Political Parties in the Streets

The development and timing of party-sponsored protests in Western Europe

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1   Introduction

> Hundreds of thousands of French people took part in demonstrations across the
> country Saturday to protest against government plans to reform the 35-hour work
> week. Organized by an alliance of trade unions and backed by the opposition
> Socialist party (PS), more than half a million people took part in marches in 100
> towns and cities–with 90,000 joining the largest demonstration in Paris. (Agence
> France Presse, 5/2/2005)

This short news item illustrates the research object of the present chapter, i.e., political

parties' involvement in protest events in the streets. In other words, the chapter takes the main

collective actors engaged in electoral competition but focuses on their involvement in a major

form of *non*-electoral mobilisation. More specifically, the chapter concentrates on the

development and the timing of protests sponsored by political parties in four West European

countries: Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Sponsorship is broadly defined and

means that political parties (co-)organise, take part in and/or call for the participation in a

protest event (Rucht 1998: 41). By adopting a *Between Election Democracy* (BED)

perspective, I am especially interested in whether the development and timing of party-

sponsored protests reflect electoral incentives: Are political parties' protest actions in-between

elections coloured by their participation in elections?

To answer my research question, I proceed in two steps. The first step focuses on the long-

term development of party-sponsored protests in the four countries, while the second step

looks more closely at the timing of such activities between elections. In both steps, the

guiding hypothesis assumes that party-sponsored protests are shaped by incentives created by

the parties' involvement in electoral politics. At first, I examine the *differentiation hypothesis*

proposed by Herbert Kitschelt. Kitschelt (2003: 82) has argued that 'politicians in the early

twenty-first century face a much more complicated and challenging task of representation and

interest intermediation than ever before.' Therefore, political organisations tend to specialise

and we witness a transformation from 'competitive politics among a few omnibus "party department" stores to more complex competitive landscapes populated by multiple political 'boutiques'' (Kitschelt 2003: 97). In short, according to the differentiation hypothesis, political parties should focus increasingly on electoral competition and leave the protest arena to single-issue groups with less institutionalised access options. Thus, in the long-run, electoral incentives should drive political parties to be less involved in contentious forms of political mobilisation.

In the second step, I zoom-in on the more short- to mid-term timing of parties' activities in the streets between elections. More precisely, I ask whether the timing of protests supported by parties is systematically related to the electoral cycle (*between election hypothesis*). Again, the proposed mechanism linking protest and electoral politics is that parties sponsor protest events mainly due to incentives provided by their participation in elections. Here, I follow other research that assumes electoral cycle effects on parties' and citizens' behaviour (e.g., Alesina et al. 1993; Drazen 2001; Franzese 2002; Katsimi and Sarantides 2012; Nadeau and Blais 1993; Nordhaus 1975; Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt 2005; Stimson 1976; Tufte 1975; Kölln and Aarts, this volume). While there are good reasons to expect that party-sponsored protests peak shortly before Election Day, others argue that (opposition) parties should mainly opt to protest in the middle of the electoral cycle when the next elections are still too far off (e.g., Kriesi 2011; McAdam and Tarrow 2010; forthcoming; Vadlamannati 2008).

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, I distinguish the two main arenas of mass mobilisation in contemporary democracies: the electoral arena and the protest arena. This distinction is taken up when I present the two guiding hypotheses in more detail (see Section 3). Thereafter, Section 4 introduces the protest event data used to trace the development and

timing of parties' protest activities. Section 5 is devoted to the empirical findings, while Section 6 concludes the chapter with a short summary and suggestions for future research.

2 A tale of two separated arenas

Following Ferree et al. (2002), an arena is the place where one can observe those who are actively engaged in political contestation. The mere bystanders, who observe what happens, and the backstage area, where the ones trying to become involved in the arena prepare themselves, are not included. However, I do not delineate arenas on the basis of the issues being discussed, but by the modal form of how ordinary people become involved in the struggle that takes place in the different arenas (see Flam 1994; Kriesi 1993: 1ff.). More specifically, I introduce five crucial differences between the two arenas that are most heavily characterized by the direct participation of citizens: the electoral arena and the protest arena (for a summary, see Table 1).[1]

Table 1: Conceptual differences of the protest arena and the electoral arena

	Protest arena	Electoral arena
Modal form of participation	Participation in protest events	Participation in elections
Degree of institutionalisation	Low	High
Degree of issue linkage	Low	High
Main organisations	SMOs	Political parties
Main sites of mobilisation	'Street' and mass media	Legislature and mass media

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[1] Talking about arenas is very much in line with other classifications that try to capture modes of political interest intermediation by distinguishing political parties, interest groups and social movements as main types of intermediary mobilizing agents (e.g., Rucht 1996), organizations (e.g., Burstein 1998), or modes of political mobilization (e.g., Kitschelt 2003). However, the arena concept shifts the attention from the collective political actors to a broader focus on the forms of mobilization and participation, respectively.

The center and pivotal point of the two arenas is the *modal form of political participation*: protest vs. vote. Taking part in protest events or elections is the main way for ordinary people to enter these two arenas. Mobilising this active participation is one of the core competencies and resources of the collective actors involved in the two arenas. The concept of 'protest politics' underscores this dual role. Protest politics 'usually denotes the deliberate and public use of protest by groups or organisations (but rarely individuals) that seek to influence a political decision or process, which they perceive as having negative consequences for themselves, another group or society as whole' (Rucht 2007: 708).

However, to define what counts as a protest event is no easy task. Following the ground-breaking work of Tilly (1976; 1995; 2008), one can trace the development of a modern 'repertoire of contention' in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. Although this repertoire is far from stable and self-contained, it limits what counts as a protest event. These forms range from demonstrations or occupations of public sites via boycotts and blockades all the way to riots that involve violence against property or individuals, to list only a few of the most common examples. In contrast to protest politics, the modal participation form of the electoral arena (i.e., the act of participation in elections) can be more easily defined. It consists of a formal expression of a preference for a candidate who seeks a public office.

The crucial role of the modal participation form goes hand in hand with other characteristics differentiating the arenas, among others, the *degree of institutionalisation* and the *degree of issue linkage*. Both aspects can be traced from the individuals' and the political system's perspectives. In line with the former, one can distinguish different modes of participation according to the variations in volume, initiative, resources, and skills required for effective participation as well as in reference to the degree of cooperation with others (e.g., Dalton 2006; Verba et al. 1995). Voting varies little in volume, requires little individual initiative,

resources, and skills, as well as it involves almost any cooperation among individual participants. By contrast, protest varies more in volume and requires a higher amount of initiative, individual skills, and cooperation.

From a macro perspective, one can distinguish similar features referring to timing, participants, collective competitors, and impact (e.g., Goldstone 2003; Kitschelt 2001; 2003). In the case of elections, these aspects are very much predetermined and regulated. Think of the 'electoral cycle,' which refers to a rather fixed period of time. The people entitled to participate, the competitors, the rules of the competition, and the way of aggregating individual preferences into collective outcomes (e.g., parliamentary seats) are very much predetermined in the electoral arena. Protest politics is far more episodic and less predictable. The term 'protest cycle' seems like a world apart from its sibling in the electoral arena. Its less-institutionalised character does, however, not only include the question of whether and when protest happens, but also who takes part and who is mobilised by whom—not to speak of the impact of protest (see Gava et al., this volume).

