

Young people's trajectories of political participation in Europe: Cohort effects of life-cycle effects?

Different patterns of young people's and adult's political participation depend on two types of causal factors (Bennet, 1997). On the one hand, there is a cohort effect that reflects different contexts in which the process of political socialization of each generation takes place. And therefore, there is a trend that explains stable differences between generations. On the other hand, there is also a life-cycle effect, and depending on this factor political participation patterns change as time passes, which leads to a convergence between generations. However, on an empirical level, it is very complex to distinguish the size of both effects when it comes to explaining differences in participation of young people and adults at a certain moment in time. This article makes a comparison using three waves of the EVS (European Value Survey) in 1980, 1990 and 2000. There are two objectives: First, comparing differences in patterns of participation of young people during the last three decades in Europe (cohort effect). In the second place, study evolution of the trajectories of political participation of young people in the three cohorts throughout time (life-cycle effect). Comparisons of these results will allow us to identify to what extent differences between cohorts are persistent (in which case, we will have to find the explanations in different contexts of political socialization) or, on the contrary, if there is convergence between cohorts (in that case, explaining factors will be found in the processes of transition from youth to adulthood).

Key words: political participation, socialization, young people, cohorts, life cycle.

Introduction

There seems to be the commonly accepted idea that there is a crisis of political participation in Europe, mainly attributed to the lack of participation of the young people (Bennet, 1997; Delli Carpini, 2000; Putnam, 2000). But at the same time, numerous empirical studies point in a different direction, underlining that levels of political participation of young people have not experienced a significant decrease in the last decades, instead there has been a transformation of the patterns of participation (Funes, 2006; Morales, 2005; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). The key to this issue lies in two implicit problems of this debate. First, what do we understand as political participation? And second, who can we compare young generations to in order to assess levels of political participation? A possible analytical strategy would be comparing levels of participation of today's young people with older cohorts. However, this comparison is only of limited utility, as differences between cohorts at a certain moment in time could be caused by other factors than age, because today's youth differs in multiple variables linked to age from contemporary adults. Another analytical strategy could be comparing levels of participation of today's young people to levels of participation of young people from other periods of time. This alternative has its advantages with regard to other strategies, as we compare individuals of the same age stages. However, there are also problems; because young

people from different historical periods can show different characteristics and the historical contexts are not homogeneous.

This article is based on the idea that individuals follow participation trajectories throughout their life, and thus patterns of participation at a certain moment in time are the product of generational factors (depending on the historical context) and life-cycle factors. Therefore, we try to analyze three different generations of young Europeans in order to compare the evolution of their patterns of political participation throughout time. With this in mind, we use a specific definition of political participation focused on non-conventional political participation, where young people have significantly more presence, as shown by numerous studies (Norris, 2003; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). This study will allow us to gather important information about the factors that influence decisions regarding political participation of different cohorts throughout time. This approach is essentially comparative and its frameworks are the European countries, although we will especially focus on the Spanish case.

Analyzed data refutes that there is a crisis of youth's political participation in Europe: if we take a closer look at political participation from a general point of view, not only limited to traditional participation this becomes clear. European youth has lowered engagement with regard to traditional forms of political participation or what Inglehart and Catterberg (2002) call participation controlled by the elites. However, young people's political participation is directed towards so-called "non-conventional" forms that will be the central object of analysis in this paper. In the following, this article will be organized as follows: the next section presents a view of the debate about the evolution of political participation in Western societies during the last decades, making special reference to the evolution of youth's political participation. The third section is focused on the description of the analytical methodology used for this work. Then we will analyze the main results of the study. The following section is focused on the analysis of different generations of young Spanish people, where we will examine the specific circumstances of the evolution of youth's political participation in Spain, in the background of the process of transition and consolidation of democracy. And lastly, the article ends with some general conclusions.

Young people and political participation. The thesis of youth's political alienation

As mentioned before, it is a common place to think that young people are alienated from politics and that political participation decreases as generational replacement takes place in Western societies. However, this statement leaves many queries unanswered. The first thing to do is to precisely define the concept of political participation itself. In spite of being one of the central concepts of Sociology and Political Science, diverse authors give pretty different definitions of the concept. In an already classic definition Verba and Nie (1972) stated that political participation refers to "legal" acts by private citizens directed to influence on the election of their governments and the actions these take. This definition seems excessively narrow from today's point of view, as it excludes non-legal participation (for example, protest actions) and passive forms of participation (for example, civil disobedience). Barnes and Kaase (1997) come up with a wider definition of political participation. This definition included volunteering activities of

individual citizens directed to directly or indirectly influence on political decisions at different levels of the system. Barnes and Kaase explicitly included protest actions as political participation in their definition. They called them non-conventional participation.

However, and at the same time as the previous authors, Booth and Seligson (1978) came up with a more extensive definition of political participation that covered all those behaviours that affect or try to influence on the distribution of public goods. Public goods are mainly, although not exclusively, the product of the government's actions. Therefore, and in opposition to Barnes and Kaase, Booth and Seligson do not limit political participation to actions directed to authorities of the political system, and they also get rid of the requisite of political intentionality for participation. Their concept includes all those actions (or inactions) that show an impact on the social organization. For example, Booth and Seligson consider strikes by workers as political participation, while Barnes and Kaase do not. Developing the previous definitions, Conge (1988) suggests the following definition: "political participation is any kind of action (or inaction) of an individual or a group of individuals that intentionally or unintentionally oppose, support, or change any or some characteristics of a government or a community" (Conge, 1988: 246).

The problem of the definition of political participation is not exclusively a problem of terminology, as the concept has historical dimensions that vary from one socio-political context to the next. Typical forms of political participation evolve from one stage to the other and, as a consequence, different generations can use different methods of participation as a way of political expression, also depending on the available alternatives. In this sense, Norris (2003) points out that in today's societies multiple forms of civic engagement emerge and substitute those used by traditional societies. Political participation seems to have evolved and diversified throughout time, in terms of the agents of collective actions, the forms of expression, as well as the addressees of political participation (those they try to influence).

Most studies that show the decline of youth's political participation are focused on traditional forms of participation or what Inglehart (1996) calls "participation controlled by the elites", such as affiliation to political parties. However, this does not necessarily imply a decline of other forms of political participation. Inglehart specifically denies that the erosion of trust in traditional political institutions is part of a wider phenomenon of political alienation. He states that those defending such positions exclusively focus on conventional participation, like for example, the decrease of participation in elections. In Inglehart's opinion, we cannot speak of a decrease of political participation in Western societies during the last decades. In contrast, Western public opinions are now stronger involved in non-conventional participation and directly challenge the elites. According to Inglehart, Western societies have abandoned political party bureaucracies and other forms of political participation that were associated to oligarchic structures, which had a central role in political mass movements during modernity. The process of individualization leads to an erosion of the respect towards authority among the citizenship but, at the same time, creates more support for democracy as form of government. In many cases we can see a contradiction between the dynamism of participation of the society, and the apathy and distrust towards traditional political institutions (Benedicto, 2004).

