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Social Movement Mobilization under Right and Left Governments: A Look at Four West European Countries

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Summary

This paper analyzes the impact of changing political opportunities, and more particularly of changes in the composition of government, on the levels, political leaning and forms of protest mobilization. The literature provides us with contradictory expectations as to these questions, some stressing openess of the political system, some closure, and some a combination of openness and closure as the situation most conducive to protest mobilization. To assess these hypotheses, we use data on protest events in four West European countries (Germany, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands) for the period 1975-1979, as well as similar data derived from another project on protests in Germany between 1950 and 1991. Altogether, this provides us with data on protest mobilization (differentiated in left-wing and other protest) under fifteen different governmental constellations, which can roughly be classified as left, right and mixed. The data show, first, that mobilization by left-wing movements in Western Europe by far exceeds mobilization by the Right. Second, the mobilization of left-wing movements is concentrated during periods of right-wing government, whereas the Right tends to mobilize most strongly when the Left is in power. However, the highest levels of mobilization, of the Left and to some extent also of the Right, occur when mixed governments, in which power is shared by parties of the Left and of the Right, are in power. Self-evident as some of these results may seem at first sight, they run against the thrust of much of the recent social movement literature. In particular they make clear that in order to explain fluctuations in levels of social movement mobilization we should not only take into account (positive) opportunities for protest, but also its necessity from the point of view of potential activists and its relative attractiveness compared to more conventional ways of pressuring governments. In this view, the most conducive situations for mobilization are those in which protest seems both opportune and necessary; a situation that for instance prevails when mixed, often internally divided governments are in power.

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Papier wird der Einfluß von wechselnden politischen Chancenstrukturen, insbesondere von Änderungen der Regierungszusammensetzung auf Umfang, politischer Stoßrichtung und Formen der Protestmobilisierung analysiert. Aus der Literatur lassen sich widersprüchliche Erwartungen bezüglich dieser Frage ableiten, wobei sowohl Offenheit, als auch Geschlossenheit des politischen Systems und schließlich auch eine bestimmte Kombination dieser beiden als optimale Bedingungen für Protestmobilisierung dargestellt werden. Um die Erklärungskraft dieser unterschiedlichen Hypothesen zu überprüfen, werden Daten zu Protestereignissen in vier westeuropäischen Ländern (Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien und den Niederlanden) im Zeitraum 1975-1989 sowie ähnliche Daten aus einem anderen Projekt zu Protesten in Deutschland zwischen 1950 and 1991, herangezogen. Insgesamt verfügen wir so über Daten zu Protestmobilisierung (differenziert nach linken und sonstigen Protesten) unter fünfzehn unterschiedlichen Regierungskonstellationen, die grob in links, rechts und gemischt eingeteilt werden können. Die präsentierten Daten zeigen zum ersten, daß die Mobilisierung linker Bewegungen in Westeuropa die der Rechten bei weitem übertrifft. Zum zweiten stellt sich heraus, daß die Mobilisierung linker Bewegungen vor allem unter rechten Regierungen stark ist, während rechte Bewegungen zu einer stärkeren Mobilisierung unter linken Regierungen neigen. Die Mobilisierung von linken und zum Teil auch von rechten Bewegungen erreicht ihren größten Umfang aber unter gemischten Regierungen, in denen die Macht von linken und rechten Parteien geteilt wird. Obwohl manche dieser Ergebnisse wenig überraschend erscheinen mögen, stehen sie im Widerspruch zum größten Teil der jüngsten Literatur über soziale Bewegungen. Insbesondere machen sie deutlich, daß bei der Erklärung von Fluktuationen der Protestmobilisierung nicht nur (positive) Gelegenheiten für Protest, sondern auch dessen Notwendigkeit unter dem Gesichtspunkt potentieller Aktivisten und dessen Attraktivität im Vergleich zu mehr konventionellen Formen der Einflußnahme auf Regierungen, in Betracht gezogen werden müssen. Nach dieser Deutung sind die günstigsten Situationen für Mobilisierung die, in denen Protest sowohl opportun als auch notwendig erscheint; eine Situation die zum Beispiel zutrifft, wenn gemischte, oft intern zerstrittene Regierungen an der Macht sind.

Social Movement Mobilization under Right and Left Governments: A Look at Four West European Countries¹

Ruud Koopmans and Dieter Rucht

It is widely acknowledged that social movement mobilization is strongly influenced by societal conditions and, in particular, by so-called political opportunity structures. Probably most striking in this respect is the differential impact of authoritarian and democratic regimes on social movements. Authoritarian regimes may be tempted to initiate movements "from above" in support of the regime, but usually tend to repress social movements "from below." This applies notably for movements that in a broad sense can be characterized as progressive. They hardly get a chance to act openly and without restrictions. As a consequence, these movements tend to remain small, scattered and without many resources. By contrast, democratic regimes tend to provide ample space for all kinds of social movements, sometimes even fostering particular movements when these are in line with the overall aims of the regime or, more specifically, converge with the political goals of the groups who are in power. Depending on the specific features of democratic regimes, these regimes' contingent power constellations, and the dominant aims of the power elites, movements are confronted with more or less favorable conditions. These have an impact on the movements' levels and forms of mobilization which, in turn, are a crucial factor for the movements' outcomes.

Drawing on the concept of political opportunity structure, several scholars have begun to study the differential impact of democratic regimes on social movement mobilization. Most of this work has been done from a cross-national comparative perspective, starting from the assumption that different structural properties of individual de-

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mocratic regimes will have different impacts on social movements (e.g., Brand 1985; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992; 1995). The focus in these studies has been primarily on relatively invariant dimensions of the political opportunity structures of the countries investigated, such as the prevailing political cleavages, the degree of centralization of decision-making structures and the availability of institutionalized channels of access to social movements.

