


The relationship between ideology and protest from a comparative perspective

A relação entre ideologia e protesto sob uma perspectiva comparada

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga a relação entre ideologia e protesto, questionando a perspectiva de assimetria que destaca o protagonismo da esquerda. Argumentamos que as tendências de protestos variam conforme fatores contextuais. Testamos duas hipóteses: (H1) a disponibilidade atitudinal modera a relação entre ideologia extrema e engajamento em protestos; (H2) a polarização política e a orientação do governo influenciam a mobilização ideológica. Para testar essas hipóteses, analisamos os dados da última onda do World Values Survey (WVS 7), utilizando modelos logísticos hierárquicos. Os resultados indicam que a polarização cultural afeta a mobilização da esquerda, enquanto a polarização política impacta a direita, confirmando parcialmente as hipóteses.

Palavra-chave: protesto; ideologia; polarização; governo; disposições atitudinais.

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between ideology and protest, challenging the asymmetric perspective that emphasises the left-wing activism. We argue that protest trends vary according to contextual factors. We test two hypotheses: (H1) attitudinal availability moderates the relationship between extreme ideology and engagement in protests; (H2) political polarization and government orientation influence ideological mobilisation. To test these hypotheses, we analysed data from the latest wave of the World Values Survey (WVS 7), using hierarchical logistic models. The results indicate that cultural polarisation affects left-wing mobilization, while political polarisation impacts the right, partially confirming the hypotheses.

Keyword: protest; ideology; polarisation; government; attitudinal dispositions.

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Introduction³

Are individuals identified with ideological extremes more likely to participate in protests? The storming of the United States Capitol following Donald Trump's 2020 electoral defeat and the invasion of Brazil's Three Powers Plaza (*Praça dos Três Poderes*) after Jair Bolsonaro's loss in 2022 are paradigmatic cases in which the defeated presidents played a crucial role in mobilising radical supporters. Despite the high costs involved, ideology emerged as a decisive factor in the mobilisation of the supporters of Trump and Bolsonaro.

A body of literature argues that the relationship between ideology and protest is asymmetric, associating the left more strongly with this kind of action (Dalton & Rohrschneider, 2002; Gutting, 2020). Among the explanations for this asymmetry are the issues that mobilise each ideological spectrum, such as deference to authority and group norms (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013; Stenner, 2009), identification with liberal causes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009) and the endorsement of values of conformity and security (Malka, Inzlicht & Lelkes, 2014). The mobilisation of the right in recent years, however, has called this left-wing asymmetry into question, suggesting that the relationship between ideology and protest is not as clearly defined as once assumed.

Gutting (2020) highlights that trends in left-wing and right-wing protests vary in response to contextual factors. Kostelka and Rovny (2019), for example, argue that it is not the "left" itself that engenders protest, but rather the historical-cultural legacy and the degree of liberalism within a given region that provide the mobilising elements subsequently appropriated by each ideological grouping. Kleiner (2018), for her part, observes that a politically polarised environment creates a context of perceived threats to normative notions, exacerbating the defence of conflicting attitudes and values — stances that are strongly associated with the increased frequency of protests on both the left and the right. These studies, thus adopt a less dogmatic view of the supposed left-wing asymmetry in protest behaviour.

Analysis of the relationship between ideology and protest is particularly important since previous explanations for this type of action have tended to focus on non-political factors, such as relative deprivation and resource availability (Grasso & Giugni, 2016). The specific role of the ideological component, as well as the complexity involved in conceptualising the 'ideology' variable, are still underexplored. The political dimension of protest dynamics is significant given that contemporary movements often incorporate distinct – and at times contradictory – ideological elements into their agendas. It is worth emphasising that the ideological component has attracted increasing academic attention in recent years, owing to the growing context of political polarisation (Borba, Ribeiro & Fuks). Studies by Svolik (2019) and Graham and Svolik (2020) are categorical in asserting that partisanship and ideological militancy intensify under such conditions.

Setting out from the premise that participation in protests results from a combination of ideological predispositions and contextual conditions, this study advances two central hypotheses. The first (H1) proposes that attitudinal availability

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moderates the relationship between extreme ideological positions and the probability of engaging in protests. The second (H2) suggests that both the context of political polarisation and the ideological orientation of the government in power influence the conditions under which individuals situated at the ideological extremes choose to mobilise. These propositions will be discussed and substantiated in greater detail in the theoretical section.

