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## How peace movement emerges: protest networks, mechanisms and outcomes of Czech anti-war campaigns

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### ABSTRACT

How do political protests transform into a social movement? Analysing Czech anti-war protest events between 2002 and 2009, this study aims at identifying particular mechanisms through which the social-movement mode of coordination was established out of a fragmented field of activism through consecutive protest campaigns. The study shows how broadening collective identity and creating instrumental relationships in times with the opening of political opportunities is followed by the institutionalisation and further expansion of protest cooperation during a period of heightened political threats, which establishes a new mode of protest coordination.

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## Introduction

On 6 August 2006, the unprecedentedly broad coalition No Bases Initiative organised its first rally against the plan to build a US missile base in the Czech Republic. Thus was launched the third stage of anti-war protests in the new millennium, following the protest campaigns against NATO (2002) and the war in Iraq (2003–2006). While no sustained anti-war activism existed before these campaigns, the first of them was driven by several isolated clusters of activist organisations divided strictly along political and ideological lines, the second was coordinated by broader informal alliances, and the third was based on a formally organised coalition with an inclusive collective identity and resource sharing. This study analyses how a series of protest campaigns gradually transformed the fragmented field of anti-war activism and led to the emergence of the social-movement mode of organising.

This research contributes to the large body of literature that focuses on the relationship among protest campaigns, social movements, and their outcomes (e.g. Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009; Tilly and Wood 2009; Diani and Kousis 2014; Edwards 2020). It also contributes to the existing research on the rise and transformation of anti-war activism and peace movements (e.g. Rochon and Meyer 1997; Yeo 2011; Heaney and Rojas 2015). By “social movement”, I mean here not any specific type of collective *agent* but rather a specific *mode* of inter-organisational coordination of collective action – not necessarily always

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publicly visible – among formal organisations or informal groups that includes both resource exchange and shared beliefs and solidarity beyond organisational boundaries (Diani 2015). By “protest campaign”, I understand a set of interconnected public events sharing similar claims (cf. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Della Porta and Rucht 2002; Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009).

Protest campaigns and social movements are related in various ways. Typically, protest events arise from social movements and their mobilising structures and keep these visible and vital. Social movements are sometimes even viewed as being comprised of (among other things) protest campaigns (Tilly and Wood 2009). At the same time, however, a series of protest events may arise from dispersed activist clusters and subsequent campaigns may sometimes contribute to the emergence of more inclusive identities and broader resource exchanges – a new social movement or movement community. It is the latter logic of the relations between protest campaigns and social movements that I focus on in this article. Drawing on the Czech case of anti-war activism, I ask: How did the social-movement mode of coordination emerge out of a fragmented and marginal field of activism through three subsequent anti-war campaigns?

### Conceptualising protest campaigns and social movements

Protest campaigns and social movements – even if sometimes treated interchangeably – are separate entities that are important to one another: campaigns are vital to social movements as they keep them visible and thus vital and enduring; movements are – together with interest groups and advocacy non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – key organisers of protest campaigns that they use to promote their goals. Protest campaigns often arise from the organisational infrastructure of particular social-movement organizations (SMOs) and individuals, and at the same time, social movements are viewed as being comprised of (among other things) protest campaigns – “a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities” (Tilly and Wood 2009, 3). Protest campaigns follow specific goals and build on public displays of unity to support the claims of activists typically aiming at authorities (Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009, 164). On the other hand, social movements represent more enduring and complex phenomena. They represent “sustained interactions between power holders and challengers and [consist] of nested campaigns” (Tarrow 2011, 9; Tilly 1978) that may but also need not be always publicly visible (Taylor 1989; Melucci 1996) or united and cohesive (Melucci 1989; Tilly and Wood 2009).

Protest campaigns have sometimes been explored primarily as instruments used by social movements (e.g. Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Oegema and Klandermans 1994) or as outcomes that are produced by such movements (e.g. Reese 1996; Fantasia and Stepan-Norris 2006; Heaney and Rojas 2015). More generally, protest campaigns have often been treated as phenomena subordinate to social movements. It has also been demonstrated that these two instances of collective action might become completely independent of one another. While social movements engage in protest campaigns during their visibility phase, they typically abstain from this activity during the phase of latency or demobilisation (Melucci 1996) or when in abeyance (Taylor 1989). Social movements that are no longer engaged in visible and public protest campaigns might become subcultures rather than actors engaged in political or social conflict (Johnston and Snow

1998). At the same time, the occurrence of protest campaigns does not necessarily indicate the presence of a social movement or a social movement community. This was also the case for anti-war protests after the US-led attack on Iraq in 2003, where a coordinated transnational protest campaign brought together an enormous number of people in many countries with common goals against a common target, but it was not backed by any cohesive peace movement (Tarrow 2010); in some countries, such a movement emerged but vanished soon afterwards (Heaney and Rojas 2015).

This also demonstrates that campaigns do not necessarily induce the establishment of a more enduring form of collective action – a social movement. Moreover, protest campaigns may even cause harm to political activism: they may ignite conflicts among SMOs or their coalitions as the general movement goals typically need to be cast in terms that are very concrete and accessible to the general public – selecting the appropriate tactics, framing, or political allies (Hathaway and Meyer 1993; Heaney and Rojas 2008, 2015).

However, protest mobilizations may also significantly contribute to the establishment of social movements as they create the movements' essential infrastructure, and even short-term relationships that arise over a series of protests may become institutionalised and contribute to more enduring instances of collective action – social movements (e.g. Tarrow 2005, 177). They substantially contribute to organising a movement especially by building new inter-organisational and interpersonal ties and collective identities, finding and formulating new frames and issues, or testing intra-movement coordination and a new repertoire of action (Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009).

This is also the case with the Czech anti-war movement, which emerged after several protest campaigns had transformed the field of anti-war activism and led to the establishment of a broad anti-war movement. Three anti-war campaigns took place between 2002 and 2009: against the NATO summit (2002), the war in Iraq (2003–2006), and the instalment of a US military base (2006–2009). Starting as a series of rather isolated events and organisations, this anti-war activism transformed into a dense network of cooperation with a distinct identity and mode of coordination.

