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Europeans' Democratic Aspirations and Evaluations: Behavioral Consequences and Cognitive Complexity

Enrique Hernández

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

Florence, 21 October 2016

European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences

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Examining Board

Prof. Hanspeter Kriesi, European University Institute (Supervisor)
Prof. Pedro C. Magalhães, University of Lisbon
Prof. Mariano Torcal, Pompeu Fabra University
Prof. Alexander H. Trechsel, European University Institute

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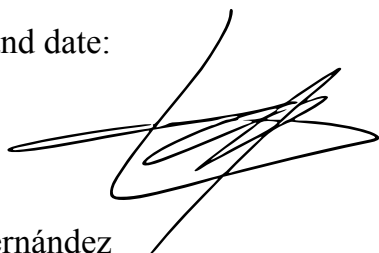
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Florence, 21 September, 2016

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a collection of four empirical studies that analyze Europeans' democratic aspirations and evaluations and their behavioral implications. It is well established that most citizens support democracy in the abstract but that a substantial proportion of them are not fully satisfied with the way democracy works. However, we know significantly less about the specific type of democracy citizens aspire to, about the extent to which they evaluate that their democracies meet these democratic aspirations, and about how these aspirations and evaluations relate to their political behavior. Drawing on an innovative dataset that provides a detailed account of individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations I first assess the availability and structuration of these attitudes towards democracy in the belief systems of Europeans. Next, I analyze how democratic aspirations and evaluations and the imbalance between the two relate to political participation and party choice decisions. The empirical analyses reveal that: (i) these attitudes towards democracy are widely available and coherently structured in the belief systems of most individuals; (ii) that democratic aspirations and evaluations, and the imbalance between the two, are significantly related to the likelihood of turning out to vote and demonstrating, but that, at the same time, their impact is contingent on a series of individual- and macro-level factors; (iii) that the imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations that individuals perceive for specific elements democracy is significantly related to their likelihood of defecting from mainstream parties and voting for different types of challenger parties. In the conclusion to this dissertation I discuss the potential implications of these findings for the quality and stability of democracies, and how these findings qualify some aspects of the prevailing optimistic outlook about the behavior of those who are critical or dissatisfied with the functioning of their democracies.

Keywords: Political attitudes, political behavior, democracy, discontent, belief systems.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the last decade European democracies have witnessed increasing political protest, declining support for mainstream parties, an increase in the vote share of challenger parties of different stripes and, although not homogenous, a moderate decline in voter turnout (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015; Kriesi, 2012). In parallel, dissatisfaction with the way democracy works and distrust in representative institutions has increased throughout Europe (Armington and Guthmann, 2014). To what extent are these phenomena related? What is the relationship between individuals' attitudes towards democracy and their political behavior? Despite the existence of classic and contemporary studies that analyze the relationship between generic attitudes towards democracy, political participation and party choice, many questions remain unanswered or require further research.

Ever since the publication of early political culture studies, attitudes towards democracy and about the functioning of political institutions have been related to political behavior (see e.g. Almond and Verba, 1963; Gamson, 1968; Wright, 1976). Early studies predominantly viewed negative orientations towards the political system and the behaviors they could entail –non-voting, increasing elite-challenging activism, increasing support for radical or extremist parties– as a potential threat for the stability of democracies (Almond and Verba, 1963; Crozier et al., 1975; Wright, 1976). However, in light of rising mass support for democracy as an ideal form of government this pessimistic view has been challenged by scholars who consider critical attitudes towards the functioning of democracy, such as dissatisfaction with democracy or political distrust, not as a threat, but as a potential positive force for reform (Dalton, 1996; Klingemann, 1999). This has given rise to the notions of *assertive citizens*, *dissatisfied democrats*, or *critical citizens*, which are characterized as individuals who support democracy in the abstract but are dissatisfied with how it is implemented in their countries, partly owing to their rising democratic aspirations (Dalton, 2004; Dalton and Welzel, 2014a; Fuchs and Klingemann, 1995; Norris, 2011, 1999). In contrast to the prototypical *allegiant citizen* defined by Almond and Verba (1963), these citizens emphasize voice and participation and have a strong affinity to non-violent, elite-challenging forms of political participation (Dalton and Welzel, 2014a, p. 11). As a consequence, this type of citizens are considered a source of

“healthy pressure on officeholders to improve on meeting democratic standards in daily political practice” (Klingemann, 2014, p. 117).¹

This optimistic view has been challenged by some studies, especially in the case of young democracies with limited democratic tradition, where individuals’ dissatisfaction with democracy might have a different character than in more established democracies (Torcal, 2006). These studies have shown that in some African, South European and Latin American countries, critical attitudes towards the functioning of democracy do not lead to a greater involvement in political affairs but to widespread estrangement from politics (Doorenspleet, 2012; Montero and Torcal, 2006, pp. 341–342; Torcal and Lago, 2006). While more prevalent in young democracies, similar findings are also reported for established Western European democracies (Dahlberg et al., 2013; Geissel, 2008; Stoker, 2006). Hence, while the optimistic view with regard to the potential consequences of critical attitudes towards the political system seems to prevail today, the empirical findings with regard to how attitudes towards the functioning of democracy relate to individuals’ political behavior are far from conclusive.

Do most citizens behave like the ideal *critical citizen* when they perceive that democratic standards are not met? Are different forms of democratic discontent differently related to the likelihood of participating in politics through different means? What is the role of traditional political actors like parties and unions in the mobilization of discontented citizens in the electoral and protest arenas? Is democratic discontent related to the likelihood of supporting challenger parties and defecting from mainstream parties? Relying on an innovative dataset, that allows me to extend the analyses beyond generic attitudes towards democracy, this thesis addresses some of these questions.

MOVING BEYOND GENERIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

While it is well established that a majority of Europeans support democracy in the abstract (Alonso, 2016; Norris, 2011), we know significantly less about how they think democracies should be or about the specific type of democracy Europeans aspire to.² In other words, we do

¹ See also the early studies by Barnes et al. (1979) or Gamson (1968), which anticipated that a combination of high political interest/efficacy and low political trust might trigger political participation.

² Some previous studies analyzed citizens’ conceptions of democracy or the way in which citizens think democracies ought to be organized in regions like Asia (e.g. Chu et al., 2008), Latin America (e.g. Canache, 2012;

not know enough about how individuals believe that democracy should be ideally organized or about the particular elements of democracy that they think should be present in a democratic system. In a similar vein, while there is ample evidence that a substantial proportion of individuals are critical or not satisfied with the way democracy works (Dalton, 2004; Montero and Torcal, 2006; Norris, 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000), we have only limited comparative evidence about the particular elements of democracy with which individuals are not satisfied (Canache et al., 2001).

The sixth round of the European Social Survey conducted between 2012 and 2013 in 29 European countries provides the opportunity to systematically analyze the way in which Europeans think democracy ought to be ideally organized –their democratic aspirations– using an extensive number of indicators that gauge individuals’ opinions about the importance of different democratic principles for democracy in general. At the same time, this dataset also provides a detailed account of the way in which individuals’ evaluate the functioning of their democracies –their democratic evaluations–, since it measures how individuals assess that these different elements or principles of democracy have been implemented in their country.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEIR RATIONALE

Drawing on this innovative dataset this thesis addresses the questions of how democratic aspirations, democratic evaluations, and the imbalance between the two relate, first, to political participation and, second, to party choice. However, before addressing these questions it seems pertinent to assess to what extent ordinary citizens are capable of developing and elaborating structured opinions about democracy and its constitutive principles in the first place. Hence, this thesis is divided in three different parts. A first part (*chapter 2*) focused on analyzing the availability and coherent structuration of democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations, which constitute the basis for the operationalization of the central independent variables of subsequent chapters. A second part (*chapters 3 and 4*) devoted to the analysis of the relationship between democratic aspirations and evaluations and different forms of political

Lagos, 2008) or Africa (e.g. Bratton et al., 2005). A limited number of studies have also focused on European countries (Ferrín, 2012; Fuchs and Roller, 2006), or have used European or Western democracies as a point of reference to analyze views of democracy in other world-regions (e.g. Regt, 2013). Finally, some scholars have adopted a global outlook and analyzed democratic aspirations in different world-regions, including Europe (Dalton et al., 2008; Norris, 2011; Welzel, 2013).

participation. A third part (*chapter 5*) that focuses on the relationship between these aspirations and evaluations and the support for different types of political parties.

Given that the average citizen appears to have limited knowledge about politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996) and that democratic aspirations and evaluations have never been measured in detail before, prior to analyzing their relationship to political behavior it is essential to assess whether these attitudes are available and coherently structured in the belief systems of the general public. With this purpose, and drawing on Converse's (1964) notion of Political Belief Systems (PBS), *chapter 2* entitled "*Democracy Belief Systems in Europe: Cognitive Availability and Attitudinal Constraint*", develops a theoretical framework and different empirical measures to analyze the articulation of Europeans' belief systems about democracy or their Democracy Belief Systems (DBS). Building on this notion of PBS, in this chapter I argue that DBS are formed by two main components: the number of cognitions or attitudes about democracy that are available in an individuals' belief system and the constraint or coherent structuration of these cognitions or attitudes. An articulated DBS will be one in which a broad number of attitudes about how democracy ought to work in ideal terms – democratic aspirations– and how it works in reality –democratic evaluations– are available, and in which these attitudes are coherently structured. Relying on this theoretical framework and the measures of the different components of DBS this chapter addresses the following questions: (i) whether and to what extent the DBS of Europeans are articulated; (ii) whether there are any individual and country-level differences in the articulation of DBS; (iii) whether differences, if any, are linked to micro and macro factors commonly related to individuals' capacity to learn and develop attitudes about politics.

In the second part of the thesis, which is composed of two chapters, the focus shifts to analyzing how these democratic aspirations and evaluations, and the imbalance between the two, relate to the likelihood of turning out to vote and to the likelihood of protesting. Building on Verba et al (1995) civic voluntarism model, which underlines the importance of motivations, resources and mobilization for participation decisions, these attitudes are linked to these two forms of political participation.

Chapter 3 entitled "*Evaluations of the Quality of the Representative Channel and Unequal Participation*" addresses two questions: (i) how individuals' evaluations of the functioning of key elements of the representative channel –for example, the freedom and

fairness of elections— relate to their likelihood of voting and demonstrating; (ii) whether and how this process is moderated by individual resources as measured by education. Building on the notion that motivations are crucial for political participation decisions (Verba et al., 1995) this paper develops a theoretical framework to analyze how evaluations of the quality of the representative channel should alter individuals' motivations to engage in politics through different means. By addressing this question this paper engages with the emerging field of electoral integrity studies and extends their analysis to established democracies (Carreras and İrepoğlu, 2013; Norris, 2014). However, in this chapter I argue that when focusing on established democracies it is necessary to broaden the scope of this inquiry, since the quality of the representative channel is likely to depend on other factors that go beyond the integrity of the electoral process, for example, the ideological differentiation between political parties. At the same time, when analyzing this relationship it is fundamental to consider, first, that resources might be necessary for individuals to translate motivations into actions, and, second, that not all forms of participation pose the same demands in terms of individual resources. Based on these premises, I argue that negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel should only translate into a greater likelihood of demonstrating for those who are more educated while they should reduce the likelihood of not participating in elections among all individuals independently of their level of education. If this is confirmed, negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel could be considered an additional source of inequalities in political participation, since in the presence of negative evaluations those who are less educated will be much more likely to withdraw from the political process.

Chapter 4 entitled “*Democratic Discontent and Political Participation: a Multilevel Analysis*” relates to the recent literature that analyzes the relationship between individuals' discontent with the functioning of their democracies and their democratic institutions and the likelihood of participating in politics (e.g. Braun and Hutter, 2014; Dalton et al., 2010; Hooghe and Marien, 2013) and broadens the scope of this inquiry in two new directions. First, this chapter advocates for an improved measure of democratic discontent, which should be conceptualized and measured in way that is better suited to test the theoretical claims put forward by relative deprivation theory and that, at the same time, reflects the multidimensionality of democracy. Drawing on the relative deprivation theoretical framework (Gurr, 1968, 1970) in this chapter I develop a measure of democratic discontent that reflects

the mismatch or imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations in different dimensions of democracy (liberal and social). Hence, the first set of questions addressed in this chapter are: (i) how democratic discontent relates to the likelihood of turning out to vote and joining legal demonstrations; and (ii) whether there are any differences in the relationship between democratic discontent and political participation depending on the dimension of democracy –liberal or social– democratic discontent refers to. However, this chapter also takes into account that the context in which democratic discontent is rooted is likely to alter its impact on political participation. Drawing on the Political Opportunities Structure (POS) theoretical framework, in the second part of the chapter I argue that the relationship between democratic discontent and participation cannot be fully understood without considering whether in a country we can find actors that might mobilize specific forms of discontent in the electoral and protest arenas. Hence, this chapter also addresses the question of (iii) how the mobilizing potential of political parties and trade unions moderates the relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote and demonstrating.

Having assessed the relationship between democratic aspirations and evaluations and political participation, the third part of the thesis is devoted to analyze their relationship to party choice. With this purpose, *Chapter 5* entitled “*Democratic Discontent and Support for Mainstream and Challenger Parties: Rational Protest Voting*” assesses how the imbalances between democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations for five particular elements of democracy relate to the likelihood of defecting from mainstream parties and supporting left- and right-wing challenger parties. To address this question I develop a theoretical framework –the rational protest voting model– that combines elements of the ‘protest vote’ and ‘rational-choice’ hypotheses.³ Following the protest vote hypothesis I posit that democratic discontent should influence the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties and different types of challenger parties. However, as a difference from previous studies and following the rational choice hypothesis, I take into account that there might be different forms of discontent that are informed by individuals’ democratic aspirations, and that not all forms of discontent should relate to the likelihood of supporting mainstream and challenger parties in the same way. Hence, I conceptualize protest vote not as a vote devoid of any political meaning and detached

³ See Billiet and De Witte (1995) or *chapter 5* for an extended discussion about the protest and rational-choice hypotheses

from reality (Brug et al., 2000), but as a rational protest vote that is informed by individuals' democratic aspirations and the extent to which these are realized for particular elements of democracy. Hence, through this chapter I engage with the literature analyzing the rising support for challenger parties, and I address the question of whether the vote for these parties is just a protest vote, or whether, instead, it is a rational protest vote anchored in the specific elements of democracy with which citizens are not satisfied.

DEMOCRACY'S MANY ELEMENTS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

These research questions are addressed drawing on data from the sixth round of the European Social Survey (ESS). This survey includes a special module of questions measuring the importance individuals attribute to 16 different elements or principles of democracy for democracy in general –their democratic aspirations.⁴ The question used to gauge democratic aspirations reads:

Now some questions about democracy. Later on I will ask you about how democracy is working in [country]. First, however, I want you to think instead about how important you think different things are for democracy in general. There are no right or wrong answers so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me how important you think it is for democracy in general.

For each of the elements of democracy democratic aspirations are then captured through an 11 points scale where 0 indicates that a given element is “*Not at all important for democracy in general*” and 10 indicates that it is “*Extremely important for democracy in general*”.

⁴ ESS-6 includes three additional elements of democracy –freedom of expression, government responsiveness and power sharing– that are only considered in the first part of *Chapter 2*. Due to their trade-off nature these elements are measured using a different question format, which forces me to exclude them in all the other chapters of the thesis. Therefore, these elements of democracy are not discussed in this chapter. The question wording for these elements of democracy can be found in the appendix of *Chapter 2*.

These questions are followed by 14 questions asking respondents to state to what extent they believe that each of these elements is implemented in their country –their democratic evaluations.⁵ The question used to gauge democratic evaluations reads as follows:

Now some questions about the same topics, but this time about how you think democracy is working in [country] today. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think each of the following statements applies in [country]

For each of the elements of democracy democratic evaluations are then captured through an 11 points scale where 0 indicates that the respondent thinks that the statement “Does not apply at all” and 10 indicates that she thinks that it “Applies completely”.

The 16 elements of democracy included in the ESS allow us to measure citizens’ aspirations and evaluations about the fundamental model of liberal democracy, and also about two additional models of democracy that go beyond the liberal democracy model: the social-justice and the direct democratic models (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016a). The liberal model of democracy is based on basic civil liberties (for example the protection of minorities’ rights) and electoral guarantees (for example the freedom and fairness of elections). The social democratic model moves beyond procedures and incorporates social and distributive justice as constitutive elements of democracy. The direct-democratic model is based on the direct involvement of citizens in the decision making process. The elements of democracy included in the ESS and considered in this dissertation are summarized in *table 1*.

⁵ For two elements of democracy –horizontal accountability and migrants’ voting rights– democratic evaluations were not measured.

Table 1: The different elements of democracy

Element of democracy	Principle of democracy
Equality before the law (Rule of law)	That courts treat everyone the same
Freedom and fairness of elections	That national elections are free and fair
Horizontal accountability	That courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority
Media reliability	That the media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government
Vertical accountability	That governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job
Government justification	That the government explains its decisions to voters
Protection of minorities' rights	That the rights of minority groups are protected
Parties freedom	That opposition parties are free to criticize the government
Press freedom	That the media are free to criticize the government
Differentiated partisan offer	That different political parties offer clear alternatives to one another
Political deliberation	That voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote
Direct-democracy (referenda)	That citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums
Migrants' voting rights	That immigrants only get the right to vote in national elections once they become citizens
Responsibility towards other European governments	That politicians take into account the views of other European governments before making decisions
Protection against poverty	That the government protects all citizens against poverty
Reduction of income differences	That the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels
Minorities' rights	That the rights of minority groups are protected
Economic equality	That governments take measures to reduce differences in income levels

DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS AND EVALUATIONS AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: OPERATIONALIZATION DECISIONS

After analyzing in *chapter 2* the availability and structuration of democratic aspirations and evaluations, in *chapters 3 to 5* I rely on these aspirations and evaluations to operationalize the central independent variables of each chapter. Examining the research questions addressed by each of the chapters requires, though, a different approach to operationalizing the independent

variables based on individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations. Basically, there are three decisions one needs to adopt in order to operationalize these independent variables:

1. **Grouping:** Whether to group elements of democracy according to the model of democracy they pertain to (e.g. social-justice model) or any other theory driven criteria, or to rely on single elements of democracy separately (e.g. the freedom and fairness of elections).
2. **Combining:** Whether to combine democratic aspirations and evaluations into a single measure (or series of measures depending on the grouping decision), or to rely on democratic evaluations and/or democratic aspirations separately.
3. **Computing:** If aspirations and evaluations are combined, how to compute a variable based on the combination of the two.

These decisions are driven by the research questions addressed in each chapter and the main literature strand each of the chapters relates to. While the operationalization of each of the independent variables is discussed in full in the corresponding chapters, in this section I briefly discuss these decisions as well as the conceptual assumptions on which the different measures rest. It is worth noting that these different independent variables are implemented throughout the thesis because they are conceptually different, and, therefore, they serve different purposes and allow me to address each chapter's research questions.⁶

With regard to the decision of grouping, some of the questions addressed require me to group different elements into a composite measure while some other questions can be better addressed by relying on single indicators. Thus, in *chapter 5* I rely on five different independent variables relating to a single element of democracy each –free elections, minorities' rights, economic equality, direct-democracy, and responsibility. In contrast, in *chapter 3* the four elements of democracy that are related to the functioning of elections and the representative channel –free elections, vertical accountability, differentiated partisan offer and parties freedom– are grouped into a composite measure. In *chapter 4* I adopt a broader perspective and consider most of the elements of democracy included in the ESS, which I group into three

⁶ See Ferrín and Kriesi (2016b) volume for a similar approach, where the determinants of democratic aspirations, democratic evaluations, and a combination of the two (legitimacy) are analyzed.

theoretically derived groups –liberal, social-justice, and direct-democratic– following the models of democracy proposed by Ferrín and Kriesi (2016a).

With regard to the decision of combining aspirations and evaluations or not, in *chapter 3* to operationalize its main independent variable –individuals’ evaluations of the quality of the representative channel– only democratic evaluations are considered. The justification to restrict the independent variable to the evaluations is that in this chapter I do not intend to measure a feeling of discontent, which as I discuss in the next paragraphs would require me to incorporate democratic aspirations. Instead, in this chapter the goal is to directly capture individuals’ perceptions or judgment of the extent to which the representative channel or elections provide the proper means to transmit political demands and affect policymaking by voting. Higher evaluations indicate that the representative channel is working better, and vice versa for lower evaluations. Hence, in this case a simple measure based on individuals’ evaluations is the most adequate variable to address the research questions of this chapter. Moreover, this operationalization is in line with the variables used in the electoral integrity literature to which this paper relates (see e.g. Norris, 2014). The critical assumption underlying this operationalization, which also applies to all the other measures, is that different respondents interpret and use the 11 points response scales similarly.

In *chapters 4* and *5* the main goal is to analyze how democratic discontent relates to different forms of participation and to party choice, respectively. In both chapters the operationalization of democratic discontent builds upon the idea that discontent is generated when the political system does not work according to one’s expectations or aspirations (Gunther and Montero, 2006, pp. 48–49). Therefore, to operationalize the main independent variables of these chapters democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations are combined. This operationalization is in line with the notion of *critical citizens*, which proposes that discontent or dissatisfaction is generated by a combination of high or rising expectations about how democracy is supposed to work and a critical outlook about how it actually works (Norris, 1999).

The next decision one needs to adopt is how to compute a measure that combines democratic aspirations and evaluations. Arithmetically, there are many ways in which aspirations and evaluations can be combined –addition, subtraction, multiplication or division–, and each of them rests on different conceptual and empirical assumptions (Wessels, 2016). In

both *chapter 4* and *chapter 5* the two are combined by subtracting the evaluations from the aspirations for each of the elements of democracy considered in each chapter. The resulting measure indicates the mismatch or imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations, and it takes the value 0 when aspirations match evaluations. However, when relying on the balance measure one needs to decide how to treat negative values resulting from evaluations that are higher than aspirations (Wessels, 2016).

In *chapter 4* in those cases in which democratic evaluations are higher than aspirations the measure summarizing the mismatch between aspirations and evaluations for each element of democracy is recoded so that it takes the value 0.⁷ This decision is theoretically driven by the fact that in this chapter democratic discontent is conceptualized and operationalized building upon the concept of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1968, 1970). Deprivation implies the lack or deficit of a certain good or condition –in this case this is indicated by higher aspirations than evaluations for a particular element of democracy. Since a surplus of a certain element of democracy implies a complete absence of deprivation, in those cases in which evaluations are higher than aspirations the mismatch or imbalance measure is assigned the value 0.⁸

In *chapter 5*, instead, the variables measuring the imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations are allowed to take both positive and negative values. A positive value indicates that aspirations are higher than evaluation or a democratic deficit, a negative value indicates that evaluations are higher than aspirations or a democratic surplus. In this case, the decision is based on one of the central argument to be tested in the chapter: that democratic deficits and democratic surpluses for particular elements of democracy should make one more

⁷ This is the empirical strategy followed by Wessls (2016) to calculate a measure of democratic legitimacy based on the balance between democratic aspirations and evaluations.

⁸ This decision is also justified on methodological grounds. In this chapter the mismatches between aspirations and evaluations for different elements of democracy are aggregated to generate a summary measure for different models of democracy (liberal, social, direct-democratic). If negative values were not assigned the value 0 they might cancel the impact of the elements of democracy for which individuals perceive a deficit/deprivation. Moreover, in this chapter the mismatches between aspirations and evaluations for each element of democracy are weighted by the relative importance attributed by each individual to each of the elements of democracy. As it will become apparent in *chapter 4*, if the mismatch between aspirations and evaluations took negative values weighting the mismatch measure by the relative importance attributed to each element of democracy would be misleading.

likely to vote for a specific type of party. Therefore, the distinction between democratic deficits and surpluses is crucial to test the rational protest voting model that I develop in this chapter.⁹

Relying on these different operationalizations of the independent variables the chapters of this thesis assess how individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations relate to their political behavior. The empirical analyses reveal, first, that these attitudes towards democracy are widely available and coherently structured in the belief systems of most Europeans (*chapter 2*). Second, the analyses also show that democratic aspirations and evaluations and the imbalance between the two are significantly related to individuals' likelihood of participating in politics through different means (*chapters 3 and 4*). However, the impact of these variables on the likelihood of turning out to vote and demonstrating is moderated by individual resources, as measured by education (*chapter 3*), and by the mobilizing potential of political parties and trade unions (*chapter 4*). Finally, the results also reveal that the imbalance that individuals perceive between their democratic aspirations and evaluations is related to their likelihood of defecting from mainstream parties and supporting different types of challenger parties (*chapter 5*).

Through these analyses this thesis contributes to the academic debate about individuals' attitudes towards democracy, their relationship to different types of behaviors, and their consequences for the stability of advanced democracies. In fact, some of the empirical findings qualify the prevailing optimistic outlook about the behavior of those who are critical or dissatisfied with the functioning of their democracies. Hence, the findings of this thesis have several theoretical and practical implication for the study of political support and its potential impact on the functioning of contemporary democracies, which are discussed in the concluding chapter (*chapter 6*).

⁹ As a difference from *chapter 4*, in *chapter 5* different elements of democracy are not combined to generate a composite measure, and the balance between aspirations and evaluations is not weighted. Therefore, there are no methodological reasons to recode negative values into positive values or 0.

CHAPTER 2: DEMOCRACY BELIEF SYSTEMS IN EUROPE: COGNITIVE AVAILABILITY AND ATTITUDINAL CONSTRAINT

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade there has been a growing interest in identifying citizens' democratic aspirations or the way in which they conceive democracy (Chu et al., 2008; Dalton et al., 2008). This interest has been driven by the possibility that individuals may not share a common idea of democracy, and by the implications this may carry for the study of political support. Recent studies have expanded this inquiry and, besides democratic aspirations, they also analyze whether citizens evaluate that these democratic aspirations are fulfilled (Ferrín and Kriesi, 2016b).

These studies represent a relevant contribution for the study of attitudes towards democracy and political support. However, before settling on the relevant question of how individuals understand and evaluate democracy we should ask ourselves to what extent ordinary citizens are capable of elaborating opinions about democracy and democratic principles in the first place. Traditionally, it has been argued that the political belief systems of mass publics lack structure and coherence and that a sizable number of citizens are nearly ignorant of political facts (Converse, 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Hence, not all individuals might be capable of elaborating coherent opinions about democracy and its constitutive principles.

Through this paper I contribute to the emerging literature on citizens' understanding and evaluations of democracy by analyzing the articulation of individuals' belief systems about democracy. Hence, here the focus shifts from what people believe about democracy to an analysis of the extent to which mass publics are capable of developing structured attitudes about a relatively abstract political domain such as democracy. Adapting Converse's notion of Political Belief Systems (PBS), this paper analyzes the articulation of individuals' Democracy Belief Systems (DBS).¹⁰ The first goal of this paper is to operationalize and present an overview of individuals' DBS in Europe. The second goal of this paper is to trace the most relevant individual and country level correlates of the articulation of DBS. In line with recent

¹⁰ Previous studies already adapted Converse's notion of PBS to specific policy domains. For example, Rohrschneider (1993) analyzes Environmental Belief Systems (EBS).

findings about domain-specific PBS, the empirical results support the idea that most Europeans have coherently structured attitudes about democracy. However, even if the results show that, on average, Europeans have a relatively articulated DBS, the empirical analysis also suggests that there are some relevant individual and country level differences in the articulation of specific components of DBS.

In the next section I provide an overview of the main components of PBS and how they can be adapted to the analysis of DBS. In this section I also summarize the hypotheses about the individual and country level factors that should contribute to the articulation of DBS. Next I present details about the operationalization and measurement of the different variables. The empirical results follow, and the last section concludes.

THEORY

Political Belief Systems (PBS)

Converse defined a political belief system as ‘a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence’ (Converse, 1964, p. 207). A person’s political cognitions together with those with which they are constrained or interrelated form a PBS (Luskin, 1987). From this definition we can identify two central components of a PBS: the number of cognitions or attitudes available in an individual’s belief system, and the coherent structuration of these cognitions or attitudes. Following Goren (2013) I refer to the first element as cognitive availability and to the second as attitudinal constraint.

Studies analyzing PBS focus, predominantly, on attitudinal constraint and disregard cognitive availability (see Goren, 2013 for a recent exception). This is an important omission since the fact that a set of cognitions or attitudes about a political issue are available in one’s mind –or can at least be constructed on the spot– is a precondition for the existence of attitudinal constraint. The latter cannot exist without the former, because for a set of attitudes to be coherently structured these attitudes need first to be available in a belief system. As a consequence, by exclusively focusing on attitudinal constraint, most previous studies exclude

those citizens with low levels of cognitive availability.¹¹ This is a potentially relevant omission since cognitive availability is likely to vary as a function of socio-political factors like education or political interest (Berinsky, 2005). Hence, an analysis of cognitive availability should be the first step when studying PBS in any policy domain.

The fact that cognitions or attitudes about a given political issue are available in one's belief system is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a fully articulated PBS. It is well known that individuals' attitudes might not be coherently structured, since their declared attitudes might be just a reflection of 'non-attitudes' produced at random when required (Converse, 1970). For this reason, an articulated PBS also requires attitudes to be bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence. A coherent attitudinal configuration is a fundamental characteristic of an articulated belief system (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Martin, 2002).

Attitudinal constraint can be defined as 'the success we would have in predicting, given initial knowledge that an individual holds a specified attitude, that he holds certain further ideas and attitudes' (Converse, 1964, p. 207). Constraint is a relational property of attitudes, which implies that the different attitudes an individual holds in a given policy domain are structured forming a coherent whole. Therefore, in the presence of constraint it is less likely that the attitudes of a given individual are "non-attitudes" (Goren, 2013). This is the reason why attitudinal constraint has been considered a manifestation of rationality, coherence, sophistication, or consistency (Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008; Freeze and Montgomery, 2016; Rohrschneider, 1993; van Elsas, 2015).

Attitudinal constraint can take two forms: horizontal and vertical (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987). Horizontal constraint implies that two or more attitudes at the same level of abstraction are related in a predictable way. For example, knowing that someone favors increasing government spending in social housing we would predict that this person would also favor greater government spending in healthcare. Vertical constraint implies that some superordinate value, priority or attitude at a higher level of abstraction structures attitudes on more specific issues at a lower level of abstraction. One common example of a superordinate value that

¹¹ Most previous studies exclude those respondents who fail to provide a valid answer to any of the attitudinal items considered. While those who fail to provide a valid answer cannot be included in the analysis of attitudinal constraint, they can always be included in a first step of the analysis focused on cognitive availability.

shapes attitudes on more specific and less abstract issues is ideology. Continuing with the previous example, issue specific attitudes towards government spending on social housing and healthcare might derive from a broader stance towards the involvement of the government in the economy that is reflected in one's ideology. Knowing that someone considers herself left-wing we would predict, that in the presence of vertical constraint, she would favor greater government spending in social housing and healthcare. It is important to note that assessing the presence of horizontal and vertical constraint by analyzing the interrelationship between attitudes at the same and different levels of abstraction requires a theoretical framework that specifies a priori 'what goes with what'.

Early studies analyzing the articulation of PBS predominantly focused on horizontal constraint, and concluded that the PBS of mass publics lacked constraint (Converse, 1964; Klingemann, 1979). This conclusion was challenged by studies that showed that when the analyses pose a greater emphasis on vertical constraint, and the focus is domain-specific (i.e. analyzing attitudes on specific policy domains such as foreign policy), PBS appeared to be significantly more constrained than it was first assumed (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987). More recently the focus shifted from describing constraint levels to analyzing the variation in the articulation of PBS between population subgroups (Rohrschneider, 1993). In this case there are also contrasting findings. Some studies find that constraint levels vary according to attributes like education or political interest (Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008). In contrast, others have found that differences in attitudinal constraint between population subgroups are limited or inexistent, and that, on average, the public's attitudes are coherently organized. (Freeze and Montgomery, 2016; Goren, 2013; van Elsas, 2015).

Democracy Belief Systems (DBS)

In contrast to analyses of PBS, studies of conceptions of democracy have partially analyzed what I here define as cognitive availability. Some of these studies describe individuals' capacity to articulate a conception of democracy or their democratic aspirations (Bratton et al., 2005; Canache, 2012; Dalton et al., 2008; Hernández, 2016a). Recent studies also describe citizens' capacity to evaluate the performance of different aspects of their democracies (Dalton and Shin, 2014; Gómez and Palacios, 2016). Their conclusion is that a significant proportion of the population is incapable of articulating a fully-fledged conception or evaluation of

democracy. However, these studies only provide a superficial description of this important aspect of individuals' attitudes towards democracy, and are not integrated with analyses of the constraint of these attitudes.

A broader perspective needs to be adopted in order to analyze individuals' DBS. Drawing on the concept of PBS, I analyze three elements that indicate the extent to which DBS are articulated: cognitive availability, horizontal constraint, and vertical constraint. An articulated DBS will be one in which, first, a broad number of cognitions about how democracy ought to work (democratic aspirations) and how it works in reality (democratic evaluations) are available and accessible and, second, in which these cognitions or attitudes are coherently organized or constrained.

Cognitive availability is the first and fundamental component of DBS, and it refers to the number of cognitions about democracy that are accessible in a belief system. In order to express their democratic aspirations and to evaluate the extent to which these aspirations are fulfilled in the countries where they live citizens require some cognitions about democracy and its constitutive principles to be available and accessible in their belief systems. At this point it is important to remember that in the absence of cognitive availability attitudes towards democracy cannot be constrained either horizontally or vertically. As a consequence, the analysis of cognitive availability is the first step in the examination of the articulation of DBS.

Political cognitions are not directly apprehensible and must be inferred from what a person says or does (Luskin, 1987). Therefore, cognitive availability must be inferred from external manifestations. One approach to gauge availability is to rely on opinion-holding measures (Berinsky, 2005; Berinsky and Tucker, 2006; Dalton and Shin, 2014). According to this approach, when a survey respondent admits ignorance (i.e. that she 'doesn't know'), the presumption is that no attitude or cognition resides in memory.¹² That is, the cognition or attitude is unavailable.

I implement this approach in this paper by relying on questions that ask citizens how important they think certain democratic elements or principles (e.g. the rule of law) are for democracy in general (democratic aspirations), and to what extent they evaluate that these same principles or elements are applied in their countries (democratic evaluations). Hence, cognitive

¹² Recent studies appear to support this presumption (Luskin and Bullock, 2011)

availability captures, first, whether a cognition about a certain democratic element or principle (e.g. the rule of law) is available and accessible in the respondent belief system, and, second, whether that cognition can be related to an ideal notion of democracy or to an objective reality. In order to relate a democratic element or principle to an ideal or real notion of democracy one must see the logical connection between that element or principle and democracy. For example in the case of the principle of the rule of law, to link that concept to an ideal notion of democracy citizens first need to understand what the concept of the rule of law means, and, second, they need to consider whether and to what extent the rule of law is related to democracy (Ferrín, 2012).

Cognitive availability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for an articulated DBS. Besides a high level of cognitive availability an individual with an articulated DBS should also have coherently structured attitudes about democracy. As I argue above, analyzing attitudinal constraint requires a theoretical framework that provides guidance about ‘what goes with what’. It is possible to specify such a theoretical model for how democratic aspirations about specific elements of democracy should relate among themselves (horizontal constraint) and for how these aspirations should relate to superordinate attitudes or values (vertical constraint). However, this is not the case for the evaluations about how these same democratic elements are applied in a country, since their interrelationship and their relationship with attitudes at higher levels of abstraction are likely to be dependent on the specific democratic performance of each country and other idiosyncratic factors. Therefore, the analysis of constraint is limited to democratic aspirations.

Studies of PBS argue that in the presence of horizontal constraint attitudes tapping a common domain and located at the same level of abstraction should be positively correlated. However, in the case of DBS I draw on the logic of a hierarchical structuration of the model of liberal democracy proposed by Kriesi et al. (2016) to argue that correlation should not be the determinant of horizontal constraint. In this case, instead, horizontal constraint will be determined by the fact that democratic aspirations for elements of democracy pertaining to the liberal model of democracy are hierarchically structured in a coherent way.¹³ Hence, the fact

¹³ See next section for a methodological justification of the restriction of the analysis of constraint to the liberal model of democracy.

that democratic aspirations that tap a common domain and are located at the same level of abstraction are related in a predictable (hierarchical) way will denote horizontal constraint.

The idea that the importance individuals attribute to different elements of the liberal model of democracy (e.g. rule of law, free elections, press freedom) should be hierarchically structured derives from the fact that some of these elements such as the rule of law or free elections are considered indispensable by all theoretical notions of democracy (Fuchs, 1999). More demanding theoretical notions of liberal democracy always include these basic elements, which are complemented with additional elements or requirements (e.g. press freedom). One would expect individuals to follow a similar logic when determining the importance of different elements of democracy for an ideal democratic system (Hernández, 2016a; Kriesi et al., 2016). Individuals who attribute a high importance to non-essential elements of the liberal model should also attribute an equal or higher importance to its basic elements. It would be illogical that, for example, someone attributes a high importance to the fact that voters discuss about politics before deciding for whom to vote but, at the same time, attributes a lower importance to the fact that elections are conducted freely and fairly. This could be taken as an indication of a non-horizontally constrained or incoherently structured DBS. Hence, in the presence of horizontal constraint individuals' democratic aspirations should be hierarchically structured in a predictable way.

In the case of vertical constraint, a DBS will be constrained if a superordinate attitude or value located at the center of an individual belief system structures these democratic aspirations in a predictable way. The importance attributed to live in a democracy (i.e. preference to live in a democratic country without reference to any specific democratic element or principle) can be considered a general belief that is likely to be at the center of individuals' belief systems. In the presence of vertical constraint, democratic aspirations, which are located at a lower level of abstraction or a more peripheral position in belief systems, should be structured by this generic preference to live in a democratic regime. A stronger desire to live in a democracy (generic democratic preference) should be positively correlated with higher democratic aspirations.¹⁴ If for a given citizen there is a significant correspondence between this more abstract belief and her democratic aspirations, her DBS will be vertically constrained.