As pointed out by Dalton (1988; 2000), post-industrial societies are characterized by the availability of political information, which translates into better cognitive and ideological abilities of the citizens. The consequence is a transformation of the forms of political mobilization and, therefore, former mobilization agents (mainly political parties) become less important and start to be substituted by autonomous or non-directed mobilization. This is fundamentally the product of an increase of the levels of education of the population, which makes a higher proportion of citizens capable of developing an independent political opinion without the functional need of resorting to political parties to help them orientate their decisions. The theses by Inglehart and Dalton share some aspects, like highlighting a positive relation between economic development and political participation. Higher levels of development mean abundance of cognitive and economic resources that increase political participation, although said participation is completely autonomous. This makes the distinction between conventional and non-conventional participation less useful in the current context, as non-conventional forms are now very common in most Western countries (Morales, 2005). This is why this paper focuses on “non-conventional” participation, in order to analyze to what extent there is a change of the strategies of participation of European youth.

Van Deth (2000) makes a different interpretation and states that economic development does not lead to a general increase of political participation. According to Van Deth, an increase of the resources simultaneously produces an increase of the available alternatives of action. Today's youth has more cognitive resources available to understand politics than any previous generation, but that does not necessarily mean that they give more importance to politics. These cognitive abilities can be used differently and, therefore, political mobilization can decrease. For Van Deth, this precisely is a sign of complete democratization. As long as there are no serious political conflicts in contemporary societies, people can spend their time with more desirable activities. In fact, Van Deth's argument implies going beyond Inglehart's definition. According to Inglehart, the transition to rich Western societies makes people less worried about material questions and more concerned about political problems (post-materialistic values). Van Deth suggests that there is a “post-political” stage where politics become of no relevance. This does not imply a crisis of democracy, but it is precisely the consequence of the success of democracy for the solution of political problems.

Another important aspect is related to what youth understands as politics. Henn, Weinstein and Wring (2002) argue that the idea of the lack of political participation of young people is rooted in the narrow conception of politics, which affects the general population, as well as the social researchers themselves. Activities that are usually not considered as political participation can have a political meaning and political orientations (Funes, 2006). Bhavnani (1994) highlights that most published studies about youth's political participation contribute to spread a concept of politics that is excessively linked to electoral behaviour. His empirical research shows that youth takes part in numerous types of political activities, in spite of these activities being branded as non-political by researchers and society itself. White et al. (2000) underline the fact that when asked to talk about politics in their own terms (therefore widening

the conception of politics), young people seem to be more interested in politics than reflected by qualitative studies.

On the other hand, data shows that participation of young generations in certain forms of political action is higher than adult's participation. Works by Perry, Moser and Day (1992) highlight that young British people between 18 and 29 years of age participate more than older generations in demonstrations, although this relation is the other way around for other forms of participation. And Caínzos (2006) reaches the same conclusion for the case of young Spanish people. Recently, a comparative study in several Western countries by Norris (2003) also found more presence of young generations in what he calls actions directed towards specific causes, that is, those that interest the youngest cohorts more.

Norris (2003) interprets these changes of young people's political participation through two basic dimensions: the repertoire of available actions and the agencies through which participation happens. With regard to the repertoire of actions, Norris distinguishes between actions directed towards the citizen and actions directed towards specific causes. Actions directed towards the citizen are those in which individuals use instruments of participation of representative democracies in nation-states. Typical examples are electoral participation or collaboration with political parties. They all have in common their objective of influencing the political system from a general point of view. For the last decades these participation activities have still been important, but new types of action directed towards specific causes have appeared. The objectives of these actions are specific issues in the political agenda. A typical example would be protest actions or demonstrations. This is a new form of political participation, more spontaneous, and with more emotional engagement.

An important aspect of these new forms of participation, according to Norris (2003), is that the political object around which mobilization takes place is considerably wider, thus breaking the limits between what is social and what is political; and between public and private. Bang and Sorensen (2001), among others, have called this the "informalization" of politics. New forms of participation are directed towards traditional political actors, such as the government, the parliaments or the political parties, but also towards other actors of the public or private sector, frequently overflowing the limits of state-nations. At the same time, there has been a change of the repertoire of political actions; also the agents have changed, as well as the forms of organization of political participation. Traditional agencies of political participation, such as unions or political parties were part of the Weberian model of bureaucratic organization, with centralized structures and more or less defined limits. On the contrary, new agencies of participation, such as the new social movements, are characterized by fluid and diffuse limits and a more decentralized organization. Norris (2003) also highlights the fact that the addressees and the objectives of participation have changed. Political participation is directed to influence political representatives in the framework of state-nations. However, today's trends towards globalization and decentralization make addressees of political participation more numerous. For example, human rights organizations and anti-globalization movements.

Empirical analyses suggest that this change, in terms of the type of activities, as well as in terms of agencies of participation and the addressees

of the actions, is fundamentally a consequence of new strategies of participation of young generations. We can make a distinction that says that older generations are more represented in forms of participation directed towards the citizen and through traditional agencies, while young generations participate through actions directed towards specific causes and through new social movements. However, there are several problems when it comes to analyze empirical relations between age and political participation. Basically, we can distinguish two types of effect: “generational effects” and “life cycle effects”. But when we also have to compare data from different moments in time, an additional effect, known as “period effect”, can be identified: observed differences can be the consequence of the political context in which the data is collected. Episodic moments of political confrontation can increase participation among all ages or among a certain age group. Each one of these effects logically shows different implications to understand and explain social and political change (Norris, 2003).

The first effect, the “generational effect”, is based on the idea that primary political socialization exerts differential influence on each generation. The generational approach has been known for a long time now in sociology (Funes, 2005). According to Mannheim (1952), experiences of political events are measured by the social structure, and that is why the same event will have different meanings for different generations. Therefore, the “generational effect” is due to shared experiences of a group that is born in a certain moment in time (Mannheim, 1952). Evidences gained since the 1950’s suggest that conditions of the social and political context in which different generations socialize affect patterns of political participation. This is fundamentally a consequence of the great relevance attributed to the process of primary political socialization during childhood and adolescence (the impressionable years, according to Mannheim). Traditional theories about political socialization suggest that basic political attitudes are developed at relatively early ages (mainly in family and school), and these habits and attitudes tend to solidify as time passes, creating persistent differences between generations. In spite of the fact that beliefs acquired during the primary socialization are not unchangeable, different studies about political socialization reveal that attitudes acquired at early ages are relatively stable even after becoming an adult.

Although the differentiating effect of socialization of each political generation is something commonly accepted by the literature about political participation, the main problem is to identify the specific conditions that make some generations participate more than others. Inglehart (1990) thinks that social and political change is the consequence of economic changes. As the level of economic development increases, materialistic values are substituted by post-materialistic values. And according to Inglehart, post-materialistic values are the direct cause for the increase of forms of non-conventional political participation. However, Jackman and Miller (1996), among others, have criticized Inglehart’s approach, calling it economic-cultural determinism and concluding that causal links established by Inglehart are the product of “ad hoc” assumptions and inherent methodological weaknesses. From the point of view of culturalist approaches, other authors also do not think that the trend towards individualistic values in Western societies will have an effect of social atomization, causing a decrease of political participation (Henn, Weinstein & Wring, 2002).

