**Resubmission Letter for Application Number 1048/25**

Dear Committee Members and Reviewers,

This submission for an ISF Personal Research Grant 1595/26 is a resubmission of grant proposal 1048/25. I am grateful to the ISF and the reviewers for the constructive reviews, which provided an opportunity to further strengthen the project’s contributions. In this resubmission letter I first summarize the main revisions of the resubmitted proposal compared to last year’s submission. As all of the reviewers praised the originality and expected contributions of the project without critiquing its theoretical focus or guiding research questions, the resubmitted proposal investigates the same three research questions as last year’s submission. Informed by the reviewers’ comments, the main revisions I have conducted relate to the scope of the empirical studies, and the provision of additional detail regarding the research design. The summary of main proposal revisions is followed by a summary of revisions conducted in response to each reviewer’s comments.

**I. Summary of main proposal revisions**

(1) Streamline of the project’s empirical studies: Several reviewers noted the ambitious scope of the proposed project, with concerns for its feasibility. A main revision implemented in response to these comments is to streamline the project’s work plan. Specifically, the resubmitted proposal retains two of the three empirical studies included in last year’s proposal—namely, the *literature mapping*, and *cross-national survey* studies—and removes from the project’s work plan the interview-based study focused on qualitative interview fieldwork of 90 interviews in three countries (the U.S., Spain, and Israel). Instead of including the interview-based study in the project’s research design, the resubmitted proposal discusses this type of intensive qualitative cross-national fieldwork focused on identifying causal mechanisms as a key component of the final “Project integration and next-step plan.” This revision enhances the project’s feasibility, and positions the resubmitted project as a strong foundation for next-step multi-national collaborative grant projects.

(2) Expanded detail of the empirical studies: Revision #1 created space for the resubmitted proposal to include greater detail on important aspects of the two main empirical studies of the project, as suggested by reviewers. Both of the empirical studies that constitute the focus of the resubmitted proposal received almost uniformly positive comments from the reviewers, as well as requests for additional information. For the literature mapping study, the resubmitted proposal provides updated and expanded preliminary findings, and additional discussion of the theoretical and analytical innovations of the study. The revised cross-national survey study description includes a new discussion of country selection, and additional detail on the experimental component within the survey designed to identify causal connections in the relationship between individuals’ meanings of protest and their political behavior.

(3) Revised discussion of democratic backsliding: Informed by Revisions #1 and #2, a related revision is the resubmitted project’s discussion of democratic backsliding. The resubmitted proposal situates the project as a whole in an era of democratic backsliding without including an intensive interview-based project that selects country cases based on similar dynamics of democratic backsliding. Instead, the discussion of country case selection for the large-n cross-national survey focuses on maximizing heterogeneity, including on standard cross-national measures of democracy.

(4) Articulation with the ERC project: The resubmitted proposal addresses one reviewer’s comments regarding the articulation with the current ERC project in two ways. First, Revision #1’s streamlining of the project’s empirical studies enhances the feasibility of the ISF project. Second, the resubmitted application adds detail on the distinctiveness of the two projects. Consistent with my prior service on an ISF review panel, I hope that panel members are still instructed to judge the proposals on their merits, allowing for new promising research projects to be launched during the successful management of other large research projects.

(5) Updated information on the international collaboration with Prof. Carolina Plescia: The project’s international collaboration with Prof. Carolina Plescia was noted explicitly by 3 of the 5 reviews as among the strengths of the proposed project. As Prof. Plescia and I have greatly enjoyed expanding our collaborative work in the past year, the resubmitted proposal includes documentation of our new collaborative activities, including a new conference paper on literature mapping related to voting, presented at MPSA in April 2025; and Prof. Plescia’s presentation of her 2025 Oxford book on *Meanings of Voting* in the webinar series of my ERC project. When I updated Prof. Plescia that ISF guidelines allow for one resubmission attempt, she strongly supported my resubmission, and provided valuable revision comments. We both continue to be very enthusiastic about the potential contribution of an ISF-funded project that builds on her innovative work on the meanings of voting to break new ground in scholarship of the meanings of protest.

Taken together, these main revisions strengthen the contribution of the proposal as a stand-alone research project, and also strengthen its capacity for creating a multinational scholarly infrastructure for launching next-step collaborative research on these topics, such as an ERC Synergy grant, a Horizon 2020 Consortium, a U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation grant, or a German-Israeli Foundation grant. Building on this summary of main revisions, the following section details specific revisions made to address each reviewer’s comments.

