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Limitations and possibilities of transnational mobilization. The case of the EU summit protesters in Brussels, 2001

Abstract

Taking part in protest demonstration has become a normal part of national politics. However whereas politics have gradually moved to a higher level, the protest has not evolved at the same pace. It is only the recent wave of protest against neo-liberal globalization that seemed to have increased the speed and successfully mobilized on a transnational scale, hereby seemingly overcoming the transnational mobilizations difficulties. By means of a large survey conducted under protesters from all over Europe during the anti-globalist manifestation against the EU summit at Brussels (Belgium), we will try to expose the specific impediments to transnational mobilization in the European context. How did the anti-globalization movement(s) managed to overcome these obstacles while other movements only succeed to coordinate collective action on a national level? Special attention will be dedicated to the impact these difficulties have on the motivation and profile of foreign versus local protesters. Are foreign protesters more fervent protesters than the local participants and do they take a stronger stance towards their protest actions and globalization? Finally we speculate on the future possibilities of this movement and transnational collective action in general.

0. Introduction

Taking part in protest demonstrations has become a normal part of politics. Venting dissatisfaction or making demands on the streets has become commonplace in our 'demonstration-democracies'. In almost every Western country the self-reported number of people that took part in a protest march has risen substantially recently (Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst 2003). Most of the time these actions have a national focus and leave the international level undisturbed. Although protests against international organizations and institutions seemed to have multiplied the last few years, empirical research on contentious actions on the European level proved no significant increase in Europe related protest. Despite a slight rise of 'Europrotest' the large majority of actions remained domestic (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Rucht 2002; Giugni and Passy 2002). Even when political powers are gradually emigrating out of the national states towards higher international or supranational levels, citizens seem not to be easily inclined to turn to these higher institutional levels as targets for contentious action. In this article, we try to make sense of

this paradox by focussing on one particular transnational action event and examining the features of its participants. Carefully comparing the features of domestic and foreign demonstrators, we will empirically establish the obstacles and thresholds that hamper transnational mobilization.

The recent wave of protests against neo-liberal globalization seems to have overcome transnational mobilization difficulties and to have mobilized successfully on a transnational scale. One of the most impressive transnational mobilizations was undoubtedly the 1999 protest during the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit in Seattle. Since then similar protests took place whenever an important international summit was held, staged by the G8, WTO, IMF, World Bank or, more recently, by the EU. Each time an equally diverse and seemingly international crowd rallied at the summit's location to fight the symbols of neo-liberal globalization. Despite the numerous actions and campaigns the movement against neo-liberal globalization ran, its international character remains vague and unexplained. Are these demonstrators really coming from different countries, as many journalists and observers state? And if so, how did the organizers manage to break down the barriers that prevented successful transnational mobilizations before? All kinds of movements and mobilizations are studied under the transnational label. Sometimes 'transnational' seems to be subject to inflation among social movement scholars. Transnational can refer to the *target* of the protest if these are supranational or international agencies, like the WTO or the European Union (EU). It can refer to the *issue* when the topic addressed is of a transnational nature, like a war or a trade agreement between countries. It can refer to the *movement* that organizes the event, if this is a transnational NGO with branches in many countries, like Greenpeace. It can refer to the *coordinated action* of different national movements staging parallel action events in their own country, like the worldwide February 15th 2003 protests against War on Iraq. Finally, transnational can refer to the *protesters* themselves, if participants from different countries show up at the same collective action event, as was the case in Seattle.

Neither transnational targets, issues, movements nor actions are our prime concern in this paper. Our study focuses on the actors of these protests and their presumed transnational character. Some mobilizations might be transnational in all these respects, while others can be considered transnational only in some of them. The movement against neo-liberal globalization meets most of the transnational aspects including, and this makes it suitable for our aim here, the international composition of its participants. In Seattle the protest was both diverse and transnational as regard to the target, the issues *and* the actors (Smith 2001a). The barriers for transnational mobilization mentioned in the scholarly literature, we will discuss them later at length, are more directly affecting the protest participants than the issue, the target, the action or the movement. While it may seem not too hard to address an international issue, to target an international institution and to organize transnationally, the mobilization of people from different countries to one action event appears to be the trickiest aspect of transnational mobilization exactly because the barriers in the first place affect the participants. In this sense the supranational character of the participants can be considered to be the hardest test for transnational mobilization, and a scrutiny of the participants' features is most useful to make sense of transnational mobilization and how the barriers are taken.

