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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of Politics and International Relations

Institutional Determinants of Youth Political Participation in the EU, 2002-2016

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

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Declining levels of youth political participation pose a major challenge to many advanced and new democracies. Institutional context is a significant unexplored factor in shaping levels of youth political participation. Especially when it comes to newly established democracies, there is little existing research on how macro-level factors shape levels of youth political engagement. When explaining political participation, the majority of the literature refers to individual-level characteristics as main determinants of youth political engagement.

The influence of political institutions on political participation is widely studied comparatively in general terms but not in relation to youth. This is surprising given the widely held view that young people are one of the most disengaged groups in democratic politics. There is little cross-national research on how the age of democracy together with other country-level characteristics influence the political participation of young people specifically. In addition, most existing research considering macro-level factors as determinants of political participation focuses on voting. These significant gaps are addressed by this thesis, which considers voting, formal political participation (e.g. contacting a politician, being a member of a political party) and informal political participation (e.g. working in another organisation, wearing a badge, signing a petition, taking part in demonstration, boycotting, and taking part in online political activism). This thesis contributes to current debates over political participation and enables insights into the determinants of youth informal political participation.

Focusing on newly established and advanced democracies across the EU, this study explores whether country-level characteristics influence the propensity of young individuals to engage in politics. This thesis therefore investigates the following research question: What are the institutional-level determinants of youth political participation in the EU? I outline an empirical

analysis exploring the effect of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of young individuals to participate in politics in the EU, differentiating between electoral, formal, and informal participation. This thesis develops an institutional theory of youth engagement in politics and offers the original claim that dimensions of the institutional setting of a country account for variations in levels of youth political participation across the EU. I argue that age of democracy together with other country-level characteristics fundamentally condition the way young people participate in politics. In order to assess these claims, I analyse time-series cross-sectional data from the European Social Survey (2002-2016) combined with a country-level dataset of institutional measures between 2002 and 2016 by applying multilevel logistic regression.

In summary, the findings of this thesis show that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young people to engage in politics, be it voting, formal, or informal activities. Results suggest that high levels of corruption decrease youth political engagement in electoral, formal, and informal politics. Moreover, youth voter turnout is higher in countries with proportional representation.

Main conclusions once comparing all age groups are that younger individuals participate more in informal politics compared to older individuals. On the other hand, older people vote more than young people, however, the institutional setting of a country accounts for differences in these patterns. For instance, young people in established democracies tend to vote at similar rates as middle-aged people in new democracies. The results raise fresh concerns and explore new questions regarding the role of political institutions in shaping youth political participation.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

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2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Between 2000 and 2019, more than 150 parliamentary elections took place in 28 European Union (EU) countries, with voter turnout varying from 37.8% to 95.7% (IDEA, 2019). Unarguably, turnout varies extremely across countries, and in advanced democracies voter turnout is consistently found to be higher than in newly established democracies. Countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands have extremely high levels of turnout (IDEA, 2019). If the explanations for high levels of turnout are to do only with an individual's characteristics, then how is it that citizens from these countries are so different from citizens in Bulgaria or Croatia, where turnout is much lower? Levels of turnout cannot only be explained by individual-level characteristics but by contextual ones as well that account for differences across countries.

Individual-level characteristics are the dominant explanation of voter turnout (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba et al, 1995; Tenn, 2007; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces; Sloam, 2012; Holmes and Manning, 2013). In this thesis, I adopt a focus that differs from the existing literature and explores macro-level drivers of political participation. The thesis makes a novel contribution to the study of youth political participation by bridging the gap between micro- and macro-level determinants of political participation.

1.1 Why do young people participate or not participate in politics?

Youth disengagement continues to be a major issue facing most contemporary democracies that needs to be better understood (Norris, 2003; Hay, 2007; Farthing, 2010; Furlong and Cartmel, 2012; Henn and Foard, 2012). Declining levels of youth political participation pose a challenge to many advanced and new democracies. Therefore, addressing questions regarding factors determining participation is key, since participation is crucial for the quality of democracy (Cnudde and Neubauer, 1969; Dahl, 1971; Lipset, 1981; Almond and Verba, 1989).

In recent years, young people are believed to be interested in politics, however, as seen in numerous countries in Europe this does not result in high levels of youth political engagement, especially when it comes to electoral participation. A large and growing body of literature has investigated individual-level characteristics as the main determinants of youth political (dis)engagement (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; McVeigh and Smith, 1999; Henn and Foard, 2014). Youth are seen to be less interested in politics and less likely to vote or become members of political parties than any other age group (Mycock and Tonge, 2012; Wattenberg, 2012). Participation in political activities is seen to be in crisis, especially when it comes to young people and politics (Franklin, 2004). There is strong evidence

that youth participation in formal, institutionalised political processes is relatively low compared to older citizens (European Commission, 2001; Henn et al, 2002; O'Toole, Marsh, and Jones, 2003; Fieldhouse, Tranmer, and Russell, 2007). Despite the growing interest in youth political participation, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the external determinants of youth participation.

Political participation is a vital cornerstone of a healthy and well-functioning democracy. The contemporary literature emphasises that participation can take many forms such as voting, party membership, contacting politicians, protesting, boycotting, demonstrating etc. Some scholars argue that young people are not apathetic and disengaged, but they have turned to alternative forms of political engagement such as protesting, demonstrating, being part of organisations, signing petitions, volunteering, and engaging in politics online (Norris 2003; Spannring, Ogris and Gaiser, 2008; Sloam, 2016). However, other studies have found that young people are equally disengaged from both formal and informal political participation (Grasso, 2016; Fox, 2015).

1.2 Context matters

Verba et al. (1978) in their study of seven Western countries noticed that different countries have unique patterns of political participation. The majority of existing research on youth political engagement has focused on differences among Western democracies, instead of differences across advanced and newly established democracies. As previous research shows, levels of political activities vary extensively across countries (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2002; Blais 2006; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Solt, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Dalton and Anderson, 2011). For instance, countries such as Netherlands and Norway have vibrant civil societies, where on the other hand, post-communist countries have a weaker civil society and lower levels of political participation (Howard, 2003). Taking into consideration their history, it is expected that countries with a longer democratic experience will have more established traditions of civil society development, whereas post-communist countries became democratic only in the last three decades. In this study, I consider whether citizens are more likely to participate in politics if the country in which they live has had a prolonged experience with democratic processes.

There is little research regarding the institutional-level factors determining political participation in European Union countries, particularly for newly established democracies, and there is a little comparative research on institutional-level differences between established and new democracies when it comes to political participation. The influence of political institutions on political participation is studied comparatively largely in general terms but not to a great extent in

relation to youth. This is surprising given the widely held view that Millennials[1] are one of the most disengaged groups in politics. In this thesis, I argue that the distinct nature of the institutional context within a country explains differences in political participation among new and advanced democracies. As such, I argue that the long-term institutional setting (e.g. age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral systems) accounts for why young people engage or disengage from political participation in the EU. This thesis offers new insights regarding the role of political institutions in shaping levels of youth participation. The main research question addressed in the thesis is therefore: What are the institutional-level determinants of youth political participation in the EU?

I answer the research question through testing relevant hypotheses that emanate from theory. This thesis develops an institutional theory arguing that political institutions significantly shape variations in levels of youth political participation in the EU. I outline an empirical analysis of 13 EU countries exploring the effect of institutional factors (e.g. the cumulative impact of a number of institutional variables) on the propensity of young individuals to participate in politics using data from the European Social Survey (2002 – 2016) combined with a country-level dataset of institutional measures covering the period from 2002 to 2016, compiled specifically for the purpose of this study. This study compares EU countries that have variations in their civil society, historical developments, state relationships, differences in institutional settings, political socialisation processes, social policies, etc. The analysed countries provide a suitable sample as both their differences and similarities allow for an in-depth comparison.

1.3 Original contribution

This thesis makes a number of original contributions to the understanding of political participation of young people. As noted previously, the existing explanatory models of youth political participation do not fully answer the question of why there are variations in youth turnout across countries. I argue that country-level institutional features condition the way young citizens behave when it comes to electoral participation. Previous research does not fully account for variation across countries, and do not explain why exactly the nature of the political participation of young people varies across EU democracies.

The existing literature lacks a typology that can systematically present and link institutional settings and levels of youth political participation. To date, institutional factors as drivers of

[1] The generation of young citizens who entered the electorates "around the turn of the millennium" (Fox, 2015: 1).

political participation have been studied mainly in relation to the general public, with electoral systems being the most widely researched factor (Lakeman, 1974; Powell, 1980; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). This highlights a need to better understand the influence of other institutional factors on youth political participation in a comparative research. This thesis develops a theory that a combination of certain institutional settings account for varying levels in youth political engagement across countries.

In addition, this thesis presents a dataset of institutional measures that was constructed specifically for the purpose of the study featuring different country settings of EU countries between 2002 and 2016 providing a time-series cross-sectional data that can be replicated and used by scholars in future research. This thesis is the first empirical research to conduct a thorough assessment of young people's political participation in both traditional and non-traditional political activities by examining age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system cross nationally over time. The analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the explanatory factors of political participation by addressing the institutional settings of countries. This study makes a major contribution to the research on youth political engagement, as the current literature is still debating about whether there is a youth engagement or disengagement in politics (Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2003; Stoker. 2006; Fieldhouse et al, 2007; Spannring et al, 2008; Fox, 2015; Grasso, 2016; Sloam, 2016). In addition, my research gives insights on whether or not young people participate more in new forms of political participation as argued in recent years by numerous studies (Norris, 2003; Harries, Wyn and Younes, 2010; Henn and Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2013).

As noted, this thesis presents an institutional theory of youth political participation, which is currently missing from the extensive literature on political participation, institutions and youth engagement in politics. It contributes to that literature by examining youth political participation comparatively in terms of the macro-level drivers of political engagement. The institutional setting of a country both constrains and enables particular political behaviour. Contextual factors should feature extensively in the research on youth political participation as they have a crucial role in determining levels of participation in different countries (Crepaz, 1990; Freitag, 1996, 2005; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Wernli, 1998; Franklin, 2002; Norris, 2004). Moreover, contextual explanations of informal political engagement in new democracies are not an object of a great deal of study as the majority of research on contextual factors as determinants of political participation focuses mostly on voting as a political action. Such gaps are addressed in my study. Existing explanatory models of youth political participation do not fully answer the question of why there are variations across countries, nor do they explain why they work better in one

country than another, and do not fully account for differences between countries as they are focused on individual-level characteristics. What remains unclear is what are the country-level drivers of youth political engagement.

This thesis also makes a methodological contribution to the existing empirical research on youth political participation. It analyses young people's political engagement using multilevel modelling that accounts for different levels of nested data (i.e. individuals nested within countries). In addition, I analyse *individuals* nested in *countries*, nested *in time periods* which present a contribution itself to the way we analyse youth political engagement.

Much uncertainty still exists about how age of democracy together with other country-level characteristics influences political participation in a cross-national study across EU targeting young people. In research on political participation, many scholars have analysed national, regional-, or individual-level data. These analyses, however, do not fully account for variation across countries, nor do they explain why levels of political participation vary across distinctive democratic regions in Europe (e.g. Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe).

Today, a main concern relates to what will youth disengagement in politics mean when relatively disengaged younger generations grow older. If the trend of older people dominating electoral participation continues, this generation could dominate all political processes and influence policy outcomes in this age group's favour (Goerres, 2009). This would mean that young people would continue to be neglected by politicians and the issues they care about would tend to be ignored. This, in turn, could result in young people becoming more ignorant and alienated when it comes to participating in the democratic life of a country. By being disengaged and not participating in the formal political processes, young people create few incentives for governments to prioritise them in the policy-making processes (Fox, 2015). This leads to political parties skewing policies towards the more active (older) groups of citizens, which in turn creates a feeling that young people have little incentives to participate in politics as policies do not represent their interests (Birch et al, 2013). This leads young people to feel alienated and to disengage from the political system, which results in political parties not prioritising them and their needs. As such, this creates a vicious circle (Duff and Wright, 2015) and is a pattern that is observable in numerous countries (Arnadottir, 2014; Lee and Medeiros, 2014; Coss, 2015; Evans et al, 2015).

Explaining why, when and how the institutional setting of a country affects levels of youth participation has implications not only for participation studies but it also helps to understand what is the role of institutions in a given context and how external influences change citizens' paths of actions. Therefore, my study also seeks to address questions relevant for policy makers'

concerns about how institutions and governments can function and increase political engagement and improve democracy quality. As Putnam (1993) argues, changing institutions can result in changing political practice, and this study can therefore have potential implications for policy relevance.

Scholars continue to debate what influences youth political participation, and a significant contribution of this thesis is that it further advances this debate based on reliable and valid data analysis. On the other hand, questions have been raised about whether there was a "youthquake" in the UK in the 2017 general election (McLoughlin, 2018; Prosser et al, 2018; Sloam, Eshan, and Henn, 2018; Sloam and Henn, 2019), and whether there is a youth "engagement" or youth "disengagement" in politics. Debates about levels of youth turnout are happening not only in academia; therefore, it is extremely important to understand what influences levels of youth engagement in politics.

Young people can engage in politics through a range of activities. The literature reveals that participation can take many forms such as voting, party membership, contacting politicians, protesting, boycotting, demonstrating etc. Over the past decade, political participation activities expanded rapidly, a turning point being when unconventional types of political participation started emerging (Verba et al, 1978; Barnes, Kaase et al. 1979; Parry et al, 1992; Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2001; Van Deth, 2001). I conceptualise 'political participation' as any lawful activities citizens undertake that will or aim to influence, change or affect the government, public policies, or how institutions run (see the discussion in Section 2.5).

1.4 The structure of the thesis

In this section, I set out the structure of the thesis, summarising the key features of each chapter.

Chapter 2 critically reviews the existing literature on political participation and introduces a new conceptualisation of the term that captures the shortcomings and limitations of previous definitions and measurements. It also highlights the multidimensionality of political participation and presents previous influential studies' differentiation of conventional and non-conventional political participation. Chapter 2 then explores and highlights the key contemporary debates in the literature regarding the state of youth political engagement in Europe.

Chapter 3 examines and conceptualises the most relevant explanatory factors of political participation identified by the existing literature, reviewing both individual-level and country-level factors. It particularly emphasises that external factors are conceptualised as main drivers of participation. In Chapter 3, I present the proposed institutional theory of youth political

participation, arguing that democratic experience, levels of corruption, and the type of electoral system shape levels of youth political participation. The chapter identifies the causal mechanisms underpinning my theoretical arguments and derives specific hypotheses for testing my theoretical arguments.

In Chapter 4, I detail the empirical strategy behind data collection, measurement, and the method of analysis used in the thesis. This chapter explains the rationale behind choosing the European Social Survey (ESS) for the analyses and behind the creation of the country-level dataset of institutional measures that was constructed specifically for the purpose of this study. The chapter explains how the dependent and independent variables are measured using the ESS (2002-2016) and a country-level dataset on institutional measures (2002-2016).

Chapter 5 presents the results from the multilevel regression modelling applied to the 2016 wave (Wave 8) of the ESS and analyses youth electoral participation, focusing on people aged 18 to 24. This case is selected as a pilot study to test the theoretical framework and methodological approach of the thesis, using the most recent wave of the ESS for one type of political participation, with a view to informing subsequent analysis. The findings support the assertion that institutional factors are significant predictors of youth voter turnout and account for variations in levels of young people's engagement in elections. This chapter draws conclusions on how institutional features account for variations in levels of youth voter turnout across the EU and suggests that further research is needed in order to test the effect of institutional settings on young people's propensity to participate in politics more widely.

Chapter 6 employs time-series cross-sectional data, again from the ESS, in order to further test the theory of institutions as significant determinants of youth political participation. This chapter considers electoral, formal, and informal participation specifically. The expansion of analysis beyond voting allows examination of the effect of institutional-level variables on youth political participation in a comparative perspective, thus extending understanding of how macro-level factors shape political participation. In Chapter 6, I employ multilevel logistic regression analyses of ESS Waves 1 to 8 (2002-2016) and the dataset on the institutional-level variables for the corresponding period, to examine which institutional factors account for variations in levels of youth participation (individuals aged 18 to 24) in the EU, comparing results for voting, formal political participation and informal political participation. The analyses provide insights on not only how youth political participation changes over time in the EU, but also on the variations in the effects of institutional variables on young people's involvement in the formal political process. Here, I discuss the findings in relation to the theoretical hypotheses presented in the thesis, noting how they sit with the existing literature.

Chapter 7 considers how three analysed dimensions of the institutional context (i.e. democratic experience, levels of corruption, and the type of electoral system) impact on the level of political participation for all individuals across EU countries and how these effects are mediated by the age of individuals. The findings offer insights on how the age of individuals matter for the effect of contextual variables on different forms of political participation. The chapter is structured in two sections. First, I explore descriptively the pooled ESS time-series cross-sectional dataset (2002-2016) including all age groups of respondents and highlight notable patterns in relation to age differences in propensity to vote, engage in formal political activities, and informal political activities. Here, youth political participation is compared to the political participation of all individuals. Second, to demonstrate how the effect of institutional variables varies by age, I analyse the results from the three-level multilevel logistic regression models and discuss the effect of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of all individuals to participate in politics. I analyse their effect on voting, formal and informal political participation. Here, I also look at how the effect of age is mediated by these institutional-level variables.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarises the conclusions of the thesis based on the findings of the empirical analyses. This chapter includes a summary of my hypotheses and how my findings relate to the existing literature and policy implications. This final chapter also considers the broader implications of the findings. Finally, the chapter reflects on limitations of the study, and any recommendations that might follow from this thesis, including suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 Conceptualising Political Participation

This chapter reviews the existing literature on political participation and presents a new conceptualisation of the term; as well as analyses current debates on the topic of youth political participation in the EU. My theoretical conceptualisation of political participation takes into account shortcomings and limitations of previous studies and accounts for different modes of political engagement. Here, I also outline different debates and generations of research presenting the main arguments so far in the existing literature on young people's (dis)engagement in politics.

2.1 Defining political participation

Definitions of political participation are still under-specified and there is a need for a new, coherent conceptual framework that explains the use of the term and fully accounts for political engagement nowadays. The term "political participation" is an ambiguous one and entails nuances. Therefore, this chapter contributes and enhances how the term "political participation" is conceptualised and I offer a definition that I use throughout the thesis. No universal definition of political participation exists, although studies of political participation employ similar explanatory approaches. Participation, its definitions, and measurements have traditionally been discussed in the literature with regard to political acts such as voting, party membership, campaigning and protesting. Particularly, the emergence of definitions of political participation as constituting actions beyond the traditional forms of political activities has spawned considerable discussions and debates. Verba and Nie's (1972) influential definition of political participation hinged on the notion that political participation is not only constituted in conventional acts such as voting and party membership, it also involves "communal activities" and acts that are intentionally aimed at influencing the government.

Building on this definition, a number of political scientists have interpreted, redefined and produced alternative definitions of the term (Booth and Seligson, 1978; Barnes and Kaase et al, 1979; Nelson, 1979; Parry et al, 1992; Verba et al, 1995; Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2001). Including non-traditional forms of political participation in defining and conceptualising the term has rapidly expanded, as a great number of researchers have developed and are still developing new ways to measure political participation (Inglehart, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Deth, 2001; Norris, 2003; Grasso, 2016). Typically, these measures were developed as part of definitions of both traditional and non-traditional types of political participation or alternative civic engagement. Such measures are also used to study the impact of political participation on democracy, as a criterion for assessing

the quality of democracy, and as indispensable feature of democracy (Cnudde and Neubauer, 1969; Dahl, 1971; Lipset, 1981; Almond and Verba, 1989).

Despite the prominence of "political participation" in the academic debates, a unified theoretical framework of the term is missing. Empirical studies exist in the area of diverse types and activities viewed as political participation in Western democracies (Verba and Nie, 1972; Norris, 2001; Teorell at al., 2007). Yet, these studies are confined to using specific aspects of participation that cannot necessarily be generally applicable, and thus, do not result in forming a general conceptual framework of political participation that can be applied to any democracy. A key question that arises then is: Are concepts with conventional and unconventional political participation indicators measuring the same general concept?

2.2 Explaining political participation

Despite the frequent use of the term in the literature and in everyday life, no universal definition of "political participation" exists. There are various conceptualisations of the term reflecting historically the time the term was studied. Political participation was commonly referred to as actions of voting or party membership, and campaigning, by early generations of political scientists (Berelson, 1952; Lane, 1959; Lazarsfield et al, 1959; Campbell, 1960). Verba and Nie (1972) challenged such definitions by introducing a new theorising of the term as the legal activities performed by citizens that aim at influencing the government. They rejected the perception that political participation is a one-dimensional phenomenon, but it is also about exerting political influence beyond electoral activities. Several scholars use the term to refer to extensive engagement of citizens in politics in various ways that do or aim to influence governmental decisions (Schonfeld, 1975; Norris, 2002; Marsh et al, 2007). With regard to contemporary days, however, political participation is frequently referred to as actions that are related to a wider civic engagement. This leads to an argument that political participation is often framed in broader terms, which do not always represent its true definition. The most common denominator of the wider concept of civic engagement is that it focuses on activities that are not necessarily perceived as political participation. For instance, the act of watching television is referred to as "civic engagement" but it does not constitute political participation (Van Deth, 2016).

Participation is a universal civic right, a crucial principle of a democracy and there is a strong link between participation and quality of democracy (Cnudde and Neubauer, 1969; Dahl, 1971; Lipset, 1981; Almond and Verba, 1989). If there are higher rates of political participation, there is a healthy democracy. One could argue that this notion of political participation has been a

condition for democracy. Going back to the seminal study of Verba and Nie (1972), better participation is associated with better democracy. Citizen engagement is a vigorous principle of democratic governance and levels of participation have consequences for democracy (Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012). Political participation, therefore, is of importance as it concerns ideal acts of democratic citizenship. There is a considerable conceptual stretching of the term, that while understandable, is detrimental to disciplinary progress, and this thesis aims to unpack political engagement in a more conceptually accurate manner.

The first sequential research that links with the evolution of political participation was in 1950s and viewed the time as the "Golden age" of democracy consisting of studies reporting high voter turnout. During that time, participation was all about voting, campaigning, and party membership. This time period was characterised by high demand of party memberships and higher levels of voter turnout than current days across democracies. The conceptualising of political participation focused mainly on voting as a political activity exercised by the citizens (Berelson, 1952; Lazarsfield et al, 1959). Specifically, when it comes to British politics, 1945-1950 was acknowledged as a "Golden age" period starting with the 1945 UK General Election, which identified the start of the "Golden age" of political engagement after the Second World War. During that period, turnout and party membership were extremely high as well as the support for the two main parties. On the other hand, some scholars refer to that time period as "Age of apathy" where "revisionist accounts of apathy, focusing on the prevalence of self-interest, cynicism and anti-party feeling evidenced in the press and opinion polls" (Moss, Clarke, Jennings, and Stoker, 2016: 442). It was argued that during that time, citizens were in dispense with party politics and were disregarded (Fielding, 1992). However, a research by Moss, Clarke, Jennings, and Stoker (2016: 456) presents findings that when it comes specifically to Britain, the "Golden age" was "golden" neither for political engagement nor for apathetic citizens.

A significant study during this period was Milbrath's (1965) analysis of political participation. He analysed questions about who participates in politics, why, and what are the characteristics of those who get involved in politics. Milbrath looked at political participation in terms of the individuals' characteristics, more specifically personality traits. Thus, people were active in politics depending on their social status and characteristics. In his study, Milbrath referred to activities such as voting, taking part in political discussions, contacting an official, attending a political rally, being a member of a party, donating, being a candidate for office etc., while placing these activities into a hierarchical pyramid. The process of moving up the hierarchy pyramid ladder was a subject to individuals' characteristics and understood in terms of thresholds. The hierarchical manner of conceptualising participation evolved around the perception that citizens engage in particular activities up to a certain threshold, which is inclined by one's sociability and socio-

economic status. Following Milbrath's framework, participation was influenced by people's sociability and socio-economic status. A main conceptual problem with Milbrath's framework is that it more or less suggests a hierarchy for the political actions, which was challenged later by Verba et al (1971). Several decades ago, there was an elite nature conceptualisation of political activities, as the citizens' own intentions became important in later days.

A related group of studies from late 1960s and 1970s analysed the "crisis of democracy" which was represented by protests connected with the rising political discontent in most Western European countries and the US (Trilateral Commission, 1975). Verba and Nie are among the most influential scholars of this period, who significantly challenged previous views and concepts of political participation and marked a new era in the research of political engagement. Political participation as a concept started to be viewed as the legal activities performed by citizens that aim at influencing the government (Verba and Nie, 1972). Here, the universal conceptualisation of the term from earlier studies as a one-dimensional phenomenon was challenged and new concepts were formulated to reflect the political period with exerting political influence gained beyond electoral activities (Booth and Seligson, 1978; Barnes and Kaase et al, 1979; Nelson, 1979). This conceptualisation of political participation lacks concerns about political engagement as a broader term in addition to voting, party membership, and campaigning. However, Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) suggested that citizens could participate beyond such activities "in-between elections" such as engaging in demonstrations, boycotts and protests (Barnes, Kaase et al, 1979; Kaase and Marsh, 1979). This line of research introduced the new conceptualisation of political participation defined as actions directed towards a broader form of civic engagement. The term was conceptualised by Barnes and Kaase et al (1979: 28) as "all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political systems".

When conceptualising a term, it is important to be as precise as possible, especially when it comes to a phenomenon that has no universal definition. Therefore, distinguishing and conceptualising what is exactly viewed as political participation in terms of legal and illegal is important for the empirical measurement of the concept. However, my study does not aim to focus on legal vs illegal political participation, but to define what is political participation exactly, therefore, positioning the concept of legality in political engagement is important.

"Illegal" could be viewed as "civil disobedience" which is a contentious piece of politics and is undertaken by groups that express their opposition to the law and policy via disobedience and unlawful acts (Smith, 2013). Authors argue that justified civil disobedience activities can be a

contribution to a deliberative democracy (Fishkin, 2009), and that such form of activism can play a crucial role in producing conditions for deliberative democracy (Talisse, 2005).

In developing a definition of political participation, Nelson (1979: 8) offered a more precise but broader way of doing so by suggesting that it is an "action by private citizens intended to influence the actions or the composition of national or local governments", where illegal and violent actions are considered as political participation. Nelson acknowledges legal vs illegal. At the same time, he suggests a central problem in establishing a concept that is having a broad definition that raises basic issues concerning appropriate criteria of political participation and appropriate standards for the formation and application of a certain concept (Collier and Adcock, 1999).

Nevertheless, while only traditional political acts such as voting, campaigning, or being a member of a political party described a person as politically engaged (Lane, 1959; Campbell, 1960; Asher et al, 1984), such a definition today would mean that a majority of young citizens are not politically active as these traditional forms of participation are not exclusive. Due to the emergence of alternative forms of participation, a new conceptualisation of the term is needed in order to reflect the social development of the time the term is being used. Undoubtedly, the study of political participation reflects social developments and can be mapped onto particular time periods as they reflect the particular conditions of successive eras. Consequently, a great deal of research from the 1990s onwards focused on broadening the scope of political participation to alternative political activities (Parry et al, 1992; Verba et al, 1995; Putnam, 2000; Norris, 2001). Moreover, showing a chronological and historical development of the phenomenon political participation is important as it acknowledges the differences in the perception of political participation, how it has evolved and how keeps evolving with time. Since 2000, a great deal of research focuses on various modes of political participation incorporating wider activities, which opens up the question of what is political participation and what is civic engagement?

2.2.1 Civic Engagement

If "political participation" is used to account for a diverse range of activities, it then becomes an impractical concept, as it would confuse more than it would illuminate. If a crucial issue in an established democracy has to do with the declining levels of "political engagement", as Pharr and Putnam (2000) argued, then it is necessary to be more specific about what is actually declining. At the most basic level, voting is a necessary outcome of the democratic political process. However, political engagement involves a large number of different activities. Adler and Goggin (2005) criticise Putnam's (2000) decision to include various activities (e.g. reading newspapers,

associations' involvement, social networks) when referring to civic engagement as they critiqued that Putnam avoided any explicit definitions of the term. Furthermore, Berger (2009) noted that any kind of social activities and political participation are viewed as civil engagement. As previous authors argued, Putnam's (2000) concept of civic engagement, covering everything from helping a neighbour to casting a vote, entails a substantial degree of conceptual stretching. Putnam's finding that civic participation has been declining does not transfer into that political participation is declining, as these are two distinguished concepts.

However, Putnam clearly distinguished that he is referring mostly to the so-called "social capital" concept where he emphasises the importance of social capital for the quality of democracies focusing more on engagement as a concept than the concept of political participation. Moreover, Putnam is critiqued for muddling "cause and effect, dependent and independent variables" which on one hand obscures further the enigmatic conceptualisation of social capital and civic engagement (Rubenson, 2000).

Teorell et al (2007) developed a refined definition of the term of political participation drawing on Verba and Nie's conceptualisation of political participation, which included actions or activities by citizens that are directed towards influencing political outcomes. According to Ekman and Amna (2012) this new definition is the most comprehensive and up to date one. It includes a wider typology than previous studies with five dimensions of participation activities: electoral participation, consumer participation, party activity, protest activity, and contact activity. They view this typology as a valuable contribution to the research on political participation featuring explicit focus of the term as a narrowed one and specifying activities covering mainly traditional forms of participation i.e. voting. However, as Erkman and Amna (2012) also note, Teorell et al's typology is not ideal as its measures of "protests" can also be associated with demonstrations, strikes and illegal activities, and they do not clearly distinguish that. In addition, a significant problem with this typology is that it does not cover forms of participation that are beyond voting and protesting, such as participating in local community affairs, supporting environmental issues, and forms of online political participation. Teorell et al fail to take such actions into account; however, on the other hand, it can be argued that such activities are not necessarily "political" as environmental activities are done for ethical reasons as well as a variety of civil disobedience activities. Even though people engage in the society in a number of ways, these activities are not necessarily political participation.

What is crucial at this stage is to identify which activity is not viewed as political participation. A key conceptual distinction that I argue is that those civil participation activities such as discussing politics; reading about political issues; recycling, are not acts of political participation. These are

considered civic actions that are not necessarily directed towards influencing the government/political system.

Acknowledging such shortcomings and understanding the differences between civic engagement and political participation is crucial when building a conceptual framework. Moreover, if one is interested in explaining and accounting for distinctive forms of political participation among different groups (e.g. in this study case: youth), such aspects of participation should not be neglected.

2.3 Refining the concept of political participation

What was perceived as political participation by the standards of an earlier period can be looked at as incomplete and misinterpreted by later periods. For instance, in early studies, political participation was used as a concept of voting (Berelson, 1952; Lane, 1959; Lazarsfield et al, 1959; Campbell, 1960; Verba and Nie, 1972). In contrast, later research on political participation started developing and evolving as a concept consisting of actions that influence or seek to influence the decision-making process through unconventional forms of participation such as protests (Barnes, Kaase et al, 1979). This coincided with a time of social unrest in the US and parts of Western Europe, where protest was on the rise. Subsequently, political participation started to be viewed beyond the acts of voting and protests and included new alternative forms of political participation that also aim at influencing the decision-making process (Parry et al, 1992; Verba et al, 1995; Norris, 2001). Furthermore, actions concentrated towards all political, societal, media or economic actors can be considered as "political participation" (Norris 2002; Teorell et al. 2007). However, such recent definitions of political participation thus tend to be wider in scope e.g. "action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes" (Brady, 1999:737) as well as Teorell et al (2007) even wider typology of political participation. Achieving sharper differentiation of what counts as political participation and what does not is an important step in creating a conceptual framework (Collier and Adcock, 1999).

2.3.1 Van Deth's theoretical framework of political participation

Van Deth (2001) develops a conceptual map offering a comprehensive explanation of what is political participation, but it does not fully represent the current state of the theoretical, conceptual and empirical understandings of the term. His theoretical framework does not fully provide room for complex political participation activities to be mapped onto his proposed strict categories (adapted in Figure 2.1). Political participation became more than just the traditional political activities such as voting. It consisted of diverse activities such as people being members

of political parties or different organisations, participating in a cultural organisation or activities, signing petitions, contacting politicians, protesting, etc. (Bourne, 2010). Van Deth (2001) summarises the expansion of political participation starting with voting and conceptualises it further. He analyses previous studies of political participation and differentiates between several major types of participation: first, the act of voting is a form of participation on its own; the second is campaigning; the third refers to contacting a politician; and the fourth refers to acts of protest. Van Deth suggests that participation is changing and expanding rapidly, and nowadays, it includes various activities, which are reflected in his participation framework adapted in Figure 2.1.

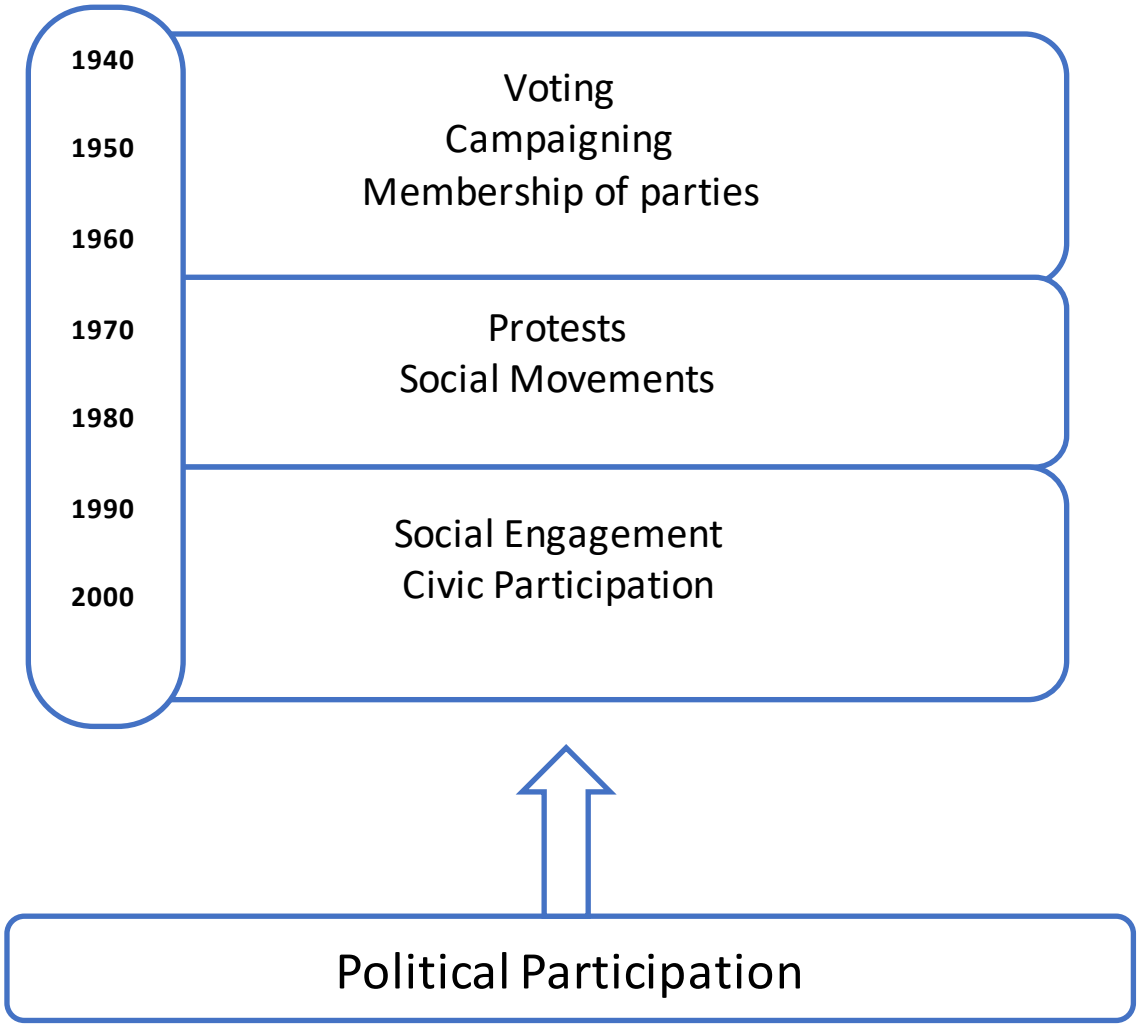

Figure 2.1 Political participation framework adapted from Van Deth (2001)

Van Deth's framework offers a useful basis reflecting on the conceptualising of political participation. With the evolution of modern society, political participation started to rebuild as a term and incorporated new activities within it. If I were to update Van Deth's framework, I would include use of online and social media in terms of emails, blogging, Facebook, Twitter and most recently, Instagram, used specifically by young people to express political opinions. Online and

social media have the ability to serve as a communication channel to an electorate, which is demonstrated in a considerable number of campaigns run over the past decade. A recent study by Harvey (2014) suggests that social media enhances young people's expression on cause-oriented politics based on customer behaviour.

2.3.2 Online Political Participation

Online activism is considered the latest innovation and addition to the expanding repertoire of participation activities. However, there is a debate whether such activities should be placed alongside repertoires of political participation (Gladwell, 2010; Fox, 2013; Zuckerman, 2014; Sloam and Henn, 2019). This innovation, however, has – to date at least - not become the norm in political participation studies. There are studies on the political activities on the Internet, online versus offline participation, and digitally networked participation (Christensen, 2011; Vissers and Stolle, 2013; Theocharis, 2015). Nevertheless, if digital participation IS a form of political participation, it needs to be further conceptualised or mapped onto the existing studies of political participation.

The Internet changed the way we communicate and share information and gave citizens the opportunity to engage with content and access it from everywhere in the world (Bennett, 2008; Dalton, 2009). For instance, data collected by Eurostat (Eurostat, 2010, 2014) indicates that about 50% of young people in Europe have used the Internet to contact public authorities in 2014 where this percentage has increased rapidly in the past four years. Obama first used social media in his 2008 presidential campaign as a platform for getting donations, volunteers, and mobilising voters (Edelman Research, 2009; Clayton, 2010). Since then it was used rapidly to mobilise citizens for political reasons (tuition fee protests in Britain in 2010 (Theocharis, 2010); the Arab Spring, 2011; the social-media-driven anti-government protests in Bulgaria, 2013 (Mckenzie, 2013)). Examples like these are prominent; however, the changes in political participation go beyond high-profile events. Murthy analyses Twitter in-depth and states that Twitter is associated with wide-ranging forms of socio-political activism, providing as an example the "Arab Spring'' movement (Murthy, 2013) and protest networks therefore create not only an online discussion. The Internet can also be used as a platform of mobilising voters and provoking engagement. The rapid evolvement of the Internet allows for a greater political communication and engagement among the political parties, candidates, other political actors, and voters.

Murthy (2013) also explains the action of observing one's profile. It is questionable whether or not following/liking/re-tweeting are engagement as this is one-way communication. I argue that in order to define an action as a political participation in terms of online political engagement, it

has to be a two-way communication. Paine (2011) defined engagement within social media as an action of a visitor that is outside the viewing and reading category, for example, commenting, re-tweeting, registering, sharing, posting, and etc. Ferber et al (2007) suggested that there are two key dimensions for understanding the use and impact the Internet has within politics (see Figure 2.2).

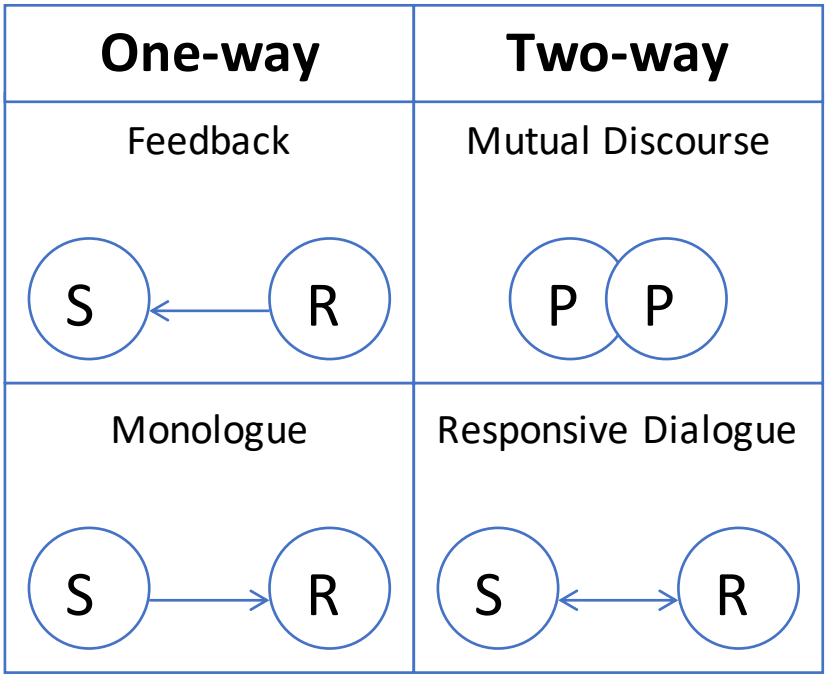

Figure 2.2 Adapted from Ferber et al., six-part model of cyber-interactivity (2007)

As Figure 2.2 shows, within the two-way model, the sender and the receiver have equal levels of control and communication is conversational (McMillan, 2002; Ferber et al, 2007). One cannot achieve this type of communication while watching TV for instance. Initially, the role of the media in political communication was seen as intermediary vehicles that reflected the public opinion, respond to public concerns and informed the electorate. This is not the case now, as social media provides much more than being a news platform, it is also a political engagement platform. Therefore, watching TV cannot be perceived as political action, while on the other hand having a conversation with a current politician or a MP online is a two-way communication and an online activity of political participation. Hence, it is not the accessibility that makes online participation conceptually distinct from conventional participation.

Referring back to Van Deth's framework, it encompasses a social engagement/civic participation category (Van Deth, 2001), however, it is not clear if this includes online activism, and if so, what type. The fact that the indicators of social engagement are not well-defined limits the extension of

the concept, and therefore, excludes some activities that are seen as of importance today and challenges previous conceptualisations of the term "political participation".

2.4 Political participation as a dependent variable

Distinguishing between a range of modes of political participation allows for a more coherent and comprehensive theoretical framework. In order to explore and analyse political participation, one first needs to clarify what is meant by the diverse modes of the term and what measures does it involve.

2.4.1 Multidimensionality of political participation

Political participation is seen as a multidimensional concept with different arenas of political engagement activities. Studies explored the multidimensionality of political participation (Verba and Nie 1972; Parry et al. 1992; Pattie et al. 2004), where some citizens are believed to engage more in one dimension of political engagement, and others choose to participate in another dimension. When researching political participation, one should explore its dimensionality and cluster political activities into more than just one dimension (Garcia-Albacete, 2014).

Research exploring political participation not only in relation to voter turnout has distinguished that the concept is a two-dimensional one where political participation is either traditional or non-traditional (Marsh 1977; Inglehart, 1990; Norris, 2002; Ekman & Amna, 2012; Grasso, 2016). Verba and Nie (1972) coined the classic distinction between "conventional" and "unconventional" political participation. They expanded the single form of voting into ten modes of political participation such as working in elections, persuading others to vote, being a member of a political party, fundraising, attending meetings, being part of informal or organised group, raising issue in a group, contacting a public officer, and voting. For instance, voting and party activism were considered as conventional activities.

In recent years, Norris (2002), who stated that the ways people choose to engage with politics have rapidly transformed, redefined this typology. For instance, in the past, the unconventional form of political engagement was perceived as a rebellious unacceptable behaviour against the state, whereas, nowadays, activities such as protest are seen as a form of political engagement and are widely spread amongst democracies (Putnam, 2000). In addition, the emergence and development of digital technologies also changed political participation. Conventional participation represents the traditional concept of political participation as voting or being a member of a political party (Mair, 2006), where voting is the most traditional and common method of political participation. Previous studies reveal declining levels of voting turnout across

many advanced democracies: Franklin (2004) shows that there is a decline in the turnout in established democracies. On the other hand, unconventional political participation is connected to the new social movements that came up in various Western societies in 1960s and the growth of the consumer politics in recent years (Norris, 2002). Social movements are identified as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in non-stop interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities (Tarrow, 2001:9).

Table 2.1 presents a comprehensive table of the arguments concerning what the concepts of "conventional" and "unconventional" participation cover according to previous research, where "conventional" politics is referred to as formal, and "unconventional" as informal. In the past, the "traditional" form of political participation was seen as the superior one consisting of voting and being a member of a party, whereas, recently, people join organisations, demonstrate, sign petitions, and engage in consumer politics (Grasso, 2016).

Table 2.1 Conceptualisation of formal and informal political participation

Traditional Political Activity	**Authors**	**Year**	**Measures**
Conventional participation	Dalton	1988	Voting; campaigning; attending meetings; work for party/candidate; contact officials;
"Elite-directed activities"	Inglehart	1990	Voting; party membership;
Civic engagement	Putnam	1993	Ranging from reading newspapers to participating in elections;
"Citizen-orientated political action"	Norris	2002	Voting; party membership; contacting a politician;
Political Participation (manifest)	Ekman & Amna	2012	Voting; non-voting or blank voting; member of a party; donating; activity within an organization (voluntary work or attend meetings)
Informal Political Activity	**Authors**	**Year**	**Measures**
Unorthodox political behaviour	Marsh	1977	Petitions; slogans; lawful demonstrations; boycotts; unofficial strikes; rent strikes; unlawful demonstrations; occupations; violence;
"Elite-directing activities"	Inglehart	1990	Social movements; petitions signing; boycotts; strikes; demonstrations;
"Cause-orientated political action"	Norris	2002	Bought products for political reasons; signed a petition; boycotted certain products; lawfully demonstrating; took part in illegal protest;
Parliamentary political participation	Ekman & Amna	2012	Legal: Boycotting; signing petitions; political leaflets; involvement in new social movements or forums; demonstrating; protests Illegal: civil disobedience; participation in violent demonstrations; violence confrontations with political opponents

Previous studies conceptualise differently political participation in terms of formal and informal activities. Scholars within their time period would have different explanations of what formal and informal participation consists of. A question that arises is whether we need a range of categories to differentiate political participation if it is all about whether someone is politically engaged or not (no matter whether it is voting or another repertoire of political participation). However, political participation can be a continuous term instead of a dichotomous concept. To answer this,

it is necessary to look at whether the conceptual descriptions fully correspond to the empirical ones.

Studies of political participation in Europe and the US generally employ similar explanatory approaches. Despite the differences between modes of participation, political scientists generally find that diverse ranges of independent variables are significant indicators of political participation. Previous empirical studies show that people who are involved in one type of political participation are more likely to be involved in another one as well. For instance, people involved in illegal demonstrations are also likely to be involved in legal demonstrations, but not automatically involved in voting (Barrett and Zani, 2015).

Scholars advanced a variety of activities to measure political participation as seen in Table 2.1. The activities related to a range of modes of participation are usually discussed as part of cross-national analyses. Alternatively, where scholars analysed political participation in only one mode, most work focused on voting as a measure of political participation.

There is extensive literature on voter turnout analysing individual countries and cross-national analyses. Voting is the most common form of political engagement. When researching political participation, a large deal of research looks at voter turnout. Systematic explanations of political participation and empirical testing are not a new development in the field of political science. As it was noted earlier, the first stages of empirical research on political participation began in the 1950s and 1960s, where political participation was defined as activities that associated with the conventional conceptualisation of politics, participation in electoral campaigns and party memberships (Lane, 1959; Campbell, 1960; Milbrath, 1965). For instance, Lane (1959) introduced one of the first groups of dependent variables commonly used in participation studies: voting, fundraising, group activities, contacting officials, and especially in the US, voting turnout was used to measure citizen engagement in politics.

Verba and Nie (1972) used the following four dimensions to measure participation: voting, campaign activity (being a member of a political party and organisations and donating money), contacting officials, and communal activities (involvement in groups that aim to influence social and political issues). This measurement of participation implies and forms perhaps the most comprehensive definitions of political participation including activities directed at influencing political outcomes. However, these measures could be viewed mainly as formal political activities, which do not necessarily cover the growing non-traditional forms of participation. Milbrath and Goel (1977) similar to Verba and Nie, also based their empirical contribution on dimensions of participation including voting, campaign activity, communal activity.

In the UK, Whiteley (2012) extensively empirically examined political participation in Britain drawing on the data from the 2002 European Social Survey. He measured political participation in terms of a range of activities: voting, signing a petition, political consumerism, contacting politicians, showing campaigns' materials, donating, lawful demonstration, working in political party, working in voluntary organisations, and being part of an illegal protest. These measures of participation do not fully capture the realistic evolvement of political participation in the UK (Fox, 2013). A major drawback of Whitley's conception of political participation is that he fails fully to address alternative forms of participation: the ones emerged from the evolved use of technology. The Internet is seen to have a great impact on the way people connect (Dalton, 2009) and Whiteley does consider the role of the Internet but fails to acknowledge measures of participation activities of the citizens through the Internet. It is argued that Whiteley did not provide a sufficient assessment of the UK citizens' participation in politics, and thus his conclusion whether or not participation is in decline is not truly valid (Fox, 2013).

As argued earlier, Putnam (1997, 2000) is an influential scholar in contributing to the debate over declining political engagement, focused on identifying and measuring participation as the act of "engagement". In his research, he covered a vast number of activities associated with participation: ranging from reading newspapers to associational involvement and argues that civic engagement has declined in the US. Putnam's empirical backing up of what is political participation, is not necessarily universal as it is actually not very precisely clear about what exactly "civic engagement" involves as conceptually assessed earlier in this chapter.

A more extensive dimension to measure participation was applied by Teorell et al (2007) who, as discussed above, developed a comprehensive conceptualisation of political participation and studied the term as referring to electoral participation, consumer participation, party activity, protest activity, and contact activity, where donating money, boycotting, political consumption, and signing a petition are features of consumer participation. Furthermore, its empirical research concludes that different forms of participation are related to one another. Citizens involved in one form of political participation are more likely to be also involved in other activities.

In summary, participation is empirically measured through a diverse range of variables. The empirical measures used in different studies of political participation capture the relationship between the concept and the variables. However, the measurements derived from the given indicators do not meaningfully interpret and fully apprehend the term "political participation" as a specific and identifiable concept. This is, nevertheless, because there is not a universal conceptualisation of the term. Studies ranging from distinctive time periods and diverse interpretations of civic engagement define the act of political participation alternatively.

However, it can be argued that based on the empirical findings and explanatory variables, definitions of political participation are under the restriction of what a particular political scientist studies and analyses. Moreover, research arguments and points are linked to the particular aims, context and choice of research (Adcock and Collier, 2001).

2.5 A unified conceptual framework of political participation

A systematic assessment and explanation of political participation requires a clearer specification of the scope of its definition and creating a conceptual framework. Explanations of political participation are still under-specified and there is a need for a coherent conceptual framework that explains the use of the term and fully represents politics today. The conceptualisation of political participation in the US and Western Europe resembles a patchwork rather than a coherent theoretical framework. Political scientists have used a number of measures of participation which are substantiated in individual studies that are not derived from one assumption about what is considered as political participation universally.

The review of previous concepts, definitions, and empirical studies demonstrates that political participation involves numerous activities: some are restricted to only traditional forms of participation i.e. voting and some of them are viewed as "civic engagement".

The conceptual framework I propose therefore builds on these activities and differentiates between modes of political participation. Hereby, my conceptualisation uses Verba and Nie's (1972) and Van Deth's (2001) framework as a central building block. The definition does not attempt to explain every single civic action but is limited to the explanation of the concept of what is considered political participation. It is not restricted to only traditional forms of participation but employs newly developed political engagement activities.

In the construction of a working definition, my conceptualisation of political participation defines the term as any lawful activities undertaken by citizens that will or aim at influencing, changing or affecting the government, public policies, or how institutions are run.

To be even more specific, my conceptual framework builds on the measures presented in previous studies (Verba and Nie Inglehart, 1990; Norris, 2002; Erkman and Amna, 2012) and it defines traditional political participation as activities related to the conventional forms of participation such as voting, being a member of a party, and campaigning. This represents the older studies' perspectives on political participation and thus assumes that there should be no inclusion of the newly established concepts of participation. However, I differentiate between voting and participating in formal activities such as being members of political party, contacting

politicians, campaigning. Voting is the most common act of political participation, therefore it should be analysed separately in order to allow to draw conclusions on determinants of voting behaviour, as well as to contribute to the literature on voter turnout.

Informal[2] political participation is defined as protests, demonstrations, boycotts, petitions signing, strikes, protests and online political activities, and I refer to such activities in this study as "informal" political participation. Even though some studies consider reading about politics, watching about politics on TV etc. as a political participation, I, however, exclude these activities from my definition of informal political participation as they are not considered as political participation (see Section 2.3.2). Online political activism is conceptualised as an informal political activity only if it is a two-way communication, such as tweeting to a politician, having an online discussion with a politician, or influencing politics via online platforms. Unlike reading a newspaper, these online activities are not one-way communication, but two-way communication as there is an interaction achieved through online political activities.

Undoubtedly, there are issues of endogeneity and conceptual problems when one thinks about the quality of democracy. This is also extremely important when it comes to conceptualising the term of political participation as precisely as possible.

Having explored and defined what political participation is, the next section of this chapter follows onto discussing youth political participation.

2.6 Young people and their political (dis)engagement

In this section, relevant debates in the existing literature on youth participation are discussed in order to (1) understand the concepts of youth political engagement; (2) conceptualise the phenomenon of youth participation; and (3) identify existing empirical, conceptual and theoretical gaps in the current literature on youth political participation.

This study focuses on the youth as a subgroup of citizens. Studying young people is extremely important for several reasons. First, young people are an important subgroup of the population, which has its own behaviour, characteristics, and attitudes whilst dealing with unique challenges. They are believed to cause disruption to the democratic stability in countries. The levels of political participation of young people are substantively lower than of their elders (Henn et al. 2002; Norris 2002; Russell et al. 2002; Franklin 2004; Pattie et al. 2004; Phelps 2005; 2012; Marsh

[2] I use the term "informal" to refer to "unconventional", "elite-directing", "cause-orientated" political activities.

et al. 2007; Jacobs et al. 2009; Dalton 2012; 2013; Sloam 2014). It is necessary to explain why this is so and determine what structures youth political behaviour. By understanding that, one can make advanced inferences about the apparent decrease in levels of youth political participation, as there are considerable disagreements in relation to the underlying reasons and explanations. Second, as other minority groups in our society, the participation of young people matters as much as any other group and should be worth studying and analysing. Each citizen should have their voice heard and represented and by studying young people, equality among all groups is promoted. Third, by studying young people, one does not only look into the present, but also into the future. Studying young people now, means looking into the middle-aged citizens of the future. Understanding the political characteristics and behaviour of this subgroup could inform about how communities will develop as young people age. Academics and politicians should take into account the possible implications of levels of youth political participation for representative democracy. Therefore, the concern about youth political engagement is a future concern regarding the functioning of healthy democracies. One of the most defining phenomena of democracy is political participation; without it, democracy would not exist in its current state. It is essential to understand what determines the political (dis)engagement of young people.

One of the issues of doing cross-national work is that the context of what is understood by "youth" can range in different countries. For instance, the United Nations (UN) defines youth as people aged between 15 and 24. The UN uses the terms "youth" and "young people" identical to refer to people aged between 15 and 24 (UNDESA, 2017). For the purpose of this study, the terms "youth" and "young people" refer to people aged between 18 and 24 years old as this is the general practice employed by election analysts in the UK (YouGov, 2018) and by academics studying the phenomenon of youth political engagement (Fieldhouse, Tranmer and Russell, 2007; Sloam and Henn, 2019). I acknowledge that the choice of what is a "young person" could be challenged, however, this age range fits perfectly the distinct cohort of first time voters, and at this age range, the electoral participation of citizens is more likely to be "habit-forming" and the decision whether or not to participate in politics could be a long-term one (Franklin, 2004; Sloam and Henn, 2019).

There is an immense difference between youth and general political participation across Europe. There are also major differences in the types of political activities undertaken by young people across the European countries, which have important implications for public policy. As Figure 2.3 reveals, youth political participation varies from overall political participation in the early 2000s. Citizens' engagement in politics is crucial for democracy, and participation in recent years has been declining rapidly. Young people are one of the largest disengaged groups in politics not only

in Europe, but in the world. Political participation is studied largely on a general level but not that distinctively on a youth level and this gap needs to be addresses and covered.

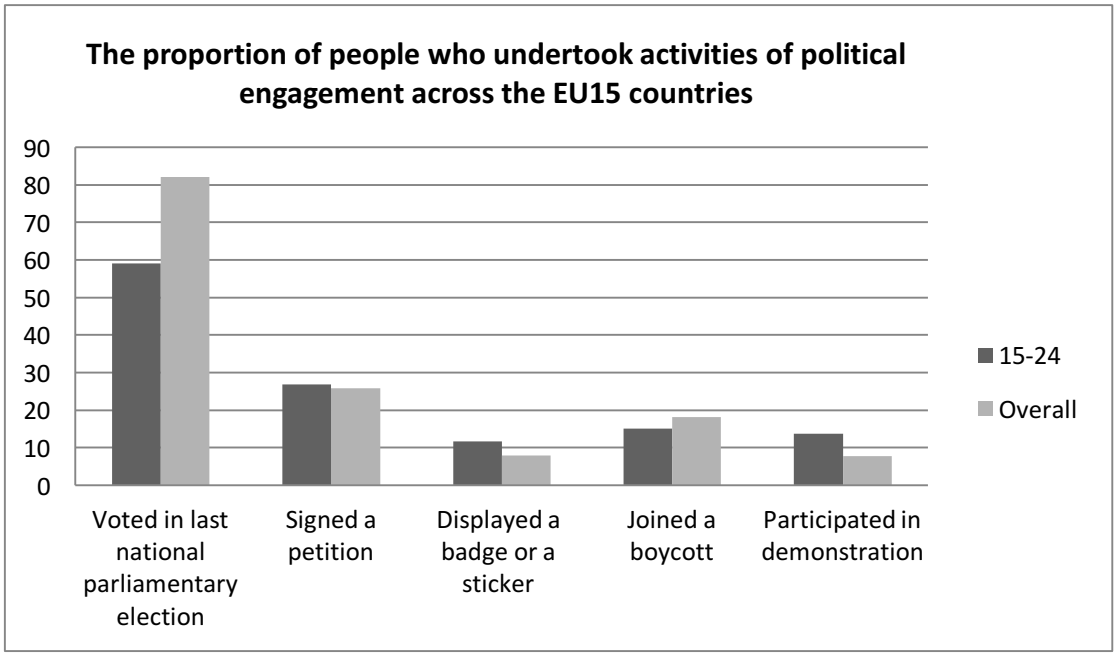

Figure 2.3 Adopted from Sloam, 2013 (European Social Survey cumulative data (Waves 1-4, 2000-2008)

There are evidences that the participation of young people in formal, institutionalised political processes is relatively low compared to older citizens across the globe (Norris, 2003; Hay, 2007; Farthing, 2010; Furlong and Cartmel, 2012; Henn and Foard, 2012). As Figure 2.4 reveals, voting turnout among young people in EUcountries has been declining further between 2011 and 2014. If one pauses for a second and accepts that youth political participation is in decline and, young people are increasingly disengaged from the political processes, then one should examine why young people are the least politically engaged age group.

Participation of young people (aged 15 to 30) in election at local, national and EU level by country (2011 and 2014 comparison)

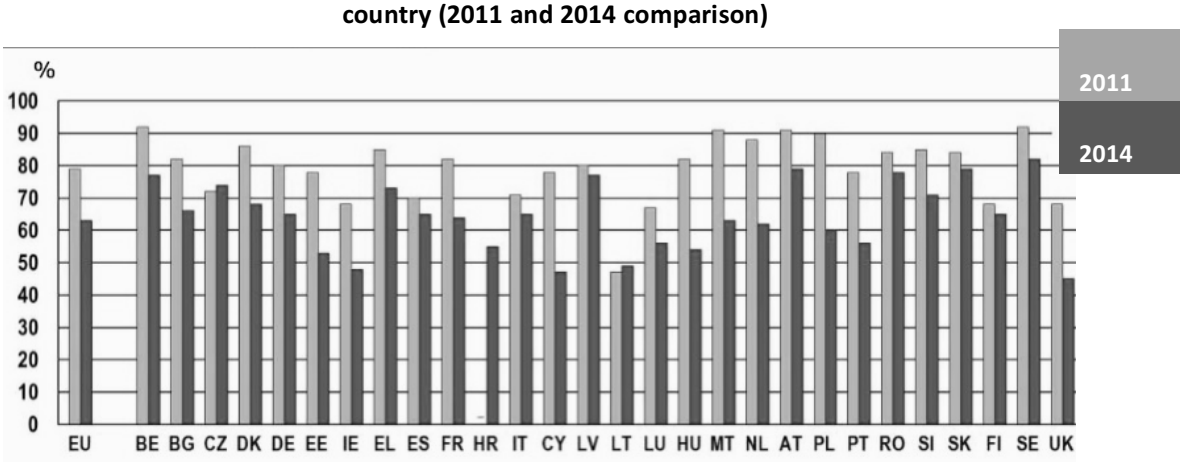

Figure 2.4 European Commission, 2015 (2011 Eurobarometer 319a; 2015 Eurobarometer 408)

Contemporary trends across European democracies indicate a deepening disconnect between citizens and democratic processes and institutions (Norris, 2011). Most apparently, such apathy is expressed during election time and more noticeably in today's youth, which should be a major concern of European politicians as lower levels of youth turnout are registering every year. Voting is one of the most important avenues for political participation and it is a clear example of the difference between the levels of political engagement between the youth and the other age groups. Voter turnout data across countries implies that the youth votes less than older citizens do. The situation is similar for party membership and leadership positions in political parties (Mycock and Tonge, 2012). As shown in Figure 2.3, young people were perceived to be more likely to participate in informal political activities such as protests, demonstrations, boycotts etc. Both conventional and unconventional political participation is valuable for a vivid and resilient democracy and it might be the case that it is crucial to bridge gaps between the two types of participation as well as between the percentage point difference between the "youth" and the "older citizens" who participate in politics, especially in formal political activities. In addition, the presence of young people in formal political processes is crucial from the start as their inactivity might have a destabilising effect on democratisation. Hence, I need to analyse in-depth the phenomenon of youth political participation.

2.6.1 Youth political participation in Europe

Scholars debate that a given research or measures might not have the same meaning when it comes to different subgroups of the population e.g. young people. It is, thus, interesting to explore whether/how/why concepts and measures of general political participation theories are informative for understanding and explaining youth participation, as well as discern how does the concept of political participation changes to address the youth.

Two main frameworks of debates regarding young people's political participation exist in the current literature. There is a debate about the declining levels of youth participation (Putnam, 2000; Stoker. 2006; Fieldhouse et al, 2007) as numerous studies reveal that there is a worrying decline in young people's participation in politics, especially when it comes to voting. On the other hand, some of the recent studies reveal that young people are not apathetic and disengaged, but they have turned to alternative forms of political engagement such as protesting, demonstrating, being part of organisations, signing petitions, volunteering, and engaging online (Norris, 2003; Spannring et al, 2008; Sloam, 2016).

2.6.2 Disengaged youth?

In recent decades, there has been a decline in political engagement in most European Union countries (Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Torcal and Montero, 2006; Norris, 2011; Papadopoulous, 2013; Allen and Birch, 2015). Given that, it is important to establish and position the research of youth political participation as a narrowed form of political participation.

The conventional wisdom that young people are less likely to vote dates back from research in the 1960s. Research analysing Western democracies studied and found that youth are the least likely to engage in elections (Abrams and Little 1965a; Mulgan 1997; Wilkinson and Mulgan 1995; Parry et al. 1992; Jones and Wallace 1992; Lansdown 1995; Verba and Nie 1972; Nie, Verba and Kim, 1974; Bennett 1997; Campbell et al. 1960; Hyman 1972; Baker 1973), and other West European democracies (Topf 1995; Milbrath and Goel 1977).

