Explaining Modes of Participation
An Evaluation of Alternative Theoretical Models

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Abstract

This paper evaluates two alternative explanations to political participation – the idea that collective interests motivate individuals to take part in political action, and the notion that selective incentives motivate political activity. These two solutions to “the paradox of participation” are evaluated across three different modes of political participation, party activity, contacting and manifestations, using a nationally representative 1997–1999 panel study of the Swedish population. The results indicate that individuals who take part in contacting and manifestations are motivated by both collective incentives and the goal to influence policy, and selective incentives, such as expressive incentives and the entertainment value of participation. We also find that individuals who are active in parties are not mainly driven by the goal to influence policy. Instead, such activity seems to be motivated by selective incentives, more specifically, expressive incentives.
Introduction

The literature on political participation provides two main types of explanations of why some people participate and others do not: socioeconomic models, in which various resources constitute the key predictors, and rational choice models. The latter have long been concerned with solving the Olsonian paradox of participation: Why would a rational actor contribute to the provision of public goods when each individual’s likelihood of affecting the outcome is minimal, and when non-participants can free-ride on the efforts of others? The literature identifies two main solutions to this paradox. The first is to relax the assumption that individuals view the importance of their own participation in the collective effort as negligible. According to this solution participation is explained in terms of collective interests, that is, a combination of individual demands for public goods and perceptions of individual and group efficacy. The second solution is to introduce selective incentives, that is, benefits that participants (and only participants) derive from activity irrespectively of whether they manage to provide the public good or not.

Different studies yield different results as to the relative success of these solutions to the paradox of participation. For example, students of party activism in Britain have shown that both collective and selective incentives matter (Whiteley et al. 1994; Whiteley 1995; Whiteley and Seyd 1996). Finkel and Muller (1998) find that variables drawn from a collective interest model are important predictors of protest behavior in Germany, whereas selective incentives are less relevant when explaining such behavior (cf. Finkel et al. 1989; Muller and Opp 1986).

One obvious explanation for the conflicting results is that they apply to different modes of participation. Some factors may be better predictors of traditional modes, such as party activity, whereas others may be better suited to explaining newer forms of participation. In this paper we compare the predictive performance of different theoretical models when applied to different modes of participation, more specifically, party activity, contacting and manifestations (e.g., donations, petitions, consumer boycotts, demonstrations). Are certain theoretical models superior across the board? Or is the strength of various types of predictors strongly dependent on the mode of participation that we purport to explain? Are some models superior when we aim at explaining and predicting newer forms of participation?

To answer these questions, we draw on a nationally representative 1997–1999 panel study of the Swedish population. Most prior research on participation relies on cross-sectional data. The use of cross-sectional data is especially problematic when evaluating rational choice models, due to the fact that individuals are likely to alter their preferences about public goods, perceptions of efficacy, and prospects of social and psychological rewards as a result of past participation. This suggests that most prior research on participation is biased, and to overcome this problem, survey data is needed that measures attitudes before reports of actual participation, that is, panel data. Panel studies in this area are very rare and are often restricted to a single mode of participation (see e.g. Finkel and Muller 1998; Whiteley and Seyd 1996). The panel at our disposal allows us to simultaneously eliminate the potential endogeneity bias inherent in cross-sectional designs and systematically compare the performance of various theoretical models across modes of participation.
Rational Choice and Political Participation

In this section of the paper we discuss alternative explanations to different modes of political participation, with a special focus on rational choice theory and solutions to the paradox of participation. This discussion also includes an evaluation of what factors can justifiably be included in a rational choice account of participation, and an evaluation of how resources relate to such an account.

Much of the rational choice literature on political participation is focused on turnout (see e.g. Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Aldrich 1993). The calculus of voting, originally formulated by Downs (1957), therefore constitutes the basis of most scholarly work on rational choice and participation. The basic voting model was stated as such (Riker and Ordeshook 1968):

\[ R = P \times B - C \]

Where \( R \) describes the rewards that an individual voter receives from the act of voting, \( B \) is the benefit that a voter receives from the success of his/her preferred candidate or party, \( P \) describes the probability that the citizen, by voting, will affect the outcome of the election, and \( C \) describes the costs associated with the act of voting. A citizen will thus choose to vote when \( R > 0 \), that is, when the rewards from voting exceed the costs from voting, or differently put, when \( P \times B > C \).

The calculus of voting was later generalized to also describe other forms of political participation, such as party activity, contacting and manifestations. In a general model of political participation, the \( R \) term describes the rewards an individual derives for example from being a party member, from contacting a politician, or from participating in a demonstration. In this model, \( B \) describes the collective benefits or public goods that are brought about when for example a party program is implemented or when decisions are made by a politician. \( P \) describes the probability that an individual’s participation will bring about the public good, often labeled “efficacy”. The \( C \) term in this general participation model describes the costs associated with the act of participating in party activity, contacting or some other form of political participation. Such costs include for example the time spent taking part in the activity, and material costs, such as membership fees.

As stated first by Mancur Olson (1965), the problem with this “calculus of participation” lies in the fact that for most political activities, an individual’s likelihood of affecting whether collective action will be successful is extremely small. Since most public goods are available to everybody, that is, to those who participate and to those who don’t, people should not get involved in collective action. Instead, since participation usually entails some sort of costs, individuals should prefer to abstain from for example joining a party, or from taking part in a demonstration or a boycott, since the rewards from participation will not exceed the costs associated with this act. This problem has been called “the paradox of participation”. The paradox of course lies in the fact that the model predicts that people should not participate in collective action, even though in the real world many individuals do take part in such activities. How do we evade this paradox?
Solving the paradox of participation

Numerous efforts have been made to solve the paradox of participation. As stated by Finkel and Muller (1998, 39) scholars have generally focused on two main solutions to this paradox:

1) measuring individual demand for public goods and perceptions of individual and group efficacy to determine whether the combination of these collective interest variables yields, contra Olson, a nonzero expected benefit from participation, and
2) specifying the private payoffs or selective incentives that are available only to the collective action participants and hence may produce greater expected benefits to the individual from participation than abstention.

