Engaging adolescents in politics: the longitudinal effect of political socialization agents

Ellen Quintelier

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Abstract

Starting from a political socialization perspective, this study examined the development of political participation during adolescence and early adulthood. We explore the effect of parents, peers, school media and voluntary associations on political participation. Self-reported data were collected from 3,025 Belgian adolescents at three points in time: at age 16, age 18 and age 21. Latent growth curve modeling was conducted to analyze the effect of the five agents of socialization upon the initial level and development of political participation. As hypothesized, we find that all political socialization agents influence the initial level and development of political participation over time. Peers and voluntary associations have the largest influence both on the initial level of political participation and on its development. Parents and school would appear to be of less importance. While watching more television has a negative effect, more news consumption and internet use leads to more political participation.

Keywords

Adolescence, development of political participation, political socialization

Introduction

In recent decades, many worries have been expressed regarding the lack of political engagement on the part of young people: they are disengaged, they prefer different (i.e. less political) forms of participation, unconventional forms of participation, etc. (Dalton, 2008; Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Just as frequently, means are suggested to counteract this trend: communication scientists argue that young people should go online more often and/or watch less television, social network specialists recommend that young people should have a network that is reasonably diverse, educational researchers advocate paying more attention to civic education in school, and so on. All researchers show convincing evidence that these agents of socialization have a positive effect on political participation, sometimes even longitudinally, but all too often, they forget that there are different agents of socialization that interact with each other: children of politically active parents are more likely to engage in political discussion, not only at home, but also at school and with peers. Those who are active in voluntary associations are also more likely to have a more diverse network, etc. Even if it is generally agreed that different agents of political socialization exist, the manner in which they jointly influence political participation needs to be studied further.

The aim of this article is therefore to explore this research question: how do different agents of political socialization jointly influence political participation? In the literature, five agents of political socialization were presented: parents, peers, school, voluntary associations and media (Amnå, 2012; Hess & Torney, 1967). While there is a fairly large body of research relating to the different agents of socialization individually, there are relatively few studies focusing on how these factors interact with each other. As there is a growing interest among policy makers and scientists alike in how levels of political participation can be increased, we consider that it is relevant to combine this information within a single model in order to

examine which agents of political socialization can be most effective in stimulating political participation relative to one another.

As political participation is a habit that is shaped early in life (Aldrich, Montgomery, & Wood, 2011; Gerber, Green, & Shachar, 2003; Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2009), political socialization should be studied at the phase in which it develops, namely during adolescence (Campbell, 2006; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Flanagan (2003, p. 261) and others argued that a civic identity can develop relatively early in life, as politics are relevant to adolescents: “But much of relevance to politics - experiences of inclusion and exclusion; stereotypes and prejudice; membership in and identification with a group; rights and accountability; self-determination and respect for difference; status and power; trust and loyalty; and of fairness in process and justice in outcome - are themes that resonate with adolescents.” It is therefore very relevant that young people too voice their opinion through political participation (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Based on the social learning theory, Bandura (1977) asserts that behavior can be influenced by the environment. Behavior that is reinforced by parents, peers or other agents of socialization will be repeated. Furthermore, the development of a political participation habit goes hand in hand with the development of politically relevant attitudes. A study of Metzger and Smetana (2009) has shown that adolescents who are actively involved in politics see participation as a moral and collective value, not as a means of personal fulfillment. Furthermore, politically active adolescents are more likely to see political participation as a moral obligation and attribute more respect to those who participate. So not only does political participation develop at a young age, these young people also develop a positive attitude toward society. Therefore, it is extremely relevant to study this developmental process (Quintelier & Van Deth, forthcoming).

We will now proceed with a short review of the literature which has presented evidence that political socialization agents can reinforce political participation. The subsequent section

describes the dataset that will be used in the analyses, followed by the analysis itself and the conclusion.

Political socialization agents

As already mentioned, different agents of socialization have been discussed in the literature. We will focus briefly on all five agents in this literature and their possible effects on political participation (the scope of this article prevents us from going into any great depth concerning all five agents and their possible effects).

