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Experimental Evidence from Belgium on Local Politicians' Engagement with Protests*

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Abstract

When do politicians react responsively to protesters demands? I argue that politicians react responsively to protests they anticipate their voters to support — peaceful, large, and actionable protests. In an experiment with Belgian local politicians ($N = 1003$), I randomize protest scenarios that vary how peaceful and large protests are, and how actionable protesters' demand is. Results show that peaceful protests prompt the most responsive reactions, whereas large protests are more limited to influencing a party's agenda. However, among politicians who perceive protesters as their voters (in this case left-wing politicians), moderately disruptive actions still prompt politicians to listen to protesters' demands. Whether demands are formulated in an actionable way does not affect politicians' reactions when compared to abstract demands. This study contributes to understanding when and how politicians are responsive to their constituents in the case of protests and shows that being peaceful shapes politicians' incentives to react responsively.

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Introduction

When do politicians react responsively to protesters demands? This question matters because the impact of protesters' demands on policymaking depends on how politicians react to protests. If politicians simply ignore a protest or send repressive police forces, its chances of causing a policy change seem small. In contrast, policy change becomes more likely if politicians meet protesters, listen to their demands, or popularize protesters' issue within their own party. In this paper, I aim to test and compare the effects of the most widely studied protest actions (protest peacefulness, size, and actionable) on politicians' immediate reactions.

This study contributes to a wide literature on the effects of protests on political outcomes. Most studies on the effects of individual protest actions (i.e., being peaceful) offer limited insights into politicians' immediate reactions (Cunningham, 2023; Dahlum et al., 2022; Mueller, 2022; Wasow, 2020). Only a few studies have assessed politicians' reactions to different types of protests but they do not provide evidence on the comparative advantage of specific protest actions (e.g., Barrie et al., 2023; Schürmann, 2023; Gause, 2022). Wouters and Walgrave (2017) bridge this emerging gap with a comprehensive analysis of the effects of different types of protests on a host of politicians' favorable attitudes and actions toward a protest. However, it remains unexplored how politicians face the trade-offs between different reactions, such as ignoring, policing, or being responsive, that can also be combined with one another.

I provide a theoretical framework on how different protest actions incentivize politicians to react responsively in contrast to ignoring or policing them, building on previous research concerning the effects of protests

on politicians' responsiveness (e.g., Gause, 2020; Giugni and Grasso, 2018; Schumaker, 1975; Wouters and Walgrave, 2017). I argue that politicians are most responsive to protests where they anticipate their voters to be present. Protests that are peaceful, large, and raise actionable demands are likely to raise sympathy among the wider public, facilitate the dissemination of protesters' demands, and ultimately enable a broad spectrum of people to participate. Therefore, such protests are likely to attract more participants in the future, including more potential voters.

To test and compare the effects of protests that vary in peacefulness, size, and demands, I conduct an original experiment¹ with 1,003 politicians. Focusing on local politicians, who are often directly exposed to street protests and must respond quickly, I conducted the experiment in Flanders, Belgium. Compared to other European democracies, Belgium experiences an average amount of protest and politicians face typical partisan pressures when being responsive. The protests in the experiment concern housing, which is a common issue for policy protests and for which Belgian local governments bear political responsibility.

The results show that politicians are most responsive to peaceful protests which makes them more willing to listen to protesters' demands, meet protesters, and raise the protest issue within their party. This adds to research finding peaceful protest to increase the likelihood of concessions (e.g., Dahlum et al., 2022; Orazani et al., 2021) by showing that the immediate political reactions are favorable as well. Explorative findings suggest that politicians are most responsive to protests where they expect the largest share of their voters to be present (i.e., peaceful protests). However, left-wing politicians are as

¹The study was pre-registered, see Appendix C and the link: https://osf.io/uehfj/?view_only=4799f314c95043a09bf3a339a41f4bfd

likely to listen to disruptive protests as to peaceful protests. This indicates an important scope condition for the effects of peaceful protest. I reason that the disruptive treatment describing protesters squatting in an abandoned house might have provided an ideological cue to left-wing politicians, which is empirically substantiated by the share of voters they expect among such protests. That politicians are more likely to be responsive to protesters they perceive as their voters adds to evidence showing that politicians systematically offer more in negotiations to co-partisan citizens (Sheffer et al., 2023; Öhberg and Naurin, 2016).

Politicians are less responsive to large protests or actionable demands and don't expect increased shares of their voters to attend such protests. Large protests seem to create a sense of urgency among politicians who are likely to speak to party colleagues and manage protests with the help of police forces. This shows that large protests might have agenda-setting power but complicate more direct interactions between politicians and protesters that would enable protesters to explain their demands. These results further demonstrate the benefits of measuring a range of political reactions to protests (for similar responsiveness measures, see Naurin and Öhberg, 2018) Whether a demand is actionable or not does not affect politicians' reactions. Possibly, the evidence indicates that the actionable demand was so easy to understand that politicians were less likely to listen to protesters, preventing further engagement.

In conclusion, the findings add a novel perspective on how different ways of protesting shape perceptions of voters being present in a protest, which is related to varying levels of responsiveness. The practical implications of this study are that how protesters design their protests affects the extent to which politicians will engage with their concerns.

Responsiveness and perceiving protesters as voters

Research finds politicians to react responsively to protests by adapting their communication (e.g., Barrie et al., 2023; Schürmann, 2023) or political agenda (e.g., Gause, 2022; Bernardi et al., 2021; Wouters and Walgrave, 2017). These works give insights into responsive communication or political decisions after protests but less into which protest characteristics affect responsiveness. An exception is the work by Wouters and Walgrave (2017) who vary a protest's worthiness (whether the protest stayed peaceful), unity (presence of divergent claims, size, and commitment (follow-up demonstration planned)). The authors find that unity and size affect politicians' opinions about the protest issue and their willingness to take political action the most. However, it remains unclear whether politicians' reactions are driven by the theorized electoral incentives. To advance our understanding of this matter, I present a theoretical framework that derives testable implications on how protesters might shape politicians' perceptions of electoral incentives to react responsively. By conducting an original experiment, I am able to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between ways of protesting, perceiving protesters as voters, and responsive reactions.

To understand the relationship between what protesters do and how politicians engage with them, I build on a rich body of work analyzing when protests are effective in reaching their political goals. Notably, these studies offer limited insights into more immediate and responsive reactions in the face of a protest. Rather, studied outcomes include, for example, a shift in public attitudes (e.g., Enos et al., 2019), government concessions meeting

protesters' demands (e.g., Cunningham, 2023; Rasler, 1996), or even regime turnover (Kadivar and Ketchley, 2018; Dahlum, 2019). I review this broad research field assuming that protests capable of achieving far-reaching political goals are also more likely to prompt more immediate responsive reactions. Such reactions are a first step toward policymaking, entail that politicians demonstrate a willingness to engage with protesters' demands, and can range from simply listening to demands to initiating a policy (Esaiasson et al., 2013; Öhberg and Naurin, 2016; Naurin and Öhberg, 2018; Schumaker, 1975).

I argue that politicians are responsive to protests they expect their voters to support or participate in. Being responsive to one's own voters is important for politicians to ensure electoral support and secure chances for reelection. Besides partisan cues such as the ideology of protesters' demand, the actions that protesters use can influence the perception of whether voters are involved with a protest. By protest actions, I refer to protest characteristics that protesters can influence, such as peacefulness. They influence politicians' perception of a protest as they affect whether many sympathize with the protesters, understand their demands, and consider joining as participants. These factors facilitate that more and more individuals join the protest, thereby leading to more potential voters participating. An early responsive reaction can further aim to appease protesters and reduce the probability of increased mobilization.

In the following, I lay out the relationship between a protest's peacefulness, size, or demand and politicians' responsiveness. I remain agnostic toward different characteristics of politicians that affect their baseline probability to react responsively to a protest. Previous research shows that politicians in opposition are more likely to react responsively to a protest than incumbents (e.g., Hutter and Vliegenthart, 2016; Uba, 2016). Additionally,

studies show that left-wing politicians are more responsive to protests (e.g., Giugni and Grasso, 2018; Gilljam et al., 2012). While incumbents might not be as responsive to a protest as members of the opposition, I theorize that they should nevertheless be incentivized to react more responsively to a peaceful protest than to a disruptive as. This is because incumbents as well as opposition members (similarly for left-wing and right-wing politicians) both care about maintaining their electoral support.

Peaceful protest

A peaceful protest increases the chances that a politician's voters are present in several ways. To start with, most will think of a peaceful protest as more legitimate than a disruptive one (Edwards and Arnon, 2021). Such increased legitimacy makes protesters' demands more agreeable and easier to disseminate, generating public support (Dahlum et al., 2022; Orazani and Leidner, 2019) and future participation. Additionally, peaceful protest makes it safe for large parts of the population to participate. This increases the appeal for individuals to participate in the future. Anticipating that a protest will attract more participants means that chances increase that a broader spectrum of individuals will participate, which further increases the chances that politicians' voters are present at a protest. In combination, politicians might be more sympathetic toward peaceful protesters and therefore expect more of their own voters to be present. Research shows that politicians sympathize more with voters who share their partisan interests (Öhberg and Cassel, 2023; Lucas and Sheffer, 2024), which in turn suggests that politicians anticipate that those constituents are likely to be their voters. Further, a responsive reaction to a peaceful protest is easier to justify to colleagues in the party or government.

In contrast, a disruptive protest is not only a disturbance to residents (see Ketchley and El-Rayyes, 2021) but might be perceived to overstep its boundaries as rightful participation that everyone should tolerate. However, disruption is at times found to be effective. Nonviolent *and* violent secession movements are granted more concessions when compared to movements that participate in institutional politics (Cunningham, 2023). Wasow (2020) adds that while disruption is successful in putting an issue onto the political agenda, nonviolence is more likely to sway public opinion. This shows that even if disruption gains media attention, peaceful protests are likely to gain popularity.

Similarly, instances where disruptive protests are more effective than peaceful ones highlight the importance of a protest being perceived as a majority group. The positive effects of peaceful tactics significantly decrease for minorities that are, by definition, not part of a popular majority (Manekin and Mitts, 2022; Pischedda, 2020). For Black Americans, violent riots instead of peaceful protests in the United States in the 1990s shifted voters' policy preference (Enos et al., 2019). Research on the perceptions of protest might explain why the added benefit of protesting peacefully is limited to ethnic minorities. Edwards and Arnon (2021) find that support for repressing protesting minorities increases to similar levels as when majority groups use illegitimate means of violence.

Together, politicians have good reasons to expect a higher share of their voters among peaceful protests, which tend to be perceived as more legitimate and are able to attract more and more participants in the future. Additionally, greater sympathy for peaceful protesters can bias politicians' expectation toward voters being present. I hypothesize politicians are therefore likely to opt for a responsive reaction.