Starting with the second of these, the most frequently cited attempt to solve the paradox of participation is Riker and Ordeshook’s (1968) “D-term”.1 The authors argue that the calculus of voting is incomplete, due to the fact that this model underestimates the selective rewards of voting, and they therefore rewrite the original calculus, adding one term:

\[ R = P \times B - C + D \]  

[2]

Among the elements in this added D-term are psychic gratifications, such as, “the satisfaction from compliance with the ethic of voting” and the “satisfaction from affirming a partisan preference”. According to this model, the citizen will go to the polls when \( P \times B + D > C \), that is, when the rewards from voting exceed the costs.

Let us elaborate some on the selective incentives that may affect an individual’s choice to participate. To act in accordance with “the ethic of voting” can be interpreted as compliance with a social norm. Applying the idea of social norms to other forms of political participation, some individuals may choose to become party members or take part in demonstrations since they believe that it is a citizen duty to participate in political action. Some authors argue that norms cannot be included in a rational choice model of political participation (see Whiteley 1995). We however argue with Coleman (1990) that norms may both be purposively generated and affect what actions it will be in the interest of individuals to carry out. Individuals who abstain from participating in actions that are regulated by effective norms are susceptible to the cost of sanctions, either external (pressure from others) or internal (pressure from within). Thus, social norms fit perfectly into a rational choice account, where individuals weigh the expected costs (where sanctions increase costs) against the benefits derived from non-participation.

Riker and Ordeshook’s “satisfaction from affirming a partisan preference” is of course also a selective incentive. This type of incentive has often been categorized as an expressive incentive. Expressive incentives include the psychic gratification that an individual derives from the act of participation per se, by for example

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1 Downs (1957) actually introduced this term, by arguing that citizens derive benefits from the act of voting per se, since they do not want democracy to collapse. As several authors have pointed out, the problem with this attempt to solve the paradox of voting is that “the maintenance of democratic institutions is itself a public good to which any one voter’s contribution is negligible”. Why would a voter not free-ride and “let others save democracy?” (Green and Shapiro 1994).
expressing his or her political views, or by expressing allegiance to a favored candidate or party. This type of incentive has been equated to a sports fan cheering for his or her team in front of the TV. That is, it is not the goal to affect the team’s performance that guides the fan’s behavior. Instead the incentive to cheer for a team, or to vote for a party, is the satisfaction that comes with this act of expression in itself (Brennan and Buchanan 1984; Brennan and Lomasky 1985).

Whiteley (1995) includes party attachment as an incentive that may affect party members’ level of activity. Whiteley argues that this expressive incentive can not be seen as a rational incentive. He argues that “the incentives to free-ride on the efforts of other people are the same for individuals who are strongly attached to a political party as they are for individuals who are weakly attached to that party” (p. 223). This argument however does not hold since expressive incentives are rewards that an individual only receives when he or she participates. Hence, there are no incentives to “free-ride”, since individuals will not receive these benefits when they do not participate. Just as other selective benefits, the gratification from expressing one’s political views is part of the cost-benefit calculus that determines whether an individual chooses to participate or not. We see no reason to exclude expressive incentives from a rational choice account of participation (see also Calvert 2002).

Another type of selective incentive that according to Whiteley (1995) can be included in a rational choice model is an ideological incentive. Whiteley derives this incentive from the so called “law of curvilinear disparity” of political parties (May 1973; Kitschelt 1989), which says that party activists will be more radical than the party leadership and the voters. The argument that Whiteley proposes as an explanation to party activism is that “ideological radicalism should motivate party members to become more involved than voters or inactive members, if the reward for their involvement is to express deeply held beliefs in company with other like-minded individuals” (p. 222). This type of incentive can be generalized to explain other forms of political action, and the idea is that the more radical an individual is, the more likely he or she is to participate in political action, since this involvement gives the individual a chance to express such radical beliefs. Thus, this incentive can also be interpreted as an expressive incentive, which boosts the selective benefits that an individual expects to derive from political participation.

All of the selective incentives presented so far can be labeled process incentives, since the benefits that an individual derives are “not rooted in the outcomes of collective action, but rather in the process itself” (Whiteley 1995, 221). Tullock (1971) introduces another type of process incentive, which can be called the entertainment value of political participation. The argument is that the voter, the party member, or the individual participating in a demonstration may find the act of participation entertaining in some sense. This entertainment value may for example be derived from the excitement that comes from waiting for an election result or from participating in illegal protest, or from enjoying the company of others or learning about the political process when working within a party. Thus, individuals who expect to be entertained are more likely to participate in political action.

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2 Individuals may also be motivated by selective outcome incentives. This type of incentive implies that collective action is instrumental, since the participation comes with some perks that are only available to those who participate (such as the benefits that come from building a political career).
Up until now we have focused only on the introduction of selective incentives as a solution to the paradox of participation. As mentioned above, there have however also been attempts to solve this paradox by focusing on collective incentives, more specifically, by focusing on the $P \times B$ part of equation 1. Focusing on the original calculus of voting, several authors have concluded that even when a race between candidates is very close, “the probability of casting the decisive vote amid a large number of ballots is miniscule” (Green and Shapiro 1994, 49). Thus, with such a small chance of affecting the vote, the rewards from voting are extremely unlikely to exceed the costs of voting when selective benefits are excluded from the model.

One possible way out of this dilemma is to argue that $P$ is not as miniscule as one might expect. Riker and Ordeshook (1968) for example argue that “It is likely that, for many people, the subjective estimate of $P$ is higher than is reasonable, given the objective circumstances”. Several authors have criticized this argument (see e.g. Green and Shapiro 1994). Such critiques are however often vested in the incorrect notion that rationality assumes that voters have to be perfectly informed, which would make a high perceived efficacy (a large $P$) incompatible with a rational choice account of participation. We however contend that a high subjective efficacy is compatible with a procedural view of rationality, to which we adhere. As argued by Jackman (1993), a procedural view of rationality “does not preclude miscalculations on the part of the actors”. Thus, citizens may believe that they can affect collective outcomes by being active in a party, or by contacting a politician. Finkel, Muller and Opp have in various articles elaborated on this argument. Finkel and Muller (1998, 39) label these efforts the collective interest model, which “posits that individuals will participate in protest activities to the extent that (1) they have high levels of discontent with the current provision of public goods by the government or regime, (2) they believe that collective efforts can be successful in providing desired public goods; and (3) they believe that their own participation will enhance the likelihood of the collective effort’s success”. From a rational choice perspective the success of this model in solving the paradox of participation hinges on a combination of the first and the third component. That is, if we assume that individuals do not necessarily perceive that the importance of their own participation is negligible, their level of discontent legitimately enters the cost-benefit calculus of participation. In formal terms, if $P \times B > C$, people participate.

