

Activism Success:
A Concept Explication

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2014

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Department of Communication

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2014

University of Washington

ABSTRACT

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Activism is all around us, but its mechanics are little understood and explanations are often idiosyncratic, focusing on particular activism efforts rather than empirically exploring broad patterns. In an effort to create the theoretic underpinnings for broad-cased comparative analysis of activism efforts, this thesis explicates the meaning and measurement of activism success. Activism success is defined along two dimensions: goal achievement and realization of benefit. This study operationalizes the first dimension in an exploratory content analysis, yet significant methodological challenges remain. The new abundance of activism artifacts available online, including citizen-generated and self-published news reports, hold the promise of making distant activism efforts accessible to researchers. Yet problems related to sampling, unitization, and outcome evaluation need to be resolved before large-N comparative studies of activism can be undertaken.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

ACTIVISM: A GREAT UNKNOWN

Nigerian-Americans are holding rallies across the country demanding the release of schoolgirls abducted by the terrorist group Boko Haram, while others create and share images online to raise awareness of the cause. In other parts of the world, Mauritanian bloggers have called for the ouster of foreign mining companies. Nonprofits and politicians in Canada blacked out their websites to protest a federal budget that ultimately slashed environmental spending. Human rights activists in Saudi Arabia demanded freedom for political detainees by marching through a shopping mall. Activism is all around us, but its mechanics are little understood, and explanations are often idiosyncratic, explaining particular activism efforts rather than empirically exploring broad patterns (Meier, 2009). If academic research can illuminate how activism works, particularly why certain efforts succeed and others fail, a wide range of efforts will benefit from this increase in strategic understanding. In this thesis I will explicate activism success and test a means of measuring it, work that could serve as the foundation for the type of large-N comparative studies that could reveal the broad patterns in activism that have so far eluded social scientists.

THE CONCEPT EXPLICATION

The purpose of a concept explication is to determine how one may observe a focal concept (Chaffee, 1991). In this study, the focal concept is activism success. There are four key milestones in the concept explication process, each marked by the elaboration of a definition related to the focal concept. The first definition is the nominal definition, the second is the preliminary conceptual definition, the third is the operational definition, and the fourth and final definition is the conceptual definition. These four definitions are linked by stages of literature

review, meaning analysis, and univariate analysis. The stages of the concept explication, as elaborated in this thesis, are as follows:

1. Identification of focal concept: Chapter one
2. Nominal definition of concept: Chapter one
3. Literature review of concept: Chapters two and three
4. Preliminary conceptual definition of concept: Chapter four
5. Meaning analysis of concept: Chapter four
6. Operational definition of concept: Chapter four
7. Univariate research on concept: Chapter five
8. Evaluation of operational definition: Chapter six
9. Final conceptual definition: Chapter six

The nominal definition provides a basic definition of the focal concept that will be altered and improved upon through the explication process. For the purposes of this study, the nominal definition of activism success is *the positive outcome of an effort in which individuals seek to make a change to the status quo*.

The preliminary conceptual definition is a description of the concept that allows the researcher to determine whether or not an observed event is an instance of the concept. I derive the preliminary conceptual definition through a systematic process of collecting, reviewing, and analyzing meanings of the focal concept in the literature. In this explication, because the concept activism success is not used in the literature, I conducted two literature reviews, one on activism and the other on success. These two literature reviews constitute chapters two and three of this thesis. The preliminary conceptual definition, which is the result of the analysis, is presented in chapter four in the meaning analysis.

Following these literature reviews I undertake a meaning analysis, which for Chaffee is the fulcrum between the literature review, the creation of the preliminary conceptual definition and the creation of the operational definition. Because I identify two key dimensions of activism success in the literature review – goal achievement and realization of benefit – my meaning analysis takes the form of the creation and analysis of a two-by-two conceptual matrix, which I analyze in the conceptualization section of chapter four.

The third important definition of the explication process is the operational definition, which defines the formal operations of measurement that will be carried out to measure the focal concept. In this thesis, I determine through my meaning analysis that there are many types of ambiguous activism outcomes for which it is difficult or impossible to observe activism success or (in the absence of success) failure. For this reason, in the operationalization section I choose a single dimension of the focal concept to measure: goal achievement. I operationalize this concept as a three-level ordinal variable, and the description of this variable is the operational definition of the concept explication. Following a content analysis based on the operational definition, which I describe in chapter five, I present a conceptual definition of activism success and evaluate the appropriateness of that operationalization in chapter six.

Following this introductory chapter, the thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter two begins by exploring the etymology of the word activism, which emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and was originally quite apolitical in meaning. Despite this early usage, scholarly research on activism did not begin until the 1960s, spurred by a desire to understand why seemingly contented American young people were engaging in mass demonstration. Much activism at this time was part of large and organizationally complex social movements aimed at achieving dramatic changes in society, such as gaining civil rights for African-Americans and

removing the United States from the Vietnam War. Due partly to this path dependence, most literature on activism describes social movements, and this trend continues into the present day. Other types of activism efforts – individual action, collective tactics, and campaigns – receive far less attention.

When scholars write about activism they tend to focus on one or more of the following dimensions: participants, causes, tactics, and tools. Though activism was at first described by its participants, it is now often described by its cause. Examples include studies of environmental activism (DeLuca, 2005; Gerlach, 2001; Wapner, 1995), animal rights activism (Herzog, 2010), and anti-sweatshop activism (Bair & Palpacuer, 2013). The rise of the Internet has made tool-based definitions of activism more common, visible in terms like Net activism (Meikle, 2004) and Web activism (Earl & Kimport, 2011). Though it may seem appealing to describe activism by its tactics – petition-signing, tweeting, engaging in protest rallies, donating funds – what constitutes activism differs from place to place and from scholar to scholar. Four types of activism actors – challengers, antagonists, constituents, and beneficiaries – are also introduced in this chapter. These terms will be used throughout the study.

The third chapter tightens the focus of the study by exploring the literature of success in the context of activism. Like activism, there is no consensus definition of success in the context of activism, and the literature on this topic is also scant, though for a different reason. The literature on the concept of activism is scant because scholarly attention has been focused on social movements for the past fifty years. Scholarly withdrawal from the concept of success has been more intentional. While early scholars, such as Piven and Cloward (1979), Jenkins and Perrow (1977), and Gamson (1990), were willing to use the term success, contemporary scholars are more chary with the word (Kolb, 2007). Seemingly neutral terms such as “impact” (Amenta

& Young, 1999; Kriesi & Wisler, 1999; Luders, 2010), “effect” (Giugni, 1998, Salmon & Murray-Jones, 2013), “outcome” (Giugni, 1998), and “consequence” (Amenta & Caren, 2004; Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, & Su, 2010; Giugni, 1998; Kolb, 2007) are now the terms of art.

Yet, as Salmon & Murray-Jones (2013) point out, these terms are not really neutral. They simply describe a wider range of phenomena than success does. All successes are types of outcomes, but not all outcomes (or effects or consequences...) are successes. This scholarly unwillingness to discuss success sidesteps rather than resolves the problem of definition. People involved in activism still wish their efforts to succeed, even if scholars are wary of confronting this problem head-on.

Despite this scholarly tentativeness, the chapter proceeds by identifying the two principal measures of activism success: goal achievement and realization of benefit. The first measure refers to whether the intended objectives of the activism effort occurred. The second measure refers to whether that outcome actually improved the welfare of those it was designed to benefit. Benefits can be further subdivided into two types. Direct benefits accrue to beneficiaries and indirect benefits accrue to the activism efforts that work on behalf of beneficiaries.

Chapter four explicates this concept through a meaning analysis that uses a matrix model. Through this meaning analysis the meaning of both dimensions expand. Goal achievement becomes net goal achievement: the difference between the goals an effort intends to achieve and those it actually achieves. Realization of benefit becomes net realization of benefit: the difference between the benefits and costs that result from an activism effort.

Analysis of the matrix reveals that labeling an activism effort a success or failure will only be valid in situations where net goal achievement and net benefit coincide, that is, where achievement exceeds non-achievement and benefits exceeds costs (both indicating success) or

where non-achievement exceeds achievement and costs exceed benefits (both indicating failure). Measures of activism success where these two dimensions do not coincide will be invalid because indicators of success and failure are both present.

For example, one could define as a success a campaign that achieves a policy goal that increases the welfare of beneficiaries and one could label as a failure a campaign that neither achieves its policy goal nor increases the welfare of its beneficiaries. However, if the campaign achieves its goal but does not increase welfare (for example, if the policy change does not have the desired effect) or if the campaign does not achieve its goal, but does increase welfare (for example, by developing new alliances to fight for the policy change in the future), then calling the effort a success or a failure would be more problematic.

In order to deal with the ambiguity implied by concurrent evaluation of net goal achievement and net realization of benefit, in the operationalization section of this chapter I suggest measuring the dimensions separately and making more limited success evaluations. For example, one could say that an activism effort is successful in that it achieved most of its goals. I then explore means of measuring five success-relevant outcomes of activism: goal achievement, realization of intended benefit, realization of unintended benefit, incursion of intended costs, and incursion of unintended costs. At the end of the chapter I describe means of measuring all five outcomes.

The fifth chapter describes an exploratory content analysis of one of the dimensions: goal achievement. In this study I use a three-level ordinal measure that categorizes a campaign's goal as fully achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved. This is the operational definition of the concept explication and also forms the basis for the univariate study suggested by Chaffee (1991). The texts I use for this content analysis are drawn from the source documents of the

Global Digital Activism Data Set, version 2.0, (GDADS2) and many of the news stories in that data set are written by non-professional journalists. The data set includes 426 cases, each of which represents one activism campaign. Each campaign, in turn, is described by two news articles: one that describes the goal of the campaign and one of that describes its outcome.

Though I was able to achieve an acceptable level of agreement for the goal achievement variable (average pairwise agreement was 81.5% and Krippendorff's α was 0.732), I was nevertheless unsatisfied with the three-level measure of goal achievement. After presenting a final conceptual definition of activism success, I delve into the continuing challenges of measuring the concept. Significant sacrifices in validity were made to achieve reliability across a diverse array of campaigns. In addition, problems sampling from the unknown population of global activism campaigns, unitizing those campaigns, evaluating imprecise goals, and using news stories by non-professional journalists for content analysis arose.

I end the thesis by arguing that analysis of activism success using comparative methods is important and that online artifacts still hold the promise of making distant efforts observable to researchers. However, significant methodological challenges related to sampling, unitization, and success evaluation need to be resolved before these studies can be undertaken.

CHAPTER 2: ACTIVISM LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no universally recognized definition of activism and the literature on this topic is scant. In this chapter I will chart the development of activism as a word and its use in the literature, where researchers generally describe activism efforts by their participants, causes, tactics, and tools. Though activism is highly contextual, some patterns hold true across contexts. In the analysis of activism one encounters four types of actors: challengers, antagonists, constituents, and beneficiaries. There are also four types of activism efforts: individual actions, collective tactics, campaigns, and social movements. The best conceptual framework for understanding activism would be one that accurately describes current phenomena while allowing a margin of flexibility for the continuing evolution of both theory and practice. This chapter develops such a framework.

ETYMOLOGY

Activism is a relatively new word. Born in the twentieth century, its earliest usages are apolitical, referring to action to reveal spiritual truth (Eucken, 1906). In 1920, Henry Lane Eno, plutocrat and scion of a wealthy New York banking family, wrote a book entitled *Activism* proposing a new metaphysics. “For Activism,” he writes, “the world is ‘one’ as activity, only as for Physical Science it is ‘one’ as a manifestation of energy” (p. 146). Though his metaphysics never quite caught on, Princeton University was kind enough to publish the book and Mr. Eno was kind enough to become the principal donor for Princeton’s Eno Hall (Leitch, 1978).

Across the Atlantic in Europe, the term was being used to refer to the physical world of nations, power, and politics. In discourse about the First World War, activism was used to describe active support for Germany. “The publicists who proclaim that war is desirable... urge

Sweden to throw in her lot with the Central Powers. This is Activism,” wrote a British journalist at the time (Long, 1915, p. 801).

Activism moved back across the Atlantic in the 1930s. It continued to denote engagement with public life, though not necessarily with states and governments. Members of the Activity Movement believed that school curricula should reflect the needs of children rather than rigidly defined academic subjects (Klein, 2003). These educators used the term activism to refer to their new pedagogical philosophy. Activism, first metaphysical and then macro-political, now denoted individual effort to achieve social transformation.

There is little mention of the word during the years of the Second World War, but in the 1950s a definition of activism emerged that combined the early twentieth century connotation of passionate political belief and the Progressive era connotation of personal engagement in social transformation. In an article on the political activity of the poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht, Boeninger (1955) defines activism as “a political attitude and program.” Brecht was an activist because he took up “residence in East-Berlin [sic] and participated in the theatrical and cultural life of the communist-controlled zone” (p. 387). Activism had come to mean personal engagement in activities that bring about political and social transformation. It had gained its contemporary usage. When scholarship of activism began in the following decade, scholars built on this meaning.

RESEARCH FROM TURMOIL

Activism became a focus of research in the 1960s in the United States, a time of “turmoil and crisis” when the “complacent, quiescent Eisenhower years” gave way to “outbursts of mass discontent” on issues ranging from the administration of institutions of higher education to demands for civil rights and opposition to the war in Vietnam (Sampson & Korn, 1970, pp. xii,

153). Students were particularly active in these mass actions, so activism was first studied as a student phenomenon. Called upon by the media to explain the causes of mass protest, scholars in the social sciences became “psychological newsmen” seeking to explain why a demographic group seemingly so content had risen up in protest (Sampson & Korn, 1970, p. xii). These scholars hypothesized that the seemingly constant student protests of that period were the result of biographical factors unrelated to the issues the students were protesting, such as the social class of their parents, the values of the family unit they were born into, or even their academic major (Fendrich & Tarleau, 1973; Sampson & Korn, 1970; Westby & Braungart, 1966).

In one of the first international comparative studies of activism, Bakke (1966) observed student protests in Mexico, Colombia, Japan, India, Egypt, and the USA and developed a definition of student activism with five dimensions: participant age, organization type, tactic type, leadership, and problematic nature. Yet Bakke is wary of developing a universal definition of student activism. He believes that the differences in activism behavior between different countries “could very well be more significant than the similarities,” making a “universally valid theory” unfeasible (p. 164).

ACTIVISM IN CONTEXT

This wariness of a universal definition of activism turned out to be prescient. There is still no universal definition of activism, only definitions of activism within particular contexts. Like Bakke’s (1961) own term, “student activism,” these contextual activisms tend to be compound terms where the word activism is modified by an adjective, to create terms such as environmental activism, youth activism, and protest activism. Though the new compound term is sometimes defined, the word activism is not.

Moreover, the nature of activism has changed over the years, particularly in the Western democracies where activism is most often studied. This change is due to the economic and cultural changes of post-industrialism and to the technological changes that resulted from the adoption of new information and communication technologies (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Lievrouw, 2011). As a result, describing activism is a bit like describing contemporary art. Though there are common features, every manifestation of activism is slightly different. Over time, new manifestations are constantly being created while others become less common or are significantly transformed. Conceptually, activism is a moving target.

ACTIVISM DIMENSIONS

Scholars tend to describe activism along four dimensions: participants, causes, tactics, and tools. These dimensions coincide with four distinct types of research questions (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Activism Dimensions		
Dimension	Core Concern	Associated Question
Participants	Who?	Who is engaging in activism?
Causes	Why? What?	Why does a particular activism effort exist? What is the effort trying to achieve?
Tactics	How?	How are participants in the effort taking action?
Tools	With what?	With what tools are participants taking action?

By using the term “student activism,” Bakke (1966) defines the activism he witnessed through the collective identity of the participants rather than by the particular causes they were fighting for. Events in the 1960s and 1970s, however, weakened the focus on participant identity as a way of classifying activism efforts. Scholars observed that individuals of multiple identities could be drawn to a cause. For example, middle class white students in the 1960s were quite active in the civil rights movement, advocating on behalf of African-Americans and often taking great personal risk to do so (McAdam, 1986). In another example, Gamson (1989) observed that

not only AIDS sufferers were active in efforts to push researchers and governments to develop treatments for the disease. As one HIV-negative participant said, “I'm here because I'm angry and I'm tired of seeing my friends die” (p. 354). Other forms of participant-specific activism, such as women’s activism, describe not only the participants, but also the cause (Hewitt, 2001). Women’s activism is not only by women, but also for women.

