

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO USFQ

Colegio de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

**The Effects of Education over Unconventional Political
Participation of Young Ecuadorians during the year 2011**

Proyecto de investigación

Mateo Antonio Tobar Tamayo

Relaciones Internacionales

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Mateo Antonio Tobar Tamayo

Calificación:

María Daniela Maag Pardo, M.A.

Relaciones Internacionales

Firma del profesor

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Firma del estudiante: _____

Nombres y apellidos: Mateo Antonio Tobar Tamayo

Código: 00112164

Cédula de Identidad: 1715492169

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Resumen:

Los jóvenes ecuatorianos han sido tipificados como apolíticos y ajenos de la arena política (Putnam 2000). Esta caracterización de los jóvenes ha sido desarrollada no solo para referirse a nivel de Ecuador, sino también en referencia a todos los jóvenes alrededor del mundo. A lo largo del tiempo, los jóvenes no han sido tomados en cuenta para la construcción de políticas públicas y es por esto que este grupo de la población se ha visto separado del ámbito político. El presente artículo, analiza la participación política de jóvenes ecuatorianos por medio de mecanismos no convencionales a través de un modelo de regresión logística que toma en cuenta varias variables de interés como educación, edad, género e interés en la política. Esta investigación se enfoca en el efecto que tienen diferentes niveles de educación de los jóvenes sobre el desarrollo de mecanismos de participación no convencional. Aunque el efecto de la educación sobre la participación no convencional de los jóvenes no es ampliamente significativa, el presente estudio resalta otros elementos de interés como la importancia de variables como el género y el ingreso al momento de determinar si un joven participará o no. El presente trabajo de investigación logra confirmar tendencias referentes a las diferencias de género sobre la participación provistas por Barnes y Kaase (1979) y Hooghe y Stolle (2004); a las diferencias de edad al momento de que se ejecute una participación no convencional dadas por Norris, Walgrave y Van Aelst (2002); y a las diferencias provistas por la desigualdad económica entre actores.

Palabras Clave: *participación política, jóvenes ecuatorianos, participación política no convencional, política contenciosa*

Abstract:

Young Ecuadorians have been typified as apolitical and disengaged from the political arena (Putnam 2000). This characterization of young people has not been constructed only to refer to young Ecuadorians but it has been used to explain the disengagement from young individuals worldwide. In this regards, young people nowadays are not taken into considerations for the construction of public policies and hence produces a wider disengagement of this group. Through the present article, the engagement from young Ecuadorians in unconventional mechanism of political participation is analyzed through the construction of a logistic regression model. The effect of education of young people as an independent variable of unconventional participation is studied controlling by other variables of interest. Although the effect of education on unconventional participation of young people is not strong, the importance of variables such as gender and income should be considered as a factor that can determine whether a young person participates or not. The effect of education over unconventional political participation confirmed the statements from various scholars as Barnes and Kaase (1979) and Hooghe and Stolle (2004) regarding differences in gender over participation; Norris , Walgrave and Van Aelst (2002) in regards to differences of age and unconventional participation; and, Frederick Solt (2004) regarding economic inequality and contentious politics.

Key Words: *political participation, young Ecuadorians, unconventional political participation, contentious politics,*

Content

Introduction:.....	7
Theoretical Framework of Political Participation:.....	8
The Case of Political Participation in Ecuador:	12
Young Ecuadorians and Unconventional means of Political Participation:	14
Methodological Approach:	18
Source of Data:	18
Methodological Analysis:	19
Selected Variables for the Methodological Analysis of Unconventional Political Participation:	19
Dependent Variable:	20
Independent Variable:	21
Logistic Regression Model:	23
Model Analysis:	25
Logistic Regression Model:	25
Marginal Effect at Mean:	27
Marginal Effect at Representative Values (MER):.....	30
Conclusion:	36
Bibliography	39

Introduction:

Millennials have been identified as apolitical and disengaged actors throughout the last decades (Wattenberg 2002). This characterization of young people has been made on the base that their involvement on electoral means of participation has been significantly lower than that one of their parents (Putnam 2000) and that their overall interest in politics had went down. Although this drop in electoral participation of young people is evident in many countries, the questions of whether young individuals are interested in politics or not still remains.

Throughout this investigation the political participation of young people in Ecuador will be analyzed after a brief analysis over the most influential scholars over the subject of political participation. Young people will be classified based upon the distinction developed by Cliff Zukin, et al (2007). Based upon this classification, young Ecuadorians that were born during 1980 and 2000 will be taken into consideration¹. This investigation will use the database from the “*Primera Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política del Ecuador (ENJPP)*” because it’s the only survey over political participation of young people in Ecuador.

This article will be structured in the following manner. First, the most important theories on the subject of political participation will be reviewed. Second, the Ecuadorian case will be introduced and its most relevant information will be analyzed. Third, the methodological approach for the analysis of the survey data will be explained. Fourth, the analysis of the most important trends found will be explained. Finally, a conclusion will be developed and specific recommendations will be presented.

¹ Since this analysis will be based upon the “*Primera Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política del Ecuador*”, Ecuadorians younger than 16 years old won’t be taken into consideration.

Theoretical Framework of Political Participation:

The characteristics of democracy that Tocqueville (1966) once recognized in America have changed. The conditions under which democracy works nowadays are not the same as when Tocqueville stated “that a participatory public was a defining feature of American politics and a basic strength of the political system” (Tocqueville 1966). Even though political participation remains a fundamental factor for the promotion of democracy, the means of political participation for people have changed and acquired new approaches. In this sense, political participation cannot be acknowledged any more only as a synonym of voting but as a complex variety of mechanisms.

It would be misleading and inaccurate, as highlighted by Sidney Verba, Kay Scholozman, and Henry Brady, “to understand citizen participation solely through vote” (1995, 23). Political Participation must be understood as a wide aggregate of mechanisms that “affords citizens in a democracy an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concern and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond” (Verba, Shclozman and Brady 1995, 37). This wide arrange of tools and mechanism bears in mind also the existence of some not “conventional” methods of participation.

The low levels of voting that have arisen in the last decades do not only represent a possible disassociation of the population from politics but also exemplify a shift of the perspective from society in regards to political participation. Robert Putnam refers to the reduction of political participation – of the general population – as a “visible symptom of a broader disengagement from community life” (Putnam 2000, 35). In this sense, Putnam highlights the risks that an electoral abstention may have in regards to democracy since voting

“embodies the most fundamental democratic principle of equality” (Putnam 2000, 35) . Although the electoral participation has declined around the world; it would be inaccurate to qualify people as “apolitical” and to confirm that statement from Robert Putnam. In this sense, electoral abstention does not represent also a reduction in the other venues of participation such as contacting local and national officials, working for political parties, attending public meetings, participating in a protest and many more.

