

The citizen, the state and protests in the Netherlands and France during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Ethical approval reference: 210477

June 30th, 2021

Abstract

Since Covid-19 is officially labeled as a global pandemic, countries have been demonstrating that the virus could and especially should be suppressed and controlled. Countries such as France opted for a strict lockdown where citizens were only allowed to leave their home for grocery shopping or essential work. On the other hand, the Netherlands had their so called “intelligent lockdown” where society was kept very open and only large assemblies were forbidden in combination with social distancing. This study proposes the idea that the governmental pandemic policy strategy and the relationship between the citizen state are interactive. Specifically, the expectation is tested whether a lower rated citizen-state relationship in a country leads to a higher willingness to protest against restrictive Covid-19 measures. To test this hypothesis the differences between the Netherlands and France and the overall effect of lower citizen-state relationship on the willingness to protest against Covid-19 related matter, an online survey was distributed among Dutch and French citizens. Respondents were asked to respond to questions indicating their trust and opinion towards governmental aspects and whether they have participated in or would consider to participate in certain types of protest activities. Comparisons between the Dutch and French citizen-state relationship and protest willingness were analysed using a two-sample t-test. A possible causal relationship was tested via regression analysis. The results showed a significant difference between the Netherlands and France in terms of these variables. Also a higher citizen-state relationship has a negative effect on protest willingness. However, the it is found that this effect is only able to explain a small part of the Covid-19 related protest motivations.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The continuation of government imposed Covid-19 measures justify a closer look at the Dutch Covid-19 related protests (NCTV,2021). However, also outside of the Netherlands, one can find recent protest movements against the corona measures and/or against government which are often fueled by anti-government sentiments and dissatisfaction with policy pursued (NCTV,2021). Since social discontent implies an overall negative perception of the state of society as a whole, it could be stated that the Covid-19 pandemic is not a mere health problem with huge consequences, but also a matter of social order (Terpstra et al.,2021). The Covid-19 outbreak gave any longstanding societal discontent the chance to further manifest and harden itself (NCTV,2021).

From a Public Administration perspective, it is interesting to note that state response and protest movements are interactive and could eventually also lead to policy shifts influencing democratic responsiveness (Powell,2004). Especially at the beginning of the outbreak in Europe, the Dutch state put a lot of confidence in her citizens by opting for a so called “intelligent lockdown” in which most activities were still possible (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken,2020). This was combined with a complementing pragmatic policing style with emphasis on voluntary compliance and sanctions were only applied when alternatives would not seem to be effective (Terpstra et al.,2021). In contrast with the Dutch state, French president Macron chose to immediately declare the state of emergency in March 2020 which was accompanied by a strict national lockdown (Nu.nl,2020). Residents were not allowed to get out of their homes without valid paperwork and strict control led to many issued fines (Nu.nl,2020). The differences in controlling the Covid-19 pandemic between the two countries is reflected in the frames projected by their political leaders. This frame is related to the relationship between the state and its citizens and policing (Terpstra et al.2021). While France is known for its state-oriented and repressive conception of the role of the public police, the Dutch approach is known for its emphasis on proximity, communication and shared responsibilities (de Maillard and Skogan, 2021 as cited in Terpstra et al.2021). As the Dutch and French approach towards the crisis quite differ from each other, it is therefore interesting to research the interaction between citizen-state relationship and protest.

1.2 Objective and research question

The objective of this bachelor thesis is to gain insight in the differences between the Dutch and French Covid-19 situation concerning the governmental framing and citizen response to the crisis. Besides, there is the general aim is to check whether differences in the state-citizen will lead to a greater or smaller willingness to participate in certain types of protests. The leading question for this thesis is therefore formulated as following: *To what extent could the differences in the Dutch and French Covid-19 protest movements be explained by the perceived citizen-state relationship?*

The following sub questions will be discussed:

- What are the main types and functions of pandemic related protests identified in the literature?
- Which type of frame did the Dutch and French government use to describe the necessity for restrictive measures?
- To what extent could the differences in citizen-state relationship and willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities in the Netherlands and France be seen as significantly different?
- What is the strength of possible causal relationship between the rated citizen-state relationship and the willingness to protest against Covid-19 restrictions?

1.3 Thesis structure

In this bachelor thesis, Covid-19 related protest movements are studied with regard to the general citizens his or her willingness to participate. More specifically, we tend to provide evidence that the willingness to participate in such covid-19 related protest movement is related to the relationship between the state and its citizenry. Therefore, the initial focus is on the concept of protest itself and its theoretical role in the relationship and interaction between the state and citizens. Secondly, the theoretical framework provides an overview of the specific types of protest which are to be identified in the time of the pandemic up till June 2021. After the more general theory about the main concept of protests, focus will shift towards the main independent variable, the citizen-state relationship. Central to the theory section and the rest of this research are the differences between the Netherlands and France in terms of the frame used by the state which represents the expected citizen-state relationship

based on the assumption that the citizen-state relationship is interactive. On the basis of the theoretical insights, chapter three presents the formulated hypothesis stating the expectations concerning the upcoming data analysis. Beforehand, the more precise methodology and operationalisation sections in chapter four will explain the methods used to test the formulated hypotheses and takes into account the validity and reliability concerning this research. Before going into the actual analysis by testing the hypothesis, chapter five will give some additional descriptive information about the demographic composition of the sample and outstanding results in the answers on the questioned items. The actual analysis will be executed in the data analysis chapter, chapter six which insights are to be key to conclude this thesis by answering the main question. The research will be concluded with the conclusion, giving an overview of the research and its results while also taking into account the limitation it has.

2. Conceptual framework / Theory

2.1 The concept of protest

The concept of protest is defined as “non-routinized action in which indirect channels of influence are opened through the activity of a series of collective actors” (Della Porta & Diani,2006, p.191). Formulated more concretely, protests are contesting activities in which symbols, practices and conversation are deployed to pursue or prevent particular changes in the in institutionalized power relations (Taylor and van Dyke as cited in Della Porta & Diani,2006). The existence of social movements could therefore be considered to be in line with the principles of a democratic representative democracy where governmental decisions are challenged by the political opposition or by its citizenry (Della Porta & Diani,2006).

Protest could therefore been seen as an indicator for social problems which are not adequately registered or dealt with by the government according to the citizenry (Rucht et al.,1999 as cited by Hanna et al.,2016). Such social problems or grievances, which mobilize a social movement, inevitably come with consideration of interests, principles, and objectives. All of these have immediate implications for protest activity and the strategies, also called action repertoires, used.

To make certain standpoints heard by society and/or the political representatives, protest movements often rely on the use mass media and social media as their channels (Lipsky, 1968 as cited by Hanna et al, 2016). This relationship is, however, bidirectional. Matters such as the public opinion mass media and the internet also feed back on the protest events and the strategies used by protesters. Hanna et al. (2016) therefore define social protest as: “strategic forms of action designed to influence decision making, either directly or by influencing public opinion via the use of the media and the internet” (p.219). This relationship between social protest and decision-making is also visualized in figure 1.

According to Tilly (2004), social movements are characterized by worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment also called WUNC (as cited by Hanna et al.,2016). The general governmental responses to slow down the Covid-19 pandemic, entailing multiple social distancing measures, seems therefore to work against this principle of protests (Gerbaudo,2020). Instead of the government taking the protestors opinion seriously and addressing the issues, governments tend to adopt defensive behaviour which in turn tends to escalate into conflicts (Hanna et al.,2016). The way in which governments try to justify their

action and actual enforcement of the rules does however vary from country to country (Terpstra et al.,2021).

Although there is a vast variety of ways in which social protest could take place, in the end, all forms serve (a part of) the same intertwined functions (Hanna et al.,2020), namely:

1. Informing, to raise awareness about ‘the cause’ or the situation that is the subject of protest
2. Fundraising, is necessary to financially support the campaign.
3. The creation of publicity, to obtain media attention by performing actions that usually include a performance component.
4. Mobilization, to gather to participants for a specific protest event or campaign.
5. Building solidarity, to instill a sense of worth and solidarity among protestors and toward the protest cause in general.
6. Creating political pressure, in order to exert pressure on authorities or decision-makers in relation to a specific action or decision.
7. Direct action taking, to cause immediate disruption to a specific part of within the society.

