

In their quest for equal representation and thus beneficial policy, social groups, for example of women, of the young, or of the socioeconomically disadvantaged, can turn to political parties and social movements that can give voice to these groups' interests in the political sphere. However, both parties and movements seem incapable, on their own, to address the crisis of unequal democratic representation. Parties face declining membership and social movements cannot create policy. As such, there is growing interest in the "movement-party relationship". Movement-party relations are understudied in the social sciences: we know little about how often and under what conditions these social actors cooperate, whether the patterns of their relations hold cross-nationally, and about specific mechanisms that help or hinder cooperation. We know little about these issues because scholars of the movement-party relationship have relied on case studies from Western Europe with a focus on idiosyncrasies of the relationship, and they have yet to examine the extent to which protest – a main activity of movements – impacts social group representation across nations and over time.

In theory, movements and parties have a dynamic and reciprocal relationship. Social movements can mobilize voters to vote for specific parties. Movements can publicize a social issue that parties are forced to address. Movements can create new parties. Meanwhile, parties are opportunists that seek electoral advantage and may attach themselves to movements because they agree with the movement's ideology or they are simply hunting for new voters. To gain advantage, parties position themselves against other parties, and movements move closer to their social change goals. Movements can improve the party representation of disadvantaged groups via protest. Protest is a primary way for social movements to publicly influence the actions of political parties. Thus, social group representation can improve or worsen as a result of the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between movements and parties.

This three-year, cross-national empirical project, to be housed in the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (SWPS) in Poland and in collaboration with Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) in Germany, addresses what we do not know about the movements-party relationship. I propose a mixed-method study design that links qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative research will reveal how movements and parties cooperate, with a focus on the representation of social groups. The case studies will be of Poland ("Strajk Kobiet"), Ukraine ("Euromaidan"), and Germany ("Fridays for Future"). I plan to interview social movement activists and spokespeople of political parties in government and in opposition, and analyze official documents and media reports before, during, and after parliamentary elections of these countries. From these data I will build a theory of the mechanisms through which movements and parties help or hinder mutual cooperation and contend with social group representation.

I create a new database and design the statistical analyses to reveal whether the patterns of movement-party relations are similar across nations and time. All the statistical data in this project exist and are publicly available, but they have yet to be combined into a single database. For the representation of social groups, I will use a new dataset that spans 95 national elections conducted between 1999 and 2016 in 25 European countries. To that I will attach data on protest events in Europe (PolDem) during this time period, on party ideology from MARPOR, and data on institutional contexts from Quality of Government data. In sum, the mixed method approach will create new theoretical and empirically-based knowledge on the movement-party interaction in comparative perspective.

To contribute to sociology and political science and inform the public, with findings from this project I will participate in international academic events, prepare articles in high-visibility journals, and create a project website to help disseminate the results to other scholars and to the general public.