INTERPERSONAL TRUST AND THE MAGNITUDE OF PROTEST
A Micro and Macro Level Approach

MICHELLE BENSON
University at Buffalo, State University of New York

THOMAS R. ROCHON
University of St. Thomas

The authors demonstrate that interpersonal trust is an important factor in motivating protest participation and raising the intensity of protest. They suggest that high levels of trust make individuals likely to anticipate low expected costs of participation while leading to optimistic estimates of the potential benefits of protest. Using 1990 World Values Survey data for 33 countries, a series of multinomial logistic regressions confirms that interpersonal trust plays an important role in determining both militant and nonmilitant forms of protest. These findings hold at the individual level in both free and nonfree societies. The authors also find some evidence that the same relationships hold at the national level. In addition, trust and postmaterialist values are shown to have complementary roles in fostering protest, whereas education is largely insignificant. Interpersonal trust, therefore, serves as both a personal and a social capital resource that fosters collective action in the form of protest.

Keywords: protest; trust; social capital; postmaterialism; World Values Survey

From a cost-benefit perspective, the motivation for political participation remains something of a mystery. This is even more true when one considers the costs and benefits of protest participation. Engaging in political protest is especially problematic because both the costs levied on participants and the benefits that might be expected from the protest are difficult to assess. It is relatively easy to guess the costs of voting in terms of one's time and effort. These matters are far less certain in the case of protest participation. The costs of taking part in a demonstration, for example, may be relatively

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small, or they may entail arrest and prosecution, depending on whether some of one's fellow demonstrators become violent and on how the police react to possible provocations. The outcomes of a demonstration are also unclear. It is as unlikely that one's personal participation in a demonstration will make a difference as it is unlikely that that one's single vote will determine the outcome of an election. In the case of voting, though, one at least knows that the election will decide the future incumbent of some political office. In the case of a demonstration, it is not clear (often even after the fact) whether there has been any impact at all.

All of this is to say that there are significant uncertainties surrounding protest participation and that those uncertainties would tend to reduce people's readiness to take part in protest. It is this uncertainty that led Dennis Chong (1991) to conceptualize most forms of protest as examples of an assurance game, in which one's participation depends in part on how many other people one expects will participate. The expected number of other participants is important because a larger number of participants reduces the expected cost of participation. As Chong points out, "Members of a group are enthusiastic about contributing to collective action or are pressured to do so, only when such collective action has a realistic opportunity to achieve the desired public good" (p. 11). Because the odds of success are directly related to the number of participants, Chong adds that people are more likely to join in a protest when they believe that many others will become involved as well. The trait of looking to see what others will do before getting involved accounts for the bandwagons that sometimes lead to the startling growth of a protest movement as well as the cascading defections that portend movement collapse (Chong, 1991).[1]

Chong (1991) uses this insight to explore the actions of movement organizations designed to increase people's confidence that others will join them in a protest activity. Such actions include preprotest meetings or rallies and the informal "milling" phase that takes place before a mob swings into action. These forms of mutual self-assurance are promoted by movement organizers to set the number of anticipated participants as high as possible. It makes sense for movements to do these things because the expectation of a high turnout for a given protest can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

1. Although he does not place the phenomenon in a theoretical context, Granovetter (1978) formalizes the bandwagon effect in terms of thresholds. He observes that a person's threshold for joining a protest is "the proportion of the group he would have to see join before he would do so" (p. 1422). People bandwagon onto collective protest, but they have different thresholds at which they are willing to do so. Schelling (1978) and DeNardo (1985) likewise link the number of protesters to the costs and benefits associated with protesting.

In this article, we approach the same problem from a slightly different angle. We are concerned with the factors that set a high or low threshold for an individual's participation in political protest. Specifically, we examine the role of interpersonal trust in protest participation. We believe that a high level of trust should make individuals more likely to anticipate low expected costs of participation while leading to optimistic estimates of the potential benefits of protest. Other things being equal, interpersonal trust will lead to a greater readiness to take part in protest activities. This effect will be especially pronounced in the case of more demanding, militant, and hence potentially costly forms of protest.

It is well established that protest is more likely to occur in free societies, where the costs of protest are likely to be lower and the expected political benefits higher (Tarrow, 1998). However, we posit that trust facilitates protest participation even when political and civil liberties are absent. Although political freedoms have been shown to facilitate protest participation, it remains true that citizens without freedom still engage in significant levels of political protest. In such countries, interpersonal trust may be an important catalyst in obtaining collective action because it leads to greater optimism that others who share the same grievance will join in a protest.

To examine the impact of interpersonal trust on protest in 33 countries, we use data from the 1990 World Values Survey (World Values Survey Group, 1994) and the protest event database of the Protocol for the Assessment of Nonviolent Direct Action (PANDA) (Bond & Bond, 1998). This article begins with an elaboration of the theory linking interpersonal trust to protest. Next, we discuss the research design and operationalization of the trust and protest variables. We then present multinomial logit estimations of the relationship between trust and protest. Our analysis demonstrates that interpersonal trust increases not only the odds of a person participating in protest activities but also their odds of being involved in more militant protest actions. In countries where people are generally more trusting, we also find higher levels of protest activity. Finally, we conclude with the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST AND PROTEST

The relationship between interpersonal trust and protest rests on the uncertainty attached to both the costs and the rewards of protest participation. We suggest that trusting individuals will be more likely than less trusting individuals to deem movement participation safe and worthwhile. As Coleman (1990) states, "a group whose members manifest trustworthiness

and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust" (p. 304). Thus, the threshold for political action for trusting individuals should be lower than for nontrusting individuals because they have more generous estimates of the number of people who will join them in protest.

