PROTEST AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Hans Jonas Gunzelmann

Organizing for Independence

Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia

Amsterdam
University
Press

Organizing for Independence

Protest and Social Movements

Recent years have seen an explosion of protest movements around the world, and academic theories are racing to catch up with them. This series aims to further our understanding of the origins, dealings, decisions, and outcomes of social movements by fostering dialogue among many traditions of thought, across European nations and across continents. All theoretical perspectives are welcome. Books in the series typically combine theory with empirical research, dealing with various types of mobilization, from neighborhood groups to revolutions. We especially welcome work that synthesizes or compares different approaches to social movements, such as cultural and structural traditions, micro- and macro-social, economic and ideal, or qualitative and quantitative. Books in the series will be published in English. One goal is to encourage nonnative speakers to introduce their work to Anglophone audiences. Another is to maximize accessibility: all books will be available in open access within a year after printed publication.

Series Editors
Jan Willem Duyvendak is professor of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam.
James M. Jasper teaches at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Organizing for Independence

Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia

Hans Jonas Gunzelmann

Amsterdam University Press

The publication of this book is made possible thanks to the Leibniz Open Access Publishing Fund for Monographs, the Center for Civil Society Research at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, and the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

Cover photo: “Demanding to vote!” by Joan Campderrós-i-Canas (https://www.flickr.com/photos/joanet). No changes were made.
Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden
Typesetting: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 90 4856 109 4
e-ISBN 978 90 4856 110 0
DOI 10.5117/9789048561094
NUR 697

Creative Commons License CC-BY NC ND
(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0)

© H.J. Gunzelmann / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2024

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise).

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables 9

List of Abbreviations 11

Acknowledgements 13

1 **Introduction** 17
Understanding Secessionist Protest 19
The Argument: Eventful Interactions and Organizational Change 22
Catalonia in Context 23
Rethinking the Organizational Basis of Protest 25
The Research Behind This Book 27
Plan of the Book 29

2 **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework** 39
The Organizational Basis of Protest 40
Strategic Interactions and Organizational Change 45
Players, Arenas, and Strategies 46
Changing Interactions 49
Eventful Times and Organizational Change 50
Normal Times and Intense Times 51
Eventful Episodes and Organizational Change 53
Organizing During Intense Times and Eventful Transformations 56
Understanding Strategic Interactions in Time: An Interpretivist Approach 60
Strategizing Through Prognostic Framing 61
Sensemaking: The Social Construction of Eventfulness 63
Conclusion 66

3 **The Catalan Secessionist Protest Cycle: Intensity, Action Repertoires, and Organizational Structures** 77
The Emergence and Normalization of Secessionist Protest 2009–2015 79
Contentious Events: (Local) Referendums and Mass Protests 80
The Rise of an Organized Movement 2005–2015 83
The Transformation of Secessionist Protest 2015–2019 86
Intensifying Protest 87

The Structural Basis of Protest 92
Declining Organizing Between Organizations 96
Conclusion 99

4 **Crisis Organizing: From Normal Times to Intense Times** 105
Organizing in Normal Times 107
Campaigning: Ara és l'hora 108
Process: Organizing the Diada 110
Organizational Practices Across Times 112
Weaving the Texture: Combining Practices in Normal Times 117
Summary 118
Intensifying Interactions 118
Interacting with Allies: Frame Alignment 119
Interacting with Opponents: Counter-Secessionist Repression 121
September 20: Protests Against Police Actions 123
September 22–October 2: Occupying the University of Barcelona 126
Crisis Organizing 128
Accelerating Organizing 129
Organizing Beyond Organizations 129
From Deliberation to Directing 130
Understanding Crisis Organizing 134
Conclusion 137

5 **Organizing Eventful Protest: Defending the Referendum** 141
The Defense of the Voting Stations: Uncertainty, Action, Repression 143
The Puzzle: When Organizations Are Obstacles to Organizing 146
Organizational Practices in the Defense of the Voting Stations 150
Consensus Without Deliberation 151
Combining Directing, Assemblies, and Messengers 154
Organizational Practices Beyond Organizations 157
Practical Knowledge and Experience 158
The Sedimentation of Organizational Innovation 159
Conclusion 165

6 **The Day That Lasted Years: Making Sense of the Referendum** 173
Expectations, Repression, and Sensemaking 175
October 3: Shutting Down the Country 177
Sensemaking and Organizing 181

From Sensemaking to the Post-Referendum Frame Dispute 183
Two Rival Narratives of the Referendum 185
Fer República: Unilateral Strategy 187
Eixamplar la Base: Gradualist Strategy 188
The Post-Referendum Frame Dispute and Protest Organizing 190
November 8: Disruption and Strike 191
From Directing to Deliberation 193
Disputes Between Organizations 196
Conclusion 199

7 **Organizing Under Pressure: Dealing with Repression** 203
Continuing Counter-Secessionist Repression 204
Making Sense of Repression 206
Perceptions of Surveillance 208
Framing Anti-Repression: Sensemaking and Strategizing 209
Protesting After the Secessionist Crisis 211
Llibertat Presos Polítics 211
March 2018 Protests 214
Organizational Responses to Repression 217
From Messengers to Meetings 218
Disrupting Deliberation and Meetings 219
Fracturing the Movement 221
Inertia and Resilience 222
Conclusion 223

8 **Conclusion: The Transformative Power of Secessionist Crises** 229
Protest Organizing Beyond Organizations 231
Eventful Interactions 232
Implications Beyond Catalonia 234
Volatility and Durability 235
Outlook 237

Appendix 243
Studying the Organizational Basis of Protest Events 243
Qualitative Data and Analysis 244
Exploratory Fieldwork 244
Semi-Structured Interviews 245
Documents 248
Cases 251
Data Analysis 252

Protest Event Analysis 254
Codebooks 257
Codebook 1: Events 257
Codebook 2: Actors 258
Codebook 3: Claims 259

References 263

Index 285

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1:	Protest organizing	42
Figure 2:	Overview of key events during the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention	87
Figure 3:	Trajectory of self-determination protest in Catalonia 2015–2019	88
Figure 4:	Shares of action forms	90
Table 1:	Organizationality, organizing, organizational practice, organization	41
Table 2:	Compound players present in at least 10 events	93
Table 3:	Events organized by key compound players	95
Table 4:	Interorganizational collaboration among key compound players	97
Table 5:	Overview of cases	106
Table 6:	Dimensions of organizational practices in the independence movement	113

List of Abbreviations

1-O	October 1, 2017
3-O	October 3, 2017
8-N	November 8, 2017
9-N	November 9, 2014
10-J	July 10, 2010
20-S	September 20, 2017
21-D	December 21, 2017
AMI	Associació de Municipis per la Independència
AMPA	Associació de Mares i Pares d'Alumnes
ANC	Assemblea Nacional Catalana
CCO	Communication-as-constitutive
CDR	Comitè de Defensa del Referèndum/Comitè de Defensa de la República
CiU	Convergència i Unió
CUP	Candidatura d'Unitat Popular
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICV	Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds
JERC	Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana
JxC	Junts per Catalunya
IMA	Instant Messenger Application
PDD	Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir
PP	Partido Popular
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya
RM	Resource Mobilization
SEPC	Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans
SMO	Social Movement Organization
UxR	Universitats per la República

Acknowledgements

Writing a book can be quite a lonely endeavor. At times it felt as if the only companion I had in this process was the book itself, which seemed to have taken on a life of its own. Luckily, this is only one side of the coin. I must also admit that I could not have written this book without the support of many people.

I want to thank Donatella della Porta for giving me the opportunity and freedom to pursue this project. Her guidance and support throughout this time have been invaluable for my work. Without her incredible vision, I would have never turned to Catalonia and the 1-O referendum as a case. Many people at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore have supported me in one way or another: Thanks to Andrea Felicetti, Carla Mannino, Alice Mattoni, and Manuela Moschela. Dieter Rucht and Michael Keating were helpful in discussing my project during their visiting stays at the Faculty. Thank you to John McCarthy, who surprised me by encouraging me to look further into organizational practices. I will always be grateful to Martín Portos, who shared his infinite knowledge of Spanish and Catalan politics with me. With his sharp mind he pushed me to improve my research on many occasions.

Many people have made my stay in Barcelona one of the happiest times of my life. Ferran Giménez Azagra, Raffaele Bazurli, Núria Suero, Bernat Ferrer, Adam Holesch, Anna Subirats, Jacopo Custodi, Anel Aguilar Ramos, Anna Alexandropolou, and Ion Pagoaga Ibiricu all helped me navigate an exciting period of fieldwork. Jordi Muñoz was so kind to host me at the University of Barcelona. Sharing an office with Camilo Cristancho and Aitor Anabitarte was productive and fun at the same time.

The findings from this fieldwork started to take shape during my stay as a visiting researcher at the University of Gothenburg, where I was very warmly welcomed by the faculty and staff of the Department of Sociology and Work Science. Christoph Haug, Mattias Wahlström, Håkan Thörn, and Abby Petersen commented on my work and drove the analysis in the right direction. I would like to thank Judith Vey, Peter Ullrich, and Michael Neuber for hosting me and providing helpful comments on my project on various occasions during a research stay at the Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft at Technische Universität Berlin. During the pandemic, Joana Hofstetter, Bartek Goldmann, and Tobias Amigo read and commented on my work online and offline in Berlin.

I am grateful to the Fritz-Thyssen-Stiftung, which supported this project with a postdoctoral scholarship during the academic year 2021–2022. The book has benefitted enormously from the work I could do during that year. During that phase, Alejandro Ciordia was key with his inspiration and feedback on combining protest event and network analyses.

I could not have found a better environment to finish this book than the Center for Civil Society at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Swen Hutter encouraged me to continue the book project and provided much needed feedback. Thank you to my wonderful colleagues Endre Borbáth, Sophia Hunger, Christin Jänicke, Daniel Saldivia Gonzatti, Lennart Schürmann, Clara van den Berg, and Teresa Völker for their support and feedback during the last stages of this project. Silvia Höhne helped me to navigate the intricacies of open access funding. Thanks to Lejly Agamuradova for the administrative support.

Over the past seven years, Clara Süß has read numerous drafts of this book, has been the best conference companion, and has shared the finest memes and tweets about academia with me. Karlo Basta and Cristina Flesher Fominaya commented extensively on a previous draft. A special thanks goes to Eduardo Romanos and Kathleen Gallagher Cuningham for their feedback on the final manuscript. I also would like to thank Maryse Elliott, Mike Sanders, and Inge van der Bijl at Amsterdam University Press for their excellent work during the publication process.

Friends and family have supported me throughout this project. Thank you to Lisa Sollik, Filip Dippel, Moritz Dippel, Annabell Kolbe, Christoph Schwarz, Andreas Vogel, and Hanitra Randriaminahy for your friendship over the years. I am also thankful for my Florence friends and all the joyful memories with them: Linus Westheuser, Francesca Feo, Pálma Polyák, Giorgos Venizelos, Stella Christou, Rui Coelho, Eleonora Erittu, and Larissa Meier. Since the day we met in Aldo Capitini, Angelo Panaro has been there for me in good times and bad times. It is not an exaggeration that I probably would have gone nuts during the first lockdown without him. Ignacio García de Paso García has been a loyal friend and flatmate and has deepened my knowledge about Spanish politics and culture in numerous conversations over amaro in Florence, vermut in Barcelona, and pacharán in Zaragoza. I will always be indebted to Anna Esteban Benet, who helped me with the transcripts, never failed to cheer me up even in the dullest times, and taught me more about Catalonia than any academic book could.

Above all, I would like to thank my parents, Steffi and Michael, for their steady support. I could have never come so far without everything they have given me. Finally, I cannot put into words how grateful I am to my

love Felicitas Fritzsche, who has been an incredible intellectual support and source of inspiration and happiness. Thank you!

After all, knowledge is not created in isolation and does not come out of nowhere. This book is dedicated to the activists who took their time to take me to demonstrations, let me sit at their assemblies, and answer the many questions I had. It could not have been written without their trust and cooperation.

1 Introduction

Abstract

The first chapter introduces the context and key events of the 2017 referendum crisis in Catalonia as well as the larger secessionist cycle of contention. I suggest that the key to understanding secessionist protest lies in studying its organizational dimension rather than describing it lopsidedly as either an elite-driven or bottom-up phenomenon. The chapter posits the key question of this book: How did the referendum crisis affect the organizational basis of secessionist protest? I present the main argument of the book and situate it within the existing scholarly literature on social movements and secessionism. Finally, I outline the mixed-methods research design that provided the evidence for the book's argument.

Keywords: Secessionism, Independence Referendum, Protest, Organizing, Catalonia

Time and again, nation states around the globe are challenged from within their own borders. Discontent and grievances turn demands for greater autonomy into claims for outright independence. The contention over independence in Catalonia represents one of the most salient of such political conflicts in Europe. It has been accompanied by one of the largest protest waves during the 2010s. While some states, for example, the United Kingdom, France, or Ukraine, have faced serious secessionist challenges in the last decade or so, no other country has seen such a sustained tide of protest.

Over a period of ten years, millions of Catalans took to the streets to demand self-determination and even independence from Spain. The first big demonstration took place on July 10, 2010 (abbreviated 10-J). More than a million people protested in Barcelona, claiming *Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim* ("We are a nation. We decide"). The 10-J protest was the largest protest for self-determination since the mobilizations at the end of the Franco regime (Johnston, 1991) and during Spain's transition to democracy (Guibernau, 2004). The following year, the newly founded Assemblea Nacional

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH01

Catalana (ANC) organized a large demonstration for the National Day of Catalonia on September 11 (called *La Diada*), shortly before parliamentary elections in the region. The protest under the slogan "Catalonia, new state of Europe" mobilized even more people than the 10-J (Crameri, 2015b). The Diada became a regular event of the Catalan political calendar, mobilizing more than a million people in each of the following years.

Secessionist conflicts often extend over several decades but the time during which the boundaries of the state are seriously in question tend to be brief. Using Mark Beissinger's (1996, p. 100) terms, the "quiet politics of nationalism" give way to the "noisy politics of nationalism." This occurred in Catalonia in early June 2017, when Carles Puigdemont, the president of the Catalan Generalitat (the autonomous institutions), stepped in front of the media to make a public declaration. He announced his intention to hold a referendum on Catalonia's independence on October 1 of the same year. The push for a binding referendum on independence was met with strong opposition by the Spanish state. On September 7, the Constitutional Court suspended the "Law on the Referendum on Self-determination," which had only been approved by the Catalan parliament the day before.

Nevertheless, on October 1, 2017 (often abbreviated 1-O) over two million Catalans cast their ballots and voted largely in favor of independence, while defying a massive police intervention deployed by the Spanish government to close the voting stations.[1] About four weeks after the referendum, the secessionist parties in the Catalan parliament voted to unilaterally declare independence. However, on the very same day, the Spanish senate applied article 155 of the Spanish constitution. Article 155 suspended Catalan autonomy for the first time since its re-establishment in 1979, dissolved the Catalan government and parliament, and called for anticipated elections in the region. Several members of the Catalan government, including Carles Puigdemont, left the region. The remaining ministers were arrested and sentenced to prison for sedition and misuse of public funds after a lengthy trial that ended in October 2019.

The events of September and October 2017 arguably were the most important disruption in Spanish politics since the attempted military coup in 1981. What is more, the intense interactions between the independence movement and the Spanish state represent one of the most serious secessionist crises in an established democracy. Despite the massive protest

1 The Generalitat reported a turnout of 43.03%, of which 90.18% voted "Yes" and 7.83% voted "No" (Generalitat de Catalunya: Referèndum d'autodeterminació de Catalunya. Resultats definitius, https://govern.cat/govern/docs/2017/10/06/17/31/a3c84f5f-a902-4f55-b3a9-41e112d7a8d9.pdf).

mobilizations before, during, and after the crisis, the Catalan protest cycle has received only little attention in the academic literature (with the exception of Della Porta et al., 2017, 2019, 2021; Gunzelmann, 2022). Beyond the Catalan case, scholars have acknowledged the importance of nonviolent mobilization for secessionist conflicts (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Cunningham, 2013, 2014; Griffiths, 2016; Griffiths & Wasser, 2019). However, few systematic and longitudinal studies focus on secessionist protest in its own right, aside the seminal work of Beissinger (1996, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2009) on the nationalist mobilizations during the final phase of the Soviet Union.

Understanding Secessionist Protest

The conflict around independence has deeply polarized Catalan politics and society (Balcells & Kuo, 2022). Thus, it is not surprising that existing accounts of the independence movement have been fairly lopsided. On the one hand, those opposed to Catalan independence often see secessionist protesters as the victims of elite manipulation. A similar, albeit less simplistic explanation can be found in the academic literature as well. Some scholars attribute the rise of support for independence in Catalonia to secessionist parties and elites (Barrio & Field, 2018; Barrio & Rodríguez-Teruel, 2017; Martínez-Herrera & Miley, 2010; Miley, 2013). On the other hand, supporters of Catalan independence often portray the movement as an expression of the will of the Catalan people for self-determination. In a similar vein, some authors see the secessionist challenge as a grassroots movement pushing the Catalanist parties and the regional government towards independence (Guibernau, 2013, 2014; Ordeix & Ginesta, 2014).

In contrast, a third strand of research highlights the organizational processes and structures in the emergence of the secessionist cycle of contention. Protests in the early phase were the product of "an impressively thorough organisation" (Crameri, 2015b, p. 52). ANC and Òmnium Cultural, two large professionalized social movement organizations, meticulously planned and prepared massive protest campaigns (Crameri, 2015b; Della Porta et al., 2017). The best example of this thorough organization was the 2013 Diada when more than 1.5 million independence supporters formed a 400-kilometer human chain spanning the entire region. The chain was called the Via Catalana ("Catalan Way"), because it followed the stretch of the ancient Via Augusta from the French border to the Valencian Community.

> Tens of thousands of t-shirts were printed with the logo "My place in history. Catalan Via towards Independence." The participants registered online to take a specific slot in their locality. The event was hugely successful, and it demonstrated the immense organisational capacity of the pro-independence Catalan movement. (Della Porta et al., 2017, p. 90)

Protests such as the Via Catalana were organized in long and detailed preparatory processes by large and professionalized social movement organizations.

These findings match the analysis of comparative research on secessionism, which suggests that the Catalan independence movement stands out from other cases for its vibrant civil society organizations (Griffiths & Wasser, 2019). More generally, social movement scholars have long acknowledged organization as an important precondition of protest (de Bakker et al., 2017; Lofland, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1995). Thus, the key to understanding how secessionist protest comes about lies in studying its *organizational basis*, rather than reducing it to a product that simply emerges from the identities of activists or follows the interests of the elites.

However, there is still little systematic research charting the evolution of pro-independence civil society and protest in Catalonia over time. Moreover, previous research focused mainly on the emergence of secessionist contention between 2005 and 2015 (Crameri, 2015b, 2015a; Della Porta et al., 2017; Dowling, 2018). These organizing processes took place in periods of relative tranquility when protests were met with little opposition from the Spanish state. But as noted above, the secessionist conflict has intensified significantly after 2015. The rapid expansion of contention confronted organizers in the independence movement with challenges that differed very much from the normal interactions in previous times. It appears unlikely that the referendum crisis[2] has not had any consequences for secessionist protest, which calls to expand previous research on its organizational dimension.

The referendum crisis was key for the secessionist challengers. On the one hand, it represented an opportunity for the independence movement. Secessionist movement organizations successfully mobilized their supporters for massive protests in late 2017. New challengers emerged, alliances were forged, and tactics were invented. On the other hand, the Spanish state intensified counter-secessionist action during the same period. Police raided institutions and organizations and cracked down on protesters. Politicians

2 I use the terms "secessionist crisis" and "referendum crisis" interchangeably. It comprises the period from September 6 until October 27, 2017.

and civil society leaders were arrested and tried for stirring upheaval. Catalan autonomy was suspended, and a snap election was called.

The double character of the referendum crisis as opportunity and threat posits the central question of this book: How did the referendum crisis impact secessionist protest and its organizational basis? By addressing this question, this book represents the first systematic inquiry into secessionist protest and its organizational basis in a West European case.

This question is not answered easily. Institutional arenas provide plenty of rules and resources for how political parties and governments organize, but civil society and movements tend to be scarce on both. This is why collective action in the protest arena generally is a complex issue that has sparked a lot of research. Previous research understood organization as *an* organization, i.e., a more or less formal entity of people. Social movement organizations (SMOs) and their properties were used as the central units of analysis to demonstrate their importance for mobilization as well as to trace processes of organizational change such as oligarchization or radicalization.

This book, in contrast, develops an innovative conceptual approach to the organizational basis of protest that includes events, entities, processes, and practices as analytical categories. Prioritizing action over structure, it employs protest events and their preparatory processes as the central units of analysis. This approach allows transcending organizational boundaries and reveals the transformation of organizing inside, outside, and between formal organizations.

In political science, the challengers of existing states are commonly called *secessionist movements*. Despite the use of this term, the literature has actually engaged very little with work on social movements and contentious politics.[3] Vice versa, social movement scholars have largely turned a blind eye on the dynamics of secessionist conflict, with some notable exceptions (Beissinger, 1996, 2002; Della Porta et al., 2017, 2019; Huszka, 2014). Not just with regards to secession, but also more broadly, “research on ethno-nationalist conflict and social movements has remained regrettably separate” (Muro, 2015, p. 2). This book brings these two literatures together with organizational theory to make sense of secessionist protest in Catalonia and by extension elsewhere.

3 Secessionist political parties and regional governments have received much more attention in comparative politics (Elias et al., 2015; Ferreira, 2022; López & Sanjaume-Calvet, 2020; Massetti & Schakel, 2016; Sorens, 2012; Zuber & Szöcsik, 2015). In contrast, conflict studies have incorporated non-state actors and protest more frequently (e.g., Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Cunningham, 2013; Griffiths & Wasser, 2019; Seymour et al., 2016)

The Argument: Eventful Interactions and Organizational Change

Drawing on rich empirical evidence, I show that secessionist protest in Catalonia and its organizational basis were much more dynamic than assumed by existing accounts. Organizational processes, practices, and structures transformed both during and after the secessionist crisis. When the Catalan secessionist conflict intensified in late 2017, protest organizing became quicker and more collaborative but also less deliberative. In contrast, protest organizing was less collaborative and more deliberative in the aftermath of the referendum.

I argue that the key to understanding these short-term shifts lies in how organizers framed and perceived interactions with their allies and opponents during the secessionist crisis. At the onset of the crisis, the referendum provided a shared prognostic frame around which diverse movement players could rally. Less deliberation within organizations was required and collaboration between organizations increased, which was exacerbated by a perceived increase in repression from the Spanish state. After October 1, a frame dispute emerged within the movement about what the referendum meant. While some activists claimed that the referendum represented a legitimate mandate for secession, others saw it as a successful mobilization but not a final vote on independence. This frame dispute required more deliberation within organizations and led to a decline in interorganizational collaboration. Continuing repression and surveillance reinforced declining collaboration and made deliberation more difficult, which created tension with the strategic needs within and between groups.

I hence argue that secessionist crises as eventful periods of intense interactions have a significant impact on independence movements and protest—even when they do not lead to independence. Put in more general terms, the main argument of this book is that episodes of intense interactions—such as secessionist crises—can be eventful and transform the organizational basis of protest. How protest organizers make sense of these episodes plays a crucial role for organizational change. This argument consists of three parts.

The first part starts from the fundamental finding of social movement scholars that interactions between challengers and authorities do not distribute evenly across time (Beissinger, 2002; Koopmans, 2004; McAdam et al., 2001; Tarrow, 1989). There are phases when these interactions become more *intense*: protest turns disruptive, repression increases, and the pace of events accelerates. Following Donatella della Porta (2020) and Beissinger (2002), I suggest distinguishing between "normal times" and these "intense times" of conflict.

The second part of this argument builds on the work of William H. Sewell and others (Abbott, 1992, 2001; Della Porta, 2008, 2020; McAdam & Sewell, 2001; Sewell, 1996b, 1996a; Wagner-Pacifici, 2010), who suggested that brief but outstanding events can result in durable and profound political transformations. I argue that episodes of intense interactions have fundamental consequences for social movements, including the organizational basis of protest. On the one hand, intense contentious episodes shape protest organizing already while these episodes unfold. The way in which activists organize protests *during* the accelerated succession of occurrences differs fundamentally from protest organizing in normal times. On the other hand, intense contentious episodes have consequences for protest organizing also *after* these intense periods end.

The third part of the argument suggests that cultural processes of meaning-making play a crucial role in linking episodes of intense interactions to organizational change. The transformations during and after the secessionist crisis show that the way organizers perceive and imagine their interactions with their allies and opponents shapes how they adapt their practices. This becomes even more relevant when interactions are understood as events in time. Categories such as normal times, intense times, and transformative events are not readily available to organizers as objective concepts, as other scholars emphasized (Basta, 2018; Della Porta, 2008, 2020; Sewell, 1996a; Wagner-Pacifici, 2010, 2017). Rather, they must prognostically frame them before their occurrence and make sense of them once they are passed. Framing and sensemaking are collective processes that can result in disputes and have a substantial impact on organizational structures, processes, and practices. The symbolic dimension is thus key to organizational transformations.

Catalonia in Context

The organizational capacity of Catalan secessionists has been a cornerstone of their successful mobilizations. Studying the organizational dimension of the independence movement over time tells us more about how it managed to challenge the integrity of the Spanish state. This book shows that the top-down and bottom-up accounts of the Catalan independence movement fail to grasp the dynamic interactions between protesters, their allies, and their opponents.

The conflict in Catalonia is not only relevant to Spanish politics. In particular after World War II, the struggle for independence became such

a common feature of global politics that Buchanan (1991) called it the "age of secession," a trend that has continued after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Griffiths, 2016). The size and frequency of secessionist protests in Catalonia are remarkable, but pro-independence mobilization is far from unique to the region. During the last decade, secessionists around the world have gathered in the streets to voice their claims. The 2014 referendum in Scotland, for example, was accompanied by large demonstrations by the Yes camp. In Iraqi Kurdistan, too, massive protests erupted following a referendum on independence in 2017. In 2019, thousands of Papuans rallied to demand independence from Indonesia. These examples show that secessionist contention is a global phenomenon. In a survey of all secessionist movements between 1946 and 2011, Griffiths and Wasser (2019) show that almost all of them employ some form of action outside of political institutions. Only nine movements pursued independence purely through institutional channels. Other aggregative studies confirm the spread of secessionist contention around the world (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Cunningham, 2014; Cunningham et al., 2017).

The work of Beissinger (1996, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2009) highlighted the need to study the dynamics of secessionist protest in its own right. He showed that, like other kinds of contention, secessionist protest erupts in waves that are driven by the interactions between challengers and authorities. Beissinger (2002, p. 27) observed that "most studies understand nationalist action as merely an externalization of nationalist ways of thinking brought into being well before the onset of nationalist action." Building on this observation I suggest that concepts and theories from social movement studies may be more useful than theories of nationalism to understand how and why people demand independence in the streets. This book draws primarily on social movement studies and makes only a few references to the literature on nationalism.

The second important resource is the literature on secessionist and self-determination conflicts. This research increasingly places strategy at the core of its analysis (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Cunningham, 2013; Griffiths & Muro, 2020; Griffiths & Wasser, 2019; Sorens, 2012). Secessionist strategy is usually theorized "in terms of a 'cost/benefit' analysis" (Crameri, 2015a, p. 2). Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham (2013, p. 292), for example, assumed that self-determination groups "pick strategies based on the costs of those strategies and their anticipation of achieving success through them." Adopting a strategic perspective makes sense given that secessionist movements can be defined by pursuing a specific goal (independence), something that is usually less clear in other social movements.

This book also underlines the strategic dimension of secessionist movements. However, it shows that secessionist strategy cannot be reduced to simplistic cost–benefit calculations. This critique involves two points. First, drawing on the work of Jasper (2004, 2006), I show that culture plays an essential role in strategizing. Organizers form and adapt their strategies with reference to future and past events by collective processes of prognostic framing and sensemaking. Second, organizational processes and practices are fundamental. Protest is not a tool that secessionist movements simply pull out of their pocket—it requires planning and preparing, time, and resources.

The Catalan case thus is highly relevant for understanding the strategic and organizational dimension of secessionist movements. As much as Catalan secessionists voice their solidarity with other independence movements in Scotland, Kurdistan, Corsica, or Flanders, these movements look with great interest at what is happening in Catalonia. For many of them, the organizational capacity of the Catalan independence movement has been exemplary. Arguably, no other independence movement is based on such a dense network of civil society organizations and has repeatedly managed to turn out millions of protesters. Catalonia can hence be considered an ideal case of an organized secessionist movement. Furthermore, the intensification of conflict in 2017 provides a critical case for understanding how secessionist players adapt their strategies in interaction with their allies and opponents.

Rethinking the Organizational Basis of Protest

When academics or the media observe social movements, they often describe what is most visible to the public eye: activists marching in the streets, shouting their demands, occupying squares, and fighting the police. Melucci (1994, p. 107) called this perspective on social movements the "myopia of the visible." There is much more to social movements than their public expression. Many protests would not be possible without hours of previous preparations. Activists often spend much more time organizing protests than in the streets (Haug, 2010; Haug et al., 2009; Polletta, 2002; Rucht, 2017).

The classic literature in social movement studies focused primarily on the organizational infrastructure of movements, and SMOs in particular, because they often provide the human and material resources that are required for contentious action (Clemens, 1997; Curtis & Zurcher, 1974; Kriesi, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977; Minkoff, 1995; Zald & Ash, 1966). However, scholars have bemoaned the decline of organizational sociology, not just in social movement studies (Soule, 2013), but also more generally

within the social sciences (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Besio et al., 2020; King, 2017). And indeed, it appears that researchers have dispensed of the notion of organization and stressed the role of other concepts such as networks (Anduiza et al., 2014; Baldassarri & Diani, 2007; Castells, 2012; Diani, 2015; Mische, 2008). Den Hond, de Bakker, and Smith (2015) suggested that this has been due to the narrow focus on SMOs as *formal* organizations. The paradoxical consequence of the focus on organizational structures has been that "few empirical studies were undertaken to demonstrate the actual requirements and processes of organizing protest," as Dieter Rucht pointed out (2017, p. 1679).

This book aims to revive scholarship on the organizational dimension of protest and social movement by addressing this gap. Focusing on what activists *do* when they organize protest, I develop an innovative conceptual framework that goes beyond formal organizations. What I call the *organizational basis of protest* involves four dimensions: i) organizationality as a property of protest, ii) protest organizing as the process of planning and preparing contentious action, iii) organizational practices, and iv) organizational structures. Applying this framework to the Catalan case brings into view the diverse forms of how activists organize protest inside, between, and even *outside* organizations. This demonstrates that formal organizations are not a necessary precondition for protest, as suggested by classic social movement theories (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1995).

Social movement scholars have studied a range of organizational transformations, in particular when resource mobilization theory represented a primary reference point in the field. The first concern has been the emergence, survival, and decline of organizations. Although they are treated as an important precondition for mobilization, SMOs are often born in phases of heightened contention (Pearlman, 2021; Tarrow, 2011, pp. 122–123). However, few groups that emerge in contention actually turn into organizations, and even fewer persist over extended periods of time (Blee, 2012; Minkoff, 1995). Studies suggested that the key to organizational survival lies not only in obtaining material resources but also social capital (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Walker & McCarthy, 2010).[4] A second line of research focused on

4 From a process perspective, there are fundamental problems with using organizational entities as units of analysis, as Abbott (1992, p. 433) pointed out: "Although the organizational ecologists have addressed the question of merger and division, they treat the processes merely as the continuation of one group coupled with the death or birth of another, thus avoiding the central questions posed about the continuity between entity and attribute. Existence in such an argument becomes an attribute that is somehow possible for an entity to lose, thus producing the philosophical monstrosity of an entity that can be defined as an entity but that doesn't exist."

the properties of SMOs. There has been considerable debate around the "movement career model" (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 65; Zald & Ash, 1966), which is derived from Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy (1911) and predicts that, over time, SMOs become more bureaucratic, hierarchical, and conservative. A contrasting line of works investigated the radicalization of SMOs (Della Porta, 1995, 2013; Diani & Donati, 1999; Rootes, 1999). Tarrow (2011, p. 207) pointed out that moderation and radicalization may occur simultaneously as a cycle of contention contracts. Thus, they often do not only occur in the same movement but also in the same period of time.

This book addresses three issues with the existing literature on organizational change in social movements. The first has been addressed above: the existing literature understood organizational change as changes of organizational entities. In contrast, this book understands organizational change as transformations in the four dimensions of the organizational basis. This distinction is critical, because the Catalan case demonstrates that organizational practices and processes change in different ways than organizational entities. The second problem is that the existing body of work saw the drivers of change as structural, too. This could be either macro-structural changes such as technological change (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013), the organizational structure itself (Clemens 1993), or the political opportunity structure in the political process model (McCarthy 1996). However, this book reveals the agency of protest organizers and the key role of interactions of protesters, their allies and opponents for organizational change. The third issue is that the existing work paid little attention to the temporal dimension of organizational change. As mentioned above, the role of the dynamics of contention for organizing has been acknowledged (Tarrow, 2011) but events, episodes, and sequences do not feature as proper sources of explanation in previous works. In contrast, I build on event-centered approaches to social movements to theorize organizational change. The empirical part of this book demonstrates the critical role of eventful episodes of conflict for organizational change.

The Research Behind This Book

Organizations are important in social movements but much of protest organizing takes place between organizations or even outside organizations. When I started researching the Catalan case departing from this assumption, it was clear that organizations-as-entities were unfit as a unit of analysis if I wanted to capture organizing processes outside of them as well. This

is why I chose to focus on the *outcomes* of organizing and use the protest event as the main unit of analysis of this book.[5]

I follow Tilly and others in defining protest as the collective, non-routine act of public claims-making (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 2008; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).[6] Protest *events* are claims-making acts that are bounded in time and space. The core concept is *secessionist* protest, which claims "the creation of a new state by the withdrawal of a territory and its population where that territory was previously part of an existing state" (Pavković & Radan, 2007, p. 5). Empirically, however, I broadened this focus to also include *self-determination* protests as well (Cunningham, 2014), because independence claims often go hand-in-hand with other kinds of self-determination claims.[7]

The empirical evidence presented in this book is based on a mixed-methods research design, which combines qualitative techniques with protest event analysis. The protest event analysis primarily serves to map the intensity of secessionist contention and track the evolution of organizational structures over time, whereas the qualitative analyses allow tracing the organizing processes of selected key protest events in depth.

First, during ten months of fieldwork in Catalonia between May 2018 and March 2019, I gathered four types of qualitative materials: observations of meetings and protests, interviews with experts, documents from social movement organizations, and semi-structured interviews with organizers. The 30 interviews with organizers represent the richest data source. I define organizers as activists who regularly engage in the planning and preparing of collective contentious action. Organizers attend meetings, communicate with other activists and organizers, make decisions about where and when to protest, choose frames and tactics, and mobilize resources and participants.[8] This distinguishes organizers from activists who merely participate in protests or only occasionally in their preparatory processes. In order to include a series of organizational perspectives and experiences, and to go beyond organizational boundaries, I interviewed not only organizers from

5 See the Appendix for a full discussion of the methodological choices.

6 McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow prefer the term "contention." I use protest and contention interchangeably.

7 As Chapter 3 shows, self-determination protests were mostly driven by secessionist players.

8 There is a subtle difference between this understanding, and the one by Han (2014, p. 8), which distinguishes between organizers and mobilizers: "Organizers invest in developing the capacities of people to engage with others in activism and become leaders. Mobilizers focus on maximizing the number of people involved without developing their capacity for civic action." Her approach is closely related to what I like to call the Alinksyian meaning of organizing as community organizing and structure building.

the main social movement organizations but also targeted interviewees without formal affiliation. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a detailed reconstruction of past protest events while also prioritizing the agency of organizers (Blee, 2013; Della Porta, 2014; Langley, 2010; Rathbun, 2009). Most importantly, the interviews revealed how activists made sense of the referendum and other events and connected them to the ways in which they organize protest. Documents, expert interviews, and observations complemented the interviews. These qualitative data are the basis for in-depth analyses of nine protest cases before, during, and after the 2017 secessionist crisis.

Second, I collected original data on self-determination protest events in Catalonia from October 2015 through December 2019 from two Catalan newspapers: *El Periódico* and *El Punt Avui*. I used a combination of action forms and self-determination claims as keywords to search the archives of the two newspapers through the online platform Factiva, which resulted in 10,209 query hits. These articles were used to identify and code protest events, following Ciordia's (2020, 2021) strategy and using the Discourse Network Analyzer (DNA) software developed by Leifeld (2016). This resulted in 1,405 protest events, which allow tracing the trajectory of self-determination protests from the regional elections in 2015 until the end of 2019, right before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. I also coded information on the compound players participating in these protests, which provides a comprehensive picture of the role of organizational structures over the course of the second phase of the cycle of contention.

Plan of the Book

The book is organized into eight chapters including this introduction. Chapter 2 presents the conceptual basis of the book and outlines its main theoretical argument. It constructs an innovative framework of the organizational dimension of social movements using protest events and their preparatory processes as the central conceptual building blocks. Drawing on the players-and-arenas approach, research on secessionist conflicts and strategies, and the literature on transformative events, I develop what I call an "eventful approach" to organizational change in social movements that accounts for the role of organizers' framing and sensemaking.

Chapter 3 provides a broad view of the various phases of the Catalan secessionist protest cycle from its emergence in 2009 until right before the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. Drawing on an original protest event data

set, it shows how the 2017 referendum crisis transformed secessionist protest. The chapter also tackles the structural dimension of the organizational basis of secessionist protest in Catalonia. It introduces the main compound players, discusses their changing roles, and the declining collaboration among them over the course of the cycle.

Chapters 4 to 7 provide in-depth analyses of the transformation of organizational processes and practices during and after the 2017 secessionist crisis. The chapters draw on rich qualitative materials to reconstruct nine cases of protest organizing. Chapter 4 shows how the intensification of the Catalan secessionist conflict after the announcement led to the emergence of what I call "crisis organizing." It analyzes the preparatory processes of two protest events during the intense phase (the September 20 protests and the occupation of the University of Barcelona) and how they differed from previous processes to show how protest organizing became quicker, more collaborative and directed. I argue that this shift can be explained by frame alignment and intensifying repression and is reinforced by increased uncertainty and time pressure in this phase.

Chapter 5 explains how the defense of the voting stations was organized despite the inaction of the established social movement organizations. It shows that decision-making and communication practices structured collective action in the absence of formal organization. These practices sedimented into organizational structures beyond the referendum, which makes the defense of the voting stations an eventful protest for the organizational dimension of the movement.

Chapter 6 reconstructs how a frame dispute about the meaning of the referendum emerged after the event. Looking at the organizational processes of the October 3 and November 8 general strikes, the chapter shows that this inherently strategic frame dispute led to more deliberation within organizations and to declining interorganizational collaboration. How organizers frame events and make sense of them thus has a critical impact on organizational change.

Chapter 7 focuses on the consequences of counter-secessionist repression and surveillance for secessionist protest and its organizational basis. Analyzing the organizing processes of the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign and the March 2018 protests, it shows how organizers made sense of repression, elaborated new frames, and adapted their organizational practices. In contrast, organizational structures provided some resilience against repression.

The concluding chapter draws the findings of the empirical chapters together and links them to the theoretical framework and the central

research question. It restates the main argument of the book and discusses its contributions to organization theory, social movement studies, and research on secessionist conflict. It provides an outlook for the Catalan case and discusses its implications for further research.

References

Abbott, A. (1992). From causes to events: Notes on narrative positivism. *Sociological Methods & Research, 20*(4), 428–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124192020004002

Abbott, A. (2001). *Time matters: On theory and method*. University of Chicago Press.

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2014). Mobilization through online social networks: The political protest of the indignados in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(6), 750–764. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.808360

Balcells, L., & Kuo, A. (2023). Secessionist conflict and affective polarization: Evidence from Catalonia. *Journal of Peace Research. 60*(4), 604–618 https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221088112

Baldassarri, D., & Diani, M. (2007). The integrative power of civic networks. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(3), 735–780. https://doi.org/1010.1086/521839

Barrio, A., & Field, B. N. (2018). The push for independence in Catalonia. *Nature Human Behaviour, 2*(10), 713–715. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0439-8

Barrio, A., & Rodríguez-Teruel, J. (2017). Reducing the gap between leaders and voters? Elite polarization, outbidding competition, and the rise of secessionism in Catalonia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40*(10), 1776–1794. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1213400

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Beissinger, M. R. (1996). How nationalisms spread: Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of nationalist contention. *Social Research, 63*(1), 97–146.

Beissinger, M. R. (1998). Nationalist violence and the state: Political authority and contentious repertoires in the former USSR. *Comparative Politics, 30*(4), 401–422. https://doi.org/10.2307/422331

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.

Beissinger, M. R. (2007). Structure and example in modular political phenomena: The diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics, 5*(02), 259–276 https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070776

Besio, C., du Gay, P., & Serrano Velarde, K. (2020). Disappearing organization? Reshaping the sociology of organizations. *Current Sociology, 68*(4), 411–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120907613

Blee, K. M. (2012). *Democracy in the making: How activist groups form*. Oxford University Press.

Blee, K. M. (2013). Interviewing activists. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements* (p. wbespm111). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm111

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Polity Press.

Chenoweth, E., & Stephan, M. J. (2011). *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. Columbia University Press.

Ciordia, A. (2020). Less divided after ETA? Green networks in the Basque Country between 2007 and 2017. PhD Thesis, University of Trento. https://doi.org/10.15168/11572_277816

Ciordia, A. (2021). Less divided after ETA? The evolution of ideological cleavages in the Basque environmental field, 2007–2017. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 26*(2), 217–236. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-2-217

Clemens, E. S. (1997). *The people's lobby: Organizational innovation and the rise of interest group politics in the United States, 1890–1925*. University of Chicago Press.

Crameri, K. (2015a). *"Goodbye, Spain?": The question of independence for Catalonia*. Sussex Academic Press.

Crameri, K. (2015b). Political power and civil counterpower: The complex dynamics of the Catalan independence movement. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 21*(1), 104–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2015.1003491

Cunningham, K. G. (2013). Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and nonviolent campaign in self-determination disputes. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313475467

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination*. Oxford University Press.

Cunningham, K. G., Dahl, M., & Frugé, A. (2017). Strategies of resistance: Diversification and diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science, 61*(3), 591–605. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12304

Curtis, R. L., & Zurcher, L. A. (1974). Social movements: An analytical exploration of organizational forms. *Social Problems, 21*(3), 356–370.

De Bakker, F. G. A., Den Hond, F., & Laamanen, M. (2017). Social movements: Organizations and organizing. In C. Roggeband & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across disciplines* (pp. 203–231). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0_8

Della Porta, D. (1995). *Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527555

Della Porta, D. (2008). Eventful protest, global conflicts. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, 9*(2), 27–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2008.9672963

Della Porta, D. (2013). *Clandestine political violence*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139043144

Della Porta, D. (2014). In-depth interviews. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 228–261). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0010

Della Porta, D. (2020). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 19*(5–6), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458

Della Porta, D., Gunzelmann, H. J., & Portos, M. (2021). Repression and democracy amidst the eventful 1-O referendum. In Ó. G. Agustín (Ed.), *Catalan independence and the crisis of sovereignty* (pp. 127–150). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54867-4_6

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2019). Protest cycles and referendums for independence: Closed opportunities and the path of radicalization in Catalonia. *Revista Internacional de Sociología, 77*(4), 142. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.005

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Portos García, M., & Subirats Ribas, A. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: Direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press.

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G. A., & Smith, N. (2015). Social movements and organizational analysis. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 291–305). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.41

Diani, M. (2015). *The cement of civil society: Studying networks in localities*. Cambridge University Press.

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organisational change in Western European Environmental Groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Dowling, A. (2018). *The rise of Catalan independence: Spain's territorial crisis*. Routledge.

Edwards, B., & McCarthy, J. D. (2004). Strategy matters: The contingent value of social capital in the survival of local social movement organizations. *Social Forces, 83*(2), 621–651. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2005.0009

Elias, A., Szöcsik, E., & Zuber, C. I. (2015). Position, selective emphasis and framing: How parties deal with a second dimension in competition. *Party Politics, 21*(6), 839–850. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068815597572

Ferreira, C. (2022). Identity, money, or governance? Explaining secessionist parties' rhetorical strategies. *Party Politics*, Online First. 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688221140249

Griffiths, R. D. (2016). *Age of secession: The international and domestic determinants of state birth*. Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (Eds.). (2020). *Strategies of secession and counter-secession*. ECPR Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Wasser, L. M. (2019). Does violent secessionism work? *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 63*(5), 1310–1336. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718783032

Guibernau, M. (2004). *Catalan nationalism: Francoism, transition and democracy*. Routledge.

Guibernau, M. (2013). Secessionism in Catalonia: After democracy. *Ethnopolitics, 12*(4), 368–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2013.843245

Guibernau, M. (2014). Prospects for an independent Catalonia. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, 27*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-013-9165-4

Gunzelmann, H. J. (2022). Counter-surveillant organizing during the secessionist cycle of contention in Catalonia. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2142545

Han, H. (2014). *How organizations develop activists: Civic associations and leadership in the 21st century*. Oxford University Press.

Haug, C. (2010). *Discursive decision-making in meetings of the Global Justice Movement: Cultures and practices* [PhD dissertation]. Free University of Berlin.

Haug, C., Haeringer, N., & Mosca, L. (2009). The ESF organizing process in diachronic perspective. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Another Europe: Conceptions and practices of democracy in the European social forums* (pp. 26–45). Routledge.

Huszka, B. (2014). *Secessionist movements and ethnic conflict: Debate-framing and rhetoric in independence campaigns*. Routledge.

Jasper, J. M. (2004). A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social-movement choices. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 9*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.9.1.m112677546p63361

Jasper, J. M. (2006). *Getting your way: Strategic dilemmas in the real world*. University of Chicago Press.

Johnston, H. (1991). *Tales of nationalism: Catalonia, 1939–1979*. Rutgers University.

King, B. G. (2017). The relevance of organizational sociology. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews, 46*(2), 131–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094306117692563

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Langley, A. (2010). Studying processes in and around organizations. In D. A. Buchanan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 409–429). SAGE.

Leifeld, P. (2016). *Policy debates as dynamic networks: German pension politics and privatization discourse*. Campus Verlag.

Lofland, J. (1996). *Social movement organizations: Guide to research on insurgent realities*. De Gruyter.

López, J., & Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). The political use of de facto referendums of independence: The case of Catalonia. *Representation*, Online First. 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2020.1720790

Martínez-Herrera, E., & Miley, T. J. (2010). The constitution and the politics of national identity in Spain. *Nations and Nationalism, 16*(1), 6–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00432.x

Massetti, E., & Schakel, A. H. (2016). Between autonomy and secession: Decentralization and regionalist party ideological radicalism. *Party Politics, 22*(1), 59–79. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813511380

McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. Jr. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Jr. Sewell, S. G. Tarrow, & C. Tilley (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.005

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1973). *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization*. General Learning Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*(6), 1212–1241.

Melucci, A. (1994). A strange kind of newness: What's "new" in new social movements? In E. Laraña, H. Johnston, & J. R. Gusfield (Eds.), *New social movements: From ideology to identity*. Temple University Press.

Michels, R. (1911). *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie. Untersuchungen über die oligarchischen Tendenzen des Gruppenlebens.* (1st edition). Klinkhardt.

Miley, T. J. (2013). Blocked articulation and nationalist hegemony in Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies, 23*(1), 7–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2012.754356

Minkoff, D. C. (1995). *Organizing for equality: The evolution of women's and racial-ethnic organizations in America, 1955–1985*. Rutgers University Press.

Mische, A. (2008). *Partisan publics: Communication and contention across Brazilian youth activist networks*. Princeton University Press.

Muro, D. (2015). Ethnicity, nationalism, and social movements. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 185–199). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.1

Ordeix, E., & Ginesta, X. (2014). Political engagement principles as the basis for new regional self-determination processes in Europe: The case of Catalonia. *American Behavioral Scientist, 58*(7), 928–940. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213506214

Pavković, A., & Radan, P. (2007). *Creating new states: Theory and practice of secession*. Ashgate.

Polletta, F. (2002). *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press.

Rathbun, B. C. (2009). Interviewing and qualitative field methods: Pragmatism and practicalities. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of political methodology* (pp. 685–701). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.0029

Rootes, C. A. (1999). The transformation of environmental activism: Activists, organizations and policy-making. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 12*(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1999.9968595

Rucht, D. (2017). Exploring the backstage: Preparation and implementation of mass protests in Germany. *American Behavioral Scientist, 61*(13), 1678–1702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744135

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996a). Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society, 25*(6), 841–881.

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996b). Three temporalities. In T. J. McDonald (Ed.), *The historic turn in the human sciences* (pp. 245–280). University of Michigan Press.

Seymour, L. J., Bakke, K. M., & Cunningham, K. G. (2016). E pluribus unum, ex uno plures: Competition, violence, and fragmentation in ethnopolitical movements. *Journal of Peace Research, 53*(1), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343315605571

Sorens, J. (2012). *Secessionism: Identity, interest, and strategy*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Soule, S. A. (2013). Bringing organizational studies back into social movement scholarship. In J. van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The future of social movement research* (pp. 107–124). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816686513.003.0007

Tarrow, S. G. (1989). *Democracy and disorder: Protest and politics in Italy, 1965–1975*. Clarendon.

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (1995). *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834*. Harvard University Press.

Tilly, C. (2008). *Contentious performances*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804366

Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2015). *Contentious politics* (Second revised edition). Oxford University Press.

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2010). Theorizing the restlessness of events. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(5), 1351–1386. https://doi.org/10.1086/651299

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2017). *What is an event?* The University of Chicago Press.

Walker, E. T., & McCarthy, J. D. (2010). Legitimacy, strategy, and resources in the survival of community-based organizations. *Social Problems, 57*(3), 315–340. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2010.57.3.315

Zald, M. N., & Ash, R. (1966). Social movement organizations: Growth, decay and change. *Social Forces, 44*(3), 327–341.

Zuber, C. I., & Szöcsik, E. (2015). Ethnic outbidding and nested competition: Explaining the extremism of ethnonational minority parties in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research, 54*(4), 784–801. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12105

2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Abstract
The second chapter represents the conceptual basis of the book and outlines its main theoretical argument. It does so in four steps. First, I construct an innovative approach to the organizational dimension of social movements using protest events and their preparatory processes as the central conceptual building blocks. Second, I adopt the players-and-arenas approach to the study of secessionist conflicts and strategies. Third, I develop an eventful approach to organizational change in social movements. I argue that episodes of intense interactions between challengers, allies, and authorities are eventful and transform the organizational basis of protest. Fourth, I suggest that framing and sensemaking processes are key to understanding how organizers relate interactions-as-events to their organizing.

Keywords: Organizing, Strategic Interactions, Transformative Events, Sensemaking, Framing, Secessionist Conflict

Protests are inherently dynamic. They come in "waves" (Koopmans, 2004) or "tides" (Beissinger, 2002). The same is true for organization. Previous research documents the manifold facets of organizational change in social movements (Clemens, 1997; Diani & Donati, 1999; Kriesi, 1996; Minkoff, 1995; Rucht, 1999). Organizational change is also a major concern in organization studies (Rerup & Feldman, 2011; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). Understanding the organizational dimension of protest thus requires studying its evolution over time. This posits two major questions: How does the organizational basis of protest change over time? And what drives organizational change? While this book focuses specifically on the impact of the 2017 referendum crisis on the organizational basis of secessionist protest in Catalonia, it also engages with these broader questions. Addressing these questions requires a theory of organizational change, which I develop in this chapter.

The conceptual and theoretical approach of this book follows a series of writings that emphasize the role of *events* in the transformation of

---

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH02

contentious politics (Basta, 2018; Della Porta, 2008, 2020; McAdam & Sewell, 2001; Sewell, 1996b, 1996a). Building on this body of work, I develop what I call an "eventful" approach to organizational change that is sensitive to the strategic interactions of protesters with their allies and opponents. The central theoretical argument is that organizational change is the result of how protest organizers make sense of their interactions with their allies and opponents. When these interactions intensify and become eventful, they have short-term and durable consequences for the organizational basis of protest.

In this chapter, I elaborate this "eventful" theory of organizational change in four steps. First, I develop the conceptual framework of this theory. What I call the organizational basis of protest involves four components: events, processes, practices, and structures. Second, I theorize strategic interactions and how they impact the organizational basis of protest. I argue that organizers plan and prepare protests with the goals and tactics of their allies and opponents in mind. Third, I distinguish between strategic interactions during normal and intense times of conflict and theorize the impact of intense times on protest organizing. Fourth, I highlight the role of meaning-making processes for protest organizing. Sensemaking and framing play an important role in translating strategic interactions into organizational change.

The Organizational Basis of Protest

Organization became central to the study of social movements in the 1970s, when Tilly and others disagreed with the earlier view of protest as irrational and spontaneous behavior that was purely driven by grievances. Instead, they highlighted the strategic, organized, and almost routine character of collective action. Proponents of the resource mobilization (RM) approach stressed the role of the social movement organization (SMO) as a crucial precondition of protest (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977; Zald & Ash, 1966). Or, as Tilly (1995, p. 32) put it: "whatever stress ordinary people may have endured, the critical difference between action and inaction was the extent to which they had become involved in organized movements."[1] *Organized protest* became synonymous with *protest by organizations*.

1 At the same time, Tilly (2004, p. 6) warned against equating "a movement's collective action with the organizations and networks that support the action." But in practice, this warning has often been ignored.

The focus of the RM approach on formal organizations and their importance has been criticized by scholars working on movements lacking resources (Piven & Cloward, 1979, 1979), on prefigurative practices (Boggs, 1977; Breines, 1980; Epstein, 1991; Yates, 2015), and, more recently, information and communication technologies (abbreviated ICTs; Anduiza et al., 2014; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Bimber et al., 2005, 2012). In response, scholars acknowledged that "organizations are very important in social movements, but they are not the whole story" (Oliver, 1989, p. 1) and there "is much more organizing in social movements than social movement organizations, but much of social movement organizing is not quite befit with that label" (de Bakker et al., 2017, p. 217). However, these insights have rarely led to innovative theorizing on the organizational dimension of social movements.[2] Rather, it seems that social movement scholars have lost interest in organization (Soule, 2013).[3] In contrast, I suggest that both classic writings and recent advances in organization theory can be fruitfully applied to social movement studies to go beyond formal organizations.

I call this conceptual framework the *organizational basis of protest*. It consists of four conceptual components: *organizationality* as a property of protest, *organizing* as the process of preparing protest, *organizational practices*, and *organizations* as entities. It must be stressed that these are different phenomena, and it is important not to confuse them. Following Schoeneborn, Kuhn, and Kärreman (2019) and other organizational theorists, I use the adjective organized when describing the quality of a protest action or event, the verb or gerund form when speaking about the process or practice of organizing, and the noun when referring to an organization as a specific entity. Table 1 summarizes this terminology.

Table 1. Organizationality, organizing, organizational practice, organization (based on Schoeneborn, Kuhn, and Kärreman, 2019)

Concept	Definition	Grammar
Organizationality	Property of protest action	Adjective
Organizing	Process of preparing contentious action	Verb, Gerund
Organizational practice	Practice of reducing equivocality	Verb, Gerund
Organization	Entity within a social movement	Noun

2 See however, the proposal by De Bakker and colleagues (de Bakker et al., 2017; den Hond et al., 2015) to apply the "partial organization" approach (Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011) to social movements.

3 Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) even claim that this is a broader trend in the social sciences.

First, *organized protest* represents the starting point of my conceptual framework. The attribute o*rganized* refers to what Schoeneborn and others (2015; 2019) have called "organizationality," which is a property of something that can be more or less organized. In social movement studies, the organizationality of protest has usually been equated with social movement organizations. In contrast, I argue that the organizationality of protest should be distinguished from organizations and be understood in contrast to spontaneity. Distinguishing between organized protest and organizations posits important conceptual and empirical questions: How does organized protest come about? How can we understand organizing outside of organizations? What are activists actually doing when they prepare collective action? The other components of the framework address these questions.

The second component is *protest organizing*, which refers to the process of planning and preparing collective contentious action. This concept draws on the process perspective in organization studies, which sees organizing as a sequence of interactions that reduce equivocality, uncertainty, and chaos (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010; Poole et al., 2000; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Weick, 1979).[4] It represents an attempt to prevent spontaneous or random lines of action during the protest action. Thus, protest organizing directly relates to the concept of protest organizationality. If spontaneous and random action is minimized as a result of previous preparations, a protest can be called *organized*. In contrast, if protest occurs without any kind of previous organizing, it qualifies as spontaneous. Figure 1 depicts the concept.

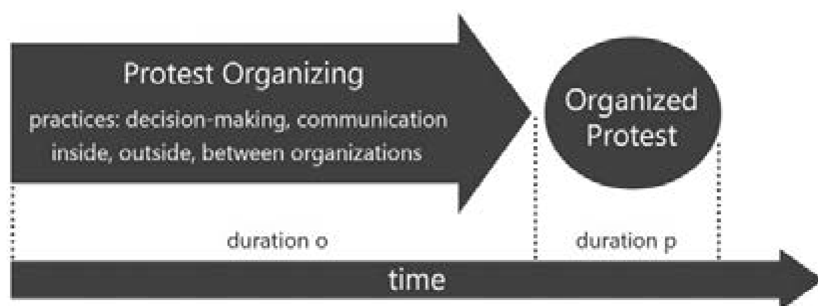

Figure 1. Protest organizing. Concept by the author, visualization by Filip Dippel.

4 Process perspectives are set in contrast to entity-based approaches (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). The RM approach in social movement studies builds on classic entity approaches in organization studies.

This perspective shifts the analytical attention away from the properties of organizational entities to what activists actually *do* to make protest happen. The field of social movement studies has produced an impressive literature about organizations as entities. In contrast, Rucht (2017) pointed out that there is no systematic account of the preparatory activities of protest, which are usually treated as one among many elements in case studies on social movements. Thus, despite a large body of literature on organizations and social movements, we know very little about how activists actually organize contentious action. Staging street demonstrations, calling for strikes, and occupying squares often require meticulous planning and a great amount of preparatory work. The crucial insight of the process-based approach is that this work can be done within organizations but also between and outside of organizations, as theorists have pointed out (Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, 2019; Haug, 2013).

The preparatory activities in the process of protest organizing can also be understood as *organizational practices*, which represent the third component of the framework.[5] Practice theories point to the recurring character of social activities, as well as the relationship between their cognitive, emotional, and material elements (Reckwitz, 2002). Practices represent recognizable *ways of doing things*, which require knowledge, learning, and experience by the practitioner. Epistemologically, organizational practices represent "a primary way to study organisation processually" (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2016, p. 110).[6]

I suggest that organizational practices are distinct from other practices in that they reduce uncertainty. Drawing on two innovative strands of literature in organization theory, I focus on two sets of organizational practices. First, the communication-as-constitutive (CCO) approach to organization (Cooren, 2000; Cooren et al., 2011; McPhee & Zaug, 2000; Putnam et al., 2009; Robichaud & Cooren, 2013; Taylor & Van Every, 2000) departs from the assumption that communication *is* organizational. In other words, organization is constantly reproduced by communicative interaction. This means that activists must communicate with each other to prepare a protest. Communication thus is a key component of organizing. Second, a number of theorists put decisions at the center of their understanding of organizing

5 Organization studies have proliferated research on a wide range of practices such as strategizing (Fenton & Langley, 2011; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 1996, 2003), knowing (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Gherardi, 2006; Nicolini, 2003; Orlikowski, 2002), and learning (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Gherardi, 2000; Rerup & Feldman, 2011).

6 However, most of these works remain within an understanding of organization as an entity, as Feldman and Orlikowsi (2011) pointed out.

(Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2019; Mintzberg et al., 1976). Decisions are, as Ahrne and Brunsson (2011, p. 8) suggested, a primary way for organizational members to reduce uncertainty: "Decisions are attempts at creating certainty, at establishing what the future will look like." Activists often have several options for action available, but to reduce uncertainty they must rule out all options but one. How decisions are made is thus essential for organizing. Decision-making and communication represent two broad categories of practices that have inherently ordering capacity.

Organizational structures represent the fourth component of the organizational basis of protest. This builds on the classic literature on social movement studies that underlines the role of organizations for mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Zald & Ash, 1966). However, I focus not only on formal organizations, but understand organizational structures more broadly. I define organizational structures as "sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by that social action" (Sewell, 1992, p. 19). Schemas are the abstract rules or norms that govern social action and relations. Resources are all objects and properties—material and immaterial, human and nonhuman—that can be used as a means of power. Schemas and resources are mutually constitutive. They provide blueprints and routines for protest events and their preparation. Organizations are also collective actors—or what Jasper (2004, 2006) calls "compound players" (see second part of this chapter).[7]

In sum, what I have called the organizational basis of protest consists of four basic conceptual components. The first is the protest event itself, which can be organized or spontaneous. This property of protest events is called organizationality. The second and central component is the process of protest organizing, which is understood as a sequence of interlocking activities that reduce uncertainty about a future protest event. The third and

7 I distinguish four types of basic organizational structures, building on Rucht's (2013) comprehensive discussion. First, there are small local groups that usually do not have any formal structure. Rucht (2013) called them basic action groups, I call them grassroots groups or local groups. These must be distinguished from the second category, which is the SMO in the narrow sense of an entity with some degree of formalized membership, goals, rules, and roles. The size, the level of horizontality/verticality, and professionalization, among other things, may vary greatly within this category. The diverse groups and SMOs of a social movement often work together. If they do so for a limited amount of time, they may form a campaign network or an umbrella organization (Rucht, 2013). While Rucht saw these as belonging to distinct types of structures, I suggest that the boundaries are fluent. I use the term platform for this category. Finally, networks of local groups, SMOs, and platforms may be more durable, which is why Rucht (2013) called them enduring networks. These can consist of formal or informal interactions and can be located at various levels (local, regional, national, transnational).

fourth components represent the primary means to reduce uncertainty in the process of protest organizing. Organizational practices, such as decision-making and communication, reduce uncertainty by ordering other social practices. Organizational entities seen as structures are sets of resources and schemas, which facilitate collective action. Organizational structures and practices are connected in that structures can be seen as bundles of practices, and practices over time sediment into structures. However, organizational practices can also be located outside the boundaries of organizational entities. Protest organizing—both as a practice and process—can thus happen inside, outside, and between organizations.

These four components represent the basic units of analysis for the empirical research presented in this book. The framework allows going beyond the narrow focus on formal organizations in the classic literature. As such, it can account for the diverse organizational sources of protest mobilization in contemporary societies.

The organizational basis of protest changes over time. Practices and structures by definition exhibit some stability, but they are far from static. How does the organizational basis of protest change? And what drives its transformation? Having specified the object of change, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to the mechanisms driving its transformation. The next sections elaborate the theoretical response to these questions in three steps. First, I bring together research on secessionism with the players-and-arenas framework to situate strategic interactions in secessionist conflicts. Second, I turn to event-centered approaches to theorize the temporal dimension of interactions and their transformative effects for protest organizing. Third, I draw on the literature on framing and sensemaking to account for the constructed character of normal and intense times and how organizers relate them to their strategizing and organizing.

Strategic Interactions and Organizational Change

Organization is often treated as a precondition of contention, as something that arises prior to political conflict. However, activists do not organize in a vacuum. They respond to grievances, are motivated by interests and emotions, and build on pre-existing identities and networks. The emergence and transformation of the organizational basis of protest is thus connected to the wider social and political environment.