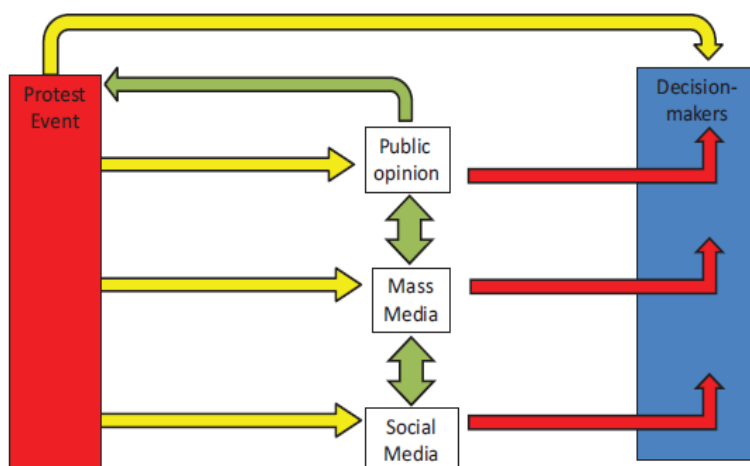


Figure 1: The relationship between protest movements and decision-makers and its mechanisms (Hanna et al.,2016,p.219).

2.2 Types of pandemic protests

The various types of social protest are often represented in the social movement literature as ‘repertoires of contention’ (Tilly, 1995, 2004; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Tilly (1986) describes these repertoires as specific action such as petitioning, striking or lobbying, carried out by actors over a specific period of time (as cited in van Stekelenburg &

Klandermans,2009). The choice of action is however dependent upon the political system, the degree of repression and cultural traditions (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans,2009).

Therefore, it could be stated that repertoires of contention are shaped by the structural variables and the cultural context in from which the social movement originates (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans,2009).

Especially during this pandemic, protest movements should take into account the limitation of resources and pandemic related regulation (Kowalewski,2020). Even though the current technological developments allows us to gather attention of a great amount of people, it is the offline activism which is highlighted by the mass media and thereby attracts most attention of the public and politics. Especially the physical types of protest have become a subject of debate within society as those protest go straight against the imposed health measures (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans,2009). Although classic street protest may not be the most appreciated option to voice ones standpoint nowadays, protest movements could still make their point by other means such as symbolic action or other modifications of the classic street protest. In countries where the organisation of demonstrations by itself is not prohibited, social movements could opt for a socially distant type of demonstration. Participants in socially distant type of protest keep the 1,5 meter distance from each other and/or wear masks. Social movements are in this way still able to interact with the public on the streets making their point. Besides, the protesters deliver a 'we can' message implicating that a pandemic can not stop social movement (Kowalewski,2020). Socially distant protest can also take the form of symbolic communication (Kowalewski,2020). Socially distant demonstrations are therefore characterized by a clear display of public duty from the perspective of action repertoires (Gerbaudo,2020). They also sent out a message of discipline, self-control, and loyalty to the common good by actively trying to avoid spreading of the virus through their actions (Gerbaudo,2020).

While socially distanced protests try to cope with circumstances of the pandemic lockdown, anti-lockdown demonstrations fundamentally call for a return to pre-pandemic normality (Gerbaudo,2020). Protesters' strategies are about breaking the lockdown rules simply by assembling in public space and not wearing mask equipment as a form of provocation (Gerbaudo,2020). This type of disobedience becomes their way of criticizing the governments crisis management, as well as its economic implications (Gerbaudo,2020). Ironically, by ignoring the potential danger of the virus and breaking the principle of no harm, one shows

commitment by risking a greater infection rate and individual penalties (Della Porta & Diani, 2009 as cited in Kowalewski,2020).

At last, Gerbaudo (2020) differentiates pandemic riots from regular anti-lockdown protest. Where socially distanced protests seek to express grievances through a language of normalcy and self-control and the anti-lockdown protests demand a return to normalcy through ignoring basic health norms, pandemic riots use the current crisis to expose the myths of pre-pandemic normality and long-standing conflicts. This type of protest is highly confrontational, often involving destruction of property and police clashes. As a result, pandemic riots are more about problems that aren't specifically linked to the pandemic. However, the pandemic's existence as a period with increased security measures and increasing economic deprivation, has contributed to making issues as cultural prejudice feel more striking and morally reprehensible.

In the end, the social movement theory could be used as a framework to identify the different types of protests concerning the pandemic, resulting in a typology of socially distanced protests, anti-lockdown protest and pandemic riots (Gerbaudo,2020). Gerbaudo (2020) describes a socially distanced protest as protest forms where the social distancing measures are still being adhered. Often times these protest are held to show solidarity toward healthcare workers, but they can also evolve from pre-existing grievances. Anti-lockdown protest, in contrast, reject the newly established norms such as keeping distance and often demand for the “old normal” (Gerbaudo,2020). Participants of these type of protest think of the lockdowns as authoritarian attempt which is a grievance by itself. Pandemic riots could be seen as moments of revelation of longstanding injustices and intensification of already existing grievances. Think about racial inequality and discrimination or poverty. Rioters often seek police confrontations and tend to barricade important places. These types of pandemic protests and Dutch and French examples are summarized in Appendix A.

2.3 Citizen-state relationship

The concept of state-citizen relationship is defined by the Department for International Development (2010) as “interactions between state institutions and societal groups to negotiate how public authority is exercised and how it can be influenced by people” (p.15) This relationship focusses on the mutual rights and obligations of state and society and includes institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization

(DFID,2010). This, in turn, facilitates the development of protest movements in some instances (Kitschelt 1986 as cited in Quaranta,2015). Therefore, the county specific context is determining the opportunity structure for citizens to engage in contentious politics (Tarrow 1994; Kriesi & Westholm 2007 as cited in Quaranta,2015). A state should be open enough towards any citizens' demands as citizens have the need to foresee opportunities to have their interests accommodated (Quaranta,2015). On the other hand, citizens are also likelier to accept the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force and comply with laws and regulations when there is the trust that the states acts in the collective interest (DFID,2010).

As a consequence, the level of protest can be influenced by the degree of decentralization (Quaranta,2015). Decentralization decreases the number of people impacted by government decisions while it increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes for citizens (Quaranta,2015). Furthermore, state decentralization offers more points of entry to the political system as it raises the number of state (Kriesi et al. 1995), which is indirectly eases up the mobilization of affecting the decision-making process (Morales 2009; Vráblíková 2014 as cited in Quaranta,2015). According to van Oenen (2021), also the form of protest is affected by a horizontal or vertical (hierarchical) perception of the state. Where in a vertical perception of authority, opposition expresses itself by refusal to comply with government regulation, a horizontal perception could lead to fundamental changes in in orientation towards democracy. In this view, the main aim is rather to question and weaken the power of democratic government to make sure government can not breach to much of the individual's interest (van Oenen,2021).

2.3.1 The Netherlands

In comparison with other Western countries, the citizen satisfaction with their government is high (Bovens & Wille,2006). On the international comparisons about the rule of law and good public administration, the Netherlands is also in the top (Raad Openbaar Bestuur [ROB], 2020). However, also in the Netherlands, a 'good' citizen-state relationship is not self evident. In the Dutch polder model, employers, workers, and the government negotiate socioeconomic policy and job terms with the aim of achieving content agreements and coordinating the policy among themselves (Keune, 2016). According to the ROB (2020), the Dutch have always been good in their poldering which is characterized by its civil society and institutions taking care of long time stability concerning the citizen's social rights. The Dutch institutions

thereby represent the values that have been formed through trial and error throughout Dutch history (ROB,2020).

In line with the work of Quaranta (2015), a less open/accessible state might decrease the willingness for citizens to accept regulation or the ability to make compromises with the state while the high centralization in the country also causes lesser entry points. The Dutch however still have the reputation to be sober (Versteeg,2020). When angry, the Dutch generally express their anger in alternative ways than protest as protest forms as strikes are often not appreciated by the overall Dutch citizenry (Versteeg,2020)

However, the process legitimacy of the polder model is under pressure (Keune,2016). Research of the Nationale ombudsman (2019) showed that even though Dutch citizens still rated their government with a pass, citizens seem to notice that the proximity of citizen and state is increasing. Keune (2016) claims that although the call for more transparency and thus more accountability from elite to grassroots seems to be slowly but surely being heard, it is still unclear whether this will be at the expense of the efficiency and capacity to arrive at compromises, and whether it will lead to more conflict. According to Oenen (2021), a horizontal governmental approach could not fully avoid resistance as distrust could lead to citizens could still questioning the governmental authority they have to deal with which does not always need to fully comply with the citizenry's interests.

2.3.2 France

France has a long history of contention for over the last four centuries, mainly as a response to the development of a national, centralised state accompanied by the rise of capitalism (Tilly,1986 as cited in Holt,2012). After the French revolution in the 18th century, the French citizen learned that one could get out of oppression through resistance, a lesson that was passed onto the future French generations (Versteeg,2020).

Tilly (1986) explains that France went through a dramatic transformation in their "repertoire of popular collective action" around the middle of the nineteenth century, from forms of popular contention that were insular and patronised towards collective action that was more national and autonomous (as cited in Holt,2012). Before this transformation, regular citizens tended to view themselves in relation to the powerful elites rather than as an autonomous collective group capable of acting independently (Tilly,1986 as cited in Holt,2012).

