

Distrusting politicians, supporting alternative decision-making processes

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Abstract

How do we want political decisions to be adopted? Is support to decision making processes not based on representation (i.e., technocratic or participation based) mostly a result of eroded political trust? The analysis of process preferences has become a disputed field, where several potential explanations are possible. This paper focusses on two of them: the role of political trust and of perceptions about social and political actors. Using data from two comparable Spanish surveys we show that both sets of factors contribute decisively to understand preferences for these three models.

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Introduction

The extant research on political processes preferences has shown that most of the general public wants balanced processes, locating their preferences about midway between direct and representative democracy (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2001, 2002; Font et al. 2015; Allen & Birch, 2015). However, most of this research has also moved beyond the classical distinction between representative and participatory democracy. Recent empirical studies have defended the existence of three perceived models of political decision-making processes: representation, participation and technocracy (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Del Rio et al, 2016; Webb, 2013). The main question that emerges from this literature is, which are the main forces driving this support for one model or another? Which are the individual or contextual factors that help explain the support for each of these models?

In this paper, we want to know whether citizens' political trust is one of the crucial influences to understand support for the alternative, participatory or technocratic models. In other words, do citizens support the participatory or technocratic models mostly because they fail to support the central institutions of representative democracy?

The paper includes a second complementary explanation. One of the crucial distinctions between these models is who are the main decision makers in each of them: politicians (representation), citizens (participation) and experts (technocracy). What if preferences for these models were mostly based on the perceived images of these different actors?

Thus, this paper presents a quantitative approach to the relation between political trust, conceptions regarding different social actors and the preferences towards decision-making processes. We use national and regional data from Spain to analyze preferences towards the decision-making process, both in general terms and regarding specific mechanisms. In order to answer these questions, we use political trust and perceptions regarding social actors as independent factors in regression analysis for explaining the support to representative and participatory democracy, in general, as well as to specific mechanisms for incorporating citizens and experts in the decision-making process.

Our results show that both explanations are crucial to understand these preferences: the different variables measuring support to the representative system help explain that citizens choose a larger role for politicians or for alternative actors, but the specific images and evaluations of these actors are also an essential part of the story.

The next section presents the discussion about process preferences, illustrating it with descriptive Spanish results for the main variables to be used through the paper. Next, we present

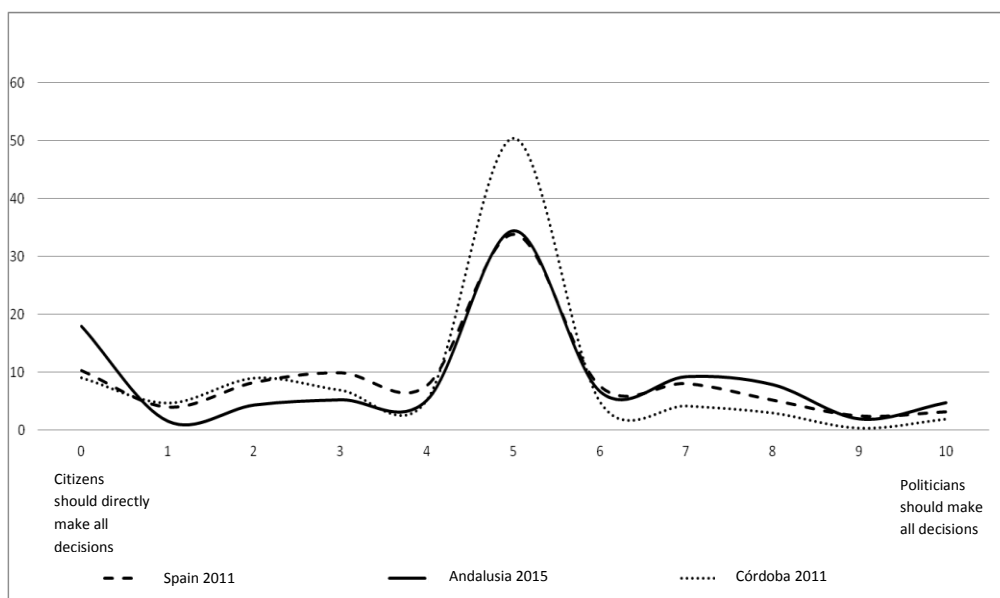
the data, variables and empirical strategy. Our two final sections present the results and discuss the main findings and implications.

Process preferences: confronting different political decision-making models

When analyzing preferences for political processes, confronting support to participation and representation is necessary. In previous research surveys in Spain on process preferences, support for a more participatory or more representative processes has been analyzed in both different territorial/administrative levels and temporal periods.

The results obtained in 2011 at local (Córdoba) and national levels show that citizens prefer balanced decision-making processes with a slight tendency towards more participatory ones¹. A similar tendency is appreciated in 2015 at regional (Andalusia) level. Nevertheless, when comparing 2011 and 2015 data, we observe that the participatory extreme has increased importantly. Considering the limitations of comparability, the results obtained in Andalusia indicates that in the last five years many more citizens have an extremely favorable opinion about participation.

Graph 1. Political process scale in Spain (2011), Córdoba (2011) and Andalusia (2015) (%)



