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Why Workers Mobilize: Working Conditions and Activism Attitudes

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Abstract

Various forms of sabotage and corruption that stem from workers' inability to voice their discontent at perceived injustices any other way have cost the Soviet and post-Soviet societies dearly. Under what circumstances are workers ready to take overt action against perceived injustices against themselves and the interests of their colleagues? Using ordered logistic regression models and People's Security Survey data from a 2004 national sample from Ukraine, this paper argues that *different forms of socio-economic security significantly increase the readiness of workers to take action if faced with grievances*. Our findings add to the body of literature on mobilization in several ways. First, they contribute to the social movement literature on Post-Soviet countries by focusing on Ukraine. They also enrich the social movement literature by the concept of security or the perception of resources across time. Furthermore, our models translate largely macro-level concepts, such as the political opportunity structure, to the micro-level of an individual's attitudes as they relate to their work life. Finally, our results provide limited support for the older grievance theory in the social movement literature: grievance is not the most influential factor, yet it remains significant.

Introduction

Anomic pressures over the past decades have been among the most dramatic in Eastern Europe. While institutional pillars of the Soviet era are largely dismantled, many alternative institutions and mechanisms fostering social solidarity are still only nascent. Ukraine, a low-income post-Soviet country, is an instructive case to study under what circumstances workers are ready to take action to defend themselves and the interests of their colleagues. Which paths are they willing to pursue when faced with hardship? Using ordered logistic regression models and People's Security Survey data from a 2004 national sample from Ukraine, this paper argues that *different forms of socio-economic security significantly increase the readiness of workers to take action if faced with grievances*.

Our results suggest that subjective aspects of socio-economic security play an important and complex role in activism¹. Such a conclusion is consistent with a long tradition of psychological research on justice perceptions (Cook and Hegtvedt, 1983; Cook, 1986; Jasso, 1978, 1994; Hegtvedt, Clay-Warner and Johnson, 2003) and social movement research, in particular, the political process model (Abu Sharkh, 1998, 1999, 2002; Snow et al., 1986; Gamson, 1997; McAdam, 1992, 1988, 1986, 1982; McAdam, et al., 1988; Klandermans, 1992, 1986; Melucci, 1989, 1985; Moore, 1978; Tarrow, 1983; Tilly, 1975, 1978, 1992). The theoretical traditions have addressed the perceptions of justice and injustice, arguing that it is how individuals define and perceive injustices, often along the lines of culturally defined norms of acceptability that influences their responses.

Significance of Resources and Cognitive Frames: Why is Discontent ever Present but Collective Action not Always a Perceived Option?

Labor activism is an integral part of the struggle to create decent work conditions. Literature across a range of disciplines from small group dynamics (social psychology) and social movements (sociology and political science), to organizational literature (business) and research on nativist and chiliastic² movements (anthropology), addresses the issue of collective action.³ The following paragraphs link the older social movement literature, which claims motivation for workers' action as objective desperate deprivation, with the more recent social movement literature, which claims that resources and legitimated definitions are prerequisites for mobilization. After delineating these arguments, we explore how socio-economic security at work increases the readiness of workers to take action.

A seminal finding in post-1945 social movement research has been that mobilization is not a necessary outcome of workers' discontent. Unless there are resources, apathy is a more common response to grievances. Resource mobilization theory suggests that it is not discontent but the availability of resources that predicts attitudes towards activism (Eisinger, 1973; McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Oberschall, 1973, 1994; Jenkins, 1983; Jenkins and Perrow, 1997). Jenkins and Perrow (1997, p. 40) summarized perhaps the most influential stance in post-1945 mobilization literature: "Discontent is ever present in deprived groups, but collective action is rarely a viable option because of the lack of resources and the threat of repression. When deprived groups do mobilize, it is due to the injection of external

¹ End time.

² The term "frame" was coined by Goffman (1974, p. 21) to describe the "schemata of interpretations" that enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events as meaningful. Goffman stands in the tradition of Mead (1934, 1938), on whom symbolic interactionism draws, which, in turn, inspired the political process model. Symbolic Interactionism is associated with Blumer (1993, p. 51) whose central thesis is that social problems are fundamentally products of a process of collective definition instead of existing independently as a set of objective social arrangements with an intrinsic make-up.

resources” (see also McCarthy and Zald, 1973, pp. 21-22). Those who mobilize are not the ones who have nothing to lose but their chains; rather, they are those who have resources to unlock their chains.

On the other hand, the political process model asserts that the causes behind activism lie beyond the availability of “objective resources”; rather, it is the subjective interpretation of events that encourages mobilization (Snow et al., 1986; Gamson, 1997; McAdam, 1986, 1992; Klandermans, 1992, 1986; Melucci, 1989; Moore, 1978; Tarrow, 1983; Tilly, 1992). Drawing upon the work of Moore (1978) and Goffman (1974), the political process model argues that mobilization is partly contingent on the generation of a cognitive frame or schema for the perception of injustice. The declarations and conventions of the ILO provide such frames for interpreting behavior previously seen to be “natural” or “part of our culture” as illegitimate. Scholars of the neo-institutionalist world society approach have demonstrated how such cognitive frames are applied to topics ranging from gender discrimination to child labor (Meyer et al., 1997; Abu Sharkh, 2002; Berkovitch, 1999; Bradley and Ramirez, 1996; Ramirez and Meyer, 1998; Ramirez and McEneaney, 1997; Ramirez et al., 1997; Ramirez, 2000; Bretherton, 1998; Wölte, 1998). The norms codified by the ILO via Conventions exert normative pressures on member states beyond those explicable by economic or functional rationality, cultural or religious traditions, or even power relations.

