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Austerity and Protest

Popular Contention in Times of Economic Crisis

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Chapter 4

Does Class Matter in Anti-Austerity Protests? Social Class, Attitudes towards Inequality, and Political Trust in European Demonstrations in a Time of Economic Crisis

Anders Hylmö and Magnus Wennerhag

Introduction

For many decades, the role of “the social” for igniting and shaping political protests has been given little attention in social movement research. For the social theorists that coined the social movement concept during the nineteenth century, the conflicts and divisions between social classes during capitalism were central for understanding politics and mobilizations (e.g. Sombart 1896/1968; von Stein 1850/1964). “The social movement”—in singular—was equivalent with the Workers’ movement, and how its trade unions and parties claimed greater economic equality and political rights. The theories analyzing the “new social movements” that emerged during the 1960s discussed class from a different angle. These movements were rather seen as having a firm middle-class base, while working-class mobilization was claimed to be in decline (e.g. Eder 1995; Touraine 1969/1971). The interest in class did however wane—a development reflecting a general lack of interest within social movement studies in how the dynamics of capitalism affect protests (Hetland and Goodwin 2013). Quite often, social class is today regarded as a factor having little explanatory value for understanding mobilizations and protests. When class is discussed today, it is almost only regarding individuals’ educational level. It has indeed often been shown that university educated people are more inclined to take part in street demonstrations (e.g. Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001), but as we will see in this chapter, education doesn’t tell the whole story of an individual’s belonging to a certain class.

During later years, many longstanding democracies have witnessed novel forms of mobilizations that have cast new light on the role of social class for political protests. The wave of protests during the turn of the century often associated with the global justice movement were often seen as bringing together “new social movements” with the “old” trade unions that traditionally mobilized the working

class, to commonly address the “social question” on a global scale (e.g. della Porta 2007; Wennerhag 2010). Since the global financial crisis in 2008 we have furthermore witnessed a new wave of protests targeting national governments for their austerity measures. In particular the *Indignados* and the “Occupy” protests have been treated as prime examples of these anti-austerity mobilizations, both in the media and by researchers. Other scholars have however pointed out that the trade unions were at least as central for the anti-austerity mobilizations, many times staging the protests that attracted the highest numbers of participants (Accornero and Pinto 2015; della Porta, Mosca and Parks 2012).

Street protest are sometimes seen as the foremost political “weapon of the weak” (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012: 124), expressing a quite classical notion of how subordinate groups denied access to conventional political arenas can potentially achieve social change through protest activities. Following this view, the question arises as to whether the anti-austerity protests, addressing “the social question” of our time—i.e., demands for greater social justice and political inclusion—attract citizens belonging to the “lower” classes to a higher degree than other types of demonstrations. Or, do these protests have the same type of middle-class base as the “new social movements”?

In this chapter, we will therefore compare the class composition of four types of anti-austerity demonstrations—Occupy/*Indignados*, trade union, May Day and other anti-austerity protests—with “new social movement” demonstrations. This will allow us to, firstly, scrutinize whether contemporary anti-austerity protests attract more participants from the lower classes—in particular the working class—than from the upper strata. Since austerity policies tend to affect the general population differently, and in particular worsen the social conditions for the lower classes, it would be interesting to see whether these policies mobilize the groups that are primarily affected by them. In this comparison, we will explore and analyze survey data from 75 demonstrations collected within the research program “Caught in the Act of Protest: Contextualizing Contestation” (CCC). Secondly, we will use the same data to examine the impact of social class on political attitudes among protesters, focusing issues that have been at the forefront during the last few years’ wave of protest: deepening social inequality, welfare privatization, and distrust in political elites. This analysis will allow us to scrutinize to which degree the “framing” of the protests possibly contributes to the demonstrators’ attitudes towards austerity measures, economic inequality and their governments—or if the attitudes of the protesters are best explained by their individual social class, or even the national context in which the demonstration takes place.

Social class will be measured in two different ways. First, with the recently developed occupation-based Oesch class scheme, in which class is conceptualized as the individual’s “objective” position in the labor market. Secondly, we will focus individuals’ self-categorizations of which class they belong to, i.e. their class identity, which can be seen as the “subjective” side of class. Our analysis will also show the different merits of these two conceptualizations of class for analyzing political protests.

Earlier Research on Social Class and Protest Participation

Measuring Social Class

For both Marx and Weber—two of the most influential early theorists of social class—the individual's employment situation was central for conceptualizing class. For Marx, classes existed in relation to each other, as a consequence of the conflict between the owners of the means of production *the bourgeoisie*, i.e. the employers) and the owners of labor power *the proletariat*, i.e. the wage-laborers). Weber (1922/1978: 928) instead saw class as a “market situation.” For him, specific groups' common situation on the labor market—characterized by different levels of reward and opportunity—brought different classes into existence. Education and other forms of merit was seen by Weber as ways through which closure and access was created to specific positions on the labor market (e.g. Crompton 2010; Wright 2009). In practice, this meant that when studying class Weber understood the main dividing line to be between the different working conditions and opportunities of the working and the middle class. Subsequently, he subdivided the entire class of wage laborers that Marx had seen as potentially united by their common interests *vis-à-vis* the employers.

