

# Word on the Street: The Persistence of Leftist-dominated Protest in Europe

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*Classic studies of protest politics have traditionally defended the dominant left-wing orientation of protesters. However some recent research has highlighted the general spread of protest by the increasing participation of right-wing individuals. Has this process meant an 'ideological normalisation' of protesters? The present article tackles this question by examining competing hypotheses regarding the relationship between ideology and political protest. Through a hierarchical multilevel design, we test whether left-wing (or right-wing) supporters are more likely to stay at home when left-wing (right-wing) parties are in power and whether they intensify their protest activities when they are more distant from the government's ideological position. The results show that protesters are still predominantly left-wing-oriented individuals, regardless of government ideology. Additionally, we show that left-wing individuals protest more under left-wing governments because they are more mobilised to do so, although personal values also appear to play a role in the final decision to join demonstrations.*

Keywords: Ideology, protest, values, mobilization, cabinet ideology

On 15 May 2011 thousands of discontented Spanish citizens (*indignados*) occupied the Puerta del Sol, the central square in Madrid, to protest against bankers, politicians and the functioning of democracy in Spain. Also in 2011, Greek citizens took over the Sintagma Square and created their own 'outraged' (*aganaktismeni*) movement. These protest events received wide media coverage, instigating other demonstrations in these

countries and other parts of Europe. Participants in all these public demonstrations protested against high levels of unemployment, austerity measures, the abusive practices of banks and political corruption. In addition, many called for basic economic and social rights such as homes, jobs, health, education and even culture. These collective actions of protest were thus connected to the exogenous shock of the economic and fiscal crises, and to the many grievances that the crisis produced among hundreds of thousands of citizens in Europe, so that the resigned acceptance of the inevitable was being increasingly replaced by political protest (Kriesi 2012: 522). However, and while many of the demands expressed in these actions could be considered as classically left wing, those participating in these protests appeared to have a more 'ecumenical' profile.

Based on this evidence, some scholars have begun to argue that participation in demonstrations is becoming a more 'normal' type of action among different types of political actors. This spreading of protest actions might be producing, as a consequence, the ideological normalisation of protesters, meaning that right-wing individuals are progressively becoming as likely as left-wingers to participate in protest demonstrations (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001; Norris *et al.* 2005; Anduiza *et al.* 2013). This position, which is increasingly gaining academic support, is opposed to the standard view that left-wing citizens are more likely to demonstrate (Barnes *et al.* 1979; Inglehart 1990; Dalton 2008a; Meer *et al.* 2009).

Recent contributions have also argued that the political restlessness produced by the above events is being mobilised through two different mechanisms, depending on the ideological issues at stake: protest actions for left-wing discontent, and electoral channels for right-wing dissent (Hutter and Kriesi 2013). According to this argument, there should be more protest actions among left-wing citizens in Europe, and an absence of such actions among right-wing citizens, regardless of the government in power and its decisions.

To contribute to this debate, this article examines the ideological profile of demonstrators during the 2000s. Our interest in these years is justified by the processes of globalisation occurring during the first decade of the twentieth century, and the 2008 financial crisis, a period which has had a highly disruptive influence on people's lives and resulted in a significant increase in protest by citizens. We extend this question by asking whether the relationship between ideology and protest is conditioned by the ideological position of governments. We finally test the role that mobilisation and values might play in the probability of participating in demonstrations.

The article draws on data of the first five rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) (years 2002–3; 2004–5; 2006–7; 2008–9; 2010–11). The hierarchical structure of the data, consisting of 208,077 individuals nested in 110 country-years, permits the estimation of the ideological profile of street protesters and the impact of government ideology on individuals' probability of participating in demonstrations.

Empirically, the article contributes to previous research in three different ways. Firstly, many studies have mainly focused on a narrow set of cases, which results in little variation at the country level. Our dataset clusters 26 different countries, to examine the existing patterns of participation in demonstrations across countries. Additionally, previous research has normally operationalised government ideology as a dummy or categorical variable. Our coding is based on a weighted average between party ideology and the number of seats it has, which provides a more valid measure with greater variation in government ideology. By doing so we are able to explore the effect of ideology across the full range of governments' ideological positions. Finally, previous studies have made use of headcounts of protest events (e.g. Koopmans and Rucht 1995; Hutter and Kriesi 2013) or surveys of protest participants (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002; Norris *et al.* 2005). While this approach is undeniably productive, we believe the literature requires a broader empirical analysis, based on survey data, to expand our knowledge of how government ideology and individual ideology and values interrelate to explain participation in demonstrations for the entire population.