The focus of this study is on a single aspect of mobilization in the workplace: workers’ pro-activism attitudes, measured by self-report of readiness to take action, consistent with the political process model. Through combining theories on social movements and economic security, we attempt to develop the idea of “working conditions as resources”. We contribute to the literature by empirically evaluating which working conditions foster workers’ pro-activism attitudes, and more specifically by examining whether the same factors predict attitudes of activism as activism.

One novel contribution of the micro-level approach is the focus on subjective aspects of economic security. Another potential contribution lies in examining how macro/meso-level theories apply to the micro-level. The genesis of movements is often determined by the so-called “political opportunity structure” of the nation state, the options or restraints the elite members of the state impose on workers as well as the mobilization structures in civil society (Eisinger, 1973). Applying this concept to the enterprise, the micro-level would mean examining how far access to the “firm elite” – such as managers and other senior officials – and being part of a potential mobilization structure – such as trade unions – increases workers’ readiness to take action when aggrieved.

Making Activism for Decent Work Possible: The Seven Components of Economic Security

The notion of socio-economic security delineates seven dimensions of secure work. This paper uses the framework of these seven dimensions of socio-economic security to operationalize the notion of “resources on the job”. They mark a condensation of the policy focus of the International Labor Organization, the United Nations agency specializing in labor, across its 85 years of existence. These dimensions also integrate newer insights from cognitive psychology regarding the importance of resource stability over a longer period of time.

Income security denotes adequate and regular, actual, perceived and expected income, either earned by working or in the form of social security and other benefits. It encompasses the level of income (absolute and relative to needs), assurance of receipt and expectation of current and future income, both during a person’s working life and in old age or disability retirement.⁴ Voice representation security refers to both individual and collective

³ Historically, security protection mechanisms have included a minimum wage machinery, wage indexation, comprehensive social security, progressive taxation, etc. Because of its essential importance for basic security, it should be seen as a fundamental objective of social, economic and political policy.

representation. Individual representation is related to individual rights enshrined in laws as well as individuals' access to institutions while collective representation is defined as the right of any individual or group to be represented by a body that can bargain on its behalf and which is sufficiently large, independent and competent to do so.⁵

Other forms of socio-economic security include labor market security, which arises in labor market environments characterized by ample opportunities for adequate income-earning activities. It has a structural component (types and quantity of opportunities) and a cognitive component (expectations about adequate opportunities).⁶ Employment security is protection against loss of income-earning work. For wage and salary workers, employment security exists in organizations and countries, in which there is strong protection against unfair and arbitrary dismissal and where workers can redress unfair dismissal. For the self-employed, it means protection against sudden loss of independent work and/or business failure.⁷ Work security denotes working conditions in organizations that are safe and promote the well-being of workers. Most forms of work have their dangers, physical or psychological. Classic "occupational health and safety" provisions, shielding workers from occupational hazards, disease and injury are an integral part of work security. However, work security goes beyond this in addressing the modern scourges of stress, overwork, absenteeism and harassment.⁸ Skill reproduction security refers to workers' access to basic education as well as vocational training to develop capacities and acquire the qualifications

⁴ Independent trade unions with the right to collectively bargain over wages, benefits and working conditions as well as monitor working practices and strike have been one typical form of granting representation security. This requires the assurance that one's interests can be represented in social and individual bargaining, and should combine both collective representation and individual representation.

⁵ Labor market policies aimed at enhancing this form of security have included employment agencies and other placing services.

⁶ Typically, forms of enhancing this have been protection against arbitrary dismissal, regulations on hiring and firing, imposition of costs on employers for failing to adhere to rules, etc.

⁷ Protection devices for work security include provisions and insurance against accidents and illness at work, limits on working time, unsociable hours, enterprise level tripartite committees, etc.

needed for socially and economically valuable occupations. To further skill reproduction security, widespread opportunities to gain and retain skills, through education, apprenticeships, employment training and the opportunity for professional development are needed.⁹ Job security signifies the presence of niches in organizations and across labor markets allowing workers some control over the content of a job and the opportunity to build a career. This concept refers to the worker's ability to pursue a line of work in conjunction with his or her interests, training and skills.¹⁰

Objective and Subjective Factors in Mobilization

Socio-economic security has objective as well as subjective components (ILO, 2004). Objective components are the actual levels of security/insecurity, while subjective components are the attitudes and expectations regarding levels of security/insecurity (Anker, 2002). Stock (2001) elaborates that perceptions of threat associated with losing an aspect of security, such as income or a job, are important for subjective economic security. This two-pronged conceptualization of socio-economic security can be integrated with recent work on mobilization. While resource mobilization theory primarily examines the objective resources stemming from political and societal structures enable a movement to mobilize, the political process model adds how the subjective interpretation of events influences mobilization.

There is also substantial literature showing the importance of consistency of resources across time for feelings and attitudes (Kahneman et al., 1999; Schkade and Kahneman, 1998). This suggests that the sustainability of resources across time and their predictability – as perceived by actors, rather than the presence of resources at one single point – matters.

