

***The two faces of political
disengagement:
Alienation and Apathy in France***

Matthias Mineau

Mémoire présenté pour le Master en
Sociologie

Mention:

Directeur du mémoire: Jen Schradie

Année académique 2024-2025

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Jen Schradie for her advice, support and surprising amount of enthusiasm about my master thesis. It seemed like you were more excited than me about what I was doing...

He probably doesn't know it but Olivier Godechot made the quantitative part of this thesis possible by telling me how to merge variables of different length into one, which is why I would also like to thank him as well.

Thank you Vic, for your answers to my never ending list of questions. It helped me a lot in successfully handing out surveys to jobseekers, which seemed to be a daunting task to me.

I am thankful to Stéphanie Samper for the time she spent designing my flyer even though I had only asked her for some advice.

Thank you to all the friends that helped me withstand the beautiful but highly unfunctional Saint Thomas library: Maëlle, Joséphine, Clara, Léa, Tianlan and Lucile.

Thank you Maëlle for inviting me twice into your home to work (and eat a lot).

Finally, I would like to thank the people without which this thesis would not have been possible: my interviewees. Thank you for having taken your time to answer my numerous questions.

Table of content

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Introduction.....</i> | <i>4</i> |
| A. The rise of disengagement..... | 4 |
| B. Literature review - Apathy and Alienation..... | 6 |
| <i>Methods.....</i> | <i>13</i> |
| A. Research Design..... | 13 |
| B. ESS Analysis..... | 13 |
| C. Fieldwork in France Travail..... | 24 |
| D. Use of AI..... | 28 |
| E. Outline..... | 29 |
| <i>Chapter 1 - What variables shape alienation and apathy.....</i> | <i>30</i> |
| A. Descriptive Statistics of employment-related and socio-demographic variables..... | 31 |
| B. The correlation between socio-demographic characteristics, employment-related variables and alienation, its dimensions and apathy..... | 33 |
| C. Survey data on jobseekers..... | 41 |
| <i>Chapter 2 - Political socialization and its effects on apathy and alienation.....</i> | <i>50</i> |
| A. Interviewee Demographics..... | 50 |
| B. The engaged ones..... | 52 |
| C. The apathetic one..... | 58 |
| D. Ascending political socialization..... | 61 |
| E. Descending political socialization..... | 66 |
| <i>Chapter 3 - The effects of alienation and apathy on political participation.....</i> | <i>73</i> |
| A. Descriptive statistics of political variables and political practices..... | 73 |
| B. The correlation between alienation, its dimension and apathy and political practices.. | 76 |
| C. Survey data on jobseekers - the effects of meaninglessness, normlessness, powerlessness and apathy on political participation..... | 87 |
| <i>Chapter 4 - The participation paradox.....</i> | <i>96</i> |
| A. Party politics as scarecrow..... | 96 |
| B. Views on the political system are influenced by attitudes on political practices..... | 99 |
| <i>Limits and methodological reflections.....</i> | <i>118</i> |
| A. Limits of the ESS data..... | 118 |
| B. Limits of the case study..... | 119 |
| <i>Conclusion.....</i> | <i>124</i> |
| A. Key Results..... | 124 |
| B. Empirical and theoretical contribution..... | 126 |
| <i>Bibliography.....</i> | <i>129</i> |
| <i>Appendices.....</i> | <i>136</i> |

Introduction

“The effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and non involvement on the part of some individuals and groups [because] the danger of overloading the political system with demands [...] still remains”. That is how Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki (1975, 114) describe a good working political system. Indeed, proponents of a realist concept of democracy consider that the active involvement of a minority, the existence and “disconnection” between the elite and the people is not a downside but a core feature of democracy (Sartori, Christiane and Serge 1973). These conceptions of democracy have sparked reactions from advocates of a more participatory democracy. For them, this apathy is a problem. Citizen participation is a sign of vitality and citizen’s concern for public affairs is central for democratic institutions because it allows everyone to get involved in the decision making process (Pateman 1970). Hence, the consideration that a low level of involvement is something noteworthy at all is only valid in the participationist paradigm.

A. The rise of disengagement

Indeed, disengagement towards politics is rising. It is characterized by three different phenomena: the decline of formal participation, the relative rise of informal participation and the rise of negative attitudes towards politics (Colin Hay 2007).

Voter turnout, a central institution of democratic systems (Pateman 1970, 43), is declining. In presidential and parliamentary elections in OECD countries, it has been steadily declining since 1970, and although the decline has been modest in France (0,49%), it is now accelerating. Overall, voting participation peaked in 1978 for parliamentary elections and in 1974 for presidential elections (« Database Result (Country + Question) | International IDEA », s. d.) Party membership and for other forms of formal participation also declined (Miquet-Marty and al. 2013).

This trend is echoed by the stagnation or rise of informal political participation. If between 1980 and 1999, informal participation was stagnating (Bréchon 2006), the percentage of people having participated in demonstrations stayed the same between 2001 and 2020, since 12% had had demonstrated in the last 12 months in 2001 while this

percentage was 11% in 2020 and the signing of petitions slightly decreased (from 32% to 28%). However, boycotts have gained some attraction over the years, as ESS data shows. Those engaging in these new forms of participation do it because they do not want to engage in more conventional forms of participation, meaning it is a highly political act (O'Toole and Marsh 2003). The concept of political participation therefore has been extended to include these forms of engagement, but this does not change the fact that formal participation has been declining. Informal participation cannot be considered as a substitute for formal participation (Hay 2007, 27).

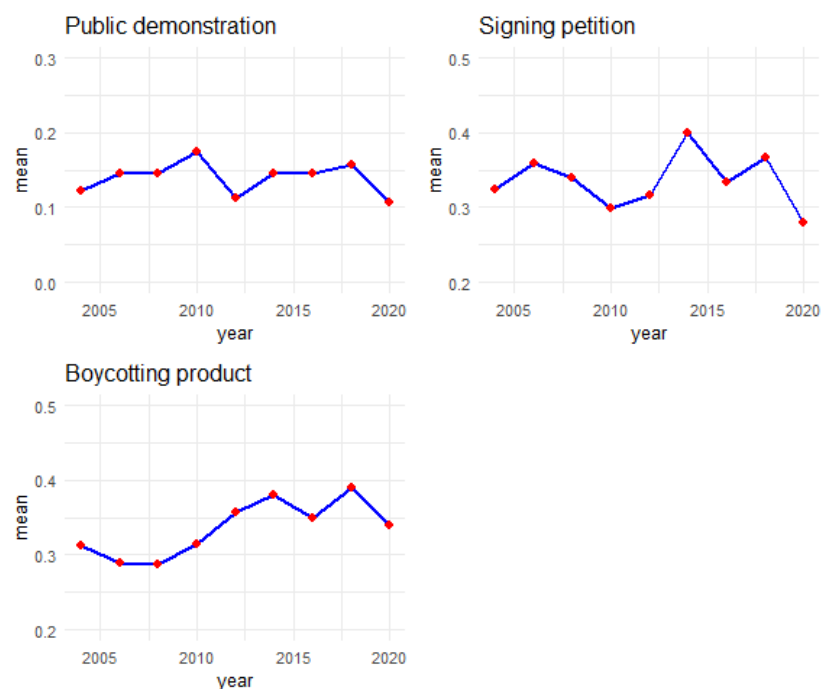


Figure 1 - Evolution of the percentage of respondents that demonstrated, signed petitions and boycotted products between 2004 and 2020

Trust towards politics also declined in France for at least 10 years (Cheurfa Madani and Chanvril Flora 2019) and the 2025 edition of the *Baromètre de la confiance politique* shows that negative feelings prevail: 18% of the respondents are afraid, 30% feel gloom, 40% are fatigued/fed up and a whopping 45% do not trust politics. Furthermore, to the sentence “Public officials care about what people like me think”, fewer and fewer people respond positively. Positive answers to the question went from a bit more than 70% in 1976 to not even 30% in 2000 (Hay 2007, 30). Finally, disinterest in politics slightly raised from an already 44% in 2009 to 49% in 2019 (Eder, Mochmann and Quandt 2014).

Colin Hay gives two possible explanations for these trends. The first one, apathy, is a demand side explanation in which posits that people are not interested in politics, i.e the demand for politics is low (2007, 24). However, Hay surmises that a better explanation could

be found in a supply-side perspective in which external factors, such as the political elites or socio-demographic characteristics, are at fault (ibid.). This resonates with the concept of alienation, which postulates that people feel estranged from politics because of the political system (Fox 2015).

We might expect more research trying to study disengagement through alienation or apathy among the wider population. However, they are few and far between. I therefore ask the following questions: What shapes political alienation and apathy. In turn, what is their effect on political participation?

B. Literature review - Apathy and Alienation

a. Apathy and its pitfalls

Apathy often refers to an individual's lack of motivation to engage with politics, for example deciding not to watch the news or read a newspaper (Dalton 2012; Wattenberg 2015; Henn, Weinstein and Forrest 2005; Marsh 2007), or the lack of desire to get involved in politics, such as voting (Dean 1961; Rosenberg 1954). The concept also refers to a generalized indifference towards politics (Thompson and Horton 1960), in which the individual is only aware of politics enough to know it is not worth engaging with. It can be considered a spectrum rather than a dichotomy and it is an attitudinal orientation, meaning it is long-standing, not temporary. Apathy is associated with lower levels of motivation for involvement in politics which is in turn associated with a lack of participation (Thompson and Horton 1960; Dalton 2012). It is also a stable orientation, meaning it should not change much over time (Smets 2008; Neundorff, Smets and García-Albacete 2014; Prior 2010; Jankowski and Strate 1995). Finally, apathy is a uni-dimensional concept: there is a single dimension representing the motivation (or lack thereof) to get involved in politics.

There are a small number of studies on political apathy but almost all of them are quantitative and they cannot be considered as part of a single field of research since they do not cite each other. They use political apathy as an independent variable that explains political passivity among youth (Dahl and al. 2018), that influences trust in the federal government (Miller and Hoffman 1998), that leads to a lower voter turnout among black voters (Salamon and Van Evera 1973) or voters in general (Nweke and Etido-Inyang 2018). It can also be a dependent variable, which is influenced by internet use (Raïq 2022), social characteristics (Dean 1961; Deth and Elff 2000), or by political institutions (Arleta and Prokop 2019).

Furthermore, these studies have several issues that the literature on youth political alienation can help overcome. They show what the studies on political apathy lack and how to operationalize apathy and alienation in a convincing way. Several studies on apathy I cited earlier tend to have a very narrow definition of political participation. Some of them tend to confuse political apathy and low voter turnout (Nweke and Etido-Inyang 2018) or tend to use the lack of political participation as a proxy of political apathy (Raïq 2022). They do not introduce the debate on the different scope of the concept of political participation (Van Deth 2014) and therefore do not justify their choice of a very restrictive definition. Furthermore, non-participation - as conceived by the researcher - cannot be equated to a lack of political participation, which they in turn categorize as political apathy. The absence of proof isn't the proof of absence. Some citizens may think that they cannot influence outcomes (O'Toole and Marsh 2003), that participating in politics is too costly compared to its benefits (Downs 1957) or that the political system is structured in a way that disincentivizes participation (Hay, 2007). However, the fact that the concept has been misused does not mean it is a bad concept in itself since it allows me to categorize a very specific kind of respondent: the one that does not feel concerned/affected by politics.

Since the field of political alienation among youth is an established field of research dating back to the 1950s, it has seen some changes in the study of this phenomena. The number of qualitative studies increased to counter the preponderance of quantitative studies that depicted young people as apathetic. These qualitative works studied how young people viewed politics, their involvement in it and highlighted the fact that young people are far from being apathetic but that their participation in politics is hampered by the feeling of not being listened to by politicians (Marsh 2007; Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest 2005; O'Toole and Marsh 2003). It was also argued that political scientists impose a narrow definition of politics because they rely too much on survey research and that little attempt has been made at exploring how people themselves define politics (O'Toole and Marsh 2003). Before the 1990s, in this field of research, the study of political participation often focused on electoral behaviors. In the 2000's, researchers began to argue that the way people view politics, and the way they influence political outcomes had changed because of social evolutions like education and the use of digital technologies which favored new modes of political expression, hence the wider definition of political participation (Fox 2015, 2). In this master thesis, I adopt a broad definition of participation that focuses on how individuals define politics through their lived experience (Marsh and al. 2007) since people tend to specialize in the form(s) of participation that is/are) more compatible with their socialization, resources

and the time they can spend on politics (Verba and Nie 1987; Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992) and because all forms of formal or informal political participation are not similar (Verba and Nie 1987; Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley 2003). It allows me to understand which kinds of experiences lead to which kinds of practices.

b. The multi-layered definition of alienation

Alienation is also a useful concept in understanding the rise of the three phenomena Hay underlined because instead of identifying someone that does not feel concerned/affected by politics, alienation rather identifies someone that actively does not want to get involved in politics. However, the concept lacks both conceptual clarity and empirical verification. Political alienation is at the heart of numerous studies but researchers do not always rely on the theoretical works conceptualizing and defining it when using the concept. The most commonly cited causes of alienation can be categorized into six different types: a lack of confidence in people's knowledge about politics (Henn, Matt and Foard, Nick 2012; Fahmy 2006; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), a lack of faith in the responsiveness of the political system (Sloam 2014; Wattenberg 2015; Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest 2005), a lack of trust regarding the willingness or capability of politics to represent people (Martin 2012; Henn, Weinstein and Forrest 2005; Marsh 2007; Furlong and Cartmel 2012), a dislike for conflict in politics (Mycock and Tonge 2012; Marsh 2007; Fahmy 2006), a negative view of politics because of the reporting of politics in the media (Wayne et al. 2010) and a more general negative feeling towards political institutions and officials (Citrin 1977, 3). However, these studies all have problems linking the proposed causes of alienation, the expression of that alienation and the impact it has on political participation because they lack a clear definition of the concept. Furthermore, these studies do not look at a single phenomenon but each one of them focuses on something different. They then name their dependent variable alienation, disregarding its actual definition (Schwartz 1973, 7).

In order to have a functioning definition of alienation, we need to go back to the field of youth political alienation since a more general field of research about political alienation in the wider population does not exist. An important work is that of Ada Finifter (1970). She defined the concept as an orientation, and argued that it can be defined as a feeling of estrangement from politics. That means it can be conceptualized as a continuum with the other end being a feeling of identification and attachment with the polity or simply as "allegiance". Allegiant people "feel themselves an integral part of the political system; they belong to it psychologically as well as legally. Allegiant citizens evaluate the regime

positively, see it as morally worthy, and believe it has a legitimate claim to their loyalty” (Citrin 1977; Nachmias 1974; Aberbach 1969; Southwell 2012; Schwartz 1973). Alienation is a feeling of non-identification with politics, causing the individual to feel dissociated from it and considering it with scepticism and cynicism (Gamson 1968; Olsen 1969; Aberbach 1969; Hammer-Lloyd, Dermody and Scullion 2010), which differentiates this concept from a mere discontent or dislike (which would be of not much analytic relevance). People who are alienated may feel like they are outsiders, trapped in an unknown political order and “perceive a fundamental conflict between their basic politicized values and those exhibited in the polity, under the conditions that they perceive both themselves and the political system to be inefficacious to reduce this conflict” (Schwartz 1973, 14). There is therefore a clear distinction between alienation and apathy. Alienation also has to produce identifiable political behaviors, for example a lack of participation. However, alienation is not itself the lack of participation, rather it causes it.

Quantitative research conceptualized alienation as a multi-dimensional concept (Finifter 1970; Southwell 2003; 2012; Nachmias 1974; Deters and Geurts 1993; Olsen 1969; Weatherford 1991). The dimensions all represent different manifestations of the phenomenon and are correlated between each other. Four dimensions have been identified:

- Political powerlessness reflects “an individual’s feeling that he cannot affect the actions of the government [and that] the heart of the political process [...] is not subject to his influence” (Finifter 1970, 390). The alienated person feels that political decisions are not taken by them and that they could not influence the decision-making process (Olsen 1969). This dimension is therefore linked to perceptions of political efficacy (Gniewosz, Noack, and Buhl 2009; Kabashima et al. 2000).
- Political normlessness is “the individual’s perception that the norms or rules intended to govern political relations have broken down, and that departures from prescribed behaviour are common” (Finifter 1970, p.390). It is therefore linked to political (dis)trust because it is about the individual’s belief that politics is crooked and that they are treated unfairly as a result (Hammer-Lloyd, Dermody, and Scullion 2010; Gamson 1968).
- Political meaningfulness refers “both to the individual’s perception of the political process as lacking an easily intelligible pattern [...] that allows the citizen to understand the effects of his choice, and to his feelings that such choices are essentially futile” (Deters and Geurts 1993, p.447; Nachmias 1974). In other words, it reflects an individual’s lack of confidence in their capacity to understand the

political process and to interact with it in a way which can promote their agenda (Finifter 1970; Gniewosz et al. 2009; Kabashima et al. 2000).

- Political deprivation refers to an individual's perception that the political system is structured in a way that will prevent them being considered treated fairly (Thompson and Horton 1960; Citrin et al. 1975). In contrast to normlessness, the individual does not believe that they are treated unfairly because of corruption for example, but because the system structurally disadvantages them. Thompson and Horton (1960) argued that this could be a common form of alienation among people of lower social class.

The multi-dimensional aspect of alienation (powerlessness, deprivation, meaninglessness and normlessness) has been thoroughly discussed (Southwell 2003; 2012; Kabashima et al. 2000; Gniewosz et al. 2009; Finifter 1970; Weatherford 1991) while it has not been the case when it comes to the uni-dimensionality of political apathy (simply a lack of interest in politics), probably because it had been deemed obvious. What is noteworthy however is that both of these concepts are lacking empirical verification, a gap I intend to fill. Until recently, no studies had analyzed the multiple dimensions of alienation except that of Finifter (1970). She concluded that only powerlessness and normlessness could be empirically verified although the two other dimensions were theoretically possible. This is why almost every other study on alienation has adopted the same structure and it is considered a conventional wisdom since some authors see the issue of dimensionality as settled (Wright 1976). In 2015 however, Stuart Fox verified the 4 dimensions of alienation. He indeed identified the same dimensions Finifter (1975) had unearthed. He then analyzed the correlation between the 4 dimensions and although the correlations are small (ranging from 0,1 to 0,31) they are significant. Finally he tested the correlation between these dimensions and voting and found that the four dimensions were significantly correlated: the coefficients ranged from -0,09 to -0,55. This is however a very basic that cannot end the the debate on the empirical verification of the concept and its dimensions since he could only use election data and that the goal of his doctoral thesis was to use qualitative methods

Furthermore, identifying alienation (be it with quantitative or qualitative methods) is not a sufficient level of analysis. Indeed, saying that someone is politically alienated does not tell why, i.e it does not explain which dimension is the most prevalent in the person's alienation or which experiences led to the beliefs the person holds. Also, people might hold one or several of those beliefs without being alienated. In the literature, the most prevalent variable used has been political powerlessness (Schwartz 1973, 12) and it has either been

used as a direct definition of alienation or something producing alienation. Indeed, McLeod, Ward and Tancill (1965) showed that people who see themselves as not being able to influence politics are more likely to withdraw from it, show less interest and participate less. However, the person could see their powerlessness not as something detrimental if they do not care about exerting influence over politics outcomes, i.e feeling powerless is not indicative of alienation. The same goes for people who have a low feeling of efficacy but are satisfied with the way things are. Similarly, people might also be very critical or cynical of the motives behind politicians' actions but not be alienated because they still believe that they can influence politics or that institutions compel politicians to act according to people's needs. Even if a person has a strong feeling of discontent towards politics, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are alienated because they could put their trust in another group to reform what they do not like in politics, hence lowering their value conflict. People do not respond uniformly to every feature of the political system. Thus, it is important to differentiate between estrangement from the political system because of the nature of the system itself (alienation) and estrangement of the system because of one situational characteristic of it (discontent). For a person to be characterized as alienated, the whole political system rather than a particular political party or politician, has to be deemed inefficacious. For example, people heavily criticizing Macron because of his actions after the dissolution of the *Assemblée Nationale* (something that came up several times during the interviews) cannot be indicative of them being alienated.

Overall, my research will address the following gaps: there is a lack of both qualitative and quantitative research on the wider population, which makes the concept unclear since it has not been very much empirically tested. Using ESS data and a self-made survey on Parisian jobseekers, I show that income and education play a big role in the emergence of alienation and apathy. Furthermore, I show that apathy has a negative effect on participation while alienation displays more complicated patterns. In addition to these quantitative methods, I interview parisian jobseekers and show that political socialization is essential in the interviewees' conception of politics, i.e in the presence or absence of alienation and apathy. These two concepts exert an influence over the perception of the different forms of participation individuals have and therefore influence participation itself.

| Concept | Dimensions | Definition | Behavior |
|------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Alienation | ⇒ | Feeling of estrangement from politics, i.e there is a conflict between individual's political values and those in the polity, the reason why they see themselves and the political system as ineffective | There is no unequivocal behavior linked to alienation. The most common cited behavior related to alienation is the choice not to participate (Fox 2015, 167) but depending on the reasons a person is alienated, they can participate in an "anti-system" way, by for example voting for populist parties (Fox 2015, 171) |
| | Powerlessness | Feeling that the individual cannot affect political decisions: decisions are not taken by him and he cannot participate in the decision making process | |
| | Normlessness | Perception that the rules of political relations aren't respected anymore and that they are treated unfairly as a result. It is linked to distrust | |
| | Meaninglessness | Perception that individuals cannot understand the political process and that their choices are therefore futile, making them unable to promote their agenda | |
| | Deprivation | Perception that the political system is structured in a way that will prevent them from being treated fairly | |
| Apathy | (Uni-dimensional) | An individual's lack of motivation to engage with politics or generalized disinterest towards politics | Lower levels of involvement in politics which is in turn associated with a lack of participation |

Figure 2 - Summary of the key concepts

Methods

A. Research Design

In order to understand the emergence of alienation and apathy and their effect on political practices, I incorporate both survey and interview data. I chose to conduct this study in France and more specifically in Paris purely because of practical reasons: I live in Paris and it would have been too complicated and costly to study alienation and apathy in another city or country. First, I harness European Social Survey (ESS) data in order to assess which socio-demographic and employment-related variables influence alienation, its dimensions and apathy. Then I compute the effect of my concepts on political participation. To understand in-depth mechanisms of any relationship between alienation and political practices and how people's socialization influenced the presence or absence of alienation and apathy, I conducted interviews. In order to sample both alienated and non-alienated people and apathetic and non-apathetic people, I chose a field that would ensure inclusion of respondents who were more likely to experience alienation and/or apathy since this is a lower percentage of the general population. Urban and unemployed individuals are less likely to vote (Mayer 2010), so I use abstention as an indirect proxy for alienation and/or apathy. Therefore, I handed out leaflets leading to an online survey in front of a France Travail in Paris, the French unemployment office, from which I also recruited potential interview respondents. My survey and the subsequent interviews provided detailed answers on attitudes, socio-demographic characteristics and practices.

B. ESS Analysis

a. Goals of ESS data analysis

The ESS - a European wide cross sectional survey conducted every two years since 2001 – is an ideal data set because of the numerous waves it has and the vast number of variables that were relevant to my research question, such as a wide array of socio-demographic and political variables. The ESS data also allows me to identify correlation and causations with the benefit of having a high level of internal validity. It also allowed me to determine the effect of each singular variable.

The quantitative element of my thesis accomplish multiple goals. Using the software R, the first set of regressions show how socio-demographic characteristics and employment related variables influenced the four dimensions of alienation. I then regressed the four dimensions on the five political practices present in my datasets, with and without socio-demographic controls. With these two types of regressions I identified which characteristics shape deprivation, normlessness, meaninglessness and powerlessness and which impact the dimensions of alienation and apathy have on political participation. I then created one alienation variable from the dimensions and then repeated the socio-demographic and political practices regressions. While four dimensions are useful to know in detail what effect each of them has and how they are influenced, one alienation variable provided parsimony for my study. In particular, by looking at the correlation between the dimensions, the socio-demographic determinants of alienation and its effects on political practices, I could determine if the four scales I used are, indeed, dimensions of one concept (a multi-dimensional concept) or four different concepts.

b. The ESS datasets and variables

To clean the dataset, in addition to renaming the variables, I added weights because the unemployment rate was underestimated by approximately half in the ESS dataset compared to the real percentage of unemployed people in France between 2004 and 2020.



Figure 3 - unemployment rate between wave 2 (2004) and wave 10 (2020) in my sample

Although the curves look alike, they do not display the same numbers. In 2004, only 4% of my sample was unemployed whereas 8.9% of French population was (« France: Unemployment Rate 2004-2020 », s. d.). The same trend continues in subsequent years.

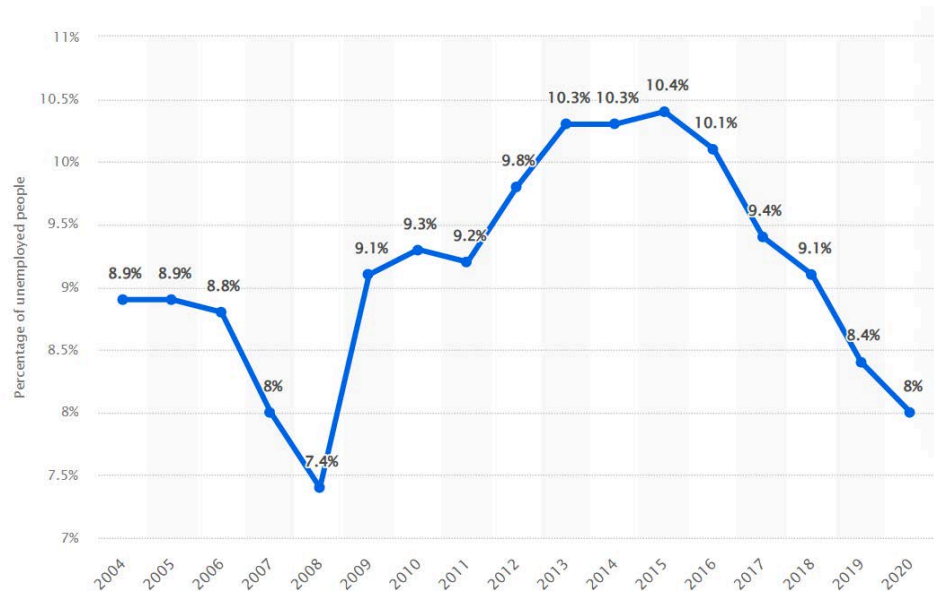


Figure 4 - unemployment rate in France between 2004 and 2020

Out of the 11 waves of the ESS, I excluded the 11th because the entire French dataset was not released at the time I conducted my analysis. I also did not include the first wave because it lacked an income measurement. As a result, I used nine waves from 2004 to 2020.

I decided to use three different datasets (in the sense that I selected different amounts of waves) to balance between significance and representativity on one hand and operational accuracy on the other. The first dataset (waves 2 to 10) allows me to have the widest range of years, hence the highest number of observations but only lets me to build 2 dimensions of alienation (normlessness and deprivation) in addition to apathy. The second dataset (waves 6 and 10) gives me access to another theme called “understanding of democracy”, which lets me build the powerlessness dimension and also allows me to add more variables in the different scales I built. However, it has the lowest number of waves and observations, which impacts statistical significance. Finally, the third dataset includes waves 8 to 10, allowing me to build the 4 dimensions of alienation (in addition to apathy as well).

All of the datasets include the same socio-demographic, employment-related and political practices variables relevant to my study:

| Socio-demographic variables | Employment-related variables | Political practices |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Place of living (domicile) | Unemployed and not actively looking for a job | Vote |
| Education years | Unemployed and not actively looking for a job | Contact a politician |
| Household income | Experience of 3 months of unemployment or more | Demonstration |
| Gender | Experience of 12 months of unemployment or more | Petition |
| Age ² | Working in a paid job | Boycott |
| Feeling of racial discrimination | | |

Figure 5 - Table of the socio-demographic, employment-related and political practices variables used in the three datasets

The choice of the meaning of the intercept was not an easy one. It had to make sense but some choices I made made the intercept fall below the minimum of the dependent variable or increased it above its upper limit. This is why I chose to use most of the variables the way they were coded except for age, which was centered on its mean. I also decided to add age² but not education² (more information about that choice in [appendix 1](#)). The intercept is a 52 year old male with 0 years of education living in the countryside, not racially discriminated against, that is neither working nor unemployed and who experienced an unemployment period longer than 3 months and longer than 12 months.

c. Building the scales

The number of variables used to build the different dimensions are the only differences between the three datasets. Here is table summarizing the variables used in the different alienation dimensions in the different datasets:

| | Dataset 1 | Dataset 2 | Dataset 3 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Normlessness | Trust in the parliament | Trust in the parliament | Trust in the parliament |
| | Trust in parties | | |
| | Trust in politicians | Trust in politicians | Trust in politicians |
| | Trust in people | | Trust in people |
| | | People are fair | |
| | People help | | |
| | Satisfaction with democracy | Satisfaction with democracy | Satisfaction with democracy |
| Deprivation | Life satisfaction | Life satisfaction | Life satisfaction |
| | Feeling about income | Feeling about income | Feeling about income |
| Powerlessness | | Different parties offer alternatives to each other | Political system allows people to have influence on politics |
| | | Government changes policies in response to what most people think | Political system allows people to have a say in what government does |
| | | Government is voted out it has done a bad job | |
| Meaninglessness | | | Political interest |
| | | | Consumption of political news |

Figure 6 - Used variables for each dataset and each alienation dimension

i. Deprivation

I used the same deprivation scale for the three datasets. Since deprivation is measuring the perception that the political system is structurally organized in a way that prevents people from getting what they deserve, it can be operationalized by using assessments of life satisfaction and of the gap between expectations and receipts (Fox 2015, 158). It is a common form of alienation among low SES individuals (Thompson and Horton 1960). However, the ESS doesn't offer many variables measuring such things. I could only use life satisfaction and the feeling about one's income. These two variables happen to be correlated. Someone who finds it very difficult to live with their current income will have a life satisfaction of 3 (out of 10) and all else equal, each increase in one's feeling about their income (out of 4) increases life satisfaction by 1,347.

| | Life satisfaction |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Intercept | 3.630*** (0.053) |
| Feeling income | 1.347*** (0.024) |
| R ² | 0.192 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.191 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05
Statistical models

Figure 7 - correlation between feeling about income and life satisfaction

ii. Normlessness

This concept is measuring the perception that the political system does or doesn't respect the norms and rules it established. It is therefore related to political trust. I was able to build the normlessness scale for the first and third dataset by using variables relating to political and social trust (Fox 2015, 157), i.e trust in politicians, trust in parliament, trust in parties, people are fair, people can be trusted, satisfaction with democracy and people are willing to help. In the second dataset, I could add the media are free to criticize the government and elections are free and fair. I computed the correlation between these variables to select the ones that would end up in the normlessness scale. For example, in the first dataset I excluded people are fair because it was correlated to only 4 other variables while those I kept were correlated to at least 5 of them.

| | Trust parliament | Trust politicians | Trust parties | People fair | People trust | People help | Satisfaction democracy |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Intercept | 0.755*** (0.053) | -0.215*** (0.036) | 0.170*** (0.037) | 3.059*** (0.049) | 1.086*** (0.058) | 1.774*** (0.058) | 1.446*** (0.062) |
| Trust politicians | 0.387*** (0.012) | | 0.704*** (0.006) | 0.020 (0.014) | 0.056*** (0.014) | 0.085*** (0.014) | 0.259*** (0.015) |
| Trust parties | 0.185*** (0.012) | 0.673*** (0.006) | | -0.009 (0.013) | 0.052*** (0.014) | 0.046** (0.014) | 0.043** (0.015) |
| People fair | 0.042*** (0.008) | 0.008 (0.006) | -0.004 (0.006) | | 0.301*** (0.009) | 0.261*** (0.009) | 0.077*** (0.010) |
| People trust | 0.092*** (0.008) | 0.021*** (0.005) | 0.021*** (0.005) | 0.277*** (0.008) | | 0.182*** (0.009) | 0.026** (0.009) |
| People help | -0.013 (0.008) | 0.031*** (0.005) | 0.017** (0.005) | 0.229*** (0.008) | 0.173*** (0.008) | | 0.034*** (0.009) |
| Satisfaction democracy | 0.227*** (0.007) | 0.084*** (0.005) | 0.015** (0.005) | 0.062*** (0.008) | 0.022** (0.008) | 0.031*** (0.008) | |
| Trust parliament | | 0.179*** (0.006) | 0.089*** (0.006) | 0.048*** (0.009) | 0.112*** (0.010) | -0.017 (0.010) | 0.321*** (0.010) |
| R ² | 0.470 | 0.711 | 0.673 | 0.234 | 0.244 | 0.184 | 0.306 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.470 | 0.711 | 0.672 | 0.233 | 0.243 | 0.183 | 0.306 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Statistical models

Figure 8 - Correlation between the variables that can build the normlessness scale in dataset 1

Because of the same reasoning as the one described above, the normlessness scale in the second and third dataset use different variables than the ones used in the first dataset. You will find the two other tables in [appendix 3](#). The p-values of the selected variables were often below 0.001 but some were below 0.01 and in the second dataset, some were only under 0.05. These coefficients were however all positive, which means that an increase in x caused an increase in y, be it in trust in political institutions, in social trust, in satisfaction towards democracy, etc.

iii. Powerlessness

I could only measure powerlessness in the second and third data set. It is a measure of the perceptions that the individual's actions cannot influence the political outcome. In the second dataset, I used the following variables: "different political parties offer clear alternatives to one another", "governing parties are punished in elections when they have

done a bad job” and “government changes policies in response to what most people think”.

| | Different parties offer alternatives to each other |
|---|---|
| Intercept | 3.036*** (0.115) |
| government is voted out it has done a bad job | 0.220*** (0.016) |
| government changes policies in response to what most people think | 0.184*** (0.019) |
| R ² | 0.141 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.140 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 |

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Figure 9 - correlation between the “powerlessness” variables in the second dataset

The two independent variables are significant (p-value < 0.001) and positive, meaning that - all else equal - the more people think that a government can be voted out and that government responds to people’s demands, the more they think that different parties offer alternatives. Again, this is not causal. This regression table is only meant to show a significant correlation justifying the merging of these variables into one scale. In the third dataset, I operationalized these dimensions by using the political system allows people to influence politics and the political system allows to have a say in what the government does (Fox 2015, 158). In this regression, coefficients are significant and positive, meaning that - all else equal - an increase in the perception that the political system allows people to have a say increases the belief that people can influence politics by 0,507 points.

| | Political system allows people to have influence on politics |
|--|---|
| Intercept | 0.934*** (0.029) |
| Political system allows people to have a say in what government does | 0.507*** (0.012) |
| R ² | 0.274 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.274 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 |

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Figure 10 - correlation between the “powerlessness” variables in the third dataset

iv. Meaninglessness

Meaninglessness is not easy to operationalize because it is intended to measure the lack of confidence in people’s ability to understand politics and to interact with it in a way that can promote their agenda. Variables related to the level of confidence in political knowledge can serve as proxy (Fox 2015, 158) but this type of variable was not consistently measured in the ESS dataset which is the reason why I could only build this scale in dataset 3

by using the political interest and political news (a variable originally coded in minutes that I recoded in 4 levels by using its quartiles). The intercept indicates that someone who is very

| | Political News |
|--|-----------------------|
| Intercept | 1.639*** (0.031) |
| Interest in Politics | 0.386*** (0.017) |
| R ² | 0.102 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.102 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 |
| *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05 | |
| Statistical models | |

Figure 11 - correlation between political interest and political news

interested in politics will consume more than 90 minutes of news everyday. All else equal, when political interest increases by one (i.e when interest decreases since the scale is reversed), it makes the news consumption variable decrease by 0,386. Both variables are correlated ($p < 0.001$), hence the choice of these two for this dimension.

v. *Alienation*

Finally, I built the alienation scale by adding the various dimensions I had. When they had a different number of levels, I centered them on their mean by computing their z-score in order to make them compatible with each other. In order to know if these dimensions could be merged into one single variable, I used two different methods. I first regressed the dimensions of alienation between each other to see if they were correlated.

| | Normlessness | Normlessness 2 | Powerlessness | Powerlessness 2 | Powerlessness | Meaninglessness |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| (Intercept) | 1.990 (1.213) | 2.770* (1.251) | 1.377*** (0.261) | 1.582*** (0.296) | 1.440*** (0.294) | 2.153*** (0.316) |
| deprivation | 1.487*** (0.074) | | | 0.188*** (0.018) | | -0.009 (0.019) |
| domicile | 0.707*** (0.085) | 0.676*** (0.087) | 0.032 (0.018) | 0.113*** (0.021) | 0.100*** (0.021) | 0.082*** (0.022) |
| education | 0.250*** (0.028) | 0.251*** (0.029) | 0.034*** (0.006) | 0.062*** (0.007) | 0.054*** (0.007) | 0.081*** (0.007) |
| income | 0.071 (0.041) | 0.389*** (0.038) | 0.021** (0.008) | 0.025* (0.010) | 0.060*** (0.009) | 0.052*** (0.011) |
| gender | 0.100 (0.192) | 0.108 (0.198) | -0.156*** (0.041) | -0.142** (0.047) | -0.100* (0.047) | -0.364*** (0.050) |
| age_z | 0.296 (0.602) | -2.066*** (0.612) | -0.361** (0.128) | -0.304* (0.147) | -0.661*** (0.144) | 0.504** (0.157) |
| age2 | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.001*** (0.000) | 0.000* (0.000) | 0.000* (0.000) | 0.000*** (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | -0.969 (0.593) | -1.760** (0.610) | 0.209 (0.128) | 0.104 (0.145) | -0.032 (0.143) | 0.315* (0.154) |
| jobless_inactive | -0.382 (0.756) | -0.929 (0.778) | 0.081 (0.163) | 0.045 (0.185) | 0.009 (0.183) | -0.299 (0.197) |
| jobless_active | 2.103*** (0.450) | 1.304** (0.462) | -0.062 (0.097) | 0.190 (0.110) | 0.092 (0.108) | -0.041 (0.117) |
| jobless_3months | 0.458 (0.249) | 0.713** (0.256) | 0.060 (0.054) | 0.110 (0.061) | 0.135* (0.060) | 0.067 (0.065) |
| jobless_12months | -0.299 (0.304) | -0.011 (0.313) | -0.058 (0.066) | -0.095 (0.074) | -0.045 (0.073) | -0.119 (0.079) |
| paid_work | 0.450 (0.284) | 0.532 (0.294) | -0.087 (0.061) | -0.033 (0.069) | 0.034 (0.069) | -0.502*** (0.074) |
| meaninglessness | | 0.673*** (0.060) | | | 0.197*** (0.014) | |
| normlessness | | | 0.115*** (0.003) | | | |
| R ² | 0.187 | 0.138 | 0.296 | 0.099 | 0.116 | 0.139 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.185 | 0.135 | 0.294 | 0.096 | 0.114 | 0.137 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 12 - correlation between dimensions (third dataset)

It appears that - in the only dataset where the 4 dimensions were computed - they are all mildly correlated. Although the coefficient of normlessness on powerlessness (0,115) and of deprivation on powerlessness (0,188) appear less strong than the others (1,487 for deprivation on normlessness and 0,673 for meaninglessness on normlessness), they are related to dimensions having respectively 39 and 44 levels, i.e way more than the other two (7 for meaninglessness and 9 for powerlessness), hence the lower coefficients. The only non-significant coefficient among the dimensions is the one of deprivation on meaninglessness, meaning that its effect cannot be differentiated from 0. This is the reason why I decided not to include deprivation in my alienation variable. Also, since neither deprivation nor powerlessness had an effect on political practices (this is my second method), it seemed relevant to exclude powerlessness as well. In the other waves, I included all the dimensions in the alienation variable by using the criteria outlined above. You will find the correlation graphs in [appendix 4](#).

vi. *Apathy*

In all the datasets, I built the apathy scale variable using political interest (Fox 2015). It is indeed related to the various political information variables from the ESS. There are four variables related to news about politics but some were measured only in the first waves while the other ones were only measured in the last waves, which is why I cannot include them. In order to test the relationship between political interest and the four other variables, I built 3 mini-datasets allowing me to test the correlation between these variables. In all of the mini-datasets, all the coefficients are significant ($p < 0,001$) and negative.

| | Interest 1 | Interest 2 | Interest 3 |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Intercept | 2.832*** (0.029) | 2.945*** (0.016) | 3.171*** (0.025) |
| Newspaper | -0.295*** (0.019) | | |
| Radio | -0.092*** (0.010) | | |
| TV | | -0.161*** (0.006) | |
| News | | | -0.261*** (0.010) |
| R ² | 0.131 | 0.058 | 0.098 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.131 | 0.058 | 0.098 |
| Num. obs. | 2769 | 10937 | 6036 |

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Figure 13 - Correlation between “political interest” and political news related variables

Given that political interest is reversed (i.e a higher score equals a lower interest), all else equal, the more you watch TV, read newspapers or listen to the radio, the more you are interested in politics. Furthermore, the political news variable has one of the strongest effects. All else being equal, someone that spends between 0 and 30 minutes reading/watching/hearing political information, will be hardly interested in politics. When political news increases by one (i.e when news consumption lies between 30 and 60 minutes), political interest grows by 0,26. Both political news and political interest have four levels. This regression is not meant to prove any causal effect but only to show that information and interest are correlated, meaning that choosing political interest as a proxy for political news is relevant. I wasn't able to test the variable in the second and third dataset due to the lack of information variables present specifically during the waves I used for these dataset...