Furthermore, citizens often sought out influential patrons to lead and protect them (Tilly,1986 as cited in Holt,2012). After the 19th century shift, however, those in contention started to

confront national authorities directly (Tilly,1986 as cited in Holt,2012). The French's repertoire of contention shifted from local food riots and tax revolts towards demonstrations, marches and electoral rallies.

Nowadays, the view that the relationship between the state and citizens is strictly hierarchical still prevails (Terpstra et al.,2021). Although the French state has gone through multiple regime changes, the state seems to stay both a breeding ground for elites and for increasing civil force (Rouban,2009). In addition, the French populist discourse was prosperous in the country with the general rise of the Extreme Right and the discovery of some past corrupt activities by members of both public and private sector elites (Rouban,2009). This would explain the considerable amount of distrust in citizens by the state and contention of citizens against the state in France (Terpstra et al.,2021). All in all, one could summarize the French sentiment as the following: "To be a real French citizen, you have to resist injustice and oppression. Whatever it is." (Versteeg,2020).

2.4 Frame usage by political leaders

A frame, as a concept used in social movement studies, is defined as "schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large" (Goffman,1974,p.21 as cited in Benford & Snow, 2000). Frames could contain certain symbolic, language or anecdotes and their rhetoric power may be able to give direction towards decisions and behaviour (Terpstra et al,2021). These frames guide people with the interpretation of events or incidents and serve to coordinate and direct action by simplifying and condensing aspects of the world we live in with the intention to mobilize potential adherents (Snow & Benford 1988 as cited in Benford & Snow, 2000). Collective action frames are therefore best defined as action-oriented collections of values and meanings that motivate and legitimize actions and campaigns (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Frames let people focus on specific aspects of understanding a certain situation while neglecting other types of understanding (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Corstange & York, 2018; Kinder, 1998; Zaller, 1992 as cited by Benziman,2020). Thereby, frames could be very convincing, hard to refute and are shaping the perception of events (Benziman,2020; Terpstra et al.,2021). In major events, like this pandemic, framing therefore plays a very important role in justifying the reasons for particular behaviour and rule enforcement (Brubaker & Laitin,

1998; Fearon & Laitin, 2000) as the (conflict) frame clarifies for the public how things should be perceived (Schattschneider, 1960 as cited by Benziman,2020). Especially during this crisis, political leaders therefore write their speeches in accord with the frame that fit their constituencies (Benziman,2020). These speeches are in turn important because most citizens do not rally in direct response to the crisis, but likelier to the way the political leader handles and presents the events (Baker & Oneal, 2001 as cited by Benziman,2020).

When leaders frame Covid-19 as a battle, citizens learn to accept the idea that they have to get through the tough times and willingness to sacrifice some self-comfort freedoms are for the collective good (Milla, Putra, & Umam, 2019; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998 as cited by Benziman,2020). Besides, citizens also show more willingness to cooperate with governmental institutions as they emphasize this is a unique (LaFree & Adamczyk, 2017 as cited by Benziman,2020).

The frame usage and citizen-state relationship are also related to the policing style within a state. Policing could namely be seen as the power of the government to enforce the social and political order (Bayley, 1985 as cited in Sheptycki,2020). As rule breaking and protests in the pandemic could be considered to be existential threats in the governments fight against this pandemic, a government in either a style including more negotiation or the use of force (Sheptycki,2020). The way in which the police deploys their legal tools to enforce the new implemented social order is thereby dependent on the cultural understandings of the police as part of the citizen-state relationship in a particular country (Sheptycki,2020).

In general, more neo-liberalist countries are worse in the effective service provision paired with low policing, meaning they tend to use force more quickly. Meanwhile, in more social democratic countries, governments seem to be more prosperous in policing for the general good which comes more gentle forms of interventions (Sheptycki,2020).

2.4.1 The “Samen tegen corona” frame

When living in the Netherlands during the pandemic, one is unable to avoid the slogan; “Alleen samen krijgen we Corona onder controle” The phrase is used in tv-commercials, the background of the press conferences and even on signs alongside the road.

Since the beginning of the outbreak in Europe, prime minister Rutte put a lot of emphasis on the voluntary compliance of people towards the basic rules such as keeping the 1,5 meter distance or no shaking hands. In the past press conferences Rutte and minister of national health de Jonge really tried to explain the Dutch citizenry which scenario's could unfold in the future when citizens did or did not comply with the basic and additional regulations enforced by the state, attempting to raise people's own awareness of the danger the virus brings along (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2020; Terpstra et al.,2021). It is important to note that sanctions and more intrusive rules are really used as the last resort by the Dutch state in order to decrease the amount of new infections.

The greatest example of the Dutch framing style can be seen in the speeches Prime Minister Rutte gave in both March and December, both at moments when the state wanted to implement heavy limitations of our freedom of behaviour. These speeches alone are already really unusual in the Netherlands, in contrast to countries like the United States or France, which is already the first indicator that the message proclaimed should be taken seriously (NOS,2020b). All three times such a special speech was held by the then Prime Minister den Uyl and now by current Prime Minister Rutte, the Prime Minister wanted to inform the citizenry about the urgency of the situation and ask the citizenry to put certain aspects of life on hold (NOS,2020b). Symbolism within 'het torentje' such as the 'Remaking one nation' book and a painting of our constitutional writer Thorbecke, compliment the overall frame that we have to work together to get our 'usual' freedom and rights back. This again strengthens the message sent towards the citizenry to make them comply to the lockdown measures (NOS,2020b ;Terpstra et al,2021). Thus, nothing in this speech was actually coincidental, but was precisely thought out to pass on a message fitting the overall Dutch frame in which communication is considered to be key (NOS,2020b).

In turn, the Netherlands also has a more pragmatic style of policing, involving mostly reason and negotiation management (Della Porta and Reiter, 1998; Della Porta et al., 2006 as cited in Terpstra et al.,2021).

2.4.2 The “Nous sommes en guerre!” frame

“Nous sommes en guerre”, the expression French president Macron used six times in his speech in March 2020 while announcing a strict national lockdown (Lemarié & Pietralunga,2020). It was already the second speech in five days (Lemarié & Pietralunga,2020). This time, Macron announced a regime of at least fifteen days

where French citizens are fully forbidden to leave their homes with the exception for grocery shopping and essential workers. Important to note is that every type of violation is immediately fined with a penalty up till 135 euros (Lemarié & Pietralunga,2020).

The warlike vocabulary in the speech and strict enforcement were chosen on purpose, inspired by the French politician Clemenceau who was haunted by fear for Germany intending war just before the start of WWI (Monnerville,2021). Clemenceau did not want to be unprepared for something one should be fearful of and therefore, measures needed to be taken in time. Macron also tried to raise the sense of urgency in the French citizenry by emphasizing that even though there is no physical invading army to see, the enemy is there, invisible elusive, and progressing (Le Monde,2020).

Even though the French president is trying to create an understanding amongst the citizenry by presenting the seriousness of some of the French regions, the strict national lockdown relied on the strict enforcement of the rules instead of own responsibility. Anyone leaving home must fill out an official form stating why they are going outside (Mazoue,2021). Anyone who did not have that form was fined immediately by one of the circa 100,000 deployed police officers slogan (Mazoue,2021). "Stay home," was the underlying lockdown slogan by the government (Mazoue,2021).

The though policy enforcement in turn reflects a state-oriented and repressive conception of public policing where police is mainly in charge of citizen control and maintaining social order (de Maillard and Skogan, 2021 as cited in Terpstra et al.,2021).

3. Hypotheses

The research question that rises from the conceptual framework is:

RQ: To what extent could the differences in the Dutch and French Covid-19 protest movements be explained by the perceived citizen-state relationship?

The premise that frame plays an important role in the justification of Covid-19 rule enforcement and the public perception of these measures is the common thread within this research (Benziman,2020). These frames reflect how the state thinks it could best steer its citizenry to deal with the pandemic and thereby in turn reflects the citizen-state relationship (Terpstra et al.,2021). In France, people generally still have the perception that that the relationship between the state and citizens is strictly hierarchical and more distant (Terpstra et al.,2021). The Netherlands, in contrast, frames this relationship as more equal where state and citizens should both take their responsibilities (Terpstra et al.,2021). Accordingly, one would expect that the citizen-state relationship would be rated higher in the Netherlands than in France by its citizenry (DFID,2010; Terpstra et al.,2021; Benziman,2020). This results in the first hypothesis:

H1: The rated citizen-state relationship in the Netherlands is (significantly) higher than in France.

The second hypothesis is based on the work of Quaranta,2015, Keune,2019 and Versteeg,2020. Versteeg (2020) concluded that in the Netherlands, instead of having a tradition of protest and contention, they tend to be cooperative. Angry Dutch citizens tend to express their dissatisfaction in less disruptive ways. France has a history of distrust between citizens and the state which results in a tradition of contention. Therefore, based on the countries history of governmental satisfaction and contention, one could expect that the willingness to protest against Covid-19 rule enforcement will be lower in the Netherlands than in France. This means that the second hypothesis will be formulated as follows:

H2: The willingness to protest against Covid-19 restrictions is (significantly) lower in the Netherlands than in France.