Firstly, scholars agree that the parents fulfill the role of a political socialization agent. Parents are the most likely agents of socialization because they spend so much time with their children, from a young age onwards. Parents are expected to guide young people's behavior, through both direct and indirect socialization. Direct socialization takes place when children's parents themselves are actively engaged in politics (Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Nesbit, 2012). When children see that their parents are involved in politics, they are more likely to engage in politics themselves at a later age (Cicognani, Zani, Fournier, Gavray, & Born, 2012; McFarland & Thomas, 2006). Indirect socialization might happen if parents discuss politics with their partner and children. Children who discuss politics with their parents more frequently are more likely to engage in politics later in life (McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007; Schmid, 2012). Therefore, we hypothesize that parents influence political participation among their children.

A second agent of socialization is formed by peers. Peers are indisputably a part of young people's life: they are omnipresent and they are constantly interacting with each other. Through discussion with peers, adolescents develop their opinions and political skills (Verba, et al., 1995). Political discussion among peers leads to increased political participation, in part because these discussions function as a mechanism for becoming recruited (Klofstad, 2011;

McClurg, 2003). In addition, social network specialists also have shown that network diversity (e.g. differing political opinions within a person's social network) is linked with both less (Mutz, 2002) and more (Pattie & Johnston, 2009; Quintelier, Stolle, & Harell, 2012) political participation. We thus expect that peers influence the level of political participation.

A third agent is formed by the school. Schools are renowned for their influence on development in various different subjects: math, language, etc. Together with the fact that in Western societies, most young people get their education at school, this also makes them susceptible to the demands of society: they have to work on tolerance towards immigrants, gay people, etc., making children more assertive and so on. Although teachers are educated to teach young people in different subjects, they do not always have the capacities and means to educate young people as politically engaged citizens. However, several studies have suggested that there are effects of an open classroom climate (Campbell, 2008; Hess, 2009), extracurricular activities (Marzana, Marta, & Pozzi, 2012; McFarland & Thomas, 2006), formal civic education (Galston, 2001) and active learning strategies (such as service learning or group projects) (Galston, 2001; Quintelier, 2010) on political engagement. Therefore, we expect that schools can influence the political participation of their pupils: through both *how* they teach and *what* they teach.

The fourth agent of political socialization is formed by voluntary associations. In associations, young people develop skills that are relevant for political participation. The characteristics of these associations include giving members access to public deliberation, stimulating a community spirit, generating a shared identity and to a certain extent offering them representation (McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Quéniart, 2008; Verba, et al., 1995). However, on the other hand, if young people spend more time in associations, they might have less time for political participation; this is referred to as the overscheduling hypothesis (Fredricks, 2012). Although we cannot go into further detail here (as we cannot for any

individual political socialization agent), we expect that people who are engaged in more associations are more likely to be politically active.

A fifth and final political socialization agent is formed by the media. Media may well have been the political socialization agent that has been discussed most often in the last decade, in tandem with the increasing popularity of the internet. Although it has been shown that people who watch more television are less likely to participate (Putnam, 2000), Norris (2001) expected that the internet would attract new people to politics. Similarly, people who keep up with the news more often (i.e. have a preference for news, whether online or via the newspaper), are more likely to participate in politics as well (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011). Social networking websites are also expected to increase the engagement or intention to engage in politics among young people. However, research has shown that while social networks stimulate other forms of online political engagement, they do not spill over to offline political engagement (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010). We expect that those who follow the news are more likely to engage in politics, while general internet and television use will be associated with less political participation.

To sum up, the relevance of the political socialization agents on political participation is clearly supported by the above findings. However, most of these articles explore only the effect of one, or at most two, agents of political socialization. Current literature lacks research that compares the effect of different agents of socialization jointly. Therefore, this article will explore how the five agents of political socialization influence political participation relative to one another and how they influence political participation (or its development) over time.

Data and methods

The Belgian Political Panel Survey 2006-2011 is a three-wave panel study among 16, 18 and 21-year-olds which is ideally placed to explore the effects of different agents of political

socialization on political participation. In 2006, a representative survey was conducted among 6,330 16-year-olds in Belgium, and the response analysis demonstrated that the survey was representative for language, school type, education track, gender and region. Based on written surveys completed by respondents in 112 schools, the study focused on adolescents' social and political attitudes and it contained questions about their background characteristics, political activities and political attitudes. To obtain a national random sample, all schools included in the survey were selected through a stratified sample, based on the location and type of the school. In each school, a minimum of 50 students were selected, representative of the tracks being offered in that school (Hooghe, Quintelier, Claes, & Dejaeghere, 2006).

