Persistent Anti-Littering Activism in a Non-Western Context: The Case of the Nature Cleaners Movement in Iran

Saeed Keshavarzi, Clare Saunders & Maryam Karimi

Published online: 22 Apr 2023.

Submit your article to this journal ⬀

Article views: 1540

View related articles ⬀

View Crossmark data ⬀

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

🔓 OPEN ACCESS | Check for updates

Persistent Anti-Littering Activism in a Non-Western Context: The Case of the Nature Cleaners Movement in Iran

Saeed Keshavarzi[a] 🆔, Clare Saunders[b], and Maryam Karimi[a]

[a]Independent Researcher, Deparmtent of Sociology, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran; [b]Department of Politics, University of Exeter, Penryn, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

ABSTRACT

Persistent activism has mostly been discussed in the context of Western socio-political and religious movements, where it is attributed to organizational and inter-personal networks and the development of identities and solidarities. Studies of persistent environmental activism are rare in countries that lack durable mobilizing structures. This study explores, for the first time, persistent anti-littering activism in an infrequently studied social and political setting, Iran. This allows us to assess the applicability of social movement findings from western cases to a non-western context. Drawing on in-depth interviews with eighteen persistent Iranian anti-littering activists we find that cosmopolitanism, which de-naturalizes pollution and littering, is a key motivating factor. Persistent anti-littering activism involves overcoming the difficulties of participation by finding pleasures finding pleasures in generating, together, a pragmatic identity.

Introduction

This study provides important insights into how voluntary collective actors come to persist in environmental activism in socio-political environments that are non-conducive to Western forms of collective action. We use the case study of Nature Cleaners Movement (NCM) in Iran to understand whether a set of factors that facilitate persistent activism in Western social movements is useful for understanding persistent anti-littering activism in Iran. Bayat (2005) and Hoominfar (2021) argue that Western social movement theory can be useful for understanding Islamic/Iranian movements, but with nuance to account for the particular socio-economic and political context. The political environment in Iran, hostile to challenging forms of organized environmental activism, invites us to explore how anti-littering activism persists outside of formal organizations. Hence, we present important novel insights into the prospects for sustained environmental activism within sociopolitical contexts that are not supportive to

CONTACT Clare Saunders ✉ C.Saunders@exeter.ac.uk 🖳 Deparmtent of Politics, University of Exeter, Penryn, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

such forms of environmentalism. Our work therefore builds upon studies of environmental action in authoritarian and hybrid regimes, such as Xie's (2009) work on non-challenging forms of environmentalism in China, and Owen's (2020) study of 'participatory authoritarianism' in China and Russia. While it is established that moderate forms of environmental action exist in such places, little is known about what allows people to sustain involvement in environmental activities in places that shun politically challenging environmentalism.

Persistent activism is sustained participation in movement actions or organizations (Driscoll 2018). It generates durability, crucial to the vitality of movements and movement organizations (Klandermans and van Stekelenburg 2013; Nepstad 2004). Persistent activism is well-studied in Western democracies in the context of voluntary organizational membership (Cress, McPherson, and Rotolo 1997), protest participation (Saunders et al. 2012), environmental activism (Driscoll 2018) and in relation to various movements including intentional religious communities (Kanter 1968), college anti-apartheid protests (Hirsch 1990), anti-hunger organizations (Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1995) and peace activism (Downton and Wehr 1998). Extant literature confirms a range of individual- and group-level structural and agentic factors that generate persistent activism, including personal and organizational networks, socialization, the development of collective identities and solidarities (see also Saunders 2008), personal enthusiasm and self-identity (Driscoll 2018). These studies indicate that different factors are important in understanding persistence in different types of activism. For example, ideological depth and coherence is important for sustaining involvement in close-knit social movement organizations (Kanter 1968), but is sometimes irrelevant for individualized forms of environmental participation (Driscoll 2018). Collective identity and solidarity are important predictors of persistent participation only in groups or organizations (Driscoll 2018).

We argue that the foci on organizations of many studies of persistent activism is problematic. First, it overlooks many activists who participate without formal organizational affiliation (Earl, Maher, and Elliott 2017; Elliott and Earl 2018; Klandermans et al. 2014). Second, and more directly relevant to our study, an organizational focus cannot be applied in political contexts that dissuade informal movement organizations. Foremostly, we consider it crucial to understand what motivates people to participate persistently in peaceful collective actions when they are embedded in contextual settings restrictive of durable mobilization structures, like Iran (Fadaee 2011).

Studies on persistent activism in countries not accepting of organized events-driven activism are rare for multiple reasons. In Iran this is partly because only a small number of multi-place events-driven environmental programs exist. Current long-term environmental initiatives in Iran tend to be education-focused (e.g. The Center for Sustainable Development, Avand Environmental Institute), or to have specific foci on a sub-section of society (e.g. Women's Society Against Environmental Pollution) or a place (e.g. the Public Campaign in Support of Kind Zagros[1]). Their educational remit makes these initiatives immune from the threat of being suspended by the government. Moreover, to be a persistent activist outside of the education-specific or tightly defined remit-specific foci of many existing environmental NGOs is to put oneself in the spotlight, making oneself vulnerable to repression (Hoominfar 2021; Moghadam and Gheytanchi 2010).

Consequently, one may anticipate persistent environmental activism to be rare in Iran. However, anti-littering activism, to a certain extent, bypasses repression by avoiding a formal organizational structure and by side-stepping direct challenges to the state. The latter means that anti-littering activism, as a widely perceived less politically sensitive domain of action, is less likely to be suspended and hence higher long-term survival potential. Indeed, political opportunity structures can be relatively open for non-system challenging civil society organizations in Iran, like in China (Xie 2009) and Russia (Owen 2020). For instance, during the tenure of President Mohammed Khatami (1997–2004) – a tolerant open minded cleric who championed the rights of youth, students and women – civil society was encouraged to help develop legitimacy for the regime, resulting in what Doyle and Simpson (2006) call a 'state run civil society'.

The Khatami era also established the Iranian Department for the Environment, which formed a Public Participation Bureau to encourage environmental NGO growth, which proliferated 1997–2005 from 20 to 640 (Fadaee 2011). Environmental organizations in Iran range from rural to local in scope, and focus on a range of issues from conservationism to challenging the fundamental basis of society. The relative scarcity of mass supporter environmental organizations (Fadaee 2011) means that persistent participation in Iranian environmental organizations is even rarer. Thus, we focus on persistent anti-littering activists in an informal network linked through Facebook, rather than one with a formal organizational structure, NCM, which we introduce more fully later. The differences between NCM and other long-term environmental initiatives implies that our findings are perhaps not generalizable across Iranian environmental organizations, even though they resonate with other environmental collectives in non-democratic regimes.

