

Drivers of collective action in contemporary democracy

Sarri Nykänen

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Aalto University
School of Science
Industrial Engineering and Management

Supervising professor

Professor Robin Gustafsson, Aalto University, Finland

Preliminary examiners

Professor Ion Bogdan Vasi, University of Iowa, The United States of America

Professor Jennifer Earl, University of Delaware, The United States of America

Opponent

Professor Jennifer Earl, University of Delaware, The United States of America

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Collective action is a joint, goal-directed activity in pursuit of common interests. Often, the objective of collective action is institutional change. Institutions are taken-for-granted social structures, such as norms, legislation, practices, organizational forms, status hierarchies, and social contracts. Contemporary societies give rise to new forms and dynamics of collective action, such as a growing application of direct democracy tools, new dynamics from the Internet and social media, and changing power balances from globalization and digitalization.

The objective of this doctoral thesis is to improve our understanding of the drivers of collective action and its outcomes for institutional change in contemporary era. I address the objective in three studies, which focus on the following research questions: 1) How do organizers' resources and focusing events interact in triggering online social mobilization? 2) When and how does issue-boundary-spanning influence social mobilization? 3) Why do social contracts between business and society enter a crisis, and how do stakeholders renegotiate social contracts?

The research questions are addressed in two empirical contexts: Finnish citizens' initiatives, which are agenda-setting legislative direct democracy petitions, and the Swedish banking industry. The data for the studies on citizens' initiatives is combined from multiple sources, including the citizens' initiative service of the Finnish Ministry of Justice and search engine query data from the Google Trends API service. The data for the qualitative single-case study on the Swedish banking industry is combined from multiple archival sources, including four Swedish newspapers, banks, regulatory institutions, political actors, and other public sources. Two studies use quantitative deductive research methods, including ordinary least squares, negative binomial, and quasipoisson regressions. One study is a qualitative inductive single-case study predominantly following the narrative approach.

Results indicate that despite the lower cost of digital activism, coalition resources, such as funding and organizational capabilities, still matter substantially in mobilizing supporters. However, timing actions with focusing events provides activists an alternative pathway to success. Moreover, combining distant issues inhibits social mobilization. Finally, stakeholders renegotiating social contracts use strategies that combine idealistic notions of deliberative democracy, i.e., the process of public deliberation, with power-oriented strategy, i.e., attempts to increase bargaining power, coerce other parties, as well as collaborative strategies.

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Sarri Nykänen

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Kollektiivinen toiminta on yhteistä, tavoitteellista toimintaa yhteisten etujen saavuttamiseksi. Usein kollektiivisen toiminnan tavoitteena on institutionaalinen muutos. Instituutiot ovat itsestään selvinä pidettyjä yhteiskunnallisia rakenteita, kuten normeja, lainsäädäntöä, käytäntöjä, organisaatiomuotoja, asemahierarkioita ja yhteiskunnallisia sopimuksia. Nyky-yhteiskunnat synnyttävät uusia kollektiivisen toiminnan muotoja ja dynamiikkaa, kuten suoran demokratian kasvavaa soveltamista, uutta dynamiikkaa Internetistä ja sosiaalisesta mediasta sekä globalisaation ja digitalisaation aiheuttamia muuttuvia voimasuhteita.

Tämän väitöskirjan tavoitteena on parantaa ymmärrystämme kollektiivisen toiminnan ajureista ja sen vaikutuksista nykyajan institutionaaliseen muutokseen. Tarkastelen tavoitetta kolmessa tutkimuksessa, jotka keskittyvät seuraaviin tutkimuskysymyksiin: 1) Miten järjestäjien resurssit ja fokuoivat tapahtumat vaikuttavat vuorovaikutuksessa ihmisten mobilisointiin käynnistämiseen verkossa? 2) Milloin ja miten aiheiden yhdistely vaikuttaa sosiaaliseen mobilisaatioon? 3) Miksi yritysten ja yhteiskunnan väliset yhteiskunnalliset sopimukset joutuvat kriisiin ja miten sidosryhmät neuvottelevat yhteiskunnalliset sopimukset uudelleen?

Tutkimuskysymyksiä käsitellään kahdessa empiirisessä kontekstissa: Suomen kansalaisaloitteissa, jotka ovat agendaa asettavia lainsäädännöllisiä suoran demokratian veto-oimuksia, ja Ruotsin pankkitoimialalla. Kansalaisaloitettutkimusten tiedot on yhdistetty useista lähteistä, kuten oikeusministeriön kansalaisaloitepalvelusta ja hakukonekyselymäärädataa Google Trends API -palvelusta. Ruotsin pankkialaa koskevan kvalitatiivisen tapaustutkimuksen tiedot on yhdistetty useista arkistolähteistä, mukaan lukien neljä ruotsalaista sanomalehteä, pankkeja, sääntelyelimiä, poliittisia toimijoita ja muita julkisia lähteitä. Kaksi ensimmäistä tutkimusta hyödyntää kvantitatiivisia deduktiivisia tutkimusmenetelmiä, mukaan lukien lineaarinen pienimmän neliosumman regressio ja negatiivinen binomi- ja kvasipoisson-regressiot. Kolmas tutkimus on kvalitatiivinen induktiivinen yksittäistapaustutkimus, joka noudattaa pääosin narratiivista lähestymistapaa.

Tulokset osoittavat, että digitaalisen aktivismin halvemmista kustannuksista huolimatta liittoutuman resurssilla, kuten rahoituksella ja organisatorisilla valmiuksilla, on edelleen suuri merkitys kannattajien mobilisoinnissa. Toimien ajoittaminen fokuoivien tapahtumien ajalle tarjoaa aktivisteille kuitenkin vaihtoehtoisen tien menestykseen. Lisäksi etäisten aihe-rajojen ylittäminen estää sosiaalista mobilisaatiota. Lopuksi sidosryhmät, jotka neuvottelevat uudelleen yhteiskuntasopimuksia, käyttävät strategioita, joissa yhdistyvät idealistiset käsitykset deliberatiivisesta demokratiasta eli julkisesta pohdinnasta valtasuuntautuneeseen strategiaan, eli yrityksiin lisätä neuvotteluvoimaa, pakottaa muita osapuolia sekä tehdä yhteistyötä.

Avainsanat kollektiivinen toiminta; yhteiskunnalliset liikkeet; yhteiskunnallinen sopimus; suora demokratia; institutionaalinen muutos

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Helsinki, 19 August 2024
Sarri Nyk anen

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List of Essays

This doctoral dissertation consists of a summary part and the following essays, which are referred to in the text by their numerals.

1. Nykänen, Sarri; Cheung, Zeerim; Gustafsson, Robin (2024). Social Mobilization in the Online Era: The Role of Organizer Resources and Timing of Focusing Events. Abridged working paper versions were presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting 2022, Seattle, USA, August 2022. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2022.14128abstract> and the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2022, Los Angeles, USA, August 2022. Unpublished manuscript.

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Author's Contribution

Essay 1: Social Mobilization in the Online Era: The Role of Organizer Resources and Timing of Focusing Events

Sarri Nykänen was the lead author of this paper. She conducted all the quantitative analyses, most of the data collection, literature review, writing, and conceptual development. Zeerim Cheung has contributed to the conceptual development, data collection, literature review, and paper writing since the beginning of the research project. Robin Gustafsson contributed to the paper's writing, editing, and conceptual improvement.

Essay 2: The contingent effect of issue boundary spanning on social mobilization

Sarri Nykänen was the sole author of this paper.

Essay 3: The Crisis and Re-negotiation of a Bank's Social Contract

Sarri Nykänen was the lead author of this paper. She conducted most of the paper's qualitative analysis, literature review, writing, and conceptual development. Robin Gustafsson and Perttu Kähäri contributed substantially to the paper's conceptual development, writing, editing, and commenting. The master's thesis worker Tiina Ahva and the research assistants Maria Oehlandt, Viola Kilpeläinen, and Riku Lamminen contributed to the data collection and initial analysis.

1. Introduction

Collective action is a joint, goal-directed activity in pursuit of common interests (Snow et al., 2018, p. 5). Often, the objective of collective action is institutional change (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Institutions are taken-for-granted social structures, such as norms, legislation, practices, organizational forms, status hierarchies, and social contracts. At their best, institutionalized structures might embed social learning, meaning that they automate wisdom acquired by others. Yet, often, institutions remain enacted not because they are the most effective solution but due to their substantial inertia or because they initially emerged inequitably or misguidedly.

Collective action has been a driving force of our inherited institutions. However, contemporary societies give rise to new forms and dynamics of collective action. For one, the past decades have seen a growing interest and application of various forms of direct democracy, such as citizens' initiatives (Christensen et al., 2017; Landemore, 2015). This increasing trend is accompanied and motivated by an improving understanding of the functional, epistemic value of democracy, meaning that under the right conditions, diverse, deliberating groups will reach better decisions than individuals or homogeneous groups (Dryzek et al., 2019; Landemore, 2017; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004). As the importance of direct democracy increases in modern democracies, their political dynamics, particularly the need to mobilize supporters for direct democracy initiatives, channel collective action dynamics more directly than before. Consequently, collective action theories have much to offer to understand direct forms of democracy.

Moreover, the Internet and social media changed the landscape of collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Earl & Kimport, 2011). Organizing collective action in online spaces is notably more cost-effective, which some argue diminishes the significance of conventional resources such as finances, organizational structures, and human resources (Bimber et al., 2005; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl & Schussman, 2002; Elliott & Earl, 2018). Collective action in the digital age appears to be more transient, occurring in bursts or sudden spikes (Earl & Kimport, 2011, Chapter 8), often in response to external, triggering events beyond the control of movement organizers (Dorobantu et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2022; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). Informal online networks and collective digital spaces increasingly facilitate collective action because they link individuals without formal organizational frameworks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Leong et al., 2019; Vaast et al., 2017).

Finally, globalization and digitalization have altered the dynamics of institutional arrangements. Parties to a social contract (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Rawls, 1958; Rousseau, 1762) have a powerful option of non-participation, i.e., voting with their feet, individual or corporate. For example, multinational corporations are uniquely positioned when negotiating social contracts with states and communities (Neiman, 2013; Palmer, 2001; Sama, 2006) because they can quickly relocate. These trends spur the competition of alternative institutional regulatory frameworks with each other and motivate a tax competition race to the bottom (Woods, 2006), adding further pressure to social structures, social contracts, and contemporary democracy.