Trusters, we suggest, are able to make estimations about the likelihood of success in protest with more confidence than nontrusters. This is because an individual's level of trust allows him or her to form expectations about the actions of others (Dasgupta, 1988). As Gambetta (1988) notes,

> When we say that we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him. (p. 217)

In essence, a trusting person believes that under similar circumstances, 100 people willing to take action for a cause will continue to be willing to take action at another time or place. Consequently, whether trusting individuals are right or wrong in their assessments of others, they are able to make cost-benefit calculations more resolutely than individuals who do not feel that others can be trusted.[2] In effect, we posit that trust in others may lead to the perception that there is a more stable base for a movement as well as more sanguine expectations concerning the potential impact of the movement.

Estimates of the beliefs and action propensity of others are important because of the uncertainties that attach to political protest. Protest is by no means a "popular" activity in that a majority of the population disapproves of most forms of protest action (Rochon, 1990), and less than 5% of the supporters of a cause typically become active on behalf of that cause (Lichbach, 1998). A government could thus conceivably oppress at least the occasional protest without losing the support of the majority of the population. Consequently, protesters must trust that a government will follow previously established patterns of protest tolerance. The best guarantee that this will happen is if a protest is a large and peaceful one, for the costs of repression rise sharply as protests become larger. When protest achieves newsworthy mass, both government and protesters have an interest in an orderly process in which there is a set of clearly defined mutual expectations. If, then, an individual

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2. A number of authors have made an association between trust and predictability or the probability that another actor will act in a certain way (e.g., Gambetta, 1988; Hardy, Phillips, & Lawrence, 1998; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Coleman (1990, p. 100) similarly notes that trust affects a truster's calculation concerning the probability that he or she will be better off, or at least not worse off, as a result of taking a risk.

trusts that others who believe in a cause will actively support it, the expected costs of protest are much lower. The likelihood of taking part in protest is of course related to one's own resources for participation (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1996), to the grievances one feels toward a regime, to the extent of connections with others associated with the protest (Klandermans, 1984; Marwell & Oliver, 1993), and to the tolerance for protest displayed by the regime (Tarrow, 1998). Alongside these factors, however, we view interpersonal trust as an additional resource for protest participation. The more militant the form of protest undertaken, the more strongly this logic holds. More militant forms of protest also rely on trust because the potential costs of such protest are even greater. Therefore, we investigate two hypotheses about the effects of interpersonal trust on individuals. First, we consider whether trust in others helps individuals decide to undertake a specific protest action, such as participating in a demonstration. Second, we examine whether trust affects the range of protest forms an individual uses, specifically whether trust emboldens people to undertake more militant (and even illegal) forms of protest.

We also examine the effects of generalized interpersonal trust on protest under an authoritarian government. Although the relatively closed nature of authoritarian government may heighten grievances and leave few or no institutional channels for expressing demands, the costs of protest are both more uncertain and potentially much higher than is true in a democracy. By contrast, guarantees of individual rights should lead to a decreased fear of protest. Political freedoms not only decrease the likelihood that one would be inordinately punished for protesting but may also ensure that the benefits of successful protest will be longer lived than under a dictatorial government (Olson, 1993).[3]

In this article, we consider the relationship between trust and protest in a variety of cultural, social, and political contexts. We test empirically the impact of generalized interpersonal trust on protest by using the World Values Survey for approximately 34,000 individuals in 33 countries in 1990.[4] In this survey, individuals were asked if they felt that generally speaking, "most people can be trusted" or that "you can't be too careful in dealing with peo-

3. Our indicator for the level of political freedoms was obtained from the Freedom House index of political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House, 2001), which has been published annually since 1972. We recode the Freedom House measure so that the higher the score on the 7-point index, the more free a country is deemed to be.

4. The 33 countries in our study, including 24 democracies and 11 partly free and nonfree states, are listed in the Appendix.

ple." Individuals who chose the former were coded 1, and those who chose the latter were coded 0.[5]

Although our theory rests on the individual psychology of protest participation, it has implications for national patterns of protest as well. Trust in this aggregate sense is often referred to as "social capital," which Putnam (1995b) describes as the "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared interests" (pp. 664-665).[6] We test the impact of interpersonal trust at the societal level by aggregating the individual-level data into the mean level of interpersonal trust by country. We then examine the relationship between the average level of societal interpersonal trust and several measures of the amount and militancy of protest participation in our sample of 33 countries.

THE MODEL AND ITS MEASUREMENT

Our emphasis on the importance of interpersonal trust as a source of protest participation does not, of course, diminish the importance of political convictions in motivating protest. Individuals will join a social movement only if they believe in its cause. Inglehart (1997, pp. 211-213) has shown that individuals with postmaterialist value orientations are much more likely to engage in protest than people with materialist value orientations. Postmaterialists have a more participatory orientation to politics than materialists, and they are also less accepting of hierarchical authority and conventional (institutionally bounded) channels of participation. Postmaterialist support for such issues as environmental protection and women's rights lies behind the blossoming of these protest movements over the past several decades. To investigate the interpersonal trust–protest relationship, then, we control for value orientations.

