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TSMOs and Protest Participation

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Abstract

Transnational social movements organizations (TSMOs) have grown at a remarkable rate since the 1950s, which has given protest politics a decidedly international character. In the 1990s, TSMOs shifted their strategy to focus more on mass mobilization. The success of these efforts remains unclear, however, as scholars have yet to examine whether TSMO connections are associated with increased protest participation. The uncertainty is compounded by work that suggests linkages between TSMO activity and mass mobilization could be an artifact of other factors. This study addresses the gap by merging data on TSMO memberships with data on individual protest participation to examine the existence of such a relationship. The merged data set contains information on 32,580 individuals in 35 countries. Results from a multivariate analysis that controls for several possible sources of spuriousness indicate that the number of TSMO memberships in a country is associated with individual protest activities. The results are similar in both high- and middle-income countries. The findings suggest that TSMOs have been successful at accomplishing one of their primary organizational objectives.

Keywords

mass mobilization, international activism, protest

Over the past century, the population of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) has experienced a dramatic increase (Smith and Wiest 2012a). During the middle of the twentieth century, the number of TSMOs in existence hovered around 120. By the turn of the century, this number had swelled to over 1,000—an eight-fold increase over the course of five decades.[1] More recent estimates suggest TSMO expansion has continued into the twenty-first century (Smith, Hughes, and Duncan 2014). This growth also means that TSMOs have an increasing number of ties with individual countries. From 1953 to 2003, the average number of country memberships per TSMO increased from 24 to 36. Conversely, countries also have an increasing number of memberships with TSMOs. Over the same time period, the mean number of organizational memberships per country increased from 30 to 320. These trends suggest that at both the organizational and country levels, the social movement sector is becoming intensely international.

For social movement scholars, the rapid growth of TSMOs has been one of the more remarkable developments shaping patterns of transnational politics (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). These scholars highlight several activities that TSMOs undertake to improve the efficacy of popular mobilization (cf. Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Smith 2008). For example, TSMOs galvanize support around issues that transcend national contexts, such as environmentalism and human rights (Schofer and Hironaka 2005; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004). They also organize regional and global conferences that focus attention on pressing social problems. Furthermore, TSMOs provide critical resources—for example, expertise, coordination, and information—to national actors engaging in movement activism.

However, despite the amount of scholarly attention devoted to understanding these developments, many questions remain, especially as they relate to the consequences of TSMO expansion. A key objective for many TSMOs is creating and opening avenues for individuals to participate in the political process, typically in the form of protest activism (Fisher et al. 2005). This raises the question: Are they successful? That is, does TSMO expansion have an effect

[1]These numbers are based on the author's calculations of the Transnational Social Movement Organization Dataset, 1953–2003 (Smith and Wiest 2002b).

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on patterns of mobilization? More specifically, does the level of protest in a country increase when the number of TSMO linkages in that country increases? Answers to these questions will create a better understanding of the influence of TSMO activities on protest politics. While they have other objectives—including policy influence and issue awareness—the goal of public empowerment stands at the core of many TSMOs' missions.

This study expands sociological knowledge of the relationship between TSMOs and protest politics by merging data on TSMOs with data on individual protest participation and examining whether an association exists between TSMO presence and individual protest behavior. Results from the analysis shed additional light on how changes in the international arena have consequences for patterns of mobilization at the domestic level.

The Rise of TSMOS

TSMOs in the Global Arena

A frequent observation among comparative scholars is that globalization intensified during the latter part of the twentieth century (Brady, Beckfield, and Seeleib-Kaiser 2005; J. W. Meyer 1987; Waters 1994). While the concept of globalization is often used to refer to a number of different processes, one key component is the increase in economic integration (Guillen 2001). States, organizations, and individuals have become more interconnected through the increased flow of investment capital and trade as well as the relaxation of trade barriers. Another component of globalization is the emergence of cross-national political alliances (Beckfield 2010; Boli and Thomas 1997). Since the 1950s, states have become more integrated through the development of a global network of international governmental organization (IGOs) whose actors develop and harmonize international policy responses to growing social problems.

The rise of a global economy alongside a world polity has also been accompanied by the development of a global civil society—a transnational network of international nongovernment organizations (INGOs) (Beckfield 2003; Schofer and Longhofer 2011; Tsutsui 2004). One particularly active segment of the INGO population is comprised of transnational social movement organizations. These groups explicitly advocate for social and political change (Kriesberg 2008; Smith and Wiest 2012a).

This broader network of TSMOs structures how individual organizations mobilize local populations (Della Porta et al. 2006). The network provides TSMOs with access to new information on emerging issues and potential threats, which can help in the development of new strategies for mobilization (Keck and Sikkink 1998). It also links actors across national contexts, which gives a global character to the transnational movement agenda. At the same time, communicating with other TSMOs encourages organizations to account for the preferences of other groups in the network. Much of this communication takes places at global and regional meetings (e.g., the World Social Forum), and the process of negotiation provides stability to the overall network and gives the broader movement agenda a degree of coherence (Reese et al. 2008; Smith et al. 2007).

The issue orientation of TSMOs has changed in significant ways over time (Smith 2008). Prior to the 1980s, some of the key issues included slavery, anti-colonialism in poorer countries, and protecting human rights. Peace, environmental protection, and anti-globalization were major themes in the 1980s and 1990s. By the 2000s, however, TSMO activism had shifted to emphasize much broader issues (e.g., global justice) that encompassed more specific goals (e.g., environmentalism or gender equality) (Della Porta 2007; Pleyers 2010).

This shift has been accompanied by organizational restructuring. Whereas earlier periods of transnational activism were dominated by organizations that focused on single issues—such as environmental protection—and mobilizing their core constituency around that issue, the current period of transnational activism involves organizations that focus on multiple issues and mobilizing more diverse constituencies around those issues (Bennett 2005). Indeed, some organizations that were once focused on single issues have evolved over time to focus on multiple issues. Friends of the Earth International is one example. Founded in 1971, it started as an organization that focused strictly on environmental issues. Over time, it has expanded its focus, however, and now campaigns on several issues that go beyond strict environmentalism, including economic justice and human rights (Friends of the Earth International 2016).