⁸ Protection devices for work security include provisions and insurance against accidents and illness at work, limits on working time, unsociable hours, enterprise level tripartite committees, etc.

⁹ Protection mechanisms have consisted of barriers to skill dilution such as craft boundaries, job qualifications, restrictive practices, craft unions, etc.

The notion of socio-economic security conveys that material, social and cognitive resources needed for mobilization have been regular and are predictable.

Listing the dimensions of work-related security and specifying whether they have objective and subjective aspects prompts the question: which are the most relevant for workers' pro-activism attitudes? To answer this, we develop and test hypotheses on the absolute as well as relative impacts of different forms of security on workers' pro-activism attitudes. We take a comprehensive approach toward socio-economic security and examine both its objective and subjective aspects. Using data that contains information on objective as well as subjective indicators of socio-economic security enables us to compare the relative importance of these factors in individual readiness to take action when aggrieved.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Socio-economic security is positively associated with pro-activism attitudes

As outlined above, literature has shown that sustained economic resources are necessary for mobilization (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Oberschall, 1973; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Jenkins and Perrow, 1997). Since the literature suggests that resource-rich jobs may serve as breeding grounds for activism, we expect that workers who enjoy high levels of socio-economic security are more likely to hold pro-activism attitudes than workers who suffer from low levels of economic security.

*Hypothesis 2: Income security and voice
representation security have stronger positive
associations with pro-activism attitudes than other
dimensions of economic security*

The ILO's emphasis on income security and voice representation security as the most important aspects of socio-economic security suggest that these two dimensions should have the largest positive impacts on readiness to take action. Standing (1999, 2002) and the ILO's Programme on Socio-Economic Security (ILO, 2004; Bonnet et al., 2003) argue that while all seven dimensions are important, income security and voice representation security are essential, "sine qua non", both for limiting the uncertainties individuals face daily and providing an economic environment in which they can have a fair opportunity to develop their capacities via what the ILO calls "decent work". Basic income security and voice representation security complement each other. As the ILO's (2004) report "Economic Security for a Better World" states, "one without the other would be inadequate. Representation security requires both individual rights and collective rights in the form of solidaristic representation. Unless representation security is ensured, the vulnerable will always remain vulnerable to the loss of other forms of security".

The concept of income security denotes that security is especially high when incomes have been adequate and regular over time and when there is an income pool, i.e. sources of income beyond the individual earner that the individual can fall back on in case of need. Expectations of future income and perceptions of income as secure are also important components of income security. Those who enjoy high degrees of income security may be less concerned about the impact of potential repercussions from their employers on their family's economic well-being, and may therefore be more ready to take action against the employer. Hence, income security should lead to pro-activism attitudes.

Voice representation security reflects the ability of the workers to raise their demands, “voice”, and to execute their rights of association, to form a “chorus”. Voice may be positively related to self-efficacy, a subjective sense of an internal locus control (Bandura, 1977, 1986), which has been shown to induce action (Bandura, 1986; Ennis and Schrener, 1987; Gurin and Brim, 1984; Marsh, 1977; Paige, 1971). Voice representation security should thus facilitate readiness to take action.

The most common organizations ensuring voice representation are labor unions. Union membership has several activism enhancing features: (1) *Recruitment into a movement follows pre-existing social relations*: according to the social network model, being part of network such as a union induces individuals to partake in collective action (Gamson, 1997; McAdam, 1986; Klandermans, 1986; Evans, 1980; Tilly, 1975, 1978); (2) *Networks impede movement defection*: according to the dynamic social network model, individuals who defect from movement participation are subject to social ostracism (Gamson, 1997; Melucci, 1989; McAdam, 1986; Klandermans, 1986); (3) *Once individuals are embedded into a network, their preferences become plastic*: membership in activist networks may lead to ideational changes and a dynamic increase in collective action furthering participation (McAdam, 1982, 1986) especially if there is (4) an *enveloping critical mass*: a densely “interlocking network of activists” which provides an ideological envelop that “enables the production and reproduction of activism and interest in the activist core while protecting activists from cross-pressures” (Kim and Bearman, 1997, p. 90). Unionists are part of the network of other activists, and therefore may be more inclined to strike or take legal action if their demands are not satisfactorily met. Union membership should thus encourage pro-activism attitudes. Trade unionism, however, is only one aspect of voice representation security. Other aspects, such as the opportunity to discuss with management, should also increase pro-activism attitudes.

Data and Methods

The data for this study comes from a national sample of 5953 (final non-missing N of all employed) Ukrainians collected in the People's Security Survey (PSS) of 2004. PSS household surveys are an initiative of the ILO's Programme on Socio-Economic Security. The surveys were first conducted in 2000, "driven by a desire to learn from the voices of people about their securities and insecurities in work and life" (Anker, 2002, p. 309). The details of the methodology of PSS, including sampling and method of data collection, is described elsewhere by Anker (2002).