In 2008, the respondents were surveyed again for a second wave, this time at the age of 18. While most of the initial respondents could still be reached at their schools, alternative strategies had to be developed for those who had left or changed schools. Of the initial 112 schools, 109 participated once again in the 2008 wave. In these schools, the same classes were re-surveyed. This enabled the re-interviewing of 2,988 students. The other students were contacted through a mail survey. In total, 4,235 pupils (or 67 percent) from the initial panel were re-surveyed. In 2011, respondents who had already participated twice in the survey were asked to fill in a third survey. Of the initial 6,330 adolescents, 3,025 (or 48 percent) could be contacted again by mail or internet survey. Analyses indicate that this panel is still representative for the initial study population (Hooghe, Havermans, Quintelier, & Dassonneville, 2011).

A political participation index was created consisting of 7 political participation items: wearing a badge, signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, boycotting products, forwarding political emails, displaying a political message and attending a political meeting. For all these activities, respondents were asked at all three age points whether they participated in any of them (never, once in a while, often). We summed these 7 activities so

that we not only have an index of the activity in which one participates, but also the intensity with which that participation is carried out (Quintelier, et al., 2012). These items are one-dimensional and become more internally consistent. Political participation is clearly still under development, even between the age of 18 and 21 (Franklin, 2004)¹.

In the analyses, we control for gender (0=male; 48.2%), socio-economic status at age 16 (a factor scale for 3 items, namely current educational track, educational goal and number of books at home)² and nationality (0=not having Belgian nationality; 3.3%). For the five agents of political socialization, we included several indicators which are available most of the time for the three age points. First, regarding family, we asked at both age 16 and age 18 how often young people discuss politics with their parents (never, once in a while, often, always) and whether or not they had someone in their family who was politically active (0=no, 1=yes). Second, the effect of peers was measured using the indicator of political discussion (never, once in a while, often, always) as well as the diversity of political opinions encountered in the peer group (ranging from 0 - everyone agrees - to 7 - no-one agrees). Third, with respect to the media, we measured how often young people follow the news (never, less than once a week, once a week, several times a week, daily), as well as the time they spend in front of the television and computer screen (never, less than one hour, 1 to 2 hours, 3 to 4 hours, 5 hours or more a day). Fourth, the level of association membership was measured by the membership of a new social movement (environmental association, peace movement, etc.) and the number of associations of which one is a member (n max.=13 at age 16 and 18; n max.= 20 at age 21).

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¹ 2006: Cronbach's α : .56; 2008: Cronbach's α : .59; 2011: Cronbach's α : .63.

² eigenvalue: 1.682; explained variance: 56%, Cronbach's α : .46;

The effect of schools, finally, was measured using a sum scale of the topics discussed in class (the functioning of parliaments, United Nations, European Union, federalism, elections and recent political events) and the frequency (never, once or twice, several times, often)³, a factor scale to measure open classroom climate (measured by three questions)⁴ and whether or not the respondent participated in group projects in class (never, once or twice, several times, often). Obviously, these indicators were only measured at age 16 and 18, except for group projects that were only measured among the school respondents at age 16.

As we wish to estimate the effect of the political socialization agents on political participation at the initial stage (age 16) and the effect of the political socialization agents on the growth in political participation, we use a latent growth curve model to estimate these trends⁵. A latent growth curve model is an application of structural equation modeling. Fundamental to this type of model is that it estimates the mean starting values for the dependent variables, as well as the growth trajectories of the dependent variables over time of the three measurement points (Singer & Willett, 2003). Additionally, parameters that explain

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³ 2006: eigenvalue: 3.300; explained variance: 55%, Cronbach's α : .83; 2008: eigenvalue: 2.808; explained variance: 47%, Cronbach's α : .64.

