



What drives political participation? Motivations and Mobilization in a Digital Age

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What drives political participation? Motivations and Mobilization in a Digital Age¹

Abstract

The article provides insights into the driving forces that underpin new forms of political participation. Digital technologies offer opportunities for engaging in a wide range of civically-oriented activities, each of which can contribute to deeper democratic engagement. Conventional acts of political participation are argued to be driven primarily by intrinsic motivations relating to self-efficacy and empowerment with participants feeling they can have influence over decision makers. Little research explores whether similar motivations drive participation in less conventional acts, as well as whether mobilisation attempts via social media by peers or political organisations mediate those motivations. Drawing on data from a survey among a representative sample of the UK electorate, we find the offline and online spheres of agency remain fairly distinct. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations both matter but extrinsic motivations have the strongest explanatory power independent of the sphere of activity. The mediating effect of mobilisation tactics has a minimal effect on extrinsic motivations, online or offline, but online intrinsic motivations lose their explanatory power. As intrinsic factors offer little explanatory power some forms of online political participation may lack meaning to the individual. Rather, these non-conventional acts result from reward seeking and are more likely to be encouraged by non-governmental campaigning organizations suggesting social media users are most likely to perform simple acts in support of non-contentious causes.

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Motivations and Mobilization in a Digital Age

Political participation can no longer be purely defined in terms of high effort, offline acts.

Political participation now covers an array of forms which includes traditional forms, such as voting, petitioning governments, contacting elected representatives and taking part in demonstrations, as well as non-conventional acts performed using digital technologies which appear geared more towards expressing a view, supportive or otherwise, than influencing decision makers (De Zúñiga et al., 2012; Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013). Most conventional acts can be performed using digital platforms, however social media also allows users to create or join communities which transcend state boundaries, starting or contributing to discussions, advertising support for causes, and promoting the work of a range of national and global political organisations and campaigns. Digital technologies thus provide a range of new means for engaging in civically-oriented forms of behaviour.

Political organisations encourage supporters to engage in these forms of behaviour via digital platforms. Political parties, non-governmental and civil society organisations attempt to draw citizens into promoting their campaigns, harnessing their dedication to a cause or the organisation (Tenscher et al., 2016). The interplay of attitudes towards a participatory act, the organisation promoting that act, and beliefs and positions elicited through persuasive communication represent highly complex cognitive processes (Leighley, 1995). The complexity is increased in the digital age; a broader range of factors can heighten the propensity to participate as digital technology use can provide pathways into higher cognitive engagement (De Zúñiga et al, 2012). Little research, however, captures how stimuli received via digital technologies combine with individuals' predispositions to create the conditions for political participation.

Our research explores what motivates citizens to pursue suites of participation, specifically testing the power of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and the extent these are mediated by

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2
3 persuasive communication. Given the evidence showing a decline in participation in a range
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5 of forms of civic life (Martin, 2012), it is crucial to understand what stimulates citizens to
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7 perform civically-oriented actions. Our research is conducted within a context when political
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9 engagement should be high. Elections are times of high politicization with evidence digital
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11 technology expands the public sphere and fuels engagement (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). The
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13 2015 UK political scene, in the aftermath of the European parliamentary election (May 2014),
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15 the referendum on independence for Scotland (September 2014), and opinion polls showing
16
17 deadlock between the major parties, indicates the conditions for heightened engagement.
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19 Furthermore, media attention to on the continued rise of Euroscepticism, with a right-wing
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21 anti-EU party winning most seats in the European parliament initiated a debate on the UK's
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23 membership of the EU. Controversy also surrounded the nature of the devolution settlement
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25 for Scotland following the close victory for the No campaign and subsequent debates over
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27 parity between the four UK nations. Speculation about the election outcome, and high
28
29 chance of protracted coalition negotiations, meant voter turnout was predicted to be high.
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31 While an unusual set of circumstances, the predicted high engagement offered an
32
33 opportunity to gather data, drawn from a representative survey of UK citizens, to understand
34
35 the extent of, and motivations for conventional and non-conventional participation. We
36
37 proceed to conceptualise motivations and mobilisation prior to providing details on the
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39 methodology, presenting and analysing data and offering pointers for further research.
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42 **Intrinsic Motivations**

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45 Motivations represent the interplay between personal attitudes towards a specific action and
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47 external persuasion (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Intrinsic motivations hinge upon personal
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49 attitudes which provide hedonic evaluations of actions assessing for example whether an act
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51 is enjoyable and personally satisfying (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). People, self-determination
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53 theory suggests, are behaviourally self-regulating. When there is freedom of choice, people
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55 pursue activities perceived or experienced to be personally useful or valuable. Studies have
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57 shown even apparently altruistic behaviour can be explained partially or fully through selfish
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3 motivations (Barasch et al, 2014), for example political activists' dominant motivations are
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5 intrinsic: seeking enjoyment, self-realization and personal well-being (Klar & Kasser, 2009).
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7 Hence, based on work using the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI), we argue that
8
9 underlying predispositions to behaviours are powerful for explaining the likelihood of
10
11 performing an action and this is particularly the case when combined with confirmatory
12
13 experience-based data (Plant & Ryan, 1985; Mcauley et al, 1989; Deci et al, 1999).
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15
16 Intrinsic motivations lead to the formation of patterns of behaviour which can be reinforced
17
18 through the use of digital technologies (Garrity et al, 2007). Technology offers
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20 complementarity: strengthening commitment by providing further means to pursue favoured
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22 forms of activity (Dutta-Bergman, 2006). The reinforcement and complementarity theses
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24 suggest intrinsic motivations are key drivers of behaviour, but studies often find mixed
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26 results in particular when studying behaviour facilitated by digital technology (Nam, 2012).
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28 29 **Extrinsic Motivations**

