

Spanish young people's Internet use and political practices

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Abstract: In this article we apply a secondary analysis on the micro-data provided by the study 2,889 of the Spanish Center for Sociological Research. The main objective is to observe if there is a correlation between young people's Internet use and their political practices. Specifically, the analyzed variables allow us to study three important aspects: 1) the correlation between the degree of political participation and the frequency of Internet use, 2) the relation between online and offline political participation, and 3) the existence of differences in online political participation with respect of socio-demographic variables. Among the results we can highlight the existence of a statistically significant relation between a higher frequency of Internet use and a greater online and offline political involvement.

Key words: young people, Internet, political participation, Spain, quantitative analysis.

Resumen: A partir de un análisis secundario de los microdatos procedentes del estudio 2.889 del Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas de España, pretendemos observar la posible relación entre el uso de Internet por parte de los jóvenes y sus prácticas políticas. En concreto, las variables disponibles permiten estudiar tres aspectos fundamentales: si existe relación entre la frecuencia de uso de Internet y la participación política; si el grado de participación política en el espacio virtual se correlaciona con la participación fuera de este espacio; y si se observan diferencias en términos de participación política online según variables sociodemográficas. Entre los resultados obtenidos podemos destacar la existencia de una relación estadísticamente significativa entre una mayor frecuencia de uso de Internet y una mayor implicación política tanto en el espacio virtual como offline.

Palabras clave: jóvenes, Internet, participación política, España, análisis cuantitativo.

Introduction

Disinterest, apathy and disenchantment seem to have become features that characterize the relationship with politics of a large part of citizens around the world (Bauman, 2007). Although this attitude affects everyone, young people are apparently those farthest away from politics; at least in its institutional dimension (Mindich, 2005; Banaji and Buckingham, 2010). Concurring with this we find authors who speak of a growing individualist and cynical attitude in young people toward politics and they even point out the youth as those championing a growing democracy crisis (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

However, other studies challenge this alleged disaffection and lack of political participation of young people, indicating that the authors that support such statements focus excessively on the traditional and institutional forms of making politics (Bakker and de Vreese, 2011; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010). Their thesis is that the interpretations young people make of politics and the ways to participate differ from those traditionally supported (Bennett, 2012; Loader *et al.*, 2014). In this new scenario, the crucial role of information and communications technologies, and in general the tools offered by Internet, is underscored (Livingstone, 2007; Castells, 2012).

The political use of digital technology has specially stood out because of the civil mobilizations that have taken place recently. From the early Tunisian and Egyptian riots against authoritative regimes, there has been a growing tendency to occupy the public space in various parts of the world. In the Spanish context, the Anti-austerity movement (“los indignados”) has raised awareness on the existing breach between political and social legitimacy. Young people have been at the forefront of these demonstrations making widespread use of new technologies (Sloam, 2014).

Email, social media, blogs and web sites have increased the activists’ resources demonstrating great efficacy as disseminators of initiatives and mobilization tools (Castells, 2012). This context has collaborated to promote a growing interest in the analysis of the political participation of young people and the impact of new technologies; even if, we will see further in the text, the results so far obtained do not allow speaking of unanimous agreements (Hirzalla *et al.*, 2011).

In this article, our main purpose is to analyze the political use that young people make of Internet. To do so, we carried out a secondary analysis of the microdata from the study 2.889 of the Center of Sociological Researches (CSR), an autonomous organism dependent of the Ministry of Presidency of the Government of Spain. This survey was applied in May 2011 to a sample of youth, male and female, who lived in Spain, aged between 15 and 29 years, which despite

being oriented to the use of new technologies includes a series of variables related to political issues. In short, it allows analyzing three relevant aspects: whether there is a relation between the frequency of the use of Internet and political participation; if the degree of political participation in the virtual space is correlated with participation outside such space; and if there are significant differences in terms of online political participation according to sociodemographic variables.

