Living, Doing, and Learning from Politics in a Youth Wing of a Political Party

Carla Malafaia
CIIE – Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade do Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen, 4200-135 Porto, Portugal, carla.malafaia@hotmail.com

Isabel Menezes
CIIE – Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade do Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen, 4200-135 Porto, Portugal, imenezes@fpce.up.pt

Tiago Neves
CIIE – Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade do Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen, 4200-135 Porto, Portugal, tiago@fpce.up.pt

Recommended APA Citation

Living, Doing, and Learning from Politics in a Youth Wing of a Political Party

Abstract

The field of civic and political participation has been studied mostly from individual, psychological approaches rather than collective, relational perspectives. Here we address this gap through a political ethnography in the youth wing of a major Portuguese political party, conducted during the fervent months right before and after the Portuguese parliamentary elections of October 2015. Investigating the meaning-making of doing politics in real-life contexts, we assess the collective learning processes involved in political participation. This paper shows that youth wings can provide quality participation experiences. Indeed, collectively envisioning and constructing a more democratic society and working for the public good are guiding principles of the wing. Debatement politics and pedagogical politics thus play a fundamental role in the wing's activity, even if they are accompanied by the more mundane, festive party politics and the backstage politics. Through their activity, the wing's members acquire and display high levels of political efficacy, critical thinking and effort regulation regarding political involvement. Methodologically, this paper shows that ethnography is well equipped to study the experience of participation, foregrounding activities and perceptions of wing's members in order to make sense of their learning processes and outcomes.

Keywords

Civic and Political Participation, Youth Wings, Political Ethnography, Learning

Creative Commons License

Acknowledgements

Living, Doing, and Learning from Politics in a Youth Wing of a Political Party

Carla Malafaia, Isabel Menezes, and Tiago Neves
Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal

The field of civic and political participation has been studied mostly from individual, psychological approaches rather than collective, relational perspectives. Here we address this gap through a political ethnography in the youth wing of a major Portuguese political party, conducted during the fervent months right before and after the Portuguese parliamentary elections of October 2015. Investigating the meaning-making of doing politics in real-life contexts, we assess the collective learning processes involved in political participation. This paper shows that youth wings can provide quality participation experiences. Indeed, collectively envisioning and constructing a more democratic society and working for the public good are guiding principles of the wing. Debatement politics and pedagogical politics thus play a fundamental role in the wing's activity, even if they are accompanied by the more mundane, festive party politics and the backstage politics. Through their activity, the wing's members acquire and display high levels of political efficacy, critical thinking and effort regulation regarding political involvement. Methodologically, this paper shows that ethnography is well equipped to study the experience of participation, foregrounding activities and perceptions of wing's members in order to make sense of their learning processes and outcomes. Keywords: Civic and Political Participation, Youth Wings, Political Ethnography, Learning

Introduction

The broad field of civic and political participation has been studied mostly from individual, psychological approaches rather than collective, relational perspectives. In addition, and in articulation with this, quantitative methods have been used more widely than qualitative ones (e.g., Auyero, 2006; Auyero & Joseph, 2007; Mahler, 2006; Schatz, 2009; Wedeen, 2010). In what concerns the use of ethnography, Javier Auyero (2006) called attention to the "*double absence*: of politics in ethnographic literature and of ethnography in studies of politics" (p. 258), and Schatz (2009, p. xi) states that "ethnography is generally underappreciated in academic political science," Similarly, Wedeen (2010) makes her point by quoting Pachirat's (2009) statement at the Institute for Qualitative Multi-Method Research in Syracuse: "if we think of the range of research methods in political science as a big family, ethnography is clearly the youngest, somewhat spoiled, attention-seeking child" (p. 256). This paper seeks to address this gap in the research literature. Indeed, through due consideration of the collective pedagogical processes – people learning by doing things together –, involved in political participation, ethnography can closely investigate the meaning-making of doing politics in real-life contexts, as it unfolds through time and space (Auyero, 2006; Baiocchi & Connor, 2008).

In order to fulfill this aim, we conducted an ethnographic study, spanning 6 months, in the youth wing of a major Portuguese political party. This fieldwork was framed by a particular socio-political context which, on the one hand, finds many resemblances with other southern European democracies and, on the other hand, came to be marked by a political turn that rendered Portugal a rather unique case in Europe. Over the last years, Portugal had been

governed under tight austerity measures, which led the Portuguese people to experience severe hardship, rising unemployment leading to massive emigration, and a general decline in the quality of life. Movements and rallies surfaced in Portugal which echoed similar events elsewhere, such as the *Indignados* in Spain, or the *Occupy Wall Street* in the United States. However, in late 2015, highly controversial elections took place, leading to "an historic experiment of the left-wing government in Portugal" (Lisi, 2017, para. 1) that has been governing the country ever since, proving the existence of an alternative to the mainstream austerity and portraying Portuguese government as a "role model for Europe's struggling socialists" (Ames, 2017, para. 1).

The ethnography of a youth wing of a political party, upon which this article rests, was framed by historic political dynamics – that eventually came to be closely followed by the international media – and also by a scenario of an increasing withdrawal of the young generations from institutional politics, following, in fact, the global alarms about the gap between the institutional arenas of political socialization and young people (e.g., Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010; Putnam, 2000; Zukin et al., 2006). Both these dimensions are grasped through an ethnographic work that looked specifically at what and how youngsters can learn from their participation in a rather unpopular youth participatory setting (the youth wings), but in a historical political moment. The pedagogical dimension of participation (the quality of participation experience) is, then, the main rationale behind the ethnographic work. The literature on political participation emphasizes its "crucial role for the development of democracy, both in shaping its institutions and in embedding and legitimizing them socially" (Forbrig, 2005, p. 12). However, it needs to be taken into account that not all participation is good and that the nature of the context of participation and the learning outcomes that such experiences produce need to be examined (Coimbra, 2012; Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, 2012; Fiorina, 1999; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005). Here, we present an analysis that can go beyond the self-report measures about the quality of participation, encompassing ethnographic accounts that show how the experience of participation within institutional politics may bring about highly significant learning outcomes – not only about the pluralistic nature of democracy, but also regarding competences that may, eventually, be useful in other personal and social spheres. Finally, and importantly, this research makes clear the usefulness of ethnography in bridging individual and collective levels of analysis, in making sense of and going beyond the data provided by quantitative analyses.

The Youth Wings

While youth wings are widespread phenomena, existing in plenty of African, Asian, Oceanic, European, and North and South American, there is surprisingly little knowledge about them. Therefore, it becomes crucial to "de-exoticize the extraordinary" (Mahler, 2006, p. 287), as suggested by sociology and anthropology. Also, some scholars emphasize that political parties should take their youth wings seriously (Pickard, 2015), calling attention to their responsibility in young people's political disengagement, as they practice "a myopic and exclusory party politics of youth" (Mycock & Tonge, 2012, p. 157) by often breaking the few electoral promises concerning youth issues, assuming a clear adult-centric political agenda and not giving voice to young members in their internal structure. Recent data confirms this situation: according to a Eurostat survey following the European elections of May 2014, only 19% of the Portuguese people aged 18-24 admitted having voted, as opposed to the European average of 28% (Pena, 2016, para. 1). There is the risk, then, that youngsters become politically irrelevant because political parties find it useless to try to persuade them to vote. Given this disengagement from formal politics is a global problem, how come research on those who find voting crucial and choose youth wings as fundamental contexts for their participation is so

scarce? Bruter and Harrison (2009, p. 1261) ask the same question: "Would it not be important to understand what is in their hearts and minds before they make it to the front benches of national political scenes?" Moreover, the little literature available about youth wings, especially in Europe, is mostly based on quantitative studies (Bennie & Russell, 2012; Bruter & Harrison, 2009; Cross & Young, 2008; Pickard, 2015; Scarrow & Gezgor, 2010).

Yet, youth wing members are particularly useful to represent young people's interests and link them to formal politics which, as argued above, is currently a pressing and hard task. A youth wing follows the same hierarchical structure as its parent party: municipal branches integrated at a district level, and a national coordination. Moreover, as in other countries, Portuguese youth wing members are sometimes elected in the parliamentary elections, as the parties' deputies lists always have junior positions. Youth wings are often seen by the parent parties as the "much needed lifeblood for political parties" (Mycock & Tonge, 2012, p. 139), as a prime means of recruitment and also as important contexts of political socialization in both organizational and ideological terms (Hooghe, Stolle, & Stouthuysen, 2004; Mycock & Tonge, 2012). Similarly to British parties' youth wings, in Portugal, they aim especially at higher education students, although the minimum age for membership is 14 years old and the maximum 30 (Pickard, 2015). Frequently, youth wings have their own political agenda, which sometimes inspires the policies presented by the parent party, and other times reflects an explicit opposition to them as a result of different ideological stances between the youth wing and the parent party (Hansen, 2015; Russell, 2005). In fact, youth sections are characterized as "fiercely independent" and tend to defend more radical political ideas (Bennie & Russell, 2012). Ensuring the future of old-style politics, and still believing in the current mode of governance, in Portugal, a country with a total population of approximately 10 million people, there are approximately 90.000 youngsters engaged in youth wings. In what concerns more detailed data (e.g., age, occupation, level of education), we had trouble obtaining reliable information, as there are no organized records - a difficulty also reported by Pickard (2015) in England. As in other European countries, members of political parties play a mediator role between political elites and the community (Seyd & Whiteley, 2004).

Studying youth wings is not an easy task, though. It requires an approximation to contexts which are nowadays fraught with prejudice and distrust not only from the citizens in general but also from the social sciences' community, as exemplified by the statement of the most famous Portuguese sociologist (who happens to be left-wing): "youth wings are the greatest plague in Portuguese democracy" (Santos, 2013, para. 6). This type of judgment impacts their members, leading them to recognize their experience as

> bitter-sweet: on one hand, being part of a youth wing enables personal fulfilment based on civic participation and on sharing enriching collective experiences; but, on the other hand, it requires confrontation with a political reality too often unfair and discouraging, and particularly with being discredited by a large group of young people that do not trust the goodwill of political parties as engines of change and progress (as said by a youth wing member) (Vicente, December 12th).

It should be highlighted that this situation is not exclusive to Portuguese youth wings. Sarah Pickard (2015), for example, refers the need for name changes that the youth wings of English mainstream political parties have gone through due to the very unfavorable and extreme reputations they were associated with.