Without denying the existence and impact of relatively invariant political opportunity structures, several authors have also argued that some opportunities are changing over time. For historians who tend to overview long periods of time, this may be a trivial observation. For example, the labor movements of the 19th century first were confronted with relatively restrictive and unfavorable political opportunities, which then, partly due to the impact of the movements, became more open and supportive. For shorter and more recent periods, changes in political opportunities are sometimes less prominently visible and have therefore often been overlooked. Nevertheless, several recent studies have emphasized the role of changing opportunities for social movements within democratic states (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1989; 1994; Rucht 1990; 1994; Joppke 1993; Koopmans 1993; Gamson and Meyer 1995). In this line of thought, Kriesi (1991) and della Porta and Rucht (1991) have argued that for new social movements in Western Europe two factors, namely the attitude of traditional Left parties towards these movements and their position inside or outside government, are probably the most influential factors determining the strategic behavior of these movements. First empirical support for these hypotheses has been presented by Kriesi et al. (1992; 1995). However, as regards the impact of changes in government, the evidence presented in these studies has remained relatively impressionist.

Regarding several European countries, we are now in a better situation as far as the measuring of social movement mobilization is concerned. Based on data on movement mobilization collected in a cross-national study in four West European countries (Germany, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands) as well as on more detailed data on protest events in Germany, we will investigate the impact of different governmental

constellations on the levels and forms of social movement mobilization. To our knowledge, this is the first systematic empirical study of this question. Drawing on the relevant literature, we will first discuss some theories and hypotheses that refer to our research question. Second, we will empirically analyze the relation between the composition of government on the one hand and the amount and forms of social movement mobilization on the other. Finally, we come back to the theoretical assumptions and discuss them in the light of our empirical findings.

1. Theories and Hypotheses

The literature on social movements has provided a number of suggestions on the differential impact of regime structures and the attitudes of power elites on social movements. Though not being overly systematic in specifying independent and dependent variables, the older literature has speculated about the effects of more or less open regime structures and more or less reform-oriented elites on the growth and degree of radicalness of social movements. For instance, with respect to the labor movement of the last century, it has been assumed that the revolutionary impulse from these movements has forced the political regimes in most Western countries to make partial concessions such as acknowledging the right to unionize, to expand participation, and to create systems of social security and welfare (Ritter 1991). The overall assumption is that a sequence of reforms has gradually taken the wind out of the labor movements' sails. Formerly striving for a revolutionary change, the movements have become tame and today are considered as a pillar of rather than a threat to the existing political systems (Touraine 1973). To this perception one could add the observation that the labor movements have not only lost their radical impetus but also their attractiveness--as indicated by the decreasing degree of unionization (Lipset 1981; OECD 1993). Once elementary demands of the movements are fulfilled, there is no longer a need to strongly support the movement. In this perspective, the current decline of unionization could be interpreted as a late consequence of regime changes and regime responsiveness. Probably these changes have not gone as far as the movement may have wished, but far enough to weaken it. The general conclusion from this prominent historical case would be that open and responsive regimes undermine the level of social movement mobilization.

a. Hypotheses on Levels of Mobilization

More recent and more systematic literature on the impact of political opportunity structure on the scope of social movement mobilization has produced diverging hypotheses and empirical results. One can identify three elementary positions.

First, in comparing different democratic states, some authors have provided theoretical arguments and empirical evidence that more open systems tend to encourage mass mobilization by social movements, whereas the opposite holds true for more closed systems (Kitschelt 1985; 1986; Kriesi et al. 1992; 1995). Thus, Koopmans and Kriesi (1995) show that, if one considers all forms of mobilization, levels of participation decrease from the very open Swiss state, via the intermediate Dutch and German cases, to the very closed French state.² Several US-American authors maintain that the mobilization of progressive social movements was facilitated by reform-oriented liberal governments (for instance, McAdam 1982; Jenkins 1985; Amenta and Zylan 1991). Along similar lines, Tarrow (1994: 84) explains cross-national differences in past strike activity: "There were strike waves in France and the United States in the 1930s, and not in Germany and Britain, not because economic distress was greater in the first two countries than in the latter but because reform administrations came to power--in France in 1936 and America in 1933."

Second, other authors have argued just the opposite. Although they would not deny that repression in authoritarian regimes may successfully prevent mass protest (at least

² However, if more conventional forms of participation such as collection of signatures are excluded, the finding is reversed (Kriesi et al, 1995; Koopmans 1996). In that case, the level of unconventional participation (anything ranging from legal and peaceful demonstrations to mass violence) is highest in France and lowest in Switzerland--a finding which is in line with the results presented below. These are based only on unconventional forms of mobilization, the frequent use of which distinguishes social movements from interest groups and political parties.

for a while), these authors expect relatively closed democratic regimes to be conducive to mass protest. The assumption is that this closure contradicts the democratic values which usually are endorsed by the elites and the wider public. This discrepancy gives mass protest some leverage. One example for this argument is the rise of the early civil rights movement in the Southern parts of the United States. Another example is the neocorporatist system in West Germany in the late sixties and early seventies with its tendency to exclude democratic grassroots movements from the political game. Various authors have identified this system as a major factor to set free a wave of new social movements that gradually made their way into the system, opened its formerly more rigid structures and finally enhanced its overall readiness for reform (Offe 1985; Brand et al. 1986; Roth and Rucht 1991). This development, in turn, is supposed to have undermined the movements' mobilization capacity.

