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Water privatization, hegemony and civil society: What Motivates Individuals to Protest About Water Privatization?

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ABSTRACT

The article takes the case of protest against water privatization in Ireland to show that protestors with high levels of instrumental motivation as opposed to ideological motivation are more likely to protest. In order to explain this we uniquely combine Klandermans' social psychology of protest with Gramsci's theory of hegemony. By bridging these two bodies of theory, we provide an interdisciplinary account of the reason why protestors serve to uphold the exact power structures they intend to challenge. We argue that for water movements to be successful they must focus equally on both their instrumental and ideological motivations to ensure that power structures are confronted. This would enable movements to devise a coherent counter-hegemonic discourse, which is essential to contest the dominant global hegemony of water marketization.

KEYWORDS

Civil society; hegemony; water privatization

Introduction

Conflicts over water privatization are conflicts over hegemony; it is a question of whether water is a private good, to be bought and sold as a commodity, or a public good, and thus to be considered as a human right (Davidson-Harden, Naidoo, & Harden, 2007, p. 7). The dominant global neo-liberal hegemony of water marketization – as opposed to water as a human right – remains largely unchallenged and state-centric (Bakker, 2013). A counter-hegemonic discourse is necessary to challenge the dominant hegemonic ideas and replace them 'by undermining the political economic foundations of liberal democracies' (Baer & Gerlak, 2015, p. 1529). Without a coherent counter-hegemonic agenda, which is ideologically supported by water activists both locally and globally, the dominant hegemony of water marketization will remain largely uncontested. This is troubling because neo-liberalization of primary resources is sporadic and reliant upon profitability, and thus structural economic inequality becomes intertwined with the provision of water (Baer & Gerlak, 2015, p. 1540).

We consider the issue of water privatization as a conflict of interest between the public provision of water and the corporate interest of private management. This is a global

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conflict that emerged in the 1980s and increased significantly during the 1990s (Bakker, 2013, p. 253; Opel, 1999). The discussion about private management in the provision of water was, and still is, framed as a conflict between state failure with public utilities and water access for the poor (Bakker, 2013, p. 254; Dellas, 2011, p. 1917). During the early 1990s, this conflict was framed as a 'simple rational-choice problem that can only be resolved by pricing water' (Agnew, 2011, p. 472). This rationale was affirmed as the fourth principle in the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development in 1992, in which it was claimed that water 'should be recognized as an economic good' (World Meteorological Organization, 2016).

This led to water sector liberalization which, facilitated by privatization policies, allowed private companies from France, Britain and Spain to expand their activities internationally (Bakker, 2013, p. 254). Privatization programmes were encouraged by the World Bank, which required states to 'open up public utilities for sale, lease or concession' (Jaffee & Newman, 2013, p. 321). However, the World Bank has been criticized for allowing its agenda of privatization to undermine the human right to water (Food and Water Watch, 2015).

In Ireland, the struggle over water was reignited following the economic depression of 2008 when the Irish government imposed a series of austerity measures that were sewn up with an assisted financial bid from the EU and the IMF to stimulate Irish economic recovery. One of the clauses of this agreement was the transfer of water service provision from local authorities to a water utility, which would then impose charges (Department of Finance, 2010, pp. 9 & 26). While Ireland had been in a longstanding debate since the 1970s over the management of its water utilities, a key moment in the policy conflict occurred when the country was criticized by the EU, which found in 2015 that 1.5% of groundwater bodies were of poor chemical status (Environmental Protection Agency, 2016). A privatization programme under the auspices of the Water Framework Directive was foreseen by the European Commission as the best way to ensure better water quality (Zurita et al., 2015, p. 172). These findings provided the Irish government with the justification it had been seeking to pursue its privatization measures by seeking a technical approach, in the form of a private company, to improve the quality of water in Ireland (Irish Times, 2016a). However, despite this, the success of the private sector's ability to achieve better water system remain ambiguous (Bakker, 2013, p. 256).

In response to the privatization plans of the government, a significant protest movement has rallied together to raise concerns about economic injustices and to present a counter-hegemonic discourse about water as a human right in order to oppose Ireland's water privatization policy (Right2Water Ireland, 2015). Many other smaller, regional-based organizations have been active in organizing rallies and coordinating direct resistance such as the removal of water metres. This local activity was coordinated by larger organizations such as Right2Water and the resulting regional organizations have provided the secure foundations and essential networks for the reinforcement of a wider and therefore more significant campaign on the national level. Many national protests have taken place and a particularly well-attended march in Dublin in 2015 saw participation estimated at 80,000 (The Guardian, 2015)

We investigate the motivations of protestors who participate in the water movement in Ireland and whose aim is to present a counter-hegemonic discourse in response to the

water privatization policy. We are interested in seeing whether instrumental or ideological motivation is more influential in leading individuals in Ireland to engage in a hegemonic struggle over stakeholder status in water through civil society protest.

