

**INSTITUTT
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Rapport 2016:19

Hva skjer når 16-åringer får lov til å stemme?

Resultater fra evalueringene
av to forsøk med nedsatt
stemmerettsalder

Johannes Bergh (red.)

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Forord

Bakgrunnen for denne rapporten er to forsøk med stemmerett for 16-åringer som ble gjennomført ved lokalvalgene i 2011 og 2015. Ved hvert av valgene ble stemmerettsalderen senket til 16 år i 20 utvalgte kommuner (10 kommuner gjennomførte forsøket ved begge valgene). Disse forsøkene gir en unik mulighet til å undersøke hva konsekvensene blir av å senke stemmerettsalderen. Altså, hva skjer når 16-åringer får stemmerett?

Rapporten er en samling av forskningsarbeider som på ulike måter forsøker å besvare dette spørsmålet. Hoveddelene av arbeidene er skrevet på engelsk; vi presenterer derfor et utfyllende norsk sammendrag av disse bidragene i kapittel 1.

Jeg ønsker å rette en stor takk til rapportens bidragsytere: Jo Saglie, Marte Winsvold, Guro Ødegård og Jacob Aars. Det har som vanlig vært en fornøyelse å samarbeide med dere! Takk også til Stine Hesstvedt, for assistanse i forbindelse med redigering av rapporten.

Forskningen som presenteres i denne rapporten, er finansiert av Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet.

Oslo, 31. oktober 2016

Johannes Bergh

Sammendrag

Forfattere Johannes Bergh (red.)

Tittel Hva skjer når 16-åringer får lov til å stemme? Resultater fra evalueringene av to forsøk med nedsatt stemmerettsalder

Sammendrag I denne rapporten spør vi: Hva skjer når 16-åringer får lov til å stemme? Vi bruker resultatene fra to forsøk med stemmerett for 16-åringer i utvalgte norske kommuner til å besvare spørsmålet. Forsøkene ble gjennomført ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2011 og 2015.

Det generelle bildet er at en eventuell senkning av stemmerettsalderen vil få små konsekvenser for det norske demokratiet. De som frykter negative konsekvenser av å gi så unge personer stemmerett, har ikke så mye å frykte, mens de som håper på positive endringer, godt kan dempe sine forhåpninger. Konkret finner vi:

- Valgdeltakelsen blant 16- og 17-åringer er overraskende høy, og ligger så vidt under deltakelsesnivået for alle velgere samlet. Den totale valgdeltakelsen blir altså uendret av at 16- og 17-åringer får stemmerett. De aller yngste velgerne har en høyere deltakelse enn velgere i aldersgruppen 19–25 år. Mye tyder på at det å gå på videregående skole og å være en integrert del av et sosialt nettverk i sin hjemkommune har en positiv effekt på deltakelsen.
- Vi finner *ikke* noen indikasjoner på at de som får stemmerett i en alder av 16 eller 17 år, etablerer en vane om å stemme som gjør at deres tilbøyelighet til å stemme senere i livet øker. De som fikk stemmerett som 16-/17-åringer i 2011 er ikke mer tilbøyelige til å stemme – verken ved stortingsvalget i 2013 eller lokalvalget i 2015 – enn andre på samme alder. Resultatene tyder derfor *ikke* på at en senket stemmerettsalder vil ha en positiv effekt på valgdeltakelsen på lang sikt, slik mange har håpet eller ønsket.
- De sosiale forskjellene i valgdeltakelse som vi ser i den voksne befolkningen, ser ut til å være like store blant ungdommer. Slike forskjeller forsvinner altså ikke selv om man senker stemmerettsalderen. Likevel er det viktig å understreke at de videregående skolene potensielt kan bidra til å begrense sosiale skjevheter i politisk deltakelse i denne aldersgruppen (se Winsvold og Ødegård 2016).
- Det er kun små forskjeller i politiske preferanser mellom ungdommer og voksne. Ungdommenes stemmer fordeler seg på de politiske partiene i Norge, omtrent som i den voksne befolkningen. Det betyr at en eventuell senkning av stemmerettsalderen vil ha lite å si for styrkeforholdet mellom partiene.

- Lokalmedienes dekning av forsøket har alt overveiende vært positiv; kritiske stemmer har vært så å si fraværende. Dekningen har i stor grad handlet om hvilke saker ungdom er opptatt av, og valgdeltakelsen blant ungdom. I nasjonale medier har stemmerettsforsøket nesten ikke vært omtalt.
- Når stemmerettsalderen senkes, øker den politiske representasjonen av unge. Det ble valgt inn flere unge kommunestyrepolitikere som følge av forsøkene med senket stemmerettsalder. Dette er trolig det mest konkrete politiske utslaget av forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer. Unge politikere er generelt underrepresentert i kommunestyrene i Norge, og stemmerett for 16-åringer kan altså være et virkemiddel for å endre på dette. Evalueringen viser også at mange av de nylig innvalgte unge politikere har en positiv opplevelse av å ha reell innflytelse, mens noen opplever å bli satt i en bås som «ungdomspolitikere».

Emneord

Stemmerettsaker, valgdeltakelse, ungdom

English summary

Authors Johannes Bergh (ed.)

Title What happens when 16-year-olds are allowed to vote?

Summary The voting age for Norwegian local elections was lowered to 16 in 20 selected municipalities in the 2011 and 2015 elections, as part of a government-initiated trial. Based on data and analyses from those two elections, the purpose of this report is to determine what the consequences of a lower voting age are. The general finding is that this age does not lead to any fundamental changes in local politics. Specifically we report that:

- Voter turnout does not change. The trial-voters, aged 16 or 17, have a rate of turnout that is similar to the population as a whole, though quite a bit higher than other young voters. Overall turnout therefore remains stable when the voting age is lowered.
- There is no evidence to suggest that a lower voting age has an effect on long-term turnout. We do not find that those that were allowed to vote at the age of 16 are more likely to vote later in life than those who only received voting rights at the age of 18.
- There are large differences in turnout by social background among the youngest voters. It does not appear that a lower voting age, in itself, can bridge social inequalities with respect to voter participation.
- The political voting preferences of the youngest voters do not deviate substantially from the adult population. A lower voting age will therefore likely not affect the political composition of elected assemblies, such as municipal councils.
- The local media generally covers the voting age trials as a positive event in the community. There is close to no coverage in the national media of the 2015-trial.
- When the voting age is lowered to 16, young politicians are elected at a higher rate. This is the most concrete effect of the two voting age trials: the political representation of people below the age of 25 went up. In 2011, this happened because young political candidates received more preferential votes; whereas in 2015, parties were ahead of the curve and nominated young candidates at ballot-positions that secured their election.

Index terms Voting age, turnout, youth

1 Innledning

Johannes Bergh

Innledning

Stemmerettsalderen i Norge ble sist endret av Stortinget i 1978, da den ble senket fra 20 til 18 år.¹ Dette var den siste i en rekke av utvidelser av stemmeretten til yngre aldersgrupper i løpet av det 20. århundret. Utviklingen i Norge på dette området speiler utviklingen i de fleste andre moderne demokratier, med at en stemmerettsalder på 18 år ble etablert som en norm i løpet av 1960- og 1970-tallet (Franklin 2004). I nyere tid har det oppstått en debatt i flere europeiske land om en mulig ytterligere senkning av stemmerettsalderen til 16 år. I Storbritannia har det vært en offentlig diskusjon om dette, og temaet har blitt belyst gjennom en offentlig utredning. Det samme er tilfellet i Danmark. Østerrike er foreløpig det eneste landet som har senket stemmerettsalderen permanent ved alle demokratiske valg. Estland er i ferd med å senke stemmerettsalderen til 16 år ved lokale valg. Videre er det flere eksempler på at stemmerettsalderen er senket ved enkelte typer av valg, slik som ved valg til det skotske parlamentet, eller til delstatsforsamlinger i Tyskland.

I Norge tar noen aktører (slik som Landsrådet for Norges barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner og Barneombudet) til orde for å gi 16-åringer en mulighet til å stemme, men foreløpig er det ikke flertall på Stortinget for en ny senking av stemmerettsalderen. Det er bare Venstre, SV og Miljøpartiet de Grønne som har programfestet en slik endring.²

Likevel har det ved to valg blitt gjennomført forsøk med en senket stemmerettsalder i et utvalg av kommuner. Formålet med forsøkene er å samle inn kunnskap om hvilke konsekvenser en eventuell senking av stemmerettsalderen vil få. Det første forsøket ble gjennomført ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2011, i 20 kommuner.³ Resultatene av evalueringen av dette forsøket ble publisert i

1 For å ha stemmerett må man ha fylt 18 år innen utgangen av valgåret.

2 Venstre og SV ønsker å senke stemmerettsalderen ved både stortingsvalg og lokalvalg, mens Miljøpartiet de Grønne bare ønsker en slik endring ved lokale valg.

3 Det gjaldt følgende kommuner: Marker, Lørenskog, Hamar, Vågå, Sigdal, Re, Porsgrunn, Grimstad, Mandal, Stavanger, Gjesdal, Austevoll, Luster, Ålesund, Osen, Namdalseid, Tysfjord, Kåfjord, Hammerfest og Kautokeino.

Bergh (red., 2014). Det andre forsøket ble gjennomført i 20 kommuner ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2015. Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet valgte da ut 10 kommuner som hadde gjennomført forsøket i 2011, samt 10 andre kommuner. Det gjaldt følgende kommuner (kommuner i **uthevet skrift** var også med på 2011-forsøket): **Marker**, Oppegård, **Hamar**, Gausdal, Horten, **Porsgrunn**, Lillesand, **Mandal, Stavanger**, Hå, **Austevoll, Luster**, Eid, Kristiansund, Klæbu, **Namdalseid, Tysfjord**, Målselv, Vadsø og **Kautokeino**. Alt i alt fikk 9329 ungdommer stemmerett som følge av dette forsøket. En tredjedel av velgerne var bosatt i Stavanger, som er den desidert største av disse kommunene.

Formålet med denne rapporten, som er én av tre rapporter fra evalueringen av forsøket med senket stemmerettsalder i 2015,⁴ er først og fremst å presentere fem analyser av disse norske forsøkene. Analysene tar for seg

1. politisk mobilisering blant unge velgere,
2. spørsmålet om en senket stemmerettsalder kan bidra til at de unge får en vane om å stemme ved valg,
3. mediedekningen av forsøket i 2015,
4. hvilken betydning en senket stemmerettsalder har for representasjon av unge i norske kommunestyre,
5. hvordan det går med unge representanter som blir valgt inn i kommunestyrene.

Vi kommer tilbake til disse analysene nedenfor. Først er det naturlig å sette disse analysene inn i en kontekst, som er forsøket med senket stemmerettsalder i 2015. Jeg ser nærmere på tre grunnleggende spørsmål knyttet til dette forsøket spesielt og en senket stemmerettsalder generelt:

1. I hvilken grad deltar ungdommene i valget, og hvem er det som deltar?
2. Hvilke partier stemmer ungdommene på? Er det store avvik i politiske preferanser mellom 16- og 17-åringer på den ene siden og voksne velgere på den andre?
3. Hva mener ungdommer, og befolkningen generelt i Norge, om en senket stemmerettsalder? Vil en eventuell senking av stemmerettsalderen ha støtte i befolkningen?

Nedenfor forsøker jeg å besvare disse spørsmålene. Deretter gir jeg en kort presentasjon av de fem påfølgende analysene som utgjør hoveddelen av rapporten.

⁴ Se også Folkestad (2015) og Winsvold og Ødegård (2016).

Valgdeltakelse blant 16- og 17-åring

Valgdeltakelsen blant ungdommene som deltok i forsøket med senket stemmerettsalder i 2015, var 57,0 prosent. Det er et nesten identisk nivå som deltakelsen i 2011, som da var på 57,8 prosent. Den generelle fremmøteprosenten ved disse valgene var 60,2 prosent i 2015 og 64,5 prosent i 2011. De yngste velgerne, på 16 eller 17 år, har altså en deltakelse som ligger litt lavere enn befolkningen generelt, men denne forskjellen har faktisk blitt mindre fra 2011 til 2015. I 2011 fant vi at fremmøtet var klart større blant 16- og 17-åringene enn blant andre unge velgere (Bergh og Ødegård 2013). Det ser vi også i 2015. Valgdeltakelsen blant vanlige førstegangsvelgere, aldersgruppen 18–21 år, er 44,8 prosent.

Tabell 1 viser valgdeltakelsen blant forsøksvelgerne i hver enkelt kommune i 2015, og sammenliknet med tilsvarende gruppe i 2011 der det er aktuelt. Deltakelsen varierer i betydelig grad mellom kommunene. Dette kan nok i noen grad reflektere den innsatsen kommunene har lagt i å mobilisere og engasjere ungdommer. Den lave deltakelsen i Kristiansund kommune er særlig påfallende, og er kanskje et uttrykk for den spesielle politiske situasjonen i Kristiansund ved dette valget, der en sak som ikke falt inn under kommunepolitikernes ansvarsområde – lokalisering av nytt regionsykehus – dominerte den politiske debatten. Marte Winsvold og Guro Ødegård (2016) analyserer aktiviteten i enkelte kommuner (blant annet Kristiansund) i rapporten «Fra medvirkning til makt. Organisering og gjennomføring av forsøket med stemmerett for 16-åring i 2015».

I noen kommuner går deltakelsen opp fra 2011 til 2015, i andre kommuner er det en nedgang. Det er ikke noe entydig mønster, og i sum utlikner disse endringene hverandre. De største svingningene ser vi i kommuner som er så små at tilfeldigheter trolig kan avgjøre om man får en fremgang eller en tilbakegang.

Tabell 1.1. Valgdeltakelse blant 16- og 17-åringer i kommuner med nedsatt stemmerettsalder i 2015, sammenliknet med deltakelsen i samme aldersgruppe i 2011

	2015		Valgdeltakelse i 2011
	Valgdeltakelse	Antall stemmeberettigede	
Marker	56,8	111	67,9
Oppegård	63,9	698	
Hamar	61,3	679	59,8
Gausdal	56,1	157	
Horten	54,3	670	
Porsgrunn	58,6	865	52,7
Lillesand	57,2	285	
Mandal	60,5	440	59,3
Stavanger	57,5	3136	61,5
Hå	56,0	518	
Austevoll	77,0	135	62,2
Luster	68,4	133	82,2
Eid	60,6	188	
Kristiansund	37,2	607	
Klæbu	56,9	195	
Namdalseid	52,4	42	77,3
Tysfjord	65,1	43	64,4
Målselv	52,2	178	
Vadsø	48,4	184	
Kautokeino	53,8	65	59,1
Totalt	57,0	9329	57,8

For å analysere deltakelsen blant disse unge velgerne i større detalj har vi fått tilgang til data (på individnivå) fra valgmanntallet. Statistisk sentralbyrå har koblet på informasjon om ungdommenes alder (16 eller 17 år), kjønn, innvandrerbakgrunn og studieprogram på videregående skole. Dette gjør det mulig å se nærmere på hvem, blant de unge, som møter opp på valgdagen, og hvem som blir sittende hjemme. Hovedresultatene vises i tabell 1.2.

Vi ser, for det første, en viss forskjell etter alder. De aller yngste, 16-åringene, som i de fleste tilfeller akkurat har begynt på det første året på videregående skole, deltar i noe større grad enn 17-åringene. Det er en påfallende stor forskjell i valgdeltakelse mellom gutter og jenter. Jentene er nesten 10 prosentpoeng mer tilbøyelige til å stemme enn guttene. Dette ser ut til å være en forsterking av en trend vi har sett ved nyere norske valg: Unge kvinner deltar i større grad enn unge menn (Bergh 2015).

Det er ikke overraskende at ungdommer med innvandrerbakgrunn har lavere valgdeltakelse enn andre ungdommer. En slik forskjell finner vi også blant voksne velgere (Bjørklund og Bergh 2013). Kun 31 prosent av 16- og 17-åringer som selv har innvandret til Norge, deltok i valget. Ungdommer som er født i Norge, og som har foreldre som begge har innvandret (også kalt «andre generasjon»), har også en lavere deltakelse enn andre. Foreldregenerasjonens lave valgdeltakelse ser altså ut til å smitte over på ungdommene.

Et annet entydig funn fra tidligere forskning er at utdanning og valgdeltakelse henger sammen (Christensen mfl. 2013; Wolfinger og Rosenstone 1980; Aardal 2002). Personer som har tatt høyere utdanning, er mer tilbøyelige til å stemme enn andre. Ungdommer på 16 og 17 år er ikke gamle nok til å ha påbegynt høyere utdanning. Det er likevel tenkelig at studieløp på videregående skole kan henge sammen med valgdeltakelse.

De aller fleste av 16- og 17-åringene som fikk stemmerett ved forsøket i 2015, er registrert som elever på en videregående skole. Av de over 9000 stemmeberettigede er det litt over 500 som ikke er registrert ved en videregående utdanningsinstitusjon. Valgdeltakelsen i denne gruppen er kun 21 prosent (ikke vist i tabellen). Tilsynelatende har videregående utdanning mye å si, men når vi ser nærmere på denne gruppen, ser vi at en del er bosatt i utlandet; mange har innvandrerbakgrunn. Trolig sier deltakelsen i denne gruppen oss ikke så mye om effekten av videregående utdanning; det er sannsynligvis bakenforliggende årsaker til at disse personene hverken har registrert utdanning eller stemmer i valget.

Tabell 1.2. Valgdeltakelse blant forsøksvelgerne ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2015, etter sosial bakgrunn. I prosent

	Valgdeltakelse		N
Alder	16 år	59,2	4654
	17 år	56,5	4669
Kjønn	Gutter	53,4	4841
	Jenter	62,8	4482
Innvandrer- bakgrunn	Første generasjon innvandrere	31,2	606
	Født i Norge av foreldre som er innvandrere	41,0	356
Utdannings- program – videregående skole	Allmenne fag	71,7	4108
	Naturvitenskapelige fag, håndverksfag og tekniske fag	42,9	1888
	Helse-, sosial- og idrettsfag	54,9	1366
	Humanistiske og estetiske fag	65,5	409
	Samfunnsfag og juridiske fag	58,6	399
	Økonomiske og administrative fag	39,2	260
	Primærnæringsfag	40,3	144
	Samferdsels- og sikkerhetsfag og andre servicefag	42,4	85

I tabell 1.2 fokuserer vi på de som er registrert som deltakende på et studieprogram på videregående skole. Forskjellene i valgdeltakelse etter studieprogram er betydelige. Valgdeltakelsen er høyest blant de som velger det mest populære studieprogrammet: studiespesialisering (som i SSBs terminologi kalles «allmenne fag»). Formålet med denne studieretningen er å kvalifisere elevene for og forberede dem på høyere utdanning. Vi vet fra tidligere forskning at personer med høyere utdanning deltar mer enn andre, og det ser altså ut til at disse forskjellene etableres allerede før man starter et studieløp på universiteter eller høyskoler.

