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## THE MANY FACES OF HERMES: THE QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF MIGRANT AND NON-MIGRANT YOUTH

MARIA FERNANDES-JESUS, CARLA MALAFAIA,  
PEDRO D. FERREIRA, ELVIRA CICOGNANI, ISABEL MENEZES

**Abstract:** This paper intends to explore whether and how the quality of participation experiences is associated with political efficacy and the disposition of migrant and non-migrant young people to becoming involved. The sample includes 1010 young people of Portuguese, Angolan and Brazilian origin, aged between 15 and 29 years old. The results reveal that the quality of participation experiences is related to political efficacy and dispositions to becoming involved, but different groups seem to react differently to different forms of political action.

**Key words:** quality of participation; youth; immigrants; political efficacy; dispositions

### Introduction

A world of interesting ambiguities has guided research on civic and political participation, particularly in the past two decades. First, the very definition of participation has only recently evolved towards a comprehensive perspective that includes emerging and diverse forms of citizen participation. In fact, there was a tendency to focus almost exclusively on voting behaviour and conventional politics (Brady 1998; Van Deth and Elff 2004), which legitimized the academic and public discourses about citizens' political disengagement and apathy. Only more recently have models of civic and political participation explicitly included non-conventional forms of participation such as protest and consumer-related activities. For instance, Teorell, Torcal and Montero (2007) characterize political participation along five dimensions, including electoral participation, consumer participation (e.g. donating money, boycotting a product with a political purpose or signing petitions), party participation, protest (involving demonstrations, strikes or other protest actions), and, finally, contact with organizations, politicians or public officials. Therefore, the very conceptual definition of civic and political participation has been expanded and diversified, reflecting the variety of forms of civic and political behaviours. Second, the

ambiguity that characterized participation research was even more present as far as individual outcomes and the benefits of being engaged are concerned. In fact, participation was considered, uncritically, as positive and as a value, and rarely did research openly admit that participation can have detrimental consequences on political attitudes and dispositions. We believe that participation, like Hermes, has many faces, performs many functions and may produce different outcomes. However, most research on participation seems to emphasize its “positive” character. But does participation always lead to positive changes in political attitudes such as political efficacy or dispositions to becoming involved in the future? Are there relevant psychological criteria associated with the variations in these experiences? And, finally, do these criteria apply to culturally diverse groups of young people? This paper intends to explore these issues using data from a research project involving national and migrant youth in Portugal. The research is part of a larger European study, PIDOP (Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation), supported by the 7th European Framework. Our sample includes 1010 participants aged between 15 and 29 years old, of Portuguese, Angolan and Brazilian origin.

### **On the many outcomes of civic and political participation**

Several studies have considered the benefits of civic and political participation, emphasizing mainly positive outcomes such as social well-being (e.g. Klar and Kasser 2009; Ryan and Deci 2001), community and individual empowerment (e.g. Barker, 1999; Benford and Hunt 1995; Kelly and Breinlinger 1996) political efficacy (e.g. Bandura 2000; Craig, Niemi and Silver 1990; Niemi, Craig and Mattei 1991), political skills and civic virtues, such as tolerance and trust (e.g. Putnam 1993; Warren 2001). Thus, participation seems to be directly linked with empowerment—a process through which citizens gain control over their lives, participate in collective decision-making and gain critical awareness of the social and political contexts (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995). The relationships between participation and empowerment are complex and probably bi-directional. Indeed, several social movement theories are becoming increasingly focused on the role of efficacy and empowerment processes in participation (Bandura 1997, 2000; Klandermans 1997) but also on the role of participation in empowerment—which we are more interested in.

However, the positive impact of participation (e.g. Flanagan and Sherrod 1998; Roschelle, Turpin and Elias 2000; Metz, McLelland and Youniss 2003), has been questioned in recent studies calling attention to some potentially negative consequences of these experiences such as stereotypes, conformity, scepticism and distrust (e.g. Menezes 2003; de Piccoli, Colombo and Mosso 2004; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005). Recently, Klar and Kasser (2009) pointed out that the effects of participation on social well-being are not consistent for all forms of participation, giving illegal means of participation as a negative example. Some decades ago, Flinkel (1987) stressed that conventional participation, such as voting and campaigning, seems to foster political efficacy, while non-conventional forms of participation, such as peaceful protest but also violence, could foster the opposite. There is also a growing discussion about the role of organizational characteristics (Putnam 2000; Maloney, van Deth and Robteutscher 2008), and the differences between members and non-members in specific types of voluntary associations (van Deth 2010); however, Yang and

Pandey consider that it is still “unclear how organizational characteristics affect participation outcomes” (2011, 881). Thus, in order to identify and determine which types of participation are more beneficial for the individual, more research should be conducted.

