

On the border of participation. NEET youth & political (in)activism in Europe

Vera Lomazzi

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne (Germany)

Introduction

The exclusion from the economic and educational processes has dramatic consequences on the civic and political participation too, fed by the reduced access to material and relational resources, and increased by the lost of self-efficacy. But how the Neets' (in)activism can be explained?



“NEETs” are a heterogeneous group (Eurofond, 2012; Rosina, 2015).

Does this reflect also in different levels of political (in)activism?

To what extent can the perception of opportunities and constrains instead of the individual agency (Evans, 2002) make the difference?

And what about risk & protection factors?

Does the context matter? Or NEETs are similarly (in)active regardless the context where they live?

Data & Methods

Data EVS 2008 & ESS 2008 (pooled data)

Sample 1130 young NEET (15-29 years old) in 10 countries (EE, FI, DE, IT, PT, ES, HR, SK, RU, UK)

Dependent variable Political activism index: a composite index (Welzel, 2013) which includes:

- Traditional political activism
- Civic activism
- Protest activism
- Propensity to activism (interest, trust)

Methods Stepwise regression model, adding a group of predictors in each step: M1: ascribed characteristics; M2: agency and control; M3: risk/protection factors; M4: country)

Results

Figure 1. NEET's Political Activism: Political activism index by sub-dimension and country (total score in brackets). Scores from 0 to 10, 10= maximum activism

