

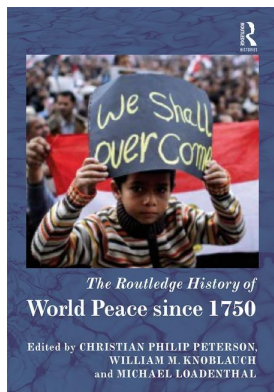
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On: 27 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *CRC Press*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750

Christian Philip Peterson, William M. Knoblauch, Michael Loadenthal

Belgian Peace Demonstrations after the Invasion of Iraq

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-31>

Ione Corbeel, Pauline Ketelaars

Published online on: 04 Sep 2018

How to cite :- Ione Corbeel, Pauline Ketelaars. 04 Sep 2018, *Belgian Peace Demonstrations after the Invasion of Iraq from: The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750* CRC Press

Accessed on: 27 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-31>

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BELGIAN PEACE DEMONSTRATIONS AFTER THE INVASION OF IRAQ

A sociological perspective

Ione Corbeel and Pauline Ketelaars

On February 15, 2003, millions of people around the world protested the imminent invasion of Iraq. These protests came after a wave of contention that started in 2002. About ten million people protested in more than six hundred cities around the globe. This was the largest transnational protest campaign in world history.¹ As such, the slogan “The World Says No To War” was well chosen. Despite the remarkable size of the protests, war was not prevented. Little more than a month later, on March 20, the United States—supported by the “Coalition of the Willing”—started an armed intervention against the regime of Saddam Hussein. As the war raged, protests continued. Peace movements around the world persisted in their efforts to stop the war. Large-scale mobilization continued with tens and hundreds of thousands of people participating in antiwar rallies and in events that took place each year around the anniversary of the war.²

The worldwide protest campaign of February 15, 2003 received a great deal of scholarly attention as it provided an intriguing and unique case study.³ Subsequent organized events against the war, however, have mostly stayed under the scholarly radar. In this chapter, we will investigate the widely studied 2003 protests as well, but additionally we will compare them with demonstrations that took place during wartime. Specifically, we examine features of peace protesters and explore whether the changed context—from a war that had to be *prevented* to a war that had to be *stopped*—affected protester characteristics. Accordingly, we set out with a straightforward research question: To what extent and how did the perceptions, mobilization trajectories, and social backgrounds of people who protested in the context of the imminent war differ from people who protested the ongoing war?

The influence of the political environment on social movements and protest is one of the most important and best developed strands in the social movement literature.⁴ However, most studies within this research tradition—also known as the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) approach—focus on trying to explain the rise and decline of social movements or protest actions. Whether and how contextual circumstances can affect characteristics of demonstrators has been examined considerably less.⁵ In the conclusion, we will propose why the composition of a demonstration is important for social movements.

To answer our research question, we used a unique sample of three Belgian protest demonstrations. The first one took place in Brussels in February 2003 as part of the worldwide protest described above. The second and third events were also held in Brussels, but in

March 2004 and March 2006—respectively during the war’s first and third anniversaries. The organizations who staged the protests remained consistent; namely, featuring platforms consisting of multiple organizations mobilizing for peace, human rights, and global equality. Hence, we compare people who participated in protest on the same issue (the war in Iraq), in the same country (Belgium), in the same type of activity (street demonstrations), staged by the same kind of organizations, yet in another international context (an imminent versus an ongoing war).⁶ This way we assess whether the changed macro context of war resulted in differences at the micro-level among protest demonstrators.

Context, composition, and Belgian protests against the Iraq war

Social movement scholars frequently link the ebb and flow of protest activities to changes in the political environment.⁷ Research has shown that political opportunities and threats can both encourage people to take part in contentious action and also discourage them from taking part. The political environment, however, does not only affect *whether* people participate in protest, but also *who* participates and *why*—i.e., the composition of the demonstration. Protest activities that seem similar—occurring in the same country, held by the same organizers, broadcasting the same claims—can be populated by people with different motivations, perceptions and social backgrounds due to dissimilar circumstances in the macro-context.⁸ Gómez-Román and Sabucedo, for instance, compared people who participated in two street demonstrations against the reform of Spanish labor law.⁹ The same organizations staged both protest actions, yet the first one was held before the law was passed and the second one took place after the government had adopted the law. This change in political circumstances affected the identity and the perceptions of participants. Similarly, Ketelaars found that the government’s stance regarding austerity measures during the economic crisis affected protest participants’ expectations of influencing politics and their reasons to take part.¹⁰ They expected more or less responsiveness from political authorities depending on the situation. When certain government actors supported the aims of the demonstration, activists anticipated a higher political impact and, subsequently, this influenced their reasons to protest.