Nonetheless, existing studies tend to focus mainly on content-specific dimensions of participation, and how these are related to apparent outcomes. In line with perspectives that consider development flows through the process of participation in socio-cultural activities (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa and Goldsmith 1995), our own research with Portuguese adolescents, young adults and adults (Azevedo 2009; Ferreira 2006; Veiga 2008; Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes, in press) has emphasized the importance of psychological factors that rely on classical contributions from developmental psychology, educational theory and political science to determine the quality of participation experiences. The assumption is that “the elements of challenge and support, of action and reflection [that previous research has associated with psychological growth] may be an important part of experiences such as getting involved in political parties, unions, social movements, volunteer work in the community, religious or recreational associations” (Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes, in press, s/p). The combination between opportunities for action and reflection in a supportive environment where pluralism and dissent are valued—i.e., the *quality of participation*—seems not only to characterize many current civic and political experiences, but also relevant attitudes, dispositions and behaviours (Azevedo 2009; Carneiro 2006; Ferreira 2006; Veiga 2008).

Moreover, in our increasingly diverse societies, it is important to recognize the potential cultural dimensions have in promoting diversity within the phenomena of civic and political participation. Existing studies tend to reveal a tendency for lower levels of civic and political participation among migrant youths (Vogel and Triandafyllidou 2005; Burns 2007; Paxton, Kunhovich and Hughes 2007; Norris 2002), not recognizing the existence of diversity in terms of contexts and forms of engagement (Stepick, Stepick and Labissiere 2008). Some years ago, Flinkel (1985, 87) suggested that ethnicity and gender could affect the way young people react to various modes of political action. But, so far, no studies have considered that cultural dimensions may have an influence on the individual benefits of participation. Does the quality of participation experiences similarly influence young people from different cultural backgrounds, such as those with immigrant status? This is exactly the main topic of this paper, where we intend to explore whether (and how) the quality of participation experiences is related to political efficacy and dispositions regarding future involvement for three different sub-groups of young people: a majority group (of Portuguese origin) and two minority groups (of Angolan and Brazilian origin).

## **Method**

### *Data collection and participants*

The data for this study were collected under PIDOP—Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation, a European project studying civic and political participation in young people. Participants were recruited mainly in the metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, from a variety of contexts, such as religious associations, immigrant associations, youth organizations, regular and vocational schools, higher education institutions, and

immigrant support centres. The sample included 1010 young people of Portuguese, Angolan and Brazilian origin, aged 15 to 29 years old, and approximately balanced in terms of gender. The Portuguese subsample consisted of a total of 388 participants, with 166 men and 222 women; the Angolan subsample constituted a total of 255 participants, including 121 men and 134 women; and the Brazilian subsample contained a total of 367 participants, with 158 men and 208 women. Both migrant groups come from Portuguese-speaking countries that were former Portuguese colonies; however, migration from Brazil is more recent, consequently fewer young people of Brazilian origin have Portuguese citizenship when compared to Angolans.

### *Measurement*

The instrument was a self-administered questionnaire developed under PIDOP and based on existing research in the field. We used a Portuguese version of the questionnaire, which was translated and revised by experts and prospective respondents, as all groups are native Portuguese-speakers. The final instrument had a wide set of items and scales measuring attitudes, behaviours and dispositions towards civic and political participation. In this paper we will focus on the quality of participation experiences, political efficacy, and dispositions to becoming involved in the future.

