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The consequences of social intolerance on non-violent protest

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This paper scrutinizes the impact of intolerance toward diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups on an individual's willingness to actively engage in non-violent protest. Following new insights, we examine the individual as well as the ecological effect of social intolerance on protest behavior. Drawing from insights of social psychology and communication science, we expect that the prevalence of intolerance reinforces the positive effect of individual-level intolerance on protest participation. From a rational choice perspective, however, a negative moderating effect is expected, as the expression of opinions becomes redundant for intolerant individuals in an intolerant society. We base our multilevel analyses on data from the *World Values Surveys* covering 32 established democracies. Our results reveal that intolerance leads to more non-violent protest participation. This relationship, however, is strongly influenced by the prevalence of intolerance in a country.

Keywords: intolerance; protest behavior; World Values Survey; spiral of silence; values

Introduction

Over the last decade, non-violent protest has reached new heights in modern democracies (Inglehart, 1990; Tarrow, 1998; Norris, 2002; McAdam *et al.*, 2003; Dalton, 2006; Kriesi, 2008; Dalton *et al.*, 2010): an increasing number of people are taking part in peaceful demonstrations, signing petitions, or participating in boycotts to express social grievances and pressure governments. Accordingly, numerous scholars have examined the causes of non-violent protest behavior with foci on single protest movements, specific countries, or general individual attributes and attitudes. Socio-economic factors and political attitudes thereby play an important role in explaining protest behavior on the individual level (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Inglehart, 1990; Opp, 1990; Verba *et al.*, 1995); whereas on the contextual level, the research mainly concentrates on the explanatory power of political institutions and the accompanying political opportunity structures (Eisinger, 1973; Tilly, 1978; Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi *et al.*, 1995; Kriesi and Wisler, 1996; Meyer, 2004; Tarrow, 2011; Fatke and Freitag, 2013; Quaranta, 2013). Recently, however, a new strand of research has emerged which introduces cultural factors and their interplay with individual attitudes and values to the analysis of non-violent protest behavior (Dalton *et al.*, 2010; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012; Welzel, 2013). Welzel and Deutsch (2012: 465), for example, argue that the examination of

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the link between psychological variables, such as attitudes and values, and behavior should not be limited to the individual level but should pay attention to societal level effects in order to 'give […] "culture" its full weight in explaining behaviour'. Based on these insights, our contribution seeks to dig deeper into this new line of research on the relationship between individual attitudes, the attitudinal climate, and political behavior by asking *how intolerance toward ethnically, religiously, or culturally diverse groups on both the individual and contextual level is related to non-violent protest behavior*. By examining this research question we are able to contribute to the existing literature in three important ways, as both intolerance as well as non-violent protest comprise two highly relevant and largely discussed issues in modern civil societies.

First and in contrast to prior research, we focus on one specific individual attitude as a trigger factor for protest behavior: intolerance toward ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse groups. Intolerance, in terms of an objection toward diverse groups, represents a major challenge for mature democracies as they are confronted with increasing cultural and ethnic diversity that may erode the public's general acceptance of immigrants (Norris, 2002; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011; Freitag and Rapp, 2013). While intolerance has high social prevalence, the consequences of this social attitude are less known (Gibson, 1992). Nonetheless, there are examples that underscore the potential behavioral consequences of intolerance: in countries where the public can voice their negative sentiments toward immigrants via institutionalized channels, such as direct democratic instruments, regular votes against immigrants take place as the example of Switzerland shows (Kriesi *et al.*, 2005). But how do individuals voice their intolerance in countries without well-developed direct democratic instruments? One possible way to express opinions in a rather direct way could be engagement in non-violent protest activities.

Second, if there are behavioral consequences of intolerance, hitherto we cannot be sure about their direction. Flanagan and Lee (2003), for example, find that there is a positive relationship between tolerance and an individual's protest potential, for tolerant people are generally more liberal-leaning and more likely to actively engage in non-violent protest. In sharp contrast, among tolerance researchers the idea prevails that intolerant individuals will be more prone to protest behavior, as intolerance is a stronger and more expressive attitude than tolerance (Gibson, 1992, 2006). The relative deprivation theory (Gurr, 1970), which argues that socially and politically dissatisfied individuals will be more likely to engage in political action, since it is a means to express personal frustration, provides theoretical support for this line of reasoning (Barnes *et al.*, 1979). Recent mass protests in Germany against immigrants from Islamic countries may lend some anecdotal evidence to this argument. The following analysis addresses this obvious puzzle on the relationship between intolerance and non-violent protest behavior.

And last, starting with the path-breaking publication by Almond and Verba (1963) and drawing on the more recent contribution by Welzel and Deutsch (2012),

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it is generally agreed that a country's prevalent attitudinal culture shapes individual political action. Following this line of reasoning, we expand the literature by analyzing how the attitudinal prevalence of intolerance in a country directly affects an individual's likeliness to actively engage in non-violent protest. Besides this direct effect, we argue that the attitudinal climate further influences the relationship between individual levels of social intolerance and protest participation. Two competing hypotheses regarding this assumption can be formulated: following the social psychological insights about conformity (Asch, 1956) as well as the proposition regarding the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), we expect that a uniform climate of intolerance reinforces the individual-level effect of intolerance on protest participation. From a rational choice perspective (Downs, 1957), however, a negative moderating effect is expected, as the expression of opinions becomes redundant for intolerant people within an intolerant culture.