On the other side, Osgerby (1998) points out that the economic crisis of the 70's and 80's branded youth with labour precariousness and economic insecurity. At the same time, family structures and community networks are weaker (Henn, Weinstein & Wring, 2002) and today's young people's life is characterized by a combination of risks and uncertainties with regard to numerous life decisions. The consequence is that transition from youth to adulthood is now a greater problem (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997), longer and individualized (Miles, 2000). Henn, Weinstein and Wring (2002) and Williamson (1997) state that fundamental concerns of today's young people in European societies are related to problems of insecurity in the short term, and the immediacy that characterizes youth's life makes the time available for politics very limited. In this sense, Megias (2005) states that today's youth faces a long period characterized by the lack of definition. The time between childhood and adulthood is now considerably longer and young people are obliged to play conflictive roles as children and adults. Politics, as something characteristic of adults, is left out of the young people's world.

Other authors have focused on some other possible explanations to interpret intergenerational differences in the field of political participation. Goerres (2006) understands shared social attributes by a cohort as the shared probability by the members of a generation of acquiring certain characteristics. Therefore, a political generation would not only be determined by shared political history, but also by social and economic trends. A typical example is education. The probability of reaching higher or lower levels of education depends on the generation the individuals belong to. Or better, depends on structure of opportunities in each historical period. Thus, accepting that there is a correlation between education and political participation, the extension of education during the last decades should lead to an increase of participation of the last young generations (Leighly, 1995).

The explanation of the "life-cycle" is based on the idea that people acquire experience in the field of participation throughout time. An already classic study by Milbrath and Goel (1977) stated that there is a relation between age and political participation: political participation increases with age and reaches a maximum at the adult age, later gradually decreasing with older ages. However, participation in protest actions seems to be essentially something of young people, and after youth these kind of political actions are not common among the adult and old population. As individuals play different social roles, they acquire resources of participation (Steckenrider & Cutler, 1989). Especially important are life transitions, as they are linked to important changes in terms of the individual's social network. For example, aspects like marriage or accessing the labour market have been identified as factors that positively affect political participation. In general, the increase and diversification of social networks, which typically takes places during intermediate maturity, are linked to higher levels of political participation. After that, at older ages there is a trend towards disruption of pre-existing social networks, which would explain the decrease of political participation of these age groups.

Although this approach of transitions between social networks seems to have been dominant regarding the interpretation of the effects of the "life-cycle", it is also important to take into account that social roles linked to the life-cycle are not the same for all individuals (Goerres, 2006). For example, not everyone gets married or finds a job or does this at the same age. In any case, there are regularities in the process of becoming an adult that would

explain differences between age groups. The consequence is that “life-cycle” effects are stable and persistent, more than cohort effects. However, “life-cycle” effects can also change with time, from one generation to the next generation. Demographic changes in Western societies during the last decades (decrease of birth rates, increase of life expectancy...) have had important effects on life styles. Therefore, patterns of political participation during the life cycle can change, which adds an additional difficulty to the analysis.

Methodology

On empirical levels, there is an additional problem when we try to compare the evolution of the forms of political participation, as relevant variables are not always available for all periods of the analysis. This paper analyzes forms of non-conventional political participation, according to the classic classification by Barnes and Kaase (1979). The starting hypothesis is that a “conventionalization” of non-conventional political participation was fundamentally promoted by the political engagement of young generations. The analyzed data are provided by the EVS (European Value Study), a comparative study about values of European people that started in the 1970's and has since then been repeated in different editions. This study is interesting in terms of the comparative dimension, as well as in terms of the temporal range of the variables. In spite of the fact that the dates of recollection are not always the same from one country to the others, there is information available for the beginning of the 1980's, the beginning of the 1990's and for around the year 2000. So, there are three replication studies with a ten-year periodicity for Europe as a whole. Although most authors establish intervals of fifteen years between generations, this is not an essential problem, as our objective is not to identify generational differences in absolute terms, but to study differential patterns of participation between successive cohorts.

The analysis focuses on the following variables: signing petitions, participating in legal demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, or occupying buildings or factories. We have discarded electoral participation, as it is a traditional form of participation where participation rates are notably higher in general terms. At the same time, we have not considered participation in different types of organizations because our approach focuses on specific political actions. Another important aspect refers to how information is coded. The original questionnaire of the survey includes questions regarding participation in the aforementioned political actions, also asking the interviewees if they could do it, or would never do it. The second option (could do it) highlights a certain level of intentionality, but is still “no participation”. Therefore, when we speak of young people's political participation, we will exclusively be referring to those that have really participated, bringing together those who could do it but never did and those who never would do it in the group of non-participants.

With the objective of proving the previously outlined hypothesis we use an aggregated approach on the dataset of all three editions of the EVS. Dependent variables are participation in each one of the non-conventional political actions mentioned before. We will use binary logistic regression to calculate the impact of every explicative variable on the probability of participation in political actions. However, as there are numerous actions to

be analyzed, we will also use a summary measure: total actions by a specific individual. In order to calculate the impact of explicative variables on the number of actions by one individual we will use the Poisson regression. In any case, and in spite of the apparent complexity of these techniques, the interpretation of the results shows apprehensible and intuitive results.

The essential methodological problem in order to study the differences of political participation depending on age is to distinguish between differences due to the life cycle, generational differences, and differences due to period effects (that is, differences depending on the specific context of the data). This methodology is based on the comparison between cohorts and age groups. Analytically, every observation corresponds to one individual belonging to a certain age group and a certain generation at a certain moment in time. How can we measure the impact of each of these variables on participation on the individual level? We introduce three groups of variables. The first group measures the fact that observations belong to one of the waves of the survey (1980, 1990, 2000), with the 1980 edition as the reference category. These variables measure the period effect. For example, if the period effect in 1990 is positive (in statistical terms), this can be interpreted as higher levels of political participation in 1990 than in 1980 for all age groups.

The second group of variables reflects belonging to a specific age group (age groups are defined by five-year intervals), taking the interval from 15 to 20 years as the reference. This group of variables measures the “life-cycle” effect. If the effect of belonging to a certain age group is statistically positive, that means that people belonging to that age group show higher level of political participation than the group of 15 to 20 years of age. By combining these two groups of variables we create the third group of variables (period effect and belonging to a certain age group), representing the multiplicative effect of the age group and the period. In purely statistical terms, this allows us to compare participation of a specific age group to the same age group in the edition of 1980. Therefore, the generational effect is a residual effect obtained through deducting the period effect and the life cycle effect. In different words, the probability that an individual participates in a certain political action depends on the influence of the moment in time (period effect), the effect of belonging to a certain age group (life cycle effect), and the effect of belonging to a certain age group at a specific moment in time (generational effect). Apart from these three groups of variables we include a fourth group that is related to the influence of countries. Although living in one or another country should not have an impact on the effects of age on political participation, differences in participation in different countries are noticeable, and therefore it is important to take into account the potential effect of countries on participation rates.

However, the described methodology does not allow identifying the reasons for observed differences. In other words, the fact that differences in participation between younger generations and older generations are (hypothetically) due to the effect of the life cycle does not mean that we can identify or directly know which are the relevant events within the life cycle that could explain these differences. That is why, in a second stage, we add new explicative variables with the objective of obtaining an explanation of the differences between generations and between different periods of the life cycle. A series of variables that take into account the impact of life

transitions are included as explicative factors, as well as other control variables, with the aim of avoiding deceitful causal relations. Two variables are particularly important: the position in the labour market and the marital status. As a starting hypothesis we hope to find out that political participation increases with access to the labour market and marriage, as typical forms of emancipation in Western societies. We also include education as an explicative variable, as we hope to prove that cognitive political activities are related to the level of education. Also other variables were included that will be mentioned in following sections.