C. Fieldwork in France Travail

a. Justification of the fieldwork

To deeply understand what shapes political alienation and apathy, a regression analysis of survey data is limited. They allow me to know what kind of characteristics influence alienation apathy and in which these two concepts influence participation (by decreasing or increasing it), but they cannot tell me how, which is why I also incorporated qualitative methods. However, alienated or apathetic people cannot be found “in the wild”, meaning that I have to focus on one specific setting to interview people who may be more likely to demonstrate signs of alienation or apathy. Since I hypothesize that my conceptualization of alienation and apathy is less prevalent than non-alienation among the whole population, I needed to find a setting in which they would be overrepresented. It is difficult to know where this kind of person can be overrepresented since alienation apathy is not something that is often measured. If I cannot know which population is more alienated than the rest, I can know which part of the population participates less than the rest in politics and hypothesize that those who partake less in politics are also more likely to be alienated, hence my choice for unemployed people. Participation is less prevalent among populations that are less socially integrated, like young people, migrants and inhabitants of urban areas (Lancelot 1968, 228). High SES individuals participate politically more because they have resources and competences facilitating participation (Verba and Nie 1987; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980) which explains why subordinated social roles participate less (Mayer 2010, 181). Since group membership also increases participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Rosenstone, Hansen and Reeves 2003), I hypothesized that *désaffiliation sociale* (Castel 1995) causes a decline in participation.

Thus, I decided to do my fieldwork among Parisian jobseekers. Indeed, jobseekers tend to be socially disaffiliated, especially those who have been unemployed for a long time (ibid.), jobseekers have a higher poverty rate than the whole population (« L’essentiel sur... la pauvreté | Insee », s. d.) and have lower levels of education (« Taux de chômage par niveau d’études en France », s. d.). Finally, Parisian jobseekers logically come from Paris or neighboring cities, both being urban settings.

Parisian jobseekers mustn’t be equated with jobseekers in general because they have certain specific characteristics. They have a little more trouble going out of unemployment and the jobs they find are more precarious (« Panorama de l’emploi pour la FRANCE et la région ILE-DE-FRANCE », s. d.). In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, 10% are less than 25 years old and 28% are older than 50, which is very close to the percentage found

in the French population (ibid). Also 43% of them are unemployed for at least one year (ibid). The main characteristics differentiating parisian jobseekers from other jobseekers is the education level. CAP-BEP are underrepresented among the Parisian jobseekers (18% versus 28% in the French population) and Bac+3 are overrepresented (30% versus 19% in the French population) (ibid.).

b. Field work

In order to contact my interviewees, I handed out flyers in front of France Travail offices. These leaflets ([appendix 5](#)) contained a QR code leading to a survey in which respondents had to enter their email address in order to be interviewed.

I visited five France Travail in total but ended up only choosing three. The first one, France Travail “Carl Armandre”, was the one situated in the North of Paris in an *arrondissement* that had a poorer population and a higher percentage of Black and Arab people. The second one I chose, France Travail “Vidale”, was in the south of Paris, again in a poorer area but with a less high percentage of non-white people. The last place I stayed was the France Travail “Jacques Lelarge” in the center of Paris, meaning with a richer population and with a higher percentage of white people (according to my observations). There are two France Travails I did not continue my fieldwork in. They both were not far apart from each other and were situated in an area with a medium level of wealth. I did not include these two locations because I only stayed 30 minutes in the first since too few people were there and with the second, I was there three times and distributed a few hundred flyers just to receive 5 answers, which is a very low response rate.

In order to distribute those flyers, I stayed in front of France Travail for several hours in the morning. I tried to do it in the afternoon but since France Travail is appointment-based at these hours, very few people come in. In the beginning, I stayed between 9 am (opening) and 1:15 pm (the time to which France Travail becomes appointment based) because these are the hours during which people can freely come to France Travail, but I then only stayed from 9 am to 12 am because after that time, people are way less numerous. In total, I stayed 70 hours in front of France Travail handing out flyers.

I stayed in front of France Travail for several reasons. First, I didn’t tell the institution about what I was doing (since contacting them wasn’t successful), which means that it would have been tricky to enter the building. I ended up meeting the director of the France Travail “Jacques Lelarge” several times and although he explained to me that I had to stay outside France Travail the first time, he invited me in the last time I met him. When it comes to the

two other France Travails, I didn't meet any personnel of the France Travail "Carl Armandre" and met a few of them for the France Travail "Vidale". I saw a lot more counselors at France Travail "Broncian". The second reason is that I didn't want to mislead the jobseekers into thinking that they had to fill in the survey for France Travail even though I was asked several times if the survey was to be done for France Travail. When handing out the questionnaire, I generally said "Bonjour, je suis étudiant et ça m'aiderait beaucoup si vous pouviez remplir mon questionnaire en ligne" (Hello, I'm a student and it would help me a lot if you could fill in my online survey). Sometimes I added information about it, but most of the time, people had already taken the survey or were already gone inside France Travail. Most of the people took the leaflet (which didn't mean they filled it in) but some (about 12,5% of the people visiting France Travail) did not take it. They sometimes explained why they didn't take it, for example by telling me that they had an appointment, that they weren't interested or that they didn't speak French well enough. The large majority of them just said no and entered the building. I cannot know why those people refused to fill in the survey. It could be for the reasons described above but also because they are alienated and didn't want to talk about politics since it was written in bold that the questionnaire was about politics. During the distribution sessions, a few people asked what I was doing, either because they didn't understand what it was or because they were interested. Some of these people were not jobseekers but simply pedestrians that were intrigued by me. I observed that although there was a pretty large amount of non-white people at France Travail, those who accepted the survey were predominantly white. In total, I distributed 1843 leaflets.

c. France Travail Survey

The flyer's QR code led to a questionnaire, which contains both questions related to the topic of politics and to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent. Those questions include age (six levels), household income (in fifteen levels), the *catégorie socio-professionnelle*, the level of education (eleven levels), gender (three levels). The formulation of the different answers ("I did it in the last 12 months", "I did it long ago", "I didn't do it but I could", "I didn't do it and I wouldn't") allowed me to gauge the level of engagement of the respondents with seven forms of political participation. The two questions about interest are related to apathy, the two questions about information are about meaninglessness, those about trust measure normlessness and the two other about influence on politics and the respondent's interest measure powerlessness. I completed my questionnaire before I concluded conceptualizing my theoretical framework, which is why I

didn't ask any question that could measure deprivation. You will find the precise list of the questions in [appendix 6](#). In total, I had 88 responses, which means that the response rate was 4,7%. It would have been a bit higher if I didn't go to France Travail "Broncian".

In order to show the trends present in my dataset, I decided to merge the political variables into alienation dimensions, a unified alienation scale and apathy. I built the dimensions based on my operationalization of the variables in the ESS dataset and on previous research (Fox, 2015). Here is a table summarizing what I did:

| Concept | Variables |
|-----------------|--|
| Normlessness | Trust in parties Trust in politicians Trust in the government taking good decisions |
| Meaninglessness | I have a good knowledge about politics Consumption of political news (centered on its mean) |
| Powerlessness | My interests matter for elected officials I can influence politics |
| Alienation | All of the above |
| Apathy | Interest in politics Interest in what happens in the world |

Figure 14 - Operationalization of alienation, its dimensions and apathy for the France Travail survey

d. Interviews

As I said earlier, the questionnaire allowed me to recruit interviewees. In the first version of my survey, I decided to ask respondents if they would be willing to do an interview with me and allowed them to write their email address. This method didn't work very well which is the reason why I decided to always ask the email address of the respondent and write in the presentation of my questionnaire that they would be susceptible to being contacted by me for an interview but that they could refuse. This worked better and this is how I was able to interview 21 people. When it comes to consent, I didn't use consent forms.

I contacted people and when they answered, I asked them if they would accept the interview to be recorded and when we were about to begin the interview, I asked them again if they consented and started the interview if they were (which happened in 100% of the cases). Most of the interviews happened in cafes but 8 of them were conducted on the phone.

These first series of questions I asked were about political socialization. The questions allowed me to know at each stage of the respondent's life, how they conceived and enacted politics, what influenced their beliefs and actions (be it their parents or peers) and how it all developed until now. This allowed me to talk about their interest in politics, how it was translated in terms of political practices and which forms these practices take. I was then able to tackle subjects related to trust, political efficacy, demands and disappointment towards the political system. You can find a list of the questions I asked in [appendix 7](#).

The shortest interview lasted about 30 minutes while the longest lasted more than 1 hour and a half. Having handed out flyers in front of France Travail, most of my interviewees were jobseekers. However, a man I interviewed said he wasn't unemployed (he was an actor) but that he got my leaflet because I handed it out to someone he knew. Another man I interviewed was a pensioner that had been summoned at France Travail to be taught about formation offers. The interviews were recorded on my laptop and my phone and they were then transcribed using different softwares. I began by using Whisper via Humanum (4 were transcribed that way), then I used Whisper via Google Repository (2 were transcribed with this technique) and the rest was transcribed using NoScribe (a version of Faster Whisper that has to be locally downloaded). The interviews were then uploaded on MAXQDA, the software I used for my qualitative coding. I coded the first 10 interviews only with first-level coding (using a lot of in-vivo or quasi in-vivo codes), then rearranged the coding into categories and themes, continued to code the rest of the interviews and rearranged the categories I had. When coding, I first looked for codes related to political socialization, then codes related to political practices and their justification and finally to codes relating to attitudes toward the political system.

D. Use of AI

In this thesis, AI was used in three different ways. It was first used to transcribe interviews via Whisper, it was also used to know more about certain functions in R like for example "htlmreg" (ChatGPT) and it was also used to translate excerpts from interviews in english (ChatGPT or DeepL).

E. Outline

Chapter 1 will tackle the question of the correlation between socio-demographic and employment-related variables on alienation, its dimensions and apathy. Chapter 2 will aim at understanding the role of socialization in the presence or absence of alienation and apathy. Chapter 3 will analyze the effect of alienation, its dimensions and apathy on political practices and Chapter 4 will seek to grasp how these dimensions affect the perception of the different forms of participation. The limitations part will point out the limits of both qualitative and quantitative methods while the conclusion highlight my key findings and underline the contribution my thesis brings to research in social science

Chapter 1 - What variables shape alienation and apathy

This chapter aims at studying which variables influence alienation and apathy. As I explained in the introduction, only one study sought to quantitatively measure the different dimensions of political alienation on the whole population (Finifter 1970) and only one study measured both alienation and apathy, although only for a younger demographic (Fox 2015). In this chapter, using ESS data and a survey on parisian jobseekers, I intend to fill that gap. This chapter tackles the question of the correlation between socio-demographic variables and employment-related variables on the one side and alienation, its dimensions and apathy on the other. I want to know if variables like age, gender, education, income and the place of living influence alienation and apathy and if so, how. The same goes for employment-related variables, i.e if the person worked in a paid job in the last 7 days, if they are unemployed and actively looking for a job or not, if they experienced short-term (3 months) or long-term unemployment (12 months).

I show that powerlessness (the feeling that his actions do not bear any consequences), meaninglessness (the feeling that individuals cannot understand the political process), normlessness (the feeling that the rules of politics have broken down) and deprivation (the feeling individuals cannot get what they deserve) have slightly different correlations with socio-demographic variables but that the two most important variables are education and income since they appear to be both the most frequently significant variables and also to have the highest coefficients. Also employment-related variables are only mildly correlated with alienation dimensions with the notable exception of deprivation. The variables that seem to be the most important are related to the experience of short term (3 months) and long-term unemployment (12 months). Apathy is not correlated with employment-related variables but is correlated with almost all of the socio-demographic variables.

A. Descriptive Statistics of employment-related and socio-demographic variables

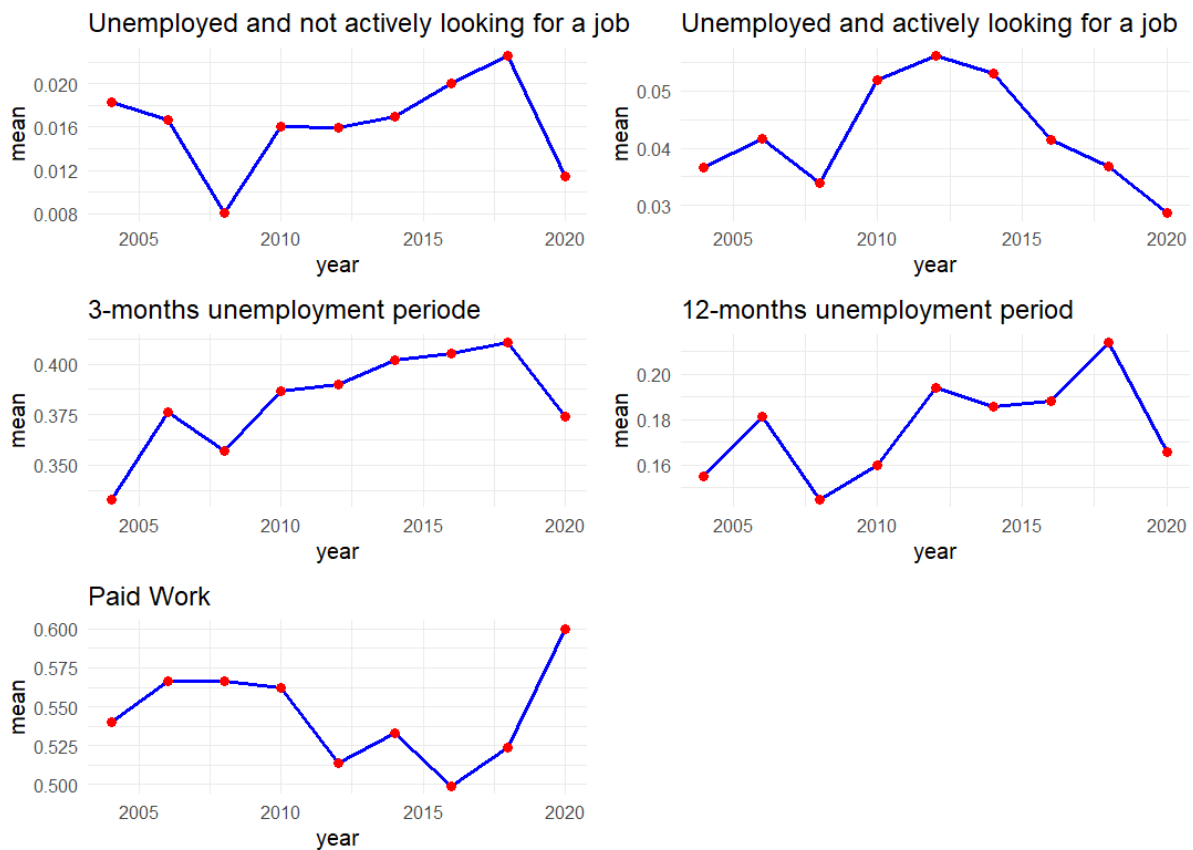


Figure 15 - The evolution of employment-related variables between 2004 and 2020

The number of unemployed people *not* looking for a job has been relatively stable between 2004 and 2020 in France (between 1% and 2%) while the percentage of jobseekers follows the trends of the national average in the sense that the unemployment rates is lower in 2004 and 2020 but was higher between 2012 and 2016. As I said in the methods section (see page 15-16), the percentage present in the ESS are twice as low as the ones in France, hence my use of weights for that variable. The percentage of people who have been unemployed for more than three months increased from 33% in 2004 to 40% in 2018 and went back to 37% in 2020. The same upward and then downward trend is present in people having been unemployed for more than 12 months. It is not surprising that the percentage of positive response is smaller than for short-term unemployment because long-term unemployment is rarer but also because in the survey, the long-term unemployment question only concerns those who answered that they had experienced 3 months or more of unemployment. I recoded the long-term unemployment variable to merge those who answered “no” and those who were “ineligible” to answer the question (i.e those who didn’t answer “yes” to the short-term unemployment question). Paid work seems to inversely mirror unemployed and looking for a job since its levels are rather high from 2004 to wave 2014 (about 57%) then decreases from

2014 to 2018 (about 52%) and finally increases in 2020 to reach 60% of people working in a paid occupation.

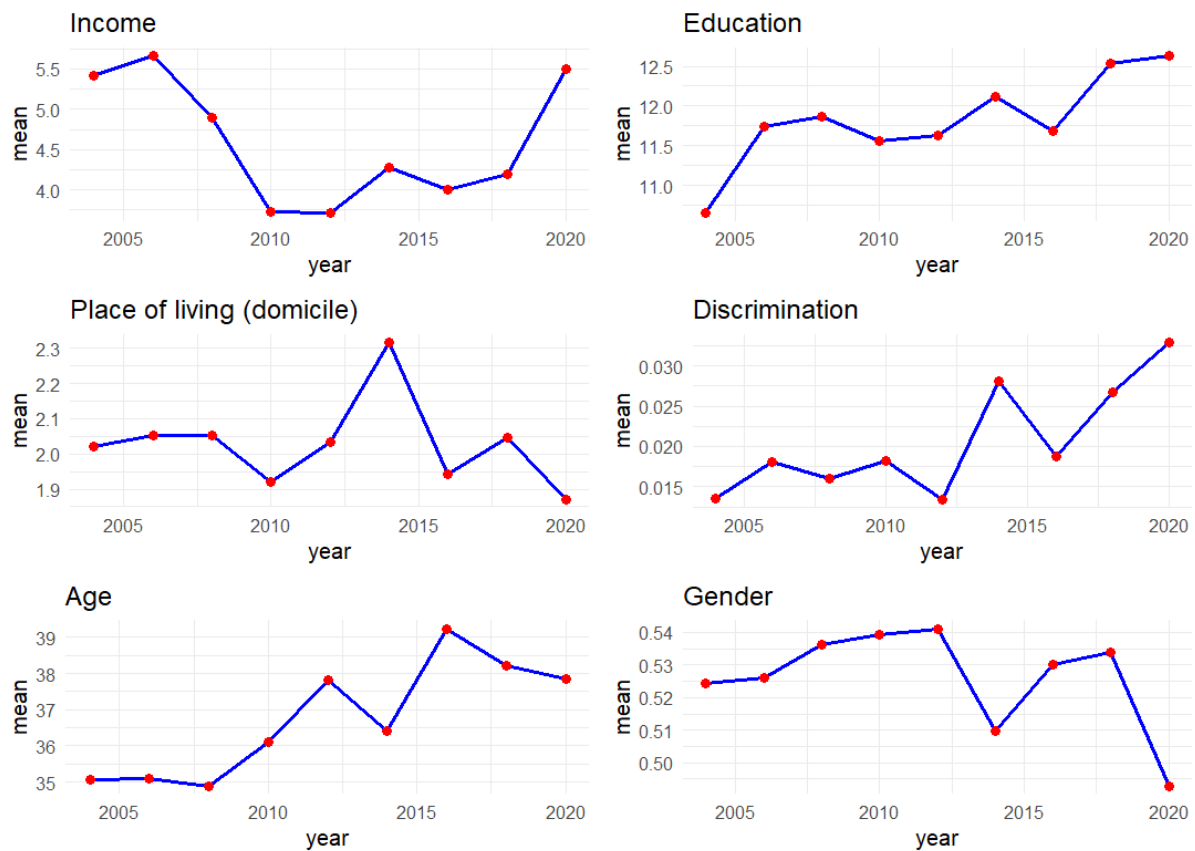


Figure 16 - The evolution of socio-demographic variables between 2004 and 2020

The sample saw a decrease in the mean household income: it went from a mean around the 5th decile to a mean under the 4th decile but it went up again in 2020 to the 5th decile, echoing the trends present in the unemployment and looking for a job and paid work variables. When it comes to education, it logically increases over the years, as does age, going from 11 to 12,5 years for the first and from 35 to 39 years old for the second. Another socio-demographic characteristic that increased is the feeling of racial discrimination that went from 1,5% of the sample feeling discriminated against on the basis of their race to 3%. Gender didn't change. The place of living or domicile (i.e the type of environment the individual lives in) also didn't change and the mean answer stayed around 2 which means that the average individual lives in a town or small city.

B. The correlation between socio-demographic characteristics, employment-related variables and alienation, its dimensions and apathy

I show that employment related-variables usually do not play a role (except for deprivation) and that the most important variables are income (especially on deprivation) and education (especially on normlessness). Also, alienation seems to be indeed a multi-dimensional concept.

a. First dataset: normlessness, deprivation and apathy

The first dataset contains 9 waves and therefore allows me to have the highest span of years. As I said before, in dataset one, I could only build 2 alienation scales: normlessness (the feeling the rules of politics have broken down) and deprivation (the feeling that individuals do not get what they deserve). Apathy, the generalized indifference in politics, is also included. Normlessness has 56 levels (from 0 to 56), deprivation has 44 (from 0 to 7,226) and apathy has 4 levels ranging from 0 to 3. These scales are reversed so that the closer to 0 the individual is, the closer he is to being deprived, apathetic and normless. The higher the score, the lower the normlessness, deprivation and apathy.

i. Linear regressions

All the socio-demographic variables have an effect on both normlessness and deprivation so that the higher the social class, the lower the feeling that individuals cannot get what they deserve and that the rules of politics have broken down. A male living in the countryside, that has 0 years of education, that is on the first income decile, that is 51,77 years old, that doesn't feel racially discriminated against, that is neither unemployed nor working (for example disabled or retired) but has lived an unemployment experience longer than 12 months will have 9,069 of the normlessness scale, 0,772 on the deprivation scale and 1,211 on an a apathy scale, i.e this individual will be rather apathetic, deprived and normless since these scores are close to 0 on their respective scales. The variables that are always significant are domicile (place of living), education, income, age and discrimination, confirming that socio-demographic variables influence normlessness and deprivation more reliably than employment-related variables. Given that normlessness and deprivation are thought to be two dimensions of one single concept, one could think that the coefficients would go in the same direction (negative for both or positive for both). It is indeed the case for all the coefficients except for the place of living (or domicile), i.e all else being equal, going from a rural place of living to an urban place of living decreases normlessness (remember, the scale is reversed) by 0,595 but increases deprivation by 0,029. This result is

hard to explain but one explanation could lie in the way I operationalized deprivation: I used the variables life satisfaction and feeling about income. Both are variable (directly or indirectly) related to the financial situation and since inequality

| | Normlessness | Deprivation | Apathy |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| (Intercept) | 9.069*** (0.938) | 0.772*** (0.138) | 1.211*** (0.093) |
| domicile | 0.595*** (0.067) | -0.029** (0.010) | 0.066*** (0.007) |
| education | 0.315*** (0.023) | 0.054*** (0.003) | 0.066*** (0.002) |
| income | 0.467*** (0.031) | 0.212*** (0.005) | 0.043*** (0.003) |
| gender | 0.203 (0.156) | -0.061** (0.023) | -0.262*** (0.015) |
| age_z | -3.027*** (0.477) | -1.181*** (0.070) | 0.448*** (0.047) |
| age2 | 0.002*** (0.000) | 0.001*** (0.000) | -0.000*** (0.000) |
| discrimination | -1.752** (0.539) | -0.348*** (0.080) | 0.148** (0.053) |
| jobless_inactive | -0.699 (0.644) | -0.443*** (0.095) | -0.093 (0.064) |
| jobless_active | -0.175 (0.345) | -0.589*** (0.051) | 0.025 (0.034) |
| jobless_3months | 0.777*** (0.204) | 0.173*** (0.030) | 0.003 (0.020) |
| jobless_12months | 0.321 (0.250) | 0.206*** (0.037) | -0.027 (0.025) |
| paid_work | -0.295 (0.227) | -0.058 (0.034) | -0.124*** (0.022) |
| R ² | 0.069 | 0.268 | 0.145 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.069 | 0.267 | 0.144 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 17 - Correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and employment-related variables on 2 alienation dimensions and apathy in dataset 1

is not only an objective fact but a subjective feeling based on interpersonal comparison (Kuhn 2019), an urban environment could multiply these points of comparison, hence making this feeling more prevalent. Urban areas also tend to be more unequal (Glaeser, Resseger and Tobio 2009). Apart from domicile, all the other significant coefficients go in the same direction. So all else equal, each year of education decreases normlessness by 0,315 points and deprivation by 0,054. Given that the normlessness scale is about seven times bigger than deprivation, a variable having the same effect on these variables will be seven times bigger for normlessness. I conclude that education has a similar effect on normlessness and deprivation but that income has a stronger effect on deprivation than on normlessness since even though the coefficient is twice as high (0, 467 compared 0,212), it should be 7 times

higher if the effect was similar. This echoes other research that identified the effect of education on political trust, a concept close to normlessness, by arguing that it was mediated by the perception of corruption (Hakhverdian and Mayne 2012). Perception of corruption is mediated by the level of education (ibid). Other argue that is is linked to cognitive ability and the occupational prestige associated with the level of education (Hooghe, Marien and de Vroome 2012).

When it comes to employment-related variables, they only seem to really affect deprivation. Overall, employment-related variables aren't significant with the exception of short-term unemployment, which has a negative effect on normlessness, i.e all else being equal, not having experienced short term decreases the feeling that the rules of the political system have broken down. This seems to be linked to the fact unemployed people have less economic resources and are stigmatized, i.e they experience economic and status deprivation, which increases political distrust (Giustozzi and Gangl 2021), a concept that is linked to normlessness. The less someone has experienced unemployment, the lower deprivation will be. Generally, all of the employment-related variables are significant ($p < 0,001$) and their effect is negative, although small.

Apathy is affected by socio-demographic variables (especially income and education) but not by employment-related variables. They aren't significant, except paid work, whose effect is counter-intuitive since having a paid work increases apathy by 0,124. A possible explanation could be that people who work have less time to dedicate to politics and that they focus on their work... Another result seems counterintuitive: feeling racially discriminated against makes the respondent feel less apathetic by 0,148. That could be explained by the fact people who feel discriminated against are conscious of race and can more easily link it to political topics such as racism, making them more interested in politics. The other coefficients are more in line with the ones of normlessness and deprivation: having spent more years in the education system, having a higher income, and living in a more urban area decreases apathy while being female increases it.

ii. Conclusion of the subsection

For the first dataset, socio-demographic variables clearly are more influential than employment-related variables, first because they are more often significant and second, because they are higher.

b. Second dataset: normlessness, powerlessness, deprivation and apathy

| | Normlessness | Powerlessness | Deprivation | Apathy |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (Intercept) | 4.176 [*] (1.639) | 11.244 ^{***} (1.352) | 2.381 ^{***} (0.648) | 1.227 ^{***} (0.232) |
| domicile | 0.296 [*] (0.116) | 0.268 ^{**} (0.095) | -0.081 (0.046) | 0.069 ^{***} (0.016) |
| education | 0.172 ^{***} (0.041) | 0.023 (0.034) | 0.047 ^{**} (0.016) | 0.064 ^{***} (0.006) |
| income | 0.465 ^{***} (0.051) | 0.159 ^{***} (0.042) | 0.393 ^{***} (0.020) | 0.036 ^{***} (0.007) |
| gender | 0.581 [*] (0.268) | -0.411 (0.221) | -0.188 (0.106) | -0.249 ^{***} (0.038) |
| age_z | -3.746 ^{***} (0.807) | -0.382 (0.665) | -2.322 ^{***} (0.319) | 0.428 ^{***} (0.114) |
| age2 | 0.002 ^{***} (0.000) | 0.001 (0.000) | 0.001 ^{***} (0.000) | -0.000 [*] (0.000) |
| discrimination | -1.040 (0.836) | -0.967 (0.689) | -0.345 (0.330) | -0.137 (0.118) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.527 (1.123) | 0.408 (0.926) | -0.371 (0.443) | -0.018 (0.159) |
| jobless_active | 0.931 (0.581) | 0.735 (0.479) | -0.616 ^{**} (0.229) | -0.110 (0.082) |
| jobless_3months | 0.204 (0.349) | 0.002 (0.288) | 0.415 ^{**} (0.138) | -0.035 (0.049) |
| jobless_12months | 0.308 (0.423) | 1.197 ^{***} (0.349) | 0.134 (0.167) | -0.053 (0.060) |
| paid_work | -0.084 (0.401) | -0.547 (0.330) | -0.182 (0.158) | -0.124 [*] (0.057) |
| R ² | 0.081 | 0.053 | 0.239 | 0.121 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.075 | 0.048 | 0.235 | 0.116 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 18 - Correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and employment-related variables on 2 alienation dimensions and apathy in dataset 2

The second dataset only has 2 waves (6 and 10, or 2014 and 2020) but allows me to incorporate more variables, which is why I could measure powerlessness (i.e the feeling that politics cannot be influenced by an individual's actions). Normlessness goes from 0 to 38, powerlessness from 0 to 30, deprivation has 43 levels (from 0 to 7,230) and apathy has 4, from 0 to 3.

i. Linear regressions

No employment-related variables are correlated with the level of normlessness anymore. These variables are generally not correlated neither with powerlessness, nor with apathy, except for long-term unemployment which decreases powerlessness by 1,197 when the individual didn't experience such an unemployment period. Deprivation has more

correlation with the employment-related variables since being unemployed and looking for a job increases deprivation by 0,616 and not having experienced short-term unemployment decreases deprivation by 0,415. The fact that more employment-related variables are associated with deprivation than with the other dimensions (and apathy) could be due to the fact that unemployment is indirectly related to income and as Thompson and Horton (1960) argue, deprivation could be higher with people of lower social class.

When it comes to socio-demographic variables, they are as well less significant in the sense that a smaller number of them have an adequate p-value (at least smaller than 0,05) and that even among those who are significant, the significance levels are smaller. Only income is significant for all of them ($p < 0,001$) and positive although its effect is small on apathy while big on deprivation. Education is still positive and significant but not for powerlessness and its significance for deprivation is not as high. The same goes for place of living (domicile). In general however, the trends seen in this dataset reflect those of the first dataset, the higher the SES, the lower the normlessness, deprivation, powerlessness and apathy. Overall, fewer variables seem to influence powerlessness. The only three significant variables are domicile, income (whose effect is weak compared to the two other alienation dimensions) and long-term unemployment.

ii. Conclusion of the subsection

The third dimension of alienation that was added in the second dataset doesn't seem to be correlated with many variables. The more an individual lives in an urban area, the higher its income and not having experienced long term unemployment decreases the feeling that one cannot influence political outcome (powerlessness). It is not easy to understand why precisely these three variables are significant but it is congruent with the fact that higher SES individuals are more interested in politics and the feeling of being able to influence politics could be more prevalent among them (Fouquet-Chauprade, Charmillot and Felouzis 2024, 59-61). Living in an urban area could also allow easier political mobilisations (Allegra et al. 2013) but when it comes to long-term unemployment, I cannot explain why it only influences powerlessness.

c. Third dataset: normlessness, meaninglessness, powerlessness, deprivation and apathy

The third dataset allows me to build the meaninglessness dimension (i.e the feeling that individuals cannot understand the political process). In the third dataset, normlessness

ranges from 0 to 38, powerlessness goes from 2 to 10, deprivation has 44 levels (from 0 to 7,895), meaninglessness goes from 0 to 6 and apathy has 4 levels, from 0 to 3.

| | Normlessness | Meaninglessness | Powerlessness | Deprivation | Apathy |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| (Intercept) | 4.209*** (1.262) | 2.140*** (0.314) | 1.863*** (0.299) | 1.493*** (0.246) | 1.249*** (0.175) |
| domicile | 0.731*** (0.089) | 0.082*** (0.022) | 0.116*** (0.021) | 0.016 (0.017) | 0.047*** (0.012) |
| education | 0.305*** (0.029) | 0.081*** (0.007) | 0.069*** (0.007) | 0.037*** (0.006) | 0.069*** (0.004) |
| income | 0.423*** (0.038) | 0.050*** (0.010) | 0.070*** (0.009) | 0.236*** (0.007) | 0.038*** (0.005) |
| gender | -0.136 (0.200) | -0.363*** (0.050) | -0.172*** (0.047) | -0.159*** (0.039) | -0.278*** (0.028) |
| age_z | -1.719** (0.620) | 0.516*** (0.154) | -0.559*** (0.147) | -1.355*** (0.121) | 0.449*** (0.086) |
| age2 | 0.001*** (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000*** (0.000) | 0.001*** (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) |
| discrimination | -1.546* (0.619) | 0.318* (0.154) | 0.031 (0.146) | -0.388** (0.121) | 0.095 (0.086) |
| jobless_inactive | -1.127 (0.788) | -0.294 (0.196) | -0.049 (0.187) | -0.501** (0.154) | -0.152 (0.109) |
| jobless_active | 1.280** (0.468) | -0.036 (0.117) | 0.085 (0.111) | -0.553*** (0.091) | 0.082 (0.065) |
| jobless_3months | 0.757** (0.260) | 0.065 (0.065) | 0.148* (0.061) | 0.201*** (0.051) | 0.009 (0.036) |
| jobless_12months | -0.092 (0.317) | -0.121 (0.079) | -0.069 (0.075) | 0.139* (0.062) | -0.058 (0.044) |
| paid_work | 0.196 (0.297) | -0.500*** (0.074) | -0.065 (0.070) | -0.171** (0.058) | -0.147*** (0.041) |
| R ² | 0.113 | 0.139 | 0.076 | 0.315 | 0.144 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.110 | 0.137 | 0.074 | 0.313 | 0.142 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 19 - Correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and employment-related variables on 2 alienation dimensions and apathy in dataset 3

i. Linear regressions

Again, income and education are the most significant variables since they are correlated to the four dimensions. The effect of income on deprivation (0,236) is particularly strong compared to the other alienation dimensions when the size of the scales are taken into account. In this case, the coefficient is twice as low as the one for normlessness (0,423) but normlessness goes from 0 to 38 while deprivation only goes to 7,895. This is also very different from education in which the coefficients for deprivation, meaninglessness and powerlessness is way lower than the one for normlessness (0,305 compared to 0,81 at best). Concretely, this means that income has a big influence on the feeling that the political system in a way that prevents people from getting what they deserve while education has a bigger

effect on the perception that the rules of politics have broken down. Other coefficients like gender or domicile are only significant in 3 dimensions and their effect is smaller.

Three out of four dimensions of alienation are almost not correlated to employment-related variables. Deprivation is the only one being correlated with most of them and as before, not having experienced unemployment decreases deprivation. There are two variables that give odd results, however. All else equal, being a jobseeker increases deprivation but decreases normlessness. The same can be said with the paid work variable which increases meaningfulness, deprivation and apathy. I cannot explain why these two variables act the way they do...

ii. Conclusion of the subsection

Meaninglessness is primarily correlated to education and income: all else being equal, each year of additional education decreases the feeling that politics is incomprehensible by 0,8 points and each additional income decile decreases this feeling by 0,5 points. It is also not correlated with employment-related variables.

d. Alienation

In the first dataset, I showed that normlessness and deprivation are correlated (see [appendix 4](#)), which is why I fused them into Alienation 1 (the feeling of estrangement from politics). I did the same in the second dataset with normlessness, deprivation and powerlessness. However, for the reasons mentioned in the methods section (see page 22-23), I chose to only fuse normlessness and meaningfulness into “alienation” for the third dataset. Alienation 1 goes from 0 to 10,697, Alienation 2 goes from 0 to 14,343 and Alienation 3 goes from 0 to 6,119.

i. Linear regressions

Again, only income and education are always significant. Given the fact that Alienation 1 and 2 have a larger scale they are about twice as big), one would expect a coefficient with a similar effect on the three scales to have lower values for Alienation 3 since its size is smaller. It is not the case for education since it is as high as the coefficient for Alienation 1 (0,68 and 0,71). I conclude that education lowers alienation more for Alienation 3 than Alienation 2 and 1, which is congruent with the fact that education has a bigger effect on meaningfulness in the third dataset. Income, however, doesn’t follow this pattern. Its effect is way higher for Alienation 1 and Alienation 2, which could be linked to the fact that deprivation, which was strongly affected by income, isn’t in Alienation 3. The number

present in the coefficients become very dependent on the way the dimensions of alienation were operationalized

Not many employment-related variables are related to Alienation 2 and Alienation 3, which is not surprising given that figures 18 and 19 showed that the employment-related variables had little effect on normlessness and powerlessness.

| | Alienation 1 | Alienation 2 | Alienation 3 |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| (Intercept) | 1.503*** (0.155) | 2.822*** (0.544) | 1.531*** (0.215) |
| domicile | 0.045*** (0.011) | 0.068 (0.038) | 0.100*** (0.015) |
| education | 0.071*** (0.004) | 0.048*** (0.014) | 0.068*** (0.005) |
| income | 0.192*** (0.005) | 0.244*** (0.017) | 0.059*** (0.007) |
| gender | -0.018 (0.026) | -0.056 (0.089) | -0.218*** (0.034) |
| age_z | -1.115*** (0.079) | -1.491*** (0.268) | 0.171 (0.106) |
| age2 | 0.001*** (0.000) | 0.001*** (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | -0.423*** (0.089) | -0.470 (0.278) | 0.070 (0.106) |
| jobless_inactive | -0.371*** (0.106) | 0.025 (0.373) | -0.250 (0.134) |
| jobless_active | -0.411*** (0.057) | 0.062 (0.193) | 0.072 (0.080) |
| jobless_3months | 0.200*** (0.034) | 0.182 (0.116) | 0.092* (0.044) |
| jobless_12months | 0.172*** (0.041) | 0.324* (0.140) | -0.076 (0.054) |
| paid_work | -0.071 (0.038) | -0.183 (0.133) | -0.273*** (0.051) |
| R ² | 0.213 | 0.156 | 0.166 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.213 | 0.152 | 0.163 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 2203 | 4368 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 20 - Correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and employment-related variables on alienation for the three waves

ii. Conclusion of the subsection

A general trend that emerges with these three variables is that the coefficients are smaller. This highlights the fact that merging these dimensions together might not be a necessity, actually artificially lowers coefficients and doesn't allow me to differentiate between the different effects variables can have on different alienation dimensions. However, the fact that even after merging several dimensions, the effect of socio-demographic and

employment-related variables remains significant (often with $p < 0,001$) means that these dimensions are separated but part of a multidimensional concept, i.e alienation. That is the main advantage of doing that.

C. Survey data on jobseekers

The primary goal of the survey on parisian jobseekers was to recruit interviewees but the secondary goal was to have data on both socio-demographic variables and on attitudinal variables, allowing me to observe the trends present in those who answered my survey.

a. Descriptive statistics: socio-demographic characteristics and political variables

When it comes to the people that responded to my survey, they can neither be deemed representative of the whole French population, nor of the whole unemployed population, nor of the parisian jobseekers.

