

Explaining the determinants of public demonstration participation in Mexico

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RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper will study the political culture and practices of Mexican citizens, particularly non-institutional forms of political expression and participation. Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005) distinguish two types of political participation, conventional and unconventional. The former refers to actions done through the formal institutional channels, for example voting. The latter alludes to those actions that express political concerns through informal non-institutional channels like street demonstrations, boycotts, or riots.

The determinants of public demonstration, a type of unconventional political participation will be investigated throughout this paper. The main research question that will be investigated is *what are the determinants of public demonstration among Mexico's population?*

CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

It is important to investigate citizen's political participation to understand the effects Mexico's transition to democracy¹ in 2000 had in citizens' political culture. Further research should also explore and try to understand the role that political participation, particularly unconventional types, has in the process of democratic consolidation (Norris, 2002).

The participation of the masses in public matters is crucial and indispensable for a healthy representative and participatory democracy. This situation is clearly nonexistent in

¹ After 71 years in power, the PRI lost the federal elections in 2000. The opposition party PAN came into power delivering promises for 'change and democracy.' Twelve years later, the citizens of Mexico are still waiting for these promises to become a reality, but instead live amidst a 'War on Drugs' that has killed 50,000; an economic crisis; and the highest unemployment rate in decades (Dresser, 2011).

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Mexico today if we consider the low voter turnouts (less than 50% in recent decades) or the lack of truly participatory methods of decision-making and citizen consultation (Norris, 2002).

Mexico currently experiments a democratic crisis, a situation in which engaged and politically active citizens are unable to find formal mechanisms and legal channels to affect change or express their political views and concerns – not to mention that some are blatantly repressed or ignored (Contreras-Ibanez et al 2005).

The use of unconventional political participation, exemplified in social movement participation, argues Stolle-McCallister (2004: 24) represents one of the ways in which political culture is being formed in Mexico, by giving voice to different versions of democracy and governance.

It is then necessary to study the structural political, cultural, social and demographic determinants of demonstration participation, if we are to understand the complex issue that has been discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars (Putnam 2000; Tarrow 1998; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Soule and Earl 2005) have argued that in advanced democracies, protest activities have become institutionalized and taken for granted. Nevertheless, little research has systematically studied developing nations, in which their democratic governments are structurally, culturally and historically different from those in the West.

Mexico has usually showed the lowest political, civil and electoral participation among Latin American countries (Contreras-Ibanez et al 2005, Norris 2002). Past research, has tended to focus on voting trends and political participation of citizens through formal channels of State bureaucracy but a serious analysis of unconventional political participation such as involvement in protest, boycotts, marches, demonstrations, and strikes; and the determinants of these, is missing from the body of literature.

While Norris (2002: 19), Schussmand and Soule (2005) or Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) suggest looking at the civic and political affiliation of individuals, previous political and civic engagement, and electoral participation to understand unconventional activity; Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005: 187) propose to look at the motivational and strategic determinants

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of protest participation, such as the support of democracy as the best political system, citizen's satisfaction with government performance, and trust in State institutions. This paper will help shed light on the explanatory variables of demonstration assistance by testing several models that take into consideration the above mentioned ideas.

Furthermore, how can we understand the decline in conventional political participation (e.g. voting) and an apparent increase of protest activity? Norris (2002: 4) discusses two different perspectives that could answer the question. On one hand, it is argued that political engagement has deteriorated over time and that democracies are entering a crisis stage. This view is supported by the decreasing percentages of electoral participation or affiliation to civic groups (Norris 2002: 5, Putnam 2000); and is connected with Putnam's (1993) concept of social capital²; which argues that well informed and socially engaged individuals who participate in electoral politics will be more active in the political life and debate of their country.

On the other hand, it is argued that rather than deteriorating, political participation has *reinvented* itself by utilizing new forms of repertoires (types of actions) and targeting new actors (political players that activists try to influence). According to Norris (2002: 5), this *reinvention* is a result of the improvement of quality of life and the general accessibility of education and health among the masses.

Nevertheless, these theories have focused in Western nations with different levels of social and economic development, and with older democratic traditions. Could these theories and ideas be applied to, and significantly explain social movement activity in Mexico?

Contreras-Ibanez *et al* (2005) argue that existing literature on political participation in Mexico has seen conventional and unconventional political participation as antagonistic. They propose the existence of a *dual actor* that utilizes both action strategies to make political claims and express dissent. An actor that has the ability to shift from formal and institutional forms of political participation such as voting, or using the existing bureaucratic channels to express their grievances; to informal and non-institutional forms of political action like participating in public demonstrations, boycotts or riots.

