# Social Movement Studies in Europe

THE STATE OF THE ART



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Chapter 13

# Politics and People

Understanding Dutch Research on Social Movements

Jan Willem Duyvendak, Conny Roggeband and Jacquelien van Stekelenburg

This chapter mostly focuses on social movement studies carried out in the Netherlands and dealing with the Netherlands. This rather 'national orientation' is not because Dutch scholars dealing with social movements are not working abroad (they are, e.g. Chabot in Cheney [US], and Koopmans in Berlin) or that foreign scholars do not write about the Netherlands (they do, e.g. Gladdish 1987). However, for a representative picture of social movement studies specifically addressing the Netherlands, it makes sense to look at clusters of scholars rather than individual contributions, and-at least for the time period considered herein—these clusters were working in the Netherlands itself.

We identify two groups of scholars—social psychologists at the VU University in Amsterdam and political sociologists at the University of Amsterdam (UvA)—who for many years represented the main local schools. For sure, many more scholars in the Netherlands at other universities carried out research on contentious performances, but they were either linked in one way or another to the two Amsterdam-based schools, or they worked in a somewhat isolated manner (Huberts 1988; Mamadouh 1992; Van Noort 1988; Valkenburg 1995), having little impact on the study of Dutch social movements at large. This case contrasts with that of the UvA and VU groups who applied international and comparative approaches from scratch. They applied and contributed to the most influential international paradigms of the past decades, such as the social-psychological approach (SPA), with strong emphasis on subjective processes in the creation of meaning (VU group) and the more 'objectivist' political process approach (PPA) (University of Amsterdam).

Conspicuously absent from the Dutch approaches to social movements is the so-called new social movement (NSM) approach. Although some have argued that the NSM approach was the 'European contribution' to the field of social movements par excellence, we have to conclude that most Dutch scholars contributed to Anglo-Saxon traditions, often being inspired and influenced by scholars such as McCarthy and Zald and, in particular, McAdam (1982). The sole exception is the work by Van der Loo, Snel and Van Steenbergen (1984), who understood the development of new social movements primarily in terms of autonomous cultural change, and not so much in relation to the political context.

One can speculate why certain approaches resonate so strongly in some countries and less in others. Here, we want to hypothesise that the Dutch political culture of openness towards protest and protestors has been mirrored in the popularity of scholarly approaches that emphasise the importance of political opportunities and resources, and the lack of popularity of the NSM approach. The latter is not because Dutch 'new' social movements have been weaker than their French and the Italian counterparts—to the contrary (Duyvendak 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995).

This is, however, not the full story: the development of a specific field of study is not only shaped by structural factors such as the social and political context but is also dependent on more contingent factors such as the role of individual social movement scholars. Two people have played a pivotal role in this respect: Hanspeter Kriesi, as the founder of the UvA-school and, even more so, Bert Klandermans, as the long-time leader of the social psychology of protest group at VU University.

# Social Psychological Research into Social Movements

Bert Klandermans has studied the social-psychological approach at VU University since the 1970s. His 1983 dissertation already revealed the typical 'Klandermans' approach to social movements: a social psychological interpretation from an interdisciplinary comparative perspective. The SPA focuses on subjective variables and takes the individual as its unit of analysis (Klandermans 1997; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007, 2013). Social psychologists maintain that people live in a perceived world: they respond to the world as they perceive and interpret it. If we want to understand why people protest, we need to know how they perceive and interpret their world. Another characteristic of the VU group is what Klandermans (2013) describes as 'the virtue of comparison'. Only comparisons of place and time tells us how contextual variation works (see Klandermans 2012; Van Stekelenburg et al. 2012; Linden and Klandermans 2007; and Klandermans and Mayer 2006; Klandermans, de Weerd, Sabucedo and Rodriguez 2001).

In the last decade, the Dutch SPA of the VU group has been supplemented by social psychologists from Groningen University (around Postmes and Van Zomeren) and sociologists from Nijmegen (following Akkerman, who joined the VU group towards the end of 2013).