The essays in this dissertation utilize various research methods, including frequentist statistical analysis, machine learning, and a qualitative case study from archival data. I have enjoyed learning diverse research methods and have stayed curious about the abundant means of inquiry available to scholars. Often, simple and time-tested methods are the most appropriate. However, I also utilize two new research methods, which have opened new possibilities for measuring social phenomena and provide increasingly granular, even big, data. Firstly, I develop a method for measuring focusing events from search engine query volumes (Oehl et al., 2017; Swearingen & Ripberger, 2014; Vasi et al., 2015) in research paper 1. Second, I use topic modeling, a form of machine learning (Hannigan et al., 2019; Hillard et al., 2008; Quinn et al., 2010), to construct issue categories in research paper 2.

This dissertation consists of an overview chapter and three research papers that examine the success drivers of collective action for institutional change in two distinct contexts. Research papers 1 and 2 focus on the success drivers of social mobilization in direct democracy in the context of Finnish citizens' initiatives. Research paper 3 explores stakeholders' strategies in the crisis and renegotiation of the social contract of banking in Sweden.

This overview chapter first presents the research problem and an overview of the literature on collective action for institutional change. It then presents the empirical setting, data, and analytical methods used. Next, the key findings are presented for each paper. The chapter concludes with a synthesis, discussion of the findings, and a presentation of contributions to literature and practitioners.

2. Research problem

The question of how collective action influences institutions has long puzzled scholars. Solving many of humanity's grand challenges, such as climate change and poverty, requires institutional changes. Frequently, institutional change emerges as the result of intentional, collective action. Organizers of collective action initiatives or broader social movements struggle with the practical challenge of changing institutions. Digitalization and globalization have altered the environment, objects, and tools of the collective endeavor for better institutional arrangements and cast the puzzles of institutional change and collective action in a digital era in a new light. Accordingly, the research question of this dissertation is:

What factors explain the outcomes of collective action for institutional change in the contemporary era?

The research problem can be dismantled into more specific research questions addressed in the three papers.

The advent of the Internet and social media has brought about significant shifts in the landscape of social mobilization (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Earl & Kimport, 2011). Firstly, organizing collective action in online spaces is notably more cost-effective, which some argue diminishes the significance of conventional resources such as finances, organizational structures, and human resources (Bimber et al., 2005; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl & Schussman, 2002; Elliott & Earl, 2018). However, others contend that while organizer resources remain crucial, their nature has evolved, with digital infrastructure such as webpages, social media platforms, and information and communication technology resources and skills assuming greater importance (George & Leidner, 2019; Schradie, 2018).

Secondly, activism in the digital age appears more transient, occurring in bursts or sudden spikes (Earl & Kimport, 2011, Chapter 8), often in response to external events beyond the control of movement organizers, known as focusing events. Recent studies have shown how activists frequently seize upon these events to draw public attention to their causes (Dorobantu et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2022; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014).

Thirdly, informal online networks and collective digital spaces that link individuals without formal organizational frameworks actively facilitate contemporary social mobilization. Participants in these networks and online forums are

often driven more by personal expression of identity than shared objectives (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Leong et al., 2019; Vaast et al., 2017). To sum up, there remains a limited understanding of how traditional organizer resources—such as funding and human resources—still hold relevance or whether they are marginalized by the influence of social media networks and the strategic timing of focusing events (Harrison et al., 2022). Therefore, the first research question is:

1. *How do organizers' resources and focusing events interact in triggering online social mobilization?*

In pursuit of higher supporter numbers, social movements frequently engage in boundary-spanning across issues (Wang et al., 2018) to appeal to wider audiences and gain more resources. These issue-boundary-spanning social movements address multiple issues simultaneously, such as world peace and minority rights or climate change mitigation and employment. Boundary-spanning issues can speak to more audiences but might confuse the perception of movement focus, worthiness, unity, and commitment (Wang et al., 2018). Reflecting this trade-off, prior research on boundary-spanning's implications has resulted in partially mixed findings. Social movement organizations that span issue and identity boundaries are more central actors in inter-organizational networks, enjoy a notable recruiting advantage in terms of protestor numbers and reaching protestors from allied movements, and, thus, effective in supporter mobilization (Heaney & Rojas, 2014). However, issue boundary spanners may also sacrifice a lack of focus, which can be perceived as confusing (Fassiotto & Soule, 2017). For instance, women's movement protest events that make focused claims can better influence congressional votes in the US (Fassiotto & Soule, 2017), and the clarity of ideological focus of terrorist organizations is also associated with their lethality and longevity (Olzak, 2016).

Research has only recently begun to study the potential adverse effects of boundary spanning (Wang et al., 2018). We still need to understand how and when these tradeoffs occur and how they can be resolved. The question of the potentially negative effects of issue boundary spanning on social mobilization becomes even more interesting in the digital realm because the lower costs of digital activism have led to a widening of the issue space (Earl & Kimport, 2011) and a new logic of activism on social media has dispersed and personalized the use of activist frames (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Consequently, the second research question is:

2. *When and how does issue-boundary-spanning influence social mobilization?*

What businesses owe to society and what society owes to businesses is frequently subject to intensive debate. Crises, such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, globalization, increased cross-border mobility, and competition of institutional frameworks add pressure to this debate.

Social contracts between businesses and states (Donaldson, 1982) are a cornerstone of a functioning economy. In these contracts, businesses give some of their power (i.e., companies are given obligations) or possessions (i.e., company taxation) in return for protection or exclusive rights that the state provides (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1995; Freeman, 1994; Marens, 2007; Palmer, 2001; Wempe, 2008). The term social contract originates from early political science (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Rawls, 1958; Rousseau, 1762). We define a social contract as an institutionalized agreement between parties of society that involves a reciprocal exchange. Social contracts are institutionalized in that they are generally based on formalized agreements or regulations, taken-for-granted assumptions, and expectations of reciprocal behaviors concerning businesses and society. These assumptions and expectations become most visible when they are breached. Social contracts are contracts because they are about reciprocal exchanges where parties of the contract consent to and enact a trade of valuable goods and services, such as insurance, financial contributions, or police. Social contracts are social, i.e., related to society and its organization, because they encompass, affect, and are affected by all parties to society and are socially constructed, i.e., collectively enacted.

Further understanding of how social contracts emerge and are renegotiated is in pressing demand because globalization, digitalization, and past liberalizations increase the bargaining power of corporations over nations. Much has changed since the early days of social contract theory (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Rawls, 1958; Rousseau, 1762). Many societies are now democratic, which means that an authoritarian Leviathan, as discussed by Hobbes (1651), cannot coerce its citizens, individuals or corporations, to follow the terms of the social contract. Parties to the social contract have a powerful option of non-participation, i.e., voting with your feet. Multinational corporations are in a special position when negotiating social contracts with states and communities (Neiman, 2013; Palmer, 2001; Sama, 2006) because they can easily relocate. Palmer (2001) noted that it is not evident how laws can be enforced against multinationals as these are mobile and have the alternative to withdrawing from the social contract in a given institutional context. Globalization has increased and will continue to improve the opportunity for corporations to vote with their feet. Digitalization amplifies this effect as digital service providers are not tied to specific locations. These trends spur the competition of alternative institutional regulatory frameworks with each other and motivate a tax competition race to the bottom (Woods, 2006). Consequently, the third research question is:

3. *Why do social contracts between business and society enter a crisis, and how do stakeholders renegotiate social contracts?*

Research questions 1, 2, and 3 correspond to research papers 1, 2, and 3.

3. Literature review

This literature review aims to situate the doctoral thesis in the broader research programs of collective action for institutional change.

3.1 Collective action

This literature review seeks to provide a brief overview of collective action theories. Research on collective action has a long tradition, and consequently, due to space constraints, it is only possible to include some perspectives on collective action. Collective action is a joint, goal-directed activity (Snow et al., 2018). It differs from a broader category of collective behaviors that are merely joint but not goal-directed.

Collective action can have a variety of outcomes, such as mobilizing supporters (Ferguson et al., 2018; McCammon, 2001), affecting political and societal changes (Amenta et al., 2010; Amenta & Polletta, 2019; Bosi et al., 2016; Soule & King, 2006), and influencing organizations (Briscoe & Gupta, 2016; Davis et al., 2022; King & Soule, 2007; Soule, 2012) and industries (Davis et al., 2022; Guérard et al., 2013; McDonnell & Werner, 2016; Pacheco et al., 2014; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Frequently, the ultimate objective of collective action is institutional change. However, mobilizing participants and supporters is an essential, intermediate outcome. Social mobilization is the process of convincing and activating supporters for collective action, and its success is often evaluated based on the number of mobilized individuals. In other words, mobilization refers to a process of attracting participants, gaining power, and collectively organizing, and recruiting individuals to act, such as attending protests, joining activist organizations, donating, or publicizing their sympathy for a movement (Bailey et al., 2023)

Research on collective action has brought forth several streams of research. The economic-institutional perspective of collective action focuses on why collective actors would choose to exert themselves to provide common resources and public goods (Oliver, 1993; Olson, 2012; Ostrom, 2000, 2010). Being non-excludable, public goods create a free-rider problem because actors who do not contribute to their provision benefit from them nonetheless (Olson, 1989, 2012). Therefore, Olson (2012), initially published in 1965, problematized collective action and argued it is not rational. Subsequent theories on collective

action sought to uncover coordinating mechanisms by which groups overcame the collective action problem (Oliver, 1993). Notably, Elinor Ostrom's research program uncovered how collective actors establish social norms, rules, and other institutions that monitor contributions or sanction a lack thereof to maintain and provide public goods (Ostrom, 2000, 2010).

From a more sociological perspective, a broad stream of research on collective action focuses on social movements and has formulated a rich field of social movement theory. An early definition of social movements maintained that social movements are "nothing more than preference structures directed toward social change"; in other words, "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, pp. 1217–1218). Some later definitions take a more specific and narrower stance and establish a dichotomy between social movements and other kinds of collective action (e.g., Snow et al., 2018, p. 5). Social movements are defined as "coordinated and planned collective action typically involving articulated grievances and claims" that exhibit five characteristics: they are challengers to or defenders of existing structures or systems of authority, they are collective instead of individual, they act outside existing institutional or organizational arrangements, they are at least partially organized, and they have some degree of continuity (Snow et al., 2018, p. 6).

