The Mobilization Toolbox: The Mechanisms of Extra-Rational Motivation for Political Participation

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In his 1965 classic, Olson demonstrates that whenever an individual's interests are shared by more than a small segment of the population, their material motivation should be to free-ride off the investments of others. This implies that most political participation is *irrational.* Yet, participation occurs. The social sciences have created a vast catalog of potential extra-rational motivations to explain this phenomenon. Nevertheless, we lack a framework within which to consider how this ensemble of mechanisms interacts. In this review, I address the principal explanations for *irrational* political participation and place these motivations within a structure, easing their application to individual cases. Three categories of mechanisms are proposed: (1) bounded rationality, (2) means-as-ends, and (3) extension of the unit of consideration. It is through these pathways that norms, emotions, and group identity motivate political behavior. I end with a set of recommendations for the political entrepreneur hoping to elicit political participation.

1. Introduction

Political entrepreneurs, from environmental activists and labor organizers to presidential candidates and aspirant warlords, share a common problem: how do you mobilize individuals to participate in politics? This is, after all, no small feat. Whenever an individual's interests are shared by more than just a small segment of the population, they have little *material* motivation[1], absent selective incentives, to invest time, energy, or resources into collective action. They should happily free ride on the efforts of others (Olson 1965). Indeed, even a relatively low-cost form participation, the act of voting, is too costly to be rationally motivated (Downs 1957). While political entrepreneurs often do turn to coercion and selective incentives to induce engagement, with surprising frequency it seems they do not have to, people "irrationally" participate in politics (Hardin 2015). This begs the question: what are the underlying motivational mechanisms that political entrepreneurs can use to mobilize a population?

Social science has developed many explanations for deviation from utility maximization. Yet,

[1]Material motivation is intended here to imply utility maximization in the traditional classical economic framework, in which utility is the combination of goods and services.

they tend to be organized by the specific action under investigation - protest (e.g. McCarthy and Zald 2001), voting (e.g. Blais and Young 1999), rebellion (e.g. Petersen 2006) - rather than by the mechanism. As a result, explanations for extra-rational mobilization tend to find prominence within silos of scholars; in part because of relevance to the action at hand but also likely merely due to relative exposure. Moreover, the same word is often used in inconsistent ways across scholarship leading to conceptual ambiguity, for example the use of ideology in Zaller (2012) versus that in Olson (1965), while at the same time similar concepts gain prominence under different monikers.

To come to terms with the diversity of "extra-rational"[2] mechanisms abound, I divide the world of explanations into three principal categories based on their relationship to models of economic utility maximizers as expressed by scholars such as Downs and Olson.[3] In the first category, I place mechanism which rely on individuals being ostensibly material *ends* motivated but failing to act rationally due to constraints on reason. I denote this category **bounded rationality**, a phrase introduced by Simon (1955), though the mechanisms within this concept have grown considerably in the last half-century. This group is further subdivided into rational ignorance, cognitive biases, affective biases, and "common sense."

The second category contains all theories which transmute means to ends; where the act of participation itself, or some ancillary benefit of it, is the motivation. These **means-as-ends** include: intrinsic benefits of participation, social benefits, and expressive benefits.[4] Finally, **solidarity** includes all those motivations which rely on an extension of the *unit of consideration*. In its most micro form, the family, this mechanism is so common as to be assumed in many rational models. In its grandest form, universal altruism, it is so rare as to have its very possibility doubted.[5]

[2]I take this term from Hardin (2015).

[3]It should be noted that there are many "rational choice" scholars who accept these modifications to *homo economicus* as consistent with rational actors (for example Riker and Ordeshook 1972). Moreover, this review is not intended to undermine the idea that individuals can and often due act in a strictly self-interested way. Indeed, North is likely correct that material self-interest and alternative ends are often weighed against each other in the evaluation of the best action (North 1990). Instead, I intend only to catalog and organize the alternatives to the strictest interpretation of rational behavior.

[4]The keen Weberian will recognize that this ends/means bifurcation bares a family resemblance with Weber's concepts of *zweckrationalitat* or "rationality of purpose" and *wertrationalitat* or "value rationality" (Weber 1978). Similarly, the moral philosopher might recognize the distinction between the utilitarian ends-focused evaluation and the Kantian means as an ends in themselves. (That utilitarianism and rational choice theories share a common pedigree is perhaps unsurprising.) Moreover, that utility maximization equations are incomplete if they fail to acknowledge the relative value of the means is also not novel. Milton Friedman, of all people, makes this assertion in his introduction to *Capitalism and Freedom* (2009). This is all to say that this bifurcation is quite common.

[5]The view that altruism does not exist is denoted *psychological egoism*. According to this perspective all

Moreover, there are both conditional and unconditional forms of solidarity.

Having adopted this typology, I will fit the world of hypothesized mechanisms of extra-rational motivation[6] within these categories. Accompanying each motivation will be examples drawn from diverse literatures of political participation. While I argue that these three categories allow for the clearest organization of extra-rational motivation, there are commonly discussed factors which do not fit cleanly within this framework, namely: emotion, norms, and identity. I consider this a virtue, rather than a limitation, of the typology, as it allows for a more precise consideration of the distinct ways in which these factors are influencing the motivation to participate.

The remainder of this review will proceed in a straightforward manner. I first briefly rehash Downs's paradox of voting and Olson's collective action problem. I then proceed through each of the three types of explanations for extra-rational motivation, introducing established mechanisms within these categories.[7] Ultimately, by organizing these mechanisms in such a way, I hope to facilitate scholarship which wishes to explain acts of collective action where individual's material incentives are insufficient. It should go without saying that not all of the explanations highlighted below will apply to any individual case and alternative mechanisms may exist. Nevertheless, when attempting to explain (or facilitate) political participation, these mechanisms and their underlying sources will be a good place to start.

