Representative Voices

A study on diversity and inclusion in youth participation in political decision-making processes in Europe

Floor Sophie Becx

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Ethical Statement

This study has been approved by the Ethics Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University. Ethical approval number: 22-0848

Preface

Before you lies my master thesis on diversity and inclusion in youth participation in decision-making processes in Europe. With this research I finish my graduation project for the master's programme *Sociology: Contemporary Social Problems* at Utrecht University. I have been able to write my thesis for my internship organisation, Kennisland. I want to thank my colleagues at Kennisland for giving me such a pleasant time and giving me all the space I needed to learn about social innovation and write my thesis research.

For the realisation of my thesis I want to thank my thesis supervisor, Lute Bos, who has been a great help during my writing process by providing constructive feedback but also taking on the role of a tutor during the process of doing an internship.

Furthermore I want to thank my internship supervisor, Wessel Kok, who has been an inspiring help for me and my research with his knowledge about the practice of youth participation and his connection to the relevant studies and actors in the field.

Lastly, I want to thank my fellow students, Carlijn Toet, Lieke de Jong and Merijn Zomer for providing substantive feedback and making the process of writing a thesis less of a lonely process and much more fun.

With the completion of this research as well as my internship period at Kennisland, my study career is coming to an end. I look back on a educative and fun time. I am curious to discover the professional career that lies in front of me.

Enjoy reading!

Floor Sophie Becx

Abstract

Youth belonging to marginalised groups are underrepresented in political decision-making processes throughout Europe. This is especially problematic for inclusion and diversity in political representation. This study examined the relationship between youth (aged 15 to 25) belonging to marginalised groups and their participation in formal and informal political decision-making processes in Europe. Confidence to participate politically was included as a moderating variable. With use of the *European Social Survey* wave 9 from 2018, the hypotheses were tested among two samples; respondents aged 18 to 25 to analyse formal political participation and respondents aged 15 to 25 to analyse informal political participation, using a binary logistic regression analysis. The results show that belonging to marginalised groups has a positive effect on both formal and informal political participation among youth. Furthermore, low levels of confidence to participate politically has a negative effect on formal political participation for youth belonging to marginalised groups. Confidence to participate politically has no effect on informal political participation. Based on the results of this study, policy suggestions are made focussed on the organisation Kennisland who facilitates bottom-up youth-participation within schools and policy-making.

Key words: *youth participation, marginalised groups, political decision-making processes, inclusion, representativity, confidence to participate*

Contents

1. Introduction

In 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an agreement that recognizes young people to be entitled to the protection of their human rights and freedom 'without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' (UNCRC, 1989a, p 1). One of the fundamental principles of the Convention is the right of all young people to be heard either directly or through a representative and to be taken into consideration, set in Article 12 (UNCRC, 1989a).

Since its adoption, Article 12 has become conceptualised as youth participation. Warrington and Larkins (2019, p. 133) define youth participation as 'having a say, being involved in decision-making and achieving influence through words and actions within personal lives, communities, practice, research and policy'. In practice, the term 'youth participation' is used to represent processes in which young people participate in information-sharing and dialogue with adults to learn how their views are considered and to form outcomes. Important is the mutual respect between young people and adults in these participation processes (UNCRC, 2009b). The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 to 25 years old (Van Herk, 2019).

Research and policy in Western democracies have developed broader interest in youth participation and have framed it as a solution to contemporary societal issues on the economic, social, and political level. Youth participation is seen as a medium for active citizenship, human rights and the building of democratic nations (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Hart, 1992; Zeldin et al., 2014). From pedagogical reasoning, scientists have emphasised the need for young people to be active in society from a young age. Active participation in society helps youth to develop confidence and competency (Hart, 1992). The ability to partake in decision-making is important for agency: the perception of having voice and influence (Glorie, 2020). Moreover, youth participation increases young people's civic and social awareness. It is important to expose youth to the skills and responsibilities necessary for democratic and civil participation prior to the age of 16, 18, or 21 when they are expected to become responsible and participating adult citizens (Hart, 1992).

In the last two decades, much progress has been made in the efforts to locally, nationally, regionally and globally implement Article 12 in legislation, policies, and methodologies. Moreover, in the last 40 years, youth participation in social, political and civic decision-making

has gained increasing importance in European societies, its value stressed by the Council of Europe (Crowley & Moxon, 2017). The Council of Europe emphasises the importance of youth participation in politics to "foster young people's active citizenship, enhance their integration and inclusion and strengthen their contribution to the development of democracy" (Council of Europe, 2022b, para. 1).

1.1. A lack of diversity

Despite an increase in importance, it appears young people belonging to marginalised groups are underrepresented in youth participation projects and organisations, including participation in political decision-making. Young people from marginalised groups are defined as those belonging to an ethnic minority - including having a refugee background - or having a migration-background, young people with a disability, young people who come from a low socioeconomic status background, and young people in foster care. Also young people living in geographically distanced areas, such as rural areas, are often disengaged from participation due to travel barriers (Bell et al., 2008; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018; European Commission, 2021). These youths face particular obstacles in the realisation of their participation right as a result of differences in their background, educational levels and capital compared to non-marginalised youth. They are tied to other priorities, experience a lack of financial support or connections to be able to spend time in youth participation (Bell et al., 2008; Number 5 Foundation, 2021; Youth and Environment Europe, 2020).

Accordingly, youth who are currently involved in political decision-making activities, are not necessarily representative of the community at large (Matthews, 2001). Often youth with a privileged background, from middle class, traditional families and the dominant cultural group, are the ones involved in participation projects, such as youth councils and parliaments (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Russell & Van Campen, 2011; Vromen, 2008). So, while inclusiveness is an important goal in youth participation, challenges remain in including marginalised young people (European Commission, 2021).

Another element that appears to be important in political participation is the perception youth have of their ability to participate and have influence in decision-making processes (Van Hal & Kanne, 2021; European Commission, 2021). In political participation this is called 'political efficacy' which is of high influence in the actions people take to engage in political participation, including marginalised youth (Diemer & Li, 2011; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019).

1.2. The societal and scientific relevance

In society, diversity in youth participation in political decision-making is necessary to increase representativity that reflects national demographics. Different groups have different experiences and perspectives (Matthews, 2001). A lack of diversity in youth participation brings the risk of insufficient recognition of important societal issues (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018; European Commission, 2021; N5F, 2021). Moreover, disengagement of marginalised youth can deepen inequalities and disadvantages which leads to poor developmental outcomes (Iwasaki et al., 2014).

Kennisland is an organisation with the expertise to facilitate the bottom-up participation of those who are most closely involved in certain societal issues to develop interventions, strategies and methods that produce social change based on equality. In doing so Kennisland connects the system world of policymakers and organisations to the social world of citizens (Kennisland, n.d.a). Since 2021, Kennisland also encompasses the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes on societal issues within schools and governmental policy-making. The aim is to give youth a say in the development of what is mainly their future. In doing so, Kennisland calls for a deepening of knowledge and awareness about where and how young individuals can be supported to participate (Kennisland, 2021b).

In the last few years, much research has been done on the facilitators and barriers to youth participation through qualitative research investigating the perspectives of youth and involved stakeholders. However, although the problem of diversity in youth participation stands high on the agenda, young people from marginalised groups still are underrepresented in decision-making processes. Moreover, concrete numbers on the involvement of these young individuals are lacking. This study aims to analyse this issue on a wider scale, using a quantitative approach with data from the European Social Survey Round 9. This study is executed for Kennisland.

The research questions this study will address are the following:

1. What is the effect of youth belonging to a marginalised group on their participation in political decision-making processes in Europe?
2. How is this effect moderated by having confidence to participate in political decision-making?
3. How can Kennisland guide organisations in facilitating inclusion of youth belonging to marginalised groups?

