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**Learning to be active citizens from basic education:
The development of youth political interest, democratic attitudes,
and political participation in England**

Pedro Luis Garret Vargas

Word count: 13 198

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September 2019

Abstract

While there has been some progress in the development of citizens' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours since the implementation of citizenship as a compulsory subject in secondary education in England, there are still many challenges related to citizenship education for young people. School is one of the essential contexts where citizenship education can be strengthened; for example, through significant experiences of democratic participation and coexistence as part of the institutional culture. For this reason, this dissertation aims to examine the factors related to English young people's political interest and democratic attitudes during compulsory secondary education, and political participation when they reach the age of majority, as well as the mechanisms that could explain the differences in the development of those components of active citizenship. Data from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS), one of the most important studies on citizenship development carried out to date, are used, and a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach with sequential mediation analysis is adopted. All estimated models partially confirm the proposed theoretical models with adequate goodness of fit. The results reveal that the levels of political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation in English young people still show gaps according to their background characteristics, especially due to socio-economic status indicators. Additionally, it is demonstrated that an adequate school organization can encourage students to get involved in different experiences related to citizenship knowledge and praxis throughout high school. Most of the latter act as positive mediators for the development of political interest and democratic attitudes, which then results in greater expressive and electoral political participation during young adulthood. In times when the United Kingdom faces complex political and social issues, the findings of this dissertation are highly relevant, and hopefully they serve as an input for the construction of a more fair, peaceful, and democratic society.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special gratitude to Professor Kirstine Hansen and Professor Ingrid Schoon for their willingness, their advice, and their valuable feedback to improve and complete this dissertation.

I would like to thank Professor Janice Tripney for her constant guidance during the Master's programme, and for betting on an open and democratic university, attentive to the voice of the students.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Professor Germ Janmaat, who gave me access to the data used in this dissertation and helped me solve different queries throughout this project.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support and love of my family, my old and new friends, and Sayuri. This significant step is thanks to you and for you.

I return to my country very grateful for this opportunity and eager to contribute to the construction of a more fair, equitable, and peaceful society.

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“Je me révolte, donc nous sommes.”

[I rebel, therefore we exist.]

(Albert Camus, *L'Homme Révolté* [*The Rebel*], 1951)

“Entonces todos los hombres de la tierra

le rodearon; les vio el cadáver triste, emocionado;

incorporóse lentamente,

abrazó al primer hombre; echóse a andar...”

[Then, all the inhabitants of the earth

surrounded him; the corpse looked at them sadly, deeply moved;

he got up slowly,

embraced the first man; started to walk...]

(César Vallejo, *Masa* [*Mass*], 1937)

1. Introduction

1.1 The relevance of citizenship education in England today

Even before citizenship became a formal subject for compulsory secondary education there was evidence of a decline in civic and political engagement in Britain (Whiteley, 2012), an issue that remains today (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; House of Lords, 2018). A particular concern is the low electoral participation of young people. For instance, 53% of 18-24 year olds voted in the European Union membership referendum of 2016, while 54% did it the general election of 2017 (Ipsos MORI, 2016, 2017). These figures are still lower than those of other age groups and are far from the expected citizen participation.

A different situation seems to arise in the expressive aspect of political participation, because British young people tend to be more involved in protests than middle-age and older adults (Sloam, 2013). In recent years, the former have been the protagonists of significant campaigns and mass social actions (e.g. England riots, student protests, occupy movement) (Henn & Foard, 2014). Given this ambiguity between the manifestations of political participation in the United Kingdom, some recent studies affirm that young people are not completely apathetic towards politics. Rather, they are interested in it and often form part of unconventional political activities, but they feel alienated from formal politics and institutions (Marsh, O'Toole & Jones, 2007).

There are also contemporary challenges regarding democratic coexistence, related to the development of positive attitudes towards equality and respect for human rights in society. For example, about 4 out of 10 people in Britain report that they have experienced some form of prejudice recently. Likewise, there is still a considerable percentage of people who have negative feelings towards some minority groups (e.g. Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers; Muslims; transgender), and just over a third of the citizens think that efforts to provide equal opportunities for immigrants have gone too far (Abrams, Swift & Houston, 2018).

At this critical juncture, coupled with the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union and its potential consequences, it is necessary to strengthen citizenship education for democracy. While this involves complex processes that take place in multiple formal and informal contexts (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy & Lopes, 2010; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito & Agrusti, 2016), this dissertation will emphasize the role of the school in the construction of future citizens' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. This is a key role that is not only reflected in teaching citizenship as part of the formal curriculum, but also in encouraging that students to get involved in citizenship activities as part of the school culture (Harris, 2005; Keating, 2016).

This entails the promotion of significant learning opportunities to develop political engagement and democratic attitudes from basic education in order to anticipate greater civic and political participation in young adulthood (Flanagan, 2013; Keating, 2016). The school is an environment where citizenship for democracy should be understood and lived. Therefore, beyond the importance of declarative knowledge related to citizenship as a subject (education about citizenship), participatory school experiences and their relationship with the community (education through citizenship) should be stressed (Keating & Janmaat, 2016).

In that sense, the school ethos and organization are crucial for the promotion of active citizenship. For example, students are more likely to develop political engagement, democratic attitudes, critical thinking, and institutional and social trust if their school has an open climate, with fair coexistence rules and where they are allowed to participate in the decision-making process (Audsley, Chitty, O'Connell, Watson & Wills, 2013; Flanagan, 2013; Keating, 2016; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schultz, 2001; Perliger, Canetti-Nisim & Pedahzur, 2006; Schulz et al., 2017). However, these positive results are often strongly associated with the socio-economic status of students and schools, which shows that the English education system is recreating inequalities in the development of active citizenship to the detriment of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016, 2019).

1.2 What is active citizenship and how does it relate to citizenship education?

Traditionally, research on citizenship has focused on the rights and duties of individuals in relation to the state (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009). However, this notion is insufficient to establish a prosperous civil society or a system of government in which the voice of citizens is heard (Westholm, Montero & van Deth, 2007). In that sense, the emphasis is currently on the action of citizens and their involvement in individual and social decision making, as part of participatory and deliberative democracy.

It is in this context that the notion of active citizenship emerges, which highlights the sense of agency of individuals as legal subjects, members of a political community, responsible for the consequences of their actions and for their coexistence in society (O'Donnell, 2010). As part of these responsibilities, citizens assume a set of commitments with the state and society as autonomous agents¹. These commitments take the legal form of duties, which should be internalized by individuals as values or criteria to act. Among the most important obligations derived from citizenship are respect for the others and the rule of law (de Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter & van Rij, 2005).

In the literature there are different philosophical approaches to this topic (e.g. liberalism, republicanism, communitarianism) and, as a consequence, there is no single definition of active citizenship. In this dissertation the proposal by Hoskins (2006) will be adopted: "Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy" (p. 4). This definition is similar to that used by other specialized reports on conceptualization, measurement and discussion of active citizenship (de Weerd et al., 2005; Harris, 2005; Schulz et al., 2016; Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007).

¹ Assuming the commitments that responsible citizenship entails is a dynamic and complex learning process, which is based on moral development (Kohlberg, 1984) and should be analyzed from an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

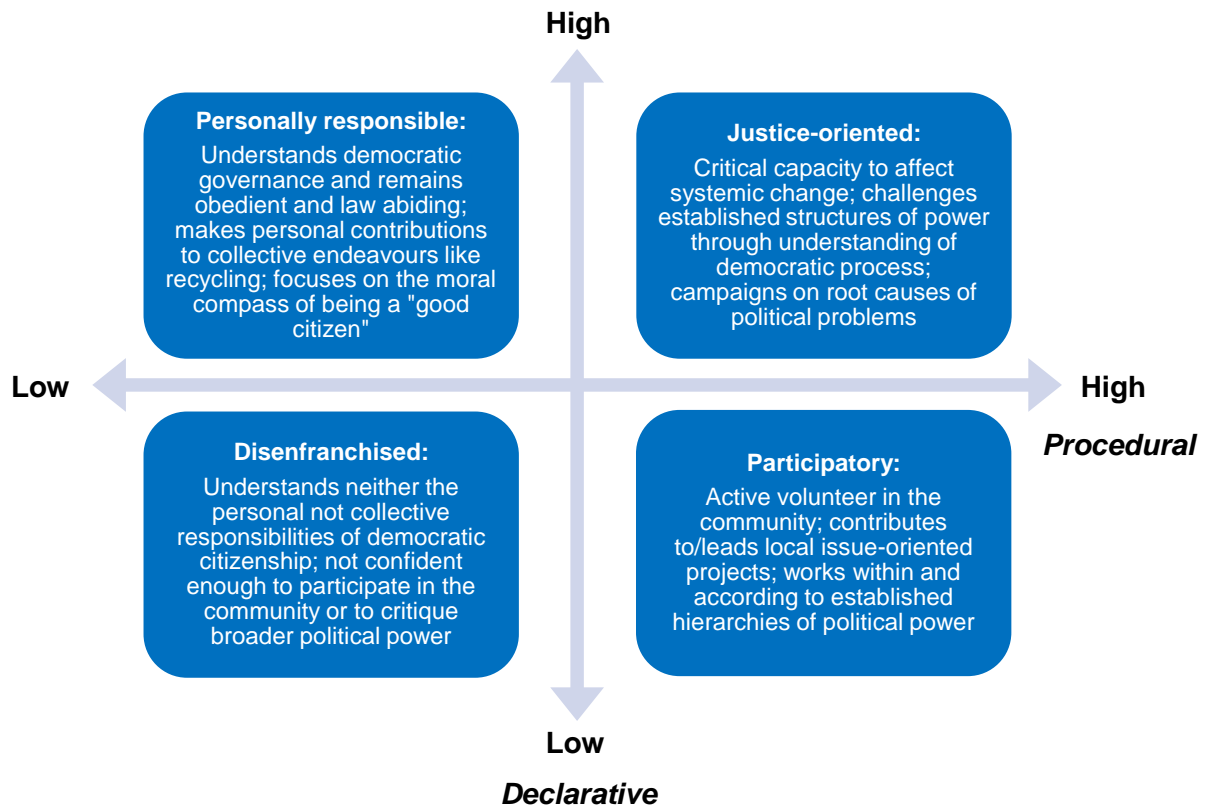
The concept of active citizenship can be operationalized in different dimensions and indicators. For example, Hoskins and Mascherini (2009) suggest four dimensions: representative democracy (e.g. voter turnout), democratic values (e.g. respect for human rights), community life (e.g. engagement in organizations), and protest and social change (e.g. boycotting products). In a similar vein, de Weerd et al. (2005) propose a set of indicators grouped into two dimensions: voluntary work (e.g. organizing community activities), and political participation (e.g. involvement in peaceful protests or public debates). For his part, Harris (2005) believes that active citizenship in a democracy involves awareness of interdependence (e.g. caring for the environment), civic self-restraint (e.g. taking part in jury duty), and openness to deliberative argument (e.g. challenging unfair laws).

Although these and other proposals have their own peculiarities, most of them agree that the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values through the educational process is essential for the crystallization of active citizenship and the construction of a democratic society (Keating, 2016; Lockyer, 2010; Schulz et al., 2016). Thus, the purpose of citizenship education is “to enhance the awareness of rights and duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens; and in so doing to establish the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998, p. 40).

Bearing in mind the interrelation between the notion of active citizenship and the objectives of citizenship education, it is important to consider the kinds of citizens conceived by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and reviewed by Weinberg and Flinders (2018). According to these authors, the development of citizenship should be encouraged through rich learning opportunities in both declarative knowledge and procedural skills (see Figure 1.1). As will be seen in the next section, this taxonomy also responds to political positions on whether education for democracy should emphasize a personally responsible position (i.e. character education from an individualistic and econocentric approach) or a justice-oriented position (i.e.

citizenship education from a critical, active and collective approach) (Lockyer, 2010; Kisby, 2014).

Figure 1.1. *The declarative-procedural paradigm of citizenship*



Source: Weinberg and Flinders (2018).

Given this framework, this dissertation focuses on two broad aspects of citizenship education: political engagement and democratic attitudes. As members of a political community, it is expected that citizens are engaged with the strengthening of democracy. For this, an important requirement is that they are interested in politics and aware of its impact on society (de Weerd et al., 2005). In addition, another indicator of political engagement is citizen participation, whether electoral (i.e. representative democracy) or expressive (i.e. participatory and deliberative

democracy) (Keating & Janmaat, 2016). However, the different manifestations of citizen participation should not contravene the rule of law or human rights. Therefore, another key aspect of democratic citizenship is peaceful coexistence, which is reflected in positive attitudes towards equity, justice, and recognition of people's dignity (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009).

1.3 The rise and decline of citizenship education in England

Since the 1970s there has been explicit, albeit fragmented, ways of teaching aspects related to citizenship in English schools. However, it was not until the new Labour government in 1997 that the interest in citizenship education as a subject within the framework of active citizenship really began (Davies & Chong, 2015; Kerr, Smith & Twine, 2008). The aim was to move from a vision of citizenship as an individual obligation to one of collective responsibility. Specifically in the educational context, children and young people were encouraged to receive citizenship education in a formal and organized way.

To do this, the Secretary of State for Education created the Advisory Group on Citizenship, which produced the seminal document known as the Crick report (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). This document was crucial because it established a framework to contextualize the objectives of citizenship education in England, and how it could be developed inside and outside the school (Kerr et al., 2008; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018). The central proposal of the Crick report was composed of three strands (i.e. social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy) and four essential elements (i.e. concepts, knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, and values and dispositions). It can be affirmed that this key document adopted a justice-oriented citizenship approach (Weinberg & Flinders, 2018), because it conceived young people as “active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998, p. 7).

After the Crick report was approved and the National Curriculum was reviewed, in 2002 citizenship became a statutory subject for students between 11 and 16 years old, that is, during compulsory secondary education (Burton & May, 2015; Kerr et al., 2008). In addition, at the institutional level, different government agencies were created to implement, audit, promote, and investigate the development of citizenship education in schools (Davies & Chong, 2015). For example, the National Foundation for Educational Research was commissioned to conduct a study to analyze the progress of students in that subject over time: the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) (Keating et al., 2010), which will be discussed in more detail later.

In 2008, a review of citizenship education in the National Curriculum was made. The highlight was the inclusion of a new strand on identities and diversity, based mainly on the conclusions and recommendations of the so-called Ajebo report to update citizenship education to the contemporary context of the United Kingdom (Ajebo, Kiwan & Sharma, 2007). Thus, issues of critical identity formation, tolerance and respect for diversity, and community cohesion were emphasized.

However, the nature of citizenship education in England changed five years ago with the new version of the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014). Although citizenship was ratified as a compulsory subject at key stages 3 and 4, its status was not that of a core one (Burton & May, 2015). In addition, the essence of citizenship education was replaced by civics, volunteering, and money management, as well as an emphasis on character education from an instrumental rationality (Davies & Chong, 2015; Kisby, 2014). This last point has been warned by different specialists and even by the House of Lords (2018), where it was stated that “one of the concerns about the direction of citizenship education is whether it has moved from a collective political conception of citizenship towards a more individualised notion that focuses on character and promoting volunteering” (p. 29).

According to Davies and Chong (2015), there are different factors that could explain this turn in the vision of citizenship education in England. Firstly, perhaps the main factor is the change in the political context of the last decade. Already from the Conservative-led coalition government in 2010, there was a different notion of what

citizenship education implied, and this trend continued with the victory of the Conservative Party in 2015. On the one hand, government initiatives followed a neo-liberal pattern, which in educational matters resulted in the increase of academy schools' autonomy and the creation of free schools. This meant that lessons not necessarily had to be based on the National Curriculum, and that traditional subjects were prioritized, leaving citizenship education in the background. On the other hand, the economic crisis that has affected Europe since 2008 caused budget cuts for initiatives related to active citizenship, as they were not on the priority political agenda (Hoskins, Kerr & Liu, 2016).

Secondly, the definition of citizenship education has not been entirely clear from the academia, and the debates over time did not reach conceptual coherence. Although critical points and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of citizenship education were detected in the period between the Crick report and the Ajebo report (Kerr et al., 2008), it was attempted that these key documents did not become party political projects. However, the new government elected in 2010 believed that these debates were aligned with the Labour Party, and that citizenship education was politicized towards one part of the political spectrum; therefore, it required a transformation.

Thirdly, the power of persuasion of the available evidence did not have adequate political management. Although the results from the CELS (Keating et al., 2010) and the monitoring of the Office for Standards in Education (2010, 2013) showed that the implementation and impact of citizenship education was improving over time, this evidence was not prioritized by policy makers. Finally, even though the Association for Citizenship Teaching was established to provide professional support, the scaffolding of the education system for citizenship education was not sufficiently strong. The low status given to this subject is still reflected in the lack of specialist teachers and in the weak integration of it within the school ethos, which negatively affects teaching strategies and students' learning opportunities (Burton & May, 2015; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018).

These and other challenges related to planning, training, monitoring and evaluation of citizenship education in England still persist. After the CELS ended, English students did not participate in the second edition of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) in 2016. Unfortunately, there is no official evidence on the current provision and quality of citizenship education after the new version of the National Curriculum came into force (House of Lords, 2018; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018).