The last question refers to inherent limitations of our analytical approach. First, analysed data does not imply a continuous sample functions. Thus, interviewees in each edition of the survey are not the same ones. Therefore, there is the possibility that differences in participation in different periods are due to different characteristics of these individuals. However, we can say that this is a relatively minor problem, as individuals in different samples have been selected using equivalent criteria, and so they should share similar characteristics from the point of view of the sample. The second objection refers to the importance of the specific moment or situation in time when data was obtained. From a quantitative point of view, it is difficult to specify if the period effect, as defined in this article, measures a generalized context of more or less political activity or may be reflecting the presence of political mobilizations in relation to very specific events. If such events affect an age group more than others it could be possible that the generational effect is polluted by episodic variations of political participation in that age group.

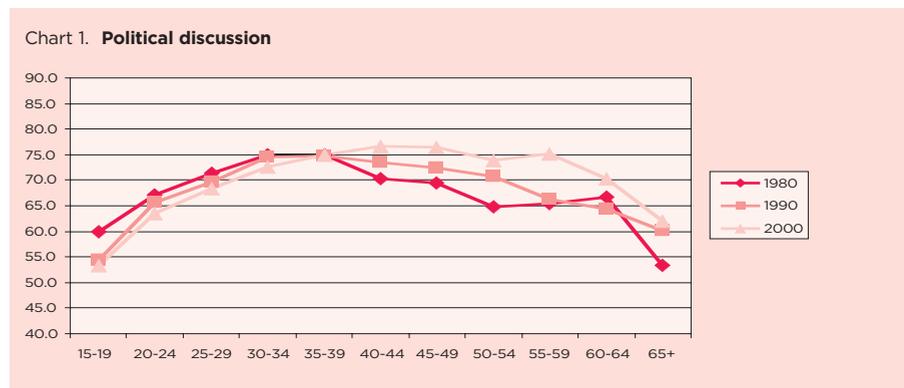
Lastly, the interpretation of the “generational effect” is not necessarily univocal. Although said effect refers to differences between individuals belonging to the same age group at different moments in time (deducting the period effect), the definition of the concept itself also reflects differences between individuals belonging to different age groups at the same moment in time (deducting the life-cycle effect). That is, the generational effect could also be interpreted as a variation of the life-cycle patterns between different moments in time. However, as already mentioned, we can reasonably assume that the social development of the life cycle is more stable than other differences that surface from one generation to the next, in spite of the fact that specific cases will be analyzed where answers are not always clear. To sum it up, and in spite of these methodological limitations (limitations that are, on the other side, inherent to any process of investigation) this approach is still very useful to identify period effects, life-cycle effects and generational effects.

Trajectories of political participation of the European youth

Before we start discussing the issue of political participation we have to pay attention to the level of political engagement. Therefore, we will specifically consider two variables: the level of interest in politics and frequency of political discussion. The variable of interest in politics distinguishes between those interested (very or pretty interested) and those who are not (not at all or little). The variable of frequency of political discussion distinguishes between those who discuss about politics (frequently or sporadically) and those who do not discuss about political

issues (never or almost never). Using the same methodological approach that was developed in the previous section we can reach a series of conclusions with regard to the evolution of political engagement during the last three decades. Results are presented in Table 1. Although we could expect a similar evolution of both variables throughout time, analyses reveal some important differences between interest in politics and frequency of political discussion.

In general terms, there is a negative period effect for the frequency of political discussion, as we can see a negative sign in 1990 and 2000 (with respect to 1980). However, only the last one is significant. That means that there is a trend towards lower levels of frequency of discussion, but the decrease is only significant in the last decade. Although the frequency of political discussion has decreased in general terms, interest in politics shows the opposite pattern. The data for this variable is only available for 1990 and 2000, but the period effect between both decades is positive.



When analyzing the influence of the life cycle on interest in politics and frequency of discussion, the different evolution of both variables tends to disappear. In both cases we can see that the youngest group (young people between 15 and 19 years of age) is the group with the least interest in politics and the group that speaks less about politics. Any other age groups show positive effects of both variables. There is only one exception: people over 65 discuss less about politics than the young people between 15 and 19 years of age. However, this does not mean that the increase of interest in politics is linear with age. The fact that the comparison group is the one of the youngest people (for technical reason) makes differences in participation refer to this group. But the value of estimated coefficients shows that the relation between interest in politics and life cycle is curved, as revealed by previous studies (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). For example, and according to the analyzed data, frequency of political discussion among 20 to 24 year olds is similar to the frequency among 45 to 49 year olds and higher than among all other groups of older ages. In the case of interest in politics, the relation with age does not show such a clear curved form, but presents the same life-cycle effect. Younger generations show lower levels of interest in comparison to mature generations, but interest is even lower among the oldest generations.

Chart 2. **Signing petition**



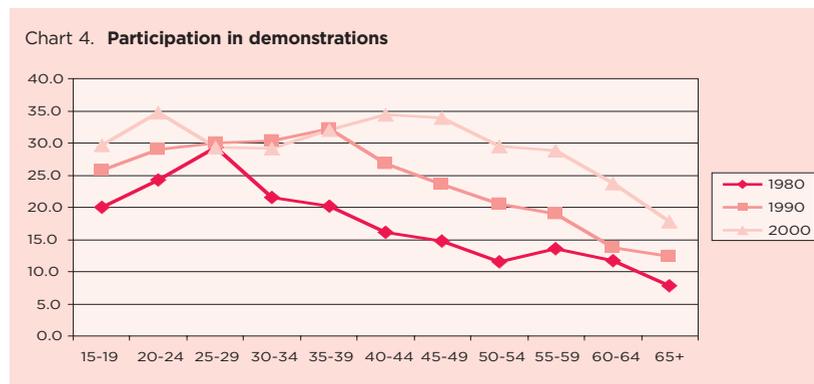
There are also generational effects regarding the frequency of discussion about political issues, and regarding interest in politics, although not as obvious. Those around 40 years of age in 1990 and in 2000 (with some exceptions) tend to discuss more about politics than people of that age in 1980. In most cases the increase is significant. However, curiously, there are no significant differences between the younger groups in 1980, 1990 and 2000. How can we interpret these data? First, it is clear that interest and frequency among young people have not changed substantially during the last decades. There has been a general decrease of political discussion, but not due (at least not exclusively) to the new young generations. Second, generational effects among people over 40 in 1990 and 2000 with regard to 1980 seem arguable. A more plausible interpretation is that the life cycle of political discussion has slightly changed since 1980. While in 1980 the maximum of political discussion was found at early ages, as time passes the maximum is delayed to older ages. With regard to interest in politics, the pattern is even more confusing. The generational effect is also present among older people in 2000, but the trend is not homogeneous, as proven by the presence of positive and negative signs. What seems plausible is that there is an evolution of the life-cycle pattern of interest in politics.