There are some specific features in the social space in which our study takes place. Social as well as economic insecurity have been great in post-Soviet transitional societies, such as Ukraine. First, post-communist societies of Eastern Europe have in recent years experienced a dramatic rise in poverty, unemployment and social deprivation (Standing, 1996). Second, many individuals have been affected by economic instability, the impact of which has been exacerbated by the "torn social safety nets" and "slipping anchors of social protection" (Standing, 1997). Third, in post-communist societies, less-than-decent work is common (ILO, 2004) and workers are dissatisfied with working conditions and the general economic order. In a report based on representative surveys conducted in several post-communist countries in 1996, Kluegel and Mason (2004) find that satisfaction with the market economy measured on a scale ranging from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 7 (completely satisfied), averaged merely 1.7 in Bulgaria and 2.7 in the Russian Federation, and that about three-quarters of Hungarians, East Germans, and Bulgarians believed that poverty would increase with time.

In spite of the widespread discontent, apathy among workers in post-communist societies has been pronounced. For one, trade unions have had limited success in protecting workers from the impact of market transitions (Cook, 1995; Kramer, 1995). But, little is

known about why individuals in transitional societies “manage” instead of mobilize, and about what can be done to help workers overcome apathy and mobilize towards action against negligent or abusive employers. We explore this question through statistical analyses.

Dependent Variable

Respondents reported their attitudes toward action in response to four types of work-related grievance. They were asked “What forms of active involvement would you prefer and are you ready to take action against an employer in case of...” (1) “wage arrears for more than 3 months” (2) “non-observance of the labor safety by employer” (3) “violation of the labor legislation or collective agreement by the employer” (4) “unfair dismissal of other workers”.

Initially, four variables representing readiness to take action were calculated in response to each individual grievance. These were coded as (1) if the respondent selected one of the following response options: “Application to the court”, “Application to government agencies”, “Application to the trade union organization”, “Taking part in meetings, manifestations, etc.”, or “Taking part in strikes” and (0) if the respondent selected “No action taken” or “Don’t know”.¹¹

Next, the dependent variable was calculated as an index of the four variables representing readiness to take action. The index ranges from 0 (obtained if the respondent selected “no action” or “don’t know” in response to all the four types of grievance) to 4 (obtained if the respondent reported s/he would prefer to and was ready to take action in response to all the four types of grievance). Factor analysis reveals that the items entering

¹⁰ We also ran the regression analyses coding “don't know” as missing. This did not significantly alter the results.

the index constitute a single factor (with items loadings ranging from .80 to .86). The index has high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$).

Independent Variables

The PSS questionnaire collects information on objective and subjective aspects of seven dimensions of work-related security. Each dimension is represented by at least two independent variables measuring the objective and the subjective aspects of the given dimension. The variables representing the objective aspects are listed first, followed by the list of variables representing the subjective aspects of economic security.

Objective Aspects of Economic Security

Income security: *Household income* is measured by the aggregate average monthly money income of the respondents' household for the last month, in UHR.

Voice representation security: *Union membership* was based on the question "Do you belong to a union organization that represents worker interests in the enterprise?" with responses coded as "yes"=1, and "no"=0. *Communication with employer* is measured by "Does employer provide opportunity to discuss claims and personal issues?" Responses were coded as "yes"=1; "no" or "do not know"=0.

Employment security: The type of employment contract was identified as follows: "What type of contract do you have in your main job?" *Permanent contract* was coded as 1; while other types (i.e., verbal, day by day, temporary, fixed term, self-employed, or other) were coded as 0. This measures the level of employment security.

Job security: *Promotion* was measured by "Have you been promoted during the past 5 years?" Responses were coded as "yes" = 1, and "no" = 0. Promotion signifies that the

career-building opportunities are present at the job, which is an important marker of job security.

Skill representation security: *Correspondence of skills to work* is based on the following questions: “Do your qualifications and skills correspond to the work you perform?” “Higher than needed” was coded as 5; “adequate” was coded as 4; “difficult to say” was coded as 3; “not adequate to work I perform” was coded as 2; while “insufficient for the work” was coded as 1.

Labor market security: *Past unemployment* is based on the question: “Have you been unemployed in the last 5 years?” Responses were coded as “yes”=0, and “no”=1.

Work security: *Presence of a work safety committee* is based on the question: “At your present main workplace, is a committee responsible for health or safety in the workplace?” Responses were coded as “yes”=1; “no” or “do not know”=0.

Subjective Aspects of Economic Security

Income security: *Expectations of maintaining income* were measured by the question: “In 12 months’ time, do you expect your family’s income to be...?” “Higher in real terms” and “about the same in real terms” were coded as 1; “lower in real terms” and “difficult to say” were coded as 0. This measure determines whether or not the worker feels secure that his/her income will remain at the current level.

Voice representation security: *Knowledge of organizations representing workers besides trade unions* was based on the question “Do you know any organization in Ukraine which represents workers’ interests beside trade unions?” Responses were coded as “yes”=1; “no”= 0. Knowledge of other workers’ organizations may be an important aspect of representation security especially among workers who do not belong to trade unions, or

among those who belong to trade unions but do not feel trade unions adequately represent them.

Employment security: *Expected impact of job loss* was measured by the question “How much would the loss of your current job would impact your living standards?” Responses were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “a lot” (coded as 1) to “not at all” (coded as 5). This question measures the level of employment security.

Job security: *Perceived likelihood of promotion* was measured by the question “What do you think your chances of being promoted are within the next 12 months? Responses were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “very unlikely (coded as 1) to “very likely” (coded as 5).

Skill reproduction security: *Expected correspondence of skills to work* was based on the question “Do you have qualifications and skills necessary for the work you will perform within the next 5 years?” “Fully sure” and “sure” were coded as 1; while other responses (not sure, very unsure, and difficult to say) were coded as 0.

