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Antigovernment Protests and Commitment to Democratic Principles

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ABSTRACT

While antigovernment protests have been widespread across the world in recent years, it is still not well understood why people protest their governments. This study addresses this question and asks why some individuals participate in antigovernment protests, while others don't. I argue that commitment to democratic values is essential to understanding participation in antigovernment protest: individuals who are committed to democratic values are more likely to participate in an antigovernment protest. With broader implications for political protests in political regimes other than consolidated democracies, this research explores recent widespread protests in Georgia and finds evidence consistent with its primary argument.

Introduction

Political protests have been prevalent in the South Caucasus in recent years. In particular, 2018 and 2019 were a very turbulent time in the region. In April 2018, massive antigovernment protests in Armenia forced Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan to resign and state that he was "wrong" for staying in power against the will of the protesters (MacFarquhar, Pérez-Peña, and Nechepurenko 2018). Two months later, in June 2018, antigovernment protesters gathered in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Georgian prime minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili was forced to resign (Nechepurenko 2018).

Given these mass protests in the South Caucasus region, with their wider implications for political protests in other parts of the world where democracy is not consolidated and democratic forces are pushing for a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, this study asks why some individuals are more likely to participate in antigovernment protests, while others are not. This study argues that *commitment to democratic values* is essential to understanding participation in antigovernment protests: individuals who are committed to democratic values are more likely to participate in antigovernment protests.

There are two ways that individuals can be committed to democratic values: in an abstract form and a contextual form. In order to measure individual commitment to democratic values in the abstract form, individuals are simply asked if they support democratic values in general terms, without forcing them to choose among different values. In this study I look at the extent to which individuals think it is important for them to live in a democratically governed country. Studies have shown that individuals' preference for democratic governance shapes the extent to which they are committed to democratic values (Diamond 1999; Linz and Stepan 1996; Navia and Osorio 2019, 191). I also examine individual commitment to democratic values in a contextual form (Davis and Silver 2004), since the level of commitment might change when it is evaluated in comparison with other essential principles (Gibson 1987; Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz 2001; Sniderman et al. 1996).

Based on these two measures of *commitment to democratic values*, the research advances two propositions. First, those individuals who prefer democratic governance are more likely to participate in antigovernment protests. Second, those individuals who prefer *democratic* values over *economic* and *security* concerns are more prone to participate in antigovernment protests. Using two World Values Survey (WVS) datasets, WVS Georgia 2009 and WVS Georgia 2014, this study finds evidence consistent with both hypotheses.

Georgia has experienced many mass antigovernment protests since 2003. Mass demonstrations around the Rose Revolution forced President Eduard Shevardnadze to resign and propelled Mikheil Saakashvili to power in 2003. In 2007, mass demonstrations against corruption allegations forced President Saakashvili to call for early elections. In the summer of 2018, Tbilisi again became the center of antigovernment protests. Mass demonstrations forced the head of the government to resign. Mass protesters also forced the Georgian internal affairs minister to resign after Georgian police raided several nightclubs (Mdzinarishvili 2018).

Although antigovernment protests have been an integral part of Georgian politics, it is not yet understood why some individuals participate in these protests, while others do not. The study of these protests has potential to contribute to the academic literature on political protest and contentious politics. The rest of the study proceeds through four parts. The first part reviews the literature on antigovernment protest and then presents the major hypotheses. The second part qualitatively examines the antigovernment protests in Georgia and explores their objectives. The third part describes the research design. The fourth part presents the results.

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The Study of Political Protest

Political protest has been generally viewed as a particular form of political action employed by politically marginalized and deprived groups as an instrument to force the government to fulfill their demands through unconventional channels (Gurr 1970). It occurs in a form of both collective and individual political action to question the status quo and influence political processes (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). It includes practices such as boycotts, traffic obstruction, strikes, riots, and demonstrations in addition to political activities (Barnes et al. 1979; Della Porta and Diani 2006). Political protest plays an essential part in contentious politics, involving "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, leading to coordinate efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 4).

The literature has developed several major approaches to explain why people participate in political protests. These approaches focus on ideological explanations (Norris 2002), grievances and relative deprivation (Gurr 1970), resource mobilization (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; McCarthy and Zald 1977), and political opportunity structure (Kitschelt 1986; Meyer and Minkoff 2004).

First, *ideological explanations* argue that different ideological positions in a country lead to political protest. Rightist or leftist extremism in a country is more like to lead to political protest, since sharp ideological differences and political polarization create a rich environment in which individuals may be mobilized to protest (Powell 1982). At the individual level, ideological explanations have focused on individuals' ideological orientations to explain whether they are likely to participate in antigovernment protest (Barnes et al. 1979). Individuals' ideological orientations are shaped by their consistent value and belief systems (Converse 2006). Citizens process political information, develop their preferences, and make their political decisions through their ideological orientations (Fuchs and Klingemann 1989). Scholars associate individuals' political actions with their ideology, since "ideological knowledge enhances one's understanding of the interdependence of political phenomena" and "help[s] to make political judgments." Certain values within an ideology "determine whether a political situation or a political event is experienced as good or bad, desirable or undesirable" (Klingemann 1979, 279).

While individuals oriented toward the left are likely to oppose hierarchy and demand equality and social change, individuals with a right ideological orientation are prone to express support for the established social order (Inglehart 1990; Sani and Sartori 1983). G. Bingham Powell (1982) demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between the likelihood of political protest and support for extremist political parties. Other studies have found that individuals oriented toward the left are more likely to participate in antigovernment protest compared to individuals on the right (Dalton 2008; Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Quaranta 2015). Ideological orientations are shortcuts for individuals, directing them to participate or to refrain from participating in political protests.

Second, *grievance and relative deprivation* theory argues that people participate in political protest when individuals face relative deprivation. Grievances and relative deprivation are "general spurs to action" that mobilize people to participate in political protest (Gurr 1970). Grievances were key to the rise of racial groups' demonstrations and student protests during the 1960s and 1970s (Lipsky 1968; Scott 1985). Paul D. Almeida (2007) demonstrated that relative deprivation was a primary reason for the rise of antigovernment protest activity in Latin America. Joseph Ibrahim (2011) linked student protests in the United Kingdom during 2010–2011 to the students' grievances over rising tuition fees. Grievance theory was also a major approach to explaining protests against the 2008 economic recession in European countries (Beissinger and Sasse 2014).

To measure the relationship between protest behavior and dissatisfaction, studies have looked at the happiness level of individuals (Dalton and Van Sickle 2005). Ruut Veenhoven (1984) demonstrated that there is a relationship between civic participation and life satisfaction. Individuals who are more satisfied with their life are more likely to participate in conventional politics than in unconventional politics (Bahry and Silver 1990).