Towards a Focus on the Pedagogical Dimension of Political Participation

Youth Civic and Political Participation

Civic and political behaviours and attitudes have been scrutinized in relation to structural, social and psychological variables (e.g., Costa, 2011; Geys, 2006; Magalhães, 2008; Sobel, 1993; Putnam, 2000; Stolle, 2007; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). This body of research demonstrates that civic and political participation is positively related to individual variables such as political knowledge, self-efficacy, and psychological empowerment (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2007; Stewart & Weinstein, 1997). Thus, we find in the literature emphatic statements about the importance of youngsters' civic and political participation, considering its significant role in predicting political behaviours in adulthood (e.g., Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Politicized networks, as well as political attitudes, are more easily developed at an early age, remaining throughout adulthood, and making youngsters who are not politically mobilized more likely to continue to be untargeted by political mobilization efforts when they grow older (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003).

For about a decade, scholars have emphasized that youngsters are shifting away from institutional forms of participation (Barrett & Zani, 2015; Harris et al., 2010; Menezes et al., 2012; Norris, 2002). Although this generation may "have the potential to be a potent political force," as they are a large generational block, they do not vote, preferring instead more fluid relations with politics and modes of participation that, for them, seem more effective in dealing with the issues they believe to be most important (Gilman & Stokes, 2014, p. 57). Concerns emerge, then, about how these new forms of participation may contribute to democracy; that is, when people stop voting and engaging with formal politics, there is an undeniable democratic deficit that has to be considered (Farthing, 2010). Following Norris (2002), the mobilizing agencies are crucial elements in promoting political activism. Political parties, for example, are either making little effort to attract young people (Forbrig, 2005) or having trouble presenting themselves as legitimate arenas of political power (Mycock & Tonge, 2012).

Being engaged therefore seems crucial, as it is a component of democratic, responsive and plural societies. But is this really true, regardless of the nature and the context of participation?

The Quality of Participation Experiences

Studies have shown that civic and political participation does not always and necessarily entail benefits, but can actually contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes, social distrust and social fragmentation (de Picolli, Colombo, & Mosso, 2004; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Menezes, 2003; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005). Coimbra (2012) straightforwardly makes this point, stressing that the "social risks, stereotyped views, conformist attitudes, distrust and skepticism sum up the less interesting results of political participation, when research dissociates it from the evaluation of the quality of such experiences" (p. 159). Other researchers have already brought to the table the discussion about the importance of considering the nature and outcomes of participation. Fiorina (1999) claimed that civic engagement in the political realm can be harmful given that the expansion of opportunities to participate in politics enables extremists to participate more, as they have higher expectations regarding changing the *status quo*. Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) discussed the democratic benefits of civic engagement by developing a systematic literature review regarding participation in civic groups. They claim that homogenous groups – the ones that people often join in – do not lead to political participation and do not promote democratic

values. Yet, to be sure, by getting involved in civic and political practices, "citizens need to learn that democracy is messy, inefficient and conflict-ridden" (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005, p. 227). Therefore, participation can mean several negative things: the exclusion of others who are different (Putnam, 2000), the protection of a certain status (Kohn, 2002), the cultivation of selfish interest (Rosenblum, 1998), and the avoidance of any kind of political talk in order to preserve consensus-based environment (Eliasoph, 1998).

One can argue that politics can also mean consensus and a conflict-free environment and, therefore, a group in which this is preserved should be considered a good form of participation as well. Indeed, such features, per se, do not render a given group anti-democratic. However, they may contribute to an insulated living of democratic politics and turn people away from it, as eventually they will come to realize that doing politics is necessarily difficult. As pointed out by Walker (2002, p. 187), "democratic institutions exist not to level out differences between citizens, but to find ways to bring competing needs to the table and make difficult decisions about the allocation of resources and the production of values," Acknowledging each other's differences, learning from them, and constructing, together, a common-ground of conciliation is a slow and hard process that can produce frustrations.

Politics, then, is diversity, opposition, confrontation, and plurality. Learning, in its turn, entails a continuous organization and reorganization of experience through a process of reflection, in which the meaning of experience is amplified and the possibility of uncertainty is integrated (Dewey, 1916). Practicing and learning democracy may incorporate such features. Thus, some questions can now be raised: Does involvement in a youth wing of a political party instigate development? In other words, what can one learn from participating in a political party? To address questions like these, research has been developed with a particular focus on the meaning of participation for the individuals, according to its potential to promote action and reflection. Ferreira and Menezes (2001) developed the concept of *Quality of Participation Experiences*, later cast into a questionnaire, which explores the implications and meanings of participation. This concept rests "on classical contributions from developmental psychology, educational theory and political science to define criteria that could inform the quality of participation experiences" (Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, 2012, p. 1). The works of John Dewey (1916), Georg Herbert Mead (1934) and Jean Piaget (1941) were inspirational here, particularly regarding the importance of taking the role of the other and integrating the acknowledgement of difference in self-development. The idea of reflective abstraction also echoes in other literature that stresses the opportunities for social interaction as a source of cognitive conflict (Lind, 2000; Kohlberg & Wasserman, 1980). Additionally, the construct of Quality of Participation Experiences combines these educational and psychological views with contributions from political philosophy, particularly concerning the role of emotions in political experience (Bobbio, 1995; Walzer, 1995) and the relational, plural and confrontational dimension of politics, as it emerges from the interaction between different equals (Arendt, 2001).

In sum, the quality of participation presumes personally meaningful involvement, participating in diverse activities, searching for information and getting implicated in decision-making processes, within a plural environment. These are contextual features, assessed by the individuals when taking into account their most meaningful experiences of participation. As will be made clear in the next section, this construct guided our ethnographic work, once the youth wings had been found (in a previous phase of our research) to offer meaningful experiences, entailing opportunities to reflect about them in a plural and supportive environment.

Although the quantitative data pointed towards the youth wings for their learning potential, what happens inside such a context remained, in part, vague: on the one hand, we could not find ethnographic studies on youth wings, and on the other hand, while some studies

on the quality of participation cover this type of setting, they do not grasp what really happens in those contexts. This is particularly interesting considering that youth participation in institutional politics – either by voting turnout or getting involved in political parties – is clearly in abrupt decline, both in Portugal and elsewhere (e.g., García-Albacete, 2014; Magalhães & Sanz Moral, 2008; Menezes et al., 2012).

Method

The ethnographer who conducted the fieldwork that will now be presented is a young woman involved in research since 2008, having begun doing ethnography with young people in a disadvantaged urban area. At that time, she was working in the field of conflict mediation and since 2009 her scientific work has been focused on the individual and collective processes of youth civic and political participation, using a plurality of methods, likewise the other authors of this article. At some point, they felt the importance of researching this topic through an ethnographic lens, considering the scarcity of the use of ethnography in studying youth political participation and its usefulness in adding density to this field, along with other types of data.

Ethical Considerations and the Role of the Researcher

First, we should clarify the stance from which we observed; that is, the standpoint and context that situates the production of knowledge (Haraway, 1988), as the researcher's background in terms of his/her set of experiences, beliefs and interests "must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint" (Harding, 1987, p. 9). The ethnographer, a 26-year-old woman, conducted the fieldwork in the youth wing, which is composed mostly by male militants. The militants with whom she interacted more were between 19 and 27 years old. The fact that the ethnographer was virtually the same age as many wing members and volunteers facilitated the impression management efforts. Furthermore, while she had never been affiliated with any political party, she was ideologically close to this wing. It must be said, however, that the ethnographer realized that in the wing members' eyes, this ideological proximity turned her into a potential future militant (considering the constant search of the wing for new members and the fact the ethnographer could be suited to the requested profile), which demanded additional care to avoid predatory opportunism on the members' willingness to welcome her (Neves & Malafaia, 2016). The purpose of the study and the ethnographer's role was clarified from the beginning of the fieldwork. We agree that "it is certainly a mistake to assume that ethnographic fieldwork can ever be fully open and overt, with all the relevant participants giving their continued support based on a consistent understanding of the research" (Lugosi, 2006, p. 544). Yet, we believe that clarifying the researcher's role was essential for an ethically sound research. The word was spread among the members every time one of them introduced the ethnographer to others. The participants' confidentiality was assured every time the ethnography was disclosed. Thus, participants' names are fictional to ensure their anonymity. It should be added that our local context does not require the oversight of an Ethics Committee for this type of study.

Although the researcher already had some experience in conducting ethnography through participant observation with young people, one of the main new challenges had to do with the periods of intensive fieldwork, sometimes of several days non-stop (particularly during the summer camp and the electoral campaign). These periods were absolutely crucial in getting closer to the phenomenon, in identifying the main actors in the field, in inscribing her presence and to mingle in the research setting. In sum, to acquire the ability to act *as if* she belonged in (Goffman, 1993). Reflexivity and vigilance over our role and performance are, then, of utter

importance, since ethnography can easily slip from impression management to a predatory stance (Neves & Malafaia, 2016). Moreover, the ethnographer tried to be reciprocal during the fieldwork – despite the unbalanced terms that unavoidably frame the relationship between researcher and participants. To be sure, the ethnographer always tried to be useful: cleaning rooms, transporting activities' materials, rallying in the youth wing (e.g., waving flags, distributing leaflets), etc. These are the easier and peaceful ways to address reciprocity while doing participant observation. However, and even if we declined the requests for more direct, personal participation – for instance, by taking sides in meetings in which important political decisions were being discussed – it can be difficult to observe and participate, without direct impact, when we feel that declining a request can undermine reciprocity and impression management altogether. This came to happen when one of the participants asked the ethnographer to do street campaign. She had, of course, second thoughts about it. At the same time, a request for doing street campaign was that kind of situation in which the ethnographer remembered how important it is to return the favor of being allowed to be there, especially because nothing repays such favor. But this situation was not just about that, it was a test to assess the trust that was being invested in the relationship with her. The ethnographer felt she could not refuse.

> It was 1 am when we arrived at a popular party that was going on as part of the campaign program. Chico, who is revealing to be an important gatekeeper, began to distribute the pamphlets listing the political measures proposed by the wing.
>
> - Today I want to see you talking with people, doing campaign – Chico told me, challenging me.
>
> - All right – I replied.
>
> I am in [the youth wing] to understand this participation experience and, thus, I am here to do whatever they do, to go wherever they go, to see whatever they see. However, in the street campaign I do not talk to the people, I just hand them the leaflets while the [youth wing] members do all the talk. On the one hand, because I am interested in seeing the participants in that role, to follow their discourses, the way they interact with people and do campaign. On the other hand, doing campaign would be notoriously unnatural and, in some way, dishonest and unnecessary given my good integration here. Yet, I accepted Chico's request and followed his lead. I think he tried to include me as much as possible in the [youth wing]. It would have been a step behind to say no (September 26th).