One of the main debates on youth political participation evolves around the declining levels of political engagement of the youth. Scholars are arguing that young people are apathetic and disengaged from the political process and the majority of them employ a concept of "political process" that involves participation in traditional political activities. Youth are seen to be less interested in politics and less likely to vote or become members of parties than any other age groups. Participation in political activities is seen to be in crisis, especially when it comes to young people and politics. Youth disengagement is still a major issue facing British democracy (Norris, 2003; Hay, 2007; Farthing, 2010; Furlong and Cartmel, 2012; Henn and Foard, 2012). This is a vital challenge facing not only Britain but other contemporary democracies as well, which is re-shaping electoral politics and the relationship between citizens and parties. Today, the youth are increasingly disengaged and disconnected from the traditional political processes in the EU, especially when it comes to voting (European Commission, 2001; Council of Europe, 2010). Moreover, young people are not only disengaged but it also looks like they are apathetic and even alienated from traditional forms of politics (Stoker, 2006; Hay, 2007). Main limitations of these debates are that they employ a narrow concept of political participation i.e. voting only.

Scholars studying traditional forms of political participation such as voting and party memberships find that the youth are disengaged from politics and there is a decline in youth political participation in Europe (Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Torcal and Montero, 2006; Norris, 2011; Papadopoulous, 2013; Allen and Birch, 2015). For instance, Fieldhouse, Tannmer, and Russel (2007) measure youth participation as engagement in elections in Europe and reveal that the turnout of people aged 18 to 24 is 21% lower than the other age groups in the electorate.

Unfortunately, such studies do not generally account for the newer forms of participation associated with political engagement. They, instead, use a dichotomous differentiation so that a young person either is involved in voting behaviour or is considered as being disengaged from politics. Typically, youth disengagement concepts fail to measure activities that are opposed to traditional forms of participation and are new forms of political participation. An accurate participation/non-participation of a young citizen can therefore not only be determined by the act or the missing act of voting. New forms of political participation that add to the activities that measure youth (dis)engagement in politics appear more precise and sensible and fully recognise a young person as engaged or disengaged. Dalton (2011) also critiques youth participation studies in terms of that some researchers have focused only on electoral behaviour when commenting on youth disengagement in politics and conclude that the youth are apathetic and disengaged, which is not enough to be a sufficient and comprehensive argument.

The 2015 UK General Election is an exact example of a "disengaged youth" with young people's turnout of 43%, and more than 25% of young people remained not registered to vote. Contradictorily, in the Scottish Independence Referendum when the 16- and 17-year olds were given the opportunity to cast their vote, the results showed that 89% of all citizens aged 16 to 17 in Scotland registered to vote, which indicates an exceptional case.

In another example, results from an EU funded MYPLACE survey in 14 European countries revealed that 42% of the respondents aged 16 to 24 reported to have an interest in politics (Tatalovic, 2015). Thus, it can be argued that the youth are not a politically apathetic generation but might be disengaged from the traditional political system and formal political participation. The arguments that the youth are disengaged and apathetic potentially lead to implying that young people are not willing to take responsibility and participate in the political life and can be looked at as "less than good citizens" if what makes a good citizen is participating in the democratic life (France, 2007). This, therefore, leads to depoliticising the youth and restricting their engagement in democratic life to traditional forms of political activities, failing to acknowledge that they are a different generation from their parents and grandparents and prefer to be politically active in other forms of activities as well rather than voting.

The British Social Attitudes report (2015) also revealed an important statement about the declining youth turnout as in 2013 only 57% of the respondents felt they have the duty to vote compared to 76% in 1987. It can be clearly recognised that there has been a long-term decline in young people's involvement in elections in most of the EU countries (O' Toole et al, 2003). These results are consistent with the conventional wisdom and debate that youth are disengaged from the traditional political system (Wring, Henn and Weinsten, 1999). If one accepts that youth

political participation is in decline and that young people are increasingly disengaged from the political processes, then one should examine why young people are the least politically engaged age group.

2.6.3 Life-cycle effect

A main explanation of youth disengagement in the literature is the so called "life-cycle effect" where age is perceived as to reflect life experiences prevailing during formative years. Young people were believed to be in a stage of their lives where participating in politics is not necessarily a priority.

A reason for the declining youth engagement in this view lies in the fact that the Millennials today lack the resources that other generations have accumulated through life because every group occupies a different social role (Martikainen, Martikainen, and Wass, 2005). However, such differences would potentially disappear with time as the youth grows older and they perceive higher levels of education, have a stabilised place of residence and are fully integrated into the community (Zukin et al, 2006). The reflection of the life-cycle stage in young people's lives has a crucial bearing on their engagement in the political life (Verba and Nie, 1972; Parry et al, 1992). In opposition, Kimberlee (2002) argues that the life-cycle effects cannot be perceived as the only adequate approach when explaining lower participation. He analysed the 2001 UK General Election and why young people do not vote at general elections and concluded that there are at least four approaches for explaining youth non-participation such as youth focused, politics focused, 'alternative value', and generational approaches. However, the life-cycle effect is a sustainable and straight to the point reason explaining youth lower levels of participation. In contemporary days, the lives of the youth generation are changing rapidly and are very different than those of previous generations. Their transition to adulthood has become delayed as they stay longer in education, enter full-time employment later and create a family later (European Commission, 2009). The life-cycle effect was also suggested to account for protest activity among young people as they were associated with rebelling against status quo (Abrams and Little, 1965; Barnes et al, 1979).

However, taking into account the view that the life-cycle effect accounts for low levels of political participation among young people, then how come that the new generation of young people is still less likely to vote than previous generations? This is where the shift started pointing more and more away from life-cycle effects as main explanation of low youth turnout towards generational differences and research on the cohort effects.

2.6.4 Generational differences

Another explanation for lower youth turnout is the "generational effect" that youth participation is subjected to and previous research indicates that recent generations are less likely to be politically active than previous generations of the same age (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) studied political participation and concluded that the civic engagement of US citizens was higher during 1900s to 1920s but started to decrease among the generation who were born between the world wars, and then with the post-war generation or the "baby-boomers", and then with the Generation X (born 1965 -1980). There has been a long-term generational trend away from electoral politics.

Previous research has confirmed that young people are less likely to vote than their elders, and Millennials are more politically inactive in comparison to previous generations (Henn et al., 2002; Norris, 2002; Russell et al., 2002; Pattie et al., 2004; Phelps, 2005; 2012; Sloam, 2007; Marsh et al., 2007; Jacobs et al., 2009; Dalton, 2012; 2013; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Martin, 2012; Sloam, 2014). In addition, Millennials are also less likely to be members or engage with political parties (Russell et al., 2002; Henn et al., 2005; Martin, 2012; Mycock and Tonge, 2012).

It is argued that a distinctive social experience of a generation plays crucial role in political participation (Bennett, 1986; Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Van Den Broek, 1996; Van Deth and Elff, 2000). Since the 1990s, findings suggested that there is an existing cohort effect where younger cohorts were less likely to vote than previous cohorts (Miller and Shanks, 1996; Burgess et al., 2000; Vowles, 2004).

In more recent times, scholars analysed generational changes and argued that there is a cohort-based decline in levels of political participation, not only when it comes to voting but untraditional political activities as well (Putnam, 2000; Wattenberg, 2012; Grasso, 2014). In her work, Grasso (2014) analysed cohort effects in traditional and untraditional political participation across Europe and suggested that Millennials were the least active generation in any type of political participation, be it formal or informal. Similarly, Wattenberg (2012) suggested that the Millennials are less likely to engage in untraditional politics than previous generations. They were viewed to be more politically active in informal politics due to the rapid spread of such activities nowadays. For instance, findings suggest that the Millennials are more engaged with volunteering than previous generations (Roker and Eden, 2002; Henn et al., 2005; Fahmy, 2006; Zukin et al., 2006; Wattenberg, 2012; Dalton, 2013).

2.6.5 Apathy and alienation

Political apathy is another prominent explanation of low levels of youth political participation in the formal processes. Young people were alienated from politics as politicians were not addressing issues and concerns of the youth (Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995). As politicians do not represent young people's interests, they become alienated. Henn et al (2005) suggested that the British youth were alienated from formal politics. Alienation from formal politics could be associated with higher engagement in alternative forms of political activities as young people orientate themselves to influence the decision-making process via informal activities (Dalton, 2013; Sloam, 2014).

2.6.6 Alternative youth political participation

The emerging discourse on the debate of youth political participation looks at the youth as not being apathetic but being involved in politics in new ways. While the previous debate perceives apathy and alienation as characterisations of the youth; here researchers seek novel ways to adapt to the changes caused by the increased pace of socio-economic change and the increased relationships' complexity between citizens and government (Tsekoura, 2005). Therefore, new types of political activities replace the conventional political activities (Henn et al, 2002; Henn et al, 2005; Marsh et al, 2007). More specifically, Henn and his colleagues (Henn et al, 2002) examined young people's political participation and marked a turning point in research about young people's participation in politics, where they concluded that the youth are 'a generation apart' i.e. "a distinct political generation, who had developed a habit of low electoral participation relative to their predecessors" (Fox, 2015:4).

Studies on youth participation suggested that young people engage in non-traditional modes of political engagement (Norris, 2003; Spannring et al, 2008; Sloam, 2013). Political participation is evolving in order to adapt to the new political realities (Norris, 2002). The traditional political participation activities are being replaced by informal political activities, and young people engage more in informal political participation.

The younger cohorts are disengaged from traditional politics; however, they have turned towards issue-based political activities. Young people are believed to have interest in politics and are often influenced by single-issued politics (Mort, 1990; Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995; Henn and Foard, 2012). In addition, Amna and Ekman's (2014) suggest that young people are politically engaged when an issue is highly relevant to them. A study by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) suggested that participation has increased when it comes to petitions, boycotts and demonstrations. Similarly,

Dalton (2017) shows that levels of informal political activities such as protesting, signing petitions, political consumerism, online activism, are high.

Norris (2002; 2003) highlights active youth engagement in respect to alternative forms of political participation and suggests that young people are not ebbed away in apathy, but they are choosing other forms of politics that are not traditional and seem more meaningful to them (Spannring et al, 2008; Sloam, 2013). Norris contributes to the current debates arguing that when it comes to "cause-orientated" politics (identified as informal activities such as signing a petition, boycotting, lawfully demonstrating, taking part in illegal protests), the youth are more likely to get involved than their parents and grandparents, which is in contrast with the numerous conclusion drawn by several authors that young people are apathetic. The youth has not become apathetic, but they are engaging in informal political activities and there is a broadly linear pattern "among successive cohorts in every type of European society, suggesting a persistent generational shift, with important implications for representative democracy" (Norris, 2003: 16).

When it comes to the "non-traditional" forms of participation, one of the arguments in the current literature is that young people are more likely to engage than their parents and grandparents (Norris 2003). These theoretical expectations are forming the new generation of research on young people's participation in politics. One organising idea here is that young people feel excluded from the traditional political system (O' Toole, Marsh and Jones, 2003) resulting in recent changes in the way they can engage in politics (Harries, Wyn and Younes, 2010; Henn and Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2013). However, all of the new debates can lead to questions regarding whether these new forms of participation are replacing the traditional political activities, which as identified earlier are crucial to the quality of democracy. So, a main weakness within the second set of arguments on youth participation is that it does not fully acknowledge to what extent can the newly emerged increase in informal political participation compensate for the pre-identified decline in young people's electoral behaviour.

A recent study by Harvey (2014) suggests that social media enhances young people's expression on cause-oriented politics based on customer behaviour; protest networks therefore create not only an online discussion but also give the opportunity to mobilise the youth and provoke engagement. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, the evolved use of social media speeded up the process of political mobilisation and is a cost-effective participation platform (Bimber et al., 2005). Reuters Institute (2017) recently showed after analysing 36 countries that the number of people using social media as a source for news has increased rapidly since 2013. Informal political activities seem to be a "better fit" for young people and their preferences in relation to political

engagement, as signing a petition online is seen as more attractive than a promotional political activity related to a political party (Sloam and Henn, 2019: 25).

Sloam (2014) found that as there is a decrease in formal youth political engagement and increase in informal youth political participation apparent in Europe and the US; there are existing national differences, e.g. young people in the UK having lower levels of informal political engagement than young people in Germany.

Garcia-Albacete (2017) analyses youth political engagement in institutional and non-institutional participation in 17 European countries. She found that young people were less likely to engage in institutional participation and more likely to engage in non-institutional forms in 2002. There is a consistency of this result and she suggested that this could be due to young people's characteristics, as opposed to differences in the national cohorts. In addition, looking at young people with the same level of political interest were still less likely to engage in formal and more likely to engage in informal politics in 1974 and in 2002. Garcia-Albacete concluded that "new cohorts were found to be neither more critical nor more alienated from political institutions than earlier cohorts" (Garcia-Albacete, 2017: 224). The author also found that political interest and party identification showed as strong predictors of conventional and non-conventional participation.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter critically examined the different concepts of what does political participation mean, and the multidimensionality of the concept. The literature about political participation shows a general lack of consensus, which contributes to difficulties in measuring and explaining levels of participation. Recent work has created a conceptual stretching of political participation that incorporates new informal modes of political participation. This chapter contributes and enhances the way political participation is theoretically framed.

While most researchers can agree that youth participation in formal political processes has been declining, there is little research into the country-level influencers of such decline. This survey of the literature has identified existing empirical, conceptual and theoretical gaps in the current literature on youth political participation and shows the need for a more systematic, empirical investigation of the influence of contextual factors on youth political participation

This chapter focused on the dependent variables of my study in terms of political participation, which laid the ground for the independent variables and explanatory factors explained and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Existing explanations of political participation and towards an institutional theory of youth political participation

This chapter examines and conceptualises the factors in the existing literature related to political participation, categorised into four micro- and macro-level factors: individual; economic; cultural and social; and institutional. The first section of this chapter reviews these most prominent explanatory factors and outlines which country-level characteristics are analysed in this study as determinants of political participation. The second part of this chapter argues that political participation is determined by the institutional context within which each individual engages (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978). Democratic experience, levels of corruption, and type of electoral systems all present individuals with conditions that shape their choice to participate or not participate in politics, and how to participate. To incorporate the role of that "institutional context" into an explanatory model of political participation, this chapter presents an institutional theory of youth participation arguing that the institutional setting of a country structures levels of youth political participation across the EU and accounts for variations in rates of political participation. Then, this chapter deduces specific hypotheses regarding how the proposed dimensions of the institutional setting of countries are expected to affect young individuals' propensity to engage in electoral, formal, and informal participation.

3.1 Explanatory factors of political participation

What explains varying levels of youth political participation? The previous chapter offered an overview of the existing research into youth political participation concluding that a clear consensus regarding the (dis)engagement of young people in politics is missing. Research into the institutional-level characteristics as drivers of youth engagement is underdeveloped in the existing literature. Based on the established research of institutional drivers of voter turnout, I test whether this holds when specifically analysing EU countries and young people.

For the purpose of this chapter, I categorise the existing literature into four main factors that are studied to account for variations in the levels of political participation. First, a large and growing body of literature has investigated individual-level characteristics such as socio-demographic characteristics and individual resources as main determinants of political participation (Verba et al, 1995; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces, 2010; Nagler, 1991; Roseston and Hansen, 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; McVeigh and Smith, 1999).

Such factors have been studied in relation to young people as well and are a prominent argument in the existing literature (Henn and Foard, 2014). Second, the existing literature on external drivers of political participation is extensive and focuses particularly on socio-economic factors being crucial predictors of political engagement (Nannestad and Paldam, 1994; Lewis-Beck, 2000; Wlezien, 2005; Singer, 2011). Third, for many years, literature on the sociological and cultural group of factors cites them as important explanations of political participation (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 2002). Fourth, there are number of large cross-national studies which suggest that institutions account for variations in levels of political participation (Powell, 1986; Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2002; Blais 2006; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Solt, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Dalton and Anderson, 2011).

3.1.1 Individual-level factors

A great deal of previous research into determinants of political participation has focused on individual-level characteristics. There is a large volume of published studies describing and investigating the role of individual-level characteristics on citizens' political behaviour, where individual-level characteristics are studied as main determinants of political engagement (Verba et al., 1995; Norris, 2002). One of the most established models in terms of individual-level determinants of political engagement is the socio-economic status (SES) model highlighting mainly the role of income, social class, and education as crucial determinants of electoral participation. Numerous scholars (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba et al, 1995; Tenn, 2007; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces; Sloam, 2012; Holmes and Manning, 2013) argue that individual-level resources influence whether or not citizens participate in politics and how they participate. The obvious reasons include education, income, age, gender, social class etc. and personal resources such as time, capacity and psychological motivations. In addition to those variables accounting for variations in individuals' political participation, the life-cycle model argues (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Kimberlee, 1998; Highton and Wolfinger, 2001) that age is another crucial variable accounting for participation as citizens get older, their interest in politics increases and so does their willingness to participate in politics, and with age individuals become more politically engaged.

Overall, studies related to individual-level drivers of political participation highlight that citizens who are more resource-rich, have higher social class, are better educated, and with a higher income, are more likely to participate in politics (Parry et al., 1992; Verba et al., 1995). Particularly, when it comes to youth participation in politics, education and social class have the most bearing on young people's political engagement (Tenn, 2007; Sloam, 2012; Holmes and Manning, 2013; Henn and Foard, 2014). Another line of argument that is prominent in the

literature is that the length of time a person has been in full-time education appears to have a huge impact on their political behaviour (Flanagan et al, 2012).

It is important to acknowledge that there are more existing explanatory models in the current literature related to individuals' characteristics such as the structural availability model, the rational choice model, the resource model (Verba & Nie, 1972; Whiteley, 1995; Franklin, 2004). In summary, the individual-level explanation of political participation is one of the most established and dominant frameworks as evidences are ample that such characteristics have a direct impact on levels of political participation (Nagler, 1991; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba et al, 1995; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces, 2010) and youth engagement in politics on a national scale as reported in several studies (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; McVeigh and Smith, 1999; Henn and Foard, 2014). However, such a model could not possibly account for country-level characteristics and explain why levels of youth political participation vary across countries.

3.1.2. Country-level factors

Any research study that aims at determining explanatory factors of political participation should take into account not only individual-level characteristics, but also contextual ones as well as differences in the contextual settings of a country would have a direct and diverse impact on political participation, especially when it comes to comparative research. In such voting related research, cross-national variations could be explained by cultural, economic, political, and institutional factors (Crepaz, 1990; Freitag, 1996, 2005; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Wernli, 1998; Franklin, 2002; Norris, 2004).

An existing argument in the literature is that contextual factors can cause differences in the way young people participate in politics, and is empirically tested in recent years (Fieldhouse, Tannmer, and Russel, 2007; Grimm and Pilkington, 2015; Soler-i-Marti and Ferrer-Fons, 2015; Sloam, 2016). Political context matters when it comes to engagement in politics (Grasso, 2016), and "the political context at the time of socialization was a very important influence in itself" (Grasso et al, 2019: 211). It is plausible to suggest that growing up in a certain context and environment would make young people become politically engaged or disengaged depending on their cultural settings (Snell, 2010). Vrablikova (2010) demonstrated that political context has to be taken into account not only for theoretical reasons but also because as empirical findings show country-level variation in individual political participation exists.

Factors that are not related to the individuals' characteristics can be classified as external factors. There are various ways of conceptualising the external factors that influence political participation (Powell, 1982; Kostelecky, 1994a; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998). I first review the most prominent contextual factors in the current literature on political participation before outlining and distinguishing the contextual factors that I will focus this study on. I review contextual factors in terms of three main categories: a) economic, b) socio-cultural, c) political institutional.

a) Economic factors

Economic development is studied to be positively related with political participation as the higher a democracy's level of socio-economic development is, the higher the rate of electoral participation in that country is (Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Siaroff and Merer, 2002).

A seminal theory here is the modernisation one, which presents a widespread and obvious explanatory framework describing the occurrence of democracy referring to socio-economic developments. An influential analysis conducted by Lipset (1963) is one of the earliest and most comprehensive studies arguing that growing wealth, urbanisation, industrialisation, and education are crucial social foundations for democracy and political participation. In a more recent cross-national study, Przeworski investigated the mechanisms allowing a democracy to succeed covering 135 countries and reports that the propensity of a healthy functioning democracy is highly dependent on economic and institutional development. (Przeworski et al., 2003; Przeworski, 2008). Economic development appears to be the strongest predictor of political interest in Europe as analysed by Van Deth and Elff's (2004) multilevel analysis of the Eurobarometer surveys (1978-1998).

It is evident in previous literature that there is a strong relationship between a country's economy and levels of participation (Powell 1982; Nannestad and Paldam, 1994; Lewis-Beck, 2000). Although examining the economy as an external factor is justified by its significance to voters, this may vary between individuals, countries, and electoral contexts (Singer, 2011). Moreover, referring back to Lipset's arguments and findings, they failed to explain why countries such as Brazil and Taiwan fail to sustain a democratic political structure even though they experienced rapid economic developments. As I focus on EU countries, there are existing differences in economic development between the member states but compared to international differences there are substantially more similarities in terms of their economic development than with many non-EU countries.

b) Cultural norms and values

Inglehart (1997) and Norris (2004) are among the most influential studies of culture as a determinant of political engagement. In the existing literature, seeking to contextualise drivers of political participation, attention is paid to cultural factors such as norms, habits, trust towards the government and the political institutions, political interest, political efficacy etc. Such theories and arguments mainly emerge from studies on social capital (Putnam, 1993). The influence of culture is central in such theories stressing on the argument that individuals' propensity to participate or not participate in politics is a habit (Norris, 2004), which is believed to be acquired early in life and reinforced via experiences within a cultural context. This leads to the socialisation aspect of citizens' life. A socialisation process is identified as a major contributing factor to involvement in political activities as growing up in such a context that you have an opportunity to collect and distribute information and opinions on politics within your community, family, and friends enhances political engagement (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Liebes and Ribak, 1992; Bettin Lattes, 1999; Flores, 2001). In addition, levels of voter turnout are empirically investigated to be higher for citizens who grew up in an environment encouraging political discussions, whose parents are politically active, and in schools fostering political discussions (Hahn, 1998; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001).

In the same tone, Inglehart (1997) notes that a "supportive" cultural setting legitimating the democratic system, where citizens of the society have certain norms and rules, needs a stable economic and democratic system. He measures culture as interpersonal trust, institutional trust, memberships in organisations and well-being, and how they relate to the economy and democracy. Inglehart concludes that culture is crucial for a stable democracy. A recent study by Bryan et al (2011) examined the social aspect of voter turnout with personal identity and concluded that citizens' behaviour can be driven by social acceptability by shaping one's identity. This can be applied to young people easily through the impact of social media. When Furlong and Cartmel (2011) studied youth participation in traditional politics using the 2010 British Election Survey, they aimed comparing political attitudes and involvement amongst four generations, who grew up in different social and political environments. Their study found that there is a "duty to vote". This all suggests that participation in formal politics is rooted in social class cleavages and collectives, where cleavages are weakly expressed nowadays (Bryan et al, 2011).

Easton and Dennis defined political socialisation as a "developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour" (1969:7). One of the stages of political socialisation identified by Easton and Dennis referred to the process of recognising the political institutions e.g. legislature, judiciary etc. The different environments that individuals

socialise in create their attitudes towards politics. The socialisation process influences regime support in early ages by creating orientations towards the state. Besides, socialisation is important as individuals develop orientations towards institutions and this structures their future political behaviour and could lead them to become either engaged or disengaged citizens.

4) Political institutions

Formal and informal institutions should be distinguished from other contextual factors such as economic ones (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011). A prominent existing argument in the literature focuses on institutions as determinants of political participation. Particularly, when it comes to voter turnout, political institutions and institutional characteristics are studied at a great extent (Powell, 1986; Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2002; Blais, 2006; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Solt, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Dalton and Anderson, 2011). Smets and van Ham (2013) refer to institutional models of voter turnout as models, which explain variations in electoral participation by the institutional and political context of a country. Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) also claimed that political participation is hindered by the institutional context within each individual engage. Other seminal studies in the existing literature point to institutions as important drivers of levels of participation. Powell's (1986) comparative influential study laid the grounds for institutional factors as determinants of turnout. He found institutional variables positively related to voter turnout by examining 20 countries between 1960 and 1980: compulsory voting, proportional electoral system, and voter registration. Similarly, Jackman's (1987) and Jackman and Miller's (1995) comprehensive studies investigated also institutional factors in industrialised countries and confirmed the already identified variables by Powell to have effect on participation. The first systematic study of institutional settings, focusing beyond highly developed democracies, was by Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) who focused on 324 elections between 1972 and 1995. The main implications of their empirical research were that turnout was higher in less populated countries, where there is a PR electoral system, there is compulsory voting, and the minimum voting age is 21. As Norris (2003) notes, the likelihood of electoral participation is higher in countries with Proportional Representation, small districts, infrequent elections, and competitive party systems.

So far, the institutional factors are proven predominantly significant determinants of voter turnout (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Lijphart, 1997; Franklin, 2004; Norris, 2004). Especially, following the tradition of neo-institutionalism, this perspective perceives institutions as the "rules of the game" that can empower particular actions and at the same time prevent others. Specially, institutions operate in terms of formal rules and norms that can enable, provoke, or constraint individuals' actions (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1995; Immergut, 1998). In voting studies, institutional

research shows that there are possible institutionalised barriers that correspond to participation in elections (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2004).

Voter turnout is reported to be higher in economically developed countries with longer democratic experience, high levels of freedom and high literacy rates (Solt, 2008). Political institutions are extensively studied as a main cause of variations in voter turnout (Powell, 1986; Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Norris, 2002; Blais 2006; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Dalton and Anderson, 2011), but not when it comes to young people. In addition, the effect of the institutional context on unconventional participation has not received much attention (Dalton, van Sicle and Weldon, 2009). This is an unexplored argument that this study addresses and fills in the existing gaps in the current literature.

Scholars have different perspectives about political participation. There are multiple causality mechanisms related to the phenomenon of political participation. However, for the purpose of this study I focus on institutional-level factors. After acknowledging the existing most prominent school of thoughts and arguments in the current literature, I argue that what accounts for variations in levels of youth political participation across countries are the institutional features of each country. This thesis contends that the variation in levels of youth political participation is explained by the institutional setting of a country, where institutional-level characteristics are main drivers in shaping levels of youth political participation.

3.2 Towards an institutional theory of youth political participation

This chapter seeks to improve the understanding of institutions as explanatory factors of youth political participation by developing a theory of determinants of youth political participation that emphasises the explanatory power of institutional factors. Later on, I test the set expectations in this chapter by analysing that particular phenomenon in regard to youth political participation. In constructing my theoretical argument, I build on relevant studies from the current literature starting with the seminal study of Almond and Verba (1963) on political participation in different countries. This chapter argues that dimensions of the institutional setting of a country should be explored. This chapter identifies how the three proposed dimensions of the institutional setting of a country are significant determinants of the way young people participate in politics. My theoretical argument is that variations in levels of youth political participation in the EU are a result of existing differences in the three analysed fundamental dimensions of the institutional setting of a country in this study as presented in Section 3.2.1: age of democracy, presence of corruption, and type of electoral system. My explanation for the varying levels of youth political participation across countries is that the institutional setting within which individuals are situated

matters and structures their participation in politics. In particular, I make the claim that youth electoral participation is likely to be higher in advanced democracies with low levels of corruption and a proportional representation electoral system. I approach the problem of youth political participation in politics beyond the established political participation models and argue that institutional factors account for different levels of youth political participation.

As identified in Section 3.1.2 of this chapter, several country-level characteristics identify as crucial drivers of patterns of political engagement across countries. Among the existing empirical studies of political participation and its variations across countries, perhaps the most rigorous factors are the experience of democracy and economic development. Such studies and arguments can date back to the modernisation theory predicting that democracy and education increase with economic wealth (Welzel et al, 2005). However, despite each country in the EU being democratic, there are still existing and crucial differences among those countries, which modernisation theory fails to explain and account for.

In order to keep this study focused and narrowed on the institutional setting of a country and its influence on a diverse range of political participation modes, I test my theoretical expectations laid later in this chapter by analysing variables that account for political institutions and institutional-level characteristics. Research focused only on individual-level variables puts too much weight on the socio-demographic factors and deprives analysis on how institutions or the "rules of game" are important (Norris, 2007). This leads to arguing that institutional variables interact in distinctive ways for each country and individual (Franklin, 2004). The current literature that deals with young people's political participation needs to bridge the gap between micro- and macro-level factors and test institutional-level explanations of youth participation, as up to date research on youth engagement in politics has focused mainly on the individual-level characteristics.

3.2.1 Institutional Setting

When it comes to a cross-national comparison, institutions matter as stable dimensions because they define constraints and opportunities for individuals' behaviour in their settings and vary across countries (Diermeier and Krehbiel, 2003). "Institution" is a key concept in political science research employed in numerous ways by various authors. Institutions are often described as "rules of the game" that empower particular actions and at the same time prevent others (North, 1990). Specially, institutions operate in terms of formal rules or norms that can enable, provoke, or constraint behaviour (Mayntz and Scharpf, 1995; Immergut, 1998). Institutions are also described as norms, rules of behaviour, and collective actions (Shepsle, 2006; Rhodes, Binder, and

Rockman, 2008). This study asserts a more fundamental role for institutions in societies; they are the underlying determinants that account for the levels of participation among young people in the EU. Within the institutional setting of a country, there are dimensions of the decision-making setting that are regarded as essential to understanding political behaviour.

The presented existing research in the previous section acknowledges the premises for institutional determinants of political participation and shows the need for a more systematic, empirical investigation of the influence of contextual factors on youth political participation, which is done based on three dimensions of the institutional setting of a country. The first dimension represents democratic experience as a characteristic of the political system and captures the length of that experience as crucial. Age of democracy is a measure of how consolidated institutions are in a country. The second dimension I consider captures levels of corruption across different countries, and it is a consequence of institutional symptoms of how well institutions in a particular country work. The third dimension belongs to formal institutions and looks at the type of electoral system within a country.

This thesis examines the extent to which levels of youth political participation are influenced by the three dimensions of the institutional setting of a country. The causal mechanism underpinning my theory is a multiple conjectural causation (Braumoeller, 2003), where X1 and X2 produce Y. And in order for Y to happen, there are necessary and sufficient conditions. For instance, only the combination of X1 and X2 is believed to have a causal impact on youth political participation. In addition, the impact of changes in X1 on Y depends on X2 and vice versa.

The main focus of this thesis is age of democracy as a driver of youth political participation, which presents an important contribution to the existing literature on youth political participation. I expect that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are its young citizens to participate in politics (Almond and Verba, 1963; Howard, 2002; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015; Kitanova, 2019). These theoretical expectations are further developed in the next section with accompanying hypotheses.

Regardless of the type of institution, be it formal or informal, the institutional approach to explaining levels of political participation is different to the individual-level ones. In an institutional-level framework, a key is that different institutions exist depending on the age of democracy, where post-communist countries have “peculiar institutions, which are rooted in communism and shape subsequent political behaviour” (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011: 381). To be more specific, the authors considered that having institutions in newly developed democracies that emerged from the communist period, can have an influence on citizens’ political behaviour

nowadays. Moreover, post-communist countries had to "build democracy from scratch", which lead to a possible suffering of the quality of their political institutions (Fish, 1995).

Democratic institutions, once implemented, create an environment that socialises citizens within the norms of the democratic system, implying that through the democratic experience, individuals have loyalty and certain habits. A large body of literature argued that voting is a habit (Campbell et al., 1960, 92; Plutzer, 2002; Gerber, Green, and Shachar, 2003; Franklin, 2004). The historical context of newly established post-communist countries and advanced democracies has a potential influence on the political behaviour of individuals situated in these countries. The long-term functioning of democratic institutions gradually creates a democratic political culture (Mishler and Rose, 2001), and through the democratic experience in a country, individuals develop loyalty and certain habits (Jackman and Miller, 2004). In post-communist countries, the democratic experience is new; therefore, there would not be necessary developed habits of voting.

The paragraphs below present the causal mechanisms of my proposed theoretical framework, justifications, and I embed my theoretical expectations in the existing literature. Institutions are defined here as the relevant settings, which create conditions that lead to an outcome (participation in politics) via causal mechanisms (Falleti and Lynch, 2009). Even though age of democracy, corruption, and electoral systems are interlinked and influence each other, each of them supplies mechanisms about how it can stimulate or discourage youth engagement in politics.

3.2.1.1 Age of Democracy

The expectation that age of democracy influences youth political participation builds upon one of the most influential study of political participation of Verba and Almond (1963), more recent studies in the current literature arguing that long-standing, well-established democracies have higher levels of political participation (Howard, 2002; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015; Kitanova, 2019), and on prominent arguments that post-communist countries have different political engagement (Bernhard and Karakoc, 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012). Countries that have gone through the transition to democracies not that long ago would have different political characteristics and historical trajectories to advanced democracies. I argue that examining in greater detail the democratic experience of a country is a crucial building block to understanding what are the country-level determinants of political participation.

Democratic experience is analysed as the number of years a country has been a democracy. There will be similarities between advanced democracies, and respectively among new democracies. An argument in the literature is that participation is lower in post-communist countries compared to established democracies when it comes to traditional politics (Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Letki, 2013). Young people in Europe are socialised differently towards distinctive aspects of political participation. Through the democratic experience, individuals develop loyalty and certain habits (Jackman and Miller, 2004). Countries with similar historical trajectories will have similarities of the process of how a young person goes through life and develops their political beliefs and behaviour.

In post-communist countries, the democratic experience is new. This makes parties, partisanship, and electoral behaviour not necessary based on family and social groups or even social traditions, which actually reinforce participation in advanced democracies (Dalton, 2016). The probability of a newly democratised country to be corrupted is high. Corruption matters as it is fundamental for the relationship and the experience an individual has with state institutions, and how they perceive state institutions since early years. Democratisation causes lower levels of corruption. There is a strong causal link between wealth, democracy and corruption as in wealthy countries, there are incentives to control corruption (Heywood, 2014); while on the other hand, respectively, corruption is higher in not so economically stable countries.

A study by LeDuc, Niemi and Norris (2010) found that there is a positive relationship between the age of the party system and the number of partisans in a country. Their study reported that feeling closer to a party is less likely to occur in a post-communist country. The situation differs in new democracies where people learn how to participate in politics, political parties running for elections are newly formed, and partisanship is less likely to exist. All of these make it difficult for citizens to identify with a particular party, and at the same time to participate in politics in new democracies. Building on this, I discuss whether age of democracy applies to political participation as well, which is also a learned behaviour. An expectation here is that the long-term functioning of democratic institutions will gradually create a democratic political culture (Barry, 1978; Mishler and Rose, 2001). Then, as a logical consequence, the relationship between age of democracy and electoral participation should be positive.

Age of democracy has been discussed for a long time (Lipset, 1959; Converse, 1969; Inglehart, 1988; Almond and Verba, 1989). A recent study by Novy and Katrnak (2015) analyses the influence of democratic maturity on the propensity of citizens to vote by exploring 27 countries. They expected differences in the impact of factors that account for turnout explanations in established democracies in comparison to new democracies, where “In established democracies,

as we would expect, there are experienced agents of political socialization and the atmosphere is more favorable to values congruent with democracy. People learn to believe that their political engagement can foster change" (Novy and Katrnak, 2015: 2). The findings of their study imply that individuals in long established democracies are more likely to vote. I test the common argument made in the literature that advanced democracies experience higher levels of political participation when it comes to young people (Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Letki, 2013; Kitanova, 2019).

In an important work, Converse (1969) highlights that age of democracy influences party attachments, as partisanship takes time to root. Developing partisanship is more challenging for new democracies. Here, Converse's argument (1969) is extended beyond the partisanship context. When it comes to political participation, age of democracy may also have crucial impact on political engagement in elections. The seminal study of Almond and Verba (1963) report that a set of political orientations foster democratic stability. Their study also concluded that a large number of citizens in the UK and the US believe that they have high levels of obligation to participate, whereas Germans, Italians and Mexicans do not necessarily have the same extent of obligation to participate. It is evident from their study that the norm of being an active citizen in a society is prevalent among advanced democratic countries such as the UK and the US.

Almond and Verba (1963) laid the ground that norms together with existing opportunities to participate in a country could underline and account for the high levels of political participation in one country and the low levels of participation in another. For instance, in countries such as Italy or any newly developed democracy, there is a lack of opportunity to participate and there is a lack of existing norms in that society. Similar to the UK and the US, citizens in advanced democracies are motivated by the norms and political opportunities in their country to participate in politics. However, young people would have been in the system for less time than older people, therefore socialisation into the democratic system is crucial. I argue therefore that young citizens in advanced democracies would have a greater sense of obligation to be active in the political life of their country, and the opportunities to participate in politics are higher in advanced democracies.

Democratic experience directly affects the propensity of voting. It is reasonable to assume that in countries with longer democratic experience, people will experience great social pressure for electoral participation. I acknowledge that young people will have been in the political system less time than older people. Therefore, their socialisation into the democratic system would be more important than norms and habits formed throughout a whole life experience (which is something more crucial for older people). Being socialised in a country with developed and existing political culture and vibrant civil society affects the youth democratic socialisation process. Therefore, as

socialised differently in distinctive lengths of democratic experiences, I expect young people in established democracies to be different from not only young people in new democracies, but old people in new democracies as well[3].

Building on prominent arguments in the literature, I test the expectation that established democracies have higher voter turnout in relation to young people. Consequently, with an increase of the age of democracy, individuals will be more likely to vote. These assumptions then lead to the following hypothesis:

H1: The longer the democratic experience, the higher the youth turnout.

Individuals who have participated in elections are more likely to engage in other formal activities as well as they have already developed a habit to be actively engaged in the traditional forms of political participation. Studies show that young people are generally the least likely to vote or join a political party when it comes to post-communist countries (Szczerbiak, 2001, Fieldhouse et al., 2007). Therefore, I hypothesise:

H2: The longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young individuals in advanced democracies to participate in formal political activities.

There is an existing deficit in civic participation of post-communist countries (Howard, 2003). Additionally, Howard suggests that dissatisfaction with the political and economic system can lead citizens to withdraw further from public activities, and I address this point in my final hypothesis regarding age of democracy. Two influential authors of research on post-communist countries (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012) show that there is a post-communist participation deficit. They find that there is a greater demobilising effect of communism and suggest that it is important to distinguish post-communist countries from other ex-authoritarian countries. To be more specific, their analyses revealed a statistically significant participation deficit of post-communist countries such as Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia in comparison to Austria, West Germany, and Italy. Pop-Eleches and Tucker's study reveals that greater exposure to communism

[3] I test this in Chapter 7.

is associated with lower civic participation. Even though young people[4] did not necessary experience communism, they are yet socialised in a time of great political, social, and economic pressure and could be argued inherit certain behaviour patterns. Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993) suggested that shorter democracies might provide citizens with fewer opportunities for civic participation, and thereby this creates lower citizen engagement, which is suggested in other studies focusing on young people only as well (Robertson, 2009). Bernhard and Karakoc (2007) found that protests are not developed in post-communist countries when compared to established democracies. Previous research reports that rates of protest are lower in newly democratised countries than in established democracies (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998).

Moreover, it could be argued that in established democracies, where parents had experience with informal politics such as being involved in protesting, demonstrating, and petition signing for a long time, could have an influence in driving such political actions among younger people as well (Cross and Young, 2008). Building on previous studies, theoretical expectations, and findings, I hypothesise that:

H3: The longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young individuals to participate in informal political activities.

Democratic length influences participation, but a key aspect is that even within countries that have similar democratic experience, there are differences in levels of political participation due to differences in other dimensions of the institutional setting. It is not only about one dimension that determines youth participation, but a combination of several that interact differently with each other and account for variations in young people's political behaviour. All in all, only a comprehensive consideration of various factors reveals the range of conditions, which presumably affect levels of youth political participation across the EU. The expected causal relationship between the suggested determinants of youth political participation are presented in terms of equations and tested empirically further in this thesis.

It is important to acknowledge that there could be a potential effect of wave democratisation theory (Huntington, 1991), however this thesis does not focus and analyse different waves of democratisation. The process of democratisation is a continuous one, where consolidation of

[4] Depending on in which year one would analyse young people.

democracy is qualified by previous studies as "consolidating" "new" once the chance of reversal is extremely low (Gasiorowski and Power, 1998), which is about after six democratic elections, which corresponds to around 20 years of democratic experience (precisely calculated at an average of 18.3 years (Kostelka, 2017)). The probability of a democratic breakdown is drastically reduced after that period of 20 years (Svolik, 2008; 2015). The time-series cross-sectional dataset I employ in Chapter 6 allows me to test my hypotheses in terms of whether or not the 20 years' democracy mark has an influence on the results.

Because of the nature of the post-communist countries, for instance, newly established democratic countries will be more inclined to blame political parties and the government for the spread and presence of corruption (Chiru and Gherghina, 2012). Countries with shorter democratic experience are more likely to be highly corrupted and this will decrease trust in institutions and the political system, leading to increasing alienation, apathy, and dissatisfaction with formal processes.

3.2.1.2 Corruption

The second dimension of the institutional setting of a country captures a measure of existing levels of corruption in a country. I explore how the presence of corruption in a country influences the propensity of young individuals to engage in politics. It is expected that presence of corruption corrodes citizens' trust in the political system, which leads to general cynicism, distrust and apathy among young people (Rothstein and Stolle, 2008; Dahlberg and Solevid, 2016). Previous research reports that corruption alienates voters and decreases turnout (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015).

This argument requires further empirical testing as the existing contributions suffer from methodological and empirical challenges when explaining the relationship between corruption and political participation. For example, existing contributions rely largely on voting as a type of a political activity based on which a rather broad conclusion of the influence of levels of corruption on political participation in general is derived. As shown in Chapter 2, political participation is characterised by being multidimensional and consisting of a wide range of political activities, not only the traditional electoral participation. As such, an accurate and reliable analysis of the influence of presence of corruption in a country on the levels of political engagement should take into account all modes of political participation with the maximum possible precision and division.

Presence of corruption is crucial for democratic stability (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Warren, 2004; Dahlberg and Holmberg, 2014). The presence of corruption within a country can affect in

two possible ways youth political engagement. One possible common mechanism through which corruption may affect participation and increase it is that in highly corrupted environments voters can become more mobilised to participate and create change (Karahan al., 2006, Kostadinova, 2009; Escaleres et al., 2012). In such an environment, citizens might feel more motivated as they can use the ballot box to punish corrupt individuals and "clean up" the country's political system. Another approach for exploring the institutional mechanism by which corruption affects political engagement is that high levels of corruption decrease turnout as the corroding of the political system leads to cynicism, distrust, voter apathy and alienation among citizens (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015). A mechanism by which this might be the case is that corruption takes a prominent account for making citizens feel they have no power in influencing the political system as the decision-making process operates in a corrupted way. Stockemer (2013) found a negative relationship between corruption and voter turnout covering 70 presidential elections. It is widely known that Eastern European countries experience higher levels of corruption and lower levels of political participation. Countries that experienced the post-1989 democratisation process are associated with high levels of corruption among government officials and institutions. For example, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia are the most corrupt states in the EU (European Parliament Research Service, 2016). The cases of post-communist states fighting corruption are numerous. The political systems created in the post-communist countries allow for establishing clientelistic relationships and existing corruption on all levels. Moreover, due to the corrupted juridical system, the crimes of corruption remain unpunished and uncontrolled (e.g. fighting corruption in post-communist countries is on top of the EU agenda).

In countries with high levels of corruption, in voters' minds, each political party that enters the Government becomes corrupted. Consequently, I expect that presence of corruption in a country will increase the chances of ineffective and unfair delivery of what its citizens are lawfully and democratically entitled to, leading them to become politically disengaged. If younger citizens feel alienated from the political system this may lead to a decreased interest in politics, becoming less politically knowledgeable, feeling less able to influence political outcomes and more distrustful of political institutions, therefore less likely to participate in politics.

If corruption increases distrust in citizens, this could be particularly relevant for young people who are already evidenced to trust politicians the least. Therefore, young people will be even less likely to trust political parties in a highly corrupted environment and this will drive disengagement in politics. This in turn could make young people see no point in being politically active given high levels of corruption as I would expect this to prevent rather than encourage youth participation (British Council, 2009). If a country has a corrupted nature of politicians and political parties,

citizens then become more disengaged from the political system due to such perceptions. In a country where politicians acquire votes in a corrupt manner e.g. by buying votes or illegal party financing, this then is likely to have an impact on citizens' political participation in elections.

If corruption reflects negatively on the levels of trust among citizens towards political parties, government, and democracy in general, this therefore causes apathy among voters. Young people as explained in the previous chapter are referred to as apathetic and alienated from the political process. Having corruption on top of that will further decrease their trust in the political system and respectively generate even more apathy and alienation and will contribute to and create a disengaged young generation. Plausibly, the rationale of a citizen to cast a vote in a highly corrupted country is different from the one in a low corrupted country. I argue that the presence of corruption within a country suppresses youth turnout as levels of political distrust are higher and young citizens believe that their political actions cannot achieve change or affect the government. In line with existing comparative research, turnout is lower in countries with high levels of corruption, thus, I expect the relationship between corruption and political participation in general to be negative in countries where there is a prominent presence of corruption. But very little is known in the current literature about the implication of corruption on youth political participation. Therefore, I aim to fill in this empirical gap in the existing literature.

The next two hypotheses follow as:

H4: High levels of corruption decrease youth turnout.

H5: High levels of corruption decrease youth participation in formal political activities.

Findings reveal that there is a strong and negative relationship between corruption and political participation, where high levels of corruption decrease the likelihood of political engagement. (Dominguez and McCann, 1998; Simpser, 2005; Kostadinova, 2009; Stockemer et al, 2012). Engagement in non-traditional types of political participation is generally at an extremely low level in post-communist countries (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998, Mudde, 2003, Howard, 2003, Vanhuysse, 2004).

Even though young people are believed to have orientated themselves towards informal political participation (Norris, 2003; Harries, Wyn and Younes, 2010; Henn and Foard, 2012; Sloam, 2013),

high levels of corruption in a country would have an effect on informal participation. Young people are still expected to engage in informal politics as numerous studies have found, however, young people situated in countries with high presence of corruption are expected to engage less in informal politics than their counterparts in countries where corruption is not of a big presence.

It is expected that young people exposed to corruption to be less politically active in informal politics than their counterparts in low corrupted countries. In newly established democracies, where levels of corruption are higher, previous research found that individuals are likely to have higher levels of distrust in the democratic institutions than in advanced democracies (Linz and Stepan, 1996, Mischler and Rose, 2001). Reasons for low levels of trust in politicians include high levels of corruption (Mischler and Rose, 2001; Rose and Munro, 2003). Consequently, young people could feel disconnected from the political process and alienated from formal political processes, which leads to young people choosing to exit political participation altogether. Robertson in her study of youth political participation in Romania and Poland finds that the presence of corruption can "block" youth political engagement in both formal and informal activities (Robertson, 2009). In addition, she suggests that high presence of corruption and clientalism within a country make younger citizens feel they have no power over the decision-making process and against authorities. This could lead to young people becoming totally disengaged from political participation in countries with high presence of corruption, as they would feel their act of participation is meaningless, unless they are willing to engage in corrupt practices as well (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 2002). Therefore, corruption is expected to decrease informal political participation among young people.

Therefore, I hypothesise that:

H6: High levels of corruption are expected to lead to decrease levels of youth participation in informal politics.

Having argued the main expectation in this thesis regarding the influence of high levels of corruption, I acknowledged earlier in this sub-section that there is a counter argument[5] where in highly corrupted countries voters can become more mobilised to engage in politics and create change. Regarding *informal political participation*, the counter argument could be that young people in highly corrupted countries would seek alternative activities to engage in politics and be more active than individuals in countries with low levels of corruption.

3.2.1.3 Electoral Systems

As participation varies across different electoral systems (proportional vs. majoritarian systems), an additional explanatory dimension of the institutional setting within a country that I explore is the formal institution of electoral system. The theoretical expectations for the effect of electoral systems on youth political participation are relatively straightforward. Previous research suggests that systems that are more proportional are associated with higher levels of political participation (Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Powell Jr, 1980, 1986; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Blais and Carty, 1990).

Electoral systems can account for variations in levels of political participation and there are several reasons why I expect for electoral systems to affect youth political participation. First, voting impact is clearer within some electoral systems. Having an apparent impact motivates people to vote and makes them feel their vote counts without being "wasting", which is crucial. Support for this idea is found in numerous studies (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). Second, it is more likely that smaller parties might reflect the interests of young people as research has suggested, they are more engaged with single-issue politics.

For instance, in PR systems, smaller parties are not likely to be excluded and they could represent young people's interests specifically (e.g. Pirate Party in Iceland; Podemos in Spain). However, a country with a first-past-the-post electoral system tends to exclude such small political parties from being competitive. In addition, in PR systems, more political parties take part in the process of voter mobilisation (Jackman, 1987; Koopmans and Kriesi, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998).

In addition, complicated electoral systems can serve as institutional barriers and thus reduce voter turnout (Campbell et al., 1960). Electoral systems possess various characteristics such as

[5] While I do not formulate a counter-hypothesis, I recognise that there is an alternative theoretical perspective.

compulsory voting, which has an impact on turnout where the effect depends on the rules and restrictions not only when it comes to general public but to youth voter turnout as well. For example, in the 2009 European election, voter turnout for people aged 18 to 24 in Belgium was 97% compared to Poland where it was 12% (IDEA, 2018). The empirical evidences regarding the impact of electoral systems on levels of voter turnout are mixed. A prominent argument is that one should expect that PR systems would enhance voter turnout (Lakeman, 1974; Powell, 1980). On the other hand, results show that the effect between Proportional Representation and turnout has not proven to be predominantly robust. For instance, Powell (1980) concludes that there is no significant effect of electoral systems on voter turnout. Blais and Carty (1990) reveal an effect of PR on voter turnout but their outcome relies on having dichotomous variables for four out of twenty countries. Siaroff and Meyer (2002) concluded that turnout is higher in polarised two-party systems and countries with a high level of party membership. Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) argue that PR increases turnout, but their results are only marginally significant, and the main conclusion is that turnout is only 3% higher in PR systems. Such weak findings are partially due to insufficient attention to measurement and sampling issues. Therefore, before testing the effect of electoral system on youth turnout, one should reflect on what measures studies employ to test whether electoral systems matter for political participation. To be specific, the majority of such studies employ aggregate-level data. As shown recently, there are evidences that aggregate-level turnout measures are mismeasured (Mellon et al, 2018). It is argued that such errors in measurement overdo effects of institutional explanations of voter turnout. Therefore, even though it can be looked at as a limitation that I am analysing only 13 countries, as some of the studies analysing institutional variables employ between 10 and 30 countries, I am looking at individual-level data, and my analysis is free of the issue of aggregate-level analysis.

Age of democracy and electoral systems are argued to account for variations in political participation simultaneously. For instance, Netherlands is an old democracy and has high levels of political participation and it has a PR system. France is also an old democracy but has lower levels of political participation than the Netherlands. A possible explanation here that can account for existing differences in levels of political participation is the type of electoral system. At the same time, Sweden and Croatia have both PR electoral systems but experience different levels of political participation. Two possible explanations in terms of the institutional setting can be as follows: the differences in the democratic experience of both countries, and the existence of high levels of corruption in one of the two countries.

Electoral laws and regulations can either encourage or discourage young people to actively participate in politics. For instance, youth voter turnout is higher in countries with no registration prior to voting e.g. in the 2016 Icelandic Parliamentary election, voter turnout for people aged 18

to 24 was 66.5%; and respectively in the 2014 Swedish General election was 72.4% (IDEA, 2018). Electoral systems can differ in various ways such as ballot structures, assembly size, open versus closed lists, and especially the electoral systems' structures that control the proportion of votes against seats. Types of electoral systems reviewed in my study therefore take into account the varying nature of the European electoral systems: Majoritarian, Proportional Representation (PR), and Mixed.

Building on existing literature, I argue that PR electoral systems will create institutional incentives for voters to act in particular ways. For instance, having a PR system means that young voters might participate more in the political process as it is perceived as a fairer system where no votes "go to waste" and citizens feel more incentivised to participate as each vote can result in democratic representation of their interests. PR electoral systems usually go together with a higher number of political parties, which thus increases the variety of choice available to citizens. PR electoral systems create greater competitiveness since parties have more incentive to achieve their best engagement with all voters—including youth—in order to get the highest number of votes. In non-PR systems, lower levels of turnout can be explained by the assumption that citizens who do not support political parties that have high chances of winning elections, do not participate at all (Powell, 1982).

A fundamental aspect of party politics is that there is a relationship between electoral systems and party systems. For the purpose of my study, I focus on electoral systems, as it is the conventional wisdom that electoral systems influence party systems as the well-known Duverger's law argues that the plurality-rule types of elections such as FPTP favour two-party systems while PR systems lead to multipartyism (Duverger, 1954). In countries with PR electoral systems, there is a higher number of effective political parties (Cox, 1997). On the basis of Dueverger's law (1954), I assume that citizens who have more options to choose from in terms of political parties will become more politically active and motivated to vote. The probability of youth participation in elections to be higher exists if there is a PR system as there will also be more political parties to choose from, and in most cases, citizens can reasonably find a party which best suits their beliefs. This is in the line with the predominant argument in the literature that a higher number of political parties increases voter turnout as there are more alternatives to choose from and there are more parties that take part in the process of voter mobilisation (Jackman, 1987; Koopmans and Kriesi, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998). More importantly, the higher number of political parties gives citizens more channels how to influence politics and increase alleged chances for success due to a lower decisiveness of coalition governments (usually formed in multiparty systems).

In majoritarian systems, especially, young people would be more likely to be discouraged to participate in elections as their vote would not necessary count and make a difference. For instance, in the 2017 UK General Election, despite the remarkable youth turnout, the number of young citizens' votes still could not swing the election's results. Then, 62% aged 18 to 24 voted Labour with 12,878,460 votes in total resulting in 262 seats versus the number of differences in votes for the Conservatives being less than 1million but resulting in them being the party in power (Ipsos MORI, 2017). The highest demographic age group voting Labour was the 18 to 24-year olds (Huffpost, 2017). Another example from the 2015 UK General Election indicates that around 4 million people voted for UK Independence Party (UKIP) resulting in the party gaining 1 seat, whereas at the same time, just under 1.5 million citizens voted Scottish National Party (SNP) resulting in SNP reaching 56 seats (Guardian, 2015). This example shows how unrepresentative a FPTP electoral system can be and how it can discourage citizens to vote by giving the feeling that your individual vote will not count or make a difference. After illustrating the difference between a majoritarian and a PR electoral system, I hypothesise that there are higher levels of youth political participation in countries with PR electoral systems. This implies that:

H7: Youth turnout is higher in countries with PR electoral systems.

Individuals situated within PR electoral system are therefore more likely to vote than individuals in majoritarian systems. Given that PR electoral systems are expected to boost youth electoral participation, then it is also expected to increase engagement in traditional political activities in general such as party memberships, contacting officials etc. having developed participating in traditional political activities. This informs the following hypothesis:

H8: Formal youth political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral systems.

Following from expectations discussed above, individuals become active in the democratic processes in a country as youth are encouraged through electoral laws to cast a ballot and thus empowered to engage in other political activities as well. This implies that young people are more likely to engage in informal activities in PR systems.

Testing whether a PR electoral system has an effect on levels of youth participation in informal activities, this study hypothesises that in PR electoral systems there are more opportunities to engage with politics, and more political parties to mobilise political participation among all age groups. Therefore, it is expected and tested in this study against empirical evidences in Chapter 6 whether young individuals become more active in informal political participation too when situated in a PR electoral context.

As hypothesised in H7 and H8, young people who feel that their votes are wasted in non-PR systems would choose to opt out of traditional forms of political participation. This, on the other hand, could lead to an exit from the political processes in general as they would feel that their action would not make a change overall.

H9: Informal youth political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral systems.

Even though, in previous studies, electoral systems alone explain political participation of citizens in general, young people are a distinctive age group (as discussed previously). I argue that there is a complex causation when it comes to institutional factors determining youth political participation as the outcome results from several conditions.

3.3 Conclusion

To sum up, Table 3.1 graphically represents the institutional theory of youth political participation, developed in this study, which shows that political participation is all about the institutional arrangements of particular country-level features that interact in different ways and construct levels of youth engagement.

My institutional theory of youth political participation is illustrated in Table 3.1 as an institutional setting's typology (multidimensional typology). I conceptualise the influence of the institutional settings of countries by looking at levels of political participation, types of political engagement, and the institutional features. The overarching concept that is measured by the typology is levels of youth political participation. The raw and column concepts are cross-tabulated to form a 2x2 matrix.

Table 3.1 Institutional setting's typology of Youth Political Participation

	Level of Youth Political Participation	
	Low participation	**High participation**
Traditional (voting and formal)	New democracy High levels of corruption Majoritarian electoral system	Old democracy Low levels of corruption PR electoral system
Informal	New democracy High levels of corruption Majoritarian electoral system	Old democracy Low levels of corruption PR electoral system

Table 3.1 suggests that countries which have longer democratic experience, low levels of corruption, and a PR electoral system are consistent with high youth voter turnout. Similarly, countries which have institutional features such as newly established democratic systems, high levels of corruption and majoritarian electoral systems, are consistent with low levels of youth participation in formal politics. As illustrated, some institutional settings ensure high levels of youth political engagement better than others do and certain combinations give rise to certain patterns. Countries can cluster in terms of how political participation operates in context.

Youth political participation is high in countries that are advanced democracies, have lower levels of corruption, and have PR electoral systems. Similarly, levels of youth political participation are low in countries that are new democracies, experience higher levels of corruption. These theoretical arguments are tested using the ESS (2002 - 2016) dataset and the country-level dataset of institutional measures from 2002 to 2016 that was constructed specifically for the purpose of the study. In order to capture more precisely the determinants of youth political participation, my analyses distinguish between electoral, formal, and informal political participation. Such an institutional theory will allow making predictions for levels of youth participation in countries based on their institutional setting. The institutional setting surrounding a person plays an important role in structuring their political behaviour and I test this claim empirically in the next chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 4 Data and Measurement

This chapter explains the rationale behind choosing the European Social Survey for my analyses and behind the creation of the country-level dataset. This chapter details the empirical strategy pursued to data collection, describes the measurement used in this study, explains the dependent and independent variables, and justifies the use of multilevel regression modelling. In order to test the theoretical framework of this study and the set hypotheses, I use European Social Survey (2002-2016) data together with a country-level dataset of institutional measures (2002-2016) compiled from existing sources specifically for the purposes of this study. This time-series cross-sectional dataset itself makes a contribution to country-level drivers of political participation and enables replication. Drawing on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3, the features of the institutional settings across countries that are referred to in the study are the age of democracy, levels of corruption and the type of electoral system. I analyse the impact of these institutional features on youth political participation in the EU. In particular, I test the theoretical claim that youth political participation is likely to be higher in advanced democracies that have proportional representation and low levels of corruption.

The empirical analyses presented in the following chapters is based on ESS data (2002-2016) and a country-level dataset of institutional measures compiled from existing sources specifically for the purposes of this study. The aggregate-level dataset consists of information about the institutional setting of European countries such as length of democratic experience, levels of corruption, and type of electoral systems. The dataset was compiled from a variety of sources (e.g. Coppedge et al, 2017; Gallagher, 2017; Transparency International, 2017) and the indicators are annual observations to allow for change over time. The dependent variables and the individual-level independent variables are constructed from the ESS questions.

Most empirical analyses of political participation are mostly restricted to using ready datasets from surveys. In the European context, studies typically employ proxies, such as levels of participation, attitudes towards politics, or descriptive statistics (usually confined to one specific country). To address such shortcomings, I construct a dataset on institutional-level variables from existing measures as detailed below and merged it with ESS data. While until now, the lack of appropriate and specific cross-country data made it difficult to test hypotheses on external/institutional factors determining youth political participation, the compiled country-level dataset allows me to assess the importance of the various institutional factors expected to influence youth political participation. My dataset allows for replication.

The analysis in this study is presented in three empirical chapters. In Chapter 5, I outline an empirical analysis of the latest wave of the ESS 2016 exploring the current state of youth political participation and the effect of institutional-level variables on the propensity of young individuals (aged 18 to 24) to vote in national elections in 13 EU countries. I test how the diverse nature of the institutional context within a country explains trends in electoral turnout among newly established and advanced democracies, when it comes to youth participation. Then, Chapter 6 follows onto employing time-series cross-sectional data in order to further test my theory of institutions as significant determinants of youth political participation. I employ multilevel logistic regression analyses of the ESS survey Waves 1 to 8 (2002-2016) and a country-level dataset of institutional measures exploring and comparing youth political participation. In addition, Chapter 6 analyses not only electoral participation, but also youth political participation in formal and informal activities. Chapter 7 tests the proposed theoretical framework in this study on all individuals using the ESS Waves (2002-2016) and the dataset on institutional-level variables (2002-2016). The chapter compares youth political participation to the political participation of all individuals and looks at how the effect of age is mediated by institutional-level variables.

4.1 Political participation surveys

Starting with Milbrath's (1966) and Verba and Nie's (1972) influential studies, empirical studies of political participation grew rapidly. Comparative surveys started evolving and participation studies expanded and became part of a continuously studied phenomenon (Inglehart, 1990; Lijphart, 1997; Marsh, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Pintor and Gratschew, 2002; Franklin, 2004; Blais, 2006; Grasso, 2016).

The majority of national political participation studies adopt a common set of questions such as Who votes, and for what reasons? Which candidates and/or parties are chosen, and, again, for what reasons? For instance, voting intentions, party choice and party membership are the most common measures of political participation in individual European countries surveys (DPES, 2006; SNES, 2014; BES, 2015; ALLBUS/GGSS, 2016), however this study requires a comparative dataset to enable it to address the effect of institutions across countries.

Various surveys as presented in Table 4.1 have questioned the European public about their voting behaviour and some address other political participation activities as well. The majority of questions available from comparative datasets refer to the respondents' voting behaviour and participation history such as: Did you vote in the last national election? Which party did you vote for? Have you done any of the following (informal political participation) activities in the last 12 months? These types of questions have been asked in various ways in different surveys.

As the aim of this thesis is to study youth political participation cross-nationally over time, there are several cross-national surveys that are suited for this type of analysis. Table 4.1 summarises the surveys reviewed as part of the exercise of choosing the most appropriate data for the purpose of this study. In the majority of surveys, respondents were asked about whether or not they have participated in elections. As shown in Table 4.1, a possible survey data available for the purpose of my analyses was the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). It is an international election studies programme and gives measures for both formal and informal political activities. However, it features only 12 EU countries that fielded surveys at multiple points in time and it has only a total number of 80,163 participants from more than 40 countries worldwide. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) dataset was also considered, as it is an international programme of cross-national surveys covering a range of topics including citizenship. The main drawback of this survey is that it does not have a measure of electoral participation, which is a key dependent variable in my study. On the other hand, the World Values Survey (WVS) does not include many measures of informal participation. In addition, there are only 7 EU countries that repeat over time in the WVS as it is an internationally-focused survey.

The European Election Study (EES) features surveys fielded at multiple time points across 25 EU countries, but the only measures for informal political participation it provides is demonstrating. Furthermore, the ESS only includes questions that measure electoral participation, party membership and attendance of a meeting or a rally. The European Values Survey (EVS) includes 28 European countries, but does not feature a measure of electoral participation. Instead, it has a "Would you vote?" question and at the same time it includes only four measures of informal political participation. The last EVS survey was conducted over 10 years ago (2008), which means that it does not provide information about the current state of youth political participation in the EU, which is a main focus of this thesis.