¹⁴ To ensure comparability between horizontal and vertical constraint the analysis of vertical constraint is also limited to the liberal elements of democracy.

The articulation of DBS: expectations

Given the domain specificity of DBS and the findings of studies that analyzed the availability and constraint of individuals' domain specific attitudes (Rohrschneider, 1993; van Elsas, 2015), one could expect that, on average, Europeans would have an articulated DBS. That is, a DBS in which, first, a broad number of cognitions about democracy are available and, second, in which these cognitions or attitudes are horizontally and vertically constrained.

Even if I expect DBS to be generally highly articulated, we might still find some individual and country differences in levels of articulation. To analyze these potential differences in the articulation of each of the components of DBS —cognitive availability, horizontal constraint and vertical constraint— I draw on the literature on how people learn and develop attitudes about politics. The main means to learn and develop structured attitudes about political objects are: direct experience with the object and exposure and comprehension of information about the object (Bizer et al., 2004; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Goren, 2013). Hence, one's ability, motivation and opportunities to learn about politics are crucial for the development of structured political cognitions (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996).

Education is one of the factors most often linked to the articulation of belief systems. Converse's (1964) seminal study showed that the PBS of the more educated were characterized by a wider range of abstract and highly organized cognitions. Education should be an important factor for the development of DBS not only because it is related to an enhanced capacity to process, coherently store and express opinions about democracy, but also because it is positively related to direct and indirect exposure to information about democracy (Nie et al., 1996). Hence, there are two mechanisms linking higher education to broader and more coherently organized attitudes: enhanced cognitive abilities and an increased likelihood of being exposed to information about democracy. As a consequence, *those who are more educated should have a more articulated DBS (H₁)*.

The importance an individual attributes to an object should also be linked to the development of structured attitudes and cognitions about that object. Object importance means that a person cares and is concerned about a given issue, and, as a consequence she is more motivated to monitor information and learn about that issue (Bizer et al., 2004). Political interest, which can be considered a proxy of the general importance that politics has in someone's life, reflects a greater motivation to learn and be informed about politics (Delli

Carpini and Keeter, 1996). As a consequence, *those who are more interested in politics should have a more articulated DBS (H₂)*.

In this paper I analyze belief systems in 29 different countries, which allows me to ascertain how country-level factors influence the articulation of DBS. Direct experience with an attitude object should contribute to the development of broader and more structured attitudes about that object (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). In line with this argument, institutional learning perspectives acknowledge the importance of a nation's institutional framework for the formation of attitudes (Rohrschneider, 1999). Interacting with a given political system increases individuals' opportunities and motivations to learn and internalize the prevailing norms of that institutional framework. In democratic contexts citizens' will be more likely to be incorporated to the democratic game and they will have greater chances of directly interacting with democratic institutions. As a consequence, the costs of acquiring information about democracy will be lower in those contexts. In countries with a prolonged experience of democracy the chances of having been actively or passively exposed to information about democracy will increase significantly. As it has been argued in previous studies, individuals living in young democracies lack this prolonged experience with democratic institutions, and, as a result, those individuals might have greater difficulties to evaluate the functioning and performance of democratic institutions (Torcal, 2006) Therefore, *in countries with a prolonged experience of democracy citizens should have a more articulated DBS (H₃)*.

An additional hypothesis can be derived from the fact that a longer historical experience of democracy is expected to increase the salience and availability of information about democracy. Information rich contexts have been shown to depress inequalities in political knowledge, especially in the case of differences related to education (Fraile, 2013). By increasing the opportunities of learning about democracy and making information about its main principles more readily available democratic regimes are, hence, expected to lead to a reduction of the impact of factors that might generate inequalities in the articulation of DBS such as education. As a consequence, *differences in the articulation of DBS across educational levels should be smaller in countries with a longer historical experience of democracy (H₄)*.

All previous hypotheses refer to the three components of DBS. However, the fact that attitudinal constraint is, by definition, relational implies that levels of constraint cannot be assessed for each specific attitudinal element of a belief system. By contrast, each of the

elements that form the cognitive availability dimension can be analyzed individually. For example, it is possible to analyze whether a cognition about the importance of free elections is available for a given individual. This allows me to assess the impact of contextual- and individual-level factors on the availability of cognitions about specific elements of democracy.

Drawing on the institutional learning logic, we could expect cross-country differences in the way in which democratic principles are institutionalized to give rise to differences in cognitive availability for specific elements of democracy. In the European context clear examples of cross country differences in the institutionalization of democratic principles are related, among others, to: the implementation and frequency of direct democratic procedures and the integration of countries in supra-national institutions like the European Union (Bochsler and Kriesi, 2013). Therefore, in some countries features of democracy like direct democracy will be more salient. Since salience implies that information about these elements of democracy will be more abundant, institutional learning is more likely to occur in these cases.¹⁵ As a consequence, *citizens should have higher cognitive availability about specific institutional elements of democracy in countries where those specific institutional elements are more present* (H₅).

DATA, MEASUREMENT AND METHOD

The empirical analyses of this paper draw on data from the sixth round of the European Social Survey (ESS). This survey includes a battery of questions that ask respondents to give their opinion about the importance they attribute to nineteen different elements for an ideal democratic system (democratic aspirations), followed by questions about their evaluation about the extent to which seventeen of these elements are applied in their countries (democratic evaluations). These questions refer to different elements or principles of democracy: equality before the law (rule of law), freedom of elections, government justification of decisions, media reliability, press freedom, the protection of minorities' rights, political parties' freedom, political deliberation, direct democracy, vertical or retrospective accountability, differentiated partisan offer, freedom of expression, government responsiveness, horizontal accountability,

¹⁵ Elsewhere I have presented a related argument and I have shown that citizens have higher cognitive availability for those elements that are considered on average more salient or important for democracy in a given country (Hernández, 2016a).

migrants' voting rights, power sharing, government responsibility towards other European governments, the government's role in protecting citizens against poverty, and the government's role in reducing income inequalities. Relying on these survey items an individual level measure of each of the DBS components is computed.¹⁶

Cognitive availability

The operationalization of cognitive availability is based on opinion holding measures. When a respondent admits that she does not know the answer when asked to state her opinion about the importance of a given element for an ideal democratic system or for how it is applied in her country the presumption is that a cognition about that element is not available in her belief system. Cognitive availability is operationalized by relying on the nineteen elements respondents were enquired about with respect to their democratic aspirations, and the seventeen elements capturing their democratic evaluations. Each of the elements takes the value 1 if the respondent provided a *don't know* answer and the value 0 otherwise.

I assess whether *don't know* answers to each of these questions capture a latent dimension and can be aggregated in an overall measure of cognitive availability through Mokken scaling. Mokken scaling is an item-response-theory (IRT) method that tests whether responses to different questions are governed by a latent trait (e.g. one's ability). The logic underlying Mokken scaling is simple. Each of the items can be hierarchically ordered according to some characteristic, for example, their difficulty. In the case under consideration, this is indicated by the number of respondents who provided a *don't know* answer to each of the items. Items with a larger share of *don't know* answers are considered more difficult. If responses to each of these items are governed by a latent trait (cognitive availability) those who have higher availability should only fail to respond to those more difficult items, while those who have lower availability should fail to respond to easier items as well. If this is confirmed, the items form a Mokken scale and they can be used to measure the latent trait by adding each of the items that reach acceptable levels of scalability.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the Mokken scale analysis. The second column $\text{Pr}(x=1)$ indicates the difficulty parameter for each of the items, with more difficult items taking

¹⁶ Details about the question wording and distribution of all the variables used in this paper can be found in the appendix.

higher values. The third column summarizes the Loevinger-H index for each of the items, and at the bottom of the table the Loevinger-H coefficient of scalability is summarized. Mokken (1971) argues that scales with a scalability coefficient higher than 0.3 satisfy a Mokken scale. A coefficient between 0.3 and 0.4 indicates that the scale is weak, between 0.4 and 0.5 that the scale is moderate and higher than 0.5 that the scale is strong. The same thresholds can be applied to the Loevinger-H coefficient of each item. Hence, these results indicate that all items have good scalability properties and that both scales are strong.¹⁷

Table 1: Mokken scale analysis of cognitive availability items

Aspirations			Evaluations		
	Pr(x=1)	Loevinger H		Pr(x=1)	Loevinger H
Government responsibility	8.6	0.55	Government responsibility	13.4	0.58
Power sharing	7.3	0.38	Power sharing	9.3	0.43
Migrants' voting rights	5.8	0.50	Government responsiveness	7.1	0.44
Horizontal accountability	5.0	0.50	Minorities' rights	6.9	0.43
Government responsiveness	4.8	0.36	Vertical accountability	6.1	0.50
Freedom of expression	4.6	0.34	Differentiated partisan offer	6.0	0.51
Differentiated partisan offer	4.1	0.53	Political deliberation	5.8	0.46
Vertical accountability	3.7	0.50	Direct democracy	5.6	0.50
Direct democracy	3.6	0.53	Freedom of expression	5.3	0.40
Political deliberation	4.0	0.52	Parties' freedom	4.5	0.53
Parties' freedom	3.5	0.56	Rule of law	4.2	0.44
Minorities' rights	3.7	0.49	Reduction income differences	4.0	0.49
Reduction income differences	2.7	0.54	Media reliability	4.1	0.52
Press freedom	2.7	0.61	Government justification	3.8	0.56
Media reliability	2.3	0.64	Free elections	3.6	0.50
Government justification	2.3	0.63	Press freedom	3.5	0.58
Free elections	2.2	0.61	Protection against poverty	2.3	0.62
Protection against poverty	1.8	0.62	Migrants' voting rights	-	-
Rule of law	1.8	0.66	Horizontal accountability	-	-
Loevinger H of scalability		0.52	Loevinger H of scalability		0.49
Monotonicity assumption		Yes	Monotonicity assumption		Yes

¹⁷ I computed an additional Mokken scale in which both aspirations and evaluations items were included. For this new scale all items were above the 0.3 cutoff and the Loevinger H coefficient of scalability equaled 0.47 (results not shown). Exploratory factor analyses of the democratic aspirations and evaluations cognitive availability items yield a one-factor solution both for democratic aspirations and evaluations, with only one factor extracted with an eigenvalue higher than one and with all items loading strongly on the first dimension.

These results not only indicate that these items can be used to compute an additive cognitive availability scale, but they also support the idea that *don't know* answers are governed by a latent trait and are, therefore, not likely to be generated at random. The cognitive availability variable is computed by adding up all the cognitive availability items; it is rescaled to range between 0 and 100; and it is reversed so that higher values indicate higher levels of cognitive availability (i.e. a lower number of *don't know* answers).

Horizontal and vertical constraint

There is an unresolved methodological controversy as to how attitudinal constraint should be measured (Martin, 2002). Following Converse (1964) a significant number of studies have relied on correlations among issues located at the same level of abstraction to measure horizontal constraint. An alternative approach was proposed by Peffley and Hurwitz (1985) who advocated for the use of latent measurement models. More recent studies have relied on techniques like relational class analysis, which can accommodate group heterogeneity (Baldassarri and Goldberg, 2014). However, as Luskin (1987) pointed out, the problem of these techniques is that they produce aggregate or group level measures of constraint. Even if they are estimated using individual level data, individual level estimates of horizontal constraint cannot be obtained through these methods.

Without relating to the literature on attitudinal constraint, but focusing on a closely related topic, van Elsas (2015) argues that assessing the internal consistency or rationality of political attitudes requires a scaling method that considers structured differentiation in answering patterns as a measure of consistency. For this reason, she relies on Mokken scaling to assess the internal consistency of individuals' political trust. However, in her analysis she just compares the overall fit (Loevinger-H coefficient of scalability) obtained from a Mokken scale analysis of political trust items across different education groups, but she does not compute individual level estimates of internal consistency or constraint.

In this paper I adopt the same approach but fully exploiting the potential of Mokken scaling to estimate a measure of horizontal constraint for each respondent. Like any other approach to measure horizontal constraint this method requires me to select a set of theoretically related items. As I argue above, in order to measure horizontal constraint I draw on the logic of a hierarchical structuration of the liberal model of democracy proposed by Ferrín

and Kriesi (2016).¹⁸ This model comprises the following elements of democracy: rule of law, freedom of elections, horizontal accountability, media reliability, vertical accountability, government justification, minorities' rights, parties' freedom, press freedom, differentiated partisan offer, and political deliberation.¹⁹

To generate an individual level measure of horizontal constraint I first estimate a Mokken scale model including all the items measuring democratic aspirations for elements pertaining to the liberal model of democracy. As a difference from the cognitive availability model, in this case, the items are not dichotomous but range between 0 and 10, because the intention is to capture the importance individuals attribute to each element of democracy on an 11 points scale. Therefore, a polytomous Mokken scale model is estimated (Hardouin et al., 2011). Although the estimation of the summary parameters is more complex than in the case of dichotomous items, the underlying logic is the same. *Table 2* summarizes the results of this model. Results show that the hierarchy established by respondents with regards to which are, on average, the most and least important elements is coherent with theoretical models of democracy, since elements like the rule of law or free elections are the elements to which respondents attribute a higher importance. All the item-specific and scale Loevinger coefficients have an acceptable fit, which could be taken as a first indication that, on average, Europeans' liberal democratic aspirations are coherently structured or horizontally constrained.²⁰

To compute an individual level measure of horizontal constraint I estimate the Gutman errors induced by each individual. The Gutman errors constitute the basis for the computation of the item-specific and scalability H coefficients, and capture, for each pair of items, whether

¹⁸ Ferrín and Kriesi (2016b) propose two additional models of democracy: the direct democratic and the social justice models. However, given that the ESS only includes two elements measuring the importance citizens attribute to elements of each of these models of democracy the methodology based on Mokken scaling cannot be implemented. For this reason this part of the analysis is restricted to the liberal model of democracy.

¹⁹ Ferrín and Kriesi (2016b) include two additional elements in their model of liberal democracy: migrants' voting rights and responsibility towards other European governments. In this case these elements are excluded due to their high number of missing values.

²⁰ An exploratory factor analysis of the liberal democracy aspirations items yields a one-factor solution, with only one factor extracted with an eigenvalue higher than one and with all items loading strongly on the first dimension.

an individual attributes a higher importance to a lower ranked element (e.g. deliberation) than to a higher ranked element (e.g. free and fair elections). From the Mokken scale model, the total number of Gutman errors of each individual (e_n) for all the possible combinations of items included in the scale can be computed. The greater e_n the more times and more severely each individual has violated the hierarchy of the items, as defined by the response pattern of all respondents included in the sample (see Hardouin et al., 2011 for further details about the computation of e_n). Emons' (2008) simulations show that in the case of polytomous items a count of e_n is effective to characterize individual level fit. Hence, to compute the measure of horizontal constraint e_n is simply reversed and rescaled to range between 0 and 100, with higher values indicating a lower number of Gutman errors and, therefore, a higher level of horizontal constraint.

Table 2: Polytomous Mokken scale analysis for the calculation of horizontal constraint

Liberal democracy aspirations		
	Mean	Loevinger H
Rule of law	9.21	0.48
Free elections	8.94	0.47
Horizontal Accountability	8.77	0.42
Media reliability	8.73	0.5
Vertical accountability	8.37	0.39
Government justification	8.35	0.44
Minorities' rights	8.3	0.41
Parties' freedom	8.28	0.48
Press freedom	8.23	0.45
Differentiated partisan offer	7.97	0.43
Political deliberation	7.41	0.34
Loevinger H of scalability		0.43
Monotonicity assumption		Yes

Different methods have also been proposed to measure vertical constraint. Some studies have assessed vertical constraint through structural equation models linking superordinate values and issue specific attitudes (Goren, 2013; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Rohrschneider, 1993). Others either relied on the analysis of correlations between superordinate attitudes and issue specific attitudes, or analyzed the variance explained in issue specific attitudes by the superordinate attitude (Baldassarri and Gelman, 2008; Granberg and Holmberg, 1996; Jennings, 1992). A similar approach is adopted here.

To evaluate the vertical constraint of DBS the correspondence between individuals' generic preference to live in a democracy and individuals' liberal democratic aspirations is first evaluated by analyzing the correlation between the two.²¹ A positive correlation is expected since the former is considered a superordinate and more central value that should structure democratic aspirations. Next, to compute a measure of vertical constraint for each respondent I estimate an OLS model in which liberal democratic aspirations are specified as the dependent variable and the generic preference to live in democracy is specified as the independent variable. In a second step the absolute value of the residuals of this model are calculated for each respondent. These residuals represent the part of the variation in individuals' democratic aspirations not explained by their generic preference to live in a democracy. The resulting variable is rescaled to range between 0 and 100 and is reversed so that higher values indicate smaller residuals and, as a consequence, higher vertical constraint.

Model estimation and independent variables

To analyze the individual and country-level correlates of the articulation of DBS I estimate a series of regression models specifying each of the DBS components as the dependent variables. Given the hierarchical nature of the data (respondents nested into countries) and the use of both individual and country-level variables I estimate all models through random-intercepts linear models.

All models include the following individual level variables: education measured in three categories (primary or less, secondary, university), political interest (measured in four categories ranging from not at all interested in politics to very interested). At the country level three variables are introduced in the models. First, the historical experience of democracy of a

²¹ In order to ensure comparability between the measures of horizontal and vertical constraint and to ensure that the same respondents are included in the analysis of vertical and horizontal constraint the analysis of vertical constraint is also limited to the liberal elements of democracy. The measure of citizens' liberal democratic aspirations is obtained by adding all the elements of the liberal model of democracy included in the Mokken scale model used to estimate citizens' horizontal constraint and dividing this measure by the number of items (11). Including democratic aspirations related to the social-justice and direct-democratic models of democracy in the analysis of vertical constraint does not substantially alter the conclusions. The generic preference to live in a democracy is measured through a question asking respondents to state "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?". See table A1 in the appendix for further details.

given country, measured as the number of years a country can be considered democratic according to Polity IV. Second, the effective use of direct democratic mechanisms in a given country, measured as the number of referenda celebrated in each country in the last 40 years. To mitigate the impact of countries with a very prolonged experience of democracy or a high number of referenda I rely on the log transformation of these variables. Third, a variable capturing whether a country is a member of the European Union, which takes the value 1 for those countries that are members and 0 otherwise. Three additional individual level control variables are introduced in all models: age, age squared, and gender.

RESULTS

The articulation of Democracy Belief Systems in Europe

For the presentation of the results I first provide a descriptive overview of each of the components of Europeans' DBS. I begin with the analysis of cognitive availability, which is a precondition for the existence of attitudinal constraint. The cognitive availability dimension is rightly skewed and has a mean of 94 and a standard deviation of 13. Hence, cognitive availability is, on average, high in European countries. Only eight percent of the sample has a value lower than 80, which corresponds to having provided a valid answer for 29 of the 36 questions about democratic aspirations and evaluations. In fact, 64 percent of the sample has a value of 100 or full cognitive availability. This result indicates that a majority of respondents were able to link each and every element of democracy to an ideal conceptualization of democracy and to an evaluation of how the same elements are applied in their country. The percentage of respondents with full cognitive availability about democracy is lower than this same percentage in other areas like, for example, basic policy principles for which approximately 90 percent of respondents tend to have full cognitive availability (Goren, 2013). In any case, the proportion of citizens with full cognitive availability can still be considered relatively high since democracy and its main principles are abstract topics.

Even if the DBS of most citizens are characterized by a wide range of cognitions about democracy, these cognitions might not be coherently organized. To assess this I first analyze the horizontal constraint of Europeans' DBS. The horizontal constraint dimension is measured from 0 to 100 with higher values indicating higher horizontal constraint. The distribution of this variable is also rightly skewed since it has a mean of 92 and a standard deviation of 12.

Although this measure, based on the number of Gutman errors of each individual, is ideal to make comparisons in the levels of horizontal constraint between individuals, it does not directly provide a threshold to characterize whether horizontal constraint is, on average, high or low. However, a threshold can be easily established since the number of Gutman errors (e_n) constitute the basis for the calculation of H-indexes and, therefore, each value in the horizontal constraint dimension can be associated to a specific H-index (Hardouin et al., 2011). A common rule-of-thumb in Mokken scale analysis is that a set of items has acceptable scalability properties if the H-index is equal or higher than 0.3. This same threshold can be used for each individual H-index. The analysis reveals that in this particular case the value 91 in the horizontal constraint measure corresponds to an H-index of 0.3. Hence, all those respondents with a value equal or higher than 91 can be considered to have a horizontally constrained DBS. Only 25 percent of respondents have a value lower than 91 in the horizontal constraint dimension. This means that a majority of respondents have a coherent structuration of their democratic aspirations. Most citizens, no matter how high or low their democratic aspirations are, appear to recognize that there are some basic elements of democracy, like free elections or the rule of law, to which they usually attribute a higher or equal importance than to other non-basic elements of democracy like, for example, deliberation before deciding for whom to vote.

The next step in the descriptive analysis consists on examining the extent to which individuals' DBS are vertically constrained. The vertical constraint dimension, which is also measured from 0 to 100, has a mean of 89 and a standard deviation of 8. However, again, while this measure is useful in relative terms (to compare constraint levels between individuals) it does not provide a threshold to judge whether the vertical structuration of DBS is, on average, high or low. A better assessment of Europeans' overall levels of vertical constraint is provided by the correlation between individuals' democratic aspirations and the general importance they attribute to live in a democratic country. The correlation between the two equals 0.44 and is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.²² Contrasting this level of constraint to comparable studies of PBS—which have focused on the correspondence (correlation) between the positioning of citizens on the left-right dimension and their issue positions on policy issues—the average level of vertical constraint of DBS (0.44) is higher than the average level of vertical constraint

²² The correlation is statistically significant in all countries included in the sample.

of the PBS of those individuals considered in these early studies (see Granberg and Holmberg, 1996; Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Jennings, 1992). In fact, the comparison with these studies reveals that the average vertical constraint of citizens' DBS is similar to the levels of vertical constraint that one could find in the PBS of the most politically sophisticated fraction of the population considered in these early studies.

These results indicate that, on average, the horizontal and vertical structuration of individuals' DBS is high. However, it is important to note a potential limitation of these measures that could lead to an overestimation of constraint levels. Since full cognitive availability is a prerequisite for the measurement of attitudinal constraint these results are restricted to the subsample of respondents that did not provide a *don't know* answer for any of the liberal democratic aspirations items used to operationalize vertical and horizontal constraint.²³ This subsample represents approximately 85 percent of the ESS sample. Given that cognitive availability is positively related to factors like education or political interest (see below) the examined subsample is likely to be biased and might have higher levels of horizontal and vertical constraint than the target population.

Overall, though, the descriptive analysis indicates that Europeans' DBS are broad ranging and coherently organized. The average of the three different components of DBS—cognitive availability, horizontal constraint and vertical constraint—across all countries equals 91.6. However, notwithstanding this high level of DBS articulation, there might still be differences across countries, since in some countries individuals might have relatively less articulated DBS. To make an overall comparison across countries I estimate the proportion of respondents that in each country falls below the value that corresponds to the 25th percentile for each of the three DBS components in the pooled sample. The average of these three measures can be used to characterize countries as a function of the proportion of individuals with relatively low levels of DBS articulation.²⁴ *Figure 1* summarizes these differences by

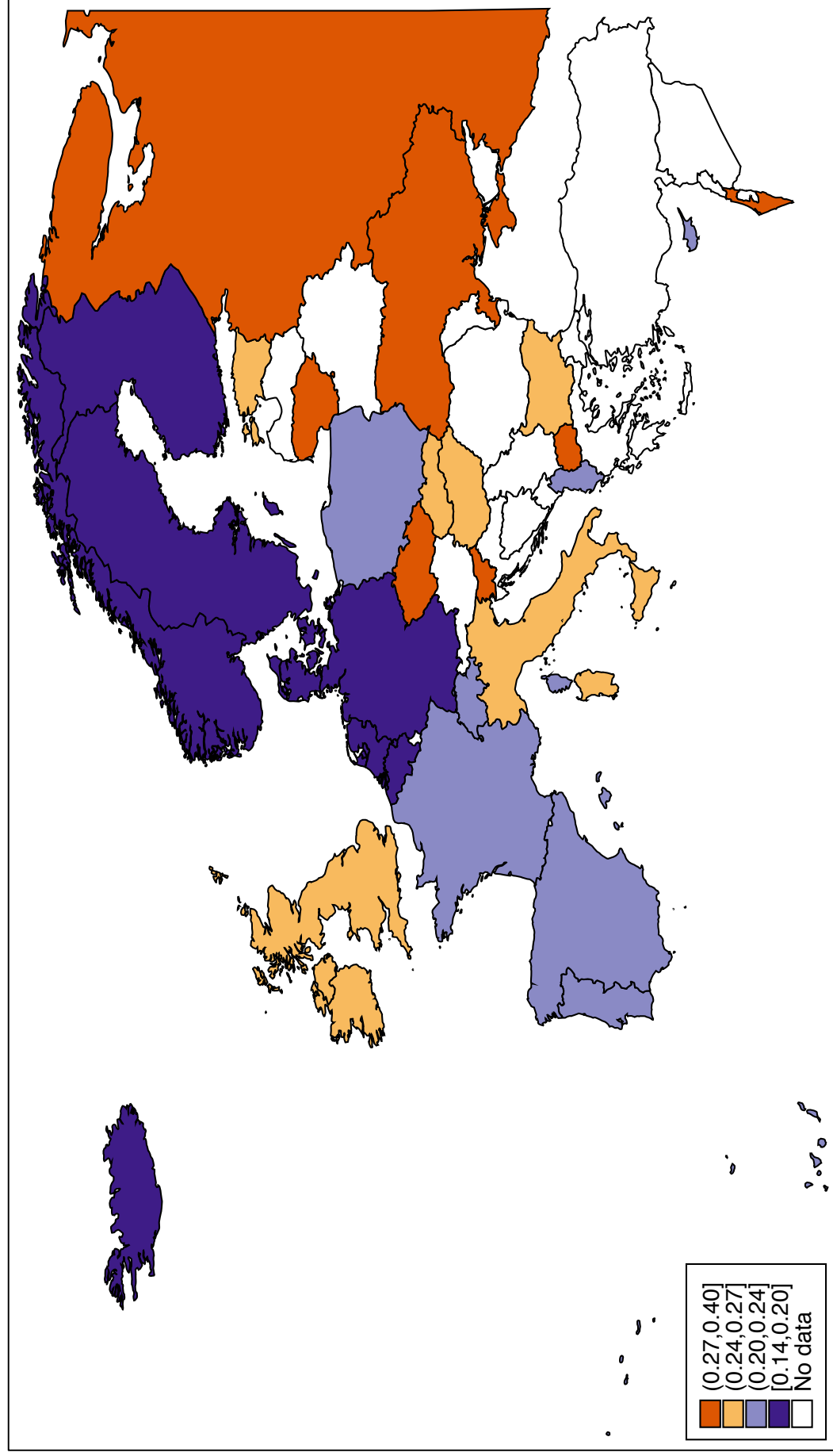
²³ This limitation is imposed by the fact that including individuals who have a missing value in any of the elements could bias the estimation of the number of Gutman errors (Emons, 2008).

²⁴ The cutoff values corresponding to the 25th percentile are determined by the distribution of each of the DBS components in the pooled sample, which includes all countries. Those respondents falling below that cutoff value for each of the DBS components are the individuals with the lower levels of cognitive availability, horizontal and vertical constraint in relative terms. After estimating the proportion of individuals falling below that cutoff value

grouping countries into four groups according to the proportion of respondents with relatively low levels of DBS articulation. The map shows that, with the exception of Italy, Ireland and the UK, the proportion of individuals with a relatively low articulation of DBS is significantly lower in West European countries. Conversely, in Central and Eastern European countries there seems to be a higher proportion of individuals with less articulated DBS, especially in countries like Russia or Ukraine, where approximately 35 percent of respondents fall below the 25th percentile for each of the DBS components.

for each of the components in each country the average proportion of the three components is calculated. For example, in the case of Russia the proportion of respondents that falls below the cutoff value equals 0.40 for cognitive availability, 0.32 for horizontal accountability, and 0.49 for vertical constraint. Hence the average value for Russia equals 0.40. According to the value of this average, countries are assigned to one of the groups of the map (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1: Relatively low articulation of DBS in Europe (average proportion of respondents below the 25th percentile for each of the three DBS components).



Correlates of the articulation of Democracy Belief Systems

Model 1 in *table 3* summarizes the results of an analysis of the correlates of cognitive availability, which allows me to assess whether there are any significant differences between those individuals with higher and lower levels of cognitive availability. It appears that the belief systems of those who are more educated are characterized by a wider range of cognitions about democracy. Those with university education have higher levels of cognitive availability. The difference on the average level of cognitive availability between those with primary and university education is substantial since it is equivalent to a 0.45 standard deviation change in the cognitive availability index. However, the most relevant individual level differences in cognitive availability are related to political interest. Moving from being not at all interested in politics to being very interested in politics is related to a positive change of 7.2 units in the cognitive availability index, which is equivalent to an increase of 0.55 standard deviations in this variable. Hence, I find evidence in favor of the first and second hypotheses, which posit that motivational aspects, captured by political interest, and cognitive abilities, measured by education, are relevant predictors of cognitive availability.

To test the institutional learning hypothesis I introduce in *model 1* a variable measuring countries' historical experience of democracy. The coefficient of this variable confirms that in countries with a longer tradition of democracy, where individuals are more likely to have been exposed to information about democracy, individuals have a broader range of cognitions about democracy. This variable, as all other country-level predictors used throughout the paper, ranges from 0 to 1. Hence, moving from the country with the shortest experience of democracy to the one with the longest is related to an increase of 4.3 units in the cognitive availability dimension. Although of moderate magnitude, this effect contrasts with the findings of Dalton et al. (2008), who argued that democratic experience had no impact on 'citizens' awareness' about democracy.

Table 3: The correlates of cognitive availability: random intercepts linear models

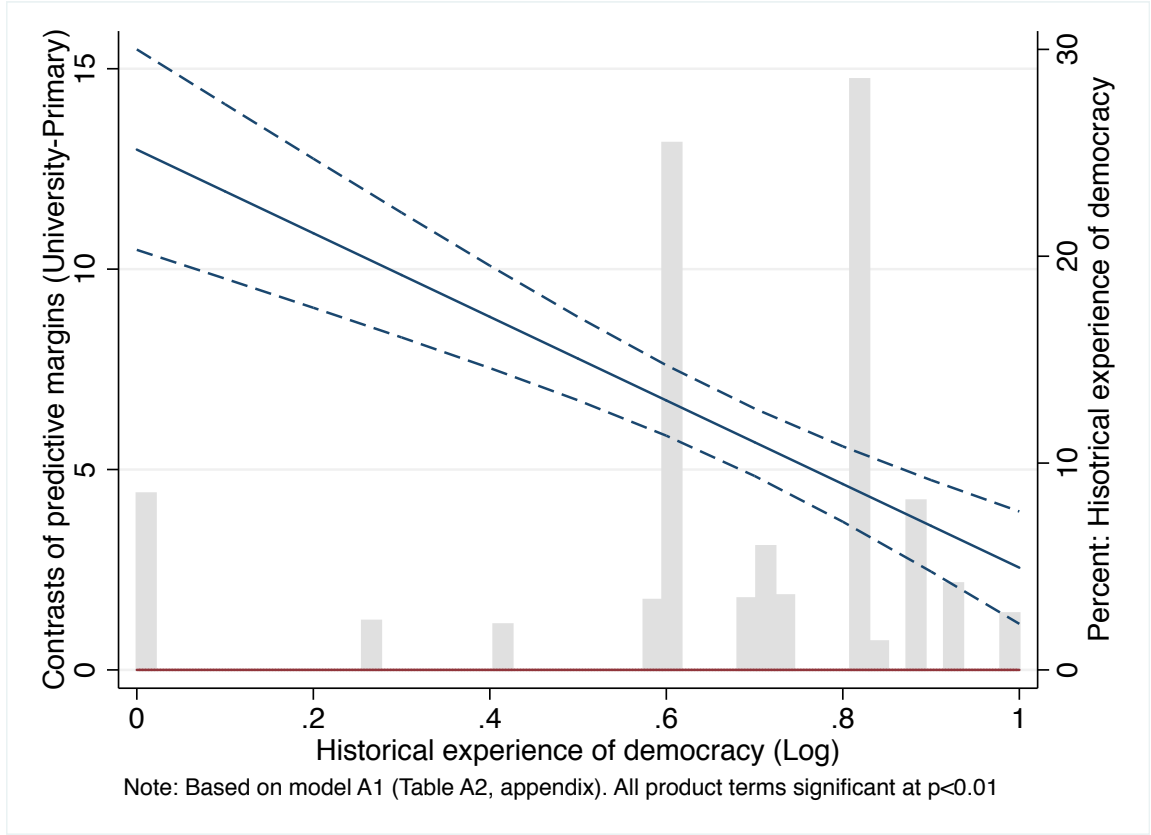
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Cognitive availability	CA*: Aspi. Direct democracy	CA: Eval. Direct democracy	CA: Aspi Responsibility	CA: Eval Responsibility
<u>Individual level variables</u>					
Education (ref: primary)					
- Secondary	4.234** (0.199)	0.052** (0.003)	0.061** (0.004)	0.070** (0.004)	0.065** (0.005)
- University	5.265** (0.219)	0.061** (0.003)	0.074** (0.004)	0.096** (0.005)	0.099** (0.006)
Political interest (ref: not interested)					
- Very interested	7.228** (0.217)	0.060** (0.003)	0.078** (0.004)	0.110** (0.005)	0.135** (0.006)
- Quite interested	7.086** (0.157)	0.060** (0.002)	0.077** (0.003)	0.102** (0.003)	0.122** (0.004)
- Hardly interested	5.553** (0.150)	0.049** (0.002)	0.061** (0.003)	0.079** (0.003)	0.082** (0.004)
Age	0.308** (0.015)	0.003** (0.000)	0.004** (0.000)	0.003** (0.000)	0.005** (0.000)
Age²	-0.003** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Male	1.806** (0.108)	0.015** (0.002)	0.023** (0.002)	0.029** (0.002)	0.055** (0.003)
<u>Country-level variables</u>					
Historical experience democracy (Ln)	4.348** (1.391)	0.026* (0.012)	0.049** (0.014)	0.066 (0.042)	0.085+ (0.046)
Direct democracy use (Ln)		0.029* (0.012)	0.030* (0.014)		
EU-member				0.038+ (0.022)	0.047+ (0.025)
Constant	76.363** (1.058)	0.774** (0.012)	0.684** (0.014)	0.636** (0.029)	0.512** (0.032)
<u>Random-effects parameters</u>					
SD Constant	1.765 (0.238)	0.014 (0.002)	0.016 (0.002)	0.048 (0.006)	0.053 (0.007)
Observations	53,924	53,793	53,774	53,774	53,756
Number of groups	29	29	29	29	29

Standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Note: CA* = Cognitive Availability. Model 1 OLS. Models 2-5 LPM.

The increasing opportunities to learn about democracy in countries with a longer democratic tradition are also expected to reduce the inequalities in cognitive availability related to education that I have just identified. In order to test this hypothesis I specify a cross-level interaction between education and historical experience of democracy (see *table A2 in the appendix*). *Figure 1* summarizes the results and shows how the differences in cognitive availability between those with primary and university education change as a function of a country historical experience of democracy. As expected, these differences are high in those

Figure 2: Contrasts of predictive margins of cognitive availability between those with university and primary education as a function of a country’s historical experience of democracy.



countries with a short experience of democracy and become substantially smaller as the number of years that a country has been a democracy increase.²⁵ These results support the idea that in contexts in which information about democracy is more likely to be readily available inequalities in cognitive availability are smaller.

To probe further into the institutional learning argument and test the fifth hypothesis I estimate four additional models. In these models the dependent variables measure cognitive availability about specific elements of democracy (direct democracy, and responsible governments) for which there is no clear prescription from democratic theory and for which

²⁵ A similar result is obtained when assessing the change in the differences in cognitive availability between those with primary education and secondary education and those with secondary and university education. For the latter, in the contexts with the longest historical experience of democracy (values higher than 0.8 in the historical experience of democracy variable) the differences in cognitive availability between these two groups are not statistically significant at conventional levels.

there is clear variation in the extent to which each of them is implemented in each country.²⁶ Drawing on this variation I test whether cognitive availability about these elements of democracy is related to the extent to which they are present in each country.

Models 2 and 3 in table 1 summarize the relationship between the frequency of referenda and cognitive availability about direct democracy. The coefficients of the direct democracy variable indicate that in countries where a greater number of referenda have taken place respondents are more likely to be able to express their democratic aspirations about direct democracy and to evaluate the extent to which direct democracy is applied in their countries. Hence, this indicates that the greater salience and visibility of direct democracy in those countries in which this particular institutional feature is more present increases cognitive availability about this particular element of democracy.

A similar pattern is uncovered by *models 4 and 5* which summarize the relationship between EU membership and citizens' cognitive availability about responsibility towards other European governments.²⁷ These models indicate that in countries with a greater degree of European integration, as measured by their EU membership status, individuals are more likely to be able to express their aspirations and evaluations with regard to the fact that their national governments take into account the views of other European governments before taking decisions. Hence, in countries where these aspects of democracy are more likely to be salient and more likely to be the object of public debate citizens appear to have greater cognitive availability about these elements of democracy.

Focusing on horizontal constraint, *model 6 in table 4* summarizes the relationship between individual and country level characteristics and horizontal constraint. This model reveals that even if education and political interest are positively related to the horizontal constraint of DBS the effect of these variables is negligible. Even though the coefficients of these variables are statistically significant at conventional levels, their substantive impact on horizontal constraint is limited. For example, moving from primary to university education is

²⁶ The dependent variables of models 2-5 take values 0 and 1, with 1 indicating that cognition about a certain element is available in the respondent belief system.