Third, some students of social movements in democratic systems assume a more complex relationship between regime structures and mobilization. In some way their perception reconciles the two former positions by hypothesizing a curvilinear relationship between the degree of regime openness and the level of mass mobilization. The assumption is that both relatively closed and relatively open systems have the same effect of reducing protest mobilization, though for different reasons. Whereas closed systems discourage protest mobilization because extraparliamentary pressure cannot be transferred into the decision-making system, open systems tend to reduce protest through mechanisms such as preemption and co-optation. By contrast, intermediate degrees of system openness are expected to induce the highest level of mass mobilization. For instance, Eisinger (1973) has found such a curvilinear relationship when he compared the protests in different cities in the US whose local administrations varied with regard to the degree of accessibility to protest groups. A similar pattern has been identified by Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995) in their study of the variations in the reactions of anti-nuclear movements to the Chernobyl accident in different countries.

Finally, we should note that, besides regime openness or access to the decisionmaking system, the political opportunity structure concept also lists other factors that are expected to strongly influence the level of mobilization. Among these, there is one variable that we want to pay particular attention to, namely the degree of unity or disunity among elites (Tarrow 1994, 88-89) or, more specifically, among those who govern. The general assumption is that splits among elites are a favorable condition for social movement mobilization because such a situation weakens the overall position of the powerholders, provides a chance for challengers to form alliances with parts of the elites, reduces the likelihood of repression, and raises hopes that high levels of mobilization can be translated into policy impacts.

Summing up, we must conclude that the more general literature on regime openness and social movement activity does not provide us with clear assumptions as regards the relation between the composition of the government and levels of movement mobilization. According to some theories, we might expect left-wing movements to mobilize most strongly under left-wing governments that are more in favor of political reforms and provide both incentives and space for these movements. Other theories, on the contrary, emphasize that social movement mobilization should be understood as a reaction to closed decision-making structures. These would lead us to expect left-wing movements to mobilize more under right-wing governments and right-wing movements more under left-wing governments. Finally, according to still another perspective, we might expect social movements, regardless of their overall political orientation, to mobilize most strongly under mixed governments which are neither too closed nor too open and, because of their heterogeneity, are often internally divided.

b. Hypotheses on the Radicalness of Mobilization

Levels of mobilization and the degree of radicalness of the protesters' actions may covary considerably, but should be treated as seperate dependent variables. On a general level, we hypothesize that more closed democratic regimes increase the degree of radicalness of the challengers' actions, whereas the contrary holds for more open regimes.

In international comparison this hypothesis has been confirmed by Kitschelt (1986) and by Kriesi et al. (1992; 1995).

However, focusing on the more specific question of the relation between the composition of government and the radicalness of protests, the situation becomes more complex. Here as well, it is important to distinguish between the general ideological orientations of the protesters (left or right) and the composition of the government (left, right, and mixed). Again competing hypotheses seem to be plausible. On the one hand, one could expect that clear-cut left or right governments, particularly when they tend to use repressive measures, are likely to provoke radical action from the respective extraparliamentary opposition. On the other hand, when confronted with a strong and ideological aggressive government, the parliamentary and extraparliamentary oppositions are likely to close ranks, which implies an increase in facilitation for unconventional protest and a moderating impact of the more established oppositional forces on the more radical ones.³

2. Data and Operationalization

In order to test our hypotheses, we used two data sets stemming from different projects. The first set has been produced by a Dutch-Swiss research group. This project initially covered four countries, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, in the period from 1975 through 1989. It was later extended to include Great Britain. Data were primarily drawn from the Monday issues of one national newspaper in each country. The focus of this research was on new social movements, but other movements were covered as well. Details on the methodology are presented by Koopmans (1995, Ap-

³ For empirical evidence of the moderating impact of support by the established Left on the mobilization of new social movements, see Koopmans (1995).

⁴ The Swiss data are not used here because in Switzerland no changes in the composition of the national government took place during the period studied.

pendix), empirical results are offered by Duyvendak (1995), Koopmans (1995) and Kriesi et al. (1992; 1995).

The second data set refers to Germany only, but is more detailed and covers a longer time period (currently 1950-91). This project focuses on protest events in a more general sense but not specifically on social movements (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992). The data were drawn from two national newspapers and refer to protests on each weekend plus on all weekdays of every fourth week. The process of data collection and cleaning is not yet completed. In this paper, we use only data on weekend protests for the period from 1950 to 1991. Moreover, we had to limit our analysis of these data to numbers of participants.⁵

We identified different governmental constellations and broadly categorized these as left, right or mixed governments in order to operationalize our research question on the differential impact of governmental compositions on movement mobilization. Protests, too, were classified as either left or "other" (right or ambiguous). Measures were computed on a monthly basis, linking the amount and radicalness of different types of protests to the different governmental constellations in these countries. Altogether, the combination of both data sets provides us with fifteen different cases with an overlap concerning two of the German cases. In comparing these two German cases between 1975 to 1989, we can also get information on the robustness of event data produced in different projects based on partially different research strategies and instruments.

Because the events in this data set were originally not classified on a left-right dimension, and only about half of the events could be attributed to the left or the right on the basis of other variables, we had to additionally code many events according to their ideological bias (left, right or neutral). Within the present context, we have been able to undertake such extra coding only for those events with 10,000 or more participants. Because mobilization in these large events encompasses more than 90 percent of all mobilization, we thus have reliable data on left and right participation.