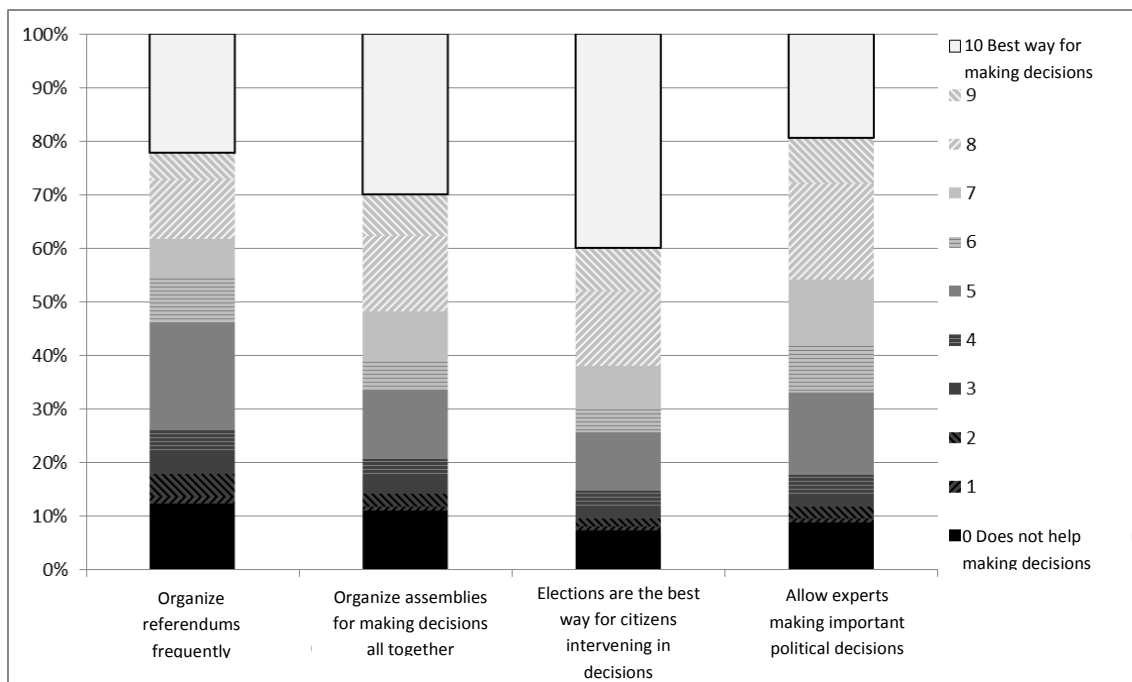
Source: Spain (CIS), Andalusia (PACIS-IESA), Córdoba (IESA)

¹ Data for Córdoba is based in the study E-1112 developed by IESA-CSIC (997 face-to-face interviews to a representative sample of adult Spanish residents in this Andalusian city). The next section provides the details regarding the Spanish and Andalusian surveys.

The apparently balanced process preference become more complex when introducing a third model of decision-making, beyond participation and representation. For example, when asking whether ‘Our political life would be better off if political decisions were made by independent experts, instead of politicians or citizens’, we find that two thirds of our population sampling would prefer that political decisions were made by experts. Nevertheless, this strong support to independent experts is nuanced when we ask for different forms of decision-making processes in the same set of survey questions.

Graph 2 shows that preferences for political decision-making processes seem to be more widely distributed when contrasting both different actors and participatory and deliberative mechanisms. Firstly, results show that when we ask about elections instead of politicians, the representative model obtain more support. Moreover, when comparing elections with experts, the former obtains twice as much support. This may mean that politicians’ qualities such as technical skills and moral virtues are considered by citizens when supporting specific political processes of decision-making. Next, we present two explanatory factors for explaining political process preferences, particularly, political trust and political actors’ qualities.

Graph 2. Experts and other decision making processes in Andalusia (2015) (%)



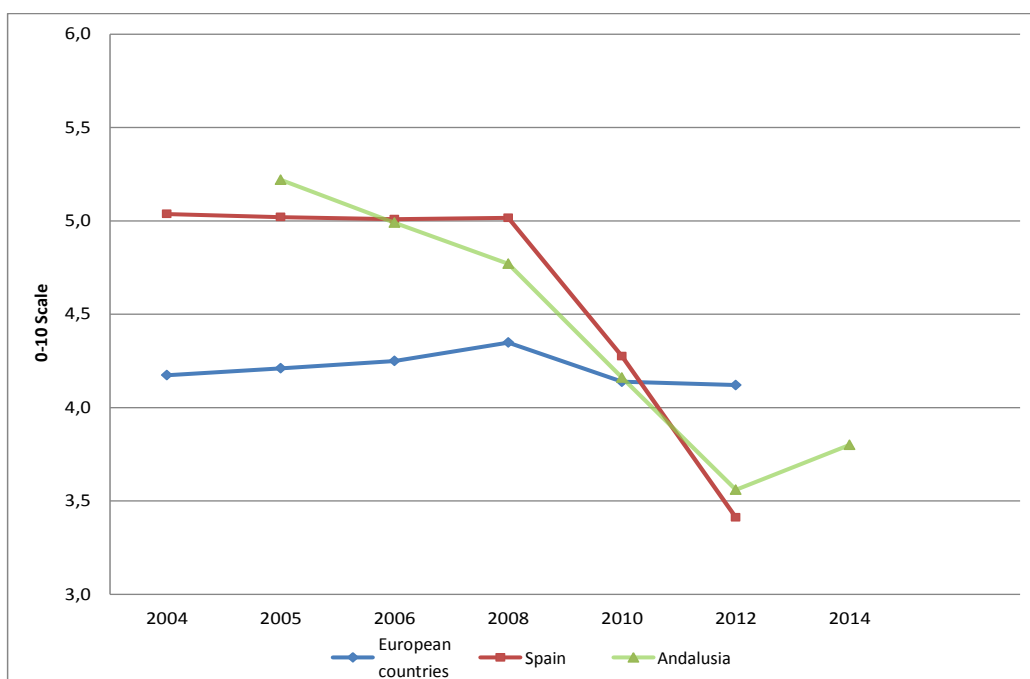
Source: PACIS (IESA/CSIC)

The indicators about these preferences we use in the next section (see table 1) show that the idea of letting politicians decide is the less supported decision-making mechanism, obtaining less than 5 points in both Spain (2011) and Andalusia (2015). In contrast, allowing citizens, experts or entrepreneurs to decide are more attractive options, with some differences between Spain in 2011 and Andalusia in 2015.

Political trust placed in context.

Citizen disenchantment seems to be related to a loss of political trust. According to longitudinal data, the sharp decline of trust in political parties and government is not shared by other institutions such European ones and judicial power. As we can observe in graph 3, the decline of trust in parliament both in Andalusia and Spain contrasts to the stable opinion in the rest of European countries. Other indicators of political trust show similar patterns.

Graph 3. Political trust in Parliament in Europe, Spain and Andalusia (2004-2014)



Source: Andalusia PACIS (IESA/CSIC), Spain and Europe (ESS²)

² For calculating Spanish and European means, weightings corresponding with one country (*design weight*) and with several countries (*design + population size weights*) have been used. In this regard, see: https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/ESS_weighting_data_1.pdf

The attitudes towards parliament and government in Andalusia show a similar tendency in terms of decline of political trust. Nevertheless, in the case of Spain, this political distrust is sharper. Beyond this descriptive information, to what extent this political distrust can explain preferences for alternative decision-making processes? The loss of political trust in different political institutions impact in the same extent in supporting specific political actors or mechanisms?

