

Chapter 4.

Basic model

Definition and related fields of research

Our literature review revealed that the term social unrest is not frequently used in scientific research. Most definitions rely on operational descriptions, that means the term is explained by using indicators of their measurement. Such definitions are not conceptual but empirical (Drury and Olson, 1998; Zhang *et al.*, 2005). Our own argumentation will start with these operational definitions. These will give us a hint about the activities that can be grouped under the term social unrests. In a second step we take the indicators as a heuristic tool to explore additional literature on theoretical or empirical studies dealing with activities connected to these indicators. In particular, we refer to studies on political participation, social movements, conflict and crisis, and collective violence. We will discuss the intersections and boundaries between these concepts and social unrest which will lead us to a nominal definition and a specific frame that characterizes our approach. The aim here is to make theoretical and empirical thoughts coming from other fields of research accessible to an audience primarily interested in social unrest.

Our common experience associates social unrest with protests in the form of peaceful as well as violent demonstrations, strikes and with acts of civil and political violence. This first impression is supported when we take a closer look at the indicators that are used in operational definitions by scholars. For example, Keidel (2005) links social unrest with a protest that includes more than eight persons. The intensity of social unrest can be measured by the number of demonstrations, riots, armed infringements and strikes within a year (Keidel, 2005). Beyond a simple reckoning of social protest, some authors place more emphasis on the spatial dimension. So we can find an operational concepts for social unrest based on “(...) historically documented nationwide social unrests (with more than five provinces affected at a time) (the study concentrated on China; R.S.) caused by the unanimous underlying factors (...)” (Zhang, 2005). Many more operational definitions of social unrest could be cited here. They all have in common that they assume some kind of numerical threshold which defines a demarcation line between protest or manifestation of dissatisfaction and the emergence of social unrest. We believe that such numerical threshold are arbitrary and not very useful since the impact as well as the potential damage of social unrest may not at all or only slightly correlate with the head count of participating individuals or the number of protest events.

Political participation

Within the semantic area of activities that underlie social unrest protests, demonstrations and political violence are most frequently mentioned. These manifestations are also part of another social science tradition, i.e. the theory and concepts of political participation. That concept includes actions that are operated by

citizens aiming at influencing collective decisions on several levels of the political system (Barnes *et al.*, 1979). Not only the active mobilization of citizens but also the political goals of influencing collective decisions constitute key elements of this tradition. Excluded here are economic or social goals for which people could get engaged. Also political violence is not mentioned as a means of political participation. In newer studies both aspects are sometimes (nowadays more frequently) mentioned as components of participation (van Deth, 2009)

Kaase distinguishes conventional and unconventional political participation. While conventional participation includes activities such as voting or writing letters to the editor, unconventional political participation includes activities such as signing petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, sit-ins, rent and tax strikes, traffic blockades and wild strikes (Kaase, 2002). This listing of unconventional activities seems to be close to the list we found in the literature about social unrests. Activities associated with social unrest are often linked to unconventional political participation. Conventional political participations such as elections or the attendance of a political event are definitely not part of social unrest. Seen from a theoretical perspective it can be concluded that activities that are designed to serve a specific function within a functional system (such as politics or economics) belong to the ordinary, expected and conventional form of serving this function, while unconventional or unexpected forms of expressing a desire for change or intervention can turn into social unrest. Even those unconventional forms may be functional if the corresponding system is in urgent need of a radical reform. So in view of this line of argument social unrest is not necessarily dysfunctional but its manifestations appear as unexpected, unplanned, often spontaneous as well as unconstrained or uncontrollable within the functional system in which they occur.

Collective (political) violence

The subject of political violence constitutes a research field of its own. Generally there are at least three forms of political violence: The first form refers to forms of violence performed by the political system (e.g. administrative, judicative, executive). In some studies political violence performed by the political system also means violence against citizens in form of disparity, social exclusion or persistent poverty (just to name some). The second understanding of violence refers to violence that is performed by the citizens against the political system (Sanchez, 2006). In this field we can find the following definition: "...political violators break with their actions basic social norms. These injuries of norms are justified on a level above the individual in difference to criminal infringements". In extreme cases they challenge the complete normative system (Kepplinger, 2009). Kepplinger assumes that the description of delinquent behavior reflects the view of the political establishment or that part of society against which the violence is directed. For the peers and the supporter of the violator this behavior is regarded as legitimate and morally justified given the circumstances under which they believe to suffer (Kepplinger, 2009).

These two perspectives are integrated in the following definition: "Collective violence is personal injury by a group... most is social control by which people define or respond to behavior as deviant" (Senchal de la Roche, 1996). The author distinguishes four forms of violence: lynching, unrest, vigilantism and terrorism. These forms can be classified along two dimensions: The degree of accountability (it can be individual or collective) and the degree of organization. Lynching is an individual act with a high degree of organization, vigilantism is likewise individual but not well organized. Unrest

and terrorism are collective forms of violence, terrorism is organized, while unrest is not (Senchal de la Roche, 1996).