The results of our empirical analyses show that left-wing individuals in Europe are still more prone than ideologically conservative citizens to participate in demonstrations. In fact, overall, right-wing and non-ideological individuals are still very reluctant to participate in this type of collective actions. As a result, we do not observe ideological convergence among demonstrators in Europe during the 2000s, except for extreme right-wing individuals who appear to be more prone to use this type of political participation than other right-wing citizens. In addition, our results suggest that the ideology of the government matters: left-wing citizens demonstrate more when the incumbent party is ideologically conservative. Yet this effect does not have an equivalent repercussion on right-wing individuals, which is coherent with the hypothesis defending the greater propensity of right-wing protesters to use elections instead of protest to express their political preferences (Hutter and Kriesi 2013). Consequently, left-wing citizens are by far the principal actors in demonstrations, regardless of government ideology, although they tend to march in the streets more often under right-wing governments. However, we observe another anomaly with extreme right-wing demonstrators; contrary to our expectations, they demonstrate slightly more under right-wing governments.

We suggest that this heterogeneous effect of government ideology on individuals with different ideological backgrounds occurs mostly because left-wing citizens tend to be more willing to demonstrate. Thus, we find that under left-leaning governments, left-wing individuals who identify with the left-wing parties in the political opposition tend to protest more than those who identify with left-wing parties forming part of the government. Individual values also make a difference, as Hutter and Kriesi (2013) have argued, but their effects are more limited. All in all, our results imply that the individual link with the left-wing parties in opposition, and the different impact that values have on left-wing individuals lie behind these individuals' greater propensity to protest, even under left-wing governments.

## **The Ideological Normalisation of Protesters**

Today, protest activities include a varied set of actions, from political consumerism to participation in demonstrations and strikes, the occupation of public spaces or various Internet activities. Like other forms of political participation, political protest tries to influence political outcomes (Teorell *et al.* 2007). However, individuals' participation in demonstrations is, above all, a distinctive way of expressing disagreement with government policies and political decisions.<sup>1</sup>

Political protest and, specifically, participation in demonstrations has progressively become a more common channel of political expression, one which is changing citizens' relationship with the state (della Porta 1999; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Norris *et al.* 2005; Stolle *et al.* 2005; Marien *et al.* 2010). A part of the literature has even argued that protest is becoming a more routinised form of political engagement (Tarrow 1994; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). This appears to have occurred because both public opinion and political authorities now see protest as a legitimate and acceptable way to express political demands, and because, at the same time, citizens' norms for participating in politics have changed (Dalton 2008a).

Together with the routinisation of protest, three more aspects have contributed to the spreading of political demonstrations as a form of political participation in the previous decade. Firstly, the emergence of a new integration-demarcation division and the issues related to it have led to an increase in extreme right-wing activism (Grande and Kriesi 2012; Hutter 2012; Macklin 2013). Secondly, the universalisation of the Internet, the increasing political mobilization of citizens through this channel, and the configuration of new social networks (of transnational actors) have eroded the barriers to protest (Norris 2007; Anduiza *et al.* 2010; Oser *et al.* 2013). Finally, the third aspect is the recent and important grievances caused by governments to European citizens as a result of the fiscal and economic crises initiated in 2008 (Kriesi 2012; Hutter and Kriesi 2013).

All these processes might have resulted in a progressive change in the social and attitudinal profile of protesters (Dalton 2008a; Marien *et al.* 2010). Beyond the idea that protesters are mainly left wing, there is considerable evidence to show that workers and trade unionists have ceased to be 'the only man in the street', so that the ideological profile of demonstration participants has diversified (Dalton 2008b: 71; Norris 2007: 639; Rucht 2007: 713). This change in the profile of demonstrators has been accentuated due to the progressive involvement of citizens who are becoming politicised by new conservative issues (Dalton 2008a; Caren *et al.* 2011). The proliferation of extreme right-wing activism illustrates this tendency. As shown by analyses of protest marches in countries such as Belgium (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001) or West Germany (Rucht 1998), extreme right-wing protests are becoming increasingly popular.

As a result, the literature on normalisation contradicts the conventional wisdom that the left is more likely to protest (our baseline null hypothesis;  $H_0$ ). It appears that several factors have converted protesters into more diverse social groups employing protest, in general, and demonstrations, in particular, as tools of political participation. It may therefore be concluded that there is no longer a linear relationship whereby left-wing individuals are more likely to demonstrate than other citizens on the remaining ideological spectrum.