The disassociation of people, especially millennials – a person reaching adulthood around the year 2000- from multiple means of participation may be explained through one of the three reasons proposed by Brady, Verba & Schlozman (1995). People won’t take part in political life because “they can’t, because they don’t want to, or because nobody asked” (1995, 271). People that decide not to participate may take this decision based upon three factors that are time, money and civic skills (Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995). In this sense, it should be highlighted that Millennials have developed “new avenues of political participation” (Dalton 2009, 58) that provide them with the opportunity to specialize in the mechanisms that they feel will serve them better to achieve their objectives. These new avenues of participation differ from the four “conventional” forms of participation that may be divided, according to Russell Dalton, between “voting, campaign activity, communal activity (working with an informal group in the community), and contacting officials” (Dalton 2009, 58). Contrasting with these mechanisms, unconventional participation is exemplified broadly through riots, protests, marches, manifestations and many others.

As specified by Samuel Barnes *et al*, since 1960, “a new set of political activities has been added to the citizen’s repertoire” (1979, 149). Not only has voter turnout reduced significantly, specially over young voters, but there has been an increase over new mechanisms of

unconventional forms of political participation that includes, but is not limited to, “signing petitions, lawful demonstrations, boycotts, withholding of rent or tax, occupations, sit/ins, blocking traffic and wildcat strikes” (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 166). Overall, political participation should not be acknowledged solely as the act of voting but it should be understood as a every type of mechanisms directed to exert some kind of influence over the government or any institution with the purpose of achieving a social benefit or outcome.

Unconventional mechanisms of participation are recognized as legitimate by the people because of the capacity to exert influence over the government. In order to understand better the scope from contentious politics, the concept of “political participation” should be recognized as a “behavior that is intended to influence the political system, be it at the national, regional, or communal level” (Seligson and Booth 1976, 96). Through this approach the concept of “political participation” has the capacity to go beyond “the activities of elites, election and violence and includes communicating about politics and communal problems, and working collectively *to solve problems not handled by government*” (Seligson and Booth 1976, 96). This concept of political participation allows for the recognition of unconventional mechanisms of participation as a useful tool for citizens to express their needs.

The development of protests, marches and riots are much higher in Latin America than in other regions. This is possible because Latin-Americans have a tendency to conceive protests as a consolidated and legitimated mechanism of democracy (Latinobarómetro 2009, 63). In this sense, the acceptance of this type of political participation as truly effective and legitimate mechanisms may be subject upon the region where this assumption is made. Protests, riots and marches might be linked to low levels of confidence over governmental institutions. Because of this, multiple groups might act with “hostility toward political and social leaders, the institutions

of the government, and the regime as a whole” (Miller 1974, 951), the low confidence of people allows for them to disengage effectively from the ‘conventional’ political system of participation.

Political Participation is experiencing an expansion of its various mechanisms. At this same time, a shift has been also produced in the generational spectrum of the actors that involve in politics. In this sense, a new focus of study have been the declining levels of participation of young actors. Many authors as Tom Brokaw and Robert Putnam highlight the civic values and engagement of the older, ‘greatest generation (Brokaw 1998). In contrast, other scholars highlight not the apathy from young people but instead their shift of mechanisms towards non-electoral forms of political participation. The problem that multiple scholars have evidenced is that each time fewer people are voting, and this trend increases with each younger generation (Dalton 2015, 6).

The case of Ecuador, as it will be explained, presents a scenario where voting is not an option but an obligation. This particular case exemplifies an interesting area of study where research on the topic of political participation of young people has not been developed. For this reason the next section will describe the conditions of the political engagement of young people in Ecuador. Through the Ecuadorian case it will be possible to analyze the link between the involvement of young people in higher levels of education and their increase perception of corruption as a consequence of a higher political awareness. As an effect of this two, the usage of unconventional mechanism of participation will be recognized as a result from these two elements of interest.

The Case of Political Participation in Ecuador:

A main component in the sustainment of a democratic government is the level to which the population trusts not only the democratic system but the institutions that represent it in a daily base. In this regards, Ecuador is not necessarily the best example to highlight the success of a government that is recognized as trustful by their citizens. The report “Political Culture of Democracy in Ecuador, 2010” (Donoso, Montalvo and Orcés 2011) evidence the low levels of trust from the Ecuadorian population towards some political institutions such as the police (49.1%), the elections (49.1%), the National Electoral Council (Consejo Nacional Eelctoral) (45.3%), the National Assembly (41.5%), the judiciary system (38.2%), the Supreme Court (now National Court of Justice) (36.9%) and the Political Parties (26.4%) (Seligson and al 2010, 107). The decrease of trust towards these institutions in Ecuador presents a perfect scenario to analyze the disengagement of people from “conventional politics” and the promotion of unconventional mechanism of participation.

Throughout the Ecuadorian history, it has been possible to recognize how low levels of confidence in the national and local government have had an influence on the performance of marches and protests. The usage of unconventional tools of participation by young Ecuadorians as a method to exert influence over the government has been widely executed as a mean to remediate the low responsiveness from the government that Ecuadorians have (Seligson, Donoso, et al. 2008). In these regards, the perception of corruption plays an essential role in the determination of what mechanism of participation will Ecuadorians citizens choose in order to proclaim their desires. The perception of high levels of corruption in Ecuador acts as a determinant factor in the sense that it will promote a greater approval for citizens to organize and make demands through contentious politics on both the national and local governments

(Seligson, Donoso, et al. 2008, 134). The conditions from the Ecuadorian political system allows for the development of not only protests and marches but also other means of political participation like riots, occupations and strikes.

Although the Ecuadorian government in the last 10 years has developed new mechanisms of political participation through the Organic Law of Citizen Participation, the Council for Public Participation and Social Control, and the 2008 Constitution; the usage of these instruments by young Ecuadorians has been relatively low in comparison to the participation of this same group in the general elections where the voting is compulsory. The great variety of instruments that promote an institutional political participation contrasts with the reality in Ecuador where 22% from the people interviewed by the Americas Barometer survey in 2009 considers that the development of protests is more effective than voting as it allows you to express the desired changes through a direct mechanism² (Seligson, Donoso, et al. 2008, 35). Overall, there still exist a high percentage of people that perceives unconventional mechanisms as more effective tool political pressure.

The development of new mechanisms of political participation in a system where the population has not been used to access to this type of tools may influence the way in which citizens interact with the State. Bearing in mind the Ecuadorian history, after a period of time marked by social discontent and protests during the presidencies of Jamil Mahuad and Lucio Gutierrez; Ecuadorians did not recognize institutional mediums of participation as effective tools to express their desires because of the lack of legitimacy that young Ecuadorians awarded to the institutions of the government. Moreover, another limitation to these venues of participation

² This rate is about the Latin American media of 15%

provided by the Ecuadorian government is the need of a high level of education or political understanding to manage the processes of participation. In this sense, higher levels of education will allow people to understand better democratic values that are necessary for the consolidation of the democratic system (Seligson et al 2010, 120) and will allow for a higher level of conventional participation of educated people in contrast with not educated people.

The lack of interest from young Ecuadorians over the local governments can be highlighted through the 94.3 percent of Ecuadorians that in 2008 assured that they had not participated in any type of municipal meeting during the last 12 months (Seligson, Donoso, et al. 2008, 37). This low awareness over state politics can be a reflection of the lack of responsiveness from the government to the “people” which is why many young Ecuadorian may act through unconventional means of political participation. Because of the importance of young people for the development of the future Ecuadorian politics, the next section will directly analyze the situation of young Ecuadorians regarding their political involvement.