While this was a way for the ethnographer to keep managing the impression and showed some reciprocity in the relationship with the participants, it was also a moment in which the ethnographer questioned the limits of what she could and could not do. In fact, the more the ethnographer felt the participants were giving her access to privileged information and moments, the more she felt obliged to be reciprocal. Acts of reciprocity, besides helping building rapport, may also provide important insights (Baiocchi, Bennett, Cordner, Klein, & Savell, 2014). In fact, the campaigning episode (which will be portrayed again, later in the article) ended up with a youth wing member explaining to the ethnographer how they believe the campaign should be done, and we came to understand that, for them, it is a privileged

moment of political education that is often undervalued and instrumentalized by the political party.

Research Design and Purpose

The study presented in this article is grounded in a previous application of the *Participation Experiences Questionnaire* (QEP), a self-report measure aimed at capturing the developmental quality promoted by participatory settings (that is, whether or not they offer opportunities to reflect and integrate the meanings of experiences, and to interact with plural perspectives) in long-term experiences. QEP is an instrument validated in several studies with adults and young people in Portugal (people from both national and migrant origins). Previous studies have shown that high-quality experiences are related to the individuals' political development and their likelihood of future involvement (Ferreira, 2006; Azevedo, 2009; Fernandes-Jesus, Malafaia, Ribeiro, & Menezes, 2015).

We first administered the QEP questionnaire to 1107 Portuguese youngsters (from the 8th [176 boys and 173 girls] and 11th grades [162 boys and 221 girls], and the 2nd year of University [89 boys and 286 girls]), from private and public schools and Universities, located in rural and urban areas, in the northern area of Portugal. The diversification of the sample aimed to encompass different perspectives and experiences. The respondents started by identifying their civic and political experiences (e.g., in political parties, social movements, groups of volunteering, religious organizations, etc.) and their duration, rating their degree of involvement in the experience considered the most meaningful. Then, they were asked to consider the opportunities for action and reflection the latter offered[1]. This stage enabled us to gain knowledge of the more relevant youth participation contexts. In a cross-analysis of the group with higher participation quality and the contexts that respondents engaged in for more than 6 months, youth wings of political parties and political movements or groups were those shown to offer higher quality participation (80,6% and 77,3%, respectively). In other words, the larger percentage of young respondents classified into the "high quality" cluster, which is the group with the higher scores on the action and reflection dimensions stated that their most meaningful experiences were in the contexts mentioned.

Given that the proponents of the QEP have already stressed the need for further research through different methodological tools, namely qualitative methods (Ferreira et al., 2012), as they can add density to the understanding of participatory processes, selecting the youth wing of a political party to carry out ethnographic work was a rather straightforward decision based on our previous application of the QEP questionnaire. More than simply having youngsters talk about the features of their experiences that may resemble the condiments associated to quality of participation (something that could be provided by other qualitative methods), we considered that ethnography is a more coherent research procedure. First, it is line with the construct of QEP itself – as it is a contextual measure that considers the features of the participatory settings in promoting quality experience – and, second, it is a more effective way of getting closer to the experiences of participation, as they happen. The meaning-making of being involved in a particular participatory setting is, then, more contextualised. Therefore, the recognition that political development is a fundamentally relational process framed by contextual dynamics propelled us to get closer to participation, studying it ethnographically, that is, "at a smaller scale and as [it] really happen[s]" (Baiocchi & Connor, 2008, p. 140).

---

[1] Quality of Participation Experiences results from a clustering procedure that classifies participants into groups that integrate both the action and reflection dimensions of the participation experience. Multiple cluster analyses are employed to classify participation on the basis of similarity derived from the scores of QEP subscales (action and reflection). The final variable has three groups: low quality of participation (low scores on action and reflection), medium and high quality.

Political ethnography provides access to a set of contingent interactions among people and groups, enabling access to unfolding processes, causes and effects (Tilly, 2006, p. 410), bringing to the fore individuals' actions, meanings and perceptions that are located in a particular political structure that influences them (Bayard de Volo & Schatz, 2004). Departing from Weber's conceptualization of politics as a vocation, Mahler (2006, pp. 283-284) stresses that, when studying political engagement, we need to develop methods capable of actually grasping "the experiential specifics of politics while recognizing the conditions that shape the possibility of those very experiences," We believe that ethnography can help to better understand the pedagogical features of participation experiences. Indeed, "by identifying what is at stake for agents in a given setting, we can begin to understand the character and quality of their experiences" (ibid., p. 292). Surely, studying politics through an anthropological approach implies vivisecting social actors' understandings and practices of politics: how they produce meanings regarding their experiences in the political world (Kuschnir, 2007). We believe that the use of political ethnography can contribute to grasping the nitty-gritty of political experiences and political socialization, promoting the dialogue between the individual effects (cognitive, psychological, motivational) of such experiences – as revealed by political scientists and political psychologists –, and the collective, relational dimension of such experiences.

What happens inside the participatory contexts, and how distinct modes of doing politics acquire meaning for youths was, then, the main purpose of this study. Specifically, we began the fieldwork aiming to grasp I) how participants understand their practices and perceive their roles within the participatory contexts; II) how youngsters envisage social change; and III) the extent to which participation can be a pedagogical process.

Setting of the Study and Field Entry

As stated beforehand, the results from the QEP questionnaire pointed to youth wings as participatory setting deserving to be studied. Therefore, we decided to contact one of the most representative wings in Portugal (i.e., one of those with more militants). We considered that one of the mainstream youth wings would be more representative of the youngsters' participatory choices, it would be at the centre of the political upheaval and it would predictably be a more "observable context" – in the sense that it would probably entail more ongoing activities, since it is formed by a high number of young people. Formal and informal contacts were made with the youth wing to get the respective authorizations for research.

Once none of us knew anyone from the wing, we asked around (to family, friends, and colleagues) for someone linked to the parent party of the wing at stake who could put us in touch with the youth wing. One of us was then informed by a member of the parent party, at a district level, about the email address of the person of the wing we should contact if we wanted to carry out a study like this. We emailed this person, explaining the goals and procedures of this research, also mentioning the name of the person belonging to the parent party that had provided us the contact. We started as soon as we got the authorization from this first person we contacted (at that time, the president of the local structure of the youth wing in Porto), who suggested us to kick off the fieldwork by going to a week-long youth wing summer camp, in August 2015. This event is one of the most important for youth wing members. In addition to a conferences' program scheduled for the week (with important party representatives), this is also an opportunity for all members of the country to be together for one week, getting to know each other, tuning up local and regional decisions, discussing politics and having fun. In 2015, this event also marked the beginning of the electoral campaign for the parliamentary election, symbolically kicked off by the speech of the general-secretary of the party in the last day of the camp. The ethnographer began the fieldwork by spending the entire week in the camp. It was intense and quite useful to get embedded in the youth wing spirit, as well as to speed up

the process of creating a network, once the ethnographer had the chance to be with the national leader, present the research and get closer to the members of the Porto district – who she did not know at that time but with whom she intended to be for the rest of the ethnography. The electoral campaign was beginning, and therefore the young wing was about to start a rather unusually active period. The researcher had the opportunity to take part in it by joining the district campaigning caravan in the following months, as well as the youth wing's meetings and activities, the local youth wing elections and the district convention.

Data Collection Procedures

Fieldwork was conducted for 6 months (from mid-August 2015 to mid-February 2016), during the fervent months right before and after the Portuguese parliamentary elections of October 4, 2015. These elections led to the deposition of the right-wing coalition that – with the assistance and supervision of a Troika composed of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission – had been governing the country in austeritarian fashion during the previous 4 years.

During the fieldwork we relied on ethnography's most pivotal technique of gathering data, participant observation, which entails "close-up, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the researcher embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do" (Wacquant, 2003, p. 5). In this study, we adhered strongly to Costa's (1986) suggestion that ethnography is very much about getting answers without asking questions. This was because we were seeking to introduce minimal disruptions in the natural flow of the contextual dynamics, in order to observe, the more genuinely as possible, the experiences of participation in those settings, as they "naturally" happen. To be sure, the goal was to potentiate immersion in the context, and not to record a given speech framed by a questions-answers format – which would impact the interaction between the participants and the ethnographer in the field.

The effort to focus our observation on specific research questions was meant to foster vigilance throughout the fieldwork by trying to double-check the data that was emerging from the fieldnotes, paying additional attention to some of the issues that began to be drawn as potentially relevant results. The research question that drove the ethnography was: what happens inside the participatory contexts that youngsters identify as personally most meaningful and particularly promising in their developmental quality? The goal was to describe and analyze the internal dynamics of youth participatory contexts in order to understand what features make them particularly relevant for youths today, the learning processes collectively occurring inside them, and the ways in which such settings promote distinctive participation experiences, with more developmental quality. Specifically, we wanted to know how participants make sense of their practices and roles within civic and political contexts, how those experiences impact them and how they intentionally project and perceive better social futures from collective ways of doing politics. The intention of these guidelines was to steer the research while, at the same time, avoiding constraining its scope. Considering the research aims are very much about grasping daily routines and the meaning-making *in loco*, participant observation would have to be the privileged method.

The fieldnotes were written on a regular basis and constituted our main recording device. The fieldnotes accounted for different moments of the youngsters' participation in the wing (summer camps, campaigning moments, meetings, conventions, political commissions, etc.) and, in total, they report about 340 hours of fieldwork in the abovementioned period (August-February); the first two months were those in which the ethnographer engaged in more and longer activities. In each field note, the ethnographer indicated the time frame of the day, the context (how she came to know about the event and its purpose), and everything she heard

and saw happening during that day. Because the time of contact was often of several hours, usually some quick notes were taken using keywords or writing short dialogues in the mobile phone during the instants she was alone (e.g., on her way to the bathroom, on coffee breaks, during cigarette breaks). At the end of each day, those jottings were developed in order to provide the full picture of the day, with more detailed descriptions of the context and the interactions the ethnographer had witnessed, also including links with previous notes that could gradually enlighten the story that the ethnography was about to tell. In this regard, having the research goals clearly set in the background and regular moments of discussion about the fieldwork between the researchers involved were fundamental. Trying to write down the fieldnotes on the same day the events happened was crucial in order to prevent the risk of significant memory losses and to make room for new information to be apprehended. This was particularly challenging during the first months, once the summer camp and the campaigning were characterised by rather intensive fieldwork. As reported by the ethnographer herself, "the non-stop fieldwork, for several days in a row, is demanding (…) the writing task is not easy, then – lots of notes are being sketched at 2 or 3 am, inside my tent, by the light of the mobile phone," (August 28th).

