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# **SOCIAL NETWORKS AND INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES: EXPLAINING DIFFERENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article seeks to explain differential participation in social movements. People are not brought to collective action at the same level of intensity. Some become core activists, while others invest only little time and effort. We test a number of hypotheses drawn from the social networks and the rationalist perspectives on individual engagement by means of survey data on participants in a major organization of the Swiss solidarity movement. Not surprisingly, both perspectives find empirical support: the intensity of participation depends both on the embeddedness in social networks and on the individual preferences towards engagement, that is, the perception of a number of aspects implied by engagement. In particular, to be recruited by an activist and the perceived effectiveness of one's own prospected contribution are the best predictors of differential participation. We specify the role of networks for social movements by looking at the nature and content of networks and by distinguishing between three basic functions of networks: recruitment, socialization, and the bridging of structural and individual components of participation. The latter function suggests that individual preferences are not given a priori but are strongly affected by the embeddedness in social networks. This allows us to criticize both social networks and rational choice accounts of individual participation. Explanations that stress the role of networks are often mechanistic insofar as they fail to show how the embeddedness of individuals in pre-existing networks affect their interests, preferences, and utilities. Rationalist accounts, on the other hand, neglect the origin of those interests, preferences, and utilities, which are strongly affected by social relations.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PREFERENCES: EXPLAINING DIFFERENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Even a cursory look at participants in social movements gives us a variegated picture. On the one hand, we find deeply involved activists who spend much time and effort in organizing campaigns and who are at the forefront of the movement. On the other hand, a usually much larger number of people only provide the movement with some sporadic support, often made of financial contributions. In between, of course, there is a whole range of intermediate levels of participation. Briefly put, social movements typically display various levels of involvement. For example, Kriesi (1993) distinguishes between contributing to a social movement organization (SMO) as a member, participating in campaigns, and participating in the movement's core activities. However, surprisingly few authors have taken into account this self-evident feature of social movements (Barkan et al. 1995; Klandermans 1997; Kriesi 1993; McAdam 1986; Oliver 1984; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991). Usually, authors have examined how people get involved, thus neglecting the obvious distinction between different degrees of participation. In this respect, differential recruitment has been a major focus of theory and research (e.g., Rosenthal et al. 1985; Snow et al. 1980), showing that people are brought into social movements through a variety of channels and due to a variety of factors. As Barkan et al. (1995: 114) have remarked, “[r]ecruitment is only a part of the picture, however. Of the many people who join a movement, some subsequently participate more than others, while some eventually drop out altogether. The focus on recruitment has obscured this basic fact of collective action. Despite the importance of differential participation for movement outcomes, it surprisingly remains a black box in the study of social movements”.

In this paper we would like to shed some light on the “black box” Barkan and his co-authors have pointed out as being a major shortcoming of recent research. Thus, the first goal of our paper is to account for differential participation in social movements. Furthermore, we do so in relation to the well-known theoretical discussion of the opposition of structural-level and individual-level explanations of participation. In this regard, a second shortcoming of previous work relates to the insufficient specification of the links between micromobilization contexts and structures and individual preferences. Most accounts of participation in social movements stress the role of social networks (e.g., Gould 1995; Fernandez and McAdam

1988, 1989; Kim and Bearman 1997; Kriesi 1988, 1993; McAdam 1986, 1988a, 1988b; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; McAdam et al. 1988; Rosenthal et al. 1985; Snow et al. 1980). On the other hand, work in the rational choice perspective focuses more explicitly on individual-level factors affecting the preferences that lead to engagement, and in particular the perceived effectiveness of participation (e.g., Chong 1991; Hardin 1982; Opp 1989; Sandler 1992). In addition, other authors have similarly stressed the role of individual perceptions and expectations for participation in movement activities (e.g., Gamson 1992a; Klandermans 1997; Piven and Cloward 1979).

Research has either focused on social networks as push-factors toward participation in movements or on individual preferences as the critical moment in the decision to participate. While both research traditions have provided insightful findings, we argue that such “division of task” does not allow us to unveil the process through which structure translates into action. Taken as a whole, existing research has shown that both social networks and individual preferences are critical to understanding micromobilization processes. What still remains to be done is to ascertain whether these two sets of factors provide two opposing explanations or whether they are to be seen as parts of a broader process in which each of them intervene at different moments in time. We firmly opt for the latter perspective. Thus, we think it is now time to attempt to link these two kinds of explanation, to theorize on the relationship between the structural location of social actors and their individual preferences, and to show how this leads them to participate in social movements at different degrees of intensity. Our second goal is to suggest a way to do so.

Several authors have paved the way to an explanation that links social networks and individual preferences. For example, Anthony Oberschall has looked at both factors, but he has underscored either one or the other on different occasions. His *Social Conflicts and Social Movements* (1973) makes a strong argument for the role of the individuals' social positioning. Yet, in a number of articles gathered in a recent volume (Oberschall 1993), he embraces a decidedly rationalist view. Doug McAdam (1982, 1986), for his part, includes in his model both structural and cognitive factors (in addition to political opportunities). Yet, if this combination of factors is laid out very nicely in his theoretical model, it tends to be lost in the empirical analyses. The same could be said of Bert Klandermans' (1984, 1997) attempt to link resource mobilization theory and social-psychological aspects of mobilization. Finally, Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver (1993) have gone closer to bridging structural and individual accounts by developing a critical-mass theory which posits that individual preferences are

affected by the social environment. However, we think their theory has a rationalist bias, for it implicitly assumes that individual choices are predetermined. According to them, social actors have a given interest in participating, but actually participate only to the extent that a “critical mass” of other participants is present. Here we would like to argue that social networks, not only form the social environment on the basis of which individuals make their choices in the short run, but also affect in the long run the very preferences that lead to choices such as participating in a social movement or abstaining from doing so. This calls for further specification of the role of networks for pushing individuals to participate in social movements. This will be our third goal.

In the remainder of the paper, we will proceed in three steps. First, we put forth a model that specifies the linkages between social networks and individual preferences. In doing so, we propose a number of hypotheses on the impact of various structural and individual factors on differential participation. In particular, we distinguish between different roles of networks in the micromobilization process. Second, we test the hypotheses by means of an analysis of the members of a major organization of the Swiss solidarity movement. Survey data provide us with empirical evidence on both the structural and the individual determinants of differential participation. Finally, we discuss the broader implications of our findings for future research on micromobilization.

## **THEORY**

### **Individual Preferences and Perceptions**

A number of studies of the determinants of individual participation in social movements have shown that individual preferences and perceptions are strong predictors of engagement (e.g., Klandermans 1984, 1997; Macy 1991; Marwell and Oliver 1993; Oberschall 1993; Opp 1985, 1989; Opp and Roehl 1990). Expanding this finding, we assume that individual preferences also affect differential participation, that is the intensity to which one is involved in movement activities. In other words, other things being equal, the individual preferences have a direct positive effect on the level of participation

In order to be translated into testable hypotheses, this general statement calls for further specification. We do so by looking at how individual perceptions influence the social actors' intention to take part in collective action. Four aspects are usually emphasized in the literature on micromobilization, though they are rarely taken into account together: the effectiveness of the action, the risks implied by the action, the behavior of political authorities, and personal

availability. First, individual decisions are influenced by the perceived effectiveness of the action. Numerous authors working in different theoretical traditions have underscored this aspect. Rational choice theory (Marwell and Oliver 1993; Opp 1989), perspectives linking resource mobilization theory and individual motivations (Klandermans 1984; McAdam 1986), and the political process approach to social movements (Tilly 1978; Koopmans 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995) all underscore the role of effectiveness in micromobilization processes. Accordingly, our second conjecture maintains that not only participation in social movements, but also its intensity depends on the evaluation of the effectiveness of both the individual contribution and the action of the group. Before they decide to engage, potential participants assess the prospected impact of their own contribution as well as that of the group in which they are going to be involved. Unlike previous work (e.g., Marwell and Oliver 1993; Opp 1989), we consider both individual and collective effectiveness, for we think these two aspects should be distinguished in order to better specify the dimensions of this important predictor of participation. Thus:

Hypothesis 1a: The more positive an individual perceives the effectiveness of her/his involvement and the effectiveness of the group, the higher the level of participation.