²⁷ Responsibility towards other European governments refers to the importance citizens attribute to the fact that their national governments take into account the views of other European governments before taking decisions, or whether they evaluate this to be the case in their countries.

just associated with a 0.14 standard deviation change in horizontal constraint. At the country level, there are no significant differences in the extent to which citizens' DBS are horizontally constrained between countries with a shorter and longer historical experience of democracy. Hence, there is no significant variation in levels of horizontal constraint across population subgroups. Similar conclusions are reached if instead of a continuous measure of horizontal constraint the variable is dichotomized so that it takes the value 1 for those with a horizontal constraint value higher or equal than 91 (equivalent to a 0.3 Loevinger H-coefficient) and the value 0 otherwise.

Table 4: The correlates of horizontal and vertical constraint: random intercepts linear models

	(6) Horizontal constraint	(7) Vertical constraint	(8) Vertical constraint
<u>Individual level variables</u>			
Education (ref: primary)			
- Secondary	0.768** (0.174)	1.188** (0.156)	1.116** (0.155)
- University	1.369** (0.189)	2.407** (0.169)	2.277** (0.168)
Political interest (ref: not interested)			
- Very interested	0.785** (0.182)	2.101** (0.162)	2.024** (0.161)
- Quite interested	1.298** (0.135)	2.154** (0.121)	2.029** (0.120)
- Hardly interested	0.829** (0.131)	1.315** (0.117)	1.236** (0.117)
Age	0.051** (0.013)	0.054** (0.012)	0.049** (0.012)
Age2	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)
Male	-0.564** (0.090)	-0.025 (0.080)	0.031 (0.080)
Horizontal constraint			0.097** (0.004)
<u>Country-level variables</u>			
Historical experience democracy (Ln)	1.142 (0.869)	5.449** (0.949)	5.346** (0.934)
Constant	89.136** (0.699)	82.029** (0.735)	73.401** (0.812)
<u>Random-effects parameters</u>			
SD Constant	1.089 (0.150)	1.199 (0.162)	1.179 (0.160)
Observations	46,810	46,810	46,810
Number of groups	29	29	29

Standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

The results obtained for horizontal constraint clearly contrast with those obtained for cognitive availability. These findings are, though, in line with recent analyses about the structuration of individuals' domain-specific PBS. These studies have shown that most citizens have a coherently structured PBS and that education and political awareness do not have a substantial impact on the extent to which belief systems are coherently structured or constrained (Goren, 2013; van Elsas, 2015).

Turning now to the analysis of the individual and country level determinants of vertical constraint, *model 7* in table 4 summarizes the results of the regression analysis in which the individual level measure of vertical constraint is specified as the dependent variable. In this case, education appears to have a slightly more significant impact. Moving from primary to university education is related to an increase of 2.4 units in the measure of vertical constraint, which is equivalent to an increase of 0.3 standard deviations in the level of vertical constraint. The same occurs in the case of political interest, since the DBS of those who are more interested in politics appear to be more vertically constrained. However, the most relevant difference between the horizontal and vertical constraint models relates to the impact of countries' democratic trajectory. In countries with a prolonged experience of democracy the vertical constraint of DBS is substantially higher. Moving from the country with the shortest historical experience of democracy to the one with the longest implies an increase in the level of vertical constraint of 5.4 units (equivalent to a 0.6 standard deviation change in the vertical constraint variable). Although the models are not entirely comparable due to the different number of cases included, the influence of this variable on vertical constraint appears to be stronger than its influence on cognitive availability.

I specify an additional model (*model 8*) to analyze the relationship between horizontal and vertical constraint. Given that both elements capture the coherent structuration of DBS they should be positively related. *Model 8* reveals that this is indeed the case. Those citizens who have a more coherent structuration of their democratic aspirations (horizontal constraint) are also more likely to have a greater correspondence between these aspirations and their more abstract values and preferences about democracy (vertical constraint). This is not surprising since a non-coherent structuration of democratic aspirations should prevent a strong correspondence with any other attitude or preference.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have adapted Converse's notion of Political Belief Systems (PBS) to conceptualize and analyze belief systems about democracy. Hence, this paper contributes to the emerging literature on how citizens understand and evaluate democracy by analyzing the availability and coherent articulation of attitudes about how democracy ought to work in ideal terms –democratic aspirations– and how it works in reality –democratic evaluations. Drawing on the concept of PBS, I argue that Democracy Belief Systems or DBS are formed by two main components: the number of cognitions or attitudes about democracy available in individuals' belief systems and the constraint or organization of these cognitions or attitudes. The latter component is divided into two subcomponents: horizontal and vertical constraint.

The main conclusion of this paper is that, when considering its three components, the DBS of most Europeans appear to be broad ranging and coherently organized. This conclusion is in line with recent findings about the articulation of PBS, which, in contrast to early studies, have found that individuals' PBS tend to be coherently structured, especially when focusing on particular policy domains. Specifically, the empirical analyses of this paper first reveal that most individuals have a broad number of cognitions about democracy available in their belief systems. However, limiting the analysis of DBS to cognitive availability would be inadequate, since individuals' cognitions or attitudes may not be coherently structured. The analysis of the constraint of DBS reveals that this does not seem to be the case. Individuals' democratic aspirations appear to be both horizontally and vertically constrained. For a majority of individuals democratic aspirations located at the same level of abstraction are coherently structured, and these aspirations are also related, in a predictable way, to generic attitudes towards democracy located at a higher level of abstraction.

Notwithstanding the fact that most citizens appear to have a relatively articulated DBS, I have also analyzed whether differences in levels of articulation are related to individual and country level factors that have been shown to affect the way in which individuals learn and develop attitudes about politics. The empirical analyses support the hypotheses that those who are more educated, more politically interested, or live in countries where opportunities to be exposed to information about democracy are greater tend to have higher levels of cognitive availability and vertical constraint. However, the strength of these relationships is modest. In the case of horizontal constraint, the effects of education or political interest are also in the

expected direction, but these effects do not appear to be significant in substantive terms. The reduced impact of these variables is also in line with recent studies, which conclude that the rationality, constraint and structuration of political attitudes is not closely related to factors like education or political awareness.

These findings have important implications for future analyses of Europeans' democratic aspirations and evaluations. First, the fact that most of those who provide an answer to questions about their democratic aspirations appear to do so in a coherent way allows researchers to meaningfully analyze these attitudes towards democracy. Second, since horizontal and, to a lower extent, vertical constraint are only modestly related to attributes like political interest or education studies analyzing the impact of these factors on democratic aspirations (e.g. Ceka and Magalhães, 2016) are more likely to capture meaningful relations that are not generated by the fact that the attitudes of those who are more educated or interested are more coherently structured. However, a third finding of this paper is that even if cognitive availability is, on average, high those who are more educated and interested in politics tend to have higher levels of cognitive availability. This implies that researchers relying on these survey items, and applying listwise deletion, are likely to underrepresent certain sociodemographic groups.

Finally, different avenues for further research can be suggested as a result of the limitations of this paper. First, this paper focuses on European countries, which may be a propitious region to find highly articulated DBS due to the prolonged democratic trajectory of most countries, among other factors. Further analyses could extend the geographical scope relying on data sources like the World Values Survey. Second, due to data limitations, and with the exception of the cognitive availability dimension, I have exclusively focused on the liberal dimension of democracy. Further research should consider alternative models or dimensions of democracy like the social justice model of democracy. In a similar vein, only the cognitive availability dimension includes citizens' evaluations of democracy, since it is not feasible to assess attitudinal constraint for evaluations of how democracy works for the reasons exposed above. Future projects could analyze related aspects of individuals' evaluations of democracy like, for example, their correspondence with country aggregate contextual indicators, as measured in the Democracy Barometer or the V-Dem dataset.

APPENDIX: CHAPTER-2

Table A1: Descriptive statistics and question wording

Variable	Wording / Coding	Mean	SD	min	max
Dependent Variables					
Cognitive availability	Additive index of the number of <i>don't know</i> responses provided to the 36 questions measuring democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations. Rescaled to range between 0 and 100 with higher values indicating a lower number of don't know answer or higher cognitive availability. See data and methods section for further details.	94.98	13.30	0	100
Cognitive availability (aspirations referenda). For table 3	Variable that takes the value 0 if the respondent provided a <i>don't know</i> answer to the democratic aspirations question about direct democracy and the value 1 if she provided a substantive response. Other forms of non-response (non-answer and refusal are declared missing)	0.96	0.18	0	1
Cognitive availability (evaluations referenda). For table 3	Variable that takes the value 0 if the respondent provided a <i>don't know</i> answer to the democratic evaluations question about direct democracy and the value 1 if she provided a substantive response. Other forms of non-response (non-answer and refusal are declared missing)	0.94	0.23	0	1
Cognitive availability (aspirations responsibility). For table 3	Variable that takes the value 0 if the respondent provided a <i>don't know</i> answer to the democratic aspirations question about responsibility towards other European government and the value 1 if she provided a substantive response. Other forms of non-response (non-answer and refusal are declared missing)	0.91	0.28	0	1
Cognitive availability (evaluations responsibility). For table 3	Variable that takes the value 0 if the respondent provided a <i>don't know</i> answer to the democratic evaluations question about responsibility towards other European government and the value 1 if she provided a substantive response. Other forms of non-response (non-answer and refusal are declared missing)	0.86	0.34	0	1
Horizontal constraint	Variable that summarizes the number of Gutman errors associated to each respondent in order to measure their level of horizontal constraint. Gutman errors are calculated from the Mokken scale summarized in table 2. Rescaled to range between 0 and 100 with higher values indicating a lower number of Gutman errors and, therefore, higher horizontal constraint. See data and methods section for further details.	92.82	9.70	0	100
Vertical constraint	Variable that summarizes the absolute value of the residuals associated to each individual from a regression model in which liberal democratic aspirations are specified as the dependent variable and the generic preference to live in a democracy is specified as the independent variable.	89.44	8.83	0	100

Independent variables (Individual level)					
Education (Categorical):	"What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?" Categories adapted to each country in which the survey was conducted and later recoded into the ESS Education Detailed ISCED Coding Frame. From this categories and according to the ISCED classification I divided the sample in three different groups: Primary or less; Secondary; University				
	- Primary	0.11			
	- Secondary	0.59			
	- University	0.29			
Political interest (categorical)	"How interested would you say you are in politics- are you:"				
	- Very interested	0.10			
	- Quite interested	0.34			
	- Hardly interested	0.34			
	- Not at all interested	0.20			
Age	Age in years	48.3	18.59	15	103
Gender	Gender of the respondent. Coded 1 = male 0 = female	1.54	0.50	1	2
Generic preference to live in a democracy	How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? Choose your answer from this card where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important.	8.42	2.12	0	10
Independent variables (Country level)					
Historical experience of democracy	Logarithm of the number of years that a country has been a democracy according to Polity IV (country is considered democratic if it has a value higher than 6 in the Polity IV database). Recoded to range between 0 and 1,	0.66	0.24	0	1
Use of direct democracy	Logarithm of the total number of referenda conducted in a country since 1950. Source: www.csd.ch . Recoded to range between 0 and 1.	0.62	0.25	0	1
EU membership	Variable that takes the value 1 if a country is a member of the European Union and the value 0 if not.	0.75	0.43	0	1
Variables capturing democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations used to generate the different dependent variables as explained in the data and methods section (except for introductory statement, common wording for aspirations and evaluations, except for trade-off questions)					
Introductory statement aspirations	Now some questions about democracy. Later on I will ask you about how democracy is working in [country]. First, however, I want you to think instead about how important you think different things are for democracy in general. There are no right or wrong answers so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me how important you think it is for democracy in general				
Introductory statement evaluations	Now some questions about the same topics, but this time about how you think democracy is working in [country] today ⁷⁷ . Again, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think each of the following statements applies in [country]. 0 means you think the statement does not apply at all and 10 means you think it applies completely				

Equality before the law (Rule of law)

Freedom and fairness of elections

Horizontal accountability

Media reliability

Vertical accountability

Government justification

Protection of minorities' rights

Parties freedom

Press freedom

Differentiated partisan offer

Political deliberation

Direct-democracy (referenda)

Migrants' voting rights

Responsibility towards other European governments

Introductory statement trade-off questions

Power sharing

That courts treat everyone the same

That national elections are free and fair

That courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authority

That the media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government

That governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job

That the government explains its decisions to voters

That the rights of minority groups are protected

That opposition parties are free to criticize the government

That the media are free to criticize the government

That different political parties offer clear alternatives to one another

That voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote

That citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums

That immigrants only get the right to vote in national elections once they become citizens

That politicians take into account the views of other European governments before making decisions

At the next questions, I'll first ask you to choose between two options. Then I'll ask how important you think your choice is for democracy in general. Finally, I'll ask you to think about this issue in [country] today. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think.

Sometimes the government disagrees with what most people think

is best for the country. Which one of the statements on this card describes

what you think is best for democracy in general?: (a) A single party forms the

government (b) Two or more parties in coalition form the government (c) It depends on the circumstances

Freedom of expression

There are differing opinions on whether or not everyone should be free to express their political views openly in a democracy, even if they are extreme. Which one of the statements on this card describes what you think is best for democracy in general? (a) Everyone should be free to express their political views openly, even if they are extreme (b) Those who hold extreme political views should be prevented from expressing them openly (c) It depends on the circumstances

Responsiveness

Sometimes the government disagrees with what most people think

is best for the country. Which one of the statements on this card describes

what you think is best for democracy in general? (a) The government should

change its planned policies in response to what most people think (b) The

government should stick to its planned policies regardless of what most people think (c) It depends on the circumstances

Table A2: The correlates of cognitive availability: random intercepts and random slopes linear models

	(A1) Cognitive availability
<u>Individual level variables</u>	
Education (ref: primary)	
- Secondary	10.532** (0.817)
- University	12.982** (1.520)
Political interest (ref: not interested)	
- Very interested	7.328** (0.216)
- Quite interested	7.124** (0.157)
- Hardly interested	5.556** (0.150)
Age	0.301** (0.015)
Age2	-0.003** (0.000)
Male	1.783** (0.108)
<u>Country-level variables</u>	
Historical experience democracy (Ln)	12.802** (2.899)
<u>Cross-level interactions</u>	
Historical experience democracy*Education	
- Secondary	-8.268** (1.113)
- University	-10.431** (2.116)
Constant	70.085** (2.096)
<u>Random-effects parameters</u>	
SD Education	0.810 (0.123)
SD Constant	3.463 (0.481)
Observations	53,924
Number of groups	29
Standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1	

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATIONS OF THE QUALITY OF THE REPRESENTATIVE CHANNEL AND UNEQUAL PARTICIPATION²⁸

INTRODUCTION

Political participation is a crucial characteristic of democracies, since it constitutes the main tool for citizens to channel their demands to policymakers. This is manifested in numerous studies that analyze the determinants of political participation. One strand of this research focuses on the impact of characteristics of the electoral process on citizens' motivations to turn out to vote. This research has generally relied on macro-level factors, reflecting the competitiveness of elections or other characteristics of electoral systems, to account for the incentive structures surrounding specific elections (Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Franklin, 1996; Franklin and Hirczy, 1998). Following a similar logic, recent studies have analyzed how individual-level assessments of the integrity of the electoral process affect citizens' likelihood to participate in politics (Birch, 2010; Carreras and İrepoğlu, 2013; Norris, 2014). Combining the insights of these two literature strands, in this paper we construct a measure that captures Europeans' assessments of the quality of the representative channel. Adapting the motivational or rational approach to understanding political participation (see Franklin, 1996; Norris, 2002, pp. 61–72) and Verba et al. (1995) civic voluntarism model we argue, first, that these assessments affect citizens' participation decisions by altering their motivations to engage in politics through different means, and, second, that individual resource inequalities play a moderating role in this process.

Citizens' subjective assessments of how much they can influence governments' composition and policymaking through elections should affect their motivations to express their demands through the representative channel. Hence, we expect that positive evaluations of the functioning of this channel will be positively related to participation in elections. When such evaluations are negative and, as a consequence, elections do not provide the proper means to influence policymaking, citizens might choose to engage in non-institutionalized forms of

²⁸ This paper was coauthored with Macarena Ares. This chapter has been published in *Comparative European Politics* and it is reproduced in this thesis in accordance with the copyright transfer agreement signed between myself and Macmillan Publishers Ltd. on November 25, 2015. The reference for the Advance Online Publication of the article is the following: Hernández, E., Ares, M., 2016. Evaluations of the quality of the representative channel and unequal participation. *Comparative European Politics*. doi:10.1057/cep.2015.45

participation to voice their demands. Hence, positive evaluations of the quality of the representative channel should relate negatively to the likelihood of demonstrating. However, from the literature on political participation we know that resources can moderate how and when motivations get translated into behavior, although differently for voting and demonstrating. As we argue below, these moderating effects might give rise to inequalities in political influence in the presence of a malfunctioning representative channel.

Our empirical analysis, based on novel data from European democracies, reveals that, on the one hand, there is a positive relationship between citizens' assessment of the quality of the representative channel and their likelihood of turning out to vote. On the other hand, we find a negative correlation between these assessments and participation in demonstrations. Our hypotheses about the moderating role of individual resources are also confirmed. Results show that education is a significant moderator in the relationship between individual evaluations and participation in demonstrations, but not in the case of voting. An extension of this analysis reveals that when the representative channel is judged to be malfunctioning only those with higher education are more likely to resort to demonstrating as an alternative or supplemental form of expressing their demands, while those with lower levels of education are more likely to simply withdraw from politics.

This paper proceeds as follows. We first lay out the theoretical framework for the analysis of citizens' evaluations of the quality of the representative channel, and we hypothesize how they should relate to participation decisions. In the following section we summarize the data and methods. The section 'Results' discusses the main empirical findings. Next we discuss the limitations of the paper and conduct a series of robustness checks. The last section concludes.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

The quality of the representative channel

There are different aspects of a political system that can affect the quality of the representative channel. We consider that in established democracies this quality is a function of four characteristics: the degree to which elections are conducted freely and fairly; the capacity of organized opposition parties to effectively contest elections; the ideological differentiation of political parties; and the decisiveness of elections in determining the composition of

governments. These are aspects that are likely to modulate citizens' capacity to transmit their political demands and affect policymaking through their vote. Hence, since participation is motivated by the will to exert influence over policymaking, citizens' subjective evaluations of these different aspects should affect their motivations to participate in politics (see below).

Free and fair elections is the first condition that a democracy, where citizens are meant to exercise influence over policymakers through their votes, must fulfill. If elections are tampered in any way, or they are not celebrated in an environment free from coercion, citizens' capacity to exercise influence over policymakers will be limited. As Birch (2010) argues, elections that are not free and fair are less meaningful and consequential. Hence, the quality of the representative channel depends, first, on whether elections are conducted in a free environment and the rules regarding the process are fairly applied.

Even if free elections are important to ensure that citizens can route their political demands through the representative channel this is by no means sufficient, since elections must also be contested. That is, opposition parties must be able to effectively compete with each other for votes to ensure that all of them have a real chance of winning office (Przeworski et al., 1996). To effectively compete in elections it is fundamental that all parties are free to criticize the government. If opposition parties are constrained in their capacity to criticize government actions, opposition parties will only have a slim probability of effectively running for office.

In established democracies citizens' capacity to transmit their demands through the representative channel not only depends on the integrity of the electoral process (i.e. elections being free and contested), but also on the ideological differentiation between political parties. One of the aspects that makes the choices in an election process meaningful is that the parties contesting it are distinguishable in terms of ideology (Wessels and Schmitt, 2008). In the presence of a sufficiently differentiated partisan offer it is likely that all sectors of society will be able to find a party that represents their interests and preferences (Norris, 2002). In its absence, some sectors of society will remain unable to express their true policy priorities through the conventional channel of representation, since they will find no party to vehicle their demands.

The different options offered to citizens, no matter how broad or narrow they are, become meaningless if citizens are not able to determine the composition of governments and

reward and punish the incumbent government through their vote. That is, elections must be consequential and citizens must be capable of ‘throwing the rascals out’ (Wessels and Schmitt, 2008). If this is the case, elections grant citizens the means to exercise control over political institutions and the political agenda through the representative channel (Morlino, 2009). Conversely, if elections are not decisive citizens’ will not be able to sanction and hold the government accountable through their vote.

Empirically, earlier research documented the impact of characteristics of the electoral process such as the breadth of the partisan offer, the number of parties, the closeness of elections and the frequency of government change on aggregate turnout (Adams and Merrill, 2003; Blais, 2006; Jackman, 1987; Wessels and Schmitt, 2008).²⁹ While this work has mainly analyzed how macro-level characteristics of the electoral process and the institutional system affect turnout by influencing individual incentives to vote, some recent studies have considered how individual assessments of aspects related to the integrity of the electoral process, mainly the freedom and fairness of elections, affect political engagement (Birch, 2010; Carreras and İrepoğlu, 2013; Hiskey and Bowler, 2005; Levin and Alvarez, 2009; McCann and Domínguez, 1998; Norris, 2014). These studies have shown that when citizens judge that elections are conducted freely and fairly and the electoral process is not tampered they are more likely to vote and less likely to protest.

Although these studies represent an important contribution because they moved from contextual factors to subjective evaluations of specific aspects of the electoral process, they have certain limitations. With the notable exceptions of Levin and Alvarez (2009) and Norris (2014), prior studies focus exclusively on voting, and disregard other forms of participation. More importantly, all these studies focus on evaluations of the integrity and incorruptibility of the electoral process, and most of them rely on a single indicator about trust in elections or the extent to which elections are conducted freely and fairly.³⁰ Electoral integrity considerations might be more relevant for citizens’ behavior in non-fully established democracies like those

²⁹ Some studies have analyzed how individuals’ perceptions of these characteristics (e.g. the closeness of an election) alter individuals’ likelihood of turning out to vote (see e.g. Blais, 2000).

³⁰ Although still focusing on the integrity of the electoral process Carreras and İrepoğlu (2013) and Norris (2014) rely on more than one indicator to operationalize their electoral integrity/malpractice measures.

analyzed in most of these studies.³¹ However, in a context of established democracies, where the prospects of elections being conducted in accordance with the highest democratic standards are high, we need to incorporate elements that go beyond electoral integrity and malpractice (e.g. the ideological differentiation between parties and the decisiveness of elections).³² Moreover, it is also necessary to consider these processes in broader models of political participation that account for the potential moderating role of individual resources.

Evaluations of the quality of the representative channel, resources, and political participation

Verba's et al. (1995) civic voluntarism model underlines the importance of motivations, resources and mobilization for participation decisions. In this paper we focus on the first two sets of factors, and begin by considering how subjective evaluations of the quality of the representative channel relate to motivations to participate in politics. The motivational or instrumental model of political participation sustains that citizens are rational actors who intend to affect the course of public policy through their actions (Franklin, 1996; Norris, 2002, pp. 61–72). Although it might appear naïve for individual citizens to expect to influence policymaking through their individual behavior, research has shown that the desire to influence policies is among the most relevant considerations motivating citizens' participation in elections and demonstrations (Verba et al., 1995). Hence, citizens' assessment of the probability that their actions will have any impact on policymaking should influence their decisions to participate, as well as the means through which they participate.

In a recent study, Birch (2010) has argued—following the classic arguments proposed by Downs (1957) and Riker and Ordeshook (1968)—that perceptions of the fairness of the

³¹ The studies by Hiskey and Bowler (2005), and Levin and Alvarez (2009) focused on Mexico where allegations of electoral fraud have been common in the last decades. Carreras & İrepoğlu (2013) focused on Latin American countries, which clearly differ in their levels of democracy. Although Norris' (2014) analysis adopted a global outlook, a great number of the 18 countries included in her sample cannot be considered full democracies as attested by their scores in Freedom House indexes, and the few established democracies included in her analysis (Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Uruguay) functioned as a control (Norris 2014, p.64). The exception to this pattern is Birch's (2010) study, which included a great number of established democracies.

³² Carreras and İrepoğlu (2013 p. 612) show that while distrust in the fairness of elections is quite high in regions like Latin America this is not the case in Europe.

electoral process are part of the calculus that informs the decision to vote. These perceptions are likely to alter the estimated probability that one's vote will matter or be decisive, since votes that are not counted will, by definition, not play a role in the outcome of the election. As a consequence, these perceptions should have an impact on the likelihood of turning out to vote by altering the "p" term in the calculus of voting equation.

As we argue in the previous section, though, the quality of the representative channel goes beyond the freedom and fairness of elections, since there are other elements related to it that are likely to modulate the extent to which citizens are able to vehicle their political demands and influence policymaking through institutionalized means of participation. Therefore, if citizens perceive that elections are not free, competitive or decisive, or that there is no ideologically differentiated partisan alternatives, citizens should think that they have a reduced capacity to express their true preferences and influence policymaking through the conventional channel. These perceptions of individuals should be more relevant than the actual or real conditions of the representative channel, since what should matter for the decision to vote are individuals' perceptions (Blais, 2000, p. 10). Therefore, if citizens perceive that the representative channel does not work well, they should consider that their vote is less likely to be effective to transfer their demands to the political system and also less likely to influence policymaking. Hence, given that motivations to ultimately affect policymaking will play a central role in citizens' participation decisions, we expect that *more positive evaluations of the quality of the representative channel will be positively associated with the likelihood of turning out to vote (H₁)*.

A logical consequence derived from our first hypothesis is that those with negative evaluations of the representative channel will be less likely to turn out to vote. However, even when the evaluations of the representative channel are negative, citizens might still desire to influence the political process. Protest has become increasingly present in contemporary democracies, and it constitutes an important tool to exert influence over policymaking (Dalton et al., 2010). Historically, demonstrations have been a tool for those lacking access through the conventional channel of representation, and studies of protest argue that with limited means of conventional political access citizens' likelihood to demonstrate may increase (Dalton et al., 2010; Kitschelt, 1986; Marien and Christensen, 2013). Hence, when citizens perceive the representative channels to be blocked or inadequate, they may opt to vehicle their demands

through demonstrations, either in addition to or as an alternative to voting. As a consequence, we expect that *more negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel will be positively associated with the likelihood of participating in demonstrations (H₂)*.

Although a citizen might or might not participate in elections and take part in demonstrations depending on how she evaluates the functioning of the representative channel, this choice is constrained by her individual resources (material and cognitive) and the different resource demands imposed upon her by each of the forms of participation. This implies that the role of motivations stemming from subjective assessments of the quality of the representative channel cannot be analyzed in isolation, and that one must also consider the role played by material and cognitive resources that are relevant for particular forms of political participation. Previous research has recognized the importance of personal resources to explain political participation. Resources such as education or income enable citizens to participate, since they provide the necessary skills and means to be active in politics (Verba et al., 1995).

Resources have not only been considered a direct correlate of participation, but also a moderating factor affecting the relationship between political grievances or motivations and actual political actions. Following the argument put forward by Gamson (1968), the relationship between grievances and participation is considered to involve complex interactions (Levi and Stoker, 2000), since resources are assumed to be necessary for individuals to translate motivations into action. One strand within this literature has focused on the moderating effect of resources such as education or income (Chan, 1997; Citrin, 1977; Kriesi and Westholm, 2007), while others have predominantly focused on the moderating effect of political attitudes such as political interest, political efficacy, or regime support (Christensen, 2014; Craig and Maggiotto, 1981; Hooghe and Marien, 2013).

In comparison to other forms of participation, demonstrations are considerably more demanding in terms of material and cognitive resources (Dalton, 2006, pp. 73–74). As a consequence, not all citizens that assess the quality of the representative channel negatively will be equally likely to reroute their political demands through demonstrations. Protests and other direct action methods are considered high information activities, and, as such, the requirements to participate in terms of civic skills are higher than for other forms of participation (Dalton, 2000, pp. 929–930). These civic skills are fostered by education (Verba et al., 1995). Thus, education is likely to affect citizens' capacity to grasp and exploit the opportunities to influence

the policymaking process through demonstrations. We hence expect *more negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel to have a stronger effect on the likelihood of demonstrating for those who are more educated (H₃)*. In fact, it might be that (when holding negative evaluations of the representative channel) only those who are more educated are able to add another form of participation to their political repertoire or to bypass the representative channel altogether to ensure that their demands are channeled into the political system. That is, a minimum level of education might be necessary for individuals to be able to resort to alternative means of participation.

In contrast to demonstrations, voting is one of the most common and least demanding forms of participation, since the act of voting makes only modest demands on citizens in terms of cognitive and material resources (Verba et al., 1995). In comparison to other forms of participation, voting has a ‘low-cost’ nature (Aarts and Wessels, 2005, p. 81). Research on the determinants of voting in Europe has shown that there is barely any educational effect for voting and that, as a consequence, voting can be considered one of the most democratic forms of participation (Marien et al., 2010). Topf (1995) argued that since the 1960s all Europeans appear to possess the skills and means to participate in national elections. Hence, while educational attainment generates pronounced unequal participation patterns in most non-institutionalized forms of political participation, people of all educational levels participate at similar rates in elections (Marien et al., 2010, p. 197; Teorrell et al., 2007, p. 395).³³ As a consequence, we do not expect educational attainment to moderate the association between respondents’ evaluations of the representative channel and their likelihood to turn out to vote. Hence, *we should not find any differences in the effect of evaluations of the representative channel on the likelihood of voting for individuals with different levels of education (H₄)*. That

³³ Some recent studies challenge the view that differences in turnout across education groups are small in all countries. Gallego (2015) uncovered substantial country differences in turnout inequalities related to education. Likewise, Armingeon and Schädel (2015) recently argued that there are remarkable cross-country and temporal differences with respect to voting inequalities related to education. In any case, Gallego (2015, p.25) points that in most countries the overall differences in turnout rates for citizens with different levels of education are moderate in size, and Armingeon and Schädel (2015) identify an average difference in turnout rates between those with the highest and the lowest education of just 4.9 percent (for the 1999-2009 decade). See also the earlier analyses of Anduiza (2002), who, like Gallego (2015), shows that the relationship between individual resources —measured among others by education— and the likelihood of turning out to vote is not constant across countries.

is, the impact of negative evaluations on the likelihood of withdrawing from electoral participation should be the same across individuals with different levels of education.

If confirmed, our first two hypotheses imply that negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel should not be considered a threat for the correct functioning of contemporary democracies. Those who hold negative evaluations would not withdraw from politics altogether, but they would just be more likely to adjust the way in which they channel their demands into the political system. The ‘critical citizens’ thesis argues that dissatisfied citizens may eschew institutionalized forms of participation to engage instead in protest activities. Within this framework, a critical outlook towards the functioning of political institutions is not seen as a symptom or precursor of political alienation, but as a healthy attitude, which, even if it may discourage participation through conventional means, it is also likely to motivate citizens’ to remain vigilant and engage in alternative forms of political participation (Hofferbert and Klingemann, 2001; Norris, 1999; Rosanvallon, 2008). Although this conclusion would be reassuring, this might not always be the case.

Our third and fourth hypotheses imply that more negative assessments of the functioning of the representative channel would entail that all citizens, independently of their level of education, would be less likely to vote. However, negative evaluations would only imply a greater likelihood to demonstrate for those who are more educated. As a consequence, for those who are less educated negative evaluations would entail an increasing likelihood of withdrawing from politics (i.e. political alienation). Conversely, for those who are more educated, negative evaluations imply that these individuals are more likely to participate in demonstrations, and this could be done as an alternative to voting or in addition to it.

It is possible that those who demonstrate more as their perceptions of the representative channel worsen still participate in elections, since citizens can also express dissatisfaction through voting (e.g. by casting a vote for protest parties). In fact, studies suggest that protest might be an instrument that some citizens add up to their participation repertoires, instead of being a tool predominantly used by those who decide to withdraw from conventional politics (Saunders, 2014). In terms of the participation outcomes we study, we expect that given their lack of resources individuals with lower levels of education will simply withdraw from politics when they have negative perceptions of how the representative channel works. At the same time, we expect those with higher education to be more likely to adapt their behavior either by

only demonstrating, or by incorporating this form of participation to their repertoire as a way of adding strength to their voices in the presence of a malfunctioning representative channel. Hence, the joint consideration of both motivations and resources leads us to expect that only a resourceful fraction of the population will behave as the ideal ‘critical citizen’, who does not withdraw from the political process in the presence of a malfunctioning representative channel.

DATA AND METHODS

Our empirical analyses draw on data from the European Social Survey (ESS), a cross-national survey frequently used to study political participation. In its sixth round, conducted between 2012 and 2013 in 29 countries, the ESS includes a rotating module in which citizens are asked to evaluate different elements of their democracies, among them several aspects related to the functioning of the representative channel.³⁴ This rotating module gauges to what extent citizens evaluate that, in their countries, elections are free and fair, opposition parties are free to criticize the government, parties offer clear alternatives to one another, and government parties that have done a bad job while in office are punished in elections.³⁵

The main independent variable (evaluations of the quality of the representative channel) is operationalized relying on these four survey items. This operationalization is consistent with the discussion in the theory section, which summarizes the theoretical rationale underpinning the aggregation of these different indicators. The empirical analysis confirms that these indicators can be combined into a single measure. An exploratory factor analysis (table 1) yields a one-factor solution, with only one factor extracted with an eigenvalue higher than one, and with all indicators loading strongly on this single dimension.³⁶ The Cronbach’s alpha for

³⁴ Our final sample includes 27 countries. We exclude Russia and Ukraine because they cannot be considered fully democratic. None of these countries had a score above 6 in the Polity IV dataset. We exclude countries that are not fully democratic because voting and demonstrating, as well as answers to questions related to the functioning of democracy, might be distorted by the non-democratic character of these regimes.

³⁵ The question wording and descriptive statistics of all the variables of this paper can be found in table A1 in the appendix.

³⁶ The same factor solution is obtained when factor analyzing these indicators in each of the countries separately. In all countries only one factor with an eigenvalue higher than one is extracted, and in all cases all indicators have a factor loading above the 0.3 threshold.

these indicators equals 0.72. We estimate our main independent variable based on the factor scores, which take higher values for better evaluations of the quality of the representative channel. The resulting index ranges between (-1.7) and (0.9), with Kosovo being the country with the lowest/worst average evaluations and Sweden the country with the highest/best.³⁷

Table 1: Factor analysis

To what extent in your country...	Loadings
National elections are free and fair	0.7865
Opposition parties are free to criticize government	0.7618
Parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job	0.6921
Parties offer clear alternatives to one another	0.7117

Note: Entries are the result of a principal-component factor analysis. 1 component extracted, eigenvalue 2.184. Number of observations included in the analysis 44,582

With regard to our dependent variables, voting takes the value 1 for those who voted in the last national election and 0 for those who did not.³⁸ Following Saunders' (2014) recommendation, we restrict our analysis to participation in demonstrations without incorporating to our measure any other non-conventional activity. The demonstration variable takes the value 1 for those who participated in lawful demonstrations in the last 12 months and the value of 0 for those who did not. These two variables are combined to generate our third dependent variable which classifies respondents in four different categories: *neither votes nor demonstrates*, *only votes*, *only demonstrates*, *votes and demonstrates*.

Together with the evaluations of the representative channel, education is a key independent variable. The ESS includes two measures of education. A categorical variable capturing the highest level of education achieved by a respondent, and a continuous variable measuring the number of years a respondent spent in full time education. Although the latter has been extensively used in political science research, survey and education research questioned its use in cross-national analyses (Müller, 2008; Schneider, 2007). As a

³⁷ If instead of relying on the factor scores we rely on an index obtained through the sum of the four indicators we obtain very similar results that lead us to the same conclusions for all the analyses presented below (results available upon request).

³⁸ Respondents not eligible to vote have been excluded from all the analyses.

consequence, we rely on the ISCED categorical education variable to group respondents in three categories: primary education or less, secondary education, and university education.

All models include a control variable that identifies respondents that support any of the parties in government. It is important to account for the potential confounding effect of ‘winners and losers’, since being a winner affects citizens’ assessment of the fairness of elections (Birch, 2008), while at the same time it might also alter citizens’ decisions to join demonstrations (Anderson and Mendes, 2006). Hence, those who identify with a government party receive the value 1 while those who do not, either because they identify with another party or do not identify with any party, receive the value 0.³⁹ Other variables that have been shown to affect the propensity to participate in politics are included in the analyses as additional controls. Political interest is used as a proxy for citizens’ intrinsic motivations to participate in politics. Feeling about current income is introduced as a control for the impact of monetary resources. In order to account for citizens’ embedment in mobilization networks, two variables measuring whether respondents are members of unions or whether they work or participate in any other kind of organization are used. Finally, age and gender are also included in all models.

We estimate models in which the dependent variable is binary through logistic regression, and models in which the dependent variable has four categories through multinomial logistic regression. Listwise deletion is used in all models. Our data has a hierarchical structure (individuals nested into countries). Since our interest is to estimate the effects of level-1 predictors (individual level factors) we take into account the hierarchical structure of the data by estimating country fixed-effects models. Fixed-effects are warranted in our case since this approach controls for country-level heterogeneity and takes care of the nesting of units, allowing us to concentrate on the effects of individual level predictors (Allison, 2009; Huang, 2014; Möhring, 2012). The advantage of fixed-effects over the common alternative of random-intercepts (multilevel) models is that this approach is conservative and parsimonious, since it controls for unobserved differences between countries through a series

³⁹ This choice is motivated by the fact that it is not possible to directly measure winner/loser status according to the party voted for by the respondent, because this variable predicts success perfectly in non-linear models in which voting is specified as the dependent variable.

of country-dummies, and does not require us to assume that the covariates are uncorrelated with the country-level error term (Allison, 2009).⁴⁰

RESULTS

Our first hypotheses refer to the association between evaluations of the quality of the representative channel and the likelihood of voting and demonstrating. *Table 2* summarizes the results from four logistic regression models with vote and participation in demonstrations specified as the dependent variables.⁴¹ The first key findings from these analyses are the coefficients associated to the evaluations in the first and the second model. These coefficients provide initial support for hypotheses 1 and 2. Evaluations are positively associated to voting and negatively associated to participation in demonstrations, with both coefficients being statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Hence, more negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel discourage voting, while they foster participation in lawful demonstrations.