We believe that the exclusiveness of participant observation enabled us to make the best of the time in the field: that is, to "afford" to "just" being there, observing and participating, seeking a "thick description" of the groups when writing the fieldnotes (Geertz, 1993). Thus, while we considered we were aware of the "generative power of the field work" (Neves, 2008, p. 55), we also tried to define what we were looking for. The data collected in this way is completely fuelled by interaction and framed by a given context. To be sure, doing recorded interviews – for instance - would enable a further development/validation of some of the results acquired through the participant observation. Also, by using only participant observation, the possibility of participants expressing themselves in more intentional, strategic fashion is severely curbed.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

The data analysis involved two researchers – the ethnographer of this work and a more experienced ethnographer (not involved in this fieldwork). First, both read through all the data to get familiarized with the fieldnotes, and then the data were coded into categories. "Coding begins with the ethnographer mentally asking questions of specific pieces of field note data" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 146). We followed this lead, considering the research questions that motivated this ethnography, as outlined above. As suggested by Emerson and colleagues (1995), in pursuing what seems significant to the participants, the ethnographers involved in the coding process started by writing down, on the margins of the fieldnotes, their interpretation and description of what was happening in the field. The following examples illustrate this process:

Differences between types of campaign	Ernesto said that the [youth wing] caravan is characterized by being informative. Unlike the type of campaign of the [parent party], there are no gifts, nor hats.
Citizens' distrust of political parties	In the streets, the members talked with several youngsters. At first, they seemed suspicious. "They are all the same" – we heard, about the political parties. However, they
Informative campaign	listened to Ernesto for almost an hour. The issues of youth emigration, job precariousness and disinvestment in the industry caught their attention. At some point, they came to enjoy listening to Ernesto, even asking more questions.

	They seemed impressed with the vast information he was displaying.
The approach to citizens' negative view of youth wings	At the convention, they were talking about the negative generalized view concerning the youth wings, saying that most of them are preconceptions that often do not correspond to the truth. Someone was saying that [the youth wing] is trying to make the difference in this regard. "The [youth wing] has to end the image of being closed" – Edmundo stressed.
Importance of students' associations / The perception of associative dimensions	He told me he considered surprising that the students' associations had not scored higher than the youth wings regarding "the quality of participation." He considers that the experiences in students' associations are highly meaningful.
Involvement in students' associations	In the meantime, I came to know that he [Chico] is vice-president of the students' associations of [a University]. "Is this the first time you do this [doing campaign]?" – I asked Edmundo – "It seems like you have quite a lot of experience in this," "I had the best school, the [Academic Association of a Portuguese city]" – he replied.

By observing how the members practiced their roles in the youth wing, in what terms they attributed meaning to their participation and the kinds of features that might distinguish this participatory context from others, the researchers began to describe this type of participation and participatory setting. Specifically, and taking the examples above, the code "differences between types of campaign" was about the distinction between how the youth wing and the parent party were conducting the campaign and their respective beliefs as to what a political campaign should be. While observing the young participants doing street campaign, the ethnographer witnessed the popular reactions to youth wings and, more broadly, to political parties, but also the participants' conception of campaigning in action. Considering other data coded similarly, the researchers involved in the analysis discussed this initial coding process and began to realize that there was a pattern among different moments in which the members of the wing stressed the importance of political information. They seemed to believe that by fostering informed and committed dialogues with citizens, they would be able to restore the credibility of institutional politics, youth wings included. Thus, we realised that what was at stake was one aspect of the meaning they were attributing to doing politics. This became particularly evident for us when, during a campaigning moment, one of the wing members explicitly stated that the right way to do it is through a "pedagogical" approach.

Based on the recorded observations, we proceeded with this first "line-by-line coding (…) as a way of opening up avenues of inquiry" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 151). Then, such coding was followed by a collective work of analysis, in which we passed form codes to categories. Using the examples, the codes titled "differences between types of campaign," "citizens" distrust of political parties and informative campaign" and "the approach to citizens' negative view of youth wings" came to integrate the category "pedagogical politics," which later, in the bigger picture, was assigned to the theme "Doing Politics," Similarly, both researchers noticed that the fieldnotes accounting for the "importance of students' associations/the perception of associative dimensions" were linked to the "involvement in

students' associations," This was based on the realization that the associative dimension was part of the participatory pathway of many members, playing a certain role in their ways of living politics. These codes were firstly categorised into a broad category named "characterization of the youth wing"; during the recodification work, this category was dropped and the categorization evolved towards more specific categories, such as "access to the youth wing," and respective sub-categories ("social capital"), that came to belong to the theme "Living Politics,"

INITIAL CODING	FINAL CATEGORY	THEME
Differences between types of campaign *Citizens' distrust of political parties* *Informative campaign* *The approach to citizens' negative view of youth wings*	Pedagogical Politics	Doing Politics
Importance of students' associations/ *The perception of associative dimensions*	Access to the youth wing [sub-category: social capital]	Living Politics
Involvement in students' associations		

In sorting fieldnotes (organising them according to codes and categories), we also sketched some analytical memos (either textual or schematic) and tried to reach inclusive themes that could be related to each other (Emerson et al., 1995). These transformations in the categorization happened as we moved from an open procedure to a more focused, analytical one. In drawing such links, we also understood that from particular ways of doings and living politics the young participants were also learning from it. This is the story we tell in this article.

To sum up, after familiarization with the data and coding it, we assigned data units to categories that eventually enabled the organization of the data into themes that, we hope, offer a coherent narrative to the fieldwork material. As mentioned, the analysis of the data was done by two researchers; this was a way to cross-check codes, by comparing and discussing results that were independently arrived at, aiming to ensure as much rigor as possible in the data interpretation (Creswell, 2009). The two main themes that will be presented in this article are "living politics" and "doing politics." The researchers created these themes in a final stage of the data organisation. The theme "living politics" accounts for elements that characterise ingrained principles in which the participants' roles and practices are grounded, impacting the ways of "doing politics" afterwards. The following categories are included: *access to the youth wing* (social and economic capital; natural arena of participation), *internal relationships* (friendship and affection; critiques to the hierarchy; mobilization; setting things up), *relationship with the general citizens* (monitoring of popular behaviour; proximity), and *to be successful in politics* (mobilization capacity; being present at all times; instrumental relationships, and politics above health). The second theme, "doing politics," is related to the practices and processes developed within the wing's structure, framing the collective participatory routines through which meaning is created. The categories in this theme include *debatement politics*, *pedagogical politics*, *party politics* and *backstage politics*.

These categories represent modes of describing how the members of the youth wing live and do politics, so a discussion can be drawn about how such a setting may promote learning and development. Throughout the presentation of these dimensions, regarded as the guiding principles of the experience of participation, verbatim examples from the fieldnotes, including participants' quotes, will be provided.

All participants in the research received a previous version of the paper we are presenting here. This was a way of getting participants' feedback on the accuracy of the data and on the trustworthiness of the interpretations. All of them acknowledged and thanked the reception of it, but only one participant offered feedback, stating that he had enjoyed reading what he called a "technical-sociological-anthropological" account of the youth wing.

The Experience of Participating in a Youth Wing: Living, Doing, and Learning

We have organized the data in three blocks, corresponding to the two themes described just above and to a third theme that results from the convergence of those two themes and discusses the articulation between them. For narrative purposes, these blocks will be presented sequentially. First, we will address what it is to be *living politics the youth wing way*. Here we will begin by focusing on issues regarding access to the youth wing, and then move on to how relationships are developed and framed, both with other members of the youth wing and with people outside it. This block ends with what we identified as a few principles for succeeding in politics. The second block refers to *doing politics*. It entails a description of four modes of doing politics, which we have named party, backstage, pedagogical, and debatement politics. These four modes offer an ample understanding of what doing politics in the youth wing means and involves. Finally, in the third block, we address what youth wing members *learn from* living politics the way they do and doing what they do. In addition to more general learnings, the development of political efficacy, critical thinking and the regulation of political effort and involvement emerged as major learning areas.

Living Politics the Youth Wing Way

Access to the youth wing

Youth wing members see it as a natural arena for civic and political participation. This becomes clear to the ethnographer when, during a dinner in one of the campaign's days, she asked the members about their entry trajectories into the youth wing:

> - I came to this youth wing because I believe that this is the way towards social change, this is the way to fight. I've always been concerned with social injustice, and the way to make a difference. So, for me, the question is more like: why is a person like you not a member of a youth wing or a political party? – Chico asks me.

> Cristina, who was sitting next to me, also shared her experience:

> - It is the same thing for me. I had also been involved in social and volunteering associations, and belonging to the youth wing was a kind of natural consequence, taking my commitment one step forward (September 26th).

This seems to suggest that, for these members, becoming part of a youth wing is a natural and obvious way of promoting social change. For them, it is a space for developing and fulfilling

goals they have sometimes pursued elsewhere before, or simultaneously, such as in voluntary and social intervention organizations, or student associations in high schools and universities. They strongly oppose the common prejudice against youth wings in Portugal, where they are often regarded as breeding grounds for empty-headed opportunists seeking positions and career in political parties. One of the oldest higher-rank members states assertively to an audience of youth wing members: "when people tell you that youth wings are nothing but lairs, reply confidently that this is the purest, most beautiful exercise of freedom" (Júlio, December 12th). This being said, it is acknowledged that students' associations at the university level are often associated with political youth wings, and that those who ascend to the high ranks of those students' associations have good chances of obtaining positions in the party – or the Government, if the party is ruling the country – be it in more technical, auxiliary roles or in political functions. During the youth wing camp, the ethnographer asked Laura (a 27-year-old-militant, engaged since she was 14 years old) about these links:

> - People here are very much connected to academic associations, aren't they?

> - Yes, to academic associations – Laura replied.

> - But are they connected to academic associations and only then get in the wing?

> - No. It's the opposite. Usually, people become wing members at an early age. They are already part of the wing and then, when they move on to higher education, things happen naturally… Because those are the settings where young people are – Laura explains.

> - And then [academic associations] act as a trampoline for political life, that is, as a way of making oneself more visible. Is that it?

> - Yes, of course. There are many cases like that. It is not disinterested. But there are also lots of people who, when they become 30 years old, leave the wing but do not enrol in the parent party. Because the wing is quite different from the parent party… The ideals become a bit lost… The wing is more based on friendship and affection. (…) (August 26th).