Rather than define an activism effort by its participants, many scholars define activism by its cause. Examples include environmental activism (DeLuca, 2005; Gerlach, 2001; Wapner, 1995), animal rights activism (Herzog, 2010), anti-sweatshop activism (Bair & Palpacuer, 2013), and AIDS activism (Brown, 1997; Gamson, 1989). These causes can be further broken down into two types. Bakke (1966) observes that activism protests an undesirable status quo or protests an undesirable future alteration of the status quo. Wilson (1961) would identify the first type of cause as assertive and the latter as defensive. Among the causes mentioned above, AIDS activism, which seeks to change the status quo by providing treatment, is assertive, while environmental activism, which seeks to protect nature, is often defensive. Other causes, such as anti-war activism, can be of either type. Before a nation goes to war, activism that opposes the planned war is defensive. Once hostilities begin, anti-war activism becomes assertive as it seeks to end a conflict that has already begun. Although the literature is not explicit on this point, beneficiaries of activism efforts tend to be individuals or groups that are either disadvantaged (in the case of assertive activism) or threatened (in the case of defensive activism). The activism effort seeks to increase their ability to realize their interests.

Yet describing activism based on participant identity and cause leaves open the question of what participants in activism actually do. Bakke (1966) makes an effort in this direction when he writes that student activism consists of engagement in “group activities the most frequent of

which is the mass demonstration” (p. 164). In one of the most detailed definitions of activism, Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) define activism in Western democracies as “a score above the population mean” on a standardized political participation scale of “legal acts by private citizens... aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions that they take” (p. 53-54, p. 1). These acts are specified as voting, involvement in electoral campaigns, communal and cooperative activity (such as campaign work outside of elections), and particularized contact with a government official regarding a personal issue.

Yet this list of actions represents only one view of what activities constitute activism. Yates (2014) asked squatters in Barcelona about their activism. “For me, activism and my life are super-mixed-up,” replied one respondent. “I don’t know where one starts and the other ends, but at the same time I try to not let activism take over my life totally” (pp. 10-11). When quizzed for specifics, another resident cited squatting instead of living in paid housing, refusing to pay for public transportation, and dumpster-diving for discarded food instead of purchasing food as forms of activism. Baumgardner and Richards (2010) and Alexander (2006) also define activism as acts of everyday defiance by cultural innovators. These definitions are quite different from Verba and colleagues’ definition of activism as forms of prescribed civic engagement.

In their study of environmental activism, Seguin, Pelletier, and Hunsley (1998) asked 732 self-defined environmental activists in Britain what their activism consisted of. The authors arrived at a list of six representative behaviors: participating in events organized by environmental groups, donating to those groups, circulating petitions advocating environmental policy change, voting for pro-environment candidates, participating in protests against environmental conditions, and writing letters to the manufacturers of harmful products. These

actions fall between the poles of dutiful civic engagement (Bennett, Wells & Rank, 2009), which adheres to law and convention, and a more rebellious form of activism, which flouts both.

In their focus on polite collective persuasion of government officials and business leaders, these British activists would likely be appalled at the activism of the squatters in Barcelona, and vice-versa, though both groups are more rebellious than Verba, Nie, and Kim's conventional influencers. The activities of activism are highly context-dependent. What constitutes activism differs from scholar to scholar and effort to effort. One person's defiance in personal consumption patterns may be another person's frivolous narcissism.

The final means of defining activism is through its tools. This method of description has become particularly popular since the integration of new information and communication technologies into activism, particularly the Internet. Many new terms for activism have emerged that reference the use of these new tools. Meikle (2004) defines Internet or Net activism as the "political uses of networked computers... to effect social or cultural change in the offline world" (pp. 4) while Hill & Hughes (1998) define it as the use of the Internet for political purposes. Jordan and Taylor (2004) use the portmanteau hacktivism to describe online direct action while McCaughey and Ayers (2003) define cyberactivism, or online activism, as simply political activism on the Internet. Digital activism is described as activism on the digital network, though the specificities of the activities undertaken are not mentioned (Joyce, 2010). Earl and Kimport (2011) use the term Web activism to describe use of the Internet's linked hypertext documents to coordinate, mobilize, and disseminate information about protest.

To complicate matters further, studies of activism rarely concentrate on participants, causes, tactics, or tools alone. Instead, most studies describe a particular instance of activism along a few dimensions. Scholars of different disciplines also tend to address different

dimensions of activism. Conklin (2008), an anthropologist, has studied how the use of new video communication technologies in the 1980s altered the way indigenous environmental activists in Brazil presented themselves to Western audiences, a study that addresses participant type, cause, and tools. Pickerill (2008), working within the computer-mediated communication (CMC) tradition, writes about environmental cyberprotest, the intersection of a particular tool and cause. Working from a social movements perspective, Gillan, Pickerill, and Webster (2011) look at how individuals use both new and old media in anti-war movements, focusing on two types of tools used for the same cause. Earl and Kimport (2011), working from a science, technology, and society (STS) perspective, explore the affordances of the Internet for activism as illustrated by four types of e-tactics (petitions, boycotts, and letter and e-mail-writing campaigns). Their perspective focuses on how Web-based tools are used for diverse tactical purposes. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) also view the Internet as having transformative effects on activism across a range of causes, particularly on the organizational structure of activism and the more personalized expressions of identity it affords. These patterns of mixed approach across theoretical perspectives continue into the most recent scholarship, with a particular emphasis on comparative approaches and attention to the use of new technologies (Akchurin & Cheol-Sung, 2013; Bair & Palpacuer, 2012; Velasquez & LaRose, 2014).

Though scholars agree that activism is an activity undertaken by individuals in order to protest the status quo or a proposed change to it, exactly what activities constitute activism differs according to context. The integration of new technologies as tools of contemporary activism further complicates this picture by introducing another sources of variation. Activism can be defined in the context of a group of participants, cause, or tool type, but a universal

definition of activism must necessarily remain broad in order to describe a diverse range of observed phenomena.

ACTIVISM ACTORS

Though activism can only be defined broadly, it does share some structural features that hold across multiple contexts. Most activism effort are composed of the actions of four types of actors, which are described in Figure 2 (Gamson, 1990). The challenger initiates the activism effort on behalf of a disadvantaged or threatened beneficiary group. That action usually includes the mobilization of a constituency of supporters who seek to influence a powerful antagonist. In the classical social movement model of activism, challengers mobilize constituents to influence antagonists in order that those antagonists take action to improve the welfare of beneficiaries.

Type	Description
Challenger	An individual or group that takes action alone or seeks to mobilize others to take action.
Antagonist	An individual, group, or social institution that must alter their decisions or policies in order for a challenger to correct a situation to which it objects.
Constituency	Individuals or groups whose resources and energy the challenger seeks in carrying out its efforts.
Beneficiary	Those individuals or groups whom the challenger hopes will be affected positively by the changes that it seeks.

An example of this type of activism structure is a nonprofit mobilizing sympathetic individuals to convince a government body to change a discriminatory law, where the group currently being discriminated against is the intended beneficiary of the effort.

However, there are exceptions to this pattern. In public communication campaigns, challengers seek to influence the beneficiary directly, and an antagonist is not involved (Valente, 2001). An effort to convince young people to practice safe sex is an example of this type of activism. In addition, some activism is carried out by one person rather than a collective. Here

the challenger is an individual and no constituency is mobilized. Challenging capitalism by reducing consumption or challenging oppressive gender norms by wearing gender-nonconforming clothing are examples of individual activism (Sauer, 2011; Yates, 2014), as is the work of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden.

ACTIVISM EFFORTS

Activism in different contexts is also similar in that it occurs through four types of activism efforts: individual actions, collective tactics, campaigns, and social movements (Figure 3). At each successive level, the scale and complexity of the unit increases, from the action of a solitary individual to the organizationally complex actions of a social movement. These units are nested within one another. A collective tactic is composed of multiple individual actions, a campaign is composed of multiple tactics, and a social movement is composed of multiple campaigns.

Figure 3: Basic Distinctions Among Activism Efforts	
Type	Description
Individual Action	Activism in which an individual takes action alone.
Collective Tactic	Activism in which a group of individuals take action together.
Campaign	Activism in which a group of tactics are undertaken together.
Social Movement	Activism in which groups of campaigns are undertaken together.

The individual is the fundamental unit of activism and can take action alone or collectively. All the other types of activism efforts, from collective tactics to campaigns to social movements are composed of individual actions. Scholars that take the individual as the unit of analysis analyze the factors that motivate participation, the organizational mechanics of participation, and the effect of participation on subsequent life choices and beliefs (Bailard, 2012; Bruns, Highfield & Burgess, 2013; Marwell, Aiken, and Demerath, 1987; Valenzuela, 2013). These scholars study individuals engaging in larger collective action. Because purely

individual forms of “everyday resistance,” such as choices about dress and consumption, are neither collective nor overtly political (state-oriented), they are often overlooked by scholars (Scott, 1989, p.33).

A collective tactic is a means by which a group seeks to influence an antagonist, constituent, or beneficiary. Sharp (2005), describing nonviolent activism, identifies three types of tactics: symbolic public displays that seek to persuade, noncooperation that withdraws existing support, and intervention that disrupts an unjust activity. Studies of tactics are relatively rare compared to studies of individuals and social movements and often explore how a given tactic or set of tactics are employed across contexts. Colby’s (1982) study of three violent and nonviolent tactics used during the civil rights movement, Earl’s (2006) study of four types of tactics using the Internet, King’s (2008) study of anti-corporate boycotts, and Sauter’s (2013) exploration of the use of online distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks are four examples of comparative tactical studies.

Although sometimes tactics are undertaken in isolation, when a series of tactics are carried out to achieve the same goal, the activism effort is called a campaign (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Ganz, 2006; Tilly, 2004). Changes to the organizational structure of activism wrought by the networked communication affordances of the Internet have made campaigns newly relevant. Rather than describing campaigns linearly as a series of tactics, Keck and Sikkink (1998) describe campaigns spatially as “strategically linked activities in which members of a diffuse principled network develop explicit, visible ties and mutually recognized roles toward a common goal (and generally against a common target)” (p. 228). Despite this assertion of the new relevance of campaigns, these units of analysis are also rarely studied compared to individuals and social movements. Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) and Bartley and Child (2011)

explore nonviolent and anti-sweatshop campaigns, respectively, the former in an international context, the latter within the US.

The boundary between the campaign and the next unit of analysis, the social movement, is fuzzy. Tilly (2004) defines a social movement as a campaign that employs particular tactics, and whose participants display worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. Rather than seeing a social movement as a particular type of campaign, Lakey (2011) suggests that campaigns are subsidiary units of social movements. “Movements often require a number of campaigns to achieve large goals,” he writes, “such as an end to U.S. white discrimination against blacks, or the independence of India.” Though the social movement is itself a highly contested term, social movements are generally defined as sustained collective challenges against antagonists that aim to overthrow or influence social institutions or structures (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Toch, 2013; Tarrow, 2011; Wilson, 1973; Zald & Ash, 1966).

Because there is such a rich body of theory on social movements, I will go into more detail on this type of activism effort than I did with the others. Social movement theory began in the United States in the 1960s with studies of collective action in the civil rights, student, and labor movements (Bakke, 1966; Lipsky, 1968; Olson, 1965). It grew into a substantive discipline in the following decade with the elaboration of theories of resources mobilization and protest dynamics (Eisinger, 1973; Fireman & Gamson, 1979; McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Beginning in the 1980s, scholars in the United States and Europe observed contemporary changes in activism and created new social movement (NSM) theories to describe them (Buechler, 1995). Where traditional social movement theory had viewed individuals as rational actors who mobilized resources to obtain collective goods from states, new social movement theories challenged these assumptions. Wapner (1995) observes that movements for peace,

human rights, women's rights, and the environment seek to influence both state and non-state actors, challenging the assumption that the government was a social movement's default antagonist (Tilly & Tarrow, 2006).

Scholars like Melucci (1985), Klandermans (1984), and Benford and Snow (1992) observe that perception of interests is not self-evident and based on rational analysis but is instead subjective and based on the presentation and interpretation of causes through processes of symbolic interaction, framing, and social construction. Causal factors external to the movement also gained more attention, with the elaboration of theories of opportunity structures and the political process model (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996; McAdam, 1999).

Because of the substantial number of social movements in Western democracies in the second half of the twentieth century, the social movement was the most studied activism effort in the past century. This popularity endures, even as the form of the social movement has changed. Recent scholarship has noted the changing role of collective identity in social movements as social media affords greater personal expression and personalization of movement frames (Bennett, Segerberg & Walker, 2014). Networked technologies also facilitate flatter, peer-to-peer structures in place of the hierarchical and centralized social movement structures of the past (Agarwal, Bennett, Johnson & Walker, 2014; Lievrouw, 2011).

Because social movements are large and visible and are linked to a rich and diverse range of theories of collective action, collective identity, resource mobilization, opportunity structures, and framing processes, they remain a common theoretical framework for the analysis of phenomena ranging from Occupy Wall Street (Costanza-Chock, 2012; Gleason, 2013), the 15M movement in Spain, (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2013), and the Arab Spring (Eltantawy & Wiest,

2011) to sports fandom (Millward & Poulton, 2014) and “ex-gay” pseudoscience (Waidzunus, 2013).

The scholarship of activism is marked by both continuity and (fittingly) rebellion as scholars adopt and adapt past theories to describe new forms of protest. While activism resists anything but a broad universal definition, there are common types of actors and structures that one finds across contexts. In describing activism, an open-ended definition seems not only practical but appropriate, as the causes, activities, and tools of activism are constantly evolving. For the purposes of this study, *activism will be defined as efforts that seek to change or prevent change to the status quo in order to improve or protect the welfare of some threatened or disadvantaged beneficiary using methods not limited to prescribed and conventional means of influencing antagonists.*

CHAPTER 3: ACTIVISM SUCCESS LITERATURE REVIEW

SUCCESS IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTIVISM

"Success is an elusive idea" writes Gamson (1990) in one of the earliest studies of activism success (p 28). He then goes on to enumerate a number of situations in which evaluating the success of a social movement would be difficult. What if an effort's organizers are honored while their supposed beneficiaries remain "in the same cheerless state"? "Is a group a failure if it collapses with no legacy save inspiration" to other challenger that take up the cause with more tangible results? Finally, Gamson addresses the problem of evaluating success for an effort with multiple goals and target antagonists, which achieves "some results with some targets and little or nothing with others." Gamson first asked these questions in 1975, and they have not yet been answered. Since then, new problems with the evaluation of success, such as determination of causality and accounting for costs, have been added to the list. As a result, the task of creating a universal definition for activism success has been abandoned in favor of activism evaluation by less normative measures.

In this chapter I will describe how the term success has lost favor among scholars due to conceptual and operational challenges. I will then explore two ways of conceptualizing success, goal achievement and realization of benefit, and the shortcoming of each. The last section of this chapter will explore how scholars are operationalizing success, and the shortcomings and challenges of these methods. Neither conceptual nor operational consensus exists on the question of how to measure activism success and this is an opportunity for future scholarly work.

It is worth noting that most of the theory in this chapter comes from the literature on social movements. This is because, as noted in the previous chapter, social movements receive more scholarly attention than any other type of activism effort. Though social movement theory

is rich and nuanced, what is true for social movements may not be true for individual actions, collective tactics, and campaigns. The preponderance of scholarly attention on the largest type of activism effort indicates a significant gap in the literature, and room for growth.

SIDESTEPPING SUCCESS

While early scholars of activism, such as Piven and Cloward (1979), Jenkins and Perrow (1977), and Gamson (1990), were willing to use the term success in their studies of activism, contemporary scholars are more chary with the word (Kolb, 2007). Seemingly neutral terms such as “impact” (Amenta & Young, 1999; Kriesi & Wisler, 1999; Luders, 2010), “effect” (Giugni, 1998, Salmon & Murray-Jones, 2013), “outcome” (Giugni, 1998), and “consequence” (Amenta & Caren, 2004; Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, & Su, 2010; Giugni, 1998; Kolb, 2007) are now in vogue. All of these terms indicate a scholarly interest in studying any result of an activism effort, without regard to whether that result is judged to be positive or desirable by some separate and more subjective criterion.

Yet these terms are not really neutral. They simply describe a wider range of phenomena than success does. As Salmon & Murray-Jones (2013) point out, effects (and also impacts, outcomes, and consequences) refer to states of affairs that are attributable to the activism effort’s intervention. Success, on the other hand, refers to a particular type of activism effect that is somehow desirable, positive, or beneficial. All successes are types of outcomes, but not all outcomes (or effects or consequences...) are successes.