Here we make use of data from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey (WVS 7), which includes representative samples from 61 countries across five continents. To analyse the relationship between ideology and protest from a comparative perspective, we employed a hierarchical logistic model, appropriate for data organised across diverse levels. Overall, the results indicate that the influence of extreme ideological positions on mobilisation depends on both individual dispositions and contextual factors such as political and cultural polarisation. The evidence suggests that these conditions shape patterns of protest on the right and left in distinct ways, reinforcing the importance of considering both attitudinal and contextual elements in the analysis of political activism.

This article is divided four sections, in addition to this introduction. The first three sections address the questions, propositions and expected relationships between ideology and protest. The fourth section describes the materials and methods used in the analysis, highlighting the construction of the category *attitudinal availability* and the political contextual factors. In the fifth and sixth sections, we present the data and discuss the research findings.

Limits of measuring and interpreting ideology

The use of ideology in studies of political behaviour encounters several challenges (Pereira, 2013). The first is selection bias: the classical thesis asserts that ideological identification is limited to a select group of more highly educated individuals (Converse, 2006 [1964]). This bias is problematic since it makes it difficult to disentangle the real effects of ideology from the characteristics informing that selection (educational level, political knowledge and interest in politics). The second is endogeneity, whereby ideology indirectly registers the effect of some omitted variable. The third concerns within-group heterogeneity, since ideology may exert a stronger influence among the more educated, while being irrelevant or even non-existent among the less educated.

The methods used to measure ideology have also raised caveats regarding the validity of measuring ideology. Lafferty and Knutsen (1984) argue that a scale suggesting a central point – for example, a seven-point scale – tends to inflate the number of centrists, particularly among those who view centrism as a neutral stance. Kroh (2007), in turn, contends that the absence of a midpoint increases the rate of non-responses among individuals who would otherwise place themselves at the centre, as they do not feel represented by the available range of scale levels. Finally, some studies have questioned the unidimensional model of ideology (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013; Feldman & Johnston, 2009), proposing instead a multidimensional model that incorporates both economic and cultural dimensions in evaluating individual attitudes. The existence of these issues does not invalidate the hypothesis that ideology influences political behaviour, but rather underscores the need for a research

design capable of isolating the effects of other factors – whether individual or contextual – while also recognising the limitations inherent to a unidimensional measure of ideology.

In this article, we adopt the definition of ideology as a socially shared mental structure or model (Brandt & Sleegers, 2021; Federico & Malka, 2021), a construct that can be reinforced by political elites (Jost, Federico & Napier, 2013). The ideological labels left and right function as heuristics that encapsulate a set of themes latent within public opinion (Brady & Sniderman, 1985), assisting individuals in their political decision-making. In this sense, ideology operates as an organising dimension of individual beliefs (Feldman & Conover, 1983; Lafferty & Knutsen, 1984), constituting a form of collective identity.

Ideology as a predictor of protest

The literature on protest tends to concur that ideology matters insofar as it communicates a sense of group identity (Downey, 1986; Melucci, 1988; Opp, 2009). First, ideology constitutes a mental framework that captures a series of positions on contentious issues that divide opinion. Second, it guides which resources to mobilise (when available), which strategies are deemed legitimate and whether the opportunities available increase the likelihood of success. For instance, the protest repertoire of strikes and other non-institutional forms of participation is familiar to left-wing groups, while resistance to disruptive modes of participation appears as a tendency for groups on the right. Ideology not only communicates group identity, therefore, but also translates into a political habit.

If ideology reflects an internal disposition of the individual that translates into behaviour, then the way social movements frame political issues exerts a multiplying effect on these internal dispositions. Framing results from interaction and the strategic use of symbols that direct activism towards a shared goal. Tarrow (2009) emphatically argues that the elements constituting a frame are not automatically available: rather, it is through the mobilisation of sensitive issues within public debate (Klandermans, 1984) that actors discern which values should be aligned. In this sense, the frame is constructed throughout the mobilisation, serving as a structuring strategy or tactic within this process (Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

Ideology, in turn, is a content composed of multiple beliefs, socially shared and anchored in a social identity (Federico & Malka, 2021). It can be represented both by its symbolic content – for instance, identifying with the labels left or right – and by its operational content, such as the general inclination of each person's preferences (Ellis & Stimson, 2012). Hence, a frame may be formed by a set of ideological contents. The thesis that movement framing strengthens attitudinal dispositions is supported by McAdam's (1986) discussion of black voter registration in Mississippi (USA). Political engagement, the author contends, depends on a certain level of attitudinal availability towards the group's agenda. Snow and Benford (1988) also contribute to this line of argument, asserting that one of the defining features of framing is the alignment of attitudinal dispositions with a shared cause.

