

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

(Hilary 2019)

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I. Political participation

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/PoliticalSociology.shtml>

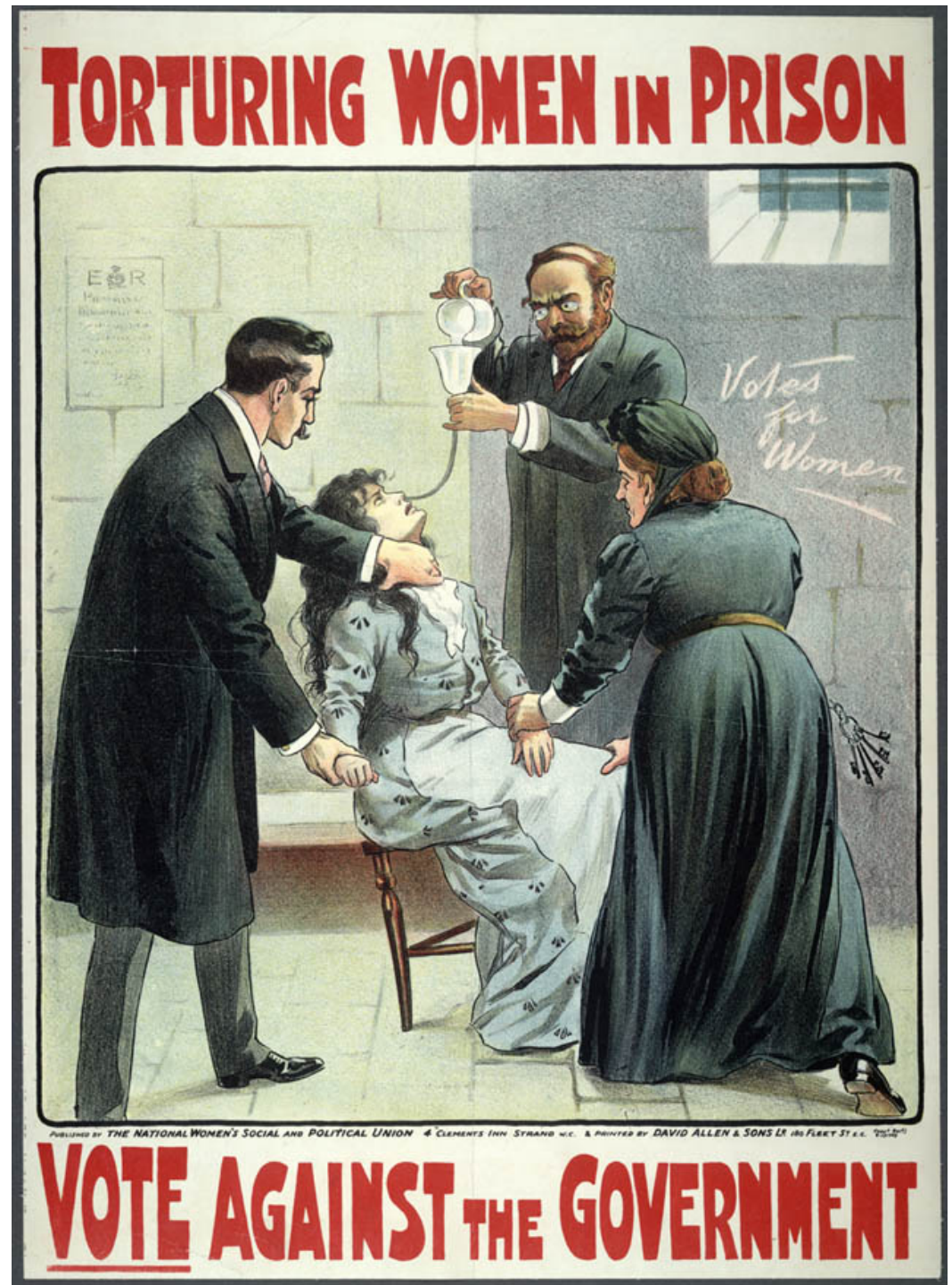
Differs from voting (last lecture)

2010

- less institutionalized — not legal



- more costly: time ...