This clearly sets Finkel and Muller’s (1998) collective interest model apart from their earlier developed “collective rationality” model, in which the $P$ term never entered the equation. This model instead explained political participation in terms of the first and second component above, that is, as a combination of public grievances and the belief that collective efforts could be the cure (Muller and Opp 1986; Finkel et al. 1989). Whiteley (1995, 216) argues that the notion of collective rationality is not compatible with a rational choice model, since it implies that “individuals calculate the costs and benefits of different action at the level of the group”. Even more importantly “collective rationality” does not solve the paradox of participation, since individuals who believe their own contribution to the collective effort is negligible still have a rational incentive to free-ride.

True, if the $P$ term is non-negligible, expectations at the group level could be part of a rational choice account of why some participate in politics whereas others do not. However, in this paper we will for two reasons not include group expecta-
tions in our model. First, these expectations introduce a strategic element into the calculus of participation that is not easily modeled with individual-level survey data. Second, and more importantly, it would be problematic to apply these components to actions that are not necessarily group actions, such as contacting. Since our goal is to evaluate the predictive performance of the same theoretical models across different modes of political activity, this could bias our comparison.

We have now discussed a number of solutions to the paradox of participation. Let us here summarize the hypotheses to be tested. We expect that an individual is more likely to participate when his or her perceived efficacy is high and the collective benefits at stake are high, when the individual expects to derive a high entertainment value from participation, when he or she is ideologically radical, when the individual is strongly attached to a party, and when he or she believes that it is a citizen duty to participate. The hypotheses about an individual’s perceived efficacy and collective benefits are aimed at testing the collective interest model, whereas the other hypotheses are derived from the selective incentives solutions.

**Explaining Different Modes of Participation**

We have so far discussed how different types of incentives may affect political participation *in general*. Are there any reasons to believe that different types of incentives are better predictors of specific modes of political participation? Are some variables superior at predicting newer forms of participation? Several authors have attempted to evaluate how different explanatory factors perform when applied to a specific mode of participation. For example, Whiteley (1995) includes a number of incentives in a model of party activity, and finds that both selective and collective incentives determine Conservative party members’ level of activity.

Studying a different mode of participation – protest behavior – Finkel and Muller (1998), find that what matters for participation are not selective incentives, but rather “collective goals, collective chances of success, and the individual’s estimates of his or her own importance for the collective outcome”. Thus, the collective interest model is strongly supported in Finkel and Muller’s application of this model to protest behavior, whereas the selective incentives are found to be weaker predictors of such behavior. If we draw conclusions about the performance of different types of incentives based on these two studies, we should thus expect that the collective interest model will perform well and the selective incentives solutions should perform poorly when applied to the manifestations mode, whereas both types of incentives should be fairly good predictors of party activity.

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3 Finkel and Muller (1998) measure two group level components, the likelihood of group success, and the necessity of group unity. The first factor is measured as the individual’s perception of whether others will participate. The relationship between group success and participation is however not as simple as assumed, since a high likelihood of group success does not necessarily affect participation positively. Instead the relationship should be curvilinear. That is, individuals are more likely to participate when the likelihood of group success is moderate, since there is no reason to participate when the group effort is doomed, or when it will succeed with certainty. Matters are however further complicated by the introduction of the group unity component. If an individual truly believes that a group can only be successful when it is united, then he or she should only participate when everybody else does. This factor thus changes the relationship between group success and participation, making it linear for people who believe that group unity is necessary, and curvilinear for others.
Other empirical studies may also help us gauge which types of incentives should perform well when applied to particular modes. For example, Verba, Schlozman and Brady’s (1995) study of the activists’ own interpretations of gratifications can give some insights about the types of incentives that motivate the activists, even though it is of course problematic to rely on activists’ self-reported reasons for taking part in political action (see also Schlozman et. al. 1995). Verba et. al. (1995) for example find that few of those who made a donation or who contacted an official mentioned social gratifications as a main motivation, whereas campaign workers, members of a political organization, and protesters did mention such benefits. The authors also discern that none of the protesters mentioned material gratifications, whereas a somewhat higher proportion of campaign workers, members of political organizations and individuals who engaged in contacting did mention such selective incentives. For a number of activities, such as protesting, making a donation and contacting officials (i.e., contacting and manifestations), individuals state the desire to influence government policy as a main motivation.

The empirical results are not completely coherent, but on the whole, most research suggest that collective benefits are important determinants of contacting and manifestations, whereas selective incentives are important predictors of party activity. Moreover, different selective incentives seem to drive contacting and manifestations. However, no previous empirical study has included variables specifying the same theoretical models as predictors of several different modes of political participation. This suggests that the differences in the success of various types of incentives found in previous research may be due to specifics associated with the various empirical studies rather than real empirical differences. This is why we have chosen to evaluate the importance of different incentives across three modes – party activity, contacting and manifestations. We expect that the results in this study will follow the pattern found in previous research, and our hypothesis is thus that collective incentives variables will perform well, but selective incentives variables will perform poorly, when applied to manifestations and contacting, and that selective incentives variables will perform well when applied to party activity.

**Resources and the Calculus of Participation**

Alongside the developments of a more comprehensive rational choice theory of participation referred to above, the empirical field of political participation studies have been dominated by the so-called socioeconomic status (SES) model. According to this model, participation is primarily driven by individuals’ resources, such as time, money and skills. With “monotonous regularity”, in Nagel’s (1987, 59) words, study after study have confirmed the finding that access to such resources increases the likelihood of participation (see, e.g., Leighley 1995; Brady et al. 1995). Can this resources model be squared with rational choice theory?