The study will be composed as follows. First, the theoretical framework will be described, explaining the context and mechanism affecting the relationship between marginalised youth, political participation and confidence to participate. Next, the methodological strategy of the research will be outlined. Then, the results of the study will be presented. Lastly, conclusions will be drawn, followed by a discussion and policy recommendations.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the following chapter, the theoretical framework explaining the disengagement of marginalised youth in participation in political decision-making processes and its interrelation with confidence to participate politically will be discussed. The chapter starts with a description of the present positioning of youth participation in political decision-making processes in Europe. Next, the mechanisms and context that influence the political disengagement of marginalised youth will be discussed. Lastly, the influence of confidence to participate politically will be outlined in its effect on the relationship between marginalised youth and their level of political participation. Hypotheses for the current study will be derived from the body of research. The chapter ends with the conceptual models of this study.

2..1 The current position of youth participation in political decision-making processes

Youth participation a process that comprises the engagement of young individuals aged 15 to 25 in decision-making about the social, economic, ecological and political environment they live in and which impacts their lives (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Van Herk, 2019). Political youth participation focusses on membership of different organisations, participation in cultural organisation and activities, and engaging in political activity through voting, signing petitions, contacting politicians, protesting and voting (Kitanova, 2020).

At the European level, councils are the foremost instruments through which youth gain voice (European Commission, 2021). Additionally, the Council of Europe, including 47 European member states, maintains a youth department which involves 'guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels' (Council of Europe, 2022a, para. 1). These councils are primarily centred on contribution to the development of policy, policy planning and giving recommendations. They often facilitate the most direct method of participation in decision-making for youth (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; European Commission, 2021). At the national level, youth councils, youth parliaments, and the Ombudsperson for children's and youth's offices are the main instruments through which youth are involved in political and democratic life (European Commission, 2021).

In the Netherlands, youth participation in political decision-making is generally facilitated through municipalities. In 2015, when the Youth Law came into force, municipalities were given responsibility for all care for youth and their parents. The purpose

of this law is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of youth care (Mak & Gilsing, 2014). One of its instruments is to increase the quality of youth care by actively including youth in decision-making, policy making and its execution. Moreover, the law is driven by the mechanisms that youth participation contributes to an empowered development of young individuals in terms of their confidence, self-respect and social responsibility. Also not unimportant is the obligation to sustain Article 12 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Mak et al., 2016).

The assumption in the Netherlands that fuels the Youth Law is that the local municipality stands closest to the young individual and therefore provides the best accessible organisation, more so than provincial- or national level governmental institutions (Mak, et al., 2016). In 2016, 66% percent of the Dutch municipalities have formed political youth participation as a policy goal and 18% had the intention to form youth participation as a policy goal. Dutch municipalities facilitate youth participation in decision-making through four levels. The first level is 'informing', whereby municipalities inform about certain themes that involve young people. 45% of the Dutch municipalities engage in this level. The second level is 'consult', whereby municipalities consult young people about matters that affect them. 69% of the Dutch municipalities engage in this level. The third level is 'participation'. On this level, municipalities stimulate youth to participate in municipal policy making and its execution. 28% of the Dutch municipalities engage in this level, making actual participation the level that is least realised by municipalities. The fourth level is 'stimulation of one's own initiative', which comprises the extent to which municipalities stimulate young people to participate in giving advice on their own initiative, without necessarily being asked to. 75% of the Dutch municipalities engage in this level (Mak et al., 2016).

2.2. Formal and Informal political participation

In recent years, a concerning decline in political engagement among youth has been observed globally. This is especially visible in voting and membership of political parties. Studies have shown young individuals to be alienated and apathetic towards political engagement, their political interest has declined and they distrust political institutions (Kitanova, 2020). On the other hand, it is argued that youth aren't necessarily disinterested or disengaged, but frustrated and distrustful. They have experienced decades of neoliberal policy-making painting them as a threat to democracy and public order and hence excluding them from political participation (Davies, 2018; Pickard, 2019). Young people experience limited opportunities and exposure to

effectively participate in decision-making processes (United Nations Youth-SWAP, 2012). Youth participation could hence be argued to serve as a means to increase political trust.

However, a distinction can be made between formal and informal political engagement. Youth participation in formal or traditional political participation has declined among young people. This form of participation is considered to be the official form of political engagement through parliamentary representation and includes activities such as voting and membership of a political party (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). In the greater part of the European Union countries, electoral involvement of young people shows a long-term decline (Kitanova, 2020). Nevertheless, young people have turned to alternative, more informal means of engagement that are more meaningful to them. These forms include demonstrations, signing petitions, volunteering and online engagement (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020). It is argued that as young people feel excluded from the formal political system, they turn to alternative methods of engagement in politics and decision-making processes (Kitanova, 2020). This development can be seen in the climate protests that took the globe in 2019 with young people standing on the frontlines (European Union, 2021b). Moreover, informal political participation in the form of social movements can mobilise young people belonging to marginalised groups. Social movements are important for systematically disadvantaged groups to gain some form of democratic representativity (Weldon, 2011). Take for example the Black Lives Matter movement or Feministic movements. In addition, it has become evident that youth from minority groups increasingly engage in political activities on social media to engage in and influence democracy (Kaskazi & Kitzie, 2021).

2.3. The disengagement of marginalised groups

Of all youth, those belonging to marginalised groups show to be the most disengaged group when it comes to youth participation in decision-making processes (Bell et al., 2008; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018; Brady et al., 2020; European Commission, 2021; N5F, 2021; Zani & Barett, 2012). This is especially the case for participation in formal political engagement. For example, for individuals from ethnic minority and migrant groups, experiences of racism and discrimination may form a significant obstacle and causes them to participate only in their ethnic community organisations. Moreover, for individuals of these population groups, the knowledge of civic and political institutions, their political values, and linguistic skills also influence their level of engagement in political decision-making processes (Zani & Barrett, 2012).

Disengagement or exclusion of young people belonging to marginalised groups in youth participation in decision-making processes is explained by the socio-demographic factors that shape young people's positions within society, as well as their social and cultural capital (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020; Iwasaki et al., 2014). Socio-demographic factors, such as gender, education and social class, have been acknowledged as significant in the determination of engagement in youth participation (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020). Educational history and social class appear to be crucial predictors (Kitanova, 2020). These factors shape resources that create or obstruct opportunities for youth to engage in political decision-making processes and hence cause disengagement of marginalised groups.

Marginalised youth experience less opportunities to develop and attain skills and resources relevant for political participation (Diemer & Li, 2011). Flanagan et al. (2012) examined how disadvantage through the life-course influences the opportunities young individuals receive to engage in youth participation in political decision-making processes. Disadvantages encompasses inequalities in public education, inequalities in opportunities for civic exercises in schools and in community organisations, as well as in exposure to and inclusion in political discussions at school or within families. Civic practice in school includes participating in debates, mock trials, volunteering etcetera (Flanagan et al., 2012). Accordingly, it is membership in institutions, extracurricular activities and community organisations that connects young individuals to the opportunity and ability of engagement in youth participation in decision-making processes. When young people have opportunities to engage in civic practice during their elementary- and high school career, they are more likely to participate in voting and volunteering activities in young adulthood (Flanagan et al., 2012). However, disadvantaged youth are often unaware about participation processes and initiatives as a result of insufficient information and insufficient inclusive targeting efforts. Governors are unaware of how to reach and motivate youth from marginalised and disadvantaged groups (European Commission, 2021; N5F, 2021).

Furthermore, differences in ethnicity and social class between and within schools can determine the opportunities young people have to engage in civic practice. Students who come from an ethnic minority or working-class background are less likely to participate in classes that offer opportunities for civic engagement than students who come from the ethnic majority and have a middle-class background (Flanagan et al., 2012). Membership and engagement in youth councils and politics is associated with higher education, middle-class and white view positions. Predominantly young people with certain talent, time, and social capital are the ones

who engage in and more importantly obtain positions in representative politics (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Crowley & Moxon, 2017). Young people who come from marginalised communities are less engaged in meaningful relationships and often have limited connections to community support. Additionally, coming from a non-marginalised family influences a better access to social and political capital as opposed to coming from a less advantaged family (Flanagan et al., 2012). Consequently, exclusion and disengagement can enlarge inequalities and disadvantages which subsequently leads to poor developmental outcomes for those excluded (Iwasaki et al., 2014).