A crucial issue regarding access to the youth wing is, of course, money. While work in the wing is voluntary, and therefore involves no financial gains, in this youth wing, in particular, there is great care in ensuring that participation involves minimal expenses, or none at all. Thus, typically transportation and food are provided, and lodging – when necessary – is very cheap. In summary, while a lack of economic capital is no major obstacle to accessing the youth wing, the possession of social capital – reflected in belonging to a network of civic and political organizations – plays a relevant role in defining one's role and status in it, as such organizations both feed and are infiltrated by the youth wing. In fact, "the political field is a relatively closed social universe, where the ability to gain access to insiders and "important" players is largely determined by one's degree of social capital" (Mahler, 2006, p. 282). We must add that this is valid both for the ethnographer (who had the luck of being close to some of the big players – higher-rank members) and for the youth wing member, whose ability to network through other contexts of civil society makes him/her part of a network of trust inside the youth wing, pulling him/her into politics.

Internal relationships

With regard to relationships between members of the youth wing, friendship and affection are two of its defining features. It is clear from the data that the collective, intensive experience of political life produces strong emotions and, often, strong bonds between members. Intensity and closeness are most visible in that, during the most intense month of the campaign for the parliamentary elections of October 2015, the presidents of Porto's district and municipal organs of the youth wing all lived together in the same flat for practical reasons. As one of the oldest members stated: "Politics is made of affections. I tell you this: I did not come here to make friends, but I have many good friends here" (Chico, September 30th). Also, a camp with hundreds of participants, which was held for a week in the summer, played an important role in establishing networks and strengthening bonds between members. Ultimately, it is living politics intensely: the associated victories and defeats, the sharing of emotions that make high-ranked members of the youth wing say that friendship, camaraderie, and loyalty are fundamental in politics.

The intensity of life in the youth wing is also a consequence of two articulated traits that characterize its daily workings: mobilization and setting things up. By mobilization, we are referring to the continuous calling of members to take part in activities, whether internal to the wing or involving external agents, such as common citizens or the mass media. New technologies are very relevant in this respect, as SMS messages and Facebook groups are privileged means of communication. Setting things up is often the reason why members are mobilized, namely to provide manual labor and ensure the logistics for all types of political events, from rallies to conferences. Clear, methodical communication is a crucial element for ensuring speedy, extensive mobilization and efficient organization. Reflecting this, the Porto's district of the youth wing included in its Strategic Global Motion a specific topic on organization and communication. It contemplates several aspects, from creating a newsletter to creating video contents for the website, through to holding regular meetings at different territorial and political levels, and strengthening the bonds with politically aligned students' bodies.

Critiques are also a part of the daily workings of the youth wing, namely critiques to the comforts sometimes enjoyed by the higher ranks of hierarchy with regard to accommodation and absence from manual labor. Interestingly, while critiques to the party and its senior members were unheard during the electoral campaign, they surfaced quite emphatically after the elections, with accusations of internal fractures that prevented the party from uniting around its leader. In this respect, the youth wing members find themselves to be different from the party members in the sense that they were united throughout the electoral campaign, never putting the party's interest at stake for personal reasons. In addition, youth wing members also voiced strong critiques to what they considered the old-fashioned and unprofessional way the party led its campaign.

Relationship with the general citizens

With regard to the relationships with members of the public, that is, the citizens, whether they are old enough to vote or not, there is obviously the need to set things up for their participation in political events. This means, for example, contributing to setting up the venues for rallies during the electoral campaign, and also acting as security staff on behalf of the party leader. There is also a more systematic and politically strategic side to the relationship with common citizens, which involves closeness and monitoring in order to produce adequate interpretations of their behaviors and expectations. Seeking closeness with the public is, of course, clearly evident during campaign activities, be it in street propaganda actions where

leaflets are handed out, or in more prolonged interactions in which the political situation of the country is discussed. However, it is not limited to these short periods; on the contrary, it is part and parcel of a politics of proximity that the youth wing actively seeks to develop. As stated by a high-ranked member, "our action is grounded on local action, which is where daily lives are changed" (Edmundo, December 12th). Engaging with local organizations such as schools, hospitals, and factories is seen as integral to achieving this goal. Another crucial element is involving more and more young people in politics, with the youth wing acting as a mediator between the youths and the local political authorities; this can also be achieved through youth wing members being active in other civil society organizations. It is this kind of politics of proximity – the emphasis on local, micro-level activity – that enables making politics – and the youth wing – relevant to the people, but also to understand and monitor people's aspirations, to integrate them in political programs.

To be successful in politics

Living politics in this manner brings up a few unspoken, necessary – but not necessarily sufficient – principles that guide youth wing members to success in politics. First, one needs to be able to mobilize people, both inside and outside the wing, for a range of activities and events. This is a decisive sign of efficiency and commitment to a cause. Rafael, a youth wing member, a recent militant, when talked with the ethnographer about his family life, he addressed the way he became militant about one year ago:

> (…) I'm in the youth wing… my parents like the idea, they know I'm doing something good… Of course, I have a lot of things to learn with these guys! I have to thank Junior (president of one of the municipal branches) for bringing me here. I knew him already…And he knew that I have a lot of connections with students' associations, so he invited me to become part of the wing. So I think I'm a good asset for the wing, I know a lot of people, I'm persistent and determined (September 30th).

Second, these mobilization efforts may go as far as to develop instrumental intimate relationships: "I did things while I was in higher education which I regret. I started dating the vice-president of a faculty because I only had the support of three faculties and another guy had the support of two faculties. It was a close call…" (Ricardo, August 26th). Another sign, closely related to these, is the ability to be present at all times and to be regarded as someone who is always there. This principle is succinctly stated by one of the oldest members: "In politics it is important to see and to be seen" (Ricardo, August 27th). This continual availability is often achieved at the expense of one's health, which again is a signpost of personal commitment to defending a collective cause at all stakes. During the month of the electoral campaign, the members of the wing who lived together in a flat slept on average 4 hours per night, and at one point the only item in the fridge were cans of *Monster*, an energy drink, which were sometimes drunk in conjunction with *Mebocaine*, an analgesic and anti-inflammatory medicine for the throat and mouth. Politics above personal health is the fourth and final principle considered here. There is a continuous effort regulation, translated into a commitment to a range of political tasks, whether they are more or less stimulating (as in the case of participating in the campaign activities of the political party, which sometimes involves just singing along, waving flags and being present during the events). They are capable of doing what the parent party expects of them, do the kind of campaign they believe in, and keep everyone with a strong sense of collective political efficacy, as better demonstrated in the following section.

Doing Politics

While at the youth wing, we found that doing politics takes on different forms. Some are transparent, some rather opaque; some congruent, others possibly contradictory; some oriented to intellectual consideration, others to emotional attachment. Here we will go through each of them, in an attempt to show their workings and, ultimately, as will be illustrated in the next section, to reveal what can be learned from them.

Party politics

Party politics, which refers to the entertaining, festive side of political activity, emerged as a significant dimension of political work. It struck us on our very first day of fieldwork, on the bus to the youth wing summer camp. As we wrote at the time:

> In the bus, most people are aged between 18 and 23. In the bus, they act as if they are heading to a summer music festival, or as if they are in their finalists' trip. Alcohol and music set the scene for people to get to know each other better: the presidents of local structures of the wing introduce each other, make contacts, and suggest partnerships (August 25th).

This is a camp in which every young militant of the country could participate and, thus, it was also an opportunity for the young members from different districts to get in touch with each other. It was also a kind of preparation of the political campaign that would begin in the coming month. This camp also had an agenda of political debates and speeches with members and deputies of the party. Music plays an important role in bringing to the surface the more emotional side of politics. Singing along was not only a way of keeping spirits high in the youth wing van that toured the district of Porto during the electoral campaign, but also a means to elicit memories from previous campaigns and previous party leaders.

Senior party leaders can be idolized as rock stars, as parts of their speeches are remembered and given a new life through a kind of role plays in which a member of the wing recites them and another acts as the cheering crowd.

> "You can't imagine it. When the former party leader spoke, the ground trembled!" - said a wing member. I must confess I was surprised: people my age or younger knew political speeches [from years ago] by heart and recited them like someone singing the chorus of the most famous song of their favorite band (September 26th).

Together with simple noise ("The goal here is to shout out loud as much as possible" – Edmundo, September 26th), music was instrumental in setting the mood right for attending rallies, in mobilizing adherence to a cause based not only on rational arguments but also on emotions. This party-esque side of politics is well summarized by a wing member, addressing the ethnographer in the summer camp: "You can write it down: a good thing about the wing is that it conciliates two things: it mobilizes when it's necessary, but we also have a lot of fun" (August 25th).

Despite the fact that "we may never know the full motivations behind any political group" (Jasper, 2006, p. 424), the observation of "politics in action" enables a broad understanding of "the dispositions, skills, desires, and emotions of a variety of political actors and the meanings that they attach to their practices" (Auyero, 2006, p. 258). Our data help us

make sense of the role of emotions in the youth scene of conventional politics, and the strategies meant to sustain the spirit of members and keep their attachment.

Backstage politics

Whereas party politics is all about creating plain emotional attachment, backstage politics have to do with the political activities and decisions that take place outside of the standard or formal procedures, or imply options that, for one reason or the other, are not deemed suitable to be brought to daylight. This is most clear in what regards the organization of political events and the candidature to political positions. Providing any of these situations is deemed prestigious, it may happen that the preferences of the wing's leading group eventually find their way to becoming fulfilled. We are not referring to any sort of downright illegality, but rather to subtle ways of handling opposing interests. For example, while the process of selecting the person in charge of a significant political event was still under way, it was already clear that the higher ranks of the wing had a marked preference for one of them, which turned out to be the winner. In turn, this yet-to-be winner had already hinted that, with regard to selecting the location of the event, a bid coming a specific part of the district would have very good chances of winning. And, indeed, it won. It needs to be stressed that we are not saying that undeserving applications won. Certainly, we are not equipped to be judges of that. We can only say that, from the ethnographer's point of view, those victories came as anything but a surprise.

In the same vein, when a potential opponent manifests his intention to run in local elections for the wing, the current leaders are swift to arrange a meeting with him to try to talk him out of it.

> - Carla, you can't imagine! César applied for the presidency of [name of local structure of the wing]! - Carlos, told me, as he stood with Edmundo at the door. "Really?" - I asked. "Yes. We arranged a meeting with him, and I was even prepared for some political confrontation, but he made it too easy. As soon as we got there he said he had reconsidered and that he was going to give up... Damn, he didn't even put up a fight!" - said Edmundo, making fun of the situation (October 22nd).

Pedagogical politics

Side by side with backstage politics coexists what we have named pedagogical politics, which refers to the political activities oriented towards providing information to or training competencies of either youth wing members or common citizens – that is, pedagogical politics is oriented both internally and externally.