Table 4.1 Surveys' summary: ESS (2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016); CSES (2006-2011, 2011-2016); ISSP (2004, 2014); WVS (2005-2009, 2010-2014); EES (2004, 2009, 2014); EVS (2008)

			Measures for:	
Survey	**Years**	**Number of Participants**	**Traditional Political Participation**	**Informal Political Participation**
European Social Survey	Wave 8 (2016) Wave 7 (2014) Wave 6 (2012) Wave 5 (2010) Wave 4 (2008) Wave 3 (2006) Wave 2 (2004) Wave 1 (2002)	34,837 40,185 54,673 52,458 56,752 43,000 47,537 42,359	Voted in the last national election Contacted a politician Worked in a political party	Worked in another organisation Badge worn Petition signing Demonstrating Boycotting Online activism
Comparative Study of Electoral Systems	Module 4 (2011-2016) Module 3 (2006-2011) Module 2 (2001-2006)	64,218 80,163 64,256	Voted in the last national election Contacted a politician	Signed petition online Signed petition Worked on a behalf of political party Donated Demonstrating Boycotting Strike Member of a political party Poster display Attended a meeting or rally
International Social Survey Programme	Citizenship II (2014) Citizenship (2004)	49,807 52,550	Boycotting Demonstrating Attending political meeting or rally	Signing petition Belonged or actively participated in other organisations Online activism Media exposure

Survey	Years	Number of Participants	Measures for: Traditional Political Participation	Measures for: Informal Political Participation
			Contacted a politician Donated Belonged or actively participated in political party	
World Values Survey	Wave 6 2010-2014 Wave 5 2005-2009	85,000 80,950	Member of a political party Usually vote	Member of different organisations Petition signing Boycotting Demonstrating Strike Act of protest
European Election Studies	2014 2009 2004	30,000 27,000 28,290	Voted in the European Parliament Election Voted in the last national election Attended a meeting or rally	Demonstrating
European Values Survey	N. 4 2008	59,792	Would vote at general election	Petition signing Boycotting Demonstrating Unofficial strike

*The table reflects only surveys carried out since 2000 onwards

*All surveys have socio-demographic questions

It is challenging to find a survey that offers measures of political participation that are inclusive of all forms of political participation. Electoral participation and party choice questions nearly always feature in surveys. It is less straightforward to find surveys with measures for informal modes of political participation. However, the European Social Survey provides such measures for a diverse range of traditional and non-traditional political activities as shown in Table 4.1. At the same time, it is a Europe-wide survey, which makes it an ideal choice for this study.

4.1.1 The European Social Survey (ESS)

The chosen cross-national survey identified as the most suitable one for the purpose of my study after reviewing all available surveys is the European Social Survey for several reasons. First, the European Social Surveys are nationally representative on-going surveys that collect cross-national data on democracy, European constitution, party identification, political attitudes, political behaviour, political power, and political participation dating to 2002 and offering a repeated cross-sectional survey format. Second, the ESS is designed to provide methodological consistency and is ideal for comparative and cross-national data analysis. The survey includes questions on a diverse range of political participation activities, which allows to fully test my hypotheses. Third, the ESS contains questions that measure a broader range of political actions than the other available surveys, and therefore, offers more refined measures. In addition, one of the main aims of the ESS is to monitor the changing nature of public attitudes and values of European citizens over time (throughout the different waves). The ESS is also known for being an academically designed social survey intended to account for European respondents' attitudes and behaviour patterns (Gideon, 2012).

Since 2001, the ESS has conducted eight waves of surveys in over 30 European countries, with standard surveys generally carried out every two years. The ESS is funded by the European Commission's Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes, the European Science Foundation, and participating countries. Data is collected via face-to-face interviews conducted by different interviewers monitoring national contexts and it uses standardised questionnaires, which collect information on the individual and household. The ESS uses a multistage sample with a range of sampling fractions in different countries. Eligibility for interviews requires for a person to be aged 15 and above, and to be a resident within private households in each individual country. Participants are selected through strict random probability methods (ESS, 2018). The ESS has rigorous ethical protocols in place for protecting the privacy of the respondents and in all ESS surveys all respondents must agree to an informed consent, which ensures participation is completely voluntary. Anonymisation of respondents is also maintained in the dissemination of data with individual respondents being identified only by a specific number. The ESS questionnaires consist of a collection categorised into two key parts: core and rotating sections. My analysis focuses on the core section of the survey, which measures a range of topics and features socio-demographic questions. The source questionnaire uses British English and it is then translated into different languages following a Translation Guidelines and Translation Quality Checklist.

The latest wave of the ESS (2016), which is analysed in Chapter 5, features data on electoral participation, party membership, membership of other organisations, contacting politicians, wearing a badge, signing a petition, demonstrating, boycotting, and online activism. All of these measures make the survey a good fit for the purpose of this study. In Chapter 6, I employ data on younger voters (aged 18 to 24) from all of the 8 waves of the ESS (2002-2016) in order to place determinants of youth political participation in a comparative perspective over time. The time-series cross-sectional data that the ESS provides is ideal for studying how participation changes over time. In Chapter 7, I employ analysis from the ESS combined dataset (2002-2016) again, analysing all survey respondents in order to further demonstrate the relationship between age and political participation and determine how institutions mediate that relationship.

4.1.2 Participating countries

In order to accurately analyse all ESS Waves (2002-2016), I include countries that are repeatedly surveyed over time. However, in the ESS Waves 1 to 8, not every country features in each wave, some of the countries feature only twice or three times, where others feature in all of the 8 ESS Waves of the survey. Therefore, I restrict the number of countries to make sure that missing data is kept to a minimum, as there are numerous of problems associated with obtaining good estimates using imputation.

In order to ensure country-level comparability, this thesis focuses only on European Union countries. Countries outside the EU would have very diverse political institutions and regime structures e.g. less developed, authoritarian countries, which can skew results making them meaningless for a comparison (Norris, 2002). Therefore, comparing countries that are similar in terms of being *democratic* ensures a substantial level of comparison, and at the same time analysing countries that are different in terms of their political institutions' structure and design allows understanding the likely trajectories of countries. For instance, given the positive relationship between democratic regimes and political engagement, it can be projected that individuals living in post-communist countries will become more politically active with time if the countries they are situated in experience similar levels of economic and democratic development as the Western ones.

The combined data from all ESS Waves after data clearing includes 184,913 respondents from 13 EU countries. The total number of participants and countries identified per ESS wave are presented in Table 4.2. It is important to acknowledge that a limitation of my time-series cross-sectional study is that it includes only three post-communist countries, due to data availability. However, in Chapter 6, I run further tests including more EU post-communist countries on each

ESS Wave separately[6]. The repeated EU countries over time available in the ESS Waves 1 to 8 (2002-2016) are as follows:

Table 4.2 Number of respondents per country per ESS Wave

Number of respondents per country per ESS Wave

Country	W1 2002	W2 2004	W3 2006	W4 2008	W5 2010	W6 2012	W7 2014	W8 2016	Total
Belgium (BE)	1,598	1,620	1,560	1,551	1,560	1,631	1,577	1,496	12,593
Finland (FI)	1,753	1,869	1,711	2,033	1,678	2,042	1,910	1,805	14,801
France (FR)	1,471	1,631	1,728	1,863	1,535	1,780	1,694	1,814	13,516
Germany (DE)	2,643	2,499	2,635	2,490	2,708	2,581	2,780	2,469	20,805
Hungary (HU)	1,537	1,409	1,444	1,419	1,515	1,827	1,581	1,497	12,229
Ireland (IE)	1,976	2,192	1,463	1,616	2,350	2,433	2,157	2,496	16,683
Netherlands(NL)	2,240	1,786	1,784	1,677	1,744	1,767	1,775	1,553	14,326
Poland (PL)	1,906	1,541	1,577	1,489	1,548	1,779	1,459	1,595	12,894
Portugal (PT)	1,401	1,910	2,141	2,157	2,036	2,008	1,174	1,198	14,025
Slovenia (SI)	1,255	1,285	1,332	1,224	1,280	1,171	1,158	1,210	9,915
Spain (ES)	1,603	1,470	1,689	2,286	1,610	1,747	1,666	1,757	13,828
Sweden (SE)	1,863	1,761	1,789	1,630	1,374	1,655	1,648	1,444	13,164
UK (GB)	1,922	1,649	2,235	2,174	2,229	2,084	2,054	1,787	16,134

4.2 Dependent Variables

Several empirical analyses are conducted as part of this study, each referring to a different aspect of youth political participation and using different time periods and waves from the ESS data (as indicated above). In Chapter 5, the dependent variable I analyse is voting: i.e. whether or not a respondent voted in the last national election in their country. I undertake an empirical analysis exploring the effect of the three proposed dimensions of the institutional setting of a country (age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral systems) on the propensity of young individuals (aged 18 to 24) to vote in national elections. I analyse data from the latest wave of the ESS, conducted in 2016, on voter turnout in 13 countries by applying multilevel logistic regression.

In Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, I analyse the time-series cross-sectional data from ESS Waves 1 to 8 in order to track change in participation over time. The chapters conduct empirical investigations and comparisons of young people's political participation in a diverse range of political activities (electoral, formal, and informal). A multilevel analysis across time is employed in order to determine the substantive effect of institutional-level variables across time and observe how

[6] Results show consistent with the analyses including only 3 post-communist countries. See Chapter 6 for discussion.

youth political participation changes over time and why. I also explore how variations in the institutional-level variables have an effect on rates of youth political participation.

Before operationalising drivers of political participation, I first explain how political participation is measured in this study. The dependent variables in this study are categorised as follows and their measurements are extracted from questions from the ESS surveys (as described below):

- *Voting (electoral participation)*
- *Formal political participation*
- *Informal political participation*

Voting

Voting is the most common act of political participation and forms the basis of representative democracy. Existing research mainly examines voting as a distinct form of political engagement (Dalton, 2002; Norris, 2002; Dalton, 2002; Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Inglehart, 1990), therefore, I analyse voting separately which allows drawing substantive inferences.

A straightforward way to measure whether a respondent has participated in national elections is through the ESS question: *Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]?* All of the missing values associated with this question were dropped from the dataset. In addition, the response category "Non-eligible to vote" was also dropped from the dataset, as the respondents who chose this answer cannot be considered either as voters or non-voters. As the focus of this study is whether youth engage in political participation, the dropped response category is not reflective on political participation. In addition, in order to ensure comparability between different forms of political participation, these respondents were dropped completely from the datasets. Voting is a dichotomous variable, coded as equal to 0 if a respondent has not voted in the last national election and as 1 if they have.

Formal political participation

The *formal political participation* dependent variable is compiled to capture political engagement in formal activities such as contacting politicians, working in a political party, being a member of a political party. The variable is constructed using two questions from the ESS surveys:

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you…

	Yes	*No*	*Refusal*	*Don't know*
Contacted a politician, government or local government official?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Worked in a political party or action group?	☐	☐	☐	☐

It is important to note that the following question features only in ESS Waves 1 to 5 (2002-2010), therefore, the *formal political participation* dependent variable only includes political membership for the first five waves of the survey.

	Yes	*No*	*Don't know*
Are you a member of any political party?	☐	☐	☐

Formal political participation captures whether individuals have engaged in traditional political activities, excluding voting. It allows comparing rates of political participation between formal activities i.e. contacting politicians, working in a political party, being a member of a political party and participating in elections. I compare empirically in Chapter 6 formal participation and voting, and the extent to which the proposed institutional-level variables account for variations in formal political engagement as opposed to voting.

Table 4.3 presents the distribution of all respondents and young people (aged 18 to 24) in ESS Wave 8 (2016) and ESS Waves 1 to 8 (2002-2016) who engaged in one or more formal activities or not engaged in any at all. As the Table 4.3 shows, about 80% of the respondents did not engage in any of the identified formal participation activities, which allows coding this dependent variable dichotomously as there is not enough variation in the data regarding this measure.

Table 4.3 Percentage of adults and young people engaged in formal political participation in ESS Wave 8 and ESS Waves 1 to 8

Number of Activities	Participants' N (Wave 8)	Participants' N Wave 8 (18-24)	Participants' N (Wave 1-8)	Participants' N Wave 1-8 (18-24)
0	81%	88%	82%	88%
1	16%	10.7%	15%	10%
2	2.7%	1.4%	2.6%	1.5%

Therefore, the dependent variable *formal political participation* is coded as a dichotomous variable with a value of 0 if a respondent has not participated in formal activities, and a value of 1 if they have.

Informal political participation

This dependent variable *informal political participation* is composed using the following question from the ESS surveys:

There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you…

	Yes	*No*	*Refusal*	*Don't know*
Worked in another organisation or association?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Signed a petition?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taken part in a lawful public demonstration?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Boycotted certain products?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?	☐	☐	☐	☐

It is important to note that "*Posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?*" question features only in ESS Wave 8 (2016). The potential implication of the dependent variable, *informal political participation*, changing over time in Chapter 6 is whether it provides a consistent measure over time. Therefore, I run robustness checks using the *informal political participation* dependent variable with its original measures discussed above and additional analyses including having a variable that

accounts for informal political participation excluding the question that features only in ESS Wave 8 (2016) as per above[7].

Respondents can choose more than one activity that they have participated in. Therefore, in order to make an informed decision about the coding of this dependent variable, I run descriptive statistics to assess in how many activities the respondents participated. Table 4.4 shows the results for Wave 8 and Waves 1 to 8 (total number of all participants and young participants). This allows exploring if there is enough variation in this dependent variable. Ideally, this would be a cumulative index, but there is not enough variation. In all 4 scenarios, about 50% of the respondents have not participated in any activity, meaning that the other 50% of the respondents have participated in informal politics. The majority of those who have participated in informal politics engaged in one activity only in the past twelve months. Therefore, informed by the distribution of the number of activities, the dependent variable *informal political participation* is coded dichotomously indicating for each individual whether or not they have taken part in any informal political activities (e.g. worked in another organisation, worn a badge, signed a petition, took part in demonstration, boycotted, and/or took part in online activism) with 0 meaning they have not participated in informal participation, and 1 meaning that they have.

Table 4.4 Percentage of adults and young people engaged in informal political participation in ESS Wave 8 and ESS Wave 1 to 8

Number of Activities	**Participants' N (Wave 8)**	**Participants' N Wave 8 (18-24)**	**Participants' N (Wave 1-8)**	**Participants' N Wave 1-8 (18-24)**
0	48%	41%	51%	51%
1	21%	22%	25%	24%
2	15%	18%	14%	14%
3	9%	9%	7%	7%
4	4%	5%	3%	3%
5	2%	3%	0.8%	0.9%
6	0.7%	0.9%	N/A	N/A

[7] Refer to Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.1 for discussion of the results.

4.3 Country-level dataset of institutional measures

I construct a country-level dataset of institutional measures from 2002 to 2016 compiled from existing sources specifically for the purposes of this study to reflect the particular theoretical concerns of the analysis. Most other studies of participation make limited use of country-level controls/variables. Especially, previous analyses of youth political participation focused predominantly on individual-level characteristics as determinants of youth participation, which can be looked at as incomplete explanations of the state of youth political participation. Nevertheless, there tend to be more to measuring youth political participation when undertaking a cross-national study as differences exist not only on the individual-level but also on the country-level. Consequently, data that captures the different institutional setting of European countries is needed. The information and the existing measures on which my dataset was compiled come from a variety of data sources as detailed next (Coppedge et al, 2017; Gallagher, 2017; Transparency International, 2017).

4.4 Explanatory Variables

The independent variables that are expected to influence youth political participation used in this study are clustered into two categories: country-level variables and individual-level variables. They are selected on a theoretical basis and reflect the suggested expectations for youth political participation. I argue that the three proposed dimensions of the institutional setting of a country account for variations in youth political participation across countries: age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral systems. I also acknowledge the most prominent up-to-date models in the literature that individual-level factors are crucial predictors of youth participation, therefore, I control for individual-level characteristics in my analysis.

4.4.1 Country-level variables

There are three key country-level independent variables that I analyse which are expected to have an influence on the levels of youth political participation across countries. They are the main explanatory variables in my study with a great focus on age of democracy.

4.4.1.1 Age of democracy

To control for age of democracies within my study, I measure the length of democratic experience in each country. The majority of studies that account for different democratic lengths across countries measure the length of democratic experience in terms of newly established versus advanced democracies (Converse, 1969; Lipjhart, 1991; Franklin, 2004; Catterberg and Moreno,

2006; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Smith, 2009). However, to capture best the effect of democratic experience on youth political participation and to explore how age of democracy has an effect on other country-level variables as well, I adopt a measure in terms of the number of actual years since a country has been a democracy. Such measure has been applied in several studies; however, it is not as common as the differentiation between advanced and new democracies (Visegrady, 1992; Ziblatt, 2006; Jou, 2013; Novy and Katrnak, 2015). This operationalisation of the independent variable *age of democracy* provides a more refined measure of democratic length.

As Figure 4.1 illustrates, there are noticeable variations in when countries democratised. Some of the countries have undergone a transition to full democracy very long time ago, whereas others have a shorter period of democratic experience behind them.

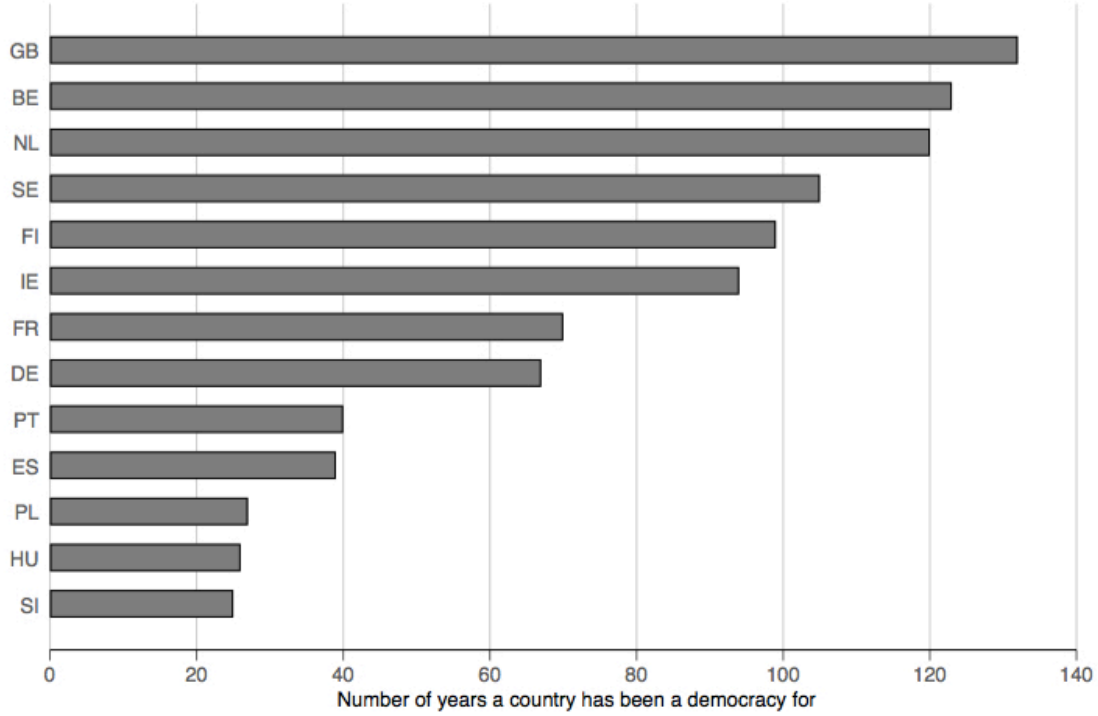

Figure 4.1 Number of years a country has been a democracy for as of 2016

Age of democracy has been discussed for a long time (Almond and Verba 1965; Converse, 1969; Inglehart, 1988; Lipset, 1959). The conventional wisdom in the literature is that advanced democracies have greater levels of political participation (Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Letki, 2013). For the purpose of this thesis and for measuring the length of democratic experience within a country in the most precise way, age of democracy is treated as a continuous variable measuring how many years of uninterrupted functioning of democratic rule have passed. In order to measure the number of years a country has been an uninterrupted democracy for, I use the well-established V-Dem dataset (V-Dem codebook v.7.1 and V-Dem dataset v.7.1

(Coppedge et al, 2017)) and their following measures: dichotomous democracy measure; democratic transition; and duration of regimes (using Boix, Miller and Rosato, 2013[8]). The independent variable *age of democracy* is coded as a continuous variable consisting of the number of years each featuring country has been a democracy for.

4.4.1.2 Corruption

Employing a measurement of the levels of corruption within a country can be extremely challenging. First, there is the existing problem of the challenging quantifying nature of corruption as a concept. For instance, the number of investigations related to corruption can be subject to how effective the laws in a particular country are in relation to responding to corruption, and there are numerous cases of unreported corruption (European Commission, 2003). Taking into considerations various difficulties in measuring corruption, numerous indicators exist, and information is gathered through public opinion surveys or expert assessments. The number of such indicators is growing recently. Some of the indicators are based on one data source. However, most of the developed corruption indexes are based on composite indicators gathered from a variety of sources and combined into one index.

The first substantial effort to develop a corruption index that allows for a comparison across countries is that of the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, which to this day remains the major index for measuring corruption (Treisman, 2007). I acknowledge that corruption is a controversial measure and there are several indexes of corruption that can be employed in my study, however, the best fit for the purpose of my analysis is the Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The CPI is the leading composite indicator that measures public-sector corruption worldwide, aggregating data from more than 10 datasets from independent institutions (Transparency International, 2018). It is worth acknowledging the other prominent existing measure of corruption: The Index of Public Integrity (IPI) (Mungiu-Pippidi et al, 2017). There are debates in the literature about which corruption index provides the most reliable and accurate measures of corruption worldwide. Even though, the IPI is very EU focused and well-operationalised index, it does not provide corruption scores before 2015, which is crucial for my

[8] A widely used dataset on democracy covering the period from 1800 to 2007 in 219 countries. Boix, Miller and Rosato (2013) define a country as democratic if it satisfies conditions for contestation and participation (free and fair elections and suffrage). Conditions are as follows: "1. The executive is directly or indirectly elected in popular elections and is responsible either directly to voters or to a legislature. 2. The legislature (or the executive if elected directly) is chosen in free and fair elections. 3. A majority of adult men has the right to vote" (Boix, Miller and Rosato, 2013: 9).

study as I analyse data between 2002 and 2016. Therefore, to ensure analytical depth of my analysis, I employ the CPI.

The CPI launched in 1995 and is a well-credited corruption composite index worldwide produced annually. The CPI is the most quoted and used index in the field of social science research. It is widely credited and a main measure of corruption worldwide (Rothstein, 2007). The CPI ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 means the highest level of corruption and 100 indicates that a country is the least corrupt. Prior to 2012, the CPI used a score of 0 to 10, where 0 meant that a country is highly corrupted and 10 meant that it has the lowest levels of corruption. To acknowledge and adopt these changes in my study and for the purpose of employing the most refined measure of corruption, I transformed all scores prior 2012 into a 0-100 scores to reflect the newest CPI Indices coding. As the corruption index in my analysis takes the value of the CPI, varying between 0 and 100. In one of the most recent CPI indexes (2016), 7 EU countries were ranked among the least corrupted countries worldwide. However, this is a very general description, as there are about 6 EU countries that have scores of less than 50.

For better understanding and clearer interpretation of the analyses, the CPI index has been inverted. Therefore, the index I use that measures levels of *corruption* ranges from 0 to 100, where the higher the number, the more corrupt the country is.

The corruption levels in the EU countries can be looked at the two extremes as evident in Figure 4.2. The figure illustrates the variation of the Corruption Index across time across EU countries. It is observable that there is a substantial variation across EU countries. The corruption index in my dataset varies from 65 being the highest (Poland in 2004) to 3 being the lowest (Finland in 2002 and 2004). What strikes from Figure 4.2 is that the corruption index varies more across countries than across time. For instance, looking at ESS Wave 2 (2004), the corruption index varies from 3 in Finland to 65 in Poland. As observed, newly democratised countries have higher levels of corruption.

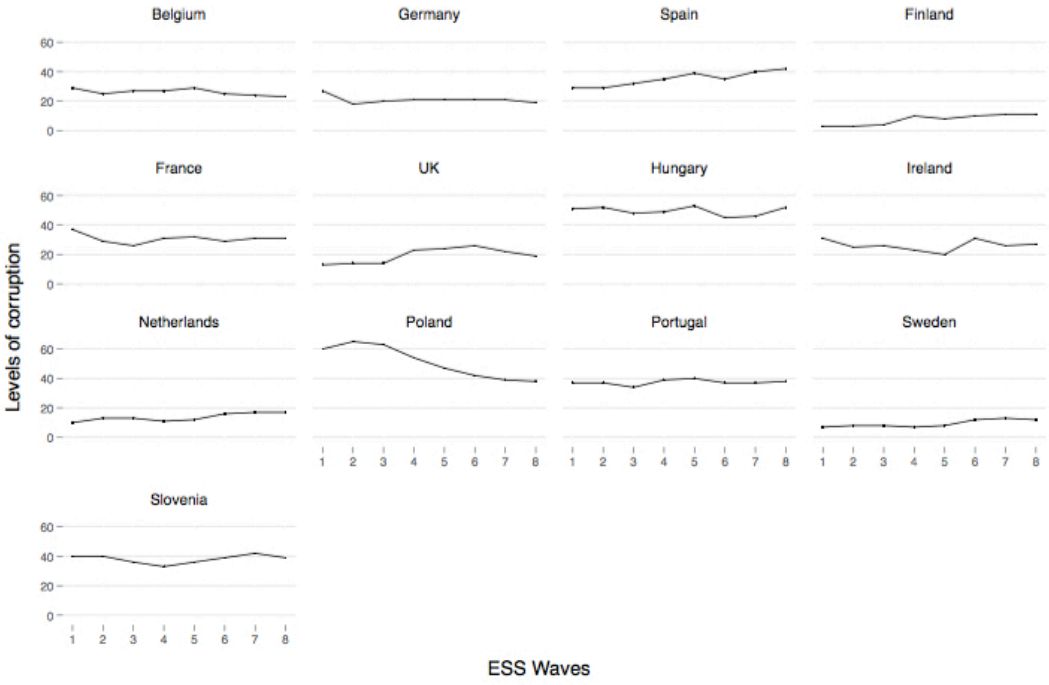

Figure 4.2 Corruption Index across countries across ESS Waves 1-8

The independent variable *corruption* in my dataset takes values between 0 and 100. Therefore, corruption is coded as a continuous variable consisting of values associated with the studied countries.

4.4.1.3 Electoral Systems

The electoral system is one of the features of the institutional setting of a country that is most likely to remain unchanged and is one of the most stable democratic institutions. Electoral systems are crucial when it comes to understanding political representation (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). Although electoral systems include many different components, at their heart is the process of translating votes into seats (the electoral formula) and this therefore is the primary focus of my study. There is a general consensus in the literature on political participation that countries with PR electoral system have a higher voter turnout (Lijphart, 1994).

To determine whether countries' different electoral systems have an effect on the levels of youth political participation, I examine the effect of the type of electoral system for legislative elections using the well-established cross-national Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) dataset version 3.0 in the influential study of Bormann and Golder (2013). This dataset covers legislative elections taking place between 1946 and 2016 for more than 80 countries. The reasons I employ the DES dataset are that it has good coverage, high reliability, and uses a simplified classification scheme

for electoral systems. Bormann and Golder (2013) classify electoral system in three main categories: Majoritarian, Proportional, and Mixed system. The DES data was crosschecked with the V-Dem measurement of electoral systems and the measurement was consistent (Coppedge et al, 2017)[9]. For the purpose of my analysis, the *type of electoral system for legislative elections* independent variable is operationalised as a categorical variable measuring the type of a country's electoral system for legislative elections with 1 being *Mixed electoral system*, 2 being *PR electoral system*, and the reference category being *Majoritarian electoral system*.

As seen in Table 4.5, there is no variation within countries' types of electoral systems across time but there is enough variation across countries, which allows for a comparison of how the different types of electoral systems affect youth political participation in the analysed countries.

Table 4.5 Variations of electoral systems for legislative elections across countries

Country	**W1**	**W2**	**W3**	**W4**	**W5**	**W6**	**W7**	**W8**	**Type of electoral system**
Belgium	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Finland	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
France	TRS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Majority
Germany	MMP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Mixed
Hungary	MMP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Mixed
Ireland	STV	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Netherlands	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Poland	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Portugal	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Slovenia	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Spain	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
Sweden	List PR	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	PR
UK	FPTP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Majority

[9] The V-Dem detailed measure of electoral systems in terms of 13-categories was applied as well in order to compute a more detailed index of electoral systems for the purpose of robustness checks of my analysis (Coppedge, 2017: Sources: Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections (IPU); IDEA; Nohlen and colleagues (1999, 2002, 2005, 2010); Handbook of Electoral System Choice (Colomer 2016).

4.4.2 Individual-level variables

The ESS provides demographic measures for the respondents through a set of socio-demographic questions including age, gender, education, and current status of the respondents.

Age

For the purpose of the multilevel analysis, *age* is included in terms of its centered mean in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. However, in Chapter 7 where I analyse all individuals, age is included as a continuous variable in order to best capture the effect of age on political participation.

Gender

The independent variable *gender* is coded as a dichotomous variable where 1 is a male respondent, and the reference category is a female respondent.

Education

Across all ESS Waves, the highest level of education is measured by the following question: *What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?*

The variable *education* is a 7-category variable that builds on the ISCED educational categories and maps each individual country-specific category. From Wave 5, there is a new education variable with more categories but even before Wave 5, the education levels can be mapped into the newly created variable. *Education* is coded as a three-level categorical variable indexing the highest level of education of a respondent:

(1) "Secondary or lower"
(2) "Upper Secondary"
(3) "Higher Education"

Current Status

The independent variable *current status* reflects on the current occupation of the respondent in the last 7 days. The variable was composed using 8 existing variables from the ESS dataset constructed from the following question: *Using this card, which of these descriptions applies been doing for the last 7 days? Select all that apply.*

Current status is a categorical variable with three main categories as follows:

(1) "Paid work"
(2) "In education"
(3) "Other"

Table 4.6 presents a general descriptive analysis of the dependent and independent variables from ESS (2002-2016) and the country-level dataset of institutional measures compiled from existing sources specifically for the purposes of this study, including the minimum and maximum number, mean, and standard deviation for.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables. Source: ESS (2002-2016)

Variable name	Min	Mean	Max	SD
Voting	0	0.60	1	0.49
Formal participation	0	0.11	1	0.32
Informal participation	0	0.41	1	0.49
Age of democracy	11	66.06	132	38.67
Corruption	3	28.84	65	14.69
Electoral system	1	2.57	3	0.70
Age	18	21.66	24	1.79
Gender	0	0.49	1	0.50
Level of education	1	2.35	3	0.82
Current status	1	1.79	3	0.73

4.5 Method of analysis

My study utilises a comparison between European countries identifying general and unique patterns of individuals' political engagement focusing on electoral, formal, and informal modes of political participation. By not restricting this study to a particular type of political activism, I remove the possibility of having a political activity that is very specific to one or two countries or regions in Europe. Employing such a narrow and structured focus in this thesis provides a comprehensive assessment of the country specific details. Identification of potential general patterns across countries can have an impact on formulating specific patterns of political change. Focusing specifically on the EU ensures that the studied countries have the needed degree of similarities required for a meaningful comparison (Landman, 2002).

Table 4.7 shows the number of total respondents and the number of respondents aged 18 to 24. The number of participants over the ESS Waves 1 to 8 has small variations. For instance, the country with the highest mean of total respondents and respondents aged 18 to 24 is Germany.

On the contrary, Slovenia has the lowest number in terms of all respondents. And France has the lowest number of young respondents.

Table 4.7 Number of all respondents and respondents aged 18 to 24 across ESS Waves 1 to 8 across countries

Country	Number of all respondents	Number of respondents aged 18-24
Belgium	12,593	1,158
Finland	14,801	854
France	13,516	702
Germany	20,805	1,429
Hungary	12,229	952
Ireland	16,683	1,347
Netherlands	14,326	726
Poland	12,894	1,416
Portugal	14,025	788
Slovenia	9,915	973
Spain	13,828	1,024
Sweden	13,164	1,118
UK	16,134	987

I am interested in political engagement as in if a young citizen has engaged in a political activity in their country. I have a nested data structure (individuals in countries) which calls for multilevel modelling as it is the most practical and suitable way of analysing different levels of data. When analysing the pooled dataset, it consists of individuals nested within countries that are nested within survey waves, which calls for three-level multilevel modelling analyses as detailed in Section 4.5.3.

4.5.1 Multilevel modelling

The effect of contextual factors in social and behavioural research has been analysed at great deal (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Blau, 1994; Riordan, 2004). It is important to recognise that values of the studied dependent variable are subject to differences across the independent variables, at both individual- and contextual-level (Bickel, 2007). Previous research that has looked at both individual- and country-level variations in terms of political participation indicate that civic engagement is influenced by the context of a country (Jones et al., 1992; O'Loughlin, 2004; McFarland and Thomas, 2006; Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Grasso, 2016). In contemporary days, the

growing body of empirical political research uses multilevel modelling which allows taking context into account by recognising that homogeneous units situated in diverse contexts may behave differently; and valid causal inferences rely on sufficiently identifying the contexts in which individual units are situated using multilevel modelling to investigate determinants of particular behaviour (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002; Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Jerit, Barabas, & Bolsen, 2006).Domonkos, 2016). The lower level measurement is referred as “micro-level”, which in my study refers to individuals, and “macro-level” is the higher-level measurement.

Using multilevel modelling ensures in-depth analysis about how political behaviour can be affected by the hierarchical nature of the data and by the context. Techniques such as multilevel regression analysis allow for a “specification of more complex theoretical relationship than is possible using traditional single-level regression analyses” and their use expanded rapidly in recent years (Heck and Thomas, 2000: 10). Thus, applying multilevel regression allows investigating complex relationships.

Multilevel modelling is applied in this study for several reasons. First, it allows estimating best the relationship between the explanatory variables from different levels and the response variable. Second, multilevel modelling allows measuring explicitly country-level variations while controlling for individual-level characteristics. In multilevel modelling, the model variances e.g. individual experiences vary from country to country. It also allows accounting for the possibility that individuals from the same country will tend to be similar to one another, and it models contextually micro and macro relations. Individuals are often seen in isolation from the context; therefore, including Level 2 variables allows to account for the context surrounding the individuals (Figure 4.3).

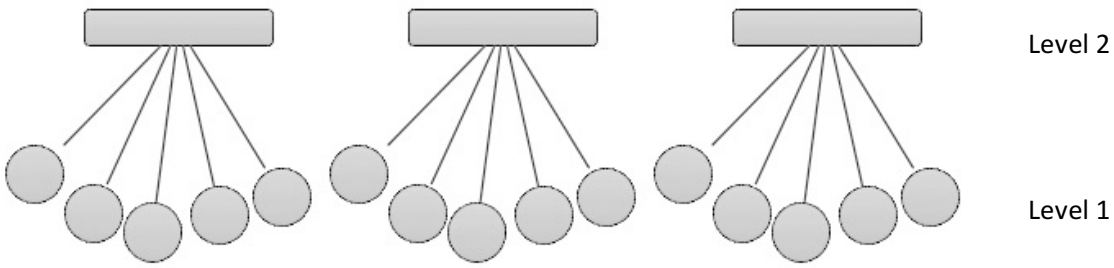

Figure 4.3 Hierarchical data: individuals nested in countries

Many researchers analysing youth political participation have used age-period-cohort (APC) analysis (Grasso, 2014, 2016; Garcia-Albacete, 2014; Fox, 2015). APC estimates the influence of cohort, life-cycle, and period effects. In APC models, outcomes can vary across individuals as they age, across time, and across individuals depending upon the year of their birth. In my study, I am

not interested in generational dynamics, and not looking to test whether these dynamics are specific to a particular cohort of citizens. However, I am interested in the country-level characteristics that account for differences in the levels of youth political participation. Therefore, employing APC analysis is not suitable for the purpose of this study as I am not interested in analysing whether or not the Millennials are more\less active in politics than previous generations. The purpose of my study is not to compare how young people are different or the same in terms of their levels of engagement when it comes to comparing them to previous cohorts of young people. I analyse the current state of youth political participation in electoral, formal, and informal politics and compare it with that of the general public in Chapter 7. However, this comparison aims at analysing and presenting the effect of age, not the effect of cohorts or life-cycle effects.

A major problem with employing simple regression analysis is that it risks missing the importance of the effect of country-level characteristics as it does not take into account the clustering within countries, which can lead to biased estimates as a consequence. Multilevel regression analysis acknowledges that there are X number of cases from X number of countries. For instance, if analysing a pooled individual-level data of X countries, there is a risk of overlooking the significance of country-level effects, as clustering within countries is not taken into account. Therefore, this could lead to biased estimates. On the other hand, an aggregate-level analysis cannot take into account individual-level variations. This could lead to misleading inferences about individuals. A multilevel analysis, however deals with those possible drawbacks, as using this method allows to distinguish that 13,473 young individuals from the analysed dataset are from 13 countries in Chapter 6, and 184,913 individuals in Chapter 7. In order to overcome the problem with biased estimates, I run random-effects multilevel logistic regression. Using the random-effects model allows to make inferences about the larger population of democracies in the EU and elsewhere from the sample used in this analysis. Using multilevel logistic regression provides conceptual and technical advantages over Ordinary Least Squares (Draper, 1995). Theories about functioning relationships across variables at each level could be investigated by using multilevel modelling.

Another advantage of multilevel analysis is that it avoids drawbacks associated with the use of aggregate-level analysis and individual-level analysis. By using multilevel modelling, problems such as aggregate bias are avoided and multilevel models produce more accurate findings (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992). The data used in this study is characterised by a hierarchical structure, where in Level 1 (micro level) individuals are settled. These individuals then are nested in countries, which represent Level 2 (macro level) of the analysis. Due to this structure, multilevel logistic modelling (the response variable is binary) is used to estimate the propensity of young

individuals to participate in politics. Multilevel analysis accounts for the fact that the respondents are derived from different countries.

4.5.2 Multilevel logistic regression modelling

Different research methods have been used to study empirically the phenomenon of political participation. Recently, studies exploring the complex relationship between political participation and macro-level factors have used multilevel analysis (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Acik-Toprak, 2009; Vrablikova, 2011; Hakhverdian and Mayne, 2012; Novy and Katrnak, 2015; Domonkos, 2016). Here I formulate a model, from the theoretical expectations presented in Chapter 3, which is tested against the data in the following chapters.

The dataset I constructed for testing my hypotheses is characterised as Time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) Data (Beck and Katz, 1995). However, for the purpose of Chapter 5, I analyse only the data from the ESS Wave 8 (2016) in order to explore what is the current state of youth political participation in the EU and what are the institutional settings that influence variations across countries. Then, in the following empirical chapters, I analyse the TSCS data, which allows comparing how things change over time. In my first empirical chapter, I analyse the propensity of young individuals to vote in the EU using multilevel logistic regression. Let *Yij* denote the binary response for individual *i* (*i*=1,..,1,289), nested in country *j* (*j*=1,…,13) and defined as:

$$Y_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1 \; if \; voted \\ 0 \; if \; did \; not \; vote \end{cases}$$

The binary (0,1) response of *i*th individual in country *j* is denoted by *yij.* I denote the probability that *yij*=1 by πij. The logit link, i.e, f(πij) = Log $\left\{\frac{\pi ij}{1-\pi ij}\right\}$, where the quantity πij/(1-πij) is the odds that *yij* = 1.

I fit a multilevel model to estimate a binary outcome variable voting on explanatory variables with random intercepts varying across countries. The multilevel model for each binary outcome dependent variable (*voting; formal political participation; informal political participation*) takes the following form:

$$Log\left(\frac{\pi_{ij}}{1-\pi_{ij}}\right) = \beta_0 + X_{ij}'\beta + Z_j'\gamma + U_{oj}$$

where *i* is the Level 1 individual units, and *j* is the Level 2 country-characteristics, X_{ij}' is a vector of individual-level characteristics with coefficient β, and Z_j' is a vector of country-level characteristics with coefficient γ. In a null model, β_0 is the intercept, π_{ij} is the probability of voting, and U_{oj} is the random intercept.

The models in this study have been fitted using StataIC 15.

4.5.3 Three-level multilevel logistic regression modelling

Multilevel modelling can help understand what factors account for change in a particular phenomenon over time (Kiecolt-Glaser, 1997; Muthen, 1997). In Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, I use three-level multilevel logistic regression to analyse the combined ESS and the country-level dataset of institutional measures. I first specify a three-level random-intercept model for voting with individuals *i* nested in countries *j* which are nested in survey waves *k*. The model for each binary outcome variable (*voting; formal political participation; informal political participation)* takes the following form:

$$Log\left(\frac{\pi_{ijk}}{1-\pi_{ijk}}\right) = \beta_0 + X_{ijk}'\beta + Z_{jk}'\gamma + U_{ojk}$$

where *i* is the Level 1 individual units, *j* is the Level 2 country-characteristics, *k* is the Level 3 units and denotes the survey waves, X_{ijk}' is a vector of individual-level characteristics with coefficient β, and Z_{kj}' is a vector of country-level characteristics with coefficient γ. In a null

model, β_0 is the intercept, π_{ijk} is the probability of voting/participating in formal political activities/participating in informal political activities, and U_{ojk} is the random intercept.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined in greater detail the empirical strategy and rational behind choosing the most appropriate survey for the analyses, described the dependent and independent variables and the measurement of variables used in this study. I presented several descriptive statistics of the employed measures, which provided a better understanding of the nature of the data, and measures used.

The following chapter presents an empirical analysis exploring the effect of the discussed explanatory variables (e.g. democratic experience, corruption, and electoral systems) on the propensity of young individuals to vote in national elections in the EU using the latest wave of the European Social Survey (2016).

Chapter 5 Institutions as determinants of youth voter turnout

This empirical chapter analyses the current state of youth electoral participation in the EU by examining the effect of a) age of democracy, b) levels of corruption, and c) type of electoral system. Using the 2016 European Social Survey dataset and a country-level dataset of institutional measures (2016) that was constructed specifically for the purpose of the study, this chapter begins by looking at differences in the levels of youth electoral participation across countries. Then, I explore the results from the multilevel logistic regression analyses, with a particular focus on age of democracy as a main macro-level determinant of variations in levels of youth electoral participation. The findings challenge the often-argued view that individual-level characteristics are the main determinants of youth electoral participation. The results support the theoretical expectation that institutional factors are significant predictors of youth turnout and account for variations in levels of young people's electoral engagement. This chapter lays groundwork for the subsequent chapters looking at different forms of political participation over the full period of the ESS dataset in order to test more in-depth the effect of age of democracy, corruption, and electoral system on young people's propensity to participate in politics.

5.1 Understanding youth electoral participation in the EU

As discussed in earlier chapters, institutional context is a significant unexplored factor in shaping levels of youth political participation in the EU. There is little research on how age of democracy together with other country's characteristics influence political participation, when it comes to cross-national studies across the EU focusing on young people. In this chapter, I present an empirical analysis exploring the effect of age of democracy, levels of corruption and electoral systems on the propensity of young individuals to vote in national elections. This chapter develops a comparative perspective on youth (dis)engagement in politics and tests the claim that institutional context matter and fundamentally condition the way young people participate in elections. To assess these claims, I analyse cross-national data from the latest wave of the ESS (2016) on youth voter turnout in 13 EU countries by applying multilevel logistic regression. The analyses in this chapter employ the conceptualisation of political participation developed in Chapter 2, and it specifically focuses on voting as a political engagement activity.

Given what it is known about the determinants of youth political engagement, I have advanced a theoretical argument that incorporates country-level characteristics in addition to individual-level

ones (see Chapter 3). In this chapter, I explore how the institutional context conditions youth voting behaviour. The findings from this chapter reveal that age of democracy is an important predictor of the propensity of young individuals to vote in national elections. In other words, the longer that a country has been a democracy for, the more likely are its young citizens to vote. These findings point to a substantively important effect of democratic maturity on the youth propensity to vote. The findings support the claim that there are significant institutional determinants of youth electoral participation in addition to the well-known individual-level ones. Finally, the findings reveal that higher levels of youth turnout are more likely to occur in countries that have longer democratic experience, low levels of corruption, and PR electoral systems. Support for this theoretical prediction holds crucial consequences for the determinants of young people's engagement in electoral participation.

The influence of formal and informal institutions on political participation is studied comparatively largely in general terms but not in relation to youth. This is surprising given the widely held view that young people are one of the most disengaged groups in politics. I approach the study of youth political engagement beyond the established political participation models and test the theoretical framework proposed in this study that institutional factors are main determinants for young people's participation in politics in established and developed democracies across Europe.

In order to facilitate my analyses, I compiled a bespoke dataset consisting of country-level measures as of 2016 regarding the length of uninterrupted democratic experience, the existing levels of corruption, and the type of electoral system in the 13 analysed EU countries (see Chapter 4 for further details). This data was then merged with the most recent wave of the ESS, which was conducted in 2016. All respondents aged over 24 were then dropped from the dataset in order to enable me to analyse and explore only youth electoral participation for the purpose of this chapter. Multilevel logistic regression was then applied in order to allow country-level characteristics to be controlled for, and to explore variations in the levels of youth electoral engagement across countries.

5.1.1 Average electoral participation

I start by considering the levels of electoral participation of citizens in general. Figure 5.1 shows the average level of electoral participation (the percentage of people voting) for all age groups. As age increases, so does the level of electoral participation. The sudden increase and decrease for people aged over 95 reflects the small number of respondents aged over 95[10]. As evident from

[10] Number of individuals aged over 95 in total: 17

the graph, younger people are less likely to vote than their elders are. There is a reverse "U" shape observed. Unsurprisingly, given existing evidence, the graph indicates that younger citizens participate less in elections than any other age groups.

It is widely known that young people are less likely to vote than older people (Franklin, 2004). There is strong evidence more widely that the participation of young people in formal, institutionalised political processes is relatively low compared to older citizens.

Participation in elections is less common for young people than for older respondents in the ESS, and the consensus among most researchers is that young people are one of the most disengaged groups in politics. Then what determines young people's engagement in electoral participation?

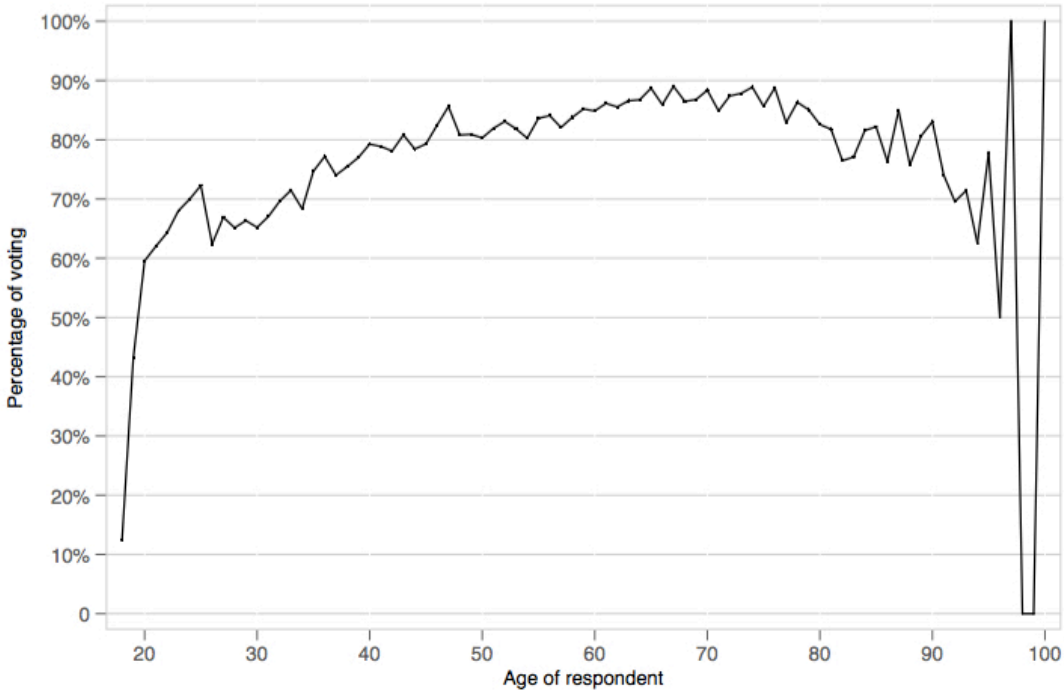

Figure 5.1 Voting by age (ESS, 2016)

Figure 5.2 presents the mean percentage of voting per country and compares the average levels of electoral participation across the 13 countries analysed. It is evident from Figure 5.2 that youth electoral participation varies considerably across different EU countries. Belgium and Sweden have the highest percentage of youth electoral participation varying between 75% and 93%. Belgium has compulsory voting which unsurprisingly makes it the country with the highest level of youth electoral engagement. Sweden is an established democracy with a PR electoral system.

Among the countries with the lowest percentage of youth electoral participation are the UK, France, Ireland, Slovenia, and Hungary. It is not surprising that the UK is among the countries with the lowest levels of youth turnout, which is also evident in previous studies reporting that young

people in the UK are much disengaged from traditional politics (Wring, Henn and Weinsten, 1999; Henn and Foard, 2012; Grasso, 2014; Fox, 2015). Both the UK and France have majoritarian electoral systems, which could account for the low levels of youth voter turnout. This is tested later in this chapter. On the other hand, Hungary and Slovenia have PR electoral systems; however, they are both newly established democracies in the EU. At the same time, as presented in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.2), Hungary and Slovenia experience extremely high levels of corruption in 2016 in comparison to the other studied countries (index varying between 40 and 50). In the next section, the multilevel regression analysis models turnout as a function of institutional context, controlling for other factors and provides more insights.

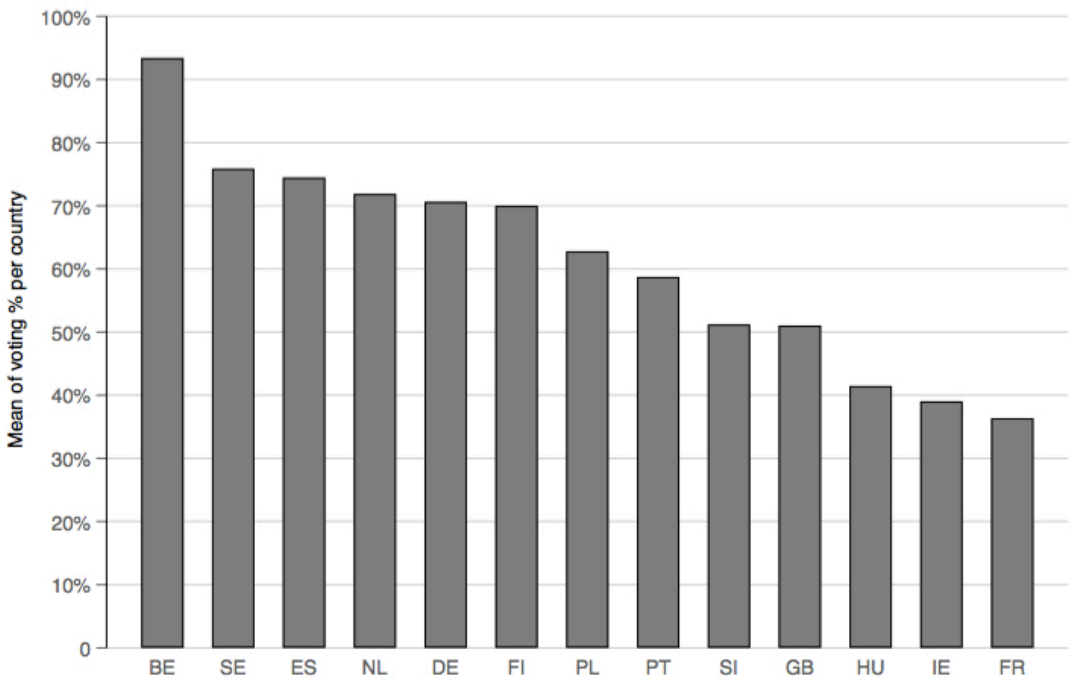

Figure 5.2 Youth turnout across countries (ESS, 2016)

Unsurprisingly, the characteristics of electoral rules such as compulsory voting will have an enormous effect on voter turnout e.g. Belgium. However, voting is not compulsory, for instance in Sweden, therefore, there must be at least one other country feature that accounts for differences in levels of turnout. Or perhaps, there is a combination of country-level institutional features that condition the way young citizens behave when it comes to electoral participation.

5.2 Results from multilevel regression modelling

My theoretical expectation is that youth political engagement is likely to be high in advanced democracies with low levels of corruption, and PR electoral systems. To determine what shapes youth engagement in elections, I apply a multilevel logistic regression to the ESS 2016 dataset and

the country-level dataset of institutional measures (2016) that was constructed specifically for the purpose of the study. I expect the institutional features of the studied countries to account for variations in youth voter turnout across countries.

Table 5.1 presents a general descriptive analysis of the dependent and independent variables from my dataset and ESS (2016) including the minimum and maximum number, mean, and standard deviation. As Table 5.1 shows *age of democracy* and *corruption* have enough variation in their minimum and maximum numbers, which allows for a meaningful comparison.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics of independent variables. Source: ESS (2016)

Variable name	**Min**	**Mean**	**Max**	**SD**
Voting	0	0.626	1	0.484
Age of democracy	25	73.955	132	37.825
Corruption	11	28.036	52	12.067
Electoral system	1	2.608	3	0.675
Age	18	21.894	24	1.645
Gender	0	0.492	1	0.500
Education	1	2.305	3	0.877
Current status	1	1.775	3	0.710

Multilevel logistic regression models are fitted to the variables presented in Table 5.1 in order to analyse the propensity of young individuals to vote in national elections, investigating the effect of country-level characteristics controlling for individual-level factors. The results from the models and the corresponding odds ratios are reported in Table 5.2, where *voting* is the binary response variable.

Table 5.2 Results from multilevel logistic regression on the propensity of young individuals to vote (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	Model 5.0	Model 5.1	Model 5.2*(a)*	Model 5.2*(b)*
Country-level variables				
Age of democracy			1.010**	
			(0.005)	
Corruption				0.974*
				(0.016)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)				
Mixed Electoral system			3.361*	2.501
			(2.434)	(1.742)
PR Electoral system			4.301***	3.460**
			(2.358)	(1.865)
Individual-level variables				
Age		1.225***	1.229***	1.229***
		(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)				
Upper Secondary Education		2.026***	1.999***	1.995***
		(0.748)	(0.385)	(0.384)
Higher Education		3.256***	3.208***	3.225***
		(0.390)	(0.737)	(0.741)
Male		1.028	1.034	1.032
		(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.131)
Current status (*paid work*)				
Current Status: In education		1.697***	1.691***	1.687***
		(0.255	(0.254)	(0.253)
Current Status: Other		0.727*	0.729*	0.729*
		(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.135)
ICC	0.150	0.170	0.103	0.108
Log Likelihood	-799.8189	-753.8328	-750.2289	-750.7026
Deviance	1599.6379	1507.6655	1500.4578	1501.4052
AIC	1603.638	1523.666	1522.458	1523.405
Number of individuals	1,289	1,289	1,289	1,289

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I first run the null model and then move to the random-intercept models. Model 5.0 reports that a total of 1,289 observations in Level 1 (individual-level) are nested in 13 countries in Level 2 (country-level). The average number of individuals per country is 99. The effect of Level 2 units is measured using the Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) or also known as the Variance Partition Coefficient, which is calculated in the following manner: the between-country variance (τ_{00}) is 0.580, which is the variance in the intercepts across all countries. The ICC in a multilevel logistic model is computed as:

$$ICC = \frac{\tau_{00}}{\tau_{00} + \frac{\pi^2}{3}}$$

This then gives an ICC_0[11] of 0.150, which indicates that 15% of the total variability in youth turnout is explained by country: the variation in individual-level turnout can be attributed to the contextual level. This is a sufficient ICC, which justifies the use of multilevel logistic regression (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsem, 2017). In addition, from the model estimates, it is observed that the log-odds of voting in an "average" country is estimated as $\widehat{\beta_0}$=0.540, where the intercept for country *j* is 0.540+U_{oj}, where the variance of U_{oj} is 0.580. The test statistic is 104.46 with a corresponding p-value of less than 0.001, therefore there is strong evidence that the between-country variance is significant.

Figure 5.3, known as a caterpillar plot, presents calculated residuals for country effects in ranked order together with corresponding 95% confidence intervals. It can be observed that for a substantial number of countries, the 95% confidence interval does not overlap the horizontal line at zero, indicating that voter turnout in these countries is significantly above average (above zero line) or below average (below zero line).

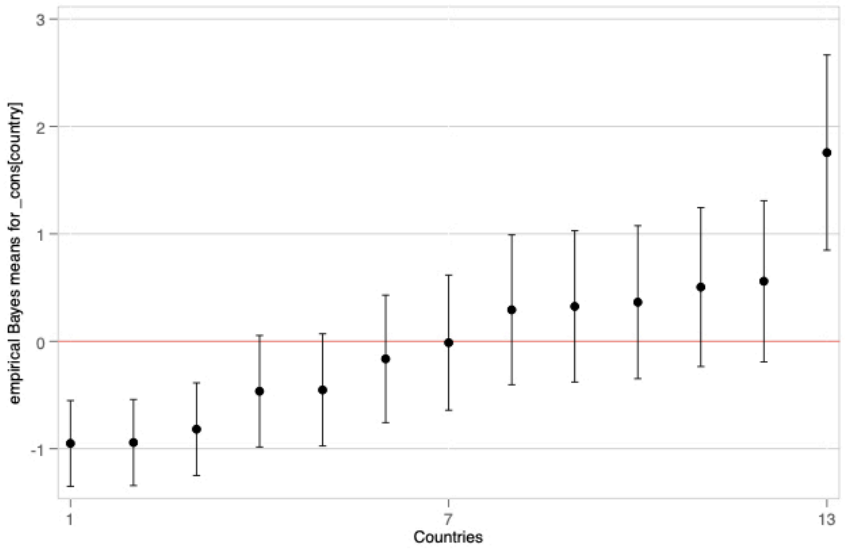

Figure 5.3 Caterpillar plot with the country effects shown in rank order with 95% confidence intervals

In the next steps of the model building, Level 1 variables (individual-level) and Level 2 variables (country-level) are added to the model. The intermediate model[12] including only Level 1 variables reported that the ICC_1 is 0.170 (variability explained by country-level variables on voting). Thus, 17% of the residual variation in the propensity of young individuals to vote is attributable to unobserved country-level characteristics. Figure 5.4 shows the predicted log-odds of voting for

[11] ICC_0 The calculated ICC for Model 0.
[12] Multilevel model with Level 1 variables, which shows to what extent does the effect of the relevant lower levels' variables vary across countries.

young respondents. The graph shows that for a person aged 24, the log-odds of voting range from about -1.7 to 2.7 depending on which country young people live in. This translates to a range in probabilities of exp(-0.4)/[1+exp(-0.4)]=0.40 to exp(2.3)/[1+exp(2.3)]=0.91, so there are strong country-level effects.

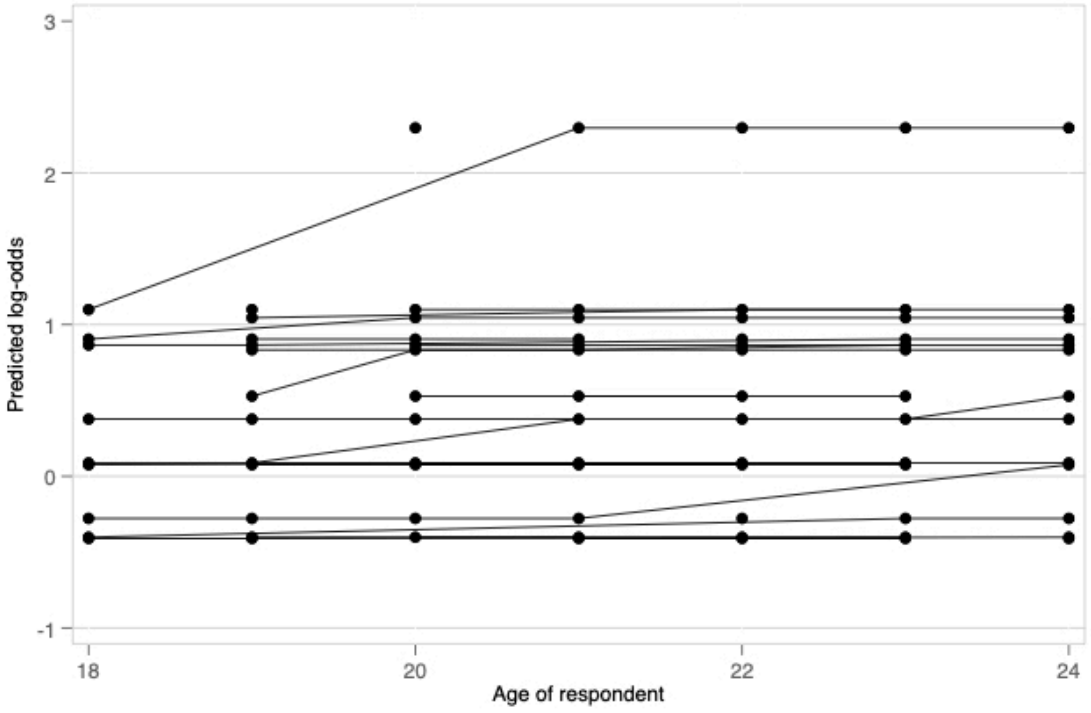

Figure 5.4 Predicted probabilities against age

In the last step of the model building, I fit the final model[13] controlling for Level 2 (country-level) characteristics. The computed ICC_2 equals to 0.103. In order to see how the ICC changes after controlling for country-level characteristics, I compare the reported ICCs. The comparison of ICC_1 and ICC_2, accounts for that the country-level variables explain 6.7% of the variability across countries.

5.2.1 Age of Democracy

I hypothesised that the longer the democratic experience, the higher the youth voter turnout. The results from the multilevel model as presented in Table 5.2 (Model 5.2(a)) reveal that age of democracy is a significant positive predictor of youth voter turnout. The odds ratio for age of democracy is 1.010, which indicates that for each one-year increase in age of democracy, the odds of a person voting increase by 1.01. Therefore, individuals living in countries that have

[13] Multilevel model with the country-level variables.

longer democratic experience have a greater propensity to vote. In countries where democracy is older, citizens are more likely to cast a ballot. This result is positive and significant indicating that there is a positive relationship between the democratic length of a country and youth turnout.

The effect of age of democracy is positive and significant: the longer a country has been democratic for, the more likely are its young citizens to vote. If we consider the political history of newly established democracies, this tendency is not surprising. Newly established democracies experience nation-building and industrialisation in more recent years, and the occurrence of civil society is delayed (see Chapter 3). This could explain why with the increase of a number of years a country has been democratic for, the likelihood to vote increases as well. Young people in established democracies were socialised differently to young people in new democracies, who did not necessary had examples in the family to be politically active.

In Figure 5.5, I plot the marginal effect of age of democracy (x-axis) on voting (y-axis) corresponding to Model 5.2(*a*) in Table 5.2, with 95 per cent confidence intervals in dotted line. This illustrates the estimated probabilities of voting for individuals in countries depending on the length of the country's democratic experience. It is evident from the graph that the probability of young people to vote increases with age of democracy. Unsurprisingly, young people are more likely to vote if they are situated in a long-established democracy. The predictive probability of voting rises with democratic experience and is about 70% once a country democratic experience reaches 110 years. This suggest that length of democratic experience appears to account for higher levels of turnout in countries, providing support for H1.