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motivation is self-directed: "Whenever we want others to do well (or ill), we have these other-directed desires only instrumentally; we care about others only because we think that the welfare of others will have ramifications for our own welfare" (Sober 2017, 148). This conception of human nature is generally limited to economists, undergraduates, and Speakers of the House.

[6]Throughout this review, I use the phrase "extra-rational motivation" despite consternation at its connotations. This phrase suggests that actors are motivated by factors that are divorced from reason. Alternatives such as "irrational," "non-rational," "a-rational" have similar implications. I do not demonstrate, and would not want to demonstrate, that this is the case. There is nothing inherent to "reason," or even utility maximization, that actors must have full information or are entirely self-interested. Indeed, as I suggest in footnote 3, most items I present here could be incorporated into an admittedly complex "rational choice" model. Thus, to even call these alternative motivations, especially in the case of bounded rationality, is a bit disingenuous. Yet, to remain consist with the literature being summarized here and the analytical schemas of most readers, I retain the common phrase.

[7]It is quite common among scholars either supporting (e.g. Becker 2008) or challenging (e.g. Ostrom 2000) rational choice explanations for behavior to turn to evolutionary psychology. As a result, the literature on extra-rational motivation is littered with these types of explanations. While perhaps useful in explaining the origins of these motivations, this footnote is the entirety of their discussion herein.

2. "The Voting Paradox" and "the Logic of Collective Action"

The voting paradox has a long lineage, beginning in 1793 with Condorcet, according to whom interest in voting "must decrease with each individual's influence on the election and as the number of voters increases (1994, 246)." The paradox's modern formulation was presented by Downs in 1957. Put simply, he argues that given the information costs and physical costs of voting, as well as the infinitesimal probability that a single vote will be pivotal, it is irrational for to vote. As a result, this model predicts far lower turnout than actually occurs - hence the "paradox". Recognizing this problem, Downs argues that individuals vote to invest in the public good of democracy. However, as we shall see, this is simply passing the buck as collective action falls victim to a similar problem.

Collective action is anytime a group of people work together towards a shared goal, such as democracy, clean air, higher-wages, and victory in war. This type of action is fraught with the risk of free-riding. Individuals will prefer to acquire the public good without paying for it. They will prefer their preferred candidate to win without voting, clean air without a car emissions test, a union without dues, and a strong military without service. Given how negligible an effect any single individual will have on these large-scale outcomes, it is rational to free-ride on the investments of others. Given everyone has that incentive, the public good will not be created.

However, it is important to note that there are several conditions under which collective action will occur within Olson's articulation of the rational choice framework. First, if the good can be feasibly withheld from any non-contributors, i.e. if it is a club good, there is no collective action problem as paying the fee for producing the good is necessary to acquire the good. Thus, collective action is only a problem for non-excludable goods.[8] Second, when the marginal utility of a collective good is greater than the cost for any individual to provide the good unilaterally then the good will be provided. Olson denotes groups in this condition: "privileged."[9]

Third, if the size of a group is small enough, what he calls "intermediate groups," the good

[8]Olson collapses common-pool resources (rivalrous) and public goods (non-rivalrous) into the category public goods. Therefore, to be consistent with Olson, I use public goods to refer to both of these categories. In addition, following Olson, I use the phrases "collective goods" and "non-excludable goods" as synonymous with public goods.

[9]Olson does note that in the short-run actors who would benefit sufficiently from unilateral provision may still attempt to free-ride off the unilateral provision of others. This may produce a stalemate in which all actors choose not to provide, awaiting the investment of others. In the long run, however, this type of situation is unlikely to continue, as for any individual providing the good is still better than not, regardless of the actions of others (1965).

can may be produced through the creation of coordinating organizations. Finally, if individuals are provided selective incentives, individual level rewards or punishments, they will invest in the good. For example, unions in the early 20th century often provided the selective benefit of unemployment insurance or employed the coercive arm of the state to ensure dues-paying members. However, absent these conditions, collective action will remain impossible and thus many groups with shared interest will remain "latent."

As most forms of political participation are investments in public goods, most political participation is, according to the logic of Downs and Olson, irrational.[10] This is the traditional foil against which most discussions of extra-rational motivations progress (e.g. Ostrom 2000; Benn 1978). However, while Olson focuses his analysis on economic motives, he does allow for the possibility of alternative incentives. Specifically, he discusses the potential for social and psychological factors to act as the selective incentives which facilitate collective action. He further references ideology as a possible motivation, though is suspect of its ability to maintain long-term participation. Therefore, the majority of the "means-as-ends" motivations described in Section 4 can be incorporated into Olson's model. Nevertheless, Olson fails to account for the bounds of rationality and dismisses outright the possibility of solidary motives.

3. Bounded Rationality

"*The task is to replace the global rationality of economic man with a kind of rational behavior that is compatible with the access to information and the computational capacities that are actually possessed by organisms, including man, in the kinds of environments in which such organisms exist*" Simon (1955)

Bounded rationality is not irrationality. It maintains the principle from classical economics that individuals are acting to maximize their utility function. It does however assert that individuals are limited (often *rationally* limited) in their access to the necessary information and cognitive processing to understand their "true" utility function. Thus, in the case of collective action, when they are acting "illogically" and "paradoxically" by investing in public goods, this

[10] It should be noted that there are several rational choice solutions proposed to the collective action problem. For example, the "folk theorem" of political participation argues that when actors do not discount the future too much, the game is repeated, the end of the game is uncertain, and actors have the option to punish defection, then it becomes rational to cooperate (as summarized in Whiteley 1995). While intriguing, these game theoretical solutions are not within the scope of this review.

is not out of an intention to deviate from their interests but rather out of a failure to realize that they should be free-riding. In other words, they act for the public good out of *ignorance* or *misunderstanding*.