This dichotomy generally contrasts social movements to forms of collective behavior, including "panics, crazes, crowds, rumors, and riots" (Buechler, 2004, p. 47). This distinction stems in part from a historic paradigm shift. The study of collective behavior was initially built mainly on the theory that "periods of strain and breakdown generate collective behavior because the social controls and moral imperatives that normally constrain such behavior are weakened or absent" (Buechler, 2004, p. 48). A notable example of this research stream is the action threshold model of collective behavior (Granovetter, 1978), arguing that actors' cost and benefit calculus of whether to engage in collective behavior, such as demonstrations and riots, depends on the number of other actors who have decided to engage in the behavior, and that action thresholds vary among individuals.

However, forming social movement research challenged assumptions of the collective behavior paradigm by arguing that collective action and social movements were not impulsive outbursts by irrational masses but required strategic resources and organizational structures (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Effective social movements operated increasingly with a high degree of internal coordination. They were guided by formal organizations called social movement organizations (SMOs), which were grouped into a social movement industry (SMI) composed of SMOs with similar core objectives. For example, Amnesty corresponds to an SMO in the human rights SMI. Thus, social movements were understood to resemble interest groups more than previously perceived. However, there are essential distinctions between interest groups and social movements, including that "interest groups pursue their collective objectives mainly through

institutionalized means, such as lobbying and soliciting campaign contributions, whereas social movements pursue their collective ends mainly via the use of non-institutional means, such as conducting marches, boycotts, and sit-ins” (Snow et al., 2018, p. 6).

This turn led to a conceptual division of coordinated and planned social movements and uncoordinated and unplanned collective behavior but also impacted the prevalent explanations of mobilization and outcomes of collective behavior through an emphasis on structure and rationality and a period of disinterest in grievances (Buechler, 2004), emotions (Goodwin et al., 2000), and collective identities, ideology, and political orientation (Walder, 2009) although this interest has since then recovered.

More recent changes in the digitalization of the collective action space have brought forth or at least merit yet another paradigm shift. The dichotomous contrast between social movements and collective behavior misses a lot of highly effective, change-oriented, collective action, especially in the digital era. The Internet and social media have substantially changed the dynamics of social mobilization (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Earl & Kimport, 2011). Firstly, collective action in online environments is less costly to organize. This has been argued to decrease the importance of traditional resources (financial, organizational, human) (Bimber et al., 2005; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Earl & Schussman, 2002; Elliott & Earl, 2018). However, others have argued that organizer resources still play an essential role but have changed in form so that digital infrastructure, i.e., webpages, social media channels, and ICT resources, and skills have become important (George & Leidner, 2019; Schradie, 2018).

Secondly, activism in the online era seems to be “ephemeral,” “episodic,” and “sporadic” (Earl & Kimport, 2011, Chapter 8), occurring in sudden surges (Yasseri et al., 2017). Recent research has documented how activists often react to focusing events (Dorobantu et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2022; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014), i.e., external events that are out of the control of movement organizers, and that they use them to direct public attention to the issues they call attention to.

Thirdly, social mobilization is today facilitated actively by informal online networks and online collective spaces that connect individuals without formal organizational structures. Individuals in these networks and collective online forums are more motivated by identity-oriented personal expression than shared goals (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Leong et al., 2019; Vaast et al., 2017). Consequently, I draw heavily on social movement theory, even though collective action in the online era increasingly occurs independent of enduring movement structures.

3.2 Institutions as a target of collective action

Institutions are taken-for-granted social structures, such as norms, legislation, practices, organizational forms, status hierarchies, and social contracts. Institutions are socially constructed, meaning they are humanly shared, agreed-upon,

intersubjective imaginations that people enact through interactions. Social construction entails that the behavior of people influences their expectations, and their expectations, in turn, influence their behavior (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Despite their imaginary origins, institutions have substantial consequences because they affect our behavior and constrain, enable, and direct our actions. Institutions are widely shared on a societal macro-level and generally enforced with sanctions. Occasionally, social constructions as large as entire nations cease to exist because people stop believing in their existence at the same time, such as in the case of the collapse of the Soviet Union, albeit it is a simplistic explanation. However, suppose a person individually denies the existence of a social construction, such as money and property rights. In that case, other individuals will seek to rectify the deviant behavior, ultimately through imprisonment.

According to a widely accepted framework, institutions are upheld by regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars (Scott, 1995). The regulative pillar includes explicit rules, laws, and sanctions that are coercively enforced and gain legitimacy from the formal, legal processes that generate them. Normative institutions pertain to binding expectations of social obligation that are upheld by moral consideration, avoiding shame, and striving for honor and respect. The cultural-cognitive pillar is about taken-for-granted shared understandings, schema, and common beliefs that are rarely consciously challenged but orient social behavior.

3.2.1 Laws and direct democracy

The two types of institutions most relevant to the empirical part of the dissertation are laws and social contracts. Laws are an explicit form of institution. Consequently, changes in laws are changes in institutions. In addition, the process of legislating has undergone important institutional changes. The past decades have seen a growing interest and application of various forms of direct democracy (Bowler et al., 2007; Dryzek et al., 2019; Fung, 2015; Landemore, 2015; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004). These forms of direct democracy include citizens' initiatives (Christensen et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2015; Leston-Bandeira, 2019; Linder et al., 2021), referendums (Bowler et al., 2007; Landemore, 2018; Linder et al., 2021; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004), and mini-publics for deliberation (Landemore, 2015; Mercier & Landemore, 2012). This increasing trend is accompanied and motivated by an improving understanding of the functional, epistemic value of democracy, meaning that under the right conditions, diverse, deliberating groups will reach better decisions than individuals or homogeneous groups (Dryzek et al., 2019; Fung, 2015; Landemore, 2017; Mercier & Landemore, 2012).

Direct democracy practices occur in different parts of the policy process, e.g., agenda-setting, deliberation and drafting, and voting on the proposed legislation. Each stage of the policy process leads to more "stringent rules" and is more "consequential" than the previous one (Soule & King, 2006). Single legislators, governments, or citizens can make law proposals. Law proposals are sent to committees where they are debated, drafted, amended, rewritten, rejected, or

ignored before voting. Once proposals reach parliamentary voting, they require increasingly more supporters in the legislative bodies, and successful proposals become actual laws (Soule & King, 2006).

Citizens' initiatives (Christensen et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2015; Rosenberger et al., 2022) propose legislation and set the agenda of political processes. Citizens' initiatives are used in many countries and areas, including Finland (Christensen et al., 2015, 2017), Germany (Puschmann et al., 2017), Austria (Rosenberger et al., 2022), the UK (Leston-Bandeira, 2019; Vidgen & Yasseri, 2020), Switzerland (Linder et al., 2021), Estonia (Vooglaid & Randma-Liiv, 2022), several US states (Dumas et al., 2015; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004; Reilly et al., 2012), and the EU (Greenwood, 2019; Monaghan, 2012). The different systems differ in their design and standing in political processes, influencing their social and democratic functions (Leston-Bandeira, 2019; Rosenberger et al., 2022).

As the importance of direct democracy increases in modern democracies, their political dynamics, particularly the need to mobilize supporters for direct democracy initiatives, channel collective action dynamics more directly than before. Consequently, collective action theories have much to offer to understand direct forms of democracy.

3.2.2 Social contracts

Social contracts are institutionalized agreements between parties of society, which involve a reciprocal exchange. They involve many implicit elements in addition to their explicit components. Social contracts are institutionalized in that they are generally based on formalized agreements or regulations, taken-for-granted assumptions, and expectations of reciprocal behaviors concerning businesses and society. These assumptions and expectations become most visible when they are breached. Social contracts are contracts because they are about reciprocal exchanges where parties of the contract consent to and enact a trade of valuable goods and services, such as insurance, financial contributions, or police. Social contracts are social, i.e., related to society and its organization, because they encompass, affect, and are affected by all parties to society and are socially constructed, i.e., collectively enacted.

The idea of a social contract between the state and its participants dates to the early political philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Rousseau, and Rawls (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Rawls, 1958; Rousseau, 1762). Parties to a social contract may be institutional entities, such as the state, individuals, or larger entities, such as families (Rawls, 1958). Social contracts between firms, governments, and society consist of explicit and implicit terms (Meznar & Nigh, 1993). Different variations of social contract theory all revolve around the idea that "[E]very one who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit, and the fact of living in a society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest." (Mill, 1859, Chapter 4).

Early formulations maintained that social contracts emerged after people living in a state of nature formed a pact with each other (Hobbes, 1651; Locke,

1690; Rousseau, 1762), but later theories have focused on defining social contracts as terms that parties to the social contract would willingly agree to if they renegotiated the contract (Rawls, 1958). Research on social contractarian theory for business in the fields of business ethics and corporate social responsibility takes a conceptual, normative approach in the discipline of ethics, i.e., discussion on what companies should do and how they can know what the right thing to do is (Child & Marcoux, 1999; Cragg, 2000; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1995; Dunfee, 2006; Fia & Sacconi, 2019; Frynas & Stephens, 2015; Hartman et al., 2003; Marens, 2007; Palmer, 2001; Sacconi, 2006; Sama, 2006; Wempe, 2008).

3.2.3 Theories on institutional change

The collective action model “views institutional change as a dialectical process in which partisan actors espousing conflicting views confront each other and engage in political behaviors to create and change institutions” (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006, p. 864), and is also referred to as the social movement perspective (King & Pearce, 2010). It emphasizes the importance of conflict, power, and politics in the process of institutional change (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). For example, the currently hegemonic shareholder-centric view on corporate control emerged from the political actions of the shareholder-rights social movement in the 1980s and 1990s (Davis & Thompson, 1994). The collective action model, or social movement perspective, encompasses a broad range of processes and actions that explain collective action outcomes, such as mobilizing resources and identities (King & Pearce, 2010), which I discuss in more detail later.

