



OECD Working Papers on Public Governance No. 46

Political efficacy
and participation: An
empirical analysis in
European countries

**Mariana Prats,
Axel Meunier**

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/4548cad8-en>

OECD Working Papers on Public Governance No. 46

Political efficacy and participation: An empirical analysis in European countries

By Mariana Prats and Axel Meunier



The active participation of citizens is the lifeblood of any functioning democracy. But what drives people's willingness to participate in political life? A key driver is their self-perception of their ability to understand political processes and to influence change through their action. These attitudes also determine people's level of trust in government, making it a cornerstone of research and work on trust.

In a context of increasing concerns regarding democratic legitimacy and decreasing levels of political participation, this paper aims to analyse empirically to what extent people's attitudes towards their ability to influence and engage in political life – or their “political efficacy” - affect their political behaviour, including different forms of participation. The main results, based on an analysis of 30 European countries, confirm previous findings and highlight that political efficacy always has significant effects on participation. An individual's self-perception of his or her ability to understand political processes (internal efficacy) has a positive effect on any form of participation. Furthermore, people's perception that their participation will influence what government does (external efficacy) has a positive impact on traditional forms of participation, as well as on participation within the political system, but it has a negative impact on digital forms and “outside of the system” participation. In this sense, results indicate that political institutions' low responsiveness to citizens' demands may reorient people towards different political activities.

A better understanding of political attitudes can help governments anticipate democratic deficits and develop strategies to improve political efficacy and promote participation.

1. Introduction

1. A defining criterion of functional democracies is effective and equal participation. This criterion goes together with the pursuit of enlightened understanding and the ideal of democratic citizens – that is, to have equal opportunities to understand issues discussed and alternative decisions, as well as to have information on means, ends and their potential impact (Dahl, 1989^[1]; Bobbio, 1993^[2]). In fact, the most basic use and understanding of democracy is its literal meaning: the government of the people (Lijphart, 1984^[3]). Participation and democracy mutually reinforce each other. People are encouraged to participate and are supposed to have equal opportunities to express their preferences and to have a reasonable control over the agenda (Dahl, 1989^[1]). At the same time, when people participate, they develop stronger democratic values and civic skills, and provide legitimacy to the system.

2. Political participation – broadly understood as those activities undertaken by the public to influence political decisions, either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make policies (van Deth,

2001_[4]; Conge et al., 1988_[5]; Quintelier and Van Deth, 2014_[6])¹ – has been identified as a key determinant of people’s trust in government and public institutions. At the same time, trust can be theoretically considered as a prerequisite of political action (Hooghe and Marien, 2013_[7]). Civic-minded citizens participate more frequently and have higher levels of trust than passive citizens (Almond and Verba, 1963_[8]; Brehm and Rahn, 1997_[9]). Conversely, as participation is found to encourage the sense of having a stake in collective endeavours and build trust, lack of participation is associated with lower levels of trust (Parvin, 2018_[10]). The OECD Trust Framework considers public trust as having both a competence dimension – government’s responsiveness and reliability in delivering public services and anticipating new needs – and a values dimension – government’s principles of integrity, openness, and fairness. In this framework, participation is framed both as part of the openness driver and the fairness one. Citizens’ participation in a democracy ensures that diverse interests and needs are equally considered, and helps prevent the capture of democratic institutions by privileged groups and the exclusion of non-elites (OECD, 2017_[11]).

3. Literature on the subject highlights that political attitudes are drivers of (political) participation. People who feel they are capable of participating and believe that the system is responsive are more likely to participate than cynical ones (Almond and Verba, 1963_[8]). There is an uneven distribution of civic engagement. In fact, a “self-selection effect” occurs: some people are more prone to participate than others, and a minimal level of political knowledge or political efficacy are preconditions for getting involved in politics (Gamson, 1968_[12]; Schulz, 2005_[13]; Uslaner, 2002_[14]); Prewitt 1965 in (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012_[15]).

4. Among political attitudes, the sense of “political efficacy” has been defined as “the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process” (Craig and Maggionto, 1982_[16]). The definition includes two dimensions: 1. internal efficacy, which refers to an individual’s self-perception on his or her capability or competence to understand and participate in political processes; and 2. external efficacy, which refers to people’s feeling of having a say in what government does, measuring beliefs about system responsiveness to citizens’ demands. Additionally, empirical evidence shows that citizens’ self-efficacy and political involvement predict trust in government (Parent, Vandebek and Gemino, 2005_[17]). Internal efficacy was also found to predict trust in Parliament and satisfaction with democracy (Bäck and Kestilä, 2009_[18]).

5. Efficacy has been used broadly as an explanatory factor of participation (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982_[19]; Verba and Nie, 1972_[20]; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993_[21]; Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995_[22]; Blais, n.d._[23]). Political efficacy advances people’s character in a more active, effective way in politics and other areas of social life, hence high levels of efficacy make it more likely that the individuals will participate in the future (Finkel, 1987_[24]). The more people feel able to understand politics and have their voice heard, the more likely they are to pursue democratic endeavours (Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl and Ardévol-Abreu, 2017_[25]). Besides, high levels of efficacy are considered desirable for the stability of democracies, as efficacy is linked to people’s feeling that they have power to influence government actions (Schulz, 2005_[13]).

6. In a context of increasing concerns regarding democratic legitimacy, expressed in part by lower global election turnout levels and low levels of participation beyond voting, it is crucial to understand how political attitudes may affect political behaviour. Indeed, throughout history, forms of participation have changed and expanded, and the emergence of internet and social media have raised expectations of political stimulus and increased participation. Yet, many people do not want to engage in political activity, they are not interested in politics, and participation is declining disproportionately among specific groups of

¹ The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) refers to stakeholder participation as all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery. By including services design and delivery, this definition is even broader than the one presented on political participation (OECD, 2017_[77]).

citizens (Parvin and Saunders, 2018^[26]). There are demographic differences in participation (Quintelier, 2007^[27]), as well as a participation gap based on socio-economic status (Dalton, 2017^[28]), which underscores the need to explain the link between attitudes and behaviour.

7. This paper analyses to what extent political efficacy explains (political) participation, in its many forms. Principally, it evaluates whether and to what extent people's political attitudes (specifically, their levels of political efficacy) are a factor in increasing or attenuating political behaviour (political participation), based on a cross-country empirical analysis of 30 European countries (of which 22 are OECD countries). The other novelty of the paper, which contributes to the ongoing debate on political participation in current democracies, is to analyse whether political efficacy has a different impact on different forms of political participation, namely digital participation and traditional, collective and individual participation, and participation within and outside the system.

8. The main results highlight that political attitudes always have significant effects on participation, confirming previous research. In addition, individuals' self-perception of their capability to understand political processes (internal efficacy) has a positive effect on any form of participation. There is no form of participation that is enhanced when individuals feel unable to understand politics. At the same time, people's feeling of having a say in what the government does (external efficacy) has a positive impact on traditional forms of participation, as well as on participation within the system, but a negative one on digital forms and "outside of the system" participation. In this sense, results indicate that low responsiveness of political institutions to citizens' demands reorient people away from traditional towards digital forms of participation, and to perform exit activities instead of voice activities².

9. These results are also relevant to discussions around the future of democracy, as a better understanding of political attitudes would help better anticipate democratic deficits, as well as support and inform government efforts and strategies to improve political efficacy by, for example, developing new institutional mechanisms or channels to encourage more participation, or by including practical civics curricula in schools to enhance internal efficacy.