The Czech case has several advantages for studying the influence of protest campaigns on the rise of social movements. First, no sustained<sup>1</sup> anti-war activism was present in the country after 1989 as the anti-war and anti-imperialist ethos and claims were associated with the official discourse of the previous socialist regime and thus delegitimized. Second, the emerging anti-war activist field was populated by ideologically loaded radical-left SMOs and standard NGOs and thus serves as an ideal laboratory for the study of coalition formation in the highly fragmented organisational field. Furthermore, 2002–2009 represents ideal study material for three successive anti-war campaigns and the transformation of their mode of coordination within a changing political context.

### **Protest campaigns and social movements as networks**

Both protest campaigns and social movements are relational phenomena and their connection may be conceptualised through social network analysis. While campaigns are established by networks of events, movements arise from the networks of actors who – at some point – sponsor and coordinate these events. It is through the joint coordinated participation of organisations in the chain of protest events that campaigns emerge, as it is the joint engagement in the campaign that renews and strengthens the relations



among organisations, makes them share and exchanges various types of resources, and deepens the ties of solidarity.

Relations between campaigns and movements might be studied within a relational – and more specifically a network analytic – perspective on political protest and social movements (Melucci 1996; Diani and McAdam 2003; Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Diani 2015). Protest campaigns are usually defined as a “thematically, socially, and temporally interconnected series of interactions that, from the viewpoint of the carriers of the campaign, are geared to a specific goal” (Della Porta and Rucht 2002; see also Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009). A thematic relationship is created by a shared issue and claims (Della Porta and Rucht 2002), social interconnections by the organisations that promote (or jointly promote) multiple events (Diani and Kousis 2014), and temporal interconnectedness related to the delineation of the campaign in time and sequencing (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). Here, the notion of “event” is crucial – each campaign extends beyond a particular event and may be conceived of as a set of nested events (Tilly and Wood 2009, 4; Diani and Kousis 2014, 388). The concept of a protest campaign thus may be interpreted in terms of a network analytic perspective as a set of events that are connected by the joint involvement of the same organisations – whether organisers or participants – with similar claims during a given period (e.g. Diani 2015).

In relational terms, social movements are viewed as “coalition affairs, featuring sometimes loosely negotiated alliances among groups and individuals with different agendas” (Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005) or more specifically as “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities” (Diani 1992). A social movement is a specific mode of coordination of collective action where “dense networks of informal inter-organisational exchanges and processes of boundary definition operate at the level of broad collectivities rather than specific groups/organisations, through dense interpersonal networks and multiple affiliations” (Diani 2015, 18). Protest campaigns, on the other hand, necessarily involve only the processes of inter-organisational exchanges (sharing financial, cultural, or personal resources; expertise; promotion strategies; etc.), while a broader meta-organisational collective identity beyond event organising is not necessarily present.

This study focuses on identifying the particular mechanisms through which protest campaigns have contributed to the establishment of social movements. A qualitative comparative meta-analysis of 24 empirical studies focusing on the formation of SMO coalitions revealed that pre-existing social ties, resources, and ideology – in combination with political settings – have played a decisive role (McCammon and Van Dyke 2010). These represent three relational mechanisms through which campaigns help to establish a movement: coordination of protest campaigns entails repeated cooperation among SMOs; promoting protest campaigns entails exchanges of various resources – personal (members, supporters), organisational, financial, etc. – and, finally, advancing joint claims and targeting the same enemies leads to the crossing of ideological disagreements and the establishment and renewal of a collective identity – underlying, strong affective relations reinforcing solidarity (Baldassarri and Diani 2007; McCammon and Van Dyke 2010).

Validating these suggestions means to conceptualising and empirically identifying transformations of a mode of coordinating networks of organisations behind anti-war

campaigns. To this end, this study makes use of a catalogue of existing concepts of processes and mechanisms in protest politics (cf. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007) and applies methods to measure their impacts (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2008). The use of a pre-existing ties mechanism may be understood as the opposite of a mechanism of defection, and I therefore call it *emulation*. This consists of repeating a performance; for example, forming protest cooperation in one setting similar to one observed in another setting (cf. Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). The roles of ideology and resources in coalition formation may be depicted as two different logics constituting a single *boundary activation/deactivation* mechanism, one instrumental and one of identity (see above). While the role of resources in protest coalition formation may be understood as a resource-interdependence mechanism (cf. Klandermans 1984) on the collective level, the role of ideology (sector, industry) is more similar to the social-boundary mechanism (Tilly 2004). Depending on whether the salience of the us–them distinction is increased or decreased, we may speak of mechanisms of boundary activation or deactivation.

Finally, it has been repeatedly illustrated that the role of (national) political context in the emergence and transformation of protest campaigns and social movements has been of great importance (Tarrow 2005, 32–34; Verhulst and Walgrave 2010). By “political context”, I mean here primarily political opportunities and threats: while a political opportunity is the potential that challengers will advance their interests if they act collectively, a threat denotes “the costs that a social group will incur from the protest, or that it expects to suffer if it does not take action” (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Almeida 2003). More specifically, political context refers here to positions of the national political elites, institutions, media, and public towards the contentious issue – and changes in these positions (Walgrave and Rucht 2010; Yeo 2011). Transformation of political context might be conceptualised as a contextual mechanism that links with other types of mechanisms – *cognitive* and *relational*. Cognitive mechanisms refer to the fact that the transformation of political context into the relationships among activist organisations does not take place mechanically; these events first need to be perceived as decisive by the relevant actors (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Meyer and Minkoff 2004). Changes in the political context producing threats or opportunities alter the costs and benefits for activists’ protest strategies and also transform the logic of both protest campaigns and movements (Staggenborg 1986; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Meyer and Corrigan-Brown 2005; Heaney and Rojas 2008; McCammon and Van Dyke 2010; Hadden 2015).

This study conceptualises each protest campaign as an autonomous network of inter-organisational cooperation among activist organisations sponsoring protest events. It seeks to identify selected transformations – contextual, cognitive, and relational mechanisms – within subsequent protest campaigns and to analyse the resulting protest cooperation patterns. To gain a comprehensive view of how relational mechanisms transforming various protest campaigns result in the social-movement mode of coordination, it is necessary to consider also contextual and cognitive mechanisms that translate the conditions for the relational mechanisms and combine with them in broader processes. This study asks: How did contextual, cognitive, and relational mechanisms combine in the transformation of Czech anti-war activism? Which relational mechanisms were present within the three anti-war campaigns and what was their intensity? Generally, how did the structure and intensity of the resulting cooperation networks alter between particular campaigns?