H1: Politicians are more likely to be responsive to *peaceful* protests.

Large protests

In addition to a protest's peacefulness, the size of a protest is an important signal. Large protests are most commonly assumed to be a predictor for successful protest outcomes (Gurr and Irving Lichbach, 1986; Schumaker, 1975). This has been studied among mass mobilizations during which protest size varies within the upper limits (e.g., Stephan and Chenoweth, 2011; Rasler, 1996). Studies that mention protest size more explicitly find a positive relationship between large protests and favorable protest outcomes (McAdam and Su, 2002; Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012; Wouters and Walgrave, 2017).

Why politicians might expect their voters to participate in a large protest is related to the fact that many people are on the streets. As protest participation is costly in many ways (for example time-consuming) and collective action problems are present, individuals are likely to free-ride and hope that others show up even though they support the protest's cause. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that many who did not show up at the protest support the protesters' issue. Further, even if there remain many who are not (yet) convinced of protesters' demands or have not participated yet, a large crowd is likely to attract more attention and reach others, which encourages mobilization. A large protest also implies that many people have coordinated to protest together, which shows that the protest's organizational capacity is large. If organizers manage to organize a big event, they are likely to be able to manage media contacts and public relations as well. This again promises to increase widespread protest participation.

Together, politicians have incentives to be responsive to large protests because collective action problems suggest that protesters' issue is even more popular among the wider public than apparent on the streets and because chances are high that the protest will become more popular. A protest's popularity, in turn, increases the chances that a politician's voters are present, to whom politicians are likely to be responsive.

H2: Politicians are more likely to be responsive to *larger* protests.

Actionable protest demands

The way protesters formulate their demands affects their likelihood of involving new participants and therefore politicians' expectations of whether voters are present. A basic distinction between demands relates to whether demands are abstract or actionable. An actionable demand is, for example, making a specific policy-oriented demand (e.g., "We don't want the new road to go through our village") instead of an abstract one (e.g., "We don't want traffic"). Schumaker expects government responsiveness to protest to be a response to an action with "manifest or explicitly articulated demands" (1975, 494). Similarly, demands that are a "narrowly tailored message that identifies the problem, recognizes the culpable parties, and proposes policies that alleviate concerns" are expected to be effective (Gillion, 2012, 951).

The effects of such actionable demands have been considered theoretically relevant but empirical tests are less common. In a recent study, Mueller (2022) measures demands as being either semantically cohesive or incohesive, which aims to capture whether a protest group raises one coherent issue or a set of diverse issues. Mueller finds convincingly that cohesive demands are more likely to receive concessions. The treatment arms mix mostly ab-

stract with some actionable demands and one might ask whether formulating actionable demands makes an additional difference.

From a theoretical point of view, actionable demands make it easier for the public (including the media) to understand what the protest is about, spread the demand, and motivate more individuals to participate. Next, being able to formulate an actionable demand signals organizational capacity. Protests are an assembly of individuals who usually have varying demands. Unifying demands under a common phrase that is also policy-oriented, shows that protest organizers were able to consolidate demands. In turn, protests with higher organizational capacity are likely to be well organized, hold regular protest events, reach out to the media, recruit new participants, and popularize the protest. These traits increase protests' chances to affect public opinion and create a larger base of support among the public, which includes politicians' voters.

H3: Politicians are more likely to be responsive to protests with *actionable* demands.

Experimental design

To study the effect of protest actions on politicians' responsiveness, I ran a pre-registered online survey experiment² from March to May 2023 with local politicians. Examining the responsive reactions from local politicians

²The pre-registration can be accessed here: https://osf.io/uehfj/?view_only=4799f314c95043a09bf3a339a41f4bfd. See section C in the Appendix for further information on possible divergences from the pre-registration.

has the advantage that these politicians often experience protests in their municipality. Additionally, their political responsibilities concern issue areas that are frequently the target of protests.

Case selection and sample

The experiment was conducted in Brussels and Flanders in Belgium. In Appendix D, I introduce the case of protests and local politicians in Belgium in greater detail. Surveying Belgian local politicians on the matter of protests is reasonable, given the regular protest occurrences in Belgium. Figure 1 shows the number of protest events per municipality between 2021 and 2022 captured in the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project — ACLED (Raleigh et al., 2023). Flanders and Brussels experienced slightly more protests than Wallonia on average, but variation in protest occurrence is rather homogeneous. Overall, the number of protests happening in Belgium is comparable to other Western European countries (see further Figure D1).

The survey was included in a survey panel with Belgian politicians (see for example Walgrave et al., 2022)³. The panel samples all Dutch-speaking local politicians in Brussels and Flanders, including mayors, aldermen, city councilors, and district councilors. Politicians who combine a local mandate

³The survey data were collected in the framework of the POLPOP project, led by Prof. Dr. Stefaan Walgrave. The local politician panel was established by Stefaan Walgrave, Julie Sevenans, and Karolin Soontjens, in the Media, Movements, and Politics (M2P) research group at the University of Antwerp. The panelists are asked to participate in research once a year, and they are informed about the research results afterward.

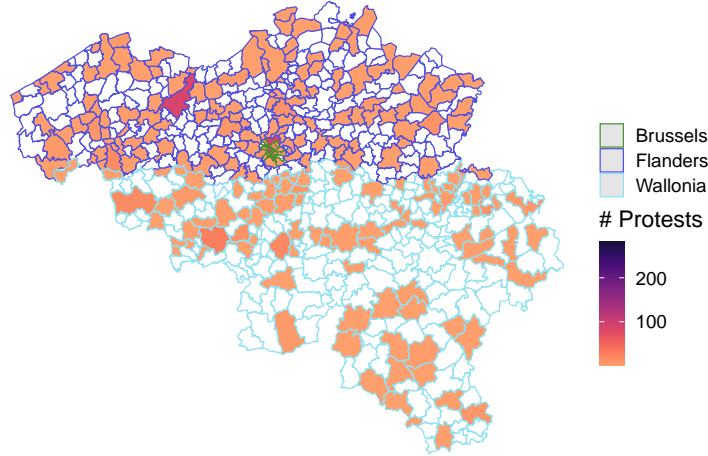


Figure 1: Number of protest events in Belgium between 2021 and 2022. Data sources: ACLED and Statistics Belgium.

with a seat in the Flemish regional or the Federal parliament are not included in the panel. All survey items were translated into Dutch.⁴

I excluded participants who did not finish the survey or who stated to be a national and not local politician. The final sample includes 1,003 respondents (35% female, $M_{Age} = 54.3$, $SD_{Age} = 12.8$)⁵. The majority of survey respondents were municipal councilors ($N = 677$), followed by aldermen (Schepenen, $N = 262$), and mayors ($N = 64$). 26% of all respondents have held the position of a mayor before and the average years of experience in the sample are 14 years. Together, this indicates that respondents in the sample have a high degree of proficiency and represent the variation in political positions at the municipal level.

⁴The fielded survey in Dutch is displayed in Appendix A.

⁵see Table E1 for summary statistics and Table E2 for a comparison between the sample and Belgian’s population of local politicians. The figures show that the sample matches closely the demographics of the population.

Treatment: Protest scenarios

To estimate how politicians react responsively to different protests, the survey participants read a vignette that described a local protest for which three actions (size, disruption, demand) are randomly varied. Therefore, I embedded a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial experiment in a vignette. Following an a-priori power analysis, I chose to expose every respondent to only one vignette as a sample size of at least 782 respondents was deemed sufficient to detect a small effect size of 0.1 at a power of 0.8. Power could have been increased by giving respondents repeated tasks. This, however, might have additionally introduced the possibility for respondents to learn about the protest treatments across vignettes and bias the results.

The protest concerns the issue of housing, which is a pressing political issue in Belgian politics, and protests concerning housing are common (see Appendix D and Table D1). Moreover, local politicians in Belgium have jurisdiction over housing. The issue of housing is traditionally more important for the political left. In recent years, however, the political discourse in Belgium has included economic actors and is increasingly perceived as a societal, rather than an ideologically-charged issue (Amies, 2023). I address whether reactions to housing protests are conditional on politicians' ideology in greater detail in the results section.

The treatment vignette avoids any deception of the respondents. I follow research practice by Naurin and Öhberg (2021) and begin the experimental vignette with: "Imagine the following scenario". The description of the protest is kept short and includes only relevant information about the treatments. This vignette design has the advantage of being as specific as possible to test the hypotheses while being unspecific enough to enable respondents

to picture the described protest in their municipality.

Every protest action has two levels that reflect, for example, whether a protest is small or large. The treatment levels are designed to create variation in the independent variable of protest perception. The treatment levels must be distinct from one another so that a small protest is recognized as small without the reference level being known and treatment level combinations should be reasonable. Both are crucial for the experiment’s internal validity (see further Druckman, 2022).

For protest size, I distinguish between protests of 10 or 500 protesters. The housing protests included in the ACLED data (see Appendix D) range in size from 15 (or no report) to one event with 900 protesters in Brussels. As a capital city, Brussels is likely to experience the largest protests in the country. I chose 500 protesters as the level for large protests, which is still a large protest in Brussels and an extraordinarily large protest in the other municipalities (Table D1).

In terms of peaceful protests, the treatment level explicitly mentions that people are demonstrating “peacefully”. I compare the effect of peaceful protests to the baseline of disruptive protests. However, treating disruption is challenging as it nevertheless is most likely to induce social desirability bias. When directly asked, few politicians seem likely to answer that they would be responsive to disruptive protest even though disruption can exert such societal pressure that being responsive seems inevitable. Additionally, levels of protester violence (in particular in a democracy such as Belgium) are generally low and any divergence is probably notable for politicians.

To give respondents the perception that engaging politically with disruptive protesters is still possible, I specify that only *a fraction* of the protesters are using disruptive means. The text describes that some protesters are

squatting⁶ in an abandoned house. This description is based on a real protest event in Ghent, Belgium in 2020.⁷

To distinguish between demands, I include an actionable demand that is a practical request for a policy that can be implemented and is adapted from a Belgian newspaper article (D’hoore, 2018). The abstract demand leaves the reader unclear about the specific policy change being sought after. Below, I display an exemplary vignette with the three treatments indicated in squared brackets. Thus, no treatment combination is excluded.

Protest vignette (English translation) “Imagine the following scenario: In your municipality, a group of [SIZE] people assembled to protest against the shortage of affordable housing. [DISRUPTION]. Protesters demand of you to [DEMAND].”

- SIZE: 10 *or* 500
- DISRUPTION: They are chanting peacefully on the streets *or* A fraction of the protesters is squatting in an abandoned house and have become a disturbance to neighboring residents
- DEMAND: convert a vacant office space into affordable housing *or* resolve the housing crisis

⁶In the analysis, I check whether squatting induces party-dependent reactions as it is a tactic that is more frequently associated with left-wing protesters.

