Tracing Protest Motives: The Link Between Newspaper Coverage, Movement Messages, and Demonstrators' Reasons to Protest[1]

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Within the social movement literature, it is mostly assumed that the reasons why people join a protest demonstration are in line with the collective action frames of the organizations staging the protest. Some recent studies suggest, however, that protesters' motives are only partly aligned with the messages that are broadcasted by social movements. This study argues that activists' motives are for an important part shaped by mass media coverage on the protest issue. It investigates the link between people's reasons to protest, the campaign messages of the protest organizers, and newspaper coverage prior to the demonstration. Data cover 14 anti-austerity demonstrations in Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Results show that social movements depend a lot on other political actors to gain media visibility for their messages. Furthermore, the relationship between social movement frames and protest participant motives is mediated by newspaper coverage. Protest organizers' are able to reach demonstrators via their own communication channels to some extent, but for many of their messages, they also rely on journalists' reporting about the protest issue.

KEY WORDS: austerity; frame alignment; mass media; protest participation; social movements; Western Europe.

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates demonstrators' reasons to take part in protest events. What is the problem they are protesting for? Whom do they hold responsible for it? And how do they think the problem should be solved? The aim is to gain insight into how protester motives relate to the broader communicative context in which protest occurs. The frame alignment perspective—one of the most important approaches within the social movement literature (Benford and Snow 2000)—holds that activists' motives can be traced back to the mobilizing messages of the organizations that stage protest events. Social movement organizations (SMOs) construct and reconstruct frames of injustice in order to align people with the SMO's

perspectives and, subsequently, motivate people to join (Snow and Benford 1988). However, recent research suggests that demonstrators do not necessarily share the frames of social movements. Their reasons to engage in action are only partially in line with the protest organizer frames: they also express other grievances and formulate alternative solutions regarding the protest issue (Ketelaars, Walgrave, and Wouters 2014; Wahlström, Wennerhag, and Rootes 2013). What social movements are communicating thus tells only part of the story of what rank-and-file protest participants are thinking.

This study argues that activists' reasons to protest are for an important part shaped by the way the protest issue is represented in mass media. SMOs do not have a monopoly on framing "their" issue (Koopmans 2004). Competing perspectives float around in the public sphere and can influence protester motives. In the media arena, political actors struggle over the representation of social matters (Gamson and Stuart 1992). Social movements are only one of those political actors, and—even more than others—they have to compete heavily to gain media coverage (Gamson and Modigliani 1989).

I depart from a model in which SMOs and other political actors try to affect the media agenda, which in turn influences protest participants. Media coverage can then affect protester motives in three ways. Via mass media, potential demonstrators can be confronted with the viewpoints of organizations that stage the protest, they can receive messages of other political actors that are, nonetheless, in line with the perspectives of the organizing SMOs, or they can be exposed to alternative views about the protest issue. Accordingly, the following research questions take center stage: To what extent are activist motives congruent with the movement's mobilizing messages? Do protesters pick up (alternative) motives from mass media? And to what extent is the congruence between SMOs and demonstrators mediated by news coverage?

The data cover 14 anti-austerity demonstrations staged between 2009 and 2012 in three countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Via the protest survey method, 2,496 people were surveyed during their act of protesting. Demonstrators' motives are identified via answers to three open-ended survey questions. The SMO campaign messages are deduced from the official demonstration platform texts, and mass media content is identified via a random sample of newspaper articles on the protest issue in the four months before the demonstration took place. The overlap between these three sources is coded via quantitative content analysis.

RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND MASS MEDIA

The relationship between social movements and mass media is a topic that often falls between two stools. Communication scholars are in general more interested in political parties or members of parliament than in political outsiders such as SMOs. Social movement scholars, on their part, regularly use media data, but they are mostly not really interested in media coverage as such. They rather use media data to track protest cycles and mobilization levels (see, e.g., Oritz et al.

2005). While the literature on the relationship between movements and mass media is steadily growing (for overviews, see McCurdy 2012; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2010), there are still some questions that haven't been answered yet.

The studies that inquire into the link between movements and media focus by and large on media reporting of protest activities (see, e.g., Ketchum 2004; McCluskey et al. 2009; Sobieraj 2010). Considerably fewer studies look at coverage of SMOs as such and their issues (but see, e.g., Amenta et al. 2009; Andrews and Caren 2010; Corrigall-Brown 2016). Furthermore, scholars foremost take SMOs as their starting point, investigating how movements (try to) influence media reporting. The opposite process, how media coverage affects social movements, is not so often addressed. As Koopmans (2004:369) notes, "We now know a lot about the factors that determine if and how the media cover protest, but we have hardly begun to address the more important question of how media coverage of protest, and the wider discourse surrounding it, affect movements."

There are, of course, some notable exceptions. Koopmans and Olzak (2004), for instance, demonstrate how media reports about radical-right collective action affect the rate of violent radical-right attacks in Germany. When examining the Dutch environmental movement, Vliegenthart, Oegema, and Klandermans (2005) find that the media visibility of movements and their issues positively influences membership figures. Cooper (2002) shows that a protest wave is larger when social movement framing and media framing are congruent. These studies, however, all look at the influence of media coverage on aggregate levels of participation. The underlying assumption is that media messages somehow shape people's cognitions and behavior, but they do not actually examine media effects on the microlevel of individual protesters. Callaghan and Schnell (2005) deal with this issue. In an experiment, they expose undergraduates to different news frames on gun control. They find that exposure to particular news frames increases people's willingness to donate money and to attend a rally of a gun rights group. Although experiments are increasingly lifelike and allow to make strong causal inferences, they inevitably take place in a fabricated communication environment. The advantage of this study is that the link between *real* media reports and the motives of *actual* protest participants is investigated. Moreover, because the original pamphlets of SMOs are examined as well, this study, to my knowledge, is the first to analyze to what extent SMOs can reach potential constituents directly and to what degree the spread of their mobilizing messages is mediated by media coverage on the protest issue.