Internet and young people political participation

Existing empirical studies show serious disagreements and contradictory results in relation to the political impact of Internet (Borge *et al.*, 2012; De Marco and Robles, 2012); these contradictions are noticed both in early studies and those recently published, which incorporate the analysis of social media and web 2.0 (Xenos *et al.*, 2014). This way, from the most optimistic stances, a number of authors suggest the existence of a positive relation between the use of Internet and various indicators of political implication (Bode, 2012; Valenzuela *et al.*, 2009; Zhang *et al.*, 2013). These studies underscore the mobilizing capacity of Internet and its potentiality to reduce the existing inequalities in political participation, managing to involve previously inactive individuals or who do not share the profile of traditional participant (Morris and Morris, 2013).

Facing these results, from the most pessimistic stances, some authors state the inexistence of a relation, or in any case of a weak, between Internet use and greater involvement (Baumgargner and Morris, 2009; Dimitrova and Bystrom, 2013). However, the most abundant literature is to be found at a position we would call cautious optimism. Hence, we find studies that refer positive relations between the use of Internet and political participation, but limiting such relation to specific uses of the web, to concreter forms of political participation, or the necessary interaction of different variables and factors (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2012; Vitak *et al.*, 2011; Xenos *et al.*, 2014). In this section we can place those authors who defend the hypothesis of normalization or reinforcement, according to which Internet has an especially positive effect among citizens already politically committed, while its effect is minimal among those indifferent (Scheufele and Nisbet, 2002; Banaji and Buckingham, 2010). These researches point out that the political effects of Internet can suppose the reproduction or even the increase of previously existing inequalities in terms of involvement and political participation (Schlozman *et al.*, 2010).

In this same framework of disagreements the studies that specifically analyze the use of Internet by young population and its effects in terms of political participation. This way, considering the obtained results, it is possible to find arguments that support both the normalizing hypothesis (Macafee and De

Simone, 2012; Baumgartner y Morris, 2010; Banaji y Buckingham, 2010) and the mobilizing one (Zhou and Pinkleton, 2012; Livingstone, 2010; Sloam, 2012), or a combination of both stances (Nam, 2012; Vissers and Stolle, 2014). Part of this apparent absence of agreements can be explained by methodological differences and theoretical discrepancies between researchers (Xenos *et al.*, 2014).

For instance, most of the studies have been based upon surveys on specific samples (such as university students or a limited age group) or have focused on a concrete occurrence. On the other side, several strategies have been applied to define both the use of Internet as the concept of political participation. Then, while some studies analyze the generic way of using Internet or social virtual networks (Bode, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2013), others indicate the importance of distinguishing between the various uses and tools offered by the web, since each of them supposes different implications in political terms (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2012; Yamamoto and Kushin, 2014). In this line, some authors agree on distinguishing the positive effects from the use of Internet as an information source (Ekström *et al.*, 2014; Bakker and de Vreese, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2013) in relation to other options such as social media (Ekström *et al.*, 2014; Vissers and Stolle, 2014).

In relation to the concept of political participation, while some works focus on traditional and institutional participation forms, others broaden the approach to include a broader range of activities and opt for more general concepts such as political involvement, civil commitment or political orientation (Anduiza *et al.*, 2010; Dahlgren, 2011; Xenos *et al.*, 2014; Ekström *et al.*, 2014). This way, it is possible to find various ways to differentiate and interpret virtual political activities from the traditional or novel options of offline political involvement (Xenos *et al.*, 2014). For instance, in opposition to some authors that adopt an openly critical stance to virtual activities, considered excessively simple and without relevant effects (Morozov, 2009), other opt for underscoring the importance of such strategies (Anduiza *et al.*, 2010; Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2010).

This terminological debate becomes especially significant in the case of young population. In concurrence with the studies that underscore their disaffection with the classic and institutional forms of political participation, some researches point out that young people are developing different ways to relate with politics and public life (Bennett, 2012; Bennett *et al.*, 2011). From these statements the classification of youths as politically apathetic is rejected (Berlinguer and Martínez, 2014; Loader *et al.*, 2014; Sloam, 2014), even if their interest is not expressed through the traditional participation options (voting, militancy and unions, press reading, etc.), but to a large extent, by means of relatively novel ways such as volunteering, public demonstrations, boycotting certain products, participation in social movements or virtual activism.