Hardin describes how, when teaching the collective action problem to undergraduates: "a clear majority of the students thought [he] was crazy" (2015, 113). It is not necessarily obvious to individuals that they should rationally free-ride. Indeed, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman point out that those with a high socio-economic status are more likely to free-ride, because, "by virtue of their high levels of education [they] command the intellectual sophistication to comprehend the free-rider problem" (1995, 272). Why might this be? This question can be broken down into two components: (1) what aspect of the rational calculation is going awry and (2) why is it going awry?

The (Mis)calculation

There are several ways that an individual's calculation could be flawed. First, one may incorrectly estimate the individual costs or likely benefits of the collective good. In turn, the benefits are themselves a function of the likelihood of the successful provision and the value of the good if achieved. This type of misperception is common. Enos and Hersh show that both the general public and political operatives systematically over-predict the probability that their candidate will win election (2017). Similarly, Petersen argues that Lithuanian rebels systematically overestimated their chance of success against the Red Army and the likelihood of Western intervention on their behalf, thus facilitating continued activity (2006).

Second, individuals may overestimate how likely their contribution is to be pivotal. For example, Verba et al. questioned activists as to their motivations for political participation and found that a significant portion of respondents "describe their participation as guided by a desire to influence public policy, a motive that is considered self-delusive and irrational by theorists of rational action" (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 22). Moreover, a survey of members of five organizations in Minnesota found that two thirds of members believed that their dues were likely to affect the association's chance of success (Moe 1988).

Finally, in making their calculation, an individual may fail to consider all available options. This can be because of the choice architecture people are presented with or the options which

they can independently conceive of. For example, children who have parents who served in the military are more likely to end up serving themselves. This is hypothesized to be the result of differential exposure to the idea of military service (Kleykamp 2006). It has also been shown that when individuals are charged $0.05 for a grocery bag, they are more likely to bring their own - not because a nickel is sufficient to change the cost calculus, but rather because it causes people to actively consider the choice of bringing a reusable bag (DeSombre 2018).

Rational Ignorance

These miscalculations may arise due to *ignorance,* in which the individual simply does not know the necessary information for making the rational decision (Hardin 2015, 113). It is well-established that citizens are far less informed about politics than democratic theorist might like (Converse 1962). Moreover, this ignorance is often highly rational. Gathering information about politics is costly and, assuming a low probability of being pivotal, often useless (Downs 1957). Yet, even with significant decisions there is still a point at which the marginal utility of searching for more information is less than the cost of acquiring that information. Consequently, individuals rarely act under conditions of full information (Selten 2001). Moreover, they will rely on cheap sources of information, particularly that subsidized by elites (Downs 1957) or provided by social norms (Louis, Taylor, and Douglas 2005; Cialdini and Goldstein 2004).

Misunderstanding is often intentionally fostered. If an individual can be made to think their actions are essential to the provision of the public good, they are then more likely to invest in its provision. Popkin argues this was an essential to the organization of Vietnamese resistance to colonial and American forces. By breaking big collective goods into small tasks which are each treated as essential to the overall provision of the good, actors are convinced that each member's contributions will have a perceptible effect (1979). Similarly, Benford discusses the parable of The Hundredth Monkey,[11] a story used by nuclear disarmament activists to convince recruits that it may be their efforts which tips the scales (Benford 1993).[12]

[11] At length: "…when a certain critical number achieves an awareness, this new awareness may be communicated from mind to mind. Although the exact number may vary, the Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon means that when only a limited number of people know of a new way, it may remain the consciousness property of these people. But there is a point at which if only one more person tunes-in to a new awareness, a field is strengthened so that this awareness reaches almost everyone!… Your awareness is needed in saving the world from nuclear war. You may be the 'Hundredth Monkey.' (quoted in Benford 1993, 196).

[12] This type of individualization of responsibility for public goods is a common mobilization strategy: Captain

Nevertheless, having full information would only solve the problem if our entire concern was with calculating under the condition of risk, in which the relative probability of an outcomes is knowable. However, often with collective action, individuals are acting under conditions of uncertainty in which the relevant probabilities of outcomes are unknowable (Ferejohn and Fiorina 1974). In this case, it is not that we do not know if we are going to be the hundredth monkey, it is that we *cannot know*. Under conditions of uncertainty, it is difficult to maximize utility, and so actors may be more likely to attempt to minimize regret. Thus, while free-riding may be feasible, if the cost associated with contributing to the public good is relatively small, it may still be reasonable to invest (Ferejohn and Fiorina 1974; Panning 1982).

Uncertainty has further been associated with an increased conformity. Lacking the information to deliberate themselves, they rely on the deliberations of others. This creates a "crowd mentality," and leads to "collective behavior" (Rule 1989; Turner and Killian 1957). This collective behavior is itself connected with political act such as riots, revolutions (Rule 1989), and the outbreak of social movements (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2008).

Faulty Processing

Miscalculation may also occur due to *misunderstanding*. It is not enough that individuals have full information, they must also process it correctly. With many decisions "the computations involved can be so massive that one is forced to assume that ordinary people have the computational capabilities and statistical software of econometricians" (Gigerenzer and Selten 2001, 5).

Yet, beyond mere limits to computational capacity, our inability to calculate regression coefficients in our heads, there are several factors which bias the individual's analysis for decision making. While these impediments to rationality are analytically related, they can be loosely sorted into cognitive biases, affective bias, common knowledge.