Politicians, citizens and experts' qualities.

To what extent the politicians' honesty and their moral and technical qualities define citizens' preferences towards different political decision-making processes? In other words, do these types of judgments matter for preferring more participatory or technocratic processes? These questions have been little explored in the broad field on processes preferences. However, evidence about how politicians' reputation relates to process preferences has bloomed in the last years, pointing it as potential explanatory factor (Allen & Birch, 2015; Río et al., 2016).

In the Spanish context, a recent study (Río et al., 2016) relied on 2011 data has concluded that: while supporters of the representative model of democracy tend to have a favorable assessment regarding both politicians' moral and technical qualities; those who support participatory modes of decision-making evaluate negatively the politicians' moral and technical qualities but positively the citizens' ones. On the contrary, moral distrust towards politicians seems to explain mostly support for technocratic preferences. Unfortunately, that study lacks of survey questions assessing experts' qualities.

In comparative terms, we find similar conclusions in other European countries. For instance, in the United Kingdom, Allen and Birch (2015) state that 'Citizens who are more critical of politicians' integrity and responsiveness tend to express support for greater levels of popular involvement in political decision making'. On the other hand, 'those with greater confidence in the integrity of all politicians are more likely to endorse the view that voting is a duty'. Our work is embedded in this recent branch of research.

To the best of our knowledge, there are not studies that have analyzed the relation between citizens' evaluations and the qualities of politicians, citizens as well as experts. Aware of this lack, our contribution is twofold: on the one hand, we provide survey data about the moral (egoism) and technical (capacity) qualities of the three aforementioned actors; and on the other hand, the new data collection gives the opportunity to compare process preferences during one of the most changing periods (2011 – 2015) in Spain in the last decades. This temporal

comparison is partially limited because 2011 data refers to national level whilst 2015 are regional level data.

Differences appear when comparing the perceptions of diverse social actors (the potential policy-making subjects). Politicians are perceived as less capable and more selfish than citizens. In Andalusia, where data is available, experts appear as the most capable actor, being less selfish than politicians but more than citizens. Social trust and trust in 15M or 'indignados' movement receive medium marks (higher than political trust both in Spain and in Andalusia) (see table 1).

Political trust and preferred actors structuring political preferences.

This paper aims to test to what extent political trust and perceptions about social actors are both explanatory factors of preferences toward the decision-making process. We organize this general expectation in three specific hypotheses, related with three different decision-making logics:

- 1) Political trust and a positive conception of politicians would imply a strong support to representative democracy.
- 2) Political distrust and a positive conception of citizens would entail a preference towards a participatory democracy.
- 3) Political distrust and a positive conception of experts would imply a support to a technocratic democracy.

In other words, preferences towards a representative decision-making process is based in a positive consideration of politicians and institutions. When this perception is negative, other mechanisms emerge as more desirable. If citizens are perceived as trustable, capable and not selfish, a participatory democracy appears as a good option. But if citizens are also perceived negatively, delegate decisions in experts or successful entrepreneurs will be the preference.

Measuring process preferences, political trust and perceptions about social actors

The study of the relations between political trust and preferences towards the decision-making process in the Spanish case is interesting since its increase in institutional distrust is one of the highest in Europe since 2008 (Torcal, 2014).

The empirical evidence of this section is related to two datasets. The Spanish data is based on the 2860 study developed by CIS (the public survey research institute) and collecting

information of 2,454 face-to-face interviews to Spanish adult population. Fieldwork was conducted in January-February 2011, just a few months before the apparition of the 15M or 'indignados' movement³. On the other hand, Andalusian data is based on the EP-1510 study (second wave of the Citizen Panel for the Social Research in Andalusia, PACIS), developed by IESA-CSIC. The fieldwork took place in December 2015, consisting in 1,081 CATI and CASI interviews to residents in Andalusia aged 16 and over.

The comparison between both datasets is relevant since both include the main variables, being most of them identical. The analysis in the Spanish context will therefore be reinforced with the Andalusian case. Also, this regional data from 2015 allows us to incorporate evidence from a more recent scenario, after the impact of the 15M movement and the apparition of new political parties like Podemos. Additionally, the Andalusian study incorporates information regarding the perception of experts and the 15M movement, that we lack in the Spanish case, improving the explanatory factors of our models regarding preferences towards the decision-making process.

Table 1 shows the variables used for the analyses and their basic distribution. Regarding the preferences towards the policy-making process 6 variables are considered. First, a 0-10 scale asking what is the best way for making decisions: citizens make all decisions or politicians make all decisions. As the mean shows, citizens prefer a combination between representative and participatory democracy, with both politicians and citizens being involved in the decision-making process. Besides this process scale, five additional scales are analyzed regarding the support to specific items related to representative democracy (let politicians decide), participatory democracy (organize referendums and assemblies), and technocratic or elitist democracy (let experts and entrepreneurs decide)⁴.

All the independent and control variables have been recoded into a 0-1 scale. Regarding political trust, all indicators receive less than 0.5. The government and political parties are the less trusted institutions in Spain and Andalusia. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that, unlike trust in political parties and in the judicial system, the items measuring trust in the government and in the general system are incorporating the traditional confusion between political satisfaction and political trust (Torcal, 2014)⁵.

³ For more technical details, see: http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/2860_2879/2860/Ft2860.pdf.

⁴ Differences exist between the two specific items measuring support to both participatory and technocratic democracy, but we will not delve into them here in order to simplify the analysis.

