The Effect of Protests and Protest Conditions on Satisfaction with Democracy in European Liberal Democracies: A Comparative and Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

In this research, I study the effect of protests on public opinion and, more specifically, on citizen's satisfaction with democracy in liberal democracies. Based on the idea that protests affect public opinion and that those protests serve an essential role in democracies, the link between protests and satisfaction with democracy is established. The hypothesis is that protests negatively influence satisfaction with democracy. Furthermore, the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is dependent on certain protest conditions. These conditions are protesters' violence, state violence, the state's response to the protester's demands (ignoring or accommodating demands), and the organisation of the movement (size and formal organisation). The data used in this research is nested and therefore, a multilevel model is used to account for country differences. Based on the data, the conclusion is that protests indeed have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy, but the conditions did not influence this relationship.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

In democracies, it can be expected that people have the right to protest – whether they make use of it is up to the citizens, but the right to protest is key as citizens have the right to assembly and the right to express their opinion (Dahl, 1967). Therefore, protests have a purpose and can be regarded as a key democratic factor. Protests are a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the way things go and newsworthy protests do not go unnoticed by media which means that the broader public gets to know about it (Kilgo and Harlow, 2019, p. 509). Protests are a type of opposition against majority rule. They are part and parcel of our daily life, and it influences what we see in the media, in the news, in politics (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Les Gilet Jaunes and more). Hence, the study of protests and what it does to citizens' perception of democracy is a topic that should be studied. In this research, I study the influence of protests on citizens' satisfaction with the way their democracy works. How do the people perceive the democracy they live in after protests? Do protests affect public opinion as to satisfaction with democracy? To investigate this, protests in democracies and the public perception of these regimes are studied using quantitative analysis.

1.2 Scientific Relevance

This study will contribute to the field of comparative politics and social movements as there is little research on the empirics of social movements. Although social movements have been researched, there is still a lack of empirical research on protest outcomes in terms of public opinion on democracy. In this study I will specifically research protests.

Regarding social movement studies, there is a difference between reasons, mechanisms, and consequences. Former research has a great focus on the reasons and rise of protests. There is a broad range of studies discussing the rise and frequency of protests (Etzioni, 1970) to the agitators of protests and the protesters (Norris et al., 2006). In these studies, different factors are used to explain the rise of protests. A few key theories and studies are summarised by Norris et al. (2006), who present different perspectives such as political alienation, context, and modernization of society as explanations of protests (Norris et al., 2006, p. 3-6). However, I will not further elaborate on these explanations, as I do not study what has caused social movements. Instead, in this study, I focus on the consequences of these movements – specifically citizens' satisfaction with democracy.

Previously, other scholars have also written about the outcomes of social movements (Della Porta, 2016; Feinberg et al., 2020; Giugni, 1998; Wasow, 2020). A great example would be

Della Porta (2016) who extensively theorizes about the consequences of and the mechanisms between social movements and democratic outcomes; however, she does not include an analysis of the public perception of the outcomes, which is where this research comes in.

Other research on public opinion and satisfaction with democracy has already established how a society dissatisfied with its regime could affect the regime. Though this is the opposite relation of what this study focuses on, these studies show why the study of public perception and political protest is relevant. For example, Sarsfield and Echegaray (2005) studied how dissatisfaction with democracy can lead to a different type of preferred regime. When people are satisfied with democracy, they will support the democratic regime, and when they are dissatisfied, they prefer any alternative (which is not necessarily authoritarianism). Sarsfield and Echegaray (2005) again focus on social movements in terms of causes for a social movement instead of the outcome of social movements. The study, however, clearly suggests that studying the relationship between political protests and satisfaction with democracy is worthwhile as satisfaction with democracy again has an impact on how regimes are perceived and to what extent they are accepted. So, if protests affect satisfaction with democracy, this could impact a regime extensively, which makes it interesting to research this relationship.

Furthermore, Norris (2011) argues that people's experience of democratic governance affects their (dis)satisfaction with democracy. Demonstrations are a way of democratic governance as protesters try to influence current politics through protesting and these expressions can further influence the rest of society in terms of perception of regime performance. Hence, experiencing demonstrations could affect society's satisfaction with democracy. Regarding empirical studies and the outcome of social movements, there is a gap in the literature as to social movements studies and public opinion. These studies show a link between protests and satisfaction with democracy. This study will elaborate on that link and empirically study it.

Besides protests and public opinion, this study also focuses on other protest conditions that could influence public opinion. This is another gap in the literature in terms of empirical research. An important condition to consider is, for example, violence. Violence could mean that the state is repressive or that protesters are attacking. In previous studies, state repression has been studied thoroughly. Earl (2003) summarizes explanations and types of repressive actions during protests. This includes explanations of different groups who repress (individuals, groups, or state actors) (Earl, 2003, p. 1) and different types and factors of repression (controlling versus suppressing; the visibility of repression; violence versus

positive reinforcement), and how these affect protest culture and participation. Other scholars also studied the effect of violence on political protests, such as Opp and Roehl (1990) who researched the effect of repression on political protest and empirically tested the effect that repression has on mobilisation. In their study, they found that repression and the cost of activism are related, which means that citizens are less likely to participate in protests when there is state repression. These studies show that the conditions of a protest greatly influence mobilisation and public perception of the protest.

However, as mentioned before, this study focuses on public opinion and violence. Robinson (1972) studied voting behaviour after demonstrations. He studied anti-war demonstrations in the United States and how these affected voting behaviours, and the demographic influenced by the events. He found that although the media was supportive of the demonstrations, the different voters agreed in attitude towards protests which did not align with the media representation. Robinson (1972) also argued that there are differences as to party identification, racial, and educational differences as to the attitudes toward the use of police force.

Moreover, both Wasow (2020) and Feinberg et al. (2020) focused on public opinion and the problem of violent protests. Violent protests are considered protests where either the state or the protesters are violent – or both. Wasow (2020) studied the effect of violent and non-violent protests and state response, and the negative effect that it has on media coverage and thus, on public opinion and support for the protesters. Feinberg (2020) argues that violent protests can be beneficial, but that it can also mean that there is less public support for your movement (p. 25). These scholars have given enough incentive to study violence as a protest condition even further, because, again, there is an empirical gap in the literature in terms of protest conditions and satisfaction with the way democracy works. In this study, I will continue this branch of research.

Furthermore, besides violence and repression, I elaborate on the state's response in terms of demands. It is important to include this considering that protests have an inherent democratic purpose. Protesters want something from their government – which is why they protest. Thus, demonstrations are a way of democratic governance. Protesting is in that sense similar to voting. Dahl (1971) argues that "[a] key characteristic of democracy is the continued responsiveness of the government to the preferences of the people" (p. 1) and considering that demonstrations are part of democratic governance, it is expected that governments also

respond to the protest demands. Hence, studying state response to demands in the context of satisfaction with democracy is scientifically relevant. Although there is already some research on violent or nonviolent state response and public opinion, there is little on state response to demands. To understand the link between protests and satisfaction with democracy better, I include empirical research on state response to this study.

In previous research, other scholars have also found a link between size, organisation, and the visibility of protests in media and public opinion (Oliver and Myers, 1999; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Vliegenthart, et al., 2005). Oliver and Myers (1999) argue that there are various contributing factors as to the media coverage of protests. This includes the type of conflict, the organisation, location, and the type of medium that covers the protest. They conclude that a larger event and organisation is more visible in the media. According to Vliegenthart, et al. (2005), this visibility influences the citizens' support for the social movements. These studies give this research an incentive to include size and organisation of a protest too, especially considering that humans gather a lot of information about the world from different media. This link between visibility and support for social movements is worth extending through studying whether the support for the opponent of the protesters (often the regime) is also affected by it.

1.3 Research Question

Although previous studies showed the link between protests, public opinion, and different protest conditions, there is still an empirical gap in the literature regarding the consequences of protests on satisfaction with democracy. It is likely that social movements affect public opinion on democracy and therefore, it is worth studying this effect. This relates to the societal relevance of this study. Besides the fact that it is a gap in the literature, it will expand the discussion in literature and society regarding how protests affect citizens and, based on the influential conditions explored in this research, also help state and protesters in terms of strategic response. The goal of the study is to investigate the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy. The research question studied in this thesis is: *what is the effect of political protests on the public's satisfaction with the way democracy works in liberal democracies, and to what extent does that change when other conditions – protesters' violence, state response to demands, state violence, and size and organisation – are included?*

In this study, I argue that protests have a negative impact on public opinion. Furthermore, I argue that protesters' violence, state response – violence and response to demands – and size and organization of the protests are conditions that also influence the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy. Hence, this study improves theories on both social movements and public opinion.

1.4 Structure

In the remainder of this paper, I focus on concepts such as protests and satisfaction with democracy and discuss literature on the importance of protests in democracies in the theoretical framework. Moreover, I explain the link between protests and satisfaction with democracy, and the mechanism between both concepts is specified. The first hypothesis is formed using theories of protests and public opinion. Subsequently, studies about force, repression, demands, size, and organization of social movements are used to form moderation hypotheses. Furthermore, the third chapter explains the used methodology and data. This chapter justifies using quantitative data – Mass Mobilization Project (Clark, & Regan, 2016), the European Social Survey (European Social Survey Round 8 Data [ESS 8], 2016), and V-Dem (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Alizada [V-Dem], 2021) – and the method of analysis – multilevel models with random effects including interaction effects for the models with moderation. In the fourth chapter, I discuss the results and the outcomes of the analyses. Based on these results, I draw conclusions in the final chapter, discuss findings and limitations, and recommend steps for further research. This research has implications for the literature on social movements and satisfaction with democracy as it looks at protests from a dimension that has not been studied before empirically. It is an unexplored part of social movement studies for which I use quantitative methods that have generally not yet been used in this field. The study focuses on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy, and therefore, it enhances knowledge of factors that influence satisfaction with democracy. Altogether, this research opens a new discussion regarding the importance and influence of protests in democracies.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks are presented. First, political protests are defined and then explored by linking them to democracy and public opinion. Afterwards, satisfaction with democracy is conceptualised. Then, I present the literature and provide the mechanism that links the concepts for the first hypothesis. Furthermore, other conditions are explored to further establish the theoretical framework this research is grounded in.

I provide the link that shows how satisfaction with democracy is expected to be negatively influenced by protests. Moreover, I show conditions that are expected to moderate this expected effect. The conditions that are researched are protesters' violence, state response to demands (accommodation or not), state violence, and the type of protest. Altogether, I elaborate on the link between these concepts and the mechanism leading to the hypotheses.

2.1 Political Protests

One key scholar in social movements studies is Karl-Dieter Opp (2009) who has written a book about social movement theories. The influence and prominence of his works give me the incentive to use his work as a framework to conceptualize protests. The concept of protests is rather broad and can have many forms. Technically, even a terrorist attack could be regarded as a protest as it is an extreme and violent expression of disapproval (Opp, 2009, p. 33). Opp (2009) combines several definitions from other scholars and takes four main elements that distinguish protests from other actions.

The first of these elements is simply the fact that there is an "action or behaviour", and this is a "joint" or "collective" action, which means that it is done in group form and not individually (Opp, 2009, p. 33). This means that one person who sends a letter to the municipality to object tax assessments is not protesting. Even though it is an action, it is not a collective, whereas an organised group sending letters regarding a common issue to their municipalities would count as a protest. The next element is the idea that protest is about targeting a common opposition. If a citizen stands in the park to fight lockdown measures, another citizen stands there to fight police brutality, and another is there to draw attention to climate change, then these citizens do not have a common opposition. Several issues may be protested at the same time; however, the citizens should roughly agree on these issues. Another element that Opp (2009) uses is that a protest should be regarded as a final option. When the usual ways have not worked for protesters, they opt for other more pressuring

tools. However, technically citizens do not have to try other options as an issue might be pressing or they do not live in a democracy where the government listens to the citizens. It could also be a choice to influence politics and policy through protest (Opp, 2009, p. 39). It is nevertheless a serious action that represents a severity or urgency. Lastly, it is "not regular", and it is "unconventional" in nature (Opp, 2009, p. 33). The protesters use means that are not institutionalised, which is similar to the previous element in the sense that it can be expected that a last-resort action is indeed not institutionalised and unconventional. Sometimes citizens can achieve their goals through institutions, but they prefer to use protests.