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32 Extrinsic motivations suggest people in reality have lower levels of freedom of choice. When
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34 behaviour is conspicuous people internalize the attitudes of others, conforming to social
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36 norms when making behavioural decisions. The alternative dimension to the notion of
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38 behaviour driven by selfish motives offered by self-determination theory suggests people
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40 seek approval and rewards from others (Deci, 1971). Experimental research showed the
41
42 greater the reward, perceived or actual, predicted higher likelihood of action (Deci et al.,
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44 1999) including gaining encouragement (Vallerand & Lalande, 2011), positive feedback
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46 (Greenwald 1982) and approval from peers (Madden et al., 1992). Hence, communal
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48 (Omoto et al., 2010) or prosocial (Grant, 2008) motivations are important in explaining civic
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50 engagement as behavioural self-regulation becomes diminished and behaviour conforms to
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52 observed norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), when there is direct incentive (Deci et al, 1999).
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55 Ryan and Deci (2000b) recognise that where there are combinations of intrinsic and extrinsic
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57 motivations, for example when an expectation of rewards makes a task personally enjoyable
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3 and fulfilling, action is more likely. Degli-Antoni (2009) found volunteers seek to have a
4 positive effect on others through their efforts, and feel self-fulfilled (intrinsic motivations);
5 however they are also motivated by gaining recognition from peers and earning social capital
6 (extrinsic motivations). Therefore differing actions may elide with differing levels of both
7 intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but each type of motivations impact upon the other, and
8 an individual will most likely perform an action when they have strong intrinsic and extrinsic
9 motivations. While research consistently shows behaviour is driven by underlying positive
10 predispositions, which underpins the formation of intrinsic motivations, intrinsic motivations
11 are also shown to be positively correlated with extrinsic motivations suggesting that
12 expecting or receiving awards contributes to further strengthening intrinsic motivations
13 (Gottfried et al, 1994; Gonzalez-DeHass et al, 2005). Hence, we argue in the context of
14 political participation:
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28 H1. Regardless of the form or sphere of participation we will find a complementary influence
29 from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on political participation regardless of other
30 explanatory factors.
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34 35 **Offline versus online participation**

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38 Studies over the two last decades have largely treated online and offline as distinct spheres
39 of activity, and while research has found hyper active citizens participate in conventional and
40 non-conventional forms of activity within offline and digital environments the majority of
41 studies suggest the existence of participation patterns taking place within one single sphere
42 (Polat, 2005; De Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2011; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). This paper adheres to
43 the argument that “a distinction between online and offline political activity should be
44 maintained” (Vissers & Stolle, 2014: 950). The distinction chimes with suggestions online
45 mobilisation leads only to online participation, actions some dismiss as shallow and
46 effortless (Morozov, 2012). Indeed research consistently shows online mobilisation has
47 lower if not minimal effects in encouraging offline forms of participation (Quintelier & Vissers,
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3 2008). UK research reinforces this argument (Ward et al, 2003; Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006)
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5 although more complex suites of participation exist when online and offline spheres are
6
7 bridged (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013). Studies show some online forms of political
8
9 engagement, like online information seeking (De Zúñiga et al., 2012) and goal oriented
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11 forum use (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013), positively predict online and offline participation.
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14 The motivations underpinning forms of participation in online or offline spheres have not
15
16 received significant attention. The traditional view of offline political participation, geared
17
18 towards personal fulfilment through exacting political change (Verba et al, 1995), suggests
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20 intrinsic motivations have the greater explanatory power. We therefore hypothesise:
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23 H2a. Intrinsic motivations will have greater explanatory power over participation occurring
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25 within the offline sphere (as this involves greater effort, resources and planning, so personal
26
27 attitudes towards the action and its outcomes will dominate)
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30 Research on behaviour within online environments suggests extrinsic motivations may have
31
32 primacy. Studies find those who join Facebook communities do so predominantly to
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34 socialize, and enhance their reputation among peers (Park et al., 2009). Similarly interaction,
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36 whatever the subject matter, within communities is undertaken in pursuit of social capital
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38 (McClurg, 2003). The primary motivations of bloggers, for example, are to influence others
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40 and build a reputation (Ekdale et al., 2010). These findings suggest behaviour is driven by
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42 expectations of rewards and incentives would act as an important behavioural cue (Kriesi,
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44 2008). We therefore argue:
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47 H2b. Extrinsic motivations will have greater explanatory power over participation occurring
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49 within the online sphere (as action and social reward can occur almost simultaneously).
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51 52 **Mobilisation tactics and political participation**