### *Quality of participation experiences*

The questionnaire regarding participation experiences consisted of two parts (Questionário das Experiências de Participação—QEP) (Ferreira and Menezes 2001) and was designed to collect information about the social and political participation experiences—and their developmental quality—of adolescents and adults (Ferreira and Menezes 2001). In the first part participants were asked to consider a variety of groups, associations and movements, tell us which ones they participated in, and give information on the continuity and the duration of the involvement. The second part of the QEP constituted the Quality of Participations Experiences scale more properly considered, which combined seven items representing the action and reflection dimensions of participation experiences. The action subscale included items referring to opportunities for real action in real contexts, and to interaction with different others: e.g. *looked for information, in books, in the media or by asking others; participated in activities such as protests, petitions, meetings, assemblies, parties, and debates; organized activities such as protests, petitions, meetings, assemblies, parties, and debates; was directly involved in group decision-making*. The reflection subscale focused on the atmosphere experienced and the presence of pluralism, openness to difference and dissension, and opportunities to reflect on the action: e.g. *felt that there were a variety of points of view being discussed; observed conflicting opinions that introduced new ways of perceiving the issues in question; saw real and/or everyday life problems being the focus of discussion. Respondents positioned themselves on each item on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from not frequently to very frequently*.

Under PIDOP we performed exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA); CFA reported a very good model fit ( $X^2/df= 2.651$ ; CFI=.991, GFI=.988, RMSEA=.054;

P [rmsea $\leq$ .05] = .357) of the two dimensional solution; thus, the quality of participation experiences scale was composed of two reliable subscales (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ =.81;  $\alpha$ =.84).

### *Political efficacy*

Political efficacy was a three dimensional construct constituted by internal efficacy—beliefs about one's own ability to influence political processes; external efficacy—beliefs about the responsiveness of government officials; and the collective—perceptions that a group can work together as a unit (Anderson 2010; Bandura 1997; 2000; Craig, Niemi and Silver 1990, Niemi, Craig and Mattei 1991). The sub-scale of internal political efficacy had two items: *I know more about politics than most people of my age*; and *when political issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say*. The external efficacy sub-scale also included two items: *the powerful leaders in the government care very little about the opinions of people*; and *in this country, a few individuals have a lot of political power, while the rest of the people have very little power*. Finally, the collective efficacy related to the ethnic group sub-scale and included: *I think that by working together, people of my own ethnic group can change things for the better*; and *by working together, people of my own ethnic group are able to influence the decisions which are made by government*.

Responses were given on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Our exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis indicated a three factor structure model ( $X^2/df$ = 2.476; CFI=.992; GFI=.981; RMSEA=0.051; P[rmsea $\leq$ .05] =.432). All the sub-scales had acceptable or high reliability: internal political efficacy ( $\alpha$ =.82), lack of external efficacy ( $\alpha$ =.70), and collective efficacy related to ethnic group ( $\alpha$ =.92).

### *Dispositions to becoming involved in the future*

Based on Lyons's (2008) scale of participation, the questionnaire contained a set of participation activities such as civic activities (three items, e.g. doing volunteer work), direct activities (four items, e.g. writing political messages or graffiti on walls), activities involving the internet (four items, e.g. discussing social or political questions on the net), economic activities (two items, e.g. boycotting or buying certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons). We asked participants to respond to the following item: *How likely are you to carry out each of these actions in the future?* Responses were given on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from not likely at all to very likely.

The four factor model was used and confirmatory analysis indicated an acceptable model fit with our data ( $X^2/df$ =5.625; CFI=.934, GFI=.926, RMSEA=.091; P[rmsea $\leq$ .05] <.000).

## **Results**

### *Cluster analysis*

As Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes (in press) have pointed out “the quality of participation experiences variable is not directly given by the QEP. This variable, as the underlying concept, combined both action and reflection dimensions of participation

experiences, by classifying participants into groups that distinctly articulate both dimensions”(s/p). The correlation between dimensions, action and reflection was moderate ( $r=.58$ ). Therefore, to classify the participants we conducted a cluster analysis, combining hierarchical and k-means clustering. The combined method allowed a more rigorous determination of the number of clusters and of the initial centroids to be used in the k-means analysis (Maroco 2007). The three clusters solution explained the seventy per cent variance.