² Putnam's "*Making Democracy Work*" (1993) conceptualized and measured social capital in Italy by looking at three main variables: affiliation to civic associations such as sporting clubs or political parties; electoral participation (voting); and newspaper reading as a proxy to measure how many people were following and able to discuss public matters and politics.

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The authors are able to identify individuals with lower education and income as the dual actors, after analyzing the socio-demographic factors of participants. Regardless of sex, lower classes are more prone than others to engage in unconventional tactics, due to their lack of understanding and familiarity with formal and bureaucratic channels, while still taking part in conventional forms of political participation (Contreras-Ibanez et al: 184).

DESCRIPTION OF DATA

Mexico's 2008 National Survey on Political Culture and Citizen Practices (*ENCUP* in Spanish) is utilized for this research. This database is able to provide information about the political perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, and participation of Mexicans in regards to broader social and economic issues; this makes it ideal to study citizens' formal and informal participation on the public life of the country. *ENCUP* is allegedly better suited to answer these matters with greater detail than other databases like *Latinobarometro*, the World Values Survey, or *Barometro de las Americas*, due to a better construction of the questionnaire, which took into account Mexico's cultural context (*ENCUP*, 2008).³

The sample was limited to those individuals 18 years of age or older across the country. The sampling method used was probabilistic, stratified and clustered; interviews occurred at the respondent's household. The final product contained 4,383 respondents and had a 90% confidence level; it is representative at a national level but not at a municipal or provincial level (*ENCUP* 2008).

The data that informs *ENCUP* 2008 was gathered by the staff of *INEGI*, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, in November of that same year. The questionnaire was pretested in three cities using a cognitive-interview method with the aim to correct potential errors (*ENCUP*, 2008).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The author constructed a dummy variable measuring whether or not the respondent participated in a public demonstration event in the previous six years. The *ENCUP* 2008 survey

³ Nevertheless, this database presents some methodological challenges and limitations that will be further discussed when explaining how the independent and control variables were constructed.

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asked respondents ‘*Of the following activities that I’m about to mention, please tell me if you have participated, or not, in one of them: e) Assist public demonstrations.*’⁴

A dummy variable coded 1 was constructed if respondents took part in demonstration events. A dummy variable coded ‘0’ was created for those that did not participate in this type of action. 407 individuals expressed they attended at least one demonstration in the past six years, comprising 9.3% of the population (ENCUP, 2008).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The analysis presented in this paper was designed to test several hypotheses about the determinants of unconventional political participation, namely public demonstration, presented by various authors (Norris 2002; Contreras-Ibanez et al 2005; Putnam 2000; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Gould 1991; Soule and Earl 2005, Schussmand and Soule 2005). These independent variables are sorted out into several models: electoral participation, civic engagement, affiliation, social capital, institutional trust, democratic beliefs, and political opportunities. Dichotomized dummy variables were constructed for all the independent variables. For the different types of variables, participation, affiliation or support were coded as 1, while the lack of participation, affiliation or support was coded as ‘0’.

Electoral participation: Voting in presidential elections will have a positive effect in explaining the determinants of public demonstration. As Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005) claim, conventional and unconventional politics are not antagonistic; while voting in elections certainly does not lead to participation in demonstrations, we would expect individuals who voice their political concerns in the streets, to also express those concerns through the ballots.

3,308 individuals, exactly 75.47% of the sample voted in the past 2006 presidential elections in Mexico. Respondents who weren’t able to respond the question were counted as missing from my analysis; the possibility of respondents to have truly forgotten if they voted or not in the 2006 elections is considered; the ENCUP data was gathered two years after the

⁴ The author believes a demonstration event, the paper’s dependent variable, is not considered violent by the ENCUP questionnaire and respondents. Protests, the author argues, are essentially violent in contrast to demonstrations. Only 147 respondents (3.4% of the population) responded to have participated in a protest event in the past 6 years. Due to the small amount it comprises, this research focuses in demonstration instead of protest participation.

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elections day. Assuming they didn't vote could be misleading and affect the objectivity and reliability of the results.

Civic engagement: A positive effect in attending demonstrations is expected from the variables that measure civic engagement, such as signing petitions, forming neighborhood committees, and asking a citizen's group for support. Schussman and Soule (2005) have pointed out that political engagement (in this paper *civic engagement*) influences individual's propensity to participate in social movement activities.

These activities were carried out by 6.68%, 7.83%, and 9.95% of the population, respectively; a number that would still be considered a minority. They were then turned into dichotomous dummy variables, in which participation was coded 1, and a lack of engagement was coded '0'.