TSMOs and Mass Mobilization

While TSMOs typically emphasize issues that transcend national contexts—such as human rights, environmentalism, and economic justice—they still remain committed to improving conditions at the domestic level (Auyero 2001; Auyero and Moran 2007; Diani 2005). Over the past two decades, they have started to employ protest strategies as a means to accomplishing that goal (Bennett 2005; Smith 2008). For example, on its website, Greenpeace (2015) states that it "uses peaceful protest and creative communication to expose global environmental problems and to promote solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future."

It appears that these organizations have been successful in these efforts, with scholars of transnational activism highlighting how transnational activists connect to local groups to improve mobilization. Despite an early divide between highly networked transnational activists and locally focused grassroots activists, increased interactions have led to more collaboration, with transnational activists turning more of

their attention to local movements (Pleyers 2008). As these local campaigns have multiplied, TSMOs have been seen as crucial actors in the coordination of activities, dissemination of information, and cultivation of international awareness (Juris 2004; Pleyers 2010; Rucht 2003). They also help local actors formulate frames that move the target of action beyond the local environment (Dufour and Giraud 2007).

The 1999 "Battle in Seattle"—in which activists protested against World Trade Organization policies—provides a window into how TSMOs work with local actors to aid mobilization (Smith 2001). The key role for TSMOs involved assisting local social movement organizations (SMOs) in the coordination of ground activities. There is a general division of labor between TSMOs, national SMOs, and local SMOs that runs along a continuum. On one end, formal TSMOs take an active role in disseminating information, providing frames for critiquing free trade, monitoring institutions, and fostering transnational cooperation. At the other end, local SMOs focus on educating the public, mobilizing participation, coordinating the protest, and disrupting the WTO meetings. National SMOs work between these organizations, offering assistance to local chapters while also routinely communicating with TSMOs. Importantly, the division of labor suggests that while many TSMO activities are not those that are most closely linked to individuals "on the street," they are nevertheless crucial to mobilizing individuals to participate in protest.

One special area of concern for transnational activists is the mobilization and empowerment of individuals in less affluent countries (Smith and Juris 2008). Many transnational activists—especially those who are active in the World Social Fora—are focused on achieving global equality (Juris 2008; Reese et al. 2008; Smith et al. 2007). Their goals include alleviating foreign debt for poor countries, promoting basic rights of citizenship for individuals in these countries, reducing economic inequalities between rich and poor countries, and reforming global financial institutions so that poor countries are no longer dependent on rich countries. One way these activists attempt to achieve these goals is by organizing protest and direct action campaigns that take place in countries with fewer economic resources.

Empirical Challenges

The strategic goals of TSMOs provide a clear basis for anticipating an association between the presence of TSMO connections in a country and individual protest participation. However, two empirical issues currently challenge the claim that TSMOs mobilize protest participation. The first is that analysts have yet to conduct a comprehensive analysis that establishes a clear relationship between the amount of TSMO connections to a country and level of protest in that country. This raises the possibility that TSMO connections may not be associated with protest activity. Second, even if there were an association between TSMOs and protest activity, other factors could account for the apparent relationship. Specifically, the types of countries that are likely to have more TSMO connections also have characteristics that make protest more likely. These characteristics—rather than the TSMO connections—could be the driving force behind cross-national differences in protest levels.

Regarding the first challenge, researchers have noted that TSMOs face serious obstacles when trying to mobilize local populations and may find it difficult to encourage local groups to engage in protest politics. One concern highlights the complexity of framing global issues in ways that resonate with the customs, practices, and shared understanding of local populations (Della Porta et al. 2006). In this respect, frame bridging—in which distinctive discourses are linked and harmonized—becomes an important process for mobilization because it creates a sense of solidarity between transnational and local activists. Without it, the global issues that drive transnational activists may not be sufficiently meaningful to move local groups to participate in contentious activity.

Another concern is that activists have to overcome the formal structures that organize domestic political life. Local governments in particular have increased their capacity for restricting protest in several ways—for example, by limiting access to public spaces for protestors or requiring protestors to apply for permits when planning events (McPhail and McCarthy 2005). Because their purpose is to minimize disruptions to the everyday routines of the public, these restrictions have the effect of limiting confrontational tactics in particular. As a result of both local practices and institutions, then, TSMO connections may not be sufficient to mobilize protest participation. Furthermore, even if TSMOs are successful at connecting with local groups, they may be forced to focus on less contentious forms of protest activism because of institutional regulations.

The second set of concerns relates to issues of spuriousness. In short, the location of TSMO activities is not random. TSMOs tend to be more active in areas that already have the characteristics that make protest more likely. Scholars have identified several characteristics of countries that could account for the potential relevance of TSMO connections. These characteristics tap into both the economic and political conditions prevalent in a given country. Regarding economic circumstances, researchers argue that economically developed countries are more likely to participate in global civil society (Beckfield 2003; Smith and Wiest 2005). Economically affluent countries have more resources available for social movements (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Disposable income is higher, the technological infrastructure is more developed, and SMOs have more paid staff to assist and coordinate protest. Comparative analyses also demonstrate a strong link between economic affluence and aggregate protest levels (Dalton 2008; Jenkins, Wallace, and Fullerton 2008), which raises the possibility that economic

conditions could be responsible for any observed influence of TSMO connections on protest levels.