To answer our question – how is transnational mobilization possible? - we will draw upon a case study of the protest staged by the movement against neo-liberal globalization during the EU summit in Belgium, Brussels, at the end of 2001. By means of questionnaires handed out at the demonstration of December 14th 2001, we gathered data that enable us to map

these protesters and especially their believed international character. In a first chapter, we will discuss the theoretical hurdles movements have to overcome in order to succeed in transnational mobilizing. What kinds of obstacles prevent people from different countries to join forces in a protest demonstration? Following the literature we distinguish practical, psychological and political barriers hindering international protests and yielding very specific hypotheses on the differences between domestic and foreign demonstrators. In the next part, we turn to our evidence and sketch the research method of surveying people at demonstrations. In the empirical chapter we focus on the national origin of the demonstrators and subsequently compare the Belgian with the foreign demonstrators. Do foreign demonstrators have another socio-demographic profile? Are they mobilized differently? Do they have other opinions on the globalization issue? And, most importantly, can these mutual differences be traced back to the barriers to transnational mobilization? Finally, we reflect on our results and speculate how the movement against neo-liberal globalization manages to overcome practical, psychological and political transnational mobilization barriers.

1. Barriers for transnational mobilization

The successful demonstrations of the movement against neo-liberal globalization² came as a surprise to many social movement scholars. Not in the first place the number of people that joined the protest, but rather the supposedly international composition of the protest was unseen. Previous research on protest actions consistently found only a limited number of transnational events. Imig and Tarrow's study (2001) of the 1984-1997 period shows that of all contentious action within the European Union, while being doubtlessly the international institution extracting most power from its member states, only 5% concerned EU related contentious action. Of this small group, the majority (83%) was labelled as 'domesticated protest': while the subject was EU related, it were domestic protesters that waged actions against domestic targets. In sum, only a tiny 0.85% of all actions were truly transnational European actions directly or indirectly targeting the European Union and involving protesters from different EU member states. Of course, it does not make much sense to expect demonstrations against EU-institutions in, let's say, Lisbon when the EU is not residing in Lisbon and when EU decision-makers are only seldom meeting in Lisbon. Yet our own protest-event analysis of all demonstrations in Belgium (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2000), including the demonstrations in the European capital of Brussels where the EU-commission sojourns and the European Parliament regularly gathers, shows that even in Belgium the number of EU-related protests in the 1991-2000 period is surprisingly small. Of the 3913 demonstrations recorded in the 90s in Belgium, only 11% concerned international and/or EU-related topics. While the Union integrated further in this decade, this does not show in the demonstration evidence with the highest proportion of internationally targeted protest being recorded as early as in 1992 and not at the end of the decade. Although the number of *demonstrators* on EU-related demonstrations in Belgium is somewhat higher,

¹ (1) *D14* (called after the anti-globalization manifestation on December 14), with national branches in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, the UK, Germany, France, and even Serbia. (2) A '*North-South coalition*' of Belgian NGO's. (3) ATTAC was the leading force behind the network 'For Another Europe'.

² It is wrong to state that, what are called 'anti-globalization' protesters, are against globalization per se. It is mainly the neo-liberal way in which the globalization is shaped and the negative (side) effects it has on human beings and the environment that are contested (Ayres 2001). The discussion about an apt name to label the movement is ongoing and important because the movement has regularly been attacked on the basis of its anti-globalization label (Smith, 2001b). Here we will refer to this movement as the movement against neo-liberal globalization.

evidencing on average bigger transnational demonstrations, the international demonstrators still make out only 16% of the total amount of people showing up during the entire 10-year period. These findings are confirmed in the study on farmer protests against the European Union during the 90s. Bush and Simi (2001) found that farmers were more inclined to fight each other by pressurising their national government than to target the European Union through transnational cooperation. Klandermans and colleagues came to similar conclusions in their research of Dutch and Galician farmers. They found that the farmers still predominantly pressurized their own national governments to protest EU policies (Klandermans, de Weerd, Sabucedo and Rodriguez 2001). Reising (1999) states that while Europe-related protest might be slowly increasing, this does not mean that specifically transnational protest actions are becoming more popular (Reising 1999).

The low level of Europrotest challenges the thesis which suggests that the loss of political power of nation states caused by the European integration would be followed by similar changes in interest articulation (Marks and McAdam 1996). The growing European integration may have created new political opportunities, but the European civil society seemed to have just timidly started to use them. How can this lack of transnational protest with people from different countries participating in the same event be explained? In the literature different factors are held responsible for the lack of unconventional European action. Following Marks and McAdam (1999) three possible thresholds can be distinguished: practical, psychological, and political ones.

Among the different *practical* obstacles, geographical distance is the most obvious (Marks and McAdam 1999). Even within the European territory physical distance can form a tremendous barrier for transnational mobilization. On a global scale the problem becomes even more salient, especially when summit organizers increasingly seem to be seeking for remote and unreachable venues in order to discourage protesters from even trying to engage in disturbing the summit. A study on the Australian reaction to three anti-globalization protest actions stressed the fact that, despite the use of internet as a mobilization tool, distance and physical location continue to play a major role in protest actions (Capling and Nossal 2001). Likewise a survey of the anti-war on Iraq protest on February 15th 2003 revealed that only a very small amount of demonstrators tend to travel more than 200 kilometres to participate in a protest march, even in larger countries like the UK, Germany and the US (Walgrave and Verhulst 2003). The world is not our village yet. Besides sheer distance also the (related) investment of time and money is much higher for transnational than it is for domestic actions. Participants need time to travel, look for transportation and often a place to stay. Social organizations can try to lower these practical barriers, but need the funding and the organizational capacities to do so. In this sense the lack of strong international social movement organizations might be problematic.