There certainly are ways in which resources can be thought to affect the calculus of participation. For one, access to resources may be inversely related to costs. Above we only focused on the D-term included in equation 2, that is, the selective incentives for political participation. The obverse of selective benefits are the costs of participation, or the C-term. Just as selective benefits, costs only affect those who participate and can thus be seen as selective disincentives. The costs of voting
for example include the time spent on the act of voting itself and the costs of acquiring information about the different choices (see e.g. Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968). The costs of party activity for example include the opportunity cost from the time spent at meetings and so on. Besides varying across modes of participation, costs may also vary across individuals. For example, for some people it is easy to acquire the information needed to make a voting decision, whereas this information comes with less ease for others. Since individuals should participate when $P \times B + D > C$, the lower the costs, the more likely it is that people will participate. Hence, if resources measure the inverse of costs, the higher the level of resources conducive of participation, the more likely will participation be.

However, while this might be a plausible interpretation it hinges on the untested assumption that resources really tap into (the inverse of) perceived costs (and nothing else). Since the rational choice approach is rooted in the individuals’ perceptions (be they false or correct), costs can only provide an indirect linkage through which resources enter the calculus of participation. Moreover, there are other such indirect linkages, the most obvious one being the connection between resources and efficacy (the $P$-term). Individuals equipped with more resources favorable to participation should of course be expected to make a more favorable assessment of the prospects that his or her action will make the public good more likely to materialize. In this way, resources indirectly enter the general interest model of participation. But resources may also be indirectly related to different kinds of selective incentives. For example, high-status individuals in society may be more prone to develop strong social norms urging them to participate.

The upshot of all this is that more theoretical work is needed in order to integrate the socioeconomic resource and the rational choice explanations of political participation. We simply cannot tell a priori whether resources belong to the general, selective or cost component of the calculus of participation. Equally important, however, is the conclusion that, for this very reason, we cannot exclude resources from our tests of the rational choice model. Since resources may exert an independent influence on both the perceived incentives and political participation itself, excluding them from the model could introduce serious omitted variables bias. Thus, in all models presented in this paper we will control for a number of resources that we in previous tests have found to be significant predictors of political participation. In Coleman’s (1990) terms they tap into both the human and social capital side of the stock of resources at the disposal of each individual. More specifically, we include as controls both the standard resource measure in the SES model, that is, level of education, and some key elements in the resource model of participation developed by Brady et al. (1995), that is, political knowledge and civic skills. Moreover, we include two measures of the social capital available to the individual through social networks (Lake and Huckfeldt 1998), the structure of political discussion and practical assistance networks. Finally, we control for membership and activity in voluntary organizations. This measure blends human and social capital aspects of the stock of resources, and stands along with SES as one of the most consistent predictors of participation in the field (Teorell 2003).

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4 In our pretests it turned out that neither time nor income were significantly related to any of the three modes of participation, once controlling for background variables and other resources.
Data and Measures

We will here rely on a nationally representative panel survey of the Swedish population. The first wave of the panel was conducted in the fall of 1997 on a random sample of 1964 Swedish residents in the ages 16–80 years, the so-called Swedish Citizen Study 1997. The fieldwork was mainly carried out as face-to-face interviews averaging about 75 minutes in length, with a response rate of 74.3 percent. The second wave was conducted in the spring of 1999 as a short mail questionnaire distributed to the same sample as in 1997. The response rate this time was 61.9 percent, but taking panel attrition across waves into account, only 1054, or 52.7 percent, of the original 1997 sample took part in both panel waves.5

Both waves of the panel include measures of our dependent variables, the three modes of political participation: party activity, contacting and manifestations. We employed five dichotomous indicators for each mode of political activity. The indicators of party activity are: being a member of a political party, holding office within the party organization, holding elected office in local, regional or national government, having attended a political meeting during the past year, and having worked within a political party during the past year. Our measure of contacting taps whether respondents during the past year have contacted a politician, a civil servant, an organization/association, the mass media, or a lawyer or some other legal authority. The manifestations mode, finally, consists of information on whether respondents during the past year have signed a petition, donated money, boycotted, e.g., certain products, worn or displayed a campaign badge or sticker, or whether they have participated in a demonstration. The indicators of each mode have been summed to a simple additive index standardized to range from 0 to 1.6

Our independent variables are all measured in the first wave of the panel (1997). For exact question wording, we refer to the Appendix. All independent variables have been standardized to vary between 0 and 1. We first include a number of control variables: sex, age, being an immigrant, class, employment sector, and residence. Secondly, we employ a number of resources crucial for participation: education, political knowledge, civic skills, organizational involvement, and access to two kinds of networks: practical assistance and political discussion networks.

Among our collective interest variables, we include two measures of efficacy. The first efficacy measure gauges the individual’s perceived personal influence.7 The second measure, mode specific efficacy is based on a question that asks the

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5 Principal investigators were Anders Westholm and Jan Teorell, both at the Department of Government, Uppsala University. The fieldwork was carried out by Statistics Sweden. Funding for the interview survey of 1997 was provided by the Swedish Research Council for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (HSFR) and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, whereas the mail questionnaire of 1999 was funded by the Government Commission on Swedish Democracy.

6 In the first wave of the panel the three modes are neatly reproduced as the three first dimensions in a principal component analysis after varimax rotation. In the second wave this is almost the case, but with one minor deviation: the item on campaign badge/sticker loads both on the party activity and the manifestations dimension. We believe this is due to the Swedish national election in September 1998, which arguably over-represented the number of campaign badge/stickers among party activists. However, the dimensionality is still similar enough to allow meaningful comparisons across waves.

7 We here focus on “internal efficacy”, i.e. perceptions of the individual’s own possibility to influence policy, thus excluding “external efficacy”, i.e. perceptions of the responsiveness of the system (Balch 1971; see also Westholm and Niemi 1986).
respondents to estimate the effectiveness of different activities, such as, working in a political party, and contacting those who can influence policy. The collective interest variables also include a measure of collective benefits, which is based on a question where the respondents were asked to estimate the importance of a number of social issues. In order to measure the $P \times B$ term of equation 1, we create two interaction terms; one is the product of personal efficacy and collective benefits and one is an interaction between mode specific efficacy and collective benefits.