2. Theoretical framework and research hypothesis

2.1 Political efficacy and political participation

10. Political attitudes are a key component of people's belief systems, and refer to an enduring feeling, mental or emotional set, with which people approach political problems or situations (Rosenberg, 1942^[29]). Hence, they are important for explaining political behaviour. One of the most relevant and studied attitudes is political efficacy, or the feeling that individuals have or can have an impact on political processes. Analysis on the topic has become more relevant given that in many countries current levels of political efficacy are low, and have even been decreasing in recent years. According to data from the European Social Survey (2018) and the World Values Survey (2020), on average less than half of the population in OECD countries (44%) believe the political system in their countries allows people like them to have a say in what the government does. These concerns are also shown in the results of the OECD *Risks that Matter Survey* (2018): about 60% of respondents considered that the government does not incorporate the views of people like them when designing policies.

² "Exit" is a concept taken from economics used to analyse political phenomena (Hirschman, 1970). It refers to the situation when consumers stop buying an item produced by a firm because of dissatisfaction with the product or the firm. In "political" terms, it alludes to people expressing dissatisfaction by deciding to abandon activities within the political system. In turn, "voice" refers to situations when dissatisfied individuals instead of quitting the system they turn to organisations or to 'whoever will listen' to them, hence performing activities and legitimising the functioning of the political system.

11. Both in its external or internal dimension, efficacy is understood as a psychological resource that may reduce or help overcome the costs of participation. Hence, it should be more stable over time than participation, and is considered to be a “fundamental orientation” toward politics (Abramson, 1983^[30]). In addition to literature on political efficacy coming from psychological studies, other approaches, such as the resources-based approach – which seeks to explain political participation in the United States based on three key resources: money, time and civic skills – also found that political attitudes, such as political interest or political efficacy, are necessary to understand and explain participation (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995^[31]).

12. Indeed, various studies have found that internal political efficacy increases the likelihood of participating (Condon and Holleque, 2013^[32]; Reichert, 2016^[33]). For example, an analysis of the 1990-1992 National Election Panel data in the United States found that, faced with political stimulus (“threats”), highly efficacious citizens feel anger instead of fear, which mobilises action and proactive political behaviour. These patterns are stronger in young people, who have no experience or habits of previous participation (Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk, 2008^[34]). Furthermore, another study on Americans’ behaviour found that highly efficacious people are less likely to be inhibited by their anxiety; conversely, they are more prone to confront environmental demands by increasing their involvement in political activities such as campaigning (Rudolph, Gangl and Stevens, 2000^[35]).

13. A election study based on data from a nine-wave panel survey conducted in Britain between 2005 and 2010 found that concerns about the economic crisis decreased electoral participation and fuelled support for populist parties among people with low internal efficacy, while they promoted participation and increased support for mainstream opposition parties for those with high internal efficacy (Magni, 2017^[36]). As citizens perceive a low ability to influence political processes, they distance themselves from the system. Furthermore, data from a German Longitudinal Election Study showed that internal political efficacy, affected by political knowledge, increased the chance that citizens would participate in politics (Reichert, 2016^[37]).

14. People’s attitudes and circumstances, as well their perception of being able to improve the performance of political systems by making failures noticeable (external political efficacy) were also found to affect many forms of political participation (Hirschman, 1970^[38]). People’s different values and beliefs (cognitive components of attitudes) drives different types of participation, (De Marco, Robles and Antino, 2017^[39]). People can “voice”, by expressing a competing interest or dissatisfaction; or they can “exit”, for example by boycotting certain products. While voice actions reinforce pluralism and promote accountability – both key components of representative democracies - exit activities incentivise anti-systemic, cynical attitudes, the erosion of traditional representative institutions, and with the rise of populist options.

15. The literature on political participation underscores the many forms that it takes, from voting and campaigning to contacting public officials, working in a political party, demonstrating or being part of representative deliberative processes. These many forms of participation have multiple patterns of effects which also differ according to types/ groups of citizens. For instance, voting has been found to affect regime support, or campaigning was found to positively affect attitudes such as efficacy (Finkel, 1987^[24]). Indeed, this political repertoire has expanded along the years, and reflects changes in attitudes and norms (Dalton, 2000^[40]). Nowadays, more and more traditional mass-based organisations and actions are being replaced by individualised and digital political actions (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012^[15]).

16. Previous studies found that political efficacy has a differentiated impact on different forms of participation. For instance, a study on panel data in Germany found that high external efficacy was negatively correlated with aggressive behaviour, and voting and campaigning strengthen efficacy and prevented regime-challenging acts (Finkel, 1987^[24]). Using the 2012 data from the European Social Survey, Oser and Hooge found that citizens’ conceptions of democracy affect their political behaviour, and this affected their patterns of political participation. Citizens who emphasise a conception of citizenship related to political rights are active in all forms of participation, while citizens who relate citizenship to social

rights are involved mostly in non-institutionalised participation (such as boycotting products for political reasons) and less in institutionalised participation (e.g working in a political party, contacting a politician) (Oser and Hooghe, 2018^[41]). Moreover, other studies found that, while political trust is positively associated with institutionalised participation, it is negatively associated with non-institutionalised participation (Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[7]), and the effect of political trust on institutionalised participation is dependent on self-confidence about one's ability to understand politics (internal efficacy) (Reichert, 2016^[33]). Regarding the impact on different population groups, internal efficacy is found to be a significant predictor of first-time voters (Moeller et al., 2014^[42]). In addition, various analyses find that disruptive events (such as economic crisis, or corruption scandals) are more likely to affect younger generations than older ones in terms of participation and trust in public institutions (Dinas, 2013^[43]; Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2014^[44]).

17. There has long been a debate on the direction of the causality relation between political attitudes and participation. A certain number of studies, for example, highlight that participation, through “a socialisation effect”, has a positive effect on successive perceptions of political efficacy (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012^[15]). Panel data from the US showed that participation during a campaign significantly boosts external efficacy during the next election cycle (Finkel, 1985^[45]). Similar findings resulted from panel data in West Germany (Finkel, 1987^[24])³, and a study on Belgians citizens aged 16-21 found that political participation has a stronger effect on political interest than attitudes on political participation (Quintelier and Van Deth, 2014^[46]). However, this paper uses a static model on the relationship between efficacy and participation and, as such, cannot investigate the dynamic role of participation on successive levels of political efficacy. Nonetheless, even studies that find that participation has an influence on political efficacy recognise that participation affects only particular subsets of the general population (Dyck and Lascher, 2009^[47]) and strengthens pre-existing attitudes (Hooghe 2003 in (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012^[15]), and that acquisition of political efficacy during childhood and adolescence is crucial for future participation as an active citizen in a democracy (Schulz, 2005^[13]). In fact, based on psychological explanations of behaviour through performance (Bandura, 1977^[48]), internal efficacy is enhanced by successful participation in politics, closing a feedback loop that helps explain participatory habits (Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk, 2008^[34]).