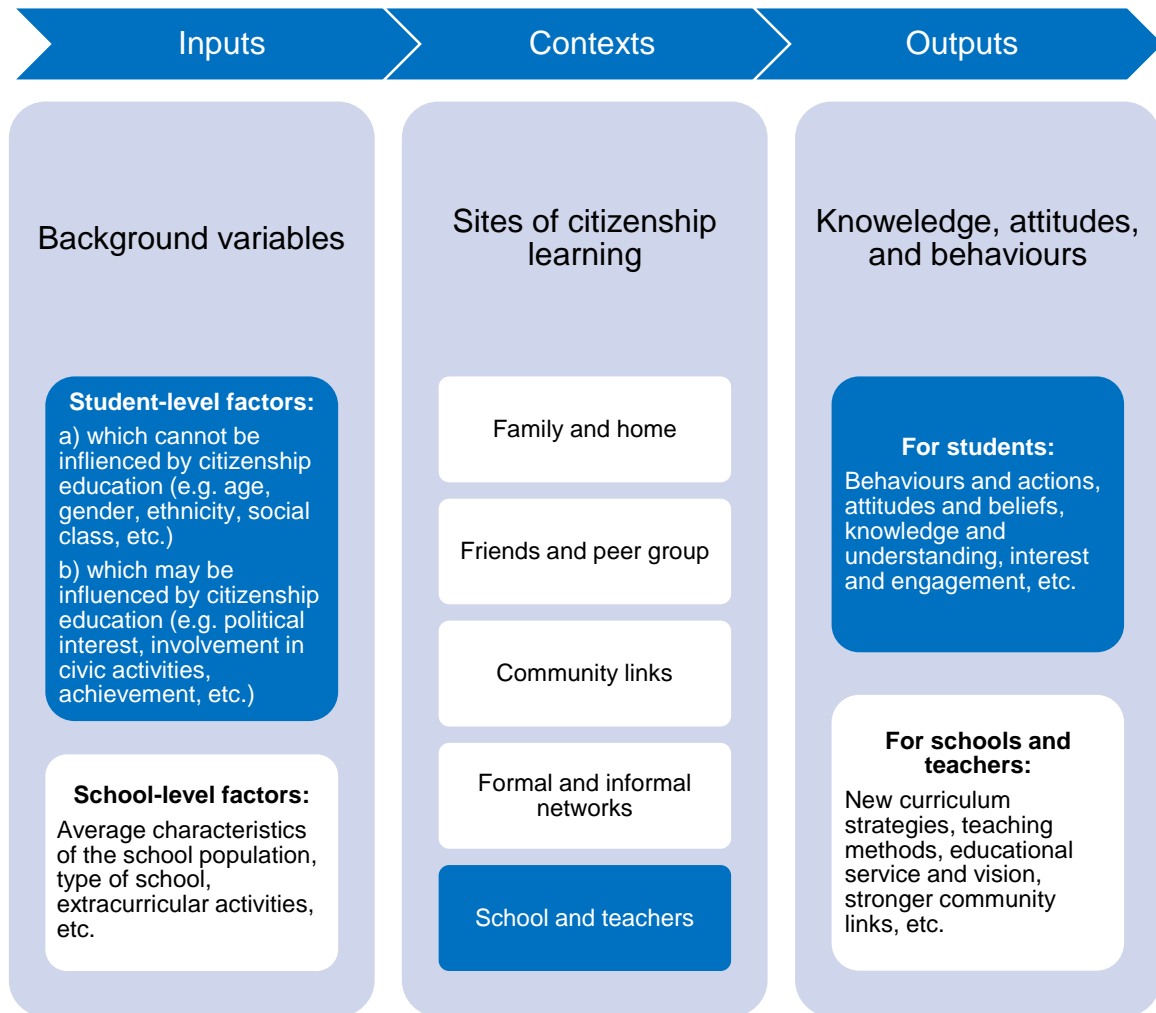
1.4 What are the main findings related to citizenship education in England?

Although the findings of international cross-sectional studies such as the Civic Education Study (CIVED) and the ICCS are relevant², emphasis will be placed on the main results of the CELS due to the objectives of this dissertation. This study aimed to analyze the impact of citizenship education and its main associated factors over time in the same cohort of English young people (Keating et al., 2010). The general framework of this study is summarized in Figure 1.2, which shows that the theoretical model considered different inputs (i.e. background variables), contexts (i.e. sites of citizenship learning), and outputs (i.e. knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours). Some of these aspects are highlighted, because the research questions of this dissertation focus on the effect of student-level factors, mainly from the school context, on the participants' outcomes³.

² The CIVED was conducted in 1999 across 28 countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), and the ICCS was administered in 2009 across 38 countries (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito, 2010). In general terms, both large-scale studies examined the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to citizenship education in different contexts of year 9 students. Some results of the CIVED 1999 and the ICCS 2009 can be compared at country level, due to the inclusion of common items. However, since there were some differences in the sample and certain scales of both studies, it is suggested to be cautious when analyzing change over time.

³ Although in this dissertation some outcomes were measured when participants were 19 or 20 years old, most of the variables of interest analyzed belong to the compulsory secondary education period, as will be seen later.

Figure 1.2. General analytical framework of the CELS



Source: Adapted from Keating et al. (2010).

In the report that compiles the main findings of the first four waves of the CELS, Keating et al. (2010) concluded that citizenship education during high school encourages young people to have positive attitudes and intentions towards civic and political participation. They also found that the effectiveness of citizenship education is related to its format, timing and duration in which it is provided at school. In that sense, factors such as the extension of citizenship lessons, planning by specialist teachers, and continuous accreditation of learning in this subject are essential to promote active citizens.

Given the variables of interest of this dissertation, it is important to detail some specific findings of that document. The evidence is mixed: while the degree of civic and political participation increased significantly over time, attitudes towards equality in society remained at the same level and political engagement showed a fluctuating trend. It was also found that the intentions and attitudes that young adults construct throughout high school contribute to shaping later citizenship outcomes. Finally, it was concluded that the students' political literacy (one of the crucial strands proposed in the Crick report) should be strengthened even in years 12 and 13, so that they have the opportunities to develop citizen competencies to act in the political system.

In a narrower study, Keating and Janmaat (2016) used data from the CELS to analyze the short and medium term impact of citizenship activities at school on youth political engagement⁴. The authors found that although the citizenship activities promoted by the school during year 7 did not have a lasting effect on the indicators of youth political engagement, they did influence the involvement of this type of activities during year 11. In turn, the latter showed an effect on how politically engaged the participants were after leaving school. In other words, these activities developed during high school have an indirect and cumulative effect over time as predictors of both electoral and expressive participation at the age of majority.

Hoskins and Janmaat (2016) also took into account information from the CELS to analyze how participants' type of education (i.e. vocational or academic) and level of qualification (i.e. levels 1-3) relate to their voting and protesting practices in young adulthood⁵. The findings showed that low level vocational qualifications are associated with a lower probability of voting compared to academic ones. Also, only participants with high academic qualifications, which usually come from families with

⁴ This outcome was operationalized in two indicators: electoral participation and expressive political participation. The authors explored the relationships between the variables of interest in two lagged panel models using path analysis. In addition, these models included prior proxy measurements of the outcomes (i.e. high school students' intentions to participate in electoral or expressive politics in the future) to control potential autoregressive effects.

⁵ To test their hypotheses, the authors estimated logistic regression models. As in the previous case, this study also included prior measures of the outcomes, operationalized as the intentions of high school students to participate in future elections or protests.

high socio-economic status, are more likely to have been involved in protests. Therefore, the authors concluded that following a trajectory with advance level qualifications is strongly related to the development of active citizenship. However, this relationship is alarming because it would evidence the maintenance of an inequitable education system in England.

All the previously reviewed studies that used data from the CELS also considered diverse participants' background characteristics as control variables (e.g. gender, ethnicity, parental education, socio-economic status). This allowed researchers to analyze gaps in the outcomes between different groups and adjust the estimates of the models run. The importance of incorporating these variables when examining outcomes related to citizenship education is widely reported in the literature (Henn & Foard, 2014; Schulz et al., 2010, 2017; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Whiteley, 2014).

It is seen that there is strong evidence on the effectiveness of citizenship education in England, as well as some factors associated with it. However, most of these studies focus only on the political participation of young adults, but not on the underlying mechanisms of such participation that would begin to be consolidated from school stages (e.g. political interest and democratic attitudes). In addition, even though the development of some outcomes is analyzed, they do not carry out comprehensive models that consider diverse students' experiences during compulsory secondary education, nor are the variables of interest treated as latent factors.

In this sense, the present dissertation seeks to complement these studies, contributing to the understanding of the precursors of political participation of English young people through the exploration of different school processes over time based on the structural equation modeling (SEM) framework. As detailed later in the analytical strategy section, this approach has numerous advantages over first-generation multivariate analysis techniques such as multiple regression. For example, using SEM gives greater flexibility to test a priori theoretical models against empirical data, explore complex relationships between multiple predictors and outcomes, incorporate hypothetical constructs that are not directly observable, and

estimate the measurement errors of the variables included because these are proxies subject to disturbances (Chin, 1998; Kline, 2011; Muthén & Muthén, 2009).

1.5 Research questions

Taking into account what was previously discussed, this dissertation analyzes the development of students' political interest and democratic attitudes during compulsory secondary education, and political participation during young adulthood in England. For this, a longitudinal approach based on the SEM framework was adopted to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the differences in participants' political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation according to their background characteristics?
- b) How do school experiences related to citizenship knowledge and praxis limit or promote participants' political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation?
- c) What are the mechanisms that could explain the differences in the development of participants' political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation?

Answering these questions from that approach, this dissertation addresses the current challenges related to the strengthening of English young people's political engagement and democratic attitudes. This will allow further discussion on citizenship education, a key aspect for the construction of a more fair society which has not been given much importance in recent years. In addition, it will be possible to complement existing research and evaluate the role of the school context to promote citizenship education for democracy, in order to provide recommendations for policy and practice.

2. Methods

2.1 Data and sample

The data used comes from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS), which investigates citizenship development between adolescence and young adulthood⁶. The CELS collected information at six different points in time from the beginning of secondary education, following the same cohort for just over a decade. This cohort was surveyed in 2003 (year 7, age 11-12); 2005 (year 9, age 13-14); 2007 (year 11, age 15-16); 2009 (year 13 or equivalent, age 17-18); 2011 (age 19-20); and 2014 (age 22-23).

Students from 112 maintained schools in England took part of the initial sample of the CELS, which was nationally representative considering region, number of students eligible for free school meals, and attainment in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Keating & Benton, 2013). However, especially in the final part of the study, progressive attrition caused the decrease of sample size⁷. While 58% of the original sample participated in wave 2 and 38% participated in wave 3, from wave 4 this amount was reduced to approximately 5% (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016).

For the analysis of students' political interest and democratic attitudes, this dissertation mainly uses information from the first three waves of the CELS, which comprise the compulsory stages of secondary education. In this case, the actual sample is made up of the students who participated in wave 1 (n = 18 583), wave 2

⁶ The specific objectives of the CELS were: 1) assess the short and long term effects of citizenship education on English young people; 2) analyze the processes related to different levels of citizenship development; and 3) provide suggestions to the delivery of citizenship education to improve its effectiveness (Keating et al., 2010).

⁷ After completing compulsory secondary education (year 11), a large number of young people usually leave school for start vocational training, continue their studies at another institution, or enter the workforce (Keating & Benton, 2013). For this reason, there was a high attrition rate in the CELS, especially since wave 4. Some studies have reported that this attrition produced distortions in participants' background characteristics with respect to the initial sample (e.g. gender, ethnicity, parental education, number of books at home), and therefore the estimates could be biased (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016; Keating & Janmaat, 2016). However, the database includes inverse probability weights that compensates for attrition on such characteristics, and makes the information of the different waves similar to that of the initial sample (wave 1). As detailed later in the analytical strategy section, in this dissertation these weights are used to estimate the results that answer the research questions.

(n = 13 643), and wave 3 (n = 11 042). For the analysis of participants' political participation, the actual sample also includes the information gathered in wave 5 (n = 1510), when participants were 19 or 20 years old. Therefore, the number of cases used in different analysis vary considering the variables of interest incorporated.

2.2 Measurements

2.2.1 Dependent variables

The outcomes are the students' self-report of political interest and democratic attitudes measured at the end of compulsory secondary education (wave 3 of the CELS), as well as participants' self-report of political participation measured after leaving school (wave 5 of the CELS). Political interest is a latent variable reflected in nine items about being concern about politics and aware of its importance in society (e.g. "Politics makes no difference to people my age", "I am very interested in politics", "I often discuss politics with other people"). Response options for each statement were *Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither agree nor disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly agree*. From the total number of items, two of them were eliminated due to very low factor loadings, and reverse scoring was done for five items. A latent factor was estimated using categorical confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), in which higher scores indicate a greater degree of political interest. The goodness of fit showed acceptable indexes (RMSEA: 0.069, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.064-0.074, CFI: 0.988, and TLI: 0.978).

Democratic attitudes is also a latent variable reflected in 13 items regarding the disposition towards equality and respect for human rights in society (e.g. "Britain does not have room to accept any more refugees", "Women should stay out of politics", "People should have the right to express racist views"). Each statement might be answered with the options *Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither agree nor disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly agree*. Reverse scoring was carried out for eight

items, while other four were eliminated because their factor loadings were very low. Categorical CFA was used to confirm the existence of a latent factor, in which higher scores represent a greater degree of democratic attitudes. The model fitted the data well (RMSEA: 0.067, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.064-0.071, CFI: 0.969, and TLI: 0.951).

Lastly, political participation comprises two aspects: expressive and electoral. On the one hand, expressive participation is a latent variable reflected in 10 items about direct involvement in citizen demonstrations such as protests and campaigns (e.g. "Taken part in a public demonstration or protest", "Contacted a local councillor or Member of Parliament", "Got together with other young people to campaign about an issue"). Participants might tick all the options that applied, and then the responses to each statement were transformed into a dummy variable (i.e. *No* or *Yes*). Four items were eliminated, three of them because their factor loadings were not statistically significant in the estimation of the final models, and the rest because its responses did not have enough variability. The existence of a latent factor was confirmed using categorical CFA, in which higher scores represent a greater degree of expressive political participation. The goodness of fit showed acceptable indexes (RMSEA: 0.052, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.037-0.067, CFI: 0.964, and TLI: 0.940). On the other hand, electoral participation is an observable variable about involvement in the United Kingdom general election of 2010. Of the total participants, 67.8% reported that they voted in that election, while the others did not.

2.2.2 Independent variables

The predictors can be divided into observable background characteristics and latent covariates. The participants' background characteristics considered were gender, ethnicity, mother's education, and number of books at home in wave 1 of the CELS⁸.

⁸ Although the information on participants' background characteristics of wave 1 was taken as a reference, if there were cases with missing values in these variables, they were replaced by the information collected in wave 2. If the problem of missing data remained, the information reported in wave 3 was taken into account. This procedure helped prevent the loss of cases when analyzing the data.

It is noticed that the sample has 50.3% girls and 49.7% boys. Most of them described themselves as white British (81.8%), while the rest considered themselves as Asian (8.3%), white European (3.6%), black (2.9%), mixed (2.5%), or from other ethnic group (0.9%). Regarding the education of students' mothers, 46.0% of them left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old, 30.2% did it after college or sixth form, and 23.8% studied at university. Finally, while 2.7% and 11.8% of students said that they did not have books at home or that they had a maximum of ten books, respectively, the proportion is similar in those who mentioned having between 11 and 50 books (23.8%), 51 and 100 books (23.0%), 101 and 200 books (18.3%), and more than 200 books (20.5%)⁹.

Latent covariates consist of the students' report about their perceptions or experiences with activities related to citizenship knowledge and praxis, which have been developed in the school context. Five of this type of predictors have been considered, referring to the students' perceptions about: 1) the organization of their school, 2) how much they are informed about national and international news, 3) the topics related to citizenship that they learned in school, 4) their participation in school activities related to citizen practices, and 5) their participation in school decision making. The measurements made in wave 2 of the CELS were taken into account for all these latent covariates, except for the students' perception of school organization, which was based on the information gathered in wave 1.

School organization is a latent variable reflected in four items about how fair and equitable school's goals and administration are (e.g. "The rules in my school are fair", "My school is organised more for the benefit of the teachers than the students", "My school focuses on the needs of clever students above those of other students"). Response options for each statement were *Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither agree nor disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly agree*. Reverse scoring was done for three

⁹ Since no information on household income or parental occupation was collected, a socio-economic index could not be constructed. Although this is a limitation, mother's education and number of books at home have been considered as two important indicators of participants' socio-economic status. Therefore, by including these variables in the analysis, it is possible to have an approximation on the effect of socio-economic background.

items. A latent factor was estimated using categorical CFA, in which higher scores indicate a greater degree of school organization. The goodness of fit showed adequate indexes (RMSEA: 0.083, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.073-0.093, CFI: 0.982, and TLI: 0.945).

Another latent covariate refers to how much students are informed about national and international news, which was reflected in six items (e.g. "Read a national newspaper", "Read stories in the newspaper about what is happening in other countries", "Watch the news on television"). Each statement might be answered with the options *Never*, *Rarely / Once a month*, *Sometimes / Once a week*, and *Often / Most days*. Categorical CFA was used to confirm the existence of a latent factor, in which higher scores represent a greater degree of being informed about the news. The model fitted the data well (RMSEA: 0.072, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.067-0.077, CFI: 0.993, and TLI: 0.986).

Students were also asked about the topics related to citizenship that they learned in school over the last year in any lessons. This latent variable was reflected in 10 items (e.g. "Rights and responsibilities", "Different cultures and ethnic groups", "The global community and international organisations"), and response options for each statement were *No*, *Yes*, and *Don't know*. The cases that presented this last category were not taken into account for the analysis. A latent factor was estimated using categorical CFA, in which higher scores indicate a greater degree of citizenship topics learned in school. The goodness of fit showed optimal indexes (RMSEA: 0.035, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.032-0.037, CFI: 0.973, and TLI: 0.964).

Participation in school activities is also a latent variable reflected in seven items regarding the involvement of students in citizen practices promoted by their school during the last year (e.g. "Electing school / class council members", "Helping in the local community", "Working on the school newspaper / magazine"). Participants might tick all the options that applied, so then the answers to each statement were transformed into a binary variable (i.e. *No* or *Yes*). One item was eliminated because its factor loading was very low. The existence of a latent factor was confirmed using categorical CFA, in which higher scores represent a greater degree of participation

in school activities. The model fitted the data well (RMSEA: 0.017, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.011-0.023, CFI: 0.959, and TLI: 0.932).

Finally, participation in school decision making comprises the involvement of students in agreements about the organization and general practices of their school. This latent variable was reflected in six items (e.g. "Students have a say in how school is organised and run", "Students are consulted about the development of school rules and policies", "Students discuss in class how to work during lessons"). Response options for each statement were *Not at all*, *Not much*, *Sometimes*, *Quite a bit*, and *A lot*. A latent factor was estimated using CFA, in which higher scores indicate a greater degree of participation in school decision making. The goodness of fit showed acceptable indexes (RMSEA: 0.068, RMSEA 90% CI: 0.063-0.074, CFI: 0.977, and TLI: 0.950).