A classical sociological mechanism to further explain inequalities between young people in political participation is that of social and cultural capital, developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986a). Bourdieu (1986a) argued that social and cultural capital are forms of resources that influence inequality between individuals in the accessibility of chances in society. Social capital is defined as the social connections an individual has and of which he or she can derive certain advantages (Bourdieu, 1997b; Gelderblom, 2018). Cultural capital, which comprises the competencies an individual possesses, is shaped by the knowledge and educational qualifications of a person, cultural possessions and manners (Goldthorpe, 2007; Bourdieu, 1986a). Cultural capital consists of the resources that come from societies' dominant norms, values, beliefs and practices as well as language competencies and is subsequently associated with higher status (Breinholt & Jæger, 2020; Dillon, 2014). Individuals with more social and cultural capital receive more advantages than those who have less capital and are subsequently limited in their prospects (Bourdieu, 1997b; Gelderblom, 2018; Rogošić & Baranović, 2016). Youth with a great amount of capital are often resourced young people who receive encouragement to engage in leadership within their community (European Commission, 2021; Vromen, 2008). Structures such as these tend to make youth participation an exclusive or even elitist endeavour, creating a lack of accountability and democracy (Matthews, 2001; Vromen, 2008). Hence, it could be argued that youth participation as it currently holds its shape has a reinforcing effect on inequality. Young individuals with a significant amount of social and cultural capital engage in participation in decision-making which enlarges their capital and thereupon increases their future opportunities. They make contacts via the activities they engage in and they learn the sufficient skills for participation. According to Fitz-Patrick et al. (1998), youth forums even have the ability to disempower young people who belong to certain groups when these forums limit their representation to a certain portion of the population.

From the literature described above, the following first hypotheses is derived:
H1a: *Belonging to a marginalised group has a negative effect on youth participation in formal political decision-making processes for young individuals in Europe.*

H1b: *Belonging to a marginalised group has a positive effect on youth participation in informal political decision-making processes for young individuals in Europe.*

2.4. Confidence to participate in political decision-making

Research on political participation repeatedly shows that individuals who have higher levels of self-confidence and higher levels of political efficacy are much more likely to engage in political participation (Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019; Sandovici & Listhaug, 2010).

The psychologist Albert Bandura (1977a) initiated the term self-efficacy, as part of the social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory holds that a great deal of people's behaviour is learned from their interactions with others. This is primarily accomplished through imitation, learning based on the observations of others (Glassman & Hadad, 2013). Within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as an individual's perception and beliefs in his or her own capability to bring about achievement (Bandura, 2006c). Put differently, it is the individual's confidence in his or her ability to engage in action and continue in that action when confronted with obstructions or challenges (Boushey et al., 2001). According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is the most intensive and important mechanism of personal agency (Bandura, 1986b; Garcia et al., 2015; Glorie, 2020). Agency is the perception of an individual that he or she has voice and can exert influence (Glorie, 2020). The expectations an individual has for his or her future are influenced to a great degree by his or her judgments of how he or she will be able to perform in certain situations (Garcia et al., 2015). Bandura (1977a) argues that if individuals do not believe they have ability to bring out results, they will not engage in action that attempts to generate these results.

Self-efficacy in political participation is generally termed 'political efficacy', an individual's belief in one's ability to use his or her knowledge and skills to engage in social and political action (Hope & Jagers, 2014). Schools provide a constructive environment for young individuals to convey knowledge fruitful for participation in political decision-making (Slijkhuis, 2021). Education has an increasing effect on civic skills and political knowledge. Both these competencies stimulate political participation. Moreover, education stimulates political efficacy as it enhances the belief that the young individual has the skills to understand and engage in political participation (Persson, 2015). According to Pfanzelt and Spies (2019),

the interrelation between political skills and self-efficacy is particularly relevant for formal political participation. This is the case because both require visibility as well as responsibility, attributes that occur less among individuals with low levels of self-efficacy. These findings indicate an influential role for civic education. Civic education involves school programmes creating space for participation in student government and mock elections (Keating & Janmaat, 2016). Its goal is to promote political and civil awareness among youth (Slijkhuis, 2021). Furthermore, education forms a key space for socialisation. Schools and classrooms operate as simulations of society where political structures, democratic processes and principles of broader society are duplicated and subsequently can be learned and practised by youth (Cabrera & Leyendecker, 2017). Civic education does not merely increase the political efficacy and hence participation of youth in general. Youth belonging to a minority group are positively affected by this form of scholarship. Diemer and Li (2011) found that a young individual's perceived ability to influence social and political change is related to engagement in voting behaviour among youth belonging to marginalised groups. Furthermore, an American study by Hope and Jagers (2014) found that civic education has a direct effect on civic engagement and strengthens political efficacy among Black youth. From their study it emerged that black young individuals were more civically engaged when they had more confidence in their capacity to participate in politics and believed they had an effect on change. Besides civic education, an open classroom atmosphere where free discourse about social and political matters is possible, has a significant effect on political participation as it increases civic and political knowledge (Slijkhuis, 2021). According to Slijkhuis (2021), political knowledge should be taught in a continual manner starting during primary education. What's more, as educational level influences the degree of political participation of young people, Slijkhuis (2021) advises to give form to a longer or broader time period for the first years of secondary education. He argues that when doing so, students from different educational levels can socialise with and learn from each other and hence rectify the deviations that influence their political participation.

From the literature described above, the following third and fourth hypotheses are derived:
H2a: *Having confidence in one's ability to participate in political decision-making has a positive effect on the relationship between youth belonging to a marginalised group and formal political participation in Europe.*

H2b: *Having confidence in one's ability to participate in political decision-making has a positive effect on the relationship between youth belonging to a marginalised group and informal political participation in Europe.*

The four hypotheses constitute the conceptual models presented below:

Figure 1.

Conceptual model formal political participation including hypotheses 1a and 2a

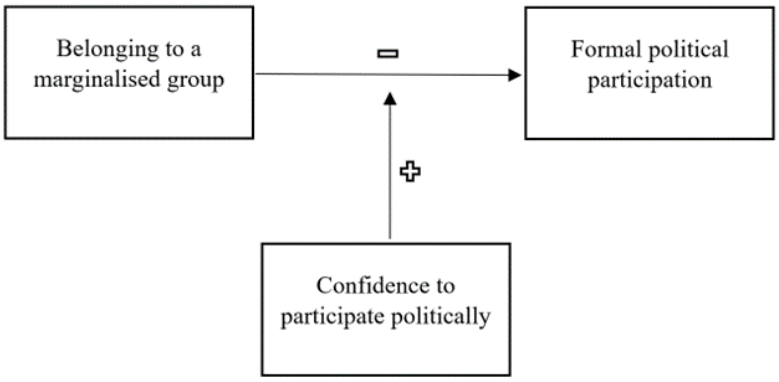
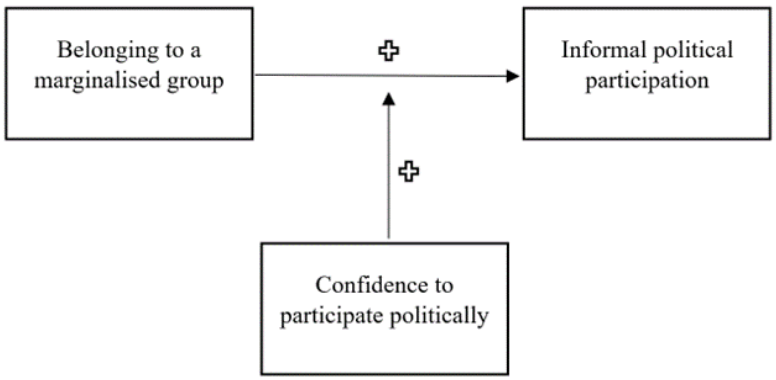


Figure 2.