The motivations of civil society can be used to study conflicts of interest and to better understand why privatization is still being pursued both in Ireland and globally even though in 2005 the World Bank acknowledged that as a direct result of water privatization, popular protests occur, and that provision for water should remain publicly managed (World Bank, 2005).

The research is informed by a theoretical framework which operationalizes Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and civil society and links this to Klandermans' social psychology of protest to study the effects of instrumental and ideological motivation on protest participation in Ireland. The design of the research applies a multidisciplinary approach in an effort 'to bridge *subjective* (psychological) and *social* (structural) perspectives on when, why and how, people engage in social protest' (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008, p. 504). First, we provide a working definition of civil society as an associational organization of citizens arising spontaneously as a product of the state and capitalism to mediate conflicts between social life and the market economy (Edwards, 2005, p. 3). We argue that this definition of civil society represents a theoretical understanding of the instrumental motivation, which is later operationalized together with the theory of social psychology of protest.

Next, we discuss Gramsci's ideas about hegemony in relation to civil society. Gramsci's work shows why civil societies are created and are indeed considered a salient form of political life, not as a sphere of freedom, but of hegemony (Buttigieg, 1995, pp. 6–7). He expanded on Marxist ideas of how the ruling capitalist class maintains control. Hegemony is explained as consent which is manufactured – as opposed to coerced – as a form of control. By questioning the role of hegemony within the relationship of the civil society to the state, Gramsci helps to advance the idea about how ideology develops and how it is maintained as the dominant position of the ruling classes and the expansion of capital (Morton, 2007, pp. 87–88). We use this point to argue that ideological motivation is as necessary as instrumental motivation in order to counter hegemonic ideas and affectuate political change. Indeed, it is also claimed by Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2014, p. 184) that both instrumental and ideological motivation contribute to the determination to protest.

The social psychology of protest shows us that the two different types of motivation resonate with different types of campaigns: 'instrumental motives more likely resonate with campaigns that emphasize the violation of interests', while 'ideological motivation more likely resonates with campaigns that emphasize the violation of principles' (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2014, p. 185). However, the water movement simultaneously emphasizes a violation of interest (economic) and principles (human rights). We argue that the water movement must foster support for both instrumental motivation (through civil society) and ideological motivation (through counter-hegemony) to attract the greatest amount of support for protest participation and to reinforce the allocation of water as a social issue as opposed to a technical issue (Salleh, 2000; Susskind, 2013). We expect that individuals must experience simultaneously high indications of instrumental and ideological motivations to result in high protest participation.

Civil society and conflict over hegemony

The conflict over hegemony underpins the central concept investigated in this article. The mechanisms of hegemony within the privatization of water have been considered before (see Ekers & Loftus, 2008; Goldman, 2007; Zurita et al., 2015). However, in this article we seek to understand why individuals engage in civil society protest activities to challenge the dominant hegemony by combining Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Klandermans' arguments about collective action from social psychology. By employing Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the power structures that operate within a capitalist system under the guise of liberal democracy are revealed (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 3). This leads us to question whether the individuals that engage in civil society conceive of this framework and are ideologically aware of it. How are they affected by hegemony, how do they affect hegemony and thus, are they aware of their instrumentality? This reasoning applies to the hegemony in which civil society operates, while it simultaneously challenges it. So by extending hegemony with individual reasons to protest we can investigate whether protesters actually achieve ideological change.

Civil society is a historically contested concept (Fine, 1997). Laine (2014, p. 60) argues that civil society is an evolving concept that will continue to adapt to the political environment of the epoch and its relation to democracy. Edwards (2005) divides the existing scholarship on civil society into three central schools of thought: associational life (Béteille, 2001; Kopecký & Mudde, 2003; Laine, 2014); the good society (Edwards, 2005; Fine, 1997); and the public sphere (Habermas, 1994). The main characteristics of these schools are summarized in Table 1.