At the same time, the political opportunity structure can also foster country ties with TSMOs. A key factor in this regard is the openness of a country to social movement activism. Researchers in the political process tradition have argued that the presence of political allies aids in the successful emergence of many social movements (Kriesi 1995; McAdam 1982). It increases access to the policymaking process, legitimates the goals of the movement organizers, and raises public awareness of the movement issues. Others also highlight the importance of preexisting political conditions that foster both movement activism and the development of social movement organizations (D. S. Meyer 2004; Tarrow 1994). For example, movement organizations are more likely to flourish in areas where the domestic political culture respects the rights of individuals to use protest tactics when making political claims (Dalton, Van Sickle, and Weldon 2010). Not surprisingly, while the evidence suggests that protest is higher when aggregate political conditions are amenable to social movement mobilization (Kitschelt 1986), these same factors also appear to generate linkages with the broader TSMO industry (Smith and Wiest 2005; Wiest and Smith 2007). Thus, it remains unclear whether an association between TSMOs and protest participation is an artifact of larger political conditions, such as the presence of elite allies and a favorable protest culture.

A final factor could also account for the perceived influence of TSMOs on protest participation. As noted earlier, the growth of TSMOs has occurred alongside the growth of other dimensions of globalization. The number of IGOs and the frequency of international trade and investment have also increased over the past several decades (Beckfield 2010; Boli and Thomas 1999; J. W. Meyer 1987). These developments have tended to unfold together, meaning that countries with a large number of TSMO ties frequently have a large number of IGO ties and experience a higher volume of economic trade and investment. Research on transnational activism points to these dimensions of globalization as key factors behind protest participation (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004). These associations raise the possibility that a different set of factors related to international politics could be responsible for the perceived linkage between TSMO connections and protest participation.

Summary

Long-term developments in the field of transnational activism coupled with more recent changes in organizational strategy have raised new questions about the efficacy of TSMOs in mobilizing protest. A clear objective of many TSMOs over the past two decades has been the mobilization of protest in support of human rights, gender equality, environmental protections, and economic justice. Some TSMOs have been particularly focused on mobilization in less affluent countries. Case studies based on episodes of mass protest provide initial evidence that TSMOs have been successful in their efforts. Yet, systematic analyses—especially those that examine alternative sources of influence—have been lacking. The absence is important because research suggests that the sources behind TSMO/country linkages are not random and that many of the factors that influence the development of TSMO connections with a country could also be responsible for influencing the level of protest in that country. To address the uncertainty, this study uses a comparative framework to conduct a multivariate analysis of the association between the number of TSMO memberships in a country and the level of protest participation.

Methods

Data

This study merges data from several sources to investigate whether TSMO connections with a country are associated with individual protest participation (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics). Data on TSMO connections are provided by the Transnational Social Movement Organization Dataset, 1953–2003 (Smith and Wiest 2012b). The data set compiles a biennial roster of TSMOs using information from the Yearbook of International Associations and represents the most comprehensive list of TSMOs available. It tracks the number of countries that have memberships with each organization. This analysis uses data on TSMOs connections for 2000 and 2003, depending on the country.

One important concern with the TSMO data set is that some organizations may prefer to operate anonymously, and the individuals they mobilize may also prefer to remain anonymous. This raises the possibility that the findings in this analysis may not extend to organizations that operate in more covert spaces. With that in mind, it bears emphasizing that the results of this analysis describe the mobilizing effects of only those TSMOs that operate overtly. As additional data on these organizations become available, future scholarship should evaluate whether organizations that operate more covertly are as effective as those that operate more overtly.

Data on individual protest participation are drawn from the 2004 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (ISSP Research Group 2012). In total, 38 countries were included in the original sample. Three countries (Russia, South Africa, and Taiwan) are excluded because they lack information on some independent variables. Low-income countries were not included in the ISSP survey. As a result, the findings should be interpreted strictly within the context of middle- and high-income countries. To test for alternative sources of national and international influence, I also incorporate data from other sources (see Table 1). The merged data set contains information on 32,580 individuals in 35 countries. The countries and their sample sizes are listed in the Appendix.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Analysis.

	High Income		Middle Income		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Data Source
Dependent variables					
Signing petitions	.301	.459	.096	.294	
Boycotts	.250	.433	.059	.235	
Demonstrations	.074	.261	.046	.209	
Independent variables					
TSMO memberships	485.326	131.016	288.310	73.135	TSMO
GDP (per capita)/1,000	34.751	6.619	11.537	4.754	PWT
Democracy	9.949	.270	8.988	1.025	Polity
Rule of law	1.575	.291	.265	.642	WB
Economic globalization	82.346	11.018	65.991	9.063	KOF
Political globalization	90.201	7.690	79.498	12.769	KOF
Individual-level controls					
Female	.505	.500	.537	.499	
Age	47.051	16.283	43.656	16.843	
Marital status (reference: never married)					
Married	.669	.471	.608	.488	
Widowed	.062	.242	.090	.286	
Divorced	.069	.254	.055	.228	
Separated	.020	.139	.032	.176	
Education (reference less than secondary)					
Secondary education	.193	.395	.277	.447	
Some higher education	.197	.397	.104	.305	
Higher education degree	.181	.385	.126	.332	
Current union member	.287	.452	.105	.307	
Weekly church attendance	.144	.351	.237	.425	
Political interest	2.530	.835	2.268	.942	
Organizational participation	.362	.481	.143	.350	
Country-level controls					
Population size (logged)	2.642	1.214	2.566	1.428	PWT
Region (reference: Asia/Pacific Islands)					
Central and Eastern Europe	.044	.205	.469	.499	
Middle East	.028	.166	.078	.268	
North America	.074	.262	—		
South America	—		.375	.484	
Scandinavia	.197	.398	—		
Western Europe	.366	.482	—		
Southern Europe	.129	.335	—		

Note: N = 20,583 high-income countries; N = 11,997 middle-income countries. Unless otherwise noted, data are from the 2004 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP Research Group 2012). TSMO = Transnational Social Movement Organization Dataset, 1953–2003 (Smith and Wiest 2012b); PWT = Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, and Aten 2011); Polity = Polity IV Project (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2011); WB = World Bank (Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2010); KOF = Globalization Database (Dreher et al. 2010).