It is seen by the wing as opposed to indoctrination, and as a process through which trust in politicians, political parties and organizations can be restored. A member in a high rank is quite clear about this when speaking to another member in a street activity during the electoral campaign:

> We need to talk with people, it is important that we do a campaign of proximity. (…) Our way of doing this should be pedagogical. We have to do pedagogical politics in opposition to a doctrinary approach. We must be in touch with the people, close to them, explain things well so that those explanations can endure. Some moments later, Edmundo continued talking about the argumentation with

people, the importance of giving solid information and, therefore, explaining people their political cause (Edmundo, October 2nd).

After the parliamentary elections, the youth wing rhythm was marked by regular meetings of the district and municipal organs, and simultaneously the organization of the district convention. Throughout these activities, a recurrent theme was the internal training of youth members. At a local convention of the wing, a motion in favor of holding a training camp for members is emphatically approved. This weekend-long training camp should include topics like critical thinking, communication in public, team work, and political marketing.

The youth wing leaders showed concern with the lack of political (but also legal and economic) knowledge of some of its members, and thus very much interested in providing training in those areas. During a district meeting, one of the themes discussed was whether the Government should be formed only by elected members of parliament or not. This topic gave rise to a long discussion, in which several members gave their opinion. The next excerpt describes one of these moments:

> Chico favored this change, considering that in this way the population would feel better represented, as it is the people that elect the parliament. In his turn, Lucas said that it would generate promiscuity between the executive and legislative organs, and in any case, the Government is always scrutinized by the people through the elected members of parliament. (…)
>
> Edmundo stressed the need to "explain to people how the system works," In the same vein, Junior said that all they had been discussing pointed to the same thing: the need for political education in the schools, from an early age. "This is the only way people can get interested, understand the political process and get motivated to take part in it," he said.
>
> [Later, Edmundo added:] "Many people have no information, but the wing also serves the purpose of political training" (November 14th).

The description of this particular moment during a district meeting illustrates the concern that every member should acquire political knowledge in order to be well-prepared to represent the wing, its political causes and struggles, in order to face the generalized mistrust and prejudice against youth wings. Additionally, great emphasis is also placed on creating opportunities for political training of every citizen, particularly young people, namely in schools, in order to strengthen the quality of democracy and participation. This pedagogical approach is focused both on the inside of the youth wing and on the outside (the general population). With regard to the pedagogy of the common citizen, it is interesting to note that there is a fundamental opposition between the wing and the party: whereas the party invests, as mentioned above, in gifts and leaflets, the wing clearly prefers an informational, personalized approach that promotes political debate with the members of the public. Chico explained to the ethnographer how the youth wing believes that the street campaign should be carried out:

> Giving a pamphlet to someone is just an excuse to talk and debate with the person who receives the pamphlet. Because some of them could just not read our political proposals. It is a moment you can talk with the person about politics…explaining, asking questions, debating… - Chico said.

> I noticed that Chico became very critical when another member simply handed out the pamphlets to passersby without promoting any interaction, almost in a mechanized way. When this happened, I saw Chico going to speak with the member right away, telling him that he/she should try to speak with people. (September 24th)

We had the chance to witness plenty of long interactions with common citizens, usually young people with which topics such as youth emigration, labor market precariousness, and the lack of credibility of politicians and the political system were discussed. This pedagogical attitude is often faced with people's confrontational behavior towards the wing members, not only because of the generalized mistrust regarding politicians, but also because of the specific prejudice they hold against youth wings – seen, as mentioned before, as breeding grounds for opportunists. "This is ignorance" – Chico tells me. "If people were properly informed, if they read our program, our proposals, they would change their minds. But they don't want to know".

Debatement politics

Finally, debatement politics, perhaps the type of activity that most easily comes to mind when thinking of politics. Here, debatement refers to the discussions held between members of the wing, whether they are focused on policies and ideological contents or on organizational aspects.

Organizational matters frequently revolve around the interpretation of regulations and the decision-making regarding the logistics necessary for setting up events. While this latter topic follows common cost-benefit reasoning and involves the voluntary mobilization already mentioned, the interpretation of regulations, at first sight a rather arid subject, turns out to be very relevant not only for transparency reasons, but also because it is intertwined with notions of fairness and democracy. For example, there were lively discussions about gender quotas, the maximum admissible number of mandates in given political positions, and the possibility of electronic vote. Indeed, at some point it becomes impossible to set a clear line between these debates about organizational aspects and deep, fundamental ideological issues.

Different points of view are discussed, and disagreement takes place often in those moments of political discussion. In a plural environment, one in which every opinion counts, conditions are created so that every person feels that his/her opinion is valued by the group. The dialogue transcribed just above took place in a meeting with all the district militants, where the main points of a Strategic Global Motion were discussed. Interestingly, this meeting took place in a cafe, with all tables set in a circle, in order to intentionally promote an open discussion without the embarrassment created by pulpits and microphones. The Motion in discussion was previously sent to all members, and some participants were clearly prepared for it, having searched information on other countries in order to being able to present, during the discussion, alternatives and concrete data to sustain or disprove some measures under discussion. According to Menezes (2007), these are elements of the participation experience that the literature associates with the promotion of developmental quality.

As a complement to these current debates, there was frequent talk about the role the wing had played in the past in influencing the party's stance towards issues such as abortion, regionalization or the elimination of lifetime subventions for members of parliament, which in some cases actually produced major changes in the laws ruling the country. Such recollections highlight the relevance of the wing's work and commitment, and boosted motivation as they showed the wing at the forefront of political decision-making.

Debates in the wing ranged from the macro political settings like the relationship between Portugal and the European Union – including very recent topics like the refugees'

crisis –, to the micro, local politics – such as whether or not a given local authority should provide free textbooks to primary school students – an issue discussed by Chico and Ernesto during the lunch time, in one of the campaign days:

> - This is a policy I have been battling against – Ernesto said.
>
> - I never understood why you are against this measure – Chico said.
>
> - If you look at the dropout rates in primary education you see that this is not a problem, which proves that social action is working well in this level of education – Ernesto replied.
>
> - I'd rather have school books distributed for free even to people who are able to buy them if this ensures that people who can't buy them get access to the books – Chico argued.
>
> - I don't agree. We need to focus on more pressing matters – Ernesto countered.
>
> - Still, we're friends anyway. But let me tell you that you acted badly in the Municipal Assembly – Chico said.
>
> - No, I wasn't – Ernesto reacted.
>
> - Fuck that! Your mayor presents a left-wing policy and you oppose it! Well, congratulations then! – Chico replied as he put his arm around Ernesto's shoulder as they kept on walking (September 24th).

Also, the role of the party in the current Portuguese political situation was heavily discussed. The scope of political debate was thus wide, and debates lively. In conventions, it was clear that the wing serves as a school for political communication, as formal speeches were instrumental not only in putting ideas across, but also in mobilizing people through catchy, persuasive soundbytes. The following excerpt exemplifies what we mean, showing how new social and collective futures are imagined by/in the youth wing, which is significantly shaped by the big political scenario:

> The right-wing wants to persuade us that we need to live worse to have a better country, that we must cut down wages to stimulate the economy. But what is economic growth good for if not for paying better wages to the workers? This is their program, the program of an elite. (...) That is why the ideological defeat of the right has become so important. They have been on the upside for too long, but there is something they will never be able to do, which is to defeat history. We have brought down walls that lasted for decades, and brought the left to Portugal. Even knowing what the risks were, we dreamt. (...) The humiliating situation in which the Portuguese people find themselves is not only due to incompetent people in government; the problem is that the model of government of the right-wing sets the State against society. And that is corruption, that is stealing the State from people. (...) This is why we want the return of politics, of equality between people, equality between regions (...). This is our program. Our first conquest will have to be reclaiming the right to dream for citizens. The elites will say that such a right will be experimentalism and that chaos will

ensue. We will call that process democracy (Alexandre, speaking to an audience of youth wing members, December 12th).

Learning from Living and Doing Politics

As indicated just above, the wing is a setting for learning and practicing communication skills. It is also, has hopefully we have been able to make clear, a place for developing a number of other competencies. The abilities to mobilize other people, to negotiate different sensitivities and political stances, to be assertive, to manage information, to control one's motivation and that of others, are actively trained in the wing. In a sense, it is a school of life through which many transversal skills are acquired and, with them, social capital increases. More specifically, there are three important areas of learning: the regulation of political effort and involvement, critical thinking, and political efficacy.

The regulation of (political) effort and involvement, a fundamental feature of metacognition, is readily apparent in the constant monitoring of oneself, of the group, and of the citizens, as well as of the procedures needed to fulfill a given task effectively, skills which have already been described in this paper. Doing this, of course, requires persistence and determination, not giving up and taking advantage of every opportunity presented. As stated by Chico: "In war, in order to win, you must be prepared to die. Courage is what separates the strong from the weak" (September 30th). In the last day of the electoral campaign, when we were talking about what was to be done, he asserted that "we cannot abandon Porto on the last day of the campaign, we must struggle for the last voter in our home," as opposed to going to Lisbon for the final rally of the party's candidate (October 1st).

Additionally, critical thinking ability, which refers to applying previous knowledge to new situations in order to assess or solve them, was clearly observable, particularly in political debates between members - in which they did not shy away from making critical evaluations concerning fellow members' political stances, arguing and justifying their positions. Even more strikingly, it was observable in their direct political opposition to the parent party in cases in which they felt young people's interests and the youth wing's ideological positions were not considered. Critical thinking emerges, then, as a competence nurtured in the context of the youth wing, namely through debatement politics.

Finally, high levels of political efficacy, which refers to beliefs about one's personal (internal efficacy) and group (collective efficacy) ability to influence political processes, were easily observed. In this respect, features such as debatement and pedagogical politics, the continuous, intensive mobilization and the work and commitment to setting things up are all traces of strong beliefs in the ability to influence politics. In addition to the aforementioned recollections of the different times in which the wing managed to set the political agenda of the party and, in that way, of the country itself, it is clear that the members believe strongly that they are effective and competent in what they do. This recognition takes place at a personal level, as a member told the ethnographer at the beginning of the fieldwork:

> (...) you will also be able to see the political struggle in a strict sense: political debates, discussions, motions. And that is interesting. And, in those moments, I can tell you, for example, that myself, Edmundo and Eduardo are politically very strong. If we're together, forget about it: no-one can defeat us (September 30th).