Given that the median living standard in 2021 was 23 160€ a year (« Niveau de vie des personnes et pauvreté – Les revenus et le patrimoine des ménages | Insee », s. d.), it seems to fit with data on household income I have, in which the median lies in the 20 000-29 000€ category. However, one could hypothesize that unemployed people might have a lower median living standard. The gender of the respondents seems to slightly overrepresent women since they represent 55% of the sample. In terms of age, France Travail indicates that the Parisian workforce is composed of 10% of people aged 15-24%, 64% of people aged 25-49 and 27% are older than 50 (francetravail.FR, s. d.). In my sample however, older people are underrepresented at 16%, hence the overrepresentation of young people (23% compared to 10%). This can probably be attributed to the format of the survey (i.e online) that advantages younger people (Hargittai, Piper and Morris 2019). My sample also overrepresents those with a higher level of education. In île-de-france, 30% have Bac+3 or more, while in my sample, a whopping 69% have Master's degree or a PhD. This is maybe linked to the fact that those interested in politics tend to have a higher SES (Goyder, Warriner and Miller 2002) and that one of the France Travail I visited (Jacques Lelarge), was located in the center of Paris, hence visited by a richer population, meaning with a higher level of education. I do not have any data to back this up, this is purely based on my observations when handing out leaflets.

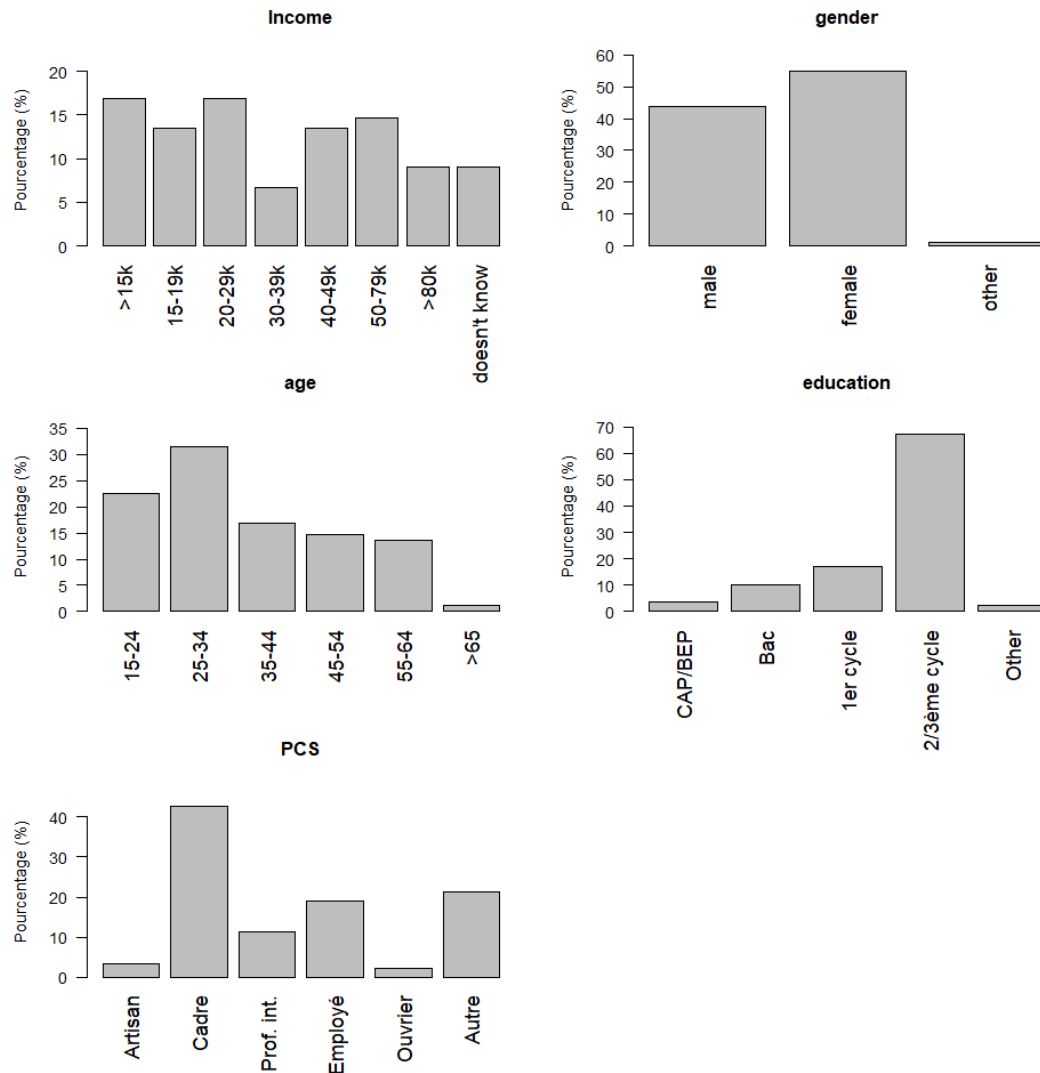


Figure 21 - Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Visitors often wore trendy clothes and I remember for example a woman wearing Balenciaga clothes. Job seekers of this France Travail were - what could be considered - well dressed compared to the other two France Travaills and it was harder to differentiate the jobseekers from the France Travail employees. Also, answering a survey requires a certain amount of capital and competences, hence advantaging those who had a higher level of education. It is then not surprising that almost to *ouvriers* (workers) answered the survey but that 40% of *cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures* (*cadres* and higher intellectual occupations) did.

On the subject of politics, my sample generally had a high level of interest. They consumed political news several times a day (abridged in “several/day” because of the lack of space), 75% are rather or very interested in politics, 90% are rather or very interested in what happens in the world and 60% think they have a rather or very good knowledge of politics.

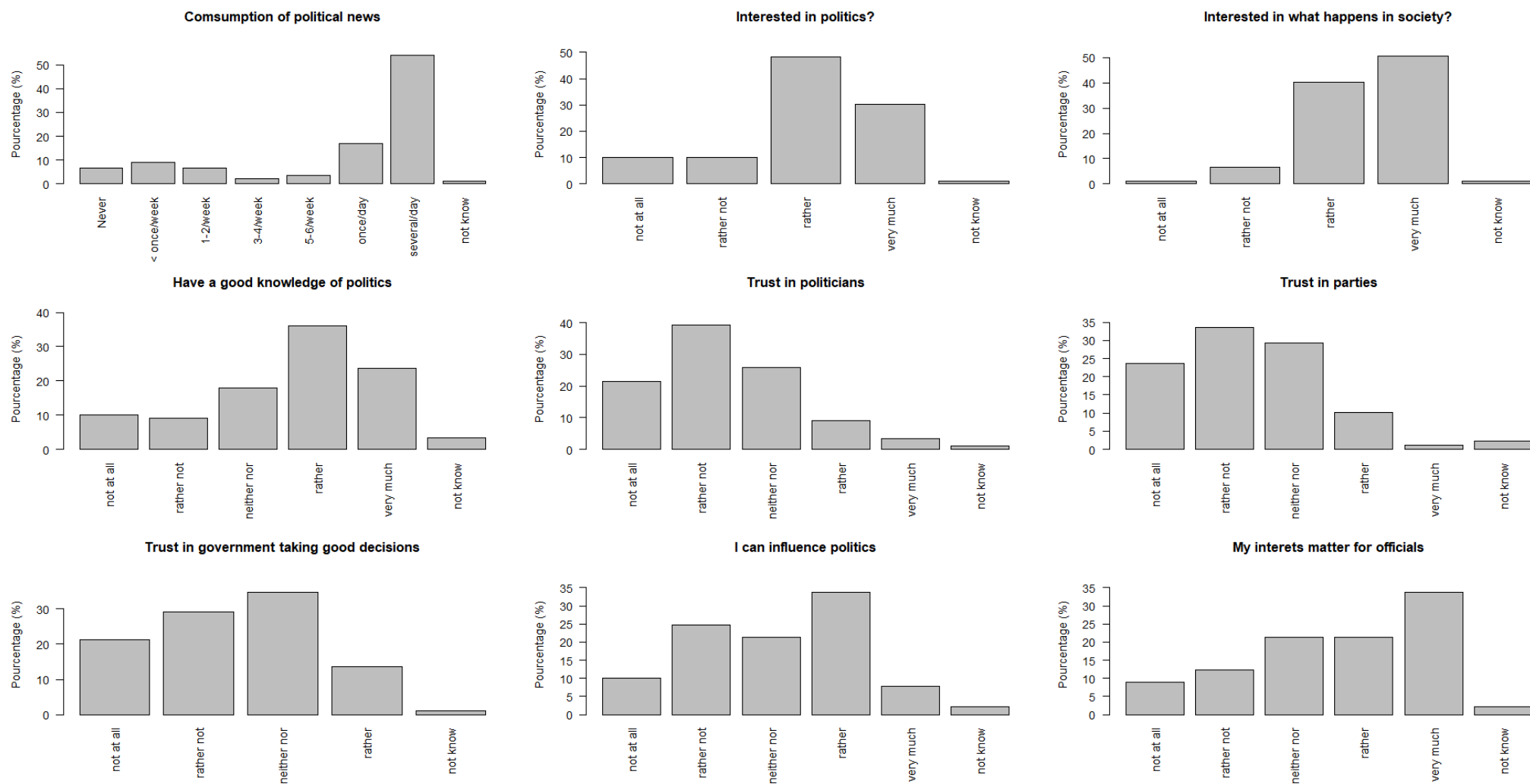


Figure 22 - bar plots of the political attitudes of my sample

They however do not trust institutional politics. 60% do not trust politicians, 55% of them do not trust political parties and almost 50% of them do not trust the government in taking good decisions while none of them completely agrees with the fact that governments usually take good decisions. This doesn't mean they don't trust the wider political system since 40% think they can influence politics (compared to 35% who think they can't) and more than 50% think that their interests matter for elected officials.

b. Jitter plots of the socio-demographic variables on alienation

i. Operationalization

The dimensions are in the same direction as the ones I used in the ESS dataset, i.e the lower the score, the higher the alienation/apathy and vice versa. I also removed the answers "I don't know" from the dataset, which reduces the number of observations to 74. Jitter plots can make trends visible only to a certain point given the small number of datapoints I have, which is why I also added a line to highlight the direction and strength of the trend. I did it by visualizing a simple regression (with the socio-demographic characteristic as the independent variable and the alienation dimension or apathy as a dependent variable). In general, a regression cannot be used to establish causality but merely to make a correlation more visible. This is however not the way I used these regressions since the very low number of observations make the coefficients insignificant (which is the reason why I do not even cite them). These regression were merely used to make the trends present in my data more visible via the blue lines.

ii. Jitter Plots

Generally, the jitter plots reflect the results found in the regressions: age and gender do not seem to affect alienation, its dimensions and apathy that much compared to income and education. When it comes to apathy, education and age play a bigger role than the two other variables

Figure 23 shows that all else being equal, the individuals present in my sample have a level of normlessness between 6 and 7 when all the independent variables are set at 0, i.e they lean on the normless side of the scale since it goes from 3 to 12. Except for age (which has no effect), gender, income and education seem to increase the score by 1,5 when they are set at their maximum, meaning that the higher the income or education level, the lower the normlessness. Also, being a man lowers normlessness.

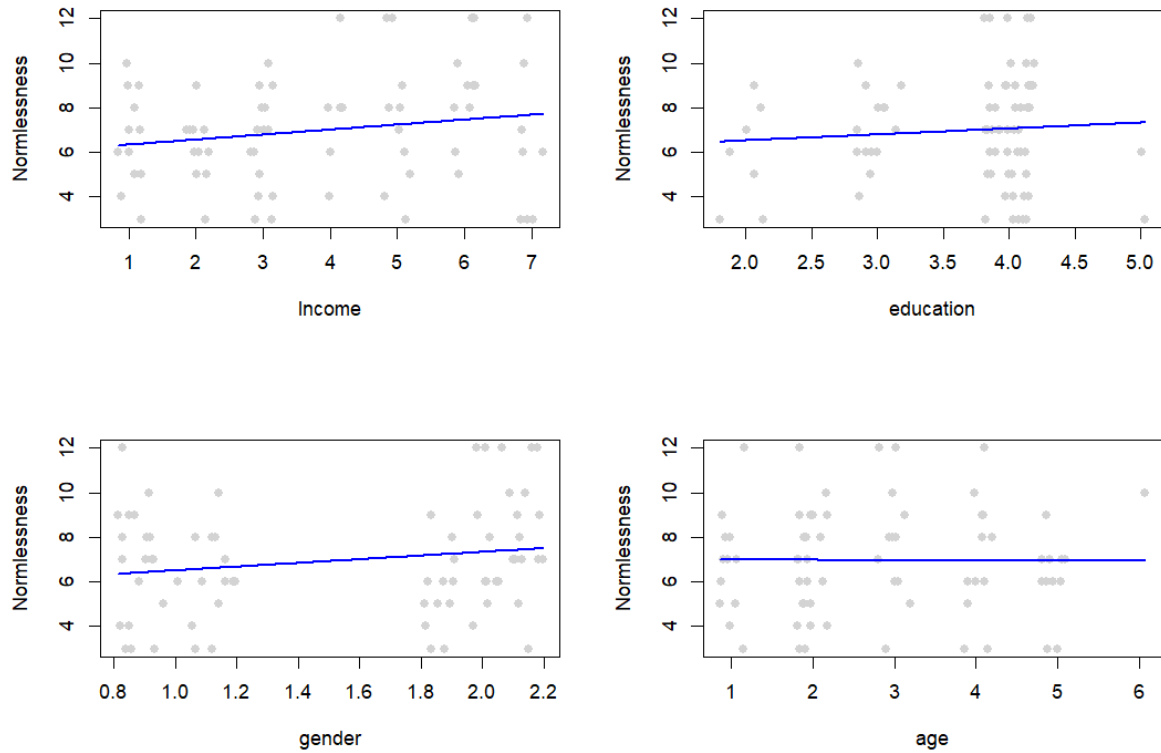


Figure 23 - Jitter Plots of the socio-demographic variables on normlessness

All else being equal, figure 24 shows that the level of powerlessness lies between 6 and 7 when the socio-demographic variables are equal to 0, i.e they lean more towards the non powerless side since the scale goes from 2 to 10. This time, gender doesn't seem to have any effect while the effect of age seems to be bigger than the one of income. The biggest is the one of education which adds 2 points for people having a higher tertiary education (Master or PhD).

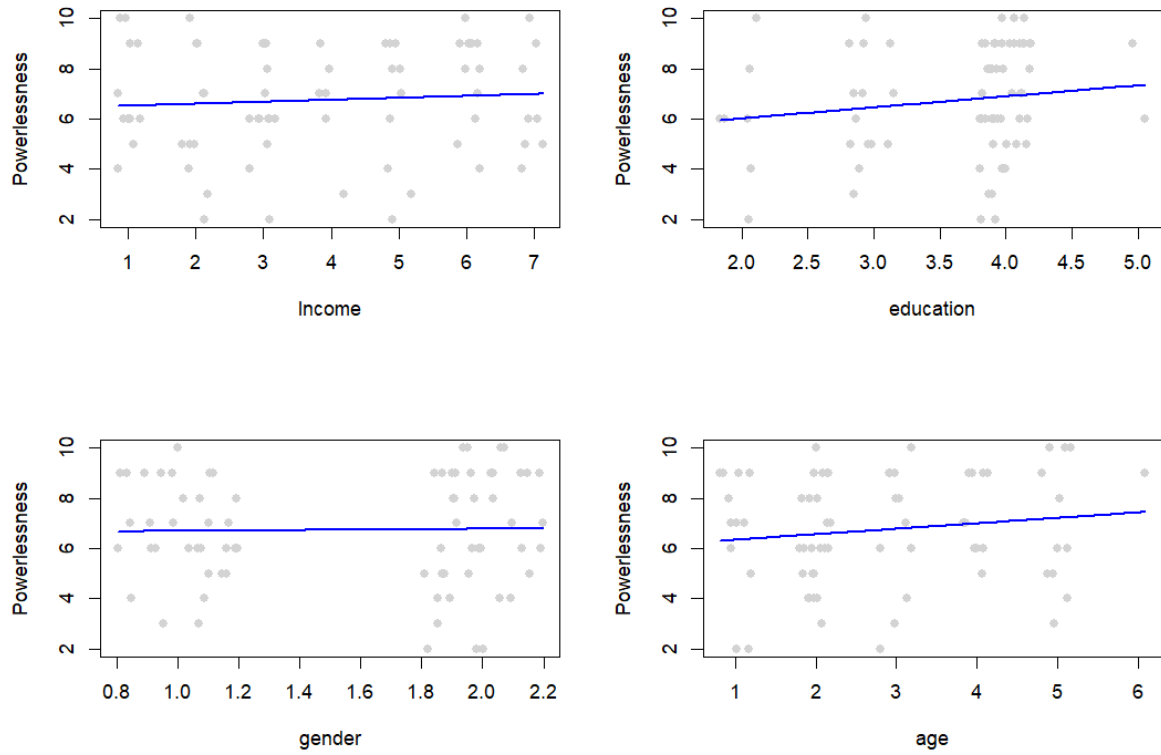


Figure 24 - Jitter plots of socio-demographic variables on powerlessness

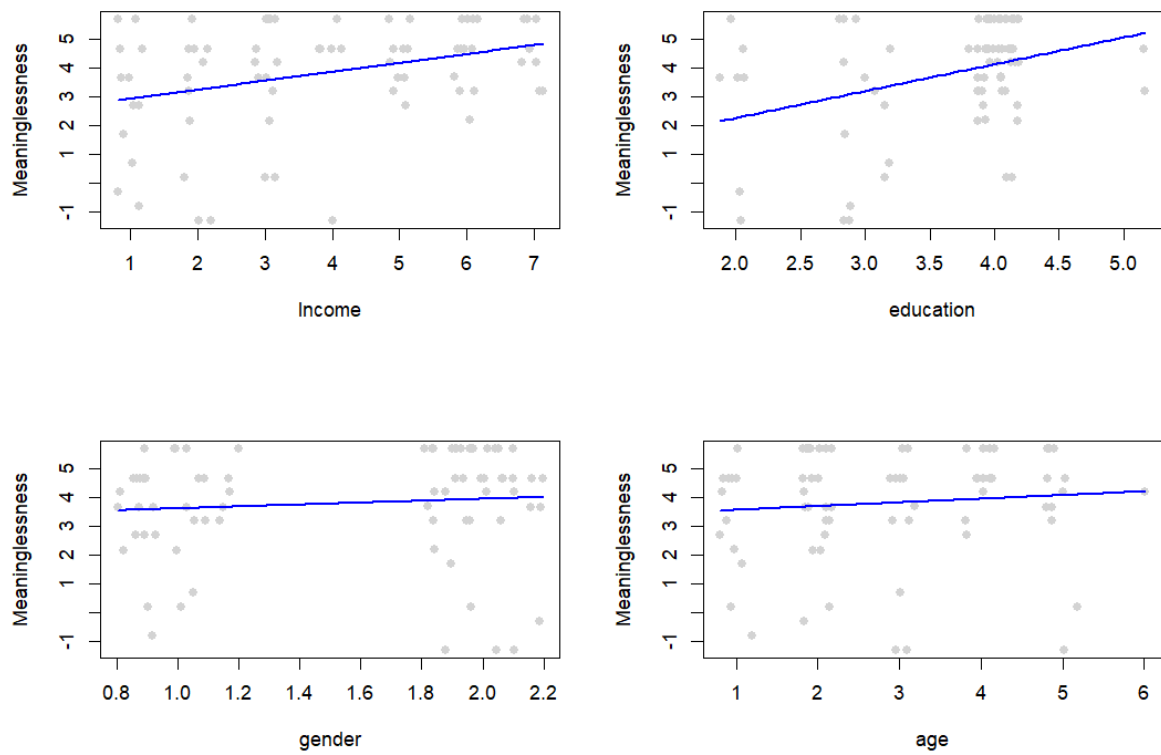


Figure 25 - Jitter plots of socio-demographic variables on meaninglessness

When the independent variable is set at 0, figure 25 shows that the level of meaningfulness usually lies between 3 and 4, except for education in which it is about 2. This means that they lean towards the non meaningless side of the spectrum since the variable goes from -1,2 to 5,6. Gender and age have little effect on meaningfulness but an income above 80 000€ a year adds two points to the scale while having a master's degree or a PhD adds almost 3 points. This alienation dimension is the one that is the most influenced by income and educational attainment.

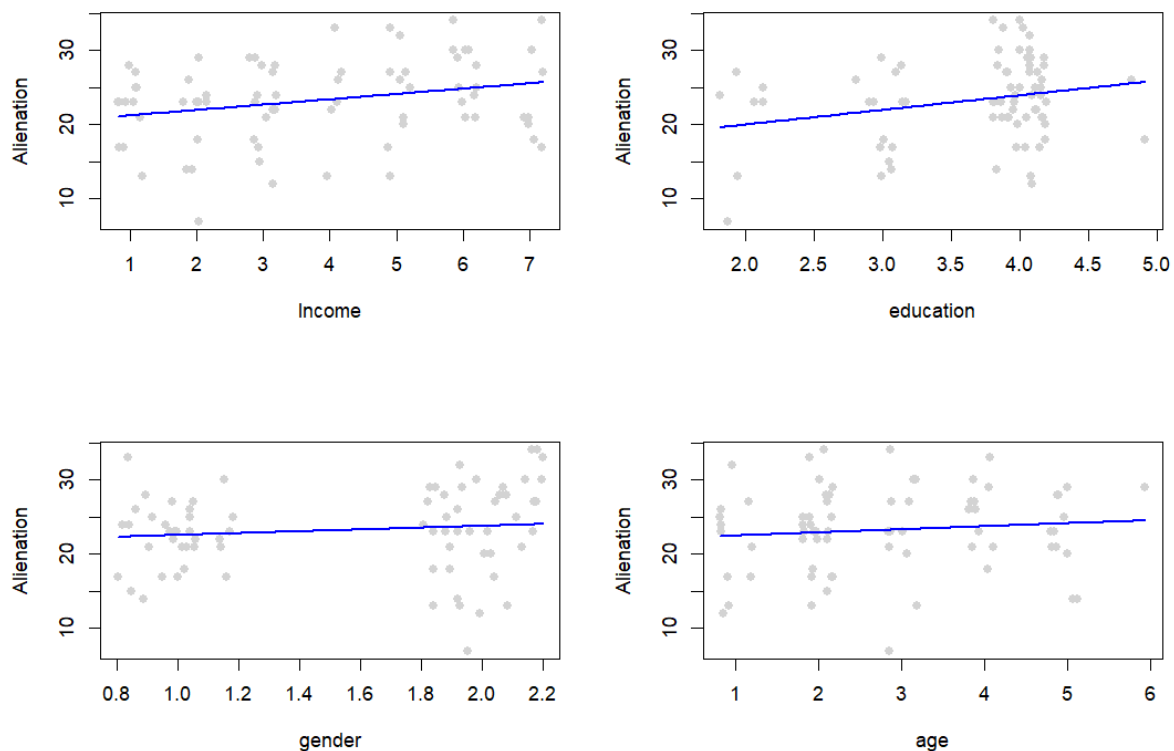


Figure 26 - Jitter plots of socio-demographic characteristics on alienation

As I said in the methods section, I didn't measure deprivation in my survey since my conceptual framework wasn't complete at the time I did it. This is why alienation only encompasses three dimensions. When it comes to alienation, the intercept lies between 20 and 25, i.e on the non alienated side of the scale since it ranges from 7 to 34. Age and gender have - again - a small effect while education seems to be the variable with the biggest effect.

For apathy, the intercepts lie between 6 and 7 and being old or rich (all else being equal) adds one point on the scale. Education has - again - a stronger effect. The effect of gender is surprising because being a male lowers the scale, i.e increases apathy.

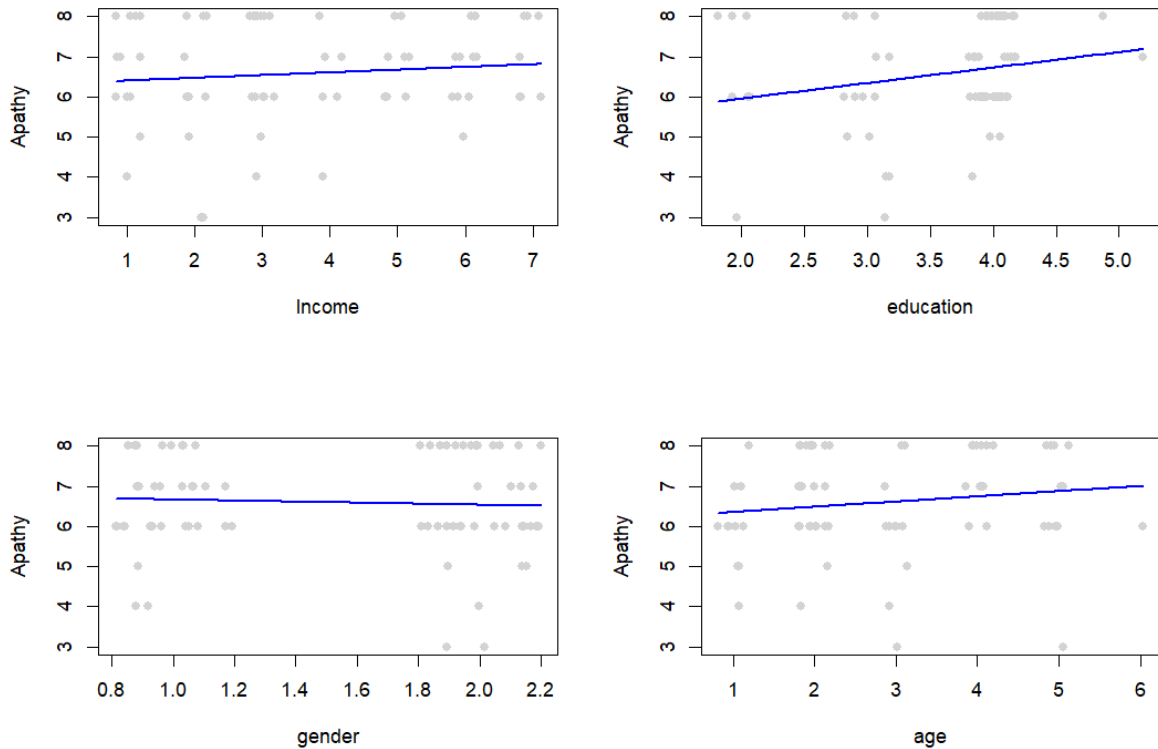


Figure 27 - Socio-demographic variables on apathy

D. Conclusion

As I showed in this chapter, it is meaningful to look at what factors increase or decrease alienation (and apathy). Overall, education and income are the strongest and most consistent predictors. Other socio-demographic variables like gender and domicile have less influence. Contrary to what research on political behavior could have indicated (Mayer 2008), employment-related variables have a very limited impact on meaningfulness, powerlessness and normlessness: the experience of short-term unemployment and being a jobseeker are almost the only variables that are sometimes significantly correlated with them. However, deprivation is heavily influenced by these kinds of variables. It shows that the different dimensions of alienation are differently impacted by different kinds of variables, hence the need to first look at them individually. I find that although the four dimensions can be considered part of a multi-dimensional concept (alienation), it is more interesting to look at them individually.

My survey on parisian France Travails seems to confirm the importance of income and education but also highlights the fact that although most of my sample distrusts institutional politics such as parties, politicians, governments (which could indicate a rather

high level of normlessness), they did put some trust in politics in general because they thought their actions had a meaning (i.e they didn't feel powerless). It is a good reminder that someone is politically alienated only if the person rejects the political system as a whole, not just some of its components like parties or politicians .

The results I get seem to be quite dependent from the way I build the scales. If the employment-related variables are way more correlated with deprivation than with the other alienation dimensions, it is because deprivation was built using variables related to economy. Also, even if a variable isn't significant in the regressions I did, it doesn't mean it has no effect in the real world: this is the problem of external validity. For example, long-term unemployment was rarely significant, not because it had no effect but because the number of people having had that experience was very small. Furthermore, when it comes to powerlessness, it seems that measures related to individual capabilities are more relevant. The dimension was measure by two completely different sets of variables: Different parties offer alternatives to each other, Government changes policies in response to what most people think, Government is voted out it has done a bad job for dataset 2 and Political system allows people to have influence on politics, Political system allows people to have a say in what government does for dataset 3. The first set was more related to how responsive the political system is towards the demands of individuals while the second set while the second one measures if individuals think they can influence politics. It is then not surprising that the second set of variables which is more directly linked to powerlessness (i.e the feeling of not being able to influence political outcomes) seems to measure it better.

Computing the correlation between socio-demographic variables and alienation, its dimensions on apathy tells us what effects and how strong these effects are on the different dependent variables but it doesn't tell how these effects take place, how socio-demographic variables shape alienation and apathy. Studying political socialization can help us understand how interest and disinterest in politics grows and how it shapes political practices. The next chapter will tackle this issue.

Chapter 2 - Political socialization and its effects on apathy and alienation

This chapter aims at understanding how political socialization, that is “all the mechanisms and processes involved in the transmission and incorporation of individuals' political opinions and representations” (Boughaba, Dafflon and Masclet 2018) throughout one's life, shapes the presence or absence of apathy and alienation. In my sample, socialization patterns seem to take four different forms. The first group (the majority of the sample) is comprised of people whose socializing has constantly been at a mild or high level and who tend to engage with politics, either by having an interest in it or by participating. They also tend to be rather allegiant to the political system. This group aims to show that early primary socialization plays a big role (which is typically the case, as research shows (Castrà 2013)), but that socialization is not a homogeneous process. This group will also allow me to draw comparisons. The second group is the only interviewee that had a constant low level of political socialization and is therefore apathetic. I show that the absence of the socializing institutions present in the first group could explain the prevalence of apathy. The third group is composed of people who had a low level of political socialization during their childhood but who experienced an increase in their level of socialization. Like the first group, this one is not homogeneous either. On the one hand, it shows that an ascending political socialization can lead, as in the first group, to greater engagement with the political system and, on the other hand, that it could also foster alienation. Finally, the fourth group encompasses those who had a “descending” political socialization in the sense that they had a mild or high level of engagement that then developed into alienation during adulthood.

A. Interviewee Demographics

Whereas only 30% of the sample had a household income of less than €30,000 per year, 50% of my interviewees are in that case, meaning that poorer people are overrepresented. Moreover, my interviewees are “overeducated” in the sense that 50% of them have a master's degree or a PhD, although the percentage is still below that of the France Travail survey respondents (65%), i.e they have lower educational attainment compared to the survey sample. In addition, 40% of my interviewees, as well as 40% of my

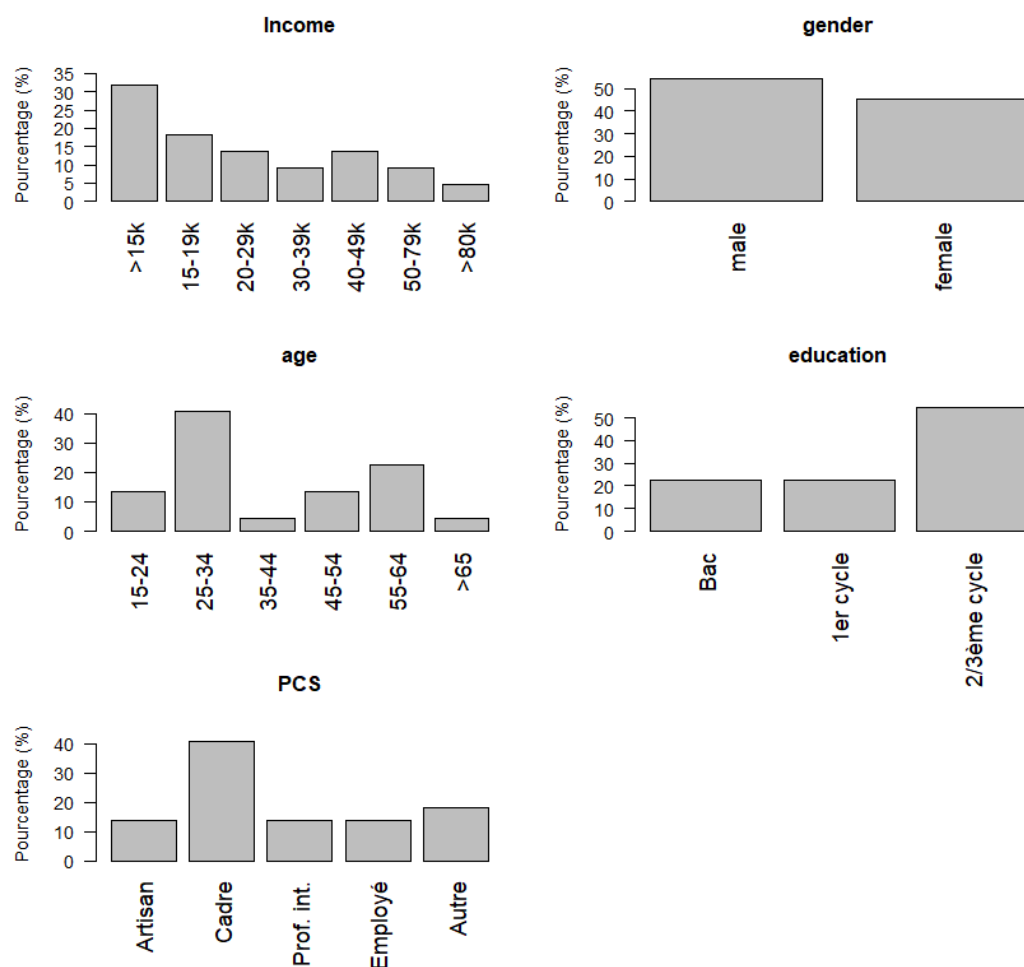


Figure 28 - Socio-demographic characteristics of my interviewees

sample respondents, are *cadres*, whereas none of them are *ouvriers*. These characteristics are likely to have an influence on the results I will obtain since, for example, Thompson and Horton (1960) highlight the fact that deprivation is more prevalent among people with a lower social class, meaning that this dimension of alienation is likely to be less prevalent among my interviewees. Moreover, having a relatively high number of people being *cadres* and having had a tertiary degree indicates that a substantial amount of my interviewees could probably not feel normless (i.e won't feel that the rules of politics have broken down) since, as research shows, individuals with higher SES generally have more trust in the political system (Albareda and Müller 2025) and political trust is an important part of normlessness. Furthermore, SES is also positively linked to external efficacy (Balch 1974), a concept akin to powerlessness, meaning that, again, a substantial part of my sample should not feel that they cannot influence politics. This could indicate that a majority of my sample won't feel alienated and, as I am going to show, it is indeed the case.

B. The engaged ones

This group of interviewees is characterized by their relatively early socialization into politics, by a relatively high level of socialization, and by the fact that they tend to engage with the political system. Political socialization and the mechanisms accomplishing it having been thoroughly studied, this part will not aim at pointing out new results but rather serves as a point of comparison for the other groups.

a. An early socialization that increases over the years

i. Childhood

Childhood is marked by a very diffuse, almost non-existent consciousness of politics. This awareness was mostly very vague (when it existed at all), resulting from experiences indirectly related to politics: “I was aware of certain things. So, I was going to start middle school and I knew I was going to get a scholarship and all that. And they explain to us what that is and the link with the economic situation. And that awakens you a little on one side” (Eleonore 10, Pos. 19). This could also happen through accompanying one's parents into the voting booth, making them more acquainted with political rituals. The same goes for their opinions: “I had opinions, [...] but of a child. Nothing very thoughtful, I think” (Eleonore 10, Pos. 19). Their knowledge and opinions were informed by the media. An interviewee remembers a skit from *Les Guignoles* (satirical puppet show), another told me that her family listened to the news “religiously” some of them listened to the radio because their parents did and “read” the newspaper in a similar fashion. Politics could therefore be present in the background. This lack of political awareness was logically linked to a lack of political participation, perhaps with the exception of Jennifer, who internalized the practice of boycott at a very young age (although she describes it more in terms of lifestyle than political practice).

Although they didn't participate in politics, it doesn't mean it had no place in their lives, since it could be a subject of discussion, especially between or with their parents. Carine told me that her father tried to explain to her how politics worked: “Since I didn't know much about it, let's say, I mostly listened to them rather than taking part in the debate. [...] But I couldn't participate in the debate because I wasn't interested” (Jeanne, 19, Pos. 21). When these discussions happened, my interviewees were passive. These debates between parents and children took place especially during important political events such as elections but debates could also happen at school between classmates.

ii. Middle school

Middle school is the time during which the awareness starts to grow, although they mostly remain inactive. It is important to differentiate awareness from interest because both of these concepts are only indirectly linked. My interviewees generally were not yet interested because they didn't understand politics very much: "I didn't feel like it was something I understood more than that. [...] I saw it. I was 'aware' in English, but I saw it, I was conscious of it. But no, I don't think I was interested." (Mirna 20, Pos. 37). However, a few already had a big interest when they were in *collège*. This interest manifested in several ways. First, they already had political opinions: Jean-Philippe on the municipal election of his village, Eleonore was conscious of social inequalities and had a negative opinion of Macron, and Martin had an argument with his grandfather about the 2005 riots, for example. Some of them had a more passive way of engaging with political news, such as watching TV news or scrolling through their Twitter feed, while some were actively seeking information on topics of interest, reading essays, reading newspapers, or even listening to conscious rap. The majority of these practices seemed to have been done without any outside supervision, but at least when it came to reading essays, parents were guiding the choice and giving advice or information. Finally, interest in politics usually manifested itself in debates or discussions with either parents or classmates. When these debates took place at home, they were often between parents, while the interviewees remained passive and listened, but sometimes they played an active role. Most of what was described as debates or discussions took place with their classmates. Topics could sometimes emerge randomly, but discussions also resulted from a topic discussed by the teacher or something they read in the news.

iii. High school

High school seems to be the time when their interest rose and when they began to participate in politics. Very few of them weren't interested. Even though Leila had the right to vote, she did not feel interested in politics, and Jeanne felt she was too young: "I didn't take part in their ideas, because I wasn't informed at all yet. I had other things to think about [laughs]. Yes, yes. At 16, politics at 16, unless you're really passionate about it, when you're young, it's not on your mind" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 38). However, for the rest of the interviewees, high school seems to be the time when they started to get interested in politics. This interest could be small, as when Carine notes that she was informed about politics and wasn't involved in it, just felt conscious that it existed. In general, however, this interest was stronger. It could be linked to current political issues such as the term of a president, but also

to presidential elections and the fact of being able to vote for the first time, highlighting the role of important events and especially elections in political socialization.

As for the last subsection, interest in politics manifested through information consumption. This could be on social media or the internet, by watching the news, or by reading newspapers. However, several differences emerge. First, they seem to engage more with information and to be more proactive in searching for content. Second, they are more autonomous in the sense that they no longer mention the presence of parents or teachers. This coincides with the fact that during high school, young people are able to form their opinions and values through their use of social media (Azevedo 2018).

Debates and discussions about politics were happening regularly, be they surface-level: “We really referred to hearsay and what comes up all the time. [...] I think that at the time, we weren't very well informed” (Jeanne 19, Pos. 70), or more thorough. These debates were more numerous than before but still tended to happen when important events such as presidential elections were taking place. Interestingly, debates seemed to happen more between my interviewees and their classmates than with adults (parents or teachers). Discussions with parents were rarer and seemed to take place at specific times, for example during meals. Again, interviewees were more and more autonomous vis-à-vis their parents, they were more proactive in the debates they had, although these debates were usually caused by some outside political event.

The biggest difference between *collège* and *lycée* lies in the way high schoolers participate in politics since it was more prevalent than before. Some of them demonstrated in order to exert influence on issues that concerned them: “There were demonstrations during the *lycée* reforms. In fact, every time I was in *lycée*, we went to demonstrations.” (Victor 4, Pos. 103), while in other cases, primary socialization was visible in the fact that, for example, they demonstrated with their parents: “I did go to a few demonstrations. The SNCEEL [union of head teachers] demonstrations, because my father is in the SNCEEL” (Carine 13, Pos. 41). Other than demonstrations, voting was also something high schoolers could do or considered important: “It was still a major issue, the fact of being of age and being able to vote. There was a lot at stake in that” (Jennifer 14, Pos. 54). However, apart from demonstrating and voting, they didn't do more. The only exception is Leila who took part in a blockade and a sit-in and found herself involved in political movements because of her friends. The rest of my interviewees did not engage in political participation. As Carine puts it: “I knew that there were people who were causing trouble, that it was an excuse for them not to go to class. [...] Afterwards, I was still quite studious, so I often watched what was going on, but I was still

one of those who went to class afterwards” (Carine 13, Pos. 35). She didn't feel concerned about the situation.

iv. *Higher education*

Higher education is not necessarily synonymous with heightened political interest or participation. Jeanne, although she sometimes talked about politics, didn't feel concerned because she was young: “I was in the middle of my studies. [...] I had just passed my *bac*. I wasn't interested at all because I didn't feel really concerned by the decisions. In the sense that I was young” (Jeanne 19, Pos. 19).