TRACING PROTESTER MOTIVES

Social movement scholars have mostly assumed that the reasons why people protest are aligned with the frames of SMOs. In their seminal 1986 article, Snow and colleagues (1986:464) state that people's alignment with the frames of SMOs is "a necessary condition for movement participation, whatever its nature or intensity." For someone to take part in a demonstration, he or she has to agree with the frames underlying the event.

On the other hand, as Gamson (1995:89) remarks, "Activists may read a variety of movement publications and attend meetings and conferences where the issues that concern them are discussed. But they cannot assume that their constituency shares these or other forums or is aware of this discourse." People can be participants or members of the same organization with varying degrees of commitment and with varying degrees of alignment with the ideas of the organizations they support. There is more diversity within social movements than is often presumed. While demonstrations are usually portrayed as homogeneous crowds, they are rarely so coherent or unanimous as one might think (see, e.g., Etzioni 1975; see Turner and Killian 1987 on the "illusion of homogeneity"). Some recent empirical studies indeed show that protest participant motives are not necessarily in line with the messages that are broadcasted by the organizers of a demonstration (Ketelaars et al. 2014; Wahlström et al. 2013). While some demonstrators fully share the perspective of organizations that stage the protest, others participate because of different reasons and bring in alternative understandings about the social issue.

There are various reasons why protesters' frames might differ from the mobilizing messages of SMOs. First, the frame alignment literature mainly highlights cognitive reasons for people to take part in collective action. Yet, besides cognitions, emotions can be at play. Participation in a demonstration can be, for instance, a means to vent anger (Stürmer and Simon 2009). Sharing emotions of outrage can then provide enough motivation to protest even without sharing the frames of the organizers. Positive emotions—feeling part of a larger group—can play a role as well (Sabucedo and Vilas 2014). Furthermore, some studies suggest that commitment to an issue is a consequence of participation, rather than a cause for it. In a study on the pro-life movement, Munson (2009), for instance, finds that many activists only develop strong beliefs about abortion *after* they join the movement. Finally, from micromobilization literature, we know that many people are mobilized via interpersonal networks consisting of family members, colleagues, and friends (Diani and McAdam 2003). People are more likely to be convinced to participate via personal contacts than via indirect calls to action of social movement organizations (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Lim 2010). As a consequence, protest participants may never have been directly confronted with frames of protest staging organizations but only with potentially biased or even entirely different interpretations by their personal recruiters. The first research question of this study therefore is

RQ1: To what extent do protest participant motives correlate with campaign messages of the protest organizers?

Besides the communication of organizing SMOs, mass media messages—in this study newspaper articles on the protest issue—can be expected to play an important role in shaping protester motives. When it comes to political matters, at least on the national level, people often rely on mass media for information (Iyengar 1987). Politics are hardly perceived directly by the public (McCombs 2004). That way, media can affect individual political perceptions and subsequently political conversations and discussions with peers. How mass media report on a certain issue can for an important part determine the context in which people decide to protest (McLeod, Scheufele, and Moy 1999).

While communication scholars have frequently shown that it is unlikely that media coverage actually changes people's political attitudes, priming research suggests that media reporting *can* influence which considerations people use when they make political evaluations and decisions (Althaus and Kim 2006). The relative prominence of issues in the news affects what topics are deemed important by the public (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Because media attention is a zero-sum game, particular perspectives on an issue become more "accessible" than others, which means that certain knowledge that is stored in memory is more easily activated (Higgins 1996). News priming theory holds that the supply of information primes people to give considerations that are more prominent in the news more weight when making evaluations of various kinds. Although priming has mostly been used to explain voting decisions and evaluations of politicians (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007), it can apply to the decision to engage in political action as well. The more news about the protest issue focuses on certain frames and issues, the more likely it is that people deem especially these considerations relevant when deciding to protest. The second research question of this study is

> RQ2: To what extent do protest participant motives correlate with newspaper coverage on the protest issue?

While SMOs have various "movement" outlets to broadcast their messages—like pamphlets, websites, meetings, or ads—scholars agree that they depend heavily on news media to gain visibility and support for their claims. "Much of what adherents of a movement see, hear, and read is beyond the control of any movement organization and is likely to overwhelm in sheer volume anything that movement sources try to communicate" (Gamson 1992:71). Gaining media attention is not an easy task for SMOs. Demonstrations only rarely receive publicity (Wouters 2013), and when demonstrations do pass the media gates, the coverage seldom serves the movement's interests (Smith et al. 2001).

Although the advent of new media and the Internet has expanded movements' means to communicate with the public, mass media are still key to reach a broad audience (Cottle 2008). As a consequence, social movements attempt to control how "their" issues are covered. SMOs are in constant competition over meaning with other political actors—such as the government, other societal organizations, and opinion makers—struggling over how an issue is reported (Gamson and Stuart 1992). Movements have adopted various strategies in order to elicit media framing that is in line with the organization's view (Rucht 2004). Ryan, Anastario, and Jeffreys (2005:111), for instance, describe how the Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence became journalists' "foremost source for background information on domestic-violence murders" after deepening their relations with reporters and by developing a media response team. Furthermore, social movements can often rely on other actors to frame a social issue in the right direction. Political actors who are on the same side can broadcast messages that are in line with the views of SMOs. So, although movements have difficulty to get their messages covered, organizations do seem to have opportunities to let their perspective be heard in mainstream media and subsequently to reach (possible) adherents. The final research question of the study is

RQ3: To what extent is the link between protest participant motives and SMO messages mediated by newspaper coverage on the protest issue?