Let us now turn to the selective incentives variables. The entertainment value of participation describes whether the individual thinks it is fun or exciting to follow politics and to work actively to influence policy. Ideological radicalism is an index that measures the individual’s view on a number of social issues as the absolute difference between his or her position and status quo. Party identification is based on a question that asks if the individual perceives himself/herself as strongly attached to a party. Social norms is based on a question that inquire whether the respondent thinks that it is a citizen duty to try to influence political outcomes.

Methodological issues when using panel data

As previously indicated, panel data offer several distinct advantages over cross-sectional information in testing explanatory models of political participation. To begin with, the use of cross-sectional data in the particular case of participation not only implies that the predictors and the dependent variable are observed synchronously rather than diachronically. The temporal order is in fact typically opposite to the one theoretically posited. The predictors usually refer to the respondent’s state at time $t$ whereas the dependent variable refers to activities carried out within some unit of time (e.g., the last year or the last three years) prior to time $t$. This problem obviously becomes particularly acute when the predictors consist of psychological characteristics that might well be effects as well as causes of participation. Provided that the unit of time over which participation is observed (one year in our case) is no longer than the interval between panel waves (about one and a half year for our data), the use of dynamic information fully remedies this problem. All the analyses presented below are based on predictors observed in the first panel wave and participatory acts subsequently carried out between waves.

Second, any statistical model based on non-experimental evidence runs the risk of bias due to omitted variables. Even when the time order between the predictors and the dependent variable is correct, as it is in our case, there remains a risk that the association between them is spurious. Panel data allow us to control for one additional factor of considerable importance, namely past participation. The inclusion of the lagged dependent variable in the statistical model ensures that the effects of the substantive explanations we try to test are not due to a joint effect of past participation on current participation and the motivations on which we focus. In this sense, including past participation on the right hand side of the equation eliminates endogeneity bias.

This reasoning, however, is fully valid only under the condition that the association between past and current participation is indeed a causal one. If, instead, it results primarily from other omitted variables, for example personal characteristics
that remain highly stable over time and continuously affect the rate of participation, the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable may not only eliminate but also inject bias. More specifically, the effect of past participation may be overestimated and the impact of other predictors underestimated. We therefore present analyses with as well as without control for past participation. These estimates can be regarded as lower and upper bounds, respectively, for the effects of the factors in which we are substantively interested. Our conclusions, however, are primarily based on the more conservative test of our explanatory models, that is, the analyses controlling for past participation.

Results
In all regression analyses presented here, attitudes measured in 1997 are used to predict party activity, contacting and manifestations acts measured in 1999. We first present our statistical models without the variable measuring political participation at \( t-1 \). These results are presented in table 1. In table 2, we present results from the analyses where we control for prior participation.

In table 1 and table 2 we present two alternative models for each participatory mode. The first model includes an additive specification of the collective interest model, whereas the second model includes a variable that measures the interaction between efficacy and collective benefits. We here present the interaction term that gives the best performance, which implies that we present the interaction between perceived personal efficacy and collective benefits for manifestations and party activity. For the contacting mode, we instead present the interaction between mode specific efficacy and collective benefits, since this interaction variable performs slightly better when applied to this particular mode of participation.8

Let us begin by studying the results found when analyzing party activity in table 1. It is clear that selective incentives are far better predictors of this type of activity than collective incentives. The only variable in the collective interest model that has a significant effect on party activity is personal efficacy. The effect of this variable is positive, which suggests that individuals who perceive that they personally can influence political outcomes are more likely to become active party members. The interaction variable created by taking the product of efficacy and collective benefits however does not exert a significant effect, which suggests that it is not the goal to influence collective outcomes that drives party activity.

All of the selective incentives included in these models have significant effects in the expected direction. Thus, an individual who finds political activity entertaining is more likely to participate in party activity. Individuals who are more ideologically radical, and who identify with a party participate to a larger extent in party activity. These results indicate that individuals become active in parties in order to express their political views, and that expressive incentives are important predictors of this particular mode of participation. Individuals are also more active in parties if they believe that it is a citizen duty to participate in political action, which supports the notion that individuals' choices are affected by social norms.

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8 A model including the two interaction terms and all of the original collective interest variables yields a high level of multicollinearity, which is why we do not present such a model.
Table 1: Three modes of participation, without lagged dependent variable

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<th>Contacting</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
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<td>P2</td>
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<td>(0.26)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode specific efficacy</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective benefits</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy × collective benefits</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.31)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode specific eff. × coll. ben.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment value</td>
<td>0.08**</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological radicalism</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.06**</td>
<td>0.06**</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * significant at the 0.10 level, ** significant at the 0.05 level. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; N=926–927. Resource variables included in all models are: education, knowledge, skills, organizational involvement, practical assistance network, political discussion network. Control variables included in all models are: sex, age, immigration, class, employment sector, residence.

In both contacting models, the collective interest model performs better than when applied to party activity. In the additive specification (C1), only efficacy has a significant effect on contacting, but in the model where we include the interaction term created by taking the product of mode specific efficacy and collective benefits (C2), both efficacy and this interaction term has a positive and significant effect. Hence, individuals use the instrument to contact officials to a higher degree when they believe that they can influence political outcomes. Moreover, they are more likely to do so when they believe that contacting is an efficient form of participation and think that it is important to improve government policy.9

Several selective incentives also affect whether or not an individual chooses to contact officials. Individuals who think that taking part in political activity is fun or

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9 The coefficients of the two additive terms found in the interaction model (C2), that is, for mode specific efficacy and collective benefits, should be interpreted as the impact of one of these variables when the other is equal to zero. Thus, the coefficient of –0.27 for collective benefits, for example, implies that for individuals who have zero mode specific efficacy, there is a negative impact of the importance attached to the collective outcome. Although this may sound counterintuitive, it does not run counter to the main results summarized in the coefficient for the interaction term, that is, as mode specific efficacy increases, the effect of collective benefits increases (significantly). When mode specific efficacy is at its maximum (1), the effect of these benefits are –0.27 + 0.43 = 0.16.
exciting, or who are ideologically radical are more likely to contact officials. Party attachment also has a positive and significant effect on contacting. This suggests that both expressive incentives, the entertainment value derived from participation, and the goal to influence policy determines who takes part in contacting activities.