Given that my interviewees were mostly already interested in politics at that stage of their lives, they debated a lot with others about it. Some of the debates were on a small scale, stemming from a mild interest, but most of them happened frequently. Interviewees who saw their field of study as linked to politics told me that debates were constantly happening. They could happen in class, stemming from an exercise the professor was doing, and continue afterwards, but debates often happened between classmates, when they were eating, drinking coffee, at any time of the day: “Because, I mean, we debated in class, but in fact, we debated a lot outside of class too, and that was about current events, about what we had talked about in class” (Mirna 20, Pos. 60). Debates seemed to be something almost natural or obvious. Since they were studying topics and gaining more knowledge, they were also more confident in their debates: “We had a few more tools to debate, we perhaps had more knowledge” (Mirna 20, Pos. 62). However, when interviewees didn't see their field of study as being linked to politics in any way, engagement with politics was lower: “Political discourse is not very common in these fields of study [engineering]” (Victor 4, Pos. 70). They were going to university to learn, not to talk about politics. When it comes to participation, it didn't seem to be that prevalent at that stage of their lives

b. A multifaceted socialization

I showed that for this group, political socialization happens rather early and that this has the effect of making the political system known to them, increasing their interest and political participation. If I showed how political socialization unfolds, I didn't yet show the precise socializing institutions at play. This is the topic of this subsection.

i. Parents

This type of institution is especially talked about in this group. Political socialization could happen even when parents were not that interested in politics. Interviewees were familiarized with politics by, for example, accompanying their parents to the voting booth, or

by passively or actively watching TV. The nuclear family is not the only socializing force. More distant relatives also played a role: “when I talked about family meals, that was it, it was my father, and my aunt quite a lot too” (Jacqueline 6, Pos. 228-229). Relatives could also act as an accompanying force that reinforced the collective aspect of politics when they, for example, went demonstrating with the whole family. If family usually favored a positive view of politics by talking about it and making politics familiar, it could also transmit negative attitudes. Eleonore, whose parents were “tired of voting” (Pos. 69) and “don't believe in it anymore” (ibid.), said that she had a low level of trust towards party politics because of her disappointment with François Hollande's term.

ii. Peer groups

What also shapes political socialization is the influence of peer groups. Léa participated had center-right views when she was younger but her time spent in associations that advocated for social justice (i.e. were rather left-wing) changed her views (and influenced her practices): “And through my experience in associations, in the community and in citizen mobilization, I was able to take part in marches, demonstrations, and causes related to social and environmental justice” (Léa 5, Pos. 78-87). Peer group effect could also be much more subtle. An interviewee described her meetings with her friend in an anti-fascist bar, discussing, playing chess, debating: “And so yes, my friends influenced me, I would say that I let myself be influenced by certain things. [...] Yes, it allowed me to see what was possible through my friends, like politicization” (Leila 8, Pos. 41). Finally, the constant presence of a peer group in someone's life seems to further political socialization even more. Juan's roommate was a member of the political association he was also in, and the fact of being in contact for a prolonged period of time made him more interested in politics and also influenced his practices: “So it was with them that I gained access to information. There were the media, there were also discussions. [...] And all our friends were involved. [...] We often went to the same demonstrations, the same debates” (Pos. 558-587).

iii. Education

Another mechanism explaining the rise of interest in politics is education. Teachers can for example make children aware of or interested in politics: “The school teacher I had at the time talked to us about it and I was interested” (Jennifer 14, Pos. 14). This kind of socialization can also happen later, i.e. during higher education. In that context, what seems to be of importance is the field of study the interviewees studied in. Mirna studied political science and her studies made her learn a lot about current politics: she regularly had debates both outside the classroom and as part of her classes, as is the case for Jeanne. However,

another interviewee who studied engineering said that he didn't talk about politics at all with his classmates. The socialization through studies depends on the link the interviewee makes between their studies and politics. When the area of study didn't seem to be linked to politics (according to the interviewee), studies were seen as totally separate from politics and hence way more important. This hindered their willingness to engage in politics: "I was quite diligent and I didn't want it to prevent me from going to class. I didn't want political demonstrations and blockades to distract me from my studies" (Carine 13, Pos. 39).

iv. Political events

Political events seem to trigger a surge in interest or even in participation. Presidential elections seem to be the primary event that has that kind of consequences. This could be because people my interviewees knew they could vote or because they realized that they could: "In any case, I felt all the more invested because it was the first time we could vote" (Jennifer 14, Pos. 54). Voting could also be seen as an important issue in a complicated situation: "[I began having a more informed opinion] Starting with [the 2022] presidential elections. Because I arrived just as the vote was taking place, it was very, very tense. [...] It was crazy to think that the first time I voted, I had to choose between Macron and Marine Le Pen. [...] I had to find out more, obviously. [...] And [my interest] grew over the years" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 40). The experience of political issues can also foster political activism. Interviewees underlined the fact that seeing social inequality "happen" before them, for example seeing queues at the Red Cross, "it politicized us" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 54).

v. National community

Having interviewed several jobseekers who were not French or had a second nationality, it appeared that the feeling of belonging or not belonging to some kind of imagined national community (Anderson 1991) and having more knowledge about one country compared to another affected the level of interest in politics: "No, honestly, even though I lived in the UK, I realize that I've always been more concerned about what's happening in France. I know more about it. [...] Maybe because I grew up in France [...] I identify more with French political parties, perhaps" (Mirna 20, Pos. 114). If having a feeling of belonging to one country compared to another makes people feel more interested and likely to participate, the opposite is also true in the sense that being able to vote will also make someone more concerned about the country they are able to vote in: "That's when I realized I could vote in the UK. Yes, actually, I felt... It's true that that's when, I think, I started to feel more concerned about what's happening [there]" (Mirna 20, Pos. 120). Nonetheless, this feeling of belonging does not guarantee a feeling of attachment to the

political practices of the national community: “Despite having grown up here, there are things where I tell myself it doesn't matter. All the elections that come and go and I don't participate in.” (Leila 8, Pos. 107)

c. Conclusion of the subsection

This first group, the “engaged ones,” are characterized by early socialization that can begin during childhood. It increases until high school, so that most of the interviewees in this group are interested in politics and participate, whether through voting or demonstrating, etc. Thus, they are rather interested and engaged in politics. I purposely chose the word engaged instead of loyal, because they do not necessarily adhere to all the features of the political system. Some are very allegiant because they think that they are well represented: “I would say that overall, yes, we can trust [the government] at the moment” (Jean-Philippe 15, Pos. 127) and that their actions are not useless, meaning that their level of alienation is low. However, some are less optimistic when it comes to parties or politicians. When asked what interests politicians serve, Mirna answered: “Theirs? I think so. First and foremost, unfortunately. I think so. They also serve the French people” (Mirna 20, Pos. 185) while others, such as Juan, Eleonore, and Martin, are even less loyal (which does not mean they are alienated) because they are anti-capitalist and therefore think that party politics is disappointing and less important than other forms of participation: “I hope one day I will be able to believe in this democracy, but... I don't yet... I don't see that day coming. [...] you always have to ask for more” (Juan 2, Pos. 818-823)

As I said in the introduction, this group serves as the benchmark to which the other groups will be compared. It seems that the constant presence at a high level of socializing institutions explained why this group is so engaged in politics. The second group aims at showing how the absence of these socializing institutions can lead to apathy.

C. The apathetic one

The only interviewee in this group is characterized by her lack of engagement with politics and more specifically by the lack of socializing institutions during her political socialization.

a. Peers

The influence of peers is palpable both in their presence and in their absence (in this case). Whereas the interviewees in the first group talked about politics during *collège* or *lycée*

(or even earlier in some cases) with their peers, she only has a vague memory of some of her foreign friends being stressed about Marine Le Pen being elected. Furthermore, political debates did not happen afterwards: “In middle school, not really. I remember in high school I knew that I had a teacher who was for *La France Insoumise*, that's all I know” (Marine 12, Pos. 20-22). In general, they rarely took place, except during big events sometimes, i.e. during elections. Indeed, she remembers a debate during her time in high school because of the upcoming presidential election, even though she and her friends weren't old enough to vote yet: “I think at that time I was informed because I had friends who could vote, but since I hadn't celebrated my [18th] birthday yet, I could only follow along” (Marine 12, Pos. 45), highlighting the role of peer groups as well as the role of important events as initiators of debates. However, even then, her interest was very limited.

b. Education

When it comes to the education system, the same lack of socialization is present. Since she didn't talk about it at all, I deduce that no teacher of hers ever did anything that could have made her interested in politics...

c. Family

The role of her parents is important in the sense that the lack of politics in her family seems to have been an important factor. Her parents seemed to have a low level of political socialization and since her parents were immigrants, they were not familiar with French politics. This is probably why they never talked to Marine about politics and explained the their confusion when their daughter participated in politics at all: “my parents say to me, ‘what are you doing voting?’” (Marine 12, Pos. 49).

d. Knowledge

This lack of political socialization by her peers, her parents, and the education system led her to lack knowledge about the political system and to lack involvement when it comes to consuming political information. Indeed, the only way she engages with politics is when YouTube recommends videos by *Hugo Décrypte* (YouTuber who comments on the news) or content on *France TV*, when her friends talk to her about politics, or when a “big event” (Pos. 61) happens, as I said earlier. Otherwise, politics is not a concern of hers. This actually highlights the role of cultural capital and parents' SES in interest in politics and one's understanding of it. While some of the interviewees in the first group had access to

newspapers or had parents who explained politics to them, Marine did not and had to rely on other resources to try to understand politics: "I remember that there was one time when I wanted to take an interest, or at least I was trying to get a clearer picture, because when the terms left and right came up and we drew parallels with politics in America, I asked a parent who was a history and geography teacher, and it became very complicated to explain" (Marine 12, Pos. 19). That wasn't enough to fill her knowledge gap. As I said earlier, Marine's parents were migrants, which means that they probably had a low economic and cultural capital as a result, i.e a low SES.

Other interviewees, especially in the first group, had a higher SES. The most extreme case is that of Martin (from the first group), whose parents are a journalist and a high-ranking official, indicating higher cultural and economic capital, which can be directly linked to his interest and knowledge of politics (two things that later impacted the way he participates and the occupation he chose). Talking about his consumption of political information, he said: "Actually, my father is a journalist, so I read the newspapers on the living room table from a very early age" (Martin 11, Pos. 9), meaning that his father had significant cultural capital and could help him in his search: "As I said, my father is a journalist, so even when I started asking who Franz Fanon was in middle school, he also studied history, so he quickly redirected me [...] and explained who Fanon was in broad terms. And then in high school, whenever I had a question, [...] he was always able to give me some keys, some books, redirect me to authors" (Martin 11, Pos. 33). After that, Martin became more autonomous in his search for and consumption of information at a young age and became more and more interested in anti-colonial thought and race.

e. Conclusion of the subsection

Overall, Marine's political socialization process compared to the first group is almost completely reversed. Nearly all the socializing institutions that played a role in the gradual increase of political engagement among the "engaged ones" are not present when it comes to Marine's political socialization. The only exception seems to be the role of peers with whom she sometimes talks about politics (when there are big events) or rather who sometimes talk about politics to her. That was not enough to make her engage with politics. This is why she says that politics "is not really a passion, and that in my current situation, [...] I prefer to stick to one priority in my life rather than politics, which is still something very new to me, I would say, and which is also scary" (Marine 12, Pos. 115). She can therefore be deemed apathetic in the sense that she shows a generalized indifference towards politics (Thompson

and Horton 1960). If research argued that alienation could be influenced by socialization (Gniewosz et al. 2009; Sherrod et al. 2002; Damico et al. 2000; Verba et al. 2005), I argue that the same can be said when it comes to apathy.

If there seems to be a link between the lack of political socialization and apathy, this conclusion has to be put into perspective since this “group” only has one interviewee in it, which does not allow for a more complex and complete understanding of the emergence of apathy. I was actually lucky to be able to interview Marine. She emailed me saying that her interview would not be interesting to me since she is not interested in politics, which prompted me to respond that it would actually be very interesting to interview her (and I was right). Indeed, someone who is indifferent to politics will be less inclined to talk about it compared to someone who is interested or even someone who rejects politics. The second reason why my conclusion should be relativized is that a lack of political socialization does not necessarily lead to apathy, as the third group shows. They also had little primary political socialization, but certain factors led them to become more engaged with politics.

D. Ascending political socialization

This group is composed of five interviewees: three of them became rather engaged with politics either because of their late primary socialization or because of their secondary education, while the other two are rather alienated despite a surge of engagement due to their secondary socialization.

a. A low level of primary socialization

When it comes to political socialization, most of the interviewees in this group had late primary socialization. When it comes to childhood, for example, they didn’t have much to tell, if at all. They were just aware of politics and had little knowledge about it: “I knew about the presidents, but that was about it” (Frédéric, 16, Pos. 17).

During middle school, again, none of them were interested in politics, but some were aware of its existence. For example, Lydia had vague memories of presidents, that their role was important, that there were debates on TV, but she didn't feel that she understood politics or even that she was interested in it. Some other interviewees seemed to have a higher level of engagement with politics, but interestingly, both of them emphasized the fact that what they did was not really linked to politics. Nur participated in a blockade but did not really describe it as being political: “We had our little blockades, our little ‘peace’ [in French] demonstrations, yes, when there were two or three idiots, in quotation marks, who wanted to

burn cars.” (Nur 3, Pos. 615-618) and Patrick described his opinion on taxation as a teenage crisis: “I said to myself, but it's not normal, the more you earn in France, the more money you earn, the more taxes you pay. [...] It wasn't in a political tone, it was in a... pre-teen tone.” (Patrick 22, Pos. 20-24).

What is also striking is that although *lycée* seemed to be an important milestone in the political socialization of the first group (the engaged ones), this does not seem to be the case for this group. The same interviewees with a higher level of engagement in middle school told me that they demonstrated once or twice during high school and, again, they didn't think it was something political. One wanted to skip school: “No, the only demonstration I ever did was when I was a kid. I don't know why, but it was when I was in high school, but it was just to skip school” (Patrick 22, Pos. 109), the other said that what they demonstrated against/for something was only related to high school: “So it were things that concerned high school” (Nur 3, Pos. 668). Even then, their interest in politics was meager at best.

Overall, whereas interviewees in the first group seemed to have been socialized by the education system and by their peers as well, this does not seem to be the case for this group, since they never talked about it.

When it comes to the role of parents, they are also much less present than in the first group. Indeed, one interviewee was in a children's home, i.e. family played no role, one interviewee would not talk about her parents, perhaps indicating that she had a bad relationship with them (which means they probably played no role either), and among the rest of the interviewees, they were not a strong socializing institution because they were not themselves interested in politics: “I don't have French nationality and neither do they. So it was never really a family topic [...]. So no, it's just not a family topic, they never brought it up and neither did I” (Frédéric 16, Pos. 38-39). Only Jacques' parents seemed to be politically engaged, but since they were right-wing and he discovered early on that he was left-wing, this could have hampered or delayed his political socialization until he realized he was homosexual and became acquainted with left-wing cultural circles, as I will explain shortly. This is only a supposition, however. The only exception seems to be Lydia, who had a higher interest than the rest of the group, although it remained small. Her family wasn't that interested in politics, which is why she had this to say about her own interest: “I was interested in it as a current affairs topic, so I followed what was going on, I inevitably had my opinion on the matter, but I didn't get involved in relation to these events” (Lydia 18, Pos. 35).

b. A longer secondary education

i. Higher education

Political socialization in higher education depends on the link that is made between the field of study and politics. As for the first group, some interviewees didn't link their field of study to politics, which is why their interest was not that big: "I would say that I wasn't in a field of study where people were very politicized, since I'm a pharmacist, so I studied pharmacy at the pharmacy school. [...] At university, I was still very much in my student world, studying, taking exams, passing, moving forward." (Lydia 18, Pos. 35-39). Although her field of study was not linked to politics, she was still interested in the topic, albeit to a lesser extent, as the last excerpt from her interview showed. Frédéric, however, became interested in politics because he thought his field of study was linked to politics: "I think it came about in high school, during my studies. I did a bachelor's degree in history, and that kind of tied in with past politics. But it explained a lot of things, so that's why I became a little more interested in it. [...] So it was more at the end of *lycée* and really in college." (Frédéric 16, Pos. 25).

ii. Socialization processes

The rest of their adult life marks the beginning of their interest in politics, although it didn't start right away because interviewees were focused on other aspects of their lives, be it work or leisure. The factors that initiated people's interest and involvement in politics can be separated into two categories: slow processes and events that cause a surge of engagement.

A slow process during adulthood seems to be linked to a higher engagement with politics. The most telling example is that of Jacques. His discovery of his homosexuality when he was 18 led him to socialize with homosexual circles that were left-leaning, in stark contrast to his traditional Catholic upbringing. That started a political socialization process that continued as he worked in the cultural sector: "I discovered theater. And maybe that's what opened up a new horizon for me, other people who were naturally on the left, in general. [...] And yes, I became interested in the left. Little by little, gradually" (Jacques 1, Pos. 34). It then continued through the topic of ecology: "It happened through... I don't know how, through a website. Nicolas Hulot's [famous ecological figure] website. And... through something very educational, about the impact of our actions on the environment" (Jacques 1, Pos. 1297-1301), which then prompted him to read and learn more about politics in general and which in the end led him to join a political party (which he left at some point). Jacques' trajectory shows an upward trajectory that was not entirely matched by Lydia or Patrick, although they also experienced this kind of rise.

A surge of political socialization can also be caused by events that shock the interviewee. If Frédéric had a slight interest until recently because he studied history and because of Brexit, about which he read the news, his engagement was amplified and quickened by the rise of the far right: “Now things are starting to change for the far right, and I’m not necessarily in favor of that, so that’s why I’m motivated to take steps to obtain French citizenship. I see that no longer being active in politics will be a danger for me and my loved ones [because his wife is neither French, nor from the EU]” (Frédéric 16, Pos. 57). His interest in politics rose since the dissolution and the rise of the RN, which is why he wants to acquire French nationality to be able to vote. The same goes for Nur since she is a black woman: “The moment I really felt involved, and I had a real interest in doing it, was when Le Pen almost won [during the 2022 presidential election]. So I was scared, and that’s when I became, in quotation marks, interested in politics” (Nur 3, Pos. 27). The rise in interest was even starker for her since she wasn’t interested in politics at all before that.

iii. Consequence of the ascending political socialization

These two different political socialization processes lead to two different results: on the one hand, those who had a slower, more gradual socialization process seem to have a more positive view of the political system than those who had a shorter and more brutal socialization process.

Indeed, those who experienced a gradual process have more positive views of the political system, although they still seem to be generally more negative than those in the first group. For example, Jacques does not really feel powerless because the political system offers different ways of expressing one’s opinion: “I tell myself that if everyone went to vote, maybe something would happen. And I find that in certain elections, precisely, like the legislative elections, the more local ones, there is a great choice of parties” (Jacques 1, Pos. 421-422) and seems to have some trust in party politics. Lydia has less positive feelings about party politics but still trusts the voting process because it is worth making one’s voice heard: “We have to take our destiny into our own hands, and try to... make the best decisions” (Lydia 18, Pos. 110). The same goes for Patrick, who still partially dislikes the political system: “Let’s say I’m not desperate yet. [...] I trust politics, yes, but I don’t trust politicians” (Patrick 22, Pos. 90). The fact that Patrick and Lydia have more negative views of the political system could stem from the fact that their socialization arrived later and seemed to be less strong.

Nur and Frédéric have more negative views of the political system, so much so that Nur can be deemed alienated since several dimensions of alienation are present in her answers. She exhibits normlessness: “for me there is a system that is corrupt” (Nur 3, Pos.

550) and therefore thinks that political participation usually does not bring anything (powerlessness). She also does not think she knows much about politics (meaninglessness): “politics [...] is not my field. So I know very little about politics” (Nur 3, Pos. 47) and seems to think that the political system is structured in a way that prevents her from getting what she deserves (deprivation): “today there are people who pay less and less taxes, there are others who survive in ways we don't even know about, and yet we are asked to pay more and more” (Nur 3, Pos. 293-297). Frédéric does not reject politics as much as Nur, although he feels a sense of disgust because: “in the end, it doesn't really change much. It's hard to see the progress or other effects of your vote or the policies implemented by those in power. You need to have some perspective on it, and you don't have that directly, which is why it causes disinterest” (Frédéric 16, Pos. 55).

c. Conclusion of the subsection

If both of these sub-groups experienced an ascending political socialization, the different process that took place on individuals having different backgrounds had two different consequences. The first subgroup that was characterized by a higher SES and by a slower and more gradual socialization process seems to have been made strongly or mildly trusting of the political system as a result. The second subgroup, which either had a lower SES because of their social origin (Nur being from the *banlieues*) or because of their immigrant background (in the case of Frédéric), had a lower attachment to politics. Interest in politics was still stronger for Frédéric because it was sustained by the fact that he consumed political information and linked politics to his field of study. However, both of them were generally distrustful of politics and their upward trajectory was only caused by a feeling of being threatened by the rise of the far right, which made them want to counter it by either voting or acquiring French citizenship. It did not change their perception of politics, though. It even worsened their rejection of politics: “I think it stems from the fact that it's something I didn't grow up with, that my parents didn't talk to me about it, so you don't see the difference, it's something you don't really know exists. So I think that's where it comes from: indifference, and now the fact that things are getting worse for me comes mainly from the fact that I'm following current events more and more” (Frédéric 16, Pos. 61). Being more interested in politics than he was before made him realize how bad the situation was.

If an upward trajectory is enough to counter simple disinterest (for Lydia, Jacques, and Patrick), it cannot counter a lack of attachment to politics (Frédéric) or even alienation

(Nur). What is interesting is that other interviewees in my sample are alienated but experienced a downward trajectory instead of an upward one.

E. Descending political socialization

This group is composed of three interviewees: two have completed the alienation process and can therefore be considered alienated, while the third may have begun this process.

a. Mild or strong socialization in early life

When it comes to primary and early secondary socialization, it seems that my interviewees were at least mildly engaged with politics. I cannot be too confident when asserting that because, while it is clear for one interviewee, the data I have on the two alienated interviewees is a bit more limited since they talked more about the current political situation or what led them to alienation rather than their early years.

If none of them was conscious of politics during their early childhood, contrary to some in the first group, they seemed to be more conscious of it during middle school, although Alessandro still wasn't interested in it: "I think I started to understand, to make connections. So, I started to perceive politics when I was maybe... After the age of 12, 12-13, I started to see this aspect of man, the political aspect, from a distance. And during those 12-13 years, I still didn't feel concerned, anyway" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 45). Assia's awareness however, grew during that time because of debates at school, although her opinions were not very informed: "We often talked about it at school, starting in middle school. [...] We would say, for example, I don't like Sarkozy, I like Ségolène Royal. We didn't go into details" (Assia 7, Pos. 643-654).

During *lycée*, Assia's interest grew because of her teacher: "I did a STMG [management] *bac*. So the teachers told us that we should keep up with everything going on in politics, economics, and so on. And so we often had political debates in class" (Assia 7, Pos. 666-671). Dieudonné also began talking politics with his classmates during that period.

When it comes to higher education, Dieudonné seemed to be very politically active: "At university, yes, I was in the science faculty, but yes, at university, we discussed a lot. On campus, we had become politicized. In addition, there were student movements on campus, so there, it was even more... There were debates. We had debates in the lecture hall" (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 37), while Assia also debated with her classmates.

If the role of peers is present among this group and the education system also seems to have played a role (at least for Assia), family is much less present, except for Assia, who links her interest in politics to her parents' high interest: "[I followed the 2007 presidential election through my] parents. Since they have been in France, they have been following politics and then, well, I started following too. [They get their information from various media:] TV, radio and often they have political debates at home" (Assia 7, Pos. 16-25). When it comes to the two other interviewees, Alessandro didn't mention his parents at all and in the case of Dieudonné, they didn't seem to positively influence his socialization: "With my parents, [I didn't debate]. No, my parents weren't very political, not very interested. [...] They didn't know much about politics. For them, politics was just empty words, lies" (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 28-31).

When considering the little data I have on Alessandro's early life, it is hard to gauge if he was engaging with politics, but I think I can conclude that he was because when talking about how he conceived politics before being alienated, he had this to say: "Yes, let's say that voting was a duty, in any case, which also forced me to get a little closer and to take a stand, to choose. [...] And so all [my interest in politics] actually grew. [...] At the age of 18, I became much more interested in understanding [...] what this whole thing was all about" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 55). It seems that, like some interviewees in the first group (the engaged ones), Alessandro at least partially adhered to the political system and his involvement in the voting process increased when he turned 18 and realized he could vote. That is why I considered that he was at least mildly engaged in his younger years.

b. Alienation process

My interviewees do not yet seem to be alienated, but they are going to undergo a process that will make them feel more and more estranged from politics. This process seems to have been completed for both Alessandro and Dieudonné and seems to have begun for Assia.

i. A possible beginning of the alienation process

When it comes to Assia, the alienation process seems to have begun because she engages less and less with politics, but it is not complete (and may not go any further). Her interest began to fade after her second year of BTS, i.e. during Covid, because of stigmatizing media discourses about her religion and race: "You see on *CNews* [far-right news channel], they often invite politicians or anyone who is interested in [racism]. I don't know, they have a bit of hateful discourse. And even islamophobic too" (Assia 7, Pos. 155-157), which reduced

her interest and her media consumption. Her engagement with politics sank even lower after the dissolution of the *Assemblée Nationale*. Other interviewees mentioned that they had been disappointed by this event, but Assia is the only one who has really been impacted in both her attitudes and practices. She was disappointed because she invested a lot of time in the campaign but “it didn't lead to anything” (Assia 7, Pos. 93). Because of her disappointment, she reads/watches the news even less frequently. She also doesn't want to vote anymore because of her lack of trust: “I don't want to vote anymore. Because I've lost faith in it” (Assia 7, Pos. 199-200). If her feelings of powerlessness and normlessness seem to rise, the alienation process is not complete since she still has positive views on certain features of the political system, for example on political parties: “they also meet certain needs” (Assia 7, Pos. 372-373). This is not the case for Alessandro and Dieudonné.

ii. *A completed alienation process*

Both Alessandro and Dieudonné have a deep distrust of politics. For both of them, it begins with an interpretation of events that contradicts the mainstream discourse. Alessandro rejects the mainstream narrative concerning “so-called terror attacks” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 15) on the Twin Towers in 2001: “It's a bit from events like this that you see how there is a powerful force capable of transforming official reality and calling it truth, so when the change in the official truth is so powerful, that's when I realize that we are far from democracy” (ibid.). It seems to be this event that made him doubt that politics was about truth. Indeed, according to him, politics is a “theater” (Pos. 5), meaning that not much is real. For him, voters do not have much power over elected officials since they are “subject to not necessarily respond to an ideology but to a diktat that comes from a more powerful force linked to the economy” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 5) and that is not democratic. Dieudonné does not really exhibit adherence to non-mainstream theories but similarly has an estrangement towards politics that is linked to his interpretation of political events. His starting point was the Iraq war and his realization that the media could not tell the truth: “It dates back to Bush's war, in fact, the war in Iraq. So, there you go, when this war happened, we understood that, well, the media had been muzzled [...] So, as a result, this war could have been avoided, but it happened anyway, because, well, there were all those who wanted it” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 82). He felt that this war was not in the interest of the people, which increased his distrust towards politicians and towards the media which was misinforming people. For him, politicians and the media work together against people: “Politicians do what they want, which is a lot because the media misinforms people. [...] There is collusion between the media and politicians. So, there is no longer any countervailing power, in fact. This allows politicians to

do whatever they want” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 84). In terms of alienation dimensions, several are present. Politics cannot be trusted or is a sham, which indicates normlessness. Furthermore, politics is heavily influenced either by economic forces or by the media, which skews political outcomes (deprivation). That is why they do not think that they can influence it (powerlessness). These events seem to have started a trajectory that will lead them to reject politics, i.e. feel more and more powerless, normless and meaningless.

Being manipulated and powerless is also a vision of politics that is present in Alessandro. The doubt in the reality or truth of politics makes him also doubt about the left/right divide, i.e. about the possibility of actually being able to influence politics: “I realized that left and right are just conventions [...]. In the end, there's not much difference between the right and the left in politics” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 7). This appears to be more recent (7 or 8 years ago). Before, he identified himself as a leftist. The fact that the left/right divide is meaningless is then linked to one of the first points he made, i.e. that politics inevitably has to follow a “powerful force” that does not let politicians act according to their ideology: “They have to be able to respond to the dictates of economic power, so as soon as money comes into play, it's no longer a question of doing good or bad, it's a question of following orders” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 31). Politics is no longer even possible since its nature has completely changed: “It's more of an instrument; this theatrical aspect is more of a tool to hide a reality that is not acceptable” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 9). Since politics cannot influence outcomes and since it is no longer democratic, we are living in a “strong dictatorship” (Pos. 11) whose voting system is mere aesthetics. Similar to Alessandro's “powerful force”, what furthered the development of Dieudonné's alienation was his realization that presidents are bound by “the power of money”: “[Democracy has been in bad shape] since the election of Nicolas Sarkozy. I think that was when there was... a rather sudden change. It means that we clearly saw the power of finance, of money. Money [...] to silence dissenting voices. [...] Since Sarkozy's election. There have been a lot of changes” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 91-93). This power of money is not totally similar to what Alessandro described because while it was outside politics and dictated what it should do, this power is inside it and allows the politician to control politics. However, these two “powers” have the same function in the sense that they made my interviewee realize that politics was crooked. Since politicians aren't honest, in order to have power, they don't talk about important topics but about topics that will get them elected instead of developing a program that would make people want to vote for them. The topic that used to gather votes is the topic of migration (according to Dieudonné), which is

used to stigmatize certain people, similar to what Assia told me about the discourse on race and Islam.

Other events caused Alessandro and Dieudonné to feel even more alienated. For Alessandro, it was Covid-19, which underlined the role of this “powerful force” even more because it wasn't about health but a military exercise. For Dieudonné, the alienation process continued with Nicolas Sarkozy but also under Emmanuel Macron: “But I think it's gotten worse with the current government” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 98).

Alessandro, more than Dieudonné, has a very fatalistic conception of politics. Politics as it is commonly defined is not possible because of this “powerful force,” because politics itself corrupts and because money is also a factor of corruption, something he observed for both Sarkozy and Macron. This is linked to his endorsement of several non-mainstream theories (related to 9/11 or Covid-19) and indeed, adherence to this kind of theories is linked to a lower political trust (Schlipphak, Isani and Back 2022). Throughout this subsection, I refrained from using the concept of “conspiracy theory” because it is burdened by its normative weight, be it in political debates in which it has a negative connotation, or even in political science in which it still means that the person believing in these theories is wrong.

c. Conclusion of the subsection

What seems to have made Dieudonné and Alessandro reject politics is a series of events that started the alienation process and reinforced it, like a feedback loop that acted during their secondary socialization. This process seems to have started a few years ago for Assia, although I cannot be sure of that. The members of this group seem to have had at least a mild primary socialization, but contrary to the first group, in which secondary socialization reinforced their engagement in politics, secondary socialization seems to have started a process of alienation. What is important to know, and my data's limitations make it difficult to assess, is what caused this junction between a reinforcing secondary socialization (in the case of the first group, for example) and an alienating secondary socialization. However, there might actually be no junction: the alienating secondary socialization might also be a reinforcing secondary socialization but simply reinforcing negative views (that were maybe already present during the primary socialization) towards the political system instead of the positive ones. When it comes to Assia, for example, her alienation seems to have roots in the discourses that are held on her race and religion, and she has actually been aware of race since childhood: “[I started to take an interest in racism] since I was little. Because already, in my neighborhood - I live in Stalingrad - they started to displace people of color [*racisés*].

And us, with friends, when I was maybe 8 or 9 years old, we were already protesting with our moms outside about that” (Assia 7, Pos. 145-148). The awareness that people like her could be subject to racism influenced the development of her socialization. In this case, instead of secondary socialization contradicting primary socialization (which is harder to make sense of), secondary socialization actually reinforces some trends already present in primary socialization. Since, for her, racism and islamophobia are ubiquitous in the political system, she began to reject it. The same goes for Dieudonné, whose parents had little knowledge about politics and conceived it as “slogans” and “lies” (Pos. 31), which could have impacted his views on the matter. This is however harder to know for Alessandro because I lack data on his childhood.

F. Conclusion

As I have shown, socialization does indeed play a role in the development or absence of alienation and apathy. When it comes to apathy, an almost total lack of socialization seems to explain its emergence because the individual is completely unfamiliar with the way politics works, hence the lack of interest in it. However, the interviewees who experienced upward socialization show that having a slightly higher level of primary socialization seems to have a big impact on socialization later in life. For most of this group (the third one), it means that they were engaging with politics. However, secondary socialization is sometimes not enough to counterbalance a (lack of) primary socialization that rendered interviewees alienated (or at least close to it) because it was a short socialization process caused by an event that shocked the interviewees and prompted them to act against it. The last group highlights the fact that primary socialization that seems to point towards future engagement with politics on the part of the interviewees can lead to alienation because secondary socialization reinforces negative views about the political system.

In fact, the trajectories of my alienated interviewees (Nur, Dieudonné, and Alessandro) and those close to alienation (Frédéric and Assia) could also be explained by the fact that a lack of primary socialization (for Nur and Frédéric) or a specific type of primary socialization (in the case of the fourth group) actually transmits a negative view of the political system. In the case of Nur and Frédéric, secondary socialization, instead of just not being able to counterbalance the lack of primary socialization, reinforced the feeling of alienation stemming from a lack of primary socialization. For the fourth group, it is less clear, but a few hints could indicate that these interviewees also had negative views of the political system even though they could participate in politics, a result in line with research showing

that citizens with a low SES do not necessarily trust politics even though they participate in it (Albareda and Müller 2025), meaning that their secondary socialization actually highlighted and reinforced the negative views they had towards the political system compared to the positive ones. However, this does not tell me why secondary socialization reinforced negative views instead of positive ones, since interviewees in the first group (the engaged ones) also have some negative views of the political system. It might be linked to the amount and strength of positive and negative views... Furthermore, those whose negative views have been reinforced tend to be those who have a lower SES, which seems to be the case given that they have a low income (all of them earn less than €20,000 a year) and they are unemployed since a longer time than the rest.

The results I have should be taken *cum grano salis* given the limits of my data. While having a large number of interviewees who are engaged with politics (first group) allows me to make meaningful comparisons that make my analysis more precise, I still only have one interviewee who is apathetic, three who are alienated, and two who are on the alienated end of the spectrum.

Throughout this chapter, I hinted at the fact that alienation and apathy were linked to participation. The next two chapters will tackle this question.

Chapter 3 - The effects of alienation and apathy on political participation

This chapter tackles the question of the influence of alienation, its dimensions and apathy on political participation. Indeed, their effects among the wider population are unknown since they have never been tested before. Given the lack of studies testing the influence of meaninglessness (the feeling that individuals cannot understand the political process and hence cannot understand the consequence of their choices), normlessness (the feeling that the rules of politics have broken down), powerlessness (the feeling that his actions do not bear any consequences) and deprivation (the feeling individuals cannot get what they deserve) on political practices such as voting, boycott, demonstration, petitions and contacting politicians, I am going to use ESS data to do that. I will use survey data on Parisian jobseekers as well to observe more precise trends present in this subsample.

Defining political participation is no easy task and some spent entire papers mapping its different definitions (Van Deth 2014). As I said before, during my interviews, the goal was to not impose any definition of politics or political participation. However, this is hardly doable for survey research, hence the need for a definition. I adopt a wide definition, in line with current questions about the widening of the scope of political participation in political science (Fox 2014). Political participation is a voluntary activity done by citizens (amateurish) that is neither necessarily located in the political arena nor aimed at political actors or collective problems but that is used to express political aims and intentions.

In this chapter, I show that although socio-demographic variables have an impact on political practices, alienation, its dimensions and apathy do as well. Being disinterested in politics (apathy) is negatively correlated with all forms of political practices while alienation dimensions always decrease voting. However, they can increase the odds of doing other forms of (informal) participation, especially normlessness.

A. Descriptive statistics of political variables and political practices

What is striking is that all of these variables (except for life satisfaction) display a low or medium level at best. Indeed, French respondents seem to be rather satisfied with their lives (5th graph) but when it comes to politics, it is less the case. The first seven variables

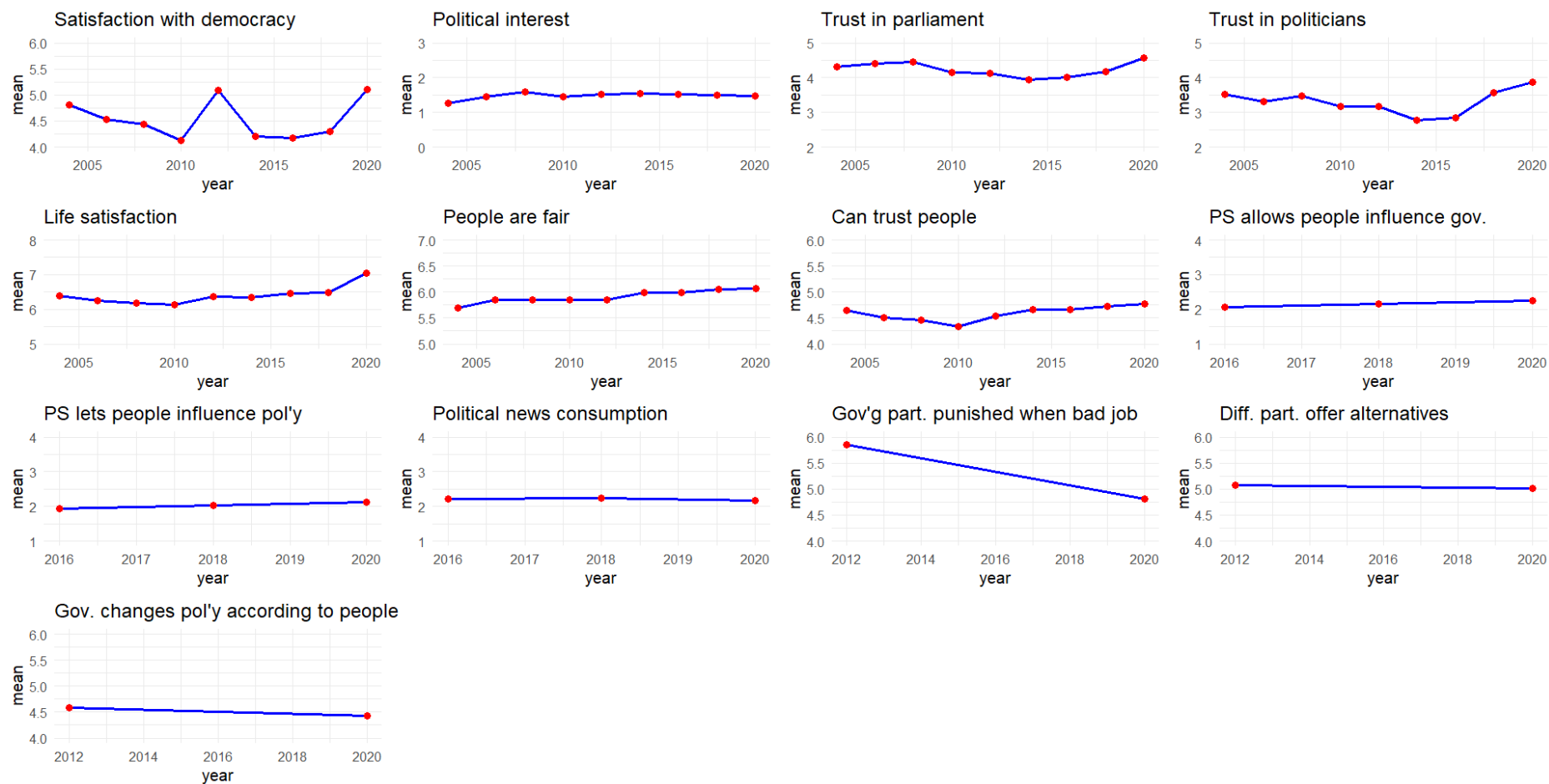


Figure 29- evolution of the different variables used to build the alienation, its dimensions and apathy¹

¹ Because of space constraints, I had to shorten a few words: PS = political system; Gov. = government; Pol'y = policies; Gov'g = governing; Part. = parties; Diff. = different

except political interest have 10 levels but their highest score is a mere 6. The three variables of the first row paint a negative picture of politics: respondents are not very satisfied with democracy, they do not really trust the Assemblée Nationale and do not trust politicians. However, trust in parliament and politicians seem to slightly increase since a few years. The two social trust variables (in the middle of the second row) have medium scores: respondents tend to be more optimistic towards fairness than trust, though. Political interest is also rather low. It goes from 0 to 3 and a mean of about 1,5 means that people are hardly interested in politics. When it comes to the rest of the variables, only one is decreasing but the rest have a low level as well (with the exception of political news consumption). To the question “governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job”, people thought it could be the case (mean of 6) in 2012, but in 2020 they neither agreed, nor disagreed. The rest of the variables display lower levels. Respondents think that the political system only allows them to have a say in what the government does and to influence policies very little. When it comes to political parties offering clear alternatives and the government changing its policies according to what people want, respondents neither agree nor disagree. Political news consumption is not that low however. A mean of 2,5 means that people consume between 30 and 60 minutes of political news a day.