The collective action model should be understood as a complementary perspective to other theories on institutional change (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006, p. 882). Alternative theories of institutional change include the research streams on institutional diffusion and institutionalization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999). Here, institutions possess their own agency, and their inherent pressure becomes a driving force of adaptation. The research program on institutional entrepreneurship attributes agency to innovative, leading individuals or organizations that intentionally pioneer novel institutional arrangements (Battilana et al., 2009). The discourse perspective on institutional change argues that discourses, i.e., collection of meaningful texts, shape institutions (Phillips et al., 2004). This perspective grants agency to texts, cultural artifacts, and discourses.

Theories on institutional logics argue that institutional logics are socially constructed, central logics consisting of material practices and symbolic elements that present organizing principles for social behavior that structure societies, for example, capitalism, democracy, and Christianity in Western culture (Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). These logics, practices, or organizing principles change when they are replaced by another, mixed with other institutional logics, or their enactments diverge and segregate in different contexts (Lounsbury et al., 2021; Thornton et al., 2012).

Finally, research on institutional work focuses on systematic actions, i.e., types of “work” that change agents, such as organizations, coalitions, or individuals, conduct (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016; Lawrence et al., 2011; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). These include temporal institutional work, in which change agents influence temporal perceptions and dynamics by entraining and timing actions to fit an external rhythm, constructing a sense of urgency, and enacting momentum (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016). Moreover, change actors can engage in boundary and practice work, such as when actors in the Canadian forest industry challenged decision-making boundaries and forestry practices (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

3.3 Explanations of collective action outcomes

Prior research has found that factors influencing the mobilization of popular support are only partly the same as those influencing other outcomes, such as the later stages of the policy process (Amenta et al., 2010; Olzak, 2021; Soule & King, 2006; Soule & Olzak, 2004). For instance, proponents of the political mediation model (Amenta et al., 2005, 2010; Cress & Snow, 2000; Soule & Olzak, 2004) argue that policy challengers increasingly need allies in power to succeed and will only succeed if they find powerful allies willing to champion their initiatives through the later political stages. However, Olzak (2021) finds that collective action may impact policy even without sympathetic allies because collective action signals the salience of issues, raises awareness of problems, and empowers and unites communities, which threatens elites and pressures them to act. I do not distinguish between factors influencing mobilization or institutional change separately in this literature review because they are frequently the same or at least highly connected due to mediation. I structure the presented explanations of collective action outcomes into motives, means, and opportunities.

3.3.1 Motive

Grievances

Grievances, or relatedly, strain and breakdown theories, are one of the oldest theoretical perspectives of collective action (Opp, 1988; Snow et al., 1998, 2005; Useem, 1998). These theories generally describe a fairly constant strain or a change in conditions, such as breakdown or disruption (Buechler, 2004). A theoretical variant of relatively stable grievances argues that the relative strain or deprivation compared to reference groups causes individuals to mobilize in collective action (Buechler, 2004; Snow et al., 2005). Deprivation can also be absolute, such as when difficult social conditions increase the likelihood that vulnerable groups will mobilize (Snow et al., 2005). For example, strain from high unemployment rates increased homeless protests (ibid). Further, dissatisfaction with nuclear energy increased participation in protest activity (Opp, 1988).

Durkheim’s work formed a foundation for theories of breakdown, arguing that the breakdown of social structures and social ties triggered dysfunctional actions of individuals (Buechler, 2004; Snow et al., 2005). This macro perspective

was reconceptualized (Snow et al., 1998) to center more around everyday life. The theory of quotidian disruption argues that breakdown leads to the mobilization of movements when the taken-for-granted routines of everyday life are disrupted or threatened to be disrupted (Snow et al., 1998). This is likely to occur in four circumstances that lead to a sense of loss: when accidents disrupt routines, when privacy, safety, or control is intruded, when resource ratios change abruptly, or if structures of social control are altered (ibid). Furthermore, people mobilize in response to political threats, which are future expected grievances (Almeida, 2018; McAdam & Tarrow, 2018).

Identity

An essential motivation of collective action is identity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Klandermans, 2004; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Rao et al., 2003). Collective identity refers to an individual's connection with a broader community or other entity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Identity movements emerge to oppose dominant cultural rules and a desire for autonomy and living out a desired identity (Rao et al., 2003). Such identity movements often do not aim to change institutional arrangements; however, they frequently change institutions as a byproduct of identity expression. For example, the French nouvelle cuisine movement emerged as an identity movement for the personal expression of elite chefs and ushered in a new paradigm of gastronomy (Rao et al., 2003). Identities can be "collective". However, collective action increasingly occurs on social media, where movements are increasingly about personal expression (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). On social media, activists of the same movements increasingly personalize collective action frames, adapting framings to their perspectives, customizing them, and making them more personal (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Ideology

Ideologies are belief systems of interdependent configurations of ideas and attitudes (Converse, 2006). Ideology is an essential motivation for participation in collective action (Den Hond & De Bakker, 2007; Klandermans, 2004). Moreover, ideology, or "political orientation," should also be understood as an outcome in itself. For example, Walder (2009) argued that understanding what kinds of movements emerge is far more important than how they appear.

Common conceptualizations of political ideologies follow a continuum from left to right, alternatively phrased as the linear-conservative or the progressive-conservative continuum (Graham et al., 2009; Huber & Inglehart, 1995), or distinguish between economic and social ideologies, which both are situated on a linear spectrum (Ksiazkiewicz et al., 2016). Other proposed dimensions for political ideologies include environmental concerns and immigration (Huber and Inglehart 1995).

However, the interdependencies of idea elements of ideologies also differ from one geographic, historical, and institutional context to another (Pieurko et al., 2011; Thorisdottir et al., 2007). Ideology has been shown to follow from individual personality (Bakker, 2017; Thorisdottir et al., 2007), values (Pieurko et al.,

2011), sociodemographic position (Bakker, 2017; Converse, 2006), and even genetics (Ksiazkiewicz et al., 2016), but it is also forged through socializing and epistemic learning processes from information, knowledge, and education (Converse, 2006; Gerber, 2000; Iyengar et al., 2019; Stroud, 2008).

Ideology influences which frames resonate (Benford & Snow, 2000; Day et al., 2014). For instance, using moral foundations preferred by conservatives may increase the support of conservative individuals for typically liberal issues (Day et al., 2014). Moreover, ideology creates a “prism” through which experiences are interpreted (Tucker, 1989), influencing responsibility attributions (Rudolph, 2003).

Emotions

Emotions motivate participation in social movements (Goodwin et al., 2000; Jasper, 2014; Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Van Ness & Summers-Effler, 2018). For example, moral shocks are a key reason recruits join the animal rights movement (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995), and anger at injustice frequently motivates participation in protest movements (Jasper, 2014). For a long time, the study of collective action and social science juxtaposed rationality with emotions (Goodwin et al., 2000) but has since then moved toward a more integrative understanding of emotions. For example, emotions are a central mobilizing mechanism of free spaces (Rao & Dutta, 2012) and can motivate collective organizing even in the absence of unifying goals (George & Leidner, 2019).

3.3.2 Means

Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization theory argues that collective action and social movements require strategic resources and organizational structures (George & Leidner, 2019; McCammon, 2001; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Organizing and participating in collective action incurs costs, such as flyers and banners, postal fees, transportation to protest locations, arranging meeting places, the time spent by activists coordinating roles and tasks, preparing campaign materials, and staying at sit-ins and demonstrations. These costs require resources. Resources come in many forms, such as human capital, money, skills, time, and social networks. For example, advice on fundraising spans large sections in Gandhi’s autobiographies. Online and marketing skills have gained significance and exhibit unequal distribution, influencing the effectiveness of aspiring change-makers (George & Leidner, 2019; Schradie, 2018). Access to digital infrastructure, such as computers, further contributes to resource disparities among activists (Schradie, 2018).

To organize collective action, effective social movements have high internal coordination and hierarchies and are guided by formal organizations called Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), grouped into a Social Movement Industry (SMI) composing SMOs with similar core objectives (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). However, the Internet enables social mobilization at a lower cost, on a larger scale, and without the co-presence of participants for actors that leverage digital affordances (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Elliott & Earl, 2018; Leong et al.,

2019). Social media platforms have diminished the role of social movement organizations (SMOs) in coordinating such actions, providing activists access to resources beyond their direct control, such as informal networks (Earl & Kimport, 2011). Online forums, exemplified by Facebook groups and alternative social media, serve as activism platforms (Caren et al., 2012, 2020). Online activism can be organized in drastically smaller teams or by solo organizers (Earl & Kimport, 2011). Nevertheless, resources still matter, even for decentralized movements in the digital era (Vasi & Suh, 2016).

Framing

Framing is meaning-construction (Benford & Snow, 2000). Analogously, in photography, when you take a picture, you can decide what is included within the frame, what parts are excluded, and what you focus on. Similarly, how decisions, initiatives, and issues are framed influences how they are perceived and how people respond. Frames are “schemata of interpretation” that “locate, perceive, identify, and label” (Goffman, 1974, p. 21).

Frames have essential consequences for collective action. For example, when organizers of the US suffrage movement of the 19th and 20th centuries argued that women would bring a unique, womanly, and expedient perspective to elections (i.e., an expedience frame) rather than that the exclusion of women was unfair (an injustice frame), people were more likely to support women’s suffrage (McCammon, 2001). Framing contests are also typical at the emergence of new institutional arrangements (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). For example, the emergence of an environmental standard in the German automotive industry accompanied a framing contest about economic and health-oriented motivations and the correct diagnosis of pollution problems (Guérard et al., 2013).

The core framing tasks in collective action include diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing (Benford & Snow, 2000). Diagnostic framing identifies the problem and sources of “causality, blame, and/or culpable agents” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616). Prognostic framing “involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616). Motivational frames provide a call to arms, rationales, and incentives to act (ibid).

Worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (“WUNC”)

Social movements signal their attractiveness to potential supporters and participants through the display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment, which is a widely applied framework in social movement theory abbreviated as “WUNC” (Bailey et al., 2023; George & Leidner, 2019; Tilly, 2006; Wang et al., 2018; Wouters, 2019). Higher WUNC leads to a higher likelihood of participation in collective action efforts (Bailey et al., 2023). Worthiness pertains to perceived deservingness. Unity is demonstrated through group cohesion and consensus, often communicated through logos or slogans. Numbers refer to the count of participants, the size of the crowd, or the level of resources gathered. Finally, commitment is the perception of the steadfastness of existing participants. Recent research has found that factors improving audience perceptions

of WUNC include a single-issue focus and demographic heterogeneity (Bailey et al., 2023; Wouters, 2019).