⁷In the ACLED database the protest is described in the following way: “On 27 December 2020, an unknown number of people staged a protest in Gent, squatting a house of a social housing quarter that is about to be demolished.”

Outcome: Reactions to protest

The outcome is a participant's reaction to the described protest. When reacting to a protest, politicians have several options to choose from. For example, they might ignore a protest (e.g., Bishara, 2015; Yuen and Cheng, 2017), secure and manage a protest by deploying police forces (e.g., Curtice and Behlendorf, 2021; Eck et al., 2021), or be responsive and consider protesters' demands (e.g., Cunningham, 2023). To model the variation in reactions, I include six options, three for responsive and three for non-responsive protest reactions (ignoring, securing, arresting) that can be combined. The items are shown in a randomized order. Respondents indicate how likely they are to choose each response option.

By using a scale for response options, I further aim to avoid social desirability bias. Local politicians tend to be aware that being responsive to citizens' demands is considered a virtue in their job (Walgrave et al., 2022). Thus, simply asking politicians whether they would react responsively or not could risk triggering social desirability bias. This is potentially mitigated when respondents choose from several response options that do not exclude each other.

To derive the different forms of responsive reactions that seem plausible to local politicians, I rely on previous research studying (local) politicians' responsiveness to citizen demands (Esaiasson et al., 2013; Öhberg and Naurin, 2016; Naurin and Öhberg, 2018; Schumaker, 1975). I include three reactions that vary in their costliness and level of commitment. A first response that requires few costs and little commitment from politicians but that is distinct from ignoring or managing a protest might be to listen to protesters' demands (see also access responsiveness in Schumaker, 1975, 494). Listening

to demands is a pre-condition for further political actions as it means that a politician gets familiar with citizens' demands and signals to protesters a willingness to consider what they are voicing (Esaiasson et al., 2013; Esaiasson and Wlezien, 2017).

A next response could be to initiate a dialogue by meeting protesters. Organizing a meeting is more costly and shows more commitment than listening. Meeting protesters gives them the possibility to explain their demands and, in turn, politicians can explain their policy position or ideas (see Esaiasson and Wlezien, 2017). In the best case, a meeting can lead to an agreement between both actors. The respective survey item is as similar as possible to previous studies (Öhberg and Naurin, 2016; Naurin and Öhberg, 2018), which increases comparability across studies and ensures that the item has successfully been tested with local politicians (in Sweden) before.

Lastly, a more concrete step toward policymaking is to put protesters' issues on the political agenda by discussing them within the party. Making other party members listen to protesters' demands shows increased commitment. This form of responsiveness is in line with the concept of "agenda responsiveness", which suggests that an issue is placed on the agenda of a political system (Schumaker, 1975, 494). I use a survey item similar to items by Öhberg and Naurin (2016) and Naurin and Öhberg (2018).

To avoid an imbalance in responsive and non-responsive responses, I add three further (non-responsive) response options. Ignoring is, besides listening, another low-threshold option. Further, politicians might strive to secure a protest or arrest disturbing protesters. In Belgium, mayors serve as the head of the local police in performing administrative tasks. However, not every politician on the panel is a mayor. Therefore, the securing item is formulated in the following way: "*I would like* the protest location to be

secured by police forces.” Also, note that the arrest item specifies that *disturbing* protesters are arrested. This enables politicians to choose arrest as a response option without being overly repressive against protesters. Respondents were asked how likely they would be (on a 5-point Likert scale) to react in the following six ways. Items are shown in randomized order.

What do you do? Please indicate how likely you are to choose the following options:

Responsive

- Listen: I make myself familiar with and listen to protesters’ demands.
- Meeting: I suggest a personal meeting with protesters.
- Party agenda: I take the matter of housing further and get others in my party to listen to the protesters’ arguments.

Non-responsive

- Ignore: I avoid any hasty response from my side.
- Secure: I would like the protest location to be secured by police forces.
- Arrest: I would like disturbing protesters to be arrested by police forces.

Results

I test whether peaceful, large, and actionable protests increase politicians’ likelihood to react responsively by computing the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) for every protest action⁸. The AMCE gives the marginal effect of a protest action, averaged over the joint distribution of the other actions (Hainmueller et al., 2014).

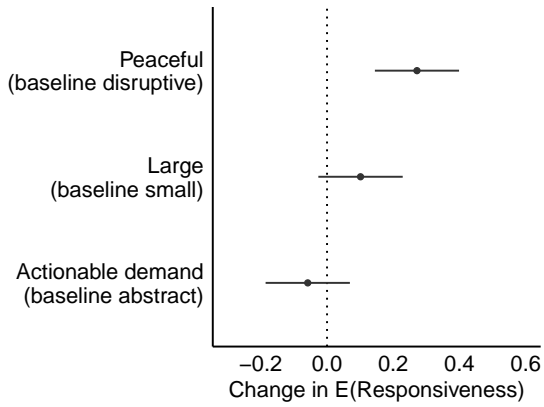
⁸Table E3 shows that the randomization of treatment levels was successful.

Figure 2 shows the effects of peaceful and large protests, and actionable demands on responsiveness⁹. The AMCEs are estimated in comparison to the respective baseline level of either disruptive or small protests, or abstract demands. Plot (a) shows the results for the aggregated responsiveness index. Peaceful protests increase the likelihood of a responsive reaction by 0.25 points. In contrast to expectations, neither large protests nor actionable demands significantly increase the likelihood of a responsive reaction.

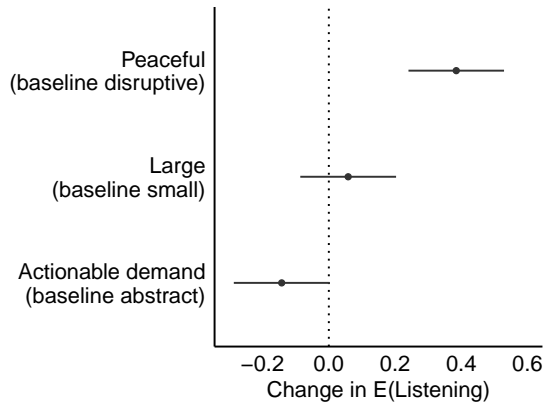
Disaggregating these effects shows that reactions vary across responsive reactions. Plots (b) to (d) in Figure 2 depict the effects of protest actions on politicians' likelihood to listen to protesters' demands, meet protesters, or discuss it with party members in the house influencing the party's agenda. Peaceful protests affect positively all three responses; especially politicians' likelihood to listen to protesters. Effects are more heterogeneous for large protests. Given a large gathering of around 500 people, politicians are not significantly more likely to listen to or meet protesters. However, they are more likely to discuss the protest issue with their party members. This could reflect that large protests signal that an issue is important and should be discussed within the party. Uncertainty remains large around the estimates for actionable demands across responses. An actionable demand slightly decreases the likelihood of listening, but the upper confidence interval is close to zero.

How do politicians' responsive reactions relate to other protest reactions? I further explore how protest actions affect *non-responsive* reactions. Figure

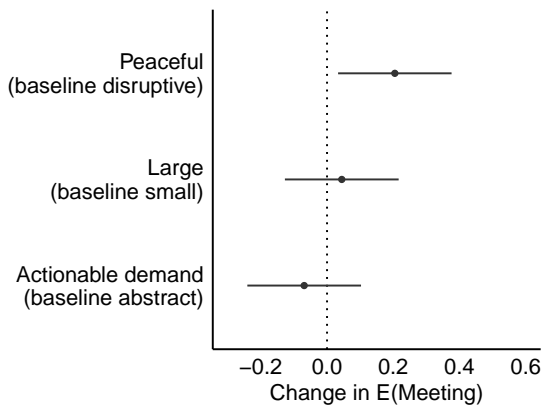
⁹A confirmatory factor analysis shows that the responses listening, meeting, and setting the party agenda can be combined into one factor (Table E4 and Figure E2). The distribution of my main dependent variable and further descriptive statistics are displayed in Appendix E.



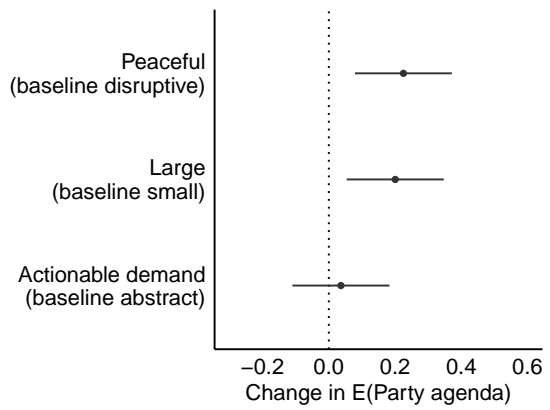
(a) Responsiveness



(b) Listening



(c) Meeting



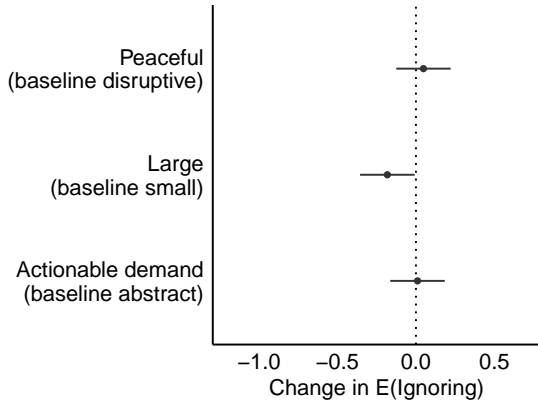
(d) Party agenda

Figure 2: AMCEs for responsive responses to protest. 95% confidence intervals are displayed. See Table E5 for the full regression results.

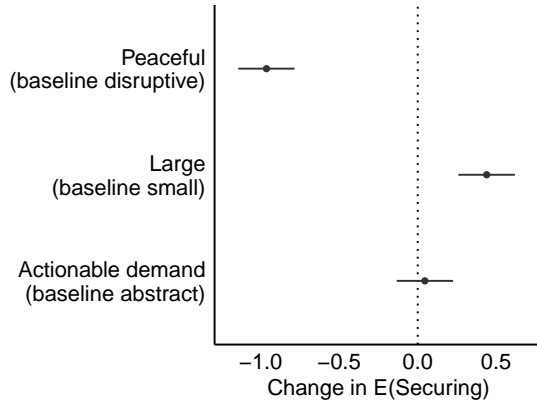
3 shows the AMCEs for responses including ignoring a protest, securing a protest location, or arresting disturbing protesters. A peaceful protest does not affect a politician's decision to ignore a protest. Compared to a disruptive protest, however, employing peaceful tactics decreases the likelihood of using police forces. Large protests significantly decrease the likelihood of ignoring a protest and increase politicians' willingness to send police forces to secure and arrest protesters. This adds to the impression that large protests signal the need for attention. The added benefit of actionable demands remains uncertain and close to zero.