Cognitive biases are shortcuts in reasoning (Tversky and Kahneman 1974) and the distortions in memory storage and retrieval (Hilbert 2012) which are hardwired into our mental processes. These biases lower computational costs but also result in "irrational"

Planet's mantra, "the power is yours." Smokey the Bears insistence that "only you can prevent forest fires." Most any World War 2 poster.

conclusions.[13] There are well over a hundred biases identified by researchers in psychology and the psychological variants of other disciplines (Ghemawat 2017). Discussing how each of them can influence collective action is infeasible in this review. Nevertheless, a few examples of specific prominent cognitive biases facilitating political participation is illustrative.

Cognitive biases can affect how we estimate the likely benefits of collective action. The clearest case of this is our tendency towards *motivated reasoning*, in which we come to conclusions as a result of what we want to believe rather than what the facts most reasonably should lead us to believe. Petersen's aforementioned case of "wishful thinking" in Lithuania, where rebels convinced themselves that Western forces were going to join the war effort on their behalf was a clear case of motivated reasoning (2006). As are the voters and political entrepreneurs who overestimate their likelihood of success (Enos and Hersh 2017).

Biases can also impact how we estimate the costs of participation. Petersen emphasizes the "tyranny of sunk costs." If one has invested heavily in an outcome, one will continue to invest in that outcome even after it becomes clear that the benefits of the outcome do not justify further investment. He explains continued participation in clandestine rebellious groups as in part motivated by this bias (2006).

Moreover, the self-related superiority bias makes it highly likely that individuals will overestimate their relative importance. This bias is a "pervasive tendency to see oneself in a favourable light" [Hoorens (1993)). Even if people accept that most individuals are unable to affect policy, they may think they can as they are special. We all want to believe we are the hundredth monkey. Moreover, Elster argues that individuals not only overestimate their likelihood of being pivotal, but also the likelihood that their actions will result in others also investing in the public good - what he terms "magical thinking" (Elster 1989).

Cognitive biases also affect the world of possibilities we consider and the relative importance which we assign them. For example, due to the availability heuristics, people tend to evaluate options and concepts that more easily to mind as more important, often due simply to their repetition in the environment. This has been shown to influence political beliefs and cause individuals to accept false propositions (Lewandowsky et al. 2012). It also increases conformity,

[13] They are also particularly common when making judgements under conditions of uncertainty (Tversky and Kahneman 1974).

as more often stated beliefs become "truer" through repetition (Lemieux 2003). As a result, individuals are more likely to fail to consider the option of free-riding in environments in which norms or leaders emphasize investment in collective goods.

As previously indicated, what ideas are available is a direct determinant of what actions are considered. In other words, ideas have cognitive "agenda-setting" power. Thus, what ideas are available and how interests are expressed is tightly bound. To quote Weber, "Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (1946, 280).

Ideas come and go, however, certain types of ideas have greater power in structuring our understanding of the world. These are *ideology, tradition,* and *common sense* (Swidler 1986). An ideology is "highly articulated, self-conscious belief (Swidler 1986, 279)." In that it is conscious, ideology is not directly a threat to processing (though it may instigate motivated reasoning). The principal difference between ideology and tradition is that tradition is taken for granted, it needs no reasoned justification in the same manner that ideology does. Yet, as with ideology, it remains a conscious idea (Swidler 1986). Thus, traditions are also not a direct threat.

The ideas which are most clearly a threat to reason are those believed to be **common sense**. Common sense is the set of unconscious assumptions which are so natural and undeniable as to structure how we see the world (Geertz 1975). Accordingly, by limiting the options under consideration, common sense is a challenge to reason. Common sense is closely related to habit. Habits are settled and regular activities. A decision was made to do an act at some point, either by oneself or by one's cultural predecessors. The act is then repeatedly conducted without deep consideration. Habit has been demonstrated to be a strong predictor of voting - if you vote once you are likely to vote again (Brody and Sniderman 1977; Gerber, Green, and Shachar 2003; Kadt 2017).[14] This may be due to the fact that the individual has internalized voting as a "common sense" act.

The final source of deviation in processing is **affective biases.** These are often clumped in

[14]Note, the underlying source of the "habit" is contested. It may be due to a change in incentives, either increased benefits or decreased costs, which is durable between elections. It may also be due to a change in self-perception effecting expressive motivations (see below) or learning about the fun of participation (also below) (as summarized in Harder and Krosnick 2008).

with cognitive biases due to the fact that they distort understanding in a similar way. However, while cognitive biases are a systematic error in processing, affective biases distort reasoning conditional on a specific emotional state. Emotions can influence cognition in several ways. They alter how individuals appraise information (Lerner and Tiedens 2006) and the likelihood that an individual engages in motivated reasoning (Gambetta 2004). Emotions can affect how likely one is to seek additional information before acting, which can either result in less (anger, happiness) or more (fear, sadness) information (Johnson 2009; Gadarian and Albertson 2014). Emotions can change what types of information or actions are given consideration (Clore and Gasper 2000). They can also be treated as information in and of itself, informing decisions in a manner detached from objective reality (Clore and Gasper 2000). Specifically, fear and anger can decrease the evaluated cost of inaction compared to *any* action (Gambetta 2004), as well as evaluated probability of different outcomes (Lerner and Tiedens 2006).

Examining fear in particular: it makes one more prone to motivated reasoning, to interpreting all evidence in the most threatening way, and taking some action (Gambetta 2004). Consequently, it may plausibly cause one to discount the potential benefits of free-riding compared to the absence of the public good at all - thus increasing the likelihood that one invests.[15] Similarly, anger might make one discount costs and risks, thus increasing the probability of engaging in collective action.