Second, as several studies have shown, individual participation depends on the assessment of the risks of collective action (della Porta 1990; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Hirsch 1990; McAdam 1986; Opp 1989; Tilly 1978), especially those stemming from repression. The reactions of powerholders and the police when faced with protest actions have been shown to have a major impact on mobilization and participation in social movements (della Porta 1995; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1978). The perception of the risks implied by engaging in movement activities has a negative impact on individual participation, for it raises the costs of getting involved. High costs are a barrier to participation (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). Higher risks imply higher costs of participating and, consequently, render involvement more difficult. As Wiltfang and McAdam (1991) have pointed out, risks raise barriers not only to participation in social movements, but to its intensity as well. Thus:

Hypothesis 1b: The higher the perceived risks of engaging in a social movement, the lower the level of participation.

Third, individual preferences are affected in important ways by the social actors' judgment of the behavior of the authorities. A number of studies have shown that the lower the

legitimacy granted by citizens to authorities in regard to a given issue, the greater the chances that mobilization arises (McAdam 1982; Melucci 1989; Piven and Cloward 1979). Low levels of legitimacy may stem from the authorities' incapability or unwillingness to act. At the same time, delegitimation of powerholders is likely to increase the legitimacy of protest activities "from below". Applying this idea to differential participation, we can hypothesize that the delegitimation of authorities, together with the legitimation of protest, affects the intensity of participation. Thus:

Hypothesis 1c: The lower the legitimacy given by an individual to political authorities and, conversely, the higher the legitimacy granted to citizens to form social movements, the higher the level of participation.

Fourth, participation in social movements depends on personal availability, that is, the amount of time at one's disposal to be devoted to collective action (McAdam 1988a; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991). Again, it could be argued that what matters is the perception of one's own availability, rather than the disposal of time per se. Nevertheless, activism is conditioned by a number of biographical constraints, such as family tasks and, above all, professional activities (McAdam 1988a; Wiltfang and McAdam 1991; Marwell and Oliver 1993). Therefore, we must distinguish between two sides of personal availability: biographical constraints have both an objective (i.e., actual constraints) and a subjective (i.e., perceived constraints) facet. Actual constraints should be retained in spite of the fact that it is not a perception, because social actors always know precisely their objective availability for a given activity. In contrast, it is more difficult to have an objective judgment over variables such as the action's effectiveness, the risks involved, and the capability and willingness of powerholders to pursue a certain course of action. Thus:

Hypothesis 1d: The more an individual is objectively available in terms of free time, the weaker the constraints on her/his preferences and, consequently, the higher the level of participation. The same effect occurs the more an individual feels (subjectively) to have time to devote to collective action,

An important stream within the literature on micromobilization, which we cannot ignore, has stressed the role of selective incentives for participation in social movements. Classical rational choice theory has emphasized the role of material incentives for joining collective action (e.g., Olson 1965; Opp 1985). Others, criticizing this restrictive view, have expanded the notion of incentives by taking into account social and moral incentives as well (e.g., Fireman and Gamson 1979; Pizzorno 1978). We share the criticism that the theory of

material incentives, originally conceived for explaining free-riding in interest groups, cannot be applied in a mechanistic manner to unconventional political participation, especially when we are dealing with mobilizations, such as those carried by the solidarity movement, that do not produce immediate and material benefits to individual members. Yet, expanding the notion of selective incentives to cover social and moral aspects bring us in the pitfall of tautology, for thus it becomes a catch-all concept that has little explanatory power (Chazel 1986; White 1976) and, furthermore, can hardly be falsified. Therefore, we do not include selective incentives in our model.

### **Social Networks**

As we stated at the outset, perhaps the firmest and more consistent finding of recent research on micromobilization processes is that the embeddedness in social networks deeply affects individual participation in social movements. Again, we can extend this finding to the case of differential participation and hypothesize that network ties also influence the intensity of engagement. Our assumption here is thus that, other things being equal, the embeddedness of individuals in social networks has a direct positive effect on the level of participation.

Once again, we go beyond this general statement and formulate more concrete and testable hypotheses. In particular, following McAdam and Paulsen's (1993: 641) suggestion that we must "specify and test the precise dimensions of social ties that seem to account for their role as facilitators of activism", we suggest hypotheses on the impact of different types of networks on the level of participation in social movements. In other words, it is not sufficient to say that networks are good predictors of commitment, though this is an important result in itself. To reach a better understanding of the dynamics of micromobilization, the nature, content, and role of social ties should be further specified. If we fail to do so, we miss the crucial mechanisms that lead people to become involved in social movements.

The most recurrent specification that we find in the literature is the distinction between formal and informal ties (della Porta 1988; Kriesi 1993; McAdam and Paulsen 1993). The former refer to membership in organizations, while the latter are defined as interpersonal ties such as parenthood, friendship, and acquaintance. These two ways of belonging to social networks have arguably an impact on the intensity of one's involvement in movement activities. What matters for differential participation is the type of tie rather than the embeddedness in networks per se. Formal and informal ties influence the intensity of participation in distinct manners and have a varying impact on differential participation

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Beside the well-known distinction between formal and informal ties, we would like to propose another way of specifying the role of networks, which can be applied both to their formal and informal side. Previous work has paid much attention to the recruitment of potential activists and participants (della Porta 1988; Gould 1995; Kriesi 1988; McAdam 1986; Snow et al. 1980). We think that the recruitment function of networks must be conceptually distinguished from what we propose to call their socialization function. Here we refer to the individuals' previous embeddedness in social networks. Such embeddedness place them in an interactive structure that allows them to define and redefine their framing of the social world. As a result, they gain political consciousness with regard to a particular issue. We can think of the socialization function as the cultural role of networks, whereas the recruitment function discussed above can be seen as their structural role with regard to participation in social movements. To separate between these two functions of networks is of outmost importance, for they intervene at distinct moments in the micromobilization process. Socialization intervenes at the beginning of the process and takes place in the longue durée. To put it differently, social networks as a “ socialization device ” concur to the formation of a mobilization potential and provide or reinforce the political awareness towards a given protest issue. On the other hand, the recruitment function of networks plays a role at the end of the process by creating a contact between the potential participant and the movement.

Combining the formal/informal and the recruitment/socialization distinctions, we can formulate two testable hypotheses on the effect of social networks on differential participation. Previous research has shown that people are brought to collective action mainly through interpersonal ties (e.g., della Porta 1988; McAdam 1988b; Snow et al. 1980). This has been done with respect to recruitment. Accordingly, we might ask whether this result holds for differential participation. At the same time, we may want to test whether informal networks play a greater role also with regard to their socialization function. The sociological literature has long stressed the impact of interpersonal relations with family members, friends, and acquaintances on the internalization of social norms and values, that is, on the socialization of individuals. Thus:

Hypothesis 2a: Recruitment by informal networks has a greater impact on the level of participation in social movements than recruitment by formal networks.

Hypothesis 2b: Embeddedness in informal networks (socialization) has a greater impact on the level of participation in social movements than embeddedness in formal networks.

Further specifying the relationship between social ties and activism, next we propose three hypotheses related to the proximity of potential participants and social movements. To begin with, we consider the impact of strong vs. weak ties on differential participation. Granovetter's (1973) well-known argument points to a major effect of weak ties for recruitment in the labor market. According to him, weak-ties permit to bridge the hiatus between two or more network cliques. However, it could be argued instead that strong involvement in social movements is more likely to occur when an individual has been recruited via strong ties. For, as Pizzorno (1986) has pointed out, trust is critical to political behavior under uncertainty. Potential movement participants often are in such a situation of uncertainty, which stems from the lack of information on the situation and can be reduced by trusting the recruiter. Within a network structure, strong ties provide social actors with a higher level of trust than weak ties. Thus:

Hypothesis 2c: Individuals who have been recruited through strong ties are more likely to display a high level of participation than those who have been recruited through weak ties.