Rethinking the relationship between ideology and protest: analytical and contextual strategies

The literature on ideology and protest faces a persistent challenge: the difficulty of measuring and interpreting ideology in a way that captures its actual influence on political action. Part of this problem stems from the selection bias associated with individual engagement, as well as from contextual variation that can alter the impact of ideology in different political environments. To move this debate forward, we propose an analytical strategy that combines individual-level moderating mechanisms with contextual determinant factors.

At individual level, a shared cause, boosted by the attitudinal dimension, is shaped by the sharing of common cognitive frames, the interactions between individuals, and their prior experiences of activism (Klandermans, 1992; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). In addition to shared cognitive frames, Schussman and Soule (2005), Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) and Almeida (2020) also show how sociodemographic characteristics can contribute to the recognition of group belonging. As an example we can cite the Black Lives Matter movement, originating in the United States, which mobilised numerous protests against racism and police violence in 2020, or the student movements advocating for gun control in 2018. Issues like race and firearm regulation are highly sensitive in the US context, particularly affecting black people and young people. Similarly, themes such as the legalisation of abortion, domestic violence and gender pay inequality directly affect women in many countries. In such cases, identification with a group (Opp, 2009), which contributes to the perception of a “we,” may be associated with an increased likelihood of participation in protests (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Klandermans, 1992; Stürmer & Simon, 2004). Following on from these arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

(H1) attitudinal availability moderates how ideological extremes translate into protest participation

Analysis of this hypothesis allows us to assess whether the interaction between ideological positions and political engagement captures the full heterogeneity of the ideological effect across different participation profiles, reducing the limitations of approaches that assume homogeneous effects.

The literature on protests also demonstrates that contextual factors influence the dynamics of collective action. Eisinger (1973), a classic reference in this discussion, argues that opportunity structures generate expectations which, when frustrated by the mismatch between institutional advances and the fulfilment of individual demands, create environments conducive to protest. Dalton's (2010) study was innovative in proposing a causal link between context, individual characteristics and protest. According to the author, the combination of medium levels of economic development and social centrality are the main determinants of protest.

The revival of the discussion on relative deprivation theory in Europe (Galais & Lorenzini, 2017; Klandermans, Roefs & Olivier, 2001; Kurer et al., 2019) has also been decisive in linking the context of economic crisis and the discontent of disadvantaged social groups to the dynamics of protest. In these studies, inequality and unemployment are identified as the main environmental factors moderating individual discontent. This body of literature makes clear that institutional and economic factors have traditionally

been central to comparative studies. Another political dimension that has received relatively little attention in protest research, however, relates to the context of polarisation and the ideological orientation of the government in power.

Recent research has indicated that a polarised context increases levels of political participation (Van der Meer, Van Deth & Scheepers, 2009; Whitford, Yates & Ochs, 2006). Kleiner (2020) argues that polarisation heightens perceived threats to individual beliefs insofar as the success of one group is seen to entail losses for the opposing side. From the perspective of grievance theory, which explores how the frustration of social expectations affects political behaviour, the author contends that polarisation anticipates the feeling of deprivation, translating into political action. The thesis is that citizens mobilise to the extent that their beliefs and values are perceived to come under threat. This effect tends to be strongest among individuals situated at the ideological extremes, exerting a multiplying influence on protest.

Relative deprivation theory (Kurer et al., 2019) posits that citizenship is a product of the structural features of the environment. Incorporating the factor of “polarisation” within this framework contributes to a political reading of discontent. This perspective becomes particularly important when we consider that ideological extremism tends to be reinforced in polarised contexts (Ribeiro & Borba, 2020; Ribeiro, Borba & Fuks, 2022; Borba, Ribeiro & Fuks, 2024). While ideology is indeed a determinant of protest, we assume that the context of polarisation can moderate this relationship.

Van der Meer, Van Deth and Scheepers (2009) note that the ideological positioning of the government in power can also trigger a defensive stance when it threatens the survival of the beliefs held by ideologically unaligned groups. This argument becomes more plausible still when we recall recent events such as the storming of the US Capitol and the invasion of the Three Powers Plaza in Brazil. These discussions have concrete analytical implications since they acknowledge that the relationship between ideology and protest is mediated or blurred by both individual and contextual factors. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

(H2) the context of political polarisation and the orientation of the government in power shape the conditions under which individuals located at the ideological extremes decide to protest.