Besides these high practical and organizational costs also the *psychological* distance can play an impeding role for transnational actions mobilizing people from different countries. Psychological distance refers to the lack of individual attachment to a higher level of governance like the European Union. Most EU citizens are still predominantly nationally or even sub-nationally centred and rarely consider the European Union, let alone a transnational organization like the WTO, as a direct target. An analysis of the 2002 Eurobarometer (EB 56.3) revealed that only 4% of the European respondents identified with Europe above their nation of origin (Baetens 2003a). This lack of a transnational European public as Rucht (2002) calls it, is associated with the national focus of the mass media and

the lack of genuine European media. The average EU coverage in the Belgian media, for example, only made out a meagre 2.5% of all news coverage in newspapers and on TV in the entire 1991-2000 period (Baetens 2003b). Limited media attention is a problem because it decreases the psychological attachment to the higher political levels, but it hinders as well the resonance of the protesters' claims within European society. Psychological distance touches not only upon the tiny attachment to the targeted institution, but also upon the lack of personal interaction between the activists themselves. Constructing a collective movement identity on a transnational scale is complicated by psychological barriers among which, for example, language barriers still play a role. A collective identity, which traditionally draws on social networks like family, friends, neighbours and colleagues, is necessary to create enough solidarity and trust among potential protesters (Diani 2001). Moreover, transnational mobilizations also demand the successful framing of issues that forms a central element in the construction of the collective identity, as their frames must be adapted to the cultures and belief system of the different countries and citizens they want to reach and mobilize (Keck and Sikkink 1998a). This frame bridging is a crucial factor for transnational mobilization but it demands far more time and resources than national framing (McCarthy 1997).

Thirdly, there are *political* opportunity related reasons that prevent the number of transnational actions from expanding. There is a consensus among movement scholars that the national political opportunity structure is a crucial element for explaining the level of mobilization and the success of a protest movement in a given country (Kriesi, Koopman, Duyvendak and Guini 1995; McAdam, McCarty and Zald 1996). In some respects, the political opportunities at the European level are less favourable than on most national levels. The European Parliament as an elected institution is the only European institution that could effectively be influenced by unconventional action, yet its power is limited. Other institutions like the European Council of Ministers composed of national representatives reinforce the tendency towards easier nationally centred action. Despite the expansion of the qualified majority voting system in the EU, national governments maintained their veto power on numerous policy areas making them fit as targets for protest actions even for EU-related topics. The national centred tactics could even prove to be more effective than directly supranational protest (Grant 1993; Rucht 2002). The third player in the EU arena, the European Commission, is most often not an appropriate target either. It relies mainly on expertise and therefore is more susceptible for conventional actions like drafting reports and lobbying. Evidence on the environmental movement, for example, suggests that these movements leave their contentious action repertoire aside and tend to turn to more institutionalised policy participation methods when addressing the European level (Imig and Tarrow 1999). The same preference for lobby tactics at the EU level was also found in other research concerning EU migration policies (Giugni and Passy 2002). Moreover some movement organizations are generously subsidised by and get privileged access to the Commission. In that context it is comprehensible that they are reluctant to foster radical protest actions that could jeopardise their comfortable position (Rucht 2001).

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⁴ These figures are based on TV newscasts and front page reports of Belgian newspapers during the period 1991-2000., and are part of a empirical research concerning EU and WTO related coverage conducted at the University of Antwerp.

Given all these thresholds and cost heightening complications, and considering the damage a poor turnout would do, it is hardly surprising that social movements have been reluctant to organize supranational demonstrations. However in some cases, and the movement against neo-liberal globalization offered us some recent examples, social movements effectively manage to stage an action event that succeeds in attracting considerable amounts of demonstrators from different countries. Yet, even in those successful cases of transnational mobilization, the thresholds and barriers hindering transnational mobilization probably leave their traces in the composition of the demonstration. First of all, even if the target, the issue and the organizers of the demonstration are truly transnational, all discussed obstacles do make us to expect a smaller amount of foreign compared to domestic participants. Secondly and more importantly, we believe that the footprints of the three clusters of barriers might be retraced in the characteristics of the demonstrators themselves. More concretely, if the transnational barriers claim is true the domestic and foreign demonstrators attending the same demonstration should be different. The more mutual differences between these two groups, the more the idea of barriers for transnational mobilization is underpinned. We do not only expect differences between native and foreign participants, but very specific differences.

