

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STUDY

REPORT - 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of a quantitative study concerning youth civic/political engagement on the Maltese Islands. A survey was distributed to 498 participants (aged between 16 and 25), asking them for their views on political engagement, community engagement, and specific issues of interest such as religious faith, ideologies, health and the environment. This executive summary presents the **methodology** utilised, together with **key findings** and **recommendations** for educating youth about civic and political engagement. Following Barrett & Pachi (2019), in this research report, *political engagement* refers to “the engagement of an individual with political institutions, processes and decision-making” (p. 3), whereas *civic engagement* refers to “the engagement of an individual with the concerns, interests and common good of a community” (p. 3).

Methodology and Analysis

- A telephone survey was conducted in the period April–May 2021, adopting a quantitative approach. Data collection was undertaken by Misco on behalf of, and using a questionnaire designed by, DISCERN, the Justice & Peace Commission, and Malta Catholic Youth Network, using a random sampling strategy with random digit dialling. Data analysis was conducted by DISCERN.
- In the survey, political engagement was measured using the **Normative Political Engagement** scale (Imhoff et al., 2021). This scale taps the extent to which one would vote in elections, join/support political parties, reach out to politicians, sign online petitions, participate in demonstrations, join political meetings, contact newspapers/journalists, exchange political views, organise/coordinate a rally, and post one’s own opinion on social media. Community engagement was measured using the **Civic Engagement Scale** (Doolittle & Faul, 2013).
- The sample size consisted of 498 valid responses. The participants were youth in Malta aged between 16 and 25.
- Demographics: 56.0% of participants were female ($n = 279$), whilst 44.0% were male ($n = 219$). 15.3% of participants were aged 16-18 ($n = 76$); 31.7% were aged 19-21 ($n = 158$); and 53.0% were aged 22-25 ($n = 264$). Participants’ mean age was 21.55 years ($SD = 2.50$). 15.3% of participants had completed up to a Secondary level of education ($n = 76$); 40.4% had completed up to a Post-Secondary level ($n = 201$); and 44.4% had completed up to a Tertiary level of education ($n = 221$).

- The data was initially analysed by exploring (a) Descriptive statistics. Subsequently, the data was analysed using: (b) Bivariate Statistics, to understand relationships between variables, two at a time; and (c) Multiple Regression, to shed light on the predictors of political engagement.

Findings – Descriptive & Bivariate Statistics

- **Normative political engagement (NPE)** was scored on a 6-point scale (individual item scores were averaged, to compute the scale score per participant), where 1 meant Very Low Engagement and 6 meant Very High Engagement. Overall, based on overall scale scores, participants expressed the following views:
 - 15.9% ($n = 79$) expressed **very low** levels of NPE (score = 1.00–2.00)
 - 37.1% ($n = 185$) expressed **low** levels of NPE (score = 2.01–3.00)
 - 26.3% ($n = 131$) expressed **medium** levels of NPE (score = 3.01–4.00)
 - 15.7% ($n = 78$) expressed **high** levels of NPE (score = 4.01–5.00)
 - 5.0% ($n = 25$) expressed **very high** levels of NPE (score = 5.01–6.00)
- Mean NPE score = 3.14 ($SD = 1.03$),¹ **below the midpoint** of 3.50.
- Participants were statistically more likely to participate in **community engagement behaviours** ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 1.14$) than **NPE** ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 1.03$)
- Following **Health** (which was included as a benchmark for a crisis issue, given the Covid-19 pandemic), the **Environment** transpired as **the most important issue in the local context at present**, for the participants on average.
- **Female youth** were more likely than **Male youth** to:
 - consider **Faith as important**
 - state they would engage in **Crossvoting**
 - consider **Migration** as an important issue in the local context at present
 - hold positive **Community engagement attitudes**
 - engage in **Community engagement behaviours**
- Those with a **Tertiary** level of education were more likely than those with a **Non-Tertiary** level of education to:
 - consider **Faith as important**
 - deal with religion through **Symbolic interpretation**²

¹ SD = Standard deviation (dispersion of scores around the mean).

² **Symbolic interpretation**, as a variable, refers to the extent to which religious symbols, issues and expressions are interpreted symbolically or literally (higher score = more symbolic interpretation).

- state they would engage in **Crossvoting**
- inform themselves about **Different political ideologies**
- consider the **Environment**, the **Improvement of Institutions**, and **Migration**, as important issues in the local context at present
- hold positive **Community engagement attitudes** (but there were **no differences** in community engagement *behaviours* between Tertiary and Non-Tertiary participants)

Findings – Multiple Regression

Two multiple regression models were analysed (see **Appendix D**), which converged in terms of the significance of all the following variables for predicting political engagement, except for **Education** (which was a significant predictor of political engagement in one model but non-significant in another). The findings were as follows:

- **Age negatively** predicted NPE (i.e., the older one is, the less politically engaged one is likely to be, even within the narrow 16-25-year cohort)
- The extent to which one's **Faith influences political choices positively** predicted NPE (i.e., the more faith influences one's political choices, the more politically engaged one is likely to be)
- The extent to which one informs oneself on **Different political ideologies positively** predicted NPE
- **Community engagement behaviours positively** predicted NPE
- Having **Pop music** as one's favourite music genre **negatively** predicted NPE
- Having a **Tertiary** level of education **positively** predicted NPE – **more research may be needed to confirm the finding on Education.**

Recommendations

- **Pursue more education on civic and political engagement**, promoting critical thought and insight into the **different forms** of political engagement (beyond electoral participation). Similarly, given the decline in engagement with age, pedagogical experiences can also take the form of structured volunteering positions for young adults (e.g., with Church and/or secular NGOs working in the social field).

- **Incorporate environmental concerns** in **strategies** aimed at increasing awareness of civic/political engagement among youth. This would serve two purposes: (a) **mobilising youth** for environmental causes; whilst (b) **educating youth** on civic/political engagement through environmental issues. Being “children of the same earth which is our common home” (Pope Francis, 2020), our relations with nature, the sociocultural and the sacred are interconnected (see Bergmann et al., 2016). Thus, this recommendation requires concerted efforts by religious and secular stakeholders alike for its actuation.
- **For future research:** Identify the **factors contributing to the decline** in political engagement as youth grow older.
- **For future research:** In view of the relationship between music and political engagement, study the role played by other **non-traditional** variables (e.g., music preference) in predicting youth civic/political engagement.
- **For future research:** Conduct **focus groups** with young people to understand the reasoning behind their levels of civic engagement, and how social media usage influences their perceptions of, and participation in, civic life. Other options for qualitative research include ethnographic methods, participatory action research, and life history research.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Among many possible definitions, political engagement or participation can be defined as “action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes” (Brady, 1999). Scholars have noted various features of political participation, three notable ones being: (a) concrete action, (b) implementation by non-elites (citizens); and (c) the intention to actuate changes of a political nature (Teorell et al., 2007; see Mannarini, Buhagiar et al., 2020). This definition is workable as it encompasses the act, the actor, and the intended goal. It also encompasses the various forms of political participation, with their respective channels of expression and mechanisms of influence, which are availed of by different individuals and groups (Teorell et al., 2007, p. 341; Mannarini, Buhagiar et al., 2020).

Studying civic/political engagement amongst youth requires its own set of considerations, primarily since the members of this demographic group are generally invested in meaning-making processes that mark and shape the trajectory they take during this transitional period of life (Smith & Dowse, 2019). Youth’s understandings of the public sphere, formal and informal politics, and macro- and micro-politics carry “unique perspectives on social issues,” allowing them to “respond in ways that [are] ‘different’ to adults’ Politics, yet nonetheless [show] their political and tactical selves” (Wood, 2012, p. 337).