Furthermore, Verba et al. (1995) stress that an individual voter is not able to convey a high amount of information to political authorities (see also Dalton 2006). By contrast, protesting allows one to communicate quite specific claims to the authorities. Even though it is quite easy to understand what protesters want, their specific claims are most often not linked to other concerns. The arena of electoral politics, by contrast, is far more characterised by a linkage and an ordering of different issues into broad 'ideological packages' (Kitschelt 2001). On the supply side, the main competitors in the electoral arena present programs that cover and link different issues. On the demand side, the voters are forced to choose between these alternative packages.

The next distinction refers to the main *organisations* that dominate the arenas. Protest politics is regarded as the core competence and resource of social movement organisations (SMOs) that are distinguished from other formal organisations because they mobilise their constituencies for protests and do so with political goals in mind (Kriesi 1996: 153; McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1218). SMOs are regarded as challengers, i.e., as actors who do not have regular access to the decision-making process via more established channels and, therefore, need to organise protest events to draw attention to their claims and to reinforce the positions of established allies. The electoral arena, by contrast, is the main terrain for political parties. Parties are the main organisations that people form to compete for electoral offices. In Schattschneider's (1960 [1942]: 35) realist view, a 'political party is first of all an organised attempt to get power. Power is here defined as control of the government.' Parties are also more involved in the business of issue linkage, in contrast to the more issue-specific SMOs (Kitschelt 2001; 2003).

The modal form of participation and its main actors are related to yet another difference: the *main site of political mobilisation* (Kitschelt and Rehm 2008: 450). Protest politics relies on 'the streets' as the major site for citizens to express their claims. Following Snow et al. (2004: 13), the term 'street' should be understood in a literal and metaphorical sense. Hence, it covers the whole array of protest tactics. It is even more important to stress that, by means of staging protest events, actors strive for public attention, which is their main instrument for putting pressure on authorities. That is why the mass media holds a key position with respect to the protest arena. In this spirit, Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993: 116) even state that an event 'with no media coverage at all is a nonevent.' Nowadays, the electoral arena is also unthinkable without the presence of the mass media (Manin 1995), a fact that is most obvious during election campaigns. Thus, election campaigns and protest events might be understood

as the most condensed images of the two arenas in the mass media. At the same time, the electoral arena is not as closely tied to the mass media. The individual act of voting takes place in the polling booth, and the main organisations of electoral politics (political parties) have a firm standing in the legislative branches as another main mobilisation site.

So far, I have presented a story of two neatly separated arenas that can be differentiated along several dimensions. While such conceptual differences help to structure our thinking about modes of political mobilisation, Goldstone (2003: 8) rightly insists that we should not forget that the activities taking place there are 'different but parallel approaches to influencing political outcomes, often drawing on the same actors, targeting the same bodies, and seeking the same goals.' While most authors acknowledge this and highlight that such distinctions are just analytically instructive, these distinctions still structure most contemporary research and lead to lively but often separate research fields. Usually, party and electoral research is very focused on the electoral arena, while the study of protest is left to social movement scholars (e.g., Goldstone 2003; Hutter and Kriesi 2013; McAdam and Tarrow 2010). This chapter starts a conversation between party and social movement research by tracing protest events in the streets that are supported by political parties. Thus, the analysis carried out here takes the pivotal actors of electoral politics and focuses on their activities in the protest arena. Following the BED perspective proposed by the present volume, I am interested in whether electoral incentives structure the protest activities of political parties in the long and short run. The following section elaborates on the two hypotheses that guide my exploratory analyses: the differentiation hypothesis and the between election hypothesis.

3 Hypotheses on the development of party-sponsored protests

As stated before, both hypotheses presume that the development of party-sponsored protests is shaped by electoral incentives, i.e., incentives created by the parties' involvement in electoral politics. Thus, both build on a similar mechanism that links electoral politics with protest politics. More precisely, political parties are seen as strategically timing their involvement in protest activities in view of their involvement in electoral competition. To make a long story short, the differentiation hypothesis argues that, in the long run, we observe an increasing division of labor among collective political actors because of institutional and functional exigencies provided by the different political arenas. Therefore, political parties are expected to become less involved in protest events over time, and we should observe an increasing correspondence between sites of mobilisation and types of mobilising actors more generally. The between election hypothesis, by contrast, focuses on the mid- to short-term timing of parties' activities in the streets. Again, the timing is expected to follow incentives closely linked to the electoral arena. More precisely, the rhythm of party-sponsored protests is expected to closely mirror the relative timing of elections. The following paragraphs present the two hypotheses in more detail.

The differentiation hypothesis

Herbert Kitschelt (2003) has argued that we have witnessed an increasing differentiation in the patterns of interest mobilisation since the end of the 'Golden Age' of Western capitalism. According to his argument, the post-war period was characterised by fused political arenas, while the various arenas have become increasingly differentiated since the 1970s. 'The progressive differentiation of modes of collective interest mobilisation and growing

separation of political entrepreneurs in movements, interest groups, and parties from each other is the big story of the last third of the twentieth century in European democracies' (Kitschelt 2003: 89). In a theoretical tour de force, he explains this development by internal learning processes among political entrepreneurs and their followers that were fuelled by economic, social, and political-institutional changes.

Regarding the learning processes, Kitschelt (2001; 2003) focuses on two key challenges faced by political entrepreneurs: problems of collective action and social choice. In contrast to movements and interest groups, political parties are seen as the actors that have invested the most in solving both types of problems. As argued in Section 2, this is caused by the fact that parties frame their stakes as long-term, durable, and encompassing programs. To realise such programs, political entrepreneurs need to invest in an infrastructure that allows communicating with potential adherents and disbursing selective incentives for solving collective action problems (Olson 1965). Furthermore, parties need to invest in techniques of collective preference alignment (e.g., formal rules for aggregating individual preferences into organisational purposes). Such techniques help to overcome social choice problems, 'namely, the instability and paralysis of a collectivity with many activists that results from the heterogeneity of individual preferences' (Kitschelt 2003: 85). In the long-run, political actors that have invested a lot in solving both problems 'are likely to enter the arena of elections for representative office based on territorial representation' (p. 85).

When it comes to the external conditions, Kitschelt (2003) regards such diverse developments as the revolution of information technology, the up-skilling of the labor force, the increasing openness of national economies, the intensifying physical and social mobility as well as the internal politics of the welfare state as catalysts behind the breakdown of traditionally fused patterns of interest intermediation. Most importantly, he argues that all these transformations

have led to the decline of mass parties and party-centred networks that were central to the associationally interlocked systems of interest intermediation in European democracies until the 1970s (Kitschelt 2003: 90ff.).