More specifically, I argue that protest and its organizational basis are shaped by the interactions of protesters with their allies and opponents

in the various arenas of the strategic playing field of political conflict. Organizational change is thus driven by shifting interactions. This idea builds on the combination of two bodies of research: The players-and-arenas approach by James Jasper (2004, 2006; Jasper & Duyvendak, 2015) and the work by Griffiths and Muro (2021a; 2020b) on secessionist conflicts as strategic playing fields. Griffiths and Muro's conceptualization helps to concretize the argument for secessionist conflicts, which are a particularly fitting example of strategic interaction. Let us first look at organizing and interactions in an abstract way and then at their temporal dimension.

Players, Arenas, and Strategies

Protest organizing is linked to interactions on a strategic playing field of political conflict. The ways in which activists organize protest is impacted by the actions of other players as well as the structure of the playing field. Activists react to other player's actions and anticipate their next moves. This argument involves three components: players, arenas, and strategies.

First, three stylized players interact in secessionist conflicts (Griffiths, 2021a; Griffiths & Muro, 2020a): the secessionist movement, the host state, and the international community. *Players* are simply those actors "who engage in strategic action with some goal in mind" (Jasper, 2015, p. 10). The secessionist movement pursues the goal to become an independent state. It can either convince the host state to grant independence to the seceding region or circumvent the host state by lobbying the international community. The host state tries to counter-act the secessionist movement's efforts internally, but also at the international level. The international community is a crucial player in that the independence of the seceding region ultimately depends on recognition by other states, and UN membership as a formal status. Both secessionists and the host state employ various strategies to pursue their goals and to influence the international community.[8]

The key players in this book are secessionist actors, in particular protest organizers. Following Cunningham (2014), one should be careful not to conceptualize secessionist movements as unitary actors. They are composed of what Jasper calls simple players (individuals) and compound players

8 Thereby, the *strategic playing field* does not focus on the challenger side alone, but embeds movement strategies in their environment, especially taking into account the international community as a third player category.

(groups, collectives, organizations).[9] These players are bound by the goal of independence, but might otherwise not have much in common and pursue different strategies. Within the same movement a rebel group might employ violent actions, while a political party contends in the institutional arena.[10]

From the perspective of secessionist protest players, we can group the various compound players into opponents, allies, and bystanders. Allies of secessionist protest players are other secessionist players, which can be secessionist political parties, armed groups, or governmental actors. The composition of secessionist movements—and thus the type, number, and strength of allies—varies from case to case. The classic adversaries of secessionist protesters are the police as the representatives of the host state. Indirectly, they confront the central government, unionist political parties, and the judiciary. Secessionists may also interact with counter-movements, which may be groups, organizations, platforms, or parties.

Second, the structure of the conflict *arena* shapes the organizational basis of protest. This builds on Griffiths and Muro (Griffiths, 2021a; Griffiths & Muro, 2020b), who approach secessionist conflicts as a "strategic playing field of secession and counter-secession." This strategic field can be understood as *arena*, which Jasper (2015, p. 14) describes as "a bundle of rules and resources that allow or encourage certain kinds of interactions to proceed, with something at stake."[11] The playing field thus is structured on the one hand by rules, in particular those of the international law on self-determination, the territorial integrity of states, and the principal of non-intervention,

9 Compound players are comprised of simple players, which is why they are rarely unified actors—simple players within compound players have their own goals and may defect from the compound if they do not see their individual goals met (Jasper 2006, p. 2). This means that compound players are not monolithic entities; they are emerging, transforming, and disappearing over time.

10 The same is true for the state: it does not represent a monolithic entity but is composed of multiple elements. This includes various levels of government, ranging from city halls to the central government, and different kinds of institutions, i.e., courts, parliaments, or administrations. The secessionist movement, the host state, and the international community should thus be understood as sets of players. The secessionist movement and the host state are bound by their respective goals around secession, while the international community may have more diverse views on the matter.

11 Note that Jasper's definition of arena is basically identical to Giddens' definition of structures as rules and resources, which I have discussed in the first half of this chapter. Arenas differ along several dimensions, with the three most important ones being size (i.e., the number of players and audiences, as well as their ratio to each other), the degree of institutionalization (i.e., the density of formal rules), and the kind of capacities that matter in it (e.g., money in markets, power in politics, etc.). Arenas are not isolated spheres of social interaction. They are related to other arenas and most arenas consist of several subarenas.

and by economic and political resources on the other hand. These features represent constraints and opportunities for secessionist players and how they organize protest.

While Griffiths (2021b) argued that there is only a single playing field of secession,[12] I suggest that there is analytical leverage in breaking down the playing field into several subarenas.[13] Movements, states, and international players interact in various spheres that are characterized by different rules and resources. The arenas in which a secessionist conflict takes place thus influences the interactions between challengers and the state as well as the outcomes of conflict a great deal.

This book focuses on the protest arena. In the first half of this chapter, I have already introduced some of the compound players in this arena: local groups, movement organizations, and platforms. These civil society players are the main protagonists of this book, but they are not the only players in the arena: Political parties frequently participate in protest as well, as do representatives of public institutions.[14]

Third, I suggest that the *strategic interaction* of players within arenas is key for the organizational basis of protest. Strategy is usually understood in broad terms as "a plan of collective action intended to accomplish goals within a particular context" (Maney et al., 2012, p. xvii).[15] Choice is thus at the heart of the players-and-arenas approach (Jasper, 2004, 2006, p. 13). However, it diverges from rational-choice approaches and their simplistic cost–benefit calculations by accounting for culture: choices are shaped by emotions, symbols, and identities (see the last part of this chapter). Most importantly, choices are interactive. Strategic interaction occurs when players pursue their goals having the potential opposition of other players to their actions in mind. Or, as Jasper (2006, p. 6) puts it, action "becomes interaction when both sides are doing it with mutual awareness."

12 Following Coggins (2011, 2014), he argues that there is only one international system that ultimately grants recognition, and thereby formal independence, to nations.

13 There are two key advantages of breaking down the strategic playing field into various arenas. First, focusing on several arenas allows to specify the logics of secessionist conflict. The game is played differently in the protest arena than for example in the legal arena, because different rules and resources matter. Loudspeakers and banners are important in the streets but useless in the courts. An LLM degree matters a lot for a trial but little for a demonstration. Second, differentiating arenas allows analyzing how secessionist and counter-secessionist players choose different arenas and how conflict as a consequence may spill from one arena to another.

14 One could of course break these compound players into individual players, but since I am concerned with organizing as an inherently collective process, I largely omit this level of analysis.

15 For similar definitions see: Maeckelbergh (2011, p. 6), Griffiths and Wasser (2019, p. 6), or Smithey (2009, pp. 660–661)

In this book, I focus primarily on protest actions. That category includes classic street protests such as rallies or marches but also more contained actions such as petitions and more disruptive ones such as blockages or occupations. States can respond mainly with concessions or repression (Butt, 2017; Griffiths, 2015). Public protest always seeks to address audiences (Tilly, 2008). Important audiences for the protest arena are players in other arenas, for example the central and regional governments, as well as the local population and international community. These audiences do not follow the interactions in the arena face-to-face but through the media, which is why the coverage of protests represents a key part of the game (Davenport, 2009; Mattoni & Treré, 2014). Similarly, protesters observe what is going on in other arenas, for example the moves of the central government in the institutional arena or the performance of their party allies in the electoral arena.

The same applies to the organizational basis of protest. Thinking about what other players do may lead protest players to adapt their tactics and organizing. They may, for example, choose a barricade instead of a march, they may use a different claim or address a different player. The same is true for organizing. Protesters may hold an open assembly instead of making a quick decision over Telegram. These adaptions can occur as a reaction to other players' actions or anticipating them. These interactions in the protest arena and across arenas are the first element of my theory of organizational change.

Changing Interactions

I argue that organizational change is closely linked to shifts in strategic interactions. The temporal dimension is a key aspect of strategic interactionism but remains undertheorized in both the players-and-arenas approach and the strategic playing field by Muro and Griffiths. The strategic playing field is presented merely in static terms. Jasper acknowledges more explicitly that goals, means, and even players and arenas may change. However, he does not theorize how and when this occurs. Rather, he provides an extensive list of dilemmas that players may face. These dilemmas are presented in universal terms and are void of historical and geographical context.[16]

16 The only hint that Jasper offers is his suggestion that strategic choices often represent the events that are at the core of historical approaches by sociologists such as Abbott or Sewell (Jasper, 2004, p. 10). This also resonates with the literature on critical junctures as "choice points" (Mahoney, 2002). However, choices are difficult to observe empirically for three reasons. First, choices are often made on the "backstage" of protest (Haug, 2013; Rucht, 2017), which is less accessible to the researcher. Second, it involves the reconstruction of alternative options that

Strategic interaction is not static but dynamic. Single interactions rarely occur in isolation. Interactions are usually the product of previous interactions and result in further interactions. The same is true for strategic choices. If *player a* changes its course of action, then *player b* has to decide whether to stick to their plans or to change their strategy as well. What may follow is a back-and-forth of mutual reactions and anticipations. Focusing on a single interaction between two players is unlikely to reveal much about the conflict between players or the functioning of an arena. Rather, researchers must consider *sequences* of interactions.

This introduces time as a key dimension of strategic interaction. If approached in a time-sensitive way, strategic interactions become *events*. Understood in this way, the interaction-as-event represents the basic unit for analyzing the temporal dimension of strategic interactions. Examples can be a government adopting a certain policy, a court pronouncing a sentence, activists occupying a square, or the police raiding a building.[17]

These relational dynamics have been captured best by research following the political process and dynamics-of-contention approaches (McAdam, 1982; McAdam et al., 2001; Tarrow, 1989; Tilly, 1986). In the next sections, I draw on this line of research to theorize the temporal dimension of strategic interaction. I suggest it is possible to integrate their insights on cycles and episodes of contention into a strategic interactionist framework without importing their structuralist biases.

Eventful Times and Organizational Change

Episodes of intense interactions have a transformative impact on the organizational basis of protest. This argument is elaborated in three steps. First, I distinguish between normal and intense times of interaction. Second, I suggest that intense episodes of contention represent eventful times that transform the participants, trajectories, and outcomes of political conflicts. Third, I argue that eventful times transform protest organizing both *while* they unfold and *after* their conclusion.

players did not choose (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007), which is often tricky to do in retrospect. Third, decision-making is a gradual process (Haug, 2010), which often escapes the discrete delineations required to call something an event.

17 These interactions of course involve choices, but the choices to carry them out are usually made in advance and are less visible than the actual interaction. This is why I suggest it is more straightforward to focus on interactions as events.

Normal Times and Intense Times

Strategic interaction unfolds as dynamic sequences of events over time. However, interactions do not spread out evenly in time (Beissinger, 2002; Koopmans, 2004; Tarrow, 2011). In a similar vein, following Della Porta (2020) and Beissinger (2002), I suggest distinguishing between "normal times" and "intense times" of conflict.

On the one hand, there are times when strategic interactions follow contained patterns and do not alter the status quo. Beissinger (1996, p. 104) wrote that in "times of normalized politics," the established structure of the nation state "is backed by the effective authority of the state and is not subject to open challenge from within," so that individuals normally accept "a given institutional arrangement as unalterable and even natural."[18] During these normalized times, political occurrences mostly "reproduce social and cultural structures without significant changes" (Sewell, 1996b, p. 262, see also 1992; Giddens, 1984). The relationship between challengers and authorities remains unaltered most of the time.

On the other hand, it has been observed that periods of relative tranquility are followed by outbursts of conflict. This pattern has been described as a "cycle" (Tarrow, 2011) or a "wave" (Koopmans, 2004) of contention.[19] Cycles of contention often expand over several years (Tarrow, 1989). This book, by contrast, zooms in on a shorter *episode of contention* within the larger cycle. Episodes of contention are defined as "bounded sequences of continuous interaction" (Tilly, 2008, p. 10) between authorities and challengers.[20]

There are episodes of interaction within cycles of contention that are particularly *intense*—usually at the peaks of cycles. To conceptualize the intensity of interactions, I build on Contentious Episode Analysis (CEA, Bojar et al., 2021; Kriesi et al., 2019), which is a methodology to study the interactions between governments, challengers, and third parties. CEA develops the concept of *contentiousness* to capture how interactions fuel conflict, considering "both the frequency and the type of action as crucial 'ingredients' of what makes an episode contentious" (Gessler & Hutter, 2021, p. 69).

18 On the emergence of the symbolic power of the state, see Loveman (2005).

19 Like most scholars, I use the terms interchangeably. Although sometimes these terms have been used mainly in reference to protest activity it is important to stress that the cyclical progression refers to contentious interactions more broadly. Allies and opponents of protesters engage in interactions more frequently as well. What varies throughout the cycle is not just the number of protesters, but the relationship between challengers and authorities (Koopmans, 2004).

20 Note how similar the basic conceptual components of Jasper and Tilly are despite their mutual criticism.

At the heart of contentiousness is the "*intensity of adversarial actions*" (ibid.). When players resort to adverse rather than cooperative action, the intensity of conflict increases. For example, authorities may choose to repress challengers instead of making concessions, and challengers may engage in disruptive action instead of cooperating with the authorities. The more repressive and disruptive the interactions, the more intense the episode. Building on this conceptualization, the first component of intensity is *adversity*.

The second component of intensity, which is less explicit in the CEA conceptualization of contentiousness, is the *pace* of interactions.[21] Within a few months, weeks, or even just a couple of days, social movement actors repeatedly stage protests, occupy buildings, and go on strike. In turn, authorities make institutional declarations, sue challengers in the courts, and order the police to repress protest. During these heated times, "events suddenly start to fuel themselves, as action produces action" (Della Porta, 2014, p. 30). Sometimes these contentious events happen in such quick sequence that the players involved in contention cannot keep up with the pace themselves—let alone the external observer. Beissinger (2002, p. 27) described these phases of intense contention as "thickened history":

> By "thickened" history, I mean a period in which the pace of challenging events quickens to the point that it becomes practically impossible to comprehend them and they come to constitute an increasingly significant part of their own causal structure [...] What takes place within these "thickened" periods of history has the potential to move history onto tracks otherwise unimaginable, affecting the prisms through which individuals relate to authority, consolidating conviction around new norms, and forcing individuals to make choices among competing categories of identity about which they may previously have given little thought—all within an extremely compressed period of time.

The quote points to the rapid succession of occurrences that are often too complex to observe in real time—what Tarrow (2011, p. 199) described as "sequences of intensified information flow and interaction between challengers and authorities." In short, an episode of intense contention represents a quick and dense sequence of strategic interaction.

21 Contentiousness includes the *frequency* of adversarial actions but it refers to the share of these actions among all actions and not their frequency in *real* time (Gessler & Hutter, 2021). However, pace does come in as a separate measure (Bojar & Altiparmakis, 2021).

In sum, I conceptualize the *intensity* of contentious episodes as the product of the *adversity* and the *pace* of strategic interactions between challengers and authorities.[22] The more often players resort to adverse action forms such as hard repression, disruption, or even violence, the more intense is an episode.

In the context of secessionist conflicts, the most intense episodes of interactions can be called *secessionist crises*. I define secessionist crises as episodes in which interactions between secessionist challengers and the host state intensify to the degree that they become unsustainable.[23] In the most extreme cases, when challengers and the host state systematically resort to violence in their interactions, a civil war erupts (Toft, 2012; Walter, 2009). Intense episodes of contention—such as secessionist crises—represent critical junctures in territorial politics. The next section elaborates on this feature.

Eventful Episodes and Organizational Change

Research in social movement studies has devoted much attention to the question of how cycles and episodes of contention emerge. The contentious politics approach has synthesized previous findings on the role of the political opportunity structure (Kriesi, 1995; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Tilly, 1978), framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Johnston & Noakes, 2005), and organizations (Lofland, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) and embedded them in a relational framework. Contentious actions—marches, meetings, strikes—were seen as the product of these factors.

This book takes the reverse approach. Instead of looking at contentious episodes as outcomes, I am interested in how they trigger change. The idea that sequences of occurrences may result in lasting transformations has been

22 My concept differs from CEA in some regards. First, I focus more specifically on the intensity dimension and less on the second actor-specific dimension. Second, I have a stronger focus on challengers and authorities and largely omit third parties. These foci make my concept more parsimonious and apt for the purposes of this book. Third, I emphasize the dimension of pace, which is needed for my eventful and time-sensitive approach.

23 My definition is narrower than those commonly used in the literature. For example, Bartkus (1999, p. 10; see also Pagoaga Ibiricu, 2020) defines a secessionist crisis as a phase during which "the leaders representing a territorially concentrated and distinct community within a larger state translate discontent into demands for secession, and possess the power, either through sufficiently strong internal community mobilization or through the use of force, to compel the central government to react to those demands." In my view, this definition does not attend to the exceptional character of the situation nor to its critical component. Rather, I see it as a good definition of the broader concept of secessionist *conflict*.

captured with two key concepts in the social sciences: critical junctures and transformative events.

First, there are windows of opportunities, during which it appears that the course of history *could* go either way, towards radical change or the maintenance of the status quo. In social science, and in particular the historical institutionalism literature, these moments of increased contingency have been labeled *critical junctures* (R. B. Collier & Collier, 2002; Mahoney, 2002; Roberts, 2015) and have become a central concept for understanding change and stability in politics. Critical junctures are phases when structural constraints on political action are reduced and players have enhanced agency to pursue their agenda (Basta, 2018; Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Mahoney, 2002, p. 7; Soifer, 2012). In the language of social movement scholars, a critical juncture can be described as a shift in the political opportunity structure (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Tarrow, 2011; Tilly, 1995). Even in the face of fierce opposition, protest can produce critical junctures or overturn structural constraints entirely (Della Porta, 2020). However, as Capoccia and Kelemen (2007, p. 352) emphasized, critical junctures do not necessarily result in political change:

> Tempting as it may be to equate critical junctures and change, this view is not commensurable with the emphasis on structural fluidity and heightened contingency that are the defining traits of critical junctures. Contingency implies that wide-ranging change is possible and even likely but also that re-equilibration is not excluded.

Taking the concept of contingency seriously, and not just as a placeholder for opportunity, means leaving room for failed transformations. Thus, critical junctures also include negative cases, in which a structural opening does not result in long-lasting change.[24] Including these "near misses" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 352) avoids selection bias and also draws the attention to counterfactual analysis.

A critical juncture opens several options for players, some of which might lead to radical change, while others might result in a reproduction of established patterns. What makes them *critical* is that "once an option is selected, it becomes progressively more difficult to return to the initial point when multiple alternatives were still available" (Mahoney, 2002,

24 Contingency has been a major point of debate in research on critical junctures (D. Collier & Munck, 2017, p. 4). Other scholars regarded change as a necessary element of critical junctures (R. B. Collier & Collier, 2002; Della Porta, 2020; Slater & Simmons, 2010).

pp. 6–7). In other words, the decisions taken during a critical juncture have long-lasting and near-irreversible impacts on the future.

Second, the idea that some political occurrences can trigger fundamental change was advanced by historical sociologist William H. Sewell and other scholars (Abbott, 1992, 2001; McAdam & Sewell, 2001; Sewell, 1996a, 1996b; Wagner-Pacifici, 2010). These occurrences are called *transformative* or *historical events* and are different from routine or normal occurrences, because they have exceptional impact on the course of politics and society.[25] Whereas critical junctures describe the enhanced *possibility* of transformation, these events *do* result in profound political change, which is why they have been called *transformative* (McAdam & Sewell, 2001).[26] Hence, transformative events are a subclass of critical junctures (Basta, 2018) that have far-reaching consequences for politics and society.[27] Building on this insight, Donatella della Porta (2008) argued that protest can be eventful, too. This means that contentious episodes can have transformative consequences for the course of movements, institutions, and even entire societies.[28]

I thus argue that episodes of intense interactions—such as secessionist crises—can be eventful and have transformative effects for the trajectories and outcomes of political conflicts. This is a twofold argument. On the one hand, intense contentious episodes shape protest organizing already while these episodes unfold. The way in which secessionists organize protests *during* the accelerated succession of occurrences differs fundamentally from protest organizing in normal times. On the other hand, intense contentious

25 In the words of Sewell (1996b, p. 263), "events bring about historical changes in part by transforming the very cultural categories that shape and constrain human action."

26 While Sewell (1996a) and others use the terms "event" and "transformative event" interchangeably, I distinguish between transformative events and "simple" events, which for me are synonymous with occurrences.

27 Sewell's (1996a) prime example was the taking of the Bastille as the event that truly started the French Revolution. The taking of the Bastille led to regime change, because it was "interpreted as a direct and sublime expression of the nation's will—that an act of popular violence could be articulated directly with sovereignty to form the new political category of revolution" (Sewell 1996a, p. 861).

28 Of course, not all contentious episodes are necessarily eventful. To appreciate this fact, it is helpful to distinguish between occurrences, critical junctures, and transformative events (Basta 2018). Occurrences are "all instances of political action, from the routine (e.g., regularly scheduled elections, or normal legislative or regulatory acts) to the unusual (acts of civil disobedience, outbreaks of political violence, corruption scandals)" (Basta 2018, p. 4). Or, as I would put it, occurrences are interaction-in-time. They are the sum of all political happenings. Many of them go unnoticed by analysts and political actors themselves. There are two kinds of occurrences that are of special interest, because they represent departures from normal politics: critical junctures and transformative events. They are subclasses of occurrences, where every transformative event is also a critical juncture (Basta 2018, p. 6).

episodes have consequences for protest organizing also *after* the peaks of contention. How activists organize protests is often affected in the long run.

What do events transform? When Sewell first formulated the idea of transformative events, it referred to large-scale changes such as revolutions and other regime changes. He is mostly quoted with his definition of events as "sequences of occurrences that result in the transformation of structures" (1996a, p. 843). There are two important caveats to this statement.

First, Della Porta (2008, 2020) argued that transformative events can also have important consequences at a lower level of abstraction. While Sewell and others focused on the impact of events on macro-level structures, she suggested that contentious events can have "effects not only (and might be not mainly) on the authorities or the public opinions but also on the movement actors themselves" (Della Porta, 2008, p. 48). She demonstrated that "many protests have cognitive, affective and relational impacts on the very movements that carry them out" (2008, p. 30). Social movements do not just take part in contentious events—contentious events also change social movements. I follow Della Porta's work in that I am interested in how contentious episodes may be eventful and result in organizational change in social movements.

Second, the narrow reading that events transform structures might lead the researcher's attention to organizational structures in social movements and design a study that uses organizational entities as the primary units of analysis. This would imply focusing on SMOs and other elements of the social movement's infra*structure*. However, Sewell also wrote that an event "durably transforms previous structures *and* practices" (p. 843, emphasis added), which reflects his understanding of structure following the work of Anthony Giddens (1984). Thus, an event does not just represent a transformation of social structure, it also implies "a surprising break with routine practice" (Sewell, 1996a, p. 843). What might seem like an ontological debate for social theorists has fundamental implications for empirical research. I have built a conceptual framework that prioritizes organizational processes without neglecting the role of both practices *and* structures. In this sense, my approach is compatible with Sewell's dual view of structure and practices. Events do not just transform organizational structures, but also organizing processes.

Organizing During Intense Times and Eventful Transformations

Building on the previous section, I argue that times of intense conflict—such as secessionist crises—can be eventful and transform the processes, structures, and practices of how activists organize protest. This argument

comprises two parts. On the one hand, I suggest that intense times have important repercussions already *as they unfold*. Eventful times have the power to transform structures and practices while they happen. When contentious interactions occur in dense sequences, organizers are faced with heightened contingency, resistance from opponents, and time pressure. As a result, organizational processes and practices vary substantively from organizing in normal times. Second, intense times also have transformative effects on the organizational dimension of social movements *after* the events themselves come to a conclusion. While some of the changes during the contentious episode are reverted and normalized afterwards, others solidify over time and become part of the organizational practices of the movement. Let me elaborate further on these arguments.

First, I suggest that protest organizing during intense times differs fundamentally from organizing in normal times. As mentioned above, intense times are characterized by a dense sequence of interactions. The compressed succession of interactions has a profound impact on the ways in which social movement players organize protests *during* intense times.

In normal times, social movement organizers face a number of challenges to overcome the collective action problem despite the routinization of interactions with authorities (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998) and the normalization of protest (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998). Organizing mass protest requires a series of preparatory activities (Rucht, 2017). These "kinds of coordinations, complex in normal times, become even more difficult" (Wagner-Pacifici & Ruggero, 2018, p. 2) in intense times. When organizers are "faced with an emerging event, individual decisions about whether (or not) to continue adhering to normal schedules of organizational and personal life become charged and consequential" (Wagner-Pacifici & Ruggero, 2018, p. 2). This pertains not just to individual decisions, but also collective ones. Three features of intense times make protest organizing more challenging than in normal times: the quality of interactions, the frequency of interactions, and uncertainty.

First, the quality of interactions with opponents shifts in intense times. As cycles of contention unfold and reach their peak, authorities are more likely to respond to challengers with enhanced repression (Tarrow, 2011). Thus, when activists organize protest during phases of intense contention, they face legal barriers, police action, and counter-mobilization, all of which make preparing and planning collective action much more difficult. For example, organizers must take into account whether the itinerary of a march will be blocked by the police; they must think about what to do in case there are confrontations with counter-protesters.

Second, intense times represent dense sequences of contentious interactions, as the *pace* of contention increases. Thus, organizers must deal with their opponents' actions repeatedly over the course of a short period of time. This creates time pressure for activism in intense times, as Della Porta (2020, p. 9) explained:

> The intensity of extraordinary times reduces the availability of the time that would be necessary to collect information, to reflect, to deliberate. In these intense times, activists report, crucial decisions have to be made quickly, in the heat of the moment. Time accelerates because of the breaking down of previous institutions, rules, and norms. Rather than being based on routines, which are perceived as no longer effective, decisions often favor creativity and innovation, and the capacity of movement actors to occupy these spaces, changing them in the process.

Time pressure has an enormous impact on how activists organize protest. It alters previous routines and practices. It reduces the time for deliberation and decision-making, but also creates a need for innovation, which can ultimately result in transformative consequences.

Third, the shifting quality and pace leads to uncertainty for organizers. Transformative events have sometimes been seen as sudden and unforeseen ruptures or cracks (Della Porta, 2020). An occurrence becomes an event for observers when the "current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world" (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). Unexpected events pose an enormous challenge for social movement organizers. During periods of intense contention, governments, courts, or the police often act without previous notice, which may call for an immediate response from challengers. Also, the sudden eruption of protest itself can create a need for organizers to adapt to an unforeseen situation. At the peaks of contentious cycles, these types of action cluster within short periods of time, which creates a climate of uncertainty and contingency. Uncertainty is thus key to understanding how protest organizing changes in intense times. Organizing has been conceptualized as the attempt to reduce uncertainty and create order (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Weick, 1979). If uncertainty increases during intense times, protest organizers must also expand their efforts to reduce uncertainty.

The second part of the argument concerns the idea that the impact of intense times on organizing does not stop once interactions shift back to normal times. In fact, the notion of "eventful temporality" (Sewell, 1996b) carries a much more radical claim than the one I have developed as the

first part of my argument. Sewell and others have suggested that outstanding political occurrences often affect the course of politics beyond the very moment in which they happen, leading to fundamental changes in political discourse, public policy, or even regime types. This is why events have been defined as "very brief, spatially concentrated, and relatively chaotic sequences of action [that] can have durable, spatially extended, and profoundly structural effects" (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 102). Thus, eventful times are not just ruptures and breaks, after which the course of political action returns to normality as if nothing happened. Rather, they have *lasting* consequences for social structures and practices. Following this understanding, eventful times are not just transformative for protest organizing because of the specific challenges they pose as they unfold, but also for the period of time that follows.

Let us assume that the first part of the argument developed in the previous section holds true: the quality and pace of interactions as well as uncertainty transform the ways in which activists organize protest. It follows that there are, from a theoretical point of view, three possible trajectories after the crisis ends.

First, intense contentious episodes need not necessarily lead to durable transformations. They can be critical junctures and change the ways in which activists organize in the very moment, but not in the long run. Institutionalist scholars have stressed that critical junctures represent moments of greater possibility for change, but it is not inevitable. Instead, "re-equilibration" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 352) can also take place afterwards. Following this idea means that the various patterns of organizing during the intense period of contention can be exceptional, and once this phase is over, activists go back to previous modes of normal organizing.

Second, contentious episodes can create what Della Porta (2020) calls "sedimentations": Transformations stabilize and become long-term outcomes. For the organizational dimension, this means that some of the organizational practices that emerge during the peaks of contention are adopted by activists and become part of their normal repertoire—even when the mechanisms of intense contention (time pressure, opponent actions, contingency) become less relevant. This means that protest organizing during intense contention was not just an exceptional period. Sedimentations can be seen as a continuity beyond the episode of contention itself.

Third, there may be transformations that are different from both re-equilibration and sedimentation. Contentious episodes can also be eventful in the way that they trigger a series of interactions that are still at play after the episode is over. These interactions—although less intense than during the crisis—can change the ways of how activists organized but without

bringing them back to their pre-crisis state. They may produce totally novel forms of organizing.

Drawing on this distinction, I suggest that intense contentious episodes can be eventful and produce durable changes in the ways in which social movements organize protest. These transformations extend beyond the contentious episode itself. The trajectory of change can take two forms. On the one hand, transformations that emerged during the contentious episode can sediment and turn into long-term legacies. On the other hand, contentious episodes can produce a series of mechanisms that continue to transform protest organizing in ways that are different from those during the contentious episode.

The twofold argument, which I have developed here suggests that the dynamics of contention produce a series of mechanisms that can have a transformative impact on how activists organize protest. It represents an *eventful* approach to organizational change and stability. However, there is one problem that I have bracketed until this point. Contentious events do not represent objective temporal units. Their symbolic dimension is the result of a process of social construction. The next section tackles this problem and integrates the constructivist level into the argument.

Understanding Strategic Interactions in Time: An Interpretivist Approach

Thus far I have argued that organizational change is the product of organizers' strategic interactions with each other, with their allies, and their opponents. These interactions must be understood as dynamic and embedded in the flow of time. I have suggested that there is a crucial difference between protest organizing in normal times and intense times of conflict. Some interactions are outstanding events and play a crucial role in transforming protest and its organizational basis.

I approach these theoretical components from an interpretivist perspective that assigns cultural meanings a key role. This constructivist approach is based on the assumption that neither strategic interactions nor their temporal embedding as events are objectively given to players. The term strategy often evokes cold-hearted rational calculations. However, Jasper's approach to strategic interaction is inherently culturalist. He emphasizes that

> Cultural meanings permeate strategic action at every moment—an influence that game theory has traditionally hidden, thereby limiting its own

> utility. Participants' know-how, usually gained from their cultural traditions, shapes the moves at which they are competent. Their understanding of the world affects their goals. Their moral perceptions determine the satisfactions they expect from various moves. Their emotional ties to the world around them affect their allies, their enemies, their enjoyment of the game, and their payoffs. It is hard to find any aspect of strategic action that is not filtered through meanings and feelings. (Jasper, 2006, p. 12)

The workings of culture in interaction are complex and multilayered but they can be reduced to two dimensions. On the one hand, players draw on their own past experiences, memories, identities, when they make their choices. Their strategies are informed by emotions, narratives, and symbols. This focus on practical knowledge resembles Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) habitus concept but is less structurally deterministic.

On the other hand, strategic *interaction* is inherently cultural. Interaction is distinct from simple action by what Jasper called "mutual awareness" (2006, p. 6). Players must act with other players in mind. Similarly, Tilly (2008) stressed the theatrical character of contentious action, arguing that contentious action always addresses an audience. This is where culture comes in: interactions manifest themselves as texts, symbols, images, and other carriers of meaning. Thus, the actions of a player are not readily available to other players, they must be perceived and interpreted.

What follows from this assumption is that organizational choices and organizational change do not follow mechanically from strategic interactions. The relationship between interaction and organizing is infused with cultural processes of meaning-making. I expand and refine Jasper's approach by drawing on the literatures on framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Johnston & Noakes, 2005) and sensemaking (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick et al., 2005). I argue that activists must actively construct meaningful strategies, perceive and interpret the actions of other players, make sense of events, and distinguish between normal and intense times. These cultural processes play a key role in making the choices that lead to organizational adaption and thus to change or stability. The next section turns to the cultural dimension of strategic interactions and the following outlines the construction of transformative events.

Strategizing Through Prognostic Framing

The most prominent culturalist approach to social movement studies is the framing perspective (for overviews, see Benford & Snow, 2000; D. Snow et al.,

2014).[29] Frames are "schemata of interpretation" that allow participants "to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21).[30] Frames turn something senseless into something meaningful.

While Snow and Benford (1988) saw frames as strategic devices, Kaplan (2008) was interested in how framing impacts strategy making in a firm. Following this idea, frames can be used as heuristics to capture how meaning permeates the relationship between strategic interactions and organizing. I suggest that Snow and Benford's (1988) original concept of *prognostic* framing already contained a strategic element. A prognostic frame provides answers to the diagnosed problem. Snow and Benford (1988, p. 201) already pointed out that by providing answers, prognostic frames also "identify strategies, tactics, and targets. What is to be done is thereby specified." Prognostic frames delineate which goals are desirable and achievable and which means are effective and acceptable.[31]

Building on this cue by Snow and Benford (1988), I argue that prognostic framing is a key way of strategizing in social movements. Prognostic framing sets the goals and means that are the basis of strategic interaction. Most importantly, prognostic framing is an analytical tool to grasp the cultural dimension of strategizing. It allows us to go beyond a view of strategy as simple cost–benefit calculations. Prognostic frames provide symbols, images, and narratives that render goals and means meaningful. They are both cognitive and emotional and are shaped by past experience and accumulated knowledge.

Four properties of prognostic framing are key for understanding strategic action. First, framing is a process. Frames are not static objects that are readily available, but they must be actively constructed over time. This is why I often use the terms framing and strategizing to highlight that there is an ongoing process at play. Second, framing is performed through practices. The same is true for strategy. Ganz (2009, p. 10) pointed out that strategy "is a verb—something you do, not something you have. An ongoing interactive process of experimentation, learning, and adaptation, we strategize as we act." The strategy-as-practice approach in organization studies makes the same argument (Fenton & Langley, 2011; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington,

29 Jasper does not build on the framing perspective, although he shares the same culturalist approach. In his view, "culturally oriented scholars"—such as the proponents of the framing approach—"have done even less to address strategy [than political process theorists]."

30 The concept of frame or framework was originally proposed by Bateson (1955) but coined by the work of Goffman.

31 Basta (2018), in contrast, prefers the term "prescriptive framing."

1996). Third, prognostic framing is inherently oriented towards the future. It is about imagining future events—framing them as pressing (Basta, 2020) or even transformative (Basta, 2018). As such, prognostic frames perform what Kaplan and Orlikowski have called the "temporal work" in strategizing (2013). Fourth, framing is both an individual and collective process (D. A. Snow et al., 1986; D. A. Snow & Benford, 1988). Frames develop as exchanges between simple and compound players. Frame *alignment* has been identified as a key process in protest mobilization (D. A. Snow et al., 1986). However, collective framing processes can also involve framing *disputes* (Benford, 1993) or framing *contests* (Kaplan, 2008).

Sensemaking: The Social Construction of Eventfulness

Strategic interactions are embedded in a temporal context. Earlier I have argued that how interactions between secessionist challengers and the host state unfold—how they cluster or extend in time, and shift from normal to intense times—have transformative effects on secessionist protest and its organizational basis.

Time in itself is not transformative, however. It is not "simply an independent and self-evident causal force [...] clock time is the medium through which processes unfold, the environment in which processes take place" (Grzymala-Busse, 2011, p. 1273). Time does nothing but pass by. Neither are interactions as events objective. They are not facts out there in the world waiting to be discovered. But neither are they pure imaginations of the researcher's mind.

Occurrences become events through a process of social construction (Basta, 2018; Sewell, 1996a; Wagner-Pacifici, 2010, 2017).[32] The duration and meaning of an event are results of collective articulations:

> Social and political actors seek to identify discrete political and historical events and entities. They also seek to distinguish between events and entities (sometimes referred to as "structures" in social scientific analyses). In and with their documents, speeches, gestures, and images, actors want to be able to bind and map these phenomena, to determine their beginnings and endings. (Wagner-Pacifici, 2010, pp. 1354–1355)

32 The phrase "social construction of events" comes from Basta (2018), drawing primarily on Sewell (1996a, p. 861), who used the term "symbolic interpretation" among others. Wagner-Pacifici (2010, 2017) has even developed a "political semiosis" to analyze the symbolic production of events.

Events only come into existence through symbolic creation. Most political occurrences go unnoticed. Only if players devote attention to it and attribute relevance to it, an occurrence becomes an event.

The symbolic level is fundamental for the transformative power of eventful episodes. In the previous sections, I have argued that episodes of intense contention may shape protest organizing in numerous ways. During the episode, the shifting pace and quality of interactions with allies and opponents may impact organizational practices and processes. After the episode, these practices and processes may revert or sediment, or they may be further transformed as the cycle of contention contracts. However, strategic interactions are not self-evident. They become meaningful through processes of interpretation, framing, and sensemaking. In periods of intense contention—and afterwards—activists must constantly make sense of occurrences and decide how to deal with them. In this interpretive process, they construct events and their meaning. This is best illustrated by Sewell's piece on the French Revolution:

> The novel articulation that makes this happening a momentous event in world history is an act of signification. Terms—for example, "Bastille" and "revolution," but also "people," "liberty," "despotism," and so on—took on authoritative new meanings that, taken together, reshaped the political world. This implies that events are, literally, significant: they signify something new and surprising. They introduce new conceptions of what really exists (the violent crowd as the people's will in action), of what is good (the people in ecstatic union), and of what is possible (revolution, a new kind of regeneration of the state and the nation). (p. 861)

As an action, the taking of the Bastille was not decisive in a military way, Sewell argued. But it in a moment of heightened contingency, established meanings of political structures became unstable and thus open for what Sewell (1996a, p. 861) called "transformative rearticulation."

This means that organizational change does not follow mechanically from a given contentious event, because that event is, after all, a socially constructed unit of time. Political occurrences do not have consequences for organizational change (or anything actually) by themselves, the link between event and transformation is a product of activist meaning-making.

Taking the constructivist perspective on events and organizational change seriously had fundamental implications for the empirical analyses presented in this book. Instead of looking for objective causal relationships, the constructivist approach implied reconstructing organizational change

through the lenses of participants.[33] Studying the relationship between intense times and organizing thus requires focusing on activist experiences. It shifts the attention to their narratives and interpretations. This allows understanding how and why activists adapt how they organize protest.

I adopt the concept of *sensemaking* from organizational sociology to describe this process of event creation (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick et al., 2005).[34] Weick (1995, p. 5) viewed sensemaking as the process of how social actors construct meaning out of situations that, quite literally, do not make sense to them. When actors are faced with occurrences that do not meet their previous expectations, they try to retrospectively rationalize these occurrences and integrate them into a plausible narrative (Weick, 1995, p. 17; see also Czarniawska, 1998, p. 5). It represents an ongoing collective attempt to create reality.[35]

Sensemaking is very similar to diagnostic framing, which is the process of identifying and defining a social problem (D. A. Snow & Benford, 1988).[36] Frames also play an important role in sensemaking, along with more concrete *cues*.

> Frames and cues can be thought of as vocabularies in which words that are more abstract (frames) include and point to other less abstract words (cues) that become sensible in the context created by the more inclusive words. Meaning within vocabularies is relational. A cue in a frame is what makes sense, not the cue alone or the frame alone. Said differently, the substance of sensemaking starts with three elements: a frame, a cue, and a connection. (Weick, 1995, p. 120)

When an occurrence—understood as a cue in Weick's terms—does not fit previous frames, the situation does not make sense anymore. Players

33 Following Bruner (2002), Czarniawska (1998, p. 6) wrote that "people's nonscientific explanations and interpretations of life events are grounded in attempts to establish a connection between the exceptional and the ordinary."

34 The concept of sensemaking rose to prominence in particular through the seminal work of Karl Weick (1995), who developed a theoretical framework for its analysis drawing on previous studies (Feldman, 1989; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Louis, 1980; Sackmann, 1992).

35 Of course, the academic debate around the concept is much more complex than presented here. For an overview, see Maitlis and Christianson (2014).

36 The literatures on sensemaking and framing have remained surprisingly separate, which is most likely the consequence of having emerged in different disciplines (organization studies and social movement studies). Still, the disconnect is surprising given the similarity of the two concepts and the common reference to the work of Goffman.

need to make an effort to understand what is going on. They must engage in sensemaking.

Sensemaking thus represents a specific form of diagnostic framing. While diagnostic framing does not depart from a specific situation, sensemaking responds to cues that are puzzling or unsettling. Transformative events represent such a class of occurrences.

Sensemaking is more than just interpretation, because it involves the *active creation* of the problem that actors try to understand. The difference between the two is that "sensemaking is about the ways people generate what they interpret" (p. 14). This is why the concept is essential for the empirical analyses that are the subject of this book. It describes the processes through which social actors construct events.[37] The concept of sensemaking thus is extremely valuable for the study of events in the line of Sewell and others, precisely because it does not assume that events are "out there" to be discovered. Instead, it highlights how people do not just interpret and frame events, but how they actively create them. Hence, the concept of sensemaking can be employed to investigate how players construct transformative events.

Conclusion

The organizational dimension of protest is key to understanding secessionist contention. However, it is also difficult to grasp due to the voluntary nature of protest and the lack of institutional rules and norms that govern how protest comes about. Organizing in social movements is extremely fluid. Yet, classic theories of social movements and protest conceptualized the organizational dimension in structural and fairly rigid terms. In contrast, this chapter has outlined an analytical framework that goes beyond a narrow focus on (formal) SMOs by accounting for the organizational dimension of protest in a comprehensive way. Building on a wide range of organizational theories, I have conceptualized what I call the *organizational basis* of protest, which comprises four key components: organizations as entities, organizing as a process, organizational practices, and organizationality as a property. Based on this distinction, I have developed the central concept of this book: *protest organizing*, which describes the process of preparing and planning protest.

This chapter has demonstrated the value of organization studies for social movement studies. The existing literature highlighted the connections

37 Or as Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005, p. 210) put it: "Organizational sensemaking is first and foremost about the question: How does something come to be an event for organizational members?"

between the two disciplines as well (Davis et al., 2005; Minkoff & McCarthy, 2005) but movement scholars have almost exclusively drawn on organization-as-entity approaches, which has led to a narrow focus on (formal) SMOs. This chapter contributes to this literature by drawing on a wider range of organizational theories such as process theories (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Weick, 1979), practice approaches (Corradi et al., 2010; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011), CCO (Cooren et al., 2011), and decision-centered works (Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011).

This book addresses the question of how this organizational basis of protest is affected by intensifying conflict. The second part of this chapter has theorized the temporal dimension of this question arguing that episodes of intense interactions have transformative effects for the organizational dimension of protest. This argument represents an eventful approach to organizational change and contentious politics. It recognizes the power that some political events may have on the course of conflict, movements, and protests as well as the symbolic nature of these events.

This argument is different from the existing research on organizational change in social movements. In that line of research, change was understood as structural in a double sense. On the one hand, organizational change was conceived as change *of* structures, that is organizational entities as a specific materialization of movement infrastructure (Clemens, 1997; Minkoff, 1995; Zald & Ash, 1966). On the other hand, organizational change was regarded as driven mainly by structural factors: these can be in the rather immediate political opportunity structure (Kriesi, 1996; McCarthy, 1996) or in the large-scale transformations of societies, such as the technological innovation that has driven much of the theories on digital organizing (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Interactions and events only played secondary roles in these approaches. The theoretical argument I have developed here goes in the opposite direction: it holds that sequences of contingent political events and their associated temporal dynamics may play a central role in shaping the ways in which activists organize protest—both in the short and the long run.

References

Abbott, A. (1992). From causes to events: Notes on narrative positivism. *Sociological Methods & Research, 20*(4), 428–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124192020004002

Abbott, A. (2001). *Time matters: On theory and method*. University of Chicago Press.

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2019). Organization unbound. In G. Ahrne & N. Brunsson (Eds.), *Organization outside organizations: The abundance of partial organization in social life* (p. 3–36). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108604994

Ahrne, G., Brunsson, N., & Seidl, D. (2016). Resurrecting organization by going beyond organizations. *European Management Journal, 34*(2), 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2016.02.003

Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2014). Mobilization through online social networks: The political protest of the indignados in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(6), 750–764. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.808360

Bartkus, V. O. (1999). *The dynamic of secession*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491214

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Basta, K. (2020). "Time's up!": Framing collective impatience for radical political change. *Political Psychology, 41*(4), 755–770. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12649

Bateson, G. (1955). A theory of play and fantasy. *Psychiatric Research Reports, 2*, 39–51.

Beissinger, M. R. (1996). How nationalisms spread: Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of nationalist contention. *Social Research, 63*(1), 97–146.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.

Benford, R. D. (1993). Frame disputes within the nuclear disarmament movement. *Social Forces, 71*(3), 677–701. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579890

Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*(1), 611–639. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Bimber, B., Flanagin, A. J., & Stohl, C. (2005). Reconceptualizing collective action in the contemporary media environment. *Communication Theory, 15*(4), 365–388. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2005.tb00340.x

Bimber, B., Flanagin, A. J., & Stohl, C. (2012). *Collective action in organizations: Interaction and engagement in an era of technological change*. Cambridge University Press.

Boggs, C. (1977). Revolutionary process, political strategy, and the dilemma of power. *Theory and Society, 4*(3), 359–393.

Bojar, A., & Altiparmakis, A. (2021). Action sequences and dynamic indicators of contention. In A. Bojar, H. Kriesi, S. Hutter, & T. Gessler (Eds.), *Contentious*

episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions (pp. 110–131). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367.009

Bojar, A., Gessler, T., Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (Eds.). (2021). *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press.

Breines, W. (1980). Community and organization: The New Left and Michels' Iron Law. *Social Problems, 27*(4), 419–429.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science, 2*(1), 40–57.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1998). Organizing knowledge. *California Management Review, 40*(3), 90–111. https://doi.org/10.2307/41165945

Bruner, J. S. (2002). *Acts of meaning* (10. print). Harvard University Press.

Butt, A. I. (2017). Secession and security: Explaining state strategy against separatists. Cornell University Press.

Capoccia, G., & Kelemen, R. D. (2007). The study of critical junctures: Theory, narrative, and counterfactuals in historical institutionalism. *World Politics, 59*(03), 341–369. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100020852

Clemens, E. S. (1997). *The people's lobby: Organizational innovation and the rise of interest group politics in the United States, 1890–1925*. University of Chicago Press.

Coggins, B. (2011). Friends in high places: International politics and the emergence of states from secessionism. *International Organization, 65*(3), 433–467. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000105

Coggins, B. (2014). *Power politics and state formation in the twentieth century: The dynamics of recognition*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107239050

Collier, D., & Munck, G. L. (2017). Building blocks and methodological challenges: A framework for studying critical junctures. *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, 15*(1), 2–9.

Collier, R. B., & Collier, D. (2002). *Shaping the political arena: Critical junctures, the labor movement, and regime dynamics in Latin America*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Cooren, F. (2000). *The organizing property of communication*. Benjamins.

Cooren, F., Kuhn, T., Cornelissen, J. P., & Clark, T. (2011). Communication, organizing and organization: An overview and introduction to the special issue. *Organization Studies, 32*(9), 1149–1170. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611410836

Corradi, G., Gherardi, S., & Verzelloni, L. (2010). Through the practice lens: Where is the bandwagon of practice-based studies heading? *Management Learning, 41*(3), 265–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507609356938

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination*. Oxford University Press.

Czarniawska, B. (1998). *A narrative approach to organization studies*. SAGE.

Davenport, C. (2009). *Media bias, perspective, and state repression: The Black Panther Party*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810985

Davis, G. F., McAdam, D., Scott, R. W., & Zald, M. N. (Eds.). (2005). *Social movements and organization theory*. Cambridge University Press.

de Bakker, F. G. A., den Hond, F., & Laamanen, M. (2017). Social movements: Organizations and organizing. In C. Roggeband & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across disciplines* (pp. 203–231). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0_8

Della Porta, D. (2008). Eventful protest, global conflicts. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, 9*(2), 27–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2008.9672963

Della Porta, D. (2014). *Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011*. Oxford University Press

Della Porta, D. (2020). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 19*(5–6), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458

Della Porta, D., & Reiter, H. (Eds.). (1998). *Policing protest: The control of mass demonstrations in Western democracies*. University of Minnesota Press.

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G. A., & Smith, N. (2015). Social movements and organizational analysis. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 291–305). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.41

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organisational change in Western European environmental groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Dobusch, L., & Schoeneborn, D. (2015). Fluidity, identity, and organizationality: The communicative constitution of Anonymous. *Journal of Management Studies, 52*(8), 1005–1035. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12139

Epstein, B. (1991). *Political protest and cultural revolution: Nonviolent direct action in the 1970s and 1980s*. University of California Press.

Feldman, M. S. (1989). *Order without design: Information production and policy making*. Stanford University Press.

Feldman, M. S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2011). Theorizing practice and practicing theory. *Organization Science, 22*(5), 1240–1253.

Fenton, C., & Langley, A. (2011). Strategy as practice and the narrative turn. *Organization Studies, 32*(9), 1171–1196.

Gamson, W. A., & Meyer, D. S. (1996). Framing political opportunity. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 275–290). Cambridge University Press.

Ganz, M. (2009). *Why David sometimes wins: Leadership, organization, and strategy in the California farm worker movement.* Oxford University Press.

Gessler, T., & Hutter, S. (2021). Conceptualizing, measuring, and mapping contentiousness. In A. Bojar, H. Kriesi, S. Hutter, & T. Gessler (Eds.), *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions* (pp. 67–90). Cambridge University Press.

Gherardi, S. (2000). Practice-based theorizing on learning and knowing in organizations. *Organization, 7*(2), 211–223.

Gherardi, S. (2006). *Organizational knowledge: The texture of workplace learning.* Blackwell.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* Polity Press.

Gioia, D. A., & Chittipeddi, K. (1991). Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal, 12*(6), 433–448.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience.* Harvard University Press.

Griffiths, R. D. (2015). Between dissolution and blood: How administrative lines and categories shape secessionist outcomes. *International Organization*, 69(03), 731–751. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000077

Griffiths, R. D. (2021a). *Secession and the sovereignty game: Strategy and tactics for aspiring nations.* Cornell University Press.

Griffiths, R. D. (2021b). Secessionist strategy and tactical variation in the pursuit of independence. *Journal of Global Security Studies, 6*(1), ogz082. https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz082

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (2020a). Introduction. In R. D. Griffiths & D. Muro (Eds.), *Strategies of secession and counter-secession* (pp. 1–11). ECPR Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (Eds.). (2020b). *Strategies of secession and counter-secession.* ECPR Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Wasser, L. M. (2019). Does violent secessionism work? *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 63*(5), 1310–1336. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718783032

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2011). Time will tell? Temporality and the analysis of causal mechanisms and processes. *Comparative Political Studies, 44*(9), 1267–1297. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010390653

Haug, C. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution. *Organization Studies, 34*(5–6), 705–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Jarzabkowski, P. (2004). Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation, and practices-in-use. *Organization Studies, 25*(4), 529–560. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840604040675

Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. (2007). Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. *Human Relations, 60*(1), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707075703

Jasper, J. M. (2004). A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social-movement choices. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 9*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.9.1.m112677546p63361

Jasper, J. M. (2006). *Getting your way: Strategic dilemmas in the real world.* University of Chicago Press.

Jasper, J. M. (2015). Introduction: Playing the game. In J. M. Jasper & J. W. Duyvendak (Eds.), *Players and arenas* (pp. 9–32). Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285.3

Jasper, J. M., & Duyvendak, J. W. (Eds.). (2015). *Players and arenas: The interactive dynamics of protest.* Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285

Johnston, H., & Noakes, J. A. (Eds.). (2005). *Frames of protest: Social movements and the framing perspective.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Kaplan, S. (2008). Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty. *Organization Science, 19*(5), 729–752. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0340

Kaplan, S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization Science, 24*(4), 965–995. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0792

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Kriesi, H., Hutter, S., & Bojar, A. (2019). Contentious episode analysis. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 24*(3), 251–273. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-24-3-251

Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Duyvendak, J.W., Guigni, M. G. (1995). *New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis.* University of Minnesota Press.

Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. (2010). Introducing "Perspectives on process organization studies." In T. Hernes & S. Maitlis (Eds.), *Process, sensemaking, and*

organizing (pp. 1–26). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199594566.003.0001

Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. (Eds.). (2017). *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies.* SAGE.

Lofland, J. (1996). *Social movement organizations: Guide to research on insurgent realities.* De Gruyter.

Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 25*(2), 226. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392453

Loveman, M. (2005). The modern state and the primitive accumulation of symbolic power. *American Journal of Sociology, 110*(6), 1651–1683.

Maeckelbergh, M. (2011). Doing is believing: Prefiguration as strategic practice in the alterglobalization movement. *Social Movement Studies, 10*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2011.545223

Mahoney, J. (2002). *Legacies of liberalism: Path dependence and political regimes in Central America.* Johns Hopkins University Press

Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.15993111

Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals, 8*(1), 57–125.

Maney, G. M., Kutz-Flamenbaum, R. V., Rohlinger, D., & Goodwin, J. (2012). An introduction to strategies for social change. In G. M. Maney, R. V. Kutz-Flamenbaum, D. Rohlinger, & J. Goodwin (Eds.), *Strategies for social change* (pp. xi–xxxviii). University of Minnesota Press.

Mattoni, A., & Treré, E. (2014). Media practices, mediation processes, and mediatization in the study of social movements. *Communication Theory, 24*(3), 252–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12038

McAdam, D. (1982). *Political process and the development of Black insurgency, 1930–1970.* University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. Jr. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Jr. Sewell, S. G. Tarrow, & C. Tilley (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.005

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention.* Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D. (1996). Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting, and inventing. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 141–151). Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1973). *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization.* General Learning Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*(6), 1212–1241.

McPhee, R. D., & Zaug, P. (2000). The communicative constitution of organizations: A framework for explanation. *Electronic Journal of Communication, 10*(1/2), 21–47.

Meyer, D. S., & Minkoff, D. C. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunity. *Social Forces, 82*(4), 1457–1492. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0082

Meyer, D. S., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1998). *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Minkoff, D. C. (1995). *Organizing for equality: The evolution of women's and racial-ethnic organizations in America, 1955–1985.* Rutgers University Press.

Minkoff, D. C., & McCarthy, J. D. (2005). Reinvigorating the study of organizational processes in social movements. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*, 289–308.

Mintzberg, H., Raisinghani, D., & Theoret, A. (1976). The structure of "unstructured" decision processes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*(2), 246. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392045

Nicolini, D. (Ed.). (2003). *Knowing in organizations: A practice-based approach.* Sharpe.

Nicolini, D., & Monteiro, P. (2016). The practice approach: For a praxeology of organizational and management studies. In A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies* (pp. 110–126). SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957954.n7

Oliver, P. (1989). Bringing the crowd back in: The nonorganizational elements of social movements. *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change, 11*, 1–30.

Orlikowski, W. J. (2002). Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organization Science, 13*(3), 249–273. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.3.249.2776

Pagoaga Ibiricu, I. (2020). Party competition during secession crises in advanced democracies. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2020.1824994

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1979). *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail.* Vintage Books.

Poole, M. S., Van de Ven, A. H., Dooley, K., & Holmes, M. E. (2000). *Organizational change and innovation processes: Theory and methods for research.* Oxford University Press.

Putnam, L. L., Nicotera, A. M., & McPhee, R. D. (2009). Introduction: Communication constitutes organization. In L. L. Putnam & A. M. Nicotera (Eds.), *Building theories of communication: The constitutive role of communication* (pp. 1–19). Routledge.

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory, 5*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432

Rerup, C., & Feldman, M. S. (2011). Routines as a source of change in organizational schemata: The role of trial-and-error learning. *Academy of Management Journal, 54*(3), 577–610. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.61968107

Roberts, K. M. (2015). *Changing course in Latin America: Party systems in the neoliberal era.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511842856

Robichaud, D., & Cooren, F. (2013). Introduction: Materiality, agency and discourse in the constitution of organization. In D. Robichaud & F. Cooren (Eds.), *Organization and organizing: Materiality, agency, and discourse* (pp. xi–xix). Routledge.

Rucht, D. (1999). Linking organization and mobilization: Michels's Iron Law of Oligarchy reconsidered. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 4*(2), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.4.2.l2680365q32h6616

Rucht, D. (2017). Exploring the backstage: Preparation and implementation of mass protests in Germany. *American Behavioral Scientist, 61*(13), 1678–1702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744135

Sackmann, S. A. (1992). Culture and subcultures: An analysis of organizational knowledge. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 37*(1), 140–161.

Schoeneborn, D., Kuhn, T. R., & Kärreman, D. (2019). The communicative constitution of organization, organizing, and organizationality. *Organization Studies, 40*(4), 475–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618782284

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1992). A theory of structure: Duality, agency, and transformation. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1086/229967

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996a). Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society, 25*(6), 841–881.

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996b). Three temporalities. In T. J. McDonald (Ed.), *The historic turn in the human sciences* (pp. 245–280). University of Michigan Press.

Slater, D., & Simmons, E. (2010). Informative regress: Critical antecedents in comparative politics. *Comparative Political Studies, 43*(7), 886–917. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010361343

Smithey, L. A. (2009). Social movement strategy, tactics, and collective identity. *Sociology Compass, 3*(4), 658–671. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00218.x

Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilization. *International Social Movement Research, 1*, 197–217.

Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation. *American Sociological Review, 51*(4), 464–481. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581

Snow, D., Benford, R., McCammon, H., Hewitt, L., & Fitzgerald, S. (2014). The emergence, development, and future of the framing perspective: 25+ years

since "frame alignment." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 19*(1), 23–46. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.19.1.x74278226830m69l

Soifer, H. D. (2012). The causal logic of critical junctures. *Comparative Political Studies, 45*(12), 1572–1597. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012463902

Soule, S. A. (2013). Bringing organizational studies back into social movement scholarship. In J. van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The future of social movement research* (pp. 107–124). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816686513.003.0007

Toft, M. D. (2012). Self-determination, secession, and civil war. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 24*(4), 581–600. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2012.700617

Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science, 13*(5), 567–582. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.5.567.7810

Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. (2005). Alternative approaches for studying organizational change. *Organization Studies, 26*(9), 1377–1404. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605056907

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2010). Theorizing the restlessness of events. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(5), 1351–1386. https://doi.org/10.1086/651299

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2017). *What is an event?* University of Chicago Press.

Wagner-Pacifici, R., & Ruggero, E. C. (2018). Temporal blindspots in Occupy Philadelphia. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1474096

Walter, B. F. (2009). *Reputation and civil war: Why separatist conflicts are so violent.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511642012

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing.* Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations.* SAGE.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409–421. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133

Whittington, R. (1996). Strategy as practice. *Long Range Planning*, 29(5), 731–735. https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301(96)00068-4

Whittington, R. (2003). The work of strategizing and organizing: For a practice perspective. *Strategic Organization, 1*(1), 117–125.

Yates, L. (2015). Rethinking prefiguration: Alternatives, micropolitics and goals in social movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 14(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.870883

Zald, M. N., & Ash, R. (1966). Social movement organizations: Growth, decay and change. *Social Forces, 44*(3), 327–341.

3 The Catalan Secessionist Protest Cycle: Intensity, Action Repertoires, and Organizational Structures

Abstract
This chapter shows how the 2017 referendum crisis transformed secessionist protest and its underlying organizational structures. It traces the trajectory of the Catalan secessionist protest cycle from its emergence in 2009 until the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. I draw on original protest event data to show how secessionist contention became more frequent and disruptive during the secessionist crisis. Data on the compound players participating in these protests illustrate that organizational structures do not represent a necessary condition for protest. They also allow the tracing of the emergence of new players in the protest arena. Network analyses of these data show how organizing between the key compound players increased during the secessionist crisis and declined afterwards.

Keywords: Secessionist Crisis, Cycle of contention, Protest event analysis, Social Movement Organizations, Interorganizational Collaboration, Network Analysis

For about three decades since Spain's transition to democracy (1975–1978), demands for Catalan independence were a minor issue on the region's political agenda. Autonomism was the territorial ideology of the region's major party coalition, Convergència i Unió (CiU), whose leader Jordi Pujol governed Catalonia from 1980 until 2003. When CiU's rule came to an end and Pujol's government was replaced by a coalition of the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC, social democrats), Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC, republican left), and Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds (ICV, greens), pro-independence claims surpassed autonomism over the following ten years.

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH03

By 2014, surveys indicated that 45% of Catalans supported secession from the Spanish state (Muñoz & Tormos, 2015). The question of independence became the central line of political conflict in the region.

The determinants of the rise of secessionism in institutional politics and public opinion have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Álvarez Pereira et al., 2018; Basta, 2018; Burg, 2015; Guinjoan & Rodon, 2016; Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013; Serrano, 2013). Previous research has also sketched the role of protest mobilization and non-state actors in the period until the regional elections of 2015 (Crameri, 2015b, 2015a; Della Porta et al., 2017; Dowling, 2018). However, there is less systematic research on protest and organizing after 2015. This is why I suggest an epistemological distinction between two *phases* of the secessionist cycle of contention: The first phase from 2009 to 2015 and the second phase from 2015 until 2020. However, these phases should not be equated with the distinction between normal times and intense times of conflict (see Chapter 2).

In this chapter, I show how the push for a binding referendum in late 2017 and the response by the Spanish government escalated the territorial conflict in Catalonia and led to a full-blown secessionist crisis. Drawing on Della Porta, Beissinger, and others, I have theorized this transformation of conflict as a shift from normal times to intense times in the previous chapter. While previous research on the 2017 secessionist crisis in Catalonia focused primarily on intergovernmental interactions (Ferreira, 2021; López & Sanjaume-Calvet, 2020), I expand this analysis to the protest arena.

I begin by providing some historical background and by tracing the origins of pro-independence demands. I then sketch an overview of the first phase of the secessionist cycle by outlining the major events and organizational dynamics between 2009 and 2015. At the heart of the chapter is the analysis of the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention between 2015 and 2019. Drawing on original protest event data, interview data, and secondary analyses, I show how the *pace* and *adversity* of contentious interactions shifted after the announcement of the referendum. First, I focus on the number of protest events per month as an indicator of the pace of contention. Second, I show how the adversity of contention shifted as the independence movement's repertoire of action became more diverse and protesters engaged in disruptive tactics more often. These two analyses are combined with expert and activist interviews as well as secondary analyses of existing accounts to provide a thick description of the strategic interactions between secessionist protesters, their allies, and their opponents. The secessionist cycle of contention thus involves four stages: emergence, normal times, secessionist crisis, and post-crisis.

The second part of the chapter shifts the focus to the role of organizational structures in the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention, using information on organizational participation from the protest event dataset. First, I argue that organizational structures played an important role but were not a necessary condition for contentious action in the territorial conflict in Catalonia. Second, the data show how self-determination protest more generally was driven by secessionist forces. Third, I demonstrate how the secessionist crisis transformed the role of the main secessionist organizational structures. Finally, I use network analyses of the protest event data to show how organizing between organizations increased during the secessionist crisis and declined afterwards.

The Emergence and Normalization of Secessionist Protest 2009–2015

Demands for self-determination have a long tradition in Catalonia. Already during the Francoist dictatorship, working-class immigrants and bourgeois nationalists overcame their mutual prejudices to forge an alliance against the regime (Johnston, 1991). During Spain's transition to democracy, protesters demanded greater self-determination for Catalonia, which resulted in the region's first statute of autonomy in 1980. Despite this achievement, the violent clandestine group Terra Lluire continued to fight for independence and organized several terrorist attacks during the 1980s (Vilaregut, 2004).

