

Rethinking the Sources of Participation: A Case Study of Spain

Ernesto Ganuza Fernández and Francisco José Francés García

The aim of this article is to analyse the reasons which lead individuals to engage in participation in Spain. We put forth two different generally accepted models of participation, defined in terms of the political and cultural practices associated with them. The first refers to participation in organized or corporate groups, whereas the second refers to non-institutionalized individual participation. The aim is to understand the factors that support one or the other model in order to gain insight into contemporary problems regarding citizen participation, and open new horizons in this field. Our conclusion suggests reciprocity between conventional and non-conventional participation practices, that is, that they mutually reinforce one another, even though the latter better support the civic values expected from participation and democracy.

Introduction

When we think of citizen participation we often think of the quality of democracy: the higher the number of citizens who participate, the better the democratic institutions. Since Alexis de Tocqueville, democracy has been associated with participative attitudes and practices that would seem to reinforce its stability. Later, this association would become the core of Robert Putnam's (1993, 2000) studies on social capital. Aside from Putnam's arguments, the participation of individuals in politics in a wide sense of the term—be it through associations, through a positive predisposition towards politics and taking an interest in it (Jan van Deth and Elff, 2001, 2004), or through participating in non-conventional ways (Dalton, 1999; Norris, 1999)—has been taken as an indicator of the democratic quality of political communities. The main argument in favour of this indicator rests on the perverse effects on democracy that would arise if individuals did not watch over it. The rationale is that individual joint participation, in pursuit of common interests, can counter the

excess of power of representative institutions. Thus, participation has been set in opposition to the egoism and indifference found in societies that foster individual interests and that thereby favour the domination of majorities or of a political class freed of social control (Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Montero and Torcal, 2006; Offe, 2006).

While citizen participation is an accepted indicator of democratic quality, there is less consensus on the effects of the different types of participation found today. The participation of citizens in voluntary organizations and other organizations of a political nature is, for many, the very core of democratic participation, given that it is through these ways of participation that the attitudes conducive to a vigorous democracy are materialized (Putnam, 1993; Warren, 2001; Hirst, 2002). Others, on the other hand, hold that it is no longer possible to generalize the positive effects of associationalism; it is necessary to take into account the type of association (Jan van Deth, 2001; Wollebaeck and Selle, 2002; Morales and Mota, 2006), whether they are actually representative (Eliasoph, 2001; Jan van Deth, 2006)

or whether we can actually expect generation of social capital from them (Newton and Norris, 2000, Uslander and Conley, 2003; Lichterman, 2006; Newton, 2006). Along with studies on associative participation, there are already many studies regarding non-conventional modes of participation, which were originally associated with forms of protest and, in many cases, with ways of participation on the fringes of legality (Crozier *et al.*, 1975; Barnes and Kaase, 1979). For Inglehart (1990, 1997) this form of participation is gradually emerging as social values and politics change, whereas for others it has already become a common form of participation of individuals (Dalton 1999, 2004; Norris, 1999). The debate proposed in this article regards the democratic benefits we might expect both from non-conventional forms of participation and from traditional associationalism.

Norris argues that it is no longer possible to hold that citizens who participate in non-conventional forms of participation are exclusive and scarcely representative of the body of citizens. The profile of demonstrators, says Norris *et al.* (2006) in a study on Belgium, is very similar to that of the general body of citizens. For Norris, the extension of these forms of participation in today's society makes it a form of participation that is available to all citizens and not only an alternative for young people or people who are politically very active. Even so, the practical implications of these new forms of participation for the political attitudes of individuals are yet to be clarified, and, especially, their relationship with conventional forms of participation. Are people who participate in associations really more committed to society? Do citizens who decide to associate or who attend demonstrations speak more and more openly? Can we expect values of tolerance, sociability, and an interest in politics from those who decide to participate through non-conventional forms? To what extent are these forms equivalent in the promotion of democratic attitudes? Are they exclusive forms of citizen participation?

Our aim in this article is to analyse the ways of participation which underlie both approaches in order to understand the relationships underlying those ways of participation, both between one another, and with the attitudinal predispositions usually associated with citizen participation. Thus, on one hand, we shall study the activities that can be associated with an individual who participates through social organizations and we assess the attitudes that underlie the choice of this way of participation. On the other hand, we shall analyse the activities that lead an individual to participate through unorganized processes, or processes not organized institutionally, and we shall assess the

attitudes that may lead to choosing this option. The aim is to evaluate the underlying relations that motivate one or the other way of participation, in the sense of gaining insight into what attitudes they are based on and how the two imagined ways of participation differ from one another. Thus, from the presupposition that both ways of participation actually concur, we shall examine the relationship between both forms of participation and evaluate whether there is sufficient empirical basis to speak of both forms separately. We believe that approaching the debate from this point of view makes it easier to understand the phenomenon of participation.

This article analyses, in the first place, the conventional and non-conventional models of participation, with a view to further defining each of the models and proposing a different theoretical model of participation, albeit rooted in the classical distinction made by Barnes and Kaase (1979). Secondly, we proceed to present the analysis carried out on the basis of our theoretical proposal, showing the empirical basis for speaking separately of institutional and non-institutional forms of participation, as well as of the existence of empirical relationships between them. Lastly, we put forward some suggestions based on the analysis carried out that point to the democratic importance acquired by non-institutionalized forms of participation and the individual's perception of all acts of participation as complementary.

Theoretical Proposal

In order to study the relationship between both forms of participation and between them and the social and political attitudes of individuals, it is useful to define the two models of participation clearly. We owe to Barnes and Kaase (1979) the conceptual distinction between conventional and non-conventional forms of participation. The former would include mainly electoral forms of participation, but also, among others, participation in citizen associations, fund raising for political causes or contacting public authorities. Non-conventional forms of participation would include protest actions or activities on the fringes of legality such as attending demonstrations, signing petitions, boycotting products, etc.

