

TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION: MAY DAY AND CLIMATE CHANGE PROTESTERS' IDENTIFICATION WITH SIMILAR PROTEST EVENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES*

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Why do some people participating in transnational protest events identify with their foreign counterparts while others participating in the same events do not? We find that participants in a series of May Day and climate change events are aware that the events are part of a broader struggle, and many in fact identify with their overseas counterparts. However, there are differences between demonstrations. Some are populated with people who identify transnationally, while others are comprised of participants who more closely identify with their national companions. Focusing on differences in transnational identification at the participant level, our findings can be summarized in two statements: (1) protest participation is a stronger producer of transnational identification than associational activism; (2) expressive protesters identify more transnationally than instrumentally motivated protesters.

Social movement researchers have increasingly studied the transnationalization of movements and protest. Numerous studies have addressed what appears to be an increase in the transnational organization of the social movement sector (e.g., see Bandy and Smith 2005; Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997). Scholarly interest in the transnationalization of movements has not stopped at the 1999 Battle of Seattle. A recent example is the Indignados movement that started in Spain, fueled the Occupy movement across the Atlantic, and then spread all over the globe, gaining a fair amount of media coverage and sympathy. Most research has focused on assessing the transnational character of specific movements or particular protest events. On the one hand, the basic tenet of a large volume of work on transnationalization has been that organizing transnationally has become more necessary for social movements—as political and economic decisions are shifting to the international level, movements increasingly need to target international or transnational agencies. Some have spoken about an increasingly conducive transnational opportunity structure (Tarrow 2005). On the other hand, due to technological and mobility-related developments, transnational protests and movements are now easier to organize than they used to be (della Porta and Tarrow 2005).

As is often the case with social movement research in general, research on transnational movements and protest has not give center stage to the individual participant. The elite level (leaders, professional activists) and the organizational level (politics and society) attracted the lion's share of attention (e.g., Keck and Sikkink 1998). This article, in contrast, focuses on the level of the individual grassroots participant in transnational collective action events. It deals with transnational movements and protest from the perspective of the individual participant. The double question we set out to answer is simple: *To what extent and why do participants in transnationally embedded protest events identify with their counterparts in other countries?*

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We believe this question is relevant and may illuminate research on transnational movements and protest more generally. First, to gauge the extent to which a movement is transnational, one must assess how individual grassroots participants think and feel about its transnational character. If individual participants do not identify with their foreign counterparts—even if the organizers have coordinated internationally and the organizational backbone of the event is transnational—it is hard to conceive of this movement as a transnational movement or of the protest as a transnational protest. Indeed, some social movement scholars have incorporated a “shared collective identity” element in the core of their definition of what a social movement is in the first place (e.g., see Diani 1992). Therefore, in the absence of transnational collective identification, it is hard to speak of a truly transnational social movement (for a similar argument, see Diani 2005). In those instances, it may be the case that we witness transnationalization at the elite level but not on the grassroots level.

Second, apart from these definitional matters, studies show that collective identification more generally is an important driver and a consequence of movement and protest activism (Melucci 1988). For example, Klandermans states that “a strong identification with a group makes participation in collective action on behalf of that group more likely” (2004: 364). In a sense, collective identification is one way to overcome the free-rider problem since people participate because they identify with a group or a concept—to fulfill identity needs—and not just to achieve movement goals, which might be accomplished without their participation (Simon, Loewy, Stuermer, Weber, Freytag, Habig, Kampmeier, and Spahlinger 1998). We suspect transnational collective identification also affects how individual participants behave and what they think. In this sense, the absence of transnational collective identification may impede sustaining transnational collective action. Ephemeral transnational action episodes are then only the unintended by-products of domestic collective identification and are merely a temporary extension of the domestic struggle to the transnational level—this is what Sidney Tarrow and Doug McAdam (2005) call “externalization.”

Concretely, this article gauges the transnational collective identification processes of participants in two series of transnational protest events in 2009-2010. Using protest surveys, we questioned samples of demonstrators (N = 1,869) in six May Day events in five different countries (Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland) and three climate change events in overlapping countries (Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Denmark). The study is not meant to be a comparative case study. We do not formulate expectations about, nor do we find differences in, levels of transnational identification between the six countries and between the two issues under study here. We simply use these nine demonstrations as a useful sample of transnational events to test general expectations about differences between activists who identify transnationally and those who do not. Assessing whether our general expectations apply to nine different events presents a rigorous test.

A first step in the process of transnational identification is transnational awareness. Protestors have to know about similar events in foreign countries in order to be able to identify with their foreign counterparts. Therefore, we first assess to what extent participants are aware of taking part in a transnational event. Among those transnationally aware, we assess their transnational collective identification by asking about their identification with participants in similar events in other countries. Finally, we account for the differences in transnational identification by examining protesters’ individual characteristics and the events they participate in.

TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

Identity is an elusive and multifaceted concept. Social psychologists have developed detailed typologies and have distinguished several dimensions. For example, people can hold different identities at the same time—multiple identities that can contradict or reinforce each other (Gonzalez and Brown 2003). In this article we deal with collective identity and define this in a

rather straightforward way as group identification: the extent to which people identify and feel connected to a group of people with specific features. Collective identity is thus a shared identity. Also, an identity is the result of identification, which is a process and not a fixed state of affairs. When we occasionally use the word “identity” in the remainder of this paper, we refer to the process of identifying with a group rather than to “having” an identity.