Chart 3. **Participation in boycotts**



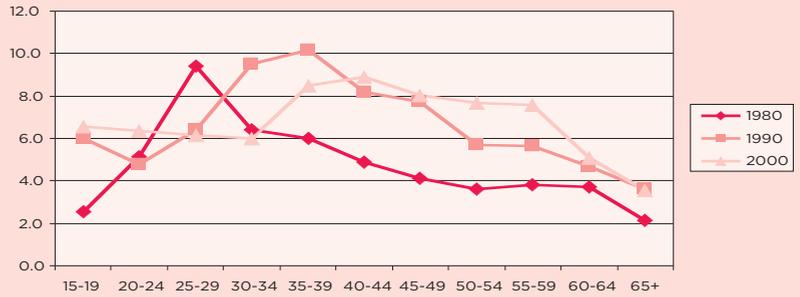
When faced with these data, the first question we have to ask ourselves is to what extent differences regarding interest in politics also turn into different patterns of political participation and, specifically, non-conventional political participation.

In principle, given the correlation between interest and participation, the age groups that show more interest in politics should be the ones that participate more. However, the analysis of the data reveals that there are important differences depending on the type of political action. Also, and in spite of the trend towards a general decrease of the frequency of political discussion, there are common elements to all actions of political participation, as the period effect is positive and significant, although the trend is not as clear in the case of the occupation of buildings and factories. That means that non-conventional political participation increases for the whole of the population between 1980 and 2000, which confirms Inglehart's and Catterberg's thesis (2002). According to them, more than a crisis of political participation, we are facing a change of the strategies of participation, from participation directed by elites to a new type of autonomous participation, even challenging the elites. As we can see, also the average number of non-conventional actions increases significantly during this period.



On the other side, all cases show a “life-cycle” effect that creates a clear pattern of participation in non-conventional actions throughout life: more participation in early maturity and less participation in first youth and advanced maturity. In any case, if we compare the life cycle of political participation to the interest in politics we can clearly see that younger generations participate more in non-conventional actions than what shows their level of political discussion, which again makes us think about the definition of what young people consider politics or not. But maximum levels of participation depending on age notably vary from one kind of action to others. Signing petitions is a relatively stable action during the whole life. It is true that those who participate more in this form of action are young people between 20 and 34 years of age, but differences with older age groups are relatively small. But it is also true that young people between 15 and 19 years of age are the ones that participate less in this type of action. It is also interesting that participation in strikes grows from the youngest group until the group between 45 and 49 years of age, but from that age on, participation is similar to the participation of young people between 15 and 19 years of age. Logically, higher levels of participation in this type of activity are a consequence of being in the labour market, although the most active group is the one between 25 and 29 years of age.

Chart 5. **Participation in strikes**



On the contrary, participation in boycotts, demonstrations, and the occupation of buildings or factories (although this last political action is less frequent) are actions typically carried out by young people. Young people between 20 and 30 years of age are the ones that participate more in these types of actions, which does not include people between 15 and 19. But participation does not decrease drastically among people over 30. This type of “non-conventional” actions has very short life cycles, where participation reaches a maximum at early ages. And from then on participation decreases drastically among mature and older generations. Therefore, these are not conventional actions with typical life cycles, where participation reaches the maximum among mature generations to decrease among the oldest generations, but forms of participation that are typical for young people. They were in the 70’s and 80’s, but still are today. This also reflects in the number of “non-conventional” actions of specific individuals. Participation is higher between 15 and 39 years of age, and the most active group is the one of 25 to 29 year olds. Thus, highest levels of “non-conventional” political participation are reached at the time of what could be called the limits of youth, at the beginning of the transition to adulthood.

Chart 6. **Occupation of buildings or factories**



But well, we could also ask ourselves if young people’s participation increases or decreases with time. The analysis of estimated coefficients shows that generational differences are not consistent in any of the cases. Non-conventional participation rates have not changed substantially as a

consequence of generational replacement. There is only one exception, which is “going to demonstrations”. As well as in the analysis by Caínzos (2006) we are able to see that young people go to demonstrations more than any other age group. But also the group of people between 40 and 54 years of age tend to increase their participation in demonstrations between 1980 and 2000. In this case, can we speak of generational effects? It does not seem probable. Plausible is, as was the case with interest in politics, that the life cycle of participation in this type of events is being prolonged. Those who started going to demonstrations in the 70’s and 80’s still go today. Statistically, the number of political actions carried out, as going to demonstrations is the most common non-conventional action, proves this pattern.

Another important issue to be analyzed are the differences between countries. Although the perspective of this work is very general, we should highlight that the European situation regarding young people’s participation is far from being homogeneous. In the first place, young people’s interest in politics is higher in northern and central European countries. In countries like Norway or Germany the proportion of young people that are interested in politics is around 80%. On the contrary, interest is notably lower in southern European countries. In countries like Spain and France the proportion of young people of the same age that are interested in politics not even exceeds 50%.

This corresponds to the common pattern of differences for the whole population, and therefore lower levels of interest in politics in southern European countries are not a big surprise. This pattern repeats when analyzing forms of political participation, with clearly higher levels of participation in northern European countries. In spite of these significant differences when carrying out a comparative analysis, these general patterns correspond to what happens in specific countries with regard to the primacy of the life-cycle effect over the generational effect. Data of different analyzed countries show that for Europe as a whole we cannot, in any case, refer to a decrease of non-conventional political participation between the young generations in 1980 and today. It’s even the opposite; there is an increase of participation in this type of actions by the population in general, which also affects young people.

Once proven that life-cycle effects are the main explanation of changes in the levels of political participation throughout life, I will now start to discuss specific events of the life cycle that are somehow related to the levels of participation. The models discussed up until now will be slightly more complicated as we will add another group of variables with the aim of capturing the impact of transitions from youth to adulthood. The results of the estimation can be seen in Table 2. Age is also a continuous variable due to technical reasons (in order to avoid an excessive number of variables), but we add an additional term: square age, precisely to capture the curved relation between age and political participation. In any case, interpretation of the effects has the same intuitive meaning.

A first reading of the results shows that life transitions have an impact on interest in politics and non-conventional political participation, although this impact is not always as awaited. The first of these transitions is the access to the labour market. Taking the group of those who work full-time as a reference, retired workers, housewives and unemployed people are less

interested in politics and discuss less about public issues. On the contrary, students are the most interested group in politics, even discounting the effects of the variable age, which is also included in the model. Correlatively, a variable that does positively affect interest in politics is education. The more years someone spends in the education system, the more he/she is interested in politics and political discussions. However, insertion into the labour market is not a variable that necessarily increases the interest in political issues, at least not when compared to the situation of students. But any other situation (retirement, unemployment...) that leaves people outside the labour market does weaken interest in politics. In this sense, Morán and Benedicto (2003; 2007) highlight the difficulty of becoming citizens experienced by today's young people in Europe. This is fundamentally due to the obstacles to reach personal autonomy through the access to the labour market, which was the usual emancipation trajectory in Western societies. The consequence is a coexistence of economic family dependence and forms of social and cultural autonomy in the field of life-styles. Therefore, work is no longer the central aspect for the development of youth's citizenship.

Another important life transition for young people is marriage or the creation of an independent family. Data reflect, however, that the effect of this variable is very relative. We cannot say that singles show less interest in politics than those married or having a couple-relationship, although it is true that widowers, divorcees and separated people show less interest in politics and discuss less about political issues than those married or with a stable relationship. Therefore, it is not possible to say that the process of emancipation, through the creation of an own family, is a decisive factor to increase interest in political issues. However, leading an autonomous life is an important factor. Those living with their parents are less interested in politics and discuss less about it.