Finally, because we were also interested in considering the subgroup of young people with no participation experiences, we reincluded the group showing ‘no participation experiences’ that had not been present in the clustering procedures. The final variable had four groups: no participation ( $N=327$ ); low quality of participation ( $N=118$ ) - low scores on the action dimension ( $M=1.44$ ;  $SD=.50$ ) and low scores on the reflection dimension ( $M=1.44$ ;  $SD=.51$ ); medium quality of participation ( $N=289$ ) - medium scores on the action dimension ( $M=2.4$ ;  $SD=.59$ ) and medium scores on the reflection dimension ( $M=3.3$ ;  $SD=.65$ ); high quality of participation ( $N=255$ ) - high scores on the action dimension ( $M=3.9$ ;  $SD=1.12$ ) and high scores on the reflection dimension ( $M=4.2$ ;  $SD=1.13$ ).

## MANCOVAS

In order to explore how the Quality of Participation Experiences was related to the scores of political efficacy and of dispositions to becoming involved we ran a series of multivariate analyses of covariance. As covariates we used gender (female and male) and the number of books a person had at home (less than 10, between 10 and 100, and more than 100 books), which is a classic indicator of parental cultural capital. These were used because preliminary multivariate analyses showed that they both had a statistically significant effect on political efficacy and dispositions to participating in the future. The quality of participation experiences (no participation, low, medium, high) was used as the differentiating factor. In order to explore the relationship between this variable and political efficacy and dispositions across groups, we performed the analysis separately for each subgroup: Portuguese origin, Angolan origin, and Brazilian origin.

## Political efficacy

Concerning political efficacy, multivariate tests showed that the quality of participation experiences had a statistically significant effect on the three groups: the Portuguese (Pillai’s

**Table 1.** Tests of between-subjects effects – political efficacy

| Efficacy/Group | Portuguese origin                  | Angolan origin                      | Brazilian origin                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Internal       | $F(3,368)=8.160$ ,<br>$p\leq.0001$ | $F(3,242)=10.451$ ,<br>$p\leq.0001$ | $F(3,344)=11.946$ ,<br>$p\leq.0001$ |
| Lack external  | $F(3,367)=1.5670$ ,<br>$p=.196$    | $F(3,242)= 5.573$ ,<br>$P=.001$     | $F(3,344)= 6.119$ ,<br>$p\leq.0001$ |
| Collective EG  | $F(3,367)=2.687$ ,<br>$p=.046$     | $F(3,242)=7.198$ ,<br>$p\leq.0001$  | $F(3,344)=2.624$ ,<br>$p=.050$      |

Trace=.074;  $F(9,1101)=3.098$ ,  $p=.001$ ); the Angolans (Pillai's Trace=.151;  $F(9,726)=4.287$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ) and the Brazilians (Pillai's Trace=.135;  $F(9,1032)=5.418$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ). For both minority groups, the tests of between-subjects effects showed that there was a statistically significant effect on all three dimensions of political efficacy: internal efficacy, lack of external efficacy and collective efficacy related to ethnic group.

### *Portuguese origin*

Pairwise comparisons did not indicate statistically significant differences on internal and collective political efficacy between the group with no experiences and that with low and medium quality participation experiences. In addition, the differences between groups were statistically significant when we compared the group with no participation and that with high quality experiences on internal political efficacy ( $p=.001$ ) and on collective efficacy ( $p=.017$ ). On the internal political efficacy sub-dimension we found statistically significant differences between the group with high quality experiences and all the other groups: no participation ( $p=.001$ ), low ( $p\leq.0001$ ), and medium quality participation experiences ( $p\leq.0001$ ). Thus, for the Portuguese group, high quality experiences are associated with higher levels of internal political efficacy and of collective efficacy related to ethnic group.

### *Angolan origin*

In the sample of young people of Angolan origin, pairwise comparisons showed that there are differences between those with no participation and those with low quality experiences on two dimensions, lack of external efficacy ( $p=.044$ ) and collective efficacy (ethnic group) ( $p=.043$ ). These results suggested that low quality participation experiences are associated with higher levels of external and collective efficacy related to the ethnic group, but not with higher levels of internal political efficacy. Additionally the group with high quality participation experiences was statistically significantly different from the group with no participation on both dimensions, lack of external efficacy, ( $p=.001$ ) and collective efficacy ( $p\leq.0001$ ). As far as the levels of internal political efficacy were concerned, the differences were statistically significant when we compared the group with no participation with the groups with high quality ( $p\leq.001$ ) and medium quality participation experiences ( $p=.031$ ). Thus, experiences of medium quality tend to be related to higher levels of internal efficacy. In turn, on the other two dimensions of political efficacy we found that high quality participation experiences seem to be associated with higher levels of efficacy.