Blant de to andre store gruppene av utdanningsprogram på videregående skole – 1) naturvitenskapelige fag, håndverksfag og tekniske fag og 2) helse-, sosial- og idrettsfag – er valgdeltakelsen betydelig lavere. En del av disse elevene går

videre til høyere utdanning, men i utgangspunktet har de valgt et mer yrkesrettet studieløp.

Det blir til tider diskutert i denne forskningslitteraturen om forskjellene i valgdeltakelse etter utdanningsnivå skyldes egenskaper man lærer og opparbeider seg gjennom studiene, eller om det er en seleksjonsmekanisme som ligger bak (Kam og Palmer 2008). Hvis det siste er riktig, vil man forvente at de personene som velger høyere utdanning, vil ha høy valgdeltakelse allerede før de begynner studiene, og at studiene i seg selv ikke betyr så mye for om de stemmer. Når valgdeltakelsen er så høy som 72 prosent blant de som velger studiespesialiserende på videregående skole, så tyder det på at de som går videre på høyere utdanning, allerede i ung alder er tilbøyelige til å stemme. Dette gir støtte til ideen om at en seleksjonsmekanisme ligger bak forskjellene i valgdeltakelse etter utdanningsnivå. I så fall kan man tenke seg at det er noen bakenforliggende egenskaper hos disse ungdommene som påvirker både valg av utdanning og om de stemmer eller ikke.

Avslutningsvis i denne analysen av valgdeltakelse er det grunn til å spørre om det kan være en sammenheng mellom flere av variablene i tabell 1.2. En særlig nærliggende tanke er at det er kjønnsforskjeller i valg av studieretning på videregående skoler. Kanskje er kjønnsforskjellene i valgdeltakelse derfor et uttrykk for at jenter og gutter velger ulike studier? For å undersøke denne og liknende muligheter gjennomfører jeg en multivariat flernivå-regresjonsanalyse i tabell 1.3. Formålet med analysen er å studere effekten av hver enkelt variabel, kontrollert for de andre variablene i analysen.

Jeg gjennomfører en flernivåanalyse fordi det kan være grunn til å tro at disse velgerne ikke er helt uavhengige av hverandre (noe som er en forutsetning for vanlig regresjonsanalyse). Personer som er bosatt i samme kommune, kan være påvirket av de samme forholdene i den kommunen (og kan påvirke hverandres deltakelse). For eksempel kan det være en kultur for høy deltakelse i enkelte kommuner, og det motsatte i andre. For å kontrollere for det på en enkel måte, inkluderer jeg den generelle valgdeltakelsen i kommunen som en uavhengig variabel. Det er mulig at 16- og 17-åringenes deltakelse påvirkes av det generelle deltakelsesnivået i kommunen.

Tabell 1.3. Flernivå-regresjonsanalyse – valgdeltakelse blant 16- og 17-åringer i 20 forsøkskommuner

	Koeffisient	Standardfeil
Kjønn (gutt = 1)	-0,076 **	0,010
Alder (16 = 0; 17 = 1)	-0,016	0,010
Første generasjon innvandrere	-0,286 **	0,021
Født i Norge av foreldre som er innvandrere	-0,225 **	0,026
Utdanningsprogram – studiespesialiserende	0,217 **	0,101
Valgdeltakelse i hele kommunen	-0,007	0,004
Konstantledd	0,984 **	0,237
N – individer	8778	
N – kommuner	20	

** Statistisk signifikant på 1 %-nivå

Resultatene i tabell 1.3 viser OLS-regresjonskoeffisienter. Disse kan tolkes som forskjeller i deltakelse, og disse forskjellene kan dermed sammenliknes med forskjeller i deltakelse mellom grupper som fremgår av tabell 1.2. Koeffisienten for kjønn, -0,076, indikerer at gutter har en valgdeltakelse som er 7,6 prosentpoeng lavere enn jenter. Dette er en sterk og statistisk signifikant effekt, men den er altså noe lavere enn forskjellen vi så i tabell 1.2 (nesten 10 prosentpoeng). Noe av kjønnsforskjellen i valgdeltakelse kan forklares med at jenter og gutter velger ulike studieprogram på videregående skole, men i hovedsak består kjønnsforskjellen etter denne statistiske kontrollen.

Aldersforskjellen i valgdeltakelse er ikke statistisk signifikant i denne analysen. Den lave deltakelsen blant personer med innvandrerbakgrunn fremstår som omtrent like stor i tabell 1.3 som i den bivariate analysen i tabell 1.2. Betydningen av å velge et studiespesialiserende utdanningsprogram er også klar og tydelig i tabell 1.3: Deltakelsen er nesten 22 prosentpoeng høyere i denne gruppen enn blant andre. Det er ingen effekt av det generelle deltakelsesnivået i kommunen. Ifølge denne analysen er ungdommene i liten grad påvirket av om befolkningen i kommunen for øvrig stemmer. I en bivariat analyse finner Winsvold og Ødegård (2016) at det er en slik sammenheng, men den effekten forsvinner altså når vi kontrollerer for individuelle kjennetegn ved ungdommene i tabell 1.3.

I sum blir forskjellene i deltakelse som fremgår i tabell 1.2, bekreftet i den multivariate analysen. Det er betydelige forskjeller i valgdeltakelse etter kjønn, innvandringsbakgrunn og valg av studieretning på videregående skole.

Dermed vet vi en del om hvem som stemmer. Neste spørsmål er hvilke partier de stemmer på.

Stemmegivning

Et mye brukt argument mot å senke stemmerettsalderen til 16 år er at ungdommer er lettere påvirkelige enn voksne velgere, og at de er tilbøyelige til å støtte ytterliggående og populistiske politiske alternativer.⁵ Hvis 16-åringer får mulighet til å stemme, kan altså det gi økt oppslutning om fløypartier, og de store etablerte partiene kan tape. Forsøket med stemmerett for 16-åringer gir en mulighet for å undersøke om dette stemmer. I forbindelse med 2011-valget fant vi små forskjeller mellom ungdommenes og de voksnes stemmegivning. Vi diskuterte da muligheten for at terrorangrepene den 22. juli samme år kan ha gjort at ungdommer støttet opp om etablerte partier i større grad enn de ellers ville ha gjort (Bergh, red. 2014). Kommunestyrevalgene i 2015 var heldigvis ikke preget av en slik hendelse, og kan dermed ses på som mer «normale» valg. Det gjør det interessant å se om resultatene fra 2011 holder seg i 2015.

Informasjon om stemmegivning blant 16- og 17-åringer henter vi fra skolevalgsundersøkelsen. Dette er en undersøkelse som blir gjennomført av Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelige datatjeneste – nå Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD) – på videregående skoler i forbindelse med skolevalget, uken før det egentlige valget. Undersøkelsen spør om hvilket parti elevene stemte på i skolevalget. Vi har tidligere sett at det er stort samsvar mellom stemmegivning i skolevalget og i det egentlige valget (Bergh, red. 2014). Skolevalgsundersøkelsen representerer altså langt på vei ungdommenes reelle politiske preferanser.

Tabell 1.4 viser hvilke partier 16- og 17-åringene stemte på i skolevalget 2015. Tabellen skiller mellom ungdommer som er bosatt i en av forsøkskommunene, og som dermed hadde stemmerett i 2015, og de som er bosatt i landet ellers og som ikke hadde stemmerett. Siste kolonne viser valgresultatet ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2015 (for alle velgere i hele landet).

⁵ For en oppsummering av debatten, se Ødegård og Aars 2011.

Tabell 1.4. Stemmegivning ved skolevalget 2015 blant 16- og 17-åringer i henholdsvis forsøkskommuner og andre kommuner. sammenliknet med valgresultatet ved kommunestyrevalget (i hele landet). I prosent

	Bosatt i forsøkskommunene	Bosatt i andre kommuner	Valgresultat
Rødt	5	5	2,0
SV	4	7	4,1
Ap	33	33	33,0
Sp	8	9	8,5
MDG	4	6	4,2
KrF	2	3	5,4
Venstre	5	6	5,5
Høyre	14	14	23,2
FrP	17	11	9,5
Andre partier	7	6	4,6
Sum	99	100	100,0
N	1794	13326	

Tabellen viser et påfallende samsvar mellom de politiske preferansene til 16- og 17-åringer på den ene siden og velgere for øvrig på den andre siden. Oppslutningen om Arbeiderpartiet er identisk når man sammenlikner ungdom og voksne velgere, og det er små forskjeller knyttet til de fleste andre partiene. Den største forskjellen gjelder Høyre, som får mindre oppslutning fra ungdom enn fra befolkningen for øvrig.

Det er nesten ingen forskjeller i stemmegivning mellom ungdommer i forsøkskommunene (som har stemmerett) og ungdommer i landet ellers (som ikke har stemmerett). Den eneste forskjellen av betydning gjelder Fremskrittspartiet. Ungdommer i forsøkskommunene stemmer i større grad enn andre ungdommer, og i større grad enn befolkningen generelt, på FrP. Det er lite sannsynlig at dette avviket er forårsaket av stemmerettsforsøket. Trolig skyldes dette tilfeldigheter: Ved et par av de videregående skolene som forsøksvelgerne gikk på, gjorde FrP et godt valg og ble største parti.

Alt i alt er det likevel grunn til å understreke at det er små forskjeller i stemmegivning mellom ungdommer og befolkningen ellers. Gitt at ungdommer kan være opptatt av andre politikkfelt og ha andre politiske holdninger og andre

interesser enn den voksne befolkningen, er det overraskende at det er et så stort samsvar i stemmegivning. Vi finner ikke støtte for hypotesen om at ungdom er mer radikale eller på andre måter avviker betydelig i politiske preferanser fra den voksne befolkningen.

Holdninger til stemmerett for 16-åringer

I forbindelse med evalueringen av forsøket med stemmerett for 16-åringer i 2011 fant vi at befolkningen ikke ønsket at stemmerettsalderen senkes. Selv blant ungdommer og unge velgere svarer store flertall at 16-åringer ikke bør få stemmerett. Vi fant kun én gruppe i 2011 der et flertall var positive til å senke stemmerettsalderen, og det var 16- og 17-åringer i forsøkskommunene, altså den gruppen som faktisk fikk stemmerett som følge av stemmerettsforsøket.

Liknende undersøkelser i nyere tid fra Storbritannia og Danmark viser det samme: klar motstand i befolkningen mot en lavere stemmerettsalder (Birch mfl. 2014; Larsen mfl. 2016). Det er ikke gitt at dette er veldig fastlåste holdninger, eller at dette er et spørsmål som velgerne har veldig sterke meninger om. I de fleste europeiske land var det på 1960- og 1970-tallet en tilsvarende motstand mot å senke stemmerettsalderen fra 20/21 år til 18 år rett før denne endringen faktisk ble gjennomført (Bergh, red. 2014; Birch mfl. 2014).

Tabell 1.5 viser holdninger til stemmerett for 16-åringer blant ungdommer (i og utenfor forsøkskommunene) og blant befolkningen for øvrig i hele landet i 2015. Det er lite nytt å rapportere, sammenliknet med situasjonen i 2011. Selv om det i 2015 ble gjennomført et forsøk med stemmerett for 16-åringer for andre gang, er det stor motstand mot å gjøre en slik endring permanent. Dette resultatet er tydelig i alle aldersgrupper, men henger likevel sammen med alder: De eldste velgerne er særlig negative til å gi 16-åringer stemmerett. Som i 2011 ser vi at motstanden mot en slik utvidelse av stemmeretten er minst blant ungdommer i forsøkskommunene. Men selv i denne gruppen er det en minoritet som ønsker å senke stemmerettsalderen. Kun blant 16-åringer i disse kommunene uttrykker et flertall at deres egen aldersgruppe bør få stemmerett.

Tabell 1.5. Andeler som er enig i at stemmerettsalderen bør senkes til 16 år i ulike grupper

			Prosent	N
Elever i videregående skoler	Forsøkskommunene	16 år	51	1150
		17 år	44	938
		18 år eller eldre	34	684
	Andre kommuner	16 år	35	7111
		17 år	31	7573
		18 år eller eldre	14	6591
Totalt (alle vgs.-elever)			29	27192
Den voksne befolkningen for øvrig	Under 30 år		26	196
	30–49 år		22	342
	50–69 år		13	279
	70 år eller eldre		11	148
	Totalt (voksne bef.)		19	965

Kilde: Skolevalgsundersøkelsen 2015 og NSDs (tilhørende) nasjonale spørreundersøkelse

Fem analyser av stemmerettsforsøkene

I de resterende delene av rapporten presenterer vi fem analyser av forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer i 2011 og 2015. Analysene er presentert og/eller publisert i andre sammenhenger, men siden alle analysene stammer fra evalueringene av forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer, synes vi det er naturlig å gi en samlet fremstilling av dem her. Fire av paperene er skrevet på engelsk. Det siste, Winsvolds paper om mediedekningen av forsøket, er et bokkapittel som kommer (i noe revidert form) i boken basert på Lokaldemokratiundersøkelsen 2015, som blir publisert våren 2017.

Politisk mobilisering av norske ungdommer i 2011

Av Guro Ødegård, Johannes Bergh og Jo Saglie

Det første paperet (kapittel 2) tar for seg den uvanlige graden av politisk mobilisering blant ungdom som fant sted i forbindelse med 2011-valget. Valgdeltakelsen blant førstegangselgere økte med 11 prosentpoeng siden forrige valg, og i tillegg var deltakelsen høy blant 16- og 17-åringer som deltok

i stemmerettsforsøket. Disse to begivenhetene blir gjerne analysert hver for seg; paperet er et forsøk på en mer overordnet analyse.

Den politiske mobiliseringen blant ungdom analyseres med utgangspunkt i tre forklaringer på alders- eller generasjonsforskjeller i deltakelse: livssyklus-, generasjons- og periodeeffekter.

Vi finner at aldersforskjeller i deltakelse i stor grad kan forklares av livssyklus-effekter: Unge velgere tidlig i 20-årene er i en overgangsfase i livet som gjerne innebærer flytting og endring av sosiale nettverk. Dette medfører lav politisk interesse og deltakelse. Etter hvert som man bygger nye sosiale nettverk, stifter familie og blir yrkesaktiv, øker den sosiale integrasjonen, og dette fører til høyere politisk deltakelse. Graden av integrasjon i et lokalsamfunn forklarer nok også noe av den relativt høye deltakelsen blant de aller yngste: 16- og 17-åringene. I tillegg er de yngste velgerne påvirket av skole og foreldre.

Videre viser analysene i paperet at terrorangrepene 22. juli 2011 førte med seg en høyere politisk mobilisering blant ungdom som ikke bare er en (kortsiktig) periodeeffekt, men som ser ut til å ha preget en hel generasjon over lengre tid enn bare 2011-valget. Mye tyder altså på at denne mobiliseringen er en generasjonseffekt.

Stemmegivning som vane

Av Johannes Bergh

Tidligere forskning tyder på at for mange velgere er det å delta i valg en vane, og at hvis man først har stemt ved ett valg, så øker sannsynligheten for at man stemmer ved fremtidige valg (se for eksempel Coppock og Green 2016; Meredith 2009; Plutzer 2002). Hvis stemmegivning er «vanedannende», så kan det å gi stemmerett til 16-åringer gjøre at ungdommer etablerer en slik vane tidligere enn de ellers ville ha gjort. I tillegg har vi sett ovenfor at valgdeltakelsen blant 16- og 17-åringer er høyere enn blant de ordinære førstegangsvelgerne. Det kan bety at vanen om å stemme blir mer utbredt blant flere ungdommer hvis stemmerettsalderen er 16, enn hvis den er 18 år. Dette argumentet for å senke stemmerettsalderen til 16 år blir gjerne tilskrevet Mark Franklin (2004).

De norske forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer gir en mulighet til å undersøke om dette argumentet stemmer. Den ene delen av argumentet vet vi er riktig: Valgdeltakelsen er relativt høy blant 16- og 17-åringer. Det gjenstående spørsmålet er derfor om det etableres en vane om å stemme når denne aldersgruppen får stemmerett. I kapittel 3 benyttes data fra stemmerettsalderforsøket i 2011, samt det påfølgende stortingsvalget i 2013, til å undersøke dette.

Analysen i kapitlet sammenlikner ungdommer som fikk stemmerett i en alder av 16 eller 17 år i 2011, med ungdommer som er like gamle, men som ikke fikk stemmerett i 2011. Hvis hypotesen om stemmegivning som vane er riktig, burde ungdommene som fikk stemmerett i 2011, ha høyere valgdeltakelse ved stortingsvalget i 2013 enn de som ikke fikk stemmerett i 2011. Vi har altså en hypotese om at det ble etablert en vane om å stemme i 2011 som påvirker deltakelsen i 2013.

Resultatene viser at valgdeltakelsen *ikke* er høyere blant forsøksvelgerne enn blant andre velgere. Forsøket med stemmerett for 16-åringer i 2011 hadde ikke en positiv effekt på ungdommenes deltakelse i 2013. Tvert imot ser det ut til at de som får stemmerett for første gang i 2013 (i en alder av 18 eller 19 år), har høyere deltakelse enn jevnaldrende velgere som også hadde mulighet til å stemme i 2011 (forsøksvelgerne). Vi kan ikke utelukke at denne tilsynelatende negative effekten av forsøket skyldes tilfeldigheter i utvalgene som brukes i paperet. Vi kan derimot konkludere med at forsøket ikke bidro til å etablere en vane om å stemme hos ungdommene som deltok. Dette argumentet for å senke stemmerettsalderen til 16 år finner ikke støtte.