The distinction made by Barnes and Kaase rests on a sharp contrast between channels of participation considered to be politically conventional and less conventional channels. In our view, if we consider participation from an organizational point of view, these terms confound both simple forms of participation (donations, voting) and complex forms

(association, contacting public authorities), relating non-conventional practices to forms understood as not usual. From a citizen's point of view, it would seem more appropriate to talk of institutionalized and non-institutionalized participation. Institutionalized forms of participation would refer to those carried out through institutional organizations, whereas non-institutionalized participation would refer to that carried out by other means. In the individual's mind translates this into different costs of participation, besides embodying different purposes for participative action, given that it is not the same to participate through an association as to participate through a demonstration. If we consider participation from the point of view of public administrations, and the regulations developed to promote it, this distinction fits the political expectations surrounding participation. Institutional forms of participation are the focus of a great part of the political effort to increase the relations between governors and governees, through the promotion of associationalism (subsidies, for instance) or the growing customer attention culture which is gradually being incorporated into the administrations (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000; Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, 2001; Font, 2001; OCDE, 2001; Stoker, 2001; Sintomer *et al.*, 2006). Non-institutionalized forms are, on the other hand, perceived as extra-institutional channels, including all the participative forms that do not require an organization stable through time for citizens to take part. Both are different ways of exerting political influence, following the definition of participation put forth by Brady (1999) or Torcal *et al.* (2006), in the period between elections. And it is this that we propose to assess: the relationships between both forms of participation and between them and the social and political attitudes of individuals who decide to participate in one way or another with the aim of influencing politics.

Following this approach, we consider that to include voting as an institutional form of participation, as Barnes and Kaase did when talking of conventional ways of participation, dilutes the sense given here to citizen participation. Undoubtedly, voting is a majority form of participation and the most extended form of political influence. However, when we talk of citizen participation, we are talking of participation between elections and not as an alternative to elections. Thus, we are interested in considering the different meanings that individuals attach to participating through one channel or the other. The purposes that individuals associate with voting are different from the purposes associated with using institutional or other mechanisms of participation in periods between elections. Torcal *et al.* (2006), for instance, have shown the independence

of the act of voting with regard to other forms of participation in Spain. Thus, we will leave voting to one side, in order to focus on those forms of participation available to the individual to exert political influence during the periods between elections.

The difference between institutional and non-institutional forms of participation, in our view, rests on organizational criteria. The former require a strong organizational structure and, therefore, in order for an individual to participate, it is necessary for them to do it through an administrative body, either from an organization (voluntary, political, labour, etc.) or by means of contact with administration or corporation officials. The latter, however, do not require prior organization on the part of the individual, and may be carried out on an occasional basis (donating funds, demonstrating, boycotting products, etc.), conferring this form of participation a self-organizational nature that is absent from the other model.

The relationship between both forms of participation has yet to be explored in detail. Most studies have focused on the representativity of participants in one way or another (Jan van Deth, 2006; Norris *et al.*, 2006) and, especially, on the relationship between democratic attitudes, such as social trust and institutional trust, and conventional forms of participation (Norris, 2001; Newton, 2006; Torcal, 2006). This has led to the idea that both forms of participation are not complementary and to doubts regarding the civic effects of associationalism (Eliasoph, 2001; Norris, 2001; Wollebaek and Selle, 2002; Kwon, 2004; Lichterman, 2006; Morales and Mota, 2006; Newton, 2006), creating a void which must be addressed. Although not all research raises this doubt regarding democracy and associationalism (Putnam, 2000; Hirst, 2002; Kwak *et al.*, 2004; Torcal, 2006), the question remains. The fact that we think of social trust in relation to activities usually thought of as associational is deeply rooted in contemporary democracies, and specifically in the public models of participation encouraged by the different administrations (OCDE, 2001; Wollmann, 2003). However, several authors are arguing that trust in people should be positively associated with non-conventional activity, as the ability to trust others is the factor which would, ultimately, reduce the perceived costs of being *non-conventional*. As Uslaner (2002, 2004) shows in many countries, social trust trends are not related with patterns of conventional political participation. The work of Eliasoph (2001) and Lichterman (2006) in the United States also questions the ability of institutional forms of participation to generate civic values traditionally linked to them. In Europe, Jan van Deth (2006) comes to accept this view in a study on participation in Europe.

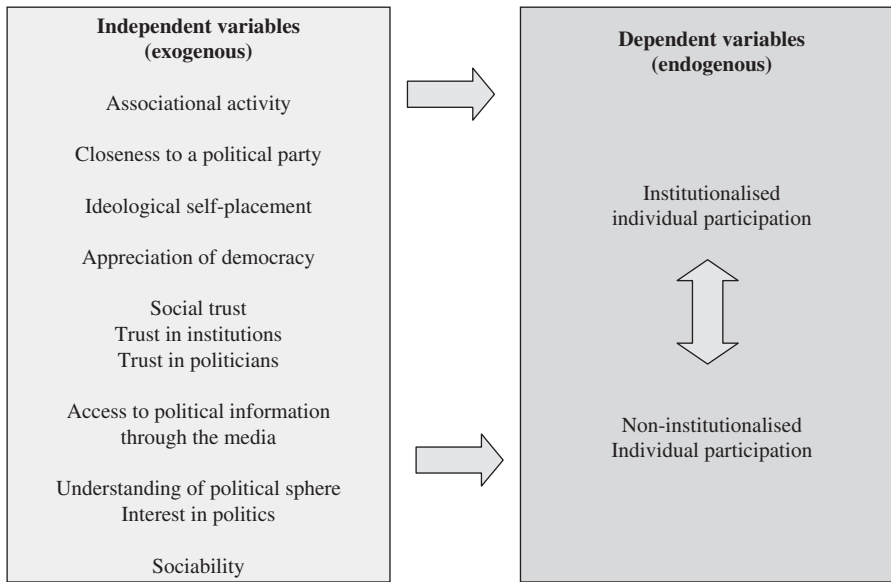


Figure 1 Explanatory order of the variables proposed

We believe that in Spain both forms of participation may be related to one another, given that the participative structure of the country favours this interconnection, although it is possible that, as some studies have already suggested (Ferrer *et al.*, 2006), the relationship between the two forms of participation with civic and democratic attitudes is stronger in the case of non-institutionalized forms of participation. We believe that the participation structure in Spain is sufficiently complex as to allow an exploratory analysis of the issue outlined. Since the 1980s, in Spain, most municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants have regulated citizen participation through regulations that favour participation through institutional channels and associations (Font, 2001). Approximately 42 per cent of the population says they are members of an association (Montero *et al.*, 2006). However, in the last decade, the emergence of participation through non-institutional channels has been significant, which has even lead some municipalities to modify their participation regulations to include mechanisms similar to non-institutional mechanisms in order to allow the incorporation of non-associated individuals (Font, 2001). For instance, Spain is the European country with the highest number of participatory budgeting experiences (Sintomer *et al.*, 2006), impregnated with the spirit of non-institutional participation channels, given that this form of participation involves mainly non-organized individuals (Ganuzá and Álvarez, 2003). These reasons reinforce our choice of Spain as an ideally suited case study, given

the coexistence of institutional and non-institutional forms of participation. From this perspective, it is useful to observe the inter-relationship between both forms of participation, as well as the differences between them. As in the rest of Europe, the emergence of non-institutional forms of participation has generated a more complex participation scene. Our purpose is not to explore both forms from an exclusive point of view, but rather to answer the following question: in what way are the values traditionally associated with civic democracy linked to each of the two forms of participation outlined at a time when both forms of participation cohabit in the public sphere?