## Demand, Supply and Mobilization

Successful mobilization brings together what Klandermans (2004) calls 'demand' and 'supply'. Demand refers to the will of (a segment) of the population to protest. Supply refers to social movement organizations and their appeals, and the opportunities staged by organisers to protest. Successful mobilization is a process that interconnects 'supply' and 'demand'. The dynamics of both supply and demand have fascinated the VU group over the past four decades: regarding the dynamics of supply, the process of mobilization and the role of organisers, and concerning the dynamics of demand, the question 'Why do people protest?' has been of central importance. This contrasts with Reicher's group, whose scholars tend to focus on emergent group phenomena and which departs regularly from social psychological identity theories, while the VU group tends to depart from social movement theory.

## The Dynamics of Supply

Organisers need to pay attention to the following four aspects of mobilization: (1) formation of mobilization potentials, (2) formation and activation of recruitment networks, (3) arousal of motivation to participate, and (4) removal of barriers to participation. On the demand side, individuals go through four synchronous steps towards participation: (1) becoming part of the mobilization potential, (2) becoming a target of mobilization attempts, (3) becoming motivated to participate, and (4) overcoming barriers to participation.

Klandermans and Oegema's mobilization theory (1987) is based on a study that examined all four steps of the mobilization process from a mobilization campaign for the peace demonstration in The Hague in 1983. Before the demonstration, respondents were asked if they supported the campaign and intended to participate; afterwards they were asked if they had participated. Analytically distinguishing between the four steps revealed the process of mobilization. The net result of these different steps demonstrated that although three-quarters of the population felt sympathy for the movement's

cause, only a small proportion of the general public actually participated (4 per cent).

Boekkooi studied the role of organisers. Protest does not emerge out of the blue, but it needs to be organised and mobilised. She examined how organisers 'weaved' their mobilizing structures, and the time it took protesters to make a firm decision to attend these protests (Boekkooi, Klandermans Van Stekelenburg 2011; see also Van Stekelenburg and Boekkooi 2013). In yet another study, Boekkooi shows how seemingly trivial quarrels in organisers' coalitions caused a relatively low turnout for the Dutch international anti-war demonstration in 2003.

#### The Dynamics of Demand

The dynamics of demand refer to the process of the formation of mobilization potential: grievances and identities are politicised, environments become supportive, and emotions are aroused (Klandermans 2013). This process of politicization (Simon and Klandermans 2001; Van Stekelenburg, Van Troost and Van Leeuwen 2012) is not a given fact, as Van Doorn et al. (2013) show in their study on why young Moroccans in the Netherlands do not become politicised.

Thirty years ago Dutch social psychologists began to investigate individual participation in protest. They began by demonstrating that instrumental reasoning controlled peoples' protest participation (e.g. Klandermans 1984). Gradually, they explored other motives that stimulate people to engage in protest. The first motive to be added was identification (e.g. Klandermans, Sabucedo and Rodriguez 2004; De Weerd and Klandermans 1999). Recently, group-based anger has been put forward as another motive (Van Zomeren et al. 2004). The social psychological answers to the question as to why people protest were provided in terms of grievances, efficacy, identity and emotions.

In practice all these concepts are interwoven, which is what the psychological branch to date focuses on. German social psychologists, Simon et al. (1998), proposed a dual path model in which they distinguished between the instrumental pathway proposed by Klandermans (1984) and an identity pathway. Van Zomeren et al. (2004) also propose a dual path model, comprising an instrumental and emotion pathway. The VU team integrated these elements into a single theoretical framework (Van Stekelenburg et al. 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012), developing a model that assigns a central, integrating role to identification. In order to develop shared grievances and shared emotions, a shared identity is needed. On the basis of a meta-analysis, Van Zomeren et al. (2008) came to the same conclusion.

More recently, the Groningen team zoomed in on the ideological motivation. They integrated moral conviction—strong and absolute stances on moral issues—with their social identity model of collective action (SIMCA. Van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears 2008). They found that moral convictions predicted protest through politicised identification, group-based anger and group efficacy (Van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears 2012), and that violations of moral convictions about social inequality can motivate advantaged group members to participate in protest against inequality (Van Zomeren et al. 2011).