⁵ Political trust indicators are closely related among them. Tables A1 and A2 in the annex show that correlations range from 0.490 to 0.719 in Spain and from 0.458 to 0.626 in Andalusia. Also, political trust and the perceptions about the social actors are somehow related. Social trust and positive perceptions of politicians (capable and not

Table 1. Variables analyzed and basic distribution for Spain (2011) and Andalusia (2015)

| Name | Description/Categories | Spain 2011 | | | Andalusia 2015 | | |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|------|----------------|----------|------|
| | | Mean | St. dev. | N | Mean | St. dev. | N |
| Dependent Variables | | | | | | | |
| Process scale: participatory vs representative democracy | Desired decision-making process (scale) 0: citizens make all decisions 10: politicians make all decisions | 4.45 | 2.47 | 2340 | 4.55 | 2.82 | 1078 |
| Politicians decide | Allow politicians making decisions (scale) 0: Worst way for making decisions ⁶ 10: Best way for making decisions | 4.89 | 2.57 | 2256 | 4.25 | 3.14 | 1052 |
| Organize referendum | Organize referendums frequently (scale) 0: Worst way for making decisions 10: Best way for making decisions | 6.20 | 2.62 | 2157 | 5.95 | 3.72 | 1060 |
| Organize assemblies | Organize assemblies for making decisions (scale) 0: Worst way for making decisions 10: Best way for making decisions | 6.57 | 2.43 | 2209 | 6.71 | 3.28 | 1052 |
| Experts decide | Allow experts making the important decisions (scale) 0: Worst way for making decisions 10: Best way for making decisions | 7.07 | 2.25 | 2294 | 6.56 | 2.93 | 1058 |
| Entrepreneurs decide | Better if successful entrepreneurs make decisions 1: Strongly disag.; 2: Disagree; 3: Agree; 4: Strongly agree | 2.34 ⁷ | 0.99 | 2065 | 2.73 | 0.78 | 1070 |
| Independent variables: Political trust | | | | | | | |
| Trust in political parties | From original scale 0-10 0: No trust at all 1: Complete trust | 0.30 | 0.24 | 2402 | 0.33 | 0.28 | 1075 |
| Trust in the government | From original scale 0-10 0: No trust at all 1: Complete trust | 0.29 | 0.26 | 2391 | 0.33 | 0.31 | 1079 |
| Trust in the judicial system | From original scale 0-10 0: No trust at all to 1: Complete trust | 0.37 | 0.26 | 2361 | 0.42 | 0.30 | 1071 |
| Trust in the general system | From original scale 0-10 0: No trust at all to 1: Complete trust | 0.34 | 0.25 | 2362 | 0.38 | 0.28 | 1075 |
| Independent variables: Social actors | | | | | | | |
| Politicians capable | From original scale 0-10 0: No capable at all to 1: Completely capable | 0.45 | 0.27 | 2303 | 0.42 | 0.28 | 1077 |
| Politicians selfish | From original scale 0-10 0: No selfish at all to 1: Completely selfish | 0.83 | 0.18 | 2324 | 0.84 | 0.23 | 1075 |
| Citizens capable | From original scale 0-10 0: No capable at all to 1: Completely capable ⁸ | 0.53 | 0.22 | 2224 | 0.67 | 0.23 | 1078 |
| Citizens selfish | From original scale 0-10 0: No selfish at all to 1: Completely selfish | 0.57 | 0.23 | 2276 | 0.53 | 0.29 | 1076 |
| Social trust | Interpersonal trust. From original scale 0-10 0: Can't be too careful to 1: Most people can be trusted | 0.46 | 0.24 | 2442 | 0.55 | 0.27 | 1066 |
| Trust in 15 M movement | From original scale 0-10 0: No trust at all to 1: Complete trust | - | - | - | 0.46 | 0.30 | 1027 |
| Experts capable | From original scale 0-10 0: No capable at all to 1: Completely capable | - | - | - | 0.71 | 0.22 | 1075 |
| Experts selfish | From original scale 0-10 0: No selfish at all to 1: Completely selfish | - | - | - | 0.59 | 0.25 | 1067 |
| Controls | | | | | | | |
| Interest in politics | 0: No interest; 0.25: little; 0.5: some; 0.75: quite; 1: A lot | 0.38 | 0.32 | 2444 | 0.54 | 0.31 | 1081 |
| Education | 0: No educ.; 0.33: Primary; 0.66: Secondary; 1: University | 0.61 | 0.27 | 2450 | 0.53 | 0.28 | 1081 |
| Ideology | From original scale 0-10. 0: Far left to 1: Far right | 0.44 | 0.20 | 2017 | 0.47 | 0.22 | 1045 |
| Age | Age/100: 0.18 - 0.94 | 0.47 | 0.18 | 2454 | 0.46 | 0.17 | 1081 |
| Gender: female | 0: Male; 1: Female | 0.51 | 0.50 | 2454 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 1081 |

*p <0.05 ** p <0.01

selfish) are correlated with higher levels of political trust. The relation about political trust and the perceptions of citizens being capable or selfish is not consistent in our two datasets. Finally, in Andalusia (where data is available), perceiving experts as capable is correlated with higher levels of political trust, but with much less strength than in the case of politicians.

⁶ In Andalusian questionnaire, 0 means “Does not help making decisions” for the four scales about decision-making preferences.

⁷ In a 0-10 scale the equivalent mean would be 5.85 in Spain (2011) and 6.83 in Andalusia (2015).

⁸ In Spanish questionnaire, the item asks if politicians (and citizens) are capable of reaching an agreement.

Results

In this section, we test the impact of political trust and the perceptions of social actors on process preferences. First, we summarize bivariate relations between our independent and dependent variables. Second, we develop several regression analyses for measuring the combined effects, also controlling by sociopolitical variables.

Correlations between the independent variables (political trust and considerations about social actors) and the dependent variables (preferences toward the decision-making process) show differences between the different democratic models (see table A3 in annex). Political trust is positively correlated with support to representative democracy both in general terms (opposed to participatory democracy) and specific terms (support to the idea of letting politicians decide). Also, supporters of representative democracy consider politicians being capable and not selfish (in contrast to citizens).

Preferences towards a participatory democracy (measured with the support to the idea of organizing referendums and assemblies for making decisions) is related with political distrust. In this case, citizens are perceived as capable and not selfish (in contrast to politicians). In Andalusia, social trust and trust in 15M movement are also positively correlated.

Finally, the support to a technocratic democracy shows some particularities. The idea of letting experts making decisions is positively related with political trust in Andalusia (with less intensity than representative democracy) but not in Spain. Preferring successful entrepreneurs making decisions is not related with political trust. Also, the considerations of politicians and citizens are not strongly neither consistently related with those technocratic preferences.

These initial findings suggest that political trust is important to explain the support to a representative democracy, while participatory preferences are related to political distrust. Out of politicians and citizens, the role of other actors (experts or entrepreneurs) seem to present a more nuanced explanation.