For a better assessment of these effects *figures 1 and 2* plot the average adjusted predictions of voting and demonstrating (respectively) for different values of the evaluations.⁴² The adjusted prediction of voting changes by 0.10 points when moving from the lowest to the highest level of the evaluations. The probability of voting for a person with the worst evaluation

⁴⁰ To ensure that our results are not driven by our model estimation decisions we replicate all the analyses using random-intercepts logistic and multinomial logistic models. Empty random-intercepts models reveal that the amount of variance at the country level is 8.6 percent for voting, and 13.7 percent for demonstrating. Following recent analysis of political participation (Braun and Hutter, 2014; Dalton et al., 2010; Marien and Christensen, 2013) we introduce in these models a country-level control for the openness of the political system. To operationalize this variable we follow Dalton et al., (2010) who rely on the World Bank rule of law indicator to measure system openness. This choice is motivated by this being the only system openness proxy (among the ones used in previous studies) that is available for all the countries in our sample. These multilevel models also include a country-level variable measuring the enforcement of compulsory voting in national elections. These models, which can be found in tables A4 and A5 in the appendix do not alter the substantive results and lead us to the same conclusions.

⁴¹ Independent variables are rescaled so that numeric inputs represent the effect of the mean ± 1 standard deviation. Binary predictors are not rescaled.

⁴² Average adjusted predictions plots were generated with Stata *marhis* command (Hernández, 2016b)

Table 2: Logistic fixed-effects regression results

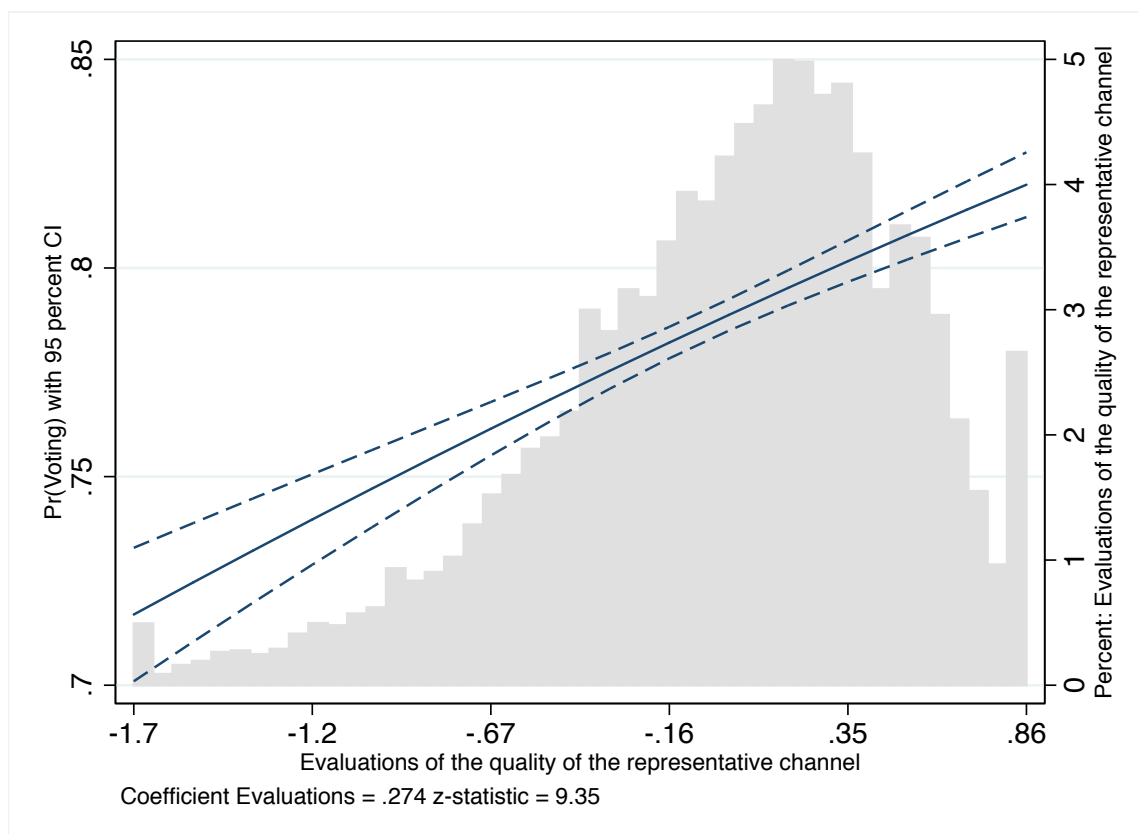
VARIABLES	(1) Vote	(2) Demonstrate	(3) Vote	(4) Demonstrate
Evaluations	0.274*** (9.347)	-0.227*** (-4.874)	0.268** (3.298)	0.329* (2.008)
Education (cat). Reference: primary				
Secondary	0.164** (3.279)	0.257** (2.810)	0.162*** (3.187)	0.245** (2.666)
University	0.591*** (10.30)	0.578*** (6.010)	0.594*** (10.24)	0.570*** (5.920)
Interaction: Evaluation * Education				
Evaluation * Secondary			-0.013 (-0.160)	-0.526** (-3.059)
Evaluation * University			0.080 (0.800)	-0.723*** (-4.082)
Supports winner	1.003*** (22.98)	-0.0846 (-1.643)	1.003*** (22.96)	-0.0811 (-1.576)
Political interest	1.052*** (33.72)	0.949*** (20.58)	1.052*** (33.71)	0.949*** (20.57)
Association member	0.438*** (8.619)	1.141*** (23.13)	0.438*** (8.609)	1.139*** (23.09)
Female	-0.126*** (-4.671)	0.0449 (1.088)	-0.127*** (-4.703)	0.0458 (1.108)
Age	0.935*** (29.64)	-0.736*** (-14.67)	0.934*** (29.61)	-0.735*** (-14.63)
Union member	0.482*** (10.50)	0.645*** (12.48)	0.482*** (10.49)	0.646*** (12.51)
Feeling about income	-0.308*** (-10.07)	0.185*** (3.901)	-0.309*** (-10.10)	0.186*** (3.924)
Constant	1.962*** (17.63)	-3.228*** (-20.54)	1.961*** (17.58)	-3.219*** (-20.44)
Country fixed-effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nagelkerke R2	0.23	0.19	0.23	0.20
Observations	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381

z-statistics in parentheses *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

is 0.72 and it increases to 0.82 when the evaluation takes the highest value.⁴³ This substantial change in the likelihood of voting is similar to the one estimated by Birch (2010) for her measure of perceptions of electoral fairness, and stronger than the one estimated by Carreras & İrepoğlu (2013) for Latin American countries. To further evaluate the significance of this

⁴³ We have re-estimated these predictions relying on adjusted predictions at representative values (APRs) instead of average adjusted predictions (AAPs). We have estimated APRs of the likelihood of turning out to vote for a young individual with a low level of political interest. In this case the adjusted predictions of voting change from 0.46 for an individual with the worst evaluations to 0.62 for an individual with the best evaluations. That is, in this case the change in the adjusted prediction of turning out to vote is of 0.16.

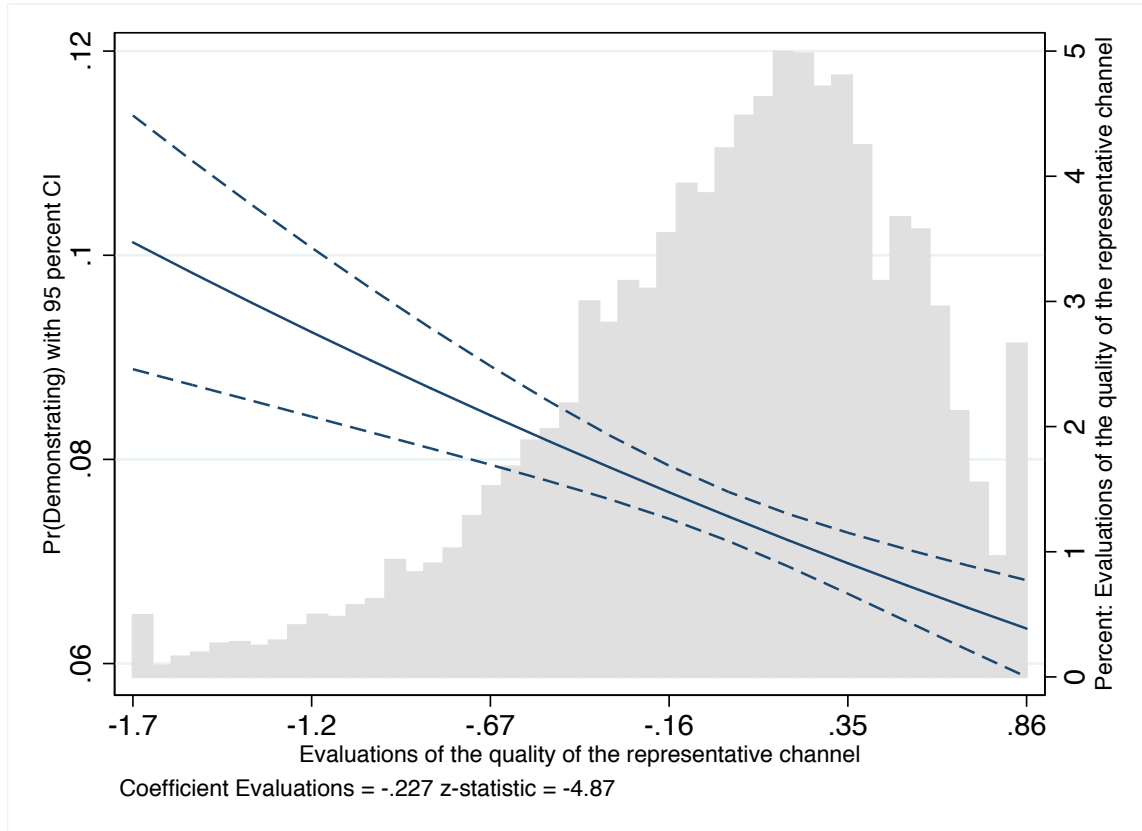
Figure 1: Average adjusted predictions (AAPs) of voting for different values of the evaluations



change we compare it to one of the most relevant attitudinal predictors of voting: political interest. The analysis reveals that the estimated change in the probability of voting is higher than the one associated to moving from being hardly interested in politics to being quite interested in politics.

In the case of participation in demonstrations the change in the adjusted prediction is smaller when moving from one extreme of the evaluation index to the other. The adjusted prediction of demonstrating is 0.10 for those with the worst evaluations, and it decreases to 0.06 when the evaluation index takes its maximum value, a change of just 0.04 points. Hence, while H_1 is clearly confirmed by these results, H_2 is only weakly supported. It is possible that the marginal effect of the evaluations of the representative channel is smaller when explaining participation in demonstrations than voting because, as we hypothesized above, in the case of demonstrations we expect this effect to vary according to educational levels, with flatter slopes for those with low levels of education.

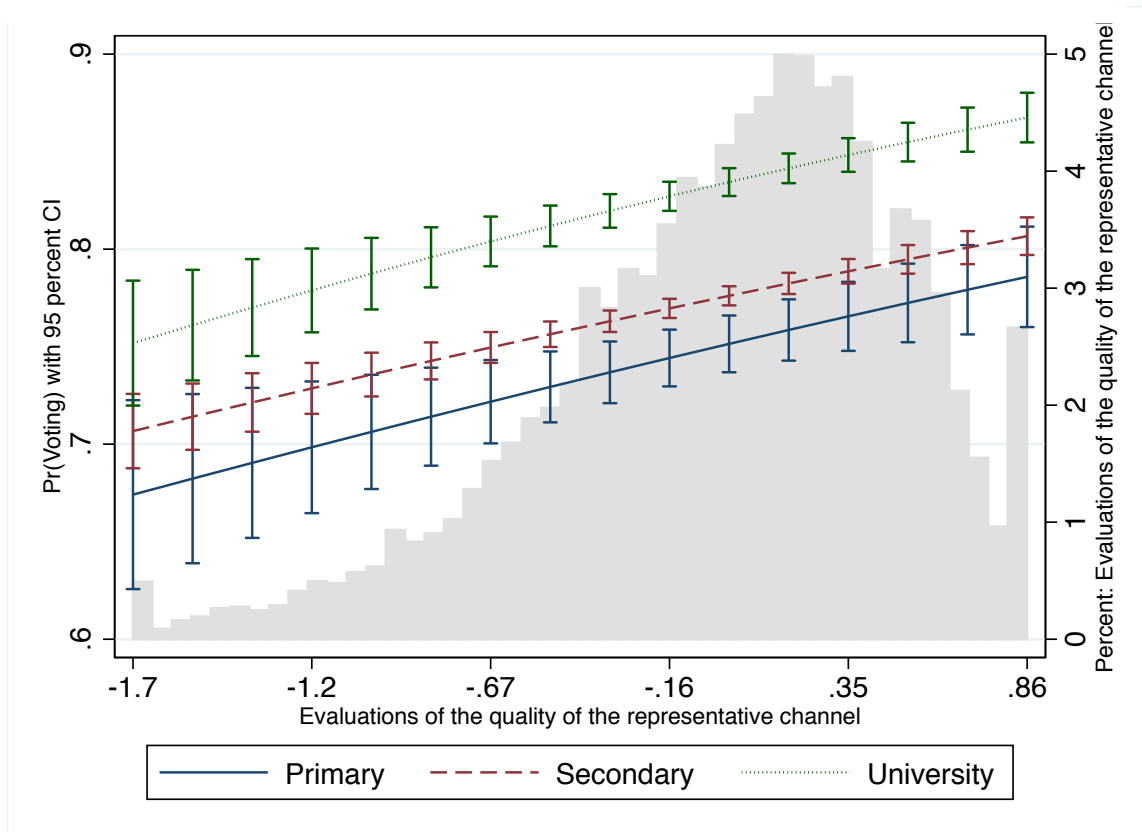
Figure 2: AAPs of demonstrating for different values of the evaluations



The third and fourth hypotheses focus on the moderating effect of education on the association between evaluations of the representative channel, voting and participating in demonstrations. *Models 3 and 4* in *table 2* summarize the results of the two interactive models specified to test these hypotheses. In both cases the evaluations of the quality of the representative channel have been interacted with education levels (with the level of primary education or less set as the reference category). The coefficients reported in *model 4* reveal that in the case of participation in demonstrations the interactive effect between the evaluations and secondary and tertiary education are both significant at least at the 0.01 level. However, these interactive terms fail to reach conventional levels of significance in the model in which voting is specified as the dependent variable (*model 3*). These results provide preliminary support for H_3 and H_4 . However, since interactive effects in logistic regression models are not easily interpreted by raw coefficients we turn to *figures 3 and 4* for a better assessment of these results.

Figure 3 summarizes the average adjusted predictions of voting for different levels of the evaluation factor and education (computed from *model 3*). The slopes for the different education categories are similar. Although the absolute probability values are different for the

Figure 3: AAPs of voting for different values of the evaluations and levels of education

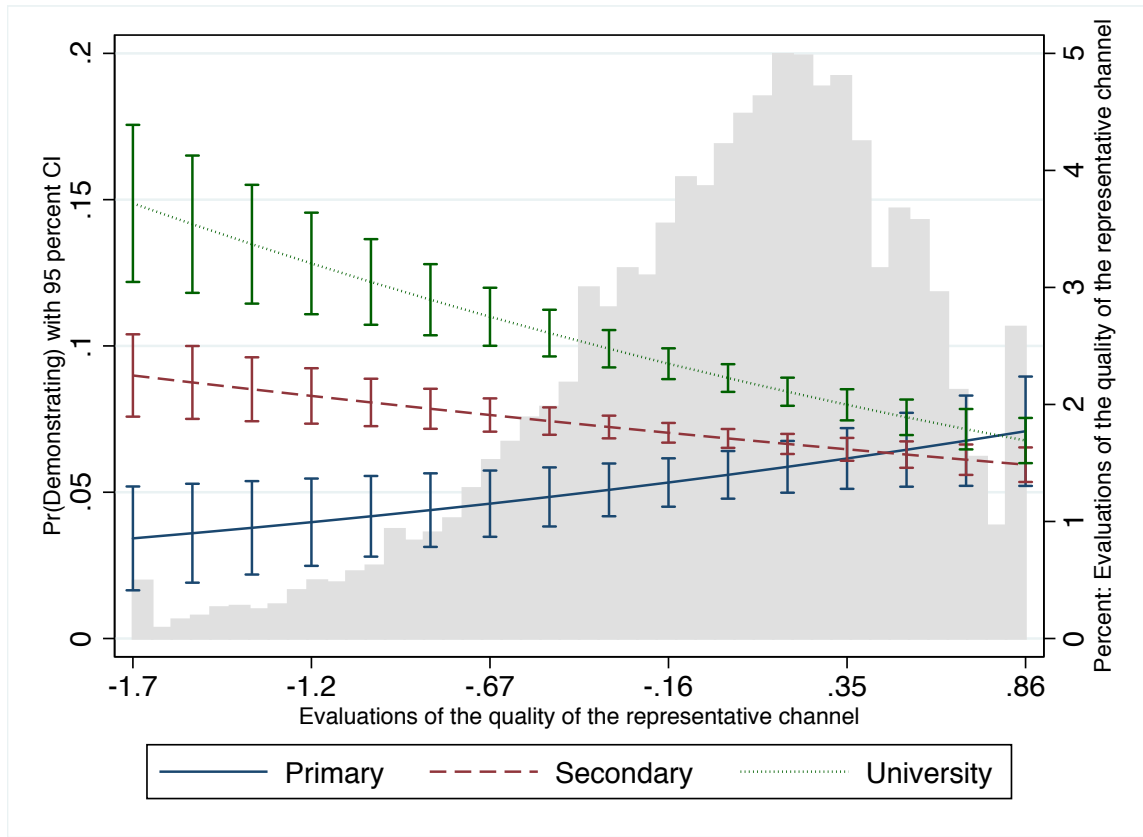


three groups (with tertiary educated individuals showing greater predispositions to vote) the marginal increase in the likelihood of turning out to vote when the evaluation of the quality of the representative channel improves is similar across education levels. Moving from the lowest to the highest point in the evaluation scale increases the probability of voting by 0.11 points for those with tertiary education, by 0.10 points for those with secondary education, and by 0.11 points for those with primary education or less. Hence, education does not appear to moderate the relationship between evaluations of the quality of the representative channel and voting.⁴⁴

Figure 4 summarizes the average adjusted predictions of participating in demonstrations for different values of the evaluation factor and levels of education. A comparison of *figures 3* and *4* clearly highlights the relevance of the moderating effect of

⁴⁴ In the case of voting a contrast of the statistical significance of the average marginal effects of the evaluations reveals that there is no statistically significant difference in the effect of the evaluations between the three education groups.

Figure 4: AAPs of demonstrating for different values of the evaluations and levels of education



education on the likelihood of participating in demonstrations. While in the previous figure there were barely any differences in the slopes for the different levels of education, we find substantial variation in the marginal effects of the evaluations on the likelihood of participating in demonstrations for the three different levels of education considered. For those with university education, the adjusted prediction of participating in demonstrations decreases by more than 50 percent as evaluations of the quality of the representative channel improve (from 0.15 for the worst evaluations to 0.07 for the best evaluations). These predicted probabilities also decrease for those with secondary education, but the change is considerably smaller (from 0.09 to 0.06). In the case of individuals with primary education or less the relationship between evaluations of the representative channel and the probability to participate in demonstrations not only is different (as we hypothesized) but it also changes signs and becomes positive, with the predicted probabilities rising from 0.03 for the most negative evaluations to 0.07 for the

most positive.⁴⁵ To assess the significance of these effects we compare them again to one of the most important attitudinal predictors of engaging in demonstrations: political interest. In the case of individuals with university education the change associated with moving from the best to the worst evaluations (0.08 increase in the likelihood of demonstrating) appears to be substantial, since it is similar to the change associated with moving from being not at all interested in politics to being very interested in politics (0.09 increase in the likelihood of demonstrating).

We have shown how variation in the evaluations of the quality of the representative channel, moderated by educational attainment, is associated to the probability of voting and demonstrating separately. In the next step of the analysis, we consider the role of these variables on a typology of participation that can take four different values. Respondents can either: only vote, neither vote nor demonstrate, only demonstrate, or both vote and demonstrate. The classification reveals that most respondents only vote (70 percent of the sample) or neither vote nor demonstrate (23 percent). In line with Saunders (2014), among those who demonstrate (7 percent of the sample), 16 percent only demonstrate and 84 percent both vote and demonstrate.⁴⁶ This classification of respondents according to what combination of these two activities they perform allows us to investigate further the impact of evaluations on political involvement, and, more importantly, to determine if negative evaluations can be considered a mobilizing or an alienating factor depending on citizens' resources. *Table 3* summarizes the results of two multinomial logistic models in which *only votes* is set as the base outcome.

The first model replicates the non-interactive specification using the categorical dependent variable. The results reveal that more positive evaluations of the quality of the representative channel encourage *only voting* versus all other possible outcomes. The negative

⁴⁵ In the case of demonstrating a contrast of the statistical significance of the average marginal effects of the evaluations reveals that there are statistically significant differences in the effect of the evaluations between all these three education groups. The negative average marginal effects of the evaluations are statistically significant at the 0.001 level for those with secondary and university education. The positive average marginal effect of the evaluations fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance for those with primary education.

⁴⁶ Even if the *only demonstrates* category only includes 503 respondents, it is meaningful to separate those respondents from those who *both vote and demonstrate* since their attitudinal profile is likely to be quite different (e.g. they should have more negative evaluations of the functioning of representative channel than those who both vote and demonstrate).

coefficients of the evaluations for the comparisons of *neither votes nor demonstrates*, *demonstrates only* and *votes and demonstrates* with respect to *only voting* imply that the chances of only voting relative to these three categories are higher as evaluations improve. The association is the strongest for the comparison between *only voting* and *only demonstrating*. A one unit increase in the evaluations factor (which corresponds to a two standard deviations change) decreases the odds of only demonstrating versus only voting by 45 percent, while this change in the odds is of 20 percent for voting and demonstrating, and of 24 percent for neither voting nor demonstrating. Hence, worsening evaluations of the quality of the representative channel are associated with the possibility of not participating (*neither votes nor demonstrates* category), but also clearly associated to the possibility of engaging in demonstrations (*demonstrates only* category), or even of supplementing electoral participation with participation in demonstrations (*votes and demonstrates* category). Our previous analysis suggests that resources are likely to play an important role for which of the three possible alternatives citizens opt for.

The second model introduces the interactive term between the evaluations and educational attainment. In accordance with the evidence for the fourth hypothesis examined above, we find that there is no moderating effect of education on the relationship between the evaluations and the probability of *only voting* versus *neither voting nor demonstrating*. More negative evaluations of the representative channel increase the odds of *neither voting nor demonstrating* (versus *only voting*) to a similar extent independently of educational attainment. There is, however, a significant moderating role of education for the likelihood of *only demonstrating*, and of *voting and demonstrating* versus *only voting*. Negative evaluations of the representative channel only increase the odds of *voting and demonstrating* for those respondents with secondary or university education. While positive evaluations do not significantly decrease the odds of *voting and demonstrating* versus *only voting* for those with primary education (as revealed by the coefficient for the evaluations' constitutive term in the interaction), an increase in two standard deviations in the evaluations factor decreases the odds of voting and demonstrating versus only voting by 41 percent for those with secondary education relative to those with primary, and by 51 percent for those with university education

Table 3: Multinomial logistic fixed-effects regression results

Reference category: Only votes	Non-interactive model			Interactive model		
	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates
Evaluations	-0.268*** (-8.907)	-0.600*** (-5.799)	-0.217*** (-4.244)	-0.263** (-3.181)	-0.0151 (-0.042)	0.342 (1.867)
Education (cat). Reference: primary						
Secondary	-0.148** (-2.900)	-0.112 (-0.544)	0.292** (2.899)	-0.143** (-2.761)	-0.191 (-0.908)	0.294** (2.909)
University	-0.583*** (-9.899)	-0.0771 (-0.349)	0.584*** (5.558)	-0.580*** (-9.735)	-0.194 (-0.858)	0.595*** (5.640)
Interaction: Evaluation * Education						
Evaluation * Secondary				0.013 (0.150)	-0.543 (-1.436)	-0.533** (-2.776)
Evaluation * University				-0.068 (-0.665)	-0.838* (-2.112)	-0.711*** (-3.617)
Supports winner	-1.018*** (-22.69)	-0.854*** (-5.050)	-0.122* (-2.280)	-1.018*** (-22.68)	-0.850*** (-5.025)	-0.119* (-2.221)
Political Interest	-1.060*** (-32.74)	0.0880 (0.827)	0.874*** (17.24)	-1.060*** (-32.73)	0.0882 (0.829)	0.874*** (17.24)
Association member	-0.442*** (-8.051)	0.799*** (6.104)	1.122*** (21.62)	-0.441*** (-8.030)	0.796*** (6.089)	1.120*** (21.58)
Female	0.121*** (4.365)	0.259** (2.600)	0.0347 (0.778)	0.122*** (4.391)	0.260** (2.611)	0.0351 (0.787)
Age	-0.917*** (-28.43)	-2.174*** (-15.93)	-0.682*** (-12.60)	-0.916*** (-28.40)	-2.173*** (-15.92)	-0.680*** (-12.55)
Union member	-0.469*** (-9.797)	0.148 (0.994)	0.641*** (11.84)	-0.468*** (-9.785)	0.150 (1.008)	0.642*** (11.86)
Feeling about income	0.318*** (10.12)	0.417*** (3.824)	0.221*** (4.284)	0.319*** (10.14)	0.417*** (3.824)	0.222*** (4.304)
Constant	-1.971*** (-17.23)	-5.288*** (-12.68)	-3.214*** (-19.10)	-1.973*** (-17.20)	-5.207*** (-12.47)	-3.219*** (-19.07)
Country fixed-effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nagelkerke R2	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29
Observations	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381

z-statistics in parentheses *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

relative to those with only primary.⁴⁷ Similarly, while positive evaluations hardly have any impact on the odds of *demonstrating only* versus *only voting* for those with primary education, for those with university education the odds of *only demonstrating* versus *only voting* decrease by 57 percent for an increase in two standard deviations of the evaluations factor (compared to those with primary education or less). For those with secondary education these odds decrease by 42 percent compared to those with primary education, although in this case the difference between these two groups is not statistically significant.⁴⁸

These results confirm the findings based on two separate measures of participation and show that in the presence of negative evaluations only those who possess greater resources are more likely to react by engaging in demonstrations, either as an alternative or as a complement to voting. For those respondents with lower levels of education, variation on evaluations of the quality of the representative channel only significantly alter their likelihood of either voting (when evaluations are good) or withdrawing from politics (when they are bad). Hence, negative evaluations should be considered as either a mobilizing or alienating factor depending on individuals' resources.

LIMITATIONS AND ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Like most studies analyzing the relationship between attitudes and behavior, our analyses are susceptible of being affected by endogeneity.⁴⁹ Respondents might rationalize and edit their answers to the attitudinal questions according to their behavior. For example, it is possible that respondents who did not vote provide worst evaluations of the representative channel to appear consistent, avoid cognitive dissonance, or justify a socially undesirable behavior (Birch, 2010; Norris, 2014). The act of voting itself might also reinforce citizens' evaluations of the

⁴⁷ For those with university and secondary education, the average marginal effects associated to a one-unit change in the evaluations factor indicate that, for them, more negative evaluations statistically significantly increase the likelihood of *both voting and demonstrating*, while this is not the case for those with primary education.

⁴⁸ As in the previous case, for those with university and secondary education, the average marginal effects associated to a one-unit change in the evaluations factor indicate that, for them, more negative evaluations statistically significantly increase the likelihood of *demonstrating only*, while this is not the case for those with primary education.

⁴⁹ Birch (2010) and Norris (2014) acknowledge this potential pitfall when analyzing the relationship between electoral integrity and political participation.

functioning of the representative channel. Although Birch (2010) showed, using UK panel data, that prior perceptions of electoral fairness affect subsequent voting decisions, in our case endogeneity might bias some of our results, especially in the case of voting.

If endogeneity biases our findings, it is more likely to affect some of the variables of our index of the quality of the representative channel than others. Of the four questions we use to operationalize evaluations of the representative channel only one directly refers to the electoral process (elections being conducted freely and fairly). The remaining three questions ask respondents about their opinion on elements that are related to the functioning of the representative channel, but without explicitly mentioning elections. As a consequence, the likelihood of respondents rationalizing and editing their answers according to their behaviors should be lower for these three questions. We exploit this feature of the dataset in order to assess the robustness of our findings.

Tables A2 and A3 in the appendix replicate our models with an evaluation variable generated from a factor analysis that excludes the free elections question. Overall, our findings are robust to the use of this alternative specification. Only in the case of the model in which voting is specified as the dependent variable the effects of the evaluations weaken, but still remain significant. This might suggest that in the case of voting a share of the direct effects we estimate could be endogenous. However, the interaction effects are not modified. For participation in demonstrations the results are also unaltered by the different specification of the main independent variable. Lastly, in the case of the multinomial logistic analysis, the results are only slightly weaker. Hence, in spite of the inherent limitations of cross-sectional data to address potential endogeneity biases, these analyses increase our confidence in the robustness of our findings, by showing that the exclusion of the question most susceptible of being affected by this bias does not substantially alter our findings.

Another limitation of our paper stems from the fact that we consider only one form of non-conventional participation (demonstrations), and citizens may rely on other forms of non-conventional participation to channel their demands to policymakers. Although different forms of non-conventional participation may not be entirely comparable (Saunders, 2014), we re-specify our demonstration variable to include a larger number of non-conventional actions, and

we re-estimate all our models.⁵⁰ The results (available upon request) are very similar to the ones obtained with the measure based on demonstrations only. Negative evaluations of the quality of representative channel are associated with a greater likelihood of engaging through non-conventional forms of participation only for respondents who are more educated.

CONCLUSION

With this paper we contribute to the field of political participation studies by implementing a measure that captures one of the determinants of citizens' motivations to engage in politics: their evaluations of the quality of the representative channel. Our initial hypothesis contended that those citizens who evaluate positively the functioning of the representative channel should be more motivated to vote. At the same time, those who evaluate it negatively should be more likely to choose extra-institutional forms of participation as a mechanism to channel their demands into the political system. Our empirical results support these initial hypotheses but with certain caveats, namely that individual resources play an important moderating role in the case of participation in demonstrations.

In line with studies analyzing attitudes on electoral integrity (e.g. Carreras and İrepoğlu, 2013; Norris, 2014), our results indicate that negative evaluations of the representative channel increase the likelihood of withdrawing from electoral politics. Yet, our analyses also add further nuances to the relationship between evaluations of institutional channels of representation and political participation by showing the presence of a moderating effect of education in how these assessments relate to participation in demonstrations, but an absence of this effect for voting. These results underline the importance of considering these specific attitudes in light of the potential moderating role of individual resources (material and cognitive) and the different resources demands of each form of political participation. Our analyses also point to the pertinence of going beyond electoral integrity considerations when accounting for individual assessments of the functioning of the representative channel, especially more so when studying established democracies.

⁵⁰ This variable measuring non-conventional activity takes the value 1 if the respondent performed any of the following actions in the last twelve months: joined a demonstration, boycotted a product, or signed a petition. The categorical variable of participation is also re-estimated with the category of *only demonstrates* becoming *only non-conventional*, and the category *both votes and demonstrates* becoming *both votes and non-conventional*.

These findings also have broader implications for the functioning of European democracies. For those who are more educated, negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel are less likely to imply a withdrawal from the political process, because these citizens have a greater likelihood of adapting the repertoire through which they vehicle their demands into the political system. Conversely, for those with low levels of education, negative evaluations are more likely to imply a withdrawal from the political process altogether. For these citizens, who have fewer resources to engage in demanding forms of political participation, negative evaluations are not translated into a greater likelihood of engaging in demonstrations and, in the same way as for those who are more educated, they are associated with a lower likelihood of voting. This finding qualifies the optimistic view of the ‘critical citizens’ thesis, which contends that in post-industrial societies negative orientations towards the political system might not be problematic for the functioning of democracy, since those who are dissatisfied, disenchanted or critical are more likely to change their repertoire of political actions but they will not withdraw from politics. Our findings show that, whenever the channel of representative politics is judged to be malfunctioning, only the most resourceful citizens are likely to reroute their political demands through alternative channels. Hence, a low quality of the representative channel is more likely to politically alienate those with fewer resources.

Given that political participation is one of the main mechanisms linking citizens’ preferences to the policymaking process, the logical implication of these findings is that when perceptions of the representative channel are negative not all citizens are equally likely of making their voices heard. This would violate democracy’s ideal that all citizens’ needs and preferences should be given equal consideration, since there is evidence that policy makers are more likely to neglect the preferences of those groups that are less likely to participate (Bartels, 2008). There are, however, alternative forms of political participation other than demonstrating that could mitigate these inequalities in the presence of negative evaluations, as long as engagement in them is not conditional on individual resources. A succinct analysis of other forms of participation included in the ESS indicates that inequalities are also apparent in them, but further research should analyze other emerging forms of participation (e.g. online participation). Besides considering other forms of political participation, further extensions of these analyses could consider the role played by contextual factors (e.g. the political

opportunity structure) in how negative perceptions of the representative channel relate to participation decisions, and how this relationship is moderated by individual resources like education.

APPENDIX: CHAPTER-3

Table A1: Descriptive statistics and question wording

Variable		Wording	Valid N	Mea n	SD	min	max
Dependent Variables							
Vote		"Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]?" Coded 0 for No, and 1 for Yes	45,800	0.76	0.42	0	1
Demonstrate		"There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?. Taken part in a lawful demonstration?" Coded 0 for No, and 1 for Yes	49,823	0.07	0.26	0	1
Types of participation (Categorical):		Variable based on vote and demonstration variables. Four different categories: neither votes nor demonstrates; only votes; only demonstrates; both votes and demonstrates.					
		- Neither votes nor demonstrates	10,274	0.23			
		- Only votes	32,153	0.7			
		- Only demonstrates	503	0.01			
		- Both votes and demonstrates	2,724	0.06			
Independent variables							
Evaluations quality representative channel (Factor)		Four indicators capturing citizens evaluation of different aspects of their democracies (see below for question wording). Variable calculated through principal components factor analysis with regression scoring assumed.	44,582	0	1	-3.37	1.72
Age		Age in years	49,885	48.41	18.60	15	103
Political interest		"How interested would you say you are in politics- are you: very interested, quite interested, hardly interested, or not at all interested". Higher values correspond to higher levels of political interest.	49,835	2.35	0.92	1	4
Gender		Gender of the respondent. Coded 1 = female					
Union membership		"Are you or have you ever been member of a trade union or similar organization? If Yes, is that currently or previously?". Coded 1 for those who are member currently and 0 for all other responses	49,994	0.46	0.50	0	1
Association membership		During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?. Worked in an organization or association?" Coded 0 for No, and 1 for Yes	49,694	0.17	0.38	0	1
Supports winner		"Is there a particular party you fell closer to than all the other parties? Which one? Coded 1 if respondent identifies or feels close to any of the parties in government.					
Education (Categorical):		"What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?" Categories adapted to each country in which the survey was	50,011	0.21	0.41	0	1

conducted and later recoded into the ESS Education Detailed ISCED Coding Frame. From this categories and according to the ISCED classification we divided the sample in three different groups: Primary or less; Secondary; University

- Primary 5,653 0.11
- Secondary 30,563 0.61
- University 13,438 0.27
49,425 2.15

Feeling about income 0.91 1 4

Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays? (1) Living comfortably on present income. (2) Coping on present income. (3) Finding it difficult on present income. (4) Finding it very difficult on present income. Higher values correspond to more difficulties on present income

Compulsory voting (country-level)* 50,011 0.06 0.24 0 1

System openness (country-level) 50,011 1.15 0.67 -0.57 1.95
Coded 1 for those countries that enforce compulsory voting according to IDEA database, coded 0 for all other countries
Variable measuring the openness of the political system following Dalton et al. (2010). Based on the World Bank rule of law indicator. Higher values indicate higher openness

Indicators evaluations quality representative channel

Introductory statement common to all questions	"Now some questions about the same topics, but this time about how you think democracy is working in [country] today. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think each of the following statements applies in [country]. 0 means you think the statement does not apply at all and 10 means you think it applies completely."				
Free elections	48,081	7.24	2.80	0	10
Parties freedom	47,647	7.55	2.36	0	10
Vertical accountability (elections decisiveness)	46,985	5.60	3.07	0	10
Differentiated partisan offer	47,029	5.62	2.55	0	10
Different political parties in [country] offer clear alternatives to one another.					

Note: All values correspond to the original variables before rescaling. See footnote 38 for further information. Valid N corresponds to the answers for given item after excluding non-response (don't know, no answer and not applicable categories). Non-response figures for each variable can be obtained by subtracting the valid N from 50,011, which corresponds to the sample size.