For å følge opp denne analysen har vi også undersøkt valgdeltakelsen blant forsøksvelgerne fra 2011 ved lokalvalget i 2013. Disse resultatene er ikke rapportert i paperet. For 2015-valget har vi data for 3763 av forsøksvelgerne fra 2011. Dette gjelder de som i 2015 er bosatt i en kommune med elektronisk avkryssing i manntallet. Som i analysen i paperet sammenlikner vi denne gruppen med 350 tilfeldig utvalgte personer i samme aldersgruppe, men som ikke var en del av 2011-forsøket.

Resultatene blir påfallende like det vi fant i forbindelse med 2013-valget. Deltakelsen er faktisk høyere i gruppen som ikke var med på forsøket i 2011: en forskjell på 4,5 prosentpoeng (35,5 vs. 40,0 prosent). Dette ligger helt på grensen til statistisk signifikans. I tillegg er det noe usikkerhet om det kan være noe skjevhet siden vi bare har med personer bosatt i kommuner med elektronisk manntall. Vi kan altså ikke si med sikkerhet at forsøket i 2011 hadde en negativ effekt på senere deltakelse, men vi kan slå fast igjen at forsøket ikke hadde den forventede positive effekten. Ingenting tyder på at disse velgerne etablerte en vane om å stemme når de deltok i forsøket i 2011.

Stemmerett for 16-åringer – rettighet eller opplæringsprosjekt? En analyse av mediedekningen av forsøket med nedsatt stemmerettsalder

Av Marte Winsvold

Stemmerettsforsøket var gjenstand for mye diskusjon i forkant av valget. I dette bidraget har vi undersøkt hvordan forsøket ble fremstilt i den lokale medie-debatten i fire av forsøkskommunene. Pressens innramming av forsøket kan si oss noe om hvordan stemmegivning ble formidlet til ungdom som skulle stemme for første gang, og hvordan stemmegivning ble begrunnet for dem. Analysen viser at forsøket fikk en del oppmerksomhet, og at denne oppmerksomheten nesten utelukkende var positiv: Få eller ingen argumenter ble anført *mot* å senke stemmerettsalderen. Motforestillinger er likevel indirekte representert ved at problematiske sider ved å senke stemmerettsalderen trekkes frem for så å tilbakevises. Spesielt gjelder dette spørsmålet om hvorvidt 16-åringer er modne nok til å avgi stemme.

I noenlunde lik dosering presenteres forsøket som å handle om stemmerett som en *rettighet* og stemmerett som *læring*. Stemmerett som rettighet innebærer at ungdom fortjener retten til å stemme fordi de berøres av de politiske beslutningene som fattes. Stemmerett som deltakelse innebærer at ungdom bør få stemmerett fordi de trenger å lære å delta i politikk og samfunnsliv. Stemmerett for 16- og 17-åringer presenteres altså både som en rettighet og som et opplæringsprosjekt.

Det å lære å delta politisk er åpenbart en forutsetning for politisk deltakelse, og dermed en forutsetning også for å kunne benytte seg av stemmeretten forstått som en rettighet. En kan likevel spekulere i hva det gjør med ungdom å bli presentert for stemmeretten som et opplæringsprosjekt. En mulig konsekvens er at valgdeltakelse knyttes til opplæringssituasjonen i skolen. En kan videre tenke seg at det er mindre motiverende å få stemmerett fordi det er en del av et opplæringsprosjekt, enn det er å få stemmerett fordi en ses på som meningsberettiget.

Rekruttering av unge folkevalgte

Av Jacob Aars og Jo Saglie

Ungdom er generelt underrepresentert i politisk valgte forsamlinger. Et mulig tiltak for å øke representasjonen av ungdom er å øke antallet unge velgere gjennom å senke stemmerettsalderen. De to forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer (i 2011 og 2015) innebar at aldersgrensen for å stemme ble senket, men det skjedde ingen endring i alderen man må ha for å kunne stille til valg

(såkalt valgbarhetsalder). 16- og 17-åringer kunne altså ikke stille til valg. Likevel er det tenkelig at forsøkene bidro til at flere unge politikere ble valgt. Det kunne skje ved at partiene nominerte flere unge, og kanskje særlig nominerte flere unge kandidater på sikre plasser, for å appellere til den nye unge velgergruppen. Alternativt kan man tenke seg at unge velgere gir personstemmer til unge kandidater. Flere unge velgere fører til at unge kandidater kommer bedre ut på valgdagen, og dermed blir flere av dem valgt.

I kapittel 5 gjennomføres det en grundig analyse av hvilken effekt de to stemmerettsforsøkene (i 2011 og 2015) har hatt på representasjonen av unge politikere (under 26 år) i norske kommunestyre. Resultatene viser at det skjer en økning i andel innvalgte unge i forsøkskommunene sammenliknet med resten av landet. Dette er trolig det mest konkrete utfallet av forsøkene med stemmerett for 16-åringer: Representasjonen av unge folkevalgte i de aktuelle kommunestyrene gikk opp. Dette skjedde både i 2011 og i 2015.

Det er likevel en viktig forskjell mellom utfallene av de to forsøkene. I 2011 var det først og fremst velgerne som mobiliserte og gav personstemmer til unge kandidater. Dette skjedde i hele landet i etterkant av terrorangrepene 22. juli – politisk aktive ungdommer ble jo angrepet den 22. juli, derfor ble det rettet mye oppmerksomhet og sympati mot unge politikere. Denne effekten var likevel størst i forsøkskommunene, som opplevde en betydelig økning i representasjonen av de unge i kommunestyrene. Forsøket hadde altså en effekt på toppen av en mer generell 22. juli-effekt.

I 2015 ser det ut til at partiene i forsøkskommunene i større grad nominerte unge politikere på gode plasser på sine valglister. Utfallet blir omtrent som i 2011: en klar økning i representasjonen av unge i forsøkskommunene. Forskjellen er at det er partienes nominasjoner snarere enn velgernes retting på listene, som forklarer økningen. I resten av landet var det imidlertid i større grad velgernes personstemmer som brakte unge kandidater inn i kommunestyrene.

Hva skjer med unge politikere som blir valgt inn i kommunestyrene?

Av Marte Winsvold, Guro Ødegård og Johannes Bergh

I det siste kapitlet ser vi på den rollen som unge politikere (under 26 år i 2011) har spilt etter at de ble valgt inn i kommunestyrene i forsøkskommunene i 2011. Hvordan opplever disse unge ferske politikerne deres periode i kommunestyret, og hvilken rolle opplever de at de har som valgte representanter? Er de innflytelsesrike politikere eller kun partienes «ungdomsalibi»? Vi er også interessert

i om motivasjonen til å drive med politikk og å ta gjenvalg er påvirket av hvilken rolle de opplever at de har i kommunestyret.

Det er rimelig å tro at det å bli plassert inn i en rolle som ungdommens representant, og kanskje ikke bli tatt helt seriøst når man forholder seg til andre politikkområder, kan være ødeleggende for disse politikernes motivasjon til videre politisk arbeid. I verste fall kan partiene på denne måten miste fremtidige politiske talenter.

Vi finner at unge politikere i forsøkskommunene i hovedsak har en positiv opplevelse av å være folkevalgte. Et flertall opplever å bli tatt seriøst av eldre politikere og at de i hvert fall har noe politisk innflytelse. Unge representanter som er bredt politisk orientert, altså som ikke bare fokuserer på «ungdomsaker», opplever i størst grad at de har politisk innflytelse og er mer motivert til å ta gjenvalg. Politikere som først og fremst er orientert mot ungdomssaker, uttrykker en større grad av misnøye og er mindre motivert til å fortsette en politisk karriere. Det å være et «ungdomsalibi» fremstår altså ikke som et godt utgangspunkt for videre politisk engasjement.

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2 Why did they vote? Explaining the political mobilization of young Norwegians since 2011

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Introduction

Election turnout has declined in Western democracies during the past 30–40 years, and there is reason to believe that low turnout among young voters has contributed to this development. Most of the decline happened after the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 (Franklin, 2004; Gallego, 2009). The political and academic debate on declining voter turnout tends to focus on the low turnout among the young. From this perspective, the relatively high participation rate among young voters in Norway since the local elections of 2011 comes as a surprise. While turnout in general remained more or less stable, turnout among first-time voters (aged 18–21) increased by 11 percentage points from the previous local elections in 2007 (from 35 to 46 percent). In addition, the voting age was lowered from 18 to 16 in 20 selected municipalities. As much as 58 percent of the 9,400 16- and 17-year-olds who took part in this trial turned out to vote. However, the local elections of 2011 took place under extraordinary circumstances: Norway was struck by a terror attack less than two months before Election Day.

This changed pattern of participation raises the following questions: How can the increased turnout among young voters in general—and the exceptionally high participation among the trial voters in particular—be explained? To understand the nature of this increase, it is necessary to also consider the later elections: The 2013 parliamentary election and the 2015 local elections. Did the increased mobilization persist four years later?

Obviously, different mechanisms may have contributed to the high turnout among young Norwegian voters. Scholars have been particularly attentive to

three different mechanisms that explain the age differences: Life-cycle, generation, and period effects (Blais, Gidengil, & Nevitte, 2004; Franklin, 2004; Gallego, 2009; Konzelmann et al., 2012; Wass, 2007). We argue that these mechanisms are valuable for understanding the recent political mobilization among young voters in a Norwegian context. The article aims to contribute to the understanding of political mobilization among a particular age group of young voters by discussing the relevance of these three explanatory mechanisms. The life-cycle effect is a permanent and static dimension tied to the characteristics of specific life stages. Consequently, a specific pattern of voting behaviour will be repeated by new generations at the same life stage. As is the case in other democracies, turnout among young Norwegian voters is lower than among the electorate in general. However, the remarkable increase in turnout within a specific age group among young voters in the 2011 election cannot be explained by a static life-cycle effect. Accordingly, we ask if this mobilization may be interpreted as a short-term period effect that will fade after a while, or if we can identify a more extended generational effect that will follow this generation throughout its lifespan. Two limitations are worth mentioning. First, these explanatory mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, and it is not possible—given our data—to completely separate these effects. Second, a term of four years is a limited period; to identify a resilient generational effect we would need to analyse voting pattern through several elections. Still, we argue that a time span of four years, which includes a parliamentary election in 2013 and a local election in 2015, will give some indications of possible voting habits for this specific cohort in the future.

We thus raise the following research questions: Is the increased turnout among young voters in the 2011 local elections a short-term period effect or can we identify a comprehensive generational effect? Furthermore, how can we explain the exceptionally high turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds compared to the ordinary first-time voters? Was this a period effect of the voting pioneers of 2011 or can we identify a life course effect restricted to new, young voters?

The article is structured as follows: We review research on the relationship between age and turnout in the next section, and use the mechanisms described in this literature to present three expectations that will guide our empirical analysis. Then we present the extraordinary contextual conditions of the Norwegian local elections in 2011. Our analysis is based on quantitative data on turnout by age, membership of political youth parties, and qualitative interviews with first-time voters. On the basis of the results, we finally discuss whether the increased turnout among young people might be interpreted as a period effect, a life course effect, or a generational effect.

Age differences in voter turnout: Life-cycle, generation and period effect

The curvilinear impact of age on turnout is one of the most robust findings in the study of turnout. A relatively low level of participation in early adult life, a gradually growing mobilization among middle-aged voters, and a soft decline with old age have been reported since the seminal analyses conducted in the 1930s (for reviews see Milbrath, 1965; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). This age difference has been explained by a *life-cycle effect*. People at the age of 18 are moving into a transitional phase in life; they finish secondary education, they move away from home, leaving old social networks and local communities behind. These shifts reduce young persons' probability of voting, but turnout increases when they get older and enter a more stable phase in their lives. Accordingly, the young vote less than the middle-aged, who have established families and careers (Highton & Wolfinger, 2001; Abramson et al., 1998).

In recent years, however, scholars have questioned the simple curvilinear relationship between age and turnout. Bhatti and Hansen (2010) have studied the relationship between age and turnout among first-time voters in Denmark at the local elections in 2009. They found that first-time voters who had turned 18 a few weeks before Election Day were more likely to vote than older first-time voters; while voters at the age of 18 had a turnout of 65 percent, the turnout for voters who had passed the age of 19 in the weeks leading up to the election, decreased to 50 percent. Bhatti and Hansen (2012a) also found a positive effect on turnout of approximately 10 percentage points among young voters who still lived with both parents. When young adults left home, the influence of their parents was presumably replaced by the influence of their peers—who generally are less likely to vote. Bhatti and colleagues also found a similar pattern in Finland and Texas (Bhatti et al., 2012). Voters in their early twenties are characterized by low turnout, while voters at age 18 participate to a greater extent than older youth.

Age differences in turnout has also been explained by a *generational effect* (see e.g., Franklin, 2004, Highton & Wolfinger, 2001), whereby different generations have different turnout rates. Scholars have put forward the argument that, if a generation is mobilized during its impressionable years, this early socializing experience can have a lasting impact (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Plutzer, 2002; Franklin, 2004). Therefore, a generation or cohort effect is often seen as something that is constant over the course of life (Mannheim, 1952; Franklin, 2004). Low turnout among today's young voters will cause a drop in

overall participation when the young generations replace the older electorate. In other words, losing young voters today risks losing future generations of voters.

Following the sociology of generations, individuals born in the same period of time may share exposure to certain socio-historical events that shape their political socialization (Franklin, 2004; Inglehart, 1989; Mannheim, 1952; Putnam, 2000; Edmunds & Turner, 2002). According to Edmunds and Turner:

A generation can be defined in terms of a collective response to a traumatic event or catastrophe that unites a particular cohort of individuals into a self-conscious age stratum. The traumatic event uniquely cuts off a generation from its past and separates it from the future. The event becomes the basis of a collective ideology and set of integration rituals (2002:12).

This quote is in line with other scholars who argue that individuals are more open to external stimuli during their impressionable years in late adolescence and early adulthood (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Easton, 1953; Hyman, 1959). Zukin and colleagues (2006) identify four age cohorts in the U.S., who grew up with different socialization experiences. This led to differences in political outlook and participation. Within such a framework of understanding, we may deem terrorism to be a traumatic event or catastrophe that created a collective response, especially among young people. In general, there is limited research on how terrorism influences turnout in general and its age-specific effects in particular. However, two studies are relevant. Age-specific effects were found after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001 in the United States. The first national election was held more than a year after the attacks. Researchers have shown that both political confidence and engagement increased in the period immediately after 9/11. Six months later the numbers had returned to normal (Traugott et al., 2002), except in one group: Those who were young and in their most formative years when the terror struck (Sander & Putnam, 2010). Unlike the older cohorts, young Americans born in the 1980s maintained a stable high level of political interest and high turnout in the years following the terrorist attacks. This study exhibits a generational effect. In a study of Spanish voters, Bali (2007) found that the terrorist attack in Spain, three days before the parliamentary election of 2004, mobilized groups with previously low turnout such as young voters and voters without higher education. The election was remarkable, partly because of the short time between the attack and Election Day and partly because the sitting conservative government was voted out. However, Bali's study did not show a long-lasting effect on turnout in the young generation.

Such socializing experiences might in some cases be common across several countries. For example, Bhatti and Hansen (2012b) use the 1960s movement as an example of political currents affecting a young cohort across several countries—born just after the end of WWII. In other cases, different countries may be affected in different ways. One example is the above-mentioned response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA. Edmunds and Turner (2005) have pointed out that this traumatic event contributed to bottomless fear and political mobilization among many young Americans. Among groups of youths from the Middle East, the terrorist attacks did not symbolize an attack on American democracy and freedom, but on American imperialism, and worthy of celebration.

However, it is not necessarily the case that traumatic events or important social, cultural, or political occurrences have long-term effects on turnout. Such events may have short-term consequences for turnout—or the relationship between age and turnout. A limited *period effect* is the third effect that may explain a decline or an increase in turnout. Bhatti and Hansen (2012b) use the examples of the 2009 European Parliament (EP) election in Denmark and Latvia, where highly salient referendums were held simultaneously with the EP election, which boosted the turnout. Franklin (2001) uses the first-time-boost of the first EP election in new member states as examples. Period effects may also be of an even more general nature—if the public perceives the EP election as less important than previously or if it generally becomes more politically disinterested, this is likely to result in a negative period effect (see Bhatti & Hansen, 2012b). An example from Norway is the parliamentary election in 1989, where environmental issues were high on the political agenda. This mobilized young voters in particular (Aardal & Valen, 1995). However, this effect seemed to be brief, as it could not be identified in the following parliamentary election of 1993.

Since life-cycle effects are supposed to remain stable, they cannot explain declining turnout (unless there is a substantial change in the age composition of the electorate). However, Franklin (2004) argues that a combination of generational replacement and life-cycle effects—directly related to reduced voting age—can explain the decline. His starting point is the low turnout rate among young voters. Franklin argues that voting is a habit. People learn the habit of voting or not based on experiences in their first few elections. It is therefore of crucial importance that the newly enfranchised use their right to vote: ‘Turnout appears to be stable because, for most people, the habit of voting is established relatively early in their adult lives, (Franklin, 2004, p.12). When the voting age was reduced, the newly enfranchised got the right to vote at what might be considered the wrong stage of the life-cycle—in a transitional phase of

their lives. If they did not vote in their first election—at the age of 18—a habit of non-voting would be formed. Thus, a life-cycle explanation does not exclude the generation explanation, but there seems to be an interaction: A high turnout among young voters increases the probability that they will vote in subsequent elections. In a Nordic context, Gallego (2009) found that lower turnout among the post-baby boomer generations is the main reason behind the decline in turnout. Franklin (2004) suggested that the voting age should be raised to 21, since 21-year-olds have passed a key transitional phase. According to our findings, the turnout of 21-year-olds is remarkably lower than that of 18-year-olds. This indicates that young voters in their early twenties are still in an unstable life phase, which influences their turnout. In a later work, Franklin (2005) showed that there is a close relationship between the length of residence, and thus of integration into the home network, and turnout—especially among young voters. This might be an argument for giving the franchise to younger teenagers, as they are more often in a more established local community network. Franklin suggests that an appropriate voting age would be 15 (see the discussion in Milner, 2010).

The Norwegian context: The 2011 local elections

To explain the increased political mobilization among young voters in the local election of 2011, we have to look at the Norwegian context. The election was held on September 12, less than two months after Norway was struck, on July 22, by a terror attack of unprecedented magnitude.