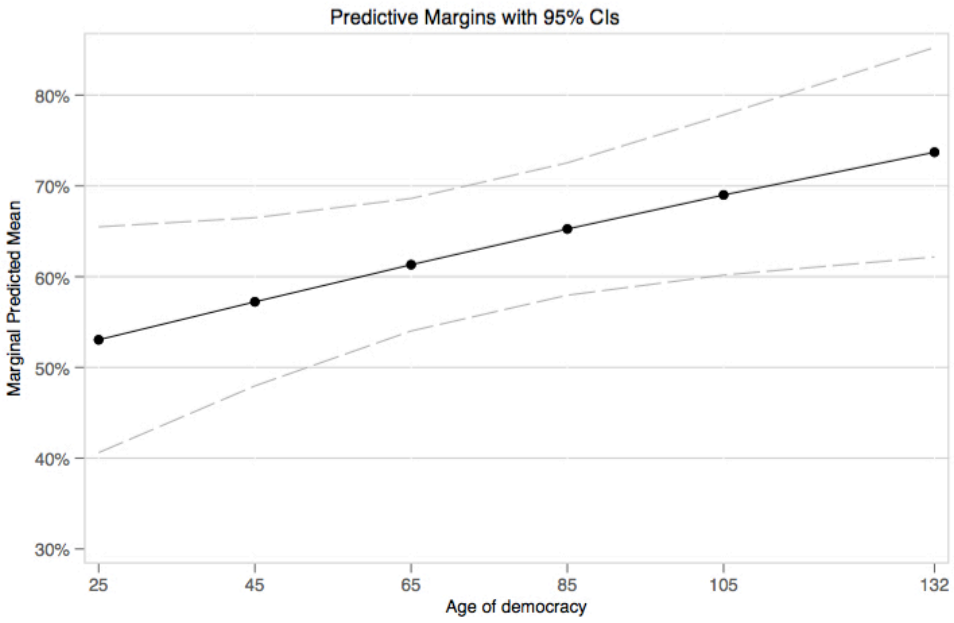

Figure 5.5 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on voting

For robustness checks, I create an additional age of democracy variable, which is a categorical one accounting for the number of years a country has been an uninterrupted democracy. The added variable 'age of democracy' is coded as a categorical variable, where the reference category is *up to 49 years*, 1 is *between 50 and 99 years* and 2 is *100 years or above*. The results from Model 5.3 (presented in Appendix A: Table 9.1) largely hold when I run the additional multilevel logistic regression model with *age of democracy* as a categorical variable.

The robustness checks show that measuring a key variable several times using multiple codes can account for how consistent the results are. The robustness check indicates that individuals who are nested within countries that have been democratic for more than 100 years are more likely to vote. To be specific, the odds of casting a ballot for individuals nested in countries that have been democratic for more than 100 years are 4.033 times higher than the odds for those individuals nested in younger democracies. This result is statistically significant at the 99 per cent confidence level ($p<0.01$). Model 5.2*(a)* and the additional models that I run confirm H1, which suggested that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young people to vote. This finding suggests that the longer the democratic experience, the higher the youth propensity to vote. This result is consistent with the findings from earlier studies that participation is higher in established democracies (Kostadinova, 2003; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Letki, 2013; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015) and especially when it comes to young people (Kitanova, 2019).

5.2.2 Corruption

It is expected that *age of democracy* and *corruption* are highly correlated as newly democratised countries tend to have higher levels of corruption. To check, I run a correlation test, which finds that the correlation between age of democracy and corruption is highly negative at -0.80, indicating that as one score increases, the other decreases. However, relying only on correlation between pairs of predictors has limitations, therefore, to detect multicollinearity (Daoud, 2017), I run a variance inflation factors (VIF[14]) test which showed multicollinearity between *corruption* and *age of democracy*.

It is not surprising that levels of corruption and democratic length correlate negatively as the older the democracy, the lower the levels of corruption in a country. Therefore, the effects of age of democracy and corruption on youth voter turnout are examined in separate models to account

[14] Variance Inflation Factor: a common indicator of multicollinearity

for accuracy of results[15].

Model 5.2(*b*) presented in Table 5.2 reveals that levels of corruption is a significant determinant of youth voter turnout. The odds ratios of the level of corruption is 0.974. This indicates that for each one-point increase in the corruption index of a country, the odds of voting decrease by 0.026. Countries with lower levels of corruption create an environment that predisposes its younger citizens to participate in elections. This confirms that higher levels of corruption reduce youth voter turnout. This is consistent with other studies, which report that higher levels of corruption decrease turnout because a corrupted system creates apathy and alienation among its citizens (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Sunstrom and Stockemer, 2015), which as suggested in Chapter 3 was expected to be the case for young people specifically.

In the robustness check, the same results hold even if the independent variable *corruption* is coded as a categorical variable (Appendix A, Table 9.2). In the robustness check models, *corruption* is coded as a categorical variable, where *low levels of corruption* (levels of corruption between 11 and 19) is the reference category, 1 is *medium levels of corruption* (between 23 and 31) and 2 is *high levels of corruption* (between 38 and 52). The results from the robustness check indicates that young citizens in countries with higher levels of corruption are significantly less likely to participate in elections than someone situated in a country with lower levels of corruption.

The results from the multilevel regression analyses indicate substantial negative relationship between youth turnout and levels of corruption. Therefore, H4 is supported and high corruption decreases youth voter turnout. This finding is in line with previous studies, which found that corruption accounts for lower levels of voter turnout (McCann and Dominguez 1998; Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015).

In Figure 5.6, I plot the marginal effect of levels of corruption on the probability of young individuals to vote. It is evident that higher values of the Corruption Index are associated with lower electoral participation. It is apparent in the graph that young people's levels of electoral participation are affected by the presence of corruption in a country. As expected, plotting the relationship between voting and corruption, the graph illustrates that lowest levels of corruption are associated with the highest levels of youth electoral participation. There is a statistically significant gap between levels of youth electoral participation across countries with low levels of

[15] *Age of democracy* and *corruption* are analysed in separate models throughout the thesis due to high negative correlation.

corruption and countries with high levels of corruption.

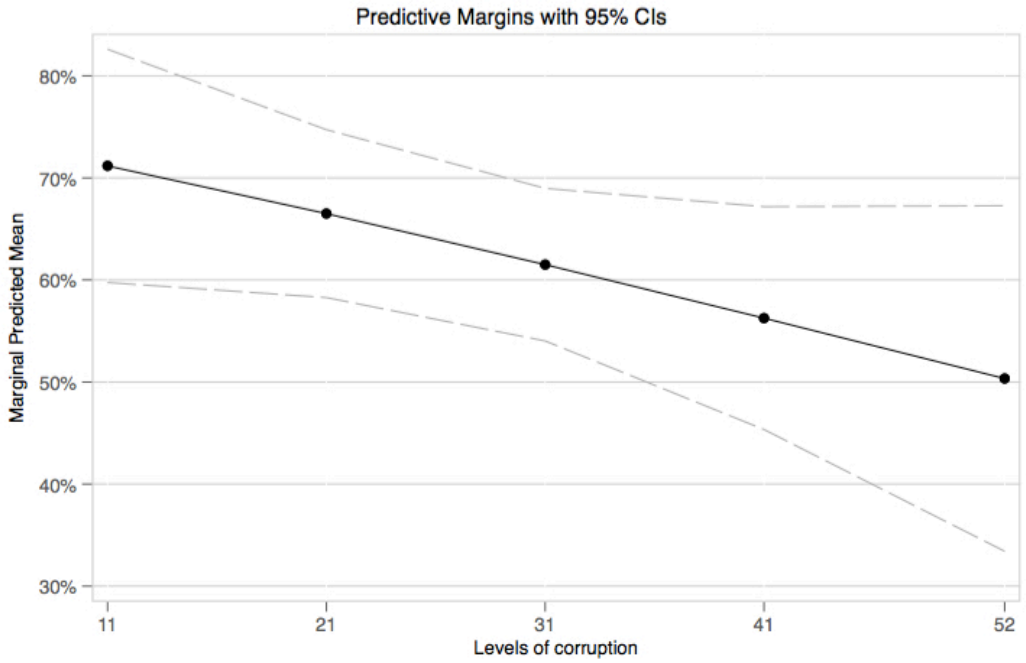

Figure 5.6 Marginal effect of *corruption* on voting

5.2.3 Electoral Systems

The results from Model 5.2(*a*) in Table 5.2 reveal that electoral system is a significant explanatory variable of youth voter turnout. The odds ratio for countries with mixed electoral system is 3.361, which indicates that the odds of voting for individuals in countries with mixed electoral system are 3.4 times the odds of voting for individuals situated in majoritarian electoral systems. The odds ratio for PR systems is 4.301 meaning that the odds of voting for individuals situated in countries that have a PR electoral system is 4.3 times the odds of voting for individuals situated in majoritarian electoral systems. In other words, individuals situated in a country with PR electoral system are 4 times more likely to vote compared to individuals situated in a country with a majoritarian electoral system. PR electoral systems have a substantive effect on the propensity of young people to vote.

The results from the multilevel logistic regression reveal that individuals situated in any other context, but majoritarian systems are more likely to vote[16]. Given this result, I conclude that there is empirical evidence that individuals situated in PR systems are in times more likely to vote than

[16] Three additional models were run with changed base category in each model and the results showed the same every time.

individuals in majoritarian electoral systems, which confirms H7. This is consistent with what one would expect from theory and is not too surprising, considering that the majority of studies related to electoral systems imply that turnout is higher in PR contexts (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). It is worth noting that at this stage of the analysis, the category "Mixed electoral system" has only 1 country in it (Germany).

In robustness checks, *electoral system* was recoded as a dichotomous variable accounting for whether a country has a PR electoral system or not (Appendix A: Table 9.3). The results from Model 5.5 indicate that the odds of voting for individuals situated in a country with a PR electoral system are 2.3 times the odds of voting for individuals situated in countries with non-PR electoral systems. This result is statistically significant at the 90 per cent confidence level.

In another robustness checks, I include a six categorical variable that accounts in detail for the type of electoral system (Appendix A: Table 9.4: Model 5.6). The results from Model 5.6 are substantively the same as the one reported in Model 5.2(*a*). The results show that PR electoral system is a significant predictor of youth voter turnout at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. Individuals situated in countries with PR (List) electoral systems are almost 5 times more likely to vote than individuals situated in countries with electoral system using first-past-the-post. The results indicate that youth propensity to vote in elections is significantly lower in FPTP, TRS, and STV electoral systems in comparison to List PR systems.

After plotting the marginal effect of electoral system on the probability of young individuals to vote in Figure 5.7, based on Model 5.2(*a*), presented in Table 5.2, it is evident that young people are most likely to vote in countries with PR electoral system.

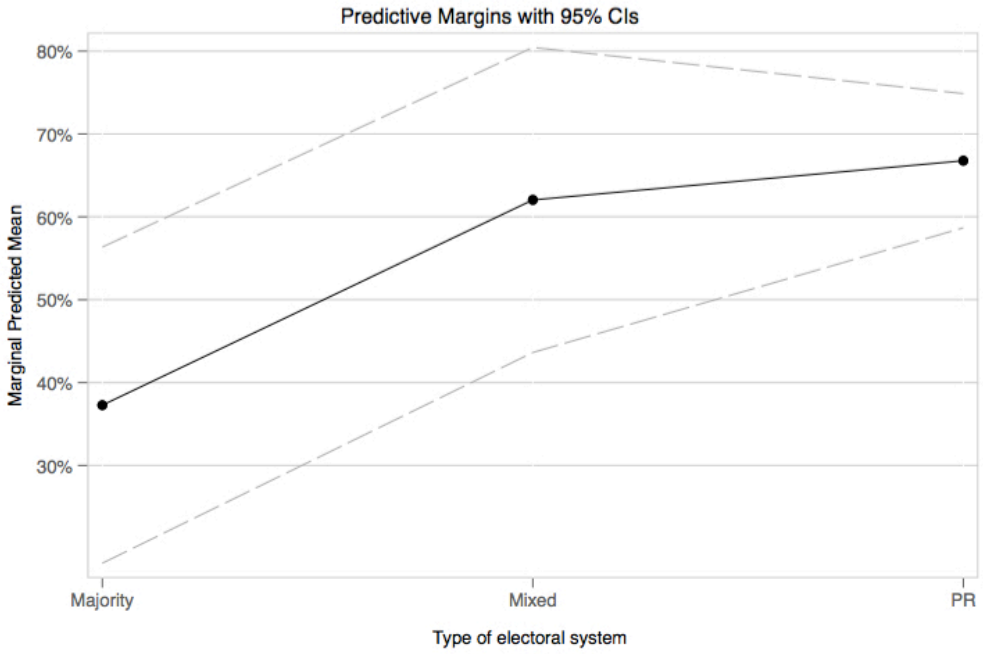

Figure 5.7 Marginal effect of *type of electoral system* on voting

5.2.4 Individual-level characteristics

The results from the multilevel regression analysis reveal that individual-level characteristics are important when it comes to participation in elections. This is consistent with previous studies investigating general turnout and youth turnout in terms of individual determinants (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba et al, 1995; McVeigh and Smith, 1999; Flanagan et al, 2012; Henn and Foard, 2014). The effects of all individual-level controls with the exception of gender are statistically significant. As expected, age has a positive and significant effect on the propensity of young people to vote at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The odds ratio for age is 1.229, which indicates that a one-year increase in the age of a respondent corresponds to an increase of 1.23 points in the odds of voting. In other words, the older the respondent, the more likely they are to vote (where the age range of respondents analysed in this chapter is 18 to 24). As expected, education is a significant predictor of youth voter turnout. The odds of casting a ballot are 3.208 times as large for individuals with higher levels of education as the odds for individuals whose education level is secondary or lower. Individuals with higher levels of education are 3 times more likely to vote than individuals with secondary or lower levels of education. The odds ratio for individuals who are currently in education is 1.697, which indicates that the odds of voting for respondents who are in education are 1.697 times as great as the odds for respondents who are in paid work. In other words, being currently in education increases the odds of voting by a factor of 1.697. Therefore, there is empirical evidence that voting is most common for young people who are currently in education and their education is higher than lower or secondary level of

education. These results once again confirm that individual-level characteristics are highly significant predictors of youth political participation. However, such explanations do not account for differences in the levels of political participation across countries.

5.3 Conclusion

The presence of young people in elections is crucial from the start as their inactivity might have potential effect on the quality of democracy (Lipset, 1981; Almond and Verba, 1989). Hence, one should analyse in-depth the phenomenon of youth political participation. Chapter 5 suggested that youth electoral participation varies across countries. This chapter used multilevel logistic regression to explore whether these differences in the levels of youth electoral participation as of 2016 are influenced by the institutional setting of the countries.

The findings from Chapter 5 confirmed the theoretical expectations of this study that the institutional settings condition the way young people participate in elections and provide new evidence on the link between age of democracy and voting. The findings suggest that young citizens situated in countries with longer democratic experience are more likely to vote. When analysing voting as a political engagement activity, the result shows that in newer democracies young citizens are less likely to vote, which is consistent with Novy and Katranak (2015) study that democratic maturity influences levels of electoral participation, and older democracies experience higher levels of voter turnout (Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Letki, 2013; Kitanova, 2019). The political environment structures voting behaviour. As evident from Almond and Verba's study (1963), the norm of being an active citizen in a society is prevalent among advanced democratic countries such as the UK and the US. These norms together with existing opportunities to participate in a country could underline and account for high levels of political participation in one country and the low levels of participation in another. In newly developed democracy, there is a lack of opportunity to participate and there is a lack of existing norms in that society. It can be concluded that the nature of political participation varies across distinctive democracies in the EU in terms of their democratic maturity.

The results showed that the presence of corruption within a country is a significantly important driver of youth electoral participation across the EU. The findings reveal that higher levels of corruption decrease youth voter turnout. Presence of corruption in a country appears to partly explain why young citizens in some EU countries vote less than their counterparts in advanced democracies.

Higher levels of corruption are linked to lower levels of electoral participation among young people. This is a particular problem in post-communist countries where corruption is on the rise.

The issue that corruption is higher in post-communist countries raises concerns about the long-term consequences for youth electoral participation. The evidence presented in this chapter suggest that presence of corruption within a country has a negative effect on youth electoral participation[17]. This finding corroborates the findings of previous studies that corruption decreases voter turnout (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015).

The analyses also reveal that individuals living in countries with PR electoral system are more likely to vote than individuals situated in majoritarian electoral systems. As found in previous empirical studies, electoral systems have influence on political participation (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013) and previous findings hold when analysing young people's propensity to vote as well, and levels of youth political participation are higher in countries with PR systems. Moreover, this argument suggests that if the electoral system is proportional, there are more options to choose from in terms of political parties, and that would provide the citizens with at least two incentives to vote.

The results showed that age of democracy, corruption, and PR electoral systems are significant determinants of the propensity of young individuals to vote. It is interesting to analyse whether or not this finding holds once the analysis features each ESS Wave (2002-2016), which is one of the focuses of Chapter 6.

The current literature that deals with young people's political participation needs an institutional explanation of youth participation as most research on youth engagement in politics has focused on the individual level determinants. In order to test more comprehensively an institutional theory of youth participation, one should study youth participation comparatively and over time. The empirical chapters that now follow explore how things change over time as having more observations allows testing more precisely for the influence of the institutional context on the propensity of young citizens to engage in formal and informal political activities.

[17] It is interesting to test whether or not this result holds when analysing corruption and electoral participation over time, as well as once analysing the whole population, or is this result distinctive for young people only.

Chapter 6 Institutional determinants of electoral, formal, and informal political participation among young people

This chapter explains the effect of the institutional setting of countries on the propensity of young individuals to engage in electoral, formal, and informal participation in the EU using European Social Survey data (ESS, 2002-2016) and a country-level dataset of institutional measures (2002-2016). This time-series cross-sectional data allows capturing not only how youth political participation changes over time in the EU, but also how variations in the institutional-level variables have an effect on young people's involvement in the political processes. Here, I go beyond analysing the most widely studied form of political engagement: voting; and analyse and draw conclusions about youth participation in formal and informal political activities as well. The results show that age of democracy is a positive and significant determinant of youth participation in elections, formal, and informal politics; indicating that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young people are to engage in politics. The findings indicate that corruption is a strong predictor of youth electoral, formal, and informal participation. The results confirm expectations that countries with higher levels of corruption experience lower youth political engagement. The results show that individuals living in countries with PR electoral systems are in times more likely to vote and participate in formal political activities. However, there is no evidence that type of electoral system has an impact on youth participation in informal politics.

The multidimensionality of the concept of political participation structures the analyses presented in this chapter. The majority of researchers who contribute to the debate on youth political engagement tend to differentiate between "institutionalised" and "non-institutionalised" political participation (Garcia-Albacete, 2014; Fox, 2015). Seldom have political participation been analysed as a multidimensional concept.

The previous chapter showed that democratic experience and levels of corruption are statistically significant determinants of the propensity of young individuals to vote, based on the 2016 ESS Wave. The longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young citizens to vote. Statistically significant results showed that higher levels of corruption decrease youth turnout. In addition, electoral system is a positive and statistically significant determinant of youth voter turnout. These results were derived from analysing the latest wave of the ESS survey (2016). This chapter builds on the findings from Chapter 5 and analyses the effects of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of young individuals to engage not

only in elections, but in formal and informal politics, and not only in 2016, but over time, specifically from 2002 to 2016.

To understand better the effects of the political context on rates of youth political participation, the following analyses consider how the effects of age of democracy, corruption, and electoral system change over time. I merge all ESS Waves (2002-2016) into one combined dataset and apply three-level multilevel logistic regression to the pooled sample. The dependent variables analysed in this chapter are *voting, formal political participation*, and *informal political participation*. Here I investigate what are the institutional determinants of youth political engagement, comparing the results for voting, formal and informal political participation. I use a time-series cross-sectional dataset (ESS, 2002-2016) merged with a country-level dataset on institutional-level variables (2002-2016) to test the theoretical framework proposed in this study and the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 3.

In the first section of this empirical chapter, I employ descriptive analyses to provide an overview of the time-series cross-sectional dataset (2002-2016) and assess any observable patterns of political participation. I explore descriptively trends of youth political participation across time and across countries. I also look at how youth political engagement varies across different modes of political participation. Specifically, I compare the involvement of young people in electoral, formal, and informal participation, and observe any variation across countries. In Section 6.2, I proceed to test the formulated hypotheses in this study in three sub-sections. First, I analyse age of democracy as a determinant of young people's propensity to engage in politics. I analyse the effect of length of democratic experience on voting, formal, and informal participation. Second, I test my hypotheses related to corruption and assess the influence of levels of corruption on electoral, formal, and informal political engagement. Third, I analyse how the type of electoral system has an influence on the propensity of young individuals to engage in different modes of political participation.

6.1 Descriptive analysis

This chapter analyses 13 EU countries that repeat in each ESS Wave (2002-2016). For more details, refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2. The analysed countries are Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. In this section, I present descriptive statistics for voting, formal participation and informal participation of young people.

Table 6.1 presents the original sample number, the numbers of missing data, and the final number of respondents after I excluded the missing values[18] from the datasets in each ESS Wave (2002-2016). See Appendix B (Table 9.6) for the number of young individuals in each country per ESS Wave.

Table 6.1 Number of respondents aged 18 to 24 per ESS Wave

	Waves							
Number of respondents aged 18 to 24	**W1 2002**	**W2 2004**	**W3 2006**	**W4 2008**	**W5 2010**	**W6 2012**	**W7 2014**	**W8 2016**
n (original sample)	2,530	2,423	2,300	2,386	2,461	2,353	2,035	1,963
k (missing data)[19]	460	551	628	704	644	668	649	674
n-k (final number)	2,070	1,872	1,672	1,682	1,817	1,685	1,386	1,289

The next set of descriptive analyses focuses on the three dependent variables: *voting*, *formal participation*, and *informal participation*. Table 6.2 shows the frequency of voting, formal, and informal participation in percentages. Table 6.2 shows that 60% of the young respondents aged 18 to 24 across all ESS Waves (2002-2016) have voted[20]. Participation in formal political activities is not common across young people, where only 11% have reported to have participated in a formal political activity such as contacting politician, government or local government official; working in a political party; being a member of a political party. This is not surprising as voting is looked at as the predominant act of institutionalised political participation. This result reinforces the decision to analyse voting and formal political engagement separately as two dependent variables. Young respondents engaged in informal political activities at much higher rate than in formal political activities. About 42% of the young respondents across all ESS Waves have participated in informal political activities such as working in another organisation; wearing or

[18] All of the missing values associated with the questions used to derive the dependent variables in this study were dropped from the dataset. In addition, missing values in terms of respondents' demographic characteristics were also dropped. In addition, to ensure comparability throughout all of the ESS Waves, only respondents eligible to vote were included. The response category "Non-eligible to vote" was dropped from the data, as these respondents cannot be considered as neither voters or non-voters.
[19] Missing data from the independent and dependent variables were dropped from each ESS Wave.
[20] Note that these figures rely on reported turnout.

displaying a badge; signing a petition; engaging in lawful demonstration; boycotting a product; involving in online political activism.

Table 6.2 Frequency of voting, formal participation, and informal participation (ESS 2002-2016)

Mode of political participation	**Participated**	**Did not participate**
Voting	60.05%	39.95%
Formal participation	11.42%	88.58%
Informal participation	41.47%	58.53%

Figures 6.1-6.3 illustrate the average young citizens' engagement in different modes of political participation across countries[21]. Figure 6.1 compares the average levels of electoral participation across the 13 countries analysed, and Figure 6.2 shows all studied countries and the average levels of youth participation in formal politics across time. Figure 6.3 illustrates levels of informal political participation across time across countries. The trends of participation across time reveal some changes between 2002 and 2016.

Figure 6.1 reveals a decrease in young citizens' electoral participation in 2008 in Sweden, Finland, and Germany. These results could be due to the emergence of the economic crisis that unfolded in 2008 in Europe. As argued in the existing literature, the effects of the economic crisis were not equal to all age groups, where numerous studies suggest that young Europeans were hit the hardest by the economic crisis, which lead to the ever-increasing youth unemployment (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Hooghe, 2012; Dietrich, 2013). This then created protests, in which young people were involved. To test these, from Figure 6.3 (looking at informal political participation) it is clear that in countries that experienced huge decrease in levels of youth electoral participation, the levels of informal participation were rising in 2008 (Germany). In Sweden and Finland, youth involvement in informal activities in 2008 was extremely high in comparison to other EU countries.

[21] It is important to note that Figures 6.1-6.3 present results of descriptive analyses only.

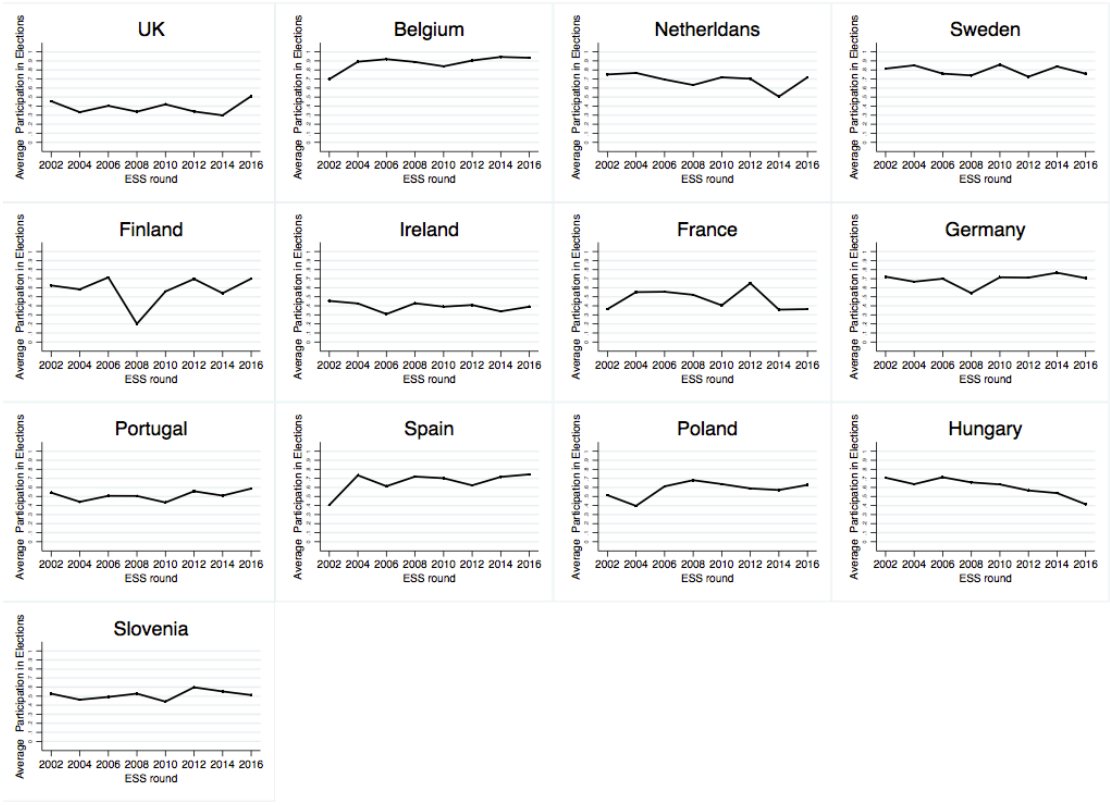

Figure 6.1 Levels of electoral participation across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002- 2016)

From Figure 6.1, it emerges that the countries with lowest electoral participation are the UK, Ireland, Portugal, and Slovenia. Belgium, Netherlands, and Sweden rank drastically higher in their rates of youth turnout. These countries are usually known for their high levels of participation, and especially Belgium where there is compulsory voting. The countries with the higher levels of youth turnout generally have a long democratic experience in comparison to the pattern observed in newly established democracies (lower levels of youth turnout).

In some countries, there is a rather stable trend of electoral participation, which suggests that youth turnout does not vary much over time, but it varies more across different countries. For instance, Sweden has relatively stable high rates of youth turnout, whereas Slovenia has stable lower rates of youth turnout across time. It seems that there is something at the country-level that accounts for the low/high levels of youth electoral participation. Understanding what drives these differences across countries is the central aim of this thesis, and thus a systematic analysis of these trends is next presented and discussed in this chapter.

Figure 6.2 shows the average levels of formal interactions across time in each country. Looking at the graphs, it is apparent that on average there are very low levels of formal interactions across all countries. It is important to note here that even in the multilevel logistic regression analysis of formal interactions, the ICC is extremely low. It can be stated that the number of respondents who participated in formal interactions is extremely low. Even though I analyse formal participation in this chapter, I do not provide detailed discussion, as I present a more in-depth discussion of formal participation in the next chapters, where levels of participation are not low to the extreme they are here.

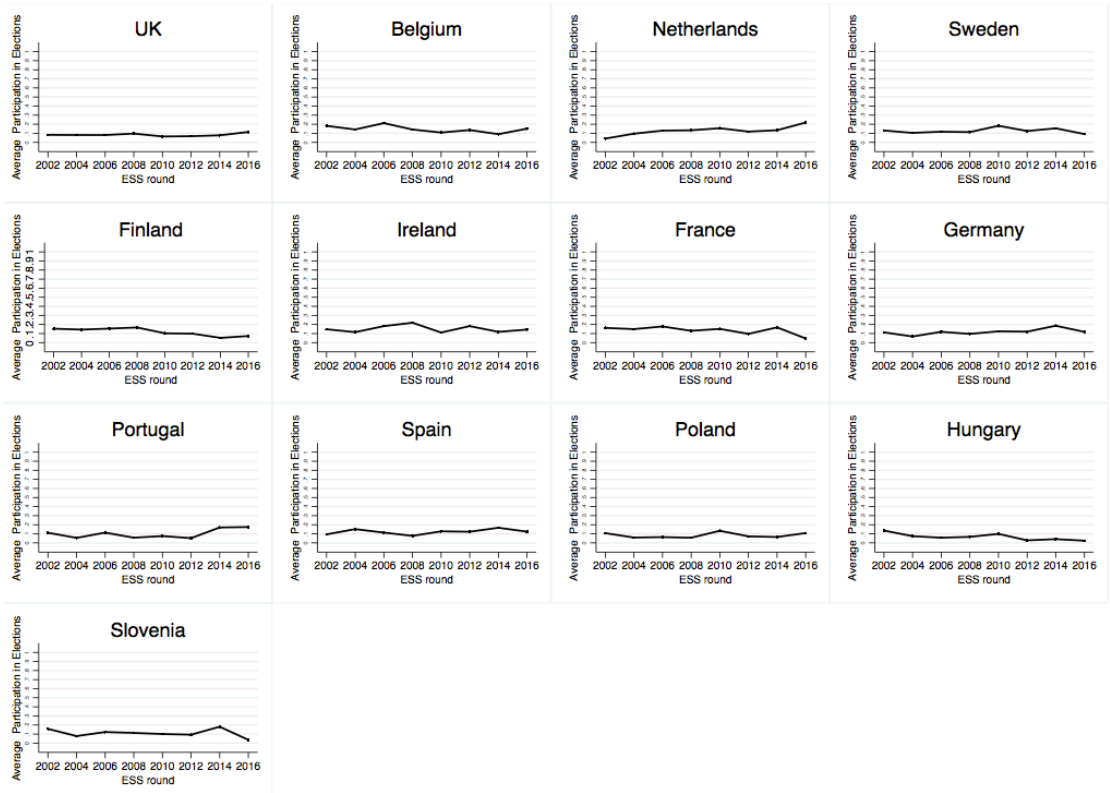

Figure 6.2 Levels of formal interactions across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002-2016)

As Figure 6.3 shows, when it comes to informal youth political participation, what emerges is that in recent years, there has been a gradual increase in the levels of informal engagement among young people. This could be due to the rise of online political engagement in recent years that started emerging with the use of social media. Especially, as noted in the Data and Measurement chapter, a question about online political activism was asked in the ESS 2016 survey. The figure shows that the larger increase in informal political participation in 2016 can be observed in almost every country with the exceptions of Poland, Hungary, and Finland. The figure also confirms that

changes in levels of youth informal participation do not occur to a great extent over time, but far more within each country.

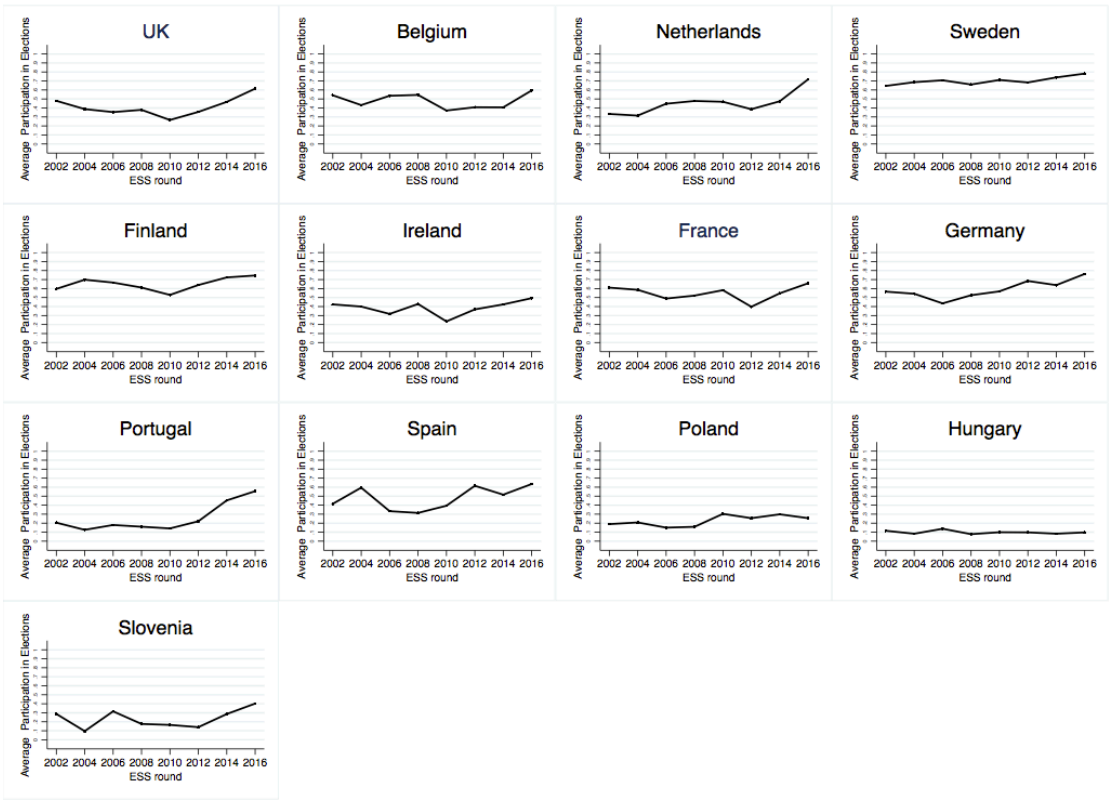

Figure 6.3 Levels of informal participation across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002-2016)

Figure 6.3 indicates that young individuals' informal political engagement is relatively high in Belgium, Sweden, and Finland, which all have PR electoral systems. The lowest levels of youth informal participation are in Portugal, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia, which all have PR electoral system. These descriptive analyses suggest that the type of electoral system is not a crucial determinant when it comes to informal participation. As seen from the graphs, countries with majoritarian electoral system (France, Germany) have higher levels of informal participation than some PR countries. It was hypothesised that countries with PR system will experience higher levels of informal political participation; however, the descriptive statistics suggest that the type of electoral system does not have a big influence on the levels of informal participation across time. Especially, given the fact that there are visible changes in the levels of informal participation across time in several countries, and the electoral system of countries is stable. However, these observations are tested later in this chapter by applying multilevel logistic regression to the ESS datasets (2002-2016).

Figure 6.4 looks descriptively into the relationship between voting, age of democracy and electoral systems in 2002 (ESS 2002). The x-axis of the graph shows the mean of voting (where voting takes the value of "1" if an individual votes, and "0" if they do not, and the 'mean' is the average across all respondents) for each country, and y-axis shows the type of electoral system and the number of years a country has been democratic for. As seen below, the mean of voting for young people is higher in countries with PR electoral systems. The lowest mean of voting is in a country with a majoritarian electoral system, and the highest in a country with a PR system. What is interesting is that within countries with PR systems, there is a huge variation in terms of their mean of voting. This graph clearly shows that this variation is due to the democratic maturity of each country. The graph shows big variations in the average levels of voting for a country that has been democratic for only 11 years and for a country that has been democratic for 91 years.

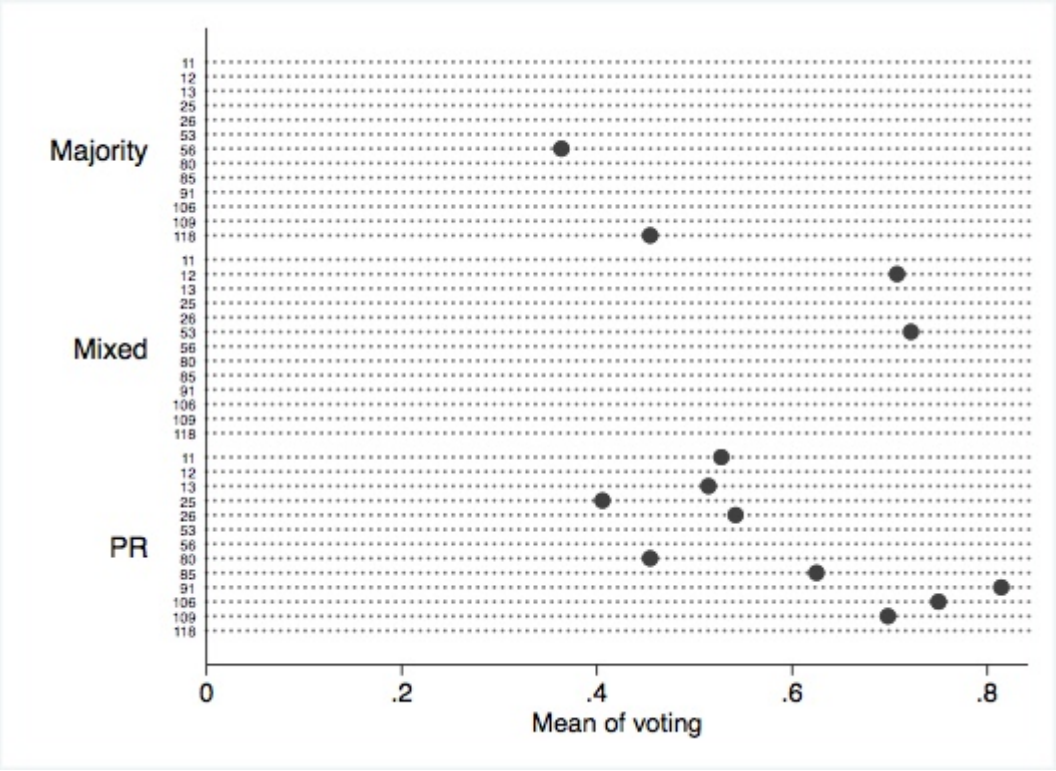

Figure 6.4 The relationship between age of democracy, electoral systems and voting (ESS 2002)

Figure 6.5 shows the mean of voting (where *voting* takes the value of "1" if an individual has voted, and "0" if they have not, and the 'mean' is the average across all respondents), formal participation (where *formal political participation* takes the value of "1" if individuals have participated in formal activities, and the value of "0" if they have not), and informal participation (where 1 means individuals have participated in informal activities and 0 means they have not) in 2012. The lowest mean of a political activity refers to formal political participation. The average levels of participation in formal activities is extremely low in 2002 among all young people. In

total, in 2002, only 13% of the respondents reported that they had participated in formal political activities.

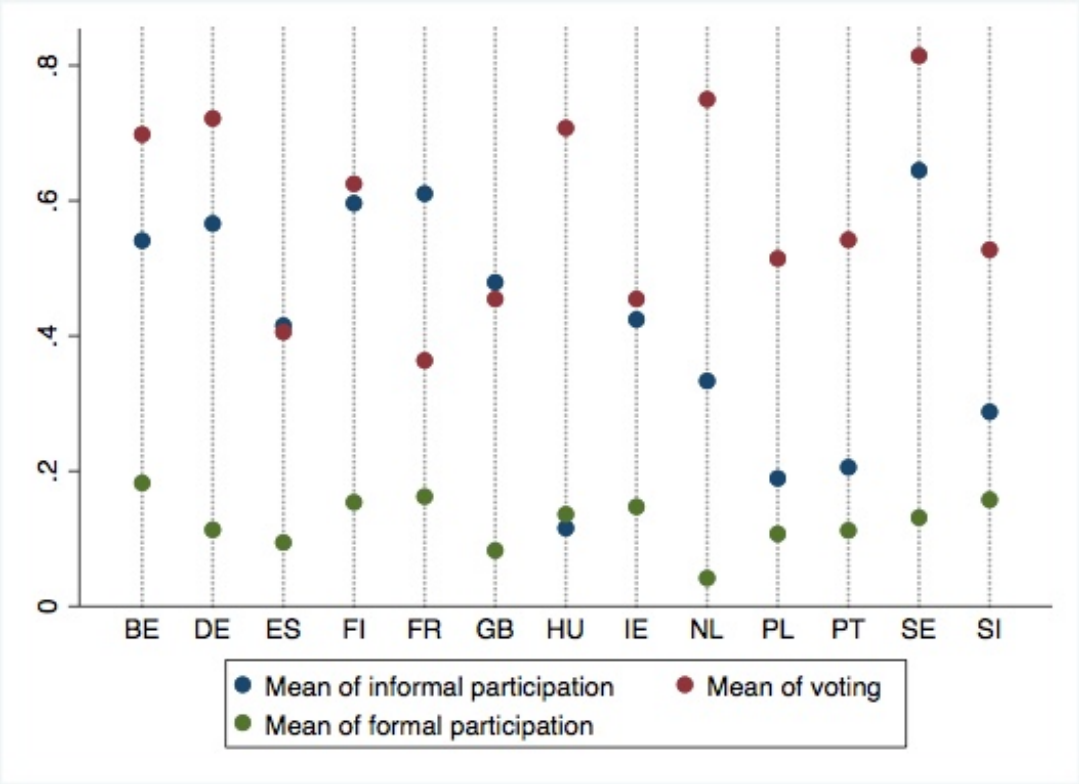

Figure 6.5 Mean of voting, formal participation, and informal participation across countries (ES 2002)

Figure 6.5 shows that the mean for voting is much higher than the mean of participating in formal activities. Across all countries, in total 58% of the respondents have voted. As seen in Figure 6.5, voting varies considerably across countries. In Sweden, there is the highest mean of voting among respondents in 2002, and France is the country with the lowest mean of voting that is below 0.4 (where 0 indicates no engagement in elections at all). The mean of participating in informal activities is relatively close to the mean of voting for particular countries. Countries such as Ireland, UK, and Finland have little difference in their average voter turnout and informal participation. Hungary is an interesting example of a huge difference between the mean of voting and informal participation, where the mean of voting and participating in formal activities are very close. To sum up, when looking at 2002, voting is the most common activity as opposed to participating in formal or informal activities among young individuals. See Appendix B (Figures 9.1-9.4) for graphs comparing the average levels of engagement in electoral, formal, and informal participation between 2002 and 2016.

Figure 6.6 presents the average young citizens' involvement in electoral and informal participation across all ESS Waves. The graph shows the relationship between voting and informal political participation, where each country is situated in a two-dimensional space to examine that

relationship between the levels of involvement in electoral and informal participation. Figure 6.6 shows that high participation in one mode of political participation does not necessarily lead to high levels of participation in the other type.

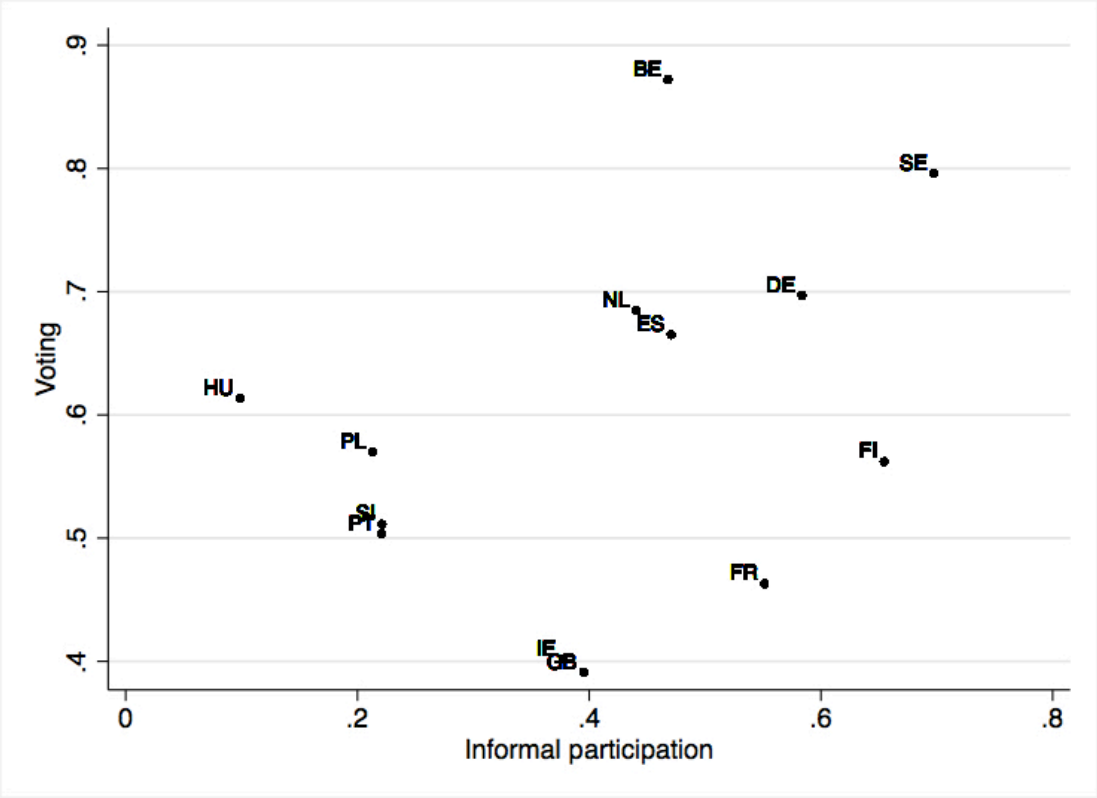

Figure 6.6 Average levels of electoral and informal participation across countries (ESS 2002-2016)[22]

Tables 6.3 presents the distribution of voting, formal participation, and informal participation, respectively, by age in all ESS Waves (2002-2016). From the tables, it is also evident that young people engage the least in formal political interactions. Looking at all ages, the descriptive analysis show that young people participate the most in elections and informal politics compared to formal participation, in which they are least likely to engage.

[22] Portugal and Slovenia slightly overlap (PT; SI).

Table 6.3 Distribution of voting, formal participation, and informal participation by age in all ESS Waves

	Voting		**Formal participation**		**Informal participation**	
Age	Participated	Not participated	Participated	Not participated	Participated	Not participated
18	**29%**	71%	**10%**	90%	**36%**	64%
19	**48%**	52%	**8%**	92%	**38%**	62%
20	**59%**	41%	**13%**	87%	**41%**	59%
21	**62%**	38%	**9%**	91%	**42%**	58%
22	**44%**	56%	**11%**	89%	**42%**	58%
23	**65%**	35%	**11%**	89%	**43%**	57%
24	**65%**	35%	**13%**	87%	**42%**	58%

To gain an initial understanding of how participation in elections is different among age groups, I examine how levels of voter turnout relate to age, where this chapter analyses only young people aged 18 to 24. In terms of electoral participation, previous research shows that levels of turnout rise with age (Milbrath, 1965; Nie, Verba and Kim, 1974). Figure 6.8 presents the trends in electoral participation across time and age by looking at the pooled ESS data (2002-2016). The figure illustrates the number of participants who voted in all of the ESS waves and their age. It suggests that as age increases so do levels of electoral participation, confirming the pattern expected. The significance of these preliminary results is tested in the following section. It is important to note that all respondents who were not eligible to vote in the national election in their country at the time of the survey was carried out (ESS, 2002-2016) in respondents' country were dropped from the dataset. For data comparison and accuracy of results, the data analyses only respondents who were eligible to vote at the time that the survey was executed. To summarise, Figure 6.7 shows that in all countries across fourteen years, the level of electoral participation is lower among people aged 19 than people aged 24. However, as this chapter focuses only on young people, it is hard to draw conclusions on whether young people participate less or more in politics than their elderly, which I do in Chapter 7.

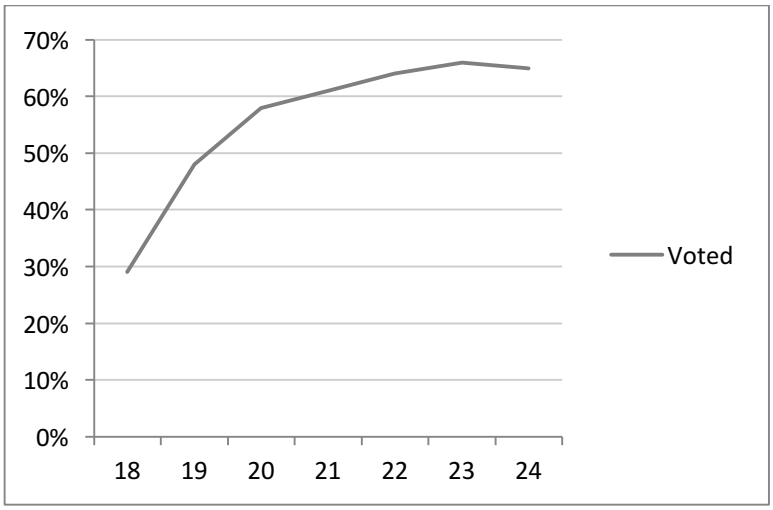

Figure 6.7 Voting by age in all ESS Waves

Is there a same pattern when looking at informal political participation? According to recent studies, the expectation here regarding the relationship between such patterns and age is different from the one for electoral participation. It is claimed that youth engage more in politics through new types of political activities, as one view is that young people nowadays are very different from their parents' generation (Norris, 2003; Spannring et al., 2008; Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2009; Bauman, 2011; Sloam, 2016). However, it is important to acknowledge that in this chapter, only young people are analysed. The expectation that young people participate more in informal activities than any other age group is tested in the next empirical chapter. By analysing the ESS (2002-2016), from the descriptive statistics, by comparing Figure 6.7 and Figure 6.8, it is apparent that young people engage more in elections than in informal activities. However, this is a descriptive result, without controlling for individual-level or country-level variables.

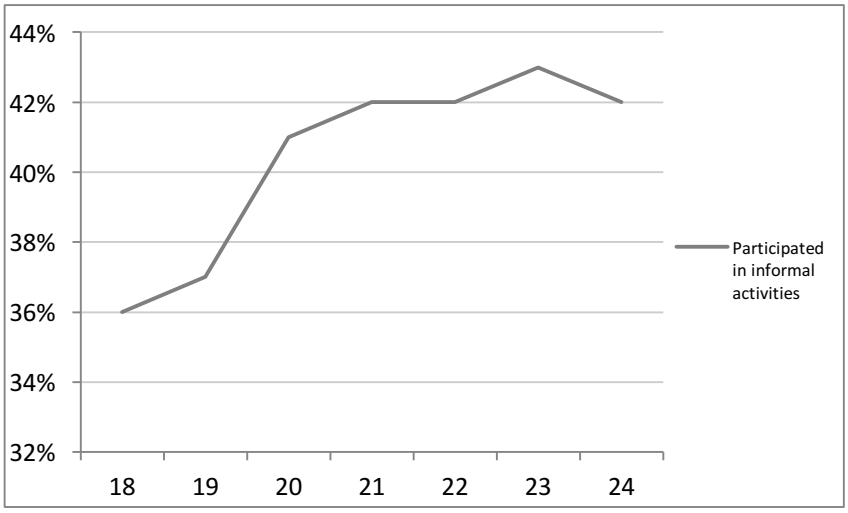

Figure 6.8 Informal participation by age in all ESS Waves

The descriptive statistics used in the first section of this empirical chapter showed that there are some discernible patterns of youth political participation. I now proceed to present and discuss the results from the multilevel regression analyses to parse out the influence of institutional-level variables on youth electoral, formal, and informal participation.

6.2 Results and discussion

I approach the study of youth political engagement beyond the established political individual-level studies and suggest that institutional factors form strong determinants of youth participation in politics in established and developed democracies in the EU. To test the theoretical framework proposed in this study that institutional-level factors influence levels of youth political participation, the following independent variables are used in the analysis*: age of democracy*; *corruption*; *electoral system*. The operationalisation of these variables is detailed in Chapter 4. Individual-level variables are also added to the analysis as follows: *age*; *levels of education*; *gender*; *current status.* Even though, individual-level characteristics are not the focus of this study, I still report and reflect on the results from the analyses as the findings contribute to the existing literature on individual-level determinants of youth political participation.

This chapter's main focus is on institutional-level characteristics as drivers of youth political engagement in the EU where I analyse the pooled ESS (2002-2016) dataset. The results and the discussion in this chapter are presented in terms of age of democracy, corruption, and electoral system, as it was expected and hypothesised that levels of youth political participation are explained by differences in the institutional setting of countries as outlined in Chapter 3.

I merged together each ESS Wave (2002-2016) into a pooled dataset to parse out the effect of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of young individuals to vote, engage in formal and informal politics. For the pooled sample, all young respondents aged 18 to 24 from ESS Wave 1 to 8 (2002-2016) were analysed. This made the sample size 13, 473, increasing the sample size from Chapter 5 by 12,184 young individuals. The pooled models allow comparing the influence of the country-level characteristics on the propensity of young individuals to engage in electoral, formal, and informal political participation.

I present the results from the three-level multilevel logistic regression models for voting (Table 6.4), formal political participation (Table 6.5), and informal political participation (Table 6.6) for the EU repeated countries over time across all ESS waves (ESS, 2002-2016). In addition to the pooled models, multilevel logistic regression is applied to each ESS Wave separately on the propensity of young individuals to vote, engage in formal politics, and engage in informal politics, where the results are presented in Appendix C: Tables 9.8 - 9.9; Tables 9.10 – 9.11; Tables 9.12 –

9.13, respectively. Each set of tables presents sixteen model specifications, two for each wave of the ESS (2002-2016), with *age of democracy* and *corruption* included in separate models as highly correlated (see Chapter 5).

6.2.1 Age of democracy

The key contextual variable I analyse is *age of democracy.* The theoretical expectation is that the longer the democratic experience, the higher the rates of youth political engagement in electoral, formal and informal participation.

6.2.1.1 Voting

This study hypothesised that youth voter turnout is higher in countries with longer democratic experience (H1). Chapter 5 showed strong support for H1, which is now tested against a time-series cross-sectional dataset including all ESS Waves (2002-2016), in comparison to Chapter 5 which analysed only ESS Wave 8 (2016).

I present the results analysing voting as a dependent variable in Table 6.4, where Model 6.1(*a*) presents the analysis with *age of democracy* and Model 6.1(*b*) presents the analysis with *corruption* (see Chapter 5 for discussion on the high correlation between the two variables, which led to analysing each of the variables in separate models). The results indicate that *age of democracy* is a strong and statistically significant predictor of electoral participation at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The length of democratic experience influences the propensity of young individuals to vote.

Table 6.4 Results from the three-level multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset of the propensity of young individuals to vote (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 6.1 (a)	**Model 6.1 (b)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.008***	
	(0.002)	
Corruption		0.986***
		(0.005)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	4.484***	3.323***
	(1.217)	(0. 881)
PR Electoral system	3.149***	2.612***
	(0.641)	(0.534)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.199***	1.199***
	(0.015)	(0.015)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.964***	1.965***
	(0.101)	(0.101)
Higher Education	2.857***	2.873***
	(0.189)	(0.190)
Male	1.093*	1.093*
	(0.042)	(0.042)
Current Status (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	1.274***	1.273***
	(0.059)	(0.059)
Current Status: Other	0.661***	0.663***
	(0.036)	(0.037)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

In Figure 6.9, I plot the marginal effect of age of democracy based on Model 6.1(*a*), Table 6.4, on the propensity of young individuals to vote. Figure 6.9 graphically presents the results and findings discussed above and shows that as democratic experience increases, so does the likelihood of voting among young citizens. The long-term functioning of democratic institutions gradually creates a more democratically active environment and being an active citizen becomes prevalent among advanced democratic countries (Barry, 1978; Mishler and Rose, 2001).

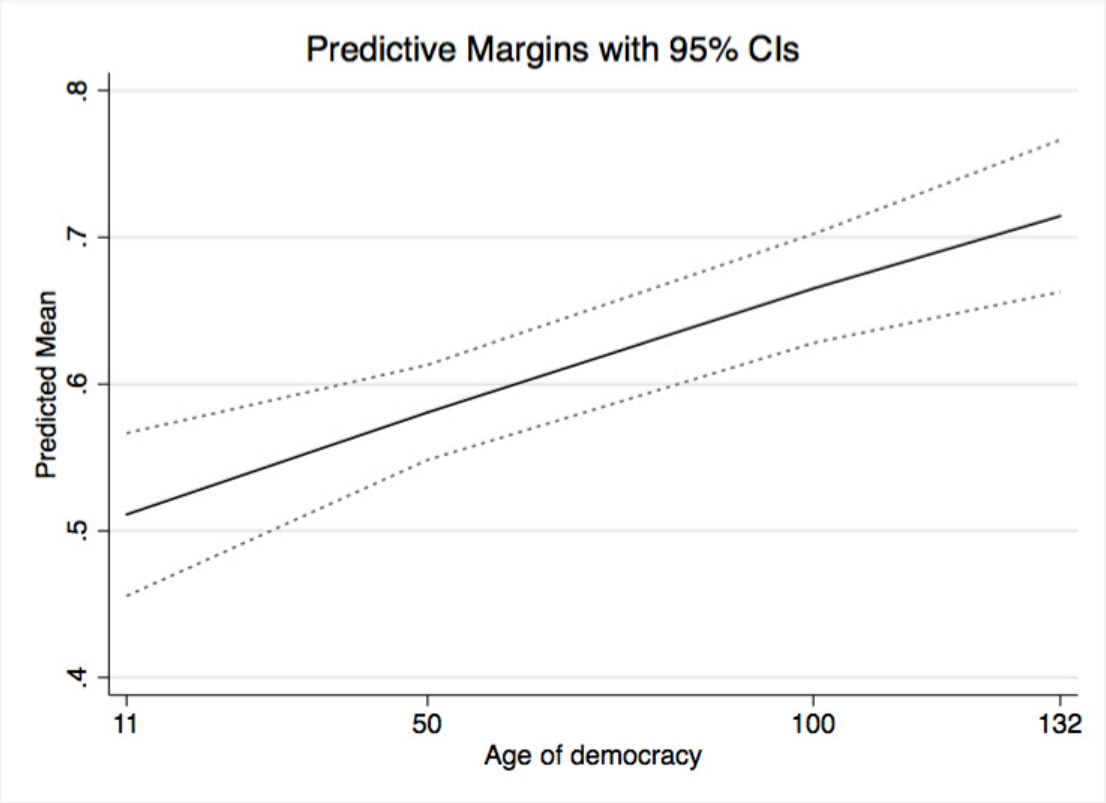

Figure 6.9 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on voting

For a more detailed picture, I run additional multilevel regression models to each ESS Wave separately (Appendix C: Table 9.8 and 9.9[23]) on determinants of youth electoral participation. Table 9.8 and Table 9.9 reveal that *age of democracy* has a significant effect on youth electoral participation in several ESS waves, and the nature of those effects is identical across the waves. The effect of democratic maturity on youth turnout is positive and significant across Waves 1, 2, 5 and 8. In 2002, the odds ratio for age of democracy is 1.009, which indicates that for each one-

[23] As stated earlier, Table 9.8 presents eight model specifications, two for each ESS Wave 1 to 4 featuring *age of democracy* and *corruption* respectively (ESS, 2002-2008). Table 9.9 presents eight model specifications, two for each ESS Wave 4 to 8 featuring *age of democracy* and *corruption* respectively (ESS, 2010-2016).

year increase in the age of democracy, the odds of voting increase by 1.01. A possible explanation for this is that once a democracy becomes "consolidated" after the 20 years' period (Gasiorowski and Power, 1998; Svolik, 2008; 2015), the effect will decrease. As country's democracy matures, its citizens are more likely to participate in politics. In 2002, the democratic experience of all democracies is the shortest compared to the other ESS Waves due to 2002 being when the first wave of the ESS surveys was released. These results indicate that electoral participation takes time to root (Converse, 1969; LeDuc, Niemi and Norris, 2010).

The multilevel logistic regression analyses presented in Table 9.8 and Table 9.9 suggest that in terms of *age of democracy*, while there is evidence that the odds of voting increase with democratic length, the effect is not statistically significant in ESS Waves 3, 4, 6, and 7 (respectively 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2014). However, the coefficient direction of *age of democracy* remains positive across all ESS waves, except in Wave 4 (2008).

For a robustness check, I run additional multilevel logistic regression analysis including all EU countries that have been surveyed in each ESS Wave (see Appendix E: Tables 9.17-9.18). The results indicate that age of democracy is a significant positive driver of the propensity of young individuals to vote in all ESS Waves (2002-2016). This result could be due to the fact that when including countries that feature only once or twice, or five times in the ESS waves, there is still a greater number of newly established democracies in each wave than when analysing only countries that repeat in all ESS Waves[24]. However, when analysing all EU countries, the coefficient direction of age of democracy remains positive and stable. The increase in the levels of significance when all countries are analysed can be simply due to the greater number of countries.

The results reported earlier in this sub-section suggest that young citizens who live in long-established democracies are more prone to vote. This confirms H1, which suggested that the longer the democratic experience, the higher the youth turnout. My finding is consistent with that of previous research where voter turnout is found to be higher in advanced democracies (Verba and Nie, 1963; Howard, 2002; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015). Most studies up to date looking at democratic experience and voter turnout have focused on all age groups, the results from a time-series cross-national dataset focusing on young people only suggest that age of democracy is a significant driver of political engagement among the most disengaged groups in politics as well.

[24] 3 out of 13 countries are newly established democracies.

6.2.1.2 Formal political participation

Even though, formal political participation is not analysed to a great extent in this chapter due to the small numbers of young individuals who participated in this activity, once combining the ESS Waves into a pooled dataset, it allows making inferences about the state of formal political participation and its determinants. Table 6.5 presents the results from the multilevel logistic regression analysis on the pooled sample, showing the effect of the institutional variables on the propensity of young individuals to engage in *formal political participation* across time (ESS, 2002-2016).

Table 6.5 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset on the propensity of young individuals to participate in formal politics (ESS 2002-2016)

	Model 6.2 (a)	**Model 6.2 (b)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.003***	
	(0.001)	
Corruption		0.991***
		(0.003)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	1.041	0.964
	(0.160)	(0. 138)
PR Electoral system	1.221**	1.157
	(0.144)	(0.131)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.003	1.001
	(0.017)	(0.017)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.352***	1.351***
	(0.109)	(0.109)
Higher Education	1.834***	1.863***
	(0.173)	(0.175)
Male	1.346***	1.344***
	(0.074)	(0.074)
Current Status (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	1.238***	1.233***
	(0.079)	(0.079)
Current Status: Other	0.023	0.032
	(0.084)	(0.085)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table 6.5 shows that as described earlier, in each wave, there is a very small number of respondents who have participated in formal interactions. This is evident in the extremely small ICC number in the analysis of each Wave separately (Appendix C: Table 9.10 and 9.11), therefore the results from each ESS Wave are not discussed here. These results confirm, therefore, that even with existing differences on macro- and micro-level, young people continue to expect to be the least active in formal interactions. However, to overcome the issue of the small proportion of

respondents and be able to draw accurate conclusions regarding the youth engagement in formal interactions, the pooled sample is used, and multilevel logistic regression is applied. Combining all waves allows making inferences about the drivers of formal interactions. The effect of age of democracy on formal political participation is positive and statistically significant at the 90 per cent confidence level. The odds ratios for *age of democracy* is 1.003, which indicates that for a one-year increase in the age of democracy, the odds of participating in formal activities increase by 1.003. Nevertheless, individuals in countries that have been democratic for longer are expected to participate more in formal interactions e.g. contacting a politician, being a member of party, and working in a political party or action group. The results show support for H2.

Figure 6.10 plots the marginal effect of age of democracy on formal participation when it comes to young people. Even though rates of formal political participation are low among young people, the graph shows that young people in established democracies are the most likely to engage in formal political activities.