An obvious question is whether combining protest actions has an added effect. Results are displayed in Table E6 and do not suggest that, for example, combining a large with a peaceful protest significantly alters politicians' responsiveness. However, securing a location or arresting protesters becomes more likely when peaceful protests are large. It is important to note that large uncertainty around the estimates also reflects the limited number of respondents per treatment combination creating issues with statistical power.

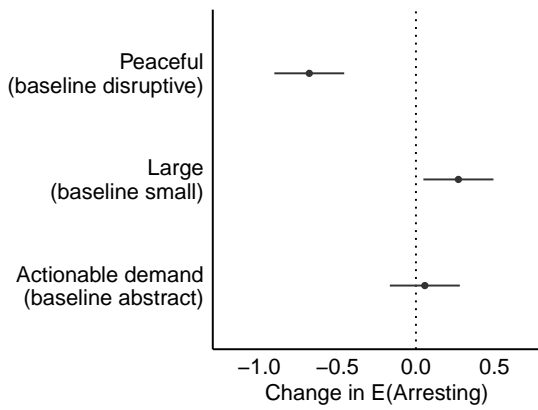
Together, the results indicate that politicians are most responsive to peaceful protests: They are more likely to listen to protesters' demands, meet protesters, and forward protesters' demands to their party colleagues (H1). This adds to previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of peaceful movements for responsiveness and policy success (Dahlum et al., 2022; Orazani et al., 2021) and demonstrates that these results hold for local protests and when compared to only a moderate level of disruption. While the comparison to moderate disruption aimed to reduce social desirability bias among politicians, a risk of bias remains. However, estimating the marginal means shows that peaceful protests receive the most responsive reactions in absolute terms compared to any other action (Figure E3). Thus,



(a) Ignoring



(b) Securing



(c) Arresting

Figure 3: AMCEs for non-responsive responses to protest. 95% confidence intervals are displayed. See Table E5 for the full regression results.

even if the disruptive protest description elicits a socially desirable more unresponsive reaction in the survey setting, peaceful protests prompt more responsive reactions than protests that vary in size and demands.

Given a large gathering, politicians are more likely to speak with party colleagues about the issue but not to engage with protesters more directly by listening to their demands or meeting them. At the same time, politicians are likely to ensure that the protest location is secured and disturbing protesters are arrested. In this sense, large protests fail to prompt responsive reactions, which stands in contrast to common theoretical assumptions (Gurr and Irving Lichbach, 1986; Schumaker, 1975) and empirical findings (Chenoweth and Belgioioso, 2019; Wouters and Walgrave, 2017) and fails to reject the null hypothesis for H2. An explanation might be that politicians avoided more direct contact with protesters when the event was big as they thought it implausible to engage with such a large group. However, note that the treatment for large protests described a protest with 500 people, which is a rather small protest compared to previous studies that focus on social movements (e.g., Stephan and Chenoweth, 2011; Rasler, 1996). Nevertheless, for the Belgian local politicians in the sample, 500 people are most likely to be perceived as a large group (see further Appendix D) and effects should generalize to other contexts if politicians think of protest size in relative terms.

How demands were formulated did not affect politicians' reactions. This contradicts my hypothesis H3 and previous theoretical expectations (Gillion, 2012; Snow and Benford, 1988), which suggest that the formulation of demands that are actionable — meaning they are policy-oriented and feasible to implement — increases protests' effectiveness. The null findings could suggest that the treatment failed to create variation in politicians' perceptions

of the protest. Both treatment levels concern the same policy area and when reading the abstract demand, respondents might have anticipated a policy solution, since the problem of housing is well-known in Belgium. If anything, an actionable demand seems to decrease politicians' likelihood of listening to protesters. This could suggest that politicians thought that engaging with protesters was unnecessary since the demand seemed clear.

Conditional deterrence of disruptive protest

As discussed in the description of the treatment, the protest's issue of housing might have resulted in differential reactions from politicians, depending on their ideology. Housing tends to be an issue that is more commonly associated with the political left and the disruptive treatment level of squatting is more often used by left-wing protesters (e.g., Jämte et al., 2023; Karapın, 2010). Therefore, left-wing politicians might be more responsive to the protest overall and particularly more responsive to disruptive protests than right-wing politicians. Moreover, previous research suggests that left-wing politicians are more responsive to protest (Wouters et al., 2022).

To check the robustness of the findings, I probe whether the results are conditional on politicians' ideology measured on a left-to-right scale reaching from 0 to 11. Table E7 shows that as politicians lean further to the right, they become less responsive to protests and more inclined to prioritize securing locations or arresting disruptive protesters. However, the main results for the different reactions largely hold for left-wing and right-wing politicians. The most important difference emerges in their likelihood to listen to different protesters (see Figure 4). Protesting peacefully has a larger added benefit among right-wing politicians than among left-wing politicians. Left-wing politicians are similarly responsive to disruptive as well as peaceful protests.

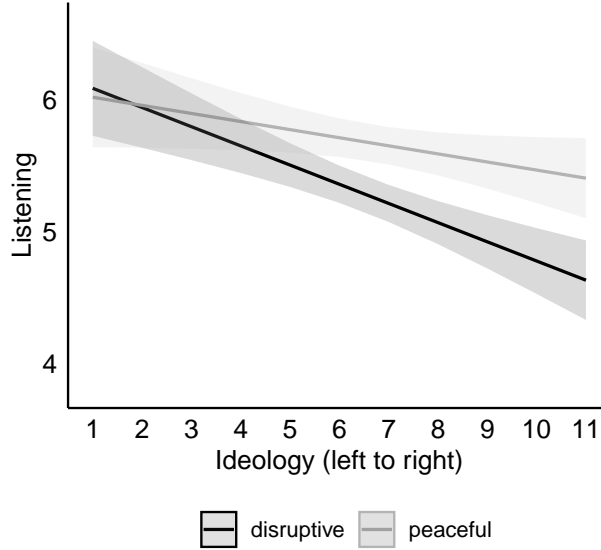


Figure 4: Politicians' likelihood to listen to peaceful or disruptive protests, conditional on ideology. 95% confidence intervals are displayed.

This possibly suggests some important scope conditions for the effects of disruptive protest. There are two potential explanations. A first explanation could be the ceiling effects of left-wing politicians' high willingness to listen to any protesters. The added benefit of protesting peacefully is therefore limited. This explanation, however, would be more convincing if we observed similar patterns for other actions, which is not the case as left-wing politicians report a higher likelihood of listening to large protests than to small protests.

A second explanation is that disruptive actions *only* deter those politicians from engaging with protesters who are unlikely to view the protesters as their voters. As previously discussed, squatting in an abandoned house is an action that is more commonly used by left-wing protesters, which might signal to politicians that protesters are more left-wing. However, this indifference between levels of disruption only holds for left politicians' likelihood to *listen* to protesters. Just like more right-wing politicians, left-wing politicians

report an increased likelihood of wanting to secure a location or arrest. In the next section, I empirically address the explanation that left-wing politicians are more likely to perceive disruptive protesters as their voters.

Perceiving protesters as voters

I explore if variation in politicians' responsive reactions to protests co-varies with politicians' perception of protesters as their voters. I argued that politicians are likely to react responsively to those protests where they expect their voters to be present. I expected that politicians expect more of their voters among peaceful, large, and actionable protests, which incentivizes them to be more responsive to such protests. The results so far show that politicians are most responsive to peaceful protests and partly engage with large protests. While my theoretical expectations were only partly met, I can check the applicability of the argument and test whether increased responsiveness is more likely when politicians expect their voters to be present. In this regard, the finding that left-wing politicians were equally likely to listen to squatting protesters as to peaceful ones suggests that politicians perceived squatting as an ideological cue, indicating that the protesters lean more toward the left than the right. I test whether politicians perceived such an ideological cue that is dependent on protesters' actions by estimating the effect of protesters' actions on politicians' estimated share of their own voters among protesters.

After the treatment vignette and outcome question, I asked respondents to estimate the percentage of protesters they believed to be their voters (ranging from 0% to 100%). Figure 5 shows the coefficient plot for the effect of protest actions on the estimated share of voters among protesters. The plot reveals important differences in politicians' perceptions of protesters.

Across all eight scenarios, politicians, on average, thought that 29% of the protesters were part of their electorate. Bear in mind, apart from the varied actions, the described protest scenario did not give any indication of the politician's popular support among the described protesters. How demands are formulated does not affect the estimated vote share. Compared to small protests, large protests increase the estimated share by 2.4 percentage points but the 95% confidence interval includes zero. The biggest effect on the estimate is the use of a peaceful tactic that increases the estimated voter share by 8 percentage points. In case of a disruptive protest that has become a disturbance for neighboring residents, this estimate drops to 25%, while it increases to 33% in case of a peaceful protest.

These results are corroborated in a mediation analysis in Table E9 showing that the effect of peaceful protests on expected voter share (7.92 percentage points increase) is mediated through politicians' indicated responsiveness on expected voter share (4.81 percentage points increase). Thus, politicians expect most of their voters to be among peaceful protests, which are also the protests to whom they were most responsive.

Since the survey item on the expected voter share was included after the outcome question it is also possible that the results show that politicians are using motivated reasoning to legitimize their responsive reaction to peaceful protests by thinking that these protesters are their voters. In practice, however, the difference is low between perceiving a protest to include voters to then react responsively or reacting responsively to then reason the protest was likely to include voters.

Can variation in the expected voter share further help to understand left politicians' responsiveness to disruptive protests? I explore heterogeneous protest action treatment effects on politicians' expected voter share among

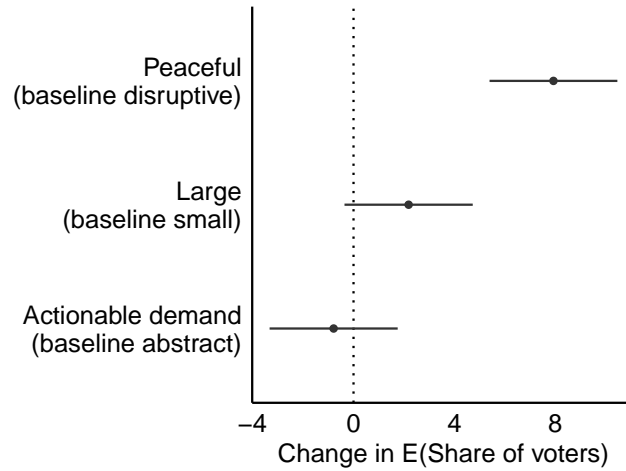


Figure 5: Coefficient plot of the AMCE of peaceful, large, and actionable protests on politicians' expected voter share among the protesters. The average estimated share is 29.2%. 95% confidence intervals are displayed.

protesters, conditional on politicians' ideology (see also Table E10). Figure 6 shows that left-wing politicians report highly similar shares of voters among peaceful and disruptive protests. More right-wing politicians expect statistically significantly different shares between both protests. A look at right-wing politicians' expectations of the presence of their voters in protests that vary in size and demands suggests that the disruptive protest does not decrease the expected voter share, but rather peaceful protests increase it. Thus, this pattern corresponds to the results concerning differences in reactions between left- and right-wing politicians.