Older social movement scholarship which focused on "collective behavior" emphasized the role which emotions play in fomenting group think and thus collective action (Rule 1989). Despite the field having moved away from collective behavior, anger and fear are still seen as major factors in the translation of grievances into action (Sturmer and Bernd 2009; Aminzade and McAdam 2001). Emotions are also believed to play a significant role in violent political action (Petersen and Zukerman 2010; Costalli and Ruggeri 2015) and further have been demonstrated to change the likelihood that an individual votes (Valentino et al. 2011), with anger leading to increased engagement in both cases.

Accordingly, emotions can shape the way we process the information, but emotions also affect how much we value the inherent utility of an action.

[15]The reverse is also true. Fear might make one discount the probability that the group as a whole will or can successfully coordinate to provide the good, thus decreasing the desire to make any investment.

4. Means-as-Ends

"*If every man was to show hisself in the streets to-night, we should have the ballot before Parliament breaks up, and if none of' em don't do it, we shall never have the ballot. If that's so, a man's duty's clear enough. He ought to go*" from *Phineas Finn* (1868) quoted in Benn (1979)

"*Protest is the new brunch!*" Anonymous (2017)

Assessments of the collective action problem generally treat the primary benefit of collective action as the public good created. However, there are a number of sources of utility from the act of political participation which are largely orthogonal to whether or not the participation accomplishes the intended goal. First, the act itself may be pleasurable for a host of reasons. Second, political participation may affirm or augment one's self-conception and self-esteem by aligning one's actions with one's own normative standards. Third, participation may be accompanied by social benefits.[16]

Intrinsic Benefits: Pleasure Seeking

It is a a point that should not need belaboring to political scientists: *politics is fun.* It can be an emotionally powerful process, providing joys and pleasures even without an appeal to the ends or greater meaning of it all. There are often performances by musicians, appearances by celebrities, emotionally moving speeches, and witty placards (Oberschall 2017). Moreover, politics often deeply engages people's sentiments: Political violence can satiate a desire for revenge (Balcells 2017) and act as an outlet for moral outrage (Wood 2009). Rebellion can be instigated by the joy of agency (Pearlman 2016) or the thrill of risk (Petersen 2006). Resentment can fuel populism (Berlet 2011; Cramer 2016) and protest can relieve aggressive tension (Sturmer and Bernd 2009).

Moreover, with particularly notable events, there is also a factor of "being there" that can be profound. People want to be a part of history. Hardin presents a particularly compelling example of this:

Even an Iranian who dreaded what rule by ayatollahs and mullahs would imply in the long run might have participated in the politics of 1978-79. The logic of collective action might even have eased the decision for many Iranians because, for example, a woman who could not expect to

[16]These three types of benefits may all be considered selective benefits. Nevertheless, they differ substantively from the types of economic or coercive mechanisms generally considered in the Downs-Olson framework.

affect the outcome one way or the other certainly had no political reason not to participate in the revolution of the ayatollahs. She could therefore participate for the sake of living her people's history with them without fear that she might be effecting her own future illfare (2015).

Finally, as pointed out by Hersh, for many people politics is a hobby, similar to following the Red Sox or a love of Bruce Springsteen (Hersh 2017). As with other hobbies, the fact that political participation has an ostensible product does not necessarily imply that the outcome is the purpose. When one takes a pottery class, there are mugs and ashtrays to show for it, but they are not the objective of the activity. People can vote for the same reason they yell at the screen during a football game. They do not expect to change anything, but it is enjoyable nonetheless.

Expressive Benefits: Meaning Seeking

Cognitive dissonance, however, is painful. It stimulates the same parts of the brain as anger and agitation, as well as those associated with avoiding aversive outcomes (Izuma et al. 2010). It should therefore be no surprise that people seek to be consistent with their self-image (or their desired self-image) and may be willing to work towards ends merely to maintain that vision of who they are. There is, after all, a "the psychological cost of preference falsification" (Kuran 1991, 18). As a result, there is value to doing something, even if that act is futile, to express your stance, even if no one listens (Turner and Killian 1957). As Benn puts it: "an action can be rational for a person regardless of its payoff if it expresses attitudes or principles that it would be inconsistent in him not to express under appropriate conditions, given the character which he is generally content to acknowledge as his own. This is what is called being true to oneself" (Benn 1978, 3). These are **expressive benefits** as they allow the individual to demonstrate to themselves and the world their underlying beliefs.

This idea has a long history. It has been used to explain the first movers in rebellion against a totalitarian state (Petersen 2006; Pearlman 2016), why people vote in a democracy (Schuessler 2000; Hillman 2010; Edelman 1985), and why people choose to become activists (Chong 2014; Turner and Killian 1957). However, the broad impact of expressive benefits is not fully grasped until one realizes that expressive benefits are one of the chief mechanisms through which norms influence behavior.

One of the common understandings of the functioning of norms is that, through social

sanctions, communities compel members to adhere to informal principals which guide behavior and facilitate cooperation. This is a function that will be fleshed out in the following section. However, as Elster argues, norms also drive behavior absent of social sanction. We have already discussed one way this is possible, by creating the "common sense" solution. But in addition to this: "when norms are internalized, they are followed even when violation would be unobserved and not exposed to sanctions… [due to s]hame, or anticipation of it" (Elster 1989, 131). Norms thus manifest into political participation through the expressive benefits that individual accrue by conforming to them. Thereby, many motivations which rely on an internalized norm, such as duty (Knack 1992), justice (Costello, Jenkins, and Aly 2015), or civil rights (Chong 2014), are in fact functioning through expression.