For Marx, the class concept was furthermore connected to political action, as he also saw classes as potential political actors. Weber instead made a distinction between “class,” “status” and “party” when discussing social group formation and stratification, claiming that economic class realities had to be analytically separated from questions about both prestige/lifestyle and power/politics.

Since the early twentieth century, statistical agencies have aggregated employment data into rough “class schemes.” One of today's most influential employment-based class schemes is John Goldthorpe's, first used in empirical studies in the UK in the 1970s and often referred to as the Eriksson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero, or EGP, scheme (Crompton 2010).¹ Goldthorpe's mainly Weber-inspired scheme defines class positions on the basis of employment relations. The basic distinction between employers, self-employed and employees is combined with a notion of different forms of employment contracts. The category of employees—covering the vast majority in developed countries—is subdivided into two ideal contract types: service contract and labor contract. The latter means that work is easily monitored and has a relatively low degree of required skills and expertise, while the opposite is true for the service contract (Goldthorpe 2000: 208). The service contract is predominant within middle class occupations, while working class occupations typically are subject to the labor contract.

A modified version of the EGP scheme has been created by Daniel Oesch (2006a; 2006b), with the ambition to take contemporary changes in the

1 For example, based on the EGP scheme, the European Union's statistical agency Eurostat recently developed a standardized class scheme for international comparative use, the European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC) (Harrison and Rose 2006).

employment structure into account. According to Oesch, three labor market trends have outdated the EGP scheme: the *sector-shift* of the economy entailing a shift from manufacturing to services, the *gender-shift* following women's increased participation in paid employment, and the *education-shift* caused by rising education levels (Oesch 2006a: 27). The result is a swelling middle class that the EGP scheme cannot handle properly. Whereas EGP only has a single hierarchical dimension of service and labor contract, the Oesch class scheme introduces an additional horizontal distinction between three different work logics. These are the *organizational*, the *technical* and the *interpersonal* work logic. The self-employed and the employers are thought of as instances of a fourth *independent* work logic (Oesch 2006a: 64). Behind this division into different work logics lies the assumption that employees' work experiences differs overall between economic sectors, and that such differing experiences tends to shape the employees' political and cultural orientations (Oesch 2006b; 2008a). For instance, managerial occupations are characterized by an organizational work logic, which means that they primarily carry out orders within a bureaucratic setting that value hierarchies and organizational loyalty. Occupations structured by an interpersonal service logic—e.g. teachers and medical doctors—are in contrast more often based on the employees' more autonomous role and their need to interact with their "clients" in a less hierarchical fashion.

The resulting class scheme consists of 17 classes which can be collapsed into an 8-class version. For example, the four classes belonging to the interpersonal work logic are collapsed into two, combining skilled and unskilled service workers into one class (i.e. working class occupations), and professionals and semi-professionals (i.e. middle class occupations) into another.

However, for our present purposes we depart slightly from Oesch in constructing a 9-class scheme. We use the standard collapsed 8-class model, but do not collapse the two independent work logic classes of large employers and self-employed professionals into one aggregate class. The class of self-employed professionals is made up not only of classic professionals like medical doctors or lawyers, but to a large extent also of occupations like freelance journalists and artist. It could be argued that in times of growing labor market insecurity, self-employment increasingly becomes a necessary alternative to regular employment. During such conditions, the market position of e.g. free-lance journalists will differ significantly from that of large employers and managers. Since we study protests where the issue of labor market insecurity has been central, it thus seems warranted to keep these two classes separate in the analytical scheme. Table 4.1 shows the 9-class version of the Oesch scheme.

Table 4.1 Oesch class scheme, 9-class version

Employees			Self-employed
Interpersonal service work logic	Technical work logic	Organizational work logic	Independent work logic
Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals	Technical professionals and semi-professionals	Higher-grade and associate managers and administrators	Large employers
<i>Medical doctors, social workers, teachers</i>	<i>Computing professionals, architects, mechanical engineers</i>	<i>Financial managers, managers in small firms, public administrators</i>	<i>Business owners, department managers (10 or more employees)</i>
			Self-employed professionals <i>Self-employed journalists, doctors and lawyers</i>
Service workers	Production workers	Office clerks	Small business owners
<i>Children's nurses, home helpers, cooks, waiters, telephone salespersons</i>	<i>Assemblers, carpenters, machinery mechanics, bus drivers</i>	<i>Bank tellers, mail sorting clerks, secretaries, fire fighters</i>	<i>Farmers, hairdressers, shopkeepers, lorry drivers (less than 9 or no employees)</i>

Apart from the often Weber-inspired research focusing on the individual's employment situation, class is sometimes also measured according to the individual's subjective belonging to a certain class, i.e. *class identity*—which does not need to coincide with her or his position on the labor market (Cigéhn et al. 2001; Crompton 2010). This approach focuses the “subjective” aspect of social class, and in terms of Weber's concepts for social group formation and stratification, class identity reminds more of his “status” concept. It is worth to mention that class identity only regards the individual's recognition of different social classes and belonging to one of these. This distinguishes it from Marx's more political approach to the subjective side of class, which he mainly discussed in terms of *class consciousness*, which express a further belief that one's own class has different and opposite interests *vis-à-vis* other classes (Oskarson 1994: 111–112).