2.3 Analytical strategy

The analytical strategy adopted in this dissertation is a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach with sequential mediation analysis. On the one hand, SEM is a multivariate analysis technique that allows to estimate complex relationships between variables, ensuring the quality of measurements, exploring structural patterns, and explaining the greatest amount of variance of the estimated models. Its main foundation lies in the theory and is very flexible in the use of different types of variables, which can be observable (i.e. directly measured manifest data) or latent (i.e. indirectly measured hypothetical constructs) (Chin, 1998; Kline, 2011; Muthén & Muthén, 2009). On the other hand, in the context of regression analysis, mediation is a technique that allows the identification of underlying mechanisms (i.e. indirect effects) in the relationship between predictors and outcomes (i.e. direct effects) (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Mackinnon & Dwyer, 1993). When the data are collected longitudinally and the variables of interest follow a temporal logic, it is possible to estimate a sequential mediation (Cain, Zhang & Bergeman, 2018).

This methodological approach allows examining the observable and latent variables related to the differences in students' political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation, as well as the mechanisms that could explain that variability. After making an initial exploration of the variables of interest, the main two stages of SEM are considered. Firstly, the measurement models are estimated to confirm the existence of valid and reliable latent factors, taking into account the measurement errors of latent variables and their indicators. Then, these results are incorporated into the estimation of the structural models to analyze the relationship between predictors and outcomes.

In the measurement models, the factor structures of the different latent constructs (i.e. outcomes and latent covariates) are confirmed¹⁰. Categorical CFA is done to estimate the factor loadings and other parameters of the models. To evaluate their fit to the data, it is expected that the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are greater than 0.95, and that the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less than 0.06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

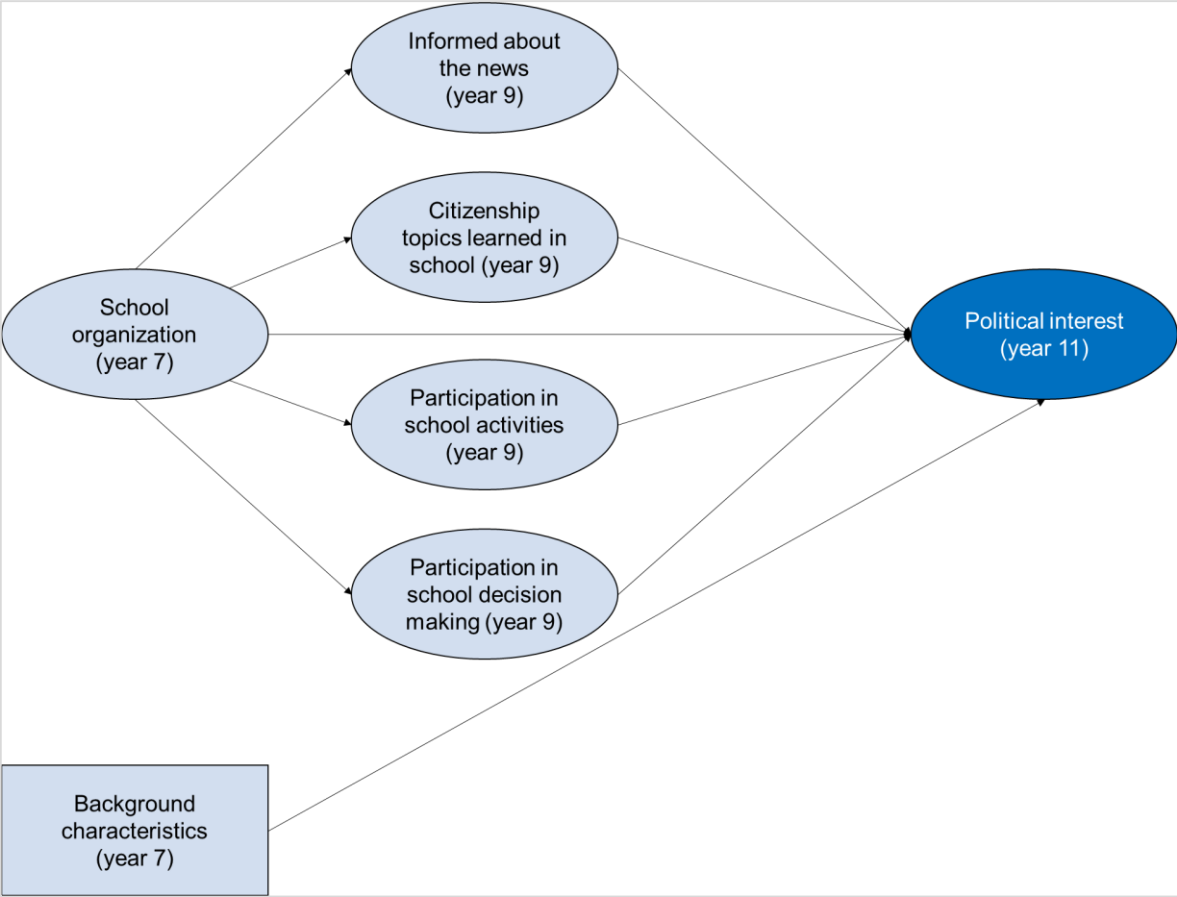
Taking into account the measurement models, the structural models are run. These are predictive models of participants' political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation that adopt the SEM framework, considering observable and latent covariates. Two sets of models are specified: 1) partial models, which examine the outcomes according to observable background characteristics¹¹; and 2) final models, which add latent covariates to analyze their relationship with the outcomes, and the mechanisms that could explain their variability. Between the partial and the final models, a forward selection strategy is followed, including the latent covariates and the sequential mediation analysis with statistically significant effects gradually.

¹⁰ Previously, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done with a random sample of 50% of cases from the database, and taking into account these results categorical CFA was made with the other half, in order to cross-validate the findings and avoid confirmation bias (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2011).

¹¹ The reference categories are female (gender), white British (ethnicity), and left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old (mother's education).

Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 show the final models at a theoretical level, which will be empirically estimated to answer the research questions¹².

Figure 2.1. Theoretical model of the mechanisms related to the development of students' political interest



¹² Before the incorporation of the mediation analyzes to the final models, the steps recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) were followed. It was shown that: 1) the causal variable is significantly associated with the outcome, 2) the causal variable is significantly associated with the mediator, 3) the mediator is significantly associated with the outcome controlling by the causal variable, and 4) the complete effect of the causal variable on the outcome is transferred by the mediator. If all these steps are fulfilled, there is a full mediation, but if the last step is not, there is a partial mediation.

Figure 2.2. Theoretical model of the mechanisms related to the development of students' democratic attitudes

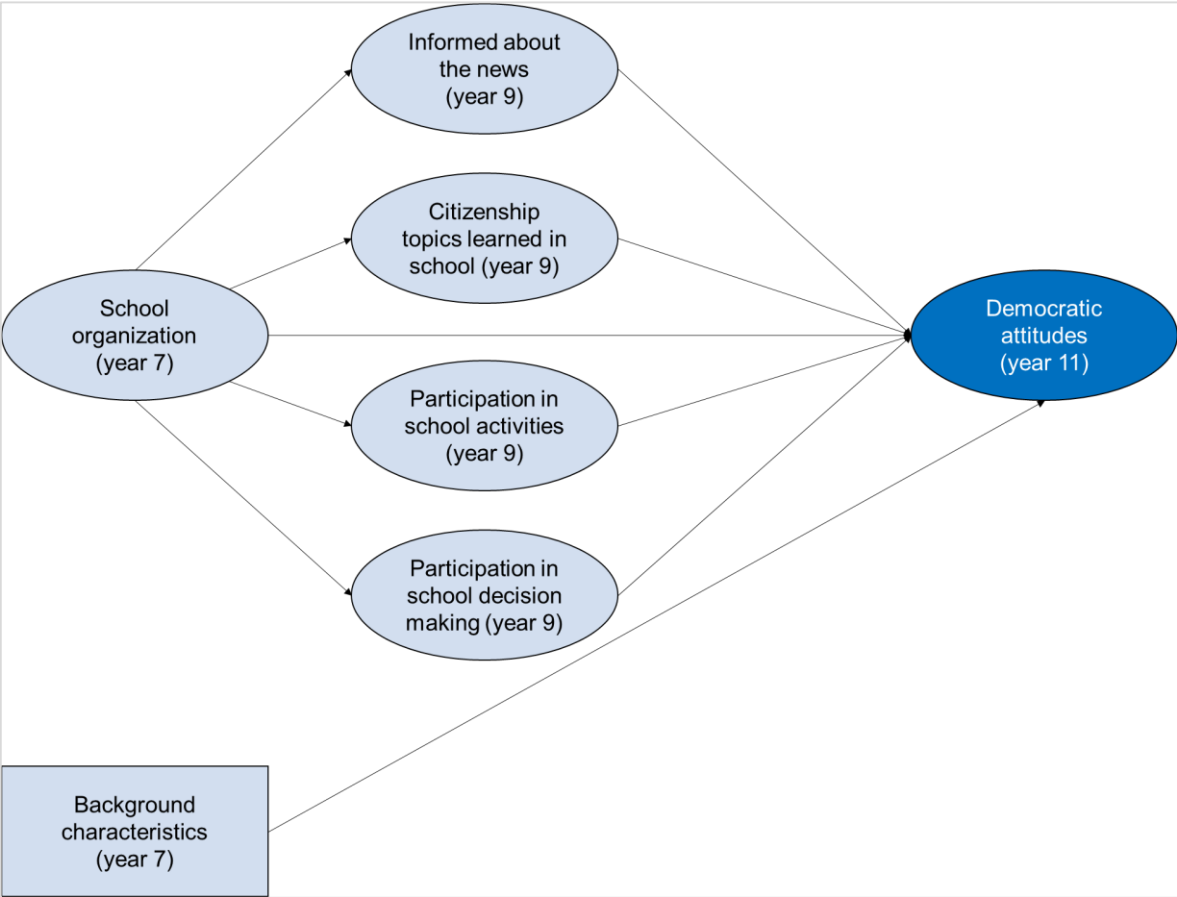


Figure 2.3. Theoretical model of the mechanisms related to the development of participants' expressive political participation

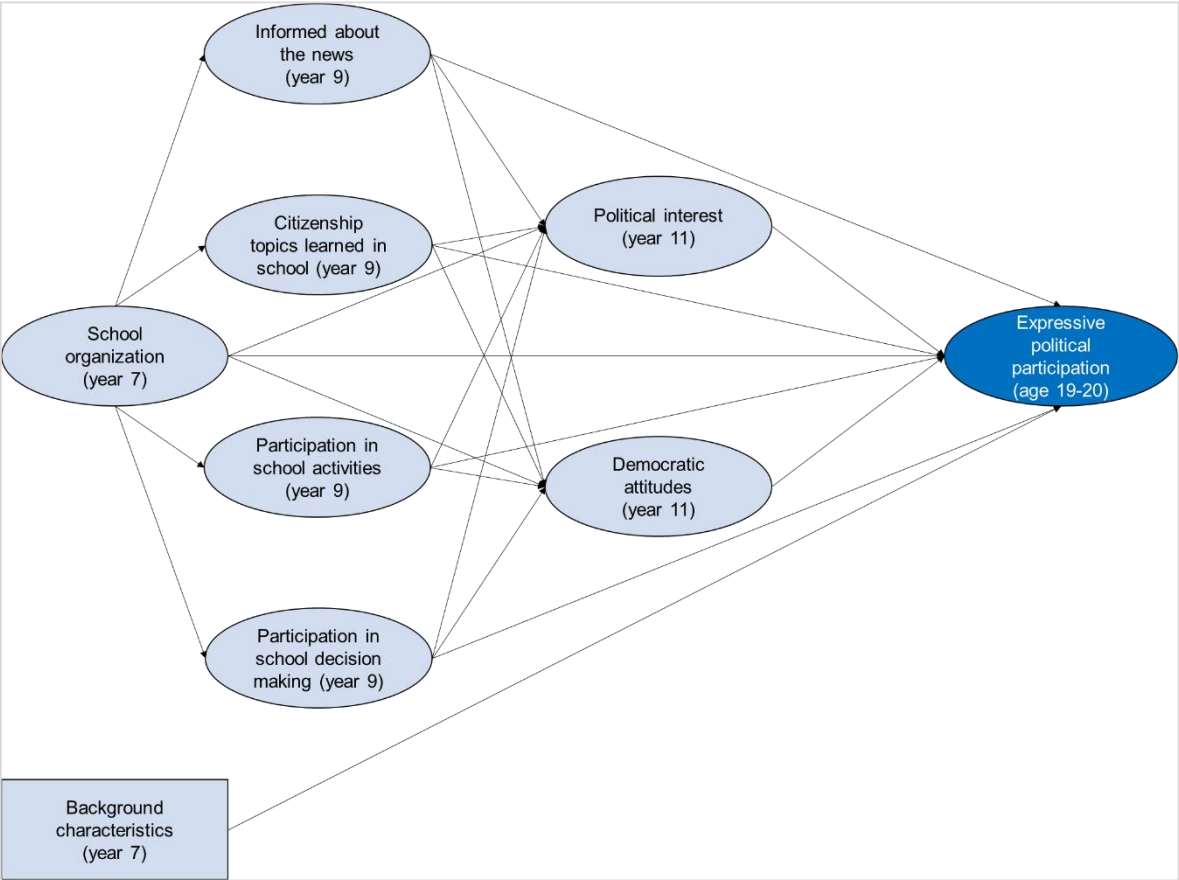
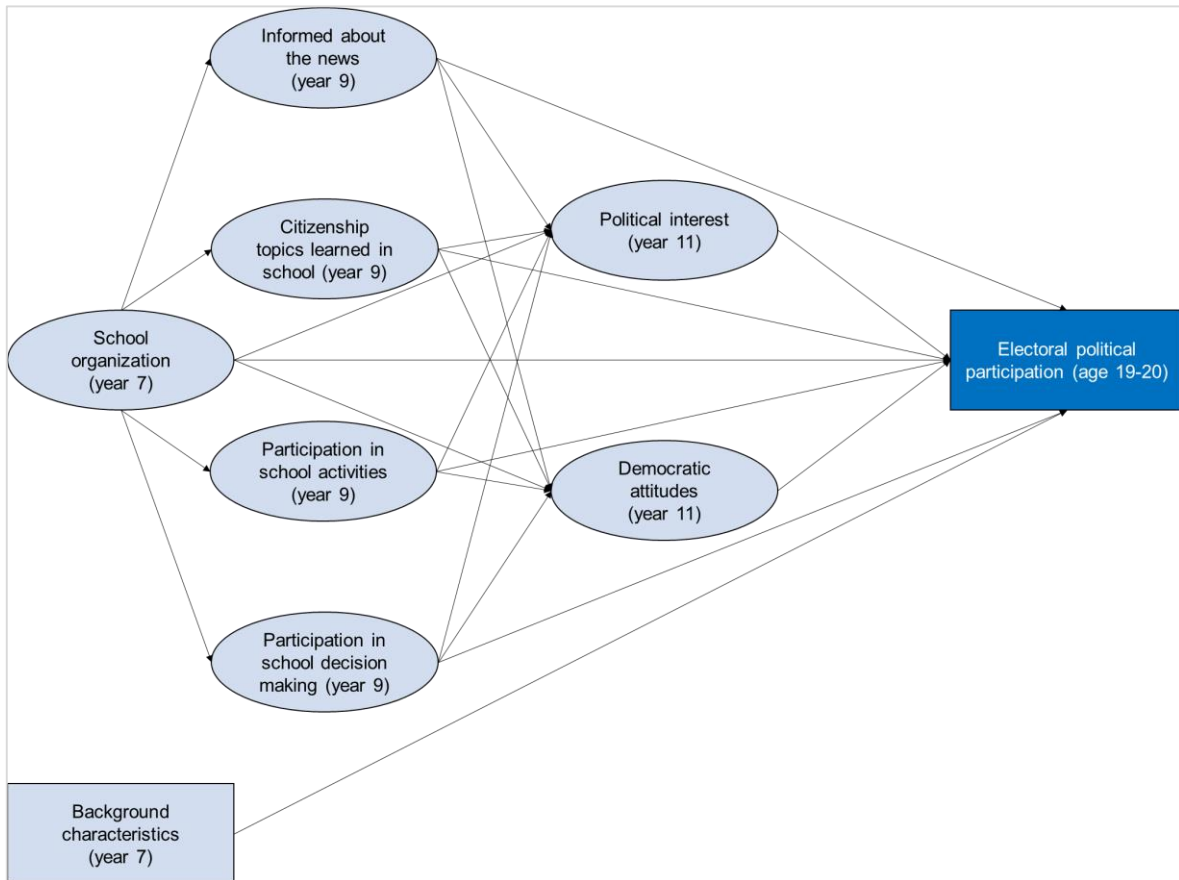


Figure 2.4. Theoretical model of the mechanisms related to the development of participants' electoral political participation



In the case of continuous outcomes (i.e. political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation), linear models are estimated and standardized regression coefficients are reported. Thus, the interpretation of each effect is reflected in standard deviations of the outcome when there is a change of a unit or category in a predictor, keeping the other covariates constant. In the only case that a binary outcome is included (i.e. electoral political participation), probit models are estimated and non-standardized regression coefficients are reported, as well as their marginal effects at the means (Muthén & Muthén, 2009). The latter allow to interpret the effect on the outcome as a change in event probability when there is a variation of a unit or category in a predictor, setting the values of the other covariates to their means within the sample.

The aforementioned fit indexes (i.e. CFI, TLI, and RMSEA) are used to evaluate the goodness of fit of these models to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011), as well as the coefficient of determination R^2 is used to evaluate their explanatory power following the Cohen's criteria (1988). However, a pseudo R^2 is utilized in the case of the models of electoral political participation since it is a binary outcome (Long & Freese, 2006)¹³. In addition, inverse probability weights are incorporated in this stage of the analysis to adjust the estimates¹⁴.

¹³ There are different estimates of pseudo R^2 in the case of models with a binary outcome. For example, the statistical software Mplus used in this dissertation adopts the estimate of McKelvey and Zavoina (Muthén & Muthén, 2009). It is recommended to be cautious when interpreting the values of the pseudo R^2 , since it is not exactly the same as the coefficient of determination of linear models.