We will propose a model with a view to explaining individual participation through institutional channels or non-institutional channels. These variables will be the dependent variables, which we will attempt to explain on the basis of participative practices and political attitudes usually considered in studies on participation. Figure 1 shows a diagram of our theoretical proposal. The statistical information from which we carry out the analysis is taken from the second European Social Survey (ESS) for Spain (2005).

Analysis

In our empirical approach to the reality of citizen participation subject of this article we have used a multivariate analysis method known as structural equation modelling (SEM), using the statistical tool LISREL,

which consists in a multivariate statistical technique commonly used to study and analyse dependence relationships established between the variables that form part of a social process. One of the main advantages of using this technique compared to other multivariate analysis techniques is the possibility of analysing multiple relationships between subsets of variables, as well as the possibility of incorporating theoretical concepts or latent variables in the analysis. This allows us to propose an empirical relational structure within the context of our theoretical explanatory proposal, in our case, the two ways of participation.

The indicators of the latent variable in the first form of participation we have considered (institutional participation) are related to actions involving contact with social organizations, political organizations, or the public administration. These contacts almost always take place within institutionally designed means and channels of participation. Thus, in order to explain it, we have included the answers referring to the interaction of the individuals with politicians or with the administration ('During the last 12 months, have you contacted a politician, or a national, regional, or local government official?') and the answers regarding contacts established with formal associations ('During the last 12 months, have you co-operated with an organisation or association?').

The indicators of the other latent variable (non-institutionalized individual participation) are related, however, to actions that take place outside institutionally regulated practices. For the study of this form of participation we have chosen as indicators the three types of action which are shown to be most significant for the Spanish case in terms of frequency, from the ESS data: participation of individuals through signing petitions ('During the last 12 months, have you signed a petition?'), attending demonstrations ('During the last 12 months, have you taken part in authorized demonstrations?') and, lastly, modifying consumption habits for non-economic reasons ('In the past 12 months, have you boycotted or stopped using certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons?')

Tested together in the statistical model created, the five activities considered allow us to evaluate the two ways of social and political participation under study as differentiated phenomena, representing two latent (endogenous) variables, for which we will then explore explanatory relationships from attitudes to participative action. Figure 2 shows the empirical fit of the measurement models for these two variables, which confirms the possibility of using them in the analysis.¹

From the attitudes of individuals, we tend to imagine the motivations that lead them to carry out an action or,

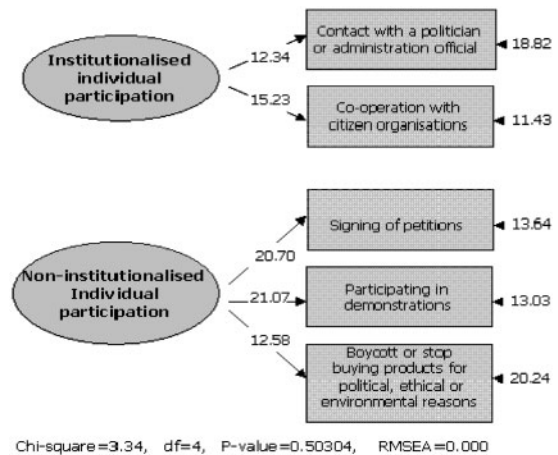


Figure 2 Measurement model for the endogenous variables. (individual forms of participation)

at least, we think that behind the attitudes we can speak of the probability that an individual will carry out one set or another set of activities. For instance, if an individual says she has a high level of trust in others, this is often associated with an inclination to engage in participative activities. On the other hand, if an individual places little trust in the institutional system, this tends to be associated with a reticence to participate. Thus, we shall consider the way in which different attitudes relate to the two ways of participation under study, in order to assess different relations supporting each of the two ways examined. To do so, we have proceeded in the same manner as in the previous endogenous variables, analysing the relevant relations underlying the different variables usually used to describe the framework of citizen participation of individuals (Figure 1). These variables are exogenous in our study and, as with the endogenous ones; they will be modelled as latent variables, and will be explained by empirically relevant indicators. It is relevant to point out that the exogenous variables of our model do not include all those we might intuitively imagine in Figure 1. The model only includes those variables carrying an explanatory load in empirical terms, excluding the variables which, in the fit and testing process, were not shown to be significant. Variables such as the scale of ideological self-placement, appreciation of democracy, trust in institutions or in politicians, understanding of the political sphere, have been tested in the model but did not reveal themselves as empirically relevant to differentiate one or other way of participation, at least for the Spanish case.

Thus, in the structure of our analysis, the following exogenous variables have been included, from which we may draw relevant data to understand the two ways of participation we wish to explain: associational activity, closeness to a political party, social trust, access to political information through the media, interest in politics and sociability. This means that these variables are those which are most significantly linked to both ways of participation. Two indicator variables revealed themselves as empirically relevant for the first latent exogenous variable of the model *associational activity*. The first refers to those individuals who say they engage in activities organized by the associations, regardless of whether they are members or not of an association. The second variable refers to those individuals who engage in volunteer work in associations. The second empirically relevant exogenous variable is the *closeness of the individuals to a political party*. The indicator variable record whether there is a political group the individual feels more identified with (the exact question in the questionnaire is: 'Is there a political party you feel closer to than the others?'). The *interest in politics* expressed by individuals is another variable with explanatory load in our analysis, whose indicator is represented by the question: 'To what extent would you say you are interested in politics?'