Furthermore, Opp (2009) argues that protests can be regular as protests can happen every week, but that does not make them less of a protest (p. 39). These elements should be taken strictly as he agrees that the degree and the elements can vary among protests. There can be some exceptions regarding this conception of protests. Opp (2009) argues that these exceptions do not have to be a problem. In sum, the broad definition of protests would be the "joint (i.e., collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target" (Opp, 2009, p. 36). This is also the definition that will be used in this research for the concept 'political protests'. The definition of protests is rather broad. It is still ideal as it does not include too many instances through separating political protests from the meaning of the word 'to protest' and at the same time, it includes enough types of protests as it is not demarcating too much and ignoring the diverse types and ways of protesting that is inherent to protests due to its unconventional and noninstitutional character. This definition is demarcating a difference between regular politics and protests without including or excluding too many instances.

2.1.1 Protests in Democracies

In this section, I elaborate on the role of protests in democracies and why protests are important. This also shows the significance of studying the link between protests and satisfaction with democracy which is explored in a later subsection.

In democracies, people have the right to assembly and opposition, they have the right to protest (Dahl, 1967, p. 373). Protests have a similar role to elections in giving feedback on the current situation. It is a way to show dissatisfaction with the way things work and a cry for change. Especially compared to autocracies, protests in democracies are part of the system and therefore, free and fair protests are as indispensable to democracies as elections

are. Arce and Rice (2019) argue that protests have a twofold effect on democracies. They can promote them, but they can also threaten them (Arce & Rice, 2019, p. 7). The positive effect of protests on democracies lies in the positive feedback as it gives citizens more power in affecting policies within election cycles. As mentioned before, protests in democracies are similar to free and fair elections that are part of the system. Protests are a way of direct democracy as the decision-making process is shifted more towards citizens than that it remains in the hands of the government (Arce and Rice, 2019, p.). In the previous section, I explained Opp's perception of protests (2009) as a non-institutionalised form of politics, however, Goldstone (2003) explains that social movements are part of normal politics and play an important role in democracies. Goldstone (2003) perceives this distinction between protests and other politics as unclear and "fuzzy and permeable" (p. 2). Institutions and institutional practices are influenced and affected by protests, and the opposite is also true. Meyer and Tarrow (as cited in Goldstone, 2003) argue that Western democracies are now "movement societies" where social movements are fully institutionalised and part of normal politics (p. 2).

The positive effect of protests on democracies is only one side of the coin. Similar to Opp (2009), Arce and Rice (2019) argue that protests are not institutionalised which means that protests pose a threat to democracy. It becomes a threat to the political system as the protesters do not use regular ways that fall within the definition of representative democracy. This is a theory that is called "disaffected radicalism" (Arce & Rice, 2019, p. 7).

Altogether, institutionalised or not, protests have a key role in democracies as they are part of what constitutes a democracy. As argued here, protests challenge democracy and politics, they provide feedback between election cycles, and thus, strengthen democratic institutions through giving feedback. Without the right to protest, there is no democracy.

2.1.2 Protests and Public Opinion

Considering that I have explained the role of protests in democracies, I will have to take this a step further and link protests to public opinion. This will be the first step toward the link between protests and satisfaction with democracy. Protests are one of the key elements of democracy and particularly affect democracies in two ways. As previously mentioned, protests are part of democracies as they influence politics from the outside – in fact, their effect is so relevant that some scholars consider protests as part of institutionalised politics. Protests also affect public opinion. As Giugni (1998) argues, "it seems rather obvious protest

activities raise the awareness of the population over certain political issues" (p. 379). The goal of protests is to influence both authorities and the public. In essence, they try to pressure and find support and empathy at the same time. The effect that protests have on public opinion can be effective regarding pressure too (Giugni, 1998, p. 379), so in that sense, it has a separate and intertwined purpose. Carey et al. (2014) also studied protests and public opinion in the context of the 2006 immigration protests in the United States and the effect of those protests on the saliency of that issue among Latinos. Carey et al. (2014) found that the protests had a great impact on the issue salience, which means that political protests are likely to highlight the importance of an issue compared to other forms of public participation. Altogether, this shows that protests affect public opinion.

The mechanism can partly be explained by relating it to the deprivation theory that is prevalent in social movements studies. According to this theory, the feeling that people have been deprived of certain public goods can spark outcry and protest (Sen & Avci, 2016). When society may not have been focusing on certain problems, protests may show the importance of a certain issue. This is similar to the situation of the Latinos in the research of Carey et al. (2014), they did not perceive immigration as an issue before the rallies, but after the protests, the importance of the issue increased. Society may not notice their deprivation until it is highlighted and shown to them.

This mechanism between protests and public opinion is related to the purpose of protests in representative democracies. In representative democracies, some issues may not receive enough attention which is one of the reasons for protest. These protests highlight the importance of an issue and are picked up by politicians who, in theory, cannot ignore the protests as it is a demand by the public and, in theory, these representatives cannot ignore the change in public opinion. Hence, it can be argued that through issue salience, protests affect public opinion, and therefore, politics is affected as politicians are directly shown what issues and topics should care about.

2.1.2.1 Protests, Public opinion, and Media. As many other political issues, protests are also mostly understood by citizens through different media. Therefore, it is important to consider media coverage and its influence on public opinion as part of the mechanism that links these concepts. As McCombs (2002) argues, mass media create certain images in people's head and help them give an opinion about those pictures. These pictures are important considering that mass media are also the ones that highlight which issues should be

considered important and what we should think about public leaders. As Snow (2013) explains, media framing directs the person to the part that needs attention. Hence, the influence of mass media is important in relation to public opinion. Therefore, the role of news media is also important when it comes to public opinion and protests. In previous research, this link was already established in the sense that media have difficulty with portraying protests that challenge the status quo without bias against the protesters (Gitlin, 1980). As Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) found, public perception also depends on the language that is used in the media. Moreover, Oliver and Maney (2000) argue that different types of protests have different types of influence on media coverage, which is why later in this chapter I also include conditions of protests as influential. However, McCurdy (2012) argues that just focusing on media coverage is too limited in terms of public perception as coverage is not the same as interpretation (p. 247). Furthermore, media are not the only messengers. Protesters also have their own tactics and strategies. These are important elements as to media's influence on public perception.

2.2 Satisfaction With Democracy

Satisfaction with democracy is a concept that is strongly related to the broader concept of public opinion. The simplest way of thinking about it is that any value that the public holds and that adapts to situation, history, and context can be regarded as public opinion. Satisfaction with democracy is part of public opinion as it is also a particular value that citizens have, but that is subject to change depending on context. The concept of satisfaction with the way democracy works is regarded as highly important as consolidated democracies need citizens who believe in democracy because citizens will otherwise turn to other alternatives (Linde & Eckman, 2003, p. 392).

One of the key understandings of satisfaction with democracy is that it is related to political support. When people remain dissatisfied for a long time, their support for democracy will deteriorate. Becoming more politically active will solve much of this dissatisfaction; however, it is not likely that they will become so unless they have a clear understanding of how to solve certain issues (Dahl, 2000, pp. 39-40). According to Easton (1957), political support is also closely associated with legitimacy in the sense that political support becomes stronger when legitimacy is higher (p. 399). Therefore, political support and thus, satisfaction with democracy are key to a democracy. There are two types of support according to Easton (1975): diffuse and specific. Specific support is supporting the output of a system, such as policies et cetera, but also support for the authorities (Easton, 1975, p. 438). Diffuse support

is the most abstract definition. It is explained as "what an object represents…not of what it does" (Easton, 1975, p. 444), which means that it is about supporting the political community as a whole and not necessarily supporting specific actors or a regime.

Norris (1999) uses Easton's framework and expands it to five levels of political support that go from abstract to specific: political community, regime principles, regime performances, regime institutions, political actors (p. 10). The support levels are similar to Easton's as political community and regime principles are the most general level and thus, supported most too. Regime performance is most volatile and depicts the way the regime works. Support for regime institutions is more about individual institutions instead of general regime or democracy and, compared to the previous categories, the confidence and trust are declining. Political actors are on a very individual level and therefore, the levels of support are mixed. These "summaries of trends" as presented by Norris (1999) show that regime performance is both general and volatile. As Norris (1999) explains, democratic principles can be important and at the same time, the satisfaction with the democracy or the evaluation of the regime – regime performance – can be questioned. As Lühiste (2014) also argues, this regime evaluation is not the same as supporting democracy as a regime type (p.786). Therefore, I understand satisfaction with democracy to be reflecting the evaluation of regime performance focusing on the way a regime works, and not so much on principles.

Complementing Norris' framework (1999), Dahlberg and Holmberg (2014) also argue that satisfaction with democracy is not just about the quality of democracy but also the quality of government. The difference is that the quality of democracy is about the functioning of institutions, while the quality of government is about performance. The explanatory factor of quality of government is larger than that of quality of democracy. Quality of democracy focuses on democracy as a regime and the principles around it. Quality of government includes different factors such as professionalism, effectiveness, rule of law, and impartiality that truly focus on current performance more than principles (Dahl and Holmberg, 2014). If the people do not find the government effective, the quality of government is lower. This in turn affects citizens' satisfaction with democracy. As Scharpf (1999) explains, this highlights the importance of output democracy where the "government for the people" is important (as cited in Hobolt, 2012, p. 93).

Linde and Eckman (2003) are more critical of the concept 'satisfaction with democracy' and argue that satisfaction with democracy is sensitive to ideology. In politics, there are always

winners and losers, and citizens are sensitive to their position as winners or losers. This means that their position influences their perception of democracy and regime performance. Moreover, Linde and Eckman (2003) contend that satisfaction with democracy is not a concept about the degree to which citizens are democratic or generally support democracy. Instead, it is more about the quality of democracy and the performance of their regime (Linde & Ekman, 2003, p. 391). This is, however, not a problem for this study. The latter is beneficial to this study as the concept is also defined as regime performance based on Norris (1999) and Dahlberg and Holmberg (2014). Although the concept of satisfaction with democracy can have its weaknesses in studies, the link with the dissatisfaction of citizens and satisfaction with democracy as quality of a regime performance remains essential in this study. In the end, it is not about political parties and ideological executives, where winners and losers are more clearly defined than with protests and regime performance. Satisfaction with democracy clearly shows whether protests influence perception regime performance. In that sense, these elements of critique are not affecting this study.

Altogether, support for democracy will decline when people are dissatisfied for a long time and protests highlight citizens' issues. Thus, protests truly highlight dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the governments as the protesters are targeting the existing laws and policies. In terms of issue salience, protesters show politicians and other citizens which issues are more important to them. As Arce and Rice (2019) argue, protests are a way of direct democracy as they try to influence decision-making. Although I argue in the previous section that public opinion is influenced by media who have the power in framing protests, and who often frame in favour of regimes, this does not mean that citizens have a more positive perception of regime performance afterwards. Instead, I argue that even though there is media framing, the negative attention to regime performance still has an effect, which is directly related to citizens' evaluation of regime performance and issue salience. As mentioned earlier, theoretically, satisfaction with democracy is directly affected by government effectiveness and protests lead to issue salience among all citizens. With that, they affect satisfaction with democracy negatively, as this is an evaluation of regime performance.

Altogether, political protests affect public opinion, and satisfaction with democracy is part of the larger concept of public opinion. Satisfaction with democracy is related to the perception of regime performance, and as previous research found that political protests influence issue salience, we can expect that political protests highlight incompetence with regards to regime

performance. Therefore, it can be expected that protests have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy.

H1: Political protests have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy.

2.3 Conditions

In the previous sections, I focused on the presence of protests that will influence citizens' satisfaction with democracy. However, besides the presence of protests, there are elements of protests that can have an influence too. As mentioned earlier, protests can have many different forms and outcomes. Therefore, I present four conditions that will be considered in this research. These are based on characteristics of protests and the state's reaction to the protests. It is necessary to consider the effect that these forms and outcomes may have on the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy. In the next section, these conditions will be further explained.