Affiliation to civil society groups: Affiliation to a civic group will positively affect an individual's participation in public demonstrations. Pre-existing social ties to politically engaged and active individuals can explain social movement participation (Gould 1991; Klandermans 2004; Schussman and Soule 2005). 8.3% of my sample, precisely 365 respondents, belongs to a *citizen's organization*.

The ENCUP 2008 database distinguishes affiliation between unions, political parties and civic groups; the database's questionnaire breaks these down into several types of civic groups like sports associations, religious groups, charity organizations, citizen organizations, neighbour associations, and Co-ops, among others.

For this study *citizen organization's* was chosen as an independent variable because affiliation is completely voluntary (in contrast to *certain* neighborhood associations in which membership is mandatory, such as housing coops or gated communities⁵) and because their range and scope of political visions and fields of interest is broader, relative to other groups like charities for instance.

⁵ Gated communities are residential zones who restrict access to non-residents or non-members of the community (Bagaen and Uduku 2010). In Mexico this particular form of urban and housing development has rapidly expanded from those upper-class zones to middle and lower socioeconomic classes.

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Social Capital: Access to information about politics – through newspaper and Internet-based news sources – and past participation in the 2006 presidential elections will have a positive effect in explaining demonstration participation.

This model, based in Putnam's (1993, 2000) ideas on social capital, and supported by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) points to the information dimension of social movement activity, which defends that individuals who are not informed about politics will probably not choose to participate in political activities of any type (Schussman and Soule, 2005).

Dichotomous dummy variables were created to identify people who read newspapers and Internet-based sources and those who didn't. It is important to note that the variables used to construct these dummy variables didn't capture the frequency of these actions.

In addition to these variables, the author utilized a dichotomous dummy variable to identify those individuals that were interested in politics; which is believed to have a positive effect on attending demonstrations. Without some level of interest in politics, Verba, Schlozmann and Brady (1995) argue, individuals wouldn't participate in political activities.

This variable was constructed by utilizing the higher two responses of a 1-4 scale of interest as caring about politics (coded 1). The lower two responses, as well as the '*don't know*' answers were counted as disinterest in politics and coded '0'.

Institutional trust: Trust in political parties and the police will have a negative effect in explaining participation in non-institutional activities like public demonstrations. It is expected that individuals who believe in the fairness and effectiveness of these institutions will not seek to address their concerns through other (non-institutional) means.

The variables to measure *institutional trust* were constructed in the same fashion as the satisfaction variables. Based in a 1-5 likert scale of trust, a dummy variable of trust, coded 1, encompassed those participants that trusted police corps and political parties in a *very* and *somewhat* extent. The other possible answers, *little*, *not at all* and *don't know* were utilized for constructing the distrust dummy variables coded '0'.

Democratic Beliefs: Believing democracy is the best form of government is expected to have a positive effect in explaining public demonstrations. 2,421 respondents (55.24% of the

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population) believe democracy is the best political system the country should follow. While it is not sufficient, it is believed to be a necessary cause for demonstration participation. The preference of democracy over any other type of government was measured in a 1-4 agreement scale. For this study only 1 (*I agree*), was utilized to construct the dummy variable, coded 1, of support for democratic ideals. The other possible responses (neutral, disagreement, don't know) were used to construct the dummy variable, coded '0', for lack of support to democratic ideals.

Satisfaction with the current democratic system is expected to have a negative effect in explaining public demonstration. Only one in every three respondents (34.36%) is satisfied with the current political system in Mexico. Inversely, those that believe Mexico is not yet a socially just and inclusive democracy will be more prone to publicly demonstrate.

The level of satisfaction was measured by using a 1-5 scale, the possible answers included *very, somewhat, little, not at all* and *don't know*. The first two were utilized to construct the dummy variable of satisfaction with the current democratic system, coded 1; the latter were used to construct the dummy variable of dissatisfaction with the system, coded '0'.

Political Opportunities: The sense that actions make a difference, and believing the government doesn't listen to citizen's concerns will have a positive effect in explaining attendance to demonstrations. Political engagement is usually captured by the level of perceived political efficacy, the sense that one's actions matter (Paulsen 1991; Ennis and Schreur 1987) as well as the political opportunities (McAdam 1986).

The author constructed dichotomous dummy variables to identify those individuals that indeed felt citizen's actions can change things, as well as to identify those that believe the government listens to people's concerns, both coded 1.