A key theme within each of the schools of thought is social association, which is considered a central feature of human life, inherent to the natural state of humankind (Edwards, 2005, p. 19). This claim presents a large debate in itself. However, Laine (2014, p. 74) argues that there appears to be compelling evidence that humankind is prone to social association as a means to progress a particular cause of interest. This idea is associated with a connotation of positivity and development, though such an effect may not always necessarily occur (Kopecký & Mudde, 2003). For instance, few people would recognize the social association of the Ku Klux Klan as a campaign for a better society for all. We assume in this article that the social association of civil society to campaign against water privatization strives for a more equitable and improved society. Gonzalez and Yanes (2015, p. 2) argue that these 'struggles are ... not restricted to the poor regions of the world; there are mobilizations everywhere as the awareness of the importance of water grows.'

The form of social association is also important, but while all schools of thought consider civil society in some way to be the organization of association, they see it as involving

Table 1. Characteristics of the main schools of thought on civil society.

Characteristics	Civil society schools of thought		
	Associational life	Good society	Public sphere
Social association	✓	✓	✓
Civility	✓	✓	✓
Lobbying	✓		
Freedom		✓	
Discursive			✓

different actors. Whereas the school of associational life considers the social association of civil society in an institutionalized form, it could also be considered in terms of Tocquevillian thinking, between individuals, as in the public sphere; or it could be the association of organizations with the political society, as in the good society school. Indeed, it is difficult to achieve democratic consolidation without a 'strong associational eco-system' (Edwards, 2005, p. 74). Furthermore, the concept of civility is a theme of consensus between the schools of thought. That is to say, all three schools admit that violence, in an anarchical sense, contravenes the norms of civil society; that violence can only serve to degrade the value of civil society as an arena for political deliberation (Béteille, 2001, p. 291).

We will use the following working definition of civil society here: an associational organization of citizens arising spontaneously as a product of the state and capitalism to mediate conflicts between social life and the market economy (Edwards, 2004, p. 3). Specifically, in relation to water privatization, civil society is the organization of citizens with the common aim being to challenge the dominant hegemony of water marketization. While this definition of civil society provides a working understanding of the mechanisms of civil society, it does not provide any specific answers as to why civil societies are created and are indeed considered a salient form of political life. This is however a point of interest developed by Gramsci. By questioning the role of hegemony within the relationship of the civil society to the state, we can use Gramsci's ideas about how ideology is developed and maintained as the dominant position of the ruling classes and the expansion of capital (Morton, 2007, pp. 87–88).

Gramsci and protest

Gramsci's work explains how civil society is connected to the economic and political sphere (Laine, 2014, p. 64). We use this to study the response of civil society to the privatization of water, as this is a topic which encompasses both the economic and political sphere. Gramsci specifies that the relationship of power and influence is between the political society (otherwise known as 'government' or 'state') and civil society (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 6). In Gramsci's definition civil society is thus not described as a sphere of freedom, but of hegemony (Buttigieg, 1995, pp. 6–7). Hegemony is explained by Gramsci as consent which is manufactured – as opposed to coerced – as a form of control. However, consent is not distributed evenly in society and not everyone is in an equal position to understand how consent is manufactured (Buttigieg, 1995, p. 7).

Gramsci concludes that 'the struggle over hegemony revolves around shaping intersubjective forms of consciousness in civil society – which are like the trench systems of modern warfare – rather than simply focusing on gaining control of the coercive state apparatus' (Morton, 2007, p. 93). This point helps to formulate the working definition of hegemony, which is here applied, as the production and reproduction of consent by the population, including subordinate groups, to a social order created by dominant groups in society (Baer & Gerlak, 2015, p. 1529). The central theme in Gramsci's explanation is the *forma mentis*, an 'ideological commonsense', engendered by dominant groups to legitimize existing arrangements and relations of power. This induces potential opposing groups that are out of power to consent with the dominant groups' control and ideology and to pursue their goals in a manner that does not threaten the basic order (Buttigieg, 1995). In this way, while reformation of the system is fought for within the existing

structure of social order, the campaigns for change are pursued within the sphere of civil society (Buttigieg, 1995).

With this in mind, we ask: (1) Why do individuals in Ireland choose the sphere of civil society to deliberate ideas and express dissatisfaction with government's water policy?, and (2) What expectations do individuals in Ireland have about their action within civil society? We therefore focus on the *individual* as opposed to the organization (civil society). We aim to study the relationship between the individual and the democratic system and why people protest.

Individual motivations to protest

The question of why individuals protest has been considered by Klandermans (1997), Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013), and Van Zomeren et al. (2008). We will apply this social psychology of protest here as a heuristic tool (Corrigall-Brown, 2012) to examine the motivations of protestors (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). We extend this social psychological approach with Gramsci's ideas to reveal how hegemony and counter-hegemony are forces which influence the motivations and achievements of protestors.