Secondly, Gould (1993) has shown that the structural position of social actors, in combination with the properties of networks, matters for joining collective action. We think that not only the position of recruits, but also the position of recruiters affects participation in social movements. In particular, we argue that the higher the intensity of activity of recruiters in a movement or SMO, the stronger the involvement of recruits. This may be due to at least two reasons. On the one hand, once again following Pizzorno's (1986) forceful criticism of rational choice theory, centrally located recruiters are more apt to reduce the uncertainty related to movement participation. On the other hand, core activists usually are the "true believers", who are more willing to put much effort at convincing people to join them. As a consequence, they should be more successful in recruiting equally strongly committed activists. Thus:

Hypothesis 2d: Individuals who have been recruited by strongly committed activists are more likely to display a high level of participation.

Thirdly, a number of authors have stressed the relevance of collective action frames for social movements (Gamson 1992b, 1995; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Melucci 1996; Snow and Benford 1992; Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1992). Applying this idea to the role of social networks, we argue that networks which share similar cultural frames with the movement are better carriers of socialization of individuals who are embedded in these networks. More

precisely, networks vary in their socialization function as to their affinities with the issues raised by a given movement. The higher the network's cultural and ideological affinity with the movement, the deeper the socialization of potential participants to the movement. A current example is the ideological proximity between the environmental and the solidarity movements with respect to sustainable development. We may expect members of environmental organizations to have recently become more likely to participate in the solidarity movement as a result of the rapprochement of these two movements within the common frame of sustainable development. Thus:

Hypothesis 2e: Individuals who are embedded in formal networks that are culturally close to the movement are more likely to display a high level of participation.

### **Linking Social Networks and Individual Preferences**

Above we have introduced a distinction between recruitment and socialization functions of social networks. There is a third function of networks for differential participation that deserves a separate discussion, for it is a crucial aspect of our argument. We argue that, in addition to recruiting potential participants and socializing them to the issues raised by a given movement, the embeddedness of social actors in networks has an impact on the definition of individual preferences. Social relations create and reproduce a structure of meanings that contributes to the definition of individual preferences about political commitment. Preferences are constantly redefined by individuals, a process that is strongly shaped by social relations. For example, embeddedness in formal networks affects the perception both of individual and collective effectiveness (Neal and Seeman 1964; Sayre 1980). Similarly, recruitment through informal networks influences the perception of the risks involved in participation (della Porta 1988).

Thus, in addition to having a direct effect on differential participation thanks to the recruitment and the socialization functions, networks influence the intensity of involvement in social movements indirectly. They alter the perception of the effectiveness of the engagement and of collective action, of the risks of being engaged, of the legitimation of the authorities, and of one's personal availability. This, in turn, increases the chances that one is brought to participate with strong intensity. That the embeddedness in social networks poses the conditions for facilitating mobilization is a firm and consistent result of research on social movements. As our discussion above should have made clear, here we want to add further

evidence of this effect to the existing literature. Most important, however, we relate this impact to two important issues. First, we do so with regard to the specification of the role of networks for differential participation in an attempt to show that affecting individual preferences is a major function of networks. Second, we see this function of networks as a powerful conceptual tool for linking the structural location of social actors, their individual preferences, and their actions, for bridging the “ micro/macro gap ”, for assuring the transition from small-scale to large-scale processes, for connecting structure and agency (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Tilly 1997). In line with previous research, we maintain that social networks strongly facilitate the process of micromobilization. However, we would like to make it explicit that the structural location of social actors translates into action largely thanks to the influence networks exert over the perception individuals have of their own possibilities as well as of their social and political environment. As Pizzorno (1996) has remarked, intentions receive their meaning only to the extent that they are communicated and interpreted during social interactions. That is why we need to go both downstream to unveil how networks affects the intentions and upstream to show how the latter depend on the type and nature of embeddedness in the former.

Although recruitment by and embeddedness in social networks crucially affect individual preferences towards movement participation, we expect two other aspects to have a relevant impact as well. First, the evaluation of the four aspects of individual preferences mentioned above is also influenced by the interest social actors have in the mobilization issue (Kim and Bearman 1997; Marwell and Oliver 1993). By interest in the mobilization issue we mean the place a given problem has in the hierarchy of individual priorities of people (central or peripheral), that is to say, its relative importance with respect to other problems, be they related to their everyday life or the broader environment. Second, past experiences with the issue may facilitate participation in social movements. The preferences of individuals who have had direct contacts with a given issue prior to engagement are likely to change after such experiences. For example, workers who have faced economic difficulties in their life display different values and behaviors than their homologues who have enjoyed smoother conditions (Andrews 1991). Similarly, people who have seen and lived Third-World realities from close are probably more likely to become part of the solidarity movement. Thus:

Hypothesis 3: The higher the protest issue in an individual’s priorities, the more positive the evaluation of the various aspects of individual preferences and, as a result, the stronger her/his involvement.

Hypothesis 4: Having had past experiences with the protest issue brings an individual to evaluate the various aspects of individual preferences more positively and, as a result, to engage with stronger intensity.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

The hypotheses above cluster into three groups: those referring to the individual level of preferences, those relating to the structural level of social networks, and those concerned with linkages between these two levels. We test these hypotheses on a representative sample of members of the Bern Declaration (BD), a major SMO of the Swiss solidarity movement<sup>1</sup>. Like many organizations of the new social movement family, the BD was born in the aftermath of the student movement at the end of the 1960s. Its principal aim is to sensitize the population towards inequalities and unbalances in North/South relations. Its action is both social (production of didactic materials aimed at informing pupils and teachers, in particular through a close collaboration with public schools) and political (pressure on political authorities when they deal with North/South issues, such as the entrance of Switzerland in the International Monetary Fund, the favorable conditions offered to companies exporting to southern countries, the increase in financial aid by the Swiss government, and so forth).

Levels of participation. The dependent variable is the level of participation. Its construction combines Klandermans' (1997) distinction between effort and duration and the distinction between low and high intensity. Effort varies according to the type of activity in which people are involved, which ranges from simply contributing financially to an SMO to belonging to its core activists (Kriesi 1993; McAdam et al. 1988). The distinction made by Oliver and Marwell (1992) between "giving money" and "giving time" is a good criteria to separate low effort from high effort. Those who invest time can be said to be more deeply involved than those who simply give money. However, this dimensions does not allow us to distinguish between different levels of participation within the group of people who spend part of their time in the SMO. In order to differentiate among activists, we take into account duration by looking at the frequency of involvement. We distinguish between actions that imply irregular participation, such as sporadically taking part in campaigns or going to annual meetings, and actions that require regular participation on a less-than-annual basis, such as belonging to working groups or to the SMO's committee.

Thus, our indicator of the intensity of participation is a combination of the giving money/giving time and the sporadic/frequent criteria. Concretely, a question was asked that included all possible political activities that one can carry within the BD. These are: (1) to pay membership fees, (2) to subscribe to the annual fund raising, (3) to participate in campaigns, (4) to participate in the annual meeting, (5) to participate in the organization of campaigns on a regular basis, (6) to be a member of working groups, (7) and to be a member of the central committee. The first two activities simply involve contributing financially to the organization, the following two imply active participation on an irregular basis, and the last three call for active and regular participation. The resulting variable has three categories of participants of increasing intensity: subscribers are members who contribute financially to the SMO (i.e., they carry activities 1, 2 or both), adherents are members who are active on an irregular basis (i.e., they carry activity 3 or 4 but not more, regardless of whether they also carry activities 1 or 2), and activists are members who are regularly active in the SMO (i.e., they carry activities 5, 6, or 7, regardless of whether they also carry one or more of the other activities). The distribution of members in our sample (74% of subscribers, 18% of adherents, and 8% of activists) corresponds to the evaluation made by the organization's staff of the distribution of members and can therefore be considered as representative of the composition of the BD at the time we conducted the survey.