## Data and method

The study analysed two broad sets of mechanisms – processes – that consist of the transformation of political context and the inter-organisational coordination of protest campaigns by activist organisations.

The specification of the relationship between relational and contextual mechanisms is one of the most challenging problems in process-oriented explanations (Falleti and Lynch 2009). The specification of time and careful attention to the placement of starting and ending points are essential for what we can observe and what we can infer about an episode of change (Büthe 2002; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2008). This is why I built on detailed periodisation and sequencing of the mechanisms under study, focusing specifically on the role of transformative contextual events (McAdam and Sewell 2001) and their connection to the relational strategies of activist organisations (cf. Meyer and Corrigan-Brown 2005; Heaney and Rojas 2008). The study proceeds through a description of sudden context changes (the intensification of the Iraq crisis in January 2003 and the leak of plans to locate a US missile base in the Czech Republic in August 2006), perception of these changes by activists (an analysis of claims at protest events, interviews), impulses for cooperation change (interviews), and changes in cooperation patterns (an analysis of co-occurrence networks).

The study relies on protest event analysis, (PEA Czech) which allows for the quantification of protest-related dimensions such as a protest's frequency, timing, duration, location, size, form, and carrier (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Drawing on Tilly's (1995) definition, a protest event, here considered as the basic unit of data collection and analysis, is either an actual gathering of at least three people convened in a public space to make claims that bear on the interests of an institution or collective actor, or a petition addressed to an institution or collective actor. Only real episodes of collective action were included (threats of resorting to collective action were excluded).

The following resources were used for event collection: first, the press monitoring database *Anopress* covering news articles from all key Czech national and local newspapers was used to generate a list of protest events within the period under study (from the start of the protest campaign against NATO in September 2002 to Barack Obama's visit to Prague in April 2009 to announce the will to re-evaluate the location of the US anti-missile radar base in the Czech Republic). A selection of keywords combining the protest repertoire (barricade, blockade, boycott, demonstration, extremist, happening, strike, confrontation, manifestation, meeting, resistance, performance, petition, march, parade, protest, rally, gathering, squat) and protest issues (NATO, Iraq, radar, missile base) was used to identify articles related to anti-war protests during the research period (cf. Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Articles that dealt with protest events other than anti-war events were excluded. When not available, information about events was retrieved from the websites of relevant SMOs, alternative and activist media, personal e-mail communication with activists, and interviews with representatives of the most important groups and networks.

The final dataset consists of 287 events within the period under study (September 2002–April 2009). There were 154 happenings, 121 demonstrations, 4 combinations of these two event types, 3 street parties, 2 social forums, 2 marches, and 1 strike. For each event, the following data points were recorded: location, date, organising and



participating groups, repertoire, number of individual participants, and the main claim (the direct open claim was either recorded from speeches and interviews with the media or reconstructed from banners and signs, which were retrieved from the press coverage or activist websites). Because of the character of some events (e.g. local events that were not reported by the media), 69% of claims raised at events were recorded (100% from the first period, 38% from the second, and 30% from the third). First, the basic scale of the claim was coded (international/global or national/local), then a key content component of the claim was coded (economic, democratic, or environmental). Categories for coding were created inductively from the data. Following their main issues and claims, the anti-war protests were divided into three campaigns: September 2002–November 2003 (12 protest events), January 2003–June 2006 (82 protest events), August 2006–April 2009 (193 protest events).

Semi-structured interviews with two key representatives of the anti-war coalitions representing the two most active ideological platforms (anarchist and Trotskyite) throughout all three protest campaigns were a supplementary source of data. These interviews were conducted to clarify the role of key factors and identify the mechanisms that were in play in the process of coalition (trans)formation.

To identify the cognitive mechanisms connecting the political context and collective action, I relied mainly on an analysis of the media and public opinion during the three anti-war campaigns (opinion polls, newspaper articles, press releases from the government), interviews with activists, and an analysis of the claims of the protest events, where the scale of the claim's main issue represented the extent to which the issue (threat) was perceived as imminent (cf. Hathaway and Meyer 1993).

Identification and measurement of relational mechanisms were based on both the interviews with activists and social network analysis, which was carried out on the protest event data. Protest cooperation, that is, ties between two or more activist organisations, was indicated by the presence of these activist organisations at the same protest event (i.e. sharing time, place, and attendants). Through joint presence at a protest event – the central means by which social movements exercise power – activist organisations share similar risks and make a public statement about their relationship that reflects their collaborative ties in a specific field of activism (Van Dyke 2003; Wada 2014; Diani 2015). Ties between activist organisations were treated as undirected given that the anti-war actors did not take part in an event without the consent of the other organising or participating actors. An undirected valued co-occurrence network was created from the protest event data for each campaign (for a similar strategy, see Pirro et al. [2021]). The value for a tie was set as the number of joint co-occurrences of two groups at an event.

The presence and intensity of the role of ideology in the boundary (de)activation mechanism were measured by applying a constant homophily blockmodel to three protest cooperation networks (cf. Bearman and Everett 1993; Saunders 2011). Groups were identified based on their sectoral/ideological belongings according to their choices (5, 14, and 15 sectors were differentiated within the three cooperation networks and the proposition that all groups shared a preference for within-group ties was tested).

The comparative role of resources in coalition formation was assessed through a linear regression model explaining the number of ties between activist organisations while controlling for their ideology (Hanneman and Riddle 2005; Diani 2015). Here, I built on the assumption that “standard” material resources played a secondary role compared to



personal resources, the number of sympathisers or individuals that groups were able to mobilise in the streets (Walgrave and Rucht 2010). There were two main reasons for this. First, the anti-war protest events were primarily driven by the logic of aggregation. In other words, the more people a group was able to mobilise in past protest events, the more appealing in terms of resources it was for other groups.<sup>2</sup> Second, as previous research in the field has revealed, typical radical activist organisations are used to lacking material resources and aggregate them primarily from individual sympathisers, not from other groups. Therefore, activist organisation resources were assessed in terms of the average number of people that participated in a protest event sponsored by that activist organisation during the preceding anti-war campaign. Only activist organisations that participated in both the first and second campaigns (9 activist organisations) or both the second and third campaigns (24 actors) were included in this analysis.