Then a third and final, hypothesis is formulated which concerns mainly concerns the general relationship between the two variables citizen-state relationship and the willingness participate in Covid-19 related protest activities. While it is expected that there will be a difference in the citizen-state relation and the willingness to protest in both the Netherlands and France, as stated in the first two hypotheses, these outcomes would only make sense when there is an actual causal relationship between the two factors. The third hypothesis therefore seeks to shed light on this. Hence, the third hypothesis is formulated as:

H3: Citizens with a higher rating of the citizen-state relationship will be less willing to participate in protest activities related to the Covid-19 measures.

4. Methodology & Data collection

In this study, mainly quantitative and qualitative research was conducted to answer the question of to what extent the Dutch and French Covid-19 protest movement differ and whether this could be explained by the differences in citizen-state relationship and its corresponding policy frame. For this purpose, a literature search was conducted and an online survey conducted among citizens of the Netherlands and France.

4.1 Data collection

For the literature research, multiple types of secondary data were collected and consulted. These forms of secondary data consisted out of scientific articles, news items and reports from (governmental) institutions and the outlooks of international questionnaires. The scientific articles were sought mainly via Google Scholar, Springer and Scopus which were accessible via the university library. The source questionnaires from the large international surveys were retrieved via the websites of the concerning survey.

As the Covid-19 pandemic is a relatively new phenomenon, most scientific articles and news items were published fairly recent in either 2020 or 2021. Especially the articles of Gerbaudo (2020) and Terpstra et al. (2021) served as a starting point of this research providing the basis of the comparison between the Netherlands and France in the Covid-19 protest context. However, it were the earlier published articles such as Della Porta and Diani (2006), van Stekelenburg & Klandermans (2009) and Hanna et al (2016) which were able to well establish the concept of protest by itself. On the basis of the articles from Holt (2012), Quaranta, 2015 and Keune (2016) it was possible to define the second most important concept of the study, namely the citizen-state relationship.

4.2 Survey Inclusion- and exclusion criteria

Even though the survey is fully anonymous, participant were asked to fill out their current country of residence, gender and age. This first question about country of residence was necessary as it allows to analyse the Dutch and French population separately and make a comparison while leaving out residents of other countries. By the use of Qualtrics survey programme, this first question would determine whether the participant is allowed to proceed

with the questionnaire. If the participant filled out that he or she was currently living in a different country than the Netherlands or France, this participant was led to an end of survey screen informing them that they were unfortunately not in the target group of this research.

The gender and age questions were included to be able to analyse the demographics of the respondents who filled out the survey. By analysing the demographics in terms of gender and age one could discuss whether the sample would be a fitting representation of the Dutch and French citizenry even though it is not possible to question the whole population. In the ideal situation, the survey is filled by approximately the same number of men and women and are the age groups all being represented.

4.3 Research design

The aim was to conduct a survey among citizens from the Netherlands and France measuring the two main variables citizen-state relationship and (willingness to) protest. On the one hand, the choice for quantitative research is the ability to generalize the outcome. The aim of the research is to draw a conclusion about to what extent one could explain between Dutch and French citizens. The target audience is too broad to keep interviews representing multiple groups in both states. The choice of collecting quantitative data is, on the other hand, because of the language barrier when collecting data from French citizens. Set questions could be translated with human language knowledge available and translation tools. It was assured that all questions and explanations were available in three languages; Dutch, French and English so that the survey would be accessible for Dutch and French speakers as well for citizens less familiar with the national language (e.g. international students). As the research concerns people living under the state jurisdiction of either the Netherlands or France, language should not form a barrier blocking non-Dutch or non-French speakers to fill out the survey when they are fulfilling the criteria of living in the country during the pandemic. In the end, the results are analysed using more universal language of statistics. The survey is distributed online as that offers a wide range of internet users both in the Netherlands and France and it allows to collect data avoiding any personal contact concerning the Covid-19 pandemic.

The survey link was distributed among a wide range of people among using personal networks, social media platforms and student initiated websites such as SurveySwap.

Participants starting the survey got an introductory text explaining for what purpose this survey is conducted, what the goal of the study is and that all data will be processed fully anonymously. By continuing the survey, participants agree that their data is saved and taken into the analysis anonymously. There was no time limit in which the participants needed to finish the survey, generally it should not have taken them more than five minutes to complete. In total, 222 people have opened the survey. Respondents which filled out that they were currently not living in the Netherlands or France were requested to close the survey. These responses were collected in the period from June 2nd till June 14th. From June 14th onwards, it was impossible for people to hand in new responses after that date. The English version of the survey is included as Appendix B at the end of the paper, 208 cases were included in the analysis from which 138 Dutch residents and 70 French residents.

The full survey consisted of thirteen questions from which eight were meant to measure the respondents rating of the citizen-state relationship. The last two questions, consisting both of six sub questions, were dedicated to the variable willingness to protest by showing respondents six forms of protest from which they had to indicate on a 4 point scale to what extent they would participate in this form of protest. Respondents had the choice between the following answers; Have done, Would consider doing, Would not consider doing, Would never do. The two protest related question were identical except for one detail. For the first question, participants needed to indicate their willingness to participate not related to the Covid-19 pandemic, while the second question, question 13 specifically asked respondent to answer with regard to the pandemic (Appendix B). Question 12, the question measuring the willingness to protest not related to the Covid-19 pandemic is however later used as a control variable in hypothesis 3.

4.4 Operationalisation of variables

As both main variables are measured within the created survey, it is important that both independent and dependent variable are carefully operationalised. As a source of inspiration, the questions of the European Social Survey (ESS,2018) and European Values Survey (EVS,2008) were analysed looking at their questions concerning the ‘Politics’ theme (ESS,2018) and the ‘Willingness to join in political action’s section of the EVS (2008).

4.4.1 Measuring the Citizen-State relationship

The citizen-state relationship is described as interactions between state institutions and societal groups which is about the public authority and citizens influence on it. In this research it is therefore assumed that the relation between the citizenry and state is interactive and that the concept of “state” is an amalgamation of several public bodies. Although, the relationship from the state towards the citizenry (state-citizen relationship) would be harder to measure in numbers, this part of the relationship has been discussed in the theory section by the means of the frames used by government as it indicates to what level of responsibility government leaves in the citizen’s hands during the pandemic.

The first part of the survey therefore mainly measures the opinion of the citizen towards the state questioning to what extent the citizen think they have the possibility to have such influence on public authority and how much trust they put in the democratic system and its bodies. Therefore, to measure the citizen-state relationship variable in the survey, questions from the core section B, politics including political interest and trust from the European Social Survey (2018) were taken over (p.7-9). The ESS (2018) explicitly asks respondents to indicate to what extent the citizen has their say in public policy and authority. These questions therefore come back in the survey as Q.4 and Q.5 (Appendix B). Next, the (overall) trust in politicians, police and policy are measured as in the ESS (2018). Apart from the ESS (2018), a question was added concerning the level of decentralisation. Question 10 asked whether the respondent thought the state is rather distant or close to the citizen based on the idea of Quaranta (2015) that a feeling of closer government gives more entry points for citizens to exert their influence.

4.4.2 Measuring the willingness to protest

The best strategy to measure protest, according to Marsh (1974), is to measure the intention to participate in petitions, demonstrations, or to damage property etc. (Van Deth 1986, 2014 as cited in Quaranta,2015). Posing a series of protest from items allows measuring the “protest potential”, which could be described as the extent to which an individual would join protest actions (Quaranta,2015,p.25). Quaranta (2015) pointed out that especially the European Values Study (2008) proves useful to measure the protest variable as its questions specifically allow respondents to express their intention to engage in certain types of protest, thus in line with Marsh (1974) best strategy of measuring protest activity.

The European Values survey differs in this way from European Social Survey (2018) which questions about (political) protest only asks whether or not the responded already has participated in specific actions (Quaranta, 2015). Given that the research is interested in the possible willingness of citizens to protest, it is important to give respondents the possibility to express their potential considerations about taking action. Therefore, to measure the protest variable via the survey, the 55th question of the 4th EVS wave is used as a model for the survey for this thesis (EVS, 2008, p.13-14). The final form of the survey questions are included as Q.12 and Q.13 in Appendix B.

4.5 Data analysis

Before the data could be analyzed, the survey results were processed in SPSS. When creating the survey in Qualtrics beforehand, all possible answers in a question were already assigned with a score. These are the scores which are being recorded and displayed within the SPSS data set. For example, all Dutch citizens have a score of one and all French citizens get a score of two. In order to confirm or reject the three hypothesis, multiple analysis are executed within the SPSS data collected through the survey.