A car bomb was detonated outside the offices housing the central government, killing eight people. Another 69, mostly teenagers from all parts of Norway, were brutally massacred at a national Labour Party youth camp at the island of Utøya outside Oslo. The perpetrator, a 32-year-old right-wing extremist, had specifically targeted political talents in a scheme designed to thwart the future of the governing party in Norway. In the public debate, the terror plot was seen as an attack on the nation's democratic values and might represent an epochal watershed and a national trauma in the Norwegian context (Wollebæk et al., 2011). Following the call made by the prime minister on the eve of the attacks to respond to terror with 'more openness, more democracy', peaceful mass mobilizations were organized throughout the country to show sympathy for the victims and to stand up for the core values of Norwegian society. Thus, what came to be termed the *Rose Marches* were characterized more by serenity and containment than by anger and fear (Wollebæk et al., 2012a).

In the aftermath, it seems that young people's awareness of fundamental democratic values became stronger. Studies carried out short time after the attacks indicated that the effects of this dramatic collective social experience seemed to make its deepest impression among young people. It was among the youth that the feeling of unity and togetherness after July 22 was strongest (Wollebæk, Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Ødegård, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). These studies indicate that one of the consequences—at least in the short-term—was an increased trust in institutions of government, politicians, and police.

During the 2011 election the very first trials were held in which 16-year-olds from 20 selected municipalities were allowed to vote. As in many European countries, voting age has recently become a hotly debated issue in Norway. At the time of writing, Austria is the only European country to have permanently lowered the voting age to 16 in all political elections. Some states in Germany and Switzerland have a voting age of 16 in local elections. The issue is, however, debated in several other countries as well. The Labour Party in the United Kingdom favours a lowering of the voting age, and 16-year-olds were allowed to vote in the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. In 2015 a bill in the Scottish parliament allowed 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in the Scottish and local government elections. Accordingly, they were able to vote in the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. In the UK and the European Parliament elections, Scottish voters still must be 18 to use their voting rights. In 2015, the Estonian Parliament voted to lower the voting age to 16 in local elections, but that constitutional change must be confirmed by the next parliament before it takes effect.

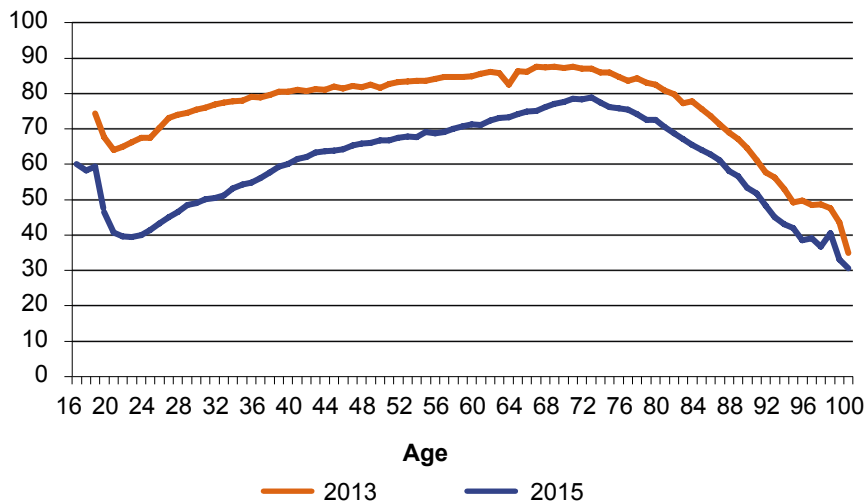
The voting age in Norway has generally followed that of other European democracies. The last lowering of the voting age occurred by an act of the Norwegian Parliament in 1978, when 18-year-olds were given the right to vote. As mentioned previously, in 2011 the very first trials were held in which 16-year-olds were allowed to vote in 20 selected municipalities. In the local elections four years later in 2015, a new trial was held in 20 municipalities—ten participants from the 2011 trial and ten newcomers.⁶ In general the voting age debate centres on several key questions, including the political knowledge and the political maturity of 16- and 17-year-olds (Bergh, 2013a; Chan & Clayton, 2006; Wagner et. al., 2012) and the potential legal or constitutional hurdles (Electoral Commission, 2004; Milner, 2010; Ødegård & Aars, 2011). The two trials, held in two subsequent local elections in Norway, will give valuable knowledge about how 16- and 17-year-olds behave when they get voting rights.

⁶ Local elections in Norway include elections for both county and municipal councils, but 16- and 17-year-olds were only allowed to vote in the municipal elections.

Analysis: Turnout by age and the mobilization of young voters

Voter turnout in political elections in Norway, as in most other democracies, is strongly influenced by life-cycle effects. Figure 2.1 displays turnout levels in individual age cohorts in the Norwegian parliamentary election of 2013 and in the local elections of 2015. The results are from a select group of municipalities that have implemented a system in which voter turnout is registered electronically. This includes all of the major cities in Norway and thus a large section of all eligible voters.⁷ This makes the data ideal for a detailed study of the relationship between age and turnout.

Figure 2.1. Voter turnout by age in the 2013 Norwegian parliamentary election and in the 2015 local elections. Percent



The very youngest eligible voters in the 2013 parliamentary election have a rate of turnout that is close to the average level for the entire population (the overall participation rate was 78.2 percent). Turnout then drops sharply as voters get beyond the age at which they attend high school. Those in their early 20s are less likely to vote than most other age groups, but turnout then rises as people

⁷ This computerized system was implemented in 15 municipalities in 2015 (Bergen, Bodø, Bremanger, Fredrikstad, Hammerfest, Larvik, Mandal, Oslo, Radøy, Re, Sandnes, Trondheim, Tynset, Vefsn, and Alesund). Eligible voters in these municipalities constitute 28 percent of the entire Norwegian electorate. In the 2015 local elections, this system had expanded to 27 municipalities (Asker, Bergen, Bodø, Bremanger, Bærum, Drammen, Fredrikstad, Hammerfest, Haugesund, Karmøy, Larvik, Mandal, Oslo kommune, Porsgrunn, Radøy, Re, Sandefjord, Sandnes, Sarpsborg, Skedsmo, Skien, Stavanger, Trondheim, Tynset, Tønsberg, Vefsn, and Alesund), now covering 42 percent of the electorate. Data from these municipalities is used in figure 2.1.

get older and into middle age. Towards the end of their lives, people again become less frequent voters, probably because of health issues.

The data from the 2015 local elections reveals a similar pattern. We also include 16- and 17-year-olds in this figure. Turnout in local elections in Norway is generally at a lower level than in parliamentary elections. Life-cycle effects are evidenced in 2015, perhaps even more so than in 2013. High school students, the age cohorts from 16 through 18, have about an average level of voter turnout (the total turnout rate in this election was 60.2 percent). This is in line with the above-mentioned findings of Bhatti and Hansen, where 18-year-olds are characterized by a higher turnout than their slightly older peers. Moreover, just as Zeglovits and Aichholzer (2014) found in Austria, this pattern becomes even stronger when we include voters at the age of 16 and 17 years. The clear majority in these age cohorts are high school students; they live with their parents or guardians and are part of established social networks. These young voters have a stable living situation, and they are in school where they learn about democracy and elections. Leaving home does have a negative impact on turnout in the short run (Bhatti & Hansen, 2012a; Smets, 2012).

The middle-aged are clearly at an advantage when it comes to voter turnout and again, in 2015, the frequency of voting drops off as one gets into old age. These patterns are stable over time, from one election to the next, and are highly suggestive of life-cycle effects.

There is little reason to doubt that the period of life that a voter happens to be in influences his or her likelihood of voting. However, that does not preclude the possibility that there are generational differences in voting and that period effects may also occur.

In order to explore this, we need time-series data. Using the Norwegian National Election Studies for parliamentary and local elections respectively, we look at changes over time in voting turnout across these age differences. Figure 2.2 displays the differences between turnout levels in individual age groups on the one hand and turnout among the entire electorate on the other.

Starting with parliamentary elections from 2005 through to 2013, average deviations in turnout with respect to most age groups are stable. Middle aged voters are above average with respect to voter turnout, while the age groups below the age of 30 have a frequency of voting that is clearly lower than the rest of the population. The group that may be defined as first-time voters (since there are four years between parliamentary elections), 18- to 21-year-olds, start out

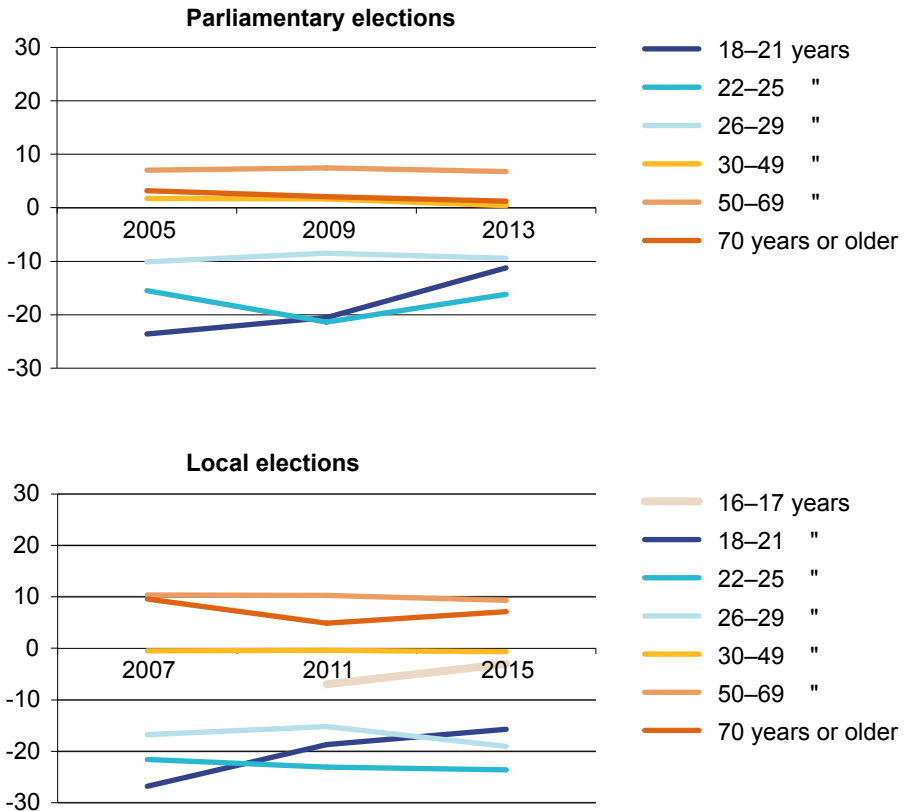
with the lowest level of turnout in 2005, but show a distinct increase over time, especially from 2009 to 2013.

The same development seems to occur in local elections, where there is a rise in turnout from 2007 to 2011. In the local elections of 2011, 65 percent of the eligible voters turned out to vote; an increase of 3 percentage points since the previous election in 2007. First-time voters turned out to vote at a rate of 46 percent, which is 11 percentage points higher than the previous election. We do not find the same increased turnout among voters older than 21. In the 2015 election, the general turnout had declined by 5 percentage points compared to the previous local election (from 65 to 60 percent). The turnout among first-time voters was more or less at the same level as the 2011 election. Hence, the relative increase in figure 2.2.

Turnout among the newly enfranchised adolescents in the trial municipalities, aged 16 and 17, was 58 percent in the 2011 election and approximately the same level four years later (57 percent). This is somewhat lower than the overall turnout level. However, compared to the turnout rate for other young voters this is a remarkably high. There is a small and close to insignificant difference between this age group and voters in general in 2015.

For all other age groups in figure 2.2, there is a pattern of stability from one election to the next. This stability probably reflects the consistent life-cycle effects that were evidenced in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.2. Differences in voter turnout between voters in general and various age groups in elections in Norway from 2005 to 2015. Percent



Thus, the main question that emanates from figure 2.2 is: What explains the relative (and absolute) increase in turnout in the 18 to 21 age cohort over time? Whatever explains this change may also contribute to explaining the extraordinarily high turnout levels among those aged 16 or 17. In order to explore this, we need to look for generational or period effects. If there is a generational effect in turnout we would expect to also find an increased mobilization in other political institutions such as political parties. In the next section, we will turn to the terrorist attacks on July 22 and ask how this might have mobilized young people politically in the short- and long-term.

Did the terrorist attacks mobilize the youth?

The high turnout among young voters in general in the elections from 2011 must be seen in the context of the terrorist attacks in Oslo and the island Utøya on July 22 2011. The atrocities shocked the whole world. The aim of the terrorist was to damage political institutions by attacking the offices housing the central government, as well as the political talent at the party youth camp to thwart the future of the governing party in Norway. In the public debate after the attacks, a consensus emerged that people's response to terrorism should be to embrace openness and democracy. A clear manifestation of this was a historically high turnout in the local elections. The general increase of three percentage points from the previous local elections was not enough to meet expectations. The expectations towards young voters were especially great and these expectations were fulfilled. Based on previous research on terrorism there is no reason to expect a general increase in turnout after a terrorist attack. The fact that the perpetrator's target in Norway was teenagers at a political summer camp might have affected the generation of teenagers in general. The victims who were trapped at the island at Utøya—69 deaths and 495 survivors—were the inhabitants of local communities across the whole country. This might have shaped a dramatic collective experience for this age group, which also affected young voters in the next elections in 2013 and 2015.

However, did the terrorist attacks also change young peoples' connection to political parties in a way that lasted over time? One way to find out is to look at changes in youth party membership. Until 2012, eight youth wings of the regular political parties received funding from the Norwegian government through the grant scheme Frifond (www.frifond.no).⁸ After 2012, Young Greens of Norway was established and received funding for the first-time in 2013.⁹ The amount of financial support depends on the number of paying members below the age of 26 and the number of local branches. Based on this self-reported data, we analysed changes in membership over the period from 2003 to 2014.

As shown in figure 2.3, the political youth parties in Norway increased their membership by 6,000 from 2010 to 2011 (from 11,060 to 17,066). This is not merely an effect of increased sympathy for the Worker's Youth League (AUF), which was attacked July 22. On the contrary, all eight youth parties reported increased membership at the end of 2011 (Ødegård 2014). Two years later, in

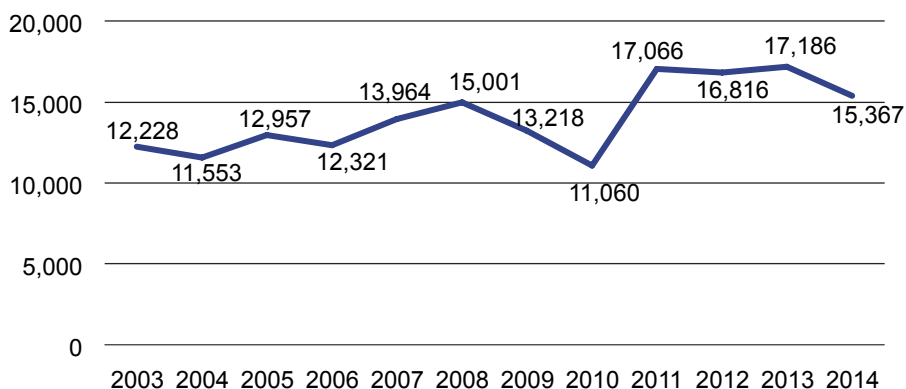
8 These eight are: Workers' Youth League (AUF), The Norwegian Young Conservatives (UH), The Progress Party's Youth (FpU), Young Liberals of Norway (UV), Socialist Youth Norway (SU), Red Youth (Rød Ungdom), The Centre Youth (Senterungdommen), The Young Christian Democrats (KrfU).

9 Green Young reported 468 members in 2013.

2013, the membership numbers for these organizations were approximately the same as in 2011. Young peoples' involvement with political parties appears to have gone up in 2011 and remained at a high level until 2013.

However, we can identify a decrease from 2013 to 2014. It is first and foremost the largest youth parties that lost members and in particular the youth wing of the Conservatives, which became a governing party after the 2013 parliamentary election.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the total youth party membership in 2014 is still at a higher level than before 2011. Party membership in general also increased in 2011, but this was a much more short-lived increase: The total number of paid-up party members in Norway had almost gone back to the 2010 level in 2012 (Allern et al., 2016, p.52).

Figure 2.3. Membership in political youth parties in Norway among youth below the age of 26, 2003–2014



In the aftermath of the 2011 election, case studies were carried out in five of the twenty municipalities participating in the voting age trial. This fieldwork included interviews with young people who had been involved in the municipalities' planning of the trial. All of the informants were students at local high schools and were selected to take part in the planning of the trial because of their involvement in local youth councils. In the youth councils, they represented local political youth parties, voluntary organizations, youth centres, student councils, etc. In total, twenty young people took part in the interviews; eighteen of the informants were divided into four focus groups, and two of the informants were given individual interviews. The interviews were semi-structured; we

¹⁰ The Young Conservatives lost approximately 1,100 members from 2013 to 2014 (from 4,917 to 3,806 members). In the same period membership in the Labour Party's youth wing – The Workers' Youth League (AUF) – was reduced from 6,223 to 5,621 (602 members).

followed an interview guide where the questions and topics we wanted to cover were recorded. The interviews were digitally recorded.

In the interviews, we asked if the informants had some thoughts on how the terrorist attacks on July 22 affected young people's political engagement in their municipality. The talks between the informants centred around how the terrorist attacks influenced young people to vote and made young politicians and political youth parties more visible to the general public. There was a consensus that the knowledge of politics and political parties had increased among youth in general. The ruthless terrorist's target touched the informants deeply. Lise was not politically active, but she felt that July 22 affected young peoples' political engagement and turnout. She put it this way:

On July 22, young people died because they believed in something. I think this point in particular has been an important motivation for many youths to vote. (...) For many young people it became important that those (who died at Utøya) did not die in vain.

Several of the informants were engaged in political parties. Some of them talked about how it had become easier to be young politicians after the terrorist attacks. The attention from other peers became more positive, something which Adam, a member of the Norwegian Young Conservatives, expressed in this way:

We (young politicians) are no longer identified as nerds. Youth in general had an eye-opener. They understand that young politicians are humans and that youth parties exist.

This experience of increased respect is in line with Carl's feelings. He was a member of the Socialist Youth, the youth league of the Socialist Left Party in Norway:

We are no longer seen as "precocious". Now it has become something that gives you status to express your political opinion.