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54 The extent people become motivated through peer-to-peer encouragement or the
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56 mobilization strategies pursued by political organisations via digital technologies is an issue
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3 of debate. The mobilization thesis argues that access to digital technologies has the capacity
4 to draw new participants into civic life (Stanley & Wear, 2004), particularly among younger
5 citizens (Hirzalla et al., 2010). Certain social media usage for news gathering or social
6 interaction encourages the growth of diverse networks, belonging to a diverse network leads
7 to regulation of behaviour in order to maintain one's position within that network. Hence,
8 being part of a network in turn leads to persuasion through exposure (Anderson & Tverdova,
9 2001). Therefore, testing for the mediation of motivations by exposure to mobilization is
10 important for understanding the dynamics of behaviour.
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20 In the context of the lead up to an election, understanding the power of the mobilization
21 thesis is particularly important. Research on election campaigns (Lilleker, 2013) and the
22 campaigns of civic society organisations (Enjolras et al., 2013; Guo & Saxton, 2014) show
23 political parties and campaign organisations build community spaces, encourage supporters
24 to join those spaces and then seek to mobilise those supporters to perform actions to benefit
25 the organisation and its campaign. Social media has become a significant battleground for
26 all political organisations, in particular civic society organisations (Acensio & Sun, 2015).
27
28 Within the context of UK politics, organisations seek to persuade citizens to support the
29 organisation, join its campaigns and provide financial and physical resources (Fisher et al.,
30 2014). Mobilisation attempts are highly strategic (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993) and have
31 accelerated significantly as a result of the widespread adoption of social media (Vaccari,
32 2013). Organisations not only seek to mobilise supporters directly, but also encourage
33 existing activists to accelerate their reach within digital networks. The revised two-step flow
34 model (Norris & Curtice, 2008) demonstrates organisations utilise the affordances of social
35 media to mobilise supporters to, in turn, persuade and mobilise their followers.
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51 Social media allows any user to play the role of activist, even on a single occasion; they can
52 post content about a political cause or issue, be it their own content, content from other
53 users, content from media or content from political organisations. The role they play may be
54 purely the product of intrinsic motivations, self-fulfilment and for entertainment, or it might be
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3 to conform to social norms and receive rewards. Equally these social media activists may be
4
5 drawn more by receiving encouragement which provides an outlet to satisfy their underlying
6
7 predispositions. Predispositions enable activation as they provide the “manifest political
8
9 potential” (Kreisi, 1985) that makes the individual susceptible to being mobilised
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11 (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Each action taken on social media can, in turn, have a
12
13 mobilising impact on others within an online network (De Zúñiga et al., 2014). Theocharis
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15 (2015) uses the term digitally networked participation to describe individuals attempting to
16
17 mobilize their networks for political purposes. The effectiveness of differing mobilisation
18
19 practices and their relationship to the underlying motivations is however largely unknown.
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22 Social media also facilitates accidental exposure to news and political content and permits
23
24 all users to publicly show their agreement or disagreement through posting content and
25
26 commenting. In terms of Facebook’s likes and shares or Twitter’s retweet function this can
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28 involve nothing more than a single click. However organisations and peers can also share
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30 invitations to demonstrations, to sign petitions or get more involved in a campaign. Exposure
31
32 to political content from peers or directly from organizations or activists both predict online
33
34 and offline participation, although viewing content shared by peers is a stronger predictor of
35
36 online participation, while direct communication from an organisation predicts online and
37
38 offline participation (Tang & Lee, 2013). These findings build upon studies which have
39
40 shown accidental exposure to news can lead to a heightened propensity to be civically
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42 engaged (De Zúñiga et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013;) and at the very least can reduce gaps in
43
44 the levels of interest and engagement (Valeriani & Vaccari, 2015). Social pressure, applied
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46 by peers via social media, to act in a certain way is equally seen as a predictor of
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48 participation, in particular when an action is seen to have broader societal benefits
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50 (Panagopoulos, 2013) and applied via “specific networks of informal sociability” (Lowndes,
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52 2004: 61). Studies of the effects of social media usage on the propensity to participate from
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54 different perspectives arrive at contrasting results ranging from strong to adverse effects
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56 (Theocharis & Lowe, 2015). Some studies highlight that the form of social media usage
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3 matters, for example positive experiences from engaging in issue-specific activism increases
4 the propensity to participate further (Vraga et al, 2015) while others suggest it is the
5 composition of an individual's network (Lupton et al, 2014), its size, interactive dynamics and
6 heterogeneity (Huckfeldt, 2014). The inconsistent results demonstrate the importance of
7 asking about a range of participatory actions, their motivations and the forms of mobilisation
8 received in order to fully distinguish what forms of mobilisation stimulate which motivations.

9 We therefore hypothesise:

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18 H3a. The predictive strength of intrinsic motivations will not be mediated by the mobilisation
19 from political parties, non-electoral organisations and peers.

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23 H3b. The predictive strength of extrinsic motivations will be mediated by mobilisation from
24 political parties, non-electoral organisations and peers.

25 26 27 **Measuring the relationship between motivations and mobilisation**

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30 Attitudes, built around underlying predispositions, in particular those underpinning internal
31 efficacy (the means to affect a system) and external efficacy (the system can be affected)
32 are argued to be the key drivers of a propensity to participate and the mode of participation.
33 Therefore within classic studies of political participation (for discussion see Anderson &
34 Tverdova, 2001), there is clear model of a hierarchy of effect. Research on a broader range
35 of human behaviours also suggest that underlying dispositions, regarding attitudes to an
36 action and how others perceive you if you act a certain way, are proven to be strong
37 predictors of behaviour especially when the underlying attitudes are proven through
38 experience (Ajzen, 2011). Equally, underlying dispositions, combined with perceptions of the
39 potential for gaining a desired outcome, are shown consistently to be strong predictors of
40 behaviour in a range of contexts (Chen & Tung, 2014; Friese et al, 2016). Yet, while
41 motivation can predict willingness to participate; willingness is a necessary but insufficient
42 condition of participation. In other words motivations need channelling and any action needs
43 to inform potential participants that the action can be undertaken and may fulfil needs which
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3 satisfy their motivations (Chen & Tung, 2014). Acts of mobilization involves the activation of
4 individuals who have the motivations and predispositions to support a movement's goals and
5 perform the prescribed activity (Snow et al, 1986).
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9 It is impossible, even under experimental conditions, to capture every potential variable.
10 However, following research using IMI and the theories of reasoned action and planned
11 behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) it is possible to capture underlying predispositions as
12 well as behavioural data and examine whether there is internal consistency (Deci et al,
13 1999). Indeed researchers have long measured motivations through some combination of
14 observable cognitive (e.g., recall, perception), affective (e.g., subjective experience),
15 behavioral (e.g., performance), and physiological (e.g., brain activation) responses alongside
16 using self-reports (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2014, 328). The latter researchers argue that
17 motivation can only be measured accurately by the degree an action is evaluated positively,
18 using explicit measures (p. 330). In highlighting self-reports are a valid means by which
19 researchers can learn about psychological motivations they support the notion that, when
20 understanding real-world behaviour, as opposed to behaviour under laboratory conditions, it
21 is perfectly adequate to measure motivations and behaviour through self-reports as the two
22 are fundamentally interlinked and self-reinforcing through experience. Following the tradition
23 of IMI research we argue the values of motivational variables at the time of a survey were
24 similar to their values before the individuals actually took part in (or abstained from) action
25 (Pierce & Converse 1990). While motivational responses may be higher due to having
26 experience-based data what we capture is the mutually reinforcing relationship between
27 organizational activities and participation in collective action (Finkel & Muller, 1998).
28 Therefore a survey that records participation, the underlying motivations relating to that
29 action as well as the extent to which encouragement has been received allows us to build a
30 picture of how motivations and encouragement interacts to drive behaviour.
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54 55 **Methodology** 56 57 58 59 60

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3 There is a general lack of data on the motivations driving political participation and the
4 mediation of motivations by encouragement via social media. We ran an online survey with
5 Opinium Research on a United Kingdom representative sample of 18+ year olds (N = 1982).
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7 The survey was conducted one month prior to the start of the six-week 2015 parliamentary
8 election campaign 24-27 February 2015. The questionnaire was sent out to a stratified
9 sample of those registered on the Opinium Research database (40 000 e-mails), the
10 stratification (by age, gender, region and social class) was used to ensure
11 representativeness. The CAWI method was employed among a non-probability, stratified
12 sample with the participation rate (AAPOR Task Force (2010)) of 28.6 per cent (2037 out of
13 7126 invitations sent).
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23 24 **Dependent variables**