By considering political polarisation and ideological orientation, we explore how the political environment modulates the connection between ideology and protest, providing a framework for hypotheses concerning interaction effects. These propositions not only address the problems of inferential validity associated with a multidimensional construct, but also provide space for more precise hypotheses about when and how ideology converts into mobilisation.

Materials and methodological procedures

Here we utilize data from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey (WVS 7)⁴, which contains representative samples from 61 countries across five continents, totalling 91,666 observations. Our dependent variable is actual protest, obtained from

⁴ To access the variables online: 1. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>; 2. Select wave 2017-2022; 3. Select all countries; 4. Variables: Protest (Q211); Ideology (Q240); Political party affiliation (Q98), trade union (Q97) and environmental organisation (Q99); Economic issues: equal v. different salaries (Q106); public v. private (Q107); welfare v. economic liberalism (Q108); cooperation v. competition (Q109); Cultural issues: homosexuality (Q182), prostitution (Q183), abortion (Q184) and divorce (Q185).

the question: “I am going to read out some forms of political action that people can take, and I would like you to tell me whether you have done any of these things, might do them, or would never do them.” We coded this variable as “Have done” (1) and “Might do” or “Would never do” (0). The ideology variable is originally measured on a ten-point scale and was categorized in three categories: left (1, 2, 3), centre (4, 5, 6, 7), and right (8, 9, 10). In aggregate terms, 14.09% of respondents reported participating in protests.

Our first hypothesis mobilises the concepts of attitudinal availability (McAdam, 1986) and ideological alignment (Snow & Benford, 1988). In this approach, the “engagement” factor is central to the operationalisation of these concepts. Since the focus here is on the political dimension of engagement, we selected, among the available items, only membership of a political party or trade union, both traditional institutions, as well as participation in environmental organisations, which represents a more contemporary dimension of social struggle.

Our second hypothesis considers an environmental factor as a moderator of the relationship between ideology and protest. To measure levels of political polarisation, we used an item from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) database,⁵ which asks: “Is society polarised into antagonistic political camps?” According to the codebook, societies are considered highly polarised when supporters from opposing political camps show reluctance to engage in amicable interactions. Kleiner (2020) observes that in polarised societies salient issues emerge that mobilise public opinion; there is a growing division into antagonistic and mutually exclusive groups, while beliefs and values tend to become more consistent, reinforcing social identities. We recoded this variable on a scale from 0 to 10, with values closer to 10 indicating higher levels of polarisation.

Additionally, we constructed two complementary measures of polarisation, considering both economic and cultural tensions. For economic polarisation, we included issues such as equality versus income inequality, the public sector versus the private sector, welfare versus economic liberalism, and cooperation versus competition. For cultural polarisation, we considered issues such as acceptance of homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and divorce. We followed the strategy proposed by Kleiner (2019, p. 949), which consists of calculating the mean positions of opposing groups in relation to these issues for each country and then multiplying one mean by the other. This approach allows for a quantitative assessment of the intensity of division between groups across different dimensions of public debate. According to the author, an individual indicator is more suitable for detecting the consequences of polarisation on political behaviour.

Table 1 – Strategy for constructing the economic and cultural polarisation variables

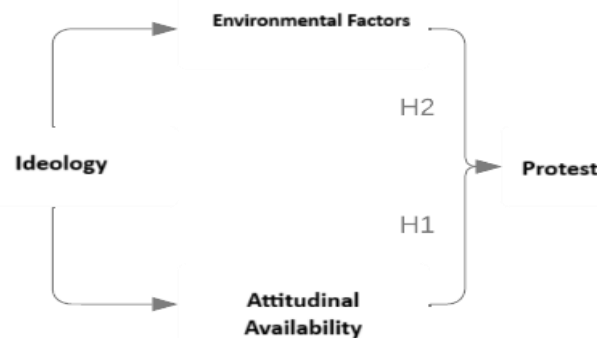
	LEFT									RIGHT
Original Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Left	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	5
Right	5	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Formula: $Polarization = Mean_{Left} \times Mean_{Right}$										

Source: Adapted from Kleiner (2020, p. 949).

⁵ Access to data from V-Dem: 1. <https://v-dem.net/>; 2. Datasets; 3. Variable: Polarization (v2cacamps).