The time period of the study coincides with the build up to the Iraq War—a time when many TSMOs were actively engaged in staging protests against the upcoming invasion. As a result, protest levels were generally higher in the early 2000s than in the late 1990s or late 2000s. However, anti-war mobilization was not limited to specific types of countries, such as affluent countries. Instead, the organizing for these protest events took place on a global scale, across a wide array of different types of countries. Events were held in rich countries that have a relatively high level of TSMO activity, including those in North American and the Europe, and (to a less extent) in less affluent countries with relatively less TSMO activity, including those in South America, the Middle East, and Africa. In other words, TSMOs everywhere were organizing direct action campaigns. At a time of heightened mobilization, the key question is whether countries with more TSMO connections had more protest than countries with fewer TSMO connections.

Restricting the analyses to the early 2000s also raises the question of whether similar patterns would be observed in other time periods. That is, one possibility is that TSMOs were effective at mobilizing because of the unique conditions (e.g., the impending invasion of Iraq) that characterized the early 2000s. However, case studies of specific movements continue to highlight the central role that TSMOs play in facilitating direct action campaigns, suggesting the efficacy of TSMO mobilization efforts are not limited to the time period under study. However, the possibility that the results may not extend to different time periods should be kept in mind.

Dependent Variables

The ISSP provides information on participation in three standard forms of protest: signing petitions, boycotts, and attending demonstrations. As others have argued, these activities are three of the most well-known and widely used forms of contention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 1978). As noted previously, they also reflect some of the forms of direct action that TSMOs frequently pursue and cover more institutionalized activities (petition signing) and more contentious activities (demonstrating). Individuals were asked whether they had participated in each form of protest during the previous year. Each item is coded as a binary measure (1 = participation in previous year; 0 = no participation in previous year).

Independent Variables

The key independent variable of interest is the *number of TSMO memberships* for each country. Higher values indicate an increased presence of TSMO activity. According to the objectives of many TSMOs, an increased presence should be positively related to protest levels. The analysis uses the raw count of memberships, but supplemental analyses that use alternative transformations—such as the square root and natural logarithm—produce similar results.

When evaluating the influence of TSMOs on protest participation, an important criterion is that TSMO activity should precede protest activity. To ensure the temporal precedence of TSMO activity, I use the 2003 TSMO count for those countries surveyed in 2005 or 2006 (because they ask about protest activity that took place in 2004 or 2005). I use the 2000 TSMO count for those countries surveyed in 2003 or 2004 (because they ask about protest activity that took place in 2002 or 2003).[2]

However, any perceived relationship between TSMO activism and protest levels could be an artifact of other factors. To examine the influence of economic affluence, the analysis includes a measure of *gross domestic product* (GDP) *per capita* (Dalton 2008; Jenkins et al. 2008). Following social movement scholars (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995; Rucht 1996), the influence of political conditions is assessed with two variables. *Democracy* is a scale that reflects the competitiveness of elections and constraints on the power of the chief executive. Following Dalton et al. (2010), *rule of law* is measured with a scale derived from several indicators that reflect the extent to which individuals' legal rights are respected and enforced by legal institutions (Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2010). Ideally, information on the number of national and subnational SMOs would also be included as a control variable. However, this kind of information is not available for the vast majority of countries in the analysis. While the other two variables—democracy and rule of law—capture many of the dynamics associated with the domestic opportunity structure, the absence of information on the number of SMOs active in a country should be considered when evaluating the results.[3]

The effect of internationalization is captured with two variables developed by Axel Dreher and colleagues (2010). The first measures *economic globalization* and uses several indicators of increasing economic interdependence, including economic flows (e.g., trade and foreign investment) and economic restrictions (e.g., import barriers and tariffs). The second measures *political globalization* and also uses several indicators of embeddedness in international political networks, including the number of embassies, international organizations, and international treaties.

The analysis also includes a set of control variables at both the national and individual levels. At the national level, *population size (logged)* is included to capture any population-related effects. *Regional differences* are captured with indicators for Asia/Pacific Islands, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North America, Scandinavia, South America, Southern Europe, and Western Europe, with countries coded according to the U.N. classification scheme. All data for the country-level variables use the same year of measurement as the TSMO memberships variable.

At the individual level, control variables are in place for several demographic characteristics, following work on the biographical sources of protest activism (Corrigall-Brown 2011; McAdam 1992; Schussman and Soule 2005). *Gender* is measured with a dichotomous variable (1 = female; 0 = male). *Age* is measured in years since birth. *Marital status* is controlled with indicators for married (including long-term relationships), widowed, divorced, and separated (the reference

[2]Currently, transnational social movement organization (TSMO) data have only been collected for the years 2000 and 2003.

[3]As noted below, I also include a control for population size. To the extent that countries with larger populations have more national and subnational social movement organizations (SMOs), this variable should control for some—but certainly not all—of the residual influence associated with national and subnational SMOs.

category is never married). The influence of *education* is assessed with indicators for secondary degree, some higher education, and higher education degree (the reference category is less than a secondary degree. *Union membership* is a dichotomous variable (1 = yes; 0 = no), as is *weekly church attendance* (1 = yes; 0 = no) and organization memberships (1 = yes; 0 = no). *Political interest* is measured with an ordinal variable, where higher values indicate a greater level of interest in political affairs. *Organizational membership* is a dichotomous variable indicating membership in one nonpolitical organization (1 = yes; 0 = no).