3. The Impact of Governmental Constellations on Protests: Empirical Findings

a. Levels of Protest

Tables 1 to 4 show the levels of mobilization according to the first, comparative data set. Mobilization levels are measured in average numbers of events per month as well as in average numbers of participants per month for each distinct governmental period for the four countries under investigation. We have twelve different cases, five left (dominated) governments, five right (dominated) governments, and two mixed governments, which involved parties of both the left and the right on a more or less egalitarian basis.⁶ Apart from data on all events and participants, we single out the data on levels of left-wing mobilization.⁷

The Dutch mixed case concerns a coalition involving both the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats (because of its internal divisions also known as the "fight cabinet"). The French mixed case concerns the period of so-called "cohabitation," during which the Socialists, through Mitterrand, controlled the Presidency, while the right controlled parliament and the cabinet (under the Gaullist Chirac).

⁷ The category of left-wing mobilization includes the peace, ecology, third-world, anti-racist, student, labor, women's and gay movements, as well as left-wing radical movements and left-wing mobilization with regard to institutional questions, civil rights and moral questions such as genetic engineering.

Table 1: Average Mobilization per Month by Composition of Government: Germany

	Schmidt (Left)	Kohl (Right)	
	01/75-09/82	10/82-12/89	N=
Total Events	10.6	15.6	2,345
Total Participants	57,400	100,500	2,281
Left Events	8.3	13.5	1,948
Left Participants	49,000	96,400	1,892
Other Events	2.3	2.1	397
Other Participants	8,400	4,100	389

Table 2: Average Mobilization per Month by Composition of Government: Great Britain (excl. Northern Ireland)

	Wilson/Callaghan (Left) 01/75-05/79	Thatcher (Right) 06/79-12/89	N=
Total Events	6.1	6.0	1,089
Total Participants	11,700	37,400	1,036
Left Events	3.9	4.3	705
Left Participants	7,300	33,800	665
Other Events	7.3	4.4	262
Other Participants	4,400	3,700	251

Table 3: Average Mobilization per Month by Composition of Government: France

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Giscard	Mitterrand-	Mitterrand-	Mitterrand-	
		Mauroy/Fabius	Chirac	Rocard	
	(Right)	(Left)	(Left/Right)	(Left)	
	01/75-05/81	06/81-04/86	05/86-06/88	07/88-12/89	N=
Total Events	14.8	10.7	8.9	7.5	2,132
Total Participants	43,500	76,300	94,700	60,400	2,106
Left Events	9.4	4.1	4.8	3.6	1,157
Left Participants	39,200	22,800	7911,500	39,300	1,140
Other Events	5.4	6.6	4.1	3.9	975
Other Participants	4,300	53,500	15,200	21,000	966

Table 4: Mobilization per Month by Composition of Government: The Netherlands

	Den Uyl	Van Agt-	Van Agt-	Lubbers	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
		Wiegel	Den Uyl		
	(Left)	(Right)	(Left/Right)	(Right)	
	01/75-12/77	01/78-09/81	10/81-05/82	06/82-09/89	N=
Total Events	8.2	7.7	10.1	7.7	1,319
Total Participants	10,600	12,000	35,900	19,700	1,282
Left Events	4.4	6.1	8.9	6.3	1,016
Left Participants	7,800	11,300	32,500	18,500	990
Other Events	3.8	1.6	1.3	1.4	303
Other Participants	2,900	700	3,400	1,200	292

A first striking result is the strong predominance of left as compared to other mobilization (right or mixed) in the large majority of cases. This applies in particular for the number of people mobilized in left protests. In the light of this it is significant that the only three cases in our sample where right and mixed mobilization was (partly) stronger than left-wing mobilization occurred under outspoken left-wing governments, which did challenge the Right's institutionalized dominance. Thus, under the Labor government in Britain before 1979, and under the Socialist government in France after 1988, the number of right and mixed protest events was higher than the number of left protests. The strongest case of right-wing mobilization, however, occurred under the first five years of the Mitterrand presidency in France between 1981 and 1986. This government, which for part of the period included several ministers from the French Communist Party, is also clearly the most left-wing government in our sample. Among other things, its program included the nationalization of several key industries and banks and a restriction of the rights of religious schools. Particularly the latter issue led to massive mobilization by the right.

Because the essential results of the four tables are hard to grasp, we present parts of their information in a different way. In Table 5 we have documented the ratio of left versus other mobilization for both the number of events and the number of participants and ranked these ratios.

⁸ France and Great Britain are also the countries in which the traditional left-right cleavage is still more salient than in the Netherlands and Germany. This is not only reflected in terms of lower protest mobilization of new social movements but also in lower support for these in the wider populace (Fucht and Rucht 1993).

This holds at least for traditional (socialist) left-wing themes. With regard to the demands of the antinuclear power movement, for instance, the Socialist government was almost as unresponsive as its conservative predecessor (see von Oppeln 1989; Rucht 1994b).