Overall, Sloam (2016) notes that “there is widespread concern about declining public involvement in established democracies. Europeans are turning away from mainstream electoral politics towards new forms of political engagement. This is particularly the case for younger citizens” (p. 521). Whilst political participation has been widely researched (e.g., Mannarini, Buhagiar et al., 2020), and despite scholarly calls for a better understanding of youth participation (Kitanova, 2020), there is little literature on political participation among youth in Malta. Moreover, comparative European analyses of youth political engagement tend to group the Maltese Islands into a broader category or else omit them altogether. Yet, such studies can still shed light on the Southern European context, within which Malta is situated. For instance, Sloam (2016) compared EU-15 countries vis-à-vis youth political participation. Whilst Malta did not feature in Sloam’s (2016) analysis, it is worth noting that the Southern European states of Greece and Italy had medium to high levels of *electoral* engagement, but relatively lower levels of *issue-based* political engagement (e.g.,

petitions, demonstrations, online activism) (p. 523). Moreover, aggregate scores of engagement (based on measurements of electoral voting, badge displays, petition-signing, boycotting, and participation in demonstrations) were very low in the Southern European states of Italy, Greece and Portugal (p. 526), with electoral turnout being particularly low in Portugal (pp. 526-528). Turning to issue-based forms of engagement, Portugal, Greece and Italy generally scored below the EU-15 average for petition-signing, boycotts and the use of stickers/badges to pass on political messages (p. 528).

Also relevant for the Southern European context is a recent study by Mannarini, Buhagiar and colleagues (2020). This study conducted media analysis on digitized newspaper articles in Italy and Greece in the period 2000-2015, and analysed the data using a combination of correspondence analysis and cluster analysis. The focus was not specifically on youth, but the findings shed light on general processes underlying political/civic participation in the Southern European milieu. Essentially, in Italy, social representations of political participation were defined by more gradualness and a broader variety of what can be termed 'moderate politics', despite there being extremes as well. In contrast, in Greece, radical political positions were more prominent, and the middle ground was less visible in the social representations of political participation. For instance, populist politics were present in both Greece and Italy (Mannarini, Rochira et al., 2020), however in the former country, far-right and far-left discourse occupied broader stretches of newspaper discourse as alternatives to electoral participation (Mannarini, Buhagiar et al., 2020). Given the extent of the economic downturn in Greece after 2008, it is unsurprising that extreme views are more prominent (e.g., consider the rise of the neo-fascist party Golden Dawn). Thus, whilst the issues faced by European countries include notable commonalities (climate change, migration, economic inequality, regulation and so forth), the interplay between regional (e.g., Southern Europe) and national cultures and characteristics plays a substantial role in the understanding of youth participation.

Turning to the local context, in Malta, in a study carried out in April 2011, Inguanez and colleagues (2012) surveyed youth concerning a variety of issues, including political engagement and civic duties. The following findings were reported by Inguanez and colleagues (2012): (a) political ideas did not generally influence youth's lives (p. 24); (b) youth did not generally desire to enter into politics (p. 32); (c) the ability to hold meaningful political conversations was not generally seen by youth as

an indicator that one had reached adulthood (p. 33); (d) youth expressed extremely low levels of trust in members of parliament and politicians, and generally low levels of trust in parliament as an institution (pp. 40–41); (e) youth did not generally regard political parties as arbiters of right or wrong (p. 42); and (f) 10.8% of youth were members of a political party, and expressed mixed levels of commitment to their party (p. 45). Years later, the same low levels of youth engagement were also noted by Cassar (2016).

In 2017, a flash Eurobarometer focused exclusively on European youth aged between 15 and 30 years (European Commission, 2018), found that only 7% of Maltese youth had participated “in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation activity” (p. 7) in the past 12 months. Only Slovakia had a lower score. In contrast, 78% of youth in Malta had “voted in at least one local, regional or national election” (p. 15), putting Malta in second place in terms of youth electoral participation. An increase in Maltese youth’s electoral participation was also noted between 2014 and 2017 (p. 17). However, youth’s interest in Malta primarily revolved around national elections, not regional ones (p. 16). The 2017 flash Eurobarometer also reported a decrease in volunteering in Malta, when compared to previous years (p. 22), particularly when such volunteering activities were aimed at issues in the home country (i.e., aimed at making a difference in a field of interest locally), as opposed to issues in other European countries (p. 25). In Malta, youth (18%) were also the least likely to agree with “promoting critical thinking and the ability to search for information in order to combat fake news and extremism” (p. 61).

Finally, a more recent study conducted with 16–17-year-olds in Malta found moderate levels of interest in political matters, and a higher appreciation of voting responsibilities (Borg & Azzopardi, 2021). Borg and Azzopardi (2021) also found that participants generally declared an intention to vote in future parliamentary elections and MEP elections (p. 20). The acts of following political news and establishing political party loyalties, were prevalent amongst the majority of the youth surveyed; however, engagement in political discussions was rarer (p. 21).

In summary, and mirroring the foregoing literature, whilst general youth political participation seems to be very high in Malta (Kitanova, 2020, p. 827), it is actually *formal/electoral* political participation (e.g., voting, political party membership, etc.) on which the youth score highly in Malta. In contrast, youth in Malta score low on

organisational membership (e.g., involvement in organisations working for a cause, etc.) (pp. 831–833).

1.1 The Present Research Study

The aims of the present research report were the following: (1) to understand the levels and type of **political** and **community engagement**, amongst youth in Malta; and (2) to shed light on the **predictors of political engagement** among youth in Malta. Having presented a brief review of the relevant literature, this report now proceeds to present the **Methodology** behind the research, together with the **Results** of the study conducted. This is then followed by a **Discussion** and **Conclusion**, highlighting the way forward in terms of recommendations, and in terms of directions for future research. Following Barrett & Pachi (2019), in what follows, *political engagement* refers to “the engagement of an individual with political institutions, processes and decision-making” (p. 3), whereas *civic engagement* refers to “the engagement of an individual with the concerns, interests and common good of a community” (p. 3).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study involved a quantitative survey (see **Appendix A & Appendix B**), in the form of a telephone questionnaire. A total of 498 participants³ took part in the study. The procedure involved the following steps: (a) a questionnaire was designed based on prior literature and research aims; (b) the instrument was translated from English into Maltese; (c) the instrument was piloted to ensure item comprehensibility; (d) the survey was distributed; and (e) data analysis was conducted by DISCERN, focusing on descriptive statistics, bivariate statistics and multiple regression analysis.

The telephone survey was conducted in the period April–May 2021. Data collection was implemented by Misco on behalf of, and using a questionnaire designed by, DISCERN, the Justice & Peace Commission, and Malta Catholic Youth Network, using a random sampling strategy. Participants were between 16 and 25 years old, and resided in the Northern, Western, Northern Harbour, Southern Harbour and Southeastern regions of Malta, and in Gozo. Participants could complete the survey either in English or Maltese. The dataset only contained anonymous responses, and did not contain identifiable sensitive personal data. The data was processed in accordance with the Archdiocese of Malta’s General Decree on the Protection of Data (GDPD). The sample had a margin of error of 4%. The dataset was checked for inaccuracies and other issues, and analysed using SPSS 27.

The measures included in the questionnaire were chosen in a way that fulfilled the research aims. After piloting the questionnaire, some items were slightly altered to ensure item comprehensibility. In total, the measures used were the following (see **Appendix A** for the items):⁴

(a) **Demographics** (including favourite music genre)

³ A total of 502 responses were collected, out of which 4 responses were invalid.

⁴ All items were measured on a 6-point scale, except (e)(vi) Sources (respondents mentioned categories [e.g., newspapers, social media, etc.]), and (f) Issues of Importance (measured on a 10-point scale). Whilst items in the Post-Critical Belief Scale were measured on a 6-point scale, the average scores for Inclusion of Transcendence and Symbolic Interpretation were computed based on a formula provided by Bart Duriez (correspondence). The highest possible score for IoT and SI was 10 (signifying total inclusion of transcendence, or totally symbolic interpretation), whereas the lowest possible score was -10 (signifying total exclusion of transcendence, or totally literal interpretation).