To have opinions, to argue for political solutions, to have standpoints, and to represent something are values that became more appreciated after July 22. Julie was a member of the youth division of the Norwegian Labour Party (AUF) that was attacked on July 22. In line with Adam, she thought that political knowledge among young people had increased after the terrorist attacks. When she was wearing her AUF-button 'at least youth know what AUF is committed to', as she put it.

The informants also talked about the enormous media focus on young politicians in the weeks after the terrorist attacks. Lise felt that this extensive focus from the media had been a 'wake-up call' for people in general. The focus on young people also led to an unusually large number of candidates below the age of 26 becoming councillors after the local election of 2011. Previous research shows that many of these young councillors were elected because voters gave preference votes to young candidates (Saglie, Ødegård, & Aars, 2014).

In conclusion, the findings concerning electoral turnout and the membership of political parties, supplemented by qualitative data, indicate that the terrorist attacks increased young people's awareness, knowledge, and interest in the conventional and established parts of our political system. An obvious question is why the terrorist attacks did not mobilize older age groups to the same extent. According to the theory of generational effect, an epochal watershed such as the July 22 terrorist attacks makes a lasting impression and influences the values of younger adults in their formative years to a greater extent than older generations (Zukin et al., 2013; Edmunds & Turner, 2002; Sanders & Putnam, 2010).

The Utøya Generation: Concluding remarks

In both the local elections of 2011 and 2015 and the parliamentary election of 2013, we can identify a remarkable increase in turnout among young voters below the age of 24. At the same time, the general turnout remains stable or decreased in older age groups. To understand this change in the pattern of participation we use the distinction between life-cycle, generation, and period effects.

The aim of the article is to discuss the how we can understand this increase in turnout among young Norwegian voters since 2011 and the consequences on turnout in the short and long run. Did the terrorist attacks trigger a generational effect where young voters in the future are more willing to use their right to vote, or is this just a short-lived period effect? How can we explain the extraordinarily high turnout among the 16- and 17- year-olds trial-voters?

The findings indicate that our data tells two different stories. First, since 2011 there was a dynamic generational mobilization among young people who were in their formative years when the national tragedy of the terrorist attacks struck Norwegian political and social life. The other story is the story of stability in maintaining a high voter turnout among youth between the ages of 16 and 18. Among this group, we can identify a life course effect that, in all probability,

will follow the next generation of high-school students. Hence, our explanatory factors are linked to both generational and life-cycle effects.

A generational effect after the July 22 terrorist attacks

In the aftermath of July 22, it seems that young people's awareness of fundamental democratic values and the political parties' significant position became stronger—contrary to the terrorist's aims. Following the sociology of generations, such traumatic events might influence young people's political outlook and participation throughout their lifetime (Edmunds & Turner, 2002). Based on a total appraisal, the findings indicate a more politically oriented generation—one that has been referred to as 'the Utøya generation' (Bergh, 2015). The current generation of young voters in Norway is more politically active and engaged than prior generations. We have identified a remarkable political mobilization among first-time voters since the Norwegian local elections of 2011. Furthermore, the number of members in political youth parties has increased after the terrorist attacks in 2011. Additionally, in a more extensive analysis of political interest and various types of political activities among youth, Bergh (2015) finds evidence of political mobilization across a broad range of indicators. Hence, the young Norwegians of today are more politically active than previous generations.

The development over time makes it clear that the increased turnout did not represent a limited period effect. The high turnout among second time voters both in the 2013 parliamentary election and the 2015 local election, combined with a decreased turnout in the electorate in general, gives strong indications that we see a generational effect.

A life-cycle effect among high-school students

Why did the 16, 17, and 18-year-olds turn out to vote to a greater degree than other young voters under the age of 30? It is not so obvious that the high turnout among this group was solely a reflection of true engagement and increased political interest in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Norway (see also Bergh, 2013). An alternative explanation would be that the extraordinary mobilization was an effect of being *voting pioneers*, as a consequence of taking part in the trial. Hence, this would indicate a limited period effect. A previous study has shown that the voting age trial in 2011 got much attention in local, regional, and national media and was a prestige project for the participating municipalities (Ødegård & Saglie, 2013). High turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds was necessary—in their eyes (and the eyes of the media)—if the trial were to be

considered a success. This means that high turnout could, to some extent, be the result of a ‘Hawthorne effect’ caused by the trial itself and not necessarily occurring in future elections if 16 years were to be the regular voting age (ibid.). However, the second voting age trial in 2015 weakened this hypothesis. The fact that the turnout remained more or less stable among trial voters in the local election of 2015—also in the municipalities that took part in both trials (2011 and 2015)—strengthens the assumption that the high turnout among this group of voters cannot be explained as a limited period effect caused by being voting pioneers.

Our empirical data, based on two similar trials held in two subsequent local elections in Norway, clearly indicates a life-cycle effect among 16, 17 and 18-year-olds. The vast majority of those in these age cohorts have a stable living situation, are high school students where they learn about democracy and elections, live with their parents or guardians, and are part of established social networks. These findings seem to be robust, as they are in line with research from other countries where the voting age has been reduced (e.g. Zeglovits & Aichholzer, 2014). In addition, previous research has shown that leaving home does have a negative impact on turnout in the short run (Bhatti & Hansen, 2012a; Smets, 2012). There is thus reason to believe that this life-cycle effect is a general phenomenon, which also applies to other democracies.

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3 Is voting a habit? An analysis of the effects of the Norwegian voting age trial

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Introduction

Is the act of voting in elections habit-forming? Does one's participation in one election increase the likelihood that one will vote in the next election? If so, a voter may enter into a virtuous circle of participation, in which voting will eventually become a habit.

Several previous studies have looked at this issue, and have tried to determine the extent to which participation in one election will by itself increase the likelihood that one will vote the next time around (Gerber et al., 2003; Meredith, 2009; Plutzer, 2002). Uncovering such an effect, however, is challenging. Data on voter participation in consecutive elections may itself be hard to come by. When such data is available, the effect of participation in one election on turnout in a later election is quite strong (Plutzer, 2002). This effect tends to remain after control for several variables, which may be the source of specification errors, such as educational level, political interest, and the like (Green & Shachar, 2000). It is impossible to be sure, however, if there are no remaining specification errors in these types of models.

Experimental studies are therefore a natural alternative strategy (see e.g., Gerber et al., 2003). The problem with these studies is that you cannot randomly assign values to your key independent variable (voting or non-voting in the first election). Most of these studies use the results of a voter mobilization drive that had an effect on turnout in one election, to study long-term effects (Cutts et al., 2009; Davenport et al., 2010; Gerber et al., 2003). The significant long-term effects found in some of these studies may therefore be the effects of the mobilization drive rather than the act of voting itself.

A final strategy, used by Meredith (2009), is a regression discontinuity design that takes advantage of voting age restrictions in the US and compares voters who turned 18 just before or just after the 2000 presidential election. There is a positive effect of eligibility in 2000 on later turnout, but the analysis may have been hampered by the lack of comparative data on the two groups.

I use data that stems from a trial that was held in a group of Norwegian municipalities in the local elections of 2011, in which the voting age was lowered from 18 to 16. In the trial municipalities, 16- and 17-year-olds were given the right to vote, while people of the same age in the rest of the country did not have the opportunity to vote. By studying turnout in the 2013 parliamentary election in the group of then 18- and 19-year-olds, I was able to measure the extent to which voting in one election had an effect on later participation. My hypothesis is that the youth who were given voting rights in 2011 had higher levels of turnout in the 2013 election than those who did not had the opportunity to vote in any previous election.

A positive result indicates that voting in itself is habit-forming. Furthermore, we know that 16- and 17-year-olds tend to have high voter turnout (Bergh & Ødegård, 2013; Zeglovits & Aichholzer, 2014). If it can be shown that voting becomes a habit at this age, we can conclude that a lowering of the voting age to 16 is an effective means of increasing voter turnout in the long run.

I use data from the Norwegian electoral roll to test the hypothesis. The voter-level data includes information on turnout in both the 2011 and the 2013 elections.

The paper is structured as follows. I start by reviewing previous research in this field. The data-section describes the rather unique panel data that has been collected from the Norwegian electoral roll. In the results-section, I start by comparing turnout-rates between the 2011 trial-voters and other first-time voters in 2013. I then aim to test whether the findings are generalizable by asking: Could the result be explained by some unique characteristic of the Norwegian voting age trial? I conclude and sum up my findings in the final section.

Previous research

There is a general consensus in the voter research literature that voting is habit-forming; once a person has become a voter, he or she is likely to continue voting later in life (Franklin, 2004; Franklin et al., 2004; Plutzer, 2002). What is not entirely clear, however, is what causes this habit to develop. Much

of the literature in this field suggests that it is the act of voting itself that is habit-forming (Gerber et al., 2003). If you have voted once, you are, all else being equal, more likely to do so again. Others suggest that there is more of a complex psychological process at work, which over time can lead to a habit of voting (Plutzer, 2002).

If the act of voting itself is habit-forming, researchers are faced with the problem of isolating the effect of past turnout on voting in later elections. Whatever reasons and motivations that a voter may have had for voting in one election will often be unchanged in the next election. The strong individual-level correlation between voting in two consecutive elections is therefore likely to be partially a spurious effect. So, how do you isolate the direct effect of voting in one election on turnout the next time around? Three different strategies have been employed in the literature to solve this problem.

The first strategy is to use panel data on voter turnout, i.e. data that measures voter turnout on two or more consecutive elections. Researchers then do a statistical analysis of the effect of voting in past elections on later turnout, using a large number of statistical controls. Green & Shachar (2000) use panel data from the US National Election Studies, and try several different groups of control variables. They find robust strong effects of past turnout on later voting in every model specification. They do acknowledge, however, that they cannot completely rule out ‘the possibility that some unmeasured variable accounts for over-time persistence in voting behaviour’ (p.564).

A second method for capturing the direct effect of past voting on participation later in life is experimental studies. There is a large and expanding research literature on voter turnout field experiments in the US (see e.g., Gerber & Green, 2000; Gerber et al., 2003; Murray & Matland, 2013; Panagopoulos, 2010). An abundance of experiments have been conducted, testing the effectiveness of various get-out-the-vote messages and various modes of delivery of that message (e.g. telephone, emails, and personal canvassing). Most of these studies look at the short-term effects on the upcoming election, but some also capture long-term effects. For instance, Gerber et al. (2003) use the results of an experiment in advance of the 1998 US general election, to look at turnout in local elections one year later (in November of 1999). They find a positive effect of the experimental treatment on turnout in 1998 and then estimate the effect of turnout in 1998 on voting in the 1999 local elections. The estimate indicates that there is a large effect of turnout in 1998 on voting in the next year’s election. Other studies have reported similar findings (Cutts et al., 2009; Davenport et al., 2010).

This research clearly shows that some get-out-the-vote efforts have an effect on voter turnout, and they may also have long-term effects on voting in subsequent elections. It is not evident, however, what the mechanism producing the long-term effect is. Gerber et al. conclude that it is the act of voting in one election that produces an effect in later elections. Davenport et al. (2010) find that it is the social pressure imbedded in their experiment that produces the long-term effect. The experiments conducted thus far cannot differentiate between, or directly measure, those two possible mechanisms. To do so, one would have to randomly assign voting or non-voting to people in one election, and measure the effect of that in the next election. Such an experiment has for obvious reasons not been carried out. However, as I will explain below, the Norwegian voting age trial approximates an experiment of this sort, and can therefore be used to test the hypothesis that voting in itself is habit-forming.

Finally, the third approach used in the literature for identifying the direct effect of casting a ballot in one election on turnout later, is the regression discontinuity design used by Meredith (2009). He takes advantage of US voting age restrictions, which hold that a voter must be 18 years of age at the time of the election. People who turn 18 in the fall of the election year (2000), are separated into those that are eligible to vote (whose birthday is before Election Day), and those that are ineligible (who turn 18 after the election). Apart from differences in eligibility, the two groups are assumed to have similar characteristics. Using this semi-experimental design, Meredith (2009) measures the effect that eligibility in the 2000 presidential election has on turnout in the 2004 election, using data from the California Statewide Voter File. He finds that 2000 eligibility has a positive effect of about four percentage points on turnout in 2004. While this study is quite convincing, Meredith (2009) lacks data on eligible voters who are not registered. He uses statistics on births in California to construct a measure of turnout for the entire eligible population. This procedure may have affected the results.

There is an overwhelming consensus in previous research that voting is habit-forming. Most of these studies conclude that the act of voting itself increases the likelihood that you will participate in elections in the future. That assertion cannot be tested directly in most cases. Data from the Norwegian voting age trial provides the opportunity for more of a direct test than has been conducted in previous research.

The 2011 Norwegian voting age trial

After several years of low and sometimes declining voter turnout among young voters in Norway, a growing concern has emerged in public opinion and among governing officials that a young generation of Norwegians is becoming disengaged from politics. One possible solution to this problem, according to some youth organizations and political parties in Norway, is to lower the voting age from 18¹¹ to 16. Mark Franklin's (2004) theory that a lowering of the voting age to 16 may have beneficial long-term effects on turnout, because it will instill a habit of voting in people at an early age, has been floated on several occasions in public debates on this issue.

Political support for a lowering of the voting age in Norway is limited to two small parties (the Liberal Party and the Socialist Left Party), so there is no short-term prospect of change in voting age restrictions. Instead, the Norwegian government decided to hold a trial in which the voting age would be lowered to 16 in 20 selected municipalities¹² and in the self-governed area of Longyearbyen in arctic Svalbard.

The selected municipalities are not a random sample. However, the government took pains to ensure that they were a fairly representative sample of Norway's municipalities; all regions and counties of Norway are represented, large and small municipalities are included, and the municipalities are diversified with respect to demographic characteristics, the political composition of the local council, and the party adherence of the mayor. However, the government also chose municipalities that had actively tried to get its youth involved in local society in various ways; in this respect, these municipalities are not representative of the country as a whole.

The trial was held in the municipal elections of 2011. Voter turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds were 58 percent; somewhat below the overall turnout rate in these municipalities of 63 percent. However, 16- and 17-year-olds voted in much higher numbers than other young people. For instance, only 46 percent of the 18- to 21-year-old age group voted in the election (Bergh & Ødegård, 2013).

Some municipalities put a large effort into getting 16- and 17-year-olds to the polls, while others did not. This resulted in large disparities in turnout rates between municipalities (Ødegård & Saglie, 2013).

11 You get the right to vote in Norway the year you turn 18.

12 The 20 municipalities were: Ålesund, Austevoll, Gjesdal, Grimstad, Hamar, Hammerfest, Kautokeino, Kåfjord, Luster, Lørenskog, Mandal, Marker, Namdalseid, Osen, Porsgrunn, Re, Sigdal, Stavanger, Tysfjord and Vågå.

Data and Methods

The Norwegian voting age trial has most of the characteristics of a research experiment. One group, 16- and 17-year-olds in the trial municipalities, was given the right to vote in 2011. A control group, 16- and 17-year-olds in the rest of the country, did not have voting rights in the election that year. To the extent that we have identical types of data on the two groups, they can be used to test for effects that a lowering of the voting age may have. For instance, in Bergh (2013) I test whether a lower voting age had an effect on the political maturity of 16- and 17-year-olds.

The aim in this paper is to test what effect the trial may have had on voter turnout in later elections; specifically, in the Norwegian parliamentary election in September of 2013 (exactly two years after the 2011 elections).

The data used in this paper comes from the Norwegian electoral roll. In 2011, the Norwegian statistical agency, Statistics Norway, collected data on turnout from the electoral roll from almost all of the trial voters aged 16 or 17¹³, we have data from about 7,000 of the 9,000 eligible voters at that age. The data was collected using the principle that a sample of 1,000 young voters in each municipality was sufficient. All municipalities, with the exception of Stavanger and Ålesund, had less than 1,000 trial voters (16- and 17-year-olds). Hence, we have data on all eligible voters in this age group from 18 of the 20 municipalities, and a sample of 1,000 from Stavanger and Ålesund. I use weights to compensate for what is in effect an underrepresentation of those two municipalities in our data.

In the 2013 parliamentary election, the trial voters from 2011 had reached the age at which one ordinarily becomes a first-time-voter in Norway: 18 or 19 years. After the 2013 election, information about voter turnout was again added to the data file, so that we now have measures of turnout in two consecutive elections.

To measure turnout in our control-group, i.e. first-time voters in 2013 that were not part of the trial in 2011, we use a random sample of 9,608 eligible voters in Norway. The file covers all age groups, and was collected to study voter turnout generally. It includes information from the electoral roll about participation in both the 2011 and 2013 elections.¹⁴ When we exclude voters from the trial

¹³ We measure age as being age on December 31. This corresponds to the voting age restrictions in Norway: Turning 18 by the end of the election year. When voting age was lowered in the trial, those who turned 16 by the end of the election year received the right to vote.

¹⁴ Those aged 18 or 19 in 2013 who were not part of the 2011 voting age trial did not have voting rights in 2011. For this group, we only have data on participation in 2013.

municipalities, we are left with a file of 8,932 voters, 350 of whom were aged 18 or 19.

The aim of this paper is to compare turnout rates between trial voters who had the right to vote in 2011 and ordinary first-time voters in 2013. I then explore the generalizability of the findings by investigating whether three characteristics that are specific to the Norwegian voting age trial could explain the result:

1) The trial municipalities were in part selected because they had made an effort toward getting young people involved in politics and society. Could a higher level of political interest and engagement among young people in the trial municipalities explain the result?

2) There were unusual efforts made toward getting young people to the polls in the trial municipalities in 2011. Could these get-out-the-vote drives, directed at young people in the trial-municipalities, account for the finding?

3) The trial involves a specific age group only. Can the result be used to draw a general conclusion about voting as a habit? I look at the extent to which voting in 2011 is correlated with a vote in 2013, and how that correlation varies by age groups.

Results

Turnout rates in the 2013 parliamentary election in the treatment group of 18- and 19-year-olds who had voting rights in 2011 and in the control group of others at the same age, are shown in Table 1. These rates are compared to the overall levels of electoral participation in the trial municipalities and in the rest of the country in 2013.

The results are surprising. Voter turnout in 2013 among 18- and 19-year-olds who were given the right to vote in 2011 is lower than those in the same age group who were first-time voters in 2013. This difference is statistically significant ($p=.03$). Furthermore, the difference is not due to an overall lower turnout rate in the trial municipalities. Turnout in the trial municipalities is only marginally lower than in the rest of the country. Controlling for that, the negative effect of being a trial voter (in 2011) on turnout in 2013 is 5.1 percentage points.