The findings from this study are relevant beyond its immediate scientific goals. Like many environmental problems, littering is unquestionably caused by human activity (Dunlap and Jorgenson 2012), and can be solved by the same means. Meanwhile, it is also symptom of global supply chains (Koger 2010; Steg and Vlek 2009). In this study, we focus on activism in a country that suffers from poor environmental management, which is common across many parts of the world, particularly outside of Western democracies (Mansouri Daneshvar, Ebrahimi, and Nejadsoleymani 2019).

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we review literature on the factors leading to persistent activism in general and environmental activism in particular. Second, we provide background information on NCM. Next, we introduce our inductive methodological approach that involved analysis of interviews with founder and current persistent activists in NCM. We therefore make a significant contribution to literature on environmental activism by systematically investigating processes leading to long-term non-organizational anti-littering activism in a non-Western context. Our findings allow us to assess the generalizability of social movement literature often criticized for its over-emphasis on western societies (Wiktorowicz 2004).

Persistent Activism

Following Saunders et al. (2012), we differentiate two main sets of explanations for persistent activism: structural and agentic. 'Structural' explanations emphasize external factors such as networks and organizational memberships. 'Agentic' refers to internal

characteristics of individuals e.g. perceived injustice, senses of efficacy, and emotional responses. The two are interrelated: being in the right place at the right time is structural, but often stems from mixing with people with similar agentic characteristics.

Structural availability expedites engagement into activism (Schussman and Soule 2005). Social networks with intense interaction mobilize and retain activists (Diani 2003; Kitts 2000; Passy and Giugni 2000). In their analysis of peace activism, Downton and Wehr (1998) suggest that networking generates 'creative' forces that maintain movement momentum. Similarly, Nepstad (2004) demonstrated that leadership and community strengthened activist identity and fortified members' commitment. On the other hand, agential explanations, rooted in social-psychological approaches, explain participation through factors internal to individuals. Among them, grievance is traditionally considered a pre-cursor to provoking and sustaining activism (Folger 1986; Gurr 1970; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Klandermans, Roefs, and Olivier 2001). According to deprivation theory (Finkel and James 1986; Klandermans, van der Toorn, and van Stekelenburg 2008), participation stems from comparisons people make between their current situation and their ideal situation. Grievance-based theories, though heavily criticized, have been revived due to a wave of anti-austerity movements in the late noughties (Giugni and Grasso 2016; Kurer et al. 2019). It is also argued that people who sustain participation retain faith that their participation helps to obtain their desired goals (Schussman and Soule 2005).

Emotions and activism are related in complex ways (e.g., Brown and Pickerill 2009; Jasper 2011; Nepstad 2004). Individuals usually experience numerous and in some cases contrasting feelings before/during/after participating in social actions. Some emotions like fear or frustration can discourage, particularly high-risk, activism (Goodwin and Pfaff 2001), while positive feelings, e.g. pleasure, pride, and joy, can encourage and sustain activism (della Porta and Giugni 2013). Persistent activists struggle with some components of emotions that they experience during events (Rodgers 2010).

Some factors associated with sustained activism are simultaneously structural and agentic. Identity – both individual (agentic) and collective (structural) – sustains participation (Hunt and Benford 2004; Turner 1981; van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2017). Collective identity is a process and output of movements that coheres members (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Satterfield 2007).

What about environmental activism in particular? Studies indicate the primary importance of agentic factors. Driscoll (2018) highlighted nature connection, individual practices, and personal missions as crucial for persistent environmental activism, but found organizational factors marginally important. Focusing on college students, Fung and Adams (2017) found that personal history, experiences, passion, a sense of community, existing incentives, and self-satisfaction encourage environmental activism. Farrell (2013) showed that people who consider nature sacred are more likely to sign environmental petitions and participate in environmental groups. The value orientations that provide a foundation to support environmental activism tend to be biocentric (McFarlane and Boxall 2003; Vaske and Donnelly 1999). But structural factors matter, too. Dietz, Stern, and Guagnano (1998) demonstrated the effect of socialization on environmental activism. Education, awareness of consequences, and attitudes have been

found to be determining factors in triggering environmental activism (Marquart-Pyatt 2012).

The literature outlined above provides sensitizing concepts through which we *might* interpret our own data (Charmaz 2003). However, given our expectations that non-Western contexts have different factors leading to sustained activism, we were vigilant prevent these sensitizing concepts from directing attention from naturally emerging themes (Holton 2010). We credit western-oriented scholarship for recognizing that social movements do not develop uniformly, but are instead shaped by political contexts (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1996). We expect to find some similarities between Driscoll's (2018) findings on non-organizational environmental activism in the West and our own in Iran. We also expect to find unique processes underlying persistent environmental activism in Iran because the political context and absence of green social norms necessitates more powerful motivations compared to western settings. Let us now introduce the specific context of our work: NCM.

Nature Cleaners Movement

Littering is a publicly accepted but serious environmental issue in Iran, where waste production is almost double the world average (Mashreghnews 2019). It is serious because generates health and safety hazards including fire risks (Crump, Nunes, and Crossman 1977) and infections from bacteria (Schultz et al. 2011). Litter is also esthetically unpleasant (Ackerman 2013) and degrades public welfare via imposing significant cleaning costs to states (Muñoz-Cadena et al. 2012). Littering is more serious in low income per capita countries, disproportionately burdening the environment and economy of these nations (Arafat et al. 2007). It is common across other Middle Eastern countries (Arafat et al. 2007). Socio-psychological factors, including habits, anonymity, existing litter, lack of awareness, poor normative control and irresponsibility, have allowed littering to become a norm, unlike in Western countries (Firuzjaeyan and Gholamrezazadeh 2015). NCM is a direct challenge to this unfortunate status quo.

In June 2012, Kazem Nadjariun (NCM founder) observed polluted nature on a family picnic. He collected rubbish in bags, took photographs and uploaded them to Facebook. After viewing his posts, others started copying him, leading to more photos of bagged litter uploaded to Facebook. Shortly after, Kazem and his virtual friends organized the first NCM event. Thereafter, NCM's Facebook page was established, attracting members from across Iran. Over time, approximately 18 informal local groups formed across the country. Local members organized 'cleaning events' mostly at weekends. Wearing clothes emblazoned with NCM logos, members collected rubbish mainly in tourist destinations. To date, over three-thousand 'cleaning events' have taken place (October, 2022). NCM local activists connect via online social networks such as Whatsapp. They hold events independently but share details and photographs with other NCM activists.