* In Switzerland only the canton of Schaffhausen enforces compulsory voting. Hence Switzerland is coded as 0

Table A2: Logistic fixed-effects regression results

VARIABLES	(1) Vote	(2) Demonstrate	(3) Vote	(4) Demonstrate
Evaluations	0.199*** (7.114)	-0.235*** (-5.313)	0.251** (3.131)	0.297 (1.868)
Education (cat). Reference: primary				
Secondary	0.156** (3.151)	0.262** (2.867)	0.150** (2.988)	0.255** (2.781)
University	0.590*** (10.37)	0.577*** (6.007)	0.586*** (10.20)	0.568*** (5.912)
Interaction. Evaluation * Education				
Evaluation * Secondary			-0.066 (-0.780)	-0.503** (-3.008)
Evaluation * University			-0.027 (-0.278)	-0.685*** (-3.980)
Supports winner	1.013*** (23.37)	-0.0877 (-1.709)	1.013*** (23.37)	-0.0847 (-1.651)
Political interest	1.067*** (34.44)	0.953*** (20.75)	1.066*** (34.43)	0.952*** (20.73)
Association member	0.441*** (8.699)	1.143*** (23.21)	0.441*** (8.695)	1.141*** (23.17)
Female	-0.120*** (-4.463)	0.0468 (1.138)	-0.120*** (-4.486)	0.0478 (1.159)
Age	0.931*** (29.75)	-0.737*** (-14.71)	0.931*** (29.74)	-0.735*** (-14.66)
Union member	0.485*** (10.62)	0.643*** (12.47)	0.485*** (10.62)	0.643*** (12.47)
Feeling income	-0.321*** (-10.58)	0.190*** (4.017)	-0.321*** (-10.58)	0.190*** (4.019)
Constant	1.899*** (17.20)	-3.198*** (-20.50)	1.904*** (17.21)	-3.190*** (-20.41)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nagelkerke R2	0.23	0.19	0.24	0.2
Observations	40,751	40,751	40,751	40,751

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table A3: Multinomial logistic fixed-effects regression results

Reference category: Only votes	Non-interactive model			Interactive model		
	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates
Evaluations	-0.194*** (-6.731)	-0.532*** (-5.333)	-0.222*** (-4.599)	-0.244** (-2.991)	-0.0566 (-0.159)	0.314 (1.776)
Education (cat). Reference: primary						
Secondary	-0.141** (-2.793)	-0.0848 (-0.413)	0.294** (2.925)	-0.133** (-2.599)	-0.137 (-0.654)	0.300** (2.968)
University	-0.582*** (-9.966)	-0.0724 (-0.328)	0.582*** (5.549)	-0.573*** (-9.727)	-0.176 (-0.781)	0.591*** (5.604)
Interaction. Evaluation * Education						
Evaluation * Secondary				0.062 (0.715)	-0.413 (-1.104)	-0.517** (-2.784)
Evaluation * University				0.045 (0.444)	-0.743 (-1.885)	-0.664*** (-3.497)
Supports winner	-1.027*** (-23.06)	-0.882*** (-5.223)	-0.124* (-2.324)	-1.027*** (-23.07)	-0.878*** (-5.200)	-0.121* (-2.274)
Political Interest	-1.075*** (-33.44)	0.0786 (0.742)	0.878*** (17.36)	-1.075*** (-33.44)	0.0782 (0.739)	0.878*** (17.35)
Association member	-0.443*** (-8.097)	0.784*** (6.010)	1.126*** (21.73)	-0.442*** (-8.087)	0.782*** (5.995)	1.124*** (21.70)
Female	0.114*** (4.136)	0.266** (2.684)	0.0341 (0.765)	0.114*** (4.150)	0.268** (2.708)	0.0343 (0.771)
Age	-0.913*** (-28.54)	-2.173*** (-16.00)	-0.681*** (-12.61)	-0.912*** (-28.53)	-2.171*** (-15.98)	-0.679*** (-12.55)
Union member	-0.472*** (-9.903)	0.142 (0.956)	0.640*** (11.83)	-0.472*** (-9.910)	0.142 (0.954)	0.640*** (11.83)
Feeling about income	0.331*** (10.64)	0.425*** (3.916)	0.229*** (4.445)	0.331*** (10.64)	0.423*** (3.902)	0.229*** (4.445)
Constant	-1.909*** (-16.82)	-5.170*** (-12.48)	-3.184*** (-19.06)	-1.917*** (-16.85)	-5.107*** (-12.30)	-3.189*** (-19.04)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nagelkerke R2	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29
Observations	40,751	40,751	40,751	40,751	40,751	40,751

z-statistics in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table A4: Multilevel random-intercepts logistic regression results

VARIABLES	(1) Vote	(2) Demonstrate	(3) Vote	(4) Demonstrate
Evaluations	0.276*** (9.425)	-0.229*** (-4.921)	0.270*** (3.316)	0.327* (1.995)
Education (cat). Reference: primary				
Secondary	0.159** (3.196)	0.249** (2.725)	0.157** (3.106)	0.237** (2.582)
University	0.585*** (10.21)	0.569*** (5.925)	0.588*** (10.15)	0.561*** (5.835)
Interaction: Evaluation * Education				
Evaluation * Secondary			-0.0134 (-0.155)	-0.525** (-3.056)
Evaluation * University			0.0818 (0.819)	-0.723*** (-4.088)
Supports winner	1.001*** (22.96)	-0.0889 (-1.729)	1.000*** (22.94)	-0.0854 (-1.661)
Political interest	1.052*** (33.76)	0.950*** (20.61)	1.052*** (33.75)	0.950*** (20.60)
Association member	0.443*** (8.713)	1.141*** (23.15)	0.442*** (8.704)	1.139*** (23.12)
Female	-0.126*** (-4.669)	0.0452 (1.096)	-0.127*** (-4.701)	0.0461 (1.116)
Age	0.933*** (29.59)	-0.737*** (-14.71)	0.932*** (29.56)	-0.736*** (-14.66)
Union member	0.495*** (10.79)	0.641*** (12.45)	0.495*** (10.78)	0.643*** (12.47)
Feeling about income	-0.308*** (-10.09)	0.184*** (3.887)	-0.309*** (-10.11)	0.185*** (3.910)
Compulsory voting	0.612* (2.061)		0.613* (2.068)	
System openness	-0.179 (-1.639)	-0.399* (-1.998)	-0.179 (-1.642)	-0.391 (-1.958)
Constant	1.146*** (7.570)	-3.164*** (-11.43)	1.146*** (7.570)	-3.159*** (-11.42)
Random effects parameters				
Constant (var)	0.154*** (3.481)	0.531*** (3.562)	0.154*** (3.480)	0.529*** (3.562)
Observations (countries)	27	27	27	27
Observations (Individuals)	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381

z-statistics in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table A5: Multilevel random-intercepts multinomial logistic regression results

Reference category: Only votes	Non-interactive model			Interactive model		
	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates	Neither votes nor demonstrates	Demonstrates only	Votes and demonstrates
Evaluations	-0.270*** (-9.084)	-0.674*** (-6.723)	-0.237*** (-4.827)	-0.258** (-3.121)	-0.0709 (-0.199)	0.276 (1.556)
Education (cat). Reference: primary						
Secondary	0.0199 (0.399)	-0.505** (-2.583)	-0.150 (-1.578)	0.0247 (0.485)	-0.593** (-2.961)	-0.147 (-1.532)
University	-0.412*** (-7.117)	-0.505* (-2.404)	0.102 (1.027)	-0.408*** (-6.959)	-0.626** (-2.917)	0.113 (1.138)
Interaction: Evaluation * Education						
Evaluation * Secondary				0.00845 (0.0960)	-0.570 (-1.535)	-0.470* (-2.532)
Evaluation * University				-0.0878 (-0.854)	-0.836* (-2.143)	-0.676*** (-3.560)
Supports winner	-0.952*** (-21.51)	-0.950*** (-5.728)	-0.292*** (-5.624)	-0.952*** (-21.50)	-0.946*** (-5.701)	-0.289*** (-5.559)
Political Interest	-1.024*** (-32.24)	0.101 (0.944)	0.894*** (17.78)	-1.024*** (-32.25)	0.103 (0.967)	0.894*** (17.78)
Association member	-0.476*** (-8.741)	0.839*** (6.567)	1.155*** (23.19)	-0.476*** (-8.737)	0.841*** (6.583)	1.155*** (23.20)
Female	0.114*** (4.121)	0.278** (2.816)	0.0358 (0.823)	0.115*** (4.150)	0.279** (2.821)	0.0366 (0.840)
Age	-0.874*** (-27.26)	-2.207*** (-16.87)	-0.788*** (-15.16)	-0.872*** (-27.22)	-2.208*** (-16.86)	-0.786*** (-15.11)
Union member	-0.482*** (-10.33)	-0.0387 (-0.269)	0.645*** (12.66)	-0.482*** (-10.33)	-0.0321 (-0.223)	0.648*** (12.71)
Feeling about income	0.313*** (10.13)	0.369*** (3.469)	0.187*** (3.739)	0.314*** (10.17)	0.372*** (3.500)	0.190*** (3.786)
Compulsory voting	-0.614* (-2.308)	-0.973* (-2.421)	-0.394 (-1.428)	-0.616* (-2.329)	-0.982* (-2.447)	-0.403 (-1.465)
System openness	0.157 (1.604)	-0.167 (-1.337)	-0.300** (-2.940)	0.157 (1.616)	-0.162 (-1.297)	-0.296** (-2.923)
Constant	-1.246***	-3.981***	-2.569***	-1.249***	-3.894***	-2.576***

Random effects parameters		(-9.063)	(-15.93)	(-15.90)	(-9.112)	(-15.58)	(-15.96)
Constant (var)		0.122*** (3.501)	0.122*** -3.501	0.122*** -3.501	0.121*** (3.499)	0.121*** -3.499	0.121*** -3.499
Observations (countries)		27	27	27	27	27	27
Observations (individuals)		40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381	40,381

z-statistics in parentheses
 *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

CHAPTER 4: DEMOCRATIC DISCONTENT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of early political culture studies, attitudes toward democracy and its main institutions have been linked to political participation (Almond and Verba, 1963; Gamson, 1968). However, the empirical relationship between critical attitudes toward democracy and democratic institutions —generally measured as dissatisfaction with democracy or political distrust— and different forms of participation is not conclusive. While some argue that these attitudes are a relevant predictor of the degree and means by which citizens participate in politics (e.g. Karp and Milazzo, 2015), others claim that there is no observable relationship between how individuals judge democracy and its institutions to be working and political participation (e.g. Dalton et al., 2010). These mixed findings are likely to be the result of, first, a deficient conceptualization and operationalization of individuals' discontent with the functioning of their democracies, and, second, of the fact that a substantial number of studies do not fully take into account that the relationship between democratic discontent and participation may involve complex interactions and contingencies (Levi and Stoker, 2000).

In this paper I analyze the relationship between democratic discontent and political participation relying on a conceptualization of democratic discontent that is better suited to test the theoretical claims put forward by relative deprivation theory. This theory suggests that in order to affect behaviors deprivation needs to be perceived relative to what an individual feels entitled to (Gurr, 1968, 1970). Building on this notion of relative deprivation I conceptualize and operationalize democratic discontent as the mismatch between individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations. Democratic aspirations reveal the type of political system that an individual feels entitled to, while the evaluations indicate the extent to which these aspirations are fulfilled. Hence, greater aspirations than evaluations imply democratic discontent. This discontent should affect individuals' motivations to participate in politics through either conventional or unconventional means. Democratic discontent is, thus, considered a motivational disposition likely to alter the means by which citizens participate in politics. This novel conceptualization of democratic discontent also has the added value of taking into account that democracy is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, which implies that

democratic aspirations might be fulfilled for some dimensions of democracy (e.g. liberal dimension) but not for others (e.g. social dimension).

Besides motivations, the literature has provided two other reasons to explain why individuals participate in politics: resources or skills, and mobilization or recruitment (Verba et al., 1995). While previous studies analyze how membership in mobilization networks moderates the impact of socioeconomic resources on political participation (e.g. Verba et al., 1978), fewer attention has been paid to how individuals' motivations interact with the mobilization context (cf. Di Palma, 1970; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2009). Drawing on the Political Opportunities Structure theoretical framework I argue that the relationship between democratic discontent and participation cannot be fully understood without considering whether in a country we can find actors that might mobilize specific forms of democratic discontent in the electoral and protest arenas. Hence, the second aim of this paper is to analyze how the mobilizing potential of agents like political parties and trade unions moderates the relationship between discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote and demonstrating.

The empirical results of this paper, based on data from the European Social Survey (ESS), indicate that democratic discontent is a relevant predictor of participating in the electoral and protest arenas. At the same time, the empirical findings underscore the importance of relying on more fine-grained measures of discontent, since different forms of democratic discontent are related to political participation with different strength. The analysis also supports the idea that both the partisan supply and the strength of trade unions moderate the relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote and protesting.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Democratic discontent, individual-level motivations and political participation

The prevailing view today is that critical attitudes toward democracy and democratic institutions should be associated with a lower likelihood of participating through institutionalized channels (e.g. voting). At the same time, these critical attitudes should increase the likelihood of participating through non-institutionalized channels (e.g. demonstrating). In the case of institutionalized participation, however, studies analyzing this relationship yield mixed results. Some show that dissatisfaction with democracy or political distrust are

negatively associated to the likelihood of turning out to vote or engaging in other forms of institutionalized participation (Doorenspleet, 2012; Grönlund and Setälä, 2007; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Karp and Milazzo, 2015). Conversely, other studies conclude that the relationship between these attitudes and conventional participation is either weak or non-existent (Citrin, 1974; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Sanborn, 2015). In some cases, dissatisfaction with the way democracy works is even positively related to the likelihood of participating through institutionalized channels (Booth and Seligson, 2009).

There is also empirical evidence of a positive, null and even a negative relationship between dissatisfaction with the way democracy works, political distrust and the likelihood of protesting. Recent studies show that these attitudes are positively related to the likelihood of demonstrating or engaging in other forms of non-institutionalized political actions (Braun and Hutter, 2014; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Marien and Christensen, 2013). However, others argue that those who are critical of the way their democratic systems and institutions work are not significantly more likely to protest (Dalton et al., 2010; Saunders, 2014; Welzel and Deutsch, 2012), and, in some cases, they are even less likely to protest (Dubrow et al., 2008).

These inconclusive findings are likely to be caused by a deficient conceptualization and operationalization of individuals' critical judgments of the functioning of their democracies or their democratic discontent, among other reasons. Prior studies rely, albeit not always explicitly, on the theoretical arguments put forward by the proponents of grievance and deprivation theories (see e.g. Dalton et al., 2010). However, these studies do not take into account a critical point of these theories, which is that in order to generate grievances or discontent and to have behavioral implications deprivation needs to be perceived relative to what an individual feels entitled to (Gamson, 1968; Gurr, 1968, 1970). Relative deprivation implies a '*discrepancy between [actors'] value expectations (the goods and conditions of the life to which they believe they are justifiable entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts of those goods and conditions that they think are able to get and keep)*' (Gurr, 1968, p. 1104).

Implicit in the concepts of trust in democratic institutions or satisfaction with democracy—the indicators of discontent most commonly used in previous studies—is the notion that they reflect the fulfillment of individuals' normative expectations (Grönlund and Setälä, 2007). However, both trust and satisfaction with democracy are measured in absolute rather than relative terms. Hence, neither the concepts nor the indicators of political trust and

satisfaction with democracy are adequate to capture the fulfillment of individuals' normative expectations about democracy, since individuals might have different normative standards about democracy that are not captured by these measures. That could be the reason why some studies conclude that at equal levels of political grievances or discontent some citizens protest but many others do not (Dalton et al., 2010). If normative expectations are not the same, similar levels of absolute grievances should lead some to protest and abstain from voting, while that should not be the case for others. To capture individuals' grievances in the form of relative deprivation we need, thus, to conceptualize and measure discontent in relative rather than absolute terms.⁵¹

The conceptualization of democratic discontent can be further improved by taking into account that democracy is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and that there is no universally accepted model of democracy (Held, 2006). This has two implications for the analysis of the relationships between discontent and participation. First, individuals might have different conceptions of democracy, which implies that they assign a greater or lower importance to particular aspects of democracies (Hernández, 2016a). This fact, which was acknowledged but not addressed by Karp and Milazzo (2015), should be incorporated to the analysis of the relationship between democratic discontent and participation, because citizens are likely to be more motivated to act upon values that are salient or central for them (Schwartz, 1973; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2009; Verba et al., 1995). If an individual is not satisfied with the functioning of a particular element of democracy but, at the same time, she does not consider that this element is important for democracy she might be less motivated to transform her discontent into protest behavior. The second implication of democracy being a multifaceted phenomenon is that some democracies will perform well in some dimensions, for example freedom and liberties, while having deficiencies in some others, for example social justice (Bühlmann et al., 2012). Hence, citizens may be discontented with the functioning of some dimensions of democracy but not with others.

In sum, the conceptualization and operationalization of democratic discontent can be strengthened in three ways: (i) by conceptualizing and measuring it in relative terms, (ii) by taking into account that citizens may have different conceptions of democracy, and (iii) by

⁵¹ Norris (2011) developed a concept and measure of political discontent along these lines (democratic deficit).

acknowledging that there are different aspects of democracy with which citizens might be dissatisfied.

The concept and measure of democratic discontent implemented in this paper addresses these three points. First, in line with the notion of relative deprivation, discontent is conceptualized as the mismatch between individuals' normative expectations about the importance of different elements of democracy (i.e. their democratic aspirations) and their evaluations about the extent to which these normative expectations are realized in their political system. Second, the measure of discontent is weighted to reflect which are the elements of democracy considered relatively more and less important by each individual (see data and methods section for further details). Third, by relying on individuals' aspirations and evaluations for different elements of democracy the measure of discontent also takes into account that aspirations might be realized for some dimensions of democracy but not for others.

The different elements of democracy considered in the operationalization of democratic discontent are grouped according to the three models of democracy proposed by Ferrín and Kriesi (2016a): the liberal, the social, and the direct-democratic model. The liberal model of democracy is based on basic civil liberties (e.g. the protection of minorities' rights), and electoral guarantees (e.g. free elections). The social democratic model moves beyond procedures and incorporates social and distributive justice as constitutive elements of democracy. The direct-democratic model is based on the direct involvement of citizens in the decision making process. Hence, the mismatch between democratic aspirations and evaluations can take the forms of liberal, social, and direct-democratic discontent.

How should these different forms of democratic discontent relate to political participation?⁵² As any other form of institutionalized participation, voting can be considered a tacit expression of satisfaction with the functioning of the political system, and an expression of support and acceptance of the current political order (Barnes et al., 1979). Hence, citizens with high levels of democratic discontent, be it liberal or social, should be less motivated to participate through institutionalized channels, precisely as a way of signaling their discontent

⁵² In order to simplify the analysis, and due to the lack of country-level measures of political actors' mobilizing potential of direct-democratic discontent, the measure of direct-democratic discontent is just used as a control. Therefore, I focus on the relationship between liberal and social discontent and political participation.

with the functioning of their democracies. As a consequence, *higher levels of liberal and social discontent should be negatively associated with the likelihood of turning out to vote (H₁)*.

However, the negative relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote should be stronger in the case of liberal discontent. If discontent is generated by the perception that the political system is falling short of one's expectations with regard to the functioning of elections and other basic representation mechanisms, voting in elections is likely to be perceived as an inadequate instrument to influence policymaking (Hernández and Ares, 2016). This is partially captured by liberal discontent, which in addition to aspects related to civil liberties, also reflects the mismatch between aspirations and evaluations for some aspects related to the functioning of elections. Since the desire to influence what the government does is one of the main motivations driving citizens' to the voting booth (Verba et al., 1995), liberal discontent should, thus, reduce individuals' motivation to turn out to vote to a greater extent than social discontent, which should only reduce the likelihood of turning out to vote for the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph. As a consequence, *the negative relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote should be stronger in the case of liberal discontent than in the case of social discontent (H_{1.1})*.

In the case of non-institutionalized participation, grievances generated by deprivation, either political or economic, are important for the emergence of social movements and the occurrence of protests (Gamson, 1968; Gurr, 1970; Klandermans, 2004). If the political system is not working according to one's expectations citizens' incentives to raise their voices to demand change are likely to increase. Hence, political grievances, manifested in the form of democratic discontent, should be a motivating force to engage in non-institutionalized political actions like demonstrations. The desire to influence the political process through an alternative channel that is not directly linked to representative institutions can also be considered an additional reason for citizens who are discontent with the functioning of the political system to be more likely to join protests (Hernández and Ares, 2016). Hence, *higher levels of liberal and social discontent should be positively related to the likelihood of protesting (H₂)*.

Democratic discontent, contextual-level mobilization and political participation

Citizens do not make political participation decisions in a vacuum. As Verba et al (1978, p. 19) noted, ‘all else is not equal’ across countries, and cross-country differences in how political parties and organizations mobilize individuals help to explain variation in the relationship between socioeconomic resources and participation across countries. Following the same logic one would expect the relationship between democratic discontent and participation to vary depending on the institutional context where discontent is rooted. The literatures on electoral participation and social movements have frequently acknowledged the importance of the institutional context. However, only recently, studies analyzing the individual-level relationship between dissatisfaction with democracy, distrust in democratic institutions and political participation have directly considered how these attitudes interact with contextual factors (Braun and Hutter, 2014; Dalton et al., 2010; Marien and Christensen, 2013; Quaranta, 2014; Welzel, 2013),

Most of these studies draw on the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) theoretical framework initially developed for the study of social movements. The POS model contends that the institutional structure of the state and the configuration of political actors affect the opportunities to mobilize (Kriesi, 2004). This model has been explicitly adopted for the study of the relationship between distrust in democratic institutions, voting and protesting (Braun and Hutter, 2014; Dalton et al., 2010; Marien and Christensen, 2013). However, prior studies focus predominantly on how the institutional structure of the state moderates the relationship between distrust and participation and disregard the role that political actors might play in this relationship.

The POS framework contends that the configuration of political actors, like political parties and unions, is a fundamental factor for mobilization (Kriesi, 2004). The relevance of parties and unions was also recognized in early political participation studies, which argued that participation arises from the interaction between collective actors and individuals (Barnes et al., 1979; Verba et al., 1978). However, in spite of the potential relevance of actors like political parties and trade unions, studies analyzing the relationship between attitudes towards democracy and participation have not usually taken them into consideration. Some proponents of the POS framework even argue that the limited attention paid to the electoral channel and

political parties is a serious shortcoming in the study of protest (Kriesi, 2015; McAdam and Tarrow, 2010).

A counterargument for the potential relevance of these actors is that political mobilization via traditional agencies like unions is believed to be under threat, and parties might be losing their grip on the political process as reflected by the erosion of partisan loyalties. However, recent accounts suggest that parties and unions still retain a central role in the mobilization of protest (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2014; Rüdig and Karyotis, 2014; Torcal et al., 2016). Hutter's (2013) analysis shows that political parties play an important role in the organization and sponsoring of demonstrations in different countries. Likewise, in the electoral arena political parties are still the central actors mobilizing voters, and one of the main instruments through which citizens vehicle their political demands into the political system. Hence, these actors should moderate the relationship between different forms of democratic discontent and political participation.

In the specific case of voting, the literature has emphasized the key role that the partisan supply plays for the decision to turn out to vote (Campbell et al., 1960; Kittilson and Anderson, 2010). Following a Downsian logic, citizens are more likely to turn out to vote if they have at least one party likely to address their concerns (Brockington, 2009). Hence, 'the incentives created by parties serve to encourage or inhibit participation' (Brockington, 2009, p. 50).

This argument can be easily applied to the relationship between democratic discontent and institutionalized participation. While democratic discontent should be negatively related to the likelihood of turning out to vote, the strength of this relationship is likely to be moderated by the partisan supply. Expressing their discontent through their vote can be the choice of those with strong feelings of democratic discontent if they can find a party that strongly advocates for policies that address the deficiencies they perceive in the democratic system. If this is the case, voting can be a useful tool to improve the situation and, at the same time, express discontent at the voting booth. In the presence of such party citizens with high levels of discontent should be less likely to withdraw from the electoral arena. Hence, everything else equal, *the negative relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote should be weaker in the presence of a party that strongly advocates for policies that address the perceived democratic shortcomings (H₃)*.

In the case of protest, to analyze the moderating role of the partisan supply it is first necessary to consider whether protesting is a surrogate of electoral participation or whether the electoral and protest arenas complement each other. Some have argued that in post-industrial societies the decline in institutionalized political participation is accompanied and compensated by increasing levels of participation in non-institutionalized activities (Norris, 2002). Underlying these claims, usually based on macro-level evidence, resides a conception of the protest arena as a surrogate for the electoral arena. However, numerous empirical studies challenge this view and show that, at the individual-level, the electoral and protest arenas are more likely to be complementary (Barnes et al., 1979). Even in post-industrial societies, a majority of those who demonstrate also vote, and, therefore, protesting can be considered an instrument citizens resort to in order to add additional volume to their claims when they are motivated to do so (Saunders, 2014). Participation in demonstrations is, thus, likely to supplement institutionalized forms of participation. However, the translation of democratic discontent into participation in demonstrations does not exclusively depend on individuals' motivations. Collective action requires, among other things, mobilization potential and an organizational infrastructure.

Given their organizational resources political parties are fundamental actors for the organization, sponsoring and facilitation of protests (Hutter, 2013). Hence, the partisan supply should be a relevant factor to account for the translation of democratic discontent into protest behavior. If in a country there are parties that strongly advocate for policies that are linked to the perceived shortcomings of the democratic system in a given dimension, citizens who are discontent with the functioning of their democracies in that dimension should be more likely to get mobilized to protest. For example, in the presence of a party that strongly advocates for reducing economic inequalities, citizens with high levels of social discontent should be more likely to get mobilized to protest, since that party will be more likely to organize, sponsor or facilitate protests that address social justice problems. Hence, everything else equal, *the positive relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of protesting should be stronger in the presence of a party that strongly advocates for policies that address the perceived democratic shortcomings (H₄)*.

Trade unions are another actor that retains a central role in the organization and mobilization of protests throughout Europe (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2014; Rüdiger and

Karyotis, 2014; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2009). Unions have historically defended the interests of socially disadvantaged groups, and economic equality and social justice are prominent issues in their agendas (Xhafa, 2014). As a consequence, I expect that the strength of trade unions in a given country will have a positive impact on the mobilization of discontent related to the social justice dimension of democracy, since unions are likely to organize, sponsor and facilitate protests that address social justice problems. Hence, everything else equal, *the positive effect of social discontent on protest should be stronger in countries with a higher presence of unions (H₅)*.

It is worth noting that the moderating effects of political mobilization by parties and unions should not be restricted to their members. Through their organizational infrastructure political actors like parties and unions act as first movers in the generation of participation opportunities, which then trigger the mobilization of a broader public that shares the concerns of these actors (Boekkooi et al., 2011; Rüdiger and Karyotis, 2014). Hence, the moderating effects of mobilization should spillover to the general public, which does not necessarily need to be a member of these organizations.

DATA AND METHODS

The empirical analyses draw on data from the sixth round of the ESS, conducted in 29 European countries between 2012 and 2013. This survey includes a battery of questions that ask respondents to give their opinion about the importance of fourteen different elements of democracy for an ideal democratic system (their democratic aspirations) on a 0-10 scale. These questions are followed by a battery asking respondents about their evaluation (on a 0-10 scale) of the extent to which they believe that each of these elements is present in their country.⁵³

Through these questions I operationalize the mismatch between democratic aspirations and evaluations for the liberal and social models of democracy proposed by Ferrín and Kriesi (2016a). The liberal discontent scale comprises indicators for the following elements of democracy: equality before the law, protection of minorities' rights, press freedom, media reliability, parties' freedom, freedom of elections, vertical accountability, government

⁵³ Details about question wording, operationalization and distribution of all the variables used in this paper can be found in table A2 in the appendix.

justification of decisions, electoral competition, and political deliberation. The social discontent scale is based on two elements: protection against poverty and reduction of income inequalities.⁵⁴

The operationalization of democratic discontent is based on the measure of democratic legitimacy proposed by Wessels (2016), albeit with some modifications. To operationalize discontent I follow three steps. First, the mismatch between aspirations and evaluations for each of the elements of democracy i is calculated for each individual j following equation 1:

$$Mismatch_{ij} = Aspiration_{ij} - Evaluation_{ij} \quad (1)$$

where both aspirations and evaluations are measured in its original 0-10 scale, with higher values indicating higher aspirations and better evaluations, respectively. Hence, higher values imply a greater mismatch between democratic aspirations and democratic evaluations, and when normative aspirations are fulfilled the measure takes the value 0.⁵⁵

Second, the measure of discontent takes into account that individuals are more likely to act upon values that are salient or central (Schwartz, 1973). In this particular case, this is indicated by the importance each individual attributes to each of the elements of democracy in her ideal conceptualization of democracy. However, it is the relative rather than absolute value priorities that are likely to be more influential for behaviors (Schwartz, 2007, 1992). By incorporating the relative importance individuals' attribute to each element of democracy the discontent measure reflects respondents' democratic priorities. Those elements that are

⁵⁴ The liberal and social scales were validated by the analysis conducted by Kriesi et al., (2016). I replicated the analysis adopting the same logic of a hierarchical structuration of democratic aspirations. To this purpose I conducted a polytomous mokken scale analysis of democratic aspirations. The polytomous mokken scale analysis for the liberal items produces an H-loevinger coefficient of scalability of 0.42 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. All the Loevinger-H values for the individual items are above the 0.3 cut-off. The two elements of the social model are moderately correlated in all countries (average correlation = 0.65). A principal-component factor analysis of the democratic aspirations items also yields two factors with an eigenvalue higher than 1 and with the items of the liberal discontent scale loading on the first factor, and the items of the social discontent scale loading on a second factor (before rotation, and after tandem orthogonal rotation).

⁵⁵ A higher evaluation than aspiration would result in a value lower than 0. Following Wessels (2016) in the cases in which evaluations are higher than aspirations the measure is assigned the value 0.

considered relatively more important are the ones that carry a greater weight in each respondent measures of discontent. To measure the relative importance attributed to each element of democracy I follow the procedure suggested by Schwartz (2007) for the measurement of value priorities. Hence, a measure of the relative importance of each element of democracy is calculated as follows:

$$Relative_aspiration_{ij} = Aspiration_{ij} - \overline{Aspiration_j} \quad (2)$$

where $\overline{Aspiration_j}$ represents the average of the democratic aspirations over all elements of democracy for each individual j . This yields a score for each element of democracy i , which takes positive values for higher than average aspirations and negative values for lower than average aspirations. These measures are rescaled to range from minimum 0.03 and maximum 0.97 to prevent them from taking negative values and with higher values indicating higher relative aspirations.⁵⁶ This indicator is used to weight each of the mismatch measures calculated through equation 1 as follows:

$$Weighted_mismatch_{ij} = Mismatch_{ij} * Relative_aspiration_{ij} \quad (3)$$

Hence, the values obtained in the first step for each element of democracy i are weighted by the relative importance of that element.

The third and final step involves the aggregation of the different elements to generate the liberal and social discontent variables as follows:

$$Liberal_discontent_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{10} Weighted_mismatch_{ij}}{10} \quad (4)$$

$$Social_discontent_j = \frac{\sum_{i=11}^{12} Weighted_mismatch_{ij}}{2} \quad (5)$$

⁵⁶ Given the way relative aspirations are calculated the original measure can never take the minimum value of -10 or the maximum value of 10. Therefore, the rescaled measure never takes the values 0 or 1 and it ranges between 0.03 and 0.97.

The resulting measures are normalized into a range from minimum 0 to maximum 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of discontent in each of the dimensions.

The dependent variables of this paper are voting and protesting. Voting takes the value 1 for those who turned out to vote in the last national election and 0 for those who did not. To operationalize protest most previous studies combine different non-institutionalized actions. However, following Saunders (2014), I restrict the protest variable to respondents' participation in legal demonstrations. The protest variable takes the value 1 for those who participated in at least one legal demonstration during the last 12 months and the value 0 otherwise.

To operationalize the partisan supply I rely on data from the 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey, which covers 22 of the 29 countries included in the ESS.⁵⁷ This survey measures the position of political parties on different issues, as well the salience of these issues in the agendas of each party. To operationalize the positions of parties in the liberal dimension I rely on a question about civil liberties. Parties that favor an increase of civil liberties take positive values from 1 to 5, parties that defend a limitation of civil liberties take negative values from -1 to -5, and parties that take a neutral position take the value 0. Values further away from 0 indicate a more extreme position on each side of the issue. To generate a final measure that takes into account not only the position of each party but also the salience of the issue these values are then multiplied by a 0-10 indicator measuring its salience for each party. To operationalize the position of parties in the social dimension I rely on a question about redistribution from the rich to the poor, with positive values indicating a position in favor of increasing redistribution, and negative values indicating a position in favor of reducing redistribution. The procedure followed to generate this measure is the same as for the civil liberties question, with higher positive values indicating a position more in favor of redistribution and a greater salience of the issue.

To assign a value for the civil liberties and welfare and redistribution variables to each country the maximum value in each of these indicators is used. That is, these variables take the value of the party that is most in favor of increasing civil liberties or redistributing from the rich to the poor in each country. The country maximum is a more adequate measure than the

⁵⁷ Countries not included: Kosovo, Ukraine, Russia, Iceland, Israel, Cyprus, and Albania.

country average for two reasons. First, because, in light of the hypotheses formulated for voting, citizens with high levels of democratic discontent only require one viable party that strongly advocates, for example for greater civil liberties, in order to express their liberal discontent through their vote. Likewise, in the case of protest citizens only need one party to organize or sponsor a demonstration about a given issue, like for example welfare and equality, to be mobilized. However, this reasoning only applies to viable parties, which are likely to possess the organizational infrastructure and resources to organize or sponsor protests, and also to appear as rational vote options. Therefore, the operationalization of the partisan supply is restricted to parties with parliamentary representation. The second reason why the maximum is more adequate than the average is because the average can be misleading if most parties adopt a position against, for example redistribution, but there is still one party that strongly advocates for it. The latter party could mobilize citizens with high social discontent, but the average would instead reflect that mobilization of these citizens is not likely in that party system.

To operationalize the presence of trade unions I would ideally rely on union density measures. However, comparable union density measures are only available for 22 of the 29 countries included in the ESS. As an alternative, I operationalize this variable by aggregating the percentage of ESS respondents that declare being members of a trade union in each country. This appears to be a good surrogate of union density measures, since the correlation between the ILO union density indicator, available for 22 of the surveyed countries, and the ESS aggregated variable equals 0.94.

In all models I introduce a control variable measuring discontent related to the third model of democracy proposed by Ferrín and Kriesi (2016): the direct-democratic model. Direct-democratic discontent is operationalized following equations 1 to 3 and relying on a single indicator about citizens' right to decide on policies by voting in referenda. Besides direct democratic discontent, at the individual-level I include controls for age, gender, education, political interest, ideology, and membership in voluntary organizations and trade unions. In the models in which protest is specified as the dependent variable I also add a control for place of residence (city or village). To account for the fact that representation preferences might affect the way in which citizens participate in politics all models also include a variable measuring whether citizens have a trustee or mandate conception of representation (Bengtsson and

Christensen, 2014). At the country-level I control for institutional openness, which is operationalized as a composite measure of the effective number of parliamentary parties and territorial decentralization (Marien and Christensen, 2013). Additionally, in voting models I control for compulsory voting, and in protest models I introduce a variable capturing whether the government was led by a left-wing party in the 12 months prior to the survey (see Torcal et al., 2016).

To account for the hierarchical structure of the data all models are estimated through multilevel linear probability models (LPM). Although the most common practice in the presence of dichotomous dependent variables is to estimate logistic models, the coefficients estimated through LPM are similar to the average marginal effects of logistic regression and are directly interpretable, especially if the intention is to make comparisons across models and estimate cross-level interactions (Ai and Norton, 2003; Karaca-Mandic et al., 2012; Mood, 2010).

RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the results of *models 1* and *2* specified to test the individual-level hypotheses (H_1 , $H_{1.1}$ and H_2). In line with the first hypothesis, both liberal and social discontent are negatively related to the likelihood of turning out to vote. These results suggest that when measured in relative terms, and taking into account the elements that citizens consider most important in their conceptualization of democracy, democratic discontent is negatively related to the likelihood of turning out to vote.

The first model also reveals that the relationship between democratic discontent and the likelihood of turning out to vote is stronger in the case of liberal discontent. This result supports the idea, advanced in hypothesis 1.1, that discontent related to the functioning of the core elements of democratic representation should be more consequential for the decision of turning out to vote. In comparison to other predictors commonly associated with turnout decisions, the effect of liberal discontent appears to be substantial. The reduction in the likelihood of turning out to vote associated with moving from the minimum to the maximum value of liberal discontent is equivalent to a reduction in thirteen years of education, greater than the effect of being a member of a trade union, and equivalent to moving from being hardly interested in politics to being interested in politics. The differences in the effects of social and liberal

discontent underscore the importance of distinguishing between different forms of democratic discontent when analyzing its relationship to political participation.