Although there may be a great sense of discontent about the privatization of water in Ireland, individuals do not necessarily choose to take action (Klandermans & Van Stekelenburg, 2014). The transformation of discontent into collective action obliges individuals to deal with a social dilemma, which requires them to weigh up the risks and costs of participation in a collective movement that may or may not achieve its purpose (Klandermans, 1997). Klandermans (1997, p. 15) argues that there are three processes central to the social psychology of protest: the construction and reconstruction of collective beliefs, the transformation of discontent into collective action, and the formation and maintenance of commitment to a movement. According to Corrigall-Brown (2012), individuals can engage in two main ways, attitudinally and behaviourally. Attitudinally, a person can feel more or less commitment to a group, and behaviourally a person can participate in more or fewer activities (Corrigall-Brown, 2012, pp. 40–41).

The process of becoming motivated to participate in protest is a complicated one (Klandermans, 1997). The work of Feather (1982) and Klandermans (1997) shows how values and expectations in collective action are explained by value expectancy theory and collective action theory. Klandermans argues that 'in order to motivate participants an activity must be rewarding in and of itself and help to achieve valued collective goals, and neither can be taken for granted' (1997, p. 28). The individual must perceive the organizations' goals as achievable and perceive the forms of action to be effective.

Once an individual has made a decision to participate, the question of why people protest still remains to be answered. Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013, p. 896) argue that grievances, efficacy, identity, emotions and social embeddedness are interwoven concepts that explain why people protest. Their model for research (Figure 1) combines these concepts to explain that:

grievances originate from interests and/or principles that are felt to be threatened. The more people feel that interests of the group and/or principles that the group values are threatened,

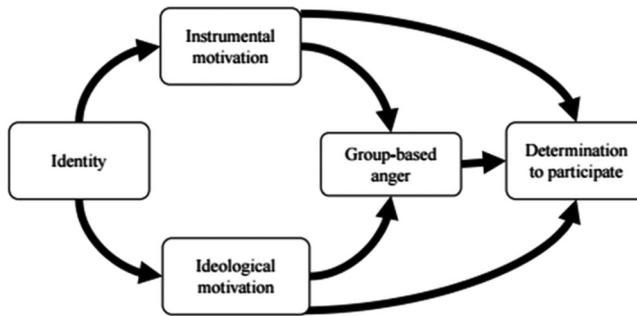


Figure 1. Factors which influence the determination to participate in collective action (after Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2014: 184).

the angrier they are and the more they are prepared to take part in protest. (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013, p. 897)

We use the distinction between instrumental and ideological motivations in this model as the basis for our study in this article and take the recommendation of Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013, pp. 897–898) for a more dynamic and contextualized study of protests. We do this by applying the political concept of hegemony to the social psychology of protest.

So in our study we will use a survey, and include protest behaviour and the factors influencing the determination to protest, paying specific attention to ‘instrumental motivation’ and ‘ideological motivation’. Instrumental motivation is explained as people protesting because they believe it will make a difference, while ideological motivation is explained as the moral obligation that people feel to express their views (Van Stekelenburg, Walgrave, Klandermans, & Verhulst, 2012, p. 253). We argue that both instrumental and ideological motivations contribute to determination to protest (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2014). We will test the importance of instrumental motivation and ideological motivation in order to determine to what extent these variables effect protest participation.

The two types of motivation resonate with different types of campaigns. Instrumental motivation ‘more likely resonates with campaigns that emphasize the violation of interests’, while ‘ideological motivation more likely resonates with campaigns that emphasize the violation of principles’ (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2014, p. 185). Protests about water privatization simultaneously emphasize a violation of interest (economic) and of principles (human rights). We therefore argue that the water privatization campaign must foster both instrumental and ideological motivations in order to achieve optimum participation in protest.

Based on the general research question of this article – what motivates individuals to protest about water privatization – we have deduced two more specific sub-questions that we want to investigate in the following section. The first one is descriptive and necessary to get a picture of the protesters: who are these protesters and how and why do they protest? The second question is theoretical and relates to the above-mentioned distinction: to what extent is ideological motivation adopted over instrumental motivation in relation to protest activity? Based on Klandermans’ reasoning, we extrapolate four expectations to

determine the relationship between the factors that influence determination to protest and actual protest action taken. We expect (1) that individuals with high indications of both instrumental and ideological motivations are the most likely to protest. Furthermore, we expect that individuals with a high indication of ideological motivation but low instrumental motivation are less likely to protest (2a), and those with high instrumental motivation but low ideological motivation even less likely (2b). The most unlikely individuals to protest are those with both low instrumental motivation and low ideological motivation (3).