To capture the ideological orientation of governments, we used information on political leaders from the Global Leader Ideology dataset (Herre, 2023). This dataset classifies leaders in 182 countries, annually, from 1945 or from the year of national independence up to 2020, as left-wing, centrist, right-wing, or non-ideological. Herre's study emphasises how the ideology of political leaders influences policy formulation and social welfare. It substantially expands the coverage of earlier datasets, which were largely restricted to OECD countries. For the purposes of our present research, we classified governments according to the ideology of the head of the executive in the corresponding year, using the Global Leader Ideology coding as an indicator of the government's position on the left–centre–right scale. In addition to the main variables, we included sociodemographic controls to isolate the effects of the variables of interest on engagement in protests.

Figure 1 – Theoretical structure of protest activism



Source: Authors.

To analyse the relationship between ideology and protest from a comparative perspective, we employed a hierarchical logistic model, appropriate for data organised across multiple levels (Gelman, 2006). The hypotheses tested here assume that environmental factors – such as levels of political polarisation and the ideological orientation of the government in power – as well as the political engagement of individuals, moderate the relationship between ideology and participation in protests. The hierarchical approach is essential for identifying contextual differences between countries, including factors contributing to polarisation and the ideology of political leaders, which may influence the probability of engaging in protest (Garson, 2013). Furthermore, this model allows us to estimate the proportion of variation explained by between-country factors, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of contextual effects in the relationship between ideology and political behaviour.

Results

Approximately 46.5% of respondents did not state an ideological position, which represents a high rate of non-response. Exploratory analysis demonstrates that this omission is not random: it is concentrated among individuals with lower levels of political engagement, education and income. This pattern suggests that non-response may bias estimation of the relation between ideology and protest by reducing the representativeness of less politicised groups.

To address non-response and selection bias, we employed multiple imputation. This technique generates multiple datasets for the missing values, using observable information from other individual variables as predictors. This approach allows full use of all available observations, thereby reducing bias arising from non-response and producing more robust estimates.

Four hierarchical logistic models were estimated using multiple imputation. Analysis of the standard deviation between the models indicates that the progressive inclusion of variables increases the explanatory power of the model (Table 2).

Table 2 – Standard deviation of the intercept and ICC (%) in the multilevel logistic models

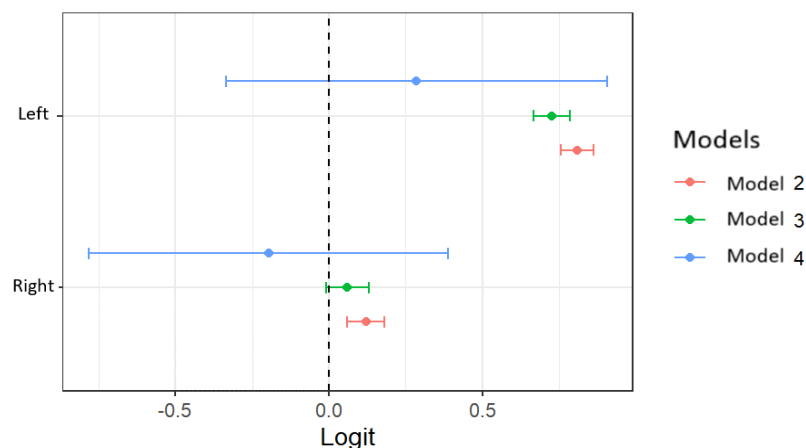
	SD of the intercept	ICC (%)
Model 1	0.8268	17.2
Model 2	0.8281	17.2
Model 3	0.8177	16.8
Model 4	0.7449	14.4

Source: Authors.

The procedures that we adopted – multiple imputation and hierarchical modelling – help reduce the biases generated by non-response and selection. Using these strategies, we aim to address some of the classical problems associated with the use of ideology as a variable in behavioural studies (Pereira, 2013), thereby ensuring more reliable estimates.

We now turn to the analysis of the direct effect of ideology on protest, comparing the models (Figure 1). In Model 2, the inclusion of ideology reveals that, compared with the reference group (Centre), individuals on the left show a substantial increase in their propensity to protest ($\beta = 0.12$, $SE = 0.029$, $p < 0.001$), while the effect for the right is positive but more modest ($\beta = 0.12$, $SE = 0.029$, $p < 0.001$). In Model 3, which incorporates level 1 variables (engagement and sociodemographic controls), the significant effect of the left is attenuated ($\beta = 0.73$, $SE = 0.030$, $p < 0.001$), while the effect for the right loses significance ($\beta = 0.06$, $SE = 0.035$, $p = 0.10$). Finally, in Model 4, the ideological variable ceases to be significant, indicating that the effect of ideology is mediated or conditioned by political contexts and specific issues.