Let me illustrate this argument by focusing on the impact of international economic openness. By exposing formerly protected sectors to competition, globalisation is expected to lead to rising income inequalities and to create new social divisions (most importantly, tensions between formerly sheltered sectors and highly competitive and export-oriented ones) (e.g., Alderson and Nielsen 2002; Mayda and Rodrik 2005; Schwartz 2001; Walter 2010). This is expected to 'lead to a sectoral cleavage, which cuts across the traditional class cleavage and tends to give rise to cross-class coalitions' (Kriesi et al. 2008: 6). When it comes to the traditionally fused systems of interest intermediation, Kitschelt (2003: 98) argues that these new divides and coalitions weaken traditional patterns of 'highly centralist, corporatist interest intermediation around encompassing economic interest groups and their party affiliates.'

What does the differentiation hypothesis tell us about parties' protest politics? Overall, these processes are expected to result in a strict division of labor among political parties, interest groups and social movements. Having invested differently in solving problems of collective action and social choice, political actors are more or less well adapted to compete in the different arenas. Thus, Kitschelt (2003: 97) argues, 'Parties focus increasingly on electoral competition, at the expense of interest group representation or social movement protest actions […]. Social movements, finally, concentrate on public actions outside institutionalised arenas of bargaining to affect public opinion and political elites through the media.' Thus, the differentiation hypothesis predicts that parties become less involved in protest events over time since, in times of complex political markets, organisations need to specialise and we see

an increasing correspondence between sites of mobilisation and types of mobilising actors. To come back to the shopping metaphor, the huge 'department stores' disappear and are replaced by more specialised 'boutiques.'

The between election hypothesis

While the differentiation hypothesis focuses on the broad transformations during the last decades, the between election hypothesis focuses on the timing of party-sponsored protests over a far shorter period of time, i.e., the period between two (national) elections. The electoral cycle concept is often used in political science and refers to the relative timing of elections. The notion of 'electoral cycle effects' assumes that the behaviour of politicians and citizens shows some systematic variation over the electoral cycle. For example, authors have examined whether economic policies follows some cyclical patterns. Here, the main assumption is that office-seeking politicians use economic policies just before the election to increase their re-election chances (e.g., Alesina et al. 1993; Katsimi and Sarantides 2012; Nordhaus 1975; for reviews, see Drazen 2001; Franzese 2002). Similarly, many have observed post-election changes in citizens' attitudes on a variety of objects (e.g., evaluations of winning candidates, government popularity or more diffuse support measures) (e.g., Clarke and Acock 1989; Nadeau and Blais 1993; Kölln and Arts, this volume). A lively debate on electoral cycle effects has also taken place in the literature on 'second-order elections' (either on the sub- or supranational level) (e.g., Koepke and Ringe 2006; Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt 2005; Stimson 1976; Tufte 1975). Again, the authors expect that the results of a second-order election depend on the stage at which it takes place during the national electoral cycle. For example, government parties are expected to lose the most in the middle of the electoral cycle, while small opposition parties are expected to win the most at that time.

Although the empirical results are mixed and the mechanisms behind electoral cycle effects are not always clear, it remains a powerful idea both that politicians strategically plan their activities and that citizens behave differently depending on the relative timing of elections.

As argued in Section 2, the timing of electoral politics is very much predetermined, whereas protest politics is far more episodic and one cannot identify as clear-cut and recurrent patterns. Thus, at first sight, we should not expect that the rhythm of protest politics closely mirrors the electoral cycle. However, the literature provides at least two contrasting arguments on the general linkage between elections and protest mobilisation.

Some authors argue that elections provide opportunities and threats that provoke protest mobilisation since there is so much at stake on Election Day (e.g., Andrews 1997; McAdam and Tarrow 2010). Thus, movement groups are expected to proactively mobilise in the run-up to the elections to advance their interests. Furthermore, since election campaigns increase political awareness and knowledge in general (e.g., Andersen et al. 2005), they might also increase participation in protest events. This suggests a close temporal clustering of protests around elections. Unfortunately, this hypothesis has rarely ever been tested in a quantitative way (for an illustrative case study, see McAdam and Tarrow forthcoming). In a rare example, Vadlamannati (2008) finds that scheduled elections are associated with an increase in riots in the Indian states.

Alternatively, authors have argued that if elections and protests are seen as parallel ways to influence political decisions, then protests are less likely around elections since elections already provide an important 'mechanism through which political change can occur' (Piven and Cloward 1977: 15; see also Kriesi 2011). Thus, protests should be more common in the middle of an electoral cycle when the next elections are still too far off and the protest arena

provides an alternative opportunity for voicing discontent in the absence of available options in the electoral arena.

In view of these general arguments, I formulate two more specific hypotheses on parties' activities in the streets and the electoral cycle. Following the first line of reasoning, I expect that party-sponsored protests are more likely closely before Election Day. Political parties are expected to strategically plan their protest activities with the elections in mind. Thus, they use protest events for their campaign since protests are a way to gain media attention, as well as to show mobilising capacity and responsiveness to (new) societal demands. Alternatively, one could expect that political parties' involvement in protest events is most likely in the middle of the electoral cycle. On the one hand, (opposition) parties might want to influence political decisions by using public protests since they still have to wait for too long to get a chance through the electoral channel. On the other hand, political parties in general might want to show their close linkage and responsiveness to citizens' demands by supporting protest events in-between elections.

4   Design and methods

In this chapter, I am mainly interested in general trends and not in the differences across the four countries under scrutiny, i.e., Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Western Europe is chosen because it is where the differentiation of political interest intermediation is expected to be most pronounced (Kitschelt 2003: 101f.). Methodologically, the chapter is based on protest event analysis (PEA), a form of quantitative content analysis of mostly media sources, to assess the changes in the protest arena. The aim of PEA is to retrieve and describe protest events in such a manner as to allow for cross-sectional and longitudinal

analyses (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Compared to survey data, protest event analysis is better suited to measure actual protest mobilisation as well as many additional features of protest events (e.g., the goal of an event). Most important for the present purpose, it allows tracing the organisations that support or take part in protest events.

More precisely, two different datasets are used. On the one hand, I rely on an updated version of the data used by Kriesi et al. (1995) to study new social movement (see also Kriesi et al. 2012). This allows me to cover protest events in the four countries from 1975 to 2005.[2] On the other hand, I rely on the so-called Prodat data collected by Rucht and colleagues that covers protests in Germany from 1950 to 2002 (e.g., Rucht 2001; 2003). Ideally, we would have data going as far back in time in the other countries as well. Unfortunately, the Rucht et al. data for Germany is an exceptional case in that respect.[3]

The Kriesi et al. data comes from one national quality newspaper per country, and the Monday editions were consulted. The newspapers are *The Guardian* (Britain), *Le Monde* (France), *Frankfurter Rundschau* (Germany), and *NRC Handelsblad* (Netherlands). The choice of Monday editions was dictated not only by the necessity to reduce the work of collecting a large number of events over a long period of time, but also because the Monday edition reports on events during the weekend. Since protests tend to be concentrated on the weekend, the dataset includes a high proportion of all protest events occurring during the period under study. All events noted in the Monday edition were coded, including those occurring one week before or after the publication date. That is why around 25 per cent of all

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[2] The original dataset covers also protest events in Austria and Switzerland for the same period. Due to the small overall number of protest events for Austria and missing information on organizations for the 1990s in Switzerland, I excluded the two countries from the following analyses.