A different distinction is introduced in the text from Sanchez (2006). In addition to violence executed by the political system (called structural violence), he refers to radical violence that may lead to waves of protests, strikes, demonstrations and to regional endangerment of security and criminal violence that occurs in the form of criminal youth gangs, mafia type collaborations and drug cartels (Sanchez, 2006).

In reference to social unrests, violence, as long as it is collective, can be counted as one extreme from among other forms of collective expressions of dissatisfaction. Violence that is executed from the political system is different from social unrest, but may be a trigger for social unrest as Sanchez (2006) emphasizes. Often social unrest may not be directed towards changing collective decisions but could be spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction, frustration or experienced inequity. In this sense social unrest is only one component of unconventional political participation but, at the same time, transgresses the concept of participation as it may include collective protests that may not have a clear political goal, let alone a message of what should be done to cope with the present situation or crisis.

Social protest movements

The last research tradition included in this review refers to social movements. This tradition also covers activities such as protests, demonstrations and other forms of unconventional collective activities. In his classical definition Karl W. Deutsch defines social mobilization as (...) “the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior” (Deutsch, 1961). To be successful protest activities need both organization and endurance. Organizational capacity is essential for coordinating activities, recruiting new members, sustaining motivation and building networks. Sociologists refer to the process of institutionalization, i.e. the introduction of structures, rules and procedures independent of individual preferences and decisions, as a necessary means for movements to develop momentum beyond single events and to generate collective identity (Nover, 2009).

Charles Tilly notes that social movements emerge as a synthesis of three elements. These are campaign (sustaining collective action aimed at influencing public decisions), a social movement repertoire (e.g. demonstrations and other actions similar to those mentioned in the chapter on political participation), and a public representation of the goals, unity and values as prerequisites for sustaining the coherence of a social movement (Tilly, 2004).

We can conclude that unconventional activities of collective actors are part of both research traditions: social movement as well as political participation. The difference between the two concepts seems to be that, within the scope of social movement, the interest is more on the endurance of such activities, while political participation is more focused at the individual motivation for joining a protest group and its impacts on the political system. Political violence intersects with both the political participation as well as the social movement tradition.

It is interesting to note that over time some of the allegedly unconventional activities have become ordinary, conventional forms of expressing dissent. Strikes organized by labor unions, for example, are now seen as legitimate form of protest even by those who

do not benefit from these activities. Other actions such as demonstrations or petitions are now labeled as conventional although when they were first introduced they started as unconventional forms of protest. Today most of the European citizens have at least once participated in such actions. They tend to belong to normal processes within the political system.

The analytical division between conventional or unconventional is hence contingent on time period, location and culture. What appears to be a common form of political expression in one country is seen as major deviant behavior in another country. Social unrest is hence not a term that can be defined irrespective of the context in which it is used. Any political system constructs a boundary between conventional and unconventional (often by legal prescriptions or by daily practice). That boundary is fluid, however. It changes over time and may manifest itself at very different thresholds in different political cultures. This is the basic reasons that all operational definitions of social unrest are bound to fail. It is justified to connect social unrest to unconventional activities performed by collective actors but the extent and intensity of what unconventional entails depend on time, culture and social context. Furthermore, even attributes such as violent behavior may in some contexts be seen as legitimate or conventional (for example resistance against a common aggressor). However, most cultures would classify politically motivated violence as from of unconventional activity and hence social unrest. Yet even if we had an agreement among all scholars that violent behavior constitutes one example of social unrest there is a clear understanding that social unrest cannot be confined to violence alone and that other forms of unconventional activities such as a national boycott should be grouped under this category.

Given these ambiguities, we conclude that social unrest is an expression of collective dissatisfaction with the political system and manifests itself in unconventional forms of protest behavior. The exact definition of what is regarded as unconventional (or extraordinary) and the degree and extent of collective actions that constitute the demarcation line between protest and social unrest cannot be defined in advance but relates to the context in which social unrest is studied. Social unrest can be seen as an extreme expression of social mobilization with major impacts for society (e.g. economy or politics), with the proviso that the extent of the term “major” is subject to wide cultural, social and individual interpretations.

This definition brings us back to the concept of risk. If we see social unrest as a source of risk, we can map the major impacts in terms of losses to what people value: loss of life, injuries, property damage, loss of wealth, etc. If social unrest is the result of risk we can look for triggers and drivers that lead people to actions that, in their respective context, are regarded as unconventional and extraordinary. Both perspectives assume a continuum between a mere expression of dissatisfaction and violent civil war at each end of the continuum.