In terms of political practices, they tend to be stable except for two. Between 2004 and 2020, a bit less than 20% of the respondents contacted politicians, 15% did demonstrations and about 35% signed petitions. Apart from peaks and dips here and there, these practices stayed stable. The only practice that went up is boycotting products. It went from 30% in 2004 to almost 40% in 2018. Vote doesn't entirely follow the trend of the national average since in 2002, 73,6% of registered voters casted a ballot, in 2007, it was 86,2%, in 2012 82,2% and in 2017 81,2% (« Taux de participation aux présidentielles France entre 1965 et 2022 », s. d.). The variables only went up to 80% and in 2020, it was down to 65%.

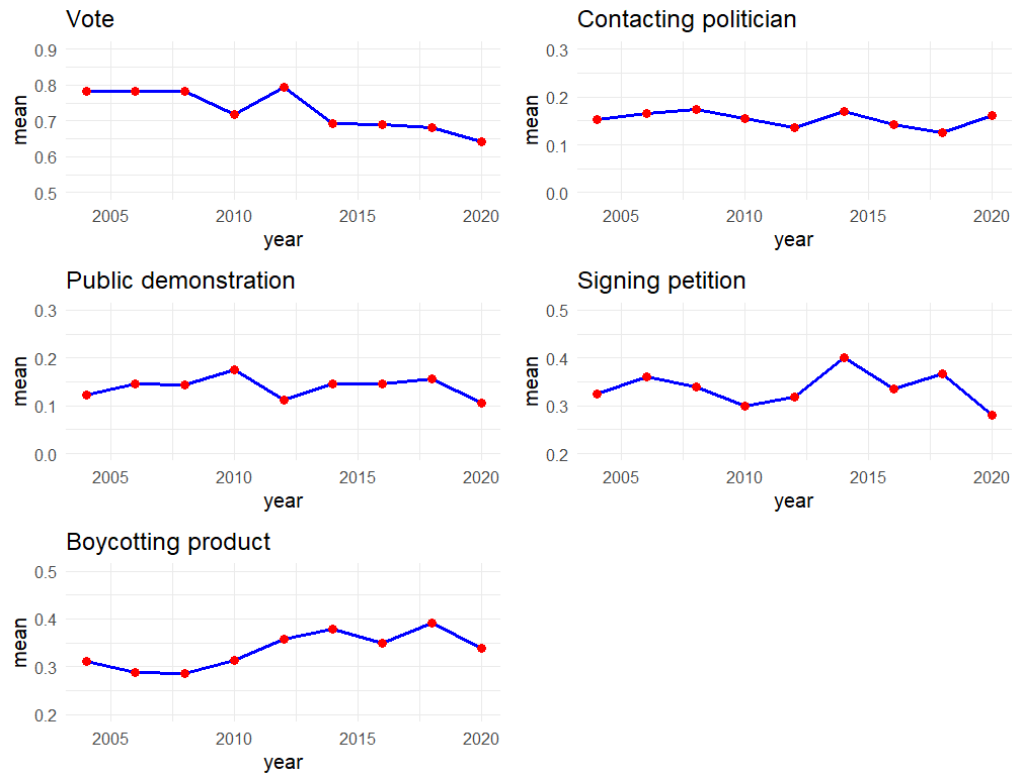


figure 30 - Evolution of political practices of French respondents between 2004 and 2020

B. The correlation between alienation, its dimension and apathy and political practices

Since the use of dichotomous dependent variables warrants the use of logistic regressions, I use logit models to show that the effect of the control variables generally are small (with the exception of education and to a lesser extent income and domicile). Moreover, if all the alienation dimensions have a positive effect on vote (i.e the less one is deprived, normless etc., the more someone votes), they do not have the same influence on the other forms of participation. Understanding how the political system works (lack of meaningfulness) increases all the other forms of participation whereas feeling that the political system respects the rules it set up (lack of normlessness) decreases the use of the other forms of participation. The two other dimensions generally are less significant.

a. First dataset

The first dataset contains 9 waves and therefore allows me to have the highest span of years. As I said before, in dataset one, I could only build 2 alienation scales: normlessness (the feeling the rules of politics have broken down) and deprivation (the feeling that individuals do not get what they deserve). Apathy, a generalized indifference towards politics is included as well. These scales are reversed so that the closer to 0 the individual is, the

closer to being deprived, apathetic and normless the individual is. The higher the score, the lower the normlessness, deprivation and apathy. Normlessness has 56 levels, deprivation has 44 (from 0 to 7,226) and apathy has 4 levels. All the independent variables are binary: 0 means that the practice didn't occur while 1 means it did. In the models, I separated apathy from the two other alienation dimensions since they are two different concepts.

i. Logistic regressions: alienation dimensions and apathy

Employment-related variables rarely have an effect on political practices compared to socio-demographic variables. The effect is concentrated on voting so that in general, being unemployed tends to decrease the odds of voting. Socio-demographic variables have a bigger effect on participation and as shown before in Chapter 1, each additional year of education and each additional income decile increase the odds of voting, although the effect of education seems to be focussed on petition signing and boycotting products (each year of education increases the odds by approximately 10%). They are both almost always significant, which is also the case of domicile which decreases formal participation and increases informal participation the more the individual lives in an urban area.

When it comes to the variables of interest, they are significant less often but their effect is strong despite their little coefficients since they have large scales. All else being equal, the more one feels that the rules of politics are respected and that one is treated fairly as a result (lack of normlessness), the bigger the odds of voting ($p < 0,001$) and contacting politicians (although this specific coefficient is rather small). This could be linked to the fact that a non-normless person trusts politics and politicians and hence sees contacting politicians as something useful or meaningful. This is congruent with the fact that “direct contacting of representatives is not an expression of protest behaviour. On the contrary, contacting politicians shows strong adherence to representative democracy” (Aars and Strømsnes 2007, 93), i.e a low normlessness. Furthermore, not being normless decreases the use of boycott, highlighting the fact that it is a protest behavior (Borman 2015). Deprivation is only significant for contacting politicians, which means that the more one feels that the political system is structured in a way that they will be treated fairly, the less one will tend to contact politicians. This appears to be logical: a person that thinks they aren't treated unfairly by the political system will not need to contact politicians to complain. The effect is actually quite strong since it is similar to the effect of education or income although the scale of deprivation is bigger.

Regarding apathy, the coefficients seem to be the strongest but I cannot really compare apathy to the two alienation dimensions for two reasons: first, apathy is in a separate

set of models (because these are two separate concepts) and second, in this dataset, apathy is only comprised of one variables, while deprivation and normlessness are comprised of several. What I can say, however, is that the less one has a feeling of generalized indifference towards politics, the bigger the odds of engaging with politics. This effect is strong for voting (77%), contacting politicians (62%) and demonstrating (75%) and a bit less strong for petitions and boycotts.

| | Vote 1 | Contact Politician 1 | Demonstration 1 | Petition 1 | Boycott 1 | Vote 2 | Contact Politician 2 | Demonstration 2 | Petition 2 | Boycott 2 |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 1.661 (0.264) | 0.912 (0.320) | 0.242*** (0.350) | 0.622 (0.249) | 0.703 (0.236) | 1.205 (0.266) | 0.484* (0.329) | 0.114*** (0.362) | 0.373*** (0.254) | 0.371*** (0.240) |
| normlessness | 1.030*** (0.002) | 1.006* (0.003) | 1.000 (0.003) | 0.998 (0.002) | 0.985*** (0.002) | | | | | |
| deprivation | 1.010 (0.016) | 0.929*** (0.019) | 0.985 (0.020) | 1.001 (0.015) | 1.006 (0.015) | | | | | |
| domicile | 0.944** (0.018) | 0.919*** (0.021) | 1.154*** (0.021) | 1.083*** (0.016) | 1.015 (0.016) | 0.923*** (0.018) | 0.895*** (0.021) | 1.112*** (0.022) | 1.052** (0.016) | 0.979 (0.016) |
| education | 1.070*** (0.006) | 1.080*** (0.007) | 1.082*** (0.007) | 1.110*** (0.006) | 1.108*** (0.006) | 1.041*** (0.007) | 1.048*** (0.007) | 1.047*** (0.007) | 1.082*** (0.006) | 1.075*** (0.006) |
| income | 1.088*** (0.009) | 1.040*** (0.011) | 1.007 (0.011) | 1.034*** (0.008) | 1.042*** (0.008) | 1.084*** (0.009) | 1.006 (0.010) | 0.984 (0.010) | 1.017* (0.008) | 1.019* (0.008) |
| gender | 0.948 (0.041) | 0.781*** (0.048) | 0.816*** (0.051) | 1.172*** (0.038) | 1.150*** (0.037) | 1.112* (0.043) | 0.891* (0.050) | 0.952 (0.052) | 1.318*** (0.039) | 1.283*** (0.038) |
| age_z | 4.671*** (0.132) | 3.479*** (0.169) | 2.205*** (0.176) | 2.798*** (0.127) | 2.967*** (0.122) | 3.526*** (0.131) | 3.102*** (0.171) | 1.854*** (0.179) | 2.430*** (0.128) | 2.610*** (0.123) |
| age2 | 1.000*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 1.000*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 1.000*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.723* (0.128) | 1.199 (0.162) | 1.032 (0.161) | 1.078 (0.125) | 1.200 (0.126) | 0.625*** (0.131) | 1.127 (0.164) | 0.953 (0.164) | 1.016 (0.127) | 1.159 (0.128) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.662** (0.154) | 0.641 (0.227) | 1.262 (0.195) | 1.051 (0.150) | 1.097 (0.151) | 0.670* (0.158) | 0.668 (0.230) | 1.323 (0.199) | 1.093 (0.153) | 1.148 (0.153) |
| jobless_active | 0.691*** (0.085) | 0.703** (0.115) | 0.885 (0.115) | 1.113 (0.081) | 1.130 (0.082) | 0.665*** (0.086) | 0.709** (0.115) | 0.867 (0.116) | 1.103 (0.082) | 1.118 (0.082) |
| jobless_3months | 1.131* (0.053) | 0.952 (0.063) | 1.066 (0.064) | 0.895* (0.048) | 0.872** (0.048) | 1.162** (0.053) | 0.943 (0.064) | 1.058 (0.065) | 0.889* (0.049) | 0.860** (0.049) |
| jobless_12months | 1.206** (0.062) | 0.886 (0.077) | 1.091 (0.081) | 0.927 (0.059) | 0.972 (0.059) | 1.254*** (0.063) | 0.884 (0.078) | 1.107 (0.083) | 0.935 (0.060) | 0.979 (0.060) |
| paid_work | 0.900 (0.061) | 0.922 (0.071) | 1.043 (0.076) | 0.887* (0.055) | 0.835*** (0.055) | 0.943 (0.062) | 0.973 (0.072) | 1.109 (0.077) | 0.929 (0.056) | 0.878* (0.055) |
| apathy | | | | | | 1.776*** (0.025) | 1.624*** (0.028) | 1.753*** (0.030) | 1.521*** (0.022) | 1.511*** (0.022) |
| AIC | 14408.736 | 11466.049 | 10715.905 | 16729.283 | 16977.191 | 14001.726 | 11179.208 | 10349.676 | 16352.960 | 16649.975 |
| BIC | 14521.045 | 11578.357 | 10828.214 | 16841.591 | 17089.500 | 14106.547 | 11284.029 | 10454.497 | 16457.781 | 16754.796 |
| Log Likelihood | -7189.368 | -5718.025 | -5342.953 | -8349.642 | -8473.596 | -6986.863 | -5575.604 | -5160.838 | -8162.480 | -8310.987 |
| Deviance | 14378.736 | 11436.049 | 10685.905 | 16699.283 | 16947.191 | 13973.726 | 11151.208 | 10321.676 | 16324.960 | 16621.975 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 31 - Correlation between normlessness, deprivation, apathy and political practices, with control variables included in dataset 1

ii. Logistic regression: alienation

Unsurprisingly, the effects of control variables are similar but the effect of alienation is stronger compared to deprivation and normlessness. All else being equal, the less someone feels estranged from politics, the bigger the odds of voting by 16% but the smaller the odds of boycotting products by 6,6%. Other practices do not seem to be affected by alienation.

| | Vote | Contacting Politician | Demonstration | Petition | Boycott |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 1.766* (0.262) | 0.946 (0.321) | 0.243*** (0.350) | 0.619 (0.249) | 0.685 (0.235) |
| Alienation | 1.163*** (0.014) | 0.979 (0.017) | 0.991 (0.017) | 0.991 (0.013) | 0.934*** (0.013) |
| domicile | 0.955** (0.018) | 0.926*** (0.021) | 1.155*** (0.021) | 1.082*** (0.016) | 1.009 (0.016) |
| education | 1.069*** (0.006) | 1.079*** (0.007) | 1.082*** (0.007) | 1.110*** (0.006) | 1.108*** (0.006) |
| income | 1.074*** (0.009) | 1.031** (0.010) | 1.006 (0.011) | 1.036*** (0.008) | 1.050*** (0.008) |
| gender | 0.956 (0.041) | 0.786*** (0.048) | 0.817*** (0.050) | 1.171*** (0.038) | 1.144*** (0.037) |
| age_z | 5.003*** (0.131) | 3.656*** (0.169) | 2.223*** (0.176) | 2.779*** (0.126) | 2.841*** (0.122) |
| age2 | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) | 0.999*** (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.728* (0.128) | 1.208 (0.161) | 1.032 (0.161) | 1.077 (0.125) | 1.193 (0.126) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.682* (0.154) | 0.653 (0.227) | 1.265 (0.195) | 1.049 (0.150) | 1.078 (0.151) |
| jobless_active | 0.728*** (0.084) | 0.728** (0.114) | 0.890 (0.114) | 1.108 (0.081) | 1.098 (0.081) |
| jobless_3months | 1.124* (0.053) | 0.948 (0.063) | 1.066 (0.064) | 0.895* (0.048) | 0.875** (0.048) |
| jobless_12months | 1.187** (0.062) | 0.879 (0.077) | 1.090 (0.081) | 0.928 (0.059) | 0.980 (0.059) |
| paid_work | 0.898 (0.061) | 0.923 (0.071) | 1.043 (0.076) | 0.887* (0.055) | 0.834*** (0.055) |
| AIC | 14456.936 | 11478.211 | 10714.193 | 16727.664 | 16993.463 |
| BIC | 14561.757 | 11583.032 | 10819.014 | 16832.485 | 17098.284 |
| Log Likelihood | -7214.468 | -5725.105 | -5343.096 | -8349.832 | -8482.732 |
| Deviance | 14428.936 | 11450.211 | 10686.193 | 16699.664 | 16965.463 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 32 - Correlation between alienation and political practices, with control variables included in dataset 1

iii. Conclusion of the subsection

When it comes to employment related variables, their (negative) effect is rather small and quite limited to voting. Socio-demographic characteristics, especially income and education, have a positive effect on political practices, mostly on voting for income and mainly on petitions and boycotts for education. This could be explained by the fact that boycotts are usually tied to individuals possessing a high cultural capital (Carfagna et al. 2014; Baumann, Engman and Johnston 2015). A similar process could be happening for petitions since it requires an active search, something maybe more fitting to people with a higher cultural capital and it also requires certain cognitive abilities (Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier 2010, 11).

In regards to apathy, the less someone is indifferent to politics, the more likely that person is to participate. It seems indeed logical that a person that is interested in politics tends to participate more.

Normlessness and deprivation have different effects on political participation. Normlessness (or the lack thereof) seems to increase the participation in formal politics and decrease informal politics that is geared towards protest (Aars and Strømsnes 2007, 93). That means that the more someone feels that the rules of politics have broken down, the less likely they are to vote and contact politicians, maybe because they won't bother engaging with the ones that caused their feeling. Someone that thinks that they do not get what they deserve (i.e. are deprived) could complain about it to someone able to change that.

b. Second dataset

The second dataset only has 2 waves (6 and 10, or 2014 and 2020) but allows me to incorporate more variables, which is why I could measure powerlessness (i.e. the feeling that politics cannot be influenced by an individual's actions). Normlessness goes from 0 to 38, powerlessness from 0 to 29, deprivation ranges from 0 to 7,226 (44 levels) and apathy has 4 levels, from 0 to 3.

i. Logistic regressions with alienation dimensions and apathy

Control variables are less significant this time. Employment-related variables are almost never significant and when they are, they are less than before and their effects are smaller. Overall, again, experiencing unemployment decreases voting. When it comes to socio-demographic variables, they are rarely significant as well. The place of living (domicile) is sometimes significant: it decreases the odds of formal participation while increasing those of informal participation. The fact that inhabitants of urban areas vote less than others is a well known fact of political sociology (Mayer 2010) and the fact that urban areas favor demonstrations could be linked to the fact that a high concentration of people in one place facilitates mobilization. Income isn't significant anymore but education is and, as in the previous dataset, every additional year of education increases the odds of participation. Its effect is stronger on all the forms of participation compared to the first dataset.

Except powerlessness, alienation dimensions are almost not significant. The more one feels that one can influence politics (i.e. doesn't feel powerless), the more one will vote but

| | Vote 1 | Contact Politician 1 | Demonstration 1 | Petition 1 | Boycott 1 | Vote 2 | Contact Politician 2 | Demonstration 2 | Petition 2 | Boycott 2 |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 0.738 (0.659) | 0.228 (0.804) | 0.119* (0.911) | 0.208* (0.636) | 0.339 (0.572) | 0.583 (0.661) | 0.117** (0.814) | 0.034*** (0.940) | 0.104*** (0.646) | 0.164** (0.580) |
| normlessness | 1.018* (0.009) | 1.011 (0.012) | 0.999 (0.013) | 1.009 (0.009) | 0.984 (0.008) | | | | | |
| powerlessness | 1.032** (0.011) | 0.994 (0.013) | 0.950*** (0.015) | 0.973** (0.010) | 0.991 (0.010) | | | | | |
| deprivation | 1.075 (0.039) | 0.966 (0.051) | 0.917 (0.055) | 1.084* (0.039) | 1.064 (0.037) | | | | | |
| domicile | 0.902* (0.042) | 1.001 (0.053) | 1.256*** (0.058) | 1.092* (0.041) | 0.992 (0.039) | 0.871** (0.043) | 0.972 (0.054) | 1.193** (0.058) | 1.051 (0.041) | 0.949 (0.040) |
| education | 1.086*** (0.016) | 1.089*** (0.018) | 1.090*** (0.020) | 1.110*** (0.015) | 1.085*** (0.014) | 1.053** (0.016) | 1.061** (0.018) | 1.050* (0.021) | 1.086*** (0.015) | 1.053*** (0.014) |
| income | 0.994 (0.021) | 1.030 (0.026) | 1.037 (0.029) | 1.022 (0.020) | 1.028 (0.019) | 1.005 (0.019) | 1.010 (0.024) | 0.989 (0.026) | 1.027 (0.018) | 1.018 (0.018) |
| gender | 0.940 (0.099) | 0.991 (0.123) | 0.762* (0.137) | 1.073 (0.095) | 1.223* (0.091) | 1.091 (0.101) | 1.129 (0.125) | 0.897 (0.139) | 1.212* (0.097) | 1.373*** (0.093) |
| age_z | 3.014*** (0.318) | 2.741* (0.408) | 1.069 (0.445) | 1.548 (0.308) | 1.927* (0.283) | 2.046* (0.316) | 2.313* (0.411) | 1.006 (0.451) | 1.169 (0.311) | 1.575 (0.285) |
| age2 | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.430** (0.284) | 1.088 (0.379) | 0.599 (0.447) | 0.842 (0.288) | 0.750 (0.299) | 0.421** (0.296) | 1.141 (0.383) | 0.700 (0.447) | 0.885 (0.292) | 0.799 (0.305) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.599 (0.376) | 0.521 (0.631) | 1.826 (0.471) | 1.225 (0.379) | 1.429 (0.368) | 0.595 (0.385) | 0.499 (0.640) | 1.745 (0.481) | 1.182 (0.392) | 1.415 (0.378) |
| jobless_active | 0.616* (0.199) | 0.714 (0.287) | 0.635 (0.313) | 0.940 (0.201) | 0.890 (0.199) | 0.655* (0.204) | 0.752 (0.288) | 0.645 (0.314) | 0.951 (0.203) | 0.898 (0.202) |
| jobless_3months | 1.307* (0.124) | 1.003 (0.161) | 0.959 (0.172) | 0.691** (0.120) | 0.863 (0.117) | 1.373* (0.127) | 1.015 (0.162) | 0.942 (0.173) | 0.710** (0.121) | 0.884 (0.119) |
| jobless_12months | 1.098 (0.146) | 0.944 (0.196) | 1.225 (0.215) | 1.035 (0.144) | 1.087 (0.142) | 1.209 (0.149) | 0.952 (0.198) | 1.161 (0.215) | 1.033 (0.145) | 1.101 (0.144) |
| paid_work | 1.045 (0.148) | 0.871 (0.183) | 0.923 (0.206) | 0.862 (0.143) | 0.888 (0.135) | 1.092 (0.150) | 0.927 (0.185) | 1.019 (0.208) | 0.905 (0.145) | 0.942 (0.137) |
| apathy | | | | | | 1.855*** (0.059) | 1.573*** (0.071) | 1.649*** (0.079) | 1.540*** (0.055) | 1.617*** (0.053) |
| AIC | 2583.205 | 1861.431 | 1568.234 | 2723.049 | 2937.552 | 2493.720 | 1816.683 | 1543.687 | 2666.752 | 2855.868 |
| BIC | 2674.366 | 1952.592 | 1659.395 | 2814.210 | 3028.713 | 2573.486 | 1896.449 | 1623.453 | 2746.518 | 2935.634 |
| Log Likelihood | -1275.602 | -914.715 | -768.117 | -1345.524 | -1452.776 | -1232.860 | -894.341 | -757.844 | -1319.376 | -1413.934 |
| Deviance | 2551.205 | 1829.431 | 1536.234 | 2691.049 | 2905.552 | 2465.720 | 1788.683 | 1515.687 | 2638.752 | 2827.868 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 |

Figure 33 - Correlation between normlessness, deprivation, powerlessness, apathy and political practices, with control variables included in dataset 2

that person will have smaller odds of demonstrating and signing petitions. It seems that the more powerlessness is prevalent, the bigger the odds of informal participation geared at protesting, which is a result similar to the normlessness variable in the last dataset. One could have hypothesized that the feeling of powerlessness would have had a uniform and negative effect on participation and yet, it is not the case...

Apathy has similar patterns as in the first dataset: it primarily affects voting and demonstrating and increases the odds of participating the less someone feels indifferent towards politics.

ii. *Linear regressions with alienation*

| | Vote | Contact Politician | Demonstration | Petition | Boycott |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 0.863 (0.655) | 0.211 (0.796) | 0.089** (0.907) | 0.181** (0.630) | 0.341 (0.564) |
| alienation | 1.140*** (0.024) | 1.003 (0.030) | 0.874*** (0.033) | 1.000 (0.023) | 0.966 (0.022) |
| domicile | 0.904* (0.042) | 1.003 (0.053) | 1.254*** (0.058) | 1.082 (0.041) | 0.985 (0.039) |
| education | 1.085*** (0.016) | 1.090*** (0.018) | 1.093*** (0.020) | 1.114*** (0.015) | 1.085*** (0.014) |
| income | 0.990 (0.020) | 1.025 (0.025) | 1.044 (0.027) | 1.041* (0.019) | 1.043* (0.018) |
| gender | 0.938 (0.098) | 1.005 (0.123) | 0.781 (0.136) | 1.081 (0.095) | 1.203* (0.090) |
| age_z | 3.086*** (0.317) | 2.753* (0.405) | 1.007 (0.442) | 1.375 (0.306) | 1.807* (0.280) |
| age2 | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.431** (0.284) | 1.091 (0.379) | 0.601 (0.446) | 0.840 (0.289) | 0.747 (0.299) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.603 (0.376) | 0.526 (0.631) | 1.792 (0.471) | 1.182 (0.378) | 1.380 (0.366) |
| jobless_active | 0.620* (0.199) | 0.724 (0.286) | 0.624 (0.312) | 0.905 (0.200) | 0.859 (0.198) |
| jobless_3months | 1.301* (0.124) | 0.995 (0.160) | 0.963 (0.172) | 0.707** (0.119) | 0.880 (0.116) |
| jobless_12months | 1.104 (0.145) | 0.938 (0.196) | 1.191 (0.214) | 1.009 (0.143) | 1.085 (0.142) |
| paid_work | 1.044 (0.148) | 0.877 (0.183) | 0.933 (0.206) | 0.865 (0.142) | 0.882 (0.135) |
| AIC | 2579.737 | 1858.626 | 1568.121 | 2730.129 | 2939.958 |
| BIC | 2659.503 | 1938.392 | 1647.887 | 2809.895 | 3019.724 |
| Log Likelihood | -1275.869 | -915.313 | -770.060 | -1351.065 | -1455.979 |
| Deviance | 2551.737 | 1830.626 | 1540.121 | 2702.129 | 2911.958 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 34 - Correlation between alienation and political practices, with control variables included in dataset 2

Political practices are, again, rarely influenced by employment-related variables except for voting and the same goes for socio-demographic variables for which only education is consistently correlated to participation.

When it comes to alienation, I observe that - all else being equal - feeling less and less estranged from politics increases the odds of voting by 14% and decreases the odds of demonstrating by 13%. These odds are again stronger than the individual odds of deprivation, powerlessness and normlessness. This indicates, as in the last dataset, alienation isn't apathy in the sense that it decreases the use of certain forms of participation while increasing the use of other (informal) ones.

iii. Conclusion of the subsection

This dataset shows that employment related variables only influence voting behavior (rather mildly). It could be linked to the fact that unemployment favors anomy which itself favors abstention (Schnapper 1982) or to the fact that unemployment is linked with social disintegration, which also favors abstention (ibid, 9). Socio-demographic variables play a more consistent role regarding political participation but the only variable significantly correlated to all of them is education, which has a positive effect on the odds of all of them.

Apathy displays patterns similar to the ones in the first dataset, i.e it is always significantly correlated with political practices and increases the odds of doing them, the more one is interested in politics. Deprivation and normlessness were almost not correlated with practices and when they were, the significance was not high. Only powerlessness exhibited higher coefficients with several practices and consequently, the alienation variable is heavily influenced by powerlessness. The more one feels that one can influence the political system, the more one will be likely to vote but the lesser the odds of demonstrating. A hypothesis that could explain these two behaviors is that those who do not feel powerless could tend to feel more allegiant towards the political system. Voting is a central legitimizing institution of our political system (Rosanvallon and Goldhammer 2011a), which could explain the fact that non-powerless citizens focus on voting rather than demonstrating because it is a sufficient action to make their voices heard. Also, as I said earlier, demonstration is a protest-oriented practice (Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst 2005), a practice that would less likely be used when the individual is satisfied with the political system.

c. Third dataset

The third dataset allows me to build the meaninglessness dimension (i.e the feeling that individuals cannot understand the political process). Normlessness ranges from 0 to 38, powerlessness goes from 2 to 10, deprivation from 0 to 7,895 (44 levels), meaninglessness from 0 to 6 and apathy has 4 levels, from 0 to 3. For the reasons mentioned in the methods part (see page 22-23), I chose to only merge normlessness and meaninglessness into alienation for the third dataset.

i. Linear regressions with the four alienation dimensions and apathy

| | Vote 1 | Contact Politician 1 | Demonstration 1 | Petition 1 | Boycott 1 | Vote 2 | Contact Politician 2 | Demonstration 2 | Petition 2 | Boycott 2 |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 0.655 (0.473) | 0.260* (0.623) | 0.234* (0.644) | 0.239** (0.460) | 0.246** (0.429) | 0.724 (0.472) | 0.193** (0.628) | 0.184** (0.648) | 0.192*** (0.462) | 0.199*** (0.429) |
| normlessness | 1.019** (0.006) | 1.000 (0.008) | 0.965*** (0.008) | 0.977*** (0.006) | 0.971*** (0.006) | | | | | |
| meaninglessness | 1.278*** (0.023) | 1.162*** (0.027) | 1.230*** (0.027) | 1.210*** (0.021) | 1.166*** (0.020) | | | | | |
| powerlessness | 1.073** (0.027) | 0.987 (0.033) | 1.023 (0.033) | 0.987 (0.025) | 1.007 (0.024) | | | | | |
| deprivation | 1.082** (0.028) | 0.971 (0.037) | 1.034 (0.037) | 1.057* (0.027) | 1.041 (0.027) | | | | | |
| domicile | 0.917** (0.032) | 0.826*** (0.040) | 1.057 (0.040) | 1.009 (0.030) | 0.980 (0.029) | 0.929* (0.032) | 0.821*** (0.040) | 1.029 (0.039) | 0.986 (0.029) | 0.956 (0.029) |
| education | 1.069*** (0.011) | 1.090*** (0.013) | 1.068*** (0.013) | 1.100*** (0.010) | 1.093*** (0.010) | 1.059*** (0.012) | 1.074*** (0.013) | 1.044** (0.013) | 1.078*** (0.010) | 1.071*** (0.010) |
| income | 1.052*** (0.015) | 1.049* (0.019) | 0.985 (0.019) | 1.010 (0.014) | 1.040** (0.014) | 1.077*** (0.014) | 1.034 (0.017) | 0.974 (0.017) | 1.006 (0.013) | 1.031* (0.012) |
| gender | 1.014 (0.072) | 0.928 (0.089) | 0.937 (0.091) | 1.283*** (0.067) | 1.238** (0.065) | 1.065 (0.073) | 0.992 (0.090) | 0.984 (0.091) | 1.353*** (0.068) | 1.295*** (0.066) |
| age_z | 4.943*** (0.232) | 2.447** (0.315) | 1.781 (0.315) | 1.446 (0.225) | 1.326 (0.211) | 3.639*** (0.228) | 2.308** (0.314) | 1.593 (0.312) | 1.260 (0.223) | 1.194 (0.209) |
| age2 | 0.999*** (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000** (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) | 1.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.578** (0.213) | 0.937 (0.286) | 0.402** (0.341) | 0.952 (0.199) | 0.950 (0.199) | 0.550** (0.216) | 0.948 (0.285) | 0.432* (0.340) | 0.986 (0.200) | 0.996 (0.198) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.682 (0.269) | 0.986 (0.365) | 1.215 (0.325) | 0.965 (0.256) | 0.466** (0.282) | 0.656 (0.272) | 0.993 (0.368) | 1.233 (0.326) | 0.969 (0.259) | 0.471** (0.284) |
| jobless_active | 0.687* (0.160) | 0.525* (0.250) | 0.725 (0.220) | 1.118 (0.151) | 1.064 (0.149) | 0.637** (0.161) | 0.509** (0.250) | 0.639* (0.220) | 1.014 (0.151) | 0.972 (0.149) |
| jobless_3months | 1.128 (0.090) | 0.952 (0.115) | 1.086 (0.116) | 0.884 (0.085) | 0.917 (0.083) | 1.194* (0.090) | 0.951 (0.116) | 1.076 (0.116) | 0.882 (0.086) | 0.910 (0.084) |
| jobless_12months | 1.230 (0.108) | 0.747* (0.138) | 0.858 (0.140) | 0.882 (0.103) | 0.905 (0.101) | 1.240* (0.108) | 0.745* (0.139) | 0.855 (0.140) | 0.890 (0.103) | 0.913 (0.102) |
| paid_work | 0.950 (0.108) | 1.095 (0.135) | 1.044 (0.136) | 0.854 (0.100) | 0.755** (0.097) | 0.909 (0.108) | 1.077 (0.135) | 0.985 (0.136) | 0.816* (0.100) | 0.728** (0.097) |
| apathy | | | | | | 1.866*** (0.041) | 1.488*** (0.049) | 1.588*** (0.050) | 1.555*** (0.037) | 1.447*** (0.036) |
| AIC | 4877.746 | 3542.062 | 3467.191 | 5430.776 | 5690.295 | 4821.916 | 3500.897 | 3445.659 | 5374.316 | 5654.005 |
| BIC | 4986.241 | 3650.557 | 3575.686 | 5539.272 | 5798.790 | 4911.264 | 3590.246 | 3535.008 | 5463.665 | 5743.354 |
| Log Likelihood | -2421.873 | -1754.031 | -1716.595 | -2698.388 | -2828.147 | -2396.958 | -1736.449 | -1708.830 | -2673.158 | -2813.002 |
| Deviance | 4843.746 | 3508.062 | 3433.191 | 5396.776 | 5656.295 | 4793.916 | 3472.897 | 3417.659 | 5346.316 | 5626.005 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 |

Figure 35 - Correlation between the four dimensions of alienation, apathy and political practices, with control variables included in dataset

Employment-related variables are generally not correlated with practices but socio-demographic variables are more than in the second dataset. Employment-related variables are barely correlated with any practice (even voting) and when they are, the significance is very low. Socio-demographic variables have bigger and more numerous significant coefficients. Living in a more urban area lowers the odds of voting and contacting politicians while each additional income decile increases the odds of voting, contacting politicians and boycotting products. The most significant and correlated variable is education whose effect is again concentrated on petition signing and boycotting products.

When it comes to the alienation variables, meaninglessness and normlessness stand out. The influence of the four alienation dimensions is especially visible on voting. All of the dimensions of alienation have a positive effect on the voting behavior, meaning that the less prevalent they are, the bigger the odds of voting. This effect is particularly strong for deprivation and meaninglessness, although the operationalization of meaninglessness comes with some caveats that puts the unusually large odds ratio in perspective (see page 21-22). If the effect of deprivation is stronger than the one of normlessness and powerlessness on voting, I cannot explain why it is the case... Normlessness is correlated with four or the five political practices but whereas meaninglessness always has a positive effect, normlessness only has a positive one on vote. The more someone feels that the political system respects the rules it set up, the lesser the odds of demonstrating, signing petitions or boycotting products. I already hypothesized why that could be the case but for meaninglessness, the explanation could be simpler: someone that understands how the political system works (compared to someone that doesn't) will be more likely to use practices linked to that system or that can influence it, hence political participation will be higher. Indeed, political knowledge is associated with the belief that one can understand politics, which in turn increases the odds of both formal and informal participation (Reichert 2016).

Apathy is again positively and significantly correlated to all the outcome variables but seems to primarily influence voting since a lower indifference towards politics increases the odds of voting by 86% while the other forms of participation only see an increase of 58% at best. Both apathy and meaninglessness exhibit large and positive coefficients (although apathy has a stronger effect on voting compared to meaninglessness) because of the way they were operationalized. Apathy has been coded by using political interest while meaninglessness uses political interest and political news consumption. Ideally, both variables would have been coded more differently to reflect the fact that they do not measure the same thing but it was not possible due to the limitations of ESS data.

ii. *Linear regressions with alienation*

| | Vote | Contacting Politician | Demonstration | Petition | Boycott |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 0.783 (0.471) | 0.249* (0.619) | 0.260* (0.635) | 0.262** (0.454) | 0.272** (0.422) |
| Alienation | 1.540*** (0.033) | 1.211*** (0.039) | 1.196*** (0.040) | 1.196*** (0.030) | 1.124*** (0.029) |
| domicile | 0.917** (0.032) | 0.820*** (0.040) | 1.031 (0.039) | 0.989 (0.029) | 0.962 (0.029) |
| education | 1.073*** (0.011) | 1.087*** (0.013) | 1.062*** (0.013) | 1.095*** (0.010) | 1.088*** (0.010) |
| income | 1.071*** (0.014) | 1.037* (0.017) | 0.979 (0.017) | 1.011 (0.013) | 1.037** (0.012) |
| gender | 0.990 (0.072) | 0.920 (0.089) | 0.894 (0.089) | 1.231** (0.067) | 1.190** (0.065) |
| age_z | 4.291*** (0.227) | 2.641** (0.310) | 1.849* (0.306) | 1.467 (0.219) | 1.374 (0.206) |
| age2 | 1.000*** (0.000) | 1.000** (0.000) | 1.000** (0.000) | 1.000** (0.000) | 1.000* (0.000) |
| discrimination | 0.572** (0.213) | 0.997 (0.283) | 0.456* (0.338) | 1.013 (0.197) | 1.023 (0.196) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.665 (0.267) | 1.007 (0.364) | 1.227 (0.321) | 0.955 (0.254) | 0.471** (0.280) |
| jobless_active | 0.650** (0.159) | 0.525** (0.248) | 0.663 (0.218) | 1.034 (0.149) | 0.992 (0.147) |
| jobless_3months | 1.145 (0.090) | 0.941 (0.115) | 1.064 (0.115) | 0.873 (0.085) | 0.905 (0.083) |
| jobless_12months | 1.238* (0.107) | 0.738* (0.138) | 0.848 (0.139) | 0.883 (0.102) | 0.904 (0.101) |
| paid_work | 0.933 (0.107) | 1.073 (0.134) | 0.977 (0.135) | 0.810* (0.099) | 0.718*** (0.096) |
| AIC | 4886.700 | 3544.342 | 3514.362 | 5483.412 | 5746.275 |
| BIC | 4976.049 | 3633.691 | 3603.710 | 5572.761 | 5835.624 |
| Log Likelihood | -2429.350 | -1758.171 | -1743.181 | -2727.706 | -2859.138 |
| Deviance | 4858.700 | 3516.342 | 3486.362 | 5455.412 | 5718.275 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Figure 36 - Correlation between alienation and political practices, with control variables included in dataset 3

Control variables exhibit the same trends as explained in the last table in the sense that income is rarely significant and mostly influences the odds of voting while education increases the odds of all the practices.

This alienation variable is different from the other ones because it is consistently correlated with the outcome variables. The biggest effect of alienation is on voting: all else equal, feeling less and less estranged from politics increases the odds of voting by 54%. Other practices exhibit lower odds-ratios (between 12% and 21%) but they tend to be bigger

than in the previous datasets. Overall, the effects are always positive, indicative of the strength of meaningfulness whose positive coefficients were bigger than the negative ones of normlessness. This is a reason why fusing the different dimensions of alienation might not be relevant: it erases the different effects of the dimensions. Some had positive coefficients while some had negative ones.

iii. Conclusion of the subsection

Employment-related variables have little effect on participation while socio-demographic have a bigger impact. Experiencing unemployment seems to rarely have an impact on the outcome variables but when it does, it is negative. Whereas income increases the odds of formal participation, the place of living decreases them. Among the control variables, education is the strongest predictor of participation: its effect is always negative and is focused on petition signing and boycotting products.