Let us now situate NCM within the broader ecology of the Iranian environmental movement to justify our case selection. Hoominfar (2021) concluded that Iranian environmental movements have emerged and coalesced, but have failed institutionalize – they lack well-established formal movement organizations and effective NGOs. She attributes this failure to state restrictions. Environmental movements in Iran did not

emerge until the 1990s (Fadaee 2011). Sustained environmental collective programs have been rare even until now (Afrasiabi 2018). That is why many environmental activists, including the participants in our study, are founders or pioneers of local groups. This contrasts with western environmentalism that has many long-timers, large-scale formal organizations, radical forms of activism barely repressed by the state and a history of action dating back to the 19th century (Saunders 2014). The structural and cultural discrepancies between Western environmentalism and our understudied contexts motivated us to conduct this in-depth study on NCM.

Although pro-environmental NGOs in Iran have grown since the 1970s, many have been short-term responses to imminent environmental threats e.g. protests against planned dog killing (Irna 2015; Tabnak 2021) and rural protests against water shortages (Ilna 2020). Others, such as Boom Iran, the Green Front of Iran and Mountain Environment Protection Committee have not been able to sustain persistent collective action programs. NCM is one of the first nationwide environmental movements to have persisted for over eight years. Given that this network is not part of any pre-established organization, studying its activists allows us to examine persistent activism beyond the lens of conventional mobilization structures.

Data and Method

The study used qualitative inductive analysis to identify factors encouraging persistent anti-littering activism in Iran. The method is particularly useful for gaining comprehensive insights into social phenomena, even with small sample sizes (Patton 2005). Our sampling strategy involved approaching the most persistent activists of NCM in each area of the country, by purposive and snowball sampling. The sampling took six months (1 May to 10 November 2019), while 18 in-depth interviews were conducted. After each interview, audio recordings were transcribed and data were reviewed before the next interview.

We decided to conduct and analyze interviews with persistent activists rather than analyze Facebook posts. Activists share only brief information on Facebook, and social media channels are used primarily to encourage citizens to remove litter. Moreover, use of social media was decentralized, with each local network advertising collective programs to different channels. This makes systematic collection of such data difficult to coordinate without access to specific VPN channels.

Table 1 provides brief demographic information about participants including aliases (to protect activists' identity), age, gender, and duration of NCM participation. Their ages range from early 30s to late 60s (mean 40.3 years, SD = 8.80). Most were male (72%). They have been involved in NCM for 4–8 years (M = 5.55 SD = 1.14).

The first two interviews were open-ended, after which we shifted gradually to semi-structured interviews around emergent themes. We did not directly question participants on structural and agentic factors, but instead allowed explanations for persistent participation to emerge inductively. We stopped interviewing new participants once newly collected data revealed no new themes (Fassinger 2005). The first interviews lasted approximately 80 minutes, while further ones gradually reduced in length to 40 minutes. Interviews were conducted at a location comfortable for participants and

Table 1. A short profile of research participants.

Number	Name	Gender	Age	Marital status	Years in focal group
1	Farhad	Male	45	Married	6
2	Ali	Male	33	Married	4
3	Mohammad	Male	44	Married	5
4	Mahan	Male	30	Married	4
5	Amir	Male	65	Married	8
6	Sepehr	Male	41	Married	7
7	Matin	Male	46	Married	6
8	Yousef	Male	34	Married	6
9	Mehdi	Male	38	Married	6
10	Sara	Female	53	Married	7
11	Mina	Female	45	Married	6
12	Mahnaz	Female	30	Single	5
13	Ashkan	Male	43	Single	6
14	Susan	Female	35	Single	4
15	Ehsan	Male	32	Married	5
16	Hamid	Male	39	Married	6
17	Negar	Female	34	Married	5
18	Amin	Male	40	Married	4

were free-flowing except when there was a need to clear up an issue or encourage further explanation.

We immersed ourselves in the data, listening to the audio and reviewing the transcripts repeatedly. Writing up our presuppositions and values, we applied a bracketing approach to minimize the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions (Tufford and Newman 2012). We coded in three interrelated phases: open, focused, axial, and selective (Corbin and Strauss 1990). First, transcripts were split into segments letting the codes emerge from the data without researcher interventions or restrictions, engaging in open coding to identify common themes.

Initial line-by-line codes (column 1 of Table 2) were refined to allow us to make sense of data. Then we engaged in 'focused coding' (column 2 of Table 2), attributing more inclusive and abstractive themes. During axial coding (column 3 of Table 2), we merged data segments into broader categories according to conceptual similarity while exploring relationships among categories, relating primary themes to constituting subcategories. The findings' validity was confirmed through employing peer review, participant confirmation and external audits (Creswell and Miller 2000).

During the whole research process, we took care to avoid giving preference to notions from Western studies (that is known as orientalism, see B. S. Turner 1989). In so doing, we maximally enhanced the validity of our findings. We wish to stress that two authors of the current paper are Iranian. They were responsible for conducting the interviews and thematically analyzing the data. The Iranian nationality of two of the researchers, and our inductive approach, are a conscious attempt to avoid orientalism.

Our project confirms to ethical standards for the conduct of social scientific research. Participants gave informed consent, weree been granted confidentiality (we refer to them using pseudonyms), were explicitly permitted to withdraw from the study at any time and we sought to ensure their comfort at every stage of the research process.

Table 2. Coding process.