Concerning the *practical* barriers of distance, time and money, we expect foreign demonstrators, naturally, to be coming primarily from neighbouring countries, but also to be younger and more students than their Belgian counterparts. Being young and as a student it is probably easier to take time off for this kind of time-intensive demonstrations. The same applies for having children: it does not really enhance time flexibility either. Since mobilizing agencies' efforts are aimed at lowering the barriers for participation, we expect the foreigners to be more members of supporting organizations and to be more mobilized via organizational channels and less through open media channels. Because participation in a demonstration abroad asks for more thorough preparation than domestic demonstrating, we hypothesize that foreign demonstrators took the decision to participate on average earlier than the native participants. Finally, as attending a demonstration abroad with all its practicalities is a 'skill' that can most likely be learned, we expect foreign demonstrators to have attended protest events in foreign countries before, more than their Belgian colleagues.

The *psychological* barriers of poor attachment to higher political levels like the EU might in the first place be overcome by a higher degree of general political interest. Furthermore we expect non-Belgian demonstrators to identify stronger with Europe and to consider themselves in the first place to be European citizens. The same applies to their appraisal of the EU-membership of their country. Another indicator for attachment to a higher governance level is previous participation in similar protest events. We anticipate foreigners to have been more active in the movement before.

In terms of the *political* thresholds and the poor EU opportunity structure, we hypothesize that this might be overcome by radicalism. Realizing that the chance of effectively influencing policies is low, it probably takes more determination and commitment to the cause to take part in the event anyhow. Therefore, we expect the foreign demonstrators to be more politically radical, more 'angry' so to say, than their native counterparts. We anticipate a lower satisfaction with democracy, less trust in political institutions, less trust in international institutions, less believe in the responsiveness of politics, more critique on the

way the EU deals with globalization, and less reluctance to use violent and radical action forms.

2. Data collection: surveying the 2001 EU summit demonstration in Brussels

The movement against neo-liberal globalization seemed the first to be a truly transnational movement, not at least because it can largely be considered to be a product of globalization itself. The movement reacts against the current model of economic liberalization propagated by international economic institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. These institutions' form (structure, decision-making procedures) as well as the content of their policies (deregulation, environmental degradation...) are fiercely challenged (O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams 2000). The demonstrations at the WTO in Seattle at the end of 1999 have become a major symbol of the anti-globalization struggle (Van Aelst 2000; Smith 2001a). However, Seattle was not the beginning of this movement. Protest against neo-liberal aspects of globalization is not new. Third world organizations have been asking questions on the unequal distribution of wealth and the dubious role of international organizations like the IMF and the World Bank for several decades. But their concerns recently received a new, more international and more radical élan. Since the WTO debacle in Seattle almost every summit of a transnational organization has led to street mobilizations. This was the case for the meetings of other symbols of globalization: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in Washington and Prague, the summit of the FTAA in Quebec, the European summits in Nice and Gotenborg, and the G8 summit in Genoa (Van Aelst, Walgrave, 2002). These and other smaller demonstrations set the mood for another summit of European leaders announced for the end of 2001 in Brussels seeing the Belgian EU-presidency off. Three networks of organizations, partly overlapping each other, were engaged in actions during the Belgian EU-presidency: **D14**, called after and set up for the manifestation on December 14th, an international organization with branches in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, the UK, Germany, France, and even in Serbia; the **North-South coalition** consisting out of Belgian NGOs; and **For Another Europe** in which ATTAC was a leading force. They succeeded in marking the entire length of the Belgian residency with international protest. The high point of the protests were 13 and 14 December. On these two days two different demonstrations were staged in the Brussels' streets. The trade unions rallied on December 13th with 80,000 participants; the three mentioned specific anti neo-liberal globalization networks organized their own protest event the 14th with 25,000 attending. The trade unions did not want to share a common demonstration, afraid as they were for Göteborg-like incidents caused by radical elements in the movement. Quite some people appeared to have attended both demonstrations. We only surveyed the demonstration of December 14th.

Interviewing participants at protest demonstrations is not a common research technique (Van Aelst, Walgrave, 2001; Norris et al, 2003). To the best of our knowledge, it has only been used in a few studies. Most elaborate is the work of the French research team

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including Favre, Mayer and Fillieule (1997), who developed a method designed to offer all participants an equal opportunity of being interviewed. Their method was refined further in this research. The actual survey process used to establish a random survey of demonstration participants was twofold. First, fieldwork supervisors counted the rows of participants, selecting every Nth row, to ensure that the same number of rows was skipped throughout. Then a dozen interviewers selected every Nth person in that row and distributed questionnaires to these individuals during the actual protest march itself. The selected participants were asked to complete the questionnaire at home and to mail it back. We applied this field survey method before during several national demonstrations in Brussels between 1998 and 2001 (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2001).