Although the literature on the connections between the macro-context and the features of individual protesters is steadily growing, there are still questions that have not been answered. Specifically, there are no studies that link demonstrator characteristics to changing contexts of war and peace. However, even more than for other social movement events, there is a clear link between contextual circumstances and *whether* people participate in peace protest. Activities of peace movements are very much driven by global developments such as nuclear threats, imminent wars, or tensions between states.¹¹ While peace organizations in Western Europe are often small, their protest events can mobilize large numbers of people.¹² The fluctuating levels of engagement are probably more erratic for the issue of peace protests than any other issue. It is a reasonable expectation, then, that a changing war context also has consequences for the features of people participating in peace demonstrations.

The international protests against the invasion of Iraq clearly marked another high tide in the cyclical pattern of peace movements. After a long period of abeyance following the 1991 Gulf War, new coalitions were formed, new structures were created, and large-scale mobilizations took place.¹³ The three Belgian protest events examined in this chapter were all part of this international surge of protest. However, the specific context in which people protested changed dramatically after March 20, 2003: The reality of an ongoing war replaced

the threat of a potential war. After giving a short description of the three Belgian street demonstrations under scrutiny, the next section examines how “pre-war” demonstrators differed from the “during-war” participants.

In comparison to other countries, the February 2003 demonstration in Brussels was relatively small, likely because both the Belgian government and various opposition parties fiercely opposed the American-led attack on Iraq. As in other war-opposing countries, such as Germany, turnout was lower than in war-supporting countries, such as Italy and Spain.¹⁴ Still, about 75,000 people came out that day in the Belgian capital to protest the upcoming invasion. A year later, at the war’s first anniversary on March 20, 2004, peace organizations around the world organized another day of internationally coordinated events. In Brussels, the demonstration included a platform consisting of ninety-five Belgian social movement organizations, and about 5,000 people took to the streets. Two years later, on March 19, 2006, protest events occurred in multiple countries again. Again, some 5,000 people from various Belgian social movements participated in a street demonstration.¹⁵ Demonstration pamphlets and newspaper articles suggest that in 2004 and 2006 the aim of the protests was not only to stop the war, but also to stand up against violence against innocent civilians. Protesters also challenged the notion of “preventive wars,” or wars fought under the guise of a “war against terror” and preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction. Demonstrators claimed that large numbers of innocent civilians died while the United States was not succeeding in its preconceived goals. The “preventive war” had not brought peace and democracy, and many raised questions about the true reasons for US-involvement. Some organizations claimed that the US troops were not there to bring peace and security, but that the invasion had been planned before 9/11. Many believed that the real underlying goal of the US was to secure its oil-supply.¹⁶

External efficacy, mobilization patterns, and social backgrounds

Based on the description above, clearly many people joined forces in Brussels before the war started and these numbers declined in the following years when the war was raging. In this study, however, we try to find out to what extent the change from an imminent war to an ongoing war affected *who* protested and *why*. We expect the diverging context, apart from affecting the size of the demonstration, to affect the composition of the protest events. We anticipate that the protesters in 2003 differ from the participants in 2004 and 2006 on three dimensions: Their perceptions of efficacy, their mobilization channels, and their social backgrounds. Next, we formulate our hypotheses and we elaborate on the mechanisms that produced the differences between the demonstrators.