The first two hypothesis is comparative in the sense that the answers between the Dutch and French respondents are being compared. This is, in the first hypothesis a comparison between the rated state-citizen relationship in the Netherlands and France. The second hypothesis entails this comparison between the two countries based on the willingness to participate in protest(s) variable.

As explained earlier in the operationalization section, both independent and dependent variables are measured via multiple Likert-like questions which are posed in the questionnaire. Therefore, to create one variable out of the multiple answers given by the respondents, one needs to combine these scores into the new variable in SPSS by taking the mean score of the items. It is highly debated whether ordinal Likert scaled responses can be calculated in the same way as interval data as distance between ordinal responses is not measurable. Some therefore say, it is not appropriate to take the mean score of Likert scale answers (Kostaulas,2013). However, by the use of computer technology, survey designers are able to assign scores to the answers, creating continuous measure scales that do provide interval responses as a Likert-type scale (Sullivan & Artino,2013). It is therefore common among researchers to create several Likert-type items, group them into a “survey scale”, and then calculate a total score or mean score for the scale items (Sullivan & Artino,2013). This is done especially when measuring less concrete concepts where a single survey item is unlikely to be capable of fully capturing the concept being assessed (Rickards, Magee, Artino,2012 as cited in Sullivan & Artino,2013). It is, however, recommended to use Cronbach alpha in these situations to show that the scale's components are properly intercorrelated and that the grouped elements accurately measure the underlying variable (Sullivan & Artino,2013). On the basis of this reasoning, this thesis took the approach to take the mean score of the multiple items used to create the one independent variable “citizen-state relationship” and the one dependent variable “willingness to protest”. Especially because these variables are too broad to measure with only one survey item, it is justified to combine the scores of the multiple items in attempt to find a appropriate assembled scale. To check the validity of this scale, the Cronbach alpha is used beforehand.

To be able to test the first two hypothesis, the mean scores of the Dutch and French citizen should be compared. As both groups are represented by more than 30 responses, one could assume that the sampling distributions are approaching normality as one could assume based on the Central Limit Theory.

The third hypothesis, in contrast, is initially not mainly concerned about the differences in data between the Dutch and French respondents. The research namely also seeks to test whether there is a causal relationship between the variables in question in general. This is relevant as when a causal relationship between the variables is found, this may support a potential explanation for any differences in the dependent variable between the Netherlands

and France as tested in hypothesis one and two. To test this potential relationship as formulated in the third hypothesis, the data of all respondents will be used for regression analysis.

Within the second hypothesis only the dependent variable “willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities is used to compare the Netherlands and France and also in the third hypothesis, this variable is central for the analysis together with the independent “citizen-state relationship variable. A test between these variables is not necessarily bad, however, not including any control variable in the study would mean that the results of would be less accurate. Danger is that the effect of the independent variable as a predictor in the potential causal relationship would be overestimated. To overcome this problem, another variable, namely “the willingness to protest in non Covid-19 related protest activities” is included in the regression analysis.

4.6 Validity and reliability

For the purpose of internal validity, the survey was drawn up on the basis of the literature and pre-existing surveys. This concerns literature that has been selected for relevance to the research question. Before distributing the survey to the greater public, close contacts have tested the survey in regard to the comprehensibility of the questions and completion time. Also, the survey was able to filter citizens living outside the Netherlands and France, which assures that only data from respondents within the target group is recorded anonymously.

In terms of external validity, it should be noted that in this study, respondents were able to decide for themselves whether they wanted to complete the online questionnaire. This means that one could not speak of a full random sample which in turn should be taken into account in the conclusion of the study in terms of generalizability. According to De Veaux, Velleman and Bock may lead to a voluntary response bias which invalidates the survey (2015). Also, in paragraph 5.1 the demographics of the respondents show that there is a general overrepresentation of people in the age group 18-25 which could be explained by the accessibility of this group on the (online) platforms used to spread this survey. On the other hand, it can be assumed that there are independent observations, because it is likely that each respondent completed the questionnaire without consulting other respondents about the answers.

Next to the validity, the reliability of the research method should be discussed. As already stated in paragraph 4.4, the survey questions consist out of multiple items, which in turn create the main variables citizen-state relationship and willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest. In order to prove the used scale reliable, a reliability analysis is executed for both scales.

Taking into account the Dutch and French adult population sizes, to guarantee a standard confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5%, the number of completed survey results should be 385 per group (CBS,2014; Insee,2021). However, because of the limited time and resources involved in this research, the response rate is not high enough to guaranty reliability working with these numbers. In order to still guarantee reliable results for both groups, one needs to take into account a 90% confidence interval and accept a margin of error up to 10%. This means that if we were to run a questionnaire a hundred times under the same conditions, in 90 cases one would get answers +/- 10% of the calculated numbers. Unfortunately, this combination of a lower confidence interval with a relatively high margin of error takes away the ability of the research to draw really certain or precise conclusions (De Veaux, Velleman and Bock,2016).

5. Data

5.1 Survey participant demographics

Table 1 ,below, displays the country of residence, gender and age group of the survey participants which filled out the survey during the approximately 2 weeks that the survey has been open. With this information it could be checked to what extent the sample is diverse and whether the sample size for both countries is sufficient to draw conclusions about the large populations.

First it should be noted that more Dutch people have filled out the survey than French participants ($N_{NL} = 135$, $N_{FR} = 70$). As stated in the validity and reliability section one can not draw conclusions with the standard 95% confidence level with the number of answers the survey collected for both the Dutch and the French group. Therefore, when testing the hypotheses and drawing conclusions, one should take into account this limitation.

Another characteristic of the sample is that that especially in the Netherlands there is a overrepresentation of females in comparison to male participants. At the moment there is a slight female surplus in the Netherlands, however, the proportion of both genders is generally about the same (CBS,2021). Although, when looking at France's gender distribution there is a male surplus to be found (Insee,2020), both genders are almost equally represented in the sample.

When it comes to age, the sample is quite unbalanced as more than half of the sample consist out of people in the 18 to 24 year old age category. This is most likely due to the approach in the distribution of the survey where social media and student websites played a large role in. It could therefore be discussed that the age composition is part of a sampling bias which. The sample is therefore not representative for all age groups in the population which distorts the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1. *Sociodemographic Characteristics of Survey Participants*

Characteristic	<u>Dutch</u>		<u>French</u>		<u>Total sample</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender						
Male	41	29.7	33	47.1	74	35.6
Female	94	68.1	36	51.4	130	62.5
Other	3	2.2	1	1.4	4	1.9
Age						
18-24 years old	97	70.3	39	55.7	136	65.4
25-34 years old	26	18.8	19	27.1	45	21.6
35-44 years old	3	2.2	5	7.1	8	3.8
45-54 years old	8	5.8	2	2.9	10	4.8
55-64 years old	1	0.7	5	7.1	6	2.9
65 years or older	3	2.2	0	0	3	1.4

Note. N = 208. Participants were on average 26.4 years old (SD = 10.19).

5.2 Scale reliability

The survey is designed in a way that respondents got multiple questions or statements to which they had to respond with the answer they thought would be best fitting to their opinion. Especially as the independent variable citizen-state relationship is a relatively broad variable it is impossible to measure this rating with only one question or item. Therefore, the questions four till eleven questioned multiple aspects concerning the relation and trust between the respondent as a citizen and the state. All questions are 5 point Likert-scale questions to which the respondents could only select one answer per question.

To check whether these items are suitable to be combined into one scale, in terms of reliability, a reliability analysis was carried out. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire scale on the citizen-state relationship consisting of eight items to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.84$. Also, all items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if one of the items would be deleted.

The same procedure is done with the "willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protests" variable. Respondents had to indicate to what extent they were willing to participate in the

posed type of protest. These items include; displaying protest related symbols, signing petitions, expressing dissatisfaction online, attending lawful demonstrations, attending illegal demonstrations and the occupation of buildings. There were four categories to choose from; Have done, Would consider doing, Would not consider doing and Would not do. In the item analysis (Appendix C), the answers are computed into a single division of would do or would not do. Although, for the later analysis for the hypothesis, the four answer categories are used as they are once reversed. The answers “have done” and “would consider doing” indicate a higher score on the willingness to protest while “would not consider doing” and “would not do” indicate a lower score. The mean score of the items would result in the “Willingness to protest Covid-19” scale. Also, this scale proves to reach acceptable reliability with $\alpha = 0.84$. Again, all items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if one of the items would be deleted.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Hypothesis 1

As a small reminder, the first hypothesis was based on the premise that citizen-state relationship would be rated higher in the Netherlands than in France by its citizenry. The first hypothesis was therefore formulated as:

H1: The rated citizen-state relationship in the Netherlands is (significantly) higher than in France.

