Mobilizing usual versus unusual protesters : information channel openness and persuasion tie strength in 71 demonstrations in nine countries

Mobilizing Usual versus Unusual Protesters. Information Channel Openness and Persuasion Tie Strength in 71 Demonstrations in Nine Countries

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Abstract

Decades of research found that protest participation is unequally distributed over the population. The usual protesters are resourceful, skilled, and politically engaged. We theorize that 'open channel' mobilization and mobilization via strong persuasion ties is able to bring unusual protesters to the streets. Additionally, we explore the contextual antecedents of both mobilization types. Results are based on large-scale protest survey data encompassing 71 protests from nine countries. We measure protester (un)usualness in terms of education, political interest, political efficacy and past participation. We find that mobilization via closed information channels and weak persuasion ties generally leads to the well-known skew in participation. Open information channels and strong persuasion ties, on the other hand, tend to decrease the probability of participants being usual suspects and increase the probability of participants being unusual suspects. In sum, not all mobilization fosters inequality.

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Mobilizing Usual versus Unusual Protesters. Information Channel Openness and Persuasion Tie Strength in 71 Demonstrations in Nine Countries

Political participation in general and protest participation in particular is highly skewed. Some segments of the population are overrepresented in protest while others are underrepresented. This fact has been documented abundantly across countries and issues (e.g. Dalton, Van Sickle, and Weldon 2010). That some groups—people with low education levels or with low levels of political interest, for example—hardly participate in protest while others do so more often, is important. It implies that the protest signals political decision makers receive are not representative; some groups are heard disproportionally loud while other groups speak in a whisper (see for example Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012).

A sizeable literature examined the causes of unequal protest participation. It concludes that a lack of *resources* such as time or money, low civic *skills*, and weak political *engagement* make some people participate less (Milbrath and Goel 1977; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Resources, skills and engagement are individual features that produce unequal participation in the aggregate. While considerable attention has been paid to these features of individuals—the demand side of protest participation—a much smaller portion of work has looked at the *recruitment* process as an explanation. One of the main reasons why people participate, these scholars hold, is that they are *mobilized* to participate (Schussman and Soule 2005; Walgrave and Wouters 2014). As such, differential participation might be a consequence of differential recruitment as well. Some people are simply informed and asked more to take part in protest than other people. Extant work even suggests that those with the necessary resources, skills and engagement are also more *mobilized* for protest, recruitment thus reinforcing inequality (Schlozman et al's 1999).

Our claim is that not *all* recruitment mobilizes the usual and neglects the unusual protesters. Rather, there are different *types* of recruitment and some forms are likely associated with unusual rather than usual protesters. We distinguish two dimensions of micro-level recruitment. Mobilization via open information *channels* that are available to most of the population and via strong persuasion *ties* that help unusual protesters participate.

Additionally, our study not only looks at mobilization at the micro-level but also explores the meso-level *antecedents* of micro-level mobilization types. It examines whether the prevalent mobilization type of a particular protest event is related to specific features of the demonstration context. So, we go beyond previous work by examining whether different mobilization types matter differently for participation, and at the same time we investigate whether this type of mobilization is affected by context features. In doing so, our study forms a rare attempt (Giddens 1987) to connect the meso-context in which protest takes place with the micro-level of individual participation (see also Sabucedo et al 2017; Damen and van Stekelenburg 2020).

For all this, we draw upon a large dataset with protest survey data on eight thousand demonstrators from 71 events in nine countries. We find that the average openness of the information channels and the prevalence of weak or strong persuasion ties are affected by demonstration features: mobilization type depends on the intensity of preceding media attention for the event, the number of political parties supporting the demonstration's claims, and the size of the coalition staging the protest. Subsequently, we find that mobilization type matters for who individually participates. Unusual protesters—those with little protest experience—are more mobilized via open than via closed information channels and they are more asked to participate via strong than via weak ties. Closed channels and weak ties, inversely, mobilize those with more protest experience—the usual suspects. This overall pattern is cautiously confirmed for participation inequalities related to political interest and

perceived political efficacy, but not for education. In sum, not all mobilization is alike, and not all mobilization fosters inequality; but persuasion tie strength and information channel openness rather close than broaden protest inequality gaps.

Mobilization Types: Open vs. Closed Information Channels and Strong vs. Weak Persuasion Ties

The classic account of Verba et al. (1995) goes that individuals participate because they want, can, and are being asked. Extant work has shown that mobilization—the 'being asked'—is crucial for participation (see among many others: Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Schussman and Soule 2005; Munson 2008). As Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:7) summarize: "The key to understanding who takes part and who does not, when they take part and when not, is mobilization".

Notwithstanding wide agreement on the relevance of mobilization, only a small number of studies have investigated how *types of mobilization* are associated with *types of protesters*[1]. A number of studies looked at individuals' engagement in social movements more broadly and their trajectories of engagement and disengagement over time (see for example: Munson 2008; Corrigall-Brown 2012). Yet, these studies did not produce a framework connecting mobilization types with protester types. The key study in that regard is authored by Schlozman and colleagues (1999), relying on the *American Citizen Participation Survey* (Verba et al. 1995). They show a large difference between participants who have somehow been recruited compared to those that have not been recruited but that participate, what they call, 'spontaneously'. Recruited participants have a higher income and are better educated than non-recruited ones. Another study, focusing on female micro-level recruitment into the Salvadorian Guerilla Army, shows how networks and situational mobilization contexts mobilize participants with varying features (Viterna 2006). A study by Walgrave and Verhulst (2009)

looked at how cross-country variation in mobilization for protest against the Iraq war led to a differential composition of the anti-war marches. Walgrave and Klandermans (2010), in a similar study, found that features of demonstrators—their gender, age, political interest, protest frequency—are associated with how they were informed about the protest event. In sum, the literature is highly suggestive of the fact that different sorts of mobilization recruit different sorts of people. But it is not very systematic in establishing a theoretical connection between types of mobilization and sorts of people. And, it does not consider that some types of mobilization may more than others successfully mobilize unusual protesters.

We propose a simple two-dimensional typology of individual mobilization that allows for comparison across events and countries and that is associated with the recruitment of usual or unusual protesters (for earlier attempts to come up with a generic typology of mobilization, see: Snow et al., 1980; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987).

Mobilizing people for protest requires two things: information and persuasion. People must be *informed* about the event and they must be *persuaded* to take part (Oegema and Klandermans 1994). Although information and persuasion are analytically different things they probably are to some extent performed by the same ties and at the same time. We argue that protest event information is disseminated via information *channels* that may be of the open or closed type. Persuasion is done via personal *ties* that may be strong or weak.

First, we distinguish open and closed information channels. The distinction has been made earlier (Walgrave and Verhulst 2009; Walgrave and Klandermans 2010; Boekkooi 2012; Klandermans et al. 2014). It refers to the scope of people that can be informed through a certain channel. An information channel is 'open' if all, or most, citizens can be reached through it. People informed via open channels do not have specific features, they do not need to have made specific choices to be reachable. An example of such a channel is family. As good as all people have family and may be informed by them; the family channel has a large reach; having

family is not an exclusive feature of an individual distinguishing them from other individuals. Mass media is another example of an open information channel; the media can reach a very broad group of people. 'Closed' channels, in contrast, touch only upon a specific subsection of the population with particular features. Closed channels have a smaller reach and connect to particular groups. A good example are organizations; they can inform their members, of course, but not far beyond. Being an organization member does not apply to everyone, only to people with specific features. Some information channels lay in between the open and the closed ideal types. Examples are friends or acquaintances; not everyone has them. The same holds for colleagues, they are closer to the closed than to the open side of the spectrum. Not everyone has colleagues, only a segment of the population with specific features (working and having colleagues at work). In sum, information channels can be classified, we hold, according an open-closed continuum.

The second distinction goes back to the classic study by Granovetter (1973) about strong and weak personal ties. Mobilization is also about persuasion: people asking and persuading others to participate. Key in that regard is the tie between recruiters and their target. People can be asked to participate in protest by an acquaintance, for example, and this represents weak tie persuasion: the asker and the asked do not know each other very well, their relationship is not intimate, they do not spent much time together, etc. The opposite situation is a person being asked to protest by one's partner, representing a strong tie. The advantage of weak ties is that they allow information to diffuse very far. The advantage of strong ties is that they may support costly and high-threshold action (Centola and Macy 2007).