- defy authority;
withstand ridicule

Gay Liberation
Front, London,
early 1970s



Importance

- historically, voting is consequence of participation

Riot in
Bristol
after
House of
Lords
rejected
Reform
Bill, 1831



- changes voters' attitudes / politicians' policies
- can (rarely) directly force change in government policy

Fuel duty,
2000

Poll tax, 1990



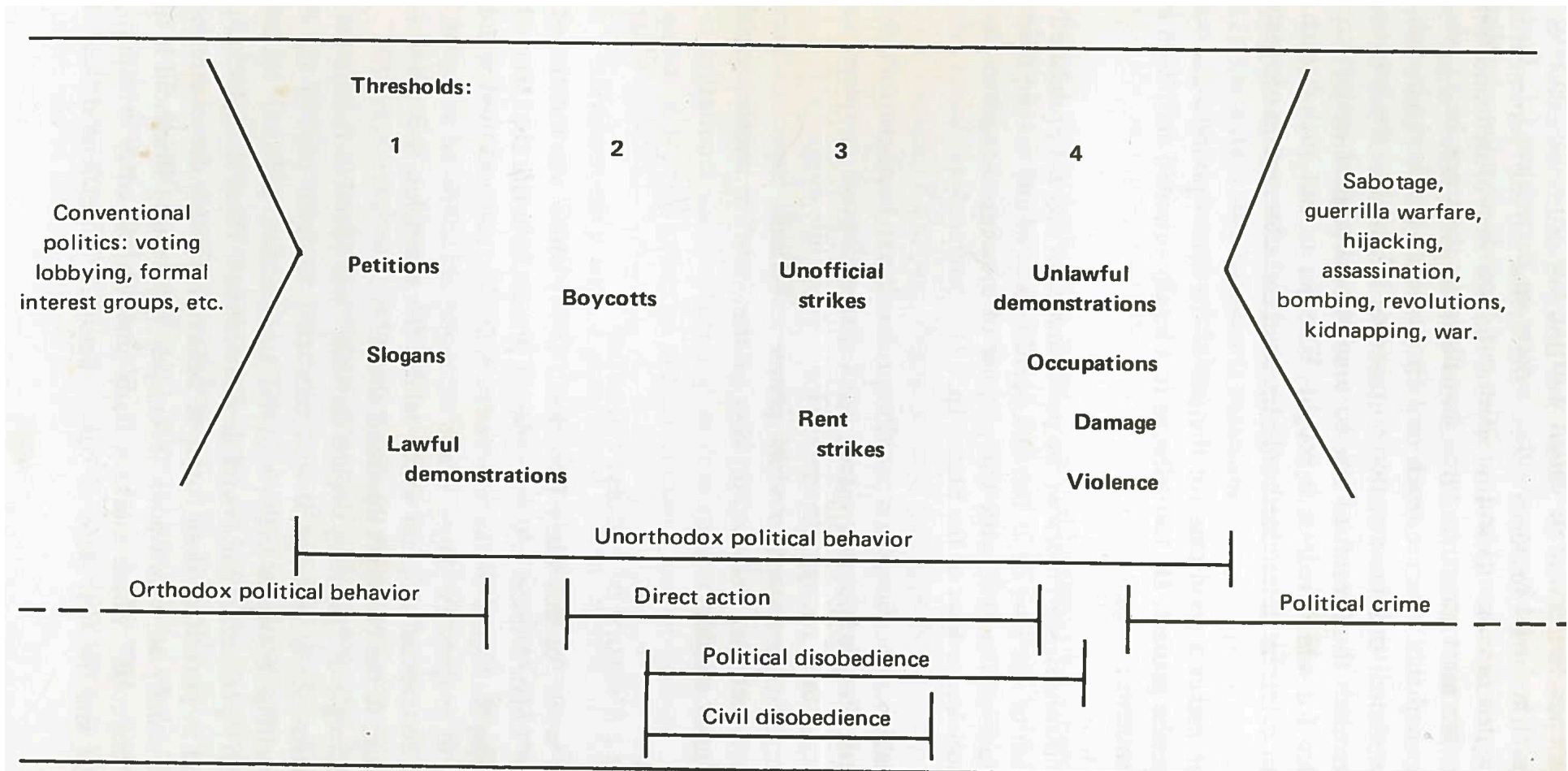
Outline

1. Survey data
2. Recent trend
3. Individual characteristics
4. Variation across polities

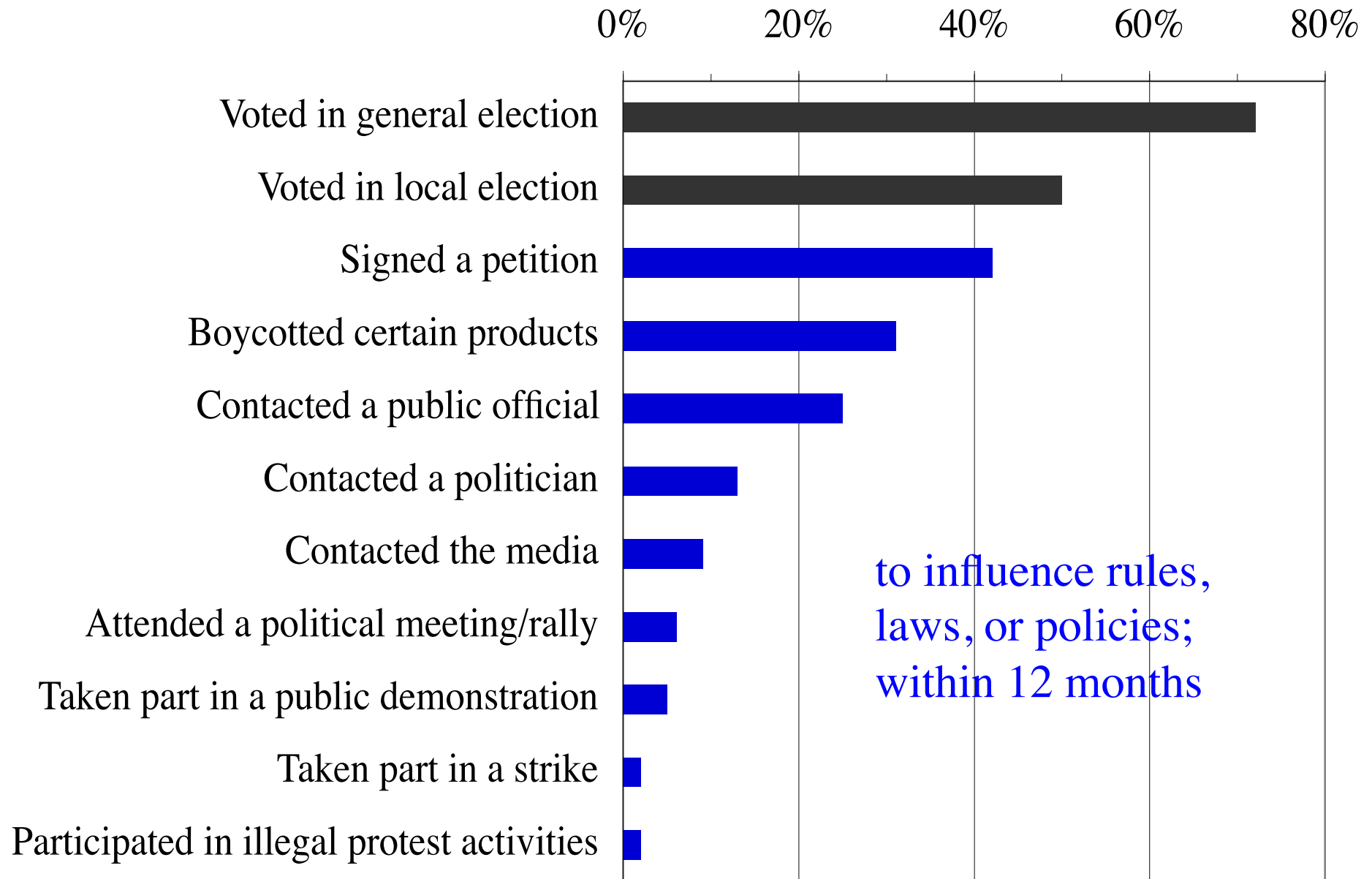
I. Survey data

1960s upsurge => data on 'unorthodox political behaviour'

(Marsh 1976)



British adults in 2000 (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley 2004)



	Individual	Contact	Collective
Bought goods for political or ethical reasons	0.70		
Boycotted certain products	0.69		
Given money to an organisation	0.64		
Raised money for an organisation	0.48		
Signed a petition	0.61		
Worn or displayed a campaign badge	0.51		
Voted in a local government election	0.45		
Contacted a public official		0.68	
Contacted a politician		0.61	
Contacted an organisation		0.59	
Contacted the media		0.54	
Contacted a solicitor or judicial body		0.52	
Taken part in a public demonstration			0.74
Attended a political rally or meeting			0.66
Participated in an illegal protest			0.62
Formed a group of like-minded people			0.39
Percentage of variance explained	22	9	8

(Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley
2004)

Weighted 2000 face-to-face survey.