However, pro-independence efforts were marginal in Catalan politics for most of the second half of the 20th century. Autonomism dominated the political landscape in the region after Spain's transition to democracy. More radical claims only came to the foreground of the region's politics after the turn of the century when self-determination groups started to voice their demands with more frequency and vigor. An early effort to bring these diverse groups together was the foundation of the Platform for the Right to Decide (*Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir,* abbreviated PDD) at the end of 2005 (Vilaregut, 2010, p. 131). The PDD was constituted as a formal organization, but because of its intention to represent a wide spectrum of self-determination groups, it also featured some elements of a federation. At the same time, the PDD championed norms of internal democracy. The failure to turn these principles into formalized decision-making processes represented one of the weaknesses of the organization and contributed to the rise of internal conflict (Vilaregut, 2010, pp. 154; 183–184). In 2007, the PDD internally split into two factions and remained paralyzed for the following

two years. Nevertheless, the PDD and its promotion of the right to decide can be considered an "early riser" (Tarrow, 2011, p. 201) that paved the way for the more radical secessionist demands that would follow.

Contentious Events: (Local) Referendums and Mass Protests

There is no agreement in the literature with regard to what could be considered the starting point of the secessionist cycle of contention. The experts I interviewed in the course of this research pointed to different dates as well. Some of them included the period of the PDD, but most settled on September 13, 2009.[1] On that day, the municipality of Arenys de Munt held an unofficial referendum on Catalan independence. According to Mayor Carles Móra, the goal of the consultative plebiscite was to achieve that the "self-determination of peoples could be talked about with normality, and that it could be demanded without fear or taboos."[2] More than 41% of the small town's inhabitants participated in the referendum, voting largely in favor of independence. Most importantly, the event received a lot of media attention, which helped spread the idea of a micro-referendum beyond the local context (Muñoz and Guinjoan 2013). Three months later, on December 13, another 166 Catalan towns and cities held referendums, which Guibernau (2013, p. 17) identified as the "origin of the pro-secessionist movement." The referendum in Arenys de Munt and other municipalities were formally initiated by the city council, which passed a law to initiate the referendum. However, the referendums were "organized mainly from the civil society" (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013, p. 45). Throughout the region, local initiatives emerged to promote the referendums and demanded the right to decide.

Shortly afterwards, mayors from many pro-independence municipalities and members of the PDD, which had overcome its internal conflict, founded a platform to coordinate local referendums following the model of Arenys de Munt (Vilaregut, 2010, p. 167). Within the next two years, 552 of 947 Catalan municipalities organized unofficial referendums on independence (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013). The PDD had pushed the right to decide as a collective action frame, and the referendums helped to spread it across the Catalan region. They established the idea that a referendum represented the preferred way to achieve independence. Moreover, the local referendums not only contributed to the diffusion of the right to decide as an idea, but were also an important means of putting this idea into practice. As such, they can be

1 Ubasart-González (2021), in contrast, sees September 11, 2012 as the starting point.
2 Vilaweb. August 12, 2009. Arenys de Munt Consulta Sobre La Independència de Catalunya.

understood as a prefigurative practice, demonstrating the viability of the referendum as a type of collective action.

The first major protest at the regional level took place on July 10, 2010 (abbreviated 10-J). Over a million people claimed *Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim* ("We are a nation. We decide") in the streets of Barcelona. This event was organized by the cultural association Òmnium Cultural in response to a ruling of the Spanish Constitutional Court some weeks before. After an appeal by the conservative Partido Popular (PP), the Court removed substantive parts of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, which had been in place since 2006. The ruling represented a transformative event in the secessionist cycle in that it aggravated the existing territorial grievances (Basta, 2018; Ubasart-González, 2021). This was visible in the 10-J protest as an immediate reaction. The 10-J protest was the largest protest for self-determination since the mobilizations at the end of the Franco regime (Johnston, 1991) and Spain's transition to democracy (Guibernau, 2004). It also became a strong symbol, as it brought together collective actors from many different political orientations (Della Porta et al., 2017, p. 60). Finally, it marked the beginning of mass-protest performances in favor of self-determination and independence in Catalonia.

In 2011, an explicitly secessionist organization emerged from the coordinating group of the local referendums and the remnants of the PDD: the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC). The following year, the newly founded ANC organized a large demonstration for the National Day of Catalonia on September 11 (called *La Diada*), shortly before parliamentary elections in the region. The protest under the slogan "Catalonia, new state of Europe" was supported by Òmnium Cultural and other SMOs and mobilized even more people than the 10-J (Crameri, 2015b). On the same day in 2013, the ANC organized the so-called Via Catalana. The Via Catalana was a huge human chain along the ancient Via Augusta from the French border through the entire Catalan territory to Alcanar in the Autonomous Community of Valencia. Around 1.6 million people participated in the 400-kilometer demonstration (Della Porta et al., 2019, p. 6). The 2014 Diada formed part of the campaign Ara és l'hora ("Now is the time") jointly organized by ANC and Òmnium Cultural. Nearly two million protesters filled two of Barcelona's largest intersecting avenues to form a giant "V" (for "Votar, Voluntat, Victòria – Vote, Will, and Victory").

The Diada became a regular event in the Catalan political calendar, mobilizing over a million people during each of the following years. The Diadas were performances in the very sense of the concept, as expert interviewee Daniel put it:

> All the mass mobilizations have been perfect from a standpoint of public order, there was never any problem. Everything was like a magnificent, happy performance. You took a picture and participated, you were happy and that's it [...] Perfect for television, for propaganda.

Similarly, an interviewee quoted by Della Porta, O'Connor, and Portos (2019, p. 8) described the Diada as "activism-for-the-picture." Participants had to perform a certain activity, for example raising their hands at a certain time. The Diada was what Sampson et al. (2005) called a "hybrid event": a mix of contentious and civic action. In fact, one could go so far as to argue that its annual repetition removed all contentious character from the event.[3] At the same time, the routinization of the Diada contributed to the stabilization of the pro-independence demands that emerged after the ruling on the Statute into a sustained secessionist movement.

In 2014, the Catalan autonomous institutions and civil society actors lifted the local referendums to the regional level. This process started two weeks after the massive 2012 Diada, when Artur Mas, at the time president of the Generalitat, dissolved the parliament and called for a snap election. The following campaign of his party CiU centered on the issue of self-determination. About a year after Mas's reelection, the Generalitat called for a referendum on Catalan independence, which would take place on November 9, 2014 (called 9-N). However, the Spanish government resorted to the Constitutional Court, which eventually suspended the referendum (Martí & Cetrà, 2016). In response to the Court's decision, the "Catalan government decided to set out a popular non-binding consultation instead of a referendum, delegating the organisation to civil society actors, while using the regional government's resources" (Della Porta et al., 2017, p. 61). Ultimately, 80.7% of the 2.3 million Catalans casting their ballots voted for independence, but the vote had no effect (Martí & Cetrà, 2016). The preparation of the 9-N unfolded as a participatory process, which is why Della Porta et al. (2017) dubbed it a referendum "from below." Soon after the 9-N, Mas called a snap election again and framed it as a "de facto referendum on independence" (Martí & Cetrà, 2016). Before I turn to these elections as a major turning point in the secessionist cycle of contention, I elaborate more in detail on the organizational dynamics during the first phase of the secessionist cycle in the next section.

3 According to McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001, p. 5) contentious politics "excludes regularly scheduled events."

The Rise of an Organized Movement 2005–2015

In his seminal book *Nations Against the State*, Michael Keating described Catalan nationalist civil society as "rather fragile" and splintered into many small groups (Keating, 2001, p. 265). More than two decades later, the Catalan independence movement is known for its impressive organizational capacity (Crameri, 2015a). The shift from autonomism to secessionism was thus accompanied by the emergence of an organizational basis. This shift consisted of five organizational dynamics.

First, as described in the previous section, the splinter groups mentioned by Keating started to collaborate in the PDD in the mid-2000s. Hence, the PDD was important not only for pushing self-determination frames but also as an organizational platform. Second, the same was also true for the wave of local referendums that swept many towns of the region (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013) after 2009. Although normally these referendums were formally introduced by the local town halls and pro-independence parties, they were often prepared by civil society actors. Organizationally, the local referendums were important in two ways. On the one hand, expert interviewees reported that the preparations of the referendum brought together activists from different organizations and political parties at the local level. These formed dense networks that persisted over the course of the following years. On the other hand, at the Catalan level, the coordinating platform for the local referendums represented the nucleus for a new organization: the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC).

The emergence of the ANC represents the third organizational dynamic. The origin of the ANC goes back to the day of the first local referendum in Arenys de Munt. Back then, two experienced activists, Pere Pugès and Miquel Strubell, discussed the idea of a new platform to unite the different sectors of the independence movement. They joined forces with two other organizers, Enric Aïnsa and Miquel Sellarès. The latter had been one of the founders of the anti-Francoist Assemblea de Catalunya, which served as a historical reference for the new organization. In early 2011, the four activists organized the Conferència Nacional per l'Estat Propi (National Conference for the own State), which was attended by over 1,500 people, and where a provisional leadership group was elected. Simultaneously, participants and organizers of the unofficial referendums were recruited into local assemblies (Crameri, 2015). About a year later, 7,000 participants officially founded the ANC in a constitutive assembly. Within the next three years, the ANC experienced an unprecedented organizational growth and established itself as a major compound player within the independence movement (Crameri, 2015).

The ANC's structure blended horizontal and vertical elements in the phase between 2012 and 2017. On the one hand, there was a strong leadership. The ANC had a National Secretariat (*Secretariat Nacional*), which consisted of 77 elected secretaries. Each secretary was a member of two committees (for example mobilization, communication, etc.). The chairs of each committee formed the Permanent Committee (*Comitè Permanent*), together with the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and the leaders of the organizations' administration. The National Secretariat met once a month and the Permanent Committee once a week. This leadership group was supported by a large paid staff. On the other hand, the ANC was a decentralized organization. It created more than 500 local chapters (*Territorials*) throughout the region and even abroad, as well as professional interest-based groups (*Sectorials*). Each of these chapters had its own board and regular meetings. The local chapters provided an opportunity for the 40,000 paying members (as of 2015) and registered volunteers to participate in the organization's decision-making. Local chapters had some autonomy, which meant that they could decide in which actions of the organization they would take part and whether they wanted to organize actions independently at the local level. Most members of the National Secretariat were elected through the local chapters, thus connecting the central and local structures of the organization.

Fourth, another large civil society organization, Òmnium Cultural, started to become involved in contentious politics and organized the first large protest in the cycle of mobilization. The 2010 protest was indicative of a fundamental change that Òmnium Cultural went through as an organization. Founded as a cultural association by progressive members of the Catalan bourgeoisie and intellectuals in 1961, Òmnium Cultural had only occasionally been participating in pro-independence campaigns (e.g., Free Catalonia in 2004), as the self-understanding of Òmnium Cultural had always been resting on the promotion of Catalan culture and language. However, the failure of the Statute of Autonomy, as well as the wave of unofficial referendums confronted the organization with a changing political reality. Interviewees reported that a key event for the organization was its General Assembly in Santa Coloma de Gramenet in 2012, when it officially decided to push for Catalan independence.

Òmnium Cultural was led by a Board of 24 volunteer directors (*Junta directiva*). Six of them formed the Executive Committee (*Comitè Executiu*): the president of the organization, the treasurer, the secretary, and three vice presidents. The Board met once a month and the Executive Committee once a week, in person or via messenger. Around the time of my fieldwork, Òmnium Cultural had more than 80 paid staff members. Interviewees

reported that there were fewer staff members before 2017, but they already played an important role in the organization. Staff worked in a series of different areas, from event management and stage production to social media outreach and graphic design. The organization always had a large and growing membership pool, which rose even more after 2015 and has reached over 190,000 members at the time of writing. The large membership provided an important funding basis. However, the large majority of these members did not participate actively in the organization. Members could get involved in one of the 45 local chapters, but had little influence on the leadership apart from internal elections and the yearly membership assembly. In short, Òmnium Cultural was a highly professionalized SMO based on strong leadership and concentrated decision-making.

After 2012, the ANC and Òmnium Cultural became the two most important civil society players. In this time, they were successful in recruiting members and resources, founding dozens of local chapters throughout Catalonia and even abroad. Organizationally, this implied a change from the initial grassroots phase to formal and large organizations under the strong leadership of Carme Forcadell (ANC) and Muriel Casals (Òmnium Cultural) (Dowling, 2018, pp. 99–100). Around ANC and Òmnium Cultural, the two main SMOs, emerged what expert interviewee Eduard called a "diffuse magma" of individuals, smaller groups, and organizations. This magma could be distinguished into two important organizational networks. On the one hand, the groups that initiated the wave of local referendums persisted as loose networks in the neighborhoods of Barcelona and other cities, and especially in small towns and villages. On the other hand, there was a series of groups and organizations that were often subsumed under the term *independentist Left* (Esquerra independentista).

The fifth dynamic was the emergence of the movement party CUP (Candidatura d'Unitat Popular) as an anchor for these diverse groups. The left-wing struggle for independence has a long history in Catalonia, but has usually been split into a number of organizations, parties, and grassroots groups (Bassa, 1994). After 2009, these groups coalesced into the CUP, a movement party that previously had only been running in local elections and had no organizational structure at the regional level, which is why it was often called in plural (*Les CUP*). In 2012, the CUP made the leap into the Catalan parliament and obtained three seats. It even enhanced its representation to ten seats in 2015. In this time, the CUP was connected to a network of smaller left-wing organizations and grassroots groups: this included trade unions (CSC-Intersindical and Coordinadora Obrera Sindical), youth organizations (Maulets and Coordinadora d'Assemblees

de Joves de l'Esquerra Independentista, who later formed Arran and then La Forja), a student union (Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans), and the CUP's two branch organizations Poble Lliure and Endavant. These organizations formed a dense network and many activists participated in several of them at the same time. Moreover, there was considerable overlap of the independentist Left with the aforementioned local networks, but also with ANC and Òmnium Cultural.

In sum, there were five organizational dynamics that sustained the contentious performances described in the previous section: The emergence of the PDD as an early riser, the formation of dense local networks through the local referendums, the subsequent foundation of the ANC, Òmnium Cultural's shift towards a secessionist stance, and the solidification of the independentist Left into the CUP. These five dynamics outlined above established two large SMOs (ANC and Òmnium Cultural), dense civic networks at the local level, and a series of smaller organizations. These organizational structures had considerable overlap and formed a strong pro-independence civil society. As a result, some have attributed civil society organizations a stronger role within the independence movement than the secessionist political parties (Ordeix & Ginesta, 2014). In fact, Catalan civil society played a key role in the preparation and planning of collective action throughout the cycle of contention.

The Transformation of Secessionist Protest 2015–2019

The 2015 regional elections were proclaimed a "referendum on independence" by the secessionist parties CDC and ERC, which ran on a single platform called Junts pel Sí (Martí & Cetrà, 2016). There is little systematic research on secessionist protest after the elections—in what I call the second phase of the secessionist conflict. This poses the question of how the key events during this second phase—the secessionist crisis—affected pro-independence protest and its organizational basis. This is the central research question of this book.

This chapter provides some first answers. I show how the announcement of the referendum and the referendum itself led to an intensification of secessionist protest. Building on the theoretical argument in the previous chapter, I focus on changes in the pace and adversity of contentious events. These contentious events can be grouped into three categories: protest events, opponent actions, and ally actions. I draw on an original protest event data set to describe the first category. I show how both the *pace* and the *adversity* of secessionist contention changed over time. I embed this

development in a narrative on opponent and ally actions that is drawn from activist and expert interviewees.

Analytically, I split the second phase of the secessionist cycle into five *periods*. The first four periods each comprise one year, while the fifth period lasted three months. The referendum crisis as the central episode of contention overlaps with the second and third periods. Figure 2 provides an overview of the key events during these five periods.

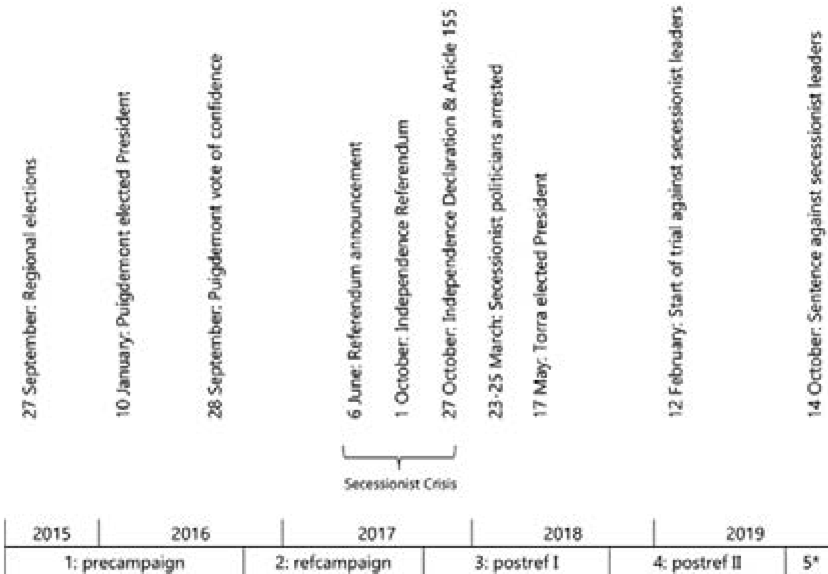

Figure 2. Overview of key events during the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention

Intensifying Protest

The secessionist conflict unfolded mainly in the institutional realm and less in the protest arena during the first year after the 2015 elections, which represents the first analytical period. As Figure 3 shows, there were fewer self-determination protests in comparison to the following phases. During the 2015 election campaign, Junts pel Sí had committed to an 18-month process of unilateral secession from the Spanish state in the case of electoral success but failed to obtain a majority of seats in the Catalan parliament (Orriols & Rodon, 2016). The coalition needed the support of the left-wing party CUP to form a government. The CUP rejected incumbent Artur Mas in parliament several times until a suitable candidate was found in Carles Puigdemont. A few months later Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya dissolved and was refounded under the name Partit Demòcrata Europeu

Català (PDeCAT).[4] At the same time, the pro-independence parties passed a motion to start secession from Spain shortly after the election, which was quickly suspended by the Spanish Constitutional Court. This meant that the unilateral strategy promised before the elections had reached an impasse.

After surviving a vote of confidence in the Catalan parliament on September 28, 2016, Puigdemont changed course and vowed to call a binding referendum on independence. This can be considered the beginning of the extended referendum campaign, which represents the second period of the late secessionist conflict. As the data show, there were few protest events in late 2016 and early 2017 as well. Interviewees reported that movement actors were waiting for the Catalan government to provide more concrete information about the date and question of the referendum (see Chapter 4). On June 6, 2017, Puigdemont officially announced the referendum to take place on October 1 of the same year. The announcement can be considered the event that triggered the 2017 secessionist crisis. However, the level of mobilization remained rather low in the summer of 2017. During this time, the Catalan government tried to achieve an agreement with the Spanish government, which rejected the referendum arguing that it was against the Spanish constitution.

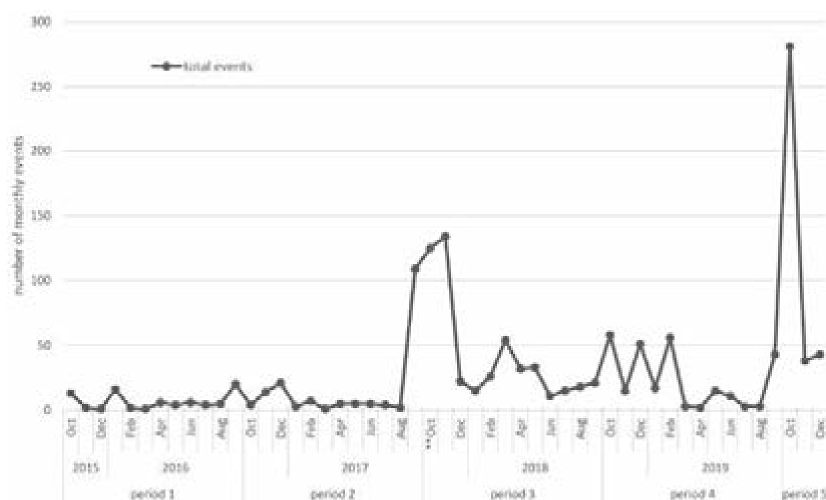

Figure 3. Trajectory of self-determination protest in Catalonia 2015–2019. n=1405 events. Source: own data collection (see Appendix).

4 In 2017, the PDeCAT was part of the Junts per Catalunya (JxR) coalition for the December 21 election. In 2020, Junts per Catalunya was established as a proper political party under the leadership of Puigdemont and ran in competition to the PDeCAT in the 2021 regional elections. Even most of the interviewees had trouble keeping up with these splits and mergers in the post-CiU era. Most of them referred to the PDeCAT and Junts per Catalunya simply as "Convergència." Or, as interviewee Oriol jokingly said: "Convergència i Unió—or whatever they are called at the moment."

The secessionist conflict intensified at the beginning of September 2017, when the pro-independence majority in the Catalan parliament passed the "Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination" in a controversial session boycotted by the unionist parties. The Spanish Constitutional Court immediately suspended the law after an appeal from the Spanish government and declared the referendum illegal. These two events represent the first dyad in a sequence of intensifying interactions between secessionist challengers and the authorities of the host state. The intensification of conflict manifested itself primarily as changes in the pace and adversity of both contentious and repressive action. Over the course of the secessionist crisis, repression became harder and faster while protest became more frequent and disruptive.

In early and mid-September, Spanish police forces carried out several raids of Catalan newspapers and printing firms to search for ballot boxes for the referendum (Giménez & Gunzelmann, 2019). The Constitutional Court first warned all Catalan mayors that they would face personal consequences if they facilitated the referendum and then cited about two thirds of them for alleged collaboration in the referendum preparations. The most important repressive event was the Anubis Operation on September 20. Spanish police forces carried out 41 raids and 14 arrests in Catalan public institutions, including the Catalan Department of Economy in Barcelona (Giménez & Gunzelmann, 2019) and tried to enter the headquarters of the CUP.

Movement players responded to increasing repression with more frequent and more disruptive protest action. As Figure 3 shows, the number of protest events rose sharply in September. Protesters denounced the repressive actions and demanded the right to decide via the referendum. Most importantly, contentious action became more adversarial. For example, protesters met the police raids on September 20 by surrounding the raided buildings to prevent police forces from entering or exiting. These more disruptive protest forms differed from the orderly and contained Diada demonstrations that had been characteristic of the first phase of the secessionist conflict.

This shift is also reflected quantitatively in the protest event data, as Figure 4 shows. While severely disruptive protests made up only 1% of all events in the first analytical period, their share rose to 10% during the referendum campaign. At the same time, the share of contained events dropped from 80% to 72%. This suggests that the protests on September 20 were not isolated instances but part of a larger trend towards more disruptive action.

The spiral of escalation continued to unfold on the day of the referendum, when riot squads of the Spanish National Police and the Civil Guard attempted to prevent the referendum by entering voting stations and confiscating ballot boxes. This led to confrontations between police and voters,

resulting in more than 900 people being injured and some voting stations being closed because of the police intervention (Barceló, 2018; Della Porta et al., 2019; Guinjoan & Rodon, 2017). Nevertheless, more than two million Catalans (about 43% of the electorate) turned out to vote overwhelmingly in favor of independence (more than 90%), while the unionist camp refrained from participating in the referendum.

The secessionist crisis continued after the referendum, as interactions between the host state and the independence movement escalated further. The level of mobilization remained high in the immediate aftermath of the referendum. Two days after the referendum, hundreds of thousands of Catalans turned to the streets to protest against police violence. On October 10, Puigdemont stood in the Catalan parliament to declare independence—only to suspend his declaration a minute later. A few days later, the leaders of ANC and Òmnium Cultural were arrested for their role in organizing the protest against the police raids prior to October 1. On October 27, the pro-independence majority in the Catalan parliament voted to declare independence. That same day, the Spanish Senate voted in favor of applying article 155 of the Spanish Constitution, which imposed a temporary suspension of Catalonia's autonomy and snap regional elections. In the following days, Puigdemont and other members of the Catalan government left Spain to avoid legal prosecution, while others, including Vice President Oriol Junqueras, were arrested. It finally had become clear that Catalan independence could not be achieved in the short term, which is why I consider October 27 the end of the secessionist crisis.

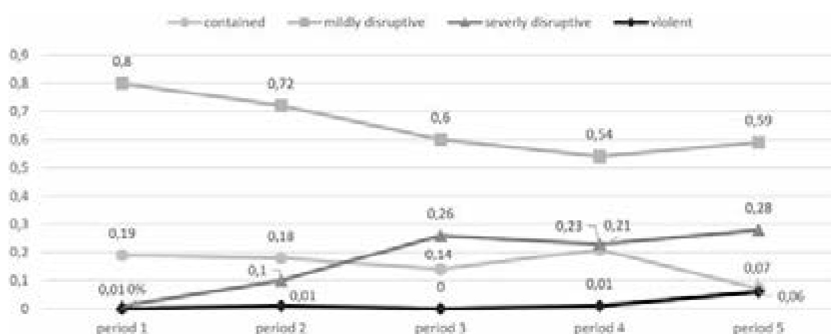

Figure 4. Shares of action forms. Source: own data collection (see Appendix).

The first year after the referendum represents the third period of the late secessionist conflict. After the initial turbulence of the secessionist crisis, the election campaign returned the focus to the institutional arena. The

secessionist parties managed to defend their majority of seats in the Catalan parliament but struggled to form a government in the first months of 2018. Finally, Quim Torra was elected new President of the Generalitat on May 17. Another important change of government took place at the federal level. After the ruling Partido Popular (PP) as an organization was found guilty in one of the major corruption scandals in Spain, the leader of the opposition, Pedro Sánchez (PSOE) won a motion of confidence against incumbent Mariano Rajoy and became Spanish prime minister.

At the same time, the secessionist conflict became less contentious. Figure 3 shows that the number of events dropped sharply in December. At the same time, the level of disruption increased even further in this period. As Figure 4 shows, the share of severely disruptive events rose further while the share of contained events dropped. This development was connected to the emergence of the Committees for the Defense of the Republic (CDRs), which used disruptive tactics such as blocking highways and railways. The CDRs acted mostly in response to repressive events, such as the arrests of secessionist leaders on November 2 and at the end of March 2018.

The fourth period of the late secessionist conflict began in October 2018 and was less eventful. It was marked by the judicial trial of ten Catalan politicians, including former Vice President Oriol Junqueras and the activist leaders Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart. During this period, the level of mobilization rose initially but dropped after the onset of the trial of the Catalan leaders in February 2019. It was only when the end of the verdict came closer in September 2019 that activists initiated a new wave of protest.

The fifth period is what I call the sentence episode. On October 14, 2019, Sànchez, Cuixart, Junqueras, and the rest of the secessionist leaders were condemned to lengthy prison sentences—some of them for more than ten years. Activists responded to the sentences with massive mobilization. As Figure 3 indicates, October 2019 represents the peak in the number of protest events for the timespan covered by the analysis. Mobilization dropped to a medium level in November, which was sustained in December. At the same time, the share of severely disruptive events rose again during the fifth period with respect to the previous one (see Figure 4). Most importantly, for the first time there was a significant number of violent events as well, making up 7% of all protest events. In the weeks after the sentences, there were numerous violent clashes between police and protesters and severe damage was inflicted to public and private properties.

The data do not cover 2020. I suspect that protest mobilization remained at somewhat similar levels during the first months of 2020 and most likely

dropped sharply with the lockdown imposed by the Spanish government on March 14, 2020.

The protest event data provide a detailed picture of the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention. The analysis demonstrates how the referendum shifted the character of contentious interactions between protesters, their allies, and their opponents. While the level of mobilization was rather low for the first two years after the regional elections, both the adversity and pace of repression and protest transformed rapidly after the announcement of the referendum. This is why this most intense episode of contention can be considered a secessionist crisis. After the secessionist crisis, the conflict became less contentious, although activists still responded to counter-secessionist repression and did so ever disruptively. While protest action decreased for a couple of months in 2019, the sentence against the secessionist leaders sparked a short but intense episode of contention. Protest action became even more disruptive and eventually violent.

The Structural Basis of Protest

In the conceptual chapter, I have distinguished between several dimensions of the organizational basis of protest. This section sheds light on what I call the structural dimension: organizations as entities. Classic social movement theories hold that organizations are critical for protest mobilization. And indeed, previous research on the Catalan case has attributed protest mobilization mainly to the two largest civil society organizations, ANC and Òmnium Cultural (Crameri, 2015a; Della Porta et al., 2017; Dowling, 2018). In contrast, the protest event data I gathered provide a much more nuanced picture of the second phase of the secessionist conflict. For each event, I coded all compound players that were present in the protest. I differentiated between compound players that were reported as organizers or initiators and those that merely participated. Let us consider three aspects of the structural basis of protest: firstly, the properties of the events, secondly, the main compound players driving protest action, and thirdly, the shifting roles of these players over time.

The first finding is that in 583 events (roughly 41%) no compound players at all were reported to have participated. In 456 events (33%), there was only a single organizer reported and only 366 events (26%) were collaborative events, i.e., including at least two compound players as participants. The large number of events where no compound player was mentioned should be surprising given the importance attributed to social movement organizations by the classic social movement literature (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Zald &

McCarthy, 1979). However, one should be careful not to rush to this conclusion. The large number may be a consequence of how newspapers report on protest events. There was hardly any newspaper article explicitly mentioning that there was no compound player on the ground. Non-reports should be interpreted as missing data rather than as the absence of compound players. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that reporters would fail to identify the respective compound players in more than a third of all events. The number may thus be taken as an indicator that organizational structures are not a necessary precondition for protest action.

Table 2. Compound players present in at least 10 events. N=822 events where compound players were reported

Compound player	Identity	org	% org	part	% part
CDR	Sec	282	34%	49	6%
ANC	Sec	232	28%	92	11%
Òmnium Cultural	Sec	156	19%	61	7%
CUP	Sec	42	5%	93	11%
AMI	Sec	32	4%	17	2%
Rescat	Sec	31	4%	0	0%
SEPC	Sec	28	3%	12	1%
Tsunami Democràtic	Sec	25	3%	0	0%
UxR	Sec	24	3%	4	0%
Intersindical-CSC	Sec	16	2%	13	2%
ACM	Sec	15	2%	9	1%
Sindicat d'Estudiants	Sec	14	2%	1	0%
Unió de Pagesos	Non-sec	11	1%	15	2%
Taula per la Democràcia	Non-sec	11	1%	5	1%
ERC	Sec	10	1%	91	11%
Arran	Sec	9	1%	6	1%
Federació de Cooperatives Agràries	Non-sec	9	1%	1	0%
ACDC	Sec	6	1%	4	0%
PDeCAT	Sec	4	0%	47	6%
CCOO	Non-sec	4	0%	13	2%
COS	Sec	4	0%	6	1%
Alerta Solidària	Sec	3	0%	39	5%
JxC	Sec	3	0%	33	4%
UGT	Non-sec	2	0%	15	2%
Ustec-STEs	Non-sec	2	0%	9	1%
Ajuntament de Barcelona	Non-sec	1	0%	33	4%
Catalunya en Comú	Non-sec	1	0%	18	2%
Podem	Non-sec	1	0%	18	2%
Demòcrates	Sec	1	0%	11	1%
Govern de Catalunya	Sec	0	0%	53	6%

Compound player	Identity	org	% org	part	% part
Presidenta del Parlament de Catalunya	Sec	0	0%	31	4%
Junts pel Sí	Sec	0	0%	19	2%
CSQEP	Non-sec	0	0%	16	2%
EUiA	Non-sec	0	0%	11	1%

The second finding is that the field of collective actors driving self-determination protest was quite heterogeneous but dominated by secessionist forces. Table 2 lists all compound players that were present as organizers or participants in at least 10 events throughout the time covered by the data. It shows the number of events these players appeared in as organizers or participants.[5] Thirty-four different secessionist compound players engaged in a non-trivial amount of protest events. It goes beyond the scope of this book to discuss the entire catalogue of players, but several groups stand out from this list.

First, there are what I call the "Big 3" organizations: ANC, Òmnium Cultural and CDR. While the former two were already key compound players in the first phase of the secessionist cycle of contention, the CDR only emerged through the referendum campaign and became the most important facilitators of protest action (see below). These three groups organized by far the most events and also participated in many events organized by other players. They were the most important non-state actors in the movement and the core of the SD collective action field. Second, there is what I call the "extended core," which includes players that organized many events and participated in many others, although to a lesser extent than the Big 3. The players in this group were the leftist political parties CUP and ERC, the interest groups AMC and AMI, the unions Intersindical-CSC, and Unió de Pagesos, as well as the student group Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (SEPC). Among these, the political parties CUP and ERC tended to be involved in events as participants rather than as organizers. The third group includes actors that organized many events but participated in few events organized by other players: Rescat, Tsunami Democràtic, Universitats per la República (UxR). These players can thus be described as avant-gardist: they prefer to initiate collective action rather than joining the actions of others. The fourth group is the inverse: it consists of players that participated in many events initiated by other players, but which organized few events themselves. This group includes the political parties and coalitions Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català (PDeCAT), Junts per Catalunya (JxC),

5 Note that the share relates to the total number of events where any compound player was reported (n=822).

Catalunya en Comù, Podem, Demòcrates, Junts pel Sí, Catalunya Sí que es Pot (CSQEP), and Esquerra Unida i Alternative (EUiA), the unions Unió Sindical de Treballadors i Treballadores de l'Ensenyament de Catalunya – Federació Sindical de l'Ensenyament de Catalunya (Ustec-STEs) and Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), the anti-repression platform Alerta Solidària, and the representatives from the Govern de Catalunya, the Parlament, and the Ajuntament de Barcelona.

Looking at organizers and participants shows that SD protest was driven mainly by secessionist players, which took the initiative and organized most of the events. The Big 3 organizations ANC, Òmnium Cultural, and CDR played a central role in facilitating protest action. In contrast, non-secessionist players (with the exception of Unió de Pagesos) did not organize events on their own but preferred to join events organized by others—mainly secessionists. In other words, non-secessionists selectively joined self-determination protests. The field of collective players that engaged in SD protest was thus quite heterogeneous. The CDRs as the most active player were involved in organizing roughly a third of all events. No player outside the Big 3 organizations initiated more than 5% of all events. It goes well beyond ANC and Òmnium, which had been the focus of previous research.

Table 3. Events organized by key compound players

	period 1		period 2		period 3		period 4		period 5	
	events	%	events	%	events	%	events	%	events	%
ANC	46	69%	32	31%	93	30%	38	21%	61	37%
AMI	16	24%	11	11%	1	0%	3	2%	0	0%
CDR	0	0%	0	0%	127	41%	96	53%	92	56%
CUP	10	15%	19	18%	7	2%	6	3%	8	5%
Òmnium Cultural	23	34%	23	22%	69	22%	19	11%	27	16%
SEPC	0	0%	3	3%	9	3%	3	2%	13	8%
Tsunami Democràtic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	11	6%	14	9%
UxR	0	0%	10	10%	11	4%	4	2%	0	0%
total org events	67		104		307		180		164	

Third, the referendum shifted the role of all key organizing players. Table 3 shows the eight collective players that organized 20 events or more.[6] The data

6 I excluded Rescat, a long-standing yet marginal organization in solidarity with political prisoners, because all 31 events they participated in belonged to a single multi-site protest action which demanded the release of the Catalan secessionist leaders.

show how both the share and absolute number of events organized by these players changed over the course of the five periods. The data demonstrate how, on the one hand, some players lost importance. This is particularly the case for the ANC and Òmnium Cultural, whose role decreased over time. This trend is more dramatic for AMI, which often initiated protest action together with the ANC and Òmnium Cultural before the referendum but organized only four events after the referendum. Similarly, the CUP was fairly active in the protest arena during the first two periods, but then less so after the referendum. On the other hand, some players gained importance. The CDRs quickly emerged as the main organizer after the referendum, initiating 41% of protest events in period 3.[7] While the total number of events decreased in the following periods, the share rose even further to 53% in period 4 and 56% in period 5. The CDRs thus replaced the ANC and Òmnium Cultural as the main drivers of SD protest action. Tsunami Democràtic emerged only towards the end of the trial against Catalan leaders. It received a lot of media attention for blocking the airport of Barcelona, but it was overall less important than the Big 3 organizations in this period. Finally, the role of some players was more volatile. UxR was an important mobilizer in the referendum campaign and the year after the referendum but then disappeared again. The SEPC as an integrative part of the UxR also organized some events during this time and became more important in the last period once UxR had disintegrated.

The data illustrate that the weight of organizations within the field of collective action shifted fundamentally in the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention. The comparison of the periods before and after the referendum is particularly striking. While ANC and Òmnium Cultural lost importance, a series of new players emerged. Among them, the CDRs rose to become the most essential drivers of protest action.[8] The independence movement thus became more fragmented and diverse.

Declining Organizing Between Organizations

Organizations do not always plan and prepare protest on their own. Inter-organizational collaboration—or organizing *between* organizations—plays

7 The CDRs actually emerged a few weeks before the referendum, which corresponds to phase 2. However, I did not include them in that phase, because at that point they were still called Committees for the Defense of the *Referendum* and were thus not strictly secessionist.

8 Bear in mind that this only pertains to the *number* of events. The rise of the CDR as the main organizers is linked to the fact that they organized many small but disruptive events throughout the region such as blocking highways and railways. In contrast, ANC and Òmnium Cultural focused more on large-scale events in a single location (often Barcelona). Hence, the number of organized events is not a simple function of organizational capacity but also a product of strategic decisions.

a critical role in social movements, as previous research showed (e.g., Diani, 2015; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Levi & Murphy, 2006; Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010; Wang & Soule, 2012).

My protest event data allowed for protest organizing between organizations to be traced over time, since for each event I coded which compound players were involved as organizers.[9] Joint protest organization can be conceptualized as a close interorganizational tie (cf. Ciordia, 2020, 2021; Wang & Soule, 2012). These ties can then be studied using network analytical tools. I focused on interorganizational ties among the eight main organizers described in the previous section, with the exception of UxR, which as an interorganizational platform represents an instance of collaboration itself. The network statistics in Table 4 display the evolution of these ties over time. In the first period, the network only comprised five compound players as nodes. The CDRs emerged in the third period and Tsunami Democràtic in the fourth. The density of the network increased from the second to third period and declined again afterwards. However, the key indicator for interorganizational collaboration is the Jaccard coefficient in the last line of the table, because it controls for the number of events in each period.

Table 4. Interorganizational collaboration among key compound players

period	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
time	**Oct. 2015–Sept. 2016**	**Oct. 2016–Oct. 1, 2017**	**Oct. 2, 2017–Sept. 2018**	**Oct. 2018–Sept. 2019**	**Oct. 2018–Dec. 2019**
total events	80	180	506	277	362
0 org events	13	76	199	97	198
1 org events	31	37	163	135	90
collab events	36	67	144	45	74
network stats					
nodes	5	5	6	7	7
isolates	0	1	1	2	2
edges	112	76	170	46	70
avg. degree	4.33	3.67	6.29	6	4.5
density	0.6	0.6	0.86	0.71	0.54
Jaccard coeff.					
edge val range	0 – 0.63	0 – 0.62	0 – 0.63	0 – 0.14	0 – 0.70
average edge val	0.16	0.12	0.05	0.03	0.05

9 See Appendix for details on the methodology.

The data show that joint protest organizing between the main secessionist compound players continuously declined from the 2015 regional elections until the sentence against the secessionist leaders in October 2019, when it increased slightly. The referendum marked a turning point in this development. After the referendum, the average Jaccard coefficient dropped substantially and never rose again to pre-referendum levels. Moreover, the growth of the network was accompanied by a steady increase in isolated actors from zero in the first period to two in the last two periods.

Declining collaboration is reflected by three developments at the meso level. First, AMI ceased to be an important compound player after the referendum, as mentioned in the previous section. Before the referendum, many large events were jointly organized by AMI, ANC, and Òmnium Cultural. In contrast, after the referendum AMI organized only four events and was isolated in periods 4 and 5. Second, the emergent actors CDR and Tsunami Democràtic organized most of their protests on their own and collaborated little with other players (Tsunami Democràtic was an isolate in period 4). This was related to their more disruptive action repertoire, which made it difficult to jointly organize protests with the established players which generally preferred contained action. Third, the tie between ANC and Òmnium Cultural always represents the maximum Jaccard value, which points to their generally close collaboration and relationship. Its Jaccard value remained quite stable during the first three periods but dropped drastically (from .63 to .14) in period 4 and increased again in the last period. This points to a fallout between the two organizations between October 2018 and September 2019.

However, the continuous decline of Jaccard values in the first four periods does not capture the role of interorganizational platforms such as UxR or the Taula de la Democràcia as an important part of organizing between organizations. These platforms were coded as discrete players rather than as instances of collaboration between pre-existing players. They were particularly active during the secessionist crisis, which sits at the intersection of periods 2 and 3, which is reflected by the data on UxR in the previous section. As Table 3 shows, the student platform organized most of its events (21 of 25) in the periods right before and after the referendum. A closer look at the timing of these events reveals that most of them took place during the secessionist crisis (see Chapter 4). Organizing between organizations thus took a qualitatively different form during the secessionist crisis, which is not captured by the quantitative measures.

Overall, the descriptive network statistics indicate that secessionist compound players collaborated less in the protest arena after the referendum

on October 1, 2017. Density values and Jaccard coefficients were pronouncedly lower in the two phases after the referendum than in the two before. Established players organized protest together less frequently. At the same time, the protest arena fragmented as more actors emerged. New players such as the CDRs decided to call for protests on their own and collaborated with others only occasionally. During the secessionist crisis, organizing between organizations increased through the forming of interorganizational platforms. This shows that the independence movement was less cohesive after the secessionist crisis.

Conclusion

Over the last 15 years, the political landscape in Catalonia has been undergoing a profound transformation. The territorial conflict between supporters of Catalan independence and those opposed to it has become the primary political cleavage. Between 2012 and 2017 the nature of the conflict remained fairly contained: interactions between the independence movement and the host state mostly followed patterns of normal politics with occasional moments of disruption such as the friction around the 2014 referendum.

In this chapter, I have shown how the territorial conflict acquired a new quality after the announcement of the referendum in 2017. Even in the two years before the referendum, the features of self-determination protest varied very little. It resembled protest in the first phase of the cycle of contention: large and contained protests were organized mainly by ANC, Òmnium Cultural, and AMI, with limited variation in the number of events per month. The announcement of the referendum and the response of the Spanish state shifted both the pace and the adversity of protest. Hence, the escalation of conflict was not only observable in the intergovernmental sphere but also in the protest arena. The dramatic acceleration of the rhythm of protest makes the period of September and October 2017 a full-blown secessionist crisis.

While others have classified the situation already after 2012 as a secessionist crisis (Basta, 2018, 2021; Pagoaga Ibiricu, 2020), I suggest—with the benefit of having some more hindsight on the events—that the term should be reserved exclusively for September and October 2017. Only during this period was there an untenable situation in both the institutional sphere *and* the protest arena.

After the 2017 snap election, the pace of contention slowed down while events became even more adversarial. The independence movement's repertoire of action became much more disruptive through the emergence

of the CDRs and their focus on blocking highways and railways. The sentence against Catalan leaders then produced a second critical moment. Another contentious episode erupted in the streets of Catalonia, which in fact represents the peak in the number of events. The sentence episode can be considered a second crisis that was a direct consequence of the first one. The results confirm previous findings that the radicalization of the movement's repertoire of action was limited throughout the secessionist crisis and its immediate aftermath (Della Porta et al., 2019). However, they also expand these findings by highlighting the violent outbursts during the sentence episode.

Overall, the patterns of protest action described in this chapter are not unfamiliar to social movement scholars. The trajectory of SD protest as an inverted-U shape closely fits the predictions of cyclical theories of social movements, which argue that expansive, transformative, and contractive mechanisms lead to protest mobilization and demobilization (Koopmans, 2004; Tarrow, 1989, 2011). The chapter also demonstrates the importance of strategic interactions between secessionist and counter-secessionist players (cf. Jasper, 2004, 2006; Jasper & Duyvendak, 2015)—similar to what other scholars conceptualized as political opportunity structure (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). For example, the parallel processes of increasing repression and radicalization after the referendum has been observed in many other movements (Alimi et al., 2015; Davenport et al., 2005; Della Porta, 1995; Tarrow, 2011).

The Catalan case hence does not add breaking insights to the literature on protest mobilization. The opposite is true: social movement theories help us understand the Catalan case better. They show that protest mobilization was neither the result of elite mobilization nor a purely bottom-up phenomenon but a product of relational strategic interactions between protesters, their allies, and their opponents, a finding that is familiar from other movements. This chapter represents a first indication in this direction while the coming chapters will add more evidence for this argument.

This chapter has provided some first answers to the question of how the organizational basis of secessionist protest was transformed by the referendum crisis. Drawing on organizational participation variables from the original protest event dataset, I have described the main compound players and their role in SD protest action. The analysis has yielded several findings that are key for the overall argument of this book. First, the data suggest that organizational entities are not a necessary condition for protest action, which runs against classic assumptions in social movement studies (McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1995). Second, I demonstrate

that the structural basis of SD protest is more heterogenous than assumed by previous research, which focused mainly on the ANC and Òmnium Cultural (Crameri, 2015a, 2015b; Della Porta et al., 2017; Dowling, 2018). At the same time, the data show that secessionist organizations are the main driving force behind SD protest. Third, I show that the two main organizations during the normal phase of the secessionist conflict, ANC and Òmnium Cultural, lost importance after the referendum while new challenger organizations, in particular the CDRs, emerged. Finally, network analyses of protest event data showed how organizing between organizations continually declined until the sentence episode. However, during the secessionist crisis there was an increase in organizing between organizations through interorganizational platforms. This demonstrates the importance of secessionist crises for the internal structure of secessionist movements, which has not been acknowledged by the existing research (Cunningham, 2014; Griffiths, 2021).

The analyses laid out in this chapter serve as a foundation for the chapters that follow. Having discussed organizational structures, the following chapters tackle two other dimensions of the organizational basis—processes and practices—in more detail. While this chapter has tackled the overall picture of protest events in a quantitative way, the next chapters select some of the most important protest events and their preparatory processes as case studies by drawing on rich qualitative materials.

References

Alimi, E. Y., Bosi, L., & Demetriou, C. (2015). *The dynamics of radicalization: A relational and comparative perspective*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199937707.001.0001

Álvarez Pereira, B., Portos, M., & Vourdas, J. (2018). Waving goodbye? The determinants of autonomism and secessionism in Western Europe. *Regional studies, 52*(2), 197–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2017.1282609

Barceló, J. (2018). Batons and ballots: The effectiveness of state violence in fighting against Catalan separatism. *Research & politics, 5*(2), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018781747

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Basta, K. (2021). *The symbolic state: Minority recognition, majority backlash, and secession in multinational countries*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Burg, S. L. (2015). Identity, grievances, and popular mobilization for independence in Catalonia. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 21*(3), 289–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2015.1063912

Ciordia, A. (2020). Less divided after ETA? Green networks in the Basque Country between 2007 and 2017. PhD Thesis, University of Trento.

Ciordia, A. (2021). Less divided after ETA? The evolution of ideological cleavages in the Basque environmental field, 2007–2017. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 26*(2), 217–236. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-2-217

Crameri, K. (2015a). *"Goodbye, Spain?": The question of independence for Catalonia*. Sussex Academic Press.

Crameri, K. (2015b). Political power and civil counterpower: The complex dynamics of the Catalan independence movement. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 21*(1), 104–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2015.1003491

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination*. Oxford University Press.

Davenport, C., Johnston, H., & Mueller, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Repression and mobilization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Della Porta, D. (1995). *Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527555

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Portos García, M., & Subirats Ribas, A. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: Direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press.

Ferreira, C. (2021). Entrapped in a failing course of action: Explaining the territorial crisis in 2017 Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies*, Online First, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2021.1907570

Giménez, F., & Gunzelmann, H. J. (2019). Conflict and collaboration in contentious events: The case of the 1-0 in Catalonia. In B. Tejerina, C. Miranda de Almeida de Barros, & I. Perugorría (Eds.), *Sharing society: The impact of collaborative and collective actions in the transformation of contemporary societies: Conference proceedings* (pp. 582–592). Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia.

Griffiths, R. D. (2021). *Secession and the sovereignty game: Strategy and tactics for aspiring nations.* Cornell University Press.

Guibernau, M. (2004). *Catalan nationalism: Francoism, transition and democracy.* Routledge.

Guibernau, M. (2013). Secessionism in Catalonia: After democracy. *Ethnopolitics, 12*(4), 368–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2013.843245

Guinjoan, M., & Rodon, T. (2016). Catalonia at the crossroads: Analysis of the increasing support for secession. In X. Cuadras-Morató (Ed.), *Catalonia: A new independent state in Europe? A debate on secession within the European Union* (pp. 20–61). Routledge.

Guinjoan, M., & Rodon, T. (2017). L'1-O a anàlisi (2): La lògica de l'actuació policial. *Naciódigital.* https://www.naciodigital.cat/elpatidescobert/noticia/38/1-o/analisi/logica/actuacio/policial

Jasper, J. M. (2004). A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social-movement choices. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 9*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.9.1.m112677546p63361

Jasper, J. M. (2006). *Getting your way: Strategic dilemmas in the real world.* University of Chicago Press.

Jasper, J. M., & Duyvendak, J. W. (Eds.). (2015). *Players and arenas: The interactive dynamics of protest.* Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285

Johnston, H. (1991). *Tales of nationalism: Catalonia, 1939–1979.* Rutgers University Press.

Keating, M. (2001). *Nations against the state: The new politics of nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland* (2nd ed). Palgrave.

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Levi, M., & Murphy, G. H. (2006). Coalitions of contention: The case of the WTO protests in Seattle. *Political Studies, 54*(4), 651–670. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2006.00629.x

López, J., & Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). The political use of de facto referendums of independence: The case of Catalonia. *Representation*, Online First, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2020.1720790

Martí, D., & Cetrà, D. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: A de facto referendum on independence? *Regional & Federal Studies, 26*(1), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2016.1145116

Muñoz, J., & Guinjoan, M. (2013). Accounting for internal variation in nationalist mobilization: Unofficial referendums for independence in Catalonia (2009–11). *Nations and Nationalism, 19*(1), 44–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12006

Muñoz, J., & Tormos, R. (2015). Economic expectations and support for secession in Catalonia: Between causality and rationalization. *European Political Science Review, 7*(02), 315–341. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000174

Ordeix, E., & Ginesta, X. (2014). Political engagement principles as the basis for new regional self-determination processes in Europe: The case of Catalonia. *American Behavioral Scientist, 58*(7), 928–940. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213506214

Orriols, L., & Rodon, T. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: The independence bid at the polls. *South European Society and Politics, 21*(3), 359–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1191182

Pagoaga Ibiricu, I. (2020). Party competition during secession crises in advanced democracies. *Regional & Federal Studies*, Online First, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2020.1824994

Sampson, R. J., McAdam, D., MacIndoe, H., & Weffer-Elizondo, S. (2005). Civil society reconsidered: The durable nature and community structure of collective civic action. *American Journal of Sociology, 111*(3), 673–714. https://doi.org/10.1086/497351

Serrano, I. (2013). Just a matter of identity? Support for independence in Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies, 23*(5), 523–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.775945

Tarrow, S. G. (1989). *Democracy and disorder: Protest and politics in Italy, 1965–1975.* Clarendon.

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (1995). *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834.* Harvard University Press.

Ubasart-González, G. (2021). The independence procés in Catalonia: The triple Spanish crisis and an unresolved question of sovereignty. In Ó. G. Agustín (Ed.), *Catalan independence and the crisis of sovereignty* (pp. 33–55). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54867-4_2

Van Dyke, N., & McCammon, H. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Strategic alliances: Coalition building and social movements*. University of Minnesota Press.

Vilaregut, R. (2004). *Terra Lliure: La temptació armada a Catalunya*. Columna.

Vilaregut, R. (2010). *Memòria i emergència en l'independentisme català. El cas de la Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir.* Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Wang, D. J., & Soule, S. A. (2012). Social movement organizational collaboration: Networks of learning and the diffusion of protest tactics, 1960–1995. *American Journal of Sociology, 117*(6), 1674–1722. https://doi.org/10.1086/664685

Zald, M. N., & McCarthy, J. D. (Eds.). (1979). *The dynamics of social movements: Resource mobilization, social control, and tactics*. Winthrop Publishers.

4 Crisis Organizing: From Normal Times to Intense Times

Abstract
This chapter looks at the intensification of the Catalan secessionist conflict after the announcement of the referendum in June 2017. It argues that the transition from normal to intense times of conflict transformed organizing within the movement. It analyzes the preparatory processes of two protest events during the intense phase (the September 20 protests and the occupation of the University of Barcelona) and how they differed from previous processes. The analysis shows that protest organizing became quicker and directed during the secessionist crisis and increasingly took place between and outside organizations. I argue that this mode of "crisis organizing" can be explained by frame alignment and intensifying repression. It is reinforced by increased uncertainty and time pressure in this phase.

Keywords: Secessionist Crisis, Organizational Processes, Collaboration, Frame Alignment, Repression

Protests have become so familiar that they seem an everyday feature of contemporary democracies. The same could be said about secessionist contention in Catalonia. Demands for independence have become a central characteristic of Catalan politics. As shown in the previous chapter, the period between 2012 and 2017 can be called the "normal" times of conflict in comparison to what was to follow. In this phase, not only protests but also organizational structures, processes, and practices of the movement became normalized.

However, neither protest nor its organization remains stable over time. Scholars have shown that protest comes and goes in waves, tides, or cycles (Beissinger, 1996, 2002; Koopmans, 2004; Tarrow, 1989, 2011). The previous chapter has demonstrated how the secessionist conflict in Catalonia intensified after the announcement of the referendum in 2017. I have called this condensed series of occurrences between September 6 and October 27 a

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH04

secessionist crisis. The intensification of the conflict poses a question: how did the secessionist challengers organize protest during this crisis? Did their protest organizing change in comparison to the previous normal phase?

Existing research on organization in social movements tells us very little about these questions, because it has not been particularly sensitive to the cyclical dynamics of contentious politics. It has shown that new social movement organizations (SMOs) often emerge during the expansive phases of cycles of contention (Kriesi, 1996; Tarrow, 2011) and collapse under the impact of repression in the contracting phase that comes after (Davenport, 2014; Jeffries, 2002). However, there has been little interest in the organizational consequences of intense conflict beyond counting SMOs and their properties.

This is why this chapter and the ones that follow zoom in on some of the most important protest events of the secessionist cycle of contention and focus on their organizational "backstage" using the qualitative materials I gathered. The cases are the protests on September 20, the occupation of the University of Barcelona, the defense of the voting stations on the weekend of the referendum, the general strike on October 3, the general strike on November 9, and the March 2018 protests. I also look at the organization of the yearly Diada events, as well as two campaigns by the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Òmnium Cultural: Ara és l'hora and Llibertat Presos Polítics. Table 5 provides an overview of these nine cases.

Table 5. Overview of cases

Case	Dates	Description	Time	Chapter
Diada demonstration	Every Sept. 11 2012–2017	Massive street rally	Normal	4
Ara és l'hora campaign	July 17, 2014–Nov. 9, 2014	ANC and Òmnium Cultural campaign	Normal	4
20-S demonstration	Sept. 20, 2017	Obstruction of exits of the Catalan Department of Economy and the headquarters of the CUP	Crisis	4
Occupation University of Barcelona	July 22, 2017–Oct. 2, 2017	Occupation of the historic building of the University of Barcelona	Crisis	4
Defense of the voting stations	Sept. 29, 2017–Oct. 1, 2017	Occupation of voting stations and resistance against police intervention	Crisis	5
3-O general strike	Oct. 3, 2017	Strikes, pickets, mass rallies and marches	Crisis	6

Case	Dates	Description	Time	Chapter
Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign	Oct. 17, 2017–Apr. 5, 2018	Òmnium Cultural campaign	Crisis/ Post-Crisis	7
8-N general strike	Nov. 8, 2017	Highway and railway blockades, strikes, pickets, marches	Post-Crisis	6
March 2018 protests	Mar. 23, 2018–Mar. 31, 2018	Highway and railway blockades, marches, rallies	Post-Crisis	7

This chapter focuses on the first four of these cases. The Ara és l'hora campaign and the yearly Diada protests are exemplary cases for the organizing processes of ANC and Òmnium Cultural during the normal times of conflict between 2012 and 2017. In contrast, the September 20 protest and the occupation of the University of Barcelona were organized during the 2017 secessionist crisis. As the comparison shows, the two organizing processes of the two latter differ substantially from the two former ones. I argue that this is due to a different mode of protest organizing during phases of intense conflict, which I label *crisis organizing*.

The first part of the chapter focuses on organizing in normal times. I describe the organizing processes of the Ara és l'hora campaign and the yearly Diada protests, before I outline the four main organizational practices in this phase. The second part of the chapter shows how secessionist organizers made sense of their strategic interactions with the Spanish state as well as the Catalan government and political parties during the weeks before the referendum. The third part describes the organizing processes of the September 20 protest and the occupation of the University of Barcelona. The fourth section discusses how these two cases differed from previous organizing processes and shows how crisis organizing was driven by strategic interactions with allies and opponents.

Organizing in Normal Times

The foundation of the ANC and the regional elections in 2012 can be considered the end of the emergence phase of the secessionist conflict. What followed was a period of mostly contained interactions between the independence movement and the host state, as I have shown in the previous chapter. The same was true for the organizational basis of secessionist contention, which was relatively stable between 2012 and 2017. While the previous chapter has looked at organizational structures, this section tackles

organizational processes and practices in normal times. First, I turn to the campaigns of ANC and Òmnium Cultural, which represent a particular kind of organizational process. Second, I look more specifically at the preparatory process of the Diada protests as the prototypical protest event in normal times. The third part describes four key organizational practices that were key in normal times across both structures and processes: public assemblies, instant messenger applications, deliberation, and directing.

Campaigning: Ara és l'hora

Òmnium Cultural and ANC had in common that they organized their contentious actions in what their organizers called campaigns (*campanyes*). Campaigns represented bundles of different collective actions that were connected through a common theme or message and that extended over a couple of weeks or months. Due to this structuring, it made more sense to consider the organizing processes of entire campaigns rather than single actions. Between 2012 and 2017, both organizations engaged in a range of different campaigns. I focus here on the Ara és l'hora ("Now is the time") campaign, which was jointly organized by the two organizations for the informal referendum on November 9, 2014. This campaign consisted primarily of

> macro-events, mass demonstrations and symbolic performances that would attract participants form across Catalonia, as a means to communicate, raise awareness and gain salience, employing a more protest-oriented campaign in a context of apathy and defiance of the rule of law by the Spanish elites. (Della Porta et al., 2017, p. 78)

The major protest event of the campaign was the Diada on September 11, 2014, when participants formed a giant "V" on the streets of Barcelona. This was accompanied by many smaller protest events, but also of messages in the media and on street stands. In the Ara és l'hora campaign, both organizations relied less on traditional media outlets such as newspapers and TV stations, but increasingly on information and communication technologies (ICTs), and messenger applications in particular. This allowed them to operate independently of editorial lines and establish a direct communication with their supporters. Finally, both Òmnium Cultural and ANC engaged in direct lobbying, holding meetings with the pro-independence parties.

Overall, the campaign consisted of persuasive and contained actions with very low levels of disruption. Muriel Casals, president of Òmnium Cultural at that time, called the independence movement the "Smiling Revolution"

(*La Revolució dels Somriures*). Activists often dubbed themselves as "orderly people" (*gent d'ordre*) or "peaceful people" (*gent de pau*), because of the movement's contained repertoire of action. Also, the preparations of these actions were well-coordinated and orderly. From the analysis of the empirical data, five steps in the organizing process of the campaigns were identified.

The first step in the campaign was to establish a working group or a committee, which was responsible for taking the central decisions and carrying the load of the preparatory work. Each organization formed a group of volunteers and professionals but also a joint committee to coordinate the process. Òmnium Cultural organizer Beatriu emphasized the need to include "people with different skills" in the committee, also hiring people from outside the organization. Second, the preparations of the campaign started with "establishing a story," as Òmnium Cultural staff member Alex said. The slogan "Ara és l'hora" ("Now is the time") created a sense of urgency and readiness for the right to self-determination. Organizers also had to think about how to develop narratives and frames in line with the slogan, and how they would be received in a given context. Third, just like any larger campaign, Ara és l'hora had to obtain resources. For ANC and Òmnium, which both had a large and growing paying membership, this did not represent a particularly great obstacle. In addition to membership fees, money was raised through selling merchandising material. Fourth, the campaign committee developed a calendar for the campaign. As mentioned above, the campaign consisted of a series of events (*actes*): for example, public talks, street gatherings, and massive performances. Every event required its own material preparation. Depending on the type of action, speakers had to be contacted, stages built, and messages sent out. Fifth, the campaign was also implemented at the local level. As mentioned above, the ANC in particular had strong roots in neighborhoods and small towns, organized as territorial sections. The leaderships of both organizations tried to mobilize the local level as much as possible. This included not only passing materials and resources to the territorial sections, but also synchronizing frames, narratives, and events with the Catalan level.

These five steps emerged from the empirical data. They resemble the model of the organizing process proposed by Rucht (2017). Given that the analysis was based on representational data, the five steps are not a fully exhaustive list of preparatory activities. Interviewees likely omitted more mundane activities that they took for granted. The five elements should be considered overlapping phases rather than independent sequential steps. The organizing process resulted in a campaign that was crucial in mobilizing the Catalan population for the 9-N referendum (Della Porta et al., 2017).

The success of the organizing process made Ara és l'hora a blueprint for all following campaigns, as Òmnium Cultural organizer Beatriu explained.

> And this campaign [Ara és l'hora] worked super well. After this learning process, we have applied it to all campaigns afterwards. Not only pro-independence campaigns, but also from Lluites Compartides to Demà pots ser tu, which are campaigns with more social content.

Ara és l'hora was obviously not the only campaign in the period from 2012 until 2017. But Beatriu's statement suggested that it can be considered representative for the ways in which ANC and Òmnium Cultural organized protest in this period of normal secessionist politics. Their repertoire of action was characterized by massive symbolic performances which were planned and prepared in a meticulous organizing process. Over these years, as both organizations increased their membership and staff, organizers improved this process and their contentious capacity. In this way, the two organizations became the most important civil society actors of the independence movement and the main drivers of contentious action.

Process: Organizing the Diada

The Diada had been organized by the ANC since 2012 and turned out massive numbers of protesters each year. In the interviews, ANC organizers pointed out the enormous amount of time and preparatory work that went into the Diada each year. Organizers reported that the ANC dedicated almost half a year to the meticulous preparation of the Diada. The detailed plan for the protest required a variety of preparatory tasks. For instance, every local chapter of the ANC was responsible to prepare a stretch of the street where the demonstration happened. ANC Organizer Carme described the details of these preparations as follows.

> You have to understand that the hardest work of the summer is to organize the demonstration. No? So in this stretch [of the street] you have to organize a team of volunteers, the have to go see "their" stretch. We speak with all the businesses in that stretch, we let them know there will be a demonstration, that they have drinks that they—whether they let us use the bathrooms—we mark on a map if there are pharmacies, water fountains, the subway exits. We visit the stretch, we look at all the places that could be potentially dangerous. Then we secure them off. Oh, I don't know, we decorate our stretch. Every local chapter is in

> charge to decorate their stretch. Then there is the design of the protest. The shirt is provided by the national ANC, but for every stretch there is a local chapter in charge. Normally that is a chapter from Barcelona. And they host a chapter from outside Barcelona. A district from the Maresme or whatever. And then we do it together, and the work we have is to sell t-shirts and that is a lot of work, selling t-shirts.