Labor market security: *Expected ease of finding another job* was measured by a question “If necessary, how easy or difficult do you think it would be to find another job (work) with similar pay?” Responses were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “very difficult (coded as 1) to “very easy” (coded as 5).

Work security: *Perceived safety of work environment* was derived from the following question “How safe or unsafe do you regard the working environment in your main workplace?” Responses were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “very unsafe (coded as 1) to “very safe” (coded as 5).

Control Variables

To gauge the degree of work aggravation in the multivariate model, we control for general work satisfaction/dissatisfaction: “In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied or reasonably neutral with your current main job (earning activity) in terms of nature of work performed? Responses were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “very dissatisfied” (coded as 1) to “very satisfied” (coded as 5).

We also control for several socio-demographic characteristics. *Age of the respondent* was measured in years. *Education* was recoded into years of education as follows: “primary”=8, “incomplete secondary”=10, “secondary special”=11, “secondary general”=12, “incomplete university degree”=14, “university degree”=17 and “scientific degree, scientific rank”=19. *Gender* was coded 1 for female; 0 for male. Marital status was coded 1 for married; 0 for single, divorced or widowed. Residence was coded 1 for urban; 0 for rural.

Results

Analyses were performed using STATA 8 statistical software (StataCorp 2003) and SPSS (release 10.1, SPSS Inc.). Sampling weights are applied to all analyses to make results representative of the Ukrainian population.

Univariate Analyses

Ukrainian workers report a high sense of self-efficacy as Table 1 shows. Despite a possible negative effect on their respective life-styles, almost three quarters of surveyed workers would still like to take action if they did not receive wages, if they felt their colleagues were unfairly dismissed, or if the employer violated safety rules or employment laws. Approximately one-fifth is not sure what they would do. Application to courts is by far the most common response (22.1 percent to 40.7 percent), followed distantly by application to trade unions, except in the case of a violation of labor safety (13.3 percent to 29.7 percent), when going to the union is the first choice. Disruptive tactics, such as taking part in

strikes, are seldom a preferred mode of action, hovering around 2 percent. Only for wage arrears is this form of action chosen by more than 3 percent of respondents.

This expression of individual readiness to take action, or perception of “actorhood” is especially interesting if compared with the widespread Ukrainian belief in the apathy of others. In the PSS 2002 survey, the ILO (2004) reports that 61 percent of male Ukrainian workers and 56 percent of female Ukrainian workers described the attitude characterizing the majority of workers in their enterprise as “passive”. Only about 25 percent of workers believed that there would be action by workers in their enterprise if wages were perceived as “unfair”, and only about 33 percent believed there would be action if wages were low or delayed.

Table 1

ABOUT HERE

Professed readiness to act is also evident when an index of readiness to take action in response to the four types of grievance is examined. As Table 2 shows, the index of readiness to take action that ranges from 0-4 has the weighted mean of 3.05. Table 2 also shows the distribution of socio-economic security and socio-demographic characteristics in our sample. As the most fundamental aspects of economic security, income and voice representation security are of special interest. Income security tends to be low among Ukrainians, as evidenced by its subjective aspects. Only 21 percent of respondents expect to maintain their level of family income within the next year. Subjective representation security among Ukrainian workers is also low, with only 10 percent of workers aware of organizations besides trade unions representing their interests. Note that this finding may be also a result of the rarity of workers’ organizations besides trade unions, rather than a lack of information. Objective representation security is higher. Half of all workers belong to a

trade union while just over half (56 percent) report that their employer provides an opportunity to discuss issues and concerns.

Table 2

ABOUT HERE

Multivariate Analyses

We estimate a multivariate ordinal probit model of the index representing readiness to take action in response to wage arrears, violation of labor safety, unfair dismissal of other workers, and violation of labor legislation or collective agreements. Ordinal probit is the model of choice when the dependent variable is ordered categorical and expresses an underlying continuous variable (Long, 1997). Main independent variables in the model include indicators of objective and subjective aspects of the seven dimensions of economic security, and it controls for socio-demographic variables.¹²

Table 3

ABOUT HERE

Table 3 shows the multivariate results. Variables representing four out of the seven dimensions of socio-economic security have significant positive effects on readiness to take action. These five dimensions include income security (subjective aspects), voice representation security (objective and subjective aspects), employment security (objective

¹¹ We also estimated models that included quadratic terms for age and income. The coefficients for these were not significant and therefore we report the more parsimonious models.

aspects), and labor market security (subjective aspects). Several unexpected findings emerge: Those who perceive the impact of losing their job to be dramatic, report higher readiness to take action. Workers who report that their skills correspond to their work have lower readiness to take action. For income security, voice representation security, and labor market security, our results support Hypothesis 1 that socio-economic security is positively associated with pro-activism attitudes. We also obtain support for Hypothesis 1 for objective employment security but not for subjective employment security.

Standardized coefficients reported in Table 3 provide information on the relative impact of independent variables on the readiness to take action, thus enabling us to evaluate Hypothesis 2 that income security and voice representation security have stronger positive associations with pro-activism attitudes than other dimensions of economic security. Among objective as well as subjective aspects of economic security, variables representing voice representation security have the largest effects on readiness to take action. Among objective aspects of economic security, these variables are followed by employment security. Among subjective aspects of economic security, voice representation security is followed by variables representing income security and labor market security. These results support Hypothesis 2 concerning the importance of representation security. They also provide support for Hypothesis 2 concerning the subjective aspects of income security. Satisfaction with work is also significant; the more satisfied an employee is with the type of work performed; the less likely he or she is to want to take action in the face of hardship.