Table 1 also includes the results from analyses of the manifestations mode. In the first additive specification of the collective interest model (M1), only mode specific efficacy has a significant effect. In the second manifestations model, the interaction term created by taking the product of personal efficacy and collective benefits is added (M2). This interaction term has a significant positive effect on manifestations, which implies that the collective interest model is given support here. Thus, individuals take part in manifestations, such as boycotts, because they strive to influence political outcomes. Among the selective incentives included in these models, only two have a significant effect, the variable measuring ideological radicalism, and the variable measuring social norms. This suggests that individuals are more likely to take part in manifestations when they want to express radical beliefs, and when they consider participation a citizen duty. Thus, both collective and selective incentives seem to determine who will take part in manifestations.

In table 2 we present the results when the lagged dependent variable is added to the model, that is, when we control for participation in 1997. Overall, many effects are weakened when we control for prior participation. For party activity, neither of the collective incentives variables have a significant effect in this specification. The only variables with significant effects on party activity are two selective incentives, ideological radicalism and party identification. These results further support the notion that party activity is to a large extent determined by selective incentives, more specifically expressive incentives. Hence, individuals are active in parties since this type of activity enables them to express deeply held beliefs.

An important result to note is also that the effect of prior party activity is substantial. When we go from zero to one on the 1997 party activity index, party activity in 1999 is increased by 0.81 units (on a 0–1 scale). This result is perhaps not very surprising to most empirical researchers – most individuals who become members and who hold office within a party are likely to keep doing so. What should also be noted is that the adjusted $R^2$ is enhanced by the inclusion of the lagged dependent variable – 64 percent of the variance in the party activity index is explained by our independent variables.

The inclusion of prior participation also affects the results found when analyzing the contacting mode, even though the lagged dependent variable has a smaller effect on current participation for this type of activity. The effect of contacting in 1997 is 0.41, which suggests that individuals who have used this instrument before are likely to use it again. The effects of the variables included in the collective interest model are somewhat weakened, but some of the effects are still significant. For example, the effect of perceived personal efficacy is positive and significant, which suggests that individuals who believe that they can influence political outcomes are more likely to contact officials.

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10 The negative effects of efficacy and collective benefits found in the interaction model (M2) again may look strange at first sight (see preceding footnote). The message they convey, however, is straightforward: as efficacy increases from its minimum (0) to its maximum (1), the effect of collective benefits increases from $-0.20$ to $-0.20 + 1.18 = 0.98$ (a substantial effect indeed).
Table 2: Three modes of participation, with lagged dependent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Party activity</th>
<th>Contacting</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P1</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode specific efficacy</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective benefits</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy × collective benefits</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode specific eff. × coll. ben.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment value</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological radicalism</td>
<td>0.06**</td>
<td>0.06**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification</td>
<td>0.03**</td>
<td>0.03**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged dependent variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation 1997</td>
<td>0.81**</td>
<td>0.81**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * significant at the 0.10 level, ** significant at the 0.05 level. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; N=926–927. Resource variables included in all models are: education, knowledge, skills, organizational involvement, practical assistance network, political discussion network. Control variables included in all models are: sex, age, immigration, class, employment sector, residence.

The effect of the interaction between mode specific efficacy and collective benefits is also positive and significant, which implies that contacting is to some extent motivated by the goal to affect policy. One of the selective incentives also stand the test when we include prior participation – individuals seem to be motivated to contact officials since they derive some entertainment value from this act.

The effects of our variables applied to manifestations are not altered much by the inclusion of prior participation, even though this variable has a substantive effect on participation. When we go from zero to one on the participation index in 1997, the manifestations index is increased by 0.38 units. The results found for manifestations again support the notion that individuals take part in manifestations because they believe that manifestations is an efficient mode of participation, and because they strive to influence policy. Thus, the collective interest model is strongly supported when applied to the manifestations mode. Some selective incentives also affect whether individuals take part in manifestations. Individuals who are ideologically radical, and who believe that it is a citizen duty to participate will be more prone to take part in for example demonstrations and boycotts.
To sum up the results found so far, we do find some fairly interesting differences across modes of political participation. The collective interest model performs particularly well when applied to the manifestations mode, suggesting that people participating in this type of activity are largely driven by the strive to influence policy. Collective incentives however cannot explain party activity. Instead, this type of activity is to some extent determined by selective incentives. Individuals take part in party activity because they want to express their views. Contacting is to some degree motivated by the desire to influence policy, but individuals who contact officials are also motivated by the entertainment value of participation.

Another way to summarize the performance of different theoretical models is to compare the effects of indexes created by combining all of the collective incentives variables into one measure and all of the selective incentives variables into another. We here create indexes by weighting each included variable by its parameter estimate. We specify four types of indexes, including (1) the control variables (plus participation in 1997), (2) the resource variables, (3) the collective interest variables, and (4) the selective incentives variables. We then run regression analyses with each participatory mode as dependent variable and each index as independent variable. The results in these analyses are summarized in table 3.

The results found in these analyses confirm the main conclusions that we arrived at above. The index for the collective incentives does not have a significant effect on party activity, which supports the conclusion that party activists are not driven by the desire to influence policy. The collective incentives index does however exert a significant effect on contacting and manifestations. The strongest effect of collective incentives is found when studying manifestations, suggesting that individuals taking part in this type of political activity are certainly driven by the desire to influence policy. The selective incentives index has a significant effect on all three modes of participation. In fact, the strongest effect is found when studying manifestations, which implies that both collective and selective incentives motivate this type of activity. The results for contacting show a similar pattern, where both selective and collective incentives seem to motivate activity, although selective incentives outweigh collective incentives in causal importance. Selective incentives also has a significant effect on party activity, suggesting that party activists are motivated by the selective benefits associated with the process of participation.

So far, we have not commented much on the resource variables included in our models. In the analyses presented in table 3, we have included an index consisting of six resource variables; education, knowledge, skills, organizational involvement, and two variables measuring the social networks that surrounds an individual. This index exerts a significant effect on all three modes of participation. Thus, individuals are more likely to be active in parties, to contact officials, and to take part in manifestations if they have a high level of resources in terms of social and human capital – even after taking their incentives into account. The resource index exerts the strongest effect on contacting and manifestations. Thus, for these modes in particular, access to resources explains a substantial amount of variation in the level of activity that our rational choice-based measures cannot account for.