The controls for postmaterialism are intended to remove the effects of sympathy for protest causes in explaining participation in protest. It is also important to control for other demographic factors that are known to affect

5. We suggest that an individual's level of trust is relatively stable throughout his or her lifetime. This assertion is supported at the aggregate level by Putnam (2000), who notes that "most if not all, of the decline in American social trust since the 1960's is attributable to generational succession" (p. 140). Indeed, the proportion of baby boomers who trusted others remained unchanged from the 1970s to the late 1990s. We believe that the proportion of trusters in an age cohort remains constant because of the relatively fixed nature of an individual's level of trust (rather than nontrusters becoming trusters and vice versa).

6. Similar definitions of social capital have been used by Coleman (1988), Fukuyama (1995), and Inglehart (1997). See Jackman and Miller (1998) for a review of social capital as both an exogenous and endogenous variable.

individual proclivities to engage in protest. Verba et al. (1996) demonstrate that political participation—whether conventional or via protest—depends to a great degree on the extent of political and social resources on which one can draw. The indicators of individual resources most commonly used in the literature on participation include age, gender, and education. We control for each of these factors in our model of protest participation.[7]

At the individual level, we operationalize protest participation using the 1990 World Values Survey. Each respondent reports whether they have ever

1. signed a petition,
2. joined a boycott,
3. attended a lawful demonstration,
4. joined an unofficial (wildcat) strike, and/or
5. occupied a building or factory.

We are interested not only in what leads individuals to participate in these actions but also in the determinants of militancy in protest participation. In contrast to studies that examine the frequency of protest participation, we are concerned here with the readiness of an individual to take part in the kinds of actions whose overt militancy creates uncertainty about the participation of others and the potential costs of participation. We expect that interpersonal trust is conducive to protest participation in general but that it is especially important as a facilitator of participation in more intense forms of protest.

Consequently, we operationalize the dependent variable, protest participation, as a scale of increasing militancy.[8] Using the Guttman scaling procedure, we assign respondents a score of 1 if they have signed a petition, a score of 2 if they have signed a petition and joined a boycott, and so forth, up to a score of 5 if they have participated in all of the protest activities listed above. Reliability analysis on these items confirms that the Guttman scale fits the

7. The socioeconomic status variable provided by the World Values Survey was posed in only 23 of the 33 countries included in our analysis. The inclusion of this variable would preclude the use of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, South Africa, and Sweden and consequently reduce the number of observations by 27%. We hence decided not to use socioeconomic status as a control variable in this study. In addition, we found no substantive differences in the empirical results when socioeconomic status was included in our model and estimated with the survey results from the 23 countries.

8. In short, our scale ranges from relatively low-cost, legal actions to relatively high-cost, illegal actions. Several studies have suggested that legal and illegal forms of protest lie on two distinct dimensions (e.g., Finkel, Muller, & Opp, 1989; Muller, 1979; Opp, 1988). We allow for this proposition by using multinomial logit analyses to estimate the effects of the independent variables on each level of protest participation.

pattern of individual protest actions for respondents in the 33 countries of our study.[9]

Taking into account the control variables described in the previous section, we propose the following model of individual protest participation:

$$\text{Protest} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{TrustOthers} + \beta_2 \text{PostmatValues} - \beta_3 \text{Freedom} -$$
$$\beta_4 \text{Gender} - \beta_5 \text{Age} + \beta_6 \text{AgeFinSchool} + \varepsilon,$$

where Protest is measured by the Guttman scale of protest participation; TrustOthers is scaled 0 (*can't be too careful*) or 1 (*most people can be trusted*); PostmatValues is measured as 1 (*materialist*), 2 (*mixed*), or 3 (*postmaterialist*); Freedom runs from 1 (*not free*) to 7 (*free*); Gender is coded 1 (*male*) or 2 (*female*); and AgeFinSchool runs from 1 (*at 12 years or younger*) to 10 (*at 21 years or older*).

AGGREGATE LEVELS OF PROTEST

An additional goal of this article is to assess whether the individual relationship between interpersonal trust and protest also affects national protest patterns. We expect that countries with higher average levels of interpersonal trust should experience greater amounts of protest, particularly in the upper reaches of the Guttman scale of militancy. To examine the relationship between national levels of interpersonal trust and protest, we created a nation-level data set from the average levels of interpersonal trust and the average Guttman protest participation scores for the 33 countries of our study. As a check on the survey-based protest scale, we added an independent measure of national levels of protest. The PANDA uses a computer program to scan the Reuters news wire service and to code reports of violent and nonviolent protest around the world (Bond & Bond, 1998). We use the total event counts for five different forms of protest to measure the volume of protest in each country for 1990. The event categories included in the index are

9. These actions scale well in the Guttman format, with a λ_2 coefficient for reliability of .758, a "respectable" score. A Guttman scale for similar survey items was also successfully used in five nations by Barnes and Kaase (1979). Muller (1972, p. 934) found that "a perfect Guttman scale" could likewise be used to represent the potential for political violence. Guttman (1945) and DeVellis (1991) suggest that λ is actually a conservative estimate of the scale reliability and that the true reliability is greater than the highest λ coefficient. For further information on how λ scores are calculated, see Guttman (1945).

1. commemorations and vigils;
2. social, political, or economic boycotts;
3. general strikes;
4. blockades or other actions that obstruct, disrupt, subvert, overload, or otherwise prevent normal operations; and
5. other unspecified physically destructive actions.