Many social movement scholars hold that collective identities are crucial preconditions for social movements to exist (e.g., Diani 1992). Group identification strongly increases the chance of recurring participation (De Weerd and Klandermans 1999). Mainstream social movement theory considers collective identification to be one of the three indispensable elements of collective action frames that inspire and legitimate participation (Klandermans 1997). People may join collective action events purely for instrumental reasons, but in the absence of a shared sense of similarity, solidarity, belonging, and agency as a group, these events will remain scattered, fragmented, and ephemeral. Without mutual feelings of commitment and engagement towards a common cause, no real a sustained identification with a social movement will develop.

The same idea that collective identification is indispensable for mobilization emerges when looking at research on transnational movements. Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) state that the emergence and increase in transnational collective action—defined as “coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states or international institutions” (della Porta and Tarrow 2005: 2)—are the most dramatic changes in the world of contentious politics. They claim that the tendency for movements to transnationalize is driven by technological advances, by cheap travel, and also by real-world changes, such as the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the rising power of international organizations. Yet, della Porta and Tarrow contend that increasing transnationalism is also a matter of “*cognitive changes*” among movement activists. They argue that “many groups of protesters have learned from people like themselves in other countries” (della Porta and Tarrow 2005: 8). This learning and international diffusion supposes a kind of collective identification, the acknowledgement that people in other countries are good examples from which one can learn.

Similarly, Tarrow and McAdam (2005) contend that the process of “scale shift”—the process through which local struggles and groups expand to wider struggles and groups (which is arguably what happens when transnational movements emerge and transnational protest events occur)—supposes that distant groups define themselves “as sufficiently similar” and hence engage in similar action (2005: 127-129). The crucial mechanism is what they call “attribution of similarity” (Tarrow and McAdam 2005: 129), or what one could consider to be another word for “collective identification.”

Although, Tarrow believes that some form of limited transnational identification is necessary to develop transnational contention, he is skeptical about the existence of strong transnational collective identities. He reckons transnational collective identification is very difficult to develop among people from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds (Tarrow 2005). Notwithstanding the transnational character of some movements, most are determined by their national context. The frame of reference essentially remains the national political context and not the international level. McAdam similarly states, “Nation states remain the dominant actors and loci for all manner of politics, including contentious politics” (2005: 121). Transnational collective identities are, at best, superficial, diffuse, and easily reversible. Indeed, collective identities are mainly anchored in social networks like family, neighbors, and friends (Diani forthcoming), and these networks are less available at the transnational level. Apart from networks, collective identification also depends on successful framing of an issue or problem, and scholars have been skeptical about the efficacy of cross-cultural frame-bridging efforts (for example, see McCarthy 1997).

In sum, the transnational movement literature suggests that, although difficult to develop, some sort of transnational collective identification is a precondition for transnational action—only when there is enough transnational collective identification can people engage in organizing transnationally. At the same time, transnational identification is seen as a by-product of

transnational action; through collaborative action, transnational collective identity develops (for example, see della Porta 2005; Melucci 1988). As Dufour and Giraud (2007: 316) observe, "Identity is a condition of action as well as it is a product of it."

However, most of these accounts of the necessity of transnational collective identification have mainly been applied at the level of elites or leaders, and have not been tested empirically at the level of individual participants. Several studies show that, at least on the elite-level, transnational collaboration with similar groups in other countries is an important asset that nurtures transnational collective action. For example, Verhulst (2010) a striking example of transnational collective action: the February 15, 2003 protests against the war on Iraq, which mobilized millions of people in hundreds of locations. He found that intense transnational collaboration, with European and US peace movement elites traveling to common meetings and setting up joint preparatory events, paved the way for the largest transnational mobilization ever seen. Another notable example specifically focusing on transnational collective identity building is the World March of Women (WMW). Bringing together women's organizations around the globe, the movement organized several events in 2000 and 2005, and drew heavily on targeted elite efforts to construct a transnational collective identity (Dufour and Giraud 2007). Hence, there is ample evidence that movement elites sometimes collaborate transnationally in order to set up transnational events. Yet, it remains unclear what role transnational collective identification plays in bringing about transnational collective action events as it is grassroots participants who comprise the bulk of the protesters at such events.

We claim that identification, and the resulting strength of the collective identity, is at least as much a grassroots phenomenon as it is the product of elite activity. Naturally, social movement organization (SMO) elites are more influential than grassroots participants in defining the identity of their organization and thus, indirectly, of the movement. Elite narratives certainly have more impact on who rank-and-file participants identify with than vice versa. Movement elites may decide to collaborate across borders, they may knit their respective national SMOs tightly together in a formal transnational coalition, and elites may even identify strongly with their colleagues in other countries. All of this may affect the extent to which grassroots participants identify with their transnational counterparts but, as such, it is not sufficient to talk about a "transnational collective identity." The fact that the worldwide antiwar demonstrations on February 15, 2003 were clearly organized transnationally does not mean that their grassroots participants felt in any way similar, acquainted, or close to their fellow demonstrators in other countries. Many of the February 15 participants may not even have been aware that they participated in a transnational day of action, but just took to the streets to target their own warmongering government or even to challenge their domestic government for other, non-war-related reasons (Klandermans 2010). We argue that transnational organization, although probably having an impact, does not automatically lead to a transnational collective identity, nor is transnational collective identification at the grassroots level a precondition to organize transnationally. As a consequence, we cannot take the presence of a transnational collective identity at the grassroots level for granted and cannot simply conclude that transnational collective action events are caused by, or bring about, transnational identification. Transnational collective identification is a social phenomenon in its own right that deserves to be studied at the grassroots level and not just through an indirect focus on movement elites.