The level of detail described by Carme required an enormous amount of preparatory work, especially because of the massive scale of the protest. Due to the huge success in 2012, organizers expected a turnout of more than a million protesters in the following years as well.

The complexity of these preparations was organized in a streamlined process. Five features of the organizing process stand out. First, the Diada was planned and prepared primarily by the ANC as a single SMO, although it was endorsed and supported by many other organizations such as Òmnium Cultural. Thus, there was less interorganizational work necessary and no negotiations about the place, slogan, and timing of the demonstration. The organization also provided both material and human resources that were necessary to achieve the level of detail. Second, the decisions in the process were made primarily the leadership bodies of the organization, i.e., the Secretariat and board of directors. There was a clear division of labor between the leadership and the local chapters. The centralized decision-making and division of labor made it easier to allocate the preparatory tasks. Third, ANC organizers benefited from already having organized the Diada for several years in a row. Interviewee Carme pointed out that over the years, they had accumulated a lot of experience and were "professionals" now. She underlined that this routinization made the preparatory process a lot easier. Fourth, while the Diada was one of the largest protests in Europe, it was also a contained performance. It did not involve any planned confrontation with authorities, police, or other opponents. Fifth, and finally: the ANC invested a lot of time into preparing the Diada—which of course made the organizing process a lot smoother.

As such, the Diada came close to the model proposed by Rucht (2017), but the difference was that the Diada required almost no interorganizational effort. Rather it represents an exemplary case of organizing *inside* a single organization. As such, the organizing process seemed typical for many of the contained and routine protests of a movement society (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998).

This Diada is only part of the picture though. The massive protest actions by ANC and Òmnium Cultural represented only the tip of the iceberg of

contentious activities in the period from 2012 to 2017. There was a large number of smaller, often local protest actions in this time. These protests were often organized by three categories of players that I have described in the previous chapter: the local networks that emerged from the wave of referendums, the pro-independence student movement, and the independentist Left. The data suggested that these players organized protests differently from the professionalized, structured, and often very vertical processes of Òmnium Cultural and ANC. Interviewees highlighted the emphasis on deliberative decision-making, open assemblies, and volunteer work. This form of protest organizing was closely connected to the tradition of Catalan left-wing movements, some interviewees said.

In their research on the secessionist cycle of contention until the 9-N, Della Porta et al. (2017, p. 70) found that pro-independence "mobilisations were characterised by a focus on horizontality, democratic decision making and inclusivity." This was certainly true for smaller protests organized by local networks, the student organizations, the independentist Left, and (to some extent) the ANC, who all championed prefigurative ways of protest organizing. However, the preceding discussion on the Ara és l'hora case shows that there was another, more dominant mode of protest organizing: organizing large campaigns focusing on mass protest involved very structured and often top-down processes that were carried by the professional staff of ANC and Òmnium Cultural.

Organizational Practices Across Times

In this section, I describe four organizational practices in the Catalan independence movement: public assemblies, instant messenger use, deliberation, and directing. Of course, these four practices do not represent a comprehensive picture of all organizational practices in the independence movement. One could write an entire book on each of these practices, but the descriptions presented here are necessarily synthetic.

The four practices relate to two important dimensions of organizing, which I have described in the conceptual chapter: communication and decision-making. On the one hand, the practices of public assemblies and instant messenger use are part of the communication side of organizing. Other communicative practices would be writing emails and making phone calls, but they were far less prominent in the data. On the other hand, deliberation and directing constitute the decision-making side of organizing. Another decision-making practice that came up in the data was voting, but deliberation and directing were more relevant. Table 6 provides an

overview of these organizational practices. However, I want to stress that the two dimensions are not intended as a generalizable typology in which all organizational practices must fit. The dimensions emerged as categories from the empirical material and help to analytically make sense of how organizing works in the independence movement.

Table 6. Dimensions of organizational practices in the independence movement

Communication	Decision
Public assemblies	Deliberation
Instant messenger use	Directing

What I present are *generalized* accounts of these practices. This means that these descriptions cover many empirical observations in different organizational contexts over time. As such, they are distinct from the other empirical descriptions in this book, which all refer to a specific period of time.

The repetitive character of practices means that they are relatively robust over time. This suggests that the four practices described here are likely to work in the same ways throughout normal and intense times. This does not mean that practices are rigid routines. They are flexible ways of doing things—no single performance of a practice is identical. Also, the accounts are located at a fairly high level of abstraction. How they look "in practice" will depend to some extent on timing and organizational context.

What changes over time is how activists *combine* certain practices at given times. Organizing requires both communication *and* decision-making. But practices can also be combined within the two dimensions. For example, activists often use both face-to-face communication and digital means at the same time (Kavada, 2010). The four practices are part of the organizational *repertoire* of the independence movement. From this repertoire, activists choose and combine different practices at different times, resulting in different textures of the field of practice. The next four sections describe each of the practices. The final section shows how activists combined these practices in normal times of conflict.

Public Assemblies

An assembly has been described as a large meeting that allows participants to engage in some "side involvement" with other participants (Goffman 1963, cited in Haug, 2013, p. 709). The practice of public assemblies in the independence movement involved nine features. First, like any kind of

meeting, public assemblies, are "by their very nature, talk. Talk, talk, talk and more talk," as Boden (1994, p. 82) puts it. Second, public assemblies involve participants gathering physically in the same space and engaging in face-to-face communication. Third, these spaces must be open and accessible, giving a public character to the assembly. Fourth, participants normally do not speak whenever they want, but turns of talk are facilitated by one of the participants. Fifth, the assembly follows an agenda which defines the main talking points. Sixth, the main points of the discussion are collected in the form of meeting minutes. Seventh, the assembly and its agenda are prepared and announced by some of the participants. Eighth, public assemblies as practices are not one-time events, but are performed repeatedly, normally in a fixed rhythm (e.g., weekly, bimonthly, or monthly) that does not preclude extraordinary assemblies. Ninth, the tasks of facilitation, preparation, and minute-taking rotate among members from one meeting to another.

These features distinguish the practice of public assemblies from other meeting practices, many of which were also called "assemblies" by the interviewees. There were four examples in the data. First, an interorganizational meeting was called "assembly" at times, but it is based on organizational membership and therefore not open to all activists. Second, national meetings of organizations were often called assemblies. This is the setting where local sections of those organizations or different groups with the same affiliation meet once or twice a year. These might be open for outsiders to attend, but decision-making is based on organizational units. Third, some organizations or groups called themselves "assemblies"—most prominently the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC). They might have open assemblies, but usually they are limited to members. Finally, some interviewees spoke of "online assemblies," which are different because they lack face-to-face contact. Also, they very likely lack the minimal degree of openness, because they are not publicly announced. In sum, not everything that was called "assembly" in the data actually referred to the narrow kind of practice that I described before.

Instant Messenger Applications

In the interviews, organizers highlighted the importance of using instant messenger applications (IMAs) for organizational purposes. Organizer Xavi from a Committee for the Defense of the Referendum (CDR), for example, described the role of messengers in communication and media work as follows:

> A lot of WhatsApp—a *lot* of WhatsApp, a lot of Telegram, like really a lot. I would say, by order it would be WhatsApp and Telegram, they were

> "steaming." Then Twitter, and then other networks, like Facebook or whatever and I would say that the traditional media were lagging behind

Instant messengers are used primarily through mobile phones, which have become a key technology for protesters because of their versatility, allowing for communication with other activists, authorities, and the wider public (Neumayer & Stald, 2014).

Activists in the Catalan independence movement use three IMAs: WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal. The applications work in similar ways, but differ to some extent with regard to three properties. The first is the perceived level of their security. Although by the time of the research, all of these services offer end-to-end encryption, activists perceived them as offering different standards of protection. WhatsApp was generally considered the least secure, while Telegram and Signal in particular were considered safer.

Second, the applications offer different *directionalities* of communication, i.e., unidirectional, bidirectional, and multidirectional. For activists, and organizers in particular, the crucial function of IMAs is that they allow creating group chats with several hundred participants. These group chats are used by organizers in two different ways. On the one hand, many group chats allow for multiparty communication. In other words, any participant can send their message in the chat without any restrictions. On the other hand, organizers use group chats as one-way tools. They create groups with a single sender and multiple receivers who cannot send messages to the group—basically a news feed.

Third, access to these messenger groups differs. The messenger group can be open or closed. In part, access depends on the features of the IMAs. Users can only join WhatsApp or Signal groups if invited by the group administrator either via their phone number or a link. On Telegram, users can search for open groups and join them directly. However, openness and closure depend mostly on the decisions of organizers who run the group chat: based on membership in a group or organization, being part of a network, or completely open.

Deliberation

Deliberation, as it emerged from the interview data, refers to overcoming conflict or disagreement through the exchange of arguments, narratives, or testimonies to reach a consensus. Let me elaborate on its elements.

First, in all interviews, organizers reported instances of debate and discussion among activists. Debate can happen at various levels: at the movement level, in an organization, between organizations, in meetings, in

emails, or in private conversations. Debate means that there is a minimum of disagreement, which becomes manifest in the interaction among activists. Interviewees referred to the debates as exchanges of arguments, narratives, or testimonies. Second, interviewees not only described the debates, but also highlighted the need to overcome disagreement and find a consensus. Many groups in the independence movement champion consensus as the preferred mode of decision-making. Organizer Irene from the Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (SEPC), for instance, stressed that "it's true that sometimes there are intense debates, but we always come to a consensus, to an agreement." In other words, deliberation means an interactive effort to reach agreement in the face of conflict.

Of course, consensus is not the only means to settle disagreement: in the data, there was also evidence about other solutions, such as voting, exit (of some participants), or silencing dissent. Conversely, consensus need not always be the result of deliberation. Finding consensus through deliberation is highly organizational. It reduces complexity, because it represents a move from several positions among participants to a common one. This means discarding other options and committing to a single line of action. Thereby, deliberation orders other movement activities. However, it is not the only way to reduce complexity. In the next section, I describe the practice of directing in the independence movement.

Directing

Despite the important role of deliberative practice described in the previous section, the empirical data also contained rich evidence on another practice that almost could not be more opposed to ideas of deliberative democracy: telling other people what to do.

First, of all, directing is a relational practice; it cannot be performed by individuals in isolation. It establishes a relationship between those who direct—which I will call directors—and those who are directed. Second, directing other people means to exercise power. However, it refers to a relationship where those directing other activists do not have coercive means to actually impose their will on them. Interviewees sometimes speak of "giving orders," but these orders require the compliance of other participants, rather than disobedience. This is why I prefer the label *directing* over the more coercive-sounding *ordering*—organizers depend on the voluntary efforts of other participants (cf. Andrews et al., 2010).[1] Third, while

1 This is why directing is a form of "soft" power, which is "based on arguments and/or the appeal to experiences and/or emotions by the use of narratives or symbols" (Haug et al., 2015,

it is different from coercion, directing can rest on some sort of formalized authority. SMOs delegate decision-making to boards of directors and other forms of “organized power” (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011), which often direct other participants. However, the two should not be equated. Activists who hold formal authority in social movements might still seek deliberation with other participants. Conversely, even activists who do not occupy a formal role might direct others at times.

Weaving the Texture: Combining Practices in Normal Times

Organizers in the independence movement rarely used these practices in isolation, but *combined* them. Theoretically, there are four mixed types combining different practices:

- Deliberative assemblies
- Directed assemblies
- Diffusion of directives
- Messenger deliberations

These four types combine different forms of communication and decision-making. First, the most typical association is between deliberation and assemblies: activists overcome their disagreements and find consensus by debating face-to-face in a public space. But there are also other possibilities. As I show in Chapter 8, public assemblies can be used by organizers to give instructions to other activists. Directing can be combined with the use of instant messengers. Finally, activists can use instant messengers to deliberate in group chats.

Beyond these simple combinations of two practices, more complex connections are possible. For example, activists often integrate face-to-face and online communication (Kavada, 2010). Some groups in the independence movement deliberated in public assemblies but use messengers as a supporting practice to share documents (for example agendas and minutes) for these assemblies. Conversely, some interviewees mentioned assemblies to prepare the diffusion of directions through messengers. From these complex combinations of the four basic practices arises what I call, following Gherardi (2012), the *texture* of organizational practices. While the four practices represent relatively stable constructs, their combinations, and thus the

p. 38). In this regard it is actually quite similar to deliberation, which is also a form of soft power. However, deliberation is fundamentally based on the *exchange* of arguments, whereas directing represents a unilateral form of communication.

texture of practice, are more flexible. Combinations can change over time and also according to the organizational context.

Summary

During the normal times of conflict between 2012 and 2017, there were two primary configurations of the organizational basis of secessionist protest. These configurations encompass the structural, process, and practice levels of the organizational basis.

On the one hand, ANC and Òmnium Cultural prepared contained mass protests in long and detailed processes, such as the one for the Diada (described above). These organizing processes were often embedded in larger campaigns, such as the Ara és l'hora campaign. Deliberation was an important decision-making practice in both these organizations. These deliberations took place among leaders in the Boards of Directors or the Executives of both organizations. Deliberation was often combined with voting, which was less relevant for interviewees though. Messenger applications were important to diffuse decisions as directives to the local and sectorial levels of both organizations. The ANC also used deliberative assemblies in the Secretariat and at the local level. In both organizations, these practices were embedded in a professionalized formal organizational structure, which regulated the use of these practices.

On the other hand, the groups and organizations of the local networks, the student organizations, and independentist Left used these practices in both formal and informal ways. The most important organizational practice in these groups were deliberative assemblies. As mentioned above, interviewees from the independentist Left and the student groups emphasized the importance of assemblies as a participatory decision-making space. Of course, some organizations had leadership groups that used directing, but this was less frequent. In general, directed assemblies and messenger deliberation were rather uncommon textures of practice in this normal time of conflict. These two modes of protest organizing formed the backstage of secessionist protest between 2012 and 2017.

Intensifying Interactions

The organizational processes and practices described in the first part of this chapter were fairly stable between 2012 and 2017. However, they underwent profound transformations once the secessionist conflict

intensified. This chapter takes a closer look at the strategic interactions between movement organizers, their allies (secessionist political parties and the regional government), and their opponents (the Spanish institutions and the police) just before the referendum. I argue that how organizers made sense of these interactions was key for how they adapted their practices and processes. This section describes these interactions before the following chapter turns to the two cases of protest organizing during the secessionist crisis.

Interacting with Allies: Frame Alignment

The period after the 2015 regional elections was dominated by interactions between the several players of the independence movement and the regional government. These interactions revolved around finding the right movement strategy for achieving independence and resulted in *frame alignment* (Snow et al., 1986) around the referendum as a shared *prognostic frame* (Snow & Benford, 1988).

Interviewees pointed out that both the regional government and the independence movement had abandoned the idea of another referendum after the November 9 referendum in 2014 (9-N). However, when the Spanish Constitutional Court suspended the motion by the secessionist parties in the Catalan parliament right after the 2015 regional elections, the unilateral strategy promised beforehand had effectively reached an impasse (see Chapter 3). The ruling of the court and the tumultuous election episode sparked a new debate within the independence movement about how to proceed further.

Several interviewees stated that the idea of another referendum, this time with binding effects, was brought up by the left-wing party Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP) in the discussion. Initially, the proposal was met with both support and opposition within the movement. Interviewee Gerard, for example, said that the referendum was "something that the movement had already abandoned" at that point. In his view, it was a position of the non-secessionist Catalunya en Comù back then. Among secessionists, in contrast, "there was a little bit of 'what are we doing here?'" Also, ANC organizer Judit said that "after Puigdemont won [the parliament vote to become President], it was like 'let's see what happens.'" Within the ANC's leadership, there was a group demanding another referendum. Another part of the leadership was opposed to that strategy, arguing that the only option would be a unilateral declaration of independence. The leadership solved this internal debate by consulting the ANC membership. An internal poll was carried out, asking

whether the ANC should demand the government to call for a referendum. The referendum option clearly won the vote and the ANC as an organization officially pronounced itself in favor as well. Subsequently, both the CUP and the ANC but also other players pressured the government to pursue this strategy. The CUP even threatened to withdraw their parliamentary support for the 2017 budget of the autonomous community, which would have meant an early ending to Puigdemont's tenure.

After surviving a vote of confidence in the Catalan parliament on September 28, 2016, Puigdemont changed his original course and vowed to call a referendum on independence in 2017. The announcement ended the debate and the movement aligned around the referendum as a prognostic frame, as expert interviewee Ivan explained: "When Puigdemont said he would do it, everybody aligned with this idea." This was a common thread throughout the interviews. Organizers highlighted that the goal to hold another referendum was shared among all movement players in the year before the October 1 referendum (abbreviated 1-O). Or, as CDR organizer Sergi put it: "For the 1-O, it was important that all strategies converge in one." This also meant to table other discussions, as interviewee Berta pointed out:

> Then, the models? About the models, the people will decide. I know already what model I want for my city, for my country, but maybe another person wants another one. Well, this is democracy, right?

Thus, there was not a lot of strategic debate within the movement in the year before the 1-O. The strategizing was done and the prognostic frame was clear and tangible, which allowed movement players to concentrate their efforts on campaigning, organizing, and mobilizing (see also Della Porta et al., 2020).

All sectors of the movement pursued the idea to hold a binding referendum resting on an agreement with the host state, like in Scotland or Québec. Òmnium Cultural initiated the Pacte Nacional pel Referèndum, a campaign to gather signatures demanding an agreement between the Catalan institutions and the Spanish state. However, it soon became clear that this would not be possible. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy declared repeatedly that he would not agree to a referendum in Catalonia and that he would be willing to take all necessary steps to prevent a unilateral referendum organized by the regional institutions. In the face of such strong opposition from the Spanish state, it became unclear to most activists how the referendum strategy would play out in practice. This did not alter the strategy, however. In the words of ANC organizer Berta, the goal was still clear: "to make the

referendum work." The Catalan government tried to negotiate an agreement until the last moments, but decided, in September 2017, to carry out the referendum against all legal and institutional obstacles. This would require a massive mobilization by the Catalan pro-independence civil society to occupy and defend the voting stations against police intervention.

I have traced here how the Catalan independence movement went through a strategizing process after the 2015 regional elections that resulted in alignment around the binding but unilateral referendum as a prognostic frame. Although the referendum frame built on existing actions and frames, in particular the previous referendums and the related right to decide, it was the product of an extensive debate among several movement players and the regional government. Frame alignment was a critical process in the movement's strategy making. The next section turns to the counter-secessionist response to the referendum frame.

Interacting with Opponents: Counter-Secessionist Repression

The secessionist move for a *binding* referendum pushed the territorial conflict in Catalonia into a new dimension of escalation. A binding referendum would render everything prior "just gymnastics," as one interviewee called it. A crucial move was the adoption of a legal framework that encompassed one law ("Law 19/2017 on the Referendum on Self-Determination") and two decrees (139/2017 and 140/2017) by the Catalan parliament. The Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination was passed in a controversial parliamentary session on September 6, when the unionist parties (Partido Popular, Ciutadans, and Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya) left the plenary before the vote (Letamendia, 2018).[2] It delegated the power to carry out the Law on the Referendum to the Electoral Administration of the Generalitat.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy had declared repeatedly that his government considered a referendum on Catalan independence unconstitutional if only held in Catalonia. In the government's view, the territorial question would have to be decided by all Spaniards. Rajoy publicly committed to prevent a referendum in Catalonia.

2 The main provisions of the law included the formation and appointment of an electoral commission for the referendum, the question on the ballot ("Do you want Catalonia to be an independent state in the form of a republic?") and the response options ("Yes" or "No"), as well as the electoral roll (all persons with the right to vote in the elections to the Catalan parliament as well as Catalans abroad). The decree 139/2017 represented the official call for the referendum, and the decree 140/2017 regulated all the administrative details.

The first major action against the referendum occurred on September 7, when the Spanish government took the Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination to the Constitutional Court. The court suspended the law immediately, while also explicitly warning the public servants of the regional government and the 948 Catalan mayors that they would face personal juridical consequences if they participated in the preparation of the referendum. That very same day, the Civil Guard carried out a raid to search for ballots in the printing firm Indugraf near Tarragona, and three days later in the newspaper *El Vallenc*, but in both cases they came up empty-handed (Vicens & Tedó, 2018, pp. 76–77). The ruling of the court was the legal basis for a series of further police actions against the referendum preparations. For instance, 712 of these mayors were cited by the attorney general on September 13 for alleged collaboration in the organization of the plebiscite (Giménez & Gunzelmann, 2019). At the same time, the Constitutional Court notified media outlets that they might face fines if they published advertisements for the referendum. However, the secessionist challengers did not give in to the court and the police and continued to prepare the referendum.

The second blow against the referendum preparations was the Anubis Operation on September 20 (20-S). The Spanish police had already carried out more raids at printing houses in different cities throughout Catalonia, for example seizing 45,000 envelopes from the firm Unipost in Terassa some days before. But the 20-S represented the peak of repressive action against the preparatory process of the referendum. On that day, the Spanish National Police and the Civil Guard carried out 41 raids and 14 arrests in Catalan public institutions (Giménez & Gunzelmann, 2019). Most notably, in the morning, the Civil Guard entered the Catalan Department of Economy in Barcelona, confiscated documents, and detained Josep Maria Jové, one of the most important civil servants in the department (Vicens & Tedó, 2018, p. 84). Police forces also attempted to search the headquarters of the CUP without a warrant, but were prevented from doing so by protesters who occupied the entrance of the building. Furthermore, police confiscated another two million ballots in a small town in the Vallès. Finally, three cruise ships with about 5,400 riot police arrived in Catalonia. Two of them docked in Barcelona, another one in Tarragona (Giménez & Gunzelmann, 2019).

Protest organizers perceived these counter-secessionist actions as threats to the referendum and the movement as a whole. One interviewee stated that activists were constantly living “in tension” in the weeks prior to the referendum. Another one said that “you could smell this climate of tension and repression, which was intensifying,” and that organizers were “afraid of everything” that could be a potential threat to the movement.

The increasing repression against the movement, and the Anubis Operation in particular, were perceived as transformative. A significant part of the movement, including ANC and Òmnium Cultural, had not encountered much opposition, let alone physical repression by the state, in the years before the referendum campaign. As mentioned before, former Òmnium Cultural leader Muriel Casals had dubbed the independence movement the "Smiling Revolution" (*La Revolució dels Somriures*), because of its peaceful and orderly repertoire of action. Before the referendum campaign, the movement had engaged in legal quarrels with the Spanish state, but not in confrontational action. Of course, this view was not shared by everyone in the movement. The independentist Left had been used to repression for a long time before the referendum. Nevertheless, even leftist interviewees stressed the different quality of repression. The image of police raiding public institutions had created the perception of a generalized attack on the movement and its representatives. This perception would be reinforced after the crackdown of voters on the day of the referendum, which I discuss in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7. The next two sections turn to the protests in the weeks prior to the referendum.

September 20: Protests Against Police Actions

On September 20, 2017, there were three major protest actions in response to the repressive actions by the Spanish police and Civil Guard against the referendum preparation. The first one took place at the Catalan Department of Economy. In the morning, the Civil Guard entered the department to search for documents related to the institutional and administrative preparation of the 1-O referendum. In response, Òmnium Cultural and ANC called for a peaceful protest outside the building to "defend our institutions." They improvised a concert and speeches at a nearby square to entertain people during the protest. During the whole day, about 40,000 protesters impeded the exit of the police officers from the Department, who ultimately had to escape the building through a rear exit. At night, Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart climbed on a car of the Civil Guard to calm down the protesters.

The second action took place at the headquarters of the CUP. Police forces tried to search the headquarters without a warrant. The party called for a protest outside the building, which successfully prevented the police from entering. Interviewees reported a third instance. In Sabadell, a high-ranking civil servant of the Catalan government was detained by the Civil Guard. People gathered outside the building, but in this case to prevent the police from exiting the detainee's home.

What these three instances had in common is the use of massive gatherings of people outside of buildings to obstruct police actions. As such, the 20-S represented a departure from the contained type of performance such as the Diada toward more disruptive forms of contentious action. Activist Pere described this shift as follows:

> Although there is no beating, it is the first day where people put their bodies to defend a political idea. It's the first day they say "you're not going to come out from the police operation. Because I've put my body." There is no beating, but if there had been, the same thing would have passed [as on October 1]. It's the change of mentality, no?

He called this change in mentality the emergence of a "revolutionary conscious," which drove people not just to demonstrate but to employ disruptive tactics against police action and defend their autonomous institutions. The shift toward more disruptive action became even more evident on the day of the referendum itself, when activists mobilized to defend the voting stations against the intervention of the Spanish state.

The organizing processes for these protests differed from those in normal times as well. Let us look at the protest in front of the Department of Economy as the most exemplary one. When the leaderships of Òmnium Cultural and ANC received news that the Civil Guard had entered the Catalan Department of Economy, the leaders quickly decided to call for a protest outside the Department building. To illustrate this condensed preparatory process, I quote at length a passage from the interview with Beatriu, who was one of the members of Òmnium Cultural's board of directors at the time. She described how the decision was taken by the organization's executive committee, which consisted of the president, the three vice presidents, the treasurer, and the secretary.

> R: Well look, on the morning of the 20-S. Hmm, we knew that the Civil Guard was entering the Department of Economy. Somebody heard it on the radio or a party member told someone. And so we discussed it on Telegram like "look this is happening, what we do?" … "do we call for a demonstration?" and so on. Then we sent a WhatsApp message, because we already had this channel in place—"Call for Democracy." Over "Call for Democracy" we called people to the streets, and we send it the same morning over Telegram as well. Thus, the responsible person send this over WhatsApp to our followers.
> I: And who on the Board of Directors decided this? How did you decide where and when?

R: That's not easy [to answer], I suppose this should have been an issue for the executive committee, I don't remember anymore, but everyday decisions, or rather for the functioning of the entity and short-term things, that's for the executive committee. So when there is something, some relevant issue, we say, "OK, fine, but we have to communicate this to the Board," and then we pass the word to their [messenger] group so that everybody is up to date. Surely it must have gone this way: In the executive committee we decide to call the people to the Department [of Economy] for what our president is on trial. And so I believe we decided to tell the board of directors, "Look, in the next moments, we are going to send a WhatsApp message to call people to protest. Spread the word!" So informing the Board, but the decision is from the Executive or rather it's the order it executes, taking the most frequent decisions.

This quote from the interview provided an account of how Òmnium Cultural made the decision to call for a protest in response to the police intervention in the Catalan Department of Economy. Òmnium Cultural called the protest jointly with the ANC. In the data, there was a very similar passage in the interview with ANC organizer Judit, who stated that it was "an emergency" and that they had to "react quickly." Beatriu and Judit thus described an organizing process that was very different from the one of the Diada.

There were three properties of the process that stood out in the analysis. First, and as stated above, the organizing process was extremely condensed. Instead of meticulous planning of every detail of the demonstration, there was only a short discussion and a call for protest on the very same day of the police intervention. This finding is not surprising, because the protests were called as a reaction to the Anubis Operation. Second, the preparation of the 20-S protest was organized in top-down fashion, even more so than the Diada. As the quote above showed, in Òmnium Cultural, the decision was made only by the Executive Committee, which is the smallest circle of the organization's leadership. Third, messenger applications played a central role in the process. The organizers did not even bother to meet in person, but made the decision through a Telegram channel. Then, the call was spread rapidly through messenger channels. Turnout was massive with 40,000 protesters showing up at the demonstration called by Òmnium Cultural and ANC and endorsed by many smaller organizations.

The evidence about the protests at the CUP headquarters and in Sabadell was less detailed. Interviewees witnessing these protests described them as quick reactions to the police interventions, which suggests that their

organizing processes followed a similar pattern like the one initiated by Òmnium Cultural and ANC.

September 22–October 2: Occupying the University of Barcelona

Two days after the Anubis Operation and the protest against it, the student platform Universitats per la República (UxR) called to occupy the historic building of the University of Barcelona in Plaça Universitat. UxR had been campaigning since summer to politicize the Catalan youth. Occupying the university was not instrumental for the platform itself or the referendum. Rather, the idea of the occupation was to maintain the level of mobilization until the referendum. In addition, the occupied campus served as a headquarter to launch demonstrations and host events but also to engage with local, Spanish, and international media. This was successful, as pictures from the occupation made it to the front page of *The New York Times*. Finally, it was also used to store material for the referendum, e.g., ballots, but also campaign material. UxR organized various activities every day of the occupation, for instance concerts with popular music groups such as Txarango, or a talk with Julian Assange via Skype. On September 28 and 29, 80,000 students participated in a strike and demonstration called by UxR. Interviewees reported that during the weekend of the referendum, there had been less participation at the occupation, as organizers had called most students to go home to their neighborhoods and villages to defend the voting stations. On October 2, the day after the referendum, the occupation ended.

The occupation was organized by UxR. The idea of UxR was first put on the table by some former members of the student organization SEPC in April 2017 and was formed as an interorganizational youth platform. It included representatives from the SEPC, ERC's youth organization Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana (JERC), the Assemblea de Joves per la Unitat Popular (AJUP), and the Joventut Nacionalista de Catalunya (JNC), the youth wing of the Partit Demòcrata Europeu Català (PDeCAT). Later, a representative from Arran also joined.

Already at the beginning of September, organizers started calling for open assemblies to mobilize people for the platform. In mid-September they staged a couple more formal events to present UxR to the media and on September 21, they organized a big event at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. In light of the 20-S, the organizers decided to use the rally at the Autonomous University as an occasion to call for the occupation of

the historical building of the University of Barcelona in Plaça Universitat. Interviewee Ester described this process as follows.

> The rhythm of things was—they'll have told you already and I don't want to be repetitive, but it was that almost from one day to the other we thought that tomorrow we would set up an occupation. So—but this event at the Autonomous University was planned before. But as things became heated, we decided we would use the event to, hmm, use it as an amplifier to call for the occupation the next morning, which was a Friday. [So at the event at the Autonomous University] we called the masses to occupy the historic building of the University of Barcelona.

The day after the event at the Autonomous University, about 3,000 students gathered to occupy the historic building of the University of Barcelona without consent of the university's administration. One of the first tasks for the organizers was to negotiate with the chancellor—primarily about the spaces that they were tolerated to occupy. The occupation required a lot of mundane organizational work, Ester explained.

> So we were taking very well-organized turns for security, like "from this hour on, no one can enter," putting measures that no one could enter. Then, all sorts of things, cleaning shifts, and then, because people outside really liked what we were doing, shop owners from the neighborhood were bringing us food and we had like a— [...] an *inventari*—an inventory. A list with the food that we had. It was all very organized.

Cleaning shifts, guard duties, and food distribution were not the only things that needed to be managed; activists also coordinated the production of political material such as placards, putting up an information stand outside the university, reaching out to other players of the independence movement, etc. This shows that the occupation, because of its duration, required a more continuous organizing process that was interwoven with the contentious action itself. In contrast, the time to prepare the occupation was rather short, as it was called from one day to another. Apart from the call itself and the negotiation with the chancellor, the organizers did not mention any specific steps or phases, but described the organizing as a permanent managing of the occupation.

One explanation for this form of description might be that the single phases in the process and their sequence were routine to the organizers. In

fact, it was not the first time that they occupied the university, as organizer Pere explained when I asked about the process in the interview.

> I: So the occupation in this moment—at the university, how did you organize it?
> R: Well, I have occupied the university several times already. Probably three times already and this was the fourth time. But I'll tell you this one and the other three don't have anything to do with each other. Just like any other youth protest that we did before and we did after.

Pere's response described the organizing of the occupation as routine, as not particularly worth elaborating about. Nevertheless, the statement also highlighted that the 2017 occupation was different from all previous occupations in normal times. The mobilization achieved a much larger turnout than other occupations. Most importantly, both Ester and Pere reported in their interviews that the organizing process was exceptional. In normal times, student activists organized occupations through deliberation in open assemblies. In contrast, the quick preparation as well as the continuous management of the occupation was controlled by the small leadership group of UxR. Although there were frequent open assemblies in the occupation, the organizers reported that no substantial decisions were made. Moreover, the leadership had full control over material resources (such as money, food, campaign material), which they received from ANC and Òmnium Cultural. Thus, the organizing of the occupation developed mainly as a top-down process steered by a small group of student organizers. This was very different from previous modes of organizing and was justified by the organizers with the prevalence of strategy and the fear of repression.

Crisis Organizing

Comparing the September 20 protests and the occupation of the University of Barcelona to the Ara és l'hora campaign, the Diada protests, and the texture of practices in the student groups and independentist left reveals three crucial differences between protest organizing in normal times and in intense times. First, while activists prepared protests in normal times in long and meticulous processes, they organized protests in intense times very quickly. Second, protest organizing in intense times tended to go beyond organizational boundaries. Third, deliberation was a key practice in normal times, whereas directing became more important in intense times. I call

the configuration of these three features *crisis organizing*. Crisis organizing represents an exceptional mode of protest organizing that works only for a short time. Here I describe its three central features.

Accelerating Organizing

A first feature that distinguished the two organizing processes from normal modes of protest organizing was their length. While it took the ANC about half a year to prepare the Diada, the 20-S protest and the University occupation were called within a couple of hours. Interviewees reported the time pressure they felt. When the Spanish Civil Guard entered the Department of Economy, there was simply no time for long and detailed preparations. ANC and Òmnium Cultural needed to react as quickly as possible. UxR's call to occupy the University of Barcelona was also related to the Anubis Operation and took advantage of a protest event the day after. Crisis organizing thus involves short organizing processes, during which activists need to make quick decisions and communicate efficiently.

Organizing Beyond Organizations

A second feature of crisis organizing is its tendency to extend beyond single organizational entities. The two cases suggest that there was more need for organizing *between* organizations and even *outside of organizations*: new interorganizational platforms emerged, and spaces outside the boundaries of established organizations became more important.

In normal times, protests were both organized by single players and in collaboration. One example is the Diada: It was almost exclusively organized by the ANC, which mobilized material resources and a large number of organizers. The ANC put a large part of its time and effort into organizing the Diada. The organization also provided established routines and procedures, since it had prepared the Diada several times before. On the other hand, there was also collaboration among organizations in normal times, most prominently in the Ara és l'hora campaign discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The network analyses in Chapter 3 suggest that there was more joint protest organizing before the referendum than afterwards.

However, during the secessionist crisis, organizing between organizations took a qualitatively different form. Organizations joined forces and created interorganizational platforms. These new organizational structures, such as UxR, often served as bases for organizing several protest events. Platforms were also purposefully designed for single contentious performances, as

was the case of the up-scaled CDR in Sabadell or the nameless platform in Fastiada (see Chapter 6).[3] Often, however, interorganizational platforms, e.g., the Table for Democracy, served as a more permanent space of encounter and only occasionally for the preparation of contentious performances. In some instances, the existing organizations merely collaborated. The decision to call for the main protest against the Anubis Operation on September 20 was taken by ANC and Òmnium Cultural separately, but followed by a coordination between the leaderships of the two organizations. These two types of processes, platform building and collaboration, were essential for organizing contentious actions in a multi-organizational social movement field.

Furthermore, activists also organized contentious action *outside* of the limits of established organizational structures. The prime example is the case of the defense of the voting stations on October 1, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. While most organizers in this process were members of pre-existing organizations and political parties, the role of these organizations in the preparation was limited. Neither of the large SMOs, ANC and Òmnium Cultural, organized the defense of the voting stations.

From Deliberation to Directing

The intensification of conflict not only impacted the structural and process levels of the organizational dimension of the movement, but also the organizational practices within these structures and processes. As I have described in the first part of this chapter, deliberation was an important practice for many collective actors in the independence movement in normal times. Student organizations, the independentist Left, and the ANC employed deliberative assemblies for communication and decision-making. This changed fundamentally in the referendum crisis. The data suggested that instead of deliberation, organizers employed directing much more frequently. This was most visible in the ANC and the University occupation.

First, in the months before the 1-O referendum, some organizational practices at the national level of the ANC changed. During this time, the ANC was part of the *Estat Major*, which was a committee in which the Catalan president and vice president, the leaders of the three pro-independence parties, as well as the presidents of Òmnium Cultural and the Associació de Municipis per la Independència (AMI) participated. For the ANC, President

3 Fastiada, Montanya, and Caldes are pseudonyms for small towns, which I use to protect the identity of the interviewees from these towns.

Jordi Sànchez took part in the meetings of the committee. My data did not reveal very much about what was discussed or decided in the Estat Major, but it became clear that it had an important coordinating role between the Catalan government, the independentist parties, and the major civil society associations. The ANC's National Secretariat had delegated the power to negotiate to its president Jordi Sànchez. This meant a departure from usual practice within the organization. Organizer Emma, who was part of the leadership at that time, described this as follows:

> In some way, the ANC *is* assemblarian, but in the last year, well it stopped being it in the sense that decisions had to be made quickly. And, moreover, in small committees. Imagine we explain October 1 to 77 people [of the national secretariat], who then explain it to 77 more, then it's inevitable that the issue comes to light [...] So we understand that in this moment the decisions had to be differently, not in an assemblarian way.

This quote highlights that the ANC in normal times worked in an *assemblarian* way—it is called *Assemblea* Nacional Catalana after all. Interviewees used the term assemblarian not just to describe the narrow practice of assemblies, but that it also carries connotations of deliberative and participatory democracy. I have called this combination *deliberative assemblies*.

The piece of data also shows that the ANC deviated substantially from its normal practices and stopped being "assemblarian" in the time around the 1-O referendum. Instead, decisions were taken by the smallest circle of leaders. This suggests that there was a shift in the relationships of organizational practices: from a texture that involved a close connection between deliberation and assemblies to more directing and closed meetings. Of course, this change did not come without tension, as Emma went on to explain:

> This produced conflicts, because you don't do it in the assemblarian way and suddenly a lot of information is not passed on and you don't really know what you're doing. At least I felt a bit useless during this time. Like, OK, I'm wasting my Saturday morning, because they just tell me that they can't tell me anything.

Emma stressed again that decisions were not taken in deliberative assemblies but primarily by the leadership of the ANC during this time. The two quotes also reveal the lack of transparency in this unusual mode of organizing. Even the members of the National Secretariat did not receive full information

about what the leadership was discussing with the political parties and the Catalan government in the Estat Major. This shattered activists' trust in the political parties but also in the ANC leadership. Enric, who also was a member of the national secretariat at the time, asked a rhetorical question in the interview.

> How do I tell people to have trust in [the political parties]? The people won't have trust. In the moment I tell them this, they will stop trusting me.

The less transparent and less assemblarian mode of organizing caught many mid-level organizers between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, the ANC leadership was asking them for confidence, and on the other hand, their constituencies were holding them accountable.

These findings suggest that in the weeks before the 1-O referendum, there was a transformation in the texture of organizational practices in the ANC. In normal times, the ANC combined deliberation and open assemblies, but during this period of time, there was a larger emphasis on directing and closed meetings. This created a lack of transparency within the organization and was met with conflict. The quotes from both Enric and Emma were prompted by the question "how has the 1-O changed the ANC?" implying that the interviewees understood them as major changes and not just some side development. At the same time, this highlights the importance of these shifts in the organizational practice for the interviewees.

These transformations in the ANC's practices were most visible in the organizing of the 20-S protest described above. Rather than waiting for regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the police actions, the organization's leadership decided to act quickly, coordinate with Òmnium Cultural, and rely on directives to organize the protest.

The second example for the shift from deliberation to directing is the organizing process of the occupation of the University of Barcelona. The occupation was organized by the student platform UxR, which was the idea of some experienced young activists who had been organizers in the student union SEPC and the left-wing youth organization Arran. This group of unaffiliated organizers brought together the leaderships of the SEPC and the JERC, the youth wing of ERC. The platform also included representatives from Arran, the AJUP, and the JNC.

During the occupation of the University, the platform called for open assemblies. However, as interviews with the former leadership of the platform show, there was no deliberation in these assemblies. Organizer Ester, for example, states that the assemblies were "super prepared." While the

leadership kept in the background, rank-and-file members of the SEPC and the JERC "knew what they had to say." In this way, the outcome "was always as it had to be." According to organizer Pere, there was no decision-making in these assemblies:

> There was a little bit of debate, but we cut it quite a bit. Without being rude. You have to know how to cut a debate delicately or to table it for the next day [...] if one member would be like, "No, because ...," then we would cut them: "Shut up, because we're acting in the interest of the country, this needs to work well." Like this, you silence internal dissent.

The organizers would make concessions to some extent, but if a controversial issue came up, they would have the debate silenced immediately. Hence, deliberative practices were basically absent from the open assemblies in the preparation and managing of the occupation of the University of Barcelona. In this regard, the case was similar to the defense of the voting stations (see Chapter 5), but there was a crucial difference: the UxR organizers actively suppressed deliberative practices, whereas there was no evidence for that in defense of the voting stations.

Instead of open assemblies, the interview data shows that the leadership group of UxR had a strong role in the organizing process. Ester described that it was the leadership group of the platform who took the decisions:

> In the end we decided what kind of activities we would do, which ones not, and so on. We were quite few, 10 or 12. Among them there were some which represented the SEPC and the JERC most of all, but the others we were independents who didn't represent anybody in reality.

The important decisions were taken within the leadership group, who directed the occupation with the help of activists from the member organizations of the platform. Moreover, the leadership controlled all the necessary resources, from campaign material such as flyers, posters, and paint to food and money. All in all, Pere admitted that the "occupation [...] was remotely controlled top-down. It's true. I'm sorry, but it's true." When activists tried to hold open assemblies, the leadership tried to manipulate debates in order to maintain control over the occupation. Ester even claimed that this "false democracy" was key to the success of the occupation.

From the interviews with Pere and Ester, it became clear that the top-down mode of organizing, which limited decision-making to the leadership group and placed emphasis on directing, was not usual practice. Most of

the organizers of UxR came from organizations of the independentist Left, such as SEPC and Arran, which championed deliberative practices.

Deliberation had been an important organizational practice in the independence movement in normal times. This changed dramatically in intense times. These two examples show that deliberation as a practice became less important during the secessionist crisis. Instead of deliberation, organizers in the ANC and UxR made decisions in small circles and relied much more on directing in protest organizing processes.

Understanding Crisis Organizing

The secessionist crisis represented a highly contentious moment. It was a period of constant mobilization and confrontation between the independence movement and the players of the Spanish state. Organizational processes and practices in this intense time differed very much from previous normal times of conflict. Organizing processes were much shorter, took place between or outside organizations, and involved more directing than deliberation.

I suggest calling this mode of preparing and planning protest action *crisis organizing*. The comparison to previous cases has demonstrated how crisis organizing differs very much from organizing in normal times. Some interviewees addressed these differences directly. For example, organizer Ester suggested that the organizing in UxR was "not a moment of [...] classic functioning." The quote illustrates perfectly that organizational process and practices during the secessionist crisis were a departure from the usual mode of organizing in the independence movement. However, Ester also pointed to the limits of directed and quick organizing. She said in the interview that it "worked well, but it has a lot of limitations. It works well only [when applied] moderately in the long run." Her co-organizer Pere stated that "of you course you cannot do this indefinitely [...] It can only be a short period of time and for a real, tangible goal, you know?" These quotes illustrate why I call it *crisis* organizing: not only because it occurs during a major crisis, but also because this mode of organizing itself is untenable for a long time—just like a crisis.

How does crisis organizing come about? I argue that crisis organizing is a product of organizers' strategic interactions with their allies and opponents. While interactions with other movement players and the regional government resulted in alignment around the referendum as a prognostic frame, interactions with the Spanish state intensified after the approval of the Law on the Referendum. The change in the pace and quality of these

interactions between the secessionist challengers and the state created uncertainty and time pressure for organizers.

First, crisis organizing was driven by frame alignment of organizers with their allies. The three features of crisis organizing described here—shorter processes outside and between organizations with less deliberation and more directing—can all be linked to the existence of a common goal among the secessionist challengers. In September 2017, the diverse players of the independence movement were united by a single aim: to realize the referendum on independence on October 1. On the one hand, interviewees suggested that there often was no *need* for deliberation and extended organizing processes, because the goal was clear to everybody. On the other hand, some interviewees described how the shared goal was used to silence dissenting voices within the organizing process. Pere, for example, explained that the occupation of the university was successful

> because there was a very clear common goal, which is October 1. When you have a common goal, you can tell people, in the short run, "Put your social demands on hold, your left-wing, your right-wing demands, your vegan demands, your feminist demands, put it on hold, because there is a common benefit in the short term."

This suggests that vertical forms of organizing—for instance, the unusual combination of public assemblies with directing—were more easily accepted by activists, because there was a common goal. The goal "defending the referendum" was clear and tangible in the near future. The referendum as a prognostic frame also carried a normative component. It becomes clear from the quotes I have shown here that organizers put them forward as justifications for less deliberative and participatory practices of organizing. As such, they should be put in a narrative perspective and handled with care.

My analyses confirm the findings of Della Porta, O'Connor, and Portos (2020), who pointed out how the important role of the referendum as a prognostic frame:

> The 1-O referendum campaign allowed Catalan secessionist activists to give priority to the fighting of specific, smaller battles and to set more easily attainable goals, such as preventing the police from entering polling stations, and actually succeeding in holding the vote.

The goal was clear to organizers and activists, which reduced internal conflict, required less deliberation, and allowed to organize protests in swift

fashion. But the 1-O also marked the logical endpoint of the referendum as prognostic frame around which the movement could unite. The contested character of the referendum resulted in different interpretations of the event, which made protest organizing after the 1-O much harder. I discuss these dynamics much more in detail in Chapter 6.

Second, interviewees stressed the role of interactions with opponents in intense times for protest organizing. In September 2017, Spanish state players intensified repressive action against Catalan government to prevent the referendum. As I have shown in this chapter and the one before, the quality and pace of counter-secessionist repression changed after the announcement of the referendum. The Spanish courts and police forces acted more often and more directly against the regional government but also against movement players. Interviewers reported how they perceived these actions as threats to the referendum, the autonomous institutions, and the movement as whole. However, organizers were not passive in the face of repression. Repression created the need to respond quickly to opponent action. Both the 20-S protest and the University occupation were direct answers to the Anubis Operation by the Spanish police forces.

Of course, repression also occurred in normal times. However, the changes in the pace and quality of repression had an impact on organizers that transformed normal organizing into crisis organizing. Intensifying interactions created two mechanisms that are key for understanding this shift: Time pressure and uncertainty. On the one hand, interviewees highlighted the necessity for quick organizing under time pressure. In the piece of data quoted above, Emma stressed that "decisions had to be made quickly." The prime example was the protest on September 20, which was organized by the leaderships of ANC and Òmnium Cultural only within a couple of hours. In the intense secessionist crisis, there was simply no time for deliberation in large assemblies. Instead, organizers made decisions in small groups and communicated them to other activists through directing. On the other hand, intensifying conflict created uncertainty. In the weeks before the 1-O, the Catalan autonomous institutions were paralyzed, and it was unclear whether they had the capacity to organize the referendum. Organizers feared repression, which is why they often shared crucial information only within small leadership circles. Directives to larger masses were limited to essential information and decisions.

Finally, the analysis suggests that the two drivers—interactions with allies and opponents—reinforced each other. Organizing processes were short because the medium-term goal was clear *and* because repression required an immediate answer. Collaboration among different secessionist

players in the face of repression became easier, because there already was agreement on movement strategy. There was less need for deliberation, because the goal was clear, while directing was more accepted because of the threat that deliberations could be infiltrated. Whether frame alignment or repression on their own would have sufficed to produce the shift from normal organizing to crisis organizing is difficult to evaluate based on the data and remains up to future research. For now, I suggest that crisis organizing should be understood as a product of interactions of organizers with both allies and opponents.

Conclusion

In the early phase of the secessionist cycle of contention, there had only been little confrontation with the Spanish state, which mainly chose to ignore the efforts of the independence movement. The politics of secession played out in rather contained fashion. The secessionist conflict intensified dramatically after the announcement of the referendum in June 2017, and in particular after the approval of the Law on the Referendum and Self-determination in early September 2017.

This chapter has shown how the interactions of organizers with their allies and opponents transformed organizational processes and practices. The emergence of the referendum as a prognostic frame and the intensification of repression led to three major changes in the ways how secessionist organizers planned and prepared protest: protest organizing became quicker, moved beyond organizational entities, and comprised more directing than deliberation. This mode of organizing was costly for the movement and could be maintained only in the short run, which is why I call it *crisis organizing*. I have described two exemplary cases: the 20-S protests and the occupation of the University of Barcelona. Two more cases took place during the secessionist crisis: The defense of the voting stations and the general strike on October 3 share many features of crisis organizing. I discuss them in the next chapters.

The findings in this chapter bear some key insights for research on the organizational dimension of social movements. Most existing approaches to organizational change in contentious politics highlight long-term trends such as technological change, oligarchization, radicalization, or moderation of movements (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Diani & Donati, 1999; Kriesi, 1996; Leach, 2005; Rucht, 1999; Zald & Ash, 1966). In contrast, this chapter has revealed how volatile protest organizing can be. When interactions

between challengers and the host state intensify, organizational practices and processes may transform substantively within a couple of weeks. The 1-O referendum as the central event functioned as a catalyzer for this development.

References

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Andrews, K. T., Ganz, M., Baggetta, M., Han, H., & Lim, C. (2010). Leadership, membership, and voice: Civic associations that work. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(4), 1191–1242. https://doi.org/10.1086/649060

Beissinger, M. R. (1996). How nationalisms spread: Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of nationalist contention. *Social Research, 63*(1), 97–146.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Boden, D. (1994). *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Polity Press.

Davenport, C. (2014). *How social movements die: Repression and demobilization of the Republic of New Africa*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139649728

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2020). *The framing of secessionism in the neo-liberal crisis: The Scottish and Catalan cases*. In C. Closa, C. Margiotta, & G. Martinico (Eds.), *Between democracy and law: The amorality of secession* (pp. 153–170). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Portos García, M., & Subirats Ribas, A. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: Direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press.

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organizational change in Western European environmental groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Gherardi, S. (2012). *How to conduct a practice-based study: Problems and methods*. Elgar.

Giménez, F., & Gunzelmann, H. J. (2019). Conflict and collaboration in contentious events: The case of the 1-0 in Catalonia. In B. Tejerina, C. Miranda de Almeida de Barros, & I. Perugorría (Eds.), *Sharing society: The impact of collaborative and collective actions in the transformation of contemporary societies: Conference proceedings* (pp. 582–592). Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia.

Haug, C. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution. *Organization Studies, 34*(5–6), 705–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Haug, C., Rucht, D., & Teune, S. (2015). A methodology for studying democracy and power in group meetings. In D. Della Porta & D. Rucht (Eds.), *Meeting democracy* (pp. 23–46). Cambridge University Press.

Jeffries, J. L. (2002). Black radicalism and political repression in Baltimore: The case of the Black Panther Party. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 25*(1), 64–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870120112067

Kavada, A. (2010). Email lists and participatory democracy in the European Social Forum. *Media, Culture & Society, 32*(3), 355–372. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443709361167

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Leach, D. K. (2005). The Iron Law of what again? Conceptualizing oligarchy across organizational forms. *Sociological Theory, 23*(3), 312–337. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0735-2751.2005.00256.x

Letamendia, A. (2018). Movilización, represión y voto: Rastreando las claves del referéndum de autodeterminación del 1 de Octubre de 2017 de Catalunya. *Anuari Del Conflicte Social, 7*. https://doi.org/10.1344/ACS2018.7.1

Meyer, D. S., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1998). *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Neumayer, C., & Stald, G. (2014). The mobile phone in street protest: Texting, tweeting, tracking, and tracing. *Mobile Media & Communication, 2*(2), 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157913513255

Rucht, D. (1999). Linking organization and mobilization: Michels's Iron Law of Oligarchy reconsidered. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 4*(2), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.4.2.l2680365q32h6616

Rucht, D. (2017). Exploring the backstage: Preparation and implementation of mass protests in Germany. *American Behavioral Scientist, 61*(13), 1678–1702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744135

Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilization. *International Social Movement Research, 1*, 197–217.

Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement Participation. *American Sociological Review, 51*(4), 464. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581

Tarrow, S. G. (1989). *Democracy and disorder: Protest and politics in Italy, 1965–1975*. Clarendon.

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Vicens, L., & Tedó, X. (2018). *Més operació urnes*. Columna.

Zald, M. N., & Ash, R. (1966). Social movement organizations: Growth, decay and change. *Social Forces, 44*(3), 327–341.

5 Organizing Eventful Protest: Defending the Referendum

Abstract
This chapter focuses on the resistance against the police intervention on October 1 as the central event of the secessionist crisis. It explains how the defense of the voting stations was organized despite the inaction of the established movement organizations. It argues that the CDRs emerged because of the uncertainty that resulted from increasing repression and the secrecy of the official referendum preparations. Experienced organizers and downward scale shift were crucial in the organizational process. The chapter shows how decision-making and communication practices structured collective action in the absence of formal organization. The sedimentation of these practices gave the CDRs continuity beyond the referendum, which makes the defense of the voting stations an eventful protest for the organizational dimension of the movement.

Keywords: Organizational Practices, Eventful Protest, Independence Referendum, Repression, Social Movement Organizations, Organizational Innovation

Social movement scholars have focused almost exclusively on organizational entities and, in particular, formal social movement organizations (SMOs, see Clemens & Minkoff, 2004; Kriesi, 1996; McAdam & Scott, 2005; McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977; Minkoff & McCarthy, 2005). Organizations were seen as a necessary condition for mass protest. This narrow approach has led to an equation of "organized protest" with "protest organized by an organization." In addition, seeing organizations as precursors of protests has obscured the view on how organizations emerge from mobilization (Pearlman, 2021).

I have argued in the conceptual chapter that the process of protest organizing must be distinguished from SMOs as organizational entities. There are cases in which the process of protest organizing does not take

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH05

place within organizations. Empirical research has found that a large part of organizing takes place at the meso level *between* organizations (Della Porta & Rucht, 2015; Diani, 2015; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Haug, 2013; Haug et al., 2009). Organization theorists have even suggested that organizing may take place *outside* of formal organizations (Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, 2019). However, it is unclear how organizing without formal organization functions empirically.

This chapter addresses this gap by tackling the puzzle of protest organizing *outside* formal organizations—or what Wendy Pearlman (2021) calls "mobilizing from scratch." It reconstructs the case of the defense of the voting stations during the Catalan referendum on independence on October 1, 2017 (abbreviated 1-O). Neither of the two major secessionist SMOs, the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Òmnium Cultural, played any role in the preparations of the protest. In fact, the empirical evidence shows that the ANC hindered the mobilization by calling followers exclusively to gather outside the voting stations and not to occupy and defend them against police intervention. The formal organizations were, using Czarniawska's (2013) phrase, "obstacles to organizing." How was it possible to organize the defense of the voting stations without the support of the existing SMOs?

I argue that organizational practices, knowledge, and practical experience were key in preparing the defense of the voting stations and the basis for the emergence of the Committees of the Defense of the Referendum (CDRs) as an organized actor. In the first part of the chapter, I show how the CDRs emerged as a space where local activists could meet to prepare the defense of the voting stations. Decision-making and communication practices were instrumental in the organizing process of the protest. Activists combined public assemblies, messenger applications, and what I call *directing* to prepare and plan contentious action. Outside the boundaries of formal organizations, the skills and experiences of activists played a crucial role in organizing mass protest.

The second part of the chapter shifts the attention to organizations as a *consequence* rather than a precondition of mass mobilization (cf. Pearlman, 2021). As shown in Chapter 4, the CDRs became the most important player in the secessionist collective action field after the referendum. In this chapter, I trace how the CDRs transformed from open meeting spaces into a loosely structured and decentralized organization. I show how the texture of practices that emerged in the preparation of the referendum sedimented into an organizational structure. This underlines the organizational consequences of the defense of the voting stations as an "eventful protest" (Della Porta, 2008).

The first section of the chapter outlines how organizers responded to the uncertain situation before the referendum with the defense of the voting stations. The second chapter elaborates on the theoretical and empirical dimensions of the puzzle of organizing outside organizations. The third section describes the key organizational practices that enabled mass mobilization in the defense of the voting station. The fourth section shows how these practices sedimented into the CDRs as a key player.

The Defense of the Voting Stations: Uncertainty, Action, Repression

Previous research pointed to the central role of the independence movement in initiating and organizing the local referendums (Muñoz & Guinjoan, 2013) and the 9-N referendum in 2014 (Della Porta et al., 2017). The 1-O referendum was different, because it was organized by the Catalan Generalitat. In the case of a positive outcome, Puigdemont pledged to declare independence. Thus, in order to maximize the legitimacy of the referendum, it had to be organized top-down by state institutions. On paper, it reads like the Generalitat organized everything. While the legal framework was an important reflection of the institutional provision, the *de facto* organization was different than laid down in the law.

The central problem was that the capacity of the autonomous institutions to organize a legitimate and valid vote on independence was threatened by intensifying repression by the Spanish state. Over the course of the first half of 2017, the Spanish government repeatedly stated to do everything to prevent a binding referendum. When Puigdemont officially announced the referendum in June, it was clear that a regular referendum would be difficult to organize as long as secessionist leaders reclaimed its binding character and committed to declare independence in case of a positive outcome. Hence, simply repeating the 2014 referendum was not an option. Consequently, many activities had to be clandestine from the beginning to minimize legal consequences for the political leadership.

The central preparatory task was the purchase and distribution of ballot boxes, which was realized through semi-clandestine networks instead of official channels. This process is well documented in the book *Operació Urnes* (Operation Ballot Boxes) by the journalists Laia Vicens and Xavi Tedó (2018). In my own data base, interviewees frequently referred to the book and confirmed its content.

However, this posed a key problem for protest organizers. On the one hand, they observed an increasing level of repression, as described above, and, on the other hand, most of them had little information about the referendum preparations due to their clandestine character. The combination of these interactions created a lot of uncertainty for organizers in the weeks before the referendum. This sensation is best illustrated by the following lengthy quote from the interview with ANC and CDR organizer Berta.

> I: How do you recall the weeks before the 1-O, in September? What was the preparation?
> R: Well, there was a lot of uncertainty and worry, because we began to see that the Spanish started a repressive, totally antidemocratic campaign [...] we always thought that we would make it, that if we did it the State couldn't do anything, because the image of police taking away ballot boxes—we believed that a self-declared democratic state would not want that image at any cost. This was something we could not imagine. More than them taking away ballot boxes, we imagined we wouldn't have ballots, that in the end we would have to print them at home [...] We saw the logistic problem, the problem that the voting stations would be closed, but in no way we imagined the uncertainty if we would achieve it or not.

Berta highlighted the level of uncertainty in September 2017. While the referendum as a goal was still clear, there were increasing doubts whether the regional government would be able to pull it off in the face of adversity.

Local organizers responded to this uncertainty by planning and preparing a massive contentious action to guarantee that the voting stations on October 1 would be open and citizens could cast their votes. In the following, I describe the latter as a set of contentious actions that have become known by the shorthand expression "defending the referendum." There were 2,305 voting stations in total, but interviewees provided a global view on the defense. As an event, the defense of the voting stations was composed by three types of actions:

- Occupations of the voting station one or two days before the referendum (in most cases)
- Gatherings inside and outside the voting stations (in all stations)
- Nonviolent resistance to prevent the police from entering the voting station (only where police intervened)

First, in some instances (e.g., in Fastiada, Sabadell), town halls provided organizers the keys to the voting stations. Also, in other cases (e.g., L'Hospitalet

de Llobregat), organizers were in contact with individuals who worked at the place that would serve as voting station (e.g., schools or cultural centers) and had keys. Where keys were available, there often were no calls for occupation (Fastiada and also in some small towns), and people just gathered on the morning of the referendum instead.

On Friday, September 29, people throughout Catalonia started occupying voting stations, many of them public schools. Although my data did not provide a comprehensive overview of the voting stations in Catalonia, my estimate is that a large majority of voting stations were occupied—sometimes even when a key was available, and in many cases very consciously against the recommendation of the ANC. Some schools were occupied only on Saturday. According to Catalan law, schools can be open for the weekend if extracurricular activities are organized, which was the case in most places.

Second, in all the stations, occupied or not, organizers, activists, and ordinary voters gathered inside and outside of the voting stations from 5 a.m. in the morning on October 1. In many places, turnout was massive with long lines forming already before the opening of the voting stations at 9 a.m. The idea was to use nonviolent resistance to prevent the police from entering by forming human barricades to obstruct the entrances. In many cases, participants reported that, in addition to forming human walls, activists constructed material barricades to stop or slow down the police. In one voting station in Girona, activists formed a car cordon, which seemed to have been effective in deterring the police. In Tarragona, a van was used to block the road to a voting station. In one of the voting stations in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, participants used trash cans to block access to the voting station. Others tried to barricade the entrance from within, even with chairs, tables and banks from the school.

It was decisive that enough people were present in all the voting stations for two reasons. On the one hand, activists knew that the Mossos d'Esquadra (the regional police) had orders not to intervene if there were more than 50 people. On the other hand, the numbers were important for effective resistance against the Spanish National Police. Thus, people had to be distributed more or less evenly across voting stations. This required communication and coordination between the voting stations. In a few cases (Fastiada, Sabadell), there were deliberate efforts dedicated to this task. Some organizers even used cars to move people from one station to another.

Third, in most of the voting stations mentioned in the data, there was actually no police intervention. Interviewees only mentioned clashes between police and protesters in six voting stations. In five of them, organizers, activists, and ordinary voters defended the college using nonviolent

resistance. Despite these efforts, police forces were able to enter the building in all these cases. However, activists hid the ballot boxes, and the police were unable to confiscate them in any of the described instances. In one case, the director of the school unilaterally decided to open the doors for the police to avoid violent confrontations. After the police interventions, the hidden ballot boxes were brought back, and the voting continued. Generally, most of the clashes occurred in the morning and around noon, while the afternoon was relatively calm. It seems that in most cases, voting stations were open regularly until 8 p.m. However, there were a couple of cases where a premature closing was at least discussed, for fear of a police intervention.

All in all, the defense of the voting stations was a massive act of civil disobedience in the face of violent police interventions. It represents not only the key protest event during the secessionist crisis but in the overall cycle of contention. As I show in the next chapters, it was an eventful protest for the Catalan independence movement. In this chapter, I focus on its most puzzling property: the fact that it was organized without the involvement of formal organizations. The next section elaborates on this puzzle.

The Puzzle: When Organizations Are Obstacles to Organizing

Classic social movement theory suggested that formal organizations represent crucial, if not necessary, preconditions for contentious action (Klandermans et al., 1989; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1986). However, the role of the two large formal SMOs (ANC and Òmnium Cultural) was rather limited in the case of the defense of the voting stations on October 1, 2017. While the two SMOs had been the main drivers of mobilization for much of the secessionist cycle of contention (see Chapter 3), they were not directly involved in what arguably represents the peak of contention. In fact, the data show that the ANC hindered the mobilization by calling followers exclusively to gather *outside* the voting stations and not to occupy and defend them against police intervention. Only when the occupations were already under way did the ANC change its stance. Organizer Carme, a member of the ANC leadership, looked back on this decision in the interview. When the plans for the referendum were announced, the ANC was part of the Estat Major, a coordinating committee composed of the Catalan president and vice president, the leaders of the three pro-independence parties, as well as the presidents of Òmnium Cultural and the Associació de Municipis per la Independència (AMI). These different players negotiated a common strategy for the referendum, as Carme described.