Table 1: Random intercepts multilevel linear probability models

VARIABLES	(1) Vote	(2) Protest
Liberal democratic discontent	-0.108*** (0.020)	0.086*** (0.013)
Social democratic discontent	-0.040*** (0.014)	0.023*** (0.009)
Direct democratic discontent	0.027** (0.011)	0.019*** (0.007)
Conception of representation (ref = mandate)		
Trustee	0.013*** (0.005)	-0.002 (0.003)
It depends	0.010* (0.006)	0.006 (0.004)
Education	0.008*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.000)
Political interest	0.094*** (0.002)	0.031*** (0.001)
Age	0.004*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)
Gender	0.020*** (0.004)	-0.005** (0.002)
Involvement in voluntary organization	0.012*** (0.001)	0.014*** (0.001)
Leftist	0.030*** (0.004)	0.051*** (0.003)
Union member	0.063*** (0.005)	0.043*** (0.003)
City		0.020*** (0.003)
Constant	0.182*** (0.016)	-0.065*** (0.012)
Random-effects parameters		
SD Intercept	0.060 (0.008)	0.052 (0.007)
Observations	43,996	43,996
Countries	29	29
Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

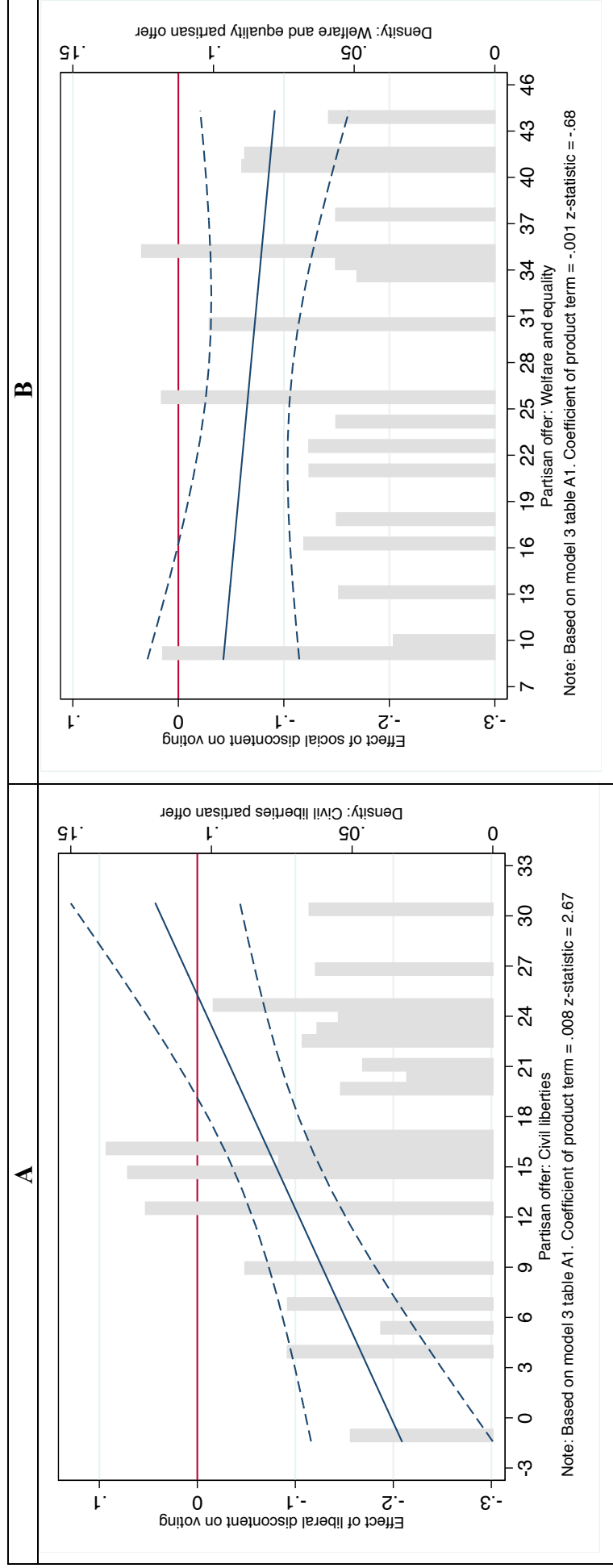
In *model 1* all control variables behave as expected, except for direct-democratic discontent, which is positively related to the likelihood of turning out to vote. Hence, everything else equal, citizens are more likely to turn out to vote if they consider that the political system is falling short of their expectations with regard to the extent to which they are directly involved in decision making through referenda. The particular nature of direct

democracy may lay behind this a priori surprising result. Direct democracy analysts argue that there is a trade-off between direct and representative democracy (Linder, 2010). Hence, if citizens are already satisfied with their direct involvement in decision-making, which would be indicated by a lack of direct-democratic discontent, they might be less likely to turn out to vote, since direct democracy might render elections less relevant.

Model 2 summarizes the results for protesting. In line with the expectations, both liberal and social discontent are positively related to the likelihood of joining legal demonstrations. Hence, it appears that discontent generated by a sense of relative deprivation with regards to one's expectations about how democracy should work is likely to increase citizens' motivations to protest. These results are in line with studies that conclude that critical attitudes toward democracy and democratic institutions are a relevant predictor of protest or non-institutionalized participation (Hooghe and Marien, 2013), and clearly contrast with those that show that these attitudes do not increase the likelihood of demonstrating (Dalton et al., 2010; Dubrow et al., 2008). However, as in the case of voting, not all forms of democratic discontent are related to the likelihood of protesting with the same strength. While the effect of liberal discontent appears to be substantial, the effect of social discontent is relatively weak. The increase in the likelihood of protesting associated with moving from the minimum to the maximum value of liberal discontent is similar to the effect of moving from being not at all interested in politics to being interested in politics, or substantially stronger than the effect of being a member of a trade union.

The relationship between different forms of democratic discontent and political participation should, however, depend on whether parties and unions are likely to mobilize these feelings of discontent in the electoral and protest arenas. To test this hypothesis I specify a series of cross-level interactions between the democratic discontent indicators and the variables summarizing the partisan supply. Beginning with the likelihood of turning out to vote, *figures 1 A* and *B* summarize the cross-level interactions between liberal discontent and the civil liberties partisan offer, and between social discontent and the welfare and equality partisan

Figure 1. Average marginal effects of liberal discontent (A) and social discontent (B) on voting contingent on the partisan offer (with 90% confidence intervals)



offer.⁵⁸ *Figure 1A* shows the expected positive slope and the coefficient of the product term is statistically significant at conventional levels.⁵⁹ In countries below the mean of the civil liberties partisan offer variable, where there is no party that strongly advocates for expanding civil liberties, liberal discontent has a substantial negative effect on the likelihood of turning out to vote. However, with the presence of parties more strongly in favor of expanding civil liberties the negative effect of liberal discontent weakens substantially, and it even becomes non-statistically significant for those countries with the presence of at least one party that is a strong advocate of expanding civil liberties. Hence, in the latter countries citizens with high levels of liberal discontent are not, on average, significantly less likely to turn out to vote. In the case of the interaction between social discontent and the welfare and equality partisan offer (*figure 1B*), though, the slope is almost flat, indicating that in this case the partisan supply does not moderate the negative effect of discontent on the likelihood of turning out to vote in any direction. This is also confirmed by the non-statistically significant coefficient of the product term.

These results provide partial support for hypothesis 3, since at least in the case of liberal discontent the partisan offer is a relevant moderating factor of its negative impact on the likelihood of turning out to vote. In this case, the electoral supply appears to make the election process more or less attractive for the discontented voter, since in the absence of parties that strongly advocate for the expansion of civil liberties citizens with high levels of liberal discontent are, on average, more likely to abstain.

Focusing now on these same interactions for protesting, *figures 2 A* and *B* summarize the cross-level interactions between liberal discontent and the civil liberties partisan offer, and between social discontent and the welfare and equality partisan offer.⁶⁰ *Figure 2A* shows a

⁵⁸ This model has been estimated through LPM with random intercepts and random slopes for the discontent measures. The model includes the same variables as the models of *table 1* plus controls at the country-level for compulsory voting, trade union density and system openness. The model includes 35,428 level-1 observations and 22 level-2 observations. The full model is summarized in *table A1* in the appendix (*model 3*).

⁵⁹ Average marginal effects plots were generated with Stata *marhs* command (Hernández, 2016b).

⁶⁰ This model has been estimated through multilevel LPM with random intercepts and random slopes for the discontent measures. The model includes the same variables as the models of *table 1* plus controls at the country-level for trade union density, system openness and left-wing governments. The model includes 35,428 level-1 observations and 22 level-2 observations. The full model is summarized in *table A1* in the appendix (*model 4*).

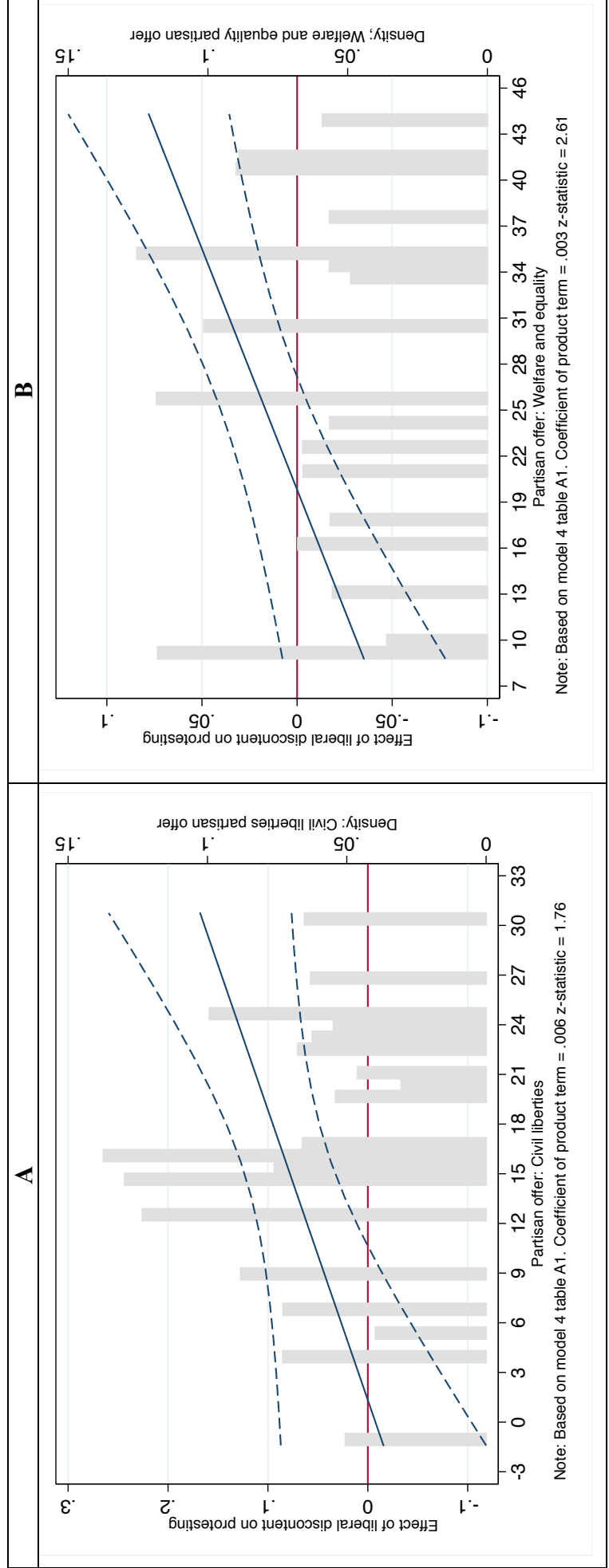
positive slope, indicating that the positive effect of liberal discontent on the likelihood of demonstrating strengthens as parties become more strongly in favor of expanding civil liberties. In fact, it is only in countries with values around or above the mean in the electoral supply variable that liberal discontent has a statistically significant positive impact on the likelihood of demonstrating. The coefficient of the product term of the cross-level interaction is statistically significant at the $p < 0.1$ level. *Figure 2B* depicts a similar pattern for the interaction between social discontent and the welfare and equality partisan offer variable. In countries where at least one party is strongly in favor of promoting greater welfare and equality citizens with high levels of social discontent are more likely to join demonstrations. Again, it is only in countries above the mean of the partisan offer variable that the effect of social discontent becomes statistically significant. In this case, the coefficient of the product term is statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

The results just summarized for protest behavior provide support for the fourth hypothesis. In line with the recent analysis of Saunders (2014), these results suggest that instead of a surrogate of the electoral arena the protest arena is a complement of it. The presence of parties that address the roots of citizens' democratic discontent does not make discontented citizens less likely to demonstrate, but instead, promotes their participation in demonstrations. In line with the postulates of the POS analytical framework, it appears that parties that strongly advocate for issues that address the deficiencies citizens perceive in the democratic system facilitate the mobilization of these citizens in the protest arena.

Focusing now on the role played by trade unions, *Figure 3A* summarizes the cross-level interaction between social discontent and trade union density for protest. In line with the fifth hypothesis, *Figure 3A* shows that the relationship between social discontent and the likelihood of demonstrating strengthens as trade union density increases, and the coefficient of the product term is statistically significant at conventional levels.⁶¹ In fact, like in the case of the partisan offer, only in those countries where trade union density is above the mean social discontent has a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of demonstrating. Hence, everything else equal, in countries with higher trade union density individuals with high levels of social

⁶¹ This model has been estimated through multilevel LPM with random intercepts and random slopes for the discontent measures. The model includes the same variables as the models of *table 1* plus controls at the country-level for left-wing governments. The model includes 43,996 level-1 observations and 29 level-2 observations. The full model is summarized in *table A1* in the appendix (*model 5*).

Figure 2. Average marginal effects of liberal discontent (A) and social discontent (B) on protesting contingent on the partisan offer (with 90 % confidence intervals)



discontent are, on average, more likely to protest. The robustness of this interaction is evaluated by re-specifying the model to include controls for the civil liberties and welfare partisan offer, as well as for system openness, because in countries with greater trade union density there might also be parties that advocate more strongly for welfare and equality. As a result of the inclusion of these additional variables the sample is restricted again to 22 cases and the country with the highest trade union density (Iceland) is excluded from the analysis.⁶² This new interaction is summarized in *Figure 3B*. Although with this new specification the coefficient of the product term weakens, the interaction effect is still substantial and statistically significant at conventional levels. An interaction between liberal discontent and trade union density was also tested and, as expected, it proved not statistically significant (results not shown).⁶³ Hence, it appears that in the protest arena trade unions are another relevant actor for the mobilization of political discontent related to the issues they have traditionally advocated for.⁶⁴

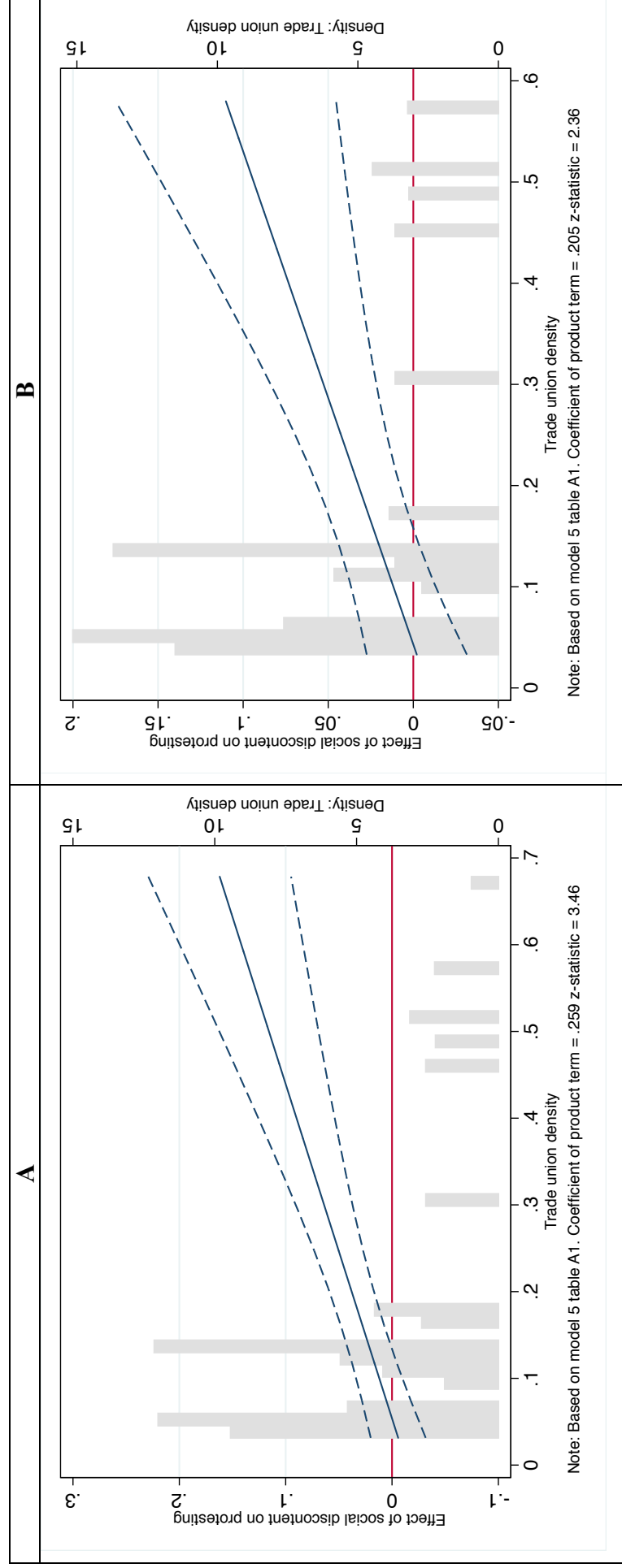
Since I estimate most cross-level interactions relying on a reduced number of level-2 units I conduct further analyses to assess whether any of the results is driven by an influential case (country). To do so I re-estimate all the models in which cross-level interactions were statistically significant leaving one country out of the sample at a time. The results are summarized in figures A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 in the appendix, which summarize the coefficients of the corresponding product term for each of these models. In most cases these models provide support for the initial findings, since the exclusion of one country does not substantially alter the size of the coefficient of the product terms. The only exception is the interaction between liberal discontent and the civil liberties partisan offer for protest. In this case, it appears that the results are partly driven by the Spanish case. When this country is excluded the size of the coefficient of the product term is reduced by half but it still remains statistically significant at the 90 percent level.

⁶² This model has been estimated through multilevel LPM with random intercepts and random slopes for the discontent measures. The model includes the same variables as the models of *table 1* plus controls at the country-level for, system openness, civil liberties partisan offer, welfare and equality partisan offer, and left-wing governments. The model includes 35,428 level-1 observations and 22 level-2 observations. The full model is summarized in *table A1* in the appendix (*model 6*).

⁶³ Additional analyses (not shown) also reveal that these same interactions are not statistically significant when, instead of protest, voting is specified as the dependent variable.

⁶⁴ Additional analyses (not shown) reveal that at the individual-level the effect of social discontent on the likelihood of demonstrating is also stronger for those individuals who are members of trade unions.

Figure 3. Average marginal effects of social discontent on protesting contingent on trade union density (with 90 % confidence intervals). Full sample (A) and restricted sample with additional controls (B)



As an additional check I re-estimate all models using multilevel logistic regression instead of LPM. The marginal effects of the main parameters of interest are reported in tables A3, and A4 in the appendix. The significance of the product terms is estimated following the recommendations of Karaca-Mandic et al (2012) for the analysis of interactions in non-linear models. The results indicate that there are no major discrepancies between the models estimated through LPM and logistic regression. The only noticeable difference is again related to the interaction between liberal discontent and the civil liberties partisan offer for protest. In this case the moderating effect of the partisan offer is slightly weaker and the product term fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

CONCLUSION

This paper began from the premise that in order to examine the link between democratic discontent and participation it was necessary to implement a measure of discontent that acknowledged that in order to affect behaviors political grievances need to be perceived relative to what a person feels entitled to. This measure should also account for the fact that democracies as well as conceptions of democracy are complex and multifaceted. Through a measure of democratic discontent that incorporates all these considerations this paper shows that individual-level mismatches between democratic aspirations and evaluations are relevant predictors of the likelihood of turning out to vote and engaging in legal demonstrations. Democratic discontent is negatively related to the likelihood of turning out to vote and positively related to the likelihood of protesting. These results contrast with recent studies that conclude that political grievances or discontent with the functioning of democracy and its main institutions do not affect political participation decisions, and provide support for the idea that democratic discontent is a relevant motivational disposition that modulates the extent and means by which citizens participate in politics.

At the same time, the empirical analyses reveal that not all forms of democratic discontent are related to voting and protesting with identical strength. In both cases it appears that discontent related to the functioning of the core elements of democratic representation are more decisive for participation decisions than discontent generated by the fact that the democratic system is not judged to perform according to one's expectations in other areas such

as social justice. These findings underscore the importance of distinguishing between different dimensions of discontent with the functioning of democracy.

The second contribution of this paper is the incorporation of traditional mobilization agents—political parties and trade unions—into the study of the relationship between democratic discontent and political participation. Building on the POS analytical framework this paper shows that the partisan supply is a relevant factor that moderates the impact of democratic discontent on the likelihood of voting and protesting. In the case of voting it appears that, in some cases, the negative effects of discontent can be attenuated if the electoral supply offers at least one viable party that strongly advocates for policies likely to address the specific shortcomings citizens perceive in their democratic system. In the case of protest the empirical analysis indicates that parties are also likely to facilitate mobilization in the protest arena. If a party system is characterized by at least one party that strongly advocates for policies that address the perceived democratic shortcomings citizens who are discontented are more likely to demonstrate. These results are in line with recent accounts that have shown that political parties play a central role in the mobilization of protest (Hutter, 2013). Contrasting with arguments about the decreasing influence of political parties, it appears that they are still important actors for political mobilization in both the electoral and protest arenas.

Apart from political parties, the empirical analysis also reveals that trade unions are important mobilizing actors in the protest arena. However, this only applies to the mobilization of grievances that are related to the main activities of unions (social justice). In countries with a greater presence of unions citizens with feelings of social discontent are more likely to demonstrate than citizens with the same levels of discontent that live in countries with less powerful unions. Hence, it appears that this actor still plays an important role in the mobilization of political grievances in the European protest arena, as it was suggested in a recent study of Portugal (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2014). Overall, the findings about the moderating effect of the partisan supply and trade unions support the idea that the relationship between democratic discontent and participation is complex, and that both motivations stemming from political discontent and the mobilizing potential of political actors need to be taken into account.

An implication of these findings is that the partisan supply constrains whether democratic discontent is voiced and channeled into the political system. In countries with a

party that strongly advocates for policies addressing the perceived democratic shortcomings discontented citizens are, on average, not less likely to turn out to vote and are more likely to demonstrate. Hence, in these cases, discontented citizens are still likely to be heard in the political process. However, in the absence of such parties, or other mobilizing agents like unions, these citizens are less likely to turn out to vote and are, at the same time, not more likely to demonstrate. Hence, a tentative conclusion is that in the absence of a suitable partisan offer or other mobilizing agents, exit is the most likely reaction to political discontent, because the available options do not allow citizens to express their discontent in a meaningful way. This conclusion is tentative because in this paper voting and protesting have been analyzed separately. Further research should rely on typologies of participants that combine different types of behaviors, and analyze whether in the absence of a suitable partisan offer or other mobilizing agents exit is the most likely reaction of those who are not satisfied with the functioning of democracy.

APPENDIX: CHAPTER-4

Table A1. Multilevel linear probability models

VARIABLES	(3) Vote	(4) Protest	(5) Protest	(6) Protest
Cross-level interactions				
Liberal discontent * PO ⁺ : Civil liberties	0.008*** (0.003)	0.006* (0.003)		
Social discontent * PO ⁺ : Welfare and equality	-0.001 (0.002)	0.003*** (0.001)		
Social discontent * Trade Union density			0.259*** (0.075)	0.205** (0.087)
Individual level variables				
Liberal discontent	-0.198*** (0.053)	-0.008 (0.058)	0.091*** (0.029)	0.082*** (0.030)
Social discontent	-0.031 (0.059)	-0.063* (0.035)	-0.014 (0.017)	-0.009 (0.020)
Direct-democratic discontent	0.030* (0.017)	0.019** (0.010)	0.017** (0.008)	0.018* (0.010)
Conception of representation (ref = mandate)				
Trustee	0.010* (0.006)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)
It depends	0.012* (0.006)	0.010** (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)
Education	0.009*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)
Political interest	0.104*** (0.003)	0.030*** (0.002)	0.031*** (0.001)	0.030*** (0.002)
Age	0.004*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)
Gender	0.020*** (0.004)	-0.005* (0.003)	-0.006** (0.002)	-0.005** (0.003)
Involvement in voluntary organization	0.012*** (0.001)	0.013*** (0.001)	0.013*** (0.001)	0.013*** (0.001)
Leftist	0.031*** (0.005)	0.050*** (0.003)	0.049*** (0.003)	0.050*** (0.003)
Union member	0.064*** (0.006)	0.045*** (0.004)	0.042*** (0.003)	0.045*** (0.004)
City		0.023*** (0.003)	0.020*** (0.003)	0.023*** (0.003)
Contextual variables				
Compulsory voting	0.115** (0.052)			
System openness	-0.023 (0.034)	-0.066*** (0.017)		-0.066*** (0.016)
Trade union density	0.357*** (0.066)	-0.059* (0.032)	-0.096*** (0.034)	-0.063** (0.032)
PO ⁺ : Civil liberties	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)		-0.001 (0.001)
PO ⁺ : Welfare and equality	0.002 (0.001)	0.002*** (0.000)		0.002*** (0.000)
Left wing government		0.011 (0.010)	0.009 (0.013)	0.010 (0.009)
Constant	0.132***	-0.014	-0.049***	-0.020

	-0.047	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.021)
Random-effects parameters				
SD intercept	0.047	0.016	0.028	0.016
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
SD liberal discontent	0.054	0.104	0.137	0.119
	(0.033)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.023)
SD social discontent	0.083	0.046	0.045	0.047
	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Observations	35,438	35,438	43,996	35,438
Number of countries	22	22	29	22

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

⁺Note: PO = Partisan offer

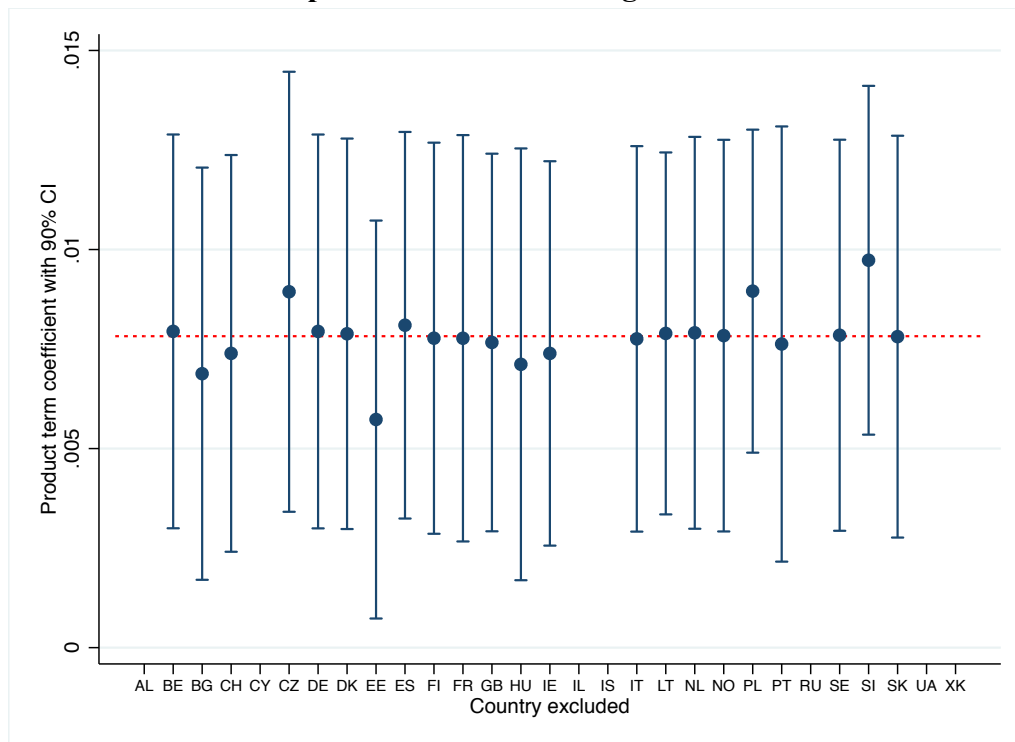
Table A2: Variables operationalization and descriptive statistics

Variable		Wording / Coding		Mean	SD	min	max
Dependent Variables							
Vote		"Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]?" Coded 0 for No, and 1 for Yes (Those not eligible to vote have been excluded from all the analyses)					
		0.75 0.42 0 1					
Protest		"There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?. Taken part in a lawful demonstration?" Coded 0 for No, and 1 for Yes					
		0.07 0.25 0 1					
Independent variables (Individual level)							
Liberal discontent		Operationalized following equations 1 to 4 (See data and methods section)					
		0.21 0.15 0 1					
Social discontent		Operationalized following equations 1, 2, 3 and 5 (See data and methods section).					
		0.27 0.19 0 1					
Direct-democratic discontent		Discontent measure for the only item corresponding to the direct democratic model of democracy operationalized following equations 1 to 3 (See data and methods section)					
		0.23 0.22 0 1					
Conception of representation: (categorical)		Sometimes the government disagrees with what most people think is best for the country. Which one of the statements on this card describes what you think is best for democracy in general?					
Cat1: Mandate		The government should change its planned policies in response to what most people think					
		0.69					
Cat2: Trustee		The government should stick to its planned policies regardless of what most people think					
		0.18					
Cat3: It depends		It depends on the circumstances					
Education		Years of education					
		0.13 12.5 4.03 0 51					
Political interest		"How interested would you say you are in politics- are you: very interested, quite interested, hardly interested, or not at all interested". Higher values correspond to higher levels of political interest.					
		2.34 0.91 1 4					
Age		Age in years					
		48.3 18.59 15 103					
Gender		Gender of the respondent. Coded 1 = female					
		1.54 0.50 1 2					
Involvement in voluntary organizations		Frequency of involvement in voluntary organizations in the last 12 months. 6 categories ranging from Never (1) to at least once a week (6).					
		1.97 1.58 1 6					
Leftist		Variable which take the value 1 for those who locate themselves at the left of the ideological spectrum (values 0 to 4 in question B19). Otherwise the variable takes the value 0					
		0.25 0.43 0 1					
Union member		"Are you or have you ever been member of a trade union or similar organization? If Yes, is that currently or previously?". Coded 1 for those who are currently members and 0 for all other responses					
		0.17 0.37 0 1					

City	Coded 1 if respondent lives in a big city or the suburbs or outskirts of a big city, otherwise coded 0	.34	0.47	0	1
Independent variables (Country level)					
Compulsory voting	Coded 1 for those countries which enforce compulsory voting according to IDEA database, coded 0 for all other countries	0.05	0.23	0	1
Trade union density	Measure obtained by aggregating the percent of respondents who declare currently being members of a trade-union or similar organization in the ESS	0.17	0.16	0.03	0.68
System openness	Measure combining the effective number of parliamentary / legislative parties (once the 'other' category has been "corrected" by using the least component method of bounds suggested by Taagepera (1997)) and a measure of decentralization based on fiscal decentralization. The effective number of parties variables was extracted from the Quality of Government dataset (variable: gol_enppl). The fiscal decentralization measure is based on the World Bank measure of the proportion of subnational expenditure and is extracted from Norris's democracy cross-national codebook (variable: SubNatExp). Both measures were recoded to 0-1 and then added up for each of the countries	0.98	0.31	0.50	1.66
Partisan Offer: Civil liberties	Measure combining the position of parties on this issue and the salience of that issue (position * salience). The maximum is assigned to each country (see Data and methods section for further details). Values of this table already show the distribution of the variable after having assigned the maximum to each country (i.e. country with the lower maximum = -1.41). Issue position is based on the variable CIVLIB_LAWORDER of the 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Issue salience is based on the variable CIVLIB_SALIENCE of the same dataset. Before combining the two CIVLIB_LAWORDER was recoded so that values from 1 to 5 indicated a position in favor of furthering civil liberties, 0 indicated a natural position and values from -5 to -1 indicated a position in favor of limiting civil liberties. Values closer to 5 indicate a position more in favor of furthering civil liberties, while values closer to -5 indicate a position more in favor of restricting civil liberties. After recoding the final measure was obtained by the product of issue position and issue salience.	16.01	8.04	-1.41	30.7
Partisan Offer: Welfare and equality	Measure combining the position of parties on this issue and the salience of that issue (position * salience). The maximum is assigned to each country (see Data and methods section for further details). Values of this table already show the distribution of the variable after having assigned the maximum to each country (i.e. country with the lower maximum = 8.78). Issue position is based on the variable REDISTRIBUTION of the 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Issue salience is based on the variable REDIST_SALIENCE of the same dataset. Before combining the two, REDISTRIBUTION was recoded so that values from 1 to 5 indicated a position in favor of redistribution, 0 indicated a natural position and values from -5 to -1 indicated a position opposed to redistribution. Values closer to 5 indicate a position more in favor of redistribution, while values closer to -5 indicate a position more	27.37	10.98	8.78	44.3

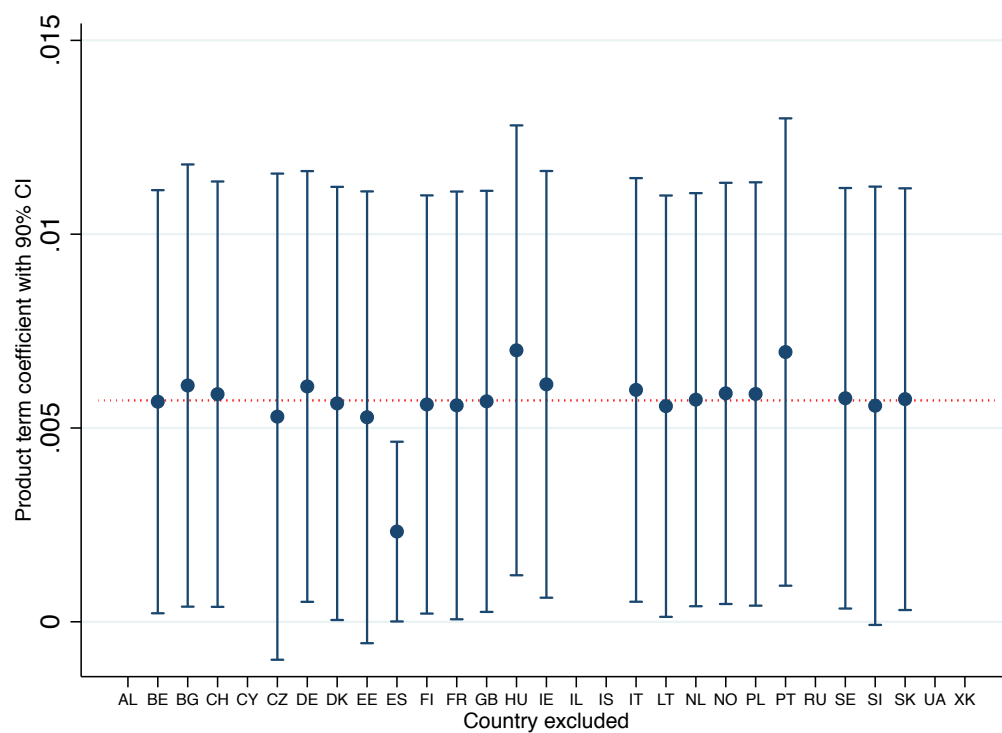
Left wing government	opposed to redistribution. After recoding the final measure was obtained by the product of issue position and issue salience. Variable that takes the value 1 if the government was led by a left-wing party at any time during the 12 months prior to the survey fieldwork. Otherwise the variable takes the value 0.	0.29	0.46	0	1
Variables used to generate the discontent measures (except for introductory statement, common wording for aspirations and evaluations)					
Introductory statement aspirations	Now some questions about democracy. Later on I will ask you about how democracy is working in [country]. First, however, I want you to think instead about how important you think different things are for democracy in general. There are no right or wrong answers so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me how important you think it is for democracy in general Now some questions about the same topics, but this time about how you think democracy is working in [country] today ⁷⁷ . Again, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think each of the following statements applies in [country]. 0 means you think the statement does not apply at all and 10 means you think it applies completely That the courts treat everyone the same That the rights of minority groups are protected That the media are free to criticize the government That the media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government That opposition parties are free to criticize the government That national elections are free and fair That governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job That the government explains its decisions to voters That different political parties offer clear alternatives to one another				
Introductory statement evaluations	That voters discuss politics with people they know before deciding how to vote				
Equality before the law	That the government protects all citizens against poverty				
Protection of minorities	That the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels				
Press freedom	That citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums				
Media reliability					
Parties' freedom					
Freedom of elections					
Vertical accountability					
Government justification of decisions					
Electoral competition (differentiated partisan offer)					
Political deliberation					
Protection against poverty					
Reduction of income inequalities					
Direct democracy					

Figure A1: Change in the product term coefficient for the interaction between liberal discontent and civil liberties partisan offer for voting.



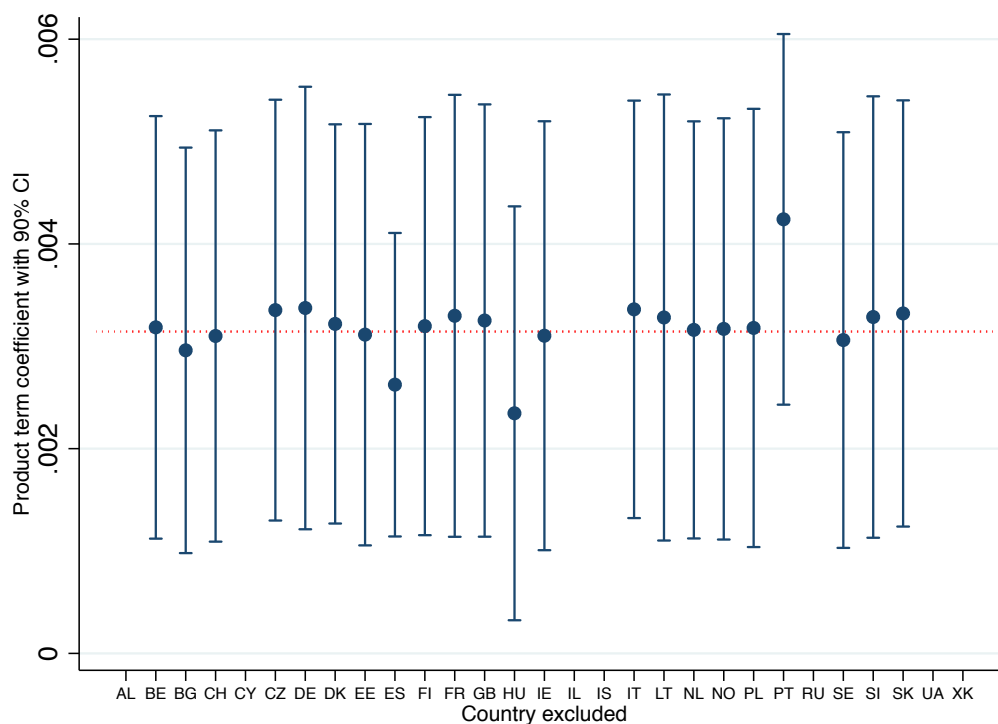
Note: Red dotted line depicts the value of the product term in the original model

Figure A2: Change in the product term coefficient for the interaction between liberal discontent and civil liberties partisan offer for protesting.