⁴ "Teachers present several sides of an issue when explaining it in class"; "Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues" and "Students feel free to express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students". 2006: eigenvalue: 1.648; explained variance: 55%, Cronbach's α : .59; 2008: eigenvalue: 2.287; explained variance: 76%, Cronbach's α : .80;

⁵ Although it is technically possible to estimate multilevel latent growth curve models, we choose not to do so because the correlation within schools is quite limited, 6 percent in the null model and 4 percent in the model with three control variables for political participation.

these starting values and growth trajectories can be added. Whereas at age 16 we add the direct effects, we added the change scores in the political socialization agents of age 18-age 16 and age 21-age 16 to avoid multicollinearity. First, we estimate a model that includes the political socialization agents at age 16 on the initial level of political participation (intercept) and the growth or development in political participation (slope). Secondly, we estimate a model with the effect of political socialization agents at age 18 and age 21 on the growth in political participation. We do not regress the effect of the political socialization agents at age 18/age 21 on the initial political participation level, because political socialization agents at age 18/age 21 cannot have influenced political participation levels at age 16.

Results

In Table 1, we present the univariate descriptives of the political socialization agents at age 16, as well as the correlation with the dependent variable: political participation at age 16. In the second part of the table, we present the correlation between political participation at age 16 and the political socialization agents at age 18/age 21. We find that discussing politics with parents and peers is correlated with higher levels of political participation. Having politically diverse peers and being member of more associations is beneficial as well. The correlations between school and participation, on the other hand, are much lower. What is quite striking is that if we look into the correlations between the political socialization agents at age 18/age 21 and political participation at age 16, these results are highly consistent.

Table 1. around here

In a next step, we present the latent growth curve models (LGCM). In Table 2 and 3, we present the LGCM for political participation. The first model includes the LGCM with the covariates at age 16 regressed on the intercept and slope, while in the second model, the covariates at age 16 on the intercept and the significant covariates at age 16, 18 and 21 on the

slope are presented. First we fitted a baseline unconditional model which shows that there is a significant growth over time (0.163; $p < 0.001$) and that the growth and initial scores are negatively correlated (-0.266; $p < 0.001$). This negative correlation indicates that people with higher levels of political participation are less likely to engage more in politics over time. The model fit of this model is acceptable (Chi²: 18.748, 1df, SCF: 0.930; CFI: 0.982; RMSEA: 0.077). In Table 2, we add the effects of the socialization agents at age 16 on the intercept and slope, and the model fit does not change significantly⁶ compared to the unconditional model; the RMSEA and CFI suggest that this model better fits the data.

We find that only the gender of the young person (namely being female) has a positive effect on the initial level of political participation (Table 2). A higher socio-economic status and having Belgian nationality does not affect the intercept of political participation. On the other hand, we find that development in political participation (as determined by the positive value of the slope: 1.257***) is not influenced by gender, but is positively influenced by having a higher socio-economic status and a non-Belgian nationality. As the correlation between the intercept and slope is negative, this indicates that those with high levels of political participation at age 16 (intercept) are less likely to increase their levels of political participation than those with lower levels.

However, what is of most interest to us is the effect of the political socialization agents on the initial level and the growth of political participation. Firstly, if we look at the effects of the political socialization agents on the intercept of political participation, we find that almost all

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⁶ The Sartorra-Bentler χ^2 -difference TRd: 4.83, 15df, $p > 0.05$. Given that this model is estimated among a large sample size, we do not discuss the significance of the Chi²-test (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008).

agents exert a positive influence on political participation. The most outspoken effects are found among peers and voluntary engagement. Through discussions, preferably in a diverse network, young people become more engaged in politics than without such discussions. Engagement in new social movements and/or a variety of association affiliations also leads to higher levels of political engagement. Parental political socialization, on the other hand, has much less effect: although discussing politics with parents and having a politically active family member leads to more political participation, this effect is much more modest than the effect of peers, for example. The media also have a limited effect: although following the news (regardless of used media) and frequent surfing on the internet leads to more political participation, the frequency of watching television leads to lower levels of political engagement. Finally, schools have the least effect: although discussing political events and group projects have a positive effect on political participation, this effect remains limited. The effect of an open classroom climate is not even significant. Overall, these indicators explain 40 percent of the variance in political participation, which is a reasonably large amount.

The results for the effect of the political socialization agents on the growth (slope) in political participation are much more disappointing: here we can explain only 7 percent. This 7 percent, however, is explained by 2 agents: the number of association memberships and the amount of time spent on the internet. Although both factors have a positive influence on the initial level of political participation, they both also inhibit the growth in political participation. On the one hand, this negative effect can be explained by an overscheduling or time displacement effect: the more voluntary associations of which one is a member and/or the more time one spends online, the less time one can devote to political activities in the future. On the other hand, these findings might imply a ceiling effect: people that are active in/with these political socialization agents will already engage in political participation, and have no tendency to increase their level of engagement later in adolescence.