Coding protest events from news services offers substantial advantages in estimating national volumes of protest. Event coding from news reports allows immediate and precise data generation over a specified range of events compared, for example, with reliance on archival records or on the use of recall measures in surveys. Event coding has also been shown to have a high degree of measurement reliability.[10]

The weakness of event coding lies in measurement validity, particularly when cross-national comparisons are involved. Even when relying on a wire service of global reach such as the Reuters service, events in some countries (such as the United States) are far more likely to be reported than similar events in other countries. This may be due in part to lack of access given to reporters, making events difficult to observe. In addition, events in outlying parts of developing countries may be presumed by news editors to be of less interest to a predominantly First World media audience. We find clear evidence of these problems in the fact that 51 protest events were recorded or the United States in 1990, whereas in Chile and Estonia, for example, no protest events were recorded. There may have been more protest events in the United States than in the latter two countries because of its greater size if for no other reason. But the contrasting scores between these countries are surely not an accurate reflection of the differences in protest levels between them. As Burgess and Lawton (1972, p. 63) remark, trees fall in all forests but are more likely to be heard in some than in others.[11]

Despite these issues of measurement validity, we find the coding of wire service reports on protest events to be a useful check on results obtained purely from survey-based measures. The coding of events from the Reuters wire service is superior to the survey data in at least one sense: We know that all protest events in the wire service coding took place in 1990, the same year for which we have measures of societal trust. The World Values Survey ques-

10. The bulk of research experience with event coding involves human interpreters who read newspaper stories and then code them for events of interest. Bond and Bond (1998), by contrast, developed an automated event search protocol. They estimate that the convergence between machine-coded and human-coded data is greater than 70%.

11. There are also nongeographic biases in event coding. For example, the more militant and the more unusual a protest, the more likely it is to be reported.

tion on protest asks respondents if they have ever participated in a petition campaign, a boycott, a demonstration, and so on. Consequently, the Guttman scale measure we derive from those data portray events over perhaps a 20- or 30-year period. Faced with complementary flaws in the several measures of protest available to us, we use all available measures as a means of checking the reliability of our results. The wisdom of doing so is suggested by the fact that the survey-based Guttman scale of protest militancy (aggregated to the national level) correlates with the coding of Reuters wire service reports at the relatively modest level of $r = .28$.

ESTIMATION PROCEDURE AND RESULTS

PREDICTING PROTEST PARTICIPATION

Because we use a categorical dependent variable, multinomial logit is used to estimate the effects of interpersonal trust, ideological support for protest causes (postmaterialist values), the presence of political freedoms, and the demographic traits associated with personal resources for participation. Respondents in the World Values data set were surveyed on a country-by-country basis. Consequently, observations within countries are not independent, although observations between countries are independent. We correct for this problem by using Huber-White standard errors that have been clustered by country.[12]

The interpretation of the parameters in a logit model can be somewhat daunting. The β values themselves represent the logs of the odds, or logit values, a measure that does not lend itself to intuitive understanding. Consequently, we also report the odds ratios from the logit estimations. Odds ratios are transformations of the β parameters in which "a unit change in x_k, [means that] the odds [of increasing one's score on the dependent variable] are expected to change by a factor of $\exp(\beta_k)$ holding all other variables constant" (Long, 1997, p. 80). The odds ratio $(\exp[\beta_k])$ can be transformed into a percentage change in the odds by subtracting 1 and then multiplying by 100.[13]

Table 1 supports our assertion that interpersonal trust has a strong positive relationship with protest participation, even when we control for post-

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12. Such corrections have a substantial effect on the significance of the coefficients. However, an examination of the country-by country results of our model suggested that such corrections were necessary.

13. For an additional explanation of the interpretation of logit parameters and alternative methods of summarizing the results of maximum likelihood estimation models, see Long (1997).

materialist value orientations, political freedoms, and the additional socio-demographic independent variables listed above. The dependent variable in Table 1 is Guttman scaled, such that the first level of protest represents an individual who has signed a petition, the next level represents an individual who has joined in a boycott and signed a petition, and so forth up until the final level, at which an individual has participated in all five levels of protest action (signed a petition, joined a boycott, joined a lawful demonstration, joined an unofficial strike, and occupied a building). The results in Table 1 thus capture the odds of an individual going from no action to each of the different levels of protest intensity. An individual who has received a score of 1 has only signed a petition, whereas an individual with a score of 5 is an intensely dedicated activist. By coding the dependent variable in this fashion, we are able to observe how the independent variables affect the intensity as well as the likelihood of protest participation. Table 1 shows an increasingly strong relationship between interpersonal trust and successive levels of protest participation.

With the lower forms of protest (signing a petition only or boycotting and signing a petition), the odds ratios (1.35 and 1.61) show that the presence of interpersonal trust increases the odds of protest by approximately 35% to 61%. With the three more intense forms of protest, the odds of having participated in the action increase from approximately 80% to almost 100% when individuals trust others. In effect, these results represent a striking confirmation that interpersonal trust makes it easier to take part in protest, particularly with more militant forms of protest. This relationship holds up with controls for other features of individual beliefs and background as well as for social and political institutions.