Conceptual model informal political participation including hypotheses 1b and 2b



3. Methods

3.1. Participants and research method

To answer the research questions of this study, data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 9, collected in the year 2018, was used as this is the most recent collection of data available that analyses participation in decision-making processes by youth. The ESS is an academic cross-national survey conducted across more than thirty European countries. The survey measures European populations' attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural patterns (ESS ERIC, n.d.a). The survey holds a quantitative and cross-sectional methodology (ESS ERIC, n.d.c). The main goals of the ESS are to graphically present stability and change in European social structures, conditions, and attitudes, with focus on the changing social, political, and moral constructions and the understanding of national progress and social change (ESS ERIC, n.d.a).

Respondents of Round 9 were randomly selected, representing all individuals aged 15 and older. There was no upper age limit (ESS ERIC, n.d.d). Data collection was executed through face-to-face computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI). The data collection included a 70% target response rate and a non-contact rate of 3% maximum (ESS ERIC, n.d.b). Participating countries in Round 9 were Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This round contains 49.519 respondents.

As this study focuses on youth, only respondents aged 15 to 25 years old were selected from the dataset, based on the CBS's definition of youth (Van Herk, 2019). Furthermore, as two dependent variables are included, two analyses are performed in this study. Each analysis contains a different sample based on the respondents' age. The first sample contains respondents aged 18 to 25 years and measures the effect on formal political participation. Because the independent variable of formal political participation includes the variable *"voting"* which is legally allowed from the age of 18, respondents aged 15 to 17 are excluded for this analysis. The second sample contains respondents aged 15 to 25 years old and measures the effect on informal political participation. Missing values were deleted.

Subsequently, for the analysis of formal political participation, the sample included 4199 individuals for the questionnaire on belonging to a marginalised group, 4238 individuals for the questionnaire on formal political participation and 4101 individuals for the questionnaire on confidence to participate politically. For the analysis of informal political

participation, the sample included 5342 individuals for the questionnaire on belonging to a marginalised group, 5399 individuals for the questionnaire on informal political participation and 5183 individuals for the questionnaire on confidence to participate politically. For this study the number of respondents was not equalised to fit all the variables included in the analyses. The reason for this is that when the sample size is equalised, respondents that are still valuable for the measurement of the direct effects are lost.

3.2. Variables

3.2.1. Dependent variables

Formal political participation. Formal political participation was measured using three variables, including the questions: *"Did you vote in the last national election?", "Have you worked in a political party or action group during the last 12 months?"* and *"Have you contacted a politician, government or local government official during the last 12 months?".* After being recoded to dichotomous variables, the answer categories for these three questions were (0) *No* and (1) *Yes.* Respondents who answered "*Refusal*", "*Don't know*" or *"No answer"* were excluded from the sample. Subsequently, these three variables were unified into a categorical outcome scale variable to measure formal political participation based on a *Yes* or *No* answering scale. This means that if a respondent scores *Yes* on one of the three variables included in the scale variable, he or she scores *Yes* on formal political participation. In the European countries included in this study, voting rights go in effect at the age of 18 years old. Therefore, the analysis that included this variable used a selection of respondents between 18 and 25 years old. This sample selection is applied to all variables of formal political participation for homogeneity of the measurement.

Informal political participation (Y2). Informal political participation was measured using four variables, including the questions: *"Have you worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker during the last 12 months?", "Have you signed a petition during the 12 months?", "Have you taken part in a lawful public demonstration during the last 12 months?"* and *"Have you posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter during the last 12 months?".* After being recoded to dichotomous variables, the answer categories for these three questions were (0) *No* and (1) *Yes.* Respondents who answered "*Refusal*", "*Don't know*" or *"No answer"* were excluded from the sample. Subsequently, these four variables were unified into a categorical outcome scale variable to measure formal political participation based on a *Yes* or *No* answering

scale. This means that if a respondent scores *Yes* on one of the four variables included in the scale variable, he or she scores *Yes* on informal political participation.

3.2.2. Independent variables

Belonging to a marginalised group. To measure whether respondents feel they belong to a marginalised group, respondents were asked the question: *"Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?".* After being recoded to dichotomous variables, the answer categories for this question was (0) *No* and (1) *Yes.* Respondents who answered "*Refusal*", "*Don't know*" or *"No answer"* were excluded from the sample.

Confidence to participate politically. Confidence in one's ability to participate in political decision-making processes was measured using a 5-point scale in response to the question *"How confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?"*. The respondents could answer (0) *Not at all confident*, (1) *A little confident*, (2) *Quite confident*, (3) *Very confident*, (4) *Completely confident.* Respondents who answered "*Refusal*", "*Don't know*" or *"No answer"* were excluded from the sample.

3.2.3. Control variables

Age. Within the cohort of youth, differentiation between age influences political participation. Older age cohorts are significantly more engaged in political participation than younger age cohorts (Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). According to the CBS (2019), political interest increases as young individuals turn 18 years old as opposed to youth within the cohort of 15 to 18 years old. Of 15 to 18 year olds, 32% indicate to be politically interested. Of 18 to 22 year olds, 40% indicate to be politically interested. This is connected to the right to vote which comes into force at the age of 18. In the cohort 22 to 25 year olds this percentage increases up to 43% (CBS, 2019). For this study, the respondents' age was already included in the survey.

Gender. Gender appears to affect engagement in political decision-making among youth. The Eurobarometer Youth Survey of 2021 found that 45% of young women believe voting to be the most effective form to influence political decision-making, whereas 38% of young men indicate to believe this. On the other hand, the same report found that the tendency to discuss political matters is higher among young men (27%) than young women (22%) (European Union, 2021a). Moreover, engagement in civic participation as well as having higher levels of self-efficacy has a bigger effect on the political participation of young men than of young women (Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019).

Education. Political participation of young people is associated with higher educational levels (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Flanagan et al., 2012). The Eurobarometer Youth Survey of 2021 found that young individuals who completed their education at the age of 20 or older (45%) believe voting to be more effective than those who completed their education at the age of 15 or younger (23%).

Educational level was measured by asking the respondents *"What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?".* As this study focuses on the European population and the countries included vary in terms of structure and curricular content, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) applies uniform definitions for the comparison of educational attainment across countries (UNESCO-UIS, 2012). The ISCED employs 9 educational levels, which can be subdivided into categories of educational attainment. The ESS contains all categories of educational attainment. For this study, the answer categories have been recoded to the 9 educational level categories to create a more coherent overview. The original as well as the recoded answer categories can be found in Appendix B. Respondents who answered "*Refusal*", "*Don't know*" or *"No answer"* were excluded from the sample. Also, respondents who answered "*Other*" were excluded from the sample as it cannot be determined which educational level they have obtained and is therefore not relevant for the results of this study. For this study, educational level was transformed to interval measurement level. The reason for this is that the educational level has eight answer categories and the logistic regression analyses will therefore produce eight dummy variables for the interpretation. As education level is included in this study as a control variable, it would be redundant to devote attention to such a relatively large amount of dummies for this variable.

3.3. Analytical Strategy

The dependent variables in this study have a dichotomous measurement level. Therefore a binary logistic regression analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 27. The alpha level was set at a maximum of .05. Alpha levels of .01 and .001 were also included in the analyses. For the pseudo R-square indice of the logistic regression analyses, the Nagelkerke R-square was chosen. Of the pseudo R-square indices available in SPSS, the Nagelkerke R-square values come closest to the ordinary least squares (OLS) R-square values (Smith & McKenna, 2013).

Prior to the analysis, the assumptions for executing a logistic regression analysis were tested. When testing for linearity of the logit with the control variable 'age', initially this assumption appeared to be violated as the interaction with the dependent variables was

significant. However, when visually checking for linearity, the graph showed a linear relationship of the variable. In conclusion, no assumptions were violated.

