

INTEREST GROUPS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Comparative Politics

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IE University

What we'll cover today

- Civil society

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- Contentious politics

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- Effectiveness of social movements and interest groups

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- Group exercise

Civil society

Civil society actors and their politics

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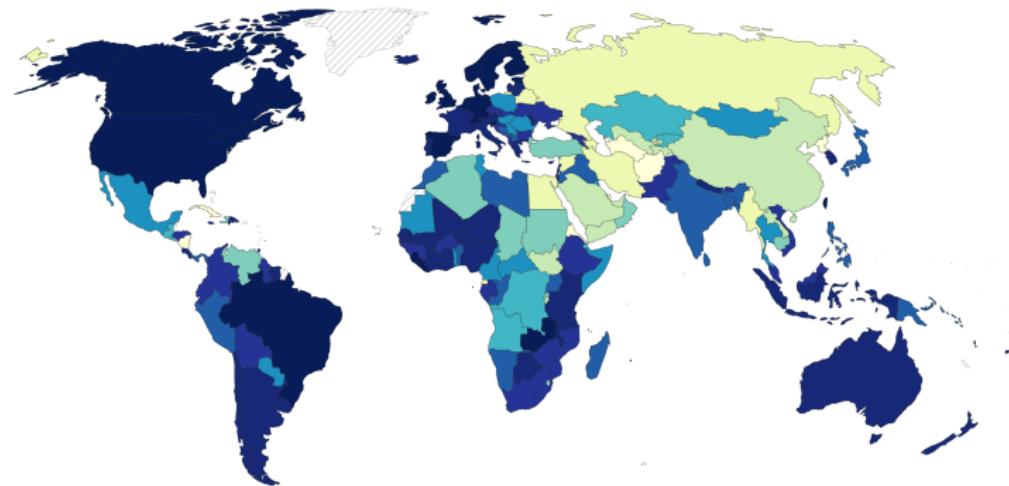
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- International observers have recently warned of **shrinking civic space** globally

V-Dem's civil society index across countries

Our World
in Data

Civil society participation index, 2023

Based on the expert estimates and index by V-Dem¹. It combines information on the extent to which citizens are active in diverse organizations which choose and influence policy-makers. It ranges from 0 to 1 (most active).



Data source: V-Dem (2024)

OurWorldInData.org/democracy | CC BY

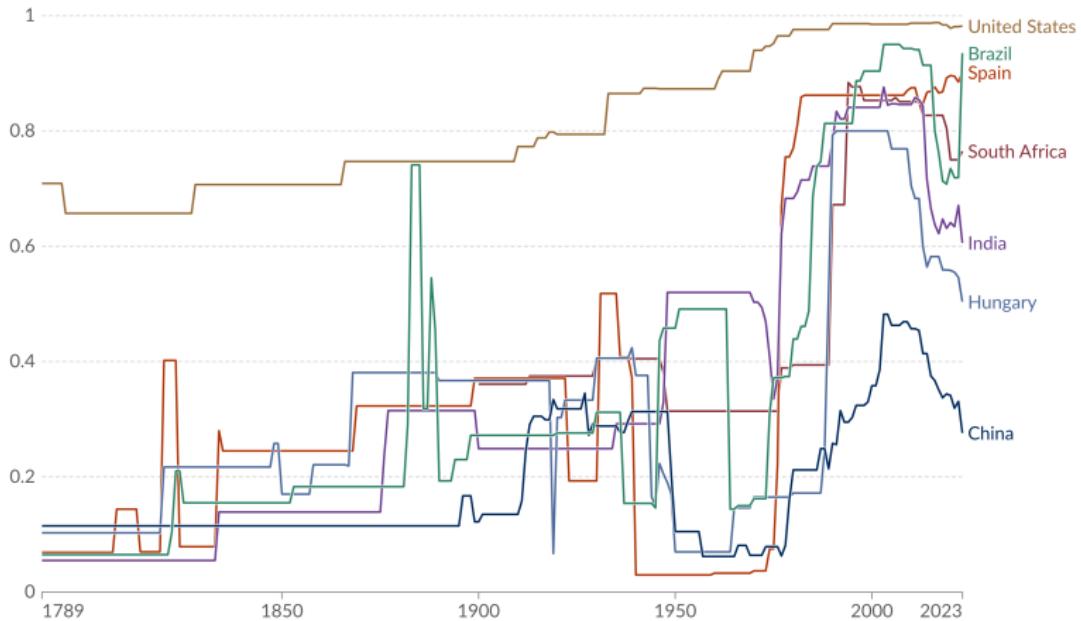
1. V-Dem: The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project publishes data and research on democracy and human rights. It relies on evaluations by around 3,500 country experts and supplementary work by its own researchers to assess political institutions and the protection of rights. The project is managed by the V-Dem Institute, based at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Learn more: Democracy data: how do researchers measure democracy? The 'Varieties of Democracy' project researchers measure democracy and other political variables. Researchers measure human rights?