Third, *resource mobilization theory* maintains that relative deprivation and grievances do not necessarily lead to political protest; that only happens when social movements have a resource base for mobilization. The establishment of social movement organizations is a necessary factor to mobilize dissatisfied people to participate in political protests (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; McCarthy and Zald 1977). The presence of resources is highly essential for the establishment of voluntary associations and social movement organizations that organize various forms of political action, including political protest. According to resource mobilization theory, political protest is more likely in affluent environments where there are "dense communication structures, mass education, urbanization, and high degrees of social mobility—factors that can increase the resources available to protest groups" (Dalton and Van Sickle 2005, 7; Boswell and Dixon 1990; Inglehart and Catterberg 2003). Communication technologies and mass media are growing in affluent societies where people develop political skills and use these technologies to reach others and mobilize them into social movements (Barnes et al. 1979). Digital technologies provide incredible opportunities for mass mobilization (Kavada 2018; Selander and Jarvenpaa 2016). The growing availability of digital technologies, specifically social media, "has transformed the resources, processes, and outcomes of collective action and social movements" (Young, Selander, and Vaast 2019, 1).

On the individual level, resource mobilization theory looks at whether individuals have more resources and whether they belong to social organizations. Education and income are two primary resources that lead individuals to participate in political actions (Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Verba and Nie 1972). Educated individuals are more likely to have "civic skills" with "those communications and organizational capacities that are so essential to political activity" (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995, 273). Higher income allows individuals to have more material and cognitive resources to bring to bear in a political action. Members of a social organization are disposed to actively participate in politics because an organization provides them "an opportunity for training in participation within the organization that can be transferred to the

political realm" (Verba and Nie 1972, 184). Membership in interest organizations is more likely to cause individuals to participate in antigovernment protests, because influence on the government is the primary goal of these organizations (Leighley 1996). Studies also demonstrate that membership in a political party is an explanation for why some individuals participate in political protest: parties may become mobilizers of antigovernment protest because they offer individuals incentives and expressive attachments (Opp 2019).

Some research has suggested that communist states were less likely to experience political protests compared to their Western counterparts because "[t]he possibilities of resource mobilization within civil society were controlled and restricted through infiltration by state and party-controlled security organs" (Szabó 1996, 1158). Through analysis of WVS 1995–1997, Guérin, Petry, and Crête (2004) found that participation in various organizations such as political parties, labor unions, and environmental groups is positively associated with protest activities. In post-communist states, the accumulation of more resources at the beginning of the twenty-first century opened opportunities for protest activities (O'Brien 2015).

Studies have also shown that two additional socio-economic factors, *gender* and *age*, can explain why individuals participate in political action. Samuel Barnes et al. (1979) demonstrated that gender provides some hints about political participation. Some studies provided indications that women are less prone to participate in political protest (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992) because of their family duties and other social restraints (Leighley 1995). Women also lack sufficient resources to participate in contentious politics. The previous research also found similar results indicating that women are less likely to engage in various political protests in post-communist states (Gigli 1995).

Other studies show that racial background plays a role in how much opportunity women are likely to have to participate in political protests. The evidence shows that black women are more likely to face police violence and brutality and therefore they encounter more difficulties engaging in protests activities. Jessica Watters (2017, 200, 202) argues that the success of "the Women's March demonstrates that White women have the privilege to protest without fear of state violence," while "women of color are often left standing alone" in the Black Lives Matter movement. She suggests that white women should use their protest privilege to help the women of color.

Individuals are also more likely to participate in antigovernment protests as they get older, since over the years individuals may accumulate more resources (Nie, Verba, and Kim 1974). Younger individuals are less likely to participate in political protest, since they are preoccupied with other concerns such as job and marriage. Lester W. Milbrath (1965) found a curvilinear relationship between political protest and age. Individuals are prone to participate in political action as they grow older, until around age fifty, after which the likelihood of political participation decreases with age. Meanwhile, other studies demonstrated that older generations have fewer resources than younger generations, since younger generations have had more chance to get a higher level of education (Jennings and Markus 1988).

Social media opened a new avenue for women and younger people to participate in political protests and social movements. Conventionally, people who organized social movements and political protests fought in the streets, but "social media enabled social movements to take place online" (Brünker et al. 2020). Social media platforms facilitate political protests and provide opportunities for the younger generation and women in several ways.

First, social media channels spread information about transportation, turnout, and police presence, facilitating the coordination of protest activities. Second, people can deliver their emotional and motivational messages in support of protest activities through social media platforms. Supportive messages from all over the world have encouraged women to get involved in protest activities to express their anger and frustration (Jost et al. 2018). In particular, social media led women to get more actively involved in social movements. #MeToo is one such movement that has allowed many women throughout the world to protest against the injustices they have faced. Occupy Wall Street was another movement where young people participated in large numbers. At the core of this phenomenon was the "ongoing crisis for people of color, women and the marginalized" (quoted in McVeigh 2011). Women and the younger generation have also been a major driver of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Thus, women and young activists have actively participated in movements protesting sexual harassment, political repression, institutionalized inequalities, and racism (Deen 2020). Their active participation in protests has changed the earlier perceptions about women's and young people's involvement in political protest. *Time* magazine described it as "youthquake," "a new phenomenon shaking up the old order, as young activists lead the fight against right-wing authoritarianism, government corruption and rising new hazards of climate change" (Deen 2020).

In some studies examining antigovernment protests in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, scholars have gauged contentious politics through the lenses of transformation from communism to post-communism. For instance, Máté Szabó (1996) argued that the transition to post-communism in Central and Eastern European countries has changed political opportunity structures, thus creating room for the establishment of social movements, and brought more openness and flexibility for civil society organizations.

However, empirical evidence suggests that Central and Eastern Europe have experienced quiescence compared to Western Europe since the transition. Szabó (2000) asserted that the region was quiescent after it transited to post-communism because the political order was novel and "the polity has just been established; everything has only recently been institutionalized, and the protest culture is still relatively new." Similarly, Ekiert and Kubik (1998) argued that quiescence in the post-communist world was associated with the fact that market economy was novel there. The authors suspected that the lower level of protests in East Central Europe was "the result of the demobilizing effect of the opportunity support structure's 'excessive' openness and the weakness of institutional support structures for protest activities" (Ekiert and Kubik 1998, 573). To account for the levels of post-

communist protests, the authors offered an instrumental institutional theory, maintaining that the level of protest activity was the outcome of fragmentation within labor unions and corporatist bargaining.

Others have attempted to explain the success of "color revolutions" in post-communist states. Paul D'Anieri (2006) argued that while grass-roots activist movements play a role in urging individuals to participate in protest activities, elites had a key role in the success of the color revolutions. By using a threshold model of protest, the author maintains that the success of protests becomes inevitable after they reach a "tipping point," and that elites play a primary role in enabling protests to reach this point. This explanation indeed has implications for the success of the 2018 velvet revolution in Armenia, where some security service members demonstrated solidarity with the protesters. Alfred Evans (2012) argues that the success of protests depends on what goals their organizers aim for: if these goals are concrete, people will be more likely to join the protests and make them successful.