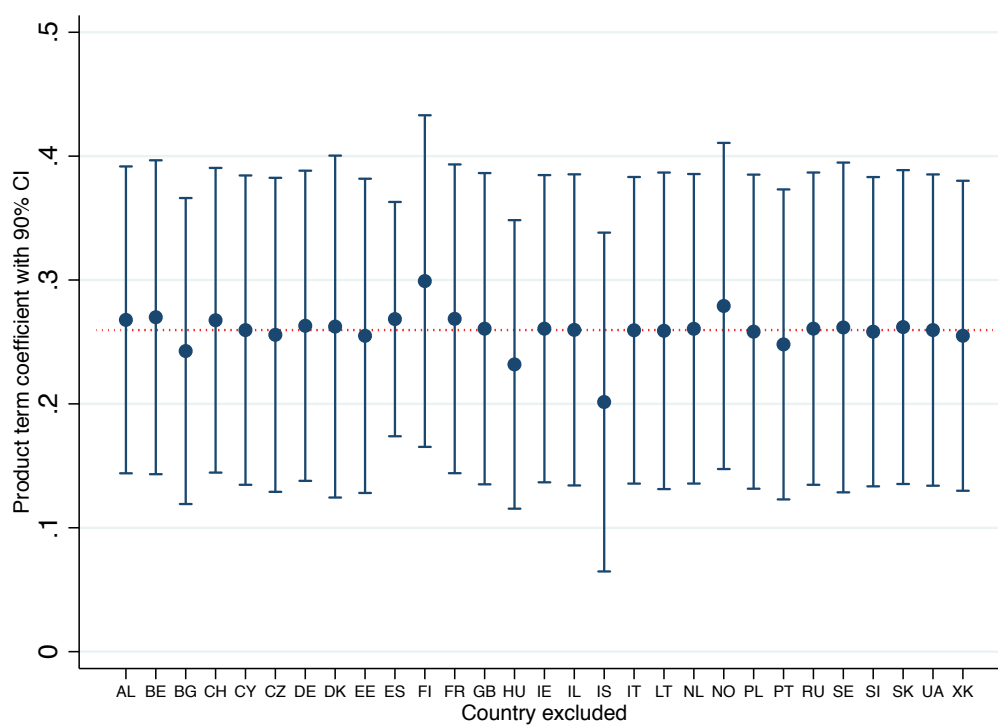
Note: Red dotted line depicts the value of the product term in the original model

Figure A3: Change in the product term coefficient for the interaction between social discontent and welfare and equality partisan offer for protesting.



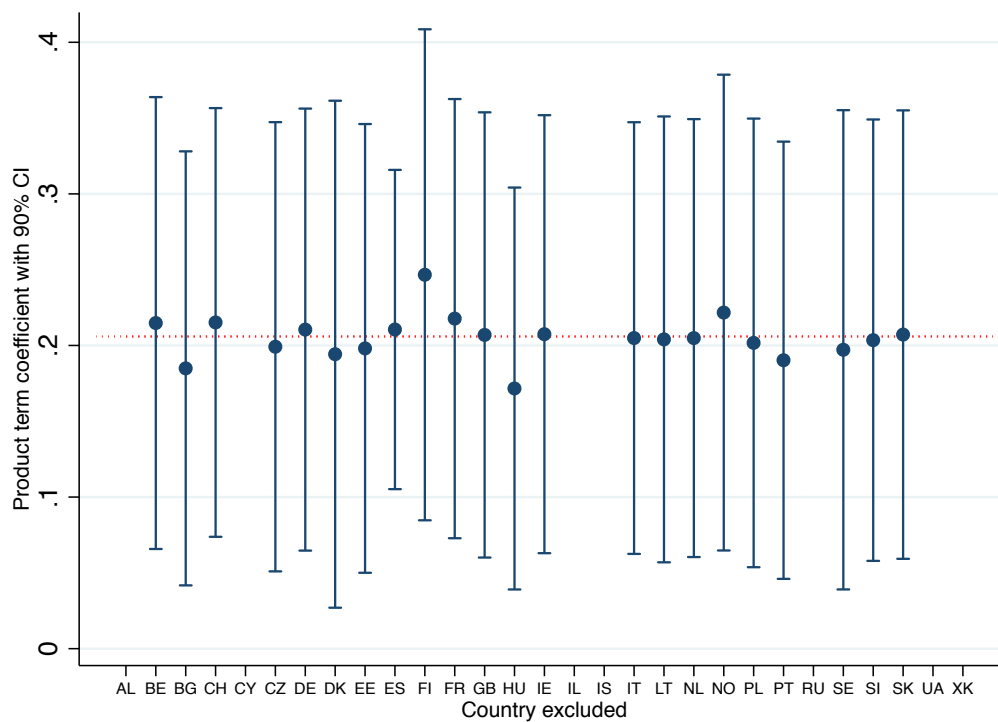
Note: Red dotted line depicts the value of the product term in the original model

Figure A4: Change in the product term coefficient for the interaction between social discontent and trade union density for protesting (full sample).



Note: Red dotted line depicts the value of the product term in the original model

Figure A5: Change in the product term coefficient for the interaction between social discontent and trade union density for protesting (restricted sample with additional controls).



Note: Red dotted line depicts the value of the product term in the original model

Table A3: Average marginal effects from random intercepts logistic models (individual level)⁶⁵

	Vote	Protest
Liberal discontent	-0.10***	0.07***
Social discontent	-0.04***	0.03***

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A4: Cross-level interactions from random intercepts and random slopes logistic models

The significance of the cross-level interactions product terms is estimated following the recommendations of Karaca-Mandic et al. (2012) for interactions in non-linear models using the inbuilt contrast feature of the margins command in Stata 14 with all control variables set at their means.

A) Adjusted predictions and significance of product term for partisan offer interactions

	Vote				Protest			
	Partisan offer			Significance product term	Partisan offer			Significance product term
	Low	Mean	High		Low	Mean	High	
Liberal discontent	-0.19	-0.07	0.03	***	0.03	0.07	0.09	NS
Social discontent	-0.04	-0.06	-0.08	NS	-0.01	0.01	0.09	**

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: For liberal discontent civil liberties partisan offer. For social discontent welfare and equality partisan offer

B) Adjusted predictions and significance of product term for trade union density

	Protest			
	Trade union density			Significance product term
	Low	Mean	High	
Social discontent full sample	-0.01	0.02	0.10	***
Social discontent restricted sample with additional controls	-0.01	0.02	0.13	***

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

⁶⁵ All models used to estimate the average marginal effects and adjusted predictions are specified with the same control variables as the original models, the only difference with the original models is the use of a logistic instead of a linear function.

CHAPTER 5: DEMOCRATIC DISCONTENT AND SUPPORT FOR MAINSTREAM AND CHALLENGER PARTIES: RATIONAL PROTEST VOTING

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade growing dissatisfaction with the way democracy works has been paralleled with declining support for mainstream parties and a substantial increase in the vote shares of challenger parties (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016). This could indicate that support for these different types of parties might be related to democratic discontent. However, the literature is divided about the extent to which support for challenger or populist parties and defection from mainstream parties can be linked to ‘protest voting’. Some argue that citizens who are dissatisfied with the way democracy works increasingly support challenger parties as a way of protesting and signaling their discontent with the functioning of representative democracy (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016). Others qualify the ‘protest hypothesis’ arguing that support for these parties is driven by policy preferences and that, as a consequence, support for challenger and populist parties is better explained by rational-choice models of voting behavior (Brug et al., 2000).

In this paper I adopt a midway position in this debate and I incorporate elements of both the protest and rational choice hypotheses to the analysis of the relationship between democratic discontent and party choice. Following the protest vote hypothesis I argue that democratic discontent should influence the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties and different types of challenger parties (left- and right-wing challenger parties). However, as a difference from previous studies, I take into account that there might be different forms of democratic discontent that are informed by individuals’ democratic preferences or aspirations, and that not all forms of discontent should relate to the likelihood of supporting mainstream and challenger parties in the same way. Democratic discontent is, thus, characterized as a function of individuals’ democratic aspirations (i.e. what they expect from democracy) and the extent to which these aspirations are fulfilled for particular elements or principles of democracy like, for example, the protection of minorities’ rights or the role of the state in reducing economic inequalities. Following the rational-choice hypothesis one would expect the impact of discontent on party choice to vary depending on the specific nature of democratic discontent, since different parties are likely to mobilize different types of discontent. Hence, citizens

should be likely to vote for a party that is aligned with the specific shortcomings that, according to their democratic aspirations, they perceive in their democracies. For example, an individual with high democratic aspirations about the extent to which governments should reduce income inequality that judges that her democracy is underperforming in this dimension should be more likely to vote for a left-wing challenger party. Hence, I conceptualize protest vote not as a vote devoid of any political meaning and detached from political preferences (Brug and Fennema, 2003; Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000), but as a rational protest vote that is informed by individuals' democratic aspirations and the extent to which these are realized for particular elements of democracy.

Voters tend to identify problems in the functioning of democracy with mainstream parties, since they see these parties as part of the system and, therefore, as part of the problem (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005). As a consequence, we would expect a negative relationship between most forms of democratic discontent and the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. By the same token, as a way of protesting and expressing dissatisfaction at the voting booth, different forms of discontent should be positively associated with the likelihood of voting for challenger parties. However, different types of challenger parties propose different solutions to democracies' problems. Hence, if the vote for challenger parties is not just a protest vote but a rational protest vote we would expect that depending on the nature of their democratic discontent individuals should be likely to vote for either left- or right-wing challengers.

To test the rational protest voting hypothesis I draw on European Social Survey data about Europeans' democratic aspirations and evaluations for five different elements of democracy: the freedom and fairness of elections, the protection of minorities' rights, citizens' direct involvement in decision-making through referenda, the role of the government in promoting economic equality, and the 'responsibility' of national governments towards other European governments. The empirical analysis reveals that specific forms of democratic discontent, measured by the imbalances between aspirations (to what extent individuals consider that a particular element should be present in an ideal democracy) and evaluations (to what extent individuals think a particular element is present in their democracy) for these five elements of democracy, are differently related to the likelihood of supporting mainstream and left- and right-wing challenger parties. These results suggest that the relationship between

democratic discontent and party choice should not just be conceptualized as a process of protest voting, but as a process of rational protest voting.

RATIONAL PROTEST VOTING: CONCEPTUALIZATION

It has been argued that exit (abstention) is one of the likely reactions of individuals who are not satisfied with the functioning of their democracies (Karp and Milazzo, 2015). However, the relationship between democratic discontent and abstention is not deterministic. Some dissatisfied citizens are likely to show up to vote on election day. How do these voters behave at the polls? Does their discontent affect the parties they decide to support?

In the American context, attitudes like political distrust increase the likelihood of voting for non-mainstream parties that are critical towards the functioning of the political system. This has led to the conclusion that, like abstention, third party voting can be considered an instrument citizens resort to in order to express their discontent with the functioning of representative democracy (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Hetherington, 1999). In the European context, most studies focus on the association between attitudes such as distrust towards representative institutions or dissatisfaction with democracy and the likelihood of voting for populist parties, mainly radical right parties. These attitudes are generally associated with a greater likelihood of supporting radical right parties (Bélanger and Aarts, 2006; Oesch, 2008). In Belgium and the Netherlands these negative orientations towards the political system have been shown to increase the likelihood of supporting protest parties located on both extremes of the ideological continuum (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016; Schumacher and Rooduijn, 2013).

The results of these previous studies suggest that support for challenger parties should be considered a form of protest vote. This view is challenged by scholars who argue that the decision to vote for these parties is more likely to be motivated by substantive considerations or policy preferences than by a desire to protest spurred by discontent with the functioning of democracy and democratic institutions. This argument has been mainly put forward by studies focusing on anti-immigrant parties, which found clear support for the rational-choice

hypothesis (Billiet and De Witte, 1995; Brug et al., 2005, 2000).⁶⁶ These results led these scholars to dismiss or qualify the protest vote hypothesis

In this paper I integrate the protest and rational-choice hypotheses in order to analyze how discontent with the functioning of democracy relates to party choices. As Billiet and De Witte (1995) noted in their conclusion, ‘a sharp distinction between the rational-choice hypothesis and the protest hypothesis is partly a false one’ (p. 194). Building on the protest vote hypothesis one would first assume that democratic discontent should affect party choice. However, following the rational-choice hypothesis, and based on the assumption that there are relevant differences in the proposals of different types of parties, one would assume that this is not likely to occur independently of the nature of individuals’ democratic discontent, which is determined by individuals’ democratic aspirations and the extent to which these are fulfilled for particular elements of democracy. Hence, the process by which democratic discontent relates to party choices should not only be influenced by citizens’ desire to protest, but also by what citizens want to protest about. Discontented citizens should not be simply likely to vote for a challenger party, as predicted by the protest hypothesis, but likely to vote for a party that is aligned with the specific shortcomings that, according to their democratic aspirations, they perceive in their democracies. If this is the case, the relationship between discontent and party choice could be characterized as a process of rational protest voting. Contrary to protest voting, which has been conceptualized as a vote decoupled from political preferences (Lubbers and Scheepers, 2000), protest rational voting is, in fact, informed by democratic preferences or aspirations.

To characterize the nature of individuals’ democratic discontent, and evaluate the rational protest voting hypothesis, democratic discontent must reflect the specific shortcomings that, according to their democratic aspirations, individuals perceive in their democracies. Democratic aspirations establish citizens’ ideal of democracy and set the standard or benchmark against which the functioning of democracy is evaluated. For specific elements of democracy democratic aspirations indicate to what extent individuals consider that a particular element should be present in an ideal democracy. In turn, democratic evaluations indicate to

⁶⁶ But see also Brug et al. (2003) later analysis, which shows that in comparison to their 1994 original analysis, in 1999 a relevant proportion of anti-immigrant parties attracted more voters on the basis of protest considerations than on the basis of policy related considerations.

Figure 1: Democratic surpluses and democratic deficits



what extent individuals think a particular element is present in their democracy. A comparison of aspirations and evaluations reflects whether the democratic system where one lives matches one's democratic aspirations, whether it is underperforming, or whether it is over-performing. These different types of (im)balances between democratic aspirations and evaluations are summarized in *Figure 1*. If aspirations match evaluations (0), the system is performing according to one's expectations. When aspirations are higher than evaluations, individuals' perceive a democratic deficit since they consider that their political system is falling short of their expectations (see Norris, 2011). If aspirations are lower than evaluations, individuals' perceive a democratic surplus since they consider that their system is over-performing.

In the presence of rational protest voting, democratic deficits and surpluses should be mobilized by different parties depending on the specific element of democracy they refer to. To test this proposition I rely on a theoretically derived set of different elements of democracy, which are presented in *table 1*. These particular elements are selected since democratic deficits and surpluses related to each of them are likely to be mobilized by different parties and, therefore, clear hypotheses can be formulated as to how perceiving a deficit or surplus for each of them should relate to the likelihood of supporting mainstream or left- and right-wing challenger parties. Hence, in contrast to previous studies (e.g. Oesch, 2008), in this paper democratic discontent does not refer to democracy in general but to particular elements of democracy. Relying on these different elements of democracy allows me to test the central proposition of the rational protest voting model, namely that citizens should be likely to cast a vote for a party that is aligned with the specific nature of their democratic discontent.

Table 1: Elements of democracy

Element of democracy / Dimension	Principle of democracy
Freedom and fairness of elections	National elections being free and fair
Minorities' rights	The rights of minority groups being protected
Economic equality	Governments taking measures to reduce differences in income levels
Direct-democracy	Citizens having the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums
Responsibility towards other European governments	Politicians taking into account the views of other European governments before making decisions

RATIONAL PROTEST VOTING IN EUROPE: EXPECTATIONS

I conceptualize mainstream parties as those parties that have played a key role in a country's party system since the postwar period and that play a relevant role in national cabinets (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2015). Given the central role that these parties play in European democracies individuals are likely to identify problems with the functioning of democracy with these parties (see Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005). As a consequence, one might expect democratic discontent to be negatively related to the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. However, when analyzing discontent in the form of imbalances between democratic aspirations and evaluations for particular elements of democracy we need to consider how democratic deficits and surpluses for each element of democracy may relate to the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties. In this case, even mainstream parties might be capable of mobilizing voters that perceive surpluses or deficits for specific elements of democracy.

In opposition to mainstream parties, I define challenger parties as those parties that have not played a fundamental role in their party systems since the postwar period and that do not ordinarily participate in national cabinets. Challenger parties offer an alternative narrative to the mainstream consensus and highlight issues that are usually downplayed by mainstream parties (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015). This alternative narrative is sometimes complemented with a populist or antiestablishment rhetoric. Given that these parties tend to emphasize the deficiencies of political systems, citizens are not likely to associate the problems of their political systems with these parties (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Ramiro, 2016). Hence, challenger parties constitute a clear alternative to established parties and should be, therefore, capable of attracting protest voters. However, depending on whether they are located on the

left or the right these parties differ significantly among themselves on their focus and the types of problems they address (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015). Thus, according to the rational protest vote model, left- and right-wing challengers should attract voters with different forms of discontent.

I begin by considering how discontent related to one of the most fundamental elements of democracy, the freedom and fairness of elections, should alter the likelihood of supporting these different parties. Given that mainstream parties have strong ties with representative institutions and are, in most cases, the main beneficiaries of the functioning of the electoral system, it does not seem likely that individuals who believe that elections are not fair enough (deficit) or who believe that elections should be less free than they currently are (surplus) should be attracted to vote for mainstream parties. Hence, in this case we should find the largest support for mainstream parties among those individuals for whom democratic aspirations and evaluations are balanced. Conversely, those who perceive that elections are not free and fair enough, probably seeing them as favoring the political establishment in charge of organizing the elections, should be more likely to vote for either left or right challengers as a form of protest, since these parties are not likely to be directly associated with the perceived malfunctioning of basic political institutions. Hence, those perceiving a democratic deficit for this element of democracy should be more likely to vote for left- and right-wing challengers. However, here, we might find the first difference between challengers from the left and the right. Some prominent challenger right parties such as the Austrian FPÖ or the French FN originate from an antidemocratic tradition (Brug et al., 2005). As a consequence, some of these challenger right parties could also mobilize voters who perceive a democratic surplus with regard to the freedom and fairness of elections.

The expectations are different for the equality and redistribution dimension. During the last decade, and especially since the outbreak of the Great Recession, mainstream parties from the left and the right have converged on a policy of austerity (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015). Most mainstream parties advocate for, or have at least agreed to, a limitation or reduction of welfare redistribution. Therefore, these parties should attract the votes of those who perceive a democratic surplus for this element of democracy, and they should receive fewer votes among those who believe that their democracies are underperforming with regard to the measures governments take to reduce economic inequality (deficit). Left-wing challengers should be the main beneficiaries of citizens perceiving a democratic deficit in this dimension. In the post

Great Recession context left-wing challengers overtly reject austerity policies and welfare retrenchment and clearly advocate for democracies characterized by greater wealth redistribution (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015; Ramiro, 2016). In contrast, on the right, challenger parties are likely to either adopt a market liberal stance (Kitschelt, 1995) or to favor limited income redistribution in the form of ‘welfare chauvinism’ (Koster et al., 2013). Hence, while left-wing challengers should receive a greater support among those perceiving a democratic deficit, it is not clear how imbalances between democratic aspirations and evaluations in this dimension should relate to the likelihood of supporting right-wing challengers.

Focusing on direct-democracy, this is a feature of democracy that resonates well with challenger parties but that mainstream parties are not likely to promote. Mainstream parties are likely to collude to favor party centered mechanisms, since they are the main beneficiaries of those (Katz and Mair, 1995). In this case, the mainstream consensus implies favoring representative mechanisms to the detriment of direct forms of decision-making.⁶⁷ As a consequence, citizens perceiving a democratic deficit in this dimension should be less likely to support mainstream parties, and those perceiving a democratic surplus should be more likely to support them. In contrast, referenda are a favorite instrument of challenger parties because they offer a way of bypassing representative institutions dominated by mainstream parties (Webb, 2013). Traditionally, direct-democracy has been more salient in the agendas of right-wing challengers. These parties favor direct democratic mechanisms as a way of advancing the goals and interests of the ‘common man’ (Lange, 2007). However, prominent left-wing challenger parties like the Spanish Podemos or the Greek Syriza, among others, have recently adopted a similar rhetoric. Hence, those perceiving that their democracies fall short of their expectations with regard to direct-democracy (deficit) should be more likely to support left- and right-wing challengers alike.

In the case of the minorities’ rights dimension, there is no theoretical guidance as to how imbalances between aspirations and evaluations should relate to the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. This is not, however, the case for challenger parties. Theoretical accounts lead me to expect that imbalances in this dimension should be related to the likelihood of supporting these parties, although differently for left- and right-wing challengers. On the

⁶⁷ But see Scarrow (1999) for a contrasting view in the case of German parties.

right, challenger parties adopt an exclusive view of society with regard to ethnic and cultural minorities (Ivarsflaten, 2008). Conversely, left challengers tend to defend the rights of minority groups such as migrants or refugees (Visser et al., 2014). As a consequence, those perceiving a democratic surplus (those perceiving that minorities' rights are more protected than they should in an ideal democracy) should be more likely to cast a protest vote for right challengers, and those perceiving a democratic deficit (those perceiving that minorities' rights are less protected than they should in an ideal democracy) should be more likely to cast a protest vote for left challengers.

Finally, in the responsibility towards other European governments dimension one would expect mainstream parties to mobilize democratic deficits and challenger parties to mobilize those perceiving a democratic surplus. With few exceptions, mainstream parties have a positive view of multilateral democracy and of the process of European integration (Vries and Edwards, 2009). Hence, mainstream parties should be more attractive to those who perceive that, in their countries, governments do not take the opinions of other European governments sufficiently into account before making decisions (deficit). Conversely, challenger parties will represent an attractive option for those who think that in their democracies governments take too much into account the opinions of other European governments before making decisions (surplus). A great number of right-wing challenger parties focus on reclaiming national sovereignty and repatriating powers from supranational institutions like the EU (Hobolt and Tilley, 2015). While only a minority of left-wing challengers defend the withdrawal of their countries from the EU (e.g. Danish Red-Green Alliance), most of them emphasize the deficiencies of how European integration is undertaken (Ramiro, 2016). Hence, in clear contrast to mainstream parties, challenger parties from the left and the right are likely to mobilize those who perceive a democratic surplus in this dimension.

DATA AND METHODS

The empirical analyses of this paper draw on data from the European Social Survey (ESS). In its sixth round, conducted between 2012 and 2013 in 29 countries, the ESS includes a module in which citizens are asked to give their opinion on a 0-10 scale about the need and importance of different elements of democracy for an ideal democratic system (their democratic aspirations). These questions are followed by a battery asking respondents about their

evaluations on a 0-10 scale of the extent to which they believe that each of these elements are present in their country.⁶⁸

Using these questions, the imbalance between aspirations and evaluations for each of the elements of democracy included in *table 1* is obtained by subtracting the evaluations from the aspirations (imbalance = aspirations – evaluations). The resulting measure ranges from -10 to +10, with 0 indicating that for a given element of democracy aspirations and evaluations are balanced, positive values indicating a democratic deficit (greater aspirations than evaluations), and negative values indicating a democratic surplus (lower aspirations than evaluations).⁶⁹

To operationalize the dependent variable —party choice— I classify the parties respondents voted for in the last national election into four categories: mainstream, left-wing challengers, right-wing challengers and non-mainstream. To assign parties to each category I draw on the classifications of parties of Hernández and Kriesi (2016) and Hobolt and Tilley (2015). The mainstream parties category comprises those parties that have played a key role in their countries since the postwar period and that play a relevant role in national cabinets. The challenger parties category includes those parties that have not played a fundamental role in their party systems since the postwar period, that do not ordinarily participate in national cabinets and that can be clearly classified as either left- or right-wing. The non-mainstream parties category is a residual category including parties that cannot be classified in any of these groups, and it mainly includes green parties and other issue parties.⁷⁰ Since the party systems of Eastern European countries have not been yet fully institutionalized, the notion of mainstream and challenger parties is only applicable to Western Europe. Therefore, I restrict my analyses to 15 Western European countries included in ESS-6.⁷¹ To operationalize vote as

⁶⁸ The question wording and descriptive statistics of all the variables used in this paper can be found in table A5 of the appendix.

⁶⁹ I have specified an OLS model with satisfaction with democracy (SWD) as the dependent variable and with the imbalance for each of these elements of democracy and its quadratic terms as the independent variables. The analysis reveals that levels of SWD are significantly linked to each of these variables. These results also show that the relationship between SWD and each of the imbalance measures is curvilinear. For most elements those perceiving the greatest democratic deficits or democratic surpluses have the lowest levels of SWD.

⁷⁰ The classification of parties for each country can be found in table A1 in the appendix.

⁷¹ Countries included: Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Sweden.

a dependent variable it is necessary to take into account that when estimating vote-choice models ‘omitting abstention as a choice leads to potentially erroneous conclusions about the effects of explanatory variables’ (Lacy and Burden, 1999, p. 234). Therefore, to fully characterize individuals’ choice-sets abstention is added as an additional category to the dependent variable. The final distribution of the dependent variable is as follows: 57 percent of respondents voted for a mainstream party, 7 percent for a non-mainstream party, 6.1 percent for a right-wing challenger, 7.8 percent for a left-wing challenger, and 22 percent abstained.

Analyzing the relationship between different forms of democratic discontent and the party individuals vote for requires the use of a discrete choice model. However, in this case, multinomial logistic regression is not adequate because the choice-sets differ across countries. While in some countries, like Sweden, citizens can either abstain or vote for any of the four types of parties, in other countries, like for example Ireland, citizens’ choice-sets are constrained since some choices are not available. This circumstance is addressed by estimating all models through multinomial conditional logistic regression. This type of model takes into account the number and type of choices available to each respondent in each country and produces reliable estimates of the explanatory variables. To account for clustering all models are estimated with robust clustered standard errors.

The estimates produced by conditional logistic models are not easily interpretable. For this reason, in the next section I summarize the marginal effects on probabilities derived from these models. They are interpreted as the predicted change in the probabilities of an outcome (e.g. voting mainstream) related to a one-unit change in a regressor with all other variables set at their means. However, the fact that the distribution of respondents across the different outcome categories of the dependent variable is unbalanced complicates the comparison of the impact of independent variables across outcomes, since the size of marginal effects on probabilities depends on each outcome baseline probability. For this reason, besides summarizing the marginal effects on probabilities, I also summarize the relative marginal change in the probabilities of each outcome associated to a one-unit change in the regressors. This is obtained by dividing the marginal change in the probabilities of an outcome related to a one-unit change in an independent variable by the probability that each of the outcome categories is selected. To further facilitate the interpretation of the models I mean center and

standardize all non-categorical independent variables so that numeric inputs represent the effect of the mean ± 1 standard deviation.

All models include the following control variables: the age and gender of the respondent, education (measured in years), political interest (with higher values representing higher political interest), satisfaction with the national economy (with higher values indicating higher satisfaction), and feeling about household income (with higher values indicating greater difficulties to live with present income).

Election winners (voters of parties that form the national government) might evaluate better the functioning of different aspects of the political system (Torcal and Trechsel, 2016). At the same time, they should be more likely to have voted for a mainstream party, since most of the parties that are part of national cabinets are mainstream. To take into account this circumstance one could control for whether a respondent voted for a winner party. However, in this paper this strategy is not adequate for two reasons. First, because more than 90 percent of winners voted for a mainstream party, which generates the risk of having empty cells in some other outcome categories once the winner/loser variable and other controls are included in the model. Second, because introducing this variable would require to exclude from the analysis all those who did not turn out to vote, since the winner/loser variable would predict success perfectly for the abstention outcome. Hence, as a robustness check I re-estimate all conditional logistic models including only losers. In these models the original sample is reduced from 19,344 respondents to 10,768 respondents. For this subsample, the distribution of the dependent variables is as follows: 32 percent of respondents voted for a mainstream party, 10 percent for a left challenger, 10 percent for a right challenger, 10 percent for a non-mainstream party and 38 percent abstained.

RESULTS

Table 2 summarizes the marginal effects and relative marginal effects of all independent variables on the probabilities of each outcome. Negative values in the coefficients of the imbalance variables indicate that as someone perceives a greater/lower democratic deficit/surplus one becomes less likely to vote for a given party, and vice-versa for positive values. To better illustrate the impact of imbalances between democratic aspirations and evaluations *figures 2* and *3* summarize the change in the predicted probability of voting for

mainstream parties and left- and right-wing challengers across the range of the variables measuring the imbalances for each of the elements of democracy. In these plots the vertical line denotes the point of perfect balance, where aspirations match evaluations, values located to the right of this line denote a democratic deficit and values located to the left denote a democratic surplus.

I begin by analyzing the impact of imbalances between aspirations and evaluations for the most basic element of democracy considered in this paper: the freedom and fairness of elections. Focusing first on mainstream parties, the results show that the imbalance about the extent to which elections are free and fair has a significant impact on the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. However, given that for this element of democracy a quadratic term is specified the results are better interpreted through the plots of predicted probabilities. The relationship between imbalances on the freedom and fairness of elections dimension and the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties displays the expected curvilinear pattern. When aspirations and evaluations are balanced citizens are much more likely to vote for mainstream parties, and the probability of voting for these parties decreases as one moves further away from the point where aspirations and evaluation are balanced either in the direction of a greater democratic deficit or of a greater democratic surplus. Hence, on this dimension both democratic deficits and surpluses reduce the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. Individuals who perceive a deficit or surplus are more likely to abstain as indicated by the coefficients of the abstention category. However, the results summarized in *table 2* also indicate that citizens perceiving an imbalance on this dimension are also more likely to vote for challenger parties. Nevertheless, it appears that right-wing challengers are more successful than left-wing challengers in mobilizing democratic deficits in the free and fair elections dimension. As democratic deficits grow larger, voters become more likely to cast a vote for both left- and right-wing challengers, but the effect is substantially stronger for the latter. Moreover, as expected, the coefficient for the quadratic term is positive and statistically significant for right-wing challengers, which indicates that those who perceive a democratic surplus are also more likely to vote for this type of party. However, *figure 3* reveals that the likelihood of voting for a challenger right party is lower among those perceiving a democratic surplus than among those perceiving a democratic deficit.

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Table 2: Marginal effects on probabilities of voting for different parties or abstaining from multinomial conditional logistic regression

	Mainstream (Pr = .62)			Challenger left (Pr = .07)			Challenger right (Pr = .08)			Non-mainstream (Pr = .07)			Abstention (Pr = .16)		
	Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)	
Imbal. fair elections	-.061 ** (.012)	-.100		.013 * (.005)	.169		.032 ** (.007)	.395		-.001 (.007)	-.011		.017 * (.008)	.108	
Imbal. fair elections ²	-.054 ** (.018)	-.088		.009 (.007)	.116		.024 ** (.008)	.296		-.025 + (.014)	-.351		.046 ** (.010)	.291	
Imbal. minorities rights	.007 (.010)	.012		.022 ** (.005)	.287		-.049 ** (.006)	-.599		.018 ** (.006)	.261		.002 (.007)	.011	
Imbal. direct democracy	-.028 ** (.009)	-.046		.009 * (.005)	.125		.029 ** (.005)	.351		-.003 (.005)	-.048		-.007 (.007)	-.041	
Imbal. equality and redistribution	-.072 ** (.010)	-.117		.049 ** (.005)	.646		.000 (.006)	.001		.007 (.005)	.102		.016 * (.007)	.104	
Imbal. responsibility	.025 ** (.009)	.041		-.008 * (.004)	-.104		-.035 ** (.005)	-.433		.009 * (.004)	.125		.009 (.006)	.058	
Age	.227 ** (.009)	.369		-.024 ** (.004)	-.323		-.019 ** (.005)	-.232		-.028 ** (.004)	-.393		-.156 * (.006)	-.993	
Education	.060 ** (.008)	.097		.008 * (.004)	.111		-.033 ** (.005)	-.406		.044 ** (.003)	.629		-.079 ** (.006)	-.501	
Gender	-.021 ** (.007)	-.034		.007 + (.004)	.091		.031 ** (.005)	.384		-.028 ** (.004)	-.398		.011 * (.005)	.068	
Political interest	.104 ** (.008)	.169		.033 ** (.004)	.433		-.005 (.005)	-.056		.027 ** (.004)	.380		-.159 ** (.006)	-1.000	
Feeling about income	-.062 ** (.009)	-.100		.015 ** (.004)	.199		-.018 ** (.006)	-.220		-.002 (.005)	-.027		.067 ** (.006)	.423	
Satisfaction with economy	.036 ** (.008)	.059		-.019 ** (.004)	-.259		-.029 ** (.005)	-.360		.031 ** (.004)	.437		-.018 ** (.006)	-.114	
N alternatives (options)	92380														
N cases (individuals)	19344														
Min N alternative per case	4														
Max N alternative per case	5														

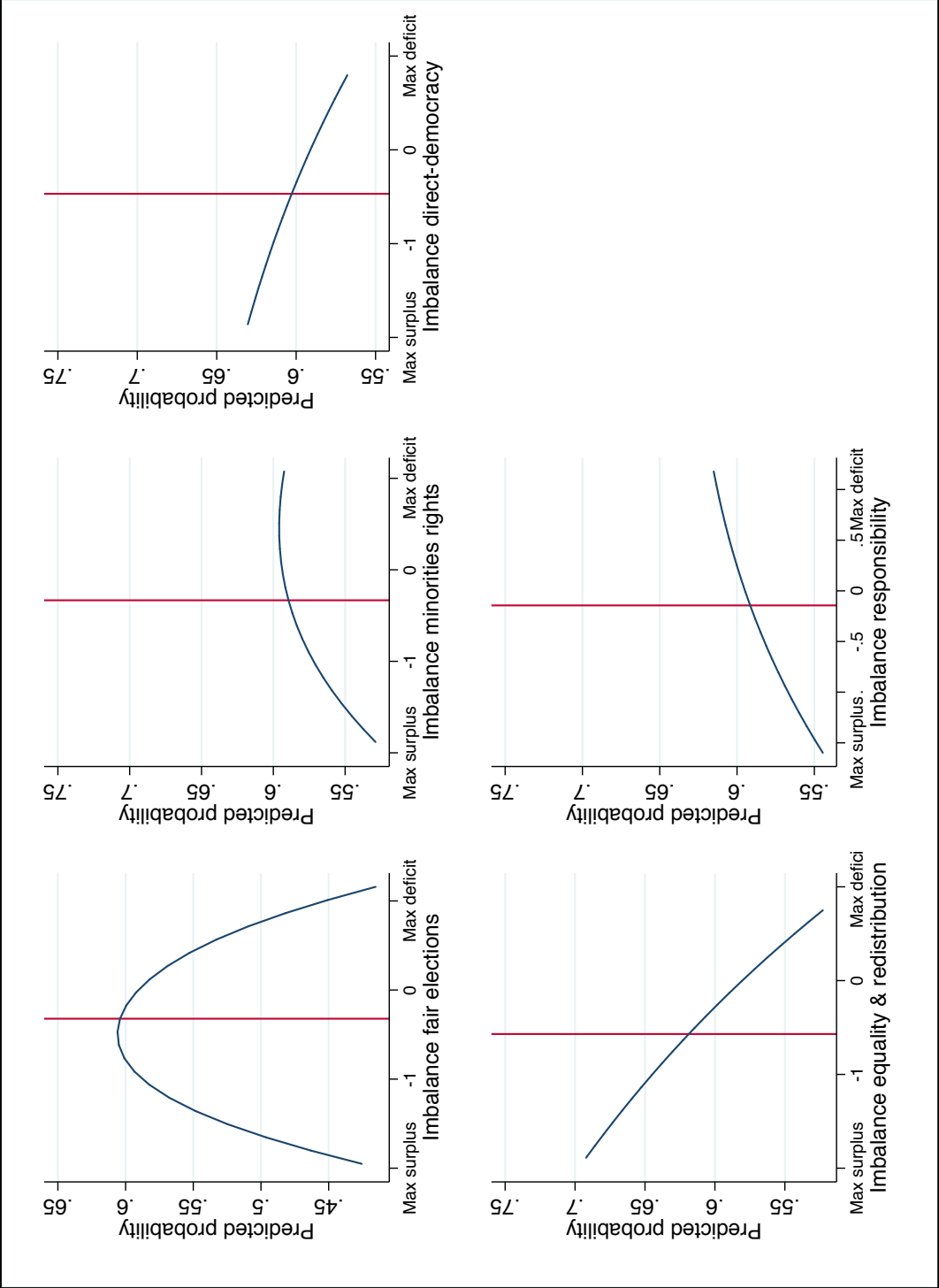
Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Marginal effects estimated with all variables set at their mean value. These results correspond to the conditional logistic model of table A2 in the appendix

In the case of imbalances between aspirations and evaluations in the minorities' rights dimension, the results reveal that these are not significantly related to the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. In contrast, they are significantly related to the likelihood of voting for left- and right-wing challengers. The positive coefficient for left challengers and the negative coefficient for right challengers indicate that, as predicted by the rational protest voting model, this relationship runs in opposite directions for each type of challenger party. On the one hand, those who perceive that their democracies are underperforming with regard to the degree of protection they grant to minority groups (democratic deficit) are more likely to vote for left wing challengers. On the other hand, those who perceive that in their democracies minority groups are more protected than what should be the case in an ideal democracy (democratic surplus) are more likely to vote for right-wing challengers. In the case of right-wing challengers this is, in fact, one of the predictors most closely associated to the likelihood of supporting this type of party. A two standard deviation increase in the imbalance variable reduces by .05 the likelihood of casting a vote for a right-wing challenger. This is a substantial effect given the relative rarity of casting a vote for right-wing challengers. A .05 reduction corresponds to a 60 percent reduction in the relative probability of voting for this type of party. The effect of this variable is substantially stronger than other predictors like, for example, satisfaction with the economy. Overall, these results indicate that even if related to the same element of democracy—the protection of minorities' rights—the impact of democratic discontent on the likelihood of voting for challenger parties is clearly different depending on whether citizens perceive a democratic deficit or surplus.