¹⁴ Data cleaning, and exploratory and descriptive analysis are done in the statistical software SPSS version 25 (IBM Corporation, 2017). The EFA, the CFA, and the SEM with sequential mediation analysis are made in the statistical software Mplus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). In the different models weighted least square mean and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator is used due to the inclusion of categorical data, and full information maximum likelihood (FIML) method is used for the treatment of missing data.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics

Before running the models based on structural equation modeling (SEM), the different outcomes are examined descriptively. Firstly, participants' answers to the items of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation are analyzed¹⁵. Subsequently, the distributions of the factor scores¹⁶ of these outcomes are examined according to the participants' background characteristics. These invariant characteristics were also tabulated with the indicator of electoral political participation (i.e. vote in the United Kingdom general election of 2010), whose results can be found in Appendix C.

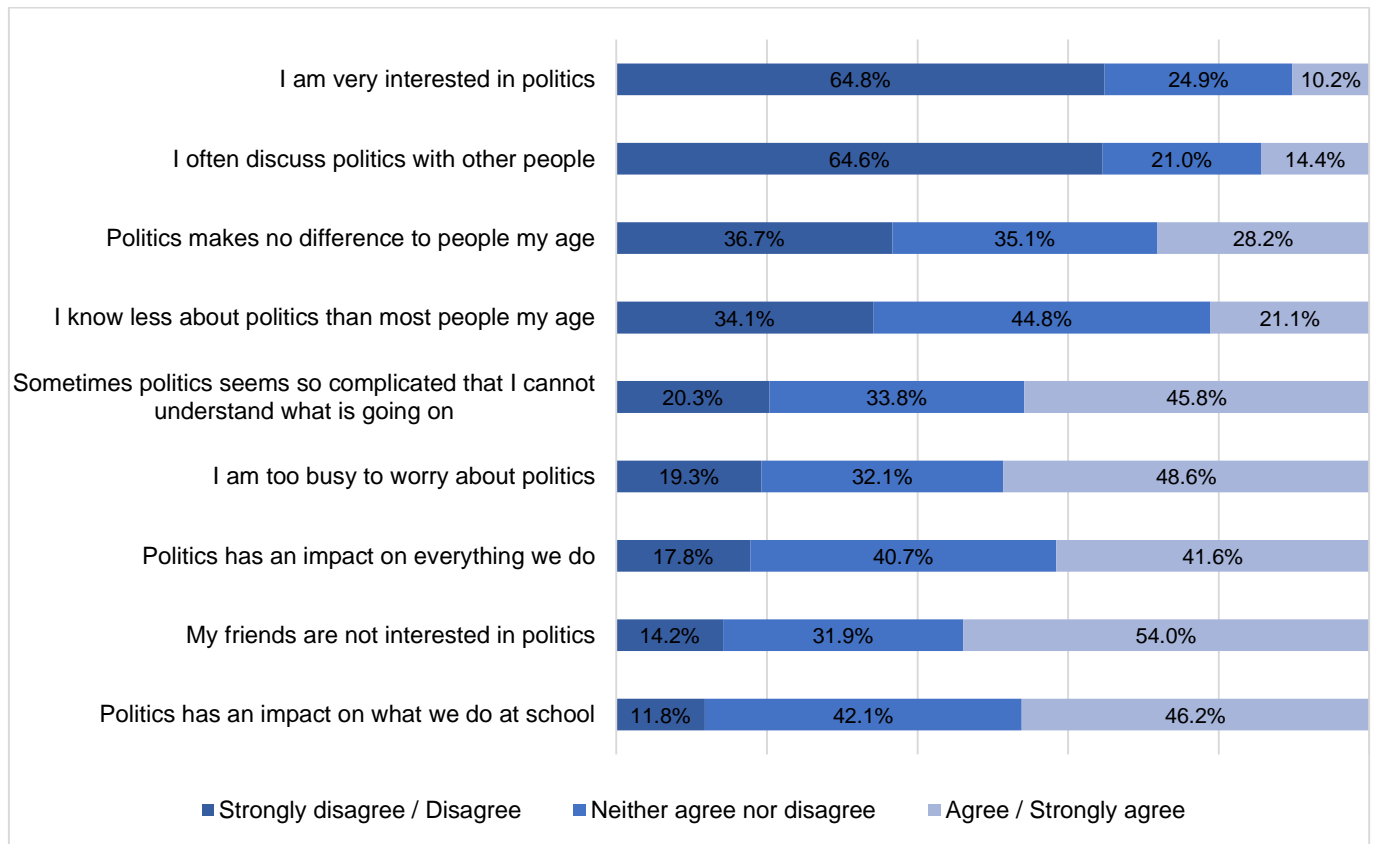
Figure 3.1 shows the indicators of students' political interest at the end of compulsory secondary education. Almost two thirds of the students are not interested in politics (64.8%) and do not usually discuss politics with other people (64.6%). This trend coincides with the fact that the majority of students state that their friends are not interested in politics (54.0%). It also draws attention that almost half of students affirm that they are too busy to worry about politics (48.6%) and that sometimes they cannot understand politics because it seems very complicated (45.8%).

However, at least 4 out of 10 students consider that politics has an impact on what they do at school (46.2%) or in general on everything they do (41.6%). Likewise, just over a third of the students consider that politics makes any difference to people of their age (36.7%) or that they do not know less about politics than most people of the same age group (34.1%). It is important to note that there is a considerable number of students (at least 3 out of 10) who do not have a clear opinion on these aspects.

¹⁵ For the items of political interest and democratic attitudes, extreme categories of the response options are collapsed. The estimates of these scales disaggregated by each response option are presented in Appendix A.

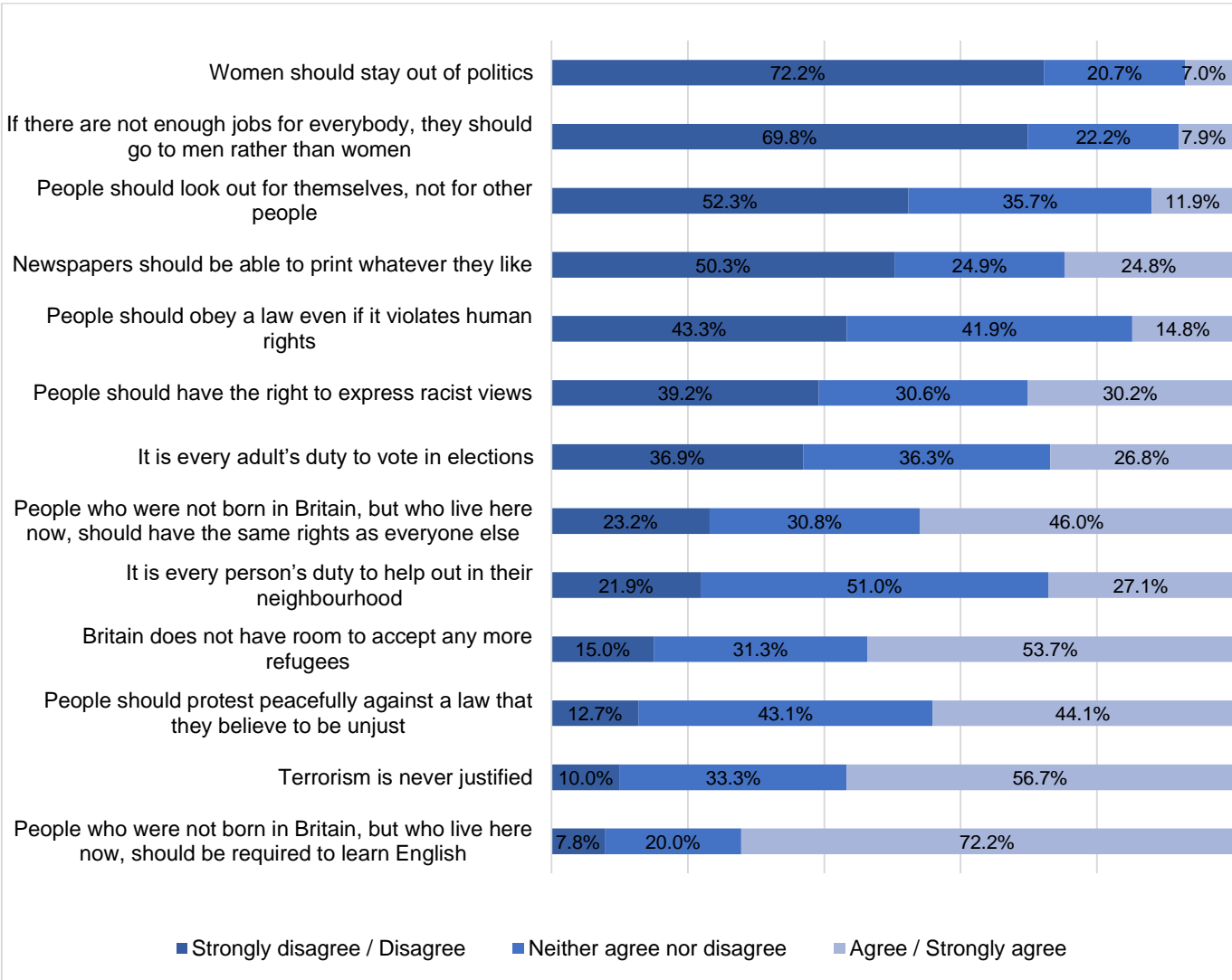
¹⁶ In the context of factor analysis, a factor score is the estimation of a continuous measure that reflects participants' relative standing on a latent factor. For full estimates related to the outcomes' factor scores, see Appendix B.

Figure 3.1. Percentage of agreement to each item of political interest by students at the end of compulsory secondary education



The indicators of students' democratic attitudes during the last year of compulsory secondary education are presented in Figure 3.2. There is a marked tendency towards equal opportunities between men and women. For example, more than two thirds of students disagree with the idea that women should stay out of politics (72.2%) and that men should have preference over women in eventual job cuts (69.8%).

Figure 3.2. Percentage of agreement to each item of democratic attitudes by students at the end of compulsory secondary education



Students' opinion is more divided on other aspects. Most of them believe that terrorism is never justified (56.7%) and that people should not look out only for themselves (52.3%). However, less than half disagree with the idea that people should obey a law even if it violates human rights (43.3%) or support that they should protest peacefully against an unjust law (44.1%). It is also remarkable that at least a quarter of the students consider that newspapers should be able to print whatever they like (24.8%) or that people should have the right to express racist views (30.2%);

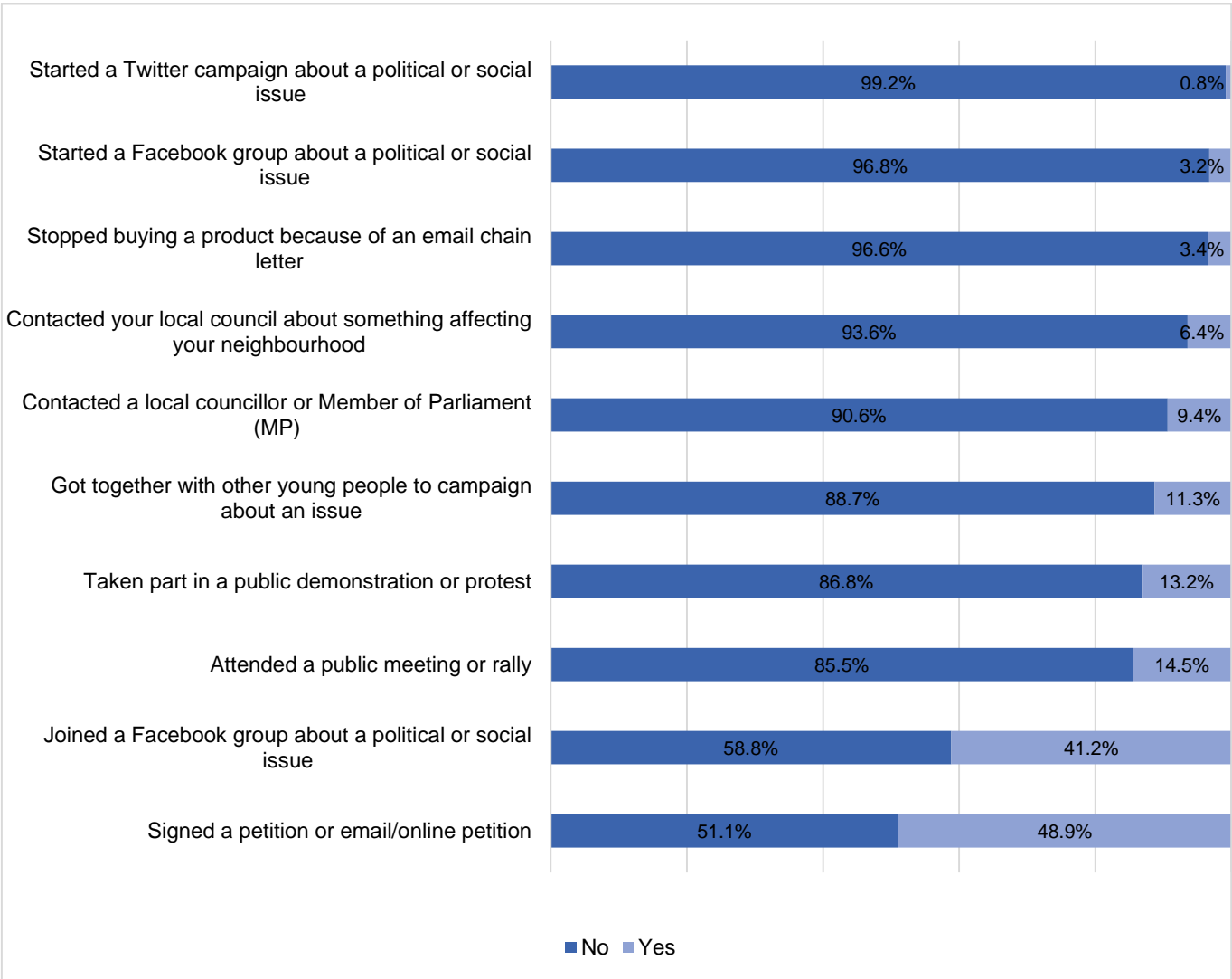
and that less than 3 out of 10 students believe that it is every adult's duty to vote in elections (26.8%) or to help out in their neighbourhood (27.1%). In almost all of these aspects, about a third of the students do not clearly agree or disagree.

Finally, the students' position on foreigners draws attention. For example, 7 out of 10 students consider that people who were not born in Britain, but live there, should be required to learn English (72.2%); while less than half think that those people should have the same rights as everyone else (46.0%). In addition, the majority of students believe that Britain does not have room to accept any more refugees (53.7%). As in previous cases, there is a considerable percentage of students who do not have a definitive posture on these aspects.

Concerning expressive political participation when participants were 19 or 20 years old, the indicators of this scale are shown in Figure 3.3. In all cases, it can be seen that more than half of young adults have not participated in the activities that reflect the construct. By a wide difference, the actions in which they have been most involved are signing any type of petition (48.9%) and joining a Facebook group about a political or social issue (41.2%).

However, less than a fifth of the participants report that they have attended a public meeting or rally (14.5%), or have got together with other young people to campaign about an issue (11.3%). These figures decrease when contacting the authorities, either specifically to a local councillor or a Member of Parliament (9.4%), or in general to their local council as an institution due to something that affected their neighbourhood (6.4%). Extremely few participants affirm that they have stopped buying a product because of an email chain letter (3.4%), or have used social media options such as Facebook group (3.2%) or Twitter campaign (0.8%) related to some political or social issue.

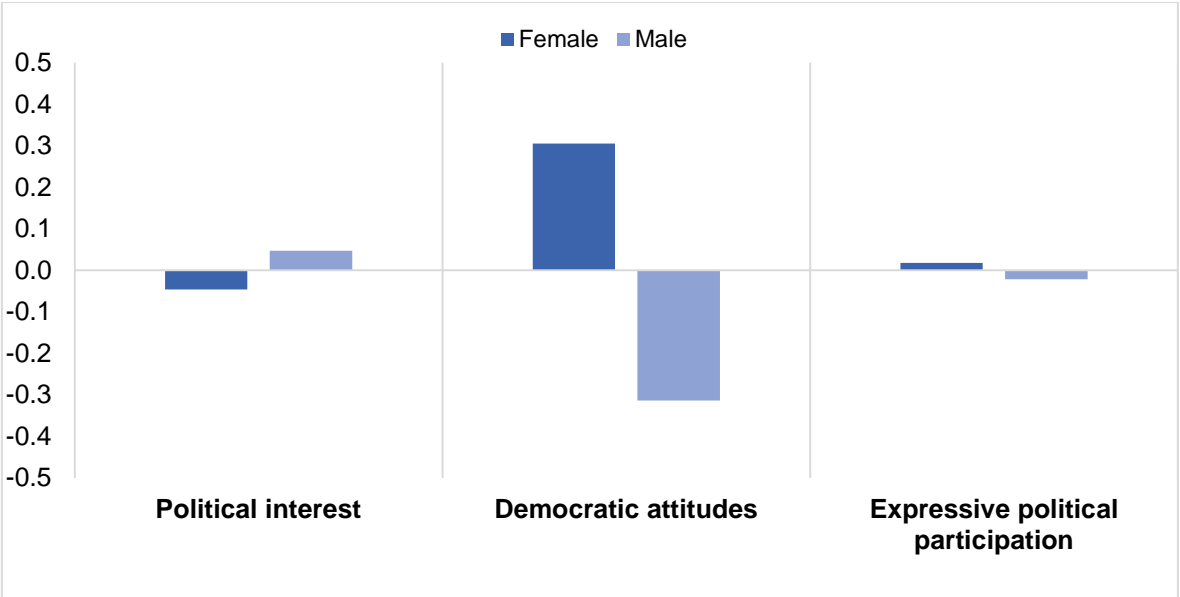
Figure 3.3. Percentage of occurrence of each item of expressive political participation by participants at age 19 or 20



After analyzing the responses to the items of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation, these are used to estimate factor scores, in which higher measures indicate a greater presence of each construct. The factor scores are standardized in such a way that the population mean is 0 with a standard deviation of 1. Next, these scores are analyzed according to the participants' background characteristics.