In the field of participation, causal relations follow a similar pattern as political interest. Although effects can vary from one action to the other, in general terms we can say that the situation in the labour market is a relevant variable for political participation. Especially housewives (and sometimes also retired people) show significantly lower rates of participation than those who work full-time. However, the main difference appears in relation to students, who stand out in all cases as the segment of population with the highest levels of participation. Autonomy and independence are factors that favour all types of political participation. Those living in their parent's home participate less in all kind of non-conventional political activities. On the other side, marital status is again an ambiguous variable. Even more, according to the data, singles participate in significantly more activities than married people. The conclusion of this situation is that transitions to adulthood not only favour non-conventional participation, but can also weaken participation. Being a student, a typical condition of young people, seems to be the most constant (and positive) factor for the different forms of participation, although it is true that personal autonomy also favours participation.

The evolution of political participation of the Spanish youth throughout time

As already mentioned, beyond similarities in the patterns of young people's political participation in Europe, there are also notable differences in terms

of the levels of participation in the different countries. The Spanish case is especially striking regarding the analysis of differences between recent generations and political participation. The first analyzed generation to reach political maturity in 1980 is a generation that experienced childhood and adolescence under a dictatorship and lived through a process of political transition to democracy. The second generation was born at the end of the Franco regime and lived their childhood experiences during the process of political transition, although it is possible that these events had limited impact on this generation. Lastly, the generation of young people in the year 2000 is a generation that was already born in democracy and, therefore, has no direct memories of the dictatorship. The comparison between these three cohorts allows us to understand how patterns of political participation have evolved from a non-democratic context to a full democracy. In this sense, there are numerous studies that try to study to what extent the evolution of the patterns of political participation in Spain can be explained through more or less general factors typical of the Western context or through idiosyncratic reasons (Ferrer, Medina y Torcal, 2006; Montero y Torcal, 1998; Morales, 2005; Torcal y Montero, 1999). In this section we will try to clarify this issue with regard to the specific case of “non-conventional” participation.

As a starting point, we can refer to two alternative hypotheses. On the one side, it is possible to think that political participation is lower among the generation of the political transition, as their primary political socialization happened in a context where the main forms of political participation were not allowed. For this reason, participation should be higher among later generations, as they were socialized in an open political context. Morales (2005) also underlines that participation could increase due to the development of democracy by promoting learning and internalization of the new forms of political participation. However, the opposite interpretation is also plausible. Young people could participate more in non-conventional terms, as conventional participation was not possible during the dictatorship. From this point of view, youth’s participation should decrease among later generations, as for the new generations other forms of participation are available through institutionalized instruments.

The methodology used to prove one or the other hypothesis is the same as the one we explained in section three, with the difference that the data exclusively refers to the Spanish case. The results are presented in Table 3. The first conclusion of the analysis of the data is that the evolution of interest in politics among young Spanish people since the 1970’s is similar to the evolution in Europe as a whole. In Spain there has also been a decrease of the frequency of political discussion, but not of interest in politics. Also differences depending on age with regard to interest and discussion can fundamentally be explained through the life-cycle effect. Interest increases during youth and reaches a maximum at maturity, and starts to fall again among older people.

The comparison between patterns of evolution of political participation of the Spanish youth is slightly different to the evolution of Europe as a whole. In opposition to what happened in Europe, where “non-conventional” participation experienced increases during the last three decades, in Spain there are no such signs of growth: the period effect is not significant in most of the actions. But Spanish people do share similar patterns with Europeans with regard to the importance of the life cycle to explain different levels of

participation depending on age. Non-conventional participation is higher during youth, and specifically towards the end of youth. From then on, this type of participation tends to decrease. However, differences between age groups tend to be small in the Spanish case and not always significant. This could be a consequence of smaller samples for the Spanish case. Even more confusing is the impact of generational replacement. According to the results there are no remarkable generational differences as most effects linked to the generations are not significant.

With regard to the variables of life trajectories that influence on political participation we can also say that their effects are not significant in the case of Spain, as can be seen in Table 4. Education is a variable with a positive effect on interest, as well as on participation. However, the situation in the labour market and the marital status has a weak impact on participation. In some cases, being a student significantly affects the probability of participation, but not all forms of participation are affected. The marital status also does not affect participation, although living in the parent's home discourages non-conventional participation.

To sum it up, we can say that the patterns of the evolution of young people's participation in Spain follow the evolution of the rest of European countries, up to a certain point. The most important difference is that in Spain there has not been a general increase of non-conventional political participation, even though levels of participation are already low if compared to Europe. During the political transition there was an increase of the interest in politics, but since then this interest has not grown much and has not become a boost for political participation among new generations of young people after the transition. On the other side, data reveal that generational differences are relatively small, as shown by previous studies (Ferrer, 2006; Morales, 2005). This is especially striking, as the country has undergone a process of social, economic and political change in these three decades.

But the data suggest that there have been pretty constant levels of non-conventional political participation in Spain, which cannot lead us to think of a general homogeneity between generations. In spite of the fact that the "number" of non-conventional actions has not increased throughout this period of time, it seems logical to think that the meaning given to participation by the actors themselves is different. Morales (2005) states that there are two "civic generations": one of the 1960's and one of 1970's. The first one focuses on conventional participation, the second one on non-conventional participation. In any case, the most plausible conclusion is that the evolution of patterns of participation among young people in Spain is the same than in Europe and in Western societies in general. In a certain way, this could be a reflection of social, economic and political convergence in the country during the last three decades. Even so, differences between countries in the level of participation tend to be constant, with Spain, and other southern European countries, showing lower levels of participation.

Conclusions

The objective of this article was to analyze variations of participation rates of young Europeans during the last three decades, trying to differentiate between changes due to generational replacement and changes due to the life cycle. The first conclusion is that we cannot speak of a decline of young people's political participation, at least not in terms of non-conventional

participation. On the contrary, the data show trends towards increase of non-conventional participation in Europe, in spite of the fact that interest in politics and frequency of political discussions has decreased. Some authors refer to a process of informalization of the patterns of political participation. There is a change from participation through traditional institutions, such as political parties, to a more flexible and individualized political engagement (Band y Sorensen, 2001; Stolle y Hooghe, 2005, Topf, 1995).

The second main conclusion of this analysis is that differences in participation depending on age groups are fundamentally a consequence of the life-cycle effect, in comparison to the generational effect. Participation increases throughout youth until maturity and then starts to decrease again. However, we have also proven that the cycle of non-conventional participation is pretty short. Highest levels of participation are reached at relatively young ages (towards the end of youth), and then start falling. At the same time, the data seem to indicate that the life cycle of participation slightly evolves throughout time. While non-conventional participation was almost exclusively limited to young people in the 1970s, those young generations (now adults) tend to extend the period of political participation. However, we were not able to find a clear pattern that allows us to explain the effects of the life cycle through young people's life-transitions. Being a student or leading an independent life seem to be factors that positively affect participation. On the other side, marital status has no defined effects on participation and, in some cases being married or having a stable relationship can even be a negative factor in relation to political participation.