It is worth taking a moment to dissect these internalized norms into the three most prevalent in the literature. Two we have already been introduced to: ideology and tradition.[17] A third is worth considering given its prominence: group norms.

To reiterate, by ideology I take Swindlers definition: "a self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action" (1986). The one alteration I make from this definition, based on our discussion of bounded rationality, is to allow the "unified" answer to by incoherent. By that I mean, most people lack either the time, interest, or capacity to fully think out their ideology from first principles and so it will be, for most people, an eclectic and unstable assortment of values and policy positions, as observed by Converse (1962). "Only a few of the values that people hold can influence their decisions at any given time. Much depends upon people's focus of attention, upon what values and knowledge are evoked while their decisions are being" (Simon 1995, 60). Upon what is on the top-of-the-head (Zaller 1992). Nevertheless, these ideological positions can be strongly felt, if loosely held. People can make moral judgements without knowing if they are a Kantians, can make economic judgements without knowing if they are a Liberal, and can make political judgements without knowing they are an Anarcho-Syndicalist.

Traditions are, again from Swindler, "cultural beliefs and practices… taken for granted so that they seem inevitable parts of life" (1986). The important distinction between these two sorts

[17] Closely related concepts to, or alternative names for, ideology and tradition, as defined here, are: values (Pearlman 2016), institutions (North 1990), morals (Scott 1977), and religious conviction (Benn 1978).

of norms is the level of conscious consideration involved. Thus, while both are largely the result of socialization (Merelman 1969; Shweder and Much 1987), tradition is more stable and bound to an individual's community than ideology. It needs no rationalization. However, the distinction between these two is often difficult for the outside observer to identify in practice. Take, for example, duty. For some, duty is so ingrained as to be redoubtable - it is a tradition, passed from parent to child. For others, duty is a virtue that has been established through reasoned consideration. Ideology is that which a *good person* ought to do, while traditions are that which *a person* ought to do.

However, norms need not be so universally applicable for them to be valued by the individual. A third set of norms are those that signal group membership (Nadler 2017). They state what a *good X person* ought to do. According to social identity theory, there are strong psychic benefits to group membership: "

> ...our sense of who we are stems in large part from our membership of affiliation to various social groups, which are said to form our social identity. This identity is thought to be maintained through evaluative comparisons between in-groups and relevant out-groups. When these comparisons are favourable, that is, when some positive distinctiveness has been achieved, our social identity is said to be positive and, by implication, our more general self-concept (Hinkle and Brown 1990, 48).

These identities are held together be norms and symbols which signal to others *and to the self* membership within a group (Bauman and May 1990).[18] This is true for groups from hunter gatherers (Henrich and Boyd 1998) to the Senate (Matthews 1959). Furthermore, it can be limited to small organizations (Bauman and May 1990) or entire nations (**???**). The identity of American citizen has bound in with it norms of political participation (Raney and Berdahl 2009). Social movements rely on people defining themselves as movement activists; "yield[ing] up part of his or her identity to the collective identity" (Della Porta 2006, 206). This begs the question: Why would anyone ever yield their identity to a group?

Social Benefits: Community Seeking

As Aristotle observed two millennia ago, man is a social animal (in Loos 1897). Social goals are "inseparable from human biology..." (J. Veroff and Veroff 2016). We desire to be part of a

[18]Group norms and individuals expressing their group affiliation is endogenous. As Bauman states: "Tribes exist solely by individual decisions to sport the symbolic traits of tribal allegiance" (1991, 249).

community, to have good standing in that community, and to enjoy the company of our fellow person. Thus, we desire social activity and status while fearing social sanction. Social incentives are so self-evident that Olson included them as a potential solution to his collective action problem, "social status and social acceptance are individual, noncollective goods. Social sanctions and social rewards are 'selective incentives;' that is, they are among the kinds of incentives that may be used to mobilize a latent group (1965, 61)." Further, Gerber et al. have demonstrated in the US context that social pressure, more so than a sense of duty, manifests into increased political participation (Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008). Moreover, in social movements, strong pre-existing social ties both increase the likelihood of an individual engaging in costly political participation as well as the resilience of that engagement in times of adversity (McAdam 1986).

A desire to engage in **social activity** is therefore a strong incentive for participation. Individuals engage for "the fun and conviviality of coming together, the sense of group membership or exclusiveness (Wilson 1974, 34)." Han has shown that to by constructing a relational context, social movement organizations better induce individuals to engage in political activities, such as signing petitions or attending meetings (Han 2016). Moreover, one study found that most members of local party organizations join because they find "coming together in groups to work at politics, intrinsically enjoyable (Wilson 1974, 110)." Thus, "liking" is essential to this mechanism: "The more we like and approve of them [other activists], the more likely we are to take actions to cultivate close relationships with them (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004, 598)."

Political participation is also something which a community might value. Thus, they may find it worth rewarding those which participate with status. "Contributors to collective action signal their motivation to help the group and consequently earn… higher status… [which] encourage greater giving to the group in the future" (Willer 2009, 1). This can be a powerful incentive to invest in public goods (Tsai 2007). Similarly, a community might find it worth socially sanctioning those that fail to contribute. "There is something distasteful in the picture of the man who sits comfortably at home applauding the readiness of others to bear the heat and burden of the day, recognising how necessary they are, and how fortunate he is that so many of his fellow citizens are more politically inclined than he is" (Benn 1978, 16). Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that there appears to consistently be a sub-population in most societies which are "willing-punishers" (Ostrom 2000).