2.2 Research hypothesis on the impact of political efficacy on different forms of participation

18. Based on previous literature, as well as on the available data gathered by the European Social Survey, this paper identifies three specific dimensions (and six forms) of political participation, and analyses to what extent political attitudes affect them in 30 European countries. The first dimension refers to *channels of participation*, distinguishing traditional types of participation, such as working in a political party, and newer types of engagement and online political participation, such as posting or sharing anything about politics online, for example on social media (Norris, 2005^[49]; Faucher, 2015^[50]; Quintelier, 2007^[51]). Theoretically, we would expect that if people consider the system responsive and feel capable of participating through existing mechanisms (efficacious people), they would tend to participate more through traditional or pre-existing channels. Indeed, in previous studies, political efficacy was found to be greater for members of politically oriented voluntary organisations than both non-members and members of non-political organisations (Zimmerman, 1989^[52]). Digital participation provides numerous opportunities to improve democratic processes, bringing people together, allowing participation of people previously excluded and increasing transparency of political processes. The appearance of internet and digital tools was even associated with great hopes for the revitalisation of democracies (Aichholzer and Allhutter, 2009^[53]). At the same time, digital participation platforms have been accused of igniting polarization and

³ Some studies also found that the impact of electoral participation is stronger only when it is combined with success. Successful participation, that is when outcomes align to intentions and preferences, boosts political confidence and efficacy (Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk, 2008^[34]; Madsen, 1987^[68]).

spreading disinformation, as well as deepening existing inequalities (Norris, 2005^[49]; Banks et al., 2020^[54]). The distinction between channels of participation used in this paper can thus shed light on whether political efficacy has a similar impact on digital participation as it has on traditional political participation, or if other factors orient people towards digital forms of political engagement.

19. A second dimension differentiates types of participation by its *character*. It includes activities that are performed individually (such as contacting a politician), and those performed collectively in the public sphere, which necessarily imply the presence of others (i.e. working in an organisation) (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2003^[55]; Faucher, 2015^[50]; Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012^[15]). These categories aim to capture and group ways of participation that are more linked to interpersonal trust and pre-existing social capital, in order to analyse the effect political attitudes have on this type of participation. Indeed, the first type of participation may be related to more intrinsic motivations (pleasure seeking), while the second to more extrinsic ones – for the benefit of others – (Koc-Michalska and Lilleker, 2016^[56]). It is also worth mentioning that, theoretically, the socialisation perspective is focused and built around collective forms of participation: it is the interaction with other like-minded people that affects attitudes and develops group preferences, solidarity, and reciprocity (Putnam, 1993^[57]). Analysis of these categories will provide evidence on the actual impact of efficacy, as a political attitude, on both individual and collective ways of participating; it will also shed light on whether actors with pro-social values self-select into participation (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012^[15]).

20. Finally, a third dimension of political participation differentiates forms of participation according to the “arena” where they are performed. There are forms of participation that operate within the system, using its tools, mechanisms and channels, such as voting, and those that operate outside it, such as boycotting a product (SABUCEDO and ARCE, 1991^[58]; Oser and Hooghe, 2018^[41]; Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[7]). Even if both actions may reflect discontent, this dimension distinguishes “voice” responses from “exit” actions, and their impact on representative democracies. People who do not believe the system is responsive may tend to distance themselves from “the system”, and therefore from within-the-system activities (Hirschman, 1970^[38]). In addition, theoretically, activities within the system are performed by people who trust (or mistrust) politics and/or other people; while the ones outside are expected to be performed by cynics who distrust⁴ politics (Steenvoorden, 2018^[59]; Gamson, 1968^[12]). Political trust is found to be negatively related to political consumerism (Newman and Bartels, 2011^[60]), as well as with activities outside institutions of the political systems, which are also more goal-oriented (Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[7]).

21. Therefore, drawing on this rationale, the main hypotheses are:

H0: People with higher levels of efficacy, both internal and external, tend to participate more than people with lower efficacy.

H1: The effect of political efficacy is higher on traditional forms of participation than on digital ones.

H2: Higher levels of social capital will have positive effects on political participation, in particular in collective and within-the-system forms.

H3: The effect of efficacy on participation within the system is higher than its effect on participation outside the system.

⁴ The difference between the concepts of mistrust and distrust is crucial in terms of their impacts on democracies, their function and legitimacy. Mistrustful and critical citizens are more likely to engage in political activities and make public representatives and officials accountable for their work. Conversely, cynicism and distrust may fuel disengagement and nurture populist responses that can, in turn, undermine democracies. Distrust reflects suspicious attitudes towards others, and the belief that the other is untrustworthy (Devine et al., 2020^[73]).

Empirical framework

Dataset and empirical model

22. The data used in the empirical analysis are drawn from the 9th round of the European Social Survey (ESS) that refers to the year 2018, a biannual survey that covers 30 European countries, of which 22 OECD countries. The ESS includes nine questions addressing different forms of political participation as well as questions on political efficacy and social capital that enter the empirical model as independent variables. It also includes some socio-economic questions used in the model as control variables. Using this cross-country dataset ensures that results are not dependent on specific national characteristics (Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[7]).

23. Respondents to the ESS are asked to state to what degree they agree with the following statements “*You are confident in your own ability to participate in politics*” (question B5 internal political efficacy) and “*The political system allows people to have a say in what government does*” (question B2 on external political efficacy). These are categorical variables on a 1-5 scale from “Not at all” to “Completely”. The answers are rescaled linearly in a [0,1] scale to facilitate the interpretation of the results. The other independent variable included in the model is social capital, as previous literature found a virtuous circle of civic engagement and positive predispositions towards others (Putnam, 1993^[57]). Variations in social capital affect participation and trust in institutions (Brehm and Rahn, 1997^[11]). We retained one of the three items referring to social capital in the ESS9, “*Most people can be trusted or you can’t be too careful*”; the variable is rescaled in a [0,1] scale from the original [0,10] scale. A previous version of the empirical model also included the explanatory variable “trust in parliament”, but it has been disregarded as much of the explanatory power is already captured by political efficacy and social capital. The set of control variables in the model includes political interest based on a categorical variable with 4 levels scaled from 0 to 1, education and age in years, and gender. Country-fixed effects are also included, as we expect individuals from the same countries to have a similar pattern of participation, due in some case to institutional characteristics (such as mandatory voting in Belgium). Table A1 in the Annex includes the independent and control variables used together with the wording of each item in the ESS.

24. The dependent variable of interest is political participation. The ESS9 includes 9 questions on political participation (See table A2 in the Annex). We selected six questions in three pairs to compare the three dimensions of interest: traditional and digital forms of participation; individual and collective; within the system and outside the system. Although these three dimensions and pairs are theoretically useful, and simplify the analysis, we do not contrast pairs, but run regressions for each form of participation, as individuals may participate in all different forms. The selection of the questions that best represent the six forms of participation to use as dependent variables was based on a literature review, and a principal component analysis was carried out to select the ones with the highest explanatory power (see Tables A3 and A4 in the Annex).

25. The first dimension on channels of participation uses the question on “working in a political party” to represent traditional forms of participation and the question on “posting a publication online” to represent digital forms of participation. It should be noted that the question on “signing a petition” had the highest explanatory power on the same factor as “posting a publication on line”; however, the latter is considered more relevant to capture digital participation.

26. The second dimension reflects the character of participation, either individual or collective. For collective participation we use “work in an organisation” and for individual participation we use “contact a politician”. Both items have a high power of explanation on different factors and are theoretically relevant to the dimension considered.

27. The third dimension represents the arena of participation. For participation within the system, we choose “vote” and for participation outside the system we choose “boycott a product”. Both items have a

high power of explanation on different factors (see A4 in the Annex) and are representative for the dimension they stand for. Voting represents a classical way of participating that is intended by all democratic regimes. As it is the basic way of participating that defines democracies, it is clearly understood as part of the political system. On the other hand, boycotting, sometimes referred to as political consumption, is indeed a form of participation outside the system..

28. These six dependent variables are binary, coded 1 if the respondent replied affirmative referring to the previous 12 months, and 0 if not.