This way, by and large, a sizable part of researches allow speaking of cautious optimism (Dahlgren, 2011) in relation to the political potentialities of Internet for young users. Hence, even if socioeconomic variables still show relevance at explaining the differences in terms of political commitment (Scholzman *et al.*, 2010; Xenos *et al.*, 2014; Vissers and Stolle, 2014), studies such as the one by Scholzman *et al.* (2010) conclude that the use of Internet does seem to reduce the traditional gaps in function of age. Likewise, researches such as the one by Xenos *et al.* (2014) suggest the existence of a positive relation between the use of virtual social networks and the political commitment of young people, in such manner that these networks might be helping to reduce the differences between the patterns of traditional political behavior in function of variables such as socioeconomic level, age, race and ethnicity.

In the Spanish context, the study of political participation of young people also arises great interest; proof of this are the multiple researches carried out in the aftermath of the Anti-austerity movement (Monterde, 2012; Soler, 2013; Feixa, 2013; Nofre, 2013; Perondi, 2013). These and other works are framed in a context characterized by three circumstances: the 2007 economic-financial crisis with the consequential despondency of a large part of the citizenry, especially among young people; the delegitimization of traditional political institutions; and finally, the technological change brought by Internet and social media.

In this framework, the research undertaken by IGOPnet research group of the Autonomous University of Barcelona reveals that young people are in process of intense politicization. This interest does not become greater participation in conventional politics, but does turn into the development of new organization ways that use the possibilities of Internet (Berlinguer and Martínez, 2014). In the same direction, the European project MYPLACE, undertaken in 16 countries, reaches similar results for the Catalanian context: most of the young people is quite or very interested in politics and there is a noticeable growing phenomena of extra-institutional political participation (Feixa, 2014).

Objectives, hypotheses and methodology

Objective and hypotheses

In this article we have adopted a fundamentally empirical definition of political participation, which comprises conventional expressions such as electoral participation and ideological positioning, as well as new participation forms facilitated and potentiated by Internet and virtual social networks. In practice, such definition is necessarily conditioned by the variables available in the CSR study here analyzed. This way, and taking the Spanish young people between 15 and 29

years of age as object of study population, the aim is to analyze: 1) the existing relation between the Internet and political participation, particularly, whether a more frequent use of Internet is related to greater political participation inside and outside the web; 2) the possible relation between the political activity performed in the virtual space and that other related to the offline space; and, 3) differences in terms of political participation according to various socioeconomic variables (sex, age, occupation and nationality). All in all, we intent to contrast the following hypotheses:

H1: young people who utilize Internet with the most frequency are those who at a larger extent use it with political ends.

H2: young people who develop intense political activity over the Internet are also the most active in offline life.

H3: young people's participation will differ in function of a number of sociodemographic variables such as nationality, age, sex and labor status.

Methodological considerations

We carried out a secondary analysis of the microdata from the study 2.889 of CSR, entitled "Attitudes toward communications and information technologies" (*Actitudes hacia las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación*). It is a research produced by appointment of the Institute of Youth (*Instituto de la Juventud, INJUVE*) in May 2011, from a sample of 1419 young individuals, both sexes, residing in Spain aged between 15 and 29 years.¹ The objective of the study was to gather information on the relations of young people with new technologies, among the used variables we included some that allow analyzing certain aspects of the political use of Internet. In short, table 1² summarizes the variables selected to build the indicators of the political use, active or passive, of the web.³

Once this indicators were built (whose elaboration is explained in the section of results), data analysis was focused on the search for significant differences in the political use of Internet according to three sorts of variables (see table 2): 1) those related to the frequency and place of Internet use; 2) sociodemographic variables; and 3) ideological stance and electoral behavior, as indicators of political

1 Supposing a simple random sampling with a confidence level of 95.5% (two sigmas) and $P=Q$, sampling error is $\pm 2,6\%$. Fieldwork date: from May 12th to 23rd, 2011. Information offered by CSR: <http://www.cis.es> [February 21st, 2014].