Analytic Strategy

The first half of the analysis examines the patterns of association for protest participation and TSMO connections by estimating a multivariate logistic regression for each of the three binary outcomes. Many TSMOs focus on empowering individuals in lower-income countries. To assess whether they have been more effective at mobilizing individuals in these countries, I estimate separate regression models for high-income and middle-income countries. Estimating separate models allows the influence of the independent variables to differ across high-income and middle-income countries. Because the data take a multilevel structure (individuals are nested within countries), the standard assumption with regression analysis that the errors are independent is likely violated, leading to bias in the standard errors (Snijders and Bosker 2012). Indeed, the intraclass correlations coefficients for the three protest activities in both samples are statistically significant.[4] To correct the standard errors, the regression models include a random error term that varies across countries. The result is a random-intercept model (for additional discussion of this model, see Raudenbush and Bryk 2002).

The second half of the analysis illustrates the results of the multivariate analysis by comparing the substantive effects of TSMO connections. The focus in this step is on comparing standardized effects. Two comparisons are central. The first is whether TSMOs have been more effective at increasing participation in petition, boycotts, or demonstrations. The second is whether TSMOs have been more effective in high-income or middle-income countries.

Results

Multivariate Analysis of Protest Participation

Table 2 presents the estimated coefficients from logistic regression models for three forms of protest—petition signing, boycotts, and demonstrating—for high-income and middle-income countries separately. The coefficients for the individual-level control variables suggest a consistent set of patterns across the two types of countries. Not surprisingly, protest increases with education and union membership, which corroborates much previous work. Campuses are key sites for the acquisition of skills and network ties that can lead to mobilization, while labor unions are a primary mobilizing structure for labor activism (and increasingly, other forms of activism). Political interest and organizational involvement also facilitate participation in all three forms of protest. Another consistent source of influence is age, with protest activity decreasing as individuals become older, suggesting individuals are most likely to protest when they are most biographically available. In contrast to these patterns, the effects of gender, marital status, and church attendance on protest are more mixed.

Moving to the country-level variables, the estimates suggest that both economic and political conditions matter for patterns of mobilization. Economic growth, democratic stability, population size, and regional location have clear patterns of influence on protest activity. Higher GDP (per capita) increases protest activities in middle-income countries, as indicated by the positive and statistically significant coefficients for those three models. Democratic stability lowers protest activity across both types of countries, as indicated by the negative and statistically significant coefficients in several models. Protest is higher in countries with smaller populations, especially among middle-income countries. This likely reflects higher levels of homogeneity and social integration that are associated with smaller populations. To the extent that it exerts an effect, economic globalization generally drives protest down. One leading explanation highlights the negative effect economic globalization has on the lives of many workers (Sassen 1998). Finally, regional differences are apparent across the three forms of protest as well.

Overall, the coefficients for the control variables are consistent with scholarly expectations. Several demographic and national characteristics structure the likelihood of individuals participating in protest. Individuals' biographical availability, access to larger mobilizing structures, and the broader economic and political environment all play crucial roles in propelling individuals to protest. With these control variables in place, the analysis can now examine the key relationship of interest—the association between the number of TSMO memberships in a country and the likelihood of an individual's protest participation.

The relationship is important to investigate because one concern for many transnational activists has been whether TSMOs can successfully connect their global frames (which highlight issues of human rights, global justice, and political empowerment) to the grievances that most resonate with local groups. Some scholars suggest that the larger global frames may be too far removed from the everyday experience of individuals. Furthermore, others have also suggested that national and subnational institutions may interfere with

[4]Statistically significant intraclass correlation coefficients suggest a significant amount of variation takes places within (as opposed to across) countries, which raises the likelihood of violating the assumption that the observations are independent and generating biased standard errors.

Table 2. Random Effects Logistic Regression Models of Protest Participation among 35 Countries.

	High Income			Middle Income		
	Petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations
TSMO memberships	.007***	.003*	.009***	.028***	.021*	.021*
	(.002)	(.001)	(.002)	(.007)	(.010)	(.009)
Individual-level controls						
Female	.362***	.383***	.086	.036	.158	−.096
	(.034)	(.036)	(.058)	(.069)	(.084)	(.096)
Age	−.016***	−.017***	−.020***	−.011***	−.010**	−.007
	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.003)	(.003)	(.004)
Marital status						
Married	.131**	.173***	−.241**	.171	.215	−.117
	(.047)	(.051)	(.076)	(.090)	(.110)	(.118)
Widowed	−.104	−.059	−.112	.039	.258	−.155
	(.100)	(.110)	(.177)	(.183)	(.219)	(.271)
Divorced	.165*	.268***	.092	.346*	.416*	−.537*
	(.077)	(.081)	(.131)	(.156)	(.184)	(.272)
Separated	.175	.081	−.220	.185	.331	.346
	(.122)	(.135)	(.207)	(.194)	(.229)	(.223)
Education						
Secondary education	.257***	.339***	.253**	.378***	.163	.425***
	(.050)	(.056)	(.086)	(.088)	(.113)	(.127)
Some higher education	.304***	.669***	.152	.638***	.598***	.389*
	(.048)	(.052)	(.086)	(.118)	(.138)	(.151)
Higher education degree	.325***	1.098***	.407***	.690***	.952***	.471***
	(.049)	(.052)	(.083)	(.098)	(.111)	(.135)
Union member	.277***	.084*	.780***	.399***	.158	.447***
	(.039)	(.042)	(.066)	(.095)	(.117)	(.127)
Church attendance	.128*	−.043	.027	−.179*	−.161	−.260*
	(.052)	(.058)	(.089)	(.085)	(.105)	(.119)
Political interest	.361***	.515***	.593***	.407***	.383***	.490***
	(.022)	(.024)	(.039)	(.036)	(.045)	(.049)
Organizational participation	.511***	.426***	.525***	.547***	.518***	.834***
	(.034)	(.037)	(.060)	(.081)	(.095)	(.102)
Country-level controls						
GDP (per capita)	−.022	−.050**	.052	.431***	.423***	.267***
	(.027)	(.017)	(.027)	(.055)	(.082)	(.079)
Democracy	−.472	−.874***	−2.163***	−2.115***	−1.953**	−1.345*
	(.271)	(.184)	(.346)	(.444)	(.650)	(.613)
Rule of law	.603	2.905***	1.092*	1.146**	.963	−.281
	(.525)	(.332)	(.548)	(.367)	(.543)	(.489)
Economic globalization	−.007	−.027*	.055*	−.166***	−.123**	−.066
	(.022)	(.014)	(.023)	(.026)	(.039)	(.034)
Political globalization	−.041	.031	−.156***	.054***	.021*	.016
	(.031)	(.019)	(.032)	(.008)	(.010)	(.010)
Population size (logged)	−.543	−.390*	−.169	−2.267***	−1.752**	−1.739**
	(.282)	(.176)	(.279)	(.442)	(.641)	(.620)
Region						
Central and Eastern Europe	−1.859*	.160	.357	−2.938***	−2.854***	−3.314***
	(.807)	(.515)	(.857)	(.580)	(.847)	(.852)
Middle East	−1.643	1.972***	−2.407**	−8.689***	−7.934***	−5.271**
	(.912)	(.568)	(.925)	(1.273)	(1.873)	(1.808)
North America	−.171	.554	−.272	—	—	—
	(.515)	(.315)	(.514)			