2.3.1 Protesters' Violence

The effect that violent protesters have on public opinion has already been thoroughly studied. In this study, the concept of violent protesters serves best as a moderating condition considering that most protests in liberal democracies are nonviolent (Martin, 1994, p. 95). Based on the previously mentioned theory, the main assumption in this study is that generally satisfaction with democracy is affected by protests. and therefore, it can be assumed that violence is not necessary to show the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy. However, as will be explained, it can be expected that violence does affect this relationship. Therefore, this concept serves best as a moderator.

The relationship between violence and public opinion has been researched thoroughly. In his research, Wasow (2020) connects violence from protesters to the public perception of the protest. Similar to the research in this paper, Wasow (2020) also studies the impact that (violent) protests have on public perception. When protesters initiate violence, this is picked up by the news and media, and as a result of the negative framing of protests, public opinion changes in favour of the regime. Wasow (2020) focuses on public opinion as voting behaviour; however, this research focuses on public opinion that goes beyond voting. As explained before, satisfaction with democracy is also important for democratic stability. Therefore, the effect of protests on the perception of democratic performance should be studied. Focusing on voting gives a limited view of public opinion. In his research, Wasow

(2020) combines protesters' violence with violent state response. State violence is part of the more general state response and therefore, explained in an upcoming section.

Simpson et al. (2018) also studied the same issue, but they focused on the public's more direct reaction. Their theory is that violence leads to less identification with the protesters as the protesters are not seen as reasonable (p. 10). Violence leads then to more support for the target of the protesters. Therefore, it can be expected that if public perception on protesters and their opposition is affected by violence, that violent protesters also affect satisfaction with the way democracy works too. When protesters protest the state or government, they do that due to dissatisfaction with their performance, which means that if violence leads to more public for the protesters' target, a violent state or government protest could affect the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy. This means that the negative effect that political protests have on satisfaction with democracy is weakened when the protesters are violent.

H2: If the protesters are violent, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is weaker.

2.3.2 State Response

State response is another moderator that should be taken into consideration. State response includes two main dimensions: state supply and state violence. These dimensions both are expected to have a separate, different effect on the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy.

2.3.2.1 State supply. The first moderator that is linked to state response is the reaction of the state to the demands of the protesters. Although I previously mentioned that the effectiveness of government could highlight negative sentiment toward the government, this also depends on the state response. The question is whether the state listens to the demands or whether they ignore these. By definition, protesters protest, because they want to achieve a certain goal. To achieve that goal, their target needs to respond to the protesters. As mentioned in a previous section, protests are becoming part of the representative democracy and at the same time, protest is regarded as a last resort. Considering that in a representative democracy, it is expected that politics represent the will of the people, citizens probably also expect this. This means that they are also likely to expect that protests lead to an accurate response to the demands from the state.

Norris (2011) studied supply-side theories which relate public dissatisfaction to supply by the regime. One of these theories focuses on policy change which emphasises the importance of policy outputs and outcomes. The theory poses that public opinion is affected by policy outputs and outcomes. When states do not respond to the demand of protesters, there is a chance that it affects the general public's (dis)satisfaction with the way their regime works as it changes the perception of regime performance. Citizens expect that in a representative democracy, governments are responsive to the demands of the public (Hobolt & Klemmensen, 2005, p. 279). If the state responds to the protesters' demands, it can be assumed that it affects the citizens' opinion positively. However, if the state does not deliver anything that is asked for and if their 'supply' is insufficient, this will affect satisfaction with democracy even more negatively. Therefore, it is likely that adding state response to demands will affect the relationship between political protests and satisfaction with democracy.

H3a: If the state does not respond to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.

H3b: If the state responds to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be weaker.

2.3.2.2 State violence. The second moderator that is linked to state response is whether the state uses violence to respond to the protesters or not. Protesting is an essential part of a democracy as it is an expression of the right to assemble and the right to opposition. Hofferbert and Klingemann (1999) relate the importance of democratic values, specifically human rights, to democratic performance and satisfaction with democracy. They give a political explanation of how satisfaction with democracy depends on respecting human rights (Hofferbert and Klingeman, 1999, p. 156). Although they specifically focus on countries that are in democratic transition, it is likely that in consolidated or stable democracies these values also weigh heavily. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948) also states in articles 19 and 20 that humans have the right to freedom of opinion and assembly. Protesting is a democratic right, and it is an expression of the right to assembly and an expression of opinion. This means that it can be regarded as a human right too. If the state responds violently to protesters, it is fair to assume that the public perceives this as having their democratic values attacked, which means that state violence will also affect the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy. It can be expected that when

democracies violate human rights through repression, it affects the public's satisfaction with democracy as the regime performance is then perceived as undemocratic.

It is not unusual to use violence to attack protesters as the target. When violence is used to repress protests, authorities in autocracies try to justify these repressive acts (Aytaç et al., 2018, p. 1219-20). However, as this research focuses on democracies, it can be assumed that the violation of human rights weighs more heavily than any attempt to justify the violence. Therefore, this attempt to justify repression does not diminish the effect of state repression. According to Anisin (2016), human rights are respected more in democracies than in autocracies as the costs of repression are too high for democratic institutions. This means that it is less likely that democratic states use violence to repress protests. However, this also means that whenever a democratic state uses violence against its protesting citizens, it might affect citizens' perceptions of the state differently. Furthermore, when police use force, it increases mobilisation and violence by protesters, as it angers them (Anisin, 2016; Aytaç et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2020). If violence angers the citizens, it could affect public opinion regarding the way democracy works too. In sum, people have the right to protest, states unwillingly mobilise citizens when their human rights are violated, which means that it can be expected that violent state response has a negative effect on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy.

H4: If the state uses violence against the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.

2.3.3 Social Movements

A final moderator that is relevant for this study is the size and the organisation of the protests. When defining protests, it was clear that due to the different forms of protests, the concept of protest remains rather broad. Sometimes, the definition of protest is separated from the definition of social movements – though most often these two concepts are used interchangeably. This similarity between the concepts is clear in the definition of social movements by Touraine (1985), which is close to the definition of political protests by Opp (2009). According to Touraine (1985), a social movement is a social conflict and, as Opp (2009) also argues, not all collective behaviour falls in the category of social movements.

As it was shown, the definitions of protest by Opp (2009) and social movements by Touraine (1985) are close to each other. However, Opp (2009) then distinguishes protests from social movements. He defines social movements from the position of protests. "A social movement

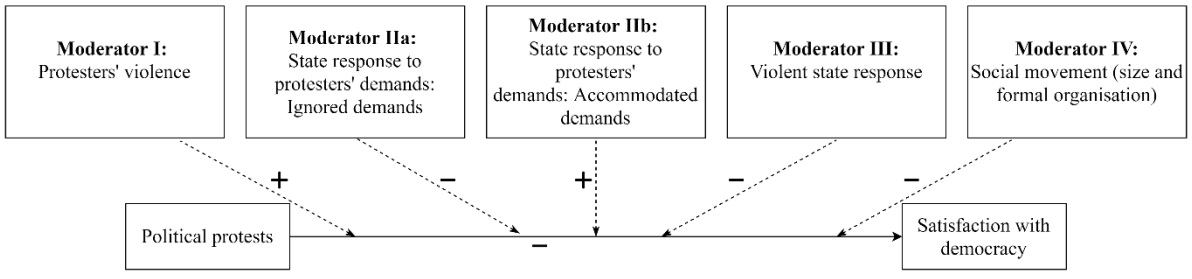
is defined as a collectivity of actors who want to achieve their goal or goals by influencing the decisions of a target" (Opp, 2009, p. 40). It is important to note the word "collectivity" here as this indicates that within the social movements, the group is more organised. This is also the biggest difference between the two concepts. Opp (2009) shows two dimensions that are relevant to distinguish both: formal organization and size (p. 41). Social movements are large and more formally organised. These elements of size and organisation could also influence the effect on satisfaction with democracy. The size and organisation of a protest could affect the salience of an issue, media attention, and with that, it could also affect satisfaction with democracy. As was argued by other scholars, visibility in the media adds to the support of the social movement (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Vliegenthart, et al., 2005). Hence, it can be expected that a larger and more formally organised protest has a negative impact on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy, which leads to even less satisfaction with democracy.

H5: If protests are larger and more formally organised, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.

2.4 Theoretical model

In the theoretical model in figure 1, all hypotheses that are studied in this research are presented.

Figure 1: Theoretical model including all hypotheses that are studied in this research



Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I explain the methodology and research design that are used in this study. First, the case selection and data are described. Then, the operationalization of concepts and the measurement of the variables are explained. Lastly, the research method to analyse the data is set out.

3.1 Case Selection

In this study, the focus is on liberal democracies as there is a theoretical and practical appeal to that. Liberal democracies can be defined as nations that have "political liberties and democratic rule" (Bollen, 1993, p. 1208). There are two key elements here that are relevant to protesting: citizens have the freedom to give their political opinion and citizens have the power to choose (or remove) their governments and representatives. Citizens in non-democratic countries often do not have the possibility to protest which means that the chance to find sufficient data on protests in liberal democracies is higher. Furthermore, the research is based on the way in which citizens are satisfied with the democracies they live in, and this suggests that it is worth looking at countries that are liberal democracies as this ensures that there is a democracy to be (dis)satisfied with and there are also not many other factors that affect satisfaction with democracy.

The selection is based on the V-Dem dataset which classifies regimes as "0 closed autocracy", "1 electoral autocracy", "2 electoral democracy", "3 liberal democracy" (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, et al., 2021, p. 283). The dataset combines various indicators into one variable to classify the democratic institutions as a particular type of regime. There are several indicators used to measure this variable: the extent to which there are multiple parties allowed, free and fair elections, polyarchy-scores[1] and liberal-scores[2] (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, et al., 2021, p. 283). In the analysis, only countries that are classified as liberal democracies are included in this research.

Besides the classification of liberal democracies, countries that are in Europe are chosen. There are no datasets available that includes satisfaction with democracy for all liberal democracies across the world, which means that it is easier to use the more widely available data on European liberal democracies. Most countries in Europe can be classified as liberal

[1]To what extent nations have free and fair elections with extensive suffrage, freedom of organization, and of press and expression

[2] This includes human rights, equality, and limits to the government.

democracies and there is also plenty of data available on protests in the liberal democracies in Europe.

Table 1 has an overview of the countries that are selected based on their status as liberal democracies and the available data on protests.

Table 1: Overview of the case selection

Liberal Democracies (2014)	Satisfaction With Democracy (Mean) (2016)	Number of Protests (2014)
Austria	5.68	0
Belgium	5.47	2
Czech Republic	7.38	1
Estonia	5.18	0
Finland	6.24	0
France	4.25	17
Germany	5.83	15
Ireland	5.44	56
Italy	4.01	6
Lithuania	4.75	0
Netherlands	6.10	0
Norway	7.22	0
Poland	4.70	1
Portugal	4.90	0
Slovenia	3.82	0
Sweden	6.43	0
Switzerland	7.38	1
United Kingdom	5.35	13
Total: 18		112 protests in 9 countries

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; V-Dem, 2021; ESS 8, 2016.

3.2 Dataset

To conduct this study, secondary data from two different sources are used as there is already existing data available that fit this research. The first dataset is from the European Social Survey [ESS] (ESS 8, 2016). The second dataset is from the Mass Mobilization Project

[MMP] (Clark & Regan, 2016) containing protest data. In this section, I elaborate on the datasets that are used in this study. I explain how the datasets were compiled, the advantages, and the possible biases of these datasets.