Structure: A stepwise approach to conceptualize social unrest

As has been outlined in the last two chapters the basic assumption of our approach is a continuum underlying a range of collective actions that may or may not meet the cultural construction of what is regarded as social unrest. Social unrest does not occur out of the blue. Our attempt is to identify steps that gradually lead to social unrest (Figure 4.1). For unfolding the model we come up with ideas for factors and drivers stemming from the case studies, but also we go a more deductive way and try to identify further important variables out of the body of theory. With every step taken, the probability for

an escalation towards more unconventional forms of protest will rise. The model is thought to be cumulative, each step taken is a necessary condition for the next step. At each step we want to investigate which interventions or actions are likely to escalate or de-escalate the situation. These interventions or events are then triggers for reaching the next step or going back one step. A return to the previous step does not mean that the risk is gone but that the likelihood of further escalation is reduced. Yet there is still a possibility that new events or decisions can start the escalation process again. In the following paragraphs we will first introduce each step and then provide some initial thoughts about the drivers and triggers that influence or shape the movements upwards or downwards on our escalator.

Box 4.1. Framework of social unrest – representing a complex, multidimensional dynamic problem

The proposed framework looks primarily at

- Degree of social unrest
- Type of action of its expression.

As types of actions the model distinguishes:

- Communication of dissatisfaction
- Organization
- Mobilization
- Actions of political violence

However, this cannot be but a very simplified representation. In terms of further development the following further developments will be explored in the future:

Developing more precise list of drivers and triggers for social unrest, possibly forming a sort of "Metrics of Unrest" (see next box),

- "Unrest Life Cycle" representation and
- "Unrest Cycle Clock" representation.

The "Unrest Life Cycle" representation specifies distinct profiles of unrests, illustrates their development in time and enables comparisons between different profiles.

We assume that people who will engage themselves publicly on any subject have to be dissatisfied with their situation or perceive a problem that they would like to address. Dissatisfaction can arise out of physical, social or psychological reasons. Even if people are dissatisfied nothing will happen unless that dissatisfaction is displayed in some kind of public arena. Unsatisfied people have to become active. Such activity can be spontaneous without any attempt to get in touch with others with similar experiences or it can be orchestrated as part of a communication effort to assemble all people with similar attitudes (for example via Internet or mobile phone) or it can be initiated by an organized group that is already part of the society in which these activities occur (for example a labor union or a nature protection league).

Figure 4.1. Ladder of social unrest

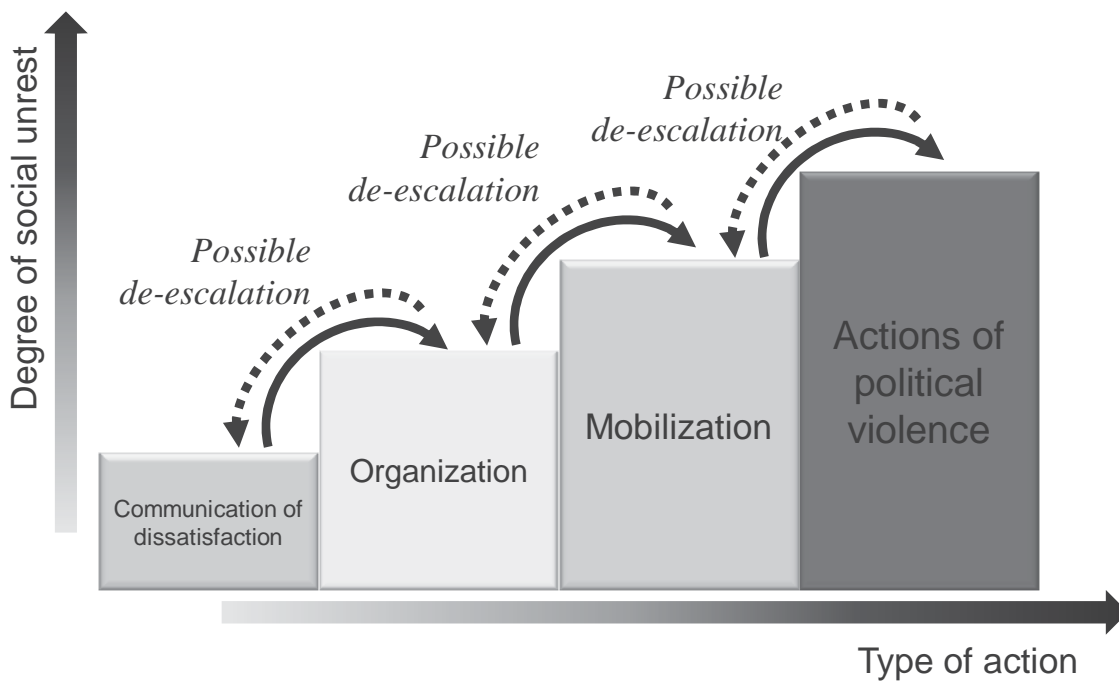
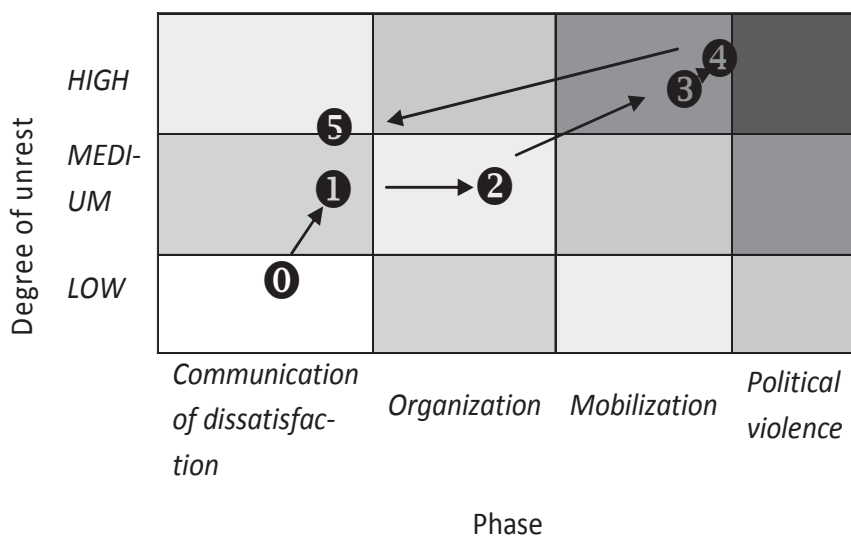