CONTROL VARIABLES ⁶

Age, education and income: Age, education, and income will have a negative effect in explaining participation in public demonstrations.

⁶ The author wanted to test other control variables such as the number of children as a determinant of participation in demonstrations, as suggested by the literature (Schussman and Soule, 2005) but the ENCUP 2008 database didn't contain clear information on the subject. The author did not wish to assume married respondents had children; therefore controlling for marital status was discarded.

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As expressed by Hirschi's (1969) control theory, younger individuals with less responsibilities and exposed to less social control will express their concerns on the street, contrary to older folk that will recur to conventional and institutional mechanisms of political expression. Dichotomized dummy variables were created for young (18-26) coded as 1, and for old (27-86) coded 0. Twenty one respondents (0.48% of the total N) over the age of 86 were dropped from the sample due to their outlier status.

Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005) argue that Mexicans with less education and from lower socioeconomic classes will be more likely to engage in unconventional political activities. In the contrary, Schussman and Soule (2005: 1092), after utilizing the 1989 American Civic Participation Study conclude that better educated people and students are more likely to be asked to protest. This research will help clarify that relationship in the Mexican case.

Education will be also utilized as a proxy for income since the ENCUP 2008 database poses serious challenges to effectively analyze the income of respondents by relying on the *income* variable.⁷ If we consider Mexico's highly unequal society limits access to higher education (Reimers, 2000), we can infer that access to good-paying jobs and elite social networks is dependent on access to higher educational degrees, therefore making it a useful proxy for income.

Three dummy variables for education were created in regards to the principal education degrees the Mexican population has: high-school, the reference category (coded 1); preparatory (CEGEP); and university.

Sex: Contrary to popular belief, as concluded by Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005) in their research on social movement participation in Mexico, it is expected that sex will not influence participation in unconventional political actions. Two dummy variables for sex were constructed to test the significance of sex in demonstration participation. Males the reference category was coded 1, while females were coded '0'.

⁷ First, the questionnaire allowed participants to select the periodicity of their earnings, be it weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or yearly; rendering the variable impossible to use for this research. Second, the variable occupation, another potential proxy for income is unsuitable; the ENCUP 2008 database surprisingly has 1784 missing values. Being unable to know the occupation or profession of approximately 40% of the population is challenging. Perhaps due to the high participation of the Mexican society in the informal economy (Cross, 1998), respondents decided to not publicly disclose their occupation.

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Work Status: Two dummy variables, employed and unemployed, were also created to dichotomize work status. It is expected that unemployed persons would have more time availability, and schedule flexibility to participate in unconventional political actions. In addition, unemployed persons could potentially suffer economic disadvantages compared to those employed; adding a strain factor that could explain participation in unconventional activities such as demonstrations (Merton, 1963).

Employed was the reference category coded 1, unemployed was coded '0' and included individuals whose main work are house-related chores; in Mexico's case, mostly women.

The author had the intention to test whether student status could influence participation in demonstrations; as existing social movement research has suggested (Schussman and Soule, 2005). Nevertheless, the small number of students in the ENCUP 2008 database signified a problem for this research⁸.

HYPOTHESES

The discussions above can be summarized in a set of eight hypotheses that will be tested in this research by given models:

0. *Education and age have a negative effect in demonstration participation. Similarly, being employed will have a negative effect in attending demonstrations. Sex has is believed to exert no effect in demonstration participation. The relationship between income and demonstration participation is to be tested.*
1. *Voting (electoral participation) has a positive effect on demonstration participation.*
2. *Civic engagement such as petition signing, forming neighborhood committees and asking a citizen's organization for support has a positive effect on explaining attendance to demonstrations.*

⁸ One of the available options for 'work status' was student. No other item in the questionnaire asked respondents if they were currently enrolled in an educational institution of any sort. Two reasons can explain the small number of students in the dataset. First, due to the age range of the population, 18-65 years of age, we would expect those who self-identify as students would be in the process of pursuing university or post-graduate degrees. As mentioned above, only a select few have access to secondary education in Mexico. Second, respondents self-identified their *work status* and weren't able to choose multiple categories. Simultaneous categories such as employed-student were excluded. Possibly, identity markers related to employment are more important to Mexican respondents than identity markers related to education and student status. Further research is required.