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26 Following Quintelier & Vissers (2008) and Vissers & Stolle (2014), as well as given that our
27 respondents' reported behaviour map to two distinct suites, we use the spheres of activity,
28 offline or online, as a dependent variable to ascertain what differences can be found
29 between motivations within the offline and online environments.
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36 **The index of offline and online political activities** are based on questions asking if in the
37 last 12 months they have performed any of the following: [offline] "boycotted a company or
38 product" (18%), "joined/rejoined a political party" (6%), "contacted an elected representative"
39 (16%), "taken part in a demonstration" (6.6%); [online] "commented about politics on social
40 media" (16%), "followed a political non-governmental political organization or charity on SM"
41 (14%), "shared political content on SM" (12%), "follow political party/MP/candidate on SM"
42 (10%). Further, based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis coefficients (Appendix: Table 2), the
43 questions were recoded into two indexes: offline political participation $\alpha=.782$
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55 **Independent variables**

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3 **Motivations:** for each of the political activities respondents indicated the level ((0) strongly
4 disagree to (4) strongly agree) to which motivations are driving their participation. Two
5 indices were created drawing on the theory of reasoned action (Madden et al., 1992) which
6 highlight the importance of behavioural beliefs (underpinning intrinsic motivations) and
7 normative beliefs (underpinning extrinsic motivations). Our survey questions were adapted
8 for the political participation context based on procedures developed by Ajzen.²

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16 The Intrinsic motivation index (IMI) is based on a combination of feeling good, having a
17 positive self-image and feelings of self-efficacy factors which contribute to self-satisfaction
18 (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The following questions were asked for each political activity “*I*
19 *personally feel good taking part in this activity*”, “*I feel that this activity is the sort of thing that*
20 *my friends and family would respect me for*”, “*I feel I can influence others*”, “*I feel I can*
21 *influence policy makers*”. The Extrinsic motivation index (EMI) “*Others benefits from people*
22 *like me taking part in this activity*”, “*A number of my friends are also taking part in this*
23 *activity*”, “*I feel inspired by my friends to take part in this activity*” link to the instrumentalist
24 nature of these motivations being concerned with benefitting others as well as expecting
25 rewards through conforming with norms prevailing within peer networks (Deci, 1971).
26 Indexes were calculated separately for offline and online participation: IMI for offline activities
27 (16 items, range 0-64, $\alpha=.963$, $M=27.4$, $SD=16.5$); IMI for online activities (16 items, range
28 0-64, $\alpha=.975$, $M=23.6$, $SD=17$); EMI for offline activities (12 items, range 0-48, $\alpha=.946$,
29 $M=18.6$, $SD=11.9$); EMI for online activities (12 items, range 0-48, $\alpha=.961$, $M=17.2$,
30 $SD=12.6$).

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47 Mobilisation: frequency ((0) never to (4) frequently) of encountering the following: “*I see*
48 *friends sharing and linking content on social media*’ or ‘*I received encouragement via social*
49 *media from friends to like or join political campaigns*”(M=2.49, SD=2.53, max=8), “*I received*
50 *encouragement via social media from political parties to like or join their campaigns*”
51 (M=1.08, SD=1.3, max=4), “*I received encouragement via social media from campaign*
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58 ² <http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.html>
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3 *organization to like or join their campaigns”* (M=1.25, SD=1.4, max=4). We asked these as a
4 general question to examine if mobilisation had occurred as recall for mobilisation around
5 any one specific action may be lower.
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8 9 **Control variables**

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12 Socio-demographic variables: *gender* with female (53%, reference group); *age* continuous
13 variable (M=46.4 SD=16.3); *education* measured as dummy variable for those with university
14 education (46%) and with lower than university education (54%, reference group); *social*
15 *grade* (ordered variable) is measured according to NRS index (A 11%, B 26%, C1 30%, C2
16 12%, D 9%, E 12%); *employment*, dummy, those being fully or partially employed (66%,
17 otherwise is a reference group).
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21 Political variables: *Party identification* is measured by whether respondents could state a
22 clear voting intention, given that the campaign had not started and the election was three
23 months later this provides a sense of partisan attachment. Party identification a dummy
24 variable 1= having party identity (73%, otherwise is a reference group); *Political discussion*
25 measured as dummy for those discussing politics with friends or family (51%, otherwise is a
26 reference group) this is also used as a proxy for political interest.
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38 39 **Results**