> I: Because in the Estat Major, there was only the president?
> R: Of course, that's why. [The Secretariat] had to delegate to him. And well, looking back, everything is easy, no? But in this moment, maybe some decisions should have been taken another way. So that role of the ANC the day before the vote would have been a bit, hmm, stronger. Which had been a bit, deluded, because we only called to gather outside. Basically, we didn't know well whether it would be possible to do [the referendum]. Well, now it's very easy to say, but those were difficult moments and a decision had to be made. And I think, as ANC, we didn't make a good choice convening people only outside the voting station with the ballot in hand.

The passage displays a high level of self-critique, essentially saying that, in retrospective, the decision was a mistake. She also made it clear that the ANC's position was influenced by its participation in the Estat Major.

> What happened is that—since the ANC also participated in the Estat Major, this also conditioned our stance on October 1, which perhaps followed the line agreed between everybody.

The ANC's decision not to call for the occupation and defense of the voting stations was fundamentally shaped by the common line of action that had been agreed upon by the regional government, the parties, and the civil society associations. For the ANC, this process also meant a departure from its decentralized decision-making, as the leadership had delegated all negotiating power to its president, Carme explained (see Chapter 4 as well). The inaction of the ANC had also been noted—and often criticized—by other collective actors. CDR Organizer Joana, for example, describes the situation as follows:

> The independence movement paid attention to two major organizations, which are Òmnium and ANC, because of their successful mobilizations. But they have a handicap, which is that there is no real political participation of the people who go to these manifestations. They have massive turnout, but they do not imply more than standing still in a place for some hours. And these organizations, at the moment of organizing the referendum, together with the government, who had to do it—they can't do it. For legal reasons, basically because their organizations are constantly under attack.

The two major organizations, ANC and Òmnium Cultural, had pushed the secessionist cycle of contention mainly through contained performances

such as the yearly Diada rally. Yet, in the crucial moment of the referendum, they were paralyzed. As Joana's comment suggests, it was for fear of legal repression that ANC and Òmnium Cultural did not call for the occupation of the voting stations. Moreover, both the two organizations' close links with the regional institutions might have discouraged them from initiating more disruptive actions.

Despite the inaction of the two major pro-independence SMOs, disruptive action *did* occur on October 1. The occupations of the voting stations and their defense against the Spanish police intervention were no ad hoc actions either. Although some spontaneous lines of contentious action unfolded on the day of the referendum, there is much more evidence in the data that most of the actions were planned and prepared ahead of time. This presents a puzzle for social movement research: If the defense of the voting stations was neither spontaneous nor initiated by SMOs, *how* was it organized?

Existing research suggested that SMOs as formal and complex organizations are not the only organizational form that can serve as a basis for contentious action. McCarthy (1996), for example, develops a typology of both formal and informal, of movement and non-movement structures, ranging from friendship networks, to churches and unions, to affinity groups, to SMOs and protest committees. These are all *mobilizing structures*, i.e., "those agreed upon ways of engaging in collective action which include particular 'tactical repertoires,' particular 'social movement organizational' forms, and 'modular social movement repertoires,'" but also "the range of everyday life micromobilization structural social locations that are not aimed primarily at movement mobilization, but where mobilization may be generated" (McCarthy, 1996, p. 141). In general, there has been agreement that *some* kind of social movement structure is crucial for contentious action, as McCarthy (1996, p. 141) points out: "Scholars of social movements have come to a quite broad consensus about the importance of mobilizing structures for understanding the trajectory of particular social movements and broader social movement cycles."[1]

Two kinds of mobilizing structures can be identified in the organizing process of the defense of the voting stations. First, parent associations (Associacions de Mares i Pares d'Alumnes, abbreviated AMPAs) planned and promoted occupation of many of those voting stations that were public

1 In the same volume, Rucht (1996, p. 185) states that "few social movement scholars doubt that movement networks and organizations have a strong impact on strategies, mobilization, and success."

schools. They used a loophole in the law, which allowed to maintain public schools open for the weekend if extracurricular activities for the pupils are held. Although the AMPAs generally do not have any links with the independence movement and are largely apolitical associations, they constituted an important link between the public schools as an institutional space and the voluntary mobilizations in the neighborhoods.

Second, while political parties and SMOs (including ANC and Òmnium Cultural) did not play any role in the organizing of the defense, the networks between their members at the neighborhood, small town, and village level represented an important structural basis for the preparatory process. In many cases, they came together with militants from the pro-independence parties to campaign for the referendum months before the defense of the voting stations was organized. Quite often, this process started with a meeting, as organizer Carles explains:

> R: One year before the 1-O, people from the Neighborhood Association, from other organizations, from the parties, mostly Esquerra and CUP, because Convergència, for participation is a bit weak—a bit weak with people—and so we did a meeting between some of us.
> I: When? When was that?
> R: One year before the 1-O. It wasn't about the defense of the referendum that day, but—we have to inform the people, the neighbors about the referendum, that it's not about being in favor or against independence, but that it's a matter of voting, of participation, and so on, of democracy. Not the defense, more about the participatory process. And that's what we did.

From these kinds of meetings between local militants of pro-independence parties and members of organizations emerged a network that served as an important basis for the defense of the voting stations. These local networks represent the "embryo" (Interview Gabriel) of the open spaces and encounters appearing in the weeks before the referendum, often under the label CDR. It cannot be neglected that these networks represent an important movement infrastructure, but they are insufficient to explain the defense of the voting stations.

This is a threefold argument. First, the network structures must be distinguished from the CDRs, which represent a different phenomenon. Reducing the CDRs to the networks between activists would miss their distinct character as non-partisan public spaces. Second, there is no doubt that the CDRs were the most important element in the organizing process. Interviewees stress that without the CDRs, the referendum would not have

happened. Third, it would be misguided to describe the CDRs before the referendum as an organizational structure, even just as an "emergent structure" (Killian, 1984). If the term mobilizing *structure* signifies "a pattern of more or less stable relationships within and between elements of a larger entity," with "some degree of regularity and therefore predictability" (Rucht, 2013, p. 170), then the CDRs *before* the referendum hardly qualified as structures at all. Interviewees described the CDRs at this point in time as a space rather than as a collective actor. The relationships among activists had not stabilized yet and would change dramatically with the upcoming events. They were still in a process of "organizational becoming" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

In sum, the role of movement infrastructures for the defense of the voting stations was rather limited. Neither the two large SMOs, nor the pre-existing activist networks account for the organizing process. Instead, the defense of the voting stations represents a case of organizing *outside* organizations.

Wendy Pearlman (2021) called this phenomenon "mobilizing from scratch" and argued that it is constituted by five processes. First, organizers look for resources other than existing organizations. Second, protest creates mobilizing structures rather than being a product of them. Third, mobilization leads to more complex forms of organization. Fourth, mobilizing from scratch deliberately avoids established social relationships. Fifth, it produces new kinds of sociability.

This chapter builds on Pearlman and identifies similar processes in the defense of the voting stations. It expands Pearlman's work using the process and practice approach to organizing developed in Chapter 2. My central claim in this chapter is that communication and decision-making *practices* were instrumental in this particular organizing process. Thereby, I show how the organizational dimension of movements must be thought beyond structural accounts of organization. I elaborate this argument in the next section.

Organizational Practices in the Defense of the Voting Stations

The key factor in the organizing process was the emergence of the CDRs as open initiatives for the defense of the referendum at the local level. On the one hand, the CDRs involved experienced organizers from different organizational backgrounds: members of the large associations ANC and Òmnium Cultural; militants from the local branches of the independentist parties PDeCAT, ERC, and CUP; members from youth organizations like

Arran or the Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana (JERC); and activists from student groups like Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (SEPC) and Universitats per la República (UxR). On the other hand, the CDRs were not an interorganizational setting, but a neutral space that also included activists from other social movements defending the right to decide (e.g., militants from Catalunya En Comù or the Plataforma de Afectadas por la Hipoteca), neighborhood associations, as well as many participants without any affiliation or prior activist experience.

The move to the local level represents a "downward scale shift" (Portos, 2017). Rather than scaling protest from the local to the national level, as classic social movement theory predicted (Tarrow, 2011), organizers identified the immediate surroundings of the voting stations (neighborhoods and villages) as critical arenas.

The next sections turn to the specific practices in the CDRs in the few days before the referendum of October 1. It builds on the theoretical approach to organizational practices developed in Chapter 2 and the description of four organizational practices in normal times in Chapter 4: On the one side, deliberation and directing as decision-making practices, and on the other side, public assemblies and messenger applications as communication practices. In the next section, I examine how experienced organizers used *combinations* of these practices in the defense of the voting stations. I argue that three of the four practices were key in the organizing process: public assemblies, instant messenger applications, and directing. First, however, I present the most notable finding about the organizing process: the absence of deliberation.

Consensus Without Deliberation

The first remarkable observation about the defense of the voting stations is the almost complete absence of conflict among activists during the preparations. Practically all interviewees answered in the negative when I asked them about tensions and debates in the days before the referendum. Consider the answer of CDR organizer Xavi for example:

> R: No. No, in fact, no. In the beginning, or rather before October 1, and the organization of October 1, conflict was practically absent. There was really a unity of action, which I have seen few times, in organization in general, because usually there exists [conflict]. But the truth is there was very little dispute, very little debate, and the idea what had to be done and how was quite clear.

Xavi stated very clearly that there was basically no debate or conflict in the organizing in the CDR in Sabadell before October 1. Instead, there was what he called "unity of action," and what Joana, another organizer from the CDR in Sabadell, dubbed "general consensus": a common willingness to go ahead and prepare the defense of the voting stations (see also Chapter 4). This pattern was not unique to Sabadell, but it was clearly visible throughout the interview data. The only contrary evidence came from small town Fastiada, where conflicts between organizers from different parties and organizations persisted during the preparatory process. But overall, conflict was absent, as expert Roger summed up: "In this moment, the debate was zero, because we all agreed. We all agreed. For the strategy for October 1, there was no dissidence, no dissent, no discrepancies, and no divergences."

The same applied not only to the preparations, but also to the actions during actual defense of the voting stations; there was no evidence of disagreements among activists and voters. During the tense day of the referendum, the unity described above did not fall apart under the pressure of police interventions. For example, when I asked organizer Carles whether there was any moment of conflict during the defense, he responded: "None. No, everybody knew what had to be done." Virtually all interviewees answered the question about conflict during the defense in the negative. In most cases, there was not even a discussion about what to do.

The lack of conflict is particularly surprising given that both during the preparations for the defense and on the day of the referendum itself, activists from very different backgrounds came together. As Joana pointed out, "there were none of the previous squabbles among these organizations, which do not share their forms of seeing politics. In this moment, there was no conflict between them."

Interviewees had their own explanations as to why this remarkable unity emerged during this short period of time. Organizer Enric, from the ANC, attributed this to the level of trust among activists, Xavi pointed out that the goal of the organizing was very clear, and Joana and Judit suggested that the conflict with the Spanish state created internal unity in the movement.

Simply focusing on consensus, one could rush to conclude that the preparations were ordered by deliberative practice. Deliberation refers to the practice of overcoming disagreement through the exchange of arguments, narratives, or testimonies to make decisions (Chambers, 2003; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Thompson, 2008). Previous research revealed the role of deliberation in many progressive social movements, such as the global justice movement (Della Porta, 2009; Della Porta & Rucht, 2015), the Spanish indignados (Della

Porta, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Nez, 2012), and the French nuit debout protests (Felicetti & Della Porta, 2018).

However, the interview data showed that the opposite was the case in the defense of the voting stations: consensus was not the result of activists overcoming disagreements through debate. Joana described an open assembly that was called by the organizers in Sabadell a couple of days before the referendum:

> R: There were 300 people. I don't think anybody expected so many people in every neighborhood. In another area, and in the center of Sabadell, there were maybe almost 2,000. Of course, it's quite difficult. Yes, we had a microphone, and we plugged it in at the civic center which was right there. And we explained what had happened at the assembly before, how it was formed, that we were coordinators, but there could be more coordinators, that it was an assembly and we would decide about the proposal to occupy the schools from Friday on if possible, if not on Saturday. And of course, there were questions, but basically, we were asking these 300 people, "Well, how many of you agree to occupy?" And it was the great majority [...]
> I: So it was more of an informative assembly?
> R: Yeah, it was—
> I: You didn't make the decision with 300 people?
> R: No, no, big decisions were not taken, most of all, because there was a proposal already and that proposal was accepted.

In the case of the CDR Sabadell, the organizers used the public assembly for two things. First, to recruit other activists as organizers (or coordinators as Joana called it) and second, to bring forth a proposal to occupy the voting stations. There was little debate about the proposal; the organizers were merely seeking the consent of other activists. Although much of the organizing was done in public assemblies, activists did not deliberate, as organizer Xavi underlined:

> Because in the end it's what I told you, since the objective was very concrete, very specific, the assemblies weren't deliberative spaces, or like, there was no deliberative element, but rather an element almost as of a transmission belt.

The extract from the interview shows that deliberation was completely absent from the preparatory process. This was a common pattern in the descriptions of the assemblies before the referendum. Interviewees from

different voting stations and different backgrounds all reported the absence of debate and disagreement. Normally, the practices of public assemblies and deliberation are closely connected in social movements, but in the case of the defense of the voting stations, they were not. This shows that the consensus described by the interviewees was not the result of deliberation. Instead, I suggest it is the expression of another practice, which played a greater role than deliberation in the defense of the voting stations: directing.

Combining Directing, Assemblies, and Messengers

Conflict was largely absent during the process of preparing the defense of the voting stations. This does not mean, however, that the protest event was a self-fulfilling prophecy; the organizing still had to be accomplished. From the analysis of the empirical material, it became clear that the practice of what I call *directing* was instrumental in coordinating the preparatory activities.

This shift from deliberation to directing is characteristic for what I have called *crisis organizing* in the previous chapter. The combination of a shared movement strategy and intensifying conflict with the state created less need and less time for deliberation. Instead, top-down directing became more acceptable to activists. This shift was especially present in the defense of the voting stations. Interviewees reported three instances of directing: first, organizers combined directing with public assemblies, and second, they combined directing with the use of instant messenger applications. Third, directing was also prominent during the actual defense of the voting stations.

First, activists held open assemblies in villages, small towns, and the neighborhoods of larger cities throughout Catalonia in September 2017 with the intention of preparing the defense of the voting stations. Openness was crucial to the public assemblies in the organizing process. At least theoretically, people from the outside were able to join and participate in the assembly. As shown in the previous section, there was not a lot of deliberation in these public assemblies. Nevertheless, they played a crucial role as "transmission belts," as interviewee Xavi calls them, in the organizing process. The analysis of the empirical data showed that organizers used these public assemblies to give directions to other participants. This is why CDR organizer Carles called them "directed assemblies" (*asambleas dirgistas*):

> So I took the microphone and said, "Listen people, come here, we need to do this," and I don't know what. There was an idea already. It was a very directed assembly. It was not participatory, because there were many people who had no experience in the topic and, moreover, they were quite

> nervous. Let's be honest, we were all feeling pretty bad, but we have a bit more activist experience and we have lived through something like that already, no? So it was a bit directed, saying, "OK, between 8 and 10 on Friday we have to be here." Those who knew when the ballot boxes would come, we did not share that information, but we said, "OK, calm down, we know the ballot boxes will come and we know the person who has them."

This passage from the interview with Carles illustrates how the practice of directing was performed in these open assemblies. Carles and the other organizers were giving instructions to other participants about what to do at what time. Thereby, the directed assemblies ordered the preparatory activities. The directed assemblies represented a peculiar texture of organizational practice. They maintained the core practice of public assemblies (multiparty talk, facilitation, and openness) and were combined with organizers giving instructions to other activists. These assemblies were crucial in the preparatory process, because they provided a space for encounter at the local level. Their public and open character allowed activists from different backgrounds to come together and work on the preparations for the defense of the voting stations. Creating this kind of organizational setting was of great importance, because the organizing process occurred outside of organizations.

Second, organizers did not only direct through public assemblies but also through instant messenger applications. Messenger applications were used primarily through mobile phones, which have become a key technology for protesters because of their versatility, allowing for communication with other activists, authorities, and the wider public (Neumayer & Stald, 2014). In the days before the referendum, organizers were passing instructions through group chats to organize the preparations of the defense of the voting stations. Telegram was particularly useful for organizers because it offered this kind of communication. Organizer Enric described how organizers practiced directing through Telegram.

> R: How were these groups born? And who was putting content on Telegram?
>
> I: Look, this is very easy. Today, with this tool that I have here, which is a mobile phone, if you have a little bit of organization, and you know a little bit of marketing and how to manage this, it's very easy to create a nucleus who gives certain orders, let's say at the head of all of this. And from there, it branches out, it's like a pyramid. It branches out and people organize. Everybody knew they had certain freedom, but that

> some norms needed to be followed. Not because they were written somewhere, but purely because of common sense. Of course, there were common prepared things. The topic of how to treat the Mossos, not to confront the National Police nor the Civil Guard, to always maintain a peaceful tone. And you notice, that practically, that was the norm in all the videos you can see.

Organizers combined the use of instant messenger applications with the practice of directing to give instructions about preparatory activities prior to the referendum. The transcript also shows how they could diffuse norms about how to behave during the defense of the referendum through the combination of these two practices. The use of instant messengers had the advantage that it could reach a great number of activists in a short time. In some cases, this was combined with the practice of directed assemblies, but in others, directions were given exclusively through instant messenger applications (IMAs), as Gabriel described. In the Barcelona neighborhood, where he participated, "before [the 1-O], there were no assemblies, it was all through WhatsApp."

Third, directing also played a role in the voting stations itself. Organizers tried to control the protest action by giving instructions to the activists and voters who were gathering in and around the voting stations. Activist Quim, who became a CDR organizer only after the referendum, told that "those who were in charge of the voting stations did give some orders, because from the roof they said, 'be careful to get together,' 'now relax,' 'please everybody in a single line,' 'if we shout, you all come here.'" The other participants were "at the orders" of the organizers.

Another example comes from a voting station in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, where organizer Enric had the idea to use trash cans to block the road access to the building where the voting station was located. In the interview, Enric reported that he directed to the other participants that they "pull them out from where they were and that they put them basically at the extremes of the street." Even if this had not stopped the police, it would have at least slowed them down. Enric was giving directions: "If they come to take the trash cans, the people who are in line come and put yourselves behind the trash cans and the others stay on the sides." In the end, this would not even be necessary, because the police only passed the voting stations but did not intervene. These two pieces of data illustrate that directing was not only relevant in combination with public assemblies and instant messaging in the preparations, but also continued during the defense of the voting station.

Organizational Practices Beyond Organizations

The analysis of the empirical material revealed that organizers employed a combination of directing, public assemblies, and instant messaging applications for the preparation of the defense of the voting stations, while deliberative practices were practically absent in the process. Directing, public assemblies, and instant messaging formed what Gherardi (2006, 2012) called a *texture* of practices. In the absence of formal organizations, this texture of practice acquired organizational qualities. The practices structured collective action in two ways: through communication and decision-making.

First, both public assemblies and instant messengers established communication flows that are usually found within formal organizations. As mentioned before, public assemblies essentially provided a space of encounter at the local level, which allowed activists from different backgrounds to come together in the squares and streets of neighborhoods and villages. Instant messaging applications had a similar role at the digital level, creating communication channels between organizers and activists. Often the digital and face-to-face levels were interlocked. In many voting stations, activists used both practices at the same time to facilitate communication.

Second, the practice of directing reduced uncertainty about the protest event. Whenever organizers gave instructions to other activists, they were taking a collective decision. For instance, when Enric told other activists where to put trash cans to prevent the police from accessing the voting stations, he excluded other courses of action and thereby organized preparatory activities. This depended on the compliance of other activists. Nevertheless, directing represented a form of (temporary) centralized decision-making. Key decisions in the process were taken by local organizers and communicated to other activists through assemblies and messengers. Outside the boundaries of established formal organizations, directing became particularly relevant, because the activities of activists were not guided by any previous collective decisions.

The three practices ordered the preparatory activities for the defense of the voting stations. Activists made use of public assemblies, messenger applications, and directing. Thereby, they integrated the decision-making and communication dimensions of these practices. Through the combination of these practices, organizers were able to plan and prepare the defense of the voting stations outside the established SMOs.

But practices not only structure collective action, but they are structured *themselves*, too. Practices are not random bundles of activity, but their

components exhibit some kind of pattern (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001). Ann Swidler (2001, p. 88) pointed out that practices "are structures in just this sense, simultaneously material and enacted, but also patterned and meaningful, both because they enact schemas and because they may be read for the transposable schemas they contain." Public assemblies, messenger applications, and directing all exhibit some regularity and repetitiveness, which provided practitioners meaningful cues for action.

Organizational practices were thus key in organizing outside formal organizations. However, this was not easily accomplished. Decision-making and communication practices could not simply be extracted from SMOs and applied in unstructured settings. Directing, messenger applications, and public assemblies could be used, because organizers and activists had the necessary experience and skill to practice them without the support of a formal organizational structure.

Practical Knowledge and Experience

Organizational practices are not a toolbox that is readily available to activists, from which they can simply pick and choose. Organizational practices require knowledge and skill. Organizers must have acquired these skills through learning and experience—they must become practitioners. The case of the defense of the voting stations was no exception, which became clear from the pieces of data cited in previous sections. Organizer Enric, for example said that giving directions through messenger applications was possible "if you have a little bit of organization, and you know a little bit of marketing and how to manage this." This highlights that it was not enough to simply send out text messages over Telegram telling people what to do. It required knowledge *how* to do it. Another example came from Carles' description of the directed assemblies in the CDR prior to the referendum. He admitted that all the participants, including him, were quite nervous, but at the same time he also stressed that the organizers had "a bit more activist experience and we have lived through something like that already." With this experience, they were able to direct the assembly and to create trust among those receiving directions.

Further evidence for the role of experience and practical skill came from the interviews with the organizers of the CDR Sabadell. Joana said that the organizing process was not initiated by "three neighbors who say 'let's do this,'" but by activists "with previous political participation." These organizers had experience in other social movements and civil society organizations, for example in the Plataforma de Afectadas por la Hipoteca. Organizer Xavi,

who had been involved in different movements before, explained the role of experience as follows.

> We had experience to stage assemblies with 300 people every Wednesday. So you prepare a microphone, an agenda in 30 seconds, pa-pa-pa, turns of talk, and I don't know what else. This is an important school of activism as well.

Previous experience in social movements provided Catalan activists with the necessary practical skills to hold public assemblies, use messenger applications, and give directions to other activists. This represented a common thread in many interviews. Organizers emphasized the role of practical knowledge and previous experiences. Because they had *practiced* these organizational skills, they could use them outside of organizational entities.

The downward scale shift to the local level was important for practices, too. Organizers could hold assemblies in their neighborhoods and villages without having to travel to another city. Strong personal ties provided trust and collaboration in the organizing process. Activists knew the spaces of the voting stations and their surroundings and could use them to their advantage during the defense itself.

This shows that the independence movement had experienced and skillful organizers who knew how to organize collective action. But skillful organizers alone were not sufficient for successful organizing. It also required that a critical mass of ordinary participants could be involved in the organizational process. The basic condition was that organizational practices had to be recognizable beyond the small circles of core activists. Participants had an idea what it meant to hold assemblies or to use instant messengers. Moreover, they also possessed some basic skills and knowledge to do these things. Otherwise, communication in messengers and assemblies would have just produced chaos, and nobody would have followed the directions of organizers.

The Sedimentation of Organizational Innovation

Periods of intense contention are productive times. When mobilization increases and resources become available, new spaces for collective action open up and activists get creative. Innovation of contentious action is a central mechanism as the cycle reaches its peak (Tarrow, 2011). Transformative events may play a crucial role in a series of innovative processes, as Della Porta (2008, pp. 29–30) argued:

> During cycles of protest, some contingent events tend to affect the given structures by fueling mechanisms of social change: organizational networks develop; frames are bridged; personal links foster reciprocal trust. In this sense, protest events—especially, some of them—constitute processes during which collective experiences develop in the interactions of different individual and collective actors, that with different roles and aims take part in it.

Della Porta suggested that contentious actions produce new frames for action, as well as relationships of trust and collaboration among individual and collective social movement players. In other words, transformative events can trigger a series of cognitive, relational, and emotional mechanisms that lead to new practices, relationships, or structures in social movements.

The open assemblies and the use of IMAs in the CDRs represented two key organizational innovations that were initiated during the secessionist crisis. Open assemblies and the use of IMAs were instrumental in the planning and preparation of the defense of the voting stations. Of course, neither of these practices was invented for this purpose. Interviewees reported that IMAs were used for internal and external communication in campaigns and protests already before the 1-O. Open assemblies already had a long-standing tradition in Catalan and Spanish alternative and autonomous movements (Flesher Fominaya, 2014).

However, the secessionist crisis was innovative in that it led to a widespread diffusion of assembly and messenger practices. The two practices were crucial for the organizing of the defense of the voting stations, because they functioned as communication channels outside the boundaries of formal SMOs and thereby allowed coordinating the preparatory activities. Through the preparation of the defense of the voting stations *outside* of the established SMOs, organizers reached a greater number of participants, especially those who were unlikely to get involved in an existing organization. Interviewees reported that these new participants learned in the emergent CDRs how assemblies and messengers worked as activist practices.

After the referendum, activists in the CDRs but also in other compound players continued to organize through the same open assemblies and messenger channels. Thereby, the two innovative practices became permanent elements of the movement's organizational repertoire. In the following, I describe these two processes more in detail.

First, IMAs such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal were instrumental for internal and external communication in organizing protests in the secessionist crisis. Organizers created messenger channels to give instructions

to activists and other organizers in the preparation of protest events. Many organizers continued to use these messenger channels after the referendum. For example, the interorganizational platform in Fastiada still used its Telegram channel *Moviment*, but changed its name to CDR, as interviewee Oriol described:

> Thus we went from Moviment, in which there were also those from Convergència, to the CDR. Those from Convergència had left the group, and once all the other actors said they wanted to be in the CDR, we said, "Look, we will change the name of the channel and call it CDR," because we already had all the people in there. And when those from Convergència saw this, they said at a meeting, "I just saw you changed the name, what is this?" And I said, "Well, look, we were all in this coordination space, which you left, so we decided to do this." He didn't say anything. Moviment was OK, but now it was Committee for the Defense [of the Republic] for strikes, and blockades, and so on. They didn't like that. Well, and from that moment we worked as CDR.

The organizers who had prepared the defense of the voting stations in Fastiada continued to use the same Telegram channel after the referendum. This was important, because it allowed them to build on an established communication channel to reach out to other activists. Fastiada was by far not the only local case to do so. Organizers in the Clot neighborhood in Barcelona changed the name of the channel from Clot deceideix ("Clot decides") to Committee for the Defense of the Republic, too. In this fashion, many messenger channels and groups were set up for the post-referendum CDRs.

The student platform UxR also made heavily use of messenger practices to prepare and manage the occupation of the University of Barcelona. The messenger channels that were set up for this purpose were also used by organizers after the occupation, as organizer Ester described in the interview:

> And then [UxR] has a larger, relatively stable group of people with already established communication channels, such as WhatsApp, and so on. This makes it much easier for them to clarify things, for example when there are demonstrations or social things. Now when UxR proposes a demonstration—where in fact the SEPC has a lot to say—UxR can call large assemblies again. They have a consolidated group of maybe more than 60 people that mobilize themselves regularly.

This piece of data illustrates the importance of the newly created messenger channels for organizing protest also after the secessionist crisis. The use of messengers allowed organizers to reach a group of regular activists in the preparatory process.

Second, open assemblies were an integral part of the organizing of the defense of the voting stations. Just like the messenger channels, some of these open encounters were called CDR, some were called differently, and some did not carry any name. In any case, these local assemblies continued after the referendum, too. The following quote from the interview with Jordi describes the initial period of time after the referendum:

> Well, on October 2, people were outraged and wanted to do protest actions, block highways, and I joined the people in the village, with the CDR [...] We started with meetings, assemblies to see what we could do, what we could not do, which actions to take basically. Of course, we wanted to do marches, we wanted to shut down the country.

In the assemblies on October 2, activists voiced their outrage over the violent actions of the Spanish police forces the previous day. These assemblies were instrumental in the preparations of the general strike on the following day, but they were no single occurrences. They kicked off a series of local activist assemblies after the referendum. Just as the assemblies in preparation for the defense of the voting stations, these encounters took place in the streets and squares every week or every other week. Thus, the assemblies acquired a steady rhythm. They went beyond their initial purpose to defend the voting stations and turned into a permanent encounter.

These two practices, assemblies and messenger applications, did not disappear after the defense of the voting stations. They continued to be used by activists as communication channels and spaces of encounter in the aftermath of the referendum. Thereby, these practices were repeated and structured over time. This routinization of communicative practices gave rise to the CDRs as a discrete collective actor within the independence movement. In other words, the CDRs evolved from an open space of encounter that was closely linked to a short-term goal (the defense of the voting station) to a more permanent organizational form. This process of stabilization, or "sedimentation" as Della Porta (2020) called it, was reinforced by three parallel developments of the CDRs.

First, the CDRs were affected by demobilization. Interviewees reported that participation numbers in the assemblies dropped after October 27 and

even more after the December 21 elections. The following quote from the interview with CDR organizer Ruben illustrates this process:

> I: I was going to ask you, did participation in your CDR drop?
> R: Yes, well, it has dropped, but there is a core of people that always attends. Thus, now there are "the 12 from the CDR," who are those that always go to the assembly and are now a group of friends. Now these people meet to put up posters, prepare I-don't-know-what, go to protests. They are those who continue and they form a loyal group.
> I: Since when?
> R: Well, I remember that the CDR maintained good numbers until the end of the year [2017], but since the beginning of 2018, it was more reduced. I think once the summer was over, this core was all that was left.

Although the CDRs became regular assemblies after the 1-O referendum, they suffered from demobilization. Instead of serving as a space of encounter with fluid attendance, many of them evolved into groups with a more or less stable but informal membership, as Ruben described. This process created close bonds among the remaining members and sometimes even friendship.

Second, the CDRs stabilized not only through mere repetition of messenger and assembly practices but also through deliberate efforts to structure themselves as a collective actor. Approximately a week after the 3-O, the CDR Sabadell proposed to enhance coordination between the local CDRs. The following quote from the interview with CDR organizer Carles describes this proposal:

> Afterwards there was the great idea of the CDR Sabadell to say, "Listen, we cannot manage our actions, everybody in our neighborhoods. Of course, in your neighborhood you have power, but a common response of 200, 300 CDRs at the same time, that's not the same thing, that's much more interesting." So, the CDR Sabadell proposed to hold a meeting. The first assembly of CDRs, which was in Sabadell after October 1, I think around October 10 or 11 [...] We were 250 CDRs or more. Two people representing each CDR as a block [...] and then the second, assembly, I don't remember where it was, Manresa, Igualada, I don't know. At this one, there were also people from the farmer's union, from Òmnium Cultural, because they saw that this was enormous. Two hundred and fifty CDRs from all over the region, trying to organize themselves. This was very powerful.

These first two encounters enhanced coordination between the local CDRs. They created a multi-level structure of local, intermediate, and regional levels, where rotating representatives from the local CDRs participated. Organizers set up a Telegram channel and a Twitter account called CDR Catalunya and started to hold regular meetings. However, until the end of my fieldwork, the relationships among the different levels remained largely informal and the local CDRs maintained their autonomy. The CDR Catalunya was not able to force the local groups to participate in collective actions. Still, establishing the CDR Catalunya represented an important step towards coordination. This allowed organizing simultaneous actions throughout the region at the 8-N and the March protests.

Third, the establishment of the CDR Catalunya was coincidental with the name change of the CDRs. At the encounter at the regional level, it was proposed to change the name of the Committees for the Defense of the *Referendum* to Committees for the Defense of the *Republic*. This proposal was accepted and brought back to the local level by the representatives. After some intense debates, almost all CDRs adopted the new name. This change was not merely about labels. As I show in Chapter 6, the debates around the name were also a way of making sense of what had happened during the 1-O and carried fundamental implications for the strategy of the independence movement. The point I would like to make here is quite simply that putting a uniform name for all local groups represented the establishment of a group identity. This identity was closely related to the readings of the referendum as a legitimation for independence, and the unilateral strategy that followed from it. Most importantly, it represented an important element in the consolidation of the CDRs as proper compound player after the 1-O referendum.

The emergence of the CDRs as new players was ultimately a result of the mobilizations around the 1-O referendum. Although organization is normally seen as preceding mobilization (Pearlman, 2021), they are also a product of protest, as Tarrow (2011, pp. 122–123) pointed out:

> Organizations emerge out of episodes of contention through interaction with authorities, allies, and third parties. [They] begin as local networks, spread through the diffusion of contention, and ultimately either disappear or scale upward to regional and national levels.

The CDRs largely fitted this process: they were born out of the need to organize the defense of the voting stations and the confrontation with Spanish police during the referendum. Before the 1-O, they were merely open spaces

of encounter that rapidly spread all over Catalonia. After the referendum, they stabilized to a certain degree and initiated coordination at the regional level. However, the upscaling remained fairly limited, as local CDRs kept their autonomy. Moreover, they did not evolve into a formal organization and remained loosely structured. Or, as interviewee Miquel put it: "We're not talking about an organization. You cannot even call it structure." This situated the CDRs along the lines of other flexible and loosely structured forms of organization that have emerged over the last decade, rather than in the realm of classic formal organization. Independently of their character, the CDRs represented the most important organizational legacy of the secessionist crisis (see also Della Porta et al., 2021). Before the crisis, the Catalan pro-independence civil society and its contentious repertoire was dominated by ANC and Òmnium Cultural. The emergence of the CDRs as a loosely structured player can be seen as a response to the inability of the two large established SMOs to adapt to the strategic context of the secessionist crisis and call for disruptive action. This organizational diversification of the independence movement reflects the pattern of environmental movement, in which many new grassroots groups emerged in the 1990s after the institutionalization and professionalization of the existing organizations (Diani & Donati, 1999; Rootes, 1999).

This stabilization did not mean that the CDRs were unaffected by the contraction of the cycle of contention that followed the secessionist crisis. In fact, the data suggested that strategic interactions with allies and opponents during the contractive phase had a transformative impact on communication and decision-making practices in the CDRs and other compound players of the independence movement. The next two chapters focus on these transformations.

Conclusion

Since the 1970s, social movement studies have been emphasizing the importance of organizational structures as a basis for contentious action. In contrast to earlier collective behavior approaches, scholars pointed out the role of social movement infrastructures, most importantly organizations and their resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977). SMOs fulfill a series of important functions for social movements: they recruit participants, raise funds and other resources, and create solidarity and identity (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 137). Social movements—as a category of action, not as an actor—were regarded as inherently organized, and that meant: based on

organizations (Snow et al., 2004, p. 10; Tilly, 2004, p. 3; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, p. 11). Organizations were thus seen as an important precondition for protest.

Recent research has cast doubt on these assumptions. Pearlman (2021) has shown how, on the one hand, activists can "mobilize from scratch," even in authoritarian settings, and, on the other hand, that mobilizing structures are also a consequence of mobilization and not just a precursor. This chapter has built on Pearlman's findings by tackling the puzzling case of the defense of the voting stations. I have described how the independence movement successfully planned and prepared the defense of the voting stations despite the inaction of its two largest SMOs. The most surprising finding was that deliberation was largely absent in the organizing process. Instead of deliberation, organizers used a specific combination of three organizational practices: public assemblies, instant messenger applications, and directing. The "texture" (Gherardi, 2006, 2012) of these practices enabled communication and decision-making among activists. Public assemblies and IMAs stabilized and sedimented into the CDRs as an organizational structure and key player after the referendum. The defense of the voting stations thus was an "eventful protest" (Della Porta, 2008) that had far-reaching consequences for the organizational dimension of the independence movement.

They key finding of this chapter is that communication and decision-making practices structure collective action—even when formal organizations as infrastructures are practically absent. Public assemblies, messenger applications, and directing also work outside the boundaries of formal organizations. Communication and decision-making practices acquire organizational qualities, because practitioners employ them to reduce uncertainty about the protest event by elaborating plans for collective action. Precisely because practices represent relatively regular and stable ways of action, they work even outside the boundaries of established organizations.

However, this requires practical skill and knowledge from both organizers and activists. Put simply, activists must know *how* to organize contentious action. Skill and knowledge are not readily available to them, but must be acquired through learning and experience. If organizers know how to use the practices at their hands properly, the structural components of organization might become irrelevant.

The defense of the voting stations fits with the mode of crisis organizing described in the previous section. It was prepared fairly quickly using directing instead of deliberation. The reason is that it is driven by the same strategic interactions between organizers, their allies, and their opponents.

The referendum as a shared strategic frame and increasing repression were key for the emergence of the CDRs and their texture of practices.

The findings have important implications for scholarship in social movement studies. The role of the ANC in the defense of the voting stations suggests that the importance of formal organizations might not only be overstated—formal organizations may even hinder contentious action. The analysis thus confirms previous research by Pearlman (2021) on "mobilization from scratch" in authoritarian settings and expands it in two ways. First, the findings suggest that the key to organized protest action may lie not so much in structures, but in the practical skill and experience of activists and organizers. The relevance of communication and decision-making practices demonstrates the limits of structural accounts of organization in social movements. This means that social movement scholars should pay more attention to practices. Second, the case of the voting stations highlights that "mobilizing from scratch" also occurs in a democratic context when repression suddenly increases. While not as unlikely as in an authoritarian regime, the chapter shows how organizers in democracies have to overcome several obstacles—including from their own allied SMOSs.

The chapter also contributes to the literature on organizing beyond organizations (Ahrne et al., 2016; Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, 2019) by exploring a case of contentious action. Social movements represent a particularly relevant field for the study of organizational dynamics beyond organizational structures, because of their comparatively low level of formalization. But the findings of the chapter might also apply to other forms of collective action. Decision-making and communication practices are critical in any kind of informal setting.

References

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2019). Organization unbound. In G. Ahrne & N. Brunsson (Eds.), *Organization outside organizations: The abundance of partial organization in social life*. (p. 3–36). Cambridge University Press.https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108604994

Ahrne, G., Brunsson, N., & Seidl, D. (2016). Resurrecting organization by going beyond organizations. *European Management Journal, 34*(2), 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2016.02.003

Boden, D. (1994). *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Polity Press.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2000). *The social life of information*. Harvard Business School Press.

Chambers, S. (2003). Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 6*(1), 307–326. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085538

Clemens, E. S., & Minkoff, D. C. (2004). Beyond the Iron Law: Rethinking the place of organizations in social movement research. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 155–170). Blackwell.

Czarniawska, B. (2013). Organizations as obstacles to organizing. In D. Robichaud & F. Cooren (Eds.), *Organization and organizing: Materiality, agency, and discourse* (pp. 3–22). Routledge.

Della Porta, D. (2008). Eventful protest, global conflicts. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, 9*(2), 27–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2008.9672963

Della Porta, D. (Ed.). (2009). *Another Europe: Conceptions and practices of democracy in the European social forums*. Routledge.

Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social movements in times of austerity: Bringing capitalism back into protest analysis*. Polity Press.

Della Porta, D. (2020). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 19*(5–6), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2006). *Social movements: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.

Della Porta, D., Gunzelmann, H. J., & Portos, M. (2021). Repression and democracy amidst the eventful 1-O referendum. In Ó. G. Agustín (Ed.), *Catalan independence and the crisis of sovereignty* (pp. 127–150). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54867-4_6

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Portos García, M., & Subirats Ribas, A. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: Direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press.

Della Porta, D., & Rucht, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Meeting democracy: Power and deliberation in global justice movements*. Cambridge University Press.

Diani, M. (2015). *The cement of civil society: Studying networks in localities*. Cambridge University Press.

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organisational change in Western European environmental groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Felicetti, A., & Della Porta, D. (2018). Between deliberation and contestation: The convergence of struggles against austerity and its world in the Nuit Debout movement. *Social Movement Studies, 17*(6), 658–675. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1505487

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2014). Debunking spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/indignados as autonomous movement. *Social Movement Studies, 14*(2), 142–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2014.945075

Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (1992). Mesomobilization: Organizing and framing in two protest campaigns in West Germany. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(3), 555–596. https://doi.org/10.1086/230049

Gherardi, S. (2006). *Organizational knowledge: The texture of workplace learning*. Blackwell.

Gherardi, S. (2012). *How to conduct a practice-based study: Problems and methods*. Elgar.

Haug, C. (2010). Discursive decision-making in meetings of the Global Justice Movement: Cultures and practices [PhD dissertation]. Free University of Berlin.

Haug, C. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution. *Organization Studies, 34*(5–6), 705–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Haug, C., Haeringer, N., & Mosca, L. (2009). The ESF organizing process in diachronic perspective. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Another Europe: Conceptions and practices of democracy in the European social forums* (pp. 26–45). Routledge.

Killian, L. A. (1984). Organization, rationality and spontaneity in the civil rights movement. *American Sociological Review, 49*(6), 770–783.

Klandermans, B., Kriesi, H., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1989). *From structure to action: Comparing social movement research across cultures*. JAI.

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Mansbridge, J. J., Bohman, J., Chambers, S., Christiano, T., Fung, A., Parkinson, J., Thompson, D. F., & Warren, M. E. (2012). A systemic approach to deliberative democracy. In J. Parkinson & J. J. Mansbridge (Eds.), *Deliberative systems* (pp. 1–26). Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D., & Scott, R. W. (2005). Organizations and movements. In G. F. Davis, D. McAdam, R. W. Scott, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Social movements and organization theory*. Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D. (1996). Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting, and inventing. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 141–151). Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1973). *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization*. General Learning Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*(6), 1212–1241.

Minkoff, D. C., & McCarthy, J. D. (2005). Reinvigorating the study of organizational processes in social movements. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*, 289–308.

Muñoz, J., & Guinjoan, M. (2013). Accounting for internal variation in nationalist mobilization: Unofficial referendums for independence in Catalonia (2009–11). *Nations and Nationalism, 19*(1), 44–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12006

Neumayer, C., & Stald, G. (2014). The mobile phone in street protest: Texting, tweeting, tracking, and tracing. *Mobile Media & Communication, 2*(2), 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157913513255

Nez, H. (2012). Délibérer au sein d'un mouvement social: Ethnographie des assemblées des Indignés à Madrid. *Participations, 4*(3), 79. https://doi.org/10.3917/parti.004.0079

Pearlman, W. (2021). Mobilizing from scratch: Large-scale collective action without preexisting organization in the Syrian uprising. *Comparative Political Studies, 54*(10), 1786–1817. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020912281

Portos, M. (2017). Keeping dissent alive under the Great Recession: No-radicalisation and protest in Spain after the eventful 15M/indignados campaign. *Acta Politica, 54*, 45–74 https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-017-0074-9

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory, 5*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432

Rootes, C. A. (1999). The transformation of environmental activism: Activists, organizations and policy-making. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 12*(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1999.9968595

Rucht, D. (1996). The impact of national contexts on social movement structures: A cross-movement and cross-national comparison. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 185–204). Cambridge University Press.

Schatzki, T. R. (2001). Practice mind-ed orders. In T. R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, & E. von Savigny (Eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary theory* (pp. 50–63). Routledge.

Schwartzman, H. B. (1989). *The meeting: Gatherings in organizations and communities*. Plenum.

Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., & Kriesi, H. (2004). Mapping the terrain. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 3–16). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch1

Swidler, A. (2001). What anchors cultural practices. In T. R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, & E. von Savigny (Eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary theory* (pp. 83–101). Routledge.

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, D. F. (2008). Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science. *Annual Review of Political Science, 11*(1), 497–520. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.081306.070555

Tilly, C. (1986). *The contentious French*. Belknap Press.

Tilly, C. (1995). *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834*. Harvard University Press.

Tilly, C. (2004). *Social movements, 1768–2004*. Paradigm Publishers.

Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2015). *Contentious politics* (Second revised edition). Oxford University Press.

Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science, 13*(5), 567–582. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.5.567.7810

Vicens, L., & Tedó, X. (2018). *Més operació urnes*. Columna.

Whittington, R. (2003). The work of strategizing and organizing: For a practice perspective. *Strategic Organization, 1*(1), 117–125.

6 The Day That Lasted Years: Making Sense of the Referendum

Abstract
This chapter argues that how activists made sense of the referendum shaped how they organized protests afterwards. It reconstructs how a frame dispute about the meaning of the referendum emerged after the event. While some activists claimed that the referendum represented a legitimate mandate for secession, others saw it as a successful mobilization but not a final vote on independence. Those who saw the referendum as legitimate demanded unilateral action in the form of civil disobedience, whereas the other camp opted for enlarging the social basis of the independence movement. The chapter looks at organizational processes of the 3-O and 8-N general strikes to show that these strategic debates led to more deliberation within organizations and to declining interorganizational collaboration.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Sensemaking, Framing, Deliberation, Interorganizational Collaboration, Independence Referendum

There can be very little doubt that October 1, 2017 represents a remarkable date in Catalonia's recent history. The images and stories of activists occupying voting stations and of police beating voters have circulated widely in national and international media. They have become engraved in the memories of participants and observers. The abbreviation *1-O* has become a familiar symbol in public discourse.

During my ten months of fieldwork in Catalonia, the date was always present in conversations and during observations, on leaflets and banners, on TV and in social media, at protests and in meetings. Organizers highlighted the role of the 1-O in the interviews as well. Many of them described the density of occurrences on that day. Interviewee Isabel said that

> October 1 is—I don't know, it's a day that could be years with all those things that happened.

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH06

Isabel's statement illustrates the eventfulness of the 1-O by pointing to the condensed sequence of happenings during that day. In another interview, organizer Gerard independently used a similar phrase.

> It was one of those days they call "days that last years" (*Dies que duraran anys*). This is how long they last, I think, all life long, and they will always be a reference for independentism.

In contrast to Isabel, Gerard used the phrase to stress that the impact of what happened on October 1 went well beyond that very day. This was very much the empirical expression of McAdam and Sewell's (2001) idea that transformative events represent short, intense periods of time that have long-term consequences. In the activists' narratives, the 1-O became a turning point for the movement, as the extract from Eulàlia's interview shows:

> Everybody knows somebody who they beat or kicked or threw on the ground. Their grandmother, their mother. You cannot forget this so easily. It marked us. I think there is a before and after October 1.

The phrase "before and after" is a crucial construction. It indicates that something, or many things, if not everything, changed for the movement on October 1. The statement underlined the symbolic importance of the 1-O as a historical event in Catalan politics. In the data, there was a widely shared narrative that constructed the referendum and the related occurrences as a transformative moment.

Transformative events are outstanding occurrences that have an impact on politics beyond their own duration. This chapter and the following focus on what came *after* the referendum and the secessionist crisis. The two chapters work in tandem to shed light on the consequences of the referendum crisis for secessionist protest and its organizational basis. Both chapters put organizers' framing, sensemaking, and strategizing at the center.

William H. Sewell in his seminal article (1996, p. 861) stressed that what makes transformative events *remarkable* is their symbolic dimension. It is the images and stories that resonate and set them apart within the continuous flow of time. However, events are not self-evident facts, as a series of scholars has pointed out (Abrams, 1993, p. 193; Basta, 2018; Wagner-Pacifici, 2010). There is no objective measure of what counts as an event and what does not, how common or rare they are, what their duration is, or whether two of them fall into the same category. All these things are not inherent

to occurrences. Rather, they are subject to social construction, or, as Basta (2018, p. 5) put it:

> Occurrences do not become events as a matter of course, even if and when they do transform institutions or social structures. Their meaning must be actively created in order for them to become broadly apparent political facts.

The meaning of an event is not objectively given, but the result of a process of social construction. This shifts the analytical focus to the question how an occurrence becomes an event in the first place (Wagner-Pacifici, 2010, p. 1358; Weick et al., 2005, p. 410). I employ the concept of sensemaking to show how organizers deal with this question (Louis, 1980; Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005).

I argue that how activists made sense of the referendum as a transformative event shaped how they organized protests afterwards. I reconstruct how the pre-crisis frame alignment eroded (see Chapter 4) and a "framing contest" (Kaplan, 2008) or "frame dispute" (Benford, 1993) about the meaning of the referendum emerged after the vote. While some activists claimed that the referendum represented a legitimate mandate for secession, others saw it as a successful mobilization but not a final vote on independence. From these meanings, activists constructed two different "prognostic frames" to guide strategic action (Snow & Benford, 1988). Those who saw the referendum as legitimate demanded unilateral action in the form of civil and institutional disobedience, whereas the other camp opted for enlarging the social basis of the independence movement. The chapter compares the preparatory processes of the 3-O and 8-N general strikes to show that these strategic debates led to more deliberation within organizations and to declining interorganizational collaboration. The chapter is structured into three parts that trace the interactions within the movement around strategic frames after the referendum.

Expectations, Repression, and Sensemaking

At the time of the interviews, which took place about eight to fourteen months after the referendum, the relevance of the 1-O was evident. However, the retrospective statements in the interviews also suggested that this was not the case right after the referendum. The transformative meaning of the 1-O was not clear immediately after the event, but was created in a longer process.

The violent imagery of the actions of Spanish police forces initially left activists, voters, and bystanders in shock. Organizers could not make sense of the referendum. The massive mobilization for the occupation of the voting stations had exceeded the expectations of activists. Many interviewees reported how they were startled by the long lines outside the voting stations already early in the morning. But it was mostly the violent intervention on part of the police that many activists had not imagined (see Chapter 4). Or as organizer Berta put it: "We saw the logistic problem, the problem that the voting stations would be closed, but in no way, we imagined the uncertainty if we would achieve it or not. [...] Never, never did we imagine what the 1-O would be." Put in Weick's terms, the violent intervention as a cue did not fit the previous referendum frame. The referendum did not make sense.

The occurrences of the 1-O put an end to the self-understanding of the independence movement as the "smiling revolution," as former Òmnium Cultural leader Muriel Casals had called it (see Chapter 4). The following piece of data from the interview with Emma illustrates this rupture:

> It was always a happy movement. Always, well—I think the 1-O was happy, too, but they took it from us. We were very happy, because in the end we were able to vote and so on, but they took it from us. They took our happiness. You could not be happy, because, shit, you had voted when you knew that there were almost a thousand people injured and the brutality that they had been injured with. The Catalan *procés* is an emotional process. It always has been.

The violent intervention of the police shattered many activists' expectations—cognitively and emotionally—of what the referendum would be. They had imagined the 1-O as a joyful celebration of democratic self-determination, and, ultimately, the foundation of an independent Catalan Republic.

However, the data also showed that these expectations were not unanimously shared in the movement. Interviewees from groups of the independentist Left stressed that they had been suffering from state repression already before the 1-O and were much more aware of a potential police deployment. Even so, many of them were shocked by the magnitude of the intervention and the brutality of police actions, as the following quote from the interview with student organizer Ester shows.

> As a people, we were not prepared, we fell into the fallacy of liberal democracy, only trying to vote peacefully [...] we militants from the radical left said that it would not be like that. We anticipated it in some

> way, but I think emotionally—at least I did not anticipate it enough. Police charging at you during a student protest or the 15-M is within your schemes, it's not the first time for me in a police charge. But uff— (*pause*) seeing old people, seeing children [getting beat by the police].

The quote stressed again that expectations of the referendum were not just cognitive—there was an emotional element as well. The police violence on the 1-O did not meet the prognostic frame shared by many activists. Outrage over the brutality of the police intervention provoked a massive reaction in the form of the October 3 (3-O) general strike, displaying unity among a wide range of the Catalan population.

October 3: Shutting Down the Country

On the day after the Anubis Operation, the trade unions CSC-Intersindical, Confederació General del Treball (CGT), and Coordinadora Obrera Sindical (COS) called for a general strike after the Spanish police forces had carried out the Anubis Operation in several Catalan government institutions. Thus, there were some preparatory activities before the 1-O. In Sabadell, for instance, the first meeting of the Committee for the Defense of the Referendum (CDR) on September 26 was also a meeting for the strike committee for the 3-O, where also the Confederació Nacional del Treball (CNT) and CGT trade unions were present.

However, the 1-O referendum completely changed the scenario. The night of October 1, the so-called Table for Democracy (*Taula per la Democràcia*), an interorganizational platform which comprised the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC), Òmnium Cultural, the Catalan sections of the largest Spanish trade Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) and Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), as well as the employers' associations Petita i Mitjana Empresa de Catalunya (PIMEC) and Cecot called for an *aturada de país*, which translates as "country shutdown"—the goal was to completely paralyze the Catalan economy.

The 3-O thus became a threefold contentious performance: first, there was a massive strike in the work place. Second, large street demonstrations and marches took place. Third, activists blocked railways and highways throughout the country. These actions were performed in response to the police violence on the 1-O. The 3-O was the largest general strike in Catalonia since the end of the Franco dictatorship and involved participation from all sectors of the independence movement and even beyond. The empirical data illustrate these contentious actions in five examples.

First, in the Clot neighborhood of Barcelona, activists cut the Avinguda Meridiana, which is one of Barcelona's largest avenues and passes just by the neighborhood. Activists then went picketing at the neighborhood's Mercadona supermarket, which did not allow its workers any strike. Afterwards, they went to protest at the station of the National Police in the nearby Verneda neighborhood. For this action, they coordinated also with the CDR Verneda. The demonstration involved the protesters sitting with their backs to the police station and staying in silence for about ten minutes. From there, they marched to the railway Meridiana-Aragón to meet other CDRs and headed to Plaça Catalunya for the main picket line.

Second, in Sabadell, activists marched from each neighborhood to meet in the North of the city. Turnout was massive, and interviewees described the 3-O as the largest protest in Sabadell in a long time.

Third, in Fastiada, activists met for a picket line at a Mercadona supermarket and then blocked a highway near the town. They also called for a protest in the main square of Fastiada at noon. However, as the action on the highway took longer, the organizers arrived late to the protest in the center. In the meantime, people had already started protesting by themselves, as Oriol explained:

> And when it was time to return to the center, we decided to send someone ahead to set up the thing already. It turns out that it got out of hand [...] like, a lot of people, all the center full of people and people were doing whatever—like they started to march by themselves. They started the demonstration and did the route they wanted. The trigger was only having said "demonstration at 12" and so people gathered at 12 and did the demo and went ahead to wherever they wanted.

It appears that the protest almost went out of control, as people were marching to the North of the city where the quarters of the Civil Guard were located. However, as the organizers arrived at the protest, they were able to redirect the march and avoid confrontation with the police forces.

Fourth, during the day, a false rumor spread that Universitats per la República (UxR) had called for a protest in Plaça Universitat. Suddenly, 150,000 people showed up in the square. They also called to occupy a square in the center of Barcelona, but it failed, because ANC and the political parties called everybody to go home after the rally.

Fifth, people even mobilized in small towns and villages such as Montanya and Caldes. In small town Montanya, the 3-O was a large event with more than 3,000 people in the streets, which organizers described as one of the

largest protests since the dictatorship. Activists cut a nearby highway. In Caldes, activists joined a protest in a nearby small town where the police had intervened to protest against violent repression.

How was the 3-O organized? As mentioned above, the labor-related elements of the 3-O were prepared primarily at the regional level and resulted from a coordinated effort between pro-independence organizations, trade unions, and employers.

In contrast to strike action, most of the protest actions and disruptions were prepared at the local level by the emergent CDRs in response to the police violence on the day of the referendum. In many neighborhoods, towns, and villages, activists who had defended the voting stations on October 1 met the day after to reflect on the referendum and to discuss possible reactions. Organizers used the WhatsApp and Telegram channels that were already in place for the defense of the voting stations to call for open neighborhood assemblies or prepare contentious actions directly through these channels.

For instance, already the night of the referendum, CDR organizers in Barcelona's Clot neighborhood called for an open assembly of all the neighbors on October 2 as a sort of "strike committee." The next day, there were 200 people in the square to prepare the strike on October 3. Participants had a lot of work-related questions (workers' rights to strike, the provision of minimal public services), but the discussion quickly shifted towards ideas for protest actions in the neighborhood, as organizer Carles explained:

> And then there were other people who said, "OK, we're going to go on strike, we have to paralyze everything, but what are the goals, where are we going, what are we going to do?"

They planned three actions: a picketing line at a local Mercadona supermarket, a silent sit-in at a police station, and a march to the main protest in the center of Barcelona.

In Sabadell, too, there was an open assembly on October 2. Organizer Joana told that there was a lot of indignation among participants about the violent repression of the previous day, but they also discussed the strike action in the neighborhood on the following day. They talked about the concrete actions, the route of the march and making banners:

> Well in that assembly, we didn't do much more than saying, "OK, we start from here and we go down this road and that one and—" well, we informed the CDR coordinators in Sabadell about the route in order not

> to run into other neighborhoods. We focused on a particular area and that's it. There wasn't much more.

In the interview, Joana stressed two things about the 3-O preparations. On the one hand, she described it as relatively easy to organize, because people were motivated to participate. On the other hand, the strike preparations that were made previous to the 1-O had become obsolete and turned into organizing a protest:

> Hmm, there was not a lot to prepare for the strike. Because—everybody was willing to go on strike. I think it was one of the strikes that required the least preparation because—we talked about it a bit on the 26th, but we forgot about it and the strike organized itself. Because people saw it was a strike against repression. [...] it was very easy to organize because it wasn't the organization of a strike. Properly speaking, it was the organization of an enormous protest.

This shows that the assemblies on October 2 were an important moment for activists to gather and reflect upon what happened the day before and how they would respond. Although Joana pointed out the ease of the preparations, they also needed to take place in an extremely short time frame. Another example in the data came from CDR organizer Josep, who described that participants in small town Caldes were angry and wanted to protest, to cut highways, to do slow marches, to strike and halt the country. Yet, they only had very little time available:

> but of course, coordinate that from one day to another, well—we didn't have anything prepared and so we said, "On October 2 we're not doing anything, but on October 3 yes, we'll do whatever we can do to mobilize the country," but of course, it was a spontaneous thing.

Through WhatsApp and Telegram the organizers in Caldes received information from other towns where the police had intervened. Finally, in the assembly they decided to go to another small town to support the protest against police violence there.

Not all platforms and CDRs called for open assemblies though. In Fastiada, for instance, only organizations and parties had a meeting on October 2 to reflect on what happened the day before and what needed to be done. There was the idea to strike and paralyze the country on October 3. The concrete plan they had was to form a picket line at the town's Mercadona supermarket

and then cut the highway near the town. The local PDeCAT did not even participate in the meeting, and Òmnium Cultural, ANC, and the local ERC group also did not support the action because of fear of repression. ANC and Òmnium just called for a protest in the afternoon. ERC in the end did mobilize some people over WhatsApp, but the main promoters in Fastiada were the CUP through the CDR. Subsequently, the CDR was more a label to mobilize protesters rather than a proper interorganizational platform.

All things considered, the 3-O was originally called as a strike in response to the 20-S, but took on another meaning after the referendum. Thus, many of the preparations had taken place in a relatively short time frame. While the strike was primarily called by actors at the regional level, much of the protests and disruptive actions were organized at the local level. Open assemblies on October 2 served as the primary setting to prepare contentious actions. These assemblies were called by the emerging platforms that had been instrumental in the defense of the voting stations. Interviewees reported that participants showed enhanced readiness to protest, which made the preparations easier, but also led to some spontaneous actions during the 3-O.

Sensemaking and Organizing

What happened on October 1 was not what many pro-independence activists had expected. Those who had imagined an orderly and regular referendum, a purely institutional act, were appalled by the confrontations between voters and police. Only the immediate response was apparent to organizers: to mobilize massively for the general strike on October 3 as rejection of the police violence on the day of the referendum.

The contentious actions on October 3 were thus largely a consequence of the further escalation of repression. The organizing process of these actions largely fits the three features of the model of crisis organizing described in the previous chapter. First, activists prepared the actions in quick fashion, because the violent police intervention required a response. The date of the general strike, originally called before the referendum, was appropriated and turned into a massive anti-repression mobilization. Second, there was much more directing than deliberation. This was again due to the need for a swift response to the police intervention but also because the outrage about it was widely shared and there was no need for debate. Third, the organizing process went beyond the boundaries of formal organizations. Interorganizational spaces such as the Taula per la Democràcia and the CDRs were key in the process.

However, the referendum produced some first cracks in the crisis organizing mode. While the rejection of police violence was widely shared among activists, the meaning of the referendum was beginning to be debated in the organizing process of the 3-O contentious actions already. It was unclear what the 1-O meant. In Weick's terms, the occurrences of the 1-O did not *make sense* to many activists initially. Did it represent a legitimate mandate for independence, an expression of self-determination, a massive act of civil disobedience, or even a failure to carry out a proper referendum? This was further aggravated by the fact that the institutional consequences of the referendum were unclear in the days after the referendum. Would Puigdemont declare independence? And how would the Spanish state react? Would the international community, and the European Union in particular, intervene? These questions came up in the preparatory assemblies on October 2. Since the meaning and outcome of the referendum were ambiguous initially, there was no clear way forward from the event. Activists needed to *make sense* of the referendum.

The emerging debates around the sense of the referendum already impacted the organizing process of the 3-O. As mentioned above, UxR organizers had the idea to set up a protest camp after the protest actions on October 3. However, this idea failed, as organizer Pere recounts.

> We said, "We have to set up a camp, like the 15-M." And we were discussing whether we could do it. Those from the independentist Left were like, "OK, seems good," but those from ERC, "Well, we have to call the party, you know." [...] this was where the division starts [...] in the end, they say yes, but we came very late [...] I think on the 3-O, had we anticipated it, it would have been a bit different. I'm not saying we would be independent, but it would have been different [...] but we came late for political decisions.

This quote shows that UxR was incapable of acting without collaboration of the participating youth organizations, which in turn depended on their parent parties. In a situation when quick action was needed, the emerging disagreement slowed down the organizing process to the extent that the contentious action practically failed.

This shows that the difficulties of making sense of the referendum soon turned into a frame dispute. For example, several ANC interviewees pointed out that the organization was searching for its strategy after the 1-O. As interviewee Iris put it, the ANC was in "a state of shock." After the detention of Jordi Sànchez, the organization was lacking a stable leadership. Local ANC organizers reported that they had difficulties coordinating with the

central organization. The lack of coordination among organizational levels led to overall disorientation. This was not exclusive to the ANC. Also, other compound players briefly lost their sense of reaction. Youth organizer Gerard described the state of the independentist Left after the referendum as follows:

> I think until some point, we in the independentist Left, all sectors, doesn't matter if Endavant or Poble Lliure, we all lost sight of reality.

The ambiguity of the 1-O left the players of the independence movement disoriented and without a clear strategy forward. According to interviewee Pere, already on the day of the referendum the internal fractures in the independence movement started. One part wanted to dialogue and relax the situation, while the other part wanted to push further and risk more confrontation with the Spanish state. He highlighted that this debate ran across party lines: there were people on both sides in ERC and Junts per Cat (JxC). The disorientation was aggravated by further events such as the detention of the presidents of Òmnium Cultural and ANC, Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez (often just called the *Jordis*), and Puigdemont's suspended declaration of independence. In sum, the independence movement had no clear strategy going forward in early October.

From Sensemaking to the Post-Referendum Frame Dispute

In response to the cues of the referendum, the movement went through a collective process of sensemaking. This was an ongoing process that was influenced by the unfolding of further events, most importantly the suspended declaration on October 10, and the detention of the Jordis on October 16.

Another critical date was October 27, 2017. That day, secessionists and counter-secessionists both made another push towards their goals. First, the Catalan parliament voted in favor of declaring independence. The three pro-independence parties approved the motion, Catalunya Sí que es Pot abstained, and Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya, Partido Popular, and Ciutadans boycotted the parliamentary session. More than two weeks after Puigdemont's suspended declaration, one could get the impression that the secessionists finally had achieved their goal. But it turned out quite different, as organizer Antoni, who was present as an observer at the parliamentary session, told in the interview.