V-Dem's civil society index across history

Civil society participation index, 1789 to 2023

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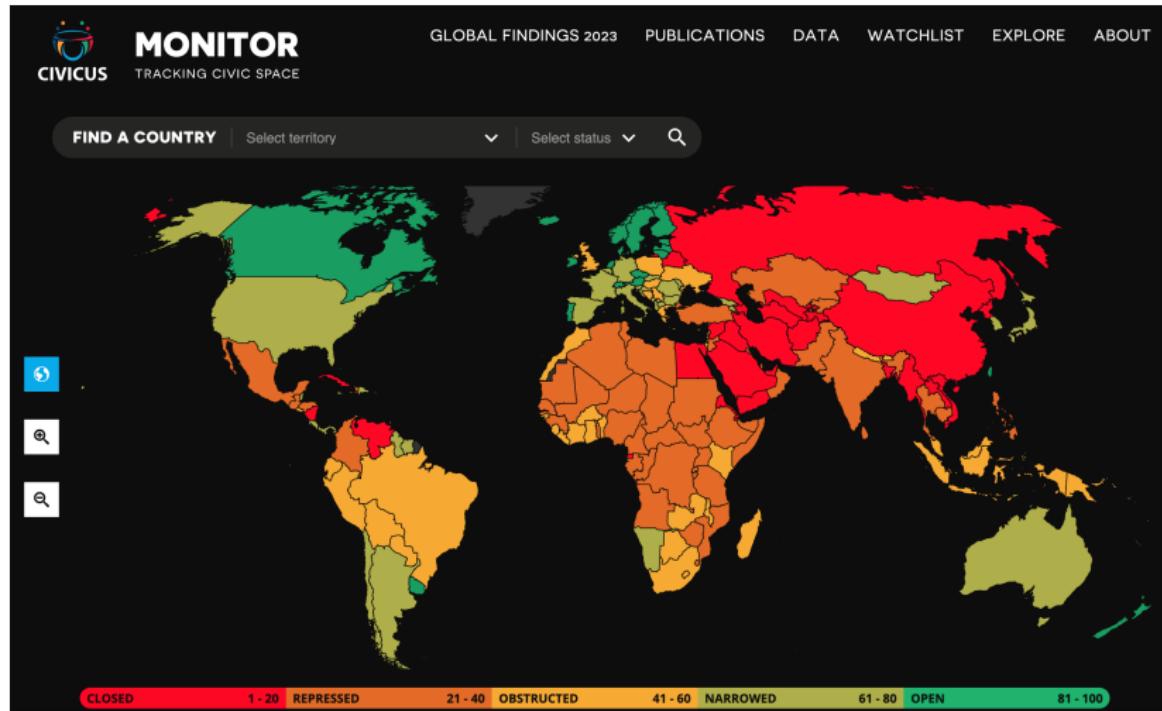