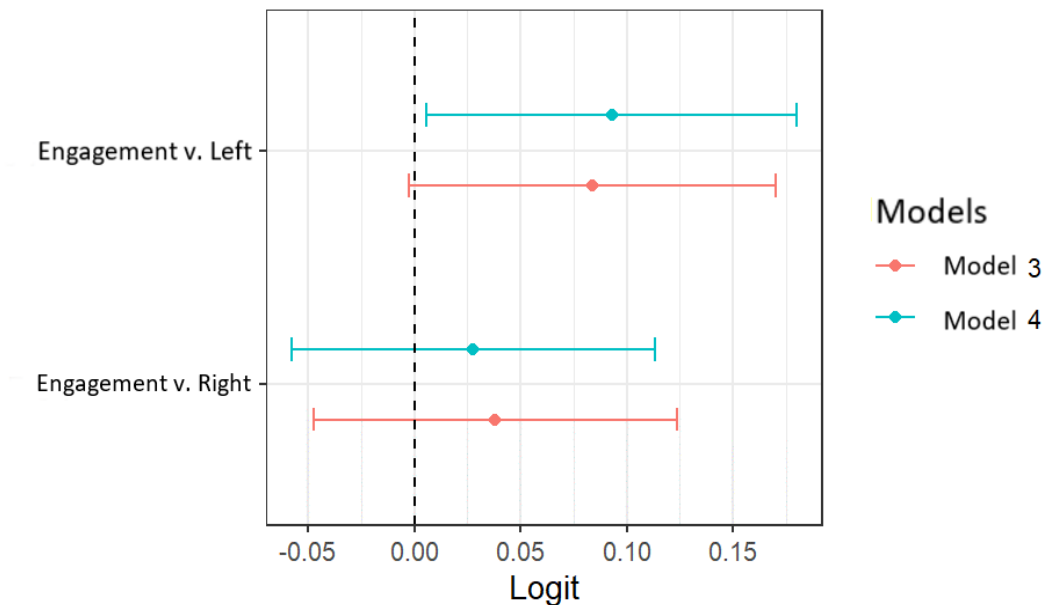
Graph 1 – Effect of ideology on protest, controlled by other factors



Source: Authors.

The preliminary results are consistent with our discussion in the previous section on how ideological predispositions are conditioned by other factors, including political engagement and the broader political context of each country (Figure 1). We now advance our analysis by testing the first hypothesis: (*H1*) *attitudinal availability moderates how ideological extremes translate into protest* (Figure 2). The results from Model 3 indicate that the interaction between engagement and ideology does not display significant trends, while engagement in an organisation shows a large and significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.53$, $SE = 0.025$, $p < 0.001$). The inclusion of level 2 variables in Model 4 does not substantively alter these patterns, although the interaction between engagement and left-wing ideology becomes significant ($\beta = 0.09$, $SE = 0.044$, $p = 0.03$). Although there is no robust evidence that attitudinal availability systematically moderates the relation between ideology and protest, the results suggest that this moderating effect may be more pronounced among individuals on the left.

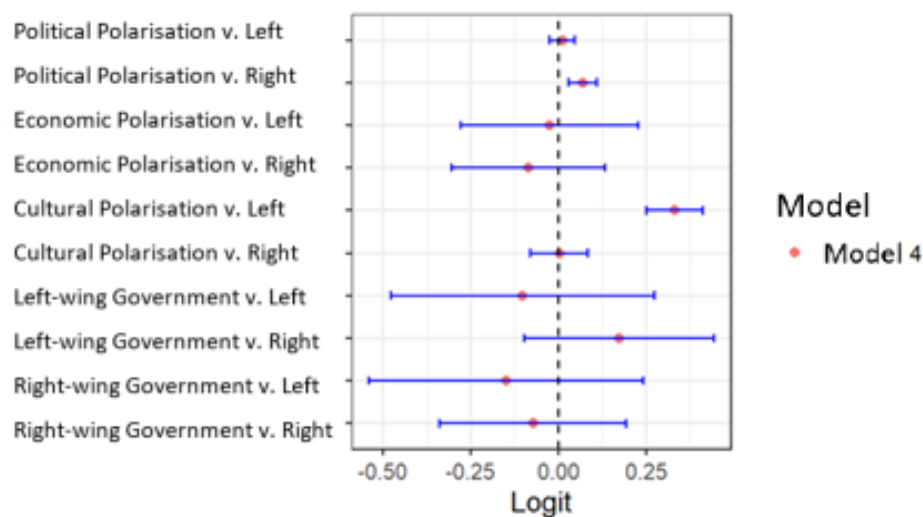
Graph 2 – Effect of the interaction between engagement and ideology on protest (*H1*)



Source: Authors.