For both analyses, the first model tests the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on participation in formal (analysis 1) and informal political (analysis 2) decision-making. The second model tests the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on participation in formal (analysis 1) and informal political (analysis 2) decision-making. The moderator variable of confidence to participate politically and the control variables are also included as independent variables in the second model. The third model tests for moderation. This model includes the interaction effect between belonging to a marginalised group on formal (analysis 1) and informal (analysis 2) participation in political decision-making.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics Formal political participation

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Belonging to a marginalised group (Yes = 1)	4199	0	1	.10	-
Formal political participation (Yes = 1)	4238	0	1	0.48	-
Confidence to Participate politically	4101	0	4	1.24	1.07
Age	4238	18	25	21.47	2.27
Gender (Male = 1)	4238	0	1	0.49	-
Educational level	4207	0	8	3.28	1.31

Valid N = 4072

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of all variables included in the logistic regression analysis of formal political participation, using the sample of youth aged 18 to 25 years.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics Informal political participation

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Belonging to a marginalised group (Yes = 1)	5342	0	1	.09	-
Informal political Participation (Yes = 1)	5399	0	1	.41	-
Confidence to participate	5183	0	4	1.24	1.06
Age	5399	15	25	20.33	2.98
Gender (Male = 1)	5399			0.49	-
Educational level	5346	0	8	2.97	1.34

Valid N = 5093

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of all variables included in the analysis for informal political participation, using the sample of youth aged 15 to 25 years.

4.2. Logistic regression analysis

4.2.1. Formal political participation

Table 3 shows the results of the effect of youth belonging to a marginalised group on formal political participation, including the control variables of age, gender and educational level and the moderation effect of confidence to participate politically.

Table 3.

Regression Models for Formal Political Participation

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b (SE)	Exp(B) [CI 95%]	b (SE)	Exp(B) [95% CI]	b (SE)	Exp(B) [95% CI]
Constant	-.05 (.03)		-7.86 (.37)***		-7.9 (.37)***	
Belonging to a marginalised group	.04 (.11)	1.04 [.84-1.28]	-.03 (.12)	.97 [.77-1.22]	.57 (.24)*	1.77 [1.10-2.83]
Confidence to participate politically						
(1) A little confident to participate			.63 (.09)***	1.87 [1.58-2.23]	.67 (.09)***	1.99 [1.66-2.38]
(2) Quite confident to participate			1.00 (.10)***	2.73 [2.26-3.30]	1.098 (.101)***	3.00 [2.46-3.66]
(3) Very confident to participate			1.34 (.14)***	3.82 [2.92-5.00]	1.341 (.146)***	3.84 [2.87-5.09]
(4) Completely confident to participate			1.15 (.20)***	3.15 [2.13-4.64]	1.237 (.215)***	3.45 [2.26-5.25]
Interaction effect						
Belonging to a marginalised group x (1) A little confident					-71 (.31)*	.49 [.27-.91]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (2) Quite confident					-1.04 (.33)**	.35 [.19-.67]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (3) Very confident					-.22 (.45)	.80 [.33-1.93]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (4) Completely confident					-.88 (.57)	.41 [.13-1.27]
Age			.31 (.02)***	1.36 [1.31-1.41]	.31 (.012)***	1.36 [1.31-1.41]
Gender (male)			.17 (.03)	1.11 [.97-1.27]	.098 (.070)	1.10 [.96-1.27]
Educational level			.173 (.031)***	1.19 [1.12-1.26]	.18 (.03)***	1.19 [1.12-1.27]
R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.00		.23		.23	

Note. CI = Confidence Interval. Dependent variable: Formal political participation (0-1). Standardized coefficients.

*P < .05 **P < .01 ***P < .001.

Model 1

Model 1 shows the direct effect of belonging to marginalised groups on formal political participation. The overall model was not significant, X^2 (1) = .12, p = .73. Therefore we cannot make judgments based on this model

Model 2

Model 2 shows the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on formal political participation, controlled by age, gender and educational level. This model also includes the direct effect of the moderator of confidence to participate politically. The overall model was significant, X^2 (7) = 748.04, p < .001 and 67,9% accurate in its predictions of formal political participation.

First, the results show that belonging to a marginalised group does not have a significant effect on formal political participation.

Second, the model shows a significant effect of confidence to participate politically on formal political participation for all four levels in comparison to the reference category (1 - 'a little confident': Exp(B) = 1.87, p < .001; 2 - 'quite confident': Exp(B) = 2.73, p < .001; 3 - 'very confident': Exp(B) = 3.82, p < .001; 4 - 'completely confident': Exp(B) = 3.15, p < .001). This means that young individuals who are confident to participate politically are more likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals who are not at all confident.

Model 3

Model 3 addresses the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on formal political participation and whether this effect is moderated by confidence to participate politically. The overall model was significant, X^2 (4) = 11.65, p < .001 and 68% accurate in its predictions of formal political participation.

First, the results show that belonging to a marginalised group has a significant effect on formal political participation (Exp(B) = 1.77, p < .05). This means that individuals belonging to a marginalised group were more likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals not belonging to a marginalised group. Therefore, we reject hypothesis 1a, which states that belonging to a marginalised group would negatively influence formal political participation.

Second, the model shows a significant effect of confidence to participate politically on formal political participation for all four levels in comparison to the reference category (1 - 'a little confident': Exp(B) = 1.99, p < .001; 2 - 'quite confident': Exp(B) = 3.00, p < .001; 3 - 'very confident': Exp(B) = 3.84, p < .001; 4 - 'completely confident': Exp(B) = 3.45, p < .001).

This means that young individuals who are confident to participate politically are more likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals who are not at all confident.

Lastly, the model shows that the interaction effect is significant for two of the four interaction levels of confidence to participate politically and belonging to a marginalised group in comparison to the reference category of individuals who do not belong to a marginalised group and who are not confident to participate politically. Individuals belonging to a marginalised group who are a little confident to participate politically (1) are less likely to participate in formal political participation (Exp(B) = .49, p < .05). Individuals belonging to a marginalised group who are quite confident to participate politically (2) are less likely to participate in formal political participation (Exp(B) = .35, p < .01). There is no significant interaction effect for individuals belonging to a marginalised group who are very confident to participate politically (3) and who are completely confident to participate politically (4).

Therefore, we partly reject hypothesis 2a, which states that confidence to participate politically positively influences the relationship between belonging to a marginalised group and formal political participation.

Control variables

Age has a significant effect on formal political participation (Model 2: Exp(B) = 1.36, p < .001; Model 3: Exp(B) = 1.36, p < .001). The older an individual is, the more he or she is engaged in formal political participation.

Additionally, educational level has a significant effect on formal political participation (Model 2: Exp(B) = 1.19, p < .001; Model 3: Exp(B) = 1.19, p < .001). This means the higher an individual's educational level, the more he or she is engaged in formal political participation.

Lastly, gender shows no significant effect on formal political participation.

4.2.2. Informal political participation

Table 4 shows the results of the effect of youth belonging to a marginalised group on informal political participation, including the control variables age, gender and educational level and the moderation effect of confidence to participate politically.

Model 1

Model 1 shows the direct effect of belonging to a marginalised group on informal political participation. The overall model was significant, X^2 (1) = 56.46, p = < .001 and 59,1% accurate in its predictions of informal political participation.

Belonging to a marginalised group has a significant effect on informal political participation (Exp(B) = 2.08, p < .001). This means that individuals belonging to a marginalised group are more likely to engage in informal political participation than individuals who do not belong to a marginalised group.

Model 2

Model 2 shows the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on informal political participation, controlled by age, gender and educational level. This model also includes the moderator of confidence to participate politically. The overall model was significant, X^2 (7) = 394.33, p < .001 and 63,5% accurate in its predictions of formal political participation.

First, the results show that belonging to a marginalised group has a significant effect on informal political participation (Exp(B) = 1.95, p < .001). This means that individuals belonging to a marginalised group are more likely to engage in informal political participation than individuals who do not belong to a marginalised group.

Second, the model shows a significant effect of confidence to participate politically on informal political participation for all four levels in comparison to the reference category of individuals who are not confident to participate politically (1 - 'a little confident': Exp(B) = 1.89, p < .001; 2 - 'quite confident': Exp(B) = 3.31, p < .001; 3 - 'very confident': Exp(B) = 5.11, p < .001; 4 - 'completely confident': Exp(B) = 4.68, p < .001). This means that young individuals who are confident to participate politically are more likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals who are not at all confident.

Model 3

Model 3 addresses the effect of belonging to a marginalised group on informal political participation and whether this effect is moderated by confidence to participate politically. The overall model was not significant, X^2 (4) = 2.73, p = .60. Therefore we cannot make judgments based on this model. However, the significant effects are worth mentioning.