Note: This table shows the strength of the correlations between the responses to the questions in the survey and three underlying latent measures of participation (varimax rotated factor matrix).

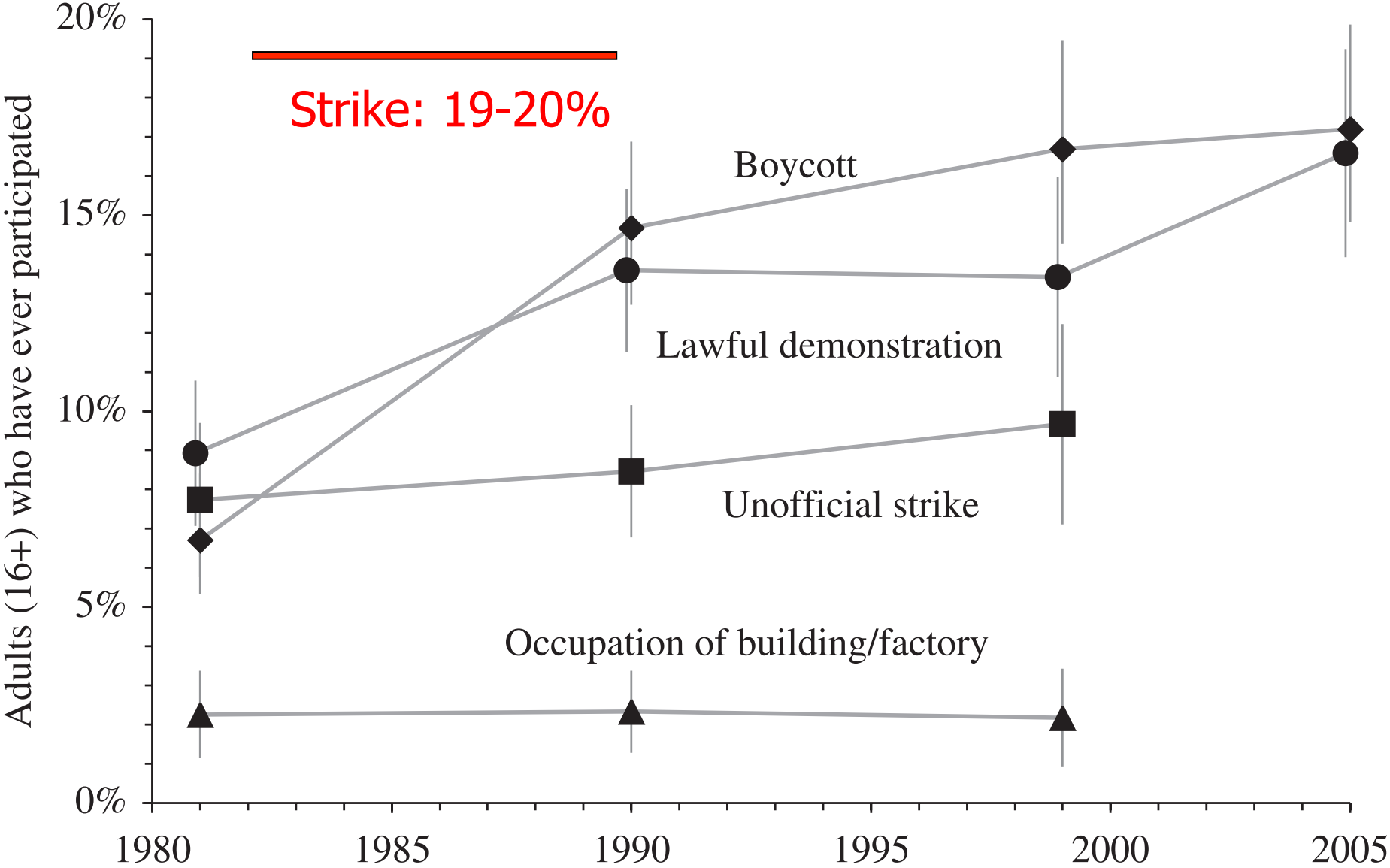
- Protest is not “anti-politics”—supplements rather than substitutes for voting
 - people who protest more often are more likely to vote, even though they express less trust in the system (Saunders 2014)
 - substantial proportion of demonstrators support the political system (Christensen 2016)
- Survey evidence does not show the *causes* for which people protest—contrast voting!
 - assume left-wing, but this is becoming less tenable