To test our individual and contextual-level hypotheses, we implement multilevel models with cross-level interactions using the World Values Survey (2005–2008) (wave 5). Our results indicate that intolerant individuals will be more actively engaged in non-violent protest, whereas a contextual climate of intolerance leads to less individual protest participation. In contrast, the results based on the conditional hypotheses reveal that the overall attitudinal climate reinforces the positive effect of individual ethnic, religious, and cultural intolerance on the likeliness of protest behavior.

Our paper proceeds as following: in the next section, we outline our main concepts and the theoretical implications underlining the relationship between individual as well as contextual-level intolerance and non-violent protest participation. On this basis, we establish our main research hypotheses. In the fourth section, we elaborate on the methodology used and subsequently subject our main hypotheses to systematic empirical testing. A conclusion completes the article.

The concepts of non-violent protest and social intolerance

Our study focuses on the relationship between intolerance and non-violent protest behavior. Before we elaborate on this, we first specify the two concepts. Broadly speaking, political protest is a form of unconventional political participation (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; van Deth, 2009: 146).[1] Even though political protest is indeed on the rise and has become widespread since the 1990s (Tarrow, 2011), the percentage of people engaging in this kind of action is still quite low compared with the percentage taking part in elections (Norris, 2002; van Deth, 2009). Therefore, it is reasonable to label this kind of activity as unconventional. We define political protest as the public expression of dissent by individuals or groups in order '[…] to

[1] Of course, the distinction between conventional and unconventional protest is only one possible way to categorize different forms of political behavior. For instance, Norris (2009b, 639) provides an alternative by differentiating between citizen-oriented and issue-oriented actions.

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influence a political decision or process, which they perceive as having negative consequences for themselves, another group or society as a whole' (Rucht, 2007: 708). Political protest includes a broad range of actions. While all of these actions are extra-representational, meaning that they do not make use of traditional representational channels to achieve their goals, they can be either exit- or voice-based (Teorell *et al.*, 2007: 340ff.). Political consumerism is assumed to be an exit-based mode of political protest because it follows the logic of a competitive market. On the contrary, taking part in a demonstration is a voice-based form of political protest, where people explicitly and publicly express their political demands. Non-violent protest – or 'peaceful protest' as Norris (2002: 191) calls it – means that neither people nor property is harmed by this kind of political action. Subsequently, it is clearly discernable from violent protest activities, like riots.[2]

Intolerance, which is the main explanatory variable in our study, is defined as the objection to groups outside one's own ethnicity, religion, or culture (cf. Dunn *et al.*, 2009; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011).[3] Within the last decade, rising immigration and cultural diversity has led to increased societal conflicts over diverging views and attitudes (Quillian, 1995; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Schneider, 2008; Rapp, 2015). As a consequence, the media and politicians often underscore the need for tolerance within societies, for it is a means to cope with these conflicting perspectives. Tolerance is most commonly understood as the willingness to 'put up with' others who are different from oneself (e.g. Stouffer 1955; Gibson, 1992, 2006; Sullivan *et al.*, 1993; Mutz, 2001; Forst, 2003), implying that disapproval or objection necessitate tolerance (Sullivan *et al.*, 1993: 4). We, however, adopt a more inclusive definition of tolerance, expressing a friendly and trustful attitude toward other people reflected in a 'non-negative general orientation toward groups outside of one's own' (Sniderman *et al.*, 1989; Dunn *et al.* 2009: 284; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011: 205). Following the logic of Allport (1958: 398) and others, it seems even more appropriate to discuss this warmer notion of tolerance in lieu of the conventional definition: '[T]he domain of tolerance should not apply solely to things that we oppose or dislike; rather it is proper to speak of tolerating things even when we like them [… thus] tolerance in some realms may progress all the way from endurance to outright approval' (Chong, 1994: 26). In this line, tolerance is often seen as a positive belief in terms of an absence of prejudice, racism, or ethnocentrism. For example, UNESCO (1995) understands tolerance as the positive recognition of human rights and civil liberties or even as 'harmony in difference'; with difference referring to ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. In the following, we exclusively focus on social tolerance, which is defined

[2] One may also argue that intolerance has an effect on violent protest behavior. Due to a lack of data we are, however, not able to include violent protest behavior in our analyses.

[3] In the following, we consider the terms intolerance and tolerance interchangeable as opposites (Freitag and Rapp, 2013; Gibson, 2013; Sullivan *et al*, 1993), although some may argue that tolerance and intolerance are not opposites (see especially King, 1998).

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as the 'willingness to live and let live, to tolerate diverse lifestyles and political perspectives' (Norris, 2002: 158). In contrast to political tolerance, which refers to the granting of political rights, social tolerance encompasses a general acceptance of diversity in society and of people who are different from oneself in various respects (cf. Dunn *et al.*, 2009; Ikeda and Richey, 2009; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011: 205).[4] Against the background of increasing international migration and ethnic diversity, we restrict our analysis to social intolerance toward other ethnicities, religions, or cultural groups. According to this conceptual outline, in the following, social *in*tolerance is defined as the disharmony between ethnically and culturally diverse groupings and the negative orientation or even objection toward such groups.