First, when it comes to a protest’s impact and people’s expectations of influencing decision makers, peace movements are at a serious disadvantage compared to movements mobilizing on other issues—such as austerity, political reform, or antinuclear protests. Decisions on war and peace are often insulated from popular democratic influences, and generally the possibilities of citizen collectives to influence policymaking on war and peace are low. Marullo et al. describe how, in the United States, even Congress has difficulty controlling presidential aspirations to go to war.¹⁷ As such, feelings of efficacy among protesters were likely not high either before March 20, 2003 or after the attacks began. We hypothesize, however, that expectations to succeed were even lower for “during-war” demonstrators than for “pre-war” protesters. Why? People participating in the 2004 and 2006 demonstrations were acutely aware that war had not been prevented in 2003 when an unparalleled number

of people raised their voices against the invasion. Furthermore, the goal to prevent war is arguably less complex and more easily reached than the aim to end a war already under way. In 2003, no real damage had been done yet, and no troops had yet been deployed. This assertion leads to our first hypothesis (H1):

H1: The perceived external efficacy was lower for participants in the 2004 and 2006 demonstrations than for participants in the 2003 demonstration.

Second, we anticipate that the changed context produced differences in the way that protesters were mobilized to take part. Before people can protest, they must be informed about the demonstration. Potential protesters can, on the one hand, be informed via so-called “open mobilization channels” that can potentially reach the whole population—such as newspapers, TV, radio, flyers, and posters, but also strong social ties such as friends and family. On the other hand, people can be informed via “closed mobilization channels” which only target a specific segment of the population. They are then mobilized, for instance, via members of an organization or via meetings, websites, and magazines of a social movement organization.¹⁸ We expect that protesters in 2003 were mostly recruited via open mobilization channels, whereas the 2004 and 2006 participants can be expected to be informed via closed ones.

In 2003 the impending war was high on the Belgian political agenda. The government loudly opposed the invasion and Belgium even temporarily blocked a NATO decision when war-supporting countries wanted to begin preparations in Turkey in case that the country became engaged in the war. The upcoming conflict was prevalent in the media as well. The threat of war filled newspaper pages and TV newscasts in the early months of 2003. As the scholars Verhulst and Walgrave remark: “People’s attention was aroused, and media coverage of the imminent war was extensive. Although foreign politics is not the primary issue in most countries’ media, the Iraq crisis was omnipresent.”¹⁹ Accordingly, there was a lot of attention for the planned antiwar protests, which led to an open mobilization process in Belgium in 2003.²⁰ After the attack began, the Iraq war obviously still garnered media coverage, but there was less attention for the yearly protest events. We therefore expect that in 2004 and 2006 fewer demonstrators heard about antiwar demonstrations via open mobilization channels, and that protesters were recruited via a more closed mobilization process. For social movement organizations (SMOs), mass media are vital as they link social movements to their broader mobilization potential. Without much media attention for upcoming protests, it is difficult for social movements to reach beyond their members.²¹ Additionally, members maintain a certain loyalty towards the organization which makes them more accessible for recruitment attempts.²² Based on these observations, our second hypothesis is:

H2: Participants in the 2004 and 2006 demonstrations were more mobilized via closed mobilization channels than participants in the 2003 demonstration.

Our first two hypotheses are about differences between *why* people protested and *how* they were mobilized to take part. Our final hypothesis is that *who* showed up to protest—particularly the social backgrounds of the demonstrators—differed as well. The composition of protest events can differ widely. Some demonstrations are quite homogeneous, populated with people of similar social backgrounds, participation experiences, and political attitudes. When a group of students, for instance, takes action against cuts on higher education, we can

expect a very homogeneous demonstration composition. The strength of peace demonstrations is often the diversity within public calls for peace. That way, organizers can show that their claims can count on broad support, which can send a strong signal to the protest targets. While we know that a diverse public participated in the 2003 demonstration, we expect that the protests in 2004 and 2006 were less diverse and more populated by “typical” protesters.²³

Building on our second hypothesis, open mobilization channels that reach out to the population at large have the potential to recruit people with various backgrounds. Closed mobilization channels, conversely, almost exclusively mobilize social movement organization members. Because we expect a more closed mobilization process in 2004 and 2006 in comparison to 2003, we should find more of the “usual suspects” than when the war was underway. Also, we can expect a less diverse range of people to be motivated to show up when the war was raging, because—in general—people tend to work harder to avoid losses than to achieve gains.²⁴ Following this line of reasoning, protesting to prevent the war can be seen as a way to take action to avoid losses. People were afraid to “lose peace,” as a war might still be evaded. Once the war started, taking part in the protest was about *achieving* peace. Following loss aversion theory, we can expect that the foremost “die-hard” peace activists would still be motivated to act and win back peace. Finally, the outbreak of a war causes demobilization or contraction of peace movements. During these periods, rather than mobilizing the masses, peace movements focus on people who are likely to stay active to maintain their organizations. Marullo et al. show that, depending on the phase in the protest cycle, the framing of peace movements can be more or less complex, and more or less appealing for non-members and new recruits.²⁵ We can expect that the framing in 2003 was not specialized; it appealed to broad pools of people and broad segments of potential adherents. In 2004, and even more so in 2006, the framing can be expected to have been focused on mobilizing core and committed activists. Before we explain how we operationalize “typical” peace protesters, we offer our third hypothesis.