While all these studies have mainly addressed the reasons for political protests at both aggregate and individual levels, it is less explored whether and how individuals' values affect their participation in protest activities. Whereas the studies reviewed above deeply explore the relationship between individuals' resources, grievances, ideology, gender, and age and their participation in political protests, it is less understood how the values the individuals carry influence their antigovernment protest behavior. The literature has successfully demonstrated that individuals' values drive their political behavior and preferences (Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Rathbun 2007). Whereas Guérin, Petry, and Crête (2004) look at the possibility of the relationship between support for a democratic regime and participation, the effect of individuals' commitment to democratic principles remains unstudied. The authors find that individuals who are tolerant of out-groups and who trust strangers are more likely to participate in protests. However, the relationship between the commitment to democratic principles in both abstract and concrete forms and participation in political protests is theoretically undeveloped. The next section takes this initiative and attempts to develop a theory that links commitment to democratic principles to participation in protest activities.

Theory and Hypotheses

Based on previous studies, the research develops a new theoretical framework to explain antigovernment protest and argues that *commitment to democratic values* explains why some individuals participate in antigovernment protest, while others do not. Democratic values include but are not limited to principles such as free elections, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equal rights for women, and lack of Internet censorship (Dahl 1998). Based on the measure of these values, several scales such as the Fundamental Principles of Democracy Scale (Prothro and Grigg 1960), the Democratic Principles and Applications Scale (McCloskey 1964), the Multi-Dimensional Scale of Democratic Values (Gibson, Duch, and Tedin 1992), the Democratic Values Scale (McCloskey and Zaller 1984), Support for Democratic Values (SDV) (Miklikowska and Hurme 2011), and the Democratic Performance Index (DPI) (Choi 2018) have been constructed to evaluate support for democratic values in various states. Support for basic liberties is an essential indicator of individuals' democratic orientation (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1966; Inglehart and Welzel 2005a).

Although commitment to democratic values has long been studied in the literature, scholars have mainly explored its determinants (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). They have treated support for democracy as a dependent variable rather than an independent variable. For instance, Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) explored how development and education lead to an increase in support for democratic values. Our study attempts to explain the effect of commitment to democratic values on participation in antigovernment protests.

A handful of studies have demonstrated that commitment to democratic values can produce different political outcomes. For instance, David Easton (1965) argued that support for democratic values constitutes an essential part of legitimacy. A study by Prothro and Grigg (1960b) argued that support for democratic values is necessary for the effective functioning of democratic governance. The authors found that individuals' support for values such as majority rule, free expression, equality, and minority rights leads to a functioning democracy. In a recent study, Lewis, Palm, and Feng (2018, 12) analyzed the 2015 Pew Global Attitudes Survey conducted in 36 countries and demonstrated that "[t]he most consistent predictor of concern about climate change proved to be commitment to democratic principles." The authors found that individuals who believe that free elections, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equal rights for women, and lack of Internet censorship are very important, are more likely to express concern about climate change than individuals who believe that these democratic principles are only somewhat important. The change from the latter to the former caused the predicted probability to jump from 7 percent to 25 percent.

The causal link from *commitment to democratic values* to *participation in antigovernment protest* goes through the holding of non-materialist values. Individuals who are committed to democratic values are more likely to hold non-materialist values such as social equality, life quality, and individual freedom, while individuals who are less committed to democratic values prefer materialist values related to security and economic concerns. Less-committed individuals' preference for security and economic concerns discourages them from participating antigovernment protest, since political protests threaten security and the economic status quo. Davis and Silver (2004, 28) found that when individuals feel a greater sense of threat, they are less likely to strive for civil liberties. Accordingly, individuals who rank economic and security concerns higher than democratic values are less likely to participate in antigovernment protest.

By contrast, individuals who rank democratic values higher than economic and security issues are mainly concerned about post-materialist values, including social equality, life quality, and individual freedom. Studies have found that a preference for non-materialist values leads individuals to participate in unconventional politics (Inglehart 1977, 1990, 1997; Inglehart

and Flanagan 1987; Inglehart and Welzel 2005b). The theory of value shift argues that the shift from materialist values to post-materialist ones increases the likelihood of engagement in unconventional politics, since this engagement serves the preservation of non-materialist values in the broader society. When post-material values become widespread, "a variety of societal changes from equal rights for women to democratic institutions" become prevalent (Inglehart 1997, 6). Individuals committed to democratic values are more likely to embrace new values such as social equality, life quality, and individual freedom (Dalton 2008).

Studies demonstrate that the shift to post-materialist values leads to new social movements and unconventional political participation (Kriesi 1989; Scarbrough 1995). Russell J. Dalton (1988) argues that the advent of new unconventional forms of political participation including boycotts and petitions is associated with a shift to post-materialist values that challenge the established authority of elites (Dalton 2008; Norris 2002). Commitment to democratic values pushes individuals to go through the value shift from materialist values to post-materialist ones that make them more likely to participate in unconventional political action.

In sum, the more individuals are committed to democratic values, the more likely it is that they will attempt to participate in antigovernment protests to preserve the healthy functioning of democracy, compared to individuals who are mainly concerned about security and economic issues. Commitment to democratic values brings appreciation for post-materialist values that encourage individuals to protest against government in defense of democratic post-materialist values. Individuals committed to democratic values are less concerned about economic and security issues, but instead embrace post-materialist values that encourage them to participate in antigovernment protest for healthy functioning of democratic governance and preservation of these values.

Individuals are committed to democratic values in two ways: in abstract form and in a context of conflicting values. First, abstractly, citizens' attitudes toward democracy provide an indication of their commitment to democratic values. Individuals' attitudes toward democracy demonstrate to what extent they prefer democratic governance. Believing that it is important to live in democratic country and that democratic governance is preferable are the essential indicators of commitment to democratic values. In this regard, Navia and Osorio (2019, 191) stress that "the valuation people make of democracy as the most preferable form of government is a central indicator of democratic values." Other studies also emphasize that individuals' preference for democracy indicates their commitment to democratic values (Diamond 1999: Linz and Stepan 1996). Ryan A. Carlin (2018) demonstrates that support for democratic governance is an indication of support for democracy.

H1: Individuals who believe that it is important to live in a country that is governed democratically are more likely to participate in antigovernment protest.

Second, context is highly essential for gauging the level of individuals' commitment to democratic values (Davis and Silver 2004). While commitment to democratic values in abstract form is important, the level of commitment might change when the individuals' commitment to democratic values is evaluated in conflict with other essential principles (Gibson 1987; Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz 2001; Sniderman et al. 1996). Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz (2001) argued that the way individuals rank the importance of different competing principles provides critical information about their judgment of democratic values and civil liberties. When asked in abstract form, individuals are more likely to demonstrate support for democratic values. However, individuals' support for the democratic values may decrease when they are asked to choose between democratic values and other essential principles such as those related to economic and security concerns.

H2: Individuals who rank democratic values higher than economic and security concerns are more likely to participate in antigovernment protest.