If the class position is either seen as a position in the occupational structure or the subjective belonging to a class, how can these categorizations of class then be used when analyzing political participation and political attitudes? When it comes to political party preferences, Oesch has for example used his class scheme to show that professionals whose employment is structured by an interpersonal work logic (e.g. teachers, social workers, medical doctors) show a greater support for left-libertarian parties than the professionals being subject to a technical work logic (e.g. mechanical engineers, computer professionals, architects), who instead

more often support conservative center-right parties (Oesch 2008a; 2008b). Other scholars have instead claimed that political preferences are foremost shaped by class identity, not the individual's position on the labor market (Cigéhn and Johansson 1997). Using a class scheme showing similarities with Oesch's, Kriesi (1989) analyzed the participation in new social movements and showed that e.g. the environmental and women's movements attracted middle class individuals in a greater degree than individuals from the working class.

These different approaches to social class have shown that both "objective" and "subjective" class matters for political preferences and political behavior. These examples of earlier research have however never used these conceptualizations of class to analyze the political attitudes of individuals that participate in protests, or to explore the class composition of different types of protests.

Protest Participation and Social Class

Within research on political participation, it has been noted that since the 1960s, citizens in Western democracies have become more inclined to demonstrate in order to bring forward their opinions (see for instance Norris 2002; Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst 2005). Street protests have become a more "normalized" way for citizens to express their opinions and political preferences (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001). The question is whether this "normalization" applies to all social groups. The research that first scrutinized this in a systematic way concluded that protesters to a larger degree were young, men, and highly educated (March and Kaase 1979). Surveys during the 1980s and 1990s however showed that differences due to gender and age have decreased, while differences in education still persist (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001: 466 ff.; see also Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Given the connection between an individual's educational level and his or her occupational class, this suggests that social class still matters for the individual citizen's participation in street protests. Such conclusions also resonate with the studies regarding "new social movements" as expressions of a "middle class radicalism" (e.g. Eder 1995).

It thus seems like a form of political participation that earlier was primarily associated with the labor movement and the mobilization of the working class, is today mostly carried out by a well-educated middle-class. An American study from the 1990s still showed that the inclination to take part in street protests is less affected by individuals' level of education, compared to other forms of political participation (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). In the follow-up study made in the 2000s, these differences between street protests and other forms of political participation had widened. While "political inequality" in general has

increased, demonstrations tend to engage equal shares of all socio-economic groups (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012: 122–4).²

These earlier analyses of protest participation have however mostly used educational level as a proxy for social class. Even though the individual's level of education is still a powerful determinant of her or his social class—since it qualifies the individual for certain positions on a hierarchically structured labor market—the analyses on protest participation have very rarely studied the class composition of demonstrations, or how class can account for differences in political attitudes amongst protesters (for a recent exception, see Eggert and Giugni 2012). This goes both for the “objective” side of class—i.e. the individual's position on the labor market—and the “subjective” side of class, i.e. the individual's own experience of belonging to a certain (or no) social class.

When it comes to the class composition of anti-austerity protests, the issue has only been touched upon in a number of recently published studies.³ Della Porta, Mosca and Parks (2012) point to the important role of rank-and-file labor unions and labor issues in the 2011 anti-austerity protests in Italy and report that around one third of these events were initiated by workers. In Castaneda's (2012) portrait of the Spanish *Indignados* protests of 2011, the movement's core of well-educated—but unemployed—youth is noted. This impression is confirmed by a survey carried out by Calvo (2013) the same year. Anduiza, Cristancho and Sabucedo (2014) have compared the *Indignados* protesters of the 15M protest with participants in 8 other Spanish demonstrations, using the same CCC data as us, and found that the former were more highly educated and more likely to be unemployed. To complement these findings, in this chapter we will provide a more thorough analysis that includes a wider range of different anti-austerity protests, and scrutinize the role of both occupational class and class identity in these protests.

Method and Data

Survey Method and Data

Our data consists in 15,815 respondents to protest surveys distributed during 75 demonstrations in 8 European countries between November 2009 and May 1st 2013, as part of the CCC research program. To explore possible differences between demonstration types, The 75 demonstrations have been grouped into 15

2 In their recent study, Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012) analyze the impact of “socio-economic status,” which is a joint measure for the individual's educational level and family income.

3 Peterson, Wahlström and Wennerhag (forthcoming) however discuss the class composition of some anti-austerity protests in four European countries, using the same CCC data as this chapter.

sub-categories. This categorization was mainly done on the basis of the issue of the demonstrations, but we did also take into consideration whether the protest organizers belong to a specific movement or a broader movement sector. The 15 sub-categories were furthermore combined into three broader categories: *anti-austerity*, *new social movement*, and *other* demonstrations (for an overview, see table in Appendix). Since the main aim of this chapter is to focus different types of anti-austerity protests, the remaining demonstrations will only be analyzed through their two broader categories.