Similarly, identification is essentially a psychological process. Feeling close to one another and recognizing another person as being linked by a distinctive bond is to a large extent an attitude, or an effect, occurring in the minds of individual people. It is individuals who feel close to other individuals, or to groups, and not organizations or social movements. Organizations cannot "feel" anything nor can they "recognize" others as having a bond. We do not claim that a collective identity is merely the sum of the opinions of a distinct group of individuals; these opinions only exist in a social context and are the consequence of social interaction. But we do contend that one can study transnational collective identification in a satisfactory manner at the level of individual grassroots participants in collective action (or movements).

This is not what most research on transnational collective action has done, though. As mentioned earlier, the literature has focused predominantly on organizations or elites, not on grassroots individuals (for a similar observation, see Fisher, Stanley, Berman, and Neff 2005). The work by della Porta and colleagues (see for example della Porta 2003; della Porta 2005) is one of the few exceptions. In a series of surveys among participants of transnational events in Italy in the first half of the 1990s (European Social Fora and demonstrations against international summits), these authors asked their respondents to what extent they identified with the global justice movement (for example, see della Porta 2003). A large majority reported that they did (della Porta 2005). This is at best an indirect measure of transnational collective identification, though, as the survey asked for identification with the movement that set up the local event in which they just participated and not with a movement in other countries. In a similar vein, Stefaan Walgrave and Jeroen Van Laer (2010), also drawing on protest survey evidence, investigated to what extent participants in a Belgian and a European Social Forum identified with the forum and with the other participants present at the forum. They found that transnational activists identified more with the forum and other participants than did the national activists. Yet again, this work lacks a direct measure of the transnational collective identification among the surveyed activists.

Summing up, most research only indirectly tackles the transnational character of the collective identification processes underlying protest across borders. It has not empirically assessed the presence or absence of transnational collective identities at the level of individuals. Neither has previous research tried to explain the presence of transnational collective identification—transnational collective identity is never the dependent variable. Finally, comparative studies gauging transnational identification across issues are rare or nonexistent. This article sets out to tackle four fundamental gaps in the literature. We (1) systematically gauge the degree of transnational collective identification (2) of individual grassroots level participants (3) in nine protest events on two very different issues in six countries, and (4) we account for the presence or absence of transnational collective identification among those participating individuals.

DETERMINANTS OF TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

Where does a transnational collective identity come from? Which participants have transnational collective identities and which are more domestically oriented? Our general expectation is that more engaged and elite-level activists have a stronger transnational collective identity than less engaged and grassroots-level participants. Many accounts have shown that at the elite-level there are frequent contacts with similar movement elites in other countries (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Also, due to numerous barriers to participation in movement events abroad—time, money, skills, and so on—the transnationalization of protest is mainly a matter of strongly committed and “full-time” activists rather than of passers-by and less engaged individuals (Bédoyan, Van Aelst, and Walgrave 2004; Fisher et al. 2005; Walgrave and Van Laer 2010).

The argument that movement elites are more apt than grassroots activists to identify with activists in other countries generates two distinct expectations. Movement elites can be defined in organizational or in protest terms. Diani (2009) holds that there are two structural bases for participation: people can be engaged in SMOs and associations, and/or they can participate in protest events. He speaks of an “associational field,” on the one hand, and of “protest communities” on the other. So, both organizations and protests form avenues for creating collective identities. Therefore, our first expectation is that activists with higher levels of transnational collective identity are more embedded in the organizational milieu: they are more often members of the event-staging organizations. As participants with relatively greater transnational identities, they hold memberships in social movement organizations in general, and they are more often asked by co-members to participate. Also, we expect there to be differences between members of different types of SMOs, some of which are transnational by their very nature. North-South

organizations, for instance, deal with international issues, and we expect their members to identify more transnationally. Trade unions have long traditions of international collaboration and activism, which may encourage their members to identify more internationally. And environmental organization members—because they have increasingly defined environmental problems in international terms—may be more likely to be transnational identifiers.

Second, regarding embeddedness in protest communities, the more experience a participant has in collective action and protest, the greater the chance that s/he has been confronted with similar groups in other countries. Dufour and Giraud (2007) suggest that a collective identity, and thus a transnational collective identity, is the product of previous collective action. Diani states that “sustained involvement in political campaigning creates the same sense of group membership [as associational membership]” (2009: 64). In this study, we do not take direct measures of participation in previous transnational protest events or in events abroad. But we do have an array of measures tapping the frequency of previous protest participation more generally. Besides more frequent protest participation, we also expect participants with a more diverse action repertoire to identify more strongly with transnational counterparts of their domestic struggle. A wide and diverse scale of collective action participation—like wearing badges, signing petitions and political consuming—points to the centrality of activism in an activist’s life, most likely increasing the individual necessity to share and identify with others engaging in the same activity.

A third batch of expectations is inspired by Tarrow’s notion of “rooted cosmopolitans.” According to Tarrow (2005). This group comprises the backbone of transnational movements. While they are strongly embedded in domestic networks and activities, they travel regularly, read foreign books and journals, and are part of networks abroad. As Tarrow notes, “They are better educated than most of their compatriots, better connected, speak more languages, and travel more often” (2005: 43). In short, we expect transnational identifiers to be more highly educated than the other activists and we expect they have been internationally mobile in the past by living in countries other than the one in which they were born.

