

When do demonstrations make a difference? Collective and connective action compared

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Abstract

Is protesting effective? Decennia after this question was first posed, it still has not been answered satisfactorily. While many scholars focus on policy change as a long-term effect of protest, the problem of causality still hinders conclusive outcomes. In trying to tackle this problem, this paper is focused on the short-term effect protest has on the mediating arenas - the political and public agendas - needed to be influenced to create policy change on the long term. By examining policy and parliamentary documents and newspaper articles on the issue-attention and issue-framing of the protest-issues of two street demonstrations before, during and after a campaign, a first attempt hereinto is made. By distinguishing between connective and collective action a new contribution is made to the recent debate on whether or not the new form of connective action leads to different outcomes than traditional forms of protest, or collective action.

Introduction

Arab Spring, austerity-protests in Southern Europe, worldwide central squares occupied; protest surges throughout the world. Although the protests often get a fair amount of attention, the question is whether they really have an effect. The question – does protest make a difference? - that interests many an observer is still waiting for conclusive answers (e.g. Burnstein & Linton, 2002; Giugni, 1998; McAdam & Su, 2002).

As protest-types and their outcomes vary widely, we choose to focus on nowadays' quintessential unconventional political action: street demonstrations. Protest-outcomes also vary widely, resulting in a long-lasting theoretical debate about their conceptualization. Most movement scholars would however agree that social movements can be defined as actors aiming for policy change. When this is reached, the protest is said to be effective. This raises the problem of causality - i.e. how can we be sure that an observed change results from a specific protest. In an attempt to tackle this problem, we do not focus on policy change on the long term but on the arenas needed to be influenced on the short term to achieve this change. The more successful a demonstration is in influencing these arenas the higher its chances are in creating policy change and thus the more effective it will be.

The first arena to be influenced for policy change is necessarily the political agenda. While the focus is on political outcomes of protest, this does not imply that the impact of demonstrations can solely be measured by their political success. Media—representing the public arena—play a significant role in mediating and amplifying the impact of protest (Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). Therefore, when able to influence the news coverage demonstrations will generate more attention, (on the long term) this can lead to more political attention and hence policy change (Vliegenthart, 2007). The public agenda can thus be regarded as the second arena needed to be influenced for policy change. Therefore, in understanding the impact of demonstrations on the two agendas our focal question reads: What is the short-term effect of demonstrations on the political and public agendas?

We will look into what Bennett and Segerberg (2012) formulate as the logic of collective versus the logic of connective action. Bennett and Segerberg argue that social movements cannot be analyzed within one framework. According to the authors contemporary protest is a “mix of different styles of organization and communication” which needs to be studied accordingly (2012, p. 749). They differentiate between collective action – for which conventional organizations such as unions and political parties try to mobilize people for pursuing a common goal for which a collective identity has to be created – and connective action - in which the goals of protest are focused on individual preferences and people are mobilized by loosely organized organizations or individuals with what Bennett and Segerberg call ‘personalized communication’ to address the individual, not the group (2012, p. 744).

What we already know is that mobilization is different for collective and connective-centered action (Boekkooi 2012; Van Stekelenburg & Boekkooi, 2013). Still unknown is if collective and

connective action also result into different outcomes. Does their impact on the political and public agendas diverge? Our research will be able to answer this question as we compare a collective and a connective organized demonstration, and hence give more insight in the outcomes of these two logics of action.

We will examine the effect demonstrations have on the political and public agendas in two ways. First, by whether or not *issue-attention* increases after a demonstration (cf. Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). We assume that the forms of action differ in the amount of political and public attention they generate as the action logics differ in their ability to reach large audiences (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). That is, resourceful organizations are expected to persevere long-lasting campaigns and stage several warming-up campaigns. Loosely organized connective actions, on the other hand, are expected to attract short but firm attention. Short because there is no organization mobilizing resources to invest in long-lasting campaigns, yet firm as the ‘newness factor’ of connective action tends to attract relatively much attention. Second, by looking at if and how the focus on the agendas changes after the demonstration (e.g. coverage on the protest-issue after the demonstration becoming more against the issue implies a positive effect of the demonstration). We call this *issue-framing*.