Figure 1 gives an overview of the relationships that are tested in this study (the bold lines are examined). SMOs and other political actors try to get their messages covered in mass media, and mass media content then affects protest participants' motives. I will examine to what extent social movements are able to reach people directly, and to what extent they depend on mass media to communicate their views to potential participants.

Mass media content will be identified by examining newspaper coverage of the protest issue. Social media and other new media are not included in the analysis, although they have become important channels to spread protest messages. I am also aware of the fact that newspapers are not representative for mass media in general. Still, studying newspapers is appropriate to meet the goals set out for this study. First, the protests in the sample are all anti-austerity demonstrations, which are typical "bread-and-butter" or "old" social movement events. Most of these protests were organized by unions, and they attracted a relatively old constituency. As a consequence, online media played a limited role for the street demonstrations under scrutiny. Only 8% of all respondents said that online social networks were their most important information channel about the protest, and just 2% indicated that they had heard about the demonstration only via online media. Second, government cuts stood high on the political agenda during the research period (2009–2012), and the issues of anti-austerity demonstrations (pension age, unemployment, student fees, etc.) received a lot of newspaper coverage. A broad spectrum of interpretations and views on the various austerity measures were present in the newspaper articles. That way, the newspaper coverage can be seen as a proxy for the wider public debate about the matters at hand.

DATA AND METHODS

Data were gathered via the project "Caught in the Act of Protest: Contextualizing Contestation" (CCC) using the protest survey method (see, e.g., the special issue in *Mobilization* [Klandermans 2012]). With this method, demonstrators are surveyed
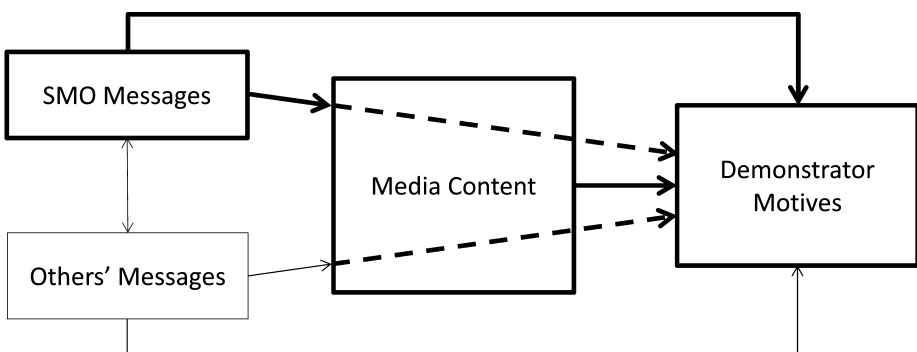

Fig. 1.   The Link Between SMO Messages, Media Content, and Demonstrator Motives

during the act of protesting (Walgrave and Verhulst 2011). This study analyzes 14 anti-austerity demonstrations staged between 2009 and 2012 in three countries: three in Belgium, eight in the Netherlands, and three in the United Kingdom. The selected events cover the most important (i.e., visible) street demonstrations against government cuts that were held in the countries during the research period. As a consequence, only relatively successful mobilization campaigns are included. It must be noted as well that for the safety of the interviewers, only nondisruptive events were covered (see the appendix for an overview of all covered demonstrations). The selection of the countries was pragmatic as interpreting and coding frames requires sufficient knowledge of the language. The three countries nevertheless present a robust test for answering the goals set out for this study. In total, 2,496 people answered all questions used in this study. The response rate was 29.7%. Unfortunately, rather low response rates are common for protest surveys. Reviewing the method, Walgrave, Wouters, and Ketelaars (2016) report an average response rate of 32% for protest surveys across 51 demonstrations. Nevertheless, response *biases* in protest surveys are generally small and problems are most likely to occur when researchers compare demonstrations across issues (in this study, all events were aimed at austerity measures).

Overlap Between Protesters and Organizers

Protester motives are derived from three open-ended questions in the protest survey. Q1: "Please tell us why you participated in this protest event?"; Q2: "In your opinion, who or what is to blame for [demonstration issue]?"; and Q3: "What should be done to address this issue?" These questions are the very first in the survey. They touch on top-of-mind beliefs and invite participants to tell in their own words what the demonstration is about and why they decided to take part in it. Such written motivations reveal only a part of the motives that may have played a role, but this incomplete picture is not a disadvantage per se: respondents can emphasize what is most important to them.

Q1 asks for the diagnosis, the situation that is problematic and needs to be repaired. Granted, it does not literally do so. Respondents might interpret this question differently and, instead of referring to the issue of the protest event, mention other reasons why they participated (for instance, because their friends went as well). However, of all motives written down on the three open questions only 6% did not refer to the issue at stake. These responses are coded as "issue unrelated" and are excluded from the analysis. Q2 goes into blame attribution: who or what is responsible for the problematic situation. Q3 tries to elicit a prognosis, a possible solution for the problem. Only people who responded to all three questions are included (in total 2,496 respondents). When answering the three questions, respondents on average wrote down four quasi-sentences: fragments containing one message or statement. The quasi-sentences are the coding units, and in total the respondents wrote down 9,214 quasi-sentences.

All the 9,214 quasi-sentences that respondents wrote down are categorized into frame components. To do so, they are first compared with the messages of the protest organizers. These are deduced from the protest platforms that social

movements spread to gather support. The platforms are the official claims and points of view underlying the demonstration and represent a shared interpretation of the organizers (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). I use the platforms that are signed by all supporting organizations. They are published in print flyers or online, and they were gathered per country by the responsible teams of the CCC project. The full platform texts are converted into a series of frame components by the author and two colleagues. Each unique message in the platform text is operationalized as a frame component. In total, the 14 organizers' demonstration platforms contain 275 frame components. Next, coders determine for each of the 9,214 respondent quasi-sentences whether it is congruent or not with one of these organizers' frame elements. Congruence between protesters' motives and protest organizers' messages is interpreted broadly. Coders look at the meaning of what is said and often mark overlap even when participants use very different words than the organizers.