Focusing on the direct democracy dimension, there is, as expected, a negative relationship between perceiving a democratic deficit and the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties. In line with the position adopted by these parties, which are likely to favor representative mechanisms of decision-making, those perceiving a democratic surplus are more likely to vote for mainstream parties. At the same time, in line with the notion that direct-democracy is a favorite instrument of challenger parties, both left- and right-wing challengers appear to mobilize those voters who perceive a democratic deficit. However, consistent with the view that calls for direct democracy are more prevalent in the discourses of right-wing challengers, perceiving a democratic deficit about direct democracy has a greater impact on the likelihood of supporting right-wing challengers. A two standard deviation increase in the

Figure 2: Predicted probabilities of voting for mainstream parties as a function of imbalances between aspirations and evaluations for different elements of democracy



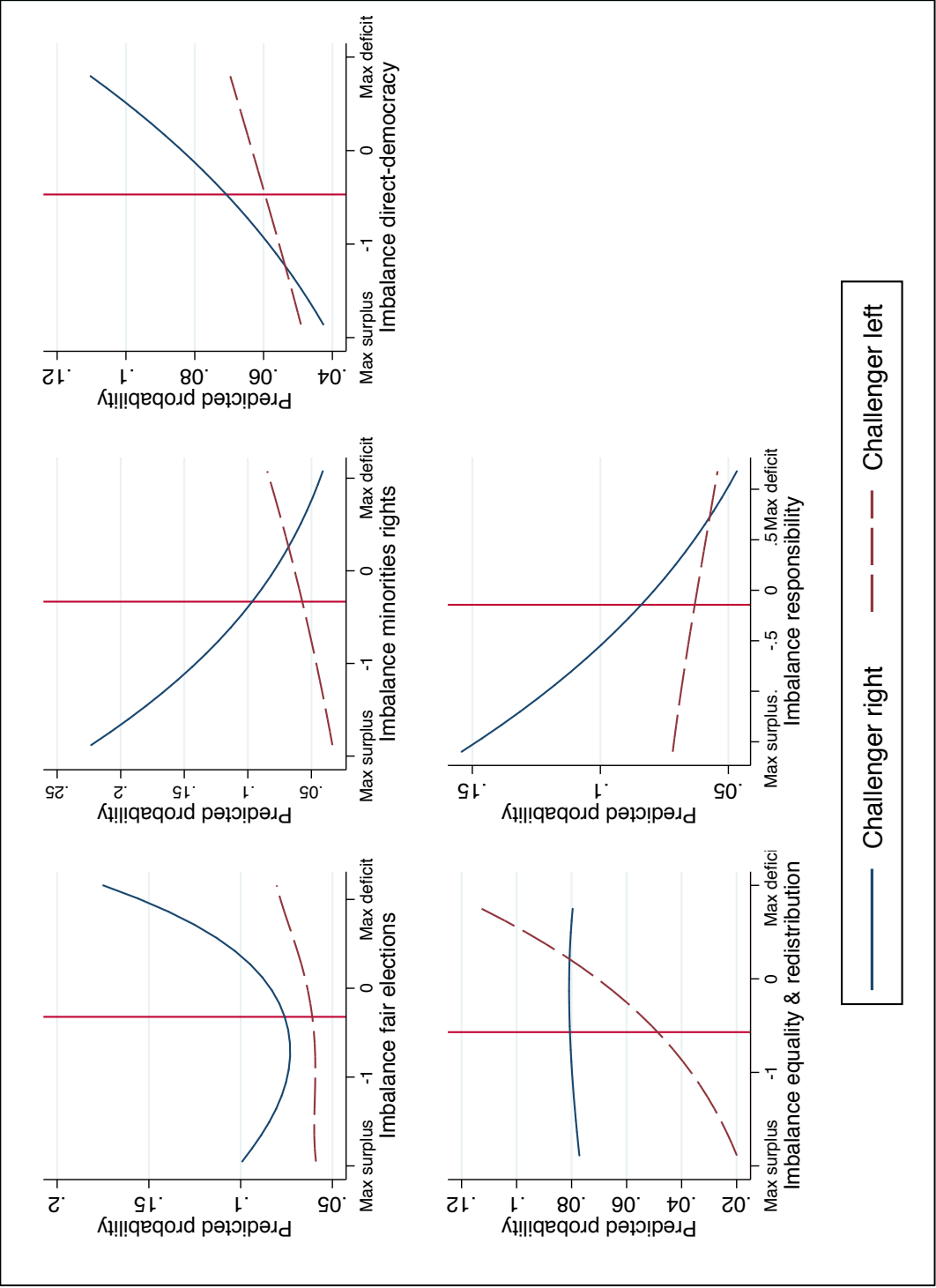
Note the differences in scaling. Curves are predicted probabilities estimated from multinomial conditional logistic model with all other variables set at their means. The vertical line denotes the point of perfect balance where aspirations match evaluations.

imbalance measure is associated with a 35 percent increase in the relative probability of voting for right-wing challengers, while this change is of only 12 percent in the case of left-wing challengers.

In the case of equality and redistribution, imbalances between aspirations and evaluations are clearly related to the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties. Democratic deficits in this dimension appear to be negatively related to the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. As one perceives a greater democratic deficit in this dimension one becomes less likely to support mainstream parties. Hence, those who perceive that, in their democracies, governments do not reduce income differences as they should according to their ideal model of democracy are less likely to cast a vote for a mainstream parties, and those who perceive a democratic surplus in this dimension are more likely to cast a vote for a mainstream party. This is the imbalance that is most closely associated to the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties. A two standard deviation increase in the imbalance measure is associated with a .07 reduction in the likelihood of voting for a mainstream party, which is equivalent to a 12 percent reduction in the relative probability. Consistent with the expectation that left-wing challengers should be the most attractive option for those perceiving a democratic deficit in this dimension, the empirical results show that as one perceives a greater democratic deficit one becomes significantly more likely to cast a vote for a left-wing challenger party. However, this is not the case for right-wing challengers, since imbalances for this element of democracy are unrelated to the likelihood of supporting this type of party. In the case of left-wing challengers, though, this is the predictor most closely associated with the likelihood of supporting this type of party. A two standard deviation increase in the imbalance measure is associated with an increase of .05 in the probability of voting for a left-wing challenger. This is clearly a substantial effect, since it is equivalent to a 64 percent change in the left-wing challenger probability.

Finally, in the case of imbalances in the responsibility towards other European governments dimension we observe a pattern that contrasts with the other dimensions, since, in this case, mainstream parties are the ones mobilizing those who perceive a democratic deficit. In line with the fact that mainstream parties are likely to be favorable towards European integration, those who perceive that in order to fit with their ideal of democracy their governments should take more into account the opinions of other European governments are

Figure 3: Predicted probabilities of voting challenger right and challenger left parties as a function of imbalances between aspirations and evaluations for different elements of democracy



Note the differences in scaling. Curves are predicted probabilities estimated from multinomial conditional logistic model with all other variables set at their means. The vertical line denotes the point of perfect balance where aspirations match evaluations

more likely to cast a vote for a mainstream party. As for challenger parties, the negative coefficient indicates that these parties attract those who perceive a democratic surplus, that is, those who think that their governments take into account the views of other European governments more than they should in an ideal democracy. However, like in the case of other imbalances, it appears that right-wing challengers are more successful in mobilizing this form of discontent, since, in comparison to challengers from the left, the impact of this imbalance is substantially stronger for right-wing challengers. This is likely to be caused by the fact that, compared to those on the left, right-wing challengers are more likely to overtly reject European integration.

As I argue in the previous section, these results could be biased by the fact that election winners might provide better evaluations of the functioning of democracy and might be, at the same time, more likely to have voted for a mainstream party. To assess the robustness of these findings against this potential threat I specify the same model restricting the sample to election losers. The absolute and relative marginal effects on probabilities for this model are summarized in *table A4* in the appendix. A comparison of these results with those of *table 2* reveals that there are no major changes associated to this alternative specification. The only exceptions are that the imbalances in the responsibility dimension become non-statistically significant for left-wing challengers, and that for most imbalances the sizes of the effects (measured by the relative change in probabilities) become slightly stronger for mainstream parties and slightly weaker for left-wing challengers.

DISCUSSION

A clear story emerges from these results. The process by which democratic discontent relates to party choices resembles more a process of rational protest voting than a simple process of protest voting detached from political preferences. This does not imply that democratic discontent should not be considered a relevant predictor of party choice, but that depending on its nature (democratic deficit or surplus and the type of element of democracy it refers to) discontent will make one more likely to vote either for a left- or right-wing challenger, and in some cases even more likely to vote for mainstream parties. Hence, the empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that discontented citizens are more likely to vote for a party that is aligned with the specific nature of their democratic discontent. In line with the protest vote

hypothesis it is confirmed that individuals' evaluations of the functioning of democracy are relevant for their party choices, but, at the same time and in line with the rational-choice hypothesis, it is clear that these evaluations cannot be decoupled from democratic preferences if one intends to fully understand the way in which democratic discontent relates to party choices.

In the case of mainstream parties, the results of this paper show that in most cases perceiving a democratic deficit is negatively related to the likelihood of voting for these parties. Those who perceive that their democracies are underperforming with respect to how they think a democracy should ideally function in the areas of fair elections, the direct involvement of citizens in decision making and the reduction of inequalities through income redistribution are less likely to cast a vote for these parties. This is consistent with the notion that there is a mainstream consensus around the issue of reducing welfare benefits and with the view that the parties that dominate a party system and benefit the most from the current political system are unlikely to favor direct forms of decision-making. In these two cases mainstream parties are likely to adopt a position not only of favoring the status quo but also of reducing welfare benefits and promoting party-centered mechanisms of decision-making. As a consequence, mainstream parties are capable of attracting voters that perceive a democratic surplus in these dimensions. However, in the case of the freedom and fairness elections, it is clear that mainstream parties represent the status quo and that these parties are unlikely to argue that elections should be either more or less free and fair than they actually are. As a consequence, both those who perceive a democratic deficit and surplus for this element of democracy are likely to withdraw their support from mainstream parties. Finally, in the responsibility towards other European governments dimension we observe that those who perceive a democratic deficit are not less but more likely to vote for mainstream parties. This is consistent with the view that, in most countries, there is a mainstream consensus in favor of European integration. Hence, in some specific cases, even mainstream parties appear to be capable of mobilizing democratic deficits.

In the case of challenger parties the results indicate that for some elements of democracy left- and right-wing challengers are likely to mobilize the same types of discontent. Those who perceive a democratic deficit in the direct-democracy and fair elections dimensions and those who perceive a democratic surplus in the responsibility dimension are more likely to cast a

vote for either of these two types of challenger parties. However, already in the fair elections dimension we find some differences between these two types of parties. Probably owing to the fact that some right-wing challenger parties originate from an antidemocratic tradition (Brug et al., 2005), right-wing challengers are also likely to attract some individuals who perceive a democratic surplus with regard to the freedom and fairness of elections. In turn, the relationship between imbalances in the minorities' rights dimension and the vote for challenger parties highlights the importance of incorporating individuals' democratic preferences into the analysis. While both parties are likely to mobilize citizens who perceive imbalances in this dimension, those who perceive a democratic deficit are more likely to vote for left-wing challengers and those who perceive a democratic surplus are more likely to vote for right-wing challengers. This result is clearly in line with the rational protest voting model, since on the right challengers are likely to adopt an exclusive view with regard to minorities and on the left they are, on the contrary, likely to defend the rights of these groups (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Visser et al., 2014). In a similar vein, the results reveal that those perceiving a democratic deficit with regard to equality and redistribution are not likely to vote for any challenger party but only for left challengers, which are the parties that clearly adopt a favorable position towards the reduction of income inequalities. These findings are in line with the recent study of Hobolt and Tilley (2015) that shows that individuals who are negatively affected by the economic crisis are more likely to vote for challenger parties, but whether they vote for a right or left challenger depends on their political preferences about redistribution and on their views on immigration.

What do these findings imply for the future prospects of mainstream and challenger parties and for the stability and change of European party systems? Overall, these results indicate that different forms of democratic discontent are relevant for the support of different types of parties, which implies that democratic discontent should be taken into account as a potential factor that could affect the future development of European party systems. In the case of mainstream parties and left-wing challengers discontent related to welfare and income redistribution is one of the most relevant predictors of their support. While this result might be driven by the particular period in which the sixth round of the European Social Survey was conducted (during the Great Recession), it could also indicate that if the economic crisis and its associated increase in economic inequalities deepen, the support for mainstream parties might decrease even further and left-wing challengers' support might increase. In the case of

right-wing challengers, perceiving a democratic surplus in the minorities' right dimension is one of the most important predictors of their support. As a consequence, events such as a refugee crisis might imply an increase in the support of right-wing challengers if a large influx of refugees modifies either individuals' perceptions of the extent to which minorities are protected in their countries or their democratic preferences with regard to the levels of protection that minorities should enjoy in their preferred model of democracy.

Table A1: Classification of parties

Belgium				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
CD&V	Groen	N-VA	PVDA+	
SPA	Ecolo	Lisjst Dedecker	PTB	
Open VLD		Vlaams Belang		
CDH		Front National		
MR		Parti Populaire		
PS				
Switzerland				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
Socialist Party	Green Party	Swiss People's Party	Swiss labour party	
Radical Liberals	Green Liberal Party	Federal Democratic Union	Alternative left	
Christian Democrat	Bourgeois-democratic	Mouvement des Citoyens Romands	Pirate Party	
	Evangelical People	Swiss Democrats		
Germany				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
SPD	Die Grüne	Die Republikaner	Die Linke	
CDU/CSU		NPD	Pirate party	
FDP				
Denmark				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
Social Democrats	Liberal Alliance	Danish people party	Socialist People Party	
Radical Liberal Party			Red Green Alliance	
Conservatives' People Party				
Christian Democrats				
Venstre				

Spain				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
PP	EQUO	CIU	IU	
PSOE		UPyD	AMAIUR	
		PNV	ERC	
		CC	BNG	

Finland				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
The national coalition	For the poor	True Finns	Pirate party	
Swedish People Party	Green league	Freedom party	Left Alliance	
Centre Party			Communist party	
Christian Democrats			Workers party	
Social democratic party				

France				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
PS	EELV	FN	Parti Radical Valoisien	
UMP		Mouvement pour la France	Nouveau Parti Anti-Capitaliste	
MODEM			Lutte Ouvriere	
Nouveau Centre			Front de Gauche	
			Parti radical de Gauche	

United Kingdom				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
Conservative	Green Party		SNP	
Labour			Plaid Cymru	
Liberal Democrats			Sinn Fein	

Ireland				
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left	
Fianna Fail	Green Party		People before profit	
Fine Gael	Independents		Sinn Fein	

Labour	Socialist Party		
Iceland			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
Social democratic alliance	Bright future		The left green movement
Progressive party	Liberal party		Citizens' movement
Independence party			
Italy			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
PD		SC	SEL
PDL		UDC	Rivoluzione civile
		Lega Nord	M5S
		Fratelli d'Italia	
		Fare	
		La Destra	
The Netherlands			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
Party for Freedom	D66	PVV	Socialistic Party
Labour Party	Green left	Reformed party	Pirate party
Christian Democrats	Christian Union		
	Party for the animals		
	50plus		
Norway			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
A	Coastal Party	Progress Party	R
V			SV
KRF			
SP			
H			

Portugal			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
PPD/PSD	CDS/PP	PDA	Bloco de Esquerda
PS	PND	PNR	PCP-PEV
			PTCP-MRPP
Sweden			
Mainstream	Non-mainstream	Challenger right	Challenger left
Centre party	Green party	Sweden Democrats	Left party
Liberals			Feminist initiative
Christian Democrats			Pirate Party
Conservatives			
Social Democrats			

Table A2: Multinomial conditional logistic model of vote choice and abstention

	Mainstream	Challenger left	Challenger right	Non-mainstream	Abstention
Imbal. fair elections	Base outcome	0.269** (0.083)	0.495** (0.095)	0.089 (0.110)	0.208** (0.065)
Imbal. fair elections ²		0.204 (0.109)	0.384** (0.116)	-0.263 (0.217)	0.379** (0.080)
Imbal. minorities rights		0.275** (0.077)	-0.611** (0.083)	0.249** (0.086)	-0.001 (0.057)
Imbal. direct democracy		0.171* (0.068)	0.397** (0.073)	-0.002 (0.074)	0.005 (0.053)
Imbal. equality and redistribution		0.763** (0.077)	0.118 (0.082)	0.219** (0.080)	0.221** (0.056)
Imbal. responsibility		-0.145* (0.059)	-0.474** (0.070)	0.084 (0.068)	0.017 (0.048)
Age		-0.692** (0.066)	-0.601** (0.071)	-0.763** (0.067)	-1.362** (0.052)
Education		0.014 (0.057)	-0.503** (0.065)	0.532** (0.053)	-0.598** (0.047)
Gender		0.125* (0.057)	0.418** (0.063)	-0.361** (0.058)	0.102* (0.041)
Political interest		0.263** (0.063)	-0.226** (0.071)	0.210** (0.065)	-1.177** (0.048)
Feeling about income		0.299** (0.067)	-0.119 (0.080)	0.073 (0.074)	0.523** (0.049)
Satisfaction with economy		-0.317** (0.063)	-0.419** (0.072)	0.379** (0.063)	-0.173** (0.048)
Constant		-1.887** (0.049)	-2.039** (0.058)	-1.947** (0.058)	-0.973** (0.034)
N alternatives (options)	92380	92380	92380	92380	92380
N cases (individuals)	19344	19344	19344	19344	19344
Min N alternative per case	4	4	4	4	4
Max N alternative per case	5	5	5	5	5

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table A3: Multinomial conditional logistic model of vote choice and abstention (election losers only)

	Mainstream	Challenger left	Challenger right	Non-mainstream	Abstention
Imbal. fair elections	Base outcome	0.337** (0.103)	0.452** (0.110)	0.071 (0.131)	0.276** (0.082)
Imbal. fair elections ²		0.338* (0.135)	0.441** (0.135)	-0.145 (0.245)	0.474** (0.103)
Imbal. minorities rights		0.097 (0.093)	-0.736** (0.096)	0.165 (0.104)	-0.092 (0.069)
Imbal. direct democracy		0.306** (0.086)	0.492** (0.085)	0.026 (0.091)	0.046 (0.065)
Imbal. equality and redistribution		0.654** (0.095)	-0.029 (0.092)	-0.026 (0.092)	0.113 (0.068)
Imbal. responsibility		-0.163* (0.073)	-0.572** (0.078)	-0.013 (0.083)	-0.096 (0.059)
Age		-0.740** (0.081)	-0.602** (0.079)	-0.641** (0.078)	-1.307** (0.060)
Education		0.116 (0.072)	-0.245** (0.075)	0.705** (0.069)	-0.424** (0.057)
Gender		0.178* (0.071)	0.456** (0.073)	-0.354** (0.071)	0.092 (0.051)
Political interest		0.218** (0.077)	-0.345** (0.079)	0.233** (0.077)	-1.113** (0.057)
Feeling about income		0.322** (0.082)	-0.088 (0.090)	-0.042 (0.093)	0.483** (0.062)
Satisfaction with economy		-0.553** (0.077)	-0.396** (0.080)	0.439** (0.076)	-0.075 (0.057)
Constant		-1.127** (0.061)	-1.054** (0.065)	-1.126** (0.069)	0.119** (0.042)
N alternatives (options)	51361	51361	51361	51361	51361
N cases (individuals)	10768	10768	10768	10768	10768
Min N alternative per case	4	4	4	4	4
Max N alternative per case	5	5	5	5	5

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table A4: Marginal effects on probabilities of voting for different parties or abstaining from multinomial conditional logistic regression (election losers only)

	Mainstream (Pr = .33)			Challenger left (Pr = .10)			Challenger right (Pr = .14)			Non-mainstream (Pr = .09)			Abstention (Pr = .33)		
	Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)		Marginal effect on (Pr)	Relative marginal change on (Pr)	
Imbal. fair elections	-.065 ** (.016)	-.194		.014 + (.008)	.143		.035 ** (.012)	.257		-.012 (.010)	-.123		.027 + (.015)	.082	
Imbal. fair elections ²	-.080 ** (.022)	-.238		.010 (.011)	.100		.028 * (.014)	.203		-.037 + (.020)	-.384		.078 ** (.019)	.236	
Imbal. minorities rights	.036 * (.013)	.106		.020 ** (.008)	.203		-.086 ** (.010)	-.629		.026 ** (.008)	.272		.005 (.013)	.014	
Imbal. direct democracy	-.039 ** (.012)	-.116		.019 ** (.007)	.190		.052 ** (.009)	.376		-.009 (.007)	-.089		-.023 + (.013)	-.070	
Imbal. equality and redistribution	-.032 * (.013)	-.097		.056 ** (.008)	.557		-.017 + (.010)	-.126		-.012 (.007)	-.123		.006 (.013)	.017	
Imbal. responsibility	.043 ** (.011)	.128		-.004 (.006)	-.035		-.061 ** (.008)	-.444		.011 + (.007)	.115		.011 (.011)	.032	
Age	.218 ** (.011)	.652		-.009 (.007)	-.088		.007 (.009)	.050		.001 (.006)	.011		-.218 ** (.012)	-.655	
Education	.032 ** (.010)	.096		.021 ** (.006)	.212		-.021 * (.008)	-.149		.076 ** (.006)	.801		-.109 ** (.011)	-.328	
Gender	-.026 * (.010)	-.077		.010 + (.006)	.100		.052 ** (.008)	.377		-.041 ** (.006)	-.434		.005 (.010)	.015	
Political interest	.125 ** (.011)	.373		.059 ** (.006)	.591		.004 (.009)	.028		.058 ** (.006)	.606		-.246 ** (.011)	-.740	
Feeling about income	-.059 ** (.012)	-.176		.015 * (.007)	.145		-.036 ** (.010)	-.265		-.021 ** (.007)	-.218		.102 ** (.012)	.306	
Satisfaction with economy	.031 * (.011)	.093		-.046 ** (.006)	-.460		-.042 ** (.009)	-.303		.051 ** (.006)	.532		.006 (.011)	.018	
N alternatives (options)	51361														
N cases (individuals)	10768														
Min N alternative per case	4														
Max N alternative per case	5														

Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Marginal effects estimated with all variables set at their mean value. These results correspond to the multinomial conditional logistic of table A3

Table A5: Descriptive statistics and question wording *

Variable	Wording / Coding	Mean	SD	min	max
Dependent Variables					
Party choice (Full sample)	Variable that measures the party voted for by the respondent in the last national elections:				
	Mainstream party	0.570			
	Challenger-left party	0.078			
	Challenger-right party	0.061			
	Non-mainstream	0.070			
	Abstention	0.220			
Party choice (Election losers)	Variable that measures the party voted for by the respondent in the last national elections among those who voted for a party that is not part of the government:				
	Mainstream party	0.318			
	Challenger-left party	0.102			
	Challenger-right party	0.094			
	Non-mainstream	0.097			
	Abstention	0.384			
Independent variables (Individual level)					
Imbalance fair elections	Democratic aspirations for free and fair elections – Democratic evaluations for free and fair elections	.849	2.10	-10	10
Imbalance minorities rights	Democratic aspirations for minorities rights – Democratic evaluations for minorities rights	2.02	2.79	-10	10
Imbalance direct democracy	Democratic aspirations for direct democracy – Democratic evaluations for direct democracy	2.70	3.38	-10	10
Imbalance equality and redistribution	Democratic aspirations for equality and redistribution – Democratic evaluations for equality and redistribution	3.07	3.53	-10	10
Imbalance responsibility	Democratic aspirations for responsibility towards other European governments– Democratic evaluations for responsibility towards other European governments	.680	3.11	-10	10
Education	Years of education	12.92	4.48	0	45
Political interest	"How interested would you say you are in politics- are you: very interested, quite interested, hardly interested, or not at all interested" . Higher values correspond to higher levels of political interest.	2.52	0.91	1	4
Age	Age in years	50.66	17.78	15	103
Satisfaction with the economy	On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]? Higher values higher satisfaction	4.59	2.62	0	10

Feeling about income	Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays? Lowest (living comfortably on present income), highest (finding it very difficult on present income)	1.80	0.83	1	4
Variables used to generate the imbalance measures (except for introductory statement, common wording for aspirations and evaluations)					
Introductory statement aspirations	Now some questions about democracy. Later on I will ask you about how democracy is working in [country]. First, however, I want you to think instead about how important you think different things are for democracy in general. There are no right or wrong answers so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me how important you think it is for democracy in general				
Introductory statement evaluations	Now some questions about the same topics, but this time about how you think democracy is working in [country] today. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, so please just tell me what you think. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think each of the following statements applies in [country]. 0 means you think the statement does not apply at all and 10 means you think it applies completely				
Free elections	That national elections are free and fair				
Minorities' rights	That the rights of minority groups are protected				
Equality and redistribution	That the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels				
Direct democracy	That citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums				
Responsibility towards other European governments	That politicians take into account the views of other European governments before making decisions				

* All values correspond to the original values before standardizing for model estimation

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this thesis I argued that when it comes to the relationship between attitudes towards democracy and political behavior many questions remained unanswered or required further research, especially with regard to the behavior of citizens who are critical or not fully satisfied with the functioning of their democracies. With this thesis I have pursued the goal of exploring some of these questions drawing on an innovative dataset that provides detailed information about Europeans' democratic aspirations and evaluations. This dataset has allowed me to move beyond the generic attitudes towards democracy usually considered in previous studies. However, before analyzing the relationship between democratic aspirations and evaluations, political participation and party choice I have taken a necessary detour in order to assess the availability and constraint of these specific attitudes about democracy and its constitutive principles in the political belief systems of mass publics.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

One of the challenges of asking individuals detailed questions about their preferred model of democracy and the way their democracies work is that these are abstract topics seldom considered by the average citizen (see Winstone et al., 2016). Therefore, before relating these attitudes to different types of behavior I have conducted a thorough analysis of the availability and structuration of individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations. For this purpose, and drawing on Converse's notion of Political Belief System (PBS), I have developed a series of empirical measures to analyze the articulation of Europeans' Democracy Belief Systems (DBS). The results of *chapter 2* show that the DBS of most Europeans appear to be highly articulated. Thus, their DBS are characterized, first, by a wide range of cognitions or attitudes about how democracy ought to be in ideal terms –democratic aspirations– and about how it works in reality –democratic evaluations–, and, second, by a coherent articulation of these attitudes. While there are some individual and country-level differences in levels of DBS articulation these are of reduced magnitude. Hence, in most countries and for a majority of individuals these attitudes towards democracy form a coherent attitudinal structure.

Through these analyses this thesis makes a contribution to the literature on how individuals' conceive and evaluate democracy, which has recently expanded due to the existence of new datasets that gauge these attitudes towards democracy in different contexts.

The results of this chapter suggest that it is meaningful to ask these questions to representative samples of the population in different countries. Moreover, they also indicate that the attitudes measured through the sixth round of the European Social Survey are not likely to have been generated at random by respondents. A practical implication of these findings is that research projects that, like this thesis, draw on these measures of democratic aspirations and evaluations are relying on attitudes towards democracy that are sufficiently structured and can, therefore, be meaningfully analyzed and related to other phenomena.

This chapter also contributes more generally to the literature on political belief systems and political sophistication. Belief systems about specific policy domains like, for example, the environment or foreign policy had already been analyzed in the past. However, the articulation of belief systems about democracy had not been assessed in detail before. Beliefs or attitudes about democracy are a particularly interesting domain, since democracy is an abstract concept and, at the same time, attitudes towards democracy represent an important and frequently studied political phenomenon. Hence, *chapter 2* contributes to this literature by analyzing individuals' belief systems in an additional and relevant domain. By doing so the analyses conducted in this chapter provide additional evidence supporting the idea that the belief systems of individuals appear to be much more articulated than what it is commonly assumed and that, at the same time, there are no major differences in levels of articulation across socio-political divides (see Freeze and Montgomery, 2016; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Rohrschneider, 1993; van Elsas, 2015 for similar findings in other policy domains).

The second part of thesis has focused on analyzing how these democratic aspirations and evaluations, and the imbalance between the two, relate to political participation. In *chapter 3* I have examined how a composite measure that reflects individuals' evaluations of the quality of the representative channel is associated to their likelihood of turning out to vote and participating in legal demonstrations. The results indicate that negative evaluations of the quality of the representative channel discourage voting, but only increase the likelihood of participating in demonstrations among the highly educated. These findings highlight potential inequalities in citizens' ability to voice their political demands: while highly educated individuals are likely to translate their negative evaluations of the institutional channel of representation into non-institutionalized forms of participation, in the presence of negative evaluations low educated individuals are simply more likely to withdraw from politics. In

chapter 4 I have analyzed how a novel measure of democratic discontent, operationalized through the imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations, relates to the likelihood of turning out to vote and demonstrating, and how this relationship is moderated by the presence of political actors that might mobilize democratic discontent in the electoral and protest arenas. The results of this chapter indicate that democratic discontent is a relevant predictor of political participation: it reduces the likelihood of voting and it increases the probability of demonstrating, although the strength of these effects varies depending on whether discontent refers to the liberal or social dimension of democracy. Moreover, the results of this paper highlight the importance of taking into account whether in a given country there are actors that might mobilize discontent in the electoral and protest arenas. The presence of parties that address the democratic deficiencies perceived by citizens mitigates the negative effects of discontent on the likelihood of voting, and, at the same time, strengthens its positive relationship with the likelihood of demonstrating. A greater presence of trade unions also strengthens the positive impact of discontent on the likelihood of demonstrating, but only in the case of discontent related to the social dimension of democracy.

In the third and final part of the thesis the focus has shifted to analyzing how democratic discontent, measured as the imbalance between democratic aspirations and evaluations for particular elements of democracy, relates to the likelihood of supporting mainstream parties and left- and right-wing challenger parties. The analyses of *chapter 5* show that individuals are more likely to support a party that is aligned with the specific nature of their discontent. Depending on its nature, democratic discontent makes one more likely to vote either for a left- or right-wing challenger party, and in some specific cases even more likely to vote for a mainstream party. As I argue throughout this chapter these results suggest that the relationship between democratic discontent and party choice should not just be conceptualized as a process of protest voting, but as a process of rational protest voting.

These findings about the relationship between democratic aspirations and evaluations, political participation and party choice have several theoretical and practical implications. As discussed throughout this thesis, scholars tend to disagree about the extent to which attitudes towards democracy are related to political participation decisions and party choice. Hence, the first implication of these analyses is that attitudes towards democracy, either in the form of evaluations of how certain aspects of democracy work or in the form of democratic discontent,

do seem to matter for participation decisions and party choice since they are significantly related to both phenomena.

What do these findings imply for the functioning and stability of democracy? As I argued in the introduction to this thesis, the prevailing view today is that citizens who are critical about the functioning of their democracies or political institutions can be potentially considered as an asset for democracies. These citizens will closely monitor the behavior of politicians and are likely to exercise pressure on officeholders through non-violent means in order to improve the functioning of democracy (see e.g. Dalton and Welzel, 2014b; Klingemann, 2014; Norris, 1999). Is this optimistic view about the behavior of the *assertive* and of the *critical citizens* supported by the findings of this thesis? Not entirely. In the absence of individual resources or political actors with mobilization potential negative evaluations of the functioning of the representative channel and democratic discontent are more likely to result in political alienation or the withdrawal from politics rather than in changing patterns of political engagement. Individual resources and the presence/absence of actors that might mobilize discontent in the electoral and protest arenas constrain whether these negative attitudes about the functioning of democracy and its institutions are voiced and channeled into the political system. Hence, only under specific circumstances will individuals behave like the ideal *critical citizen* who is likely to push for democratic reforms. This implies that these negative attitudes towards democracy might be, in some cases, detrimental for its functioning since they might lead to a greater estrangement from politics and an increase in political inequality.

With regard to party choice, some have argued that dissatisfaction with democracy, political distrust or political disaffection might have a negative impact on the quality and stability of democracy, since these attitudes might generate new opportunities for extremist, anti-liberal or populist leaders/parties to garner greater support (see e.g. Offe, 2006; Wright, 1976). The results of *chapter 5* indicate that different forms of democratic discontent are, indeed, related to a greater likelihood of supporting left- and right-wing challenger parties. It seems unlikely, though, that today's challenger parties might pose a direct and real risk for the stability of European democracies. In fact, some of these parties might even represent an ideal instrument for individuals who are critical or discontented with the functioning of democracy to directly vehicle their unfulfilled democratic aspirations into the political system (see Miller

and Listhaug, 1990). However, at the same time, rising support for challenger parties as a result of rising democratic discontent might also increase electoral volatility and, in some cases, pose a challenge to the governability of advanced democracies. For example, if these parties garner enough support to block the formation of mainstream parties' governments and, at the same time, they refuse to enter alliances with those parties, then the formation of stable governments might become increasingly complex and the likelihood of a democratic gridlock could increase.

In sum, while democratic discontent and negative evaluations of the functioning of the representative channel are unlikely to pose a direct threat for the stability of European democracies, they might have a negative impact on its functioning since these attitudes can, in some cases, increase political inequalities, increase the likelihood that citizens withdraw from politics, increase electoral volatility, and delay or prevent the formation of stable governments (see Montero and Torcal, 2006 for a similar conclusion about the consequences of political disaffection). Hence, the findings of this thesis qualify some aspects of the prevailing optimistic outlook about the behavior of those who are critical or dissatisfied with the functioning of their democracies.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Different avenues for further research can be suggested as a result of some of the general limitations of this thesis. The first of these limitations is that like most previous studies analyzing the relationship between attitudes towards democracy, political participation and party choice (e.g. Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Braun and Hutter, 2014; Brug et al., 2000; Dalton et al., 2010; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Norris, 2014) some of the empirical results are susceptible of being affected by endogeneity. While it is conventional to assume that the causal arrow runs from attitudes to behaviors, the behavioral outcomes studied could reinforce preexisting attitudes about democracy, while also being a consequence of them (Birch, 2010, p. 1162; Norris, 2014, p. 136). Respondents might rationalize and edit their answers about their attitudes towards democracy according to their behaviors in order to appear consistent, avoid cognitive dissonance or justify socially undesirable behaviors such as abstention. It is also possible that the acts of voting and protesting also reinforce some of the preexisting attitudes, like democratic discontent, that lead individuals to voting and protesting. For example, as a result of turning out to vote the levels of discontent of those individuals who already had low

levels of discontent might become even lower. Likewise, in the case of party choice it is possible that the attitudes that lead someone to vote for a given party are reinforced by casting a vote for that party.

Ideally, one would rely on panel data in order to assess the extent to which the behavioral outcomes considered in the different chapters might also reinforce preexisting attitudes. Unfortunately, national or cross-national panel data that includes information about individuals' democratic aspirations and evaluations was not available at the time of conducting this study. However, a previous study conducted by Birch (2010) analyzed, through UK panel data, how individuals' assessment of the fairness of elections relate to the likelihood of turning out vote. Her results show that previous perceptions of electoral integrity are strongly associated with the subsequent likelihood of turning out to vote. Together with the robustness checks conducted in *chapter 2* these results increase the plausibility of the assumption that the causal arrow mainly runs from attitudes to behaviors. In the case of vote choice, some studies have analyzed, through Belgian and Dutch panel data, how generic measures of political distrust, discontent or disaffection relate to the likelihood of supporting populist parties. However, while some argue that discontent is not only a cause but also a consequence of supporting these parties (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016; Rooduijn et al., 2016), others argue that "there exists an important element of exogeneity of political disaffection" with respect to voting choices, and that populist parties successfully mobilize disaffected citizens (Bélanger and Aarts, 2006, p. 16). Some even argue that the high levels of distrust of those who vote for a protest party might be reduced as a result of voting for such a party (Miller and Listhaug, 1990). If this were the case, the empirical analyses of *chapter 5* might have not overestimated but underestimated the impact of democratic discontent on the likelihood of supporting challenger parties. In any case, future studies should aim to fully unravel the direction of causality of the relationships studied in this thesis by relying on panel data that includes questions about democratic aspirations and evaluations similar to those used in the sixth round of the European Social Survey. The greater availability of online panel surveys is likely to increase the opportunities to introduce selected subsets of these questions in future longitudinal surveys, at least at the national level.

Another of the limitations of this thesis derives from its exclusive focus on European and neighboring countries, which can be considered, in most cases, advanced democracies.

Moreover, the attitudes and behaviors analyzed in this thesis were measured in a particular and, probably, exceptional period of time –the Great Recession–, during which some of the countries included in the sample suffered severe economic downturns. Hence, some of the results of this thesis could be driven by the specific context and time in which these analyses were conducted. For example, the greater number of demonstrations taking place during the Great Recession, which not only focused on austerity measures but also on a general critique of representative democracy and political institutions (Kriesi, 2014), might have strengthened the impact of democratic discontent on the likelihood of participating in legal demonstrations. Moreover, as I argue in *chapter 2* the optimistic conclusion with regard to the highly articulated Democracy Belief Systems of Europeans could be driven by the disproportionate proportion of advanced democracies included in the sample. Hence, further research should extend these analyses to other regions and time periods. The fact that the European Social Survey repeats some of its rotating modules increases the likelihood that democratic aspirations and evaluations will be measured again at a future point in time.

In spite of these limitations the chapters of this thesis make a valuable contribution to the literature on attitudes towards democracy, political belief systems, political participation and party choice, among others. These chapters broaden the scope of previous studies in multiple directions and provide further arguments and empirical evidence to enrich the academic debate about individuals' attitudes towards democracy, their relationship to different types of behaviors, and their potential consequences for the stability and the quality of advanced democracies.

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