### *Brazilian origin*

As with the Portuguese group, pairwise comparisons showed that on internal and lack of external efficacy, Brazilian youth with no participation experiences were not statistically different from those with low quality participation experiences. Instead, participation itself seemed to be associated with higher levels of collective efficacy related to ethnic group, since there are statistically significant differences between the group with no participation and those with low ( $p=.049$ ), medium ( $p=.035$ ) and high quality experiences ( $p=.009$ ). On



internal and collective efficacy there was also a statistically significant difference in the levels of political efficacy between the group with high participation and all the other groups [internal,  $p \leq .0001$ ; (lack) of external,  $p = .001$ ]; on both dimensions higher levels of efficacy tend to be associated with high levels in the quality of participatory experiences.

**Table 2.** Summary of means and standard deviation – political efficacy

|                         |              | Portuguese |      | Angolans |      | Brazilians |      |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
| Political efficacy      | QEP          | Mean       | SE   | Mean     | SE   | Mean       | SE   |
| Internal efficacy       | No particip. | 2.557      | .125 | 1.621    | .068 | 2.103      | .117 |
|                         | Low          | 2.264      | .157 | 1.991    | .224 | 2.033      | .140 |
|                         | Medium       | 2.598      | .091 | 2.000    | .159 | 2.379      | .095 |
|                         | High         | 3.086      | .101 | 2.458    | .139 | 2.935      | .108 |
| Lack of External        | No particip. | 3.309      | .133 | 2.310    | .082 | 3.273      | .132 |
|                         | Low          | 3.127      | .167 | 2.883    | .270 | 3.093      | .159 |
|                         | Medium       | 3.349      | .097 | 2.760    | .192 | 3.528      | .108 |
|                         | High         | 3.537      | .107 | 2.963    | .168 | 3.884      | .122 |
| Collective ethnic Group | No particip. | 3.079      | .139 | 2.105    | .082 | 2.996      | .141 |
|                         | Low          | 3.046      | .176 | 2.680    | .270 | 3.427      | .170 |
|                         | Medium       | 3.231      | .102 | 2.678    | .192 | 3.381      | .115 |
|                         | High         | 3.511      | .112 | 2.839    | .168 | 3.510      | .131 |

### *Dispositions to becoming involved*

Regarding dispositions to becoming involved, multivariate tests showed that the quality of participation experiences had a statistically significant effect for the three groups referred to above: the Portuguese (Pillai's Trace=.072;  $F(12,1071)=2.198$ ,  $p=.010$ ); the Angolans

**Table 3.** Tests of between-subjects effects—dispositions to become involved in future

| Participation/Group | Portuguese origin              | Angolan origin                        | Brazilian origin                     |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| On the Internet     | $F(3,358)=5.019$ ,<br>$p=.002$ | $F(3,239)=6.289$ , $p \leq .0001$     | $F(3,321)=5.797$ ,<br>$p=.001$       |
| Civic               | $F(3,358)=5.429$ ,<br>$p=.001$ | $F(3,239)=11.113$ ,<br>$p \leq .0001$ | $F(3,321)=9.826$ ,<br>$p \leq .0001$ |
| Economic            | $F(3,358)=4.168$ ,<br>$p=.006$ | $F(3,238)=7.244$ , $p \leq .0001$     | $F(3,321)=4.832$ ,<br>$p=.003$       |
| Direct              | $F(3,358)=3.359$ ,<br>$p=.019$ | $F(3,239)=5.741$ , $p=.001$           | $F(3,321)=2.157$ ,<br>$p=.093$       |

(Pillai's Trace=.223;  $F(12,714)=4.781$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ); and the Brazilians (Pillai's Trace=.110;  $F(12,960)=3.042$ ,  $p\leq.0001$ ). For the groups of Portuguese and Angolan origin, the tests of between-subjects effects indicated statistical significances on all the four dimensions: internet, civic, economic, and direct participation. By contrast, there were no significant differences in the direct participation of young people of Brazilian origin.