By comparing the respondent quasi-sentences to the frame components found in the organizations' platforms, already about half of the respondent quasi-sentences are categorized into frame components—that is, the ones that match with one of the organizers'. The quasi-sentences that are not congruent with one of the organizers' messages still have to be grouped. This inductive process is done by the author. In total, the respondent quasi-sentences are categorized into 627 different frame components. Analyses will be done using a data set with these as the units of analysis, hence consisting of 627 cases. On average, there are 45 frame components per demonstration (see the appendix for the exact number per event).

Overlap With Mass Media

Finally, coding is done to determine to what extent messages of the organizers and motives of protest participants can be found in mass media content.[3] The media data consist of printed newspaper articles about the protest issue prior to the demonstration. The research period covers the four months before the protest up to the day the event took place. Two newspapers per country are selected, one popular and one quality newspaper.[4] For each demonstration, a specific search string is used to find articles (including comment sections) that concern the protest issue. Articles that turn out not to be about the protest issue are excluded. Next, per demonstration a hundred articles are randomly selected for analysis (see the appendix for search strings and the initial number of articles found per demonstration).

Each article is read thoroughly and explored for passages that overlap with one of the organizers' and/or participants' components. Because it is very difficult for a coder to keep about 45 different frame components in mind per demonstration, they are structured in broad categories (five or six) to make searching for congruent

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[3] Because most framing literature has focused on the U.S. case, it might be good to note that the media systems in Belgium and the Netherlands belong to the "democratic corporatist model," while the media system in the United Kingdom is more market dominated and follows a "liberal model" like the United States (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

[4] Belgium: *Het Laatste Nieuws* and *De Morgen*. The Netherlands: *De Telegraaf* and *de Volkskrant*. The United Kingdom: *Daily Mail* and the*Guardian*. All selected popular newspapers have a right-wing orientation; all selected quality newspapers have a left-wing orientation.

elements in the articles manageable. Coders first seek for the broader categories and then determine which one of the components within the category is mentioned. For each frame component in the media, the source is written down (political parties, experts, protest organizers, etc.). The source can be any actor who directly or indirectly expresses one of the frames in a newspaper article. Besides quoted, a source can be paraphrased or described in a situation. The same frame component is coded only once per article per actor. Table I gives examples of three frame components from demonstrations in the sample and cites overlapping fragments.

Intercoder Reliability

The coding of overlap between participant motives and organizer messages is done by six coders. Each demonstration is coded by at least two people. Ten percent of the sample is double coded and Krippendorff's alpha (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007) is measured for the number of quasi-sentences in a respondent's answer (K-alpha = .93), and the number of participant components that are coded congruent (K-alpha = .72) and incongruent with the organizers (K-alpha = .71). Next, the coding of overlap between participant and organizer elements on the one hand and newspaper articles on the other hand is done by two coders. Ten percent is double coded, and Krippendorff's alpha is measured for the number of frame components found per newspaper article (K-alpha = .89) and per article for the number of frame components congruent with the organizers' pamphlets (K-alpha = .81) and with other participant frames (K-alpha = .77).

Variables

The data set contains 627 cases with frame components as units of analysis. The dependent variable is the number of respondents that mentioned a certain frame component when answering the open-ended survey questions (# *mentioned by respondents*). Because the dependent variable is a count variable, negative binomial regressions will be used. A normal Poisson model is not appropriate because of overdispersion. As is often the case with count data, the number of times that the observation could have happened (the "exposure") has to be accounted for. The exposure variable here is the number of respondents in each demonstration, controlling for how often a certain frame component could have been mentioned.[5] Because the frame elements are nested in demonstrations, multilevel models are used.

The first independent variable is *platform component*. This variable distinguishes between messages that are *not* found in the organizers' pamphlet (coded 0), elements that *are* found in the organizers' pamphlet (1), and the most important elements in the organizers' pamphlets—that is, the *primary* components (2). Within an

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[5] Using an exposure variable is in most cases better than "directly" analyzing a rate variable because it makes use of the correct probability distributions. In STATA, the command *xtnbreg* combined with *exp(varname)* is used. For the mediation analysis in the results section, however, the rate variable is used because the technique applied there should be performed on continuous variables.

Table I.   Congruent Participant, Organizer, and Newspaper Frame Components

Frame component	Respondent	Protest organizers	Newspaper
People lose jobs due to cuts in education (Fund our Future–UK)	"I'm worried my husband could lose his job with these university budget cuts. That would be a double hit for us."	"Many jobs might be lost because of the cuts in higher education."	"Welfare cuts combined with cuts to funding in higher education does not add up to job creation."
Cultural groups and centers must be preserved (Culture demo–NL)	"So many groups will disappear because of these austerities."	"We should protect orchestras, artistic circles, museums. Jobs are under pressure."	"Then they will only program blockbusters; what is going to perish are the experiments, the starters, the young artists."
Capitalism is to blame (March for work–BE)	"I blame unfettered capitalism."	"To blame: unbridled capitalism."	"These are the excesses of capitalism."

organizers' frame scheme, one can distinguish different hierarchical levels. Components can have a higher or lower degree of saliency in a mobilization campaign (Johnston 2002). At the top of the hierarchy are the primary elements. They summarize the overarching reason why the demonstration is held and cover the main problem and solution. The secondary levels consist of subcategories in which more specific diagnoses and prognoses are defined (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). The primary elements are coded by looking at the titles and slogans of the protest platform text. They are easily identifiable because of the use of large and bold letters.