[3] Another rare example is the data of Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, Susan Olzak, and Sarah Soule on the U.S. case (1950–1995) (available at http://www.stanford.edu/group/collectiveaction/cgi-bin/drupal/). Furthermore, Kriesi et al. (1981) collected data on 'political activation events' in Switzerland for the period 1945 to 1978.

coded events occurred during weekdays.[4] Prodat is based on a very similar strategy of data collection. However, it differs in some important ways since it covers two quality newspapers (*Frankfurter Rundschau* and S*üddeutsche Zeitung*) but only the national sections. Furthermore, Prodat is based on a more extensive sampling strategy. Rucht et al. sampled all Monday editions (but coded only protests taking place during the weekend) and all editions of every fourth complete week (but coded only the events one day before the publication day).[5]

Overall, Kriesi et al.'s strategy resulted in a dataset of 14,497 protest events in the four countries from 1975 to 2005 that involved approximately 108 million participants.[6] There is considerable variation by country in the number of events coded: 5,346 events in West Germany, 5,107 in France, 2,063 in Great Britain, and 1,981 in the Netherlands. The recoded

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[4] PEA in general and Kriesi et al.'s sampling strategy more specifically has been the object of critique in the literature. While this is not the place for a detailed summary and empirical assessment of this discussion (e.g., Earl et al. 2004; Koopmans and Rucht 2002), I want to stress three points that, in combination, highlight the strength of the current strategy of data collection. First, it can be shown that the Monday strategy yields valid and reliable data for the analyses carried out here. For example, Barranco and Wisler (1999) found that about half of the public demonstrations in Swiss cities took place either on Saturday or Sunday, and tests with continuous time data conducted by Koopmans (1995; 1998) and Hutter (2014) for Germany, as well as by Giugni (2004) for the United States, found similar patterns. In general, the results show that the national ebbs and flows of protest mobilization are traced accurately with the sampling strategy. Second, some distortions can be empirically assessed and used in interpreting the results. As Earl et al. (2004: 69ff.) sum up the literature on the comparison of newspaper with other data sources (mainly police archives), three sets of factors predict whether news media covers an event or not: (a) event characteristics (e.g., size, violence), (b) news agency characteristics (e.g., political or local orientation of the newspaper), and issue characteristics (e.g., media attention cycles). As Rucht and Neidhardt (1998: 76) state, "In the case of very large events, as in cases of violent demonstrations leading to significant damage to property and/or injuries, we can expect a total coverage even when using only one national newspaper." Furthermore, the studies show that these factors are very similar across countries (e.g., McCarthy et al. 2008). Third, it is most important for the present argument that the biases are consistent over time. Although some authors find inconsistent patterns across short periods of a week or a month (e.g., Myers and Schaefer Caniglia 2004; Swank 2000), most studies show that results tend to be stable, especially within individual newspapers, and over longer periods of time (e.g., Barranco and Wisler 1999; McCarthy et al. 1996; McCarthy et al. 2008).

[5] Moreover, Prodat includes strikes and other action forms (e.g., internal protest meetings, resolutions, and litigations) that are not covered by the Kriesi et al. data. However, for the analyses carried out in this chapter, I dropped these action forms (do-files available upon request).

[6] As the present research focuses on long-term trends and the national level, all events taking place on East German and Northern Irish soil were excluded for the following analysis. Where numbers of participants are missing, they have been replaced by the national median of the number of participants for a given type of event (e.g., a demonstration) in that country. Following the strategy of Kriesi et al. (1995), events with more than one million participants are coded as involving 999,998 participants (N=13).

Prodat dataset covers 8,875 events in Germany from 1950 to 2002 that involved around 63 million participants.

In general, the data contains information on the formal organisations that sponsor an event. Sponsorship means that the organisations mobilise for, organise, or take part in the event. As Rucht notes (1998: 41), '[t]hose serving as sponsors of protest almost always also participate, so that these roles can only rarely be separated when information is derived from newspapers.' Thus, the present analysis is based on a broad understanding of sponsorship and does not differentiate between various forms and degrees of supporting activities. At the same time, note that if party representatives were only reported as sharing the concerns of the protestors, this was not coded as sponsorship of a protest event. In contrast to Neidhardt and Rucht (2001: 45ff.), I do not restrict the analysis to events that are *exclusively* sponsored by political parties because parties often join forces with other types of organisations (especially SMOs) in the protest arena.

In the following section, three indicators are used to assess the extent of party-sponsored events. The first indicator is the relative share of events that are (co-)sponsored by a political party as a percentage of all coded protest events. The second indicator is the absolute number of party-sponsored events, and the third indicator is the absolute number of participants involved in these events. Thus, the first indicator shows how important parties are within the 'whole' protest arena of a country, and the other two focus only on the (changing) numbers of events and participants that are (co-)sponsored by political parties. Usually, participation rates (standardised by population figures) and the relative share of events are used for comparative research. The absolute number of events, by contrast, depends very much on the size of the country as well as the number of 'important cities.' Thus, it is less easy to standardise this measure.

5 Empirical findings

To begin with, I look at the extent and the long-tem development of party-sponsored protests in the four countries. This should allow testing Kitschelt's far-reaching differentiation hypothesis. For that purpose, Table 2 shows the overall number of people involved as well as the absolute number and relative share of events supported by at least one political party. In absolute terms, the two datasets cover 2,082 party-sponsored protest events. While 9.0 per cent of all German events coded for the years 1950 to 2002 by Rucht et al. saw political parties in the streets, the average share is 7.7 per cent for the four countries covered by the Kriesi et al. data.

Table 2 also highlights that a substantial number of participants have taken part in these events. While it is absolutely true that political parties by no means dominate the protest arena, the figures still indicate that the neat analytical connection between types of actors and sites of mobilisation becomes blurred in reality (Section 2; see also Rucht 1998: 25). Thus, the protest activities of political parties offer are a relevant topic for empirical research. At the same time, the three indicators highlight pronounced cross-national differences. From 1975 to 2005, political parties in Germany and France were far more present in the protest arena than their Dutch and British counterparts.