H3: The 2004 and 2006 demonstrations were more populated by typical peace protesters than the 2003 demonstration.

Data and methods

To compare the individual-level characteristics of protesters in 2003 (pre-war) with those of the protesters in 2004 and 2006 (during the war), we combine protest survey data collected at the three discussed protest events. Demonstrators were surveyed while protesting. They were randomly selected, asked to accept a questionnaire, and later fill it out at home and send it back via land mail.²⁶ Information about the 2003 protesters in Brussels was gathered within the context of the International Peace Protest Survey (IPPS).²⁷ An almost identical questionnaire was presented to the protesters of the marches in Brussels in 2004 and 2006.

In total, our dataset comprises 948 respondents: 463 from 2003, 226 from 2004, and 259 from 2006. Our dependent variable is the year (2003, 2004, or 2006) in which the respondents protested. We posed three hypotheses in our theoretical part; therefore, we identify three groups of independent variables. First, we measure demonstrators’ *perceived external efficacy*. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed (from 1 “totally disagree” to 5 “totally agree”) with two efficacy statements: “Our opinions are taken into account by

politicians” and “Most politicians are competent people.” The average score for these two is our measure of *perceived external efficacy*, and ranges from 1 (“very low perceived external efficacy”) to 5 (“very high perceived external efficacy”). Second, we asked people how they learned about the protest event: “How did you learn about today’s manifestation?” The answer categories were: Organization members (1), TV, newspapers, or radio (2), family, friends, or colleagues (3), and posters and advertisements (4). All these categories are dummy variables, coded 0 when respondents were not informed via these particular channels, and coded 1 when they indicated that they were informed via these channels. *Informed by organization members* is considered to be a closed mobilization channel, while *Posters and advertisements, TV, newspapers and radio, and Family, friends and colleagues* are open mobilization sources.

Finally, we measure a group of variables to identify “typical” peace protesters. Typical demonstrators are generally more motivated to join a protest than less usual suspects, so we use a proxy, *doubt decision*, to measure motivation. The higher the value (ranging from 1 to 4), the more the participant doubted his/her decision to participate. Also, typical peace demonstrators are people who identify themselves as left wing, who often participate in political action, and who are usually active in the peace movement. Peace organizations are generally leftist and some are historically linked or even embedded in leftist political parties.²⁸ We asked participants:

In politics people sometimes talk of “left” and “right.” In the scheme below, 0 stands for someone who is situated completely on the left, and 10 for someone who is situated completely on the right. When you consider your own opinions, where would you place yourself on this scale?

The variable *member of organization* codes members of the organizations staging the protest as 1 and non-members as 0. *Protested for peace* asks whether respondents had already protested for peace in the past (1) or not (0). *Political participation*, finally, counts all the activities that a respondent has taken part in during the last year. Responses range from 0 (no form of political participation in the last year) to 17 (participated in all 17 listed forms last year).

Results

Table 30.1 presents the results of ten ANOVA-analyses. An ANOVA-analysis tests whether or not the means of several groups are equal; it is like a t-test, but for more than two groups. We use the ANOVAs to test whether protesters in 2003 differed significantly from the protesters in 2004 and 2006. The first two columns of Table 30.1 indicate maximum and minimum values. The next three columns present the mean, respectively for 2003, 2004, and 2006. The last two columns are the results of the ANOVA-analyses, comparing whether the means differ significantly between 2003 on the one hand, and 2004 or 2006 on the other. Significant results are indicated by * ($p < .050$), ** ($p < .010$) or *** ($p < .000$). For our hypotheses to be confirmed, we expect significant differences in both ANOVA-columns.