The second independent variable is *media component,* which measures the percentage of newspaper articles about the protest issue in which a certain frame component is mentioned. That way, this variable estimates the relative weight of a certain frame element within the debate on the protest issue.[6]

Furthermore, there are two control variables. The first one is *# components demonstration.* It measures the total number of frame elements that are identified per demonstration. Second, the countries in which the demonstrations took place are controlled for. Because there are not enough countries to warrant a separate level in the multilevel regressions, country dummies are added as variables at the demonstration level. Table II gives the descriptives of all variables.

RESULTS

Before answering the three research questions, let us take a look at the extent to which the campaign messages of the protest organizers were covered in the newspapers prior to the demonstrations. On average, 20 frame components per demonstration were found in the staging organizations' protest platforms. The *dark bars* in Fig. 2 indicate how often these appeared in newspaper articles about the protest

[6] Note that this variable does not take into account that the amount of media attention that protest issues get differs. This should not be a problem because, arguably, the relative visibility of a certain frame component within an issue debate matters here, rather than the visibility of a frame component within the whole media agenda.

Table II. Variable Descriptives (N Frames = 627; N Demonstrations = 14)

|	Mean (Std. E.)	N	Min	Max
Dependent variable				
Mentioned by respondents (#)	14.70 (.94)	627	1	188
Independent variables				
Platform component: Not in platform (0)	.59 (.02)	627	0	1
Secondary (1)	.36 (.02)	627	0	1
Primary (2)	.05 (.01)	627	0	1
Media component (%)	5.32 (.30)	627	0	62
Control variables				
# respondents per demo (exposure variable)	180.07 (18.04)	14	90	309
# components demonstration	44.9 (1.9)	14	37	55
Countries: Belgium	.21 (.11)	14	0	1
Netherlands	.57 (.14)	14	0	1
United Kingdom	.21 (.11)	14	0	1
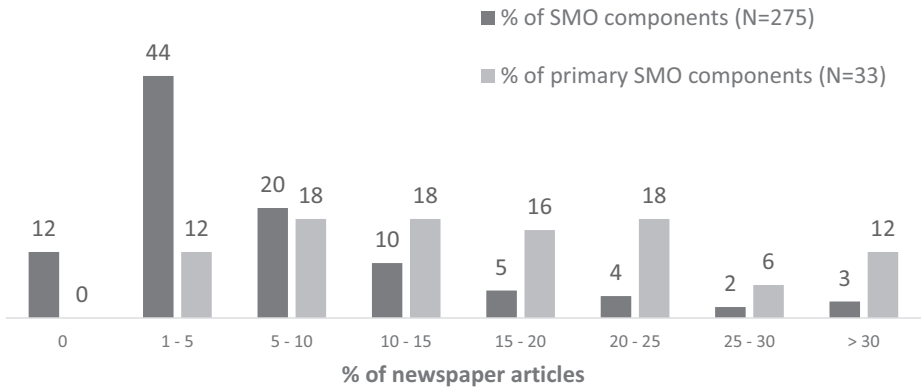
Fig. 2. How Often (%) Do SMO Platform Components Appear in Newspaper Articles (%)?

issue. Twelve percent were never mentioned, which means that almost 90% of the platform frame components were at least covered once. More than half (56%—combining the first two dark columns) were only found in 5% or less of the articles. The top 9% of the SMO platform elements (combining the last three dark bars) on the other hand were covered in at least 20% of the articles about the protest issue. It seems that the views of SMOs played a relatively central role in the mass media debate about government cuts in Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. At least some were rather visible—that is, were present in a fifth (or more) of the articles about the issue. The primary frame components of the protest organizers were more visible than the secondary elements. A third of these central demonstration messages (36%—the last three *light* columns) were referred to in 20% or more of the reports on the protest issue. On average, the primary components were mentioned in 20% of the articles, while the secondary diagnoses and prognoses were on average covered in only 6% (not in figure).

The frames underlying a protest demonstration are not necessarily advocated only in the media by SMOs staging the protest. Other actors can support the

movement's cause in the news as well. Table III gives an overview of who expressed SMO frame components in the newspaper articles. In almost a fourth (23%) of the cases, the protest organizers themselves got stage in the media arena and referred to one of their platform frames. This means, however, that 77% of the newspaper attention was due to other actors who held the same opinions. Most often, these actors were people affected by the protest issue (21%), journalists and editors (11%), representatives of opposition parties (10%), and private citizens (10%).

Let's now take a look at the overlap between motives of protest participants, campaign messages of protest organizers, and newspaper content. Of the 627 different components that were identified within all respondent answers, 34.9% can be traced back to both the newspaper coverage and the organizer platforms (see Fig. 3). Together these "newspaper and platform elements" account for more than half (57.6%) of all the quasi-sentences that were written down by respondents. Hence, although only a third of the demonstrator frame components appeared both in newspapers and in the organizers' pamphlets, these explain the majority of the

Table III. Who Expresses Platform Components in the Newspaper Coverage?