Regression analyses allow us to determine the effect of those different explanatory factors considered together (and controlling by other sociopolitical variables like interest in politics, education, ideology, age and gender). For each of our 6 dependent variables (referring to different decision-making processes) we have developed three models: first with just the control variables, then incorporating political trust, and finally incorporating the perceptions about social actors. Table 2 includes the results for Spain (2011) and table 3 for Andalusia (2015)

incorporating information about perceptions of experts and 15M movement as independent variables⁹.

Multivariate analyses show that political trust matters when explaining support to different decision-making models. Considerations about social actors also matters, without nullifying the relevance of political trust.

Representative democracy is explained by political trust, a positive perception of politicians and a negative perception of citizens. Just the opposite occurs when explaining support to direct/deliberative democracy. The main difference between Spain (2011) and Andalusia (2015) is related to the role of trust in political parties.

Regarding the support to technocratic democracy, some political distrust appears in most of the models, combined with a less positive or negative perception of both politicians and citizens (and, in Andalusia, with a positive consideration of experts as capable).

Attending the sociopolitical variables, participatory democracy is preferred by leftist, youth and people with less education level. Right-wing and older people would support more strongly a representative democracy. People with lower education levels and rightist in 2011 in Spain and with lower education levels and higher interest in politics in Andalusia in 2015 would be the main supporters of technocratic democracy.

⁹ Table A4 in the annex shows the analysis in Andalusia without these additional variables, therefore replicating the analysis of the Spanish case. Both Andalusian analyses show little difference among them.

Table 2. Regression analyses: preferences toward decision-making processes (Spain 2011)

| | Process scale: partic.-repres. | | | Politicians decide | | | Organize referendums | | | Organize assemblies | | | Experts decide | | | Entrepreneurs decide | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | |
| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 | M7 | M8 | M9 | M10 | M11 | M12 | M13 | M14 | M15 | M16 | M17 | M18 |
| Trust in political parties | | 1.64*** (0.36) | 1.30*** (0.38) | | 1.33*** (0.36) | 0.90** (0.37) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - |
| Trust in government | | - | - | | 0.73** (0.33) | 0.63* (0.34) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | - | -0.24* (0.15) |
| Trust in judicial system | | - | 0.59** (0.27) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | 0.50** (0.24) | 0.63** (0.25) | | 0.23** (0.11) | 0.24** (0.12) |
| Trust in general system | | 0.73** (0.36) | 0.73** (0.37) | | 1.86*** (0.35) | 1.65*** (0.36) | | -0.68* (0.39) | - | | -1.03*** (0.36) | -0.93** (0.36) | | - | - | | - | - |
| Politicians capable | | | 0.81*** (0.23) | | | 0.75*** (0.22) | | - | | | | -0.71*** (0.23) | | - | | | | 0.29*** (0.10) |
| Politicians selfish | | | -1.35*** (0.33) | | | -1.99*** (0.33) | | 2.10*** (0.37) | | | | 1.46*** (0.33) | | | 1.22*** (0.31) | | | 0.35** (0.14) |
| Citizens capable | | | -0.87*** (0.28) | | | - | | - | | | | 1.37*** (0.28) | | - | | | | - |
| Citizens selfish | | | 1.07*** (0.25) | | | 0.64** (0.25) | | -0.62** (0.28) | | | | -0.77*** (0.25) | | | 0.40* (0.24) | | | -0.18* (0.11) |
| Social trust | | | - | | | - | | - | | | | - | | | -0.96*** (0.25) | | | -0.33*** (0.11) |
| Interest in politics | 0.45** (0.18) | - | - | 0.64*** (0.19) | - | - | - | 0.40** (0.20) | 0.43** (0.21) | - | 0.31* (0.19) | 0.36* (0.19) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Education | - | - | - | -0.58** (0.27) | -0.54** (0.26) | -0.60** (0.27) | - | - | - | -1.16*** (0.26) | -1.18*** (0.26) | -0.93*** (0.27) | -1.00*** (0.23) | -0.99*** (0.24) | -0.61** (0.26) | -0.66*** (0.11) | -0.68*** (0.11) | -0.56*** (0.12) |
| Ideology | 1.10*** (0.27) | 1.31*** (0.28) | 1.22*** (0.29) | 1.30*** (0.28) | 1.49*** (0.28) | 1.41*** (0.28) | - | - | - | -1.06*** (0.27) | -0.97*** (0.29) | -1.00*** (0.29) | 1.10*** (0.25) | 1.19*** (0.26) | 1.24*** (0.28) | 1.08*** (0.11) | 1.07*** (0.12) | 0.95*** (0.12) |
| Age | 2.13*** (0.38) | 1.90*** (0.38) | 1.89*** (0.39) | 1.80*** (0.39) | 1.32*** (0.38) | 1.07*** (0.39) | -0.90** (0.42) | -0.81* (0.43) | -0.79* (0.44) | -2.18*** (0.38) | -1.96*** (0.38) | -1.89*** (0.39) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gender: female | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Intercept | 2.56*** (0.32) | 1.74*** (0.33) | 2.61*** (0.50) | 3.69*** (0.33) | 2.57*** (0.33) | 4.11*** (0.50) | 6.80*** (0.35) | 7.29*** (0.37) | 5.19*** (0.56) | 8.64*** (0.32) | 8.87*** (0.33) | 7.35*** (0.51) | 7.18*** (0.29) | 6.92*** (0.31) | 5.61*** (0.48) | 2.28*** (0.13) | 2.27*** (0.14) | 1.98*** (0.22) |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.03 | 0.09 | 0.13 | 0.04 | 0.15 | 0.18 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 |
| N | 1943 | 1874 | 1723 | 1905 | 1848 | 1708 | 1821 | 1777 | 1658 | 1864 | 1812 | 1685 | 1916 | 1855 | 1711 | 1751 | 1702 | 1576 |