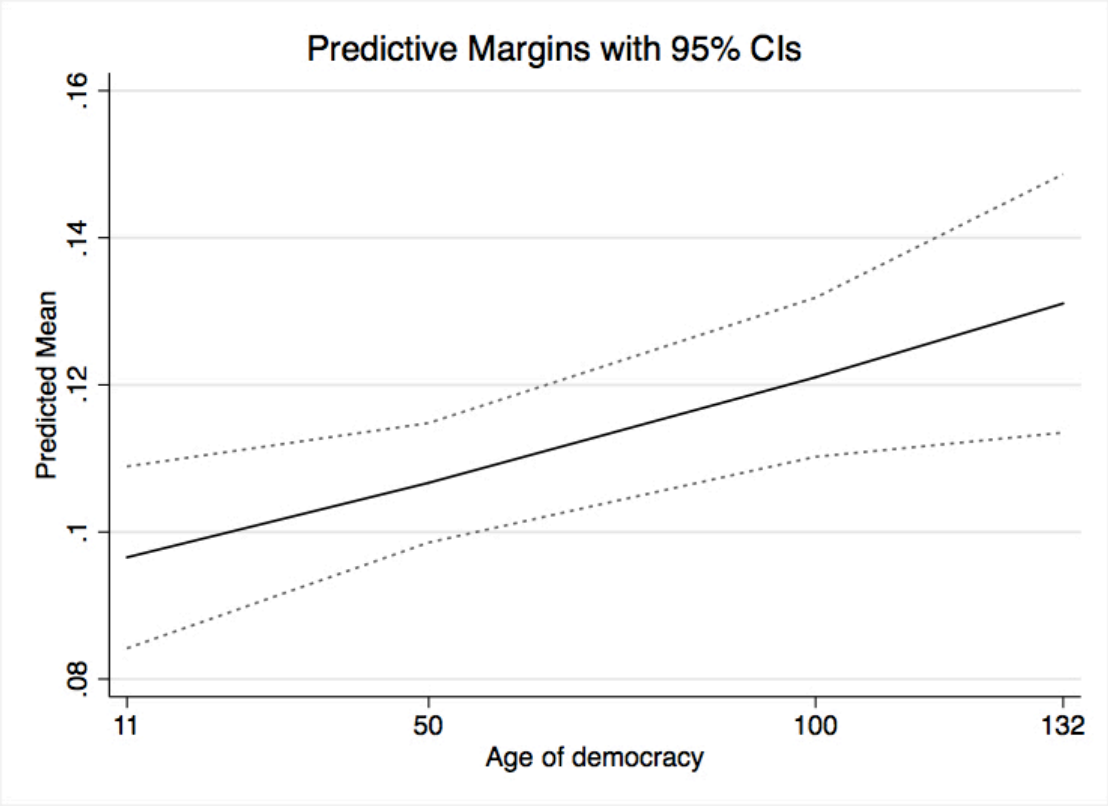

Figure 6.10 Marginal effect of age of democracy on formal political participation

6.2.1.3 Informal political participation

Before analysing informal political participation and its determinants, an observation has to be taken into account here. Conclusions regarding informal political participation are often drawn from analysing only few modes of informal political participation, such as protests. However, the

measure of informal participation in this study allows for a more comprehensive understanding of this mode of political engagement.

The results of the multilevel logistic regression on the propensity of young people to engage in informal politics from the pooled sample is presented in Table 6.6. As Table 6.6 shows, age of democracy is a statistically significant predictor at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. This result further confirms H3 that young people are more likely to engage in informal politics in long-established democracies. Prior studies about the civic participation among post-communist countries appear to be strongly suggesting that there is a democratic deficit in those newly established democracies (Bernhard and Karakoc, 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012).

Table 6.6 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset on the propensity of young individuals to participate in informal politics (ESS 2002-2016)

	Model 6.3 (a)	**Model 6.3 (b)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.015***	
	(0.002)	
Corruption		0.952***
		(0.004)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	0.982	0.727
	(0.292)	(0. 163)
PR Electoral system	1.075	0.813
	(0.237)	(0.139)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.024*	1.022*
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.715***	1.710***
	(0.094)	(0.094)
Higher Education	2.383***	2.399***
	(0.158)	(0.159)
Male	1.009	1.008
	(0.039)	(0.039)
Current Status (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	2.006***	2.002***
	(0.093)	(0.093)
Current Status: Other	0.997	1.002
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

What emerges from my findings is that in countries with shorter democratic experience, young citizens are less likely to be involved in informal political participation, as illustrated in Figure 6.11, where I plot the marginal effect of age of democracy on informal participation. Countries with shorter democratic experience might provide citizens with fewer opportunities for civic participation (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993). It is evident from the graph that as democratic experience increases, so does the likelihood of young people to engage in informal politics.

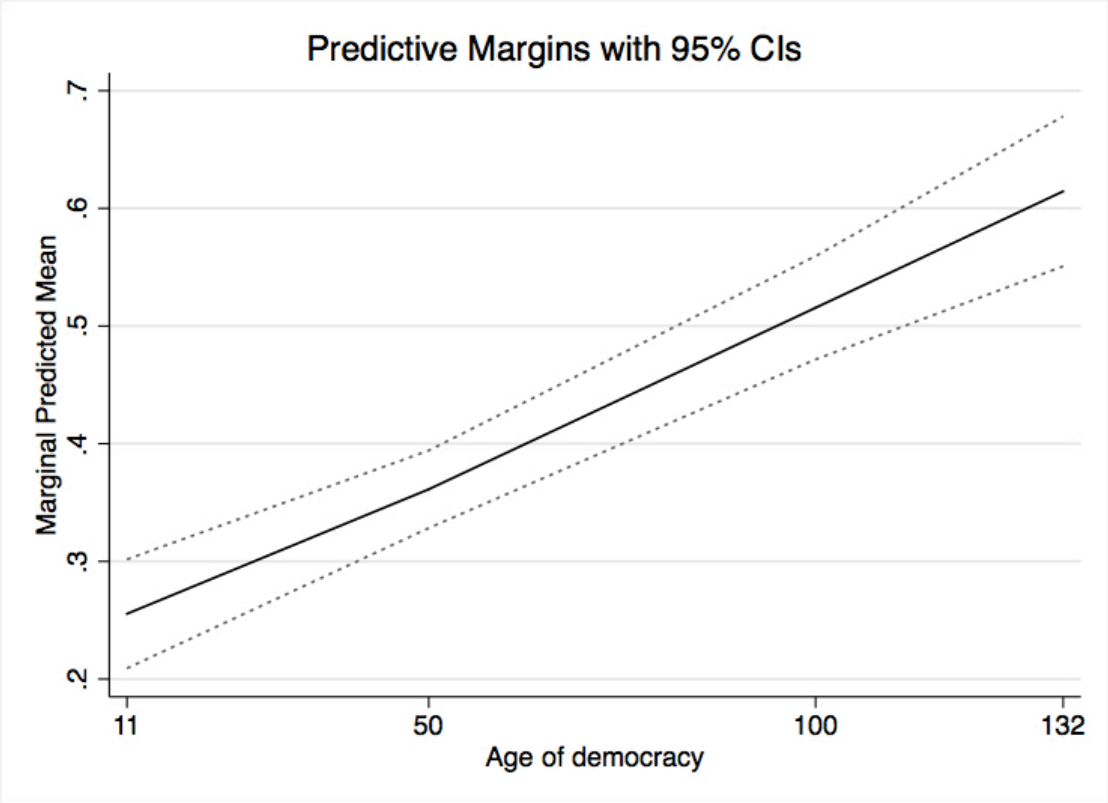

Figure 6.11 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on informal political participation

The results from the individual ESS Wave analyses presented in Appendix C: Tables 9.12-9.13 reveal that age of democracy has a positive and significant effect on the propensity of young people to engage in informal politics in the EU across all ESS Waves (2002-2016). The multilevel logistic regression models indicate a positive and statistically significant effect of age of democracy on the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal politics.

Across all Waves, young people are more likely to engage in informal politics in long-established democracies than in newer established democracies. The effect of age of democracy is bigger in 2008, where a one-year increase in the age of democracy corresponds to a 1.019 increase in the odds of participating in informal activities. A possible explanation for these results is the rise of

informal activities in 2008 following the economic crisis, which gave rise to protests and demonstrations with huge involvement from young people. As observed in Figure 6.3, which presented average levels of informal political participation in each country across time, it was clear that countries, which were hit hard during the economic crisis, had increased levels of youth informal engagement in 2008. In 2008, individuals living in countries that have been democratic for longer, participated more in informal politics.

For further robustness checks, referring back to Chapter 4 and the raised issue of the measure of *informal political participation* changing in 2016, and whether that would have an effect on the results[25], I run robustness checks using the consistent measure of *informal political participation* over time. The results are reported in Appendix E: Table 9.23. The results show that the effects of institutional-level variables are very stable so there is no concern that the slight difference in the measure leads to misleading results.

To conclude, this sub-section tested the theoretical expectations of this thesis in relation to age of democracy. The results reported earlier in this sub-section suggest that young citizens who live in long-established democracies are more prone to vote. This confirms H1, which suggest that the longer the democratic experience, the higher the youth turnout. My finding is consistent with that of previous research where voter turnout is found to be higher in advanced democracies (Almond and Verba, 1963; Howard, 2002; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015). Most studies up to date looking at democratic experience and voter turnout have focused on all age groups, the results from a time-series cross-national dataset focusing on specifically on young people suggest that democratic experience is a significant driver of political engagement among the most disengaged groups in politics as well (Kitanova, 2019).

In countries with longer democratic experience, it is more likely for developed habits of engaging with the political system to exist (Jackman and Miller, 2004). Young individuals in established democracies are being socialised in a certain political culture, which has a long history of democratic elections; higher trust in democracy; and more political opportunities, which all have positive influence on the propensity of young individuals from such countries to be voting.

In addition, in countries where democratic experience is new, there are not necessary examples in the family to participate in politics, existing social traditions, or partisanship (Converse, 1969; LeDuc, Niemi and Norris, 2010). These would have an influence on the lower likelihood of engaging in elections (Dalton, 2016).

[25] Refer to Chapter 4.

The findings in this chapter confirm H2, which expected that formal political participation among young people is higher in countries that have longer democratic experience. The propensity to be active in formal activities increases with the number of years a country has been a democracy. My findings support that of others (Szczerbiak, 2001, Fieldhouse et al., 2007) and show that when it comes to engagement with political parties, young people are also less likely to be active in such activity in newly established democracies.

There is a clear gradient here and participation in informal politics is most common for young citizens living in advanced democracies. This result further confirms H3 that young people are more likely to engage in informal politics in long established democracies. Prior studies about the civic participation among post-communist countries appear to be strongly suggesting that there is a democratic deficit in those newly established democracies (Howard, 2003; Bernhard and Karakoc, 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012). This study show support for the argument that newly democratised countries might provide citizens with fewer opportunities for participation in politics (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993). This was found to be the case in my study as well once looking specifically at young people (Robertson, 2009).

Another possible explanation for these results is that in advanced democracies, parents are more likely to have participated themselves in alternative forms of political engagement which could have an effect on their children having greater participation in such activities as well (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998; Cross and Young, 2008).

6.2.2 Corruption

As identified in Chapter 5, *corruption* and *age of democracy* are highly correlated, which is not surprising as newly democratised countries have higher levels of corruption. Therefore, the effect of age of democracy and corruption on the propensity of young individuals to engage in politics is examined in separate models to account for accuracy of results.

6.2.2.1 Voting

As hypothesised, corruption is a statistically significant explanatory variable in the pooled models at the 99 per cent confidence level, presented in Table 6.4, Model 6.1(*b*). The odds ratio for levels of corruption is 0.986, which indicates that a one-point increase in the corruption index of a country corresponds to a decrease of 0.014 in the odds of voting. This result is illustrated graphically in Figure 6.12, where it is apparent that as levels of corruption increase, the likelihood of voting decreases. Young people are more likely to vote when they are situated in a country with low levels of corruption.

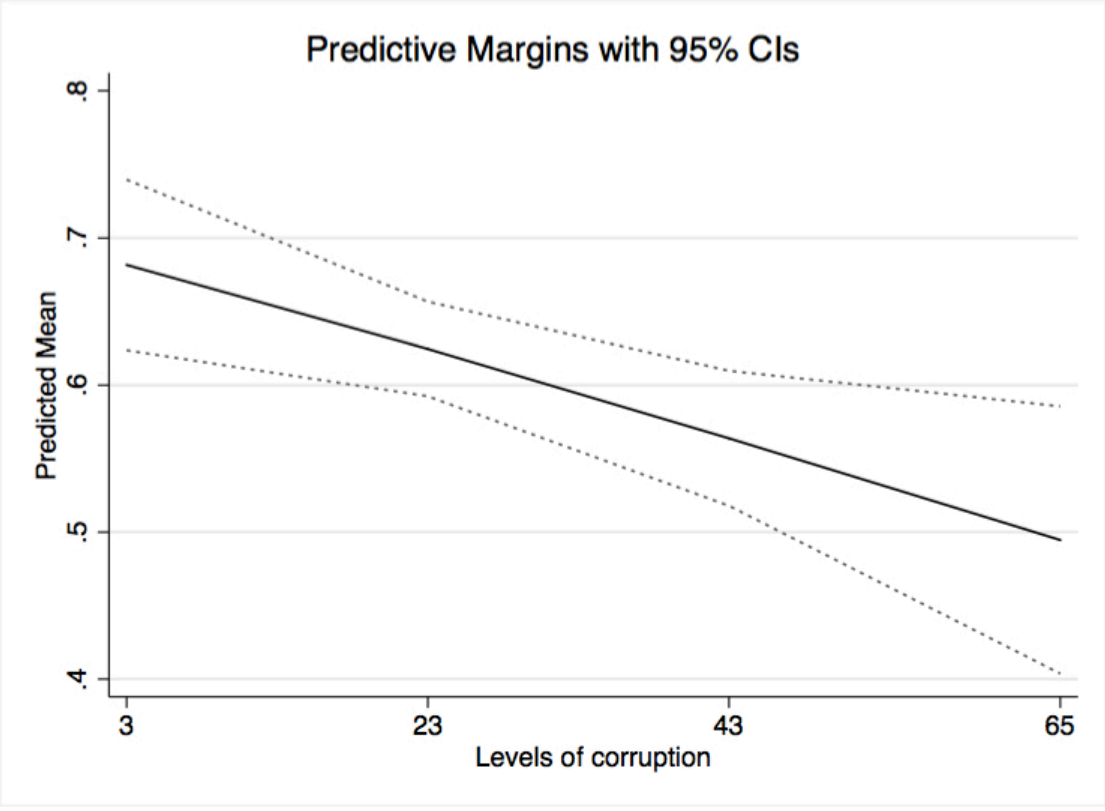

Figure 6.12 Marginal effect of *levels of corruption* on voting

For robustness checks, Appendix C: Table 9.8 and Table 9.9 present the results from the multilevel regression analysis and the effects of the explanatory variables on the propensity of young individuals to vote in each ESS Wave (2002-2016). The analyses show that the significant effect of corruption varies across Waves[26]. The coefficient direction of *corruption* remains negative across all waves. The effect of electoral system reduces its significance as well in the multilevel models when corruption is included. Therefore, a possible explanation for the mixed levels of significance for *corruption* could be due to an overlapping with some other measures in the model.

[26] Corruption is statistically significant in Waves 1, 2 and 8 (2002, 2004, and 2016 respectively).

The findings here showed strong support for H4, which suggested that high levels of corruption decrease youth turnout., In accordance with the present results, previous studies have also demonstrated that corruption decreases voter turnout (Simpser, 2005; Kostadinova, 2009; Stockemer, 2013). The presence of corruption corrodes citizens' trust in the political system, which leads to general cynicism, distrust and apathy among young people (Rothstein and Stolle, 2008; Dahlberg and Solevid, 2016). High levels of corruption provoke alienation among young people, disengage them and make them feel powerless as they feel that it is not worth participating in politics. Results showed a strong effect of high presence of corruption on voting as a political participation activity when it comes to young people.

6.2.2.2 Formal political participation

Referring to Table 6.5, the results from Model 6.2 (*b*) indicate that the odds ratio of corruption is 0.991. The effect of corruption remains negative when analysing another form of traditional political participation: engagement in formal activities. The odds ratios for levels of corruption indicate that for each one-point increase in the corruption index of a country, the odds of engaging in formal interactions decrease by 0.009. This result is significant at the 95 per cent confidence level and confirms that when it comes to type of formal political participation, young citizens are more likely to engage in such activities if there are low levels of corruption in the country. It might be that countries with higher levels of corruption create an environment that alienates its citizens form participating in formal activities.

The marginal effect of age of democracy and corruption on formal political participation are presented in Figure 6.13. Taking into account that youth formal participation is extremely low, the graph still shows that young people situated in low corrupted countries tend to be more likely to participate in the formal political activities within that country. Here, H5 gains support and I conclude that high levels of corruption decrease youth participation as it encourages alienation from traditional forms of political participation such as being a member of a political party, working for a political party, contacting a politician (Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015).

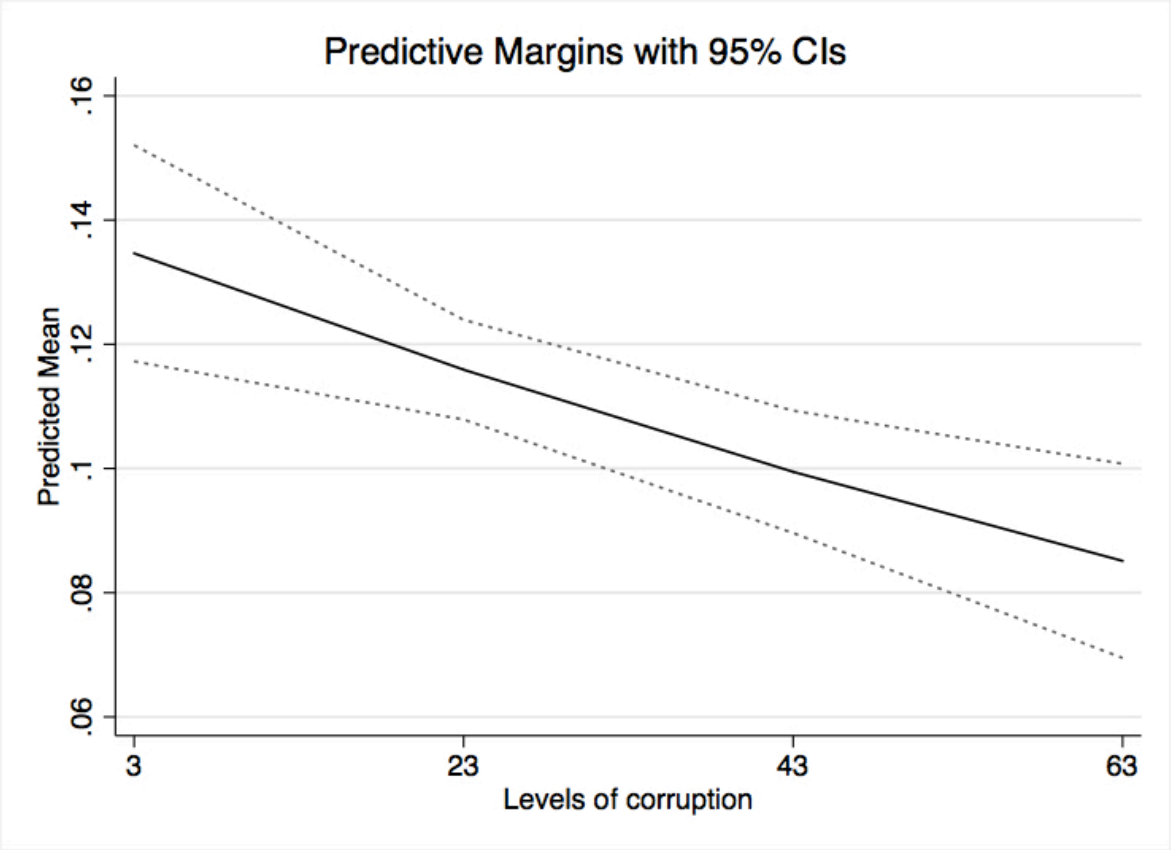

Figure 6.13 Marginal effect of levels of corruption on formal political participation

6.2.2.3 Informal political participation

The results from the pooled sample presented in Table 6.6 (Model 6.3 (*b*)) show that *corruption* is a statistically significant explanatory variable at the 90 per cent confidence level. The odds ratios indicate that for each one-point increase in the corruption index, the odds of participating in informal politics decreases by 0.008. From the data, it is apparent that individuals living in countries with higher levels of corruption will be alienated to participate in informal politics. The presence of corruption depresses youth political participation in general. H6 is confirmed as it suggested that young people situated in highly corrupted countries are less likely to engage in informal political activities. According to these findings, I can infer that the higher the levels of corruption, the less likely are young people to engage in politics.

There are several possible explanations for these results. First, it might be the case that corruption increases distrust in citizens, and I would expect this to be particularly dominant for young people, who are already evidenced to trust politicians the least. This would lead to young people becoming even less likely to trust the corrupted environment and this will drive disengagement in politics. This could make young people see no point in being politically active given the high levels of corruption (British Council, 2009). Second, a possible explanation for these results is that high levels of corruption take a prominent account for making citizens feel they

have no power in influencing in any way political system as everything operates in a corrupted way. Young people could feel that their act of protest or boycotting would not be able to influence the corrupted government. Figure 6.14 portrays that relationship between corruption and informal political participation, and it is evident that as the levels of corruption increase, the more likely are young citizens to be engaged in informal politics.

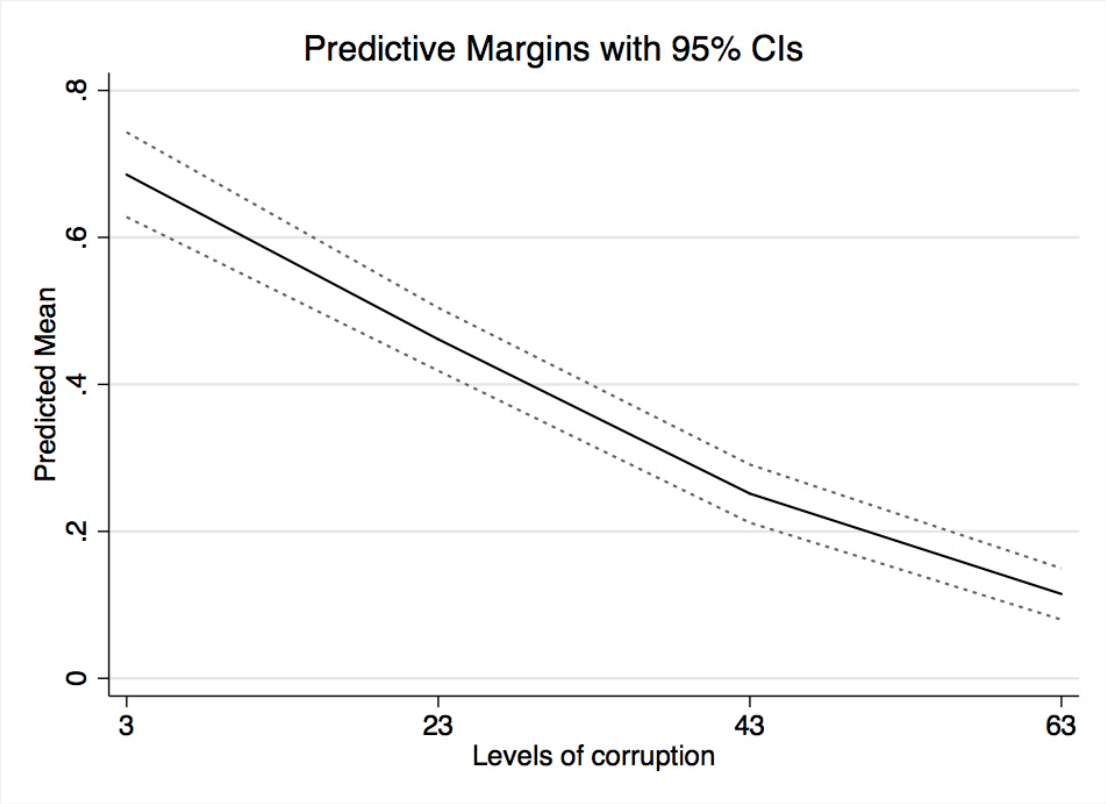

Figure 6.14 Marginal effect of *levels of corruption* on informal political participation

The results from the multilevel logistic regression investigating the effects of the explanatory variables on the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal politics in each Wave are presented in Table 9.12 and Table 9.13. The analyses reveal that *corruption* has a statistically significant effect at the 99 per cent confidence level on the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal politics across all waves (ESS, 2002-2016). Drawing on these results, corruption has the most bearing on young individuals' propensity to participate in informal political activities.

The results suggest that the odds of participating in informal activities decrease with each one-unit increase in the corruption index within a country across each ESS Wave, which implies that countries with lower levels of corruption create an environment that predisposes its citizens to engage in informal politics as well.

These findings show strong support for H6, that high levels of corruption lead to a decrease in the levels of youth political engagement in informal activities. Corruption showed to have a strong

influence on the decision whether or not to engage in informal activities. A possible explanation here is that young individuals are likely to have higher levels of distrust in the democratic institutions than in advanced democracies (Linz and Stepan, 1996, Mischler and Rose, 2001).

My findings show support for the argument and findings of previous research focused specifically on young people that in countries with high levels of corruption, it blocks youth political engagement in formal and informal activities as young citizens feel they have no power over the decision-making process and against the authorities within their country (Robertson, 2009).

6.2.3 Electoral system

In this study, I hypothesised that electoral system is a significant predictor of youth political participation. It is expected that in countries with PR electoral system, youth political participation in electoral, formal, and informal engagement is higher.

6.2.3.1 Voting

As evident in Table 6.4 (Model 6.1(*a*)), which presents the results from the analyses of the pooled dataset, electoral system is a positive and statistically significant driver of youth electoral participation at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The odds ratio for PR electoral systems is 3.149 meaning that the odds of voting for individuals situated in countries with PR systems are 3.1 times the odds of voting for individuals living in countries with majoritarian electoral systems.

This finding provides strong support for H7, which suggested that youth turnout is higher in countries with PR electoral systems. The statistically significant result indicates that individuals situated in countries with PR electoral systems are in times more likely to participate in elections than individuals situated in countries with majoritarian electoral systems.

As Appendix C: Table 9.8 reveals, the first four models show that the effect of electoral system on the propensity of young people to vote is positive and statistically significant. *Electoral system* has no effect on youth turnout in Waves 3 and 4. The coefficients remain positive. However, these inconsistent findings are not surprising given the small variation in the analysis in terms of the number of countries in each category of the variable *electoral system*[27]. Thus, there is little variation in this variable as most of the studied EU countries have PR electoral system. Table 9.9

[27] None of the studied newly established democracies has a majoritarian electoral system, however Hungary has a mixed electoral system, and therefore not all of the newly democratised countries have PR electoral system.

(Appendix C) indicates that electoral system is a statistically significant predictor of voting. To be more specific, a PR electoral system has a positive and statistically significant effect on the propensity of young individuals to vote in all of the models presented in Table 6.4**.** Moreover, these findings indicate that PR systems are effective in increasing electoral engagement.

The result shows that the electoral system is a significant driver of levels of youth electoral participation as suggested in my theoretical framework. These findings broadly support the work of other studies in this area linking the type of electoral system with levels of political participation (Lakeman, 1974; Powell, 1980; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Siaroff and Meyer, 2002).

These concerns are attenuated by several factors. First, given that in PR systems, every vote counts, young people should have stronger incentive to vote than in a majoritarian electoral system. Second, related to the Dueverger's law (1969), PR systems create multipartysm, and it is expected that more political parties will participate in the electoral race, and small political parties are not likely to be excluded from that race. This would encourage young people to vote as they could have greater choice. Given the PR electoral system, political parties should have stronger incentive to perform well in elections, and to address issues that all citizens care about. When it comes to young people, this should be particularly the case for smaller parties, which would try to attract the youth vote (e.g. Green Party in the UK; Pirate Party in Iceland; Podemos in Spain).

6.2.3.2 Formal political participation

Once analysing formal political participation, the results presented in Table 6.5, Model 7.2(*a*) showed that type of electoral system accounts for the propensity of young individuals to be active in formal politics. The odds of engaging in formal political activities for individuals situated in countries with PR systems are 1.22 times the odds of voting for individuals living in countries with majoritarian electoral system. This result provides support for H8 that formal youth political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral systems.

6.2.3.3 Informal political participation

The results from the analysis of the pooled sample presented in Table 6.6, Model 6.3(a) suggest that electoral system is a non-significant predictor of informal youth political engagement. This rejects H9, which hypothesised that informal youth political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral system. Therefore, the result implies that determinants of formal and informal political participation once analysing formal institutions show differences when it comes to young Europeans. Although there are different debates in the current literature, it is expected that if you

participate in one form of political participation, you are more likely to participate in another as well. However, PR electoral system has a positive effect on the propensity to engage in informal politics.

The results from the separate analyses of each ESS Wave (Appendix C: Table 9.12 and Table 9.13) are consistent with the results from the pooled dataset, showing that PR electoral system is a non-significant driver of youth informal engagement. In line with the results from the descriptive statistics, electoral system has no significant influence on the propensity of young people to engage in informal politics. These findings suggest that young people's propensity to work in engage in protests, lawful demonstrations, petitions singing, work in another organisation, wear or display a badge, boycott a product, engage in online political activism, is not conditional on the type of electoral system of the country they live in. An explanation for this result could be that electoral system are connected to formal political processes, and therefore such effects are hard to identify in informal activities.

When it comes to informal youth participation, other factors are more influential than electoral systems when it comes to youth informal political participation. There is no evidence from my analyses to show support the contention that if the electoral system influences participation in elections, it would also influence engagement in other political activities. Furthermore, it was expected that if young people were politically more active in PR electoral systems when it comes to voting, this would be the case for informal activities as well. If anything, the opposite appears to be the case with the significant positive effect of electoral systems disappearing when analysing youth informal participation.

6.2.4 Individual-level characteristics

Even though, the main focus of this study is not on the individual-level determinants of youth political participation, it is important to acknowledge and concisely discuss the results related to the individual-level characteristics. The multilevel logistic regression analyses (Table 6.4) show that *age* is a positive statistically significant predictor of youth electoral participation at the 99 per cent confidence level. This result is consistent across all ESS Waves. The analyses produced results, which corroborate the findings of a great deal of previous research on the topic of political participation (Verba et al., 1995; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces, 2010).

When it comes to informal political participation (Table 6.5), *age* is not significant in any wave, except in Wave 8. The results are not surprising considering that young people are believed to generally engage more in informal versus formal politics. These findings suggest that when it

comes to informal political participation, all young people regardless if they are aged 18 or 24 participate equally in informal activities. However, in Wave 8, age is a significant driver of the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal activities at the 95 per cent confidence level. This rather interesting result could be due to the additional question featuring in Wave 8: 'During the last 12 months, have you posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?'.

The results reveal that levels of education have strong positive significant effect on youth political participation. Levels of *education* is statistically significant predictor of political engagement among young people in both electoral and informal political participation in all ESS Waves. These results also accord with earlier studies, which show that education has most bearing on levels of youth political involvement (Tenn, 2007; Sloam, 2012; Holmes and Manning, 2013; Henn and Foard, 2014). As the level of education increases, so does level of political participation, regardless of the mode of political participation.

In contrast to some earlier studies, the results from the multilevel logistic regression show that gender is not statistically significant predictor of political engagement regardless of the mode of participation. This result is contrary to previous studies, which have suggested that gender is one of the significant determinants of political participation, especially when it comes to voting. However, in my study, I analysed only young people and it is evident that when it comes to young people, gender is not significant driver of the propensity of young citizens to engage in politics[28].

The current status of young individuals has a significant role in the decision of whether or not to participate in politics. The level of significance of the *current status* of the respondents varies across waves, however, *current status* continued to have a positive and significant effect on electoral participation during each wave.

Young individuals who are currently in education as opposed to in paid work are in times more likely to engage in informal political activities. These results are positive and statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level in all ESS Waves (2002-2016). Overall, to conclude, this study contributes to the literature on individual-level determinants of youth political participation and

[28] Looking at Appendix C, it is interesting to note that *gender* become statistically significant at the 90 per cent confidence level in Wave 6. This inconsistency might be due to a disproportion in the numbers of males and females in Wave 6. Surprisingly, *gender* was found to have a statistically significant positive effect on formal interactions, as being male increase the odds of engaging in formal interactions. It was surprising as well that *age* was insignificant, however, the effect of age on the propensity of young individuals to engage in formal interactions remained positive.

confirms findings from previous studies about the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and youth engagement in politics.

Table 6.7 presents a summary of the results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to engage in voting and informal political activities (ESS, 2002-2016) and the level of significance. Effects that were not significant are marked with '–'. Age of democracy and levels of corruption are significant predictors of the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal politics. However, once analysing voting, age of democracy and levels of corruption shows as significant predictors only in several waves. PR electoral system has no effect on the propensity of young people to engage in informal politics.

Table 6.7 A summary table of multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to engage in voting and informal political activities (ESS, 2002-2016)

Voting								
	Wave 1 2002	Wave 2 2004	Wave 3 2006	Wave 4 2008	Wave 5 2010	Wave 6 2012	Wave 7 2014	Wave 8 2016
Age of democracy	***	**	–	–	**	–	–	*
Corruption	**	*	–	–	–	–	–	*
PR Electoral systems[29]	***	**	–	–	***	*	**	***
Informal political participation								
	Wave 1 2002	Wave 2 2004	Wave 3 2006	Wave 4 2008	Wave 5 2010	Wave 6 2012	Wave 7 2014	Wave 8 2016
Age of democracy	***	**	***	***	**	**	**	**
Corruption	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
PR Electoral systems	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

For further robustness checks, I run additional three-level multilevel logistic regression models on the propensity of young individuals to engage in electoral, formal and informal participation, this time controlling for ESS Waves. The results are presented in Appendix D. It is evident from Table 9.14 (Appendix D) that youth political engagement in elections is declining since 2002, with statistically significant declines in 2008 and 2014. In every year post 2002, young citizens are less likely to vote. Table 9.15 reports the results in relation to formal political participation and suggest that youth participation in formal activities is declining as well. Looking at Table 9.16 (Appendix

[29] Results from the models controlling for age of democracy.

D), the results show that in general youth participation in informal politics is lower in each year after 2002 in comparison to 2002. The exception being 2016, where results show that youth engagement in informal politics is higher than in 2002 and this result is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The odds ratio for 2016 is 1.396 meaning that the odds of young individuals participating in informal political activities for individuals in 2016 are 40% the odds of young individuals engaging in informal politics in 2002[30]. Therefore, young people might be becoming more engaged nowadays in informal political activities.

6.3 Conclusion

It was argued earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 3) that the age of democracy would be positively related to the propensity of young people to turn out to vote. By being situated in a country with a longer democratic experience, young individuals are more likely to engage in the most visible form of political participation. In countries with longer democratic experience, there are existing developed norms, habits of engaging with the political system; individuals are socialised in a certain political culture; have reportedly higher trust in democracy; and more political opportunities. The evidence presented here provides support for this argument and age of democracy is a determinant of youth voter turnout. Young people in older democracies are more likely to vote than young people in new democracies. Based on analysis of each individual wave of the ESS, it appears that while there is evidence of a positive and significant relationship between age of democracy and youth political participation, the effect of democratic maturity is clearer when it comes to informal political participation. This could be explained by the existing arguments in the literature that there is an existing deficit in civic participation of post-communist countries (Howard, 2003). The lower likelihood of engaging in informal political activities of young people in new democracies could be due to the argument that the shorter democratic experience might provide citizens with fewer opportunities for civic participation, and thereby this creates lower citizen engagement (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993).

The findings indicate that corruption is a strong predictor of youth electoral participation, formal participation, and informal participation. The results confirm the theoretical expectations of this thesis outlined in Chapter 3 that countries with higher levels of corruption experience lower youth

[30] As mentioned in Chapter 4, in ESS Wave 8 (2016), a question regarding individuals' online political activism was asked. As reflected in Chapter 2, online activism is considered the latest innovation and addition to the expanding repertoire of participation activities, which is also reflected in the inclusion of such question in the latest wave of the ESS survey (2016). However, as robustness checks earlier in this chapter showed, running the analyses with the dependent variable *informal political participation* accounting for the inclusion of the question, and different analyses without it, shows no differences in the results.

political engagement. My findings are in line with previous research and arguments suggesting that there is a strong a negative relationship between corruption and political participation (Dominguez and McCann, 1998; Simpser, 2005; Kostadinova, 2009; Stockemer et al., 2012).

Electoral systems are found to be a significant predictor of youth voter turnout, where young individuals in PR electoral systems are in times more likely to vote than individuals in majoritarian ones. This finding could be due to that in PR system there is an apparent impact which motivates people to vote and makes them feel their vote counts without "wasting" votes (Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). In addition, in PR systems, there are more parties that take part in the process of voter mobilisation (Jackman, 1987; Koopmans and Kriesi, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998).

The type of electoral system shows no effect on informal political participation which provides support for the conceptual premise that informal political participation is a distinctive type of political engagement and young people' engagement in it is influenced through different factors. A possible explanation for these results might be that electoral systems cannot serve as a barrier or influencer of the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal activities. There are other factors that have an effect on young people's inclination to become politically active in informal activities. This result might be explained by the fact that the electoral system has no direct impact on informal politics as it has on formal ones.

The next chapter analyses all individuals and shows how the institutional context mediates the relationship between age and voting, formal, and informal participation.

Chapter 7 The mediating effects of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the relationship between age and political engagement

This final empirical chapter sets out to examine the influence of age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of individuals to participate in politics at different ages. The aim of this chapter is therefore to build up a detailed picture of the influence of the dimensions of the institutional context on the levels of political participation across EU countries. Therefore, I test the proposed theoretical framework in this study on all individuals using the European Social Survey (2002-2016) and the country-level dataset of institutional measures (2002-2016) compiled from existing sources specifically for the purposes of this study. I apply multilevel logistic regression to each ESS wave separately, as well as to the pooled dataset which consists of 184,913 individuals. This chapter looks at how the effect of age is mediated by institutional-level variables. The findings offer insights on how institutional context mediates the relationship between age of individuals and different forms of political participation.

This chapter answers the remaining questions about institutional determinants of political participation and youth political engagement. First, does the theoretical framework proposed in this study apply only to young people or to people of all ages? Second, are the effects of age on participation greater or weaker in different political contexts? Third, does age matter more in established democracies as opposed to new democracies? Does age matter more for voting or informal political participation? How is the relationship between age and participation mediated by institutional characteristics?

This study so far has shown that political participation of young people (individuals aged 18 to 24) varies across countries. This applies not only to voting, but also to formal and informal political engagement. Citizens from different EU countries have different rates of participation in electoral, formal, and informal politics. The analyses looked at the effect of the contextual variables (age of democracy, levels of corruption, type of electoral system) on different forms of political participation. Furthermore, Chapter 6 concluded that age of democracy, levels of corruption and type of electoral system have significant effects on the propensity of young individuals to vote. It showed that age of democracy is a significant predictor of youth turnout. The finding supported the expectation that young citizens who live in long-established democracies are more prone to

vote. The same applied to formal political participation, where young individuals living in countries with longer democratic experience were more likely to engage in formal political activities e.g. contacting a politician, being a member of party, and working in a political party or action group. Furthermore, individuals in countries that have been democratic for longer are more likely to participate in informal political activities. Those expectations are applied to this chapter.

Chapter 6 concluded that corruption is a significant driver of youth electoral participation where high levels of corruption decrease youth turnout. The findings for formal participation reveal that young citizens are less likely to engage in formal political activities in countries with higher levels of corruption. In summary, corruption was found a significant determinant of the propensity of young individuals to engage in informal activities and the higher the corruption levels, the less likely are young people to engage. The expectations that presence of corruption depresses political participation are applied to all individuals and analysed in Section 7.2 of this chapter. As expected, Chapter 6 revealed that countries with PR electoral systems have higher levels of youth turnout. Contrary to H8 and H9 which suggest that youth formal/informal political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral system, the results showed statistically insignificant.

Chapter 6 analysed macro-level factors and showed that youth engagement in politics is influenced by the institutional context in which individuals live. Young person's decision of whether or not to participate in politics is likely to be shaped by the different institutional settings of the country they live in (Norris, 2000; Inglehart, 1997; Fieldhouse, et al., 2007; McFarland and Thomas, 2006: Jones et al., 1992; O'Loughlin, 2004). Therefore, the next step is to explore and analyse whether the set of findings from the previous chapter hold once analysing all respondents from the ESS dataset (2002-2016).

The first section of this chapter sets out to explore descriptively the dataset. Here, I compare youth political participation to the political participation of all individuals. The following section presents descriptive statistics of my time-series cross-sectional dataset (2002-2016) including all age groups and identifies observable patterns of voting, formal, and informal political participation. The second section of the chapter presents the results from the multilevel logistic regression models and analyses the effect of age of democracy, corruption and electoral systems on the propensity of all individuals to participate in politics. I analyse their effect on voting, formal and informal political participation. Finally, I investigate interactions of age and institutional-level characteristics as determinants of electoral, formal, and informal participation. In this section, I discuss results of the empirical research and how the institutional context mediates the relationship between age and different forms of political participation.

7.1 Descriptive analyses

The analyses in this chapter uses the time-series cross-sectional dataset from the European Social Survey (ESS 2002-2016) and the country-level dataset of institutional measures (2002-2016). However, now I look at all respondents from all the ESS surveys. In this final empirical chapter, the number of individuals analysed is 184,913 as opposed to 13,473 individuals in Chapter 6, and 1,289 individuals in Chapter 5.

Section 7.1 of this chapter presents descriptive analysis of the data, which once merged[31] consisted of 13 countries and 184,913 individuals. This is the number of respondents from ESS Waves 1 to 8 (2002-2016) after clearing out the data[32]. By increasing the number of respondents by 171,440 cases from the previous chapter, this chapter allows for more in-depth analysis of the influence of age of democracy, corruption, and type of electoral system on the propensity of individuals to vote, participate in formal political activities, and engage in informal political participation. The large dataset provides more reliable results and gives a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of the three dimensions of the institutional setting of a country on levels of political participation.

Table 7.1 presents the original sample size in each ESS Wave (2002-2016), the number of missing data associated with each ESS Wave, and the final sample number of respondents that are analysed later in this chapter. As evident below, on average, about 5% from the original number of respondents were dropped due to missing data. Missing values that were associated with the dependent and independent variables used in my analyses were dropped from the combined dataset[33]. Moreover, to ensure comparability, only individuals eligible to vote are included in the final number of respondents[34]. Descriptive statistics for the number of individuals in each country per ESS Wave (2002-2016) and summary statistics are presented in Appendix F. The information on which this dataset was compiled comes from a variety of data sources as detailed in Chapter 3 Data and Measurement.

[31] See Appendix F for details.
[32] n=196,774 before dropping cases.
[33] An observation of a person aged "123" was dropped from the analyses, as the observation was questionable. However, in robustness checks, the results make no difference with or without that observation.
[34] The response category "Non-eligible to vote" was dropped from the data, as these respondents cannot be considered as neither voters or non-voters.

Table 7.1 Number of respondents per ESS Wave

Waves								
Number of respondents	**W1 2002**	**W2 2004**	**W3 2006**	**W4 2008**	**W5 2010**	**W6 2012**	**W7 2014**	**W8 2016**
n (original sample)	24,181	23,817	24,365	25,003	24,574	26,005	24,152	23,677
k (missing data)	1,013	1,195	1,277	1,394	1,407	1,500	1,519	1,556
n-k (final number)	23,168	22,622	23,088	23,609	23,167	24,505	22,633	22,121

7.1.1 Descriptive analyses: Age

From early studies, is evident that age is a significant determinant in explaining political participation, and especially voter turnout (Milbrath, 1965; Nie, Verba and Kim, 1974). The next set of descriptive analyses present the average participation in elections, formal politics, and informal politics by age across all ESS Waves (2002-2016). Figure 7.1 shows the mean of voting (where voting takes the value of "1" if an individual votes, and "0" if they do not, and the 'mean' is the average across all respondents) for each age group and suggests that indeed the youngest respondents are the least likely to vote. There is a reverse "U" shape observed. At certain age, people seem to participate less in politics where age, health, and mobility are likely factors in why after the age of 65 people vote less. Unsurprisingly, the graph reveals that younger citizens participate less than any other age groups in elections.

Taking into account that the average levels of voting across all ESS Waves are presented in Figure 7.1, it is interesting to discern visually whether the overall pattern presented in Figure 7.1 varies across different ESS Waves. Analysing the mean of voting across different age groups for each ESS Waves captures any time trends and suggests conclusions on whether or not the relationship between age and voting varies across time, descriptively (See Appendix F for how voting, formal, and informal political participation vary across age groups in each ESS Wave across all countries).

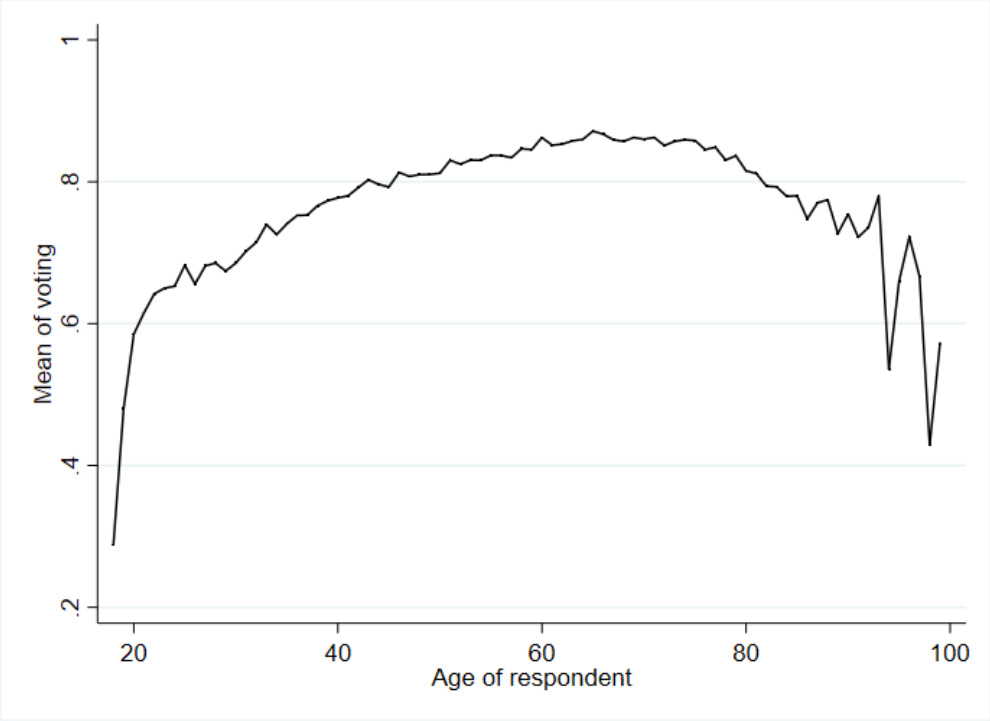

Figure 7.1 Voting by age[35] across ESS Waves (ESS 2002-2016)

[35] Respondents over 100-year-old, were not included in this set of graphs only for better visual presentation.

Figure 7.2 shows the average levels of formal political participation across all ESS Waves (2002-2016) across all countries. Even though, the number of respondents who have contacted a politician, been a member of a party, and worked in a political party or action group, is very low, the graph reveals a pattern of formal political participation. There is a reverse "U" shape and overall, the youngest respondents are the least active in formal political participation. As age increases, so does engagement in formal politics.

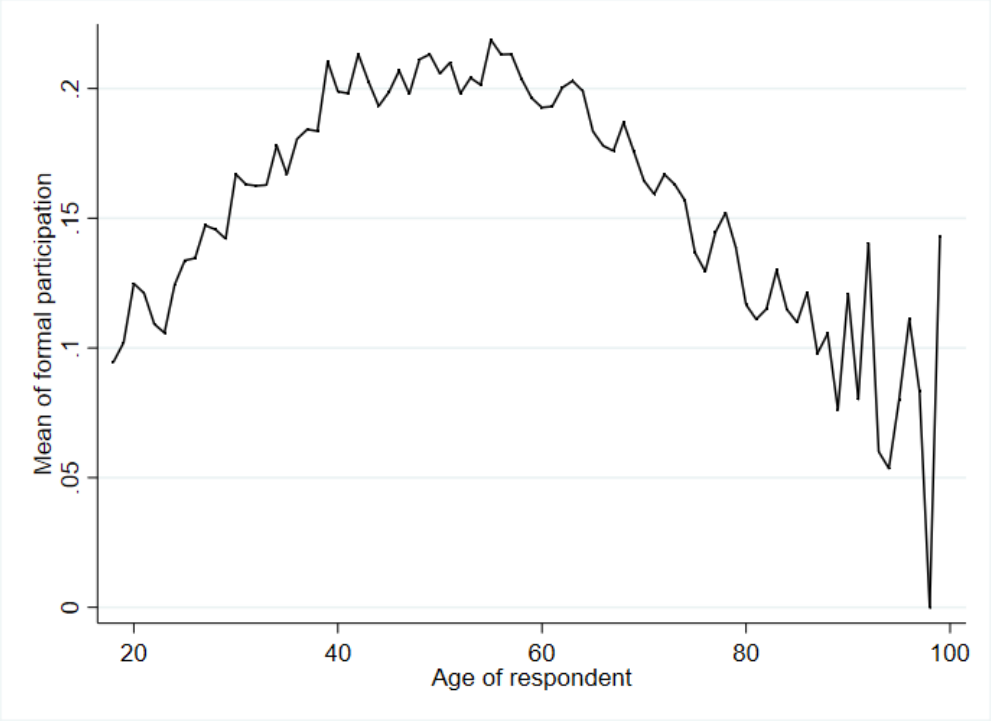

Figure 7.2 Formal participation by age across all ESS Waves (2002-2016)

The graph showing the mean of informal political participation across age presented in Figure 7.3 differs from the graphs showing the mean of voting and formal political participation across age in a number of important ways. First, there is not the usual "U" shape observable in the graph. Second, young people are participating in informal activities relatively more. However, it is important to note that this is a result of descriptive statistics only. While patterns exist, they are not tested for levels of significance yet. The next section of this chapter, therefore, employs multilevel regression modelling to test the significance of such patterns. Third, the mean of voting is unquestionably higher than the mean of informal political participation regardless of the age group. On the other hand, the mean of informal political participation is relatively higher than the mean of formal political participation.

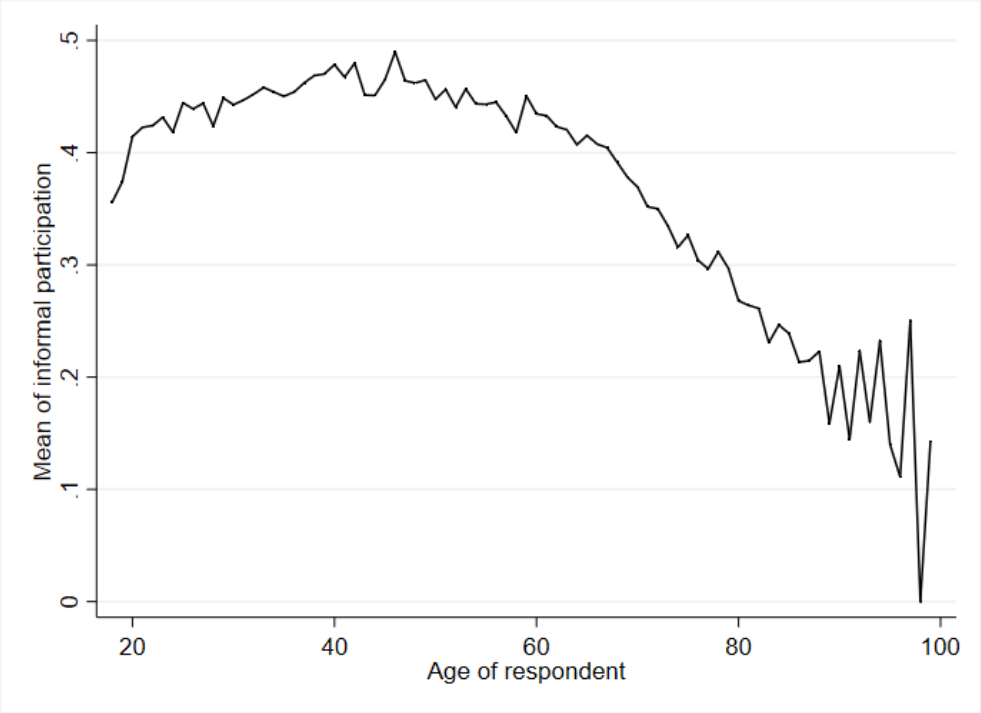

Figure 7.3 Informal participation by age across all ESS Waves (2002-2016)

The next set of graphs examine how levels of participation across the studied countries relate to age, and observe differences across electoral, formal, and informal participation across countries. When it comes to voter turnout, the established literature suggests that participation rises gradually with age (Lane, 1959; Milbrath, 1965; Nie, Verba and Kim, 1974). Figure 7.4 illustrates voter turnout in 13 EU countries in relation to age. The graphs confirm the expected pattern that emerges from the existing literature. In general, voting presents an inverted "U" shape across age[36]. Participation in elections increases with age[37]. That curved relationship is not apparent for Belgium and Sweden, where electoral participation remains remarkably high and stable with age. What stands out is the low levels of voting across the youngest respondents. Belgium, Sweden, and Finland show relatively high levels of youth electoral participation.

[36] Respondents aged over 100 were excluded from the descriptive analysis in Figure 7.3, as the sample sizes are so small that they make the patterns very noisy and subject to random error.
[37] The drastic increase/decrease in voter turnout after the age of 80 is due to the fact that there are lower numbers of respondents in those age groups and that makes it more sensitive to outliers.

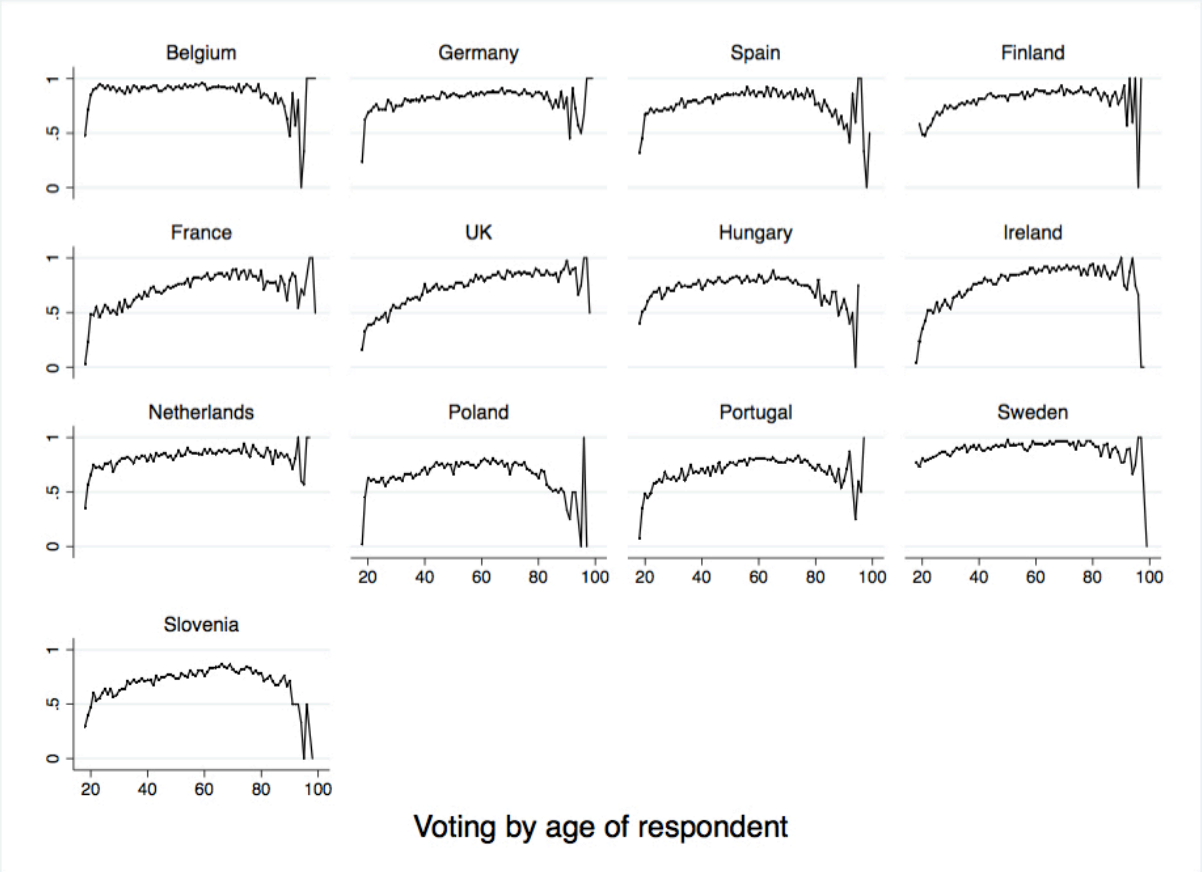

Figure 7.4 Voting across age in 13 EU countries (ESS 2002-2016)

The situation looks different when exploring participation in formal activities as illustrated in Figure 7.5. There are extremely low levels of formal participation across all countries. Nevertheless, there is an inverted U-shape for many countries. However, in Hungary, Portugal, and Poland, the graphs reveal that there is hardly any increase/decrease in formal participation with age. Hungary, Portugal, and Poland are new democracies and have not had a long democratic experience in comparison to the other analysed countries. Regardless of the age of the respondent, rates of formal political participation are extremely low across newly established democracies. In addition, these countries have high levels of corruption, which could influence their inactivity in formal political activities such as contacting politician and working for a political party.

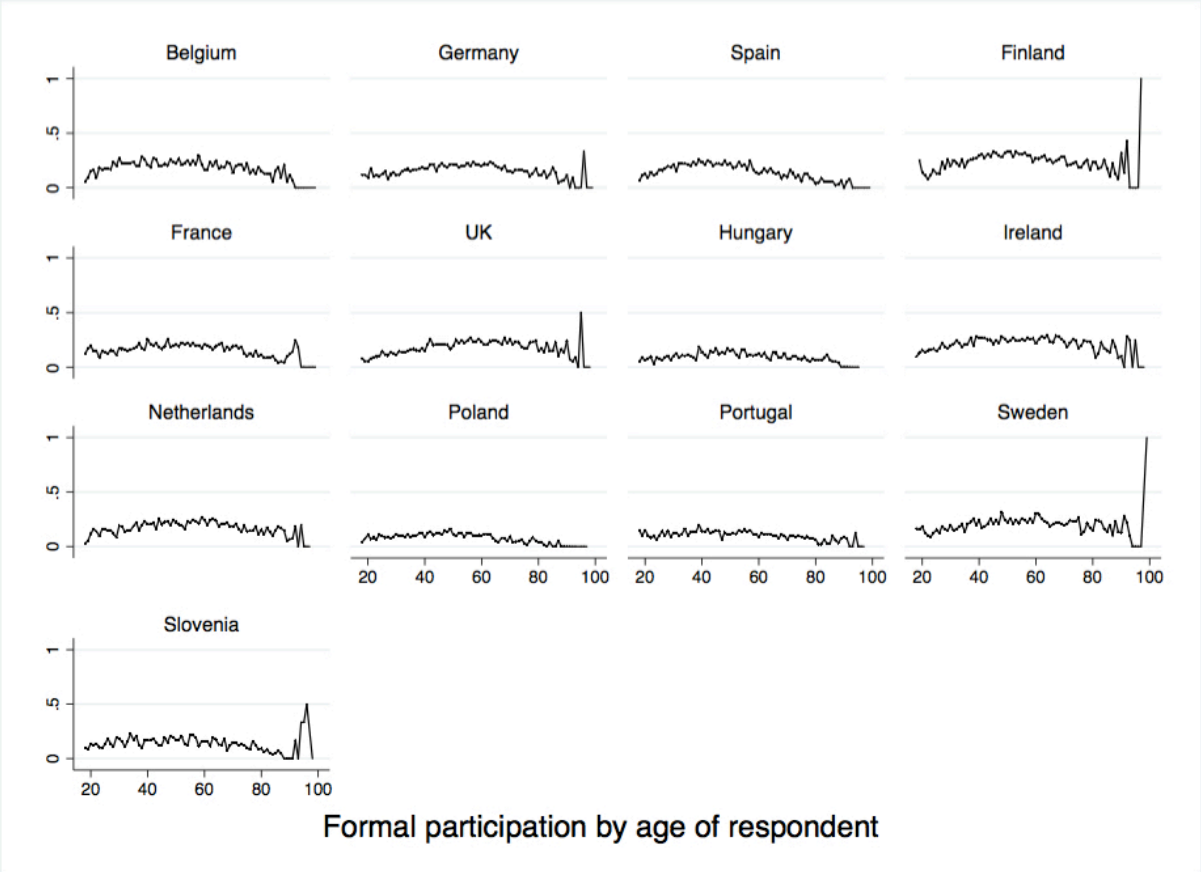

Figure 7.5 Participation in formal activities across age in 13 EU countries (ESS 2002-2016)

Figure 7.6 shows that informal political participation varies across different countries. The lowest levels of informal political engagement are observed in Poland, Hungary, Portugal, and Slovenia, which is not surprising given the theoretical expiation of this thesis that countries with shorter democratic experience have lower levels of informal political participation. On the other hand, Sweden, Finland, and Germany show the highest levels of informal participation. What is striking from these graphs is that unlike Figures 7.4-7.5, levels of informal participation do not vary as much by age as voting and formal participation. In France, Portugal, and Sweden, the highest levels of informal participation are observed among the youngest age groups. The result that younger people have higher levels of informal political participation in some countries is not surprising given the large existing literature arguing that young people are not disengaged from politics, however, they have turned towards alternative, informal types of political participation (Norris, 2002).

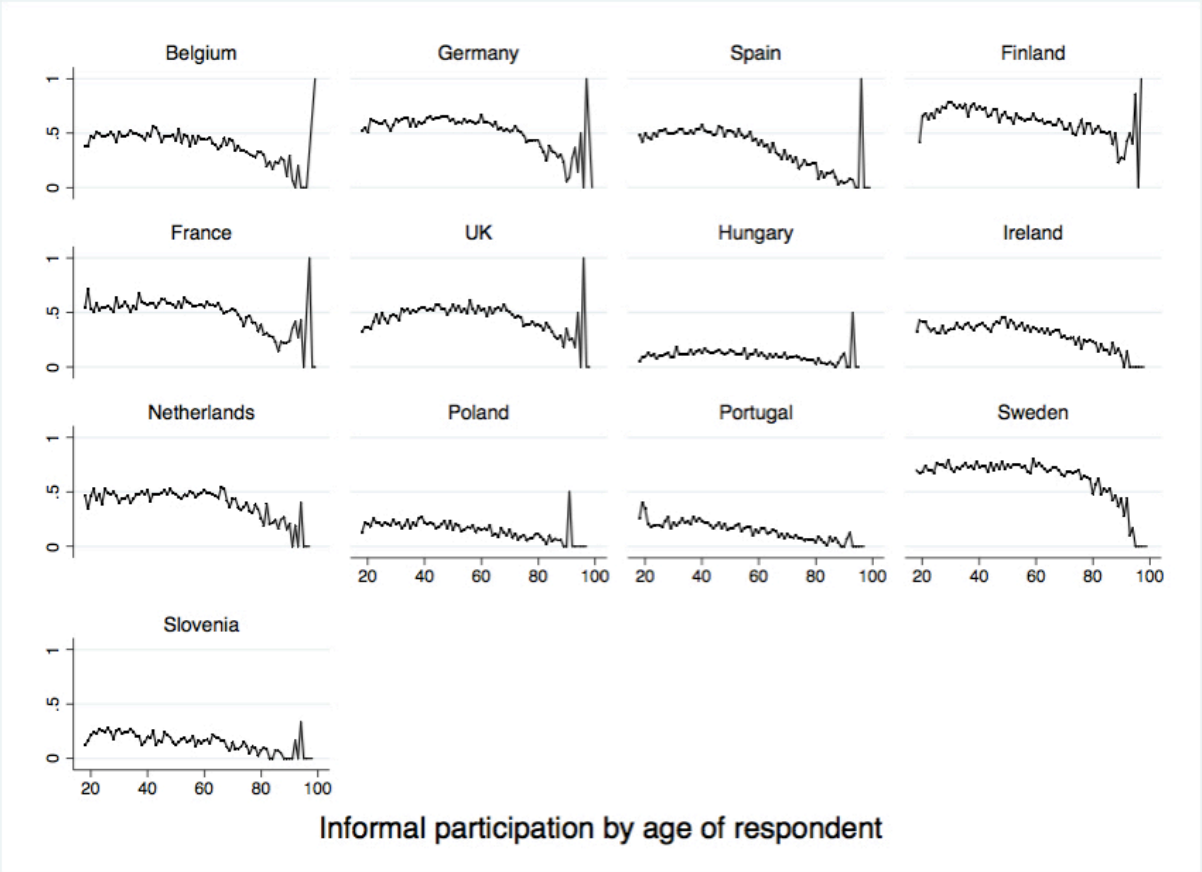

Figure 7.6 Participation in informal activities across age in 13 EU countries (ESS 2002-2016)

As evident, there is a relationship between age of individuals and political participation. The next set of descriptive statistics shows how political participation differs across countries and that there are different trends across modes of political engagement.