The respective hypothesis can be written in statistics as following:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{Netherlands}} = \mu_{\text{France}}$$

$$H_1: \mu_{\text{Netherlands}} > \mu_{\text{France}} \quad \alpha = 0,1$$

To test whether the null hypothesis could be rejected, an independent samples t-test was conducted comparing the means of citizen-state relationship between the Dutch and French citizens. Table 2 summarizes the result of the one-tailed test with alpha 0.1 which corresponds with the 90% confidence interval.

Table 2. Results of t-test comparing the independent variable Citizen-State relationship

	The Netherlands			France			90% CI for Mean Difference	T(206)
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n		
Rating of the citizen-state relationship	3.17	0.64	138	2.60	0.52	70	0.43 - 0.72	6.48*

* $p < 0.1$

Variance proves to be homogeneous $F(1.975)$, $p = 0.161$. Hence, equal variance was assumed when reading the results. As predicted, the results from an independent samples t test indicated that Dutch citizens ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.64$, $N = 138$) scored higher on the citizen-state relationship scale than the French citizens ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.52$, $N = 70$), $t(206) = 6.49$, $p < .001$. The difference of .57 scale points was large and the 90% confidence interval around difference between the group means was relatively precise (.43 to .72). Therefore, the null hypothesis, stating there is no significant difference between means, could be rejected.

6.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis was based on the premise that French citizens would be more willing to take part in certain protest activities. The first hypothesis was therefore formulated as:

H2: The willingness to protest against Covid-19 restrictions is (significantly) lower in the Netherlands than in France.

The respective hypothesis can be written in statistics as following:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{Netherlands}} - \mu_{\text{France}}$$

$$H_1: \mu_{\text{Netherlands}} < \mu_{\text{France}} \quad \alpha = 0,1$$

To test whether the null hypothesis could be rejected, an independent samples t-test was conducted comparing the means of citizen-state relationship between the Dutch and French citizens. In case of this one-tailed test, the alpha of 0.1 corresponds with the 90% confidence interval. Table 3 summarizes the result of the relevant test.

Table 3. Results of t-test comparing the independent Willingness to protest Covid-19 related

	The Netherlands			France			90% CI for Mean Difference	T(206)
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n		
Willingness to protest Covid-19 related	1.80	0.62	138	2.34	0.70	70	-0.68 - -0.37	-5.58*

* $p < 0.1$

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances resulted homogeneity $F(2.018)$, $p=0.157$. Therefore, equal variance was assumed when reading the t-test results. As predicted, the results from the independent samples t-test indicated that Dutch citizens ($M = 1.80$, $SD = .62$, $n = 138$) scored lower on the willingness to protest (Covid-19 related) scale than the French citizens ($M = 2.34$, $SD = .70$, $n = 70$), $t(206) = -5.58$ and $p < .001$. The difference of .54 scale points is therefore significant. Also, the 90% confidence interval around difference between the group means was relatively precise (-0.68 to -0.37). Thereby, the null hypothesis could be rejected.

6.3 Hypothesis 3

The last two hypothesis showed that indeed there is a difference between both the rated citizen-state relationship and the Covid-19 related willingness to protest. However, to what extent this information is useful to answer the main question, one should investigate to what extent a certain level of citizen-state relationship explains the level of willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest action. Therefore, the last hypothesis suggest a more general prediction about the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The third hypothesis is therefore formulated as following:

H3: Citizens with a higher rating of the citizen-state relationship will be less willing to participate in protest activities related to the Covid-19 measures.

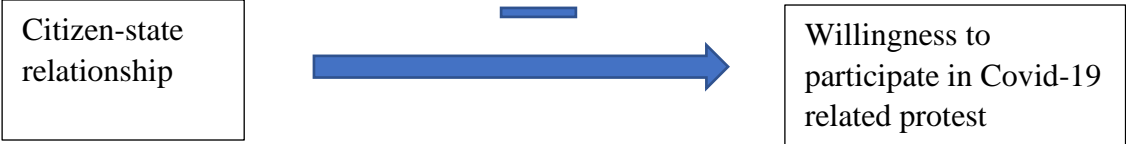


Figure 2: Conceptual model of hypothesis 3. The model displays the expected negative relationship between the rated Citizen-State relationship and the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities.

A bivariate regression was conducted to examine how well burnout could predict level of job satisfaction. Table 4 till 6 will give a summary of the outcomes in table format. Before the actual analysis, a scatterplot was checked whether a relationship would be visible between the independent and dependent variable. From the scatterplot, this relationship seems to be negative and linear and no outliers were found.

Table 4. Correlation analysis of the independent and the dependent variable

	Willingness to protest (Covid-19)	Citizen-State Relationship
Willingness to protest (Covid-19)	N/A	-0,516*
Citizen- State Relationship	-0.516*	N/A

* $p < 0.001$

Table 5. Descriptive statistics within the regression analysis

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Willingness to protest (Covid-19)	208	1.99	0.69
Citizen-State Relationship	208	2.98	0.66

Table 6. Model 1 Bivariate regression analysis with citizen-state relationship as predictor

Variable	Coefficient (B)	90%CI	SE	t	p-value
(Constant)	3.598	[3.28 , 3.91]	0.191	18.85	<0.01
Citizen-State Relationship	-0.541	[-0.65 , -0.44]	0.063	-8.65	<0.01

Note: $F(1,206)=74.85$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=0.267$, $R^2_{adj}=0.263$.

The correlation between willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities from the citizen-state relationship was significant, $r(206) = -0,52$, $p < 0.001$. The regression equation for predicting the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities from the citizen-state relationship therefore was $Y=3.598-0.541X$.

The R^2 for this equation was 0.267; that means that, 26,7% of the variance in the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities was predictable from the rated citizen state-relationship. This could be identified as a moderate relationship. The 90% confidence interval for the slope to relationship the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities by the citizen-state relationship ranges from -0.65 to -0.44. Thus, for each one unit of increase of the rated citizen-state relationship the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities decreases by about 0.44 to 0.65 points.

6.3.1 Testing a third variable

The negative relationship between the rated Citizen-State relationship and the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest is proven to be present in the first part of paragraph 5.4. However, when one seeks a causal explanation between variables, one needs to take into account the implications of time order, association and non-spuriousness.

As stated above, paragraph thereby 5.4 already showed that there is indeed an association between the stated independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, the time order seems to make sense as protests, according to the theory, are an indicator for social problems from which the citizenry thinks the government did not adequately registered it. Citizens protest to make things better in their opinion. It therefore would not make sense that protest itself worsens the citizen-state relationship. Thus, concerning the third hypothesis of this thesis, there is still a lack of any third variable(s) influence on this relationship between the independent and dependent variable. This could be done by involving an extra variable in the analysis from which a possible influence could be expected.

The effect of the variable “willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities” is therefore tested. To be able control for this variable, question 12 in the survey explicitly asked people to rate their willingness to participate in certain protest activities before the pandemic or at least not related to Covid-19. As could be seen in appendix B, the question is posed in the same way as the question measuring the main dependent variable. This variable is also included in appendix C and a scale from the data is, again, created by taking the mean score of the question items ($\alpha=0.87$). Via an hierarchical regression analysis it can be tested whether the variable “willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities” explains a statistically significant amount of variance in the “willingness to

participate in Covid-19 related protest activities”. The following tables, table 7 till 11, will show the process and results of this analysis.

Table 7. Correlation analysis of the independent and the dependent variable

	Willingness to protest (Covid-19)	Citizen-State Relationship	Willingness to protest (non Covid-19)
Willingness to protest (Covid-19)	N/A	-0,516*	0.654*
Citizen-State Relationship	-0.516*	N/A	-0.419*
Willingness to protest (non Covid-19)	0.654*	-0.419*	N/A

* $p < 0.01$

The correlation matrix shows that there is a significant relationship between all three variables. The correlation between willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities from the citizen-state relationship remains unchanged, $r(206) = -0,52, p < 0.001$. The third variable willingness to participate non Covid-19 related protest correlates significantly both with Covid-19 related willingness to protest and citizen-state relationship $r(206) = 0.65 p < 0.001$ and $r(206) = -0.419 p < 0.001$. Multicolliniarity should terefore be kept in mind when proceeding with the analysis by checking the VIF-score.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of the variables within the hierarchical regression analysis

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Willingness to protest (Covid-19 related)	208	1.99	0.69
Willingness to protest (non Covid-19 related)	208	2.22	0.73
Citizen-State Relationship	208	2.98	0.66

Table 9. Model 2: Hierarchical regression analysis with only the willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities as a predictor

Variable	Coefficient (B)	90% CI	SE	t	p-value
Constant	0.622	[0.431 , 0.814]	0.116	5.37	<0.01
Willingness to protest (non Covid-19 related)	0.615	[0.533 , 0.697]	0.050	12.40	<0.01

Note: $F(1,206)=153.63$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=0.427$, $R^2_{adj}=0.424$.