Initial coding	Focused coding	Axial coding
Life-long interest in the cleanliness of nature	The importance of the environment	Denaturalizing and problematizing
Being indebted to the future generations		
Environment as a parcel		
Connecting with nature through nature tourism	Attachment to the environment	
The dependence of human life on the environment		
The perceived situation of the environment in other countries	Continuous comparison	
Experience of living abroad		
Childhood memories of cleaner environments		
Frequent references to Japan in terms of environmental education		
Unusual environmental situation in Iran		
The experience of facing cleaning groups in Germany		
Feeling anger and annoyance from environmental situation in Iran	Grievance	
The environment at the bottom of priorities in Iran		
Lack of attention to the environment in Iran		
Littering as a normal and pervasive behavior		
Challenge to the status quo	Intolerance	
The bitter experience of environment destruction		
Why not here in Iran?		
Social mobility	Spillover	
Holding educational classes		
Helping disadvantaged groups		
Learning team-working	Intimate atmosphere	Networking in a risky political environment
The pleasures of team-working		
Attractive experience of togetherness		
Group openness to new members		
Multiculturalism in NCM		
NCM as a rare collective space		
Openness to new members from any socioeconomic status	Friendship	
NCM as a family members		
Emotional attachment to other members		
Respect to members' opinions		
Respect to members' various decisions on Hijab		
Action not talk	Overcoming passivity	Construction of pragmatic identity
The futility of not taking an action		
Importance of practical action		
Opposition with over-talking on environmental issues		
Sacrifizers of time and capital	Pragmatic feature of NCM group	
Responsibility to act		
We (NCM) as a pragmatic group		
Annoyed at others' inactiveness		
Educating the public via pragmatism	Culture-building feature of pragmatism	
Influence on the audiences via activeness		
Effectiveness over a long-time period	Regulation expectations	
Effectiveness of being persistent		
Remembering the large-scale environmental issues		
Social bonds creation	Performances	
Performances as a mobilizing tool		
Commitment motivation		

Findings

The analysis identified three core themes: *Denaturalizing and problematizing,* which illustrates how participants become persistent challengers of status quo; *Networking in a risky political environment*, which describes the emotional bonds that keep participants engaged despite repression of overt environmentalism; and *Construction of a pragmatic identity*, which elaborates how activists recognize themselves as pragmatic social actors. Whilst the category of *denaturalizing* mainly helped spark persistent activism, the other two themes seem more important in helping activism to persist. We now elaborate on these three core themes.

Denaturalizing and Problematizing

Almost all participants held grievances, expressed as deep discontentment with Iran's environmental conditions. They considered it impossible to survive without nature and wanted to protect it as a 'parcel' to deliver in pristine condition to future generations. The parcel term signifies an ethical duality of trusteeship versus betrayal. In other words, participants feared being stigmatized as betrayers to the next generation because they believed the environment belongs all people, even those not yet born. As Matin and Farhad remember respectively:

> […] that interest has been in my mind since I was about nine or ten years old, I was interested in planting, preserving nature, and so on, and now that I've gotten older, that's important to keep for the next generation, I mean we keep this earth and this life for our future generations.

> We do what we can and yeah, they (the next generation) would say 'there were those who did it and it didn't hurt', and this is my perspective.

Participants reported connection to nature since childhood (Fung and Adams 2017), referring frequently to childhood memories of feeling closer to nature when it was cleaner. Remarkably, many interviewees stressed intense nature connection even before the formation of NCM. They had an intuitive relationship with the environment. Some participants grasped the idea that the environment is a *collective good* that must be kept clean. Meanwhile, litter pollution was perceived as an extremely uncomfortable issue, representative of environmental destruction. Participants stated that they became unnerved at the normalization of littering: people apparently throw rubbish around the environment without any concern for others' reactions.

Furthermore, many interviewees revealed that they had lived for some time in western countries that they perceived as environmentally clean. What is more, some told us that they encountered environmental groups when abroad. Even those participants without such experiences referred to what they had heard about other countries' environmental standards. This constructed perception from other, cleaner, environments accompanied their never-ceasing comparison (Smith et al. 2012) to feed into the process of 'denaturalizing', that is, problematizing the environmental situation via the continuous comparison with the situation it deserves to be.[2] What they witnessed or imagined in other countries became perceived as an ideal condition juxtaposed to what they experienced in Iran. This comparison includes the environmental issues raised both by

ordinary people and governments. NCM activists believed that destructive but pervasive behavior against the environment (particularly littering) is unnatural, as illustrated by the following quote from Ehsan:

> Personally, I love nature, love cleanliness and untouched nature and stay healthy so I have long been known in the field for doing this. I myself lived in Japan for 14 years because I was there and really enjoyed the cleanliness there. When I came back to my homeland, I wanted to see it like Japan always.

They strongly believed that environmental conditions in Iran needed urgent attention and could be improved by collective efforts. In fact, denaturalizing of the environment was accompanied by a never-ending tension emerging from the idea that it is problem that 'must be addressed' immediately. We refer to this as a problematized situation. Challenges to a public culture of littering as 'normal behavior' constantly exacerbates the problematized situation. Besides that, remembering places which do not exist any-more (as a result of environmentally destructive behaviors) does not permit activists to adopt a passive position. To the activists, what has been destroyed now is a reflection of what the remaining virgin environment will look like in the near future. As Mina states:

> Look what they did to the Zayanderud river (is the largest river of the Iranian Plateau in central Iran). When you move along the river, you see how many pipes are set to pump the water, so many, many pipes … Everywhere you go, you see them.

The activists who founded the network referred frequently to their experience of exposing themselves to environmental groups in other countries that collected beach litter. They attributed the idea of organizing cleaning events to this exposure when they lived abroad. This recalls the notion of 'rooted cosmopolitans' developed by Tarrow (2012); referring to the activists who bridge the local and the global by bring-ing transnational values, interests, and activities into domestic politics. Consequently, the idea that 'something must be done', rooted in the mental denaturalizing process, as well as the memory of litter cleaning in other countries resulted in NCM activists asking themselves the key question: 'Why not here?'. Mehdi remembers in this regard:

> In those days, when I went on a picnic, we had to relocate several times seeking for a clean place to sit. I started to think […] why do I have to go to another place? Why is it dirty? And more importantly, why do people leave their rubbish?

The NCM activists' interviews, illustrated above, show, in line with previous studies (Folger 1986; Gurr 1970; Lind and Tyler 1988), that grievance is crucial for recruitment to activism. But in this case, it is denaturalization that translates the grievance into col-lective action participation. Denaturalizing littering encouraged NCM activists to per-ceive the current environmental situation as mentally insufferable: something needed to be done. The process of denaturalizing is different from what has already been discussed in the relative deprivation literature. Relative deprivation stems from a short-term com-parison among perceived ideal and existing situations, while denaturalizing stubbornly persists and extends to other social domains overtime.

Moveover, denaturalizing acts a triggering process for activism across multiple issues no longer considered natural. Social movements can potentially influence domains far beyond their specific articulated goals (Meyer and Whittier 1994). With respect to

NCM, persistent activism diffuses into both individual and collective behaviors. NCM activists started to problematize other social and environmental issues mostly related to the concept of justice. As Sara states:

> This creativity comes from Netherlands … a woman, I think, was collecting the caps of minerals and selling them and then covered the costs of wheelchairs. Then in Iran, a man or woman named Akrami started to do the same thing in Tabriz, and then NCM in all provinces did the same thing, and we bought a wheelchair with the collected money.