Young Ecuadorians and Unconventional means of Political Participation:

The importance of the young population in Ecuador is not only related to its capacity as future employees but also to its political capital that can be applied to shift politics in its favor. The Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008 in its Article 39 recognizes the importance of young people and their essential role in the National Politics:

The State shall guarantee the rights of young people and shall promote the effective exercise of these rights by means of policies and programs, institutions and resources that ensure and uphold, on a permanent basis, their participation and inclusion in all sectors, especially in public sector space (Constitution, 2008)

The Article 39 of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution does not only recognize the importance of the inclusion of young people into the national arena but it makes emphasis on their involvement in the public sectors. This principle will then be the base for the development of national policies for the improvement of the conditions of young people. Although the young population has acquired such an important characterization in the institutional design of Ecuador, they have not engaged, majorly, on institutional mechanism of participation but instead have been actively participating in protest even more than the adult population as it can be recognized through the report "*Tendencias de Participación Ciudadana en Ecuador*" developed by SENPLADES.

According to the 2010 Census there are 3'043.513 young people (18 – 24 years) in Ecuador and they represent the 13% of the Ecuadorian population (MIES 2012, 10). This percentage will grow exponentially and will allow for the Ecuadorian population to have a high number of economic active individuals that would support the development of the State. It is essential then, for the government, to recognize the importance to invest in human capital in order to take advantage of the future conditions provided by this segment of the population.

Moreover, and as recognized in the report "Agenda de la Igualdad Para la Juventud 2012-2013" if the government is not able to develop mechanisms to promote the development of the young population, the future conditions for this group will be characterized by higher levels of impoverishment and inequality (MIES 2012, 23). The young population in Ecuador is not homogenous in terms of social conditions and it has been characterized by high levels of poverty as exemplified through the 20,9% of young Ecuadorians that live in poverty (MIES 2012, 29); even though, since the year 2001 the "Ley De la Juventud" (MIES 2012, 29) (Law for the Youth) highlighted the importance of designing policies guided specifically to this age group, the

policies have not been successfully developed in a way to support young people as it can be exemplified through the goals that were not achieved through the “Ley de la Juventud” (Asamblea Nacional 2010).

The characteristic of young people when addressing political participation has been that young people don't have any incentive to participate as their opinions are not issues that the Government directly addresses hence their capacity to influence the decisions at the governmental level are perceived as low (Watternberg 2003). In this sense, young Ecuadorians are confronted with a low political efficacy when they act through conventional means of participation.

The conditions inside Ecuador, regarding the participation from young people in politics do not differ broadly from the conditions of this same group in other countries. Overall, the interest in politics from young Ecuadorians doesn't exceed the general expectations where 55.4% of young Ecuadorians have a low or no interest in politics (FLACSO 2011, 18). In this sense, it can be recognized how in a general perspective there exists a general disassociation of young Ecuadorians from politics.

In contrast with this apparent low level of interest from the young Ecuadorians in politics, the young population in Ecuador exemplifies an interesting trend when their interest towards national politics is contrasted with their interest over the politics in their neighborhood. In this regards, a 71% to 74% of young people in Ecuador is said to be interested in their local politics while a 49% to 55% of this same group has a low interest for national politics (FLACSO 2011). The contrast between these two conditions highlights the assumption that young people are more involved in the mechanisms of political participation that are disassociated from the

national government because of their low levels of confidence in these institution as an effect of the corruption system that can be acknowledged by academically formed individuals.

The young population inside Ecuador has slowly moved towards a more unconventional mechanism of participation where the mechanisms of public participation have been mainly protests and marches. In this matter, it is important to recognize that the young individuals represent the group that participates the most in protests with a 12, 3% (SENPLADES 2011, 36). A clear example of how the Ecuadorian youth is participating more in the unconventional mechanisms of political participation can be acknowledged through the percentage of young people that participated in the protests against the ex-president of Ecuador Lucio Gutierrez. A 5.8% of young Ecuadorians from the ages of 17 to 24 participated in this event that took place in the year of 2005.

The future of the democratic system in Ecuador will be largely characterized by the means through which the youth group in Ecuador decides to act. As exemplified before, the levels of confidence towards the governmental institutions have produced the low participation of the Ecuadorian citizens in the conventional mechanism of participation. It is essential then to clarify the reasons why young people engage in unconventional mechanisms in order to propose a possible approach that may support for the development of an inclusive system that do not only propose mechanism but actually achieves to engage people in those instruments. In this sense, it should be essential to recognize how distinct levels of education from young Ecuadorians will have an impact over their perception of corruption over the governmental institutions. Thus, education should play an important role in determining who participates or not through unconventional means.

Methodological Approach:*Source of Data:*

In order to analyze the importance of education and its effect over the political participation of young Ecuadorians it is necessary to acknowledge the lack of information regarding the political participation of this segment of the population. Even though, young Ecuadorians from 16 to 29 years old represent the 25% of the total of the population in Ecuador (INEC 2010), there has only been one survey (developed in Ecuador) focused solely on their political participation.

The “Primera Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política en el Ecuador”, developed by Agora Democrática with the support of the Canadian Embassy, is focused on the political participation and representation of the youth in Ecuador. This survey provided with the first set of data over the feelings from young Ecuadorians regarding the importance of politics, democracy, political involvement and political participation of young people. This first survey of political participation of young people was developed in the year 2011.

This survey served as a mean to compensate the lack of quantitative information regarding the specific topic of political participation of young people in Ecuador. Although quantitative analyses have been performed, the need of setting values to some important trends over political participation was recognized by Agora Democrática. The information provided by this survey, with a sample of 4229 respondents that was nationally representative, should be recognized as an opportunity which is why this investigation will utilize this database to determine specific trends of the political participation of young people through non-conventional means

Methodological Analysis:

Bearing in mind that political participation is motivated mainly by an expected utility –or a social outcome – (Edlin, Gelman and Kaplan 2007, 294), it should be essential to understand that political behavior can be executed through various means. As it has been analyzed in the previous sections, unconventional participation has, nowadays, become a useful tool for young voters; thus, the importance of analyzing what independent variables may correlate with higher levels of unconventional political participation. Because the intent of this investigation is to analyze the effect of education – measured in six different levels – over unconventional political participation of young Ecuadorians; the following methodological approach will take education as the main independent variable of interest and unconventional political participation will be the dependent variable.

Riots, marches and manifestations, have been the principal unconventional mechanism of political participation that have allowed for disengaged actors to “have a say” in the political arena. Whether these manifestations, riots or marches have actually been effective is not the center of this investigation but instead why did young voters decide whether to participate or not and what can predict a higher level of unconventional participation from some specific actor.

Selected Variables for the Methodological Analysis of Unconventional Political Participation:

The selection of the questions from the “Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política en el Ecuador” was executed bearing in mind that “various forms of political protest have increasingly become part of the consolidated repertoire of collective action” (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 28). In these sense, the question used to represent the dependent variable of “Unconventional Political Participation” was not limited to specific kinds of *unconventional*

activities but instead allowed for respondents to answer the question upon their recognition of what they consider a protest, marches or riot looks like. Furthermore, it should also be highlighted that for this methodological analysis it was taken into consideration that similar variables of a “sociodemographic type tend to explain with equal efficacy both unconventional participation (...) and conventional participation” (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 56).