Table 2. around here

In Table 3, we add the effect of the political socialization agents at age 18 and age 21 on the growth in political participation⁷. We do not regress the effect of the political socialization agents at age 18 and age 21 on the initial level of political participation, because it is a theoretical impossibility for effects at age 18 and age 21 to affect behavior at an earlier point in time, at age 16. Furthermore, to avoid multicollinearity, we regress the change in the scores in political socialization agents on political participation. We again find that females are more likely to participate in political activities at age 16. However, contrary to that shown by previous research, we find no effect of socio-economic status here. This does not mean that the socio-economic status of the respondent does not matter for political participation, but possibly that the effect of socio-economic status is mediated in this model by the political socialization agents: a higher socio-economic status is generally associated with more political socialization. This statement is strengthened by Christens and Speer's (2011) finding that the characteristics of organizations have more effect on future participation in group meetings than individual level predictors and they also suggest that this is due to self-selection (Christens, Peterson, & Speer, 2011).

The effects of the political socialization agents on the intercept of the LGCM model remain largely the same as in Table 2. However, the effects of the political socialization agents at age 16 on the slope differ somewhat. First, we find that high levels of political

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⁷ The model fit of this model is significantly different from Table 2: Sartorra-Bentler χ^2 -difference: 170.05, 33df, $p < 0.001$, but the other parameters indicate still an acceptable fit.

discussion with peers and association memberships lead not only to higher levels of political participation at age 16, but also that increasing discussion and more memberships lead to more growth in political participation over time (resp. 0.277***, 0.140***). More discussion over time actually increases this gap further: at the ages of 18 and 21 too, increasing levels of political discussion with peers (resp. 0.157***, 0.346***) and becoming member of new social movements or associations (resp. 0.114***, 0.240***) reinforce political participation. At age 16, having a politically active family member leads to more growth in political participation: for example, having a politically active uncle not only makes one more likely to engage in politics at the age of 16, but also at a later point in time. Participating in group projects, on the other hand, makes one more likely to participate in politics in the short term, but in the long term it makes one less likely to participate. Maybe this finding can be explained by the fact that group projects are compulsory and that this leads to fewer effects in the long term. We also find relatively few effects for the other school variables.

If we look at the effects of changes in political socialization agents at age 18 on the growth in political participation, we find that on top of the above-discussed effect of political discussion among friends and new social movements, the media and the political topics discussed in class also have a positive effect. Increasing media use too has remarkable effects on the growth in political participation. Young people who follow the news more often and/or start to use the internet more often between the ages of 16 and 21 are more likely than others to experience growth in political participation (on top of the higher starting levels of political participation). For television, once again we find a negative effect: an increased amount of time spent watching television depresses political participation. The final effect is of the membership of a new social movement: people who become a member of a new social movement are also more likely to develop higher levels of political participation. It should be noted that even though the results between Table 2 and 3 seem to contradict one another, they

do not. For instance, whereas the negative effect of time spent on the internet on growth at age 16 indicates that those that report high scores on this variable are less likely to increase their levels of political participation (Table 2), the positive effect of the *change* in internet use over time indicates that if people spend increasing amounts of time online, their political participation level will increase (Table 3).

Finally, looking at some additional parameters of this model, we still find a “ceiling” effect: those with high levels of political participation at age 16 (intercept) are less likely to increase their levels of political participation than those with lower levels (-0.451***). On the other hand, adding the effect of the change in political socialization agents at ages 18 and 21 on the slope makes the growth insignificant: i.e. the growth in political participation can be completely explained by the factors presented in the model. These parameters also explain almost 40 percent of the growth in political participation. By adding these parameters, the model fit has decreased a little bit, but is still acceptable (Hooper, et al., 2008).

Table 3. around here

Conclusion and discussion

This article assessed the influence of different current political socialization agents on the initial level and development of political participation. Combining the different agents of political socialization has led to interesting insights: some agents of political socialization that had a proven effect in previous analyses are of less importance (or indeed no importance) in this analysis. Although all agents of political socialization have some effect on political participation (such as parents and peers), some agents prove to be of lesser importance (for example schools).