In this paper we will examine whether the different logics of action differentially affect the amount of political and public attention the protest-issue gets before and after the demonstration, and if the focus of the agendas changes. We can then conclude if the protests made a short-term impact on the political and public agendas. If they did, they can be said to be effective as they then have an accrued chance of changing public policy.

For our empirical analysis we studied Dutch parliamentary documents, newspaper articles published in two Dutch newspapers on (1) on the increasing retirement age, that went up from 65 to 67, which was protested in the collective organized campaign ‘Retirement should start at 65’ (2009), and (2) the art and culture budget cuts in the Netherlands, which was protested in the connective organized campaign ‘The Dutch scream for culture’ (2010). Both campaigns debouched into large street demonstrations. The campaigns themselves started in case of the connective campaign weeks and in case of the collective campaign even months before and lasted respectively weeks and days after the demonstrations took place. Because the demonstrations are embedded within a chain of campaign-related events to acquire as much (political and public) attention as possible, we studied all documents published during the campaigns and in the month before and the month after the campaigns. By adding weeks prior and following the campaigns, we are able to examine the amount of political and public attention the campaigns generated before, during and after the campaigns. It made us also better able to study the effect of the demonstrations and additional protest actions.

In what follows, we will first present the theoretical framework of this paper, followed by an explanation of the two demonstrations/campaigns and an explanation of the methodological model. The analysis of the empirical data will be followed by an elaboration of these results in the conclusion and discussion section.

Theoretical framework

Issue-attention and issue-framing

In this research the short-term effect of demonstrations will be examined by *issue-attention* and *issue-framing* in the political and public agendas as an influence of both agendas is needed for acquiring policy change (Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). The more prominent the issue of protest is on these agendas the more effective the demonstration is as it has increased its chances for policy change. If the frame used in the agendas is or becomes more in opposition to the protest-issue after a demonstration this also implies a positive effect of the demonstration as the agendas then resemble the campaign agenda (more).

Issue-attention As the political system is the target of the protest, political responsiveness on the protest is an important aspect of the success of the protest. One aspect of responsiveness is agenda responsiveness - the placing of the demand of the protesters on the political agenda (in this paper a combination of the parliamentary and the governmental agenda) (Schumaker, 1975, p. 494). According to Walgrave and Vliegenthart (2012) being able to set the political agenda is a requirement for campaign organizers to achieve political goals. Issue-attention is thus a condition for policy change: without issue-attention no policy change. Hence, in this research, the political impact of demonstrations will be conceptualized as the effect they have on the political attention-cycle; i.e. whether or not issue-attention increases after a demonstration. When able to set the political agenda, a demonstration is likely to have more effect (cf. Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). Analogous to previous studies on the US, Walgrave and Vliegenthart (2012) already found that in Belgium this effect does exist: a week after a demonstration the political attention for the issue increases. We will examine whether it differs for collective versus connective action.

Although setting the political agenda is necessary for a protest to be successful, it will be more effective if it also able to set the public agenda (e.g. Koopmans, 2004; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). Public attention in the form of media attention is according to Walgrave and Vliegenthart (2012) even needed to be successful. In our research, media are conceived of as active actors covering, framing and interpreting issues and protest events (Giugni, 1999; Wolfsfeld & Gadi, 2011). Media act as amplifiers. That is to say, they make big demonstrations look “bigger” and grim demonstrations look “grimmer” (McCarthy et al., 1996). The amplified images in their turn influence the political agenda (Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). Hence, media play a significant role in mediating and amplifying the impact of protest. That is why, in addition to the political impact of demonstrations, we will also examine the public attention-cycle of demonstrations and, in line with the conceptualization of the political attention-cycle, the public attention-cycle of demonstrations will also be defined as whether or not issue-attention increases after the demonstration.

Issue-framing However, not only the ability of social movements to set the political and public agenda is needed to organize an effective campaign, agenda-building might be just as important. By agenda-building campaign organizers try to influence the “interpretation and prioritizing” of the issue

of protest on the political and public agenda (Smith, McCarthy, McPhail & Augustyn, 2001, p. 1400). The way social movements do this, is by framing the issue according to their own agenda (Benford & Snow, 2000). When this happens successfully, the political and public agendas resemble the campaign agenda, which implies a positive effect of the campaign on both agendas. Therefore, in addition to our conceptualization of issue-attention as an effect of demonstrations we define the effect of demonstrations also as whether or not the framing of the issue increasingly resembles that of the campaign after the demonstration.