- (b) **Shortened Post-Critical Belief Scale** (Duriez et al., 2005), which measured:
- (i) **Inclusion (vs. Exclusion) of Transcendence (IoT)**: the extent to which one believes in the existence of a transcendent God or other transcendental realities (higher score = higher inclusion of transcendence)
 - (ii) **Symbolic (vs. Literal) Interpretation (SI)**: the extent to which religious symbols, issues and expressions are interpreted symbolically or literally (higher score = more symbolic interpretation)
- (c) **Civic Engagement Scale** (Doolittle & Faul, 2013),⁵ which was used to measure:
- (i) **Attitudes (Community engagement attitudes)**: the views people hold on community involvement (higher score = more positive attitudes toward community involvement)
 - (ii) **Behaviours (Community engagement behaviours)**: the actions people take to improve their community (higher score = more actual engagement at the community level)
- (d) **Normative Political Engagement** (Imhoff et al., 2021), which measured:
Political participation that is consistent with legal and sociocultural norms (higher score = higher political engagement) (see **Appendix A** for the items)
- (e) **Civic Decision-Making**, which was measured using one-item questions on:⁶
- (i) **FAITHPOL**: The extent to which one's faith influences one's political choices
 - (ii) **INFLUENCE**: The extent to which people close to oneself (friends/family) influence one's political views
 - (iii) **CROSSVOTE**: The extent to which one would engage in crossvoting
 - (iv) **IDEOLOGIES**: The extent to which one informs oneself about different political ideologies

⁵ 'Political engagement' and 'civic engagement' are polysemic terms. It is worth noting that the Normative Political Engagement Scale (NPE) (Imhoff et al., 2021) measures political engagement/participation, whereas the Civic Engagement Scale (CES) (Doolittle & Faul, 2013) focuses on engagement at the *community level*. An overview of the scale items in **Table 3** and **Table 4** makes this point clearer. For clarity, the Attitude subscale of the CES effectively measures 'community engagement attitudes' and the Behaviour subscale effectively measures 'community engagement behaviours'. The outcome variable in the multiple regression models was the NPE scale.

⁶ Labels in bold indicate variable labels. These are used throughout the report for ease of access. **Civic decision-making** items were analysed on their own (i.e., they did not form a composite scale/index).

(v) **DIFFVIEWS**: The extent to which the people around oneself have different political views than oneself

(vi) **SOURCES**: The information sources one uses to keep oneself updated on current affairs

(f) **Issues of Importance**, whereby respondents were asked:⁷

‘Thinking about the local context, in your opinion, how important are the following issues at present?’. This was asked **separately for each** of the following issues:

(a) Economy; (b) Environment; (c) Housing; (d) Improvement of Institutions; (e) Work; (f) Migration; (g) Health

Data analysis involved three steps. First, it involved yielding the relevant descriptive statistics. Secondly, exploratory bivariate statistics were carried out, shedding light on the relationships between variables. Third, multiple regression models were built based on both theoretical and statistical considerations (see Jaccard et al., 2006), and analysed using both robust and standard regression estimators (see **Appendix C & Appendix D** for statistical details).

⁷ These items were analysed on their own (i.e., they did not form a composite scale/index).

3.0 FINDINGS

This section presents (a) descriptive statistics (participant characteristics and mean scores); (b) bivariate statistics (relationships between variables of interest); and (c) multiple regression analyses.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

As per below, participants had a mean age of 21.55, and most had a post-secondary or a tertiary level of education. Participants came from a variety of regions in Malta and Gozo. Most identified as Catholic, and 11.4% of participants stated they form part of a religious organisation or youth group. Pop music was the most commonly identified favourite music genre. Among the various preferences expressed by participants, the most commonly identified preference for keeping up to date with current affairs, was the exclusive use of social media. For analytical purposes, when analysing **Education**, **Favourite Music Genre** and **Sources (for Current Affairs)**, participants were grouped respectively as 'Tertiary (Tertiary) vs. Non-Tertiary (Secondary & Post-Secondary)', 'Pop Music vs. the Rest', and 'Social Media Only vs. the Rest'. These demarcations were meaningful and also meant that the sample sizes of each level per categorical variable were less unequal than would have been the case had these variables not been re-categorised. This safeguarded statistical power as much as possible (Frazier et al., 2004).

TABLE 1	Variable	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Gender			
	Female youth	279	56.0%
	Male youth	219	44.0%
Age			
	16–18	76	15.3%
	19–21	158	31.7%
	22–25	264	53.0%
Mean Age = 21.55 (<i>SD</i> = 2.50)			
Education			
	Secondary	76	15.3%
	Post-Secondary	201	40.4%

Tertiary	221	44.4%
Region		
North	77	15.5%
Northern Harbour	125	25.1%
Southern Harbour	85	17.1%
South East	108	21.7%
West	76	15.3%
Gozo	27	5.4%
Religion		
Catholic	404	81.1%
Mean Importance of Faith among Catholics = 7.05/10; <i>SD</i> = 2.13		
Other	14	2.8%
Mean Importance of Faith among Other = 6.50/10; <i>SD</i> = 3.08		
None	80	16.1%
Membership in a Religious Youth Group/Organisation		
No	441	88.6%
Yes	57	11.4%
Favourite Music Genre		
Pop	190	38.2%
Classical	19	3.8%
Electronic	40	8.0%
HipHop/Rap/RnB	84	16.9%
Rock/Metal	86	17.3%
Any Kind	43	8.6%
Other	36	7.2%
Sources (for Current Affairs)		
Social Media [SM] Only	180	36.1%
Social Media & Other Online Sources	108	21.7%
Online Sources (Excluding Social Media)	51	10.2%
Traditional Media (with/without Online Sources, excluding SM)	28	5.6%
Social Media & Traditional Media (No other Online sources)	38	7.6%
Miscellaneous	93	18.7%

Post-Critical Beliefs (see Table 2)

The first two rows in Table 2 present participants' scores on **Post-Critical Beliefs**. Concerning **Inclusion of Transcendence**, participants' average score revolved around the midpoint (mean = 0.24), indicating very slight belief in a transcendent God or other transcendent realities more broadly. Participants generally tended toward the **Symbolic Interpretation** of religious issues (mean = 2.05), and there was a greater convergence around the mean here (when compared to Inclusion of Transcendence), as indicated by the lower standard deviation for Symbolic Interpretation.

Civic Engagement Scale (see Table 2 & Table 3)

As per Table 2, participants expressed average attitudinal support for community engagement (**community engagement attitudes**: mean = 4.87) that was well above the midpoint. When asked about the extent to which they *do* participate in their community (**community engagement behaviours**: mean = 3.55), the average score was only slightly above the midpoint. As per Table 3, within the behaviour sub-dimension, the items that were more *specific* (e.g., items signifying involvement in structured positions, participation in discussions and contributions to charitable organizations) had average scores that were below the midpoint.

Normative Political Engagement (see Table 2 & Table 4)

A further decrease in the average score can be noted vis-à-vis political engagement. Indeed, as per Table 2, participants' score on **normative political engagement** was below the midpoint for the scale as a whole (Table 2). As per Table 3, participants' average score was also below the midpoint for all singular items composing the scale, except for those items signifying voting, petition-signing and the exchange of views on social networks (Table 3).

Overall, based on average scale scores, participants expressed the following views:

- a. **Very low** political engagement (score = 1.00–2.00) = **15.9%** ($n = 79$)
- b. **Low** political engagement (score = 2.01–3.00) = **37.1%** ($n = 185$)
- c. **Medium** political engagement (score = 3.01–4.00) = **26.3%** ($n = 131$)
- d. **High** political engagement (score = 4.01–5.00) = **15.7%** ($n = 78$)
- e. **Very high** political engagement (score = 5.01–6.00) = **5.0%** ($n = 25$)

Civic Decision-Making (Table 2)

As per **Table 2**, participants expressed average scores below the midpoint when asked about the extent to which faith influences their political choices (**FAITHPOL**), the extent to which close people (friends/family) influence their views (**INFLUENCE**), and the extent to which they would engage in crossvoting (**CROSSVOTE**). In contrast, participants expressed average scores that were above the midpoint when asked about the extent to which they inform themselves about different political ideologies (**IDEOLOGIES**), and slightly above the midpoint when asked about the extent to which the people around them have different political views (**DIFFVIEWS**).