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

	High Income			Middle Income		
	Petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations
South America	—	—	—	−.926*	−1.164	−.545
				(.444)	(.628)	(.577)
Scandinavia	−1.887***	−.401	−1.626***	—	—	—
	(.376)	(.229)	(.374)			
Western Europe	−1.822***	.013	−1.598***	—	—	—
	(.431)	(.265)	(.431)			
Southern Europe	−1.777***	–.277	1.877***	—	—	—
	(.465)	(.292)	(.475)			
Constant	6.053	2.000	20.456***	16.720***	15.535*	8.094
	(3.858)	(2.426)	(4.166)	(4.500)	(6.542)	(6.069)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. N = 20,583 high-income countries; N = 11,997 middle-income countries. TSMO = transnational social movement organization.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

the ability of TSMO activists to mobilize protest in certain locations. For example, many governments are regulating protests in ways that limit activists' ability to engage in disruptive politics. Finally, some have suggested that other factors—for example, economic development or the political opportunity structure—could account for the perceived influence of TSMOs (Dalton 2008; Rootes 2005).

However, according to Table 2, the coefficients for TSMO memberships are positive and statistically significant for each of the protest activities across both types of countries. This suggests that as TSMOs become more active in a country—as indicated by their membership levels—an individual's probability of protesting increases. According to several scholars (Bennett 2005; Smith 2008), a primary goal of many TSMOs since the mid-1990s has been the mobilization of mass publics in an effort to widen and improve access to democratic decision making. The regression coefficients provide some evidence that TSMOs are succeeding in their efforts and that their success is not an artifact of unobserved factors. The implication is that TSMOs could represent a powerful mobilizing structure that transcends national boundaries.

Importantly, the results also suggest that TSMO have been successful in a key area of concern: middle-income countries that have fewer economic resources available to individuals. Many activists focus on less affluent countries because the problems of human rights, environmental protection, and global justice are most severe there. Yet, the challenges to mobilization can also be more difficult in these settings. The regression estimates suggest, however, that these obstacles have not hindered TSMO efforts at citizen empowerment. Instead, TSMO connections in middle-income countries are positively associated with participation in all three forms of protest.

The Magnitude of TSMO Influence

The multivariate analysis substantiates the claims of many TSMOs that they mobilize the public in favor of social and political change. The next stage of the analysis uses these estimates as points of departure to examine whether TSMO activists are more effective at mobilizing some forms of activities than others. To evaluate this possibility, I calculate the change in the predicted probability of participating in each form of protest that results from a standard deviation increase in TSMO connections. For high-income countries, this corresponds to an increase of 130 memberships. For middle-income countries, this corresponds to an increase of 73 memberships.

These calculations are presented in Figure 1. Focusing first on high-income countries, the predicted changes indicate that TSMOs have the largest effect on petition activity. A standard deviation increase in TSMO connections corresponds to a 19-point increase in the percentage of individuals who sign a petition. A similar increase in TSMO connections yields a 6-percentage point increase in boycotts and a 5-percentage point increase for demonstrations.

The relative differences are similar in middle-income countries. The calculations indicate that a standard deviation increase in TSMO memberships produces a predicted increase of 14 points in the percentage of individuals signing petitions. For boycotts, the expected change is around 6 percentage points, and for demonstrations, the expected change is around 4 percentage points. In middle-income countries as well, then, TSMOs are most effective at encouraging participation in petitions.

The relative success of TSMOs at mobilizing petition drives raises interesting questions. For example, petitions are the lowest cost form of protest in the analysis—and some would suggest the least effective form of contentious activity. The policy consequences of petition drives also remain unclear. Some have suggested that more contentious forms of protest may exert more pressure on movement targets. Viewed from this perspective, the estimated changes in demonstrating—a form of activism that can be more demanding and more contentious than petitions—are perhaps more impressive. In high-income countries, a standard