The willing-punisher model requires the normal considerations of a principal-agent model: the ability to assure the agent knows the expectations of the group (communication), that the sanctions are sufficiently large to overcome the incentive to shirk, and that the enforcer is likely to catch violations (monitoring) (Grossman and Helpman 2001). This model, therefore, requires individuals who have the incentive themselves to bear the cost of enforcement. Yet, willing-punishers are abound. Scott argues that these individuals have a moral-economy, which, when violated, will cause them to engage in costly participation so as to punish those infringing norms (1977). Their existence is likely itself a function of one of the mechanisms reviewed herein. Thankfully, the existence of this group makes possible another category: the conditional cooperator.

5. Solidarity

I was in paine to consider the miserable condition of the old man; and now my almes, giving him some reliefe, doth also ease me. Thomas Hobbes quoted in Ball (1998)

People in the civil rights movement did not choose free ridership; on the contrary, they preferred participation to inactivity under the right condition - the condition being, I argued, that enough others also participate to make collective action successful. Chong (2014)

Rational models generally consider individuals as *self*-interested. However, this "psychological egoism" does not align well with empirical observations; humans generally do not to entirely discount the welfare of others. Consequently, a number of scholars have begun to incorporate some form of "altruism" into their models of human behavior (such as Fowler and Kam 2007; Ostrom 2000). By allowing actors to extend their unit of consideration, these models allow us to include the welfare of groups into the utility function of individuals. However, not all other regarding behavior is created equal. People may be willing to sacrifice for the collective good, but only if they are not "suckers" (Levi 1989); in the sense that the good is actually provided and others also invest in its creation. This type of person requires some form of assurance to participate, but will participate even if they could free-ride. They are motivated by conditional solidarity. Alternatively, there are those among us who are willing to invest in public goods without such assurance, the unconditional altruists.

Conditional Solidarity

Ostrom introduces a category she calls conditional cooperators, describing them as "individuals who are willing to initiate cooperative action when they estimate others will reciprocate and to repeat these actions as long as a sufficient proportion of the others involved reciprocate" (2000, 142). Thus, collective action can be modeled as an "assurance game" (Chong 2014). How might these assurances be provided? Ostrom relies on norms, specifically of fairness and reciprocity, enforced by the "willing punishers" discussed above. This itself is a similar mechanism as that proposed by Levi (1989), though Levi allows that the state might also be the enforcer of these norms (a proposition which Ostrom is quite opposed to). However, one could also imagine that the "expressive benefits" or "common-sense" mechanisms of norms, discussed above, may resolve this problem even absent enforcers. These conditional cooperators are thus motivated by conditional solidarity.

Hence, for conditional solidarity, participation is not (solely) determined by their individual impact on the provision of the good (as in the Olson model), but rather how much they trust others to also contribute. Thus, it is no surprise that trust is correlated with political participation (Cox 2003). This may further explain cascade effects in risky political behavior, such as rebellion (Kuran 1991; Petersen 2006). Individual actors require assurances that others will also engage in resistance, so they are not the "sucker" who finds themselves in the Gulags. The best signal that others will engage is to see others engage. Though Petersen notes that symbolic actions can also signal a willingness to engage in resistance.

This leads to another consideration of the conditional cooperator. It is not merely whether they can expect others to participate which determines their engagement, it is also whether they think their participation has any likelihood of actually accomplishing the desired outcome. This "expectation of success" may be an additional reason why regime change tends to happen in cascades. When one country experiences a successful revolution, it increases would-be-rebels expectations of success in other nations (Hale 2013; Ash 1999). Willingness to participate in the Civil Rights Movement has been argued to be, at least in part, predicated on expectations of the success of the movement (Chong 2014). Moreover, efficacy in general is consistently found to be associated with voter turnout (Harder and Krosnick 2008; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

Unconditional Solidarity

Most people have someone in their life to whom they extend unconditional solidarity, whose welfare is internalized with their own regardless of that individuals behavior: children, siblings, parents, friends. Our loyalty to them can drag us into politics, even dangerous politics. Petersen describes how families are governed by "unconditional norms." Once a single member of the family becomes entangled with resistance, the whole clan increases their likelihood of participation (2006). Similarly, Della Porta has found that "devotion to friends… [is] a powerful motivating force" for militants (2006, 168).

Nevertheless, the unit of consideration often extends beyond one's immediate community. As discussed above, individuals often develop group identities. While in the previous section it was commented on how individuals may be willing to participate in politics to affirm the norms of the group, and thus their group identity, it is likely that individuals, in identifying with a group, derive a genuine utility from the welfare of that group and thus are more likely to participate on that group's behalf (Miller et al. 1981; Rinehart 1992; Grossman and Helpman 2001; Fowler and Kam 2007). "People who say that their lives are intrinsically tied to other members of their social group (especially if that group is disadvantaged) appear to change their political behavior accordingly and increase their turnout" (Harder and Krosnick 2008, 536). While this is especially plausible for existing social groups, such as Dawson's "black utility heuristic" (Dawson 2003), it can also be constructed by political entrepreneurs. This is true in the specific-case, such as a political organization (Gamson 1992), the middle-range case such as an ethnicity (Kaufman 2001), or the large-scale case, such as a national identity (Darden and Grzymala-Busse 2006; Miguel 2004).

The unit of consideration is for most people at least somewhat constrained. This moral position can be called particularism: "one ought to give preferential consideration to the interests of some persons as against others, including not only one-self but also other persons with whom one has special relationships, such as, for example, the members of one's own family or friendship circle or local community or nation or various other restricted social groups" (Gewirth 1988, 1). However, for some people there is no boundary around those whose interest matter and those who do not. For these universalists, "all persons ought to be treated with equal and impartial

positive consideration for their respective goods or interests" (Gewirth 1988, 1).