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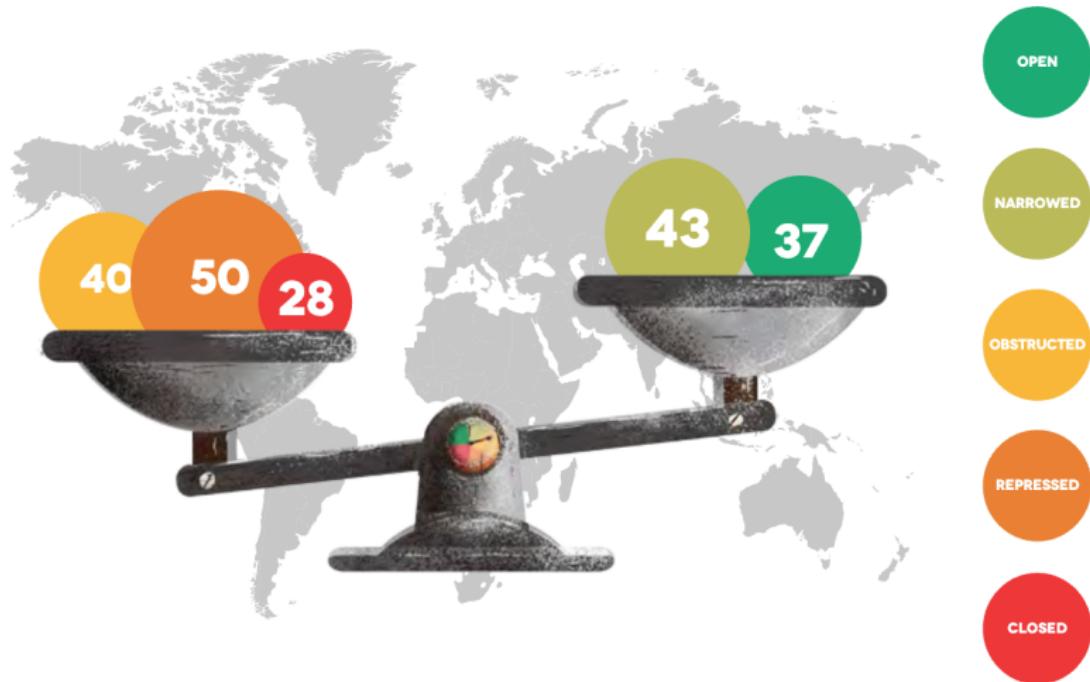
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Civicus' civic space monitor



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TOP TEN VIOLATIONS TO CIVIC FREEDOMS



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- Can there be civil society without organization or leaders? What should be the relationship between civil society leaders and street-level citizens?

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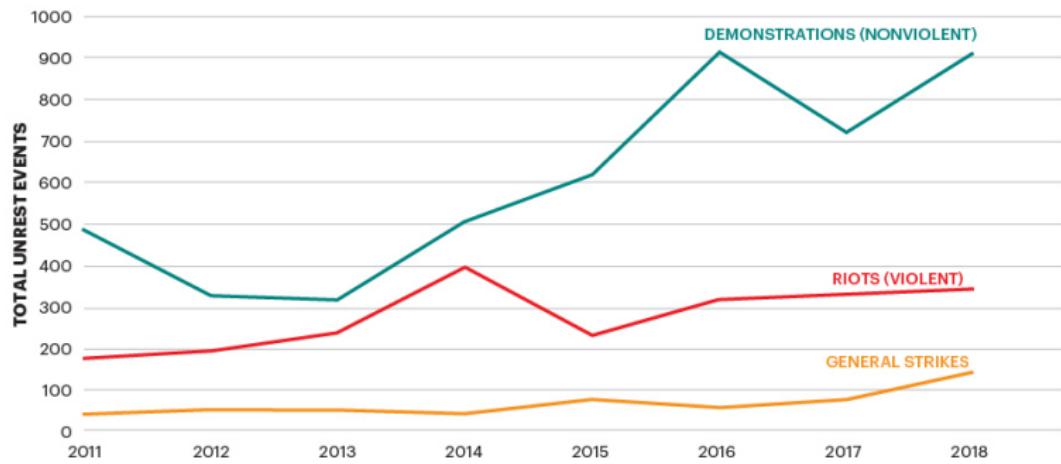
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Contentious politics on the rise