While this non-normative approach is less prone to controversy than the normative approach of defining success, it sidesteps rather than resolves the problem of success definition. While scholars may be comfortable sidestepping the conceptual and methodological messiness of success, individuals and organizations engaged in activism care deeply about whether or not

their efforts succeed (Kanter & Paine, 2012). The task of defining activism success and finding criteria for measurement is an important task, regardless of its difficulty. In the next two sections I will explore the literatures on the two dimensions of activism success, goal achievement and realization of benefit.

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

“What constitutes a successful movement outcome?” Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander (1995) ask. Their answer is that “movements may be considered successful to the extent that they achieve their formally stated goals” (p. 282). The authors also suggest that goals can be defined as “*formally stated objectives*” and may be observed in “publicly presented in speech or writing to nonmovement actors such as movement targets, the media, or bystander publics” (p. 282). This view is intuitive and appealing. Salmon & Murray-Jones (2013) also suggest defining success based on goal achievement, which they define as “effectiveness... the ratio of achievements divided by expectations.” Based on this ratio, “an achievement or accomplishment is deemed successful or unsuccessful relative to what is desired or expected” (p. 100). Expectation is to Salmon and Murray-Jones what goal is to Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander. Goal achievement may be defined as *the extent to which an outcome enunciated in a formally stated objective actually occurs*.

Despite the conceptual clarity and the apparent ease of operationalization, defining success based on goal achievement alone is problematic in a number of ways (Figure 4). First, goals are multiple and vary across time and actors. Second, some goals are unobservable to researchers, who may misperceive the true intent of an activism effort. Third, goal achievement and non-achievement do not describe the full range of activism outcomes. There are many gradations of goal achievement that vary from effort to effort and it is difficult to create decision

rules in the abstract. Fourth, a unique focus on goal achievement distracts attention from another meaningful measure of evaluating activism success, which is realization of benefit.

Figure 4: Shortcoming of a Goal Achievement Criterion for Activism Success	
Type	Description
Multiplicity	Activism efforts have multiple goals, not all of which have equal importance.
Variation	Goals vary across time and across actors.
Limited Observability	Not all goals of an activism effort are publicly observable.
Non-Binary Nature	Goal achievement is not simply present or absent. Many activism efforts achieve a goal partially, and it may be difficult to determine to what extent this outcome represents success.
Error of Exclusive Measure	Even where goal achievement is a valid measure of activism success, it is but one measure.

Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander (1995), proponents of success evaluation by goal achievement, admit to the challenges of goal multiplicity and variability. They note that the goals of an activism effort, particularly a social movement, are multiple and vary across “a multiplicity of participants and of observers, each of whom may view movement goals differently.” Moreover, goals change over time. “[W]hich set of goals should we consider when deciding if success has been achieved?” the authors ask (pp. 281-282).

Though the social movement, a particularly complex activism structure, is likely to have a particularly large number of goals or goal perspectives, the same problem appears in defining the goals of a campaign or tactic. In any activism effort there are “rank and file participants,” leaders, antagonists, uninvolved bystanders, and media observers, all of whom may have an opinion about the goal or goals of the activism effort (Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander, 1995, p. 281). This problem of multiple goal perspectives is amplified by social media, which allows any participant to broadcast their own version of the goal, a signal that may confuse journalists or researchers (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

Another problem with evaluating activism success on the basis of goal achievement is that some goals may be unobservable to those outside the effort who rely on public goal statements that may not reflect the true intent of the activism effort (Amenta & Young, 1999). Goal statements, like other public statements by activism efforts, serve to influence external audiences, including the constituency, the antagonist, and the media, and transparency is often not desirable.

For example, online denial of service (DDOS) attacks overload websites with page requests and make them inaccessible to visitors, in effect barricading the virtual commercial property of an antagonist. One might expect that the goal of this tactic would be to effectively barricade the site. Yet this is not always the case. Wray (1998) and Sauter (2013) note that for one challenging group, the Electronic Disturbance Theater, “it was relatively unimportant... whether a given action was ‘successful,’ that is, whether it brought down a site.” Rather, “the number of participants and the amount of media coverage the action attracted were most relevant to a judgment of ‘success’ or ‘failure’” (Sauter, 2013, p. 988). In this case, reading a media report to ascertain the goals of an activism effort would be misleading. The media coverage itself was the true goal of the effort.

Popper (2002) notes that “[w]e hardly ever produce in social life precisely the effect that we wish to produce.... Things always turn out a bit differently” (p. 166). Latour (1991) also notes that the fate of a goal statement “is in the hands of others” (p. 105). “The force with which a speaker makes a statement is never enough... to predict the path the statement will follow. This path depends on what successive listeners do with the statement” (p.104). These two scholars are highlighting an additional problem in measuring success through goal achievement: incomplete achievement and unexpected outcomes.

Goals are often not achieved exactly as intended, making it difficult to determine the extent to which an outcome (the result of an effort) is consistent with the goal of that effort. For example, if an environmental campaign publicly seeks to protect 1,000 acres of forest from a mining project, and instead protects 800, this is not full goal achievement, but it also seems wrong to call it a complete absence of achievement. Yet what if only 200 or 300 acres were protected? What if the effort privately expected to protect only 500 acres? At what point is the effort no longer a success?

Non-numeric goals are even harder to evaluate. What if an activism effort wishes a particular individual to be named the first female member of an all-male corporate board? Another woman is named, but she is deemed less militant than the preferred candidate. Is the goal completely unachieved or does the naming of some woman (any woman) indicate some measure of goal achievement? There are a great number of activism efforts for which a calculus like this is necessary in the evaluation of success.

This uncertainty in outcomes as a result of social complexity is quite evident in activism, as is the existence of some middle state of goal achievement between full achievement and no achievement at all. “When we collected the data, we originally thought that we would analyze it using partial outcomes (i.e. limited success),” writes Chenoweth, describing her 2011 comparative study of nonviolent activism campaigns (2011, p. 2). However, she ultimately decided to use a dichotomous indicator of success, where success was achievement of the exact goal and failure was anything less. She and her coauthor did this because it was easier to establish complete success than limited or partial success. “Limited success is quite a fuzzy category,” she notes “and we ran into too many subjective judgments about the point at which a

campaign moved from a failure to a limited success” (p. 2). “Goal achievement,” notes Simon (1957), “is a matter of degree” (p. 177).

The fourth and final problem with evaluating success based on goal achievement is that this strategy can distract attention from important, but unintended, outcomes. “[A]lthough it would be foolish to ignore a challenger's stated goals, we argue that focusing on them alone would mean missing other important occurrences that might have resulted from the challenge,” argue Amenta & Young (1999, pp. 22-23). For example, what if a campaign fails in achieving its goal but increases awareness of its cause or raises funds from constituents? These kinds of unintended benefits should be included in the success calculation.

Evaluating the success of an activism effort based on goal achievement provides the researcher with an *ex ante* criterion against which the outcome of the effort can be judged. Though this method seems initially appealing, in reality an activism effort is likely to provide an array of signals of intent because goals are multiple and change across time and actors. In addition, even if one can argue that a goal enunciated at a particular time or by a particular actor is a valid signal, evaluating whether the intent implicit in that goal was actually realized is difficult because social life rarely proceeds as expected. For these reasons, an alternative measure of success is needed, not necessarily as a replacement for the goal achievement measure, but at least as a complement.

REALIZATION OF BENEFIT

In recent years, realization of benefit has gained currency as an alternative measure of activism success. In this section I will describe how determining whether an activism effort realizes benefit provides a more nuanced picture of activism success than considering goal achievement alone. I will then review the two types of activism benefits, direct and indirect. I

will then address the issue of costs. Though costs are rarely addressed in the literature of benefit, they should also be weighed in the determination of activism success. Finally, I will address the operational limitations of evaluating activism success through benefit.

An activism effort realizes benefit to the extent that the individual or group the effort is designed to benefit is in fact “affected positively” by that effort (Gamson, 1990, p. 16). Realization of benefit may be defined as *the extent to which the welfare of the beneficiary group improves as a result of the activism effort*. Writing in the context of public communication campaigns, Valente (2001) agrees that success is not measured by whether challengers feel that an effort has succeeded, but rather by the effect of the effort on those it was “created to benefit” (p. 105).

Considering benefit adds additional nuance to the goal achievement evaluation of activism success in a number of ways (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su, 2010). When benefit is also considered an outcome of goal achievement may appear less successful and an outcome in which the goal was not achieved may appear more successful.

When a goal is not achieved, but benefit is realized, the activism effort has realized some measure of success. This can occur when an effort acquires new resources, such as volunteers or elite allies, despite failing to achieve its intended goal. Likewise, if a goal is achieved, but benefit does not occur, then the effort has to some extent failed. This can occur when the challengers misjudge the effect of goal achievement, as when a city is convinced to set up a sexual assault hotline, but assault victims are too afraid to use it and thus do not benefit from it.

Goal achievement can also occur without benefit when a challenger misuses resources. For example, an anti-poverty nonprofit may succeed in reaching its fundraising goal, but may then use the money to renovate their headquarters or to give their director a bonus. In both cases

the nonprofit succeeded in achieving its goal but the impoverished individuals it supposedly intended to benefit were not positively affected. Despite goal achievement, the effort is not a complete success.

Activism efforts can provide two types of benefits: benefits that improve the situation of beneficiaries directly and benefits that improve the situation of the beneficiaries indirectly by providing the activism effort with resources. Many types of benefits can be either direct, and indirect, or both at once. Money is a benefit that can be direct (as when a subsidy is transferred directly to beneficiaries) or indirect (as when a challenging organization raises money to fund their future activism work). Positive media coverage is a benefit that can be direct and indirect at the same time. For example, if there is an increase in sympathetic media coverage of transgender people, members of the public who are transgender may feel immediately validated. In addition, this media coverage increases awareness of the concerns of transgender people and the perceived importance of those concerns, making it easier for challengers to gain support for future demands.

A change in status is a form of direct benefit. For a group, a change in status is usually the result of some legal action that establishes a new right or removes discriminatory policies (Wilson, 1961). A change in status can also affect an individual. Gamson (1990) uses the word inclusion to describe an outcome in which a member of the beneficiary group becomes part of the structure of the antagonist organization. When a woman becomes a member of an all-male corporate board or person of color wins the power of public office, these are examples of inclusion. Activism efforts that result in this form of “institutionalized participation are both more durable and more productive of further reforms” than outcomes in which the beneficiary group remains excluded from the antagonist organization (Tarrow, 1983, p. 45).

Resources can be either direct or indirect benefits. However, in the literature of social movements, particularly the literature of resource mobilization, a resource is an indirect benefit because it is an asset to the activism effort. In this literature, benefits are assets acquired by an activism effort which allows that effort to continue demanding benefits for the beneficiary group. Freeman (1979) suggests that resources be categorized as tangible (money, facilities, means of communication) or intangible (human assets). Edwards and McCarthy (2004) present a five-part typology of resources, which are moral (such as legitimacy and support), cultural (specialized knowledge and skills), social-organizational (purpose-built and appropriated organizational structures), human (applied labor), and material (money, workspace, supplies). Tufekci (2013) argues that attention should also be considered a resource. “The microcelebrity activist is not monopolistically dependent on mass media for [the] attention of broader publics,” she writes. Through social media, an activism effort can easily gain an audience of “tens of millions of people in just one or two degrees” of connection (p. 867).

Changes in perceptions are a type of resource whose benefit can either be direct or indirect. Nagel (1995) describes how positive change in self-perception is a form of direct benefit. She uses an analysis of U.S. census data to show that the number of Americans identifying their race as American Indian more than tripled between 1960 and 1990. Nagel attributes this “ethnic switching” to the American Indian Movement, active in the 1960s and 70s, and the “atmosphere of increased resources, ethnic grievances, ethnic pride, and civil rights activism that... galvanized a generation of Native Americans” to feel new pride in their ethnicity (pp. 947; 956).

Changing perceptions not only gives individuals the direct benefit of a greater sense of self-worth, it also provides the indirect benefit of increasing the pool of constituents for an

activism effort (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Atkin and Freimuth (2013) offer a four-part typology of changes in perception that make an individual more likely to take action on behalf of an activism effort: increasing an individual's knowledge or awareness of an effort, causing an individual to have a positive disposition toward the effort, increasing an individual's perception of the effort's importance, and increasing an individual's perception of self-efficacy.

Individual changes in perception can be an indirect benefit to an activism effort, even if the individual does not participate, so long as their favorable opinion is publicly recorded. The mechanism for this benefit is what Kolb (2007) calls the "public preference mechanism." If an activism effort can mobilize public opinion on its behalf, target antagonists might shift their behavior in ways that are consistent with these revealed public preferences (p. 77). When a target antagonist shifts his or her behavior because their current actions are viewed as unpopular, it is called rational anticipation or, in the case of government antagonists, dynamic representation (Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson, 1995).

Finally, activism efforts can indirectly benefit one another through the transfer of physical resources, tactics, knowledge, personnel, and organizational structure. Whittier (2010) notes that the women's movement emerged in the United States "in the late 1960s with... groups formed primarily by women active in the civil rights and New Left movements" (p. 19). The women's movement in turn seeded or strengthened a number of subsidiary activism efforts aimed at improving the economic independence of women and the health and safety of children. In a more contemporary example, Occupy Wall Street, which opposed corporate capitalism, gave way to a series of occupations around the world that used the tactics and framing of Occupy but for different ends, including the protection of squatters' rights in Brazil and the protection of public green spaces in Armenia and Turkey (Aghajanian, 2012; Catterall, 2013; Moreira, 2012).

There is one additional factor to consider when evaluating the extent to which benefit has been realized, and that is cost. Baldwin's (2000) concept of "net success" measures success as "the value of the final achievement... weighed against the cost of that achievement" (p. 172). McAdam (1986) defines costs as "expenditures of time, money, and energy" (p. 67).

But the costs of activism may far exceed expenditures of resources. As Amenta and Caren (2004) note, "challengers may do worse than fail" (p. 463). Participation in activism, particularly in repressive countries, can result in intimidation, humiliation, injury, and even death to constituents and beneficiaries. The Internet makes it easier to document and disseminate accounts of these harmful costs. Sometimes, dissemination of these accounts incites moral outrage and further mobilization (Emon, Lust, & Macklin, 2011). Yet, as Pearce and Kendzior (2012) note, "greater documentation and publicizing of suppressed dissent can derail political protest" because "making an example out of online dissenters... affirm[s] the futility of activism to a disillusioned public" (p. 284). A cost may be defined as *a resource expenditure or physical harm that is the result of an activism effort*.

Like benefits, costs can also be direct or indirect. Direct costs accrue to the beneficiary. This can happen when discrimination is made more severe as a punishment for activism. Indirect costs accrue to the challenger. Staff salaries paid by a challenging organization are an example of indirect costs. Costs are an important, though largely unrecognized, element of a thorough evaluation of activism success.

Though realization of benefit provides a more nuanced picture of activism success than an evaluation of goal achievement alone, it is more difficult to operationalize. This is because the goal provides the researcher with an *ex ante* signal which dictates the terms on which the success of an activism effort should be evaluated (ie, They wanted to block the passage of this

law, let's see if they succeeded in that aim). Unless an activism effort is explicit about the benefit they intend to realize, there may be no such signal to aid researchers in evaluating the outcome.

While the list of benefit types just presented could be applied in the abstract (Did the effort gain attention? Did they gain inclusion? Did they gain money?), such a universal list would not apply to every effort. For example, should an effort by a group of bloggers that seeks to free an imprisoned fellow blogger, and succeeds in that goal, be penalized because they did not also raise money?

Because no group of benefits is relevant to all activism efforts, the determination of what benefits are relevant becomes subjective. In addition, the researcher may not be fully aware of the benefits the activism effort has achieved. Also, challenger groups may overstate the benefit they realize, particularly if they failed to achieve their goal, because they wish to maintain constituent and staff morale and donor support. Though net realization of benefit is conceptually valuable, it is difficult to operationalization because there is no consensus on which benefits (and costs) should be included in the evaluation of activism success.

MEASURES OF ACTIVISM SUCCESS

“Because of the complexity of theoretical arguments and data limitations on movements and their activities, scholars typically employ case or small-N studies,” note Amenta, Yang, Chiarello, and Su (2010). This methodological pattern holds true not only for past studies, but also new studies of contemporary activism using networked technologies (see for example Gilad, Erhardt, Ananny, Gaffney & Pearce, 2011; Benkler, Roberts, Faris, Solow-Niederman & Etling, 2013). “[T]he methodological dominance of the case study approach” is operationally problematic (McAdam, 1995, p. 218). It means that formal operationalizations of activism

concepts are less common than one might expect because small-N studies do not require them. Below are examples of how the few scholars who have operationalized activism success have done so.