Issues of Importance (Table 2)

Health was only included as a crisis issue, acting as a benchmark and signifying an issue that is extremely important. As per **Table 2**, following Health, the **Environment** transpired as the most important issue in the local context at present, for youth.

TABLE 2	Mean	SD	Scale
<u>Shortened Post-Critical Belief Scale</u>			
Inclusion of Transcendence	0.24	2.34	-10 (Exclusion) ... 10 (Inclusion)
Symbolic Interpretation	2.05	1.85	-10 (Literal) ... 10 (Symbolic)
<u>Civic Engagement Scale</u>			6-point scale
Community Engagement (Attitudes)	4.87	0.84	
Community Engagement (Behaviour)	3.55	1.14	
<u>Normative Political Engagement</u>			6-point scale
<u>Civic Decision-Making</u>			6-point scale
FAITHPOL	2.46	1.59	
INFLUENCE	2.70	1.50	
CROSSVOTE	3.07	1.81	
IDEOLOGIES	3.94	1.61	
DIFFVIEWS	3.56	1.57	
<u>Issues of Importance</u>			10-point scale
Health	9.27	1.33	
Environment	8.93	1.56	
Work	8.69	1.55	
Economy	8.18	1.82	
Improvement of Institutions	8.15	1.90	
Housing	8.03	1.93	
Migration	7.40	2.33	

⁸ The mid-point of a 6-point scale (1-2-3-4-5-6) is 3.5. Scores above 3.5 are displayed in green. Scores below 3.5 are displayed in red.

TABLE 3	Mean	SD	Scale
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – ATTITUDES			
A1. I feel responsible for my community.	4.87	0.84	6-point scale
A2. I believe I should make a difference in my community.	4.33	1.44	
A3. I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the hungry.	4.95	1.21	
A4. I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the hungry.	5.17	1.11	
A5. I am committed to serve in my community.	4.14	1.53	
A6. I believe that all citizens have a responsibility to their community.	4.91	1.07	
A7. I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues.	4.97	1.23	
A8. I believe that it is important to volunteer.	4.97	1.17	
A8. I believe that it is important to financially support charitable organizations.	5.18	1.15	
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – BEHAVIOUR			
B1. I am involved in structured volunteer position(s) in the community.	3.55	1.14	6-point scale
B2. When working with others, I make positive changes in the community.	2.70	1.72	
B3. I help members of my community.	4.33	1.34	
B4. I help members of my community.	3.81	1.53	
B5. I stay informed of events in my community.	3.81	1.56	
B6. I participate in discussions that raise issues of social responsibility.	3.27	1.70	
B6. I contribute to charitable organizations within the community.	3.37	1.62	

TABLE 4	Mean	SD	Scale
Normative Political Engagement	3.14	1.03	6-point scale
1. I would participate in an election by voting.	5.09	1.42	
2. I would join and support a political party to represent my interests.	2.81	1.79	
3. I would reach out to politicians or people from the administration.	2.82	1.74	
4. I would sign an online petition that supports an issue that is important to me.	4.95	1.39	
5. I would participate in a legal demonstration to express my opinion publicly.	3.04	1.77	
6. I would join meetings of political stakeholders.	2.30	1.61	
7. I would contact newspapers or journalists to call attention to political problems.	2.31	1.57	
8. I would exchange my opinions with like-minded people in social networks.	3.67	1.74	
9. I would organize and coordinate a protest against political deficiencies.	2.34	1.63	
10. I would post my political opinion on social media.	2.08	1.61	

3.2 Bivariate Statistics

Having presented a descriptive profile of participants, this section proceeds to present salient bivariate statistical findings. A significance level of 0.05 was used for all tests.⁹

Gender

Female youth were statistically significantly more likely than **Male** youth to:

- a. consider **Faith as important**
(Mean: Females = 7.27; Males = 6.72) ** 10-point scale
- b. hold positive **Community engagement attitudes**
(Mean: Females = 5.00; Males = 4.69) *** 6-point scale
- c. engage in **Community engagement behaviours**
(Mean: Females = 3.66; Males = 3.41) ** 6-point scale
- d. engage in **Crossvoting** in the future
(Mean: Females = 3.25; Males = 2.85) * 6-point scale
- e. consider **Migration** as an important issue in the local context at present
(Mean: Females = 7.61; Males = 7.14) * 10-point scale

Education

Tertiary educated participants were statistically significantly more likely than those with a **Non-tertiary** (Secondary & Post-secondary) level of education to:

- a. be of older **Age**¹⁰
(Mean Age: Tertiary = 23.09; Non-Tertiary = 20.33) ***

⁹ Independent-samples t-tests were used to study Gender and Education differences, and paired-samples t-tests were used to study mean score differences between community engagement behaviours and NPE, and between Issues of Importance. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

¹⁰ This was to be expected. The relationship between Age and Education justified the inclusion of Education in the final multiple regression models.

- b. consider **Faith as important**
(Mean: Tertiary = 7.40; Non-tertiary = 6.73) ** 10-point scale
- c. deal with religion through **Symbolic interpretation**
(Mean: Tertiary = 2.44; Non-Tertiary = 1.73) *** 6-point scale
- d. hold positive **Community engagement attitudes**
(Mean: Tertiary = 4.96; Non-Tertiary = 4.79) * 6-point scale
- e. engage in **Crossvoting** in the future
(Mean: Tertiary = 3.26; Non-Tertiary = 2.92) * 6-point scale
- f. inform themselves about **Different political ideologies**
(Mean: Tertiary = 4.24; Non-Tertiary = 3.71) *** 6-point scale
- g. consider the **Environment** as an important issue in the local context at present
(Mean: Tertiary = 9.09; Non-Tertiary = 8.80) * 10-point scale
- h. consider the **Improvement of Institutions** as an important issue in the local context at present
(Mean: Tertiary = 8.40; Non-Tertiary = 7.95) ** 10-point scale
- i. consider **Migration** as an important issue in the local context at present
(Mean: Tertiary = 7.70; Non-Tertiary = 7.16) * 10-point scale

Community Engagement

Participants were significantly more likely to participate in **community engagement behaviours** ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 1.14$) than **normative political engagement** ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 1.03$). ***

Issues of Importance

Following **Health** (which was included as a benchmark for a crisis issue, given the Covid-19 pandemic), the **Environment** transpired as the **most important issue in the local context at present**, for the participants on average. **Table 5** compares the

separate issues in terms of statistical significance. Asterisks indicate that the difference between the means for the two adjacent issues in question was statistically significant (higher score = issue is more important for youth on average).

- The score for **Health** was statistically significantly higher than for the **Environment**
- The score for the **Environment** was statistically significantly higher than for **Work**
- The score for **Work** was statistically significantly higher than for the **Economy**
- There was no statistically significant difference between the **Economy, Improvement of Institutions** and **Housing** in terms of score/importance
- The score for **Housing** was statistically significantly higher than for **Migration**

TABLE 5	Mean	Standard Deviation
Health	9.27	1.33
Environment	8.93	1.56
Work	8.69	1.55
Economy	8.18	1.82
Improvement of Institutions	8.15	1.90
Housing	8.03	1.93
Migration	7.40	2.33

3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to understand the predictors of **Normative Political Engagement** among youth in Malta.

Normative Political Engagement

Prior to building the multiple regression models, preliminary correlation tests were conducted, in order to understand which variables correlated significantly with **Normative Political Engagement**. These preliminary correlations, together with theoretical considerations, informed the final regression models (see **Appendix C & Appendix D**).

3.3.1 Technical note

Two multiple regression models were built, each analysed with both the HC3 estimator and the standard OLS estimator. Interpretation of the results largely rests on the HC3 estimator as it is more robust. The following results and discussion rest on Model 1, as this was the more parsimonious model. **Model 1 is therefore the main model.** Testing a second model simply shed light on the sensitivity of Model 1 (see **Appendix D** for details).