The surveyed *anti-austerity* demonstrations are analyzed as four separate sub-categories. First, three Occupy/*Indignados* demonstrations, held under these banners in 2011 in London, Madrid and the Netherlands. Secondly, anti-austerity demonstration staged by trade unions. Thirdly, other types of anti-austerity demonstrations that do not fit into the two above-mentioned categories. This primarily includes students' protests against austerity measures, in the UK and the Netherlands. As our fourth category, we have chosen May Day demonstrations. This may not be obvious, but as has been shown by Peterson, Wahlström and Wennerhag (forthcoming) in an analysis using CCC-data, anti-austerity demands have dominated European May Day-demonstrations since 2010. Despite the fact that all 16 May Day demonstrations (but four)⁴ were primarily organized by trade unions, we have chosen not to categorize them as "trade union anti-austerity," since this annually occurring march is probable to display other mobilization patterns than the trade union protests that address specific anti-austerity issues, many times at a very short notice. In total, 39 anti-austerity demonstrations are included in the analysis, of which a majority was staged by trade unions.

The category "new social movement demonstrations" is made up of 25 demonstrations concerning anti-racist, environmental, peace, LGBT, and women's rights issues. The category "other demonstrations" is made up of 11 protests addressing such diverse issues as anti-abortion, anti-corruption, anti-regionalism, regionalism, democracy (often addressing upcoming or past elections), and one trade union demonstration that did not have a specific anti-austerity focus. The countries from which we use data are Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and the UK. The table in the Appendix shows how the different types of demonstrations—divided into the three broader categories and the 15 sub-categories—are distributed between countries, and also the number of cases for each demonstration type and country. In the following analysis, six categories of protests will be used: the four types of *anti-austerity* demonstrations, *new social movements*, and *other* demonstrations.

Furthermore, in order to compare the social composition of the CCC-surveyed demonstrations with the general population, we have used data for the relevant

4 These four cases were three May Day demonstrations organized by the Left Party in Sweden 2010, 2011 and 2012 and one May Day demonstration organized by the Czech Communist Party in 2013. Even though no trade unions were amongst the official organizers, many trade union activists took part in these demonstrations.

countries from the 2010 European Social Survey Round 5 (ESS5) and relevant rounds of the World Values Survey (WVS). This will allow us to see whether the composition of the different types of anti-austerity demonstrations more or less mirror the general population, and thus get indications for whether certain classes are over- or underrepresented in the protests.

Class Variables and Dependent Variables

In order to construct a variable for the protesters' placement in the Oesch-9 class scheme, we have used available CCC data about the individuals' employment status (employer, self-employed or employee), occupation and supervisory status.⁵ Since labor market position determines class position in the Oesch class scheme, a central concern is how to treat individuals not currently in employment.⁶ Since we want to include both unemployed and pensioners when analyzing class, we have chosen to include everyone disregarding age or current employment status. The unemployed are thus coded according to their last paid job. To be able to include the relatively large group of full-time students—which previous studies have shown to be central for the Occupy/*Indignados* protests—we have furthermore constructed an extra tenth “class” of students.⁷ The data used from the European Social Survey have been recoded into an Oesch-9 variable using the same procedure as with the CCC data.⁸ The variable for class identity is derived from an identical question posed in both the CCC and the World Values Survey.

The three dependent variables analyzed in this chapter's regressions are two items concerning the respondent's level of agreement to two statements about whether the state should redistribute incomes, and whether the state should privatize public enterprises; and one item concerning the respondent's level of trust in the national government.

5 For a detailed description of the coding process and the variables used, see Appendix C in Hylmö and Wennerhag (2012)

6 Oesch (2006a: 75) proposes a target population that covers only persons in ages 20–65 currently working at least 20 hours per week, in order to only derive a class position from persons properly involved in the labor market. Full-time students, the retired and the unemployed are thus altogether left out of the Oesch class scheme.

7 The small share of respondents who are both full-time students and in paid employment are class coded according to their occupation.

8 The ESS5 covers the countries included in the CCC data, except Italy that was not part of the ESS5.

Table 4.2 The class composition of different types of demonstrations (CCC) and in the general population (ESS5), according to the Oesch-9 class scheme. (%)

Class: Oesch-9 category (%)	Demonstration type						Total	National populations*
	Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	Trade union anti-austerity	Other anti-austerity	May Day	New Social Movements	Other	All demonstrators	ESS5 (2010)
Self-employed								
Large employers (10 or more employees)	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
Self-employed professionals	6	3	7	4	7	5	6	2
Small business owners	4	1	3	2	5	5	4	9
Employed: Middle-class occupations								
Associate managers and administrators	19	36	11	24	22	24	24	14
Technical professionals and technicians	15	7	2	7	7	8	7	5
Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals	25	25	19	30	32	33	30	12
Employed: Working-class occupations								
Office clerks	4	6	3	4	3	3	4	11
Production workers	3	11	1	10	3	4	6	22
Service workers	5	6	4	7	5	5	6	15
<i>Students, not working</i>	17	4	49	11	13	11	13	10
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (N)	444	2,271	933	2,135	4,895	2,372	13,050	12,597

*The ESS5 sample does not include Italy.

Analysis

The Anti-Austerity Demonstrations' Class Composition

In order to see whether the “objective” class composition of anti-austerity demonstrations differ from other types of CCC-surveyed demonstrations, as well as from the general population, we first use the Oesch class scheme. Table 4.2 shows the figures for this.⁹

In general, we find that almost 70 percent of the demonstrators belong to the five classes of managers, professionals and semi-professionals at the upper end of the Oesch-9 scheme. The two classes of professionals and semi-professionals with occupations characterized by an organizational or interpersonal service work logic together account for about 55 percent of demonstrators, while the corresponding group with occupations characterized by a technical work logic only make up seven percent of the demonstrators. Only two percent of demonstrators are large employers, while the self-employed professionals make up six percent. All these five classes of managers, professionals and semi-professionals are more or less over-represented among demonstrators, compared to the corresponding ESS figures for the general population. In contrast, individuals with typical working class occupations (the Oesch classes for office clerks, production workers, and service workers) are clearly underrepresented.