Participants frequently stated that they gradually extended their activities into non-environmental charitable fields. We found that local networks also mobilize their members for non-environmental activities. For instance, in the case of an earthquake, which caused huge damage, NCM in the affected area transformed into the local relief team helping out vulnerable locals.

Networking in a Risky Political Environment

Among factors behind persistent activism, networking plays crucial role. Networking is perhaps even more crucial for encouraging persistent activism in risky political environments. According to our participants, nationwide NCM activity was not administratively authorized and local groups were supposed to request for permission separately. However, our interviewees described heavy bureaucratic processes for getting permission that were exhausting and often not successful. Furthermore, the authorities were sensitive to the group activities and the underlying motivations of activists. As Mahan asserts: 'I was approached several times [by governments] asking me about what have been discussed in the events, about any political discussion among members, about their hijab […]'.

Political environments non-conducive to activism generally militate against the generation of intimately networked groups. In contrast, our participants reported that NCM is intently accessible and inclusive. Hence, they found NCM to be a unique team-working experience for a collective good, absent in the other domains of their lives, resulting in pleasurable feelings. According to our participants, persistent participation in NCM adds meaning to their lives, preventing the feelings of boredom that they experienced before joining the group. Mehdi asserts in this regard:

> My family and I are fans of these events. You know, there are lots of things we can do at the weekend, but events are something else, we feel so happy after each event, we feel that we have done something important and feel satisfaction.

Accordingly, the sense of meaningfulness that they develop through their involvement in NCM keeps the members motivated to participate. They frequently referred to the existing companionship feelings among members of NCM as an immensely encouraging factor for participation. They expressed pride in being members of NCM, seeing it as a progressive effort that generated happy feelings of association. This is particularly relevant as membership in some types of social movements could be accompanied by a sense of shame (Britt and Heise 2000). Feeling pride (or shame) stems from viewing one's self from the standpoint of others (Scheff and Retzinger 1991). Being stigmatized by the larger society takes considerable energy from participants to overcome the social costs of participation.

An array of emotions such as anger, frustration and desperation are also at work to move potential activists into taking collective action, but, in order to sustain it, pleasure and pride seem necessary. Similar to what Sepehr stated, pleasure encourages committed members to organize events: 'if we don't have an event one week, family members say this Friday (Weekend in Iran) has passed in vain …'. Events go beyond just place-cleaning, providing the participants with the experience of being embedded in the social communities not accessible elsewhere.

NCM activists make efforts to keep the group welcoming to all, providing openness not available to most Iranian communities and public spaces. These characteristics make participants feel that they thoroughly belong. More importantly, NCM is fully open to including people with different types of Hijab and, according to the founders, no one in this group is in a hierarchical power arrangement in relation to other members. Despite the challenges of living in a risky political environment, and despite cultural differences, NCM activists come to identify with each other, as we discuss in the next section.

Construction of a Pragmatic Identity

NCM activists demark their identities from others (Hall and Du Gay 1996), purposively building a desirable identity that establishes boundaries from other groups. Common statements by research participants suggest that NCM activists' identity is constructed as pragmatic actors who challenge the pervasive passive culture. Accordingly, participants feel tired of facing politicians, institutions, and people who just talk about the obscurant situation rather than take action. Participants believe they witness fruitless statements such as giving a public lecture while there has been need for practical actions. As Farhad states:

> I am not interested in just talking, we have to do something, for example, some people are giving lectures well, they are commenting and criticizing, but this is good if they do something and act.

> Mehdi also says:

> We are a grassroots group who do not just chant but act and act. Some people just sit and talk and the time for action comes then they say the others would do it.

Cleaning performances portrayed the pragmatic aspect of activism as clearly as possible. On the other hand, the events were places where members became more familiar with each other, discussed the dissatisfying situation of the environment and hence built a coherent shared identity. During events, the activists made social bonds while the face-to-face interaction led some members to become committed and persistent. What Amir described, demonstrates the importance activists subscribe to organizing events:

> My house is 60 km away from Tehran, but anyway I went with my wife to a cleaning event because I said with myself especially it is on the rainy days that we need to do it … Showing friends not only go out in the good weather but all days!

On the other hand, activists understood inactiveness as a characteristic of today's society that must be tackled. Accordingly, participants considered themselves to be people who sacrifice their time and capital to do something real, even if small, for the

environment. The theme that emerged in the case of NCM's persistent activism is regulated expectations. Accordingly, the interviewees frequently attempted to adapt their perceptions away from focusing on the inefficacy of their actions, instead referring to reality and its limitations. What kept the activism alive was not only the perception of effectiveness but being concerned about the scope of it. In the case of long-term activism, the motivations leading people to take part potentially weaken overtime, as they become practically informed about obstacles through experience. In this vein, our participants demonstrated that they actively try to regulate their expectations about the possible output of their collective actions. Mahan stated: 'We're not supposed to wear gloves and clean up all the rubbish of Iran … this is not possible at all! We know it'. Furthermore, the participants recognize that their main goal is not collecting litter or rubbish, but rather they consider it as what could be called 'sensitizing', that is, flipping society's dominant culture resulting in awareness and culture-building. Confronting the logic of the market, activists introduce themselves as 'sacrifizers' of time and capital. The term sacrifice signifies negation of the market logic and also refers the perceived importance of the collective good. In sum, the performances not only allowed NCM activists to achieve their goals or recruit new members, they concurrently help it to keep its local groups alive through strengthening the shared identity as well as highlighting the pragmatic aspects of their actions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore social processes underlying persistent anti-littering activism in Iran. We conceptualized denaturalizing as a key process that triggers and sustains activism. Consistent with the literature (Folger 1986; Gurr 1970; Opp 1988), our findings suggest that activists were highly aggrieved about a situation that matters to them (littering in the environment). The explored discontentment was rooted in their environmental worldview, personal long-term bonds to nature (Driscoll 2018), and more importantly the comparison of the current situation of nature with what they remember or imagined from earlier times or in other countries. Hence we conclude that the ongoing denaturalizing of the status quo is a key mechanism that moves people into long-term commitment to anti-littering activism. The outlined process pushes activists to question the current environmental situation as they try to resolve their perception of its unnaturalness. Substituting the subject of problematization, activists extend their activities to other environmental problems as well as further social issues. In line with previous studies, our work highlights the importance of grievance in launching social movements but goes further to introduce denaturalizing. This is more than deprivation because, to be activated, it requires *experience or imagining* the ideal situation. This is a key process, encouraged by visits abroad or to historically cleaner environments, that fuels activism and keeps the activists committed in a non-Western setting.