The normal data gathering process described above had to be adjusted because of the international character of the demonstration. Different organizations had mobilized internationally, but it remained unclear how many people from how many different countries would actually come to Brussels. On the basis of contacts with some leading figures from mobilizing organizations we decided to distribute 400 questionnaires in Dutch, 300 in French and 300 in English. The decision to only use three languages was made because of practical reasons (time investment, limited language skills of the interviewers). By consequence some protesters from foreign countries were unable to fill in the questionnaire and to send it back. Yet this only happened in a minimal number of cases while many of them could easily understand English or French. The nationality ratio in our sample might be somewhat skewed as a consequence of this. Also the lack of recognition and importance accorded to a survey conducted by an unknown Belgian university might have withheld some non-Belgian from sending back their completed questionnaire. Furthermore a small group of about 200 'black block'-demonstrators refused to accept the postal questionnaire, so our sample might underestimate these (minor) radical elements in the movement. Still, we believe that the 378 respondents in our dataset can be seen as a fairly reliable sample of the total population of the demonstration. Confidence in the procedure was reinforced by a response rate of more than 40%, which is satisfactory for an anonymous survey without any reminders and similar to the response rates we reached while surveying pure Belgian demonstrations (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2001). In other demonstration surveys carried out before, we controlled the representativity of the sent back questionnaires by comparing them with a random sample of face-to-face interviews. We did not carry out this test at this demonstration, because we never found any significant difference between the mail surveys and the face-to-face interviews.

A final remark on the method used and the demonstration covered. We do not claim that 'Brussels' is a perfect representative of 'the' mobilizations staged by 'the' movement against neo-liberal globalization. Although the Brussels demonstration was one of the many protests in a long row of similar contentious gatherings on EU summits, it might not be representative for anti neo-liberal globalization rallies targeting other institutions like G8, WTO or the World Bank. These participants are attached to the EU and have sympathy for the European project, which might not be the case for demonstrators who fight the WTO. Secondly, the central and accessible location of Brussels could have affected the barriers for transnational mobilization. This gives us an argument a fortiori: if we find differences between foreign and domestic participants even in an easy protest location as Brussels, we surely would find more dramatic differences in more remote venues as Göteborg and Doha.

3. Results

The Brussels' crowd contained people from different countries but, as all three clusters of barriers would expect, a large majority of the participants were Belgians. TABLE 1 contains the figures.

TABLE 1: Nationality of participants in demonstration on December 14th in Brussels at the EU summit against neo-liberal globalization (N=378)

NATIONALITY	Proportion (in %)
Belgian	61.8
Dutch	10.9
French	10.1
German	6.6
British	3.4
Austrian	0.8
Irish	0.5
Italian	0.3
Danish	2.4
Swedish	0.5
Spanish	0.5
Greek	0.3
Serb	0.3
Australian	0.3
Multiple nationalities	1.1
TOTAL	100%

The countries are more or less ordered according to their distance to Belgium and it is clear that distance is important. The relationship between distance and number is almost perfectly linear. The further you get from Belgium, the smaller the chance that you will attend a demonstration in our beautiful country. The demonstration counted more than a quarter of French, Dutch, German and British protesters coming from neighbouring countries. More remote areas of the Union were hardly present, with the exception of a remarkable Danish delegation.

The real test of the barrier claim is a comparison of the Belgian and the foreign demonstrators. Therefore we ran a multivariate model predicting the nationality of the demonstrators (foreign/Belgian) containing the variables of the hypotheses while adding some standard demographic controls. Some of the variables in the model are scales illustrated in the technical appendix. The results of the model are to be found in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2: Parameters of a binomial logistic regression predicting the foreign (vs. Belgian) nationality of the participants in a demonstration on December 14th in Brussels at the EU summit against neo-liberal globalization (N=257).

	B	Significance
Socio-demographic controls		
Gender	-	ns
Education	-	ns
Religion	-	ns
Practical barriers		
Age	-	ns
Student	1.744	****
Having children	-	ns
Demonstrations abroad before	1.078	***
Organization members company	1.114	***
Demonstration info channel media	-.746	****
Member organizing organization	-	ns
Time decision to participate	-	ns
Psychological barriers		
Political interest	.509	*
European Identity	-	ns
EU membership a good thing	-	ns
Participation previous globalization demonstration	-	ns
Political barriers		
Satisfaction democracy	-.652	**
Trust parties, government, parliament	-	ns
Trust EU, WTO, IMF	-	ns
Evaluation responsiveness politics	-.111	*
Satisfaction EU deals with globalization	-	ns
Support radical movement strategy	.383	**
EU and globalization	-	ns
Constant C	-3.241	ns
Adjusted R ₂	.484	

The coefficients represent unstandardized betas (B), and significance in a binomial logistic regression analysis model predicting the demonstrators' nationality as the dependent variables. The Belgian nationality was used as the reference nationality. Sig. ****=.001 ***=.01 **=0.05 *=0.1. The variables were entered in the order of the table, and a stepwise backwards procedure was applied.

SEQARABE Of the original model of 22 variables only 8 proved to be significant. The others were removed from the final parsimonious model. The total explained variance of the model is satisfying. As expected, there are indeed considerable differences between Belgian and non-Belgian demonstrations and our model is capable of grabbing quite some of these differences. Based on our operationalization of the three barriers for transnational mobilization, we can predict rather well who the foreign demonstrators are and who the native ones are. The barriers for transnational mobilization clearly matter and leave their trace in the different protesters' profile.