In their 2011 study of nonviolent campaigns, Chenoweth and Stephan define a campaign as successful using the goal achievement criterion. In their definition, a successful campaign is one that attains full achievement of its stated goals within a year of peak activity (highest level of participation), and has a “discernible effect on the outcome” (p. 13). The authors use a three-level ordinal variable to measure this concept of success. The first variable is called “success” and indicates whether or not the campaign “achieved 100% of its stated goals” (Chenoweth, 2011, p. 31). The second variable, “limited,” indicates whether the campaign achieved some of its stated goals, further specifying that “[w]hen a regime makes concessions to the campaign or reforms short of complete campaign success, such reforms are counted as limited success” (p. 32). The final variable, “failure” indicates whether the campaign “achieved none of its stated goals” and includes campaigns that were suppressed by their governments (p. 32). If campaign success were a 100-point scale, using this system a score of 100 would be coded a “success,” a score of zero would be coded “failure,” and any outcome between complete failure and complete success (one through 99) would be coded “limited.” Despite the middle category, there is little nuance in this system.

Other scholars do not use generalized goal achievement as a measure of success. Rather, they specify the outcomes they expect to see and link them to an ordinal or additive measure of success. These operationalizations tend to be valid for a particular type of activism effort and the work of Schumaker (1975) and Banaszak (1996) are examples of this method.

Banaszak, writing about suffrage movements in Western democracies, suggests that success can only be evaluated by comparing a series of activism outcomes. "As suffrage organizations fought to achieve voting rights for women, they first had to achieve a number of intermediate victories along the way," she writes (p. 73). These four stepwise achievements are the drafting of bills considered by legislatures, the passage of these bills into law, the passage of popular referenda to amend state and national constitutions, and final enfranchisement (female voting). Because Banaszak uses a small number of case studies, she evaluates these steps qualitatively, but one could imagine developing variables from her explication of success.

Schumaker is interested in campaigns that seek to achieve policy responses from municipal governments in the United States. In this context, success is "policy responsiveness... the degree to which those in the political system adopt legislation or policy congruent with the manifest demands of protest groups" (p.494). Schumaker then operationalizes this concept using a five-level ordinal scale: repressive responses, no action, minimal policy responses, compromise responses, and responsive policy actions. His study is a content analysis and coders are instructed to "consider all of the available qualitative data for each incident, to derive impressions of the relative value of each variable for each incident, and to measure their impressions by using a five-point ordinal scale" (p. 505).

What the narrow measures gain in precision, they lose in generalizability. Schumaker's five-point scale only applies to campaigns in which policy change is sought, just as Banaszak's scale only applies to campaigns to achieve suffrage via legislative means. Furthermore, these methods of operationalization rely primarily or exclusively on goal achievement to measure success and are designed to describe activism outcomes in Western democracies. While both Schumaker and Chenoweth and Stephan do account from unintended costs (repression and

suppression, respectively), they do not account for unintended benefits. There is work to do not only in the conceptualization of activism success, but also in its operationalization.

Causality is an additional operational challenge in measuring activism success. “The principal difficulty is how to establish a causal relationship between a series of events,” notes Giugni (1998, p.373). “Important developments sometimes happen in the wake of social movements,” caution Amenta and Young (1999), “[b]ut it is premature to call these developments outcomes or results” because the events may be caused by forces other than the activism effort (p. 23). For this reason “scholars need to assess the individual impact of challengers” or their impact in interaction with the other potential influences (Amenta & Caren, 2004, p. 462). If an activism effort does not cause an outcome, that outcome cannot be a success of the effort.

The potential causal influences Amenta and Caren refer to may or may not be observable to the researcher. For example, the American campaign that blocked SOPA and PIPA, two Internet bills unpopular with freedom of expression advocates, was widely heralded for its use of online tactics, such as a coordinated blackout of popular webpages and active public discourse on small technology-focused news sites (Benkler, Roberts, Faris, Solow-Niederman, & Etling, 2013; Condon, 2012; Oz, 2012). Yet behind-the-scenes lobbying played a significant role as well. While lobbying in favor of the bills by old broadcast media companies like Comcast, News Corporation and Time Warner was widely demonized by the bills’ opponents, new Internet-based media companies like Google lobbied hard on the side of activists. One CNN journalist noted that Comcast “was by far the biggest lobbyist, spending upwards of \$5 million on the issue,” while underplaying the fact that Google spent \$4 million to oppose the bill (Goldman, 2012).

Online tactics may very well have exemplified social mobilization in the networked public sphere (Benkler et al., 2013) and information-age citizenship (Meinrath & Ammori, 2012), but it is harder to know what the causal impact of this activity was, relative to other factors. While the effect of lobbying is in some way observable due to transparency regulations in the United States, in many countries this would not be the case. Where lobbying is more effectively hidden, the influence of behind-the-scenes activities external to the activism effort can be even harder to quantify.

Activism success is best measured through goal achievement and net realization of benefit, yet neither form of measurement is straightforward. The following chapter will address this complexity in more detail and provide suggestions for measuring activism success in the face of both conceptual and operational challenges.

CHAPTER 4: EXPLICATION

Activism success is not an objective reality. It is a label that may be applied to certain outcomes of activism based on certain criteria. Only rarely will an activism effort be either a complete success or, in the absence of success, a complete failure. All outcomes of activism exist along a continuum, where some outcomes can be more confidently identified as successes or failures, but many outcomes fall somewhere in between. Both the conceptualization and operationalization of activism success should reflect this nuance to the greatest extent feasible. The first section of this chapter explores the ambiguous nature of the concept of activism success and the following section considers methods of operationalizing five outcomes of activism that are relevant to the evaluation of success.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Net Goal Achievement and Net Realization of Benefit

Until this point activism success has been measured along two dimensions: realization of benefit and goal achievement. In this section I will expand these concepts into more inclusive and accurate terms. These new terms are net realization of benefit and net goal achievement. While realization of benefit only takes into account ways in which the welfare of the beneficiaries has improved as a result of the effort, net realization of benefit also takes into account the costs of the effort. While measurement of success by goal achievement only takes into account the extent to which goal were achieved, net goal achievement also takes into goals that were not achieved.

Activism success may now be defined along two improved dimensions: net realization of benefit and net goal achievement. When one subtracts the costs of an activism effort from the benefits of an activism effort, the result is the net realization of benefit. When benefits are

greater than costs, the net benefit will be positive. When costs are greater than benefits, the net benefit will be negative. By the net benefit dimension, an activism effort is successful to the extent that benefits exceed costs.

The second dimension of activism success is goal achievement. When one subtracts the portion of goals that are unachieved from the portion of the goals that are achieved, the result is the net goal achievement. Unlike net realization of benefit, net goal achievement will never be negative. Its maximum value corresponds to full achievement of all goals and its minimum value, zero, corresponds to the achievement of no goal. Conceptually, one may consider the calculation of net goal achievement as a graph like the one below.

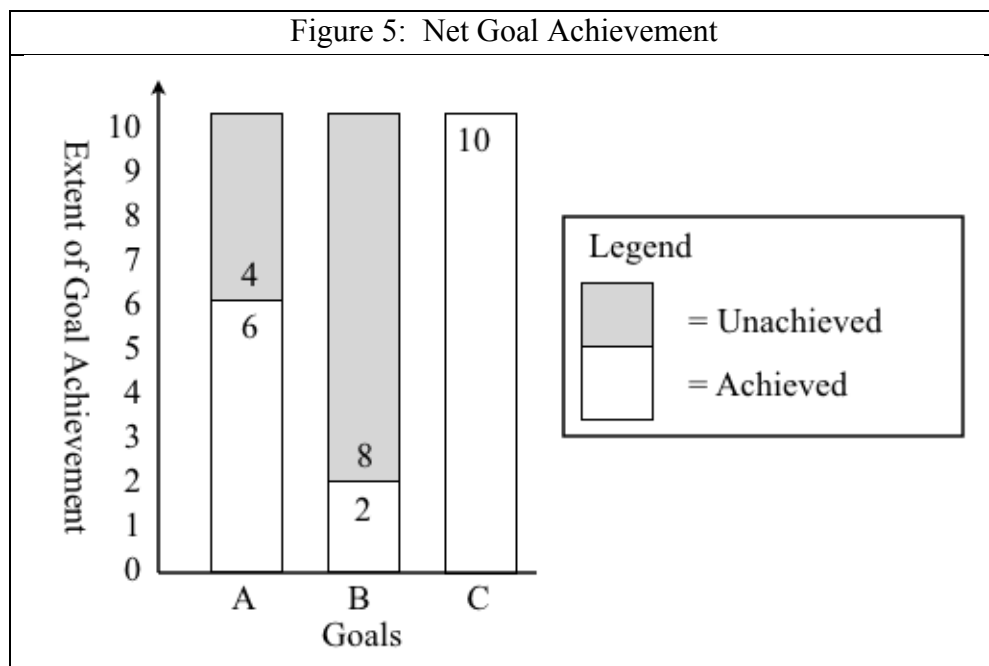


Figure 5 represents an analysis of goal achievement for a campaign with three goals (A, B, and C) where the achievement of each goal is measured on a ten-point scale ranging from 0 (no goal achievement) to 10 (complete goal achievement) for each goal. The white area of each bar indicates the extent to which each goal was achieved and the gray area represents the extent to

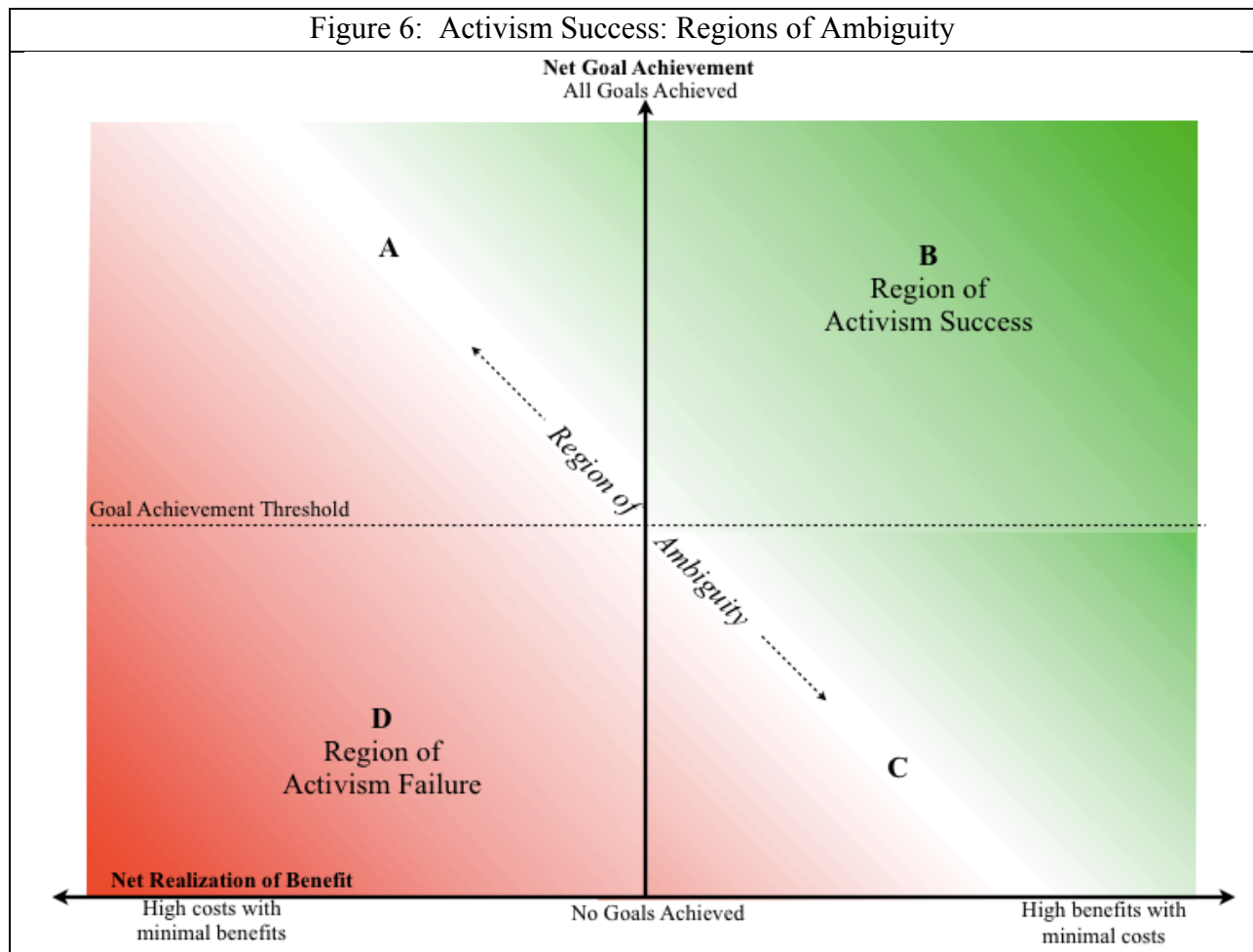
which the goal was not achieved. Because this hypothetical campaign intended to achieve three goals, each on a ten-point scale, its initial goal score is 30. The graph reveals that only the C goal was entirely achieved, resulting in an achievement score of 10. The other two goals, A and B, were not fully achieved. Their achievement scores are six and two respectively. To calculate net goal achievement, one would subtract the quantity of the goals that were unachieved, 12 (8 + 4 + 0), from the quantity of goals initially put forth by the activism effort, 30 (10 + 10 + 10), to arrive at a net goal achievement score of 18. It might also be useful to express the quotient of goal achievement as a percent. A goal achievement score of 18, divided by an initial goal score of 30, results in a goal achievement quotient of 0.6. This means that the activism effort achieved 60% of its goals.

Despite the clarity of this model, this type of operationalization would only work in a context in which goals were comparable to one another, so that their scores could be meaningfully compared. The goals would also need to be meaningfully measurable on a numeric scale such that a one-unit change at any point in the scale would be equivalent to a one-unit change at any other point in the scale. By the net goal achievement dimension, an activism effort is successful to the extent that goals achieved exceed those unachieved.

Combining the net benefit and net goal achievement dimensions, activism is successful to the extent that benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved. To be more complete, *activism success is the outcome of an effort that seeks to change or prevent change to the status quo in order to improve or protect the welfare of some threatened or disadvantaged beneficiary, using methods not limited to prescribed and conventional means of influencing antagonists, in which benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved.* This is a preliminary conceptual definition of activism success.

A Matrix Model of Activism Success

Despite its brevity and apparent clarity, this preliminary conceptual definition implies substantial ambiguity. The ambiguity implied by the intersection of these two dimensions is represented in Figure 6.



The vertical axis of Figure 6 represents net goal achievement and the horizontal axis represents net realization of benefit. Through the middle of the y-axis is a horizontal line marked goal achievement threshold. Above this line (regions A and B), more goals are achieved than unachieved. Below this line (regions C and D), more goals are unachieved than achieved. A

goal cannot be negatively achieved, only unachieved. For this reason, the lower limit of the vertical y-axis is zero.

The horizontal x-axis represents net realization of benefit. Because this value can be both conceptually positive (a benefit) and negative (a cost), the axis represents both positive and negative values as well, and its midpoint is zero. For values less than zero (regions A and D), costs exceed benefits. For values greater than zero (regions B and C), benefits exceed costs. At the zero point, costs and benefits are equal.