Figure 4.2. Combining the ladder of social unrest with unrest cycle clock for a hypothetical example of a social unrest



(a hypothetic) **Cycle of an unrest:** ① - initiation of the crisis ① - spontaneous protests ② - trade unions involved ③ - riot police involved ④ - casualties ⑤ - protest calmed – "resignation"

This protest is likely to disappear if the protest itself is not picked up by an existing organization or gives rise to establishing a new organization (new movement). Sometimes organized groups join the protest for different reasons than those addressed by the protest group because they see this as an opportunity to promote their own goals and aspirations. Sometimes the protesters are co-opted by other groups and they may lose their original cause for action.

If public expression of dissatisfaction and the organization of protest does not help in the eyes of the protesters to improve the situation the probability for further social mobilization increases. Social mobilization goes beyond expressing dissatisfaction. It comprises all activities that require an organizational effort to concentrate forces, to develop and enact a strategy for gaining public attention and for putting pressure on those who are targeted to make changes. In the course of this process, activities may get more and more radical, in particular if these collective protest actions are ignored or even oppressed (examples may be wild strikes, regional boycotts or blockades). Then the continuum enters the next step: violent outbreak. This can ultimately lead to civil war.

At each step one can specify the conditions (described in the following chapters) that have to be met for moving on to the next step or to return to the previous step(s) – see Figure 4.2. This allows to introduce the time dimension into the model, and to develop a concept of a "social unrest cycle clock" similar to the "Business Cycle Clock" of Eurostat¹. The clock helps representing the development of business cycles as a function of time (the position of different events at a given point in time is given by the markers) and it has served as a model for the "Unrest Cycle Clock" (Figure 6.5).

Step 1: Communication of dissatisfaction

The first step deals with the communication of dissatisfaction. The question is: why are people dissatisfied? To answer this question we assume that people are dissatisfied if their needs and wants are not met or violated.

Within the body of literature the concept of social production functions emerges as an appropriate candidate for explaining dissatisfaction. "The theory states two universal goals: physical well-being and social well-being. These are accomplished through five main instrumental goals (stimulation, comfort, status, behavioral confirmation and affection)" (Ormel *et al.*, 1999). We assume that individuals strive for these goals. The means to reach these goals can be deduced from the theory of rational choice. Within this school of thought it is assumed that individuals choose the most effective and efficient means for reaching a pre-determined goal. The production functions illustrate the relationship between goal attainment and personal costs (in terms of resources such as money, time, effort etc.). Risks occur if either the degree of goal attainment and/or the extent of costs are uncertain. Often it depends on the actions and decisions of others if one's expectations become true. These contingencies express themselves as risks to the individual decision maker. In terms of rational action each individual has to calculate the impacts of each decision option and assess the probability that the expected impacts will or will not materialize.

Social mobilization theory claims that individuals express dissatisfaction in public arenas if the costs of going public are low and the expectation that somebody will respond to it high (McCarthy and Zald, 2001). In cultures where the expression of dissatisfaction

¹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/BCC2/group1/xdis_en.html

is encouraged we will find more public manifestations of dissatisfaction than in those culture in which such behavior is politically or socially sanctioned. However, the likelihood of further escalation rises if people face high costs of expressing dissatisfaction. The reasons is obvious: If people decide in spite of high costs to go public they are much more inclined to organize themselves and mobilize other citizens than in a situation where there is no obstacle to expressing dissatisfaction.