Non-violent protest and the role of intolerance: theoretical considerations

Having defined the main concepts, we now turn to the theoretical foundations of our study. As mentioned, there are theoretical arguments for both directions of a potential effect of intolerance on non-violent protest. Flanagan and Lee (2003) assume that tolerant people have a higher probability to be liberal and therefore, should be more likely to engage in unconventional political activities such as non-violent protest. This implies a negative effect of intolerance on non-violent protest behavior. Following the insights from the work on post-materialism as well as the emancipative values literature (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Welzel, 2013), there are further arguments underlining this relationship: it is generally agreed upon that more liberal and post-materialist individuals tend to be more open to social changes, and thus, should generally be more tolerant (Inglehart, 1997; Flanagan and Lee, 2003). Second, the more educated, the more informed, the more widely connected, and the generally well-off tend to engage more often in unconventional political action (Inglehart, 1990; Norris, 2002; Welzel, 2013: 217). Following Welzel (2013), we further argue that tolerance represents a highly valuable attitude, which needs to be expressed through social or political actions to increase its general utility. More precisely, Welzel (2013: 218) states that expressing valuable attitudes 'fulfills an identity-building purpose that gives value-guided action an expressive utility'. This implies that the more tolerant should be more likely to actively engage in non-violent protest.

There are, however, several arguments emphasizing that intolerant people should have a higher probability to take action. First, intolerant attitudes are assumed to be highly internally consistent compared with tolerant attitudes. For example, Gibson (2006: 22) argues that 'intolerant attitudes […] have more substantial political consequences than tolerant attitudes'. Thus, intolerance should constitute a

[4] While we are solemnly looking at the effect of social intolerance, we also believe that political intolerance has a decisive effect on non-violent protest behavior. The theoretical reasoning above may also be true for the effect of political tolerance. Since political intolerance, however, tends to be less pronounced than social intolerance the effect might be weaker (Weldon, 2006). Unfortunately, political tolerance is hardly ever included in cross-national surveys (like the World Values Survey). Thus, we are not able to test this in our empirical analysis due to data availability.

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stronger basis for political behavior, as social intolerance has a higher expressive identity and probably a stronger expressive utility. People who do not accept diversity in a society and who tend to be against the equality of rights for ethnically, religiously, or culturally diverse groupings, are more willing to engage in political action on the basis of this dissatisfaction. Following this line of reasoning, intolerance is the stronger and more expressive attitude and protest should be triggered based on this expressiveness. Besides the higher expressiveness of intolerance, deprivation might also serve as a trigger, which translates social intolerance into protest behavior. Relative deprivation is defined as '[…] the perceived discrepancy between what people feel they want and deserve and what they get' (Canache, 1996: 549). This perceived discrepancy implies that the subjective evaluation of one's own situation is most relevant for feelings of deprivation (Gurr, 1970: 24). Relative deprivation, thereby, can either be egoistic or fraternalistic (Runciman, 1966). Egoistic relative deprivation originates in an individual-level interpersonal comparison that makes an individual feel deprived compared with another individual. This interpersonal comparison is more likely to cause stress than motivation to engage in political action (Crosby, 1976; Walker and Mann, 1987). In sharp contrast, fraternalistic relative deprivation relates to intergroup comparisons, that is, between the respective in-group status and the out-group status. Adapted to our research question, these intergroup comparisons might foster negative feelings toward diverse ethnic, religious, or cultural groups and result in social intolerance. Since fraternalistic deprivation is a good predictor of protest orientation (Taylor *et al*., 1987; Walker and Mann, 1987; Grant and Brown, 1995), it might especially trigger the behavioral consequences of social intolerance.[5] To sum up, social intolerance should reinforce protest behavior due to its expressiveness and through the mechanism of relative deprivation. Thus, we predict a positive effect of social *in*tolerance on individual protest behavior:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Socially intolerant individuals will be more likely to actively engage in non-violent protest behavior.

As we know from numerous studies on political behavior, people's political actions do not occur in isolation from their context. Individuals are decisively influenced by their surroundings (cf. Books and Prysby, 1988). Surroundings can be wide-ranging: the prevalence of certain values or attitudes in a society is a contextual factor that potentially affects an individual's political behavior (Almond and Verba, 1963; Weatherford, 1980; Books and Prysby, 1988; Schwartz, 2006; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012). Books and Prysby (1988: 221) describe three ways in which contextual effects can emerge: contextual characteristics affect social interactions, influence conformity

[5] Prior research points to the link between social deprivation and social intolerance, or attitudes toward immigrants (e.g. Runciman and Bagley, 1969; Schmitt and Maes, 2002). Building on that, relative deprivation serves as an important mechanism underlying the link between social intolerance and protest behavior within our theoretical framework. It is, however, beyond the scope and focus of our study to test this mechanism empirically.