Tactical repertoires and strategic adaptation

Collective action can be carried out with various tactics and actions. Extant research distinguishes between institutional tactics, such as letter-writing, lobbying, press conferences, lawsuits, legal actions, and petitioning, and extra-institutional tactics, such as demonstrations, rallies, marches, and civil disobedience (Olzak & Soule, 2009). Repertoires of collective action are sets of means and actions that groups can use to further their cause (Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016; Tarrow, 1993; Tilly, 1993). These can include digital and physical means (Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016). Repertoires are the generally known toolboxes from which activists can choose their actions. For instance, activists might campaign on social media, organize demonstrations, strikes, or flash mobs, copy tactics from other activists, or innovate their own.

Movements that strategically adapt their tactics to the environment's signals improve their chances of successful political outcomes, as evidenced by the US women's jury rights campaign in the early 20th century (McCammon et al., 2008). Research on the US pension movement found that higher levels of movement activity improve the attainment of movements' political goals (Amenta et al., 2005). Moreover, innovative tactics are frequently related to social movement success (Wang & Soule, 2016).

Power

Power is at the heart of political studies and is also central to the collective action perspective of institutional change (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). Collective action is inherently a field of contestation and conflict (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). Movements have countermovements that vie for opposing outcomes (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). Social movements are frequently seen as the actions of the powerless (King & Pearce, 2010) that seek to oppose, influence, or ally with powerful elites or create coalitions to counter power relative to opposing entities.

Power influences the process of institutional change but also originates from institutional arrangements, such as laws and norms (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). The state is a central holder of power, but other institutional foci are also sources of power (Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). Power can stem from a functional position, such as a political or economic structural position (Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). Bargaining power stems from the dependence of actors on each other and their available alternatives (Kim & Fragale, 2005; Sebenius, 2009). Also, social actors derive power from legitimacy, status, and reputation, which are social evaluations that social actors seek to attain, provide them with influence, and protect them from damaging scandals and sanctions. For example, reputation protects companies from social movement boycotts and decreases the likelihood of corporate concessions (King, 2008). Legitimacy refers to perceived conformity with taken-for-granted norms (King & Whetten, 2008; Suchman, 1995). Contesting or reinforcing the legitimacy of institutions is a cen-

tral process in struggles over institutions (Vaara et al., 2006, 2006). Status refers to an unearned social rank based on the position of a social actor in a network and grants privileges (Washington & Zajac, 2005). Reputation is a perception of quality based on signals of past performance and is generally domain-specific (Washington & Zajac, 2005).

3.3.3 Opportunity

Opportunity structures

Opportunity structures are external, long-term conditions that group many exogenous factors (Amenta et al., 2005; McCammon et al., 2001; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). For example, political opportunity structures refer to aspects and changes in the political and institutional context that affect the likelihood of success of a movement or the perceptions thereof (McAdam & Tarrow, 2018). Favorable political settings make it easier to succeed in legislative and political proceedings (Amenta et al., 2005), motivating people to mobilize. Political opportunity structures are frequently conceptualized along the dimensions of accessibility or openness, stability or coherence of political alignments, the presence or absence of elite allies, and the repressive capacity of the state or relevant political entity (Amenta et al., 2005; McCammon et al., 2001; Snow et al., 2005). For example, political opportunities have been measured as the strength of patronage parties (Amenta et al., 2005).

Opportunity structures are not the same for everyone; therefore, it matters for whom a given contextual setting is beneficial (McCammon et al., 2001; Ramos, 2008). For instance, a cultural norm of what activities were considered appropriate for women formed gendered opportunity structures that influenced the passing of suffrage legislation (McCammon et al., 2001). Gendered opportunity structures have been proxied with, for example, the proportion of female college students (*ibid*). Further, opportunity structures can be general or issue-specific (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). For instance, black voter registration rates provided a political opportunity for the civil rights movement in the US (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004), and settled land claims signaled an opportunity for Aboriginal movement mobilization in Canada (Ramos, 2008).

Also, public discourse influences how opportunities and movement frames are perceived (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; McCammon et al., 2007). Discursive opportunities are “aspects of the public discourse that determine a message’s chances of diffusion in the public sphere” (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004, p. 202). Media attention and public reactions of approval or disapproval to radical right-wing violence in Germany altered discursive opportunities, which increased or dampened future acts of radical right violence (*ibid*).

Public attention, issue salience, and public opinion

A definition of public attention refers to how much cognitive resources, such as time spent thinking about an object, the public spends on a particular issue (Swearingen & Ripberger, 2014, p. 883). There are multiple ways in which issues receive public attention. Agenda-setting theory argues that the media plays a decisive role in constructing the public agenda (Behr & Iyengar, 1985;

McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2014; Roberts et al., 2002). The public's attention is influenced by traditional media coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2014; Neuman, 1990; Roberts et al., 2002) but not entirely determined by it (Neuman et al., 2014). The media and journalists exercise significant agenda-setting power in deciding which topics and voices gain visibility (Nyberg & Murray, 2020; Vaara et al., 2006; Voinea & van Kranenburg, 2018), “what issues to raise, which perspectives to take, whom to give voice to, which voices to marginalize, and what to leave unsaid” (Vaara et al., 2006, p. 794).

However, Neuman et al. (2014) find that not only does the traditional media set the agenda of social media discussions, but the agenda-setting effect also occurs in the other direction, as “attentional spikes of the blogs, tweets, and discussion board posts are as likely to precede the traditional media as to follow it” (p. 210). Neuman et al. (2014) studied the dynamic effect of social media activity and traditional media coverage on each other. Some research on the agenda-setting effect of the media describes an issue-attention cycle (Chyi & McCombs, 2004; Downs, 1972). According to the conceptualization of Anthony Downs (1972), public perceptions of many problems occur in a systematic cycle of heightened public interest and boredom detached from actual changes in real conditions.

Issue salience is a related concept that generally refers to how important or paramount issues are in the minds of the public, decision-makers, or other actors (Bromley-Trujillo & Poe, 2020; Dennison, 2019; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2014; McDonnell & Werner, 2016; Mellon, 2013, 2014; Oehl et al., 2017). Distinct from public attention, prior research argues that issue salience has two dimensions: issues ranked as salient are seen as both problems and important (Bromley-Trujillo & Poe, 2020; Wlezien, 2005).

Issue salience is also distinct from but related to public opinion. Sometimes, these terms are used relatively interchangeably and considered highly intertwined, i.e., public opinion on what constitutes the most important problem (Oehl et al., 2017; Olzak & Soule, 2009), but prior research also often draws attention to the distinction between issue salience and public opinion. Public opinion refers to the public's preference regarding a policy or a course of action (Burstein, 2003). Public opinion can be measured as the population's share supporting a course of action or political actor (ibid). Some research argues that the influence of public opinion and issue salience on politics may be contingent on each other. For instance, public opinion may influence the political agenda, especially when issues are salient (ibid).

Focusing or critical events

“Focusing” or “critical” events are external occurrences that trigger temporary widespread public interest and engagement (Birkland, 1998, 2004; Harrison et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2011). Prior research has used a broad range of related terms and definitions from existing literature, such as triggering events (Hoffman, 1999; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). According to an early definition, critical events focus attention on movement issues and affect expectations and perceptions of threats (Staggenborg, 1993, p. 320). Focusing events come in

many forms, such as political events, natural disasters, and police violence incidents. These events focus attention on issues and mobilize social movements (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996; Staggenborg, 1993). Critical events increase grievances. For instance, the Chernobyl nuclear accident made more people aggrieved about nuclear energy (Opp, 1988), and terror attacks triggered peace protests (Vasi, 2006). Focusing events can change political opportunity structures by increasing the salience of movement issues. Consequently, such events can be seen as a form of opportunity structures or a precursor of public attention (Ramos, 2008), but their limited period gives them unique characteristics. Focusing events may be equally beneficial to both movements and countermovements because they raise the salience of the issue for all parties interested in each issue (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996).

Free spaces and echo chambers

Free spaces are collective, insulated social spaces where restrictive institutional rules do not apply or cannot be enforced. Individuals who want to see some specific institutional arrangements changed can interact, organize, and encourage each other in free spaces. Free spaces promote collective action and the emergence of new institutional arrangements (Polletta, 1999; Rao & Dutta, 2012). For example, black churches played a crucial role in supporting and facilitating the US Civil Rights Movement (Calhoun-Brown, 2000), and religious festivals in India in the 19th century helped organize protests against colonialists (Rao & Dutta, 2012).

Online communities, exemplified by Facebook groups and alternative social media, serve as activism platforms for various groups, including white nationalists who would face greater scrutiny in public spaces (Caren et al., 2012, 2020). Social media enables the speedy dissemination of information and the organizing of protest activities, and social media activity contributes to the emergence of offline protest (Vasi & Suh, 2016). Following and behavior on social media are pronouncedly ideological, and information tends to be distributed in echo chambers (Cinelli et al., 2021; Garimella et al., 2018; Terren & Borge-Bravo, 2021; Waller & Anderson, 2021). Such online networks may have high political capacities, especially if a highly engaged stable core shares linkages or messages go viral on dense networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Table 1 summarizes the comparison of the different theories of collective action success.