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3. *Affiliation to civil society groups, political parties or unions has a positive effect on demonstration participation.*
4. *Being informed of politics through newspapers and Internet-based news sources and had voted in the 2006 elections, while belonging to a citizen's organization will have a positive effect on attending demonstrations.*
5. *Trust in political institutions, particularly political parties and the police will have a negative effect on demonstration participation.*
6. *Support for democratic ideals (thinking democracy is the best form of government) and dissatisfaction with the current democratic system in Mexico – while having an interest in politics - will have a positive effect on demonstration participation.*
7. *Believing citizens can change things (citizenship empowerment) while considering the government doesn't listen to citizen's concerns will have a positive effect on attending demonstrations.*

RESULTS

Logistic regression is used to estimate the effects of the independent variables on the probability of participating in public demonstration event. *Table 1* presents the Means, standard deviation, median, skewness, predicted sign and zero-order correlation of the explanatory variables.

All logistic regressions were executed on STATA 11 by using the 'logit' command, these calculations test the models and hypotheses abovementioned; the results are presented in *Table 2*. The dependent, independent and control variables – except for level of attained education- are all dichotomized dummy variables.

Control Variables

Except for holding a university degree (education), all control variables did not show significance in the tested models. Holding a university degree showed to be positively significant (at the .01 and .05 level) in explaining demonstration participation in only four models. Except for Model 2, which tested Civic Engagement variables, these models had low variance levels, thus they were seen as weak models. Hypothesis 0 is then rejected.

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Contreras-Ibanez et al's (2005) claim that sex doesn't explain unconventional political participation in Mexico is corroborated. In the contrary, the research found that age was not significant in determining demonstration participation, contrary to common knowledge in social movement theory (McAdam 1983, Contreras-Ibanez et al 2005). Similarly, Model 2 disproves the argument that those with the lowest socioeconomic status (education) are more prone to protest (Contreras-Ibanez et al 2005). This research was able to find that holders of university degrees are more likely to protest, at a 95% confidence level, than those who only hold a high-school degree.

Table 1: Means, standard deviation, median, skewness, predicted sign and zero-order correlation of studied variables grouped by model distribution.

Model	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Skewness	Predicted Sign	Zero-order correlation
DV	Demonstrate	.0927031	.2900492	0	2.80879		1
Electoral Participation	Voted 2006 election	.7713615	.4200052	1	-1.292333	+	0.0373
	Sign petition	.0667737	.2496584	0	3.47095	+	0.1980
Civic Engagement	Form neighbour committees	.0784764	.2689506	0	3.13494	+	0.2289
	Ask NGO support	.0998164	.2997895	0	2.67007	+	0.2411
Affiliation	Union	.1301056	.3364581	0	2.199007	+	0.1252
	Political party	.0862781	.2808065	0	2.947007	+	0.2055
	Civil society	.0835246	.2767052	0	3.010592	+	0.1900
Social Capital	Read newspaper	.4304727	.4951992	0	.2808376	+	0.0992
	Voted 2006 election	.7713615	.4200052	1	-1.292333	+	0.0373
	News from Internet	.0805415	.272161	0	3.082783	+	0.0916
Institutional Trust	Trust pol. parties	.2705369	.4442882	0	1.033065	-	0.0032
	Trust police	.3272143	.4692501	0	.7365178	-	0.0063
Democratic Beliefs	Think democracy is best	.5532354	.497215	1	-.214159	+	0.0536
	Satisfied w/current democracy	.3435062	.4749331	0	.6590897	-	-0.0213
Political Opportunities	Think govt. listens	.3480955	.4764211	0	.6377634	+/-	0.0222
	Think citizens can change things	.3946765	.4888372	0	.4309641	+	0.0538
	Interest in politics	.3476365	.4762745	0	.6398871	+	0.1289
Interaction Term	Young & Unemployed	.0826067	.2753184	0	3.032425	+	-0.0011
Controls	Young	.1810464	.3851008	0	1.656659	+	-0.0319
	Old	.8189536	.3851008	1	-1.656659	-	0.0319
	High-School	.6693437	.4705034	1	-.7199232	+	-0.0776
	CEGEP	.1877008	.3905179	0	1.599594	+	0.0419
	University	.1429555	.3500676	0	2.040094	-	0.0574
	Employed	.5952272	.4909044	1	-.3880108	-	0.0120
	Unemployed	.4047728	.4909044	0	.4909044	+	-0.0120
	Male	.4359798	.4959414	0	.2582061	+/-	0.0126
Female	.5640202	.4959414	1	-.2582061	+/-	-0.0126	

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Model 1: Electoral Participation

As argued by Contreras-Ibanez et al (2005) voting in the 2006 federal elections has a significant positive effect in attending demonstrations, at a 95% confidence level. Nevertheless this significance disappears when tested in the full model. Hypotheses 1 is not fully accepted.