None of the control variables is significant. These basic features do not differentiate foreign from native participants. The *practical* barriers, in contrast, seem to be most important. It is

not as much age but rather being a student that differentiates both types of protesters. Of course studentship and age are closely bivariately associated and if we omit studentship from the model, age becomes the most important factor. The average participant was very young with more than 60% of them being younger than 30. In general, it is interesting to note that the protesters' profile fitted the classic profile very well (Marsh & Kaase, 1979), as the demonstrators were predominantly young, higher educated men. That demonstrating abroad can be considered as a habit that can be learned, is underpinned by the significant having-demonstrated-abroad-before parameter. From the specific organizational variables, only two are significant. Bivariately, the others were significant too but their explaining power vanished in the multivariate model because they were closely associated with the other indicators. Foreigners do show up more accompanied by co-members of an organization and they were much less informed about the march by the mass media (and more by organizations). Obviously, the latter has got to do with the high EU coverage of the Belgian media of Belgian presidency in general and of the Brussels summit in particular. Yet, even for the foreigners the media (TV, radio and newspapers) played a relatively important role in the mobilization. We recorded on average higher mass media information channel scores among them than among participants of most of the other demonstrations we surveyed in Brussels before. Not in the model, the internet did not differentiate both types of demonstrators. One out of three of the Belgians as well as of the non-Belgians sought information on the demonstration via the internet. The non-significant internet result is remarkable since it is generally regarded as the key factor to the successful mobilization against the WTO-summit in Seattle and the MAI negotiations (Smith and Smythe, 2001; Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2002). To conclude the discussion of the practical barriers: practicalities like distance, time and money still determine transnational mobilization to a large extent.

The *psychological* indicators in our model matter much less. Only political interest makes a difference confirming the idea that non-national demonstrators are more attached to higher levels of governance. The other psychological indicators were only significant on a bivariate level, and vanished in a multivariate model. Yet, it is interesting to note that the crowd consisted out of rather experienced demonstrators against neo-liberal globalization, foreigners and Belgian alike. More than 60% said they had participated before in similar protest. More general only 6% participated for the first time in a demonstration during the last five years, which makes the Brussels' protesters experienced demonstrators.

Let us turn to the *political* barriers. The violent actions in Genoa and Göteborg raised the impression that the movement against neo-liberal globalization was permeated with anti-state radicals (Norris et al., 2003) driven by growing distrust in the political system and not reluctant to use disruptive action forms. If this would be the case in general, we expected to find this radicalism in particular among foreign demonstrators. Do we have any evidence for that? Only three political barriers proved significant. Foreign demonstrators are less satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their own country, they agree more with the idea that the political system in general is not very responsive to the needs and demands of citizenry, and they endorse more a radical movement strategy not opposing violence and agreeing with the statement that 'talking is not enough' to reach the movement's goals. In that sense, non-Belgian demonstrators displayed a more politically extreme profile indeed. Our other indicators for radicalism did not make it to the final model, but most of them yielded significant correlations with the nationality of the protesters on the bivariate level. Furthermore they were strongly correlated with the satisfaction with democracy variable which explains why they did not contribute to the

explaining power of the multivariate model. Foreign demonstrators did not distrust national or international institutions more than their Belgian counterparts (in general the demonstrators are much more critical towards IMF and WTO compared to the EU), they were not less satisfied with the way the EU handles globalization, and they did not think more than the native marchers that the EU can be considered as the culprit for all kinds of negative side effects of globalization.

In sum, the practical, as well as the psychological and the political barriers seem to contribute to the distinct profile of the foreign protesters. Does the model give us any clue about which of the barriers matters most? At first sight it appears as if especially the 'ordinary' practical thresholds can account for the differences, and that the political and, especially, the psychological barriers are less substantial. Yet it is dangerous to draw this definitive conclusion, since we have not as good indicators for all three dimensions, in particular for psychological distance. We would need, for example, measures of media use and consumption of foreign politics news in particular. Also variables on the knowledge of international politics, and on the personal international experiences of these demonstrators (travel, studies) would be most useful to discard the psychological track with more determination.

We can conclude that our analysis shows that the hurdles foreign protesters have to overcome have a measurable impact on their profile. These protesters are students (and younger) and they prefer a more radical action strategy. They are better prepared for demonstrating abroad as they did this before. They are mobilized through closed forms of mobilization and rely less on the mass media to keep informed about the demonstration. And they are more critical to politics. In short, they are young, organized and fanatic compared to their Belgian friends.