Notwithstanding this general picture, the ideological normalisation of protesters might have resulted in two different scenarios:

A first scenario in which all ideological groups have converged in their probability of protesting, so that differences across ideological groups are not significant ( $H1a$ ). A second scenario is one in which protest, as a form of political participation, has only increased among extreme positions, and especially among far right-wing individuals. In other words, citizens occupying these ideological positions make use of demonstrations more often. If this were the case, extreme right-wing individuals should be equally likely to protest as extreme left-wing and left-wing

individuals (*H1b*). In this second scenario, normalisation would not affect all the ideological groups of citizens, although the participation of extreme right-wing individuals in demonstrations would indicate that protest activities are no longer solely a left-wing political tool.

### **Left-Wing Citizens and Left-Wing Governments**

The debate regarding whether demonstrators' ideological profiles have normalised or, by contrast, the left still protests more, normally overlooks the fact that government ideology may condition individuals' behaviour. The outcome that left-wing individuals still participate in demonstrations more often than their right-wing counterparts, might be the result of the greater number of right-wing governments in Europe. By the same logic, however, it may be that right-wing individuals protest more in some contexts because of the presence of left-wing governments.

The existing literature on protest offers strong evidence that institutional characteristics change people's likelihood of taking part in protest events. The notion of the structure of political opportunities is fundamental on this point. Thus, opportunities are described as the 'options for collective action, with chances and risks attached to them, which depend on factors outside the mobilizing group' (Koopmans 2004: 65). The political structure refers to those institutional aspects of the political system that provides different opportunities to mobilise effectively. Generally, the literature on the structure of political opportunities argues that the ebb and flow of protest are linked to the institutional configurations of each country, so that variation in the success of protest activity is related to differences in the openness or otherwise of the political system (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995; Meyer 2004; Kolb 2007; Vráblíková 2014).<sup>2</sup>

This framework also provides arguments in favour of the idea that the ideological profile of protesters varies with respect to the ideology of the ruling party or parties.

Tarrow (1994: 85) has claimed that the political environment affects individuals' decision to participate in collective action, by affecting their expectations for success or failure. Koopmans and Rucht (1995), Meyer and Minkoff (2004), and van Stekelenburg *et al.* (2009) provide similar arguments. Meer *et al.* (2009: 1540) have also defended the notion that those citizens who perceive themselves to be more ideologically distant from the government are more likely to engage in some form of protest action.

The reason why government ideology may interact with individual ideology when protesting is based on two different logics. Firstly, governments on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum to citizens' ideological positions are more likely to implement public policies that can be judged negatively by them. Secondly, taking part in demonstrations against a government sharing the same political outlook as the individual is much more costly, as those individuals could be exposed to ideological dissonance when protesting against governments with the same political stance. The expectation is therefore that left-wing and right-wing governments and their policies might alter individuals' motives to protest because of their ideological content. Citizens' overall ideological orientation modifies the decision to participate in a street demonstration. Thus, right-wing citizens' likelihood of demonstrating will increase under left-wing governments, while left-wing citizens will take to the streets when the government is right wing (*H2a*).

Contradicting this view, Hutter and Kriesi (2013) have recently claimed that the emergence of a new globalisation-demarcation division has not been able to counter the longstanding relationship between left-wing ideology and protest. According to these authors, right-wing citizens still prefer to express their discontent by voting for extreme-right alternatives, whereas left-wingers continue to prefer to object by participating in public protests. Furthermore, critical events, like the recent financial and economic crisis, are more likely to affect segments of society whose socio-demographic characteristics are predominantly left wing. The economic crisis and the austerity policies implemented in Europe have empowered social movements, new left-



wing parties, and even left-wing ruling parties, leading them to adopt a strategy of political mobilisation (Kriesi 2012). Consequently, left-wing individuals have continued to participate in demonstrations more often than their ideological opponents even when the ruling party is left wing. Equivalently, right-wing citizens continue to abstain from participating in demonstrations, regardless of the ideological orientation of the ruling party (*H2b*).

### **Why the Left still Protests More**

The link between left-wing citizens and protest activities has been explained by two different arguments. The first group of theoretical and empirical justifications maintains that political protest is a predominantly left-wing activity because the left has always been closely linked in Europe to the mobilising role played by trade unions and left-wing parties (Koopmans and Rucht 1995; Rucht 2003 and 2007; Tarrow and Tilly 2007; Vrábliková 2014). Social democratic parties, trade unions and left-wing citizens have historically worked together to achieve political and social reforms using protest activities first, followed by electoral success. Thus, even if the traditional links among these agents have eroded over time, as some authors have claimed (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002), new left-wing movements have taken charge of many protest actions (Kitschelt 1993; Lichbach and de Vries 2007). According to this theoretical argument, left-wing citizens, who tend to be more closely connected to those political actors who make more use of protest to express political preferences and discontent, should protest more (*H3a*).