The act of voting during election periods – is not diametrically opposed to unconventional political participation like demonstrating; that is, the existence of a ‘dual actor’ that shifts between conventional and unconventional political participation is supported by the results. Contrary to Contreras-Ibanez’s (2005) findings, the results of this paper show that those that hold a university degree or higher, are more prone to protest than those with a high school degree. Nevertheless, this positive relationship is only significant in a few models, being *Civic Engagement* the most important one of them.

Model 2: Civic Engagement

All forms of civic engagement tested in model 2 – that is, signing a petition, forming a neighborhood committee, and asking a civil society group for support – are positively significant at the 99.9% confidence level. These three IV’s alone were able to explain an 11.70% variance in demonstration participation. In addition, they are always significant at the 99.9% confidence level in all the subsequent models. Hypothesis 2 is thus accepted.

Model 3: Affiliation

Being part of political parties or civil society organizations has a positive significant effect in explaining attendance to demonstrations at a 99.9% confidence level; affiliation to unions is also positively significant but at a 99% confidence level. Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

These independent variables are positively significant in all the models tested, which supports Gould’s (1991) and Norris’ (2002) claim that participation in social movement activity can be explained by pre-existing social networks. In Soule and Schussman’s (2005: 1086) words, this refers to the presence of interpersonal networks which facilitate recruitment to activism, and that individuals rarely participate in social movement activities unless they’re personally invited to do so by those already engaged in movement activity (Klandermans 1997; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995).

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Model 4: Social Capital

Putnam's (1993) core ideas on social capital, that is reading newspapers, electoral participation and affiliation to civic groups showed weak results in my model. Reading print and online news was positively significant at the 95% confidence level; voting was insignificant. This model suggests the possibility that being informed about politics through newspapers and Internet news sources is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for individuals who care about politics to attend public demonstrations. Hypothesis 4 is partially accepted.

In addition, this model was able to test and corroborate Norris's (2002) idea that internet-based tools – news sources among them – have feed the culture of protest in contemporary Mexico, one in which politically active individuals are those with access to new technologies, that is, the educated, urban middle class.

Interestingly enough, by regressing these social capital-related variables with civic engagement and affiliation variables, as well as the independent variable of political interest, I was able to explain 15.59% of the variance in demonstration participation, the second highest r-square value after my full model.

This model is able to show, as will be discussed in the summary key findings sections, that civic engagement and affiliation variables are the most important factors in explaining protest participation.

Model 5: Institutional Trust (Governance)

Trust in political parties and police, was insignificant to predict participation in demonstrations. Hypothesis 5 is rejected. This model, which blew up, disproves Norris's (2002:13) idea that increasing political distrust towards State institutions like political parties and the police can explain the recent increase in participation in demonstrations and protests.