Model 1 = 12 predictors (main model):

- 10 continuous predictors that had preliminarily correlated with NPE
- 1 predictor (**Favourite Music Genre**) that had preliminarily predicted NPE
- 1 predictor (**Education**) included to adjust for participants' educational levels

Model 2 = 14 predictors:

- 10 continuous predictors that had preliminarily correlated with NPE
- 1 predictor (**Favourite Music Genre**) that had preliminarily predicted NPE
- 1 predictor (**Education**) included to adjust for participants' educational levels
- 2 predictors (**INFLUENCE** and **CROSSVOTE**) included based on theoretical considerations, as they addressed aspects of **Civic Decision-Making**

Both models largely converged. That is, all those variables that emerged as significant predictors of NPE in Model 1 also emerged as significant predictors in Model 2, except for **Education**. This variable emerged as a statistically significant predictor of NPE in all cases (Model 1 with OLS, Model 1 with HC3, & Model 2 with OLS), except for one (Model 2 with HC3, wherein this variable was marginally non-significant; see **Appendix D**). Thus, whilst it seems that Education plays a significant role vis-à-vis political engagement, future research would do well to confirm this finding.

3.3.2 Summary of Results

1. Having a **TERTIARY** level of education

Positively predicts political engagement (i.e., participants with a Tertiary education had a higher NPE score, when compared to those with a Non-Tertiary education) – **more research may be needed to confirm this finding**

2. **AGE**

Negatively predicts political engagement within the 16-25-year bracket (i.e., the *older* one is = the *lower* one's NPE score is likely to be)

3. The extent to which one's **FAITH INFLUENCES POLITICAL CHOICES [FAITHPOL]**

Positively predicts political engagement (i.e., the higher one's FAITHPOL score = the higher one's NPE score is likely to be)

4. Reading on **DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES [IDEOLOGIES]**

Positively predicts political engagement (i.e., the higher one's IDEOLOGIES score = the higher one's NPE score is likely to be)

5. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR** (At the community level)

Positively predicts political engagement (i.e., the higher one's Community Engagement Behaviour score = the higher one's NPE score is likely to be)

6. Having **POP MUSIC** as one's favourite music genre

Negatively predicts political engagement (i.e., those who favour Pop Music as their favourite music genre have a lower NPE score, when compared with the Rest [who favour other music genres])

4.0 DISCUSSION

The findings of this inquiry shed light on the extent and type of **community engagement** and **political engagement** among youth in Malta. The results mostly aligned with the literature (e.g., Kitanova, 2020), in that whilst **political engagement** was generally low (both for the overall scale and for its individual items), participants scored considerably higher on electoral participation (e.g., the item stating, “I would participate in an election by voting”; see **Table 4**). Nonetheless, on the whole, normative political engagement (NPE) among youth in Malta was rather low.

Interestingly, participants tended to express high scores for all **Issues of Importance**. However, it is the relative distance between scores (e.g., between **Health** and **Environment**, etc.) that matters the most for interpreting the results. Item wording possibly contributed to the high scores on these items, as asking about the importance of an issue (in the local context at present) generally tends to elicit high scores from participants. Nonetheless, the overall scores for **Issues of Importance** were highly instructive. Scores indicating that the **Environment** is important for youth make for a more straightforward interpretation (e.g., in terms of avoiding environmental degradation, over-construction, pollution, etc.) than other, more polarising, issues such as **Migration**. For instance, in the case of migration, it is less clear what stance participants mean to convey when they state that this issue is important; and the relatively low mean score might possibly mean that for young people, the reality of a multicultural society is taken as more of a given, rather than an ‘issue’ in and of itself. The high score for the Environment enabled us to make tangible recommendations, as per below.

On a related note, youth’s (at times, exclusive) reliance on social media as a source of information might mean that they are consulting a media landscape that does not promote in-depth reflection on issues of importance. This highlights the need to address the challenge of promoting critical thinking skills (see below). Similarly, the finding on music may reflect a relationship between gravitating toward the generic in musical terms (i.e., favouring pop music) and gravitating toward political disengagement. Alternatively, however, this finding could well be attributed to the changing nature of pop music over the years, such that it is presently the contents of the music itself (e.g., current pop lyrics, etc.) that promote relative disengagement.

Before presenting recommendations, it is also worth noting that the predictive influences of **Education, Age, FAITHPOL, Community Engagement Behaviour** and **Favourite Music Genre**, on political engagement were relatively modest (see β values in **Appendix D**). However, the relationship between reading on different ideologies (**IDEOLOGIES**) and political engagement was substantially stronger. This study limited itself to a correlational design and therefore causal inferences cannot be made on the basis of the results. Nonetheless, the relationship between **IDEOLOGIES** and political engagement may represent a point of departure when it comes to providing a better civic education. That is, a better civic education would have to involve critical engagement with issues of political concern (investing in more education across the board makes sense regardless of whether Tertiary education is linked with higher rates of political engagement).

4.1 Recommendations

The recommendations that one can make in this domain are necessarily limited, in that ‘political engagement’, as a term, lacks meaningful signifiers of alliance. That is, higher political engagement among youth may prove to be problematic if, for example, far-right ideologies take root among the youth. On the other hand, should political engagement increase among youth in terms of the diversification of political behaviours (beyond electoral participation), in ways that reflect a better understanding of civic responsibility, that would be a more favourable outcome, given the dependence of the democratic process precisely on this diversity of behaviours. Accordingly, based on the evidence obtained, this report makes the following recommendations:

1. **Pursue more education on civic and political engagement**, promoting critical thought and insight into the **different forms** of political engagement (beyond electoral participation). Similarly, given the decline in engagement with age, pedagogical experiences can also take the form of structured volunteering positions for young adults (e.g., with Church and/or secular NGOs working in the social field).
2. **Incorporate environmental concerns** in **strategies** aimed at increasing awareness of civic/political engagement among youth. This would serve two purposes: (a) **mobilising youth** for environmental causes; whilst (b) **educating youth** on civic/political engagement through environmental

issues. Being “children of the same earth which is our common home” (Pope Francis, 2020), our relations with nature, the sociocultural and the sacred are interconnected (see Bergmann et al., 2016). Thus, this recommendation requires concerted efforts by religious and secular stakeholders alike for its actuation.

3. **For future research:** Identify the **factors contributing to the decline** in political engagement as youth grow older.
4. **For future research:** In view of the relationship between music and political engagement, study the role played by other **non-traditional** variables (e.g., music preference) in predicting youth civic/political engagement.
5. **For future research:** Conduct **focus groups** with young people to understand the reasoning behind their levels of civic engagement, and how social media usage influences their perception of civic life and shapes their participation. Other options for qualitative research include ethnographic methods, participatory action research, and life history research.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shed light on youth civic and political engagement on the Maltese Islands. This quantitative inquiry yielded data on the predictors of political engagement, together with insight on the issues that are most important for youth. Based on the findings, a set of recommendations were made, emphasising the need for an improved civic education, together with an emphasis on environmental causes as meaningful avenues for youth political engagement. This report also made recommendations for future research that would serve to further advance this important field of inquiry, for researchers and stakeholders alike.

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7.0 APPENDIX A

Survey Items in English (some scale items were adapted post-piloting)

Demographics

1) Age:

_____ [Open response. Numerical data only]

2) Gender:

[1] Male

[2] Female

[3] Other

3) Level of Education (completed so far)

[1] Primary

[2] Secondary

[3] Post-secondary

[4] Tertiary

[5] No formal education

4) Locality (where you live)

_____ [Open response. Textual data only]

5a) Which religion do you identify with?

[1] Christianity – Catholic

[2] Christianity – Other

[3] Islam

[4] Judaism

[5] Buddhism

[6] Other: _____ [If 'Other': Open response (Textual data only)]

[7] None [If Q5a=7, go to Q6]

5b) On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'Not important at all' and 10 means 'Extremely important' to what extent is your faith important to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6) Are you a member of a religious organisation or religious youth group?

[1] Yes

[2] No [If Q6=2, go to Q8]

7) Does this organisation or youth group follow the same religion that you belong to?

[1] Yes

[2] No

[99] Don't Know

8) Which is your favourite music genre?

[1] Rock

[2] Hip Hop

[3] Jazz

[4] Pop music

[5] Heavy metal

[6] Country music

[7] Electronic music

[97] Other, please specify: _____

Shortened Post-Critical Belief Scale (Duriez et al., 2005)

9) On a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 means 'Strongly disagree' and 6 means 'Strongly agree', to what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Randomise all]

[9.1] God has been defined for once and for all and therefore is unchangeable.

