Protest Politics

Title Course
6 EC BA Elective: Protest Politics

Course Catalogue Number
7323D038FY

Credits
6

Entry requirements
Completed the first year and at least 42 ECTS from the second year of the bachelor's degree programme in Political Science.

Language of instruction
English

Time Period(s)
2022-2023, Semester 1, block 1, first meeting on Monday September 5

Location
See rooster.uva.nl.
Mondays 15u-17u, REC A1.07
Wednesdays 13u-15u, REC L0.02

Lecturer(s)
Joost Berkhout, office REC B10.10, personal Zoom room for individual ‘office hours’ meetings (on appointment / scheduled) and standard Zoom link in case plenary meetings are moved to Zoom or in case individual students, for valid reasons, cannot participate on-site: https://uva-live.zoom.us/my/joostberkhout

For contact information, see: http://www.uva.nl/over-de-uva/organisatie/medewerkers/content/b/e/d.j.berkhout/d.j.berkhout.html

See Canvas page for scheduled Office Hours
Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes
After this course, students have:

- practiced their academic skills (writing, arguing, designing / presenting research, construction of analytical connections between empirical cases and theory)
- familiarized themselves with explanatory theories of protest behaviour at individual, institutional and issue-level,
- been offered normative and conceptual arguments to discuss protest in relation to core concepts in political science, such as power, representation, intermediation and political organization,
- an awareness of the interrelationship of different forms of political behaviour (related to elections, the media, political parties, public opinion and public policy), and can situate protest and social movements in that context
- developed case-specific knowledge on a movement of their own choice

Course Content
Major political transformations such as the Fall of the Berlin Wall are frequently triggered by collective protests by citizens outside conventional political channels. This activity of citizens in social movements also creates fertile grounds for numerous seemingly 'small-scale' public policies ranging from cycling infrastructure to gay marriage to eight-hour workdays. At the same time, several waves of large-scale protests and a continuous stream of daily small-scale collective, public claims-making end up as ‘trees falling unheard in a forest’: journalists are selective, participants return to other daily sores and the agendas of political elites can only deal with a limited number of issues. Why does protest behavior, broadly conceived, sometimes lead to major changes in political outcomes but in other instances hardly seems to matter at all?

In this course, we first situate protest activity as a particular variant of political representation and interest intermediation. We continue with the identification of the individual drivers of protest (Who protests?) and the organization of movements. Subsequently, we consider the contexts of social movements: political parties, media, public opinion, and the policy process, and evaluate how these might impact the potential success of particular movements. Students will familiarize themselves with important theoretical perspectives such as Resource Mobilisation Theory and Political Opportunity Structure Theory.

Teaching methods/learning formats
Seminar meetings

Course Evaluations & Adjustments of the Course
This is the first time this course is being offered

Manner & Form of Assessment and Assessment Requirements & Criteria
Take Home writing assignment (35 percent, week 5), Case assignment (35 percent, at the end of the course) and participation (15 percent in-class (group) presentation, 15 percent engagement via Perusall). Please note that this grade-weighting replaces the slightly different weights reported in the study guide. All grade components can be compensated but not repaired or retaken.

Class attendance is a requirement for passing the course (see TER B5.2). Please contact the lecturer in case you need to participate via Zoom rather than on-site. A single meeting absence need not be justified. Let me know in case you expect to miss two meetings. In case you miss more than two meetings due to
circumstances, please be in touch with the study advisor as soon as possible about the reasons of the absence.

Class participation is graded on the basis of:

- Group presentation (15% of final grade): each ‘second’ topical meeting is reserved for student discussion. In groups of around four students you prepare a case illustration and relevant discussion points on the topic of the week. You show engagement with the required readings but you are not expected to present reading-summaries. Focus your presentation, which may take the form of a panel discussion, on a case, potentially combined with propositions to open up the discussion with the class. You are encouraged to assign some relevant but short material to be read / viewed before the presentation (e.g. a written piece of no more than 3 pages, or a video no longer than 10 minutes). Upload your PPT-slides on Canvas before 12h on Monday.

- Perusall engagement (15% of final grade): the readings of each week can be accessed via the Perusall assignments in Canvas. The grade will consist of your best four assignments finished prior to the relevant substantive meeting (Wednesdays 13h). You can start a new annotation thread in Perusall by highlighting text, asking a question, or posting a comment; you can also add a reply or comment to an existing thread. Each thread is like a chat with one or more members of your class, and it happens in real time. Your goals in annotating each reading assignment are to stimulate discussion by posting good questions or comments and to help others by answering their questions. The Perusall system is set to reward your responses automatically and the algorithm values comments that are at least one or two sentences. Perusall also weighs a couple of engagement measures (length of time studied, distribution of comments over the text etc.) Your lecturer will assess the general validity and substantive outcomes of the automated grading but no individual feedback is provided.