Table 5: Ratio of Left Versus Other Protests by Government: Germany, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands, Rank-Ordered by Participants Ratio

		Composition of	Ratio of Left	Ratio of Left
		Government	Versus Other	Versus Other
			Participants	Events (Rank Order)
1 Kohl	D	Right	23.5	6.4 (2)
2 Van Agt-Wiegel	NL	Right	16.1	3.8 (4)
3 Lubbers	NL	Right	15.4	4.5 (3)
4 Van Agt-Den Uyl	NL	Mixed	10.4	6.8 (1)
5 Thatcher	GB	Right	9.1	1.0 (9)
6 Giscard	F	Right	9.1	1.8 (6)
7 Schmidt	D	Left	5.8	3.6 (5)
8 Mitterrand-Chirac	F	Mixed	5.2	1.2 (7)
9 Den Uyl	NL	Left	2.7	1.2 (8)
10 Mitterrand-Rocard	F	Left	1.9	0.9 (10)
11 Wilson/Callaghan	GB	Left	1.7	0.5 (12)
12 Mitterrand-Mauroy/Fabius	F	Left	0.4	0.6 (11)

In terms of the ratios of left versus other *participants* in protests, right governments range at the top, which means that they are confronted with much left mobilization. The most striking case is the right-wing Kohl government in Germany, where the ratio between left and other mobilization is 23.5 to one. Very high ratios are also reached under two right governments in the Netherlands (16.1 and 15.4 to 1, respectively).

In terms of ratios of left versus other protest *events*, again right governments tend to be in the top group, though not exactly in the same rank order as for the number of participants in these events. Again, left governments range at the bottom of the table. An exception from this pattern is the right Thatcher government, where the numbers of left and right protests reached the same level. This latter exception may be explained in terms of the curvilinear hypothesis regarding the degree of openness of political regimes and the level of mobilization. The Thatcher government is without doubt the most radical conservative government among the twelve cases. In dealing with left-wing extraparliamentary mobilization, this government was not only completely unresponsive, but even actively tried to crush the power bases and organizational structures of the extraparliamentary left. Most clearly, of course, this happened in the case of the unions, whose mobilization level and societal power declined dramatically after the lost miners' strike of 1984. Thus, the Thatcher government may represent a case on the right side of

strike of 1984. Thus, the Thatcher government may represent a case on the right side of the curvilinear parabola, with a level of closure that is so high as to impede the development of a strong extraparliamentary opposition. Overall, however, the ratios of participants and events point into the same direction, namely that right governments face considerable amounts of left protests, while under left governments right protests increase and the left tends to demobilize.

Another striking finding in the tables 1-4 is that the two mixed governments in the Netherlands and France experienced high levels of left mobilization which, in numbers of participants and--in the Netherlands--also in numbers of events, even exceeded the levels of left-wing protest under clear-cut right-wing governments. Although two cases are a narrow basis for drawing definitive conclusions, this result seems to indicate that mixed governments, at least if they are strongly internally divided as in these two cases, may represent the most favorable opportunity structure for extraparliamentary mobilization. The division among the elite in such situations will often result in political stalemates within the government, with both government partners seeking support among extraparliamentary constituencies and interest groups. Thus, in the French situation the Socialists actively supported student and anti-racist mobilization against the government, while in the Netherlands the Social Democrats and parts of the Christian Democrat parliamentary faction allied to the peace movement's campaign against the deployment of cruise missiles.¹⁰

The second data set allows us to control for these findings for Germany by reference to five different governments, among them two right, two left and one mixed. As indica-

¹⁰ Another example, in this case concerning right rather than left mobilization, is the political opportunity structure in which the wave of violence against asylum seekers and foreigners in Germany in the early 1990s occurred. Although in this case there was no mixed government in the strict sense, in a more general sense the political situation in some respects resembled that of the cohabitation (see Footnote 6) in France. While the right controlled parliament and the cabinet, the Social Democrats controlled the Bundesrat (comparable to the US Congress). Moreover, any constitutional change in asylum policies required a two-third majority in parliament, which implied the necessity of a "Grand Coalition" to regulate this issue.

Table 6: Average Mobilization per Month by Composition of Government, Germany 1950-1991 (Prodat-Data)

	Composition of Government	Total Participants	Left participants	Other Participants
Adenauer/Erhard				
01/50-10/66	Right	54,900	13,600	41,200
Kiesinger				
11/66-09/69	Mixed	37,500	22,100	15,300
Brandt				
10/69-05/74	Left	15,100	8,400	6,700
Schmidt				
06/74-09/82	Left	40,900	29,300	11,600
Kohl				
10/82-12/91	Right	65,400	58,200	7,200
N=		4,173	2,186	1,987

When looking first at the period of time that is also covered by the first data set (1975-89), we basically find the same pattern. First, left mobilization by far outweighs right and ambivalent mobilization irrespective of the ideological orientation of the government. In both governments during this period, the level of left mobilization is much higher than that of right mobilization (with factors of 3.1 and 3.7, respectively). Second, the right Kohl government is confronted with twice as much mobilization as the left Schmidt government.

If we move to the early time periods (1950-1974) not covered by the first data set, a somewhat different pattern can be observed. Under the right-wing Adenauer and Erhard governments, right mobilization by far exceeds left mobilization (with a factor 3). This runs counter to the results of the four-country data set. However, these massive right-wing and ambivalent protests in Germany during the 1950s and early 1960s were specific for this historical period, which may explain why they deviate from the general pattern found in the data presented above. Almost all of these protests in one way or another had to do with the consequences of the lost war and the subsequent division of Germany. Thus, they included protests for the return of war prisoners from the Soviet Union, demonstrations against the GDR-regime sometimes sponsored by both Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, as well as, most importantly, rallies by various orga-

nizations of ethnic Germans (the so-called *Vertriebenen*) who had been expelled or had fled from the lost territories in the East and from several eastern European states.

Under the mixed Kiesinger government and the following left Brandt government, our initial pattern is to be found again. In line with the results of the first data set we here find that left mobilization increases under a mixed government as compared to the preceding right government and then strongly declines under the reform-oriented Brandt government.