Table 3.1. Voter turnout among 18- and 19-year-olds and in the whole electorate in the 2013 Norwegian parliamentary election, by participation in the 2011 voting age trial. Percent

	18- and 19-year-olds	Electorate	Difference
Part of the 2011 voting age trial	64.4	77.7	-13.3
Not part of the 2011 voting age trial	69.9	78.1	-8.2
Difference	-5.5	-0.4	-5.1
N			
Part of the 2011 voting age trial	7,168		
Not part of the 2011 voting age trial	350		

Given the results from previous research on voting as a habitual activity, there is every reason to expect the results in table 3.1 to be the reverse. The fact that turnout is lower in the group of trial voters is remarkable. I cannot completely exclude the possibility that the negative finding is the result of sampling error in our control group, which has an N of 350. We have a robust measure of turnout among the trial voters.

I can, however, conclude with confidence that the 2011 trial did not have a positive effect on turnout in the 2013 election. There is no evidence to suggest that a habit of voting was instilled in the 16- and 17-year-olds who were given voting rights in 2011.

The question, then, is: Is this result generalizable? Can we conclude from the Norwegian trial that voting, by itself, is not habit-forming? In order to do so, one has to exclude the possibility that the result can be explained by some unique characteristics of the Norwegian voting age trial. The trial resembled an experiment, but it had some flaws that potentially could impact on the result. First, a criterion for including municipalities in the trial was that there had been an effort made to include young people in local politics and society for some time. In that sense the municipalities are not a random sample of Norway as a whole. Second, some municipalities initiated unusually active voter mobilization drives directed at young people, which could have affected that voting group in some way. Third, the trial only involves a specific age cohort. The result may therefore not be relevant to voters in general. I address these three issues in turn below.

Are the trial voters unusually interested and engaged in politics?

The criterion used to select municipalities for the trial may lead one to suspect that the 16- and 17-year-olds who took part in the 2011 election were not a random selection of that age group. If the local government had tried to involve young people in politics for some time, even before the trial, that may have led to a higher level of political interest and involvement among young people there when compared to the rest of the country. I find some evidence of that in Bergh (2013), but there is only a small difference between the trial municipalities and the rest of the country.

Had I found a positive result in table 3.1, i.e. higher turnout rates among the trial voters than among others, that could have been explained by a similar difference in political interest. One may argue that the data from the selected trial participants is biased toward finding a positive result. Given that the result is negative, one may argue that the selection criteria set by the Norwegian government increases the robustness and generalizability of the finding. Hence, this is not an issue that cast serious doubt on the result.

What effect did the get-out-the-vote drives in the trial municipalities have?

The 20 municipalities involved in the 2011 voting age trial made varying efforts toward getting their youth to the polls on Election Day. Guro Ødegård and Jo Saglie (2013) have analysed these efforts and find that some municipalities, such as Stavanger and Marker, were successful in reaching out to their youth and getting them to the polls. Others, such as Ålesund and Kautokeino, did not manage to deploy their resources in an effective manner and were not as successful in voter mobilization.

Again, had the result in this paper been positive, i.e. higher turnout in 2013 among the trial voters, these voter mobilization efforts could potentially have explained the result. It seems less likely that the negative finding in Table 1 is attributable to voter mobilization. However, it is conceivable that voter mobilization in 2011 could have had a backlash effect in 2013. Perhaps the 16- and 17-year-olds received immense encouragement to vote in 2011 and when they failed to get the same level of attention in 2013 some chose not to vote.

Since the get-out-the-vote efforts varied widely between the municipalities, I should be able to uncover effects of these efforts by looking at results by municipality. In table 3.2, I have split up the trial voters according to which

municipality they resided in during 2011. Is the negative finding in table 3.1 attributable to specific municipalities?

The results in table 3.2 are fairly consistent between municipalities. The difference in turnout between 18- and 19-year-olds on the one hand and the whole electorate on the other are either at the same level as in the country as a whole, or greater. There is not a single example in table 3.2 of a positive effect, i.e. one in which the trial voters are more likely to vote in 2013 than voters at the same age outside of the trial municipalities. Hence, the general conclusion that the trial in 2011 did not have a habit-forming effect on these young voters, finds support.

There is, however, substantial variation between municipalities in table 3.2. If we exclude the smallest municipalities with less than 100 voters at the age of 18 and 19 where random coincidences could affect the results, there are still substantial disparities. The municipality of Austevoll on the west coast has relatively low turnout among its young population. The large town of Stavanger has turnout numbers that are similar to the rest of the country. I do not have exact measures of the voter mobilization efforts in different municipalities. What is clear, however, is that the backlash hypothesis does not find support. Stavanger had a successful voter mobilization program in 2011, which resulted in high turnout among young voters there. When we compare voters from Stavanger with those from other parts of the country, there is no evidence of a backlash in 2013; but, there is no evidence of a positive effect either.

Table 3.2. Voter turnout in the 2013-election among 18- and 19-year-olds generally, and by which trial municipality the voter resided in during 2011; compared to the electorate at large. Percent

	18- and 19-year-olds	Electorate	Difference	N
Not part of the 2011 voting age trial	69.9	78.1	-8.2	350
Austevoll	57.7	81.2	-23.5	142
Ålesund	60.8	76.7	-15.9	1,000
Gjesdal	58.1	79.0	-20.9	339
Grimstad	63.2	76.7	-13.5	609
Hamar	71.0	80.4	-9.4	670
Hammerfest	54.0	70.9	-16.9	250
Kautokeino	46.6	66.6	-20.0	88
Kåfjord	57.0	70.4	-13.4	79
Luster	70.5	80.3	-9.8	146
Lørenskog	67.3	79.0	-11.7	917
Mandal	63.5	77.3	-13.8	408
Marker	61.7	78.8	-17.1	81
Namdalseid	59.1	77.7	-18.6	44
Osen	48.3	75.5	-27.2	29
Porsgrunn	59.3	77.3	-18.0	881
Re	66.0	79.8	-13.8	250
Sigdal	56.5	75.7	-19.2	92
Stavanger	69.3	77.9	-8.6	1,000
Tysfjord	56.1	76.9	-20.8	57
Vågå	62.1	75.5	-13.4	87

Is the result only relevant to young voters?

The results thus far establish plainly that the 2011 voting age trial did not have a positive effect on turnout in the 2013 election. Since those who took part in the trial in 2011 are no more likely to vote in 2013 than others (perhaps even less likely), it seems improbable that the trial will have a positive long-term effect. Any such effect should have been measurable two years after the trial.

Hence, the results in this paper indicate that a voting age of 16 will not have a positive effect on turnout in the long run.

What are the implications of this for the more general question in this paper: Is voting a habit? The evidence regarding young voters suggests that the answer is no; participation in one election does not have an effect on later turnout. Is that result unique to young voters, or can it be generalized to voters overall? It is conceivable that the habit of voting does not start to form until after the age of 18 and 19. Obviously, I do not have comparable data on older voters, but our data does enable an exploration of the issue of voting as a habit in different age groups.

Both data-files used in this paper—one that covers 18- and 19-year-olds that were included in the 2011 voting age trial and one that is a random sample of all voters in the country—includes individual-level information about voting in both 2011 and 2013. I can therefore look at the effect that a vote in 2011 had on the likelihood that an individual would also vote in 2013. These effects can be split up by age. If voting only becomes a habit later in life, I would expect the effect of a 2011 vote on 2013 turnout to increase with age. Differences in turnout in 2013 between voters and non-voters from 2011, split up by age, are shown in Table 3.3.

The effect of having voted in 2011 on turnout in 2013 is 37.6 percentage points among all voters, and 35.9 percentage points among 18- and 19-year-olds. There are substantial differences between age groups in actual turnout, but not in the effect that past turnout has on later turnout. This effect is strong and statistically significant in all age groups.

Table 3.3. Turnout in the 2013 parliamentary election, by participation in the 2011 local elections, in different age groups. Percent

Age	Voted in 2011	Did not vote in 2011	Difference	N – voted	N – did not vote
18–19*	79.5	43.6	35.9	5,429	3,956
20–21	78.6	45.6	33.0	173	172
22–25	80.5	50.7	29.8	256	385
26–29	88.1	54.1	34.0	251	308
30–39	93.4	51.6	41.8	860	577
40–49	92.6	55.9	36.7	1,208	599
50 –59	93.1	57.7	35.3	1,149	442
60–79	95.3	54.6	40.7	1,776	506
All voters	92.0	54.4	37.6	6,072	3,519

* Voters that were part of the 2011 voting age trial

I found that there is no direct effect of 2011 turnout on voting in 2013 in the youngest age cohort in table 3.3. The total effect of 35.9 in that age group must therefore in its entirety be the result of spuriousness. For other age groups, we can only measure the total effect, and that does not vary in any substantial way across age cohorts. Presumably, if a direct habit-forming effect of past turnout developed in older age groups, we would have seen an increase in the total effect by age. Hence, it does not seem likely that there is such a direct effect in any age group. The evidence suggests that there is no habit-forming effect of voting in older age cohorts either.

Conclusion

The title of this paper poses the question: Is voting a habit? Data from the 2011 voting age trial and the subsequent 2013 parliamentary election provides a unique opportunity to answer that question. The short answer is no; I find no evidence that voting is habit-forming.

Previous research has used various methods for uncovering the extent to which voting is a form of habitual behaviour (Gerber et al., 2003; Meredith, 2009; Plutzer, 2002). First, regression analyses of panel data, using an extensive selection of control variables, has indicated that voting in one election has a direct positive effect on turnout in later elections (see e.g., Green & Shachar,

2000). Second, data from experiments looking at get-out-the-vote drives, mostly in the US, seem to show that voting can be habit-forming (see e.g., Gerber et al., 2003). Third, using a regression discontinuity design, Meredith (2009) finds a positive effect of turnout in one California election on later participation. The general conclusion from this research is that voting is in itself habit-forming; someone who took part in one election will, all else equal, be more likely to vote the next time around than someone who did not vote in the first election.

However, there is no guarantee in either of these studies that the effect of participation the first-time around is completely isolated. There is a remaining possibility that spuriousness explains the correlations between participation in consecutive elections.

The Norwegian voting age trial approximates an experiment in which some young people at the age of 16 or 17 were given the right to vote in 2011, while others at the same age were not. Data from that trial and from the following 2013 parliamentary election is therefore ideal for testing the hypothesis that there is a direct effect of voting in one election on turnout the next time around. The results in this paper are clear: There is no evidence of such a habit-forming effect. If voting in one election does not directly affect a vote two years later, there is no reason to believe that voting will become a habit in the long run. People vote because they choose to do so, not because it is a habit.

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4 Stemmerett for 16-åringer – rettighet eller opplæringsprosjekt?

En analyse av mediedekningen av forsøket med nedsatt stemmerettsalder

Marte Winsvold

Ved kommunevalget i 2015 ble det for andre gang gjennomført forsøk med nedsatt stemmerettsalder, og 16- og 17-åringer i 20 utvalgte kommuner fikk anledning til å stemme. Stemmerettsforsøket var gjenstand for mye diskusjon i forkant av valget, og i dette kapitlet undersøker vi hvordan forsøket ble fremstilt i den lokale mediedebatten i fire av forsøkskommunene. Hvordan omtalte lokalmediene forsøket, og hva presenterte de nedsatt stemmerettsalder som å handle om? Ble forsøket fremstilt som en mulighet til å gi unge mennesker innflytelse over beslutninger som påvirker dem, eller handlet det først og fremst om å oppdra ungdom til gode demokratiske medborgere? Måten ungdom ble introdusert for stemmegivning på, kan bety noe for hvordan de ser på stemmegjeringen og på seg selv som stemmegivere senere i livet – stemmer de fordi de vil være med og bestemme, fordi det er en borgerplikt, for symbolsk å slutte opp om kommunen eller av andre grunner? Pressens innramming av forsøket kan si oss noe om hvordan stemmegivning ble formidlet til ungdom som skulle stemme for første gang, og hvordan stemmegivning ble begrunnet for dem. Innrammingen er en av mange faktorer som kan hjelpe oss med å forstå hvorfor ungdom velger å slutte seg til stemmegivernes rekke, eller hvorfor de lar være.

Det er mange andre aktører enn lokalpressen som fortolker og fremstiller stemmerett for 16- og 17-åringer, og på individnivå er det grunn til å anta at spesielt foreldre har stor innflytelse på stemmegivning. Videre er det grunn til å tro at skolen har en viktig rolle, og at måten stemmegivning generelt og forsøket spesielt fremstilles på i skolen, kan ha betydning for hvordan ungdommen selv ser på stemmegivning. Medienes fremstilling av stemmerettsforsøket kan likevel antas å være viktig for ungdommens forståelse av hva stemmegivning innebærer, av minst to grunner:

For det første er lokalmedier vist å være en viktig kilde til informasjon om politikk og valg, også for ungdom, til tross for at avislesingen blant dem under

25 år har gått noe ned de senere år (Høst og Vaage 2010; Skogerbø og Winsvold 2011; Vaage 2014). Spesielt er mediene viktige kilder til informasjon og holdningsdannelse når det gjelder saker folk ikke har egen erfaring med (Iyengar & Kinder 1987; Waldahl 1992, som jo stemmegivning blant førstegangsvelgere langt på vei er et eksempel på. Hvordan lokalavisene dekker stemmerettsforsøket, kan derfor antas å påvirke førstegangsvelgernes informasjon om og holdning til politikk generelt og til det å stemme spesielt, og derigjennom ha betydning for hvorvidt de tar stemmeretten i bruk.

For det andre kan en analyse av mediernes innramming fortelle oss noe om hva ungdommen i et lokalsamfunn i fellesskap blir eksponert for. Lokalavisen er gjerne den viktigste arenaen i lokalsamfunnets offentlige rom, og det som presenteres her, er alle kommunens innbyggere potensielt tilskuere til. Selv om ikke alle 16- og 17-åringer leser avisen, så gjør antakelig foreldrene eller lærerne deres det, og dermed eksponeres de indirekte for lokalmediens innhold. Fortellingen om nedsatt stemmerettsalder som presenteres i lokalavisen, representerer dermed den felles lokale fortellingen om hva nedsatt stemmerett er og innebærer, og hvorfor ungdom skal stemme. Mediedekningen er ikke nødvendigvis representativ for forestillingene eller holdningene i befolkningen, men den gir en indikasjon på hvilke forestillinger og holdninger som finnes. Dersom en forutsetter at lokalavisene arbeider etter redaksjonelle prinsipper om balanse og mangfold, kan en anta at redaksjonene bestreber seg på å få alle syn på stemmerettsalderen dekket. Videre finnes det muligheter for folk som ønsker å uttale seg, til å gjøre det for eksempel gjennom leserbrevspalten eller i kommentarfeltet i nettavisen. Dersom få føler sterkt om nedsatt stemmerettsalder, vil det antakelig gjenspeile seg i slunken dekning. Måten forsøket omtales på i mediene, kan derfor antas å utgjøre et ekstrakt av måten temaet diskuteres på i lokalsamfunnet.

Videre vil de spesifikke, lokale forestillingene og holdningene til nedsatt stemmerettsalder kunne spores i den lokale mediedebatten. I *Forskrift om forsøk med nedsatt stemmerettsalder til 16 år ved kommunestyrevalget i 2015* står det: «Formålet med forsøket er å prøve ut hvordan nedsatt stemmerettsalder til 16 år påvirker ungdoms politiske deltakelse og engasjement i lokalsamfunnet.» Denne begrunnelsen er nokså overordnet generell, og den gir rom for lokale fortolkninger av hva man ønsker å få ut av forsøket. Fordi debatten varierer mellom lokalsamfunn, vil ungdom i ulike lokalsamfunn ta med seg ulike fortellinger om hva stemmegivning innebærer, og om hvorfor de skal stemme.

Teori

Måten en gitt sak omtales på, og hva som presenteres som relevant og viktig for saken, kan påvirke måten vi tenker om saken på. Tolkingsrammer er med andre ord med på å definere og avgrense et problem eller saksforhold, gi grunnlag for moralske vurderinger og antyde løsninger og tiltak (Entman 1993). Bredden på tolkningsrammene vil påvirke tolkningsrommet, og når folk er utsatt for medieinnhold med forskjellig innramming, vil effekten av de ulike innrammingene kunne utlikne hverandre. Folk blander elementer fra ulike rammer i sin fortolkning av et bestemt problem (Edy og Meirick 2007). Dersom mottakeren ikke utsettes for konkurrerende innramminger, er effekten av innramming større (Sniderman og Theriault 2004). En medieanalyse av hvordan forsøket med nedsatt stemmerettsalder er omtalt, kan si oss noe om hva nedsatt stemmerettsalder presenteres som å handle om, og hvilket problem nedsatt stemmerettsalder presenteres å være et svar på. Dette kan si noe om på hvilken bakgrunn ungdom gjør seg opp en mening om eller danner seg en holdning til nedsatt stemmerettsalder og det å stemme. Hvilken forståelse som vektlegges, kan antas å ha betydning for hvordan 16-åringene ser på seg selv som borgere og stemmegivere, og dermed for hvordan de forsvarer og begrunner demokratiet og hvordan de handler demokratisk.

Når vi analyserer mediedekningen av forsøket med nedsatt stemmerettsalder, vil vi ta utgangspunkt i innramminger eller forståelser av problemet som er identifisert ved tidligere debatter om nedsatt stemmerettsalder. Det er grunn til å anta at mange av de samme forståelsene av nedsatt stemmerett som har vært fremmet tidligere, også kom til syne i de lokale mediedebattene rundt stemmerettsforsøket i 2015. Vi må imidlertid være åpne for at nye måter å omtale og forstå nedsatt stemmerettsalder på kan ha forekommet, og at det kan finnes spesielle lokale innramminger av forsøket.

I sin gjennomgang av debatten rundt nedsatt stemmerettsalder i europeiske land identifiserer Ødegård og Aars (2011) ulike perspektiver som anføres i argumentasjonen for eller mot nedsatt stemmerettsalder. De klassifiserer argumentene i ulike grupper der begrunnelsene er basert blant annet på demokratihensyn, modenhet og samsvar med andre rettighetsbaserte aldersgrenser. Overordnet er det to perspektiver som står mot hverandre. I det ene perspektivet omtales stemmerett som en rettighet, i det andre perspektivet begrunnes nedsatt stemmerett med stemmehandlingens læringspotensial. Vi kaller disse to perspektivene for «deltakelse som rettighet» og «deltakelse som læring». De to perspektivene kan knyttes til demokratiske idealmodellens ulike syn på politisk deltakelse og deres ulike begrunnelser for hvorfor man skal delta politisk.