Mobilization Type and Differential Participation

Our core claim is that mobilization type—information via open vs. closed channels and persuasion via strong vs. weak ties—is related to who shows up. More concretely, we contend

that the usual protesters—those with resources, skills and engagement—are predominantly mobilized via closed information channels and weak persuasion ties (see also Sabucedo et al 2017 who similarly talk about usual and unusual protesters). In contrast, the unusual protesters are disproportionally mobilized via open channels and strong ties.

Open channels are non-exclusive and their information reaches, almost mechanically, a broader share of the population than closed channels do. Closed information channels only reach people with specific features and these often are the usual protesters. The case in point here is organizational membership—organizations being the outspoken case of closed mobilization. Since Almond and Verba's (1963) *The Civic Culture*, we know that associational membership has important consequences for all sorts of political participation including protest. Via organizations, people are more easily reached with information leading to so-called 'bloc recruitment' (Oberschall 1973; Diani 2013). Yet, associational membership is not evenly distributed over the population (Verba et al. 1995; Schlozman et al. 1999). Organization members mostly display features typical for the usual protester. They have, on average, more political resources and skills, and are more politically engaged. The higher educated hold more associational memberships than the lower educated (Curtis, Grabb, and Baer 1992). Members are more politically participative than non-members (e.g. Schlozman et al. 1999), have a higher political interest (e.g. Eggert and Giugni 2010; Menon and Daftary 2011) and feel more politically efficacious (e.g. Hooghe 2003). Hence, closed mobilization via organizations, due to the smaller scope of information dissemination, should bring the usual protesters to the streets while open information channels—not addressing specific groups—should be relatively more associated with the unusual protesters.

A similar logic relates to our second dimension of mobilization—whether people are asked to participate by people they have strong or weak ties with. While weak ties are good at disseminating information, they are less good at persuading people. Especially for complex

and high-threshold activities weak ties are insufficient as they do not generate enough trust and support (Centola and Macy 2007). We argue that this is especially the case for the unusual protesters. They lack resources, skills and engagement and, therefore, participating in a protest event requires more effort from them. In sum, compared to weak tie persuasion, we expect strong tie persuasion to be relatively successful in mobilizing the unusual protesters.

Both for the openness of the information channel and for the strength of the persuasion tie we implicitly argued that the mobilization type 'causes' a person with a specific profile to show up to protest. People are reached via a certain channel and asked by a certain tie and participate *because* of that. However, the causal chain can be turned upside down as well. People with certain characteristics might be more prone to be informed via a certain channel and be asked by a certain personal tie. The work by Schlozman et al (1999) on 'rational prospectors' and the study of Schussmann and Soule (2005) on predictors of 'being asked', are indicative in that regard, and signal that people with the usual features are more easily targeted for recruitment.

Irrespective of the causal direction, both causal chains produce the same empirical outcome and the evidence at our disposal—a cross-sectional survey of participants—does not allow us to tease out causality

Mobilization Type and Demonstration Context

How mobilization for protest happens is not random. It depends on the context in which the protest takes place. The political opportunity structure approach in social movement studies (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995) holds that the political and social macro context influence what social movements undertake (Kriesi 2004). Yet, this still is a very long way from suggesting specific hypotheses as to why and how the macro-context influences micro-level mobilization.

Hardly any literature addressed the contextual contingency of mobilization types. Only two empirical studies we know of, both focusing on protest against the war on Iraq in February 2003, examine how demonstration context relates to mobilization type. Walgrave and Verhulst (2009) looked at the consequence of government stance on how the anti-war movement mobilized against the war on Iraq. In countries with governments resisting the war, with a predominantly anti-war public opinion, and with protest-supportive news media coverage, protest participants refer more to typical open channels when asked how they got informed about the demonstration. A similar account of the same global anti-war event was published a year later by Walgrave and Klandermans (2010).

Extending this work and applying it to the demonstrations in our sample generates three expectations. First, mobilization for demonstrations that enjoy wide *support from political parties*, both within and out of government, is more likely to be dominated by open information channels and by strong persuasion ties. Second, also *extensive media coverage* of the demonstration and its issue, should lead to open channel and strong tie mobilization. Third, the *more organizers* an event has, the more we expect open information channels and strong ties to be central to the mobilization for that event. The logic underlying these three expectations is similar. Broader societal support for a demonstration—in the form of political support, media coverage or the size of the movement coalition—increases the chance that the information about the event will be disseminated widely through open channels that are not only reaching the usual protesters. Think about the example above on protest against the war in Iraq: in many countries, political parties, mass media and social movements were opposed to the war and, as a consequence, the information pertaining to the protest event was picked up in many information channels. With regard to the strength of the persuasion ties, a similar logic applies. The more there is broad societal support for the demonstration's cause, the more people will start asking people in their primary circles to attend. Under such conditions, the rational

prospector logic—making recruiters target people they do not know very well but who display usual protester features—breaks down as the chance is high that even people without these features would be willing to attend. Mobilization then happens more frequently through strong ties as people simply ask the people they would *like* to go to the protest event with (see Walgrave and Wouters 2014 for an extensive discussion of how recruiters prefer to ask people they are intimate with to accompany them to a protest event).

Methods

Evidence comes from protest surveys of 8,005 individuals[2] fielded during 71 demonstrations in nine countries; all demonstrations took place between 2009 and 2012. The sample of demonstrations is a convenience sample in the sense that, first, countries were selected based on the presence of a research team and that, second, within the nine countries, the biggest and most visible demonstrations during the research period were covered. Data were collected by an international team of scholars in each of the countries under study. Data collection itself followed the established field work method for protest surveying (Walgrave and Verhulst 2011). Following that method, two groups of interviewers, each directed by a fieldwork supervisors, target randomly selected demonstrators. Respondents are asked to accept a questionnaire, complete it at home and send it back by land mail to the researchers afterwards. Some respondents also answer a few oral questions before they are asked to accept the postal questionnaire. Comparing the brief oral questionnaires with the sent back postal questionnaires allows to assess the representativity of the postal questionnaires. This method produces sample data that are mostly representative for the people participating in a covered protest event. Regarding the dataset of 71 demonstrations in nine countries we are using here, an earlier study by the authors has found that it is largely representative for the participants in these 71 events. Therefore, we use unweighted data.

Appendix A provides a full overview of all covered demonstrations in the nine countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland) including date, issue, turnout, and the average level of information channel openness and persuasion tie strength (see footnote 4 explaining how these were calculated). All countries are European democracies. Many demonstrations were protests against austerity, but there also are environmental, democracy, ritual (May Day and Gay Pride), and anti-discrimination demonstrations in our sample. We cannot claim that our dataset of 71 demonstrations forms a representative sample of all demonstrations occurring in these nine countries during the research period (2009-2012). Yet, in most countries, all large demonstrations held during that period were covered. The least we can say is that we have a diverse sample of demonstrations presenting a tough test for our theoretical claims.

As our analysis proceeds in two steps—first testing how contextual features result in a particular mobilization type at the event level; subsequently scrutinizing how mobilization type brings particular demonstrators to the streets at the respondent level—the dependent variables of the first analysis become the main independent variables of the second analysis. The paragraphs below present the data in exactly this running order; Table 1 presents the descriptives.

<Table 1 about here>

Demonstration Context

The context of the demonstration—the crucial independent variable for the event-level analysis explaining mobilization type—is grasped by four variables: *Government Party Support* taps the proportion of government parties that agree with the claim of the demonstration. This was coded by the country teams right after the demonstration drawing on their knowledge of the political situation in their country. *Opposition Party Support* measures the same for opposition parties. Both measures are to some extent subjective. Still, the country teams consisted of

experts. They had been preparing to cover each of the demonstrations by being in touch with the organizers and police and were attentive to media coverage regarding the issue. So, we assume that they are able to reliably assess the country's political parties.

Media Attention grasps newspaper coverage about the demonstration before it took place. It is based on a quantitative content analysis in newspapers from five weeks before till the day of the protest. Using search strings, articles were collected that capture the specific issue of the demonstration *and* that referred to protests. We add up these articles in four national newspapers in each country (newspapers are listed in Appendix B). As the number of articles differs across newspapers, we measure its relative amount by dividing the number of articles on the demonstration by the average number of articles per week in the four newspapers.

Number of Organizers gauges the number of social movement organizations that formally supported the demonstration. It was coded by the local country teams based on the official demonstration platform. The variable goes from one till five, with demonstrations having more than five organizers coded as five.