3.2.1 European Social Survey

The first dataset used in this research is the European Social Survey (ESS 8, 2016). This dataset is used to measure satisfaction with democracy. The ESS is a high-quality dataset that is widely used. It is based on a cross-country survey conducted in 38 countries (ESS, n.d.). These large-scale surveys are conducted in many countries over time. The samples are drawn from the entire population (above 15) and the questionnaire is designed to measure the values and beliefs of the surveyed. The sample size depends on the size of the countries, but a minimum of 800 is required for all countries. The data are collected with face-to-face interviews. The project is funded by all participating countries, and it is now part of the European Research Institution Consortium (ERIC) which is part of the European Union. In this study, I used round 8 of this dataset, which is survey data from 2016, to ensure that there is a two-year time lag between the protest data and the survey data.

3.2.2 Mass Mobilization Project

Although it is difficult to find data on protests as it is still a relatively small field of study within the social sciences, the Mass Mobilization Project [MMP] (Clark & Regan, 2016) provides an extensive dataset with information about worldwide protests that fits the design of this study. This dataset covers countries all over the world – 162 countries in total – from 1990-2014. The dataset provides information that is useful in this research. It includes 26 different variables such as country, year, and protest. These variables ease case selection. Another useful element is that they focus on anti-government protests and exclude protests that are between communities or rebels.

The protests that are included in the MMP dataset are all protests that were in newspapers and that involve at least 50 people. This ensures that the protests are significant enough in terms of size and importance as they were at least published in the paper. The major papers that were used in this research are *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Times of London*. For the Middle East and North African countries, the *Jerusalem Post* was used – however, due to the case selection, these are not protests that are included in this study. The coders searched for the keywords ‘protest’, ‘demonstration’, ‘riot’, or ‘mass mobilization’ in these papers using Lexis-Nexis. They looked up whether the protests are

mentioned and further information about the protests. The minimum of articles they wanted per country is 100 articles with evidence of (different) protests. If they did not get enough articles in these major papers, the coders would do the same procedure again in regional papers and/or other sources. When they did not obtain 100 articles about various protests, the coders also continued the coding procedure with what they had. This means that this dataset has many protests across different countries that were mentioned in various media sources, and it is likely that residents of the country at least have some knowledge about the protests. If there were zero articles found in these sources, it meant that there were no protests (or only insignificant and small protests). The method used for this dataset is justified considering that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a relation between media and public opinion. In this research, I study the relation between protests and public opinion, and people are mostly aware of these protests through media.

In terms of bias, it should be noted that the project is funded by the Political Instability Task Force, which is a U.S. government research project (Clark & Regan, 2016). Although they state that the project is independent, it is possible that there is a certain western bias when coding. The papers that are initially looked at are all American/British papers, however, they also move to regional papers when they do not have enough articles. They do, however, only move to regional papers after they did not find enough articles in the initial ones, which means that there is still a possible discrepancy between the reporting in the country of protest and in the papers that they looked at. Moreover, the depiction of protests in papers can be biased. However, this should not be a significant problem considering that, in the end, the idea is that the general public gets their information of protests through these media and the coding procedure with the keywords appears to be fairly neutral.

3.3 Operationalisation

3.3.1 Dependent Variable

Satisfaction with democracy is a measurement of how people evaluate the democracies they live in and as explained in the previous chapter, it is specifically the regime performance that is evaluated. The data for this concept is obtained from the ESS (ESS 8, 2016). The dataset includes a specific question that fits this study, asking whether citizens are satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. The question in the dataset is: “And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?”. The scale goes from ’00 extremely dissatisfied’ to ‘10 extremely satisfied’ with extra options ‘refusal’ and ‘don’t know’. The cases that answered ‘refusal’ or ‘don’t know’ have been excluded as they are

considered missing variables. With a range from 0 to 10, a higher score means that the person is more satisfied with the way democracy works. The variable is ordinal as it has an ordering of categories. An ordinal variable can often be treated as a continuous variable (Robitszch, 2020), especially when the scale exists of more than five categories (Johnson & Creech, 1983). Therefore, this variable is treated as such.

3.3.2 Independent Variable and Moderators

The independent variable in this study is political protests. This variable can be found in the MMP dataset. This variable is a dichotomous variable that indicates whether there was a protest during that year or not. The protest variable is not used a dichotomous variable considering that within one year some countries had multiple protests. Each protest in each country is counted as a separate case. This is not useful for this study, which is why I chose to recalculate this variable. The sum of the protests in 2014 is used for *protests*, which means that the variable is now continuous instead of dichotomous. The use of the sum also indicates that a higher number are more protests. There are, of course, also cases with no protests in 2014.

The moderators that are used in this research are also found within the same dataset. First, there is the moderating variable *protesters' violence* which is also a dichotomous variable indicating whether there was protesters' violence or not. I transformed this variable into a percentage. For the number of protests in a country in 2014, I calculated what percentage had with protesters' violence. This also means that a higher number is relatively more protesters' violence.

Then, there is state response which is a variable that includes both violent state response as well as accommodation of demands. In the dataset, these are measured as one categorical variable. I recoded these into dummy variables to conduct a regression analysis. The variable is measured using seven state actions: *accommodation of demands*, *arrests*, *beatings*, *crowd dispersal mechanisms*, *ignore*, *killings*, and *shootings*. Similar to protesters' violence, to ensure that the variable becomes measurable per country, the actions are transformed into new variables that depicts the percentage of a certain state actions per country. Each category has its own variable. It should be noted that it is possible that some of these actions do not happen at all – I have excluded these from the study. Hence, the variables *beatings*, *killings*, and *shootings* are automatically excluded as these are not available for any of the countries or protests. Moreover, whenever there are arrests there is also a crowd dispersal mechanism,

which is why I just keep *crowd dispersal mechanisms* as a variable and remove *arrests* as a variable. An overview of these state actions per country is presented in table 2. Of all state actions *accommodation* and *ignore* are used to measure state response to demands. *Crowd dispersal mechanisms* is coded as *state violence*. It is also possible that some of these happen at the same time (e.g., violence from both sides). Hence, I always include these conditions. For this variable, a higher number means that there was relatively more state violence, ignored protests, or accommodated protests than when the number of a variable is low.

Lastly, social movements are measured in terms of size and organization. For size, the categorical indicator of participation is used. The categories of the participation variable in the original dataset are '50-99', '100-999', '1000-1999', '2000-4999', '5000-10.000', and '>10.000'. This categorical set is transformed as a variable where protests with more than 5000 participants are regarded as large and the percentage of large protests per country is then calculated. This data is then combined with the protest group identity, which is also transformed into a similar variable. For each protest, it is stated whether it is a formal organisation or not, and then it is again transformed into a percentage of formally organised protests per country. In the MMP dataset, the formal organisation is not clearly indicated, therefore, the identity of the group as 'protesters' or 'unspecified' is recoded to informal organisation, and the rest where the protester's identity is clear – such as teachers, labour unions, migrants, far-right groups – it is regarded as formal organisation considering that the identity of the group is more homogenous. Size and organisation are combined into one variable through adding both percentages and dividing the total by two. Again, the higher the number, the relatively larger and/or more formally organised protests were in a country.

Table 2: Overview of the conditions of the protests

Countries	Protests	Crowd dispersal mechanisms	Ignore	Accommodation
Austria	0	0	0	0
Belgium	2	1	0	0
Czech Republic	1	1	0	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0
Finland	0	0	0	0
France	17	6	11	0
Germany	15	4	11	0
Ireland	56	6	47	3
Italy	6	2	4	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	0	0	0
Norway	0	0	0	0
Poland	1	0	1	0
Portugal	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	1	0	1	0
United Kingdom	13	2	10	1

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016

3.3.3 Control Variables and Additional Sources

Many other factors can affect satisfaction with democracy. However, I am not interested in those effects considering that I focus on protests and their conditions, and not these variables that are not related to protests. In this study, I include both individual-level control variables and country-level control variables as the data structure of this research is nested (which I explain in the next section). The individual-level control variables are all part of the ESS 8 (ESS 8, 2016). In the sections below, I shortly explain that *age*, *gender*, *income*, and general *happiness* of a respondent influence their answers regarding the satisfaction with the way democracy works. The country-level control variables are *GDP*, *income inequality*, and *population size*.

3.3.3.1 Age. *Age* is a common control variable when it comes to surveys. It is a continuous variable as it is the respondent's actual age measured in years. It can be expected that younger people are more satisfied with democracy than older generations (Zilinsky, 2019, p. 1). The range of the variable *age* goes from 15 to 100, and a higher score means that the respondents are older.

3.3.3.2 Gender. *Gender* is a dichotomous variable that is often used as a control variable when survey data is used. It is shown that gender affects certain democratic values and beliefs, which is what the questions in the ESS 8 are based upon. More specifically, Hansen and Goenaga (2021) argue that gender affects satisfaction with democracy significantly. The variable *gender* is divided based on biological sex – male and female. As it is a categorical variable, it is transformed into dummy variable using '1 female' and '0 male', meaning that male is the reference category.

3.3.3.3 Income. Household income is another factor that can affect the perception of the respondents as to the regime performance (Wu & Chu, 2007). *Income* is measured as an ordinal variable with each category representing a decile for a household's total income; however, this variable can be regarded as a continuous variable due to the scale. As mentioned before, an ordinal variable with a scale of more than five categories can be regarded as continuous variables without major problems (Johnson & Creech, 1983). This variable has more missing values than others due to respondents who do not want to respond to this question. This is not a problem as there are still many cases, so this study remains valid.

3.3.3.4 Happiness. Another factor that might predict the way respondents are affected by events and how they answer survey questions is their general happiness. If they are generally happier people, this could mean that they perceive regime performance differently and are therefore more satisfied with democracy. Hence, this is also included as a micro-level control variable. The variable is present as a question in the ESS asking "how happy would you say you are?" (European Social Survey Round 8 [ESS 8], 2020). The score of the variable *happiness* is measured as a continuous variable from '00 extremely unhappy' to '10 extremely happy'. A higher score means that the respondent is happier. Therefore, this variable is also used as such.

3.3.3.5 GDP. The economy of a country could be an indicator. Although some view it as having only a marginal effect on political support (Dalton et al., 2010), it is still worth

looking at it as many others (e.g., Christmann, 2018) argue that good economic performance benefits satisfaction with democracy. Therefore, I include GDP as an economic measurement. The GDP measure that is used in this study is that of purchasing power parity (PPP) instead of nominal GDP per capita, as it takes purchasing power per country into account (Callen, 2020). Considering that GDP is too large to use as a proper measurement, I divide it by a thousand. This makes it easier to interpret and compare. The range of this variable varies. In general, a higher number for this variable means that a country can be considered richer as the GDP per capita is higher. The data comes from the World Bank (World Bank, World Development Indicators [World Bank], 2020a), which means that there may be a bias as the data comes from member countries themselves. However, this is mainly problematic for developing countries as they have issues of under-investment. The World Bank has official standards for data collection, which makes it a useful source for this study.

3.3.3.5 Income inequality. As mentioned before, household income can influence satisfaction with democracy, and similarly, income inequality on the country level can also affect it (Wu & Chu, 2007). Therefore, I expect that income inequality in a country is an important indicator regarding the perception of regime performance. To account for that, I include the GINI Index using data from the World Bank (World Bank, World Development Indicators [World Bank], 2020b). A GINI coefficient of 0 represents perfect equality where everyone has the same income, while 100 represents perfect income inequality where one person would have all the income and the others nothing. This means that a higher GINI coefficient represents more inequality. It should also be noted that the GINI index is regarded as problematic as some factors, such as informal economic activities, are omitted. Furthermore, certain countries with different income distributions could still have the identical/similar GINI coefficients due to the way it is measured (Chitiga et al., n.d.). However, as this is a control variable, I do not see this as a problem that will cause issues in my analysis. Considering that it is a popular variable for income inequality, I will use it in this study.

3.3.3.6 Size. It can be expected that country size affects the number of protests happening in a country, and therefore, it could also influence the variable *social movements*. In a small country, a protest of 1000 people could be perceived differently than in a larger country. Therefore, I add population size as a control variable. The data is obtained from the World Bank (World Bank, World Development Indicators [World Bank], 2019) and includes every resident of a country. The higher the number, the higher the population. World Bank

already divided population size by a thousand, however, that way it remains difficult to interpret due to the high numbers, so I recoded the variable through dividing it by another thousand.