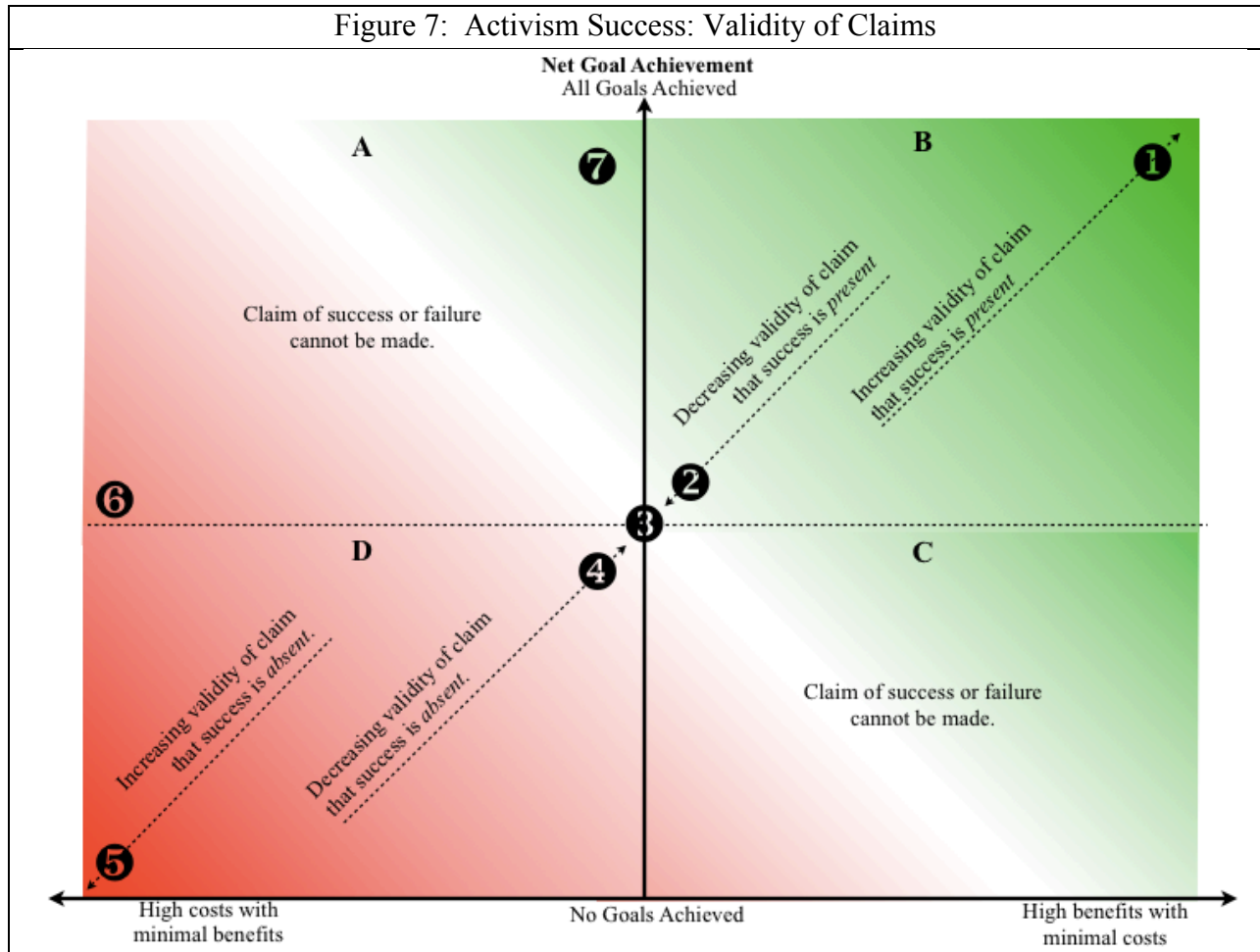
The vertical axis and the horizontal goal achievement threshold break the matrix into four regions labeled A through D. In region A goals achieved exceed goals unachieved, but costs exceed benefits. In region B goals achieved exceed goals unachieved and benefits exceed costs. By contrast, in region C goals unachieved exceed goals achieved, but benefits exceed costs. In region D, unachieved goals also exceed goals achieved and costs exceed benefits.

The matrix is tinted in green and red to create regions that fade as they approach the diagonal. The green region indicates successful outcomes and the red region indicates failed (unsuccessful) outcomes. The brighter the color, the more substantial is the evidence for labeling an activism outcome a success or a failure, the paler the color, the less evidence there is for such a claim. This variation in color is meant to visually represent what the previous descriptions of the regions indicated: there are significant areas of ambiguity in which it is difficult or even impossible to make valid claims about success and failure.

While valid claims of success and failure can be made in regions B and D, such claims are not possible in regions A and C because indicators of goal achievement and benefit realization contradict one another. In region A, while more goals are achieved than unachieved (an indicator of success), costs exceed benefits (an indicator of failure). In region C, while

benefits exceed costs (an indicator of success), more goals are unachieved than achieved (an indicator of failure).

Figure 7 illustrates how claims of unmitigated success and unmitigated failure are invalid for most activism outcomes.



The upper-right corner of region B (marked 1) represents an activism outcome in which all goals are achieved and substantial benefits outweigh minimal costs. This area is tinted bright green to indicate that there is maximal validity for making a claim of activism success. Yet, as one moves down the diagonal to the left, the tone of green becomes paler. This is to indicate that,

while benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved for all of region B, the number of unrealized goals and costs increases as one moves downward.

As one approaches the center of the diagram (marked 2), goals achieved and unachieved are balanced, and so are benefits and costs. While one could still make a claim of activism success at this point, that claim would have less validity because goals achieved barely exceed those unachieved and benefits barely exceed costs. At the goal achievement threshold, where these two dimensions are both evenly balanced (3), an evaluation of success or failure is impossible and as a result the region is tinted white.

Crossing the vertical axis into region D, goals unachieved barely exceed those achieved and costs barely exceed benefits (4). This is the region of failure, though the outcome is empirically quite similar to the outcome across the axis in area 2. In positions 2 and 4 goal achievement and non-achievement and benefit and costs are closely balanced. Moving down into the bottom corner or region D (5), as the proportion of both costs and unachieved goals increases, a label of failure (absence of success) becomes increasingly valid.

Though ambiguity increases in regions B and D as one approaches the diagonal, ambiguity is even greater in regions A and C. In region A, though goals achieved always outweigh those unachieved (an indicator of success), costs always outweigh benefits (an indicator of failure). The lower-left corner of region A (6) is red because costs are highest while goals achieved are lowest. The upper-right corner of region A (7) is tinted green because costs are lowest while the proportion of goals achieved is highest. Yet it would still be difficult to make a valid claim of either success or failure because costs outweigh benefits in the entire region. Region C has a similar ambiguity problem. In the entire region goals unachieved always

outweigh those achieved (an indicator of failure) even as benefit always exceed costs (an indicator of success).

This conceptual ambiguity has important implications for the operationalization of activism success. Labeling an activism effort an unmitigated success or unmitigated failure will only be valid in situations where goal achievement and net benefit coincide, that is, where achievement is combined with positive net benefit (both indicating success) or where lack of achievement is combined with negative net benefit (both indicating failure). Measures of activism success where these two measures do not coincide will be ambiguous because indicators of success and failure are both present.

OPERATIONALIZATION

Combining the two dimensions of activism success, goal achievement and net benefit, creates ambiguity because indicators of success and failure may be present in the same outcome. To avoid this ambiguity, one may operationalize these dimensions separately and limit the extent of success and failure claims to the dimensions one has measured. One should also be explicit about what dimensions were not operationalized. This section will describe and explore possibilities and challenges for operationalizing five success-relevant outcomes of activism and then present suggestions for operationalizing activism success in light of these constraints.

When measuring the dimensions of goal achievement and net benefit, the researcher should be attentive to five types of success-relevant outcomes. These outcomes are:

1. Goals Achievement
2. Realization of Intended Benefit
3. Realization of Unintended Benefit
4. Incursion of Intended Costs

5. Incursion of Unintended Costs

These outcome types should be largely familiar, though I am also highlighting an additional factor, intent, which means will or purpose. Intent is not new. It is implicit in goal achievement because all goals are intentional. (Goals are the formally stated objectives the effort intends to achieve.) Benefits and costs may be intentional or unintentional, as this section will describe. The reason for making intent explicit in this operationalization section is that it is easy to forget to measure unintended benefits and costs. They are nevertheless a valuable part of the net benefit calculation, and to the extent that they can be measured, evaluation of activism success will be more accurate.

What does it mean to operationalize dimensions separately and to be explicit about dimensions that are not included? The operationalization of Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) provides an opportunity for illustration. These authors operationalized the success of nonviolent campaigns using a measure of goal achievement. Their measure of goal achievement has three levels: full achievement (all goal completely achieved), limited achievement (some goals achieved or concessions made by target antagonist), and failure (no goals achieved with the possibility of government suppression). Rather than calling their operationalization a measure of campaign success, it would be more accurate to call it a measure of goal achievement, with unintended costs (suppression) taken into account in one level of the measure. Both intended costs and intended and unintended benefits are not accounted for. The authors are attentive to whether these nonviolent campaigns achieved one of three goals (regime change, secession, ending an occupation), not the extent to which the achievement of these goals actually benefited the citizens on whose behalf these efforts were launched.

Based on this operationalization, Chenoweth and Stephan can say that the campaigns they studied were or were not successful in achieving their goals, but they cannot make claims about realization of intended or unintended benefits or intended costs and can only make limited claims about the incursion of unintended costs, specifically in cases of suppression. The preceding example illustrates one limited operationalization of activism success. Below are some suggestions for additional methods of operationalizing activism success using the five success-relevant outcomes of activism.

Goal Achievement

Goal achievement is the extent to which an outcome enunciated in a formally stated objective actually occurs. There are multiple challenges for the operationalization of goal achievement, the extent to which an outcome enunciated in a formally stated objective actually occurs. An activism effort's goals are likely to be multiple and to vary across time and actors. Challengers, constituents, beneficiaries, antagonists, and attentive observers (such as journalists) may all perceive the goals of the activism effort differently.

The goals of these different groups also vary in observability. Though their information may be incomplete, the perspectives of journalists are the most easily observed by researchers because they are published. Constituents may also share their views via social media, though those views may be dispersed. Certain platform features, such as hashtags on Twitter, serve to aggregate diverse perspectives on a topic, making these opinions more accessible to the researcher. Constituents and beneficiaries may also display their goal perspectives on signs at physical rallies and protests, an offline content aggregating system that facilitates researcher observation. While challengers have the most information about the activism efforts they organize, their views may be biased because they want their effort to appear to be successful.

Challenger goals may also not be made public, so interviewing and surveying may be necessary to ascertain this information.

When selecting a goal statement, it is best to focus on a specific actor at a specific time. If one chooses to study the goals statements of diverse actors at diverse times, these perspectives may vary slightly from one another, making the identification of discrete goals difficult. For example, the goals of a hypothetical campaign could be expressed across time and actors as “down with the regime,” “down with the President,” and “President: resign.” These statements imply a desire for discrete but overlapping outcomes. If, for example, the president fails to resign formally but flees the country, and some top officials resign while others stay in power, it would be most accurate to say that some part of some goals were realized while others were not. This is an accurate evaluation, but highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of a particular outcome makes direct comparison between efforts difficult.

Where identifying a single goal is desirable, one must make an argument for which goal statement or statements one will base one’s evaluation on, and then use that measure consistently across multiple activism effort. One could select a single goal based on the consensus observations of journalists, the social media consensus of participants, formal statements of challengers, internal goal statements not shared with the public, the earliest public statement, or the most recent. Of the above sources, ascertaining intent directly from challengers and participating constituents would likely provide the most complete and accurate range of goal statements. Relying on news reports has the benefit of increased objectivity and increased accessibility to researchers, but will be incomplete, as only public goals in a brief time period will be recorded.

In addition, goal achievement is not a binary condition, but a continuum. Evaluation requires a way of accounting for partial goal achievement. As Popper (2002) and Latour (1991) observe, goal achievement in social life is contingent on the negotiation of wills across a range of actors. Partial goal achievement describes an outcome that is more desirable than the initial condition but is not the exact outcome requested in the goal. For example, a union effort to realize a 15% wage increase that realizes a 10% increase or a campaign that aims to free a political prisoner, where the prisoner is instead released on bail, both have realized partial goal achievement. Any measure of goal achievement should account for these outcomes of partial achievement.

To measure the extent of goal achievement, it is helpful to have some expectation of the range of possible outcomes. Otherwise one is forced extrapolate from goal statements to infer whether the challenging group would find an observed outcomes desirable. Rather than extrapolating, it would be preferable to use a qualitative approach to analyze campaigns with the same goals and develop a list of possible outcomes from those that have already occurred. Using this method the measurement instrument would be highly accurate, but only applicable to a limited range of activism efforts, like the stepwise goal achievement measures of policy responsiveness (Schumaker, 1975) and achievement of female suffrage (Banaszak, 1996). These types of stepwise measures also require one to rank different outcomes as being more or less desirable based on observed goal statements. This ranking will almost always require researcher inference, since activism efforts rarely publicize acceptable outcomes other than full achievement of their goal.

Labeling an outcome a partial success allows for categorization of diverse outcomes, but nuance is lost. In the example above, achieving a 10% pay increase for workers and achieving

the temporary release of a political prisoner are both partial successes, but they are quite different outcomes. Rather than describing both as partial successes, one could describe the former as realizing a financial concession and the latter as realizing a judicial concession (or some similar distinction). This type of list could also be generated using a qualitative analysis of a range of effort outcomes, but would require substantial additional time and resources. A simple categorical measure of goal achievement that accounts for partial achievement is efficient despite sacrifices in specificity.

Intended Benefit

The intended benefit of an activism effort is *the improvement to the welfare of the beneficiary that the effort aims to realize through the achievement of its goal*. Sometimes the benefit that will result from achievement of the goal may be included in the goal statement. For example, an activism effort may seek to prevent a mining operation in order to protect human settlement and natural habitat. Here the goal is to prevent the mining operation and the intended benefits are to protect the welfare of humans and the environment. In other cases, an activism effort may imply the benefit they seek. A campaign's goal may be to protect pensions from budget cuts. Though not stated, the implied benefit is to protect the elderly from financial precariousness. When the goal of pension protection is achieved, the benefit of reducing precariousness is also realized.

However, sometimes goal achievement does not imply the realization of benefit. A recent example is the Justice for Trayvon Martin campaign, which aimed to have the alleged murderer of Trayvon Martin prosecuted. After massive nationwide mobilization, the alleged killer was in fact prosecuted, but he was ultimately acquitted, leaving the evaluation of success

ambiguous. The campaign was successful in realizing its intended goal (prosecution of the alleged murderer) but did not realize its intended benefit (justice for Trayvon and his family).

When measuring intended benefit, it makes sense to divide the task into measures of direct and indirect benefits. To ascertain realization of indirect intended benefits, the perspectives of challengers are most useful. This is because indirect benefits accrue to the challengers organizing the activism effort, such as a nonprofit organization. To ascertain realization of direct benefits, the perspectives of beneficiaries are most valid. This is because direct benefits accrue to beneficiaries. While in many cases interviews or surveys will be needed to determine if beneficiaries and challengers feel the effort provided intended benefit, where an effort has received substantial media coverage, one may be able to discern opinions on benefit from news reports. For example, one could search news reports to learn to what extent Trayvon Martin's parents felt that the campaign brought justice for their son.

Unintended Benefit

Unintended benefit is *improvement to the welfare of the beneficiary that the effort did not aim to realize*. Despite difficulties in operationalizing goal achievement and intended benefit, it is even harder to measure unintended benefit. This is because a goal statement creates the expectation of an outcome that acts as a point of reference for the researcher. When a benefit is unintentional, the researcher does not have a point of reference from which to measure success. This makes measurement more difficult, because the researcher must determine independently which benefits he or she will attempt to observe.

The literature provides some guidance on what benefits one can look for in activism outcomes: direct and indirect transfer of tangible resources, intangible shifts in perception by beneficiaries and constituents, direct increases in status. Yet the diversity is tremendous.

Everything from new skills and tactics to increases in beneficiary status and improved relationships with antagonists are benefits, and may be intended or unintended.

To ascertain indirect unintended benefits, one should talk to challengers to learn the resources they unintentionally gained as a result of the effort. To ascertain unintended direct benefits, one should talk to beneficiaries. Questions about unintended benefits could be presented to the in the form of a survey or in an interview. Because the concept of an unintended benefit may be unclear to either type of interview subject, it may be useful to prepare clarifying examples (Did you receive unexpected donations? Did you gain unexpected Twitter followers?).

Unintended Cost

An unintended cost is *a resource expenditure or physical harm that an activism effort did not aim to incur*. Developing a list of the benefits of activism would go a long way toward measuring activism's unintended costs, since the two concepts have an inverse relationship. If developing new donor interest by raising the profile of the organization is an unintended benefit, then alienating a donor by mounting a controversial campaign would be an unintended cost. If complementary press coverage for a celebrity spokesperson (which makes the spokesperson more enthusiastic about the cause) is an unintended benefit of an activism effort, then critical press attention of a celebrity spokesperson (which makes the individual less enthusiastic about being associated with the cause) would be an unintended cost. Fully evaluating activism success requires the evaluation of unintended benefits and costs, yet perspectives on what these benefits and costs are is insufficient.

Talking to beneficiaries and the members of the challenging group and asking them to identify unintended costs is probably the best means of ascertaining this type of information. Constituents (non-beneficiary participants in the activism effort) may also experience unintended

costs. Having a list of concrete examples of unintended costs at hand during these interviews, such as unintentional loss of money or allies or physical harm to participants, could be helpful to interview subject.