If we compare the class composition of the four types of anti-austerity protests with new social movement demonstrations, it is quite clear that only certain types of anti-austerity demonstrations attract individuals with working class occupations to a higher degree than new social movement demonstrations do. Only the trade union anti-austerity and the May Day demonstrations have a higher share of participants with working class occupations, but this share is at the same time lower than amongst the general population.

One peculiarity is the large share of associate managers and administrators in the trade union demonstrations, but these figures results from the fact that trade union functionaries are categorized as this in the Oesch scheme. Another peculiarity is the high percentage of students in the category of “other anti-austerity,” which is explained by the fact that this category is primarily made up of student demonstrations.

The Class Identity of Demonstrators

If the occupational-based class composition of the CCC-surveyed demonstrations seems to be shifted “upwards” along the class hierarchy in comparison with the

9 For precise class data for 60 of the 75 demonstrations analyzed in this chapter and ESS data for each country analyzed, see Appendix A and B in Hylmö and Wennerhag (2012). The ESS data is presented as the percentage for all countries that occur in the CCC data, apart from Italy, which was not part of ESS5.

Table 4.3 The class composition of different types of demonstrations (CCC) and in the general population (WVS), regarding class identity. (%)

Class: Class identity (%)	Demonstration type						Total	National populations*
	Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	Trade union anti-austerity	Other anti- austerity	May Day	New Social Movements	Other	All demonstrators	WVS (1995–2012)
Upper class	2	1	6	0	1	1	2	2
Upper middle class	21	21	48	17	30	28	27	24
Lower middle class	33	35	28	38	43	40	39	46
Working class	35	37	11	37	15	22	24	23
Lower class	1	2	3	2	1	1	2	6
None	9	4	4	5	10	7	7	n.a.
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (N)	506	2,852	995	2,483	5,615	2,795	15,246	4,378

Notes: * In this column, the mean value for all countries of our study is presented (apart from Belgium). The most recent data from when this question was asked is used, for the last time the country participated in WVS. This means that the data is from the following countries and years: Czech Republic 1995), Italy (2005), Netherlands (2012), Spain (2011), Sweden (2011), Switzerland (2007) and the UK (1998). In the World Values Survey, there was not (as in the CCC survey) an alternative for “none.”

general population, what then about the demonstrators' class identity? Table 4.3 shows class identity for the different demonstration types and the corresponding "subjective" class composition of the general population, derived from World Values Survey data.¹⁰

In Table 4.3, we find that the "subjective" class compositions of the surveyed demonstrations on average resemble the general population to a high degree. However, between demonstration types we find a marked difference in working class identification, where demonstrators in the trade union anti-austerity (37 percent), May Day (37 percent) and Occupy/*Indignados* (35 percent) protests identify as working class in a higher degree than the general population (23 percent). In contrast, the demonstrators of the "new social movements" and "other anti-austerity" categories display a clear "upward shift" in their class identification vis-à-vis the general population.¹¹

Our analysis shows that in terms of "objective class" (Oesch), the "higher" classes seem to be more well-represented than the "lower" classes amongst the demonstrators, compared to the general population. Regarding "subjective class" (i.e., the class identity), the same clear pattern cannot be found: the proportion of individuals with working class and middle class identification varies more between demonstration types than between all demonstrations and the general population. These different results show the merits of not only measuring social class as positions on the labor market, but also according to the "subjective" dimension of class. This is particularly relevant when one analyzes the class composition of political protests, a context in which class is not only expressed but also "made," as part of the process of political articulation (see for instance Bourdieu 1987; Thompson 1968/1991; Wacquant 1992). Even though it is not possible to use only CCC data to analyze whether different types of protests strengthen different types of class identities, we have elsewhere (Hylmö and Wennerhag 2012) shown strong correlations between working class identity and May Day demonstrations and between middle class identity and new social movement demonstrations, even when controlling for occupational class. This indicates the importance of the demonstration level, and more specifically the demonstration type, when studying protest participants' identities and attitudes.

10 For the precise class identity data for 60 of the 75 demonstrations analyzed in this chapter and equivalent WVS data for some of the countries, see Appendix A and B in Hylmö and Wennerhag (2012).

11 It should be noted that there are strong national differences in class identity, both among demonstrators and in the WVS sample. For example, the share of the general population identifying as upper middle class is 46 percent in Switzerland, while it is only 4 percent in Spain. For more precise data on national differences in class identity, see Appendix A and B in Hylmö and Wennerhag (2012).

Attitudes on Anti-Austerity Measures and Politics

Hitherto, we have shown that the class composition of different types of anti-austerity demonstrations varies to a high degree, both regarding occupational class and class identity. We will now analyze whether demonstration type also affects the protesters' attitudes—or if the attitudes of the protesters are best explained by their individual social class both according to the Oesch scheme and regarding class identity, or even the national context in which the demonstration takes place. The analysis will focus on some of the issues that have been at the forefront during the recent wave of anti-austerity protests in Europe: increasing social inequalities, welfare privatization and distrust in the national governments. By making a linear regression analysis, we will be able to test whether the individual protesters' attitudes are foremost shaped by their social class, other individual characteristics, or by more contextual factors such as demonstration type or the national context of the demonstration.