29. The empirical strategy consists of running six *probit* regression equations to estimate the coefficients of the explanatory variables on the probability that an individual participates (in one of the six ways). This approach is similar to that employed by Hooghe and Marien, although with a different model specification (Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[61]). Specifically, the equations take the following form:

$$\Pr\{Y_{ij} = 1\} = \Phi(\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{internal}_i + \beta_2 \text{external}_i + \beta_3 \text{social capital}_i + \beta_5 \text{political interest}_i + \beta_6 \text{gender}_i + \beta_7 \text{education}_i + \beta_8 \text{age}_i + \beta_9 \text{country}_i + e_i)$$

30. Where the subscript *i* stands for the individual, subscript *j* stands for the participation (traditional, digital, collective, individual, within or outside). Phi is the cumulative distribution function of a standard normal distribution with mean 0 and variance 1, used for a *probit* equation. Table A5 in the annex presents some summary statistics of the distribution of the variables used in the model. The sign of the coefficients of internal and external efficacy will provide the direction of the effect on the various forms of participation.

Empirical results

31. Table 1 presents the estimations of the effects of efficacy on traditional and new forms of participation. The results suggest that men and older people participate more through traditional channels, while women and younger people participate more digitally. Not surprisingly, stronger political interest and higher levels of education (to a lesser extent) increase the probability of an individual participating either through traditional or digital channels.

32. The effect of internal efficacy is positive and significant for both channels. Keeping all the other variables fixed, people who feel confident in their ability to understand politics (internal efficacy) participate more, both in traditional and digital channels, than those with lower levels of internal efficacy. More specifically, the probability of working in a party is ten times higher for those with the highest internal efficacy compared to those with the lowest (from 0.01 to 0.10)⁵. Interestingly, people participating through digital channels are also those who feel empowered and capable in politics. The probability of posting online goes from 0.06 to 0.21 when internal efficacy increases from the lowest to the highest value.

33. External efficacy has a positive significant effect on traditional channels and a negative significant effect on digital channels. The results indicate that system's unresponsiveness reorient participation towards digital channels: the probability of posting online increases from 0.07 to 0.1 as external efficacy decreases from the highest to the lowest value.

34. Social capital has no significant effect on either channel of participation. Contrary to previous findings (Steenvoorden, 2018^[59]), people do not engage more in traditional or newer channels depending on their perception that other individuals in society are more trustworthy, as they focus on their attitudes

⁵ It should be noted that the percentage of respondents working in a political party is only around 4% while the percentage of those posting online is 15% (See table A5 in the Annex).

regarding the system's responsiveness (external efficacy) and their own capacity to influence it (internal efficacy).

Table 1. Excerpt of the *Probit* estimation for the first dimension of participation considered

Variables	Traditional channel	Digital channel
Intercept	-3.358*** (0.086)	-1.404*** (0.054)
Internal	1.145*** (0.049)	0.756*** (0.034)
External	0.314*** (0.053)	-0.206*** (0.037)
Social Capital	0.043 (0.055)	-0.056 (0.037)
Political Interest	1.152*** (0.05)	1.052*** (0.032)
Gender (female)	-0.039 (0.025)	0.061*** (0.016)
Years of Education	0.015*** (0.003)	0.033*** (0.002)
Age	0.002** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)

Note: 43730 observations for the first column, 43662 observations for the second column, p-value < 0.001(***), 0.01(**), 0.05(*), 0.1(.)
 The full table contains 26 additional rows with the country fixed-effects, see Annex (table 6)
 Working in a party is used for traditional channel while posting a publication online is used for digital channel
 Source: European Social Survey 2018

35. Table 2 presents the estimations for the second dimension of participation considered, namely individual and collective forms of participation. Older, highly educated people, women and citizens interested in politics participate more, both collectively and individually.

36. Internal efficacy is positive for both types of participation and slightly higher for the individual one. When an individual goes from the minimum level to the maximum level of internal efficacy, while other variables are held at their means, his or her probability of participating collectively increases from 0.09 to 0.33 and his or her probability of participating individually goes from 0.09 to 0.34. External efficacy has a positive effect on both individual and collective participation, though it is higher for collective participation. When someone goes from the lowest external efficacy level to the highest, the probability of participating collectively increases from 0.12 to 0.25 and the probability of participating individually goes from 0.12 to 0.24. This suggests that when people feel that political system is responsive to their concerns, they engage more in collective as well as individual participation, in similar proportions.

37. As expected, the effect of social capital is positive for collective participation and negative for individual participation, implying that trust in others is a factor leading to increased collective participation and decreased individual participation. This finding also suggests a certain degree of mutual exclusivity between individual and collective participation, at least with regards to social capital.

Table 2. Excerpt of the *Probit* estimations for the second dimension of participation considered

Variables	Collective participation	Individual Participation
Intercept	-2.386*** (0.055)	-2.196*** (0.053)
Internal	0.795*** (0.034)	0.94*** (0.033)
External	0.161*** (0.037)	0.134*** (0.036)
Social Capital	0.357*** (0.038)	-0.112** (0.035)
Political Interest	0.591*** (0.032)	0.681*** (0.031)
Gender (female)	-0.054*** (0.016)	-0.045** (0.016)
Years of Education	0.033*** (0.002)	0.027*** (0.002)
Age	0.002*** (0)	0.004*** (0)

Note: 43720 observations for the first column, 43723 observations for the second column, p-value < 0.001(***), 0.01(**), 0.05(*), 0.1(.) The full table contains 26 additional rows for country fixed-effects, see Annex (table 6)

Working in an organisation is used for collective participation while contacting a politician is used for individual participation

Source: European Social Survey 2018

38. Table 3 presents the results for the third dimension of participation, within and outside the system. Again, women, the highly educated and people interested in politics participate both within and outside the system. Older people participate more within the system while younger people participate more outside the system.

39. Internal efficacy has a positive effect on both types of participation. When an individual goes from the minimum to the maximum level of internal efficacy while other covariates are held at their means, the probability of participating within the system goes from 0.82 to 0.90 and the probability of participating outside the system goes from 0.11 to 0.29.

40. The effect of external efficacy is significant for both types but has a positive effect for within-the-system participation and a negative effect for outside-the-system participation. When an individual has the lowest level of external efficacy, the probability of participating within the system is 0.82 and outside the system is 0.16; with the highest level of external efficacy, the probability of participating within increases to 0.90, while the probability of participating outside the system falls to 0.12. This indicates that citizens who perceive that the system is responsive to their demands will participate more within the system. Conversely, people who feel that the system is not responsive will turn to participation outside the system. Finally, social capital has a positive effect for participation within the system, and a null effect for participation outside the system.

41. To sum up, internal efficacy increases both within-the-system and outside-the-system participation and external efficacy increases within-the-system participation and decreases outside-the-system participation. This suggests that within and outside participation are mutually exclusive with respect to external efficacy. In particular, we can state that external efficacy is an important driver of both kind of participation. A low level of external efficacy does not lead to an absence of participation but orientates

individuals toward participation outside the system. Finally, high trust in others positively affects within-the-system participation but has no significant effect on the outside-the-system participation.

Table 3. Excerpt of the *Probit* estimations for the third dimension of participation considered

Variables	Within system	Outside system
Intercept	-1.026*** (0.057)	-1.957*** (0.052)
Internal	0.299*** (0.036)	0.644*** (0.033)
External	0.365*** (0.037)	-0.188*** (0.036)
Social Capital	0.29*** (0.033)	0.012 (0.035)
Political Interest	1.132*** (0.031)	0.709*** (0.031)
Gender (female)	0.102*** (0.016)	0.168*** (0.016)
Years of Education	0.032*** (0.002)	0.047*** (0.002)
Age	0.016*** (0)	-0.002*** (0)

Note: 40250 observations for the first column, 43643 observations for the second column, p-value < 0.001(***), 0.01(**), 0.05(*), 0.1(.)