Intended Cost

An intended cost is *a resource expenditure or physical harm that an activism effort did aim to incur*. The term intended cost may seem like a contradiction in terms. (Who intends to incur a cost?) However, it is not. Any expenditure of resources is a cost, and activism campaigns know they will need to expend resources such as time and money to mobilize supporters and influence antagonists. However, unlike ascertaining the intended goal of an activism effort, the intended costs of an activism effort are unlikely to be made public, either in the news media, in social media, or even on the organization's website. This is particularly true of costs that inflict harm on participants, such as beatings and imprisonment. Activism efforts may intend to realize these harms in order to increase public sympathy and attract media attention, but are very unlikely to admit this intent publicly.

Even more than determining the intended goals and intended benefits of an activism effort, intended costs need to be ascertained through personal interaction with challengers in a context of trust. After these intents are ascertained, the researcher can determine whether costs were greater, less than, or equal to what was intended and can compare these costs with achieved goals and realized benefits. Intended costs of an activism effort are borne by challengers, constituents, and (if they choose to participate) beneficiaries. The researcher should speak with or survey these actors to acquire information about intended costs.

Causality and Time

When measuring any of the five success-relevant outcomes of activism, one must attend to two other concerns: causality and time. An outcome cannot be the success of an activism effort if the outcome was not caused by that effort. As mentioned in the literature review, causality can never be ascertained with complete certainty because causal factors invisible to the researcher will always be present. Nevertheless the researcher should seek to ascertain, to the greatest extent possible, whether factors outside the activism effort caused the outcome. News sources are particularly useful for this purpose, since they ideally would describe the context of the activism effort. Reviewing multiple third-party sources could also be useful, since one article might pick up on a detail another did not.

Since activism outcomes are often the result of a decision made by a target antagonist, speaking to the target antagonist about her or his motivation for acceding to or rejecting an activism effort demand would provide useful information for the determination of causality. If the antagonist were forthcoming, the antagonist could indicate the causal factors behind her or his decision. Gaining this access and frankness from the target would likely be difficult, however. In addition, antagonist accounts are likely to be self-serving and incomplete, or the target may incorrectly analyze her or his own motivations. Nevertheless, combined with other information sources, information from the target antagonist would provide important causal information inaccessible in any other way.

The second concern involves times. The time at which one measures the success of an activism effort can have a significant effect on evaluation. To again take the Justice for Trayvon Martin campaign as an example, if one measured the success of the campaign at the moment that the young man's alleged killer was indicted, then one might describe the campaign as a success.

The prosecutor herself noted at the time that the indictment was the end point of a “search for justice” (Horwitz, 2012). Yet the alleged murderer, George Zimmerman, was ultimately acquitted. Trayvon Martin’s parents, the initiators of the original campaign, were shocked and dissatisfied with the verdict and Martin’s mother even called on President Obama to investigate the case further (“George Zimmerman,” 2013). Measured at this later point, the campaign would be judged a success of goal achievement and a failure in providing the benefit of emotional closure and clear condemnation of racial profiling that a guilty verdict would have provided.

Figure 8: When to Evaluate Activism Success	
Temporal Marker	Description
Tactical Cessation	When the effort ceases engaging in tactics undertaken to achieve the goal.
Peak Activity	When there is the maximum individual action undertaken to achieve the goal.
Episode	A natural unit within the activism effort of interest, usually marked by tactical cessation of a subsidiary effort within the effort of interest.
Moment of Study	When the researcher is undertaking the success analysis.

There are four logics for selecting when to measure activism success: tactical cessation, peak activity, episodes, and moment of study. Summarized in Figure 8, one need only select a single type of measure, and each type has its own strengths and weaknesses. Tactical cession means that the effort ceases engaging in tactics undertaken to realize the goal. This may occur because the campaign has achieved its goal or has achieved another outcome with which it is satisfied. Tactical cessation may also occur because the effort is unable to mobilize supporters to put pressure on the target antagonist and/or because those organizing the effort became discouraged or distracted. Peak activity refers to the point in an effort when the most individual action is undertaken to achieve the goal, usually in the form of participation in publicly visible collective tactics. Episodes are naturally occurring units in an activism effort. One can use the

tactical cessation of subsidiary activism efforts to unitize the activism effort of interest. For example, one could unitize a campaign by its subsidiary tactics and a social movement by its subsidiary campaigns. The moment of study is the time at which the researcher is undertaking the success analysis. Using this method implies that the researcher would seek the most recent information available to her or him at that time.

Episodic measurement implies a panel study method of data collection, where success is evaluated at the end of each episode and cumulatively at the end of the effort. When a campaign at first appears successful and then fails to realize its goal, or when benefits are realized in spite of a failure to realize the goal, these dynamics should be included in the cumulative evaluation of success.

To undertake this type of panel study one would likely need access to the campaign organizers in order to ascertain their intermediate goals, which might not be shared publicly. News reports may be useful in judging all three methods of temporal measurement. Information provided by the challengers and constituents themselves via organization websites, Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, interviews, or other means of public and private communication are likely to be useful as well.

Because the effects of an activism effort can accrue after tactical cessation, one should leave a margin of time between tactical cessation or peak activity before making an evaluation. Because peak activity marks a point within an effort, while tactical cessation marks the end, one should leave a wider time buffer when using peak activity as a temporal marker. (Episodic measurement uses a tactical cessation marker.) For example, when measuring the success of a campaign, waiting six months after tactical cessation provides a reasonable window during which time additional outcomes may occur, without overly delaying the evaluation of success.

The moment of study method is useful in that it allows any activism effort to be evaluated for success at any time, even if the effort is ongoing. The researcher can also have additional confidence in his or her analysis knowing that she or he is using the most current information about the activism effort. However, using this method, activism efforts are likely to be measured at different points in their trajectories. One effort may be at peak activity at the moment of evaluation, another may have ended years ago. This means that evaluations of success may not be directly comparable if this method is used.

The previous section explored the challenges of operationalizing five success-relevant outcomes of activism. In this section I will briefly highlight suggestions for measuring these outcomes in light of the constraints discussed. Because goals provide clear signals for the evaluation of activism outcomes, it makes sense to lead an evaluation of activism success with an evaluation of goal achievement. This initial evaluation can be made more nuanced by the addition on information about benefits and costs.

Goal Achievement

1. Perspective selection: Balancing concerns of validity and feasibility, it makes most sense to base one's evaluation of goal achievement on the goal statements of challengers (particularly organizers engaged in strategic planning) or the public reports of professional or (where professional reports are unavailable) non-professional journalists.
2. Perspective implications: Challenger perspectives will be most complete. Journalist perspectives will be most objective and accessible.
3. Temporal selection: Episodic measurement of goal achievement will be the most detailed and accurate, but also the most time-consuming. This method of measure is most

appropriate for a qualitative case study method. For a comparative study, tactical cessation is the most reliable temporal marker when an effort has ended. When the effort is ongoing, moment of study is a workable alternative.

4. Data collection: To ascertain challenger perspectives, interviews and surveys will be necessary to obtain a complete list of goals. The reports of professional journalists are accessible through databases like Lexis-Nexis and reports by non-professional journalists are distributed throughout a number of online and offline sources. Some websites, like Global Voices, aggregate non-professional journalistic reports of activism efforts.
5. Evaluating outcomes: If one seeks to undertake comparative analysis of goal achievement, one must develop a uniform scale for measurement. Instruments like Stephan and Chenoweth's (2011) three-level measure have broad applicability while narrow measures like those developed by Schumaker (1975) and Banzak (1996) are likely to lead to higher validity and reliability. Either may be appropriate, depending on the type of study one is undertaking.
6. Causality: Absent thorough journalistic coverage of an effort, it will be easiest to acquire information about effort-external influences on outcomes by talking to challengers and antagonists. The information of antagonists will be the hardest to acquire but also the most useful, because it is their decision that determines the outcome.

Intended Benefit

1. Perspective selection: To ascertain realization of indirect benefits, the perspectives of challengers are most valid. To ascertain realization of direct benefits, the perspectives of beneficiaries are most valid.

2. Data collection: Where a beneficiary is an individual, interview is most appropriate.

Where a beneficiary group is large, community leaders may act as proxies for the purposes of interviewing. Surveying a range of beneficiaries, while more time-consuming, would yield more diverse perspectives. Beneficiary perspectives could also be gleaned from news reports and social media self-reports.

Unintended Benefit

1. Perspective selection: Since the researcher will not know what benefits to look for, it will be necessary to ask challengers and beneficiaries if they received unintended benefits as a result of the activism effort.
2. Data collection: Interviews and surveys are most appropriate. Giving examples of unintended benefits of other similar efforts may be useful in clarifying the meaning of the concept to the interview subject, though these examples may also bias the interview subject's response by making her or him more attentive to certain kinds of benefits.

Unintended Costs

1. Perspective selection: Challengers, constituents, and beneficiaries may all experience unintended costs.
2. Data collection: Interviews and surveys are most appropriate. Giving examples may be useful but may also bias the interviewee's response. Since some kinds of costs are dramatic public events (for example, the beating of protesters, the arrest of leaders), news reports may also be useful in collecting this information.

Intended Costs

1. Perspective selection: Challengers, constituents, and beneficiaries may all experience intended costs. However, because it is a question of intent and strategy, challengers would have the most reliable information on whether or not a cost was intended.
2. Data collection: Interviews and surveys are most appropriate, particularly for routine costs, such as advertising budgets and volunteer hours, which are unlikely to be made public.

As with the study of any social phenomenon, a researcher can study narrowly and deeply or shallowly and broadly. Interviews with challengers, constituents, beneficiaries, and targets would give a full and accurate evaluation of activism success but, because of the time requirements of this method, it would be difficult to evaluate more than a few case studies using this method. Conversely, relying on news reports, though providing only limited information, would allow the researcher to analyze dozens or hundreds of activism efforts. Relying on extant data provides more limited information at lower cost, allowing for a larger sample of activism efforts to be analyzed. Neither method is ideal, though the abundance of activism reports now available online suggests richer information is now accessible from extant data.

CHAPTER 5: TEST OF THE GOAL ACHIEVEMENT DIMENSION

RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous chapter described the many challenges of operationalizing activism success, and the mixed-methods approach necessary to account for all dimensions. This study undertakes one possible operationalization of the dimension of activism success that holds the most value for researchers – goal achievement – and does so with a critical eye.

The following sections describe an operationalization of the goal achievement dimension of activism success through a content analysis of news articles about activism campaigns, drawn from the source documents of the Global Digital Activism Data Set, version 2.0 (GDADS2). The study analyzes articles describing 100 activism campaigns from the years 2010 to 2012, each described by two news articles. Coders were asked to read both articles and then describe the goal, outcome, and goal achievement level of each campaign according to variable definitions presented in the study codebook (Appendix 1).

Empirical and Operational Definitions

The goal of an activism effort is its formally stated objective. Because a single activism effort can have goals of varying levels of importance, I asked coders to identify a main goal, which was of primary importance to the campaign. The main goal was represented by a single textual variable. Coders were asked to read a news article about an activism campaign and copy and paste the clearest goal statement from the article into a field in the coding form for the purpose of reference when they later evaluated goal achievement. In this study, goal acted as a contextual variable that assisted coders in evaluating the goal achievement variable by providing a point of reference. Where the article contained multiple main goals, coders were instructed to

exclude the case from analysis. I decided to make these exclusions in order to simplify the analysis task.

Goal achievement is the extent to which the outcome enunciated in the goal actually occurred. Extending Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), goal achievement is represented as a three-level ordinal variable. These levels and their definitions constitute the operational definition of goal achievement, a dimension of the focal concept activism success. These levels are:

- 3 = Full goal achievement describes outcomes where exactly what was requested in the main goal occurred.
- 2 = Partial goal achievement describes outcomes where what occurred was consistent with the goal, but was not exactly what was requested in the goal.
- 1 = No goal achievement describes outcomes in which what occurred is neither the action requested in the goal nor an action consistent with the goal.
- 99 = Added to indicate where information in the source was insufficient to code the level of goal achievement.

In an additional effort to clarify goal achievement to coders, I added an additional dichotomous variable, goal type, the purpose of which was to indicate whether the goal was assertive or defensive. An activism effort with an assertive goal is successful to the extent that it brings about change. An activism effort with a defensive goal is successful to the extent that it prevents change. Goal type is also a context variable, which I introduced into the coding scheme as a means of pushing coders to begin critically analyzing the goal, in anticipation of assigning a value for the goal achievement variable. Also, as the only other quantitative variable in the study, this variable provided a check of coder agreement, since it could be used to calculate intercoder reliability.

Sampling Procedure

This study seeks to observe goal achievement through a content analysis of news articles about activism campaigns. The content analysis was conducted using a random sample of 100 cases from the Global Digital Activism Data Set, version 2.0 (GDADS2). The GDADS2 is a public data set I created in 2013 with the support of Philip N. Howard, and is a convenient pre-existing source of texts that I could use to test an operationalization of activism success. Each of the 100 cases is a campaign described by two news articles. The first article describes the goal of the campaign. The second article describes the extent to which the goal was achieved. This is a secondary analysis; the GDADS2 was not created for this study.

The GDADS2 uses relevance (purposive) sampling to collect news articles describing 426 digital activism campaigns from 100 countries. The theoretical population of the study is all digital activism campaigns that began between 2010 and 2012, inclusive, where digital activism campaign is conceptually defined as an organized public effort making collective claim(s) of antagonist(s) in which challengers or other participants used digital media. (See Appendix 2 for full inclusion criteria.) Recalling the description in the activism literature review, a campaign is a type of activism effort that is composed of multiple tactics.

Because the global population of activism campaigns is unknown and a sample frame of texts describing these campaigns does not exist, I drew a relevance sample of texts describing digital activism campaigns around the world from a group of six websites that cover this topic: Actipedia.org, Movements.org, Mashable.com, ChinaDigitalTimes.net, techPresident.com, and GlobalVoicesOnline.org. In addition to these online sources, the study population also includes all articles meeting the inclusion criteria in the All-News (English) source group of Lexis-Nexis.

For the websites Actipedia.org, Movements.org, Mashable.com, ChinaDigitalTimes.net, and techPresident.com, I reviewed all posts in the 2010-2012 date range. For GlobalVoicesOnline.org I reviewed all posts in the date range that were posted in the categories Digital Activism or Protest. For Lexis-Nexus I constructed search strings around the terms activis! and protest and various terms for digital media (net, web, cyber, mobile, internet, online, and digital) and reviewed all results within the date range to determine which articles matched the inclusion criteria. During this process I reviewed 12,961 articles, of which 426 were coded for the initial study. Cases for this study were drawn at random from this group of 426 campaigns.

For the vast majority of articles identified using this sampling procedure, the campaign goal was described, but not the campaign outcome. For this reason, for each initial source selected through the sampling procedure, I also needed to locate a separate outcome source. These outcomes sources were identified using a Google search procedure (see Appendix 3). I used a random number generator to randomly select 100 campaigns to code for this study and had coders analyze both the initial source and the outcome source in order to evaluate the goal of the campaign and the extent to which it was achieved.

Coder Training and Reliability

Coder training consisted of reading through the codebook and instructions with the coder, Jonathan Lam, followed by weekly coding assignments and in-person review. Jonathan had worked on the development of the original GDADS2 project and was already familiar with the general process of reading news article about an activism campaigns in order to code variables. Jonathan was also a graduate student in sociology and had some topical awareness of activism.

For five weeks in late February and March, Jonathan and I coded groups of approximately 15 cases independently and then met on weekly basis to discuss our independent coding decisions. During this period the codebook was evaluated and revised to achieve better agreement. At the end of this training period a pilot test was conducting using 27 cases, slightly more than 25% of the total sample. Average pairwise agreement for goal type (assertive/defensive goal) in the pilot test was 96.3% and Krippendorff's α was 0.909, a high level of agreement. Average pairwise agreement for level of goal achievement (full/partial/none) was 81.5% and Krippendorff's α was 0.732, an acceptable level of agreement (Krippendorff, 2004). The final version of the codebook is in Appendix 1 and full coding results of key variables are available in an online appendix at www.meta-activism.org/open-methods/ma-thesis/.

RESULTS

The results of the coding are below in Table 1. While not a representative sample, the distribution below demonstrates that the outcomes of full, partial, and no goal achievement are present in activism campaigns that use digital technology.

Table 1: Goal Achievement Frequency	
Goal Achievement Levels	Number of Campaigns
Full goal achievement	36%
Partial goal achievement	25%
No goal achievement	33%
99 (Unable to code)	6%
Total	100% (N=100)

In addition, the levels of agreement present in the pilot test indicate that the measure is capable of discriminating among these different types of activism outcomes.