Table 7.2 shows the frequency within each mode of political participation in percentage. As Table 7.2 reports, 78.6% of the respondents across all ESS Waves (2002-2016) voted. The less widespread mode of political participation is participation in formal political activities, where only 17.6% of the 184,913 respondents participated in any formal political activity. This is not surprising given the fact that voting is a predominant type of traditional political participation, therefore when analysing the data, voting is analysed separately from formal political participation. Respondents engaged in informal political activities at much higher rates that in formal activities. Approximately 42% of the respondents across all ESS Waves participated in informal political activities.

Table 7.2 Frequency of voting, formal participation, and informal participation (ESS 2002-2016)

Mode of political participation	**Participated**	**Did not participate**
Voting	78.6%	21.4%
Formal participation	17.6%	82.4%
Informal participation	41.9%	58.1%

Figures 7.7-7.9 graphically present the average participation in elections, formal, and informal activities respectively across countries across ESS Waves (2002-2016). Figure 7.7 compares the average levels of electoral engagement of 184,913 respondents across Waves in 13 EU countries. Looking at Figure 7.7, it is evident that the levels of electoral participation are relatively high across countries. Comparing the levels of general electoral participation across time in 13 EU countries with the levels of youth electoral participation, presented in Figure 6.1 Chapter 6, it is clear that the levels of general electoral participation are in times higher than young people's electoral participation.

Figure 7.7 reveals that there has been a slight drop in the mean of voting of all individuals in some countries. What stands out in Figure 7.7 is the high rate of electoral participation across all waves in the majority of established democracies. On the other hand, countries that are newly established democracies have slightly lower levels of electoral participation across time. What is interesting is that there is not much variation in participation across time; however, there are existing variations in the rates of electoral participation across different EU countries.

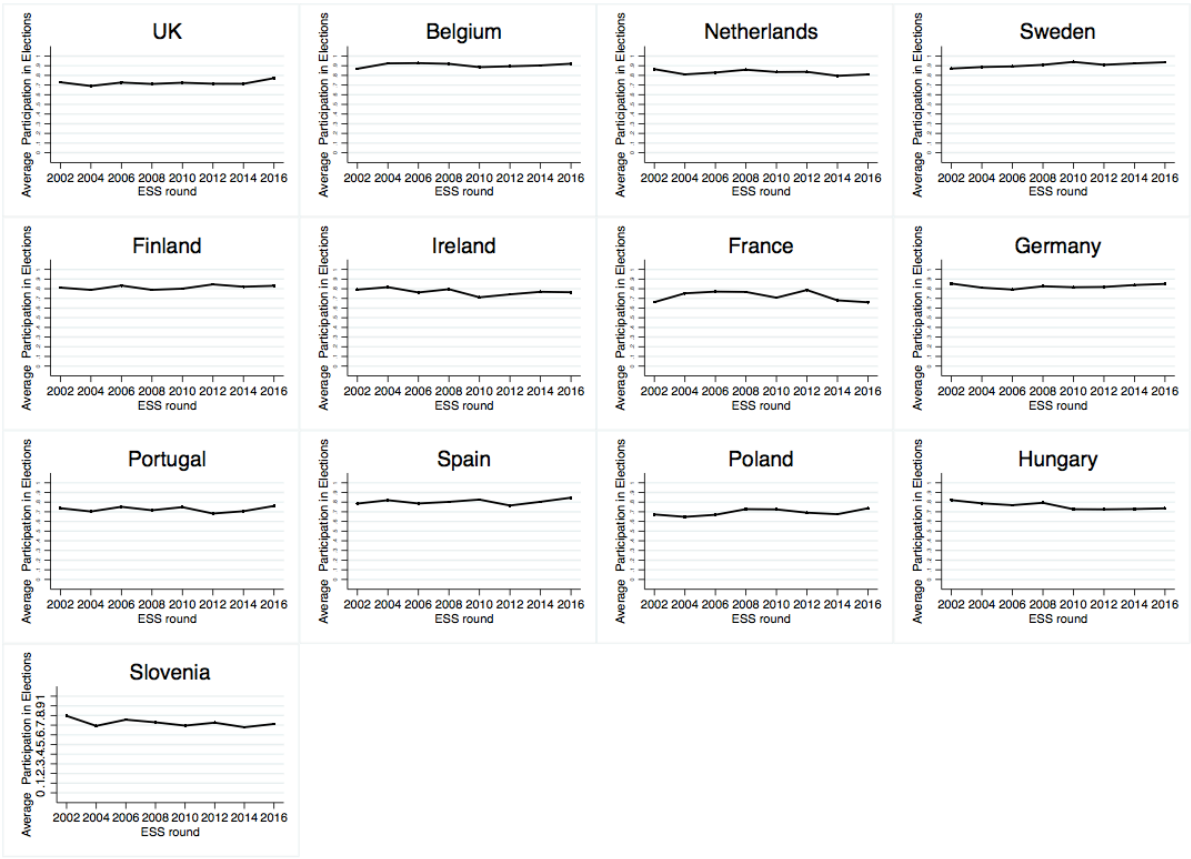

Figure 7.7 Levels of electoral participation across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002-2016)

Looking at Figure 7.7, Belgium has the highest and most stable trend of electoral participation, which is not surprising taking into consideration that voting is compulsory in Belgium. Sweden and Netherlands have also the highest and rather stable trend of voting across time. On the other hand, across all of the 13 EU countries, levels of electoral participation reached the lowest point in 2004 in Poland. These graphs in Figure 7.7 suggest that countries with little democratic experience have slightly lower levels of voter turnout. This is in line with the expectations lined in this study that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are individuals to vote. However, the descriptive statistics reveal some exceptions, which contrast with the pattern e.g. the UK and France have relatively lower levels of electoral participation in comparison to the other advanced democracies analysed in this study.

Figure 7.8 presents a combined graph of the average levels of formal participation across ESS Waves (2002-2016) in 13 EU countries. What is striking in this figure is the dramatic low levels of formal participation across all EU countries. Figure 7.8 justifies the decision to analyse voting and formal political participation separately as rates of formal engagement are exceptionally low. The extremely low rates of formal political participation would not have been captured if analysed together with voting in a single variable accounting for traditional forms of political participation.

There is not much difference across time in terms of the levels of general engagement in formal political activities. It is apparent from Figure 7.8 that the number of respondents who participated in formal participation is extremely low. This was the case in the previous chapter as well, where the number of young people who participated in formal activities was exceptionally low. Even when analysing such a large dataset, the levels of formal participation remain dramatically low. Such patterns can draw conclusions on the disengagement of individuals with formal political activities such as contacting a politician, being a member of political party, and working in a political party.

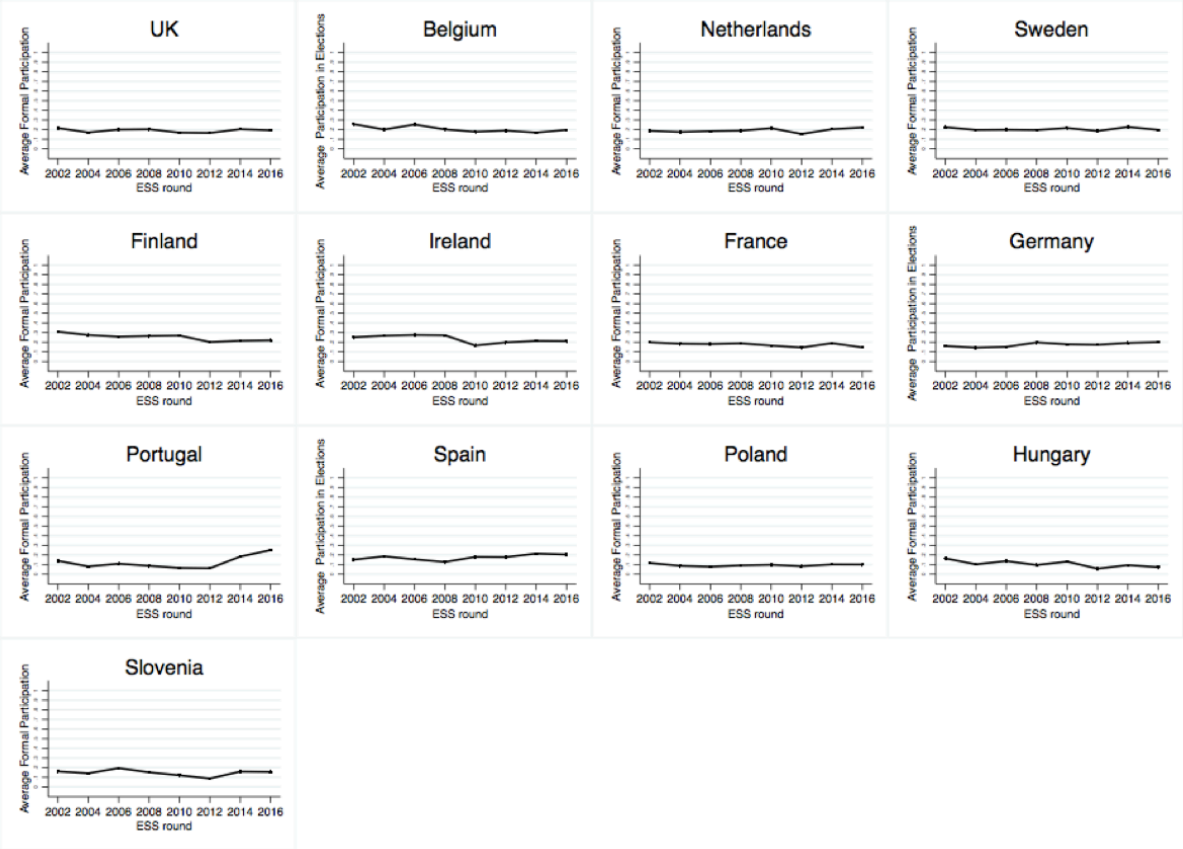

Figure 7.8 Levels of formal interactions across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002-2016)

Giving the extremely low rates of engagement in formal activities, it is challenging to compare and contrast the highest and lowest levels of formal participation across countries and across time. What strikes is that the countries with relatively higher formal participation are Finland, Belgium and Ireland. On the other hand, the lowest points in formal participation were reached by Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland in 2012, with rates close to "1", meaning that during this time in those three countries, their citizens were hardly engaging in formal activities, if in any at all.

Figure 7.9 shows that levels of informal political participation vary extremely across countries. Overall, informal participation is higher in advanced democracies. Newly established EU democracies have relatively lower rates of informal political engagement when looking at all age groups. Observing the trends over time, it is apparent that the average levels of informal engagement in politics increase in time. For instance, for some countries, the highest rates of informal engagement are evident in the latest wave of the ESS survey (2016). One possible explanation for this is that as mentioned in the previous chapter, a question about online political activism was asked in the ESS 2016 survey. Therefore, this pattern could be due to the emerging use of social media. An exception here is France, where the steady rates of informal engagement decrease in 2016. In Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Netherlands, informal engagement rose steadily since 2002, reaching its peak in 2016. For Portugal, the graph shows that there are continual low levels of informal participation, which started to rise after 2010.

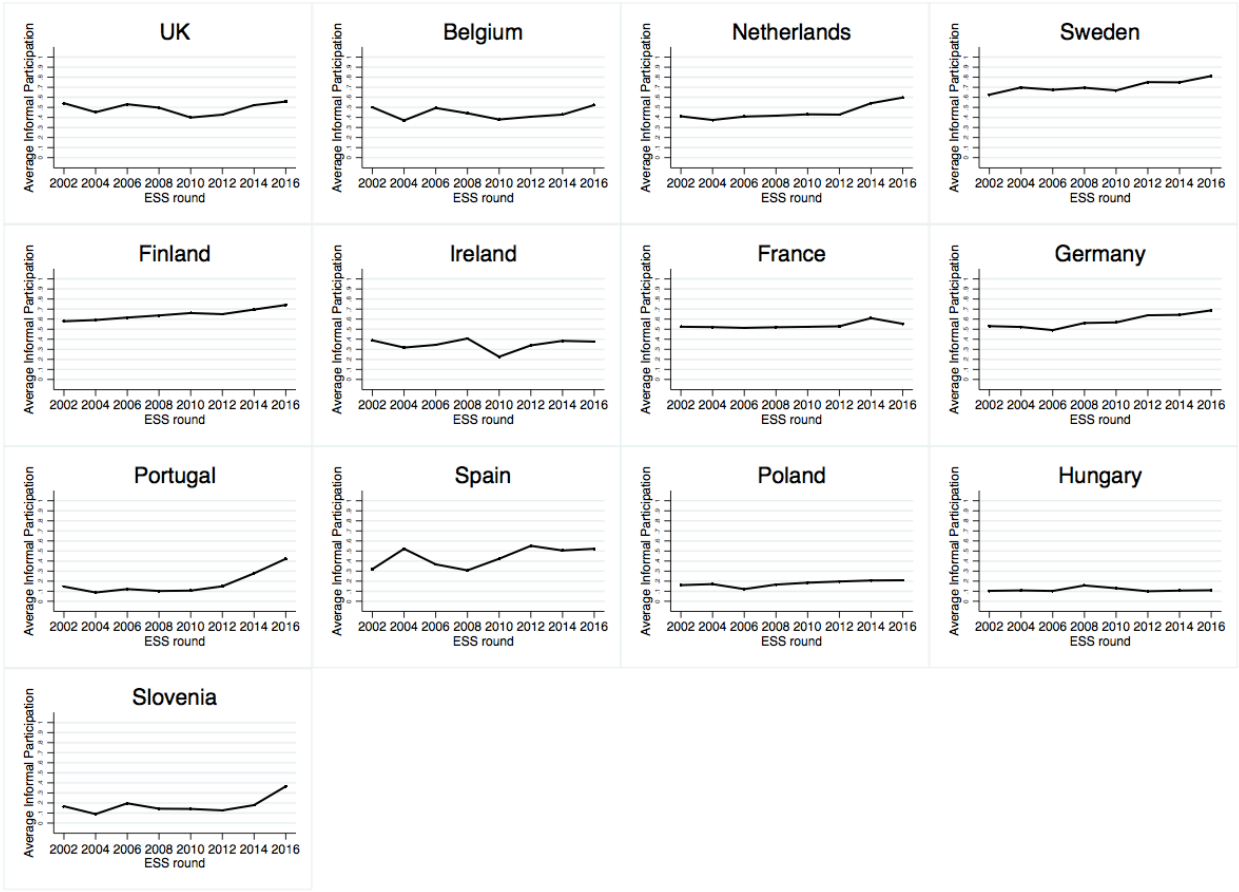

Figure 7.9 Levels of informal participation across time in 13 EU countries by the number of years a country has been a democracy for (ESS 2002-2016)

What stands out in Figure 7.9 is Spain, which shows an interesting case without a general pattern. Individuals in Spain had a generally high rate of participation in informal activities in 2004 and after that there was a continual decline until 2008, when it started rising again to reach a steady increase. This could be due to the financial crisis and recession that hit Spain after 2008. This is

the period when citizens were seeking other forms of political activities to show their discontent with the political system and the government. Especially, protests were on the rise in 2011 in Spain. Finland and Sweden have the highest rates of informal engagement. The lowest levels of informal political engagement are observed in Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland.

Figure 7.10 illustrates and compares the average participation in electoral, formal, and informal politics in each country. It is clear from the graph that formal participation is extremely low in every EU country, and voting has the highest mean of the three modes of political participation. This is not surprising given that all age groups are analysed in this chapter. As seen in Figure 7.10, levels of engagement in informal activities vary the most. Countries such as Sweden, Finland, UK, and Germany have little difference in the mean of voting and informal participation. On the other hand, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia are examples of an existing drastic difference between the average levels of electoral and informal participation. Sweden and Belgium have the highest mean of electoral participation, and Finland and Sweden have the highest mean of informal participation. On the other hand, Slovenia and Poland have the lowest rates of electoral participation, and Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia have the lowest levels of informal participation across all waves. Formal participation has the highest rates in Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, and Sweden. In summary, the graph reveals that voting is the most common political activity in comparison to participating in formal and informal politics in all countries across all waves.

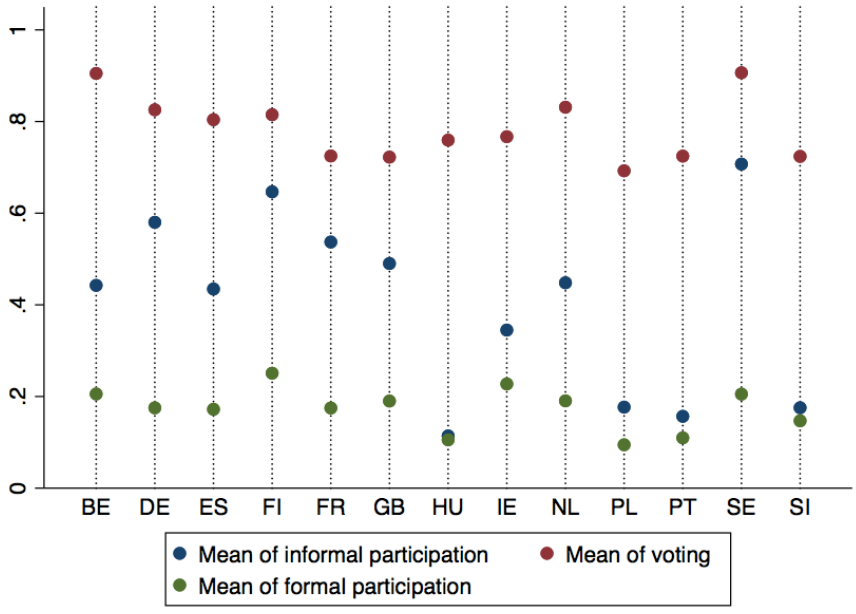

Figure 7.10 Mean of voting, formal participation, and informal participation across countries (ESS 2002)

In Figure 7.11, each of the 13 EU countries analysed in this study is situated in a two-dimensional space to examine the relationship between the levels of engagement in electoral and informal participation. The graph shows that high participation in one mode of political engagement does

not necessary lead to high levels of participation in the other mode of political engagement. When comparing the analysed countries, it is evident from the graph that in number of countries participation in both electoral and informal activities is located in the middle of the space. For instance, Spain and Ireland are in the middle of the scatterplot. It is important to note that this scatterplot illustrates the mean of voting and informal participation starting from the lowest mean instead of starting at "0". All respondents from each country have relatively high rates of electoral participation. In Belgium and Sweden, participation in both modes is very high in comparison to that of other countries. In Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, and Finland, participation in elections is comparatively high. The same is true in Sweden, Finland, and Germany with regard to informal participation. In countries that are relatively newly established democracies, such as Portugal, Slovenia, Hungary, and Poland, both participatory levels are quite low compared to other EU countries.

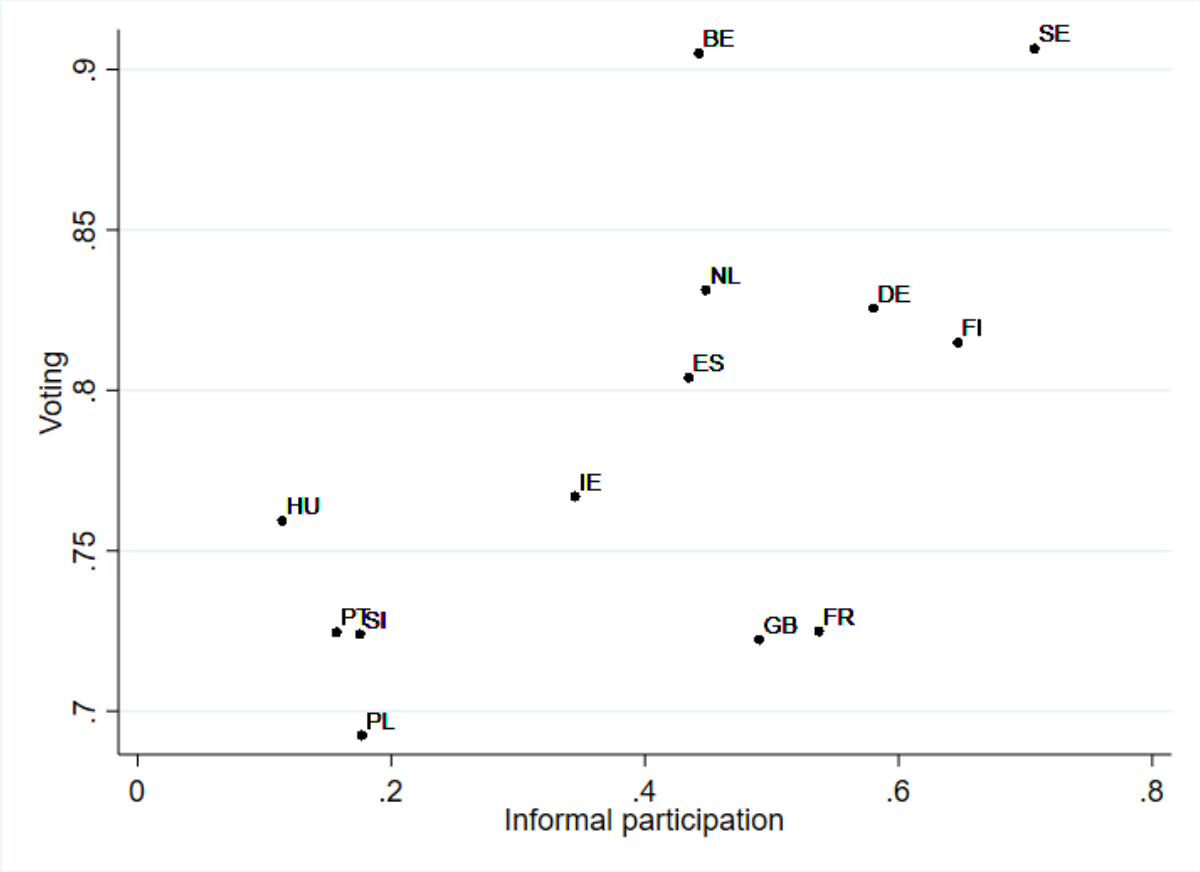

Figure 7.11 Average levels of electoral and informal participation across countries in all ESS waves (ESS 2002-2016)

In summary, a pattern that emerges from the descriptive analyses looking at average levels of electoral, formal, and informal participation across countries is that, countries that have less democratic experience possess the lowest levels of political participation, regardless of the mode

of political engagement. In all forms of political participation, Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland have extremely low mean of participation. For more descriptive analyses, see Appendix F.

7.2 Results and discussion

This chapter investigates how institutions mediate the relationship between age and participation. The following section discusses the results from the multilevel regression models analysing the extent to which the three proposed dimensions of the institutional setting of a country have an effect on electoral, formal, and informal participation. Then, I discuss the results in terms of the existing literature. This chapter provides insights on whether the same patterns observed for younger voters specifically hold for all voters, and then test whether institutions mediate the relationship between age and participation.

I tested my set of hypotheses based on theoretical expectations. As already derived from previous studies, my theoretical framework, and the empirical tests of the existing hypotheses, three expectations are set out for this chapter:

1. The longer the democratic experience, the higher the participation in electoral, formal, and informal politics among all individuals.
2. The higher the corruption, the less likely are citizens to engage in voting, formal participation, and informal participation.
3. PR electoral systems boost voter turnout and formal and informal participation.

I now proceed to present the results from the three-level multilevel regression analyses exploring the propensity of all individuals to engage in voting, formal political participation, and informal political participation, focusing on the effect of the institutional-level variables analysed in this study: age of democracy, levels of corruption, electoral systems, and individual-level characteristics. As explained in Chapter 4, the models have three levels: **individuals** nested in **countries** nested in **years**. This chapter shed light on how age matters and the discussion reveals how the effect of age is mediated by the institutional context.

7.2.1 Voting

The descriptive analyses in the previous section showed that voting is the most widespread type of political participation when looking at all individuals. Respondents' rates of electoral participation are the highest compared to formal and informal participation rates. In this sub-section, I analyse voting as a dependent variable. A reminder here is that *voting* is measured in whether a respondent has voted in the last election or not.

The results from the three-level multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset are presented in Table 7.3. Model 7.0 (the null model) informs that the model is fitted to 104[38] countries nested within 8 rounds of survey data. There are 13 countries analysed in each ESS Wave (1 to 8). The null model reported that the number of individuals per country ranges from 1,158 to 2,780, while the number of individuals per ESS Wave ranges from 22,121 to 24,505. I estimate that the intercept is 1.363 with standard error 0.049. The country-level ICC is 0.069, which shows that 7% of the variation in whether or not someone voted lies within countries.

Table 7.3 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset voting (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.0	**Model 7.1(a)**	**Model 7.1(b)**
Country-level variables			
Age of democracy		1.007***	
		(0.001)	
Corruption			0.983***
			(0.003)
Mixed Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		2.219***	1.740***
		(0.296)	(0. 238)
PR Electoral system		2.180***	1.850***
		(0.216)	(0.194)
Individual-level variables			
Age		1.035***	1.035***
		(0.000)	(0.000)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)		1.621***	1.621***
		(0.025)	(0.025)
Higher		2.776***	2.777***
		(0.047)	(0.047)
Male		1.026**	1.026**
		(0.012)	(0.012)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)		0.884***	0.884***
		(0.024)	(0.024)
Current Status: Other		0.693***	0.694***
		(0.010)	(0.010)
ICC ESS round	1.11e-10	0.001	1.60e-34
ICC Country	0.069	0.036	0.041
Number of countries	13	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7.2.1.1 Age of democracy

The main independent variable of interest in this study is *age of democracy* which is a continuous variable accounting for the years a country has been an uninterrupted democracy for. The expectation that the longer a country has been a democracy increases the propensity of young

[38] 13 countries in each ESS Wave = 104 countries

individuals to vote is adapted in this chapter and tested against all individuals from the ESS dataset (2002-2016).

The results from Table 7.3, Model 7.1(*a*) show that age of democracy is a positive and highly significant determinant of voter turnout. The odds ratio for age of democracy reported in Model 7.1(*a*), is 1.007, which indicates that for each one-year increase in the age of democracy, the odds of voting increase by 1.01. The result for age of democracy is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. As the democratic experience increases, so does the likelihood of voting. Individuals in countries that have longer democratic experience are more likely to vote than individuals in countries with little democratic experience. The theoretical expectation of this study holds when analysing all individuals as well. Taking into account that the pooled dataset includes individuals and institutional-level variables for 13 countries analysed over fourteen years, there is substantial evidence that as a country's age of democracy increases, so does its citizens' levels of voter turnout.

The robustness checks analysing each ESS Wave separately (Appendix G, Table 9.26 and Table 9.27)[39] show that the effect of age of democracy on voting remains positive. For instance, in 2002, age of democracy is a statistically significant determinant of voter rates, where a one-year increase in the age of democracy equates to a 1.007 increase in the rate of voter turnout (Table 9.27, Model 6.56(*a*)).

There is empirical evidence that democratic maturity can influence the probability of casting a ballot directly. This finding is consistent with that of Novy and Katrnak (2015) who found that democratic maturity influences voter turnout and individuals in long established democracies are more prone to vote. As a democracy matures, the likelihood of individuals to vote increases. The reported positive relationship between age of democracy and voter turnout might be explained by the habit of engagement with the political system existing in advanced democracies. My results are in line with existing findings in the literature that the norm of being an active citizen is prevalent in advanced democracies (Almond and Verba, 1963; Gerber, Green, and Shachar 2003; Franklin 2004). In addition, my results confirm the association between long-term functioning democracy and voting, as reported in the existing literature, as through the democratic experience in a country, individuals develop loyalty and habits (Jackman and Miller, 2004; Mishler and Rose, 2004). Analysing all individuals allowed testing this prominent argument in the literature.

[39] It presents eight model specifications, two for each ESS Wave 1 to 8 featuring age of democracy and corruption respectively (ESS, 2002-2016).

7.2.1.2 Corruption

In this study, I expected that high presence of corruption within a country influence negatively the propensity of young individuals to turn out to vote. It was suggested that individuals living in highly corrupted countries are suppressed by the existing corruption and discouraged to engage in elections.

The results from the analyses of the pooled sample on the propensity of individuals to vote are presented in Table 7.3 Model 7.1(*b*). Table 7.3 reports that higher levels of corruption decrease the propensity of individuals to vote. The relationship between the levels of corruption in a country and voting behaviour of individuals living in those countries is statistically significant at the 99 per cent confidence level. The odds ratio for *corruption* is 0.983. With every point increase in the corruption index, the odds of voting decrease by 0.017. The robustness checks in Appendix G, Table 9.26 and Table 9.27 show that corruption remains a significant driver of voter turnout.

My findings support previous studies, which found that corruption alienates voters and decreases voter turnout (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemerm 2015). Corruption is a strong institutional-level predictor of voter turnout.

7.2.1.3 Electoral System

Here, I explore the impact of electoral systems on voter turnout in a comparative context among all age groups and across a period of time, where the expectation is that PR systems boost voter turnout.

As Table 7.3, Model 7.1(*a*) reveals electoral system is a strong significant predictor of voter turnout among all age groups. The odds of voting are 2.2 times higher for individuals in countries having PR systems than individuals in countries with a majoritarian electoral system.

The results from the robustness checks (Appendix G, Table 9.26 and Table 9.27) show that countries with PR electoral systems are more likely to have higher levels of turnout. To be more specific, in 2002[40], individuals living in countries with a PR electoral system had 2.3 times the odds of voting compared to individuals in majoritarian systems (Table 9.25, Model 6.56(*a*)). This result is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

[40] First Wave of the ESS surveys.

My results tend to support previous findings that voter turnout is higher in PR systems where there is an apparent and clearer impact of voting, which motivates individuals to vote without any votes going "wasted" (Lakeman, 1974; Powell, 1980, 1986; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Bowler et al., 2003; Fornos et al., 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). Countries using PR electoral systems are more likely to have higher levels of voter turnout than countries using majoritarian electoral systems.

It is important to note that the results from my study are not based on a binary variable accounting for PR electoral system but a categorical one, which is different to a number of previous measurements of electoral systems variables (Blais and Carty, 1990). My findings contribute to the literature on electoral systems as determinants of voter turnout and PR electoral systems increases the probability to vote, and this result is stable over time.

7.2.2 Formal political participation

In this thesis, formal political participation refers to contacting a politician, working for a political party, and being a member of political party. When analysing formal political participation, the theoretical expectations are that rates of formal engagement are higher in countries that have longer democratic experience, lower levels of corruption, and PR electoral systems. The results from the three-level multilevel logistic regression on the pooled sample analysing formal political participation are reported in Table 7.4.

7.2.2.1 Age of democracy

Unsurprisingly, the results for *formal political participation* are similar to the results for *voting* as both types of political participation refer to traditional/conventional form of political engagement and are expected to have similar patterns. The effect of *age of democracy* on formal political participation is positive and highly significant. This finding implies that citizens who live in long established democracies are more prone to participate in formal political activities. The odds ratio for age of democracy is 1.005, which indicates that for each one-year increase in the age of democracy of a country, the odds of participating in formal politics for individuals living in countries with longer democratic experience increase by 1.005. To be more specific, moving between a democracy that is 10 years old versus a democracy that is 110 years old increases the odds of individuals participating in formal politics by a half.

Table 7.4 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset on formal political participation (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.2(a)	**Model 7.2(b)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.005***	
	(0.001)	
Corruption		0.984***
		(0.002)
Mixed	0.895	0.776**
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)	(0.099)	(0. 076)
PR Electoral system	1.120	1.000
	(0.091)	(0.075)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.009***	1.009***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)	1.496***	1.496***
	(0.027)	(0.027)
Higher	2.542***	2.542***
	(0.044)	(0.044)
Male	1.395***	1.395***
	(0.018)	(0.018)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)	0.895***	0.894***
	(0.031)	(0.031)
Current Status: Other	0.854***	0.855***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results from the robustness checks of the multilevel logistic regression applied to each ESS Wave separately (Appendix G, Table 9.28 and Table 9.29) confirm the results above.

7.2.2.2 Corruption

Table 7.4, Model 7.2(*b*) shows the results from the pooled sample analysing formal political participation. The odds ratio for levels of corruption is 0.984. This result is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level indicating that higher corruption index decreases the odds of participating in formal political activities for all age groups. Predominantly, countries with lower levels of corruption create environment that predisposes its citizens to participate in politics. This suggests that higher levels of corruption decrease citizen's propensity to engage in formal politics. In robustness checks (Appendix G, Table 9.28 and Table 9.29), the effect of corruption remains negative across all ESS Waves.

The result is consistent with previous findings which imply that a corrupted system creates apathy and alienation among its citizens (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Sunstrom and Stockemer,

2015). These findings confirm that there is a strong positive significant relationship between levels of corruption and formal political participation among all ages.

7.2.2.3 Electoral system

In Table 7.4, Model 7.2(*a*), looking at the effect of PR electoral system on the propensity of individuals to engage in formal politics, the effect is insignificant. In other words, individuals living in countries with PR electoral system are almost as exactly as likely to engage in formal politics as individuals living in countries with majoritarian systems.

This justifies once again the decision to analyse voting and formal political participation in terms of separate dependent variables in order to avoid reporting misleading results.

7.2.3 Informal political participation

In this thesis I analyse informal political participation as whether an individual has participated in the following activities: worked in another organisation, worn a badge, signed a petition, took part in demonstration, boycotted, and/or took part in online activism. *Informal political participation* is a dichotomous variable with a value of 0 if an individual has not participated in informal activities, and a value of 1 if they have.

The results from the three-level multilevel regression analyses of the pooled sample looking at *informal political participation*, presented in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset informal (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.3(*a*)	**Model 7.3(*b*)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.016***	
	(0.002)	
Corruption		0.952***
		(0.003)
Mixed Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)	0.879	0.597***
	(0.224)	(0.113)
PR Electoral system	0.853	0.645***
	(0.162)	(0.094)
Individual-level variables		
Age	0.998***	0.998***
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)	1.688***	1.713***
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Higher	2.999***	3.129***
	(0.042)	(0.044)
Male	1.033***	1.034***
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)	1.377***	1.393***
	(0.035)	(0.036)
Current Status: Other	0.850***	0.844***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7.2.3.1 Age of democracy

Model 7.3(*a*) in Table 7.5 indicates that the odds ratio for the effect of age of democracy are 1.016. In other words, for every additional year a country has been a democracy for, the odds of participating in informal political activities increase by 1.6%. The results indicate that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are its citizens to participate in informal politics as well. The results from the analyses exploring informal political participation are presented in Appendix G, Table 9.30 and Table 9.31.

As expected from the literature, in advanced democracies there are more opportunities to participate in politics (Vrablikova, 2010). Individuals having developed the habit of political participation will be more likely to engage a diverse range of modes of political participation.

7.2.3.2 Corruption

As expected, corruption has a negative and statistically significant effect on the propensity of individuals to engage in informal politics in the EU across all ESS Waves (2002-2016). The odds

ratio for corruption is 0.952 which indicate that for each one-point increase in the level of corruption within a country, the odds for participating in informal political activities such as working in another organisation, wearing or displaying a badge, signing a petition, taking part in lawful demonstrations, boycotting, and being involved in online political activism, decrease by 0.05%. This is a statistically significant finding at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

7.2.3.3 Electoral systems

The result from Table 7.5, Model 7.3(*a*) suggests that electoral system is a non-significant explanatory variable in the propensity of all individuals to engage in informal politics, and no effects are observed. Individuals are as likely to participate in informal activities in countries with PR, majoritarian, and mixed electoral systems. However, running the same model with *corruption* variable (Model 7.3(*b*), Table 7.5), the effect of PR system becomes significant. This is an interesting finding and could be interpreted as the effect of age of democracy is much stronger over the effect of electoral system when looking at informal participation of all individuals. Informal participation is explained to a great extent by age of democracy. This is tested further in this chapter later.

Electoral system is considered statistically significant when it comes to predicting the likelihood of a respondent engaging in informal politics, only when controlling for corruption.

7.2.4 Summary of effects

Table 7.6 presents a summary of the results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of all individuals to engage in voting, formal, and informal political activities (ESS, 2002-2016). The asterisks in Table 7.6 indicate whether or not the country-level characteristics studies in this thesis impact on political participation, and the level of significance. Effects that were not significant are marked with '–'. It is evident from Table 7.6 that there are more variations by independent variables than variations by year. PR electoral systems have impact on voting and formal political participation rather than informal participation, when controlling for age of democracy. Age of democracy and levels of corruption are significant determinants of electoral, formal, and informal participation with the exception in 2014 and 2016 in terms of formal participation.

Table 7.6 A summary table of multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of all individuals to engage in voting, formal, and informal political activities in each ESS Wave (ESS, 2002-2016)

Voting								
	Wave 1 2002	Wave 2 2004	Wave 3 2006	Wave 4 2008	Wave 5 2010	Wave 6 2012	Wave 7 2014	Wave 8 2016
Age of democracy	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***
Corruption	***	*	**	*	*	***	***	**
PR Electoral systems[41]	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Formal political participation								
	Wave 1 2002	Wave 2 2004	Wave 3 2006	Wave 4 2008	Wave 5 2010	Wave 6 2012	Wave 7 2014	Wave 8 2016
Age of democracy	***	***	***	***	***	***	–	–
Corruption	***	***	***	***	***	***	*	–
PR Electoral systems	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Informal political participation								
	Wave 1 2002	Wave 2 2004	Wave 3 2006	Wave 4 2008	Wave 5 2010	Wave 6 2012	Wave 7 2014	Wave 8 2016
Age of democracy	*	***	***	***	**	**	**	**
Corruption	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
PR Electoral systems	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7.2.5 Individual-level characteristics

My study focuses on macro-level characteristics as main determinants of political participation; however, I summarise the results of the individual-level characteristics analysed in this study, as individual-level factors are crucial determinants of whether or not people participate in politics. Previous findings suggest that age, education, gender and social class have a huge impact on voter turnout (Verba et al. 1995; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces, 2010).

[41] Results from the models controlling for age of democracy.

Age

Looking at Table 7.3, it is evident that age has a positive and statistically significant effect on voter turnout. Unsurprisingly, the older an individual is, the more likely they are to engage in electoral participation. The odds ratio for age is 1.035, which indicates that a one-year increase in the age of a respondent corresponds to an increase of 1.035 points in the odds of voting. In other words, the older the person, the more likely they are to vote. These results are not surprising and support the findings and expectations of numerous studies that have looked at the relationship between age and voter turnout. The general pattern that older people are more likely to vote than younger people is supported by my findings and the results are statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The results are the same when analysing formal political participation. Age has a positive and statistically significant effect on the propensity of citizens to engage in formal political participation.

The results for informal political participation are contrary to the results for voting and formal participation as presented in Table 7.5. As expected, age remains a statistically significant explanatory variable at the 99.9 per cent confidence level. The odds ratio for age is 0.998 which implies a negative relationship between age and informal political participation. For each one-year increase in the age of a respondent, the odds of participating in informal political activities decrease. To be more specific, a one-year increase in the age of a respondent corresponds to a decrease of 0.002 points in the odds of participating in informal politics. This result suggests that young people are more likely to engage in informal politics that their elders. Age as a determinant of political participation is analysed further in this chapter.

Levels of education

The results presented in Table 7.3 suggest that the more educated the individual is, the more likely they are to cast a ballot. Controlling for all other factors in the pooled models analysing voting, individuals who have completed upper secondary education are significantly more likely to engage in electoral participation than those who have completed secondary education or lower. This result is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

The odds of voting for individuals with higher levels of education are 2.8 times the odds of voting for individuals with level of education being secondary or lower, which is consistent with previous research has consistently shown that education is one of the strongest predictors of voter turnout (Verba et al, 1995; Tenn, 2007; Stolle and Hooghe, 2009; Vecchione and Caprara, 2009; Cainzos and Voces; Holmes and Manning, 2013). Higher levels of education push individuals to be more politically engaged. Education is a statistically significant predictor of formal political engagement

as well. When analysing informal political participation, the level of education appears to be a positive significant predictor of political engagement at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

Current status

Current status is a categorical variable comparing whether individuals are in education, paid work or other (refer to Chapter 4 for more details). The results in this chapter on the significance of the current status of individuals on the propensity to vote as reported in Table 7.3 are different from the results in Chapter 6, where only young people were included in the analyses. This is not surprising as most of the 184,913 individuals who are in paid work, as opposed to in education, are older. Young people are more likely to be in education; therefore, the result is expected (see Appendix F: Table 9.5). Table 9.5 reports that the odds ratios for being in education is 0.884, indicating that the odds of voting for individuals in education is 0.12 lower the odds of individuals who are in paid work. This is a statistically significant result at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

When it comes to formal political participation, the results from Table 7.4 tell the same story, where the odds of participating in formal politics for individuals currently in education is 0.1% lower than for individuals in paid work. This is statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

In contrary to the models analysing voting and formal political participation, the results from the model looking at the third dependent variable: informal political participation reported in Table 7.5, reveal that individuals currently in education are more likely to engage in informal activities than individuals in paid work. Younger people are more likely to be in education than older respondents, then this result indicates that younger people are more likely to engage in informal politics.

Gender

In contrast with the findings from Chapter 6 on informal political participation, once including all individuals in the dataset, gender becomes statistically significant predictor of informal political engagement at the 99 per cent confidence level. Participation in elections, formal and informal politics of all individuals shows gendered patterns, where males are more likely to participate in all forms of political activities than females.

In this section, I showed how contextual institutional factors affect rates of participation of all age groups. The next section shows how age relates to electoral, formal, and informal participation, looking closely at length of democratic experience and levels of corruption, which showed

statistically significant drivers of both youth participation and general participation throughout all forms of political engagement.

7.3 Marginal effects of age and institutional-level variables on voting, formal participation, and informal participation

This chapter aims to compare youth engagement in politics with general public engagement in politics and establish if there are differences between young people and general public. This chapter also looks at the influence of age of democracy and levels of corruption on political participation in relation to age. To gain an initial idea of how participation in elections is different among young people and adults in relation to institutional-level differences across countries, in this section I examine how levels of political participation relate to age. Here, the existing argument in the literature that participation increases with age is tested.

This section presents the plotted marginal effects of age of democracy and levels of corruption separately on voting, formal and informal participation. The graphs illustrate the results from the models presented in the previous section by plotting the predicted probabilities from these models. In all the graphs, the 'Predicted mean' and 'Prediction'[42] is a prediction of the rate of electoral, formal, and informal participation respectively.

7.3.1 Voting

In Figure 7.12, I plot the marginal effect of *age of democracy* on voting, based on Model 7.1(*a*), Table 7.3), where the model presents the results from the multilevel regression analysis with 95 per cent confidence intervals. The confidence intervals are not visible due to the large sample size of the pooled dataset and they are estimated but not apparent in the subsequent figures in this set of analyses.

Figure 7.12 illustrates the effect of the age of democracy of a country (plotted on the x-axis) on electoral participation holding age at different age groups (where age is equal to 18, 40 and 70). The plot shows that while the rate of electoral participation increases for all age groups as the democratic maturity of a country increases, the youngest group (at age 18) participates at substantially lower rates in elections, whereas the older you are, the more likely you are to cast a

[42] Plotting the effects of age of democracy or corruption on informal political participation are done using MLwiN, hence the wording is different i.e. "prediction" instead of "predicted mean".

ballot (hence the lines where age is equal to 40 and 70 are higher than for the younger group). Graphing the model predictions has shown that the predicted lines for each age group are effectively parallel. The graph clearly shows that levels of electoral participation increase across all age groups as the age of democracy increases. The longer the democratic experience, the more likely are all individuals to vote. There is a clear trend that the younger you are, the less likely you are to vote, even in advanced democracies. What stands out from the graph is that a young person in an established democracy (aged over 100 years) will tend to vote at similar rates to a middle-aged person in a newly established democracy (around 10-20 years). As a country approaches around 50 years of democracy, a young person becomes more likely to vote than not to vote.

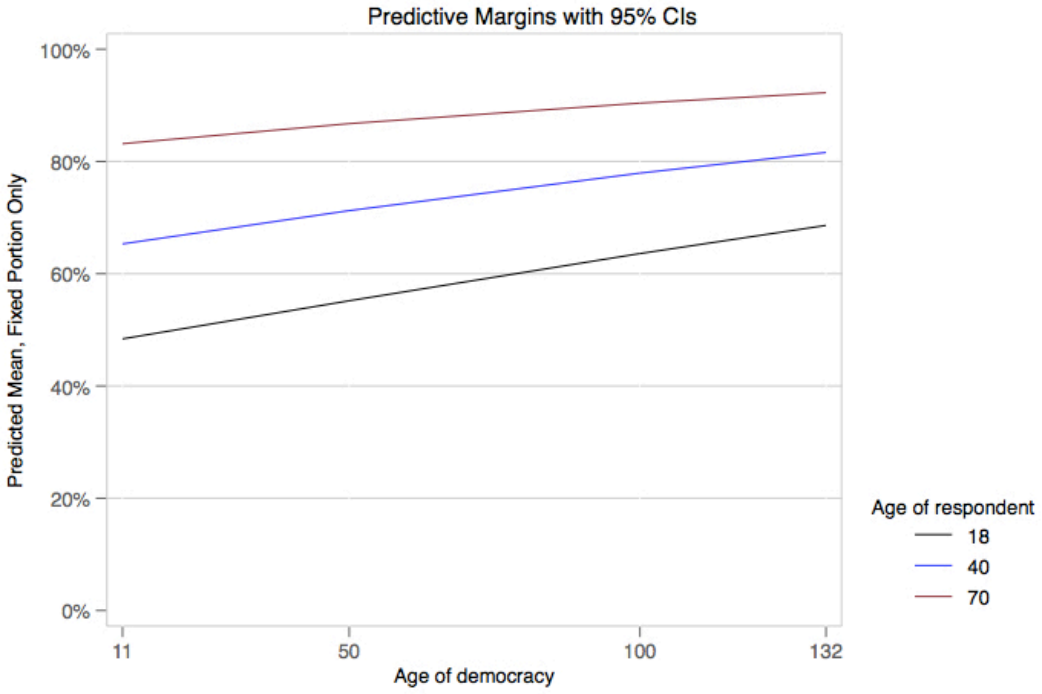

Figure 7.12 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on voting i.e. the predicted probability of individuals voting by age groups (ESS 2002-2016)

I plot the predicted levels of electoral participation against levels of corruption within a country for different age groups in Figure 7.13. The graph indicates that individuals become less likely to vote as the presence of corruption within a country increases. Notably, the graph reveals that younger people in countries with lower levels of corruption vote more than middle-aged people in countries with higher levels of corruption. This result is striking, as the conventional wisdom is that individuals reach their peak in electoral participation when they are middle-aged. This life-cycle effect is, however, exceeded by the size of the contextual effect of corruption.

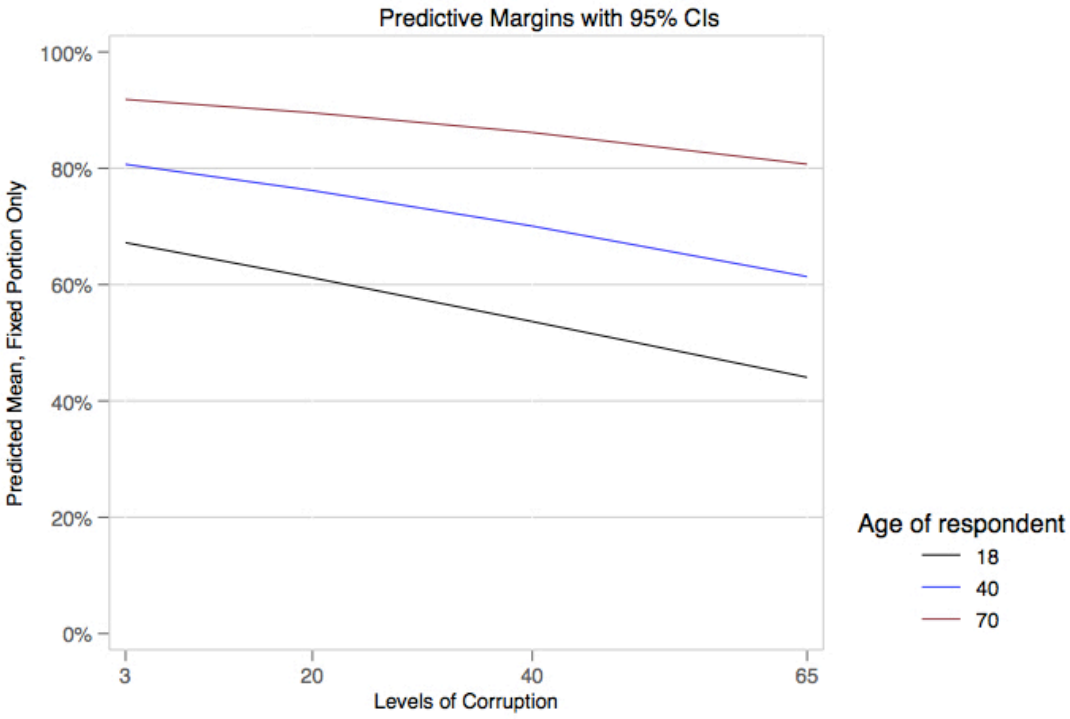

Figure 7.13 Marginal effect of *corruption* on (ESS 2002-2016)

7.3.2 Formal political participation

How the predicted marginal effect of age of democracy on participating in formal politics changes for different age groups is presented in Figure 7.14. From the graphical presentation below, it is evident that young people's participation in formal politics is the lowest in newly established democracies. As a country has been democratic for longer, the level of formal political participation increases. The level of formal political participation increases gradually across all age groups as the democratic experience of a country increases. Age of democracy is therefore an important driver of formal political participation, as even young people situated in established democracies are more likely to be engaged in formal politics than older people in newly established democracies (i.e. the predicted effect is higher for an individual aged 18 in a 100-year-old democracy compared to an individual aged 70 in a 10-year-old democracy).

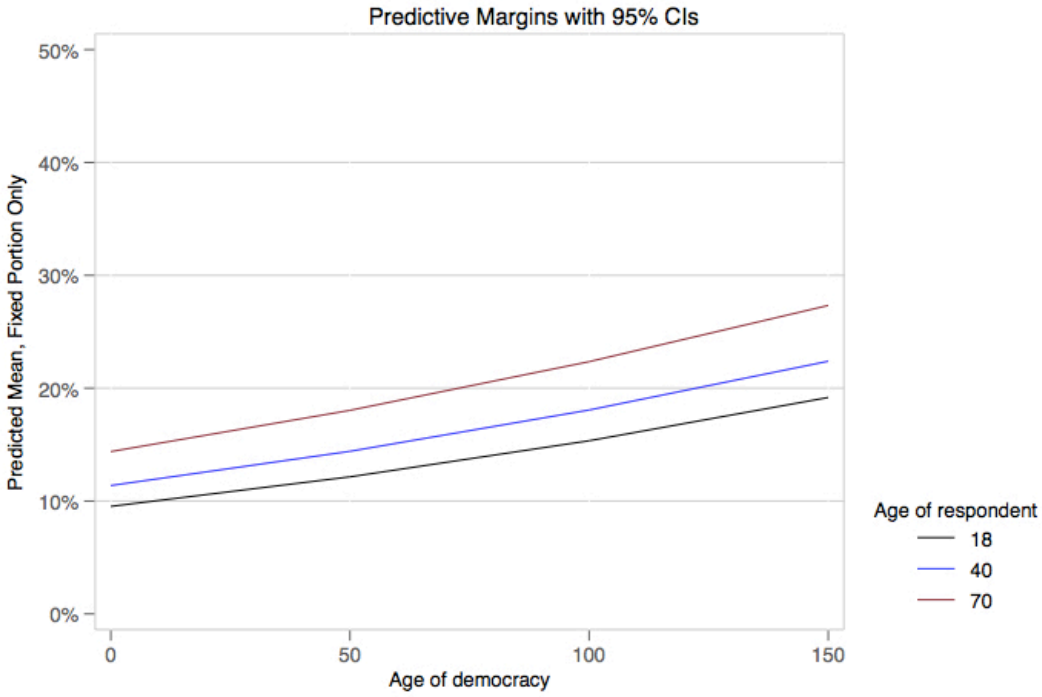

Figure 7.14 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on formal political participation (ESS 2002-2016)[43]

[43] For visual presentation and clarity, the "y" axis ranges from 0 to 50% only.

Figure 7.15 plots the predictive probabilities of individuals engaging in formal political activities looking at different levels of corruption. From this, it is evident that as the level of a corruption in a country increases, the rate of formal political participation falls. This pattern holds for all age groups. However, consistent with results presented here, younger people are less likely to engage in formal politics.

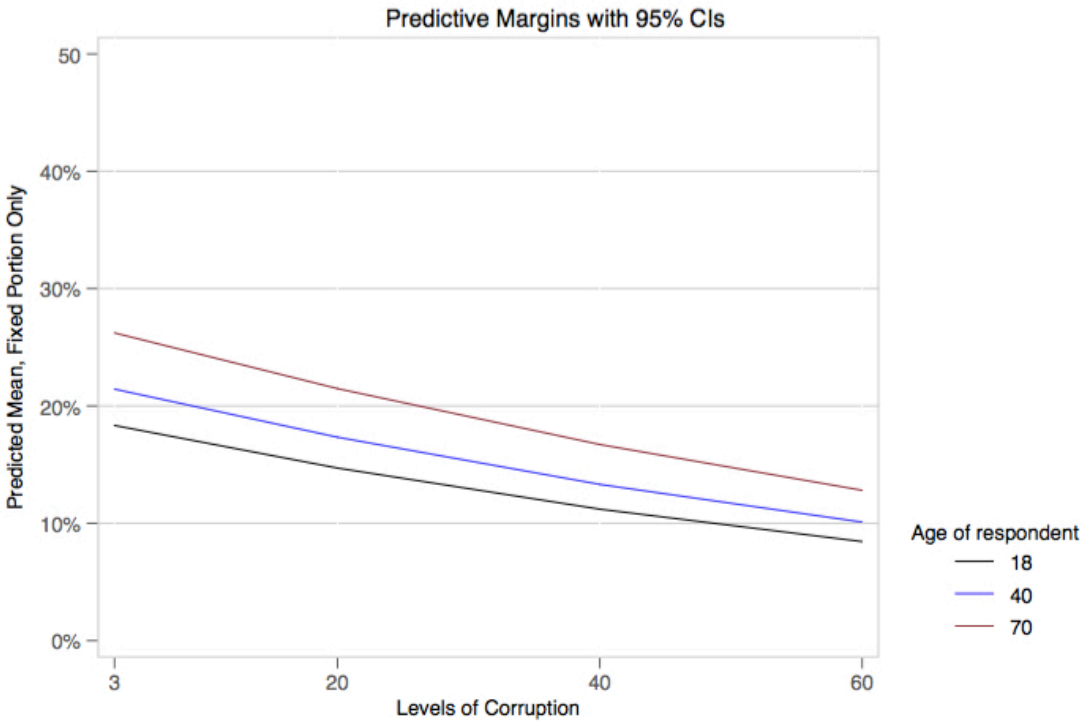

Figure 7.15 Marginal effect of *corruption* on formal political participation (ESS 2002-2016)

7.3.3 Informal political participation

Figure 7.16 presents the marginal effect of age of democracy on informal political participation[44]. Interestingly, in contrast to the previous figures for voting and formal political participation, this reveals that young people (where the value is set at age equal to 18) are more likely to participate in informal political activities than the older age groups (consistent with the results of the regression analyses presented earlier, even though the differences between age groups are small compared to the other figures). Individuals are more likely to participate in informal politics in advanced democracies. Young people are slightly more likely to engage in informal politics than older people are, and this observation is consistent across democracies of all ages. However, being a young person situated in a country that is an advanced democracy means you are the

[44] The minimum length of democratic experience here is 11 years, and the maximum is 132 years.

most likely to engage in informal politics. The graph shows that the older you are, the less likely you are to participate in informal politics, which is in line with the existing expectations in the current literature (though the difference is very slight and dwarfed by the difference by age of democracy).

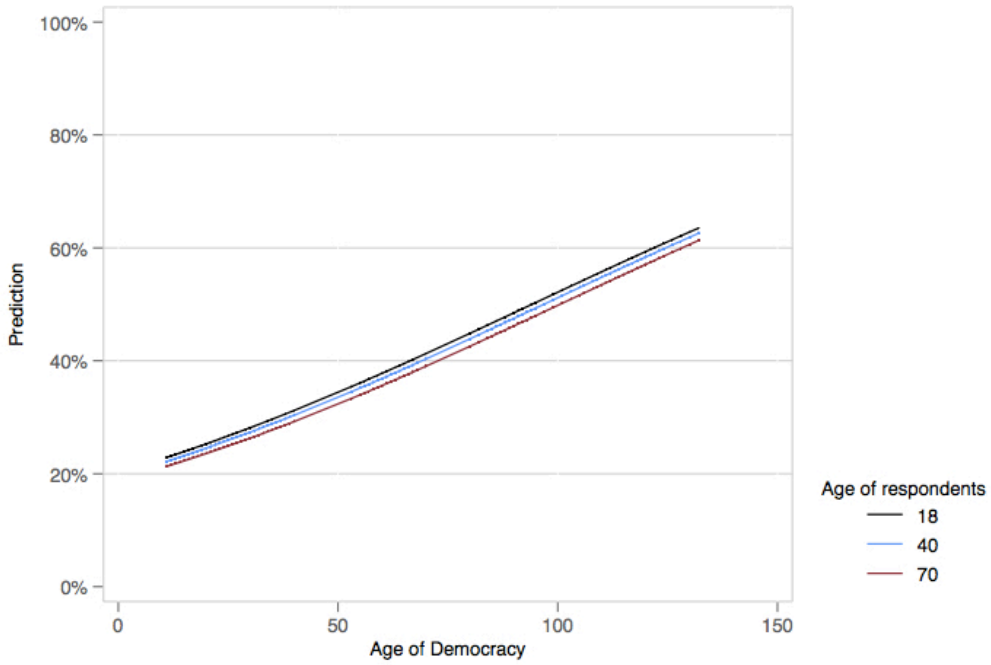

Figure 7.16 Marginal effect of *age of democracy* on informal political participation (ESS 2002-2016) [45]

Turning next to the marginal predicted effect of corruption on informal participation, Figure 7.17[46] reveals that the highest levels of informal political participation are observed at the lowest levels of corruption. There is a large gap between levels of informal participation between countries with low levels of corruption and countries with high levels of corruption.

By comparison, the difference in the effect for different age groups is very small. An individual situated in a country with high levels of corruption, the difference between participation among younger and older people is extremely small. In a country where level of corruption is below 10, 18-year-olds and 40-year-olds are more likely to engage in informal politics than individuals aged 70. However, regardless of age, all individuals are affected substantially by the level of corruption in their country. People who live in countries with high levels of corruption are less likely to

[45] The visual presentation of the graphs for the marginal effects on informal political participation vary as MLwiN was used to create the graphs due to STATA not responding to the models.
[46] The lowest level of corruption is 3, and the highest is 65.

engage in informal politics and in those countries at the most extreme rates of corruption the rate of participation is strikingly low.

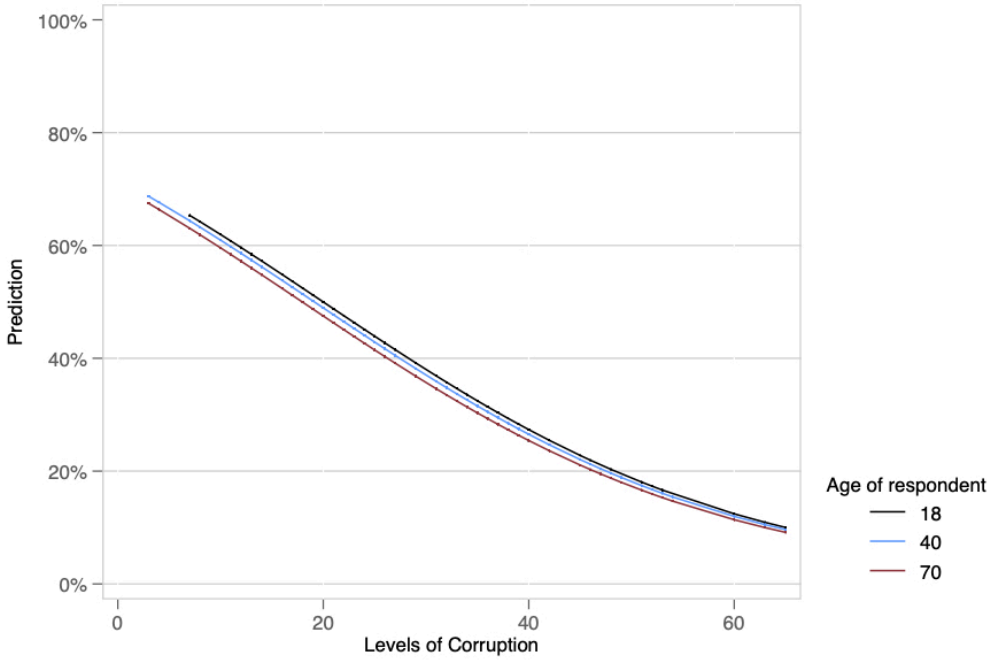

Figure 7.17 Marginal effect of *corruption* on informal political participation (ESS 2002-2016)

7.4 The mediating effect of institutional variables on the effect of age on participation

How does the relationship between age and participation vary conditional on the institutional context? In this section, the pooled sample is analysed by applying three-level multilevel logistic regression to the dependent variables in this study (i.e. electoral, formal and informal participation), this time including the interaction of an individual's age and country-level measures of their institutional context (known as an "interaction term"). This allows me to test how the relationship between age and participation varies according to institutional setting. In my analyses an "interaction term" is the linear combination of the values of an individual's age and, for example, the age of democracy for the country they live in (age x age of democracy). Interaction terms are also included for the linear combination of age and corruption and age and PR electoral systems.

Including interaction terms helps provide insight into how institutional context mediates the relationship between age and different types of participation. There is an "interaction effect" when the impact of an independent variable on the dependent variable changes when including a third "moderator" variable (Jaccard, 2001). I use product terms, which is common in logistic analyses. The values of the two independent variables, which effect is tested, are multiplied. The original independent variables are also included in the model together with the newly formed "product". Most studies analyse age in isolation as opposed to as a moderator variable, or it is interacted with other individual-level variables. However, my study bridges the gap between micro- and macro-level predictor of political participation and includes interaction terms between an individual-level variable and country-level variables.

Previously, the analysis in this thesis in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 considered young people only and contextual variables. There is, however, an age gradient in political participation, and it is considered here. Table 7.7, 7.8, and 7.9 present the results of the three-level multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of individuals to vote, participate in formal, and informal politics, respectively (ESS 2002-2016) including the interaction of age and institutional variables. Two models are presented in each table: one includes age of democracy; and the other one includes corruption[47]. One full model was computed for each interaction term between *age* and *age of democracy* and *age* and *corruption*, and for each form of political participation.