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to social norms, and structure the flow of information. These three mechanisms are not mutually exclusive; rather they all underscore that contextual effects emerge when people react on 'contextually patterned information' (Books and Prysby, 1988: 221). They further state that '[…] through observation, interaction with others, and/or media consumption, individuals form perceptions of the context. These perceptions, in turn, should influence attitudes and behavior' (Books and Prysby, 1988: 225). We therefore assume that people recognize what kind of values and attitudes are prevalent in their society and react accordingly. We argue that the value orientation on a societal level has a decisive effect on individual political behavior. More precisely, the prevalence of social intolerance in a society should affect the probability for non-violent protest behavior. Following Welzel and Deutsch's (2012: 467) idea of an 'elevator effect', we argue that the prevalence of social intolerance increases people's probability of non-violent protest behavior. That means even tolerant people – according to our reasoning in Hypothesis 1 – with a lower probability of expressing their opinion by means of non-violent protest are more likely to engage in these kind of actions in socially intolerant societies. In other words, we expect a higher overall level of protest participation in socially intolerant than in socially tolerant societies, that is, non-violent protest behavior is 'elevated' by the contextual climate independent of an individual's level of social intolerance. Consequently, we can formulate the following contextual-level hypothesis:

HYPOTHESIS 2: A climate of social intolerance within a country will lead to more active individual engagement in non-violent protest.

Going back to the assumption, which sees contextual effects as reactions to the perceived contextually patterned information, it is reasonable to argue that people might react differently to this information. An alternative to the uniform and direct contextual effect, described in Hypothesis 2, is an indirect effect pointing at the differential reaction to the value climate depending on one's own value orientation. Thus, individual non-violent protest behavior could be explained by an interaction between the individual-level value orientation and the societal value orientation. Two competing scenarios concerning this interaction effect are possible: first, the cultural climate might strengthen the hypothesized relationship between an individual's level of social intolerance and the respective protest participation. Welzel and Deutsch (2012: 467f.) call this enhancement of the individual-level effect 'the amplifier effect'. In order to justify this argument, one can draw on two closely interrelated lines of reasoning. According to social psychology research, conformity might explain the reinforcement of an individual-level effect (Asch, 1956; Bond and Smith, 1996; Martin and Hewstone, 2007; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012). Due to normative or informational social influence, individuals conform to the opinion and judgments of the majority. Social proof is one form of informational social influence. Thus, especially in situations of uncertainty, individuals use the attitudes and behavior of the majority as reference for their own behavior (Cialdini, 2001; Martin and Hewstone, 2007). Regarding our argument, societal intolerance might boost protest behavior of intolerant individuals because they are influenced by the behavior of the

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majority. An alternative explanation of such a positive interaction might be borrowed from the spiral of silence thesis, which originates in communication science (Noelle-Neumann, 1974): people who assume that their opinion is in the minority refrain from expressing this opinion, for they fear isolation within society (cf. Moy *et al.*, 2001). Adapted to our argument, this means that in a socially intolerant climate, socially tolerant people remain silent and do not express their political attitudes by means of non-violent protest. This increases the gap between socially tolerant and socially intolerant individuals regarding their non-violent protest behavior. In other words, according to the adaption of the spiral of silence thesis, the positive effect of being socially intolerant on protest is thought to be strengthened. Based on this reasoning, we formulate a first conditional hypothesis describing the interaction effect between individual- and societal-level value orientations:

HYPOTHESIS 3A: A climate of social intolerance within a country will amplify the positive relationship between (individual) social intolerance and active engagement in non-violent protest.

From another point of view, namely from a rational choice perspective, it can be reasonable to assume the opposite direction of the described interaction effect. In the context of political behavior, rational choice theory states that political participation is only rational if the benefits of one's own action are higher than the costs (Downs, 1957; Olson, 1965).[6] Against this backdrop, a culture of conformity on certain attitudes makes it unnecessary to take any action. Adapted to our research question, there is no need for socially intolerant people to actively engage in protest if social intolerance prevails within society. In this case, their opinion is already represented. Consequently, an alternative conditional hypothesis to Hypothesis 3a is formulated:

HYPOTHESIS 3B: A climate of social intolerance within a country will decrease the positive relationship between (individual) social intolerance and active engagement in non-violent protest.

To sum up, we argue for a positive individual-level effect of social intolerance on non-violent protest behavior (Hypothesis 1), for a positive direct contextual effect of the value orientation on a societal level (Hypothesis 2), as well as for an interaction between individual and societal-level attitudes (Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b). In the remainder of this paper, we test these hypotheses empirically.

Measurement and analytical strategy

Our analysis is based on the fifth wave of the World Values Survey, covering the time period between 2005 and 2008. We limit our sample selection to countries

[6] This rational choice perspective on political participation has of course been criticized for being too short-sighted (cf. Moore, 1995; Edlin *et al.*, 2007). Nevertheless, it might be a useful heuristic that provides interesting insights into political participation (Whitely, 1995: 227).

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with a political rights index of three or lower to guarantee that democratic values, such as non-violent protest, are incorporated in the political culture of the selected countries (Freedom House, 2005). Both non-violent protest and social intolerance are basic liberal democratic principles, which are hardly found in 'not free' countries (Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Gibson, 2013). In doing so, we further hold the political opportunity structure for political protest constant in our sample (see Welzel, 2013). Our overall sample comprises 32 countries with a total number of 33,330 respondents. For an overview of these 32 countries, see Table 1.

Our dependent variable is non-violent protest as a means of unconventional political participation (van Deth, 2009; Dalton *et al.*, 2010; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012). We focus only on legal and non-violent protest activities, namely signing a petition, joining boycotts, and attending lawful demonstrations. The World Values Survey offers two different questions capturing an individual's protest activity, one is hypothetical and the other directly asks if the respondent has ever done one of the three above mentioned activities in the last 5 years. We operationalize non-violent protest based on the latter question accounting for remembered action ('have done' and 'have not done'), whereby action is coded as 1 and no action is coded as 0. We construct our final dependent variable of non-violent protest based on a Maximum-Likelihood factor analysis revealing one single factor with higher values identifying a higher likeliness to actively engage in non-violent protest.[7] The country averages for our dependent variable are depicted in Table 1. The level of non-violent protest varies considerably from country to country. We find the lowest level of non-violent protest participation in Romania (0.04) and Thailand (0.04); Trinidad (0.77) and Great Britain (0.71) are the most active countries.