First, looking at the results for *perceived external efficacy*, we see that the mean of 2003 (3.09) is higher than the mean of 2004 (2.80) and 2006 (2.76). The ANOVA-analysis shows that these differences are significant, both for 2004 vs. 2003 and 2006 vs. 2003. These results confirm the first hypothesis: People participating in the anti-Iraq demonstration before the war began expected the demonstration to be more successful than the demonstrators who took to the streets after Iraq was invaded.

Table 30.1 Variable descriptives and ANOVA-analyses

Variables	Min	Max	Mean (SD)			ANOVA	
			2003 N = 463	2004 N = 226	2006 N = 259	2004 vs. 2003	2006 vs. 2003
1. <i>Perceived external efficacy</i>	1	5	3.09 (0.76)	2.80 (0.73)	2.76 (0.77)	-0.30***	-0.32***
2. <i>Information</i>							
Organization members	0	1	0.31 (0.46)	0.57 (0.50)	0.65 (0.48)	0.26***	0.34***
TV, newspapers and radio	0	1	0.58 (0.49)	0.12 (0.33)	0.21 (0.41)	-0.45***	0.36***
Family, friends and colleagues	0	1	0.59 (0.49)	0.44 (0.50)	0.39 (0.49)	-0.15**	-0.19***
Posters and advertisements	0	1	0.46 (0.50)	0.60 (0.49)	0.44 (0.50)	0.13**	-0.01
3. <i>Activist characteristics</i>							
Doubt decision (a)	1	4	2.49 (0.85)	1.78 (0.80)	1.56 (0.73)	-0.71***	-0.94***
Left–right scale (b)	0	10	2.86 (1.41)	2.24 (1.02)	2.59 (1.38)	-0.61***	-0.26*
Member of organization (c)	0	1	0.26 (0.43)	0.52 (0.50)	0.50 (0.50)	0.26***	0.24***
Protested for peace (c)	0	1	0.56 (0.50)	0.93 (0.26)	0.90 (0.31)	0.37***	0.34***
Political participation (c)	0	17	4.63 (2.27)	6.19 (2.90)	8.91 (2.96)	1.56***	4.27***

N total = 948. * p < 0,050; ** p < 0.010; *** p < 0.000

Second, looking at the information pane, we see different patterns for the closed and open information channels. In the two demonstrations that were held after the war had started, relatively more protesters were informed by organization members (closed mobilization) than in the demonstration before the war. The percentage of protesters informed by organization members more than doubled from 2003 to 2006 (31 percent vs. 65 percent). The difference is significant for both 2003–2004 and 2003–2006. Concurrently, pre-war demonstrators were more often informed about the protest event via family, friends, and colleagues and via TV, radio, and newspapers—all open mobilization channels. For example, mass media informed 58 percent of the protesters in 2003, whereas these only informed 12 percent in 2004 and 21 percent in 2006. The results for protest information via posters and advertisements display no (2003–2004) or only small (2003–2006) significant differences. We can conclude that the demonstrations held after the war had started were characterized by a more closed mobilization process compared to protests in 2003. In short, hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

Finally, we expected the 2004 and 2006 protests to be populated by more typical peace protesters than the 2003 event. We operationalized typical protesters as more motivated (a), more left-wing (b) and more politically active (c). First, with respect to being more motivated (a), the results of the ANOVA-analysis in Table 30.1 show that *doubt decision* is significantly lower for the protesters during the war. Data showing that participants had less doubt about protesting indicates that individuals were more motivated, a characteristic of “typical” protesters. Second, we generally observe low mean values for left–right placement (b), which implies that all protesters were, on average, fairly leftist. However, differences do exist between the demonstrations: Protesters in 2004 and 2006 yield significantly more leftist (lower) scores. Third, we included three variables to examine political activism (c): Member of organization, previously protested for peace, and political participation. We expected that the average protester in 2004 and 2006 was more likely to be a member of one of the staging