Case Selection: Antigovernment Protests in Georgia

To evaluate these hypotheses, the research explores individual participation in antigovernment protests in Georgia. The case study design is within a single unit synchronically (Gerring 2004). The research study attempts to explain political behavior at the individual level cross-sectionally within a single unit: Georgia. It is "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring 2004). In this study, the similar units are countries where democracy is not consolidated, although they may have some experience with some elements of democracy. Democratic forces in these countries are pushing for democratization because, although the regimes in these states have some elements of democracy, they are far from consolidated democracies. Because they lack strong democratic institutions and consolidated democracy, political protests have been the primary means of pushing for democratic reforms and democratization. Thus, the universe of cases includes antigovernment protests in the countries where democracy is not consolidated.

The study of participation in antigovernment protests in Georgia is a *typical case* and therefore a representative case of countries where democracy is not consolidated. A single unit study of Georgia can shed light on a broader universe of cases that have not experienced consolidated democracy. This is also to say that the Georgian case is *not* a representative case of consolidated democracies ranging from the United States to European countries where pro-authoritarian right-wing groups have been involved in protests against democracy. The primary dimensions along which Georgia is a typical case are lack of consolidated democracy, lack of strong democratic background and consolidated democratic institutions, and the presence of democratic forces pushing for democratization.

The puzzle of interest lies within the single unit (Seawright and Gerring 2008). The puzzle is why some individuals participate in antigovernment protests, while others do not, within the single unit of Georgia. Georgia is a typical and representative case of the similar units mentioned above because, starting

from 2003, the country has experienced a series of protests in which Georgians have called for democratic reforms and changes.

One major series of protests where protesters called for democratic developments in Georgia was the massive protest in 2003 that was labeled the Rose Revolution, because the protesters clashed with the army holding roses in their hands and Mikheil Saakashvili entered the Georgian parliament with roses in his hand. The protesters' primary demand was for a fair and free election, an essential democratic principle. The demonstrators particularly protested against President Shevardnadze's attempt "to seat an illegally elected parliament" after parliamentary elections on November 2, 2003 (Mitchell 2006, 669). The International Election Observation Mission announced that the November elections did not meet international democratic elections standards and that Georgia had failed to comply with the commitments the country had made as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Meanwhile, Mikheil Saakashvili declared himself the winner of the elections based on the results of an independent parallel vote tabulation conducted by International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, a local election monitoring group, and called on Georgians to protest against the bogus elections. One factor that made the protest successful was the active participation of the Kmara! (Enough!) youth movement and other civil society organizations in the demonstrations (Kandelaki 2006).

Another series of antigovernment protests in Georgia occurred in fall 2007. The protests started on September 28, triggered by former defense minister Irakli Okruashvili's televised criticism of President Saakashvili. The protesters rallied toward Tbilisi's popular Rustaveli Avenue, and grew to reach some fifteen thousand people, which made it the largest demonstration in Georgia since the Rose Revolution. The former minister—who launched an opposition party—stated that the Saakashvili government had "made dishonesty, injustice, and repression a way of life" (quoted in Walker 2007). The demonstrators pressed for honesty and transparency in politics and called for early elections. Although the security forces dispersed the demonstrators successfully, opposition figures promised more protests if the Saakashvili government did not increase accountability. The protests resumed on November 2, 2007. The BBC reported that at least fifty thousand Georgians demonstrated against President Saakashvili and called on him to step down. The protesters accused him of "heading a corrupt, authoritarian government" and wanted him "to be ousted democratically"; they demanded early and fair parliamentary elections (BBC 2007). The opposition leaders declared that they had stopped their antigovernment protests after President Saakashvili proposed new presidential elections in January and promised to lift the nationwide emergency, which had forced independent media outlets to shut down. Meanwhile, NATO leadership condemned President Saakashvili's crackdown on independent media as "not in line with Euro-Atlantic values" (quoted in Reuters 2007) and the OSCE called on him to establish dialogue under democratic principles.

Another series of protests in Georgia started in 2009, when Georgians again took to the streets of Tbilisi to demonstrate against President Saakashvili. Reuters reported that the number of protesters reached sixty thousand at the beginning but declined to five thouand in the following days (Antidze and Robinson 2009). The protesters called for President Saakashvili to step down "over his record on democracy and last year's disastrous war with Russia" (France24 2009). They accused the president of undermining democracy (BBC 2009). Irakli Alasania, President Saakashvili's former ambassador to the United Nations, joined the protesters and told them that "the president had spurned the values of the democratic movement [... and] exerted authoritarian control over the media, the judiciary and other spheres of society" (Levy 2009). The protesters demanded President Saakashvili's resignation and accused him of having "no democracy in the country" (BBC 2009).

In May 2011, Georgian streets in Tbilisi and Batumi experienced another round of protests. The demonstrators called for President Saakashvili's resignation, carrying posters that said "Misha must leave" (Economist 2011) The protesters accused President Saakashvili of "stifling pro-Western democratic reforms promised when he came to power" (Schwirtz 2011). They also demonstrated their frustration over growing unemployment and poverty. Around ten thousand Georgians participated in the antigovernment protests, expressing their anger at the president's failure "to tackle poverty and authoritarianism" (McGuinness 2011). After some violent clashes with police (Kimes 2011), the protests ended toward the end of May. International human rights organizations condemned the excessive use of police force during the protests (Human Rights Watch 2011). Meanwhile, some sources claim that external players were also involved in the protests. In particular, some Georgians accused Russia of involvement in the 2011 demonstrations (Economist 2011).

The following year, the Georgian opposition held a rally to campaign for an upcoming parliamentary election. Independent observers estimated that approximately eighty thousand people participated in the rally, making it the largest since the 2003 Rose Revolution. Georgian Dream, an opposition party, received support at the rally where many people demonstrated their dissatisfaction with President Saakashvili and called for him to step down.

In 2012, Georgians again rallied in Tbilisi streets to protest a prison abuse sandal after some graphic videos went viral showing prisoners brutally beaten and raped. President Saakashvili sought to sack his prison and interior ministers as a democratic signal (The Guardian 2012). However, this did not appease Georgians, who accused the president of failing to deliver on his promises of transparency and accountability (Gibson 2012). In 2013, Georgians continued to protest against President Saakashvili, accusing him of "flouting human rights and stifling dissent" (Antidze 2013). In May 2013, there were clashes when counter-demonstrators confronted a gay rights rally (BBC 2013).

Compared to other years, Georgia was less turbulent in 2014, except for anti-Russian protests in November, when tens of thousands of demonstrators staged a rally in Tbilisi streets to protest against a planned military deal between Russia and Abkhazia. The protests were organized by the United National Movement (UNM), whose former leader, Saakashvili, addressed the protesters via a video link from Kiev, Ukraine (BBC 2014). The protesters chanted "stop Putin" and "stop Russia" (BBC 2014). Anti-Russian protests continued in early 2015 as well, after Russian president Vladimir Putin signed the ratification of the military deal with Abkhazia into law. Protests in Georgia continued toward the end of 2015, as thousands of Georgians organized a rally to demonstrate against the government's attempts to close Rustavi 2, a popular television channel in Georgia. The protesters accused the government of "attempting to stifle media freedom" (BBC 2015). The channel's deputy director stated that the government's attempt to close Rustavi 2 would "put an end to media pluralism in Georgia and threaten the very existence of Georgian democracy" (quoted in BBC 2015). Meanwhile, the UNM party continued anti-Russian protests in 2016. The demonstrators organized 5-km-long human-chain protest to denounce the Georgian government's energy talks with Gazprom, the Russian state-controlled energy giant (Civil.ge 2016).