Table 4.4 shows that when it comes to attitudes towards social inequality more precisely whether the government should redistribute income to counteract such inequalities, demonstrators' belonging to a certain social class have impact. Irrespective if we are dealing with Oesch's class scheme or class identity, the "lower" classes in general favor economic redistribution to a greater degree than the "higher" classes. If one compares the different impact of the two measures of class, it is obvious that class identity has more impact for attitudes on this issue and especially those identifying as "working class" do favor more state redistribution. Regarding Oesch's "objective" class measure, it is however interesting to note that the "socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals" breaks the general pattern by being the class that most favors redistribution.

When it comes to the country of the demonstrations, this has less impact than "subjective" class for attitudes on this issue, but more impact than "objective" class. Country-wise, in particular the demonstrators in Italy, Sweden, and the UK stand out as being more favorable to economic redistribution. The issue of the demonstration also has a certain impact, but less than country of demonstration and class identity. In particular, the participants of trade union anti-austerity and May Day demonstrations do to a greater degree than participants of other protests favor more income redistribution. What is noteworthy is however that the protesters of Occupy/*Indignados* demonstrations are only slightly more in favor of redistribution than new social movement demonstrators.

Table 4.4 Social class and attitudes towards social inequality (linear regression)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Control variables			
Age	.095	.097	.099
Gender: Woman	-.020	-.032	-.016
University degree / study at university	.054	.053	.101
Unemployed or between jobs	.016	.013	.008
Country of demonstration (Netherlands = ref.)			
Belgium	.030	.019	.025
Czech Republic	-.066	-.064	-.069
Italy	.137	.129	.120
Spain	.063	.055	.017
Sweden	.102	.090	.083
Switzerland	.022	.015	.018
United Kingdom	.137	.133	.103
Type of demonstration (New Social Movements = ref.)			
Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	.021	.023	.022
Trade union anti-austerity	.070	.066	.051
Other anti-austerity	-.045	-.051	-.042
May Day	.145	.143	.126
Other	-.087	-.085	-.078

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Class: Oesch-9 scheme (Associate managers and administrators = ref.)			
Large employers (10 or more employees)		-.025	
Self-employed professionals		.009	
Small business owners		-.021	
Technical professionals and technicians		.002	
Socio-cultural professionals / semi-professionals		.086	
Office clerks		.025	
Production workers		.041	
Service workers		.035	
Students not working		.036	
Class identity (upper middle class = ref.)			
Upper class			-.024
Lower middle class			.100
Working class			.173
Lower class			.063
No class identification			.037
R ²	0.094	0.103	0.115
Observations	11,767	11,767	11,767

Notes: The regression models regards responses to the statement “Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off,” which could be answered on a 1–5 scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Columns show standardized Beta coefficients. Levels of significance: *=5%, **=1%, and ***=0.1% significance.

Some of these patterns can also be seen in Table 4.5, which shows the corresponding regression analysis for attitudes towards privatization of public welfare and state-owned enterprises. Also here, the country of demonstration is important, but in comparison with the regression in Table 4.5 the issue of the demonstration shows to be more important. In particular, the participants of the trade union-organized anti-austerity and May Day demonstrations, and of the Occupy/*Indignados* protests, stands out as being most against privatizations. For this issue, class however seems to have a lower impact—apart for those belonging to the Oesch category “socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals” and those having a “working class” identity, that are the classes being most against privatization. However, it is noteworthy that those in working class positions (according to the Oesch scheme) do not disfavor privatizations in the same degree as those that identity-wise see themselves as workers.

When it comes to trust in the national government (see Table 4.6), one can also notice differences between social classes. In general, the “higher” classes have higher trust in the national government than the “lower” classes. However, the Oesch measure shows that the “lower” classes’ distrust for the national government is also shared by parts of the “higher classes,” most notably the “socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals” and “self-employed professionals.” But still, the class identity has the highest impact, where in particular those being “working class” distrust the national government.

There are furthermore smaller differences between demonstration types than in the other two regressions. One can however notice that in particular the protesters of Occupy/*Indignados*, trade union anti-austerity and May Day demonstrations have less confidence in their national governments than other protesters do. The most important factor affecting the level of trust in the national government is however the country of demonstration, where very big differences can be noted. Especially the protesters in southern Europe (Italy and Spain) and Czech Republic show low levels of trust in the national government.