The second argument is based on the seminal book by Barnes and Kaase (1979: 279–99), where it was argued that the differences in the patterns for demonstrating by the left and the right were ultimately rooted in the different value orientations of left-wing citizens. Finkel and Opp (1991) also claimed that individuals with a left-wing ideology possess attitudes that make protest more normatively justifiable for them. In this same direction, Flanagan and Lee (2003) also found that

authoritarians (who are more closely associated to the right) are less likely to join groups oriented to political protest, and thus have a much lower potential for protest than libertarians (who are more closely associated to the left). Supporting this claim, Gundelach (1995) has contended that social or political libertarianism and post-materialist value orientations are associated with grassroots protest activities. Finally, Hutter and Kriesi (2013) have also attributed to the left and the right different values regarding protest, with the left more prone to protest than the right, as the latter prefer to channel their discontent through elections instead of using protest activities. All in all, this second argument against the ideological normalisation of demonstrators is based on the idea that the left still protests more because citizens with such ideological leanings tend to endorse more strongly certain values that are related to preferences for political and social change (*H3b*).

### **Research Design**

To test the different hypotheses discussed above, we use the five first rounds (2002–2010) of the ESS data, producing a merged dataset of 208,077 respondents, grouped in 26 different European countries.<sup>3</sup>

The dependent variable, participation in demonstrations, is included in the main questionnaire of the ESS, within a set of items regarding political participation. Respondents were asked whether they have taken part in a lawful demonstration during the last twelve months (1) or whether they have not (0).<sup>4</sup> The ESS includes other items on protest participation. Our focus is, however, on participation in demonstrations. Three reasons justify this decision: Firstly, within-country differences in the different modes of protest advise against the use of a composite index of political protest. In many cases citizens rarely employ other modes of protest, which implies that the number of cases is very small. Secondly, the argument concerning the interactive effect of individual and government ideology does not necessarily apply to other forms of protest participation, such as product boycotts (Teorell *et al.* 2007).

Thirdly, in almost every European country, taking part in demonstrations is the most common way, except for consumerism, of protesting.

A descriptive analysis of the data reveals that there is substantial variation across countries (Figure 2). Spain is the country where the percentage of citizens attending a demonstration is consistently the highest (20 per cent on average), while the percentage of Polish citizens so doing is the lowest (1.6 per cent). After excluding Spain, Luxembourg, France and Italy, the percentage of citizens participating in street protest across Europe rarely exceeds 10 per cent of the national samples.

[Figure 1 about here]

As explained in the previous section, we wish to know whether protesters do not report substantial ideological differences, and if this is either because all ideological groups have the same probability of protesting (*H1a*) or because extreme right-wing individuals have a similar or identical likelihood of protesting to left-wing citizens (*H1b*). Secondly, we want to ascertain whether governments' ideological orientations influence individuals' willingness to take part in demonstrations, and whether they do so heterogeneously, with right-wing individuals protesting more under left-wing governments and, left-wing individuals demonstrating in the streets more frequently when the government is right-wing (*H2a*) or, alternatively, that this effect is absent (*H2b*). Finally, we want to explore whether left-wing individuals still take part in demonstrations more often than right-wing citizens because they tend to be more closely connected to actors using protest to express their demands (*H3a*), or because their distinctive set of values drives this relationship (*H3b*).

The main independent individual-level variable in our analyses is, therefore, individuals' ideological self-placement. In general, previous research has for the most part assumed that the relationship between ideology and protest behaviour is linear (Dalton 2008a; Gilljam *et al.* 2012). However, this assumption is not entirely valid to

test the preceding hypotheses. Therefore, following Hutter and Kriesi (2013), we have operationalised ideological self-placement using five dummy variables for those individuals who place themselves on the extreme left (0–1), left (2–4), centre (5), right (6–8), extreme right (9–10) or choose the option *don't know* or *don't answer*. This will allow us to test the linearity of the relationship between ideology and participation in demonstrations.<sup>5</sup>

In order to test the political mobilisation argument, we look at the relative impact on the propensity to protest of identification with left-wing ruling parties, with left-wing parties in opposition, or with centre or right-wing parties, leaving no party identification as a reference category. The idea is to test whether mobilisation by political parties (indirectly measured by party identification) has any effect on the individual likelihood of participating in demonstrations. In particular, we expect that those individuals close to left-wing parties in opposition are more likely to protest, compared to individuals close to left-wing parties in government and to right-wing parties.