The aggregate data presented so far may be the result of very different patterns on the level of specific movements and thus may lead us to generalizations that are not really grounded in trends that apply in the same way to distinct movements. We therefore singled out data on participation in three different movements which have been prominent in all four countries, namely the labor, anti-nuclear power and peace movements. This selection also allows us to see whether "old" and "new" movements follow the same patterns. The results of this disaggregation, though only for numbers of participants, ¹¹ are shown in Tables 7 to 10.

¹¹ The trends for numbers of events go in the same direction, but are less outspoken. To spare the reader an overload of tables we have therefore limited the presentation here to numbers of participants.

Table 7: Average Number of Participants per Month by Composition of Government for Three Movements: Germany

	Schmidt (Left)	Kohl (Right)	
	01/75-09/82	10/82-12/89	N=
Labor Movement	1,700	11,600	93
Anti-Nuclear Power			
Movement	7,900	11,600	293
Peace Movement	25,400	59,100	422

Table 8: Average Number of Participants per Month by Composition of Government for Three Movements: Great Britain

	Wilson/Callaghan (Left)	Thatcher (Right)	N
	01/75-05/79	06/79-12/89	N=
Labor Movement	1,400	9,100	118
Anti-Nuclear Power			
Movement	500	1,100	51
Peace Movement	2,000	12,700	186

Table 9: Average Number of Participants per Month by Composition of Government for Three Movements: France

	Giscard	Mitterrand- Mauroy/Fabius	Mitterrand- Chirac	Mitterrand- Rocard	
	(Right)	(Left)	(Left/Right)	(Left)	N.
	01/75-05/81	06/81-04/86	05/86-06/88	07/88-12/89	N=
Labor Movement Anti-Nuclear Power	17,400	1,500	10,900	3,200	216
Movement	5,800	1,300	1,700	1,000	267
Peace Movement	1,800	10,700	19,200	0	91

Table 10: Average Number of Participants per Month by Composition of Government for Three Movements: The Netherlands

	Den Uyl	Van Agt- Wiegel	Van Agt- Den Uyl	Lubbers	7.44
	(Left)	(Right)	(Left/Right)	(Right)	
	01/75-12/77	01/78-09/81	10/81-05/82	06/82-09/89	N=
Labor Movement	2,800	1,200	100	1,500	117
Anti-Nuclear Power					
Movement	700	3,900	0	200	67
Peace Movement	400	2,500	28,000	10,900	212

Without going into much detail regarding the figures on each single movement in each country, we can state that the overall trends found on the aggregate level also hold on the level of single movements. We find that right governments face much more protest by the labor movement than left governments. Only in the Netherlands this pattern does not apply. For the anti-nuclear power movement and the peace movement a similar pattern emerges. Here the only partial exception is French peace mobilization during the first Mitterrand government which reached a much higher level than during the preceding Giscard government. Here one clearly sees the impact of international factors, in this case NATO's "double-track decision" of 1979 as well as the presence of massive peace movements in the surrounding countries. This extraordinary mobilization may have also spurred on their French counterparts.

These few exceptions show that, in analyzing individual movements, one should also take into account issue-specific conditions, for example economic cycles for the labor movements, the long delay between decisions on energy programs and their concrete implementation as a factor for the anti-nuclear power movement, and international opportunities and events as conditions for the peace movement. Obviously, these factors mediate between governmental constellations and major movement campaigns. We still maintain that in general there is a differential impact of governmental constellations on the level of mobilization of social movements, in particular for those movements that are sensitive to the left-right cleavage, whether in its traditional (labor-capital) or in its modern (postmaterialist-materialist) guise.

b. The Radicalness of Protest

In a second step, we draw attention to another formal aspect of mobilization, namely its degree of radicalness. In Tables 11 to 14 we have broken down all protests in the four countries under study into three categories, namely demonstrative, confrontational and violent events.¹² To simplify the discussion, these tables display only left wing mobilization.

¹² Examples of demonstrative events are demonstrations, rallies and pickets; confrontational forms include blockades, occupations and other forms of nonviolent (and usually illegal) disruption; violence includes arson, bombings, riots and violent demonstrations. See Koopmans (1995, Appendix).

Table 11: Action Repertoire of Left Protests by Composition of Government: Germany

	Schmidt (Left)	Kohl (Right)	
	01/75-09/82	10/82-12/89	N=
Demonstrative	62.0	71.0	1,313
Confrontational	23.9	17.0	384
Violent	14.1	12.1	251
Total	100.0%	100.1%	1,948

Table 12: Action Repertoire of Left Protests by Composition of Government: Great Britain

	Wilson/Callaghan	Thatcher	
	(Left)	(Right)	
	01/75-05/79	06/79-12/89	N=
Demonstrative	67.4	65.1	463
Confrontational	22.1	22.3	157
Violent	10.5	12.6	85
Total	100.0%	100.0%	705

Table 13: Action Repertoire of Left Protests by Composition of Government: France

	Giscard	Mitterrand-	Mitterrand-	Mitterrand-	
		Mauroy/Fabius	Chirac	Rocard	
	(Right)	(Left)	(Left/Right)	(Left)	
	01/75-05/81	06/81-04/86	05/86-06/88	07/88-12/89	N=
Demonstrative	55.7	49.0	64.0	60.3	642
Confrontational	28.3	22.2	16.0	27.9	297
Violent	16.0	28.9	20.0	11.8	218
N=	100.0%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%	1,157

Table 14: Action Repertoire of Left Protests by Composition of Government: The Netherlands