The presence and intensity of the emulation mechanism were measured as the correlation between the valued networks consisting of actors that remained active in both the first and second periods or both the second and third periods. Quadratic assignment procedure correlation was used to assess the similarity among the compared networks and to estimate whether this similarity was likely to have occurred by chance (Yang, Keller, and Zheng 2017).

Finally, two key aspects of the overall network structure were measured to assess the character of protest cooperation in the given period. First, the diversity of protest cooperation was measured as the density of binary cooperation networks. The intensity of protest cooperation was measured as the density of valued cooperation networks (Wasserman and Faust 1994; Hanneman and Riddle 2011).

## **Transformation of Czech anti-war protest campaigns**

Two consecutive sets of mechanisms – processes – transforming the Czech anti-war protest mode of protest coordination were launched, in January 2003 (intensification of the Iraq crisis) and August 2006 (the leak of plans to locate a US missile base in the Czech Republic). They consisted of contextual mechanisms (launched by mounting threats or opening opportunities) that were linked to cognitive (the perception of context changes) and relational (protest coordination strategies) mechanisms and resulted in a social-movement mode of protest coordination with dense resource exchanges and a broad collective identity. In the next section, I introduce the initial stage of Czech anti-war activism after 2000; I identify and trace key mechanisms, measure the intensity of the relational mechanisms, and assess the consequences of these mechanisms for the overall protest cooperation patterns.

### ***The initial stage of Czech anti-war activism (2002–2003)***

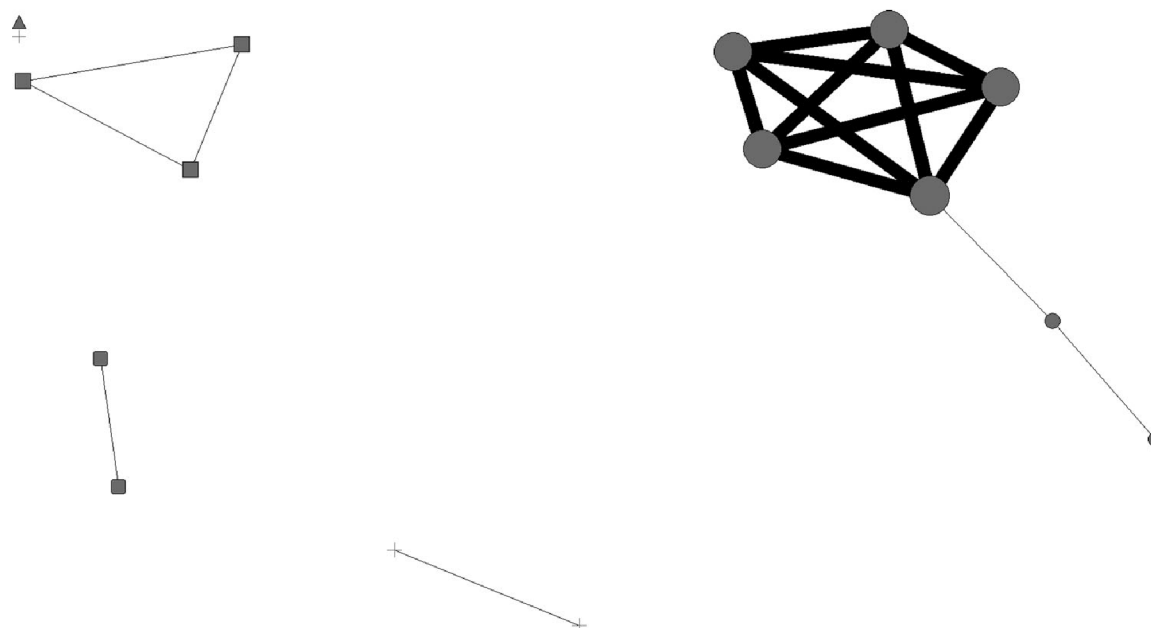
A long period of Czech anti-war activism started in September 2002 when the first protests against NATO during its Prague summit (21–22 November 2002) were organised. The threat was mostly perceived as distant (90% of claims had a supra-national scale); the summit was perceived as an occasion to show disagreement with NATO's warlike character and strategies rather than with its imminent impact on Czech society and politics. The content of the threat was interpreted largely in economic terms (80% of the

claims) while the threats to democracy (10%) and the environment (10%) were seen as minor. Most of the protests targeted NATO as a tool for maintaining the status quo of the Western capitalist system and as an instrument promoting US military and economical supremacy.

The political context of anti-war activism was defined by the attitude of the government with a majority of seats in Parliament, repressive measures taken before and during the protests, and public opinion. Most parliamentary parties continued their general support for NATO, with the only exception being the permanently oppositional Communist Party. Despite some splits within the ruling Czech Social Democratic Party over the NATO attacks in Yugoslavia in 1999, NATO as an institution and Czech membership in it never became the subject of public political disagreement. Repression became an important factor; the police ostentatiously prepared security provisions for the summit, which was widely perceived as an effort to intimidate activists. This was followed by strong-arm treatment of both domestic and foreign protesters during the summit. Protesters claimed a violation of their right to assemble and filed official complaints.

Public opinion was also not favourable towards activists. Even if support among the Czech public for holding the summit in Prague was quite low (40%), there was generally high support for Czech membership in NATO at the time (68%) and also high trust in NATO as an institution (59%). NATO and its summit were expected to strengthen European and Czech security against the threat of global terrorism and improve the international position of the country (Šandera 2003).

The initiative in organising protests during the period was taken mainly by the radical left (anarchists were the most prominent, present at 78% of events); the other sectors were not very actively involved in the protests. Within the radical left milieu, anarchists showed the most active coalition work that substantially raised the overall coalition activity in the protest during that period, but only at the intra-sectoral level (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Protest cooperation network (2002). Source: PEA Czech.

Note: Square shape denotes anarchist sector, diamond Trotskyites, box communists and circle others. The size of the node reflects the degree of an SMO, the strength of the tie reflects the amount of cooperation between groups.

This is consistent with the findings by Eggert (2014) on networks in unfavourable contexts.

A single-issue anti-NATO platform was established in which most of the key anarchist groups participated. From the other sectors, the Trotskyites were the only ones who succeeded in establishing a more open protest platform and also included ideologically non-aligned individuals. The other two protest coalitions – the extreme right and human rights – consisted of only two organisations/groups and neither of these was cross-sectoral.