Discussion and Conclusions

Underlying this paper is a Clausewitzian notion that mobilization is the continuation of orderly politics by other (disorderly) means. Activism may have beneficial results for workers by generating better working conditions but also for employers by siphoning workers away from more destructive forms of expressing discontent such as corruption or,

the ever-popular form during the Soviet rule, sabotage. Taking action, however, tends to be costly to workers in terms of their time, energy, and frequently, financial well-being. Activists may face repercussions from the employer, hostility from non-compliant colleagues, and psychological stress due to prolonged uncertainty about whether their efforts will be successful. The costs may be particularly high in societies characterized by high levels of economic as well as other forms of insecurity, such as in post-communist Ukraine. Nevertheless, about three quarters of Ukrainian workers report that they would choose to take action if dissatisfied with the current working environment.

What predicts pro-activism attitudes to work-related grievances? The overarching hypotheses were that (1) socio-economic security in its different components is positively associated with readiness to mobilize; and (2) the factors with the strongest relationship with pro-activism attitudes are income security and voice representation security. Our results support the hypotheses for some, but not for all, dimensions of economic security. Voice representation security and being confident in maintaining or procuring work are positively associated with pro-activism attitudes. Momentary income was insignificant while being able to utilize one's skills at work and work satisfaction decreased the willingness to mobilize.

In descending order of magnitude, the three most influential aspects of works conditions were:

First, representation security: The results show that what matters most is belonging to an issue-oriented network, trade union, awareness of other workers' organizations, and having a "voice", or the ability to talk to management. "Voice" is a central concept both in Standing's (1999, 2002) theory on representation security and in the literature on political

opportunity structure (Eisinger, 1973).¹³ Among all the variables representing economic security, trade union membership has the largest impact on readiness to mobilize. This is followed by the opportunity to discuss issues with the employer. Trade unions are often considered “the principal agency of voice representation for workers”, which “empowers workers and enables them to bargain effectively and negotiate to their advantage, with the result that their income, employment and working conditions improve” (Dasgupta, 2002, p. 413 citing Freeman, 1980 and Booth, 1995). In socialist countries, trade unions have traditionally functioned more as a controlling administrative body as opposed to a representative one. Several authors argue that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, trade unions have largely failed to play an active role in protecting workers. Kubicek (2002, p. 607), for instance, states that “hopes or fears associated with organized labor in the post-communist period never materialized,” adding that “Unions’ relative silence is ... a puzzle; they have been, to borrow from a Sherlock Holmes story, dogs that *should have* barked”. Our results show, however, that even in post-socialist Ukraine, unions have retained a potential agency generating function, at least as far as pro-activism attitudes are concerned.

Awareness of other workers’ organizations strongly and positively impacts readiness to take action. Our results suggest that a forum to develop and discuss ideas is essential for apathy to be displaced by action, thus confirming the political process literature that highlights the importance of an enveloping network for social action due to both practical and psychological reasons. Unions and other organizations provide the mobilization structures through which activists strategize, coordinate and organize and, ultimately, engage in collective action. Moreover, they provide both cognitive and social support. For sustained mobilization, an injustice frame as well as a network is needed (Gamson, 1997, McAdam,

¹³ In his study of public protest, Eisinger (1973, p. 25) defines the political opportunity structure as “a function to the degree to which groups are likely to be able to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system.” He demonstrates a curvilinear relationship between mobilization and access chances, maximum mobilization occurring at a medium degree of political opportunities.

1986, 1982; Klandermans, 1986; Costain, 1992; Evans, 1980; Tilly, 1975, 1978; Abu Sharkh, 1998, 1999, 2002). These authors suggest being part of a network leads people to “action participation” instead of “free-riding”, in Olson's (1965) terms, due to the fear of being ostracized by their social network if they do not participate.

Our results also add to the social movement literature by exploring the central concept of “political opportunity structure”. As the political opportunity structure is currently conceptualized in the literature, it has remained largely on the macro, nation-state level. Also, whether elite access, in this case discussion opportunities with management, is beneficial to mobilization due to the potential influx of resources as McCarthy and Zald (1973, pp. 21-22) suggest, or whether it fosters pacification non-conducive to problem solving. “Discussions” may simulate “participation without power” (Jenkins, 1981; McAdam, 1982) was unclear. The dialogue between activists and elites, such as management, is thus a precarious balance between costs and benefits. However, our findings suggest that such dialogue with management consistently and positively reinforces activist attitudes.

Second, employment security: Workers with a permanent contract report higher levels of readiness to take action in response to work-related grievances. These results stand in line with the rational actor model and the security approach that predicts that if the potential costs of action are too great and the risk too high (as in the case of workers whose job is not protected by a permanent contract), individuals apathize instead of act. If losing one's employment is an imminent danger, individuals may feel unable to mobilize either for themselves or for others. An interesting twist in this finding is that those who perceive the impact of losing their job to be dramatic still report an inclination towards activism when holding the security to maintain their employment constant. In other words, individuals who believe that losing their job would severely impact their living standards are more ready to take action than those who do not expect a large impact.