**II. Summary of reviewers’ comments and related proposal revisions**

Reviewer No. 1 (R1):R1 begins by praising the project as “empirically rich, theoretically engaging, and practically interesting,” and the review praises the proposal on all evaluative measures. Regarding methods, the review highlights the contribution of the literature mapping study for its potential to synthesize the long history of research on protest that includes contradicting claims on key topics related to the meaning of protest, noting “Oser has a good answer to this issue: a comprehensive review and analysis of existing scholarly literature, which comprises part I of the three-part study. This is absolutely worth doing, and I’d suggest incorporating a consideration of history.” As noted in the Summary item #2, the resubmitted proposal addresses this comment by including expanded discussion of the empirical studies, including multiple methods to incorporate a historical analysis (See pages XX). The resubmitted proposal also includes citation of Lipsky’s work, which R1 helpfully noted as “essential and uncited.”

Another revision topic highlighted by R1 is the suggestion to focus on “the political motivations/content of protest campaigns.” In contrast to literature that asks questions about participation in large-n surveys without considering the valence of protests, R1 notes: “I hope the Oser team will adopt a better-informed approach that considers content. I suspect it influences not only scholars—at least many scholars—and also most people, who will support picketing by teachers, for example, but not Nazis.” This suggestion dovetails with our revision of providing greater detail on the cross-national survey, including a consideration of valence of protests in the survey experimental component of the design (See pages XX).

R1’s final revision comment praises the proposed project’s interview-based study and cross-national survey as “well-constructed to evaluate the opinions of regular people,” while also noting that “setting up a useful sample will require a great deal of consideration and work.” As noted in Summary item #1, the removal of the interview-based study obviates the need to discuss sample construction for qualitative fieldwork. However, R1’s comment on sample construction is still highly relevant for the large-n survey design, and to address this comment the resubmitted proposal includes an expanded discussion of country selection criteria and representativeness of the large-n cross-national survey sample (See pages XX). R1’s final note of praise highlights the substantive importance of the proposed project, and the research team’s capacity to advance this important work: “Well-conducted (and there’s every reason to expect Oser and team to produce exemplary work) work on these issues will be of substantive and theoretical importance in addressing salient contemporary issues and fundamental elements of politics.”

Reviewer No. 2 (R2): R2 begins by describing the project as “original and timely” and “highly relevant in today’s political climate,” and praises the project’s potential for making “path-breaking” contributions on an important topic. R2 also notes several topics for revision. First, R2 notes that the conceptual link between protest and democratic backsliding is underdeveloped. As noted in Summary items #1 and #3, the resubmitted proposal addresses this comment by removing the interview-based study and its country case selection based on backsliding measures, and by situating the project as a whole in an era of democratic backsliding.

R2’s second revision suggestion relates to methods, noting that the three-part research design is ambitious. R2 begins their methods comments by noting that the literature mapping study appears redundant and insufficiently justified. Although the literature mapping study was not critiqued in any of the other reviews—and in fact was singled out for praise by R1, R3, and R5 due to its scholarly contribution—we agree with R2 that the literature mapping study would benefit further clarification of its original contributions. As noted in Summary item #2, the resubmitted proposal includes clearer justification of the original theoretical and empirical contributions of the literature mapping study (See pages XX). Another concern noted in relation to methods is that the case selection for the interview-based study is not sufficiently justified. As noted in Summary item #1, the resubmitted proposal removes the interview-based study from the project’s research design, which renders this concern no longer relevant. R2’s final note on methods is that the cross-national survey study lacks essential details on case selection, which we addressed in Summary item #2.

Regarding investigator suitability, R2 praises the investigators’ scientific background, noting that “the PI is very well-qualified, which is a strong asset.” R2’s concluding comment about investigator suitability notes “The only concern is the articulation with her current ERC project. It remains to be seen if working on two major projects at the same time is a feasible endeavor.” As noted in Summary item #4, the resubmitted proposal addresses this comment via streamlining the empirical studies, and adding additional detail on the lack of scholarly overlap between the two projects. Taken together, these major revisions in response to R2’s comments are designed to address their key concerns, and to fulfill their observation of the project’s potential as a path-breaking project on a timely topic.

Reviewer No. 3 (R3): R3 is strongly supportive of the proposed project on all key evaluative measures. The comments begin by praising the project’s originality and innovation: “This is a highly original and timely project” that addresses a “critical but somehow underexplored dimension of political participation.” R3 highlights that the project “promises to provide important contributions to political science, especially in the fields of political behavior and contentious politics. By capturing citizens' perceptions of protest and linking them to political behavior, the project can offer important insights into contemporary democratic challenges.” R3 also praises the project’s planned open dissemination of data for enhancing scientific impact.