3.4 Research Method

To test the hypotheses for this study, multilevel models are used as the data structure is nested. As shown in figure 2, the individual data is nested in countries, which means that there are both between-group (country) differences and within-group (individual) differences to consider. In figure 3, I present the multilevel model for this research. To account for the country-level differences, I chose to include a random intercept.

Within a group the outcomes are more similar which means that errors within a country are correlated due to country related variables. This is intra-class correlation (ICC), and the consequence of this ICC is that there are downwardly biased errors. If the right model is not used, these downwardly biased errors will lead to a type I error – support for a hypothesis when there is no support. Therefore, it is necessary to know the errors of between country and within country variation. When using a random effects model, the errors of the countries and the individuals are incorporated. This means that there is a random intercept which has an error term that shows how much each country deviates from the intercept. There is also another error term, which shows how much each individual deviates from the country average. So, in the end, there are two error terms – one for the country and one for the individual. As I use a multilevel model with a random intercept, we account for ICC, downwardly biased errors, and type I errors with the used model.

In a multilevel model, the moderating variables can also easily be added to the equation by adding an interaction term that shows the interaction between the independent variable and the moderating variable. The analyses are done using the statistical software SPSS. All categorical variables are recoded into dummy variables and the ordinal dependent variables are regarded as continuous variables.

In a regression analysis, there are certain assumptions (linearity, independent error, homoscedasticity, normally distributed errors, multicollinearity) that should be met. I checked these assumptions, and the results can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 2: Nested data structure

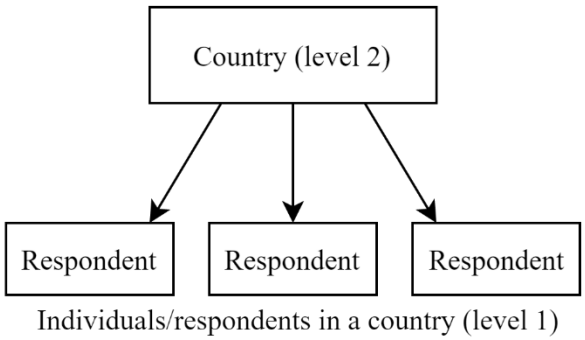
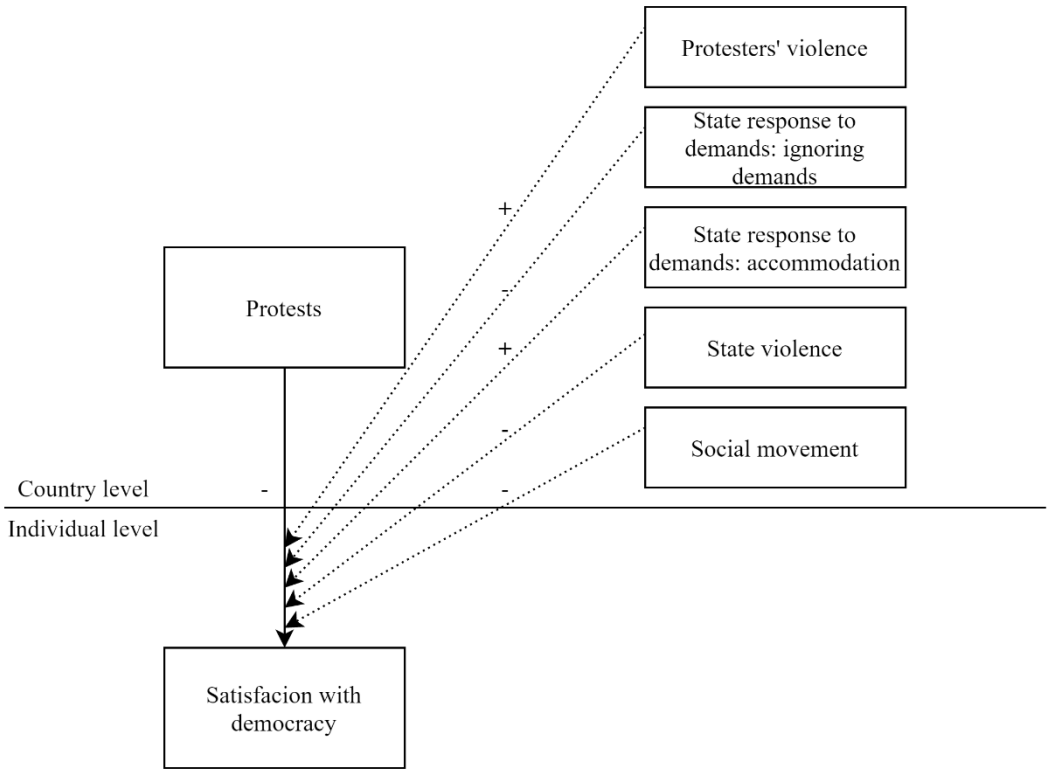


Figure 3: Theoretical model including the nested data structure



3.5 Descriptive Analysis

In this section, an overview of the variables is given through a descriptive table to obtain a summary of the relevant variables – the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. All the missing cases for each variable have been removed (a total of 15,755), which means that in total 28,532 valid cases remain for the individual-level variables and 18 valid cases for the country-level variables. A high standard deviation close to the mean suggests that the data are spread out and not so much clustered around the mean. Gender is a dummy variable, which means that the mean and the minimum and maximum are not useful as 0 means male and 1 means female. Instead, the percentage for gender (female) is included to the table.

From these statistics, it shows that most variables have a maximum far from the mean. This indicates that there are some outliers on the upper fence of the data. This is especially the case for the variable *protests*, which is why I run the analyses twice – the second time without the outlier.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean/Percentage	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction with Democracy	0	10	5.46	2.422
Protest	0	56	7.55	14.402
Protester's Violence	0	100	17.61	32.168
Ignore	0	100	32.53	39.625
Accommodation	0	7.69	.79	2.151
State Violence	0	100	16.85	26.137
Social Movement (Size/Organisation)	0	100	25.78	30.16
Age	15	100	49.89	18.07
Gender (male is reference)	0	1	51.6%[1]	
Income	1	10	5.35	2.72
Happiness	0	10	7.52	1.79
GDP (country level)	25.48	65.89	41.96	10.65
Income inequality (country level)	25.70	37.70	31.01	3.42
Size (country level)	1.31	80.98	24.82	27.92

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b)

Chapter 4: Analysis and Results

In this chapter, the analysis and results of the data are presented. First, the intra-class correlation is calculated using the null random intercept model. Then, the results of the first and most general hypothesis are presented and analysed. Following the first and most general hypothesis, the interaction effects are added. First, protester's violence is analysed as a moderator. The second moderator – state response to protester's demands – is then tested using two different variables that are analysed separately. Thirdly, violent state response is analysed as a moderator. Finally, the organization of the social movement is analysed as a moderating variable. After these analyses, there is a short discussion about the model fits and lastly, the results are summarized in table 8.

4.1 Intra-Class Correlation

As the analysis is done using a multilevel model, it is worth looking at the most basic version of the model before running a multilevel model to determine whether it makes sense to run a multilevel model. Therefore, the intra-class correlation (ICC) is calculated to know what part of the total variance is due to the country level. To do this, the null random intercept model is used without the independent or control variables. Instead, the model just includes the intercepts and the dependent variable. As presented in table 4, the inter-group variance – the individual-level difference – is 5.06 and the intra-group variance – the country-level difference – is 0.91. The ICC of this model can be calculated using equation (4.1) and in this case, the ICC is 0.15 which means that 15% of the total variance is explained at the second (country) level. This means that using a multilevel model makes sense and is necessary.

$$(4.1): \rho = \frac{\sigma^2{}_{\mu 0}}{\sigma^2{}_{\mu 0} + \sigma^2{}_r}$$

Table 4: Null random intercept model

	Null random intercept model
Intercept	5.45***
σ^2_r	5.06***
$\sigma^2_{\mu 0}$	.91*

$N_{individual}$ = 28,532, $N_{country}$=18
* p< 0.05; ** p< 0.01; *** p< 0.001; (two-tailed)
Source: ESS 8, 2016; own calculations.

4.2 Multilevel analysis

To test all hypotheses, I ran a multilevel analysis. In this section, all hypotheses are tested and explained starting from the simplest first hypothesis without interaction terms and then continuing by adding interaction terms according to the relevant hypothesis. The control variables are added from the beginning as a robustness check and analysed for the first hypothesis. Some of the coefficients of the control variables change across the other hypotheses and these results are presented in table 5 and 6.

4.2.1 Political protests

In this section, the results of the first hypothesis are presented and analysed together with the control variables. In addition to the control variables, the other variables that are later presented as moderators are also added as control variables from onset. The results for this hypothesis are presented in table 5 model 2. This hypothesis is used as a reference model for the models with interactions.

4.2.1.1 Control variables. In this section, I analyse the control variables and their results according to the test I ran for the first hypothesis. The coefficients of the control variables change when adding a moderating effect, but it can be said that the micro-level variables *age*, *gender*, *income*, and *happiness* are all significant under all circumstances, but they are not always meaningful – such as age with a regression coefficient of -0.00. The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* decreases 0.00 points for an increase in *age* (b=-.00, p=.00). The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* decreases 0.08 points for every *female* (b=-.08, p=.00). The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* increases 0.07 points for an increase *income* (b=.07, p=.00). The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* increases 0.27 points for an increase in *happiness* (b=.27, p=.00). For the macro-level variables, the variable *GDP* is significant under all circumstances. The significance of *population size* changes across the different models. *Income inequality* is not significant in any of the models. The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* increases with 0.07

points for an increase in *GDP* (b=.07, p=.00). The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* increases with 0.04 points for an increase in *income inequality* (b=.04, p=.27). The predicted value of *satisfaction with democracy* decreases with 0.01 points for an increase in *population size* (b=-.01, p=.04). The results for the control variables can be found in table 5.

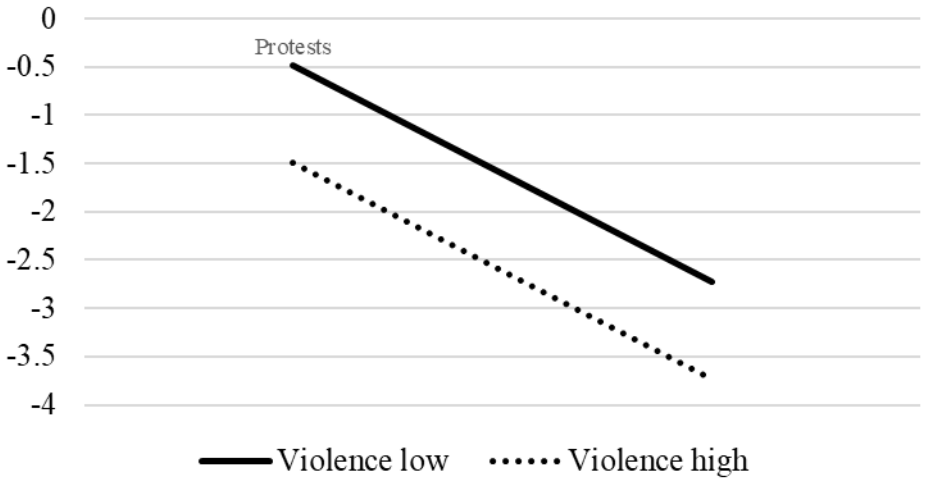
4.2.1.2 Hypothesis 1. I estimate the first model without interaction term that will later also serve as a reference model. The hypothesis for this model is: political protests have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy. In this model, all control variables are included. This analysis is done using a multilevel model as explained in the previous chapter. Besides the main variables, the control variables are also included as a robustness check. The result of this analysis (table 5, model 2) shows that the predicted value of satisfaction with democracy decreases 0.03 points for each extra political protest per year. This means that political protests, as expected, negatively affect satisfaction with democracy. Looking at the significance of this analysis, it shows that the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is significant (b=-.03, p=.04). Protests negatively affect satisfaction with democracy and the results are significant, which means that the first hypothesis is supported. Furthermore, the loglikelihood function is 125,602.77, which is considered to be the reference for the other interaction models. In comparison to the null random intercept model which has a loglikelihood function of 127,353.18, and based on the chi-square test, this model is significantly better (df=13, p< .00001). Table 5 (model 2) shows the results of this analysis.