If we look at the effects of the five political socialization agents, we find that the family, and to be specific the discussion of politics within the family, is especially successful in increasing the level of political participation. Peers, through discussion and diversity, are even more influential and successful in creating greater political participation. The media have a positive effect when they are used for news-gathering, or - surprisingly - if respondents spend more time online, in contrast to spending more time in front of the television, which leads to less political participation. Voluntary associations are the most effective when it comes to imbuing the habit of participation, as they stimulate political participation the most. This positive relationship between voluntary engagement and political participation has already been indicated by authors like de Tocqueville (1951[1835]), Almond and Verba (1963), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995): in associations, young people (and in fact people of all ages) can learn skills that are useful in politics. In addition, new social movements are quite effective. Schools, on the other hand, are the least effective in spurring political outcomes, but traditional formal learning seems to be the most effective here. Overall, we find that, relatively speaking, peers and associations have the largest influence on political participation.

The findings in this study indicate that multiple agents of socialization can increase levels of political participation among young people. However, those most easily accessible to the government (i.e. schools) are the least effective. In this article we cannot determine why this is the case: is it because schools do not focus sufficiently on civic education (given the cross-curricular context in Belgium), is it because teachers are insufficiently trained to deal with these issues, etc. While government also cannot influence peers or parents to expand political repertoires among young people (because that is part of the private sphere), media and voluntary associations might be more accessible to them due to the fact that they ensure that young people (and in fact people of all ages) can follow the news at their own level of understanding. Furthermore, with respect to voluntary associations, efforts should be made to

increase participation in associational activity. On the one hand, this goal can partly be reached by increasing the number and maintaining the diversity of associations. On the other hand, it is also necessary that the opportunity to engage in associations is provided to all youth, so that a larger diversity of people is attracted to associational membership (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Especially this last avenue in particular seems most promising.

This study also has some shortcomings, however: firstly, we were only able to measure political socialization indirectly, by measuring what happens in the family, or what young people think of the political attitudes of their peers. Future research should therefore also survey parents and peers to measure the impact of these agents of socialization jointly. Secondly, we focused on late adolescents in our analyses. It is possible that the agents of political socialization (for instance parents) have a larger influence at an earlier age, but using these data, we cannot ascertain these effects. Thirdly, although panel data are used in this article, we did not determine the causality of the relationship between political socialization agents/political behavior and political attitudes here, due to the scope of the article. Further research, however, should aim to untangle the relationship between these three concepts further. However, it should be noted that they do not completely mediate the patterns presented here. Finally, as this study focuses on only one outcome, future studies could use more dependent variables to disentangle this relationship further.

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Table 1. Correlations between political participation (at age 16) and political socialization agents.

		Political participation	Mean	Std.Dev.	Range
Family	Political discussion with parents	.217***	2.132	0.654	1-4
	Politically active family member	.156***	0.258	0.438	0-1
Peers	Political discussion with peers	.315***	1.582	0.608	1-4
	Political diversity in the peer group	.234***	2.095	1.140	1-7
Media	Frequency of following the news	.164***	3.707	1.074	1-5
	Time spent on television	-.147***	3.244	0.894	1-5
	Time spent on the internet	.009ns	3.077	1.091	1-5
Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	.249***	0.040	0.196	0-1
	Number of associational memberships	.274***	1.581	1.389	0-12
School	Topics discussed in class	.164***	0.000	1.000	-1.243-4.633
	Open classroom climate	-.021ns	0.000	1.000	-3.310-2.44
	Group projects	.126***	2.333	0.797	1-4
Age 18					
Family	Political discussion with parents	.160***	2.284	0.674	1-4

	Politically active family member	.126***	0.308	0.462	0-1
Peers	Political discussion with peers	.239***	1.761	0.610	1-4
	Political diversity in the peer group	.180***	2.437	1.134	1-7
Media	Frequency of following the news	.105***	3.846	1.028	1-5
	Time spent on television	-.126***	3.032	0.881	1-5
	Time spent on the internet	.001ns	3.040	0.992	1-5
Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	.160***	0.041	0.198	0-1
	Number of associational memberships	.250***	1.554	1.428	0-10
School	Topics discussed in class	.115***	0.000	1.000	-1.881-8.788
	Open classroom climate	-.014ns	0.000	1.000	-1.307-.953
	Group projects	.082***	2.691	0.752	1-4
Age 21					
Peers	Political discussion with peers	.223***	1.928	0.624	1-4
	Political diversity in the peer group	.126***	2.733	1.182	1-7
Media	Frequency of following the news	.100***	4.155	0.956	1-5
	Time spent on television	-.132***	2.837	0.927	1-5
	Time spent on the internet	.034ns	3.286	0.960	1-5

Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	.137***	0.055	0.227	0-1
	Number of associational memberships	.206***	1.431	1.365	0-11

Data: BPPS 2006-2011; Significances: $p \leq 0.05$:*, $p \leq 0.01$:**, $p \leq 0.001$:***.