Table 2: The long-term development of protests sponsored by political parties

	Germany 1950–2002	Germany 1975–2005	France 1975–2005	Netherlands 1975–2005	Britain 1975–2005
(a) Number of participants (per million inhabitants)	224,000	146,000	113,000	53,000	18,000
(b) Number of events supported by parties	800	618	458	82	124
(c) Share of events supported by parties	9.0%	11.6%	9.0%	4.2%	6.0%
Linear trends over years?					
(a)	**0.31****	-0.09	**0.31***	-0.19	-0.06
(b)	**0.59*****	-0.09	0.22	-0.02	**-0.78*****
(c)	0.18	0.04	0.18	**0.30***	**-0.72*****
Decade with lowest/ highest value?					
(a)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/**2000s**	2000s/1980s	2000s/1980s
(b)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/1990s	1980s/1990s	1990s/**1970s**
(c)	1960s/1970s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/1990s	1980s/**2000s**	2000s/**1970s**
(N=all protest events)	(8,875)	(5,342)	(5,106)	(1,973)	(2,063)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: The three indicators used are (a) the number of participants reported for party-sponsored protest events, (b) the absolute number of party-sponsored events, as well as (c) the relative share of party-sponsored events in per cent of all coded protest events. To compare the participation figures cross-nationally, the number of participants was divided by the number of inhabitants in the middle of the respective research period. To measure trends in the development of party-sponsored protests, I report correlation coefficients based on yearly figures for the three indicators as well as the decades with the lowest and highest values, respectively. Significant correlation coefficients as well as the first and last decade covered by the datasets are shown in bold.

Let us come to the main interest of this chapter, i.e., to the question of whether political parties are less often found in the streets over time as suggested by Kitschelt (2003). As we know from studying the general development of protest politics that protests tend to occur in waves (e.g., Koopmans 1993; 2004; Tarrow 1989; 1998), I present two simple measures indicating whether there are some general trends behind these waves. On the one hand, I calculated yearly figures for all three indicators and report whether we observe some underlying linear trend over time by means of correlation coefficients. On the other hand, I

report the decades that saw the most and the least party-sponsored activities in the protest

arena. Thus, the results would confirm Kitschelt's differentiation hypothesis (a) if we observe

significant and negative correlations coefficients and (b) if the first and the last decade

covered by the datasets are also the ones with the highest and lowest presence of parties in the

protest arena, respectively.

Most measures in Table 2 do not support the differentiation hypothesis. Based on the data at

hand, we do not find that political parties are leaving the protest arena over time. Most

importantly, the long-term German data suggests an opposite pattern. In terms of the absolute

number of both participants and events, political parties are more often found in the streets in

Germany. This is indicated by the significant linear trends as well as by the fact that the 1950s

were the period that saw the lowest number of all decades under scrutiny (for a graphical

representation, see Figure 1).[7] Similarly, the four-country data indicates more often than not

an increasing trend rather than a decreasing one. Great Britain is the only country where

political parties have withdrawn from the protest arena. In Great Britain, the number party-

sponsored events, as well as their share in terms of all reported protests, have declined

significantly over the 31-year period. France is the main countering example. There, the

participation figures have risen significantly over time, and all three measures indicate that the

1970s saw the least active parties in the protest arena, while political parties were far more

likely to sponsor protests in France in the 1990s and early 2000s.

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[77] One could object that Germany is a special case due to legacy of the Second World War. However, tests with data for Switzerland covering the period from 1945 to 1978 show similar trends (results available from the author).

Figure 1: The long-term development of party-sponsored protests in Germany, 1950–2002
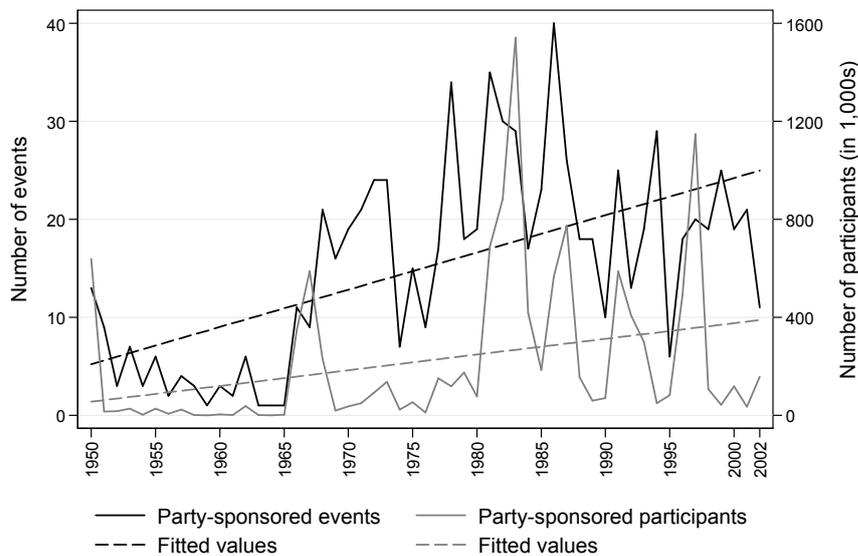
Source: Prodat

Note: For the indicators, see Table 2.

One could object that Kitschelt's differentiation hypothesis is, above all, a story about established mainstream parties. Therefore, Table 3 presents the results for the Social Democrats only. The analysis focuses on the Social Democratic party family because it is the prime example when people talk about mass parties and party-centered networks that were central to the associationally interlocked systems of interest intermediation (Bartolini 2000). On the one hand, the results for the Social Democrats are very similar to the ones for all parties (see Table 3). Most importantly, the long-term trends in Germany contradict the differentiation hypothesis by indicating that the Social Democrats are more, not less, likely to take to the streets over time. On the other hand, the even lower absolute and relative figures highlight that protests by mainstream parties of the left are a relatively rare phenomenon these days. Furthermore, the data from Britain and the Netherlands indicates that protests became even rarer from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s. Thus, while the trend lines do not really

support Kitschelt's prediction, the low levels certainly highlight that mainstream political

parties rarely 'take it to the streets' in Europe.

Table 3: The long-term development of protests sponsored by Social Democratic parties

	Germany 1950–2002	Germany 1975–2005	France 1975–2005	Netherlands 1975–2005	Britain 1975–2005
(a) Number of participants (per million inhabitants)	135,000	82,000	55,000	51,000	16,000
(b) Number of events supported by parties	263	258	166	27	30
(c) Share of events supported by parties	3.0%	4.8%	3.3%	1.4%	1.5%
Linear trends over years?					
(a)	**0.31****	-0.19	**0.36****	-0.17	-0.10
(b)	**0.36*****	-0.19	0.11	**-0.40****	**-0.53*****
(c)	0.05	-0.18	0.06	-0.27	**-0.41****
Decade with lowest/ highest value?					
(a)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s/2000s**	**2000s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s
(b)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	1980s/1990s	**2000s/1970s**	**2000s**/1980s
(c)	1960s/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	1980s/1990	**2000s/1970s**	1990s/1980s
(N=all protest events)	(8,875)	(5,342)	(5,106)	(1,973)	(2,063)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: For the indicators, see Table 2.

Having found that party-sponsored protest activities do not follow a clearly decreasing trend

when we look at the long-term development during the last decades, let us now turn to the

question of whether the short- and mid-term trends in the parties' protest activities mirror the

electoral cycle. As argued in Section 3, one can formulate at least two hypotheses on how the

extent of party-sponsored protests depends on the stages of the electoral cycle (between elec.