> When I left the parliament and I saw that the building of the parliament still had both the Catalan flag and the Spanish flag, I said, "We haven't declared independence, we haven't declared anything. This doesn't have any effect."

In hindsight, Antoni's reading of the symbolic value of the two flags on the building was spot on. When the parliament declared independence, it had already become apparent that the Spanish state would take even more severe measures of counter-secession. The second important occurrence of October 27 was the Spanish senate's vote to apply article 155 of the Spanish constitution. Article 155 suspended Catalan autonomy, discharged the Catalan government, and put the region under direct administration of the Spanish government. Activating the article also dissolved the Catalan parliament and called for anticipated elections in the region. The Catalan government did not actively resist these measures or take any effective steps to implement the declaration of independence.

The two occurrences on October 27 were an important moment in the cycle of contention, because the limits of the Catalan secessionists' quest for independence became apparent and the Spanish state took the most consequential step in its counter-secessionist strategy thus far. October 27 marked the end of what I consider the secessionist crisis and the beginning of the contraction of the cycle of contention.

Most importantly, October 27 shattered the last remains of the referendum as a prognostic frame. It reinforced the need to make sense of the referendum. There was agreement in the movement that the 1-O would occupy an outstanding place in Catalan history. However, even when the relevance of an event is clear, it still "can be plotted in many different ways" (Abbott, 1992, p. 438) and integrated in different narratives. This was true for the 1-O: in the aftermath of the referendum, there was significant controversy about why the event was so important, and what followed from it. The following quote from the interview with CDR organizer Xavi illustrates this debate:

> It is after the 1-O when precisely the substantive goals appear [...] This is when the debates start about what to do with the results of the 1-O, how to interpret them, how to manage them. It was like, "Is it binding or is it not? Is it sufficient or not? Can we move forward or not?" And this is where the disagreements between parties, detractors, between the ANC, civil society, CDRs, and so on start [...] This is where the independentist camp starts to break.

The quote points to abovementioned struggles of activists to make sense of the referendum. The meaning of the 1-O was—and remains until the time of writing—very much disputed within the movement.

This sensemaking process is best illustrated by the debates in the CDRs in the immediate aftermath of the 3-O. In the CDR Sabadell, for example, discussions started to take place in the assemblies after the general strike. This debate revolved around the "R" in CDR, as organizer Joana explained: "What do we do now? Are we Referendum, are we Republic?" Some participants argued that the name Committee for the Defense of the *Referendum* did not make sense anymore, because the referendum had passed. Now, the R should stand for "Republic" instead. Others suggested that this would not represent all those people who participated on October 1 and 3 to defend the right to decide but were not pro-independence. Losing them would mean losing strength. The issue was picked up by the first national assembly of the CDRs and from there spread to all local CDRs throughout the region. However, Xavi's quote above shows that the debate about the meaning of the referendum did not just take place within the CDRs, but in the independence movement as a whole.

Two Rival Narratives of the Referendum

The discussion in the CDRs was not just about labels, but one about sensemaking, strategy, and identity. It was basically a debate between those who supported the right to decide "but weren't so sure if they were pro-independence and those who were pro-independence for all their lives," as Joana put it. However, these positions should not be equated with particular players. Rather, it was a "frame dispute" (Benford, 1993) between two narratives that cut across the various organizations, parties, and milieus. In the following, I describe them more in detail.

On the one hand, some activists declared electoral victory for the independence movement. Organizer Carles from the CDR Clot said that "we believed that we had won the referendum. And that there must be a Republic." Also, in the CDR Sabadell, one part of the activist group claimed that "we have won. That's it" (Joana). In this narrative, the 1-O was first and foremost a legitimate and democratic decision by the Catalan people. The overwhelming Yes vote provided sufficient grounds for independence, notwithstanding the abstention of a large part of the population and the interference of police in the voting process.

On the other hand, the "we have won" narrative of the events attracted a lot of criticism from within the movement. CDR organizer Xavi argued in the interview that it represented an erroneous interpretation of the referendum.

> I think it's a very bad reading of the results. It's a very bad reading of what has happened. It's a very bad reading when the mobilization had most success, and I think it is a reading because of political interests. I think that the independentist Left is wrong about this reading, plain wrong. [...] If we have won, then where is the reward? No, maybe, we haven't won [...] You're managing a defeat with a rhetoric of victory.

Xavi questioned the victory claims of a part of the movement after the vote, considering it a bad construction of the event. In the view of many activists, the narrative of "we have won" represented a simplification of what happened on the day of the referendum. For organizer Joana, it was "not as easy as 'we have protested, we have voted, we won, that's it.'" In this view, it was at least doubtable that the turnout and result of the vote were sufficient to claim victory and justify a declaration of independence. Hence, the referendum could not represent the final decision over independence, as Oriol argued:

> In any case, the 1-O, I think, has a lot of value, but not just by itself and because of the many things that happened, but because it is part of a process and not the end of a trajectory.

In this perspective, it was not so much the result of the vote that was important, but the fact that the referendum could take place at all in the face of a massive police intervention. "We have won means we have managed that people could vote," as interviewee Joana put it. In this line of thinking, the 1-O had value for the movement, but not as an electoral victory.

In spite of this internal critique, the narrative of the 1-O as a definitive decision and legitimation for independence imposed itself—at least in the CDRs. Practically all CDRs throughout Catalonia changed their names to Committee for the Defense of the Republic. The change was a signifier of the narrative that the referendum should be seen primarily as a legitimation for secession from Spain and the foundation of the Catalan Republic. Besides the name change, there were frequent calls to "defend the results of the referendum" on leaflets, social media, and protest banners in the weeks after the referendum. Defending meant making the results of the vote binding—against the threat and repression from the Spanish state on the one hand, but also against those who criticize the "we have won" narrative of the event within the movement.

Fer República: Unilateral Strategy

The two narratives of the 1-O led to vastly different conclusions about the movement's future actions. On the one hand, the "we have won" narrative, which was materialized in the name change of the CDRs, resulted in goal replacement: from organizing the referendum to "implementing the Republic." In particular in the days after the referendum, this meant putting pressure on the Catalan government, and President Puigdemont in particular, to unilaterally declare independence from Spain. This is why I call this prognostic frame and strategy *unilateral*.

Proponents of the "we have won" narrative demanded the application of the referendum results. In the interview, CDR organizer Carles reclaimed the 1-O as legitimate and rejected any agreement with the Spanish sate.

> We think that the 1-O was worth it. It was real and for everything that it cost us to defend it, we also have to defend the results [...] if some "fool on the hill" from Convergència, Esquerra, or the CUP comes and says, "We have to make an agreement [with the Spanish state]," then as a CDR we have to say that we don't want to bargain, that we have already won a plebiscite.

The quote illustrates nicely the prognostic frame and strategy that followed from the "we have won" reading of the 1-O. For Carles, defending the results and implementing the republic required "real civil disobedience" from all pro-independence players: the movement organizations, the political parties, and the government. Unilateral action was the only way forward, and there should be no negotiations with the Spanish state.

After Puigdemont's suspended declaration and the ineffective declaration on October 27, the pressure strategy was complemented by a narrative of disenchantment with institutional politics. Many interviewees criticized the regional government and the political parties for not applying the results of the referendum. Instead of institutional politics, many interviewees chose protest as the primary tactic. Organizers aimed to keep the level of mobilization high, as Iris recalled in the interview.

> I: Do you remember the days after? What was the atmosphere, the debate?
> R: Yes, yes. We want the Republic. We want to defend the results of October 1. How? Publicly, showing our will in the streets.

When the institutional means to achieve independence failed, contention in the streets seemed the only option forward to many organizers. However, the disappointment with the pro-independence parties and the regional government also led to demobilization after October 27. Maintaining pressure on the streets became more difficult for those who followed the unilateral strategy.

On the other hand, the prognostic frame of unilateral action and disobedience attracted quite some critique as well. One line of criticism attacked the viability of the unilateral strategy. Many organizers within the movement thought that this strategy could not be maintained, in particular as it became clear that the Spanish state would respond with severe legal repression. A second argument criticized the strategy as ineffective. Oriol argued that "we will not advance by saying 'tomorrow Republic, tomorrow Republic, tomorrow Republic,' hanging ribbons and flags." Thus, many activists within the movement came to regard the prognostic frame that focused on "implementing the Republic" through civil disobedience as illusionary. Or, as Xavi put it, as trying to implement the "Republic of the unicorns, over the rainbow in candy land." As such, many organizers perceived the unilateral frame as deceptive, or—as Pere called it—a blatant "lie."

The CDRs were the main targets of this criticism. La Forja organizer Gerard, for instance, argued that when it became clear it would not be possible to "defend the mandate of the 1-O," the CDRs became "a space void of goals." Others also attacked the political parties. Oriol, for example, said that the problem was that the parties went into the 21-D election campaign with the slogan to "implement the Republic." However, these organizers not only criticized the unilateral frame, but they also proposed an alternative prognostic frame, which I describe in the next section.

Eixamplar la Base: Gradualist Strategy

The second prognostic frame that emerged from the narrative of the 1-O as an event that had value for the movement beyond the electoral victory. As described above, this narrative rejected the notion of the referendum as a final decision on independence and situated it as part of a larger process. The prognostic frame and strategies that followed from this sensemaking process can be called *gradualist*. It opened up several avenues for future action. More concretely, interviewees pointed to a combination of two plans. The first one was to achieve what the 1-O could not be: a binding referendum that would be agreed in some form with the Spanish state (*un referèndum pactat*). This meant acknowledging that the 1-O had not

been a success, which automatically attracted criticism from those who claimed to defend its mandate. This was why Joana responded to my question about strategies: "Which is the way to go? They will call me traitor, but: an agreed referendum." This choice of language showed the severity of the debate: anyone who demanded another referendum risked being attacked as revisionist, as betraying the 1-O. Yet, this prognostic frame did find support within the movement. Many interviewees mentioned another referendum as a potential way forward.

The second strategy implied building a solid pro-independence majority among the Catalan population in order to win a possible binding referendum. This approach has often been called "enhancing the basis" (*eixamplar la base*). This discourse was mostly pushed by Òmnium Cultural after the secessionist crisis. In the view of organizer Isabel, the movement had to speak to the majority of the people, which it had not always done. However, this perspective was widely shared beyond Òmnium Cultural. For example, CDR organizer Xavi stressed the need to extend support among the population.

> I don't even know if [the referendum] is legitimate, and I'm independentist, but we have 48% [of support among the population]. We don't have 58. [...] Well, we have to work—we must enhance the basis [seguir ampliando la base].

The phrase *48%* became a shorthand signifier for the broad but not majoritarian support for independence in Catalan society. Another CDR organizer, Oriol, argued that the "we have won" narrative contributed to a spiral of polarization, of splitting Catalan society. Instead of following a unilateral strategy, the movement should broaden its appeal outside of its constituencies.

> Maybe it is the moment to withdraw and see in which ways we can have an impact in the entire society again [...] If independentism wants to be a winning project it must be interested in building bridges.

Of course, the gradualist frame came under attack from those who pursued the unilateral strategy. CDR organizer Carles, for instance, criticized other players, in particular Òmnium and ANC. In his view, these organizations had chosen to move on. "These political strategies are wrong in my view—but I can understand they see it like this." He suggested implicitly that ANC and Òmnium might adopt a more "moderate" stance for "political" reasons, i.e., their close relationships with political parties.

The Post-Referendum Frame Dispute and Protest Organizing

As shown above, the prognostic frames and related strategies of the Catalan independence movement were not rigid over time, but changed as a result of transformative events. Throughout the secessionist crisis, organizers had to make sense of a series of occurrences, in particular the contested referendum itself. The narratives of these events were not uniform within the movement. A frame dispute emerged about what they meant and how to move forward.

Prognostic frames played an important role for protest organizing both during and after the secessionist crisis. As frames for future action, they were fundamental in structuring the focus of organizers. Before the 1-O, individual and compound players dedicated their time and resources to the preparation of the referendum. ANC organizer Carme, for example, said in the interview that the organization "did everything else on the side" since the announcement of the referendum. The frame alignment around the referendum was able to channel all organizational efforts into a single goal (see Chapter 4). Once the referendum was past, organizers lost this focus and the various prognostic frames drove their time and resources into different directions. The data showed that both ANC and Òmnium Cultural also devoted a lot of energy to anti-repressive strategy after the 1-O (see Chapter 7). For some time, practically all the organizations' efforts went into work for the prisoners. After a while, the leadership re-evaluated this strategy, as organizer Enric told: "We thought we could take on everything, but then we realized we couldn't do anything." Subsequently the debate shifted, and so they decided to diversify their efforts.

Prognostic frames not only influenced what kind of actions movement players pursued. The conflict around these frames also impacted how movement players *organized* these actions. This section describes how organizational processes and practices transformed as a consequence of this frame dispute within the movement in the aftermath of the referendum. It is important to stress these transformations were not the result of a *specific* frame adopted by the given players. What mattered instead was the erosion of the existing frame alignment at first and the disputes around framing and strategy later.

First, I turn to the process level. I describe the preparatory process of the general strike on November 8 and compare it to the one on October 3. Then I go beyond these two cases and describe two shifts in organizational practices. The frame dispute after the 1-O resulted in, first, more deliberation and less directing in decision-making, and second, less collaboration among compound players.

November 8: Disruption and Strike

On November 2, the Generalitat's vice president, Oriol Junqueras, and seven other members of the Catalan government were arrested. The day after, the trade union CSC-Intersindical called for a general strike on November 8 (called 8-N). The general strike was framed as a protest against the "impoverishment of the working class" and against a national law adopted in October that would facilitate the relocation of Catalan businesses to the rest of Spain. SMOs such as Òmnium Cultural and ANC joined the mobilization, but in contrast to the 3-O, neither the large trade unions CCOO, UGT, and CGT, nor the employers' associations supported the call. Thus, the CSC-Intersindical was the only trade union to call for the general strike.

On November 8, thousands of protesters took to the streets again. As a protest event, the 8-N was very similar to the 3-O in that it was a combination of a strike, a series of demonstrations, and disruptive actions such as highway and railway blocks. However, the 8-N was much smaller in scale, as very few workers participated in strike action.

Nevertheless, there was some significant participation in a number of demonstrations throughout the region. At noon, various organizations called for a protest in front of the seat of the Generalitat in Barcelona and its delegations in other towns. At 6 p.m., protesters also gathered in front of the region's town halls. Protesters were mainly mobilized through the CDRs, who had changed their name to Committees for the Defense of the Republic in the meantime. The 8-N was the public presentation of the CDRs as an independent compound player, and from this moment on they were much more visible in the media. It also represented a turning point in their relationship with the institutions, as Joana explained:

> Until this moment, the CDR fulfilled a function that the government could not take on. But when on October 27 the Republic is not actually declared and the exile begins, all these things start to change and there is a disconnect between CDR and public institutions. The CDRs take their way towards the Republic and the institutions don't.

The CDRs mainly called for disruptive actions. Protesters occupied more than 60 roads throughout Catalonia and cut the high-speed railway in Girona. The 8-N thus represented a turn towards mobilization for disruptive action (see also Della Porta et al., 2019, p. 8). These actions were prepared by the CDRs in the week prior to the 8-N. In comparison to the 3-O, this gave the organizers a bit more time to plan the concrete actions and also to

coordinate with other CDRs. Again, the primary settings for the preparation were open neighborhood assemblies. Some interviewees reported that the attendance at these assemblies rose before the general strike. In Fastiada, for instance, there were about 100 people at the open assembly to prepare the protest. However, interviewees also reported that there was much secrecy in these meetings about the preparation of the 8-N. Activist Quim described this as follows:

> We talked about how to do it, at what time we would meet and everything in a language—hmm, always encrypted. You never speak about highways. You use, well, euphemisms or—the word "excursion" is typical. "We'll do an excursion, we'll do a very slow excursion and then we go for breakfast," and everybody knows what it means.

The CDRs' increasing focus on disruptive actions was accompanied by secrecy and counter-surveillant protest organizing (see Chapter 7). The CSC-Intersindical did not participate in the preparation of disruptive actions. As organizer Montserrat stressed, the role of the union was the strike in the workplace, not blocking highways and railroads. However, it also became clear that the union was not opposed to the disruptions. Thus, the various actions of the 8-N were prepared by different compound players (CSC-Intersindical, the CDRs, and ANC and Òmnium Cultural).

Comparing the 3-O and the 8-N general strikes reveals how the mode of crisis organizing was transformed by the debates around strategy. Both events were framed as general strikes, were called in response to state repression, and consisted of rallies, strikes, and blockages. However, the analysis shows that the organizing process of the 8-N differed substantially from the 3-O. The actions of the 3-O were organized mainly in assemblies and meetings on the day before. In contrast, the 8-N took almost a week to organize. And while the 3-O was called by a large coalition of different secessionist and non-secessionist players, the actions of the 8-N were organized separately by single organizations. The 8-N thus illustrates how disagreements around strategy led to declining collaboration between secessionist organizations.

The transformation of the organizational basis of protest in the aftermath of the referendum becomes even more evident on the level of organizational practices beyond the case of the 8-N. Interviewees reported two important organizational changes: declining organizational collaboration (as indicated by the 8-N) and a shift from directing back to deliberation (which was less clear in the 8-N).

From Directing to Deliberation

Organizers reported in the interviews that the frame dispute after the 1-O resulted in a shift in decision-making practices: from directing back to deliberation. First, it became evident that there was less directing. While the practice of directing played an important role in the protest organizing processes during the secessionist crisis, and in particular during the preparations of the defense of the voting stations (see Chapter 5), it became less prominent after the 1-O.

For example, organizer Josep lamented that after the detentions of the Jordis and the application of article 155, the ANC as an organization was disoriented and lacking a stable leadership. There were no clear directions given to the lower organizational levels. The sectorial and territorial chapters of the ANC did not know what the strategy of the organization was, and were lacking concrete and coordinated action.

Another illustrative example is the student platform UxR, which did not have the same success after the 1-O and the end of the occupation of the University of Barcelona. As described in Chapter 4, the organizing process of the occupation relied heavily on leadership decision-making. A small group of leaders from different student groups told other youth activists how to prepare and manage the occupation. This top-down organizing process was only acceptable to participants because it served a short-term goal, as Pere explained.

> Of course, you cannot do this indefinitely. You cannot do it. You cannot avoid uprising, you cannot table debates forever. It can only be for a short amount of time and for a tangible, real goal.

Once this clear goal—the referendum—was past, this way of organizing protest did not work anymore for the student platform. Organizer Ester said that this type of leadership "has many limits. It works if applied well-measured, but in the long run it has some problems." After the 1-O, the course of the platform became unsteady, and the leadership group had less control over the organizing process. This became clear already on October 3, when the group failed to organize a protest camp because of internal differences. Afterwards, there was even less unity in the group, and the platform started to break apart. The erosion of the pre-referendum frame alignment thus led to the decline of the platform.

Second, activists and organizers deliberated more after the 1-O referendum. A central characteristic of the organizing processes for the

occupation of the university, as well as of the defense of the voting stations, was the absence of deliberation, because the goal of the organizing processes was clear: making the referendum happen. Once the referendum was over and the frame alignment eroded, deliberation reemerged in the CDRs, UxR, and the ANC. As described above, the contested character of the 1-O required activists to make sense of the event and to readjust their prognostic frames. These collective sensemaking and framing processes took place in the form of deliberations within and between SMOs. The most striking example of this shift from directing to deliberation were the CDRs. In Chapter 5, I have shown that deliberation was practically absent in their assemblies before the referendum. This changed dramatically after the 3-O, as this passage from the interview with CDR Sabadell organizer Joana showed.

> The assemblies started to have more debates as well. Because the other ones [before the 1-O] are more functional, more organizational. Those after October 3 are more for debate: "Well, what are we doing, are we referendum, or are we Republic?" This is also when the coordination at the Catalan level started and the CDR Catalunya emerges.

Comparing the assemblies before and after the referendum revealed notable differences in decision-making practices. In contrast to the "more functional, more organizational" assemblies before the referendum, there was much more debate after the 3-O—primarily about strategy and identity of the CDRs.

Another example was the ANC after the referendum, and in particular after the detention of its leader Jordi Sànchez on October 16. As mentioned above, these events left the organization without a clear strategy and leadership. In the interviews, organizers reported that this led to more deliberation about how to move forward both in the Board of Directors as well as at the local level. Carme told that there was a group within the leadership arguing that the organization should act more carefully and coordinate with other organizations and the political parties, while others thought the ANC should spear-head the secessionist struggle without the other pro-independence players.

> And this is reflected in the Board of Directors as well. There are people who think we should wait a bit, and people who do not think so, that we have to be—that we have to act without the others, follow our line alone. Looking for consensus in this situation of course slows down the

> decision-making. It already is [slow] because the structure of the ANC is already complex and even more when you add these obstacles.

The quote from the interview with Carme shows that the frame dispute after the referendum slowed down the ANC's decision-making, because finding consensus became much more difficult.

Of course, one might argue that these frame disputes and debates about strategy should be regarded as separate from the actual processes of organizing protest. It might well have been the case that activists discussed more about the overall strategy of the independence movement, but agreed on tactics, and, as a consequence, the organizing process remained unaltered by the strategic debate. Even if this was true, activists would have had less time and energy they could devote to the preparation of protest, because there were more deliberations over strategy. In addition, there was some evidence in the data that strategizing and framing also took place while organizing protest. Many CDR interviewees reported that ideas for protest actions often emerged from participants in assemblies. In one of the CDRs in Tarragona, activists had fundamental disagreements over protest tactics after the 1-O episode. During one assembly, a group of participants proposed to walk the city's beaches dressed in yellow to draw the attention of tourists to the independentist cause and the prisoners in particular. Interviewee Quim was not happy with this idea: "Walking on the beach dressed in yellow is the silliest thing ever." Instead, he and some other activists favored street demonstrations at concrete events. This approach, in turn, was criticized by the beach walkers as not attracting enough participation and that small protests looked poor. In the end, both types of actions were organized, but the debates made the respective preparatory processes much more difficult.

Deliberation needs time, as another interviewee put it: "The assemblarian movement is demanding, it takes time to come to an agreement when there are different opinions." In the CDRs, a protest action could not be done until there was consensus. While typical for grassroots groups, the bottom-up development became much more difficult when there was no alignment around a single prognostic frame to guide these tactics. This became most visible precisely when there was little time to prepare protests. For example, after the detentions of the Jordis, the CDRs wanted to react quickly and organize a large-scale protest. Organizer Gabriel reported in the interview that "there was a lot of energy." CDR activists felt that they had won the referendum and that they were ready to occupy the parliament or carry out any action that would lead to independence. But they saw that from the side of institutional politics, there was not really a plan. Organizer Xavi said

that "we talked about blocking the airport, but in the end, we didn't do it, we talked about blocking the harbor, but we didn't do it. And I think this is where we messed it up." In Gabriel's view, there was no sense of direction in the movement. In that phase, activists "improvised too much and weren't able to organize" due to the lack of strategy. Xavi told that already then, there was a certain sense of defeat, as it became clear that the CDRs were not able to put the country on hold and organize an effective strike. Only three weeks later, and after further detentions, the CDRs organized the 8-N.

These pieces of data illustrate the consequences of the frame disputes for decision-making practices in the independence movement. Before the 1-O, the alignment of movement strategy had allowed for quick organizing processes with little deliberation and more acceptance for directing. In the aftermath of the referendum, as goals became unclear and several prognostic frames emerged out of the narratives of the 1-O, there was more need for deliberation within and between compound players. As a result, organizing processes were slowed down significantly.

Disputes Between Organizations

The second consequence of the framing dispute after the referendum was that secessionist players collaborated with each other to a lesser extent. As described in Chapter 3, the key compound players of the protest arena (ANC, Associació de Municipis per la Independència, Òmnium Cultural, CUP, Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans, and later the CDRs and Tsunami Democràtic) organized less protests together in the two years after the referendum. This is partly due to the more disruptive action repertoire of the emergent actors, which made it difficult to organize protests together with ANC, Associació de Municipis per la Independència (AMI), and Òmnium Cultural, which generally preferred contained actions. However, there was also a fallout between ANC, AMI, and Òmnium Cultural, which cannot be explained by shifts in their repertoire. The findings of this chapter thus suggest that declining organizing between organizations was related to the frame dispute after the referendum.

Diverging narratives of the 1-O as well as different ideas of how to move on from there were not only the subject of debate *within* compound players but also *between* them. As mentioned above, there was a debate in the ANC leadership about strategy that slowed down the organization's decision-making. This also affected the ANC's collaborations with other entities. The ANC and other entities were struggling to find a new prognostic frame internally, and they were doing so even more at the interorganizational

level. ANC organizer Carme reported that it became very difficult after the referendum to agree on a common strategy among organizations. She said that "what affects us most is disagreement and repression in itself." When I ask how they noticed disagreement and repression, she told me the following.

> Yes, you notice it, because of course when we normally plan a demonstration we have to find a consensus with all the other parties and entities. Then, of course, you notice that we are a bit more daring, and there are people that are a bit more hesitant right now.

During the referendum and secessionist crisis, most mass protests were called by several organizations. After the referendum, the frame dispute made this much more difficult. This was visible in the difference between the two general strikes. While the 3-O was a great display of unity, the 8-N was called by a small trade union, and most of the protests were organized by the CDR. Other organizations, such as the ANC also decided to take a vanguard stance and organize contentious action in solitary fashion, as Carme described above. In her view, the ANC was ready to act alone and to "pull the wagon and the other parties."

In the interviews with ANC organizers, one campaign stood out as important for the organization: The Primaries campaign, in which the ANC proposed holding primary elections and creating a unitary pro-independence list at for the 2019 municipal elections in Catalonia. The Primaries campaign did represent a transformation in the ANC's strategy and repertoire of action. Whereas previous campaigns were aimed at exercising pressure on the host state and the independence movement's elected representatives, the Primaries campaign sought competition with the established parties in their arena. Hence, the campaign also illustrates how frame disputes over strategy contributed to declining collaboration within the secessionist movement after secessionist crisis.

The prime example of the impact of the frame dispute on interorganizational collaboration is the student platform UxR. As described in Chapter 4, UxR was the result of a small group of former Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (SEPC) militants, who managed to bring together organizers from different student and youth organizations to join forces in a single interorganizational platform for contentious action during the secessionist crisis. In this way, the platform organized the occupation of the University of Barcelona. However, already after the referendum and the end of the occupation, the emerging frame dispute made collective action much more difficult, as organizer Pere describes:

> I: At the level of the platform, did you change how you organize after October 1?
> R: The platform only works when there are no political discrepancies. At the level of general politics. When there is a common strategy it's perfect. When there was strategic unity, it was perfect, because it was able to agglutinate all the organizations that represented the entire cross section of the youth part of the movement [...] But when there is strategic disparity it does not work. We tried one thing, but the Joventuts d'Esquerra Republicana (JERC) told us, "I can't move [from my position], I cannot meet you," so we said, "Well let's go home then and within a month when things a clearer we organize something."

Collaboration was the foundation for UxR as an interorganizational platform. As the piece of data shows, the frame dispute made effective collaboration at the level of the platform impossible. Disagreements had a direct effect on protest organizing, which in the youth sector of the movement was only successful when launched by a broad coalition. As described above, declining collaboration already manifested itself in the organizing process of the 3-O. The platform failed to set up a protest camp due to differences among the various member organizations.

After October 27, the UxR organizers came to realize that "this is lost," as Pere put it. The platform did not develop into a formal organization, but essentially remained an interorganizational space that relied on the collaboration of its part. This became increasingly difficult, because most of the youth organizations (JERC, Joventut Nacionalista de Catalunya, Arran) were linked to political parties, which is why it became impossible to find a common strategy with the 21-D elections coming up.

Of course, this does not mean that compound players did not collaborate at all after the 3-O. There is some evidence of organizations joining forces for contentious action at the local level. The ANC in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, for example, put some efforts into interorganizational collaboration with the CDRs, but also the political parties. At the same time, the growing criminalization of the CDRs by the media and police made collaboration difficult, because the ANC took a certain distance to the CDRs. Also, in the youth sectors, La Forja was focused on initiating mass protest by bringing together different organization, for example in December 2018. Overall, however, the data suggested that the frame dispute within and among compound players made collaborative protest organizing difficult after the referendum.

Conclusion

October 1, 2017 has gone down in history as an exceptionally important event in the secessionist conflict in Catalonia. Massive participation in the defense of the voting stations and the violent actions of Spanish police forces turned the 1-O into a complex series of occurrences that was hard to grasp for challengers, authorities, and observers.

This chapter has shown how interactions between organizers and their allies around prognostic frames transformed the organizational basis of secessionist protest after the referendum. I have described how the contentious and contested character of the referendum led to conflicting narratives of the 1-O as an event within the independence movement. From these narratives, two rival strategies and prognostic frames emerged. This frame dispute had a critical impact on organizational processes and practices after the referendum. First, at the practice level, there was a shift from directing to deliberation. Before the referendum, frame alignment had made the directions of movement organizers more acceptable to other activists. After the referendum, the erosion of this alignment made it much harder for leaders to formulate clear directions and have them accepted by other activists. The frame dispute simultaneously led to a greater need for deliberation in the protest organizing processes described here. Second, at the process level, the conflict over strategy led to less protest organizing between organizations. While interorganizational collaboration was an important feature throughout the secessionist crisis, the various organizations of the independence movement mostly decided to organize protests on their own after the referendum.

The chapter highlights the temporal dimension of strategies and prognostic frames. On the one hand, they are temporal phenomena themselves, because they connect goals as projections into the future to means as choices in the present. On the other hand, they are embedded in a temporal context. They are processual, they relate to events.

The findings illustrate how important prognostic frames are key for organizational practices and processes. Since protest organizing is immediately directed at realizing collective contentious action, it depends much more on prognostic frames as guiding schemata. Prognostic frames help activists define not only what kind of protest actions are desirable in pursuit of their goals but also what kind of practices are appropriate to plan and prepare them.

The frame dispute and the organizational transformation it evoked show the fragility of the mode of crisis organizing described in Chapter 4.

Crisis organizing only works when there is frame alignment within the movement. Once this alignment breaks apart, organizers cannot rely on directing anymore and deliberation is needed to engage in framing and strategizing. This means that organizational processes and practices are much more volatile than the structural basis of protest. While organizational change in previous research followed slow and long-term patterns, shifting the view to practices and processes demonstrates how quickly organizers adapt to shifting circumstances.

Events are key in transforming frames and thus organizing. Organizers and activists more generally make sense of interactions with their allies and opponents and collectively construct narratives of events. These narratives can be transformative for activist practices, because they are the basis for framing processes that in turn guide future action. The referendum is a particular case, because it was the goal of the dominant medium-term prognostic frame of the movement. Once the referendum had a date, some kind of re-framing needed to happen afterwards. The peculiar interactions between the secessionist movement and the state led to a situation that did not make sense to activists and the frame dispute. The frame dispute that followed had a transformative effect on organizational practices and processes.

These findings contribute to the academic debate on secessionist and counter-secessionist strategies. Previous research in these fields has portrayed the adoption of particular secessionist strategies by independence movements as a result of rational choice processes (Cunningham, 2013; Sorens, 2012). Secessionist movements were understood as having a full repertoire of tactical and strategic options at hand, and being able to choose among them through cost–benefit calculations. The frame dispute after the referendum shows that strategizing in secessionist movements is permeated by cultural meanings. Strategies are neither abstract ideas nor simple tools that can be taken out of a box. They are embedded in structures of meanings, emotions, and identity. Framing processes play a critical role in how secessionist strategies are formed.

The Catalan independence movement was quite successful at strategy building before the 1-O, when the referendum as a prognostic frame served as a unifier for its various compound players. However, as described above, the contested character of the 1-O initially caused a frame dispute in the movement. Before activists could even think about calculating costs and benefits, they had to make sense of what happened during the day of the referendum. This involved the construction of the event in the first place and the creation of its meaning. I have shown that these event constructions had

crucial consequences for strategizing after the 1-O. What follows from this is that students of secessionist strategies should not limit their analyses to rational choice assumptions, but include the role of transformative events, sensemaking and framing processes of players in their response.

References

Abbott, A. (1992). From causes to events: Notes on narrative positivism. *Sociological Methods & Research, 20*(4), 428–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124192020004002

Abrams, P. (1993). *Historical sociology* (3rd ed.). Cornell University Press.

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Benford, R. D. (1993). Frame disputes within the nuclear disarmament movement. *Social Forces, 71*(3), 677–701. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579890

Cunningham, K. G. (2013). Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and nonviolent campaign in self-determination disputes. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313475467

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2019). Protest cycles and referendums for independence: Closed opportunities and the path of radicalization in Catalonia. *Revista Internacional de Sociología, 77*(4), 142. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.005

Kaplan, S. (2008). Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty. *Organization Science, 19*(5), 729–752. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0340

Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 25*(2), 226. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392453

Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.15993111

McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. Jr. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Jr. Sewell, S. G. Tarrow, & C. Tilley (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.005

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996). Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society, 25*(6), 841–881.

Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilization. *International Social Movement Research, 1*, 197–217.

Sorens, J. (2012). *Secessionism: Identity, interest, and strategy*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2010). Theorizing the restlessness of events. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(5), 1351–1386. https://doi.org/10.1086/651299

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. SAGE.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409–421. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133

7 Organizing Under Pressure: Dealing with Repression

Abstract
This chapter shows the consequences of counter-secessionist repression and surveillance on secessionist protest and its organizational basis. It focuses on how organizers made sense of the repressive sequence triggered by the secessionist crisis. Describing the organizing processes of the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign and the March 2018 protests, I demonstrate how repression and surveillance impacted organizational practices in three ways: it shifted communication from messengers to face-to-face meetings, disrupted deliberation and meetings, and led to declining interorganizational collaboration. In contrast, organizational structures provided some resilience against repression, which suggests that organizational practices are more vulnerable to the intensification of conflict between challengers and authorities.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Repression, Surveillance, Counter-Secessionism, Assemblies, Connective action

The announcement to hold a referendum on October 1, 2017 was an audacious attempt to achieve Catalan independence. But it backfired almost immediately. After the Catalan parliament approved the Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination, the Spanish government under conservative Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy reacted with a series of counter-secessionist actions. The response of the Spanish state was hardly surprising. After all, states have a reputation to lose: they fight secessionist demands in one region to prevent other regions from following this example (Walter, 2009). They are also aware of the symbolic cost of granting concessions to minority nations (Basta, 2021). Spain, in particular, had a long history of counter-secessionist action against Basque nationalists. However, states do not respond uniformly to secessionists: some states employ violence, others negotiate or accommodate

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH07

(Griffiths, 2015, 2016). Even the same state may vary in its responses to different secessionist movements (Butt, 2017). Previous research stressed that these counter-secessionist actions shape the strategies and tactics of secessionist movements (Griffiths & Muro, 2020). This chapter looks at how counter-secessionist repression as a result of the secessionist crisis affected protest organizing in the Catalan independence movement.

Social movements studies have produced an impressive body of work on the repression of social movements (for overviews, see Earl, 2011; Peterson & Wahlström, 2014). In spite of this broad interest for repression, some important blind spots remain in the literature. Earl (2011) noted that social movement studies have paid more attention to overt and coercive repression, and protest policing in particular, than other forms of repressive action (e.g., Della Porta, 1996; Della Porta & Reiter, 1998; Earl et al., 2003; Soule & Davenport, 2009). The effects of repression on public protest and mobilization—what is called "repression-mobilization nexus" (Cunningham, 2009; see also Davenport, 2005)—are well studied.

The consequences for the organizational dimension of protest are less well understood (Gunzelmann, 2022). This is true for the Catalan case as well. Existing research focused mainly on the impact of state action on public opinion (Balcells et al., 2020; Barceló, 2018), the movement's action repertoire (Della Porta et al., 2019) and frames (Della Porta et al., 2020). However, little is known about consequences for other aspects of activism in the Catalan case and beyond. This chapter expands this literature by looking at how repression affects organizational practices and processes in social movements.

The first part of the chapter looks at the sequence of counter-secessionist repression that was triggered by the announcement of the referendum and how organizers made sense of this sequence. The second part turns to the two episodes that serve as case studies to study the dynamics of repression and organizing after the secessionist crisis. The third section describes four kinds of organizational responses to counter-secessionist repression. The final section discusses these findings and draws conclusions.

Continuing Counter-Secessionist Repression

Repression against the independence movement after the referendum was neither new nor unique. Many Catalan secessionist players had been exposed to repressive actions for a long time and there had also been repression against many other movements in Spain, such as the Indignados movement

or the Basque nationalist movement (e.g., Calvo & Portos, 2018; Calvo & Romeo Echeverría, 2023; García, 2014; González-Sánchez, 2019).

However, the announcement of the October 1 referendum (1-O) increased the intensity and frequency of repressive action against the independence movement. The approval of Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination by the Catalan parliament was followed by a range of counter-secessionist actions by the Spanish state (see Chapter 4), which culminated in the violent police intervention on the day of the referendum (see Chapter 5). These counter-secessionist actions represented a "repressive turn" (Della Porta et al., 2019) in the cycle of contention.

Spanish state players continued these counter-secessionist efforts after the referendum. On October 16, the leaders of Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Òmnium Cultural, Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez were cited by a judge for their actions on the protest on September 20. Both were charged with rebellion and sedition for calling the protest, and kept in custody. With the declaration of independence looming, on October 27, the Spanish senate voted in favor of applying article 155 of the Spanish constitution, which supposed the temporary suspension of Catalonia's autonomy and a snap regional election. The application of article 155 marked the end of the secessionist crisis and a shift back to institutional politics but not of the overall cycle of contention.

The snap election on December 21 represented both a threat and an opportunity for the movement at the regional level. At that moment, the independence movement could simply not afford to lose its majority in the Catalan parliament, but it was also an occasion to expand its electoral support. The electoral campaign brought the secessionist conflict back into the institutional arena.

After the application of article 155, legal prosecution of secessionist activists and politicians by the Spanish state continued. On November 2, Oriol Junqueras, and seven other members of the Catalan government were arrested and investigated for rebellion, sedition, and misuse of public funds. Jordi Turull, Carme Forcadell, Raül Romeva, Josep Rull and Dolors Bassa were released on bail on December 4, but arrested again on March 23. The day of their arrests, judge Llarena also opened the proceedings against Carles Puigdemont, who had left the country right after the declaration of independence, and issued a European arrest warrant. A few days later, Puigdemont was arrested in Germany. The disruptive protests on November 2, and in particular those in March 2018, resulted in clashes of the police with activists from the Committees for the Defense of the Republic (CDR). On April 10, 2018, the Spanish Civil Guard accused CDR organizers Tamara Carrasco

and Adrià Carrasco[1] of rebellion, sedition, and terrorism for planning and preparing the disruptive March protests. While Adrià Carrasco managed to escape detention and left the country, Tamara Carrasco was arrested. She was later released and put under curfew in her hometown but eventually acquitted of all charges. The peak of legal persecution represented the trial against the leaders of the independence movement, which began in February 2019 and ended in October of the same year. The trial resulted in long prison sentences for former vice president Oriol Junqueras and other former members of the Catalan government, former speaker of the parliament Carme Forcadell, as well as Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart.

The single actions were interconnected. The suspension of the referendum by the Constitutional Court led to the Anubis Operation, which in turn resulted in the detention of the Jordis. Counter-secessionist action thus unfolded as a sequence of repression. This sequence was of course intertwined with the actions of the secessionist challengers. The Anubis Operation was carried out because the regional government would not give up the referendum, the Jordis were arrested because of their response to the Anubis Operation. Counter-secession thus must be understood as part of an escalating dynamic of strategic interactions between challengers and the host state.

The event at the heart of this dynamic was the 1-O referendum. All counter-secessionist actions were aimed at referendum preparations or were a direct consequence of the referendum. This sequence of action continued well beyond the secessionist crisis. After the referendum, the quality of repression shifted and the pace of repressive events slowed down. Violent protest policing continued but never reached the same scale as on the 1-O. Instead, there was a shift towards a judicalization of the conflict and rising perceptions of surveillance. The following sections shift the attention from these repressive events to how organizers made sense of them and integrated them into their interpretive frameworks.

Making Sense of Repression

Previous research stressed the distinction between actual or *experienced* repression and *perceived* repression (Honari, 2018; Kurzman, 1996; Opp, 1994; Opp & Roehl, 1990). Perceived and actual repression must not necessarily be the same: activists may perceive threats although the actual level of state repression is rather low, or, vice versa, activists may feel that opportunities

1 Despite having the same last name, the two are not related.

are opening when the level of repression is actually increasing. Following this idea means that it is not decisive whether activists are actually repressed; what matters for activists is that they *feel* repressed.

Not all organizers perceived changes in the level of repression during the secessionist crisis. Organizer Miquel from a small-town CDR stressed that "people are used to repression, this is nothing new. Some practices have always been used in the independentist Left. We are very careful generally."

Miquel's statement also highlighted that there was some variation how repression and surveillance were experienced across different sectors of the same movement. Not all activist groups were targeted in the same way by state authorities. This is particularly true for an ideologically diverse movement such as the secessionists in Catalonia, which comprises activists from the radical left to the moderate right.

However, most secessionist organizers indeed perceived that repression against the movement intensified in the weeks prior to the referendum (see Chapter 4). The violent police intervention on the day of the referendum represented a cue that did not make sense within organizers' previous prognostic frames of the referendum (see Chapter 6). These perceptions of increasing repression had a crucial impact on crisis organizing and the sensemaking process following the referendum. Counter-secessionist repression continued after the referendum but shifted towards the judicial arena and became less frequent. Organizers perceived repression as ongoing. Two repressive events stood out in the interviews.

First, the arrests of Cuixart and Sànchez represented another shocking cue that did not fit the existing frames of organizers. Board member Antoni called Cuixart's imprisonment "an exceptional situation, and we have to be aware that the way our organizing functions also is exceptional. That is the reality, and we must accept it." This statement underlines the impact of repression on Òmnium Cultural. Cuixart's detention represented a transformative event for the organization, because it had consequences that lasted beyond the secessionist crisis. Nevertheless, there never was a debate about electing a new president. Sticking with Cuixart while he was imprisoned was seen as anti-repression. In Isabel's view, the intention behind Cuixart's imprisonment was "that people forget him." Instead, Isabel called the prison an "opportunity—even if that's a bit cynical."[2] Òmnium Cultural used this opportunity to elaborate a new anti-repressive frame, which gave new meaning to the arrest of Cuixart and Sànchez and the following repressive events.

2 The word she used was "crudo," which literally translates as "raw."

The second key episode was the arrest of Jordi Turull, Carme Forcadell, Raül Romeva, Josep Rull, and Dolors Bassa on March 23, 2018, followed by the detention of Carles Puigdemont in Germany a few days later. The events followed a couple of months of declining protest activity and less intensive conflict (see Chapter 4). However, the events were perceived as a "direct attack," as CDR organizer Miquel called it, and activists mobilized again. All of the important protest players responded to the arrests, but the event was particularly important for the CDRs, who organized disruptive actions over several days, which I describe below. The next section turns to perceptions of surveillance.

Perceptions of Surveillance

Overt repression against the Catalan independence movement played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of contention between the pro-independence players and those of the Spanish state (Della Porta et al., 2019). Nevertheless, I shift the attention to surveillance as a less visible form of repression.

David Lyon (2001, p. 2) defined surveillance broadly as "any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered." This chapter is concerned with how surveillance is *perceived* by organizers. In surveillance studies, this idea stems from theoretical debates around Foucault's (1995) writings on Bentham's panopticon. Theorists have suggested that the mere feeling of being surveilled has both disciplinary and productive effects on individuals (Haggerty, 2006; Haggerty & Ericson, 2000; Lyon, 2006; Murakami Wood, 2007).

In a previous contribution drawing on the same data, I identified two major surveillance threats in the secessionist cycle of contention (Gunzelmann, 2022). First, the interviewees felt that their mediated communication might be monitored by state authorities. This included mostly mobile phones and messenger applications but also emails, landlines, and letters. Second, organizers were worried about undercover police at their meetings and assemblies. Interviewees reported several instances where they felt that police had infiltrated their meetings to observe activists and gather information. During and after the secessionist crisis, perceived surveillance varied between an abstract awareness of being monitored and concrete instances of surveillance.

These perceptions were connected to the eruption of the secessionist crisis but continued to be relevant at the time of interviews, which took

place six to twelve months after the referendum. I showed how generalized trust among activists, as well as their trust in technology, declined in this period (Gunzelmann, 2022). Rather, a "security culture" (Starr et al., 2008, p. 262), i.e., a culture in which the safety of activists has priority over all other concerns, emerged in the movement. Security culture had a substantial impact on protest organizing, as I show later in this chapter.

Framing Anti-Repression: Sensemaking and Strategizing

Social movement scholars emphasized that activists are not passive subjects of repression, but often focused exclusively on the macro effects of repression. Recent contributions have called to pay attention to how activists develop responses at the micro and meso level (Honari, 2018; Moss, 2014). I follow this line of research by putting the agency of organizers at the center of the analysis.

Cultural processes are again key when studying how organizers respond to repression. Repressive events led to the elaboration of new prognostic frames, which in turn were crucial to organizers' strategizing processes. In the previous chapter, I have described how two prognostic frames—unilateral and gradualist—were the results of competing narratives of the 1-O as an event. The strategizing process within the movement did not stop after the referendum, though. Further events occurred that activists had to make sense of. In particular, the detentions of several pro-independence politicians and activists produced a third prognostic frame: anti-repression.

The repressive interactions described before were perceived as unjust and repressive and led to an adjustment of the post-referendum movement strategy. The central prognostic frame within this strategy is represented by the label *Llibertat Presos Polítics* ("Freedom for the Political Prisoners"), which was the name of a campaign by Òmnium Cultural. The anti-repressive frame was also actively employed by ANC, the CDRs, and the political parties, and was also shared by many smaller compound players within the movement.

Interviewees report that the frame supposed a dramatic shift for the Òmnium Cultural, because its leadership did not expect that Cuixart would enter prison directly on October 16. The day after, Òmnium Cultural organizers designed "a whole strategy with regards to the prison" (Antoni) and launched its Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign. The strategy meant supporting Cuixart and his family on the one side, and a public campaign denouncing the detention as repression by the Spanish state. Òmnium Cultural later also launched its *Cuixart* campaign, which was in conjunction with but slightly different from the main Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign.

Its goal was to single out Jordi Cuixart as a social leader who never held or ran for office. This campaign tried to reach out to people who were not independentist, but against the imprisonments of Catalan leaders.

Solidarity with the political prisoners was unanimous in the movement even after the secessionist crisis. However, the anti-repressive frame did receive some criticism. CDR activists in particular criticized the increased attention to this particular brand of anti-repressive action. In their view, the demand to free the prisoners "absorbed" the more profound demands such as independence itself. In the interview, organizer Quim argued that the "concept" Llibertat Presos Polítics had replaced the concept Republic. In his view, the pro-independence elites proposed that "first we free the prisoners, then we implement the Republic." In contrast, CDR activists claimed that as long as Catalonia remained an Autonomous Community of Spain, it would be impossible to bargain with the Spanish state as equals.

Interviewees also criticized their own organizations. ANC organizer Enric, for example, said in the interview that focusing so much on the prisoners was a "mistake that we recognize." This focus took away energy from their main effort, which should have been to fight for the Republic, while in reality they could not do anything in their power to free the prisoners. He told me that the only power they had was to "really create the Republic" or to provoke a crisis in the Spanish state. "If all we do is to simply defend them, we will lose a lot of strength, and I think we're becoming aware of that." This is why they started to not dedicate "100% of our efforts" for the prisoners, as they were doing before.

After the secessionist crisis, the CDRs also engaged in anti-repressive framing as a basis for collective action. They evolved from open spaces into more structured compound players (see Chapter 5) and adopted a unilateral strategy (see Chapter 6), while their protest actions became increasingly more disruptive, as the 8-N general strike illustrates. At the same time, they were increasingly targeted by the Spanish police forces. In response, the CDRs supported the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign by Òmnium Cultural but also engaged in their own anti-repressive activities. These framing activities served as a basis for collective action. While the police violence of the referendum and the first arrests were a shock, they also were a learning process. Potential new repressive actions were included in their prognostic framing and strategizing processes, as the interview with CDR organizer Carles highlights.

> Normally as a CDR it takes us a month or a month and a half to plan an action. Apart from that, we said, "If they detain Puigdemont [...] we'll be

> at 7 p.m. of that day in the main squares of each city." But also for the [other members of government] there was a plan, which I don't remember exactly. If they cite them and release them on bail, we demonstrate. If not, then everybody to the Delegation of the Spanish government. Anyway, there were different ideas depending on the outcome.

Carles did not remember the exact plans in the interview, but the key fact is that the CDRs activists had expected the repressive actions and prepared plans for protest.

These two examples illustrate how anti-repression as a prognostic frame returned agency to protest organizers. Developing a frame was crucial to make sense of the continuing sequence of counter-secessionist repression and thus the basis for collective action. The next section turns to two episodes that serve as case studies for how perceptions of repression impacted organizing.

Protesting After the Secessionist Crisis

Llibertat Presos Polítics

After the arrest of their leaders Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez on October 16, Òmnium Cultural and the ANC both shifted their strategic efforts towards anti-repression. This included traditional and online media work, advertising and leafleting, and public events but also legal and material support for their leaders and later for the imprisoned members of the Catalan government. These actions were part of the campaign work of the two organizations.

The day after the imprisonment of Cuixart and Sànchez "was when we decided to do a campaign; we as Òmnium Cultural created the brand *Llibertat Presos Polítics*" (Beatriu). The following piece of data from the interview with Òmnium Cultural organizer Isabel shows how Llibertat Presos Polítics relates to previous campaigns.

> October 16 is the day when they lock up Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart. Here begins a campaign, which is Llibertat Presos Polítics, which coexists with the other campaigns, which are basically Crida per la Democràcia and PNR (Pacte Nacional pel Referèndum). Llibertat Presos Polítics went along the lines of framing the story, of concretizing a bit the Democracy campaign. Concretizing it as a specific case.

In Isabel's view, the campaign Llibertat Presos Polítics was tightly connected to those developed before the referendum. Although the campaign represented a shift in the organization's framing, it was an organizational continuation of the previous *Democracy* campaign. When asked about how the organizational work changed, she stated that Òmnium Cultural ran both campaigns in parallel.

> Well, in fact, they coexisted, I don't know how to say it. They coexisted, but Llibertat Presos Polítics was much more a story of demonstrations, because the image had a lot of success and you saw all the campaigns where people wore badges and banners of our image. This is part of the amplifier that Òmnium Cultural has. It's a matter of being quick, of getting it right and if you do it well and fast then people make it their own.

Isabel stressed the imagery of the campaign, which became an integral part of the movement's visual language. She did not elaborate about potential differences and changes to previous campaigns, but emphasized their coexistence. This suggested that there was a lot of continuity in the organizational work after the referendum and after the detention of Jordi Cuixart.

Nevertheless, the same interview with Isabel also displayed some differences in the organizational processes of the different campaigns. The following passage from the interview referred to the beginnings of Llibertat Presos Polítics:

> I: Do you remember the beginning of the campaign [Llibertat Presos Polítics]. Did it start right on October 16?
> R: Well, on the 16th, we called for a demonstration for the next day. In fact, here [at Òmnium Cultural] we don't usually call for demonstrations that shortly. Only for very concrete things. And here the big demonstration that we called one day for the next overflows as well. This determines how the entity [Òmnium Cultural] works now. The fact of having the president in prison changes everything. This might be different for other [entities], because Jordi Cuixart still is our president.

The campaign started abruptly with a call to protest for the day after Sànchez and Cuixart were arrested. As Isabel told, this was different from previous campaigns. Actually, the campaign start was more similar to the quickly called protest on September 20 (see Chapter 4).

The quote from the interview with Isabel shows a further difference between organizing the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign and previous

campaigns. Namely, the occurrence that led to the campaign—the imprisonment of leader Jordi Cuixart—also had a profound impact on the organizational process of the campaign. After the imprisonment, decision-making and communication within the leadership group became much more difficult. In spite of these difficulties, the campaign was successful in the eyes of the organizers, as Isabel's statement above shows. As Cuixart remained in prison, the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign unfolded way beyond the secessionist crisis, and was further developed into other campaigns, in particular Demà pots ser tu (Tomorrow it could be you), which singled out Cuixart as an activist leader among the other prisoners, who were all politicians. When the trial against the prisoners came closer, Òmnium Cultural launched its campaign Judici a la Democràcia (Trial against Democracy), which soon became its main focus. The ANC shifted its framing and focus toward anti-repressive action, too. This included periodical press releases and social media posts about the duration of Sànchez and Cuixart's imprisonment (e.g., "seven months without you—seven months of prison—Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart"), and weekly vigils in front of the town halls of villages and cities of the region.

Of course, Llibertat Presos Polítics was not the only campaign organized by Òmnium Cultural after the secessionist crisis. I have selected it because organizers and experts highlighted it as important and mentioned it more frequently than others in the semi-structured interviews. As described above, Llibertat Presos Polítics was developed further into the Demà pots ser tu campaign; later, the Judici a la Democràcia campaign was launched for the trial against the Catalan prisoners. Interviewees reported that the action repertoire employed in these Òmnium Cultural campaigns was basically the same as before the referendum.

The ANC also started new campaigns after the secessionist crisis. Examples of ANC campaigns were Consum Estrategic (Strategic Consumption), which promoted buying Catalan products and supporting Catalan firms, and #makeamove, which was aimed at raising awareness about the secessionist conflict in the international community. The Primaries campaign, which tried to create a unitary pro-independence list for the 2019 municipal elections, was the most significant campaign, because it represented a change of strategy in the ANC (see Chapter 6). On the one hand, these campaigns represented a diversification of the ANC's strategy after the secessionist crisis. On the other hand, the organization's tactics remained largely the same. It was still focused on stands in the streets, media work, public talks, leafleting and advertising, as well as contained protests.

At the process level, the two campaigns were mostly the result of planned and ordered actions, which had been typical for the two major organizations already before the 1-O referendum. The campaigns were developed and organized within each organization. Both organizing processes relied on the leadership and professional staff of the respective organizations, although this was more important in Òmnium Cultural. The ANC, in contrast, relied more on its volunteers in local chapters throughout the region. These features point to continuities in the ways in which the large organizations organized contentious action.

Nevertheless, the detention of the Jordis on October 16 was a shock for both organizations and had an impact on how they organized campaigns of contentious action after the secessionist crisis. The consequences of the event for the two campaigns were different, however. Òmnium Cultural decided to continue with Jordi Cuixart as president, which made internal communication and decision-making in the organizing process much more difficult. In contrast, Jordi Sànchez resigned as president of the ANC a month after his imprisonment in order to run for Puigdemont's Junts per Catalunya (JxC) list in the elections of December 21. While it is unclear if Sànchez's decision to leave the ANC was related to his imprisonment, the data suggested that the election of a new leadership in March 2018 brought about an expansion of the repertoire of action and a shift in strategy.

March 2018 Protests

The CDRs had emerged as a key player in the secessionist protest arena after the referendum. They organized the most events in the two years after the referendum (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, organizers reported in the interviews that the CDRs suffered from demobilization after the secessionist crisis and even more after the 8-N general strike. But there were occasional peaks of protest participation, for example in March 2018. On March 23, judge Llarena ordered the arrest of Jordi Turull, Carme Forcadell, Raül Romeva, Josep Rull and Dolors Bassa, who had already been detained on November 2, 2017 and released on bail on December 4. On March 25, Puigdemont was arrested by German police while traveling back from Finland to his residence in Belgium.

In response to the arrests, the CDRs mobilized for protests throughout the region. Similar to the 8-N, the March protests included highway and railway occupations. These disruptive actions were carried out by local CDRs. The following piece of data from the interview with CDR organizer Quim illustrates some of these protest actions in Tarragona:

> They detained Puigdemont on March 25, on the 23rd the ministers enter prison again. Dolors Bassa and the others. That day we called everybody to Plaça Imperial Tàrraco. There, we from the CDR took the reins.

Although the activists were not enough people to fully occupy the traffic circle at Plaça Imperial Tàrraco, they managed to block the traffic at its entrances. Then, the CDR Tarragona called to meet at the Spanish government's subdelegation. There, they held an open assembly and decided to block the AP-7 highway, which passes near Tarragona. About 200 activists blocked the highway, but were charged by police. There was also an innovation in the repertoire, as Quim reported in the interview:

> The organization of the CDRs went quite well, because we were able to open very quickly the toll gates in all of Catalonia on the days 23, 24, 25, 25. Then we rested for two days and opened the toll gates again. This was interesting, because opening the tolls was protest the other way round. Instead of blocking the highway to annoy people, we said let's annoy the government by opening the gates. So people see that we do not disturb them [...] But when Puigdemont was detained in Germany, we were not just 200 people. We were 4,000 people and cut three lanes on different highways.

This piece of data shows not only the innovation in the repertoire, but also the success of the mobilization. Although the arrests of Puigdemont and other politicians occurred in a phase of demobilization, the data suggest that the events led to a spike in turnout. According to organizer Quim, "people were very nervous, [...] but there was motivation to mobilize."

Given that the five ex-ministers of the Catalan government had been imprisoned before, and Puigdemont was searched with a warrant, it was not unlikely that they would be arrested again. This was why organizers perceived the situation in March 2018 as different to previous arrests. From the interview with Carles, it transpired that the CDRs had different strategies ready for this scenario:

> This was decided in the assembly. We knew [the arrests] would happen, because the judicialization would come. So there was a protocol that was approved by all the CDRs. And we knew what to do when the arrests would happen. Today we call for a protest. You, you, and you. Call for protest at 8 p.m. in Sant Jaume Square, and so on.

This plan was approved by the CDR Catalunya, the national assembly of CDRs. As Carles reported, almost all local CDRs followed the directive from the national level.

> It was quite consensual. There should be a protest in the squares in each village or city. People should prepare giant handcuffs in order to say that the imprisonment is unjust. People prepared some shows. It was very planned.

These pieces of data suggest that the CDRs were prepared and could respond quickly with coordinated protest actions throughout the region. The phrase "it was very planned" shows that the March protests were not a case of spontaneous action. Moreover, Carles also highlighted in the interview that the ANC was pursuing a different tactic in the protest, calling for a centralized, symbolic protest with yellow ribbons. The stance of the CDRs was that this was not disruptive enough.

> We said, "Shit, of course we have to protest," because Puigdemont was arrested. But you can't go to the German Consulate. So our job was to say "no." This was the day when the first riots happened.

In the end, the ANC joined the CDRs' call for protest, but there was some confusion about where to march. In the end, the protest was headed to the Spanish government's delegation, where confrontations between protesters and riot police occurred. While the protests were well organized overall, some activists said that the confrontation with the police at the Spanish government's delegation was less well prepared. This became clear in the following piece of data from the interview with CDR activist Gabriel.

> [The mobilization after the 1-O] went down a bit, not disappearing, but with dilemmas such as the action when they detained Puigdemont. As I told you, there was a call to occupy the central government's delegation, but without any kind of plan. Without anything, and it turns out to be a failure. Because we did not do anything, we only received blows by the police.

The lack of plan referred to the confrontation with the police, not to the overall protest. In Gabriel's view the CDR actions in Girona and Lleida were successful, but in Barcelona they were not. This was not surprising, because according to the interview data the March protests were the first

time there were clashes between protesters and police since the 1-O. The protest became a turning point for the CDR in which Gabriel participated, because a debate over tactics emerged and a change of repertoire: "I think on this day there is a substantial change, and it becomes understood that direct confrontation pauses."

As the protest event data showed, the CDRs organized many small but disruptive events (Chapter 3). These disruptive events increasingly caught the attention of the Spanish police and made participation in the CDRs riskier. Interviewees reported that demobilization continued to affect the CDRs after the March protests. What had started as large open assemblies after the 1-O transformed over time into small groups with a stable but informal membership. Most of their mobilization basis remained dormant. Or, as organizer Quims put it: "in the end, if there is no trigger, if there is no reason, people do not mobilize." Thus, in the long run, exhaustion, repression, and the lack of movement strategy took their toll on the CDRs.

Organizational Responses to Repression

Most major protest events in the second phase of the secessionist cycle of contention were anti-repressive protests. Starting with the 20-S and the 3-O during the secessionist crisis, anti-repressive action continued afterwards with the 8-N general strikes, the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign, and the March 2018 protests. Responding to repression became a central collective action frame and a key factor for mobilization.

However, repression also had a destructive impact on organizing processes. As shown above, the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign was hindered by the grievance it addressed, namely the imprisonment of their presidents. Both organizations had been relying very much on their leadership before the secessionist crisis. As shown before, the two leaders became even more important during the referendum campaign. In that time period, they were the only representatives from their organizations to participate in the Estat Major, the series of meetings of party leaders and associations. These meetings were often confidential. Arresting Cuixart and Sànchez thus supposed removing their knowledge and experience in the Estat Major. ANC organizer Emma stated in the interview that this was problematic, because the organization had relied more on directing than on deliberation during the secessionist crisis. Expert Roger also stressed that "any organization loses collective intelligence when their leadership is removed. Cuixart and Sànchez had information that no one else in their organizations had."

Repression also affected the organizing processes of the 8-N general strike and the March 2018 protests, which were planned and prepared by the CDRs. Both protest cases were reactions to repressive events. On November 8, CDR activists took the occasion of the general strike called by the CSC-Intersindical to condemn the detentions of Junqueras and other members of the government the week before. The March 2018 protests were an even more immediate reaction to the imprisonment of Bassa, Romeva, Rull, and Turull, and the detention of Puigdemont in Germany.

At the process level of analysis, the description of the cases showed that long and detailed organizing processes within the boundaries of single organizations continued to be relevant for contentious action in the independence movement. The primaries campaign, for example, was developed by the ANC in a deliberative process and meticulously prepared by its professional staff. Although Òmnium Cultural's Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign was quickly called for after the detention of Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez, it was continuously developed and most of its actions were the product of professional planning and preparation. This process resulted in the subsequent campaign Demà pot ser tu.

On the practice level, repression impacted organizing in three ways: it shifted communication from messengers to face-to-face meetings, disrupted deliberation and meetings, and led to declining interorganizational collaboration. However, the structural level also provided some grounds for organizational resilience. I describe these four aspects in the next sections.

From Messengers to Meetings

Instant messenger applications were an important part of the texture of organizational practices of crisis organizing and in particular during the preparation of the defense of the voting stations. At the same time, the use of messengers became more and more difficult as repression continued. As shown earlier, activists became increasingly worried about their digital communication being monitored by the state for counter-secessionist purposes. This perceived threat led to three *counter-surveillance moves* (Ullrich & Knopp, 2018): encryption, face-to-face communication, and analogizing meetings (Gunzelmann, 2022).

First, organizers turned to encrypted messenger applications to protect their communication. This mainly meant switching from WhatsApp to Telegram or Signal, which were perceived as offering stronger encryption. This happened in some groups already during the secessionist crisis and became a widespread feature after the referendum.

Second, encryption was not enough to reinstate organizers' trust in digital communication. This is why organizers shifted from digital to face-to-face communication. As repression became more frequent and intense, organizers felt surveilled and "preferred to talk to each other in person in a safe environment rather than over the phone or email" (Gunzelmann, 2022, p. 10). Interviewees from all organizations stressed the need for face-to-face meetings after the secessionist crisis.

The third move consisted in removing all digital devices from meetings—what I have called "analogizing meetings" (Gunzelmann, 2022). Activists were afraid that police might be recording their meetings through phones or laptop computers, which is why they were banned from many meetings. I was asked to switch off my phone or leave it in a separate room during several interviews.