Our findings also uncover other processes at work in fostering persistent activism. Networking is seen as important in sustaining some forms of activism in Western contexts (Diani 2003), but it is even more important in risky political and atomized societies like Iran. Experience of having a place to practice team working also establishes

activists' bonds to activism. Particularly when public spaces are often subject to restrictions, members of such groups find an novel opportunity to experience a relatively open and democratic atmosphere, far away from hands of power. These rare but existing public spaces allow social bonds to develop that keep the members committed to participation. Such enjoyable social bonds and settings might not be so important in Western countries where social capital is, generally, taken much more for granted; and where the risks of public gatherings for collective causes are considerably lower. As della Porta (2017) argued, once movements have formed and become consolidated they are able to create the resources that fuel themselves; accumulated devoted efforts prevent disengagement. What is more, we revealed a pragmatic identity constructed in response to the challenges of the pervasive and dominant anti-environmental culture, the logic of market, and general levels of inactivity among the population. We found that reconsideration of expected outcomes prevented activists' frustration and hence disengagement (Gould 2012; Hoggett and Randall 2016; Nairn 2019). Unlike in Western contexts, perceived senses of efficacy (Schussman and Soule 2005) seem less important in sustaining activism: the act of engaging in action as an example to others is rewarding enough.

To some degree our findings resonate with what is already known about persistent environmental activism in West. As expected, we found that the personal biographies such as childhood memories, prior nature connection, perceptions of human-caused environmental degradation, and feelings of pleasure from participation are flourishing grounds for sustained environmental activism. Similar to the West, we also note the importance of structural availability. We draw particular attention to the processes of identity formation resulting from joining a group and their meaning to participants. Beyond these similarities, we introduced unique mechanisms underlying persistent commitment in the Iranian context. The lasting process of denaturalization and problematizing, using networking to overcome the challenges of participating in a risky environment, and the pleasures of working together and the construction of a pragmatic identity are the key novel factors revealed by our research. Here, we also see activists as rooted cosmopolitans (Tarrow 2012) seeking to cross country borders by bringing what they witnessed and valued abroad back to their local context.

Our work opens up the doorway for further work on the persistence of environmental activism in non-Western countries. As we discussed in the introduction, the factors that lead to persistent activism do not hold across different types of activism or causes. Therefore, we might, similarly, expect our work not to be generalizable to other movements, or other forms of environmental activism. The factors leading to persistent activism in the purely peaceful anti-littering movement that we studied might be very different from the ones that encourage other forms of environmental activism even in Iran, but they will likely be applicable to relatively non-system challenging environmental activism in other non-Western countries, such as China and Russia (Owen 2020) that restrict challenging forms of environmentalism but via different mechanisms. For example, the politics of 'participatory authoritarianism' adopted in China and Russia (Owen 2020), encourages citizens to participate in local policy processes while confining, guiding, and regulating their civic participation. This reduces the possibility for autonomous groups to emerge and sustain themselves. The absence of such structural

opportunities in Iran encourages citizens take initiative in developing solutions to problems and in gathering together for collective goals. Notwithstanding our inability to generalize even across non-Western contexts, this study certainly adds to our understanding of persistent environmental activism in comparative context. We call for future studies of environmental activism in Iran to build on the key lesson we have learned: Western social movement theories and explanations for participation in environmental activism can provide useful sensitizing concepts to guide research in non-western contexts, but we must be attuned to the contextual (country level and movement level) factors that provide nuance across country cases and different forms of activism.

Notes

1. A long mountain range in Iran.
2. We adopted the term denaturalization from Foucault (1997) as 'to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things' (Foucault 1997).

ORCID

Saeed Keshavarzi (iD) http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3634-3406

References

Ackerman, F. 2013. *Why do we recycle?: Markets, values, and public policy*. Washington, D.C: Island Press.

Afrasiabi, K. L. 2018. The Environmental Movement in Iran: Perspectives from below and Above. *Middle East Journal* 57 (3):432–48.

Arafat, H. A., I. A. Al-Khatib, R. Daoud, and H. Shwahneh. 2007. Influence of socio-economic factors on street litter generation in the Middle East: Effects of education level, age, and type of residence. *Waste Management & Research* 25 (4):363–70. doi:10.1177/0734242X07076942.

Barkan, S. E., S. F. Cohn, and W. H. Whitaker. 1995. Beyond recruitment: Predictors of differential participation in a national antihunger organization. *Sociological Forum* 10 (1):113–34. doi:10.1007/BF02098566.

Bayat, A. 2005. Islamism and Social Movement Theory. *Third World Quarterly* 26 (6):891–908. doi:10.1080/01436590500089240.

Britt, L., and D. Heise. 2000. From shame to pride in identity politics. *Self, Identity, and Social Movements* 5:252–68.

Brown, G., and J. Pickerill. 2009. Space for emotion in the spaces of activism. *Activism and Emotional Sustainability* 2 (1):24–35. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2009.03.004.

Charmaz, K. 2003. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, eds. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, 249–91. Sage: London.

Corbin, J. M., and A. Strauss. 1990. Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology* 13 (1):3–21. doi:10.1007/BF00988593.

Cress, D. M., J. M. McPherson, and T. Rotolo. 1997. Competition and commitment in voluntary memberships: The paradox of persistence and participation. *Sociological Perspectives* 40 (1):61–79. doi:10.2307/1389493.

Creswell, J. W., and D. L. Miller. 2000. Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice* 39 (3):124–30. doi:10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2.

Crump, S. L., D. L. Nunes, and E. K. Crossman. 1977. The effects of litter on littering behavior in a forest environment. *Environment and Behavior* 9 (1):137–46. doi:10.1177/001391657791009.

della Porta, D. (Ed.). 2017. *Global diffusion of protest*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

della Porta, D., and M. Giugni. 2013. Emotions in movements. In *Meeting Democracy: Power and Deliberation in Global Justice Movements*, eds. D. della Porta and D. Rucht, 123–52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Diani, M. 2003. Social movements, contentious actions, and social networks: From metaphor to substance. In *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action,* ed. M. Diani, 1–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dietz, T., P. C. Stern, and G. A. Guagnano. 1998. Social structural and social psychological bases of environmental concern. *Environment and Behavior* 30 (4):450–71. doi:10.1177/001391659803000402.