Method

During the spring of 2016, we conducted a survey among active members of social media groups campaigning against water privatization policy in Ireland. The overall purpose of the survey was to test the individuals' level of ideological and instrumental motivations, and to see whether this affects their likelihood of joining a protest.

Sampling frame – Before deciding how to target the potential respondents we contacted the organizers of various organizations such as Right2Water and the Student Union of Trinity College Dublin who had either commented on or were involved in the movement against water privatization. Unfortunately, we experienced little success in gaining access to email lists of participants and interested parties active in these organizations. Instead we decided to target members of activist groups directly online. To reach potential respondents we sent out an online link on Facebook with a request to fill in a survey questionnaire. We initially sampled several groups on Facebook with the theme of fighting water privatization. The group in which the survey gained the most attention was called 'Fighting water privatization and corruption'. Non-probability sampling was used, meaning that the research targeted an active group of protestors. The specific sampling technique used was snowball sampling, where active followers of the Facebook group shared the link to other groups that they followed or managed and responses were gained due to existing and known connections between the respondents. The limitations of this technique is a bias in the response rate of respondents with analogous viewpoints. The survey link received 184 clicks, of whom 130 (71%) respondents completed the survey.

Questionnaire – The questionnaire is split into three sections. The first section asks *who* participated in protests, the second section *how* the respondents protest, and the third section enquires *for what reasons* they protest. There was a part with open questions and a part with multiple-choice questions (Likert scales). In this way, we carried out a quantitative synthesis that sought 'to bridge *subjective* (psychological) and *social* (structural) perspectives on when, why and how, people engage in social protest' (Van Zomeren et al., 2008, p. 504). Research question 1 is answered by looking at the more general part. Research question 2 is answered by looking at specific items on motivations and protest.

Respondents – Among the responses there were 50% males and 50% females. The age of respondents ranges between 23 and 72, with the majority being 46–55 years old. The largest section of respondents (19%) is waged workers, 14% are middle-level workers and 10% are unemployed. Of the respondents, 19% are high school vocationally trained, 16% completed further education after having finished high school but not university, and 11% are university graduates. They are well represented across the counties

of Ireland, with twenty-one of the twenty-six counties represented. Dublin was the county with the highest amount of responses.

Construction of indicators – In order to test the data for ideological and instrumental motivations, the individual cases were assigned a score for both. We used several items to construct two scales. The items used to construct the instrumentality indicator included the following Likert scale statements: ‘I feel committed to the organisation’, ‘I am determined to participate’, and ‘the demonstration will persuade the government to reassess its water privatisation policy’. Similarly, the items used to construct the ideology indicator included the following statements: ‘I am dissatisfied with the government’s water privatisation policy’, ‘the proposed government water privatisation policy is against my principles’, and ‘I find the proposal to privatise water unjust’.

The indicators for instrumentality and ideology were related to the responses to protesting: ‘Have you joined any protests about water privatisation? If so, how many between 2015 and 2016?’ An indicator for protest was constructed by grouping the following responses together: none, one, 2–5, 6–10, 11–20 and 20+. So for protest, a scale of 1 to 6 was assigned in incremental order, while both the instrumental and ideological indicators have a range from 3 to 15.

To test our theoretical expectations, we have split the instrumental and ideological motivation scores into high and low categories. We noticed that our sampling – selecting active members of protest groups – caused clustering towards the high end of the scales for both instrumentality and in particular ideological motivations. For instrumental motivation, the data range is between 8 and 15, so the split between low and high was made at 14 because the respondents scoring between 8 and 14 score represented 54% of the cumulative percentage. For ideological motivation, 95.5% of the data is clustered at the top end of the scale (at 15), so it is difficult to accurately split the variable into low and high categories. Despite this imbalance in the data the ideological motivation was split at 14, with a score of 3–14 representing low ideological motivation and a score of 15 representing high ideological motivation.

Results

Our first research question was: who protests, how and why? Our findings zoom in on the motivations of a politically active group of individuals in the water movement in Ireland. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they are very interested in politics. While they were more likely to vote than not to vote in the Irish general elections of 2016, they were also more likely to vote for predominately left-wing parties; with 47% having voted for Sinn Féin, a party which at the time campaigned against the water charges but won only 13.8% of the national vote (Irish Times, 2016b). Not only are the respondents politically active voters, but they also participated in other political activities between 2015–2016. As Table 2 shows, the most popular activities were: boycotting a company (70%), signing a petition (70%), contacting a politician (49%), joining an organization (40%), contacting an organization (27%), protesting (23%), and occupying a public area (22%). One can assume that, as a result of the electoral system and outcomes, these citizens have remained unrepresented by the government and so they have engaged in extra-political activity to challenge the policy of water privatization.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics concerning types of protest and replies to the open question of why respondents protest.