Global trends in civil unrest, 2011–2018



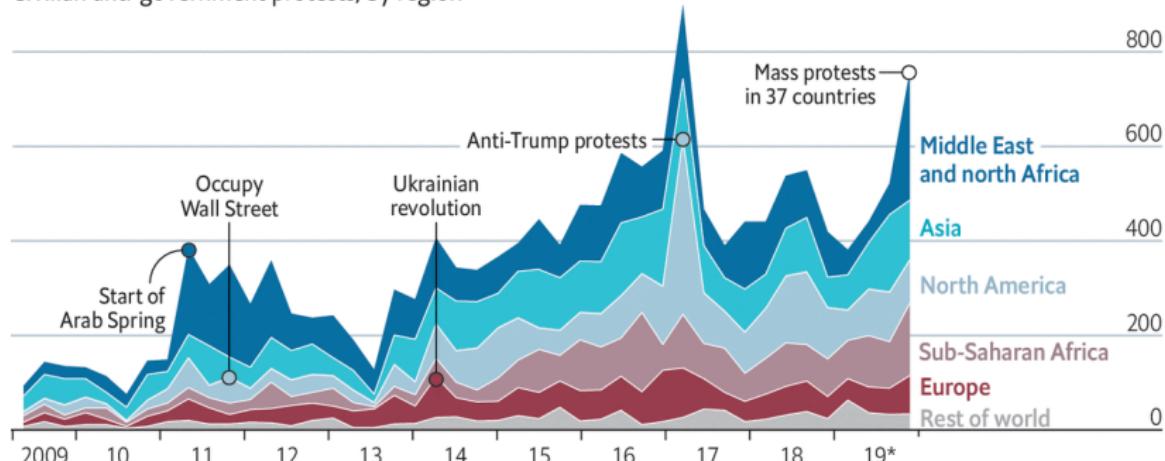
Source: Cross-National Time Series (CNTS), IEP calculations



Contentious politics on the rise

Street politics

Civilian anti-government protests, by region



Source: "The Age of Mass Protests: Understanding an Escalating Global Trend", by S.J. Brannen, C.S. Haig and K. Schmidt, 2020

*Q4 estimate

The Economist

Contentious politics on the rise

PROTESTS ON THE RISE

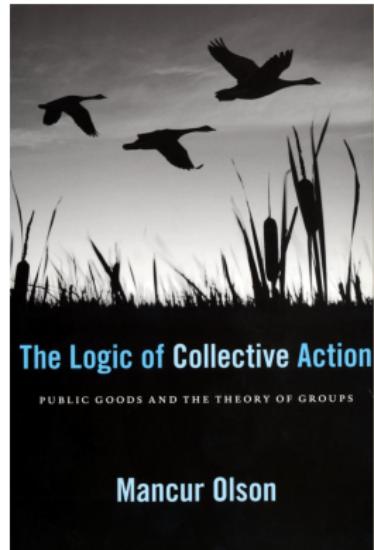
The number of protests around the globe has been climbing over the past two decades, according to a study of actions in more than 100 countries. Before 2015, economic concerns drove the largest number of protests. Since then, more protests have focused on political representation and civil rights.