In general, these three regressions shows that social class matters more than national context, but only when it comes to political issues connected to the socio-economic cleavage (i.e., income redistribution and whether the state should provide welfare services and own enterprises). An issue regarding “the political” such as trust in the national government is however more affected by the country in which the demonstration was staged. This is probably partly explained by more structural facts, e.g. that levels of trust in political institutions in general tend to vary considerably between countries and regions, or by more contingent facts, e.g. that the political color of national governments differed between the countries (and thus their ideological closeness to the protesters). But one can also note that the national contexts that most strongly correlate with low trust in the national government are simultaneously countries that have been hardest struck by austerity measures during recent years. Overall, these differences however seems to suggest that political attitudes that is more obviously connected to the socio-economic cleavage, is more affected by the class identity of the protestors and

Table 4.5 Social class and attitudes towards privatizations (linear regression)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Control variables			
Age	-.051	-.042	-.054
Gender: Woman	-.015	-.001	-.017
University degree / study at university	-.096	-.076	-.122
Unemployed or between jobs	-.015	-.014	-.011
Country of demonstration (Netherlands = ref.)			
Belgium	-.032	-.023	-.026
Czech Republic	-.047	-.049	-.043
Italy	-.031	-.025	-.020
Spain	.028	.036	.058
Sweden	-.112	-.105	-.098
Switzerland	-.123	-.114	-.118
United Kingdom	-.139	-.134	-.114
Type of demonstration (New Social Movements = ref.)			
Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	-.079	-.081	-.080
Trade union anti-austerity	-.088	-.089	-.078
Other anti-austerity	-.002	-.003	-.005
May Day	-.096	-.099	-.086
Other	.121	.121	.115

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Class: Oesch-9 scheme (Associate managers and administrators = ref.)			
Large employers (10 or more employees)		.020	
Self-employed professionals		.004	
Small business owners		-.008	
Technical professionals and technicians		-.006	
Socio-cultural professionals / semi-professionals		-.081	
Office clerks		-.010	
Production workers		.021	
Service workers		.003	
Students not working		-.007	
Class identity (upper middle class = ref.)			
Upper class			.015
Lower middle class			-.055
Working class			-.101
Lower class			-.015
No class identification			-.041
R ²	0.091	0.098	0.098
Observations	11,734	11,734	11,734

Notes: The regression models regards the responses to the statement “Even the most important public services and industries are best left to private enterprises,” which could be answered on a 1–5 scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). This means that a high value express a negative stance towards privatizations. Columns show standardized Beta coefficients. Levels of significance: *=5%, **=1%, and ***=0.1% significance.

Table 4.6 Social class and trust in the national government (linear regression)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Control variables			
Age	-.027	-.021	-.032
Gender: Woman	-.004	-.002	-.007
University degree / study at university	.069	.060	.028
Unemployed or between jobs	-.029	-.027	-.021
Country of demonstration (Netherlands = ref.)			
Belgium	.063	.066	.070
Czech Republic	-.218	-.218	-.213
Italy	-.248	-.243	-.231
Spain	-.164	-.161	-.124
Sweden	-.050	-.043	-.032
Switzerland	.165	.170	.171
United Kingdom	-.108	-.105	-.074
Type of demonstration (New Social Movements = ref.)			
Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	-.053	-.052	-.053
Trade union anti-austerity	-.068	-.069	-.053
Other anti-austerity	-.001	.001	-.004
May Day	-.079	-.080	-.064
Other	-.056	-.057	-.064

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	<i>Only control variables</i>	<i>Oesch</i>	<i>Class identification</i>
Class: Oesch-9 scheme (Associate managers and administrators = ref.)			
Large employers (10 or more employees)		-.019	
Self-employed professionals		-.051	
Small business owners		-.028	
Technical professionals and technicians		-.015	
Socio-cultural professionals / semi-professionals		-.054	
Office clerks		-.036	
Production workers		-.054	
Service workers		-.047	
Students not working		-.018	
Class identity (upper middle class = ref.)			
Upper class			.011
Lower middle class			-.091
Working class			-.152
Lower class			-.062
No class identification			-.065
R ²	0.210	0.215	0.226
Observations	11,760	11,760	11,760

Notes: The regression models regards responses to a question about how much the respondent trusted in “the national government,” which could be answered on a 1–5 scale, ranging from 1 (“not at all”) to 5 (“very much”). Columns show standardized Beta coefficients. Levels of significance: 5%, 1%, and ***=0.1% significance.

the “class-framing” of the demonstrations they take part in, than e.g. the national context. Even amongst anti-austerity protesters, one can thus see varying attitudes towards austerity measures that depend on the individuals’ social class.

When it comes to the relative merits of the different measures of class, the regressions shows that class identity has the greatest impact on political attitudes. But Oesch’s measure for “objective class”—i.e. the individual’s position in a hierarchically structured labor market—still explains the variation in individuals’ political attitudes. These attitudes are furthermore not always necessarily structured according to the class hierarchy, and thus do not place the working class at one side of the continuum and the middle class professionals at the other; the attitudes of some groups of professionals are closer to the attitudes of the working class than to other groups of professionals. These differences amongst the higher classes are most discernible in the Oesch scheme. In particular the “socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals” (having employments characterized by the “interpersonal” work logic) and “self-employed professionals” (having occupations characterized by an “independent” work logic) tends to have political attitudes closer to the working class.

Furthermore, our analysis shows that in general, the issue of the demonstration is slightly more important than occupational social class (Oesch), but it is still less important than class identity. It should probably not come as a surprise that the mobilizing issue of a protest affects which individuals that decide to take part in it, neither that demonstrations addressing socio-economic issues from a leftist perspective (such as trade union and May Day demonstrations) in a higher degree mobilize protesters being more favorable to income redistribution and more negative to welfare privatization. However, this must be interpreted in the light of the fact that social class still matters for these attitudes, also when controlling for the issues of the demonstrations.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have analyzed the class composition of demonstrations and the impact of the protesters’ social class on their political attitudes, using survey data from 75 recent European demonstrations, in particular focusing different kinds of anti-austerity protests.