40 41 **Modelling offline and online political participation**

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44 In order to understand the role intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have, as well as the
45 mediating role of mobilization attempts sent via social media by political parties,
46 campaigning organizations and friends, regressions and path analysis were run separately
47 for different participatory patterns. The offline and online participatory indexes are presented
48 in models without mobilisation effects (models A) and with mobilisation effects (models B).
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55 The data from regression analysis shows that demographic characteristics have differential
56 effects for explaining offline and online participatory patterns. Education remains a strong
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3 predictor, regardless of the participatory activities or mediation by encouragement, with
4 those being more educated also engaging more. Gender is a significant explanatory
5 characteristic for online activities only (males being marginally more active $\beta_{RA(\text{regression model})}$
6 $\beta_{RA}=.067$ $p<.05$). The gender effect is mediated, however, by mobilisation. When we take into
7 account being encouraged to act online, the gender gap diminishes. This finding suggests
8 males are slightly more likely to engage in political participation, but females may be more
9 likely to be mobilised by encouragement via social media. As expected, age has differing
10 impacts depending on whether participation is offline or online, older respondents are
11 definitely more likely to engage in traditional offline activities ($\beta_{RA}=.004$ $p<.05$), surprisingly
12 the effect is even stronger when mobilised via social media ($\beta_{RB}=.006$ $p<.000$). Age has no
13 statistically significant impact on online participation suggesting that firstly, young people are
14 more eager to engage online than offline, but also that age-related differences visible in
15 earlier studies (Martin, 2012), most probably due to a generational digital divide, have
16 diminished. The diminishing age gap may result from the greater ease of participating in
17 online forms of political activism. Those from a lower social class tend to be less likely to
18 engage in offline participation ($\beta_{RA}=-.027$ $p<.05$), the gap remains regardless of the source of
19 mobilisation. As for online participation, social class is not significant in model A, however in
20 model B encouragement via social media appears indicate lower class citizens can be
21 mobilised into political participation online ($\beta_{RB}=.021$ $p=.07$). As could be expected political
22 variables play statistically significant and positive roles on participation rates regardless of
23 the form of participation and independent of mediation by receiving encouragement.
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49 We find interesting contrasts when exploring the explanatory power motivations. Intrinsic and
50 extrinsic motivations both have positive explanatory power for offline political participation,
51 but extrinsic motivations appear dominant. This is contrary to expectations. However, when
52 focusing on online forms of political participation our expectations are confirmed by the
53 significantly higher explanatory power of extrinsic motivations. However when mobilisation
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3 factors are included the significance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations diminish, and
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5 intrinsic motivations for online political participation become insignificant. We suggest
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7 therefore that while intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play a role they are mediated by
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9 mobilisation, in particular those received from campaign organisations. The explanatory
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11 power of party proximity, though significant across all models, may suggest parties are one
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13 but not the most important factor for encouraging participation even in the lead up to a major
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15 national election.
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18 Hypotheses H1 suggests there should be a positive effect on participation from individuals'
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20 motivations, regardless whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic, however previous studies
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22 suggest intrinsic motivations should be stronger at least for offline forms of political
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24 participation (Hypothesis H2). One may assume that self-efficacy or a feeling that
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26 individuals' actions may influence policy or other citizens (IMI) or a feeling of group
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28 belonging and collective (connective) actions (EMI) have a positive effect on engaging,
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30 regardless of any other variables. Furthermore, our assumption was that forms of
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32 mobilisation received from any actor (peers (social media friends) or organizations (political
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34 party, campaigning organization)) should have mediating power on the participation. Thus
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36 we claim that the complementary effect of mediation, with statistically significant direct and
37
38 indirect effects of motivations without/with encouragement should exist (Zhao et al 2010).
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40 Our data only partially confirms these hypotheses and complementary assumptions.
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43 We find a stable, statistically significant, positive and only slightly mediated effect from
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45 extrinsic motivations on any forms of political participation ($\beta_{RA}=.019$, $\beta_{RB}=.012$ $p<.000$ for
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47 offline and $\beta_{RA}=.019$, $\beta_{RB}=.012$ $p<.001$ for online). The result is strong regardless whether
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49 participation takes place within an offline or online sphere, confirming hypothesis H2b, and
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51 showing the importance of extrinsic motivations for driving online participatory actions. On
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53 the contrary, intrinsic motivations have more complex effects, being positive for offline
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55 participation ($\beta_{RA}=.010$, $\beta_{RB}=.007$ $p <.001$) but being completely mediated by social media
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57 mobilisation for online participation ($\beta_{RA}=.007$ $p<.01$). Post-estimation tests indicate
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3 (F(1,1972)=2.92 for offline and F=3.52 for online) significantly stronger effects of extrinsic
4 motivations over intrinsic motivations (in both models A), they remain significant for online
5 participation but become non-significant for the offline participation (model B). Hypothesis 1
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7 is thus only partially confirmed, as extrinsic motivations remain stable for both online and
8
9 offline participation regardless of other factors, however intrinsic motivations lose their
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11 explanatory power for online activities once mediated by mobilisation efforts. Hypothesis 2a
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13 is not confirmed as it is extrinsic motivations, for both offline and online sphere, which have a
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15 greater explanatory power (H2b).
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20 The path analysis (Figures 1 and 2) offers a somewhat different perspective of the interplay
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22 between motivations and mobilisation factors. Again the higher explanatory power of
23
24 extrinsic motivations is borne out, with intrinsic motivations for online forms of participation
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26 lacking significance while mediated (this refutes Hypothesis 3a). Therefore it appears that
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28 across all forms of political participation, people seek approval from others (in line with the
29
30 H3b) rather than personal fulfilment. Feelings of personal efficacy or 'feeling good' are less
31
32 significant in explaining online political engagement than 'group belonging' incentives.
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35 **Social media mobilisation**

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38 Comparing the simple average of the mobilization messages received by those who decided
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40 to engage (even in one, regardless of which, sphere of political activity) in comparison to
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42 those who remained passive, we see that on average those participating were twice as likely
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44 to have received encouragement (for passive: messages received from parties M=.68, from
45
46 campaigning organization M=.77, from peers M=.83; for active: messages received from
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48 parties M=1.74, from organizations M=2.03, from peers M=1.92³ The data on the potential
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50 effect of mobilisation via social media shows campaigning organizations' messages have the
51
52 strongest effects on both offline ($\beta_p=.210$ $p<.000$) and online ($\beta_p=.330$ $p<.000$) activities.
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54 Although with significantly lower impact, peers seem to have minimal influence on both
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57 ³ For correlation and the motivational predisposition on receiving higher level of mobilization incentives
58 through social media please see Table 3 and 4 in Appendix.
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3 activities ($\beta_p=.059$ $p<.1$ for offline and $\beta_p=.098$ $p<.05$ for online). Surprisingly,
4
5 encouragement received through social media from political parties has a weak, almost non-
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7 significant, positive effect ($\beta_p=.057$ $p=.096$) on offline participation, while the effect is
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9 statistically non-significant for online participation (with a negative direction).

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12 We would argue that different sources having differing levels of mediation, with campaigning
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14 organizations having a solid and stable effect. One might explain the differential influence
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16 levels by variances in the ties social media users have with political parties, campaign
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18 organizations and friends. We assume that to receive encouragement from any social media
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20 actors one needs to be connected into their network directly or via friends. It seems to be
21
22 rare (with the exception for some specific cases e.g. journalists, partisans or potential trolls)
23
24 that the average citizen would connect via social media (providing an endorsement and
25
26 giving the organization permission to contact them as well as being able to interact with the
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28 organization's profile through likes, shares or comments) with organizations that she/he is
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30 not supporting (thus one may visit contra-ideological groups without leaving any trace of
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32 such visits).