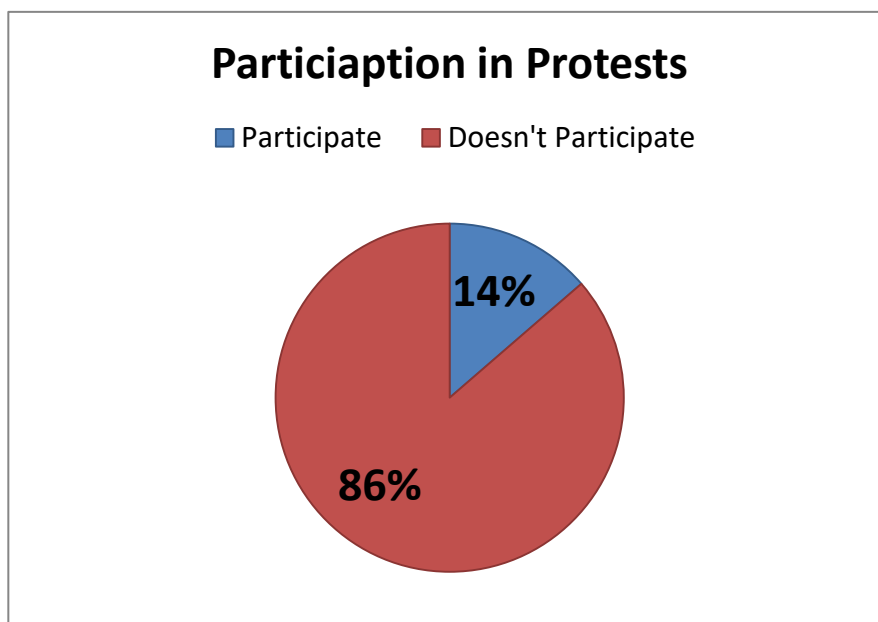
Dependent Variable:

The selected question as the dependent variable of this study asked respondents if they have participated in a protests, marches, manifestations or riots in the last five years. This question allowed respondents to respond “Yes”, “No”; thus it produced a binary variable that was divided between two categories. This question (dependent variable) allowed for the capacity to recognize unconventional participation not only at the national level but also in various governmental levels because it did not specified a specific type of marches or riots in an specific institutional level.

Furthermore, this question provides with the opportunity to acknowledge whether a young individual has participated or not. Moreover, it provides with an overview over the general panorama of unconventional political participation and does not necessarily reflect the sentiments against or in favor of the government.

The selected question from the “Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política en el Ecuador” was recodified in order to obtain the following categories when tabulated:

Graphic 1 – Dependent Variable Pie Graphic



Graphic1 reports that a total of 580 respondents that represent the 13,65% percent of the sample have at least utilized one of the aforementioned mechanisms³ of unconventional participation in the last 5 years.

Independent Variable:

The main independent variable that will be used for this analysis is education. This independent variable is expressed within the “Encuesta Nacional sobre Jóvenes y Participación Política en el Ecuador” through the level of education from the respondent. The question used for the analysis of education presented eight distinct levels – or categories – of education. The levels of education ranged between No Education, Primary Education Incomplete, Primary Education

³ These mechanisms are the ones directly expressed by the question that are riots, manifestations, marches and protests

Complete, Secondary Education Incomplete, Secondary Education Complete, University Incomplete, University Complete, and Postgraduate.

In order to achieve a better analysis, four sections from this question were aggregated into two distinct categories because of the low number of respondents within the section “No Education” and “Post graduated”. Thus, two new categories were developed. The first one, focused solely on the partial development or not of Primary Education. And the second one, focused on the completion of University and Postgraduate school. Table 1 presents the distribution of the education variable

Table 1 - Independent Variable (Education) Tabulation

Education Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percentage
No Education/Primary Education Incomplete	64	1.51	1.51
Primary Education Complete	394	9.27	10.78
Secondary Education Incomplete	1,428	33.61	44.39
Secondary Education Complete	1,109	26.1	70.49
University Incomplete	1,059	24.92	95.41
University Complete/Postgraduate	195	4.59	100
Total	4,249	100	

Table 1 illustrates the major percentage of young Ecuadorians that is located between the categories of “Secondary Education Incomplete” and “Secondary Education Complete”. Furthermore, it can also be acknowledged a low percentage of young Ecuadorians in the two extremes of the levels of education.

Although education was selected as the main independent variable, it was not the only independent variable that was taken into consideration. Education acquires an important role in this analysis because, as has been acknowledged by multiple scholars, “individuals with high

levels of education are more likely to participate in politics than individuals with low levels of education” (Leighley 1995, 183) with respect to common means of political participation.⁴

Other independent variables were taken also into consideration because of the value of “multivariate analyses over bivariate comparisons of participation rates across demographic groups” (Leighley 1995, 183). This other variables are age, demographic location (urban vs rural), socio-economic level, political ideology, gender and family (whether if respondents have children or not).

Logistic Regression Model:

For the development of this analysis, logistic regression models were developed in order to obtain information regarding the statistical relationship between education and unconventional political participation. Although it can be acknowledged that there is a positive relationship between these two variables as it will be demonstrated later on this paper, it would be mistaken to determine that a 1-level increase of a level of education will have an effect of the same value over political participation through unconventional means. Through this regression model, it would be possible to determine the odds of the effect of the independent variable(s) on participation through unconventional means. The relationship between unconventional participation and multiple independent variables of interest is presented through a logistic regression form and allows for the analysis of the effects from multiple variables on political participation. The logistic regression is expressed in the following way:

⁴ In this sense, unconventional mechanisms of political participation have not yet been taken into consideration with respect to education. Because of this, the need to determine if this trend is similar with unconventional mechanisms of participation

Equation 1 - Logistic Regression Model

$$\begin{aligned} \text{logged odds (unconventional participation)} = & \\ & a + b_1(\text{level of education}) + b_2(\text{age}) + b_3(\text{demographic location}) \\ & + b_4(\text{socioeconomic level}) + b_5(\text{political ideology}) + b_6(\text{gender}) \\ & + b_7(\text{interest in politics}) \end{aligned}$$

The effect of education over the usage of unconventional means of participation was analyzed under the effect of other independent variables that are also related to distinct trends over the usage of unconventional means of political participation. In this sense, the effect of education was controlled by age (from 16 to 29 years old), demographic location (rural vs urban), socioeconomic level (range between low, medium and high), political ideology (left, center, right, independent, don't know), gender (male and female) and interest in politics (range between no interest, low, medium and high). The variables that were included in the logistic regression model and are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 – Logistic Regression Variables, Summarize

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Unconventional Participation	0.1367178	0.3435898	0	1
Education	3.773318	1.106129	1	6
Age	22.07863	4.069391	16	29
Demographic Location	1.439906	0.4964341	0	1
Economic Level	1.338135	0.5224735	1	3
Interest in Politics	1.419126	0.909075	0	3
Political Ideology	3.503896	1.22375	1	5
Gender	0.4939787	0.5000228	0	1

The recodification of the variables of interest was performed in the following way: Education ranged from the 16 to the 29 years old and for the logistic regression model it was divided between 3 age ranges that go from 16-19, 20-24, 25-29. The second variable was demographic location that was recodify between Urban and Rural, where Urban is 1 and Rural 0. Bearing in mind economic level, the recodification took into consideration three distinct categories that went from low socioeconomic status, medium socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status. For the variable of Interest on Politics, the recodification created four levels of interest that range from high interest to low interest and qualifies the interest in politics. Finally, it is possible to recognize a categorization through political ideology that ranges from 1 to 5 where one is left and five is right. For the variable of education, the codification was divided into six levels, 1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest level of education. Furthermore, for the variable gender, the codification was 1 for men and 0 for women.