Fourth, we expect the level of transnational collective identification of a given protester to be associated with his/her attitudes and motivations. A well-known distinction between participation motives is that between so-called “instrumental” versus “expressive” motives (e.g., Jenkins 1983). People participate to change things in the world (instrumental) or to change themselves by letting their views and anger be heard (expressive). For several reasons, we expect people who have expressive motives to display higher levels of transnational collective identity than people with instrumental motives. First, instrumental motives require precise goals, a transparent attribution of responsibility, and a clear target. This is exactly what broad transnational collective action events often lack. The addressee of the transnational protest is often a large and complex institution that is situated in different sectors and countries. It is not entirely clear who is centrally responsible for the issue that protesters are targeting, nor is it always clear what the solution is for a certain problem. The recent Occupy Wall Street movement is a good example of a transnational movement lacking clear, instrumental goals. The reason for this lack is that having precise goals and targets requires decision-making procedures, which transnational movements often do not have. Domestically inspired protest, in contrast, often possesses this clarity in targets and goals. The addressee of domestic protests is often clearly identified and its actions are more clearly observable. Thus, we anticipate that expressively motivated protesters will identify more with a transnational collectivity, while instrumentally motivated protesters will be less willing to identify with other protesters abroad.

Still, regarding the attitudes of the protesters, we expect that ideologically radical protesters are more willing to identify transnationally and to feel like they are part of a broader international struggle. Less radical and ideologically committed activists, on the other hand, are more focused on the local struggle and tend to be less interested in the global meaning of their domestic activities. Both May Day marches and climate change protests are left-wing events, staged by left-wing movements, though May Day is a typical “old” social movement event, and

climate change a typical “new” one. We measure ideological radicalism drawing on the left-right ideological self-placement of the participants, and expect that the more left-wing demonstrators define themselves more transnationally.

Finally, in the models presented below, we control for several variables. We control for sex, age, and political interest. Our models also incorporate a measure of identification with the other participants at the same national demonstration. It may be the case that some people simply identify more easily with any kind of group, action, or collective. We account for this possibility by incorporating this national collective identity variable. We do not develop expectations for differences between countries or between the two protest issues (climate change and May Day) either. We do not have theoretical reasons to expect such differences. But we do control for potential differences by simply including country and issue-type dummies in all of our models. For example, it may be the case that May Day protesters, in general, are more transnational identifiers than climate change participants while there are at the same time more members of those organizations. Not controlling for issue type may lead to erroneous conclusions regarding the association between organizational membership and transnational collective identity.

DATA AND METHODS

To answer these questions we follow the method developed by Walgrave and Verhulst, and described by Klandermans in his introduction to this special issue of *Mobilization* (see also van Stekelenburg, Walgrave, Klandermans, and Verhulst, this issue). We fielded protest surveys among the participants of May Day and climate change events in 2009-2010 in several European countries. The evidence is well-suited to generate a robust test of the matter at hand, since both the May Day and the climate change demonstrations are internationally coordinated transnational days of action. However, their history and background are very different (see also Peterson, Wahlström, Wennerhag, Christancho, and Sabucedo, this issue). May Day is an old—maybe even the very first—transnational protest event. It refers to International Workers’ Day held since the end of the nineteenth century in many countries to commemorate the fight for the eight-hour workday. It can be considered the yearly celebration of the international labor and left-wing movements (Rucht 2003). Although May Day is definitely transnational, it often has domestic meanings and targets too. The slogans and claims of the demonstrations vary according to the current issues high on the domestic political agendas. May Day is an annual focal point for the traditional left-wing labor movement (social democrats, socialists, communists) that deals primarily with bread-and-butter issues. As an archetypical old social movement event, May Day participants typically working-class, male, middle-aged, and not highly educated.

The climate change issue—and the recent climate change demonstrations—are of a different kind. First of all, their origins are much more recent. Climate concerns originated in the 1990s and the first large climate demonstrations only took off at the turn of the millennium. In the United Kingdom, for example, the first large climate change demonstration, the Kyoto rally, was organized after U.S. President George Bush rejected the Kyoto protocol in 2001. Although climate protest events are not routinely organized on a fixed day every year, since 2005 there have been a regular global days of action against climate change taking place during the annual United Nations climate conference. The target of climate protests are almost entirely transnational because they are staged in order to put direct pressure on international organizations or negotiations. Most of the time additional climate change protests are organized during international summits, like the G8 or G20, or during international global-warming negotiations. So, while climate change protests lack an overarching institutional apparatus, they are more directly transnational. Also, the climate “movement” is of a very different kind than the labor movement. Climate is a typical new social movement issue that attracts environmental, global south, and generally left-libertarian participants. Typical participants are younger than average, highly educated, equally divided between men and women, and employed in the service sector.

In a nutshell, the two types of events covered here contrast two very different transnational movement moments. This design yields a tough test for any of the individual-level determinants of transnational collective identity that we expect to have an impact. We investigate the extent to which features of individual participants in these two different types of demonstrations (staged by very different movements around very different issues) predict the level of transnational collective identification of those participants. We examine whether these predictors hold across two types of demonstrations in six different countries. Consequently, any patterns we may find would apply to a fairly broad range of activists of different movements in different countries and may, therefore, be generalizable to transnational activism in general.

Table 1 contains a description of the nine events in the study. All May Day events were staged on the same day in 2010, while the climate change events were staged on two consecutive weekend days in 2009. Response rates vary and are systematically higher for the climate change than for the May Day events. Walgrave and Verhulst (2011) found this to be the case for protest surveys in general. Typical new-social-movement events produce higher response rates than old social movement events.