Universal altruists are admittedly a rarity, yet their impact on society can be large. They make up a portion of the necessary "fanatical" first movers of collective action, who can signal to others that conditional cooperation is possible (Petersen 2006). This value is generally associated with greater rates of political participation (Fowler and Kam 2007; Fowler 2006). And in cases of extreme horror, such as the Holocaust, it is these people who are most likely to risk their lives to protect their fellow man (Monroe 2001).

6. Conclusion

In this review, I chose to distinguish between motivations by their mechanism in relationship to rationality: bounded reasoning, means-as-ends, and unit of consideration. (This typology, as well as its subcategories, can be seen in figure 1.) This was not the only way to differentiate among alternatives to reason. In fact, it is far more common to separation motivations by the "dependent variable": norms, emotion, and group identity. As can be seen in the previous sections, my choice was not without its analytical costs.

Norms have a role in binding reason; acting as a source of "knowledge" during times of ignorance and uncertainty or causing an individual to fail to consider all their alternatives. They change the benefit of the means, establishing the values expressed and the actions that are socially sanctioned. Finally, norms establish expectations of cooperation and shape individuals'

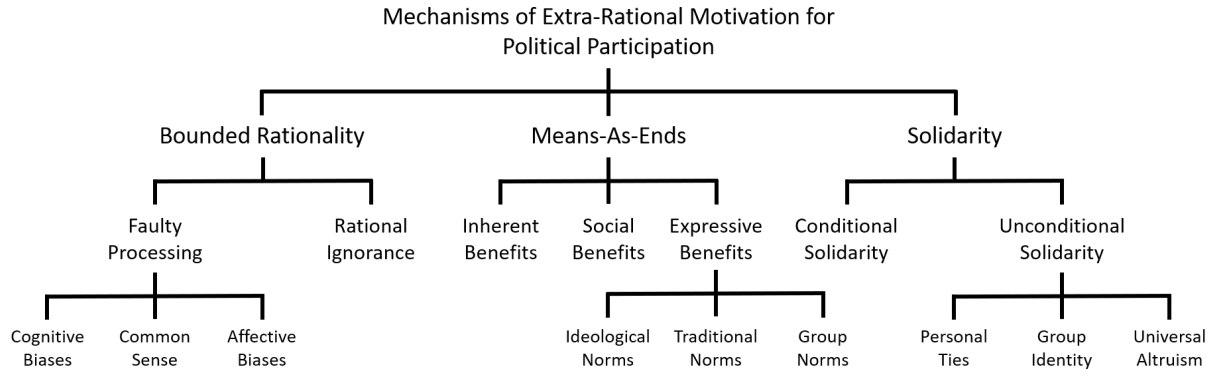

Figure 1: Typology of Mechanisms of Political Motivation

conception of the unit of consideration.[19] Emotions and identity similarly reoccurred throughout this piece, manipulating different mechanism. It may have thus made sense to organize this review in such a way as to speak of norms and their mechanisms concurrently. However, had I done so, it may have been less clear that norms do have these many and divergent pathways through which they effect motivation - not all of which may be at work in any specific case.

This organization of ideas by their mechanistic relationship to reason is thus a better tool for understanding participation in collective action than it is a tool for understanding individual motivations. To do that, we would have to address the origins of emotion, cognitive biases, identity, and norms. Thus, we would find ourselves thinking about evolutionary psychology (Ostrom 2000), personality (Levinson 1958), genetics (Fowler and Dawes 2008), and history (Weber 1905).

Instead, the formulation adopted in this review allows us to assess particular cases of political participation in terms of how they deviate from reason. We are not bound to a pre-existing list of potential sources of motivation and are instead empowered to seek explanations for why reason was constrained, means were valued, or units were expanded. As a result, in writing this review, I hope to allow scholars who have identified a particular political act of interest to think systematically about what conditions are facilitating that behavior. Are people accurately assessing their payoffs? Does the act allow for the expression of values? Are group identities extending the unit of consideration?

Yet, beyond that scholastic goal, I have a second objective to this review. I began this essay with the question: "what are the underlying motivational mechanisms that political entrepreneurs can use to mobilize a population?" Therefore, I shall end by listing some potential tools that would-be activists may adopt to incite political engagement:

[19] I did not discuss this point at length above, however religiosity (Schwartz and Huismans 1995) collectivist norms (Kim and Omizo 2005) are associated with larger units of consideration.

1. Convince individuals that their actions are essential to the success of the project, that they are the hundredth monkey; breaking down the overall objective into smaller parts. Take advantage of the fact that most people overestimate how important they are. (Rational Ignorance)
2. Engage emotions, particularly anger and enthusiasm. This will cause people to undervalue costs and overvalue victory. (Affective Biases)
3. Ask for tangible investments when individuals are emotionally aroused, triggering sunk cost valuations for future asks. (Cognitive Biases)
4. Make participation something people do *without* consideration: a habit. (Common Sense)
5. Make the act itself fun and emotionally rewarding. (Inherent Benefits)
6. Clearly link the act with the expression of a pre-existing ideological, traditional, or group norm. Think of how the act helps them to express to themselves and the world who they believe they should be. (Expressive Benefits)
7. Socially sanction those who do not participate. Celebrate those who do. (Social Benefits)
8. Recruit friends. Make people your friends. This will cause them to desire your company and to consider your utility. (Social Benefits)
9. Demonstrate to people that others are also participating, especially through symbolic acts. They won't be a sucker wasting their time. (Conditional Solidarity)
10. If you can find them, recruit altruists who are willing to pay the cost regardless of the behavior of others. (Unconditional Solidarity)

Admittedly, some of these recommendations are easier to accomplish than others.

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