Our second hypothesis proposes that *the context of political polarisation and the ideological orientation of the government in power shape the conditions under which individuals located at the ideological extremes decide to protest*. Model 4 introduces a set of interactions with political indicators, whether measures of polarisation (political, economic and cultural) or the ideological profile of the government in power (Graph 3).

The only significant interactions were polarisation on cultural issues (support for abortion, homosexuality, prostitution and divorce) for the left ($\beta = 0.33$, $SE = 0.041$, $p < 0.001$) and political polarisation (animosity between supporters of opposing political camps) for the right ($\beta = 0.06$, $SE = 0.020$, $p < 0.001$). All other interactions were insignificant, demonstrating that the relationship between these contexts and ideological groups does not substantially differ. These results help us understand that the impact of the political context is selective when interacting with ideological positioning, highlighting different aspects depending on the ideological camp.

Graph 3 – Effect of the interaction between contextual factors and ideology on protest (H2)

Source: Authors.

It is important to note that, due to the observational nature of the data, direct causality cannot be inferred. Political engagement and ideology may be partially endogenous to the political context, which can influence the interpretation of the observed interactions. Nevertheless, the use of multiple imputation and hierarchical modelling has sought to enhance the robustness of the analyses. Future studies could adopt longitudinal approaches or alternative identification strategies to address these limitations.

Discussion

The results confirm some known trends, such as the greater propensity of individuals on the left to engage in protest. However, the interaction between political engagement and left-wing positioning, though significant, is not as robust as might be expected. One notable research finding is the role of cultural polarisation, which points to an innovation in the profile of left-wing activism: cultural and identity-based issues – such as LGBTQIA+ rights, abortion and divorce – have gained prominence, while traditional economic themes have seen a decline in relevance. This suggests a transformation in the determinants of left-wing mobilisation, reflecting new social and political prioritisations.

In line with the discussion of the “culture war” concept proposed by Hunter (2022), a normative conflict can be observed between competing worldviews over what is considered good or ideal, polarising attitudes between conservative and progressive positions. A central aspect of this debate is the institutionalisation of conflict, manifested in street politics and social mobilisation. In this context, political liberalism, as a structuring principle of the democratic regime, struggles to accommodate these tensions, leading to the emergence of a new arena of disputes and generating increasing social pressure on elites.

These arguments help problematise the interests that motivate left-wing and right-wing protests, the latter group sometimes displaying less democratic stances, as illustrated by the storming of the US Capitol and the occupation of the Three Powers Plaza in Brazil. Given the issues that mobilise each ideological spectrum – such as

deference to authority and group norms (Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013; Stenner, 2005), identification with liberal causes (Mondak & Canache, 2010) and values of conformity and security (Inzlicht & Lelkes, 2014) – these kinds of polarised contexts point to an intensifying dispute over public narratives, including illiberal ones, in the streets.

For the right, the results indicate that mobilisation is strongly associated with political polarisation, measured by the animosity between supporters of opposing camps. This tendency appears to reflect the profile of right-wing movements all over the world in recent years, in which partisan conflict and intergroup hostility function as key drivers of engagement. These findings also suggest that the streets are becoming an increasingly heterogeneous arena where different ideological groups respond to distinct forms of polarisation and prioritise a wide variety of issues. Moreover, they show that the very debates intrinsic to democracy can compete with very often anti-democratic agendas, highlighting the contemporary complexity of collective action and political contestation.

Conclusion

This study tested two central hypotheses concerning the relationship between ideology and protest. The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that attitudinal availability moderates the relationship between extreme ideological positions and the probability of engaging in protest. The results indicated that, although no strong evidence emerges that attitudinal availability systematically moderates this relationship, the moderating effect may be more pronounced among individuals on the left. The second hypothesis (H2) suggested that the context of political polarisation and the ideological orientation of the government in power influence the conditions under which individuals located at the ideological extremes choose to mobilise. The findings demonstrated that cultural polarisation has a significant impact on left-wing mobilisation, while political polarisation affects the right. Thus, the hypotheses were partially confirmed, highlighting the importance of contextual and attitudinal factors in understanding the dynamics of protest.

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Data Availability Statement
data-available-upon-request.