There are statistically significant differences between the scores of females and males, but only in political interest and democratic attitudes (see Figure 3.4). On average, male students have higher scores of political interest, while female students have higher levels of democratic attitudes. In addition, it is seen that the differences are broader in the latter case, exceeding half of a standard deviation between both groups. However, there are no major differences between young men and women in terms of expressive political participation.

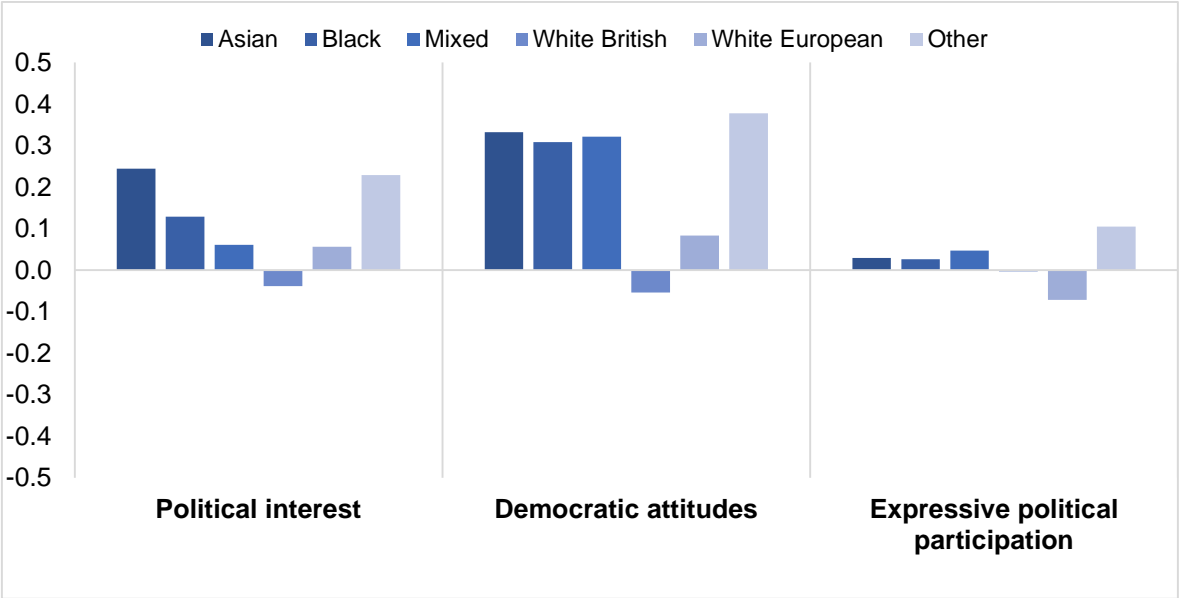
Figure 3.4. Factor scores of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation, according to gender



Some statistically significant differences are also found in the constructs measured at the end of high school, according to the ethnic group with which the students identified themselves (see Figure 3.5). Specifically, white British students have the lowest scores in political interest and democratic attitudes compared to other ethnic groups, except for those who describe themselves as white European. Although this last group also seems to have lower scores in comparison to other ethnic groups, it cannot be said that these differences are statistically significant. Again, non-

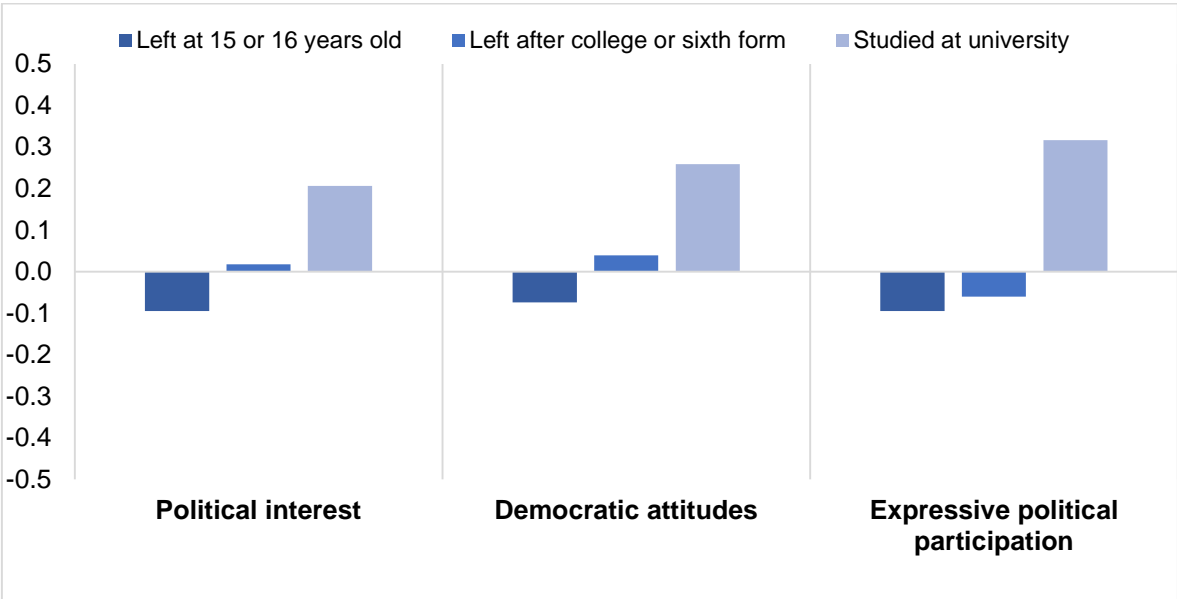
statistically significant differences characterize young adults' expressive political participation depending on ethnicity.

Figure 3.5. Factor scores of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation, according to ethnicity



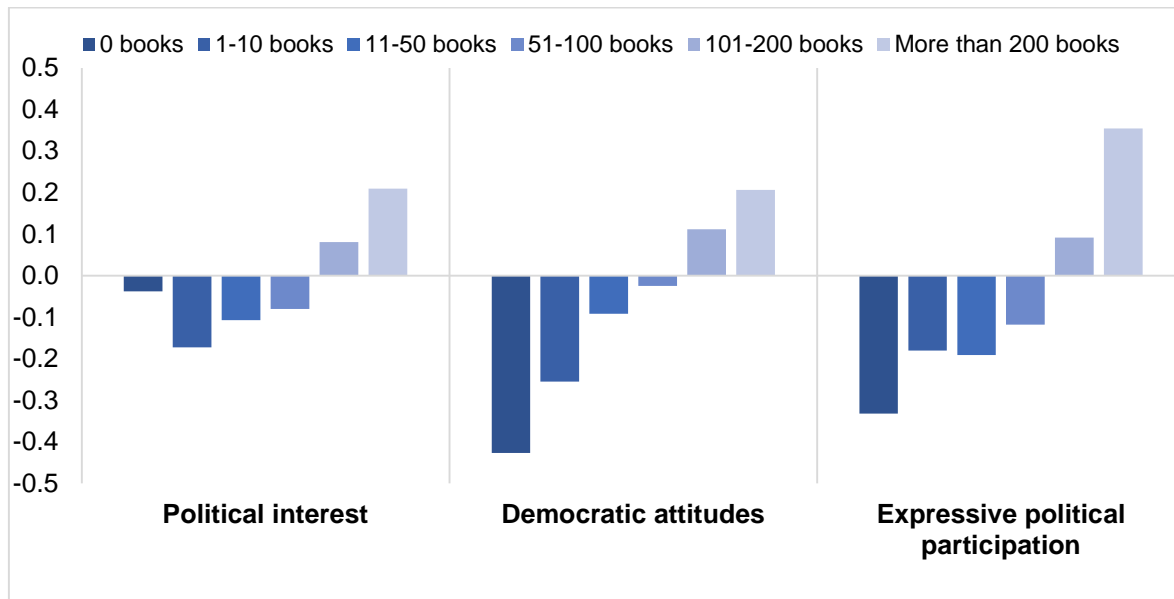
Regarding the mother's education, almost the same pattern is observed in the scores of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation (see Figure 3.6). Participants whose mothers have more years of education tend to obtain higher scores in the three constructs. In the case of political interest and democratic attitudes, the differences between the scores of all the categories considered are statistically significant; while for expressive political participation that remains only between the category that represents a higher mother's education level and the other two.

Figure 3.6. Factor scores of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation, according to mother's education



There is a similar trend when comparing the scores of the three constructs according to the number of books that participants have at home (see Figure 3.7). In general terms, the possession of more books at home is usually associated with higher political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation. For example, students who report having more than 200 books at home have the highest scores in political interest and democratic attitudes with statistically significant differences from those who have fewer books at home. In the case of expressive political participation, such difference is presented with participants who have 100 or less books at home. These differences are more pronounced in the scales of democratic attitudes and expressive political participation, especially when considering the score gap between participants who have more books at home and those who have less or none.

Figure 3.7. Factor scores of political interest, democratic attitudes, and expressive political participation, according to number of books at home



3.2 Models based on SEM with sequential mediation analysis

Once an initial mapping of the outcomes has been carried out, the models based on the SEM approach to analyze their main associated factors, as well as their possible explanatory mechanisms over time, are presented below. Due to organizational reasons that facilitate reading, only the estimation of the structural models is presented in tables and figures. However, it should be remembered that the SEM approach used in this dissertation also includes the measurement models. Appendix D can be consulted to see the SEM diagrams of the complete final models.

3.2.1 Predictors and mechanisms of political interest

The standardized effects of the different predictors on students' political interest are showed in Table 3.1. In model 1, only observable variables related to the participants' background characteristics are included as predictors. In general, the findings confirm the trends described in the previous section. Keeping the other

covariates constant, on average male students have a fifth of a standard deviation higher political interest than female students.

Regarding ethnicity, on average the students who identified themselves as Asian have 0.3 standard deviations more political interest than the white British students, while that figure is 0.16 and 0.15 in the case of black and mixed students, respectively. Students who describe themselves as white European and those of other ethnic groups do not have statistically significant differences in their scores of political interest compared to the white British students, when all other factors remain constant.

Controlling by the other covariates, it is seen that students whose mothers left education after college or sixth form have 0.06 standard deviations more political interest compared to having left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old. This difference expands to 0.23 standard deviations in favor of students whose mothers studied at university. There is also a direct association with the number of books at home, because on average students get 0.18 standard deviations higher political interest score scores due to a gradual increase in that predictor.

This partial model that includes only the participants' background characteristics has an adequate goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.046, CFI: 0.973, and TLI: 0.966). However, it only explains about 6% of the variability in political interest scores, which is a small explanatory power.

In model 2 latent covariates are incorporated, which refer to students' perceptions or experiences with citizenship activities developed in school, keeping all the observable predictors described in model 1 constant. For instance, students who have been involved more in school activities related to citizen practices tend to have higher political interest at the end of high school. On average, for each extra point in the scale of participation in this type of activities during year 9, there is a gain of 0.1 standard deviations in political interest scores in year 11.

Table 3.1. Effects of observable and latent predictors on students' political interest and democratic attitudes

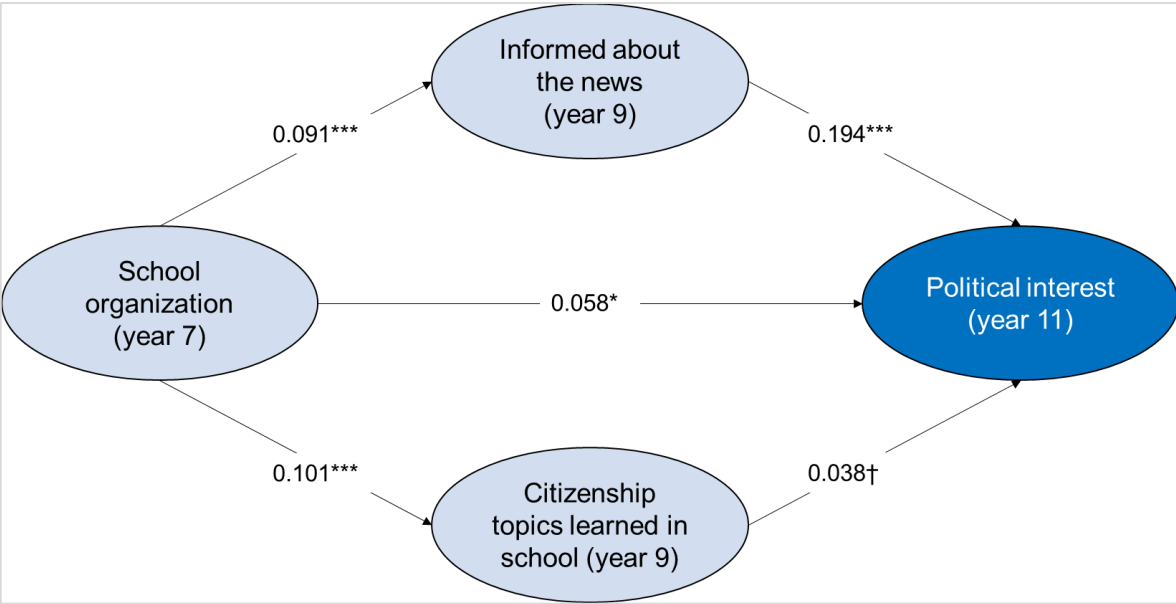
| | Political interest | | Democratic attitudes | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| Male | 0.200*** (0.025) | 0.200*** (0.025) | -0.847*** (0.022) | -0.850*** (0.022) |
| Asian | 0.301*** (0.048) | 0.301*** (0.048) | 0.650*** (0.047) | 0.647*** (0.047) |
| Black | 0.164* (0.078) | 0.165* (0.078) | 0.525*** (0.077) | 0.521*** (0.077) |
| Mixed | 0.145† (0.078) | 0.146† (0.078) | 0.484*** (0.084) | 0.482*** (0.084) |
| White European | 0.062 (0.070) | 0.062 (0.070) | 0.127† (0.072) | 0.126† (0.072) |
| Other ethnic group | 0.280 (0.175) | 0.280 (0.175) | 0.715*** (0.191) | 0.710*** (0.191) |
| Mother left education after college or sixth form | 0.059* (0.029) | 0.059* (0.029) | 0.090** (0.030) | 0.090** (0.030) |
| Mother studied at university | 0.227*** (0.033) | 0.227*** (0.033) | 0.305*** (0.030) | 0.305*** (0.034) |
| Books at home | 0.175*** (0.012) | 0.176*** (0.012) | 0.175*** (0.013) | 0.176*** (0.013) |
| School organization | | 0.058* (0.023) | | 0.172*** (0.028) |
| Informed about the news | | 0.194*** (0.016) | | -0.054* (0.022) |
| Participation in school activities | | 0.103** (0.039) | | 0.136** (0.044) |
| Citizenship topics learned in school | | 0.038† (0.021) | | |
| Participation in school decision making | | | | 0.052* (0.023) |
| Observations | 8173 | 8603 | 8363 | 8644 |
| R ² | 0.061 | 0.123 | 0.271 | 0.334 |
| CFI | 0.973 | 0.968 | 0.882 | 0.926 |
| TLI | 0.966 | 0.966 | 0.855 | 0.920 |
| RMSEA | 0.046 | 0.020 | 0.061 | 0.030 |

Standardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, †p < 0.1.

The coefficients of the other latent covariates presented in Table 3.1 are part of the sequential mediation analysis. This is shown in more detail in Figure 3.8. The fact that students perceived a better organization of their school during year 7 is directly related to how much they are informed about national and international news in year 9, and with the amount of topics related to citizenship learning in school during the same year. These last two aspects are also positively associated with their political interest scores in year 11 (around 0.19 and 0.04 standard deviations, respectively).

Figure 3.8. Direct and indirect effects of some latent predictors on students' political interest



Standardized coefficients.
 ***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, †p < 0.1.

This implies that the indirect effect of an adequate school organization on the score of political interest, which is produced by being informed about the news ($0.091 \times 0.194 = 0.018$, $p < 0.001$) and learning different citizenship topics at school ($0.101 \times 0.038 = 0.004$, $p < 0.1$), is positive. Therefore, the total effect ($0.058 + 0.022 = 0.080$, $p < 0.01$) that the students' perception of school organization already had on their

political interest over time is reflected in how much they were informed about local and global news, and in the citizenship topics that they learned in different lessons towards the middle of their compulsory secondary education. However, this is only a partial mediation, since there is still a statistically significant direct effect of almost 0.06 standard deviations in the score of political interest for each extra point in the scale of school organization.

Although there is a latent covariate that is not significantly related to the outcome (i.e. participation in school decision making), the final model has an optimal goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.020, CFI: 0.968, and TLI: 0.966). Additionally, it has a moderate explanatory power, since it explains about 12% of the differences in students' political interest scores.

3.2.2 Predictors and mechanisms of democratic attitudes

So far the results have revealed the variables that are significantly related to political interest, another outcome examined at the end of compulsory secondary education is students' democratic attitudes. Table 3.1 shows the standardized effects of the predictors on this latent construct. Observable background characteristics are specified in model 1. Unlike what happens with political interest, in this case female students have, on average, around 0.85 standard deviations more democratic attitudes than male students. This is the widest difference on this construct considering the effects of its other predictors.

Following the tendency explained in the descriptive statistics section, it is noted that students of all ethnic groups have higher scores in democratic attitudes compared to those who identify themselves as white British. These statistically significant differences favor mostly Asian and black students, and those who belong to another ethnic group, since they have more than half a standard deviation of advantage. In addition, students who describe themselves as mixed and white European have,

respectively, 0.48 and 0.13 standard deviations higher democratic attitudes than white British students.

As in the case of political interest, when controlling by the other covariates, it is seen that higher scores in democratic attitudes are associated with a higher education of students' mothers. Thus, students whose mothers left education after college or sixth form have an average gain of 0.09 standard deviations in that construct compared to having left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old. This difference is broader when considering the scores of students whose mothers studied at university, who have a profit of almost a third of a standard deviation. It can also be said that given a gradual increase in the number of books at home, students get on average 0.18 standard deviations higher democratic attitudes scores.

This partial model has a deficient goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.061, CFI: 0.882, and TLI: 0.855). Although it explains around 27% of the variability in democratic attitudes scores, which is a large explanatory power, adjustments are required to improve its fit to the data.