In addition, we check the impact that personal values have on participation in demonstrations, and their conditional (interactive) effect upon individuals' ideological predispositions. In particular, we take into consideration three values of the well-known 'human values scale' (Schwartz 2006: 2012): one more closely connected to right-wing positions (security), one more ideologically neutral (conformity) and one more closely related to left-wing positions (universalism) (Pioro *et al.* 2011: 511).<sup>6</sup>

We have also included some control variables in our analyses. The first two individual variables are 'interest in politics' and 'education' and are aimed at capturing individuals' cognitive mobilisation (Inglehart 1990). The interest in politics variable has been dichotomised and takes a value of 1 when respondents state that he or she is very or quite interested in politics and 0 otherwise. The number of years of full-time education has been introduced into the analyses as a measure of education. This variable ranges between 0 and 25. Additionally, we have included in the models a post-materialism index that ranges from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 18.<sup>7</sup> Other

variables measuring individuals' resources (besides education) have also been included in the analyses. These variables are: the size of the municipality where the individual lives, which ranges from 1, 'A big city', to 5, 'A farm or home in the countryside', respondents' gender (1 'Male', 0 'Female'), age and individuals' employment situation. This last variable identifies whether the respondent is unemployed (1) or employed (0). These variables have been proven to influence political participation in general and participation in protest activities in particular (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001; Norris *et al.* 2005).

The key independent contextual-level variable in our analyses is governments' ideological orientation, which is an aggregate measure of the ideological position of each country's government. The position of ruling parties has been calculated using the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). This variable ranges from -100 when a party devotes its entire electoral programme to left-wing issues to +100 when it has a completely right-wing electoral manifesto. This original scale has been converted into a 0–10 scale. In cases of government coalitions, we computed a weighted average based on the policy position of each party in government and the number of seats each party has in parliament.

Finally, two contextual variables are also added to the analyses as controls. Firstly, a dummy that groups together the Eastern European countries in the sample to capture the potential effect of the common Communist legacy on countries' protest levels (Glenn 2003);<sup>8</sup> and, secondly, a variable that captures GDP growth during the year prior to the interview taking place, in order to assess the potential effect that the state of the economy could have upon individuals' likelihood to protest (Dalton *et al.* 2010).

## **Results**

The nature of our argument makes hierarchical models particularly suited for our analyses. Multilevel techniques allow for testing cross-level interactions between

individual and contextual variables and the correct calculation of standard errors for hierarchical or nested data sets (Snijders and Bosker 2011).

Model 0 in Table 1 is the null model. Models 1 to 3 are aimed at testing the impact of ideology on protest behaviour and examine whether this relationship varies depending on government ideology. Model 1 includes all the individual variables, as well as the different dummies for ideology; Model 2 adds the government's ideological orientation, and country level controls; Model 3 adds the cross-level interactions, to test the conditional effect of government ideology on the relationship between individual ideology and protest.

Model 1 shows that being left-wing (either extreme left-wing or left-wing) has a positive and significant effect on the likelihood of demonstrating. Extreme left- and left-wing individuals are significantly more likely to protest than centrists (reference category) and the remaining individuals on the ideological spectrum, those without an ideology (DK/NA) being least likely to participate in demonstrations. It is noteworthy that extreme right-wingers also tend to protest more when compared to those individuals who place themselves at the centre of the scale (reference category), and to right-wing individuals; however, the likelihood of this group participating in a demonstration is far from that of citizens on the left of the ideological spectrum. These results, which are robust across models, confirm the higher likelihood of protesting of left-wing citizens. The results also show that the relationship between ideology and protest is not perfectly linear (Dalton 2008a; Gilljam *et al.* 2012), especially due to the behaviour of the extreme right of the ideological gamut.

[Table 1 about here]

We further refined this expectation below. We estimated a model with the interactions of the ideology dummies and the ESS round dummies. The results are displayed in Figure 2.<sup>9</sup> The figure shows the marginal effects of protesting by

ideological position (the centre being the reference category) over time. We included the time dimension to check whether coefficients behave differently according to the time period. Although the data used in this paper only cover a period of ten years, if the ideological normalisation of protesting had already occurred as a consequence of the events discussed above, we would see no differences across ideological groups in these years. The results are fairly consistent over time, showing that extreme left-wing individuals are more likely to protest than any other category. Interestingly, the likelihood of extreme right-wing individuals attending demonstrations is lower than moderate left-wing individuals, although the differences are not statistically significant in 2006 and 2010.