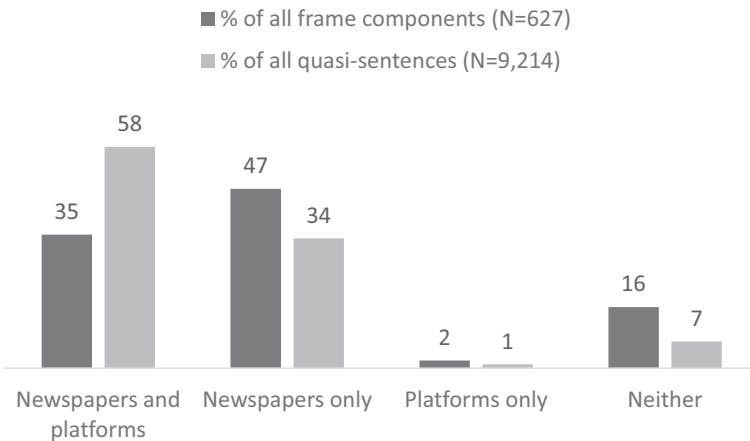| Source	Mentions of platform components in newspapers, %
Staging SMOs	23
People affected	21
Journalists	11
Opposition parties	10
Private citizens	10
Experts	8
Government parties	7
Others	10
Total	100 (N = s2,138)

Fig. 3. Distribution of Protester Frame Components and Quasi-Sentences Over Newspaper Articles and Organizer Platforms

reasons why people protested. The second set of columns in Fig. 3 shows that almost half (47.2%) of the demonstrator frame elements got "newspaper coverage only." Many topics that are discussed in newspaper articles about the protest issue are part of people's rationale to join a protest demonstration, even though they are not part of the movements' official standpoints. Combining the first two sets of columns reveals that more than 80% of the protesters' frame components where present in the newspaper coverage prior to the demonstration and that these account for more than 90% of all reasons (quasi-sentences) that were given by respondents to join the protest.

A very small portion of the respondents' frame elements are "platform only" (2.4%)—that is, messages that were officially communicated by social movements but not covered in the media. Finally, 15.5% of the protester motives could not be traced back to the pamphlets or to newspaper coverage. Apparently, protesters have reasons to participate that are not part of the wider public debate about the topic. Note that the "issue-unrelated" reasons some gave—like "I'm here because my wife asked me to"—were left out of the analysis, so these are substantive motivations to take part.

Table IV presents three mixed-effects negative binomial regressions.[7] The dependent variable is the number of respondents that mention a certain frame component to motivate their protest participation. The model fit statistics in the bottom rows compare the regressions with the intercept-only models. The full models fit the data better: the Bayesian information criterion, the Akaike information criterion, and the log likelihood substantially decrease. In order to make sense of the size of the correlations, marginal effects—while keeping the other variables at their means—are reported in the text.

The first research question asked to what extent protesters' reasons to demonstrate correlate with the protest organizers' mobilizing messages. Model 1 shows that both the SMO primary platform components (B = 1.579; p = .000) and the secondary platform elements (B = .234; p = .001) are referred to significantly more often than messages that were not part of the organizers' communication. Both variables are still significant when the variable *media component* is added in Model 2. Marginal effects (using Model 2) show that the correlation with primary frame components is substantial. These central elements underlying the demonstration are on average mentioned by 24% of the activists. The secondary frame elements play a more limited role. They are on average mentioned by 8% of the protest participants.

The second research question asked to what extent demonstrator motives are connected to media coverage prior to a demonstration. Model 2 shows that the more certain frame components appear in newspapers, the more protesters refer to them when asked about the reasons for their participation. Components that are mentioned in a higher share of the newspaper articles about the protest issue have a higher chance to be written down by respondents (B = .029; p = .003). Marginal

[7] Multilevel regression models account for the fact that the units of analysis (frame components) are clustered per demonstration. The multilevel models allow for residual components both at the frame component level and the demonstration level. The residual variance is partitioned into a between-demonstrations part (the variance of the demonstration-level residuals) and a within-demonstrations part (the variance of the frame component-level residuals).

Table IV. Mixed-Effects Negative Binomial Regressions (N Demonstrations = 14; N Frames = 627)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Coef.	*Std.E.*	*P > |z|*	*Coef.*	*Std.E.*	*P > |z|*	*Coef.*	*Std.E.*	*P > |z|*
Independent variables									
Platform component:									
Secondary	**.234**	**.071**	**.001**	**.145**	**.071**	**.043**	.101	.072	.164
(ref. = 0) *Primary*	**1.579**	**.100**	**.000**	**1.103**	**.118**	**.000**	**.996**	**.123**	**.000**
Media component				**.029**	**.003**	**.000**			
Media comp. SMO							**.054**	**.008**	**.000**
Media comp. affected people							**.051**	**.012**	**.000**
Media comp. opposition							**.052**	**.022**	**.019**
Media comp. government							.001	.028	.974
Media comp. others							.008	.010	.434
Controls									
# respondent frames	**−.020**	**.005**	**.000**	**−.013**	**.004**	**.003**	**−.015**	**.005**	**.001**
Countries: *Netherlands*	−.058	.088	.509	**−.174**	**.087**	**.045**	**−.227**	**.091**	**.012**
(ref. = Belgium) *UK*	**.282**	**.106**	**.007**	.179	.103	.081	.120	.104	.250
Constant	−4.330	.237	.000	−4.547	.221	.000	−4.337	.228	.000
Wald chi² (df)	353.50 (5)			601.15 (6)			581.37 (9)		
Prob > chi2	.000			.000			.000		
Log likelihood[a]	−2,260.617			−2,227.283			−2,228.969		
	(−2,353.965)			(−2,353.965)			(−2,353.965)		
Δ Log likelihood	93.348			126.682			124.996		
BIC[a]	4,572.762 (4,727.252)			4,512.534 (4,727.252)			4,535.23 (4,727.252)		
Δ BIC	154.49			214.718			192.022		
AIC[a]	4,537.234 (4,713.93)			4,472.565 (4,713.93)			4,481.939 (4,713.93)		
Δ AIC	176.696			241.365			231.991		

Notes: [a]Empty model in brackets.
Dependent variable: # respondents who mention the component. Exposure variable: # respondents per demonstration.
Significant coefficients are in boldface.
AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion.

effects indicate that frames that are covered in 20% of the newspaper articles are mentioned twice as often by protesters as frames that get only 5% media attention. When a frame component appears in 25% of the newspaper articles about the protest issue, on average 15% of the protesters use this message to motivate their participation.