Downton, J., and P. Wehr. 1998. Persistent pacifism: How activist commitment is developed and sustained. *Journal of Peace Research* 35 (5):531–50. doi:10.1177/0022343398035005001.

Doyle, T., and A. Simpson. 2006. Traversing more than speed bumps: Green politics under authoritarian regimes in Burma and Iran. *Environmental Politics* 15 (5):750–67. doi:10.1080/09644010600937199.

Driscoll, D. 2018. Beyond organizational ties: Foundations of persistent commitment in environmental activism. *Social Movement Studies* 17 (6):697–715. doi:10.1080/14742837.2018.1519412.

Dunlap, R. E., and A. K. Jorgenson. 2012. Environmental Problems. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*, ed. Ritzer, G. Chichester. UK/Malden: Wiley Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470670590.wbeog174

Earl, J., T. V. Maher, and T. Elliott. 2017. Youth, activism, and social movements. *Sociology Compass* 11 (4):e12465. doi:10.1111/soc4.12465.

Elliott, T., and J. Earl. 2018. Organizing the next generation: Youth engagement with activism inside and outside of organizations. *Social Media + Society* 4 (1):205630511775072. doi:10.1177/2056305117750722.

Fadaee, S. 2011. Environmental movements in Iran. *Social Change* 41 (1):79–96. doi:10.1177/004908571104100104.

Farrell, J. 2013. Environmental activism and moral schemas: Cultural components of differential participation. *Environment and Behavior* 45 (3):399–423. doi:10.1177/0013916511422445.

Fassinger, R. E. 2005. Paradigms, praxis, problems, and promise: Grounded theory in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 52 (2):156–66. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.156.

Finkel, S., and R. James. 1986. Relative deprivation and related theories of civil violence: A critical review. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 9:47–69.

Firuzjaeyan, A. A., and F. Gholamrezazadeh. 2015. Pathological analysis of citizens' environmental behavior, emphasizing on littering among tourists. *Journal of Sociology of Social Institutions* 2 (6):129–51.

Folger, R. 1986. A referent cognitions theory of relative deprivation. In *Relative deprivation and social comparison: The Ontario symposium*, eds. J. M. Olson, C. P. Herman, and M. P. Zanna, 33–5. New York: Psychology Press.

Foucault, M. 1997. Polemics, politics and problematization: An interview. In *Essential works of Foucault*, ed. P. Rabinow. New York: New Press.

Fung, C. Y., and E. A. Adams. 2017. What motivates student environmental activists on college campuses? An in-depth qualitative study. *Social Sciences* 6 (4):134. doi:10.3390/socsci6040134.

Giugni, M., and M. T. Grasso. 2016. How civil society actors responded to the economic crisis: The Interaction of material deprivation and perceptions of political opportunity structures. *Politics & Policy* 44 (3):447–72. doi:10.1111/polp.12157.

Goodwin, J., and S. Pfaff. 2001. Emotion work in high-risk social movements: Managing fear in the US and East German civil rights movements. In *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*, eds., J. Goodwin, J.M. Jasper, and F. Polletta, 282–302. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gould, D. B. 2012. Political despair. In *Politics and the emotions: The affective turn in contemporary political studies*, eds. P. Hoggett and S. Thompson, 95–111. London / New York: Continuum.

Gurr, T. R. 1970. *Why men rebel. In why men rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hall, S., and P. Du Gay. 1996. *Questions of cultural identity*. London: SAGE Publications.

Hirsch, E. L. 1990. Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement. *American Sociological Review* 55 (2):243. doi:10.2307/2095630.

Hoggett, P., and R. Randall. 2016. Sustainable activism: Managing hope and despair in social movements. In *Open Democracy*. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/sustain-able-activism-managing-hope-and-despair-in-socia/.

Holton, J. A. 2010. The coding process and its challenges. In *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, eds., A. Bryant, and K. Charmaz, 265–89. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hoominfar, E. 2021. Social movements in Iran: How well does the dominant narrative work? *Critical Sociology* 47 (7–8):1313–29. doi:10.1177/0896920520976792.

Hunt, S. A., and R. D. Benford. 2004. *Collective identity, solidarity, and commitment*. In The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, eds., D.A. Snow, S.A. Soule, and H. Kriesi, 433-57. London: Blackwell.

Ilna, 2020. تجمع کشاورزان شرق اصفهان/ حق آب ما کو؟ [Gathering of Farmers in East Isfahan / Where Is Our Water Right?]. Available at: https://www.ilna.ir/fa/tiny/news-993275

Irna, 2015. اعتراض به سگ کشی در شیراز ، تجمع مقابل محیط زیست و حوا شی آن [Protest Against Dog Killing in Shiraz, Gathering in Front of the Environment Organization]. Available at: www.irna.ir/news/81573828/

Jasper, J. M. 2011. Emotions and social movements: Twenty years of theory and research. *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (1):285–303. doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015.

Jenkins, J. C., and C. Perrow. 1977. Insurgency of the powerless: Farm worker movements (1946–1972). *American Sociological Review* 42 (2):249. doi:10.2307/2094604.

Kanter, R. M. 1968. Commitment and social organization: A study of commitment mechanisms in Utopian communities. *American Sociological Review* 33 (4):499. doi:10.2307/2092438.

Kitts, J. 2000. Mobilizing in black boxes: Social networks and participation in social movement organizations. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 5 (2):241–57. doi:10.17813/maiq.5.2.5408016w34215787.

Klandermans, B., M. Roefs, and J. Olivier. 2001. Grievance formation in a country in transition: South Africa, 1994–1998. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 64 (1):41–54. doi:10.2307/3090149.

Klandermans, B., J. van der Toorn, and J. van Stekelenburg. 2008. Embeddedness and identity: How immigrants turn grievances into action. *American Sociological Review* 73 (6):992–1012. doi:10.1177/000312240807300606.

Klandermans, B., and J. van Stekelenburg. 2013. Social movements and the dynamics of collective action. In *Oxford handbook of political psychology*, eds. L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, and J. S. Levy, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Klandermans, B., J. Van Stekelenburg, M. L. Damen, D. Van Troost, and A. Van Leeuwen. 2014. Mobilization without organization: The case of unaffiliated demonstrators. *European Sociological Review* 30 (6):702–16. doi:10.1093/esr/jcu068.