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	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>	<i>Model 7</i>	<i>Model 8</i>	<i>Model 9</i>	<i>Model 10</i>
	<i>Electoral P.</i>	<i>Civic Eng.</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Social Cap.</i>	<i>Inst. Trust</i>	<i>Demo. Belief</i>	<i>Pol. Opp.</i>	<i>Full Model</i>	<i>Yng*unemp.</i>	<i>DV= Protest</i>
Voted 2006 Election	.277321* (.138872)			-.0292174 (.1475644)				-.0189637 (.1483668)		
Sign petition		1.0244*** (.1593)		.841033*** (.1826178)				.818457*** (.1835892)	.862645*** (.1817788)	1.369897 *** (.223995)
Neigh. Comittee		1.1383*** (.14930)		.864915*** (.1599196)				.854021*** (.1613444)	.883660*** (.1596964)	.8256189*** (.228391)
Ask NGO support		1.3835*** (.13172)		1.166273*** (.1457922)				1.150486*** (.1472121)	1.188039*** (.1462764)	.8226169*** (.2271344)
Union			.480517** (.1509008)	.3974044** (.1625703)				.3997415** (.1627099)	.4330923** (.1620561)	.2860167 (.2433757)
Political party			1.151587*** (.1554589)	.893949*** (.1710011)				.891667*** (.1724369)	.900843*** (.169299)	1.173388*** (.2439192)
Civil society			1.146805*** (.1502934)	.4698935** (.1741989)				.4873499** (.1760642)	.4872472** (.1728844)	.6685678** (.2293032)
Read newspaper				.2993231* (.1237662)				.3030933* (.1242118)		
Read news online				.3857771* (.192255)				.3562635 (.195087)		
Trust pol. parties					.0127374 (.1226729)			-.0529834 (.1381701)		
Trust police					.0737104 (.1155425)			-.0139626 (.1288777)		
Democracy is best						.2964502** (.1122479)		.0563366 (.1250573)		
Satisfied w/democracy						-.3252414** (.1153658)		-.2470874 (.1303352)		
Interest in politics				.3352531** (.1255806)		.845283*** (.1091397)		.3687736** (.1328377)	.3819427** (.122621)	
Think govt. listens							.0751875 (.1125283)	-.1190379 (.129953)		
Citizens can change							.365226** (.1098492)	.1935689 (.1250346)		
Young and Unemployed									.2476172 (.3099904)	
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>	<i>Model 7</i>	<i>Model 8</i>	<i>Model 9</i>	<i>Model 10</i>
	<i>Electoral P.</i>	<i>Civic Eng.</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Social Cap.</i>	<i>Inst. Trust</i>	<i>Demo. Belief</i>	<i>Pol. Opp.</i>	<i>Full Model</i>	<i>Yng*unemp.</i>	<i>DV= Protest</i>
Young	-.1043443 (.1450747)	-.0670059 (.1529053)	.012873 (.1467458)	.0234291 (.1642979)	-.1901422 (.1425519)	-.1285725 (.1451494)	-.1952278 (.1430368)	.0343187 (.1646749)	-.054095 (.2225314)	.4789996 (.2256964)
Male	.1943438 (.1175325)	.1155207 (.123201)	.0375037 (.1226458)	-.0305208 (.1318987)	.1926598 (.1180559)	.1721184 (.1161839)	.1927551 (.1181048)	-.0215119 (.1319199)	-.0072318 (.1312842)	.2085756 (.2149319)
Unemployed	-.0389617 (.1232056)	.0308625 (.1284834)	.0453503 (.1248035)	.1211604 (.1329083)	-.036034 (.1232091)	-.018709 (.1212979)	-.0331027 (.1236065)	.1214477 (.1332136)	.0442924 (.1451928)	-.1096713 (.2290277)
CEGEP	.080324 (.1412982)	.0099279 (.149307)	.0360843 (.1468104)	-.1742313 (.1602096)	.0954401 (.1408888)	-.004874 (.1424456)	.0846373 (.1413835)	-.178531 (.1615956)	-.0632489 (.1558962)	.0497126 (.2393212)
University	.3687431* (.1418417)	.3457691* (.1507253)	.2494576 (.1480062)	-.0741889 (.1741024)	.410539** (.1396523)	.1772956 (.1454906)	.416248** (.1402626)	-.0670799 (.1766121)	.1320944 (.1626209)	.2745475 (.2458501)
N	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260	4260
Pseudo R2	0.0067	0.1170	0.0781	0.1559	0.0053	0.0331	0.0102	0.1588	0.1190	0.1437

* $P \leq .05$; ** $P \leq .01$; *** $P \leq .001$; Standard Errors are in parentheses

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Model 6: Democratic Beliefs

Belief in democracy as the best government system and dissatisfaction with the current democracy show a positive significance, at the 99% confidence level in explaining attendance to demonstrations; but only when regressed by themselves in Model 6.. Nevertheless, this significance disappears when tested in the full model. Interest in political matters is positively significant in explaining demonstration participation in all the models it was utilized, either at a 99% and 99.9% confidence level. Hypothesis 6 is only accepted in Model 6.

Model 7: Political Opportunities

Thinking citizens are able to influence their environment, that is, to change things in the country, has a positive significance in explaining attendance to demonstrations. Inversely, believing the government listens to citizen's showed no significance. Both variables are insignificant in the full model. Hypothesis 7 is accepted only in Model 7.

Classic social movement ideas on the political opportunity structure (McAdam 1983, McAdam et al 1996) show no strong significance in this study. Participation in unconventional political actions as a product of the individual's perceptions and evaluations of the possibilities of social change (Contreras-Ibanez et al: 187) is only corroborated in the partial Model 7.

Model 8: Full Model

Regressing all the independent and control variables of this study created the best model, being able to explain variance in demonstration participation at the 15.88% level.

This model illustrated the significant effect that civic engagement (all at the 99.9% confidence level) and affiliation variables (at the 99.9% and 99% confidence level) have in explaining attendance to demonstrations. Interest in politics (99% confidence level) and newspaper reading (95% confidence level) were also significant in explaining the studied phenomenon. These findings will be discussed further in the summary of key findings section.

Model 9: Young and Unemployed Interaction

No significance was found when interacting the effect of being unemployed and young (under 26 years old). This model regressed the interactive term with civic engagement and affiliation variables, as well as the independent variable of political interest.