Type of protest	Number of participants	
	<i>N</i> (<i>n</i> = 130)	%
Anti-Austerity	68	52%
Regional/Nationalistic	21	16%
Social/labour	19	15%
Environment	11	8%
Anti-globalization	8	6%
<i>Motives</i>		
Social media	19	23%
Political discontent	11	14%
Moral obligation	11	14%
Already paid via taxes	10	12%
Protest	6	7%
Existing networks	5	6%
Movement organizer	5	6%
Friends	3	4%
Local movement	3	4%
Personal research	3	4%
Personal economy	2	2%
Traditional media	2	2%
Campaign event	1	1%

The second section of the survey questioned the respondents about their participation in protest. While the majority of the respondents have been active, inactive or previous members of a water movement, within the past 12 months over two thirds (68%) of them have attended between two to ten protests. As Table 3 shows, over half of the respondents (52%) have participated in anti-austerity protests. Only 8% of the participation was in environmental protests. This gives a first indication of the fact that their primary interest in protesting is economic, rather than environmental. So environmental issues, which are more closely associated with the moral and ideological imperatives behind the water movement, may not necessarily form the priority for protestors in Ireland.

We will now examine the respondents' rationale for protest using the open questions in the final section of the survey, where a picture of political discontent in terms of economic versus moral/human rights and environmental issues was clearly formed. In response to how they became involved in the water movement, many respondents stated government corruption as central to their political discontent. One respondent wrote: '[I am] fed up of corrupt political parties who lie and break promises upon which they were elected.' Another respondent said they became involved in the movement 'because of government back-hand deals – liars.' Some responses stated that the government does not represent the

Table 3. Number of protests that respondents were engaged in.

Times protested	Number of respondents	
	<i>N</i> (<i>n</i> = 130)	%
One	4	5%
2–5	33	38%
6–10	25	28%
11–20	10	11%
20+	11	13%
None	1	1%
Don't know	4	4%

interests of the voters – ‘the corrupt services of the state robbed the people’. Instead, there is a belief that the government is controlled by an unelected oligarchy who are ‘taxing the life out of ordinary people – while the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.’

The respondents expressed a moral obligation to participate in the movement. Some people claimed that the water privatization is simply ‘wrong’, while many others argued for the necessity to protect the human right to water. Some respondents asserted that it was in the interest of the ‘common good’ that they became involved in the movement about water privatization. Some others specified that they were involved in the movement to ‘stand up for those who have no voice and simply cannot afford any more austerity measures.’ This sense of collective action to achieve a common good is discussed by Klandermandans (1997, pp. 78–79), who argues that a form of social association and development of collective identity results in participants overcoming the social dilemma of participation – as described by Olson (1968), who claimed that rational individuals would not participate in collective action but take a free ride unless selective incentives prevent them from doing so.

The respondents’ discontentment with the policy is best understood within the context of historical, current and future issues. The most common historical issue cited by the respondents was the belief that they already paid for their water through general taxation. Indeed, as a result of ‘popular public support ... a policy of zero domestic charges for water provision’ was enacted in the 1990s meaning that ‘the cost of water provision and infrastructure’ was to be collected through taxation (Zurita et al., 2015, p. 172). Some respondents asked where the money previously collected for water provision by the government had been spent (if not on water infrastructure). One respondent claimed that the government had ‘mismanaged the funds’, while another asserted that ‘not one thing has been done to improve our water, [it is] all about privatisation and money.’ There was an overall sense that the government had ‘ruined the country’ by ‘giving away oil and gas, with the fishing territories given away to boost farm subsidies.’

In terms of the current policy developments, the respondents deem the situation to represent a continuation of this destruction. There is a consensus among the respondents that water itself is a public good which cannot be owned by a private company, and moreover that the investment made using public funds until now must be protected from the interests of private business. For example, one person stated: ‘The privatisation of publicly funded infrastructure is fundamentally theft. The diversion of public funds into an organisation destined for privatisation is fundamentally theft.’ In the context of historical and present experiences of governmental organization of water provision, many respondents expressed fears and concerns about the future management of water in the hands of a private entity.