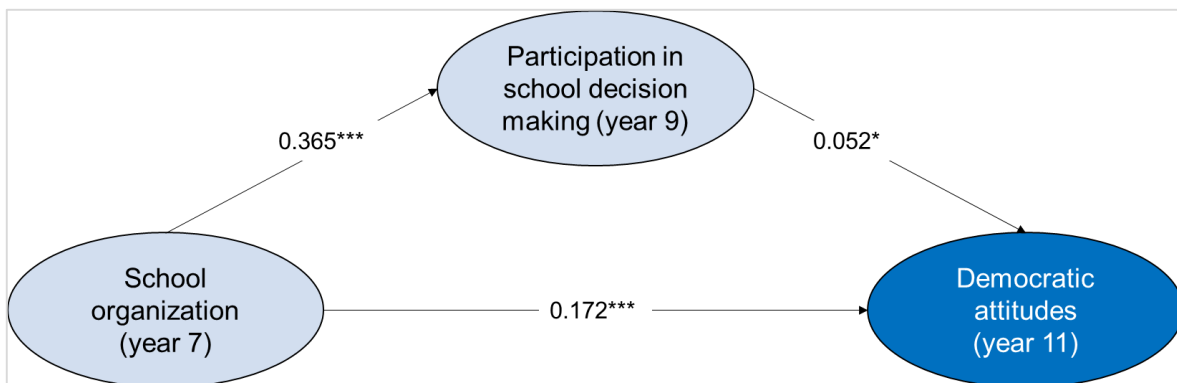
Controlling by all the observable predictors specified in model 1, latent covariates about students' perceptions or experiences with citizenship activities promoted by their school are included in model 2. For example, for each extra point in the scale of participation in school activities related to citizen practices during year 9, students get on average 0.14 standard deviations more in their democratic attitudes scores at the end of high school. However, an unexpected result is reflected in the negative coefficient of the scale of being informed about the news in year 9. Specifically, one more point in this scale represents approximately 0.05 standard deviations lower scores for democratic attitudes in year 11.

The sequential mediation analysis (see Figure 3.9) is made up of the effects of the other latent covariates showed in Table 3.1. If students believed that their school has a greater degree of organization during year 7, they tend to participate more in the decision-making process within the school context in year 9. This is later reflected in

a positive association of around 0.05 standard deviations with their democratic attitudes scores in year 11.

This implies that the indirect effect of a good school organization on the score of democratic attitudes, which is produced by the participation in school decision making (0.365 x 0.052 = 0.019, $p < 0.05$), is positive. Therefore, the total effect (0.172 + 0.019 = 0.191, $p < 0.001$) that the students' perception of school organization already had on their democratic attitudes over time goes through the degree of participation in school decision making towards the middle of their compulsory secondary education. This is also a partial mediation, because for each extra point in the scale of school organization there is still a statistically significant direct effect of almost 0.17 standard deviations in the score of democratic attitudes.

Figure 3.9. Direct and indirect effects of some latent predictors on students' democratic attitudes



Standardized coefficients.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.1$.

Although there is no significant effect of one of the latent covariates on the outcome (i.e. citizenship topics learned in school), the final model has a better goodness of fit than the partial model (RMSEA: 0.030, CFI: 0.926, and TLI: 0.920). However, these indexes have not yet reached their optimum level. In addition, the final model allows

explaining about 33% of the variability in students' democratic attitudes scores, which is a large explanatory power.

3.2.3 Predictors and mechanisms of expressive political participation

After analyzing the predictors and mechanisms of political interest and democratic attitudes at the end of high school, those associated with expressive political participation during young adulthood are now examined. The standardized effects of the predictors on this last outcome are presented in Table 3.2. In model 1, it is seen that there are no statistically significant differences in this construct according to participants' gender and ethnicity¹⁷, but there are when considering mother's education and books at home. Keeping the other covariates constant, participants whose mothers studied at university have just over a third of a standard deviation higher expressive political participation compared to having left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old. This figure is almost a quarter of a standard deviation according to a gradual increase in the number of books at home.

This partial model that takes into account only the participants' background characteristics has an adequate goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.020, CFI: 0.965, and TLI: 0.956). Additionally, it has a moderate explanatory power, since it explains around 11% of the differences in the expressive political participation scores.

In model 2 latent covariates about participants' perceptions or experiences with citizenship activities developed in school, as well as their scores of political interest and democratic attitudes, are included. When all the observable predictors specified in model 1 remain constant, only the scales of political interest and democratic attitudes have a statistically significant effect on expressive political participation.

¹⁷ Probably due to small sample size, the effects of participants' background characteristics have high standard errors. This could affect the statistical power of the estimation to detect significant differences. This occurs especially in some ethnic groups that have a small number of people.

Table 3.2. Effects of observable and latent predictors on participants' expressive and electoral political participation

| | Expressive participation | | Electoral participation | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| Male | -0.069 (0.094) | -0.063 (0.109) | 0.040 | 0.047 |
| Asian | 0.095 (0.190) | -0.101 (0.184) | 0.056 | -0.005 |
| Black | 0.592 (0.462) | 0.314 (1.016) | -0.005 | -0.075 |
| Mixed | -0.127 (0.341) | -0.316 (0.501) | -0.004 | -0.059 |
| White European | -0.082 (0.268) | -0.166 (0.256) | -0.181* | -0.195* |
| Other ethnic group | 0.865 (0.933) | -0.783 (2.582) | -0.006 | -0.288 |
| Mother left education after college or sixth form | -0.085 (0.112) | -0.095 (0.112) | 0.054 | 0.049 |
| Mother studied at university | 0.361** (0.123) | 0.297* (0.121) | 0.115** | 0.094* |
| Books at home | 0.239*** (0.051) | 0.145** (0.053) | 0.076*** | 0.056*** |
| Participation in school decision making | | | | 0.063† |
| Political interest | | 0.332*** (0.054) | | 0.133*** |
| Democratic attitudes | | 0.147† (0.078) | | 0.110† |
| Observations | 906 | 906 | 897 | 906 |
| R ² / Pseudo R ² | 0.112 | 0.241 | 0.113 | 0.199 |
| CFI | 0.965 | 0.966 | 1.000 | 0.976 |
| TLI | 0.956 | 0.963 | 1.000 | 0.973 |
| RMSEA | 0.020 | 0.034 | 0.000 | 0.033 |

In the case of expressive participation, standardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

In the case of electoral participation, marginal effects at the means.

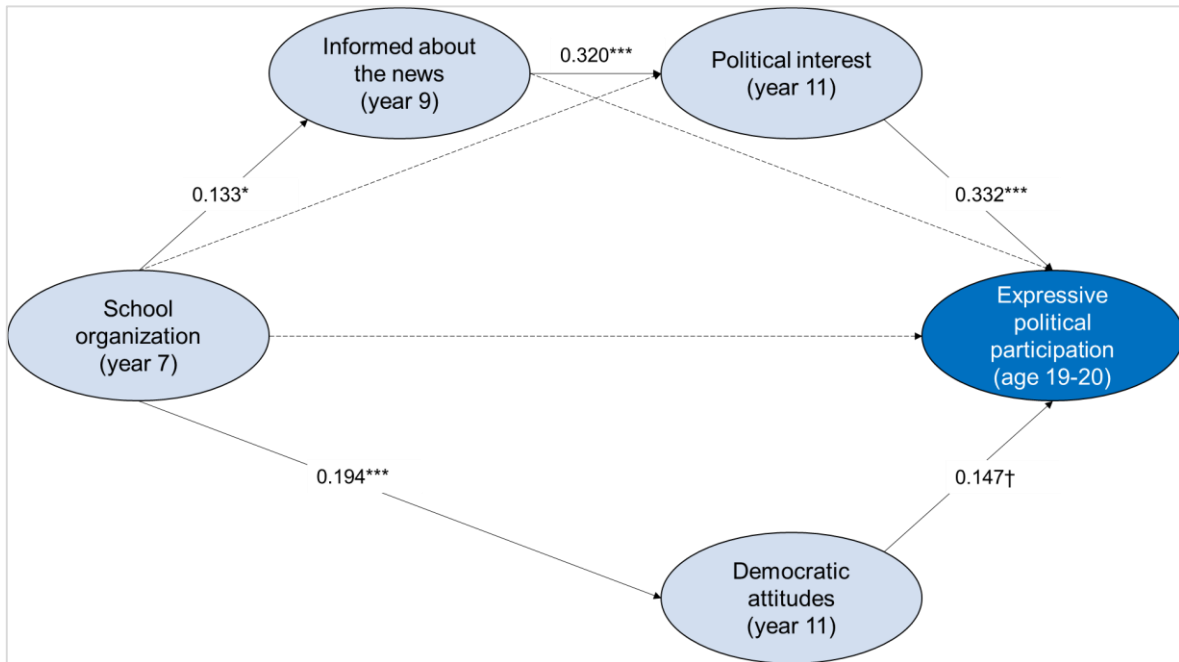
***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, †p < 0.1.

The coefficients of these latent covariates are part of the sequential mediation analysis, which is shown in Figure 3.10. On the one hand, it is noted that the fact that participants' perceptions of a better organization of their school during year 7 is directly related to how informed they are about local and global news in year 9, and this last aspect is reflected in higher political interest scores at the end of compulsory secondary education. Likewise, for each extra point in the scale of political interest, participants get around a third of a standard deviation higher expressive political participation scores when they were 19 or 20 years old.

On the other hand, higher scores in participants' perceptions about the organization of their school in year 7 are also related to higher democratic attitudes in year 11. Moreover, an extra point in the latter represents about 0.15 standard deviations more expressive political participation when participants have already left school.

This implies the existence of two positive paths through which the indirect effect of the scale of school organization on the score of expressive political participation is transmitted. These two paths have statistically significant effects: the first is produced by being informed about the news and political interest ($0.133 \times 0.320 \times 0.332 = 0.014$, $p < 0.1$), and the second one by democratic attitudes ($0.194 \times 0.147 = 0.029$, $p < 0.1$). In this case there is a full mediation, because all the effect that the participants' perception of school organization initially had on their expressive political participation over time goes through the aforementioned paths. Thus, the direct effect of the scale of school organization on expressive political participation is no longer statistically significant. This is an example that factors at the beginning of high school can have an effect on others until the end of compulsory secondary education, and even transcend school stages reaching young adulthood.

Figure 3.10. Direct and indirect effects of some latent predictors on participants' expressive political participation



Standardized coefficients. Dotted arrows represent non-statistically significant effects.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.1$.

There are several latent covariates that are not significantly related to the outcome (i.e. citizenship topics learned in school, participation in school activities, participation in school decision making). However, the final model still has an optimal goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.034, CFI: 0.966, and TLI: 0.963). In addition, it explains around 24% of the variability in expressive political participation scores, which is a large explanatory power.

3.2.4 Predictors and mechanisms of electoral political participation

Finally, the relationship between electoral political participation with the participants' background characteristics and diverse factors developed during high school is analyzed. To do this, having participated in the United Kingdom general election of

2010 is taken as an outcome indicator, so the models examine how the different observable and latent predictors influence the probability that the participants voted when they were 19 or 20 years old. The main results of these models are presented in Table 3.2¹⁸.

When the other covariates remain constant, no statistically significant differences are found in the outcome indicator according to gender and ethnicity, with the exception that participants who identify themselves as white European are approximately 18 percentage points less likely to have voted in the 2010 election compared to white British participants¹⁹. As seen previously with expressive political participation, in this case there are also positive and statistically significant coefficients when considering mother's education and books at home. Thus, compared to having left full-time education at 15 or 16 years old, participants whose mothers studied at university are around 12 percentage points more likely to have voted in the 2010 election. This probability is about 8 percentage points as there is a gradual increase in the number of books that participants have at home.

After examining the observable participants' background characteristics, the latent covariates related to their perceptions or experiences with citizenship activities in the school context were added. Likewise, political interest and democratic attitudes scores were incorporated. As specified in model 2, only these last two scores and the scale of participation in school decision making have a statistically significant effect on the indicator of electoral political participation.

These coefficients are also presented in Figure 3.11, which illustrates the sequential mediation analysis. On the one hand, when participants perceived a more positive organization of their school in year 7, they were more informed about national and international news in year 9. Also, this last aspect is directly related to political interest scores at the end of compulsory secondary education. Taking into account

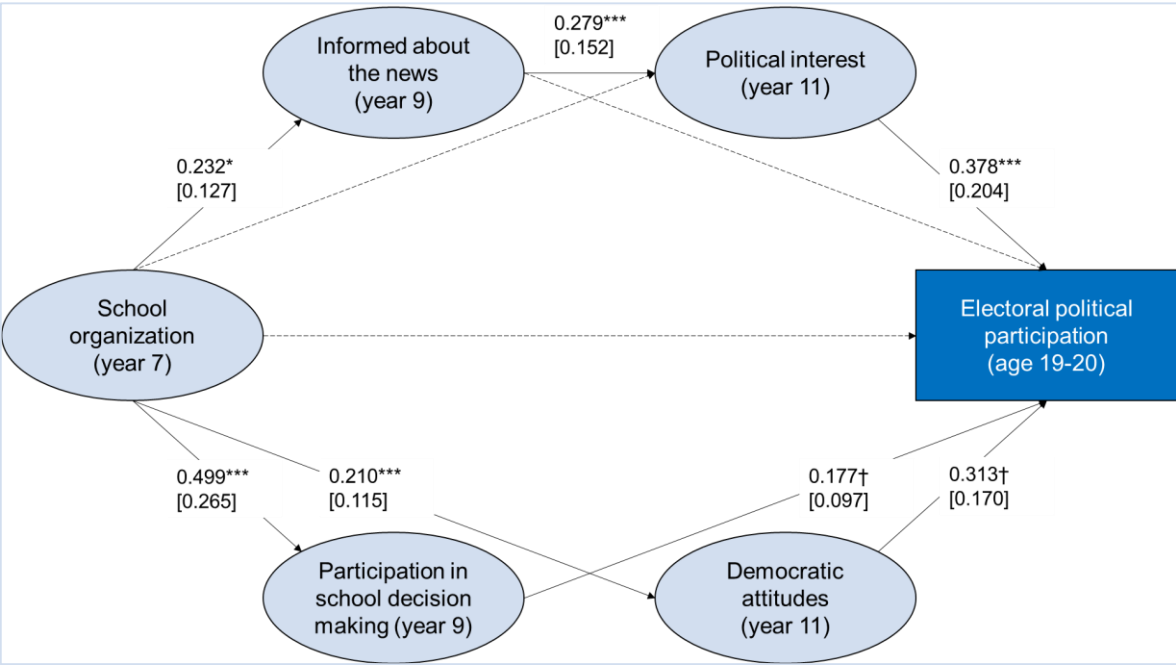
¹⁸ The complete results related to electoral political participation are presented in Appendix E.

¹⁹ Possibly, this result is due to the fact that the participants who identify themselves as white European, being not British citizens, are not allowed to vote in general elections, only in local government and European Parliament elections.

this longitudinal effects, it can be seen that the probability that the participants voted in the 2010 general election, when they were 19 or 20 years old, increases by about 13 percentage points for each extra point in their political interest.

On the other hand, the fact that participants believed that their school has a better organization during year 7 positively influences both their participation in school decision making in year 9 and their democratic attitudes in year 11. The increase of a unit in these last two latent variables is related to a higher likelihood of having participated in the 2010 general election in 6 and 11 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 3.11. Direct and indirect effects of some latent predictors on participants' electoral political participation



Unstandardized coefficients. Comparable coefficients in brackets. Dotted arrows represent non-statistically significant effects.

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, †p < 0.1.

This implies that the indirect effect of the scale of school organization on the probability associated with electoral political participation is transferred through three paths, which are statistically significant. The first path is composed by being informed about the news and political interest ($0.127 \times 0.152 \times 0.204 = 0.004$, $p < 0.1$); the second one by participation in school decision making ($0.265 \times 0.097 = 0.026$, $p < 0.1$); and the third one by democratic attitudes ($0.115 \times 0.170 = 0.020$, $p < 0.1$)²⁰. As in the previous case, there is a full mediation because the entire effect of the participants' perception of school organization on their electoral political participation is transmitted over time by these paths. Therefore, this is another example that some aspects developed during compulsory secondary education can have effects in the short and medium term, even when the participants reach the age of majority.

The final model has an adequate goodness of fit (RMSEA: 0.033, CFI: 0.976, and TLI: 0.973), even though some latent covariates are not significantly related to the outcome (i.e. citizenship topics learned in school, participation in school activities). Despite the fact that the partial model has a perfect fit, because it does not include latent variables, the final model has a greater explanatory power to predict the probability of young adults' electoral political participation.

²⁰ Since in this case the mediation analysis involves a binary outcome, the methods for calculating the indirect effects are not the conventional ones. In order to make the estimated coefficients comparable to each other, in this dissertation the proposal of MacKinnon and Dwyer (1993) has been followed, which includes the variance of the standard logistic distribution in the equations. To calculate this type of coefficients and their standard errors from non-standardized estimates, templates and syntaxes can be found on the following website: <http://www.nrpsych.com/mediation/logmed.html>

4. Discussion

This dissertation has analyzed the aspects related to English students' political interest and democratic attitudes throughout high school, as well as their political participation when they became young adults. Having shown the main results of the research, these are discussed below, then implications for policy and practice are detailed, and finally some limitations and ideas for future research are presented.

4.1 Discussion of the findings

The results show that the majority of students in this cohort completed compulsory secondary education with low levels of political interest and some attitudes that do not contribute to democratic coexistence. In addition, it can be seen that some years later, as young adults, they had a very limited participation in different political activities. Although there have been improvements in these aspects since citizenship was established as a formal subject (Keating et al., 2010; Whiteley, 2014), after more than a decade since then it still cannot be affirmed that there is an effective citizenship education.

Even when most of the students recognize the influence of politics in different spheres of life, at the same time they admit that they are not interested in politics or do not have experiences that bring them closer to it. Likewise, while recognizing the importance of gender equity, a considerable proportion of these students have certain undemocratic attitudes, which would undermine peaceful coexistence and minority rights. For instance, the lack of tolerance towards the condition of migrants draws attention, especially in a country like England, whose capital is considered one of the most diverse and multicultural cities in the world.