Take home written assignment: a relatively closely formulated assignment will be made available via Canvas after the first meeting of theme 5 (5 October). You will need to keep up with the reading throughout the course in order to be well-prepared for this assignment. It consists of an evaluation and application of relevant literature (with some choice offered on the question to answer). You will have until the next meeting (10 October) to complete around 1500 words answer.

Case assignment: choose a contemporary movement (narrowly defined in time and space) and identify an explanatory research question pertaining to the movement, such as variants of: why are some citizens more supportive of the protests than others? Why do some political parties endorse the movement positions but others not? Why do some sympathisers join protest activities whereas others remain bystanders? Why did some of parts of the movement became organized and others not? Subsequently theoretically specify distinct answers and discuss the empirical plausibility of each of them in relation to the movement selected. Around 1800 words text body. Deadline Friday 28 October 23.59h.

Inspection of exams/assignments, feedback
All written assignments will be provided with written feedback (comments in text) via the Canvas system. Additional feedback is available on request.
Rules regarding Fraud and Plagiarism
Plagiarism rules of the Faculty and Graduate School apply (See: http://student.uva.nl/en/content/az/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html). Please note that referencing rules apply to all written and graded work.

Specification workload
50 percent in block 1

Literature/materials
Required readings: See references in the programme below. Available via the library or via the links provided below or on Canvas.

Additional: Several political science Handbooks offer useful entries into relevant sub-fields of study (all available via the University Library, see links provided):
- The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements (2014)
- The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior (2007)
- The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics (2009)
- The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements (2015)

Date Final Grade
Within 15 working days after the final deadline students will receive the final grade.
Programme

After the introductory meeting, the remaining 12 meetings are subdivided into six themes with two meetings per theme. On the Wednesday meetings we will be addressing the required substantive readings on each theme (deadline for Perusall assignment). On the Monday meetings we will be discussing the case and discussion points brought forward in the group presentations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme number</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 September</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 12 September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Definitions and history: Protest behavior as a form of political behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; 19 September</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>System-level: Situating protest theoretically: Protest as counter-democracy, organizational form and resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 &amp; 25 September</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Micro level: Protest participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 September &amp; 3 October</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meso-level: The organization of protest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and 10 October</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Protest context: political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 and 17 October</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Political outcomes of protest: party system change, regime change and public policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 October</td>
<td></td>
<td>Office hours or contingency meeting in case rescheduling is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 October</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deadline case assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The readings are listed per theme in the order in which we will discuss them. Additional readings are listed alphabetically and may be useful for your presentation or other further reading.

**Monday September 5: Introduction**
Logistical and substantive introduction of the course. In-class ‘warming-up’ discussion in response to a number of newspaper clippings (largely editorials from the Financial Times). As a preparation for class discussion: read the articles (you may be more selective in your reading of the longer pieces) and assess the five propositional citations noted below.

- FT editorial 18 Feb 2022 on Canadian Truckdrivers protest:
  - ‘The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to a free society’
- FT editorial 22 June 2022 on UK trade unions:
  - ‘ Strikes are best used sparingly’
- FT 20 August 2020, column by Simon Kuper:
The New Yorker, 30 December 2019, Chenoweth:
- ‘We are reliving 1968, but bigger: an almost invariably peaceful street is replacing parliament as the main arena of opposition’
- FT magazine 17 September 2021, page 18 on Occupy movement
  - ‘Occupy’s leaderless organising could in itself embody the change [the protesters] believe the world needs.’

Prepare:
- Read this syllabus
- Read the media clippings cited above and provided via Canvas
- Start on the reading via Perusall for Wednesday

1. Wednesday 7 September: Definitions and history: Protest behavior as a form of political behavior

In this meeting, we define the topic of this course in detail. We differentiate ‘protest’ from other forms of political behavior such as voting, lobbying or journalism. We do not only study demonstrations but include a broad set variety of behaviors, ranging from consumer boycotts to strikes and several forms of civil disobedience. We focus on political change-oriented collective action by citizens largely outside ‘institutional’ political channels in the United States and Europe.