In 2017 thousands of young Georgians rallied in Tbilisi and Batumi streets and organized the White Noise movement. The protesters urged the government to review and revise Georgia's Soviet-era narcotics laws (Crosby 2017). The failure of the government to do so angered Georgians even more, culminating in a massive protest in May 2018 after Georgian police raided nightclubs in search of illegally used drugs (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2018). The protesters forced the Georgian interior minister to resign. The second large protests of 2018 occurred in June when Zaza Saralidze, a blue-collar worker, called on Georgians to rally against corruption of the justice system. Saralidze, whose young son had been killed in a street brawl in Tbilisi in December 2017, urged his fellow citizens to destroy the whole political system. In the wake of these large protests, the Georgian prime minster announced his resignation (Nechepurenko 2018). The antigovernment "protests of summer 2018 reflect[ed] the consolidation of democracy—or, perhaps, the ongoing process of democratization" in Georgia (Oravec and Holland 2019, 249).

Georgia experienced a new series of antigovernment protests in 2019–2020. The protests started in June 2019 in front of the Georgian parliament building after a Russian Communist Party member visited Georgia and gave a speech in the parliament. The protesters called for the resignation of the government and demanded a shift to a fully proportional electoral system. Although the parliament's speaker stepped down, the protests continued and abated only after Bidzina Ivanishvili, the Georgian Dream party leader, announced a partial change to the electoral system. However, the protests resumed in September, this time calling for Ivanishvili's resignation. Waving Georgian, European Union, and NATO flags, the protesters marched through Rustaveli Avenue and "accused Ivanishvili of state capture, backsliding on democracy, and collaboration with Russia" (Lomsadze 2019a). Georgians continued protests in November as well after the ruling Georgian Dream party failed to deliver the promised changes in Georgia's electoral system (Mackinnon 2019). Giorgi Margvelashivili, the former Georgian president, addressed the crowd and called on Georgians to join the protests and "defend our democracy" (Lomsadze 2019b). The protesters demanded an early parliamentary election (Antidze 2019). The failure of lawmakers to decide on a shift from a mixed electoral system to a full proportional one led to some protests in 2020 as well (Kincha 2020). Despite the pandemic, Georgians gathered in Tbilisi in June 2020 to celebrate the anniversary of anti-Kremlin protests and demonstrate against the government (Antidze 2020).

Analysis of the objectives of these series of protests provides evidence that democratic progress has been a major concern among the individuals that participated in the protests. Although Georgians demonstrated against poverty, unemployment, Russian occupation, and the country's narcotics laws in distinct protests, they demanded essential democratic principles such as free elections, transparency, accountability, and media freedom and denounced democratic backsliding. The qualitative evidence of the objectives of these antigovernment protests suggests that the individuals who participated in them should carry democratic values. Our analysis quantitatively explores the possible relationship between commitment to democratic principles and participation in protests.

Data and Methods

To measure the effect of *commitment to democratic values* on antigovernment protest behavior, the study utilizes two datasets to test two major hypotheses on participation in antigovernment protests in Georgia: WVS Georgia 2009 and WVS Georgia 2014. All datasets are collected through nationally representative mass opinion surveys conducted in Georgia.

The dependent variable, *participation in antigovernment protest*, is measured with the following question from both WVS Georgia 2009 and WVS Georgia 2014: "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, whether you have done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never under any circumstances do it: 'attending peaceful demonstrations.'" The survey question offers three answers: have done (1), might do (2), would never do (3). To make the measure of dependent variable more intuitive, it is coded in a reverse way.

The independent variable, *commitment to democratic values*, is measured through two ways: in abstract form and in a context of competing factors. First, in abstract form, individuals' attitudes toward democracy demonstrate the level of their commitment to democratic values. The attitudes toward democracy indicate whether democracy is preferable and whether it is important for the individuals to live in a democratically governed country. Navia and Osorio (2019, 191) emphasized that "the valuation people make of democracy as the most preferable form of government is a central indicator of democratic values." Individuals' preference for democracy indicates their commitment to democratic values

(Diamond 1999; Linz and Stepan 1996). Carlin (2018) demonstrates that support for democratic governance is an indication of support for democracy. To measure the commitment to democratic values in the abstract form, the following survey question is used: *"How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? On this scale where 1 means it is 'not at all important' and 10 means 'absolutely important' what position would you choose?"*

Second, context is highly essential for the measurement of commitment for democratic values (Davis and Silver 2004). While support for abstract democratic values is important, measuring the support for these values when they clash with other essential principles is critical (Gibson 1987; Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz 2001; Sniderman et al. 1996). Similarly, Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz (2001) maintained that how the individuals order different competing principles in their importance provides critical information about their judgment of democratic values and civil liberties. Therefore, to measure the commitment to democratic values in relation to other important factors, the following survey question is chosen: *"If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important?"* This survey question offers four answers: maintaining order in the nation (1), giving people more say in important government decisions (2), fighting rising prices (3), protecting freedom of speech (4). Belief in the importance of giving people more say in important government decisions and protecting freedom of speech indicates a *commitment to democratic values*. Asking individuals about their commitment to democratic values in relation to other important factors provides a contextual measure of the commitment for democratic values. The first and third options are coded as "0" and the second and fourth options are coded as "1."

This study controls for several variables that previous studies have found to have an effect on antigovernment protest. These variables include ideology, dissatisfaction and grievances, income, education, membership in political parties, membership in interest organizations, age, and gender. *Ideology* is measured through the following survey question: *"In political matters, people talk of 'the left' and 'the right.' How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?"* The responses range from the "left" to the "right" (1–10). The responses were coded in a reverse way to intuitively understand the effect of ideology on antigovernment protest. *Dissatisfaction and grievances* are measured by using the following question: *"Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy (1), rather happy (2), not very happy (3), not at all happy (4)."* The responses to this question are recoded in a reverse way to make interpretation intuitive. To measure the relationship between protest behavior and dissatisfaction, the studies look at the happiness level of individuals (Dalton and Van Sickle 2005). Veenhoven (1984) demonstrated that there is relationship between civic participation and life satisfaction. Individuals who are less satisfied with their life are more likely to participate in unconventional politics (Bahry and Silver 1990). *Education level* is measured by using the following question: *"What is the highest educational level that you have attained?"* This question has eight responses: incomplete primary school (1), complete primary school (2), incomplete secondary school: technical/vocational type (3), complete secondary school: technical/vocational type (4), incomplete secondary school: university-preparatory type (5), complete secondary school: university-preparatory type (6), some university-level education, without degree (7), university-level education, with degree (8). *Income level* is measured by using the following question: *"On this card is an income scale on which 1 indicates the lowest income group and 10 the highest income group in your country. We would like to know in what group your household is. Please, specify the appropriate number, counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in." Labor union membership* is measured by using the following survey question: "*Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?: Labor union."* There are three categories of responses to this question: not a member, inactive member, active member. The "not a member" category was coded as "0," and the other two categories as "1." *Political party membership* is measured by using the following survey question: *"Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations. For each organization, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?: Political party."* There are three categories of responses to this question: not a member, inactive member, active member. The "not a member" category was coded as "0," and the other two categories as "1." *Gender* is measured by the following: *"Respondent's gender by observation." Age* is measured by using the following: *"This means you are ____ years old."*