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My research is not able to prove the basic precepts of strain theory (Merton 1963) and control theory (Hirschi 1969) which defend that young and unemployed individuals would experience less social control that regulates their actions, as well as a feeling of relative deprivation compared to others with access to resources (jobs and salaries).

Model 10: DV = Protest

The author decided to examine the determinants of another type of unconventional political participation by examining the effect of the most important independent variables on a new dependent variable: protest participation. Only 3% of the respondents had participated in this type of action in the past 6 years (ENCUP 2008).

Due to their previous significance, civic engagement and affiliation variables were tested. All the civic engagement variables were positively significant at the 99.9% confidence level in explaining protest participation. Affiliation to political parties and citizen's organizations were positively significant in explaining protest participation, at the 99.9% and 99% level respectively. Surprisingly, union affiliation was not significant in explaining protest activity. Nevertheless, the model is able to explain variance in protest participation by 14.37%, a value close to the pseudo r-square of my best explanatory model for public demonstration.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The goal of this research was to test the applicability of several social movement theories that explain participation in social movement activity – in this case public demonstration – to the case of Mexico; a nation intrinsically different from Western democracies in which social movement research has often been carried out.

Particular theories and sets of variables were tested: electoral participation, civic engagement, affiliation to organizations and groups, social capital, institutional trust, democratic beliefs, and political opportunities.

To this point, the most relevant finding of the research is the explanatory value of pre-existing social ties and relationships with potentially engaged activists when analyzing participation in unconventional political actions, be it a demonstration or protest – all other factors constant.

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This finding is in line with that of prominent social movement scholars (Schussman and Soule 2005; Klandermans 2004; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001) which argue that social movement participation must be understood through the lens of social interaction, that is, pre-existing social ties and networks with movement participants.

It was found that individuals interested in politics and who are informed of recent political matters (those that read newspapers) are more likely to participate in demonstrations. But most importantly, participation in previous activities like signing petitions, forming neighborhood committees and asking civil society groups for support; and belonging to political parties or citizen organizations (and unions to a lesser extent) will significantly explain participation in unconventional politics.

These two sets of explanatory variables – civic engagement and affiliation – suggest that only a particular type of individual who is politically engaged and who shares common opinions and goals with others in an organizational setting, will be more likely to protest and demonstrate than a more individualistic subject who has not engaged in previous civic or political actions or who does not belong to any type of political or social organization. Perhaps due to the exposure to politically engaged activists one has in these social milieus; it would be expected that members of political parties, citizen organizations or unions; or those collecting signatures and organizing neighborhood committees would have a higher possibility of being personally invited to participate in a demonstration than those who do not engage in these kind of activities or social milieus.

In addition, as supported by scholarship (see Ruggiero 2008) on new social movement theory (NSM); today's Mexican activists belong to an urban, educated, middle-class who is politically-conscious and has access to technologies and information.

On top of the paper's main findings, it was surprising to note the lack of significance in protest participation (contrary to demonstration participation) by those individuals affiliated to unions; specially after considering its significance had been constant in all previous models. The author believes this could be explained by the particular situation of *clientelism* and cooptation unions had historically experimented in Mexico. As Hellman (1994) argues, certain social movements in Mexico – especially unions - were coopted during the PRI governments in a type of clientelistic relation in which the government gave resources to unions in exchange for their quiet acceptance of the status quo. That being said, it can be understood why unions would

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participate in peaceful demonstrations as a way to exert pressure to the government, in exchange for benefits, goods and resources; while avoiding violent forms of protest in order to not risk losing legitimacy at the time of negotiations with the authorities.

Nevertheless, the social, political, and economic context of Mexico has changed in the past decades; the PRI is no longer in power since 2000 and the wealth the country had in the late 1960s and early 1970s - due to boom in oil prices - has been replaced by the economic crises of 1976, 1982, 1994, and 2008 and by foreign debt (Dresser 2011). Further research is required to explain why unions are still loyal –to a certain extent – to the governmental structures of control instituted by the PRI in the 1960s and 1970s.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

After testing several theories that explain social movement activity, the author has found that civic engagement and affiliation are the most important factors in explaining demonstration participation in Mexico. Civic-political activities like signing petitions, forming neighborhood committees and asking a citizen's group for support; as well as affiliation to an organization such as a political party, citizen's organization or union will be the most important predictors in explaining the determinants of demonstration participation.

If one is to account and examine participation in public demonstration, or protest, attention must be given to the pre-existing social ties and networks of movement participants.

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