Next, via multilevel mediation modeling (Krull and MacKinnon 2001), and based on Model 2 of Table IV, I calculate to what extent the newspaper coverage mediates the relationship between social movement messages and protest participant motives (RQ3). Multilevel mediation analyses respect the nesting of frame components in demonstrations. The idea of the mediation analysis is that part of the correlation between SMO messages (the independent variable) and protest participant motives (the dependent variable) is created through newspaper coverage (the mediating variable).[8] The results show that the relationship between the *primary* SMO frame components and protester motives is mediated by newspaper

[8] Via the command *ml_mediation* in STATA. The control variables of Model 2 are included in the mediation analysis as covariate variables.

coverage for 27%.[9] The mediation is substantial, but it also indicates that protest organizers are able to get their most important messages across to people via their own channels. Regarding the *secondary* SMO frame elements, the results show a mediation of 50%.[10] The less dominant organizers' messages reach protesters directly sometimes, but social movements are for an important part (for half of the correlation) dependent on whether or not journalists cover these issues in the news.

We know now that the claims and arguments that were prominent in the media were more prominent among protesters as well. However, messages in newspaper coverage about government cuts can be expressed by various actors. Model 3 therefore runs a regression, cutting up the media variable into five different variables, measuring the percentage of newspaper articles in which a message was expressed by the protest organizers, opposition parties, government parties, people affected by the issue, and other actors. We see, looking at those media variables, that media appearances of SMOs (B = .054; p = .000) opposition parties (B = .052; p = .019), and affected people (B = .051; p = .000) are significantly related to protester motives. When a message is voiced in 10% of the newspaper articles by the staging organizations, 14% of the protest participants align with it. Elements expressed in 10% of the articles by opposition parties are on average mentioned by 11%. Messages uttered in 10% of the media reports by people who are affected by the protest issue are on average written down by 10% of the respondents. Media elements of government parties and other actors do not seem to correlate with protest participant motives.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the reasons people have to take part in protest demonstrations and to what extent these are linked to the mobilizing messages of the social movements organizing the protest and with the newspaper coverage preceding the event. The results show that most protester motives—more than 90%—can be traced back to news media content. The more media attention certain arguments or claims receive, the more these are also part of activists' motivations to attend the demonstration.

Media coverage can play a role in people's reasons to protest in three ways. First, via mass media coverage, protesters are confronted with the viewpoints of the organizations that stage the protest. The analyses show that media coverage mediates the link between SMO messages and demonstrators' motives. However, media reports only slightly mediate the dissemination of the most central diagnoses and prognoses of the organizers' campaign. These dominant SMO messages largely relate to protester motivations even when controlling for media attention. As such, SMOs

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[9] The indirect effect is (16.728)*(.518) = 8.665. The total effect is 32.376 (p = .000). The proportion of the total effect that is mediated = indirect effect / total effect = 8.665 / 32.376 = .268. The significance of the indirect effect was calculated using bootstrapping procedures. Sobel-Goodman mediation tests give, by and large, the same result.

[10] Indirect effect: (4.088)*(.518) = 2.118. Total effect: 4.213 (p = .000). Proportion of the total effect that is mediated = indirect effect / total effect = 2.118 / 4.213 = .503. The significance of the indirect effect was calculated using bootstrapping procedures. Sobel-Goodman mediation tests give, by and large, the same result.

seem to be able to reach protest participants directly via their own communication channels—like pamphlets, websites, meetings, ads, or newsletters. The less dominant organizer frames, however, for an important part depend on media visibility in order to reach activists. Second, via the media protesters can receive messages of other political actors that are nonetheless congruent with the perspectives of the organizing SMOs. Looking at the media coverage more closely shows that especially news content coming from opposition parties and people affected by the issue—natural allies SMOs—is congruent with protest participant motives. Finally, protesters can via the media be exposed to alternative views about the protest issue. I found that a third of the reasons why demonstrators protested did get media coverage but were not part of the staging organizations' frames. Many topics that are discussed in newspaper articles about the protest issue are part of people's rationale to join a street demonstration, even though they are not part of the movements' official standpoints.

Additionally, the results show that the majority of the campaign messages of protest organizers receive media attention prior to the demonstration—at least to some extent. The 5% most prominent frames underlying this study's protests were covered in a fourth of the articles about the protest issue. However, most of the media visibility for SMOs' messages was due to other actors who expressed beliefs similar to the protest organizers' views. More than three-quarters of the media content that overlapped with the claims in the demonstration pamphlets was traced back to other actors. These findings underline that social movements are often dependent on others and that it is important for them to activate third parties to support their claims.

An important limitation of this study is that only protest participants were surveyed. It is not clear to what extent nonparticipants' perceptions about a protest issue are affected by media reporting and whether this might stop them from joining a demonstration. Also, only relatively successful mobilization campaigns were examined. Only protests where 2,000 participants or more were expected have been covered. Media attention for the demonstrations under scrutiny was high, and a variety of actors gave their opinion in the media. The role of newspaper coverage is probably different for protests on issues with less reporting. In those cases, protesters are likely to be more aligned with the movement's messages because there are less other views floating around in the public sphere. In addition, only a particular kind of street protests was investigated: anti-austerity demonstrations. Media coverage is probably more important for movements that focus on policy issues than for the ones that focus on values or identity. The fact that a large part of the social movement's platforms were covered in mass media might be instigated by discursive opportunities that the social movements under scrutiny had. During the research period (2009–2012), at a time of economic crisis, journalists probably were very responsive to SMO views on government cuts.