Mobilization type

Mobilization type is the key dependent variable of the first, event-level analysis, and the key independent variable of our second individual-level analysis of (un)usual protesters. Mobilization type was measured at the individual-level. For the event-level analysis, we aggregated measures at the event level (see below). Specifically, the survey contained measures of how people were informed about the event and by whom they were asked (persuaded) to participate. *Information Channel* is based on the following question: "How did you find out about the demonstration? (Check as many as apply)". We presented respondents with ten information channels. Responses were categorized into five categories, going from most closed ('Via an organization') to most open ('Radio or television' / 'Newspapers (print or online').

Table 1 shows the coding of the measure. When respondents ticked several answers, their most closed answer prevailed over their more open answers.

The second key variable is *Persuasion Tie* drawing on the question: "Which of the following people specifically asked you to take part in the demonstration? (Check as many as apply)". The question does not explicitly refer to persuasion but simply queries by whom people have been asked. Yet, it is obvious that asking someone to participate is very similar to trying to persuade that person to take part. Demanding participation is almost inevitably accompanied with giving reasons for participation and motivating one's interlocutor to take part. Respondents were presented with seven answer options. Based on the strength of the tie the recruiter represents, we classified these answers in four categories from the weakest ('Co-members of an organization I am a member of') to the strongest tie ('Partner or family members') as shown in Table 1. Again, a respondent's strongest tie answer prevailed over their weaker tie answer[3]. Our scaling of seven answer options can be debated. For instance, co-members, the category we consider to be the weakest tie, may indeed refer to strong ties when people are deeply engaged in organizations and have friends there. Yet, the fact that we gave respondents the chance to give several answers and that our coding makes the strong tie prevail over the weak mitigates worries that co-members are misclassified; we assume that people when being asked by co-members that are at the same time close friends both tick the 'co-members' and 'friends' box (or only the 'friends' box). That we consider family to constitute a closer tie than friends can be criticized as well. Depending on one's life phase, for instance, friends may actually represent stronger ties than family. We cannot but assume that, on average, family ties are stronger than friendship ties. In any case, the fact that the tie strength scale contains noise leads to a conservative error and should work against instead of in favor of our expectations.

Although based on two distinct questions that ask for different things and although referring to analytically different phenomena, our two key mobilization type variables—*Information Channel* and *Persuasion Tie*—are quite strongly correlated (Pearsons R = .58; p<.000). People informed via open channels tend to be asked by strong tie contacts. This is not surprising since the two measures are based on response items that are partially the same (partner, family, friends, acquaintances…). It shows that by whom people are informed about protest corresponds to some extent by whom they are persuaded to take part in it; this makes perfectly sense, of course, as people who inform one about an event may, even in the same conversation, ask one to participate in it. Yet, technically speaking, multicollinearity is not a problem. The average Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of our model (Table 4) is 1.65 and well below the standard threshold of 10. Also the VIF-scores of our two key mobilization types show there is no multicollinearity (ranging between 1.55 and 1.58).

Usual and unusual protesters

The dependent variables in our second analysis—linking individual mobilization type to individual protester type—are meant to grasp the usual or unusual nature of the demonstrators. Four features are taken into account, each of them representing a well-known bias in individual participation. Resourceful people, people with civic skills, and people with more political engagement, tend to participate more than their counterparts. The four characteristics we examine here—education, political interest, political efficacy and previous protest participation—are classic indicators in that regard.

Concretely, *Education* is based on the question "What is the highest level of education that you completed?". *Political Interest* is based on the question: "How interested are you in politics?". *Political Efficacy* was measured by respondents' agreement with the following statement: "Organized groups of citizens can have a lot of impact on public policies in this

country". *Past Participation* is measured by asking: "How many times have you in the past taken part in a demonstration?". The direction of the coding of these variables is reversed so that the characteristics of the unusual protesters are at the high end (see Table 1).

Table 2 highlights the usual versus unusual protester traits and zooms in on the interdependencies between our measurements using crosstabulation. Note that our four indicators of 'unusualness' are correlated, but not very strongly (all but one Pearson correlation well under .30 at $p < .000$). Table 2 shows that the unusualness of protest participation for those with low education, low political interest (not at all and not very) and low perceived political efficacy (very low and low) is not an understatement. In general, in our total sample of 8,005 protest participants, these categories respectively relate to a meagre 625 (7.8%), 1,132 (14.1%) and 374 (4.7%) participants. As Table 2 shows, only 733 respondents (9.1%) indicate that they had never participated in protest before—these latter being the truly unusual protesters in a strict sense of the word although they are not necessarily so from a more substantive inequality perspective (for an analysis of first-timers, see Wahlstrom and Wennerhag, 2014). These descriptives clearly show that protest participation—often referred to as the weapon of the weak—in fact is a tool predominantly utilized by those who are not particularly 'weak', politically speaking. In more detail, Table 2 reconfirms this general point: the row percentages of respondents who never or only rarely participated in protest before, tend to be systematically higher for those at the unusual versus usual suspect side of the scale.

< Table 2 about here >

Finally, all models below also include a number of control variables. *Turnout* is the number of protest participants of a demonstration, divided by 1,000. It could be that turnout influences mobilization (or vice versa) and so it is important to take it into account. We distinguish five protest *Issues*. The models also contain *Country* dummies. On the individual level we control for *Gender* and *Year Born*.

Results

We first present results of the analyses on the demonstration level, our first-step analysis: which demonstration context features relate to mobilization type? To do so, we took averages of the information channel and persuasion tie variables per demonstration and standardized the scores across demonstrations (scores above 0 indicating a larger than average information openness and persuasion strength, scores below 0 the opposite, see Appendix A)[4]. Hence, the demonstration-level variables grasp, per demonstration, the average openness of the information channels and the average strength of the persuasion ties. Table 3 presents both OLS regressions. Due to the low number of observations (N=71) we do not incorporate all country dummies. Robustness was tested by rerunning all models multiple times including one country dummy at a time; results did not change. Note that, at the aggregate level, the two dependent variables are *very* strongly correlated (Pearsons R = .933; p<.000). Demonstrations for which the information channels are predominantly open are also characterized by recruitment via strong persuasion ties.

<Table 3 about here>

Results show that the context in which a protest takes place has an effect on mobilization channels. Both in Model 1 and in Model 2 opposition party support is a significant predictor; the same applies to government party support in the information channel model (Model 1). As expected, the wider the political support for the claims of a demonstration, the more people are informed by open channels and the more protesters are asked by people with whom they have a strong and personal bond. Media attention for the demonstration has a similar effect. This is not so remarkable when it comes to the information channels model—after all, mass media are in itself open information channels so the effect may to some extent simply be mechanical. Yet, media attention also leads to more persuasion by strong tie contacts. With a lot of media

attention, not only are protesters more *informed* about the demonstration via open channels, they are also more *asked* by people in their immediate intimate circle to participate. So, intense media attention spills over to persuasive efforts by primary circle recruiters. Finally, and along the same lines, the number of organizers has an effect on the strength of the persuasion ties (Model 2).

We now turn to step two of the analysis and switch from the event to the respondent level. Is mobilization type associated with specific traits of protesters? We expected that people informed in an open fashion and persuaded by strong ties are more likely to have unusual protester features (low levels of education, political interest, efficacy and past participation) and vice versa for those with usual protester features. Our dependent variables being ordinal and the proportional odds assumption being violated, we ran four generalized ordered logistic regressions to put our expectations to the test[5]. Given the non-parsimonious nature of presenting generalized ordered logistic regression models (each model presenting k-1 equations, k being the number of categories of the dependent variable) we report one full model in the text, tables and figures here—the model best performing according to our expectations. We discuss the other models more briefly; full information can be found in Appendix C. Note that in generalized ordered logistic regressions each model presents coefficients of being in a higher category (all higher categories combined) of the dependent variable when the independent variable increases with one unit. Table 4 presents the results of the usual versus unusual protester analysis for past protest participation.

<Table 4 about here>

Does the openness of information channels and the strength of persuasion ties matter for who participates in terms of demonstration experience? Table 4 shows it does. As expected, more open channels and stronger persuasion ties are typical for less usual, less protest-active, protesters. Models 1 to 4 consistently point towards positive associations between open

information channels and unusualness; but persuasion tie strength fails to reach significance in Model 4. In sum, for past participation, both the openness of the information channel and the strength of the persuasion ties matter and they do so on top of each other.