Since the dependent variable is an ordered level variable, the study uses an ordered logistic regression model to assess the relationship between *commitment to democratic values* and *participation in antigovernment protest*. Since the dependent variable is not continuous and the distances between the categories are not the same, ordered logistic regression is better suited to estimate the effect of *commitment to democratic values* on *participation in antigovernment protest*.

The Results and Analysis

This section presents the results of the ordered logistic models. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following tables. Tables 1 and Tables 2 present the results of the ordered logistic models based on the analysis of WVS Georgia 2009 and WVS Georgia 2014, respectively. All results have a 95 percent confidence interval. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that *participation in antigovernment protest* was driven by the theorized factor, the *commitment to democratic values*. Tables 1 and 2 provide statistically significant results for both hypotheses on why individuals participate in antigovernment protest. The results indicate that individuals who prefer democratic governance (in abstract form) and who prefer *democratic* values to *economic* and *security* concerns (in contextual form) are more likely to participate in antigovernment protest.

The 2009 and 2014 models also provide some similar and different results. First, the models from the analysis of both datasets provide similar results for labor union membership, gender, dissatisfaction, and income, which are less likely to drive individuals' participation in political protests. The data

Table 1. Factors Influencing Participation in Antigovernment Protest: Results of Ordered Regression Models from Analysis of WVS Georgia 2009

	Dependent variable:								
	Participation in Protest								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Abstract Support for Democracy	0.192***	0.171***			0.164***				
	(0.038)	(0.051)			(0.051)				
Concrete Support for Democracy	0.356***		0.352**		0.303*				
	(0.134)		(0.170)		(0.172)				
Dissatisfaction		−0.053	−0.029	−0.025	−0.051			−0.022	−0.029
		(0.107)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.107)			(0.106)	(0.106)
Labor Union Membership		0.392	0.417	0.403	0.404			0.389	0.398
		(0.423)	(0.421)	(0.423)	(0.422)			(0.424)	(0.424)
Political Party Membership		0.130	0.143	0.168	0.110			0.173	0.141
		(0.554)	(0.559)	(0.559)	(0.556)			(0.560)	(0.565)
Education		0.033	0.052	0.056	0.030			0.055	0.046
		(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)			(0.040)	(0.040)
Age		−0.013***	−0.013***	−0.014***	−0.013***			−0.014***	−0.014***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)			(0.004)	(0.004)
Sex		−0.154	−0.167	−0.177	−0.151			−0.182	−0.184
		(0.137)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.137)			(0.136)	(0.136)
Income		0.011	−0.010	−0.010	0.010			−0.010	−0.019
		(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)			(0.039)	(0.039)
Ideology		−0.075**	−0.078**	−0.081**	−0.074**			−0.082**	−0.085***
		(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)			(0.032)	(0.032)
Tolerance for Racial Groups						0.260**		0.080	
						(0.124)		(0.162)	
Tolerance for Sexual Minorities							0.446**		0.568**
							(0.198)		(0.256)
Observations	1326	801	811	812	801	1,367	1,367	812	812
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2621.480	1632.283	1654.866	1657.834	1631.198	2711.679	2711.158	1659.591	1654.984
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	2642.240	1683.828	1706.546	1704.829	1687.428	2727.340	2726.819	1711.285	1706.679

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

Table 2. Factors Influencing Participation in Antigovernment Protest: Results of Ordered Regression Models from Analysis of WVS Georgia 2014

	Dependent variable:								
	Participation in Protest								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Abstract Support for Democracy	0.151***	0.167***			0.176***				
	(0.034)	(0.042)			(0.043)				
Concrete Support for Democracy	0.441***		0.338**		0.289*				
	(0.144)		(0.170)		(0.173)				
Dissatisfaction		0.178*	0.167*	0.163	0.183*			0.173*	0.145
		(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.102)			(0.103)	(0.101)
Labor Union Membership		0.845	0.970	0.932	0.875			1.332	0.654
		(0.800)	(0.800)	(0.794)	(0.805)			(0.839)	(0.792)
Political Party Membership		1.589***	1.658***	1.682***	1.570***			1.962***	1.731***
		(0.559)	(0.554)	(0.554)	(0.557)			(0.567)	(0.559)
Education		0.122***	0.116***	0.127***	0.110**			0.095**	0.100**
		(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.046)			(0.046)	(0.045)
Age		−0.006	−0.007	−0.007*	−0.005			−0.007	−0.006
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)			(0.004)	(0.004)
Sex		0.080	0.077	0.076	0.085			0.119	0.067
		(0.142)	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.143)			(0.144)	(0.142)
Income		−0.012	−0.021	−0.025	−0.008			−0.018	−0.047
		(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)			(0.043)	(0.043)
Ideology		−0.030	−0.053*	−0.049	−0.032			−0.070**	−0.062*
		(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)			(0.032)	(0.032)
Tolerance for Racial Groups						1.077***		1.190***	
						(0.141)		(0.172)	
Tolerance for Sexual Minorities							0.766***		0.953***
							(0.162)		(0.198)
Observations	1,146	806	814	816	804	1,188	1,188	816	816
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,136.983	1,525.919	1,549.896	1,555.899	1,519.159	2,159.736	2,202.286	1,504.789	1,534.836
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	2,157.159	1,577.531	1,601.617	1,602.943	1,575.434	2,174.976	2,217.526	1,556.537	1,586.585

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

analysis suggests that the lesser importance of these factors in driving protest participation did not change from 2009 to 2014 and stayed relatively the same in terms of statistical significance. None of these factors are significant with a 95 percent confidence interval.

Second, the 2009 and 2014 models provide different results for several factors including political party membership, education, age, and ideology. One important difference across the 2009 and 2014 models is political party membership. The findings suggest that when we move from the 2009 models to

the 2014 models, membership in political parties becomes an important reason why Georgians protest. This factor is consistent with qualitative data that political parties and young activists have become a primary force in organizing antigovernment protests in Georgia (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2021).

Another difference is in educational level. Compared to the 2009 models, the 2014 models demonstrate that better educated people are more likely to participate in antigovernment political protests. Georgia's higher education system has undergone radical changes. It has been transformed from the uniform Soviet system to applying the values of market economy to the governance of higher education (Chakhaia and Bregvadze 2018). The recent research demonstrates that higher education contributes to the holistic development of individuals in Georgia by "bringing up active citizens who participate in peaceful protests" (Chankseliani, Qoraboyev, and Gimranova 2021, 119).