Additionally, this cohort has not had much direct involvement in political demonstrations reached the age of majority. However, there is a greater degree of virtual participation (e.g. social media), not necessarily starting protests or campaigns, but joining them. Meanwhile in the electoral field, on a current and

controversial issue such as Brexit, it should be remembered that this cohort still belonged to the group of younger voters when the referendum was held in 2016. Although they mostly voted to remain in the European Union, the voter turnout of this group was low as in the United Kingdom general elections, so there is a feeling that a greater electoral political participation by young people would have changed history (Hoskins et al., 2016). While this dissertation is not intended to analyze whether English young people have either apathy or alienation to politics (Marsh et al., 2007), it is likely that this generation is making its voice heard in alternative, unconventional ways.

The research findings on the outcomes are highly worrying, as they show a poor development of some citizen competencies at the end of high school and during young adulthood. Even though only two broad aspects of citizenship education have been emphasized (i.e. political engagement and democratic attitudes), these are fundamental to the crystallization of active, justice-oriented citizenship (Hoskins, 2006; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018). However, it must be remembered that citizenship development entails complex processes in different contexts, so neither can the students and the schools be held completely responsible for this issue.

It is also worrisome that young people with more disadvantaged conditions have the lowest levels of political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation. In all cases, lower indicators of socio-economic status are related to a lower development of these components of active citizenship. This confirms that even among students enrolled in maintained schools there are still inequalities in the citizenship education provided (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019). Given these results, it would be interesting to examine what happens when considering school composition to identify possible segregation effects.

There are also some gaps according to gender and ethnicity at the end of compulsory secondary education. While male students have higher political interest, female students have higher democratic attitudes, which coincides with that found by other studies (Keating & Benton, 2013; Schulz et al., 2010; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Likewise, the students who identified themselves as white British have the

lowest levels of political interest and, especially, of democratic attitudes, which also occurs when the school population is mostly made up of students of this ethnic group (Keating & Benton, 2013). Since around 8 out of 10 English people belong to that ethnic group, it is alarming that they are not sufficiently concerned about politics and do not demonstrate a solid disposition towards equality and respect for human rights when leaving school.

It is necessary to ask why these gaps persist towards the end of schooling. For example, differences in aspects such as school climate, pedagogical practices, learning opportunities, and the impact of other contexts apart from the school where citizenship is developed should be considered to find a comprehensive answer. Although the differences according to gender and ethnicity seem to dissipate in young adulthood, as other studies also point out (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016; Keating & Janmaat, 2016), it should be borne in mind that only two aspects of political participation have been analyzed. Therefore, it would be worth investigating whether the gaps found during high school have any subsequent impact on other aspects related to active citizenship (e.g. participation in political parties or political office, engagement with community activities or human rights organizations).

After analyzing the general trends of political interest, democratic attitudes, and political participation in English young people, as well as their differences according to some background characteristics, it is important to discuss the development of these outcomes from school experiences. The results of this dissertation corroborate the crucial role of an appropriate school organization as part of the institutional culture to promote better citizenship education (Keating, 2016). The fact that students perceive that their school has a fair and democratic environment contributes to participation and coexistence. This not only has an effect during school stages, but also presents a scope until students become young adults.

Therefore, a positive and well-organized school ethos, at least from the point of view of the students, is one of the essential requirements for the development of citizen competencies. Although this factor has a medium term effect on the outcomes, its relevance lies in its influence on experiences related to citizenship activities that

promote participants' political engagement and democratic attitudes. In that sense, the main underlying explanatory mechanisms of these aspects of active citizenship have been examined.

Not all the experiences related to citizenship knowledge and praxis have the same mediating effects on the outcomes at the end of high school. For example, the variability of political interest is partially explained by how much the students were informed about the news and the amount of citizenship topics that they learned in school. In the case of democratic attitudes, the differences depend in part on the degree of students' participation in school decision making. Additionally, students' participation in citizen practices promoted by the school also has a positive influence on political interest and democratic attitudes, but regardless of the effect of their perception on school organization. So, while political interest seems to be fostered by a mixture of declarative knowledge and procedural skills, the latter are more related to the development of democratic attitudes. This does not mean that the dispositions towards equality and respect for human rights are not based on the understanding of concepts and issues, but rather highlights the key role of experiential learning opportunities as manifestations of an education through citizenship.

These citizenship activities developed during compulsory secondary education do not have a direct effect on young people's political participation. Rather, nearly all of their influence, as well as the lasting effects of a good school organization, are collected by political interest and democratic attitudes. These two aspects of active citizenship act as important precursors to understand why people vote and get involved in citizen demonstrations such as protests and campaigns. This is a promising finding because it indicates that young adults who participate are not only those most interested in politics, but also those with higher democratic attitudes. Thus, participation could be prevented from having perverse ends, when in fact it is a means for the attainment of justice and the common good.

4.2 Implications for policy and practice

Given the findings of this dissertation and the current challenges regarding citizenship education in England, it is necessary to provide some recommendations for policy and practice. From an institutional point of view, it is remarkable that the new inspection framework of the Office for Standards in Education (2019) has been published to ensure the quality of citizenship education provided in different types of schools (e.g. maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools). After a period of inactivity on the monitoring of school practices since the new version of the National Curriculum came into force, this is a great step forward because valuable information about teaching and learning processes in citizenship education will be available.

While the results of these inspections are still to come, the developments proposed by the Office for Standards in Education are encouraging. For instance, rather than focusing on data, greater emphasis will be placed on what students are really learning. Likewise, different methodologies will be adopted to work together with members of the educational community on the positive points and those that can still be improved. Since this new inspection framework explicitly mentions the assurance of a school culture according to the Equality Act 2010, a coordinated work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission is recommended to guarantee the quality of citizenship education for all, showing respect for the rights of minority and disadvantaged groups.

Definitely, this could be the beginning for citizenship education to regain its core status. However, following the suggestions of academics, educators, and members of civil society in recent sessions of the House of Lords (2018), a new revision of the National Curriculum is also required to achieve that. Perhaps the key aspect is to recover the essence of previous versions, in which citizenship education was conceived from a critical, active and collective approach (Weinberg & Flinders, 2018). For example, considering the differences between citizenship education and character education (Davies, Gorard & McGuinn, 2005), it would be advisable to review the so-called fundamental British values, recognizing that they are also

shared with other democratic countries and that their rationale does not arise as part of counter-extremism policy. It would also be important to strengthen citizenship as a formal subject from primary education, where it is still optional as part of Personal, social, health and economic education. Getting young people to accomplish political engagement and democratic attitudes to consolidate a representative and/or deliberative democracy requires that citizenship education be a transversal axis throughout schooling.

It is in this context that pedagogical practices related to citizenship education should also be revised. The Crick report stated the importance of adopting a whole-school approach, that is, making citizenship education part of the school culture (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998). As it has been ratified in this dissertation, the development of citizen competencies is stimulated when the organization and daily practices of the school are consistent with the principles of democratic participation and coexistence. The school is a privileged place to debate, challenge, concur, and take responsibility. Policy makers should ponder best practice cases that already exist, such as English citizen schools (Audsley et al., 2013), to promote a citizenship education properly integrated into the school ethos. This also requires the support of school leaders, as well as strengthening initial teacher training so that all schools have pedagogical specialists in citizenship education.

These topics should be complemented with evidence from initiatives related to citizenship education, which would contribute to the political decision-making process. For example, it is suggested to evaluate the impact of the programmes provided by the National Citizen Service in favor of young people's political and civic engagement. Considering current British political and social issues (e.g. Brexit, migration, minority rights), it is also recommended that high school students participate in the third edition of the ICCS in 2022, as well as develop new longitudinal studies that explore the development of active citizenship in new youth cohorts.

4.3 Limitations and future research

At this point, it is important to discuss the main limitations of this dissertation. Regarding the theoretical approach, although comprehensive models have been proposed, only some aspects related to the development of active citizenship have been included. Citizenship education is highly complex, so more aspects should be considered for better clarification of the subject of study (e.g. involvement in community, institutional and social trust).

Concerning the data, it would have been ideal to include more participants' background characteristics. Unfortunately, the questionnaires used in the CELS did not collect this type of information in depth and the database does not have the identifiers to be merged with administrative data (e.g. National Pupil Database). Likewise, having more indicators on school culture and teaching processes from the point of view of other educational actors would have helped to rely not only on participants' self-report, thus minimizing potential response bias.

With respect to the sample, although the analyzes have considered inverse probability weights to recover the level of inference of the initial sample, multiple imputation could have been used to treat missing data more effectively (Rubin, 1987). Perhaps the robustness of the estimates would have increased, reducing possible selection bias.

Finally, regarding the analytical strategy, it would be recommended that the models include prior measurements of the outcomes (i.e. autoregressive models). This would allow adjusting the estimates and controlling possible endogeneity problems. Also, even when sequential mediation analysis has been used, the exploration of causal mechanisms (Imai, Keele & Tingley, 2010) could take advantage of the longitudinal design to draw stronger conclusions.

Apart from considering these limitations, it is suggested that future studies complement and update the findings of this dissertation. For example, it would be convenient to analyze in detail the change of the different components of active

citizenship over time, and at different stages of life, taking into account compositional and contextual effects. For this, latent growth curve models with time-varying covariates could be estimated from a multilevel approach (Newsom, 2015). Also, given the complex nature of citizenship education, it is also necessary to conduct qualitative studies and systematic reviews to deepen the mechanisms that influence its development. This research could also explore emerging issues such as political engagement, respect for human rights, and social cohesion through virtual environments.

This dissertation has emphasized that the stability democracy depends not only on the legitimacy and efficiency of its institutions, but especially on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens oriented towards the promotion of well-being and the common good. It is urgent to accomplish these ideals to face the contemporary political and social challenges of the United Kingdom, and even those that involve other states. Only then will the construction of a more fair and peaceful society from basic education receive the relevance it deserves.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Percentage of each response option of political interest and democratic attitudes items

Table A.1. Percentage of each response option of political interest items

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| My friends are not interested in politics. | 4.3% | 9.9% | 31.9% | 36.3% | 17.7% |
| I am too busy to worry about politics. | 4.1% | 15.2% | 32.1% | 34.0% | 14.6% |
| I often discuss politics with other people. | 31.6% | 33.0% | 21.0% | 11.6% | 2.8% |
| Politics makes no difference to people my age. | 11.4% | 25.3% | 35.1% | 18.6% | 9.6% |
| Politics has an impact on everything we do. | 7.0% | 10.8% | 40.7% | 32.6% | 9.0% |
| I am very interested in politics. | 35.7% | 29.2% | 24.9% | 7.3% | 2.9% |
| I know less about politics than most people my age. | 9.3% | 24.8% | 44.8% | 14.6% | 6.5% |
| Sometimes politics seems so complicated that I cannot understand what is going on. | 6.1% | 14.2% | 33.8% | 32.2% | 13.6% |
| Politics has an impact on what we do at school. | 5.3% | 6.4% | 42.1% | 37.0% | 9.1% |

Table A.2. Percentage of each response option of democratic attitudes items

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Britain does not have room to accept any more refugees. | 5.4% | 9.6% | 31.3% | 22.9% | 30.8% |
| People who were not born in Britain, but who live here now, should have the same rights as everyone else. | 9.6% | 13.5% | 30.8% | 30.4% | 15.6% |
| If there are not enough jobs for everybody, they should go to men rather than women. | 47.6% | 22.2% | 22.2% | 4.4% | 3.5% |
| People who were not born in Britain, but who live here now, should be required to learn English. | 2.8% | 5.0% | 20.0% | 33.3% | 38.9% |
| Women should stay out of politics. | 50.5% | 21.7% | 20.7% | 2.7% | 4.4% |
| It is every adult's duty to vote in elections. | 10.2% | 26.8% | 36.3% | 22.1% | 4.7% |
| Newspapers should be able to print whatever they like. | 14.8% | 35.5% | 24.9% | 18.2% | 6.6% |
| People should have the right to express racist views. | 18.1% | 21.1% | 30.6% | 19.8% | 10.4% |
| People should obey a law even if it violates human rights. | 14.7% | 28.6% | 41.9% | 11.4% | 3.4% |
| People should protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust. | 4.4% | 8.4% | 43.1% | 33.9% | 10.2% |
| Terrorism is never justified. | 4.7% | 5.3% | 33.3% | 22.8% | 33.9% |
| It is every person's duty to help out in their neighbourhood. | 5.6% | 16.3% | 51.0% | 23.5% | 3.6% |
| People should look out for themselves, not for other people. | 15.3% | 37.0% | 35.7% | 7.9% | 4.0% |

Appendix B. Descriptive statistics for outcomes according to participants' background characteristics

Table B.1. Descriptive statistics for outcomes' factor scores, according to gender

| | Outcome | Mean | SE | 95% CI lower limit | 95% CI upper limit |
|--------|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Female | Political interest | -0.047 | 0.013 | -0.073 | -0.021 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.305 | 0.012 | 0.281 | 0.329 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.017 | 0.042 | -0.066 | 0.100 |
| Male | Political interest | 0.047 | 0.015 | 0.017 | 0.076 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.314 | 0.014 | -0.341 | -0.286 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.021 | 0.045 | -0.109 | 0.066 |

Labels: SE = standard error of the mean, CI = confidence interval.

Table B.2. Descriptive statistics for outcomes' factor scores, according to ethnicity

| Outcome | | Mean | SE | 95% CI lower limit | 95% CI upper limit |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Asian | Political interest | 0.245 | 0.032 | 0.182 | 0.307 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.333 | 0.033 | 0.268 | 0.397 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.030 | 0.102 | -0.172 | 0.231 |
| Black | Political interest | 0.129 | 0.058 | 0.014 | 0.244 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.309 | 0.062 | 0.187 | 0.430 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.027 | 0.327 | -0.679 | 0.732 |
| Mixed | Political interest | 0.061 | 0.075 | -0.086 | 0.209 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.322 | 0.070 | 0.183 | 0.460 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.047 | 0.226 | -0.423 | 0.518 |
| White British | Political interest | -0.039 | 0.011 | -0.060 | -0.017 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.054 | 0.011 | -0.075 | -0.033 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.003 | 0.033 | -0.068 | 0.063 |
| White European | Political interest | 0.057 | 0.063 | -0.067 | 0.180 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.083 | 0.060 | -0.035 | 0.201 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.071 | 0.170 | -0.418 | 0.276 |
| Other | Political interest | 0.229 | 0.142 | -0.057 | 0.514 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.378 | 0.159 | 0.059 | 0.697 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.105 | 0.942 | -3.947 | 4.157 |

Labels: SE = standard error of the mean, CI = confidence interval.

Table B.3. Descriptive statistics for outcomes' factor scores, according to mother's education

| Outcome | | Mean | SE | 95% CI lower limit | 95% CI upper limit |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Left at 15 or 16 years old | Political interest | -0.095 | 0.016 | -0.126 | -0.063 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.074 | 0.016 | -0.105 | -0.043 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.095 | 0.046 | -0.186 | -0.003 |
| Left after college or sixth form | Political interest | 0.017 | 0.019 | -0.021 | 0.055 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.039 | 0.019 | 0.002 | 0.076 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.060 | 0.054 | -0.167 | 0.047 |
| Studied at university | Political interest | 0.207 | 0.024 | 0.160 | 0.254 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.259 | 0.024 | 0.212 | 0.306 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.317 | 0.079 | 0.161 | 0.473 |

Labels: SE = standard error of the mean, CI = confidence interval.

Table B.4. Descriptive statistics for outcomes' factor scores, according to number of books at home

| | Outcome | Mean | SE | 95% CI lower limit | 95% CI upper limit |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 0 books | Political interest | -0.038 | 0.075 | -0.187 | 0.111 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.427 | 0.073 | -0.570 | -0.284 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.332 | 0.131 | -0.606 | -0.058 |
| 1-10 books | Political interest | -0.173 | 0.030 | -0.232 | -0.113 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.255 | 0.028 | -0.311 | -0.200 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.180 | 0.094 | -0.367 | 0.006 |
| 11-50 books | Political interest | -0.107 | 0.020 | -0.146 | -0.069 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.092 | 0.019 | -0.129 | -0.055 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.191 | 0.052 | -0.293 | -0.089 |
| 51-100 books | Political interest | -0.080 | 0.019 | -0.118 | -0.043 |
| | Democratic attitudes | -0.024 | 0.020 | -0.063 | 0.014 |
| | Expressive political participation | -0.118 | 0.056 | -0.228 | -0.007 |
| 101-200 books | Political interest | 0.081 | 0.023 | 0.037 | 0.125 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.112 | 0.022 | 0.069 | 0.154 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.092 | 0.070 | -0.047 | 0.230 |
| More than 200 books | Political interest | 0.210 | 0.023 | 0.164 | 0.255 |
| | Democratic attitudes | 0.207 | 0.024 | 0.160 | 0.253 |
| | Expressive political participation | 0.355 | 0.080 | 0.197 | 0.512 |

Labels: SE = standard error of the mean, CI = confidence interval.