In terms of the demonstration context variables that were previously successful in explaining mobilization type on the aggregate demonstration level (see Table 3) larger demonstrations, wider party support and more media attention still matter for unusual protester participation when simultaneously controlling for mobilization type on the individual level; only the size of the movement coalition is unrelated. Clearly, aggregate demonstration context matters for who participates, beyond individual mobilization as tapped here. Some of the control variables in Table 4 are relevant as well and straightforwardly confirm well-established insights. Gender and age (year born) are significantly related to past participation. Women, on average, are more unlikely protesters than men. The same applies to younger protesters. In terms of protest issues, austerity demonstrations, by and large, seem to attract the most experienced protesters.

Plotting predicted probabilities helps us to better understand the exact effect of the variables for each outcome of past participation. Figure 1 shows the results for our two key independent variables.

<Figure 1 about here>

The general pattern shows that the probability of being a vetted demonstrator, with more than 21 demonstrations on track record, significantly decreases when information channel openness increases, from 35 percent for being informed via an organization, to 27 percent for being informed via mass media, to be precise. A similar, negative relationship holds for participants who belong to the second and third protest frequency category. The relationship is inversed for less experienced participants (those who never demonstrated and those who demonstrated less than six times), however. For these participants, the probability of being a less experienced

participant increases when information channel openness increases (see upward lines on graph). So, the probability of having never demonstrated rises from seven to twelve percent when contrasting those informed via organizations versus those informed via media. In sum, open information channels are positively associated with unusual, and negatively associated with usual protesters. Information channel openness attracts fresh blood to the streets.

A very similar pattern is found when gauging the effects of persuasion tie strength on being a usual or unusual protester. Being asked by stronger ties significantly *decreases* the probability of being very experienced while it significantly *increases* the probability of being less experienced (but not unexperienced). For example, the probability of having demonstrated less than six times, significantly rises from being asked by a co-member (25% probability), over a friend (28%) to one's partner (30%).

In all, our expectations hold the track when it comes to mobilizing usual versus unusual participants in terms of their past participation. They do so to a somewhat lesser extent for our three other indicators of unusualness, however. For education, only persuasion tie strength matters significantly, whereas for political interest and efficacy both mobilization types matter. Moreover, the effect of persuasion tie strength on education goes in the *opposite* direction of our expectations; it associates strong tie mobilization with higher educational achievement. This suggests that education is differently related to mobilization type than the three other indicators of protest unusualness. The only socio-demographic variable of the four features we ascribe to unusual protesters, it is the high-educated and not, as expected, the low-educated who are mainly mobilized through strong ties. One possible explanation for that finding may be that the effect could be driven by trade unions that typically mobilize the lower-educated based on weak tie recruitment (co-members).

Additionally, for the two other indicators of unusualness—political interest and political efficacy—the mobilization type variables generally matter less across all categories

of the dependent variable, with only some coefficients in the different models meeting standard significance thresholds[6]. The overall pattern is the same as with past political participation but the results are less straightforward. For the full models we refer to Appendix C. Generating predicted probability plots sheds light on how to interpret the findings. Figure 2 shows that for political interest and efficacy, an increase in persuasion tie strength and/or information channel openness significantly decreases the probability of being very politically interested or perceiving oneself as politically efficacious, but not significantly so the other way around. That is: increases in information channel openness and persuasion tie strength do not significantly increase the probability of being an unusual protester but closed information channels and weaker ties do generate usual protesters. The lower number of the unusual protesters in our sample, in terms of their education, interest and efficacy (see Table 2), might be part of the explanation for not meeting significance criteria here. In all, however, our analyses show, for three out of the four unusualness variables, that the openness of mobilization channels and the strength of the persuasion ties are associated with who is reached and shows up. Not all mobilization fosters inequality.

Conclusion

Extant work on protest participation inequality focuses mainly on resources, skills and engagement leading to differential participation. Only rarely studies dealt with the role played by mobilization. Some of these studies argued that mobilization reinforces demand side inequalities (e.g. Schlozman et al, 1999; Schussman & Soule, 2005). People who are expected to participate frequently are also the ones who are more often recruited. These studies show that mobilization actually has a perverse effect: it further amplifies the voices likely to be heard and mutes those with fewer resources. This study challenged this account by arguing that the *type* of mobilization matters. Some types of mobilization may indeed acerbate participation

inequality. Other types of mobilization, in contrast, namely recruitment via open information channels and strong persuasion ties, may actually attenuate protest participation inequality. The reason is that open information channels reach a wider, less 'usual' segment of the population and that strong ties provide the necessary trust and support to persuade people, even those with less skills and resources.

We believe our study goes beyond existing work theoretically by explaining how mobilization types are associated with protester profiles. Empirically, we innovated as well by testing our framework using a large-scale quantitative dataset encompassing different protest events, staged by different social movements on various issues in different countries. We looked at four features that are widely accepted as differentiating usual and unusual protesters: education level, political interest, political efficacy, and previous participation. Generally, our analyses support our key proposition that information channel openness and persuasion tie strength matter for the recruitment of less usual protesters, but for education we partially found the opposite pattern. Results with regard to past protest experience corroborated our account most. The pattern appeared in very similar form with regard to both aspects of mobilization—being informed about an upcoming event and being persuaded (asked) to participate in it. Moreover, the patterns found are robust when controlling for protest issue and for the country in which the protest takes place.

The paper also explored the antecedents of open versus closed channel and strong versus weak tie mobilization and found that the demonstration context affects mobilization type (that affects protesters profile). Some demonstrations, especially those that enjoy wide support by government and opposition parties, that receive a lot of preceding media coverage and that are staged by a broad coalition of social movement organizations, tend to be characterized by mobilization through open channels and strong ties. With less broad societal

support for a demonstration, mobilization occurs typically via closed information channels and weak ties.

We need to signal two potential weaknesses of our study. First, with regard to the period in which the studied protest were situated (2009-2012), it remains to be seen whether the found pattern would still hold. The big change is, of course, the breakthrough of social media. Social media probably affect both the channels people learn from about demonstrations and maybe even the connections people have with different sorts of ties. Yet, on the other hand, family is family and whether the actual communication (or persuasion) goes via social media or via other means of communication may not be that important. Still, it might be the case that social media lead to a more segmented social sphere that may disconnect the unusual protesters even more than before from information about demonstrations and from persuasion efforts to participate in them. Second, our cross-sectional design combined with the fact that we only have evidence about actual participants (and not about non-participants) does not allow to conclude that recruitment (via channels and ties) actually *causes* protest participation. The only thing we can say is that protesters type and mobilization type are associated. We encourage scholars to set up panel studies whereby potential participants are surveyed before and after a specific event, to address this issue.

The normative implications of our findings are clear. Scholars studying participation in general and protest participation in particular have been worrying for a long time about the biased nature of the protest signal. Studies time and again found that disadvantaged population groups participate and protest significantly less than advantaged groups. If protest matters politically and has political consequences then the inequality encapsulated in the one-sided protest signal acerbates political inequality. We showed here that mobilization may attenuate inequality in participation, though. Mobilization through open channels and strong ties, typically mobilization by the mass media, partners, and family members, is *not*

disproportionally reaching the likely protesters but relatively favors the unlikely groups of individuals with less interest in politics, less political efficacy and less experience in voicing their concerns on the streets.

However, looking at our findings regarding how the demonstration context brings about these much wanted open channel and strong tie mobilization processes, the potentially good news that a certain mobilization type may produce less biased protest signals must be put in perspective. Indeed, the demonstration context that (co-)produces the beneficial open channel and weak tie mobilization is largely beyond the control of social movement organizations (SMOs). In a sense, it is broad societal support for the cause of the protest (macro-context) that produces, in part *via* mobilization type, certain demonstrator characteristics. More concretely, SMOs can only directly mobilize through closed channels and weak ties: appealing to their members is the only sort of mobilization under their direct control. Open channel and strong tie recruitment via family and friendship ties or via the media is beyond their immediate capacities. Of course, SMOs try hard to get their issues and their events into the mass media and they may encourage their members to recruit family and friends, but the effect thereof is uncertain. It may even be the case that strong organizations, so typical for closed channel and weak tie mobilization, are actually needed to attract media attention to the protest issue. To some extent, one could say that the type of mobilization bringing the unusual protesters to the streets simply *happens to* SMOs without them having much agency. That being said, our finding on education shows that organizations and organizing can make the difference in some regards.

In all, while our study uncovered that some type of mobilization may lead to the participation of unlikely protesters, it does not seem to be directly useful for social movements trying to broaden the reach of their mobilization efforts. Ultimately, who shows up and who does not for a protest event, depends on the broadness of societal support for the protest issue;

the type of mobilization (information channels and ties) may well be the critical variable linking societal context to individual participation.