As expected, postmaterialist value orientations and political freedoms are also strongly associated with protest participation. This association jumps dramatically at the most intense levels of protest. For example, moving from a mixed value orientation to a postmaterialist value orientation (i.e., increasing one unit of measurement) increases the odds of signing a petition by 29%. Postmaterialism increases the odds of participating in the other four specified actions anywhere from 90% for boycotting to 282% for occupying a building or factory. This result suggests the importance of ideological commitment to the kinds of causes that are frequently the object of contemporary protest (the protection of the environment, human rights and group rights of various kinds) and also for creating increased opportunities for public participation and influence in politics. Inglehart (1997) has shown that postmaterialists are far more willing than materialists to become involved in protest. This is because their values (e.g., for environmentalism and feminism) are often poorly expressed in public policy and because of their reduced support for

Table 1
Multinomial Logit of Guttman-Scaled Protest Participation

Protest Action	Odds Ratio	Coefficient	*SE*
Sign a petition			
Trust	1.350***	0.3000186	0.0857793
Postmaterialism	1.297***	0.2602917	0.0438707
Freedom	1.133**	0.1249246	0.0555003
Age	0.999	–0.0013662	0.0030496
Education	1.050	0.0486324	0.0377305
Sex	0.863***	–0.1472018	0.0529484
Constant		–2.155***	0.4593877
Boycott plus previous action			
Trust	1.610***	0.4763951	0.1029162
Postmaterialism	1.898***	0.6408338	0.0584985
Freedom	1.114*	0.107534	0.0554932
Age	0.994**	–0.0062481	0.0029849
Education	1.064	0.0618953	0.0435803
Sex	0.673***	–0.3956463	0.0562918
Constant		–3.512***	0.429291
Lawful demonstration plus previous actions			
Trust	1.796***	0.5857059	0.124087
Postmaterialism	2.135***	0.7583379	0.0750931
Freedom	1.196***	0.1791755	0.0688465
Age	0.989**	–0.0110937	0.0045852
Education	1.088*	0.0847828	0.0471454
Sex	0.585***	–0.5357104	0.0850706
Constant		–4.914***	0.6897536
Unofficial strikes plus previous actions			
Trust	1.779***	0.5758913	0.1296023
Postmaterialism	2.227***	0.800735	0.0973886
Freedom	1.227***	0.2046085	0.0639435
Age	0.988***	–0.0124372	0.0041119
Education	1.076	0.0732488	0.0460402
Sex	0.394***	–0.9301578	0.1140072
Constant		–5.465***	0.6796915
Occupy a building or factory plus previous actions			
Trust	1.985***	0.685795	0.147839
Postmaterialism	3.822***	1.340895	0.1284567
Freedom	1.197**	0.1797868	0.0722914
Age	0.990*	–0.0097086	0.0053425
Education	1.074	0.0711508	0.0507109
Sex	0.364***	–1.011942	0.142329
Constant		–7.762***	0.575534

Note: Logistic regression $\chi^2(30) = 6{,}689.83$; log likelihood = –40,453.03; $N = 34{,}129$.
*$p \le .10$. **$p \le .05$. ***$p \le .01$.

organizational authority in general and their high levels of political sophistication. As Inglehart concludes, postmaterialists are "less amenable to doing what they are told, and more adept at telling their governments what to do" (p. 323). Being adept at telling governments what to do is particularly important when it comes to more militant forms of protest; the odds of signing a petition are by contrast likely to be determined more by the chance encounter with an opportunity to do so.

Political freedoms are also shown to play a role in increasing the likelihood of all levels of protest. The effect is most pronounced, however, with regard to the top three levels of protest participation (lawful demonstration, an unofficial strike, and occupying a building or factory). For these more militant forms of protest, less free societies have approximately 20% to 22% lower odds of protest than societies that are only one step higher on the Freedom House index (e.g., Levels 1 to 2, Levels 2 to 3). A government that dramatically changes its political structure and attitude toward civil liberties can thus have an extremely large impact on the protest proclivities of individuals. This finding is perhaps most often manifest when governments liberalize restrictions on political freedoms and then face an explosion of protest participation. Indeed, these results suggest that if a society were to find itself in the midst of a transformation from being partly free (freedom = 3) to free (freedom = 7), then the likelihood of individuals participating in the most intense levels of protest would increase by up to 80%.

An interesting and somewhat unexpected result of our analysis lies in the nonsignificant relationship, almost across the board, between education and protest. We believe that this result is largely attributable to the relationship between education and both trust and postmaterialist value orientations. Indeed, Almond and Verba (1963), Coleman (1990), and Putnam (1995a, 2000) find a relationship between human capital (i.e., education) and social capital (i.e., trust) at both the individual and the aggregate levels. Inglehart (1990) also notes that there is a strong relationship between value orientations and education. He states that postmaterialists "are two to three times as likely as materialists to rank in the best educated quartile of their society" (p. 171). Our multivariate logit estimation results suggest that it is trust and value orientations, rather than level of education, that drive protest participation.[14] In

14. Indeed, when our model is run again without the trust variable, education has a significant, positive impact on protest for Guttman-scaled lawful demonstrations and unofficial strikes. For lawful demonstrations plus previous actions, $p \leq .05$, and for unofficial strikes plus previous actions, $p \leq .10$. When postmaterialist value orientations are excluded as a variable, education has a significant, positive effect on all levels of protest but signing a petition. When both trust and postmaterialist values are excluded, education has a positive, significant impact on protest at the $p \leq .10$ level for signing a petition and the $p \leq .05$ level for all other levels of protest intensity.

the presence of interpersonal trust and postmaterialist values, populations with limited education would not necessarily also be limited in their levels of civic engagement.

