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The Attitudinal Bases of Protest Networks: Attitudes towards the War and Multiple Memberships in Associations and Protest Communities in the 15 February 2003 Anti-War Demonstrations

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Collective Action and Social Movements (Lecture)

Collective Action, Embeddedness, Affiliation Networks

In the protest events of 15 February 2003, all around the globe, a heterogeneous multitude of demonstrators have been challenging the imminent attack on Iraq. From the findings of the International Peace Protest Survey (IPPS) conducted in eight Western democracies, one can get a clear description of the organizational affiliation of the participant protesters, their attitudes and positions with respect to the war, its causes and possible effects. In fact, according to Mario Diani (*Acta Sociologica*, 2009, vol. 52, 63-83), these protesters are not only involved in a variety of associations, but they also participate in a number of protest communities. An analysis of the corresponding 2-mode social networks of multiple memberships reveals the formed structural patterns among these associations and protest communities in each country. However, these patterns exhibit a considerable structural variation across countries and, thus, the question is to understand what produces such a national variety. Here we are testing the hypothesis that the emerging inter-organizational structures across countries might be explained by common beliefs, attitudes, positions and stances about the war that demonstrators from these countries might hold. For this purpose, we are assessing not only the structural embeddedness of associations in the various national networks, but also the 2-mode structural embeddedness of the attitudinal variables (and the induced network of attitudes) on the organizational network of associations. By employing a Generalized Estimation Equation (GEE) where the structural embeddedness of associations on their network is the dependent variable while they type of association; the national Political Opportunity Structure; the governmental stance vis-à-vis the Iraqi war; and, the structural embeddedness of associations on the (induced) network of attitudes are the predictors, we find that the latter is the most important predictor, thus confirming our initial hypothesis.