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

Table 3. Regression analyses: preferences toward decision-making processes (including perceptions about experts and 15M movement) (Andalusia 2011)

| | Process scale: partic.-repres. | | | Politicians decide | | | Organize referendums | | | Organize assemblies | | | Experts decide | | | Entrepreneurs decide | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | |
| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 | M7 | M8 | M9 | M10 | M11 | M12 | M13 | M14 | M15 | M16 | M17 | M18 |
| Trust in political parties | | - | -1.81*** (0.43) | | - | -1.06** (0.50) | | 1.54*** (0.49) | - | | 0.96* (0.49) | - | | - | -1.41*** (0.47) | | - | - |
| Trust in government | 2.36*** (0.36) | 1.82*** (0.37) | | 1.72*** (0.41) | 0.99** (0.43) | | -1.72*** (0.45) | -1.28*** (0.47) | | -1.13** (0.45) | - | | 2.00*** (0.41) | 2.20*** (0.40) | | - | - | 0.19* (0.11) |
| Trust in judicial system | - | - | | 1.13*** (0.39) | 1.09*** (0.39) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | 0.22** (0.10) | - | - |
| Trust in general system | 1.98*** (0.41) | 1.58*** (0.41) | | 1.57*** (0.47) | 1.01** (0.48) | | -0.97* (0.51) | -0.87* (0.53) | | - | - | | - | -0.87* (0.45) | | -0.35*** (0.13) | - | - |
| Politicians capable | | 2.03*** (0.40) | | | 2.48*** (0.46) | | - | - | | - | - | | 1.33*** (0.44) | | | | | -0.38*** (0.12) |
| Politicians selfish | | - | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | | | 0.28** (0.11) |
| Citizens capable | | | -1.15*** (0.38) | | | -1.24*** (0.45) | | 1.34*** (0.49) | | | 2.49*** (0.48) | | - | - | | | | - |
| Citizens selfish | | | 0.71** (0.31) | | | - | | - | | - | - | | - | - | | | | - |
| Social trust | | | 0.91*** (0.32) | | | - | | 1.64*** (0.41) | | | 1.10*** (0.40) | | - | - | | | | - |
| Trust in 15M movement | | | - | | | - | | 1.26*** (0.35) | | | 2.48*** (0.34) | | | 0.56* (0.30) | | | | -0.22** (0.08) |
| Experts capable | | | - | | 0.99** (0.43) | | - | - | | | 1.11** (0.46) | | | 4.88*** (0.41) | | | | 1.08*** (0.12) |
| Experts selfish | | | - | | 1.48*** (0.40) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | | | | - |
| Interest in politics | 0.76*** (0.29) | - | - | 0.89*** (0.33) | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0.61* (0.34) | 1.08*** (0.31) | 0.10*** (0.31) | 0.90*** (0.30) | 0.15* (0.08) | 0.20** (0.09) | 0.18** (0.09) | |
| Education | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0.67* (0.39) | - | - | -2.16*** (0.39) | -2.25*** (0.39) | -1.44*** (0.38) | -1.06*** (0.35) | -1.10*** (0.35) | -1.04*** (0.34) | -0.22** (0.10) | -0.23** (0.10) | -0.32*** (0.10) |
| Ideology | 3.03*** (0.38) | 1.43*** (0.39) | 0.95** (0.40) | 2.19*** (0.44) | - | - | -1.59*** (0.46) | - | - | -1.54*** (0.46) | -1.19** (0.48) | - | 1.05** (0.41) | - | -0.73* (0.44) | - | 0.20* (0.12) | - |
| Age | 2.96*** (0.53) | 1.92*** (0.51) | 2.43*** (0.51) | 3.94*** (0.61) | 2.89*** (0.59) | 3.03*** (0.59) | -3.83*** (0.63) | -3.63*** (0.63) | -3.46*** (0.65) | -4.32*** (0.63) | -4.25*** (0.64) | -3.62*** (0.63) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gender: female | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.63*** (0.20) | 0.66*** (0.20) | 0.44** (0.20) | 0.68*** (0.18) | 0.62*** (0.18) | 0.51*** (0.17) | - | - | - |
| Intercept | 1.47*** (0.76) | 1.63*** (0.39) | 1.68** (0.69) | .79* (0.46) | 0.74* (0.44) | - | 8.91*** (0.49) | 8.81*** (0.48) | 5.53*** (0.88) | 10.49*** (0.48) | 10.46*** (0.48) | 5.58*** (0.85) | 5.46*** (0.44) | 5.64*** (0.44) | 2.05*** (0.75) | 2.81*** (0.12) | 2.80*** (0.12) | 2.21*** (0.21) |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.09 | 0.20 | 0.25 | 0.07 | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.20 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.21 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.11 |
| N | 1041 | 1030 | 972 | 1017 | 1009 | 955 | 1025 | 1015 | 961 | 1019 | 1008 | 957 | 1025 | 1013 | 958 | 1033 | 1023 | 970 |

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

Discussion

Most of our social and political preferences are based on our own experience. What does it happen when we need to build these preferences without or with very limited direct experience? For example, when new parties compete in elections citizens make a prospective assessment of what would happen if they were in government using probably available proxies (the party ideology, which was this party's performance in local governments, etc..). An alternative account would suggest that in this scenario citizens would mostly act using retrospective considerations and their vote would basically depend on how well the incumbent have developed their job.

A similar kind of logic can be used for process preferences. Most citizens of representative democracies have only limited experience with participatory or technocratic decision making models. However, they may have a certain image and evaluation of this type of processes based on what they have seen at the European Union level, in a neighbor country or in the condominium meetings they have experienced (García and Ganuza, 2016).

Our results show that these images matter. Wherever it comes from, citizens have an image about certain qualities of politicians, citizens and experts as potential decision-makers and these images are influential in the buildup of their preferred democratic model. More positive images of fellow citizens are related to an enlarged support to more participatory options and a more negative one favor supporting representative models. Exactly the opposite happens with perceptions about how capable or selfish politicians are. The relationship of these images with how much we like a technocratic model are less consistent, but when the image of experts themselves is introduced into the models, it also becomes a relevant explanation of the support for this model. Thus, our results confirm the idea suggested by Del Rio (2016) and his colleagues, showing that it also holds in different temporal and territorial scenario (Andalusia 2015) and for the expert based model of democracy.

These images can only explain one part of these perceptions. When they are introduced into the explanatory models, the effect of trust related variables is only very mildly reduced, showing that there is a real effect of political trust. Representative democracy is the model that every citizen has experienced and evaluations of its performance become a strong argument in favor to maintain, substitute or reform it as the main decision making model.

Thus, arguments claiming that lack of political trust is a central explanation in the search for alternatives (Hibbing and Thiess-Morse, 2002; Webb, 2013) are partly correct, but should be qualified. Political trust matters, but it is not the only thing that matters. In fact, actors' images

are not the only additional source of information, but ideology continues to show that it is an additional important proxy also in this field (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009).

