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Mobilization



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Long definition

 ##### Mobilization and movement

The movement triggered by mobility results in movement to a chosen gathering place, either to occupy it in a static, more or less temporary way (symbolic occupation of public spaces like Zuccotti Park during Occupy Wall Street in 2011 or Taksim Square in Istanbul in 2013), or as a departure point for group marches (commemorations, demonstrations, parades, etc.) along authorized or unauthorized routes.

Mobilization often takes the form of a slow march, the symbol of non-violent protest, and can take place on foot (the most common case, like the March for Equality and Against Racism in 1983), by bicycle (like Critical Mass), moped (like the March for Equality and Against Racism in 1984), rollerblade, taxi or truck. Due to the fact that it disrupts traffic in the public space (which is the whole point), occupation often seems more hostile than marches.

Reasons for mobilization

What are the “motives” that trigger movement? Causes for mobilization can be quite different. For instance, mobilization can serve to alert, draw attention to a cause to put it on the political agenda, e.g. social, societal issues or environmental (salary demands, education, etc.), to defend values (secularism, freedom of the press, etc.), to pressure the government into abandoning a law or withdraw military troops (Vietnam or, more recently, Iraq, in the U.S. and U.K.) or, increasingly common in the

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Mobilization actors and effects

Mobilization involves at least three key types of actors:

- participants,
- spectators,

<div class="logo logo-mobile"> ### Insights
 #### Characteristics of mobilization

*The cognitive dimension of mobilization.*This is the process by which actors define their interests in relation to other actors. Recognition and definition of these interests are the result of joint efforts to build awareness of specific problems and give them political and cultural meaning through interaction (*ibid.*: 186). Traditional media and social networks play an important role in this dimension of mobilization as agents; effectively, through information management, it is possible to "adapt" the representation of reality.

*The emotional dimension of mobilization.*The "emotional" dimension of mobilization is what creates a sense of solidarity between actors. As Lolive notes (1997: 129), this key aspect is the "cement of mobilization." Excitement and indignation are intense emotions trigger mobilization even for abstract ideas, arousing feelings of solidarity among strangers. Livet and Thévenot, for instance, (2003) argue that the feeling of injustice prepares individuals for action and can trigger mobilization.

 ### Forms of mobilization
 #### Vertical mobilization (the act of mobilizing)

This is mobilization organized by institutional actors, notably political parties, states or associations (NGOs, etc.) that provide citizens opportunities for political participation through their organization. Political parties, for instance, create vertical mobilization by organizing and funding meetings and demonstrations, inviting people

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The intensifying of mobilization through digital technology

According to a study of the occupation movement by students of British universities against an increase in tuition fees, new technologies have specific advantages, such as high speed message broadcasting, moral support and networking ease for multiple organizations (Ward, Gibson & Lusoli, 2003, 187).

Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign is an interesting example of the Internet as a mobilization tool. According to Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011), the use of technological tools in political campaigns is not new. However, the Obama campaign used them in an unprecedented way. Web 2.0 tools played a decisive role in the Democratic candidate's victory, thanks, among other things, to the mobilization of the four million voters. Emails, videos and an iPhone app mobilized citizens by sending them personalized messages inviting them to participate in nearby political events. Indirect mobilization was likewise possible using the same tools, especially during key primary battles in swing States: the contact information stored in supporters' phones were analyzed to identify those of people who lived in the targeted swing State. The application then suggested to said citizen that he/she call his/her friends - those selected - and talk to them about Obama (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011: 203).

One could even go so far as to say that the Internet has become a public space of mobilization in its own right, thanks notably to the growing number of opportunities for signing online petitions and instantly being able to see the number of people mobilized on a given issue.

Scales and territories of mobilization

The effects of mobilization and nature of their impact on the political system vary depending on the scale. Although mobilization often takes place at the national scale for large parades (military marches, for example), local and international mobilization has likewise considerably developed in recent years.

At the local level mobilization has the power to change how governments govern, leading to new, and more cooperative forms of governance. According to Balme and Faure (2002: 124), "(l)ocal political mobilization institutes the State's monopoly in public action and contributes to the development of a kind of 'polycentric governance,' meaning a less hierarchical, less centralized way of wielding political

authority than in the past—in other words, decentralized governance marked by cooperation between different levels of government and private actors."

International mobilizations, like marches for the environment targeting global institutions (the G8, WTO, etc.) have become increasingly frequent.

 ### Perspectives
 The political dimension of mobilization is the subject of abundant scientific literature. Identity-oriented or festive spatial mobilizations, on the other hand, are much less studied and still represent relatively uncharted territory in mobility research.
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