This study's key dependent variable is the respondent's answer to the following question: "Have you heard about other demonstrations (May Day or against Climate Change) that are taking place in other countries? If yes, to what extent do you identify with the other people present at these demonstrations in other countries?" (1 = "Not at all," 2 = "Not very," 3 = "Somewhat," 4 = "Quite," 5 = "Very much"). The identification question is preceded by a filter question measuring the awareness of other same-topic demonstrations in other countries. In the identity literature, awareness refers to the cognitive dimension of identity while the identification question refers to the affective dimension of social identity (Ellemers, Spears, and Bertjan 1999). In the next section, we present results regarding the awareness of the transnationality of the event. In the actual analyses predicting transnational identification, only respondents who said they knew about these other demonstrations—and thus were aware of the fact that they participated in a transnational collective action event—are included. As demonstrators are nested in demonstrations, we use multilevel regression models for both analyses to make sure that the clustered nature of the observations is accounted for. Precise question wording and answer categories for all measures of the independent variables are given in the Appendix.

Table 2 presents descriptions of the dependent variables. Most respondents (87 percent) were aware that they took part in a transnational event. Whereas only one May Day participant in ten is not aware of a link with similar foreign demonstrations, twice as many Climate Change participants are unaware (20.3 percent). Country differences are absent for May Day. British climate protestors are clearly less aware of any international embeddedness. Both May Day and climate change demonstrators display strong identification with fellow participants in other countries. If people participating in a transnational collective event are aware of the fact that they took part in a transnational event, they tend to identify with foreign demonstrators. Among May Day demonstrations, notable differences exist in levels of transnational identification. Whereas only one in five Belgian May Day protesters identifies very strongly transnationally, this figure increases to nearly two-thirds for the UK May Day demonstration. Comparing the three climate change demonstrations, the strong transnational identification of UK participants stands out again. The multilevel analyses will determine whether this is a real country effect or rather a composition effect.

Table 3 presents the study's independent variables, showing that the two demonstrations attract different people. May Day demonstrators are, as expected, older and (a little) less educated than climate change protesters. May Day events also tend to have more male participants, more people with past protest experience and with more left-wing leanings than the climate change marches. Membership in one of the staging organizations is high in both types of events, but still higher in May Day demonstrations. Logically, active trade union and environmental organization members are omnipresent in May Day and climate change demonstrations, respectively. Among the different demonstrations on the same topic in the different countries,

Table 1. Overview of Covered Demonstrations, Population, Sample, and Response Rates

	May Day						Climate Change			Total
	Belgium Antwerp	Spain Barcelona	Sweden Stockholm (LP)	Sweden Stockholm (SDP)	Switzerland Zurich	UK London	Belgium Brussels	Denmark Copenhagen	UK London	
Date	All 01/05/2010						5/12/2009	12/12/2009	5/12/2009	
Participants (x 1,000)	2	7	6	4	8	3	15	48	40	133
Questionnaires completed	216	180	168	175	135	176	334	242	243	1,869
Response rate (%)	26%	26%	40%	40%	15%	18%	40%	31%	40%	30%

Table 2. Dependent Variables and Descriptives

	May Day							Climate Change			
	Belgium Antwerp	Spain Barcelona	Sweden Stockholm (LP)	Sweden Stockholm (SDP)	Switzerland Zurich	UK London	Total May Day	Belgium Brussels	Denmark Copenhagen	UK London	Total Climate Change
Awareness (%)											
Yes	90.9	93.1	94.0	94.3	93.3	91.2	92.7	81.6	83.5	76.6	80.7
No/not sure	9.1	6.9	6.0	5.7	6.7	8.8	7.3	18.4	16.5	23.4	19.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Identification (%)											
Not at all	2.7	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.0	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.5
Not Very	3.2	2.5	8.4	11.7	3.2	1.9	4.6	1.9	1.9	4.1	3.0
Somewhat	21.3	12.5	32.2	33.1	20.0	9.6	21.4	20.0	20.0	16.8	18.8
Quite	48.9	53.8	39.7	38.0	43.2	25.0	41.9	50.7	50.7	46.4	46.1
Very Much	23.9	30.6	19.1	16.0	33.6	62.8	31.1	27.0	27.0	31.6	31.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average (1-5)	3.88	4.11	3.68	3.56	4.07	4.47	3.98	4.02	4.04	4.13	4.05
Standard deviation	.900	.761	.898	0.937	.815	.799	.892	.761	.862	.839	.814

Notes: Question wording: "Have you heard about other May Day/Climate Change demonstrations that are taking place in other countries?"; "To what extent do you identify with the other people present at these demonstrations in other countries?"