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11 This creates a weighted linear combination of the variables included in each model, which can be achieved by saving the predicted values from each model. In order to enable a comparison of the effects of the different indexes, each index is divided by the sum of its coefficients.
Table 3: Predicted value indexes for three modes of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Party activity</th>
<th>Contacting</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control index</td>
<td>0.92**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource index</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective incentives index</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.03**</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective incentives index</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** significant at the 0.05 level. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; N=926–927. Control variables in all models are: sex, age, immigration, class, employment sector, residence and participation in 1997. Resource variables in all models are: education, knowledge, skills, organizational involvement, practical assistance network, political discussion network. Collective incentive variables included in the models for party activity are: efficacy, mode specific efficacy, collective benefits, efficacy × collective benefits, in the models for contacting: efficacy, mode specific efficacy, collective benefits, mode specific efficacy × collective benefits, and for manifestations: efficacy, collective benefits, efficacy × collective benefits. Selective incentives variables are: entertainment value, ideological radicalism, party identification, norms.

In sum, the analyses performed here indicate that both collective and selective incentives variables are important to include when we aim to predict political participation. When we do not control for prior participation, our panel analyses show that efficacy affects whether individuals take part in party activity, contacting or manifestations. Thus, individuals who believe that they can affect political outcomes are more likely to participate. However, it is not the goal to influence policy that drives party activists. In fact, when the lagged dependent variable is included in the model, neither of the collective interest variables significantly affect party activism. Instead, individuals are more likely to take part in party activity when they are ideologically radical, and when they are strongly attached to a party. This suggests that expressive incentives are important spurs for party activism.

The collective interest model performs better when applied to contacting and manifestations, both without and with the lagged dependent variable included in the model. The results indicate that individuals who believe that they can affect policy and who value collective benefits highly are more likely to contact officials and take part in manifestations. These activities are however not only driven by the goal to influence policy – selective incentives also seem to motivate individuals to take part in contacting and manifestations. When we do not control for prior participation, the results show that individuals who derive a high entertainment value from participation, and who are ideologically radical are more likely to contact officials. However, when the lagged dependent variable is included in the model, the effect of ideological radicalism is no longer significant. When it comes to manifestations, individuals seem to be motivated by selective incentives such as ideological radicalism and social norms. Thus, individuals are more likely to take part in manifestations, such as consumer boycotts and demonstrations, when they are radical and when they believe that it is a citizen duty to participate.
Discussion

In this paper we have performed analyses aimed at explaining and predicting different modes of participation. We have focused our analyses on evaluating two main types of explanatory variables. First, we have measured the effects of variables drawn from a collective interest model, which posits that individuals will participate when they are discontent with the current provision of public goods and when they believe that their own participation will enhance the likelihood that political action will be successful. Second, we have measured the effects of variables concerned with the selective incentives that may come with political participation. Both types of variables can be included in a rational choice account of participation, and can be seen as solutions to the “paradox of participation”.

Our results indicate that collective interest variables are important predictors of two of the modes studied here – contacting and manifestations. This suggests that individuals who contact officials, who boycott products, who sign petitions, and who take part in political demonstrations are driven by the motivation to influence policy, and that individuals do not consider the effort to influence such outcomes as futile. Our results also show that the collective interest model is not given much support when applied to the party activity mode. Thus, individuals who become party members, and who are active within parties are not foremost driven by the desire to influence policy. Instead such activity is largely predicted by expressive incentives variables and prior participation. Individuals who are active in parties are thus to some extent driven by the desire to express deeply held political beliefs.

Results presented elsewhere support the notion that voting, much as party activity, is primarily driven by selective incentives. On the basis of Swedish panel data, Teorell and Westholm (1999, 2000) have shown that the two factors that best explain turnout in both national elections and elections to the European Parliament are expressive incentives and the duty to vote. Collective incentives, however, are not significant predictors of turnout. Similar results from Canada are found by Blais et al. (2000). Thus, there seems to be a resemblance in the factors that drive the two major electoral modes of participation, that is, voting and party activity.

Are there any theoretical reasons to expect this pattern? Is there something that characterizes party activity and voting that does not characterize the two other modes of participation? Verba and Nie (1972, 105) argue that the fact that the individual has the power to set the agenda is “the main characteristic that differentiates citizen-initiated contacts from other modes of participation”. The authors also contend that this agenda-setting power guarantees that the participatory act is salient and important to the individual. As opposed to contacting, Verba and Nie (1972, 206) argue that voting and “campaign activity” (that is, what Europeans call party activity) are instead often characterized by “a lack of fit between the concerns of the individual and issues of the election”, since the individual usually does not choose the agenda for this type of activity.

These differences in agenda-setting power and saliency of issues may thus be part of the explanation to the results found in our study, where variables drawn from the collective interest model are high-quality predictors of acts like contacting and manifestations, suggesting that individuals taking part in these activities are mainly driven by the goal to affect policy outcomes. Such collective interest vari-
ables however perform poorly when applied to party activity and voting, which implies that individuals do not participate in these activities mainly because they strive to affect policy. Instead, psychological rewards, such as, the satisfaction derived from expressing one’s political beliefs, are more important motivations for party activity; and, on top of that, social norms affect voting.

However, the hypothesis based on agenda-setting power only highlights the difference between voting and party activity on the one hand and contacting on the other. It cannot fully account for the difference between contacting and manifestations since the latter was not included in the Verba and Nie study. Why are collective benefits more important predictors of manifestations than of contacting? At this stage we can only speculate, but a plausible hypothesis would be that our measure of collective benefits does not fully capture the issue agenda relevant for contacting. We would conjecture that this agenda is typically more particularized. If our measure had taken such a particularized agenda into account, collective benefits would probably have had a larger impact on contacting.