4.2.2 Protesters' Violence

The second hypothesis that is tested includes the moderating variable *protesters' violence.* The hypothesis is that if the protesters are violent, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is weaker. Again, control variables are added. The interaction term (table 6, model 3a) shows that protesters' violence has a negative effect on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy. The interaction term is -0.00, which means that for every protest where the protesters are violent, the slope coefficient of protests decreases by 0.00 points. Although the negative effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is weaker when the moderator *protesters' violence* is included, this effect is not significant (b=-.00, p=.16). The hypothesis is not supported by the results. The loglikelihood function for this model is 125,600.77. Based on the chi-square test, this is not a significantly better model than the reference model (table 7). Table 6 (model 3a) shows the results of this analysis and table

7 shows the model fit. In figure 4, the interaction effect between *protests* and *protesters' violence* is visualised. The graphs are mostly parallel, which shows that there is little interaction to no interaction, which is also depicted in the interaction term of -0.00.

Figure 4: Interaction *protests* and *protesters' violence*



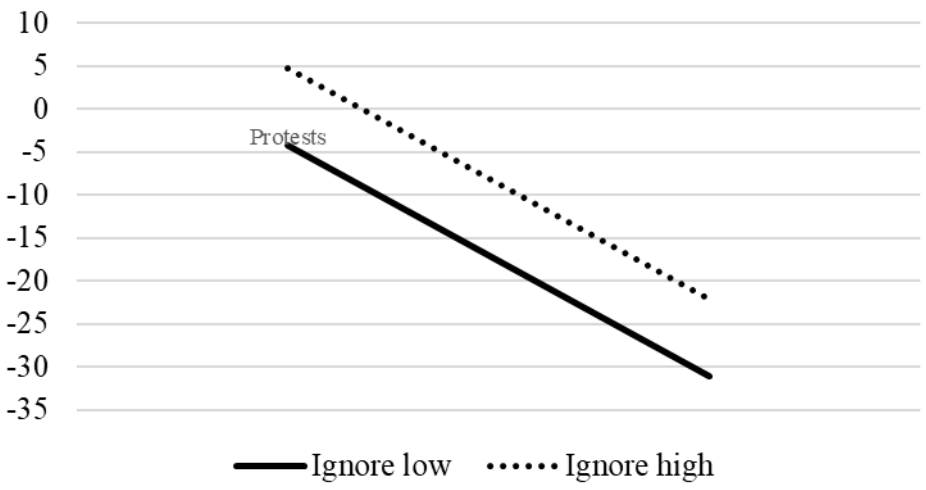
4.2.3 State Response to Demands

The third hypothesis that is discussed in this chapter is regarding the state's response to the demands of the protesters. The first hypothesis is: if the state does not respond to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger. The second hypothesis is: if the state responds to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be weaker. Again, control variables are added. Table 6 (model 3b and 3c) shows the results of both models.

4.2.3.1 Ignored protests. The results of this analysis (table 6, model 3b) shows that the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is indeed influenced by ignored demands as the interaction term is 0.01. The interaction term shows that ignoring demands has a positive effect on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy. For every protest where the demands are ignored, the slope coefficient of protests on satisfaction with democracy increases by 0.01 points. Considering that the reference model of the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is negative, the positive interaction term means that, indeed, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is stronger when the protesters are ignored. Although the effect is not significant at a significance level α at 0.05, it approaches significance (b=.01, p=.05). However, strictly speaking, the hypothesis

is not supported. Furthermore, this model is not significantly better than the reference model without interaction effects. The log-likelihood function for this model is 125,598.93 and the chi-square test proves that it is not significant (table 7). In figure 5, the interaction effect between *protests* and *ignored demands* is visualised. The graphs are mostly parallel, which shows that there is minimal interaction, which is also depicted in the interaction term of 0.01.

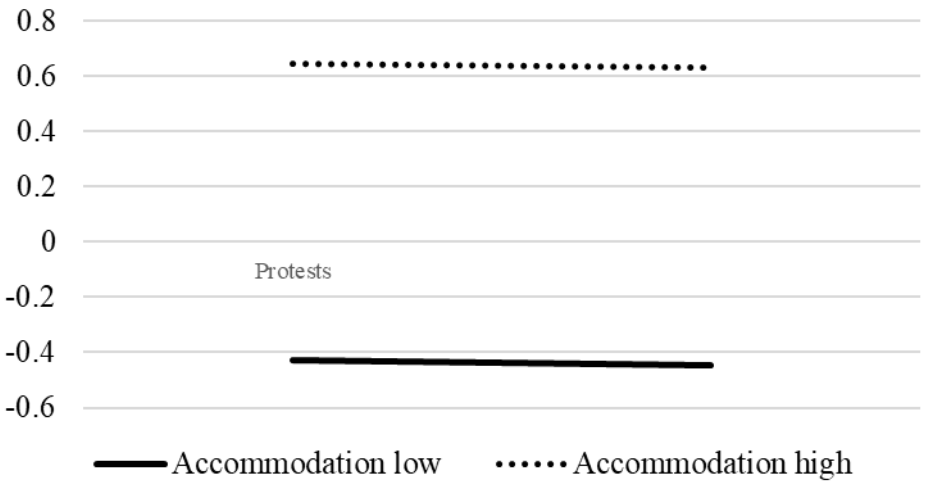
Figure 5: Interaction *protests* and *ignored demands*



4.2.3.2 Accommodation. Accommodation of demands is looked at to test whether the state responding to the demands of the protesters indeed weakens the negative effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy. Considering that accommodation is the opposite of ignoring a protest, the expectations for this hypothesis are the opposite too in the sense that with accommodated demands the negative effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy should be weaker. The result of this analysis (table 6, model 3c) shows that the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is negatively affected by state accommodation as the interaction term is -0.01. This means that the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is weaker when the protesters are accommodated. For every protest where the demands are accommodated, the slope coefficient of protests decreases by 0.01 points. Furthermore, the interaction effect is not significant (b=-.01, p=.70). Although the regression coefficient indicates that accommodation of demands leads more satisfaction with democracy, the effect is not significant. This means that this hypothesis is not supported. The log likelihood function for this model is 125,602.63 and, based on the chi-square test, this is not a significantly better model than the reference model (table 7). In figure 6, the interaction effect between *protests* and *accommodation* is visualised. The graphs are mostly

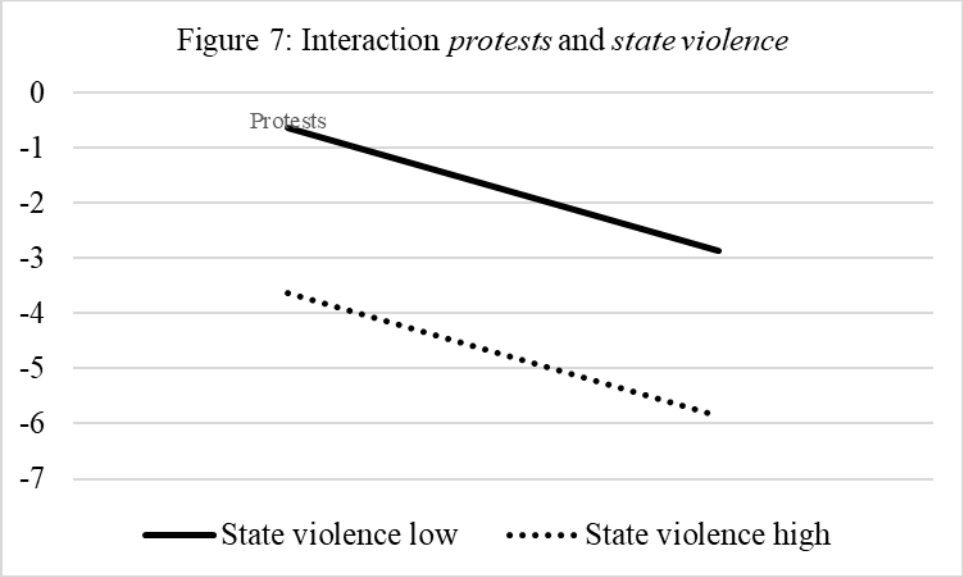
parallel, which shows that there is minimal interaction between *protests* and *accommodation*, which is also depicted in the interaction term of -0.01.

Figure 6: Interaction *protests* and *accommodated demands*



4.2.4 State Violence

The fourth hypothesis that is analysed is regarding violence coming from the state. The hypothesis is that if the uses violence against the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger. The results of this analysis (table 6, model 3d) show that state violence has a negative effect on the slope of protests. The interaction term is -0.00, which means that for every protest where the state violent, the slope coefficient of protests decreases by 0.00 points. This means that the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is indeed weaker when the state is violent. The p-value shows that the effect is not significant (b=-.00, p=.22). Therefore, the hypothesis is not supported by the results. The log-likelihood function for this model is 125,601.24 (table 7). Based on the chi-square test, this is also not a significantly better model than the model without interaction effects. Table 6 (model 3d) shows the results of this analysis and model 7 shows the model fit. In figure 7, the interaction effect between *protests* and *state violence* is visualised. The graphs are again mostly parallel, which shows that there is minimal interaction between *protests* and *state violence*, which is also depicted in the interaction term of -0.00.



4.2.5 Social Movements

The final hypothesis focuses on the effect of size and organisation – that is, social movements. The hypothesis is: if protests are larger and more formally organised, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger. Again, the control variables are included. The interaction term shows that the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is positively affected by social movements as the interaction term is 0.00. For every protest where the demands are accommodated, the slope coefficient of protests on satisfaction with democracy increases by 0.00 points. Considering that the reference model of the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is negative, the positive interaction term means that, indeed, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is stronger when the protests are larger and/or more formally organised. However, the interaction effect is not significant (b=.00, p=.28). Even though the effect of social movements on the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is as expected, it is not significant. This means that the hypothesis is not supported. Besides, the log-likelihood function for this model is 125,601.59, which is, based on the chi-square test, not a significantly better model than the reference model (table 7). Table 6 (model 3e) shows the results of the analysis and table 7 (model 3e) shows the model fit. Figure 8 visualises the interaction between *protests* and *social movements*. The graphs are mostly parallel, which shows that there is minimal interaction between *protests* and *social movements*, which is also depicted in the interaction term of 0.00.

Figure 8: Interaction *protests* and *social movements*

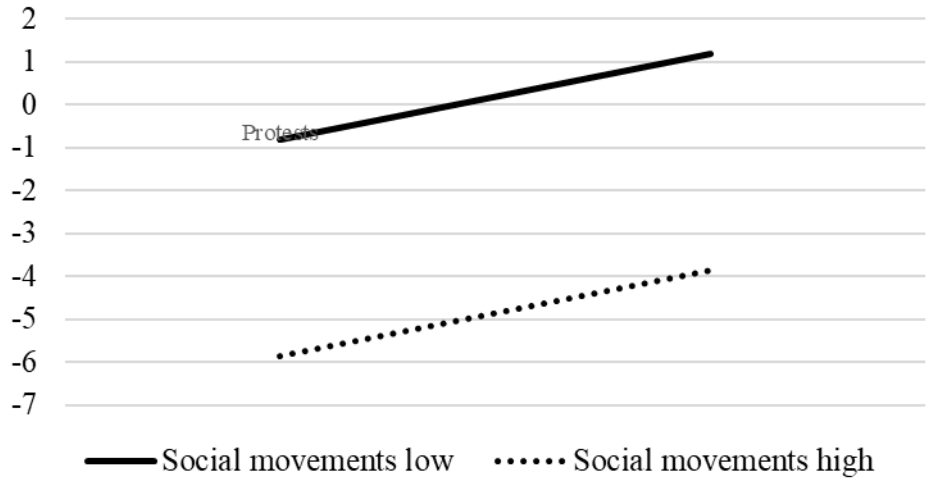


Table 5: Multilevel model estimates with dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy*

	M0		**M1**		**M2**	
	Coefficient	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***
(Constant)	5.45***	.23	-.64	1.18	-.67	1.36
Protests			-.02	.01	-.03*	.01
Protester's violence					-.01	.01
Ignore					.00	.01
Accommodation					.07	.06
State violence					.02	.01
Social movement					.00	.00
Cross-level interactions						
Protest*Protester's violence						
Protest*Ignore						
Protest*Accommodation						
Protest*State violence						
Protest*Social movement						
Control variables						
Age			-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00
Gender (male is reference)			-.08**	.03	-.08**	.03
Income			.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Happiness			.27***	.01	.27***	.01
GDP			.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Income inequality			.04	.03	.04	.03
Population size			-.01	.00	-.01*	.01
Variance components						
Individuals (N=28,532)	5.06***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04
Countries (N=18)	.91*	.31	.16**	.06	.14**	.05
-2LL	127,353.18		125,605.97		125,602.77	

* $p< 0.05$; ** $p< 0.01$; *** $p< 0.001$

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.