Social and cultural basis. In our analysis, we use four social background variables. Our measures of class belonging are based on Wright's (1985) well-known typology and yields three dummies: one for social-cultural specialists, one for members of the new middle class, and one for workers. Education is an ordinal variable for the school degree. In addition, we have a measure of the age of respondents (years) and a dummy for their gender (value 1 for female).

We also use three cultural background variables. To obtain the first two we factor analyzed a set of ten items regarding the respondents' personal priorities: (1) order and security, (2) the precepts of the Church, (3) a strong army, (4) equal opportunity in general (5) income differences, (6) equal opportunity between women and men, (7) participation of citizens to important decisions for the country, (8) equal opportunity between foreigners and Swiss citizens, (9) environmental protection, and (10) state intervention. Respondents were asked to self-position on a 1 to 6 scale for each item. The factor analysis yielded two principal dimensions: one along a left/right values axis and one along a postmodern/modern values axis.

Finally, a third indicator of the individuals' cultural background consists of the frequency of attendance to religious services.

Social networks. Embeddedness in networks is measured through three indicators. First, embeddedness in formal networks requires that an individual is or has been a member of at least one social movement or voluntary organization before joining the BD. Second, we created a separate measure for embeddedness in formal networks that are ideologically close to the movement (i.e., new social movement and religious organizations). Third, embeddedness in informal networks requires that an individual's family members, friends, or acquaintances participate in the development aid branch of the solidarity movement or at least bear some interest on this issue.

Further, we have eight measures of recruitment by networks. Recruitment by formal networks implies that an individual has been brought to the BD by another social movement or voluntary organization. Recruitment by informal networks implies that an individual has been brought to the BD by a member of this organization. In addition, we distinguish between six different types of informal ties. On the one hand, we have three measures of recruitment according to whether the recruiter is an activist, an adherent, or a subscriber. On the other hand, we measure separately those members that were recruited through strong ties (i.e., family members or close friends) and those that were brought to participate through weak ties (i.e., acquaintances. Finally, among the former, we also distinguish between strong acquired ties (i.e., close friends) and strong ascriptive ties (i.e., family members). All social network variables are dummies.

Individual preferences. We use seven measures of individual preferences. The interest in the issue is an ordinal variable indicating the importance of the development aid issue in the individual's life. Individual effectiveness and collective effectiveness are two ordinal variables of increasing perceived effectiveness. The former refers to the impact of the single individual, whereas the latter refers to the impact of the BD. A fourth variable combines the respondents' perception of the capability to contribute to solve problems related to development aid on the part of the political authorities and on the part of the citizens. The resulting variable is a dummy that takes on the value 1 when the authorities are seen as not being able to matter and, at the same time, citizens are seen as having a positive role. Subjective availability is an ordinal variable measuring on a 1 to 6 scale the degree to which participation is avoided due to lack of

time. These five indicators refers to the subjective side of individual preferences. In addition, we also have two measures referring to their “objective” side. On the one hand, objective availability is an ordinal variable with increasingly larger shares of time devoted to professional work. On the other hand, past experiences with the issues is a dummy variable that takes on the value 1 when an individual fulfils at least one of the following three conditions: (1) has lived in Third-World countries, (2) has travelled in Third-World countries, and (3) has friends or family members who come from Third-World countries.

We carry our empirical analysis in two steps. In the first step, we examine the weight of each variable and set of variables on the intensity of participation by means of multiple regressions<sup>2</sup>. Here we test the first two clusters of hypotheses (preferences and networks) in order to ascertain the best predictors of differential participation. Furthermore, nested models allow us to determine whether individual preferences or embeddedness in social networks best explain the intensity of involvement. The second step refers to the third cluster of hypotheses and consists of examining the direct and indirect effects of selected variables on differential participation by means of a structural equation model estimated with LISREL. Here we inquire specifically into the impact of social networks on the definition of individual preferences.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Effect of Individual Preferences**

Table 1 gives the results of a multiple regression of the intensity of participation on several aspects of individual preferences. We included all the aspects raised in our first cluster of hypotheses except for risks. While risks have certainly an impact in certain types of mobilization in which repression is more likely (della Porta 1995; McAdam 1986), we have no reason to think that it plays a role in the case of participation in the activities of the organization under study. None of the respondents has ever been subject to repression in relation to involvement in the BD. Therefore, we exclude this variable from the analyses.

Table 1

Confirming previous research, the table clearly shows that the perceived effectiveness of the action is by far the most important factor among those concerning the decision to participate. However, only individual effectiveness matters, whereas collective effectiveness has no statistically significant effect<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the feeling of positively contributing to change things through one’s own involvement does not only pushes people to engage in collective

action, but tends to lead them to engage with stronger intensity. In contrast, neither the delegitimation of the action of authorities nor personal availability influence the intensity of participation. These might be instrumental in bringing people to act in the first place, but we found no evidence that different individual scores can induce some to become more deeply involved than others.

In order to check for spurious relationships or hidden variables, we introduced several interactive terms into the regression. Only one of them turned out to be significant, and hence is shown in the table: the interaction of individual effectiveness and objective availability. This suggests that to have time to be spent in political activities only leads to stronger commitment to the extent that one has the feeling that her/his engagement will matter. This is an important result and confirms Marwell and Oliver's (1993) findings that resources in terms of free time influence participation in combination with other motivational factors, namely interest. Thus, the perception of being effective affects differential participation both separately and in interaction with objective availability.

In sum, among the hypotheses pertaining to the particular aspects of the individual level, only Hypothesis 1a is confirmed: the feeling of being effective in case of engagement leads to more intense participation, whereas no impact has been found for the perception of the effectiveness of the group or organization, the behavior of authorities, or personal availability (except if in interaction with individual effectiveness). This could lead us to conclude that authors who have stressed the role of individual motivations and perceptions have been all too optimistic. However, the influence of some of these individual variables might depend on the type of movement. For example, it can be argued that the couple delegitimation of authorities/legitimation of citizens is more relevant in the case of "poor people's movements", such as those studied by Piven and Cloward (1979). People who have little cultural and political resources at their disposal, and hence are less ready to become involved in politics (Bourdieu 1980; Campbell et al. 1960), are more dependent upon the process of cognitive liberation (McAdam 1982) than relatively well educated people such as most members of the solidarity movement.

## **The Effect of Social Networks**

Next we turn to the effect of social networks on the intensity of participation. Similarly to what we have done for individual preferences, we first consider the various aspects of networks in order to test our hypotheses about the specification of the role of networks. Table 2 presents the results of a multiple regression which includes all relevant relational variables. Again, results are straightforward. By and large, to be recruited by an activist is the stronger predictor of differential participation. In contrast, the simple fact of being recruited by some kind of network does not seem to affect the intensity of engagement, as the non-significant coefficient testifies. This result confirms Hypothesis 2d, which states that what matters the most is the position of the recruiter within the movement, and points to the need of specifying the type of ties that may lead to participation in social movements instead of sticking with a rather general and abstract notion of network as has often been done in previous work.

### Table 2

A second important result is the significant effect of embeddedness in formal networks that are culturally close to the movement. The stronger the cultural affinity with the movement, the stronger the involvement of participants. This finding confirms Hypothesis 2e and gives us further indication of the need of specifying the role of networks instead of treating them as they had a homogeneous impact. They do not. Not all networks lead people to become involved with the same intensity of participation in social movements. Instead, the socializing function of networks is strongly dependent on their nature and content. In particular, our findings suggest that some degree of overlapping between networks and movements is necessary for potential participants to become deeply involved. In the case of the BD, the networks closer to the issues raised by the SMO are those related to the new social movements, specifically the environmental movement, and those pertaining to the traditional churches. This comes as no surprise, given the religious roots of this SMO and its recent ideological turn towards new social movement issues and frames.

Third, embeddedness in informal networks has a significant effect on differential participation. If we compare this result to the one we have just discussed, we can see that both formal and informal networks have a socialization function that facilitates strong participation in social movements. As regards the informal side, to be embedded in a network of family members, friends, or acquaintances who are already involved in social movements is not only a condition for participation, but also affects the intensity of engagement. However, Hypothesis 2b, according to which embeddedness in informal networks should better predict differential

participation than formal ones, is not confirmed. Socialization seems to follow both formal and informal channels. The former have a slightly stronger effect, but, as we have just seen, only to the extent that they are culturally close to the movement. This calls for further specification of the content of networks. On the contrary, the corresponding Hypothesis 2a is confirmed. Recruitment to strong participation relies mainly upon informal ties, with the qualification mentioned above that this function is fulfilled by the critical role played by activists as recruiters.