Collective and connective action

Contentious politics is nowadays increasingly organized according to the ‘logic of connective action’ (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 748). In contrast to the familiar ‘logic of collective action’ protest is not organized by professionals from unions and political parties – who share a long history in organizing protest – but by loosely organized organizations and individuals, who not necessarily have experience in organizing protest (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). No central organization is needed as the message spreads itself, through individual’s personal and digital networks via digital, and especially social, media. Consequently, people can be quickly reached and at low costs. According to Bennett and Segerberg (2012, pp. 747-748), connective action creates is therefore able to create more ‘public worthiness’: recognition from public officials and media attention. They state that recent forms of connective action have outnumbered several collective forms of action regarding political and public attention. Bennett and Segerberg are not arguing that connective action is more effective than collective action, however, the way in which protest is organized and digital media are used in these new forms of action might induce public officials to move more in the direction of the connective protest issue. Because of the differences between these two forms of action, the authors argue that connective and collective action need to be studied separately.

Based on Bennett and Segerberg’s (2012) ideas, in our study we expect to find that the connective demonstration ‘The Dutch scream for culture’ will create more political and public attention than the collective demonstration “Retirement should start at 65”. However, we must take into account that traditional protest organizers (collective campaigns) have due to their experience and establishment access to policy makers and media channels and therefore do not need to rely on their protest actions to draw attention (Baylor, 1996; Walgrave & Vliegenthart, 2012). According to Walgrave and Vliegenthart (2012, p. 138) “protest is their last resort, if all other instruments have failed”. Based on this reasoning, we believe that connective actions’ strong focus on the demonstration might be the reason behind Bennett and Segerberg’s (2012) finding that connective demonstrations generate more public worthiness.

Building on Walgrave and Vliegenthart’s (2012) statement on resources, we assume that even though the attention generated with connective action will be firm, this attention span will be short as connective action not only lacks the resources to access policy makers and media, but, compared to

collective action, also the resources to invest in long-lasting campaigns. Large resource pools of money, labor, legitimacy and facilities are needed for a movement to achieve its goal (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Traditional collective movements more often than connective movements possess these resources as they are more professionalized and embedded in society. Thus connective action demonstrations might have a stronger impact on public worthiness, however, the impact of a collective demonstration of campaign will probably be more lasting – even on the relative short-term - as connective action lacks resources to keep the attention for the issue alive.

The demonstrations/campaigns

‘Retirement should stay at 65’

Before we will go into the methods used, we will shortly describe the two demonstrations. The collective organized demonstration against the increasing retirement age in the Netherlands was part of a larger campaign ‘Fighting the crisis together’ that was initiated in February 2009. It started with an ‘investment plan’ in which the unions FNV, CNV and MHP proposed measures towards the Dutch government on how to handle the economic crisis (FNV, 2009). This already led to a general demonstration in March. In June 2009 a separate campaign was initiated by FNV against the government plan to increase the retirement age – from 65 to 67 (Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, 2009). As in many countries budget cuts needed to be made in The Netherlands. Increasing the retirement age was one of the cuts.

The campaign started with meetings in which employees could discuss alternatives for the government plan (Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, 2009). Together with employer organization the unions were invited to discuss an alternative plan. This led to nothing. Consequently, the government pushed through its own plan, and the unions organized public protest actions that ended with a nationwide demonstration in November. The campaign ended four weeks after the demonstration took place. From then on FNV was still against the government plan, but realized that it was unstoppable. It would now do everything it could to limit the “damage” of this plan (De Volkskrant, 2009).

Because this campaign was organized by traditional parties (unions, supported by political parties) who are fighting against one common goal, it can be categorized as collective action.

The campaign organizer of the protest against the increasing pension age (the FNV) started out with a, what we classify as a, *in-opposition-to-frame* (see the methods chapter), but this changed after a couple of weeks into a *in-favor-of-frame*. At first the FNV was against the age-increase from 65 to 67, but when this did not seem to be tenable, it opted that everyone should still be able to stop working at 65 and receive their payment, but those who continued working until 67 would receive a higher payment.