These counter-surveillant moves became a critical feature of the texture of organizational practices as the cycle of contention progressed. Encrypted messengers continued to play a role, but important discussions and decisions for preparing the campaigns as well the March 2018 protests took place in face-to-face settings. These meetings and their deliberations were not unaffected by repression either, as the next section shows.

Disrupting Deliberation and Meetings

Repression disrupted deliberations and meetings after the secessionist crisis. Both legal and covert repression had an impact on these practices. First, the arrests of movement leaders had a disruptive effect on meeting practices in the movement. This became apparent in particular in the interviews with organizers from Òmnium Cultural, who described the preparations of the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign and the functioning of the organization around that time. Staff member Isabel said that Cuixart's detention conditioned how the entity worked—in contrast to the ANC, which worked "normally" according to her, because it chose to elect a new president. After the imprisonment, Isabel started writing reports for Cuixart every three days. Cuixart wanted to know everything that happened and not miss a detail. He voiced his opinions and intervened in the process. But this did not always work smoothly, as Isabel reported:

> Sometimes you forget a conclusion, and he misses all the debate. Then it may become a loop, because I've got an opinion, but the other [board members] don't see it clearly. I explain it well in a meeting and convince them. I show it to Jordi, but he is not convinced. Then I have to explain

> it to him too. It makes everything slower, because he does not want to miss a detail. He is the president, and he wants to see everything. But the truth is it makes internal organization more complicated.

The quote from Isabel's interview shows that working with Cuixart in prison disrupted the meeting practices and deliberations in Òmnium Cultural's board. Involving Cuixart in the decision-making process required to establish another communication channel with him, because he could not be present at meetings at the organization's offices. But communication with Cuixart was not always easy, organizer Antoni reported:

> His lawyers can go see him, for other people it is more difficult. I have gone only a few times, but I write letters. Communication exists. He receives the letters, they do not read them to him. He told me they open them in front of him, but don't read them. And also when he writes them he can close them and send them. At the moment it works like that.

Communication by mail obviously contributed to slow down the organizing process. In short, repression made communication between the president and the rest of the organization extremely difficult. Professional staff working on the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign like Isabel had to do a lot more organizational work. This slowed down the process and made it more complicated, as Isabel said.

Second, meeting and deliberation practices were affected by perceived surveillance. As outlined earlier in this chapter, activists were afraid that their meetings would be infiltrated by undercover police. Organizers responded to this perceived threat with two counter-surveillant moves.

The first move consisted in shifting decision-making from open assemblies to closed committees (Gunzelmann, 2022). Open assemblies had been a crucial feature of organizing in the ANC and the independentist Left in normal times (Chapter 4). Some ANC activists complained that already during the secessionist crisis, the organization's leadership was increasingly making decisions behind closed doors. In contrast, some protests like the defense of the voting stations or the occupation of the University of Barcelona were prepared with open assemblies—although highly directed ones. After the secessionist crisis, these groups shifted their decision-making increasingly to small committees. This was most notable in interviews with CDR organizers. Separate committees provided a space that was perceived as safe from infiltrations, where sensitive topics could be debated and open assemblies prepared. Committee decision-making became particularly

relevant as the CDRs shifted their actions towards disruptive blockades and were targeted more explicitly by the police.

Closing off assemblies to outsides was the second move in response to the fear of undercover police in meetings (Gunzelmann, 2022). It represented an alternative to committee decision-making. Rather than removing sensitive topics and decisions from the open assemblies, organizers closed these meetings off from strangers. Like committee decision-making, this move took place primarily in the CDRs as they came under pressure from the state. Consequently, what had been an open space during the defense of the voting stations (Chapter 5) now turned into "a stable group of activists" (Gunzelmann, 2022, p. 12).

Perceived surveillance and the arrest of movement leaders both disrupted meeting practices within the movement. These disruptions made deliberation more difficult and slowed down the organizational processes for the Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign and the March 2018 protests. While the arrests had a stronger impact on the more vertical ANC and Òmnium and their campaigns, surveillance was of greater relevance for the CDR and their March 2018 protests. This also shows that previous findings on the effects of surveillance (Gunzelmann, 2022) must be seen in conjunction with other repressive actions.

Fracturing the Movement

The third organizational response to repression was a shift away from interorganizational collaboration. The imprisonment of the leaders of the two largest organizations not only had negative consequences for ANC and Òmnium Cultural. It also affected organizing *between* organizations. The leadership crisis made it more difficult for other movement players to interact with them. Organizer Josep from a small profession-based organization told that:

> Well, with article 155 and when they put the Jordis in prison, the ANC of course did not have a stable leadership. Sometimes it took a lot to find coordination, a direct order or a clear order. It was obvious that the ANC was disoriented.

The statement suggests that after the secessionist crisis, the lack of leadership of ANC and Òmnium Cultural hindered their communication and decision-making with other organizations. Moreover, the detentions also played a role in the frame dispute described in the previous chapter. They

led to the creation of Llibertat Presos Polítics as a campaign but also as an anti-repressive frame. As I have shown, not all organizers were satisfied with the efforts put into this campaign rather than in other strategies.

Collaboration between ANC and Òmnium Cultural on the one side, and the CDRs on the other side, became increasingly difficult after the secessionist crisis. The CDRs suffered from attempts to depict them as radical or even violent after the November 8 (8-N) general strike and even more after the March 2018 protests. The organizers I interviewed felt criminalized by the Spanish state. CDR organizer Iris for example expressed this as follows.

> There was an attempt to identify the CDRs with terrorism. A malicious and atrocious attempt to associate the independence movement with violence and terrorism. While it is totally the contrary, nobody hides, the assemblies are public in the streets.

The data showed that this attempt to criminalize the CDRs had an impact of their protest organizing. Several interviewees stated that other organizations of the movement became more careful of collaborating with the CDRs to organize protests together. For example, Iris reported that the ANC in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat did not let the CDRs use their facilities for assemblies in winter when it was too cold to meet outside. Repression thus contributed to the isolation of the CDRs and reduced interorganizational collaboration in protest organizing. This was already visible in the organizing of the March 2018 protests, but it increased after Tamara Carrasco and Adrià Carrasco were accused of terrorism in April 2018.

Inertia and Resilience

The three responses outlined in the previous sections represent transformations of movement practices that started during the secessionist crisis and continued in its aftermath. This shows how volatile organizational practices, such as meetings, deliberation, or collaboration are.

Organizational structures are by definition much more stable. During the secessionist crisis, this was a point of criticism towards the two largest entities, Òmnium Cultural and ANC—even from their own members. They criticized the two large social movement organizations (SMOs) for their inaction before the occupation and defense of the voting stations. The inability to adapt their repertoire of action and to include more disruptive means was seen by many as a sign of organizational inertia.

In the long run, the inertia of the two organizations also provided some stability in times of crisis. Interviewees described how organizational stability was seen as a means of resistance against repression. This is best illustrated by the following piece of data from the interview with Òmnium Cultural organizer Beatriu:

> Luckily, [Òmnium Cultural] is a large ship that has some inertia, a dynamic, it moves by itself. Even if the Executive disappeared one day, Òmnium Cultural would keep working. Without political course, but an organization that manages 130,000 members would keep functioning.

The statement shows that the size and structure of Òmnium Cultural provided some resilience against the repressive actions by the state, and allowed the organization to continue campaigning despite the imprisonment of its president. In this situation, organizational inertia became important, as Òmnium Cultural interviewee Antoni put it:

> This is our work, the work we have done. Naturally support, give all our support to the president of Òmnium Cultural who is in jail. To continue working is resisting the current situation, which we do not know how it will end.

The inertia of Òmnium Cultural and ANC, which had limited their repertoire of action before the 1-O, became an asset for the organizations as they were hit by repressive action. Their organizers saw continuity as anti-repression.

Conclusion

The 2017 referendum on independence represented an immense opportunity for Catalan secessionists. For a brief and intense period of time, the creation of an independent Catalan republic seemed possible. But most of the times, states do not simply let go of secessionist territories (Butt, 2017; Griffiths, 2016; Walter, 2009). The Spanish government under Mariano Rajoy took a firm stance denying Catalans not only independence, but the right to self-determination. After the Spanish Constitutional Court ruled the holding of the referendum illegal, Rajoy and his government went a long way to prevent the referendum. Counter-secessionist repression did not end with the secessionist crisis, however.

This chapter has described the relationship between counter-secessionist repression and the organizational dimension of the independence movement. I have outlined how the sequence of repressive occurrences extended beyond the secessionist crisis and how organizers made sense of this sequence. The elaboration of an anti-repressive frame helped overcome the initial shocks of repression and enabled collective action.

The analysis of empirical data showed that repression had a negative impact on the movement's organizational practices and processes. The various compound players of the independence movement suffered mainly from legal prosecution and surveillance. These repressive measures impacted the two cases of protest organizing described here. The detentions of leaders Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sànchez had terrible consequences for their respective organizations. Especially Òmnium Cultural faced difficulties during the organizing of its Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign: the complicated communication and decision-making with the imprisoned Cuixart slowed down the organizing of the campaign. Both organizations lost collective intelligence and points of contact with other organizations, which reduced interorganizational collaboration. The CDRs responded to repressive occurrences with more disruptive protests on the 8-N general strike and in March 2018. While these protests were well prepared, organizing in the CDRs was increasingly affected by their criminalization. Other organizations were less inclined to collaborate with them. In short, ongoing repression made protest organizing after the secessionist crisis much more difficult.

The secessionist crisis thus triggered a repressive sequence by the Spanish state that transformed organizational practices within preparatory processes in three ways. First, perceived surveillance provoked a shift from messengers to meetings. Second, repression and surveillance disrupted deliberation and meeting practices within the movement. Third, declining trust and debates over anti-repressive framing led to a decline of interorganizational collaboration. In contrast, the stability of organizational structures provided some resilience against repression. Although the leaderships of ANC and Òmnium Cultural were easy targets, the two organizations kept functioning after the arrests of Cuixart and Sànchez. This suggests that organizational practices—in particular messengers, meetings, and deliberation may be more vulnerable to repression than organizational structures.

Previous research suggested that repression leads organizations to either moderation (Lichbach, 1995; Tarrow, 2011; Zwerman & Steinhoff, 2005) or going underground (Davenport, 2014; Della Porta, 1995; Zwerman et al., 2000). This chapter shows that shifts in organizational practices allow activists to deal with repression and even avoid surveillance (Gunzelmann,

2022). But organizing counter-moves comes with a cost for them. Prefigurative practices such as deliberation and open assemblies are much more difficult to maintain under pressure. Openness and inclusivity give way to a greater focus on anti-repression—what Starr et al. (2008) called "security culture."

The disruptive effect on deliberation specifically is exacerbated by the fact that it occurred primarily in a phase when the movement actually would have required *more* deliberation due to the frame disputes around the meaning of the referendum (see Chapter 6). Loosely structured groups such as the CDRs may thus be particularly exposed to repression. The CDRs relied much more on messengers and assemblies than the professionalized and formalized SMOs Òmnium Cultural and ANC. The shifts and disruptions caused by perceived repression and surveillance thus had larger effects on their organizing. These effects are amplified when these informal groups employ disruptive targets and may thus feel more targeted by the police. This finding is particularly interesting for the recent literature on assemblies and digital organizing (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Della Porta, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Gerbaudo, 2012; Juris, 2012). It shows that repression and surveillance during and after periods of intense conflict represent critical limitations for these practices, which are rarely discussed.

References

Balcells, L., Dorsey, S., & Tellez, J. F. (2020). Repression and dissent in contemporary Catalonia. *British Journal of Political Science*, Online First, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123420000307

Barceló, J. (2018). Batons and ballots: The effectiveness of state violence in fighting against Catalan separatism. *Research & Politics, 5*(2), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018781747

Basta, K. (2021). *The symbolic state minority recognition, majority backlash, and secession in multinational countries.* McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics.* Cambridge University Press.

Butt, A. I. (2017). *Secession and security: Explaining state strategy against separatists.* Cornell University Press.

Calvo, K., & Portos, M. (2018). Panic works: The 'Gag Law' and the unruly youth in Spain. In Grasso, M. & Bessant, J. (Eds.), *Governing youth politics in the age of surveillance* (pp. 33–47). Routledge.

Calvo, K., & Romeo Echeverría, A. (2023). 15-M mobilizations and the penalization of counter-hegemonic protest in contemporary Spain. *Social Movement Studies, 22*(3), 421–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2061943

Cunningham, D. (2009). Ambivalence and control: State action against the civil rights-era Ku Klux Klan. *Qualitative Sociology, 32*(4), 355–377. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-009-9137-1

Davenport, C. (2005). Introduction: Repression and mobilization: Insights from political science and sociology. In *Repression and mobilization* (pp. vii–xlii). University of Minnesota Press.

Davenport, C. (2014). *How social movements die: Repression and demobilization of the Republic of New Africa*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139649728

Della Porta, D. (1995). *Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527555

Della Porta, D. (1996). Social movements and the state: Thoughts on the policing of protest. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 62–92). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.005

Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social movements in times of austerity: Bringing capitalism back into protest analysis*. Polity Press.

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2019). Protest cycles and referendums for independence: Closed opportunities and the path of radicalization in Catalonia. *Revista Internacional de Sociología, 77*(4), 142. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.005

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2020). The framing of secessionism in the neo-liberal crisis: The Scottish and Catalan cases. In C. Closa, C. Margiotta, & G. Martinico (Eds.), *Between democracy and law: The amorality of secession* (pp. 153–170). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Della Porta, D., & Reiter, H. (Eds.). (1998). *Policing protest: The control of mass demonstrations in Western democracies*. University of Minnesota Press.

Earl, J. (2011). Political repression: Iron fists, velvet gloves, and diffuse control. *Annual Review of Sociology, 37*(1), 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102609

Earl, J., Soule, S. A., & McCarthy, J. D. (2003). Protest under fire? Explaining the policing of protest. *American Sociological Review, 68*(4), 581–606.

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2017). European anti-austerity and pro-democracy protests in the wake of the global financial crisis. *Social Movement Studies, 16*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2016.1256193

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd Vintage Books ed). Vintage Books.

García, O. J. M. (2014). Soft repression and the current wave of social mobilisations in Spain. *Social Movement Studies, 13*(2), 303–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.863147

Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. Pluto Press.

González-Sánchez, I. (2019). La violencia simbólica y la penalización de la protesta. *Revista Internacional de Sociología, 77*(4), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.001

Griffiths, R. D. (2015). Between dissolution and blood: How administrative lines and categories shape secessionist outcomes. *International Organization, 69*(03), 731–751. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000077

Griffiths, R. D. (2016). *Age of secession: The international and domestic determinants of state birth*. Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (2020). Introduction. In R. D. Griffiths & D. Muro (Eds.), *Strategies of secession and counter-secession* (pp. 1–11). ECPR Press.

Gunzelmann, H. J. (2022). Counter-surveillant organizing during the secessionist cycle of contention in Catalonia. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2142545

Haggerty, K. D. (2006). Tear down the walls: On demolishing the panopticon. In D. Lyon (Ed.), *Theorizing surveillance: The panopticon and beyond* (pp. 23–45). Willan.

Haggerty, K. D., & Ericson, R. V. (2000). The surveillant assemblage. *British Journal of Sociology, 51*(4), 605–622. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071310020015280

Honari, A. (2018). From "the effect of repression" toward "the response to repression." *Current Sociology, 66*(6), 950–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392118787585

Juris, J. S. (2012). Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. *American Ethnologist, 39*(2), 259–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01362.x

Kurzman, C. (1996). Structural opportunity and perceived opportunity in social-movement theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review, 61*(1), 153–170. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096411

Lichbach, M. (1995). *The rebel's dilemma*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.13970

Lyon, D. (2001). *Surveillance society: Monitoring everyday life*. Open University Press.

Lyon, D. (Ed.). (2006). The search for surveillance theories. In Lyon, D. (Ed.), *Theorizing surveillance: The panopticon and beyond* (pp. 3–20). Willan.

Moss, D. (2014). Repression, response, and contained escalation under "liberalized" authoritarianism in Jordan. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 19*(3), 261–286. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.19.3.q508v72264766u92

Murakami Wood, D. (2007). Beyond the panopticon? Foucault and surveillance studies. In J. W. Crampton & S. Elden (Eds.), *Beyond the panopticon? Foucault and surveillance studies* (pp. 245–264). Routledge.

Opp, K.-D. (1994). Repression and revolutionary action: East Germany in 1989. *Rationality and Society, 6*(1), 101–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463194006001007

Opp, K.-D., & Roehl, W. (1990). Repression, micromobilization, and political protest. *Social Forces, 69*(2), 521–547. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579672

Peterson, A., & Wahlström, M. (2014). Repression. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 634–652). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.2

Soule, S. A., & Davenport, C. (2009). Velvet glove, iron fist, or even hand? Protest policing in the United States, 1960–1990. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 14*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.14.1.y01123143t231q66

Starr, A., Fernandez, L. A., Amster, R., Wood, L. J., & Caro, M. J. (2008). The impacts of state surveillance on political assembly and association: A socio-legal analysis. *Qualitative Sociology, 31*(3), 251–270. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-008-9107-z

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Ullrich, P., & Knopp, P. (2018). Protesters' reactions to video surveillance of demonstrations: Counter-moves, security cultures, and the spiral of surveillance and counter-surveillance. *Surveillance & Society, 16*(2), 183–202.

Walter, B. F. (2009). *Reputation and civil war: Why separatist conflicts are so violent.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511642012

Zwerman, G., & Steinhoff, P. G. (2005). When activists ask for trouble: State–dissident interactions and the New Left cycle of resistance in the United States and Japan. In C. Davenport, H. Johnston, & C. Mueller (Eds.), *Repression and mobilization* (pp. 85–107). University of Minnesota Press.

Zwerman, G., Steinhoff, P., & Porta, D. (2000). Disappearing social movements: Clandestinity in the cycle of New Left protest in the U.S., Japan, Germany, and Italy. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 5*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.5.1.0w068105721660n0

8 Conclusion: The Transformative Power of Secessionist Crises

Abstract
This chapter brings together the findings of the five empirical chapters and ties them back to the conceptual and theoretical framework to draw a conclusion. The chapter highlights the critical role of strategic interactions and how organizers frame them and make sense of them. When interactions intensify during secessionist crises, they have a transformative impact on organizational processes and practices in independence movements. The chapter discusses the implications of these findings for the scholarly debates about secessionist protest, conflict, and organizational change and provides an outlook on the Catalan case.

Keywords: Secessionist Protest, Strategic Interactions, Contentious Episodes, Transformative Events, Catalonia

The referendum on October 1, 2017 was a risky gamble for the Catalan independence movement. On the one hand, the push for a binding vote opened up opportunities and sparked a wave of unprecedented mobilization demanding self-determination and independence. The announcement of the referendum produced a window of roughly two months in which an independent Catalan Republic seemed achievable. On the other hand, the audacity to call for a referendum without the consent of the Spanish state came with a high cost. The Spanish state responded with police batons and prison bars. Catalan autonomy was suspended for the first time since its hard-fought re-establishment in 1980.

This book has addressed the question of how this intense phase of conflict shaped the ways in which pro-independence activists organized protests. Before the announcement of the referendum, the independence movement had built a reputation for staging massive street performances such as the Diada. These protests were the result of meticulous organizational efforts

H.J. Gunzelmann, *Organizing for Independence: Secessionist Protest, Organizational Change, and the Referendum Crisis in Catalonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2024
doi: 10.5117/9789048561094_CH08

by secessionist social movement organizations (SMOs), in particular by the Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) and Òmnium Cultural. While these protests took place in a phase of relatively contained interactions between the independence movement and the Spanish state, the secessionist crisis posed new challenges. I have sought to understand how organizers made sense of the referendum and the secessionist crisis and how they connected these understandings to the ways in which they organized protest.

To answer these questions, I have drawn on organization theory to develop the concept of protest organizing to capture the work of organizers when planning and preparing collective contentious action. Empirically, I combined analyses of protest event data and qualitative materials. The protest event data map the trajectory of self-determination protest from the 2015 elections until the onset of the Covid pandemic. I used these data to analyze the adversity and pace of contention as well the compound players participating in these protests. The qualitative materials were the basis for in-depth analyses of nine protest events before, during, and after the secessionist crisis. I performed process-tracing to reconstruct the organizing processes of these protests and used grounded theory to identify the most relevant organizational practices.

I have argued throughout this book that the secessionist crisis was a transformative sequence of events for the independence movement. The protest event data demonstrated the intensification of conflict in late 2017, as secessionist contention became more frequent and adversarial after the announcement of the referendum. The Spanish state responded with increased repression. These intense interactions shaped protest organizing in two ways: during the episode and afterwards.

First, organizational practices and processes shifted towards a new mode of organizing, which I call *crisis organizing*. Increasingly adversarial interactions with the Spanish state created uncertainty and time pressure, while closer interactions with secessionist allies led to frame alignment in the weeks prior to the referendum. The referendum as a shared prognostic frame allowed the diverse compound players of the independence movement to rally around a mid-range goal. Interactions with opponents and allies reinforced themselves and made it impossible for organizers to stick to previous routines of long, detailed, and deliberative planning. Organizational processes became shorter, less deliberative, and went beyond organizational boundaries.

Second, secessionist protest and its organizational basis were further transformed after the end of the secessionist crisis. However, once the referendum was past, a frame dispute over the meaning of the referendum required more deliberation during the preparations of contentious

actions, and second, they inhibited organizing between organizations. At the same time, counter-secessionist repression continued after the crisis and increasingly shifted the conflict to the judicial arena. The movement suffered from criminalization, legal prosecutions, and protest policing, which made directing, internal communication, and interorganizational collaboration much more difficult. At the same time, the perceived threat of surveillance by the Spanish police made organizational practices less inclusive and deliberative.

This book has bridged research on secessionist conflicts with social movement studies. This concluding chapter discusses the implications of the findings of the book for these literatures, as well as for research on the Catalan case more specifically. I begin by comparing organizational processes and practices of the Catalan independence movements to other social movements and situate them within the current literature. Second, I return to the existing accounts of the Catalan case described in the introductory chapter and contrast them to my interactionist and eventful argument. Third, I sketch implications of this eventful and interactionist approach for protest beyond Catalonia. Finally, I discuss the volatility and durability of the transformations observed in this book.

Protest Organizing Beyond Organizations

Classic writings in social movement studies considered organizational structures an important precondition for protest (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992; Klandermans et al., 1989; Kriesi, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Rucht, 2013; Zald & McCarthy, 1979). In contrast, the empirical analyses in this book confirmed what organization theory suggested (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011, 2019): Protest organizing takes place inside, outside, and between organizations. Although SMOs provide routines and resources that often lead to well-planned protest, they are far from being a necessary condition. The defense of the voting station has shown that experienced and skilled organizers can also take protest organizing in their own hands. In this case, established SMOs refrained from organizing action.

As such, the case of the Catalan independence movement stands in line with other movements of the past fifteen years. In Spain, the indignados championed open assemblies and local spaces to organize an extensive protest campaign (Della Porta, 2015; Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Portos, 2021). Similarly, Occupy Wall Street employed a combination of digital tools and physical meetings to prepare and plan their actions (Juris, 2012; Kavada,

2015). New forms of organizing have complemented rather than replaced traditional formal organizations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

Empirical research on these cases has led to limited theorizing on the organizational dimension of social movements. Rather, it seems that social movement scholars have lost interest in organization (Soule, 2013). In this book, I have drawn on multiple strands of organization theory to understand what makes processes and practices beyond SMOs *organizational*. This broader conceptualization provides a unified framework to understand the diversity of organizational phenomena in current social movements—online and offline, horizontal and vertical, formal and informal. Approaching the organizational dimension of movements through processes, practices, and structures allows understanding not only the Catalan case but also other contemporary movements in a holistic way.

The framework I have presented here demonstrates that organization studies have much to offer for scholars of social movements and contentious politics if they are willing to go beyond narrow entity-based understandings of organization. Process, practice, decision, and communication-as-constitutive (CCO) approaches to organizing have not been employed in social movement studies, with some notable exceptions (de Bakker et al., 2017; den Hond et al., 2015; Haug, 2013; Kavada, 2015; Shoshan, 2017). These approaches represent valuable resources for social movement scholars and should be applied more in future research.

Recent research on the organizational dimension of movements has been very much preoccupied with the novelty of digital tools, assemblies, and other emergent forms of organizing. However, there has been little treatment of how these new forms of organizing change over time. This book provides a theory of organizational change in social movements, which places strategic interactions at its core.

Eventful Interactions

There are times when the nation state might seem like a monolith to the ordinary citizen. Its norms and institutions, territories and boundaries appear to transcend the experiences of the individuals that inhabit it (Beissinger, 1996, 2002). However, this is only one side of the picture. At times, secessionists manage to radically challenge the nation state. These brief but intense episodes during which the established boundaries, institutions, and symbols of the nation state are in jeopardy can be considered secessionist crises.

Strategic interactions between challengers, allies, and opponents are at the heart of these times. I have proposed to understand secessionist crises as episodes during which these interactions intensify to the degree that the relationship between challengers and authorities becomes unsustainable. The intensification of interactions leads to the emergence of crisis organizing but also has some long-term consequences, as the empirical research in this book has demonstrated.

The October 1 referendum was the key event of the secessionist crisis. Although Ernest Renan (1882) has famously been quoted as saying that a nation is "a daily plebiscite," referendums on independence are extremely rare in established democracies (Dion, 1996; Lecours, 2018; López & Sanjaume-Calvet, 2020). This is why they are almost automatically critical junctures for territorial conflicts. The referendum on independence on October 1 was particularly unusual because of the role of nonstate actors in its preparation and the active intervention of the Spanish police in the voting process. The critical character underlines the importance of independence referendums in secessionist conflicts, even when they are only used as "leverage devices" (Sanjaume-Calvet, 2021) rather than to make a decision. However, I suggest it was the intensifying interactions around the referendum that were transformative rather than the event itself. On the one hand, interactions among organizers and with their allies trying to grasp the unusual character of the referendum led to a frame dispute within the movement that had transformative effects on protest and organizing. On the other hand, the referendum led to a sequence of counter-secessionist repression that had a profound impact on the independence movement.

I have shown how the 2017 referendum crisis in Catalonia was a transformative episode in the history of the independence movement. It did not lead to Catalan independence, but it changed how activists organize protest in fundamental ways. These findings shed light on the development of the independence movement in one of its most turbulent phases.

The interactionist perspective I have outlined here provides a better understanding of the Catalan secessionist movements than most previous accounts, which have explained it as either a top-down or bottom-up phenomenon (see Chapter 1). It acknowledges the role of both allies *and* opponents. On the one hand, the Catalan case shows that relations between institutional and non-institutional secessionists are key for understanding their behavior, echoing the findings on other secessionist and self-determination movements (Cunningham, 2014). However, these relationships are not unidirectional, they are *inter*active and dynamic. On

the other hand, the conflict in Catalonia demonstrates the importance of the host state for secessionist movements, which does not feature at all in top-down/bottom-up accounts of the case. In this regard, the Catalan independence movement is not different from other secessionist movements (Basta, 2021; Griffiths, 2015, 2016) or social movements of other kinds (Della Porta & Diani, 2020; Jasper & Duyvendak, 2015; McAdam et al., 2001). Applying existing concepts and theories from social movement studies and research on secessionism thus provides a better understanding of the Catalan case than some of the existing polarized accounts. Vice versa, the 2017 secessionist crisis bears some critical implications for other cases of (secessionist) protest.

Implications Beyond Catalonia

Throughout the world, a number of regions strives to break away from existing countries and form sovereign states of their own. Countries as diverse as Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Serbia, and the UK have recently faced secessionist challengers who aim to redraw the borders of these states. The protests that took place in the time around the 1-O referendum in Catalonia can be seen as part of this global phenomenon.

The book underlines the role of protest and nonstate actors in secessionist conflicts. The Catalan case certainly represents an ideal case with regards to the strength of secessionist civil society and, as such, has implications for research on secessionist protest globally. Protest action is not just an expression of nationalist sentiment, it constitutes an important tactic for secessionist activists to put pressure on both the host state and their own representatives in parties and government. The findings of the book enhance our understanding of protest as a secessionist strategy by going beyond rational choice analyses (Cunningham, 2013; Griffiths & Muro, 2020; Sorens, 2012). The Catalan case suggests that secessionists do not simply pick strategies from a readymade portfolio. First, organizers did not adopt strategies on the basis of cost–benefit calculations. Rather, strategies had to be *constructed*. The conflicting strategies that emerged in the movement after the 1-O referendum were the product of sensemaking processes that are inherently symbolic. Second, strategies had to be *organized*. Tactics, understood as the means to pursue a strategy, were not readily available to secessionist challengers. Contentious action as one set of tactics required the organizational effort of activists. Third, with the notable exceptions of Mark Beissinger (1996, 2002) and Karlo

Basta (2018), scholars of secessionism have not included events as central units of analysis. But the transformation of protest during and after the referendum crisis demonstrates that secessionist strategies are not static but *change dynamically* over time. Critical junctures such as independence referendums play an important role in shaping the trajectories and outcomes of secessionist conflict. Thinking about strategies in this way may help us understand better how secessionists and host states interact in other ongoing conflicts, such as the ones in Scotland, Bougainville, or Transnistria.

Furthermore, intense episodes are not unique to secessionist movements. Although protest has become somewhat normalized in contemporary societies (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998), periods of intense conflict are still ubiquitous in established democracies and elsewhere (Della Porta, 2016, 2020). The economic and political crises of the 2010s and the Covid-19 pandemic were critical moments for social movements around the globe. And while social movement scholars have been quite attuned to the eventfulness of these episodes, there has been little attention to the consequences for the organizational dimension of social movements. As mentioned above, theorizing on organizing and organizational change has somewhat stalled. Highlighting the role of changing interactions for organizational dimension of protest, this book provides a dynamic theory of organizational change in social movements. The case of the secessionist crisis demonstrates the need to consider how activists frame events and intense episodes and make sense of them.

Volatility and Durability

Transformative events are defined as resulting in profound and *durable* changes (McAdam & Sewell, 2001; Sewell, 1996). If we take this definition seriously, it raises the question if the referendum crisis truly led to lasting transformations or if they were just short-term changes followed by "re-equilibration" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 352).

On the one hand, some of the changes that occurred during the secessionist cycle of contention were reversed afterwards. For Òmnium Cultural and the ANC, the September 20 protest remained an exception. Afterwards they returned to their previous mode of organizing and focused on detailed preparations of structured campaigns. The inertia of these large organizations, which had left them paralyzed before the defense of the voting stations, provided some stability in the face of repression after the secessionist crisis.

Despite a crisis of leadership, they continued their campaigning work. The Committees for the Defense of the Republic (CDRs), too, took more time to prepare their responses to repressive action and were well organized in the 8-N general strike and the March 2018 protests.

On the other hand, some of the organizational innovations that emerged during the secessionist crisis were there to stay. The messenger and assembly practices that were diffused through the organizing of the defense of the voting stations became routine. The most important result of these sedimentations was the emergence of the CDRs as a collective actor. The CDRs in their early stages can hardly be described as an organizational entity, but assembly and messenger practices provided them with a stable routine over time and allowed them to organize the 8-N and the March 2018 protests. The protest event data showed how they emerged as the key compound player driving self-determination protests after the secessionist crisis.

Furthermore, there were transformations after the secessionist crisis that did not result in re-equilibration. As Koopmans (2004) pointed out, the term *cycle* of contention is inaccurate, because the relationship between challengers and authorities at the end of conflict differs from their relationship at the beginning. In other words, the relationship does not cycle back to square one. This is partly true for the organizational dimension of contention as well. The protest event data showed that self-determination protest became less frequent but even more adversarial after the crisis. The frame dispute required more deliberation than in normal times and led to a worsening of interorganizational collaboration—not just with respect to crisis organizing but also to normal times.

This suggests that the various elements of the organizational basis are affected in different ways by eventful episodes of intense interactions. While organizational structures may be relatively stable, protest organizing appears to change over shorter periods of time. Organizational processes and practices are thus more volatile and depend more on the dynamic interactions between challengers, allies, and authorities.

Scope is the main limitation of my research in this regard. My fieldwork took place about 8 to 18 months after the referendum. The protest event data cover secessionist contention until the end of 2019. Thus, when I call some of the organizational transformations *durable*, this should be read with care. It is possible that some of the changes that took place during or after the secessionist crisis needed more time to re-equilibrate. The only remedy to this limitation is to repeat data collection in the future to see if the changes described in this book persist.

Outlook

On October 27, it became clear that Catalan independence would not be achieved in the near future. However, Catalan secessionists have not lost their determination to split from Spain. More than six years after the referendum on October 1, 2017, there is still no independent Catalan Republic. In the Catalan regional elections on February 14, 2021, pro-independence parties for the first time achieved not only a majority of the seats in the Catalan parliament but also of the votes cast. And for the first time since Spain's transition to democracy, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) became the leading party of government, as Pere Aragonès was voted President of the Generalitat. But the rifts within the movement that I have described in this book continued to have an impact on Catalan politics beyond the protest arena. Forming a government became harder than ever before, and in October 2022, ERC's coalition partner Junts—the party of Carles Puigdemont—abandoned the government.

Moreover, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 marked a clear rupture with the previous political cycle. Secessionist parties have tried to exploit the pandemic by blaming the Spanish government for its management of the crisis. But secessionist civil society and protest activity have clearly suffered from the pandemic. At the same time, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez struck a softer tone on the territorial conflict than his predecessor and offered dialogue in exchange for the secessionist parties support in the Spanish parliament. In June 2021, he pardoned the imprisoned secessionist leaders. Similarly, Aragonès and ERC abandoned their radical rhetoric and continued the gradualist strategy described in this book. It thus appears that the most intense episodes of the territorial conflict are past.

However, the question of independence remains unresolved and continues to impact Spanish and Catalan politics. Moderation on both sides opens space for more radical positions waiting to regain strength. Many independence supporters see their demands unfulfilled by the regional government, while Spanish centralists wish to revert whatever concession Sánchez has made to the secessionist challengers. If dissatisfaction grows on either side and is channeled into political action, the conflict may become more contentious again.

As I have written at the outset of this concluding chapter, the referendum was a risky gamble in retrospective. This does not mean that the secessionist crisis will go down in history simply as a failed attempt at secession. As I have shown in this book the crisis had numerous consequences for the independence movement and Catalan politics. Some of them were short-term changes, some of them had an impact in the long run. Without doubt, the

October 1 referendum represents a truly historical event for Catalonia. This book has sketched some lessons that scholars of social movements and secessionism can learn from this remarkable episode of contention. The Catalan independence movement will surely continue to draw its own conclusions from the referendum and the subsequent development. The post-referendum debates on strategy illustrate that making sense of transformative events is not always easy nor consensual, but learning processes are inevitable. Only the future will tell if the gamble on independence was worth it or not.

References

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (Eds.). (2019). *Organization outside organizations: The abundance of partial organization in social life.* https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108604994

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Basta, K. (2021). *The symbolic state minority recognition, majority backlash, and secession in multinational countries*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Beissinger, M. R. (1996). How nationalisms spread: Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of nationalist contention. *Social Research, 63*(1), 97–146.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State.* Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Buchanan, A. E. (1991). *Secession: The morality of political divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec.* Westview Press.

Capoccia, G., & Kelemen, R. D. (2007). The study of critical junctures: Theory, narrative, and counterfactuals in historical institutionalism. *World Politics, 59*(03), 341–369. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100020852

Clemens, E. S. (1993). Organizational repertoires and institutional change: Women's groups and the transformation of U.S. politics, 1890–1920. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(4), 755–798. https://doi.org/10.1086/230089

Cunningham, K. G. (2013). Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and nonviolent campaign in self-determination disputes. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313475467

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination.* Oxford University Press.

de Bakker, F. G. A., den Hond, F., & Laamanen, M. (2017). Social movements: Organizations and organizing. In C. Roggeband & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Handbook*

of social movements across disciplines (pp. 203–231). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0_8

Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social movements in times of austerity: Bringing capitalism back into protest analysis*. Polity Press.

Della Porta, D. (2016). *Where did the revolution go?: Contentious politics and the quality of democracy*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316783467

Della Porta, D. (2020). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 19*(5–6), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2020). *Social movements: An introduction* (third edition). Wiley-Blackwell.

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G. A., & Smith, N. (2015). Social movements and organizational analysis. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 291–305). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.41

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organisational change in Western European environmental groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Dion, S. (1996). Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies? Lessons from Quebec. *British Journal of Political Science, 26*(2), 269–283.

Ferreira, C. (2021). Entrapped in a failing course of action: Explaining the territorial crisis in 2017 Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies*, Online First, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2021.1907570

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2014). Debunking spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/indignados as autonomous movement. *Social Movement Studies, 14*(2), 142–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2014.945075

Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (1992). Mesomobilization: Organizing and framing in two protest campaigns in West Germany. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(3), 555–596. https://doi.org/10.1086/230049

Griffiths, R. D. (2015). Between dissolution and blood: How administrative lines and categories shape secessionist outcomes. *International Organization, 69*(03), 731–751. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000077

Griffiths, R. D. (2016). *Age of secession: The international and domestic determinants of state birth*. Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (2020). Introduction. In R. D. Griffiths & D. Muro (Eds.), *Strategies of secession and counter-secession* (pp. 1–11). ECPR Press.

Haug, C. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution. *Organization Studies, 34*(5–6), 705–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Jasper, J. M., & Duyvendak, J. W. (Eds.). (2015). *Players and arenas: The interactive dynamics of protest*. Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285

Juris, J. S. (2012). Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. *American Ethnologist, 39*(2), 259–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01362.x

Kavada, A. (2015). Creating the collective: Social media, the occupy movement and its constitution as a collective actor. *Information, Communication & Society, 18*(8), 872–886. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1043318

Klandermans, B., Kriesi, H., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1989). *From structure to action: Comparing social movement research across cultures*. JAI.

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Lecours, A. (2018). The political consequences of independence referenda in liberal democracies: Quebec, Scotland, and Catalonia. *Polity, 50*(2), 243–274. https://doi.org/10.1086/696709

López, J., & Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). The political use of de facto referendums of independence: The case of Catalonia. *Representation*, Online First, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2020.1720790

McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. Jr. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Jr. Sewell, S. G. Tarrow, & C. Tilley (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.005

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*(6), 1212–1241.

Meyer, D. S., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1998). *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Portos, M. (2021). *Grievances and public protests: Political mobilisation in Spain in the age of austerity*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53405-9

Renan, E. (1882). What is a nation? [Lecture].

Rootes, C. A. (1999). The transformation of environmental activism: Activists, organizations and policy-making. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 12*(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1999.9968595

Rucht, D. (1999). Linking organization and mobilization: Michels's Iron Law of Oligarchy reconsidered. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 4*(2), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.4.2.l2680365q32h6616

Rucht, D. (2013). Social movement structures in action: Conceptual propositions and empirical illustration. In J. van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The future of social movement research* (pp. 169–190). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816686513.003.0009

Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). Moralism in theories of secession: A realist perspective. *Nations and Nationalism, 26*(2), 323–343. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12544

Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2021). Plebiscitarianism revisited: A typology of independence referendums. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 54*(3), 593–614. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423921000421

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996). Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society, 25*(6), 841–881.

Shoshan, A. (2017). Habitus and social movements: How militarism affects organizational repertoires. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2017.1408006

Sorens, J. (2012). *Secessionism: Identity, interest, and strategy*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Soule, S. A. (2013). Bringing organizational studies back into social movement scholarship. In J. van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The future of social movement research* (pp. 107–124). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816686513.003.0007

Zald, M. N., & McCarthy, J. D. (Eds.). (1979). *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics*. Winthrop Publishers.

Appendix

Studying the Organizational Basis of Protest Events

Most research in social movement studies and organization studies takes organizational entities as its starting point. In contrast, I needed to develop an approach to study organizing in social movements *beyond* organizational entities, accounting for practices and processes inside, outside, and between organizations.

The protest event represents the main unit of analysis for my research. Drawing on McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 2008; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015), I define protest as the collective, non-routine act of public claims-making.[1] Protest *events* are claims-making acts that are bounded in time and space. They must take place in a physical, public space and outside the routine functioning of political institutions. These events may include violent and nonviolent forms of what Tilly (2004) called the "social movement repertoire of action"—petitions, strikes, demonstrations, vigils, occupations, blockades, and riots—as well as what McAdam and Sampson (2005) called "hybrid events."

The core interest of my research is on secession, which is defined as "the creation of a new state by the withdrawal of a territory and its population where that territory was previously part of an existing state" (Pavković & Radan, 2007, p. 5). Empirically, however, I took a broader approach to secessionist conflict by also looking at events that belong to the wider category of *self-determination* protests. Self-determination protest refers to all public acts making claims about a group's control over its own affairs in relation to the state (Cunningham, 2014). These demands very often include calls for outright independence, but also for greater fiscal or institutional autonomy. They can also be defensive claims, such as the protection of minority rights and already achieved autonomy. And they also include self-determination demands in the narrow sense, for example the call for a referendum on independence. The reason for this broader approach was that independence demands often go hand-in-hand with other kinds of self-determination claims. Looking only at independence claims would have left out some of the most important events of the Catalan case and left us with a truncated and even distorted image of what was going on.

1 McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow prefer the term "contention." I use protest and contention interchangeably.

My research design combines two approaches to study protest events and their organizational basis. First, I took a qualitative approach to the organizational basis of secessionist protest. To gather data on organizational processes I employed what Langley (2010, p. 411) called the "big three of qualitative research": observation, interviewing, and document research. These data were used to construct and analyze the nine cases of protest organizing which are at the heart of this book. Second, I gathered original protest data to map the larger trajectory of the secessionist cycle of contention from 2015 through 2019 (Earl et al., 2004; Hutter, 2014). These data complemented the qualitative data in two ways. On the one hand, they sustained my claim that secessionist protest became more frequent and adversarial after the announcement of the referendum. On the other hand, they showed the shifting role of organizational structures better than the qualitative data (see Chapter 3).

Qualitative Data and Analysis

The first part of the research design was based on four types of qualitative data: direct observations and expert interviews during the exploratory fieldwork, semi-structured interviews with organizers, and documents. The following sections describe how I gathered these materials. Afterwards I describe how nine cases were constructed and analyzed based on these materials.

Exploratory Fieldwork

In the absence of existing literature on organizational practices and processes beyond organizations in social movements, I decided to take an open and exploratory approach, which borrows many elements from grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mattoni, 2014). In May 2018, about seven months after the Catalan referendum on independence, I embarked on fieldwork in Barcelona with a sensitizing concept of organizing as reducing equivocality. First, I observed a series of activist meetings and protest events, and had a number of informal conversations with organizers in the independence movement. These data were gathered in the form of ethnographic field notes. Second, I spoke to seven experts, mostly activist scholars from the independence movement. This exploratory phase served two primary purposes. On the one hand, experts and observations provided a way of getting in contact with key organizers without having to base

the data collection on a sample of organizations. On the other hand, the exploratory phase helped me to refine the conceptual framework, the unit of analysis and the case selection.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews represented the main data source for the qualitative analyses. Between May 2018 and March 2019, I conducted 30 interviews with key organizers from the Catalan independence movement. I targeted organizers in the various milieus of the independence movement for interviews. The main selection criterion for the interviewees was that they were actively involved in at least one major protest event during the secessionist crisis. My starting point for data collection was asking experts about potential interviewees, which yielded a series of contacts, from which I proceeded through theoretically controlled snowballing. I started with a focus on the case of the defense of the voting stations and gradually expanded the cases. This allowed me to structure the data collection around comparable instances of organizing. At the same time, my aim was to keep an open approach. In order to include a series of organizational perspectives and experiences, and to go beyond organizational boundaries, I needed to maximize the variety of organizational affiliations. This involved several criteria.

The first criterion was to select interviewees from different organizational entities. I put emphasis on the three most important ones (Assemblea Nacional Catalana, Òmnium Cultural, Committees for the Defense of the Referendum/Republic), but included also smaller actors, such as student and youth groups (Universitats per la República, Arran, Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans, La Forja), one trade union (CSC-Intersindical), and a profession-based group (BxR). I also included some organizers that had no organizational affiliation at the time but were nevertheless involved in some of the protest preparations. The second criterion was to achieve variation on the organizational level at which organizers were active. This included the local level (neighborhood, village, town), some intermediate levels (city, district, province), and the regional level (Catalonia).[2] The third criterion was geography. This included different neighborhoods of Barcelona, its suburbs (L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Gavà), some mid-sized

2 Of course, independentists refer to this as the "national" level. In this book, I employ the term "regional" instead, unless it is a proper name such as the National Assembly of the Committees for the Defense of the Republic.

towns (Girona, Tarragona, Sabadell), and some smaller towns, which I have anonymized to protect the identity of the interviewees (Fastiada, Montanya, Caldes). The fourth was activist biography. I selected interviewees from different activist generations and with different organizational "careers." Some of them had remained with one organization for a long time, others had switched several times or were active in multiple entities. Finally, I tried to achieve some balance on age and gender. The sample was far from perfect, however: there certainly was a bias towards left-leaning activists with a university education.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Spanish, but some interviewees would employ Catalan vocabulary here and there.[3] The interview guide consisted of five parts. First, I asked the respondents about their "activist history": how they got involved in the movement and which groups they had been participating in. Second, I was interested in the organizing processes they were involved in. In the beginning, this revolved around the 1-O referendum but expanded to other cases later. The third part consisted of questions about the internal life of the groups the interviewee participated in. These questions referred primarily to the two categories of practices presented in the conceptual framework: decision-making and communication. Fourth, I asked open questions about how practices, organizational entities, and organizing processes had changed over time, and in particular after the 1-O referendum. The final part consisted of questions about why the interviewee wanted Catalonia to be independent, and how they thought this goal could be achieved. As it is convenience in qualitative interviewing, these questions were not standardized and led to many follow-up questions in between.

Studying protest organizing through qualitative interviews had two disadvantages. The first one was that I carried out all interviews *after* the protest cases had occurred, with the exception of the ANC's Primaries campaign which was still ongoing during my fieldwork in Catalonia. Thus, the interviews represent retrospective views on the cases under study, which bears problems of memory, narrative, and ex-post rationalization. The second disadvantage was that the interviews could only capture individual perspectives on organizing as an essentially *collective* phenomenon. In other words, organizational interactions and practices, which usually involve

3 I chose to do the interviews in Spanish, because my Catalan was rather poor at the beginning of the fieldwork. Surprisingly, the choice of language was never an issue. None of the interviewees declined to respond in Spanish. This might have been due to the fact that as a foreigner they did not expect me to be proficient in Catalan.

groups of people, were only tangible through interviewees' representations. Both these limitations were somewhat remedied by the use of documents as collective and temporarily situated data (see next section). Moreover, most of the cases were covered by several interviewees, which allowed for cross-validation within the data. Even so, there remained a retrospective bias in the data that I make transparent throughout the empirical analysis wherever necessary.

The limitations of the interview data were outweighed by their advantages. First of all, despite their retrospective bias, semi-structured interviews offered a flexible access to the past. While participant observations are bound to the present, and documents to the past, qualitative interviews are "temporally versatile in that respondents can draw on their memories and link phenomena across time" (Langley, 2010, p. 411). Thus, they are "able to provide a longitudinal window on social movement activism" (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 95). Through organizers' accounts, qualitative interviews allowed accessing different cases of protest organizing.

The second strength of qualitative interviews is their level of detail with regards to the research object. Della Porta (2014, pp. 228–229) suggested that for researching internal processes in social movements "in-depth interviews are to be preferred, especially where the researcher is aiming to make a detailed description." This level of depth was necessary to provide insights into the organizational processes and practices that were the core interest of this research. Qualitative interviews offered the potential to make use of organizers' knowledge, which would not be accessible to the same extent through observation or documents.

Third, collecting data through organizers meant prioritizing their agency. In-depth interviews were particularly well suited to reveal individuals' agency and the sense they attribute to their actions (Blee, 2013; Della Porta, 2014; Rathbun, 2009). They revealed the organizers' framing, sensemaking, and strategizing but also their emotions and identities. Most crucially, semi-structured interviews allowed organizers to elaborate on how they perceived episodes of intense contention and how they translated them into action. As I have described in the conceptual framework, events are not objective facts that are ready to be discovered through the researcher. Rather, I needed the interviewees to do that kind of work for me.

The interviews were fully transcribed, with the exception of two. Two interviews involved two respondents, while the rest were individual interviews. The raw interview data amounts to 2,451 minutes of audio recordings and 555 pages of transcripts.

#	Pseudonym	Main org. affiliation	Org. level
1	Alba & Miquel	CDR	Local
2	Alex	Òmnium Cultural	Regional
3	Antoni	Òmnium Cultural	Regional
4	Beatriu	Òmnium Cultural	Regional
5	Berta	ANC	Local
6	Carles	CDR	Local
7	Carme	ANC	Local, Regional
8	Emma	ANC	Local, Regional
9	Enric	ANC	Local, Regional
10	Ester	UxR	Local, Regional
11	Eulàlia	N/A	Local
12	Gabriel	CDR	Local
13	Gerard	La Forja	Regional
14	Irene	SEPC	Local
15	Iris	ANC	Local
16	Isabel	Òmnium Cultural	Regional
17	Joana	CDR	Local, Intermed.
18	Jordi	BxR	Local
19	Josep	BxR	Regional
20	Judit	ANC	Local, Regional
21	Lluis	AMPA	Local
22	Montserrat	CSC-Intersindical	Regional
23	Oriol	CUP	Local
24	Paloma	Òmnium Cultural	Local
25	Pasqual	N/A	Local
26	Pere	UxR	Regional
27	Quim	CDR	Local
28	Ruben	Arran	Local
29	Sergi & Dolors	CDR	Local
30	Xavier	CDR	Local, Intermed.

Documents

In addition to the interview data, I collected two types of documents: governmental and legal documents, and documents produced by SMOs. First, the eight governmental and legal documents referred primarily to actions of state institutions, for example the activation of article 155 by the Spanish senate, but also other institutionally produced documents such as the official results of the 1-O referendum. Second, the data included 16 documents produced by the SMOs of the independence movement: press releases announcing some of their actions, internal organizational rules, and organizational histories.

The governmental/legal documents were gathered on the basis of the case selection. After I had constructed the protest cases and the other contentious actions on the basis of the exploratory and the interview data, I searched official sources for documents with complementing information on these cases—for example the exact wording of the Law on the Referendum on Self-Determination. The organizational documents were selected on the basis of interviewees' affiliations, but for some loosely structured groups, such as the CDRs, no documents were available. I used these documents primarily to crosscheck what interviewees told me about contentious events and to add more data on the cases. The documents were downloaded and archived in PDF format.

Governmental and Legal Documents

- Catalan Parliament: Referendum on Self-Determination. Official results (*El Govern trasllada els resultats definitius del referèndum de l'1 d'octubre al Parlament de Catalunya*). https://www.parlament.cat/document/intrade/235869
- Generalitat of Catalonia: Decree 139/2017 (*Decret 139/2017, de 6 de setembre, de convocatòria del Referèndum d'Autodeterminació de Catalunya*). http://cido.diba.cat/legislacio/7252226/decret-1392017-de-6-de-setembre-de-convocatoria-del-referendum-dautodeterminacio-de-catalunya-departament-de-la-presidencia
- Generalitat of Catalonia: Decree 140/2017 (*Decret 140/2017, de 6 de setembre, de normes complementàries per a la realització del Referèndum d'Autodeterminació de Catalunya*). https://cido.diba.cat/legislacio/7252225/decret-1402017-de-6-de-setembre-de-normes-complementaries-per-a-la-realitzacio-del-referendum-dautodeterminacio-de-catalunya-departament-de-la-vicepresidencia-i-deconomia-i-hisenda
- Generalitat of Catalonia: Law 19/2017 on the Referendum on Self-Determination (*Llei 19/2017, del 6 de setembre, del referèndum d'autodeterminació*). https://cido.diba.cat/legislacio/7252200/llei-192017-del-6-de-setembre-del-referendum-dautodeterminacio-departament-de-la-presidencia
- Generalitat of Catalonia: Referendum on Self-Determination. Official results. (*Referèndum d'autodeterminació de Catalunya. Resultats definitius*). https://govern.cat/govern/docs/2017/10/06/17/31/a3c84f5f-a902-4f55-b3a9-41e112d7a8d9.pdf
- Spanish Constitutional Court: Press release: Constitutional Court suspends Law 19/2017 on the Referendum on Self-Determination (*Nota Informativa Nº 62/2017*).

https://www.tribunalconstitucional.es/NotasDePrensaDocumentos/NP_2017_062/NOTA%20INFORMATIVA%20N%C2%BA%2062-2017.pdf
- Spanish Parliament: Official release on the application of article 155. (*Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales. Senado. XII Legislatura. Núm. 165, Pág. 2. 27 de octubre de 2017*).
https://www.senado.es/legis12/publicaciones/pdf/senado/bocg/BOCG_D_12_165_1373.PDF
- Spanish Parliament: Official release on the application of article 155. (*Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales. Senado. XII Legislatura. Núm. 166, Pág. 1 28 de octubre de 2017*).
https://www.senado.es/legis12/publicaciones/pdf/senado/bocg/BOCG_T_12_166.PDF

Organizational Documents
- Arran. Història i principis.
https://arran.cat/qui-som/historia-i-principis/
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. July 1, 2018. L'Assemblea Nacional Catalana proposa organitzar primàries republicanes a les principals ciutats del país.
https://assemblea.cat/lassemblea-nacional-catalana-proposa-organitzar-primaries-republicanes-a-les-principals-ciutats-del-pais/
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. August 6, 2018. El Sí a las primarias gana la consulta interna de la Assemblea Nacional Catalana.
https://assemblea.cat/el-si-a-las-primarias-gana-la-consulta-interna-de-la-assemblea-nacional-catalana/
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. Història.
https://assemblea.cat/historia/
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. March 10, 2012. Estatus de l'Assemblea Nacional Catalana.
https://assemblea.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/03202001_estatuts_2020_V4_enllac%CC%A7os.pdf
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. March 12, 2012 Reglament de règim intern.
https://assemblea.cat/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Reglament_Regim_Intern.pdf
- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. April 29, 2014. Reglament de funcionament del Secretariat Nacional.
https://assemblea.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/03202001_Reglament_R_Intern_2020.pdf

- Assemblea Nacional Catalana. April 30, 2011. Declaració de la Conferència Nacional per l'Estat Propri.
  https://assemblea.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Declaraci%C3%B3-de-la-Confer%C3%A8ncia-Nacional-per-lEstat-Propi.pdf
- Intersindical-CSC. November 3, 2017. La Intersindical-CSC Convoca Vaga General Pel Pròxim Dimecres 8 de Novembre (de Moment...).
  https://www.intersindical-csc.cat/2017/11/03/la-intersindical-csc-convoca-vaga-general-pel-proxim-dimecres-8-de-novembre-de-moment/
- LaForja. Història del moviment juvenil independentista i revolucionari.
  https://laforja.cat/historia/
- LaForja. January 12, 2019. Anàlisi del procés independentista entre l'1 d'octubre i desembre de 2018.
  https://laforja.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/analisi-politic-11-1-19.pdf
- Òmnium Cultural. Ara és l'hora.
  https://www.omnium.cat/ca/campanyes/ara-es-l-hora/
- Òmnium Cultural. Presentació.
  https://www.omnium.cat/ca/presentacio/
- Òmnium Cultural. Crida per la Democàcia.
  https://www.omnium.cat/ca/campanyes/crida-per-la-democracia/
  http://www.cridaperlademocracia.cat/
- Òmnium Cultural. February 6, 2017. Deu accions que pots fer per #LlibertatPresosPolítics.
  https://www.omnium.cat/ca/deu-accions-que-pots-fer-per-llibertat-presospolitics/
- Sindicat d'Estudiants dels Països Catalans (SEPC). Qui som.
  https://www.sepc.cat/qui-som-2/

Cases

Drawing on the initial empirical material I had gathered, I constructed four cases for the secessionist crisis as the main focus of interest of this research. To refine the analysis further, I then expanded the comparison a second time and collected data on two more cases before the secessionist crisis and two more cases after the 1-O episode. The Llibertat Presos Polítics campaign started during the crisis but continued afterwards. This makes a total of nine cases. Chapter 4 provides an overview of these cases.

The cases included different types of protest events (demonstrations, strikes, occupations), but also campaigns. I decided to include the entire campaigns and not their single events for three reasons. First, the campaign cases emerged from the data as meaningful categories for the organizers themselves. Second,

although the campaigns involved different kinds of action, they all were consistently *contained* forms of protest. They could thus be considered a coherent series of actions. Third, the various kinds of action of each campaign were organized in a single preparatory process. The organizations did not plan or prepare them in isolated fashion, but as part of the campaigns.

The cases do not represent a sample from a clearly defined set of protests. Instead, they are the result of an empirically driven casing strategy (Ragin, 1992). I constructed these protest events on the basis of the empirical data collected during the fieldwork, drawing in particular on exploratory interviews with experts. Case construction and data collection occurred as almost simultaneous inductive processes. This raised the crucial point of how to delineate both episodes of contention and protest events (Tilly, 2008, p. 10). I had to dissect the continuous flows of contention and organizing into meaningful chunks through "temporal bracketing" (Langley, 1999). While there are no objective criteria for bounding and selecting the protests as displayed above (and thereby omitting other instances of contentious action), I tried to follow three rationales in the casing operations: scale, timing, and type of action.

The first one was scale. I decided to include primarily large-scale protests and neglect many smaller local protests. The reason was that mass protest requires much more organizational effort and thus yields deeper insights into the preparatory process, whereas small protests were expected to require less coordination (Rucht, 2017). The second principle for constructing these cases followed from the research questions. Since I was interested in changes over time and especially during phases of intense secessionist conflict, I focused on the peak of the cycle of contention around the secessionist crisis. Two cases were selected to account for normal times and three cases were selected to reveal transformations during the contraction of the cycle of contention that followed the secessionist crisis. A third criterion consisted in including different kinds of contentious actions: street demonstrations, occupations, blockades and obstructions, strikes, non-violent resistance, and media campaigns.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection and data analysis are intertwined parts of the research process. This was a complex and multilayered process that involved a back-and-forth between data, cases, and concepts and took place on three levels: the case level, the practice level, and the event level. These analyses were performed in MaxQDA and involved different coding and summarizing strategies.

The basic analytical task consisted in describing the nine cases of contentious action and their preparatory processes. This descriptive analysis started from the outcome (the protest event) and traced their organizing processes backwards in time. Therefore, the technique resembled "case-centric process tracing" (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 9–11), although it did not share the focus on causal inference of political science process tracing. Instead, I asked *how* the protests were organized. Collier (2011, p. 824) insisted that the description of processes "begins not with observing change or sequence, but rather with taking good snapshots at a series of specific moments," which requires "to characterize key steps in the process." This involved a series of more specific questions: What were the various preparatory activities? How did organizers try to reduce uncertainty about the action? What was the sequence of these activities, and did it matter for the outcome?

This set of analytical questions guided the coding of the nine cases of protest organizing. Most of the codes that emerged from the data were rather general, because I used them primarily to organize the raw data instead of generating categories in grounded theory fashion. The goal was not so much to arrive at a more general model of the preparatory process, such as the one by Rucht (2017). Rather, I wanted to create an accurate account of each case, following what Langley (1999) called a "narrative strategy" for the analysis of qualitative process data. This is why I used the codes primarily to produce short descriptive summaries of each case, using "summary grid" and "summary table" in MaxQDA. These descriptive summaries represented the basic analytical unit for the further analyses.

The second step involved identifying the role of organizational structures and practices in each process. For organizational structures, this was relatively straightforward, because interviewees could name them and explain how they were involved in the process. Identifying practices was more challenging. This analysis was the one which closest followed the procedures of grounded theory—and in particular its constructivist variant (Charmaz, 2006)—because I departed only from a minimum of conceptual premises. I approached organizing as a *field of practices*, which Gherardi (2012, p. 75) defined "as composed of activities and practices interconnected in constantly changing patterns." This concept draws attention to the connections between practices and the arrays of these connections, which Gherardi called "texture of practice." The data analysis departed from the very broad sensitizing concept of organizational practice outlined in Chapter 2.

For recognizing practices in the empirical data, linguistic cues were particularly helpful. In the Spanish language there is a basic difference between two past tenses: while the preterit (*indefinido*) highlights completed

actions in the past, the imperfect (*imperfecto*) refers to habitual or repetitive activities (Frantzen, 1995). With regard to the analytical procedures, I started by identifying four organizational practices through the coding of interviewee data and field notes. This analytical step was performed after the explorative rounds of coding and the coding of the preparatory processes described in the previous chapter. Initially, I worked with the parts of the data that referred to the process of organizing the defense of the voting stations. From there, I expanded the analysis to the other organizing processes described previously. This served two purposes: on the one hand, to get a sense of what the generalized features of the practices were, and on the other hand, how these features might have change over time.

After tracing nine cases and identifying four relevant organizational practices, I turned more explicitly to the question which is at the heart of this book: how do periods of intense interactions shape protest organizing? This question tackles another level of process: the change and stability of protest organizing over time. More precisely, I analyzed the development of the four central concepts (organizationality, organizing, organizations, and practices) using two techniques.

First, I compared the narrative summaries of the nine cases with regards to the four analytical categories. I employed summary grids and summary tables in MaxQDA. Focusing on the four concepts, this allowed to establish descriptive patterns of change and continuity over time. For example, I could check whether one communication practice was employed more or less frequently by activists in some cases and whether there was a difference during the secessionist crisis.

Second, I focused on direct statements on change and stability in the data. This was done primarily in the interviews with experts and key organizers. I asked these interviewees explicitly about changes over time. The responses to these questions were often quite analytical already and helped a lot to enrich the cross-case comparisons. For example, some interviewees described how deliberation as a practice became more important in organizing processes after the referendum. I coded these explicit statements on change and stability and summarized them, using summary grids and summary tables.

Protest Event Analysis

The data collection covered self-determination protest events in Catalonia from October 2015 through December 2019. Data were collected from two Catalan newspapers: *El Periódico* and *El Punt Avui*. The selection is justified

by two criteria. The first is geographical proximity, which has been found to increase the propensity to cover protests (Danzger, 1975; Fillieule & Jiménez, 2003; Ortiz et al., 2006). *El Periódico* is a national newspaper based in Barcelona, while *El Punt Avui* is a regional newspaper based in Girona. As McAdam et al. (2005: 5) noted, "the more localized the focus of attention, the more credible the use of newspapers as a source of event data." Being based in Catalonia and having an explicitly regional focus, the two newspapers were preferable over Madrid-based newspapers such as *El País* or *El Mundo*. The second criterion is ideological balance with regard to the secessionist conflict in Catalonia. *El Punt Avui* openly supports Catalan secession from Spain. In 2017, for example, the paper published "100 Arguments for Saying Yes to Independence" (Riera, 2017). By contrast, *El Periódico* is known to be opposed to Catalan independence, featuring prominent anti-secessionist voices such as Joaquim Coll in op-eds. I suggest that their selection biases should be complementary. Whereas *El Punt Avui* should be more likely to cover peaceful events, especially in response to counter-secessionist repression, *El Periódico* can be expected to focus on violent and disruptive actions.

The starting point for the time frame were regional elections in September 2015, which resulted in a clear pro-independence majority in the Catalan parliament and led to a new phase in the territorial conflict (Martí & Cetrà, 2016; Orriols & Rodon, 2016). This was justified in epistemological terms: we know much more about the secessionist cycle of contention until 2015 than the phase afterwards. At the heart of this phase is the referendum on independence on October 1, 2017. The end of the trial of Catalan leader in October 2019 represents the endpoint of the study. Geographically, the project focused on protests in the four provinces (Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona) of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia.