Table 6: Multilevel model estimates with dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy* (interaction effects hypotheses 2-5)

	M3a		**M3b**		**M3c**		**M3d**		**M3e**	
	Coefficient	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***
(Constant)	-.49	1.29	-4.23	1.29	-.43	1.50	-.63	1.31	-.83	1.33
Protests	-.04**	.01	-.48*	.01	-.00	.07	-.04**	.01	-.09	.05
Protester's violence	-.01	.01	.03	.01	-.02	.02	.00	.02	-.00	.01
Ignore	.01	.01	.09	.01	-.00	.02	.01	.01	.00	.01
Accommodation	.02	.07	-.15	.07	.14	.18	-.09	.14	.06	.06
State violence	-.00	.02	-.02	.02	.02	.02	-.03	.04	.01	.01
Social movement	-.01	.02	-.03	.02	.01	.02	-.02	.02	.02	.02
Cross-level interactions										
Protest*Protester's violence	-.00	.00								
Protest*Ignore			.01	.00						
Protest*Accommodation					-.01	.02				
Protest*State violence							-.00	.00		
Protest*Social movement									.00	.00
Control variables										
Age	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00
Gender (male is reference)	-.08**	.03	-.08**	.03	-.08**	.03	-.08**	.03	-.08**	.03
Income	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Happiness	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01
GDP	.06***	.01	.06***	.01	.07***	.01	.06***	.01	.07***	.01
Income inequality	.03	.03	.04	.03	.04	.04	.03	.03	.04	.03
Population size	-.00	.01	.03	.01	-.02	.03	-.01	.02	-.02*	.01
Variance components										
Individuals (N=28,532)	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04
Countries (N=18)	.12**	.04	.11**	.04	.13**	.05	.12**	.04	.13**	.04
-2LL	125,600.77		125,598.93		125,602.63		125,601.24		125,601.59	

* $p< 0.05$; ** $p< 0.01$; *** $p< 0.001$

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.

4.3 Model fit

In table 7, I give an overview of the model fit of the reference model and the interaction models. I compared the models to the reference model 2 using a chi-test to study whether the model fit of the interaction models are significantly better.

Table 7: Model fit overview random interaction and interaction models

	-2LL	**Δ-2LL**	**d.f.= Δm**	**P**
M2: All fixed effects (no interaction effects)	125602.77	-	-	-
M3a: M2 + interaction protesters' violence	125600.77	2.00	1	n.s.
M3b: M2 + interaction ignored demands	125598.93	3.84	1	n.s.
M3c: M2 + interaction accommodated demands	125602.63	0.14	1	n.s.
M3d: M2 + interaction state violence	125601.24	1.53	1	n.s.
M3e: M2 + interaction social movements	125601.59	1.18	1	n.s.

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.
N=28,532 individuals, 18 countries; -2LL=2*loglikelihood; m=number of estimated parameters

4.4 Outliers

Looking at table 2, it is quite clear that there is one outlier in the data in terms of protests, namely Ireland with 56 protests. Therefore, I ran all tests again to see whether the results changed after removing Ireland from the data. This leaves us with 17 countries and 26,585 individuals. There are some small changes, but these are often not significantly different from the analysis including Ireland. Hence, I will only report the models that clearly changed after removing the outlier. All the results of the test without the outlier are reported in table 8 and 8.

Firstly, the results for hypothesis 3a about *protest*'s interaction with *ignore* (table 9 model 3b) have changed significantly. For every protest where the demands are ignored, the slope coefficient of protests on satisfaction with democracy increases by 0.02 points. As explained before, the reference model of the effect of protests on satisfaction with democracy is negative. Therefore, the positive interaction term indicates that, indeed, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is stronger when the protesters are ignored.

In the previous analysis that included Ireland, this effect was approaching significance. In this analysis, the effect is significant (p=.01). Hence, after excluding the outlier, hypothesis 3a is supported. Figure 9 visualises the interaction between *protests* and *ignored demands*. Although the effect is significant, the interaction term is 0.02, which is also depicted in the graph.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that leaving out Ireland also means that only one protest was accommodated (in the United Kingdom), which makes this variable redundant. This is also indicated in table 9 model 3c with the interaction term that is 0.

Figure 9: Interaction *protests* and *ignored demands*

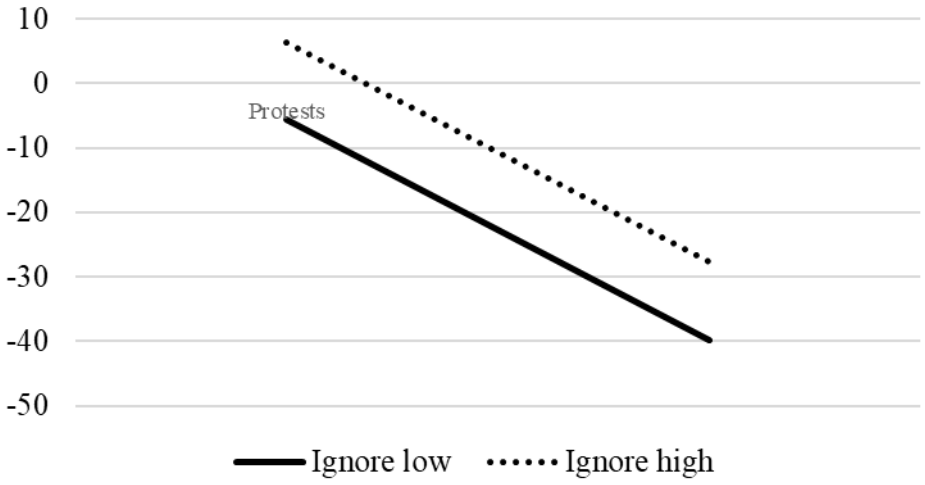


Table 8: Multilevel model estimates with dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy* without outliers

	M0		**M1**		**M2**	
	Coefficient	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***
(Constant)	5.45***	.24	-.80	1.27	-.51	1.50
Protests			-.03	.05	.01	.09
Protester's violence					-.02	.02
Ignore					-.00	.02
Accommodation					.09	.08
State violence					.02	.02
Social movement					.01	.02
Cross-level interactions						
Protest*Protester's violence						
Protest*Ignore						
Protest*Accommodation						
Protest*State violence						
Protest*Social movement						
Control variables						
Age			-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00
Gender (male is reference)			-.07*	.03	-.07*	.03
Income			.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Happiness			.27***	.01	.27***	.01
GDP			.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Income inequality			.04	.03	.04	.04
Population size			-.01	.01	-.02	.03
Variance components						
Individuals (N=26,585)	5.08***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04
Countries (N=17)	.97**	.33	.17**	.06	.14**	.05
-2LL	118,792.59		117,101.41		117,098.36	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.

Table 9: Multilevel model estimates with dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy* without outliers (interaction effects hypotheses 2-5)

	M3a		**M3b**		**M3c**		**M3d**		**M3e**	
	Coefficient	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***	***Coefficient***	***SE***
(Constant)	-.09	1.42	-5.63*	2.00	-.51	1.50	-.41	1.41	-.84	1.49
Protests	.02	.08	-.61**	.21	.01	.09	.12	.10	-.08	.12
Protester's violence	-.02	.02	.03	.02	-.02	.02	-.00	.02	-.01	.02
Ignore	.00	.02	.12**	.04	-.00	.02	.00	.01	.00	.02
Accommodation	.04	.08	-.21	.11	.09	.08	-.18	.15	.07	.08
State violence	.01	.02	-.01	.02	.02	.02	-.05	.04	.01	.02
Social movement	-.00	.02	-.00	.02	.01	.02	-.00	.02	.02	.03
Cross-level interactions										
Protest*Protester's violence	-.00	.00								
Protest*Ignore			.02**	.01						
Protest*Accommodation					0	0				
Protest*State violence							-.01	.00		
Protest*Social movement									.00	.00
Control variables										
Age	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00	-.00**	.00
Gender (male is reference)	-.07*	.03	-.07*	.03	-.07*	.03	-.07*	.03	-.07*	.03
Income	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Happiness	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01	.27***	.01
GDP	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01	.07***	.01
Income inequality	.04	.03	.05	.03	.04	.04	.04	.03	.04	.04
Population size	-.02	.03	.05	.02	-.02	.03	-.02	.03	-.02	.03
Variance components										
Individuals (N=26,585)	4.78***	.04	4.78***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.77***	.04	4.78***	.04
Countries (N=17)	.12**	.04	.09**	.03	.14**	.05	.11**	.04	.13**	.05
-2LL	117,096.01		117,090.35		117,098.36		117094.56		125601.59	

* $p< 0.05$; ** $p< 0.01$; *** $p< 0.001$

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.

Note. Interaction between protests and accommodation is redundant.

4.5 Summary of Hypotheses

In table 10, I provide a summary of all hypotheses that are analysed in this chapter. Altogether, it shows that protests do indeed have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy. Although the moderating effects were in the expected direction, the effects were not significant, and therefore, cannot be accepted. It should be noted that hypothesis 3a approaches significance.

Table 10: Overview of all hypotheses

Hypothesis	**Support**
H1: Political protests have a negative effect on satisfaction with democracy.	Yes
H2: If the protesters are violent, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy is weaker.	No
H3a: If the state does not respond to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.	No
H3b: If the state responds to the demands of the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be weaker.	No
H4: If state uses violence against the protesters, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.	No
H5: If protests are larger and more formally organised, the negative effect of political protests on satisfaction with democracy will be stronger.	No

Note. Excluding the outlier indicates that hypothesis 3a is supported. Excluding the outlier leaves the interaction term that depicts the moderating effect of accommodation (hypothesis 3b) redundant.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this chapter, I will draw conclusions and discuss the findings based on the outcomes of the models and results in the previous chapter. I will also suggest ideas for further research.

As stated in the first chapter, the research question that is answered in this research is: *what is the effect of political protests on the public's satisfaction with the way democracy works in European liberal democracies, and to what extent does that change when other conditions – protesters' violence, state response to demands, state violence, and size and organisation – are included?* I aimed to identify the effect of political protests on citizens' satisfaction with the way democracy works.

Based on theories of political protests, public opinion, and regime performance, I built hypotheses that were tested in this study. In general, political protests are necessary for a democracy. Therefore, political protests and public opinion are linked in the sense that political protests lead to issue salience and highlight shortcomings in regime performance. Satisfaction with democracy is part of public opinion and it is often an evaluation of regime performance rather than democratic principles. I argued that protests lead to media framing and issue salience and that therefore, protests can be linked to satisfaction with democracy. Hence, I expected that political protests influence satisfaction with democracy.

Considering that my data was nested, I used a multilevel model. After performing quantitative analysis, it can be concluded that political protests indeed impact satisfaction with democracy negatively. On the other hand, the conditions – protesters' violence, ignoring the protesters' demands, accommodating the protesters, demands, and state violence – did not have this same impact on satisfaction with democracy. The results were not significant; however, it should be noted that after leaving out the outlier Ireland, protests where demands are ignored indeed leads to less satisfaction with democracy.

