics and social movements lacks a nationally representative sample of street demonstrations with thorough data on event characteristics. Consequently, we do not have good answers to questions such as: How many people, on average, turn out to protests across countries? What types of organizations typically sponsor them? Which issues draw the most protest? Are peaceful or disruptive tactics the norm? Beyerlein and colleagues (2016) employ a novel methodology of hypernetwork sampling. The core idea behind hypernetwork sampling is that a representative sample of protest events can be arrived at by randomly sampling protesters and then having them nominate and describe the protests they attended. Respondents are asked questions about the protests that took place, their protesters, causes, targets, tactics, organizers, speeches and police actions. In doing so, nearly complete information about various event characteristics was collected from protests across the United States in 2010 to 2011 (Beyerlein et al. 2016).

Studying participants

Studies on protest participants tended to be limited to population surveys (e.g. Dalton, Van Sickle, and Weldon 2010; Norris 2003; Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; van Deth, Montero, and Westholm 2007), such as the World Value Survey (WVS) or the European Social Survey (ESS) (cf. Inglehart and Catterber 2002; Norris 2003; Welzel, Inglehart, and Deutsch 2004). General population surveys have the advantage of sampling people, both those who did and did not participate in protest. Consequently, studies relying on population surveys are, most of the time, comparisons of participants with non-participants. Consequently, we now know a lot about how participants differ from non-participants, but we know much less about how demonstrators differ within and between demonstrations. Moreover, while such studies based on general surveys have taught us a lot about general features of protesters (cf. Dalton et al. 2010), they provide little information on the demonstrations protesters participated in, the protesters' specific motivations, and their recruitment. Presumably, motivation and mobilization differ from demonstration to demonstration, but general surveys fail to tell us how and why.

General population surveys do not address specific protests for specific issues, i.e. comparisons between protests are impossible, therefore they are less suited to answering questions such as: Why do people protest? What are the issue-specific attitudes, motives, and beliefs that drive them? How were they mobilized, through what channels and by which techniques? And, especially, how and why does this vary across demonstrations? Collecting such information requires a different methodological approach than protest-event analysis, hypernetworked sampling, or general population surveys. In fact, answers to these seemingly simple questions require a specific type of data. Such questions not only call for comparative data on the who, the why and the how of people who took part in different protests combined with information about the issue they protested against, their mobilizing channels and their motives for taking part in this specific protest event. Until recently, such data were not available. Recently, however, a growing number of studies rely on the so-called protest-survey method (e.g. Klandermans et al. 2010; van Aelst and Walgrave 2001; Van Stekelenburg et al. 2012). The protest-survey method, a comparative approach, involves surveying a large number of protesters during a protest while at the same time recording characteristics of the context, police, and mobilizing actors (Walgrave and Verhulst 2011; Walgrave, Wouters, and Ketelaars, 2015).

If one wants to know who participates in a specific protest event and why and how they were recruited, one can ask participants themselves using a take-home questionairre distributed among protesters at protest events. This kind of fieldwork is often conducted in a crowded, unpredictable and erratic environment. A demonstration is a living thing and it can be tricky to sample from a demonstrating crowd. Walgrave and colleagues proposed two techniques to increase the representativity of the sample. In order to control for non-response bias, two types of data collection are employed: a smaller number (e.g. 200) short face-to-face interviews during the demonstration is combined with a larger number (e.g. 800) postal survey questionnaires completed after the demonstration. This is done by a so-called "tear-off system," which implies that demonstrators are approached for a short face-to-face interview (including socio-demographics, most important independent variables, and the dependent variables of the postal survey). After the face-to-face interview is finished the *same* protester is asked to fill out a postal survey questionnaire at home. Hence, survey questionnaires are always filled in at home not *during* the event, again for matters of comparison. The refusal rate for the face-to-face interviews is low (10%). Thus, provided proper sampling is done, by comparing the face-to-face interviews with the postal survey questionnaires, biases due to non-response can be assessed and controlled for.

As for sampling participants, a sampling strategy is designed such that each participant has the same chance of being selected. A demonstration is covered by a team consisting of "pointers" and "interviewers." Pointers count the rows and select a person to be interviewed in that row – alternating between the left, the right, and the middle part. Then, an interviewer is sent in to approach the selected interviewee. Separating these two roles is crucial in minimizing sampling biases. For instance, experiments where interviewers could select their own respondents indicate that they are more inclined to approach the more approachable (those who look like them) (Walgrave and Verhulst 2011).

Although the protest survey method has been refined over the years and enables researchers to answer questions related to protests and their protesters, it is not a perfect methodology. Because the protest survey method focuses only on those people who are actually participating, it samples on the dependent variable. Studies based on protest surveys cannot compare participants to non-participants. Therefore, they are ill-suited to test the determinants of activism. To overcome this problem, case-control designs – widely used in epidemiology – were proposed recently (Vráblíková and Traunmüller 2015). With a case-control design, protest survey data are merged with population survey data. The case-control design thus expands the data to include both protest participants (from protest survey data) and non-participants (from the population surveys). Consequently, case-control designs allow investigation of the determinants of activism.

Conclusion

Taking part in a street demonstration is not just a matter of people who are pushed to act by some internal psychological state (the demand-side of participation), nor is it only a matter of movement organizations pulling people into action (the supply-side of participation). Demand, supply, *and* mobilization account for instances of participation in street demonstrations. For example, the reason why often no demonstration takes place despite widespread discontent, is that there is no viable movement organization to stage any demonstration. At the same time, when present, a movement organization does not get very far if there are no people who are concerned about the issue the organization tries to address. Finally, without effective mobilization campaigns, supply and demand may never meet. There is an intriguing interplay of demand and supply. That is to say, the better the fit between demand and supply – i.e. the more organizers' appeals resonate with people's grumbles – the larger a demonstration.

In terms of methods, research on street demonstrations has been refined over the years and this has enabled researchers to answer many questions related to protests and their protesters; however, it still faces some challenges. Probably the most important challenge is to overcome the problem of sampling on the dependent variable by getting a grip on participants and non-participants. One way to do so would, for instance, be a longitudinal pre-post protest design which follows a group of citizens before, during, and after the demonstration. Such designs enhance the prospect of differentiating between participants and non-participants for a specific event. Another thorny issue is the interaction of demand and supply over the course of a campaign. Indeed, how do grievances, identification, efficacy, and emotions change over the course of a campaign or the lifecycle of a movement? Do they evolve because organizers have changed their frames? Or by the fact that counter-movements appeared on the scene? Or, because of critical incidents? As mobilization is a process, it would be worthwhile examining how demand and supply come together in a dynamic fashion or, at least as interesting, do *not* come together. In fact, especially the case where supply and demand do not come together is poorly understood. Because researchers focus on protest events and their participants, failed mobilizations tend to be overlooked. However, a focus on failed mobilizations in addition to succesful ones, may teach us a lot about the demand and supply of street demonstrations and how they interact.

Note

1 This section builds on a paper by Klandermans and van Stekelenburg (under review).

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