Third, subjective income security: The literature on mobilization is replete with claims about the importance of financial resources both as a direct factor, in the form of income (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Oberschall, 1973, 1994; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Jenkins and Perrow, 1997) and indirect influence, such as class (Rucht, 1994; Offe, 1985; Kitschelt, 1985; Brand, 1985). While the resource mobilization literature does not claim that resources are only of a financial kind, there is a clear bias in the momentary monetary direction. However, our results suggest that it is the *subjective* aspects of income security, the expectation of maintaining a stable income within the next year outweighs current household income. Income security is decidedly important, but it is not the single most influential factor in workers' pro-activism attitudes. Income expectation, not current income yield a decisive influence on the readiness to mobilize.

Several other dimensions of socio-economic security are also positively, but less closely, associated with pro-activism attitudes. *Labor market security:* Subjective aspects of labor market security, represented by the expected ease of finding another job, predict readiness to mobilize positively.

Two very novel dimensions to the insurgency literature are those of job and skill reproduction security. *Skill reproduction security:* Interestingly, the correspondence of skills to work predicts readiness to take actions negatively. This means that people who make little use of their skills in their work are more ready to take action if aggrieved. *Job security:* Apparently, climbing the "career ladder" does not impact activism attitudes. Having been promoted in the last five years or expecting a promotion in the future does not make a difference regarding the readiness to take action.

Our results reveal that most socio-economic security dimensions have a strong positive relationship with pro-activism attitudes. Our findings add to the body of literature on mobilization in several ways. First, fill the lacuna in the social movement literature on Post-

Soviet countries by focusing on Ukraine. They also enrich the social movement literature by the concept of security, particularly the aspect of skill. Furthermore, our models translate largely macro-level concepts, such as the political opportunity structure, to the micro-level of an individual's attitudes as they relate to their work life, thereby showing the effectiveness of the micro-level approach. Finally, our results provide limited support for the older grievance theory in the social movement literature: the more satisfied the worker with the nature of work, the less likely it is s/he will act. Looking at the standardized results, clearly grievance is not the most influential factor, yet it remains significant.

The elements bearing on policy design to be derived from this paper are threefold. First, the analysis shows that despite reports of widespread apathy, most Ukrainians report that, in the case of hardship, they would be ready to take action.

Second, our results suggest that the traditional venues of non-disruptive action are still preferred in Ukraine. The predominant response to work grievances is to apply to the courts, followed by application to trade unions. This means that, despite the ambiguous legacy of courts and trade unions in Ukraine, workers put trust and hope for a better life into these institutions.

Third, our findings prove that despite the pool of potential activists, individuals may need socio-economic security to allow them to respond along legitimate channels to unfair circumstances such as wage arrears. In particular, various forms of voice and the perception to not forfeit one's job strengthened activist inclinations. Not income per se but the ability to maintain a steady income stream in the future was a decisive mobilizing resource confirming hedonic psychology findings on the importance of resource *consistency* across time. Satisfied workers are less likely to mobilize.

For many workers, the choices are often not between mobilizing and motivated working. If there are no legitimate channels for conflict resolution, e.g. through courts,

disruptive forms of revenge for unfair working conditions, such as sabotage or corruption, gain sway (Hirschmann, 1970, 1992). Various forms of sabotage and corruption that stem from workers' inability to voice their discontent at perceived injustices any other way have cost the Soviet and post-Soviet societies dearly.

Further research should clarify whether constructive forms of activism, such as applying to trade unions, may be a less unruly and more productive way of resolving worker discontent. It is also important to address the question of whether firms that provide their workers with more socio-economic security fare better both from a management perspective, in terms of productivity, and from the point of view of the worker, by engendering work satisfaction.

The literature on attitudes and behaviour finds a rather loose correlation between expressed belief and action.¹⁴ Further empirical work is needed to disentangle these relationships. With data on actions, it would be possible to clarify the relationships between activist action and pro-activism attitudes, as well as relate both these variables to economic security. Furthermore, modelling in different countries is necessary to help understand if and

14 Likewise, the likelihood of workers' actual action is beyond the scope of this study. The data does not reveal whether or how socio-economic security co-varies with workers' past or future actions. It seems plausible that workers who report readiness to take legal or other action against their employer, when for example, they do not receive wages or work in unsafe conditions, would be more likely than others to take some type of action. Extensive literature on the subject cautions that the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex, and that the two may vary in important ways (Ajzen, 1989; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ungar, 1994). Many studies show that individuals are both inconsistent and rationalising. The argument runs under different theoretical traditions, such as cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), cognitive imbalance (Heider, 1958), asymmetry (Newcomb, 1953) and incongruence (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). Attitudes (especially verbalized) do not necessarily "determine" actions. Whether attitudes predict actions depends on the correspondence between the action, target, context, and the time gap (Rubikon-Modell, Heckhausen, 1990). Only if there is close correspondence (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1970) between these four dimensions as measured by specific indicators (Davidson and Jaccard, 1979) are attitudes predictive. In addition, reflecting about the gap between these dimensions will heighten correspondence (Snyder and Swann, 1978; Carver, 1975). Similarly, own experience will significantly affect attitudes and lead to a tighter causal chain between attitude and action (Regan and Fazio, 1977). Other factors affecting the relationship between attitudes and action according to Ajzen (1991) may include perceived locus of control and social norms. Stock (2001) reviews the intricate relationships between circumstances, perceptions, attitudes and actions as they relate to economic security. Further research could clarify circumstances strengthening the link between pro-activism attitudes and activism.

why apathy, greater sense of inefficacy and absence of control, which Sennett and Cobb (1972) call "hidden injuries" of social classes, is common among those suffering from lower economic security, lower income, poorer education, poorer work conditions, and uncertain employment status.