2 All the tables are in the annex (Editor's note).

3 Together with the variables referred to the political use of the Internet, table 2 also includes a question related to the reception of messages via mobile phone. We decided to include this variable in the analysis because of its close relation with the political use of new technologies and the wide expansion of cellular phones among young population.

involvement beyond the virtual space. Since the nominal nature of the utilized variables prevents running a factorial analysis, we opted for an exploratory and descriptive analysis on the basis of looking for relations by means of contingency tables, paying attention to chi-squared results and corrected typified residues that allow analyzing not only the relation between variables, but also between concrete categories of the variables.

The application of a secondary analysis to previously existing data implies a series of advantages and disadvantages; this way, for our case, it has been necessary to reduce the analysis of political participation to a limited number of the possible ways it can take.

However, the secondary analysis also implies some advantages, as it is an efficient strategy with which to attempt to answer new research questions on the basis of data obtained according to other objectives and approaches. This option is especially relevant if working with data from public institutions or research centers (as it is our case) that allow accessing reliable information obtained from representative samples from broad populations. Because of this, in the field of study our research is, other authors have also resorted to secondary analysis on previously existing data (Schlozman *et al.*, 2010; Morris and Moris, 2013; Anduiza *et al.*, 2010).

Results

The use of Internet is broadly generalized in the collective under study. Ninety percent of those surveyed states having used the Internet within the last three months (they are the subsample that we will consider Internet users and on which the successive analysis will be run). Of the total users, 82% uses Internet everyday (one or several times a day). The percentages are also high for the use of social media. The household is the usual connection place and most (68%) usually access Internet from a privately-owned computer (in their own bedroom or another private space). The purpose of connecting are diverse, even though the most frequent activities are: look for information (82%), social media (80%), and read email (76%).

As for the political uses of Internet, as we previously stated (see table 1), we differenced two categories: uses that imply active participation and passive uses, which basically are the reception of unrequested contents. In relation to active uses, the percentage of young users that looks for political information on the Internet does not reach a half (44%), and only 24% does it once or twice a week.

Some uses are especially minority, such as making a donation for a campaign, association or organization (7%); contacting a politician or political party (4%); subscribe to bulletins or mailing lists on political affairs (4%). Other uses present slightly higher percentages, for instance, contacting an administration to protest

(11%), sign a petition or adhere a campaign or manifesto (14%) and browsing political parties or candidate websites (16%). Finally, the percentage that states using the Internet to contact an organization or association (33%) and to post comments in blogs or websites about current social and political affairs (30%).

As for passive uses, only a quarter of the young users has come across political information, which allows deducing that the main content of the web is not political information. In similar proportions one finds the reception of emails both with criticisms to political parties or candidates (22%) and with a manifest or electronic request (22%). Slightly higher is the proportion of young people that states having received mails calling for demonstrations (33%).

Finally, only 11% admits having received emails to support a candidate or party, which seems to indicate a greater presence of negative messages than supportive for a political organization. Together with these variables, directly referred to Internet, another related to mobile phones was included. This way, only 17% of those surveyed states having received an SMS reporting on demonstrations, a relatively reduced proportion is we consider the alleged leading role of mobile phones in calling for demonstrations.

In views of differencing the intensive political use of Internet from the rest of possibilities we have opted for summarizing the available information by building two indicators related to the active and passive uses of the web. To do so, we added the affirmative answers of each activity accounted for in the questionnaire so that the surveyed can be sorted out according to the number of activities they carry out into three categories: those nonparticipant (no activity performed), those moderately participant (from one to three activities) and political activists (from four to six activities). The results can be seen in table 3.