Koger, S. M. 2010. *The psychology of environmental problems: Psychology for sustainability*, 3rd ed. New York: Psychology Press.

Kurer, T., S. Häusermann, B. Wüest, and M. Enggist. 2019. Economic grievances and political protest. *European Journal of Political Research* 58 (3):866–92. doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12318.

Lind, E., and T. Tyler. 1988. *Critical issues in social justice. The social psychology of procedural justice*. New York, NY, US: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC.

Mansouri Daneshvar, M. R., M. Ebrahimi, and H. Nejadsoleymani. 2019. An overview of climate change in Iran: Facts and statistics. *Environmental Systems Research* 8 (1):7. doi:10.1186/s40068-019-0135-3.

Marquart-Pyatt, S. T. 2012. Explaining environmental activism across countries. *Society & Natural Resources* 25 (7):683–99. doi:10.1080/08941920.2011.625073.

Mashreghnews. 2019. *How much waste is produced daily in Iran?* mshrgh.ir/947927. https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/947927/%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%DA%86%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%

B1-%D8%B2%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF

McAdam, D. 1982. *Political process and the development of the Black insurgency, 1930–1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McFarlane, B. L., and P. C. Boxall. 2003. The role of social psychological and social structural variables in environmental activism: An example of the forest sector. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 23 (1):79–87. doi:10.1016/S0272-4944(02)00080-4.

Meyer, D. S., and N. Whittier. 1994. Social movement spillover. *Social Problems* 41 (2):277–98. doi:10.2307/3096934.

Moghadam, V., and E. Gheytanchi. 2010. Political opportunities and strategic choices: Comparing feminist campaigns in Morocco and Iran. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 15 (3):267–88. doi:10.17813/maiq.15.3.n248564371645v14.

Muñoz-Cadena, C. E., P. Lina-Manjarrez, I. Estrada-Izquierdo, and E. Ramón-Gallegos. 2012. An approach to litter generation and littering practices in a Mexico City neighborhood. *Sustainability* 4 (8):1733–54. doi:10.3390/su4081733.

Nairn, K. 2019. Learning from young people engaged in climate activism: The potential of collectivizing despair and hope. *Young* 27 (5):435–50. doi:10.1177/1103308818817603.

Nepstad, S. E. 2004. Persistent resistance: Commitment and community in the plowshares movement. *Social Problems* 51 (1):43–60. doi:10.1525/sp.2004.51.1.43.

Opp, K.-D. 1988. Grievances and participation in social movements. *American Sociological Review* 53 (6):853–64. doi:10.2307/2095895.

Owen, C. 2020. Participatory authoritarianism: From bureaucratic transformation to civic participation in Russia and China. *Review of International Studies* 46 (4):415–34. doi:10.1017/S0260210520000248.

Passy, F., and M. Giugni. 2000. Life-spheres, networks, and sustained participation in social movements: A phenomenological approach to political commitment. *Sociological Forum* 15 (1):117–44. doi:10.1023/A:1007550321469.

Patton, M. Q. 2005. Qualitative research. In *Encyclopedia of statistics in behavioral science*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Polletta, F., and J. M. Jasper. 2001. Collective identity and social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (1):283–305. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.283.

Rodgers, K. 2010. Anger is why we're all here': Mobilizing and managing emotions in a professional activist organization. *Social Movement Studies* 9 (3):273–91. doi:10.1080/14742837.2010.493660.

Satterfield, T. 2007. *Anatomy of a conflict: Identity, knowledge, and emotion in old-growth forests*. Michigan: Michigan State University.

Saunders, C., M. Grasso, C. Olcese, E. Rainsford, and C. Rootes. 2012. Explaining differential protest participation: Novices, returners, repeaters, and stalwarts. *Mobilization* 17 (3):263–80. doi:10.17813/maiq.17.3.bqm553573058t478.

Saunders, C. 2008. Double-edged swords? Collective identity and solidarity in the environment movement. *The British Journal of Sociology* 59 (2):227–53. doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2008.00191.x.

Saunders, C. 2014. Anti-politics in action? Measurement dilemmas in the study of unconventional political participation. *Political Research Quarterly* 67 (3):574–88. doi:10.1177/1065912914530513.

Scheff, T., and S. Retzinger. 1991. *Violence and emotions*. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, L991.

Schultz, P. W., R. J. Bator, L. B. Large, C. M. Bruni, and J. J. Tabanico. 2011. Littering in context: Personal and environmental predictors of littering behavior. *Environment and Behavior* 45 (1):35–59. doi:10.1177/0013916511412179.

Schussman, A., and S. A. Soule. 2005. Process and protest: Accounting for individual protest participation. *Social Forces* 84 (2):1083–108. doi:10.1353/sof.2006.0034.

Smith, H. J., T. F. Pettigrew, G. M. Pippin, and S. Bialosiewicz. 2012. Relative deprivation: A theoretical and meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 16 (3):203–32. doi: 10.1177/1088868311430825.

Steg, L., and C. Vlek. 2009. Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour: An integrative review and research agenda. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29 (3):309–17. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.10.004.

Tabnak. 2021. *Protest against dog killing in Tabriz.* tabnak.ir/004PgM. www.tabnak.ir/004PgM

Tarrow, S. 1996. States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements. In *Comparative perspectives on social movements*, 41–61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. 2012. Rooted cosmopolitans and transnational activists. In *Strangers at the Gates*: Movements and States in Contentious Politics, ed., S. Tarrow, 181–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tufford, L., and P. Newman. 2012. Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work* 11 (1):80–96. doi:10.1177/1473325010368316.

Turner, B. S. 1989. From orientalism to global sociology. *Sociology* 23 (4):629–38. doi:10.1177/0038038589023004007.

Turner, J. C. 1981. Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group. *Cahiers De Psychologie Cognitive*[Current Psychology of Cognition] 1 (2):93–118.

van Stekelenburg, J., and B. Klandermans. 2017. Individuals in movements: A social psychology of contention. In *Handbook of Social Movements Across Disciplines*, eds., C. Roggeband, and B. Klandermans, 103–39. London: Springer.

Vaske, J. J., and M. P. Donnelly. 1999. A value-attitude-behavior model predicting wildland preservation voting intentions. *Society & Natural Resources* 12 (6):523–37.

Whittier, N. 2013. Spillover, social movement. In *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements*. Chichester, UK/ Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Wiktorowicz, Q. 2004. *Islamic activism: A social movement theory approach*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Xie, L. 2009. *Environmental activism in China*. London: Routledge.