Table 1. Comparison of different theories of collective action

Motive, means, or opportunity	Theoretical perspective	Central concepts	Exemplary articles	Central mechanism	Main locus of control
Motive	Grievances	Strain, grievances, disruption, deprivation, injustice	Useem, 1998; Snow, Soule and Cress, 2005	Pressing grievances will cause people to mobilize and act collectively to improve their situation.	External
	Identity and personalized expression	Identity movements, personalized action frames, collective identity	Rao, Monin, and Durand, 2003; Benet and Segerberg, 2012; Polletta and Jasper, 2001	People seek to express or defend their identities.	Internal
	Ideology*	Ideology, political orientation, interests	Walder, 2009; den Hond and de Bakker, 2007	Ideology, political orientation, and world views are a central motivation of collective action	Internal
	Emotions	Emotions, anger, moral shock	Goodwin et al., 2000; Jasper, 2014; Jasper and Poulsen, 1995; Van Ness and Summers-Effler, 2018	The arousal of emotions is a central motivating mechanism of collective action.	Internal
Means	Resource mobilization*	Financial, human, organizational, and other resource, powerful allies, skills, social networks	McCarthy and Zald, 1977; McCammon, 2001; Edwards et al., 2018; Schradie 2018; George and Leidner 2019	Collective action emerges and is successful when activists have sufficient resources to do so.	Internal
	Framing	Diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational collective action frames, frame resonance	Benford and Snow, 2000; Guérard et al., 2013; McCammon, 2001	The support for and success of collective action issues depends on how they are framed, in other words, rhetorically and symbolically portrayed.	Internal
	Worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment ("WUNC")*	Worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment, diversity	Tilly, 2006; Bailey et al., 2023; Wouters, 2019	To attract supporters and attain goals, movements must be perceived as worthy, united, already supported by many people, highly committed to their cause, and diverse.	Internal
	Tactical repertoires and strategic adaptation	Tactical repertoire, strategic adaptation, tactics, tactical innovation	Selander and Jarvenpaa, 2016; Tarrow, 1993; Tilly, 1978; McCammon et al., 2008; Wang and Soule, 2016	The choice of tactics influences the success of collective action.	Internal
	Power*	Power, status, legitimacy, reputation	Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006; King and Pearce, 2010; Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008	A powerful structural or social position makes it easier to attain a favorable outcome supporting or opposing collective action	Internal
Opportunity	Free spaces and echo chambers	Free space, echo chamber	Rao and Dutta (2012); Polletta (1999)	Social spaces insulated from institutional control enable change agents to plan, network, encourage each other, and build movements.	Internal

	Opportunity structures	Political opportunity structures, gendered opportunity structures, discursive opportunities	Amenta et al., 2005; McCammon et al., 2001 McAdam and Tarrow, 2018; Meyer, 2004 Koopmans and Olzak 2004	Enduring environmental structures influence, which groups have the opportunity to mobilize and steer social processes. For example, regimes can suppress or promote collective action.	External
	Public attention*	Issue salience, public attention, public opinion, media attention, social media visibility	McDonnell & Werner, 2016; McDonnell & King; 2013; King, 2008; Staggengborg 1993	The attention of the public to societal issues fluctuates and outcomes of collective action depend on whether the public is interested in a particular issue.	External
	Focusing or critical events*	Focusing events, critical events, triggering events	Birkland 2004, 1998; Dorobantu, Henisz, and Nartey 2017; H. Peng,	Significant incidents focus public attention and open temporary windows of opportunity during which collective action meets an interested audience.	External

* a focus of this doctoral thesis

4. Data and methods

4.1 Empirical settings

The empirical context of research papers 1 and 2 is Finnish citizens' initiatives. Citizens' initiatives in Finland are a legislative tool that has been used since 2012 and that can be compared to US state-level ballot initiatives. Initiatives that receive at least 50,000 support statements, corresponding to 1.1 % of the voting population, within a 6-month collection period are processed by the parliament as law proposals in plenary debate, committee discussion and preparation, and voting. Many initiatives have triggered legislative changes, such as influencing committee work and parliamentary initiatives on the same issues, establishing new research committees, triggering EU-level processes, and seven fully accepted proposals.

Several countries, including Finland, Estonia, Austria, the UK, the US, and Germany, and the EU, enable citizen participation in political processes through e-petition platforms. E-petition systems differ in their design, features, and standing in political processes, influencing their social and democratic functions (Rosenberger et al., 2022). Over the past decades, direct democracy has witnessed a surge in interest and application, encompassing various forms such as citizens' initiatives, referendums, and mini-publics for deliberation (Dryzek et al., 2019).

In research paper 3, the empirical context is the Swedish banking industry. Studying social contract theory in the context of the banking industry is particularly fruitful because banks and governments are interdependent. First, the banking industry forms a particular type of social contract with governments in which both need each other (Baradaran, 2013). Banking activity requires a high level of public trust that banks can only establish with government-provided insurance.

The paper presents the case of a major Nordic bank, Nordea, which made a public threat in 2017 to relocate its corporate headquarters from Sweden following the Swedish government's proposal for an increased bank resolution fee. During Nordea's restructuring, the Swedish government proposed several changes to bank sector regulation. Case events mainly took place from 2014 to 2018.

4.2 Data samples

The data used in this dissertation consists of separate datasets for each research paper.

Research paper 1 is based on combined data from several sources. The data on the citizens' initiatives stems from the application programming interface (API) service of the Finnish Ministry of Justice (www.kansalaisaloite.fi). We used a sample of 573 Finnish citizens' initiatives that were started between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2018. We use article data from the national public broadcasting service YLE, accessed through an API, to measure media attention to initiatives. YLE is generally considered a neutral medium and is broadly distributed in Finland. Data on Facebook shares of the links of citizens' initiatives is retrieved from the SharedCount service (<https://www.sharedcount.com/>). Further, we hand-collected information on initiative campaign websites and pre-organized entities from campaign websites, such as NGOs, that were sometimes affiliated with initiatives. Finally, the research paper uses search engine query data from Google Trends on the weekly magnitude of initiative keyword searches in Finland. Google searches have been previously used in research on public attention (Bromley-Trujillo & Poe, 2020; Hagen, 2018; Mellon, 2013; Oehl et al., 2017; Swearingen & Ripberger, 2014; Vasi et al., 2015). We access Google search data using the `gtrendsR` package for R.

Research paper 2 uses data from 1381 Finnish language citizens' initiatives from the start of the Justice Ministry online system from 3 September 2012 to 5 May 2022. The data on basic information about the citizens' initiatives comes from the online service of the Ministry of Justice (www.kansalaisaloite.fi). Of these, 63 initiatives reached the threshold of 50,000 supporters and entered parliamentary proceedings.

Research paper 3 utilizes data from 652 archival and mainly textual sources. The archival data includes 355 media articles from four Swedish newspapers, *Aftonbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, and *Dagens Industri*, and 297 public documents from Nordea, the regulating institutions, the government, and political parties that were relevant to Nordea's relocation, the evolution of the social contract between banks and society, and explicit regulation related to financial stability. These texts include press releases, investor communications, annual reports, public reports, press releases, consultations, memos, and speeches, law proposals on banking legislation and their communications, party and election programs, transcripts of parliamentary debates, reports, and written questions, as well relevant publications by the European Union, the IMF, the Financial Stability Board, and the Swedish Bankers' Association for further background.

4.3 Analytical methods

This doctoral dissertation addresses the research question with quantitative and qualitative analysis. Research paper 1 uses organizer resources, focusing events and their characteristics, and news and social media attention to predict the

number of support statements accrued to Finnish citizens' initiatives using ordinary least squares (OLS) and negative binomial regression analysis. The analytical procedures were implemented using Stata and R.

Research paper 2 uses quasipoisson and OLS regression of the number of support statements attained by Finnish citizens' initiatives on the number of issue categories, issue distance, and a squared number of issue categories to examine the effects of issue boundary spanning on social mobilization. The analytical procedures were conducted in R and Python on Google Colab. The topic modeling was performed using the scikit-learn package in Python.

The third research paper follows a qualitative, inductive case study method (Yin, 2009), following a process-theory-building and narrative approach (Langley, 1999; Pentland, 1999). The paper presents the case of a major Nordic bank, Nordea, which made a public threat in 2017 to relocate its corporate headquarters from Sweden following the Swedish government's proposal for an increased bank resolution fee.

Table 2 summarizes the research designs used in each research paper.

Table 2. Summary of methods

	Research paper 1	Research paper 2	Research paper 3
Title	Social Mobilization in the Online Era: The Role of Organizer Resources and Timing of Focusing Events	Issue categories, issue boundary spanning, and petition support	The Crisis and Renegotiation of a Bank's Social Contract
Empirical context	Finnish citizens' initiatives, 2015 - 2018	Finnish citizens' initiatives, 2012 - 2022	The Swedish banking industry
Research approach	Quantitative deductive	Quantitative deductive	Qualitative inductive
Data sources	Data on citizens' initiatives from the API service of the Finnish Justice Ministry (kansalaisaloite.fi), Media data from API service national public broadcasting service YLE, social media data from the SharedCount service (https://www.sharedcount.com/), hand-collected information from campaign websites, Internet search engine query data from Google Trends API service	API service of the Finnish Justice Ministry (kansalaisaloite.fi)	355 media articles from four Swedish newspapers Af-tonbladet, Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter, and Dagens Industri, 297 archival documents from Nordea, the Swedish banking industry, Swedish and European regulatory institutions, the Swedish government and parliament, political parties, and the Financial Stability Board
Sample size	573 initiatives	1381 initiatives	1 case, 652 text documents or other archival sources
Statistical or qualitative methods	Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, negative binomial regression	Non-negative matrix factorization topic modelling, quasipoisson regression, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression	Case study
Dependent variables	Number of initiative support statements	Number of initiative support statements	Not applicable
Independent variables	Number of accountable individuals, Number of pre-organized entities, Campaign website, Financial support, Focusing event (binary), Media attention to initiative, Facebook shares, Duration of public attention to event,	Number of issue categories Issue distance Squared number of issue categories	Not applicable

	Unpredictable event, Negative event for initiative supporters, Contested event		
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5. Key findings

This section first presents the key findings of each research paper and then proceeds to synthesize the findings.

5.1 The role of organizer resources, timing with focusing events, and news and social media visibility in social mobilization

The first research paper examines how organizers' resources, focusing events, and news and social media visibility interact in triggering online social mobilization. Findings from OLS regressions on 573 Finnish citizens' initiatives from 2015 to 2018 show that traditional coalition resources, such as funding and organizational capabilities, still matter substantially in mobilizing supporters. However, timing actions with focusing events provides activists an alternative pathway to success: short-lived windows of opportunity during which supporters can mobilize online without extensive organizer resources. Focusing events increase the visibility of social movements on both traditional and social media, increasing their popular support. A detailed list of the hypotheses and their results is displayed in Table 3.

5.2 Issue boundary spanning and social mobilization

The second research paper studied when and how issue-boundary-spanning influences social mobilization. Findings from quasipoisson regression data on 1381 Finnish citizens' initiatives started from 2012 to spring 2022 indicate that 1) the number of issue categories and issue distance have a negative interaction effect on supporter mobilization, and 2) there is support for an inverted U-shape association of the number of issue categories and social mobilization, indicating an optimal point of distinctiveness so that a bit of issue boundary spanning has a positive effect on voter support but that the positive effect rapidly disappears as the number of issue categories increases.