The fourth and last relevant result shown in Table 1 concerns the larger effect of recruitment by strong ties in comparison to weak ties, though the level of the significance test is lower than the previous ones. This confirms Hypothesis 2c and is in line with the argument put forward by Pizzorno (1986) as regards the role of trust between recruiters and recruits. It is perhaps interesting to remark that strong informal ties can be seen as playing a decisive role in the recruitment of people in underground organizations. For, as della Porta (1990, 1995) has shown, recruiting through one's closest, reduces the risk of a flight of information to the external world which would endanger the organization's survival. Yet, our findings point to a more general impact of strong ties on participation, regardless to the risks involved. In addition, we find that acquired ties rather than ascriptive ties have an impact on differential participation in social movements (Kriesi 1993). Thus, close friends can push an individual towards strong commitment more easily than family members. Although we do not have an explanation for that, based on a number of in-depth interviews we made with members of the BD, we may conjecture that demands for participation from family members tend to be felt as a sort of moral obligation and therefore one's involvement is at best weak, while interactions with friends entail trust and hence are more likely to lead to strong commitment.

Generally speaking, results shown in Table 2 testify to the importance of distinguishing between formal and informal networks. While both types of networks do have a direct impact on the intensity of participation, we see that they intervene in distinct ways in the micromobilization process. Informal ties influence participation through both their socialization and recruitment function, whereas formal ties only intervene through embeddedness in networks. Hence, there are good reasons to distinguish between formal and informal networks instead of blurring the two aspects together. In addition to this often-made specification, a much more neglected one also seems justified. We refer to the distinction between the recruitment and the socialization functions of networks for micromobilization. Both to be embedded in and to be recruited by social networks has a significant impact on differential

participation. Thus, a better understanding of the mechanisms that lie at the heart of individual engagement in social movements stems from a better specification not only of the nature of networks, but also of their distinct functions.

### **Social Networks and Individual Preferences Compared**

The next step in the analysis consists of a series of multiple regressions which include both networks and individual variables in order to assess their relative weight and to check for consistency of findings. In addition, we introduced a series of indicators on the social and cultural basis of participation as control variables. As regards individual preferences, we treat objective availability and past experiences with the issue separately from the other variables because they are not to be seen as actors' perceptions, but rather as factual data. Table 3 shows the results of nested models, each time adding a set of explanatory factors. To begin with, we observe that the social and cultural characteristics of individuals have no direct impact on differential participation in social movements. To be sure, some variables do have an effect when we consider them separately (Model 1). However, when we control for the effect of individual preferences, all statistically significant relationships disappear. Furthermore, the part of variance explained by the social and cultural basis is very small. Social and cultural factors might be crucial to bring individuals to collective action, but do not determine to what intensity they will participate.

#### Table 3

In contrast, networks and individual variables have a significant impact on differential participation. Taken together, they are responsible for 36 % of the explained variance (subtracting Model 1 from Model 6). This confirms that social networks and individual preferences are good predictors of the intensity of participation in social movements. Furthermore, these two sets of factors have approximately the same impact: networks explain 19 % of the variance (subtracting Model 1 from Model 3) and individual preferences 17 % (subtracting Models 3 from Model 6). It is also interesting to remark that the recruitment function of networks has a more important weight than their socialization function (comparing Models 2 and 3), a result that confirms the relevance of the recruitment process stressed by previous work. As we said, objective variables are treated separately from subjective ones in the full models. From Model 5 we can see that the part of variance they explain is very small.

Finally, the results shown in Table 3 are consistent with those presented above. If we look at Model 6, which includes all variables as well as the interactive term of individual

effectiveness and objective availability, we see that the perceived individual effectiveness and to be recruited by an activist are by far the best predictors of differential participation in social movements. Other significant effects concern embeddedness in networks close to the movement, embeddedness in informal networks, and recruitment through strong acquired ties. Also the interactive term remains statistically significant once controlled for all other selected variables. The only difference regards the appearance of a negative impact of collective effectiveness. While it is difficult to find an explanation for that, it should be noted that most respondents display a positive evaluation of the organization's effectiveness. This skewed distribution might, at least in part, be responsible for the unexpected finding.

### **The Effects of Social Networks on Individual Preferences**

The final step in our analysis is based on the structural equations model we estimated with the LISREL method. The main purpose of this approach is to discuss the third function of networks, that is, their effects on individual preferences. Figure 1 shows the final model<sup>4</sup>. According to our argument, social networks also influence the intensity of participation indirectly, via their impact on the set of individual preferences. What conclusion can we draw from this figure regarding this assumption? We see that the various aspects of the intention to participate with a certain intensity are affected by social relations. The only exception is subjective availability. This influence stems above all from the recruitment process, as shown by the significant coefficients of both formal and informal recruiting networks. In particular, recruitment through informal ties strongly affects the perception of being helpful in case of involvement (.31), a feeling that in turn is a strong predictor of differential participation (.37), confirming our previous findings. Networks also have an impact on collective effectiveness and on the sense of delegitimation of authorities. As regards the former, both recruitment by and embeddedness in networks matter. The fact of having been socialized in formal organizations leads individuals to perceive the role of organized citizens as potentially effective in bringing about social and political change. Unexpectedly, recruitment by networks has a significant negative effect on the perception of collective effectiveness. This might once again be a result of the very skewed distribution of this variable. At the same time, however, individuals who have been recruited through formal networks (i.e., formal organizations), though they all share a positive evaluation of collective effectiveness, are probably more realistic about the limits of organizations than people who have brought to engage through other channels. For contacts with active organizations expose one to information about such limits. At the same time,

people become aware of the limitations of the role of citizens to change political decisions. Therefore, a similar explanation could be advanced for the negative effect of recruitment by formal networks on the delegitimation of authorities and the legitimation of citizens. Here we should note that most of the organizations that have recruited BD members belong to the new social movements, and in particular to the ecology movement. These SMOs, which are reformist and often cooperate with the state (Giugni and Passy 1998), tend to be less critical towards political authorities than anti-systemic movements. This is particularly true in a consensual political context such as Switzerland's.

#### Figure 1

On the other hand, the socialization function of networks does not directly affect individual preferences. However, embeddedness in formal and informal networks has an indirect impact on preferences which is mediated by a crucial intervening variable: the interest one has on the mobilization issue. Here formal networks are more important than informal ones (.36). The interest in the issue, in turn, largely shapes both sides of the perceived effectiveness of the action (.29 and .33). What we see here is the emergence of a privileged path to strong participation in social movements. This path is highlighted by the dotted arrows in Figure 1. First, an individual is embedded in formal networks. This embeddedness strongly shapes her/his interest in a given political issue. Then the enhanced interest affects her/his projected personal contribution to the cause, that is, the perception of individual effectiveness. At the same time, it increases the perception of collective effectiveness, which in turn reinforces the perceived individual effectiveness. Finally, a positive evaluation of both sides of the prospected effectiveness of engagement facilitates strong participation. However, this should not make us forget that informal networks, thanks to their recruitment function, also have an important direct impact on differential participation (.33), in addition to their indirect effect.

Thus, Hypothesis 3 is confirmed: the more central an issue in an individual's life, the more s/he has a positive perception of the various aspects related to the decision to get involved and, consequently, the stronger s/he will become engaged. The crucial point here is that this effect is only an indirect one. The interest in the issue modifies the individual preferences, which in turn lead to weaker or stronger commitment. Such indirect impact is particularly important as regards both individual and collective effectiveness. This finding contradicts the claim that interests, or grievances for that matter, are a sufficient condition for collective action. As the regression analysis shown in Table 3 makes clear, the fact of being

interested in a protest issue has no direct impact on participation. Yet, interest in the issue is crucially related to activism to the extent that it affects the most important aspects of individual preferences and perceptions, namely the effectiveness of prospected actions. Similarly, past experiences with the protest issue have no direct effect on the intensity of participation, but intervene indirectly mainly through their impact on the interest in the issue (.22). To have been in contact with a protest issue raises the interest on that issue, which can lead to strong engagement as indicated above. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 also finds some support from our data.