The theory of rational action provides a concept of how people make decisions in the face of uncertainty (overview in Renn *et al.*, 1999; Jaeger *et al.*, 2001). It does not explain why people may become dissatisfied with their environment. The literature contains endless theoretical concepts for explaining dissatisfaction. Often dissatisfaction is linked to the gap between personal expectation and perceived reality. In some cultures even the most deprived groups do not complain about their situation because they do not expect anything better. In other cultures even the well-off tend to express dissatisfaction because they expect to be entitled to even more privileges in the future. In general, one can assume that the expression of dissatisfaction is a function of experience of unfair treatment by others, an expectation that such treatment is not justified or legitimate and a context in which such dissatisfaction can be voiced in the public.

If one turns specifically to the experience of risk, we can be more specific. Psychometric research has demonstrated the properties of risks and risk-related situations that amplify or attenuate the feeling of being endangered or threatened (overviews in Slovic, 1987; Boholm, 1988; Renn, 2008). The main characteristics that shape risk perception include voluntariness, personal control, dread, impression of inequities, blame, familiarity and others. Risks that are perceived as dreadful, involuntarily or out of personal control trigger more stress and concern than risks that are taken voluntarily, have no or minute catastrophic potential and allow personal control. Accordingly we can expect people sharing a perception of high risk to be more inclined to express dissatisfaction than those with low risk perception. This insight is useful when diagnosing the types of risks that could trigger the first steps of social unrest. If people face risks such as the global financial crisis they will probably associate a feeling of dread, involuntariness, lack of control and blame with this crisis, while other collective risks such as car accidents with a high death toll are attenuated due to the perception of voluntariness, personal control and lack of catastrophes.

In addition to the well-known psychometric variables one needs to consider two other relevant factors. The first factor relates to the perception of inequity or injustice. Even small risks are seen as intolerable if the persons exposed to this risk believe that all the benefits of the risk-bearing activity are reaped by others. The financial crisis may be a good example of such a perception of inequity. More frequent are risk situations in which people believe that they are expected to take all the risks while only sharing a small proportion of the benefits (neighbors of a nuclear power plant). If people feel to be treated unfairly they are not only dissatisfied with the resulting risk they are also deeply disappointed about the way that political or economic decision makers have violated their sense of justice (Renn and Zwick, 2008). This will contribute to a loss of trust, the second factor that is likely to promote a feeling of dissatisfaction. Trust is particularly important in cases of lacking personal control (for example the operation of large dam). If people do not trust the operators and/or the regulators they will most likely be dissatisfied with the situation and express this publicly (Renn and Zwick, 2008).

Psychometric theory and studies on trust and equity attempt to explain social behavior from the perspective of individual perception. On a more aggregate system-related level

the theory of reflexive modernization might add additional structural aspects to the list of factors that make the expression of dissatisfaction more probable. Sociologist Ulrich Beck is one of the most important representatives of this school of thoughts. In his book “Risikogesellschaft” (risk society) he claims that modern societies face a new quality of risks which is characterized by an increase in unintended consequences and irreversibility of decisions (Beck, 1992/1986). People are faced with promises of risk management that policy makers cannot meet due to the complexity of the issues and the interconnectivity of impacts. Furthermore, the benefits of new technologies or policies are contested as well as the acceptability of the risks that go along with them. Hence society tends to polarize between those who want to invest in uncertain changes and those who prefer a precautionary strategy. A rational discourse about potential social benefits and risks is not possible since no one can assess the potential systemic impacts on society with any degree of confidence. In the end it is a question of belief as well as of reflexive self-monitoring which risks are taken and which risks are rejected. The process of modernization makes itself to its own theme and problem (Beck, 2000). In terms of triggering or even causing dissatisfaction the theory of reflexive modernization claims that the discourse about new technologies or new policy options tend to polarize societies and facilitate a climate in which one side will try to make its discontent a public topic while the other side is wholeheartedly convinced that the new technologies will only benefit society. Such discontent with modernity may be more closely related to a feeling of unease than a rational balancing of pros and cons. Public acceptance of policies and technologies are thus associated with the experience of alienation from one’s living environment and resistance to further modernization (Zinn, 2006).

Conclusion of Step 1

The reasons for people to express dissatisfaction are plenty and diverse. In general people are more dissatisfied if the gap between perceived reality and personal expectation widens. With respect to risk experience our review focused on three major theoretical approaches: rational actor theory (social production function), risk perception concepts and reflexive modernization. For diagnosing structural reasons that may increase the likelihood of dissatisfaction reflexive modernization provides cues that could be used as precursors or indicators for trouble to come. When it comes to individual motivation and incentives for expressing dissatisfaction rational actor theory provides the general frame in which individuals balance the pros and cons for taking stances in society while risk perception concepts can assist analysts to classify and evaluate situation in which people tend to amplify or attenuate threats to what they value. The feeling of dissatisfaction by itself is ineffective for political processes unless it is openly expressed and communicated to others. Once this is done, the next step is to organize those who expressed their dissatisfaction and make the voice of these “people” better heard in the respective political arenas in a world of abundant information and communication.