All the alienation dimensions have a positive effect on vote (i.e the less one is deprived, normless etc., the more someone votes) but understanding how the political system works (lack of meaningfulness) increases all the other forms of participation whereas feeling that the political system respects the rules it set up (lack of normlessness) decreases the use of the other forms of participation. The two other dimensions generally aren't significant. Alienation has a negative effect on participation in the sense that the less someone is alienated, the more they will participate, probably because of the overwhelming effect of meaningfulness.

Finally, not being disinterested in politics (lack of apathy) has a positive effect on all outcome variables as well.

C. Survey data on jobseekers - the effects of meaningfulness, normlessness, powerlessness and apathy on political participation

The France Travail survey shows some different results compared to the ESS data. If all the independent variables seem to decrease participation the more they are prevalent (the more the person is powerless, alienated, apathetic, etc.), it is not the case of normlessness which increases the use of informal participation the more it is prevalent. Petition signing is an exception since all the independent variables have a negative effect on it: the less someone feel meaningless, normless, etc. the less they are likely to sign petitions.

a. Descriptive statistics: political practices

The people that answered my survey seem to be pretty politically active although it is less the case when it came to voting. They did not vote as much as the Parisian population in the last presidential election: less than 70% did compared to 74% in Paris (« Résultats présidentielle 2022 : Paris (75000) », s. d.)). In other forms of political participation however, they seem to be more active than the French population. I compare the numbers I have to the 11th wave (2023), which is the closest I have in terms of dates. Whereas 26% of the ESS sample signed a petition in the last 12 months (« ESS - Petition », s. d.), 44% of my sample did. The same goes for demonstrations: only 15% of the ESS sample demonstrated in the last 12 months (« ESS - Demonstration », s. d.) while 30% of my sample did it less than 12 months ago and almost 40% did it more than 12 months ago. For my three remaining variables that are more geared towards political parties or organizations, the ESS doesn't have as many different variables. However, in France in 2023, only 3,5% of the ESS sample said they donated or participated in a political organization (« ESS - Donprty », s. d.) while more than 10% of my sample either donated or participated in meetings of such organizations. However, only 2% of my respondents are in a political party or organization and 80% of them would never enter such organizations.

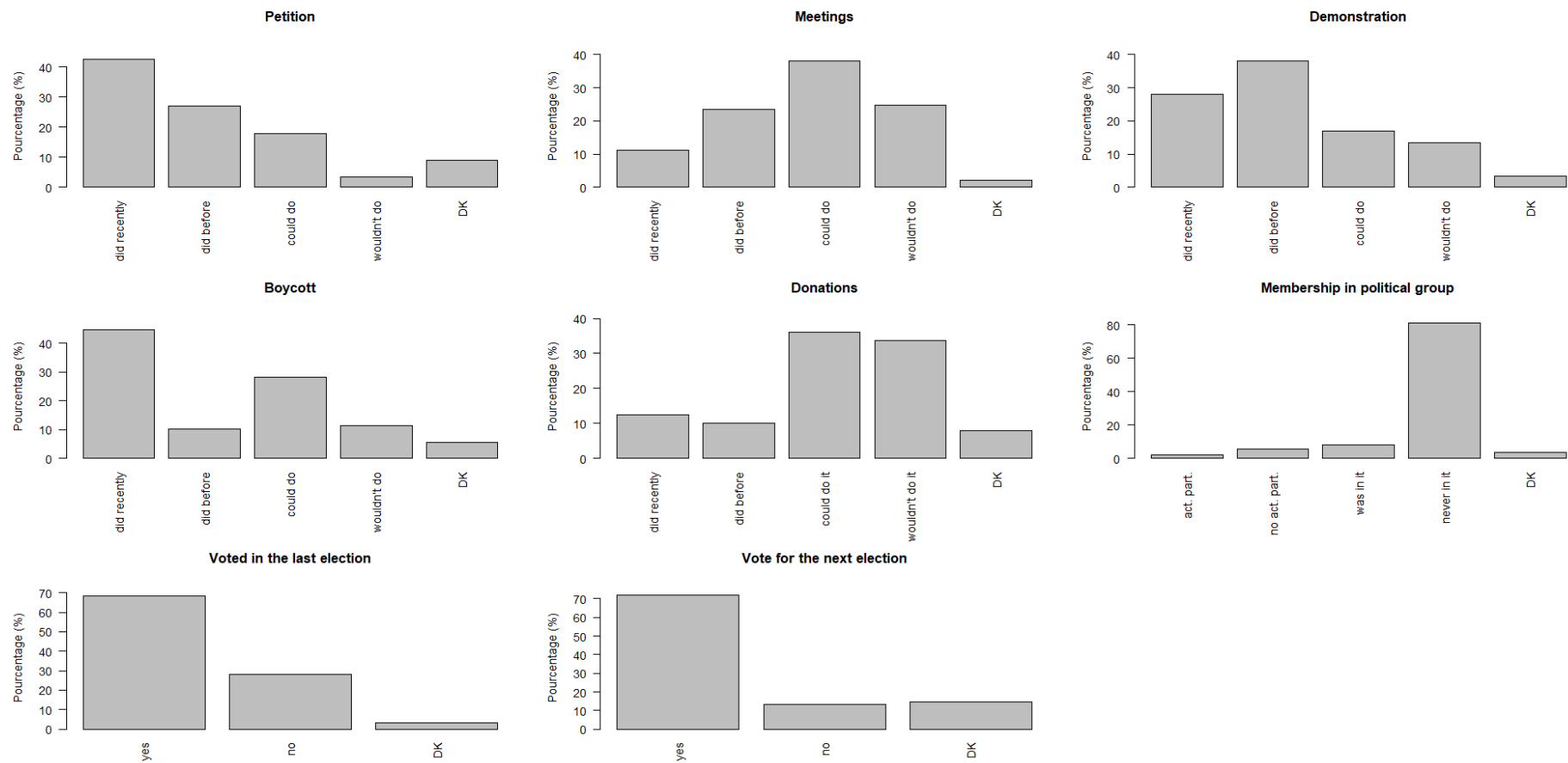


Figure 37 - Political practices of the sample²

² Due to space constraints, I abbreviated some words: act. part. = active participation; DK = doesn't know

b. Jitter plots of alienation, its dimensions and apathy on political practices

Since the ESS and my survey do not exactly have the same number of variables related to political participation and since I cannot include too many graphs in one chapter, I decide to only include the graphs about variables that were also present in the ESS: vote (in the last election and for the next one), demonstration, boycott and petition. The Jitter plots have the same characteristics as in Chapter 1: the alienation dimensions are reversed and the plots only serve to show the general trend present in my data, not to show correlation (let alone causation).

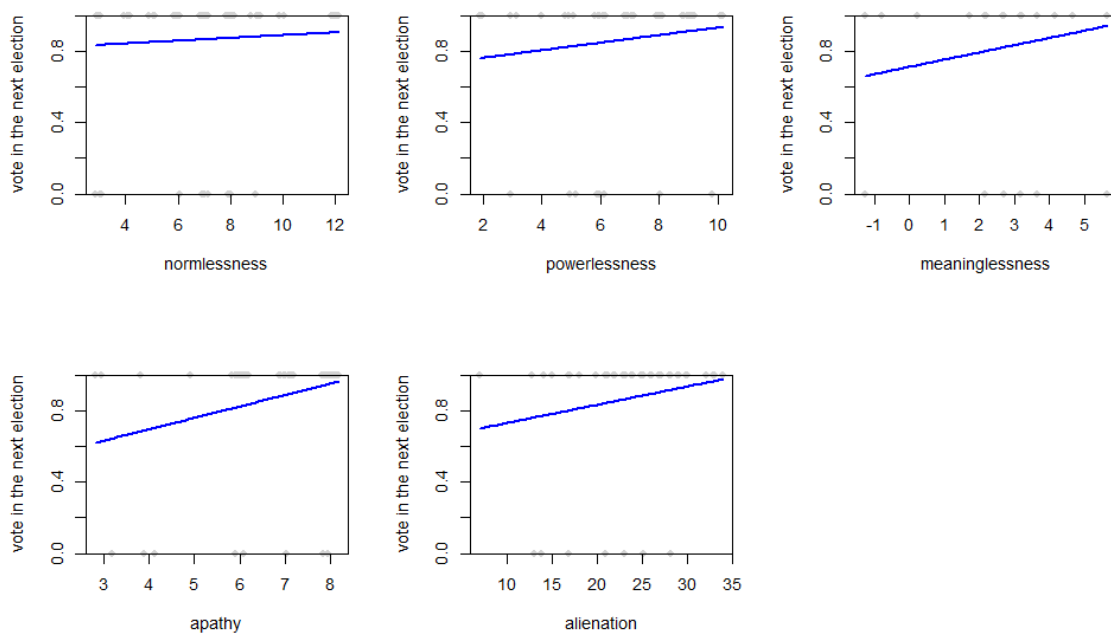


Figure 38 - Alienation, its dimensions and apathy on voting for the next election

For these variables, the lower the scores (i.e the higher the prevalence of alienation, apathy, etc.), the lower the propensity to vote for the next election. Normlessness and powerlessness have small effects whereas not understanding how politics work or not being interested in politics (meaninglessness and apathy) have bigger effects.

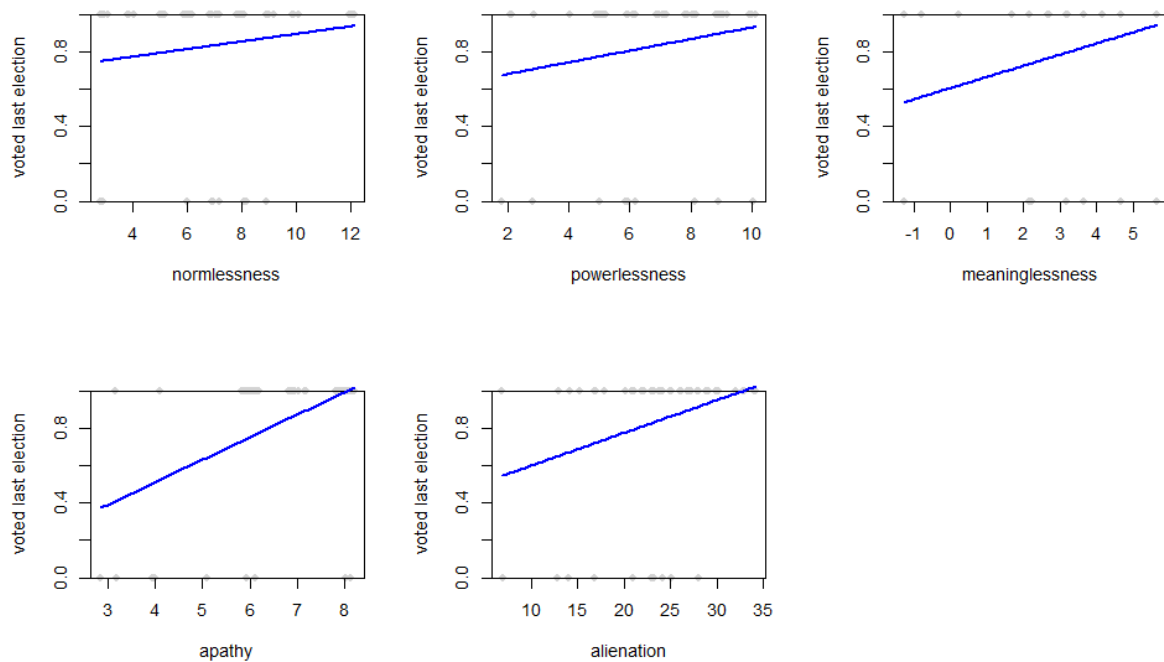


Figure 39 - Alienation, its dimensions and apathy on vote (2022 election)

I observe the same trend here except the effect is even bigger. Again, meaningless and apathy have bigger effects than normlessness and powerlessness. For example, someone having a low apathy score (i.e being apathetic) will have a propensity to vote of 0,4, which is quite low compared to the other alienation dimensions which lie between 0,6 and 0,8.

When it comes to the practice of boycott, most of the independent variables have a positive relationship with it while one has a negative one. The more prevalent powerlessness, meaningfulness, alienation and apathy are, the less prone someone will be to boycott a product and it is especially true for apathy. What is interesting however, is that the more someone thinks the rules of politics have broken down, the more likely they are to boycott products. This is in line with the results of the regression tables of Dataset 1 and 3. It could be linked to the fact that distrust in politics favors protest behaviors or as I hypothesized earlier.

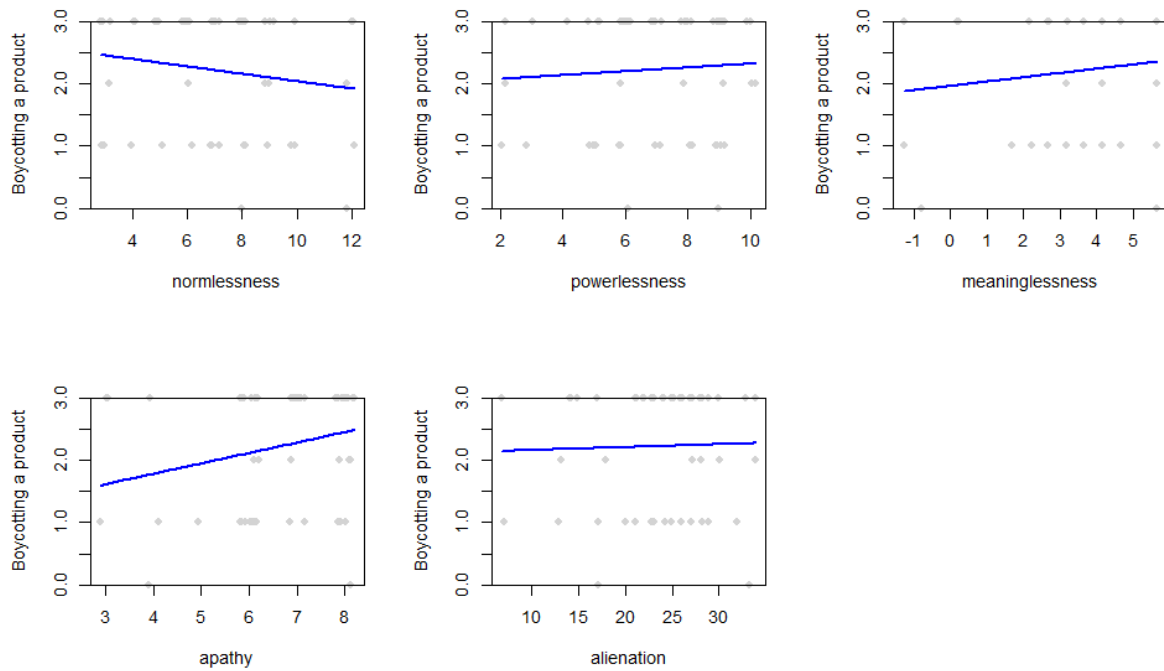


Figure 40 - Alienation, its dimensions and apathy on boycott

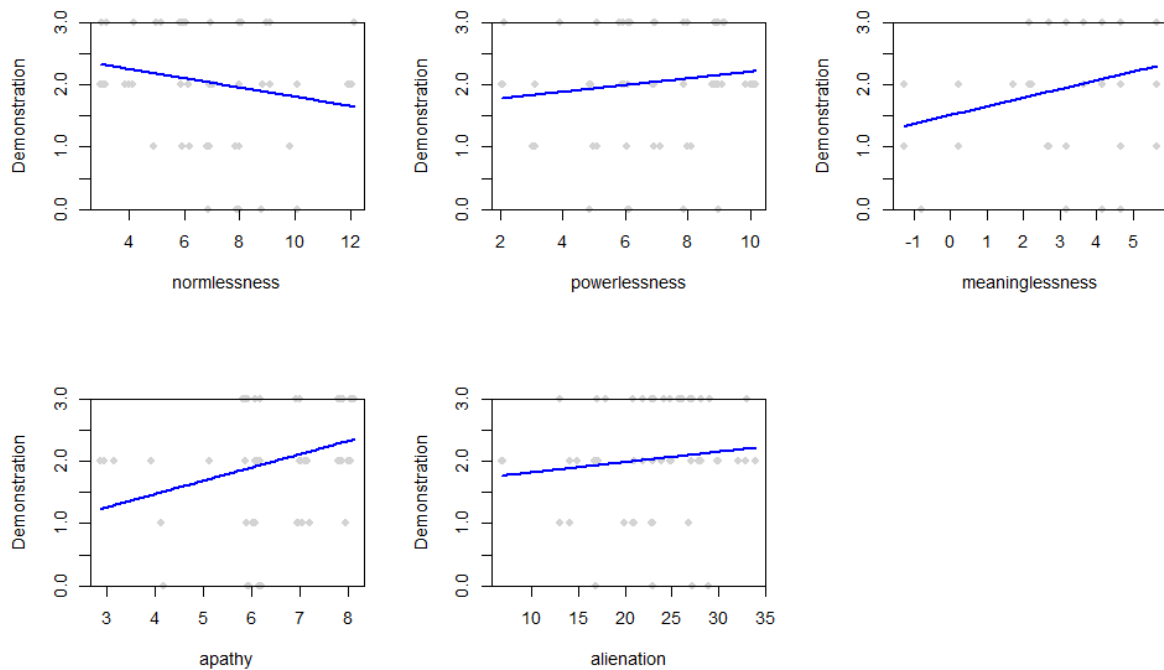


Figure 41 - Alienation, its dimensions and apathy on demonstration

Again, all the independent variables are positively correlated with this demonstration except normlessness. Feeling meaningfulness or apathetic decreases the propensity of demonstrating more than feeling powerless. However, feeling normless increases the

propensity to demonstrate, a result in adequateness with the regression table in Dataset 3. The explanation could be similar to that of boycott: distrust in politics favors protest and forms of participation not directed directly at public officials (Grande and Saldivia Gonzatti 2025). This is the second time all the alienation dimensions do not go in the same direction. This supports a point I made earlier: when doing quantitative research, fusing the dimensions into one single alienation variable hides the complexity of this multi-dimensional concept. Another interesting trend I observe is that - for the third time, meaninglessness and apathy display similar slopes although in the case of my survey, each variable was made by using 2 different variables (see page 28). This echoes a point I made earlier as well: meaninglessness and apathy seem to also be related.

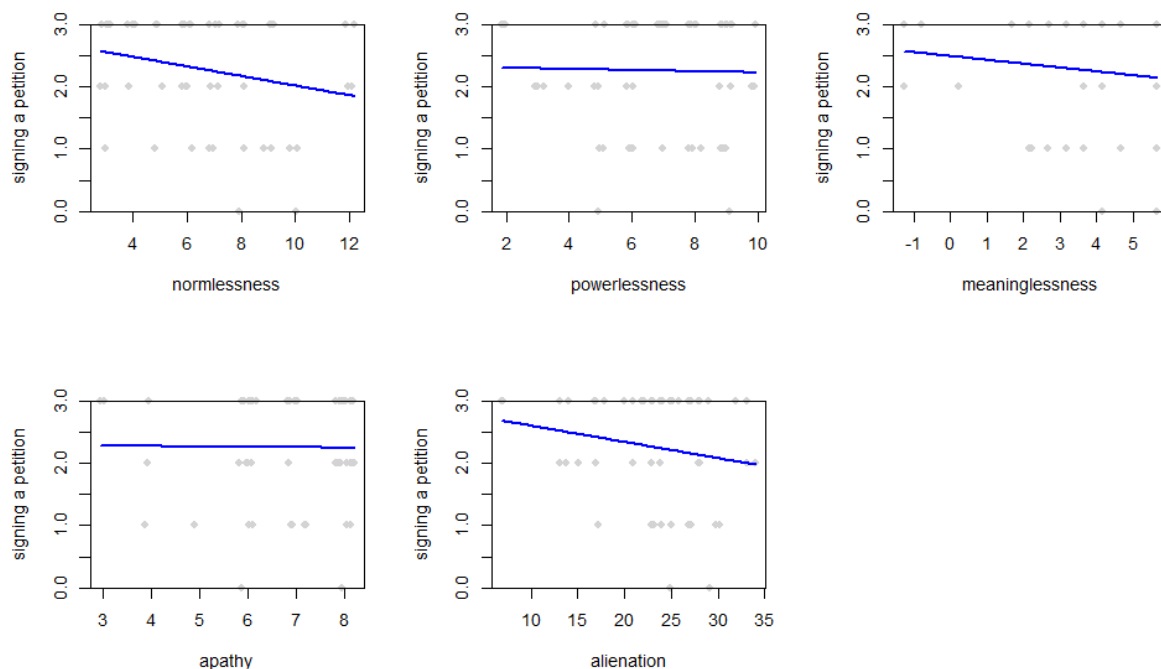


Figure 42 - Alienation, its dimensions and apathy on petition

Petition signing presents the most surprising results out of all of the other variables: all the independent variables have a positive impact on it and apathy has none. While apathy's and powerlessness' lines are almost flat, the dimension having the most effect on petition signing is normlessness: the less someone feels that the rules of politics have broken down, the more that person will sign petitions.

D. Conclusion

Control variables are more or less correlated with political practices. Employment variables are rarely correlated with the outcome variables and when they are, it tends to be

almost exclusively the case on voting. If domicile decreases the odds of formal participation while increasing the odds of informal participation, both income and education increase the odds of participation in general, although only education is always significant.

Apathy is always significant and negatively correlated with political practices, which seems to be logical: the more an individual feels a general disinterest towards politics, the less he will participate in it.

The dimensions of alienation have different effects which is why it is worth looking at them individually. All of them negatively affect voting behavior but when it comes to the other practices, they have different consequences. If not understanding the political process (meaninglessness) decreases the odds of the other practices as well, feeling that the rules of politics have broken down has a positive effect on informal participation and it seems to be the case as well for powerlessness (for 2 of the practices), although with less certainty given that the p-values were higher (and that it didn't match the France Travail survey data I had). Deprivation was generally not significant. The fact that alienation (and its dimensions) negatively impacts voting seems straightforward: feeling powerless or estranged from politics seem to imply that voting isn't a relevant form of expression since voting is the primary form through which citizens can express themselves (Rosanvallon and Goldhammer 2011a). Estrangement from politics can therefore make more secondary forms of participation more prevalent. These forms of participation also tend to be more geared towards protest (Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst 2005; Nyström and Vendramin 2015), or aren't directly linked to party politics (like boycotts or petitions).

Given that the different dimensions of alienation have different effects (positive or negative), fusing them into alienation is not a necessity. It however highlights the fact that although they are all fused into one variable, the coefficients stay significant, confirming that alienation is a multi-dimensional concept. It is nonetheless more interesting to look at the effect of each dimension separately.

If meaninglessness (a lack of knowledge about the political process) and apathy (indifference towards politics) seemed to be linked in the ESS data because of the way I operationalized them, their slopes were similar in the France Travail survey although they were coded differently. It hints at the fact that these two dimension, political knowledge and political interest, are in fact correlated (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Galston 2001).

Quantitative research helps qualitative research in so far as I observed that being meaningless or powerless have a negative impact on voting but a positive one on other forms of participation, i.e that alienation doesn't simply have a negative impact on participation like

apathy has. This means that an alienated person is not necessarily inactive or more precisely that participation is not synonymous with allegiance to the political system. Participation can be a sign of protest. If an interviewee tells me that they don't vote but that they think boycott is a good way of protesting as it is the case of Alessandro "Let's say that [signing petitions and boycotting products] are acts of *contre-courant*" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 81), it doesn't mean that they are allegiant. In fact, he can be characterized as alienated. The fact of not voting but using informal participation can be done by alienated people but also by critical citizens (Norris 1999) that are not alienated. Qualitative data could help untangle these complicated relationships between alienation and participation. Chapter 4 will do exactly that.

However, before going to Chapter, I would like to highlight a - possibly quite substantial - limit of the method I used. In this chapter, I tested the correlation between attitudes and practices and cited several studies that did something similar. However, other studies also point out that practices influence attitudes (for example Albareda and Müller 2025). This is something that I will talk about in the following qualitative chapter as well. In statistical terms, it means that there is endogeneity, which violates the core assumption of exogeneity. This introduces bias in the coefficients and p-values.

Chapter 4 - The participation paradox

This chapter tackles the question of the interviewees's attitudes on political practices. In the last chapter, we saw that while apathy decreased political participation, alienation had a more complex effect on it. What is puzzling, however, is that since my interviewees feel that the rules of party politics have broken down (normlessness) and that they cannot influence it (powerlessness), one might think that voting would be rare and other forms of participation would be favored. This is not the case. Although the overwhelming majority of my interviewees view party politics in a negative light, very few of them are alienated. The explanation lies in the fact that although my interviewees see party politics in a negative way, making it seem like the dimensions of alienation are strong, they do not see all the features of the political system that way. This is evidenced by the way they conceive political participation. Those who think of participation as achieving certain goals will use the forms they deem relevant because they see the political system as worth engaging with. Vice versa for those who have a negative view of the political system and its practices.

A. Party politics as scarecrow

Very few interviewees had positive things to say about both parties and politicians. When talking about party politics, my interviewees generally felt that party politics was normless and that they were powerless.

a. Party politics is seen as dishonest and not trustworthy

Among my interviewees very few felt that politicians could be trusted. Normlessness and more specifically political distrust directed at party politics were high. When it comes to political parties, only a few interviewees had positive things to say about them. Jacques highlighted that they had convictions in the sense that they defend a political agenda, while another underlined the fact that they had positive values and answered people's demands: "Because, for me, they are, well, for the people, they are for diversity, inclusion, [...] they also respond to certain needs, compared to others, and that's why, well, I follow them" (Assia 7, Pos. 367-375). Interviewees could also express a higher level of trust towards parties that were ideologically close to them or at least they hoped these parties would do something

positive: "I found [the NUPES, alliance of left-leaning parties during the 2022 legislative elections] really satisfying, and really a movement that was [...] joyful, I mean... With a little hope, finally, to say to yourself, yes, there are still things that can happen, and very quickly, things that can be put in place" (Jacqueline 6, Pos. 1378-1385). However, almost none of my interviewees were confident in the fact that parties and politicians could make good decisions.

Other interviewees either had a more nuanced view of party politics or weren't sure what to think. This uncertainty about the amount of trust some interviewees put in party politics stems from the fact that they think that some parties are oriented towards the common good and sincere while others aren't: "And sometimes I tell myself that there are good sides, or that there are people who aren't so bad or corrupted by power, but overall, I don't trust them too much [...] I don't know how much people lose their authenticity." (Eleonore 10, Pos. 81-89). This uncertainty leads some to have a more optimistic view of politics by giving them the benefit of the doubt: "Can we [...] trust [parties]? [...] Yes, partly, a little, not much, but enough to make it worthwhile to participate in party politics" (Martin 11, Pos. 105). However, Carine's level of trust is negatively affected by scandals: "It depends [on which politicians]. The more we follow the news, the more we see the skeletons in some people's closets. [...] Trusting people who are up to no good behind your back is not really... [...] So it depends on who they are" (Carine 13, Pos. 101). The level of trust given to party politics seems to depend on the focus of the doubt: if the morality and actions of the politicians or parties are the center of attention, trust is lowered but if the political focus lies in political action, trust is not necessarily increased but at least, a minimum level of trust is met that justifies being politically active. What these two interviewees described resembles the two types of Max Weber's instrumental and value rationality (Mien 2018). Martin only trusts party politics only insofar as it allows him to accomplish his instrumental goals (i.e participating) while Carine rather distrusts politicians and parties because their actions clash with her belief that politics should primarily have good morals.

Many of my interviewees distrust politicians. They are viewed as not being part of the people, as having privileges, which makes them even less trustworthy: "And I tell myself that, in a way, there is still a difference between them and us. And that they aren't treated the same way we're treated. [...] I find that they make promises easily and don't always keep them" (Mirna 20, Pos. 185). Indeed, they only want power: "In fact, I'm not even sure anymore whether the programs they propose are programs they believe in or programs designed to appeal to a particular segment of the population and get them to vote for a

particular person" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 112). The ideas politicians are supposed to represent are just there to gather ballots, not to be implemented. If the goal of politicians is to gain more power, it is not because of personal greed, but because it is the very function of their occupation: "The fact that their job is politics means that their goal is to have a job and therefore to stay in it, to always find ways to get elected or whatever [so] you end up being quite detached from the point of view you had at the beginning, I think, since your job is totally different from that of the majority of people in France." (Frédéric 16, Pos. 143) The separation of politicians from the rest of the population greatly diminishes people's trust in politics according to him. As Patrick says: "Actually, I believe in politics, but I no longer believe in politicians" (Patrick 22, Pos. 92). These characteristics aren't just personal or contingent but are often conceived as inevitable or structural, meaning that parties and politicians are bound to disappoint and deceive as Frédéric's quote hinted at: "I think that when you're a politician, either you're already 'dirty,' meaning you're already involved in shady stuff, or you end up getting involved in shady stuff, unfortunately. And that's what's disappointing about this field, actually" (Nur 3, Pos. 57).

b. Interviewees feel that political decisions aren't taken by them

Almost all of my interviewees also displayed a similarly high level of powerlessness (i.e. they felt that their choice did not influence the political outcome) towards party politics.

Only a few uttered positive comments. One said that the politicians he elected represented his interests: "It's very pretentious to think so. But yeah. So far, I haven't been too wrong. Those who were elected were what I wanted to hear and see" (Jean-Philippe 15, Pos. 125) and another that it was still possible to have an influence at the local level. Apart from that, interviewees were generally skeptical about their influence on political outcomes. Politics cannot be influenced since parties do not represent an alternative to each other: "I realized that left and right are just conventions [...]. In the end, there's not much difference between the right and the left in politics" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 7). Even if Alessandro is the only one to think that political labels do not matter, my interviewees (including him) thought that decisions aren't made by people but by outside forces, meaning that people's opinion is bypassed and that the interests of other organizations are taken into account instead. These outside forces can be lobbies: "Many decisions are made because there are lobbies behind them" (Jacques 1, Pos. 790-793) or to economic force in general: "I think that politics is ultimately so closely linked to the capitalist world we live in, to transnational corporations, to lobbies, etc. [...] In the political system we live in, in the system we live in, there is

sometimes a room for maneuver [...] that is quite limited” (Jennifer 14, Pos. 133). If some think that only political decisions are influenced by economic forces, Dieudonné goes further and sees their influence as something pervasive, even being able to “nominate” presidents: “Even presidents of the Republic, somewhere, they're the ones who make the choices. [...] So, there you go, it's ‘such and such a person will be president’. So, everything is done to ensure that it's that person we're obliged to follow” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 90) The feeling that outside forces - and that have no democratic legitimacy are actually the ones deciding the political outcome - made people feel that their voice doesn't matter..

Among my interviews, both normlessness and meaninglessness were linked since they were often talked about at the same time. It is not surprising that a person who thinks that the political system does not respect the rules it has set up tends to think that they cannot influence politics.

B. Views on the political system seem to be influenced by attitudes on political practices

When only considering party politics, my interviewees seem to have very negative views of politics. They think that politicians aren't honest and don't have people's interests in mind (normlessness) or that they aren't in command when it comes to political decisions (powerlessness). One would think that my interviewees would display at least a mild level of alienation. Apart from a few, this is not the case. What influences people's practices are their views on the forms of political participation because they inform how people conceive the political system as a whole. Even though they feel normlessness and powerlessness when talking about party politics, their views on political participation show that, when it comes to the whole political system, these negative attitudes towards party politics are counter-balanced by more positive views on other features of the political system.

a. A positive view of the political system and of political participation

i. Rejection of Party membership

If people with a positive view of the political system as a whole tend to participate in politics, as I will show in this section, my interviewees almost universally had a negative view of party membership, and this did not affect their level of participation at all. My interviewees seem to be especially critical of this form of participation because it doesn't accomplish much. Interviewees do not want to become party members because people's opinions can change: "Yes, I admit, I've never taken the plunge. Because my interests, my

views, my opinions can vary“ (Jennifer 14, Pos. 131) or because the organization is not honest about how it works and what it stands for: ”But in fact, I'm too afraid to join something that, later on, may no longer be in line with our beliefs. And I'm also afraid of not knowing all the... When you talk to people from associations or parties, they generally don't tell you about certain aspects of their associations. So I'm a little too afraid of that and of not knowing certain things about associations to commit myself officially" (Eleonore 10, Pos. 107). People who are part of parties are thought to be deceitful, like the parties themselves. Parties are also seen as limiting one's freedom: “I get involved in a cause, I can get involved in causes, but not in a political party because it becomes a bit like a cult. You lose your freedom of opinion” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 49). More than personal doubts, the reason why my interviewees do not want to engage in parties is related to their dishonest nature, which, again, points towards normlessness.

In fact, even those who are members of a party do not seem to be very enthusiastic either because they became members out of curiosity and their interest faded away: “Actually, since I wasn't involved, I found it a bit pointless” (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 164) or because they still distrust parties: "Even though I am a young member of a political party, I am still a little wary of saying to myself, ‘OK, we get together, we have a short/medium-term vision, but in the end, what impact do we really have?’ So [...] I still maintain a somewhat distant relationship on certain issues. I hope I won't be disappointed" (Léa 5, Pos. 889-905). One cannot know what impact their activism will have, questioning the efforts one puts into a political organization.

ii. Voting is a much more debated form of participation

Although it seemed that interviewees rejected the forms of participation that are related to party politics, voting is not nearly as rejected as party membership. One explanation could be that in most of the interviews I did, voting was a topic that naturally/automatically came up at some point, indicating the centrality of this institution in people's conception of politics.

1. Voting as an end

The reason why voting seems so central is that many interviewees considered this form of participation something important and criticized those who did not vote: "And the people who [...] didn't feel involved, that made me - in quotation marks - a little angry. So that's when I took - in quotes - my socials and used them to say, ‘Listen, you're there,’ well, I wasn't very nice, but I said, ‘You lazy bums from the *cités*. You're there, you only think about going to the shisha bar and stuff like that, when in fact you need to vote for the future of your

country" (Nur 3, Pos. 14). This was especially true for non-white voters (like Nur) because of the danger of the rise of the far-right in presidential elections. More than something important because of the goal it accomplishes, vote was considered an end in itself, i.e a duty. The belief that voting is an obligation is probably something that seemed to come from socialization at a young age: "The answer is cliché, but it's so true that we have the right to... It's a right, there's even a duty [to vote]" (Patrick 22, Pos. 30) or "I learned that it was a civic duty" (Victor 4, Pos. 204). This is something that was even mentioned by one interviewee I deemed as alienated. This duty is also justified by for example taking other non-democratic countries as counter-examples. The transmission through socialization of this attitude towards voting that almost resembles a talking point since the formulation "voting is a duty" came back is important to understand why people still choose to participate in politics.

Interviewees tended to have a strong attachment to voting, even though they knew the political system was flawed: "Even if the tool is broken, even if the parties aren't up to the task, even if we're being fed bullshit, even if... I think the last thing we can save is going voting" (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 420). Even though interviewees were disappointed, they would continue to vote. Even if the benefits are meager, it is worth voting because one has to believe in it: "Is [the vote] taken into account in the policies of the person I voted for? It depends. [...] There's also... At some point, you have to believe in it. [...] But you also vote for ideals" (Leila 8, Pos. 175), or because there is still hope: "It depends [on which politicians and parties], of course, but I would say that I don't trust them too much. Still, I have a little hope, otherwise I wouldn't have gone to vote at all, I think" (Eleonore 10, Pos. 81). For them voting doesn't even have to entail concrete or immediate benefits. If some of my interviewees see voting as an end, i.e use value rationality, it is however not the case for the majority of them. For these interviewees, voting can better be explained in terms of instrumental rationality. It is a means to an end and the efficacy of this means is judged either positively (see the next subsection) or negatively (later in the text). This instrumental view of voting also allows for a more flexible attitude towards it, as I am going to show in the subsection below.

2. Voting as an imperfect means

Even though quite a lot of interviewees thought that voting was very important or even a duty, others had a more nuanced opinion on the matter and considered it as an ambiguous practice that is still worth engaging with. If party politics at the national level was heavily distrusted and criticized, as I showed in the last subsection, voting/engaging in politics at the local level is seen as something close to the people or more tangible that makes

political outcomes more suggestible to people's demands: "But I tell myself that if people get involved in their neighborhood or in the city because we have participatory democracy rather than appointing a new king every five years who is going to save France, maybe something else would happen" (Jacques 1, Pos. 683-698). Indeed, local politics is opposed to national politics, which is described as too far removed from the people: "When the delegation of power goes so far, it is so far removed from me... [...] The voice of the voters is not really taken into account" (Juan 2, Pos. 676-684). This is why local politics is seen as enabling people to have more leeway in politics: "Generally, a member of Congress is almost like a mayor, like a local official. They are a local elected official who is attached to a territory and who is more or less re-elected in their district, who has their roots there, their political roots. Their positions are more easily challenged by voters. [...] And they have more impact" (Juan 2, Pos. 723-729).

Even if both parties and politicians tend to be viewed negatively, my interviewees are able to differentiate between the two and seem to favor parties: "I trust political parties, yes, but I don't trust politicians. They can't [agree on anything]" (Patrick 22, Pos. 90). Politicians do not work towards achieving consensus because they are ego-driven: "I have less confidence in a political figure than in a whole party. Because I feel that there is too much ego in their approach, sometimes" (Victor 4, Pos. 198-199). Politicians are too unpredictable whereas parties are collective organizations with rules that bind their members: "For me, because there is a community, then there is a team, there are several people to decide. Within parties, there are still voting rules" (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 855-859). That also makes them more democratic than the decisions of one politician.

Some interviewees said that voting wasn't the only way to influence politics. Martin emphasizes the fact that "direct action" could complement it: "You have to know how to play all the cards a little bit, and that means that you can't be a purist and focus solely on voting and party politics, or only take action, or engage in direct action on the ground, or advocate through associations. I think you have to know how to adapt." (Martin 11, Pos. 99). As Juan bluntly puts it: "When I did vote, it wasn't to shut up afterwards" (Juan 2, Pos. 872-873).

This means that even though party politics were described with feelings of powerlessness and normlessness, being supportive (even critically) of the central form of participation that is voting indicates that this is not the whole story. Voting has benefits (real or perceived) that outweigh and put into perspective the criticisms of party politics. The fact that many of my interviewees see political participation as meaningful also helps to understand why they do participate even though they criticize party politics.

like the local, collective and are forgiving

iii. Participation is meaningful

Other interviewees also underlined the fact that political participation has a purpose. Voting is about making parties ideologically close to you stronger: “And the more strength we give to a movement we believe in, the more it will succeed” (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 828-829). It can also make people more interested in politics, acting as a socializing event (reminiscent of what I talked about in the second chapter): “Once you vote in an election, you're more interested in seeing what happens next. I think so, anyway. And that's why it's important for people to vote” (Mirna 20, Pos. 120). It can also be the voice of those who cannot express themselves: “It annoys me to [...] say that voting is useless, when I think we still have a duty to vote for people who can't (Jacqueline 6, Pos. 1140-1147). More generally, voting and engaging in political participation can be conceived as something done for the greater good: “Of course there's my own interest [in voting]. But... I think it's mainly for the collective good. [...] It's more about us than about me” (Jacques 1, Pos. 381-389). These excerpts show that voting, more than just being an individual action, can also have a collective purpose, either by empowering a political movement, or by acting for others.

Political participation is meaningful also because it allows individual actions to influence politics. Some think that politics can change a lot: “Actually, I quickly realized that politics is also... Above all, and very much so, in our gestures and actions” (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 311-314), be it by voting as I said earlier, or by boycotting for example: “We don't realize the power we could have in saying, ‘No, I refuse to buy this product because it has consequences’” (Jacques 1 Interview, Pos. 329-331). However, individual actions have limits: “They have an influence if we accept that, in any case, each person is just one person. It would be strange if everything changed just because I decided so. So I think that, on their own scale, yes, they have the influence they can have, no more, no less” (Martin 11, Pos. 73). As an individual is only one person, their effect is either limited to a certain amount, or individual actions need to be followed by a large number of people in order to be more effective: “[The petition] has an impact, that's for sure. As long as it gets enough support and it's not just three nobodies signing a petition. I think that this kind of thing can have an impact. It also gives weight to certain ideas, which inevitably come into play in people's thinking” (Lydia 18, Pos. 121). In this case, the impact comes from the aggregation of a lot of individuals. Another possibility is to lead an organized action: “After that, it's not necessarily a question of numbers, but also of strategy. [...] That's why I believe more in strikes or

blockades than in demonstrations, which can sometimes seem like just a walk. [...] A petition can easily be ignored. Whereas acts of strike or sabotage, I'm just giving that as an example, but that will directly disrupt things" (Eleonore 10, Pos. 115). An action that is well organized will be perceived as more impactful than collective actions lacking a goal or a clear organization.