To summarize, the LISREL analysis confirms the importance of distinguishing what we see as the third function of social networks. In addition to providing a socializing setting and to facilitating the recruitment of participants, networks contribute to the definition of a number of individual preferences which, in the last analysis, bring social actors to decide to what intensity they are going to participate. Here, however, we must raise the problem of causality in our empirical analysis. With cross-sectional data such as those we use here, we cannot be sure that social networks affects preferences. The reverse might also be true, that is, as their preferences change, individuals change who they associate with through selection biases. Similarly, individual perceptions could be a consequence rather than a cause of the level of participation in social movements. While we acknowledge the difficulty of attributing causality in the absence of longitudinal data, we think that the causal sequence assumed here is more plausible for at least two reasons. First, our results are consistent with the causal image of structure to preferences (and both to levels of participation). This, at least, holds for most measures of networks. Second, interviews that we have conducted with several activists (to be published elsewhere) suggest that they were brought to participate at a higher level because of their proximity to social networks and not the other way around. This does not mean that we can definitively state that the causal sequence goes from networks to preferences and to the level of participation, but we can reasonably argue that this is the most likely path. In any event, in spite of this empirical limitation, our analysis has shown the importance of looking not only at direct effects of various variables on participation, but also at intervening factors, namely networks, the interest in the issue, and past experiences with the issue.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Work on individual participation in social movements has followed two main lines of reasoning. On the one hand, scholars have focused on the individual preferences that affect the

intention to get involved in collective action. On the other hand, a number of authors have seen individual behaviors as stemming from social relations, thereby looking at the embeddedness in social networks and how this affects participation. Our analysis supports both explanations in the case of differential participation. First, individual preferences have a significant impact on the intensity of involvement in social movements. Specifically, we have shown that one aspect is of utmost importance: the perception of one's own effectiveness in case of engagement. This confirms what has been found by a number of studies: the feeling that one's involvement would matter to the cause at hand is a strong incentive for actually becoming involved. Second, embeddedness in social networks has an equally relevant impact on individual engagement. Again, this is in line with a well established avenue of research. Thus, the general conclusion that can be drawn from our analysis is that both intentional and structural factors are crucial to understanding differential participation in social movements.

Following McAdam and Paulsen's (1993) suggestion about the need of specifying the relationship between social ties and activism, we looked at the varying impact of different types of network ties. First, formal and informal networks have been shown to have distinct effects on the intensity of participation. In other words, affiliation in SMOs or other organizations and embeddedness in a web of interpersonal relationships intervene differently in micromobilization processes. Second, the equally well-known distinction of strong and weak ties (Granovetter 1973) also seems justified. However, our study points to the "strength of strong ties", for the former have a greater impact on differential participation. Beside these two specifications pertaining to the nature of ties, two further specifications deal with the content of ties, an aspect often overlooked in previous work. Hence, third, not all interpersonal relationships lead to strong activism. Involvement is likely to become deeper if potential participants are recruited by strongly engaged activists, as opposed to those who put little and sporadic effort in the SMO. Finally, cultural affinity plays an important role as well. Participation at high degrees of intensity becomes more likely when networks in which individuals are embedded are culturally close to the SMO, that is, when they share similar cultural or ideological frames with the latter.

Most importantly, pushing forward our task of specifying the role of social networks for explaining individual participation in social movements, we introduced a distinction between three basic functions of networks. Recruitment refers to the role of the structural location of social actors in a network structure. In this case, people are mainly brought to act collectively through other people or organizations which are related to a given movement.

Socialization, on the other hand, refers to the formation of individual values and beliefs as well as to the production of shared identities. These two processes make individuals more sensitive to certain issues and, hence, more prone to engage in social movements. Previous research has often failed to distinguish between these two functions of networks and, above all, to acknowledge their varying impact on micromobilization processes. Our analysis, in contrast, suggests that recruitment and socialization have a different weight for explaining participation, as can be seen in the regression models. In addition, as the LISREL model illustrates, we propose to see them as intervening at different moments in the micromobilization process, though the lack of longitudinal data prevents us from empirically testing this hypothesis. Nevertheless, on a theoretical ground, we suggest to view the socialization function of networks as a long-term phase that precedes the recruitment phase, which takes place right before involvement.

In addition to recruitment and socialization, we stressed a third crucial function of social networks, one that, in our view, has not received enough attention in previous work. Networks have an indirect impact on differential participation, profoundly affecting individual preferences with regard to engagement. Specifically, social relations influence the perceptions of individuals about the individual as well as the collective effectiveness of the action, the role of authorities, and personal availability for participation. But again, networks intervene differently in this process. For they affect individual choices and perceptions above all at the moment of recruitment, while their socialization function seems to play a smaller and mostly indirect role.

The impact of networks on individual preferences suggests that the former can be seen as bridging the gap between social structure and human agency. On the one hand, we can see that networks do not only affect political participation directly, but also indirectly. On the other hand, individual intentions do not affect behavior independently from the structural components of social action. These two aspects are part of the same process and are closely intertwined. Actual social action is the product of both structural constraints and the subjective assessment of those constraints allowed by agency. This calls into question accounts by both hard-nosed network analysts and pure rational choice theorists. On the one hand, tenants of the network perspective often have a rather mechanistic view of individual participation in social movements. For they tend to ignore the ways in which social relations affect individual perceptions and evaluations. As Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) have pointed out, social interactions become incorporated into the self in a creative and often unexpected manner

during moments of freedom which characterize human agency. Our explanations of participation in social movements should take into account that. Friedman and McAdam (1992: 160) have argued in a similar fashion that “ network theory fails to offer a plausible model of individual action and therefore a convincing mechanism by which interpersonal contacts and organizational memberships draw individuals into activism. ” On the other hand, rational choice theorists tend to treat individual interests, preferences, and utilities as given, although within constraints set by personal resources and environmental settings. One of the tasks of sociology, however, is precisely to explain the formation of individual preferences. The role of social networks, we argue, is crucial to understanding the origin of preferences as regards participation in social movements. In addition, interests, preferences, and utilities are constantly renegotiated in the course of social interactions rather than fixed once and forever. To be sure, at least some rational choice theorists do take into account the individuals’ broader environment. Yet, this often remains only a theoretical statement, while in empirical research the mechanisms and dynamics linking structural context and individual choices are rarely specified. To look at how social networks affect intentions is a way of specifying those mechanisms and dynamics.

To conclude, let us reiterate our two principal arguments. First, we have tried to show that explanations which stress structural factors at the expense of intentional variables, or vice versa, neglect a relevant aspect of collective action. Instead, both perspectives must be taken into account in order to reach a better understanding of participation in social movements. Second, we have provided evidence that participation is not limited to the mere fact of becoming involved, but it implies various levels of involvement. Therefore, we must not only study participation as opposed to a wait-and-see attitude, but also analyze how much time and effort people are willing to invest once they have decided to engage. In order to do so, we must shift our attention to the factors that affect the intensity of participation.

Of course, social actors do not necessarily keep a given level of commitment during their involvement. Often the intensity of participation varies over time after one has been recruited. It may either increase or decrease. Or it may be abandoned altogether. In order to grasp such dynamic aspect of participation, qualitative analyses should supplement quantitative analyses such as the one offered here. For example, one can study variations in participation over time, single out the factors that determine such variations, and clarify the underlying mechanisms and dynamics by means of interviews with activists and participants. In brief, once we know why some people get strongly involved in social movements while other participate

less intensely and more sporadically, we need to understand the reasons that make their participation fluctuate over time.