The list of open questions that deserve further research is quite long and we will only mention two of them. First, do the different instruments used here to measure support for the participatory and the expert model mean really the same and attract the same type of people? Or are assemblies and referenda different enough, as well as experts and successful business leaders? Our results suggest that our main hypotheses hold for the two dependent variables used in each case, but also that some relevant differences between them emerge.

Second, do the different variables used here to measure political trust mean the same and have similar types of effects? Again, the results shown point to large similarities but also to differences. In fact, the high degree of correlation among them calls for caution when interpreting when and how a specific coefficient reaches a significant result. In any case, the different result for trust in political parties in 2015 is worth attention. Could it be considered a sign that the appearance of new parties diminishes the association between criticisms to parties and search for alternative democratic models?

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Annex

Table A1. Correlations between independent variables (political trust and social actors) (Spain 2011)

| | Trust in political parties | Trust in governm. | Trust in judicial system | Trust in general system | Politic. capable | Politic. selfish | Citizens capable | Citizens selfish | Social trust |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Trust in political parties | 1 | 0.704** | 0.490** | 0.719** | 0.256** | -0.293** | 0.118** | 0.093** | 0.203** |
| Trust in governm. | 0.704** | 1 | 0.526** | 0.688** | 0.245** | -0.287** | 0.106** | 0.045* | 0.176** |
| Trust in judicial system | 0.490** | 0.526** | 1 | 0.568** | 0.166** | -0.223** | 0.133** | 0.032 | 0.117** |
| Trust in general system | 0.719** | 0.688** | 0.568** | 1 | 0.233** | -0.291** | 0.102** | 0.044* | 0.177** |
| Politic. capable | 0.256** | 0.245** | 0.166** | 0.233** | 1 | -0.171** | 0.284** | 0.087** | 0.104** |
| Politic. selfish | -0.293** | -0.287** | -0.223** | -0.291** | -0.171** | 1 | -0.058** | 0.080** | -0.122** |
| Citizens capable | 0.118** | 0.106** | 0.133** | 0.102** | 0.284** | -0.058** | 1 | -0.083** | 0.045* |
| Citizens selfish | 0.093** | 0.045* | 0.032 | 0.044* | 0.087** | 0.080** | -0.083** | 1 | 0.037 |
| Social trust | 0.203** | 0.176** | 0.117** | 0.177** | 0.104** | -0.122** | 0.045* | 0.037 | 1 |

*p <0.05 ** p <0.01

N between 2,149 and 2,442.

Table A2. Correlations between independent variables (political trust and social actors) (Andalusia 2015)

| | Trust in political parties | Trust in governm. | Trust in judicial system | Trust in general system | Politic. capable | Politic. selfish | Citizens capable | Citizens selfish | Social trust | Trust 15M | Experts capable | Experts selfish |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Trust in political parties | 1 | 0.581** | 0.458** | 0.626** | 0.662** | -0.336** | -0.046 | 0.194** | 0.179** | 0.084** | 0.161** | 0.027 |
| Trust in governm. | 0.581** | 1 | 0.518** | 0.570** | 0.526** | -0.396** | -0.128** | 0.196** | 0.106** | -0.119** | 0.123** | 0.025 |
| Trust in judicial system | 0.458** | 0.518** | 1 | 0.569** | 0.399** | -0.199** | -0.041 | 0.152** | 0.092** | 0.041 | 0.144** | -0.035 |
| Trust in general system | 0.626** | 0.570** | 0.569** | 1 | 0.579** | -0.307** | -0.099** | 0.160** | 0.129** | 0.076* | 0.166** | 0.017 |
| Politic. capable | 0.662** | 0.526** | 0.399** | 0.579** | 1 | -0.364** | -0.091** | 0.244** | 0.165** | 0.020 | 0.177** | 0.117** |
| Politic. selfish | -0.336** | -0.396** | -0.199** | -0.307** | -0.364** | 1 | 0.081** | -0.134** | -0.068* | 0.096** | -0.042 | 0.026 |
| Citizens capable | -0.046 | -0.128** | -0.041 | -0.099** | -0.091** | 0.081** | 1 | -0.298** | 0.154** | 0.167** | 0.062* | -0.051 |
| Citizens selfish | 0.194** | 0.196** | 0.152** | 0.160** | 0.244** | -0.134** | -0.298** | 1 | 0.054 | -0.113** | 0.077* | 0.262** |
| Social trust | 0.179** | 0.106** | 0.092** | 0.129** | 0.165** | -0.068* | 0.154** | 0.054 | 1 | 0.148** | 0.079* | 0.056 |
| Trust 15M | 0.084** | -0.119** | 0.041 | 0.076* | 0.020 | 0.096** | 0.167** | -0.113** | 0.148** | 1 | 0.075* | 0.021 |
| Experts capable | 0.161** | 0.123** | 0.144** | 0.166** | 0.177** | -0.042 | 0.062* | 0.077* | 0.079* | 0.075* | 1 | -0.115** |
| Experts selfish | 0.027 | 0.025 | -0.035 | 0.017 | 0.117** | 0.026 | -0.051 | 0.262** | 0.056 | 0.021 | -0.115** | 1 |

*p <0.05 ** p <0.01

N between 1,016 and 1,079.

Table A3. Correlations between policy-making process preferences and political and social trust (Spain 2011 and Andalusia 2015)