Endnotes

[1] One of the reasons why so few studies looked into the connection between mobilization type and participant type, is the lack of data. Data about how exactly, via which channels and through which social ties, individuals are mobilized for protest are rare. To be sure, some studies of individual participation and protest did incorporate measures of micro-level mobilization but often these questions have been too general to specify the concrete mobilization process (for two exceptions, see: McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Verba et al. 1995).

[2] Note that the dataset initially contained 11,976 respondents. We decided to exclude almost four thousand who said they were asked to protest by "no-one". We cannot classify these people as being asked by strong or by weak ties and, consequently, they cannot be attributed a sensible value on one of the two key variables of interest here (persuasion tie strength).

[3] In our coding, closed channels prevail over open channels and strong persuasion ties prevail over weak ties. People who are informed via closed channels have distinct features. As soon as protesters mention they were informed via an organization, it does not matter that they have *also* been informed by open channels as they should display characteristics typically associated with usual protesters. For the Information variable, 73% mentioned more than one information channel and the coding decision has consequences for the results we present. For the Persuasion variable only 28% mention more than one persuasion tie and the coding hardly affects the results.

[4] Calculated by taking the score for each demonstration, subtracting the mean, divided by the standard deviation $((x-\mu)/\sigma)$. This results in standard scores for each demonstration that indicate

to what extent the demonstration's information channels and persuasion ties were below or above the mean.

[5] Although demonstrators are nested in demonstrations, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) are close to zero making multilevel modelling not necessary. Specifically, for both political interest and efficacy ICCs were .01; for models on education and past participation ICCs were .12 and .11. For these latter models we decided to run models with robust standard errors, to be consistent with the modelling strategies of the other models. Additionally, Brant tests for all models indicated the proportional odds assumption to be violated. We ran generalized ordered logit models in Stata using the gologit2 command with npl specification (see Williams, 2006; 2020).

[6] For instance, persuasion tie strength only significantly matters when comparing the highest to the middle and lowest educated. Information channel openness, on the other hand, significantly matters for political efficacy in model 1, 2 and 3. See Appendix C for a full overview.

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Tables

Table 1. Variable descriptives

Variable	N	Mean	%	SD	Min	Max
Demonstration context (event level)						
Government Party Support	71	.21	—	.31	0	1
Opposition Party Support	71	.53	—	.37	0	1
Media Attention	71	1.19	—	4.29	0	30.68
Number of Organizers	71	2.92	—	1.64	1	5
Mobilization type (event level)						
Information Channel (openness)	71	0.00	—	1.00	-1.81	2.63
Persuasion Tie (strength)	71	0.00	—	1.00	-2.32	2.09
Mobilization type (respondent level)						
Information Channel (openness)						
0: Organization (members/meetings/etc.)	8,005	.75	59.13	1.05	0	4
1: People at school/work; Alternative online media			15.08			
2: Online social networks; Ads, flyers, posters; Friends/Acquaintances			19.44			
3: Partner/Family			3.90			
4: Radio/Television; Newspapers (print or online)			2.46			
Persuasion Tie (strength)						
0: Co-members	8,005	1.07	43.99	1.10	0	3
1: People at school/work; Acquaintances			18.75			
2: Friends; Relatives			24.00			
3: Partner or family members			13.27			
Usual or Unusual protesters (respondent level)						
Education						
1: university degree (bachelor/master)	8,005	1.43	64.47	.634	1	3
2: upper secondary & post-secondary, non-tertiary			27.72			
3: no education, primary, or lower secondary			7.81			
Political Interest	8,005	1.74		.733	1	4

1: very			41.51			
2: quite			44.35			
3: not very			12.58			
4: not at all			1.56			
Political Efficacy						
1: very high perceived efficacy			25.90			
2	8,005	1.97	57.03	.777	1	5
3			12.40			
4			3.97			
5: very low perceived efficacy			0.70			
Past Participation						
1: +21			31.28			
2: 11-20	8,005	2.69	15.30	1.40	1	5
3: 6-10			15.69			
4: 1-5			28.57			
5: never			9.16			
Controls (respondent level)						
Gender						
0: male	8,005	.51	49.28	.500	0	1
1: female			50.72			
Year born	8,005	1969	—	15.59	1923	1999
Controls (demonstration level)						
Turnout (relative)	71	1.27	—	3.25	.009	24.48
Issue						
Austerity			30.99			
Democracy	71	—	11.27	—	—	—
Environment			15.49			
Ritual			30.99			
Anti-discrimination			11.27			
Country						
Belgium	71	—	12.67	—	—	—
Italy			12.67			

Netherlands	16.90
Spain	12.67
Sweden	12.67
Switzerland	11.27
United Kingdom	16.90
Czech Republic	2.84
Denmark	1.41

Table 2: Crosstabulation of Usual or Unusual Protesters

	Past Participation						
	21+	11-20	6-10	1-5	Never	Total	Total N
Education							
High	32.3	16.3	15.5	27.5	8.4	100.00	5,161
Middle	29.5	13.9	16.9	29.5	10.1	100.00	2,219
Low	28.9	11.8	12.8	34.1	12.3	100.00	625
Political Interest							
Very	46.2	16.1	14.4	19.0	4.3	100.00	3,323
Quite	23.9	16.2	17.3	32.5	10.2	100.00	3,550
Not very	10.4	10.1	14.7	44.7	20.1	100.00	1,007
Not at all	12.8	10.4	12.8	43.2	20.8	100.00	125
Political Efficacy							
Very high	41.9	16.6	15.4	21.3	4.7	100.00	2,073
2	29.9	15.3	16.0	29.7	9.1	100.00	4,565
3	19.0	14.2	17.3	34.7	14.7	100.00	993
4	18.9	12.0	10.1	39.9	19.2	100.00	318
Very low	32.14	8.9	3.6	32.1	23.2	100.00	56
Total	2,504	1,225	1,256	2,287	733	100	8,005

Table 3. OLS regressions predicting average (standardized) openness of information channels and strength of persuasion ties at the demonstration level (N=71)

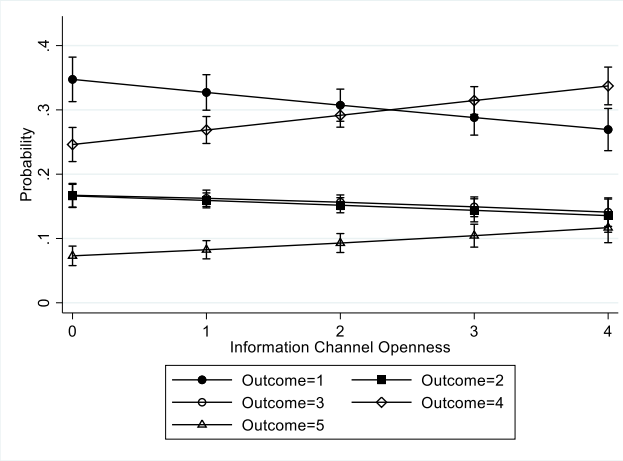
	Model 1: Information channel (open)			Model 2: Persuasion tie (strong)		
	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.
Government Party Support	**.813**	**.366**	**.030**	.496	.354	.166
Opposition Party Support	**.650**	**.295**	**.031**	**.677**	**.285**	**.020**
Media Attention	**.061**	**.027**	**.028**	**.081**	**.026**	**.003**
Number of Organizers	.052	.069	.453	**.153**	**.066**	**.024**
Turnout	.055	.035	.118	-.007	.034	.839
Issues (Ref. Austerity)						
Democracy	1.311	.371	.001	1.659	.358	.000
Environment	.095	.360	.793	.265	.347	.448
Ritual	.981	.262	.000	1.058	.253	.000
Anti-racism	1.019	.356	.006	.958	.343	.007
Constant	-1.387	.336	.000	.957	.343	.007
Prob > F		.000			.000	
Adjusted R^2		.287			.335	
R^2		.379			.420	