With regard to the specific case of Spain, in general terms we can say that the patterns of evolution of young people's participation are similar to the ones described for Europe as a whole. Participation rates in Spain are considerably under the European average, as it is the case for other southern European countries. On the other hand, in Spain there is not a clear trend towards an increase of non-conventional participation and intergenerational differences are relatively small, in spite of the process of social and political change undergone by Spain. In any case, the factors that explain patterns of participation of young Spanish people do not seem very different when compared to the rest of Europe.

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Table 1. Life-cycle effects and cohort effects on political interest and participation in Europe

	Political discussion	Interest in politics	Signing petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Strikes	Occupation of buildings	Total
15-19 years of age								
20-24 years of age	0.334***	0.37***	0.509***	0.534***	0.253**	0.716**	0.498*	0.322***
25-29 years of age	0.541***	0.438***	0.641***	0.782***	0.499***	1.359***	0.617**	0.476***
30-34 years of age	0.64***	0.53***	0.533***	0.423**	0.084	0.949***	0.347	0.3***
35-39 years of age	0.671***	0.607***	0.439***	0.389*	-0.002	0.835***	-0.17	0.228***
40-44 years of age	0.414***	0.553***	0.242*	-0.036	-0.286*	0.707**	-0.746*	0.042
45-49 years of age	0.395***	0.53***	0.189	-0.006	-0.424***	0.531*	-0.307	-0.01
50-54 years of age	0.203*	0.863***	0.178	-0.633**	-0.69***	0.321	-1.328**	-0.138*
55-59 years of age	0.25**	0.347***	0.134	-0.316	-0.503***	0.369	-0.808*	-0.067
60-64 years of age	0.188	0.797***	-0.027	-0.511*	-0.691***	0.426	-0.588	-0.17**
Over 65 years of age	-0.293***	0.655***	-0.43***	-0.937***	-1.094***	-0.263	-0.911**	-0.507***
1980								
1990	-0.12		0.518***	0.353	0.337**	1.078***	-0.511	0.306***
2000	-0.342***	0.302**	0.753***	0.584***	0.596***	1.13***	0.687**	0.509***
20-24 years of age - 1990	0.069		-0.167	-0.226	-0.077	-0.982***	0.197	-0.155*
20-24 years of age - 2000	0.115	-0.16	-0.135	-0.191	-0.104	-0.8**	-0.352	-0.174**
25-29 years of age - 1990	0.02		-0.248*	-0.321	-0.262*	-1.294***	0.152	-0.249***
25-29 years of age - 2000	0.125	-0.09	-0.127	-0.408*	-0.57***	-1.456***	-0.92**	-0.359***
30-34 years of age - 1990	0.133		0.034	0.246	0.212	-0.41	0.758*	0.035
30-34 years of age - 2000	0.237	-0.047	-0.038	0.088	-0.167	-1.053***	-0.896**	-0.184**
35-39 years of age - 1990	0.115		0.109	0.338	0.386**	-0.203	1.455***	0.127*
35-39 years of age - 2000	0.35**	0.067	0.13	0.15	0.071	-0.551	-0.031	-0.037
40-44 years of age - 1990	0.303*		0.214	0.368	0.396**	-0.366	1.465***	0.17*
40-44 years of age - 2000	0.659***	0.199	0.377**	0.699**	0.502***	-0.349	0.6	0.2**
45-49 years of age - 1990	0.293*		0.119	0.155	0.355*	-0.221	0.847*	0.13
45-49 years of age - 2000	0.683***	0.3*	0.379**	0.585*	0.609***	-0.281	-0.037	0.219**
50-54 years of age - 1990	0.367**		-0.013	0.504	0.413*	-0.332	1.838***	0.142
50-54 years of age - 2000	0.754***	-0.403***	0.204	1.097***	0.673***	-0.141	0.98*	0.266***
55-59 years of age - 1990	0.183		-0.207	-0.134	0.127	-0.426	0.841	-0.066
55-59 years of age - 2000	0.743***	0.585***	0.15	0.587*	0.468**	-0.118	0.403	0.156*
60-64 years of age - 1990	0.121		-0.19	-0.057	-0.053	-0.643	0.317	-0.1
60-64 years of age - 2000	0.622***	-0.494***	0.099	0.46	0.335*	-0.601	0.044	0.081
Over 65 years of age - 1990	0.366***		-0.051	0.142	0.252	-0.253	0.741	0.081
Over 65 years of age - 2000	0.717***	-0.427***	0.14	0.392	0.38*	-0.335	-0.46	0.157*
Constant	0.545***	-0.276**	-0.784***	-3.219***	-2.265***	-5.225***	-5.089***	-0.792***

Source: EVS (1980, 1990, 2000). Own elaboration.
Note: Values refer to estimated logit coefficients. Asterisks refer to the respective level of signification:
*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. Besides the variables included in the table, we also include the effect of countries in order to control their impact on participation.

Table 2. **Factors that have an impact on political participation in Europe**

	Political discussion	Interest in politics	Signing petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Strikes	Occupation of buildings	Total
Age	0.076***	0.066***	0.044***	0.158***	0.075***	0.144***	0.142**	0.053***
Age2	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.002***	-0.001***	-0.002***	-0.002***	-0.001***
1980								
1990	-0.455	0.333*	0.164	1.327**	0.341	0.893	-0.455	0.294*
2000	-1.01***		0.138	1.086*	0.135	1.064*	1.056	0.343**
Age - 1990	0.006		0.01	-0.081**	-0.013	-0.039	0.001	-0.01
Age - 2000	0.024	0.002	0.021	-0.069*	-0.006	-0.055	-0.075	-0.011
Age2 - 1990	0		0	0.001**	0	0	0	0
Age2 - 2000	0	0	0	0.001**	0	0.001	0.001	0**
Males								
Females	-0.457***	-0.564***	-0.031	-0.271***	-0.263***	-0.56***	-0.459***	-0.138***
Living with parents								
Independent life	-0.189***	-0.147***	-0.256***	-0.443***	-0.292***	-0.143*	-0.362***	-0.168***
Marriage								
Widowers, separated, divorcees	-0.246***	-0.154***	0.024	0.134*	-0.005	0.197**	0.053	0.02
Singles	-0.016	0.023	0.046	0.303***	0.216***	0.128*	0.375***	0.095***
Years in education	0.111***	0.094***	0.078***	0.063***	0.068***	0.038***	0.043***	0.034***
Full-time job								
Part-time job	0.011	-0.051	0.058	0.086	0.052	-0.179*	0.073	0.025
Self-employed	0.075	0.053	-0.029	-0.037	-0.261***	-0.603***	-0.241*	-0.1***
Retired	-0.199***	-0.115**	-0.075	-0.013	-0.063	-0.063	0.369**	-0.009
Housewife	-0.432***	-0.336***	-0.472***	-0.46***	-0.829***	-0.658***	-0.821***	-0.403***
Student	0.167***	0.265***	0.198***	0.337***	0.296***	-0.08	0.48***	0.167***
Unemployed	-0.288***	-0.365***	-0.181***	0.026	-0.019	0.106	0.384***	-0.032
Others	-0.251**	-0.252**	-0.228**	-0.177	-0.238**	-0.161	0.306	-0.121**
Constant	-1.894***	-2.633***	-2.294***	-6.049***	-4.236***	-7.16***	-7.494***	-1.811***