The future concerns about water privatization stem from discontentment at the process adopted by the government to administer the water contracts to Irish Water. Several respondents referred to the company as a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization (quango), calling it a ‘money-making quango’. There is a sense of suspicion indicated by many respondents, who believe that contracts for water-metre implementation were awarded by the government in a corrupt manner. One respondent stated that: ‘The companies that were set up and received the lucrative contract were corrupt from the beginning and mired in cronyism and nepotism.’ To add to the discontent, the respondents show concerns about the lack of controlled pricing and quality of the water. Much of

this fear is based on the knowledge of water privatization outcomes in other water systems, for instance in the United Kingdom. Another respondent said that ‘privatisation in other countries has shown that prices for water will increase and no money will be re-invested into the infrastructure.’ An additional key concern for the respondents was about the uncertain future of Ireland’s water for their children.

Instrumental and ideological motivations of Irish water privatization protesters

The second research question relates to ideological and instrumental motivation in relation to participating in the movement against water privatization. Respondents were asked about their commitment to the movement and their values about water privatization. The results of these questions show that the respondents have a high sense of both ideological and instrumental motivation. As Table 4 shows, almost all (98%) of the respondents are very dissatisfied with the government’s policy. The majority of respondents (78%) believe that the demonstrations will influence the government’s policy making. However, when these results are tested against the respondent’s likelihood to participate, there is a differentiation in the levels of protest of those who are more instrumentally than ideologically motivated.

In our theoretical section, we formulated expectations about the role of ideological and instrumental motivations in relation to participation in protest about water privatization. Now we will relate the scores for instrumental and ideological motivations to the protest score – more precisely, the number of protest activities an individual has attended in the past twelve months. First, we test whether individuals are less likely to participate in protest if they indicate low levels of instrumental and ideological motivations (1), then the two mixed conditions, namely low instrumental and high ideological motivations (2a) and high instrumental and low ideological motivations (2b), and finally high instrumental and high ideological motivations (3). The results are presented in Table 5.

The table shows some unexpected results, especially in relation to the assumptions that low instrumental and low ideological motivations would lead to the least protest (1), and high ideological and high instrumental motivations (3) would lead to the highest participation in protest. Instead, the participation scores of high instrumental/low ideological (2b) is the highest when we rank the four situations, while low instrumental/low ideological (1) is second. Remarkably, the participation scores of (1) and (3) differ by only 0.1, and

Table 4. Percentage of respondents who agree regarding statements on ideological and instrumental motivation.

	Not a lot %	To some extent %	A lot %	Total N (130)
<i>Ideology statements</i>				
I am dissatisfied with the government’s water privatization policy.	1%	1%	98%	89
The proposed government water privatization policy is against my principles	6%	2%	92%	130
I find the proposal to privatize water unjust	2%	1%	96%	130
<i>Instrumentality statements</i>				
I feel committed to the organization	2%	37%	60%	83
I am determined to participate	2%	31%	67%	87
The demonstration will persuade the government to reassess its water privatization policy	1%	21%	78%	84

Table 5. Participation in protest in relation to low and high ideological and instrumental motivations.

Theoretical assumption	Motivation	High (+)/Low (-)	Expected Participation in Protest	Protest Participation Score	Rank
1	Instrumental	-	Lowest	3.0	2nd
	Ideological	-			
2a	Instrumental	-	In between	2.8	4th
	Ideological	+			
2b	Instrumental	+	In between	3.2	1st
	Ideological	-			
3	Instrumental	+	Highest	2.9	3rd
	Ideological	+			

they are positioned second and third, respectively. We therefore have to conclude that the combination of high instrumental and high ideological motivations is not necessarily the most important explanation for the reasons why people participate in protest. Instead, we see a difference between the specific importance associated with instrumental and ideological motivations. Comparing (2a) and (2b) where the mixed combinations of low and high motivation were tested, we can conclude that instrumental motivation seems the key motivational factor for those who are most likely to protest. One could even reason that high ideological motivation might be a demotivating factor for those who protest, as one can see from the scores of (2a).

Conclusion

Based on Klandermans’ social psychology of protest, we had expected that Irish protesters against water privatization would show both high ideological and instrumental motivations. Yet, our study shows a different outcome. We found that among active members of protest groups, the participants most likely to protest are the ones with high instrumental motivation, but (relatively) low ideological motivation. Conversely, the participants who were least likely to protest were the ones who had low instrumental motivation and high ideological motivation. We conclude from these results that the dependent factor of protest is whether the participant experiences high levels of instrumental motivation. The feeling that they could possibly convince the Irish government to drop the measures, which violate their rights, plus their commitment to the movements were part of this instrumental motivation and led them to action.