2. Recent trend

- Increasing trend; e.g. ‘protest levels are increasing, even as nations develop economically and politically’ (Dalton, Van Sickle, & Weldon 2010)
 - social movement society (Meyer & Tarrow 1998)

Protest in Britain, World Value Survey (Biggs 2015)



Volume of protest

- ‘The most useful general conception of the magnitude of a political disturbance seems to be the sum of human energy expended in it’ (Tilly & Rule 1965)

Protest Events in Britain, 1980–1995 (Biggs 2015)

	<i>Participant-days (millions)</i>		<i>Participants (millions)</i>	
Strike	66.3 *	67%	11.7	49%
Demonstration etc	4.2	4%	4.0	17%
Occupation etc	1.5	2%	0.4	2%
Slowdown	20.0 *	20%	2.5	10%
Symbolic	2.1	2%	2.1	9%
Boycott	2.0	2%	1.4	6%
Petition	1.1	1%	1.1	5%
Other	1.0	1%	1.0	4%
Total	98.2	100%	24.1	100%

* excluding weekends

3. Individual characteristics

- Highly educated are more likely to protest, as well as engage in conventional politics—“iron law” (Rucht 2007)

BUT

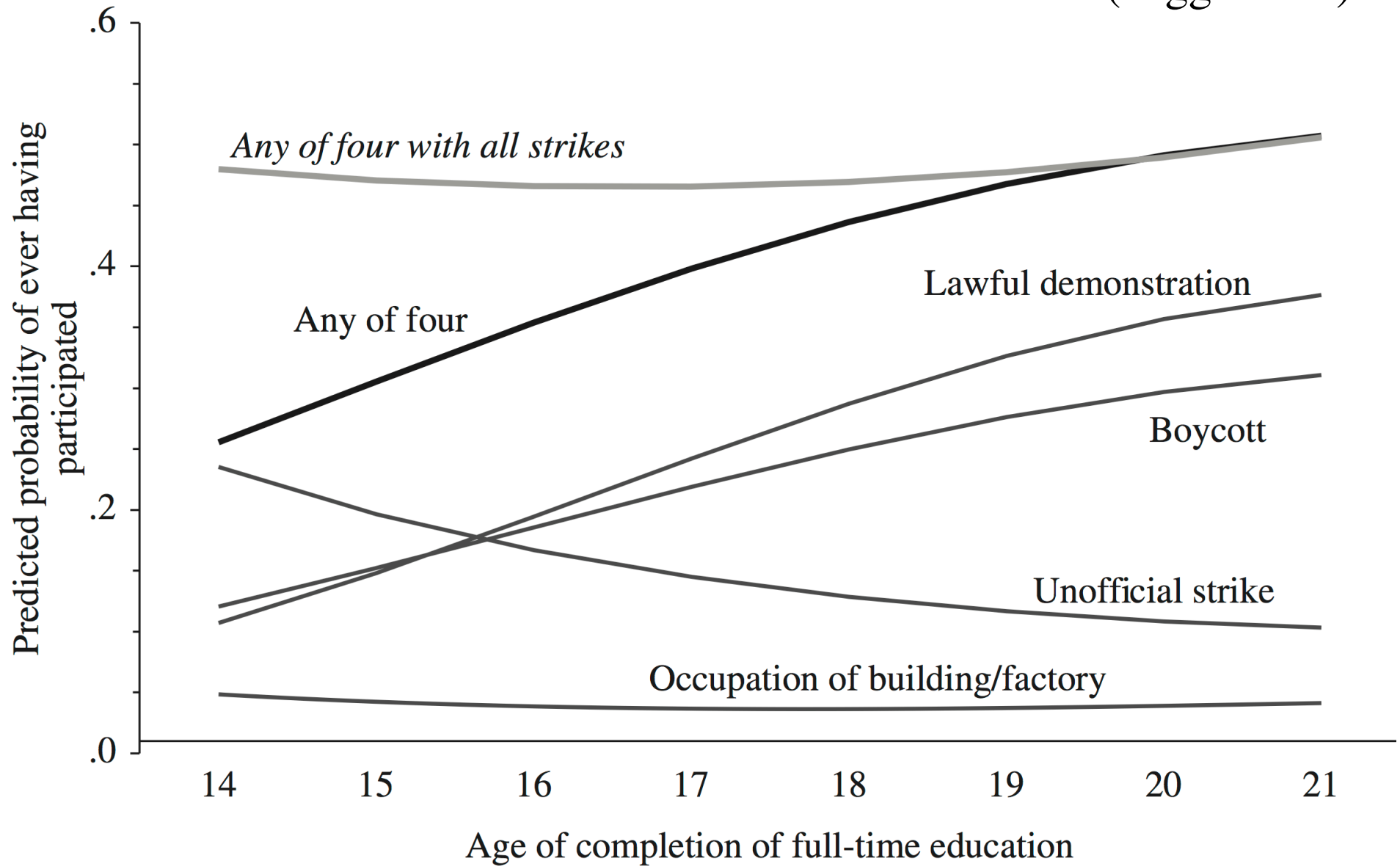
- causal estimation on longitudinal data suggests university degree is proxy for earlier characteristics like cognitive ability or family background (e.g. Persson 2014)