The full table contains 26 additional rows for country fixed-effects, see Annex (table 6)

Voting is used for within system participation while boycotting a product is used for outside the system participation

Source: European Social Survey 2018

42. To conclude, the hypotheses are confirmed by the empirical results. Internal and external political efficacy are found to be statistically significant in all the equations, with internal efficacy always having a larger effect on participation than external efficacy. There is no form of participation that is increased when an individual feels unable to understand politics. Differently from what was hypothesised (H3), internal efficacy has a similar positive effect on both within-the-system and outside-the-system participation. The empirical results also indicate that lack of voice and feeling that the system is not responsive (low external efficacy) has a significant impact on increasing digital participation and participation outside the system. In other words, lack of external efficacy does not seem to necessarily lead to political apathy, but, rather, orientates people toward other forms of participation (outside the system and digital channels).

43. Trust in others (social capital) has a positive effect on collective and within-the-system participation and a negative effect on individual participation. For the other items, the variable has no significant effect. This suggests that social capital has an impact on specific types of participation but its effects is less systematic.

44. This approach is also in line with other studies from the “self-selection” stance of literature (Hooghe and Marien, 2013_[61]). Still, the model could be improved by paying greater attention to this issue, for example by using a panel structure including more than one year, unfortunately not feasible with ESS data.

Conclusions

45. In a context marked by increasing concerns about democratic legitimacy, this paper provides contributes to the longstanding debate on how citizens' attitudes shape their political behaviour. Using data from the European Social Survey 2018, it analyses empirically to what extent political efficacy -- that is, people's feeling that their actions may influence political processes -- explains different forms of political participation in 30 European countries. It includes six *probit* regression equations that estimate the coefficients of explanatory variables, among which internal and external political efficacy, on the probability of an individual participating in six forms of participation, compared along three theoretically defined dimensions: channels, character and arena.

46. The main results highlight that political attitudes always have significant effects on participation, confirming previous research on the subject. In addition, individuals' self-perception of their ability to understand political processes (internal efficacy) has a positive effect on any form of participation (Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl and Ardévol-Abreu, 2017^[62]; Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[7]), shedding light on unclear results from previous studies that include data from a single country (Reichert, 2016^[33]). That is, there is no form of participation that is enhanced when individuals feel unable to understand politics. Another key finding that enriches current knowledge on the relationship between political attitudes and political behaviour is the existence of a differential effect of external efficacy on different forms of political participation, including, for the first time in an empirical analysis, the distinction between traditional and digital forms of participation. People's feeling of having a say in what the government does (external efficacy) has a positive impact on traditional forms of participation, as well as on participation within the system, but a negative one on digital forms and outside-of-the-system participation. In this sense, the results indicate that low responsiveness of political institutions to citizens' demands may reorient people away from traditional toward digital forms of participation, and toward "exit" activities instead of "voice" activities.

47. However, the analysis carried out in this paper has some limitations. The data available restrict our analysis to forms of participation represented by the questions included in the survey, which are not necessarily exhaustive or the most representative. In fact, there is no data on many innovative ways of engagement, such as participating in representative deliberative processes (OECD, 2020^[63]), which would be relevant to consider if they are contemplated in future waves of the ESS. For instance, beyond participation questions in the core module, the European Social Survey has also fielded a special rotating module on Europeans Understanding and Valuations of democracy. The module was fielded for the first time in 2012 and will be repeated in 2021. The module measures several dimensions of democracy, including aspects of direct participation (e.g. through referenda) and inclusiveness (ESS, 2014). A future extension of this paper could expand the analysis to those complementary participation mechanisms by exploring the mediating role that political efficacy plays in each of them. Furthermore, and as the analysis includes data from only one wave of the survey, we cannot observe the impact of historical events, understand variations in time or processes, nor directly address the direction of causality of the relationship between political attitudes and political behaviours (hence, nor addressing endogeneity issues). While the approach used in this paper is in line with other studies from the "self-selection" stance of literature (Hooghe and Marien, 2013^[61]), the model could be improved by using a panel covering more than one year, which is, unfortunately, not feasible with ESS data.

48. Finally, the analysis does not allow us to explain or state future trends and changes in forms of participation or in political attitudes or to explain the political attitudes or behaviour of those who are disengaged, who are also less likely to respond to surveys (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2003^[55]).

49. On the other hand, the results highlight that a better understanding of political attitudes would help better anticipate democratic deficits, as well as support and inform governments' efforts and strategies to improve political efficacy. Currently, young people have the lowest scores for almost every activity and attitude (Quintelier, 2007^[51]), and there is a drop in memberships in traditional organisations (such as political parties or unions) in which poorer people used to participate, mobilise and gain political knowledge

(Parvin, 2018^[10]). However, evidence shows that developing new institutional mechanisms or channels to encourage more participation, or initiatives including practical civics curricula at school, enhanced internal efficacy (Quintelier, 2007^[51]). Indeed, a study on students of a Political Engagement Project found that projects or programmes including some form of political or civic activities can enhance political efficacy and participation (Beaumont et al., 2006^[64]). Furthermore, acquisition of political efficacy during childhood and adolescence has been identified as crucial for future participation as an active citizen in a democracy and has a positive effect on future participatory levels (Schulz, 2005^[13]; Jennings and Stoker, 2004^[65]).

50. Finally, on this last point on better anticipating democratic deficits and improving efficacy levels, previous evidence also shows that initiatives on some macro dimensions, such as changes in voter registration or electoral systems, could also stimulate greater political action (Quintelier, 2007^[51]). Institutional settings frame structural constraints as well as alternatives of political action (Elster, 1979). Indeed, political institutions may facilitate or hinder political participation: the more complex they are, the more they discourage people from participating. This impact disproportionately affects the representation and participation of marginalised groups, less educated, more than they do on average people (Gallego, 2015^[66]). For instance, a study on American politics provides evidence that system responsiveness is limited regarding preferences of the general public, due at least in part to institutional impediments to majority rule, such as anti-majoritarian congressional rules and procedures (Gilens and Page, 2014^[67]). In this sense, national political and institutional contexts are also crucial for discussing the future of democracy, and how participation could be a catalyst for enhancing and building sustainable political systems.

References

- Abramson, P. (1983), *Political Attitudes in America: Formation and Change.*, W. H. Freeman, San Francisco. [30]
- Abramson, P. and J. Aldrich (1982), "The Decline of Electoral Participation in America", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76/3, pp. 502-521, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s0003055400188379>. [19]
- Aichholzer, G. and D. Allhutter (2009), *Online forms of political participation and their impact on democracy*, ECPR, Lisbon, <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/e27e56b4-fb6b-4c8b-980a-3b8357edd8e4.pdf> (accessed on 21 December 2020). [53]
- Almond, G. and S. Verba (1963), *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations.*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. [8]
- Bäck, M. and E. Kestilä (2009), "Social Capital and Political Trust in Finland: An Individual-level Assessment", *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 32/2, pp. 171-194, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2008.00218.x>. [18]
- Bandura, A. (1977), "Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change.", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 84/2, pp. 191-215, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.84.2.191>. [48]
- Banks, A. et al. (2020), "#PolarizedFeeds: Three Experiments on Polarization, Framing, and Social Media", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1940161220940964>. [54]