‘The Dutch scream for culture’

The connective campaign ‘The Dutch scream for culture’ started on November 1st 2010 and was aimed at the imminent 200 million budget by the Dutch government. The campaign followed up on the presentation of the coalition agreement in September for the year 2011. This campaign lasted three weeks and its main event was the demonstration held two days before the campaign ended. The campaign was organized by different cultural organizations in the Netherlands like art collectives, theaters, museums, and was led by movie- and theatre director Marc van Warmerdam. Although it was directed against the budget cuts, there was not a collective focus: there was protest against the increasing taxes on tickets, cuts on libraries, cuts on benefits etc., and most participants in the demonstration were no member of one of the organizing organizations (Klandermans, Van Stekelenburg, Damen, Van Leeuwen & Van Troost, 2013)¹. The campaign can thus be considered a form of connective action.

Methods

We use weeks from Monday to Saturday as units of analysis. The ‘Retirement should stay at 65’-campaign lasted 28 weeks. The month before and the month after the campaign both comprise five weeks. The ‘The Dutch scream for culture’-campaign lasted four weeks. The same goes for the months before and after the campaign. For this campaign we decided to also look at the month prior to the closing of the coalition agreement, to see if the issue was already discussed before the intended measures were presented. This were five weeks. We did not do this with the collective campaign, because the intended measures were already presented. Because we used the exact dates on which the campaigns started and ended and did this also with the month before and after the campaign, the first and last weeks of the examined period are not necessarily full weeks. For example, the campaign ‘The Dutch scream for culture’ starts at November 1st. The month prior the campaign starts at September 30th and ends on October 31st. September 30th is on a Thursday, so the first week of the researched period before the campaign starts at Thursday and thus lasts only four days.

Issue-attention To measure issue-attention we collected all parliamentary and policy documents and newspaper articles on the issues (increasing retirement age and budget cuts arts and culture sector) published during the campaigns and a month before and after each campaign. Selected were only the documents and articles in which the issue was not only mentioned as just an example (for example, in an enumeration of government plans), but was also further elaborated on.

Regarding the parliamentary and policy documents, when documents were part of a chain of documents, only the document that puts the issue on the agenda, the main document, was selected. For example, a motion is always followed by a ballot. The ballot thus automatically follows the motion.

¹ In the demonstration ‘Retirement should stay at 65’ 82 percent of the participants was a member of one of the organizing organizations against 14 percent in the demonstration ‘The Dutch scream for culture’.

The ballot is not a unique document; it is not on the political agenda because the issue is considered to be important that week, but because it follows automatically. When examining the amount of attention an issue receives it is important to only select unique documents, otherwise pairing documents are considered as distinctive and this will give a distorted view.

Answers from the government following questions from the parliament and assemblies and debates were considered unique documents, because they put the issue (back) on the agenda (which indicates renewed or more attention for the issue). In that sense they are individual documents. Every parliamentary question and governmental answer is treated as a unique document, even though they are asked/answered by the same politicians, because this is an indication of the importance of the issue in that specific week. In a week in which two questions are asked the issue is less important or less ‘hot’ than in a week in which ten questions are asked on the issue. Hence, in the latter week the issue is more prominent on the political agendas: it gets more attention. In the research period a total of 104 parliamentary and policy documents were incorporated 53 on the increasing retirement age, 51 on the arts and culture budget cuts).

The newspaper articles were selected from the two biggest Dutch quality newspapers: NRC Handelsblad and De Volkskrant. Only unique articles were selected. When an abstract of an article on for example page 7 is published on the front page, only the full article on page 7 was analyzed. In total 476 articles were incorporated (332 on the increasing retirement age, 144 on the arts and culture budget cuts).

Issue-framing Newspapers have a selection and description bias (Smith et al., 2001). They themselves decide which valence to use. Therefore, for each article we looked at the valence used: in favor or in opposition to the protest-issue or balanced. We also did this for the parliamentary and policy documents.