First, the results show that belonging to a marginalised group has a significant effect on informal political participation (Exp(B) = 2.16, p < .001). This means that individuals belonging to a marginalised group are more likely to engage in informal political participation than individuals not belonging to a marginalised group.

Second, the model shows a significant effect of confidence to participate politically on informal political participation for all four levels in comparison to the reference category of individuals who are not confident to participate politically (1 - 'a little confident': Exp(B) =

1.94, $p < .001$; 2 - 'quite confident': Exp(B) = 1.94, $p < .001$; 3 - 'very confident': Exp(B) = 4.95, $p < .001$; 4 - 'completely confident': Exp(B) = 4.78, $p < .001$). This means that young individuals who are confident to participate politically are more likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals who are not at all confident.

Based on model 3, no judgement on hypotheses 1b and 2b can be made. However, based on model 2, we would accept hypothesis 1b, which states that belonging to a marginalised group has a positive effect on youth participation in informal political decision-making processes for young individuals in Europe.

Control variables

The control variables are included in model 2 and model 3. In both models, there is a significant effect of age on informal political participation (Model 2: Exp(B) = 1.03, $p < .05$; Model 3: Exp(B) = 1.03, $p < .05$). The older an individual is, the more he or she is engaged in informal political participation.

Additionally, both models present a significant effect of educational level on informal political participation (Model 2: Exp(B) = 1.09, $p < .001$; Model 3: Exp(B) = 1.09, $p < .05$). The higher the educational level an individual has attained, the more he or she is engaged in informal political participation.

Lastly, both models present a significant effect of gender on informal political participation (Model 2: Exp(B) = .80, $p < .001$; Model 3: Exp(B) = .80, $p < .001$). Young men are less engaged in informal political participation than young women.

Table 4

Regression Models for Informal Political Participation

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b (SE)	Exp(B) [CI 95%]	b (SE)	Exp(B) [95% CI]	b (SE)	Exp(B) [95% CI]
Constant	-.37 (.03)***		-1.89 (.23)***		-1.90 (.23)***	
Belonging to a marginalised group	.73 (.10)***	2.08 [1.72-2.53]	.67 (.10)***	1.95 [1.59-2.39]	.77 (.29)***	2.16 [1.44-3.25]
Confidence to participate politically						
(1) A little confident to participate			.64 (.08)***	1.89 [1.63-2.21]	.66 (.08)***	1.94 [1.65-2.27]
(2) Quite confident to participate			1.20 (.08)***	3.31 [2.81-3.90]	1.21 (.09)***	1.94 [1.65-2.27]
(3) Very confident to participate			1.63 (.12)***	5.11 [4.05-6.43]	1.60 (.12)***	4.95 [3.89-6.30]
(4) Completely confident to participate			1.54 (.18)***	4.68 [3.32-6.60]	1.56 (.19)***	4.78 [3.31-6.88]
Interaction effect						
Belonging to a marginalised group x (1) A little confident					-.24 (.27)	.79 [.47-1.34]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (2) Quite confident					-.15 (.29)	.86 [.49-1.51]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (3) Very confident					.41 (.45)	1.50 [.62-3.62]
Belonging to a marginalised group x (4) Completely confident					-.20 (.55)	.82 [.28-2.40]
Age			.03 (.01)*	1.03 [1.01-1.0]	.03 (.013)*	1.03 [1.01-1.06]
Gender			-.23 (.06)***	.80 [.71-.90]	-.23 (.06)***	.80 [.71-.90]
Educational level			.08 (.03)**	1.09 [1.03-1.15]	.08 (.03)**	1.09 [1.03-1.15]
R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.02		.11		.11	

Note. CI = Confidence Interval. Dependent variable: Informal political participation (0-1). Standardized coefficients.

*P < .05 **P < .01 ***P < .001.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed at understanding whether engagement in political decision-making processes is affected for youth when belonging to marginalised groups in Europe, and whether confidence to participate politically would have a moderating effect on this relationship.

5.1 Participation in political decision-making processes

Employing the results presented in the previous chapter, the first research question can be answered: *What is the effect of youth belonging to a marginalised group on their participation in political decision-making processes in Europe?* In this study, a distinction is made between formal and informal political participation.

Formal political participation is defined as engagement in parliamentary representation through voting in national elections, membership to a political party and contacting politicians (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). The most important conclusion from this study is that marginalised youth are more likely to engage in formal political participation than young individuals who do not belong to marginalised groups in Europe. This is divergent from the expectation and literature which states that youth belonging to marginalised groups are the most disengaged population group in formal political participation (Bell et al., 2008; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018; European Commission, 2021; N5F, 2021; Zani & Barett, 2012). A possible explanation for this finding could be that the experience of discrimination might actually be a driver for these youth to mobilise themselves through formal influence in parliamentary representation. Diemer and Li (2011) have argued that marginalised youth who feel empowered or who feel morally obligated to enforce social change generate this through formal political participation. Future research is necessary to learn to understand the mechanisms behind this relationship.

Informal political participation is defined as engagement in protest activities including demonstrations, signing petitions, volunteering and online engagement (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020). For the effect of youth belonging to marginalised groups on engagement in informal political participation no evidence was found.

A notable observation is that the relationship between youth belonging to marginalised groups and engagement in formal political participation is no longer present when the interaction effect of confidence to participate politically and belonging to a marginalised group is included in the analysis. Based on the analyses of this study which excluded the interaction

effect, young individuals who belong to marginalised groups are more likely to engage in informal political participation in Europe than young individuals who do not belong to a marginalised group. This is in line with the expectation and literature, which states that youth belonging to marginalised groups tend to turn towards informal methods of participation such as demonstrating, signing petitions and the use of social media in order to gain an alternative form of democratic representativity as they feel excluded from the formal political system (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Kitanova, 2020; Weldon, 2011). Future research is worthwhile to understand the mechanisms behind this change in effect when the interaction variables is added.

5.2. Confidence to participate politically

Employing the results presented in the previous chapter, the second research question can be answered: *How is this effect moderated by having confidence to participate in political decision-making?*

For the moderating effect of confidence to participate politically and belonging to marginalised groups, it appears youth belonging to marginalised groups who feel a little confident and quite confident to participate politically are less likely to engage in formal political participation than individuals who do not belong to marginalised groups and who are not confident to participate politically. This is contrary to the literature, which states that having more confidence in one's ability to use knowledge and skills contributes to engagement in formal political participation among marginalised youth (Diemer & Li, 2011; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). A possible explanation finding could be that low levels of confidence to participate politically have more impact on marginalised youth and subsequently prevent these youth to a higher degree from engaging in formal political participation in comparison to youth who do not belong to marginalised groups. Therefore, it could be argued that when it comes to confidence to participate politically, marginalised youth are indeed a step behind comparison to youth not belonging to marginalised groups.

For the influence of confidence to participate politically and youth belonging to marginalised groups on informal political participation, no evidence was found. A possible explanation could be that the interrelation between confidence and belonging to marginalised groups is less relevant for informal political participation. Formal participation requires certain visibility and responsibility for which confidence is highly beneficial (Keating & Janmaat, 2016; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). In contrast, engagement in informal participation demands less skills and knowledge and is therefore not in need of confidence.

A notable observation in the analysis of the moderation is the significant positive direct effect of confidence to participate politically on formal as well as informal political participation. This means that when confidence interacts with youth belonging to marginalised groups, a different engagement in political participation can be found. Additional research is relevant to learn to understand the mechanisms behind this effect.

6. Discussion

In this study, a number of strong points and points of discussion can be identified. A first strong point is the use of a large sample that represents all youth aged 15 to 25 years from thirty European countries. This increases the external validity of the research. Another strong point is the addition of control variables to increase the robustness of the analysis. Adding the control variables decreases the possibility of an illusory association. A last important point in this study is its contribution to scientific research. The relationship between youth belonging to marginalised groups and their engagement in political decision-making processes in Europe has mostly been researched using qualitative research methods. This study adds knowledge to the social issue using a quantitative approach.