	Den Uyl	Van Agt-	Van Agt-	Lubbers	-
	-	Wiegel	Den Uyl		
	(Left)	(Right)	(Left/Right)	(Right)	
	01/75-12/77	01/78-09/81	10/81-05/82	06/82-09/89	N=
Demonstrative	70.5	44.5	59.2	55.6	545
Confrontational	29.5	48.5	32.4	29.7	351
Violent	0.0	6.9	8.5	14.7	106
Total	100.0%	99.9%	100.1%	100.0%	1,002

If we first concentrate on the share of *violent* protests, a conclusive pattern is not found. Leaving aside the remarkably different proportions of violence in cross-national comparison (see Kriesi et al. 1995) and focusing only on the correlation between governmental constellations and violence, a slightly higher share of left violent events under a left government (as compared to a right one) in Germany is found. The reverse pattern applies to Great Britain. In France, the first left Mitterrand government is confronted with an outstanding share of left violent protests, whereas the second left Mitterrand government faces the lowest share of such events. In the Netherlands it is the conservative Lubbers government that is confronted with the highest proportion of left violent protests.

A first conclusion that can be drawn is thus that there is no clear correlation between the ideological orientation of a government and the proportion of violent protests it confronts. A second conclusion is that there is no clear time trend in the sense of a general increase or decrease in the relative weight of violent protests: In the Netherlands the share of these protests is highest in the final period and the opposite is true for Germany.

As regards the share of *confrontational* left events, once again we get an inconclusive finding. In the Netherlands, where this type of event is relatively important under all governmental constellations as compared to other countries, we have an outstanding share of such events particularly under the right Van Agt-Wiegel government (48.5 percent). In Germany, it is the left government which faces a higher share of confrontational events as compared to the right government. In France, both the right Giscard and the left Rocard governments are confronted with the highest shares of confrontational events.

Regarding the two mixed governments in France and the Netherlands, we find no clear pattern either. In both countries, the level of violence is close to the average for the fifteen-year period, while the share of confrontational events is very low under the French mixed government and again around the national average for the Dutch case.

Thus, while for the impact of governmental constellations on levels of mobilization we found a consistent pattern in our data, the results regarding the degree of radicalness of protests basically reflect the conflicting hypotheses formulated above. Apparently the potentially radicalizing effect of the relative closure of channels of access under right-wing governments is offset by the countervailing moderating effects of increased facilitation by the established left, which broadens the mass base of extraparliamentary mobilization and isolates the radicals. Moreover, as several authors (Tarrow 1989; Koopmans 1993) have shown, the development of the action repertoires of social movements embedded in broader protest waves are strongly affected by patterns of strategic interaction which are partly independent from opportunity structures, a fact which further obscures the connection between the composition of government and the radicalness of protest.

4. Discussion

In reacting to an overemphasis in cross-national research on the effects of *stable* political opportunities on protest mobilization, we have tried to shed more light on the impact of *changing* opportunities. Instead of cross-national comparison, our interest was in studying empirically the impact of different governmental constellations (left, right, mixed) on levels and forms of protest mobilization by using two large data sets which overlap for a significant time period. Choosing this research strategy can avoid to a large extent a difficulty that cross-national research is confronted with, namely having few cases but a great number of variables to be assessed. When comparing across time rather than across movements, it can be assumed that *within* our national cases most institutional and cultural features do not change fundamentally and therefore can be ignored when explaining variations within countries. Our inclusion of more than one country was not driven by an interest in cross-national comparison as such but served, first, to increase the number of cases and, second, to figure out to which extent our findings can be generalized.

As we saw, the literature provides us with highly divergent answers to the question as to the relation between political regimes or, more specifically, different compositions of government and the mobilization of social movements. In the case of the effects of who governs on action repertoires our results were as inconclusive as the literature. For the level of mobilization, however, our results display a clear pattern that is highly consistent across four West European countries and across longer periods of time.

At least for the more recent decades, left-wing protests tend to be more frequent than other protests, irrespective of the governmental constellation. Right governments are generally confronted with much higher levels of left protest than left governments. The mobilization of right-wing movements, on the contrary, tends to be much stronger when the Left is in government. However, the highest levels of mobilization, particularly for left-wing movements but, to some extent, also for movements of the Right, seem to occur when mixed governments are in power.

The finding that the Left mobilizes much more than the Right is less trivial and theoretically more relevant than it might appear at the first sight. As indicated above, in many versions of the political opportunity model a positive relation is expected between regime openness and levels of mobilization. Given the fact that right-wing movements generally defend vested interests, one may assume that the opportunity structure for (moderate) right-wing movements is generally more open than for left-wing movements. For example, proponents of nuclear energy can rely on powerful allies such as the nuclear industry and electricity companies as well as, in countries such as France, the military-industrial complex. The anti-nuclear movement, on the contrary, had few established allies when it started mobilizing in the 1970s, and had to fight its way into the political system, sometimes with (Germany) and sometimes without (France) success (Flam 1994; Rucht 1994a). Nevertheless, despite (or rather because of) the much more favorable opportunity structure for supporters of nuclear energy, they had less reason to mobilize than those who opposed the construction of nuclear power stations.