4. Discussion: towards a renormalization of transnational mobilization?

The first sentence of this article stated that taking part in protest demonstrations has become a normal part of politics. Protests like demonstrations have become normalised and are an easily available instrument to convey political preferences complementing normal political behaviour like voting and contacting politicians (Norris et al., 2003). This normalization of protest led to a consequent normalization of the protester meaning that people taking to the streets are not (that) different anymore from non-participating people (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2001). All kinds of people feel inclined to show their discontent

⁶ Closed mobilization refers to a process in which only people with certain social features, only people who belong to a certain group, are the object of mobilizing activities. Typical closed mobilizers on a macro level are social organizations like unions, political parties, churches, social movement organizations or interest groups who direct their effort towards their members or supporters. Within the closed mobilization type too, there is a micro level equivalent: colleagues and classmates. In an open mobilization process, in contrast, the public as a whole, and not only people with certain social features, is the potential target of mobilization efforts. Typical open mobilizers are, on the macro level, the mass media. On a micro level also family, friends, acquaintances and neighbours could be considered as mobilizers able to touch upon the whole population.

by participating in a protest march, not only the young, highly schooled and male like the traditional SES-model claimed (Marsh and Kaase 1979; Jennings, Kent, Van Deth 1990; Verba, Kay, Schlozman, Henry and Brady 1995). In short: barriers for demonstrating are down. Yet, this contribution shows that barriers for *international* demonstrating are still very much there. International demonstration participation is not normalized at all. It might have become easier to take part in protest, but the whole SES-story seems to repeat itself on the international level. Barriers for transnational mobilization are significant, and only the strong are able to climb over them. Demonstrators on transnational topics are, again, young, highly schooled and male. They are experienced protesters, well organized, and embedded in movement organizations. And all this applies to an even larger extent to foreign demonstrators participating in demonstrations abroad. Despite global communication via the internet, despite cheap worldwide air travel, despite the existence of new transnational movement networks trying hard to facilitate participation as much as possible and despite the growing political importance of international political actors making them a natural target of contentious politics, transnational mobilization is difficult and apparently only succeeds in attracting the stronger groups. Civil society seems to have begun to catch up with economics and politics in transnationalizing – the economic community was active on the international level for ages, the political world for some years now - but in doing so the movements seem to be thrown back some decades in terms of their constituency. The (re)democratization of their (new) protest is a challenge for the future. How can transnational mobilization barriers be overcome? To conclude, let us run through the three barrier again and speculate about future developments taking into account pros and cons for the further spread of transnational demonstrations.

By giving detailed information on transportation and accommodation movements try to overcome the *practical* barriers. Such information can be easily spread via the internet. An example of this is 'The Field Guide to the FTAA Protest in Quebec City', an alternative 'travel guide' that takes the activist by the hand and guides them through all the obstacles to effective participation (Van Aelst 2002). Our data showed that especially younger (students) made the trip to Brussels. For movements with an older supporting public, like trade unions, it is probably more difficult to mobilize transnationally. But the more rigid time budget of their supporters might be compensated by the strength and professionalism of their organizations. Strengthening the transnational networks, as movements are doing intensively now, is another track that probably might get barriers down further. Recent research on transnational activism indeed seems to point to a better cooperation between non-state actors in general and environmental, peace, women's and human rights movements in particular (Green and Griffith 2002). Since travelling abroad for protest can apparently be learned, these supranational mobilizations will probably have more success in the long term when more different people have learned the habit of 'summit hopping'. The optimism (or pessimism) about a further rise in transnational activism must be attenuated since summit organizers try to reraise the barriers by searching for extremely remote and not very action-friendly meeting locations. The last WTO summit, for example, took place in the Oil-state Qatar. And after the tragedy in Genoa the next G-8 summit was planned to take place in a distant venue in the Rocky Mountains. Moreover, political authorities and police are better prepared than they were some years ago and in some cases they simply make transnational mobilization impossible by, for example, closing down borders for protesters. This heightens transnational mobilization barriers dramatically again, and demonstrators' uncertainty is boosted when they are not sure that they will reach their destination. The not very 'gentle' protest policing at some of the last summits too might deter (new) candidates from joining the protesting crowd. All these counter

tactics aimed at heightening the participation costs again, could well mean the end of major transnational protest.

The practical barriers are the only ones which the movements might partly influence themselves directly. The *psychological* and political barriers are more exogenous and are largely given. A possible proactive track is the reinforcement of a transnational collective identity as a movement. It is exactly through contentious meetings all over the world, combined with the 'constructive' national, European or world forums (and counter-summits), that the movement tries to forge ties and to construct mutual trust and common goals. In their research Keck and Sikkink (1998b) already observed the increasing importance of these counter summits and NGO-forums to fuel transnational advocacy networks. The different parts of the movement are struggling to assemble their constituencies which often pursue different and sometimes even incompatible action goals. Organizers constantly have to render the action goals relevant to the different constituencies by adaptation or through references to the broader values and causes these constituencies share. Examples of that can be found as early as in the 80s in Germany when feminists, ecologists and Third World organizations took the streets together during IMF-World Bank joint meetings (Gerards and Rucht 1992). Furthermore, in the long run as a European public gradually comes into being, we expect mobilizing transnationally will become easier.