Table 10. Model 3: Hierarchical regression analysis with the willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities and citizen-state relationship as predictors

Variable	Coefficient (B)	90% CI	SE	t	p-value
Constant	1.798	[1.395 , 2.200]	0.243	7.39	<0.01
Willingness to protest (non Covid-19 related)	0.499	[0.415 , 0.584]	0.051	9.74	<0.01
Citizen-State Relationship	-0.308	[-0.403 , -0.214]	0.057	-5.40	<0.01

Note: $F(2,205)=101.869$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=0.498$, $R^2_{adj}=0.494$, $VIF=1,213$

Table 11. Summary of R^2

Model	Predictors	R^2	Adjusted R^2	R^2 change	p-value
1	Citizen-State relationship	0.267	0.263	N/A	<0.001
2	Willingness to protest (non Covid-19 related)	0.427	0.424	N/A	<0.001
3	Willingness to protest (non Covid-19 related) Citizen-State relationship	0.498	0.494	0.07	<0.001

A two stage hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities as the dependent variable. The control variable, willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities was entered at stage one of the regression. The citizen-state relationship variable was entered at the second stage. The Intercorrelations between the multiple regression variables were already reported in Table 7 and the regression statistics are in Table 8 till 11.

The hierarchical multiple regression revealed that in model 2, non Covid-19 related willingness to protest contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(1,206) = 153.63$, $p < .001$) and it accounted for 42.7% of the variation in the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities. Introducing the citizen-state relationship variable explained an additional 7% of variation in the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities. The most important predictor of the main independent variable therefore is the willingness to participate in non Covid-19 related protest activities which uniquely explained 42.7% of the variation. Together the two independent variables accounted for 49.8% of the variance in willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities. Concerning the potential multicollinearity, the VIF score turned out to be around 1 which indicates that the predictors in question have enough variance left to bring in the actual regression model which gives no reason to be too concerned about it (De Veaux, Velleman and Bock,2016).

7. Conclusion and discussion

This research tried to find an answer to the question: *'To what extent could the differences in the Dutch and French Covid-19 protest movements be explained by citizen-state relationship and its frames?'* To this end, a quantitative study was conducted into the citizen's current rating of their relation with multiple aspects of the state and its potential effect on the willingness to participate in protest activities.

When looking at the existing theory, both general and Covid-19 specific one could come to the expectation that Dutch citizens would be more positive about their relationship with their state than French citizens. This relationship is, theoretically seen, formed throughout the years where there is continuous interaction between societal groups and the state about public policy. The way in which the state is open for such opportunity structure thereby influences the extent to which citizens have the feeling of being important and influential of what it decided. While the Netherlands is known for its polder model the French have a long contentious history. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the relationship between the citizen and state is being tested. It could thereby be noticed that the frame that the heads of government use of frame in both countries also reflects this relationship. Where Dutch prime minister Rutte called for understanding and cooperation in a more open-ended way trusting its citizenry where "samen tegen corona" was the leading phrase, French president Macron compared the pandemic with a war where the police took the overhand controlling citizens whether they complied with the stay at home orders.

Results from the survey have showed that there is a significant difference between the mean score of the Dutch citizens and the French citizens when it comes to their rated citizen-state relationship of 0.57 on a 5-point scale. This indicates that their overall trust in the democratic system, politicians and police is lower than among the Dutch citizenry. These results further support the idea of Quaranta (2015) and Terpstra et al. (2021) who described that the manner in which the governments act in the pandemic has influence on the citizen-state relationship by either giving the citizenry the responsibility approach as in the Netherlands or a more repressive approach as in France.

In line with the work of Quaranta (2015), a less open state thereby decreases the willingness for citizens to accept (repressive Covid-19) policy and the decreases the possibilities for compromises between the citizen and the state. The expected consequence of a state opting for a controlling approach rather than a shared responsibility approach is a greater willingness

to participate in Covid-19 related protest. Therefore, one would expect more candidates for more types of protest in France to protest about Covid-19-related matters than in the Netherlands. The main types of protest in question were the socially distant type, the anti-lockdown protest and the pandemic riot. It was found that, in all questioned forms of protest activities, the French seemed to be more willing to participate. Especially when it comes to (anti-lockdown) protesting, the French seem to be more active whether this concerns lawful protests or illegal ones.

This study has confirmed that there is indeed a significant difference between the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities where the French were more willing than the Dutch. It is therefore likely that a connection exist between the citizen state-relationship and willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities. A moderate negative relationship was found between the two variables. By elaborating further on this via regression analysis, the current study found with citizen-state relationship as only predictor could explain 27% of the variance in the the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activities.

However, no research is perfect and the effect of the citizen-state relationship may be overrated. Therefore, the willingness participate in non Covid-19 related protest activity was includes which suggests that this relationship is weaker than initially found. Together the independent and control variable still could not explain more than half of the variance in the willingness to participate in Covid-19 related protest activity. The share of the citizen-state relationship variable in this is relatively small. Even though the citizen-state relationship and willingness to protest in general play their role in the causes of Covid-19 related protest, still the other half of the variance is unexplained. Therefore, there is still reason to conduct further research into other possible explanations.

The reader should also bear in mind that the study is based on a relatively small sample while it needs represent the citizenry of the large adult population in the Netherlands and France. The samples were large enough make statements about the data with a 90% confidence interval of 90% and a 10% margin of error. The results are thereby not as precise as one would desire when doing scientific research. Besides, due to practical reason, the younger age category 18 to 24 is overrepresented in both countries.

In the end, this research found that the rated citizen-state relationship could be held accountable for a small amount of the variance in the willingness to protest in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic. When comparing the Netherlands with France in terms of their rated citizen-state relationship and willingness to protest related to Covid-19 the means of the two countries differed significantly. Besides, there a general causal relationship between the two variables. Thereby, it is not unlikely that the small effect of citizen-state relationship on willingness to protest during the pandemic is part of the explanation why the French are more contentious and more willing to participate in more violent forms of protest within the anti-lockdown protest or pandemic riots categories as long as the pandemic lasts.

Data for this research was collected at the beginning of summer 2021 where in Europe the third wave seems to be over and cases dropped to an all time low. In most Western-European countries, people are enjoying the relaxation of health measures generally not wanting to think about a possible fourth autumn wave thanks to the new delta variant, for example.

Policy makers mostly needed and will still need to make up their minds based upon the expert knowledge they get from other institutions which are, in turn, also not fully sure what is the best approach to combat this relatively new virus. Meanwhile, people start to believe that they became the expert themselves which sometimes entails a strong conviction in conspiracy theories leading to aversion against government. As this research also showed, the wiliness to participate in pandemic related protest is also related to the non pandemic related protest willingness. It may therefore be suggested that the health measures themselves are not the only subject of dissatisfaction among the current protesters. The current restrictions may been seen as the perfect opportunity to show the world that governmental power is too big according to them. Instead of exercising their own formal (democratic) powers they seek to constrain the system which is accommodating the regular citizen these powers in the first place, namely their own government.

For social scientists it could be interesting to continue monitoring the rated citizen-state relationship and the willingness to protest for as long as the pandemic continues to research whether the infection rate and changing policies have their effect. Also the motives of protesters could be further investigated to get a better image of the pandemic protester and its relationship with the government as when underlying grievances would become more clear, these problems may be better addressed in the future.

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Appendix A: Types of pandemic protests*

	Grievances	Tactics	Response to Covid-19 scenario	Dutch and French example
Socially distanced protests	Health and social care, solidarity to doctors and care workers, protest cuts to public serviced, revelation of pre-existing grievances	Socially distanced protest events, balcony protest, healthcare staff demonstrations	Reconciling of normality and its subversion, disruption of social routines and respecting the regulation	Empty shoes of healthcare workers all over the Malieveld in the Hague (Frensch,2020) The occupation of the Odéon theater in Paris for culture sector workers (Euronews,2021).
Anti-lockdown protests	Framing of lockdown measures as authoritarian attempt, pandemic governance as a grievance in its own right	Rejection of contagion norms, refusal to wear masks nor respecting social distance, the storming of public buildings	Demand for reinstatement of the “old normal”, reversal to the pre-pandemic conditions, conspiratorial view of the pandemic response, individualism	Hitting pots and pans at the court pond in The Hague during the speech of Prime Minister Rutte in which he announces the strict lockdown (NOS,2020a) Spontaneous assemble on the Place de la République in Paris chanting anti-Macron and anti-containment slogans (AFP, 2020).
Pandemic Riots	Racial inequality and discrimination, police killings, poverty and unemployment, intensification of pre-existing grievances	Riots, barricades, police confrontations and countermovement’s	Covid-19 crisis as moment of revelation of longstanding injustices and intensification of grievances, demand for overcoming of social normality	The night-curfew riots in multiple Dutch cities in January (NOS,2021a) The April 18 incident in the Paris suburb of Villeneuve-la-Garenne leading to riots (McAuley,2020)

* This table is based on the work of Gerbaudo (2020)

Appendix B: Survey questions

Covid-19: Citizens, State and Protests

Start of Block: Introduction

Language selection

Welcome, Bienvenue, Welkom

- You can change the language in the box on the right. Proceed by clicking the arrow.
- Changer la langue dans la case à droite. Continuez ensuite en cliquant sur la flèche.
- Verander de taal door bij het rechter vakje. Ga daarna verder door op het pijltje te klikken.