The demographic factors of gender and age that pervade much of the social movement literature show the expected relationship with protest. The gap in protest participation between men and women grows larger as one moves up the protest scale. Age, as one would expect, has no impact on one's likelihood of signing a petition. However, younger people are more likely than older people to participate in all of the successive levels of protest.

MOVING UP THE LADDER OF PROTEST MILITANCY

The results of the multinomial logit estimation in Table 1 indicate how the independent variables change the odds of moving from no protest (for which the base category is zero) to the least demanding form of protest (signing a petition) and from no action to each of the more militant and demanding forms of protest (e.g., occupying a building plus all previous actions). Table 2, in contrast, illustrates how select independent variables influence the odds of moving between levels of protest intensity. Our hypotheses for movement between levels of protest are the same as our hypotheses concerning protest participation.

Table 2 shows that interpersonal trust increases the odds of moving from no action to signing a petition by 35% and from signing a petition to boycotting by 19%. Thus, trusting others helps individuals move up the two initial steps of protest intensity. Interpersonal trust does not, however, significantly aid in the progression from boycotts to lawful demonstration, from lawful demonstration (plus previous actions) to unofficial strikes, or from unofficial strikes (plus previous actions) to occupying buildings. The combined findings shown in Tables 1 and 2 suggest that interpersonal trust is important in determining the magnitude of an individual's protest (i.e., whether someone will choose to participate in the range of successively more difficult actions presented in the Guttman scale). However, the results presented in Table 2 suggest that interpersonal trust pushes individuals to be more intense protesters only up to the point of taking part in boycotts. The odds of moving further on the scale to more intense forms of protest (lawful demonstrations, unofficial strikes, and occupying buildings) are not significantly greater among those high in interpersonal trust. Postmaterialist value orientations also show up in Table 2 as increasing the odds of engaging in the two least costly forms of protest. Unlike trust, however, postmaterialist values do increase the odds of moving from joining unofficial strikes to occupying buildings by 72%.

Table 2
Multinomial Logit Coefficients of Guttman-Scaled Protest Participation (N = 34,129)

Comparison	Trust Others	Postmaterialist Values	Freedom
No action → sign a petition			
Odds ratio	1.350***	1.297***	1.133**
β	0.300	0.260	–0.125
SE	0.086	0.044	–0.056
Sign a petition → boycott			
Odds ratio	1.193***	1.463***	0.983
β	0.176	0.381	–0.017
SE	0.047	0.053	0.032
Boycott → lawful demonstration			
Odds ratio	1.116	1.125	1.074
β	0.109	0.118	0.072
SE	0.074	0.076	0.054
Lawful demonstration → unofficial strike			
Odds ratio	0.990	1.043	1.026
β	–0.010	0.042	0.025
SE	0.092	0.073	0.040
Unofficial strike → occupy a building			
Odds ratio	1.116	1.716***	0.975
β	0.110	0.540	–0.025
SE	0.131	0.150	0.066

$**p \leq .05$. $***p \leq .01$.

One reason for the modest effect of trust on the more militant forms of protest is purely a matter of statistical artifact. Unofficial strikes and occupations of buildings are comparatively rare events. Just over 2% of the individuals surveyed in our 33 countries participated in unofficial strikes (plus previous actions), whereas just 0.78% of the sample had ever occupied buildings (plus previous actions). We also expect, however, that our logic connecting interpersonal trust to protest participation has diminished force when it comes to illegal protest (i.e., unofficial strikes and occupations of buildings). Generalized trust in others may be sufficient to generate expectations of high rates of participation in legal forms of protest. Illegal protest, by contrast, is executed by smaller groups of people who are tied to one another in face-to-face networks. Generalized trust is less relevant when one has reached specific agreement with others on a course of action. In that context, trust in other members of a group planning a protest—people known to an individual—is likely to be far more important than interpersonal trust. This logic holds particularly in democratic politics, in which the line between legal and illegal forms of protest is clearly specified and relatively stable.

As mentioned above, we reason that trust in others should also have an important impact on protest in countries where there are few or no political freedoms. Table 3 presents select results for this sample of 11 countries.[15] The model for nonfree countries is identical to the model presented above for the full sample of 33 countries. Table 3 presents the odds ratios and coefficients for only the most theoretically interesting variables: trust in others, postmaterialist value orientation, and political freedoms.[16]

The results in Table 3 suggest that interpersonal trust is uniquely important in nonfree countries for moving people up the ladder from the least demanding forms of protest participation to the more militant types of protest action.[17] Interpersonal trust is especially important at the lower and at the very highest levels of protest. At the top two levels, the belief that one can rely on others is especially important because there is significant uncertainty as to how a government will respond to a particular action. Postmaterialist value orientations also improve an individual's odds of participating more intensely in all but two types of action. The demographic variables are less important across the board, which suggests that interpersonal trust and postmaterialist values are especially important in determining who is likely to protest in nonfree states. These findings confirm our hypothesis that interpersonal trust is a key resource that lowers individual thresholds of protest participation, for both the easier and the most militant forms of protest activity, in states without political freedoms.

AGGREGATE LEVELS OF PROTEST

As described in the introduction to this article, we posit that the individual-level relationship between interpersonal trust and protest should be apparent at the cross-national level as well. Observed cross-national differences between types of protest are often imputed to differences in the political opportunity structures of particular countries. A political opportunity structure is a characterization of patterns of institutional access, elite competition, and potential political alliances that movement organizations take into

15. Countries in this sample, on the basis of their politics in 1990, include Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey.