Discussion and conclusion

This study provides evidence of how protesters' ways of protesting affect politicians' likelihood of being responsive by listening to them, meeting them, and raising their demands within their party. By studying reactions that usu-

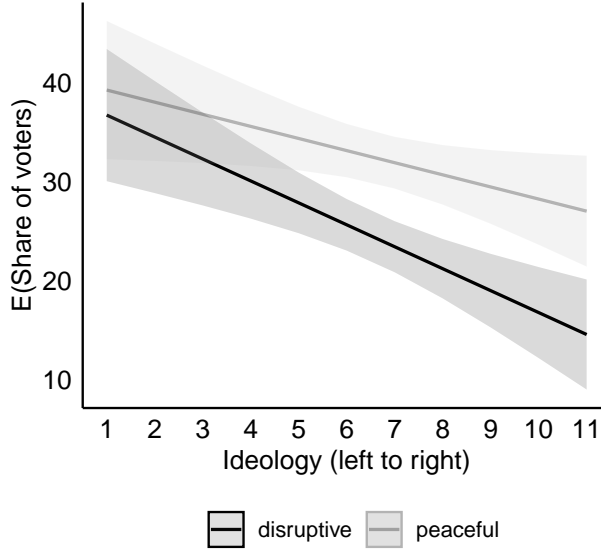


Figure 6: Politicians’ expected voter share among peaceful protests, conditional on ideology. 95% confidence intervals are displayed.

ally precede policymaking, the findings contribute to the literature on which protests reach their political goals and influence policies (e.g., Cunningham, 2023; Mueller, 2022; Gause, 2022; Wasow, 2020; Enos et al., 2019). Moreover, the experimental evidence suggests that the rationale that politicians are most responsive to their voters’ concerns applies to protests as well (for studies on electoral incentives and responsiveness, see for example Dinesen et al., 2021; Gaikwad and Nellis, 2021; Öhberg and Naurin, 2016). The actions chosen by protesters influence politicians’ perception of how many of their voters are participating in the protest.

I find that peaceful protests prompt the most responsive reactions, whereas large protests have a more indirect effect only influencing a party’s agenda. A scope condition for the effectiveness of peaceful protest is that moderately disruptive actions induce those politicians who perceive the protesters to be their voters (in this case, left-wing politicians) to listen to the protesters’

demands. Whether demands are formulated in a policy-oriented and feasible way does not affect politicians' reactions when compared to abstract demands.

Several avenues for future research emerge. First, I find that peaceful protests have the strongest effect on politicians' expectations regarding the presence of voters. Politicians' responsiveness to peaceful protests is in line with previous research pointing out that peaceful or nonviolent tactics increase support for the protest and facilitate favorable policy outcomes (e.g., Dahlum et al., 2022; Orazani et al., 2021; Stephan and Chenoweth, 2011). In addition, the results show that left-wing politicians, who perceive squatting protesters to a similar extent as their voters as peaceful protesters, are as likely to listen to such disruptive protests as they are to peaceful protests. This scope condition is suggestive of politicians' increased willingness to engage with co-partisans (Öhberg and Naurin, 2016) and in line with research finding that politicians are more likely to offer more to citizens they believe to be their co-partisans (Sheffer et al., 2023).

More research should systematically test what protest characteristics provide ideological cues for politicians (for example protesters' identities). Further, it would be interesting to capture how much disruption politicians are willing to tolerate from co-partisans before overcoming their partisan bias. Additionally, future research could consider what mechanisms drive politicians' responsiveness in regimes where electoral mechanisms are weaker. In authoritarian countries, politicians are likely to be less inclined to think about electoral accountability when responding to protests. While previous research shows that autocrats are, at times, responsive to protests (de Vogel, 2023; Turner, 2023; Leuschner and Hellmeier, 2023), we lack empirical evidence substantiating why.

Second, the limited effectiveness of large protests stands in contrast to previous studies (Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012; Schumaker, 1975) and calls for more research replicating this finding for social movements that vary in much larger sizes (for example studied by Cunningham, 2023). In addition, future research should test whether, for example, the presence of protest organizers alleviates politicians' hurdle to engage more directly with large protests (e.g., Nepstad and Bob, 2006). In combination, the results concerning large protests show that measuring reactions to protests in a multi-dimensional way reveals important variation that goes beyond the binary distinctions between responsive (i.e., concession) and unresponsive (i.e., repression). Novel data collections are needed to capture the variety of reactions to protests and should consider the possibility of coding reactions to protests that can be combined.

Third, whether demands are formulated in an actionable or abstract way does not significantly influence politicians' reactions. This is surprising considering previous research on the role of messaging and protesters' demands (e.g., Gillion, 2012). In a similar vein, while I do not measure the cohesiveness of protesters' demands, the results stand somewhat in contrast to findings by Mueller (2022) who argues that cohesive demands are effective because they are more comprehensible. Actionable demands are arguably also comprehensible but tend to decrease politicians' likelihood of listening to them in this survey context. However, the actionable demand in this study might include a policy idea that politicians feel less inclined to engage with. More research is required to pinpoint whether demand comprehensibility influences politicians' engagement with it. This can be tested not only for protesters' demands but also for citizens' demands.

Fourth, more empirics could test the generalizability of the findings.

While Belgium is a typical case in terms of protest intensity from a European perspective, it would be interesting to conduct further studies in contexts with high or low protest intensity. In the latter, protests might be perceived as an extraordinary occurrence that prompts more alert reactions. Hereby, we know little about the influence of institutional constraints on politicians' responsiveness to protest. Belgian politicians are considered to be constrained by their party (Walgrave et al., 2007), which might limit the extent to which individual politicians are able to engage with citizen demands and make this study a more conservative test. To check, future studies could measure politicians' responsiveness in contexts with lower party constraints and, more generally, determine the effects of institutional factors on reactions to protests (see Conrad, 2011).

Beyond implications for research, this paper offers insights for activists. Getting politicians to engage with protesters and their demands is an important goal for most protests. The results substantiate that how a group chooses to protest significantly affects protesters' chances of initiating a policymaking process with politicians and their parties. Protesting peacefully is met with the most responsive reactions (compared to large protests or actionable demands) as politicians expect their voters to be present.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

Online Appendices A to E for “Experimental Evidence from Belgium on Local Politicians’ Engagement with Protests”

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A Online Appendix: Survey flow

Survey in English

Q2.1 First we have some general questions about your position as a local representative.



Q2.2 Which of the following mandates do you currently exercise?

- Mayor (1)
 - Alderman (Schepen) (2)
 - Municipal councilor (of district councilor) (3)
 - None of the above mandates (4)
-

Display This Question: If Which of the following mandates do you currently exercise? = None of the above mandates

Q2.3 You indicated that you are currently not serving as a municipal or district councilor, alderman or mayor. We were not aware of this, for which we apologize. Your participation in the survey is no longer necessary. Nevertheless, thank you very much for your willingness.

Skip To: End of Survey If You indicated that you are currently not serving as a municipal or district councilor, alderman or may... Is Displayed

Page Break



Q2.4 Are you also currently a member of parliament, minister and/or party leader at national or regional level?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

If Are you currently also a member of parliament, minister and/or party leader at national or regional level... = Yes

Q2.5 You indicated that you are also currently a member of parliament, minister and/or party leader at national or regional level. Because we could probably count on your cooperation this year for our survey of national politicians, and because we do not want to burden you further, we will end the questionnaire here. Nevertheless, thank you very much for your willingness.

Skip To: End of Survey If You indicated that you are also currently a member of parliament, minister and/or party leader at national or regional.. Is Displayed

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Which of the following mandates do you currently exercise? = Municipal councilor (or district councilor)



Q2.6 Have you ever been an alderman or mayor?

Yes (1)

No (2)



Q2.7 Have you ever been a member of parliament, minister and/or party leader at national or regional level?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Page Break



Q2.8 In what year did you first take the oath as a local representative?

▼ 2023 (1) ... 1940 (84)

End of Block:

Start of Block:



Q3.1 Are you part of the local government or the local opposition?

- The local government (1)
- The local opposition (2)
- Other: (3) _____

Page Break



Q3.2 Which national party(s) do you feel affiliated with? You can indicate several.

- CD&V (1)
- Groen (2)
- N-VA (3)
- Open Vld (4)
- PVDA (5)
- Vooruit (6)
- Vlaams Belang (7)
- Other: (8) _____
- I do not feel affiliated with a national party (9)

End of Block

Start of Block:



Q4.1 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)



Q4.2 In which year were you born?

▼ 2005 (1) ... 1920 (86)



Q4.3 What is your highest level of education achieved?

- Primary education/no diploma (1)
- Secondary education (2)
- Higher non-university education (3)
- Higher university education (4)



Q4.4 Where would you place yourself on a scale of 0 to 10, if 0 means you are left-wing, and 10 means you are right-wing?

- Left (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (5)
- 5 (6)
- 6 (7)
- 7 (8)
- 8 (9)
- 9 (10)
- Right 10 (11)

End of Block:

Start of Block:

Q6.1 We are also interested in how local politicians deal with protest. Please read the hypothetical scenario below carefully.

Imagine the following scenario: In your municipality a group of $\{e://Field/size\}$ people assembled to protest against the shortage of affordable housing. $\{e://Field/violence\}$. Protesters demand of you to $\{e://Field/demand\}$.

End of Block: Vignette Elena

Start of Block: DV Elena

Q7.1 How likely is it that you would respond in the following ways?

	Extrem ely unlikely (49)	Moderat ely unlikely (50)	Slightly unlikely (51)	Neither likely nor unlikely (52)	Slightly likely (53)	Moderat ely likely (54)	Extrem ely likely (55)
Avoid any hasty response from you. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make yourself familiar with and listen to protesters' demands. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggest a personal meeting with protesters. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Take the matter of housing further and get others in your party to listen to the protesters' arguments. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Call the head of your local police and ensure that the protest location is secured. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Call the head of your local police and ensure that police forces arrest disturbing protesters. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block:

Start of Block:



Q8.1 To what extent do you find the described protest scenario realistic?

- Not realistic at all (1)
 - Not realistic (2)
 - Rather unrealistic (3)
 - Neutral (4)
 - Rather realistic (5)
 - Realistic (6)
 - Completely realistic (7)
-

Q8.2 If you had to guess what percentage of the protesters in the scenario voted for your party, what would your estimate be? Please drag the slider to the estimated percentage.