Table 3. Independent Variables and Descriptives

	May Day							Climate Change			
	<i>Belgium</i> Antwerp	<i>Spain</i> Barcelona	<i>Sweden</i> Stockholm (LP)	<i>Sweden</i> Stockholm (SDP)	<i>Switzerland</i> Zurich	<i>UK</i> London	Total May Day	<i>Belgium</i> Brussels	<i>Denmark</i> Copenhagen	<i>UK</i> London	Total Climate Change
Age (avg.)	55.6	49.2	50.3	53.6	39.8	48.0	48.7	45.5	38.2	47.4	43.8
Sex (% female)	35	33	55	48	42	35	42	45	46	62	50
Identific. national participants (1-5)(avg.)	4.19	4.07	4.08	4.16	3.96	4.13	4.07	4.02	4.07	4.23	4.09
Education (mode)	5	5	7	5	6	6	6	6	7	6	6
Different country born (%)	3.7	8.6	13.4	9.1	15.9	31.1	13.2	10.4	21.3	30.2	19.3
Member organizing organization (%)	91	72	55	75	43	48	62	60	38	67	55
Number of active memberships (avg.)	1.53	1.59	1.37	1.64	1.29	1.72	1.46	1.24	1.24	1.96	1.44
Mobilization via co-members (%)	37	34	14	35	16	35	29	22	29	40	29
Active Trade Union members (%)	44	47.8	20.8	29.1	18.5	42.6	35.0	12.9	7.4	29.6	9.0
Active Environmental Org. members (%)	5.6	3.3	3.6	2.9	5.2	5.7	4.4	21.0	22.7	31.3	24.5
Active North-South Org. members (%)	10.6	16.7	8.9	10.3	23.0	26.7	15.6	18.0	18.6	29.6	21.6
Earlier demo. participation (mode) ^a	21+	21+	21+	21+	21+	21+	21+	6-10	11-20	1-5	6-10
# of action forms practiced (1-9) (avg.)	3.85	3.93	3.92	3.77	4.66	5.01	4.15	4.06	4.47	4.95	4.43
Expressive motive (1-5) (avg.)	4.51	4.29	4.42	4.32	4.27	4.47	4.38	4.40	4.48	4.55	4.47
Instrumental motive (1-5) (avg.)	4.21	4.23	3.95	3.80	3.93	3.64	3.98	4.78	4.56	4.78	4.71
Left-Right self-placement (0-10) (avg.)	1.79	1.79	1.86	2.45	1.52	1.50	1.62	3.22	2.42	3.18	2.97
Political Interest (1-4) (avg.)	3.49	3.38	3.55	3.62	3.54	3.73	3.52	3.18	3.53	3.31	3.32

Notes: ^a Question wording: "How many times have you in the past taken part in a demonstration (ever)?" Answer categories were: never, 1 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 20, and 21+.

interesting differences regarding specific organizational membership stand out. Note, for instance, the low number of trade union members in the Swiss May Day demonstration (18.5 percent) and the relatively high amount of union members in the UK Climate Day event 29.6 percent). Compared to May Day protesters, climate change participants are less frequent demonstrators and they have used a less diverse array of protest forms in the past.

RESULTS

As a first step, we assess the precursors of transnational awareness. In order to be able to identify with other participants, one has to be aware that a particular struggle is not merely fought at home. Table 4 presents the results of a multilevel logistic regression with transnational awareness (no/yes) as the dependent variable. Age, experience, and a diverse action repertoire significantly relate to transnational awareness. Demonstrators that are older, more experienced, and participate in a wider range of protest activities are more likely to link the home country event to foreign events tackling the same issue. Controlling for these demonstrator characteristics, climate change demonstrators are less aware of the transnational character of their event compared to May Day demonstrators. Also, UK demonstrators are less transnationally aware, although separate regressions prove this to be especially true for British climate demonstrators.

Table 4. Determinants of Transnational Awareness, Multilevel Logistic Regression

	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance
(Constant)	36.245	12.537	0.004
Controls			
Climate Change participant (ref. May Day)	-0.610	0.305	0.046
Denmark (ref. Belgium)	0.091	0.298	0.760
Spain	-0.064	0.408	0.874
Sweden	0.365	0.366	0.319
Switzerland	0.008	0.444	0.985
UK	-0.642	0.230	0.005
Sex	0.056	0.177	0.751
Age (year born)	-0.019	0.006	0.003
Political interest	0.226	0.141	0.110
National collective identity	0.036	0.110	0.745
Rooted Cosmopolitans			
Education	0.005	0.061	0.938
Different country born than live	0.233	0.253	0.356
Associational Field			
Member of organizing organization	-0.218	0.193	0.260
Number of active memberships	0.014	0.073	0.851
Mobilized by co-members	0.233	0.197	0.238
Protest Community			
Frequency demonstration participation	0.181	0.082	0.028
Diversity of action forms	0.229	0.063	0.000
Motivation and Attitudes			
Expressive motive ("express views")	-0.011	0.112	0.919
Instrumental motive ("pressure politicians")	0.104	0.107	0.335
Left-right placement	-0.088	0.055	0.110
Loglikelihood (null model = -525.994)	-479.886		
Wald Chi ² (df)	104.9 (20)		0.000
N	1,429		

Table 5 presents the main results of the study. It shows a multilevel linear regression of our main variable of interest: transnational collective identity. Only one control variable is significantly associated with transnational collective identification: the more people identify with their fellow national demonstrators, the more they also identify with their transnational counterparts. Some participants seem to identify with other people more easily in general. There is no significant difference in transnational collective identification between climate change and May Day protesters, and none of the country dummies yields a significant result. The outlying case of the UK, identified in the discussion of bivariate results, does not hold in a multivariate analysis.¹

We find limited support for Tarrow's contention that rooted cosmopolitans are the backbone of transnational movements. Contradicting our expectation, education does not play a role. Yet, in line with Tarrow's argument, people who live in a country other than the one in which they were born identify more with the transnational movement than native participants. The effect is rather weak, though, and does not hold across the two types of demonstrations. Running