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Tables

Table 1. Preferred modes of action in response to work-related grievances. Percent of respondents

	Wage arrears for more than 3 months	Non-observance of the labor safety by employer	Unfair dismissal of other workers	Violation of labor legislation or collective agreement by the employer
Application to the court	40.7	22.1	30.7	33.5
Application to government agencies	10.2	11.7	6.8	7.5
Application to trade unions	13.3	29.7	22.7	26.5
Taking part in meetings, manifestations, etc.	2.5	1.8	2.1	1.4
Taking part in strikes	3.1	1.6	1.7	1.3
Other	3.7	4.2	3.9	3.4
Action: Total	73.5	71.1	67.9	73.6
Do not know	20.3	23.2	24.7	21.7
No actions taken	6.1	5.8	7.3	4.9
No action/Do not know: Total	26.5	29	32	26.6

Data: People's Security Surveys, Ukraine, 2004. N=6173.

Table 2. Summary of descriptive statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Weighted Mean (Standard Error)
Readiness to take action	0	4	3.05 (0.02)
Objective aspects of economic security			
<i>Income Security</i>			
Household income during previous month, logged (UAH)	2.64	10.31	6.25 (0.01)
<i>Voice Representation Security</i>			
Union member	0	1	0.50 (0.01)
Employer provides opportunity to discuss issues	0	1	0.56 (0.01)
<i>Employment Security</i>			
Permanent contract	0	1	0.85 (0.01)
<i>Job Security</i>			
Promoted in the past 5 years	0	1	0.25 (0.01)
<i>Skill Reproduction Security</i>			
Correspondence of skills to work	0	1	0.67 (0.01)
<i>Labor Market Security</i>			
Unemployed in the past 5 years	0	1	0.13 (0.004)
<i>Work Security</i>			
Safety committee at workplace	0	1	0.74 (0.01)
Subjective aspects of economic security			
<i>Income Security</i>			
Expectations of maintaining income in 12 months	0	1	0.21 (0.01)
<i>Voice Representation Security</i>			
Knowledge of workers' organizations besides trade union	0	1	0.10 (0.004)
<i>Employment Security</i>			
Expected severity of the impact of job loss ^a	1	5	4.45 (0.01)
<i>Job Security</i>			
Perceived likelihood of promotion	1	5	2.44 (0.01)
<i>Skill Reproduction Security</i>			
Expected correspondence of skills to work in 5 yrs	0	1	0.44 (0.01)
<i>Labor Market Security</i>			
Expected ease of finding another job	1	5	1.46 (0.02)
<i>Work Security</i>			
Perceived safety of work environment	1	5	3.35 (0.01)
Socio-Demographic Characteristics			
Married	0	1	0.73 (0.01)
Age	16	89	41.01 (0.16)
Urban	0	1	0.75 (0.01)
Education (years)	8	19	13.00 (0.04)
Female	0	1	0.58 (0.01)

Data: People's Security Surveys, Ukraine, 2004. N total =9400, N of working people = 6400 (some variables contain missing responses, lowest N=6173.) [Non-working not included in results.]

^aThis measure expresses the degree of insecurity rather than security.

Table 3. Ordered logistic regressions of readiness to take action

Objective aspects of economic security	Standardized co-efficient (weighted)
<i>Income security</i>	
Household income during previous month, logged (UAH)	.026
<i>Voice representation security</i>	
Union member	.097***
Employer provides opportunity to discuss issues	.094***
<i>Employment security</i>	
Permanent contract	.063***
<i>Job security</i>	
Promoted in the past 5 years.	-.024
<i>Skill reproduction security</i>	
Correspondence of skills to work	-.043**
<i>Labor market security</i>	
Not unemployed in the past 5 years	-.010
<i>Work security</i>	
Safety committee at workplace	.039
Subjective aspects of economic security	
<i>Income security</i>	
Expectations of maintaining income in 12 months	.050**
<i>Voice representation security</i>	
Knowledge of workers' organisation besides trade union	.064***
<i>Employment security</i>	
No expected severe impact of job loss a	-.049**
<i>Job security</i>	
Perceived likelihood of promotion	.013
<i>Skill reproduction security</i>	
Expected correspondence of skills to work in 5 years.	.027
<i>Labor market security</i>	
Expected ease of finding another job	.050**
<i>Work security</i>	
Perceived safety of work environment	-.026
Work satisfaction	
Satisfaction with nature of work	-.033*
Socio-demographic characteristics	
Married	-.001
Age	.002
Urban	.002
Education (years.)	.057
Female	-.031
Cut 1	.650
Cut 2	.910
Cut 3	1.250
Cut 4	1.740
Wald Chi-Sq (20 df)	262.130***

* Statistically significant at $p < .05$., ** Statistically significant at $p < .01$., *** Statistically significant at $p < .00$.,

Data: People's Security Surveys, Ukraine, 2004. N=5953.