This test represents an improvement on the work of Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), since I was able to reliably code for differences between full and partial success, while the two authors that developed the measure were forced to collapse these two categories due to an inability to create an effective decision rule between full and partial success.

Though the measure reached an acceptable threshold of reliability and is an improvement on previous use, problems remain. In undertaking this study I became aware of additional problems with this method unanticipated by the literature review or meaning analysis. The sacrifices in nuance to achieve reliability were substantial. Problems in sampling from the unknown population of global activism campaigns, in unitizing those campaigns, in evaluating imprecise goals, and in using news stories by non-professional journalists for content analysis also arose. I will explore these challenges in the following chapter, after I present the final conceptual definition of activism success.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

Based on the preceding literature review, meaning analysis, and partial operationalization, activism success may be conceptually defined as a term used to describe the outcome of an effort that seeks to change or prevent change to the status quo in order to improve or protect the welfare of some threatened or disadvantaged beneficiary, using methods not limited to prescribed and conventional means of influencing antagonists, in which benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved, where the effort has caused the outcome and both intended and unintended outcomes are considered.

Despite the complexity of this conceptual definition, and the difficulty in deriving it, I believe that the challenges of measurement are more substantial than the challenges of definition. For this reason I will devote the following section to addressing additional challenges of measurement that I encountered while carrying out the study of goal achievement. These challenges provide new opportunities for research and scholarship.

CHALLENGES OF MEASUREMENT

Balancing Reliability and Validity

The first challenge of measuring diverse phenomena with a single ordinal measure is balancing the need for validity and for reliability. While I was able to achieve an acceptable level of reliability using a three-level measure of success, this means of operationalization does not account for the tremendous variation in activism outcomes. An analysis of the campaigns coded partial success reveals the problematic nature of using such an imprecise measure to describe such a varied range of phenomena. The group of campaigns coded partial success includes the following:

- Case 1600: A campaign to achieve justice for a couple of murdered journalists, where an investigation was launched after stringent campaigning by the activism effort, but which has not resulted in any indictments or prosecutions.
- Case 1943: A campaign against the donation of Monsanto seeds to Haiti where 100 of the planned 475 tons were delivered.
- Case 1584: A campaign against the building of a military base on the South Korea island of Jeju in which construction has begun, after delays likely caused by the activism effort, but the activism effort continues in its attempt to stop construction.
- Case 1914: A campaign demanding that San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stop shutting off mobile phone service in an effort to stymie the coordination of protest rallies. The shut-off policy was maintained, but with a commitment that it would only be used in extraordinary circumstances.

Working independently, both coders assigned a value of partial success to these cases. While in each case the outcome of the campaign is between full goal achievement and none at all, there is variation and nuance in these outcomes that is not accounted for in this operationalization of goal achievement I used in this study. While it is necessary to use an imprecise measure to account for a broad range of phenomena, a substantial amount of information was lost by measuring goal achievement in this way. There is not necessarily a solution to this problem, but researchers that use such a broad measure should be aware that there is a substantial amount of nuance that a measure such as this does not account for.

Sampling an Unknown Population

Though sampling was does not negate the results of this study, which was methodological in motive and exploratory in nature, the non-probabilistic sampling method of

the Global Digital Activism Data Set, version 2.0 (GDADS2) precludes inferential statistical analysis. Since statistical inference is the purpose of many quantitative data sets, future studies should avoid the shortcomings of the sampling procedure used to construct the GDADS2. I describe those shortcomings below.

The GDADS2 sampling process introduced bias at two stages. The first source of bias is that article selection was purposive, not random. This is not a problem for this particular study, whose aim is concept explication. However, it does mean that any statistical analyses of an activism success variable could not have been generalized beyond the group of articles included in the sample.

The second source of bias was introduced in the selection of the outcome source. Despite the development of a systematic procedure for identifying outcome sources (see Appendix 3), the process was still subjective. For each case I selected the source that I thought provided the most clearly written and detailed description of the outcome based on strings of search terms most likely to return relevant sources. It is possible, indeed likely, that another researcher using the same procedure would have located different texts. Though ideally all relevant texts would indicate the same outcome, it is more likely that different sources would include slightly different information, meaning that the coding of the goal achievement variable was dependent on non-random selection of the outcome source.

There are two ways of dealing with the problem of bias in determining activism outcomes. The first is to rely on the interpretation of challengers and simply include disclaimers that the threshold for challengers statements of success are likely to be lower than impartial observers statements because challengers have practical reasons (donor satisfaction, constituent morale) for describing themselves as successful. A second option, proposed by Tufekci (2014),

is to study activism efforts whose goals can be measured using higher quality data created by more established methodologies. For example, if one were to study campaigns that seek to prevent or encourage the passage of legislation, one could look at the legislative record to see if the law had passed or not. Likewise, one could use salary data to evaluate whether efforts to decrease the earning gap between men and women actually resulted in decreases in disparity as Akchrin and Lee (2013) do, or use public opinion data to see if efforts to decrease homophobia actually changed individuals' perceptions. In all three examples, one would be limited in the activism efforts one was to study by the presence of reliable and valid data for use as a dependent variable.

Goal Precision

From a research perspective, not all goals are created equal. Goal achievement is easier to evaluate for more precise goals and more difficult to evaluate for more vaguely worded goals. For example, the goal of case 1575 is that the government of Ethiopia “start respecting” the nation’s constitution (Endalk, 2012). It was difficult for me to even locate an outcome source for this goal, since it was unclear exactly what respecting the constitution would look like. (That is, how would I recognize respecting the constitution if I saw it?) This type of goal was vague in that the desired outcome was not identified with specificity.

Another similar, but slightly different problem with vague goal statements is a goal statement that critiques a past bad act rather than proposing a future redress. Ongoing protests against the size of the royal budget in Morocco, where the king spends upwards of 700,000 Euros a day despite widespread poverty in the country, are an example of this kind of problem (Al Hussaini, 2012). Here the goal of the activism is to alter the unjust distribution of wealth, yet exactly what a desirable level of spending would be is not mentioned. In another quite different

example, British high school students in case 2008 protested an unfair national exam, but did not say how they thought their situation should be redressed (Administering a new exam? More lenient grading of the exam they already took?). Lack of a clear redress in the goal statement makes it difficult to determine the outcome that the activism effort desires to achieve.

There is no satisfying solution to this lack of goal clarity. The most methodologically appealing reaction is to simply exclude cases with unclear goal statements, since goal achievement cannot be reliably assessed in these cases. Another strategy is to actually seek out campaigns with clear goal statements. Because e-petitions require the enunciation of a succinctly worded demand to a specific target, they are particularly useful artifacts for finding clear goal statements. Yet excluding campaigns with unclear goals introduces bias, since campaigns with unclear goals may be initiated by less skilled activists, who also may be less likely to succeed in achieving their goals.

Unitizing Campaigns

Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su (2010) estimate that there were 34 major American social movements in the twentieth century. By contrast, the GDADS2 includes 426 campaigns looking only at the period from 2010 to 2012. For those wishing to undertake large-N quantitative studies of activism, the campaign is an appealing unit of analysis. Yet unitizing groups of tactics into discrete campaigns can be challenging.

A campaign is a series of tactics carried out to achieve the same goal. Yet it may make sense to consider the continuity of actors as well. If the goal remains the same but the organization implementing the tactics changes, does this mark a new campaign? As an example, case 1545, a campaign to legalize marijuana in Tunisia, has a clearly defined goal that can be easily evaluated for achievement (is marijuana legal or not?). Yet different organizations have

been active in this effort. A 2012 campaign called Now Legalize It! seems to have faded away, yet another organization, Prisoner 52, carries on the fight. By a tactical and goal-oriented definition, these two efforts would be considered part of a single campaign because they both intend to legalize marijuana in Tunisia. Yet they have different names and seem to have different participants. When the goal remains the same, yet the challenger changes, it may not be appropriate to think of their combined tactics as part of a single campaign.

It also makes sense to think about goal durability more critically when challengers stay the same, but the goal changes. For example, the activists in case 1584 have been protesting for years against the construction of a military base on Jeju Island in South Korea. Construction began in 2012, but the effort against the construction of the base continues. What was once a defensive goal has become an assertive one. Though the campaign goal was originally to prevent construction, the goal is now to halt construction. One could unitize groups of tactics by goal, which would result in two campaigns. One could also treat these two groups of tactics as two phases of the same campaign, based on an argument that there is continuity in challengers and the general theme of the goal remains the same. (The effort has always sought to prevent a military base from existing on the island.) Either unitizing decision would be valid, but would imply different approaches to unitization.

Content Analysis and Citizen Journalism

As Nardi, Ang, Bobrowicz, and Schiano (2013) note, “[d]ata in the wild may be copious, but not necessarily adequate to address important topics of inquiry.” While convenient, using the extant news texts of the GDADS2 had a number of shortcomings. If one is to use news stories as a source of information about goal achievement, one must account for the fact that not all goals will be publicly observable to the journalist and, by extension, to the researcher. Relying on

journalists to act as a researcher's eyes and ears is problematic in other ways. Research has revealed that newspapers are biased in their reporting of activism, both in what they choose to cover and how they cover it (Earl, Martin, McCarthy, & Soule, 2004; Oliver & Maney, 2000).

This problem is partially addressed by the increase in citizen journalists, who self-publish their reports online and have different perspectives and motivations than professional journalists (Goode, 2009). While a citizen journalist may cover an activism effort that professional journalists do not, thereby increasing researcher awareness of activism events, citizen journalism also has its shortcomings. Without journalistic training, citizen journalists may provide information that is unclear or incomplete, or that is difficult for researchers to interpret. Furthermore, though content analysis of newspapers has frequently been used for the identification of protest events in American social movements (Koopmans & Rucht, 2002), the extension of this method to an international context, to campaigns rather than tactics, and to sources not written by professional journalists is new.

The self-publication affordances of online citizen journalism provide researchers access to news stories that would otherwise go uncovered. Websites like Global Voices use these affordances specifically to increase awareness of news from countries under-represented in the Western media. They do this by relying on volunteer editors who review news reports created by local bloggers in a variety of languages and aggregate these accounts into English blog posts on the Global Voices site. Despite the value of this new form of journalism for bringing awareness to under-covered stories, this new form of self-published non-professional journalism does have its shortcomings.

Though some attention has been given to accuracy in citizen reports (King, 2012), in this study I found clarity to be a more significant barrier to analysis. Despite the fact that the Internet

makes self-published citizen journalism accessible to scholars, the clarity of organization and completeness of information is still usually best in news stories produced by professional journalists. In the articles reviewed in this study, only on rare occasions was the outcome of the campaign stated clearly in the title of the outcome source. In these cases, the article was written either by a Western NGO or by a Western news organization. These stories also tended to cover Western countries and issues of interest to Western audiences, such as gay rights and freedom of expression. By contrast, news stories not covered by professional journalists often omitted information or organized it poorly. For example, the only outcome source I could find that referenced the Ethiopian constitution campaign (case 1575) was an op-ed written by an individual whose writing in English was so difficult to interpret that one coder found it uncodable (“Ethiopia”, 2013).

This lack of comprehensibility is not the fault of the individual who wrote the op-ed, but rather of a global news ecosystem where the resources of skill journalists are unequally distributed. Citizen journalism does increase coverage of under-covered stories, but does not really close the news gap. Scholars wishing to use citizen journalism sources for the analysis of geographically dispersed events should be aware of this comprehensibility gap and the difficulties in interpretation that result.

CONCLUSION

This concept explication had nine stages, which I attempted to achieve through the course of this thesis. I first had to identify the focal concept, activism success, and propose a nominal definition for it. I then had to conduct a literature review of the focal concept. After that, I needed to create a preliminary conceptual definition of the focal concept and conduct a meaning analysis. My next task was to create an operational definition of one dimension of the focal

concept. I then committed myself to using that operational definition to conduct univariate research to illuminate the focal concept. Finally, I needed to provide a final conceptual definition of the focal concept and evaluate the operational definition.

My nominal definition was the positive outcome of an effort in which individuals seek to make a change to the status quo. In order to enrich this definition I conducted a literature review of the two concepts that compose the focal concept: activism and success. On the basis of that literature review, I developed a preliminary conceptual definition of activism success: the outcome of an effort that seeks to change or prevent change to the status quo in order to improve or protect the welfare of some threatened or disadvantaged beneficiary, using methods not limited to prescribed and conventional means of influencing antagonists, in which benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved.

Though I was able to derive the preliminary conceptual definition of activism success from the literature, developing an operational definition required further meaning analysis. By analyzing the intersections of net goal achievement and net realization of benefit, I concluded that there are a number of outcomes in which activism success is ambiguous. This is because indicators of success and failure often occur within the same activism outcome. Because analysis of the two dimensions creates ambiguity, I suggested that for the purposes of operationalization one measure the dimensions separately.

When operationalizing activism success, one should ideally measure five success-relevant outcomes of activism: goal achievement, realization of intended benefit, realization of unintended benefit, incursion of intended cost, and incursion of unintended cost. Measurement of all five outcomes would constitute a complete operationalization of activism success. However, because of limitations on time and resources I operationalized one dimension: goal

achievement. I operationalized this dimension via a three-level ordinal variable applied to news articles and analyzed through a content analysis. The content analysis of the variable goal achievement constituted the univariate research component of the explication.

In the discussion chapter I first presented a final conceptual definition of activism success, adding considerations related to causality and intent to the earlier preliminary conceptual definition. Activism success is a term used to describe the outcome of an effort that seeks to change or prevent change to the status quo in order to improve or protect the welfare of some threatened or disadvantaged beneficiary, using methods not limited to prescribed and conventional means of influencing antagonists, in which benefits exceed costs and goals achieved exceed those unachieved, where the effort has caused the outcome and both intended and unintended outcomes are considered

I then evaluated the operationalization of goal achievement, a partial operational test of the activism success concept. Though I was able to achieve an acceptable level of agreement using this particular operationalization of the concept of goal achievement, I nevertheless think it should be further refined. In particular, a more nuanced measure of goal achievement that does not sacrifice so much nuance for reliability would be desirable, for example, a measure with a greater range of ordinal levels to account for a larger array of outcomes. The presence of vaguely worded goals also made the measure of goal achievement difficult. Activism success may only be measurable through an operationalization of goal achievement where goal statements are clear. Finally, the unitization of campaigns was sometimes imprecise, because of variation in challenger behavior. Imprecision in activism campaign descriptions by non-professional journalists also limited the utility of observing goal achievement through news articles. Because of the shortcomings described above, data creation by means of content

analysis of online news reports may not be the best way of measuring activism success.

Exploring the uses, constraints, and affordances of existing data that can be used to measure success – activist self-reports, legislative records, public opinion poll results – provides one alternative to measurement.

For those who wish to measure activism success, either as scholars or as practitioners, I recommend using measures of the five success-relevant outcomes of activism. These are goal achievement, and the intended and unintended realization of benefit and cost. However, both types of evaluators should couch their conclusions in language that recognizes two types of measurement obstacles: lack of access to sources and contradictory perspectives among sources. The first access challenge includes a number of subsidiary challenges, related to difficulty and cost of data collection, particularly where large sample sizes are desirable, and human sources who are not forthcoming. Speaking to the source challenge, complete measurement of success requires collection of data from multiple sources, including challengers, constituents, beneficiaries, and antagonists, either collected directly through observation and interview or indirectly through analysis of news reports. These sources are not all equally accessible to the researcher and individuals may not be forthcoming. This is particularly true for challengers, who wish to appear successful, and antagonists, who wish to minimize the perception that that activism effort influenced their decision-making process.

Speaking to the second challenge, any evaluation of activism success will be open to challenge because individual participants and observers have different perspectives. Goal achievement requires the identification of particular goals enunciated by particular actors at particular times, which are then used to evaluate the outcome. There is always the possibility for disagreement as to whether the right goal was selected as the basis for success evaluation.

Likewise, considering the benefit dimension, while an activism effort may realize benefit that exceeds cost, where the cost is high (for example, there was loss of life or persecution of beneficiaries), challengers themselves may resist the label of success. In addition, beneficiary groups include diverse groups of individuals. Where a benefit has been realized that is less than the benefit enunciated in the goal, there will likely be disagreement within the beneficiary group as to the value of that benefit. Some may see it as substantial and an indicator of success, while others will be unsatisfied, and perceive the effort as a failure. While it is possible to measure activism success if one is able to acquire the necessary sources, there is will always be disagreement because of the problem of the second measurement challenges: contradictory perspectives. This is a problem of perspective is inherent in the complex constellation of actors who participate and perceive activism.