### *The first process: activation of contextual and cognitive mechanisms*

A substantial shift in the political context for anti-war activism was related to the heightened preparations of the US administration and its allies for a war in Iraq (and Afghanistan) in January 2003 and was related mostly to the change in domestic opportunities and perceptions of them, not to the perceived nature of the threat (cf. Hathaway and Meyer 1993; Kleidman and Rochon 1997).

The decisive shift in this period was the opening of the political environment for disagreement with the war. A split occurred inside the main coalition party (the Social Democrats) over whether to follow the reserved position of the EU (seeking an UN-imposed solution) or to strengthen the strategic trans-Atlantic partnership (cf. Verhulst and Walgrave 2010). After the outbreak of the war, the ministers of both Foreign Affairs (a Christian Democrat) and Defence (a Social Democrat) supported the coalition formed by the US, while the prime minister (a Social Democrat) and president (a Civic Democrat, from the opposition) took the opposite stance. Finally, the Czech government and Parliament participated in the war by sending only non-combatant units. After the war started, some security measures were implemented, but these remained practically well below the level of those for the NATO summit.

Public opinion turned strongly in favour of the protesters' goals. Before the war began, less than 25% of citizens perceived the strike as legitimate and inevitable, while two-thirds disagreed with the war. After the war began, criticism of US foreign policy became even stronger and persisted over the following two years (Červenka 2005).

On the other hand, no significant change in the perception of threats occurred: preparations for the conflict in Iraq were perceived as a supra-national problem (89%) – i.e. not imminent for the Czech Republic – while the content of the claims remained associated mostly with the alleged cause of this threat – the (capitalist) economy (78%). Issues related to democracy (9%) and the environment (13%) remained minor.

### *The first process: activation of relational mechanisms*

After January 2003, many actors began to engage in anti-war activism, and the structure of protest cooperation changed significantly. This shift was described by a Trotskyite activist, linking the change to the political context:

The issue was highly controversial and could not be framed within the “common sense” of the 1990s when all the steps of the West were automatically regarded as right and protests against them were limited to small groups of nostalgic people or radicals. The attack on Iraq caused doubts even among the Social Democrats in the government, which was clearly on the side of NATO during its Prague summit. A sceptical view of the US strategy was shared

among a much larger part of society ... The events were supported by communists and anarchists, the American community in Prague, and a broad public that could not be mobilized during the protests against NATO for several reasons: first, the enforced consensus ... was sort of “we are NATO members so what are we criticizing”; and second, inadequate knowledge of the critique against NATO that was not available in the mainstream media. (Interview 1)

One of the most important changes was the rise and involvement of “pure”<sup>3</sup> peace activist organisations that were not very present in the preceding phase of anti-war protest (active at 22% of events). Nonetheless, the radical left still played a major role as its aggregated participation highly exceeded the involvement of other sectors (active at 48% of events).

Generally, the single most important relational mechanism that was launched after the transformation of the domestic context was a shift in ideological boundaries in building protest alliances, suggesting a fluctuating role for symbolical barriers to cooperation (cf. Gerhards and Rucht 1992). “Traditional” key ideological alignments were still activated and mutual animosities were quite high – ideologically distant groups began to accuse one another of efforts to “privatize” joint demonstrations by using their political symbols and framing (Interview 2). However, these ideological barriers weakened after the war in Iraq was about to begin (Interview 2), confirming that opportunities inspire groups to overcome their differences (Staggenborg 1986).

The analysis confirms that, while there was a non-random 0% chance for cooperative ties among groups from different sectors during the anti-NATO campaign and the chance of making cooperative ties inside a sector was 61% greater, this changed after the context transformed. Even though the chance to establish ties outside the sector remained low, the probability of intra-sectoral ties was only 22% greater (Table 1). The variance in cooperation ties was then explained less by the activist organisation’s sector affiliation than it had been during the previous period (by 60%). At the same time, however, the first transformative process also led to a dramatic decrease of 96% in the explanatory power of the model assuming a shared preference for intra-group ties. This confirmed that the mechanism of (ideological) boundary deactivation that followed the context shift was quite intensive and non-random and led to a vast differentiation in the preferences of various activist organisations to establish inter-sectoral ties.

Compared to the role of ideology/identity, resources did not have such a large impact on cooperative activity; their effect was still lower than the effect from membership in any of the movement sectors participating in the protests (Table 2). On the other hand, as suggested by Hathaway and Meyer (1993), the role of resources during this phase of anti-war activism was not marginal: the impact of this factor was indicated as non-

**Table 1.** Role of ideology (binary, homophily blockmodel).

	2002	2003–2006	2006–2009
N	16	57	54
Intercept (unstd.)	0	0.201	0.208
ln-group (unstd.)	0.607***	0.218***	0.283***
ln-group (std.)	0.736***	0.138***	0.179***
Adj. R-Sqr	0.542***	0.019***	0.032***

Source: PEA Czech.

Note: *p*-values determined by permutation tests (5,000 iterations)



**Table 2.** Role of resources (valued, OLS).

	2003–2006		2006–2009	
	Beta	Std. Beta	Beta	Std. Beta
Resources	0.329	5.831	0.063	0.014
Controls for sector/ideology affiliation				
Intercept	–599.56	0	228.051	0
Anarchist	597.762	8.541	–209.270	–0.215
Trotskyites	676.605	9.172	568.186	0.519
Marxists			–232.033	–0.177
Social Democrats			–199.367	–0.110
Human Rights			–217.719	–0.120
Environmentalists			108.468	0.122
Trade unions			–217.501	–0.120
Religious			562.119	0.513
Minorities			–224.213	–0.171
Adj R-sqr	0,609		0.573	

Source: PEA Czech.

Note: *p*-values determined by permutation tests (10,000 iterations). All values are significant at the *p* .001 level.

random in the analysis, was positive, and had a value of more than half of the sectoral memberships. Even if it was highly inter-correlated with membership in the control communist group (because communist activist organisations were far more successful in mobilising citizens as they were also assisted by the Communist Party with its electorate), the results demonstrate that an activist organisation's success in mobilising people in the preceding period of anti-war activism affected its ability to attract ties in a given protest campaign.