Introduction

Welcome,

Thank you for your time checking out my questionnaire. This survey is part of my bachelor thesis in Public Administration at the University of Twente.

The study focuses on the citizen-state relationship and the willingness to protest in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Netherlands and France. Therefore, I'm looking for respondents living in these countries.

Important to know is that all the collected data will be processed anonymously, and exclusively used for the research. By proceeding with the survey one accepts that their data is anonymously processed. The questionnaire is completely voluntary and should not take longer than 5 minutes to complete.

If there are any questions, feel free to contact me at l.h.c.westenberg@student.utwente.nl

Kind regards,

Laurian Westenberg

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Country

Explanation

All upcoming questions are multiple choice questions. Please select the answer most applicable to you. It is only possible to select 1 answer per question. Click on the arrows down below to proceed or go back.

Q1. I'm currently living in [Country]...*

- The Netherlands (1)
- France (2)
- Other country (3)

End of Block: Country

Start of Block: Age

Q2. What is your age? (in number of years)*

End of Block: Age

Start of Block: Gender

Q3. What is the gender you identify with?*

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

End of Block: Gender

Start of Block: Citizen-State 1

Q4. How much would you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?*

- Not at all (1)
- Very little (2)
- Some (3)
- A lot (4)
- A great deal (5)

Q5. How much would you say that the political system in [country] allows people like you to have an influence on politics?*

- Not at all (1)
- Very little (2)
- Some (3)
- A lot (4)
- A great deal (5)

End of Block: Citizen-State 1

Start of Block: Trust

Q6. To what extent do you personally trust the countries (national) parliament?*

- 1 No trust at all (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 Complete trust (5)

Q7. To what extent do you trust politicians?*

- 1 No trust at all (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 Complete trust (5)

Q8. To what extent do you trust the (national) police?*

- 1 No trust at all (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 A lot of trust (5)

Q9. The government in [country] explains its policy decisions well to their citizens.*

- Totally disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Totally agree (5)

End of Block: Trust

Start of Block: Governmental relationship

Q10. On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the overall relationship between governmental institutions (local and national) and the citizenry in the country?*

- 1 Very distant from the citizen (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 Close to the citizen (5)

Q11. To what extent do you agree with the government policy pursued to date regarding the Covid-19 pandemic?*

- Totally disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Totally agree (5)

End of Block: Governmental relationship

Start of Block: Protest

Q12. This question poses multiple types of protest action that people can take. Please indicate for each statement whether you have participated in that type of protest **before or not related to** the Covid-19 pandemic.

	Have done /Will do in the future	Would consider doing	Would not consider doing	Would never do
Worn or displayed protest related campaign badge / sticker / poster	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signed a petition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posted /shared content expressing dissatisfaction or call for protest against certain governmental decisions/policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended lawful (street) demonstrations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joined unofficial strikes / (street) demonstrations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupied buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13. This question poses multiple types of protest action that people can take. To answer this question, please mark for every type of protest to what extent you would consider participation during the Covid-19 situation.

	Have done / Will do in the future	Would consider doing	Would not consider doing	Would never do
Worn or displayed protest related campaign badge / sticker / poster	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signing a petition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posted /shared content concerning dissatisfaction or call for protest against Covid-19 policy online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending lawful (street) demonstrations adhering social distancing rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending (street) demonstrations not adhering social distancing rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupying buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Protest

Appendix C: Item Analysis

Table 11.1 Item analysis: Citizen-state relationship in the Netherlands and France (N=208)

Question/Subject	<u>The Netherlands</u>					<u>France</u>					<u>Total sample</u>				
	TD+D	Neutral	A+TA	M	SD	TD+D	Neutral	A+TA	M	SD	TD+D	Neutral	A+TA	M	SD
<i>Q4. Having a say in what government decisions</i>	18.1%	42%	39.9%	3.22	0.83	37.1%	38.6%	24.3%	2.87	0.78	24.5%	40.9%	34.6%	3.11	0.83
<i>Q5. Influence political system on government decisions</i>	23.2%	43.5%	33.3%	3.10	0.91	40%	41.4%	18.6%	2.66	0.93	28.8%	42.8%	28.4%	2.95	0.94
<i>Q6. Trust in parliament</i>	20.3%	35.5%	44.2%	3.25	0.96	41.4%	47.1%	11.4%	2.70	0.67	27.4%	39.4%	33.2%	3.06	0.91
<i>Q7. Trust in politicians</i>	27.5%	38.4%	34.1%	3.04	0.94	55.7%	32.9%	11.4%	2.50	0.78	37.0%	36.5%	26.4%	2.86	0.92
<i>Q8. Trust in police</i>	8.7%	33.3%	58.0%	3.61	0.91	45.7%	27.1%	27.1%	2.71	1.07	21.2%	31.3%	47.6%	3.31	1.05
<i>Q9. Government explains decisions sufficiently towards citizens</i>	31.9%	37.7%	30.4%	2.97	0.92	70%	12.9%	17.1%	2.19	1.05	44.7%	29.3%	26.0%	2.71	1.03
<i>Q10. Relationship between citizen and state overall</i>	36%	57%	45%	3.03	0.89	61.4%	30.0%	8.6%	2.33	0.83	38.0%	37.5%	24.5%	12.79	0.93
<i>Q11. Agreement with Covid-19 related policy decisions</i>	27.5%	26.8%	%	3.14	1.04	41.4%	27.1%	31.4%	2.83	0.96	32.2%	26.9%	40.9%	3.04	1.03

Table 11.2 Item analysis: Willingness to protest in the Netherlands and France *not* Covid-19 related (N=208)

Question/Subject	<u>The Netherlands</u>				<u>France</u>				<u>Total sample</u>			
	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD
<i>Q12.1. Worn or displayed protest related item</i>	71.7%	28.3%	2.03	0.90	38.6%	61.4%	2.70	1.09	60.6%	39.4%	2.25	1.02
<i>Q12.2. Signing petition</i>	25.4%	74.6%	3.07	1.02	17.1%	82.9%	3.36	0.99	22.6%	77.4%	3.16	1.02
<i>Q12.3. Proclaiming dissatisfaction online</i>	59.4%	40.6%	2.30	1.04	41.4%	58.6%	2.76	1.00	53.4%	46.6%	2.45	1.04
<i>Q12.4. Demonstration not adhering Covid-19 regulation</i>	73.9%	26.1%	1.99	0.91	37.1%	62.9%	2.80	1.10	61.5%	38.5%	2.26	1.05
<i>Q12.5. Demonstration not adhering Covid-19 regulation</i>	89.1%	10.9%	1.59	0.72	45.7%	54.3%	2.34	0.90	74.5%	25.5%	1.85	0.86
<i>Q.12.6. Occupying buildings</i>	94.2%	5.8%	1.25	0.55	91.4%	8.6%	1.49	0.70	93.3%	6.7%	1.32	0.61

Table 11.2 *Item analysis: Willingness to protest in the Netherlands and France Covid-19 related (N=208)*

Question/Subject	<u>The Netherlands</u>				<u>France</u>				<u>Total sample</u>			
	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD	ND+NC	WC+HD	M	SD
<i>Q13.1. Worn or displayed protest related item</i>	74.6%	25.4%	1.92	0.90	50.0%	50.0%	2.66	0.97	66.3%	33.7%	2.17	0.99
<i>Q13.2. Signing petition</i>	38.4%	61.6%	2.72	1.06	18.8%	81.2%	3.25	0.99	31.7%	68.3%	2.90	1.06
<i>Q13.3. Proclaiming dissatisfaction online</i>	71.7%	28.3%	1.91	0.92	44.3%	55.7%	2.66	0.95	62.5%	37.5%	2.16	0.99
<i>Q13.4. Demonstration not adhering Covid-19 regulation</i>	76.8%	23.2%	1.83	0.90	58.6%	41.4%	2.30	1.12	70.7%	29.3%	1.99	1.00
<i>Q13.5. Demonstration not adhering Covid-19 regulation</i>	97.8%	2.2%	1.26	0.52	91.4%	8.6%	1.76	0.84	95.7%	4.3%	1.43	0.68
<i>Q.13.6 Occupying buildings</i>	97.8%	2.2%	1.20	0.48	62.0%	8%	1.43	0.69	94.7%	5.3%	1.27	0.57