The valence of the parliamentary and policy documents and the newspaper articles was coded on a scale from 1 to 5. 1 meaning *in opposition to* (against the increasing retirement age/budget cuts, without mentioning a positive aspect of it), 2 meaning *mostly in opposition to* (political documents: against the government plan, but change is not foreclosed; newspaper articles: mostly opponents of the plan are cited, but in a lesser degree also proponents. Or an interview with an opponent in which critical questions are asked), 3 meaning *balanced* (proportional attention for both opponents and proponents of the budget cuts and government plan), 4 meaning *mostly in favor of* (political documents: in favor of the increasing pension age or the budget cuts on arts and culture, but not entirely positive on the implementation plans of the government; newspaper articles: mostly proponents of the plan are cited, but in a lesser degree also opponents. Or an interview with a proponent in which critical questions are asked), 5 meaning *in favor of* (political documents: policy documents from the government in which the government plan is elaborated on or documents of other political parties that agree with the government; newspaper articles: articles in which solely proponents are cited or in which the government plans are elaborated without mentioning any

criticism/citing critics). Documents coded with 0 are neutral, meaning that no frame is used. This regarded mostly parliamentary questions towards ministers on if they were informed on the issue.

The documents and articles are judged from a layman perspective. The image a person without any background knowledge on the subject and opinions from politicians and other actors gets after reading the documents and articles is the image transmitted by politicians and the newspapers. Hence, this is the frame used. In revising this study we will opt for inter-rater reliability to enhance the reliability of our findings.

The classification of the frames (from *in opposition to* to *in favor of*) is based on the idea that social movements want to change a ‘problematic situation or issue’, which makes their frames focus on blame or responsibility (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616). A frame focused on blame and the problematic side of an issue can said to be *in opposition to*. We therefore equated the viewpoint of the campaign organizers with the most negative assessment, code 1, *in opposition to*. Based on our conceptualization of issue-framing as an effect of demonstrations, demonstrations thus have a positive effect on the political and public agenda if they take on the *in-opposition to-frame*.

Because FNV makes an opinion-switch regarding the increasing retirement age, FNV’s new stance on the issue is considered a *mostly-in-opposition-to-frame*. We decided not to make that the *in-opposition-to-frame*, because some political parties (SP and PVV) remained fully against the age-increase throughout the whole campaign period (and are thus cited in articles and documents accordingly). Therefore, the *in-opposition-to-frame* will be the campaign organizers original position on the issue. Plus, when after its opinion-switch the FNV is cited in an article with sentences like ‘we are against the increasing retirement age’ or ‘the retirement age should stay at 65’, this article is still coded with 1, as a lay does not know any better than the FNV (or the angle of the article) is in opposition to the age-increase.

Results

Figure 1 displays the amount of issue-attention the collective campaign ‘Retirement should stay at 65’ received before, during and after the campaign and how it was framed on the political and public agenda. Figure 2 shows this for the connective campaign ‘The Dutch scream for culture’. The bars represent the amount of attention the protest-issue got, expressed on the left y-axis in percentages of the total coverage. The red bar represents the amount of political attention, the green bar the amount of public (media) attention the protest-issue received. The lines represent the framing or valence of the protest-issue. The red line shows the political framing, the green line the public framing. The trend lines represent the way the protest-issue is framed throughout time. The blue polyline shows the political framing, the pink polyline shows the public framing. The grey markup balloons point out important events related to the campaign, the pink markup balloons point out possible important events in politics. The black line marks the demonstration. The grey marks the campaign period.

Figure 1: collective campaign 'Retirement should stay at 65'