organizations, someone who protested for peace in the past and participated more in politics. All three variables display significant differences between 2003–2004 and 2003–2006. Compared to 2003, the number of organization members was 26 percent higher in 2004 and 24 percent higher in 2006. In 2003, 56 percent of the demonstrators had previously participated in a peace protest. This percentage rises to 90 in 2004 and even 93 in 2006. Finally, the mean number of political activities that respondents had engaged in during the last twelve months increased from 4.63 in 2003, to 6.19 in 2004, and to 8.91 in 2006. Protesters in 2004 and 2006, then, were clearly more politically active. To sum up, the data show that protesters in 2004 and 2006 were more self-motivated to participate, more situated on the left side of the political spectrum, and they were more politically active than protesters in 2003. This confirms the third hypothesis: The demonstrations in 2004 and 2006 were more populated by typical peace protesters than the demonstration in 2003.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to investigate whether differences in macro-context—from a war in Iraq that had to be prevented (2003) to a war that had to be ended (2004 and 2006)—resulted in differences in micro-level characteristics of the protesters. Our analyses suggest that the changed context affected the composition of the demonstrations in three ways. Compared to protesters in the 2003 demonstration (before the war started), the 2004 and 2006 demonstrators were less convinced that the protest event would be successful. We theorized that these participants perceived the demonstration to be less efficacious because the war was not prevented by the large previous collective actions and because stopping a war in progress is probably more difficult than preventing one. Furthermore, we found that the during-war demonstrations were characterized by a more closed mobilization process compared to the pre-war event. In the period up to the demonstrations that were held during the war, mass media attention was less extensive than in spring 2003, leading to more peace organization-centered mobilization patterns in 2004 and 2006. Finally, the results show that protesters in 2004 and 2006 were more regular, experienced protest participants. They were more motivated, more left-wing, and more politically active than the demonstrators in 2003.

To tease out the effect of the changing context on the features of protest participants, we tried to keep other contextual factors constant. The three events under scrutiny were all street demonstrations, held in the same country, on the same issue, staged by the same type of organizations. As such, the transformation from an imminent war to an ongoing war was the most important moving factor. However, we were not able to measure the mechanisms that produced the differences between the demonstrators. We theorized about the link between the macro-context of war and the micro features of protest participants, but we had no data to measure causality. Further research might benefit from testing direct links between macro-predictors and micro-level outcomes.

Another limitation of this study is that our research focused solely on Iraq-war protest in Belgium. This raises questions about the generalizability of our case. While we might expect similar results for other countries, the story is likely to be different in countries that—unlike Belgium—were involved in the war. For instance, citizens protesting in the United States probably felt more efficacious because their government could actually influence the development of the war. Nevertheless, while the specific characteristics of pre-war and during-war protesters cannot be generalized to other places and countries, we do think that we have pointed out a way to examine how a changing context of war and peace—protesting

against an imminent war versus protesting against an ongoing war—affects who shows up to protest and why.

The unprecedented demonstrations on February 15, 2003 did not have the effect the peace protesters had hoped. This illustrates the general finding of social movement scholars that protest demonstrations seldom directly affect policy outcomes. This does not mean that social movements cannot be successful; it means that their political effect is contingent as it depends for an important part on the context. Research has shown that social movements are most likely to successfully influence policymakers when their claims are supported by powerful political allies and public opinion.²⁹ Yet, the extent to which protest can produce policy change also depends on the specific policy area. Unfortunately for peace promoters, war and peace is one of the least viable issues when it comes to influencing politicians. Policymakers are less autonomous in foreign policy than in domestic policy areas because international factors pose constraints on the decisions of national politicians. Additionally, peace is a “high-profile” issue and therefore more “threatening” for politicians than others: There are a lot of resources involved, the issue is electorally highly relevant, and public opinion is often divided.³⁰

Our research indicates that a change in political context can result in a different protest composition. One might wonder, however, whether it actually matters *who* participates in protest, *why* they take part, and *how* they were mobilized. In the end, social movement organizations might hope to drum up as many people as they can, no matter what the social backgrounds of those people are. Yet, the composition of the protest crowd can arguably have implications for protest outcomes. A broad and diverse crowd shows that the protests goals are supported by a broad segment of society.³¹ The recruitment of foremost typical protesters—as was the case in the during-war demonstrations—produces a less diverse protester demographic and, as a consequence, these protesters might be less convincing to policymakers who dismiss them as fringe activists. On the other hand, the famous sociologist and political scientist Charles Tilly argues that the “unity” of protesters contributes to the political power of protest.³² When activists agree among themselves, they display credibility and show policymakers and the public that they are sincere. A report of the 2009 G20 summit in Pittsburgh, for example, illustrates how low levels of unity can undermine a movement’s integrity:

The *Daily Show* sent a correspondent to Pittsburgh and reported on a spectrum of messages that included: a Free Tibet marching cymbal band, Palestinian peace advocates, placards condemning genocide in Darfur, hemp and marijuana awareness slogans, and denunciations of the beef industry, along with the more expected condemnations of globalization and capitalism. One protester carried a sign saying “I protest everything,” and another dressed as Batman stated that he was protesting the choice of Christian Bale to portray his movie hero.³³

To convince political targets that something should be done, protest organizers need to communicate a shared meaning of “their” problem or situation. Protest targets often try to discredit demonstrations by questioning whether participants truly endorse the same claim. The “typical” protesters in 2004 and 2006 probably were more unified than the demonstrators in 2003. While research into how political representatives react to protest is very scarce, a recent study of Wouters and Walgrave suggests that the size of a protest event and whether the protesters agree among themselves are the most persuasive protest factors.³⁴

Via an experiment, these authors show that these cues significantly change politicians' opinions regarding the importance of the issue and make them more willing to undertake action. The challenge for social movements, hence, is to mobilize a large crowd and to simultaneously make sure that they broadcast homogeneity.

Notes

- 1 Sidney Tarrow, "Preface," in *The World Says No to War: Demonstrations Against the War on Iraq*, ed. Stefaan Walgrave and Dieter Rucht (Minneapolis, MN; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii–xii.
- 2 Victoria Carty, "The Anti-War Movement Versus the War Against Iraq," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 14, no. 1 (2009): 17–38.
- 3 See e.g., Stefaan Walgrave and Dieter Rucht, *The World Says No to War: Demonstrations Against the War on Iraq* (Minneapolis, MN; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Mario Diani, "The Structural Bases of Protest Events Multiple Memberships and Civil Society Networks in the 15 February 2003 Anti-War Demonstrations," *Acta Sociologica* 52, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 63–83; Craig Murray et al., "Reporting Dissent in Wartime British Press, the Anti-War Movement and the 2003 Iraq War," *European Journal of Communication* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 7–27; Stefaan Walgrave and Joris Verhulst, "Government Stance and Internal Diversity of Protest: A Comparative Study of Protest against the War in Iraq in Eight Countries," *Social Forces* 87, no. 3 (2009): 1355–1387; David Cortright, "The Peaceful Superpower: The Movement against War in Iraq," in *Charting Transnational Democracy*, ed. Janie Leatherman and Julie Webber (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 75–99; Donatella della Porta, Mario Diani, and Lynn Mastellotto, "'No to the War with No Ifs or Buts': Protests against the War in Iraq," *Italian Politics* 19 (2003): 200–218; Joss Hands, "Civil Society, Cosmopolitics and the Net: The Legacy of 15 February 2003," *Information, Communication and Society* 9, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 225–243; W. Lance Bennett, Christian Breunig, and Terri Givens, "Communication and Political Mobilization: Digital Media and the Organization of Anti-Iraq War Demonstrations in the U.S.," *Political Communication* 25, no. 3 (July 30, 2008): 269–289.
- 4 David S. Meyer, "Protest and Political Opportunities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30, no. 1 (2004): 125–145.
- 5 For exceptions, see Michael Heaney and Fabio Rojas, "The Partisan Dynamics of Contention: Demobilization of the Antiwar Movement in the United States, 2007–2009," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (February 1, 2011): 45–64; Cristina Gómez-Román and José-Manuel Sabucedo, "The Importance of Political Context: Motives to Participate in a Protest before and after the Labor Reform in Spain," *International Sociology* 29, no. 6 (November 1, 2014): 546–564; Pauline Ketelaars, "Bridging the Protest Macro-Micro Gap: Investigating the Link between Motivations and Political Context," in *Austerity and Protest: Popular Contention in Times of Economic Crisis*, ed. Marco Giugni and Maria T. Grasso (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 111–125; Walgrave and Verhulst, "Government Stance and Internal Diversity of Protest," 1355–1387.
- 6 Because the Belgian government opposed the war in 2003 and continued to do so in the following years, we also rule out that differences between protesters were due to changes in the government's stance.
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