5.3 The emergence of social contract crises and stakeholders' strategies to renegotiate social contracts

The third research paper assesses why social contracts between business and society enter a crisis and how stakeholders renegotiate social contracts. Using archival data, we studied inductively and qualitatively the case of a Nordic bank, Nordea, which made a public threat in 2017 to relocate its corporate headquarters from Sweden following the Swedish government's proposal for an increased bank resolution fee. We found that social contracts escalate into a social contract crisis when a changing environment alters the bargaining power or interests of the social contract parties, a party breaches another stakeholder's interpretation of the social contract terms, trust between parties is lost, and when a party makes a threat.

The social contract of banking in Sweden was a historically inherited institutional arrangement with both explicit and implicit aspects. A key reason for the emergence of the social contract crisis was the broad plurality of stakeholders. We identified three manifestations of the plurality: plural interest, plural interpretations, and plural economic ideologies, which all contributed to the contestation of the social contract. Environmental changes altered parties' ability to renegotiate the social contract's terms, and changing interests, such as changing competition and market forces, increased their motives to renegotiate the social contract's terms. Finally, actions perceived as breaches of the social contract's implicit terms by other stakeholders trigger a crisis and public expressions of anger, escalating the crisis state further. Similar mechanisms that led to the crisis in Sweden's banking sector will bring new social contract crises in other industry sectors and geographical areas. For instance, extractive industries, such as mining, form a social contract with the society whose natural resources they extract.

Moreover, findings from the case study show that stakeholders renegotiate social contracts using four distinct strategies simultaneously: (1) they seek to influence the ideological and epistemic outcome of public deliberation about a fair social contract; (2) they seek to coerce each other to accept their preferred terms; (3) they seek to collaborate to find a win-win arrangement; and (4) they seek to increase their bargaining power to reach a better outcome for themselves. These strategies combine idealistic notions of deliberative democracy, i.e., the process of public deliberation, with power-oriented strategy, i.e., attempts to increase bargaining power, coerce other parties, and collaborative strategies. Coercive strategies include threats and attacks. We identified collaborative strategies: reconciliation, dialogue, consultation, and offers. Power-enhancing strategies aimed to change the bargaining power balance of stakeholders by generating new alternatives, changing the negotiation arena, or the entry of new negotiating parties.

Table 3 presents a summary of the research questions and key findings of each paper.

Table 3. Summary of research questions, hypotheses, and key findings

	Research paper 1	Research paper 2	Research paper 3
Title	Social Mobilization in the Online Era: The Role of Organizer Resources and Timing of Focusing Events	Issue categories, issue boundary spanning, and petition support	The Crisis and Re-negotiation of a Bank's Social Contract
Research questions	How do organizer resources and focusing events interact in triggering online social mobilization?	When and how does issue-boundary-spanning influence social mobilization?	Why do social contracts between business and society enter a crisis and how do stakeholders renegotiate social contracts?
Research methods	Quantitative, deductive, hypothesis-testing	Quantitative, deductive, hypothesis-testing	Qualitative, inductive, case study
Key findings	Despite the lower costs of online social mobilization, Traditional resources, such as funding and organizational capabilities, still matter substantially in mobilizing supporters. However, timing actions with focusing events provides activists with an alternative pathway to success: short-lived windows of opportunity during which supporters can mobilize online without extensive organizer resources. Focusing events increase the visibility of social movements on both traditional and social media, increasing their popular support.	Issue boundary spanning decreases social mobilization when the boundary-spanning issues have a high issue distance, i.e., they rarely co-occur together. Findings also indicate a point of optimal distinctiveness in boundary spanning, so that issue boundary spanning in moderation is beneficial, but excessive boundary spanning is associated with declining support.	Social contract crises emerge from changes in stakeholders' bargaining power, breaches in contract interpretations, loss of trust, and direct threats. Renegotiating these contracts involves stakeholders engaging in public deliberation to define fair terms while employing coercive, collaborative, and power-enhancing strategies.
Inductively identified consequences	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Social contract crisis and renegotiation
Inductively identified antecedents	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Plural interests, interpretations, and economic ideologies, Changes in bargaining power and interests, Breaches of the social contract, Public deliberation, Coercive strategies, Collaborative strategies, Power-enhancing strategies
Hypotheses	H1: An increase in the resources of the organizers of a citizens' initiative is associated with an increase in the number of initiative supporters. Supported. H2a: Citizens' initiatives that coincide with a focusing event are associated with an increase in the number of initiative supporters. Supported. H2b: Citizens' initiatives that coincide with a focusing event are associated with an increase in the number of initiative supporters, even when the initiative organizers have low resources. Supported. H3: Increases in the media attention to a citizens' initiative are associated with an increased number of initiative supporters. Partially supported. H4: Increases in the social media visibility of a citizens' initiative are associated with an increased number of initiative supporters. Supported. H5: Increases in the duration of public attention to a focusing	H1: Issue-boundary-spanning initiatives, which are about more than one issue, will receive fewer support statements than initiatives clearly on one issue. Not supported. H2: The issue distance of the boundary-spanning initiatives increases the negative effect of boundary-spanning on voter support. Supported. H3: The association of the number of issues in an initiative and the count of support statements forms an inverted U-shape. Supported.	Not applicable.

Key findings

	<p>event are associated with increases in the number of initiative supporters. Supported.</p> <p>H6: Focusing events that are unpredictable events are associated with increases in the number of initiative supporters. Not supported.</p> <p>H7: Focusing events that are negative events for initiative supporters are associated with increases in the number of initiative supporters. Supported.</p> <p>H8: Focusing events that are contested events are associated with increases in the number of initiative supporters. Partially supported.</p> <p>H9: Citizens' initiatives that coincide with a focusing event are associated with increased media attention to the initiative, which, in turn, is associated with an increase in the number of initiative supporters. Supported.</p> <p>H10: Citizens' initiatives that coincide with a focusing event are associated with increased Facebook shares of the initiative, which, in turn, is associated with an increase in the number of initiative supporters. Supported.</p>		
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6. Discussion

The studies presented in this doctoral thesis all studied attempts at institutional change following the collective action approach. However, they focused on two distinctive empirical contexts: Social mobilization in Finnish citizens' initiatives and the social contract renegotiation in the Swedish banking industry. In addition to different empirical contexts, they sought to explain distinct outcomes. Research papers 1 and 2 sought to explain the mobilization of supporter numbers as a dependent variable, which can be simplistically understood as a competition following the logic of "the one with the most supporters wins." The research studies were mainly interested in what enabled the activation of supporters for a given cause. Some citizens' initiatives aimed at opposing goals, yet contestation was in the background. Contestation was at the forefront of research paper 3, which studied the renegotiation of a social contract of banking. Despite its inherent contestation and plurality of interests and ideologies, this discussion on the social contract is geared toward attempting cooperation for the benefit of all. Parties to the social contract are highly interdependent and maximize their benefit through collaboration.

The study of collective action for institutional change is a longstanding field of inquiry that never ceases to be relevant. This doctoral thesis has focused on a few recent trends that influence the dynamics of collective action. Firstly, the past decades have seen a growing interest and application of various forms of direct democracy, such as citizens' initiatives (Christensen et al., 2017; Landemore, 2015). Direct democracy practices aim to improve political systems' legitimacy and decision-making quality.

Moreover, the Internet and social media changed the landscape of collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Earl & Kimport, 2011), making the organization of collective action in online spaces more cost-effective, occurring in bursts or sudden spikes and increasingly enabling digital networks and spaces to replace formal organizational frameworks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Leong et al., 2019; Vaast et al., 2017). Finally, online activism has broadened the issue space of activism, the entry of activists with no prior movement socialization, and a proliferation of personalized action frames (Bennett and Segerberg 2012; Earl and Kimport 2011).

In addition, globalization and digitalization have impacted the dynamics of social contracts. Social contracts (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Mill, 1859; Rawls, 1958; Rousseau, 1762) are institutionalized reciprocal exchange arrangements broadly enacted by and affect members of society. An authoritarian Leviathan

cannot unilaterally coerce its citizens, be they individual or corporate, if they can vote with their feet. Multinational corporations are uniquely positioned when negotiating social contracts with states and communities (Neiman, 2013; Palmer, 2001; Sama, 2006) because they can quickly relocate. These trends spur the competition of alternative institutional regulatory frameworks with each other and motivate a tax competition race to the bottom (Woods, 2006). In research paper 3, we have argued that social contracts' renegotiation is a complex process of the negotiating stakeholders' public deliberation, coercion, collaboration, and bargaining power. How well various stakeholders succeed in these manoeuvres will define the coming decades' global economic order.

6.1 Contributions to literature

In research paper 1, we contribute to the existing literature by exposing the mechanisms for when and how public attention to focusing events provides an alternative for resources in social mobilization. With this, we contribute to social movement theory by explaining the contingent role of the classical resource mobilization theory (Edwards et al., 2018; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) and the new online social mobilization theory (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Earl & Kimport, 2011). Focusing events create short-lived windows of opportunity during which viral mobilizations of supporters are possible without extensive organizer resources. Because these windows of opportunity are brief, collective action organizers must quickly associate their cause with the event and capitalize on the public attention. Such reactivity is feasible in online environments. However, classical resources are helpful for sustained and gradual social mobilization without such focusing events.

Lastly, we contribute to a growing research stream on direct democracy (Dryzek et al., 2019; Fung, 2015; Hagen et al., 2016; Harrison et al., 2022; Landmore, 2015; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004) by demonstrating that online direct democracy tools can be equalizing but are not necessarily so. Our research shows that online environments perpetuate existing inequalities to the extent that those with more financial, organizational, human, and other campaign resources are more likely to succeed in direct democracy campaigns. However, online democratic tools equalize when external focusing events open windows of opportunities during which movement messages can go viral, providing an alternative to resource-based mobilization.