The fourth relevant exogenous variable that emerges in the model is *social trust*. The variables indicating social trust originate from two issues commonly included in the ESS as follow: 'Would you say that, in general, people can be trusted or that one can never be cautious enough when it comes to dealing with other people?', and 'Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they could do that they would be honest towards you?' Both questions can be interpreted, after Putnam (2000), as the attitude of the citizens with regard to the trustworthiness of the society that surrounds them. It is important to point out that the trust that citizens place in political institutions or political parties did not reveal itself to be empirically relevant in our study. The fifth exogenous variable to explain individual ways of participation is the time the individuals devote to obtaining *information about political issues* through the mass media. This variable is usually interpreted in such a way that we take it that the more and the better informed individuals are, the more they will engage in some form of participation. To represent this variable, the two indicators with significant load that represent it refer to the time devoted by the individuals to consumption of political and social information in the mass media, both on television and on radio.

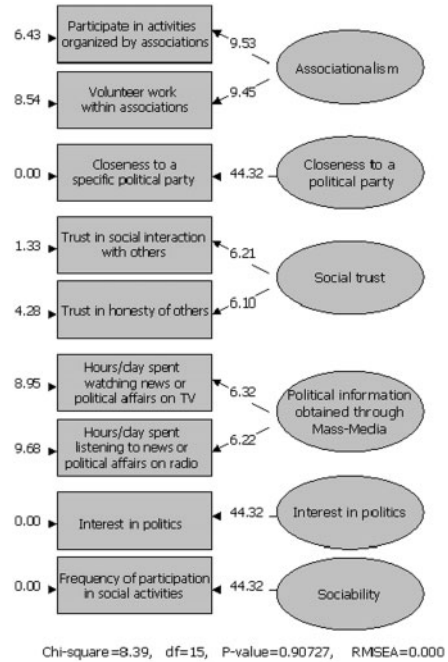


Figure 3 Measurement model for exogenous variables

Finally, the last variable regarding social and political participation contemplated in the model is what we have termed *sociability*. By sociability we shall understand actions that are based on interpersonal contact. The indicator used for this variable is the direct interaction of individuals, face to face, in daily and informal social networks. The question was formulated as follows in the ESS: 'How often do you get together with friends, relatives, or colleagues in your free time?' The set of exogenous latent variables and their observable indicator variables show a correct empirical fit, as we can see in the resulting measurement model in Figure 3.²

The Findings: Who Participates and How?

As we have already mentioned, the model we propose aims to evaluate the attitudes that best reflect one or another way of participation. In this sense, our study presents the relations that reveal themselves as empirically significant among the variables in play, following a logic that is more inductive than deductive, although derived from the prior working hypothesis and, in consequence, from establishing an explanatory order of the variables. The structural model comprises the set

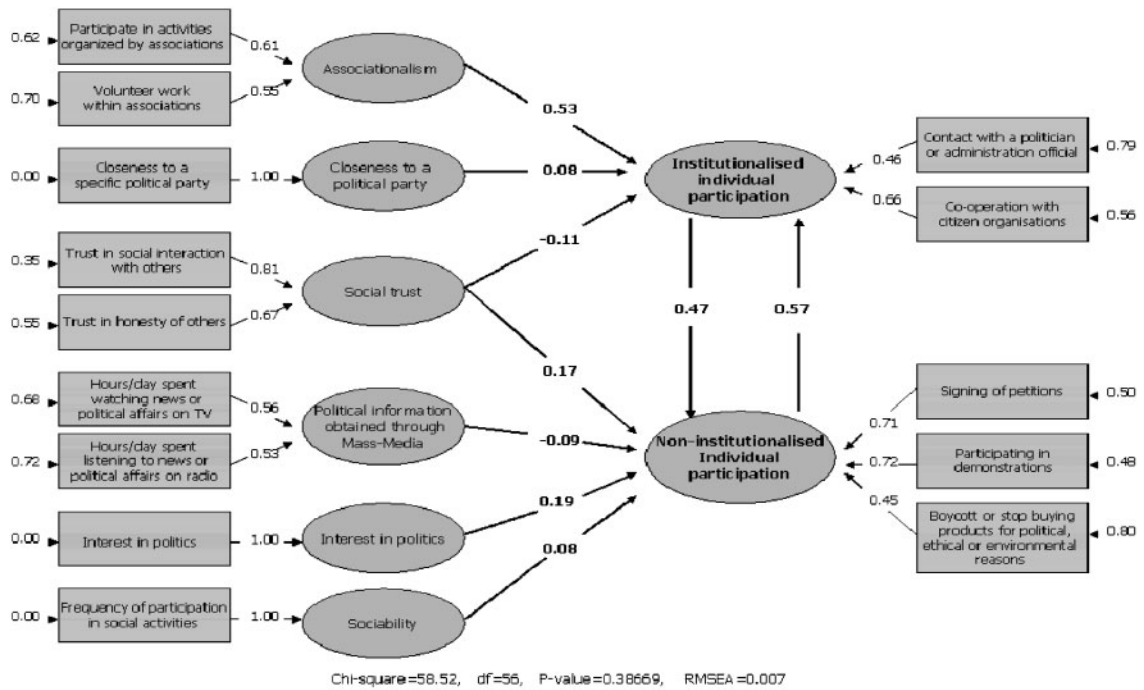


Figure 4 Model of individual social participation in the social and political sphere

of latent variables, both endogenous and exogenous, and the relations resulting between them, through which we can observe relations of dependence between some and others.

The first issue to point out with regard to the participation model generated (Figure 4) is that it is non-recursive, which means that the two ways of individual participation under consideration (institutionalized participation and non-institutionalized participation) hold a reciprocal relationship, that is, the two resulting ways of participation are in some sense complementary or mutually feed on each other. However, each of the two models of participation rests on different attitudes and actions, which allows us to assume that certain attitudes or actions better reflect some ways of participation than others, and provides us with valuable information to better understand the relations that provide empirical coherence to one or the other model of participation. Below is the general diagram of the model and the assessment of its empirical fit.

Validation of the Model

Different sources have been used in the validation process of the model. In this article we present two

of them, leaving to one side the structural equations which, due to their complexity, we have deemed convenient not to include, although we must point out the high percentage of explained variance resulting from them: the equation regarding institutionalized individual participation would explain, through this model, 93 per cent of the variance of this variable and the equation regarding non-institutionalized individual participation, would offer an explanation of 65 per cent of the total variance of said variable. Both results allow us to value positively the empirical fit of the model and the validity of the working hypothesis which we have presented up to now in this article. We shall now present the global indices of goodness of fit of the model in order to show different statistics that ensure the empirical validity of our proposal. And lastly, we present the analysis of the significance of the coefficients of the diagrams in Figure 4, which help us to graphically assess the relations of dependence between the variables that form part of the model (Ping, 2004).