Compared with the general population, the occupational class composition of demonstrations display a clear “upward shift,” making the working classes relatively underrepresented. However, when it comes to class identity, demonstrators resemble the general population more closely. There are however marked differences in class identity between the different types of demonstrations. For example, demonstrators in May Day, trade union anti-austerity and Occupy/*Indignados* demonstrations identify as working class to a much higher degree than the general population, which is not the case for participants in new social movement and other anti-austerity demonstrations.

These findings could be interpreted according to the notion that class identity is not primarily a static feature of individuals, but something that is “made” partly through political mobilizations. Especially when class issues are at the forefront of the mobilizations, such events do most probably contribute to the strengthening and/or forging of class-identity (and even class-consciousness). As a subjective and politically articulated orientation of the individual, class identity does not necessarily coincide with her or his class according to an occupational-based class scheme. For instance, even though trade union anti-austerity and May Day demonstrations—as one would expect—contains a higher degree of protesters with working class occupations than other demonstrations, they contain an even higher degree of protesters identifying themselves as working class.

We have also shown that social class still is an important factor for explaining differences in protesters’ political attitudes. Our comparison of the relative impact of class—both its “objective” and “subjective” side—*vis-à-vis* the impact of demonstration type and national context, show that class still matters for protesters’ attitudes towards social inequality, privatizations and trust in the national government. Class identity turns out to be the most important factor, but “objective class” still has an impact on political attitudes. In general, lower classes (i.e. the “working class”) are more in favor of redistribution and are more against privatization, but the Oesch class scheme also has the merit of showing that these differences in attitudes not only depend on a vertical class division, but also on the work logic characterizing different occupational classes. For instance, among the higher classes the “socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals” clearly stand closer to the working class in political attitudes regarding socio-economic issues.

This analysis shows that one of the aspects highlighted in the Oesch class schema, the occupational sector (characterized according to an analytical division between production-, administration- and social interaction-oriented occupations), creates significant differences in attitudes amongst protesters. In accordance with Oesch’s own analysis of class voting (Oesch 2008a; 2008b), we can discern patterns not only being structured by the hierarchical division of the labor market (the degrees of control, interchangeability and security that characterize different groups of occupations); the different types of work logics do also have a significant effect on political attitudes towards socio-economic issues amongst protesters.

If earlier studies of political participation have been analyzing class using mainly the educational level of individuals as a proxy for social class (e.g. Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012), our analysis overall shows the merits of including both occupational-based and identity-focused class when studying the impact of social class on protesters’ political attitudes. Our analysis shows that both objective and subjective class matters also when we control for the protesters’ level of education.

The proposed long-term “normalization of protest”—with a development towards street protesters mirroring the general population’s social composition—do indeed describe a general tendency (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2001), but when it

comes to social class, our demonstration survey data indicate that some social classes are much less likely to engage in protests than others. To take part in street protest seems primarily still be a form of political mobilization of the middle class. This is also the case for trade union-organized anti-austerity protests, as well as other protests against austerity measures. But there are striking differences *between* demonstrations, not least when it comes to the class identity of demonstrators. If the new social movements represent a “middle class radicalism,” the old social movements still mobilize demonstrators identifying as working class for their trade union and May Day demonstrations. But this is also the case for Occupy/*Indignados* demonstrators, who also tend to identify as working class to a greater extent than other protesters, despite the fact that few of them have traditional working class occupations.

One can thus conclude that recent years’ wave of European anti-austerity protests have not primarily brought out the “lower” classes on the streets. Also these protests do still primarily attract the well-educated middle-class. However, one can still see that a higher share of citizens with working class occupations or working class identities take part in these demonstrations than the more thoroughly middle class dominated protests staged by new social movements. These differences in social composition between different types of anti-austerity protests and other demonstrations deserve further exploration. Furthermore, the relation between “objective” class position and class identity and its connection to the political attitudes of demonstrators should be of interest to analyze further for anyone concerned with the political articulation of class in today’s Europe.

Appendix

Table 4A.1 Types of demonstrations analyzed

Demonstration types	Number of demonstrations in each country								Total	
	Belgium	Czech Republic	Italy	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom	Demonstrations	Cases
Anti-austerity										
Occupy/ <i>Indignados</i>	3	1	2	1	1			1	3	530
Trade union anti-austerity				4	3			1	14	2,959
Other anti- austerity				4				2	6	1,039
Mayday	1	1	2		3	6	2	1	16	2,557
New Social Movements										
Anti-racism				1		1		2	4	679
Environmental	2		1	2		1	2	2	10	3,200
Peace			1						1	264
Pride		1	1	1		1	2	1	7	1,154
Women's rights							2	1	3	534
Other demonstrations										
Anti-abortion					1				1	302
Anti-corruption		1	1						2	404
Anti-regionalist	2								2	567
Democracy			1					1	2	495
Regionalist					3				3	934
Trade union not anti- austerity)	1								1	197
Total										
Demonstrations	9	4	9	13	11	9	8	12	75	
Cases	1,945	744	1,634	2,914	2,553	1,582	1,978	2,465		15,815