End of Block:

Survey in Dutch (as shown to respondents)

Start of Block: lokaal_Functie

Q2.1 Eerst hebben we enkele algemene vragen over uw functie als lokaal vertegenwoordiger.



Q2.2 Welke van de volgende mandaten oefent u op dit moment uit?

- Burgemeester (1)
- Schepen (2)
- Gemeenteraadslid (of districtsraadlid) (3)
- Geen van bovenstaande mandaten (4)

Display This Question:

If Welke van de volgende mandaten oefent u op dit moment uit? = Geen van bovenstaande mandaten

Q2.3 U gaf aan dat u momenteel geen mandaat beoefent als gemeente- of districtsraadslid, schepen of burgemeester. Dat was ons niet bekend, waarvoor onze excuses. Uw deelname aan de survey is niet langer nodig. Desalniettemin hartelijk bedankt voor uw bereidwilligheid.

Skip To: End of Survey If U gaf aan dat u momenteel geen mandaat beoefent als gemeente- of districtsraadslid, schepen of bu... Is Displayed

Page Break



Q2.4 Bent u op dit moment ook parlementslid, minister en/of partijleider op het nationale of regionale niveau?

Ja (1)

Nee (2)

Display This Question:

If Bent u op dit moment ook parlementslid, minister en/of partijleider op het nationale of regionale... = Ja

Q2.5 U gaf aan dat u momenteel ook parlementslid, minister en/of partijleider bent op het nationale of het regionale niveau. Omdat wij dit jaar allicht al op uw medewerking mochten rekenen voor ons onderzoek bij nationale politici, en omdat we u verder niet willen belasten, zullen we de vragenlijst hier beëindigen. Desalniettemin hartelijk bedankt voor uw bereidwilligheid.

Skip To: End of Survey If U gaf aan dat u momenteel ook parlementslid, minister en/of partijleider bent op het nationale of... Is Displayed

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Welke van de volgende mandaten oefent u op dit moment uit? = Gemeenteraadslid (of districtsraadlid)



Q2.6 Bent u ooit schepen of burgemeester geweest?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)



Q2.7 Bent u ooit parlamentslid, minister en/of partijleider geweest op het nationale of regionale niveau?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

Page Break



Q2.8 In welk jaar legde u voor het eerst de eed af als lokaal vertegenwoordiger?

▼ 2023 (1) ... 1940 (84)

End of Block: lokaal_Functie

Start of Block: lokaal_Partij



Q3.1 Maakt u deel uit van het lokale bestuur of van de lokale oppositie?

- Het lokale bestuur (1)
- De lokale oppositie (2)
- Andere: (3) _____

Page Break



Q3.2 Met welke nationale partij(en) voelt u zich geaffilieerd? U kan er meerdere aanduiden.

- CD&V (1)
- Groen (2)
- N-VA (3)
- Open Vld (4)
- PVDA (5)
- Vooruit (6)
- Vlaams Belang (7)
- Andere: (8) _____
- Ik voel me niet geaffilieerd met een nationale partij (9)

End of Block: lokaal_Partij

Start of Block: Lokaal_Socio-demo's



Q4.1 Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man (1)
 - Vrouw (2)
 - Anders (3)
-



Q4.2 In welk jaar bent u geboren?

▼ 2005 (1) ... 1920 (86)



Q4.3 Wat is uw hoogst behaalde opleidingsniveau?

- Lager onderwijs/geen diploma (1)
 - Secundair onderwijs (2)
 - Hoger niet-universitair onderwijs (3)
 - Hoger universitair onderwijs (4)
-



Q4.4 Waar zou u zichzelf plaatsen op een schaal van 0 tot 10, als 0 betekent dat u links bent, en 10 betekent dat u rechts bent?

- Links0 (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (5)
- 5 (6)
- 6 (7)
- 7 (8)
- 8 (9)
- 9 (10)
- Rechts 10 (11)

End of Block: Lokaal_Socio-demo's

Start of Block: Vignette Elena

Q6.1 Verder zijn we geïnteresseerd in hoe lokale politici omgaan met protest. Gelieve het onderstaande hypothetische scenario aandachtig te lezen.

In uw gemeente komt een groep van $\{e://Field/size\}$ mensen samen om te protesteren tegen het tekort aan betaalbare woningen. $\{e://Field/violence\}$. De demonstranten eisen dat $\{e://Field/demand\}$.

End of Block: Vignette Elena

Start of Block: DV Elena



Q7.1 Hoe groot is de kans dat u op onderstaande manieren zou reageren?

	Heel klein (1)	Klein (2)	Eerder klein (3)	Klein noch groot (4)	Eerder groot (5)	Groot (6)	Heel groot (7)
Ik zou niet reageren. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou luisteren naar de eisen van de demonstranten. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou een persoonlijke ontmoeting met de demonstranten voorstellen. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou mijn collega's motiveren om aandacht te besteden aan het thema huisvesting. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou willen dat de protestlocatie wordt beveiligd door de politie. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou willen dat de demonstranten die overlast veroorzaken, worden gearresteerd. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DV Elena

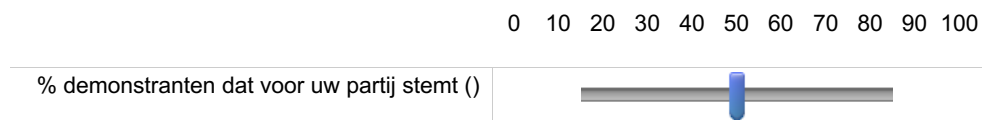
Start of Block: Controls Elena



Q8.1 In hoeverre vindt u het beschreven protestscenario realistisch?

- Helemaal niet realistisch (1)
- Niet realistisch (2)
- Eerder niet realistisch (3)
- Neutraal (4)
- Eerder wel realistisch (5)
- Wel realistisch (6)
- Helemaal realistisch (7)

Q8.2 Als u zou moeten gokken hoeveel procent van de demonstranten uit het scenario voor uw partij stemmen, wat zou uw inschatting dan zijn? Gelieve de slider te verslepen tot het geschatte percentage.



End of Block: Controls Elena

B Online Appendix: Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in compliance with the American Political Science Association's *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research* and the researchers' responsible Ethics Review Board. The survey participants were recruited through the pre-existing online survey panel of local politicians (see for example Walgrave et al., 2022) via e-mail. Before participation, participants were informed that they would participate in a survey that was conducted for research purposes, what their participation entailed, that they could terminate participation at any time, that the study was anonymous, that the study would not pose any physiological or psychological harm, and that the anonymized data was intended for publication in scientific journals. While I did not deceive participants, I manipulated participants' perceptions of political behavior. However, the treatment vignette did not deviate from what participants are exposed to in everyday life and specified that it was a fictive text. Participants received contact details if they had concerns or questions. The data was fully anonymized and due to the large sample size, the risk of participant identification is minute.

C Online Appendix: Pre-registration

The survey was fielded between March to May of 2023. Before obtaining the data, I pre-registered the analysis. The following pre-registration for the study is also available on OSF under the link https://osf.io/uehfj/?view_only=4799f314c95043a09bf3a339a41f4bfd.

I follow the pre-registration in the main analysis of the manuscript. There are the following deviations between the manuscript and pre-registration: First) The pre-registered hypotheses specify that politicians are more likely to concede. Instead of the word “concede”, the manuscript uses the expression “to be responsive”. However, the meaning and direction of the hypotheses are unaffected by this deviation.

Second) The pre-registered hypothesis states that cohesive demands will be more likely to receive more concessions. The manuscript alters the word “cohesive” to “actionable”. This change was only made to better explain what the treatment manipulates and does not change the expected effect of the demand treatment, nor the theoretical explanation of how demands affect politicians in their decision-making.

Third) The study design specifies that the experiment is a 7×3 factorial design. This is a typo and the experiment is a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design. This is also apparent in the pre-registration that shows how the treatment is designed and that it has 3 treatments with 2 treatment levels.

Fourth) The treatment vignette in the main text labels the second treatment as “disruption”, whereas the pre-registered vignette uses the word “violence”. This change does not affect how the survey was conducted, as respondents do not see the treatment labels and the change in wording only aims to clarify to readers what the treatment aims to manipulate.

To clarify, the pre-registration mentions the possibility of exploratory analyses concerning heterogeneous treatment effects. The manuscript includes such tests. In addition to the pre-registered analysis, I disaggregate the outcome variable into its six sub-components, test for additional heterogeneous effects, and add an estimation of the treatment on an alternative outcome variable.

Protest Actions and Concessions – Pre-registration Belgium Study 1

Study Information

Hypotheses

Politicians are more likely to concede to a protest, ...

H1: ...the larger a protest.

H2: ...the more peaceful a protest.

H3: ...the more cohesive protesters' demand.

Design Plan

Study type

Experiment - A researcher randomly assigns treatments to study subjects, this includes field or lab experiments. This is also known as an intervention experiment and includes randomized controlled trials.

Blinding

For studies that involve human subjects, they will not know the treatment group to which they have been assigned.

Is there any additional blinding in this study?

No response

Study design

To test my hypotheses, I embedded a conjoint experiment with vignettes into the online survey panel INFOPOL in Belgium. This survey panel samples all Dutch-speaking local politicians in Brussels and Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Their positions include mayors, aldermen, city councilors, and district councilors. The experiment follows a 7x3 factorial design, where the three protest actions (size, demand, violence) have two levels each.

Randomization

To estimate how politicians respond to different protest characteristics, every participant reads a vignette that describes a local protest for which three actions (size, violence, demand) are randomly varied. The protest concerns the issue of housing. The treatment vignette avoids any deception of the

respondents. I follow the research practice by Naurin and Öhberg (2021) and begin the experimental vignette with: "Imagine the following scenario".

The treatment vignette follows this structure:

"Imagine the following scenario: In your municipality a group of [SIZE] people assembled to protest against the shortage of affordable housing. Protesters are residents in your municipality, between 20 and 70 years old and represent people across all social classes. [VIOLENCE]. Protesters demand of you to [DEMAND]."

- SIZE: 10 or 500
- VIOLENCE: They are chanting peacefully on the streets or A fraction of the protesters is squatting in an abandoned house and have become a disturbance to neighboring residents
- DEMAND: convert a vacant office space into affordable housing or resolve the housing crisis

Sampling Plan

Existing Data

Registration prior to creation of data.

Explanation of existing data

No response

Data collection procedures

The data will be collected through the online survey panel INFOPOL in Belgium. After collecting the data, the survey results will be anonymized and shared with the researcher.

The survey panel samples all Dutch-speaking local politicians in Brussels and Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Their positions include mayors, aldermen, city councilors, and district councilors.