We capture our main explanatory variable, social intolerance, in terms of an objection to groups outside one's own ethnicity, religion, or culture (cf. Dunn *et al.*, 2009; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011), with a battery of items: 'On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbors?' The question covers 10 categories, whereby we only focus on the four categories identifying an ethnically, religiously, or culturally diverse group: people of a different race, immigrants/foreign workers, people of a different religion, people who speak a different language. Each item is binary coded to capture whether the respondent accepts or rejects a particular group as a neighbor.[8] Similar to the

[7] The ML-factor analysis is based on a tetrachoric correlation matrix for the three items being dichotomous. The one factor structure can be replicated for each of the 32 countries indicating an equivalent measurement structure for non-violent protest behavior. We further tested different measurement strategies, such as an additive index (see especially Welzel and Deutsch, 2012) or a dummy for participation in at least one of the three non-violent protest activities. The results do not differ for different measurements.

[8] We excluded all individuals from our analyses who stated that they belong to an ethnic minority within the analyzed countries. Across the 32 countries there is no specific pattern for belonging to a specific minority. With this exclusion, we anticipate that a respondent cannot be a member of the groups questioned, which yields a rudimentary content-controlled measure (Gibson, 1992; Sullivan *et al.*, 1993; Mondak and Sanders, 2003; Dunn *et al.*, 2009).

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Table 1. Mean of non-violent protest activity and social intolerance by country

Country	Mean of non-violent protest	Mean of social intolerance
Romania	0.04	0.34
Thailand	0.04	0.59
Ghana	0.05	0.48
Bulgaria	0.05	0.33
Poland	0.06	0.22
Moldova	0.08	0.47
Indonesia	0.08	0.53
Mexico	0.10	0.26
Slovenia	0.10	0.25
Chile	0.10	0.15
Peru	0.11	0.17
South Korea	0.12	0.52
Germany	0.12	0.19
Argentina	0.12	0.06
South Africa	0.13	0.32
Mali	0.16	0.40
France	0.17	0.45
The Netherlands	0.17	0.17
Finland	0.17	0.23
Cyprus	0.19	0.36
Australia	0.21	0.13
Norway	0.21	0.08
India	0.24	0.71
Switzerland	0.25	0.11
Turkey	0.25	0.43
Sweden	0.25	0.04
Canada	0.26	0.08
USA	0.26	0.21
Uruguay	0.43	0.08
Brazil	0.67	0.09
Great Britain	0.71	0.10
Trinidad	0.77	0.07

measurement of non-violent protest, social intolerance is operationalized via a Maximum-Likelihood factor analysis revealing one single factor, where higher values indicate higher social intolerance.[9] As Table 1 shows, the mean levels of social intolerance vary. The most socially tolerant society in the sample is found in Argentina [0.06], while the most intolerant society in our sample is in India [0.71].

As we are interested in both the individual and the contextual ('ecological') effect of social intolerance on an individual's non-violent protest behavior, we aggregate

[9] The one factor structure for social intolerance toward ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse groups could be replicated for each of the 32 countries indicating an equivalent measurement structure for intolerance throughout our sample.

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social intolerance to receive the level of intolerance in each of our 32 countries. Moreover, we implement cross-level interactions to test how the effect of an individual's level of social intolerance on non-violent protest behavior is decreased or amplified by the prevalence of intolerance within a country. Since our main intention is to underscore the possible consequences of intolerance on political behavior, it is not our aim to fully capture the origins of non-violent protest behavior. This task has already been undertaken by numerous studies in the field. We thus only include those control variables, which potentially confound the relationship between social intolerance and non-violent protest behavior. On the individual level we control for standard socio-economic variables, which were most commonly used in prior analyses (Dalton *et al.*, 2010; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012; Welzel, 2013). It is generally agreed upon that younger males with higher levels of education will be most likely to actively engage in non-violent protest actions, with education being one of the strongest predictors for protest activity (Verba *et al.*, 1995). As mentioned, we furthermore anticipate that post-materialist values will lead to more participation (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). In similar ways, active social engagement, as well as the respondent's personal dissatisfaction with life, should trigger political engagement. It is often argued that an individual's political ideology also plays a role in explaining protest behavior. It is thus predicted that more left-leaning individuals will be more likely to engage in non-violent protest. In international comparison, however, left and right may have different meanings and we thus refrain from including this variable, instead relying on political interest as a control for political orientation (see also Welzel, 2013). All control variables and their operationalizations are described in detail in the Appendix (Table A1). In addition, on the contextual level we control for ethnic diversity, the longevity of democracy as political engagement becomes differentiated with democratic experience (Roller and Wessels, 1996), and a country's degree of human development (Norris, 2009a). Our final analyses are based on linear multilevel models with random intercepts. Random slopes are further integrated into the models comprising cross-level interactions between the individual and country level of social intolerance.