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35 As for political party activists, they represent a small minority and party encouragements only
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37 circulate within bounded and homogenous networks. While within the context of an election
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39 party communication might be visible outside these networks, non-activists may be unwilling
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41 to engage because their network is largely non-partisan and so partisan material may be
42
43 perceived as unacceptable (Matthes, 2013). Furthermore political parties may focus more on
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45 encouraging offline forms of participation, especially leading up to an election campaign,
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47 such as encouraging supporters to join the party. Conversely, we know UK parties
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49 encourage sharing, if not debating (Lilleker, 2013), but their networks, and particularly the
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51 number of activists in their networks are no more than 7,000 individuals (Lilleker, 2016),
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53 therefore parties may lack the reach of campaign organisations as parties may have lower
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55 numbers of committed supporters. Alternatively, it is possible low trust in political parties
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57 mediates the effect of their communication. On the contrary, non-partisan campaigns are
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3 less divisive, they are trusted, and they attempt to build broad communities to participate in
4 online deliberation (commenting) or viral marketing (following or sharing) (Asencio & Sun,
5 2015). As a consequence, campaign organizations gain visibility through sharing (Stefanone
6 et al., 2012) using mobilisation tactics and perhaps providing stronger affirmation for the
7 motivations of potential participants.
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14 The weaker mediating power of encouragement received from social media friends is
15 surprising (Bond et al., 2012), however may be explained by the fact that social media users
16 inhabit fairly heterogeneous communities, where one can be friends regardless of levels of
17 agreement on political issues, even though un-friending during a public opinion flashpoint is
18 an emerging phenomenon (John & Dvir-Gvirsman, 2015). Therefore while one may see
19 countervailing political messages, unless there is strong trust that disagreeing will not end
20 the friendship or lead to hostility such encouragement is more likely to be ignored (Matthes,
21 2013). Furthermore, if the network is highly heterogeneous friends may simultaneously send
22 conflicting political messages thus neutralizing one another; as a consequence friends'
23 encouragements may have a lesser impact on political activity (De Zuniga et al., 2012).
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35 Given the complexity it is impossible to test for all variables, however regardless of the
36 causes, the weak or non-existent power of political parties in encouraging political
37 participation confirms the complex relationship between social media users, their intrinsic
38 and extrinsic motivations and those who seek to spur them to action via social media.
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44 **Discussion**

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47 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as previous studies suggest, play a complex role in
48 influencing decisions to participate (Madden et al., 1992; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). However,
49 within a UK political context it appears extrinsic motivations predominate (Grant, 2008;
50 Omoto et al., 2010). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, regardless of the form or sphere of
51 participation intrinsic and extrinsic motivations combined exert a positive influence on
52 political participation. However contrary to Hypothesis 2 we did not identify different
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3 motivations within the different spheres, rather we found extrinsic motivations were the most
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5 significant drivers of participation regardless of the sphere. Political activism is conducted to
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7 benefit others as well as to receive rewards and recognition (Degli-Antoni, 2009). In many
8
9 ways this is logical as it suggests politics is a prosocial activity driven by a desire to have an
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11 impact as well as gaining rewards and recognition. Therefore, political participation might
12
13 elicit positive feelings that lead to stronger intrinsic motivations however extrinsic motivations
14
15 have the greater explanatory power. Furthermore while there is an indication that offline
16
17 political participation is likely to be influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations,
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19 online participation may be motivated primarily by seeking acceptance from other online
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21 users. But, gaining recognition through adherence to behavioural norms may well contribute
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23 to stronger intrinsic motivations that underpin a propensity to participate further.
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26 Although the question posed on receiving encouragement was general rather than specific
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28 to an action, and so participation might not directly result from receiving encouragement, its
29
30 explanatory power is striking. Arguably campaign organisations are most successful in using
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32 social media to offer the incentives most likely to mobilise their supporters. Through building
33
34 communities they may inculcate positive motivations so when they invite the online
35
36 community to act they are most successful in gaining positive responses. The persuasive
37
38 power of campaign organisations may also result from their constant communication with
39
40 supporters, unlike parties who are most active during elections and peers who may be
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42 sporadically politically active. However, at the point of acting online, the most important
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44 consideration may be whether the action fits to the norms of behaviour within a network;
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46 offline involves also seeking self-fulfilment as well as gaining recognition.
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49 The data overall suggests the online and offline spheres may not be as different as some
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51 expect (Vissers & Stolte, 2014). Participation in both spheres are best explained by extrinsic
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53 motivational factors, although offline participation is more self-fulfilling while online
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55 participation appears more driven by conforming and earning rewards. Rewards, however,
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57 offer fulfilment, suggesting a strong link between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Ryan &
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3 Deci, 2000b). However, the fact extrinsic motivations have greater explanatory power over
4 online participation suggests some behaviour is simple clicktivism: behaviour resulting from
5 mobilisation but having little personal significance. The data suggests mobilisation tactics,
6 especially pursued by campaign organisations have some mediating effect on political
7 participation online. Social media users may follow cues, such as a like from members of
8 their network, providing they feel the message will resonate with those who follow them
9 (Deci et al., 1999; Vallerand & Lalande, 2011). This finding supports Hypothesis 3b, though
10 most clearly when mediated by campaign organisations.
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20 Campaign organisations do not simply reinforce extrinsic motivations for online political
21 participation however. Without in-depth research among individuals or a longitudinal panel
22 study it is impossible to determine whether mobilisation strategies over time have a
23 cumulative impact on the propensity to act. However, what our data may give an indication
24 of is campaign organisations not only encourage actions that spread their message but they
25 can also encourage the belief that any supportive action can simultaneously have a positive
26 impact within the real world as well as on the individual through earning recognition and
27 rewards. Hence messages that provide extrinsic motivations to act might, longer-term, and
28 through the process of taking part in a collective action, contribute to strengthening intrinsic
29 motivations by making participants feel good about themselves and gain a greater sense of
30 self-efficacy (Vraga et al., 2015). Therefore campaign organizations have the propensity to
31 channel the enthusiasm of the committed while also recruiting participants with low
32 motivations who may be encouraged to act through accidental exposure. But both committed
33 and single click-based groups may be spurred into pursuing a broader and deeper suite of
34 participation that may lead to a deeper commitment to civically-oriented activity. Social
35 media provides a space for organisations to communicate to a wide community, attract users
36 to their communities and encourage actions; it also provides a space where users can
37 dabble in activism. Our data suggests a combination of underlying predispositions which
38 drive intrinsic motivations, bolstered by a strong expectation of gaining rewards, when
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3 incentivised via social media can provide a pathway into civic participation, but in the battle
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5 for hearts and action, campaign organisations have the edge in providing this pathway.
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10 **Limitations**