In research paper 2, I contribute to the issue-boundary-spanning theory in collective action (Wang et al., 2018, 2019; Wang & Soule, 2016). Extant social movement research on boundary spanning has reached partially mixed findings on the role of issue boundary spanning for mobilization and movement goal attainment (Wang et al., 2018). My findings seek to reconcile some of these tradeoffs by suggesting that the effect of issue-boundary-spanning on mobilization is moderated by issue distance and that a point of optimal distinctiveness exists in issue-boundary-spanning so that boundary-spanning in moderation is beneficial.

In research paper 3, a primary contribution of the study to social contractarian theory (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1995; Palmer, 2001) is to explain why social contracts enter a state of crisis. Another contribution we make is to advance understanding of how stakeholders renegotiate social contracts. Extant research on social contractarian theory for business provides normative works and arguments for what constitutes a just social contract for businesses (Child & Marcoux, 1999; Cragg, 2000; Donaldson, 1982; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1995; Fia & Sacconi, 2019; Freeman, 1994; Frynas & Stephens, 2015; Marens, 2007; Palmer, 2001; Sacconi, 2006; Sama, 2006; Wempe, 2008). Still, there has been a void of empirical research on social contract theory and a scarcity of explanations of how social contracts emerge and are renegotiated in practice (Thompson & Hart, 2006). Research paper 3 has attempted to fill this gap.

Further, this dissertation's literature review groups the explanations of collective action outcomes into a overarching three-fold framework of motives, means, and opportunities, which, to my knowledge, has not been used in prior research frequently, with rare exceptions (Saxton & Benson, 2008). This grouping is approximate as some factors may be relevant for more than one category. For instance, political opportunities may mobilize because they motivate. Many drivers of collective action have been subject to longstanding inquiry. However, the dynamics of some drivers of collective action have changed. Opportunities for political participation have increased in contemporary democracy, such as in the form of direct democracy tools. Moreover, social media and digital tools provide more people with the means to participate in public discourse, voice their grievances, and promote their ideologies. However, collective actors must vie for increasingly dispersed and fleeting public attention amidst abundant informational stimuli.

6.2 Practical implications

The research presented in this doctoral thesis has several practical implications. Practical implications for institutional change agents include the following. Firstly, activists should aim for issue focus. If activists must combine several issues, they should combine closely related ones. Jointly with prior research, the findings indicate that broad, diverse coalitions benefit mobilization but should be united in pursuing a singularly focused issue (Bailey et al., 2023; Wouters, 2019). Research papers 1 and 3 presented cases where particular events focus public attention, trigger an escalation of contestation, and influence the outcomes of collective action. Timing matters for mobilization because focusing events open windows of opportunity of heightened public attention. Change agents benefit from skillful utilization of opportune timing by entraining actions with and responding quickly to temporal opportunities. Opportune timing presents a pathway to the successful mobilization of supporters, but organizer resources still matter substantially. Even in the digital era, accumulating organizational, digital, human, and financial resources seems to be the most consistent way to reach and activate supporters. Finally, social media visibility is highly mobilizing, so much so that social media visibility and supporter

accumulation for citizens' initiatives appear nearly synonymous with high covariation.

The research presented has practical implications for the design of direct democracy institutions. The study suggests that direct democracy services can equalize when external focusing events open windows of opportunities during which movement messages can go viral, providing an alternative to resource-based mobilization and substituting the need for resources. Findings suggest that grassroots mobilization without resources tends to occur in sudden surges. The more speedily accessible the direct democracy tools are during these focusing events, the better direct democracy tools can harness public participation. The highly mobilizing window of opportunity may pass quickly, at least for lower-priority issues that do not impose constantly attended grievances. On the flip side, the findings imply that if repressive regimes can inhibit mobilization during these mobilizing windows of opportunity, such measures might be effective in preventing the mobilization of the resource-poor. Unless repression itself becomes a focusing event that triggers collective action, of which there are numerous cases.

This doctoral thesis also has practical implications for actors renegotiating social contracts for business or other contexts. Consent for social contracts results from an ongoing negotiation and is only partially attained. In practice, this negotiation is a mixture of idealistic notions of fair social contract terms identified through a process of public deliberation as well as the result of negotiating parties' bargaining power and influence strategies. A key to bargaining power is the available alternatives for each stakeholder. People tend to filter reality through ideological lenses and may not be able to see all interdependencies without some extra effort. Negotiators of social contracts should aim to understand the full spectrum of public deliberation arguments and the interdependent nature of the social contract.

This doctoral thesis also has practical implications for the social contract of the banking industry. Nations heavily subsidize the banking industry through explicit or implicit government insurance (Admati & Hellwig, 2023). However, the relationship between banking, nations, and the public is interdependent because the public needs a functioning banking system. As a commentary to research paper 3, I find the final Swedish solution of 2020 to tax banks' liabilities as a base of the fee laudable because it encourages minimizing liabilities, a source of risk, instead of employees or assets. Also, the low equity rates of banks are a distortion that does not provide any benefits to economic or social welfare but leads to taxpayers paying disproportionately to insure banks, increasing the social cost of banking (Admati & Hellwig, 2023). The seeming and exaggerated obscurity and complexity of banking regulation favor corporations over taxpayers, limiting the ability of the public to participate in deliberation on fair social contract terms. Higher equity-to-debt ratios of banks would reduce the social cost of government insurance (Admati & Hellwig, 2023).

6.3 Limitations and future research

As with all research, this dissertation has limitations, many of which present avenues for future research. Regarding empirical material, research paper 3 triangulated data from numerous sources but utilized only archival data and did not collect interviews. While interviews would be susceptible to retrospective bias, they might provide more insight into the motivations of various actors. Further, despite the empirical richness of the case, due to the single case study research design of research paper 3, we can mainly explain how the events unfolded but not evaluate which strategies contributed towards successful or adverse outcomes. For example, did coercive tactics diminish the effectiveness of collaborative tactics aiming to create joint value?

The case of Swedish banking shows that customers wanted to exercise their option of non-participation and voting with their feet by leaving the relocating bank. Despite the high interest and at least partial action of Swedish consumers to switch banks, this does not seem to have been a major factor in the economic difficulties the bank experienced at the same time, but which instead stemmed from other business sectors, such as the Baltic operations. This raises questions about the financial consequences of breaching social contracts for banks and corporations more broadly. The ability of customers to sanction the bank by voting with their feet might have been relatively low despite the high media salience of customer sanctions, possibly because customers were tied to the bank with long-term loans. After the relocation scandal in Sweden unfolded, Nordea experienced a considerable decline in operating income and share price. However, this development seems to have mainly stemmed from other business decisions and sectors. Prior research has found stock price effects and other consequences of activist targeting of corporations (King & Soule, 2007; McDonnell et al., 2015; Vasi & King, 2012), including boycott tactics (McDonnell & King, 2013; McDonnell & Werner, 2016) and mathematically modeled effects of large investors' threatening exits on stock prices and management decision-making (Admati & Pfleiderer, 2009). Future research could further study the consequences of social contract breaches and negotiation tactics for corporations and the contingencies of such consequences.

We expect that our findings on social contract renegotiation are generalizable to other contexts, such as extractive mining and energy industries with pollution externalities. However, confirming this calls for further empirical research. Moreover, social contract tensions and societal pressures make discussing social contracts more pressing. Societies will need to be nimble to redefine social contracts should AI, automation, digitalization, globalization, aging, climate change, and other planetary boundaries, rising inequalities alter interest and bargaining powers, in addition to already presenting unsolved challenges. This doctoral thesis raises several questions for future research. How do we, as a society, re-evaluate and consent to our social contracts? How do we adapt to changing needs and bargaining powers? How can we promote a fair balance of bargaining power between parties? How do we cooperate despite our conflicting interests and ideologies as a society? How do we promote mutual understanding

and an intellectual ideal in public deliberation while all the other strategies are ongoing?

Finally, all papers in this doctoral thesis study highly democratic societies with distributed power and may not apply to repressive institutional contexts with centralized power. For instance, an authoritarian regime can coerce much more in social contract negotiation. An advantage of democracies is the distribution of attention, which means that more important issues will be addressed and solved because the political system aims to harness the attended issues and suggested solutions by a broader network of participants. In authoritarian regimes, public deliberation is inhibited, which the epistemic turn in democracy research argues will result in a lower quality of decision-making. While research paper 3 on social contracts for corporations takes the increased bargaining power of multinational corporations over national governments as a starting point, the empirical case takes place in a diversified economy. A more highly skewed power balance may also occur if a corporation has dominant standing in a local economic system and the potential relocation of the corporation is a non-option for the other stakeholders.

In research paper 1, we explained a very high share of the total variance in the number of supporters citizens' initiatives attained. However, much of the variation in the outcomes of focusing events was left unexplained – despite the strong statistical significance of focusing events as a mobilizing factor, some focusing events were associated with triggered mobilizations, whereas other focusing events were not. This presents an opportunity for future research to uncover why only some potential focusing events trigger mobilizations. We found that negative events were especially mobilizing and that the organizer resources did not amplify the mobilizing effect of focusing events. Possibly, further characteristics of focusing events or their matching initiatives might present an explanation. Alternatively, outcomes depend more on serendipitous enactment and chain reaction of social actors on social media and other arenas.

A long-standing question is whether factors influencing mobilization and outcomes of collective action are the same or distinct. Future empirical research could assess whether the pathway of resource-poor mobilization during windows of opportunity created by focusing events persists in the later stages of the political process and whether and how the importance of the mobilizing factors varies during parliamentary proceedings. Finally, the data of research paper 2 indicated that boundary-spanning across issue categories was non-reciprocal. Prior research has found that when social movements borrow claims from other issues, they prefer to borrow claims from focused and cohesive movements (Wang et al., 2019). This calls for future research on boundary-spanning behavior and the hierarchies of legitimation used in the process.

This doctoral thesis studied collective action in contemporary democracy, yet the scope of contemporary democracy was limited. The Internet and social media have brought forth several other phenomena that I did not address in the dissertation, including a spread of mis- and disinformation, fake news, hate speech, and ideological propaganda reaching vulnerable youths. Social media succeeds in providing mobilizing structures and isolated free spaces, which

promote the speedy dissemination of calls to action and the empowerment or radicalization of likeminded groups. However, social media has not promoted an emergence of a more deliberative, understanding democracy. Deliberative processes require alternative structures. To conclude, this doctoral thesis studied factors that explain the outcomes of collective action for institutional change in the contemporary era. The three research papers follow this summary part of the doctoral thesis.

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