16. With the partly free and nonfree sample, education had no significant impact on protest participation at any level. Age was a significant, negative determinant of protest for moving from no action to lawful demonstration, from boycotting to lawful demonstration, and from no action to occupying a building. Gender was significant for all categories except moving from no action to signing a petition. In sum, younger men are more likely to protest than others in nonfree countries.

17. Empirical analyses were also done on a sample of free countries. These results were very similar to the full sample results presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 3
Select Multinomial Logit Coefficients of Protest for Nonfree Sample

Comparison	Trust Others	Postmaterialist Values	Freedom
No action → sign a petition			
Odds ratio	1.331***	1.086	0.805
β	0.286	0.082	–0.217
SE	0.070	0.076	0.180
No action → join a boycott			
Odds ratio	1.397**	1.422***	0.734
β	0.334	0.352	–0.310
SE	0.152	0.089	0.205
Sign a petition → join a boycott			
Odds ratio	1.050	1.310***	0.911*
β	0.049	0.270	–0.093
SE	0.146	0.088	0.053
No action → lawful demonstration			
Odds ratio	1.254	1.675***	0.864
β	0.226	0.516	–0.146
SE	0.146	0.080	0.182
Boycott → lawful demonstration			
Odds ratio	0.898	1.178	1.178***
β	–0.108	0.164	0.164
SE	0.220	0.099	0.051
No action → unofficial strike			
Odds ratio	1.132	2.047***	0.907
β	0.124	0.716	–0.097
SE	0.143	0.138	0.133
Lawful demonstration → unofficial strike			
Odds ratio	0.902	1.222	1.050
β	–0.103	0.201	0.048
SE	0.195	0.132	0.079
No action → occupy building			
Odds ratio	2.404**	3.868***	0.892
β	0.877	1.353	–0.114
SE	0.408	0.302	0.241
Unofficial strike → occupy building			
Odds ratio	2.124*	1.890*	0.983
β	0.754	0.637	–0.017
SE	0.441	0.353	0.227

Logistic regression $\chi^2(30) = 124.09$***; log likelihood = –9,436.8267; $n = 9,226$.
*$p \leq .10$. **$p \leq .05$. ***$p \leq .01$.

account as they develop their strategies of protest (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Kitschelt, 1986; Tarrow, 1998; Rochon, 1998). Although the political opportunity structure of a country is surely significant in shaping protest strategies,

we propose that the cultural propensity to trust others also raises or lowers the bar for protest participation.

Because our national-level data on interpersonal trust and protest participation are limited to 33 countries, we confine our cross-national analysis to the examination of bivariate relationships. Building on our individual-level findings, we have constructed a cross-national data set for 33 countries that provides information on the average level of interpersonal trust and postmaterialist values. We use two measures of the extent and militancy of protest in each country, namely, the total number of protest actions recorded in the Reuters event counts of the PANDA data set and the national average of the Guttman scale of protest militancy derived from the World Values survey data.

The correlation coefficients presented in Table 4 show that trust in others is positively related to both measures of national protest participation. The correlation between the average, national level of interpersonal trust and the event-based protest measure ranges from $r = .13$ (for the full sample) to $r = .20$ (for countries that have experienced at least one protest event). However, because of the low number of observations ($n = 33$ and 25), neither of the correlation coefficients obtain significance.[18]

The aggregate relationship between protest and interpersonal trust is both stronger and statistically significant when the survey-based protest measure is used. The positive relationship between average levels of interpersonal trust and average previous protest is readily observable in a scatterplot (see Figure 1), in which higher levels of trust are associated with higher average protest. Indeed, national levels of interpersonal trust are strongly related to the average militancy of protest participation, with correlation coefficients (Table 4) ranging from $r = .55$ ($p < .01$) for the full sample to $r = .58$ ($p < .01$) for the restricted sample. A similarly strong relationship is apparent between the average level of postmaterialist values in a country and the previous levels of individual protest intensity ($r = .46$ to .52, $p < .01$). As with interpersonal trust, the relationship between the mean level of postmaterialist values and the protest event count measure is positive but insignificant ($r = .17$ to .25). Overall, the findings presented here suggest that interpersonal trust is a strong factor not only in pushing individuals toward action but also in determining society-wide levels of protest.

18. In addition, we suggest that measurement bias in the news reports of protest in low-visibility countries may well depress the correlation between protest events and trust.

Table 4
Correlations Between Protest and Trust at the National Level

	Survey-Based Protest Measure	Events-Based Protest Measure	Number of Cases
Full sample			
Trust	.55*	.13	33
Postmaterialism	.46*	.17	33
Countries with at least one reported instance of protest			
Trust	.58*	.20	25
Postmaterialism	.52*	.25	25