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13 As with any study based on a single country, cross-sectional survey, while there was a
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15 vibrant political culture in the lead up to the 2015 general election and significant debates
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17 surrounding the future of the union of nations, the relationship with the European Union and
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19 the best way to ameliorate the long-lasting effects of the global recession, there are limits to
20
21 the generalizability for other countries. A panel study would be required in order to control for
22
23 pure causal effects and the temporal consistency of motivations and mobilisation effects on
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25 political participation. The political context may also have led to somewhat higher levels of
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27 engagement, as well as higher levels of encouragement from a range of organizations and
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29 actors which might not be witnessed during a non-election period, especially from electoral
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31 organizations. Therefore we might suggest that some findings are exaggerated or that
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33 encouragement from friends via social media, in non-electoral periods, may play a more
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35 important role. In other words there are a number of communication and context variables
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37 that cannot be controlled for but which might impact on the results.
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41 The survey, following the IMI tradition, was also designed to ask about the respondents'
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43 motivations for each individual form of participation. This produces two limitations, firstly the
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45 lack of a general question regarding the likelihood to participate regardless of the activity (so
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47 measuring holistically the propensity to be active). Secondly, given that the survey measured
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49 motivations for each individual action, when aggregated we lose the individual context of the
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51 data where any given action may have unique drivers. However, the consistency of results
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53 suggests we provide unique insights into the relationship between motivations, mobilisation
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55 strategies and behaviour which can form the basis for further research (Touré-Tillery &
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57 Fishbach, 2014).
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3 A more sophisticated question should in future research relate to the receipt of
4 encouragement from other means beyond social media as well as other control variables
5 (e.g. size or heterogeneity of the network). It was impossible to conceive of all the means by
6 which campaign organizations, political parties or friends are able to interact with citizens in
7 an attempt to mobilize them. We thus focused entirely on social media in this project, but
8 with the understanding that any participation not explained by these forms of encouragement
9 could arrive from other sources. Equally, even when considering social media as a prime
10 route for persuasive communication, it may be the case that the relative homogeneity of the
11 networks individuals inhabit may be a moderating factor on whether communication, in
12 particular from friends, has a significant effect. However, overall, we find some interesting
13 suggested routes to participation and indications of the power of differing sets of motivations.
14 In particular the significance of the direct motivational pathways to participation may indicate
15 that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are strong predictors of political participation. If these
16 findings appear controversial it is necessary to conduct further research to focus on these
17 and other mediating factors, drawing on broader psycho-social perspectives (Klößner,
18 2013) in order to provide even more holistic explanations for the variety of forms of political
19 participation facilitated in the 21st Century.
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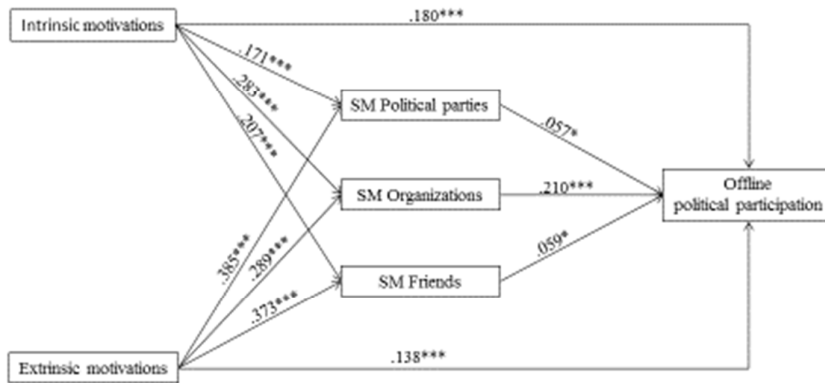
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Table 1: Regressions analysis for offline and online political participation

| | Offline Model A | Offline Model B | Online Model A | Online Model B |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| SES | | | | |
| Gender | -.017 | -.031 | .067 * | .048 |
| Age | .003 ** | .006 *** | -.000 | .001 |
| University grade | .174 *** | .155 *** | .171 *** | .145 *** |
| Social grade | -.027 ** | -.025 ** | .019 | .021 † |
| Employed | .034 | .015 | -.014 | -.035 |
| Political variables | | | | |
| Party proximity | .196 *** | .153 *** | .164 *** | .134 *** |
| Discuss politics | .371 *** | .344 *** | .451 *** | .401 *** |
| Motivations | | | | |
| Intrinsic | .010 *** | .006 ** | .007 ** | .001 |
| Extrinsic | .018 *** | .011 *** | .019 *** | .012 *** |
| SM Encouragement | | | | |
| from Political party | | .049 ** | | .018 |
| from campaign organization | | .120 *** | | .206 *** |
| from friends | | .026 | | .003 |
| Constant | -.626 *** | -.673 *** | -.505 *** | -.526 *** |
| Adj R2 | .332 | .377 | .298 | .362 |

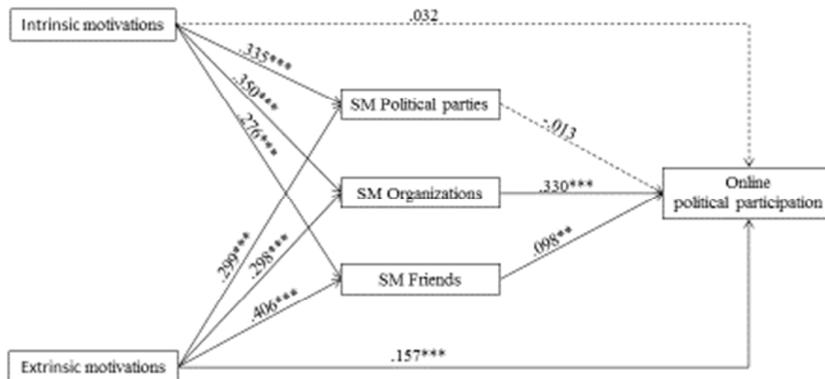
Note: OLS regression (robustness check by Poisson and negative binomial model: with the difference only for social grade being not statistically significant), Sample size N=1982, † < .1, *p < .05 **p < .01, ***p < .001. VIF: offline A 1.50; offline B 1.61; online A 1.43; online B 1.57