©nature

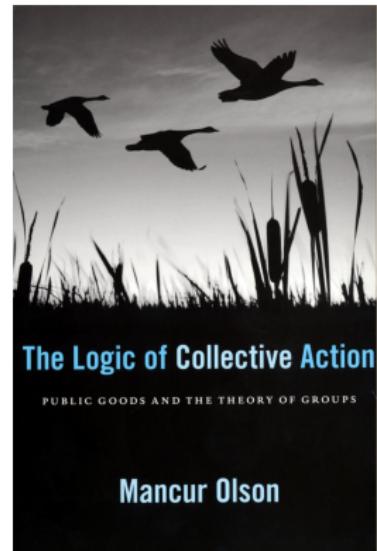
Review of Olson's theory of collective action problems

- Self-interested individuals would find it rational to not engage in costly behavior to contribute to the production of a public good, in the hope that others will do



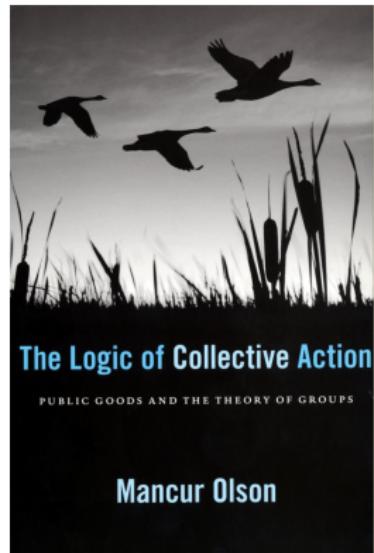
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- The existence of a common interest among a set of people (one that could be advanced through collective action) does not lead to voluntary collective action to advance the interest.
- Olson highlighted how rational individuals would therefore fail to contribute to the production of public goods, and groups will therefore not produce optimal results



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- Do all civil society actors suffer from collective actions to the same degree?
 - The distinction between social movements and interest groups, and within those categories, is key

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- Social movements vary in their scale, range, organization, and ideology

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- Unlike many social movements, interest groups **often have a formal structure, with a professional staff** rather than activist membership
- They often focus on influencing the outputs of the formal political process

Parties vs interest groups vs social movements

	Political parties	Interest groups	Social movements
Seek to influence government?	Yes	Yes	Usually
Seek to become government?	Yes	No	No
Focus on a single issue?	Rarely	Often	Yes
Formally organized?	Yes	Yes	Not usually
Tactics used?	Conventional	Mixture	Unconventional
Main levels of operation?	National, regional	Global, national, local	Global, national, local

Typology of repertoires of action

		Necessity of collective action	
		Low	High
Autonomy from the political system	High	Private interest government <i>Global firms</i> <i>Business associations</i> Political exchanges <i>Global firms</i> <i>Business associations</i>	Private interest government <i>Employer associations and trade unions</i> Political exchanges <i>Trade unions</i> Contentious politics <i>Trade unions</i>
	Low	 Direct lobbying <i>Global firms</i> <i>Business associations</i>	Contentious politics <i>New social movements</i> Direct lobbying <i>Non-business interest associations</i>

Effectiveness of social movements and interest groups

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- Key features include openness to challengers, cohesiveness of political elites, party system crisis, and capacity and willingness to repress movements

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- Constructivists emphasize how identity is the main currency of movements, and efforts to redefine it are therefore central

Group exercise

Group exercise: Designing a strategy for social change

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 - **Engage with at least 1 academic article relevant to your policy area or type of client** (use Google Scholar, or the search engines of top journals like APSR, AJPS, JOP, BJPS, CPS)

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- In designing your strategy and in the write-up of your plan:
 - **Think through the context** – both the country's and the organization's
 - **Identify what kind of client you have**, the collective action problems they face, and the resources they count on
 - **Engage with at least 1 academic article relevant to your policy area or type of client** (use Google Scholar, or the search engines of top journals like APSR, AJPS, JOP, BJPS, CPS)
 - **Engage with some of the concepts and theories from today's lecture and/or readings, AND other topics we covered**

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- **Make progress on your research design**, due December 9