The theoretical lesson to be learned from the generally low level of right-wing protests is that in analyzing the relation between regime openness and mobilization one should not only take into account the prospects of success of extraparliamentary mobilization but also its necessity from the point of view of potential activists. For many

supporters of right-wing positions, extraparliamentary mobilization, which after all is a relatively time-consuming activity, is simply not necessary. For left-wing movements, especially in their early stages, it is often the only available option. The combined effects of necessity and opportunity--or, to put it differently, positive and negative opportunities--also provide a clue as to the reasons behind the fact that the mobilization of left-wing movements is relatively low in periods when the Left is in power and opportunities for protest would seem, at first glance, more favorable. On the one hand, a leftwing government generally implies for left-wing movements more favorable chances of success and a lower level of repression than a government of the right--condititions, that are likely to encourage mobilization.¹³ At the same time, the level of support (facilitation) for extraparliamentary left-wing mobilization is likely to decline in such situations, and, as indicated above, reform programs by the government may reduce the level of mobilization by preemption and co-optation. Therefore, a situation of "left in government" implies countervailing pressures on left-wing social movements, some working in the direction of higher levels of mobilization, others in the direction of decreased mobilization.

Koopmans (1995) has hypothesized that the chances of success and levels of repression tend to be relatively independent from who is in government and are primarily affected by stable aspects of a country's opportunity structure, such as its institutional make-up and long-standing elite strategies in dealing with extraparliamentary challenges. Facilitation and reform (and the opposite situation of "threat") depend much more strongly on the composition of government. Following this hypothesis, we should expect the negative effects of "left in government" on the level of left-wing mobilization to dominate. In addition, this explains our finding that the demobilizing effect of left-wing governments was generally more pronounced for numbers of participants than for numbers of protests. This is because mass mobilization is likely to be strongly affected by

¹³ The theoretical foundation of the concepts "facilitation," "repression," chances of success," "reform," and "threat" used here, was laid by Tilly (1978: 55) and elaborated by Koopmans (1995: 15-17, 24-32).

the presence or absence of facilitation by established, powerful and resourceful allies. By constrast, the ideological hard-core of activists tends to be less impressed by the changes in opportunities linked to governmental changes and therefore will pursue its activities anyway.

According to this line of reasoning, the most favorable conditions for mobilization will be those in which protest is both opportune *and* necessary, a conclusion which is compatible with the hypothesis of a curvilinear relation between regime openness and movement mobilization that several authors have advanced. Precisely such conditions tend to prevail under mixed governments which include both (potential) allies and outspoken adversaries of a movement. On the one hand, the fact that allies are part of the government will provide protection from repression and relatively favorable chances of movement success. On the other hand, the fact that adversaries are also part of the government prevent far-reaching reforms that may take out the wind of the movement's sails. In addition, mixed governments offer movements the opportunity to profit from elite divisions, either pre-existing or created by the movement's mobilization.

This theoretical explanation implies that our results should not be interpreted in any deterministic sense. Although for post-war Western Europe it sees to be true that left-wing movements generally mobilize strongest under mixed governments and least under left-wing governments, the model allows for exceptions to this rule. Thus, a situation where a left-wing reform-oriented government is in power, however being unable to implement its reforms because of resistance from vested interests outside the government, may well lead to high levels of left-wing mobilization. Under such conditions, which in fact are a special case of divided elites (though not within the government but between it and non-governmental elites), protest may be explicitly welcomed, or even actively supported by the government. Such situations seem especially likely to occur when economic issues are at stake. Thus, the strike wave during the Popular Front period in France in the second half of the 1930s was not directed against the government but against business interests which threatened to block the government's pro labor reform programs (Danos and Gibelin 1982).

Progressive social movements may also flourish under reformist governments when their mobilization is directed at lower levels of the state which are of a different political orientation than the federal government. Such a situation prevailed during the heyday of the civil rights movement, whose mobilization in fact profited from the support of the reform-minded Kennedy administration in its struggle against conservative Southern elites (McAdam 1982). The same is true for mobilization against nuclear power in West Germany in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Whereas the Social Democrat-led national government already began to downplay the role nuclear power programs, several conservative-led state governments rigorously tried to implement nuclear facilities within their own territories.

These findings allow us to draw some more general conclusions that should lead to a partial reorientation in this field of research. First, when emphasizing the considerable time-specific variations of levels and forms of protest, we become aware of the limits of explanations based on invariant features of political regimes. In order to explain these variations of protest, we must temporalize and contextualize the concept of political opportunities, taking into account, among other things, the fact of changing opportunities. More recently, several authors have emphasized the role of such changes (Rucht 1990; 1994; Joppke 1993; Tarrow 1994; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1995). One important aspect of these changing opportunities is variation of governmental constellations. Focusing in this paper exclusively on this explanatory factor, we found that governmental changes do matter. This is particularly true for levels of mobilization. Consequently, governmental constellations should become part and parcel of a more dynamic model of political opportunities.

Such a dynamic model should also take into account the internal dynamics of waves of mobilization. For instance, in regard to levels of mobilization, it is unlikely that high level mobilization can be maintained over lengthy periods. As a consequence, exhaustion and decline in mobilization may come into effect even when political opportunities continue to be favorable. As far as the action repertoires are concerned, it could be argued that the proportion of violent protests increases when mass mobilization declines be-

cause the hard core activists feel that radicalization is the only way to maintain pressure when mass support fades away.¹⁴

In sum, we will have to investigate the complex relationship between (a) inert structural features of political systems, (b) changing opportunities such as varying governmental constellations and (c) the internal dynamics of protest waves. This task, however, is beyond the scope of this paper and would require a much greater and more systematic effort.

¹⁴ Although some authors have found evidence in support for this assumption (Tarrow 1989; 1995: 99; Koopmans 1993), results from another study did not show an increased proportion of illegal and/or violent protests in periods of decreasing numbers of protest (Rucht 1996).

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