On the other hand, the involvement of many new activist organisations encouraged by declining participation costs (a split among the elites, public support) and deactivation of ideological boundaries prevented the emulation mechanism from hindering new cooperation patterns. This is evidenced by the low and non-significant correlation for protest cooperation networks before and after 2003 (Table 3). It is hardly surprising given the fact that during the second phase of anti-war activism activist organisations ceased building coalitions exclusively on intra-sectoral ties and mobilisation successes from the previous period also played an important role.

### **The first process: resulting structure of campaign coordination**

Even though some protest coalitions were formed during the first anti-war campaign in 2002, there was no inter-sectoral protest cooperation, so overall density or cooperation activity within the network depended solely on intra-sectoral ties (Figure 1). Compared to the outcomes of the first process, there are several key differences in the later structure of protest alliances. After 2003, the protest cooperation network resulting from the

**Table 3.** Role of pre-existing ties (valued, QAP correlation).

	2003	2006
<i>N</i>	9	24
Observed value	0.074	0.423
Significance	0.27	0.001

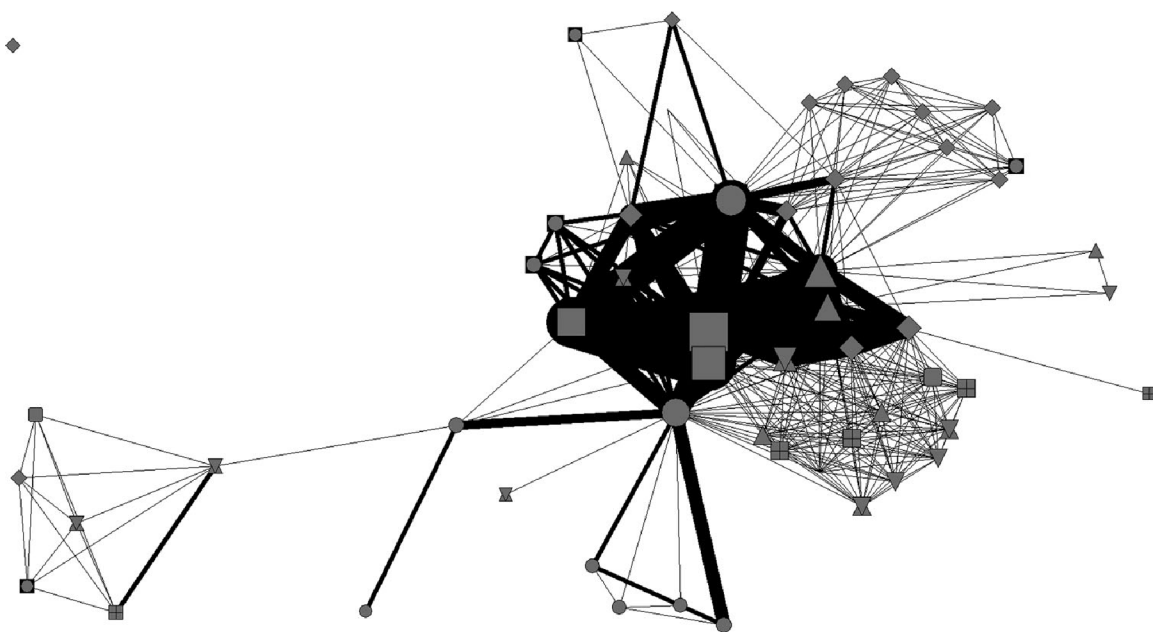
Source: PEA Czech.

Note: *p*-values determined by permutation tests (5,000 iterations).

opening of the political context, lowered threat perceptions, and deactivation of ideological boundaries was fundamentally broken down into four sectoral groupings with two isolates, thus revealing overall decentralisation (Figure 2).

The networks became much more connected, even though there were again two isolates (students and a minority-rights group). At the same time, the entire network was rather decentralised and clustered. In addition, as illustrated by the analysis, these areas of very dense relations revealed sectoral/ideological heterogeneity among protest alliances. Only two clusters were homogenous in terms of the sectoral attributes of activist organisations: the anarchist cluster and to some extent the peace one. The other three were largely mixed with no prevailing sector type, which makes this constellation fundamentally different from the protest alliances against NATO. Speaking of clusters, several important brokers interconnected several protest alliances. Quite surprisingly, these were ideologically highly profiled communist and anarchist activist organisations. In other words, the roles from previous protest campaigns of both communist actors as outsiders and anarchist groups as sectarians changed after 2003. This challenges the role of ideology as a constant barrier to cooperation (cf. Heaney and Rojas 2008, 40).

Generally, two shifts in general cooperation patterns occurred (Table 4). First, the diversity of coalitional activity increased by more than 30%. This might have been expected as new opportunities invite new groups into the field (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 317), which combined with the softening of ideological divisions leads to an increase in the connectedness of a network. On the other hand, the very same mechanism led to a decline in the intensity of coalitional activities by more than 12% in comparison to the anti-NATO network. To summarise, the opening of opportunities indeed related to coalition activities (McCammon and Campbell 2002; Poloni-Staudinger 2009) but through the creation of new ties rather than through their repetition.



**Figure 2.** Protest cooperation network (2003–2006). Source: PEA Czech.

Note: Square shape denotes anarchist sector, diamond Trotskyites, box communists, rounded square environmentalists, up-triangle peace groups, down-triangle minorities, circle-in-box religious and circle others. The size of the node reflects the degree of an SMO, the strength of the tie reflects the amount of cooperation between groups.

**Table 4.** Overall cooperation density and intensity.

	2002	2003–2006	2006–2009
Overall density (binary)	0.142	0.217	0.23
Overall density (valued)	0.475	0.354	3.171

Source: PEA Czech.

### *The second process: activation of contextual and cognitive mechanisms*

In August 2006, the political context of Czech anti-war activism fundamentally changed. After the parliamentary elections of June 2006, public debate over the deployment of a military radar base took off and in July media reported that teams of US military specialists were inspecting potential locations. This time, the scale of the threat changed from being perceived as international and therefore distant towards national or even local (especially for activists from the area identified as most likely to be chosen for the base) and therefore much more acute (cf. Yeo 2011, 199). The shift in the scale of the threat was also reflected in activists' accounts: "The issue played a role. The closer (not only in terms of geography) it was to the Czech public, the easier it was to consider mobilization" (Interview 1).