Hence, almost half of the surveyed can be classified as nonparticipant: 44% does not have active political uses and 50% answers negatively to various options of passive political uses. On the other end, that of political activists, only 13% of the young people can be considered such if we pay attention to active uses of Internet and 11% if we do to passive uses.

These data seem to verify the alleged scant interest of young people in politics that some authors notice (Zukin *et al.*, 2006; Mindich, 2005), this might be validating the thesis supported by other authors (Bennett, 2012; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010), according to which the way young people conceive politics is not related whatsoever with its traditional conception, thereby neither will the methods usually resorted to learn their participation be valid.

Political participation, Internet use frequency and connection place

The frequency and intensity with which Internet is utilized is usually included in various researches as an independent variable to consider (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2012; Quintelier and Vissers, 2008). In our case, the first objective is to find out whether those who more frequently use the Internet, also make a greater political use of the web. In like manner, the analyzed survey allows including another relevant variable such as the one referred to the space where Internet is used, and in short, the possibility of using it in a privately-owned space. The results are shown in table 4.⁴

There we observe that the most assiduous Internet users are also the most political active in the web. This relation is statically significant for the uses we have called passive (never make political use of the Internet: those who use daily, 42%; those who use it weekly, 63%; those who use it less frequently, 76%).

In a certain way, and as foreseeable, the mere frequent utilization of Internet seems to increase the probability of coming into contact with political information. Well now, the relation is equally significant in the case of active uses (the percentage of those who never make political use of the Internet descends up to 35% for the most frequent users, while it reaches 56% in the case of those who use it weekly, and 67% for the least frequent users).

These results are coherent with those obtained from the analysis of place of Internet connection. This way, young people who commonly connect in a non-shared space present a significantly larger political use of the web (both active and passive). Thus, although neither the obtained data nor the built statistics allow stating that the use of Internet increases the relation of young people with politics (the causal relation might be the opposite), we indeed can talk of a positive relation between the political use of the web, as well of the frequency with which it is used and the fact of having a privately-owned place to connect.

Data from CSR also allow testing in the relation between frequency of Internet use and political involvement outside virtual space. In short, to analyze non-virtual political participation we have two variables: participation in last elections and ideological stance. The difference in the answers to these variables according to frequency and place of use can be seen in table 5.

On this occasion, the relation between the different variables is not as unanimous as it is in the case of online political participation. However, we notice that the expression of an ideology is significantly greater among those who use

4 In tables 4 and successive, the existence of a positive significant relation between the categories of the variables (according to the corrected typified residues) has been highlighted in dark grey, while a negative significant relation has been indicated in light grey.

Internet with the most frequency (71% defines an ideology, against 59% who only use it weekly or 58% with a lower frequency), as well among those who connect in a private space (72% states having an ideology, against 63% who uses Internet in a shared space).

In this same line, the most assiduous users of Internet are the ones and those who surf from their own spaces are also those who, to a larger extent and significantly according to the corrected typified residues, state having voted in the 2008 general elections. To sum up, these data seem to indicate that those youths who use Internet more intensely have also a deeper political involvement outside the virtual space.

Online political participation and offline political participation

As shown in table 6, there is a statistically significant relation between the use of Internet with political ends (active and passive) and expressing an ideology as voting. With this we might state that the young people who are more politically involved in the virtual space are also outside the web. Only 34% of those who expresses an ideology and 35% of those who voted in the 2008 general elections never make active political uses on the Internet (these percentages reach up to 65% for those who do not express an ideology and up to 56% for those who did not want to vote in the last elections). The situation is similar in the case of the passive uses: even if 40% of those who expressed an ideology and 42% of those who voted deny making these uses, the percentage reaches up to 68% for those with no explicit ideology and up to 63% of those who did not want to vote.