Table 4. Generalized Ordered Logistic Regression predicting past participation

		Model 1: Past participation 1 vs 2,3,4,5			Model 2: Past participation 1,2 vs 3,4,5			Model 3: Past participation 1,2,3 vs 4,5			Model 4: Past participation 1,2,3,4 vs 5		
		Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.
Information Channel (open)		**0.117**	**0.035**	**0.001**	**0.142**	**0.035**	**0.000**	**0.186**	**0.033**	**0.000**	**0.152**	**0.043**	**0.000**
Persuasion Tie (strong)		**0.202**	**0.041**	**0.000**	**0.161**	**0.034**	**0.000**	**0.122**	**0.034**	**0.000**	0.069	0.061	0.258
Gender (female)		0.301	0.073	0.000	0.160	0.068	0.019	0.230	0.077	0.003	0.120	0.092	0.192
Year born		0.043	0.003	0.000	0.038	0.003	0.000	0.037	0.004	0.000	0.042	0.004	0.000
Turnout		0.053	0.020	0.008	0.049	0.016	0.002	0.039	0.016	0.013	0.071	0.031	0.021
Number of Organizers		0.026	0.075	0.726	0.034	0.065	0.598	0.009	0.059	0.876	0.019	0.070	0.788
Government Party support		0.354	0.359	0.324	0.307	0.367	0.402	0.126	0.381	0.741	0.104	0.456	0.819
Opposition Party support		0.597	0.323	0.065	0.338	0.334	0.312	0.076	0.386	0.845	-0.537	0.581	0.355
Media Attention		0.023	0.021	0.279	0.025	0.019	0.183	0.032	0.017	0.064	0.032	0.022	0.141
Issue (Ref.=Austerity)	Democracy	-0.097	0.235	0.681	-0.006	0.243	0.980	0.097	0.255	0.704	-0.284	0.318	0.372
	Environment	-0.214	0.317	0.500	-0.325	0.341	0.341	-0.332	0.322	0.304	-0.320	0.365	0.381
	Ritual	-0.545	0.268	0.042	-0.585	0.260	0.025	-0.489	0.240	0.042	-0.123	0.274	0.652
	Anti-Discrimination	-0.621	0.434	0.152	-0.641	0.369	0.082	-0.564	0.357	0.114	-0.700	0.473	0.139
Country (Ref.=Bel)	Italy	-1.499	0.377	0.000	-1.371	0.360	0.000	-1.271	0.382	0.001	-1.452	0.546	0.008
	Netherlands	1.175	0.438	0.007	1.205	0.449	0.007	1.369	0.470	0.004	1.766	0.568	0.002
	Spain	-1.305	0.377	0.001	-1.239	0.357	0.001	-1.284	0.405	0.002	-1.501	0.707	0.034
	Sweden	-1.196	0.393	0.002	-0.928	0.350	0.008	-0.889	0.389	0.022	-0.609	0.512	0.234
	Switzerland	-0.405	0.543	0.455	-0.296	0.469	0.528	-0.387	0.423	0.361	-0.539	0.503	0.284
	United Kingdom	-0.282	0.451	0.532	-0.070	0.402	0.862	0.059	0.432	0.891	0.587	0.584	0.315
	Czech Republic	1.314	0.413	0.001	1.555	0.360	0.000	1.362	0.405	0.001	1.324	0.523	0.011
	Denmark	-1.614	0.437	0.000	-1.141	0.419	0.006	-0.907	0.441	0.039	-0.897	0.501	0.073
Constant		-84.618	5.684	0.000	-74.666	6.556	0.000	-74.779	7.014	0.000	-85.240	8.815	0.000
Prob > chi2		0.000											
Chi² (df)		3099.98 (84)											
Log Likelihood		-10603.44											
N		8,005											
Pseudo R²		0.128											

Figure1: Plotted Predicted Probabilities of Past Participation by Mobilization Type

Information Channel Openness



Persuasion Tie Strength

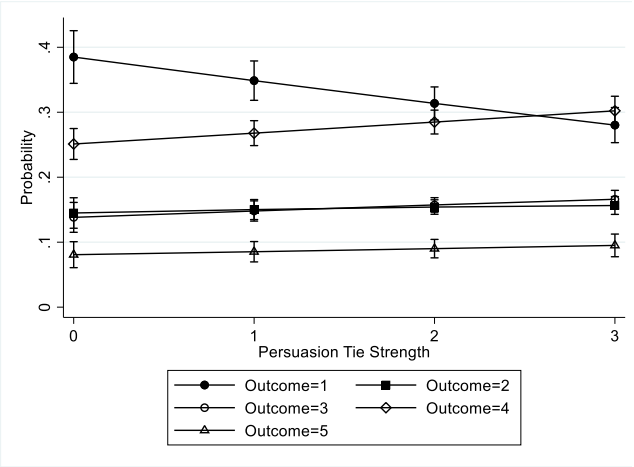
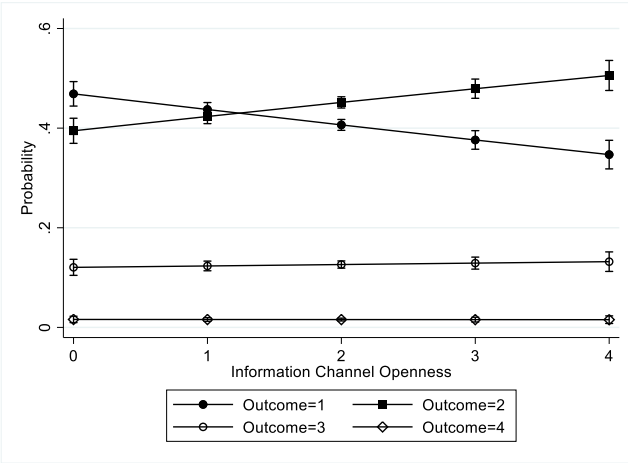


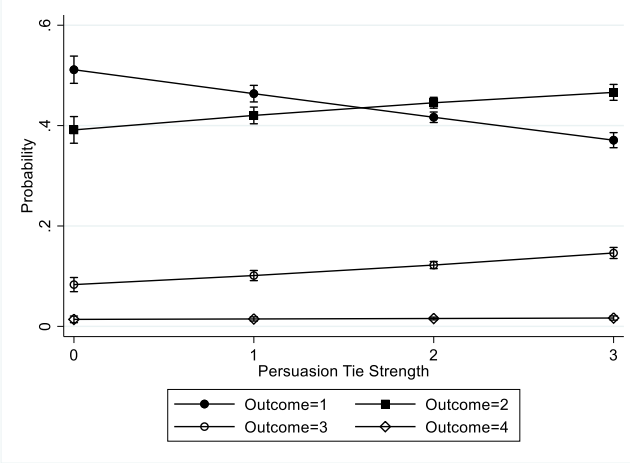
Figure2: Plotted Predicted Probabilities for Political Interest and Efficacy by Mobilization Type