7.4.1 Voting

The models presented in Table 7.7 report the results from the three-level multilevel modelling applied to the propensity of individuals to vote, including all independent variables from the previous model reported in Table 5, however, here interaction terms between "age" and "age of democracy", and "age" and "PR electoral system" are added in Model 7.4(*a*); and interaction terms between "age" and "corruption", and "age" and "PR electoral system" are added in Model 7.4(*b*).

To explore how the effect of age is mediated by length of democratic experience, the models presented in the previous section were repeated including the interaction between an individual's *age* and *age of democracy.* The result from Model 7.4(*a*); indicates that the impact of age of a

[47] "Age of democracy" and "corruption" are multicollinear, therefore, the effects of age of democracy and corruption on the propensity of individuals to engage in politics is examined in separate models in order to account for accuracy of results.

respondent can be contingent upon the age of democracy. This result is significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence level.

The result demonstrates that an individual's country-level context (e.g. age of democracy) mediates the individual-level effects of age. Not only is it true that institutions matter for the political participation of young people (as shown in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6), however, they also shape the relationship between age and participation.

Table 7.7 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset for voting including interaction terms (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.4(*a*)	**Model 7.4(*b*)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.004***	
	(0.001)	
Age of democracy*Age	1.0001***	
	(0.00001)	
Corruption		0.992***
		(0.003)
Corruption*Age		0.9998***
		(0.00002)
Mixed Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)	7.471***	6.456***
	(1.103)	(0.960)
PR Electoral system	4.284***	3.914***
	(0.473)	(0.448)
PR system*Age	0.986***	0.984***
	(0.001)	(0.001
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.044***	1.056***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)	1.658***	1.657***
	(0.026)	(0.026)
Higher	2.875***	2.874***
	(0.050)	(0.050)
Male	1.020*	1.020*
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)	0.852***	0.884***
	(0.023)	(0.023)
Current Status: Other	0.697***	0.696***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

As the odds ratios for the interaction term are not necessarily informative about the impact of age as the democratic length /level of corruption increases (Brambor, Clark, and Golder, 2006). Therefore, the results of the interactions are visually presented in graphs. When respondent's age has different effect for different ages of democracy, the marginal effects indicate to what extent

at a particular age, individuals in established democracies participate in politics differently than individuals in newly established democracies.

In Figure 7.18, I plot the marginal effect of the interaction of *age* and *age of democracy*, at different levels of *age of democracy*. The 95% confidence intervals are indicated with dotted lines. The solid sloping line shows how the effect of age changes with number of years a country has been a democracy.

The graph demonstrates that the effect of age increases as the age of democracy increases. The effect of age is weaker when democratic experience is new. The effect of age on voting is positive for countries at all ages of democracy but has a greater effect in established democracies. Older people are always more likely to vote with the effect being greater in older democracies.

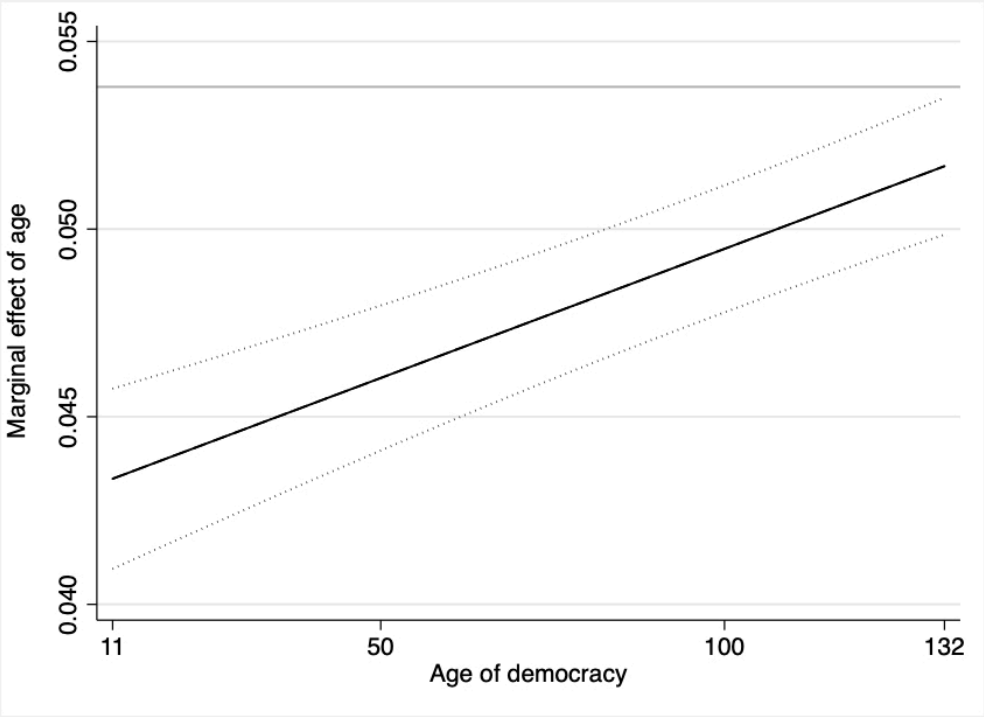

Figure 7.18 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on voting as age of democracy increases

These results provide evidence that not only does age of democracy shape the decision of an individual whether or not to vote, but it can also modify the size of the effect of age on voting.

As shown in Chapters 5-7, corruption is a predictor of political participation. The substantive nature of the interaction between *age* and *corruption* (corresponding to Model 7.4(b) in Table 7.7) is presented in Figure 7.19, which graphs predictions of voting. This tests whether the effect of age on voting differs at different levels of corruption. The graph shows that as the level of corruption increases, moving to the right of the graph, the effect of age is significantly smaller. The consistently positive effect confirms the previous finding that younger people tend to

participate less in electoral participation. The effect of age is always significant but decreases as the level of corruption increases. In summary, the results indicate that corruption weakens the strength of the relationship between age and voting.

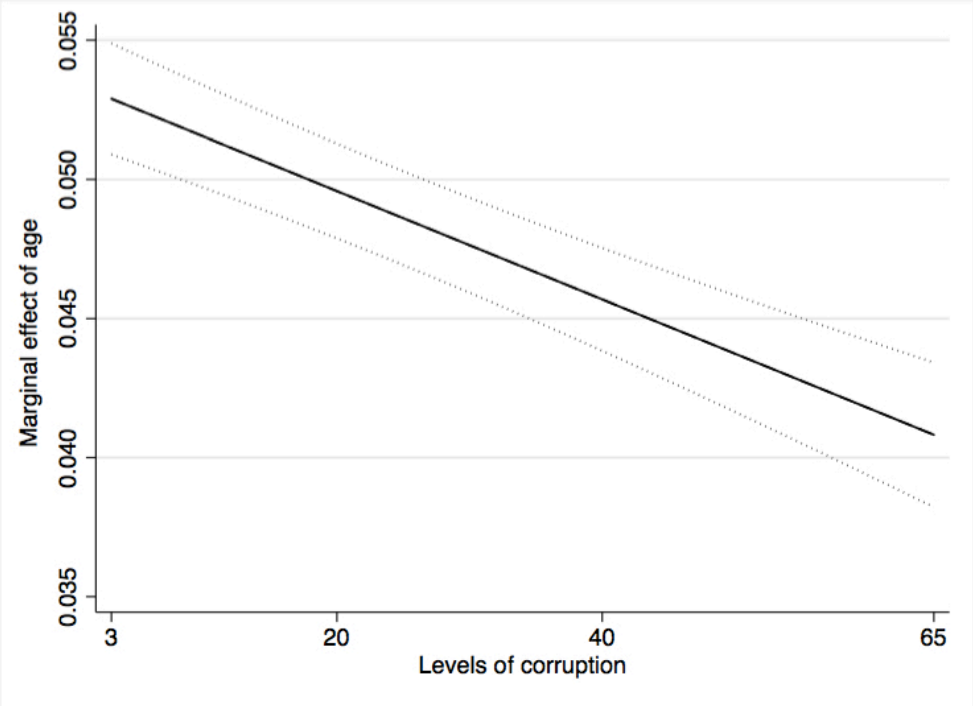

Figure 7.19 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on voting as levels of corruption increase

7.4.2 Formal political participation

The results from the three-level multilevel regression analyses applied to formal political participation including interaction terms are reported in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset for formal political participation including interaction terms (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.5(*a*)	**Model 7.5(*b*)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	0.9991	
	(0.001)	
Age of democracy*Age	1.0001***	
	(0.00001)	
Corruption		0.9995
		(0.002)
Corruption*Age		0.9997***
		(0.00003)
Mixed Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)	1.0005	1.105
	(0.133)	(0.132)
PR Electoral system	1.316***	1.361***
	(0.129)	(0.124)
PR system*Age	0.997***	0.994***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.002	1.022***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)	1.494***	1.501***
	(0.027)	(0.028)
Higher	2.544***	2.550***
	(0.044)	(0.044)
Male	1.392***	1.394***
	(0.018)	(0.018)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)	0.874***	0.879***
	(0.030)	(0.030)
Current Status: Other	0.855***	0.854***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I illustrate the results from Table 7.8 by plotting the interaction of age and age of democracy at different levels of age of democracy. Bearing in mind the extreme low levels of formal political engagement, Figure 7.20 illustrates the marginal effects of age on formal political participation as age of democracy increases. The graph shows that all respondents shun formal political participation to the same extent if they are situated in newly established democracies. However, as the length of democratic experience increases, age becomes a significant predictor as older individuals are more likely to participate in formal political activities.

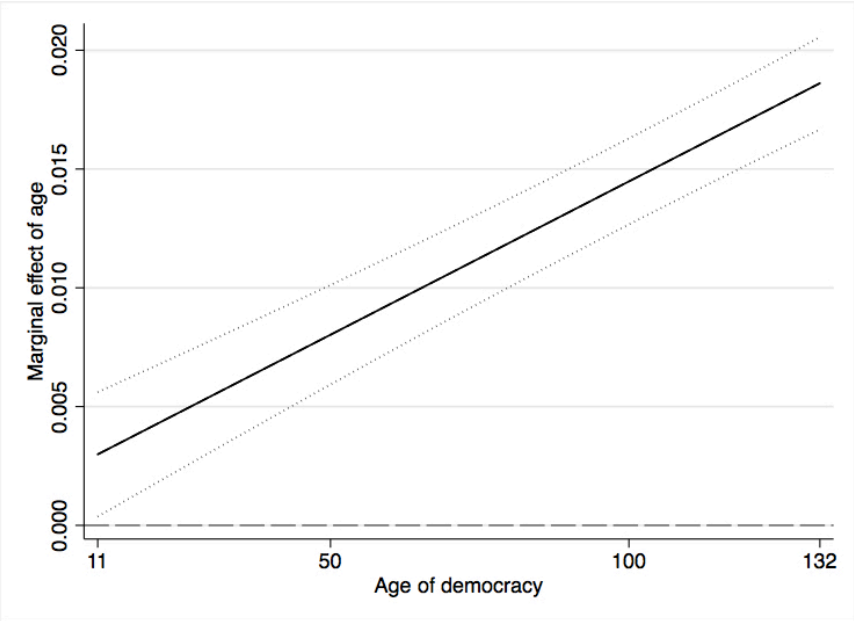

Figure 7.20 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on formal political participation as age of democracy increases

How does the effect of age change on formal political participation as the levels of corruption increase is presented in Figure 7.21. The graph shows that individuals' participation in formal politics decreases, regardless of their age, as the level of corruption increases. There is a decreasing line, implying a statistically non-significant effect of age once levels of corruption reach their highest values in a country. The coefficient interval suggests that older people are less likely to engage in informal politics in highly corrupted countries.

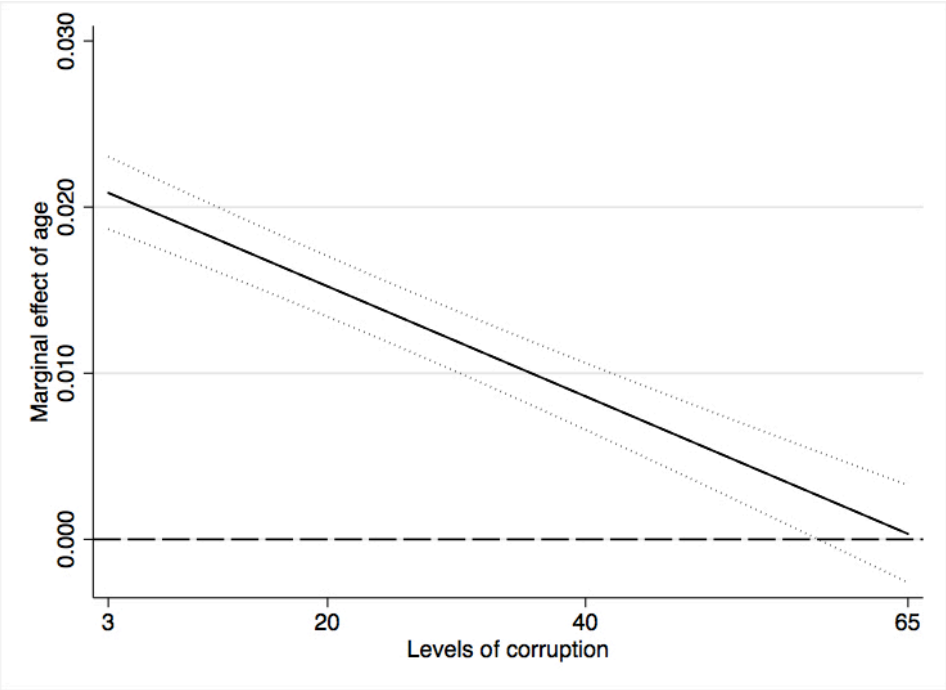

Figure 7.21 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on formal political participation as levels of corruption increase

7.4.3 Informal political participation

The results from the three-level multilevel regression analyses applied to informal political participation including interaction terms are reported in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Results from multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset for informal political participation including interaction terms (ESS, 2002-2016)

	Model 7.6(*a*)	**Model 7.6(*b*)**
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.010***	
	(0.002)	
Age of democracy*Age	1.0001***	
	(8.79e-06)	
Corruption		0.959***
		(0.004)
Corruption*Age		0.9998***
		(0.00002)
Mixed Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)	1.056	0.918***
	(0.277)	(0.181)
PR Electoral system	1.078	0.916
	(0.211)	(0.139)
PR system*Age	0.995***	0.993***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Individual-level variables		
Age	0.994***	1.001***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Upper secondary (Secondary or lower)	1.691***	1.725***
	(0.024)	(0.025)
Higher	3.001***	3.145***
	(0.042)	(0.045)
Male	1.031***	1.033***
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Current Status: In education (*paid work*)	1.334***	1.357***
	(0.034)	(0.035)
Current Status: Other	0.851***	0.844***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	184,913	184,913

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Recognising that the table presenting the results of the interaction terms has limited interpretation, I present Figure 7.22 that graphically illustrates the interaction term of age and age of democracy at different levels of age of democracy, when looking at informal participation. To be more specific, Figure 7.22 shows how the marginal effect of age of individuals changes across democratic length. Age has a strong reductive effect on informal participation when the democracy is new. As predicted, this reductive effect declines as the democratic length increases. Once the number of years a country has been a democracy for reaches around 45, age ceases to have a reductive impact on informal participation.

The negative coefficients in the graph – up to democracies aged just under half a century old – show that the older you are, the less likely you are to engage in informal politics. The positive coefficient for democracies aged around 75 and older suggests that in advanced democracies the

effect of age on informal politics is different. In newly established democracies, older people are less likely to engage in informal political activities. This is not surprising as the older generations of the post-communist countries were socialised in a different way meaning that they are not as likely to engage in informal political activities. In newly established democracies, younger people are engaging in informal activities more than older people are. However, young people in newly established democracies are still less likely to engage in informal politics than their counterparts in established democracies. Young people in countries with shorter democratic experience still have different political behaviour to young people in countries with long democratic history. However, once democratic experience reaches 132 years, older people become more likely to engage in informal politics than younger people do.

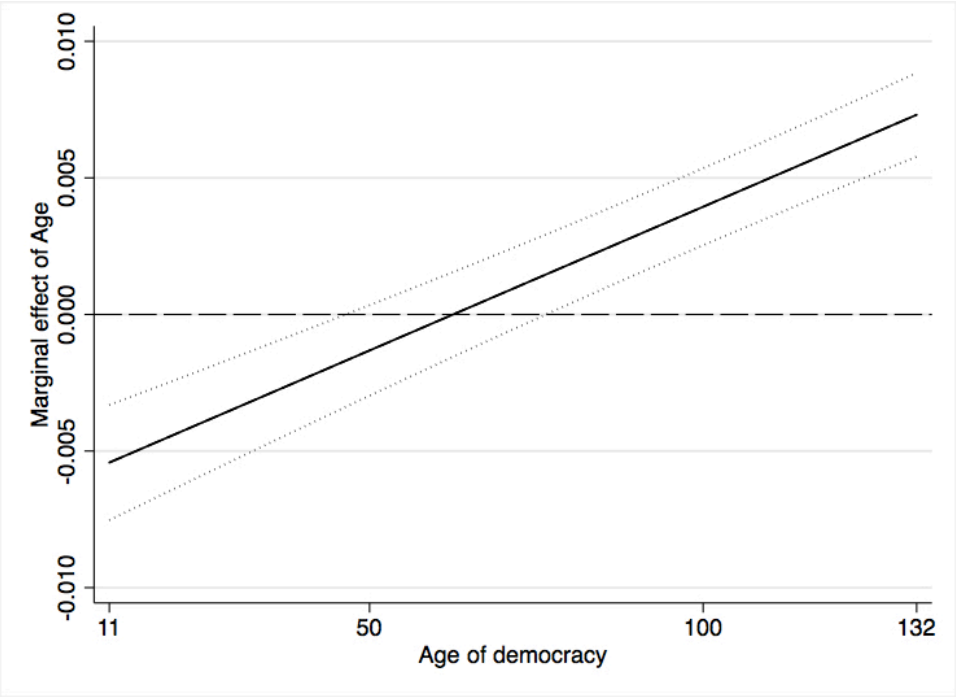

Figure 7.22 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on informal political participation as age of democracy increases

Figure 7.23 below illustrates what is the effect of age when levels of corruption are high and low. Again, looking at informal political participation, the results from the models with interactions exploring informal political participation reveal a negative coefficient and suggest that the older you are the less likely you are to engage in informal politics.

The graph shows support for the expectation that high levels of corruption decrease the likelihood of participating in informal politics. Furthermore, the graph illustrates that age has a significant positive effect on informal political engagement only until a certain level of corruption, in this case 45, which further supports the expectation that corruption is crucial in influencing

whether or not a person will engage in informal politics. Here, the negative coefficient in the graph, up to levels of corruption above 45, shows that the older you are, the less likely you are to engage in informal politics. High presence of corruption creates disengagement across all respondents.

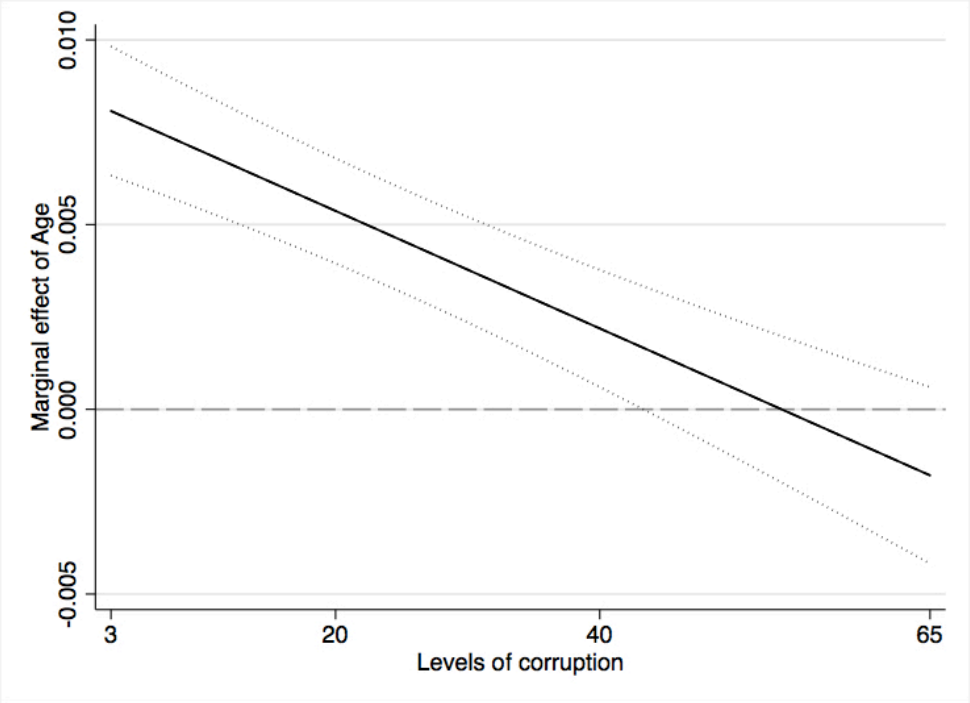

Figure 7.23 Marginal Effects of age of respondents on informal political participation as levels of corruption increases

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter confirms that existing cross-national variations of levels of participation across countries can be explained by a diverse range of several external factors (Crepaz 1990; Freitag 1996, 2005; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Wernli 1998; Franklin 2002; Norris 2004), where in this study I focused on the institutional-level predictors: age of democracy, levels of corruption, and type of electoral system.

In summary, the main results from the analyses testing for the effect of institutional-level characteristics on the propensity of individuals of all ages to vote revealed that voting is higher in countries with longer democratic experiences. As the analyses in this chapter includes all age groups, I can draw a conclusion confirming previous findings that voting is perceived as a habit, where the individuals throughout their democratic experience develop certain loyalty, partisanship and habits (Campbell et al. 1960, 92; Plutzer 2002; Gerber, Green, and Shachar 2003; Franklin 2004). The findings from this chapter revealed that newly established democracies experience lower levels of formal and informal political participation, which is not surprising as in

established democracies, it is expected more opportunities for participation to exist (Almond and Verba, 1963). In addition, the findings support those of previous research suggesting that levels of participation among post-communist countries is low (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012).

As evident from the results, when it comes to voting, formal and informal political participation, higher levels of corruption decrease the propensity of individuals to engage in such activities. This study supports evidences from previous empirical research that corruption is negatively related to political participation, where higher levels of corruption are associated with lower levels of political participation (Dominguez and McCann 1998; Simpser 2005; Stockemer et al 2012; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2013; Stockemer, 2013).

The results indicate that regardless of their age, individuals are more active in electoral participation in PR electoral systems than in majoritarian electoral systems. My results are consistent with previous studies analysing electoral systems and voter turnout (Jackman 1987; Jackman and Miller 1995; Powell Jr 1980, 1986; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais and Carty 1990; Ladner and Milner, 1999; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). When analysing formal political participation, the results reveal that being situated in a country with PR electoral system has a positive effect on participating in formal political activities. Surprisingly, this result is statistically insignificant indicating that voting and formal political participation although both being traditional types of political participation, have differences, therefore, this confirms the decision to analyse these two types of political participation separately in order to account for accuracy of results and draw valid and substantive conclusions. On the other hand, when analysing individuals' propensity to engage in informal political activities, the type of electoral system plays an insignificant role, when controlling for age of democracy.

The findings in this chapter strengthen the expectation that the gap between micro- and macro-level variables should be bridged. Plotting the interaction terms also revealed some interesting findings that are discussed and reflected on in the next chapter, which presents the concluding remarks of this thesis.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This study interrogated the academic literature behind the well-known and widely studied individual-level determinants of youth political participation. This thesis set to answer what are the institutional-level determinants of youth political participation in the EU. The findings suggested that age of democracy and levels of corruption are strong drivers of youth political participation. The results found that electoral system is an important predictor of youth participation when it comes to voting. This conclusion presents a detailed answer to the set research question and summarises the main findings from the three empirical chapters with regard to the extent to which age of democracy, corruption, and type of electoral system are significant drivers of youth engagement in electoral, formal and informal politics. It then considers the academic implications of this research for the ongoing study of 1) institutional determinants of political participation; and 2) youth political engagement. Then I reflect on the limitations of this study and propose questions for further consideration and research. Finally, this concluding chapter turns to the policy implications of my research, especially to the issue of political participation of young people in newly established democracies.

Explaining youth political participation is a challenge for contemporary political research. The literature provides insights into determinants of political participation, where the most analytical distinction is between micro- and macro-level factors. Micro-level theories study the individual-level characteristics such as personal characteristics and attitudes. On the other hand, macro-level explanations of political behaviour focus on external determinants, where country-level characteristics are looked at. Research into determinants of youth political engagement has paid little attention to macro-level factors. Individual-level characteristics and research focusing on life-cycle effects and generational differences are often analysed in explaining youth political participation (Kimberlee, 2002; Martikainen, Martikainen, and Wass, 2005; Wattenberg, 2012; Grasso, 2014; Fox, 2015; Garcia-Albacete, 2017).

At the macro-level, research differentiates between political institutions, societal and cultural explanations of political engagement. Institutional theories accounting for low or high levels of political participation are one of the most prominent theoretical approaches. Such theories focus on differences in political contexts, political opportunities, democracy (e.g. Powell 1980; Jackman 1987; Jackman & Miller 1995; Lijphart 1999; Franklin 2002, 2004; Norris, 2002; Vrablikova, 2010; Kitanova, 2019).

Political participation varies considerably across countries. I explain these variations by analysing three dimensions of the institutional setting of a country: age of democracy, levels of corruption,

and type of electoral system. The institutional theory proposed in this study sheds light on what are the institutional-level drivers of youth engagement in electoral, formal and informal political participation. I hypothesised that the longer the democratic experience the more likely are young individuals to be politically engaged. My theory also suggested that high levels of corruption depress youth political engagement in any form of political participation. I expected that PR electoral systems boost youth political participation.

In this thesis I analysed a time-series cross-sectional data from the European Social Survey (2002-2016) combined with a country-level dataset on institutional variables between 2002 and 2016 on 13 EU countries, compiled specifically for the purpose of this study. I employed multilevel logistic regression modelling in order to explore the effect of country-level characteristics on the propensity of young individuals to engage in electoral, formal, and informal participation. Using a novel approach to analysing levels of youth political participation allowed the analyses to account for the fact that individuals are nested in countries. I presented the large cross-national test of my novel theory in three empirical chapters:

The results presented in *Chapter 5* challenge the view that individual-level characteristics are the only determinants of youth electoral participation. The analyses find evidence to support the assertion that institutional factors are significant predictors of youth turnout and account for variations in levels of young people's electoral engagement. The results from the multilevel logistic regression indicate that age of democracy has a positive effect on the propensity of young individuals to vote. Longer democratic length increases the likelihood of voting. Corruption increases the probability of young people to become disengaged from the process of casting a ballot. Young people living in countries with a Proportional Representation electoral systems are more likely to vote. It thus can be concluded that – in 2016 in the European Union countries at least – youth voter turnout can partly be explained by the age of democracy, levels of corruption, and the type of electoral system across the countries.

Chapter 6 built on the analyses presented in Chapter 5 – extending the analyses to the period from 2002 to 2016 – and found substantial evidence of the positive influence of *age of democracy* on the propensity of young individuals to vote. The results show that age of democracy is a positive and significant determinant of youth participation in elections, as well as in formal, and informal politics; indicating that the longer the democratic experience, the more likely are young people to engage in politics (See Section 6.2.1). The findings in this chapter indicate that corruption is a strong predictor of youth electoral participation, formal participation, and informal participation (see Section 6.2.2). The results confirm the expectations that countries with higher levels of corruption experience lower youth political engagement. Young people living in countries

with PR electoral system are in times more likely to vote than young people in majoritarian electoral systems. However, the electoral system does not significantly account for variation in the levels of informal youth participation across countries (See Section 6.2.3).

Chapter 7 analysed individuals of all ages in European Union countries between 2002 and 2006 – using a dataset of 184,913 individuals. The analysis considered how the relationship between age and political participation is mediated by institutional-level characteristics. The results suggested that the rate of electoral participation increases for all age groups as the democratic maturity of a country increases. Interestingly, findings revealed that young individuals in established democracies are more likely to be engaged in formal political activities than older people in newly established democracies. Furthermore, young people in advanced democracies are the most likely to engage in informal political activities. Further findings implied that individuals become less likely to vote as the levels of corruption within a country increase, regardless of their age. In summary, the chapter showed that an individual's country-level context (i.e. age of democracy, levels of corruption) mediates the individual-level effects of age.

8.1 Age of democracy

Existing studies suggest that political participation is lower in newly established democracies (Verba and Nie, 1963; Howard, 2002; Barnes, 2004; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Karp and Millazo, 2015; Novy and Katrnak, 2015; Kitanova, 2019). The long-term functioning of democratic institutions gradually creates a democratic political culture (Mishler and Rose 2001), and through the democratic experience in a country, individuals develop loyalty (Jackman and Miller, 2004). Studies show that young people are generally the least likely to vote or join a political party when it comes to post-communist countries (Szczerbiak, 2001, Fieldhouse et al., 2007). Existing opportunities to participate in politics in a country could underline and account for the high levels of political participation in one country and the low levels of participation in another as younger democracies might provide citizens with fewer opportunities for civic participation (Almond and Verba; 1963; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993), and protests are not a widespread political activity in post-communist countries (Bernhard and Karakoc, 2007). I hypothesised that longer democratic experience leads to higher levels electoral, formal, and informal political participation among young people (See Section 3.2.1.1). I then tested the set hypotheses using time-series cross-sectional data from the European Social Survey between 2002 and 2016 and found that age of democracy is a strong country-level driver of youth political engagement confirming Hypothesis 1 that young people in countries with longer democratic experience are more likely to vote. In addition, each one-year increase in the age of democracy corresponds to an increase in the

propensity of young individuals to be active in formal and informal politics, showing strong support for Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3.

Looking at all age groups in Chapter 7, the results showed that younger people are less likely to vote, even in advanced democracies. The findings revealed that young people in established democracies tend to vote at similar rates as middle-aged people in new democracies. As the democratic experience of a country approaches 50 years, a young person becomes more likely to vote than not to vote. Further analyses show the strong effect of age of democracy on political participation, where even a young person situated in an established democracy is less likely to engage in formal politics than an older person in a newly established democracy. All respondents regardless of their age shun formal political participation to the same extent if they are situated in newly established democracies.

8.2 Corruption

I hypothesised that high levels of corruption would discourage young people to be politically active (See Section 3.2.1.2). Presence of corruption is expected to corrode citizens' trust in the political system, which leads to general cynicism, distrust and apathy among citizens (Rothstein and Stolle, 2008; Dahlberg and Solevid, 2016). Previous research found that corruption alienates voters and decreases turnout (McCann and Dominguez, 1998; Chong et al., 2012; Simpser, 2012; Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs, 2013; Sundström and Stockemer, 2015). High levels of corruption decrease the likelihood of political engagement (Simpser, 2005; Kostadinova, 2009; Stockemer et al, 2012). The high levels of corruption and clientalism make young people feel powerless against the authorities. This could lead to young people becoming totally disengaged from political participation in countries with high presence of corruption as they would feel their act of participation is pointless (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 2002; Mischler and Rose, 2001, Rose and Munro, 2003; Robertson, 2009). The findings of the large cross-national study presented in this thesis suggested that young people are more likely to vote when they are situated in a country with low levels of corruption, supporting Hypothesis 4. I found that countries with lower levels of corruption create an environment that predisposes its citizens to engage in formal and informal politics confirming the expectations set in Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6.

The findings from Chapter 7 analysing political participation of individuals of all ages showed that the highest levels of informal political participation are observed in countries with the lowest levels of corruption. The findings reveal that younger people in countries with lower levels of corruption vote more than middle-aged people in countries with higher levels of corruption. The findings therefore suggest that the lifecycle effect is exceeded by the size of the contextual effect

of corruption. Corruption is such a strong driver of political participation that it weakens the strength of the relationship between age and voting.

8.3 Electoral systems

In terms of electoral systems, I hypothesised that youth political participation is higher in countries with PR electoral systems, where voting impact is clearer (Hypothesis 7). Having an apparent impact motivates people to vote and makes them feel their vote counts without "wasting" votes, which is crucial (Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Bowler, Donovan and Brockington, 2003; Fornos, Power and Garand, 2004; Milner and Ladner, 2006; Selb, 2009; St-Vincent, 2013). In PR systems, there are more political parties that take part in the process of voter mobilisation and minor parties are not likely to be excluded (Jackman, 1987; Koopmans and Kriesi, 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998). In PR systems, this has implications for youth the most as the majority of political parties nowadays do not address issues that young people care about due to being perceived as one of the most disengaged group (Council of Europe, 2010). The results in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 confirmed the expectation that youth turnout is higher in PR electoral systems, where individuals situated in PR systems were in times more likely to vote and participate in formal politics than individuals in majoritarian electoral systems confirming Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8. However, when it comes to informal political participation, the type of electoral system becomes an insignificant determinant of youth engagement, rejecting Hypothesis 9. Having presented in summary the main findings from this thesis, what is evident is that institutional-level characteristics substantially influence the degree to which young people engage in politics and the different ways in which they engage.

8.4 Limitations of the study and future research

There are several limitations identified within this study and areas for future research. First, a potential limitation is the number of newly established democracies analysed in this study. As discussed in Section 4.2.1, this study includes only three post-communist countries. However, in robustness checks including more newly established democracies from the European Social Survey (2002-2016) in Chapter 5 and 6 showed that findings were consistent. Despite the limited, as some might argue, sample of 13 countries, the data provided a robust and comparable dataset. However, in future research more post-communist countries from the EU could be analysed.

Second, as acknowledged in Chapter 3, previous research has found that economic development and cultural settings in countries influence the way people participate in politics (Lipset, 1963; Inglehart, 1997; Nannestad and Paldam, 1994; Lewis-Beck, 2000; Siaroff and Merer, 2002; Przeworski et al., 2003; Przeworski, 2008). As this study was focused specifically on institutional

factors, the role of economic development and culture might be expanded on in future research when one analyses young people's political participation.

Third, a weakness in the analyses in this study in terms of exploring the effect of the type of electoral systems on youth political participation is that there was not much variation in the type of electoral systems across the countries studied, as the majority of countries have a PR system. In future research countries with more diversity in terms of their electoral system could be added to the analyses.

8.4.1 Future research

The question raised by this study is how the institutional-level characteristics influence youth political engagement in electoral, formal and informal politics. As this study showed, age of democracy, levels of corruption, and electoral system influence in various ways the propensity of young individuals to engage in politics. Further examination of whether other country-level characteristics influence youth electoral participation is an obvious route for further inquiry such as but not restricted to: economic development, quality of democracy, electoral volatility, number of effective parties, citizenship education in schools, media relations etc. There is also the question of how these new variables might influence other forms of youth political participation as well (i.e. formal and informal activities).

Several questions still remain to be answered in future research. First, further research is needed to analyse age of democracy in terms of interruptions of the democratic experience and its effect on political participation. In similar future research, the length of democratic experience could be approached in terms of the combined number of years a country has been a democracy for, as once a democracy is interrupted, this could have potential implications on citizens' political behaviour.

Second, it would be a valuable exercise to test the institutional theory of youth political participation developed in this thesis including countries beyond the scope of the European Union. In such research, the findings would look different as non-EU countries have extreme variations in type of democracy, economic development, levels of corruption etc.

Third, as informal political participation is more widespread among young people, I suggest that further research analyses more in-depth informal political participation in terms of online political activism, which is used nowadays by younger generations. Such research could address the questions of how young people use social media platforms as a political engagement tool and whether such extensive use could lead to "offline" political engagement as well.

8.5 Academic implications: Youth political participation

This study reinforces the need to analyse country-level characteristics when exploring levels of youth political participation. Any comparative study that ignores such macro-level characteristics runs the risk of placing too much emphasis on the individual-level factors, which on their own cannot fully account for differences in the levels of youth political participation across countries.

There are three further implications for the ongoing study of youth political engagement emerging from this study. First, it has shown evidence of statistically significant macro-level drivers of youth political participation. This suggests that while young people's participation is indeed influenced by the individual-level factors; differences across levels of youth political participation are explained by dimensions of the institutional setting of countries. Any attempt at analysing determinants of youth political engagement across countries should be capable of accounting for institutional-level characteristics as well. A failure to do so will undermine confidence in the validity of any country-level drivers identified. This thesis suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on contextual research with attention given to age of democracy, corruption, and electoral system. This thesis also implies that methods such as multilevel logistic regression are needed in the analysis of country-level effects as it allows taking context into account by recognising that homogeneous units situated in diverse contexts may behave differently.

Second, my findings re-confirm that political participation should be researched and analysed in its multidimensional nature. Studies should explore the phenomenon of political participation beyond voting. As my research has shown, there are vast differences between electoral participation and contacting a politician, and findings suggest that in future research voting and other forms of traditional political participation should be analysed separately. Furthermore, further studies of political participation could analyse each informal political activity e.g. protesting, signing petitions, demonstrating etc. as separate dependent variable to add in-depth analysis. However, in my study this was not executed as the aim of this study was to analyse different modes of political participation, mainly differentiating between voting, formal, and informal political activities. This allowed my findings to contribute to the existing debates in the literature about young people's engagement in "conventional" and "unconventional" political participation. Furthermore, as shown in Chapter 4, there was not enough variation in the dependent variable "informal political participation" in order for it to be a cumulative index.

Third, in a meaningful comparison of younger and older citizens in Chapter 7, this thesis drew important conclusions on the differences between youth political engagement and that of their

elders. The thesis showed that while the rate of electoral participation increases for all age groups as the democratic experience of a country increases, the youngest individuals participate at lower rates in elections, whereas the older you are, the more likely you are to cast a ballot. Further analyses showed that young people are more likely to participate in informal political activities than the older age groups. To be more specific, being a young person situated in a country that is an advanced democracy means you are the most likely to engage in informal politics.

Analysing only youth as a sub-group, the findings concluded that presence of corruption decreases engagement in informal politics. In addition, young citizens in newly established democracies are less likely to engage in informal political activities. As a democracy grows older, the likelihood of young people to engage in informal political activities increases drastically.

In addition, this thesis explored how the relationship between age and participation varies conditional on the institutional setting of the country. The results showed that older people are always more likely to vote with the effect being greater in older democracies. The findings suggested that institutional-level characteristics mediate the effect of age e.g. a young person in a country with low levels of corruption tend to vote more than a middle-aged person in highly corrupted country.

8.6 Policy Implications

This study has implications beyond academic research. The findings of this thesis suggest several potential issues that need to be addressed by democratic governments. As long as age of democracy has crucial influence on the propensity of young individuals to engage in politics, levels of corruption have the same strong effect on youth political engagement. Given the current fact that newly established democracies have the highest levels of corruption, as known, in the EU, all of the newly established democratic countries are tackling the issue of corruption. This thesis further amplifies the need to fight levels of corruption, which would lead to higher levels of political participation.

The findings in this thesis suggested that high levels of corruption hugely depress youth voter turnout. A key policy priority for increasing youth political participation should therefore be to implement long-term plans on how to tackle the problem of high levels of corruption within EU countries. Furthermore, the presence of corruption in a country leads to disengaged young citizens in all political activities. This information should be used to draw attention to the issue of corruption and its implications on political participation in general. The presence of young people in the political processes in a country is crucial from the start as their inactivity might have a destabilising effect on democratisation.

Appendix A Robustness Checks Chapter 5

Table 9. 1 Results from multilevel logistic regression with Categorical *Age of Democracy* variable (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	**Model 5.3**
Country-level variables	
50–99 years democracy (*0-49 years democracy)*	1.495 (0.596)
100 years democracy onwards	4.033*** (1.878)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)	
Mixed Electoral system	3.939** (2.395)
PR Electoral system	4.328*** (1.990)
Individual-level variables	
Age	1.231*** (0.053)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)	
Upper Secondary Education	1.993*** (0.383)
Higher Education	3.192*** (0.732)
Male	1.038 (0.132)
Current status(*paid work*)	
Current Status: In education	1.708*** (0.257)
Current Status: Other	0.734* (0.136)
ICC	0.071
Log Likelihood	-748.0386
Deviance	1496.0772
AIC	1520.077
Number of individuals	1,289
Number of countries	13

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 2 Results from multilevel logistic regression with a categorical *corruption* variable (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	**Model 5.4**
Country-level variables	
Corruption (*low levels*)	
Medium levels of corruption (*low)*	0.629
	(0.328)
High levels of corruption	0.527
	(0.235)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)	
Mixed Electoral system	2.099
	(1.534)
PR Electoral system	3.815**
	(2.198)
Individual-level variables	
Age	1.229***
	(0.053)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)	
Upper Secondary Education	2.000***
	(0.385)
Higher Education	3.242***
	(0.745)
Male	1.032
	(0.132)
Current status(*paid work*)	
Current Status: In education	1.689***
	(0.254)
Current Status: Other	0.731*
	(0.135)
ICC	0.110
Log Likelihood	-750.9274
Deviance	1501.8547
AIC	1525.855
Number of individuals	1,289
Number of countries	13

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 3 Results from multilevel logistic regression with a dichotomous *electoral system* variable (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	**Model 5.5**
Country-level variables	
Age of democracy	1.008
	(0.005)
PR Electoral system (*non PR*)	2.319*
	(1.014)
Individual-level variables	
Age	1.228***
	(0.053)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)	
Upper Secondary Education	2.011***
	(0.389)
Higher Education	3.211***
	(0.738)
Male	1.031
	(0.131)
Current status(*paid work*)	
Current Status: In education	1.686***
	(0.253)
Current Status: Other	0.724*
	(0.134)
ICC	0.124
Log Likelihood	-751.5171
Deviance	1503.0342
AIC	1523.034
Number of individuals	1,289
Number of countries	13

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 4 Results from multilevel logistic regression with a more refined categorical *electoral system* variable (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	**Model 5.6**
Country-level variables	
Age of democracy	1.012***
	(0.003)
Electoral system(FPTP[48])	
PR (List)	4.941***
	(2.258)
TRS[49]	0.756
	(0.473)
MMP[50]	3.303**
	(1.790)
STV[51]	0.762
	(0.407)
Individual-level variables	
Age	1.230***
	(0.053)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)	
Upper Secondary Education	1.924***
	(0.369)
Higher Education	3.244***
	(0.742)
Male	1.033
	(0.132)
Current status(*paid work*)	
Current Status: In education	1.731***
	(0.260)
Current Status: Other	0.748
	(0.138)
ICC	0.028
Log Likelihood	-744.1235
Deviance	1488.247
AIC	1514.247
Number of individuals	1,289
Number of countries	13

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

[48] First-past-the -post
[49] Two-round system
[50] Mixed-member proportional
[51] Single-transferable vote

Table 9. 5 Results from multilevel logistic regression on the propensity of young individuals to vote including all EU countries (ESS, 2016)

Variable *{reference category}*	**Model 0**	**Model 5.7**	**Model 5.8(*a*)**	**Model 5.9*(b*)**
Country-level variables				
Age of democracy			1.013***	
			(0.005)	
Corruption				0.968**
				(0.014)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)				
Mixed Electoral system			2.688	1.711
			(1.835)	(1.126)
PR Electoral system			4.356***	3.239**
			(2.379)	(1.757)
Individual-level variables				
Age		1.286***	1.290***	1.290***
		(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)				
Upper Secondary Education		2.270***	2.244***	2.245***
		(0.363)	(0.358)	(0.358)
Higher Education		3.774***	3.712***	3.727***
		(0.734)	(0.722)	(0.725)
Male		1.130	1.135	1.132
		(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.119)
Current status(*paid work*)				
Current Status: In education		1.890***	1.884***	1.889***
		(0.235)	(0.234)	(0.235)
Current Status: Other		0.910	0.908	0.913
		(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.141)
ICC	0.165	0.182	0.105	0.113
Log Likelihood	-1190.784	-1104.922	-1099.379	-1100.307
Deviance	2381.5672	2209.8444	2198.7588	2200.6137
AIC	2385.567	2225.844	2220.759	2222.614
Number of countries	18	18	18	18
Number of individuals	1,890	1,890	1,890	1,890

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B Further Descriptive Analyses Chapter 6

Table 9. 6 Number of respondents per country (ESS 2002-2016)

Number of respondents aged 18 to 24 per ESS Wave

Country	W1 2002	W2 2004	W3 2006	W4 2008	W5 2010	W6 2012	W7 2014	W8 2016	Total
Belgium	159	183	99	134	175	125	177	106	1,158
Finland	104	146	84	144	68	122	76	110	854
France	154	87	45	115	79	83	95	44	702
Germany	212	177	193	135	232	149	188	143	1,429
Hungary	147	121	87	90	161	143	121	82	952
Ireland	231	190	108	105	251	198	118	146	1,347
Netherlands	120	73	85	90	96	101	97	64	726
Poland	280	202	219	194	135	180	77	129	1,416
Portugal	107	127	150	87	106	95	53	63	788
Slovenia	146	167	114	142	109	107	105	82	972
Spain	106	158	132	207	94	130	60	137	1,024
Sweden	183	134	195	115	142	120	142	87	1,118
UK	121	107	161	124	169	132	77	96	987

Table 9. 7 Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables. Source: ESS (2002-2016) and country-level dataset of institutional measures (2002-2016)

Variable name	**Min**	**Mean**	**Max**	**SD**
Voting	0	0.79	1	0.41
Formal participation	0	0.17	1	0.38
Informal participation	0	0.42	1	0.49
Age of democracy	11	69.60	132	37.56
Electoral system	1	2.50	3	0.75
Corruption	3	27.12	65	13.65
Age	18	50.34	114	17.64
Gender	0	0.47	1	0.50
Level of education	1	2.03	3	0.81
Current status	1	1.95	3	0.98

Appendix B

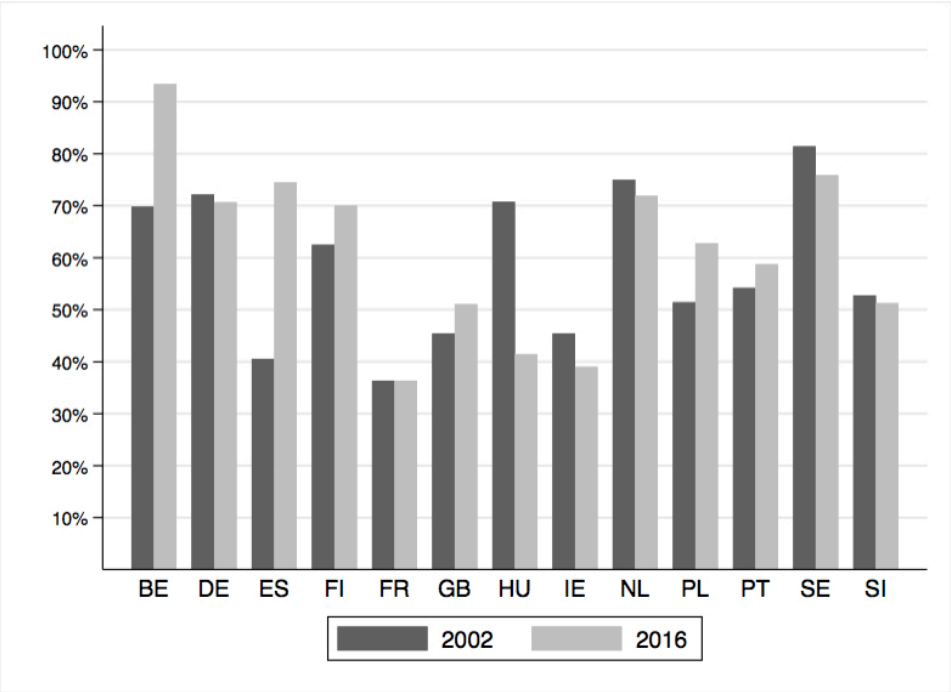

Figure 9. 1 Mean of voting across countries in 2002 and 2016 (ESS 2002, 2016)

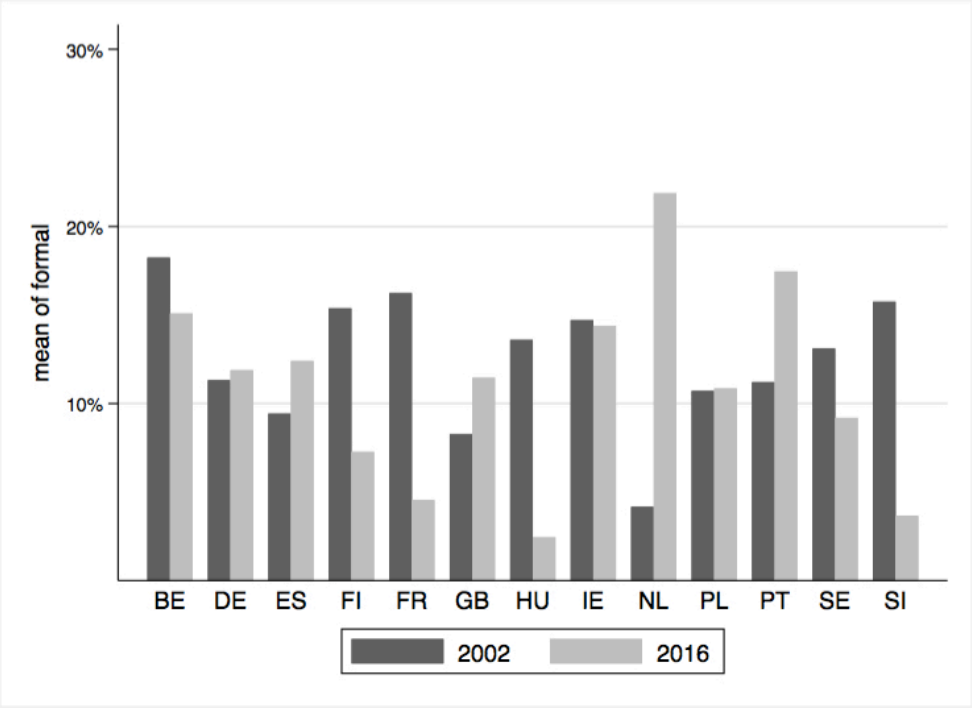

Figure 9. 2 Mean of formal political participation across countries in 2002 and 2016 (ESS 2002, 2016)

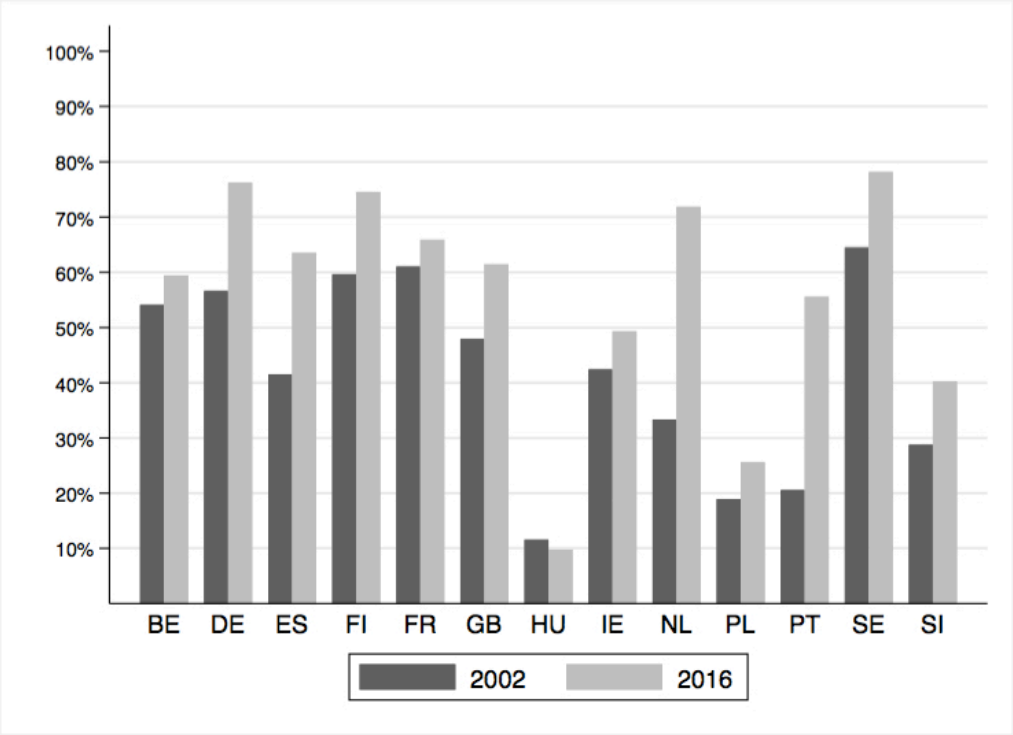

Figure 9. 3 Mean of informal political participation across countries in 2002 and 2016 (ESS 2002, 2016)

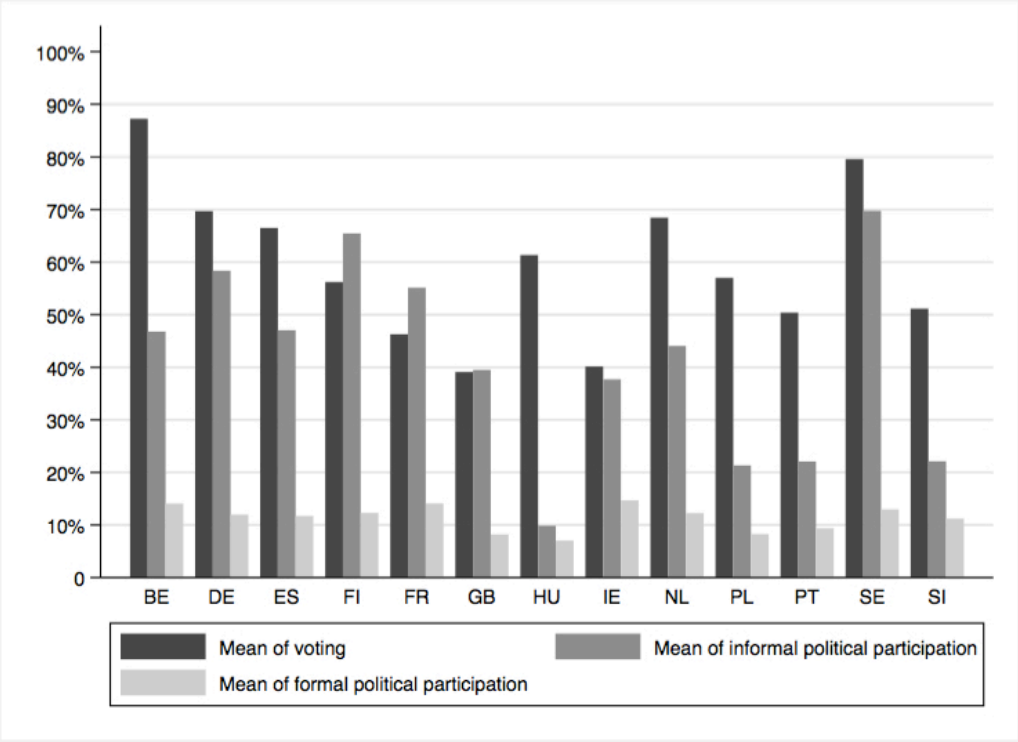

Figure 9. 4 Mean of voting, formal, and informal political participation in 13 countries across waves across people aged 18 to 24 (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

Appendix C Results from the multilevel regression analyses on each ESS Wave (2002-2016) separately (voting; formal participation; informal participation)

Table 9. 8 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to **vote**: ESS Waves 1 to 4 (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 6.4(a)	Model 6.4(b)	Model 6.5(a)	Model 6.5(b)	Model 6.6(a)	Model 6.6(b)	Model 6.7(a)	Model 6.7(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.009***		1.012**		1.007		0.999	
	(0.003)		(0.006)		(0.005)		(0.006)	
Corruption		0.984**		0.976*		0.992		1.018
		(0.008)		(0.013)		(0.011)		(0.016)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	8.286***	6.199***	5.767**	3.944*	4.818	3.575	1.951	1.769
	(3.774)	(3.012)	(4.504)	(3.045)	(3.240)	(2.406)	(1.744)	(1.409)
PR Electoral system	2.803***	2.282**	3.654**	2.982*	2.490	2.125	1.990	2.039
	(0.956)	(0.847)	(2.140)	(1.781)	(1.263)	(1.109)	(1.325)	(1.253)
Individual-level variables								

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.4(a)	Model 6.4(b)	Model 6.5(a)	Model 6.5(b)	Model 6.6(a)	Model 6.6(b)	Model 6.7(a)	Model 6.7(b)
Age	1.211***	1.209***	1.287***	1.286***	1.215***	1.215***	1.182***	1.181***
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	2.239***	2.229***	1.520***	1.524***	1.775***	1.776***	1.970***	1.970***
	(0.279)	(0.278)	(0.208)	(0.209)	(0.241)	(0.241)	(0.293)	(0.294)
Higher Education	3.948***	3.987***	2.235***	2.248***	2.307***	2.323***	2.846***	2.851***
	(0.697)	(0.703)	(0.405)	(0.408)	(0.420)	(0.423)	(0.532)	(0.533)
Male	1.019	1.018	1.125	1.124	1.068	1.068	1.103	1.104
	(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.172)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.121)	(0.121)
Current status *(In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.185	1.174	1.168	1.165	1.307**	1.307**	1.449***	1.445***
	(0.140)	(0.139)	(0.144)	(0.144)	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.189)	(0.188)
Current Status: Other	0.569***	0.569***	0.786	0.789	0.670**	0.672**	0.786	0.784
	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.123)	(0.123)
ICC	0.041	0.054	0.126	0.138	0.090	0.102	0.162	0.149
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	2,070	2,070	1,872	1,872	1,672	1,672	1,682	1,682

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 9 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to **vote**: ESS Waves 5 to 8 (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		**Wave 6 (2012)**		**Wave 7 (2014)**		**Wave 8 (2016)**	
	Model 6.8(a)	Model 6.8(b)	Model 6.9(b)	Model 6.9(b)	Model 6.10(a)	Model 6.10(b)	Model 6.11(a)	Model 6.11(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.012**		1.005		1.009		1.010**	
	(0.005)		(0.004)		(0.007)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.982		0.979		0.980		0.974*
		(0.014)		(0.014)		(0.023)		(0.016)
Electoral system*(Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	6.887***	4.238**	2.306	1.992	8.323**	5.733**	3.361*	2.501
	(4.414)	(2.905)	(1.422)	(1.084)	(7.605)	(5.084)	(2.434)	(1.742)
PR Electoral system	3.858***	2.749**	2.459*	2.155*	5.123**	4.101**	4.301***	3.460**
	(1.858)	(1.461)	(1.138)	(0.916)	(3.503)	(2.822)	(2.358)	(1.865)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.120***	1.117***	1.203***	1.202***	1.138***	1.136***	1.229***	1.229***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Education*(Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	2.648***	2.648***	2.421***	2.413***	1.536**	1.535**	1.999***	1.995***
	(0.362)**	(0.362)	(0.362)	(0.361)	(0.270)	(0.270)	(0.385)	(0.384)
Higher Education	2.910***	2.939***	3.656***	3.668***	2.414***	2.419***	3.208***	3.225***
	(0.513)	(0.518)	(0.678)	(0.680)	(0.510)	(0.511)	(0.737)**	(0.741)
Male	1.072	1.073	1.225*	1.224*	1.217	1.217	1.034	1.032
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.135)	(0.134)	(0.154)	(0.154)	(0.131)	(0.131)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.020	1.017	1.110	1.109	1.596***	1.592***	1.691***	1.687***
	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.147)	(0.147)	(0.236)	(0.235)	(0.254)	(0.253)
Current Status: Other	0.492***	0.495***	0.668***	0.670***	0.647**	0.649**	0.729*	0.729*

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.8(a)	Model 6.8(b)	Model 6.9(b)	Model 6.9(b)	Model 6.10(a)	Model 6.10(b)	Model 6.11(a)	Model 6.11(b)
	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.135)	(0.135)
ICC	0.086	0.113	0.078	0.070	0.166	0.178	0.103	.0108
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	1,817	1,817	1,685	1,685	1,386	1,386	1,289	1,289

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 10 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to engage in **formal political participation**: ESS Waves 1 to 4 (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.12(a)	Model 6.12(b)	Model 6.13(a)	Model 6.13(b)	Model 6.14(a)	Model 6.14(b)	Model 6.15(a)	Model 6.15(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.000		1.004		1.006**		1.007***	
	(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Corruption		1.004		0.989**		0.987***		0.979***
		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.006)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	0.975	0.936	0.770	0.716	1.581	1.311	1.041	0.805
	(0.307)	(0.285)	(0.284)	(0.235)	(0.628)	(0.418)	(0.369)	(0.261)
PR Electoral system	0.940	0.931	1.058	1.044	1.771*	1.616*	1.208	1.007
	(0.230)	(0.226)	(0.002)	(0.261)	(0.529)	(0.421)	(0.300)	(0.234)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.073*	1.076*	0.924	0.917**	1.004	1.002	0.989	0.989
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.050)	(0.049)

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.12(a)	Model 6.12(b)	Model 6.13(a)	Model 6.13(b)	Model 6.14(a)	Model 6.14(b)	Model 6.15(a)	Model 6.15(b)
Education(*Secondary or Lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	1.603**	1.598**	1.241	1.241	1.138	1.150	1.972***	1.940**
	(0.307)	(0.306)	(0.271)	(0.269)	(0.236)	(0.236)	(0.513)	(0.504)
Higher Education	1.807**	1.795**	2.181***	2.242***	1.931***	2.052***	2.568***	2.749***
	(0.439)	(0.437)	(0.559)	(0.570)	(0.474)	(0.504)	(0.756)	(0.804)
Male	1.714***	1.714***	1.165	1.160	0.959	0.951	1.273	1.267
	(0.236)	(0.236)	(0.181)	(0.180)	(0.148)	(0.147)	(0.203)	(0.202)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.530***	1.529***	2.030	1.014	1.188	1.173	1.581**	1.586**
	(0.244)	(0.243)	(0.185)	(0.181)	(0.212)	(0.209)	(0.292)	(0.291)
Current Status: Other	1.368	1.348	0.860	0.879	0.980	1.015	1.316	1.377
	(0.266)	(0.263)	(0.199)	(0.203)	(0.225)	(0.231)	(0.312)	(0.325)
ICC	0.008	0.008	0.004	1.65e-90	0.001	1.75e-32	0.002	4.89e-34
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	2,070	2,070	1,872	1,872	1,672	1,672	1,682	1,682

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 11 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to engage in **formal political participation**: ESS Waves 5 to 8 (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		**Wave 6 (2012)**		**Wave 7 (2014)**		**Wave 8 (2016)**	
	Model 6.16(a)	Model 6.16(b)	Model 6.17(a)	Model 6.17(b)	Model 6.18(a)	Model 6.18(b)	Model 6.19(a)	Model 6.19(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.001		1.006**		0.998		1.006*	
	(0.002)		(0.003)		(0.004)		(0.003)	
Corruption		0.990*		0.983*		0.999		0.986
		(0.006)		(0.010)		(0.013)		(0.010)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	1.278	1.272	1.211	0.910	0.831	0.913	1.358	1.049
	(0.432)	(0.353)	(1.511)	(0.378)	(0.430)	(0.451)	(0.626)	(0.485)
PR Electoral system	1.312	1.259	1.720*	1.444	0.957	0.995	1.804	1.589
	(0.359)	(0.305)	(1.548)	(0.471)	(0.381)	(0.013)	(0.662)	(0.595)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.023	1.024	1.028	1.024	1.021	1.024	0.967	0.966
	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.058)	(0.059)
Education(*Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	2.048***	2.063***	1.181	1.181	1.040	1.039	0.653	0.661
	(0.456)	(0.458)	(0.284)	(0.285)	(0.250)	(0.250)	(0.181)	(0.183)
Higher Education	2.248***	2.249***	1.480	1.527	1.267	1.258	1.239	1.281
	(0.600)	(0.590)	(0.404)	(0.419)	(0.347)	(0.345)	(0.374)	(0.385)
Male	1.968***	1.955***	1.523**	1.524**	1.400**	1.400**	0.886	0.886
	(0.301)	(0.298)	(0.250)	(0.250)	(0.233)	(0.233)	(0.160)	(0.160)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.354*	1.344*	1.149	1.123	1.069	1.071	1.037	1.026
	(0.243)	(0.238)	(0.221)	(0.215)	(0.203)	(0.203)	(0.211)	(0.209)
Current Status: Other	1.196	1.178	0.803	0.809	0.806	0.803	0.800	0.807