[9.2] Even though this goes against modern rationality, Mary truly remained a virgin.

[9.3] Only the major religious traditions guarantee access to God.

[9.4] Ultimately, there is only one correct answer to each religious question.

[9.5] I think that Bible stories should be taken literally, as they are written.

[9.6] Faith turns out to be an illusion when one is confronted with the harshness of life.

[9.7] The world of Bible stories is so far removed from us, that it has little relevance.

[9.8] Science has made a religious understanding of life irrelevant.

[9.9] In the end, faith is nothing more than a safety net for human fears.

[9.10] Faith is an expression of a weak personality.

[9.11] Each statement about God is a result of the time in which it was made.

[9.12] The manner in which humans experience God will always be coloured by society.

[9.13] God grows together with the history of humanity and therefore is changeable.

[9.14] My ideology is only one possibility among so many others.

[9.15] The Bible holds a deeper truth which can only be revealed by personal reflection.

[9.16] The Bible is a rough guide in the search for God, and not a historical account.

[9.17] Even though the Bible was written a long time ago, it retains a basic message.

[9.18] Despite the injustices caused by Christianity, Christ's message remains valuable.

Civic Engagement Scale – Attitudes (Doolittle & Faul, 2013)

10) Thinking about the country, on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means ‘Strongly disagree’ and 6 means ‘Strongly agree’, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Randomise all]

- [10.1] I feel responsible for my community.
- [10.2] I believe I should make a difference in my community.
- [10.3] I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the hungry.
- [10.4] I am committed to serve in my community.
- [10.5] I believe that all citizens have a responsibility to their community.
- [10.6] I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues.
- [10.7] I believe that it is important to volunteer.
- [10.8] I believe that it is important to financially support charitable organizations.

Civic Engagement Scale - Behaviours (Doolittle & Faul, 2013)

11) Thinking about the country, on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means ‘Never’ and 6 means ‘Always’, please indicate the level to which you have participated in the following. [Randomise all]

- [11.1] I am involved in structured volunteer position(s) in the community.
- [11.2] When working with others, I make positive changes in the community.
- [11.3] I help members of my community.
- [11.4] I stay informed of events in my community.
- [11.5] I participate in discussions that raise issues of social responsibility.
- [11.6] I contribute to charitable organizations within the community.

Normative Political Engagement (Imhoff et al., 2021)

12) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means ‘Strongly disagree’ and 6 means ‘Strongly agree’, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? [Randomise all]

- [12.1] I would participate in an election by voting.
- [12.2] I would join and support a political party to represent my interests.
- [12.3] I would reach out to politicians or people from the administration.
- [12.4] I would sign an online petition that supports an issue that is important to me.
- [12.5] I would participate in a legal demonstration to express my opinion publicly.
- [12.6] I would join meetings of political stakeholders.
- [12.7] I would contact newspapers or journalists to call attention to political problems.
- [12.8] I would exchange my opinions with like-minded people in social networks.
- [12.9] I would organize and coordinate a protest against political deficiencies.
- [12.10] I would post my political opinion on social media.

Civic Decision-Making

FAITHPOL: 13) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 6 means 'Completely', to what extent does your faith influence your political choices?

1 2 3 4 5 6

INFLUENCE: 14) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 6 means 'Completely', to what extent do the people close to you (e.g., friends or family) influence your political views?

1 2 3 4 5 6

CROSSVOTE: 15) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 6 means 'Completely', if you were to vote, to what extent would you engage in crossvoting (that is, voting for more than one party)?

1 2 3 4 5 6

IDEOLOGIES: 16) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 6 means 'Completely', to what extent do you inform yourself about different political ideologies? [1 = you do not inform yourself at all, and 6 = you inform yourself completely about different political ideologies]

1 2 3 4 5 6

DIFFVIEWS: 17) On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 6 means 'Completely', to what extent do the people around you have different political views than you do? [1 = completely similar views, and 6 = completely different views]

1 2 3 4 5 6

SOURCES: 18) Which sources of information do you use to keep yourself updated on current affairs?

[1] TV station

[2] Radio

[3] Printed Newspaper

[4] News websites

[5] Social Media

[6] Internet

Issues of Importance

19) On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'Not important at all' and 10 means 'Extremely important', thinking about the local context, in your opinion, how important are the following issues at present? [Randomise all]

Economy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Environment

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Housing

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Improvement of Institutions

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Work

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Migration

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Health

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8.0 APPENDIX B

Survey Items in Maltese (some scale items were adapted post-piloting)

Demographics

1) Eta':

_____ [Open response. Numerical data only]

2) Ġeneru:

[1] Raġel

[2] Mara

[3] Ġeneru ieħor

3) Livell ta' Edukazzjoni (li lestejt s'issa)

[1] Primarja

[2] Sekondarja

[3] Post-sekondarja

[4] Terzjarja

[5] Mingħajr edukazzjoni formali

4) Lokalita' (fejn tgħix)

_____ [Open response. Textual data only]

5a) Ma' liema reliġjon tidentifika?

[1] Kristjaneżmu – Kattoliku/a

[2] Kristjaneżmu – Denominazzjoni oħra

[3] Iżlam

[4] Ġudaiżmu

[5] Buddiżmu

[6] Reliġjon oħra: _____ [If 'Other' > Open response [Textual data only]]

[7] L-ebda reliġjon [If Q5a=7, go to Q6]

5b) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 10, fejn 1 ifisser 'Mhi important xejn' u 10 ifisser 'Estremament importanti', kemm hi important l-fidi tiegħek għalik?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6) Inti membru ta' xi organizzazzjoni reliġjuża jew youth group reliġjuż? [If Q6=2, skip to Q8]

[1] Iva

[2] Le

7) Din l-organizzazzjoni jew youth group issegwi l-istess religjon li inti tappartjeni għaliha?

- [1] Iva
- [2] Le
- [99] Ma nafx

8) X'inhu l-istil ta' mużika favorit tiegħek?

- [1] Rock
- [2] Hip hop
- [3] Jazz
- [4] Pop music
- [5] Heavy metal
- [6] Country music
- [7] Electronic music
- [97] Other, please specify: _____

Shortened Post-Critical Belief Scale

9) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Ma naqbel xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Naqbel kompletament', sa liema estent taqbel ma' dawn l-istqarrijiet li ġejjin? [Randomise all]

- [9.1] Alla ġie definit darba għal dejjem u għalhekk ma jinbidilx.
- [9.2] Anki jekk dan imur kontra r-razzjonalità moderna, Marija tassew baqgħet verġni.
- [9.3] It-tradizzjonijiet reliġjużi ewlenin biss jiggerantixxu aċċess għal Alla.
- [9.4] Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, hemm biss twegiba waħda korretta għal kull mistoqsija reliġjuża.
- [9.5] Naħseb li l-istejjer tal-Bibbja għandhom jittieħdu litteralment, kif inhuma miktuba.
- [9.6] Il-fidi tirriżulta li hija illużjoni meta wieħed jiffaccja l-ħruxija tal-ħajja.
- [9.7] Id-dinja tal-istejjer tal-Bibbja tant hija 'l bogħod minna, li ftit għandha relevanza.
- [9.8] Minħabba x-xjenza, il-viżjoni tal-ħajja minn lenti reliġjuża saret irrelevanti.
- [9.9] Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, il-fidi mhi xejn ħlief mod kif il-bniedem iħossu sigur minkejja l-biżgħat tiegħu.
- [9.10] Il-fidi hija espressjoni ta' personalità dgħajfa.
- [9.11] Kull dikjarazzjoni dwar Alla hija riżultat taż-żmien li fih saret.
- [9.12] Il-mod li bih il-bnedmin jesperjenzaw lil Alla dejjem se jkun ikkulurit mis-soċjetà.
- [9.13] Alla jikber flimkien mal-istorja tal-umanità u għalhekk jista' jinbidel.
- [9.14] L-ideologija tiegħi hija possibbiltà waħda biss fost ħafna oħrajn.