Yet, any expectation about an upcoming era of unlimited transnational mobilization must be attenuated again. The collective identity construction through action events can create unwanted association with anarchistic components of the movements and with the violent protest methods they tend to employ. This might cause activists to withdraw from the movement and it can jeopardise the benevolence of the movements' entourage so vital for action mobilization (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Unfortunately for the movement media coverage tends to focus on these anarchistic groups and the violence they use. A study of the media coverage on Belgian TV and newspapers of the EU-summit under study 2001 revealed that almost *half* of the news about the movement contained references to violence, be it in writing about violence, expected violence or the absence of violence, or in pictures showing intimidating protesters, their effective violence or the consequences thereof (Baetens 2003b). Movements against neo-liberal globalization have extra difficulties coping with these identifying mechanisms because of the democratic master frame they draw upon. The democratic ethos they defend results in an inclusiveness, which makes it very difficult to exclude particular groups and makes it almost impossible to impose a hierarchic structure to control the movement (Brooks 2003). The lack of control over these violent groups and the inability of the movement to effectively exclude them could not only affect the protesters' action preparedness, but could threaten the protest action itself by defining or at least influencing the government's reaction towards the movement as a whole resulting in an intensification of the repression as was the case in Genoa, Göteborg and Doha.

Although the institutional design of the European Union, and especially of the European Council, is not conducive for transnational contentious politics, the six monthly European summits of these Councils in the capital of the presiding country offers great *political* opportunities. These are ideal events to attract the attention of the media, the public opinion and even state representatives (Ayres 2001). Summits have since long been used as a venue to protest and organize so-called counter summits. The use of counter summits during the European Council is not a new phenomena but was used for the first time during the 70s by the European Trade Union Confederation and was further developed by the

unemployed movement during the 90s, with a peak during the Amsterdam summit in 1997 (Balme and Chabanet 2002: 57-81).

However, it appears as if EU-summits might become more routinised in the near future. From the moment that, as planned, all summits will be held in Brussels and not any more on location in one of Europe's capitals, the movement can expect less media attention, more weary demonstrators not very motivated to get to Brussels again, and a more experienced and better protest policing decreasing opportunities for eye-catching protest.

In sum: barriers for transnational mobilization might be withering but are still very present. Movements are struggling to get rid of the remaining obstacles but new obstacles are looming in the near future. It is not at all sure that Western democracies will witness the transformation from movement society (Etzioni 1970) to transnational movement society in the near future.

Technical appendix: variables and scales used in analysis

Socio-demographic controls	
Gender	Male or female
Education	6-categories from lower 1 to higher 5
Religiosity	3-categories: non-believing, christian, or other
Practical barriers	
Age	Years old: 6-categories:
Student	2 categories: being a student or not being a student
Having children	Yes or no
Demonstrations abroad before	"Did you participate before in a demonstration against neo-lib globalization abroad?" Yes or no.
Organization member company	"Are you at this demonstrations accompanied by (co students)" (0,1). "Are you at this demonstration accompanied by co members of organization" (0,1)? Scale adding both variables (0-2).
Demonstration info channel media	"Were you informed about this demonstration via TV" (0,1)? "Via Radio" (0,1)? "Via Newspapers" (0,1)? Scale adding these variables (0-3).
Member organizing organization	"Are you a member of an organization that is (co-)organizing demonstration?" Yes or no.
Time decision to participate	"When did you decide to take part in this demonstration?" The day of the demonstration, in the past few days, a few weeks ago, more than a month ago.
Psychological barriers	
Political Interest	"Some people are very interested in politics. Others are not interested at all. Are you very interested in politics, or are you not at all interested?" 5 point scale.
European identity	"I feel first European and only then a member of my own country." 5 point scale.
EU membership is a good thing	"I think it is good thing that my country is a member of the European Union" 5 point scale
Participation previous globalization demonstration	"Did you ever take part in a demonstration or manifestation against globalization prior to this one?" Yes or no.
Political barriers	
Democratic satisfaction	"Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in your own country?" 5 point scale
Trust parties, government, parliament	"Below you find a list of institutions. Could you indicate for each of them how much faith you have in them?" "The government?" "The parliament" "The political parties?" Scale adding each of these 5 point scales.
Trust EU, WTO, IMF	"Below you find a list of institutions. Could you indicate for each of them how much faith you have in them?" "The EU?" "The WTO?" "The IMF?" Scale adding each of these 5 point scales.
Evaluation responsiveness politics	"There is no point in voting, parties do whatever they want anyway." "Most politicians make a lot of promises but do not actually do anything." "In politics, a lot of things happen that are kept secret." "Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my ideas or opinions." "When people like myself voice opinions to politicians, they are not listened to."

⁷ http://www.fse-esf.org/article.php3?id_article=327

	are taken into account." Scale adding each of these agree/disagree scales.
Satisfaction EU deals with globalization	"To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way European Union deals with globalization?" 5 point scale
Support radical movement strategy	"Violent demonstrations damage our movement." "We will never reach our goals by talking alone." Scale adding these agree/disagree scales.
EU and globalization	"The European Union is too supportive of the system of free world trade." "The European Union helps to maintain the inequalities between North and South." "The European Union does not pay enough attention to sustainable development and the protection of the environment." "The European Union does not pay enough attention to social rights." Scale adding these agree/disagree scales.

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