Van Zomeren et al. (2011) also connect their model to normative and non-normative forms of protest: efficacious people experience anger and engage in normative protest, while non-efficacious people feel contempt and engage in non-normative protest. When physical threat produces fear, this leads to avoidance behaviour; however, when anger is created, this leads to confrontational behaviour: a 'nothing-to-lose-strategy' (Kamans et al. 2011).

More recently, the VU team proposed a new element to consider: social embeddedness (Klandermans et al. 2008). Individual grievances and feelings are transformed into group-based grievances and feelings within social networks. Thus, migrants who felt efficacious were more likely to participate in protest provided that they were embedded in social networks, which offer an opportunity to discuss and learn about politics (e.g. Postmes, Haslam and Swaab 2005). Akkerman et al. examined how embeddedness in Dutch unions promotes strike participation: information and identification with the union (Born, Akkerman and Torenvlied 2013a), solidarity and punishment (Akkerman, Born and Torenvlied 2013b) all foster strike participation.

## Political Opportunity Approach

When Hanspeter Kriesi arrived at Amsterdam in 1986 to become full professor in 'collective political behaviour', he was welcomed by many colleagues who had either been actively involved in recent protest waves or had been studying the new movements intensively (Outshoorn, Poldervaart, Van Praag, Van der Heijden and Wijmans). Kriesi introduced a coherent approach to the rather eclectic group of scholars in Amsterdam and published widely on social movements and protest in the Netherlands (1987a and 1987b, 1988, 1989a, 1989b and 1989c). Moreover, he launched an international comparative research project on 'new social movements' in Western Europe. This collective endeavour resulted in books and articles on Germany (Koopmans 1995), France (Duyvendak 1995), Switzerland (Giugni and Passy 1999) and the Netherlands (Wille 1994). Moreover, this group collectively produced

the first comprehensive book on Dutch social movements (Duyvendak et al. 1992), and, perhaps most importantly, Kriesi and his collaborators wrote articles and a highly influential book on social movements in Western Europe in a comparative perspective (Kriesi et al. 1992, 1995).

In their work, the group showed the fertility of an approach focusing on differences in political opportunities for (new) social movements in Germany, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The relative strength and successes of the Dutch new social movements stand out in comparison with many other countries. These Dutch characteristics could be explained by the early pacification of 'old' political cleavages and the structural and cultural opennesschances of success and low levels of repression-to new forms of protest.

In its version of the political process approach, the Dutch team distanced itself in an early state of overly static and objectivist interpretations of political opportunities. Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995), in their work on the anti-nuclear energy movement developed an approach in which framing and opportunities both had their place. Their findings indicated that the construction of grievances and social problems, and the degree to which they give rise to social movement mobilization, are rooted not in aggrieving conditions but in political power relations. Koopmans and Duyvendak concluded that it was fruitful to combine the framing and political opportunity perspectives and to look at the political conditions under which specific discourses become imaginable.

It comes as no surprise then, that criticisms regarding the overly structuralist explanations of the PPA resonated strongly in the Netherlands. In more recent work, scholars of the University of Amsterdam (Broer and Duyvendak 2009, 2011; De Graaff and Broer 2012; Grootegoed, Broer and Duyvendak 2013) have challenged core assumptions of the structuralist PPA, inspired by American scholars who have emphasised the importance of emotions and culture in social movement research (Jasper 2011, 2012). In their work, these UvA researchers show how in the policy-making process itself, political subjectivities are formed that enable people to fight precisely those policies. Often, however, resonance rather than dissonance is the outcome of the political process: policymakers and people have the same definition of the situation and no mobilization occurs.