### *Portuguese origin*

Pairwise comparisons showed statistically significantly higher levels of dispositions to participate among youths with high quality participation experiences when compared to those with no experiences of participation (on the internet:  $p\leq.0001$ ; civic,  $p=.001$ ), with low quality (on the internet,  $p=.009$ ; civic,  $p=.002$ ) and medium quality participation experiences (on the internet,  $p=.045$ ; civic,  $p=.011$ ). Regarding economic participation we found there was a statistically significant difference between the groups with high quality experiences, the group with no participation experiences ( $p=.001$ ) and those with medium quality participation experiences ( $p=.006$ ). The same effects between the groups with high and low quality experiences ( $p=.054$ ) can be observed in direct participation. The fact that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups with no participation experiences and those with experiences of low quality, on all the four types of participation, seemed to suggest that having experiences of a low quality or having no experiences at all was not related to greater dispositions to becoming involved.

### *Angolan origin*

In terms of significant differences, pairwise tests revealed that there was a statistically significant increase in dispositions when the group with no participation was compared with the three others groups: low (internet,  $p=.035$ ; civic,  $p=.046$ ; direct,  $p=.010$ ); medium (internet,  $p\leq.0001$ ; civic,  $p=.001$ ; direct,  $p=.015$ ) and high quality (internet,  $p=.048$ ; civic,  $p\leq.0001$ ; direct,  $p=.003$ ). For economic participation the statistical effect was slightly different, as the group with no experiences did not differ from that with low quality participation ( $p=.370$ ), yet differences appear when we compare it with those groups with experiences of medium ( $p\leq.0001$ ) and high quality ( $p=.001$ ).

### *Brazilian origin*

Pairwise comparisons showed a statistically significant difference between the group with no participation and that with medium (on the internet:  $p=.047$ ; civic,  $p=.029$  and economic  $p=.006$ ) and high quality participation experiences (on the internet:  $p\leq.0001$ ; civic,  $p\leq.0001$ , and economic  $p\leq.0001$ ). Additionally, regarding both digital and civic participation, the group with high quality participation experiences presented stronger dispositions than the other groups: no participation (internet,  $p\leq.0001$ ; civic,  $p\leq.0001$ ) and low (on the internet,  $p=.004$ ; civic,  $p\leq.0001$ ) and medium quality participation (on the internet,  $p=.019$ , civic,  $p=.003$ ). Thus, the results showed that having participation experiences of low quality or having no experiences at all is not very different in terms of dispositions to becoming

involved in the future, and the significant changes regarding the dispositions occur only if the experiences are of medium and high quality.

**Table 4.** Summary of means and standardized deviation—dispositions to become involved in future

|                                   |              | Portuguese origin |      | Angolan origin |      | Brazilian origin |      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------|----------------|------|------------------|------|
| Civic and political participation | QEP          | Mean              | SE   | Mean           | SE   | Mean             | SE   |
| Participation on the internet     | No particip. | 2.517             | .131 | 1.345          | .059 | 2.010            | .133 |
|                                   | Low          | 2.593             | .167 | 1.774          | .194 | 2.132            | .158 |
|                                   | Medium       | 2.834             | .094 | 1.925          | .140 | 2.348            | .104 |
|                                   | High         | 3.115             | .103 | 1.614          | .122 | 2.714            | .116 |
| Civic participation               | No particip. | 2.520             | .132 | 1.529          | .071 | 2.436            | .131 |
|                                   | Low          | 2.470             | .167 | 2.021          | .235 | 2.401            | .155 |
|                                   | Medium       | 2.734             | .094 | 2.124          | .169 | 2.798            | .102 |
|                                   | High         | 3.090             | .103 | 2.370          | .148 | 3.264            | .113 |
| Participation economic            | No particip. | 2.507             | .138 | 1.484          | .071 | 2.147            | .145 |
|                                   | Low          | 2.727             | .175 | 1.705          | .235 | 2.359            | .172 |
|                                   | Medium       | 2.672             | .099 | 2.171          | .169 | 2.656            | .113 |
|                                   | High         | 3.076             | .108 | 2.041          | .148 | 2.840            | .126 |
| Direct participation              | No particip. | 1.916             | .113 | 1.311          | .058 | 1.688            | .096 |
|                                   | Low          | 2.021             | .143 | 1.830          | .191 | 1.679            | .115 |
|                                   | Medium       | 2.123             | .081 | 1.675          | .137 | 1.783            | .075 |
|                                   | High         | 2.348             | .088 | 1.715          | .120 | 1.973            | .084 |