Monday 12 September: Student discussion
On a theme of last Wednesday’s meeting

2. Wednesday 14 September: Situating protest theoretically: Protest as counter-democracy, organizational form and resistance

In this meeting, we situate protest in relation to democratic theory and (comparative) typologies of representative government. These are not the most accessible texts of the course. Kitschelt (1993) argues that protest politics is not a symptom of failure of representative, formal institutions (the ‘cyclical model’), but may be seen as a suitable mechanism for the voicing of short-term, single issue interests of citizens (the ‘structural differentiation model’). It is structurally different from and potentially complementary to other forms of intermediation. Balme and Chabanet (2008) similarly differentiate forms of intermediation and identify three types of systems of collective action related to the type of politics that is dominant (Pluralist-such as the US and UK, Corporatist- such as the Scandinavian countries and Protest-regimes, such as in France and Greece). Della Porta and Doerr (2018) further develop the complementary character of protest
in relation to representative institutions and specify the internal and externally deliberative merits of movements. Rosanvallon (2008) conceives of protest as a form of 'counter-democracy' and sees it as part of 'transformations of political activity' of citizens (Rosanvallon, 2008, 21). Social movement organizations are part of the ‘surveillance of power by society’ (Rosanvallon, 2008, 32) and act as overseers or ‘watchdogs in their specific policy areas’ (Rosanvallon, 2008, 63).


Additional readings:


**Monday 19 September: Student discussion**
On a theme of last Wednesday’s meeting

3. **Wednesday 21 September: Micro level: Protest participation**

In this meeting, we discuss citizens characteristics and motivations to participate in protest. Van Stekelenburg et al (2018) present a summary of studies on participation in street demonstrations as the ‘normalised’ ‘prototypical protest activity of citizens today’. They conceive of protest participation as a result of demand (on the part of citizens), supply (in terms of organized contentious performances) and mobilization (as ‘marketing mechanism’). Theocharis and van Deth (2018) consider a wide range of behaviors as political participation also, for instance, including politically-driven consumer choices. The studies by Rudig and Karyotis (2014) and Norris et al (2005) empirically map the characteristics and motivations of protesting citizens, both via representative surveys of the population and questionnaires fielded at protest events (on the methodological challenges of such surveys see Fisher et al (2019) in the additional readings). Rudig and Karyotis (2014) note that ‘it was the average Greek who took part’ in anti-austerity protests. Norris et al (2005) identify important differences in the participation profile of protesters depending on the issue at hand.

Monday 26 September: Student discussion
On a theme of last Wednesday’s meeting

4. Wednesday 28 September: Meso-level: The organization of protest
In this meeting, we consider how social movement organizations mobilise resources, matter for protest events and are shaped by their (political) environments. The companion-chapters by Edwards et al (2018) and Walker and Martin (2018) review existing studies and theories. Edwards et al (2018) summarize the Resource Mobilisation Theory which postulates that ‘exchange-relationships’ allow movement actors to access different types of resources (material, human, social-organizational, cultural and moral) using distinct means (self-production, aggregation cooption and patronage). The theory provides a useful vocabulary to talk about organizational ‘business models’ that foster our understanding of the longevity and nature of organizational communities that ‘supply’ political participation opportunities to citizens. Walker and Martin (2018) further situate organizations in an organizational environment, also introducing field theory. Fisher et al (2005) discuss how organizations matter for protest events by facilitating (on-line) communication and


Additional readings:


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On a theme of last Wednesday’s meeting

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8
critical logistical support. Kriesi (1996) is less attentive to ‘resources’ and more interested in the political environment of social movement organizations, and how this may affect organizational change over time (institutionalization, radicalization, commercialization and involution).


Additional readings:


Monday 3 October: Student discussion
On a theme of last Wednesday’s meeting
5. Wednesday 5 October: Protest context: political parties
As argued in earlier meetings, protest politics is deeply intertwined with electoral or party politics. Sometimes to such an extent that a meaningful separation can hardly be made; parties initiate or support protest events (Borbáth and Hutter, 2021), the issues on the agendas of parliament and ‘on the street’ heavily impact one another (Císař and Vráblíková, 2019) and concrete organizational endorsement provide critical organizational resources (Heaney and Rojas, 2011). Kriesi (2015) and Hutter et al (2019) present state-of-the-art reviews and the other readings exemplify contemporary empirical work.


Additional readings:
Monday 10 October: Student discussion
On a theme of last Wednesday's meeting

6. Wednesday 12 October: The outcomes of protest
The final theme of the course focusses on the outcomes of protest among the public (Wouters, 2019), political parties (Hutter and Vliegenthart, 2018) and in terms of legislative proposals (Gause, 2022). Amenta et al (2018) discuss the state-of-the-art and note distinct ways in which movements can be influential. The most far-reaching form of influence, in their view, is the structural institutional or self-perpetuating policy change that guarantees future accommodation of movement preferences and frames.


Additional readings:

Giugni, M. G. (1998). Was it worth the effort? The outcomes and consequences of social movements. Annual review of sociology, 371-393. (also see other work by the same author on this theme, such as the replication of the 1998 study: Giugni, Marco, Yamasaki, Sakura. 2009. “The Policy Impact of Social Movements: A Replication through Qualitative Comparative Analysis.” Mobilization 14(4):467–84.)

Monday 17 October: Student discussion
On a theme of last Wednesday's meeting