Future research could improve the analysis presented here in two ways. First, from a methodological point of view, longitudinal data (both quantitative and qualitative) would provide a more solid answer as to the causal sequence suggested here and clarify the structure-preference-action nexus. Second, from a substantial point of view, our analysis should be replicated on different instances of mobilization. We have tested our argument and hypotheses on a particular form of mobilization: individual involvement in the activities carried out by an SMO. This model should be applied to different types of mobilization and various forms of actions. It should also be tested in a variety of social and political contexts. In order to do so, it is likely that our model will have to be modified to adapt to other movements and contexts. For example, the perceived risks of the mobilization is certainly more relevant for participants who engage in radical and violent political activities, especially in the context of non-democratic regimes. Our understanding of individual participation in social movements will certainly improve by studying the dynamics that are set in motion in different circumstances. Such inquiry into the scope conditions of contentious politics is one of the major avenues of future research, one which is slowly being followed by students of social movements (McAdam et al. 1996; Oberschall 1996; Zdravomyslova 1996). The study of micromobilization processes should not miss this opportunity.

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**APPENDIX: CORRELATION MATRIX**

1. 1  
 2. -.5427 1  
 3. -.4287 -.1621 1  
 4. -.1170 .0136 .1313 1  
 5. .2899 -.0073 -.4387 -.0856 1  
 6. .0931 -.1399 .0772 -.0242 -.1551 1  
 7. -.1223 .0289 .0799 .3502 -.1194 -.0652 1  
 8. -.0663 .0226 -.0077 .2455 -.0378 -.0833 .7242 1  
 9. -.0668 .0838 -.0761 -.3862 .0288 .0719 -.3728 -.2089 1  
 10. .0315 .0214 .0097 .0015 -.0553 .0468 -.0407 -.0779 .0725 1  
 11. .0618 .0195 -.0313 -.0060 .0288 -.0036 -.0632 -.1201 -.1535 .2118 1  
 12. .1337 -.0371 -.0518 .0627 .0397 .1394 -.1925 -.1352 .0079 .0168 .0934 1  
 13. .0587 -.0334 -.0045 .2223 .0065 -.0462 .0902 .0961 -.3520 -.0689 .1801 .0793 1  
 14. .0273 -.0035 -.0086 .1173 .0119 .0533 .0307 .0069 -.0752 -.0340 -.0762 .0919 .0066 1  
 15. .0457 -.0103 -.0404 .0817 .0682 .0529 .0047 -.0040 .0475 -.0048 -.0113 .1255 -.0065 .6216 1  
 16. -.0194 -.0256 .0352 .0242 -.0237 .0132 .0316 .0258 -.1077 -.0451 -.0116 .0260 -.0103 .3059 .0023 1  
 17. .0185 .0310 -.0013 -.0149 .0279 .0299 -.0051 -.0304 -.0833 -.0302 -.0183 -.0208 .0205 .5258 -.0176 .0320 1  
 18. .0964 -.0060 -.0701 .0176 .0557 .0262 -.0054 .0000 .0254 .0499 -.0078 .0249 -.0271 .5399 .3854 .1503 .2996 1  
 19. -.0273 -.0115 -.0091 .0519 -.0344 -.0602 .0419 .0080 -.0164 -.0094 -.0781 -.0595 -.0071 .3489 .1278 .0550 .3623 .0970 1  
 20. .0169 -.0062 .0141 .0848 .0822 .0392 .0241 .0164 -.0911 -.0276 .0289 .0774 .0496 .5948 .5073 .2164 .2850 .1552 .0705 1  
 21. .0577 .0005 .0373 .1535 .0433 .0382 -.0246 -.0006 -.1618 .0273 .1126 .2961 .1055 .1125 .1388 .0252 .0123 .0411 -.0557 .0640 1  
 22. .1606 -.0416 -.1429 -.0698 .1607 -.0315 -.0620 -.0631 -.0430 -.0579 .1101 .0901 .0031 .0674 .0246 .0847 .0773 .1001 .0034 .0901 .1628 1  
 23. .0308 -.0343 .0660 .2536 -.0335 .0245 .0308 -.0090 -.1274 -.0447 .0318 .1598 .0434 .1543 .1989 -.0010 -.0404 .0735 -.0071 .1264 .2397 .0600 1  
 24. .0792 -.0601 -.0554 -.0144 -.0227 .0974 -.1091 -.1078 -.0273 .0188 .0709 .1037 -.0495 .0165 -.0216 .0251 .0117 -.0139 -.0278 .0111 .1861 -.0102 .2230 1  
 25. .0699 -.0724 -.0148 -.1193 -.0056 .0170 -.1588 -.0528 .1025 -.0062 -.0050 .0543 .0161 -.0687 -.0809 -.0146 -.0619 .0007 .0186 -.0235 .0896 .0439 .0666 .1148 1  
 26. -.0176 -.0010 .0845 .0927 -.0266 -.0672 .0593 .0692 -.0472 -.0420 -.0139 -.0126 .0102 -.0333 -.0264 -.0137 .0390 -.0080 -.0307 -.0338 .0337 -.0944 .0248 -.0091 .0068 1  
 27. .1187 -.0993 -.0223 -.1311 -.0471 .3795 -.1104 -.0787 .0817 .0344 .0171 .0488 -.0624 -.0930 -.0453 -.0118 -.0693 -.0083 -.0467 -.0609 .0278 .0179 -.0799 .0683 .0748 .0190 1  
 28. .1170 .0037 -.0838 -.0202 .0170 .0972 -.1401 -.0395 .0147 .0189 .1633 .1914 .0673 .2435 .3631 .0446 -.0501 .2319 -.0568 .1916 .2114 .1328 .3290 .0928 .0807 .0043 .1099 1

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Social-cultural specialists                                  | 15. Recruited by an activist                               |
| 2. New middle class (other)                                     | 16. Recruited by an adherent                               |
| 3. Workers  | 17. Recruited by a subscriber                              |
| 4. Age  | 18. Recruited by strong acquired ties                      |
| 5. Education  | 19. Recruited by strong ascriptive ties                    |
| 6. Gender (women)   | 20. Recruited by weak ties                                 |
| 7. Left/right values  | 21. Interest in the issue                                  |
| 8. Postmodern/modern values                                     | 22. Past experiences with the issue                        |
| 9. Frequency of attendance to religious services                | 23. Individual effectiveness                               |
| 10. Embeddedness in formal networks (others)                    | 24. Collective effectiveness                               |
| 11. Embeddedness in formal networks close to the movement       | 25. Delegitimation of authorities/legitimation of citizens |
| 12. Embeddedness in informal networks                           | 26. Subjective availability                                |
| 13. Recruitment by formal networks (recruited by a SMO)         | 27. Objective availability                                 |
| 14. Recruitment by informal networks (recruited by a BD member) | 28. Intensity of participation                             |

**Table 1:** Coefficients from OLS regression of the intensity of participation on selected individual preferences

	<b>Beta</b>
Individual effectiveness	.34***
Collective effectiveness	-.07
Delegitimation of authorities/legitimation of citizens	-.05
Subjective availability	.04
Objective availability	-.09
Individual effectiveness X objective availability (interactive term)	.29**
	R <sup>2</sup> =.20

\* p=.05, \*\* p=.01, \*\*\* p=.001

**Table 2:** Coefficients from OLS regression of the intensity of participation on selected social networks variables

	<b>Beta</b>
<b>Embeddedness in networks</b>	
Formal networks close to the movement	.16**
Other formal networks	-.01
Informal networks	.12**
<b>Recruitment by networks</b>	
Formal networks	.04
Informal networks	.08
Recruited by subscriber	-.08
Recruited by adherent	-.01
Recruited by activist	.25***
Recruited by weak ties	.01
Recruited by strong acquired ties	.12*
Recruited by strong ascriptive	-.07
	$R^2=.21$