Fit indices

The most commonly used fit indices for model validation are the following: chi-square, degrees of freedom, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and *P*-value (Alaminos, 2004, 2005).

Table 1 Coefficients of goodness-of-fit

Statistical tests	Variation	Recommended values	Values of model
RMSEA		<0.05	0.0066
P-Value	0–1	>0.05	0.38669
GFI	0–1	>0.90	0.99
AGFI	0–1	>0.90	0.98
NFI	0–1	>0.80	0.98
NNFI	0–1	>0.95	1.00
SRMR		Values close to 0	0.018

Chi-square measured the general fit of the model with the data. The chi-square value is 58.52 and the degrees of freedom value is 56, which indicates a good fit. Statistical tests based on chi-square are very sensitive to small errors in large samples. In our analysis we are dealing with an appreciable sample (983 cases), but in any case, given the sensitivity that this measurement has with regard to the sample size, many researchers have proposed a variety of indices to assess the fit of the models. All the goodness-of-fit measurements are functions of chi-square and of degrees of freedom, and many of these indices do not only consider the fit of the model, but also its simplicity (Hox and Bechger, 1998).

Jöreskog and Sörbom, the developers of the Lisrel program, which we have used for our model, also recommend the use of two indices of goodness of fit called goodness of fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1989). Rex Kline (1998), in the assessment of structural models fits, also recommends considering the results of a further three statistical tests: normed fit index (NFI), non normed fit index (NNFI) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). In the following table we can see the results of all these indices for the proposed model.

As shown in the Table 1, the fit indices have values within the ranges assumed as acceptable. The fit tests show a very low RMSEA (0.0066), as well as a probability much higher than 0.05 ($P=0.38669$), which indicates that the model we propose fits adequately with the data.

Relation coefficients in the diagram

The reading of diagrams can be of great use for describing and assessing the relations of dependence established between the variables. In the diagram we present, which is offered in its standardized solution (Figure 4), we can distinguish between the structural

model (comprised of the latent variables and their relations) and the measurement models (the systems of indicator variables for each of the latent variables).

The measurement models regarding the latent variables still show an adequate empirical fit, maintaining at large a relevant explanatory load with regard to the indicator variables, and therefore expressing an adequate measurement of the latent variables that generate them. We will not describe the measurements obtained, given that they confirm the same empirical fit as that obtained previously. This allows us to focus on the general results of the model, that is, on the relations between the latent variables. Nevertheless, we show the relations between the latent and the indicator variables in Figure 4.

With regard to the structural model, represented by the relations between latent variables, the first result to consider is the non-recursiveness of the model. There is, in this sense, a reciprocal relation between the endogenous variables, between institutionalized participation and non-institutionalized participation (with a standardized coefficient of 0.47) and vice versa (coefficient of 0.57), which can be interpreted as a mutual reinforcement between both ways of participation. This leads us to consider the two ways of participation as complementary (as was already suggested by Torcal and Lago, 2006), in such a way that the development of non-institutionalized behaviour would aid the development of institutionalized participation behaviour and vice versa.

With regard to participative attitudes, we see that institutionalized individual participation is related positively with associationalism (0.53) and closeness to a political party (0.08), which would act as cause variables, and therefore, would have the same statistical coordination (Figure 5). This would imply that, as the range of exogenous variables increased, so would the range of the endogenous variable, that is, the higher the associational activity of the individuals and the closer they felt to a political party, the more probable it would be for them to reflect the institutionalized forms of individual participation, rather than the other form of participation. In our study we find that this endogenous variable holds an inverse relation with social trust (-0.11), which would mean that institutionalized participation is inverse (and not directly proportional) to trust, that is, as the social trust of individuals decreases, we can better explain institutional ways of participation. The rest of exogenous variables have not revealed themselves as empirically relevant in the explanation of individual behaviour of institutionalized participation, but does show itself to be empirically relevant with regard to non-institutionalized participation.

Participative activities	Non-institutionalised individual participation	Institutionalised individual participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individuals who attend a demonstration ■ Individuals who boycott or stop buying products for ethical, political or environmental reasons. ■ Individuals who sign petitions in public campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individuals who contact public representatives or the Administration ■ Individuals who co-operate with associations
Attitudes	Sociability	
	Social trust	
	Closeness to political parties	
	Interest in politics	
	Political information through the mass media	

Figure 5 Summary of participation profiles and context

The other endogenous variable of the model, non-institutionalized individual participation, receives positive explanatory loads from three variables. Firstly, this way of participation would be explained taking into account social trust (0.17), which would indicate to us that an increase in the trust of individuals in the society that surrounds them would increase their chances of participation through channels outside the institutional framework designed for participation, as Uslaner (2004) already pointed out. Secondly, it has a positive relation with interest in politics (0.19). This relationship suggests that the higher the interest in politics of individuals, the higher the chances of finding non-institutional ways of participation. The third explanatory relationship of non-institutionalized individual participation comes from the variable ‘sociability’ (0.08). Its importance with regard to participation practices shows the relevance which interpersonal interaction in social networks has with regard to participation, but in this case not towards regulated means of participation, but rather towards non-institutionalized practices. All this leads to the conclusion that the higher the frequency of participation in social activities of individuals, the higher the tendency of those individuals to engage in non-institutionalized forms of participation.

The only negative relation presented by non-institutionalized participation is that which links this way of participation with *access to political information*

through the mass media, which suggest that politics understood in the terms given by the media is not a determining variable in non-institutionalized participative practice.

Revisiting the Sources of Participation

Once we have seen the relations that emerge from the model, tested their empirical validity and described the statistical coordination of the underlying casual mechanisms, we shall attempt to understand, with all the caution required when using these tools, some of the issues which arise regarding participation in Spain according to the results of our study.

The most relevant issue for us is the global result of the model. As far as we can see, the two different ways of participation can be deemed to be complementary. We might then think that citizens who participate in institutionalized participation actions are more likely to participate in non-institutional actions and vice versa. This result allows us to conceive of participation beyond a simple dichotomy. The complementary nature of both ways of participation allows us to look at citizen participation from another angle, paying attention to the range of activities that we can deem to be participative, instead of looking at it from well defined

profiles, or subjects firmly linked to an identity. All the activities, as we have seen, rest on different attitudinal predispositions, but from the point of view of the individual, they are still, generally speaking, participative activities. From this perspective, we can see that the different means of participation have become increasingly important for individuals, which points to the importance that new ways of (non-institutional) participation have acquired in contemporary societies as valid instruments for action. If this were the case, we could think that, increasingly, citizen participation is related to aims and forms of public intervention, rather than to pre-established attitudinal predispositions. This result would confirm the hypothesis that non-institutionalized forms of participation are no longer forms that are exclusive to specific individuals, as van Aelst and Walgrave (2001) suggests.