Contrary to individual action, collective action is more prone to be perceived as meaningful. It lends a feeling of being part of a community: "I took part in a demonstration [...]. And so, for me, it was important to be part of a crowd, to show that there were that many of us who were rebelling, that we were rebelling. It was a big moment, in any case" (Mirna 20, Pos. 129). Being part of a collective makes protest-oriented actions more impactful. If they do not necessarily achieve the goal that was set, they were at least worth the try: "In concrete terms, if we look at the world now, is it better? [...] No, not by much, but maybe it's a little less bad, in that sense. By reassuring ourselves, it's a little less... it could have been worse" (Martin 11, Pos. 75-77). This is also why some interviewees deem collective forms of action as more useful than individual ones: "I think that strength is much more impactful and effective collectively than individually" (Léa 5, Pos. 409-410). Collective forms of participation are thought to compensate for the lack of effect of the vote: "The voice of the voters is not really taken into account. For me, that's why it's more important to mobilize, [...] to get involved" (Juan 2, Pos. 684-686).

Political participation is meaningful because, for many interviewees, it allows them to make their voice heard. This means that even though they felt powerless when it came to party politics, they actually use different forms of participation (including voting) because they think it actually has some kind of effect.

iv. A Multifaceted participation

Since my interviewees saw political participation as something meaningful, they engaged in it. However, this does not mean that they will use every form of participation. Engagement seems to be influenced - for example - by the subjective assessment of the relative importance of each election: "In the last elections... Well, I voted in the legislative elections. That's when there's something important at stake" (Juan 2, Pos. 621) because during that election, the far-right party was powerful. Also talking about the last legislative elections, another interviewee underlined the fact that she voted only after realizing it was important: "So, actually, for me, the legislative elections were just another thing to do, and it makes me... Well, it didn't occur to me. For me, what was important was already voting in the presidential elections. It was my important civic duty to do, even though I was abroad. So, in

the end, the legislative elections are just as important, but at the time, I didn't see it that way" (Mirna 20, Pos. 175).

What makes my interviewees' interest rise is when they have to engage against something: "Every time I vote, I vote, but I don't vote for, I vote against" (Juan 2, Pos. 634-637). Even more stringent for my left-wing interviewees (the overwhelming majority of my sample) is what they perceive as the rise of the far right. It made their interest in politics rise as well: "I think that awareness is more pronounced these days, maybe even more so this past year. I never would have believed that we would be so worried about the potential arrival of the RN in the legislative elections" (Carine 13, Pos. 45-46). Furthermore, it raised the level of engagement of my interviewees, either by voting for the first time: "All the polls showed the Front National [...] in first place, and that's what made me vote in the European elections" (Juan 2, Pos. 660-665), or by making one join a political party: "So, I joined a party because it was the party that best reflected my beliefs. But I also and above all got involved because I told myself that the RN was the opposition. It was mainly a way of putting up a barrier and telling myself that there was still hope" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 114). More than just engaging in formal politics (voting and party membership) against something, they also use informal participation. The form of participation that is used can still be directed at elected officials: "The day after or two days after the state of emergency was declared after the Bataclan, I took part, there were maybe a hundred of us, in an unauthorized demonstration against the state of emergency the day after the Bataclan attack, which is something serious, of course. But that didn't justify the restrictions on freedoms that were imposed after the Bataclan attack" (Juan 2, Pos. 527-530). However, some informal forms of participation were rather geared towards the individual: "I try to raise awareness among my close friends and family to avoid buying certain brands and, on an individual level, I boycott certain multinationals" (Léa 5, Pos. 584-593).

While engaging in politics against something seems to be a strong motivation, my interviewees also engaged to advocate for something. They can for example get involved in organizations: "I have been volunteering for various associations for the past ten years. [...] Sea Shepherd doing some militant field work. [...] The fact that I worked at Max Havelaar meant that we worked a lot with NGOs. [...] And everything to do with the environment, obviously, the biggest ones, Oxfam, sur les inégalités, Greenpeace, Bloom" (Léa 5, Pos. 495-534), or by donating money: "I gave 1,000 bucks to the NPA. Because they were in trouble" (Martin 11, Pos. 85), while others are more passive in their engagement: "Actually,

sometimes, when I'm not looking for a petition, and sometimes when a petition catches my eye and the cause seems interesting, well, I'll sign it" (Victor 4, Pos. 210).

However, having more positive views on political participation in general or on politics, i.e. being loyal to the political system, does not mean that the person will use all forms of political participation. Socialization and ideological views (themselves shaped by socialization) influence the perception of the forms of participation my interviewees have. This means that not having been socialized into doing a specific form of participation or not being ideologically inclined to use a certain form of participation will make the interviewee less likely to use it. Since Lydia's parents or peers never really went to demonstrations, she never used that form of participation except once. Here is how she describes her views on demonstrations: "To be very clear, I hate crowds and crowd movements, and I don't feel comfortable in a demonstration, I'm... I'm not very comfortable in that kind of thing" (Lydia 18, Pos. 119). The fact that she doesn't feel at ease in demonstrations is not merely a personal taste but is also indicative of a lack of socialization when it comes to that form of participation. Ideological inclinations also influence views and practices. Jean-Philippe, who is affiliated with the center-right, lamented the fact that quite a few of his colleagues were ideologues and almost automatically started protesting when a reform was announced. When talking about some forms of participation, he has this to say: "So, demonstrations, I've never been to one. Then, petitions, I've signed three, maybe four, that's about it. Political meetings, I would have liked to go to some at times, but I found that there was an atmosphere that I didn't like. [...] And that doesn't interest me" (Jean-Philippe 15, Pos. 107). He doesn't seem to think these forms of participation are of any interest. Rather, his allegiance to the political system is characterized by the fact that he puts all his faith in voting. When asked if he thought that voting was the most important thing in democracy, he said: "Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Profoundly, yes" (Jean-Philippe 15, Pos. 102-103) after specifying that he always voted. The same goes for other interviewees who were more left-wing or anti-capitalist and who favor informal participation over voting. Even though quite a lot of interviewees saw political participation positively, they didn't engage in all of its forms. The choice to use one form over another is influenced by the interviewee's perception of the practice. For example, if the form of participation is thought to be important (whether in absolute or relative terms), interviewees will tend to use it. The same goes when it comes to the format of participation, i.e. for or against something.

b. A negative view of the political system and of political participation

Even though participation can be positively assessed by my interviewees as I showed earlier, this is not always the case, leading to lower participation.

i. Disappointment with voting and party politics...

Indeed, interviewees can be disappointed by their voting experience. They can be disappointed by the lack of outcome of their participation: “Frankly, for the moment, no. I don't want to vote anymore. Because I've lost confidence in it. I no longer have any confidence in any of it. After the legislative elections, the way I felt about it, I really lost confidence” (Assia 7, Pos. 198-203). This is akin to normlessness: politicians are considered untrustworthy since they did not nominate the right Prime Minister according to the interviewee. This gives the feeling that politicians do not represent the people and that politics is a dead-end:

The dissolution, I thought it gave hope because it was an opportunity to mobilize people. But it's after the second round, and I feel like what we did was useless. It really gives a feeling of... We're stuck. The politicians who are currently... They don't represent the political ideas of the population at all. We can't get rid of them, [...] They're 70 years old, they're still in office, there's such a huge gap, it's terrible. So yes, for me it's from before, the fact that things are a bit stuck, but amplified

(Jeanne 19, Pos. 104)

This feeling is not limited to the recent dissolution but to elections in general: “Were the votes taken into account? No. [...] So there is a denial of democracy, all the same, that is happening” (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 88). Normlessness creates the feeling that democracy as a whole doesn't work anymore since the choice of the voter doesn't matter (powerlessness). This perception causes a certain fatigue or doubt towards the voting process:

For me, it was very much about voting. [...] But these elections got me, you know... I'm not saying I'm not going to vote anymore, but that's where I was putting my efforts, in fact. I thought that voting was the best way to keep democracy alive and that politicians would take their convictions into consideration. And I realize that no, frankly, what can you do if politicians don't do it. [...] I don't know. I don't know what we can do to make politicians listen to us

(Jeanne 19, Pos. 116)

Since an interview can only capture what the interviewee thinks at the time of the interview, I cannot know what this interviewee will do, but judging by what she says, one can hypothesize that she will vote less and less if her feelings of normlessness and powerlessness are confirmed by future political events.

This feeling of normlessness is - as I said - closely related to the feeling of powerlessness since if politicians do not respect the rules, i.e. do not take into account people's votes, people feel like their voice doesn't matter, that they can't influence politics. This can be a mild feeling: "Yes, yes, yes, anyway, [voting] is useful, it's just that it's useful at a specific moment, and after that, the influence is much harder to see, given that the person is elected for a five-year term" (Frédéric, 16, Pos. 159), a feeling that is linked to the way the political system works: a vote cast at a certain time can hardly affect policy decisions taken years after that vote. Some have more radical views in the sense that, for them, voting cannot change anything: "But then, I don't know, I have an opinion that makes me think that voting doesn't really have a profound impact, or at least, it's only for political... Well, it's only for the short term. To really change things, it's useless" (Eleonore 10, Pos. 69). What is also interesting is the fact that although the presence/absence of alienation or apathy influences political participation, the subjective assessment of that participation influences the presence/absence of alienation or apathy in return:

But then, if I lack confidence in voting, I wouldn't say that... It probably comes from the fact that I've also learned about the past. You know what I mean. The previous terms of office, all that, and my parents talking to me about it. There's that, and there's also the fact that, as I became interested in the subject of voting and the mechanisms, the institutions, and voting as a political act, I found that it doesn't work. There's the theoretical point of view, and then there's also the practical side, which has definitely influenced me too. If the theory wasn't confirmed in practice, it wouldn't be such a problem.

(Eleonore 10, Pos. 75)

This interviewee already had a certain level of disengagement towards voting (which made her less likely to vote) stemming from primary socialization: her parents did not vote regularly and passed on their disappointment with this form of participation to her. However, the level of disengagement she acquired through primary socialization was then reinforced by her experience of voting because feeling that it cannot affect political outcomes made her have a more negative assessment of that form of participation. Nonetheless, even the fact that she judged that voting was useless is already partially determined by her primary socialization (her parents telling they were disappointed with voting). It seems that the link between socialization, the presence/absence of alienation, the assessment of political practices and actual political participation is not a straight line but a loop, more precisely a feedback loop, which is not surprising since political socialization happens throughout the whole life (Boughaba, Dafflon and Masclet 2018).

ii. *...Can be linked to disappointment towards other forms of participation and towards the political system*

Disappointment can lead to a feeling of powerlessness, both for individual or collective forms of participation. Boycott can be seen as not useful: "Actually, I don't know. I think that... Sometimes I wonder if my boycott is really going to change anything, and so I tell myself that... [...] It's never been something that's been done in my family, and so it's never something that I feel I've been... Well, that I've seen done, so I don't know much about it" (Mirna 20, Pos. 154). As the quote showed, the fact that it is seen as not useful is due to the fact that it is an individual action but also because this perception has been influenced by a particular socialization which made boycott as a form of participation something that is not obvious. This indicates that although socialization impacts participation through its influence on alienation or apathy, it also directly influences participation by making each form known/acceptable or not. The same goes for other forms of informal participation that are deemed not fruitful: "Yes, well, I've been to demonstrations. I've boycotted things too. I've signed lots of petitions. But in fact, it's always the same. Do you feel that petitions are achieving anything at the moment?" (Jeanne 19, Pos. 120). None of my interviewees talked about contacting representatives except one, who also emphasized its uselessness: "I saw people talking about sending an email to their representative... [...] I've never done it... I've never done it... I don't know if it really [serves any purpose]..." (Jacqueline 6, Pos. 1473-1479). However, informal forms of formal participation seem to be less linked to normlessness: "I don't behave in the same way towards... When I sign a petition or boycott something, it's obviously not the same mistrust as when I vote, but I have less... Well, I don't really think it's going to work" (Eleonore 10, Pos. 111). For this interviewee, a lower level of normlessness is counterbalanced by a higher level of powerlessness towards informal participation because these forms of participation are - as I showed in this paragraph - deemed useless.

This doesn't mean that normlessness is absent from informal participation: "I think that a collective, through the act of voting, through the act of demonstrating, ideally, should be able to influence a decision. I'm thinking of the teachers' protests, that's why there's no trust anymore. Normally, it should have led to measures being taken, to the current government listening. That's not the case" (Carine 13, Pos. 111). This quote highlights again the link that can be made between normlessness and powerlessness: a feeling of mistrust arises when actions do not have any perceivable consequences. This leads to a certain fatalism: "Because today, anyway, the protests haven't changed anything. [...] We can see

very clearly that protests no longer mobilize people [...] because, in fact, work is done beforehand to ensure that these protests don't stand a chance. We can't protest anymore, we can't force change through protests. So we can't change anything today. We can't change anything today. I'm a bit defeatist“ (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 101). Not only can citizens not influence the political outcome (powerlessness) but the political system is organized in a way that prevents political participation from being useful as well, not allowing people to have what they deserve (deprivation). This feeling can also be mixed with fear of repercussions: ”I'm letting go, it doesn't concern me. That is to say that [...] I can't change the world, at least not on my own, so I'm not going to waste my energy on people who... Besides, you're just going to make them angry. You see, they're so powerful" (Nur 3, Pos. 555-566). It can also be caused by the feeling that one doesn't belong in the world of politics: "First of all, it's not my field. I'm interested, like any French person who is interested in their country, their personal situation, and their neighbors. But what do you want me to do, complain? Like I said, I have a lot of other things to do right now. Without being mean, I prefer to do constructive things. [...] But no, politics... And then I don't have the soul of a... politician" (Patrick 22, Pos. 115),

It seems that when several alienation dimensions are present and when they aren't only present in formal politics, participation is negatively impacted. This is especially the case for those I deemed alienated.

iii. Case studies: a focus on my alienated interviewees

1. A strong feeling of meaninglessness and deprivation (in addition to powerlessness and normlessness)...

Meaninglessness (i.e the feeling that politics is hard to understand and hence the consequence of people's choices isn't easy to understand either) was way less prevalent among the whole sample. This could be due to the fact that since meaninglessness is linked to political knowledge, interviewees from higher social classes (a large number of my interviewees) would have a higher level of information about politics (Campbell 2013). However, this dimension was present among my alienated interviewees. Some had trouble understanding politics: “there are words that are extremely hard to understand sometimes, there is precise, technical vocabulary” (Nur 3, Pos. 412) because it requires prior knowledge. Not understanding the pattern of politics also means that events that unfold do not make much sense, leading to a feeling that events happen randomly: ”In France, to get into politics [...] you still had to work your way up, you know. And then, all of a sudden, we saw the election of... Macron. It's... Well... Someone could come out of nowhere and get elected president of France. [...] Is this a change in mentality, or have the mechanisms really

changed? We no longer have control over the situation“ (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 109). This can also lead to a feeling of detachment towards politics, i.e. considering politics as something foreign: ”After all, politics, as I told you, is not my field. So I know very little about politics“ (Nur 3, Pos. 47) because politics is considered a kind of occupation requiring special skills: ”For me, politics is still a profession that only certain people know about. For me, they studied for it“ (Nur 3, Pos. 451-454). A lack of knowledge about politics coupled with a feeling of detachment from politics can also lead to the feeling that things do not change much, that choices do not have much consequence, and hence disinterest.

The feeling that the political system is structurally organized in a way that prevents people from receiving what they deserve (deprivation) does not seem to be very prevalent among the whole sample but - again - it is among those who I deemed alienated. Nur thinks that she doesn't get what she deserves:

Today, there are people who pay less and less taxes, there are others who survive, we don't even know how, and yet we are asked to pay more and more. For a year, people have suffered. When I say people, I really mean the lower and middle classes, but they have really suffered just to live and pay their rent and eat, and then, yes, inflation, okay, we are willing to pay more for electricity, we are willing to pay more for this and that, but in the name of what, really? What improvements for young people? What improvements for people? And in fact, we haven't heard anything

(Nur 3, Pos. 287-309)

Furthermore, as I described in the second chapter, Dieudonné and Alessandro describe the political system as being heavily influenced by economic forces that are neither democratic nor interested in the common good: “It is also linked to forces, I would say occult forces, which are embodied by very few people who have a great deal of economic power. I believe that there really are occult forces with such great power that they are able to influence the future of the entire planet” (Alessandro 9, Pos. 33).

2. ...That lead to a complex participation pattern

Dieudonné almost perfectly supports a point I made earlier: his alienation leads to the complete stop of any form of participation, and he directly links the interruption of his participation to his alienation. Although he used to vote, he no longer does: “But I think I'm feeling a bit down at the moment. So I'm taking a break [from voting]“ (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 107). He also stopped demonstrating because it is rendered useless: ”[I stopped demonstrating out of] disappointment. [...] It's useless. It's useless. I'm demobilized. That's it. I mean, there's a... Everything is done today to prevent and stifle demonstrations“ (Dieudonné

17, Pos. 133). The same goes for petitions: "Yes, I used to sign them. I signed them over the years. Well, now, a little less, a little less. I think petitions had some value a few years ago, but now, I think people don't really care about petitions" (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 127). He also stopped boycotting products but still thinks that form of participation is worthwhile: "Yes, boycotts, yes. Boycotts, in the past, same thing. Boycotts were a good thing. I took part, yes. But right now, I don't know if there are any. Personally, I'm more in favor of boycotts. They can be a good means of pressure. That's true" (Dieudonné 17, Pos. 125). Since he is talking about political participation, powerlessness (i.e., the fact that he thinks participation has no effect on political outcomes) is very visible, but as I indicated earlier, other dimensions are present as well. Although he seemed to be quite active in terms of participation, the rise of three dimensions (powerlessness, normlessness and deprivation) made him stop participating in politics.

When it comes to Alessandro and Nur, however, things are more complicated since alienation is not necessarily synonymous with a decrease in participation for them. Alessandro seems to correspond more to my quantitative data in the sense that he rejects voting but speaks in favor of participation that is *contre-courant*, i.e. against the mainstream. According to him, voting is a sham: "We don't need politics, we don't need to vote because all votes are just a cosmetic way of disguising something absurd, which is the organization of power and therefore everything that is decided for us" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 11), which means that voting is useless (hence indicating powerlessness) because it is not real and it was put in place by politicians who do not want to hear about people's needs, thereby indicating normlessness and deprivation. Politicians cannot be trusted because they put in place a system that doesn't allow people to get what they want since they cannot influence it. He is also not a fan of demonstrations: "I'm not sure that demonstrations are a good tool, a good tool for going against the mainstream" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 83). However, for the same reason, he favors boycotts and petitions: "Let's say that both acts are acts of *contre-courant*. And I am almost certain that it is through *contre-courant* that we can slow down degeneration in general, the degeneration of this becoming so absolutist, so despotic" (Alessandro 9, Pos. 81). Even though he sees boycott as a benign act and did not seem to have signed petitions before, he views these forms of political participation as relevant because they allow him to fight against a political system that is conceived as rigged.

Nur is a special case. Although both Alessandro and Dieudonné did not vote, her interest in that form of participation rose for a specific reason. Although she considers voting to be futile (powerlessness) because the political system is corrupt (normlessness), her

experience as a black woman made her interest rise when she learned that Marine Le Pen would be in the second round of the 2017 presidential election: “There was a choice between Macron and Le Pen, and that's when I said to myself, ‘Oh, watch out Nur. Something's going on here [...]. That's when I woke up. I said to myself, ‘You have to do something’” (Nur 3, Pos. 13-14). Before that, however, she wasn't interested in voting at all, and she says she still isn't today. When it comes to other forms of participation, she signs petitions and could potentially give money to political organizations, but she needs a purpose: “There has to be a goal, there has to be meaning” (Nur 3, Pos. 858-868). However, she doesn't demonstrate because she had a bad experience (linked to violence) and because she didn't seem to have been socialized into doing that kind of thing: “I'm a *hippie cool*. No, but honestly, it's not my thing because I don't like crowds” (Nur 3, Pos. 589-591). She also doesn't boycott because she thinks it doesn't change anything: “Let's not kid ourselves, it's not because you take this kind of political action that anything is going to change” (Nur 3, Pos. 1145-1215).

When considering my alienated interviewees, the thing that stands out is that they don't necessarily fit the expectations that my quantitative data led me to believe. All of them have negative views when it comes to voting, although one voted once due to racial socialization. However, informal participation is not automatically favored by them, as my quantitative data indicated. They all did not participate in demonstrations because they think they are useless, but boycotts and petitions can be seen positively, although that does not mean they used these forms of participation. Actually, the fact that the way my interviewees act does not really fit with my quantitative data is not a problem at all. Quantitative data allows me to observe general trends while qualitative data allows me to look at individual reasonings and meaning-making. Since the goals are different, it is not that surprising to have that kind of result. It had to be mentioned however.

c. The special case of apathy

When it comes to the only apathetic interviewee I have, apathy is better described as a generalized indifference towards politics. Since indifference was hard to categorize in the last two sub-parts, I chose to speak of apathy in a separate subsection. Apathy being usually characterized by a general indifference towards politics, it is not surprising to receive this answer when I asked her if people have the possibility to influence politics: “Politics, not necessarily. But I know that anyone, even on a personal level, can change someone's life just with words. [...] I think just changing my life and the lives of those I care about in a good way, on my own level, is enough for me” (Marine 12, Pos. 98-99). To her, not being able to

influence politics isn't a big deal because she doesn't want to. What interests her isn't political topics but her family. Indeed, she thinks about politics in terms of her daily life: "Um... I would say no, I've never thought about [boycotting] that much. And it's really just habits that take a bit of a hit. So if I'm aware [that there is a campaign against a certain product], I'll be in the mindset of using that [product] consciously. And then, sorry, eh" (Marine 12, Pos. 83). She doesn't boycott products because she was never socialized into using that practice and it bothers her to change her habits. She is neither for nor against political participation. The only thing that matters is the possibility to continue her life without being bothered:

The people who take part in these protests know why they are doing it and are at least honest with themselves and their opinions, unlike the people who just want to set up blockades. That's the only part I didn't like too much, students blocking other students just because 'oh well, there's a blockade on that'. [It] gives the impression that it's just a nuisance and that they just want to act like children who want attention, but they don't want to propose any real solutions

(Marine 12, Pos. 27)

Demonstrations do not bother her, although she has never really participated in them, but being unable to study does, hence her disapproval. This is why she isn't proactive and doesn't seek more politics: "Maybe [I've been interested in political issues by going to political associations or public meetings], but then when I think about going by myself, it's scary. [...]. So, no, I'm going to stay in my corner and I'm not going to go. (Marine 12, Pos. 88-89). Her feeling of being afraid stems from the fact that politics is something she doesn't really understand: "No, [I'm not interested in party politics] because quite simply, I feel that politics is like... a whole art form and a language that would be difficult to understand just like that. [...] So I really prefer to take a step back and do some research if it really interests me" (Marine 12, Pos. 86-87). The fact that she doesn't understand politics makes her disengage from it, which is why she usually doesn't participate. The only exception is voting, but even then she is not really enthusiastic: "Although I am still that person who is a little bit on the sidelines, it's really when there are big events, usually when I leave the house and say, 'Oh, right, I have to go vote'" (Marine 12, Pos. 49). Voting is something that's only on her mind when big events happen, otherwise, she doesn't care. The same goes for other forms of participation. She didn't attend meetings, didn't boycott, doesn't demonstrate, signed a few petitions but doesn't now and doesn't remember which ones. She also rarely speaks about politics at all and when she does, the conversation isn't initiated by her and she stays passive: "I trust my friends and family who follow politics, well, my only friend who follows politics

a little bit [...] explains it to me and then I just shut up” (Marine 12, Pos. 93). Marine is neither for nor against participation but simply doesn't care because she is more focused on her daily life.

C. Conclusion

I conclude that a high level of normlessness and powerlessness towards party politics does not predict political participation. Instead, what helps to understand participation patterns are the attitudes of the interviewee towards the practices because they offer a clearer understanding of their attitude towards the whole political system. Interviewees who emphasize the fact that voting is a duty and that it has an impact will tend to cast ballots during elections because they see the political as either demanding their participation and/or they think that there are still ways of influencing certain political outcomes. Their attitudes towards voting are partially linked to their attitudes towards other forms of participation because views on practices are also influenced by socialization. In general, those who have positive views on other forms of participation, i.e., who think they are meaningful and useful, also tend to use these practices, not just because of a positive assessment of each individual practice, but rather because their views on the practices show how they conceive the political system, how trustworthy or fair it is, and how it can be influenced. However, allegiance to the political system cannot be measured by the amount of forms of participation that are used in the sense that someone who uses all the possible forms of participation is not necessarily more allegiant than someone who only uses voting. Someone very allegiant towards the political system might only vote because they think this is enough to make their voice heard and because they were not socialized into using other forms of participation. The only notable exception is party membership, which is almost always disliked because it is linked to party politics.

When political practices are thought to be meaningless and useless, participation decreases since the whole political system is thought to not be responsive to people's input (powerlessness), either because politicians are distrustful or corrupt (normlessness), because the system is organized in a way that allows it to bypass popular demands (deprivation), or because people do not understand the consequences of their choices (meaninglessness). If participation usually decreases, it is not always the case. Some forms of participation will be used in order to combat the negative characteristics of the system, see for example Alessandro's *contre-courant* forms of participation and Nur's racial socialization into voting against the RN.

When it comes to apathy, the effect is much simpler: indifference towards the political system causes indifference towards political practices. In my sample, the only apathetic interviewee usually did not participate in politics and even when she did, she was not enthusiastic about it. She was much more concerned with her everyday life than with politics.

Seeking to understand the influence of alienation and apathy on political practices brings out several theoretical, conceptual, and methodological points. First, as I said earlier, many of my interviewees displayed normlessness and powerlessness towards party politics but did not display any deprivation or meaninglessness. This shows that two dimensions being prevalent is not enough to deem someone as alienated, especially if the dimensions are prevalent only when it comes to party politics. My alienated interviewees displayed powerlessness and normlessness directed at the entire political system and also displayed at least a mild level of meaninglessness or deprivation. Meaninglessness only seemed to appear in Dieudonné's and Nur's interviews (and in Marine's interview as well). This low level of meaninglessness could be explained by the fact that since it is linked to the level of information one has about politics and the fact that quite a lot of my interviewees are CSP+, they would have a higher level of knowledge about the political process and hence a lower level of meaninglessness (Campbell 2013). Deprivation seemed a bit more prevalent in Nur's and Alessandro's interview, however. Hence, it seems that in order to be deemed alienated, an individual has to feel powerless and normless towards the whole political system and also display at least a third dimension of alienation.

Second, even if alienation is separated into four dimensions, my interviewees did not seem to really differentiate between feeling that their actions cannot influence politics (powerlessness) and the feeling that politicians did not respect the rules of the political system (normlessness) or said that the first caused the second. My interviewees expressed a few times the fact that their feeling of distrust was linked or simultaneous to their feeling of powerlessness. This shows that concepts are imperfect constructs and that what has been cut into two (normlessness and powerlessness) should perhaps be merged into one dimension or that some dimensions do not have the same level of importance as others since they seem to cause the emergence of other dimensions.

Third, the different answers to abstract and concrete questions is a well-known phenomenon in survey research. Something similar happened during my interviews. If asking questions about the political system (be it about trust or representation) made the interviewees talk almost exclusively about party politics, asking them about their views on

the different forms of participation allowed me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of both their actions and attitudes towards the political system as a whole.

As I already mentioned at the end of Chapter 2, my conclusions on apathy should be taken with a grain of salt since I only had one apathetic interviewee.

Limits and methodological reflections

A. Limits of the ESS data

When it comes to the ESS data, some dimensions I operationalized were more reliably measured than others. When it comes to meaninglessness, I had to rely on variables measuring the amount of time spent reading political news and with the political interest variable whereas I would have liked to be able to have subjective assessment of respondents political knowledge for example. That means that the way I measured meaninglessness is relatively similar to the way I measured apathy since I used the political interest variable for that concept. I would have also liked to be able to use more variables to measure apathy and be more precise. I could only measure deprivation using proxies, i.e life satisfaction and one's feeling about household income, which do not allow me to have a precise measurement of the dimension. I used an economic variables because Thompson and Horton (1960) underline the fact that deprivation might be more prevalent among individuals of lower social class and I used life satisfaction because it was what Fox (2015) had used as well but I would have liked to be able to use variables measuring the gap between life expectations and receipts. Another problem I faced in the operationalization of the dimensions of alienation and apathy is that, because of the limitations of the data I highlighted above, the dimensions I built didn't have the same number of variables in them. Apathy had one variable, which probably explains why its coefficients were the biggest, while the dimensions of alienation had from 2 to 6 variables, which can probably be linked to their lower coefficients. All in all, normlessness and powerlessness could be measured in a convincing way, probably because these dimensions are close to some concepts studied in political science (respectively political trust and external political efficacy) but other dimensions like deprivation and meaninglessness could be measured less reliably.

Another limit, which is more conceptual, is that there is no threshold indicating alienation or apathy. I couldn't know which score on the four scale indicated that the respondent felt deprived, meaningless, normless, powerless, alienated or apathetic, which is why I chose not to use logistic regressions in the first chapter since I would have needed to dichotomize the variables by choosing a very subjective threshold.

The final limit of my quantitative part (that I already mentioned) is that there is endogeneity in the models of chapter 3. A possible solution could have been to use instrumental variables but it was hardly doable with this dataset... It is however most troubling to see researchers studying political trust and political participation, some studying the influence of the first on the second (Kaase 1999), some studying the influence of the second on the first (Albareda and Müller 2025) not acknowledging this problem at all.

B. Limits of the case study

a. Limits of my approach

The way I decided to approach qualitative data has to be highlighted because, if it does not have to be necessarily considered as limiting the quality of my data, it is original and hence needs to be explained.

The first limit/originality of my approach is that my target category were people who were characterized by a negative identity instead of a positive one. Social scientists usually interview individuals that were selected because of a positive characteristic in the sense that *they are* something: they can be pupils, parents, teachers, criminals, law-makers, policemen, etc. They can have a rather defined role or at least the contour of their category is well defined: teachers have diplomas, policemen can easily be recognized by their uniform and pupils can be recognized because of their age, for example. When it comes to apathetic and alienation people however, this is not the case. Rather they exhibit a negative characteristic, i.e their lack of engagement with politics. Finding interviewees having a negative characteristic rather than a positive one is a more challenging task. The way I did it was by using another positive characteristic (i.e unemployed people) that could be a good enough proxy for the people I wanted to interview. Judging if I succeeded or not isn't straightforward either. Among my interviewees, 6 were either apathetic, alienated or close to alienation. The remaining of my interviewees occupied the rest of the spectrum, with some of them being very allegiant (few of them) while the rest was in between. If my goal wasn't to only interview alienated or apathetic people because I knew it would be too difficult and that I already knew I wanted to do comparisons, I still would have wanted them to be more numerous because overall, I only have one apathetic interviewee and three interviewees that can be considered alienated. This was to be expected however because even though no study has even sought to measure the percentage of alienated and apathetic people in the wider population, I can safely assume that they are a minority. This is why I also assumed that this fact would be reflected in my sample (and I was right). I still tried to overrepresent alienated

and apathetic people by choosing unemployed people as proxy but I cannot know if it worked or not.

The second limit/originality of my approach is that my goal was to talk about politics to people who are either not at all interested in it or who reject it. It is indeed a tricky thing to do. I distributed flyers whose title was “questionnaire sur le désintérêt politique”, indicating that the target demographic were people that weren’t interested in it. However, it didn’t quite work like that since the word that people seem to remember was “politics”. My survey most probably acted as a selection bias towards people that were rather interested in politics. Among my sample, only 20% were still rather not interested or not at all interested in politics and 2% didn’t know if they were interested or not and among my interviewees however, only 5% (1 person) were not at all interested in politics while 25% didn’t know. This was not necessarily a big deal because several interviewees that were alienated or close to being alienated were rather interested in politics. Indeed, it seems that the process leading to rejecting politics can first happen by first being interested in it. My survey probably discouraged those that were not interested in it to answer, explaining why I only had one apathetic interviewee among my sample. Furthermore, what could have acted as a selection bias is the very topic of the survey. Politics seems to be a topic about which people do not necessarily want to talk about. Either because it should remain private as one jobseeker told me during my fieldwork or because it is so much rejected that people do not want to talk about it. When taking into account all the jobseekers I interacted with, 12,4% didn’t accept my flyer. The majority of that percentage could be explained by the fact that these people were in a hurry, didn’t speak French or were not interested in taking a survey. Some might also have not wanted to answer the survey because the topic of the survey was something they completely rejected. Indeed, among the jobseekers I saw, some expressed the fact that they were fed up with politics. A black woman I gave my flyer to gave it back to me saying “oh la la”, probably indicating the same feeling of being fed up. Other jobseekers said that they were not taken into account by politics. A black woman said that the government didn’t care about black people while another older woman said that she didn’t feel “*considérée*”. Another told me that politics “is useless” and like the older woman, linked his distrust of politics to the incompetence of France Travail counselors. Other jobseekers also underline the fact that politicians aren’t trustworthy because they are “all liars” and another said that they were all corrupt. Finally, another directly told me that not answering my survey was a conscious and political choice because she felt “disconnected” from politics. All of these jobseekers didn’t accept the survey because they did not want anything to do with politics.

However, their answers point towards the same phenomena as in my interviewees. They indicate the presence of powerlessness and normlessness with a hint of meaninglessness and deprivation. This means that even though there is a selection bias because of design, it is possibly not as bad as it could seem given that the interviewees and the jobseekers I interacted with gave me similar answers.

b. Limits of the data

The data I collected through the survey I did is limited in several ways. First, since the format of the survey is online, the percentage of older respondents is lower than in the parisian population of jobseekers as I mentioned in the first chapter. Furthermore, since I built and shared this survey myself, the number of responses (88) is very small and as I hinted at in the last subsection, the socio-demographic profile of the respondents cannot be deemed representative of the parisian jobseekers. Moreover, as I already mentioned in the quantitative chapters, my survey didn't measure deprivation since at the time I did them, my conceptual framework was not yet completely developed. It is however a small limitation since the first goal of my survey was to interview those who answered it, not really to measure their level of alienation.

A limit that can apply both to the ESS data and to the survey data is the discrepancy between what people answered in the surveys and what they told me during the interviews. First interviewees could sometimes make a mistake when filling in the survey, as Carine did. If these errors skewed my survey data, they probably also skewed the ESS data, although the bias is probably small. A bigger problem stems from the fact that the amount of reflection when responding to a survey or to an interview question is different. The few respondents I saw answer to my survey in front of me did it rather quickly, spending, most of the time, a fraction of a second to answer each question, while they logically spent way more time answering the interview questions. This additional level of reflection caused by the format of the interview makes the individual not answer out of reflex but rather after having thought about the question, which has an impact on the answer. Although Mirna answered that her interest rather mattered for elected officials in the survey, she gave a different answer during the interview:

Yes, I think [my interests matter to those who are elected]. I believe so. I'm not sure. Yes, yes, let's say, yeah. I think that... That, yeah. It's difficult, though. I think my interests matter a little bit to people who are elected, but I learned in political science school that the first thing you learn, I think, is that the primary goal of a politician is to get elected. I also think that a lot

of things are said that aren't always put into practice. Very often, unfortunately. I have a very defeatist side, but that's because it comes from what we've seen politically for a very long time. So it doesn't come out of nowhere.

(Mirna 20, Pos. 183)

She first answers “yes” but ends up answering “no” the more she thinks about it. That is the first limit of my survey data, a limit that also probably applies to the ESS data.

The discrepancy between what people tell me and what they said in the survey is also visible in general. For example, when looking at the alienation variable (which goes from 7 to 47), the responses range from 14 to 30, which seems to indicate that none of my interviewees were alienated although the interviews confirmed that three of them were (and that two were close to alienation). This seems to indicate that survey data underestimate alienation or overestimates positive attitudes towards politics, which corresponds to the excerpt I quoted above.

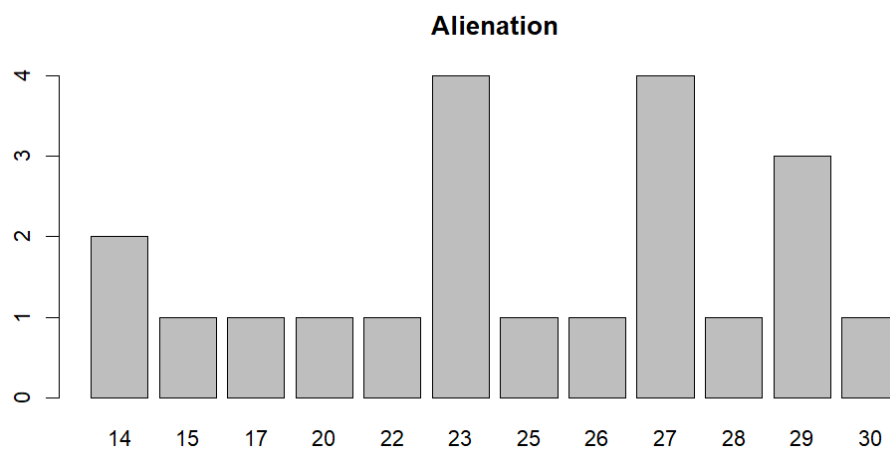


Figure 43 - Bar plot of the alienation variable for my interviewees.

Another limit that applies to both quantitative data is that when it comes to politics, opinions aren't linear. What I mean by that is that people's opinions on a given question depend on several dimensions. When asking my interviewees if they trust politicians or parties, some said that they trusted parties but not all of them or vice-versa because they still believed in left-wing parties, some said that they rather trusted politicians but also thought that one of their primary goal was to get elected and some, such as Jean-Philippe had several caveats to add to their positive opinion. Overall, When answering my questions, the interviewees considered several dimensions:

- the time dimension: how they opinion evolved over time
- the vertical dimension: they differentiate local politicians from national politicians or activists in a party from the high officials of a party

- the horizontal dimension: they have different opinions depending on the placement on the political spectrum (for example trusting left-wing parties more than other as I said earlier)
- and the “task dimension”: they deconstruct the questions I asked into several items that are easier to answer

It seems logical not to ask questions such as “what is your level of political trust” because it is way too broad and abstract, which is why it was cut into several questions on specific items (parties, parliament, politicians, etc.). I argue that this is not enough since these items are still considered in a multi-dimensional way by the interviewees. Expressing one’s opinion on a scale from 0 to 10 at best reduces the complexity, which is why this type of data should be interpreted with caution.

Conclusion

This master thesis aimed at explaining and understanding how alienation and apathy come to be and how they affect political practices by using ESS data and interviews with parisian jobseekers. I sought to fill in the gap in the literature because research about alienation and apathy on the general population was lacking since it is focussed on the youth. Furthermore, if research exists on precise topics such as political trust or external political efficacy, these studies are characterized by the use of almost exclusively quantitative methods. My thesis shows 5 key results

A. Key Results

First, I first show that a reduced number of socio-demographic variables play a role in the emergence of alienation and apathy. Gender and the place of living do not influence the dependent variables that much. Unemployment doesn't influence powerlessness, meaninglessness and powerlessness very much but has a stronger effect on deprivation, i.e the feeling that the political system is structured in a way that hinders people from getting what they deserve. This is congruent with the fact that deprivation is more prevalent among people from lower social class (Thompson and Horton 1960). Household income is - together with the years spent in the education system - the strongest and most significant variable predicting alienation, its dimensions and apathy. It has a negative impact on the dependent variables in the sense that the higher the income the lower the prevalence of alienation and apathy. It has a stronger effect on deprivation, which is not surprising given what I explained earlier. Concretely, household income - as education - might not have a direct effect on alienation and apathy but rather exert its influence through political socialization. This is - at least - what my qualitative data seems to indicate since my alienated interviewees have a lower SES than non-alienated interviewees. Education, on the other hand, although its effect is negative like income, has a stronger correlation with normlessness (the feeling that the rules of politics have broken down), which is congruent with the fact that the more individuals are educated, the more they trust politics, be it because of political socialization or because SES influences the perception of anomie (Bornand and Klein 2022).