These results show that the relationship between ideology and protest is far from displaying a flat relationship, which partly invalidates one of the interpretations of the ideological normalisation of protesters hypothesis (*H1a*). The left still protests more (as the baseline hypothesis suggests), but the results also show that extreme right-wing individuals are close to moderate left-wingers in their protest behaviour. Although the time frame does not allow a definitive answer to be supplied, this strongly suggests that extreme right-wing citizens have also 'taken to the streets' and protested (thus partially supporting *H1b*).

[Figure 2 about here]

Returning to Model 2 in Table 1, it is observable that the introduction of level 2 variables in Models 2 and 3 reduces cross-country residual variance in the likelihood of protesting by only three percentage points, which indicates the reduced capacity of the aggregate measures to explain cross-national differences in the frequency of the individual propensity to demonstrate. Here, the limited explanatory capacity of government ideology to explain cross-country differences is reasonable if we take into account the occurrence of within-country changes in the ideology of the incumbent

party over the decade analysed. Model 2 also shows that the effect of government ideology is not significant.

To further support our initial finding on the lack of 'ideological normalisation of protesters', we have estimated a third model (Model 3) adding cross-level interactions between individual and government ideology. Following hypothesis *H2a*, we expect that individuals' likelihood of demonstrating will increase when the ideological orientation of the government is opposed to that of individuals' ideological self-placement.

We report in Figure 3 the marginal effects and the confidence intervals of these cross-level interactions, for a better understanding of the magnitude and direction of the coefficients. In agreement with hypothesis *H2a*, the interaction between left wing positions (either extreme left-wing or left-wing) and government ideology is significant and positive, showing that the association between left-wing ideology and protest is stronger when governments are right wing. However, and contrary to what was also expected from hypothesis *H2a*, the likelihood of protesting among right-wing individuals appears to be unaffected by government ideology. Right-wing citizens are equally likely to protest regardless of the ideological orientation of the government (*H2b*).

Interestingly, those who place themselves on the extreme right of the political scale show a greater propensity to protest when the government's ideological orientation is also right wing. Therefore, the impact of government ideology is stronger among extreme left-wingers and extreme right-wingers. Extreme left-wing individuals are over 10 percentage points more likely to protest when the government's ideology is right wing than when it is left wing (3.2). This difference in the probability of demonstrating against the government, depending on its ideological profile, is approximately 2 percentage points for moderate left-wing individuals, -1.5 in the case of right-wing citizens and 5 percentage points greater among far-right individuals. This result shows that, contrary to what has been recently argued by Huttler and Kriesi (2013), extreme right-wing citizens do not opt only for the electoral arena in order to express discontent.



Surprisingly, both, extreme right-wing and extreme left-wing citizens participate more in demonstrations under right-wing governments.

[Figure 3 about here]

Altogether, these results suggest that both individual and government ideology matter when explaining protest participation. Right-wing governments have a multiplying effect on extreme left-wing individuals' likelihood of demonstrating. This effect is also present among extreme right-wing citizens, who demonstrate more under conservative governments, although to a far lower degree. In addition, both extreme left-wing and left-wing citizens continue to be those who demonstrate the most, even under progressive governments. Therefore, not only do left-wing citizens demonstrate more than others, but they are also more likely to do so when the party in power is right wing. Thus, left-wing individuals continue to manifest a greater probability of protesting, and this is so independently of government orientation.

Why do we observe this relationship? As stated above, mobilisation by left-wing political actors (*H3a*) or individual values (*H3b*) may be behind this effect. However, as our goal is to understand why left-wing citizens still protest more under left-wing governments, we next restrict the analysis to those cases (country/year) in which the ruling party is left wing (that is, those which score on average less than 5 on the ideological scale). As stated above, in order to test the mobilisation argument we introduce a series of dummy variables measuring individuals' identification with the government party or the opposition party. To test the effect of personal values we employ the values of security, conformity and universalism.

The results are shown in Table 2. The results from Model 1 suggest that party identifiers always participate in demonstrations more than non-identifiers (with an estimated probability of .11) when the government is left wing. But more importantly, it shows that individuals who identify with left-wing parties in opposition demonstrate by

far the most (a predicted probability of .17). Individuals who feel close to left-wing parties in government (with a probability of .13) tend to participate in demonstrations more than non-identifiers, but with a much lower propensity, one closer to right-wing party identifiers (with a probability of .12). In other words, left-wing party identifiers substantially reduce their participation in demonstrations once their party is in government (for similar results in the US, see Heaney and Rojas 2011: 57). Additionally, Model 1 in Table 2 shows that once we restrict the analyses to left-wing governments, the impact of government ideology becomes significant. This result shows that the more centrist is the left-wing ruling party or parties, the higher are the levels of protest.