- Barnes, S., M. Kaase and K. Allerbeck (1979), *Political action: mass participation in five Western democracies*, Sage, Beverly Hills. [71]
- Beaumont, E. et al. (2006), "Promoting Political Competence and Engagement in College Students: An Empirical Study", *Journal of Political Science Education*, Vol. 2/3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15512160600840467>. [64]
- Blais, A. (n.d.), "Political Participation", in *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, SAGE Publications Ltd, 1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446288740.n8>. [23]
- Bobbio, N. (1993), *El futuro de la democracia*, FCE, D.F Mexico. [2]
- Brady, H., S. Verba and K. Schlozman (1995), "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89/2, pp. 271-294, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2082425>. [31]
- Brehm, J. and W. Rahn (1997), "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41/3, pp. 999-1023, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2111684>. [9]
- Condon, M. and M. Holleque (2013), "Entering Politics: General Self-Efficacy and Voting Behavior Among Young People", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 34/2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/pops.12019>. [32]
- Conge, P. et al. (1988), "The Concept of Political Participation: Toward a Definition", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 20/2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/421669>. [5]
- Craig, S. and M. Maggiotto (1982), "Measuring Political Efficacy.", *Political Methodology*, Vol. 8/3, pp. 85-109, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25791157>. (accessed on 16 December 2020). [16]
- Dahl, R. (1989), *Democracy and its critics*, Yale University Press, New Haven. [1]
- Dalton, R. (2017), *The participation gap. Social status and political inequality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. [28]
- Dalton, R. (2000), "Citizen Attitudes and Political Behavior", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 33/6-7, pp. 912-940, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/001041400003300609>. [40]
- De Marco, S., J. Robles and M. Antino (2017), "Reasons to Participate: The Role of Political Attitudes in Digital Activism", *International Review of Social Psychology*, Vol. 30/1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/irsp.31>. [39]
- Devine, D. et al. (2020), "Exploring Trust, Mistrust and Distrust", TrustGov Project, University of Southampton. [73]
- Dinas, E. (2013), "Opening "Openness to Change": Political Events and the Increased Sensitivity of Young Adults.", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 66/4, pp. 868-882, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23612064>. (accessed on 28 January 2021). [43]
- Dyck, J. and E. Lascher (2009), "Direct Democracy and Political Efficacy Reconsidered", *Political Behavior*, Vol. 31/3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11109-008-9081-x>. [47]
- Faucher, F. (2015), "New forms of political participation. Changing demands or changing [50]

- opportunities to participate in political parties?”, *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 13/4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/cep.2013.31>.
- Finkel, S. (1987), “The Effects of Participation on Political Efficacy and Political Support: Evidence from a West German Panel”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 49/2, pp. 441-464, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2131308>. [24]
- Finkel, S. (1985), “Reciprocal Effects of Participation and Political Efficacy: A Panel Analysis”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29/4, p. 891, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2111186>. [45]
- Gallego, A. (2015), *Unequal Political Participation Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139151726>. [66]
- Gamson, W. (1968), *Power and Discontent*, Dorsey Press, Homewood. [12]
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., T. Diehl and A. Ardévol-Abreu (2017), “Internal, External, and Government Political Efficacy: Effects on News Use, Discussion, and Political Participation”, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, Vol. 61/3, pp. 574-596, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2017.1344672>. [25]
- Gilens, M. and B. Page (2014), “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens”, *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 12/3, pp. 564-581. [67]
- Giuliano, P. and A. Spilimbergo (2014), “Growing up in a Recession”, *The Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 81/2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdt040>. [44]
- Hirschman, A. (1970), *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, Harvard University Press. [38]
- Hooghe, M. and S. Marien (2013), “A comparative analysis of the relation between political trust and forms of political participation in Europe”, *European Societies*, Vol. 15/1, pp. 131-152, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2012.692807>. [61]
- Hooghe, M. and S. Marien (2013), “A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN POLITICAL TRUST AND FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE”, *European Societies*, Vol. 15/1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2012.692807>. [7]
- Jennings, M. and L. Stoker (2004), “Social Trust and Civic Engagement across Time and Generations”, *Acta Politica*, Vol. 39/4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500077>. [65]
- Koc-Michalska, K. and D. Lilleker (2016), “Digital Politics: Mobilization, Engagement, and Participation”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 34/1, pp. 1-5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1243178>. [56]
- Lijphart, A. (1984), *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries.*, Yale University Press, New Haven; London. [3]
- Madsen, D. (1987), “Political Self-Efficacy Tested”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81/2, pp. 571-581, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1961970>. [68]
- Magni, G. (2017), “It’s the emotions, Stupid! Anger about the economic crisis, low political efficacy, and support for populist parties”, *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 50, pp. 91-102, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2017.09.014>. [36]

- Moeller, J. et al. (2014), "Pathway to Political Participation", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 58/5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002764213515220>. [42]
- Morrell, M. (2005), "Deliberation, Democratic Decision-Making and Internal Political Efficacy", *Political Behavior*, Vol. 27/1, pp. 49-69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4500184> (accessed on 3 February 2021). [75]
- Newman, B. and B. Bartels (2011), "Politics at the Checkout Line", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 64/4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1065912910379232>. [60]
- Norris, P. (2005), "The Impact of the Internet on Political Activism", *International Journal of Electronic Government Research*, Vol. 1/1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/jegr.2005010102>. [49]
- OECD (2020), *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/339306da-en>. [63]
- OECD (2017), *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed on 12 March 2021). [77]
- OECD (2017), *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268920-en>. [11]
- Oser, J. and M. Hooghe (2018), "Democratic ideals and levels of political participation: The role of political and social conceptualisations of democracy", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 20/3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1369148118768140>. [41]
- Parent, M., C. Vandebeek and A. Gemino (2005), "Building Citizen Trust Through E-government", *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 22/4, pp. 720-736, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2005.10.001>. [17]
- Parvin, P. (2018), "Democracy Without Participation: A New Politics for a Disengaged Era", *Res Publica*, Vol. 24/1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11158-017-9382-1>. [10]
- Parvin, P. and B. Saunders (2018), "The Ethics of Political Participation: Engagement and Democracy in the 21st Century", *Res Publica*, Vol. 24/1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11158-017-9389-7>. [26]
- Pattie, C., P. Seyd and P. Whiteley (2003), "Citizenship and Civic Engagement: Attitudes and Behaviour in Britain", *Political Studies*, Vol. 51/3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00435>. [55]
- Putnam, R. (1993), *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. [57]
- Quintelier, E. (2007), "Differences in political participation between young and old people", *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 13/2, pp. 165-180, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569770701562658>. [27]
- Quintelier, E. and M. Hooghe (2012), "Political Attitudes and Political Participation: A Panel Study on Socialization and Self-Selection Effects among Late Adolescents", *International Political Science Review*. [15]
- Quintelier, E. and J. Van Deth (2014), "Supporting Democracy: Political Participation and Political Attitudes. Exploring Causality using Panel Data", *Political Studies*, Vol. 62/1_suppl, [6]

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12097>.