Table 2. Latent growth curve model for political participation, with effects of political socialization agents at age 16.

		Intercept	Slope
Control	Sex	0.051*	-0.048ns
	Socio-economic status	0.027ns	0.193***
	Nationality	0.014ns	-0.071*
Age 16			
Family	Political discussion with parents	0.055*	0.031ns
	Politically active family member	0.097***	-0.058ns
Peers	Political discussion with peers	0.262***	-0.025ns
	Political diversity in the peer group	0.121***	-0.052ns
Media	Frequency of following the news	0.079***	-0.016ns
	Time spent on television	-0.124***	0.047ns
	Time spent on the internet	0.07***	-0.097**
Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	0.22***	-0.047ns
	Number of associational memberships	0.187***	-0.128***
School	Topics discussed in class	0.07**	-0.025ns
	Open classroom climate	-0.031ns	-0.018ns
	Group projects	0.056**	-0.061ns
Correlation between intercept and slope		-0.28***	
Mean values (variances)		-0.683(0.601)***	1.257(0.926)***
Explained variance		0.399***	0.074***
Number of cases		2,594	

Model fit	Chi ²	24.409ns
	Degrees of Freedom	16
	Scaling Correction Factor	1.156
	CFI	0.996
	RMSEA	0.014

Data: BPPS 2006-2011; MLR estimation; Entries are standardized results and significances;

$p \leq 0.05$:*; $p \leq 0.01$:**; $p \leq 0.001$:***.

Table 3. Latent growth curve model for political participation, with effects of political socialization agents at age 16, 18 and 21.

		Intercept	Slope
Control	Sex	0.049*	0.050ns
	Socio-economic status	0.036ns	0.034ns
	Nationality	0.011ns	-0.057ns
Age 16			
Family	Political discussion with parents	0.048*	n.i.
	Politically active family member	0.089***	0.084**
Peers	Political discussion with peers	0.268***	0.277***
	Political diversity in the peer group	0.130***	n.i.
Media	Frequency of following the news	0.083***	n.i.
	Time spent on television	-0.131***	n.i.
	Time spent on the internet	0.083***	n.i.
Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	0.163***	n.i.
	Number of associational memberships	0.226***	0.140*
School	Topics discussed in class	0.063**	n.i.
	Open classroom climate	-0.035ns	n.i.
	Group projects	0.074***	-0.115**
Age 18	Difference scores (T2-T1)		
Peers	Political discussion with peers	-	0.157***
	Political diversity in the peer group	-	0.068*
Voluntary	Membership of a new social movement	-	0.114**

engagement			
School	Topics discussed in class	-	0.060°
Age 21	Difference scores (T3-T1)		
Peers	Political discussion with peers	-	0.346***
	Political diversity in the peer group	-	0.092**
Media	Frequency of following the news	-	0.087**
	Time spent on television	-	-0.148***
	Time spent on the internet	-	0.116***
Voluntary engagement	Membership of a new social movement	-	0.241***
	Number of associational memberships	-	0.240***
Correlation between intercept and slope		-0.451***	
Mean values (variances)		-0.716(0.599)***	-0.485(0.613)ns
Explained variance		0.401***	0.387***
Number of cases		2403	
Model fit	Chi²	213.919***	
	Degrees of Freedom	49	
	Scaling Correction Factor	1.128	
	CFI	0.934	
	RMSEA	0.037	

Data: BPPS 2006-2011; MLR estimation; Entries are standardized results and significances; $p \leq 0.1$:°; $p \leq 0.05$:*; $p \leq 0.01$:**; $p \leq 0.001$:***. “-”: these parameters are not estimated, n.i. these parameters are not included in the model because they are not significant. Entries at age 18 and 21 are difference scores (with measure at age 16) to avoid multicollinearity.