In addition to the strong points, several limitations in this research are important to discuss. A first limitation concerns the sample selection of 18 to 25 year old individuals for the analysis of formal political participation. This sample selection is dependent on the voting-variable in the measurement of formal political participation as voting is legally allowed from 18 years old in the countries included in this study. However, from 15 years old, youth can already be active in other forms of formal participation. Future research is relevant to study the effects of youth belonging to marginalised groups on the different forms of formal political participation more specifically and including 15 to 17 year olds.

A second limitation concerns the creation of scale variables for the measurement of both formal and informal political participation. The scale variables contain either the presence or absence of one or more activities related to formal or informal political participation. Hence, no differentiation is made between the amount and variety of political activities a respondent engages in. Future research is relevant to analyse whether a difference in effect can be observed for the different activities of political participation as well as for the number of political activities individuals engage in.

A third limitation concerns that is not made clear in this study to which specific marginalised groups young individuals ascribe their membership to. Future research is relevant to study the effect of different marginalised groups on political participation more specifically.

A last limitation is that the data used in this study has been conducted in 2018 and therefore does not contain the most recent information of the population and accompanied questions included in the study. It is valuable for future research to conduct this study at present time and take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Policy recommendations

In this last chapter policy recommendations for Kennisland are formulated. The aim of this study was to analyse the issue of diversity and inclusion in youth participation in political decision-making processes on a wide scale and hence provide policy suggestions for Kennisland. Based on the conclusions of this study, the policy question can be answered: *How can Kennisland guide organisations in facilitating inclusion of youth belonging to marginalised groups?*

In terms of equality and representativity, it is important for youth who belong to marginalised groups to be integrated in decision-making processes. The expertise of Kennisland lies with the bottom-up inclusion of civilians, including youth, in societal issues in the Netherlands (Kennisland, 2021b). Kennisland facilitates projects for schools and governmental ministries where youth are invited to participate and co-create in decision-making processes in societal issues and policy-making (Kennisland, 2021b). Using their expertise, Kennisland can take the position of the promotor and facilitator of the supportive mechanisms inclusive youth participation in political decision-making when working directly with youth within their projects. Moreover, Kennisland can increase consciousness for diversity and inclusivity among stakeholders working with youth, including their clients among which school boards, municipalities and governmental ministries.

From this study it appears that youth belonging to marginalised groups are considerably engaged in political decision-making processes in Europe, casting a positive light on their inclusion in political participation. Therefore, it is relevant to strengthen the mechanisms reinforcing the participation of marginalised youth in decision-making processes. Diemer and Li (2011) argue that young individuals who feel empowered or who feel morally obligated to influence social change feel more motivated to engage in formal political decision-making processes, disregarding the receptiveness of the political system. Research on the reflexive experiences by youth leaders and community agency partners involved in a research project on positive youth development found that strength-based empowerment appears to be a key mechanism in promoting positive youth engagement and youth leadership. Strength-based empowerment means getting acquitted with the talents and strengths of young individuals and utilising them to engage youth from marginalised groups (Iwasaki, 2016). When working directly with youth within their projects, Kennisland can include strength-based empowerment by letting diverse young individuals engage in the projects based on their talents and strengths.

However, when taking previous research into account, the participation of marginalised youth in political decision-making can still be argued to be in need of improvement. In the Netherlands, where municipalities generally facilitate youth engagement, actual 'participation' in decision-making is the level of engagement least realised (Mak et al., 2016). Governors indicate to be unaware how to reach and motivate youth from marginalised groups (N5F, 2021). Therefore, a bottom-up approach to including youth, honouring their voice and incorporating their insights is needed (Iwasaki, 2016). Using their expertise, Kennisland can realise this when designing and executing their projects. When doing this, it is important to approach young individuals in their primary living environment, their neighbourhoods, schools, sports- and hobby-clubs or youth care institutions, to ensure inclusivity and diversity. Furthermore, when including marginalised youth, it is their own life-experiences that ought to be assembled as input as these are the actual needs of the population groups. Additionally, when doing so, ensuring the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and connection are essential in motivating and developing young individuals' participation (Nationale Jeugdraad, n.d.).

Another important conclusion from this study shows that young individuals who belong to marginalised groups and experience low levels of confidence are less engaged in formal political participation than non-marginalised youth who have no confidence. Civic education in school programmes provides a relevant environment for the acquisition of political knowledge and skills that contribute to confidence to participate (Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019). When doing so, an open classroom atmosphere where free discourse about social and political matters is of added value for the increase of civic and political knowledge and self-efficacy. Moreover, it is important to unify students from different educational levels to increase inter-level socialisation and let them learn from each other (Slijkhuis, 2021). Again, Kennisland can ascertain the realisation of these criteria when designing and facilitating their projects within schools.

In conclusion, for Kennisland, key to engagement in political participation for diverse youth can be found in listening to and addressing the issues these individuals are concerned with, increasing their self-efficacy and hence empowering them, as well as expanding their knowledge about the political system and facilitating contact with political actors to encourage mobilisation (Sloam, 2007).

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Appendix A: Syntax

```
* Encoding: UTF-8.

* Change variable names X-variables.
Compute Xmargnl = dscrgrp.

* Change variable names Y1-variables.
Compute Y1vote = vote.
Compute Y1contactplt = contplt.
Compute Y1workpltprt = wrkprty.

* Change variable names Y2-variables.
Compute Y2demonstration = pbldmn.
Compute Y2petition = sgnptit.
Compute Y2postonline = pstplonl.
Compute Y2badge = badge.

* Change variable name Z-variable.
Compute Zconfidencepart = cptppola.

* Change variable names C-variable age.
Compute Cage = agea.
Compute Cgndr = gndr.

* Recode education into 9 levels.
RECODE edulvlb (0=0) (113 thru 129=1) (212 thru 229=2) (311 thru 323=3)
    (412 thru 423=4) (510 thru 520=5) (610 thru 620=6) (710 thru 720=7)
    (800=8)
    INTO Ceducation.

* Delete missing values.
Missing values Xmargnl (7 thru 9).
Missing values Zconfidencepart (7 thru 9).
Missing values Cage (999).
Missing values Cgndr (9).
Missing values Ceducation (5555 thru 9999).
Missing values Y1vote (3 thru 9).
Missing values Y1contactplt (7 thru 9).
Missing values Y1workpltprt (7 thru 9).
Missing values Y2demonstration (7 thru 9).
Missing values Y2petition (7 thru 9).
Missing values Y2postonline (7 thru 9).
```

```
Missing values Y2badge (7 thru 9).

* Adjust levels Z-variable.
Recode Zconfidencepart (1 = 0) (2 = 1) (3 = 2) (4 = 3) (5 = 4) INTO ZConfidence.

*Recode X-variable.
Recode Xmargnl (2 = 0) (1 =1) INTO Xmargnlgroup.

* Recode Y-variables into dummy variables.
Recode Y1vote (2 = 0) (1 =1) INTO Y1Vote.
Recode Y1contactplt (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y1Contactplt.
Recode Y1workpltprt (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y1Workpltprt.
Recode Y2demonstration (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y2Demonstration.
Recode Y2petition (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y2Petition.
Recode Y2postonline (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y2Postonline.
Recode Y2badge (2 = 0) (1 = 1) INTO Y2Badge.

* Recode C-variables.
Recode Cgndr (2=0) (1=1) INTO Cgender.

* Create Y1-formal participation scale.
IF (Y1Vote = 1 | Y1Contactplt = 1 | Y1Workpltprt = 1) Y1Formalprt = 1.
ExECUTE.

* Adjust systemmissings = 0 for Y1Formalprt.
RECODE Y1Formalprt (SYSMIS=0).
EXECUTE.

* Create Y2-inormal participation scale.
IF  (Y2Demonstration = 1  | Y2Petition  = 1  | Y2Postonline = 1 | Y2Badge = 1)
Y2Informalprt = 1.
EXECUTE.

* Adjust systemmissings = 0 for Y2Informalprt.
RECODE Y2Informalprt (SYSMIS=0).
EXECUTE.

* Select cases respondents aged 15-25.
USE ALL.
COMPUTE filter_$=(Cage <= 25).
VARIABLE LABELS filter_$ 'Cage <= 25 (FILTER)'.
VALUE LABELS filter_$ 0 'Not Selected' 1 'Selected'.
FORMATS filter_$ (f1.0).
FILTER BY filter_$.
```

```
EXECUTE.

* Descriptive statistics Y2 informal participation with sample size age 15-25 years old.
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Xmargnlgroup ZConfidence Y2Informalprt Cage Cgender
Ceducation
  /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV MIN MAX.

*Filter respondents aged 18-25.
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
RECODE Cage (18 thru 25=1) (ELSE=0) INTO Cagerange.
EXECUTE.

USE ALL.
COMPUTE filter_$=(Cagerange = 1).
VARIABLE LABELS filter_$ 'Cagerange = 1 (FILTER)'.
VALUE LABELS filter_$ 0 'Not Selected' 1 'Selected'.
FORMATS filter_$ (f1.0).
FILTER BY filter_$.
EXECUTE.

* Descriptive statistics Y1 formal participation with sample size age 18-25 years old.
DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Xmargnlgroup Y1Formalprt ZConfidence Cage Cgender
Ceducation
  /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV MIN MAX.
```