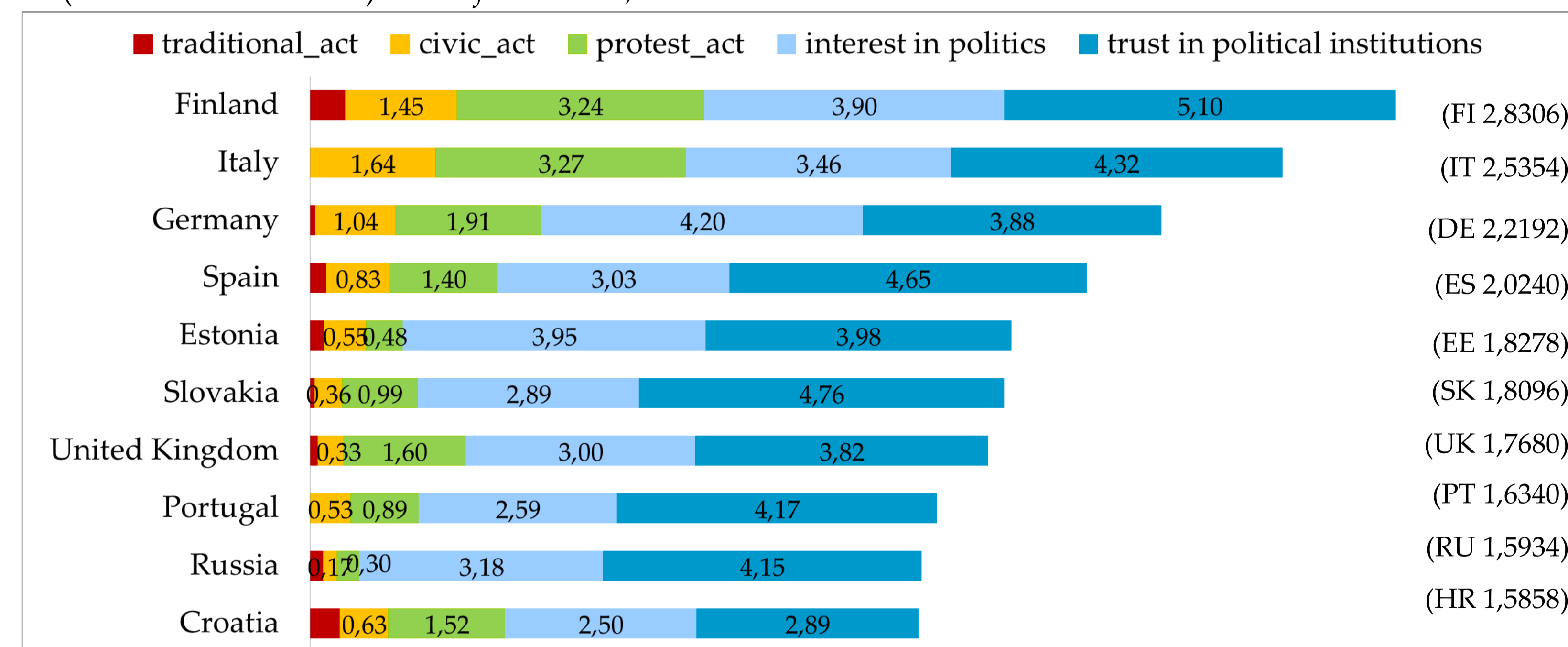


Table 1. NEET's Political Activism. Stepwise regression, unstandardized coefficients

| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| (Constant) | 1,955*** | 0,492* | -0,224* | -0,568* |
| <i>Ascribed characteristics</i> | | | | |
| Female (male=ref.) | -0,341*** | -0,360*** | -0,210 | -0,189 |
| Age (15-29) | 0,027 | 0,028* | 0,038* | 0,015 |
| Origin from other country (respondent or parent) | 0,002 | -0,067 | -0,057 | -0,086 |
| <i>Agency & control</i> | | | | |
| Status of health (1-4, 4=worst) | | 0,093 | 0,080 | 0,111 |
| Life satisfaction (1-10, 10=max) | | 0,014 | 0,001 | 0,013 |
| Be happy (1-4, 4=very much) | | 0,161* | 0,232** | 0,170* |
| People tend to be helpful (1-10, 10=max) | | 0,025 | 0,022 | 0,024 |
| Satisfaction for democracy in country (1-10, 10=max) | | 0,274*** | 0,195** | 0,161* |
| <i>Risk/protection factors</i> | | | | |
| Attendance to religious services (1-7, 7=every day) | | | 0,132*** | 0,142*** |
| Educational level (1-5, 5=liv. ISCED 5 and 6) | | | 0,120** | 0,193*** |
| Adequate household economic conditions (ref. not adequate) | | | 0,235* | 0,217* |
| Good household economic conditions (ref. not adequate) | | | 0,202 | 0,253 |
| At least one parent highly educated | | | 0,332** | 0,368** |
| At least one parent employed | | | 0,145 | 0,046 |
| Married/registered partnership (ref. never married) | | | -0,444*** | -0,219 |
| Previously married (ref. never married) | | | 0,220 | 0,459 |
| Being parent | | | -0,115 | -0,146 |
| Household size | | | -0,091** | -0,062* |
| <i>Context (Russia=ref)</i> | | | | |
| Croatia | | | | 0,350* |
| Estonia | | | | 0,752** |
| Finland | | | | 1,282*** |
| United Kingdom | | | | 0,710*** |
| Portugal | | | | 0,347* |
| Germany | | | | 1,064*** |
| Slovakia | | | | 0,435* |
| Spain | | | | 0,658*** |
| Italy | | | | 2,236*** |
| R Square | 0,016 | 0,068 | 0,159 | 0,26 |
| Adjusted R Square | 0,012 | 0,059 | 0,139 | 0,234 |
| Δ Adjusted R Square | | 0,067 | 0,080 | 0,195 |
| Std Error | 1,36302 | 1,33045 | 1,27213 | 1,20001 |

Conclusions

NEETs show really low participation in all the forms of political activism. However, they are not a “lost generation” a priori. Among this heterogeneous group, some of them are politically active, even if not in a traditional sense. What does make the difference?

The study proposes an explicative model of the NEETs' (in)activism: who perceives a certain degree of control on his/her life, experiments individual agency more than the others, and who can count on a bigger human and social capital, tends to participate more. In this way he/she keeps the links with society through the dynamics of the democratic participation.

Finally, also the context matters. Countries differ from one to another because of their participative culture, forms of social control, and youth policies. Further analyses should include these factors too, in more complex models.

References

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