Nevertheless, it is telling that even in these circumstances SMOs partly depend on mass media to reach their constituency and, within the media arena, mostly have to count on other political actors to gain attention for "their" protest frames. Moreover, the *mechanisms* that were found here can be expected to be the same for protests on other issues in other contexts. The study showed that people who engage in collective action do not necessarily agree with the protest messages of the organizers

staging the demonstration and that their alternative reasons to take part correlate with the content of media reports on the protest issue. The strength of this relationship might differ from context to context, but when trying to understand participants' frames, it appears to be essential to account for the mass media coverage of the protest issue prior to the demonstration. Future studies might be able to examine this more in depth and find out how this link actually comes about.

Because this study focuses on motives of protest participants—and not on differences between participants and nonparticipants—one might wonder whether it matters to SMOs what kind of motives demonstrators have. In the end, they may just hope to drum up as many people as they can and might not care about the specific motives that people have to join the demonstration. I would, however, argue differently. For SMOs, it is not only important *that* people participate in their protest events, but the reasons *why* they participate are important as well. More specifically, it matters to what extent these reasons are aligned with the organizers' messages. Highly aligned activists, for instance, are probably more committed and loyal followers who continue to be involved in movement organizations in the long run. Furthermore, frame alignment is important for internal cohesion. If activists make widely different claims or if particular groups put emphasis on different domains, movements run the risk to fall apart in various fractions. Diversity is not a problem per se, but if it surfaces repeatedly, schism might be the consequence. Finally, following Charles Tilly (1999, 2004, 2006), one can argue that a shared framing between protesters and SMOs matters for the potential success of a protest event. Unity is one of four factors that determine a demonstration's impact—together with "worthiness," "numbers," and "commitment." Unified groups of protesters have a higher chance to succeed by broadcasting a clearer and stronger signal. It shows that they are a unified force targets should pay attention to. The more participants agree about the problem, who is responsible for it, and what the right solutions are, the more unified the crowd and the clearer the signal that is spread to elites, allies, bystanders, and opponents.

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APPENDIX Overview of Demonstrations, Media Search Strings, Number of Respondents,
and Number of Frame Components

#	Demonstration	Date	C[a]	Media search string	# articles found	# resp. (%)[b]	# frame components
1	No to Austerity	09/29/10	BE	(bezuinig* OR bespar*) AND (recessie OR werk OR werklo* OR koopkracht OR "economische groei" OR armoe* OR herstelplan OR job*) AND (Europ* OR EU)	109	96 (4)	42
2	We have alternatives	12/02/11	BE	((bezuinig* OR bespar*) AND (index* OR pensioen* OR "economische crisis" OR werklo* OR "uitkering*"))	308	153 (6)	50
3	March for Work	01/29/10	BE	(Opel AND (werk OR werkloos OR werkloosheid)) OR (crisis AND België AND (werk OR werkloos OR werkloosheid)) OR ((herstructurering OR reorganisatie) AND (werk OR werkloos OR werkloosheid))	176	108 (4)	41
4	Retirement demonstration	11/21/09	NL	pensioenleeftijd OR (AOW AND leeftijd) OR (pensioen! AND leeftijd) OR (bezuinig! AND pensioen!) OR (vergrijz! AND pensioen!)	425	260 (10)	64
5	Culture demo Amsterdam	11/20/10	NL	(bezuinig! OR subsidie! OR BTW OR belasting!) AND (cultuur OR kunst!) OR "culturele kaalslag" OR (schreeuw AND cultuur)	438	154 (6)	40
6	Culture demo Utrecht	11/20/10	NL	(bezuinig! OR subsidie! OR BTW OR belasting!) AND (cultuur OR kunst!) OR "culturele kaalslag" OR (schreeuw AND cultuur)	438	146 (6)	37
7	Stop budget cuts (care & welfare)	09/19/11	NL	(bezuinig! OR bespar! AND (gehandicapt OR welzijn OR wajong OR PGB OR "speciaal onderwijs" OR "sociale werkvoorziening!" OR "sociale werkplaats!" OR "publieke sector" OR "publiek werk")	158	263 (11)	42

Appendix (Continued)

#	Demonstration	Date	C[a]	Media search string	# articles found	# resp. (%)[b]	# frame components
8	Together strong for public work	02/17/11	NL	(bezuinig! OR bespar! OR ontslag!) AND ("publieke sector" OR "publiek werk" OR ambtena!)	203	309 (12)	43
9	Student demo Amsterdam	05/21/10	NL	langstudeer! OR collegegeld OR studiefinanciering OR (bezuinig! AND onderwijs) OR basisbeurs OR sociaal leenstelsel OR (studie AND boete) OR (stude! AND boete) OR (crisis AND onderwijs)	288	150 (6)	45
10	Student demo The Hague	01/21/11	NL	langstudeer! OR collegegeld OR studiefinanciering OR (bezuinig! AND onderwijs) OR basisbeurs OR sociaal leenstelsel OR (studie AND boete) OR (stude! AND boete)	250	260 (10)	47
11	Military demo	05/26/11	NL	(bezuinig! OR ontslag! OR reorganisatie! OR waardering OR cao) AND (defensie! OR leger! OR militair!)	287	190 (8)	55
12	Stop Education Cuts	11/10/10	UK	((funding OR funds OR austerit!) w/15 (educat! OR universit! OR student!))	429	130 (5)	42
13	Second Student National Demo	12/09/10	UK	((funding OR funds OR austerit!) w/15 (educat! OR universit! OR student!))	488	90 (4)	47
14	TUC's March for the Alternative	03/26/11	UK	("budget cut!" OR austerit!) AND (alternative! OR unemploy! OR "economic growth" OR "economic crisis")	269	187 (7)	39

Notes: [a]C = Country (BE = Belgium, NL= Netherlands, UK = United Kingdom).
[b]Number and percentage of respondents.