The model designed allows us, however, to speak of differences between the two forms of participation, in that both forms are related to different social and political attitudes. This would imply that, beyond the fact that the forms analysed can be understood as complementary, there are certain attitudes which help us understand one form of participative activity more than the other. Without the aim, or possibility, of establishing substantial differences between them, the results provide us with information to better understand the attitudinal contexts which we can expect from each of them, which, in turn, can help us understand the sense of each of the forms of participation in the contemporary participative sphere.

We must thus point out the result which, at first sight, may seem most counterintuitive if we follow Jan van Deth and Elff (2001, 2004): the attitude of individuals towards politics. In so far as non-institutional activities have been associated with an individualist spirit, their emergence has been interpreted as a deterioration in public engagement and civic welfare of democracy (Putnam, 1996, 2000). However, these relations do not seem to fit with the analysis of the data carried out. For instance, whereas interest in politics does not seem to be a significant attitude for institutional activities, such as associationalism, in our model it is, precisely, a good indicator of non-institutional activities. The higher the interest in politics expressed by individuals, the more likely they are to be engaged in non-institutional participative activities. In contrast, it is worth pointing to the positive relation existing between institutionalized participation and closeness to a political party. We must take into account that both practices do not have a reciprocal relationship, that is, closeness to a political party does not influence non-institutionalized participation and vice versa.

Bearing in mind the rest of relations we have already mentioned or the attitudinal context of both forms of participation, this difference could well reflect a different way of understanding political engagement. On one hand, it shows the relationship with party-related politics, whereas, on the other hand, it shows a relationship with a generic term (politics) which is not necessarily subjectively related to political parties. If to this we add that, in addition to closeness to a political party, we must explain a type of participation that does not rest on social trust or on the ties of social interaction in daily life, we may argue that there exists a distinctive political attitude, which, to say the least, is far from the stereotyped analysis made of the practices of institutional participation and its implications for the democratic sphere.

Much has been written on the advantages of associational activity in the public life of any community (Putnam, 1993; Van Deth, 2001; Warren, 2001; Hirst, 2002; Kwak *et al.*, 2004), a point which, a priori, we shall not deny, considering in addition the complementarity and reciprocity of both forms of participation. However, we believe that it is possible to contextualize the role attributed to associations in the light of the results obtained, with the aim of clarifying significant issues in the sphere of participation, as well as issues regarding public efforts to increase democratization through measures strongly tending to support associationalism. It is true that, in empirical studies, associational activity has been a noble indicator of community engagement and, to a certain degree, has been understood as an indicator of citizen commitment to democratic values (Putnam, 2000; Van Deth, 2001). We believe that, in the light of the results of our study, democratic values cannot be explained only in reference to the associational world, which may even show ambiguous attitudes to this respect, given that as soon as we take into account a wide attitudinal context (exogenous variables) and its interrelation with the two forms of participation under study, the elements which could explain institutional participation are very different from those usually proposed. This has already been suggested by Lichterman (2006), Jan van Deth (2006), and Eliasoph (2001).

The problem posed here is related to the importance attributed to associational activities as an explanatory variable of participation in general and, by extension, as a reflection (thermometer) of the democratic political context, which has led to analytical generalizations (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). The model proposed here shows how associational activity contributes to explaining a type of participation in individual terms (institutionalized participation), but cannot explain the

all participative phenomena. For example, our model suggests that in order to understand institutionalized individual participation, social trust plays a relatively insignificant role as it has already been showed by some authors (Norris, 2001; Wollebaeck and Selle, 2002; Newton, 2006), which would suggest the need to rethink the role usually attributed to associations in this sense. If we examine at the results of the study, social trust acts as an indicator of the participative activities that take place outside the institutional participation mechanisms. In this sense we could question the equation that links democratic health and associational vigour, as in Delhey and Newton (2002), inverting the relation, given that if we consider that neither social trust nor interest in politics or sociability are elements that support institutional participative activities to any great extent, we can consider that the traditional values of democracy, which referred to the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, the ability to dialogue and argue, as well as the ability to participate with others, is supported to a greater extent by the other attitudes, based on interest in politics, social trust, and interaction with others. In a study on social trust in the United States, Uslaner and Conley (2003) expressed a similar conclusion, stating that among associations one could find particularized trust. This trust would bring values (strong and exclusive links within the association; weak links and distrust towards the outside) different from those usually mentioned as typical of a democratic civic culture. In the context of participation, and following our model, the associations would seem to be more of a reference for citizens with a low degree of social trust than a source of social trust, which would reinforce the idea that interest in politics and sociability might better explain non-institutionalized participation activities than those linked to associations.

Conclusions

The results of our study suggest a tension between the forms of participation considered, although in general terms they are compatible for individuals. Thus, in Spain we find individuals who use both mechanisms of participation, in the same way as we find individuals that only participate through institutional mechanisms or non-institutional mechanisms. The Spanish associationalist tradition, although not as strong as the European tradition if we look at the number of members (Montero *et al.*, 2006), has left an institutional participation fabric that is very much present in norms and cultural tradition. This may favour the existence of individuals that only participate through institutionalized mechanisms. In contrast with this

associationalist tradition, recent years have seen the emergence in Spain of non-institutional participation in the form of demonstrations (Jiménez, 2006) and, like in many other countries, consumer activism (Micheletti *et al.*, 2004, Ferrero and Fraile, 2006). Given that the adoption of one or the other form of participation, according to our study, is associated with a context of different attitudes and practices, we may think that there are individuals who prefer to participate through one form of participation only.

Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the participation channels are complementary. If we look at the usual definition, according to which participation is characterized by the possibility of individuals to influence politics (Brady, 1999; Torcal *et al.*, 2006), the compatibility of the mechanisms of participation should not be surprising. Regardless of the fact that one form is supported by associated individuals, with a low degree of social trust and closely related to a political party, and the other mechanism is supported by more trusting, more sociable individuals, with a greater interest in politics, both mechanisms are ways of exerting political influence. The compatibility of both channels tells us that for the population, non-institutional mechanisms are no longer exclusive to anyone and they have ceased to represent forms of protest on the fringes of legality. This can also be observed either in the recent discourse of the Spanish conservative party, which, since it lost the elections in 2004, after a term of government where they withstood crowded protest demonstrations (Jiménez 2006), they have supported and led a protest movement through demonstrations against the social democratic government. Beyond political opportunity, it becomes clear that the use of non-institutional mechanisms has surpassed the limits described by Crozier *et al.* (1975). Rather than degrading democracy or distorting civic values (Putnam, 1996), these mechanisms have become a source of democratic values, control of government, and generation of social trust.

The importance of non-conventional practices in democratic life has not gone unnoticed by administrations and international bodies such as the OECD (2001) or the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (2001). When it comes to recommending ways of strengthening democracy, these bodies point to the growing importance that these activities have gained in democratic life, pointing out that all these activities, frequently considered to be the basis of disaffection, are precisely the reflection of a democratic and critical attitude with regard to the existing participation channels. This would strengthen the initiatives that different administrations have shyly started launching aimed at formalizing new citizen participation

instruments based on a non-institutional spirit, through specific, open and deliberative participative processes (Stoker, 2001). Non-conventional instruments offer participative coverage to a wide sector of citizens who can participate, but perhaps do not do so through traditional channels. This leads us to consider a social and political scenario with room for ways of participation that are not regulated by corporate groups, which, far from being foreign to politics (and democracy), would seem to embrace it much more strongly than traditional institutionalized participation. Initiatives recently launched by administrations have in mind the emergence of non-institutional practices among citizens. Mechanisms such as citizen juries in Germany (Sintomer and Koehl, 2002), participatory budgeting in Spain (Ganuza and Álvarez, 2003) or deliberative surveys in Britain (Curtain, 2003) put into practice, then, structures of participation based on ways that do not require prior citizen organization.

Needless to say, there remain many ways of completing and adding to this work, which we feel is far from concluded and limited to the case under study. It certainly seems necessary to develop measurement instruments that take into account new ways of participation, and widen the study regarding participative attitudes to longer time periods. The applicability of the results presented suggests the convenience of carrying out research with designs that extend the number of indicators for the constructs used. However, we believe that non-institutional participative practices have considerable explanatory potential with regard to the development of democracy, and we think that continuing to explore this line will provide further insight into the political (and democratic) relations in contemporary societies.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Joan Font for his attentive and helpful comments. We learnt, too, from responses to the earlier, partial versions of this article presented at the Institute for Advanced Social Studies and at the University of Alicante. Many thanks also to the referees of the paper for their helpful comments.

Notes

1. The chi-square value in the proposed model is low (3.34), and is balanced with the degrees of freedom (4). It has a P -value of 0.50304 (values above 0.05 are deemed to be acceptable) and the value of Root Mean Square of Approximation

(RMSEA) is equal to 0, with values below 0.05 deemed to be acceptable. The diagram also shows that the t tests for each of the loads of the indicator variables have coefficients significantly different from zero. Therefore, we can conclude that the measurement model fit is correct and that it establishes the adequacy of the use of these variables in our analysis.

2. As in the case of endogenous variables, the measurement model of exogenous variables shows an adequate empirical fit. With regard to general goodness-of-fit statistical tests, the model has a low chi-square (8.39), a very high P -value (0.90727) and a RMSEA equivalent to 0, which indicates a good fit. Likewise, in the diagram, the t values of the loads have magnitudes significantly different from 0. The results of the fit of the measurement model allow us, therefore, to integrate these exogenous variables in the structural model, which we shall address further below.

References

- Alaminos, A. (2004). Tendencias en ideología política: estructura y contenidos. In Alaminos, A., Francés, F. and Santacreu, O. (Eds) (2005), *Socialización, ideología y participación. Casos prácticos de análisis estructural de covarianzas*. Alicante: Obets.
- Alaminos, A. (2005). *El análisis de la realidad social*. Alicante: Obets.
- Barnes, S. H. and Kaase, M. (Eds) (1979). *Political Action. Mass Participation in Five Western Countries*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Brady, H. (1999). Political participation. In Robinson, J. P., Shaver, P. R. and Wrightsman, L. S. (Eds), *Measures of Political Attitudes*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 737–801.
- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers (2001). Recommendation Rec (2001) 19: “Participation of citizens in local public life”, available at <http://www.coe.int> [accessed 9 October 2006].
- Crozier, M., Huntington, S. P. and Watanuki, J. (1975). *The Crisis of Democracy*. New York: New York University Press.
- Curtain, R. (2003). What role for citizens in developing and implementing public policy? Part 1. *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, available at http://www.apprn.org/pdf/Curtain_CitizenEngagementPart1.pdf [accessed on 20 September 2005].