One more difference is age. The analysis of WVS Georgia 2009 provided empirical evidence that people are less likely to participate in antigovernment protests as they get older. However, the 2014 models suggest that age no longer played an important role in driving Georgians to participate in antigovernment protests in the subsequent years. This result is also consistent with the qualitative evidence that Georgia's youth has been an important force in antigovernment political protests recently, as "young Georgians have come to set the agenda in these demonstrations, not just participate in them" (Kincha 2020). For instance, after two protesters each lost an eye during the antigovernment protests against the ruling party's invitation of Russian Communist politician Sergei Gavrilov to Georgia, young Georgians marched in streets of Tbilisi covering their one eye to demonstrate solidarity with the injured. The young participants in this event "became the faces of Georgia's new protest movement" (Kincha 2020). This finding also challenges the previous understanding in the literature that older people are more likely to participate in political protests.

The last important difference between the 2009 and 2014 models is ideology. The analysis of the WVS Georgia 2009 dataset suggests that *ideology* also has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of participation in antigovernment protest. However, the effect of ideology is contrary to the argument made in the literature: the results suggest that individuals oriented to the right are likely to participate in antigovernment protest. This is not surprising, given that politics in Georgia, as in some other post-communist states, shifted to the right after the fall of communism; the major parties are on the right, while on the left the Communist Party is weak (Shabeer 2020). However, ideology is no longer significant when we move from the 2009 models to 2014 models, where it becomes a not important factor for individuals' participation in political protests.

This study also conducts additional statistical tests to evaluate the robustness of the results. Since Georgia has experienced many protests in recent years, the overall picture of protests in the country might be different from what is offered in this study. It is possibile that different individuals who participated in these protests do not necessarily share democratic values. To be more specific, the significant results in this study might be linked to wrong measures of explanatory variables rather than to what is happening on the ground.

To address this concern, this study uses alternative measures of the central explanatory variables for a robustness check. One "necessary component of a functioning democracy" is tolerance (Hjerm et al. 2020, 897). It is possible that the individuals who participated in antigovernment protests and who support democratic governance and rank some contextual democratic values higher than security and economic concerns do not necessarily share democratic ideals. Given that Georgia is not a liberal democratic society and that there is still strong opposition to gay rights, a measure of support for democracy as tolerance for racial and sexual minorities should reveal the extent to which the individuals who participated in protests share democratic values.

Models 6 and 8 in both Tables 1 and 2 include tolerance for racial minorities as one alternative measure of the central explanatory variable. To measure the explanatory variable in this alternative way, the WVS question that asks individuals whether they would not like people from different racial groups to be their neighbors is used. The analysis of both datasets suggests that the individuals who do not want people of other races to be their neighbors are less likely to participate in political protests. However, these results are stronger in the 2014 analysis. This empirical finding suggests that democratic ideals are becoming more important reasons for political protests.

Models 7 and 9 in both Tables 1 and 2 include tolerance for sexual minorities as another alternative measure of the central explanatory variable. For this alternative measure, the WVS question that asks individuals whether they would not like homosexuals to be their neighbors is used. The analysis of both datasets suggests that individuals who do not want homosexuals to be their neighbors are less likely to participate in political protests. These robustness checks suggest that commitment to democratic ideals is an important reason for political protests in Georgia.

To evaluate the models, Tables 1 and 2 also provide AIC and BIC values. Table 1 illustrates that Model 1 is the best model based on AIC and BIC metrics. It contains two major explanatory and all control variables. Table 2 shows that Models 5 and 8 better fit the data. Model 2 contains two major explanatory and all control variables. Hence, Models 5 in both tables are the major models in this study.

To interpret these results, the predicted probabilities are illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 3. While Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the effects of different variables on participation in antigovernment protests at their means, they do not tell us about the changes in probabilities of participation in protest given the presence and absence of commitment to democratic values. To explore whether these differences are significant or not, the predicted probabilities graphs and Table 3 demonstrate probabilities of participation in protests across the range of the different values of commitment to democratic values.

Participation in antigovernment protests, our primary interest, has three values: outcome 1 (individuals who would never participate in protests); outcome 2 (individuals who might participate in protests); outcome 3 (individuals who have participated in protests). Abstract commitment to democracy, the first

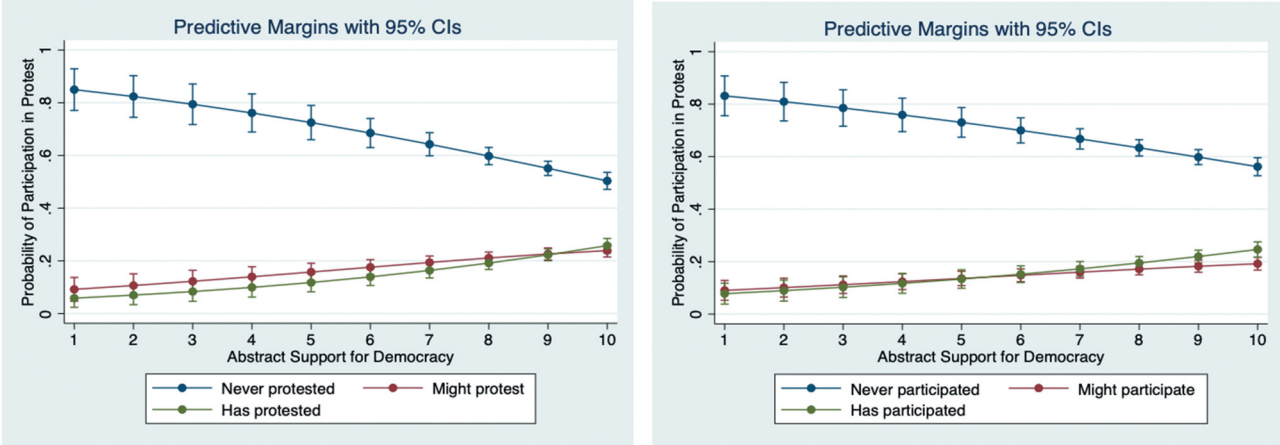

Figure 1. Abstract commitment to democratic values.
Note: The graph on the left is Figure 1(a), which demonstrates the probability of participation in protests across different values of commitment to democracy based on the analysis of 2009 data. The graph on the right is Figure 1(b), which does the same, but based on the 2014 dataset.