Once more, we cannot deduce from these data that the political use of the web is the cause for a greater politicization of young people outside the virtual space. Well now, we can indeed talk of a positive relation between both participation spheres. This way and retaking the previous results, we can conclude that the young people who make the most intensive use of the web are also the ones that make the largest political use of it; those who use Internet the most are the ones that show a deeper offline political involvement; and there is a positive relation between a greater political use of the Internet and a deeper political involvement outside the web.

Political use of the Internet according to sociodemographic variables

As for the sociodemographic variables, the theory of mobilization states a progressive diminution of inequalities to the extent that the Internet facilitates the participation of collectives with the greatest propensity to political exclusion. Such affirmation seems to be coherent, to a certain extent, with some of the obtained results (see table 7). This way, differences both in the passive uses and in the active ones among Spanish young people and any other nationality are not significant.

Only by means of the corrected typified residues can we notice a lesser passive political use among non-Spanish young people with no significant differences in relation to active uses. Neither is there a statistically significant relation between age and intensity of Internet political use (bearing in mind the age considered in the survey ranges from 15 to 29 years). It is also necessary to resort to the corrected typified residues to notice some relations between categories, such as a higher probability among the youngest of not making no active political use of the Internet.

However, the relation between political uses and sex variable does present a significant chi-squared value, even though its correct interpretation also needs looking at the corrected typified residues. Hence, even if the differences between men and women are not significant in relation to a moderate or intensive political use of the Internet, they are indeed in relation to the existence of the use. This way, women to a greater extent than men do not develop political uses of the web, active or passive. Finally, labor status keeps a clearly significant relation with the number of political uses both passive and active. The unemployed are those, which compared with the rest of collectives, make the least political use of the Internet (58% never actively uses the Internet and 65% never passively). On the other end, young people who study are those that politically use the Internet the most; among them, the percentage lowers up to 34 for those who never make active uses and up to 41 for those who are never involved in passive uses.

Conclusions

Along the previous pages we have analyzed the participation of young people in politics inside and outside the virtual space. For the study of online politics, the various participation options accounted for in the survey were grouped in two categories: active and passive. The former are those that depend on the express will of the users; the latter reach the youths circumstantially. These and those facilitate information on the political implication of young Internet users and allows contrasting the starting hypotheses.

The first hypothesis we stated was that if actually there was a positive relation between the frequency with which Internet is used and the political use of the web; data verify this relation. This is to say, the young people with more frequently access Internet are the most politically active online, both in passive and active uses. These results concur with findings of authors such as Calenda and Meijer (2009) or Valenzuela *et al.* (2012), who notice a correlation between the length of connection and virtual political participation. We also have to underscore, in spite of not being stated in the starting hypotheses, that young people who make a more intensive use of the Internet not only show a deeper online political involvement,

but as well outside the virtual space. To sum up, we can talk of a positive relation between the use of Internet and various political participation indicators, even though with our data it is impossible to determine the direction of a hypothetical causal relation between both dimensions. This way, results might be coherent both with the mobilizing theses and the normalizer. To clarify these dynamics, there is need for diachronic studies that allow a better comprehension of young people's political socialization processes.

In the second hypothesis we intended to analyze the possible correspondence between online and offline political activity. In this case, despite the results are not as conclusive as those of the first hypothesis, they also show a positive relation between both space; this to say, the youths more politically active online, are also in offline life. Once again, with the analyzed data we cannot state that Internet nowadays fosters the political participation of young people outside the web, as they only allow speaking of a correlation, not of causal relation nevertheless. These results agree with those obtained by other authors such as Calenda and Meijer (2009), Oser *et al.* (2013) or Robles *et al.* (2012).

The third hypothesis stated a differential political participation on the Internet based on different sociodemographic variables, namely: nationality, labor status, age and sex. As for nationality, the results do not display significant differences, i.e., young people from Spain and other countries present a similar political involvement. However, differences are clearly significant in function of the labor status variable.

This way, those who display a deeper political involvement on Internet are students, while unemployed youths are those with the least political use of the web. This difference is especially relevant, given the current high unemployment level among young people in Spain and its effect in terms of social exclusion (Lasheras and Pérez, 2014).