## Discussion and conclusion

Consistent with a perspective that sees civic and political participation as having multiple facets, our research proposes that the quality of participation experiences should be scrutinized, as participation is not necessarily good. Throughout this study the association of participation with political efficacy and to dispositions to being politically active in the future were explored in relation to both young migrants and non-migrants in Portugal. Our findings are consistent with previous research that pointed out that the quality of civic and political participation experiences significantly influences political attitudes and that high quality participation experiences clearly seem to have positive effects at the individual level (Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes, in press). In fact, even if we acknowledge that there might be a possibility that high efficacy and dispositions could lead individuals to perceive their participation experiences as being of a higher quality, our perspective, based not only on theoretical contributions but also on evidence from previous longitudinal research (see Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes, in press), is that the quality of participation experiences directly affects political attitudes.

In our research, higher quality participation experiences are related to higher political efficacy and to dispositions to becoming involved in the future. For instance, in all groups, a significant change in the levels of internal efficacy demands experience of participation of a medium or high level quality. But, on collective efficacy, for both migrant groups being involved in participation experiences even of a limited quality seems to be related to higher levels of collective efficacy. This result suggests that participation itself seems to be associated with higher levels of collective efficacy of migrants groups, but for the majority group medium or high quality levels are necessary for there to be a significant improvement in the levels of collective efficacy. Regarding external political efficacy, in all groups, results indicate that higher quality participation experiences are associated with a decrease in positive opinions on the responsiveness of government officials—a result that is not surprising in the current political context, and that might suggest a more complex view of politics among young people. In terms of dispositions to becoming involved, groups of Portuguese and Brazilian origin show the same tendency: having low quality participation experiences is not significantly different from having no experiences at all. In the case of the group of Angolan origin, participation experiences, even those of a low quality, appear to have a positive impact on dispositions towards future involvement (with the exception of economic participation).

The results seem to confirm our expectation that different groups react differently to different forms of political action (Flinkel 1985, 87). But the data on the differences between groups suggest that immigrant status is not the only factor playing a role here. In fact, we can find more similarities between the immigrants of Brazilian origin and the majority group, than between the two migrant groups, of Angolan and Brazilian origin. Our results have shown that Angolans appear to be less engaged in all forms of participation (Fernandes-Jesus, Ribeiro, Malafaia, Menezes 2012), and a previous study suggests that Angolans report, more often than other groups, experiences of racism and discrimination (Ribeiro et al., in press). The simultaneous presence of low levels of participation and strong feelings of discrimination might impact on participation itself being a strong predictor of political attitude change in young people of Angolan origin, but not as strongly as is the case with the political attitudes of Portuguese and Brazilians. In this respect, Fennema and Tillie (2001) suggest that cultural factors contribute to different levels of political attitudes. Trickett (1994) also propose that we should look at immigrants as a heterogeneous group and recognize “diversity within diversity” (*ibid.*, 585). Thus, going beyond the idea that the relationship between participation and significant changes on political attitudes depends on the ability to promote moments of action combined with reflection, our results may mean that we can add that participation effects are also influenced by cultural factors. Future research should investigate the role of the quality of participation experiences on other dimensions of political attitudes and behaviours and among other groups so we can continue building a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the multiples facets of civic and political participation.<sup>1</sup>

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Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação  
/Faculty of Psychology and Education Science  
University of Porto  
Rua Alfredo Allen  
4200-135 Porto, Portugal  
E-mail:maria.fernandesjesus@gmail.com

Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação  
/Faculty of Psychology and Education Science  
University of Porto  
Rua Alfredo Allen  
4200-135 Porto, Portugal  
E-mail:carla.malafaia@hotmail.com

Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação  
/Faculty of Psychology and Education Science  
University of Porto  
Rua Alfredo Allen  
4200-135 Porto, Portugal  
E-mail: pferreira@fpce.up.pt

Department of Education,  
Alma Mater Studiorum,  
University of Bologna,  
Via Filippo Re 6,  
40126 Bologna, Italy  
E-mail:elvira.cicognani@unibo.it

Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação  
/Faculty of Psychology and Education Science  
University of Porto  
Rua Alfredo Allen  
4200-135 Porto, Portugal  
E-mail: imenezes@fpce.up.pt