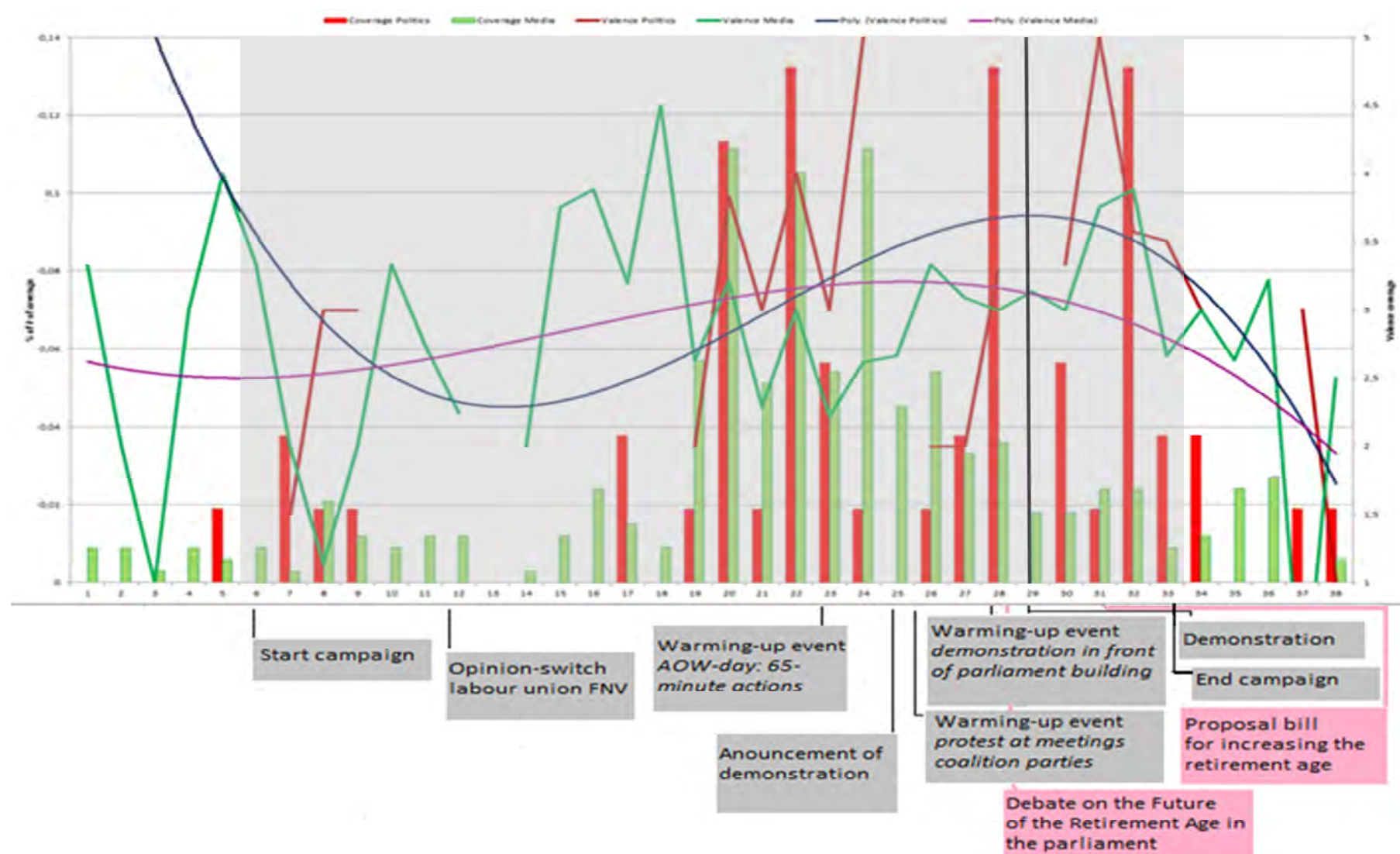
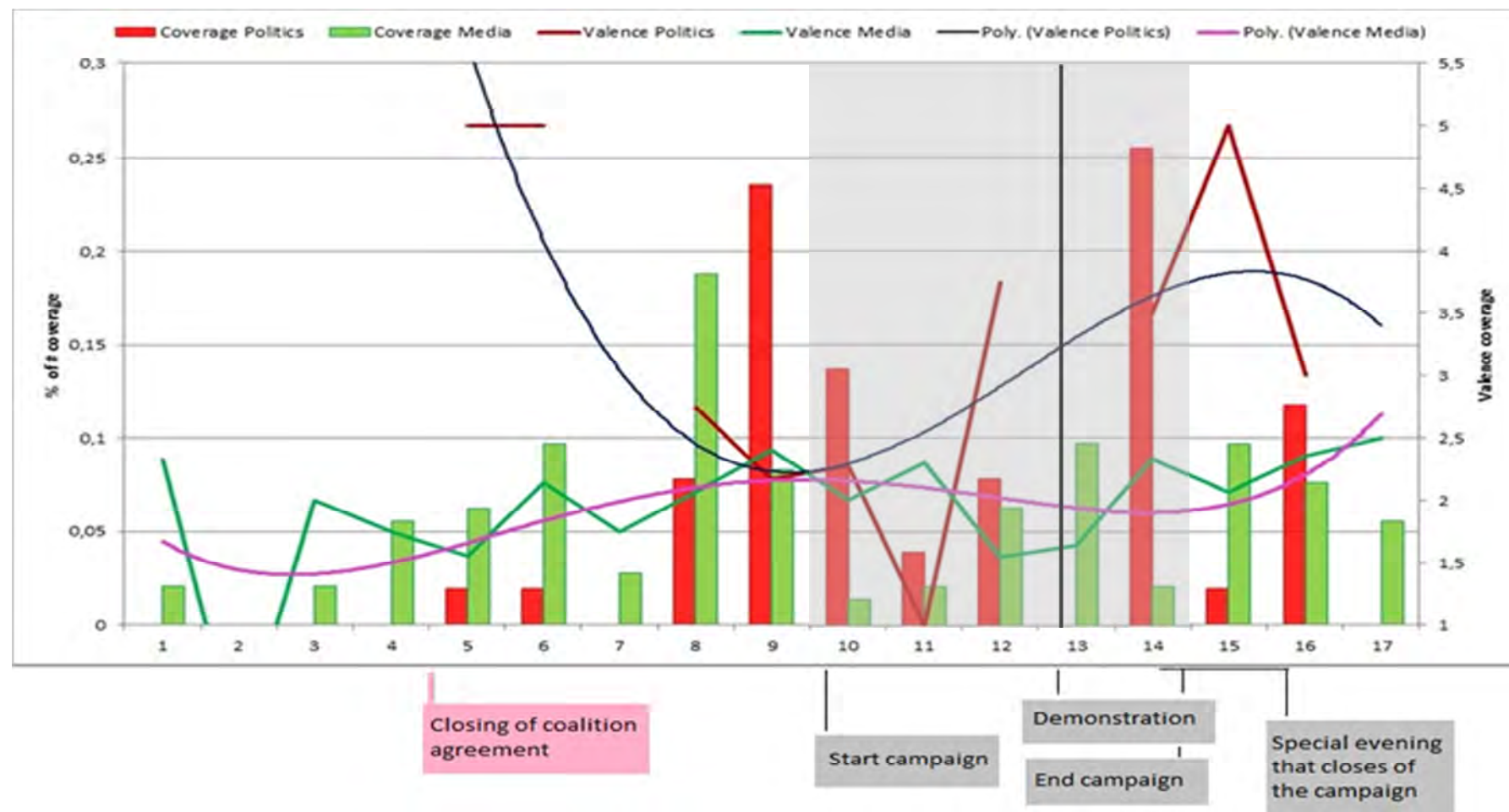