As for age, our results seem to agree with those with most of the previous researches, which usually underscore an increment in political involvement as age increases (Vilas, 2003). Even so, chi-squared is not significant and only the analysis of corrected typified residues allows to speak of a lesser political involvement of the youngest.

Finally for sex, the results indicate a limited effect, nonetheless significant, of this variable, to the extent that women seem to politically use the Internet less than men. If we analyze in a disaggregated manner each of the uses summarized in the indicators, we notice that while young men are more active than young women in some of the activities, for instance, retrieve political information or check the

websites of political parties, women are in other, such as subscribe a mailing list or contact an administration to complain. These differences by activities have also been noticed by other researchers, who underscored a further distancing of women from formal and institutional politics (Roker, 2008).

In our work we basically started from a classic conception of political participation, and from this orientation, the results seem to verify the deficit in young people's online and offline political participation. However, in spite the percentage of young people with intense political participation on Internet is relatively reduced, they do seem to make an advantageous use of the options offered by the web for their political activities, which are related in like manner with political involvement in the non-virtual space.

Given the nature of our data, we cannot state that the use of Internet fosters, in some cases, deeper political involvement, as the sense of the causal relation may be the opposite (those more interested in politics can feel more motivated to use Internet and the communications and information tools at their disposal). As a matter of fact, the statistically significant relation between virtual and offline political activity seems to place our results closer to the theory of normalization, according to which Internet is an alternative way to participate, especially useful for those who already develop a previous political activity. In any case, it will be necessary to broaden the research with diachronic or qualitative data that allow a better comprehension of these processes.

Finally, our results seem to be incongruent with a supposed politicization of Spanish young people that other studies underscore (Berlinguer and Martínez, 2014; Feixa, 2014). However, part of the discrepancies can be placed in a different conception of political participation (more reduced in our case and broader in other studies). In like manner, it will be necessary to replicate researches such as the one here presented with new data that account for the possible effects of political mobilizations in Spain in recent years.

Annex

Table 1
Variables on the political use of Internet contained in the questionnaire

Active political use	Frequency of Internet use to obtain political information
	Browse the web pages of political parties or candidate.
	Subscription to bulletins or mailing lists on current political issues.
	Political activities over the Internet: contact a politician and/or political party; contact an administration to complain; communicate with some association or organization; donate to a campaign, association or organization; write comments in forums, blog or web page; sign a petition or adhere a campaign or manifesto.
Passive political use	Email reception: from a political candidate or a political party; with a criticism on a politician or political party; calling to a demonstration of protest; with a manifest or petition.
	Involuntary reception or access to information on politics or electoral campaigns.
	SMS reception reporting on a demonstration

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 2
Explanatory variables contained in the questionnaire

1. Frequency and place of use of the Internet	Use of Internet within last three months.
	Frequency of use of Internet.
	Usual place use Internet in a privately-owned space.
	Frequency of social media use on Internet.
2. Socio-demographic variables	Age
	Sex
	Labor status
	Nationality
3. Ideological stance and electoral behavior	Ideological stance
	Electoral behavior in last general elections

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 3
Groups of intensity of political use of the web
(Base: Internet users in the last three months)

	Use intensity groups	Percentage
Active uses	Nonparticipants (not any use)	44,0
	Moderate (from 1 to 3)	43,6
	Activists (from 4 to 6)	12,5
	Total	100,0
Passive uses	Nonparticipants (not any use)	49,9
	Moderate (from 1 to 3)	39,3
	Activists (from 4 to 6)	10,9
	Total	10,0

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 4
**Intensity of the political use of the web
 according to frequency and place of connection (%)**
(Base: Internet users in the last three months)