Second, I show that political socialization patterns seem to play a big role in the emergence of apathy and alienation. It seems that a complete lack of socialization leads to a

generalized indifference towards politics (apathy) since the individual doesn't know how politics works and never has been acquainted with its institutions and processes. This produces a lack of attachment towards it, which makes politics more of an annoyance than a topic worth investing time in. However, when it comes to alienated individuals, the influence of socialization follows a more complicated pattern. It seems that alienation stems from either a primary socialization that made the interviewee internalize a large number of negative attitudes towards politics and from a secondary socialization that increased the number of negative attitudes and/or reinforced this type of attitudes. It doesn't mean that this type of interviewee didn't internalize any positive attitude towards the political system during their primary socialization or that their secondary socialization made them participate less. Alienation begins to arise when a certain process is engaged, a process that is reinforced by the experience of political events that make each dimension of alienation more and more prevalent. However, I cannot know for sure why the socialization process reinforced the negative attitudes instead of the positive ones.

Third, I show that apathy leads to a lack of political participation. Indeed, the more apathy is prevalent, the less likely people are to participate at all. This is both confirmed by quantitative and qualitative data. My apathetic interviewee doesn't feel concerned by politics and doesn't see any interest in participating in it because it is perceived as disturbing her routine.

Fourth, when it comes to the effect of alienation and its dimensions in political practices, the effects are not straightforward. The only univocal result is that the more alienation is prevalent, the less people are likely to vote. Indeed, it seems logical to not vote when one thinks that their vote won't matter (powerlessness), when the recipients of the vote aren't to be trusted (normlessness), that their vote won't improve their situation because the political system is organized in a certain way (deprivation) or that they do not understand the effect of their vote (meaninglessness). However, if meaninglessness negatively affects the other practices (because its operationalization is similar to the one of apathy) as well, deprivation doesn't seem to have much effect on participation. Nonetheless, normlessness and powerlessness have a negative effect on political practices. The use of other forms of participation rather than voting could be explained by the fact that what is primarily rejected is formal participation towards a central democratic institution (Rosanvallon and Goldhammer 2011b) that is conceived either as not being responsive to people's choice (powerlessness) or being at the center of a political system whose rules have broken down

(normlessness), hence the use of political practices that are not linked to it. This is something that is partially confirmed by my qualitative data.

Fifth, practices aren't influenced as much by the prevalence of the alienation dimensions than by the consequence the alienation dimensions have on the perception towards the forms of participation. Indeed, powerlessness and normlessness towards party politics are overwhelming among my interviewees but a lot of them still do participate in politics. The views the interviewees have on the forms of participation isn't simply an indicator of how much they like or dislike each form of participation but rather how they conceive politics. Each of the interviewees has a different conception of politics, hence a different conception of each form of participation, i.e there are some forms of participation they prefer over others. Being allegiant doesn't mean liking and using all forms of participation. Vice-versa for alienated interviewees. They usually do not participate in politics because they don't see participation as bringing any benefit since the political system doesn't respond to people's input (powerlessness) because the rules of politics have broken down (normlessness), because they do not understand the consequences of their choices (meaninglessness) or because they perceive the political system as organized in a way that will prevent them from getting what they deserve (deprivation). However, their rejection of politics can bring them to rather positively perceive some forms of participation that could fight the harmful trends the political system is subjected to.

It seems that my qualitative data partially confirms my quantitative data in the sense that for some alienated interviewees, some forms of participation like petition signing and boycott can be seen positively (although I am not sure that they were actually using these forms of participation). However, in general, they had negative attitudes towards political participation in general, which doesn't coincide with what the quantitative data showed me...

B. Empirical and theoretical contribution

My thesis provides contributions for several literatures. However, the contributions I make are not just about filling gaps but also about wanting to change the way phenomena are studied in their respective fields.

As I said, alienation and apathy are only studied among a younger population. I show that it is worth studying the larger population since political socialization continues throughout the whole life. Indeed, older people as well as younger people can be alienated. If the literature on youth alienation/apathy is more about studying the way young people conceive politics and use political practices - thereby disproving the commonsensical idea

that younger people are alienated/apathetic (O'Toole and Marsh 2003) - it would be interesting to expand the aims of this literature to the whole population to be able to study how apathy and alienation arise.

Furthermore, I make several conceptual and empirical contributions that could help to better measure alienation and apathy. First, since only Finifter (1970) (and Fox (2015) to a lesser extent) actually sought to empirically verify alienation, quantitative work on that topic was long overdue. Using ESS data, I show that it is possible to adequately measure the four dimensions (although two of them were harder to measure and were built using proxies), be it to test its impact on participation or to test the relationship between socio-demographic variables and alienation.

Second, I show that, when the four alienation dimensions are fused together into the alienation variable, they still are significant, meaning that alienation is indeed a multi-dimensional concept instead of four separate constructs, thereby answering Fox's worries (2015, 160).

Third, I show that when doing a quantitative analysis, it is worth separating the concept of alienation into its four dimensions since each of them is impacted by and influences variables in different ways as I explained in the first part of the conclusion.

Fourth, it seems that for quite a lot of interviewees, powerlessness and normlessness were linked, either because one led to the other or because they seemed to be simultaneous. This seems to indicate that these two categories maybe shouldn't be separated.

Fifth, I showed that if a lot of my interviewees displayed normlessness and powerlessness towards party politics, this wasn't enough to categorize them as alienated. Indeed, fewer of my interviewees displayed meaninglessness and deprivation but this is their presence (in addition to powerlessness and deprivation) that indicated the presence of alienation. This means that at least three dimensions have to be detected to categorize someone as alienated.

Sixth, as I showed there is a discrepancy between survey and interview answers that go beyond the differences of both formats. I argue that questions about political attitudes are not detailed enough (since they reduce several dimensions into one) and that questions about the attitudes of participants towards forms of participation should be added to be able to better capture the respondents attitudes towards the political system. This could potentially solve the biases I identified in the last part and in Chapter 4.

Finally, my interviews show that despite the literature on political trust (a concept close to normlessness) or on external political efficacy (a concept close to powerlessness)

being almost exclusively quantitative, using qualitative methods is a relevant way of studying these phenomena. More precisely, it allows us to understand how they develop and what impact they have on practices.

However, as I said earlier, this thesis is not without limitations. First, the ESS data I used wasn't optimal when it came to the measure of meaninglessness and deprivation, which could explain the fact that these two variables didn't have the same effect on participation as normlessness and powerlessness. There is also endogeneity in my models in Chapter 3. Furthermore, among my interviewees, few (a bit more than a quarter) were apathetic, alienated or close to being alienated.

Bibliography

- Aars, Jacob, et Kristin Strømsnes. 2007. « Contacting as a Channel of Political Involvement: Collectively Motivated, Individually Enacted ». *West European Politics*, janvier. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380601019704>.
- Aberbach, Joel D. 1969. « Alienation and Political Behavior* ». *American Political Science Review* 63 (1): 86-99.
- Albareda, Adrià, et Moritz Müller. 2025. « Widening the Gap? How Socio-Economic Status Moderates the Relationship between Political Participation and Trust ». *European Union Politics*, février, 14651165251318207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14651165251318207>.
- Allegra, Marco, Irene Bono, Jonathan Rokem, Anna Casaglia, Roberta Marzorati, et Haim Yacobi. 2013. « Rethinking Cities in Contentious Times: The Mobilisation of Urban Dissent in the ‘Arab Spring’ ». *Urban Studies* 50 (9): 1675-88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098013482841>.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Rev. and Extended ed. London ; New York: Verso.
- Arleta, Hrehorowicz, et Maryana Prokop. 2019. « Between Political Apathy and Political Passivity : The Case of Modern Russian Society ». *Torun International Studies* 1 (12). <https://doi.org/10.12775/TIS.2019.007>.
- Azevedo, Jeane de Freitas. 2018. « De la construction de l’identité numérique à la formation citoyenne : la socialisation politique des jeunes lycéens sur Facebook en temps de crise politique au Brésil ». Phdthesis, Université de Bordeaux. <https://theses.hal.science/tel-02067452>.
- Balch, George I. 1974. « Multiple Indicators in Survey Research: The Concept “Sense of Political Efficacy” ». *Political Methodology* 1 (2): 1-43.
- Baumann, Shyon, Athena Engman, et Josée Johnston. 2015. « Political Consumption, Conventional Politics, and High Cultural Capital ». *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 39 (5): 413-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12223>.
- Borman, David A. 2015. « Protest, Parasitism, and Community: Reflections on the Boycott ». *Social Philosophy Today* 31 (juillet):7-22. <https://doi.org/10.5840/socphiltoday201582725>.
- Bornand, Thierry, et Olivier Klein. 2022. « Political Trust by Individuals of Low Socioeconomic Status: The Key Role of Anomie ». *Social Psychological Bulletin* 17 (mai):1-22. <https://doi.org/10.32872/spb.6897>.
- Boughaba, Yassin, Alexandre Dafflon, et Camille Masclet. 2018. « Introduction. Socialisation (et) politique: Intériorisation de l’ordre social et rapport politique au monde ». *Sociétés contemporaines* 112 (4): 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.3917/soco.112.0005>.
- Bréchon, Pierre. 2006. « Chapitre 3. Les autres formes de la participation politique ». *Politique en +*, 59-78.
- Campbell, David E. 2013. « Social Networks and Political Participation ». *Annual Review of Political Science* 16 (Volume 16, 2013): 33-48. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-033011-201728>.
- Carfagna, Lindsey B, Emilie A Dubois, Connor Fitzmaurice, Monique Y Ouimette, Juliet B Schor, Margaret Willis, et Thomas Laidley. 2014. « An Emerging Eco-Habitus: The Reconfiguration of High Cultural Capital Practices among Ethical Consumers ». *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14 (2): 158-78.

- <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514526227>.
- Castel, Robert. 1995. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale: une chronique du salariat*. L'espace du politique. Paris: Fayard.
- Castra, Michel. 2013. « Socialisation ». *Sociologie*, août.
<https://journals.openedition.org/sociologie/1992>.
- Cheurfa Madani et Chanvril Flora. 2019. « 2009-2019 : la crise de la confiance politique ». CEVIPOF.
https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipoof/sites/sciencespo.fr.cevipoof/files/CEVIPOF_confiance_10ans_CHEURFA_CHANVRIL_2019.pdf.
- Citrin, Jack. 1977. « Political Alienation as a Social Indicator: Attitudes and Action ». *Social Indicators Research* 4 (1): 381-419. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00353142>.
- Colin Hay. 2007. *Why We Hate Politics* | Wiley. Wiley. Wiley.
<https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Why+We+Hate+Politics-p-9780745630991>.
- Crozier, Michel, Samuel P. Huntington, et Jōji Watanuki. 1975. *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dahl, Viktor, Erik Amnå, Shakuntala Banaji, Monique Landberg, Jan Šerek, Norberto Ribeiro, Mai Beilmann, Vassilis Pavlopoulos, et Bruna Zani. 2018. « Apathy or alienation? Political passivity among youths across eight European Union countries ». *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 15 (3): 284-301.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2017.1404985>.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2012. « Apartisans and the changing German electorate ». *Electoral Studies*, Special Symposium: Germany's Federal Election September 2009, 31 (1): 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2011.06.005>.
- « Database Result (Country + Question) | International IDEA ». s. d. Consulté le 20 novembre 2024. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/question-country>.
- Dean, Dwight G. 1961. « Alienation: Its Meaning and Measurement ». *American Sociological Review* 26 (5): 753-58. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2090204>.
- Delli Carpini, Michael X., et Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. 3. [pr.]. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Denters, Sebastianus AH, et Petrus ATM Geurts. 1993. « Aspects of political alienation: An exploration of their differential origins and effects ». *Acta Politica* 18 (4): 445-69.
- Deth, Jan van, et Martin Elff. 2000. « Political Involvement and Apathy in Europe 1973 - 1998 ». *MZES Working Papers*, MZES Working Papers, , décembre.
<https://ideas.repec.org/p/erp/mzesxx/p0012.html>.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. « An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy | Journal of Political Economy: Vol 65, No 2 ». *Journal of Political Economy* 65 (2): 135-50.
- Eder, Christina, Ingvi C. Mochmann, et Markus Quandt. 2014. *Political Trust and Disenchantment with Politics: International Perspectives*. Boston, UNITED STATES: BRILL.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sciences-po/detail.action?docID=1901129>.
- « ESS - Demonstration ». s. d. Consulté le 19 avril 2025.
https://ess.sikt.no/en/datafile/242aaa39-3bbb-40f5-98bf-bfb1ce53d8ef/128?tab=1&elems=5f2a409d-0bb9-4134-82c6-f1737023ab81_1.
- « ESS - Donprty ». s. d. Consulté le 19 avril 2025.
https://ess.sikt.no/en/datafile/242aaa39-3bbb-40f5-98bf-bfb1ce53d8ef/128?tab=1&elems=3cc05f1c-2a88-417f-a49a-8213d213bd28_1.
- « ESS - Petition ». s. d. Consulté le 19 avril 2025.
https://ess.sikt.no/en/datafile/242aaa39-3bbb-40f5-98bf-bfb1ce53d8ef/128?tab=1&elems=fdec1f91-495a-4445-b999-2158156d191c_1.

- Fahmy, Eldin. 2006. *Young Citizens: Young People's Involvement in Politics and Decision Making*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315233314>.
- Finifter, Ada W. 1970. « Dimensions of Political Alienation ». *American Political Science Review* 64 (2): 389-410. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953840>.
- Fouquet-Chauprade, Barbara, Samuel Charmillot, et Georges Felouzis. 2024. « Devenir un.e citoyen.ne à l'École. La socialisation politique des collégien.nes et lycéen.nes en France : involution ou dévolution ? » *Raisons éducatives* 28 (1): 43-73. <https://doi.org/10.3917/raised.028.0043>.
- Fox, Stuart. 2014. « Is it Time to Update the Definition of Political Participation? » *Parliamentary Affairs* 67 (2): 495-505. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss094>.
- . 2015. « Apathy, Alienation and Young People: The Political Engagement of British Millennials ». Thesis, University of Nottingham. <https://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/30532/>.
- « France: Unemployment Rate 2004-2020 ». s. d. Statista. Consulté le 21 mars 2025. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/459862/unemployment-rate-france/>.
- francetravail.FR. s. d. « Demandeurs d'emploi de la FRANCE et de la région ILE-DE-FRANCE ». Consulté le 7 avril 2025. <https://dataemploi.francetravail.fr/emploi/offre-et-demande/demandeurs/NAT/FR?codeTypeTerritoireC=REG&codeTerritoireC=11>.
- Furlong, Andy, et Fred Cartmel. 2012. « Social Change and Political Engagement Among Young People: Generation and the 2009/2010 British Election Survey ». *Parliamentary Affairs* 65 (1): 13-28. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsr045>.
- Galston, William A. 2001. « Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education ». *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (Volume 4, 2001): 217-34. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217>.
- Gamson, William. 1968. *Power and discontent*. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.
- Giustozzi, Carlotta, et Markus Gangl. 2021. « Unemployment and Political Trust across 24 Western Democracies: Evidence on a Welfare State Paradox ». *Acta Sociologica* 64 (3): 255-73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00016993211008501>.
- Glaeser, Edward L., Matt Resseger, et Kristina Tobio. 2009. « Urban Inequality ». Harvard University. https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/taubman/files/urban_inequality_final.pdf.
- Gniewosz, Burkhard, Peter Noack, et Monika Buhl. 2009. « Political Alienation in Adolescence: Associations with Parental Role Models, Parenting Styles, and Classroom Climate ». *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 33 (4): 337-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025409103137>.
- Goyder, John, Keith Warriner, et Susan Miller. 2002. « Evaluating socio-economic status (SES) bias in survey nonresponse ». *JOURNAL OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS-STOCKHOLM* 18 (1): 1-12.
- Grande, Edgar, et Daniel and Saldivia Gonzatti. 2025. « A revolt of the distrustful? Political trust, political protest and the democratic deficit ». *Journal of European Public Policy* 0 (0): 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2024.2447457>.
- Hakhverdian, Armen, et Quinton Mayne. 2012. « Institutional Trust, Education, and Corruption: A Micro-Macro Interactive Approach ». *The Journal of Politics* 74 (3): 739-50. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000412>.
- Hammer-Lloyd, Stuart, Janine Dermody, et Richard Scullion. 2010. « Young People and Voting Behaviour: Alienated Youth and (or) an Interested and Critical Citizenry? | Request PDF ». *European Journal of Marketing* 44 (3): 421-35. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561011020507>.

- Hargittai, Eszter, Anne Marie Piper, et Meredith Ringel Morris. 2019. « From Internet Access to Internet Skills: Digital Inequality among Older Adults ». *Universal Access in the Information Society* 18 (4): 881-90. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-018-0617-5>.
- Henn, Matt et Foard, Nick. 2012. « Young People, Political Participation and Trust in Britain ». *Parliamentary Affairs* 65 (1): 47-64.
- Henn, Matt, Mark Weinstein, et Sarah Forrest. 2005. « Uninterested Youth? Young People's Attitudes towards Party Politics in Britain ». *Political Studies* 53 (3): 556-78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2005.00544.x>.
- Hooghe, Marc, Sofie Marien, et Thomas de Vroome. 2012. « The cognitive basis of trust. The relation between education, cognitive ability, and generalized and political trust ». *Intelligence* 40 (6): 604-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2012.08.006>.
- Jankowski, Thomas B., et John M. Strate. 1995. « Modes of Participation over the Adult Life Span ». *Political Behavior* 17 (1): 89-106.
- Kaase, Max. 1999. « Interpersonal Trust, Political Trust and Non-institutionalised Political Participation in Western Europe ». *West European Politics* 22 (3): 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389908425313>.
- Kabashima, Ikuo, Jonathan Marshall, Takayoshi Uekami, et Dae-Song Hyun. 2000. « Casual Cynics or Disillusioned Democrats? Political Alienation in Japan ». *Political Psychology* 21 (4): 779-804. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00216>.
- Kuhn, Andreas. 2019. « The subversive nature of inequality: Subjective inequality perceptions and attitudes to social inequality ». *European Journal of Political Economy* 59 (septembre):331-44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2019.04.004>.
- Lancelot, Alain. 1968. *L'abstentionnisme électoral en France*. Armand Colin. <https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-03397474>.
- « L'essentiel sur... la pauvreté | Insee ». s. d. Consulté le 28 mars 2025. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5759045>.
- Marien, Sofie, Marc Hooghe, et Ellen Quintelier. 2010. « Inequalities in Non-Institutionalised Forms of Political Participation: A Multi-Level Analysis of 25 Countries ». *Political Studies* 58 (1): 187-213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00801.x>.
- Marsh, D. 2007. *Young People and Politics in the UK: Apathy or Alienation?* Place of publication not identified: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, Aaron J. 2012. *Young people and politics: comparing Anglo-American democracies*. Routledge research in comparative politics 51. New York: Routledge.
- Mayer, Nonna. 2010. « Chapitre 7 - Choisir... de ne pas choisir ». *Collection U*, 173-97. <https://doi.org/10.3917/arco.maye.2010.01.0173>.
- McLeod, Jack, Scott Ward, et Karen Tancill. 1965. « Alienation and uses of the mass media ». *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29 (4): 583-94. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267361>.
- Mien, Edouard. 2018. « Weber, la rationalité en valeur et en finalité ». *Regards croisés sur l'économie* 22 (1): 46-49. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rce.022.0046>.
- Miller, Alan, et John Hoffman. 1998. « Race-Specific Predictors of Trust in the Federal Government ». *Sociological Focus* 31 (1): 79-89.
- Miquet-Marty, François, Isabelle Sommier, Alice Béja, et Marc-Olivier Padis. 2013. « Revendications en hausse, représentation en baisse ». *Esprit*, n° 8 (août), 106-16. <https://doi.org/10.3917/espri.1308.0106>.
- Mycock, Andrew, et Jonathan Tonge. 2012. « The Party Politics of Youth Citizenship and Democratic Engagement ». *Parliamentary Affairs* 65 (1): 138-61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsr053>.
- Nachmias, David. 1974. « Modes and Types of Political Alienation ». *The British Journal of Sociology* 25 (4): 478-93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/590156>.
- Neundorff, Anja, Kaat Smets, et Gema M. García-Albacete. 2014. « Homemade Citizens: The

- Development of Political Interest during Adolescence and Young Adulthood ». *SOEPpapers on Multidisciplinary Panel Data Research*, 28.
- « Niveau de vie des personnes et pauvreté – Les revenus et le patrimoine des ménages | Insee ». s. d. Consulté le 7 avril 2025.
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/7941375?sommaire=7941491>.
- Norris, Pippa, éd. 1999. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*. 1^{re} éd. Oxford University Press Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198295685.001.0001>.
- Norris, Pippa, Stefaan Walgrave, et Peter Van Aelst. 2005. « Who Demonstrates? Antistate Rebels, Conventional Participants, or Everyone? » *Comparative Politics* 37 (2): 189-205. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20072882>.
- Nweke, Kenneth, et Eunice Etido-Inyang. 2018. « National Elections and Political Apathy: A Comparative Study of Voter Turnout in the 2019 General Elections of Nigeria and South Africa ». *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 5 (12).
<https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.512.8003>.
- Nyström, Ingrid, et Patricia Vendramin. 2015. « Le boycott, une forme de protestation contemporaine ». *Démocratie*, 10.
- Olsen, Marvin E. 1969. « Two Categories of Political Alienation ». *Social Forces* 47 (3): 288-99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2575027>.
- O'Toole, Therese, et David Marsh. 2003. « Political Literacy Cuts Both Ways: The Politics of Non-participation among Young People ». *Political Quarterly*, janvier.
https://www.academia.edu/5774270/Political_Literacy_Cuts_Both_Ways_The_Politics_of_Non_participation_among_Young_People.
- « Panorama de l'emploi pour la FRANCE et la région ILE-DE-FRANCE ». s. d. Consulté le 28 mars 2025.
<https://dataemploi.francetravail.fr/emploi/panorama/NAT/FR?codeTypeTerritoireC=R&codeTerritoireC=11>.
- Parry, Geraint, George Moyser, et Neil Day. 1992. *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511558726>.
- Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511720444>.
- Pattie, Charles, Patrick Seyd, et Paul Whiteley. 2003. « Citizenship and Civic Engagement: Attitudes and Behaviour in Britain ». *Political Studies* 51 (3): 443-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00435>.
- Prior, Markus. 2010. « You've Either Got It or You Don't? The Stability of Political Interest over the Life Cycle ». *The Journal of Politics* 72 (3): 747-66.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381610000149>.
- Raïq, Hicham. 2022. « The Digital Divide and Political Apathy: A Multivariate Logistic Regression Analysis of a Sample of Arab Opinion Index Data ». *AlMuntaqa* 5 (2): 109-27.
- Reichert, Frank. 2016. « How Internal Political Efficacy Translates Political Knowledge Into Political Participation ». *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 12 (2): 221-41.
<https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v12i2.1095>.
- « Résultats présidentielle 2022 : Paris (75000) ». s. d. La Croix. Consulté le 19 avril 2025.
<https://www.la-croix.com/elections/resultats-presidentielles/paris-75/paris-75000>.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre, et Arthur Goldhammer. 2011. *Democratic Legitimacy: Impartiality, Reflexivity, Proximity*. Princeton, UNITED STATES: Princeton University Press.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sciences-po/detail.action?docID=689264>.
- Rosenberg, Morris. 1954. « Some Determinants of Political Apathy ». *Public Opinion Quarterly* 18 (4): 349. <https://doi.org/10.1086/266528>.

- Rosenstone, Steven J., John Mark Hansen, et Keith Reeves. 2003. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Longman.
- Salamon, Lester M., et Stephen Van Evera. 1973. « Fear, Apathy, and Discrimination: A Test of Three Explanations of Political Participation ». *The American Political Science Review* 67 (4): 1288-1306. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956549>.
- Sartori, Giovanni, Hurtig Christiane, et Hurtig Serge. 1973. *Théorie de la démocratie / Giovanni Sartori ; traduction de Christiane Hurtig [préface de Serge Hurtig]. Théorie de la démocratie*. Analyse politique. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin.
- Schlipphak, Bernd, Mujtaba Isani, et Mitja D. Back. 2022. « Conspiracy Theory Beliefs and Political Trust: The Moderating Role of Political Communication ». *Politics and Governance* 10 (4): 157-67. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i4.5755>.
- Schnapper, Dominique. 1982. « Chômage Et Politique: Une Relation Mal Connue ». *Revue française de science politique* 32 (4/5): 679-91.
- Schwartz, David C. 1973. *Political Alienation and Political Behavior*. New York: Routledge.
- Sloam, James. 2014. « New Voice, Less Equal ». *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (5). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0010414012453441>.
- Smets, Katherine. 2008. « In need of an update or overdue? Re-evaluating the political life-cycle model ». *Comparative Perspectives on Political Socialisation and Civic Education*, 1-38.
- Southwell, Priscilla. 2012. « Political Alienation: Behavioral Implications of Efficacy and Trust in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election ». *Review of European Studies* 4 (2): p71. <https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v4n2p71>.
- Southwell, Priscilla Lewis. 2003. « The politics of alienation: nonvoting and support for third-party candidates among 18–30-year-olds ». *The Social Science Journal* 40 (1): 99-107. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0362-3319\(02\)00261-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0362-3319(02)00261-6).
- « Taux de chômage par niveau d'études en France ». s. d. Statista. Consulté le 28 mars 2025. <https://fr.statista.com/statistiques/505299/taux-chomage-selon-diplome-france/>.
- « Taux de participation aux présidentielles France entre 1965 et 2022 ». s. d. Statista. Consulté le 13 mai 2025. <https://fr.statista.com/statistiques/715378/participation-presidentielles-france/>.
- Thompson, Wayne E., et John E. Horton. 1960. « Political Alienation as a Force in Political Action ». *Social Forces* 38 (3): 190-95. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2574081>.
- Van Deth, Jan. 2014. « A Conceptual Map of Political Participation ». *Acta Politica* 49 (3): 349-67. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2014.6>.
- Verba, Sidney, et Norman H. Nie. 1987. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo3637096.html>.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, et Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1pnc1k7>.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. 2015. *Is Voting for Young People?* 3^e éd. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315663746>.
- Wayne, Mike, Julian Petley, Craig Murray, et Lesley Henderson. 2010. « Apathetic or Excluded? Young People, News and the Electronic Media ». In *Television News, Politics and Young People : Generation Disconnected?* 164.
- Weatherford, M. Stephen. 1991. « Mapping the Ties That Bind: Legitimacy, Representation, and Alienation ». *The Western Political Quarterly* 44 (2): 251-76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/448778>.
- Wolfinger, Raymond E., et Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who votes? A Yale fastback*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wright, James D. 1976. « Alienation and political negativism: New evidence from national surveys ». *Sociology & Social Research* 60 (2): 111-34.

Appendices

Appendix 1

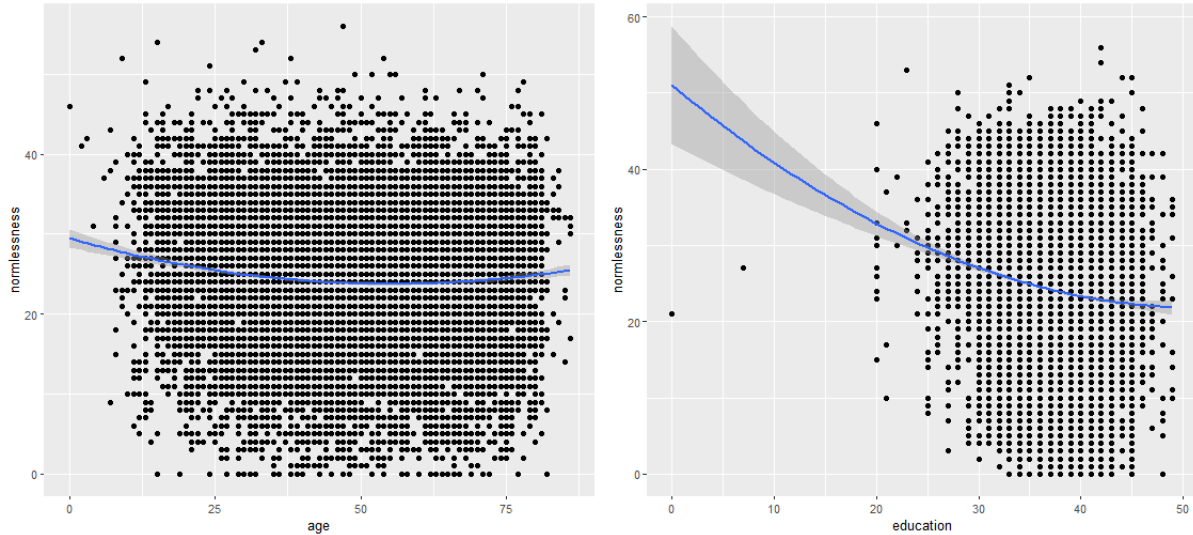


Figure 44 - plots showing the non-linear effect of age (left) and education (right) on normlessness

If the figure above seems to indicate that both age and education need to be squared, the regression table below shows that the coefficient for education² isn't significant, hence the choice of only transforming age into age².

| | Normlessness 1 | Normlessness 2 |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Intercept | 44.520*** (0.919) | 26.781*** (4.168) |
| age | -0.069*** (0.005) | 0.159*** (0.027) |
| education | -0.451*** (0.021) | -0.451*** (0.085) |
| age ² | | 0.002*** (0.000) |
| education ² | | 0.000 (0.003) |
| R ² | 0.035 | 0.041 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.035 | 0.041 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Statistical models

Figure 45 - the effect of age, education, age² and education² on normlessness

Appendix 2

| News | |
|--|----------------------|
| Intercept | 3.139*** (0.040) |
| Interest | -0.386*** (0.015) |
| R ² | 0.107 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.106 |
| Num. obs. | 5929 |
| *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05 | |
| Statistical models | |

Figure 46 - Relationship between Political Interest and Political News consumption in the third dataset

Appendix 3

| | Trust parliament | Trust politicians | Trust parties | People fair | People trust | People help | Satisfaction democracy |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Intercept | 0.527*** (0.095) | -0.122 (0.066) | 0.096 (0.065) | 3.185*** (0.083) | 1.011*** (0.099) | 1.855*** (0.101) | 1.219*** (0.111) |
| Trust politicians | 0.339*** (0.021) | | 0.673*** (0.011) | 0.033 (0.022) | 0.070** (0.023) | 0.087*** (0.024) | 0.228*** (0.026) |
| Trust parties | 0.204*** (0.022) | 0.688*** (0.011) | | -0.017 (0.022) | 0.039 (0.023) | 0.030 (0.024) | 0.097*** (0.026) |
| People fair | 0.050** (0.015) | 0.016 (0.010) | -0.008 (0.010) | | 0.316*** (0.015) | 0.252*** (0.016) | 0.066*** (0.018) |
| People trust | 0.094*** (0.014) | 0.030** (0.010) | 0.017 (0.010) | 0.288*** (0.014) | | 0.197*** (0.016) | 0.038* (0.017) |
| People help | 0.005 (0.014) | 0.035*** (0.010) | 0.012 (0.009) | 0.210*** (0.013) | 0.181*** (0.014) | | 0.024 (0.016) |
| Satisfaction democracy | 0.259*** (0.012) | 0.079*** (0.009) | 0.033*** (0.009) | 0.048*** (0.013) | 0.030* (0.013) | 0.021 (0.014) | |
| Trust parliament | | 0.162*** (0.010) | 0.095*** (0.010) | 0.050** (0.015) | 0.103*** (0.016) | 0.006 (0.017) | 0.357*** (0.017) |
| R ² | 0.481 | 0.703 | 0.671 | 0.243 | 0.267 | 0.189 | 0.346 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.480 | 0.702 | 0.671 | 0.242 | 0.266 | 0.188 | 0.345 |
| Num. obs. | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 | 4368 |
| *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05 | | | | | | | |
| Statistical models | | | | | | | |

Figure 47 - Correlation between the variables that can build the normlessness scale in dataset 3

| | Trust parliament | Trust politicians | Trust parties | People fair | People trust | People help | Satisfaction democracy | media is free to criticise government | elections are fair |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Intercept | 0.193 (0.162) | -0.094 (0.140) | 0.537 (0.310) | 2.770*** (0.154) | 1.100*** (0.166) | 1.847*** (0.239) | 0.205 (0.177) | 3.173*** (0.347) | 4.371*** (0.160) |
| Trust politicians | 0.490*** (0.022) | | 0.717*** (0.045) | 0.051* (0.025) | 0.131*** (0.025) | 0.071 (0.037) | 0.219*** (0.026) | -0.051 (0.054) | 0.009 (0.028) |
| Trust parties | 0.029* (0.011) | 0.147*** (0.009) | | -0.005 (0.011) | 0.005 (0.012) | -0.022 (0.017) | 0.025* (0.012) | 0.001 (0.024) | -0.016 (0.013) |
| People fair | 0.010 (0.021) | 0.037* (0.018) | -0.019 (0.040) | | 0.333*** (0.021) | 0.263*** (0.031) | 0.094*** (0.023) | -0.009 (0.046) | 0.089*** (0.024) |
| People trust | 0.078*** (0.021) | 0.092*** (0.018) | 0.018 (0.039) | 0.321*** (0.020) | | 0.195*** (0.031) | 0.011 (0.022) | 0.002 (0.045) | 0.030 (0.024) |
| People help | 0.005 (0.014) | 0.024 (0.012) | -0.036 (0.027) | 0.122*** (0.014) | 0.094*** (0.015) | | 0.028 (0.016) | 0.044 (0.031) | -0.012 (0.016) |
| Satisfaction democracy | 0.230*** (0.019) | 0.139*** (0.017) | 0.078* (0.037) | 0.082*** (0.020) | 0.010 (0.020) | 0.052 (0.029) | | 0.203*** (0.043) | 0.252*** (0.022) |
| Trust parliament | 0.017 (0.010) | -0.008 (0.008) | 0.001 (0.019) | -0.002 (0.010) | 0.000 (0.010) | 0.021 (0.015) | 0.051*** (0.011) | | 0.088*** (0.011) |
| media is free to criticise government | 0.077*** (0.019) | 0.005 (0.016) | -0.045 (0.036) | 0.071*** (0.019) | 0.025 (0.019) | -0.021 (0.028) | 0.229*** (0.020) | 0.319*** (0.040) | |
| elections are fair | | 0.366*** (0.017) | 0.104* (0.041) | 0.011 (0.022) | 0.083*** (0.022) | 0.012 (0.032) | 0.272*** (0.022) | 0.082 (0.046) | 0.100*** (0.024) |
| R ² | 0.446 | 0.483 | 0.212 | 0.239 | 0.245 | 0.108 | 0.360 | 0.073 | 0.188 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.444 | 0.481 | 0.209 | 0.236 | 0.242 | 0.104 | 0.357 | 0.070 | 0.185 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Statistical models

Figure 48 - Correlation between the variables that can build the normlessness scale in dataset 2

Appendix 4

| | Normlessness 2 |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| (Intercept) | 7.661*** (0.905) |
| deprivation | 1.823*** (0.057) |
| domicile | 0.648*** (0.064) |
| education | 0.216*** (0.022) |
| income | 0.080* (0.033) |
| gender | 0.314* (0.150) |
| age_z | -0.874 (0.464) |
| age2 | 0.001*** (0.000) |
| discrimination | -1.117* (0.520) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.108 (0.620) |
| jobless_active | 0.899** (0.334) |
| jobless_3months | 0.461* (0.197) |
| jobless_12months | -0.054 (0.241) |
| paid_work | -0.188 (0.219) |
| R ² | 0.137 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.136 |
| Num. obs. | 13190 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05
Statistical models

Figure 49 - correlation between deprivation and normlessness in the first dataset

| | Normlessness | Powerlessness | Powerlessness 2 |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| (Intercept) | 2.438 (1.575) | 9.643*** (1.199) | 10.589*** (1.345) |
| deprivation | 0.730*** (0.052) | | 0.275*** (0.044) |
| domicile | 0.355** (0.111) | 0.155 (0.085) | 0.291** (0.095) |
| education | 0.138*** (0.039) | -0.042 (0.030) | 0.011 (0.034) |
| income | 0.178*** (0.053) | -0.019 (0.038) | 0.051 (0.045) |
| gender | 0.718** (0.257) | -0.633** (0.196) | -0.359 (0.219) |
| age_z | -2.051** (0.782) | 1.054 (0.592) | 0.257 (0.668) |
| age2 | 0.002*** (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) |
| discrimination | -0.788 (0.801) | -0.569 (0.611) | -0.873 (0.684) |
| jobless_inactive | 0.798 (1.075) | 0.206 (0.820) | 0.510 (0.918) |
| jobless_active | 1.380* (0.557) | 0.378 (0.425) | 0.905 (0.476) |
| jobless_3months | -0.099 (0.335) | -0.076 (0.255) | -0.112 (0.286) |
| jobless_12months | 0.210 (0.405) | 1.079*** (0.309) | 1.160*** (0.346) |
| paid_work | 0.049 (0.384) | -0.515 (0.293) | -0.497 (0.328) |
| normlessness | | 0.383*** (0.016) | |
| R ² | 0.157 | 0.257 | 0.069 |
| Adj. R ² | 0.152 | 0.253 | 0.064 |
| Num. obs. | 2203 | 2203 | 2203 |

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Statistical models

Figure 50 - Correlation between deprivation, normlessness and powerlessness in the second dataset

QUESTIONNAIRE SUR L'INTÉRÊT ET LE DÉSINTÉRÊT POLITIQUE



Dans le cadre de mon Master de Sociologie, je m'intéresse aux pratiques et aux attitudes politiques.

Le questionnaire est anonymisé et prend moins de 5 minutes à remplir.

Pour plus d'informations, vous pouvez écrire à l'adresse mail suivante : matthias.mineau@sciencespo.fr

Ou tapez l'URL suivant dans votre barre de recherche :
<https://tinyurl.com/desinteret2>

Flyer I distributed during my fieldwork

Appendix 6 - Questions of the France Travail survey

- “You will find different types of political participation. Please indicate for each whether you have already done it in the last twelve months, whether you did it long ago, whether you have not done it but could, or whether you would not.
 - Sign a petition;
 - take part in meetings;
 - take part in demonstrations;
 - boycott or purposely buying a product;

- give money to a political group”,
- “Did you vote in the last presidential election”,
- “Will you vote in the first round of the next presidential election”,
- “Please indicate whether you belong to a political group or party, whether you are actively involved, whether you used to belong or whether you have never been a member”,
- “How often do you use the media, including television, newspapers, radio and the Internet, to obtain political information?”,
- “How interested are you in politics?”,
- “How interested are you in what's going on in society?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following sentence: “I have a good knowledge of current political issues”?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following sentence: “No matter who wins the election, the interests of people like me don't matter”?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following statement: “Most of the time, the government can be trusted to make the right decisions”?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following sentence: “I trust politicians”?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following sentence: “I trust political parties”?”,
- “How much do you agree with the following statement: “People like me have the opportunity to influence political decisions”?”,
- “On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to the left and 10 corresponds to the right, where would you say you stand?”

Appendix 7 - Interview Questions

- How long have you been unemployed, after what job?
- What is your first political memory?
- How did you get involved in politics? Are you interested in politics?
- Were you aware of politics in elementary school? junior high? High school?
- Was it the same for your parents?
- Did you talk about politics with your parents?
- Do you talk about politics with your acquaintances (colleagues, friends)?
- Were you involved in political activities with your parents?
- How do you find out about politics? What makes you learn about politics? Are you more or less interested than you were before?

- Do you think that the interests of people like you are important to those who are elected in elections?
- Do you think the government can be trusted to make the right decisions?
- In whose interests do politicians act?
- Do you trust politicians
- Do you trust political parties?
- Do you think people like you can influence political decisions?
- Do you think this is an important mode of action (for all political actions)?
- Do you think it is useful
- How did you come to use this method of action?
- Are individual courses of action important?
- Are collective modes of action important?
- What makes you think this mode of action is not relevant?
- What role does politics play in your life?