Figure 2: connective campaign 'The Dutch scream for culture'



Issue-attention The attention for the protest-issue of the collective campaign starts out low, especially in politics, but increases in the period the warming-up events take place and towards the demonstration, and is able to capture the politics and public's eye more during its campaign than prior and after it. Contrary to that of the collective campaign, the protest-issue of the connective campaign receives less attention during the campaign than before and after it. Both after the collective and the connective demonstration the political-issue-attention increases significantly, but especially for the connective protest-issue, although the content of the documents published is not directly related to the demonstrations. With a total of 53 political documents and 332 newspaper articles the collective protest-issue received more attention than the connective protest-issue on which 51 political documents and 144 newspaper articles were published. On both protest-issues the political attention seems to follow the public attention.

Issue-framing In the beginning of the collective campaign the framing of the protest-issue on the political agenda starts out mostly in opposition to the intended measures. During the warming-up events the frame is much more in favor of the government plans, but right before the demonstration a more in-opposition-to-frame is used. There is a positive peak in the weeks after the demonstration, but around the end of the campaign and in the month after the campaign, the frame becomes mostly in opposition to the measures and resembles that of the campaign organizers.

In the month prior to the collective campaign the protest-issue is being framed very differently: from in opposition to mostly in favor of. During the warming-up events the frame becomes more stable, mostly an in-opposition-to-frame. In the weeks prior to the demonstration the media become a bit more in favor of the measures, but balanced. Just like on the political agenda, the protest-issue is being framed more in favor of than before in the weeks after the demonstration. However, towards the end of the campaign and in the month after the campaign the public agenda just like the political agenda changes increasingly in opposition to the measures. The trend line shows that at that time also the public frame resembles the frame of the campaign organizers.