		Internet use frequency			Usual connection in a privately-owned space	
		Weekly	Less	yes	No	
Daily						
Active uses	None	34,8	55,7	66,7	34,3	48,5
	1 to 3	49,6	38,5	33,3	49,7	42,9
	4 to 6	15,6	5,7	0,0	16,0	8,5
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 50,410; signification 0,000				Chi-squared value 28,652; signification 0,000	
Daily		Internet use frequency			Usual connection in a privately-owned space	
		Weekly	Less	Yes	No	
Passive uses	None	42,1	63,0	76,2	41,4	57,1
	De 1 a 3	44,6	30,7	23,8	45,6	33,7
	De 4 a 6	13,3	6,3	0,0	13,0	9,3
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 46,536; signification 0,000				Chi-squared value 27,578; signification 0,000	

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 5
Ideology and participation in elections
according to frequency and place of connection (%)

		Internet use frequency			Connection in a privately-owned space	
		Weekly	Less	Yes	No	
Daily						
Expresses an ideology	Yes	71,4	59,3	57,9	72,0	63,0
	No	28,6	40,7	42,1	28,0	37,0
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Base: Internet users within the last three months		Chi-squared value 12,884; signification 0,002			Chi-squared value 10,242; signification 0,001	
Daily		Internet use frequency			Connection in a privately-owned space	
		Weekly	Less	Yes	No	
Voted in last general elections Base: legal-age Internet users within the last three months	Voted	64,9	50,4	61,3	65,0	57,9
	Was not able	14,1	25,2	19,4	14,6	18,8
	Did not want	21,0	24,4	19,4	20,4	23,3
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 12,394; signification 0,015			Chi-squared value 4,194; signification 0,123		

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 6
Political use of the web according to ideology and electoral participation (%)

Yes		Expresses an ideology Base: internet users within the last three months		Voted Base: legal-age internet users within the last three months		
		No	Voted	Was not able	Did not want	
Active uses	None	33,7	64,7	34,6	48,3	55,8
	1 to 3	48,6	32,1	47,6	37,7	38,8
	4 to 6	17,6	3,2	17,8	13,9	5,3
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 131,091; signification 0,000			Chi-squared value 38,569; signification 0,000		
Yes		Expresses an ideology Base: internet users within the last three months		Voted Base: legal-age internet users within the last three months		
		No	Voted	Was not able	Did not want	
Passive uses	None	40,4	68,1	41,7	58,3	63,1
	1 to 3	45,4	26,9	44,4	32,5	30,6
	4 to 6	14,2	5,0	13,9	9,3	6,3
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 94,341; signification 0,000			Chi-squared value 34,782; signification 0,000		

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

Table 7
Intensity of political use of the web
according to sociodemographic variables (%)
(Base: Internet users in the last three months)

	Nationality		Labor status			Age			Sex	
	Spanish	other	Studies	Only works	Un-employed	15-19	20-24	25-29	Woman	Men
Active uses	None	43,5	46,2	33,7	46,3	58,1	48,4	43,1	47,1	40,9
	1 to 3	43,7	42,9	51,4	41,3	34,2	42,5	42,4	42,0	45,1
	4 to 6	12,7	11,0	14,9	12,5	7,7	9,1	14,5	10,9	14,0
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 0,777; significance 0,678		Chi-squared value 51,308; significance: 0,000			Chi-squared value 9,046; significance 0,060			Chi-squared 6,670; significance 0,036	
	Nationality		Labor status			Age			sex	
	Spanish	Other	Studies	Only works	Un-employed	15-19	20-24	25-29	Women	Men
Passive uses	None	48,6	57,1	41,3	49,8	64,8	52,3	50,3	52,9	47,0
	1 a 3	40,1	34,3	45,6	39,2	28,9	39,6	38,1	37,4	41,1
	4 to 6	11,3	8,6	13,2	11,0	6,3	8,0	11,6	9,7	11,9
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	Chi-squared value 5,378; significance 0,068		Chi-squared value 44,117; significance: 0,000			Chi-squared value 5,516; significance 0,238			Chi-squared 5,203; significance 0,074	

Source: own elaboration from the questionnaire of study no. 2889 of CSR.

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