Testing for assumptions

```
* Testing for linearity of the logit Cage.
COMPUTE LnCage=LN(Cage).
VARIABLE LABELS  LnCage 'Ln(Cage)'.
EXECUTE.

* Testing linearity of Cage through interaction in logistic analysis with Y1.
LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER XColour XEthnicity XGender XSexuality XDisability
    Zconfidencepart Ceducation Cage Cage*LnCage
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(.5).

* Testing linearity of Cage through interaction in logistic analysis with Y2.
LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES Y2Informalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER XColour XEthnicity XGender XSexuality XDisability
    Zconfidencepart Ceducation Cage Cage*LnCage
```

```
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(.5).

* Check Linear assumption Cage on Y1 visually.
LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Cage
  /SAVE=PRED
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(.5).

COMPUTE LogCage=LG10(Cage).
VARIABLE LABELS  LogCage 'Log(Cage)'.
EXECUTE.

* Chart Builder for testing linearity of Cage for Y1.
GGRAPH
  /GRAPHDATASET NAME="graphdataset" VARIABLES=Cage LogCage
MISSING=LISTWISE REPORTMISSING=NO
  /GRAPHSPEC SOURCE=INLINE
  /FITLINE TOTAL=NO SUBGROUP=NO.
BEGIN GPL
  SOURCE: s=userSource(id("graphdataset"))
  DATA: Cage=col(source(s), name("Cage"))
  DATA: LogCage=col(source(s), name("LogCage"))
  GUIDE: axis(dim(1), label("Cage"))
  GUIDE: axis(dim(2), label("Log(Cage)"))
  GUIDE: text.title(label("Scatter Plot of Log(Cage) by Cage"))
  ELEMENT: point(position(Cage*LogCage))
END GPL.

* Testing for assumption multicollinearity Y1.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COLLIN TOL
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup Cgender
    Cage Ceducation ZConfidence.

* Testing for assumption multicollinearity Y2.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COLLIN TOL
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
```

```
  /DEPENDENT Y2Informalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup Cgender
    Cage Ceducation ZConfidence.

* Check for outliers Cage with Y1.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Cage
  /SAVE MAHAL COOK.

* Check for outliers Cage with Y2.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT Y2Informalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Cage
  /SAVE MAHAL COOK.

* Check for independence of errors Y1.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup Cgender
    ZConfidence Cage Ceducation
  /SCATTERPLOT=(*ZRESID ,*ZPRED)
  /RESIDUALS DURBIN NORMPROB(ZRESID)
  /SAVE MAHAL COOK.

* Check for independence of errors Y2.
REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT Y2Informalprt
```

```
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup Cgender
    ZConfidence Cage Ceducation
  /SCATTERPLOT=(*ZRESID ,*ZPRED)
  /RESIDUALS DURBIN NORMPROB(ZRESID)
  /SAVE MAHAL COOK.
```

Analysis Formal political participation (Y1)

```
*Filter respondents aged 18-25.
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
RECODE Cage (18 thru 25=1) (ELSE=0) INTO Cagerange.
EXECUTE.

USE ALL.
COMPUTE filter_$=(Cagerange = 1).
VARIABLE LABELS filter_$ 'Cagerange = 1 (FILTER)'.
VALUE LABELS filter_$ 0 'Not Selected' 1 'Selected'.
FORMATS filter_$ (f1.0).
FILTER BY filter_$.
EXECUTE.

* Logistic regression analysis formal political participation (Y1).
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES Y1Formalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup ZConfidence Cage Cgender Ceducation
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup ZConfidence Cage Cgender Ceducation
Xmargnlgroup*ZConfidence
  /CONTRAST (Xmargnlgroup)=Indicator(1)
  /CONTRAST (ZConfidence)=Indicator(1)
  /CONTRAST (Cgender)=Indicator(1)
  /SAVE=PRED PGROUP COOK LEVER DFBETA ZRESID
  /CLASSPLOT
  /CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)
  /PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)
  /CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).
```

Analysis Informal political participation (Y2)

```
* Reset filter select cases 18-25!
FILTER OFF.
USE ALL.
EXECUTE.
*Select cases 15-25.
USE ALL.
COMPUTE filter_$=(Cage <= 25).
VARIABLE LABELS filter_$ 'Cage <= 25 (FILTER)'.
VALUE LABELS filter_$ 0 'Not Selected' 1 'Selected'.
FORMATS filter_$ (f1.0).
FILTER BY filter_$.
EXECUTE


* Logistic regression analysis informal political participation (Y2).
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES Y2Informalprt
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup ZConfidence Cage Cgender Ceducation
  /METHOD=ENTER Xmargnlgroup ZConfidence Cage Cgender Ceducation
Xmargnlgroup*ZConfidence
  /CONTRAST (Xmargnlgroup)=Indicator(1)
  /CONTRAST (ZConfidence)=Indicator(1)
  /CONTRAST (Cgender)=Indicator(1)
  /SAVE=PRED PGROUP COOK LEVER DFBETA ZRESID
  /CLASSPLOT
  /CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)
  /PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)
  /CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).
```

Appendix B: Answer categories Educational level

Table 1.

Answer categories for the control variable of educational level

Original coding	New coding	**Variable Label**
000	0	Not completed ISCED level 1
113	1	ISCED 1, completed primary education
129	1	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C programmes of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED 3
221	2	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C programmes of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED 3
222	2	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2A/2B programmes, access to ISCED 3 vocational
223	2	Qualification from a vocational ISCED 2 programme giving access to ISCED 3 (general or all)
212	2	Qualification from general/pre-vocational ISCED 2A/2B programmes, access to ISCED 3 vocational
213	2	Qualification from general ISCED 2A programmes, access to ISCED 3A general or all 3
229	2	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programmes of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED level 5
321	3	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programmes of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5
322	3	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programmes, access to 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
323	3	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
311	3	Qualification from general ISCED 3 programmes of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5 institutions

312	3	Qualification from general ISCED 3A/3B programmes, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
313	3	Qualification from general ISCED 3A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
421	4	Qualification from ISCED 4 programmes without access to ISCED level 5
422	4	Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A/4B programmes, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
423	4	Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A or all ISCED level 5 institutions
412	4	Qualification from general ISCED 4A/4B programmes, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
413	4	Qualification from general ISCED 4A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
520	5	ISCED 5B programmes of short duration, advanced vocational qualifications
510	5	ISCED 5A programmes of short duration, intermediate certificate or academic/general tertiary qualification below the bachelor's level
610	6	ISCED 5A programmes of medium duration, qualifications at the bachelor's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution
620	6	ISCED 5A programmes of medium duration, qualifications at the bachelor's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution
710	7	ISCED 5A programmes of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution
720	7	ISCED 5A programmes of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution
800	8	ISCED 6, doctoral degree