Table 5. Determinants of Transnational Identity, Multilevel Linear Regression

	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance
(Constant)	7.050	3.087	0.022
Controls			
Climate Change participant (ref. May Day)	0.088	0.206	0.670
Denmark (ref. Belgium)	-0.054	0.266	0.839
Spain	0.132	0.266	0.620
Sweden	-0.242	0.225	0.282
Switzerland	0.119	0.269	0.658
UK	0.251	0.202	0.215
Sex	-0.014	0.044	0.749
Age (year born)	-0.003	0.002	0.067
Political interest	0.052	0.039	0.186
National collective identity	0.264	0.029	0.000
Rooted Cosmopolitan			
Education	0.003	0.015	0.824
Different country born than live	0.180	0.064	0.005
Associational Field			
Member of organizing organization	0.048	0.050	0.339
Number of active memberships	-0.061	0.023	0.009
Mobilized by co-members	-0.046	0.048	0.336
Active Trade Union Member	0.173	0.060	0.004
Active Environmental Movement Member	0.125	0.073	0.086
Active North-South movement Member	0.144	0.069	0.037
Protest Community			
Frequency demonstration participation	0.025	0.022	0.268
Diversity of action forms	0.057	0.015	0.000
Motivation and Attitudes			
Expressive motive ('express views')	0.137	0.030	0.000
Instrumental motive ('pressure politicians')	0.007	0.026	0.800
Left-right placement	-0.078	0.015	0.000
Loglikelihood (null model: -1537.186)	-1426.780		
Wald Chi ² (df)	359.62		
Var Demonstrators (null model: 0.684)	0.539		
Var Demonstrations (null model: 0.059)	0.036		
Explained Variance	22.5		
N	1,240		

separate models for May Day and climate change, the effect of having moved internationally only reaches significance for May Day events (results not shown in table).

The argument that engagement in associational fields nurtures transnational collective identification receives only limited support. Specific organizational membership matters. Active trade union members and North-South movement members do identify more strongly with their foreign counterparts, but none of the other measurements tapping general associational affiliations are significant predictors of transnational identification. Members of staging organizations do not identify significantly more with protestors from abroad. Being mobilized by co-members and holding more active memberships are negatively related to transnational identification. The evidence suggests that an organization's issue domain determines the transnational identification of its members, rather than the simple fact that one is organizationally active. Even the effects of trade union and North-South associations are not present across the board. Separate regressions (not shown) demonstrate that it only applies to May Day demonstrations.

What Diani (2005) calls protest communities seem to matter more for transnational collective identification. Frequency of protest participation does not produce significant results; demonstration experience does not matter. Although we do not have any information about whether previous participation took place domestically or abroad, we suspect that previous protests were mostly domestic. In contrast to participation frequency, the diversity of previous protest participation is one of the strongest predictors in the model. Activists who draw on a larger range of protest repertoires identify significantly more with their foreign counterparts. This effect of action repertoire diversity holds in separate May Day and climate change analyses (not shown). That action repertoire affects transnational identification suggests that a collective identification—and, thus, also a transnational collective identity—is a result of participation. When protesting, people's horizon widens, they get in touch with different causes and different groups, and they develop broader solidarities and group ties. However, we cannot be sure that the direction of causality actually goes in this direction only.

Regarding the effects of attitudes and motives, the expectation that expressive motives foster transnational collective identification is corroborated. Activists who take to the streets to express their views irrespective of whether the external goal of the demonstration is reached tend to identify substantially more with their fellow demonstrators abroad. Splitting up the analysis showed that this effect is strongly significant for the May Day protesters ($p < 0.000$) and marginally significant for the climate change activists ($p = 0.051$) (results not shown in table). Instrumentally motivated protesters are less likely to identify transnationally. It is interesting that, when estimating a similar model with national rather than transnational identification as the dependent variable, both instrumental and expressive motives are strong and significant predictors of national identification. Whereas willingness to put pressure on politicians and willingness to express one's views is significantly related to national identification, it is only the expressive motive that sets apart those who identify transnationally from those who do not. Finally, the findings substantiate our expectation that ideological radicalism spurs transnational identification. There is a strong effect of left-wing ideology on transnational identification. This applies as well to separate analyses of both protest types (not shown).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Why do some participants in transnational protest events identify with their foreign counterparts while others do not feel they belong to a broader transnational movement? Most participants in the two types of events under study—May Day and climate change demonstrations in six countries—were aware of the fact that the event in which they participated was part of a broader struggle. Many also identified with demonstrators in other countries. This suggests that, at least for the two types of events and movements we studied, one can speak of transnational movements exactly because they comprise pools of shared collective identity. Although the cognitive and affective dimensions of social identities are analytically distinct (Ellemers, Spears, and Bertjan 1999), they do seem to correlate strongly in our case.

There are differences between demonstrations of course, with some demonstrations populated by transnational identifiers, while others tend to be comprised of more national identifiers. However, the study was primarily interested in differences in transnational identification at the participant level. Our individual-level findings can be summarized in two sentences: (1) protest participation is a stronger producer of transnational identification than associational activism; (2) expressive protesters identify more transnationally than instrumentally motivated protesters.

The first result goes against a resilient finding that is rooted in decades of social movement research, namely, that organizations matter. In almost any study on the correlates of protest participation, scholars found time and again that organizational membership is a strong predictor of most types of behavior and attitudes related to protest. Here we found that organizational membership—measured in different ways—plays only a modest role in fostering transnational identification processes. This does not deny the importance of organizations for other aspects of protest participation, but in terms of identification, their role seems to be limited. General organizational affiliation did not play any role, and membership in two specific types of associations played a small and inconsistent role. This suggests that most movement organizations stage transnational events in their own country, and if they are dealing with their foreign counterparts at the elite-level at all, they do not specifically emphasize the transnational character of the event they organize in collaboration with their foreign partners. They may reckon that displaying the event's transnational character would not make a difference for mobilizing domestic participants for domestic events, which may make sense since most demonstrators are domestically embedded and probably care primarily for local issues and target local agencies. Apparently, many national SMOs do not consider stressing the transnational character of an event to be a particularly strong selling point for their members. It is an interesting avenue for further research to examine to the extent to which organizers emphasize the transnational character of the events they stage, and to investigate whether these organizational messages correlate with the transnational identification of the grassroots participants.