Political Interest

Information Channel Openness

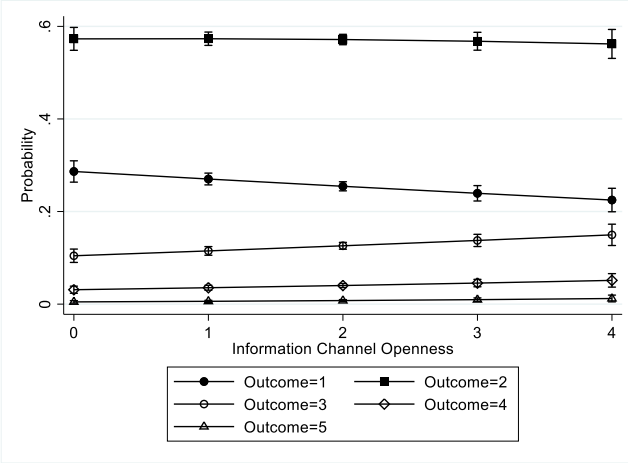


Persuasion Tie Strength

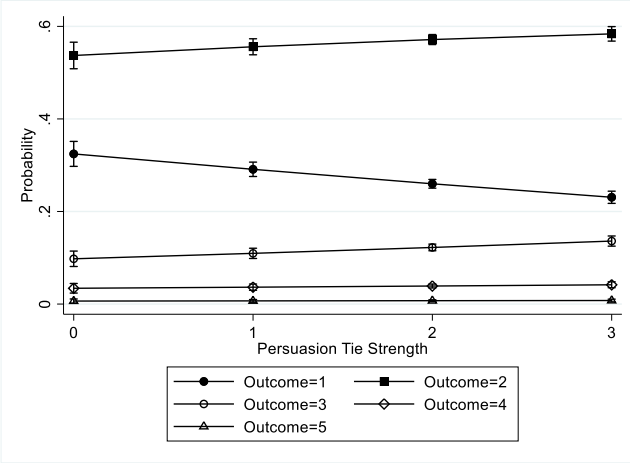


Political Efficacy

Information Channel Openness



Persuasion Tie Strength



Appendix A. Overview of covered demonstrations

Name	Issue	Country	Date	Information channel openness	Persuasion tie strength	Turnout
March for Work	Austerity	Belgium	29/01/2010	-1.81	-2.32	30,000
No to Austerity	Austerity	Belgium	29/09/2010	-1.60	-2.05	70,000
We have alternatives	Austerity	Belgium	02/12/2011	-1.57	-1.88	70,000
Demonstration against language decree	Democracy	Spain	21/01/2010	-1.40	-0.20	40,000
Stop budget cuts (care & welfare)	Austerity	Netherlands	19/09/2011	-1.37	-1.46	4,500
Retirement demonstration	Austerity	Netherlands	21/11/2009	-1.37	-1.34	7,000
Military demo	Austerity	Netherlands	26/05/2011	-1.34	-1.32	4,000
1st of May March	Ritual	Belgium	01/05/2011	-1.33	-1.64	2,000
Demonstration against the new labor law	Austerity	Spain	30/06/2010	-1.31	-1.63	10,000
Non-Profit Demonstration	Austerity	Belgium	29/03/2011	-1.31	-1.63	15,000
Together strong for public work	Austerity	Netherlands	17/02/2011	-1.30	-1.30	8,000
Unite Against Fascism National Demo	Valence	United Kingdom	06/11/2010	-1.22	-1.16	3,000
National Climate March	Environment	United Kingdom	05/12/2009	-1.15	-0.88	50,000
National Climate March 2010	Environment	United Kingdom	04/12/2010	-1.10	-0.98	1,500
Against the Europe of Capital, Crisis and War	Democracy	Spain	28/01/2010	-1.03	-0.84	1,500
'TUC's March for the Alternative	Austerity	United Kingdom	26/03/2011	-0.89	-0.74	250,000
1st May, Labour Day	Ritual	Spain	01/05/2010	-0.81	-0.78	8,000
May Day (Social Democratic Party/LO)	Ritual	Sweden	01/05/2012	-0.76	-0.20	2,450
May Day (SAP/LO)	Ritual	Sweden	01/05/2011	-0.67	-0.57	900
Fukushima never again	Environment	Belgium	11/03/2012	-0.63	0.01	1,000
World March of Women	Valence	Switzerland	13/03/2010	-0.55	-0.36	6,000
Not in Our Name	Democracy	Belgium	07/05/2011	-0.53	-0.43	700
Student demo 2	Austerity	Netherlands	21/01/2011	-0.52	-0.49	15,000
Seeds of Justice. Shared responsibility	Democracy	Italy	16/03/2013	-0.50	0.30	30,000
Fund Our Future: Stop Education Cuts	Austerity	United Kingdom	10/11/2010	-0.49	-0.64	30,000
May Day	Ritual	Italy	01/05/2011	-0.46	-0.10	500
Climate Change	Environment	Belgium	05/12/2009	-0.44	-0.48	15,000
General Strike	Austerity	Italy	06/05/2011	-0.41	-0.78	15,000
Celebration May Day	Ritual	Spain	01/05/2011	-0.41	-0.15	15,000

No Monti Day	Austerity	Italy	27/10/2012	-0.39	-0.27	25,000
London Pride Parade	Ritual	United Kingdom	07/07/2012	-0.28	-0.61	20,000
Second Student National Demo	Austerity	United Kingdom	09/12/2010	-0.27	-0.30	40,000
May 1 March, Social Democratic Party	Ritual	Sweden	09/12/2010	-0.26	-0.46	3,000
May 1ste demonstration 2011	Ritual	Switzerland	01/05/2011	-0.24	-0.38	1,000
No Mous	Environment	Italy	30/03/2013	-0.20	-0.30	10,000
Student demo 1	Austerity	Netherlands	21/05/2010	-0.11	-0.25	2,000
May 1st Demonstration	Ritual	Switzerland	01/05/2010	-0.09	0.71	8,000
Joining forces for another Europe	Austerity	Italy	10/11/2012	-0.08	0.17	3,000
Climate March	Environment	Sweden	12/12/2009	-0.01	0.12	40,000
May Day Labour March	Ritual	United Kingdom	01/05/2010	-0.01	-0.75	5,000
Gay Pride Geneva	Ritual	Switzerland	02/07/2011	0.02	0.84	3,000
Women demonstration Geneva	Valence	Switzerland	14/06/2011	0.11	-0.13	1,500
Stop racism and exclusion	Valence	Netherlands	19/03/2011	0.19	0.76	350
Rainbow Parade (LGBTQ festival)	Ritual	Sweden	03/06/2012	0.27	0.26	3,300
Climate demo	Environment	Netherlands	12/12/2009	0.29	0.60	3,500
Million Women Rise	Valence	United Kingdom	05/03/2011	0.30	0.09	3,000
Anti-Nuclear demo	Environment	Netherlands	16/04/2011	0.34	0.38	2,500
Anti-nuclear	Environment	Switzerland	11/03/2012	0.39	0.85	3,000
Gay Pride	Ritual	Italy	09/06/2012	0.59	0.80	15,000
Culture demo Amsterdam	Austerity	Netherlands	20/11/2010	0.62	0.52	15,000
Against Labor Law	Austerity	Spain	29/09/2010	0.64	0.97	55,000
Anti-Nuclear Manifestation	Environment	Switzerland	22/05/2011	0.74	1.00	20,000
Demonstration Perugia-Assisi	Ritual	Italy	25/09/2011	0.75	1.06	150,000
Euromayday	Ritual	Italy	01/05/2011	0.79	0.94	5,000
Take Back Parliament	Democracy	United Kingdom	15/05/2010	0.79	0.87	2,000
Culture demo Utrecht	Austerity	Netherlands	20/11/2010	0.81	1.16	2,500
Pride demonstration	Ritual	Switzerland	16/06/2012	0.84	0.94	3,000
Real Democracy Now!	Democracy	Spain	15/05/2011	0.90	1.36	25,000
Stop the Government	Austerity	Czech Republic	17/11/2012	0.90	1.09	6,000
Demonstration Against Abortion	Valence	Spain	07/03/2010	1.11	0.93	65,000
Prague Pride	Ritual	Czech Republic	18/08/2012	1.15	1.01	9,000

Anti-nuclear demonstration	Environment	Sweden	26/04/2011	1.19	0.54	1,000
No to Hate Crime Vigil	Valence	United Kingdom	23/10/2010	1.23	0.76	2,000
Occupy London	Democracy	United Kingdom	12/11/2011	1.27	1.34	600
May Day (Left Party)	Ritual	Sweden	01/05/2012	1.28	1.35	3,300
Against racist politics	Valence	Sweden	04/10/2010	1.29	0.64	2,800
May Day (Left Party)	Ritual	Sweden	01/05/2011	1.29	0.97	2,000
May 1 March, Left Party	Ritual	Sweden	01/05/2010	1.57	1.41	4,200
No Government, Great Country	Democracy	Belgium	23/01/2011	2.15	2.09	45,000
Pink Saturday Parade Survey	Ritual	Netherlands	07/07/2012	2.56	1.60	1,000
We are a nation, we decide	Democracy	Spain	10/07/2010	2.63	1.71	1,000,000

Appendix B. Newspapers used for media content analysis

Country	Newspapers	
Belgium	De Standaard	Het Nieuwsblad
	De Morgen	Het Laatste Nieuws
Czech Republic	MF Dnes	Blesk
	Právo	AHA!
Denmark	Dagbladet Politiken	Berlingske Tidende
	Ekstra Bladet	B.T.
Italy	La Repubblica	
Spain	ABC	El Mundo
	El Pais	El Periodico de Catalunya
Sweden	Dagens Nyheter	Kvällsposten
	Sydsvenskan	Aftonbladet
Switzerland	Le Temps	Neue Zürcher Zeitung
	Le Matin	Der Blick
The Netherlands	NRC Handelsblad	Het Algemeen Dagblad
	de Volkskrant	De Telegraaf
United Kingdom	Guardian	Telegraph
	The Mirror	The Sun

Note: Due to limitations of availability, only one newspaper was used for the content analysis in Italy.

Appendix C – Full models.