Table 3. Changes in Probabilities of Participation in Protest Given Absence and Presence of Concrete Support for Democratic Principles

	2009			2014		
Outcomes	Absence	Presence	Change	Absence	Presence	Change
Never Participated	56%	48%	8% decrease	63%	52%	11% decrease
Might Participate	22%	24%	2% increase	17%	20%	3% increase
Have participated	22%	28%	6% increase	20%	28%	8% increase

The table demonstrates the percentage changes in the probabilities of participation in antigovernment protests when there is a move from absence of concrete support for democracy to the presence of concrete support for democracy.

explanatory variable, has ten values ranging from 1 to 10, 1 referring to the individuals who are least committed to democratic values and 10 referring to the individuals who are most committed to democratic values. The contextual commitment to democratic values, the second explanatory variable, has two values: 0 and 1, 0 referring to the individuals who are not committed to democratic values and 1 referring to the individuals who are committed to democratic values. The predicted probabilities graphs below demonstrate the changes in the probabilities of the three outcomes of participation in political protests across different values of commitment to democracy.

Figure 1 illustrates predicted probabilities of participation in political protests across the values of commitment to democratic values in abstract form. Figure 1(a) shows these predicted probabilities based on analysis of WVS Georgia 2009, Table 1, Model 1, and Figure 1(b) does the same based on analysis of WVS Georgia 2014, Table 2, Model 1.

Figure 1(a) shows that at the lowest level of self-reported preference for democratic governance, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 85 percent, 9 percent, and 6 percent likely. This tells us that it is 85 percent likely that the individuals who are least committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 9 percent chance that they might participate in these protests. There is only 6 percent chance that the least committed individuals have participated in political protests.

Figure 1(a) also shows that at the highest level of self-reported preference for democratic governance, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3, are respectively 50 percent, 24 percent, and 26 percent more likely. This result suggests that there is a 50 percent likelihood that the individuals who are the most committed to democratic values would never participate in protest activities, while there is 24 percent chance that they might participate in these activities. The results also show that the most committed individuals are 26 percent likely to participate in antigovernment protests.

Figure 1(b) illustrates that at the lowest level of self-reported preference for democratic governance, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 83 percent, 9 percent, and 8 percent more likely. This result shows that it is 83 percent likely that the individuals who are least committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 9 percent chance that they might participate in these protests. There is only 8 percent chance that the least committed individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

Figure 1(b) also shows that at the highest level of self-reported preference for democratic governance, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 56 percent, 19 percent, and 25 percent more likely. This finding shows that it is 56 percent likely that the individuals who are most committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 19 percent chance that they might participate in these protests. There is 25 percent chance that the most committed individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

In short, Figure 1 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the probability of the most committed individuals' participation and that of the least committed individuals' participation in antigovernment protests. The difference is at least 10 percent, which is significant with a 95 percent confidence interval.

Table 3 illustrates changes in predicted probabilities of participation in political protests when there is a move from the absence of concrete support for democracy to the presence of support for democracy. The left column of the table shows these changes based on analysis of WVS Georgia 2009, Table 1, Model 1, and its right column does the same based on analysis of WVS Georgia 2014, Table 2, Model 1.

The left column of Table 3 demonstrates that in the absence of self-reported commitment to democratic values, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 56 percent, 22 percent, and 22 percent more likely. This result suggests that it is 56 percent likely that the individuals who are not committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 22 percent chance that noncommitted individuals might participate in the protests. There is also 22 percent chance that noncommitted individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

The left column of Table 3 also shows that in the presence of self-reported commitment to democratic values, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 48 percent, 24 percent, and 28 percent more likely. This result indicates that it is 48 percent likely that the individuals who are committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 24 percent chance that committed individuals might participate in the protests. There is also 28 percent chance that committed individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

The right column of Table 3 shows that in the absence of self-reported commitment for democratic values, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 63 percent, 17 percent, and 20 percent more likely. This result means that it is 63 percent likely that the individuals who are not committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 17 percent chance that noncommitted individuals might participate in the protests. There is also 20 percent chance that noncommitted individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

The right column of Table 3 also demonstrates that in the presence of self-reported commitment to democratic values, outcome 1, outcome 2, and outcome 3 are respectively 52 percent, 20 percent, and 28 percent likely. This result suggests that it is 52 percent likely that individuals who are committed to democratic values would never participate in antigovernment protests, while there is 20 percent chance that committed individuals might participate in the protests. There is also 28 percent chance that committed individuals have participated in antigovernment protests.

In short, Table 3 demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the probability of the committed individuals' participation and that of noncommitted individuals' participation in antigovernment protests. The difference is significant at a 95 percent confidence interval.

What is important from the results above is the change in the probability of participation in political protests given the effect of commitment to democratic values. The results demonstrate that these changes are statistically significant for both contextual and abstract forms of commitment to democratic values. All results confirm the hypotheses that individuals who are committed to democratic values are more likely to participate in political protests. In sum, the analysis provides evidence that the study of commitment to democratic values in both abstract and contextual forms is important to the understanding of antigovernment protest behavior.

Conclusion

Given large-scale antigovernment protests in the South Caucasus region, with wider implications for political protests in other countries where democracy is not consolidated, the study asked why some individuals are likely to participate in antigovernment protest. I argued that *commitment to democratic values* is central to the understanding of *participation in antigovernment protest*: individuals who are committed to democratic values are more likely to participate in antigovernment protests. I looked at commitment to democratic values in two forms: abstract and contextual. First, support for democratic values in abstract form is revealed when individuals are asked about their general *attitudes toward democracy*. Second, in contextual form, individuals' support for democratic values is revealed when they are asked to choose between *democratic* values and other essential *economic* and *security* principles. Based on these two measures of *commitment to democratic values*, the research advanced two propositions: that individuals who prefer democratic governance, and those who prefer *democratic* values to *economic* and *security* concerns, are more likely to *participate in antigovernment protests*. Controlling for other determinants of participation in antigovernment protest, this research tested the applicability of these propositions against two datasets: WVS Georgia 2009 and WVS Georgia 2014. The research found statistically significant results for both major hypotheses. I conclude that commitment to democratic values is important to an understanding of individual participation in antigovernment protests in the South Caucasus region.

The study of antigovernment protests in Georgia is important for its potential contribution to the academic literature on political protest and contentious politics and for its policy implications. The antigovernment protests in Georgia have brought about some democratic changes in the South Caucasus. The findings are essential for policymakers to understand why many Georgians have become involved in antigovernment protests in Georgia. However, it has some limitations that future research should address.

First, while the research develops a theory to explain the antigovernment protests, the theory is tested through analysis of popular protests in one country based on two datasets. Although this study of political protests can shed a light on other protests in countries where democracy is not consolidated, we do not have solid evidence that the findings from this study are applicable to other similar units. Therefore, the study is limited in its external validity. Future research should step forward and test the applicability of this argument against a wider universe of cases. One way to do that would be the use of multilevel modeling to explain the antigovernment protests across both individuals and states. Another way would be unit studies of the recent political protests in Belarus and Ukraine.

Second, future research should also explore why some individuals believe that people should participate in political protests,

while others do not. Whereas the existing literature on political protests has mainly focused on individuals' protest behavior, their political preferences are not well understood. Some political protests draw a lot support from other people who do not personally participate in the protests. Future studies should examine why some individuals support participation in political protests even though they do not participate in these protests themselves. The research should specifically study the difference between political preference and behavior, if there is a major difference.

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