While some authors expect that political parties are more often found in the protest arena

shortly before Election Day, others assume that political parties mainly get involved in the

middle of the electoral cycle when the next elections are still too far off.

The results presented in Table 4 assess the first expectation that parties are most involved in protest events shortly before Election Day. To do so, I distinguish between those events that take place during national election campaigns and those that take place during the rest of the legislative period. The election campaign is simply defined as the three months period before the next national parliamentary election takes place (see also Kriesi et al. 2008). Again, I look at same three dependent variables as before. The relative share of party-sponsored events as a percentage of all coded events is easy to compare across the two time periods. To compare the absolute number of events and participants reported during election campaigns and beyond, I calculated monthly averages (N=372 per country).

Overall, the results in Table 4 do not at all support the hypothesis that political parties strategically enter the protest arena only shortly before elections take place. Apart from the higher share of party-sponsored protests in Germany during election campaigns, none of the differences is statistically significant. Furthermore, the average number of participants even indicates that party-sponsored events attract more participants off the national election campaigns. While this measure is highly shaped by a few very large protests, the absolute and relative numbers of party-sponsored events underscore that there seems to be no systematic trend between the timing of elections and parties' involvement in protest events.

Table 4: Party-sponsored protests during election campaigns, 1975–2005

	Germany		France		Netherlands		Britain	
During election campaign?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
(a) Average number of participants (per month)	3,760	27,168	13,552	18,022	106	2,280	159	2,934
(b) Average number of events (per month)	1.79	1.65	1.52	1.21	0.24	0.22	0.33	0.31
(c) Share of all protest events	**15.8%**	**11.3%**	10.7%	8.9%	4.8%	4.1%	6.2%	6.0%

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: The absolute number of party-sponsored participants and events was calculated per month (N=372). The share of party-sponsored protests in per cent of all coded events is based on the overall number of events during the three months before Election Day and beyond. A list of all legislative periods covered by the Kriesi et al. data can be found in the Appendix. I performed two-group mean comparison tests to see whether the differences are statistically significant. Significant differences are shown in bold.

Do we find more support for the idea that parties' protest activities are coloured by their participation in elections when we look at the development across the whole electoral cycle? To answer this question and to see whether we observe some significant mid-term effects, I focus on all electoral cycles that were completely covered by the Kriesi et al. data. Furthermore, I dropped all legislative periods that lasted less than three years and/or with less than 10 party-sponsored protest events. In the end, the analyses are based on six full electoral cycles in Germany, five in France, as well as three in Britain and the Netherlands. To get closer to the electoral cycle effects, each period has been divided in 10 sub-periods or stages. Then I calculated the share of events/participants reported during each sub-period as a percentage of all party-sponsored participants/events reported during the whole legislative period. Thus, 100 per cent refer to all party-sponsored events and participants during a given electoral cycle.

Figure 2: The distribution of party-sponsored protests over the electoral cycle, 1975–2005
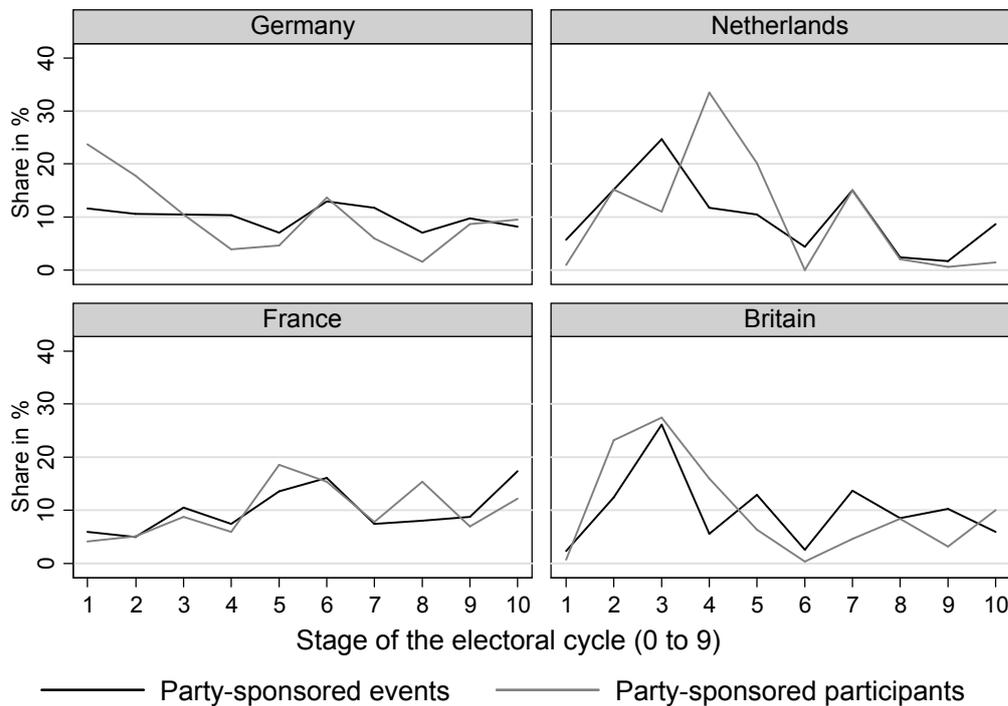
Note: The values indicate the relative share of party-sponsored protest events/participants during a certain sub-period in per cent of all party-sponsored protest events/participants reported during a given electoral cycle. Thus, 100 per cent refers to all party-sponsored protest events/participants per electoral cycle.

Again, Figure 2 does not reveal any uniform trends in party-sponsored protests over the electoral cycle. By contrast, the differences over time vary a lot across countries. For example, the German figures show a rather steady development based on the share of party-sponsored events, while we see some post-election effects when we look at the share of participants involved in party-sponsored protests. The share of participants is significantly higher shortly after the national elections than at all other stages of the electoral cycle. The French participation rates, by contrast, do not significantly differ across the different sub-periods of the electoral cycle. In France, one finds only that the share of party-sponsored events is significantly higher both in the middle of the electoral period and at the end as compared to the post-election months. The British and Dutch figures fluctuate more strongly

over the electoral cycle. However, these results are only based on three electoral cycles. Therefore, we find only significant effects as regards the peaks in the share of participants in the Netherlands during the fourth stage and in Britain during the second stage of the electoral cycle.

Finally, I focus on the question of whether political parties are more likely to sponsor a protest event taking place at a certain stage of the electoral cycle when controlling for the most important other characteristics of a given event. To do so, I change the strategy of data analysis by performing logistic regressions and using single protest events as my cases (for similar strategies, see Soule and Davenport 2009; van Dyke et al. 2004; Walker et al. 2008). More specifically, the models include two independent variables related to the timing of the event: (a) has the event taken place during the election campaign or not? (b) Has the event taken place in the middle of the electoral cycle or not (stages 4 to 6 were coded as 1)? Regarding other characteristics of a protest event, I include information on the involvement of other formal organisations, the action form, number of participants, as well as the goal of the event.