[Table 2 about here]

While party identification can only roughly test the effect of party mobilisation on protest participation, the results suggest that citizens' propensity to participate in demonstrations is somehow conditioned by their links with left-wing parties (party identification), especially so if the identification is with left-wing parties in the opposition. However, these results do not disprove the possibility that left-wing individuals still protest more because of their underlying personal values. In Models 2 to 4, we test whether values have a greater effect on the left than on the right, even when the government is left-leaning. To test this possibility, we estimate a different model for each of the aforementioned values and their interactions with individuals' ideological orientation. As can be seen in Models 2 to 4 in Table 2, individual values (security, conformity and universalism) are also important to explain why left-wing citizens still demonstrate more, even against left-wing governments.

Figure 4, which displays the predicted probabilities of these interactions, shows that the effect of personal values on protest participation is different among extreme and moderate left-wing individuals, on the one hand, and centrist and right-wing

individuals, on the other. Left-wing individuals with progressive values (low levels of security and conformity, and high levels of universalism) show a higher probability of protesting than right-wing individuals with similar values. Nevertheless, differences are only consistently significant for low levels of security and conformity and high levels of universalism, the profile of values that best adapts to left-wing individuals.

[Figure 4 about here]

The above results are consistent with the idea that left-wing individuals still demonstrate more than any of the other ideological groups, even when the government is left wing. Our analyses suggest that this is related to the fact that left-wing citizens who identify with left-wing parties in opposition, still one of the main 'instigators' of protest, take to the street more often. The conditional impact of values is also important, although more limited, among left-wing individuals. Having progressive values (low levels of security, low levels of conformity and high levels of universalism) substantially modifies extreme left-wing individuals' likelihood to protest. Left-wing individuals with progressive values are also more prone to take part in demonstrations, although differences with their counterparts having less progressive values are not significant.

### **Final Discussion**

This paper has sought to examine how ideology affects individuals' probability of taking part in a demonstration. We have tried to do so not only by performing a comparative analysis of the effect that individuals' ideology has on their decision to demonstrate, but also by testing the conditional effect of governments' ideological orientation in this relationship. To do this, we have used a large dataset containing thousands of cases of citizens from all over Europe between 2002 and 2011.

The first finding of this paper is in line with the conventional wisdom (our baseline hypothesis) that left-wing citizens (especially extreme left-wing individuals) protest more than any other ideological group. This evidence appears to be constant during the entire first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our results also show that the relationship between individual ideology and protest holds regardless of government ideology. Thus, even though the relationship between ideology and participation in protest tends to be somewhat convex at its extreme right end, it is far from displaying any ideological convergence. This implies that the so-called ‘normalisation, or proliferation, of protest’ might have changed other elements of the protesters’ profiles (Dalton 2008a; Marien *et al.* 2010; Oser *et al.* 2013), but it has not affected the dominant ideological profile of demonstrators. These results reinforce the idea that (moderate) right-wing citizens continue to use party politics to channel their demands, leaving demonstrations to the left (Grande and Kriesi 2012; Hutter and Kriesi 2013). They also support the research of Caren *et al.* (2011: 147), which states that in the United States ‘there has been no fundamental change in the overall level of protest participation and the types of people who demonstrate.’

Secondly, we have tried to explain why the left demonstrates more even when the government is left-wing. We have argued that both the greater mobilisation of those individuals who identify with left-wing parties in opposition and the progressive values of left-wing citizens can help to explain this. Our analysis suggest that this is in fact the case: individuals who identify with left-wing parties in opposition, who are those more likely to be summoned to action under left-wing governments, protest more than individuals who feel closer to the ruling party (or coalition parties) of the left. This confirms previous arguments claiming that individuals only engage in protest activities after having been targeted and motivated to participate (Klandermans 1997; Schussman and Soule 2005). Personal values also appear to make a difference to the individual decision to take to the streets, conditioning left-wing individuals’ and, especially, extreme left wing individuals’ propensity to demonstrate.