Model Specification:

Logistic Regression Model:

Education has a positive effect on the usage of unconventional mechanisms of participation. In this sense, it is possible to acknowledge a positive relationship where young Ecuadorians with a higher level of education are more prompt to engage in the usage of unconventional means of participation as riots, manifestations, marches and protests.

This logistic regression model of analysis allowed for an insight over the most important trends and effects within political participation through unconventional means and education (controlled by the variable specified in Table 2). It is expected that as education increases, that the likelihood of participating through non-conventional means will also increase. This pattern

can be identified through the *b* value of *education* – Table 3 – that presents a positive value which expresses a positive relationship between the dependent variable and education. For the development of this analysis a logistic regression was developed because the dependent variable (unconventional participation) was a binary variable with only two answers. Moreover the usage of this logistic regression will determine “the impact of multiple independent variables presented simultaneously to predict membership of one or other of the two dependent categorical variables” (Pampel 2000, 569).

Table 3 - Model Estimates – Regression Model

Logistic Regression Results: Variable Coefficients				
Variable	P> z	z	Odds Ratio	Percentage Change in Odds
Education	0.037000	2.080	1.105175*	10.5
Age	0.093000	-1.682	0.980606	-1.9
Demographic Location	0.453000	0.750	1.073479	7.3
Socioeconomic Level	0.001000	3.592	1.389421*	38.9
Political Ideology	0.000000	-5.469	0.8203024*	-18.0
Gender	0.000000	3.698	1.447141*	44.7
Interest in Politics	0.001000	3.426	1.191111	19.1
Constant*	0.000000	-5.277	0.1160736*	
*P-Value < 0.05				
LR chi2 (7)	123.900			
Pseudo R-Squared	0.037			
Prob > chi2	0.000			

The variables with statistical significance in this model are education, socio-economic level, gender and ideology. In contrast with the significance of these variables, there are two variables that present a low significance that are demographic location (P-value: 0.453) and age (P-value: 0.093). Thus, for the variable of demographic location and age, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In this sense, the null hypothesis would be that neither demographic location nor age will have an effect over the dependent variable, or its effect would be of zero.

This logistic regression model shows that after controlling for Age⁵, Demographic Location⁶, Socioeconomic Level, Political Ideology, Gender and Interest in Politics; the model improves its ability to predict the dependent variable more than if it would have only taken into consideration the variable of education. The Pseudo R-Squared for this Logistic Regression Model exemplifies a value of 0.037. Thus, the capacity from this logistic regression model to explain the usage of unconventional mechanism of participation by young Ecuadorians is of 3,7%, which still represents a low percentage but demonstrates a trend within some young Ecuadorians.

A trend that should be important to highlight is the percentage change in odds produced as an effect from the variable of gender, where the odds of participating are 44.7% higher from men than for women. Furthermore, it can be also determined how the more leaning right a person might be, the lower the odds for them to participate through unconventional means. It can be determined how with a 1-unit increases in the political ideology spectrum (higher support towards the right), the odds of participating through unconventional means will decrease by a 18.0%..

Marginal Effect at Mean:

In order to acquire an insight over this model, a summary measure of change based upon a Marginal Effects at the means (MEMs) was developed. Though this approach it was possible to compute the marginal effect of X_k – in this model education – with all the other variables held at their means. In this sense, this model allowed to recognize the shift of the independent variable

⁵ For this variable the null hypothesis cannot be rejected

⁶ For this variable the null hypothesis cannot be rejected

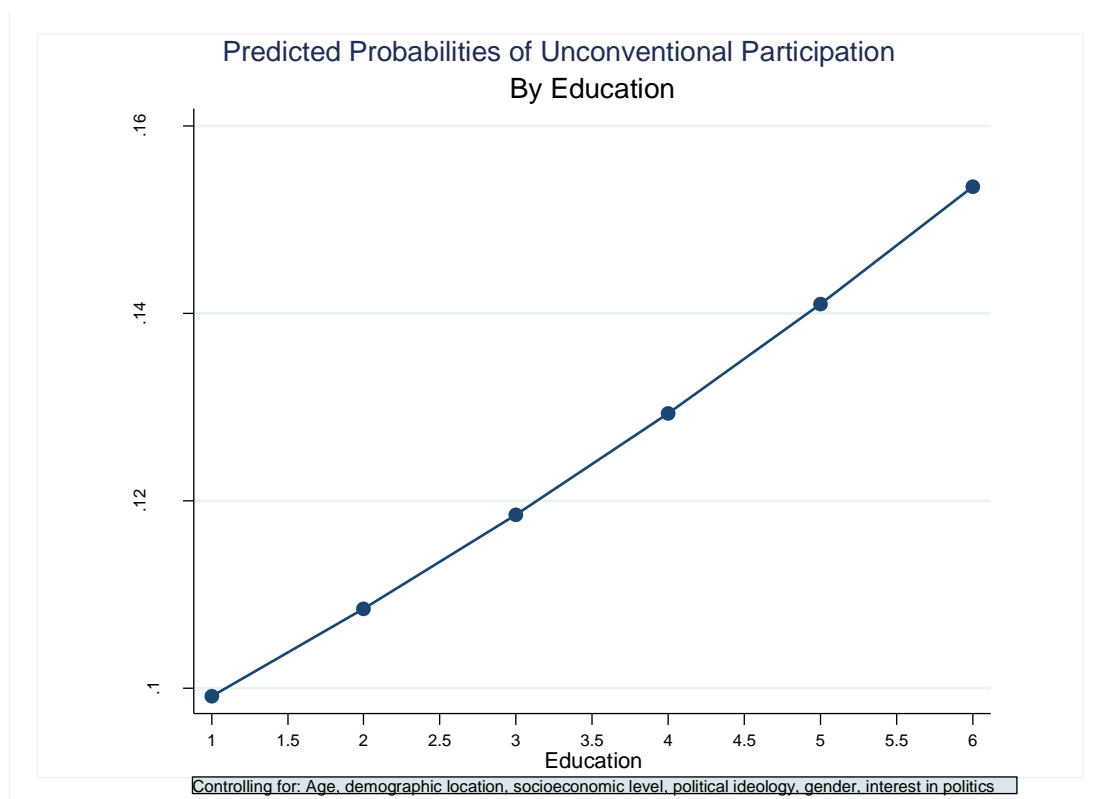
subject to very specific conditions (Long and Freese 2014, 242). Through Graphic 2, it is possible to evidence how the predicted probabilities of participating in non-conventional mechanisms increase with education. Furthermore, Graphic 2 shows that the marginal change in the dependent variable through the increase or decrease of education

Furthermore – as it can be evidenced through Table 4 – it is possible to acknowledge in the lower range of education (level 1, 2 and 3) a lower predicted probability of participation. The predicted probabilities shown in Graphic 2 increase in the order of: 0.0093, 0.01011, 0.0108, 0.0117 and 0.0126. It can be highlighted how the higher range of increase in the predicted probabilities of participation occur in the last three higher levels of education supporting in this way the general idea that the higher the education of young Ecuadorians, the higher their participation through unconventional means.