Step 2: Organization of protest

Under which circumstances do we expect that people organize their interests or rally around a common theme? Even if people are unsatisfied they will not necessarily try to organize their protest. Organization implies that dissatisfied people look either for an existing group, organization or initiative that would transport their protest into the public arena or they will form a new organization of its own kind.

The escalation from expressing dissatisfaction to organized protest rests upon many conditions. First, the number of people that share the same feeling of dissatisfaction must be large enough to form a larger group. Secondly, the potentially affected individuals must know of each other and find a way to communicate to each other. Most important, however, is the motivation to invest time, effort and often finances to start an organization or relate to an existing organization. The theory of collective behavior, most notably the studies by Mancur Olson, provides some hints of what motivates dissatisfied people to become organized. Olson claims that the organization of interests is the more likely to occur the more the benefits of such collective actions can be exclusively used by the members and not shared with non-members. Again rational actor theory provides the explanation: if everybody benefits there is no incentive for each individual to get active since one can reap the benefits without investing one's own resources. This free rider position is the main reason for a lack of organized groups that engage for goals that are in everybody's interest (Olson, 2004). Common interests are connected with individual interests. Common goods serve common interests and are available for every member within the group (Leuffen, 2006).

The emergence of groups depends for Olson on the size of the group in relation to the rest of the population. If the group is too small it may not be visible in the political arena. Potential members will not even bother to join since the organization demands resources but does not promise any realistic opportunity for success. The same is true if the group is very large. Then each individual has no incentive to join because his or her engagement adds only marginal benefit to the success of the group. So recruiting new members will be difficult in particular if non-members will also benefit from the group's success. In this respect it is crucial to have the right size: small enough to provide motivation for each individual to join and large enough to convey a realistic expectation that the group's goals are reached. (Olson, 2004). Olson also claims that groups have a better chance of motivating their members if the composition of the group is heterogeneous. If all members are very similar each member will expect the other to perform the necessary tasks to get the group's voice heard in the public. If the group integrates people from many different backgrounds each one has an incentive to mobilize others or work for the common goal in the arena in which he or she feels at home (Leuffen, 2006). Large groups are likely to be formed if the group produces selective incentives for each individual in addition to the collective good that they strive for. Among them are gratifications (for example certain benefits are for active members only, or group members have access to privileged information, or provision of resources in case of a strike or a boycott) or incentives (e.g. such as cheaper insurance fees for members of the automobile clubs) (Leuffen, 2006; Olson, 2004).

In addition to costs and gains, there are other variables that make individual participation in an organization more likely. One of these variables refers to the socio-economic background of a person. Analyzing social positions and social status has a long tradition in the social sciences and can be traced back to the seminal work of Ralf Dahrendorf (1972). The main idea is that social norms, values and expectations shape the behavior of an individual. Surveys were able to show that well-educated individuals from the middle class are more likely to start organizations or initiate links with existing organizations (Bertelsmannstiftung, 2004). However, people of lower income and education are easier to recruit and, in particular, to mobilize if the organization already exists. This result can be explained by the mechanisms of socialization: To take initiative in collective action is often a goal within the educational system and parents of middle class families encourage their children to believe in the power of individual agency. In

families of lower income and education the value of solidarity with a mass movement or the work ethics of being active in something one believes in is more wide spread than in other social classes. In addition to class, some studies were able to demonstrate that men are more active in interest groups than women (different gender roles). Other important variables (with different explanations) are age, religion or profession.

Of high importance are value clusters or belief systems that have an impact on personal and collective propensity to initiate collective action (Renn and Zwick, 2008; Edwards and von Winterfeldt, 1987) The most prominent example is the distinction in materialistic and post-materialistic value cluster proposed by Inglehart (1977). His approach is directed towards explaining participation in new social movements. Participants of new movements have distinct value patterns that differ from those of non-participants. Inglehart (1977) is convinced that this difference is due to a generational effect. Since members of the older generations had frequently experienced material shortage in their lives they tend to favor (materialistic) values such as material wealth, order, regularity and cleanliness. Those who did not experience the problems of wars and post-wars periods tend to place more emphasis on non-materialistic values such as clean environment, harmony, equity and variety of lifestyle options (Inglehart 1977; Renn and Zwick, 2008).

Conclusion of Step 2

We can conclude that people tend to organize themselves if they believe that the resources they have invested in this organizing effort are worth the chance of getting the desired benefit. The more exclusive a group can produce benefits for its members the more likely it is that individuals will opt to join the group and become active contributors. Furthermore, the group needs to have the right size to attract and motivate new members (favoring small groups) but also to demonstrate effectiveness in the respective political arenas (favoring larger groups). Very large groups need to offer additional incentives and gratifications in order to be attractive to newcomers. In addition, individual characteristics such as class, gender, education, religion and profession have an impact on the likelihood for initiating or joining social protest movements and organizations.