- Dalton, R. J. (1999). Political support in advanced industrial democracies. In Norris, P. (Ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 57–78.
- Dalton, R. J. (2004). *Democratic challenges. Democratic Choices. The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Delhey, J. and Newton, K. (2002). *Who Trusts? The Origin of Social Trust in Seven Nations*. Berlin: WZB Publications.
- Eliasoph, N. (2001). *Avoiding Politics. How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. Cambridge and New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrer, M. and Fraile, M. (2006). *Exploring the Social Determinants of Political Consumerism in Western Europe*, Working Paper 57/2006, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, available at <http://www.uam.es> [accessed 11 June 2007].
- Ferrer, M., Medina, L. and Torcal, M. (2006). La participación política: factores explicativos. In Montero, J. R., Font, J. and Torcal, M. (Eds), *Ciudadanos, asociaciones y participación política en España*. Madrid: CIS, pp. 133–156.
- Font, J. (coord.) (2001). *Ciudadanos y decisiones públicas*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Ganuzo, E. and Álvarez, C. (Eds) (2003). *Democracia y Presupuestos Participativos*. Barcelona: Icaria.
- Hirst, P. (2002). Renewing democracy through associations. *Political Quarterly*, 73, 409–422.
- Hox, J. J. and Bechger, T. M. (1998). An introduction to structural equation modeling. *Family Science Review*, 11, 354–373.
- Inglehart, R. (1990). *Cultural Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jiménez, M. (2006). Cuando la protesta importa electoralmente. El perfil sociodemográfico y político de los manifestantes contra la guerra de Irak. *Papers*, 81, 42–65.
- Jöreskog, K. G. and Sörbom, D. (1989). *Lisrel 7: A Guide to the Program and Applications*. Chicago: SPSS.
- Kline, R. B. (1998). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kwak, N., Shah, D. V. and Holbert, R. (2004). Connecting, trusting and participating: the direct and interactive effects of social associations. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57, 643–652.
- Kwon, H.-K. (2004). Associations, civic norms and democracy: revisiting the Italian case. *Theory and Society*, 33, 135–166.
- Lichterhan, P. (2006). Social capital or group style? Rescuing Tocqueville's insights on civic engagement. *Theory and Society*, 35, 529–563.
- Micheletti, M., Follesdal, A. and Stolle, D. (2004). *Politics, Products and Markets. Exploring Political Consumerism Past and Present*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Montero, J. R., Font, J. and Torcal, M. (Eds) (2006). *Ciudadanos, asociaciones y participación política en España*, Madrid: CIS.
- Montero, J. M. and Torcal, M. (2006). Some basic conclusion about political disaffection in contemporary democracies. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 335–342.
- Morales, L. (2005). Existe una crisis participativa? La evolución de la participación política y el asociacionismo en España. *Revista Española Ciencia Política*, 13, 51–87.
- Morales, L. and Mota, F. (2006). El asociacionismo en España. In Montero, J. R., Font, J. and Torcal, M. (Eds), *Ciudadanos, asociaciones y participación política en España*. Madrid: CIS, pp. 77–104.
- Newton, K. (2006). Institutional confidence and social trust: aggregate and individual relations. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 81–100.
- Newton, K. and Norris, P. (2000). Confidence in public institutions: faith, culture or performance. In Pharr, S. J. and Putnam, R. D. (Eds), *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 52–74.
- Norris, P. (1999). Conclusions: The growth of critical citizens and its consequences. In Norris, P. (Ed.) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, P. (2001). *Making Democracies Work: Social Capital and Civic Engagement in 47 Societies*, Paper prepared for EURESCO Conference Social Capital: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Exeter, UK, 15–20 September 2001.
- Norris, P., Walgrave, S. and van Aelst, P. (2006). Does protest signify disaffection? Demonstrators in a postindustrial democracy. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 279–307.

- OCDE (2001). *Citizens as Partners. Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-making*. Paris: OCDE.
- Offe, C. (2006) Political disaffection as an outcome of institutional practices? Some post-Tocquevillian speculations. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 23–45.
- Ping, R. A. (2004). *Testing Latent Variable Models with Survey Data*, 2nd edition, on-line monograph, available at <http://home.att.net/~rpingjr/lv1/toc1.htm> [accessed 21 June 2006].
- Pharr, S. J., and Putnam, R. D. (Eds) (2000). *Disaffected Democracies. What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pollit, C. and Bouckaert, G. (2000). *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. (1996). The strange disappearance of civic America. *American Prospect*, **24**, 34–48.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Sintomer, Y., Herberzg, C. and Röcke, A. (2006). *Participatory Budgets in Europe: Between Civic Participation and Modernisation of Public Administration*, available at www.buergerhaushalt-europa.de [accessed 15 July 2007].
- Sintomer, Y. and Koehl, E. (2002). *Les jurys citoyens de Berlin*, Centre Marc Bloch-Délégation Interministérielle pour la Ville, Berlin, available at <http://server.cmb.hu-berlin.de/publi/index1.html> [accessed 12 January 2006].
- Stoker, G. (2001). Trends in public participation: Part 1 – Local government perspectives. *Public Administration*, **79**, 205–222.
- Torcal, M. (2006). Political disaffection and democratization history in new democracies. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 157–190.
- Torcal, M. and Lago, I. (2006). Political participation, information and accountability: some consequences of political disaffection in new democracies. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R., (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 308–331.
- Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds) (2006). *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Torcal, M., Montero, J. M. and Teorell, J. (2006). La participación política en España: modos y niveles en perspectiva comparada. In Montero, J. R., Font, J. and Torcal, M. (Eds), *Ciudadanos, asociaciones y participación política en España*. Madrid: CIS, pp. 47–76.
- Uslaner, E. (2000). Democracy and Social Capital. In Warren, M. (Ed.), *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E. (2002). *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E. (2004). Bowling almost alone: political participation in a new democracy, *ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Emerging Repertoires of Political Action: Toward a Systematic Study of Postconventional Forms of Participation*, Uppsala, Sweden, April 13–18, 2004.
- Uslaner, E. and Conley, R. (2003). Civic engagement and particularized trust. *American Political Research*, **31**, 1–31.
- Van Aelst, P. and Walgrave, S. (2001). Who is that (wo)man in the street? From the normalisation of protest to the normalisation of the protester. *European Journal for Political Research*, **39**, 461–486.
- Van Deth, J. W. (2001). *The Proof of the Pudding: Social Capital, Democracy and Citizenship*, Paper prepared for EURESCO Conference on 'Social Capital: Interdisciplinary Perspectives' Exeter, UK, 15–20 September 2001.
- Van Deth, J. W. (2006). Democracy and involvement: the benevolent aspects of social participation. In Torcal, M. and Montero, J. R. (Eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics*. London: Routledge, pp. 101–129.
- Van Deth, J. W. and Elff, M. (2001). Politicisation and political interest in Europe: a multi-level approach, *Mannheim: Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung*; (MZES Working papers 36).
- Van Deth, J. W. and Elff, M. (2004). Politicisation, economic development and political interest in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, **43**, 477–508.
- Warren, M. E. (2001). *Democracy and Association*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wollebaek, D. and Selle, P. (2002). Does participation in voluntary associations contribute to social capital? The impact of intensity, scope and type. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, **31**, 32–61.

Wollmann, H. (Ed.) (2003). *Evaluation in Public Sector Reform: Concepts and Practice in International Perspective*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Authors' Addresses

Ernesto Ganuza Fernández (to whom correspondence should be addressed), IESA/CSIC (Instituto de Estudios Sociales Avanzados/Centro Superior de

Investigaciones Científicas), c/Campo Santo de los Mártires nº 7, 14004 Córdoba, Spain. Tel: 00-34-957.760.247; Fax: 00-34-957.760.153; Email: eganuza@iesa.csic.es

Francisco José Francés García, Universidad de Alicante, c/Puerto Rico, 3-4^ºB, 03600, Spain. Tel: 00-34-616869336; Email: francisco.frances@ua.es

Manuscript received: April 2007