[9.15] Il-Bibbja għandha fiha verità iktar profonda li tista' tigi żvelata biss permezz ta' riflessjoni personali.

[9.16] Il-Bibbja hija gwida ġenerali fit-tfittxija għal Alla, u mhux rakkont storiku.

[9.17] Ghalkemm il-Bibbja nkitbet ħafna żmien ilu, il-messaġġ bażiku tagħha jibqa'.

[9.18] Minkejja l-ingustizzji kkawżati mill-Kristjaneżmu, il-messaġġ ta' Kristu jibqa' ta' valur.

Civic Engagement Scale – Attitudes (Doolittle & Faul, 2013)

10) Meta taħseb dwar il-pajjiż, fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Ma naqbel xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Naqbel kompletament', sa liema estent taqbel ma' dawn l-istqarrijiet li ġejjin? [Randomise all]

[10.1] Inħossni responsabbli għall-komunità tiegħi.

[10.2] Nemmen li għandi nagħmel differenza fil-komunità tiegħi.

[10.3] Nemmen li għandi r-responsabbiltà li ngħin lill-foqra u dawk bil-ġuħ.

[10.4] Jiena kkommettejt li naqdi fil-komunità tiegħi.

[10.5] Nemmen li ċ-ċittadini kollha għandhom responsabbiltà lejn il-komunità tagħhom.

[10.6] Nemmen li huwa importanti li tkun infurmat(a) dwar kwistjonijiet tal-komunità.

[10.7] Nemmen li huwa importanti li tagħmel volontarjat.

[10.8] Nemmen li huwa importanti li organizzazzjonijiet tal-karità jġu appoġġati finanzjarjament.

Civic Engagement Scale – Behaviours (Doolittle & Faul, 2013)

11) Meta taħseb dwar il-pajjiż, fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Qatt' u 6 ifisser 'Dejjem', jekk jogħġbok indika l-livell li bih ipparteċipajt fih f'dawn li ġejjin. [Randomise all]

[11.1] Jiena involut(a) f'pożizzjoni(jiet) strutturata/i ta' volontarjat fil-komunità.

[11.2] Meta naħdem ma' oħrajn, jiena nagħmel bidliet pożittivi fil-komunità.

[11.3] Jien ngħin lill-membri tal-komunità tiegħi.

[11.4] Jiena nżomm lili nnifsi infurmat(a) dwar l-avvenimenti fil-komunità tiegħi.

[11.5] Jiena nipparteċipa f'diskussjonijiet li jqajmu kwistjonijiet ta' responsabbiltà soċjali.

[11.6] Jiena nikkontribwixxi għal organizzazzjonijiet tal-karità fil-komunità.

Normative Political Engagement (Imhoff et al., 2021)

12) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Ma naqbel xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Naqbel kompletament', sa liema estent taqbel ma' dawn l-istqarrijiet li ġejjin? [Randomise all]

[12.1] Jiena kieku nipparteċipa f'elezzjoni billi nivvota.

[12.2] Jien kieku ningħaqad ma', u nappoġġja, partit politiku biex jirrappreżenta l-interessi tiegħi.

[12.3] Jien kieku nikkuntattja politikanti jew nies mill-amministrazzjoni.

[12.4] Jiena kieku niffirma petizzjoni onlajn li tappoġġja kwistjoni li hija important għalija.

[12.5] Jiena kieku nipparteċipa f'dimostrazzjoni legali biex nesprimi l-opinjoni tiegħi pubblikament.

[12.6] Jien kieku nipparteċipa f'laqgħat ta' entitajiet politiċi.

[12.7] Jien kieku nikkuntattja gazzetti jew ġurnalisti biex niġbed l-attenzjoni għal problemi politiċi.

[12.8] Jiena kieku naqsam l-opinjoni tiegħi ma' nies tal-istess fehma f'netwerks soċjali.

[12.9] Jiena kieku norganizza u nikkoordina protesta kontra nuqqasijiet politiċi.

[12.10] Jiena kieku nippostja l-opinjoni politika tiegħi fuq il-midja soċjali.

Civic Decision-Making

FAITHPOL: 13) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Lanqas xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Kompletament', il-fidi tiegħek sa liema estent tinfluenza d-deċiżjonijiet politiċi tiegħek?

1 2 3 4 5 6

INFLUENCE: 14) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Lanqas xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Kompletament', in-nies li huma qrib tiegħek (eż., ħbieb jew familja) sa liema estent jinfluenzaw il-fehmiet politiċi tiegħek?

1 2 3 4 5 6

CROSSVOTE: 15) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Lanqas xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Kompletament', kieku kellek tivvota, sa liema estent kieku tagħmel crossvoting (jigifieri, tivvota għal iktar minn partit wieħed)?

1 2 3 4 5 6

IDEOLOGIES: 16) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Lanqas xejn' u 6 ifisser 'Kompletament', sa liema estent tinforma ruħek dwar ideoloġiji politiċi differenti?

[1 = li ma tinforma ruħek xejn, u 6 = li tinforma ruħek kompletament dwar ideoloġiji politiċi differenti]

1 2 3 4 5 6

DIFFVIEWS: 17) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 6, fejn 1 ifisser 'Lanqas xejn') u 6 ifisser 'Kompletament', in-nies ta' madwarek sa liema estent ghandhom fehmiel politici differenti minn tieghek? [1 = fehmiel kompletament l-istess, u 6 = fehmiel kompletament differenti]

1 2 3 4 5 6

SOURCES: 18) Liema sorsi ta' informazzjoni tuza biex izzomm lilek innifsek agġornat(a) dwar grajjiet kurrenti?

[1] Stazzjon tat-Televixin

[2] Radju

[3] Gazzetta pprintjata

[4] Websites tal-aħbarijiet

[5] Midja Soċjali

[6] Internet

Issues of Importance

19) Fuq skala minn 1 sa 10, fejn 1 ifisser 'Mhi importanti xejn' u 10 ifisser 'Estremament importanti', meta taħseb dwar il-kuntest lokali, fl-opinjoni tieghek, kemm huma importanti l-kwistjonijiet li ġejjin fil-preżent? [Randomise all]

Ekonomija

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Ambjent

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Housing

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Titjib tal-Istituzzjonijiet

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Ix-Xoghol

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Migrazzjoni

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Is-Sahha

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9.0 APPENDIX C

Preliminary Bivariate Correlations

The variables that correlated significantly with **Normative Political Engagement (NPE)** when exploring bivariate relationships were the following. These bivariate correlations were conducted to inform the choice of variables in the final multiple regression models. Apart from the variables below, participants who chose **Pop Music** as a favourite music genre were statistically less likely to express Normative Political Engagement than the **Rest**. (* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$)

Age	Negative correlation with NPE ($r = -.130$) **
Symbolic Interpretation	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .099$) *
FAITHPOL	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .166$) ***
IDEOLOGIES	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .424$) ***
DIFFVIEWS	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .125$) **
Environment	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .090$) *
Improvement of Institutions	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .150$) **
Migration	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .113$) **
Community Engagement Attitudes	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .201$) **
Community Engagement Behaviours	Positive correlation with NPE ($r = .323$) **

Music: Participants who prefer Pop music ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.92$) expressed significantly lower levels of NPE than the Rest ($M = 3.23$; $SD = 1.09$), $t(449.66) = -2.46$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.217$.

Statistical Tests behind Section 3.2 (Bivariate Statistics)

A) Gender

A.1) Female youth ($M = 7.27$; $SD = 2.08$) considered faith as being significantly more important than Male youth ($M = 6.72$; $SD = 2.24$) did, $t(416) = 2.60$, $p < .01$, $g = 0.26$.

A.2) Female youth ($M = 5.00$; $SD = 0.76$) held significantly more positive attitudes toward community engagement than Male youth ($M = 4.69$; $SD = 0.92$) did, $t(419.8) = 4.05$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.374$.

A.3) Female youth ($M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.10$) were significantly more likely than Male youth ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.18$) to participate in community engagement behaviours, $t(496) = 2.50$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.225$.