The researcher will exclude participants who do not pass the attention checks, or who show conspicuous response behavior (e.g., straightlining, short participation duration).

Sample size

All participants of the survey will be analyzed, excluding participants who failed attention checks or who show conspicuous response behavior (e.g.,

straightlining, short participation duration). The total sample size was unknown before the completion of the data collection.

Sample size rationale

No response

Stopping rule

No response

Variables

Manipulated variables

No response

No files selected

Measured variables

Dependent variable:

The outcome is a participant's willingness to concede to a protest. The variable is measured through an index that includes several response options ranging from ignoring a protest, giving in to protesters' demands, or managing a protest by deploying police forces. The response options are displayed to survey participants in a randomized order.

"What do you do? Please indicate how likely you are to choose the following options:

- Ignore: I avoid any hasty response from my side.
- Concession: I make myself familiar with and listen to protesters' demands.
- Concession: I suggest a personal meeting with protesters.
- Concession: I take the matter of housing further and get others in my party to listen to the protesters' arguments.
- Manage: I would like the protest location to be secured by police forces.
- Repression: I would like disturbing protesters to be arrested by police forces."

Indices

No response

No files selected

Analysis Plan

Statistical models

I will first summarize the items concerning responses to a protest by granting concessions to an index if internal consistency justifies this.

I will then test the stated hypotheses:

Politicians are more likely to concede to a protest, ...

- H1: ...the larger a protest.
- H2: ...the more peaceful a protest.
- H3: ...the more cohesive protesters' demand.

The experiment follows a 7x3 factorial design, where the three protest tactics have two levels each. The tactics are combined, so there is no pure control group. Rather, I calculate the average marginal component effect (AMCE) for every protest action (size, demand, violence) to estimate the effect of the action on the likelihood of a concession.

Transformations

I will summarize the outcome items concerning responses to a protest by granting concessions to an index if internal consistency justifies this.

Inference criteria

No response

Data exclusion

No response

Missing data

No response

Exploratory analysis

I might additionally test how protest actions interact with one another in terms of being granted concessions and whether effects are conditional on a politician's party affiliation, gender, age, or experience in office.

Other

Other

No response

D Online Appendix: Case description

Local politicians in Belgium

The survey experiment was conducted with a sample of local politicians (at the municipal level) in the Belgian regions of Flanders and Brussels. Belgium has 581 municipalities of which 300 are part of the Flemish region and 19 are part of Brussels. The municipalities are governed by a local parliament (council) and government (college of mayor and aldermen). In Flanders, mayors are nominated by the municipal council and appointed by the regional government. Mayors are the head of a municipality and their responsibilities include, for example, the execution of laws and the maintenance of public order.

Protests in Belgium

Belgium appears as a typical protest case. Protests in Belgium are frequent and a popular form of political participation. Taking into account population size, Belgium experiences more protests than Germany but less than Denmark. See Figure D1.

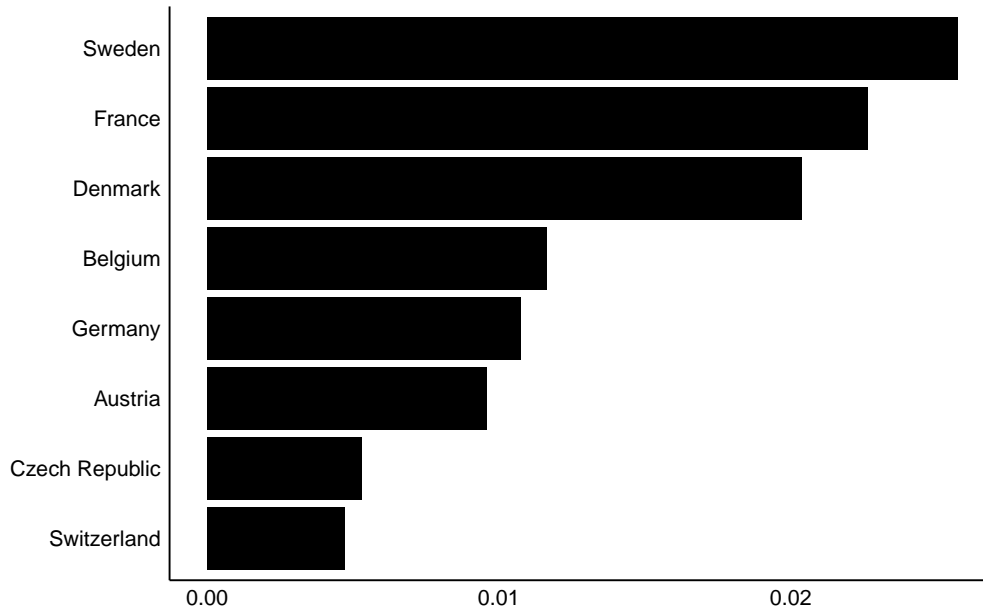


Figure D1: Percentage of the number of protests in European countries between 2021 and 2022 compared to the size of a country's population in 2022. Protest data source: ACLED (Raleigh et al., 2023).

The protests that occurred in Belgium took place across the whole country (see Figure 1 in the main manuscript). Apart from Brussels, Flanders was the region that experienced the most protests. The ACLED data reveal that these protests are overwhelmingly peaceful and vary in their demands.

To gain a better understanding of *housing* protests in the region, I filtered protest events from the ACLED database that happened between 2021 and 2022 in Flanders and for which the description of the event contained the word housing. Table D1 shows the description of these events.

Table D1: Housing protest descriptions (2021-2022, ACLED)

Description
1 On 17 October 2022, an unknown number of people staged a protest in Geraardsbergen to raise awareness for the housing crisis.
2 On 16 October 2022, around 300 people staged a protest march in Antwerpen to denounce the lack of affordable and social housing in the city.
3 On 23 September 2022, an unknown number of people staged a protest action in Gent to denounce the lack of affordable housing in the city.
4 On 15 August 2022, dozens of people staged a protest in the Bernadette quarter in Gent, denouncing its imminent demolition by the municipal authorities and the lack of solution for the 60 Roma squatters of the former social housing project.
5 On 13 March 2022, an unknown number of activists of the youth branches of the Groen, PVDA-PTB and Vooruit parties staged a protest in Antwerpen to denounce the soaring housing prices in Belgium.
6 On 14 February 2022, an unknown number of people staged a protest at the Volkshaard headquarters in Gent to demand more clarity on the status of 3000 residencies of the social housing company.
7 On 10 February 2022, an unknown number of people joined a protest march of PVDA-PTB through the Noordwijk in Antwerpen to denounce the municipal housing policy.
8 On 29 December 2021, an unknown number of PVDA-PTB activists staged a protest action in Hasselt, burning 200 candles to denounce the lack of social housing in the city.
9 On 6 December 2021, around 100 people staged a protest march in Gent against the sale of the Caermersklooster monastery and the lack of affordable housing in the city.
10 Around 3 November 2021 (as reported), around 20 students continued their protest occupation of the Sterrebos forest in Gent against its imminent removal by the University of Gent to make way for student housing.
11 On 16 October 2021, around 15 students staged a protest action at the Sterrebos in Gent, occupying the little forest to denounce its imminent destruction by the University of Gent to make way for student housing.
12 Around 9 October 2021 (weekend of), an unknown number of Vooruit and Green party activists staged a protest action in Berlare to denounce the lack of affordable housing in the township.
13 On 12 February 2021, an unknown number of people staged a protest at the Palace of Justice in Gent against the imminent demolition of the historical social housing quarter Bernadettewijk.

E Online Appendix: Empirics

Descriptive insights

Table E1: Summary statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Political position	1,003	2.61	0.60	1	3
National position	1,003	2.00	0.00	2	2
Previous mayor	676	0.20	0.40	0	1
Previous national position	1,003	0.96	0.19	0	1
Experience (years)	1,000	14.23	10.18	1	53
Incumbent	1,003	0.62	0.49	0	1
Female	1,003	0.35	0.48	0	1
Age	1,003	54.34	12.83	23	83
Education	1,002	3.20	0.78	1	4
Ideology	1,002	6.55	2.28	1	11
Ignoring	1,003	2.34	1.40	1	7
Listening	1,003	5.44	1.18	1	7
Meeting	1,003	5.17	1.38	1	7
Party agenda	1,003	5.31	1.19	1	7
Securing	1,003	3.77	1.54	1	7
Arresting	1,003	3.31	1.83	1	7
Expected voter share	964	29.17	20.39	0	100

Table E2: Representativity of the local politician sample

	Party affiliation	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Party affiliation	CD&V (Christian-democrats)	22%	21%
	Groen (Greens)	6%	10%
	Vooruit (Socialists)	20%	16%
	N-VA (Flemish Nationalists)	11%	12%
	Open VLD (Liberals)	0%	0%
	Vlaams Belang (Extreme right)	7%	9%
	PvdA (Extreme left)	6%	4%
	Other	28%	28%
	Total	100%	100%
Gender	Male	66%	66%
	Female	34%	34%
Age	18-34 year	11%	10%
	35-54 year	46%	37%
	+55 year	43%	54%

Figure E1 shows that the average score of responsiveness was 5.3. While there is no baseline level from previous studies to which this value could be compared, the indicated 'rather large' likelihood to be responsive across all protest scenarios might be considered high. In particular, because the vignettes describe small and disruptive protests.

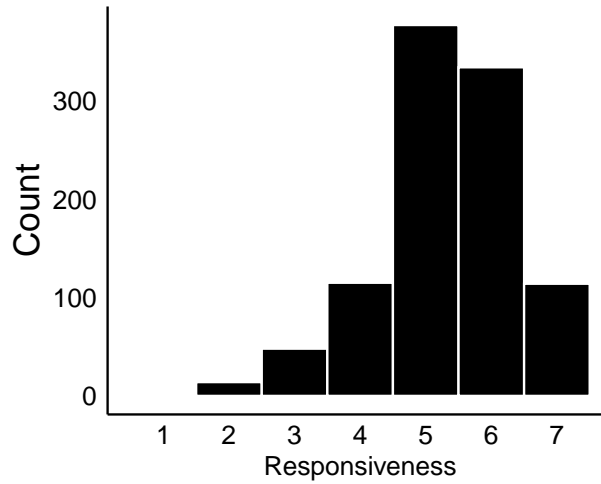


Figure E1: Histogram of the aggregated index of responsiveness.

Balance table

Table E3 shows the results of a balance test between the control and treatment group for the size treatment in the vignette describing a protest. The

difference in means for the control and treatment groups is low. Included variables in the table are all measured pre-treatment covariates.