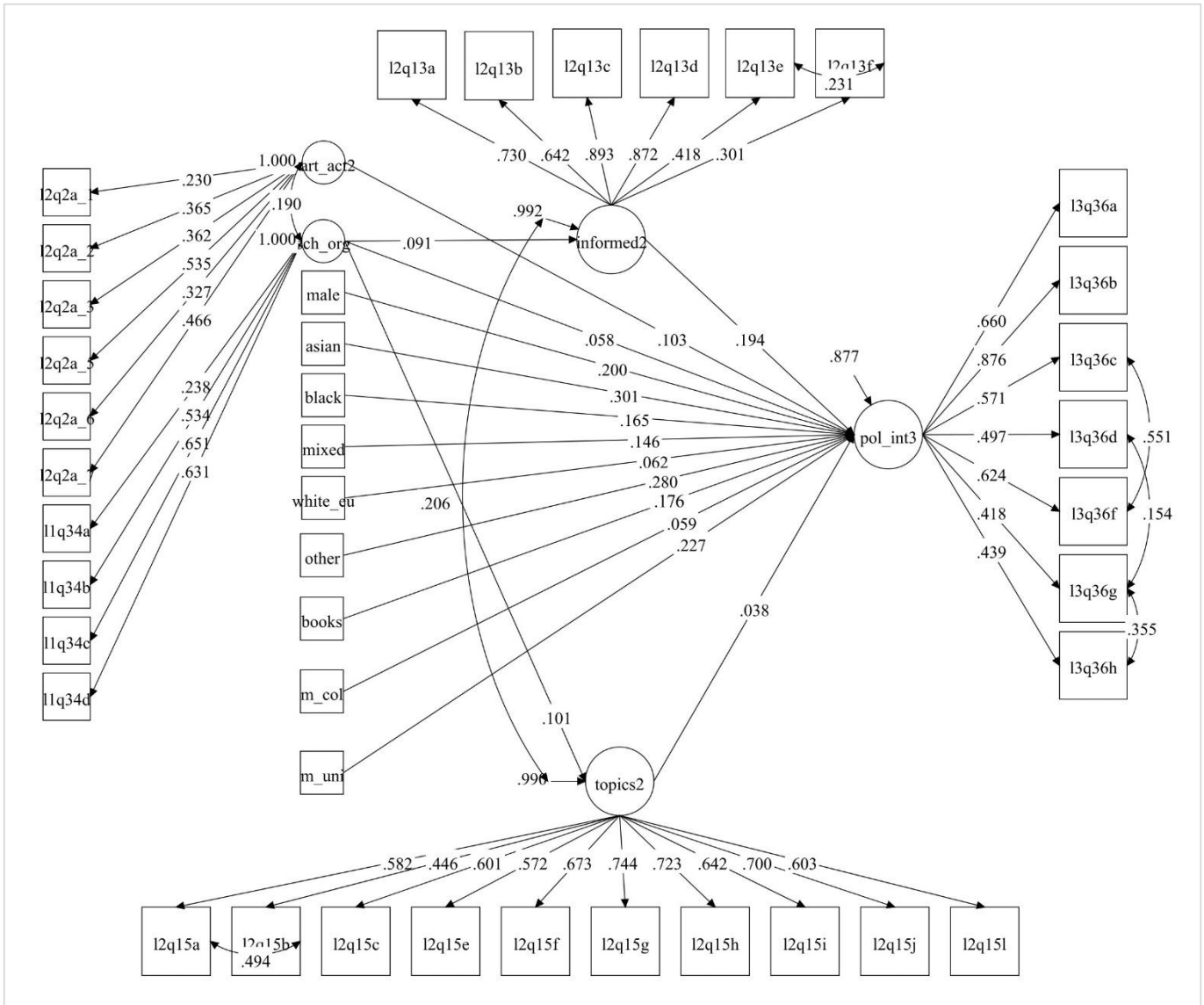
Appendix C. Percentage of occurrence of electoral political participation according to the participants' background characteristics

Table C.1. Percentage of participants who voted in the United Kingdom general election of 2010 at age 19 or 20, according to their background characteristics

| | No | Yes |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Female | 36.5% | 63.5% |
| Male | 33.9% | 66.1% |
| Asian | 29.5% | 70.5% |
| Black | 34.6% | 65.4% |
| Mixed | 30.5% | 69.5% |
| White British | 35.4% | 64.6% |
| White European | 51.5% | 48.5% |
| Other | 22.5% | 77.5% |
| Left at 15 or 16 years old | 41.1% | 58.9% |
| Left after college or sixth form | 31.3% | 68.7% |
| Studied at university | 24.0% | 76.0% |
| 0 books | 72.3% | 27.7% |
| 1-10 books | 50.4% | 49.6% |
| 11-50 books | 46.2% | 53.8% |
| 51-100 books | 31.0% | 69.0% |
| 101-200 books | 30.0% | 70.0% |
| More than 200 books | 24.3% | 75.7% |

Appendix D. SEM diagrams of the estimated final models

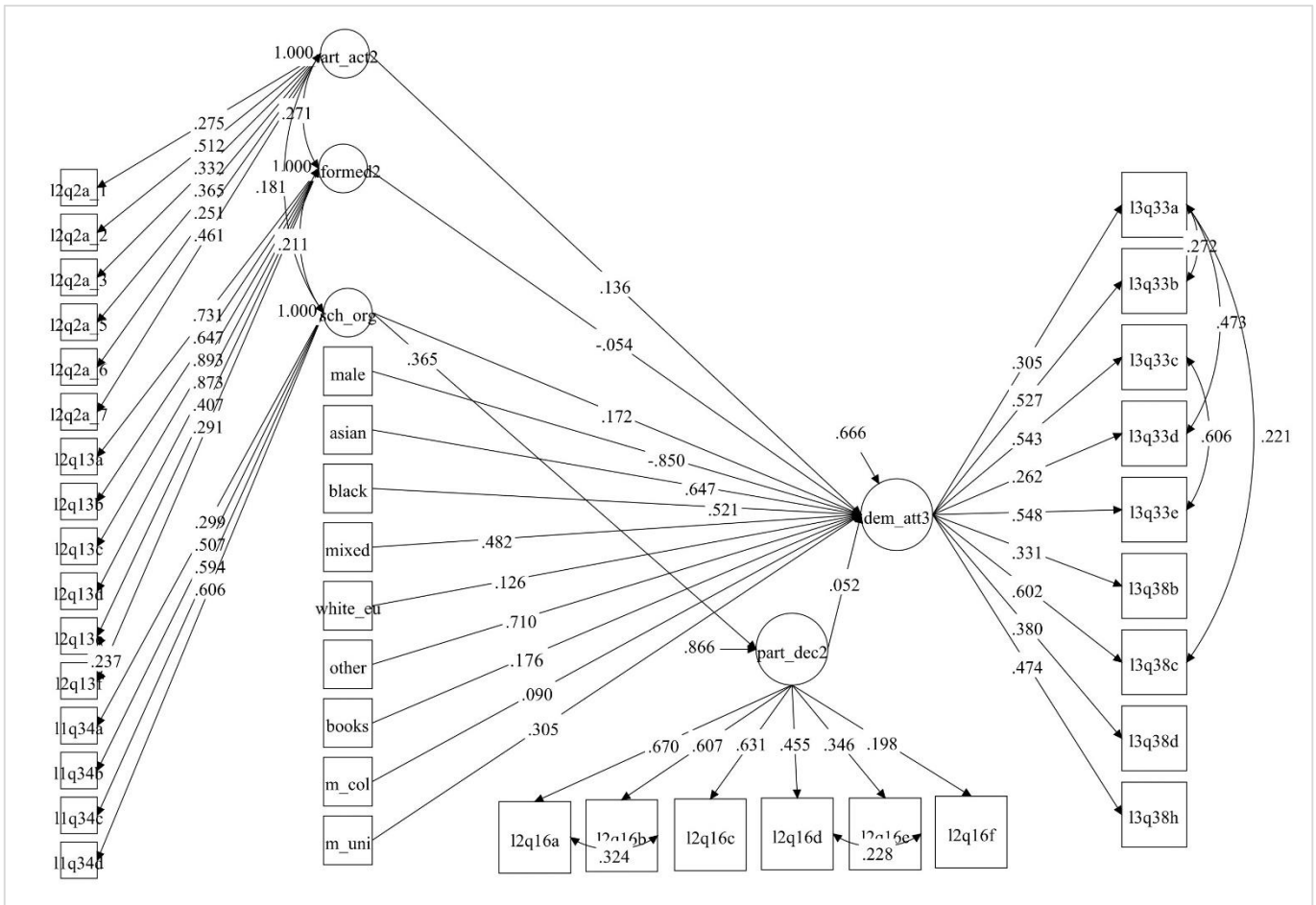
Figure D.1. *Measurement and structural model of predictors of students' political interest*



Standardized coefficients. Latent variables in circles and observable variables in squares. Estimated items' measurement errors omitted due to organizational reasons.

Constructs' labels: sch_org = school organization (wave 1), part_act2 = participation in school activities (wave 2), informed2 = informed about the news (wave 2), topics2 = citizenship topics learned in school (wave 2), pol_int3 = political interest (wave 3).

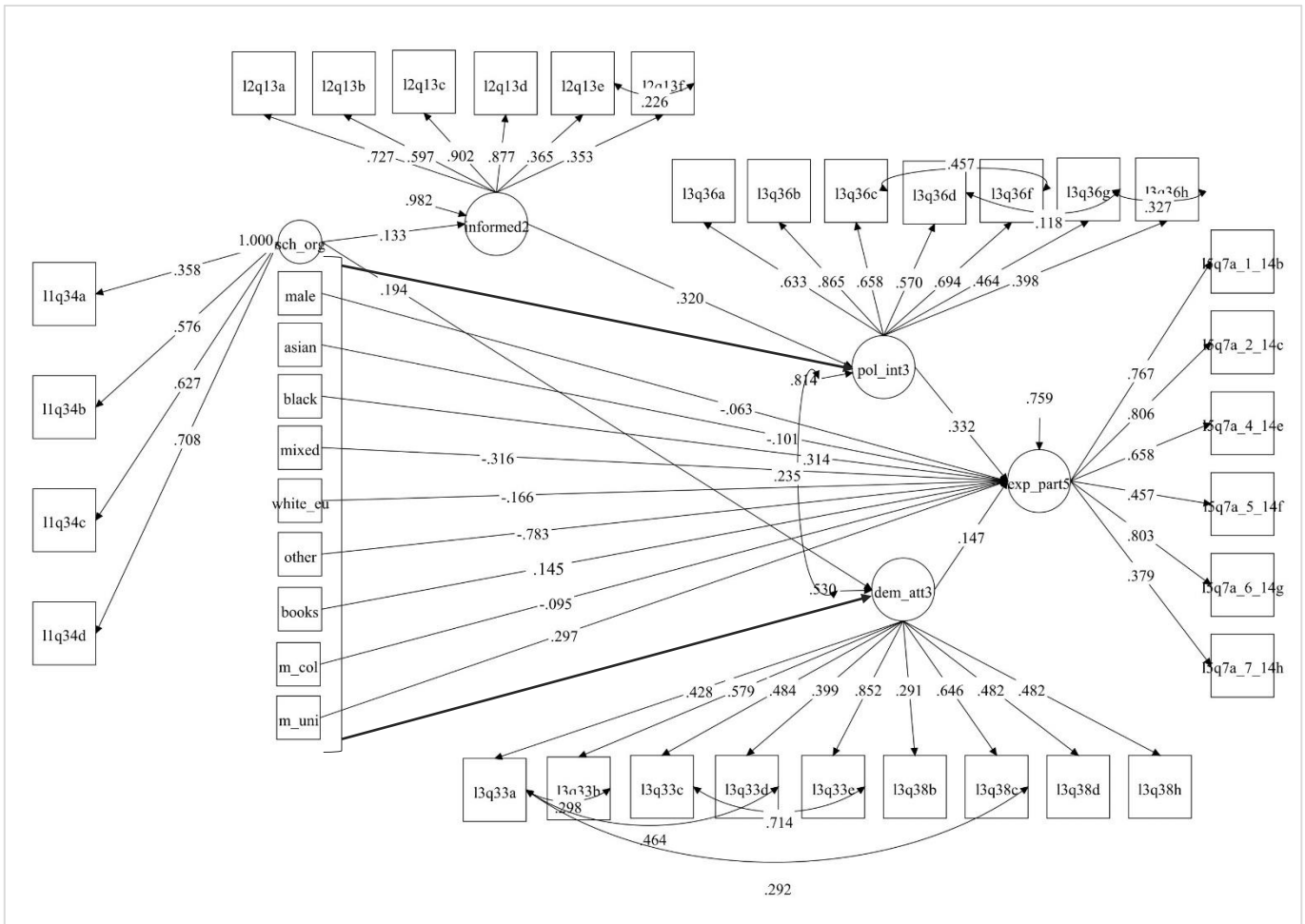
Figure D.2. Measurement and structural model of predictors of students' democratic attitudes



Standardized coefficients. Latent variables in circles and observable variables in squares. Estimated items' measurement errors omitted due to organizational reasons.

Constructs' labels: *sch_org* = school organization (wave 1), *part_act2* = participation in school activities (wave 2), *informed2* = informed about the news (wave 2), *part_dec2* = participation in school decision making (wave 2), *dem_att3* = democratic attitudes (wave 3).

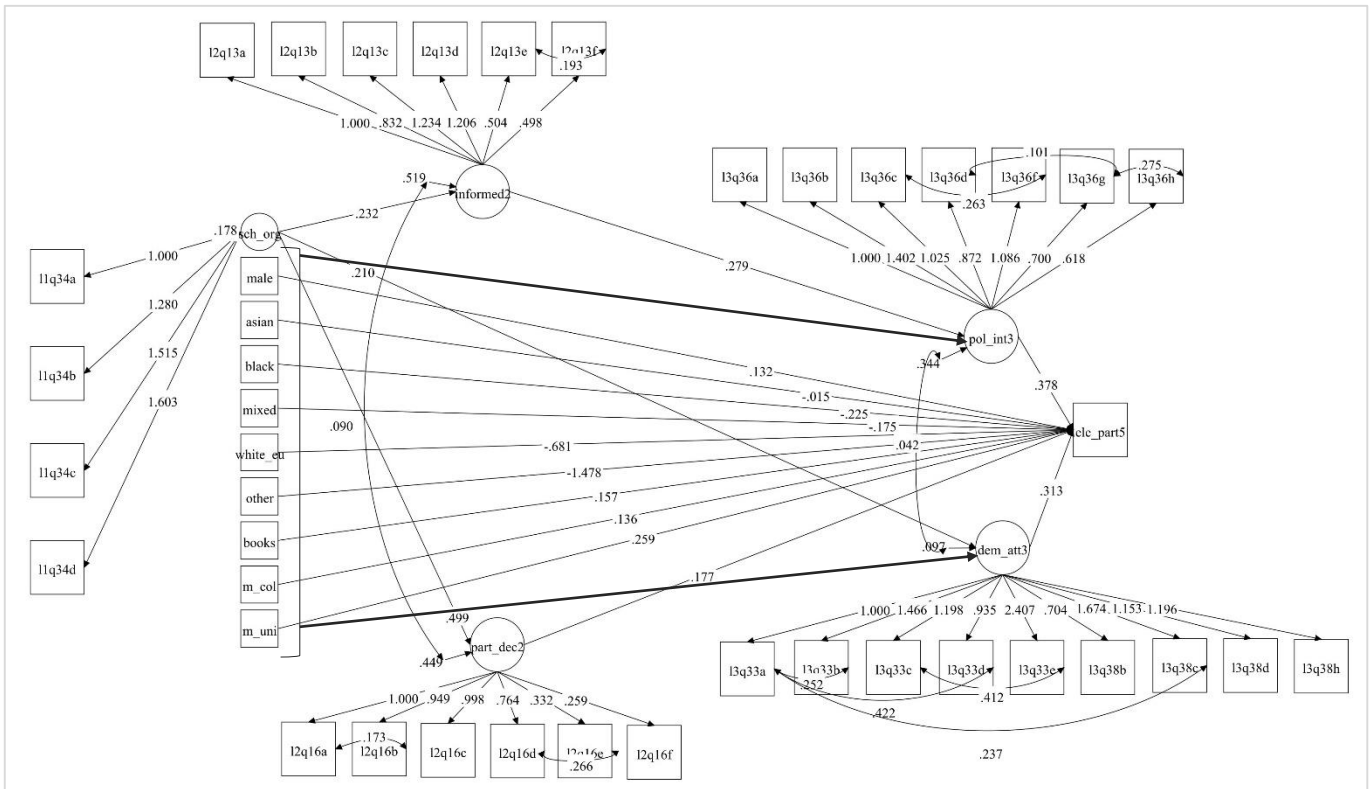
Figure D.3. Measurement and structural model of predictors of participants' expressive political participation



Standardized coefficients. Latent variables in circles and observable variables in squares. Estimated items' measurement errors omitted due to organizational reasons.

Constructs' labels: *sch_org* = school organization (wave 1), *informed2* = informed about the news (wave 2), *pol_int3* = political interest (wave 3), *dem_att3* = democratic attitudes (wave 3), *exp_part5* = expressive political participation (wave 5).

Figure D.4. Measurement and structural model of predictors of participants' electoral political participation



Unstandardized coefficients. Latent variables in circles and observable variables in squares. Estimated items' measurement errors omitted due to organizational reasons.

Constructs' labels: *sch_org* = school organization (wave 1), *informed2* = informed about the news (wave 2), *part_dec2* = participation in school decision making (wave 2), *pol_int3* = political interest (wave 3), *dem_att3* = democratic attitudes (wave 3), *ele_part5* = electoral political participation (wave 5).

Appendix E. Complete results related to electoral political participation

Table E.1. Effects of observable and latent predictors on participants' electoral political participation

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | Unstandardized coefficients | Marginal effects | Unstandardized coefficients | Marginal effects |
| Male | 0.110 (0.090) | 0.040 | 0.132 (0.104) | 0.047 |
| Asian | 0.153 (0.168) | 0.056 | -0.015 (0.169) | -0.005 |
| Black | -0.014 (0.411) | -0.005 | -0.225 (0.377) | -0.075 |
| Mixed | -0.012 (0.289) | -0.004 | -0.175 (0.276) | -0.059 |
| White European | -0.600* (0.275) | -0.181* | -0.681* (0.279) | -0.195* |
| Other ethnic group | -0.016 (0.662) | -0.006 | -1.478 (1.087) | -0.288 |
| Mother left education after college or sixth form | 0.148 (0.107) | 0.054 | 0.136 (0.108) | 0.049 |
| Mother studied at university | 0.311** (0.118) | 0.115** | 0.259* (0.115) | 0.094* |
| Books at home | 0.213*** (0.037) | 0.076*** | 0.157*** (0.038) | 0.056*** |
| Participation in school decision making | | | 0.177† (0.091) | 0.063† |
| Political interest | | | 0.378*** (0.078) | 0.133*** |
| Democratic attitudes | | | 0.313† (0.174) | 0.110† |
| Observations | 897 | | 906 | |
| Pseudo R ² | 0.113 | | 0.199 | |
| CFI | 1.000 | | 0.976 | |
| TLI | 1.000 | | 0.973 | |
| RMSEA | 0.000 | | 0.033 | |

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, †p < 0.1.