In terms of limitations, the variable *ignore* was arbitrary due to its coding. This variable had two meanings: the state ignored the protests, or the paper did not include other reactions from the state. Therefore, it could mean that the reporting was incomplete, and that the data lacked. This problem exceeds *ignore*, as reporting could generally affect how a protest is depicted, and certain issues may have been ignored while others are emphasised. A limitation of this media-focused data is that newspapers might give an incomplete depiction of the protests. Although the coders of MMP did include local media, they initially start with foreign media (or more specifically, papers from the United States), but most people get their information

from local or national papers. The depiction of protests can be different according to the location and audience of a paper. Furthermore, there might be bias in favour of either the regime or the protesters, hence, details that are included in the text can differ. At the same time, this should not be a problem considering that part of the mechanism and theory is that people get their information from media and that is what this research was about. Nevertheless, having more information about the papers and alternative media that were used would give a clearer picture, but I did not have that. Moreover, this research did not include the initiator of violence. However, it could also matter whether the state or the protesters start. Provocations and uproar, especially in light of media framing, could agitate different reactions.

Furthermore, the variable *social movements* that combined size and organisation is also arbitrary due to the measurement of this variable. I only considered protests in the higher categories as large, even though one could argue that anything above 100 or 1000 citizens is a large protest. This could significantly change the results of this analysis.

Although country differences are included as a random intercept, it could be useful to get more insight and a more thorough understanding of certain country differences that may also affect the analysis. Certain cultures are also more likely to protest than others, which may affect the number of protests. In terms of the interaction effects, it should be noted that liberal democracies tend to be less violent in general – which is partly why they are considered liberal democracies. These are again factors that can influence the outcome of this research.

This study has implications for the field of social movements. It is one of the first quantitative studies that focus on protests and specifically on protests and satisfaction with democracy. There is little focus on the relationship between those two, even though there is one. Due to its quantitative nature, the generalizability of the study is high. Although in this study, I found that the conditions do not affect the relationship between protests and satisfaction with democracy, this is still beneficial for further research as in earlier (case) studies the conclusions were different. To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could design a case study to thoroughly analyse different countries that are affected the same by protests in terms of satisfaction with democracy and understand the conditions that these countries were in. The opposite can also be studied using two similar countries that are affected very differently by protests. This could help to understand the difference between my research and previous research.

This research clearly illustrates that those protests affect satisfaction with democracy; however, future quantitative research can continue with this conclusion using cross-sectional data to get a more thorough understanding or broaden this research by adding different perspectives such as protests' specific characteristics such as labour movements, anti-racism protests et cetera. Although the scope of the dataset I used was perhaps broad enough to conduct this recommended research, the scope of this research is not. Therefore, I could not include it, but further research on this would be recommended. Other dimensions could be added such as state propaganda. Researchers can also focus on quantitative analysis on public opinion in non-liberal democracies/non-democracies. Although this would be more difficult in terms of data availability, a skewed number of protests, and violence, it could also add a different perspective to the difference between liberal democracies versus other regimes. Additional work might also want to broaden the scope by including the influence of digital media and how activists make use of it.

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Appendix A

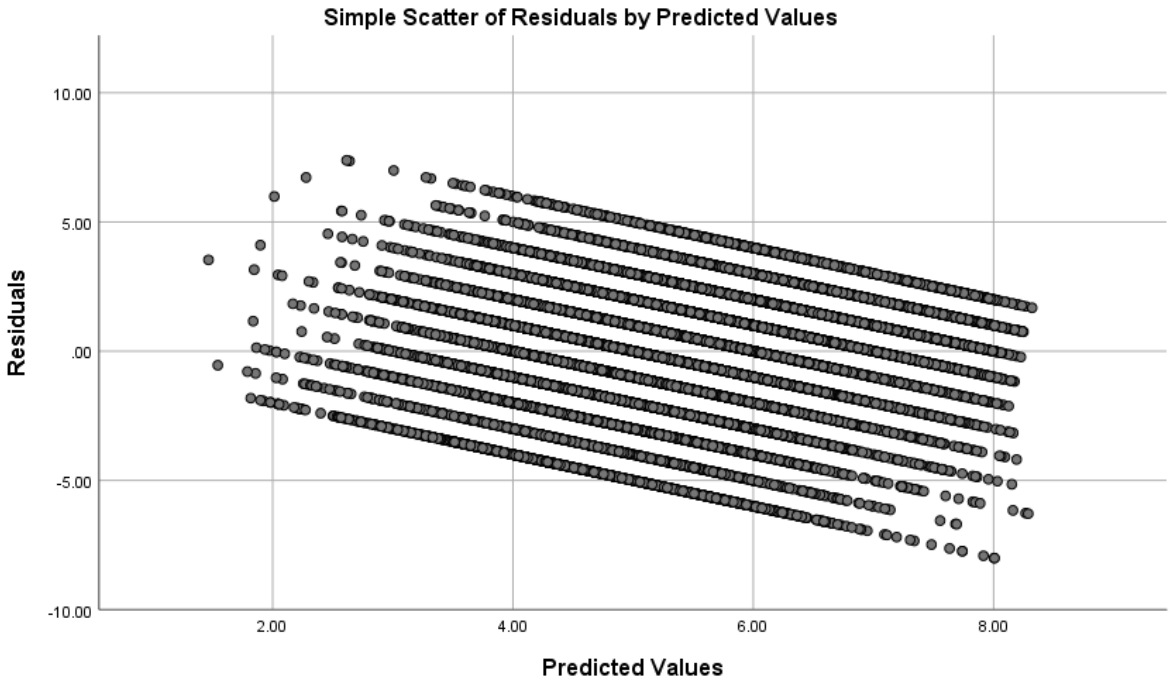
A.1 Assumptions

In this appendix, the assumptions are presented and, when necessary, discussed. The assumptions for multilevel models are the same as of a simple linear model: linearity, independent error, homoscedasticity, and normally distributed errors.

A.1.1 Linearity

The first assumption is that there should be a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. It is striking that the plot shows parallel lines. These parallel lines are in this plot due to the dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy* which only has a few possible outcomes. This is not a problem. In figure 10, the normal probability plot shows that this assumption is met.

Figure 10: Scatterplot of residuals and predicted values



A.1.2 Independent Error

In a simple linear model, one of the assumptions that should be met is that the errors should not be correlated. Due to the nested structure of the model, it can be assumed that the errors are correlated. Within a certain country, the errors are likely to be affected due to certain country-related variables and this means that we have intra-class correlation. Intra-class correlation then leads to downwardly biased standard errors. This means that the chance for

having a type I error is higher, which means that it is likely that you find significance and support for your hypothesis, when there is not. To avoid this, the errors for between country and within country variation should be separated. Therefore, I used a random effects model to incorporate the errors of countries and individuals. Further explanation can be found in section ‘3.4 Research Method’ on page 30. For now, we know that due to the inclusion of the random effects/multilevel model, we avoided violating the assumption of independent error.

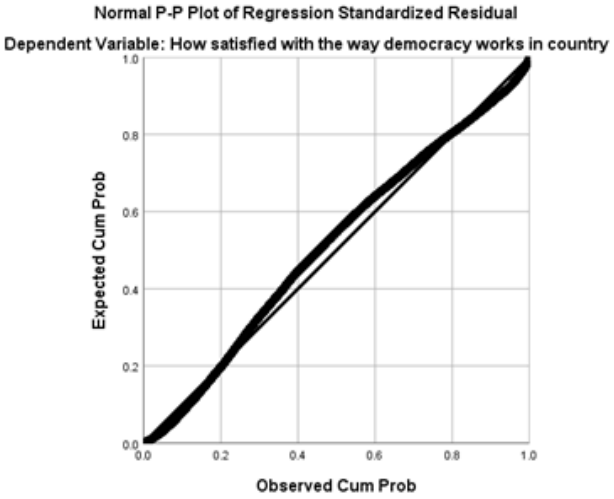
A1.3 Homoscedasticity

The third assumption is that the variance of the dependent variable remains constant and does not depend on the independent variable. When it is not constant, it is heteroscedastic, and the assumption of homoscedasticity is violated. I tested this assumption using the scatterplot in figure 10 that is also used to check the linearity assumption. It should again be noted that the plot shows parallel lines due to the fact that the dependent variable *satisfaction with democracy* only has a few possible outcomes. The plot looks good otherwise in the sense that there is fanning which would indicate heteroscedasticity.

A1.4 Normally Distributed Residuals

As can be seen in the graph, the dependent variable satisfaction with democracy is not normally distributed. It is slightly skewed to the right. Due to the sample size, this is not a problem. It is a large enough sample size to assume that it is a mild violation of this assumption. Therefore, I can continue with the regression. In the P-P plot (figure 11), we also see that the observed data points are close to the model with a slight deviation. This is not a problem, so the assumption of normality is met.

Figure 11: P-P plot of the model and the observed data *satisfaction with democracy*



A4. Multicollinearity

There is also the assumption that there is no multicollinearity in the data. Multicollinearity is when there are two or more highly correlating independent variables which can lead to skewed results. To ensure that there is no multicollinearity, I checked the correlation matrix (Appendix B table 11) and when the correlation is above 0.8, I assumed that there was too much correlation between two variables (Studenmund, 2014, p. 272). This was a problem for the variables *state violence* and *protesters' violence*. I checked their VIF values which measure multicollinearity. I use 10 as the upper fence for the VIF values and the VIF values for these variables were above 5 and below 10. Therefore, I assume that these variables will not cause great problems but should be approached with concern as ideally the VIF should be as low as possible (Studenmund, 2014, p. 274). I will consider any unusual growth in standard errors as problematic in the analysis.

Similarly, the variables *ignored protests* and *social movements* were highly correlated. The VIF values and tolerance also indicate that this is a problem as they are above 10. I nevertheless left these variables in the analysis and ensured that used mean-centred variables for all independent and moderating variables. Besides that, I also considered any unusual growth in standard errors as problematic and I doublechecked the analysis without these variables included to see whether there are any significant changes.

Furthermore, systematically including and excluding the problematic variables did not affect the estimates of the variables significantly and the results remained the same. After doublechecking, I did not analyse any major differences which indicates that the model is

stable. Because these variables are all coded similarly, the problem with multicollinearity was to be expected. However, multicollinearity did not make the model unstable. This means that the variables can be kept in the model.

Appendix B

Table 11: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations ($N_{individuals}$=28,532; $N_{countries}$=*18)*

		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
1.	Satisfaction with Democracy	-													
2.	Protest	-.042**	-												
3.	Protester's Violence	-.073**	-.040**	-											
4.	Ignore	-.029**	.576**	-.134**	-										
5.	Accommodation	-.012*	.647**	-.031**	.444*	-									
6.	State Violence	-.091**	.057**	.901**	.013*	-.051**	-								
7.	Social Movements (Size/Organisation)	-.078**	.408**	.408**	.925**	.287**	.110**	-							
8.	Age	-.054**	.025**	-.037**	.006	.025**	-.035**	-.006	-						
9.	Gender (binary)	-.037**	-.016**	-.003	-.026**	.002	-.007	-.025**	.017**	-					
10.	Income	.153**	-.089**	.001	-.054**	.072**	-.009	-.034**	-.203**	-.078**	-				
11.	Happiness	.271**	-.008	-.067**	.028**	.010	-.093**	.019**	-.080**	.002	.239**	-			
12.	GDP (country level)	.294**	.243**	-.127**	.172**	.132**	-.158**	.024**	-.007	-.052**	.022**	.186**	-		
13.	Income inequality (country level)	-.141**	.151**	-.336**	.360**	.218**	-.303**	.327**	.031**	.035**	-.062**	-.130**	-.380**	-	
14.	Population size (country level)	-.097**	.200**	.056**	.631**	.161**	.250**	.738**	.011	-.012*	.003	.003	-.012	.232*	-

NB: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001, Two-tailed test.

Source: Clark & Regan, 2016; ESS 8, 2016; World Bank (2019); World Bank (2020a); World Bank (2020b); own calculations.