Before and during the connective campaign the framed used on the political agenda is mostly in opposition to the intended measures, with an extreme low in the week before the demonstration. However, already in that same week the frame becomes more in favor of the government plans, with an in-favor-of-peak a three weeks after the demonstration. In the month after the campaign the frame is balanced. The public framing of the intended measures of the connective campaign is quite stable and mostly in opposition to the plans. In the week of and the week after the demonstration, the frame becomes even a bit more negative, but this changes quickly with a small peak three weeks after the demonstration and just like the political agenda the frame of the public agenda ends up being balanced as is shown by the polyline.

When comparing both campaigns, it is striking that (a few weeks) after the demonstration the voices of the proponents of the intended measures are more prominent, more than those of the opponents of the plan. The demonstrations thus have a direct effect, although not the intended one.

Overall, the frame of the connective protest-issue is more an in-opposition-to-frame than the frame of the collective protest-issue. Hence, the overall political and public agendas resemble the frame of the connective campaign organizers more than that of the collective campaign organizers. However, the framing of the collective issue becomes more negative in the month after the campaign and ends up resembling the frame of the campaign organizers exactly, which is in contrast to the framing of the connective issue on both agendas as that becomes more in favor of the measures and ends up being balanced.

Conclusion and discussion

By examining how the issue-attention and issue-framing of the protest-issue changes during a campaign and in the month prior and after the campaign for a collective and a connective campaign, we are able to compare the short-term effect of collective and connective campaigns and demonstrations.

We conceptualized the short-term effect of demonstrations twofold: (1) whether or not the political and public issue-attention increases after a demonstration, and (2) whether or not the frame used in the agendas resembles that of the campaign organizers (more) after a demonstration. Based on Bennet and Segerberg's (2012) findings we assumed that the connective campaign would create greater public worthiness than the collective campaign. Based on the premises of McCarthy and Zald's (1977) resource mobilization theory we thought that the attention-span of the connective campaign would be firm, but also short in comparison to that of the collective campaign, because the first has less resources and thus is less able than the latter to keep the protest-issue on the agendas.

In contrast to our expectations our analyses shows that the collective protest-issue attracted more attention than the connective protest-issue on both the political and public agenda. Like we assumed the attention-cycle of the connective issue is shorter than that of the collective issue, however it did not seem to be firmer, especially not during campaign time. The collective protest-issue was prevalent on the agendas for a much longer time. This is in accordance with McCarthy and Zald's theory that the collective campaign organizers have the resources to keep the protest-issue on the agendas for a longer time, and, compared to the connective campaign organizers, to keep it more alive during the campaign.

Based on our second definition of the short-term effect of demonstrations – on the framing of the issue – we conclude that although the frame used on the political and public agendas during the connective campaign on the whole is compared to that of the collective campaign more in opposition to the intended measures throughout the campaign and thus resembles the frame of the campaign organizers more during that time, after the demonstrations and especially after the campaigns the framing of the connective protest-issue becomes more in favor of the measures and diverges from the frame of the campaign organizers while the frame of the collective protest-issue becomes more

negative and eventually resembles that of the campaign organizers.

It is difficult to make a univocal conclusion on the difference between the short-term effect of connective and collective action. Collective action attracts more political and public attention, but during the campaign the political and public agendas resemble the connective campaign frame more than collective campaign frame. However, eventually the political and public agendas take over the frame of collective campaign organizers while the frame on the connective protest-issue negatively diverges from that of the campaign organizers (thus becomes more in favor of the intended measures). Although our results seem to indicate that the long-term efforts of collective action seem to be more effective on the short term as both the political as the public mindset changes in favor of the campaign organizers and thus in opposition to the intended measures while the connective campaign organizers are in the end not able to change the content of the political and public agenda in their favor, future research is needed to be able to conclude if this is a generalizable effect. Because we compared only two demonstrations, on different issues and with different kinds of followers, and the campaigns differ much in their length, it is difficult to be conclusive. However, it does seem that there are considerable differences in the way collective and connective campaigns attract and preserve attention.

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