Deltakelse som rettighet

Et sentralt argument for nedsatt stemmerettsalder er at ungdom skal ha stemmerett fordi de påvirkes av de beslutningene som politikerne fatter, og at alle som er berørt av en sak, skal ha mulighet til å påvirke utfallet i saken. I demokrati-teori refereres dette til som «prinsippet om berørte parter», og det anses som et helt grunnleggende demokratisk prinsipp: Demokrati betyr «folkestyre», og det at folket styrer, innebærer at de må kunne påvirke beslutninger som de selv styres av (Goodin 2007; Näsström 2010; Arrhenius 2012). Ungdom utsettes for konsekvensene av politiske beslutninger og bør derfor ha mulighet til å påvirke disse beslutningene. På bakgrunn av FNs barnekonvensjon har Norge og en rekke andre land lovfestet ungdoms rett til å bli hørt i saker som angår dem (Ødegård 2011:5), så prinsippet er allerede formelt etablert i Norge. Å gi ungdom stemmerett vil være å styrke prinsippet om berørte parter ytterligere. Argumenter knyttet til stemmegivning som borgerplikt faller også innunder dette perspektivet. Stemmeretten medfører en moralsk forpliktelse til å slutte opp om det demokratiske systemet der man er gitt en påvirkningsmulighet. Ut fra synet på stemmerett som en rettighet basert på prinsippet om berørte parter, springer også argumenter knyttet til at det bør være samsvar mellom ulike rettighetsbaserte aldersgrenser. Det finnes aldersgrenser under myndighetsalder som regulerer unges plikter og rettigheter, for eksempel er unge strafferettslig ansvarlige fra de er femten. Det argumenteres for at de som er strafferettslig ansvarlige, bør ha mulighet til å kunne være med og påvirke de lovene som de kan bli dømt etter. Samsvar med andre aldersgrenser er imidlertid også brukt som argument imot nedsatt stemmerettsalder – for eksempel hevder noen at det bare er de som er valgbare, og som dermed kan ta politisk ansvar, som bør ha rett til å stemme. Innenfor rammen av «stemmerett som rettighet» argumenteres det for at stemmerettsalderen bør sammenfalle med myndighetsalderen, fordi det bør være samsvar mellom rettigheter, plikter og ansvar.

Deltakelse som læring

Det andre sentrale perspektivet på nedsatt stemmerettsalder er at stemmegivning vil fungere som en opplæring i politisk medborgerskap. Når ungdom gis anledning til å stemme, blir de nødt til å ta stilling til hvilke saker de ønsker å legge vekt på, og gjennom slik aktiv deltakelse utvikler de så vel sin politiske bevissthet som evnen til å tenke helhetlig og kollektivt, prioritere mellom ulike politiske målsettinger og føle økt samfunnsansvar. Selve stemmehandlingen bidrar til at de unge utvikler et demokratisk sinnelag. Læringsperspektivet på deltakelse gjenfinner man i deltakerdemokratiske idealmodeller med tråder tilbake til Toqueville. I dette perspektivet har deltakelsen i seg selv en verdi for

enkeltindividene – deltakelse gjør individer til borgere ved at de konstituerer seg selv som aktive agenter i den politiske prosessen (Pateman 1970; Dahlgren 1991; Ferree mfl. 2002). Valgdeltakelse blant 16- og 17-åringer kan dermed ses på som en skole i demokrati. Knyttet til dette argumentet er også antakelsen om at dersom unge tidlig sosialiseres til å stemme, vil sjansene økes for at de ser på seg selv som stemmegivere, at stemmegivningen blir en vane, og at de dermed vil stemme ved påfølgende valg (Franklin 2004). Politisk deltakelse fra tidlig alder vil altså ha en positiv effekt for deltakelsen videre i livet. På sikt kan dermed tidlig stemmerettsalder snu trenden med lav valgdeltakelse, og det kan høyne valgdemokratiets legitimitet.

Stemmegivning som myndiggjøring er en variant av ideen om stemmegivning som læring. Gjennom stemmegivning oppdager ungdom at de kan påvirke sine egne livsbetingelser, de ansvarliggjøres og bemyndiges. Dette er også viktig for utvikling og modning. Ellers brukes argumenter om modning gjerne som argumenter *mot* nedsatt stemmerettsalder, og er på sett og vis læringsperspektivet med omvendt fortegn. En hovedinnvending mot å gi unge stemmerett er at de ikke har nådd et tilstrekkelig modningsnivå. Ungdom må utvikle evnen til å prioritere og til å tenke demokratisk *før* de får stemmerett, ellers kan de for eksempel misbruke stemmeretten til å stemme på partier med ekstreme standpunkter, eller de kan bli utsatt for utidig påvirkning fra omgivelsene. Dette argumentet har blitt anført ved alle tidligere stemmerettsutdelelser: I sin tid gjaldt det dem uten eiendom, og kvinner. Tilhengere av nedsatt stemmerettsalder møter modenhetsskeptikerne blant annet ved å vise til demokratiopplæringen i skolen. De mener at demokratiopplæringen i skolen er så god at 16-åringer er vel skodd for å avgi stemme (Ødegård 2011).

Rettighet og læring – to sider av samme sak?

Det er ikke noe absolutt skille mellom begrunnelser knyttet til deltakelse som rettighet og deltakelse som læring, og i argumentasjonen knyttes de to prinsippene gjerne kausalt til hverandre: Når ungdom får innflytelse over beslutninger som berører dem, vil de lære at deltakelse lønner seg, noe som vil ha positiv effekt på deltakelse senere i livet. Og motsatt, læring kan være et nødvendig middel på veien til å bli en kompetent og bemyndiget samfunnsborger. Det kan være nødvendig å lære å bruke den rettigheten man har. Det er likevel en forskjell i argumentasjonen. Man kan vektlegge deltakelse for fremtidig læring, eller man kan vektlegge deltakelse som en rettighet, jamfør prinsippet om berørte parter. Hvilket perspektiv som får mest oppmerksomhet, kan antas å påvirke hvordan ungdom ser på sin stemmegjering: Stemmer de for å øve seg, eller stemmer de fordi de regnes som fullverdige borgere?

Metode og data

Forsøk med nedsatt stemmerettsalder ble gjennomført for andre gang i 2015, og 10 av de 20 forsøkskommunene hadde også deltatt i et tilsvarende forsøk i 2011. Ellers skulle utvalget av forsøkskommuner sikre spredning med hensyn til befolkningstall, geografi og alderssammensetning i kommunen, samt variasjon i den politiske sammensetningen av kommunestyret. For å undersøke medie-dekningen av stemmerettsforsøket i 2015 har vi gjennomført en innholdsanalyse av deknningen i 4 av de 20 forsøkskommunene: Mandal, Gausdal, Oppegård og Kristiansund. Disse 4 kommunene ble valgt ut som casekommuner i den bredt anlagte evalueringen av forsøket, og er derfor valgt ut for å belyse flere problemstillinger enn bare mediedekningen. Viktig for analysen av mediernes dekning var imidlertid at kommunene hadde en lokal- eller regionalavis med redaksjon i kommunen – dette for å sikre at viktige ting som skjedde i kommunen, faktisk ble omtalt. Av kapasitetshensyn er det lokalavisen med det største opplaget i kommunen som er valgt for analyse. Tall for dekningsgraden i casekommunene er hentet fra aviskatalogen.no, og er oppgitt i parentes. Følgende aviser ble analysert: *Lindesnes* (L) for Mandal kommune (54 % husstandsdekning i Mandal), *Gudbrandsdølen Dagningen* (GD) for Gausdal kommune (62 % dekning); *Tidens Krav* (TK) for Kristiansund (51 % dekning) og *Oppegård Avis* (OA) for Oppegård kommune. Dette er en gratisavis som sendes ut til samtlige husstander, og som dermed har en dekningsgrad på 100 %. I tillegg er medieoppslag på nrk.no sine distriktssider analysert. I noen av kommunene er det flere konkurrerende lokal- og regionalaviser, og vi må derfor ta høyde for at en del av befolkningen blir eksponert for innhold kun fra andre kilder enn den analyserte avisen.

Lokalmediene er valgt fordi vi antar at det først og fremst er innbyggerne i lokalavisens nedslagsfelt som blir eksponert for det som formidles der. Varierende lokal problemforståelse vil dermed kunne komme til syne gjennom å sammenlikne lokalmediene. Det var planlagt å gjøre en analyse også av medieoppslag i nasjonale medier, men det viste seg at nasjonale medier nesten ikke dekket forsøket i 2015. Analysen konsentrerer seg derfor om de lokale oppslagene. Alle artiklene som handler om stemmerettsforsøket eller om nedsatt stemmerettsalder, og som var publisert i de fire avisene og på de fire distriktssidene hos nrk.no i perioden fra 1. januar 2014 til 31. desember 2015, er analysert. Grunnen til den lange analyseperioden er at det var relativt få oppslag om stemmerettsforsøket, og vi ønsket å øke antall oppslag å analysere.

Alle oppslagene er kodet for hvem sin stemme som er representert, vinkling, hvorvidt stemmerett for 16-åringer er hovedtema i artikkelen, og i hvilken grad oppslaget presenterer stemmerett for 16-åringer som en rettighet eller som et

tiltak for læring. Disse to kategoriene er delt opp i underkategorier, som blir presentert i analysen. I tillegg er oppslagene kodet for om de handler om hvilke saker de unge er opptatt av, og om de fokuserer på valgdeltakelse. Til sist er oppslagene kodet for hvorvidt de presenterer forsøket som å handle om kommunen selv: Forklares forsøket ved bestemte trekk ved kommunen, for eksempel at kommunen er spesielt god til å involvere unge?

Videre er det gjort en kvalitativ fortolkningsanalyse av oppslagene som handler om stemmerett forstått som rettighet og stemmerett forstått som læring. Denne analysen vil illustreres med eksempler fra oppslagene.

Analyse av den lokale mediedebatten

En kunne forvente at de lokale mediedebattene rundt forsøket ville være påvirket fra ulike hold. For det første kunne en forvente at regjeringens begrunnelse for forsøket ville kunne påvirke den lokale fortolkningen. Videre kunne en forvente at den nasjonale debatten rundt stemmerettsforsøket ville fanges opp i den lokale debatten. I den nasjonale debatten om nedsatt stemmerettsalder for forsøket i 2011 var det til dels stor motstand mot å innføre nedsatt stemmerett som en permanent ordning. Før forsøket i 2015 var det så å si ingen nasjonal debatt om forsøket. I juli 2015 hadde Aftenposten tre oppslag om forsøket, Nationen hadde ett, og NRK hadde ett. I tillegg hadde styreleder i Landsrådet for Norges barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner (LNU), et debattinnlegg i VG i april 2015, der han argumenterer *for* nedsatt stemmerettsalder. Mens artiklene i Aftenposten balanserte for- og motargumenter, var de øvrige oppslagene positivt vinklet. Alt i alt må vi likevel si at den nasjonale debatten først og fremst var ikke-eksisterende. Når vi lette etter argumenter og presentasjoner av stemmerettsforsøket i de lokale debattene rundt forsøksvalget i 2015, valgte vi derfor å ta utgangspunkt i argumentene som fremkom i den nasjonale debatten ved forrige forsøk, og se om disse fremdeles var til stede.

Til sist kunne en forvente at den lokale mediedebatten ville farges av lokale aktører, for eksempel lokalpolitikere eller prosjektansvarlig for stemmerettsforsøket i kommunen. Ikke overraskende avdekket intervjuer i de fire kommunene at begge disse gruppene var positive til forsøket (Winsvold og Ødegård 2016). Vedtakene om å søke om å få delta i forsøket var så å si enstemmig i alle kommunene, de prosjektansvarlige var naturlig nok positive, og i den grad politikere eller kommuneansatte ble intervjuet i lokalmediene, trakk de derfor naturlig nok frem de gode grunnene til å la 16-åringene stemme, ikke eventuelle motforestillinger.

Oppsummert kan en dermed si at stemmerettsforsøket ble gjennomført i en situasjon der det var lite oppmerksomhet fra nasjonalt hold, og der oppmerksomheten fra lokale aktører i all hovedsak var positiv. Dette skulle borge for en positiv vinkling av stemmerettsforsøket i den lokale pressen.

Omfang og vinkling

Lokalmedienes dekning av stemmerettsforsøket kan påvirke ungdommenes informasjonstilfang og holdninger gjennom det utvalget av politiske saker som ungdommene blir eksponert for i tiden før valget. For eksempel kan en tenke seg at enkelte redaksjoner vil fokusere ekstra på saker de antar de unge er interessert i, intervju unge førstegangselgere eller på andre måter motivere unge til å stemme. I noen grad gjorde tre av de fire lokalavisene i casekommunene dette. Unntaket var Oppegård Avis, som ikke viet ungdom noen særlig oppmerksomhet ved dette valget. I samtlige casekommuner hadde kommunen forsøkt å samarbeide med lokalavisen for å få til en mediedekning av forsøket. Dekningen er likevel ikke overveldende. I løpet av to år, 2014 og 2015, var det til sammen i de fire kommunene 71 oppslag der stemmerettsforsøket var nevnt.

Den enkelte førstegangselger leser i beste fall alle oppslagene om nedsatt stemmerett i egen lokalavis. For å si noe om hvilken mediedekning ungdommen i de ulike kommunene kan antas å ha blitt utsatt for, må vi derfor bryte dekningen ned på kommune. Som vi ser av listen under, var det flere oppslag i Mandal og Kristiansund enn i Oppegård og Gausdal. Informasjonen om forsøket som ungdommen potensielt ble eksponert for, var dermed større i Mandal og Kristiansund enn i de to andre kommunene.

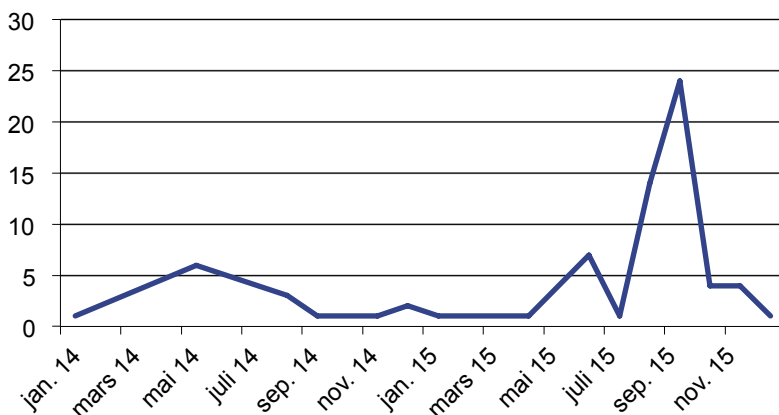
- 23 oppslag i Kristiansund (22 i *Tidens Krav* og 1 på nettsiden til NRK Møre og Romsdal)
- 23 oppslag i Mandal (alle i *Lindesnes*)
- 14 oppslag i Oppegård (alle i *Oppegård Avis*)
- 11 oppslag i Gausdal (alle i *Gudbrandsdølen Dagingen*)

I under halvparten av sakene (33 av 71 oppslag) var stemmerett for 16- og 17-åringer hovedtema. De fleste oppslagene (52 av 71) var ordinære artikler. Videre ble forsøket nevnt i to ledere, tre debattinnlegg og fire leserbrev, to videoer og en lenke til et Facebook-innlegg. Fem av oppslagene var bare små notiser, og to var annonser. Til tross for fire leserbrev kan man ikke si at det var spesielt mye debatt rundt forsøket.

De fleste oppslagene (60 av 71) var illustrert med bilde, og 33 av dem var illustrert med bilde av ungdommer, ungdomspolitikere, representanter for Ungdomsrådet eller liknende. Ved bare et øyekast ble det derfor klart for leseren at saken handlet om ungdom. I 29 av oppslagene kom ungdom selv til orde, gjerne ved at de ble intervjuet av journalisten. Den andre store aktørgruppen som kom til orde i artiklene, var «voksne» politikere (19 av artiklene).

Oppslagene spredte seg noenlunde jevnt utover, men med to topper: Først en topp i mai 2014, da det ble klart hvilke kommuner som fikk delta i forsøket. Alle oppslagene fra denne perioden handler om nettopp det: at den angjeldende kommunen fikk delta i forsøket. Den andre toppen kom rundt valget. Dekningen tok seg opp i juni 2015, før sommerferien i valgåret. Det var stille i juli, og så skjøt dekningsfarten fart i august og september. Dekningen er illustrert i figur 4.1.

Figur 4.1. Antall oppslag der stemmerettsforsøket er nevnt i lokalpressen i fire casekommuner



Når det gjelder oppslagenes vinkling, skilte vi i analysen mellom oppslag som var entydig positive, balanserte (som trakk frem både positive og negative sider ved nedsatt stemmerettsalder) og entydig negative. I tillegg var det noen oppslag som ble kodet som «nøytrale». Dette var oppslag som ikke tok stilling, men som bare informerte om forsøket og om valgavviklingen – 9 oppslag ble kodet slik. Ellers var deknningen alt overveiende positiv. I 53 av 71 oppslag ble det presentert positive argumenter til støtte for forsøket eller til støtte for nedsatt stemmerettsalder. 6 oppslag presenterte både positive og negative argumenter, mens bare 3 artikler ble kodet som negative. Av disse var bare én entydig negativ. De to andre var kritiske til forsøket fordi det var kostbart, men de var ikke kritiske til nedsatt stemmerettsalder som sådan. De som leste lokalaviser i disse kommunene, ble altså i svært liten grad presentert for motforestillinger

mot nedsatt stemmerettsalder. I en spørreundersøkelse som gikk til de kommunale prosjektlederne for forsøket i de 20 forsøkskommunene, gis det samme inntrykket: Her rapporterer 18 av 20 om at omtalen i lokalpressen i all hovedsak var positiv, 1 kommune mener omtalen verken var spesielt negativ eller positiv, mens en siste kommune rapporterer at forsøket i liten grad ble omtalt i lokale medier. Som vi skal se i innholdsanalysen, ble likevel motforestillingene indirekte holdt i live ved at de ble motsagt. Motforestillingene var derfor en del av diskursen rundt stemmerettsforsøket, selv om de fikk liten eller ingen støtte i oppslagene. Mange oppslag, spesielt de som kom da det ble klart at kommunen var valgt ut til å delta i forslaget, var såkalte skryteoppslag, der kommunen ble beskrevet i positive vendinger (dette gjelder i alt 23 oppslag). Alt i alt fremsto stemmerettsforsøket som en gladsak som bidro til å styrke kommunens omdømme. Kommunens innsats enten for å få ungdommen i tale eller for å bidra til politisk medvirkning generelt, ble trukket frem. Fraværet av en kritisk vinkling er kanskje litt urovekkende og ikke i tråd med journalistiske prinsipper om balansert dekning. Den ukritiske tilnærmingen kan tyde på at lokale medier ikke anså forsøket som så veldig viktig. Uansett ble resultatet at leserne ble presentert for få motforestillinger.