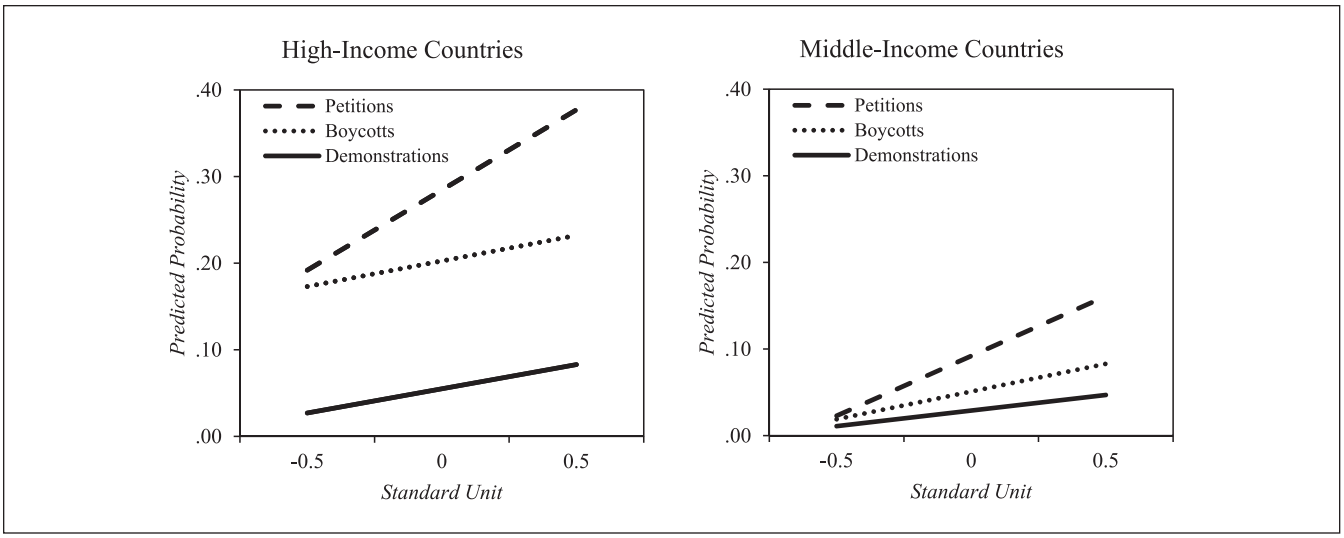


Figure 1. Simulated change in protest participation, by standard unit change in transnational social movement organization memberships and global position.
Note: Predictions calculated with other covariates held at their sample means.

deviation increase in TSMO connections increases the percentage of individuals participating in demonstrations by a factor of three (from 2.7 percent to 8.3 percent). In middle-income countries, a standard deviation increase in TSMO connections increases the percentage of individuals participating in demonstrations by a factor of four (from 1.1 percent to 4.7 percent).

One of the central motivations of many TSMOs is empowering individuals in less affluent countries' issues (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2005). To what extent, then, have they been successful? According to the comparisons, TSMOs have achieved their objective. The influence of TMSOs in middle-income countries is comparable to the influence of TSMOs in high-income countries. The only substantive difference between the two types of countries is a shift in the intercept—in which protest levels are higher across the board in high-income countries. Nevertheless, the *influence* of TSMO connections is largely the same for both middle-income and high-income countries. This suggests that local conditions in middle-income countries do not represent more of an obstacle to mobilization than local conditions in high-income countries and furthermore that global frames resonate equally well with individuals in both types of countries. In other words, it appears that TSMO activists have been successful at frame bridging—namely, at harmonizing the distinctive discourses that are taking place at the local and global levels issues.

Overall, these results suggest that the combined influence of TSMO activity can have substantial effects on protest behavior. However, they also suggest that the influence of TSMO activity has been uneven. The results indicate that the expected increase in petition signing is far greater than the expected increase in demonstrations. This suggests that while TSMOs may be successful in mobilizing individuals to participate in protest, much of the observed success is confined to activities that are less contentious in nature.

Discussion

The continued internationalization of protest in the twenty-first century along with a change in organizational strategy that focuses on mass mobilization raises important questions regarding the consequences of TSMOs for patterns of protest. At issue is whether TSMOs have been successful in their efforts to mobilize mass publics or whether claims of TSMO/protest linkages are due to other factors. The question has recently been placed in sharper relief by researchers who find that TSMOs are most likely to build connections with those countries that have the preexisting characteristics—such as economic affluence and favorable political structures—that make them more likely to experience high levels of public protest.

While related research has examined linkages between international organizations and patterns of mobilization, the focus has been on specific issues (e.g., the environment or human rights) rather than broader patterns of protest involvement. The distinction is important because TSMOs have transitioned over time to adopting "multi-issue" agendas that transcend the goals of any specific movement (Bennett 2005). Focusing on mobilization around a single issue could minimize the mobilizing consequences that TSMOs have for other issues.

This study adds to scholarship on the internationalization of protest by investigating the relationship between TSMO connections and individual protest participation. It uses a comparative, cross-national framework to examine the potential relationship using a multivariate analysis that

controls for several possible sources of spuriousness, including demographic characteristics—such as gender and education—and national characteristics—such as economic affluence and political opportunities. It also takes a more comprehensive approach by examining several different forms of protest—specifically, petition signing, boycotting, and demonstrating—that are part of the standard repertoire of contention.

The results of the analysis yield four key findings that bear on the relevance of TSMOs for protest participation. First, the estimates indicate that TSMO connections have a positive and statistically significant relationship with individual participation in all three forms of protest. Second, the substantive magnitude of the relationship across the three activities is large, indicating a high degree of responsiveness among individuals when TSMOs increase their connections to a country. Third, while individuals respond to TSMO connections by participating in all three of the protest activities in the analysis, the biggest responses—in absolute terms—were observed for petition signing and boycotting. Fourth, the influence of TSMO connections is not limited to wealthy countries—the standardized effects of TSMO connections were strong in both high-income and middle-income countries.

Implications

Researchers have suggested that the dynamics taking place in the international arena present activists with new threats and opportunities (Della Porta, Kriesi, and Rucht 1999; Tarrow 2005). International monetary policy, environmental degradation, and fair labor practices are some examples of how globalization can create or otherwise highlight grievances around which movements can emerge and mobilize. Globalization—and with it, the increasing exchange of information and resources—also provides opportunities for building coalitions and advocacy networks because they connect subnational, national, and international actors, which can improve the effectiveness of mobilization strategies. Except for the occasional case study, however, relatively little is known about how these organizations actually work together during protest campaigns (but see Brooks 2007; Smith 2001).