Step 3: Mobilization of protest groups

Organized groups could use their momentum and strength to influence the policy making process by using legal and conventional means. What counts as legal and conventional depends on the culture in which the organization is located. Strikes may be legal forms of protest in one culture but not in another. At the next step of our escalator the question arises what motivates organized protest groups to choose unconventional forms of expressing their claims. To answer this question we will have a closer look at resource mobilization theories. Resource mobilization theories use the rational action paradigm to explain the procedure of selecting the most appropriate means for reaching pre-defined goals (Klandermans, 1984; McCarthy and Zald 2001). Most conventional forms of influencing decisions rely on the means of money, power, value commitment, evidence and social solidarity. These means are called resources. They can be used in a public arena to put pressure on the decision maker(s). For example, one can use financial assets to compensate those who might be against the group's claims. Another group could use its potential for mobilizing those individuals who share the same or similar convictions (for example environmental NGOs). Other may use evidence as a means to

produce a common understanding that the desired change will lead to better outcomes (Jaeger *et al.*, 2001).

If a group has little access to resources or is not allowed to use its given reservoir of resources the likelihood that illegal and/or unconventional modes of actions are selected increases steadily. Resource mobilization theory predicts that particularly groups with highly motivated individuals will retreat to unconventional forms of protest if other channels of influencing public decision making are not available or simply ignored. This insight leads to the normative conclusion that, for a society that attempts to avoid unconventional forms of protest, the availability of channels for communication and decision making as well as access to resources are crucial.

In addition, theorists of social mobilization have discussed more formal properties of groups that tend to use unconventional means for reaching their goals. Organizations need a minimum of money and commitment of its members to initiate unconventional protest. They require also some experience and knowledge about the effectiveness of their actions. In addition, they must take into account the potential support by people who are either sympathetic to their cause or at least indifferent. If these bystanders perceive the actions as non-proportionate or illegitimate the protest movement can easily break down or the legal authority faces far less public resistance against the use of force to break the protest. If the protest is supported by large portions of the population the protest is reinforced and the legal authorities face major difficulties in justifying force or other radical forms of sustaining order. It is self-evident that the total number of participants (the more participants the higher the likelihood of success), the dedication of the members, (dis-)trust in the official authorities, and the common appeal and resonance of the cause of action among the total population increase the chance that even unconventional means are perceived as acceptable and may become more attractive for the respective organizations (Geissel and Thillmann, 2006). In addition, escalation is likely to occur if the response by public authorities (police or military force) to first signs of violence or unconventional methods is perceived as being out of proportion. In general terms, escalation and de-escalation are closely related to the openness or closeness of the political system in its response to the collective actions of the movement. Often informal patterns of bargaining with the political systems may be a possibility to reduce the degree of conflict when all legal forms are exhausted (Geissel and Thillmann, 2006.).

One major problem of resource mobilization theory is the common pool dilemma. Why should individuals invest their resources in terms of time, money and commitment for a common cause that might be delivered even without their engagement? Furthermore, since common goods are available to all members of society there is always the opportunity for free riders to enjoy the benefits without sharing any of the costs. As mentioned in the last chapter of this paper, Olson has suggested some features of social movements that may entice individuals to join a collective movement even if the benefits cannot be used exclusively (Olson 2004). In addition to the partial or extra benefits of membership resource mobilization theory suggests two additional approaches to overcome the commoner's dilemma. First, the common good may be so precious and valuable to the individual that s/he does not mind if others would benefit from such a good without payment (this is particularly true if the commitment rests on common values and convictions). Secondly, being part of a "winning" movement adds social prestige and recognition to the person which in itself may be a sufficient motivator to join. In some cases the expectation of a career move within a social movement might be a sufficient incentive to become a member or sustain membership. The larger the social movement grows the less realistic such expectations become, however (Gupta and Singh,

1992; Jerkins, 1983). But even in large social groups individuals should not be seen as isolated actors that are easily lost within such a large compound. Each individual can associate a sense of meaning and purpose with his or her own action. This symbolic gratification is often much stronger than the expectation of material gains or exclusive use of goods. In addition, new members are often recruited by established members who can offer personal assistance and support which reinforces a feeling of collective identity and solidarity (Gupta and Singh, 1992; Jerkins, 1983).

Conclusion of Step 3

Mobilizing people to initiate acts of unconventional protest or even violence relies on a set of structural and motivational factors. First of all, motivating individuals to join movements for a common cause rests on the ability of the organization to provide in-kind or symbolic incentives to members for compensating the barriers of common cause organizations, i.e. the free-rider problem and the marginal input by each member. If groups can motivate many followers to join the organization, it depends on the response of the others, particular public authorities, if and how the protest will escalate. Among the most influential factors are: lack of openness on the side of public authorities or other addressees of the protest, inability to react proportionally and a shortage of available communication channels for the activists to make their voice heard in society. Furthermore, historical evidence shows that a very narrow scope of legally accepted protest actions can indeed prevent small movements from becoming influential and also impede mobilization efforts, yet if special thresholds of dissatisfaction are surpassed the mobilization can develop into a major national crisis since no de-escalation mechanism are in place and the frustrations of being ignored for a long time can easily result in increased violence, as discussed below.