- Reichert, F. (2016), "How internal political efficacy translates political knowledge into political participation: Evidence from Germany", *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 12/2, pp. 221-241, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v12i2.1095>. [37]
- Rosenberg, M. (1942), "Analyzing Political Attitudes", *The Social Studies*, Vol. 33/2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1936.11016681>. [29]
- Rosenstone, S. and M. Hansen (1993), *Mobilization, participation and democracy in America.*, MacMillan., New York. [21]
- Rudolph, T., A. Gangl and D. Stevens (2000), "The Effects of Efficacy and Emotions on Campaign Involvement", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 62/4, pp. 1189-1197, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00053>. [35]
- SABUCEDO, J. and C. ARCE (1991), "Types of political participation: A multidimensional analysis", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 20/1, pp. 93-102, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1991.tb00257.x>. [58]
- Schulz, W. (2005), "Political Efficacy and Expected Participation among Lower and Upper Secondary Students. A comparative analysis with data from the IEA Civic Education Study.", *Paper prepared for the ECPR General Conference, Budapest*. [13]
- Steenvoorden, E. (2018), "One of a Kind, or All of One Kind? Groups of Political Participants and Their Distinctive Outlook on Society", *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 29/4, pp. 740-755, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-0002-2>. [72]
- Uslaner, E. (2002), *The Moral Foundations of Trust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [14]
- Uslaner, E. (2001), *The Moral Foundations of Trust*, Cambridge University Press, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511614934>. [69]
- Valentino, N., K. Gregorowicz and E. Groenendyk (2008), "Efficacy, Emotions and the Habit of Participation", *Political Behavior*, Vol. 31/3, pp. 307-330, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11109-008-9076-7>. [34]
- van Deth, J. (2001), *STUDYING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: TOWARDS A THEORY OF EVERYTHING?*. [4]
- Verba, S. and N. Nie (1972), *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*, Harper and Row, New York. [20]
- Verba, S., K. Schlozman and H. Brady (1995), *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics.*, Harvard University Press., Cambridge. [22]
- Zimmerman, M. (1989), "The Relationship Between Political Efficacy and Citizen Participation: Construct Validation Studies", *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol. 53/3, pp. 554-566, http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa5303_12. [52]

Annex

Table A1. Survey items for independent and control variables

Variable	Question in the survey	Name in the dataset	Question	Answers	Transformation
Internal efficacy	B5	CPTPPOLA	Confident in own ability to participate in politics	5 levels from "Not at all confident" to "Completely confident"	Rescaled from 0 to 1
External efficacy	B2	PSPPSGVA	Political system allows people to have a say in what government does	5 levels from "Not at all" to "A great deal"	Rescaled from 0 to 1
Social capital	A4	PPLTRST	Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful	10 levels from "You can't be too careful" to "Most people can be trusted"	Rescaled from 0 to 1
Political Interest	B1	POLINTR	How interested are you in politics	4 levels from "Very interested" to "Not at all interested"	Rescaled from 0 to 1
Gender	F2	GNDR	Gender	Male/Female/No Answer	None
Eduyears	F16	EDUYRS	Years of full-time education completed	Answer in education years	None
Age	Computed from F3 YRBRN Year of birth	Answer is year of birth	Computed by 2018 - YRBRN		
Country		CNTRY	Country	Answer among the 27 countries of the survey	None

Source: European Social Survey 2018

Table A2. Survey items used as dependent variables

Variable	Question in the survey	Name in the dataset	Question	Answers	Transformation
Vote	B13	VOTE	Voted last national election	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Contplt	B15	CONTPLT	Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Wrkppty	B16	WRKPPTY	Worked in political party or action group last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Wrkorg	B17	WRKORG	Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Badge	B18	BADGE	Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Sgnptit	B19	SGNPTIT	Signed petition last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Pbldmn	B20	PBLDMN	Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Bctprd	B21	BCTPRD	Boycotted certain products last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA
Pstplonl	B22	PSTPLONL	Posted or shared anything about politics online last 12 months	Yes/No/No answer	Coded 1/0/NA

Source: European Social Survey 2018

Table A3. Share of explained variance in a principal component analysis of the items on participation

	Comp.1	Comp.2	Comp.3	Comp.4	Comp.5	Comp.6	Comp.7	Comp.8	Comp.9
Standard deviation	0.5799585	0.4064141	0.3575992	0.3248925	0.31433794	0.30083425	0.25700873	0.22324181	0.17706684
Proportion of Variance	0.3139048	0.1541493	0.1193431	0.0985107	0.09221417	0.08446147	0.06164528	0.04651094	0.02926029
Cumulative Variance	0.3139048	0.4680541	0.5873972	0.6859078	0.77812202	0.86258349	0.92422877	0.97073971	1.000000

Source: European Social Survey 2018

Table A4. Loadings from factor analysis

	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5
Vote				0.535	
contplt	0.206	0.497		0.104	0.157
wrkprty		0.501	0.330		
wrkorg	0.219	0.319	0.164	0.109	0.453
badge	0.235	0.208	0.477		0.149
sgnptit	0.603	0.122	0.167	0.101	0.118
pbldmn	0.335	0.101	0.364		
bctprd	0.500				0.165
pstplnl	0.444	0.197	0.203		

Source: European Social Survey 2018

Table A5. Summary of the quantitative variables used in the model

Variable	Min	Q1	Median	Mean	Q3	Max	NA	Number of observations
internal	0	0	0.25	0.272101989	0.5	1	1434	45652
external	0	0	0.25	0.305235619	0.5	1	1504	45582
social	0	0.3	0.5	0.496704795	0.7	1	139	46947
interest	0	0.333333333	0.333333333	0.437864408	0.666666667	1	92	46994
eduys	0	11	12	12.89482417	16	60	678	46408
age	14	36	52	50.65502305	65	90	222	46864
vote	0	1	1	0.777511628	1	1	4086	43000
contplt	0	0	0	0.150104536	0	1	212	46874
wrkprty	0	0	0	0.040607405	0	1	198	46888
wrkorg	0	0	0	0.148062809	0	1	214	46872
badge	0	0	0	0.079657726	0	1	223	46863
sgnptit	0	0	0	0.24150016	0	1	291	46795
pbldmn	0	0	0	0.072885551	0	1	218	46868
bctprd	0	0	0	0.175431845	0	1	310	46776
pstplnl	0	0	0	0.149049348	0	1	276	46810

Note: Summaries are computed after appropriate transformations (rescaling, recoding of NAs)