With the departure of Kriesi back to his homeland, Switzerland, in the late 1980s, and Koopmans' move to Berlin around 1994, the UvA group stopped functioning as a collective in the Netherlands. However, due to their work, a constructivist PPA was firmly established, as can be shown by the on-going research in this tradition in the Netherlands since then (Adam, Duyvendak and Krouwel 1999; Chabot and Duyvendak 2002; Duyvendak 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Duyvendak and Nederland 2007; Duyvendak

and Verplanke 2013; Hekma and Duyvendak 2011; Sunier 1998; Sunier et al. 2000; Van der Heijden 2000, 2005). Koopmans continued to work on the political process approach and incorporated the Netherlands in many of his comparative publications (e.g. Koopmans 1998, 2006; Koopmans and Statham 1999). Today, a new generation social movement scholars (Chabot, Heumann, Scholl, Rivat and Verhoeven), trained at the University of Amsterdam, use various approaches in their scholarly work.

#### Women's Movements and State-Feminism

A PPA-inspired line of social movement research in the Netherlands focuses specifically on the close relationship between the women's movement and the state. The work of Outshoorn, Oldersma, Roggeband and Verloo show that a favourable opportunity structure in the 1970s resulted in the rapid adoption of gender equality policies, strong state support for women's initiatives and the establishment of a women's policy machinery that held close ties to the women's movements. Generous state support led to the institutionalization and professionalization of many women's organizations, coined 'subsidised revolution' by Van Rossum (1992), and a decline in autonomous feminism.

While these developments confirm the basic PPA assumptions, the studies also voice criticisms and amendments to the PPA. One of the main criticisms is related to the central distinction between states/governments and social movements, where certain political configurations provide opportunities and constraints. Yet, studies of the Dutch women's movement point to large intersections between the state and movements and the implications of these intersections for theorizing political opportunity structures. Outshoorn (1994) initiated an important line of research that examines the interface between the Dutch women's movement and the state apparatus, also labelled state feminism. In 1995, Outshoorn, together with McBride and Mazur founded the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State (RNGS): a cross-national and longitudinal research project showing how partnerships between women's movement activists and the state, and in particular feminist insiders ('femocrats') open the possibility that states adopt feminist policies without 'outside' pressure or mobilization and thus create a different structure of opportunities within the state (Outshoorn 1997).

Another criticism involves the critical idea that protest occurs in cycles or waves. The mobilization of the women's movement does not coincide with the more general wave of protest in the Netherlands during the 1960s, and the mobilization pattern does not take on a typical parabolic shape, because there is no clear decline in movement participation and mobilization in the 1980s and 1990s (Outshoorn 2009).

One explication as to why the mobilization of the Dutch women's movement portrays a different shape compared to other Dutch social movements can be found precisely in the political context. Feminist scholars have drawn attention to the 'gendered-ness' of political opportunities. Roggeband's research on the women's movement against sexual violence (2002) shows how political opportunities varied between different branches of the women's movement depending on how the issue at stake related to the political domain. For instance, the problem of domestic violence was more difficult to politicise since it belonged to the realm of the private, compared to sexual harassment in the workplace. How problems are ideologically and strategically framed affects the political response and vice versa; and as Koopmans and Duyvendak have also emphasised in their work, framing may be adapted to certain discursive opportunities.

This relationship is explored in two international research projects (Mageeg and QUING) initiated in the Netherlands by Verloo. This research studies how feminist actors have been able to frame governmental policies and shows that the role of the women's movement and other relevant civil society organizations in gender equality policy-making has become problematic and limited (Verloo 2007; Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009).

### Historical Perspectives on Social Movements in the Netherlands

A third important, but rather diffuse, line of research on social movements in the Netherlands has been historical research, not only on the extensive wave of new social movements in the 1960s and 1970s but also on older movements, in particular on labour and women's movements. An understanding in terms of 'decades' predominates in this historiography of recent protest waves. Several books have been published dealing with 'the 1960s' and 'the 1970s' (Kennedy 1995; Regtien 1988; Righart 1995). Most of the studies have a rather descriptive character, as is the case for the historical studies on the labour and women's movements as well.

Part of this work is related to the Amsterdam-based International Institute for Social History. This institute has generated a considerable body of research on labour movements, both in the Netherlands and elsewhere. While its initial concentration was mainly on the Dutch context, since the 1990s it has been working to globalise its focus and has initiated international and comparative research projects (Van der Linden 2002). Another point of emphasis within its considerable body of historic research centres on contemporary and historical women's movements (Meijer 1996; Mossink 1995; Poldervaart 1992, 2002, 2003, 2007; Ribberink 1998; Waaldiik 1998: Withuis 1990).