Results

How does social intolerance toward ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse groups on the individual and contextual level relate to non-violent protest participation? To address our research question, we run three linear multilevel models in a stepwise procedure: first, we inspect the individual-level relationship between social intolerance and protest behavior. In a second step, we test Hypothesis 2 concerning the direct ecological effect of social intolerance. Last, we run a random slopes multilevel model to test the interactive effect of the social intolerance climate on the relation between individual social intolerance and non-violent protest participation. The results for these three estimates are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2. Social intolerance and non-violent protest – regression results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Individual level			
Social intolerance	0.01 (0.01)**	0.01 (0.01)**	0.03 (0.01)**
Gender (1 = female)	−0.01 (0.00)***	−0.01 (0.00)***	−0.01 (0.00)***
Age	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)
Educational level	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***	0.01 (0.00)***
Post-materialism	0.03 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***	0.03 (0.00)***
Political interest	0.05 (0.00)***	0.05 (0.00)***	0.05 (0.00)***
Active associational engagement	0.05 (0.00)***	0.05 (0.00)***	0.05 (0.00)***
Satisfaction with life	−0.00 (0.00)***	−0.00 (0.00)***	−0.00 (0.00)***
Contextual level			
Prevalence of social intolerance		−0.48 (0.28)*	−0.52 (0.28)*
Ethnic diversity		−0.02 (0.14)	−0.02 (0.14)
Human development index		−0.18 (0.31)	−0.18 (0.30)
Duration of democracy		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Interaction effect: social intolerance × social intolerance prevalence			0.19 (0.05)***
Intercept	0.23 (0.03)***	0.42 (0.31)	0.42 (0.31)
Variance components			
Contextual level ($\sigma^2_{\alpha_j}$)	0.03 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***	0.02 (0.00)***
Individual level (σ^2)	0.06 (0.00)***	0.06 (0.00)***	0.06 (0.00)***
Social intolerance ($\sigma^2_{\beta_j}$)			0.00 (0.00)***
DIC	2564.41	2560.34	2530.10
N (indiv./context)	33,330/32	33,330/32	33,3300/32

Standard errors in parentheses; DIC = deviance information criterion.
*$P<0.1$, **$P<0.05$, ***$P<0.01$.

Considering the results in model 1, we observe that the coefficient for individual social intolerance is positive and statistically significant, supporting our proposition of Hypothesis 1. Simply put, socially intolerant individuals are more likely to actively take part in different forms of non-violent protest. This underscores the considerations from the tolerance literature and the relative deprivation theory that, first, intolerance is a more expressive attitude and, second, that intolerant individuals express their dissatisfaction by actively engaging in non-violent protest (Gurr, 1970; Gibson, 1992). Turning to our control variables, we see that well-educated, post-materialist, politically interested, actively engaged males, and people who are quite dissatisfied with their current life situation, are most likely to participate in non-violent protest. These findings are in line with previous studies (Dalton *et al.*, 2010; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012).

The question arises as to whether this protest encouraging effect also applies for the contextual level. Turning to model 2 in Table 2, we see that this prediction does not hold: the prevalence of socially intolerant attitudes leads to less non-violent protest participation. Contrary to Hypothesis 2, we do not find a positive effect for a

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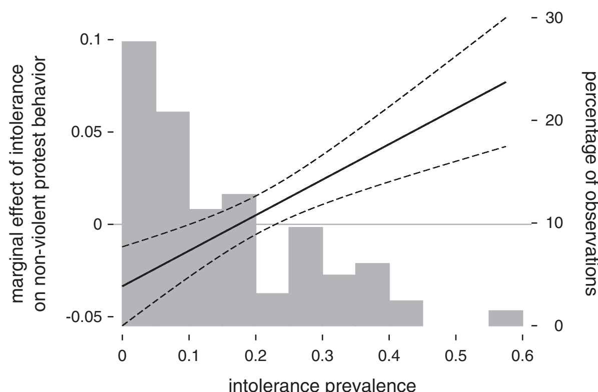

Figure 1 Marginal effect of individual-level social intolerance on non-violent protest participation by contextual social intolerance prevalence.

socially intolerant climate on the country level. In sharp contrast, the observed effect shows a strongly negative and significant influence on protest behavior. In other words, there is less individual protest participation in socially intolerant settings. This, however, could be a misleading relationship, as socially tolerant and socially intolerant individuals may react differently to the prevailing attitudinal climate within their country. To test this assumption, we run model 3 with a cross-level interaction between the individual-level social intolerance and the societal-level intolerance.

To obtain an even more precise picture of this interactive relation, the results of model 3 are graphically displayed in Figure 1. Here the solid line represents the change in the effect of individual-level social intolerance on non-violent protest behavior for different levels of the contextual social intolerance climate. The dashed lines show the 95% confidence bands revealing the uncertainty of the estimated result. Further, the distribution of the intolerance climate is given by the grey shaded area. At first glance, we observe the overall positive effect of the interaction as already given by the positive and significant interaction coefficient in model 3.[10] Upon more detailed examination, however, the Figure reveals that for around 50% of the respondents the effect of individual social intolerance on non-violent protest behavior is negative, given a highly tolerant climate in the country. In contrast, the positive relationship in model 1 is strengthened within a context of medium or high social intolerance. Here, the relationship between individual-level social intolerance and non-violent protest is strongly and significantly positive, supporting our expectations from Hypothesis 3a. But it has to be noted that for a substantial portion of our sample the interactive effect is not distinguishable from 0, for the

[10] This positive and significant interaction effect persists even if the outliers with high contextual prevalence of social intolerance are excluded from the analysis.