Coal miners,
1926 general strike



Figure V: *The effect of education on protest (WVS 1990)*

(Biggs 2015)



- Participation increases with organizational membership
 - Causal estimate from ESS 2002 and USCID 2005 (Minkoff 2016)
 - active members > passive members > nonmembers
 - political organizations (e.g. environmental) > civic organizations (e.g. religious, sports)

Participation changes people

Panel in West Germany, 1987 and 1989 (Finkel & Muller 1998)

- DV: number of different types of protest, 0–8

political dissatisfaction +		
likelihood of success +		+ likelihood of success
perceived personal influence +	Protest	+ perceived personal influence
membership of protest groups +		+ membership of protest groups
		+ standing up for beliefs is good
		+ enjoyment of participation

- soft incentives (Opp 1986) are *consequence* of participation!
- effect on optimism and efficacy surely depends on outcome?!

4. Variation across polities

% ever protested (boycott,
demonstration, occupation,
illegal strike)—WVS

Vietnam	3.1
Jordan	4.2
Hungary	5.8
Mexico	6.7
Zimbabwe	7.2
...	
Britain	25.5
...	
Belgium	43.1
France	43.2
Denmark	47.0
Sweden	49.9
Greece	56.1

Institutional logic (\approx political culture)

- Two dimensions suggested by Fourcade & Schofer (2016), following Jepperson (2002)

political input (Kitschelt 1986):

		<i>open</i>	<i>closed</i>
		Location of sovereignty	
		<i>Society</i>	<i>State</i>
Conception of society	<i>Individualistic</i>	US	France
	<i>Corporate</i>	Sweden	Germany

Adjusting for individual characteristics, p.c. GDP, and democracy:

- *Stateness*
 - increases demonstration, occupation—action that is public
 - reduces boycott—private, decentralized action
 - reduces organizational membership, but members tend more to be active
- *Corporateness*
 - reduces demonstration, occupation—emphasis on negotiating conflict
 - increases organizational membership
- Need to examine multiple forms of participation together
- Do not generalize US ‘social capital’ (active membership)

Summary

- Participation in some forms of protest, e.g. demonstrations, has increased, offsetting decline in voting—but dwarfed by decline of strike (UK, Canada, USA, Australia, France, Sweden, ...)
- Individual participation explained by
 - education—since decline of strikes
 - exacerbates dominance of university educated
 - organizational membership
 - subjective grievances, optimism for success, personal efficacy
- Systematic variation across polity depending on corporatism and statism

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Strikes **are** ‘political participation’ / ‘elite-challenging’ / ‘social movement activities’

- Systematic measurement of protest include at least subset: ‘unofficial’, ‘political’ (e.g. Hibbs 1973; Parry, Moyser, & Day 1992)
- Political significance:
 1. all implicate crucial relationship of power in modern societies—employers v workers—and challenge hegemony of market exchange
 2. many involve government directly as employer
 3. some inconvenience public or disrupt economy, which may provoke government to intervene
 4. some lead to physical confrontation between picketers and strike-breakers—bringing in police, and thereby the state as guarantor of public order
- exemplified by coalminers’ strike in 1984