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.16(a)	Model 6.16(b)	Model 6.17(a)	Model 6.17(b)	Model 6.18(a)	Model 6.18(b)	Model 6.19(a)	Model 6.19(b)
	(0.267)	(0.256)	(0.196)	(0.198)	(0.210)	(0.209)	(0.225)	(0.227)
ICC	0.004	1.45e-30	0.009	0.015	0.040	0.041	0.008	0 .016
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	1,817	1,817	1,685	1,685	1,386	1,386	1,289	1,289

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 12 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to participate in **informal political participation**: ESS Waves 1 to 4 (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.20(a)	Model 6.20(b)	Model 6.21(a)	Model 6.21(b)	Model 6.22(a)	Model 6.22(b)	Model 6.23(a)	Model 6.23(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.013***		1.016**		1.016***		1.019***	
	(0.004)		(0.007)		(0.005)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.967***		0.953***		0.954***		0.954***
		(0.009)		(0.132)		(0.008)		(0.008)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	0.767	0.590	0.784	0.612	1.125	0.969	1.168	0.650
	(0.470)	(0.315)	(0.788)	(0.474)	(0.750)	(0.422)	(0.748)	(0.297)
PR Electoral system	0.727	0.559	0.877	0.760	1.293	1.214	1.124	0.671
	(0.331)	(0.227)	(0.007)	(0.451)	(0.644)	(0.432)	(0.527)	(0.229)
Individual-level variables								

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.20(a)	Model 6.20(b)	Model 6.21(a)	Model 6.21(b)	Model 6.22(a)	Model 6.22(b)	Model 6.23(a)	Model 6.23(b)
Age	1.025	1.021	1.051	1.045	0.993	0.992	1.004	1.003
	(0.315)	(0.314)	(0.351)	(0.350)	(0.346)	(0.343)	(0.360)	(0.036)
Education(*Secondary or Lower)*		1.434***						
		(0.189)						
Upper Secondary Education	1.434***		1.621**	1.623**	1.466**	1.484**	1.813***	1.808***
	(0.189)		(0.239)	(0.240)	(0.216)	(0.218)	(0.295)	(0.293)
Higher Education	2.497***	2.523***	2.476***	2.491***	1.921***	1.964***	2.467***	2.534***
	(0.429)	(0.433)	(0.451)	(0.453)	(0.353)	(0.360)	(0.474)	(0.486)
Male	0.961	0.961	1.041	1.041	0.970	0.969	0.885	0.885
	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.099)	(0.099)
Current status(*In paid work)*		1.999***						
		(0.233)						
Current Status: In education	2.016***		2.151***	2.142***	2.121***	2.101***	1.978***	1.978***
	(0.235)		(0.276)	(0.275)	(0.279)	(0.276)	(0.260)	(0.260)
Current Status: Other	0.937	0.942	1.262	1.268	0.892	0.909	0.885	0.885
	(0.134)	(0.135)	(0.192)	(0.193)	(0.147)	(0.149)	(0.139)	(0.139)
ICC	0.079	0.066	0.196	0.137	0.088	0.041	0.083	0.044
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	2,070	2,070	1,872	1,872	1,672	1,672	1,682	1,682

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 13 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models of the propensity of young individuals to participate in **informal political participation**: ESS Waves 5 to 8 (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		**Wave 6 (2012)**		**Wave 7 (2014)**		**Wave 8 (2016)**	
	Model 6.24(a)	Model 6.24(b)	Model 6.25(a)	Model 6.25(b)	Model 6.26(a)	Model 6.26(b)	Model 6.27(a)	Model 6.27(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.013***		1.013**		1.011**		1.014**	
	(0.006)		(0.006)		(0.006)		(0.006)	
Corruption		0.949***		0.931***		0.940***		0.938***
		(0.014)		(0.017)		(0.013)		(0.014)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	1.037	0.805	1.679	1.184	0.769	0.647	0.844	0.723
	(0.933)	(0.543)	(1.498)	(0.734)	(0.589)	(0.324)	(0.678)	(0.414)
PR Electoral system	0.950	0.637	1.578	1.117	1.147	0.907	1.119	0.898
	(0.635)	(0.331)	(1.045)	(0.534)	(0.652)	(0.013)	(0.670)	(0.393)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.017	1.018	1.006	1.005	1.015	1.018	1.103**	1.105**
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Education (*Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	2.340***	2.716***	1.970***	1.935***	2.049***	2.016***	1.392*	1.356
	(0.354)	(0.512)	(0.325)	(0.319)	(0.356)	(0.350)	(0.268)	(0.261)
Higher Education	2.707***	2.339***	2.681***	2.664***	2.610***	2.577	1.916***	1.874***
	(0.511)	(0.354)	(0.515)	(0.510)	(0.520)	(0.512)	(0.425)	(0.416)
Male	1.205	1.204	1.173	1.173	0.961	0.962	0.907	0.907
	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.114)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	2.127***	2.120	1.700***	1.705***	1.653***	1.663***	2.411***	2.429***
	(0.281)	(0.280	(0.225)	(0.226)	(0.230)	(0.231)	(0.359)	(0.361)
Current Status: Other	1.139	1.136	0.731*	0.734*	0.988	0.987	1.355*	1.358*

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.24(a)	Model 6.24(b)	Model 6.25(a)	Model 6.25(b)	Model 6.26(a)	Model 6.26(b)	Model 6.27(a)	Model 6.27(b)
	(0.184)	(0.183)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.173)	(0.173)	(0.247)	(0247)
ICC	0.163	0.108	0.160	0.091	0.119	0.055	0.125	0.068
Log Likelihood	-1030.0785	-1027.2466	-986.17396	-982.39553	-854.44272	-849.99061	-772.42971	-768.4922
Deviance	2060.1571	2054.4932	1972.3479	1964.7911	1708.8854	1699.9812	1544.8594	1536.9844
AIC	2082.157	2076.493	1994.348	1986.791	1730.885	1721.981	1566.859	1558.984
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	1,817	1,817	1,685	1,685	1,386	1,386	1,289	1,289

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix D Robustness Checks Chapter 6 Analyses of the pooled dataset controlling for ESS Waves (voting; formal participation; informal participation)

Table 9. 14 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression applied to the pooled dataset of all ESS Waves of the propensity of young individuals to **vote**, controlling for ESS Waves (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Model 6.28(*a*)	Model 6.28(*b*)
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.008*	
	(0.004)	
Corruption		0.988***
		(0.004)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	4.485**	3.251**
	(2.658)	(1.913)
PR Electoral system	3.075**	2.541**
	(1.356)	(1.168)
ESS Wave (*2002*)		
ESS Wave 2004	0.934	0.929
	(0.066)	(0.066)
ESS Wave 2006	1.031	1.037
	(0.077)	(0.076)
ESS Wave 2008	0.823**	0.843**
	(0.063)	(0.061)
ESS Wave 2010	0.974	1.014
	(0.077)	(0.073)
ESS Wave 2012	0.962	1.020
	(0.081)	(0.075)
ESS Wave 2014	0.785***	0.848**
	(0.073)	(0.066)
ESS Wave 2016	0.889	0.971
	(0.088)	(0.077)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.180***	1.179***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.878***	1.883***
	(0.095)	(0.095)
Higher Education	2.758***	2.764***
	(0.178)	(0.179)
Male	1.081**	1.081**
	(0.041)	(0.041)
Current status (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	1.270***	1.274***
	(0.058)	(0.058)
Current Status: Other	0.662***	0.665***
	(0.036)	(0.036)

Number of countries	13	13
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 15 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression models applied to the pooled dataset of all ESS Waves o the propensity of young individuals to engage in **formal political participation**, controlling for ESS Waves (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Model 6.29(*a*)	Model 6.29(*b*)
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.003*	
	(0.001)	
Corruption		0.993**
		(0.003)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	1.028	0.948
	(0.209)	(0.168)
PR Electoral system	1.201	1.136
	(0.183)	(0.157)
ESS Wave (*2002*)		
ESS Wave 2004	0.757***	0.749***
	(0.077)	(0.077)
ESS Wave 2006	0.933	0.926
	(0.095)	(0.094)
ESS Wave 2008	0.825*	0.826*
	(0.085)	(0.085)
ESS Wave 2010	0.870	0.879
	(0.087)	(0.088)
ESS Wave 2012	0.745***	0.760***
	(0.079)	(0.079)
ESS Wave 2014	0.881	0.904
	(0.095)	(0.096)
ESS Wave 2016	0.773**	0.794**
	(0.088)	(0.089)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.007	1.005
	(0.017)	(0.017)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.358***	1.359***
	(0.110)	(0.109)
Higher Education	1.823***	1.841***
	(0.172)	(0.174)
Male	1.335***	1.335***
	(0.073)	(0.073)
Current status (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	1.241***	1.234***
	(0.079)	(0.079)
Current Status: Other	0.022	1.027
	(0.083)	(0.084)
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets)

*p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Appendix D

Table 9. 16 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression models applied to the pooled dataset of all ESS Waves on the propensity of young individuals to engage in **informal political participation**, controlling for ESS Waves (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Model 6.30(*a*)	Model 6.30(*b*)
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.014***	
	(0.005)	
Corruption		0.992*
		(0.005)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	0.919	0.456
	(0.661)	(0.341)
PR Electoral system	1.049	0.730
	(0.561)	(0.425)
ESS Wave (*2002*)		
ESS Wave 2004	0.873*	0.880*
	(0.063)	(0.063)
ESS Wave 2006	0.783***	0.813***
	(0.060)	(0.061)
ESS Wave 2008	0.741***	0.797***
	(0.059)	(0.059)
ESS Wave 2010	0.670***	0.741***
	(0.056)	(0.054)
ESS Wave 2012	0.771***	0.882*
	(0.069)	(0.065)
ESS Wave 2014	0.892	1.048
	(0.089)	(0.081)
ESS Wave 2016	1.396***	1.678***
	(0.150)	(0.134)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.026**	1.026**
	(0.012)	(0.012)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.663***	1.665***
	(0.090)	(0.090)
Higher Education	2.289***	2.291***
	(0.149)	(0.149)
Male	1.001	1.001
	(0.039)	(0.039)
Current Status: (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	1.943***	1.946***
	(0.089)	(0.089)
Current Status: Other	0.977	0.980
	(0.055)	(0.055)
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets)

*p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Appendix E Further Robustness Checks Chapter 6

Table 9. 17 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to **vote**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 6.31(a)	Model 6.31(b)	Model 6.32(a)	Model 6.32(b)	Model 6.33(a)	Model 6.33(b)	Model 6.34(a)	Model 6.34(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.011***		1.011***		1.007**		1.007	
	(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.993		0.985*		0.992		0.988
		(0.009)		(0.008)		(0.007)		(0.010)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	8.739***	5.480**	5.571**	3.656*	4.994**	3.709**	2.593	2.057
	(4.896)	(4.032)	(3.973)	(2.759)	(3.171)	(2.395)	(1.984)	(1.526)
PR Electoral system	3.791***	2.569*	3.660**	2.964*	2.609*	2.118	2.822	2.240
	(1.566)	(1.411)	(1.935)	(1.687)	(1.258)	(1.043)	(1.825)	(1.402)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.239***	1.272***	1.331***	1.331***	1.218***	1.219***	1.200***	1.201***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	2.109***	2.110***	1.631**	1.631**	2.029***	2.026***	1.772***	1.772***
	(0.231)	(0.229)	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.204)	(0.204)	(0.187)	(0.187)
Higher Education	3.672***	3.670***	2.343**	2.343**	2.535***	2.539***	2.786	2.787***
	(0.601)	(0.588)	(0.360)	(0.360)	(0.336)	(0.362)	(0.384)	(0.384)
Male	1.034	1.050	1.056	1.056	0.952	0.951	1.028	1.028
	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.079)	(0.079)

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.31(a)	Model 6.31(b)	Model 6.32(a)	Model 6.32(b)	Model 6.33(a)	Model 6.33(b)	Model 6.34(a)	Model 6.34(b)
Current status (*In paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	1.210*	1.240**	1.093	1.092	1.061	1.064	1.136	1.136
	(0.127)	(0.129)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.104)	(0.104)
Current Status: Other	0.643***	0.657***	0.705***	0.705***	0.633***	0.634***	0.855	0.855
	(0.079)	(0.080)	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.072)	(0.073)	(0.090)	(0.090)
ICC	0.059	0.120	0.104	0.124	0.063	0.075	0.128	0.133
Number of individuals	2,772	2,772	3,052	3,052	3,061	3,061	3,448	3,448
Number of countries	18	18	21	21	21	21	25	25

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1+; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 18 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to **vote**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.35(a)	Model 6.35(b)	Model 6.36(a)	Model 6.36(b)	Model 6.37(a)	Model 6.37(b)	Model 6.38(a)	Model 6.38(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.013***		1.010***		1.013**		1.013***	
	(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.005)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.981**		0.977**		0.968*		0.967**
		(0.009)		(0.010)		(0.018)		(0.014)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	5.353***	3.459**	2.083	1.326	5.832**	3.544	2.821	1.808
	(3.009)	(1.152)	(1.310)	(0.806)	(4.739)	(2.837)	(1.933)	(1.186)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.35(a)	Model 6.35(b)	Model 6.36(a)	Model 6.36(b)	Model 6.37(a)	Model 6.37(b)	Model 6.38(a)	Model 6.38(b)
PR Electoral system	3.484***	2.183	2.796**	2.126	5.620***	3.945**	4.524	3.377**
	(1.680)	(1.152)	(1.409)	(0.064)	(3.608)	(2.580)	(2.478)	(1.824)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.208***	1.207***	1.171***	1.170***	1.136***	1.134***	1.287***	1.288***
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.039)	(0.03)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	2.128***	2.131***	2.137***	2.132***	1.757***	1.756***	2.193***	2.193***
	(0.201)	(0.202)	(0.232)	(0.231)	(0.252)	(0.252)	(0.349)	(0.349)
Higher Education	2.398***	2.412***	2.956***	2.967***	2.807***	2.815***	3.686***	3.698***
	(0.290)	(0.291)	(0.406)	(0.408)	(0.494)	(0.496)	(0.718)	(0.717)
Male	1.092	1.092	1.085	1.087	1.141	1.140	1.119	1.116
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.119)	(0.119)	(0.117)	(0.117)
Current status(In *paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	0.905	0.905	1.007	1.005	1.369**	1.368**	1.890***	1.894***
	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.108)	(0.107)	(0.166)	(0.166)	(0.234)	(0.235)
Current Status: Other	0.587***	0.590***	0.711***	0.712***	0.747*	0.750*	0.909	0.914
	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.140)	(0.140)
ICC	0.080	0.105	0.088	0.095	0.166	0.182	0.115	0.121
Number of individuals	3,196	3,196	2,628	2,628	1,928	1,928	1,908	1,908
Number of countries	23	23	21	21	18	18	18	18

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 19 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to participate **in formal political participation**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 6.39(a)	Model 6.39(b)	Model 6.40(a)	Model 6.40(b)	Model 6.41(a)	Model 6.41(b)	Model 6.42(a)	Model 6.42(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.0001		1.001		1.008***		1.004*	
	(0.002)		(0.003)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Corruption		0.999		0.995		0.983***		0.986***
		(0.004)		(0.005)		(0.004)		(0.005)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	0.968	0.973	0.715	0.683	1.532	1.251	0.893	0.858
	(0.344)	(0.330)	(0.348)	(0.322)	(0.666)	(0.467)	(0.377)	(0.327)
PR Electoral system	1.069	1.074	1.025	1.013	1.806*	1.634*	1.272	1.153
	(0.288)	(0.283)	(0.368)	(0.356)	(0.617)	(0.478)	(0.450)	(0.366)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.064*	1.065*	0.984	0.983	0.980	0.980	1.001	1.001
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.035)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.514**	1.513**	1.321	1.322	1.176	1.194	1.759***	1.769***
	(0.245)	(0.245)	(0.451)	(0.226)	(0.183)	(0.185)	(0.313)	(0.314)
Higher Education	1.781***	1.772***	2.131***	2.142***	1.176***	1.939***	2.292***	2.234***
	(0.376)	(0.374)	(0.451)	(0.453)	(0.183)	(0.185)	(0.482)	(0.493)
Male	1.555***	1.555***	1.085	1.085	1.124	1.122	1.258*	1.251*
	(0.182)	(0.182)	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.140)	(0.140)
Current status (*In paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	1.320**	1.319**	0.991	0.989	1.014	1.012	1.233	1.232
	(0.178)	(0.178)	(0.140)	(0.140)	(0.136)	(0.135)	(0.160)	(0.160)
Current Status: Other	1.248	1.240	0.952	0.957	0.757	0.799	1.144	1.135

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.39(a)	Model 6.39(b)	Model 6.40(a)	Model 6.40(b)	Model 6.41(a)	Model 6.41(b)	Model 6.42(a)	Model 6.42(b)
	(0.209)	(0.209)	(0.167)	(0.168)	(0.132)	(0.140)	(0.178)	(0.182)
ICC	0.059	0.120	0.104	0.124	0.063	0.075	0.128	0.133
Number of individuals	2,772	2,772	3,052	3,052	3,061	3,061	3,448	3,448
Number of countries	18	18	21	21	21	21	25	25

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1+; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 20 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to participate in **formal political participation**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.43(a)	Model 6.43(b)	Model 6.44(a)	Model 6.44(b)	Model 6.45(a)	Model 6.45(b)	Model 6.46(a)	Model 6.46(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.004**		1.008***		1.0001		1.005*	
	(0.002)		(0.003)		(0.003)		(0.003)	
Corruption		0.986***		0.974***		0.992		0.985*
		(0.003)		(0.007)		(0.010)		(0.008)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	1.311	1.364	1.096	0.813	0.791	0.842	1.256	1.009
	(0.438)	(0.354)	(0.517)	(0.349)	(0.388)	(0.379)	(0.586)	(0.434)
PR Electoral system	1.358	1.225	1.167	1.215	0.988	0.993	1.845	1.624
	(1.397)	(0.286)	(1.467)	(0.426)	(0.386)	(0.368)	(0.709)	(0.592)
Individual-level variables								

Appendix E

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.43(a)	Model 6.43(b)	Model 6.44(a)	Model 6.44(b)	Model 6.45(a)	Model 6.45(b)	Model 6.46(a)	Model 6.46(b)
Age	1.054	1.052	1.021	1.016	1.051	1.051	1.019	1.019
	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.051)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.918***	1.978***	1.070	1.059	1.046	1.046	0.874	0.875
	(0.286)	(0.291)	(0.195)	(0.193)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.209)	(0.209)
Higher Education	1.974***	2.013***	1.440*	1.474*	1.223	1.224	1.587*	1.597*
	(0.354)	(0.354)	(0.210)	(0.307)	(0.286)	(0.286)	(0.423)	(0.425)
Male	1.515***	1.505***	1.447**	1.448**	1.509***	1.505***	1.151	1.149
	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.208)	(0.208)	(0.217)	(0.216)	(0.172)	(0.172)
Current status(In *paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	1.108	1.105	1.288	1.280	1.022	1.021	1.241	1.250
	(0.152)	(0.151)	(0.222)	(0.220)	(0.164)	(0.164)	(0.210)	(0.211)
Current Status: Other	0.969	0.977	1.008	1.025	0.696	0.695	0.822	0.839
	(0.163)	(0.162)	(0.213)	(0.217)	(0.156)	(0.155)	(0.199)	(0.203)
ICC	0.080	0.105	0.088	0.095	0.166	0.182	0.115	0.121
Number of individuals	3,196	3,196	2,628	2,628	1,928	1,928	1,908	1,908
Number of countries	23	23	21	21	18	18	18	18

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 21 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to participate in **informal political participation**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 6.47(a)	Model 6.47(b)	Model 6.48(a)	Model 6.48(b)	Model 6.49(a)	Model 6.49(b)	Model 6.50(a)	Model 6.50(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.013***		1.015***		1.021***		1.018***	
	(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.003)	
Corruption		0.972***		0.965***		0.954***		0.959***
		(0.006)		(0.008)		(0.428)		(0.006)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	0.752	0.552	0.789	0.543	1.542	0.940	1.053	0.724
	(0.458)	(0.285)	(0.638)	(0.377)	(0.018)	(0.466)	(0.530)	(0.310)
PR Electoral system	0.774	0.641	0.873	0.776	1.431	1.141	1.237	0.765
	(0.362)	(0.246)	(0.517)	(0.401)	(0.004)	(0.432)	(0.522)	(0.274)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.008	1.006	1.035	1.034	1.017	1.017	0.981	0.982
	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.470***	1.435***	1.671***	1.675***	1.345***	1.358***	1.662***	1.671***
	(0.170)	(0.160)	(0.188)	(0.188)	(0.153)	(0.280)	(0.196)	(0.196)
Higher Education	2.803***	2.733***	2.238***	2.250***	1.830***	1.863***	2.522***	2.550***
	(0.440)	(0.418)	(0.339)	(0.341)	(0.276)	(0.280)	(0.366)	(0.370)
Male	0.951	0.955	1.041	1.041	1.056	1.056	1.087	1.086
	(0.083)	(0.119)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Current status(*In paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	2.087***	2.132***	1.736***	1.731***	1.810***	1.905***	1.895***	1.890***
	(0.213)	(0.213)	(0.171)	(0.170)	(0.193)	(0.193)	(0.178)	(0.178)
Current Status: Other	0.889	0.959	1.029	1.036	0.831	0.852	0.835	0.843

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 6.47(a)	Model 6.47(b)	Model 6.48(a)	Model 6.48(b)	Model 6.49(a)	Model 6.49(b)	Model 6.50(a)	Model 6.50(b)
	(0.114)	(0.119)	(0.124)	(0.125)	(0.108)	(0.111)	(0.098)	(0.099)
ICC	0.081	0.064	0.142	0.113	0.092	0.053	0.070	0.054
Number of individuals	2,772	2,772	3,052	3,052	3,061	3,061	3,448	3,448
Number of countries	18	18	21	21	21	21		

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 22 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 8 of propensity of young individuals to participate in **informal political participation**, analysing all EU countries (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 6.51(a)	Model 6.51(b)	Model 6.52(a)	Model 6.52(b)	Model 6.53(a)	Model 6.53(b)	Model 6.54(a)	Model 6.54(b)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.014***		1.016***		1.014***		1.015***	
	(0.004)		(0.005)		(0.004)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.966***		0.958***		0.942***		0.943***
		(0.009)		(0.012)		(0.010)		(0.011)
Electoral system(*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	0.903	0.768	1.302	0.706	0.658	0.498	0.682	0.528
	(0.596)	(0.461)	(0.975)	(0.486)	(0.428)	(0.225)	(0.484)	(0.273)
PR Electoral system	1.018	0.664	1.571	1.010	1.255	0.880	1.055	0.869
	(0.574)	(0.338)	(0.933)	(0.618)	(0.637)	(0.318)	(0.593)	(0.368)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.040	1.038	1.005	1.005	0.998	0.9994	1.090**	1.090**

	Wave 5 (2010)		**Wave 6 (2012)**		**Wave 7 (2014)**		**Wave 8 (2016)**	
	Model 6.51(a)	Model 6.51(b)	Model 6.52(a)	Model 6.52(b)	Model 6.53(a)	Model 6.53(b)	Model 6.54(a)	Model 6.54(b)
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Education(*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.815***	1.823***	1.851***	1.935***	1.695***	1.670***	1.878***	1.848***
	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.321)	(0.319)	(0.221)	(0.216)	(0.250)	(0.246)
Higher Education	2.012***	2.024***	2.256***	2.664***	2.142***	2.132***	2.005***	1.973***
	(0.254)	(0.255)	(0.321)	(0.510)	(0.307)	(0.304)	(0.301)	(0.296)
Male	1.154*	1.154*	1.105	1.173	1.040	1.040	1.022	1.021
	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.102)	(0.131)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.104)	(0.104)
Current status(*In paid work*)								
Current Status: In education	1.830***	1.830***	1.620***	1.617***	1.418***	1.428***	2.141***	2.168***
	(0.183)	(0.183)	(0.177)	(0.177)	(0.170)	(0.171)	(0.262)	(0.265)
Current Status: Other	1.131	1.137	0.673***	0.674***	0.856	0.855	1.389**	1.402**
	(0.136)	(0.137)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.208)	(0.210)
ICC	0.125	0.112	0.138	0.133	0.100	0.051	0.113	0.065
Number of individuals	3,196	3,196	2,628	2,628	1,928	1,928	1,908	1,908
Number of countries	23	23	21	21	18	18	18	18

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 23 Results from three-level multilevel logistic regression models applied to the pooled dataset of all ESS Waves on the propensity of young individuals to engage in **informal politics (variable excludes online participation)** (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Model 6.55(*a*)	Model 6.55(*b*)
Country-level variables		
Age of democracy	1.014***	
	(0.002)	
Corruption		0.952***
		(0.004)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)		
Mixed Electoral system	0.977	0.729
	(0.661)	(0.160)
PR Electoral system	1.062	0.810
	(0.226)	(0.136)
Individual-level variables		
Age	1.029**	1.028**
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)		
Upper Secondary Education	1.723***	1.720***
	(0.095)	(0.095)
Higher Education	2.424***	2.446***
	(0.161)	(0.162)
Male	1.007	1.007
	(0.039)	(0.039)
Current Status: (*In paid work*)		
Current Status: In education	2.015***	2.012***
	(0.093)	(0.093)
Current Status: Other	1.0001	1.006
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Number of individuals	13,473	13,473

Note: Multilevel regression analysis (odds ratios with standard errors in brackets) *p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Appendix F Further Descriptive Analyses Chapter 7

I have merged numerous datasets in order to create the data used in this chapter. First, I transform my original dataset on institutional-level variables created specifically for the purpose of this study, which consisted of eight separate data spreadsheets responding to each ESS Wave (Waves 1 to 8) to eight STATA files. Then I merge each original STATA file with the correct ESS Wave that corresponds to the gathered information in each of the eight spreadsheets. Following onto that, I merge the eight Waves of the ESS Survey (2002-2016) together.

Table 9. 24 Number of respondents per country per ESS Wave (ESS 2002-2016)

Number of respondents per country per ESS Wave

Country	W1 2002	W2 2004	W3 2006	W4 2008	W5 2010	W6 2012	W7 2014	W8 2016	Total
Belgium	1,598	1,620	1,560	1,551	1,560	1,631	1,577	1,496	12,593
Finland	1,753	1,869	1,711	2,033	1,678	2,042	1,910	1,805	14,801
France	1,471	1,631	1,728	1,863	1,535	1,780	1,694	1,814	13,516
Germany	2,643	2,499	2,635	2,490	2,708	2,581	2,780	2,469	20,805
Hungary	1,537	1,409	1,444	1,419	1,515	1,827	1,581	1,497	12,229
Ireland	1,976	2,192	1,463	1,616	2,350	2,433	2,157	2,496	16,683
Netherlands	2,240	1,786	1,784	1,677	1,744	1,767	1,775	1,553	14,326
Poland	1,906	1,541	1,577	1,489	1,548	1,779	1,459	1,595	12,894
Portugal	1,401	1,910	2,141	2,157	2,036	2,008	1,174	1,198	14,025
Slovenia	1,255	1,285	1,332	1,224	1,280	1,171	1,158	1,210	9,915
Spain	1,603	1,470	1,689	2,286	1,610	1,747	1,666	1,757	13,828
Sweden	1,863	1,761	1,789	1,630	1,374	1,655	1,648	1,444	13,164
UK	1,922	1,649	2,235	2,174	2,229	2,084	2,054	1,787	16,134

Table 9. 25 Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables. Source: ESS (2002-2016) and original dataset

Variable name	Min	Mean	Max	SD
Voting	0	0.79	1	0.41
Formal participation	0	0.17	1	0.38
Informal participation	0	0.42	1	0.49
Age of democracy	11	69.60	132	37.56
Electoral system	1	2.50	3	0.75
Corruption	3	27.12	65	13.65
Age	18	50.34	114	17.64
Gender	0	0.47	1	0.50
Level of education	1	2.03	3	0.81
Current status	1	1.95	3	0.98

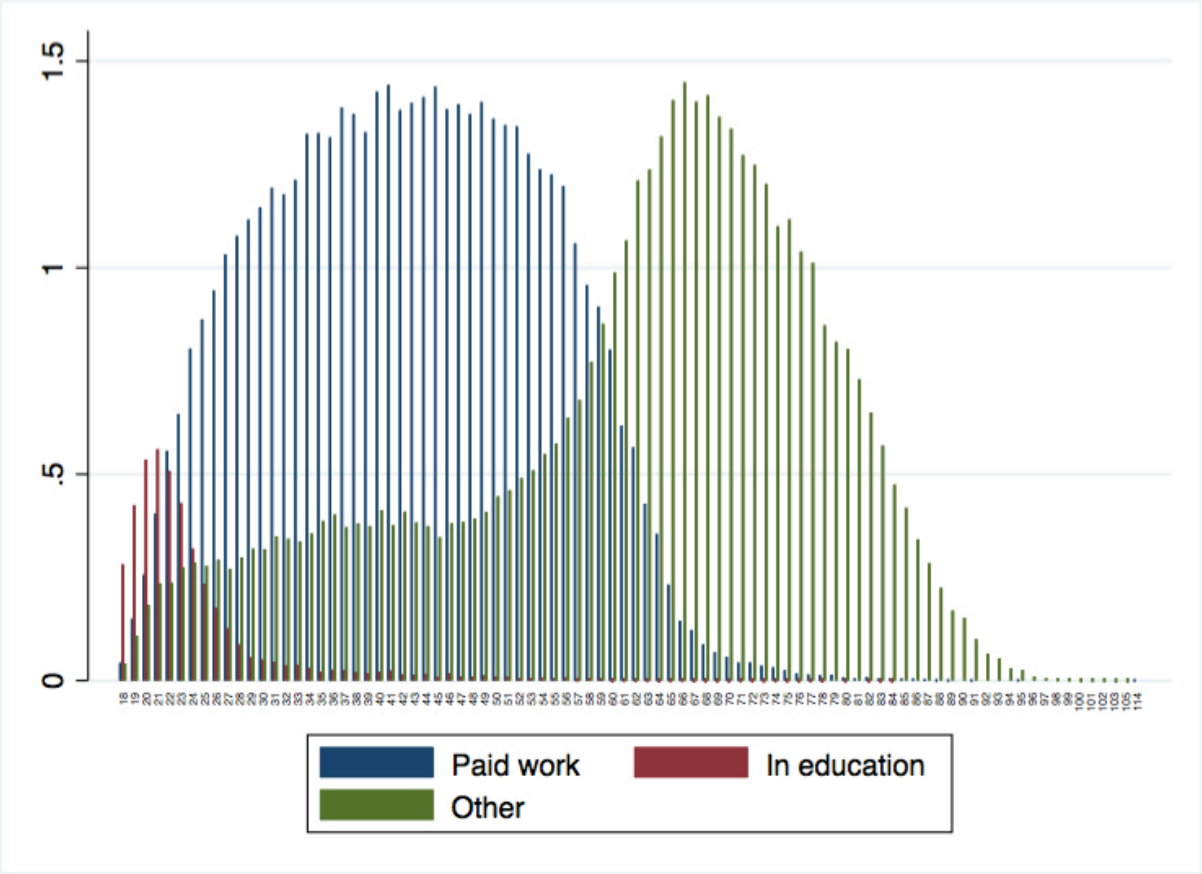

Figure 9. 5 Distribution of individuals in paid work, education, and other, in relation to their age

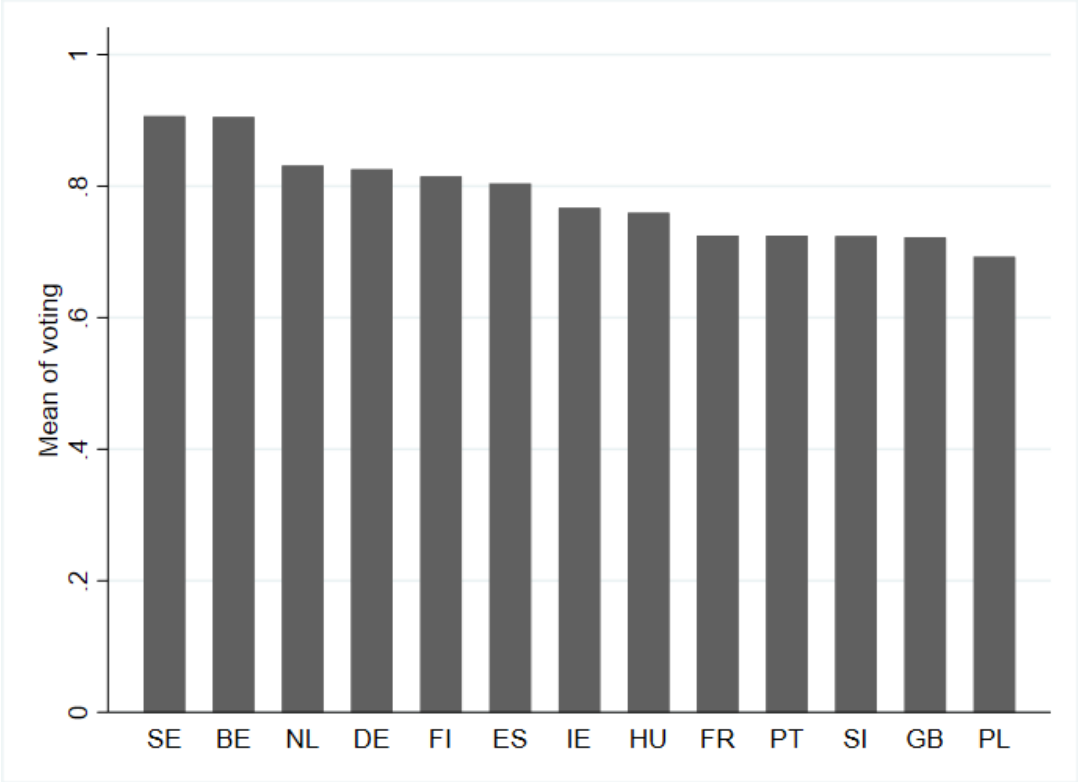

Figure 9. 6 Mean of electoral participation in 13 countries across waves ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

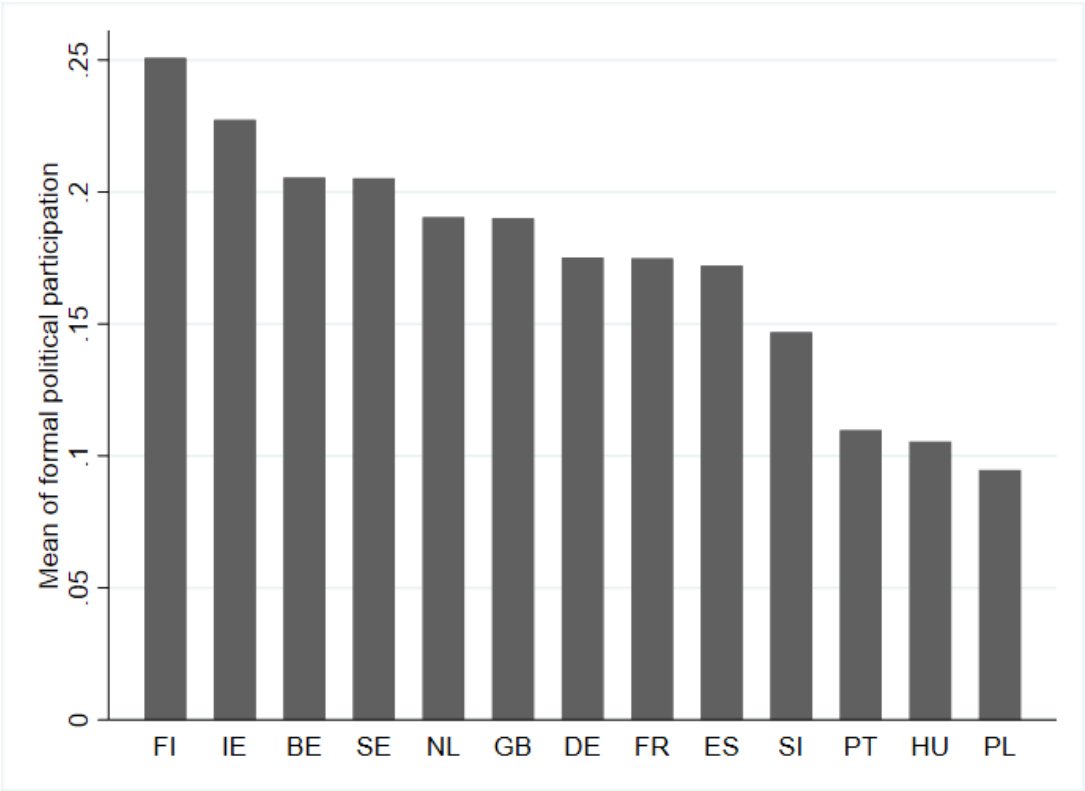

Figure 9. 7 Mean of formal political participation in 13 countries across waves ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

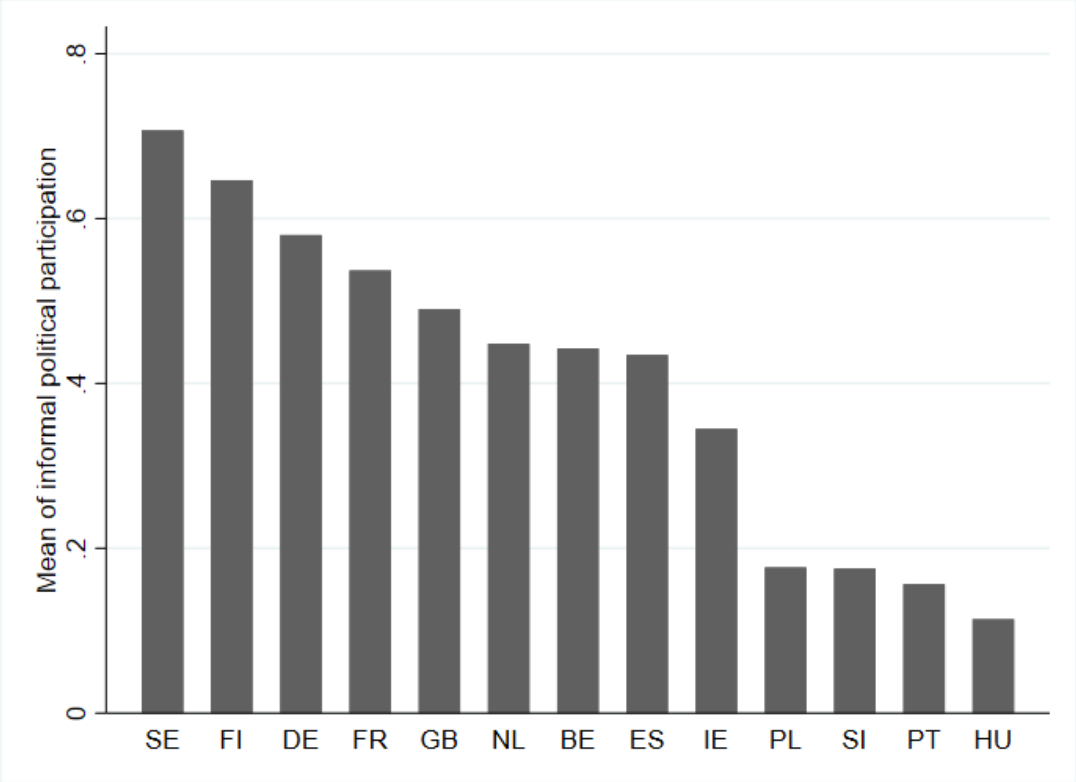

Figure 9. 8 Mean of informal political participation in 13 countries across waves (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

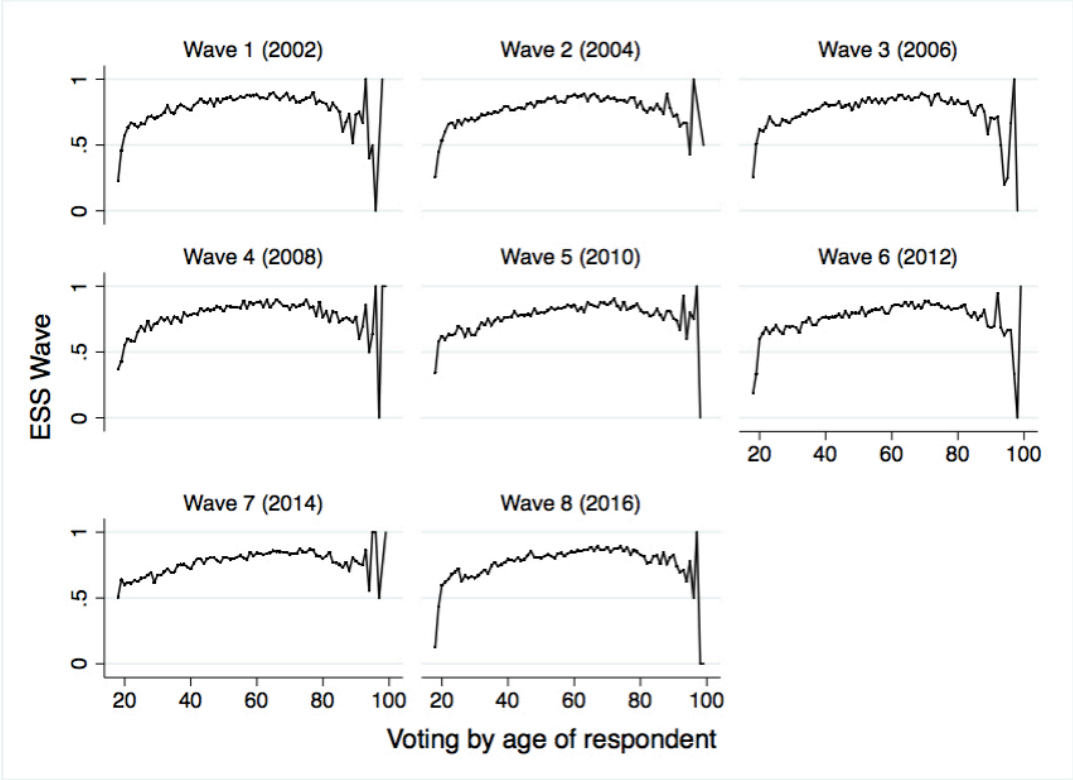

Figure 9. 9 Voting by age across each ESS Wave (2002-2016)

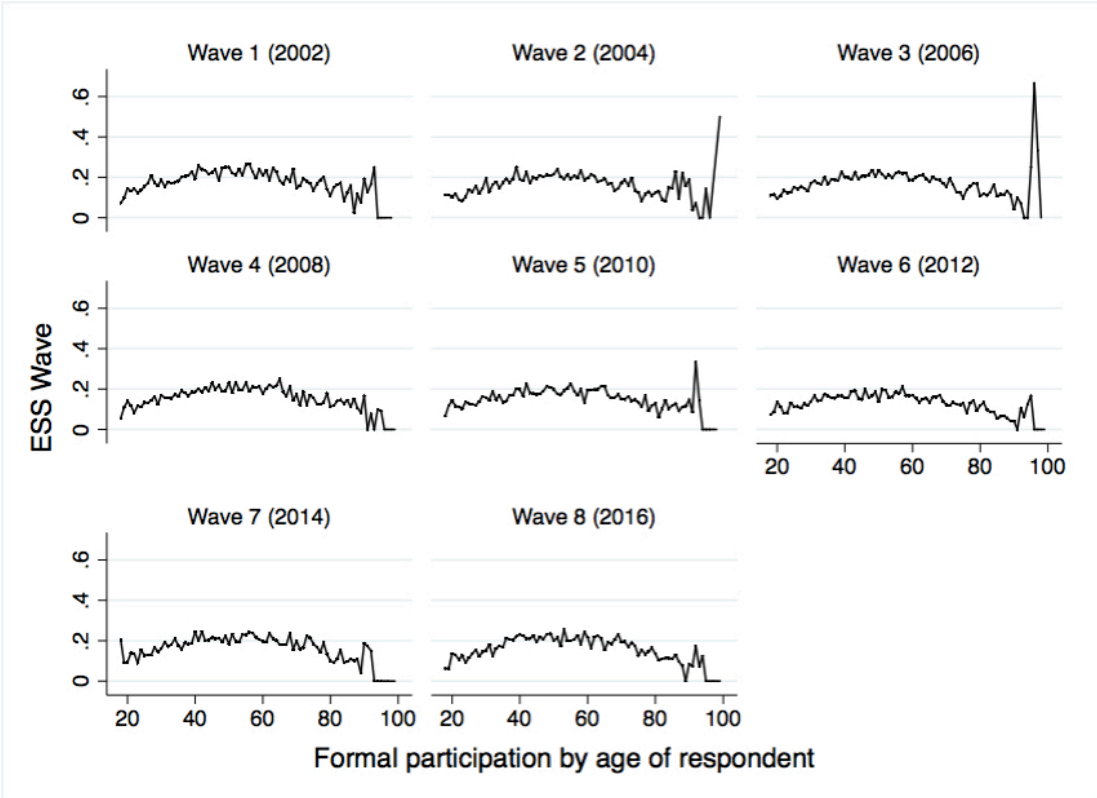

Figure 9. 10 Formal political participation by age across each ESS Wave (2002-2016)

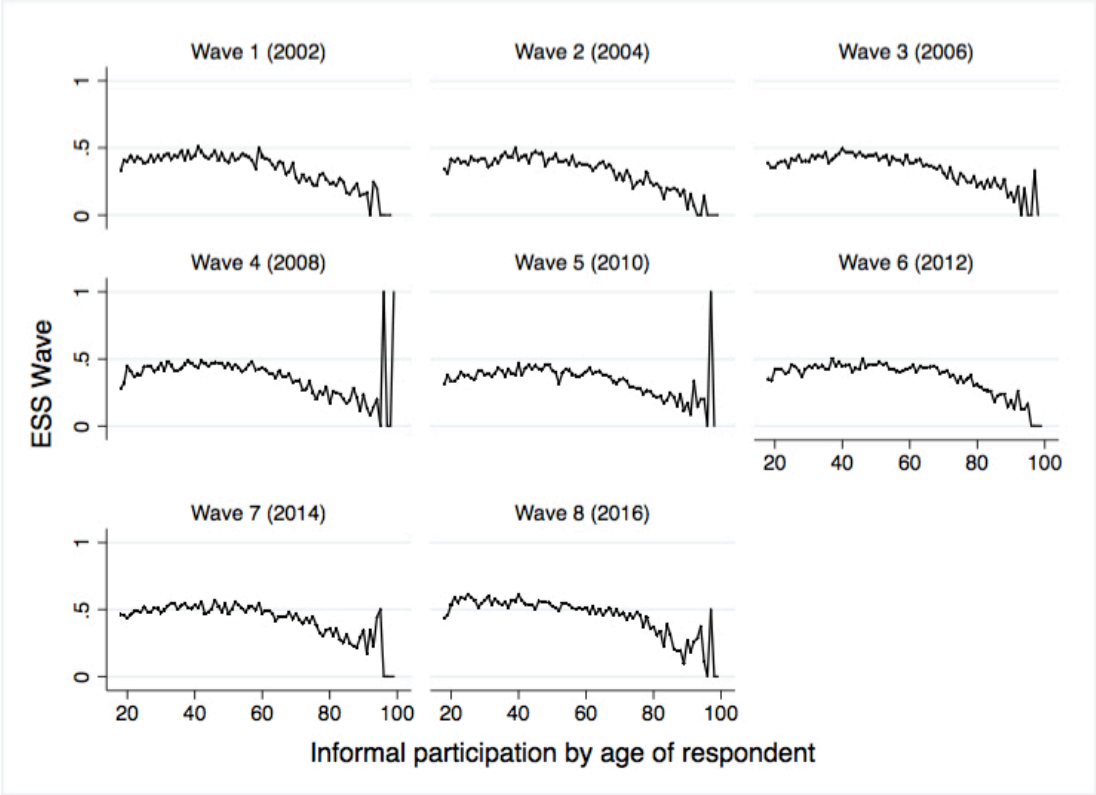

Figure 9. 11 Informal political participation by age across each ESS Wave (2002-2016

Appendix G Robustness Checks Chapter 7 Results from the multilevel regression analyses on each ESS Wave (2002-2016) separately (voting; formal participation; informal participation)

Table 9. 26 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to vote (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 7.7(*a*)	Model 7.7(*b*)	Model 7.8(*a*)	Model 7.8(*b*)	Model 7.9(*a*)	Model 7.9(*b*)	Model 7.10(*a*)	Model 7.10(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.007***		1.008***		1.007***		1.007***	
	(0.001)		(0.003)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Corruption		0.987***		0.987*		0.986**		0.986*
		(0.004)		(0.007)		(0.006)		(0.007)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	3.199***	2.382***	2.188**	1.667	1.825***	1.476	2.196**	1.647
	(0.637)	(0.579)	(0.855)	(0.696)	(0.626)	(0.532)	(0.778)	(0.617)
PR Electoral system	2.308***	2.001***	1.989**	1.725*	1.973***	1.785**	2.095***	1.715*
	(0.340)	(0.327)	(0.578)	(0.553)	(0.504)	(0.495)	(0.552)	(00495)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.036***	1.036***	1.035***	1.035***	1.032***	1.032***	1.034***	1.034***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.672***	1.673***	1.693***	1.694***	1.531***	1.530***	1.633***	1.632***
	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.073)
Higher Education	2.540***	2.547***	2.830***	2.832***	2.572***	2.575***	2.831***	2.833***
	(0.128)	(0.128)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.137)	(0.137)
Male	0.971	0.971	1.028	1.027	1.022	1.022	1.058	1.058
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Current status *(In paid work)*								

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 7.7(*a*)	Model 7.7(*b*)	Model 7.8(*a*)	Model 7.8(*b*)	Model 7.9(*a*)	Model 7.9(*b*)	Model 7.10(*a*)	Model 7.10(*b*)
Current Status: In education	0.729***	0.727***	0.752***	0.752***	0.919	0.918	0.847**	0.847**
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Current Status: Other	0.622***	0.623***	0.726***	0.726***	0.716**	0.716**	0.696***	0.697***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.029)
ICC	0.009	0.012	0.037	0.047	0.028	0.035	0.030	0.039
Log Likelihood	-10875.52	-10874.25	-10887.62	-10889.27	-11108.36	-11109.76	-11112.23	-11113.91
Deviance	21751.032	21748.506	21775.239	21778.531	22216.715	22219.515	22224.453	22227.828
AIC	21773.03	21770.51	21797.24	21800.53	22238.72	22241.52	22246.45	22249.83
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,168	23,168	22,622	22,622	23,088	23,088	23,610	23,610

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 27 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to vote (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 7.11(*a*)	Model 7.11(*b*)	Model 7.12(*a*)	Model 7.12(*b*)	Model 7.13(*a*)	Model 7.13(*b*)	Model 7.14(*a*)	Model 7.14(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.007**		1.007***		1.009***		1.008***	
	(0.003)		(0.002)		(0.003)		(0.003)	
Corruption		0.984*		0.974***		0.974***		0.980**
		(0.008)		(0.006)		(0.009)		(0.009)
Electoral system*(Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	2.127*	1.624	1.716*	1.326	2.719***	1.978*	2.403**	1.909
	(0.873)	(0.682)	(0.526)	(0.345)	(0.989)	(0.740)	(1.006)	(0.818)
PR Electoral system	2.292***	1.839*	1.823***	1.495**	2.516***	2.036**	2.626***	2.228**

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 7.11(*a*)	Model 7.11(*b*)	Model 7.12(*a*)	Model 7.12(*b*)	Model 7.13(*a*)	Model 7.13(*b*)	Model 7.14(*a*)	Model 7.14(*b*)
	(0.701)	(0.594)	(0.416)	(0.301)	(0.681)	(0.287)	(00818)	(0.727)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.037***	1.037***	1.034***	1.034***	1.034***	1.034***	1.037***	1.037***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education*(Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	1.555***	1.554***	1.630***	1.630***	1.578***	1.576***	1.760***	1.759***
	(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.083)	(0.083)
Higher Education	2.678***	2.678***	2.933***	2.930***	2.619***	2.617***	3.274***	3.274***
	(0.125)	(0.126)	(0.136)	(0.135)	(0.122)	(0.122)	(0.163)	(0.163)
Male	0.954	0.954	1.099***	1.627***	1.056	1.056	1.025	1.025
	(0.320)	(0.320)	(0.036)	(0.069)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	0.989	0.989	0.872*	0.872*	1.045	1.044	1.083	1.083
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.094)	(0.094)
Current Status: Other	0.639***	0.639***	0.701***	0.700***	0.710***	0.710***	0.745***	0.745***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.032)
ICC	0.041	0.048	0.023	0.019	0.032	0.039	0.042	0.049
Log Likelihood	-11257.53	-11258.65	-11906.98	-11905.92	-11003.66	-11004.91	-10153.58	-10154.59
Deviance	22515.051	22517.293	23813.965	23811.83	22029.32	22009.812	20307.166	20309.178
AIC	22537.05	22539.29	23835.97	23833.83	22029.32	22031.81	20329.17	20331.18
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,167	23,167	24,505	24,505	22,633	22,633	22,121	22,121

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 28 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to engage in formal participation (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		**Wave 2 (2004)**		**Wave 3 (2006)**		**Wave 4 (2008)**	
	Model 7.15(*a*)	Model 7.15(*b*)	Model 7.16(*a*)	Model 7.16(*b*)	Model 7.17(*a*)	Model 7.17(*b*)	Model 7.18(*a*)	Model 7.18(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.005***		1.006***		1.006***		1.007***	
	(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Corruption		0.989***		0.983***		0.985***		0.978***
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.005)		(0.004)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)								
Mixed Electoral system	0.942	0.821	0.811	0.708	0.993	0.882	0.935	0.740
	(0.227)	(0.196)	(0.254)	(0.180)	(0.287)	(0.230)	(0.256)	(0.157)
PR Electoral system	1.096	0.976	1.097	1.017	1.165	1.105	1.053	0.856
	(0.196)	(0.177)	(0.255)	(0.198)	(0.250)	(0.221)	(0.213)	(0.139)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.011***	1.011***	1.010***	1.010***	1.007***	1.007***	1.012***	1.012***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.504***	1.504***	1.373***	1.376***	1.391***	1.392***	1.697***	1.695***
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Higher Education	2.592***	2.596***	2.275***	2.278***	2.502***	2.505***	2.596***	2.600***
	(0.119)	(0.120)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.127)
Male	1.414***	1.414***	1.344***	1.344***	1.434***	1.433***	1.376***	1.376***
	(0.034)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Current status *(In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	0.973	0.972	0.768***	0.767***	0.907	0.905	0.962	0.960
	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.096)	(0.095)
Current Status: Other	0.838***	0.839***	0.796***	0.798***	0.938	0.939	0.846***	0.849***
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.039)
ICC	0.013	0.015	0.023	0.017	0.020	0.018	0.018	0.012
Log Likelihood	-10951.7	-10952.35	-9928.937	-9926.943	-10394.02	-10393.29	-10434.68	-10432.2
Deviance	21903.399	21904.71	19857.874	19853.887	20788.046	20786.584	20869.362	20864.392

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 7.15(*a*)	Model 7.15(*b*)	Model 7.16(*a*)	Model 7.16(*b*)	Model 7.17(*a*)	Model 7.17(*b*)	Model 7.18(*a*)	Model 7.18(*b*)
AIC	21925.4	21926.71	19879.87	19875.89	20810.05	20808.58	20891.36	20886.39
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,168	23,168	22,622	22,622	23,088	23,088	23,610	23,610

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 29 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to engage in formal participation (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 7.19(*a*)	Model 7.19(*b*)	Model 7.20(*a*)	Model 7.20(*b*)	Model 7.21(*a*)	Model 7.21(*b*)	Model 7.22(*a*)	Model 7.22(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.006***		1.007***		1.002		1.003	
	(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Corruption		0.981***		0.975***		0.990*		0.990
		(0.004)		(0.007)		(0.005)		(0.007)
Electoral system*(Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	1.218	1.007	0.874	0.664	0.724	0.677*	0.798	0.747
	(0.328)	(0.220)	(0.280)	(0.193)	(0.182)	(0.151)	(0.257)	(0.224)
PR Electoral system	1.139	0.931	1.102	0.903	1.041	0.986	1.306	1.233
	(0.227)	(0.157)	(0.261)	(0.202)	(0.193)	(0.169)	(0.311)	(0.280)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.010***	1.010***	1.006***	1.006***	1.008***	1.008***	1.008***	1.008***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education*(Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	1.516***	1.511***	1.527***	1.524***	1.483***	1.480***	1.566***	1.564***
	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.088)	(0.088)
Higher Education	2.502***	2.500***	2.685***	2.682***	2.577***	2.572***	2.690***	2.687***

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 7.19(*a*)	Model 7.19(*b*)	Model 7.20(*a*)	Model 7.20(*b*)	Model 7.21(*a*)	Model 7.21(*b*)	Model 7.22(*a*)	Model 7.22(*b*)
	(0.124)	(0.124)	(0.140)	(0.140)	(0.127)	(0.127)	(0.138)	(0.138)
Male	1.482***	1.482***	1.414***	1.414***	1.377***	1.377***	1.332***	1.331***
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	0.997	0.996	0.845*	0.844*	0.961	0.961	0.748***	0.747***
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.081)	(0.081)
Current Status: Other	0.807***	0.808***	0.874***	0.875***	0.860***	0.860***	0.874***	0.874***
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)
ICC	0.017	0.012	0.024	0.023	0.015	0.013	0.024	0.024
Log Likelihood	-9894.236	-9892.499	-9728.474	-9728.152	-10474.99	-10474.44	-10132.5	-10132.28
Deviance	19788.471	19784.997	19456.948	19456.305	20949.982	20948.871	20264.99	20264.554
AIC	19810.47	19807	19478.95	19478.3	20971.98	20970.87	20286.99	20286.55
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,167	23,167	24,505	24,505	22,633	22,633	22,121	22,121

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 30 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to engage in informal participation (ESS 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008)

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 7.23(*a*)	Model 7.23(*b*)	Model 7.24(*a*)	Model 7.24(*b*)	Model 7.25(*a*)	Model 7.25(*b*)	Model 7.26(*a*)	Model 7.26(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.018*		1.017***		1.018***		1.018***	
	(0.004)		(0.006)		(0.004)		(0.004)	
Corruption		0.959***		0.954***		0.952***		0.945***
		(0.007)		(0.010)		(0.007)		(0.008)
Electoral system (*Majoritarian*)								

	Wave 1 (2002)		Wave 2 (2004)		Wave 3 (2006)		Wave 4 (2008)	
	Model 7.23(*a*)	Model 7.23(*b*)	Model 7.24(*a*)	Model 7.24(*b*)	Model 7.25(*a*)	Model 7.25(*b*)	Model 7.26(*a*)	Model 7.26(*b*)
Mixed Electoral system	0.734	0.504	0.739	0.552	0.750	0.561	1.165	0.670
	(0.637)	(0.223)	(0.629)	(0.346)	(0.461)	(0.232)	(0.720)	(0.282)
PR Electoral system	0.714	0.496**	0.692	0.580	0.772	0.679	0.819	0.493**
	(0.276)	(0.166)	(0.438)	(0.279)	(0.353)	(0.215)	(0.375)	(0.160)
Individual-level variables								
Age	0.998*	0.998*	0.996***	0.996***	1.000	1.000	0.999	0.999
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education (*Secondary or Lower*)								
Upper Secondary Education	1.660***	1.662***	1.769***	1.770***	1.683***	1.686***	1.816***	1.816***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.075)	(0.075)
Higher Education	3.110***	3.111***	3.185***	3.187***	3.178***	3.181***	3.533***	3.535***
	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.137)	(0.137)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.143)	(0.143)
Male	1.036	1.036	0.997	0.997	1.000	1.000	1.003	1.003
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Current status *(In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.547***	1.546***	1.348***	1.347***	1.548***	1.545***	1.567***	1.565***
	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.102)	(0.102)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Current Status: Other	0.763***	0.763***	0.823***	0.823***	0.764***	0.764***	0.795***	0.796***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.030)
ICC	0.064	0.052	0.156	0.101	0.088	0.046	0.088	0.049
Log Likelihood	-13430.34	-13428.97	-12561.48	-12558.32	-13090.62	-13086.16	-13339.43	-13335.42
Deviance	26860.67	26857.931	25122.954	25116.633	26181.239	26172.327	26678.86	26670.846
AIC	26882.67	26879.93	25144.95	25138.63	26203.24	26194.33	26700.86	26692.85
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,168	23,168	22,622	22,622	23,088	23,088	23,610	23,610

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9. 31 Results from the multilevel logistic regression models (odds ratios) of ESS Waves 1 to 4 of propensity of individuals to engage in informal participation (ESS 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016)

	Wave 5 (2010)		**Wave 6 (2012)**		**Wave 7 (2014)**		**Wave 8 (2016)**	
	Model 7.27(*a*)	Model 7.27(*b*)	Model 7.28(*a*)	Model 7.28(*b*)	Model 7.29(*a*)	Model 7.29(*b*)	Model 7.30(*a*)	Model 7.30(*b*)
Country-level variables								
Age of democracy	1.014**		1.015**		1.014**		1.013**	
	(0.006)		(0.006)		(0.005)		(0.005)	
Corruption		0.950***		0.929***		0.938***		0.944***
		(0.010)		(0.013)		(0.012)		(0.011)
Electoral system*(Majoritarian)*								
Mixed Electoral system	0.986	0.718	0.938	0.636	0.683	0.497	0.743	0.656
	(0.762)	(0.393)	(0.825)	(0.353)	(0.518)	(0.250)	(0.568)	(0.341)
PR Electoral system	0.831	0.531	0.970	0.659	0.867	0.645	1.151	0.933
	(0.478)	(0.223)	(0.634)	(0.282)	(0.489)	(0.250)	(0.654)	(0.369)
Individual-level variables								
Age	1.001	1.001	1.000	1.000	0.997***	0.997***	0.992***	0.992***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Education*(Secondary or lower)*								
Upper Secondary Education	1.850***	1.848***	1.729***	1.727***	1.827***	1.824***	1.889***	1.886***
	(0.778)	(0.778)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.081)	(0.081)
Higher Education	3.439***	3.437***	3.468***	3.464***	3.472***	3.467***	3.563***	3.558***
	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.140)	(0.139)	(0.147)	(0.147)
Male	1.084***	1.084***	1.038	1.038	1.038	1.038	1.082***	1.082***
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Current status(*In paid work)*								
Current Status: In education	1.397***	1.396***	1.446***	1.446***	1.219**	1.218**	1.467***	1.467***
	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.098)	(0.097)	(0.127)	(0.127)
Current Status: Other	0.813***	0.813***	0.907***	0.907***	0.895***	0.895***	0.940	0.939
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.033)
ICC	0.132	0.080	0.165	0.083	0.128	0.068	0.130	0.071
Log Likelihood	-12874.66	-12871.03	-13820.19	-13815.17	-13228.68	-13224.23	-12904.79	-12900.49
Deviance	25749.324	25742.065	27640.376	27630.335	26457.363	26448.455	25809.57	25800.977

	Wave 5 (2010)		Wave 6 (2012)		Wave 7 (2014)		Wave 8 (2016)	
	Model 7.27(*a*)	Model 7.27(*b*)	Model 7.28(*a*)	Model 7.28(*b*)	Model 7.29(*a*)	Model 7.29(*b*)	Model 7.30(*a*)	Model 7.30(*b*)
AIC	25771.32	25764.07	27662.38	27652.33	26479.36	26470.45	25831.57	25822.98
Number of countries	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Number of individuals	23,167	23,167	24,505	24,505	22,633	22,633	22,121	22,121

Note: Multilevel logistic regression (odds ratios) with standard errors in parentheses *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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