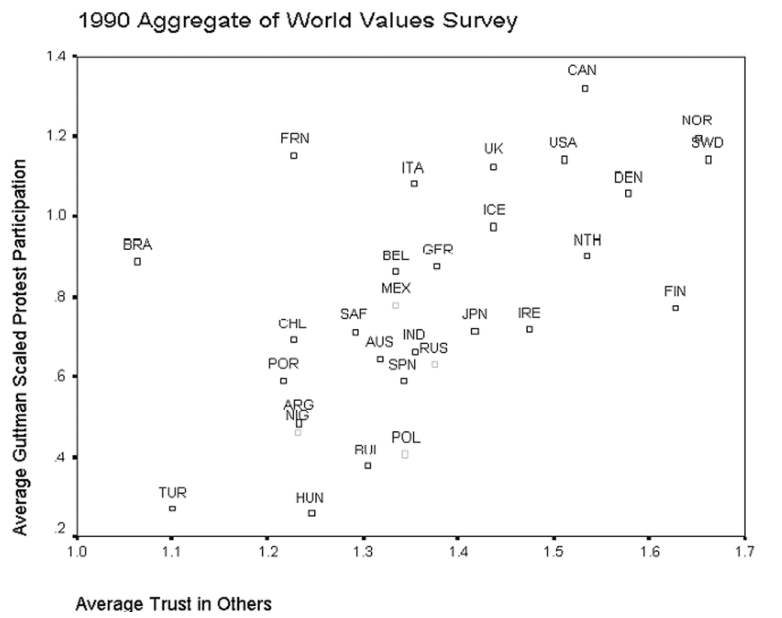*Significant at the .01 level.

Figure 1. **Aggregate of 1990 World Values Survey.**
Note: ARG = Argentina; AUS = Australia; BEL = Belgium; BRA = Brazil; BUL = Bulgaria; CAN = Canada; CHL = Chile; DEN = Denmark; FIN = Finland; FRN = France; GFR = Germany; HUN = Hungary; ICE = Iceland; IND = India; IRE = Ireland; ITA = Italy; JPN = Japan; MEX = Mexico; NIG = Nigeria; NOR = Norway; NTH = the Netherlands; POL = Poland; POR = Portugal; RUS = Russia; SAF = South Africa; SPN = Spain; SWD = Sweden; TUR = Turkey; UK = United Kingdom; USA = United States of America. *n* = 33, *r* = .55.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined interpersonal trust as an exogenous variable in determining levels and types of protest in a society. Unlike previous studies, we examine the relationship between interpersonal trust and protest in a wide variety of countries. In general, the results conform to our theoretical expectations concerning the effects of interpersonal trust in lowering the expected costs of protest.

Interpersonal trust increases both an individual's odds of protesting and the odds of becoming involved in more militant forms of protest. Trust in others increases one's likelihood of becoming an intensely involved protester and of moving across some thresholds of protest participation. The effects of interpersonal trust on the likelihood of protest and on the militancy of protest are found both in democratic countries and in those that are not free. This relationship is maintained despite an exhaustive array of statistical controls.

Moreover, individual-level results are found to hold at the national level when we aggregate the data. Protest is more common in those countries where interpersonal trust is more widespread. Our attempt to corroborate the survey-based findings with an events-based analysis met with only modest success, a result that we attribute to the measurement error inherent in any effort to count events with equal care in such diverse countries as the United States and Estonia.

In addition, trust and postmaterialist value orientations are shown to play complementary roles in increasing an individual's likelihood of participating in protest. Postmaterialism gives one the ideological propensity to sympathize with protest, while trust gives one the incentive to actually take part in protest. The spread of postmaterialist values is related to the propensity to become involved in protest at the individual level as well as in cross-national comparisons. Although postmaterialism gives one an ideological interest in protest and the skills to take part in protest, postmaterialists are subject to the collective action problem, just as others are. They are more likely to protest when they believe that others will be drawn to a protest event in large numbers. They are more likely to protest when the costs of protest are assessed as likely to be low and the outcomes of a protest are expected to be favorable.

This is where trust enters the picture. High rates of interpersonal trust are associated with higher rates of protest, particularly with legal forms of protest. Our analysis shows that levels of interpersonal trust are crucial in helping a potential protester decide to take part in a protest and to ascend the ladder of protest. These relationships hold at both the individual and national levels. Trust between citizens of a country not only allows the threshold of

protest participation to be crossed but also allows the intensity of participation to be raised.

Indeed, trust and value orientations are so important in determining protest as to make the level of education largely insignificant. In the presence of interpersonal trust and postmaterialist values, lower levels of education do not prove to be a hurdle for an individual's level of civic engagement in the form of protest. Overall, generalized interpersonal trust serves as both a personal and a social capital resource that fosters collective action.

APPENDIX
Thirty-Three Country Study, 1990

Free Countries	Partly Free Countries	Nonfree Countries
Argentina	Hungary	Bulgaria
Austria	Mexico	Estonia
Belgium	Nigeria	Latvia
Brazil	Poland	Lithuania
Canada	South Africa	Russia
Chile	Turkey	
Denmark		
Finland		
France		
Germany		
Iceland		
India		
Ireland		
Italy		
Japan		
The Netherlands		
Norway		
Portugal		
Spain		
Sweden		
United Kingdom		
United States		

Note: Total $N = 34,129$; nonfree $n = 9,226$.

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Michelle Benson is an assistant professor at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. Her research focuses on the determinants of international conflict, domestic conflict, and protest.

Thomas R. Rochon is vice president of academic affairs and a professor of political science at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the author of articles on social movements, political parties, and electoral behavior. His three most recent books are Coalitions and Political Movements: The Lessons of the Nuclear Freeze *(coedited with David S. Meyer; Lynne Rienner, 1997),* Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism and Changing Values *(Princeton University Press, 1998), and* The Netherlands: Negotiating Sovereignty in an Interdependent World *(Westview, 1999).*