Table 4 – Adjusted Predictions MEM

Adjusted Predictions			
_at	Delta-Method		
	Margin	z	P> z
1	0.099120	7.660	0.000000
2	0.108416	11.120	0.000000
3	0.118467	18.050	0.000000
4	0.129316	23.700	0.000000
5	0.140999	15.860	0.000000
6	0.153551	10.360	0.000000
*P-Value < 0.05			
LR chi2 (7)	123.900		
Pseudo R-Squared	0.037		
Prob > chi2	0.000		

Graphic 2 - Predicted Probabilities



Graphic 2 illustrates the predicted probabilities of participating in unconventional participation for the 6 distinct levels of educations while holding all the other variables of control constant at their means. The difference of 0.0126 between the predicted probabilities of the aforementioned levels represents the largest marginal increase of data. Through this difference over the predicted probabilities of these levels, it can be specified that enrolling in a university has an important effect over people as a determinant for them to participate through non-conventional means – this enrollment effect is greater than enrolling in primary education. Thus, for individuals that have been enrolled in university there is a higher predicted probability for them to engage in nonconventional means of participation. Overall it can be specified that young Ecuadorians with higher levels of education are more prompt to become engage in unconventional participation.

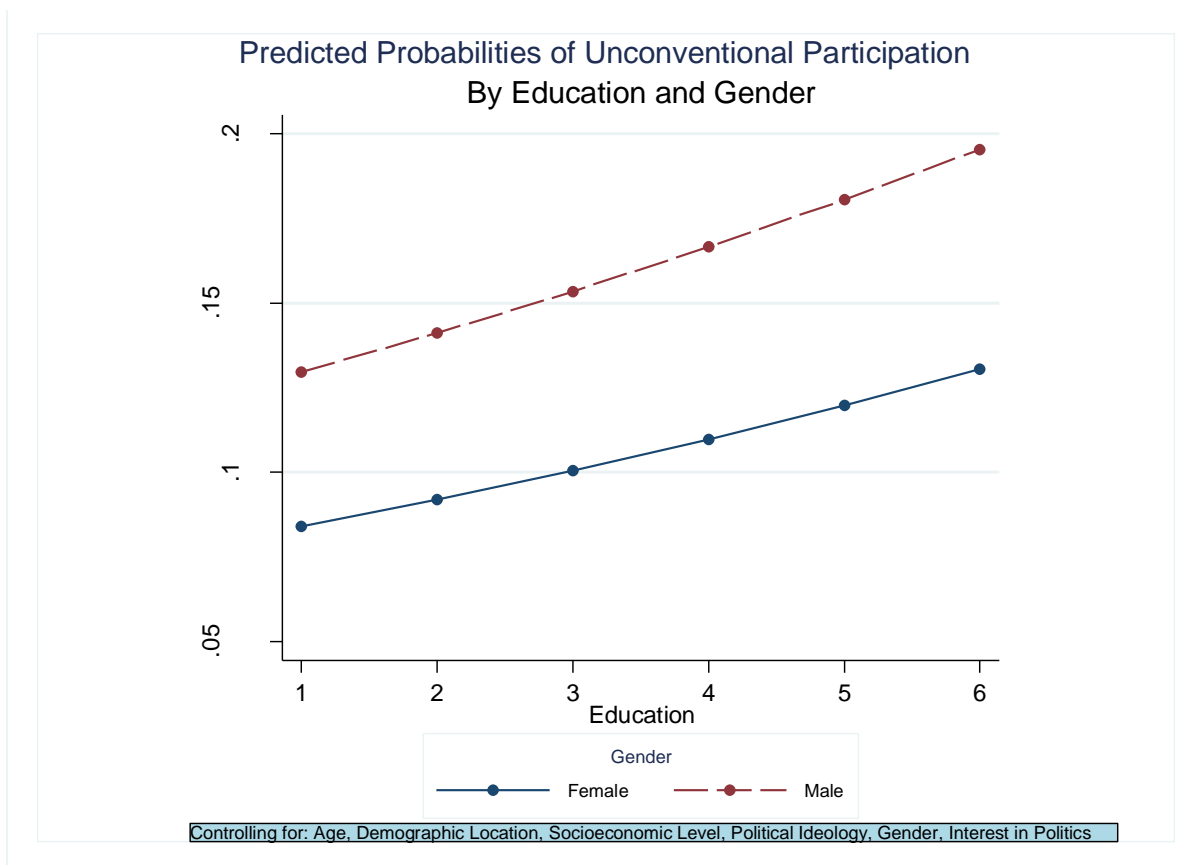
Marginal Effects at Representative Values (MERs):

Because of the limits to express a more comprehensive insight to how distinct groups of young Ecuadorians react towards the usage of unconventional mechanism of political participation, it is important to take into consideration a distinct summary of the effect of the logistic model under study. The MER approach allows to “compute the marginal effect of the – independent variable of interest – with variables held at specific values that are selected for being especially instructive for the substantive questions being considered” (Long and Freese 2014, 242). In this sense, the young Ecuadorians were analyzed through this approach taking into consideration distinct areas of interest like socio-economic level, gender and education. Overall, this approach provided the capacity to analyze the effect of education when the variables of socio-economic level, gender and education were held at a specific level.

Predicted Probabilities by Gender:

Graphic 3 provides an insight towards the usage of unconventional mechanism of political participation divided by gender. Through this graphic it is possible to acknowledge a difference between the predicted probabilities of women and men, where men are more prompt to participate in unconventional means than women. These findings reflect the results from both Barnes and Kaase (1979) and Hooghe and Stolle (2004) that recognized a large difference between the participation of men and women through unconventional means of political action (Hooghe and Stolle 2004, 12).