We have so far focused on the differences across various modes of political participation. There are however some similarities between modes that should be pointed out. For example, for most political activities, selective benefits seem to be important motivators, be they expressive incentives, norms or the entertainment value derived from participation, and for both contacting and manifestations, activists seem to be driven by the desire to influence policy. This suggests that both solutions to the paradox of participation, that is, both collective and selective incentives solutions, are given some support here. Thus, the question why rational actors would contribute to the provision of public goods when each individual’s likelihood of affecting the outcome is minimal, is given an answer – individuals participate because they do not consider their potential to influence policy as infinitesimal, and because they derive some benefits from participation *per se.*
Appendix – operationalizations

The measures used in the analyses presented in this paper were operationalized from a number of survey items in the Swedish Citizen study in 1997 and the follow-up survey performed in 1999. These items will be further described here. The dependent variables measuring participation are all operationalized using the 1999 items, and the independent variables are operationalized using the 1997 items. All variables have been standardized to vary between zero and one.

**Party activity** is measured as an additive index, consisting of five indicators. One of these is an item attached to the question, “There are different ways of attempting to bring about improvements or counteract deterioration in society. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?”, and describes if the respondent has worked in a political party during the past year. The four other indicators describe if the respondent is a member of a political party, whether he or she holds or has held an office within the party organization, if the respondent holds or has held an elected office in local, regional or national government, and whether he or she has attended a political meeting during the past year.

**Contacting** is measured as an additive index based on five items included as answers to the question referred to above, which describe whether the respondent during the past year has contacted a politician, an association or organization, a central or local government official, the media, or a solicitor or judicial body.

**Manifestations** is measured as an additive index based on five indicators included as answers to the question referred to above, which describe whether the respondent during the past year has signed a petition, donated money, boycotted e.g. certain products, worn or displayed a campaign badge or sticker, and if he or she has participated in a demonstration (other than May 1th).

**Efficacy** is an additive index based on four indicators: “Do people like you have greater or smaller possibilities than others to make politicians take account of your opinions?”, “Do people like you have greater or smaller possibilities than others to present your opinions to politicians?”, “Do you have greater or smaller possibilities than others to understand what happens in politics?”, and “Do you have the knowledge necessary to make political decisions to a greater extent than others”?  

**Mode specific efficacy** is measured with the question, “There are many opinions on how one can most effectively influence decisions in society. I have a list here of some ways that are used, and I would like to ask you how effective you think they are”. The respondents were then asked to gauge the effectiveness of a number of different activities on a 0 to 10 scale, including, work in a political party (the efficacy of party activity), personally contact those who can influence policy (contacting), and take part in public demonstrations (manifestations).

**Collective benefits** is an additive index based on a battery of items attached to the question, “People have different opinions about which social issues are most urgent. In your opinion, how important is it to bring about improvements or counteract deterioration in these following areas?”. The index is based on 14 items re-

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12 This variable has been cubed, since the relationship between efficacy and participation is curvilinear rather than linear.
ating to housing, consumer issues, healthcare, childcare, education, working life, athletics and youth premises, the local environment and traffic plans, nuclear energy, environment and nature, gender equality, immigration, peace and defense, circumstances in other countries, civil liberties and rights in Sweden.

The *entertainment value* of participation is measured as an additive index based on two questions where respondents were asked to estimate on a 0 to 10 scale, “To what extent do you think that it is fun or exciting to follow what happens in different social issues?”, and “To what extent do you think that it is fun or exciting to work actively to influence the development in different social areas?”.

*Ideological radicalism* is an index which is based on a battery of items attached to the question, “There are many different opinions about what should and should not be done in the Swedish society. If you use this scale, which is your opinion about the following?”. The scale ranges between 0, “should be reduced substantially” to 10, “should be increased substantially, where 5 is “should not be increased or reduced”. The items are: “public spending on school and education”, “the number of immigrants that are admitted into Sweden”, “equality between women and men”, “public defense spending”, “the use of nuclear energy”, “public spending for healthcare”, “the unions’ possibility to affect decisions on employment and termination of employees”, “foreign aid”, “the construction of new roads for cars”, “government spending”, “the general tax level”. Each indicator is measured as the absolute difference between item response and status quo (5). The indicators are added into a general index of ideological radicalism.

*Party identification* is measured with the question, “Do you usually think of yourself as a supporter of a particular political party?” with the follow-ups, “Do you consider yourself as one of the strong supporters of your party?”, or “Is there still some party that you feel closer to than the others?”. The party identification scale varies between “not close to any party” (0), “not supporter, but close to some party (0.33)”, “supporter, but not strong (0.67)”, and “strong supporter” (1).

*Social norms* are measured as, “There are different opinions as to what it takes to be a good citizen. I would therefore like to ask you to examine the characteristics listed on the card. Looking at what you personally think, how important is it [on a 0 to 10 scale]:”, “to actively try to influence decisions on social issues”.

We also measured a number of resource variables. *Education* is measured as the respondent’s total number of years in school, which is recoded to vary between 0 (6 years or less) and 1 (18 years or more). *Knowledge* is measured as an additive index based on a series of questions about the Swedish political system. *Skills* is an additive index based on questions where the respondent was asked how often they do the following: “participate in decisions at a meeting”, “plan or chair a meeting”, “prepare or give a speech before a meeting”, and “write a text other than a private letter, at least a few pages in length”. *Organizational involvement* is an additive index based on a battery of questions about membership and activity in 30 different types of voluntary associations. The variable *political discussion network* measures the information potential in the network of people that the individual discusses politics with, based on questions about frequency of discussion, with how many people one discusses, and how well these people know each other. *Practical assistance network* is a variable that measures the information potential in the network of people that an individual can get help from with practical issues, such as, legal
and medical knowledge. The measure is based on questions on the number of areas in which the individual can get practical assistance, how many people the individual can get help from, and how well these people know each other.

We also include a number of control variables in our models. The variable *sex* is given a 1 if the respondent is a male and a 0 if the respondent is a female. *Age* is the respondent’s age in 1999 standardized to vary between 0 and 1. *Immigration* is a dummy where respondents that have immigrated are given a 1, and all other individuals are given a 0. *Social class* is a dummy describing whether the individual is a white collar worker, *employment sector* is a dummy that measures whether the respondent is employed in the public sector. We also include a dummy for those who have never held an occupation, and a dummy for those who are not currently employed. Finally, *place of residence* is a dummy that describes whether the respondent lives in a rural area or not.

**References**