Their self-confidence goes as far as one of them saying: "And listen, Carla, one of these days I'll be helping this guy become the president of the party!" (October 1st) or that the wing does not really follow the party – "(...) if anything, it's the party that follows the wing!" (December

12th). This confident tone surfaces frequently in self-complimentary remarks about the quality of the wing, particularly of its local branch, such as: "we are the best youth wing district in the country," "our district is a reference in the wing," "we did the best electoral campaign of the wing at district level in the whole country," There are, then, plenty of situations in which political efficacy is clearly observable.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our study shows that youth wings can provide quality participation experiences. Indeed, working for the public good is a guiding principle rather than a mere façade, and it may even involve a direct confrontation between the wing and the parent party. The fact that *debatement politics* and *pedagogical politics* play a fundamental role in the wing's activity is a testimony of this: they strive on negotiating individual and collective meanings of public good, in a process envisioning what is a better political and social world, and they gather efforts to work towards such scenario – what Baiocchi, Bennett, Cordner, Klein, and Savell (2014) call "civic imagination," Nevertheless, these two modes of political activity are accompanied by the more mundane and festive *party politics* and the not so virtuous *backstage politics*. Put together, however, these different modes of doing politics concur to wing members acquiring and displaying high levels of political efficacy, critical thinking, and effort regulation regarding political involvement.

Thus, we hope to have made clear that the youth wing is a quality civic and political participation setting. Indeed, the participants are involved in personally meaningful activities in which they have the opportunity to engage in decision-making processes aimed at solving real-life problems. Importantly, at least in this youth wing in particular, access to such quality participation experiences is not contingent upon the possession of economic capital, and this is of course a major feature of the democratization of such experiences. Also, this type of participation is very much anchored in, and reinforces, bonds of friendship and commitment between members. This happens for a number of reasons, the most relevant of which are, perhaps, the intensity of organizational activity and the relevance of political debates both between members and between members and the public – as seen in the section on *debatement politics*. In the same line, the relationship with the parent party, always in a tension between loyalty and confrontation, requires constant monitoring of one's own actions and, at the same time, is of assistance in locating oneself in a wider picture, often in terms of nationally relevant issues. Therefore, in this youth wing we have found an instance of the fact that "Partisanship (...) can also, in some circumstances, be a creative, motivating, and institutionally generative source of civic involvement and reform" (Mische, 2008, p. 23). This is an accord with what Eliasoph argues about voluntary work, suggesting that it should incorporate a clear political dimension that enables participants to grasp the bigger picture of the context and consequences of their work, rather than just keeping themselves to agreeing to do what "no humane person could disagree" with (Eliasoph, 2013, p. 12). The same problem is found by Annette in the fields of experiential learning and citizenship education which, he argues, often involve "a conception of the community that sees it simply as a place or neighborhood where students are merely "active": *doing good* rather than *political good (i.e., informed, effective citizens)*" (Annette, 2009, p. 152).

Indeed, the notion of working for the public good runs through the activities and discourses of the members, in what amounts to a concrete enactment of Baiocchi's et al. (2014, p. 20) *civic imagination*, defined as "the ways in which people individually and collectively envision a better political, social and civic environment, and work toward achieving that future". Thus, the wing's members regard it as a natural arena for civic and political participation, an arena to actually make things change; in a sense, as a privileged space for

combining the civic and the political, which quite definitely are not understood as antagonistic opposites (Mische, 2008, p. 339). This is of assistance in explaining why the wing promotes the participation of its members not only in voluntary and social intervention organizations, but also in student associations in high schools and universities. To be sure, this requires a positive understanding of politics as carried out by political parties. The fact that people commonly associate political parties to corruption, broken promises and opportunism (Mische, 2008, p. 2), and regard political parties and anti-civic (Mische, 2008, p. 343) are among the main reasons why the youth wing grants *pedagogical politics* so much relevance. Despite all of this, and in order to avoid romanticizing life on the youth wing, it should not be forgotten that it also involves - particularly in times of electoral campaign - a good deal of investment of time in festive, *party politics*, which one could argue is a less elevated - even if inescapable - form of doing politics than debates and pedagogy. Even more evidently, *backstage politics* do seem to introduce a degree of tension, perhaps even contradiction, with the more conscientious forms of doing politics mentioned above.

We also hope to have shown how, as a quality civic and political participation setting, the wing provides learning opportunities in three areas which, while shown to be crucial in other types of studies on participation, are rarely – if ever – analyzed in ethnographic studies: the regulation of political effort and involvement, critical thinking, and political efficacy. In this sense, we believe we have made clear that ethnography is well equipped to study the experience of participation as a relational and collective process, foregrounding the activities and perceptions of the wing's members in order to make sense of their learning processes and outcomes. This research could now be developed in two complementary strands: on the one hand, proceeding with ethnography of the youth wing in off-peak season (that is, in periods of time distant from electoral campaigns); on the other hand, delving into voluntary, civic work organizations to look for how "the political" is conceptualized and performed. This joint effort could provide further insights into how individuals manage their (shifting?) identities between political and civic settings. Therefore, it might not only shed light on processes of democratic activity and communication and community building but also, perhaps more importantly, enable a well-grounded debate on the links and tensions between the civic and the political.

Based on the limitations of this study, future research may focus on the participating individuals and their trajectories, rather than the participatory settings, so that the role of several political and civic settings in the development of politicized identities may be analyzed. Other qualitative methodologies may be useful in directly addressing the participants' motivations for participation, as well as their perceived impacts – even including a comparison between youth wings of different ideological stances, in which meanings and processes of political socialization may differ. Finally, engaging with non-participants (either the youngsters who dislike youth wings or those who withdrew from these kinds of structures) would enable making better sense of the outside perspectives regarding these organizations.

References

Ames, P. (2017, February 24). European left wants piece of Portugal's "contraption." *Politico*. Retrieved from http://www.politico.eu/article/antonio-costa-ps-socialists-european-left-wants-piece-of-portugal-contraption/

Annette, J. (2009). Active learning for active citizenship: Democratic citizenship and lifelong learning. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *4*, 149-160.

Arendt, H. (2001). *A condição humana* [The human condition] (R. Raposo, Trans.). Lisbon, Portugal: Relógio d'Água. (Original work published in 1958)

Auyero, J. (2006). Introductory note to politics under the microscope [Special Issue]. *Qualitative Sociology, 29*, 257-259.

Auyero, J., & Joseph, L. (2007). Introduction: Politics under the ethnographic microscope. In L. Joseph, M. Mahler, & J. Auyero (Eds.), *New perspectives in political ethnography* (pp. 1-13). New York, NY: Springer.

Azevedo, C. N. (2009). *Experiências de participação dos jovens: Um estudo longitudinal sobre a influência da qualidade de participação no desenvolvimento psicológico* [Participation experiences of young people: A longitudinal study on the influence of quality of participation in psychological development] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Porto, Porto, Portugal.

Baiocchi, G., & Connor, B. (2008). The ethnos in the polis: Political ethnographies in sociology. *Sociology Compass*, *2*, 139-155.

Baiocchi, G., Bennett, E. A., Cordner, A., Klein, P., & Savell, S. (2014). *Civic imagination: Making a difference in American political life*. London, UK: Routledge.

Barrett, M., & Zani, B. (2015). *Political and civic engagement: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. London, UK: Routledge.

Bayard de Volo, L., & Schatz, E. (2004). From the inside out: Ethnographic methods in political research. *Political Science and Politics*, *37*, 267-271.

Bennie, L., & Russell, A. (2012, September). *Radical or compliant? Young party members in Britain.* Paper presented at the Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) Conference, University of Oxford, UK. Retrieved from https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:177225&datastreamId=SUPPLEMENTARY-1.PDF

Bobbio, N. (1995). *Direita e esquerda: Razões e significados de uma distinção política* [Right and left: Reasons and meanings of a political distinction]. Lisbon, Portugal: Presença.

Bruter, M., & Harrison, S. (2009). Tomorrow's leaders? Understanding the involvement of young party members in six European democracies. *Comparative Political Studies, 42*, 1259-1291.

Coimbra, J. L. (2012). Sobre determinantes psicológicas e sociais da qualidade das experiências de participação social, cívica e política [On psychological and social determinants of the quality of experiences of social, civic and political participation]. In I. Menezes, N. Ribeiro, M. Fernandes-Jesus, C. Malafaia, & P. D. Ferreira (Eds.), *Agência e participação cívica e política: Jovens e imigrantes na construção da democracia* [Agency and civic and political participation: Youth and immigrants in the construction of democracy] (pp. 158-165). Porto, Portugal: Livpsic/Legis Editora.

Costa, A. F., da (1986). A pesquisa de terreno em sociologia [Field research in sociology]. In A. S. Silva & J. M. Pinto (Orgs.), *Metodologia das ciências sociais* [Methodology of social sciences] (pp. 129-148). Porto, Portugal: Edições Afrontamento.

Costa, P. R. (2011). *Marketing político e comportamento eleitoral nas eleições legislativas: Construção de um modelo explicativo*. [Political marketing and electoral behavior in the legislative elections: Construction of an explanatory model.] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Cross, W., & Young, L. (2008). Factors influencing the decision of the young politically engaged to join a political party: An investigation of the Canadian case. *Party Politics*, *14*, 345-369.

de Picolli, N., Colombo, M., & Mosso, C. (2004). Active participation as an expression of the sense of community. In A. Sánchez Vidal, A. Zambrano Constanzo, & M. Palacín Loi (Eds.), *Psicologia comunitaria europea: Comunidad, ética y valores* [European

community psychology: Community, ethics, and values] (pp. 262–271). Barcelona, Spain: Publicacions Universitat de Barcelona.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.

Eliasoph, N. (1998). *Avoiding politics: How Americans produce apathy in everyday life*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Eliasoph, N. (2013). *Making volunteers: Civic life after welfare's end*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Farthing, R. (2010). The politics of youthful antipolitics: Representing the "issue" of youth participation in politics. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *13*(2), 181-195.

Fernandes-Jesus, M., Malafaia, C., Ribeiro, N., & Menezes, I. (2015). Participation among youth, women, and migrants: Findings from Portugal. In M. Barrett & B. Zani (Eds.), *Political and civic engagement: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 314-333). East Sussex, UK: Routledge.

Ferreira, P. D. (2006). *Concepções de direitos activos de cidadania e experiências de participação na sociedade civil* [Concepts of active citizenship rights and experiences of participation in civil society] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal.

Ferreira, P. D., & Menezes, I. (2001). *Questionário das experiências de participação* [Participation experiences questionnaire] (Unpublished manuscript). Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal.

Ferreira, P. D., Azevedo, C., & Menezes, I. (2012). The developmental quality of participation experiences: Beyond the rhetoric that "participation is always good!" *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(3), 599-610.