Table E3: Balance table of pre-treatment covariates

	Type	Mean control	SD control	Mean treatment	SD treatment	Mean difference
Survey progress	Contin.	91.45	22.52	94.20	18.68	0.13
Survey duration	Contin.	16899.98	127464.37	28410.64	187297.23	0.07
Position	Contin.	2.59	0.62	2.63	0.59	0.05
National position	Contin.	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Previously mayor	Binary	0.22	0.41	0.19	0.39	-0.08
Previously mayor (NAs)	Binary	0.34	0.47	0.31	0.46	-0.05
Previous national pos.	Binary	0.96	0.20	0.96	0.18	0.03
Years of experience	Contin.	14.79	10.44	13.68	9.90	-0.11
Years of experience (NAs)	Binary	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.06	0.03
Incumbent	Binary	0.63	0.48	0.61	0.49	-0.05
Gender	Contin.	1.37	0.48	1.34	0.48	-0.07
Age	Contin.	54.49	12.65	54.20	13.02	-0.02
Education	Contin.	3.24	0.77	3.17	0.79	-0.08
Education (NA)	Binary	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.06
Ideology	Contin.	6.53	2.32	6.57	2.25	0.02
Ideology (NAs)	Binary	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.06
Size treatment	Binary	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
CDV party	Binary	0.28	0.45	0.27	0.44	-0.02
Groen party	Binary	0.10	0.31	0.13	0.34	0.09
NVS party	Binary	0.28	0.45	0.26	0.44	-0.03
PVDA party	Binary	0.02	0.12	0.01	0.10	-0.04
Vla party	Binary	0.04	0.20	0.05	0.21	0.03
VLD party	Binary	0.17	0.38	0.15	0.36	-0.05
Voo party	Binary	0.11	0.32	0.13	0.34	0.05
Party (NA)	Binary	0.09	0.28	0.10	0.30	0.06
Mayor	Binary	0.07	0.25	0.06	0.24	-0.04

Factor analysis

I test whether the three variables that measure responsive reactions load onto a single responsiveness factor with a confirmatory factor analysis. Table E4 and Figure E2 show that the reactions of listening, meeting, and considering the party's agenda each contribute to a combined factor and that one factor is sufficient.

Table E4: Factor loadings for responsiveness

	Model			
	Estimate	Std. Err.	z	p
<u>Factor Loadings</u>				
<u>confa</u>				
DV.listen	1.00 ⁺			
DV.meeting	0.99	0.06	16.92	0.000
DV.colleague	0.70	0.04	15.70	0.000
<u>Residual Variances</u>				
DV.listen	0.37	0.05	6.84	0.000
DV.meeting	0.90	0.06	13.88	0.000
DV.colleague	0.90	0.05	18.90	0.000
<u>Latent Variances</u>				
confa	1.02	0.08	12.90	0.000
<u>Fit Indices</u>				
$\chi^2(df)$	0.00			
CFI	1.00			
TLI	1.00			
RMSEA	0.00			

⁺Fixed parameter

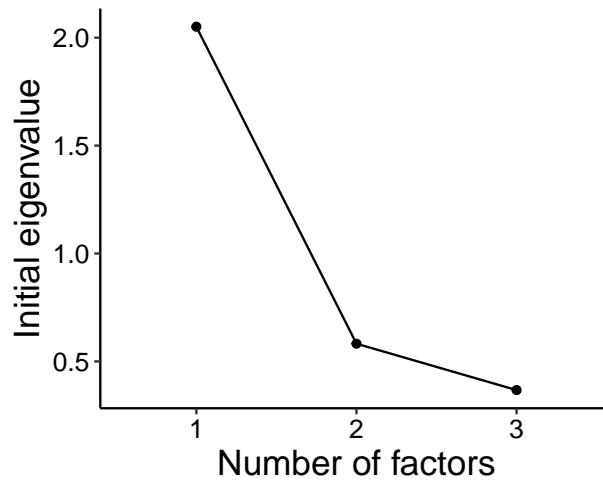


Figure E2: Scree plot for responsiveness

Main results

Table E5: Protests' effects on politicians' reactions. Results from Figures 2 and 3.

	Responsive (1)	Listening (2)	Meeting (3)	Party agenda (4)	Ignoring (5)	Securing (6)	Arresting (7)
Peaceful	0.27*** (0.06)	0.38*** (0.07)	0.20** (0.09)	0.23*** (0.07)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.96*** (0.09)	-0.68*** (0.11)
Large	0.10 (0.06)	0.06 (0.07)	0.04 (0.09)	0.20*** (0.07)	-0.18** (0.09)	0.44*** (0.09)	0.27** (0.11)
Actionable	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.07 (0.09)	0.04 (0.07)	0.01 (0.09)	0.05 (0.09)	0.06 (0.11)
Constant	5.14*** (0.07)	5.28*** (0.07)	5.08*** (0.09)	5.08*** (0.08)	2.40*** (0.09)	4.02*** (0.09)	3.49*** (0.12)
Observations	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003
R ²	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.005	0.12	0.04

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

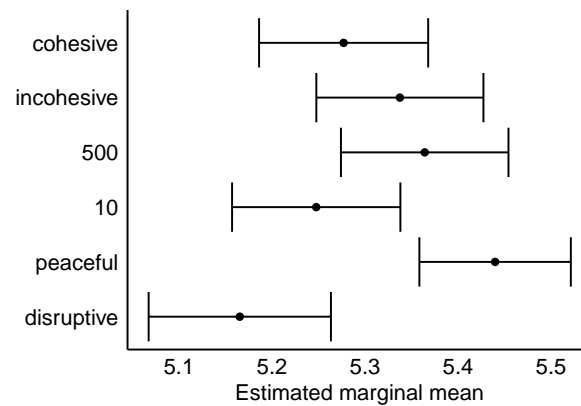


Figure E3: Estimated marginal means of protesters' actions on responsiveness

Interaction effects between protest actions

Table E6: Two-way interactions between protest actions

	Listening	Meeting	Party agenda	Ignoring	Securing	Arresting
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Peaceful	0.51*** (0.13)	0.27* (0.16)	0.38*** (0.13)	-0.02 (0.16)	-1.11*** (0.16)	-0.72*** (0.20)
Large	0.03 (0.13)	-0.12 (0.15)	0.34*** (0.13)	-0.03 (0.15)	0.26* (0.16)	0.24 (0.20)
Actionable	-0.10 (0.13)	-0.15 (0.15)	0.14 (0.13)	0.10 (0.15)	0.14 (0.16)	0.41** (0.20)
Peaceful*Large	-0.06 (0.15)	0.02 (0.18)	-0.19 (0.15)	0.01 (0.18)	0.42** (0.18)	0.43* (0.23)
Peaceful*Actionable	-0.19 (0.15)	-0.15 (0.18)	-0.11 (0.15)	0.13 (0.18)	-0.12 (0.18)	-0.34 (0.23)
Large*Actionable	0.11 (0.15)	0.31* (0.18)	-0.08 (0.15)	-0.32* (0.18)	-0.08 (0.18)	-0.36 (0.23)
Constant	5.25*** (0.10)	5.13*** (0.12)	4.98*** (0.10)	2.35*** (0.12)	4.07*** (0.13)	3.41*** (0.16)
Observations	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003
R ²	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.12	0.05

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Heterogeneous treatment effects

Table E7: Heterogeneous treatment effects of protest actions dependent on ideology (left to right)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	Responsiveness	Listening	Meeting	Party agenda	Ignoring	Securing	Arresting
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ideology	-0.17*** (0.03)	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.15*** (0.04)	-0.20*** (0.03)	0.08** (0.04)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.27*** (0.05)
Peaceful	-0.12 (0.18)	-0.15 (0.21)	-0.07 (0.26)	-0.13 (0.21)	-0.04 (0.27)	-0.50* (0.27)	0.02 (0.33)
Large	0.45** (0.18)	0.54** (0.21)	0.38 (0.26)	0.44** (0.21)	-0.49* (0.27)	0.52* (0.27)	-0.31 (0.33)
Actionable	0.19 (0.18)	0.20 (0.21)	0.18 (0.26)	0.20 (0.21)	0.02 (0.27)	0.04 (0.27)	0.15 (0.33)
Ideology*Peaceful	0.06** (0.03)	0.08*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.06* (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.07* (0.04)	-0.11** (0.05)
Ideology*Large	-0.05** (0.03)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.09* (0.05)
Ideology*Actionable	-0.04* (0.03)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.002 (0.04)	0.004 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.05)
Constant	6.23*** (0.18)	6.23*** (0.21)	6.04*** (0.26)	6.42*** (0.21)	1.87*** (0.27)	2.93*** (0.28)	1.74*** (0.33)
Observations	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002
R ²	0.19	0.15	0.09	0.18	0.04	0.15	0.14

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Perceiving protesters as voters

Table E8: Protests' effects on politicians' perception of how many percent of the protesters are part of their electorate. Results from Figure 5.

Expected share of voters	
Peaceful	7.92*** (1.29)
Large	2.18* (1.29)
Actionable	-0.79 (1.29)
Constant	24.36*** (1.32)
Observations	964
R ²	0.04

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I run a more rigorous mediation analysis using the package “lavaan” in R (Rosseel, 2012) where politicians' responsiveness is the mediator. I follow the methodology developed by Imai et al. (2011) and Imai and Yamamoto (2013) but note that the sequential ignorability assumption is only partly met since responsiveness (the mediator) is not randomized. However, variation in the mediator is significantly affected by random variation in the treatment, which increases confidence in the results. Table E9 shows that the total effect of peaceful protests on the expected vote share is 7.92 percentage points. This results from an effect of responsiveness on the expected vote share of 4.81 percentage points and an indirect effect of peaceful protests on the outcome mediated by politicians' indicated responsiveness of 1.3 percentage points. These effects are statistically significant below a p-value of 0.01.

Table E9: Mediation analysis

	DV	Estimate	SE	P-value	Lower CI	Upper CI
Peaceful	Responsiveness	0.27	0.06	0.00	0.14	0.40
Large		0.10	0.06	0.14	-0.03	0.22
Actionable		-0.02	0.06	0.70	-0.15	0.10
Peaceful	Vote share	6.62	1.26	0.00	4.15	9.09
Large		1.72	1.26	0.17	-0.74	4.18
Actionable		-0.67	1.25	0.59	-3.12	1.79
Responsiveness	Vote share	4.81	0.62	0.00	3.59	6.04
Indirect effect		1.30	0.35	0.00	0.61	2.00
Total effect		7.92	1.29	0.00	5.40	10.45

Perceiving protesters as voters conditional on ideology

Table E10: Heterogeneous treatment effects dependent on ideology (left-to-right)

	Expected share of voters
Ideology	−2.22*** (0.57)
Large	−0.95 (3.88)
Actionable	1.69 (3.89)
Peaceful	1.54 (3.86)
Large*Ideology	0.49 (0.56)
Actionable*Ideology	−0.43 (0.56)
Peaceful*Ideology	0.99* (0.56)
Constant	38.89*** (3.93)
Observations	963
R ²	0.08
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01