Figure 1: Path analysis of the motivations and encouragements on offline political participation



NOTE: Sample size N=1982. Path entries are standardized SEM coefficients (β) ***p<.001 **p<.05 *p<.1 based on two-tailed Sobel test, bootstrap at a level of 2000 iterations. The model controls for effects of sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, social class, employment, education) on exogenous and endogenous variables. Model goodness of fit: CMIN/DF = 3.000; CFI=.998; RMSEA=.032; PCLOSE=.994. R²_{offline participation} = .34

Figure 2: Path analysis of the motivations and encouragements on online political participation



NOTE: Sample size N=1982. Path entries are standardized SEM coefficients (β) ***p<.001 **p<.05 based on two-tailed Sobel test, bootstrap at a level of 5000 iterations. The model controls for effects of sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, social class, employment, education) on exogenous and endogenous variables. Model goodness of fit: CMIN/DF = 3.655; CFI=.997; RMSEA=.037; PCLOSE=.968. R²_{online participation} = .31

Table 2: Effects of motivations and mobilisation via social media on political participation

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------|
| | Direct no mediator | → | | .258*** |
| | Direct with mediator | → | | .180*** |
| Intrinsic motivations | → SM Party | → | | .010*** |
| | → SM Organization | → | | .059*** |
| | → SM Friends | → | Offline political participation | .012*** |
| | Direct no mediator | → | | .239*** |
| | Direct with mediator | → | | .138*** |
| Extrinsic motivations | → SM Party | → | | .022** |
| | → SM Organization | → | | .061*** |
| | → SM Friends | → | | .022*** |
| | Direct no mediator | → | | .168*** |
| Intrinsic motivations | Direct with mediator | → | | .032 |
| | → SM Party | → | | -.004 |
| | → SM Organization | → | | .115*** |
| | → SM Friends | → | Online political participation | .027*** |
| | Direct no mediator | → | | .285*** |
| Extrinsic motivations | Direct with mediator | → | | .157*** |
| | → SM Party | → | | -.004 |
| | → SM Organization | → | | .098*** |
| | → SM Friends | → | | .040*** |

NOTE: Standardized regression coefficient multiplied by the effect of independent variable on mediator and mediator on dependent variable, with the exception for 'no mediation' coefficient. Sobel test of significance for indirect effects 2-tailed **p<.05, ***p>.001, Sample size N=1982

Appendix

Table 1: Spearman's Rho correlations among different political online and offline activities

| | Demonstration | Boycott | Contact | Joined party | Follow party | Follow NGO | Shared content |
|---|-----------------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Boycotted a company or product | $\rho = .398^*$ | | | | | | |
| Contacted an elective representative | .421* | .346* | | | | | |
| Joined a political party | .585* | .359* | .431* | | | | |
| Follow political party/MP/candidate on SM | .271* | .261* | .315* | .290* | | | |
| Follow political NGO on SM | .239* | .353* | .334* | .204* | .431* | | |
| Shared political content on SM | .268* | .297* | .276* | .249* | .433* | .482* | |
| Commented about politics on SM | .216* | .303* | .253* | .183* | .437* | .447* | .614* |

NOTE: Spearman's Rho correlations, statistical significance * $p < .000$ 2-tailed, Sample size $N = 1982$

Table 2: Indexes of offline and online political participation

| | CFA Online | CFA Offline |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Commented about politics on SM | .682 | |
| Shared political content on SM | .648 | |
| Follow political NGO on SM | .737 | |
| Follow political party/MP/candidate on SM | .620 | |
| Joined a political party | | .555 |
| Taken part in a demonstration | | .575 |
| Contacted an elective representative | | .737 |
| Boycotted a company or product | | .688 |

Note: for CFA standardized estimates are indicated. Cronbach alpha: offline .782 online .714; CFI = .986; RMSEA = .046; PCLOSE = .706. Sample size $N = 1982$

Table 3: Pearson correlation for encouragement and motivation indexes

| | IMI offline | EMI offline | IMI online | EMI online |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| SM Encouragement from political party | .540* | .570* | .442* | .455* |
| SM Encouragement from campaign organization | .568* | .571* | .631* | .629* |
| SM Encouragement from friends | .587* | .619* | .643* | .640* |

NOTE: Pearson correlations, statistical significance * $p < .000$ 2-tailed, Sample size $N = 1982$

Table 4. Mean social media encouragement obtained according to different motivational scores (low, medium, high)

| SM Encouragement | IMI offline | | | EMI offline | | | IMI online | | | EMI online | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|--------|------------|---------|---------|------------|---------|--------|
| | L (32%) | M (49%) | H (16%) | L (57%) | M (39%) | H (4%) | L (45%) | M (42%) | H (12%) | L (61%) | M (35%) | H (4%) |
| Political party | .39* | 1.12* | 2.46* | .57* | 1.64* | 3.26* | .39* | 1.32* | 2.93* | .52* | 1.82* | 3.40* |
| Campaign organization | .45* | 1.32* | 2.74* | .72* | 1.82* | 3.35* | .49* | 1.52* | 3.18* | .67* | 2.02* | 3.49* |
| Friends | .30* | 1.14* | 2.54* | .51* | 1.68* | 3.35* | .33* | 1.32* | 3.06* | .47* | 1.87* | 3.53* |

Note: Motivational groups are build according to number of points on a scales on IMI and EMI: Low motivation (IMI 0-21) (EMI 0-15 points) Medium motivation (IMI 22-43) (EMI 16-32), High motivation (IMI 44-64) (EMI 33-48). In the brackets percentage of respondents within the group. Tukey test for the mean differences between groups * $p < .05$ or better