TableC1. Generalized Ordered Logistic Regression predicting Education

		Model 1: Education 1 vs 2,3			Model 2: Education 1,2 vs 3		
		Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.
Information Channel (open)		0.028	0.025	0.251	0.055	0.048	0.254
Persuasion Tie (strong)		**-0.095**	**0.033**	**0.004**	-0.092	0.049	0.057
Gender (female)		-0.245	0.072	0.001	-0.388	0.083	0.000
Year born		-0.012	0.004	0.004	-0.021	0.006	0.001
Turnout		0.025	0.015	0.096	-0.010	0.021	0.640
Number of Organizers		-0.122	0.061	0.045	-0.148	0.065	0.022
Government Party support		-0.390	0.327	0.233	-0.588	0.330	0.075
Opposition Party support		-0.262	0.366	0.473	0.125	0.334	0.709
Media Attention		-0.021	0.014	0.145	-0.030	0.018	0.090
Issue (Ref.=Austerity)	Democracy	-1.036	0.317	0.001	-1.069	0.334	0.001
	Environment	-0.369	0.261	0.157	-0.598	0.212	0.005
	Ritual	-0.324	0.183	0.076	-0.241	0.220	0.274
	Anti-Discrimination	-0.517	0.228	0.023	-0.434	0.232	0.062
Country (Ref.=Bel)	Italy	-0.650	0.279	0.020	-0.237	0.289	0.412
	Netherlands	-0.893	0.379	0.018	0.300	0.312	0.337
	Spain	-0.578	0.344	0.093	0.139	0.323	0.667
	Sweden	-0.909	0.312	0.004	-0.194	0.381	0.610
	Switzerland	-0.238	0.336	0.478	0.080	0.404	0.843
	United Kingdom	-1.489	0.318	0.000	-0.390	0.325	0.231
	Czech Republic	-0.148	0.326	0.650	0.504	0.505	0.318
	Denmark	-0.948	0.348	0.006	0.101	0.286	0.725
Constant		25.011	8.191	0.002	39.460	11.696	0.001
Prob > chi2		0.000					
Chi² (df)		915.08 (42)					
Log Likelihood		-6428.603					
N		8,005					
Pseudo R²		0.068					

TableC2. Generalized Ordered Logistic Regression predicting Political Interest

		Model 1: Political interest 1 vs 2,3,4			Model 2: Political interest 1,2 vs 3,4			Model 3: Political interest 1,2,3 vs 4		
		Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.
Information Channel (open)		**0.139**	**0.029**	**0.000**	0.024	0.038	0.527	-0.008	0.108	0.940
Persuasion Tie (strong)		**0.208**	**0.027**	**0.000**	**0.207**	**0.037**	**0.000**	0.060	0.109	0.582
Gender (female)		0.627	0.049	0.000	0.493	0.068	0.000	0.239	0.186	0.199
Year born		0.002	0.002	0.215	0.017	0.002	0.000	0.019	0.007	0.006
Turnout		0.028	0.009	0.003	0.012	0.011	0.270	0.023	0.034	0.497
Number of Organizers		-0.040	0.020	0.050	-0.074	0.030	0.014	-0.146	0.101	0.147
Government Party support		0.084	0.104	0.420	0.390	0.149	0.009	-0.384	0.514	0.455
Opposition Party support		0.248	0.097	0.010	0.366	0.134	0.006	0.396	0.372	0.288
Media Attention		-0.006	0.008	0.424	-0.031	0.012	0.009	-0.060	0.044	0.175
Issue (Ref.=Austerity)	Democracy	-0.599	0.096	0.000	-0.530	0.132	0.000	-0.960	0.391	0.014
	Environment	-0.179	0.092	0.051	-0.346	0.133	0.009	-0.197	0.461	0.669
	Ritual	-0.077	0.082	0.351	0.162	0.110	0.140	0.609	0.308	0.048
	Anti-Discrimination	-0.543	0.101	0.000	-0.151	0.143	0.291	0.172	0.375	0.646
Country (Ref.=Bel)	Italy	-0.574	0.114	0.000	-0.761	0.157	0.000	-1.217	0.501	0.015
	Netherlands	-0.057	0.111	0.609	-0.383	0.145	0.009	-0.551	0.403	0.172
	Spain	0.076	0.119	0.520	0.108	0.148	0.465	0.372	0.392	0.343
	Sweden	-1.420	0.119	0.000	-2.139	0.198	0.000	-2.349	0.620	0.000
	Switzerland	-0.447	0.151	0.003	-0.331	0.201	0.099	-0.046	0.580	0.937
	United Kingdom	-0.879	0.115	0.000	-1.073	0.165	0.000	-1.015	0.463	0.028
	Czech Republic	-0.532	0.194	0.006	0.262	0.230	0.255	-0.102	0.672	0.879
	Denmark	-1.416	0.200	0.000	-1.238	0.351	0.000	-0.636	0.857	0.458
Constant		-4.434	3.045	0.145	-36.438	4.576	0.000	-41.276	13.69	0.003
Prob > chi2					0.000					
Chi² (df)					1039.87 (63)					
Log Likelihood					-7895.753					
N					8,005					
Pseudo R²					0.062					

TableC3. Generalized Ordered Logistic Regression predicting Political efficacy

		Model 1: Political efficacy 1 vs 2,3,4,5			Model 2: Political efficacy 1,2 vs 3,4,5			Model 3: Political efficacy 1,2,3 vs 4,5			Model 4: Political efficacy 1,2,3,4 vs 5		
		Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.	Coef.	St.E.	Sig.
Information Channel (open)		**0.085**	**0.032**	**0.007**	**0.131**	**0.035**	**0.000**	**0.151**	**0.061**	**0.013**	0.233	0.132	0.079
Persuasion Tie (strong)		**0.164**	**0.030**	**0.000**	**0.120**	**0.036**	**0.001**	0.069	0.065	0.291	0.055	0.156	0.724
Gender (female)		0.080	0.053	0.130	0.157	0.062	0.011	-0.017	0.109	0.875	-0.695	0.284	0.014
Year born		0.000	0.002	0.977	0.011	0.002	0.000	0.011	0.004	0.003	-0.021	0.009	0.016
Turnout		0.016	0.009	0.092	0.018	0.011	0.094	-0.018	0.020	0.386	-0.150	0.102	0.142
Number of Organizers		-0.016	0.023	0.474	-0.022	0.026	0.395	0.027	0.045	0.550	0.148	0.109	0.178
Government Party support		0.029	0.120	0.806	0.194	0.128	0.131	0.181	0.232	0.437	-0.355	0.676	0.600
Opposition Party support		-0.059	0.111	0.595	-0.239	0.118	0.044	-0.040	0.200	0.843	-0.305	0.556	0.583
Media Attention		0.012	0.008	0.142	-0.013	0.012	0.294	0.015	0.021	0.479	0.033	0.054	0.545
Issue (Ref.=Austerity)	Democracy	-0.276	0.104	0.008	-0.650	0.128	0.000	-0.493	0.224	0.027	-0.563	0.542	0.299
	Environment	-0.254	0.105	0.016	-0.679	0.121	0.000	-0.919	0.234	0.000	-0.748	0.581	0.198
	Ritual	-0.047	0.091	0.601	-0.147	0.102	0.150	0.075	0.181	0.680	-0.668	0.423	0.114
	Anti-Discrimination	-0.270	0.109	0.013	-0.393	0.132	0.003	-0.021	0.216	0.924	-0.688	0.514	0.181
Country (Ref.=Bel)	Italy	-0.235	0.125	0.061	0.217	0.146	0.138	-0.257	0.272	0.346	0.030	0.700	0.966
	Netherlands	0.775	0.130	0.000	0.484	0.138	0.000	0.313	0.243	0.197	-0.785	0.676	0.246
	Spain	-0.301	0.127	0.018	0.181	0.151	0.229	0.161	0.260	0.536	-0.009	0.724	0.991
	Sweden	-0.858	0.128	0.000	-0.023	0.153	0.880	-0.868	0.302	0.004	-1.394	0.912	0.126
	Switzerland	-0.573	0.164	0.000	-0.613	0.212	0.004	-0.872	0.371	0.019	-1.153	0.990	0.244
	United Kingdom	-0.089	0.127	0.483	0.077	0.151	0.609	-0.141	0.262	0.590	0.236	0.695	0.734
	Czech Republic	-0.012	0.226	0.957	0.441	0.234	0.059	-0.134	0.413	0.746	-1.429	0.797	0.986
	Denmark	-0.053	0.220	0.810	0.879	0.244	0.000	0.556	0.475	0.242	0.777	1.218	0.523
Constant		0.660	3.357	0.844	-24.226	3.973	0.000	-24.175	7.098	0.001	37.352	17.11	0.029
Prob > chi2		0.000											
Chi² (df)		704.73 (84)											
Log Likelihood		-8388.499											
N		8,005											
Pseudo R²		0.043											