| | Process scale: partic.-repres. | Politicians decide | Organize referendum s | Organize assemblies | Experts decide | Entrepreneurs decide |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Spain 2011 | | | | | | |
| Trust in political parties | 0.242** | 0.312** | -0.110** | -0.124** | 0.027 | -0.032 |
| Trust in government | 0.187** | 0.276** | -0.099** | -0.079** | 0.024 | -0.060** |
| Trust in judicial system | 0.158** | 0.197** | -0.090** | -0.058** | 0.036 | -0.003 |
| Trust in general system | 0.222** | 0.334** | -0.110** | -0.119** | 0.022 | -0.034 |
| Politic. capable | 0.129** | 0.187** | -0.052* | -0.100** | -0.016 | 0.027 |
| Politic. selfish | -0.173** | -0.241** | 0.141** | 0.133** | 0.071** | 0.054* |
| Citizens capable | -0.017 | 0.003 | 0.022 | 0.101** | 0.008 | 0.028 |
| Citizens selfish | 0.101** | 0.076** | -0.076** | -0.115** | 0.014 | -0.081** |
| Social trust | 0.002 | 0.047* | -0.002 | -0.031 | -0.135** | -0.140** |
| Andalusia 2015 | | | | | | |
| Trust in political parties | 0.254 ** | 0.266** | -0.052 | -0.021 | 0.129** | -0.031 |
| Trust in government | 0.379 ** | 0.355** | -0.151** | -0.095** | 0.234** | -0.024 |
| Trust in judicial system | 0.237 ** | 0.301** | -0.073* | -0.040 | 0.146** | 0.013 |
| Trust in general system | 0.364** | 0.333** | -0.130** | -0.064* | 0.129** | -0.048 |
| Politic. capable | 0.360** | 0.372** | -0.078* | -0.030 | 0.179** | 0.035 |
| Politic. selfish | -0.225** | -0.198** | 0.071* | 0.074* | -0.066* | -0.020 |
| Citizens capable | -0.174** | -0.162** | 0.176** | 0.304** | 0.013 | -0.033 |
| Citizens selfish | 0.186** | 0.131** | -0.070* | -0.126** | 0.067* | 0.022 |
| Social trust | 0.101** | 0.048 | 0.106** | 0.111** | 0.018 | -0.002 |
| Trust 15M | -0.064* | -0.015 | 0.147** | 0.275** | 0.062 | -0.066* |
| Experts capable | 0.143** | 0.125** | 0.080** | 0.113** | 0.400** | -0.012 |
| Experts selfish | 0.051 | 0.137** | -0.045 | -0.064* | -0.058 | 0.027 |

*p <0.05 ** p <0.01

N between 2,019 and 2,330 for Spain and between 1,039 and 1,003 for Andalusia.

Table A4. Regression analyses: preferences toward decision-making processes (Andalusia 2011)

| | Process scale: partic.-repres. | | | Politicians decide | | | Organize referendums | | | Organize assemblies | | | Experts decide | | | Entrepreneurs decide | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | | B (standard error) | | |
| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 | M7 | M8 | M9 | M10 | M11 | M12 | M13 | M14 | M15 | M16 | M17 | M18 |
| Trust in political parties | | - | -1.68*** (0.43) | | - | -1.07** (0.49) | | 1.54*** (0.49) | 1.26** (0.54) | | 0.96* (0.49) | - | | - | | - | - | |
| Trust in government | | 2.36*** (0.36) | 1.74*** (0.37) | | 1.72*** (0.41) | 1.09*** (0.42) | | -1.72*** (0.45) | -1.63*** (0.46) | | -1.13** (0.45) | -0.86* (0.45) | 2.00*** (0.41) | 1.86*** (0.42) | | - | - | |
| Trust in judicial system | | - | - | | 1.13*** (0.39) | 1.14*** (0.38) | | - | - | | - | - | | - | | 0.22** (0.10) | 0.19* (0.11) | |
| Trust in general system | | 1.98*** (0.41) | 1.58*** (0.41) | | 1.57*** (0.47) | 0.92* (0.47) | | -0.97* (0.51) | - | | - | - | | - | | -0.35*** (0.13) | -2.23* (0.13) | |
| Politicians capable | | | 1.88*** (0.40) | | | 2.68*** (0.46) | | | - | | | | | 1.37*** (0.46) | | | -0.34*** (0.13) | |
| Politicians selfish | | | - | | | - | | | - | | | | | - | | | 0.27** (0.12) | |
| Citizens capable | | | -0.97** (0.38) | | | -1.14*** (0.43) | | | 1.63*** (0.48) | | | 3.00*** (0.47) | | | | | - | |
| Citizens selfish | | | 0.59** (0.30) | | | - | | | - | | | - | | | | | - | |
| Social trust | | | 0.69** (0.31) | | | - | | | 1.63*** (0.40) | | | 1.21*** (0.39) | | | | | - | |
| Interest in politics | 0.76*** (0.29) | - | - | 0.89*** (0.33) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1.08*** (0.31) | 0.10*** (0.31) | 1.03*** (0.32) | 0.15* (0.08) | 0.20** (0.09) | 0.21** (0.09) |
| Education | - | - | - | - | - | - | -0.67* (0.40) | - | - | -2.16*** (0.39) | -2.25*** (0.39) | -1.66*** (0.38) | -1.06*** (0.35) | -1.10*** (0.35) | -1.05*** (0.36) | -0.22** (0.10) | -0.23** (0.10) | -0.26*** (0.10) |
| Ideology | 3.03*** (0.38) | 1.43*** (0.39) | 1.37*** (0.40) | 2.19*** (0.44) | - | - | -1.60*** (0.46) | - | - | -1.54*** (0.46) | -1.19** (0.48) | - | 1.05** (0.41) | - | - | - | 0.20* (0.12) | - |
| Age | 2.96*** (0.53) | 1.92*** (0.51) | 2.14*** (0.51) | 3.94*** (0.61) | 2.89*** (0.59) | 3.15*** (0.59) | -3.83*** (0.63) | -3.63*** (0.63) | -3.35*** (0.64) | -4.32*** (0.63) | -4.25*** (0.64) | -3.86*** (0.63) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gender: female | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.63*** (0.20) | 0.66*** (0.20) | 0.54*** (0.20) | 0.68*** (0.18) | 0.62*** (0.18) | 0.58*** (0.18) | - | - | - |
| Intercept | 1.47*** (0.41) | 1.63*** (0.39) | 1.78*** (0.65) | 0.79* (0.46) | 0.74* (0.44) | 1.58** (0.74) | 8.91*** (0.49) | 8.81*** (0.48) | 6.27*** (0.82) | 10.49*** (0.48) | 10.46*** (0.48) | 7.00*** (0.80) | 5.46*** (0.44) | 5.64*** (0.44) | 4.66*** (0.74) | 2.81*** (0.12) | 2.80*** (0.12) | 2.56*** (0.21) |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.23 | 0.07 | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| N | 1041 | 1030 | 1014 | 1017 | 1009 | 993 | 1025 | 1015 | 1001 | 1019 | 1008 | 995 | 1025 | 1013 | 1000 | 1033 | 1023 | 1007 |

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