Source: European Social Survey 2018

Table A6. Estimations of the *probit* model

term	vote	contplt	wrkprty	wrkorg	badge	sgnptit	pblmnm	bctprd	pstplonl
Number of observations	40250	43723	43730	43720	43707	43655	43715	43643	43662
(Intercept)	- 1.026*** (0.057)	- 2.196*** (0.053)	- 3.358*** (0.086)	- 2.386*** (0.055)	- 2.611*** (0.071)	-1.59*** (0.048)	- 2.275*** (0.067)	- 1.957*** (0.052)	- 1.404*** (0.054)
internal	0.299*** (0.036)	0.94*** (0.033)	1.145*** (0.049)	0.795*** (0.034)	0.762*** (0.04)	0.621*** (0.031)	0.604*** (0.041)	0.644*** (0.033)	0.756*** (0.034)
external	0.365*** (0.037)	0.134*** (0.036)	0.314*** (0.053)	0.161*** (0.037)	0.142** (0.044)	- 0.115*** (0.033)	-0.065 (0.044)	- 0.188*** (0.036)	- 0.206*** (0.037)
social	0.29*** (0.033)	-0.112** (0.035)	0.043 (0.055)	0.357*** (0.038)	0.1* (0.044)	0.199*** (0.032)	0.129** (0.044)	0.012 (0.035)	-0.056 (0.037)
interest	1.132*** (0.031)	0.681*** (0.031)	1.152*** (0.05)	0.591*** (0.032)	0.742*** (0.038)	0.768*** (0.028)	0.823*** (0.038)	0.709*** (0.031)	1.052*** (0.032)
gndrFemale	0.102*** (0.016)	-0.045** (0.016)	-0.039 (0.025)	- 0.054*** (0.016)	0.208*** (0.019)	0.184*** (0.014)	0.06** (0.019)	0.168*** (0.016)	0.061*** (0.016)
eduys	0.032*** (0.002)	0.027*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.033*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.047*** (0.002)	0.024*** (0.002)	0.047*** (0.002)	0.033*** (0.002)
age	0.016*** (0)	0.004*** (0)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002*** (0)	- 0.005*** (0.001)	- 0.008*** (0)	- 0.008*** (0.001)	- 0.002*** (0)	- 0.019*** (0)
cntryBE	0.229*** (0.058)	0.216*** (0.048)	0.144. (0.077)	0.312*** (0.047)	0.531*** (0.066)	-0.058 (0.044)	0.151* (0.064)	- 0.167*** (0.048)	0.23*** (0.051)
cntryBG	0.097. (0.056)	- 0.794*** (0.08)	-0.077 (0.105)	- 1.008*** (0.099)	0.049 (0.091)	- 0.686*** (0.06)	0.151* (0.075)	- 0.793*** (0.071)	- 0.281*** (0.069)
cntryCH	- 0.826*** (0.056)	-0.087. (0.052)	0.049 (0.075)	0.004 (0.051)	0.117 (0.073)	0.216*** (0.046)	-0.131. (0.072)	0.408*** (0.047)	0.012 (0.055)
cntryCY	-0.174** (0.066)	0.155* (0.067)	0.385*** (0.101)	-0.179* (0.077)	0.517*** (0.09)	- 0.613*** (0.075)	0.34*** (0.085)	- 0.306*** (0.073)	-0.187* (0.084)
cntryCZ	- 0.483*** (0.047)	0.173*** (0.048)	0.431*** (0.074)	-0.067 (0.051)	0.635*** (0.065)	-0.009 (0.043)	0.55*** (0.059)	0.05 (0.046)	0.421*** (0.049)
cntryDE	-0.114* (0.053)	-0.139** (0.044)	-0.225** (0.069)	0.317*** (0.042)	0.005 (0.065)	0.067. (0.039)	0.077 (0.057)	0.379*** (0.04)	-0.021 (0.046)
cntryEE	- 0.469*** (0.05)	0.197*** (0.048)	0.204** (0.077)	-0.52*** (0.059)	0.386*** (0.068)	- 0.547*** (0.048)	- 0.292*** (0.077)	- 0.463*** (0.052)	-0.014 (0.053)
cntryES	-0.14** (0.054)	-0.003 (0.052)	0.329*** (0.074)	0.168*** (0.051)	0.534*** (0.067)	- 0.203*** (0.048)	0.833*** (0.058)	- 0.274*** (0.052)	0.252*** (0.053)
cntryFI	-0.095. (0.056)	0.214*** (0.047)	-0.041 (0.078)	0.683*** (0.045)	1.025*** (0.06)	0.29*** (0.043)	-0.27*** (0.072)	0.547*** (0.044)	0.163** (0.051)
cntryFR	- 0.645*** (0.049)	- 0.189*** (0.05)	-0.153. (0.082)	0.011 (0.049)	0.743*** (0.061)	0.222*** (0.042)	0.604*** (0.057)	0.499*** (0.043)	0.376*** (0.048)
cntryGB	- 0.312***	0.052 (0.045)	- 0.388***	- 0.554***	0.392*** (0.063)	0.343*** (0.04)	-0.137* (0.065)	0.093* (0.043)	0.31*** (0.047)

	(0.05)		(0.082)	(0.053)					
cntryHR	- 0.193*** (0.051)	-0.109* (0.055)	0.496*** (0.076)	-0.087 (0.056)	0.207** (0.077)	0.471*** (0.043)	0.427*** (0.063)	-0.095. (0.05)	0.067 (0.055)
cntryHU	- 0.189*** (0.052)	- 0.386*** (0.062)	- 0.482*** (0.134)	- 0.745*** (0.076)	-0.231* (0.102)	- 1.043*** (0.068)	-0.202* (0.084)	- 0.874*** (0.071)	- 0.381*** (0.068)
cntryIE	- 0.236*** (0.051)	0.189*** (0.045)	-0.046 (0.072)	- 0.244*** (0.049)	0.583*** (0.061)	-0.088* (0.042)	0.233*** (0.059)	- 0.286*** (0.046)	0.045 (0.049)
cntryIT	0.068 (0.048)	- 0.169*** (0.048)	- 0.371*** (0.095)	- 0.363*** (0.052)	0.407*** (0.064)	- 0.351*** (0.043)	0.363*** (0.057)	- 0.536*** (0.05)	0.181*** (0.048)
cntryLT	- 0.457*** (0.05)	-0.1. (0.054)	0.17* (0.085)	- 0.695*** (0.072)	0.127 (0.08)	- 0.515*** (0.052)	-0.079 (0.077)	- 0.739*** (0.064)	0.163** (0.056)
cntryLV	- 0.381*** (0.062)	0.3*** (0.06)	-0.042 (0.122)	- 0.325*** (0.076)	0.363*** (0.089)	- 0.576*** (0.067)	-0.038 (0.094)	- 0.606*** (0.075)	-0.086 (0.074)
cntryME	0.479*** (0.064)	0.185** (0.058)	0.956*** (0.076)	-0.076 (0.065)	0.508*** (0.08)	-0.013 (0.054)	0.442*** (0.072)	-0.41*** (0.066)	-0.173* (0.07)
cntryNL	- 0.185*** (0.055)	0.125* (0.049)	-0.013 (0.078)	0.566*** (0.046)	0.151* (0.072)	-0.107* (0.045)	- 0.301*** (0.075)	- 0.281*** (0.05)	0.027 (0.053)
cntryNO	0.156* (0.065)	0.195*** (0.05)	0.196** (0.072)	0.35*** (0.049)	1.427*** (0.06)	0.198*** (0.046)	0.327*** (0.062)	0.242*** (0.048)	0.467*** (0.051)
cntryPL	- 0.327*** (0.055)	- 0.276*** (0.059)	-0.012 (0.091)	- 0.325*** (0.062)	0.488*** (0.072)	- 0.397*** (0.052)	0.121. (0.072)	- 0.688*** (0.065)	-0.34*** (0.065)
cntryPT	-0.172** (0.06)	0.309*** (0.057)	0.449*** (0.084)	0.303*** (0.058)	0.38*** (0.082)	0.115* (0.054)	0.37*** (0.074)	-0.33*** (0.065)	0.44*** (0.06)
cntryRS	0.008 (0.051)	-0.013 (0.052)	0.721*** (0.07)	0.126* (0.052)	0.355*** (0.073)	-0.058 (0.046)	0.246*** (0.067)	-0.091. (0.05)	0.201*** (0.054)
cntrySE	0.429*** (0.072)	0.008 (0.049)	-0.133. (0.076)	0.553*** (0.046)	0.623*** (0.063)	0.183*** (0.044)	0.223*** (0.061)	0.701*** (0.045)	0.414*** (0.05)
cntrySI	- 0.487*** (0.053)	0.122* (0.055)	0.258** (0.086)	0.005 (0.057)	0.037 (0.089)	- 0.444*** (0.055)	0.094 (0.075)	- 0.346*** (0.058)	-0.055 (0.061)
cntrySK	- 0.487*** (0.057)	-0.013 (0.063)	0.112 (0.108)	-0.178** (0.069)	0.413*** (0.085)	0.25*** (0.052)	0.359*** (0.076)	- 0.554*** (0.072)	-0.229** (0.076)

Note: The results are not different from the ones shown above but unlike tables 1-3, they also display country-fixed effects where the first country, namely Austria (AT), is taken as the reference.

Source: ESS 2018