These historical studies do not represent a clear theoretical paradigm, nor do they articulate a social movement perspective or dialogue with dominant approaches in the field of social movement studies. Exceptions to this rule include the few studies that do not focus on specific movements but rather on trends across movements, for example, in action repertoires in the Netherlands since 1965 (Van der Klein and Wieringa 2006).

## An Agenda for the Future Study of Social Movements in the Netherlands

When we look at the main trends in the study of protest in the Netherlands, there are some strong parallels with what has happened in other countries, particularly the United States. The 'classical approaches'—emphasizing grievances, anomie of alienated and frustrated marginal people, expressing themselves in irrational and expressive ways-were replaced by perspectives that highlighted the rationality of protest behaviour of well-organised and embedded people, with balanced costs and benefits of protest behaviour, depending on resources and political opportunities. However, the Dutch were not the most 'structuralist' among the researchers working within the political process approach. On the contrary, both the UvA and particularly the VU group were sensitive to the experiences and perceptions of potential participants: a favourable political opportunity does not have to be perceived as such.

Whereas the UvA group started from 'big structures', the VU group chose individuals as their starting point. Over time, however, their roads started to cross for three reasons: first, the UvA group was confronted with the fact that comparable opportunities 'impacted' potential protesters in different ways, depending not only on their divergent perceptions of these opportunities but also on their various motivations and emotions to participate in social movements. Moreover, a macro-analysis—based on the quasi-predictability of actors' behaviour in a given political opportunity structure-did not do justice to the particularities of every interaction between the different parties involved in protest behaviour. A far more precise focus on 'strategic interaction' (Jasper 2004, 2006, 2011; Duyvendak and Jasper 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015) turned out to be necessary. Second, the VU group started to focus more on the contextual factors influencing quasi-individual decisions, summarised in the attention for individuals' informal, formal and virtual embeddedness. With regard to informal embeddedness, Van Stekelenburg et al. (2013) show, in their study on the emergence of

collective action in neighbourhoods, that identification with a neighbourhood rather than the amount of structural network nodes strengthens the experience of suddenly imposed grievances and efficacy and thereby spurs protest participation. Hence, sharedness emerges not so much in the numher of contacts but rather in the experience of psychological connectedness. Regarding formal embeddedness, one recent study shows that 50 per cent of the sample (i.e. about 7,500 demonstrators) is unaffiliated, that is, they are not a member of the organizing social movement organization (Klandermans eral, under review). They show that organizing without organizations differs from traditional protest events in terms of mobilization and participation dynamics. In short, these studies empirically show how the traditional logic of collective action affects mobilization and participation and differs from the more recent mobilization and participation of so-called connective action (cf. Bennett and Segerberg 2012).

Third, and in addition to embeddedness, the VU team started to study 'cleavages' as another contextual factor shaping the social psychology of protest. Building on Kriesi's (1995) work, they argued that cleavages configure the dynamics of action both in conventional and unconventional politics. They show that social cleavages generate cleavage-specific protest demand and supply; socio-political conflicts are rooted in these cleavages-if conflicts flare up, subsections of the cleavage's specific supply side come out of abevance to stage protest events (Damen and Van Stekelenburg 2014).

When we look at the social cleavages of Dutch society today and the socio-political conflicts of the past decade, we see that huge shifts have occurred. Changes in the Dutch political landscape, with the rise of populist and right-wing political parties and reconfigurations of the state structure (due to uploading state responsibilities to the EU, and lateral loading to the market) have important implications for social movements in the Netherlands. Not only is state responsiveness much lower but some social movements also face reversals or a backlash of earlier gains. For instance, equality policies are under threat due to state reforms (Roggeband 2014)Also, the shift to the right, with a focus on nationalism, a rejection of pluralism, and negative attitude towards internationalization, has not been conducive to mobilization of 'new social movements', for example, groups of women (Outshoorn and Oldersma 2007). The question thus emerges as to how social movements deal with this backlash and, in some cases, even opposition to their demands (Roggeband, forthcoming). The relocation of formal powers and policy-making responsibilities from the state to other policy-making levels and spaces forces social movements to seek alternative spaces to promote their goals (Roggeband 2010). This requires further research and theotization of the dynamics at scales other than the national state; for example,

of transnational actor constellations, their interactions and strategic alliances and how this affects national mobilization processes (Roggeband and Van Eerdwijk 2014).