Graphic 3 – Predicted Probabilities by Gender



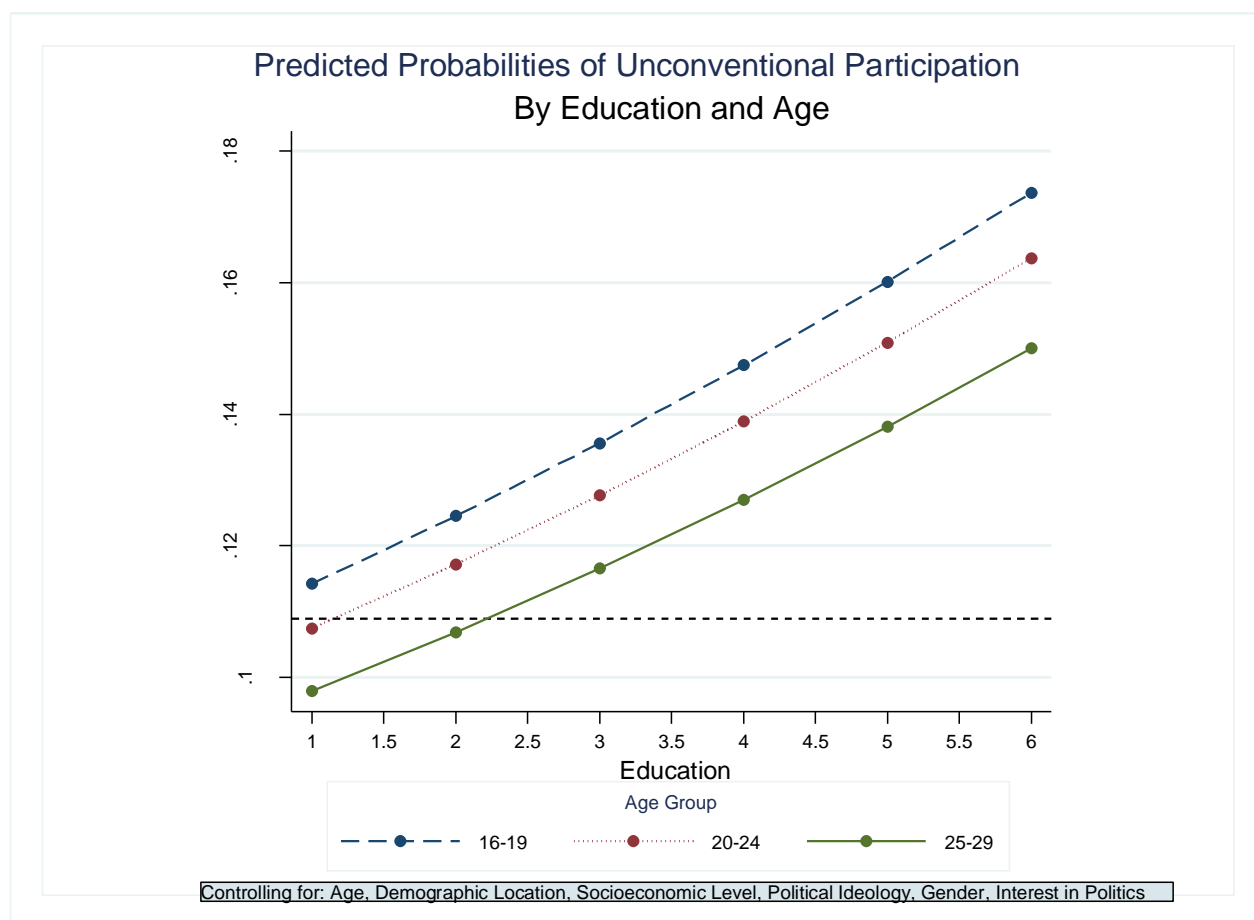
Graphic 3 illustrates that the highest predicted probability for women is equal to the lowest predicted probability of men. Thus, it can be stated that for men with low levels of education (no education /primary education not completed) the probability of participating in unconventional mechanisms is high if compared with that one of women. Furthermore, this trend in young Ecuadorians is similar to the findings of Inglehart and Norris (2004) based upon the 2001 World Value Survey. Moreover, it can be acknowledged that “men engaged in confrontational political action more often than women” (Hooghe and Stolle 2004, 12). Although women have become more involved in Ecuadorian politics in the last years, there is still an important difference between the participation of women and men in contentious politics, especially when analyzed by levels of education.

Predicted Probabilities by Age Groups:

Apart from gender, a variable that has been widely linked with political participation through both unconventional and conventional means has been age. In coherence with the statements from Marsh and Kaase that highlighted during the 1970s that the younger generation had a higher protestor potential in contrast with the middle-aged and older generation (Norris , Walgrave and Van Aelst 2002, 8), the young Ecuadorians present similar trends. Graphic 3 demonstrate how different age groups have distinct levels of probability towards unconventional participation. Although all age groups (age ranges between 16 and 29) have a relationship between education and unconventional political participation, there exists a negative relationship between age and unconventional participation.

As shown in Graphic 4, it is more likely for the youngest group of Ecuadorians (age from 16 to 19) to engage in unconventional mechanisms of participation than it is for older Ecuadorians at all levels of education. This trend contradicts the assumption that younger people are disassociated from politics; instead, young Ecuadorians approach politics through a different way. This relationship between age and unconventional participation contrasts with the relationship between age and voting turnout, where young people do not play an essential part.

Graphic 4 – Predicted Probabilities by Age Groups



It is important to take into consideration the distinct predicted probabilities between two individuals with the same level of education but that are allocated in different age groups. While the young Ecuadorian that has completed university (level 5) and is between 25 and 29 years old has a probability of 0.1501 to participate in unconventional means of political participation. A younger Ecuadorian between 16 and 19, with the same level of education has a higher probability – of 0.1737– to participate in unconventional mechanism of political action. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged the continuous effect from education that is replicated throughout all the age groups exemplified in Graphic 4 – where regardless of the age there exists an upward trend of probability to engage in unconventional mechanisms of participation.

This trends over the involvement of young people in unconventional mechanisms of participation contradicts the statement from Martin Wattenberg (2007) where he highlights that “many established democracies (if young voters continue disengaged from electoral participation) will be heading toward a government of older people, by older people, and for older people” (Wattenberg 2007, 159). Young voters may not be fully engaged with the normal mechanism of participation but there is a higher involvement in contentious politics because young Ecuadorians recognize those tools as useful mechanism to raise their voice and express their demands.