Step 4: Acts of organized civil violence

Deliberate and organized civil violence is the last step of escalation. Such planned violent acts may even result in civil war. Occasional uncontrolled violence is always a risk when large masses of people take their protest to the streets. In most cases such acts of isolated violence do not lend themselves to further escalation. On the contrary, most protest organization distance themselves according to information in mass media from violent outbreaks if there were neither planned nor secretly tolerated. In most countries, civil violence is seen as a clearly illegitimate action of protest. So if violence occurs the leaders of the respective protest organizations can either distance themselves from the violence or blame the other side for having provoked the violence. Yet they normally will try hard to reduce the extent to which its members use force during protest actions. Although small pockets of violence can also initiate a route of gradual escalation, this is rather unlikely.

The picture changes dramatically if protest organizations plan or tolerate the outburst of violence as means to promote their cause of action. The leaders of these organizations may not disclose their strategies publicly and insist in the public on a peaceful pathway to pursue their cause. Secretly, however, they encourage their members to use violence and justify these actions later as “spontaneous” outbursts of public frustrations. In most cases, organization need to legitimize their radical protest by blaming the other side (most often the political elite) to perform major acts of civil rights violations or to exploit one part of the population to the benefit of the other part. Often such accusations are linked with ethnic, religious or class-related differences which tend to amplify motivation and

willingness to use violence. Many outbreaks of civil violence are also expressions of major unresolved geographic conflicts (Misra, 2008). In any case, a call to violent actions requires a major cause. Furthermore, there must be a common conviction among the activists and their sympathizers that the conditions will only change if violence is used. Both conditions can transform a peaceful movement into a radical uprising that leads to numerous acts of violence.

It is not clear, however, how such a gradual escalation evolves over time and what factors are causing the stepwise escalation from mere dissatisfaction to civil war. There are many case studies but we still lack a coherent theory of what leads to violent outbreaks and what measures can help society to prevent them. In line with our arguments, Kepplinger (2009) has outlined a typical escalation scenario that starts with the rise of critical positions towards one's own society or parts therein. If this criticism is not taken up by any authority, small protest groups will emerge who will start to recruit members for joining their cause and to use the media for legitimizing their actions. Broad media coverage in conjunction with some demonstrative actions makes the cause a top topic in the respective society. This experience of sudden prominence encourages the protest groups to become more pronounced in their communication and often more radical in their demands. If the public authorities ignore the protest or employ rather harsh counter-measures, the conflict is likely to escalate. Yet even if public authorities signal openness to the demands and try to accommodate the protest groups they may fail to de-escalate the situation. Many protest leaders may interpret this as a sign of a weakness and take the opportunity to fight for even more radical changes in the political system. So both a too strong as well as a too lenient approach may actually contribute to the escalation. Most effective is probably a step-by-step approach by which negotiations with the protest groups and the setting of clear boundaries are used intermittently.

Kepplinger argues that the most crucial variable for explaining civil violence is the perception of the protesters that their actions are morally justified given the extent of perceived oppression or interest violations by the other side. The more the protesters experience what they would interpret as undue pressure or force the more they feel motivated to increase their own violence. So they start to radicalize (Kepplinger, 2009). Kepplinger concludes that violators do not regard their acts as examples of deviant behavior, but as part of legitimate and justified response that is embedded in the self-image of actor networks that reinforce the belief that such violent acts are the "right" thing to do under the given circumstances (Kepplinger, 2009). Violence becomes normal. An entirely different route of escalating violence occurs in societies with weak social coherence and a dysfunctional political culture. In these circumstances the leaders of protest movements easily lose control over their members and neither the group leaders nor public authorities are able to contain the violent outbursts of renegade fractions of the movement to use violence. This scenario is frequent in countries with a history of political and social instability. This comes close to situations of anarchy.

Conclusion of Step 4

The escalation to mass violence is still a process that is not well understood in the social and historical sciences. There seem to be three major components that have to come together: the perception of a legitimate cause that would justify even the use of force; the inability of the public authorities to cope with the situation due to lack of capacity, overreaction or over leniency and a random factor of mass momentum that may kick in when some trigger is released (a tipping point).

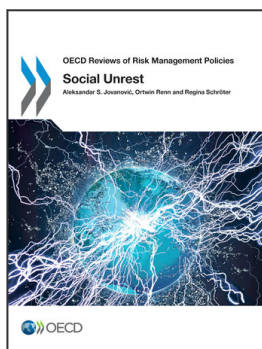
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From:
Social Unrest

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264173460-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

Jovanoviæ, Aleksandar S., Ortwin Renn and Regina Schröter (2012), “Basic model”, in *Social Unrest*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264173460-6-en>

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