Unlike the preceding two stages of anti-war activism, the protesters' claims were directed not at the alleged source of the threat (capitalism, imperialism), but more generally at its content and presumed remedy (a popular vote on the issue). Therefore, the issue of democracy became the most frequently raised (dominating in 77% of claims), followed by the economy (14%), and the environment (9%). The core layer of the threat was constructed and perceived primarily as an attack on national sovereignty and democracy (Yeo 2011, 3).

US efforts to permanently deploy military personnel in the Czech Republic were soon compared to the Nazi occupation in 1938 and the Soviet army presence between 1968 and 1991. In addition, the main coalition party (Civic Democrats, liberal-conservative) refused to organise a referendum on the issue, which was interpreted as a violation of basic democratic principles and framed as a repetition of the *Munich Diktat* of 1938. The threat was further amplified by the ongoing war in Iraq and a negative perception of the Bush administration. Some also feared that potential Czech involvement in the missile system would further brand the country as an intimate US ally, leading to subsequent danger from US enemies (see below).

Domestic opportunities remained relatively open during the period. Even though the prime minister and his party supported the US request from the very first moment, other coalition parties (the Christian Democrats and Greens) remained cautious. The Green Party demanded that the base be included within the NATO framework and even agreed with the opposition Social Democrats on support for a referendum. The government did not have a majority in parliament and so the opposition parties critical of the project could exert more influence on the decision-making process. The opposition Social Democrats warned against a security threat to the country and called for a referendum, while the Communist Party categorically rejected the project and framed it simply as "treason" against national interests. Representatives of the opposition parties and Greens participated in some of the protest events and provided activists with public moral and personal support. Repressive measures on the part of the police did not exceed the "common" level (passive surveillance) and remained far below those during the anti-NATO campaign.

The majority of the public opposed the project from the very beginning. Despite the government-launched “educational campaign” to persuade citizens, a high level of opposition persisted during nearly the entire period. Between September 2006 and March 2009, opposition to the project did not drop below 61%, while support did not exceed 30% (Červenka 2009). During the same period, citizens showed significant support for holding a referendum on the issue, which contradicted the prevailing opinion of the largest coalition party that issues of national security should not be subject to popular will. Public support for a referendum over the entire period oscillated between 68% and 78%, while 14–23% of people opposed it.

### **The second process: activation of relational mechanisms**

A key moment for the structure of protest coordination was the formation of an unprecedentedly broad and formal anti-war coalition – the *No Bases Initiative* (Iniciativa Ne základnám, INEZ) – featuring 51 various organisations, groups, and other networks ranging from communists to peace, anarchist, religious, and environmental activist organisations. The direct impulse to arrange the first meeting of activist organisations in August 2006 that led to its establishment was a US press release about an inter-governmental agreement on non-disclosure of plans to build a US base in the country before the 2006 elections (Remundová 2012). The perceived threat was articulated by INEZ through four key mobilisation frames: the threat of occupation, the threat of bypassing citizens’ will, the threat of nuclear conflict, and the threat of US violation of international norms (cf. Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005; Remundová 2012).

Some INEZ members remained involved in the campaign for the entire period; most groups also ran their own separate anti-war events. INEZ had an autonomous budget and volunteers and coordinated these with its member organisations. The overall number of actors participating in anti-war events did not decrease substantially in comparison to the previous period. The peace sector became dominant (active at 43% of events) and even exceeded protest participation by the radical left (active at 42% of events), while the relative activity of the other sectors declined.

Even though some ideology-driven splits occurred within this period, the mechanism for deactivation of ideological boundaries from the previous period generally remained effective. This confirms the still marginal explanatory power of the model proposing that all groups shared preferences for within-group ties. The non-random chance of forming extra-sectoral ties was almost the same as during activation of the previous contextual mechanism: the chance for inter-sectoral cooperation was 21% (compared to 20% in the previous period) and the chance for intra-sectoral cooperation was 28% greater (compared to 22% in the previous period; Table 1). The variance in cooperation ties was explained slightly better by an activist organisation’s membership in a particular sector than it was during the previous process (by 4%). Generally, the mechanism of ideological boundary deactivation remained almost at the same level as it had been during the process launched by the opening of political opportunities after 2003, which confirms the role of threats in suppressing ideological differences (Staggenborg 1986; Gerhards and Rucht 1992).

The comparative impact of resources on cooperation among activist organisations was substantively different than during the first process of coalition (trans)formation (Table 2). After 2006, mobilisation capacity from the previous period had a non-random impact on



protest cooperation, but it was much less of an effect than that of ideological/sectoral affiliation. Compared to the previous period, the intensity of this mechanism withered away.

On the other hand, the emulation mechanism became, unlike during the previous period, activated and quite intensive. Even though the 2003–2006 campaign seemed to be in a deep decline during its last year, there were isolated events that played an important role in establishing the ground for future coalitions, such as the commemoration of the start of the war on 15 February 2006 (Interview 1). Activists seized the chance to mobilise the public against the direct involvement of the Czech Republic in US foreign strategies and attempted to quickly create a broad alliance that would express nationwide resistance to the project. Therefore, extensive reactivation of pre-existing cooperation was a logical tool for laying the groundwork for the largest possible alliance and confirmed the importance of pre-existing ties (McCammon and Van Dyke 2010):

Clearly, the feature that led to [coalition] broadening was the trust among the activists from various activist organizations that was gained during the previous protests.

Interview 1

Not only was the emulation mechanism present, but it was also non-random and quite intensive. The correlation was 42% (Table 3). This indicates that overall patterns of cooperation to a large extent remained preserved from the previous campaign.