Source: EVS (1980, 1990, 2000). Own elaboration.
 Note: Values refer to estimated logit coefficients. Asterisks refer to the respective level of signification: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. Besides the variables included in the table, we also include the effect of countries in order to control their impact on participation

Table 3. Life-cycle effects and cohort effects on political interest and participation in Spain

	Political discussion	Interest in politics	Signing petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Strikes	Occupation of buildings	Total
15-19 years of age								
20-24 years of age	0.599*	1.006**	0.458	1.064*	0.209	0.37	0.945	0.374**
25-29 years of age	0.86***	0.594***	1.045***	1.722***	0.668**	0.793	1.23	0.728***
30-34 years of age	0.453	0.754***	0.304	0.83	-0.425	0.003	0.913	0.088
35-39 years of age	0.564*	0.65***	0.094	0.785	-0.515	-0.225	0.37	-0.026
40-44 years of age	0.192	1.435***	-0.016	0.714	-0.597*	-0.063	-0.499	-0.164
45-49 years of age	0.274	0.921**	0.288	0.761	-0.471	-0.194	0.147	-0.063
50-54 years of age	-0.34	0.158	0.212	0.534	-1.054***	-0.37	-0.535	-0.298
55-59 years of age	-0.209	1.148***	0.227	0.99	-0.405	-0.565	-0.347	-0.081
60-64 years of age	-0.149	-0.148	-0.011	0.256	-0.781*	-0.614	-0.141	-0.283
Over 65 years of age	-0.857***	-0.276	-0.775*	-0.153	-1.908***	-1.534**	0.048	-1.076***
1980								
1990	-0.938***		-0.235	-0.117	-0.174	0.048	-0.365	-0.172
2000	-1.052***	0.466	0.199	-0.099	-0.053	-0.03	-0.455	0.086
20-24 years of age - 1990	-0.261		0.051	-0.65	0.052	-0.718	0.166	-0.094
20-24 years of age - 2000	-0.08	-0.719	0.069	-0.409	0.038	0.276	-0.34	-0.075
25-29 years of age - 1990	-0.182		-0.21	-0.867	-0.388	-0.901	-0.325	-0.29
25-29 years of age - 2000	-0.093	0.248	-0.551	-1.548	-0.535	-0.363	-0.117	-0.537**
30-34 years of age - 1990	0.408		0.593	0.154	0.738*	0.53	0.291	0.46*
30-34 years of age - 2000	0.361	0.164	0.257	0.013	0.629	0.356	-0.087	0.177
35-39 years of age - 1990	0.14		0.663	0.471	0.814*	0.795	1.166	0.556**
35-39 years of age - 2000	0.13	0.434	0.475	0.433	0.755	0.677	0.339	0.369
40-44 years of age - 1990	0.212		0.292	-0.403	0.276	-0.107	1.533	0.185
40-44 years of age - 2000	0.838*	-1.017**	0.615	0.506	0.698	0.741	2.127	0.507*
45-49 years of age - 1990	0.174		-0.082	-0.187	0.108	0.015	-0.065	0.014
45-49 years of age - 2000	0.545	-0.606	0.006	-0.046	0.357	0.487	0.613	0.137
50-54 years of age - 1990	0.345		-0.523	-0.947	0.138	-0.92	0.671	-0.269
50-54 years of age - 2000	0.982**	0.864*	-0.478	-0.676	0.415	-0.519	-0.145	-0.118
55-59 years of age - 1990	0.106		-0.09	-1.206	-0.591	-0.123	0.244	-0.325
55-59 years of age - 2000	0.845*	-1.148**	-0.111	-0.894	0.126	0.627	1.322	0.003
60-64 years of age - 1990	-0.027		-0.639	-0.959	-0.338	-2.346*		-0.692**
60-64 years of age - 2000	0.308	0.899*	0.047	-0.35	0.238	0.062	1.266	0.011
Over 65 years of age - 1990								
	0.405		-0.072	-0.683	0.416	0.62	0.23	0.081
Over 65 years of age - 2000								
	0.627	0.628	0.202	-0.796	0.456	0.343	0.067	0.159
Constant	0.771***	-1.806***	-1.386***	-3.146***	-0.766***	-2.495***	-3.902***	-0.551***

Source: EVS (1980, 1990, 2000). Own elaboration.
 Note: Values refer to estimated logit coefficients. Asterisks refer to the respective level of signification:
 *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Table 4. **Factors that have an impact on political participation in Spain**

	Political discussion	Interest in politics	Signing petitions	Boycotts	Demonstrations	Strikes	Occupation of buildings	Total
Age	0.084	0.075***	0.21***	0.431***	0.184***	0.282**	1.198**	0.197***
Age2	-0.001*	-0.001***	-0.003***	-0.006***	-0.003***	-0.004**	-0.02**	-0.003***
1980								
1990	-1.13		1.689	3.605*	1.267	2.639	14.428**	1.51**
2000	-1.527	0.095	2.036*	3.739*	1.016	3.478*	13.923*	1.824***
Age - 1990	-0.018		-0.126*	-0.287**	-0.108	-0.226*	-1.088**	-0.126***
Age - 2000	-0.001	0.075***	-0.137*	-0.295**	-0.096	-0.249*	-1.085**	-0.138***
Age2 - 1990	0.001		0.002*	0.004**	0.002	0.003*	0.018**	0.002***
Age2 - 2000	0	0	0.002*	0.004**	0.002	0.003*	0.019**	0.002***
Males								
Females	-0.493***	-0.333***	-0.177*	-1.016***	-0.234**	-0.579***	-0.622***	-0.275***
Living with parents								
Independent life	-0.178	-0.287*	-0.268*	-0.386*	-0.323**	-0.407*	-0.76**	-0.256***
Marriage								
Widowers, separated, divorcees	-0.287**	-0.16	0.163	0.525*	0.101	0.444*	-0.207	0.141
Singles	-0.199	0.053	0.362**	0.226	0.251*	0.04	0.003	0.146*
Years in education	0.082***	0.075***	0.086***	0.081***	0.074***	0.066***	0.056***	0.046***
Full-time job								
Part-time job	0.219	-0.201	0.015	0.409	0.162	0.142	-0.092	0.056
Self-employed	0.03	-0.126	-0.092	0.145	-0.251*	-0.119	-0.324	-0.128*
Retired	-0.142	-0.244	-0.226	0.382	0.11	-0.089	0.586	-0.011
Housewife	-0.436***	-0.559***	-0.543***	-0.03	-0.631***	-0.727**	-1.387**	-0.564***
Student	-0.035	0.233	0.122	0.287	0.186	-0.122	0.637*	0.156**
Unemployed	-0.163	-0.375**	-0.037	0.215	0.174	0.338	0.773**	0.095
Others	-0.942**	-0.688	-0.411	0.409	-0.527	0	0	-0.571
Constant	-0.747	-3.549***	-5.827***	-10.07***	-4.543***	-6.924***	-20.2***	-3.849***

Source: EVS (1980, 1990, 2000). Own elaboration.
 Note: Values refer to estimated logit coefficients. Asterisks refer to the respective level of signification:
 *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