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confidence intervals include 0. It thus seems as if only in a culture of conformity, in terms of a low or high contextual social intolerance, is there an increased likelihood for both socially tolerant and intolerant individuals to actively participate in non-violent protests. While this supports Hypothesis 3a, the rational choice-based Hypothesis 3b has to be rejected. Besides our arguments on conformity and the spiral of silence, insights from the literature on intolerance and anti-immigrant attitudes might provide an alternative explanation for this result. As the high importance of cultural and symbolic concerns rather than self-interest shows, rational choice considerations seem to play a minor role when it comes to ethnic and cultural diversity (Manevska and Achterberg, 2013).

To sum up, our results largely confirm the propositions of Hypotheses 1 and 3a: socially intolerant individuals are more likely to actively engage in non-violent protest. This effect is thereby enhanced in highly socially intolerant political cultures (*amplifier effect*). The deviance information criterion, which gives the overall model fit – with smaller values indicating a better fit (Gelman and Hill, 2007) – further shows that the best estimates for non-violent protest in our analyses can be found in model 3. The integration of the cross-level interaction effect thus alters the accuracy of our estimates.

This interactive term further shows that the overall positive effect of the micro-level intolerance on non-violent protest is highly contingent on the context: intolerant people are more likely to protest in intolerant societies. But conversely, this means that intolerant people are less likely to protest when tolerance increases. As soon as a climate of tolerance exists, tolerant persons are more likely to express their attitudes and opinion via political protest. This result underscores our predictions from social psychology research on conformity and the spiral of silence thesis: people holding the majority opinion feel encouraged to participate in non-violent protest. Summing up, given the strong predominance of the negative macro-level effect of intolerance over its positive micro-level effect (in effect size) and the strong dependence of the latter on macro-level intolerance itself, the net effect of intolerance on protest is negative rather than positive.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to shed light on the consequences of social intolerance on non-violent protest. Intolerance and especially social intolerance have long been seen as one of today's major challenges in modern civil societies. Increasing numbers of immigrants, rapidly shifting values, and growing diversity have contributed to rising levels of individual and societal intolerance (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Dunn *et al.*, 2009; Kirchner *et al.*, 2011; Gibson, 2013). Although prior research emphasized the importance of investigating the individual and societal outcomes of intolerance, the actual consequences have received far less attention (Gibson, 1992, 2006; Sullivan *et al.*, 1993; Flanagan and Lee, 2003). We focused on non-violent protest participation as a possible consequence of social intolerant

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attitudes. Similar to tolerance, non-violent protest participation is seen as a fundamental democratic principle. Today, it is an accepted means of influencing ongoing political processes. By combing these two publicly salient concepts, we have gathered new insights on the existing research in both areas. From a theoretical perspective, the literature is undecided about this relationship. While a liberal value orientation of tolerant persons speaks for a negative effect of intolerance on protest behavior, the will to express one's opinion speaks for an enhanced protest activity of intolerant persons. We address this puzzle by considering the contextual prevalence of intolerant attitudes as a direct as well as moderating factor.

Our results confirmed that social intolerance bears certain consequences for individual political behavior: more socially intolerant individuals are more likely to actively express their attitudes via non-violent protest participation. We explain this finding by adapting arguments of relative deprivation theory, which states that individuals are more likely to take part in protest behavior if they feel (socially) deprived (Taylor *et al.*, 1987; Walker and Mann, 1987; Grant and Brown, 1995). In addition, the positive relation between social intolerance and protest is further amplified if an individual lives in a country where social intolerance prevails. Within such a culture of conformity, socially intolerant individuals are even more likely to take part in non-violent protest activities. From a social psychological perspective informational social influence might be at work within this context. At the same time, intolerant individuals will be less likely to engage in non-violent protest if they live in a rather tolerant surrounding. These results are also in line with the spiral of silence thesis, arguing that people who perceive their opinion as in the minority remain silent and abstain from expressing it in public (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Moy *et al.*, 2001). Overall, these diverse findings underscore the necessity to distinguish between the effects of individual-level values and their contextual effects as well as their interaction, as they may differ in their influence direction and be largely conditional on each other. With the help of the cross-level interaction, we could show that although we have a positive effect of intolerance on protest behavior, the overall effect of social intolerance is rather negative if we consider the contextual settings.

Although our results emphasize the effect of social intolerance on non-violent protest, its true causal direction may be questionable. Non-violent protest behavior, or political action in general, is often used as a possible explanation for higher levels of tolerance (see especially Peffley and Rohrschneider, 2003), with the assumption being that more active individuals are more open to social changes and thus will be more politically and socially tolerant (Mill, 1984; Inglehart, 1997; Peffley and Rohrschneider, 2003). Due to our research design, however, we are unable to fully address this causality question, as we would need panel or time-series data to solve this problem. Only against the backdrop of theoretical arguments, we can assume that behavior follows attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

In the end, one may ask what implications these findings may have for society and future research. Although the research on tolerance and anti-immigrant attitudes is

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growing rapidly, the question about the consequences of these attitudes remains (largely) unanswered. What if these attitudes do not result in political or social behavior? We could show that the behavioral consequences of intolerance are strongly dependent on the prevalence of attitudes in the contexts. Intolerant individuals living in intolerant contexts are more likely to participate in non-violent protest. As a consequence socially intolerant attitudes may prevail in these societies. These results should alert socially tolerant individuals living in these predominantly intolerant societies to more actively engaging in political protest or at least to more openly expressing their opinions. On the other hand, we also show that intolerant people are less likely to protest when tolerance increases. Thus, tolerant attitudes might be further strengthened in these contexts. This is good news regarding the anchoring of tolerant attitudes in modern, enlightened societies.