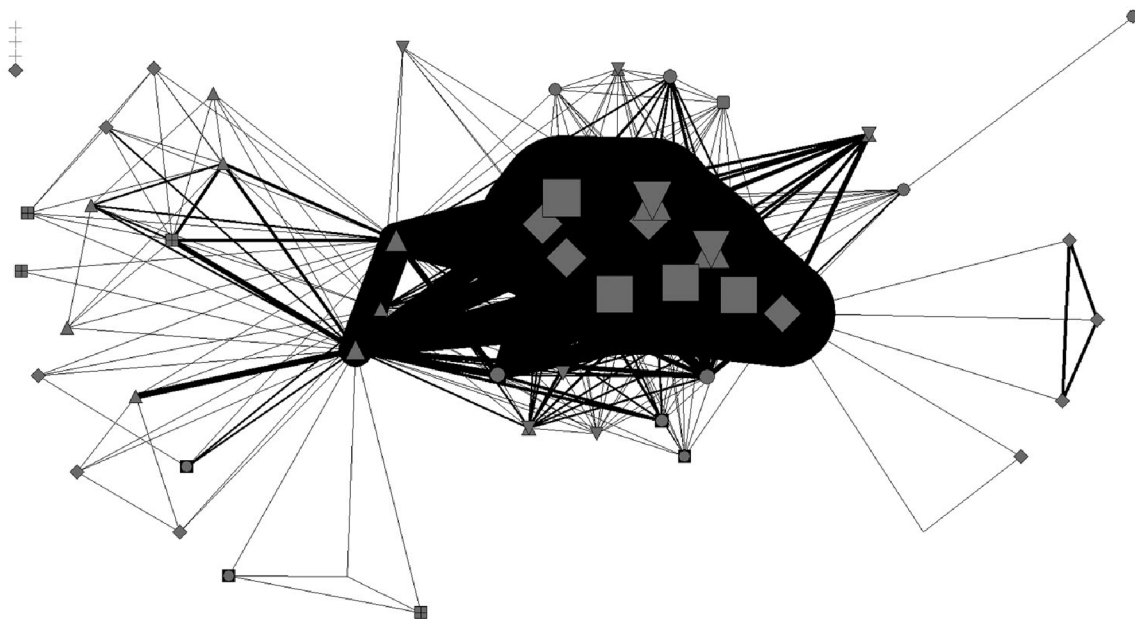
### ***The second process: resulting structure of campaign coordination***

An exploration of the protest network revealed several substantial changes from the protest cooperation of the previous campaign (Figure 3).

First, the structure of protest cooperation in the third campaign became more centralised and hierarchical, as many actors on the periphery were directly connected to the network core without forming autonomous protest clusters as they had in previous periods. The entire protest network had two key centres that connected some of its large segments: the first consisted of communist activist organisations, the second of INEZ members. The interconnectedness of protest alliances generally remained preserved from the previous period; only the number of isolates slightly increased. The dense clusters of activist organisations – with both inter- and intra-sectoral cooperation patterns – disappeared and were replaced by more direct cooperative ties with two clusters of contentious alliances. This expands the findings of Eggert (2014): while the long-term unfavourable context was linked to dispersed cooperation networks, a suddenly imposed threat was associated with centralised cooperation networks maintaining their diversity and reducing their intensity (Table 4). This is further illustrated by the increase in the transitivity of cooperation, which signals that more broad protest alliances were established and maintained under an imminent threat (and not just during the absence of opportunities as suggested by Hathaway and Meyer [1993]).

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Existing research has often addressed the problem of emergence and organising of anti-war activism and peace movements. However, the problem of how the protest campaigns



**Figure 3.** Protest cooperation network (2006–2009). Source: PEA Czech.

Note: Square shape denotes anarchist sector, diamond Trotskyites, box communists, rounded square environmentalists, up-triangle peace groups, down-triangle minorities, circle-in-box religious and circle others. The size of the nodes reflects the degree of an SMO, the strength of the tie reflects the amount of cooperation between groups.

may transform into a sustained form of collective action has been previously rather neglected. Protest campaigns may have crucial consequences for social movements: through recurrent joint organisation of protest events, new broader identities arise and resources are shared. Consequently, a new mode of coordination – a social movement mode – may arise. This study traced how contextual, cognitive, and relational mechanisms combined during the transformation of Czech anti-war activism and resulted in a social-movement mode of coordination. It described how the first contextual mechanism – the opening of opportunities – was related to two relational ones: ideological boundary deactivation and resource-oriented boundary deactivation. This demonstrates that these two dimensions of coordination of collective action – which have been theorised as having opposing logics (Baldassarri and Diani 2007) – may in fact work conjointly. In other words, resource sharing among particular organisations does not necessarily precede the creation of inclusive identity beyond these organisational boundaries and vice versa. Furthermore, these two mechanisms may link to the opening of political opportunities for the respective field of activism, which clarifies the different roles for opportunities for movement cooperation by focusing on a sudden context change for protest coalitions (cf. Diani 2015, 186; Eggert 2014). Next, the study described how the second contextual mechanism – mounting a threat – occurred with the mechanism of emulation, which resulted in a massive rise in the intensity of protest cooperation as demonstrated by the formation of INEZ, which took the main initiative in the campaign. This details and clarifies previous research on the role of threats to coalition-making (Hathaway and Meyer 1993; Poloni-Staudinger 2009). The path towards the social movement mode of coordination first led through the creation of a broader collective identity and the sharing of resources and this was followed by an enormous intensification and further broadening of these cooperation patterns through the building of a formal coalition. The study also analysed

how the variety and intensity of inter-organisational protest coordination in the three campaigns changed: while the variety of cooperation – detecting the boundary deactivation mechanisms – increased dominantly between the first and second campaigns, its intensity – indicating the emulation mechanism – boomed between the second and third campaigns.

These results raise several questions, one of which is the causal relationships between the context transformation and the protest campaign evolution (e.g. Edwards 2020). Even if more data is needed to demonstrate the full causal relationship between the political context and the coordination of protest campaigns, the sequence of mechanisms traced and measured in the study suggests that broader environmental mechanisms constituted a necessary condition for activation of relational ones. While collective action in the anti-war field existed before and after the context change, transformation of its coordination beyond the level of organisations was apparently triggered by environmental shifts. Detailed analysis of these shifts and their role may contribute to the analysis of *hybridization* of threats and opportunities in the study of political protest as these are often treated as separate, permanent or static (cf. Almeida 2003; Shriver et al. 2022). Furthermore, the study maintains that even if the concepts of coalitions and social movements are differentiated as two distinct ways of organising (cf. Diani 2015; Staggenborg 2015), inter-organisational coalitions may represent a clear and indeed vital sequence in the path from a fragmented activist field towards the full-scale social-movement mode of coordination.

## Notes

1. There were several peace organisations, but these were oriented around religious or veteran communities and did not coordinate any campaign before 2002.
2. “We deliberately wanted as broad a coalition of individuals and organisations as possible to make the protest against the missile base as strong as possible ... The broader and more open our platform was, the more people it was able to mobilize ... You search for allies on the principle of the political compatibility of the main activist platforms, and resources are only secondary” (Interview 1).
3. Organisations that claimed that peace was their main organisational mission.

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