Another important contextual factor is the global financial crisis, Do dynamics of participation in anti-austerity demonstrations differ from dynamics of participation in demonstrations focusing on immaterial goals? Are material motives (cf. Ronald Inglehart) back on the streets? Or are they combined with strong post-material motives? It is the last constellation that we find in a comparative study on sixty-nine street demonstrations dispersed over eight European countries. Hence, when a severe crisis hits citizens after times of prosperity, material motives may spur their protest, yet they are combined with post-material motives (Klandermans et al. under review b).

Apart from these recent changes in political and economic conditions, social movements have to deal with long-term macro-sociological trends such as globalization, individualization and virtualization. How this changing societal context influences the dynamics of contention is a question that movement scholars have to answer. This is, however, not a specific 'Dutch' task since these developments are global. Our future contribution is, therefore, not necessarily very 'Dutch' in nature. It might even be that thinking about the future of social movement studies in terms of national contributions will become rather outdated and obsolete. This is not only because research teams are increasingly more internationally composed and research is becoming more comparative, but it is also because the very idea that the Dutch context might engender a specific approach or contribution seems to make less sense than in the past. Methodological nationalism becomes increasingly problematic in a networked world.

Jan Willem Duyvendak is distinguished professor in sociology at the University of Amsterdam since 2003, after he had been director of the Verwey-Jonker Institute for social research (1999-2003) and professor of community development at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. His main fields of research currently are social movements, disadvantaged neighborhoods in large cities, community development, multiculturalism, urban renewal and 'feeling at home'. Some of his publications include Policy, People, and the New Professional: De-professionalisation and Re-professionalisation in Care and Welfare (2006, co-edited) and 'Citizen Participation in a Mediated Age: Neighbourhood Governance in the Netherlands' (2008) in International Journal for Urban and Regional Research, and 'Struggling to Belong: Social Movements and the Fight to Feel at Home' (2013) in Contention in Context: Political Opportunities and the Emergence of Protest. For more publications see: www.jwduyvendak.nl.

Conny Roggeband is assistant professor of gender and politics at the political science department of the UvA. Her research and teaching concentrates on the initiatives and responses that states take with regard to gender and ethnicity, and how social movements interact with the state. She has written on the politicization of gender-based violence, gender mainstreaming and equality policies, social movements and transnational feminist networking based on research conducted in the Netherlands, Spain and Latin America. Together with Bert Klandermans she edited The Handbook of Social Movements across Disciplines (Springer, 2007) and (with Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans) The Future of Social Movement Research: Dynamics, Mechanisms and Processes (2013). In 2014 she co-authored (with Anna van der Vleuten and Anouka van Eerdewijk) the book Gender Equality Norms in Regional Governance: Transnational Dynamics in Europe, South America and Southern Africa (Palgrave).

lacquelien van Stekelenburg is associate professor of sociology (VU-University Amsterdam). She studies the social psychological dynamics of protest participation. She co-authored (with Klandermans) 'Individuals in Movements: A Social Psychology of Contention (The Handbook of Social Movements across Disciplines, Springer, 2007) and (with Klandermans and van der Tootn) 'Embeddedness and Grievances: Collective Action Participation Among Immigrants' (American Sociological Review, 2008). She edited (with Roggeband and Klandermans) The Future of Social Movement Research: Dynamics, Mechanisms and Processes (2013). Her current studies include a comparative study on street demonstrations (with Klandermans and Walgrave) and a study on emerging networks and feelings of belonging.

#### Notes

The signatures of this paper appear in alphabetical order.

1. For extensive overviews we refer to Klandermans 1997, Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007, and Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013.

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