Instead of associational engagement, protest engagement seems to foster transnational collective identification. The study shows that transnational collective identities are the product of participation. The more people engage in various kinds of political activities, the more they identify with their co-protesters and with the transnational movement to which the protest belongs. Naturally, the causal chain goes the other way as well: feelings of belonging lead to participation. Hence, the broader sense of transnational solidarity and identification—which is important in helping movements to sustain mobilization and engagement—is in the end brought about by attracting people to participate in a mixture of domestic events. Thus, transnational collective identity is a by-product of frequent domestic participation.

The second key finding—that expressive motivations are associated with transnational collective identity—is related to the first. When people do not really care about the external outcome or effect of their participation, but primarily want to vent their anger and show their dissatisfaction, they identify more easily with their foreign colleagues. This makes sense, as it is more difficult to agree with someone else and to identify with another group as the goals and targets become more concrete. Untargeted and imprecise expressive motivations allow people with very different backgrounds, cultures, domestic situations, and local aims to team up with each other without being confronted by divisive differences and internal contradictions. It is only through shared, expressive motivations that very different participants can develop a joint feeling of collective identity. This is similar to della Porta's (2005) "tolerant identities," which she claims is one of the key characteristics of recent transnational movements. More instrumentality in the motives would lead to less tolerant and inclusive identities, and thus to less transnational identification. The finding that expressive motives are linked to transnational identification suggests a solution for Tarrow's (2005) observation that a transnational collective identity is extremely difficult to develop. By avoiding concrete goals and targets, and by taking to the streets out of an unfocused sense of anger and disagreement, the problem of creating a transnational political identity can be overcome.

APPENDIX: QUESTION WORDING AND RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Variable	Question Wording	Categories
Sex	Are you...?	1 = Male; 2 = Female
Age	In which year were you born?	[open ended]
Political interest	How interested are you in politics?	1 = Not at all; 2 = Not very; 3 = Quite; 4 = Very
National collective identity	To what extent do you identify with the other people present at the demonstration?	1 = Not at all; 2 = Not very much; 3 = Somewhat; 4 = Quite; 5 = Very much
Education	What is the highest level of education that you completed? If you are a student, at what level are you studying?	1 = None; 2 = Primary or first stage of basic; 3 = Lower secondary or second stage of basic; 4 = Upper secondary; 5 = Post-secondary, non-tertiary; 6 = First stage of tertiary (BA, University first degree); 7 = Second stage of tertiary (MA); 8 = Post tertiary (PhD)
Different country born than currently living	In which country do you live?	[open ended]
Member of organizing organization	Are you a member of any of these organizations? (In a previous questions respondents had to list all organizations that organized the demonstration)	0 = No + Don't Know/Not sure; 1 = Yes
Active Trade Union Member	If you have been involved in any of the following types of organizations in the past 12 months, please indicate whether you are a passive member or an active member? Trade union or professional organization	0 = Not mentioned + passive member; 1 = active member
Active Environmental Organization Member	If you have been involved in any of the following types of organizations in the past 12 months, please indicate whether you are a passive member or an active member? Environmental organization	0 = Not mentioned + passive member; 1 = active member
Active North-South Organization Member	If you have been involved in any of the following types of organizations in the past 12 months, please indicate whether you are a passive member or an active member? Global South, global justice or peace organization; antiracist or migrant organization; human or civil rights organization	0 = Not mentioned + passive member; 1 = active member
Number of active memberships	Summation of active memberships of the following list of organizations: church or religious organization; Trade union or professional association; Political party; Women's organization; Sport or cultural organization; Environmental organization; Lesbian or gay rights organization; Community or neighborhood association; charity or welfare organization; global South, global justice or Peace organization; antiracist or migrant organization; Human or civil rights organization; other	0 = No active memberships; 13 = Active in thirteen different organizations
Mobilized by co-members	Which of the following people specifically asked you to take part in the demonstration? Co-members of an organization of which I am a member?	0 = No; 1 = Yes
Frequency of demonstration participation	How many times have you in the past taken part in a demonstration?	1 = Never; 2 = 1 to 5; 3 = 6 to 10; 4 = 11 to 20; 5 = 21+
Diversity of action forms	There are many things people can do to prevent or promote change. Have you, in the past 12 months...? Summation of the following items: contacted a politician, government, or local government official?; signed a petition/public letter?; donated money to a political organization or group?; boycotted certain products?; deliberately bought products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons?; worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?; joined a strike?; taken part in direct action (such as: blockade, occupation, civil disobedience)?; used violent forms of action (against property or people)?	0 = None; 9 = Participated in nine different forms of action
Expressive motive	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements? I participated in the demonstration in order to express my views	1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree
Instrumental motive	Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements? I participated in the demonstration in order to pressure politicians to make things change	1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree
Left-right placement	In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right." Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?	0 = Left; 10 = Right

NOTES

¹ Further analysis shows that May Day demonstrators in the UK *do* identify more transnationally than the May Day demonstrators in other countries. The most probable explanation is the very explicit transnational framing by the organizing coalition. With “international solidarity” as a central slogan and with the attendance of Turkish, Kurdish, and Latin-American communities, the message of “global justice” most definitely came across.

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