These conclusions are obviously tentative, due to the fact that we have employed a proxy to estimate the effect of mobilisation, namely the individual degree of identification with political parties. Further research estimating the direct effect of mobilisation is needed to confirm this argument, and to address some additional puzzles that have emerged in the course of the present article. Firstly, further research should seek to explain why extreme right-wing citizens demonstrate more when the government is right wing. This may be due to the increasing frustration of extreme right-wing citizens who had previously opted to voice their demands by giving initial electoral support to a moderate right-wing party (Kriesi 2012). Secondly, it should investigate further the question of why the left still protest more when the government is left wing. One avenue for research is to analyse what leftist parties do when they are in government and whether their actions especially affect left-wing behaviour. A possible answer to this latter quandary might be related to the tendency of left-wing governments to move to the centre of the ideological spectrum once they gain power. Finally, further research should examine why right-wing actors tend to mobilise their supporters less to demonstrate, as rational explanations do not seem to provide a clear answer. Political entrepreneurs' incentives and strategies for mobilisation should be ideologically neutral once we take into consideration the political orientation of the governing party. Political dissatisfaction with the conservative policies implemented by right-wing ruling parties might motivate trade unions and left-wing parties to mobilise against the government, but the opposite logic should also be true for right-wing entrepreneurs and right-wing parties when the government is left-wing. One possible answer could be that right-wing actors anticipate that their potential targets for mobilisation, right-wing citizens, are less prone to employ this type of political action.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to the World Protests report (Ortiz *et al.* 2013), '80% of all protests between 2006 and 2013 targeted government's policies or decisions'.

<sup>2</sup> Although our interest in the context of countries brings us closer to this literature, our approach is different from this research in two significant ways. Firstly, we are interested in individuals' actual participation in demonstrations more than in the effectiveness of social movements. Secondly, the structure of political opportunities pays attention to the institutional configuration of each country, and institutions rarely change. However, the ideological leanings of governments vary not only across countries, but also over time.

<sup>3</sup> Some countries have taken part in more than one round and others in only some. Consequently, we decided to use only countries as the second aggregate nested unit. See the online Appendix for more details. Additionally, four countries were excluded from the analysis because parties' policy positions were not available in the Comparative Manifesto Project, which we use as the variable to measure governments' ideological positions. These countries are Israel, Turkey, Russia and the Ukraine.

<sup>4</sup> The original wording is as follows: *There are different ways to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you taken part in a lawful public demonstration?* Here it is important to note that our dependent variable reflects whether an individual has participated in a demonstration in the previous 12 months. It may be the case, nevertheless, that the interaction between an individual's ideology and his or her government's ideology would have a different impact when estimating the total number of demonstrations in which an individual has taken part in the previous 12 months. Unfortunately, data limitations prevent us from testing whether this is true. The online Appendix gives more details on within- and between-country variations.

<sup>5</sup> To check whether the linearity assumption holds for each country in our analyses, we have run separate logistic regressions for each country-year included in the analysis. In only 10 country-

elections does this relationship clearly display a linear trend. Dropping these units from the analysis or introducing a dummy that distinguishes them does not change our final results.

<sup>6</sup> Three additive scales have been created with the following items. Conformity: 'It is important to do what you are told and follow rules' and 'It is important to behave properly'. Security: 'It is important to live in secure and safe surroundings' and 'It is important that government is strong and ensures safety'. Universalism: 'It is important that people are treated equally' and 'It is important to care for nature and the environment'. These additive value scales have been transformed into three different categories, low, medium and high, using the 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile as a cut-off point. According to the ESS data, all three scales are almost symmetrically distributed, with the exception of universalism, which is skewed to the left. However, security cannot be considered a uniquely right-wing value, as it is equally distributed among right-wing and left-wing ESS respondents. Conformity is a more right-wing value. Universalists are more frequent among left-wing citizens.

<sup>7</sup> The ESS provides different questions that can be associated to materialism/post-materialism values. The three indicators employed here are the following: 'It is important to be rich, to have money and expensive things'; 'It is important to be successful and to achieve recognition'; 'It is important that the government is strong and ensures safety'. The answer categories range from 'Very much like me' taking a value of 1 to 'Not at all like me' for which the value is 6. The index included in the empirical analysis is an additive index of these three indicators.

<sup>8</sup> Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia are grouped into the Eastern European countries. Here it might be worth discussing whether the left and right concepts stand for the same thing in the countries under consideration. Previous research has argued that respondents' self-placement on the left-right scale is conditioned by the country's political context (Klingemann *et al.* 2006). Despite this, we contend here that individuals' self-categorization as left-wing or right-wing necessarily entails some common values, beliefs and behaviour. Recent research has also shown that the instrument used to capture respondents' ideology in the ESS is on average equivalent across groups with different levels of political interest and different levels of education in 23 out of 25 European countries. This research has also shown that there are not differences in the use of the left-right response scale based on the political past of the country (Weber 2011).

<sup>9</sup> The results of this test can be found in the online Appendix. The presence of any cohort effect in the ideological normalisation of protest (Caren *et al.* 2011) should also be ruled out with this test. Any cohort effect should also be noticeable over time in aggregate terms, showing a slow but increasing convergence between different ideological positions.

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