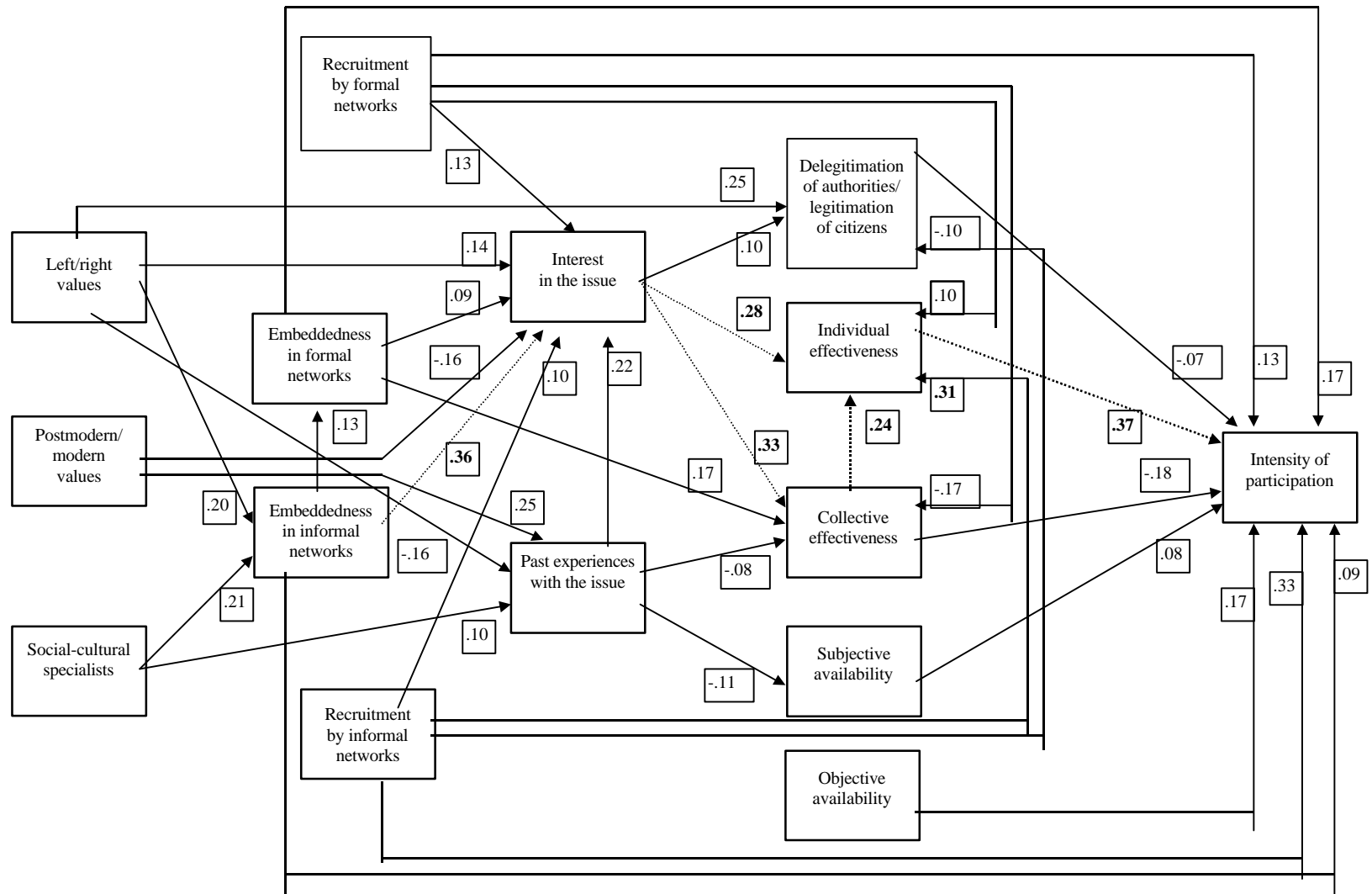
\* p=.05, \*\* p=.01, \*\*\* p=.001

**Table 3:** Coefficients from OLS regression of the intensity of participation on selected independent variables (nested models)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<b>Social and cultural basis</b>						
<b>Social variables</b>						
Social-cultural specialists	.16**	.13*	.10	.06	.04	.03
New middle class (other)	.12	.10	.09	.07	.05	.05
Workers	-.01	-.01	-.02	.01	.05	-.04
Age	.01	.00	-.06	-.11	-.07	-.07
Education	.05	.04	.07	.02	.02	.01
Gender (women)	.08	.07	.07	.03	.01	-.02
<b>Cultural variables</b>						
Left/right values	.26***	.23***	.21***	.15	.19*	.15
Postmodern/modern values	-.15**	-.17**	-.10	-.07	-.11	-.07
Frequency of attendance to religious services	-.07	-.04	-.06	.02	-.02	-.02
<b>Social networks</b>						
<b>Socialization</b>						
<i>Formal networks</i>						
Embeddedness in formal networks (other)		-.02	-.01	-.01	.00	-.01
Embeddedness in networks close to the movement		.15***	.14***	.18**	.18**	.18**
<i>Informal networks</i>						
Embeddedness in informal networks		.12**	.07	.14*	.14*	.14*
<b>Recruitment</b>						
<i>Formal networks</i>						
Recruited by a SMO			.06	.08	.05	.07
<i>Informal networks</i>						
Recruited by a BD member			.08	.05	.00	-.01
Recruited by an activist			.30***	.30***	.28***	.29***
Recruited by an adherent			-.01	-.03	.02	.03
Recruited by a subscriber			-.13*	-.02	.03	.06
Recruited through strong acquired ties			.09	.11*	.14*	.13*
Recruited through strong ascriptive ties			-.04	-.09	-.08	-.07
Recruited through weak ties			-.01	-.03	-.05	-.05
<b>Individual preferences</b>						
<b>Subjective side</b>						
Interest in the issue				.05	.01	-.01
Individual effectiveness				.29***	.31***	.23***
Collective effectiveness				-.06*	-.13*	-.13*
Delegitimation of authorities/legitimation of citizens				-.02	-.06	-.05
Subjective availability				.05	.06	.07
<b>Objective side</b>						
Objective availability					.13*	-.07
Past experiences with the issue					.08	.06
<b>Interactive term</b>						
Individual effectiveness x objective availability						.29***
	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.06</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.10</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.25</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.36</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.39</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.42</b>

\* p=.05, \*\* p=.01, \*\*\* p=.001

Figure 1: LISREL estimates of structural equations model of differential participation in social movements (standardized solutions)



Degrees of freedom = 147  
 Chi square = 413.93  
 Goodness of fit = .949  
 Probability = 0.00

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The test of hypotheses is based on a sample of 646 respondents who returned a questionnaire we sent to 1200 members of the BD. Participants have been randomly selected in each of the two main linguistic regions of Switzerland (German-speaking and French-speaking). One might argue that, as a result of the almost halved number of respondents, our sample is biased. However, after having compared it to estimations of members made by the SMO, we can reasonably claim that our sample is representative of the entire population of BD activists. In particular, the distribution of individuals with regard to their level of activity is consistent with the estimations.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to multiple regressions for the whole sample, we conducted logistic regressions for each dichotomized category of the dependent variable in order to test for possible different causal patterns for each variable. Since we found no substantial difference and since the number of cases for the category of activists is too small to yield significant results, we decided to proceed with the regression analysis, thus treating the intensity of participation as an ordinal variable.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that our measure of individual effectiveness is somewhat problematic, for we cannot determine the direction of causality. Nevertheless, in-depth interviews conducted with BD activists suggests that individual effectiveness was crucial to join the SMO. Although the perception of individual effectiveness changes in the course of participation, the interviews indicate that a positive perception before getting involved in the BD was a major determinant of participation.

<sup>4</sup> To keep the model readable, Figure 1 shows only statistically significant coefficients. In order for the model to be positive definite, and hence testable, variables to be included in the model have been selected according to their theoretical relevance and/or statistical significance in the multiple regressions. The probability test (P) of the model is not statistically significant. However, if the Chi square/degree of freedom ratio varies between 1 and 3, the model can nevertheless be accepted. The number of variables and their measure quality (mainly attitudes and evaluations) weaken the test of significance considerably. However, when we reduce the number of variables in the model by removing the social-cultural factors, which have an indirect effect on the dependent variable, the model becomes statistically significant.