Fiorina, M. P. (1999). Extreme voices: A dark side of civic engagement. In T. Skocpol & M. P. Fiorina (Eds.), *Civic engagement in American democracy* (pp. 395-425). Harrisonburg, VA: Brookings Institution Press.

Forbrig, J. (2005). Introduction: Democratic politics, legitimacy and youth participation. In J. Forbrig (Ed.), *Revisiting youth political participation: Challenges for research and democratic practice in Europe* (pp. 7-18). Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing.

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied Developmental Science*, *10*, 132-146.

García-Albacete, G. (2014). *Young people's political participation in Western Europe: Continuity or generational change?* Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Geys, B. (2006). Rational theories of voter turnout: A review. *Political Studies Review*, *4*, 16-35.

Geertz, C. (1993). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. London, UK: Fontana Press.

Gilman, H. R., & Stokes, E. (2014). *The civic and political participation of millennials.* Retrieved from https://s3.amazonaws.com/www.newamerica.org/downloads/The_Civic_and_Political_Participation_of_Millennials.pdf

Goffman, E. (1993). *A apresentação do eu na vida de todos os dias* [The presentation of self in everyday life] (M. S. Pereira, Trans.). Lisbon, Portugal: Relógio d'Água. (Original work published 1956)

Hansen, M. E. (2015). *Generational gap or different degrees of issue attention: Party youth wings and parent parties on youth integration on the labour market.* Retrieved from: https://sase.confex.com/sase/2015am/webprogram/Paper1424.html

Haraway, D. J. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 3*, 575-599.

Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (pp. 1-14). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Harris, A., Wyn, J., & Younes, S. (2010). Beyond apathetic or activist youth: Ordinary young people and contemporary forms of participation. *Young, Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, *18*(1), 9-32.

Hooghe, M., & Stolle, D. (2003). Age matters: Life cycle and cohort differences in the socialisation effect of voluntary participation. *European Political Science, 3*(2), 49-56.

Hooghe, M., Stolle, D., & Stouthuysen, P. (2004). Head start in politics: The recruitment function of youth organizations of political parties in Flanders (Belgium). *Party Politics*, *10*, 193-212.

Jasper, J. M. (2006). Freedom means endless beach reading [Special Issue]. *Qualitative Sociology*, *29*, 417-424.

Kohlberg, L., & Wasserman, E. (1980). The cognitive-developmental approach and the practicing counselor: An opportunity for counselors to rethink their roles. *Personnel and Guidance Journal, 58*, 559-567.

Kohn, M. (2002). Panacea or privilege? New approaches to democracy and association. *Political Theory*, *30*, 289-98.

Kuschni, K. (2007). Antropologia e política [Anthropology and politics]. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* [Brazilian Journal of Social Sciences], *22*, 165-167.

Lind, G. (2000). The importance of role-taking opportunities for self-sustaining moral development. *Journal of Research in Education*, *10*, 9-15.

Lisi, M. (2017, February 1). *There is no alternative, or is there? The historic experiment of the left-wing government in Portugal.* Retrieved from http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/02/01/historic-experiment-left-wing-government-in-portugal/

Lugosi, P. (2006). Between overt and covert research: Concealment and disclosure in an ethnographic study of commercial hospitality. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(3), 541-561.

Magalhães, P. (2008). Redes sociais e participação eleitoral em Portugal [Social networks and electoral participation in Portugal]. *Análise Social* [Social Analysis], *43*, 473-504.

Magalhães, P., & Sanz Moral, J. (2008). *Os jovens e a política: Um estudo do Centro de Sondagens e Estudos de Opinião da Universidade Católica Portuguesa* [Young people and politics: A study of the Center of Surveys and Opinion Studies of the Portuguese Catholic University]. Lisbon, Portugal: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, CESOP.

Mahler, M. (2006). Politics as a vocation: Notes toward a sensualist understanding of political engagement [Special Issue]. *Qualitative Sociology, 29*, 281-300.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. London, UK: The University of Chicago Press.

Menezes, I. (2003). Participation experiences and civic concepts, attitudes, and engagement: Implications for citizenship education projects. *European Educational Research Journal*, *2*(3), 430-445.

Menezes, I. (2007). *Participação cívica e política (Provas de agregação em Ciências da Educação)* [Civic and political participation (Tests of aggregation in Educational Sciences)]. Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto [Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto], Porto, Portugal.

Menezes, I., Ribeiro, N., Fernandes-Jesus, M., Malafaia, C., & Ferreira, P. (Eds.). (2012). *Agência e participação cívica e política: Jovens e imigrantes na construção da democracia* [Agency and civic and political participation: Youth and immigrants in the construction of democracy]. Porto, Portugal: Livpsic.

Mische, A. (2008). *Partisan publics: Communication and contention across Brazilian youth activist networks*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mycock, A., & Tonge, J. (2012). The party politics of youth citizenship and democratic engagement. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *65*, 138-161.

Neves, T. (2008). *Entre o educativo e o penitenciário. Etnografia de um centro de internamento de menores delinquentes* [Between the educational and the penitentiary. Ethnography of a detention center for juvenile offenders]. Porto, Portugal: CIIE e Edições Afrontamento.

Neves, T., & Malafaia, C. (2016). "You study people... That's ugly!": The implications of ethnographic deceptions for the ethnographer's ethics. In K. Bhopal & R. Deuchar (Eds.), *The complexities and dilemmas of researching marginalised groups* (pp. 50-61). New York, NY: Routledge.

Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic phoenix: Reinventing political activism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pena, P. (2016, January 31). Os jovens estão a desistir da política, e a política parece prescindir deles [Young people are giving up on politics, and politics seems to do without them]. *Público* [Public]. Retrieved from https://www.publico.pt/2016/01/31/politica/noticia/os-jovens-estao-a-desistir-da-politica-e-a-politica-parece-prescindir-deles-1721887

Piaget, J. (1941). *Études sociologiques* [Sociological studies]. Geneve, Switzerland: Droz.

Pickard, S. (2015). Trying to turn up the turnout: Youth wings and the youth vote in the 2015 general election. *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique* [French Review of British Civilization]*, 20*, 2-16.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Rosenblum, N. L. (1998). *Membership and morals: The personal uses of pluralism in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Russell, A. (2005). Political parties as vehicles of political engagement. *Parliamentary Affairs, 58*, 555-569.

Santos, B. de S. (2013, December 12). "A reflexão, as instituições e a rua." ["Reflection, institutions and the street"]. *Visão* [View]. Retrieved from http://visao.sapo.pt/opiniao/opiniao_boaventurasousasantos

Scarrow, S. E., & Gezgor, B. (2010). Declining memberships, changing members? European political party members in a new era. *Party Politics, 16*, 823-843.

Schatz, E. (2009). *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Sherrod, L., Flanagan, C., & Youniss, J. (2002). Dimensions of citizenship and opportunities for youth development: The what, why, when, where, and who of citizenship development. *Applied Developmental Science, 6*, 264-272.

Schmidt, J. A., Shumow, L., & Kackar, H. (2007). Adolescents' participation in service activities and its impact on academic, behavioral, and civic outcomes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36*, 127-114.

Seyd, P., & Whiteley, P. (2004). British party members: An overview. *Party Politics*, *10*, 355-366.

Sobel, R. (1993). From occupational involvement to political participation: An exploratory analysis. *Political Behavior, 15*, 339-353.

Stewart, E., & Weinstein, R. S. (1997). Volunteer participation in context: Motivations and political efficacy within three AIDS organizations. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *25*, 809-837.

Stolle, D. (2007). Social capital. In R. Dalton & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political behavior* (pp. 655-675). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Theiss-Morse, E., & Hibbing, J. R. (2005). Citizenship and civic engagement. *Annual Review of Political Science, 8*, 227-249.

Tilly, C. (2006). Afterward: Political ethnography as art and science. *Qualitative Sociology, 29*, 409-412.

Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schulz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen.* Amsterdam, Netherlands: IEA.

Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: A quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological Bulletin, 134*, 504-535.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics.* Harvard, MA: University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2003). Ethnografeast: A progress report on the practice and promise of ethnography. *Ethnography, 4*, 5-14.

Walker, T. (2002). Service as a pathway to political participation: What research tells us. *Applied Developmental Science, 6*, 183-188.

Walzer, M. (1995). The civil society argument. In R. Beiner (Eds.), *Theorizing citizenship* (pp. 152-174). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wedeen, L. (2010). Reflections on ethnographic work in political science. *Annual Review of Political Science, 13*, 255-272.

Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., & Delli Carpini, M. X. (2006). *A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Author Note

Carla Malafaia holds a PhD in Education Sciences from the University of Porto (this was supported by a grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology – FCT – SFRH/BD/92113/2012). Carla has been actively involved in research since 2008, both in national and international projects (funded by the FCT and the European Commission). She is currently a researcher in the CATCH-EyoU project, funded by the European Commission, Horizon 2020. Her research has dealt with conflict mediation, youth civic and political participation and citizenship education. She is the co-author of two books and has published in journals such as *Current Sociology*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Journal of Social Sciences Education* and the *International Journal of E-Politics*. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: carla.malafaia@hotmail.com.

Isabel Menezes is a Full Professor at the University of Porto. She has been working in the areas of educational research, educational and community intervention, and citizenship education. She has coordinated research on youth and adult civic and political participation, with a focus on the experience of groups at risk of exclusion on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and migrant status. She coordinated the Portuguese participation in several international projects such as IEA Civic Education Study, FP7 PIDOP and Erasmus USR, and two national funded projects. Currently, she coordinates the Portuguese participation in the CATCH-EyoU project, funded by the European Commission, Horizon 2020 and several Erasmus+ projects. She has published several papers in international journals (*Journal of Social Science Education*, *Journal of Moral Education*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, *British Educational Research Journal*, ...) and edited books and special issues for inter/national

journals. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: imenezes@fpce.up.pt.

Tiago Neves is an Associate Professor at the University of Porto. Since the mid-1990's, he has been involved in a number of studies on criminology and social and educational inequalities. His work has been funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and by the Portuguese Social Security. He has authored three books and published in journals such as *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, the *European Journal of Social Work*, and *Higher Education*. Currently, he coordinates the participation of the University of Porto in the YOUNG_ADULLLT project, funded by the European Commission, Horizon 2020. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: tiago@fpce.up.pt.

Article Citation

Malafaia, C., Menezes, I., & Neves, T. (2018). Living, doing, and learning from politics in a youth wing of a political party. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(1), 49-79. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss1/5