That ideological motivation and thus counter-hegemony is less important in the motivations among a group that is highly active in the water movement means that this civil society seems less interested in challenging the dominant global hegemony and expansion of capital in relation to water. As a result, this civil society forms a component of liberal democracy which might be complicit in upholding hegemony. It is a civil society which is instrumentally motivated primarily by a violation of (personal) interest at the expense of the violation of principles and it might therefore fail to mediate the broader conflicts between social life and the market economy. This is a group of people who have come together to fight water charges based on their personal motivation of not wanting to pay more/anything for their water. This is an essential part of the movement. However, we argue that in order to really achieve change the group should go one step further and also form a counter-hegemonic position to challenge the system. This would be a

collective ideological principle that counters the neo-liberal common sense of water marketization. Politics which operates within the predetermined boundaries of democratic civility actually serve to uphold and preserve the power structures instead of challenging them. To successfully attack the dominant neoliberal 'common sense' of water marketization, protesters against water privatization need an alternative 'forma mentis'. According to Gramsci, a strong counter-hegemonic ideology is necessary to win over civil society and progressively undermine the influence and control of dominant groups. The low presence of counter-hegemonic motivation among the most active water protesters in Ireland highlights a considerable weakness in the conflict over hegemony by the water movement, which may well not be limited to Irish protesters (Baer & Gerlak, 2015, pp. 1538). That the protesters do not see the wider systemic injustice as a point for motivation suggests that they have accepted the pervasive ideology of TINA or 'there is no alternative', the slogan used to cement neoliberalism as the dominant ideological doctrine primarily by the USA and the UK in the 1980s. Underpinned by the Darwinian-like biological understanding of human development as inherently competitive, neoliberalism presents marketization as a natural progression in the development of a society. In the case of water privatization in Ireland it was necessary for the government to position themselves as the problem solver to water management issues. This is essential for the framing of resistance, or in this case the protesters, as inhibiting the natural laws of development according to the neoliberal doctrine. In this regard, Naomi Klein's conceptions of how the capitalist system can suddenly become the leading principle to solve natural disasters, is a broader framework to explain how the system undermines those who resist by framing itself as the solution to all societal problems (Klein, 2017). Those who resist are thereby framed as non-constructive and in some cases saboteurs. To reframe themselves as constructive the protesters would need to take their actions beyond instrumental motivations and present a counter-hegemonic position.

These findings contribute to the current body of research about protest politics by innovatively providing a political theoretical underpinning to the research about protest, which allowed us to apply Gramsci's concept of *forma mentis* of hegemony to primary research about protest participation. The combination of political theory and the social psychology of protest provide a deeper understanding of the motives behind an individual's likelihood to protest and the potential implications of their protest to successfully challenge efforts of water privatization.

While this article is focused on the case of Ireland, the overall context in which the study is based is a global conflict between the economic and human interest in water. With this in mind, it would be useful in future studies to consider the global context of these issues by carrying out a comparative study concerning the reaction of civil societies within different countries (Quaranta, 2013). Such a comparative study may reveal the different experiences of the power of civil society within different democratic or non-democratic political systems. For instance, studies in different countries in Europe might reveal subtle yet interesting differences between different countries such as France (Bonnafeous-Boucher & Porcher, 2010), Italy (Mattei, 2013) and Ireland, that have all been engaged in a battle over the provision for water in the backdrop of austerity measures.

Alternatively, the study could be extended to acknowledge the differences between water privatization – where previously public-owned systems are bought out by private

companies – and commodification, where the rights to freshwater aquifers themselves are purchased by beverage companies (Jaffee & Newman, 2013). This is an issue currently affecting Lahore in Pakistan and various states in the US such as California and Maine. The ramifications of such commodification of freshwater aquifers are wide. Primarily the communities that rely upon the aquifer experience degradation of the water supply – either contamination or drought (Bloomberg, 2014). Additionally, the use of bottling plants is causing unnecessary environmental damage, from the plastics used to bottle the water to the additional vehicles needed to transport the goods (Jaffee & Newman, 2013, p. 318). All the consequences of water commodification arguably result in a situation of degradation of human standards of living while maintaining profit expansion for the company. Studying civil society responses to privatization and commodification allows us to examine what different counter-hegemonic agendas are devised and how these appeal to protesters.

Disclosure statement

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