However, the between election hypothesis is not supported when controlling for other protest characteristics. As can be seen in Table 5, only the French political parties tend to be more likely to support protest events both that take place during the election campaign and in the middle of the electoral cycle. In all other countries, we only find significant effects of the other event characteristics on party sponsorship. In most countries, political parties are most likely to support moderate protest events with a high number of participants and that are co-sponsored by other formal organisations. Thus, it seems more the event as such that leads political parties enter the protest arena and not so much the relative timing of elections.

Table 5: The impact of electoral cycle and event characteristics on party sponsorship, 1975–2005

	Germany	France	Netherlands	Britain
Election campaign (yes=1)	0.18	0.46*	0.07	-0.08
Middle of electoral cycle (yes=1)	0.04	0.50***	-0.07	-0.39
Event characteristics				
Supported by				
… an established interest organisation	1.42***	1.73***	1.51***	0.05
… a social movement organisation	0.97***	0.85***	-0.04	-0.76**
Moderate action form (yes=1)	0.64***	1.52***	0.64**	1.38***
Number of participants (1 to 5)	0.21***	0.10*	-0.05	0.41***
Issue area				
Cultural liberalism=ref.				
Immigration	-0.22	-0.19	-1.01	-1.80*
Environment	0.75***	0.74***	1.81***	2.49***
Cultural (others)	0.22	-0.47**	0.96*	0.98*
Welfare	-2.27***	-2.37***	1.08*	0.30
Economic (others)	-1.17***	-1.98***	-1.98**	1.00**
Others	-1.18***	-1.52***	-0.37	0.54
Constant	-3.88***	-4.41***	-4.01***	-5.56***
N	4,297	3,778	1,542	1,694
Pseudo-R^2	0.15	0.27	0.16	0.20

*** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$; logistic regression, unstandardised coefficients

Source: Own data

Note: Logistic regression analysis (1=party-supported protest event). The number of participants has been classified into five groups: <100=1; 101-1,000=2; 1,001-5,000=3; 5,001-10,000=4; >10,000=5; the issue categories are explained in detail in Hutter (2012).

6   Conclusion

This chapter presented first systematic results on a neglected topic: the development and timing of protest events that are sponsored by political parties. In other words, the chapter looked at the involvement of the main actors of electoral politics in a major form of non-electoral mobilisation. This shed light on parties' activities between elections and helped bridging disciplinary divides (see McAdam and Tarrow 2010). By adopting an OED-perspective, the chapter focused on the question as to whether the development and timing of party-sponsored protests is driven by electoral incentives. On the one hand, I discussed

Kitschelt's (2003) differentiation hypothesis that, in the long run, political parties are less likely to take part in protest politics. On the other hand, I focused on the question of whether the more mid- to short-term timing of party-sponsored protests shows electoral cycle effects (between election hypothesis).

To sum up, the results do not support the idea that political parties' activities in the streets are mainly coloured by their participation in elections. Although the overall share and number of party-sponsored protests is considerably low, the results indicate mainly no or increasing trends over time. Comparing the four West European countries under scrutiny, Britain is the only case where Kitschelt's prediction seems to hold in the time period covered by the present study. Furthermore, the empirical findings suggest that political parties are *not* more likely to protest either during election campaigns or in the middle of the electoral cycle when the next elections are still too far off. Again, only the French picture tends to support this view, while the developments in the other three countries do not support this close connection between the timing of party-sponsored protests and elections. The rhythms of party-sponsored protests seem to depend far more on the dynamics within the protest arena itself.

While the empirical findings disconfirm the far-reaching claim that parties' protest activities just take place in the shadow of elections, this chapter was clearly just a first cut at a more complex question. Further research is needed that elaborates the striking cross-national differences and tries to integrate more information on the type of protests supported by political parties. Furthermore, we should more closely study how the activities in the streets vary across political parties. For example, how do ideological orientations (e.g., left vs. right or radical vs. moderate), government status, or niche characteristics affect a party's protest activities? Moreover, the quantitative aggregate analysis carried out here should be

supplemented by more fine-grained and qualitative case studies. There is a lot more to be

explored when it comes to parties' activities in the streets of Western Europe and beyond.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Conceptual differences of the protest arena and the electoral arena

	Protest arena	Electoral arena
Modal form of participation	Participation in protest events	Participation in elections
Degree of institutionalisation	Low	High
Degree of issue linkage	Low	High
Main organisations	SMOs	Political parties
Main sites of mobilisation	'Street' and mass media	Legislature and mass media

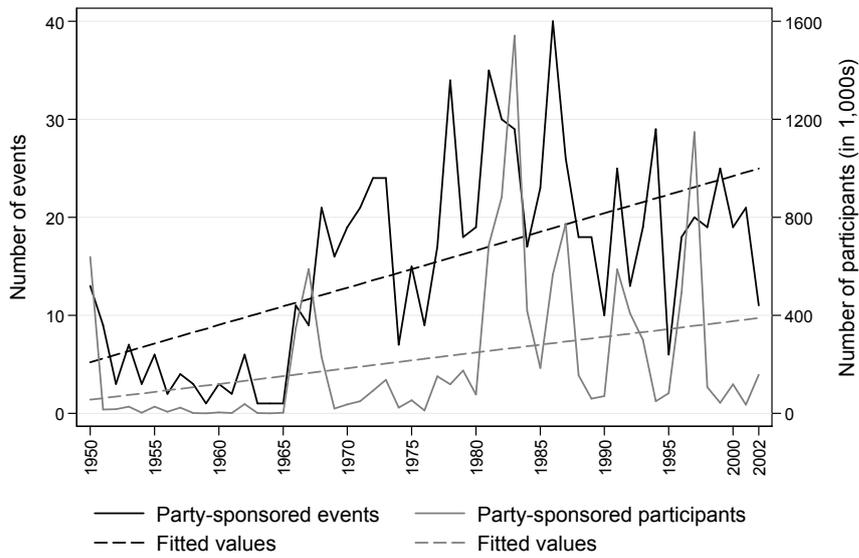Table 2: The long-term development of protests sponsored by political parties

	Germany 1950–2002	Germany 1975–2005	France 1975–2005	Netherlands 1975–2005	Britain 1975–2005
(a) Number of participants (per million inhabitants)	224,000	146,000	113,000	53,000	18,000
(b) Number of events supported by parties	800	618	458	82	124
(c) Share of events supported by parties	9.0%	11.6%	9.0%	4.2%	6.0%
Linear trends over years?					
(a)	**0.31****	-0.09	**0.31***	-0.19	-0.06
(b)	**0.59*****	-0.09	0.22	-0.02	**-0.78*****
(c)	0.18	0.04	0.18	**0.30***	**-0.72*****
Decade with lowest/ highest value?					
(a)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/**2000s**	**2000s**/1980s	**2000s**/1980s
(b)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/1990s	1980s/1990s	1990s/**1970s**
(c)	1960s/1970s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s**/1990s	1980s/**2000s**	**2000s**/**1970s**
(N=all protest events)	(8,875)	(5,342)	(5,106)	(1,973)	(2,063)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: The three indicators used are (a) the number of participants reported for party-sponsored protest events, (b) the absolute number of party-sponsored events, as well as (c) the relative share of party-sponsored events in per cent of all coded protest events. To compare the participation figures cross-nationally, the number of participants was divided by the number of inhabitants in the middle of the respective research period. To measure trends in the development of party-sponsored protests, I report correlation coefficients based on yearly figures for the three indicators as well as the decades with the lowest and highest values, respectively. Significant correlation coefficients as well as the first and last decade covered by the datasets are shown in bold.