Regarding methods, R3 praises the research design as “rigorous and appropriate to the research questions.” This praise includes the literature mapping study, which R3 observes “will build on established bibliometric methods and the PI’s prior research applying such methods.” R3 notes that the cross-national survey is explained in relatively less detail, including the planned experiment. R3 also notes minor risks regarding the recruitment of diverse respondents, while noting that the proposal includes good ideas on how to mitigate these issues. As noted in Summary item #1, the resubmitted proposal no longer includes interview-based fieldwork, and thus does not need to integrate a recruitment plan of diverse interviewees. And as noted in Summary item #2, the resubmitted proposal discusses the large-n survey in greater detail overall, including additional information on the planned experiment. In addition, the proposal expands on strategies for the large-n survey to overcoming minor risks to recruit diverse respondents in heterogeneous contexts.

Regarding investigator suitability, R3 praises both the PI and the collaboration with Prof. Carolina Plescia: “The PI has an outstanding record in the relevant fields, and substantial experience managing major funded projects, including ISF and ERC grants. Her prior work on political efficacy, participation, and protest provides an ideal background for this project. Collaboration with young but already established scholars like Prof Carolina Plescia promise to further strengthen the research team's expertise.” R3’s summary highlights their positive evaluation, noting that the project “has many strengths, including highly original and relevant research questions, a multi-method design, an experienced and accomplished principal investigator, a potential for significant theoretical and practical contributions, and clear plans for dissemination and data sharing.”

R3 identifies one potential weakness of the project as “the ambitious scope that will require careful management of research personnel and survey logistics. However, the PI has a proven record of successfully managing large-scale research projects.” As noted in Summary item #1, the resubmitted proposal addresses this concern by removing the interview-based study from the resubmitted proposal’s research design, and instead including it as part of the project integration and next steps. In conclusion, R2 strongly recommends funding the proposal: “This is an excellent proposal and one that I highly recommend for funding. The minor risks are outweighed by the PI's proven track record and the proposal's potential to advance scientific knowledge in an important field.”

Reviewer No. 4 (R4): R4 praises the proposed project on all key areas of evaluation. Regarding originality, the reviewer notes: “As protest has become an increasingly common form of political engagement in developed democracies, this constitutes a highly relevant and original research question that has not yet been studied systematically.” Regarding methods, R4 praised the project’s research design as “appropriate and well-suited to addressing the research objectives.”

R4’s overall positive assessment is clearly stated: “I am confident that the project will yield compelling research findings and make a significant contribution to the field of political participation.” Regarding the project investigators, R4 praises both the PI and the project’s international collaborator: “The background of the principal investigator is highly appropriate for this undertaking. Professor Oser is a recognized expert in non-electoral participation, and her designated collaborator, Professor Carolina Plescia, has recently led a similar project on voting. Together, they are well-positioned to produce high-quality research that will advance our understanding of protest participation.”

One potential limitation noted by R4 is that some aspects of protest behavior—“such as the frequency of participation”—may be challenging to capture accurately through surveys. While this is a common concern in this line of research, recent large-n surveys have begun to include innovative questions about multiple aspects of protest behavior, including the frequency of participation. Although standard limitations of survey methods cannot be eliminated entirely, such as respondents’ inaccurate or biased recall of past events, the resubmitted proposal incorporates several new questions in the survey instrument to assess respondents’ political behavior (See pages XX). Despite this one potential noted limitation, R4’s concluding recommendation in support of funding is clear: “In summary, this is a well-conceived and methodologically sound project that I consider fully deserving of funding.”

Reviewer No. 5 (R5): R5’s detailed report highlights the contributions of the proposed project on all evaluative measures. The only concern noted by the R5 is the proposal’s interview-based study case selection of Israel which includes the “characterization of the Israeli case as a democratic context.” As noted in Summary item #1, the concern of characterizing Israel as a democratic context like Spain or the United States is no longer relevant for the resubmitted proposal due to the removal of the interview-based study from the project’s work plan. Instead, the proposal retains Israel as one of the countries in the large-n cross-national study, and discusses the objective measures of democratic functioning used for this heterogeneous case selection (See page XX).

Regarding methods, R5 views the proposed project’s research design as “well-chosen and appropriate,” detailing praiseworthy details of all of the empirical studies. Regarding investigators’ scientific background, R5 assesses the background of the PI and the collaborator Prof. Carolina Plescia to both be very suitable and well-qualified to carry out this study. To summarize the proposal’s strengths and weaknesses, R5 reiterates that the only concern is the previously submitted proposal’s characterization of the Israeli case as a democratic context similar to Spain and the United States. Except for this one noted weakness, R5 notes the strengths of the collaborators’ qualifications, the study’s methods, preliminary findings, salience of the topic of protest, connection to past work and future extension to additional country cases, integration of empirical studies, as well as the empirically-informed plan for determining the large-n survey experiment.