A.4) Female youth ($M = 3.25$; $SD = 1.80$) are significantly more likely than Male youth ($M = 2.85$; $SD = 1.80$) to engage in crossvoting in the future, $t(496) = 2.42$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.218$.

A.5) Female youth ($M = 7.61$; $SD = 2.23$) were significantly more likely than Male youth ($M = 7.14$; $SD = 2.44$) to consider Migration as an important issue in the local context at present, $t(496) = 2.25$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.203$.

B) Education

B.1) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 23.09$; $SD = 1.52$) were significantly older than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 20.33$; $SD = 2.45$), $t(468.9) = 15.40$, $p < .001$, $g = 1.319$.

B.2) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 7.40$; $SD = 2.09$) considered faith as being significantly more important than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 6.73$; $SD = 2.18$) did, $t(416) = 3.18$, $p < .01$, $g = 0.312$.

B.3) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 2.44$; $SD = 1.81$) were significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 1.73$; $SD = 1.83$) to deal with religion through Symbolic Interpretation, $t(496) = 4.31$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.388$.

B.4) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 4.96$; $SD = 0.84$) held significantly more positive attitudes toward community engagement than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 4.79$; $SD = 0.84$), $t(496) = 2.27$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.205$. However, there was no statistically significant difference between Tertiary educated ($M = 3.61$; $SD = 1.11$) and Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 3.50$; $SD = 1.17$) vis-à-vis actual community engagement behaviours, $t(496) = 1.01$, $p = .31$, $g = 0.091$.

B.5) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 3.26$; $SD = 1.84$) are significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 2.92$; $SD = 1.78$) to engage in crossvoting in the future, $t(496) = 2.08$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.187$.

B.6) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 4.24$; $SD = 1.57$) were significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.60$) to inform themselves about different political ideologies, $t(496) = 3.66$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.330$.

B.7) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 9.09$; $SD = 1.42$) were significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 8.80$; $SD = 1.66$) to consider the Environment as an important issue in the local context at present, $t(494) = 2.09$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.185$.

B.8) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 8.40$; $SD = 1.72$) were significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 7.95$; $SD = 2.01$) to consider the Improvement of Institutions as an important issue in the local context at present, $t(496) = 2.64$, $p < .01$, $g = 0.238$.

B.9) Tertiary educated youth ($M = 7.70$; $SD = 2.22$) were significantly more likely than Non-tertiary educated youth ($M = 7.16$; $SD = 2.39$) to consider Migration as an important issue in the local context at present, $t(496) = 2.58$, $p < .05$, $g = 0.232$.

C) Community Engagement

C.1) On the whole, participants were significantly more likely to participate in community engagement behaviours ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 1.14$) than normative political engagement ($M = 3.14$; $SD = 1.03$), $t(497) = 7.20$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.322$.

D) Issues of Importance

D.1) On the whole, participants considered Health ($M = 9.27$; $SD = 1.33$) as being significantly more important than the Environment ($M = 8.93$; $SD = 1.56$) in the local context at present, $t(497) = 5.21$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.233$.

D.2) On the whole, participants considered the Environment ($M = 8.93$; $SD = 1.56$) as being significantly more important than Work ($M = 8.69$; $SD = 1.55$) in the local context at present, $t(497) = 3.13$, $p < .01$, $g = 0.140$.

D.3) On the whole, participants considered Work ($M = 8.69$; $SD = 1.55$) as being significantly more important than the Economy ($M = 8.18$; $SD = 1.82$) in the local context at present, $t(497) = 6.75$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.302$.

D.4) On the whole, there was no significant difference between participants' score for the Economy ($M = 8.18$; $SD = 1.82$) and that for the Improvement of Institutions ($M = 8.15$; $SD = 1.90$), $t(497) = 0.31$, $p = .758$, $g = 0.014$.

D.5) Similarly, on the whole, there was no significant difference between participants' score for the Improvement of Institutions ($M = 8.15$; $SD = 1.90$) and that for Housing ($M = 8.03$; $SD = 1.93$), $t(497) = 1.33$, $p = .186$, $g = 0.059$.

D.6) Finally, on the whole, participants considered Housing ($M = 8.03$; $SD = 1.93$) as being significantly more important than Migration ($M = 7.40$; $SD = 2.33$) in the local context at present, $t(497) = 5.98$, $p < .001$, $g = 0.268$.

10.0 APPENDIX D

Multiple Regression Models

Model 1 (HC3) & Model 1 (OLS) – 12 predictors. Outcome variable = Normative Political Engagement (composite score)

Model summary				ANOVA					
<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adj. <i>R</i> ²	<i>RMSE</i>		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
0.535	0.286	0.268	0.885	Regression	152.07	12	12.673	16.189	.000
				Residual	379.64	485	0.783		
				Total	531.71	497			

Predictors of Political Engagement	HC3					OLS			
	<i>β</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)		3.187	.560	5.690	.000	3.187	.520	6.129	.000
Education	.103	.214	.108	1.978	.049	.214	.099	2.149	.032
Music	-.117	-.249	.085	-2.935	.004	-.249	.083	-2.991	.003
Age	-.209	-.087	.022	-4.009	.0001	-.087	.020	-4.412	.000
Symbolic Interpretation	-.016	-.009	.024	-0.359	.720	-.009	.023	-.379	.705
FAITHPOL	.104	.067	.027	2.463	.014	.067	.026	2.628	.009
IDEOLOGIES	.333	.214	.028	7.661	.000	.214	.027	7.983	.000
DIFFVIEWS	.060	.039	.028	1.395	.164	.039	.026	1.523	.128
Environment	-.043	-.028	.030	-0.930	.353	-.028	.031	-.913	.361
Institutions	.089	.049	.026	1.853	.065	.049	.025	1.920	.055
Migration	-.034	-.015	.020	-0.761	.447	-.015	.020	-.767	.443
Civic Attitudes	-.014	-.018	.064	-0.272	.786	-.017	.060	-.289	.773
Civic Behaviours	.230	.208	.046	4.574	.000	.208	.044	4.699	.000

Education: 1 = Tertiary; 0 = Non-Tertiary. Music: 1 = Pop Music; 0 = Other.

Model 2 (HC3) & Model 2 (OLS) – 14 predictors. Outcome variable = Normative Political Engagement (composite score)

Model summary				ANOVA					
<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adj. <i>R</i> ²	<i>RMSE</i>		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
0.539	0.291	0.270	0.883	Regression	154.704	14	11.050	14.157	.000
				Residual	377.009	483	0.781		
				Total	531.713	497			

Predictors of Political Engagement	HC3					OLS			
	<i>β</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)		3.160	.567	5.571	.000	3.159	.526	6.004	.000
Education	.102	.212	.108	1.961	.0504	.212	.099	2.130	.034
Music	-.112	-.238	.085	-2.798	.005	-.238	.084	-2.846	.005
Age	-.203	-.084	.022	-3.850	.0001	-.084	.020	-4.273	.000
Symbolic Interpretation	-.006	-.003	.024	-0.139	.889	-.003	.023	-.146	.884
FAITHPOL	.101	.065	.028	2.352	.019	.065	.027	2.461	.014
INFLUENCE	.012	.008	.029	0.287	.774	.008	.028	.293	.770
CROSSVOTE	-.076	-.044	.026	-1.660	.098	-.044	.024	-1.825	.069
IDEOLOGIES	.354	.228	.030	7.566	.000	.228	.028	8.144	.000
DIFFVIEWS	.073	.048	.029	1.650	.100	.048	.026	1.825	.069
Environment	-.037	-.024	.030	-0.803	.422	-.024	.031	-.786	.432
Institutions	.084	.046	.026	1.737	.083	.046	.025	1.805	.072
Migration	-.036	-.016	.020	-0.798	.425	-.016	.020	-.812	.417
Civic Attitudes	-.017	-.021	.066	-0.319	.750	-.021	.061	-.344	.731
Civic Behaviours	.232	.210	.046	4.571	.000	.210	.044	4.733	.000

Education: 1 = Tertiary; 0 = Non-Tertiary. Music: 1 = Pop Music; 0 = Other.