I used a combination of action forms and self-determination claims as keywords to search the archives of the two newspapers through the online platform Factiva (see online Appendix). The action keywords are based on Portos (2021) and Ciordia (2020, 2021). The self-determination keywords are derived from the definition by Cunningham (2014), my knowledge of the case, and the territorial politics dictionary by Röth et al. (2024).

> (protesta or protestes or manifestaci* or escrache* or escratx or mobilitzaci* or concentraci* or vaga or vagues or roda de premsa or rodes de premsa or recollid* de firmes or caden* human* or acampad* or ocupaci* or tall* de carreter* or desobediència civil or cassolad* or casserold* or acte de suport or acte de solidaritat or aturad* de país) and (independentist*

or independència or independentisme or secessionist* or secessió or separació or separatist* or separatisme or República catalana or República independent or país independent or autonomisme or autonomist* or autonomia catalana or autogovern or estatut d'autonomia or estatut de catalunya or catalanisme* or catalanist* or nacionalist* or *nacionalisme* or sobiranist* or autodeterminació or dret a decidir or llibertat presos polítics or llibertat dels presos polítics or dret* cultural* or normalització lingüística or dret* lingüístic* or immersió lingüística or països catalans)

This search string resulted in 10,209 query hits for the period from October 1, 2015 through December 31, 2019. The articles were downloaded and archived.

The next step was to identify protest events. Empirically, protests often come in episodes (Bojar et al., 2021; Kriesi et al., 2019; Tilly, 2008), waves (Koopmans, 2004), tides (Beissinger, 2002), or cycles (Tarrow, 2011). To distinguish protest events from each other, I used three further criteria:

- **Single action.** There is only one action form per protest event. If two or more action forms are reported, these are coded as separate events. For example, when a demonstration turns into a riot, these will be considered separate events.
- **Single location.** Protests happening in different locations count as different protest events even if it is the same action form, claim, or organizers. The only exception for practical reasons is when locations are reported in generic ways, such as "in front of all town halls," then they are coded as one event, but the location is recorded in a specific category. If people move from one place to another within the same city (e.g., a march) without changing action form, it is considered a single event. If there are separate crowds at different locations, they are considered separate events, even if it is the same action form or claim.
- **Contemporaneous.** The event must occur within one week before or after the date of the newspaper report.

This resulted in 1,405 events for the period under study. Of all articles, 82.77% were false positives. I followed Ciordia's (2020, 2021) strategy for coding the articles. This strategy involves three separate codebooks: one for events, one for actors, and one for claims, which are placed at the end of this Appendix. I used the Discourse Network Analyzer (DNA) software developed by Leifeld (2016) to perform these codings. The data analyses to produce the descriptive statistics and graphs displayed in Chapter 3 were performed with MS Excel. Network analyses were performed with visone.

Codebooks

Codebook 1: Events

Variable Name	Variable Description	Values/Categories
Event_ID	Nominal, open categories. Exclusive identifier for each individual event	Format: "yymmdd-N-xxx action form town"
Date	Day when the event took place	Format: yyyy-mm-dd
Duration	Interval Number of days in which the event unfolded	Natural numbers
Size_news	Continuous	The exact number of participants reported as taking part in the event, as reported by the newspaper. If several numbers are given, use the one by the organizers of the event.
Size_source	Continuous	Specify the source for the number of participants if given. Preference is given to the organizers of the event.
Action		1 = Roda de premsa. [Press conference] 2 = Consulta popular no vinculant. [Non-binding referendum] 3 = Recollida de firmes. [Signature collection] 4 = Acte híbrid. [Hybrid event: civic form + SD claim] 5 = Protesta simbólica. [Symbolic protest] 6 = [Leafleting, putting up banners] 7 = Concentració. [Rally] 8 = Manifestació. [Demonstration] 9 = Marxa. [Intercity march] 10 = Cadena humana. [Human chain] 11 = Vaga. [Strike] 12 = Vaga de fam. [Hunger strike] 13 = Boicot. [boycott] 14 = Interrupció d'esdeveniment aliè. [Disruption of an external event] 15 = Desobediència civil. [Civil disobedience, e.g., occupations, sit-ins, etc.] 16 = Ocupació-acampada. [Squatting-Encampment] 17 = Escrache/Escratx – cassolada. [Public Shaming] 18 = Sabotatge. [Sabotage] 19 = Bloqueig de carreteres/infraestructures. [Blockade of roads/infrastructure] 20 = Danys menors a objectes. [Minor damages to objects] 21 = Danys majors a objectes. [Major damages against material objects] 22 = Violència contra persones. [Violence against people] 23= Altres. [Others]

Variable Name	Variable Description	Values/Categories
Disruptiveness	Level of disruption of the action	0 = Semi-conventional or contained: all civic events and protest actions 1–3 1 = Mild disruptive: protest actions 3–11 2 = Severe disruptive: protest actions 12–17 3 = Militant or violent: protest actions 19–20
Action_other	Nominal, open categories. Only in case “other” category has been selected for Form_of_action variable	Brief description (3–4 words). Use residually only when an event absolutely does not fit into any of the Form_of_action categories.
Town	Nominal, semi-open categories.	Catalan name of the town
Province	Nominal, closed categories	1 = Barcelona 2 = Girona 3 = Lleida 4 = Tarragona
Part_actors		0 = No participating actor 1 = One participating actor 2 = Several participating actors
Police_act	Dichotomous	Whether police directed protesters behind barricades, dispersed protesters, made arrests, confiscated goods or engaged in violence. 1 = police clearly engaged in any activity beyond simply being present, 0 = otherwise.
Arrest_prot	Continuous	Number of protesters arrested. Coded only when the number of arrests is known or can be estimated.

Codebook 2: Actors

Variable Name	Variable Description	Values/Categories
Event_ID	Nominal, open categories. Exclusive identifier for each individual event	Format: “yymmdd-N-xxx action form town”
Actor_name	Nominal, semi-open categories.	Name as reported in the articles
Actor_simplified	Nominal, semi-open categories.	Simplified actor name for complex organizations. E.g., just “ANC” instead of “ANC Reus”
Actor_type	Nominal, closed categories	1 = Civil society organization 2 = Platform/umbrella organization 3 = Interest group 4 = Trade union 5 = Political party 6 = Private enterprise 7 = Public institution 8 = Other
Actor_involvement	Nominal, closed categories. *Complete only for collaborative events	1 = Initiator 2 = Organizer/Collaborator 3 = Member of an Umbrella group 4 = Supporter/Participant

Codebook 3: Claims

Variable Name	Variable Description	Values/Categories
Event_ID	Nominal, open categories. Exclusive identifier for each individual event	Format: "yymmdd-N-xxx action form town"
Claim	Nominal, semi-open categories. Only for protest events. Broad issue/demand that is promoted at the event.	The specific claim in Catalan, e.g., "Llibertat Presos Polítics" Preference is given to already-existing categories, but new categories can be generated any time none fits the event.
Claim_category1	Nominal, semi-open categories	1 = SD narrowly 2 = Independence 3 = Autonomy 4 = SD repression 5 = SD solidarity 6 = Catalanism/nationalism 7 = Language and culture 8 = Pan-ethnic demands 9 = Other
Claim_description		If further annotation for the claim is needed
Claim_target	Nominal, semi-open categories. Recipient of the demands that are voiced at the event.	E.g., Spanish state, CAT authorities, municipality, EU, etc. Preference is given to already-existing categories, but new categories can be generated any time none fits the event.

References

Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2013). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines.* University of Michigan Press.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State.* Cambridge University Press.

Blee, K. M. (2013). Interviewing activists. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements.* Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm111

Blee, K. M., & Taylor, V. (2002). Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research. In B. Klandermans & S. Staggenborg (Eds.), *Methods of social movement research* (pp. 92–117). University of Minnesota Press.

Bojar, A., Gessler, T., Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (Eds.). (2021). *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory.* SAGE.

Ciordia, A. (2020). Less divided after ETA? Green networks in the Basque Country between 2007 and 2017. PhD Thesis, University of Trento. https://doi.org/10.15168/11572_277816

Ciordia, A. (2021). Less divided after ETA? The evolution of ideological cleavages in the Basque environmental field, 2007–2017. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 26*(2), 217–236. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-2-217

Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 44*(04), 823–830. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination.* Oxford University Press.

Danzger, M. H. (1975). Validating conflict data. *American Sociological Review, 40*(5), 570–584. https://doi.org/10.2307/2094196

Della Porta, D. (2014). In-depth interviews. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 228–261). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0010

Earl, J., Martin, A., McCarthy, J. D., & Soule, S. A. (2004). The use of newspaper data in the study of collective action. *Annual Review of Sociology, 30,* 65–80.

Fillieule, O., & Jiménez, M. (2003). Appendix A. The methodology of protest event analysis and the media politics of reporting environmental protest events. In C. Rootes (Ed.), *Environmental protest in Western Europe* (pp. 258–279). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199252068.001.0001

Frantzen, D. (1995). Preterite/imperfect half-truths: Problems with Spanish textbook rules for usage. *Hispania, 78*(1), 145. https://doi.org/10.2307/345237

Gherardi, S. (2012). *How to conduct a practice-based study: Problems and methods.* Elgar.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Aldine.

Hutter, S. (2014). Protest event analysis and its offspring. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 335–367). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0014

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H., Hutter, S., & Bojar, A. (2019). Contentious episode analysis. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 24*(3), 251–273. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-24-3-251

Langley, A. (1999). Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review, 24,* 691–710.

Langley, A. (2010). Studying processes in and around organizations. In D. A. Buchanan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 409–429). SAGE.

Leifeld, P. (2016). *Policy debates as dynamic networks: German pension politics and privatization discourse.* Campus Verlag.

Martí, D., & Cetrà, D. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: A de facto referendum on independence? *Regional & Federal Studies, 26*(1), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2016.1145116

Mattoni, A. (2014). The potentials of grounded theory in the study of social movements. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 21–42). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0002

McAdam, D., Sampson, R., Weffer, S., & MacIndoe, H. (2005). "There will be fighting in the streets": The distorting lens of social movement theory. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.10.1.a628146 51h028540

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention.* Cambridge University Press.

Orriols, L., & Rodon, T. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: The independence bid at the polls. *South European Society and Politics, 21*(3), 359–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1191182

Ortiz, D., Myers, D., Walls, E., & Diaz, M.-E. (2006). Where do we stand with newspaper data? *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*(3), 397–419. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.10.3.8360r760k3277t42

Pavković, A., & Radan, P. (2007). *Creating new states: Theory and practice of secession.* Ashgate.

Ragin, C. C. (1992). Casing and the process of social inquiry. In C. C. Ragin & H. S. Becker (Eds.), *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry* (pp. 217–226). Cambridge University Press.

Rathbun, B. C. (2009). Interviewing and qualitative field methods: Pragmatism and practicalities. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of political methodology* (pp. 685–701). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.0029

Riera, M. (2017). 100 arguments per dir sí a la independència. *El Punt Avui.* https://www.elpuntavui.cat/politica/article/17-politica/1174924-100-arguments-per-dir-si-a-la-independencia.html

Röth, L., Kaftan, L., & Saldivia Gonzatti, D. (2024). Optimized dictionaries: A semi-automated workflow of concept identification in text-data. SSOAR. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-91666-3

Rucht, D. (2017). Exploring the backstage: Preparation and implementation of mass protests in Germany. *American Behavioral Scientist, 61*(13), 1678–1702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744135

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Tilly, C. (2008). *Contentious performances.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804366

Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2015). *Contentious politics* (Second revised edition). Oxford University Press.

References

Abbott, A. (1992). From causes to events: Notes on narrative positivism. *Sociological Methods & Research, 20*(4), 428–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124192020004002

Abbott, A. (2001). *Time matters: On theory and method*. University of Chicago Press.

Abrams, P. (1993). *Historical sociology* (3rd print). Cornell University Press.

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2011). Organization outside organizations: The significance of partial organization. *Organization, 18*(1), 83–104. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (Eds.). (2019a). *Organization outside organizations: The abundance of partial organization in social life*. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108604994

Ahrne, G., & Brunsson, N. (2019b). Organization unbound. In G. Ahrne & N. Brunsson (Eds.), *Organization outside organizations: The abundance of partial organization in social life*. (p. 3–36). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108604994

Ahrne, G., Brunsson, N., & Seidl, D. (2016). Resurrecting organization by going beyond organizations. *European Management Journal, 34*(2), 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2016.02.003

Alimi, E. Y., Bosi, L., & Demetriou, C. (2015). *The dynamics of radicalization: A relational and comparative perspective*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199937707.001.0001

Álvarez Pereira, B., Portos, M., & Vourdas, J. (2018). Waving goodbye? The determinants of autonomism and secessionism in Western Europe. *Regional Studies, 52*(2), 197–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2017.1282609

Andrews, K. T., Ganz, M., Baggetta, M., Han, H., & Lim, C. (2010). Leadership, membership, and voice: Civic associations that work. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(4), 1191–1242. https://doi.org/10.1086/649060

Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2014). Mobilization through online social networks: The political protest of the indignados in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(6), 750–764. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.808360

Balcells, L., Dorsey, S., & Tellez, J. F. (2020). Repression and dissent in contemporary Catalonia. *British Journal of Political Science*, Online First, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123420000307

Balcells, L., & Kuo, A. (2023). Secessionist conflict and affective polarization: Evidence from Catalonia. *Journal of Peace Research, 60*(4), 604–618 https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221088112

Baldassarri, D., & Diani, M. (2007). The integrative power of civic networks. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(3), 735–780. https://doi.org/10.1086/521839

Barceló, J. (2018). Batons and ballots: The effectiveness of state violence in fighting against Catalan separatism. *Research & Politics, 5*(2), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018781747

Barrio, A., & Field, B. N. (2018). The push for independence in Catalonia. *Nature Human Behaviour, 2*(10), Article 10. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0439-8

Barrio, A., & Rodríguez-Teruel, J. (2017). Reducing the gap between leaders and voters? Elite polarization, outbidding competition, and the rise of secessionism in Catalonia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40*(10), 1776–1794. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1213400

Bartkus, V. O. (1999). *The dynamic of secession*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491214

Bassa, D. (Ed.). (1994). *L'independentisme català, 1979–1994* (1a ed). Llibres de l'Index.

Basta, K. (2018). The social construction of transformative political events. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(10), 1243–1278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017740601

Basta, K. (2020). "Time's up!": Framing collective impatience for radical political change. *Political Psychology, 41*(4), 755–770. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12649

Basta, K. (2021). *The symbolic state: Minority recognition, majority backlash, and secession in multinational countries*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Bateson, G. (1955). A theory of play and fantasy. *Psychiatric Research Reports, 2*, 39–51.

Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2013). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. University of Michigan Press.

Beissinger, M. R. (1996). How nationalisms spread: Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of nationalist contention. *Social Research, 63*(1), 97–146.

Beissinger, M. R. (1998). Nationalist violence and the state: Political authority and contentious repertoires in the former USSR. *Comparative Politics, 30*(4), 401–422. https://doi.org/10.2307/422331

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.

Beissinger, M. R. (2007). Structure and example in modular political phenomena: The diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics, 5*(02), 259–276 https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070776

Beissinger, M. R. (2009). Nationalism and the collapse of Soviet communism. *Contemporary European History, 18*(3), 331–347. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777309005074

Benford, R. D. (1993). Frame disputes within the nuclear disarmament movement. *Social Forces, 71*(3), 677–701. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579890

Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*(1), 611–639. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Besio, C., du Gay, P., & Serrano Velarde, K. (2020). Disappearing organization? Reshaping the sociology of organizations. *Current Sociology, 68*(4), 411–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120907613

Bimber, B., Flanagin, A. J., & Stohl, C. (2005). Reconceptualizing collective action in the contemporary media environment. *Communication Theory, 15*(4), 365–388. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2005.tb00340.x

Bimber, B., Flanagin, A. J., & Stohl, C. (2012). *Collective action in organizations: Interaction and engagement in an era of technological change*. Cambridge University Press.

Blee, K. M. (2012). *Democracy in the making: How activist groups form*. Oxford University Press.

Blee, K. M. (2013). Interviewing activists. In D. A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements* (p. wbespm111). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm111

Blee, K. M., & Taylor, V. (2002). Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research. In B. Klandermans & S. Staggenborg (Eds.), *Methods of social movement research* (pp. 92–117). University of Minnesota Press.

Boden, D. (1994). *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Polity Press.

Boggs, C. (1977). Revolutionary process, political strategy, and the dilemma of power. *Theory and Society, 4*(3), 359–393.

Bojar, A., & Altiparmakis, A. (2021). Action sequences and dynamic indicators of contention. In A. Bojar, H. Kriesi, S. Hutter, & T. Gessler (Eds.), *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions* (pp. 110–131). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367.009

Bojar, A., Gessler, T., Hutter, S., & Kriesi, H. (Eds.). (2021). *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press.

Breines, W. (1980). Community and organization: The New Left and Michels' Iron Law. *Social Problems, 27*(4), 419–429.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science, 2*(1), 40–57.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1998). Organizing knowledge. *California Management Review, 40*(3), 90–111. https://doi.org/10.2307/41165945

Bruner, J. S. (2002). *Acts of meaning* (10th print). Harvard University Press.

Buchanan, A. E. (1991). *Secession: The morality of political divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec*. Westview Press.

Burg, S. L. (2015). Identity, grievances, and popular mobilization for independence in Catalonia. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 21*(3), 289–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2015.1063912

Butt, A. I. (2017). *Secession and security: Explaining state strategy against separatists*. Cornell University Press.

Calvo, K., & Portos, M. (2018). Panic works: The 'Gag Law' and the unruly youth in Spain. In Grasso, M. & Bessant, J. (Eds.), *Governing youth politics in the age of surveillance* (pp. 33–47). Routledge.

Calvo, K., & Romeo Echeverría, A. (2023). 15-M mobilizations and the penalization of counter-hegemonic protest in contemporary Spain. *Social Movement Studies, 22*(3), 421–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2061943

Capoccia, G., & Kelemen, R. D. (2007). The study of critical junctures: Theory, narrative, and counterfactuals in historical institutionalism. *World Politics, 59*(03), 341–369. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100020852

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Polity Press.

Chambers, S. (2003). Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 6*(1), 307–326. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085538

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. SAGE.

Chenoweth, E., & Stephan, M. J. (2011). *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. Columbia University Press.

Ciordia, A. (2020). Less divided after ETA? Green networks in the Basque Country between 2007 and 2017. PhD Thesis, University of Trento. https://doi.org/10.15168/11572_277816

Ciordia, A. (2021). Less divided after ETA? The evolution of ideological cleavages in the Basque environmental field, 2007–2017. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 26*(2), 217–236. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-2-217

Clemens, E. S. (1997). *The people's lobby: Organizational innovation and the rise of interest group politics in the United States, 1890–1925*. University of Chicago Press.

Clemens, E. S., & Minkoff, D. C. (2004). Beyond the Iron Law: Rethinking the place of organizations in social movement research. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 155–170). Blackwell.

Coggins, B. (2011). Friends in high places: International politics and the emergence of states from secessionism. *International Organization, 65*(3), 433–467. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000105

Coggins, B. (2014). *Power politics and state formation in the twentieth century: The dynamics of recognition*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107239050

Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 44*(04), 823–830. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429

Collier, D., & Munck, G. L. (2017). Building blocks and methodological challenges: A framework for studying critical junctures. *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, 15*(1), 2–9.

Collier, R. B., & Collier, D. (2002). *Shaping the political arena: Critical junctures, the labor movement, and regime dynamics in Latin America*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Cooren, F. (2000). *The organizing property of communication*. Benjamins.

Cooren, F., Kuhn, T., Cornelissen, J. P., & Clark, T. (2011). Communication, organizing and organization: An overview and introduction to the special issue. *Organization Studies, 32*(9), 1149–1170. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611410836

Corradi, G., Gherardi, S., & Verzelloni, L. (2010). Through the practice lens: Where is the bandwagon of practice-based studies heading? *Management Learning, 41*(3), 265–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507609356938

Crameri, K. (2015a). *"Goodbye, Spain?": The question of independence for Catalonia*. Sussex Academic Press.

Crameri, K. (2015b). Political power and civil counterpower: The complex dynamics of the Catalan independence movement. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 21*(1), 104–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2015.1003491

Cunningham, D. (2009). Ambivalence and control: State action against the civil rights-era Ku Klux Klan. *Qualitative Sociology, 32*(4), 355–377. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-009-9137-1

Cunningham, K. G. (2013). Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and nonviolent campaign in self-determination disputes. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313475467

Cunningham, K. G. (2014). *Inside the politics of self-determination*. Oxford University Press.

Cunningham, K. G., Dahl, M., & Frugé, A. (2017). Strategies of resistance: Diversification and diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science, 61*(3), 591–605. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12304

Curtis, R. L., & Zurcher, L. A. (1974). Social movements: An analytical exploration of organizational forms. *Social Problems, 21*(3), 356–370.

Czarniawska, B. (1998). *A narrative approach to organization studies*. SAGE.

Czarniawska, B. (2013). Organizations as obstacles to organizing. In D. Robichaud & F. Cooren (Eds.), *Organization and organizing: Materiality, agency, and discourse* (pp. 3–22). Routledge.

Danzger, M. H. (1975). Validating conflict data. *American Sociological Review, 40*(5), 570–584. https://doi.org/10.2307/2094196

Davenport, C. (2005). Introduction: Repression and mobilization: Insights from political science and sociology. In C. Davenport, H. Johnston, & C. Mueller (Eds.), *Repression and mobilization* (pp. vii–xlii). University of Minnesota Press.

Davenport, C. (2009). *Media bias, perspective, and state repression: The Black Panther Party*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810985

Davenport, C. (2014). *How social movements die: Repression and demobilization of the Republic of New Africa*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139649728

Davenport, C., Johnston, H., & Mueller, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Repression and mobilization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Davis, G. F., McAdam, D., Scott, R. W., & Zald, M. N. (Eds.). (2005). *Social movements and organization theory*. Cambridge University Press.

de Bakker, F. G. A., den Hond, F., & Laamanen, M. (2017). Social movements: Organizations and organizing. In C. Roggeband & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across disciplines* (pp. 203–231). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57648-0_8

Della Porta, D. (1995). *Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527555

Della Porta, D. (1996). Social movements and the state: Thoughts on the policing of protest. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (pp. 62–92). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.005

Della Porta, D. (2008). Eventful protest, global conflicts. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, 9*(2), 27–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2008.9672963

Della Porta, D. (Ed.). (2009). *Another Europe: Conceptions and practices of democracy in the European social forums*. Routledge.

Della Porta, D. (2013). *Clandestine political violence*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139043144

Della Porta, D. (2014a). In-depth interviews. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 228–261). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0010

Della Porta, D. (2014b). *Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011.* Oxford University Press.

Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social movements in times of austerity: Bringing capitalism back into protest analysis*. Polity Press.

Della Porta, D. (2016). *Where did the revolution go?: Contentious politics and the quality of democracy.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316783467

Della Porta, D. (2020). Protests as critical junctures: Some reflections towards a momentous approach to social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 19*(5–6), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555458

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2006). *Social movements: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2020). *Social movements: An introduction* (third edition). Wiley-Blackwell.

Della Porta, D., Gunzelmann, H. J., & Portos, M. (2021). Repression and democracy amidst the eventful 1-O referendum. In Ó. G. Agustín (Ed.), *Catalan independence and the crisis of sovereignty* (pp. 127–150). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54867-4_6

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2019). Protest cycles and referendums for independence: Closed opportunities and the path of radicalization in Catalonia. *Revista internacional de sociología, 77*(4), 142. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.005

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2020). The framing of secessionism in the neo-liberal crisis: The Scottish and Catalan cases. In C. Closa, C. Margiotta, & G. Martinico (Eds.), *Between democracy and law: The amorality of secession* (pp. 153–170). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Portos García, M., & Subirats Ribas, A. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: Direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis.* Policy Press.

Della Porta, D., & Reiter, H. (Eds.). (1998). *Policing protest: The control of mass demonstrations in Western democracies*. University of Minnesota Press.

Della Porta, D., & Rucht, D. (Eds.). (2015). *Meeting democracy: Power and deliberation in global justice movements*. Cambridge University Press.

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G. A., & Smith, N. (2015). Social movements and organizational analysis. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 291–305). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.41

Diani, M. (2015). *The cement of civil society: Studying networks in localities*. Cambridge University Press.

Diani, M., & Donati, P. R. (1999). Organisational change in Western European environmental groups: A framework for analysis. *Environmental Politics, 8*(1), 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414436

Dion, S. (1996). Why is secession difficult in well-established democracies? Lessons from Quebec. *British Journal of Political Science, 26*(2), 269–283.

Dobusch, L., & Schoeneborn, D. (2015). Fluidity, identity, and organizationality: The communicative constitution of Anonymous. *Journal of Management Studies, 52*(8), 1005–1035. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12139

Dowling, A. (2018). *The rise of Catalan independence: Spain's territorial crisis.* Routledge.

Earl, J. (2011). Political repression: Iron fists, velvet gloves, and diffuse control. *Annual Review of Sociology, 37*(1), 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102609

Earl, J., Martin, A., McCarthy, J. D., & Soule, S. A. (2004). The use of newspaper data in the study of collective action. *Annual Review of Sociology, 30*, 65–80.

Earl, J., Soule, S. A., & McCarthy, J. D. (2003). Protest under fire? Explaining the policing of protest. *American Sociological Review, 68*(4), 581–606.

Edwards, B., & McCarthy, J. D. (2004). Strategy matters: The contingent value of social capital in the survival of local social movement organizations. *Social Forces, 83*(2), 621–651. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2005.0009

Elias, A., Szöcsik, E., & Zuber, C. I. (2015). Position, selective emphasis and framing: How parties deal with a second dimension in competition. *Party Politics, 21*(6), 839–850. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068815597572

Epstein, B. (1991). *Political protest and cultural revolution: Nonviolent direct action in the 1970s and 1980s*. University of California Press.

Feldman, M. S. (1989). *Order without design: Information production and policy making.* Stanford University Press.

Feldman, M. S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2011). Theorizing practice and practicing theory. *Organization Science, 22*(5), 1240–1253. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0612

Felicetti, A., & Della Porta, D. (2018). Between deliberation and contestation: The convergence of struggles against austerity and its world in the Nuit Debout movement. *Social Movement Studies, 17*(6), 658–675. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1505487

Fenton, C., & Langley, A. (2011). Strategy as practice and the narrative turn. *Organization Studies, 32*(9), 1171–1196. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840611410838

Ferreira, C. (2021). Entrapped in a failing course of action: Explaining the territorial crisis in 2017 Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies*, Online First 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2021.1907570

Ferreira, C. (2022). Identity, money, or governance? Explaining secessionist parties' rhetorical strategies. *Party Politics*, Online First. 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688221140249

Fillieule, O., & Jiménez, M. (2003). Appendix A. The methodology of protest event analysis and the media politics of reporting environmental protest events. In C. Rootes (Ed.), *Environmental protest in Western Europe* (pp. 258–279). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199252068.001.0001

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2014). Debunking spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/indignados as autonomous movement. *Social Movement Studies, 14*(2), 142–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2014.945075

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2017). European anti-austerity and pro-democracy protests in the wake of the global financial crisis. *Social Movement Studies, 16*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2016.1256193

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd Vintage Books ed). Vintage Books.

Frantzen, D. (1995). Preterite/imperfect half-truths: Problems with Spanish textbook rules for usage. *Hispania, 78*(1), 145. https://doi.org/10.2307/345237

Gamson, W. A., & Meyer, D. S. (1996). Framing political opportunity. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 275–290). Cambridge University Press.

Ganz, M. (2009). *Why David sometimes wins: Leadership, organization, and strategy in the California farm worker movement*. Oxford University Press.

García, O. J. M. (2014). Soft repression and the current wave of social mobilizations in Spain. *Social Movement Studies, 13*(2), 303–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.863147

Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. Pluto Press.

Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (1992). Mesomobilization: Organizing and framing in two protest campaigns in West Germany. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(3), 555–596. https://doi.org/10.1086/230049

Gessler, T., & Hutter, S. (2021). Conceptualizing, measuring, and mapping contentiousness. In A. Bojar, H. Kriesi, S. Hutter, & T. Gessler (Eds.), *Contentious episodes in the age of austerity: Studying the dynamics of government–challenger interactions* (pp. 67–90). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004367.007

Gherardi, S. (2000). Practice-based theorizing on learning and knowing in organizations. *Organization, 7*(2), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072001

Gherardi, S. (2006). *Organizational knowledge: The texture of workplace learning*. Blackwell.

Gherardi, S. (2012). *How to conduct a practice-based study: Problems and methods*. Elgar.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Polity Press.

Giménez, F., & Gunzelmann, H. J. (2019). Conflict and collaboration in contentious events. The case of the 1-0 in Catalonia. In B. Tejerina, C. Miranda de Almeida de Barros, & I. Perugorría (Eds.), *Sharing society: The impact of collaborative and collective actions in the transformation of contemporary societies:* [*Conference proceedings*] (pp. 582–592). Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitateko Argitalpen Zerbitzu Nagusia.

Gioia, D. A., & Chittipeddi, K. (1991). Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal, 12*(6), 433–448. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250120604

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.

González-Sánchez, I. (2019). La violencia simbólica y la penalización de la protesta. *Revista Internacional de Sociología, 77*(4), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.001

Griffiths, R. D. (2015). Between dissolution and blood: How administrative lines and categories shape secessionist outcomes. *International Organization, 69*(03), 731–751. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000077

Griffiths, R. D. (2016). *Age of secession: The international and domestic determinants of state birth*. Cambridge University Press.

Griffiths, R. D. (2021a). *Secession and the sovereignty game: Strategy and tactics for aspiring nations*. Cornell University Press.

Griffiths, R. D. (2021b). Secessionist strategy and tactical variation in the pursuit of independence. *Journal of Global Security Studies, 6*(1), ogz082. https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz082

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (2020a). Introduction. In R. D. Griffiths & D. Muro (Eds.), *Strategies of secession and counter-secession* (pp. 1–11). ECPR Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Muro, D. (Eds.). (2020b). *Strategies of secession and counter-secession*. ECPR Press.

Griffiths, R. D., & Wasser, L. M. (2019). Does violent secessionism work? *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 63*(5), 1310–1336. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718783032

Grzymala-Busse, A. (2011). Time will tell? Temporality and the analysis of causal mechanisms and processes. *Comparative Political Studies, 44*(9), 1267–1297. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010390653

Guibernau, M. (2004). *Catalan nationalism: Francoism, transition and democracy*. Routledge.

Guibernau, M. (2013). Secessionism in Catalonia: After democracy. *Ethnopolitics, 12*(4), 368–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2013.843245

Guibernau, M. (2014). Prospects for an independent Catalonia. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, 27*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-013-9165-4

Guinjoan, M., & Rodon, T. (2016). Catalonia at the crossroads: Analysis of the increasing support for secession. In X. Cuadras-Morató (Ed.), *Catalonia: A new independent state in Europe? A debate on secession within the European Union* (pp. 20–61). Routledge.

Guinjoan, M., & Rodon, T. (2017). L'1-O a anàlisi (2): La lògica de l'actuació policial. Naciódigital. https://www.naciodigital.cat/elpatidescobert/noticia/38/1-0/analisi/logica/actuacio/policial

Gunzelmann, H. J. (2022). Counter-surveillant organizing during the secessionist cycle of contention in Catalonia. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2142545

Haggerty, K. D. (2006). Tear down the walls: On demolishing the panopticon. In D. Lyon (Ed.), *Theorizing surveillance the panopticon and beyond* (pp. 23–45). Willan.

Haggerty, K. D., & Ericson, R. V. (2000). The surveillant assemblage. *British Journal of Sociology*, 51(4), 605–622. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071310020015280

Han, H. (2014). *How organizations develop activists: Civic associations and leadership in the 21st century*. Oxford University Press.

Haug, C. (2010). *Discursive decision-making in meetings of the Global Justice Movement: Cultures and practices* [PhD dissertation]. Free University of Berlin.

Haug, C. (2013). *Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution*. Organization Studies, 34(5–6), 705–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Haug, C., Haeringer, N., & Mosca, L. (2009). The ESF organizing process in diachronic perspective. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Another Europe: Conceptions and practices of democracy in the European social forums* (pp. 26–45). Routledge.

Haug, C., Rucht, D., & Teune, S. (2015). A methodology for studying democracy and power in group meetings. In D. Della Porta & D. Rucht (Eds.), *Meeting democracy* (pp. 23–46). Cambridge University Press.

Honari, A. (2018). From "the effect of repression" toward "the response to repression." *Current Sociology*, 66(6), 950–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392118787585

Huszka, B. (2014). *Secessionist movements and ethnic conflict: Debate-framing and rhetoric in independence campaigns*. Routledge.

Hutter, S. (2014). Protest event analysis and its offspring. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement research* (pp. 335–367). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0014

Jarzabkowski, P. (2004). Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation, and practices-in-use. *Organization Studies*, 25(4), 529–560. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840604040675

Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. (2007). Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. *Human Relations, 60*(*1*), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707075703

Jasper, J. M. (2004). A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social-movement choices. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 9*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.9.1.m112677546p63361

Jasper, J. M. (2006). *Getting your way: Strategic dilemmas in the real world*. University of Chicago Press.

Jasper, J. M. (2015). Introduction: Playing the game. In J. M. Jasper & J. W. Duyvendak (Eds.), *Players and arenas: The interactive dynamics of protest* (pp. 9–32). Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285.3

Jasper, J. M., & Duyvendak, J. W. (Eds.). (2015). *Players and arenas: The interactive dynamics of protest*. Amsterdam University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16vj285

Jeffries, J. L. (2002). Black radicalism and political repression in Baltimore: The case of the Black Panther Party. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 25*(1), 64–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870120112067

Johnston, H. (1991). *Tales of nationalism: Catalonia, 1939–1979*. Rutgers University.

Johnston, H., & Noakes, J. A. (Eds.). (2005). *Frames of protest: Social movements and the framing perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Juris, J. S. (2012). Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. *American Ethnologist, 39*(2), 259–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01362.x

Kaplan, S. (2008). Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty. *Organization Science, 19*(5), 729–752. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0340

Kaplan, S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization Science, 24*(4), 965–995. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0792

Kavada, A. (2010). Email lists and participatory democracy in the European Social Forum. *Media, Culture & Society, 32*(3), 355–372. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443709361167

Kavada, A. (2015). Creating the collective: Social media, the Occupy Movement and its constitution as a collective actor. *Information, Communication & Society, 18*(8), 872–886. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1043318

Keating, M. (2001). *Nations against the state: The new politics of nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland* (2nd ed.). Palgrave.

Killian, L. A. (1984). Organization, rationality and spontaneity in the civil rights movement. *American Sociological Review, 49*(6), 770–783.

King, B. G. (2017). The relevance of organizational sociology. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews, 46*(2), 131–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094306117692563

Klandermans, B., Kriesi, H., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1989). *From structure to action: Comparing social movement research across cultures*. JAI.

Koopmans, R. (2004). Protest in time and space: The evolution of waves of contention. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 19–46). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch2

Kriesi, H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative*

perspectives on social movements (pp. 152–184). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803987.009

Kriesi, H., Hutter, S., & Bojar, A. (2019). Contentious episode analysis. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 24*(3), 251–273. https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-24-3-251

Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Duyvendak, J.W., Guigni, M. G. (1995). *New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*. University of Minnesota Press.

Kurzman, C. (1996). Structural opportunity and perceived opportunity in social-movement theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review, 61*(1), 153–170. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096411

Langley, A. (1999). Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review, 24*, 691–710.

Langley, A. (2010). Studying processes in and around organizations. In D. A. Buchanan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 409–429). SAGE.

Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. (2010). Introducing "Perspectives on process organization studies." In T. Hernes & S. Maitlis (Eds.), *Process, sensemaking, and organizing* (pp. 1–26). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199594566.003.0001

Langley, A., & Tsoukas, H. (Eds.). (2017). *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies*. SAGE.

Leach, D. K. (2005). The Iron Law of what again? Conceptualizing oligarchy across organizational forms. *Sociological Theory, 23*(3), 312–337. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0735-2751.2005.00256.x

Lecours, A. (2018). The political consequences of independence referenda in liberal democracies: Quebec, Scotland, and Catalonia. *Polity, 50*(2), 243–274. https://doi.org/10.1086/696709

Leifeld, P. (2016). *Policy debates as dynamic networks: German pension politics and privatization discourse*. Campus Verlag.

Letamendia, A. (2018). Movilización, represión y voto: Rastreando las claves del referéndum de autodeterminación del 1 de Octubre de 2017 de Catalunya. *Anuari del conflicte social, 7*. https://doi.org/10.1344/ACS2018.7.1

Levi, M., & Murphy, G. H. (2006). Coalitions of contention: The case of the WTO protests in Seattle. *Political Studies, 54*(4), 651–670. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2006.00629.x

Lichbach, M. (1995). *The rebel's dilemma*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.13970

Lofland, J. (1996). *Social movement organizations: Guide to research on insurgent realities*. De Gruyter.

López, J., & Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2020). The political use of de facto referendums of independence: The case of Catalonia. *Representation*, Online First, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2020.1720790

Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 25*(2), 226. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392453

Loveman, M. (2005). The modern state and the primitive accumulation of symbolic power. *American Journal of Sociology, 110*(6), 1651–1683.

Lyon, D. (2001). *Surveillance society: Monitoring everyday life.* Open University Press.

Lyon, D. (Ed.). (2006). The search for surveillance theories. In Lyon, D. (Ed.), *Theorizing surveillance: The panopticon and beyond* (pp. 3–20). Willan.

Maeckelbergh, M. (2011). Doing is believing: Prefiguration as strategic practice in the alterglobalization movement. *Social Movement Studies, 10*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2011.545223

Mahoney, J. (2002). *Legacies of liberalism: Path dependence and political regimes in Central America*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.15993111

Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals, 8*(1), 57–125.

Maney, G. M., Kutz-Flamenbaum, R. V., Rohlinger, D., & Goodwin, J. (2012). An introduction to strategies for social change. In G. M. Maney, R. V. Kutz-Flamenbaum, D. Rohlinger, & J. Goodwin (Eds.), *Strategies for social change* (pp. xi–xxxviii). University of Minnesota Press.

Mansbridge, J. J., Bohman, J., Chambers, S., Christiano, T., Fung, A., Parkinson, J., Thompson, D. F., & Warren, M. E. (2012). A systemic approach to deliberative democracy. In J. Parkinson & J. J. Mansbridge (Eds.), *Deliberative Systems* (pp. 1–26). Cambridge University Press.

Martí, D., & Cetrà, D. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: A de facto referendum on independence? *Regional & Federal Studies, 26*(1), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2016.1145116

Martínez-Herrera, E., & Miley, T. J. (2010). The constitution and the politics of national identity in Spain. *Nations and Nationalism, 16*(1), 6–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00432.x

Massetti, E., & Schakel, A. H. (2016). Between autonomy and secession: Decentralization and regionalist party ideological radicalism. *Party Politics, 22*(1), 59–79. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068813511380

Mattoni, A. (2014). The potentials of grounded theory in the study of social movements. In D. Della Porta (Ed.), *Methodological practices in social movement*

research (pp. 21–42). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.003.0002

Mattoni, A., & Treré, E. (2014). Media practices, mediation processes, and mediatization in the study of social movements. *Communication Theory, 24*(3), 252–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12038

McAdam, D. (1982). *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930–1970.* University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D., Sampson, R., Weffer, S., & MacIndoe, H. (2005). "There will be fighting in the streets": The distorting lens of social movement theory. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.10.1.a628614651h028540

McAdam, D., & Scott, R. W. (2005). Organizations and movements. In G. F. Davis, D. McAdam, R. W. Scott, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Social movements and organization theory.* Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. H. Jr. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In R. R. Aminzade, J. A. Goldstone, D. McAdam, E. J. Perry, W. H. Jr. Sewell, S. G. Tarrow, & C. Tilley (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.005

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. G., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention.* Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D. (1996). Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting, and inventing. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 141–151). Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1973). *The trend of social movements in America: Professionalization and resource mobilization.* General Learning Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*(6), 1212–1241.

McPhee, R. D., & Zaug, P. (2000). The communicative constitution of organizations: A framework for explanation. *Electronic Journal of Communication, 10*(1/2), 21–47.

Melucci, A. (1994). A strange kind of newness: What's "new" in new social movements? In E. Laraña, H. Johnston, & J. R. Gusfield (Eds.), *New social movements: From ideology to identity.* Temple University Press.

Meyer, D. S., & Minkoff, D. C. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunity. *Social Forces, 82*(4), 1457–1492. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0082

Meyer, D. S., & Tarrow, S. G. (Eds.). (1998). *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Michels, R. (1911). *Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie. Untersuchungen über die oligarchischen Tendenzen des Gruppenlebens*. (1.). Klinkhardt.

Miley, T. J. (2013). Blocked articulation and nationalist hegemony in Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies, 23*(1), 7–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2012.754356

Minkoff, D. C. (1995). *Organizing for equality: The evolution of women's and racial-ethnic organizations in America, 1955–1985.* Rutgers University Press.

Minkoff, D. C., & McCarthy, J. D. (2005). Reinvigorating the study of organizational processes in social movements. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*, 289–308.

Mintzberg, H., Raisinghani, D., & Theoret, A. (1976). The structure of "unstructured" decision processes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*(2), 246. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392045

Mische, A. (2008). *Partisan publics: Communication and contention across Brazilian youth activist networks*. Princeton University Press.

Moss, D. (2014). Repression, response, and contained escalation under "liberalized" authoritarianism in Jordan. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 19*(3), 261–286. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.19.3.q508v72264766u92

Muñoz, J., & Guinjoan, M. (2013). Accounting for internal variation in nationalist mobilization: Unofficial referendums for independence in Catalonia (2009–11): Unofficial referendums for independence. *Nations and Nationalism, 19*(1), 44–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12006

Muñoz, J., & Tormos, R. (2015). Economic expectations and support for secession in Catalonia: Between causality and rationalization. *European Political Science Review, 7*(02), 315–341. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000174

Murakami Wood, D. (2007). Beyond the panopticon? Foucault and surveillance studies. In J. W. Crampton & S. Elden (Eds.), *Beyond the panopticon? Foucault and surveillance studies* (pp. 245–264). Routledge.

Muro, D. (2015). Ethnicity, nationalism, and social movements. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements* (pp. 185–199). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.1

Neumayer, C., & Stald, G. (2014). The mobile phone in street protest: Texting, tweeting, tracking, and tracing. *Mobile Media & Communication, 2*(2), 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157913513255

Nez, H. (2012). Déliberer au sein d'un mouvement social: Ethnographie des assemblées des Indignés à Madrid. *Participations, 4*(3), 79. https://doi.org/10.3917/parti.004.0079

Nicolini, D. (Ed.). (2003). *Knowing in organizations: A practice-based approach*. Sharpe.

Nicolini, D., & Monteiro, P. (2016). The practice approach: For a praxeology of organisational and management studies. In A. Langley & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies* (pp. 110–126). SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957954.n7

Oliver, P. (1989). Bringing the crowd back in: The nonorganizational elements of social movements. *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change, 11*, 1–30.

Opp, K.-D. (1994). Repression and revolutionary action: East Germany in 1989. *Rationality and Society, 6*(1), 101–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463194006001007

Opp, K.-D., & Roehl, W. (1990). Repression, micromobilization, and political protest. *Social Forces, 69*(2), 521–547. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579672

Ordeix, E., & Ginesta, X. (2014). Political engagement principles as the basis for new regional self-determination processes in Europe: The case of Catalonia. *American Behavioral Scientist, 58*(7), 928–940. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213506214

Orlikowski, W. J. (2002). Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organization Science, 13*(3), 249–273. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.3.249.2776

Orriols, L., & Rodon, T. (2016). The 2015 Catalan election: The independence bid at the polls. *South European Society and Politics, 21*(3), 359–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1191182

Ortiz, D., Myers, D., Walls, E., & Diaz, M.-E. (2006). Where do we stand with newspaper data? *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 10*(3), 397–419. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.10.3.8360r760k3277t42

Pagoaga Ibiricu, I. (2020). Party competition during secession crises in advanced democracies. *Regional & Federal Studies, 1–25*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2020.1824994

Pavković, A., & Radan, P. (2007). *Creating new states: Theory and practice of secession*. Ashgate.

Pearlman, W. (2021). Mobilizing from scratch: Large-scale collective action without preexisting organization in the Syrian uprising. *Comparative Political Studies, 54*(10), 1786–1817. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020912281

Peterson, A., & Wahlström, M. (2014). Repression. In D. Della Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of social movements*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.2

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1979). *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail*. Vintage Books.

Polletta, F. (2002). *Freedom is an endless meeting: Democracy in American social movements.* University of Chicago Press.

Poole, M. S., Van de Ven, A. H., Dooley, K., & Holmes, M. E. (2000). *Organizational change and innovation processes: Theory and methods for research*. Oxford University Press.

Portos, M. (2017). Keeping dissent alive under the Great Recession: No-radicalisation and protest in Spain after the eventful 15M/indignados campaign. *Acta Politica*, *54,* 45–74. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-017-0074-9

Portos, M. (2021). *Grievances and public protests: Political mobilisation in Spain in the age of austerity.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53405-9

Putnam, L. L., Nicotera, A. M., & McPhee, R. D. (2009). Introduction: Communication constitutes organization. In L. L. Putnam & A. M. Nicotera (Eds.), *Building theories of communication: The constitutive role of communication* (pp. 1–19). Routledge.

Ragin, C. C. (1992). Casing and the process of social inquiry. In C. C. Ragin & H. S. Becker (Eds.), *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry* (pp. 217–226). Cambridge University Press.

Rathbun, B. C. (2009). Interviewing and qualitative field methods: Pragmatism and practicalities. In J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H. E. Brady, & D. Collier (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of political methodology* (pp. 685–701). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.0029

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory, 5*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432

Renan, E. (1882). *What is a nation?* [Lecture].

Rerup, C., & Feldman, M. S. (2011). Routines as a source of change in organizational schemata: The role of trial-and-error learning. *Academy of Management Journal, 54*(3), 577–610. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.61968107

Riera, M. (2017, December 23). 100 arguments per dir sí a la independència. *El Punt Avui*. https://www.elpuntavui.cat/politica/article/17-politica/1174924-100-arguments-per-dir-si-a-la-independencia.html

Roberts, K. M. (2015). *Changing course in Latin America: Party systems in the neoliberal era*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511842856

Robichaud, D., & Cooren, F. (2013). Introduction: Materiality, agency and discourse in the constitution of organization. In D. Robichaud & F. Cooren (Eds.), *Organization and organizing: Materiality, agency, and discourse* (pp. xi–xix). Routledge.

Rootes, C. A. (1999). The transformation of environmental activism: Activists, organizations and policy-making. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 12*(2), 155–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1999.9968595

Röth, L., Kaftan, L., & Saldivia Gonzatti, D. (2024). *Optimized Dictionaries: A Semi-Automated Workflow of Concept Identification in Text-Data*. SSOAR. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-91666-3

Rucht, D. (1996). The impact of national contexts on social movement structures: A cross-movement and cross-national comparison. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements:*

Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings (pp. 185–204). Cambridge University Press.

Rucht, D. (1999). Linking organization and mobilization: Michels's Iron Law of Oligarchy reconsidered. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 4*(2), 151

Sackmann, S. A. (1992). Culture and subcultures: An analysis of organizational knowledge. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 37*(1), 140–161.

Sampson, R. J., McAdam, D., MacIndoe, H., & Weffer-Elizondo, S. (2005). Civil society reconsidered: The durable nature and community structure of collective civic action. *American Journal of Sociology, 111*(3), 673–714. https://doi.org/10.1086/497351

Sanjaume-Calvet, M. (2021). Plebiscitarianism revisited: A typology of independence referendums. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 54*(3), 593–614. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423921000421

Schatzki, T. R. (2001). Practice mind-ed orders. In T. R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, & E. von Savigny (Eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary theory* (pp. 50–63). Routledge.

Schoeneborn, D., Kuhn, T. R., & Kärreman, D. (2019). The communicative constitution of organization, organizing, and organizationality. *Organization Studies, 40*(4), 475–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618782284

Serrano, I. (2013). Just a matter of identity? Support for independence in Catalonia. *Regional & Federal Studies, 23*(5), 523–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2013.775945

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1992). A theory of structure: Duality, agency, and transformation. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1086/229967

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996a). Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society, 25*(6), 841–881.

Sewell, W. H. Jr. (1996b). Three temporalities. In T. J. McDonald (Ed.), *The historic turn in the human sciences* (pp. 245–280). University of Michigan Press.

Seymour, L. J., Bakke, K. M., & Cunningham, K. G. (2016). E pluribus unum, ex uno plures: Competition, violence, and fragmentation in ethnopolitical movements. *Journal of Peace Research, 53*(1), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343315605571

Shoshan, A. (2017). Habitus and social movements: How militarism affects organizational repertoires. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2017.1408006

Slater, D., & Simmons, E. (2010). Informative regress: Critical antecedents in comparative politics. *Comparative Political Studies, 43*(7), 886–917. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010361343

Smithey, L. A. (2009). Social movement strategy, tactics, and collective identity. *Sociology Compass, 3*(4), 658–671. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00218.x

Snow, D., Benford, R., McCammon, H., Hewitt, L., & Fitzgerald, S. (2014). The emergence, development, and future of the framing perspective: 25+ years since "frame alignment." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 19*(1), 23–46. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.19.1.x74278226830m69l

Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilization. *International Social Movement Research, 1*, 197–217.

Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation. *American Sociological Review, 51*(4), 464. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095581

Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., & Kriesi, H. (2004). Mapping the terrain. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (pp. 3–16). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999103.ch1

Soifer, H. D. (2012). The causal logic of critical junctures. *Comparative Political Studies, 45*(12), 1572–1597. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012463902

Sorens, J. (2012). *Secessionism: Identity, interest, and strategy.* McGill-Queen's University Press.

Soule, S. A. (2013). Bringing organizational studies back into social movement scholarship. In J. van Stekelenburg, C. Roggeband, & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *The future of social movement research* (pp. 107–124). University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816686513.003.0007

Soule, S. A., & Davenport, C. (2009). Velvet glove, iron fist, or even hand? Protest policing in the United States, 1960–1990. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 14*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.14.1.y01123143t231q66

Starr, A., Fernandez, L. A., Amster, R., Wood, L. J., & Caro, M. J. (2008). The impacts of state surveillance on political assembly and association: A socio-legal analysis. *Qualitative Sociology, 31*(3), 251–270. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-008-9107-z

Swidler, A. (2001). What anchors cultural practices. In T. R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, & E. von Savigny (Eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary theory* (pp. 83–101). Routledge.

Tarrow, S. G. (1989). *Democracy and disorder: Protest and politics in Italy, 1965–1975*. Clarendon.

Tarrow, S. G. (2011). *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Rev. & updated 3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, J. R., & Van Every, E. J. (2000). *The emergent organization: Communication as its site and surface.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Thompson, D. F. (2008). Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science. *Annual Review of Political Science, 11*(1), 497–520. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.081306.070555

Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution.* Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Tilly, C. (1986). *The contentious French.* Belknap Press.

Tilly, C. (1995). *Popular contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834.* Harvard University Press.

Tilly, C. (2004). *Social movements, 1768–2004.* Paradigm Publishers.

Tilly, C. (2008). *Contentious performances.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804366

Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2015). *Contentious politics* (Second revised edition). Oxford University Press.

Toft, M. D. (2012). Self-determination, secession, and civil war. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 24*(4), 581–600. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2012.700617

Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. (2002). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science, 13*(5), 567–582. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.5.567.7810

Ubasart-González, G. (2021). The independence procés in Catalonia: The triple Spanish crisis and an unresolved question of sovereignty. In Ó. G. Agustín (Ed.), *Catalan independence and the crisis of sovereignty* (pp. 33–55). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54867-4_2

Ullrich, P., & Knopp, P. (2018). Protesters' reactions to video surveillance of demonstrations: Counter-moves, security cultures, and the spiral of surveillance and counter-surveillance. *Surveillance & Society, 16*(2), 183–202.

Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. (2005). Alternative approaches for studying organizational change. *Organization Studies, 26*(9), 1377–1404. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605056907

Van Dyke, N., & McCammon, H. J. (Eds.). (2010). *Strategic alliances: Coalition building and social movements*. University of Minnesota Press.

Vicens, L., & Tedó, X. (2018). *Més operació urnes*. Columna.

Vilaregut, R. (2004). *Terra Lliure: La temptació armada a Catalunya*. Columna.

Vilaregut, R. (2010). *Memòria i emergència en l'independentisme català. El cas de la Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir.* Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2010). Theorizing the restlessness of events. *American Journal of Sociology, 115*(5), 1351–1386. https://doi.org/10.1086/651299

Wagner-Pacifici, R. (2017). *What is an event?* The University of Chicago Press.

Wagner-Pacifici, R., & Ruggero, E. C. (2018). Temporal blindspots in Occupy Philadelphia. *Social Movement Studies*, Online First 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1474096

Walker, E. T., & McCarthy, J. D. (2010). Legitimacy, strategy, and resources in the survival of community-based organizations. *Social Problems, 57*(3), 315–340. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2010.57.3.315

Walter, B. F. (2009). *Reputation and civil war: Why separatist conflicts are so violent.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511642012

Wang, D. J., & Soule, S. A. (2012). Social movement organizational collaboration: Networks of learning and the diffusion of protest tactics, 1960–1995. *American Journal of Sociology, 117*(6), 1674–1722. https://doi.org/10.1086/664685

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing.* Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations.* SAGE.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409–421. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133

Whittington, R. (1996). Strategy as practice. *Long Range Planning, 29*(5), 731–735. https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-6301(96)00068-4

Whittington, R. (2003). The work of strategizing and organizing: For a practice perspective. *Strategic Organization, 1*(1), 117–125.

Yates, L. (2015). Rethinking prefiguration: Alternatives, micropolitics and goals in social movements. *Social Movement Studies, 14*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.870883

Zald, M. N., & Ash, R. (1966). Social movement organizations: Growth, decay and change. *Social Forces, 44*(3), 327–341.

Zald, M. N., & McCarthy, J. D. (Eds.). (1979). *The dynamics of social movements: Resource mobilization, social control, and tactics*. Winthrop Publishers.

Zuber, C. I., & Szöcsik, E. (2015). Ethnic outbidding and nested competition: Explaining the extremism of ethnonational minority parties in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research, 54*(4), 784–801. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12105

Zwerman, G., & Steinhoff, P. G. (2005). When activists ask for trouble: State–dissident interactions and the New Left cycle of resistance in the United States and Japan. In C. Davenport, H. Johnston, & C. Mueller (Eds.), *Repression and mobilization* (pp. 85–107). University of Minnesota Press.

Zwerman, G., Steinhoff, P., & Porta, D. (2000). Disappearing social movements: Clandestinity in the cycle of New Left protest in the U.S., Japan, Germany, and Italy. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 5*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.5.1.0w068105721660n0

Index

1-O *see* October 1, 2017 referendum
9-N *see* 2014 referendum

action repertoire 78, 98, 99-100, 109-10, 123, 196-7, 204, 213-4, 222-3, 243
arena
- institutional arena 21, 47-8, 49, 90, 205
- players-and-arenas approach 46-9
- protest arena 21, 47-49, 78, 87, 98-9, 196

Article 155 18, 90, 184, 193, 205, 221, 248, 250
Associació de Mares i Pares d'Alumnes (AMPA) 148-19
Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) 18-9, 81-5, 90, 93-6, 98, 101, 106-12, 114, 118-20, 123-6, 128-32, 136, 142, 146-8, 150, 165, 167, 177-8, 181-3, 189, 191-4, 196-8, 205, 209, 211, 213-4, 216, 220-3, 229-30, 235, 245-6, 248, 250-1
autonomy
- regional 18, 21, 79, 84, 90, 184, 205, 229, 243, 259
- organizational 84, 164-5

Barcelona 17, 81, 85, 89, 96, 108, 122, 156, 161, 178-9, 216, 244-5, 255, 258

Comittee for the Defense of the
- Referendum 96, 114, 130, 141-3, 149-53, 158, 160-5, 167, 177-81, 185-6, 191, 245, 248
- Republic 91, 93-6, 98-100 161, 164, 184-9, 191-2, 194-7, 205, 209-11, 214-8, 220-2, 224-5, 236, 245, 248

Convergència i Unió (CiU) 77, 82, 87-8, 149, 161, 187
Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP) 85-7, 89, 93-6, 119-20, 122-3, 125, 149-50, 181, 187, 196, 248
Casals, Muriel 85, 108, 123, 176
CDR *see* Committee for the Defense of the Referendum/Republic
civil society
- civil society organization 20, 25, 48, 82, 84-6, 92, 158
- role of civil society 19, 86

civil war 53
contention
- contentiousness 51-3
- contentious episode 51-3, 55-7, 60, 87, 92, 100
- cycle of contention 19, 51, 57-8, 78-80, 86-7, 92, 99, 105-6, 147-8, 159-60, 184, 205, 217, 235-6
- contentious politics 21, 39-40, 53, 106, 232

decision-making 43-4, 58, 85, 112-3, 115-7, 130, 133, 142, 147, 150-1, 157-8, 166-7, 193-6, 213, 220-1, 246
deliberation 22, 113, 115-8, 130-4, 151-4, 166, 193-6, 200, 219-21, 225
Diada 18, 81-2, 108, 110-2, 124-5, 129
directing 112-3, 116-7, 131-4

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) 77-8, 86, 93-4, 126, 150-1, 181-3, 237
events
- critical junctures 53-5, 233
- episode of contention *see* contentious episode
- eventful times *see* intense times
- eventful temporality 58-9
- intense times 22-3, 51-3, 56-60, 118-23
- normal times 22-3, 51-3, 107-8, 118
- protest event 21, 27-8, 42, 87-92, 105-7, 243-4, 251-2, 254-6
- transformative events 23, 55-6, 66, 81, 159-60

Forcadell, Carme 85, 205-6, 208, 214
framing
- frame alignment 22, 63, 119-21, 135, 175, 190, 193-4
- frame dispute 22, 175, 183-190, 195-6, 221, 230, 233, 236
- diagnostic 65-6
- prognostic 22, 61-3, 119-21, 134-6, 175, 184, 187-90, 199-200, 209-11, 230

Generalitat de Catalunya 18, 82, 91, 121, 143, 191, 237
Girona 145, 191, 216, 246, 255, 258

independence
- independence declaration 119, 183-4, 186, 205
- independentist Left 85-6, 112, 123, 128, 130, 133-4, 176, 182-3, 207, 220
- independence movement *see* secessionist movement
- independence referendum 18-9, 22, 24, 28-29, 80-2, 86-92, 108-10, 119-23, 143-6, 173-7, 185-6, 229-31

information and communication technology (ICT) 41, 108
instant messenger application (IMA) 108, 114-5, 117, 124-5, 154-8, 160-2, 218-9, 224-5, 236
international community 46, 49, 182

interorganizational collaboration *see* organizing between organizations
Iron Law of Oligarchy 27

Junqueras, Oriol 90-1, 191, 205-6, 218
Junts pel Sí 86-7, 94-5
Junts per Catalunya (JxC) 93-4, 183, 214

Lleida 216, 255, 258

meetings
  disruption of 219-21
  public assemblies 112-14, 154-6, 162-5

nationalism 18, 24, 259

October 1, 2017
  referendum 18, 22, 24, 86-92, 119-23, 143-46, 173-7, 185-6, 229-31
  defense of the voting stations 130, 133, 143-46, 179, 218, 245, 254
October 3, 2017 177-81
Òmnium Cultural 19, 81, 84-5, 90, 92-6, 98, 108-10, 112, 120, 123-26, 146-50, 165, 176-81, 189-90, 205, 207, 209-14, 219-20, 222-3, 229-30, 235, 245, 248, 251
organization
  as a precondition for protest 20, 26, 40, 45, 92-3, 146-50, 166, 231
  organizational basis of protest 20-1, 25-7, 40-5, 83, 92-6, 100-1, 236
  organizational change 22-3, 27, 39-40, 45-6, 50-60, 64-5, 67, 137, 200
  organizational structure 21, 26, 41, 44-5, 56, 67, 83-6, 92-6, 141-2, 146-50, 159, 222-3, 232
  social movement organization (SMO) 19-21, 25-6, 40-1, 44, 56, 83-6, 92-6, 141-2, 146-50, 165-66, 222-3, 229-32
  studies 39, 42, 66, 232
organizers
  definition 28
  role of 22-3, 27-9
organizing
  as a practice 43-4, 112-7, 150-9, 231-2
  as a process 42-3, 105-7, 231-2
  between organizations 26, 44, 96-9, 129-30, 196-8, 221-2, 231-2
  inside organizations *see* organizational structure
  outside organizations 26, 134, 145-50, 231-2

Plataforma pel Dret de Decidir (PDD) 79-81, 83
players
  compound players 46-9, 92-9
  players-and-arenas approach 45-6, 48
practice
  communication practices 43, 112-4, 157-8
  decision-making practices *see* decision-making
  deliberative practice *see* deliberation
  practice theory 43, 56
protest
  backstage of 16, 105-7
  cycle *see* cycle of contention
  disruptive protest 22, 52, 89-92, 98-100, 124, 191-2, 214-7, 224, 255, 258
  organized protest 40-2
  protest event analysis 28-9, 87-99, 254-9
  protest organizing 25-7, 40-5, 105-7, 231-2
  self-determination protest 28-9, 254-6
  violent protest 47, 79, 91, 100, 222, 243, 255, 258
Puigdemont, Carles 18, 87-8, 90, 119-20, 143, 182-3, 187, 205, 208, 210-1, 214-6, 237

Rajoy, Mariano 91, 120-1, 203, 223
referendum
  2014 referendum 82, 108-10
  2017 referendum *see* October 1, 2017 referendum
  local referendums 2009-2011 80-2, 85
  referendum crisis *see* secessionist crisis
resource mobilization 26, 40-1
repertoire of action *see* action repertoire
repression
  arrests 18, 20-1, 89-91, 122, 191, 205-8, 210-2, 214-7, 221, 258
  police intervention 18, 90, 123-6, 145-6, 148, 177, 186, 207
  raids 20, 89-90, 122-3

secession
  definition 28, 243
  secessionist conflict 18, 46-9, 53, 78, 87-92, 118-23, 231
  secessionist crisis 20-3, 53, 87-92, 99-100, 105-6, 134, 146, 160, 174, 184, 224, 230
  secessionist movement 21, 24-5, 46-7, 82, 200, 233
  strategic playing field of secession 46-9
sensemaking 23, 25, 63-6, 175-7, 181-5, 209-11, 234
Sabadell 123, 125, 130, 144-5, 152-3, 163, 177-9, 185, 246
September 20, 2017 89, 122-6
Spain
  Spanish Constitutional Court 18, 81-2, 87-9, 119, 122, 206
  Spanish government 18, 82, 91-2, 119-22, 143, 184, 203, 223, 237
  Spanish National Police 89, 122-3, 145, 148, 177
strategy
  gradualist strategy 188-9

referendum strategy 119-21
strategic interactions 48-50, 60-1, 119-23, 143-6, 204-6, 232-4
strategizing 61-3
unilateral strategy 187-8
surveillance
monitoring 208, 218-9
perceptions 208-9
undercover police 208, 220-1
transformation
re-equilibration 54, 59, 235
sedimentation 59, 159-65, 236
transformative events 23, 55-6, 58, 66, 81, 159-60, 174-5, 235
Tarragona 122, 145, 195, 214-5, 246, 255, 258
Torra, Quim 91

Universitats per la República (UxR) 93-4, 96-8, 126-9, 132-4, 150-1, 161, 178-9, 182, 193, 197-8, 248