Finally, while this thesis developed a conceptual definition of activism success without considering communication's effect on that evaluation, a communication lens could be used to advance the ideas presented here. Theories of communication would help a scholar or practitioner answer three types of questions related to the evaluation of activism success:

1. How do communication processes within challenger organizations determine the way in which the goal of an activism effort is identified, debated, and ultimately defined?
2. How do the uses of communication technologies alter the organizational structures in which these strategic decisions are made?
3. How does communication technology use by constituents affect the evaluation of activism success?

First theories of communication technologies as structuring organizations could illuminate how members of a challenger organization define the success of the activism effort. New technologies for internal deliberation, such as wikis and Google documents, task management systems and email may both reveal and structure the way goals are defined within organizations. While there is no inherent characteristic of a piece of technology that determines its function in an organizational structure, theories of the effects of communication technology use in activism efforts could illuminate those efforts (Foot, 2001). Interpersonal theories of communication, particularly those related to debate and deliberation, could also be useful to analyzing how key strategic decisions, such as the definition of an effort's goal, are defined within an organization.

Second, theories of communication technology's effect on organizational structure could illuminate the new contexts in which these strategic decisions are made. As Barley (1986) notes, "technologies are... occasions that trigger social dynamics which, in turn, modify or maintain an organization's contours" (p. 81). Bechky (2003) extends this theory by pointing out that technologies not only trigger social dynamics in organization, but may also serve to reinforce or undermine hierarchies. One way in which digital media technologies in particular undermine organizational hierarchy is by empowering users to broadcast as well as consume media messages (Castells, 2011). As Livingstone (2014) notes, "readers and viewers, audiences and publics, users and consumers— call them what you will—are not dutifully positioned at the end of a well- planned chain of control" (p. 248). Participants in activism efforts use technology to broadcast their interpretations of activism success. In the language of Latour (1991), while the challengers who initiate an activism effort may have a certain program that includes the goals they intend the activism effort to achieve and the benefits they hope to realize, constituents --

even those that support the activism effort -- may have anti-programs, alternative goals and meanings that may change to meaning and focus of the activism effort. It is through digital media that they can communicate their alternative goals and interpretations.

Finally, theories of communication technology's effect on amplifying constituent voices could explain the new multiplicity of perspectives that the contemporary evaluator of activism success must account for. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) note that digital media may upend hierarchies and challenge the centralized control of activism efforts by permitting constituents on the fringes to publicize their own interpretations of the goals of an effort. "In this network mode," they note, "political demands and grievances are often shared in very personalized accounts that travel over social networking platforms, email lists, and online coordinating platforms" (p. 742). Compared to traditionally centralized activism efforts "with identifiable membership organizations leading the way under common banners and collective identity frames... personalized, digitally mediated collective action formations" become larger more quickly and their goals and targeted antagonists shift more quickly (p. 742). Introducing communication theories into the study of activism success offers opportunities for greater nuance and complexity in the way evaluations of activism success are deliberately developed within organizations, the way organizational structures are altered by the use of those technologies, and the way new voices are making evaluation of activism success a distributed task of the crowd as well as of the individual evaluator.

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APPENDIX 1: CODEBOOK

Version 2.17, April 25, 2014

This is the codebook for the content analysis on goal achievement in activism campaigns.

List of Variables

Case and Coder Meta-Data

1. **coder**: Coder Name
2. **caseid**: Unique Numeric Case Identifier
3. **date**: Date of Coding

Goals and Outcomes

4. **descgoal**: Goal Description
5. **typegoal**: Assertive or Defensive Goal
6. **descout**: Outcome Description
7. **typeout**: Goal Achievement Level

Coding Instructions

Procedure

1. Go to <http://www.meta-activism.org/open-methods/>. (All links are there).
2. Open your coding assignment sheet (link at above URL).
3. On the assignment sheet, click over to the tab that has your name on it.
4. Open the coding form (link at above URL).
5. Open the source links provided to you and read them.
 - Do not search for any additional sources.
 - If a source seems erroneous, contact Mary.
6. Enter variable responses on your coding form.
 - Where goal and outcome quotes are requested in sections, use the following form:
 - For 1 source: “goal quote”; "outcome quote" - URL
 - For 2 sources: “goal quote” - URL 1; "outcome quote" - URL 2
 - When you need to add your own words:
 - i. Place your own words outside the quotes as needed
 - ii. Place your own words in [brackets] to add a clarifying word within a quote
 - iii. Example: “goal quote [own words]”; "outcome quote" own words - URL
7. Move on to the next case.

Terms

- Main goal: The primary outcome the campaign desires to achieve.
 - Identifying the main goal: The main goal should appear in title of Source1 or early on in the Source1 text. It may appear in the journalist’s own words, or be a quote.
 - Quoting the main goal: You may quote to journalist’s statement (article body or title) or a quote presented by the journalists. Choose the utterance that states to goal most clearly and precisely.
 - Multiple main goals: A campaign may be considered to have multiple main goals if more than one intended outcome is mentioned in Source1 (or, rarely, Outcome Source), and at least one of those outcomes could be achieved independently of the others.
 - In there are multiple goals, exclude the case.
 - A multiple goal may appear in any of the following ways in Source1:
 - 1) A formal list of demands produced by activists (with or without numbers)
 - Numeric List Example: 1) Fire X. 2) Reinstate Y. 3) Call new elections.
 - 2) Listed in a single sentence, as in a quote from an activist or description by the journalist.
 - Activist Quote Example: “We want the Minister to fire X, to reinstate Y, and to call new elections.”
 - Journalist Description Example: Activists say they want the Minister to fire X and reinstate Y and also to call new elections.
 - 3) Multiple goals are identified by the author in non-list form.

- Examples from Case 1914:
 - “In a joint statement [campaign initiators] called ... the National Commission for Human Rights, to open an investigation“
 - Could occur without freedom of the press
 - “The objective of the rally was to denounce the clear abuse against the freedom of press.”
 - Could occur without an investigation
- Target: The organization individual that the campaign initiator(s) are asking to implement the goal.
- Class: Group of individual or other entities receiving uniform treatment based on a shared characteristic that is the basis of the collective action of the campaign.
- Employee: Individuals who provides services to, or on behalf of, the target organization. The individual may be paid or unpaid.
- Status Quo Ante: Existing state of affairs at the time when the earliest public display or statement by the campaign occurred, as described in Source1.

Problem Cases

- If the date of the Outcome Source is earlier than the date of Source1, this is an error. Please inform Mary and locate a new source using the instructions in the Appendix.

Codelist and Procedures		
Case and Coder Meta-Data		
1.1	coder	Coder Name
Description	First and last name of case coder.	
Answer Options	Select your name from the drop-down list on the coding form.	
Where to Look	Your birth certificate (just kidding, hopefully you have this memorized).	
Examples	Mary Joyce	
	Jonathan Lam	
1.2	caseid	Unique Numeric Case Identifier
Description	Unique numeric identifier of the case.	
Answer Options	Copy and paste the case ID from your coding assignment sheet.	
Where to Look	The 1 st column of your coding assignment sheet.	
Examples	1243	
	15	
1.3	date	Date of Coding
Description	Date this case was coded.	
Additional Instructions	No entry necessary. The submission date and time will be automatically generated by Google when you submit the coding online form.	
Goals & Outcomes		
2.1	descgoal	Goal Description
Description	Copy and paste textual descriptions for the main goal.	
Answer Options	[see above]	
Where to Look	Source1 and Outcome Source	
Examples	"do not want the power plant to start" - http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/05/16/india-crackdown-on-tamil-nadu-anti-nuclear-plant-protests/	
	"took issue with the company's new user cap, which limits Twitter" - http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/17/twitter-changes-incite-online-protests/	
	"against the removal of the ads" - http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/safe-sex-ads-to-return-to-bus-shelters-20110601-1fg06.html	
Additional Instructions	"Main goal" is defined in the Coding Instructions at the beginning of this codebook.	
	In there are multiple main goals, according to the definition in the Coding Instructions section, exclude the case.	
2.2	typegoal	Assertive or Defensive Goal
Description	Does the main goal seek to assert change to the status quo (=2) or to defensively prevent a change to the status quo (=1)?	
Answer Options	2 = Assertive	
	1 = Defensive	
Where to Look	Source1	
Examples	2 = That a bank remove its checking account fee	
	2 = For a new anti-discrimination law	
	1 = That a school not be torn down.	
	1 = That a pension benefits not be reduced.	
Additional Instructions	If an undesirable activity is suspended, that indicates an assertive goal.	
	"Main goal" is defined in the Coding Instructions at the beginning of this codebook.	
	The status quo is defined as the existing state of affairs at the time when the earliest public display or statement by the campaign occurred, as described in Source1.	
	Do not code a commitment, either verbal or legislative, as evidence that an undesirable	

		outcome has begun.	
2.3	descout	Outcome Description	
Description		Copy and paste textual descriptions for outcome of the main goal.	
Answer Options		99 = Insufficient or unclear outcome information provided by sources.	
Where to Look		Source1 and Outcome Source	
Examples		"Construction on the plant began on 31 March 2002,[2] but faced several delays.[3] Long construction times for nuclear reactors are common in India,[2] but this delay was partly due to the 500-day long anti-nuclear protests by the locals, led by the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE)." - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kudankulam_Nuclear_Power_Plant	
		"Despite some developers of third-party Twitter apps being upset by recent changes to "clamp down" on Twitter APIs, Behrens says those changes could actually make it easier to ensure third-party apps are playing by Twitter's rules" - http://www.cio.in/news/twitter-broken-402092013#sthash.O	
		"A safe sex advertisement featuring a hugging gay couple will return to Brisbane bus shelters after a backflip from the company that pulled them." - http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/safe-sex-ads-to-return-to-bus-shelters-20110601-1fg06.html	
Additional Instructions		"Main goal" is defined in the Coding Instructions at the beginning of this codebook.	
2.4	typeout	Goal Achievement Level	
Description		Referring to your responses to TYPEGOAL, DESCGOAL, and DESCOUT, select the category that best describes the level of goal achievement.	
Answer Options & Examples	3 = Full Goal Achievement		
	Definition	Exactly what is requested in main goal comes to pass.	
		Assertive	The exact change requested in a goal occurred.
		Defensive	The undesirable proposed action did not occur at all (no change in status quo)
	Examples	Assertive	Bank removes it checking account fee as requested. New anti-discrimination law is passed as requested.
		Defensive	School is not torn down as requested.
			Pension benefits are not reduced as requested.
	2 = Partial Goal Achievement		
	Definition	What comes to pass is consistent with goal, but is not exactly what was requested in the goal.	
		Assertive	A change occurs, but not exactly what is requested in the goal.
		Defensive	The undesirable action occurs, but in a desirably modified form.
	Additional Instructions	Assertive	Explicit evidence in Source1 and Outcome Source is necessary to indicate that the target has taken new action in response to the campaign.
			In the absence of information about the status quo ante, assume the new action has not occurred.
Defensive		Explicit evidence in Source1 and Outcome Source is necessary to indicate that the target has changed their action in response to the campaign.	
		In the absence of information about the status quo ante,	

			assume the plan has not changed.	
	Examples	Assertive	Bank maintains the fee but reduces it; Bank maintain the fee but offers a month of free checking to its clients	
			New anti-discrimination law is passed, but not in the exact form the activists wanted; A variety of scenarios in which the new anti-discrimination law does not pass but some action is taken which is consonant with the campaign goal – for example, hearings are held or the law is adopted by the legislature but vetoed by the President.	
		Defensive	School is torn down, but a new school is built for the students nearby; only part of the school is torn down; the school is torn down, but a playground for the children is built in its place.	
			Pension benefits are reduced, but by less than originally planned; Pension reductions are implemented, but only for some workers; Pension reductions will be implemented, but their implementation date is delayed.	
	Additional Instructions	For defensive goals, a delay should be coded partial achievement.		
	1 = No Goal Achievement			
	Definition	What comes to pass is neither the action requested in the goal nor an action consistent with the goal		
		Assertive	No amount of change requested in the main goal occurred.	
		Defensive	The undesirable action occurred without modification.	
	Examples	Assertive	Bank does not change fee structure at all.	
There is no action taken by the legislature regarding an anti-discrimination bill.				
Defensive		The school is torn down as originally planned.		
		The pension reductions are implemented as originally planned.		
99 = Insufficient or unclear outcome information provided by sources.				
Where to Look	Source1 and Outcome Source			
Additional Instructions	Commitment Statements	A commitment from a target or target representative should be coded as evidence that an action occurred in the absence of direct evidence as to occurrence or non-occurrence of the desired outcome.		
		If a goal-consistent commitment is made to act with no time specified or within less than one year (< 1 year) of the article publication date, then the outcome can be coded full achievement.		
		If a goal-consistent commitment is made to act in one year or more (≥ 1 year), then the outcome should be coded partial achievement.		

APPENDIX 2: GDADS2 INCLUSION CRITERIA

Mary Joyce (Dec. 2013)

If a campaign failed to meet any of these criteria it was excluded from the Global Digital Activism Data Set, version 2.0 (GDADS2) and was not coded. No geographic criterion was included and we wished to gain as large a geographic sample as possible.

The campaign was considered to conform to the conceptual definition of a digital activism campaign (an organized public effort making collective claim(s) of target authority(s) in which civic initiators or supporters used digital media) if it met the following requirements:

1. Digital (includes at least one tactic that uses digital media, by either a support or initiator).
2. Organized public effort (seeks to engage citizens as participants).
3. Collective (goal(s) made on behalf of a group of citizens).
4. Claims (goal must propose a solution to the injustice so that the success or failure of the campaign may be evaluated. Protests of injustice where discontent is expressed but no redress is proposed should be excluded).
5. Target (seeks to influence or otherwise affect an entity of authority perceived as having the ability to implement the goal. If citizens are described as a target group separate from the authority figure, the case should be excluded.).
6. Civic (initiator group not exclusively composed of government or for-profit entities).

Two additional criteria were added to ensure the quality and comprehension of coding sources to all coders.

1. Though outgoing links to primary materials may be translated from other languages, all assigned sources are written in English.
2. Primary source was created by a reliable 3rd party source with a “reputation for fact-checking and accuracy” (Wikipedia, 2013).
3. Outcome Source must also be reliable, but need not be created by a 3rd party (reports by campaign initiators may be considered).
4. Source contains sufficient information to code. (Information on goal, target, and digital media used must be present, though it may be ambiguous. If we could not answer the question “what outcome do the initiators and supporters want?” the case was excluded.)

Finally, an additional pair of criteria were added to prevent redundancy of cases:

1. Annual events are only included once.
2. Campaigns are defined at their largest definable unit (subsidiary parts of larger campaigns are not identified as separate campaigns).

APPENDIX 3: PROCEDURE FOR LOCATING AN OUTCOME SOURCE

Mary Joyce (Nov., 2013)

The following is a list of instructions for the procedure used to locate the most current outcome source. The outcome source provides information as to whether or not the goal of the campaign was achieved.

1. If the outcome source is a Wikipedia article, there is no need to conduct another search, so long as the relevant section contains a citation to a source published within the last year (365 days from coding day).

2. If the outcome source is not a Wikipedia article, search Google using keywords (especially proper nouns) from the title of the primary source. For example:

1. Title = Sallie Mae: Stop \$50 Loan Forbearance Fee / Google Search Terms = “Sallie Mae” \$50 “loan forbearance fee”
2. Title = BBC Scotland : Keep the Janice Forsyth Show / Google Search Terms = BBC “Janice Forsyth Show”
3. Title = Keep Tilgate Park as a Free Public Space / Google Search Terms = “Tilgate Park”

The researcher is to sign out of his/her Gmail account or open an “incognito” window in his/her browser before searching to ensure that results are not affected by past search preferences.

3. If using title alone does not provide relevant results, add additional information to the search, for example:

1. Current year (coding year), if unavailable, past year (to obtain more recent information).
2. Campaign beginning year (to obtain coverage at the time of campaign, if more recent information unavailable).
3. The target location (be as specific as possible). For municipal campaigns, try municipal newspapers.
4. Any additional terms in the case which are unusual proper nouns, such as names and places. Put proper nouns of more than one word in quotes (ex: “Bradley Manning,” “Lake Urmia”)
5. If the case is about a political prisoner, search for the person’s name in quotes and the term “released.”

4. Add a parenthetical note to the source indicating how far the coder needs to read to get the relevant information about outcome. Example: (read 1st paragraph), (read 1st sentence).

5. If, after using the strategies above, you do not find an outcome source, copy and paste the parenthetical phrase – (no additional outcome information) – into the Outcome Source cell on your assignment sheet.