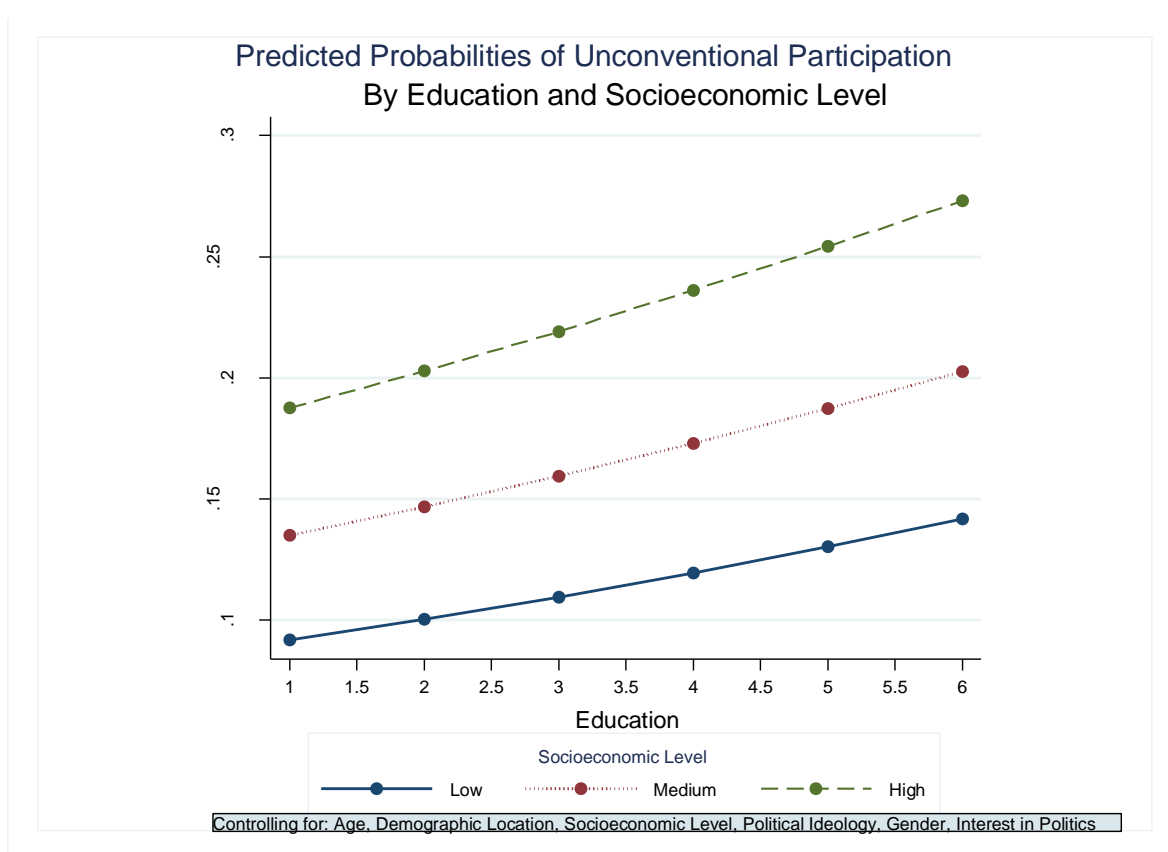
Predicted Probabilities by Socioeconomic Level:

Together with gender and age, the variable of socioeconomic level has been also characterized as a vital element that has determined who has historically participated or not. As explained by Frederick Solt (2004), “the surge in economic inequality in many countries around the world in the last few decades should be expected to have negative implications for the political engagement of their citizens” (Solt 2004, 21). In this sense, the Ecuadorian context presents the same trends of disassociation from the group of lowest socioeconomic level. The effect of education over the involvement from young Ecuadorians in unconventional means of participation is maintained although the range of probability changes when this effect is analyzed for distinct economic groups.

Graphic 5 illustrates the involvement, of three distinct socioeconomic groups, in unconventional mechanism of political participation. Through this Graphic it is possible to recognize how uneducated young Ecuadorians with a low income level have a very low probability (0.0918) of participating in unconventional means. In contrast, an uneducated young

Ecuadorian that has a higher income level has a probability of 0.1875 to participate in riots, protests and marches. In this sense, the effect of education controlled by socioeconomic level over young Ecuadorians is vital in order to determine who will and who will not participate in contentious politics. The highest probability for a highly educated Ecuadorian with a high income to participate in unconventional means is of 0.2730 while for a highly educated individual with a low income it is of only 0.1418.

Graphic 5 - Predicted Probabilities by Socioeconomic Level



In this trend shown through Graphic 5 it is essential to highlight the link between the socioeconomic level of individuals and their education. In this sense, younger Ecuadorians with a low socioeconomic level will be less likely to achieve a higher education; thus, this will

reinforce the perpetuation of a low probability of engagement in any type of political mechanism of participation for people with a low level of education.

Conclusions:

Political participation has been a subject of interest for scholars worldwide. The decrease of interest over politics not only from young people but from all the population has raised alarms over the quality of democracy. The development of various studies has demonstrated the disengagement of young people from politics and has argued that there exists apathy from this specific population. In this sense, many see young people as apolitical individuals that do not participate through any means or execute any type of influence over the government because of their lack of interest. These assumptions over the young population are misleading in the sense that they do not take into consideration young individuals as unique political actors that have engaged in politics through other types of political mechanism of participation. In contrast with the general assumption that young Ecuadorians do not participate, it is possible to identify distinct mechanisms of political participation.

Although the existence of a disengagement from conventional politics from young people is a reality, this fact does not represent the entire story of the involvement of young people in politics. The participation of young people has shifted and focused more on unconventional mechanisms of political participation. The interest from scholars over the participation of young people in contentious politics has increased in the past years, especially in areas like the United States and Europe but for Latin America and specifically Ecuador, the information regarding this topic is limited and almost inexistent.

The Ecuadorian case presents a rich arena for the study of political participation of young people because of the dynamic conditions constructed through the institutional design of this country. Although the conditions provided by the institutional framework of Ecuador appear to allow for the involvement of all citizens in politics, the reality is that a low percentage of the population engages in this institutional mechanism of participation. In contrast, more people are interested in developing marches, riots and protests as tools for promoting their interest and raising their voice. From this population that is interested in the development of contentious politics, a vast majority represents young people from 16 to 29 years old, from the sample a 14% of young Ecuadorian have used this mechanism of participation. This young population have shifted its attention towards the development of unconventional mechanisms of participation because of distinct variables including but not limited to education, age, demographic location, socioeconomic level, political ideology, gender and interest in politics.

As was demonstrated throughout this investigation, education has a direct effect, although small, over the engagement of young Ecuadorians in unconventional mechanisms of participation. In this sense, education partially explains why young Ecuadorians may participate in a higher level in riots, marches and protests. Moreover, the enrollment of young Ecuadorians in University can be specified as a determinant element for an individual to decide to engage in unconventional political actions.

It is important to recognize that education explains very little why young Ecuadorians utilize unconventional mechanisms of participation but there are also other variables as age, gender, socio-economic level, interest in politics and political ideology that helped explain the development of this type of participation. The effect of education from young Ecuadorians was constant for all the distinct groups that were analyzed in order to predict the probabilities of

participating through unconventional mechanisms in many scenarios. For gender, age and socioeconomic level, the effect of education remained constant. Furthermore the highest predicted probability of participation through unconventional mean can be exemplified by young Ecuadorians that follow a profile of a high level of education and a high socioeconomic level.

It can be concluded that the young Ecuadorians that are more prompt to participate in unconventional mechanism are those that are male individuals with higher levels of education that range between the 16 and 19 years old and that are located in a high socioeconomic level.

Education should be recognized as an important element for the development of unconventional mechanisms of participation because of the low levels of confidence from young Ecuadorians over the governmental institutions that reflect the values of democracy. In this sense, the more educated young Ecuadorians are, the higher their probability to participate in politics through unconventional means because of the existence of low levels of confidence. The importance of unconventional mechanism of participation as riots, marches and protests has risen because the Ecuadorian population recognizes this mechanism as legitimates. Moreover, the increase in the usage of unconventional mechanism of participation by young Ecuadorians should not only be recognized as a shift in the participation of people but also as an indicator of the low levels of responsiveness from the government towards the “people”. The development of unconventional means of participation should be recognized as a mechanism used by young Ecuadorians in response to a system that has not responded to their needs; because of this, the usage of unconventional mechanisms of participation may increase until the government becomes more responsiveness towards the young population.

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