According to social movement scholars, TSMOs engage in several activities—among them, dissemination of information, sharing of expertise, raising awareness of important social issues—that should propel individuals to join social movement campaigns. The substantive conclusion of this analysis corroborates that expectation and indicates that TSMOs can be a mobilizing structure that links individuals to protest politics. However, while the results provide evidence of a statistical association between TSMO connections in a country and individual protest participation, the exact mechanisms linking TSMOs and protest participation remain unobserved. Scholarship on the international dynamics behind protest politics would benefit from additional research that observes these mobilizing activities and analyzes whether specific mechanisms—for example, the sharing of information or framing of issues—are associated with individual protest participation.

Relatedly, TSMOs may be more effective at mobilizing certain types of constituencies. For example, those concerned with the living conditions in poor countries or human rights abuses experienced by individuals living in authoritarian regimes may be the most receptive to TSMO activities. Conversely, the recent increase in conservative TSMOs suggests a small but expanding constituency could reflect the openness of some individuals to a political agenda that limits the social and political rights of individuals. Examining why some individuals are more amenable to the mobilization work of TSMOs would help scholars understand which social movement sectors are the most fertile for protest expansion.

Evidence that TSMOs have mobilizing consequences for individual protest behavior also suggests a positive trajectory for mass mobilization. As TSMOs continue to expand their footprint—both in terms of the depth of their presence within countries and the breadth of their presence across countries—protest activity should increase over time. However, while these results suggest TSMOs have been effective in pursuing mass mobilization, they also suggest that mobilization is more likely to happen with more conventional forms of protest. While increasing TSMO connections does lead to more participation in demonstrations, the size of the increase pales in comparison to the size of the increase in petitions (and to a lesser extent, boycotts). In the future, researchers should consider why TSMOs have been more successful at encouraging petition signing.

This also raises questions about the continued tensions that many transnational organizations experience when deciding how to mobilize constituents. Limited budgets constrain the ability of organizations to pursue both institutional lobbying, with its focus on policy change, and direct mobilization of the public, with its focus on citizen empowerment (Ayoub 2013; Lang 2009; Marks and McAdam 1996). Many organizations also operate from the viewpoint that institutional lobbying is the most cost-effective method of advocacy. Some also have close, generally positive relationships with international governmental organizations—some of whom they depend on for funding—which makes contentious forms of claims-making unlikely. As a result, when organizations engage in public outreach, they may focus on lower-cost, less contentious methods (e.g., petition drives) that mesh well with their institutional focus (also see Ayoub 2013).

Nevertheless, as others note, the TSMO network is a heterogeneous collection of organizations, and each one has different experiences, goals, and grievances (Smith et al. 2007; Smith and Wiest 2012a). In contrast to the organizations that pursue institutional lobbying, some organizations have rejected negotiating with IGOs in favor of more contentious, less compromising modes of activism. This diversity suggests

there should be important differences in organizational strategies. It also suggests the potential for heterogeneity in the mobilizing effects of TSMOs. TSMOs that are more sympathetic to institutional negotiation may be more effective at encouraging petition signing while TSMOs that reject institutional negotiation may be more effective at encouraging participation in demonstrations.

Scholars have also directed attention to the importance of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for mobilizing protest (Bennett and Segerberg 2013; Garrett 2006). These ICTs—including cell phones and social media—serve a number of crucial roles. They provide a conduit for sharing information on protest events, reduce the costs of engaging in protest, and foster a sense of community among protestors. The development of new ICTs has coincided with the expansion of transnational activism, which raises the question of how TSMOs incorporate ICTs to improve mobilization campaigns. While cross-national data on ICT usage are not currently available, analysts should consider issues how TSMOs and ICTs interact as data availability improves.

A final issue concerns the extent to which TSMO activities have successfully penetrated poor countries. While this study focuses on mobilization among high-income and middle-income countries, it remains unclear whether TSMO connections affect mobilization in low-income countries (Smith 2008; Tarrow 2005). Investigating whether TSMOs have been successful in low-income countries is critical because many TSMOs focus on improving conditions in these countries. For example, in Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, there are several prominent campaigns focused on empowering women, where a key strategy involves organizing mass demonstrations. As comparative scholars note, however, transnational activists confront several obstacles when attempting to mobilize local groups around transnational issues (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Diani 2005; Tarrow 2005). There could be a divergence between the local opportunity structure and the international opportunity structure, the transnational issues may not resonate with local concerns, or local organizations may not be well connected to the international arena.

While the results of this study suggest TSMOs have been successful in overcoming these obstacles in high- and middle-income countries and case studies point to the potential benefits that lie in collaboration between national and international actors, there is potential for heterogeneity across contexts. Simply put, coalitions in more affluent countries may be more effective than coalitions in less affluent countries. For example, local conditions in poor countries may not be hospitable to mobilization, or international actors may have difficulty framing issues in ways that resonate with local concerns. The ISSP data used in the current study lack information on these countries, and reliable data on their country-level characteristics are difficult to obtain. However, as high-quality, standardized data become more available, investigating whether TSMOs have been successful in these settings would place the current analysis in greater context. It could also suggest that there are potential limitations to increasing popular mobilization.

Appendix

Table A1. Countries and Sample Sizes in Analysis.

Country	Sample Size
Australia	1,525
Austria	887
Belgium	1,284
Brazil	441
Bulgaria	879
Canada	563
Chile	1,160
Cyprus	936
Czech Republic	1,105
Denmark	988
Finland	897
France	549
Germany	963
Great Britain	651
Hungary	968
Ireland	758
Israel	586
Japan	409
Latvia	757
Mexico	862
Netherlands	1,423
New Zealand	1,134
Norway	1,140
Philippines	934
Poland	1,194
Portugal	1,180
Slovakia	728
Slovenia	906
South Korea	252
Spain	1,469
Sweden	1,033
Switzerland	1,028
United States	958
Uruguay	906
Venezuela	1,127

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