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Appendix

Table A1. Variables overview

Variable	Stats	Operationalization and source[1]	Exp[2]
Individual-level variables			
Non-violent protest	min: 0 max: 1.03 mean: 0.12 SD: 0.25	*Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, have you or have you not done any of these activities in the last five years? (Read out and code one answer for each action)*: – Signing a petition [V100] – Joining in boycotts [V101] – Attending a peaceful demonstration [V102] have done = 1, Have not done = 0. With the help of ML-factor analysis on the base of a tetrachoric correlation matrix we could identify a single factor for non-violent protest behavior with higher values indicating higher likelihood of participation	
Social intolerance	min: 0 max: 1.07 mean: 0.18 SD: 0.31	*On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbors?* – People of a different race [V35] – Immigrants/Foreign workers [V37] – People of a different religion [V39] – People who speak a different language [V42] not mentioned = 0, mentioned = 1. With the help of ML-factor analysis on the base of a tetrachoric correlation matrix we could identify a single factor for social intolerance with higher values indicating higher levels of individual social intolerance	
Gender	min: 0 max: 1 mean: 0.52 SD: 0.50	Dummy variable with 0 = male and 1 = female [V235, recoded].	–
Age	min: –26.44 max: 61.55 mean: 0.00 SD: 16.58	*Can you tell me your year of birth, please*? 19__ [V236]. Recoded in years old and centered on the grand mean of the sample	+
Educational level	min: 0 max: 8 mean: 4.25 SD: 2.50	Scale from 'no formal education' (0) to 'university-level-education with degree' (8). [V238, recoded]	–

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Table A1. (*Continued*)

Variable	Stats	Operationalization and source[1]	Exp[2]
Post-materialism	min: 0 max: 2 mean: 0.80 SD: 0.62	*If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important?* (Code one answer only under 'first choice') [V71]. And which would be the next most important? (Code one answer only under 'second choice') [V72]: – Maintaining order in the nation – Giving people more say in important government decisions – Fighting rising prices – Protecting freedom of speech Recoded: 0 = materialist (i.e. priority given to order and prices); 1 = priority to materialist and post-materialist concerns; 2 = post-materialist (i.e. priority given to government decisions and freedom)	–
Political interest	min: 0 max: 3 mean: 1.35 SD: 0.97	*How interested would you say you are in politics? Are you…* [V95]: – Very interested [1] – Somewhat interested [2] – Not very interested [3] – Not at all interested [4] The variable was recoded so that it ranges from 0 to 3 and that higher values imply higher interest in politics	–
Active associational engagement	min: 0 max: 1 mean: 0.39 SD: 0.49	The variable takes the value '1' if the respondent is an active member in at least one of the following kinds of clubs/associations: Church or religious organization [V24]; Sport or recreational organization [V25]; Art, music, or educational organization [V26]; Labor Union [V27]; Political party [V28]; Environmental organization [V29]; Professional association [V30]; Humanitarian or charitable organization [V31]; Consumer organization [V32]; Any other (write in):__ [V33] If the respondent is a passive member or not a member at all in any of the above listed associations the variable takes the value '0'	+/–
Satisfaction with life	min: 1 max: 10 mean: 6.71 SD: 2.33	*All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Using this card on which 1 means you are 'completely dissatisfied' and 10 means you are 'completely satisfied' where would you put your satisfaction with your life as a whole?* [V22] Scale ranging from 1 = completely dissatisfied to 10 = completely satisfied	–
Contextual-level variables			
Prevalence of intolerance	min: 0 max: 0.57 mean: 0.14 SD: 0.13	Aggregated values of individual-level variable for each country (see above)	+

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Table A1. (*Continued*)

Variable	Stats	Operationalization and source[1]	Exp[2]
Ethnic diversity	min: 0.00 max: 0.93 mean: 0.42 SD: 0.24	Fractionalization index for various ethnic groups in a country. 0 = absolutely homogeneous; 1 = highly fractionalized [0; 0.75]. *Source*: Norris (2009a)	+/–
Human development index (HDI)	min: 0.32 max: 0.95 mean: 0.75 SD: 0.17	UNDP Human Development Index (HDI); high values indicate high socioeconomic development. Average 2001–2002 [–0.22; 0.14]. *Source*: Norris (2009a)	+
Duration of democracy	min: 0 max: 196 mean: 41.39 SD: 47.42	Regime durability in the number of years since the most recent regime change (defined by a three point change in the POLITY score over a period of 3 years or less) or the end of transition period defined by the lack of stable political institutions (denoted by a standardized authority score). *Source*: Polity IV project	+

[1]All data on the individual level come from the World Values Survey (2005–2008).
[2]Exp. = theoretically derived expected direction of relationship (+ = positive relationship; – = negative relationship).