Methodological Appendix

Appendix 1 – Hierarchical logistic regression coefficients: predictors of protest

<i>Predictors</i>	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	<i>Logit</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>Logit</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>Logit</i>	<i>std. Error</i>	<i>Logit</i>	<i>std. Error</i>
(Intercept)	- 2.00 ***	(0.10)	- 2.21 ***	(0.10)	- 2.48 ***	(0.11)	- 3.51 ***	(0.90)
Ideology [Right]			0.12 ***	(0.03)	0.06	(0.03)	-0.19	(0.29)
Ideology [Left]			0.81 ***	(0.02)	0.72 ***	(0.03)	0.28	(0.31)
Engagement [0-3]					0.52 ***	(0.02)	0.52 ***	(0.02)
Education [Higher]					0.63 ***	(0.02)	0.62 ***	(0.02)
Income [High]					0.11 ***	(0.03)	0.11 ***	(0.03)
Sex [Female]					- 0.30 ***	(0.02)	0.78 ***	(0.02)
Age					0.001 **	(0.00)	0.001 **	(0.00)
Ideology [Right] × Engagement					0.03	(0.04)	0.02	(0.04)
Ideology [Left] × Engagement					0.08	(0.04)	0.09 *	(0.04)
Political Polarization							0.07	(0.06)
Cultural Polarization							0.22 *	(0.09)
Economic Polarization							0.15	(0.35)
Governo [Right]							0.20	(0.37)
Governo [Left]							-0.23	(0.37)
Ideology [Right] × Political Polarization							0.06 ***	(0.02)
Ideology [Left] × Political Polarization							0.01	(0.01)
Ideology [Right] × Cultural Polarization							0.002	(0.04)
Ideology [Left] × Cultural Polarization							0.33 ***	(0.04)
Ideology [Right] × Economic Polarization							-0.08	(0.11)
Ideology [Left] × Economic Polarization							-0.02	(0.12)

Ideology [Right]	×	-0.07	(0.13)
Government [Right]			
Ideology [Left]	×	-0.14	(0.19)
Government [Right]			
Ideology [Right]	×	0.17	(0.13)
Government [Left]			
Ideology [Left]	×	-0.10	(0.19)
Government [Left]			

Random Effects

SD	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.74
ICC	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.14

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ **Appendix 2 – Multicollinearity Diagnostics: VIF Results**

# Check for Multicollinearity							
Low Correlation							
Term	VIF	VIF 95% CI	Increased SE	Tolerance	Tolerance 95% CI		
engajamento	2.10 [	2.08, 2.12]	1.45	0.48	[0.47, 0.48]		
polarização	1.09 [	1.08, 1.10]	1.04	0.92	[0.91, 0.92]		
pol_cultural	1.17 [	1.16, 1.17]	1.08	0.86	[0.85, 0.86]		
pol_economica	1.03 [	1.02, 1.04]	1.02	0.97	[0.96, 0.98]		
governo	1.07 [	1.06, 1.08]	1.03	0.94	[0.93, 0.94]		
renda	1.03 [	1.02, 1.03]	1.01	0.97	[0.97, 0.98]		
educação	1.03 [	1.03, 1.04]	1.02	0.97	[0.96, 0.97]		
sexo	1.01 [	1.00, 1.02]	1.00	0.99	[0.98, 1.00]		
idade	1.03 [	1.02, 1.03]	1.01	0.97	[0.97, 0.98]		
ideologia:engajamento	2.93 [	2.89, 2.96]	1.71	0.34	[0.34, 0.35]		
High Correlation							
Term	VIF	VIF 95% CI	Increased SE	Tolerance	Tolerance 95% CI		
ideologia	16014.35 [	15808.41, 16222.96]	126.55	6.24e-05	[0.00, 0.00]		
ideologia:polarização	315.80 [	311.75, 319.91]	17.77	3.17e-03	[0.00, 0.00]		
ideologia:pol_cultural	41.77 [	41.24, 42.31]	6.46	0.02	[0.02, 0.02]		
ideologia:pol_economica	8056.74 [	7953.13, 8161.69]	89.76	1.24e-04	[0.00, 0.00]		
ideologia:governo	362.38 [	357.73, 367.10]	19.04	2.76e-03	[0.00, 0.00]		

The multicollinearity analysis, undertaken using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), indicated low values for most predictors, suggesting the absence of major issues. However, the interaction terms displayed higher VIF values. This was an expected outcome as interactions tend to share variance with the model's main variables. Nevertheless, even in multilevel models, caution is advised when interpreting these coefficients, since multicollinearity can inflate standard errors and reduce the precision of the estimates.