Figure 1: The long-term development of party-sponsored protests in Germany, 1950–2002

Source: Prodat

Note: For the indicators, see Table 2.

Table 3: The long-term development of protests sponsored by Social Democratic parties

	Germany 1950–2002	Germany 1975–2005	France 1975–2005	Netherlands 1975–2005	Britain 1975–2005
(a) Number of participants (per million inhabitants)	135,000	82,000	55,000	51,000	16,000
(b) Number of events supported by parties	263	258	166	27	30
(c) Share of events supported by parties	3.0%	4.8%	3.3%	1.4%	1.5%
Linear trends over years?					
(a)	**0.31****	-0.19	**0.36****	-0.17	-0.10
(b)	**0.36*****	-0.19	0.11	**-0.40****	**-0.53*****
(c)	0.05	-0.18	0.06	-0.27	**-0.41****
Decade with lowest/ highest value?					
(a)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	**1970s/2000s**	**2000s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s
(b)	**1950s**/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	1980s/1990s	**2000s/1970s**	**2000s**/1980s
(c)	1960s/1980s	**1970s**/1980s	1980s/1990	**2000s/1970s**	1990s/1980s
(N=all protest events)	(8,875)	(5,342)	(5,106)	(1,973)	(2,063)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: For the indicators, see Table 2.

Table 4: Party-sponsored protests during election campaigns, 1975–2005

During election campaign?	Germany		France		Netherlands		Britain	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
(a) Average number of participants (per month)	3,760	27,168	13,552	18,022	106	2,280	159	2,934
(b) Average number of events (per month)	1.79	1.65	1.52	1.21	0.24	0.22	0.33	0.31
(c) Share of all protest events	**15.8%**	**11.3%**	10.7%	8.9%	4.8%	4.1%	6.2%	6.0%

Sources: Prodat and own data

Note: The absolute number of party-sponsored participants and events was calculated per month (N=372). The share of party-sponsored protests in per cent of all coded events is based on the overall number of events during the three months before Election Day and beyond. A list of all legislative periods covered by the Kriesi et al. data can be found in the Appendix. I performed two-group mean comparison tests to see whether the differences are statistically significant. Significant differences are shown in bold.

Figure 2: The distribution of party-sponsored protests over the electoral cycle, 1975–2005
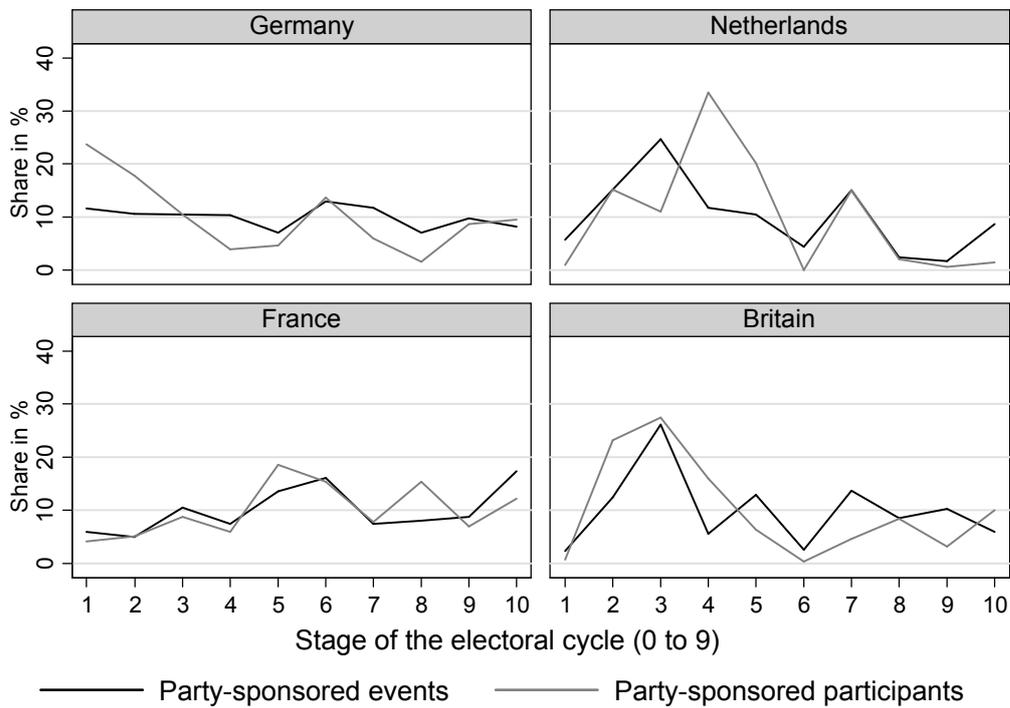
Note: The values indicate the relative share of party-sponsored protest events/participants during a certain sub-period in per cent of all party-sponsored protest events/participants reported during a given electoral cycle. Thus, 100 per cent refers to all party-sponsored protest events/participants per electoral cycle.

Table 5: The impact of electoral cycle and event characteristics on party sponsorship,

1975–2005

	Germany	France	Netherlands	Britain
Election campaign (yes=1)	0.18	0.46*	0.07	-0.08
Middle of electoral cycle (yes=1)	0.04	0.50***	-0.07	-0.39
Event characteristics				
Supported by				
… an established interest organisation	1.42***	1.73***	1.51***	0.05
… a social movement organisation	0.97***	0.85***	-0.04	-0.76**
Moderate action form (yes=1)	0.64***	1.52***	0.64**	1.38***
Number of participants (1 to 5)	0.21***	0.10*	-0.05	0.41***
Issue area				
Cultural liberalism=ref.				
Immigration	-0.22	-0.19	-1.01	-1.80*
Environment	0.75***	0.74***	1.81***	2.49***
Cultural (others)	0.22	-0.47**	0.96*	0.98*
Welfare	-2.27***	-2.37***	1.08*	0.30
Economic (others)	-1.17***	-1.98***	-1.98**	1.00**
Others	-1.18***	-1.52***	-0.37	0.54
Constant	-3.88***	-4.41***	-4.01***	-5.56***
N	4,297	3,778	1,542	1,694
Pseudo-R^2	0.15	0.27	0.16	0.20

*** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$; logistic regression, unstandardised coefficients

Source: Own data

Note: Logistic regression analysis (1=party-supported protest event). The number of participants has been classified into five groups: <100=1; 101-1,000=2; 1,001-5,000=3; 5,001-10,000=4; >10,000=5; the issue categories are explained in detail in Hutter (2012).