Innhold og problemrepresentasjon

Innledningsvis skisserte vi to ulike måter forsøket med nedsatt stemmerettsalder kunne forventes å bli presentert på: 1) Nedsatt stemmerettsalder kan presenteres som en politisk *rettighet* unge bør ha fordi de er medborgere på linje med andre og fortjener å ha innflytelse over beslutninger som påvirker deres eget liv.

I negativ retning kan det i forbindelse med dette argumenteres for at ungdom ikke fortjener å stemme ved valg fordi de ikke avkreves det økonomiske ansvaret for seg selv som inntreffer ved myndighetsalder, og fordi de ikke kan ta på seg det ansvaret det innebærer å ha et politisk verv – de er ikke valgbare.

2) Nedsatt stemmerettsalder kan presenteres som et tiltak for å *lære* ungdom å bli politiske medborgere. Stemmeretten vil dermed ikke først og fremst handle om å gi ungdom makt og innflytelse, men om å motivere og lære dem til å delta politisk slik at de kan ta et politisk ansvar senere i livet. Ut fra dette perspektivet vil en negativt kunne argumentere for at 16- og 17-åringer er for unge og for umodne til å være ordentlige politiske medborgere.

I kategorien *deltakelse som rettighet* inngår artikler som handler om at unge er berørt av politikken som føres (BERØRTHET), at unge gjennom stemmeretten gis makt til å påvirke (MAKT), at det å stemme er en plikt og/eller innebærer et

ansvar (PLIKT), og at unge må representeres av unge (REPRESENTATIVITET). Alt i alt ble 52 av 71 oppslag – altså 73 % av oppslagene – kodet for ett eller flere av disse trekkene, og kunne dermed sies å handle om deltakelse som rettighet, i en eller annen form.

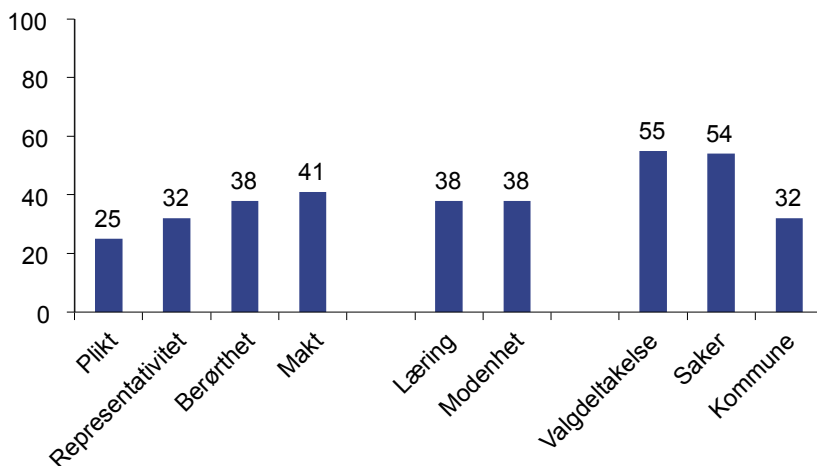
I kategorien *deltakelse som læring* inngår artikler som handler om at nedsatt stemmerettsalder er en måte å øve seg i politisk deltakelse på (LÆRING), og som stiller spørsmål ved hvorvidt unge er modne nok til å stemme (MODENHET). 43 av 71 oppslag – 61 % av oppslagene – ble kodet for trekkene læring eller modenhet og kunne dermed sies å handle om deltakelse som læring.

Med disse to perspektivene som utgangspunkt ble alle oppslagene kodet. Videre ble oppslagene kodet for to temaer eller problemforståelser som ikke falt åpenbart ned i den ene eller den andre kategorien. Det første handler om valg-deltakelse og engasjement (VALGDELTAELSE). Regjeringens uttalte mål med forsøket var å motivere til økt deltakelse og engasjement blant unge, og mange oppslag handler nettopp om dette. Begrunnelser for at deltakelse og engasjement er viktig, kan være at deltakelse både er en rettighet og et uttrykk for læring, men det kan også fokuseres på deltakelse og engasjement som et mål i seg selv, uten at det kan relateres til hvorfor det er viktig at deltakelse og engasjement forekommer. Hvorvidt dette temaet er oppe, har derfor blitt kodet for hver enkelt artikkel. Av 71 oppslag var 39–55 % – kodet for dette.

Den andre innrammingen eller problemforståelsen som ikke faller tydelig ned i verken rettighets- eller læringskategorien, dreier seg om saker ungdom er opptatt av (SAKER). Noen ganger understreker slike oppslag at ungdom er opptatt av andre saker enn voksne, og at de derfor må representeres på selvstendig grunnlag (RETTIGHET), eller at de må lære å se at også vokstemaer er viktige og vil påvirke deres hverdag (LÆRING). Andre ganger anlegger ikke artiklene noe slikt perspektiv, det blir bare referert hvilke saker unge velgere eller unge politikere er opptatt av. I alt 38 av 71 oppslag – 54 % – ble kodet for dette.

En ytterligere dimensjon som oppslagene ble kodet for, var hvorvidt de brukte forsøkene for å kaste godt lys over kommunen (KOMMUNE). Dette gjaldt for 23 av oppslagene (32 %).

Figur 4.2 viser hvor ofte de ulike temaene ble dekket i de 71 oppslagene som ble analysert. Kategoriene er organisert etter hvorvidt de faller inn under perspektivene *rettighet* eller *læring*, eller om de handler om valgdeltakelse eller hvilke saker de unge er opptatt av.

Figur 4.2. Prosentandel av oppslag der ulike trekk er representert. N = 71

De to temaene som forekommer i flest oppslag, er valgdeltakelse og saker. Begge disse temaene kan og blir knyttet til forståelse av deltakelse både som rettighet og som læring.

Når det gjelder *valgdeltakelse*, får det kanskje såpass mye oppmerksomhet fordi valgdeltakelsen er et lett rapporterbart faktum i saken om nedsatt stemmerettsalder, og fordi det er lett å lage en journalistisk historie om det. (Spente) forventninger knyttes til valgdeltakelsen i forkant av valget og rapporteres i ettertid. I tillegg ses valgdeltakelsen blant unge som et mål på suksess: Forsøket er vellykket dersom valgdeltakelsen blant unge er høy. Dette viste også intervjuer med prosjektlederne i kommunene, rapportert i Winsvold og Ødegård 2016. Høy valgdeltakelse omtales ofte ikke bare som et mål på om man har klart å engasjere ungdommen, men også som selve målet med forsøket, uten at det problematiseres ytterligere hvorfor man ønsker høy valgdeltakelse. Avisene ser det åpenbart som sin oppgave å bidra til å øke valgdeltakelsen blant de unge. Denne misjoneringen gjør oppslagene om stemmegivning nokså ubalanserte. Det er for eksempel ingen av de intervjuede ungdommene som sier de er uinteressert i politikk eller ikke har tenkt å stemme. Her ser det ut som om avisene har et mål – de ønsker å vise frem engasjert ungdom, og de ønsker å motivere ungdom til å stemme. På den måten formidler avisene en norm om at det å stemme er det riktige.

Når det gjelder *saker*, dreier det seg gjerne om hvorvidt unge er opptatt av andre saker enn de eldre. Vektleggingen av saker knyttes ofte til argumenter om *berørthet*. Ungdom antas å stemme ut fra hvilke politiske temaer som angår

deres liv, som de berøres av. At avisene gir såpass mye spalteplass til å vise hvilke saker unge er opptatt av, bidrar til at de unges stemmer kommer frem i den offentlige debatten. At de lar ungdom få en stemme ikke bare som ungdom, men som borgere som er opptatt av ulike saker, kan bidra til at ungdom ser seg selv som stemmeberettigede.

I de kommende avsnittene blir problempresentasjonen i oppslagene diskutert mer utførlig. Det er gjort en innholdsanalyse av oppslagene som rammer inn forsøket som å handle om henholdsvis rettighet og deltakelse. Målet med analysen er å gi innsikt i hvilken historie om stemmerettsforsøket som ungdommene i disse kommunene ble presentert for og med stor sannsynlighet hadde med seg når de skulle vurdere om de skulle stemme. Sitater fra oppslagene er merket med avisens initialer og dato.

Deltakelse som rettighet

I mange artikler fremmes perspektivet om at 16-åringer bør ha stemmerett fordi de skal kunne påvirke de vedtakene de selv får merke konsekvensene av. Dette synet på nedsatt stemmerettsalder fremmes ofte av politisk engasjert ungdom og brukes gjerne som argument for at unge må benytte stemmeretten:

Hvis det bare er eldre som får stemme, er det ingen som tenker på hva ungdom vil ha. Dette angår oss. Vi kan ikke ha det slik at de eldre skal bestemme hvordan vi skal ha det i fremtiden. Vi er ungdommer og vet best hva ungdom trenger og vil ha. (L 190815)

Selv om problemet som defineres er at unge bør høres i saker de blir berørt av, er ikke nødvendigvis løsningen at de får stemmerett, og av de få kritiske røstene som heves mot nedsatt stemmerettsalder, brukes nettopp berørthet som innramming. En ordfører i en av nabokommunene til Gausdal, som også dekkes av avisen *Gudbrandsdølen Dagningen*, blir bedt om å forsvare hvorfor hennes kommune ikke ville delta i forsøket. Hun svarer at ungdom allerede blir hørt gjennom andre medvirkningsordninger, og at ressursene som brukes på forsøket, kan komme ungdom til gode på andre og bedre måter, for eksempel i barnevernet eller ved helsestasjonen (GD 14.05.14).

Når stemmerett presenteres som en rettighet, brukes det også argumenter om at unge har krav på denne rettigheten fordi de allerede har plikter og ansvar som tilfaller voksne, og at det dermed er rettferdig at de også har de samme rettighetene. Sitatet under fra en ung velger er typisk:

Vi er gamle nok for veldig mye, og kan også bli satt i fengsel. Da er det jo merkelig at vi ikke skal få lov til å kunne avgjøre egen fremtid ved å kunne få stemme. Ungdommene er fremtiden. (L 070915)

Vektleggingen av hvilke saker unge er opptatt av, underbygger svært ofte det synet at stemmerett handler om og begrunnes ved hvorvidt man er berørt, altså det vi har kalt *berørthet*. Det antas, av både journalister, politikere og ungdom selv, at unge motiveres til å stemme fordi de berøres av bestemte saker, og det forventes dermed at de også skal være spesielt opptatt av saker som skole, kultur og idrett. I avisen GD anfører en ung politiker samme syn på hvorfor ungdom tiltrekkes av Miljøpartiet de Grønne; det er fordi de vil berøres av klimaendringene i større grad enn dem som er voksne nå:

Det er vi som er unge i dag, som får merke konsekvensene av klimakrisen. De fleste som er politikere i dag, vil ikke merke konsekvensene av den. (GD 210815)

Som en variant av argumentet om at de som blir berørt av politiske vedtak bør høres, er det i de analyserte oppslagene mye oppmerksomhet knyttet til sosial representativitet. Dette er et syn som innebærer at folk best kan representeres av dem som likner dem sosialt. Ungdom kan best representeres av ungdom, fordi ungdom vet hvordan det er å være ung, og hvilke saker som er viktige for unge. Dette perspektivet brukes særlig som begrunnelse for at det er viktig å få unge folk inn i kommunestyrene. Unge folkevalgte, forventes det, vil målbære de unges syn på saker og ting, et syn som er forskjellig fra eldre generasjoners syn. En innvalgt, ung representant i Mandal uttrykker det slik:

Jeg tror yngre representanter har et annet syn på ting enn de som er eldre, og det mener jeg er positivt (...). Jeg håper jeg kan gi mitt syn på saker, og at jeg som ung representant kan ha et annet blick på noen ting. (L 200915)

Videre vil det være lettere for ungdom utenfor kommunestyret å ta kontakt med unge folkevalgte enn med eldre folkevalgte, fordi de snakker samme «språk». Unge folkevalgte vil også kunne motivere unge mennesker til å delta politisk fordi de unge ser at de er representert, og at deres stemme blir hørt.

Problemedefinisjonen som presenteres, er i mange oppslag at det er de «gamle gubbene» som styrer, slik denne unge listetoppen i Oppegård uttrykker det:

I mange kommuner er årets lokalvalg et valg mellom 51 år gamle hvite menn. (OA 270815)

Femtiåringene vet ikke hva som er bra for ungdom. Dette må vi gjøre noe med, sier det, og å gi unge stemmerett er løsningen på problemet. Unge velgere vil stemme på unge kandidater, og dermed kan denne generasjonen sette sitt preg på politikken.

Et syn som fremmes i over halvparten av oppslagene, er, som vi ser av figur 4.2, at stemmerett gir 16-åringer innflytelse og **makt**. Inngangen er ofte negativ: Det er et problem at ungdom har for lite makt. Sitatene under representerer denne vinklingen:

Det er en tendens til at gamle karer styrer alt. (GD 041015).

Mange unge føler at deres mening betyr lite. (GD 061115)

Dette er et problem som nedsatt stemmerett kan bidra til å løse, slik engasjert, intervjuet ungdom gir uttrykk for når de intervjues:

Spesielt viktig er det at 16-åringene, som for første gang har mulighet til å benytte seg av stemmeretten, bruker sin stemme. (...) De utgjør opp mot 1000 stemmer. Det kan være med på å avgjøre valget, sier (ung velger). Det er kun ungdom som vet hvordan ungdom egentlig har det. Det bør førstegangsvelgerne tenke på. (TK 180815)

At ungdom får økt makt, presenteres som entydig positivt. Stemmerett gir ungdom mer makt enn de har nå, og det er bra. Ingen artikler problematiserer hvorvidt det er rettferdig at denne gruppen får økt makt, men at enda yngre grupper av barn og unge ikke får det.

Med makt følger ansvar, og en rekke oppslag fremhever også at unge har en plikt til å delta og et ansvar for å bruke den makten de blir tildelt gjennom stemmeretten. En førstegangsvelger i Gausdal siteres slik:

Ville angret hvis hun som eldre må sitte der og tenke at hun ikke prøvde å gjøre verden til et bedre sted. (GD 061115)

Som vi ser av analysen, ses stemmerett i en rekke oppslag som en naturlig rettighet for unge fordi de berøres av politiske vedtak som fattes, fordi ungdom best vet hvilke saker ungdom er opptatt av, og fordi ungdom, uten stemmerett, ikke har den makten de fortjener å ha. Som en konsekvens av at stemmerett gir makt, gir det også ansvar og en forpliktelse til å bruke stemmeretten og til å engasjere seg i politikk. Denne måten å argumentere for stemmerett på, plasserer seg godt inn i debattene knyttet til tidligere stemmerettsutvidelser. For å kunne gjøre seg nytte av stemmeretten, forstått som en rettighet, trengs – ifølge en del av dem som uttaler seg i lokalpressen i denne perioden – læring:

Ungdom må lære å stemme, og de må lære hvorfor de skal stemme, de må lære at stemmerett er en plikt, og de må lære å ta ansvaret. Synet på stemmerett som en rettighet og stemmerett som læring henger på denne måten sammen, slik det er vist i sitatet under:

Ungdom er mer engasjert i det som skjer i samfunnet, enn folk flest tror. Vi bryr oss om den hverdagen vi lever i, og jo tidligere vi føler at vi har noe vi skulle sagt, jo større sjanse er det for at vi engasjerer oss i framtiden. Jeg tror også flere og flere unge har skjønnet at vi må engasjere oss nå om vi skal få den framtiden vi ønsker oss. (TK 130615)

Andre ganger presenteres disse to synene på hva nedsatt stemmerett dreier seg om, atskilt, og i en liten del av oppslagene – 10 av 71 – er rettighetsargumentasjonen helt fraværende, og det dreier seg bare om stemmegivning som læring. Neste avsnitt er viet argumenter som fremmer nedsatt stemmerettsalder som et tiltak for å lære ungdom demokratisk deltakelse.

Deltakelse som læring

Som vi så av figur 4.2, rammes stemmerettsprosjektet i over halvparten av oppslagene inn som et læringstiltak. Ofte sies dette i klartekst, slik som av denne intervjuede rådmannen:

Dette er en unik mulighet for ungdom som fyller 16 eller 17 år i valgåret, å lære om demokratiet. (TK 120514)

I tilknytning til deltakelse som læring fremmes opplæring som viktig, og skolens rolle trekkes ofte frem som sentral. Læringen forutsettes å foregå gjennom erfaringen med den aktive valghandlingen, men også gjennom demokratiopplæring i skolen, som kobles inn i mange oppslag, slik som her:

Det (...) forutsetter et godt pedagogisk opplegg i regi av skolene. (L 151015)

Slik sett fremstår stemmegivning for 16- og 17-åringer som et læringsprosjekt og som et skoleprosjekt: Det er viktig at unge får stemmerett, fordi de er unge, og unge er under opplæring. Også når unge politikere stiller til valg eller blir valgt inn i kommunestyret, fremheves det ofte som å handle om læring. En ung folkevalgt i Gausdal uttrykker det selv slik:

Fra erfarne politikere har de fått høre at det er viktig å få prøve seg i komité- eller utvalgsarbeid når de først er valgt inn. (...) Vi har jo hatt en del om politikk på skolen, så nå blir det spennende å få være med i

praksis og se om vi blir hørt og respektert. Dessuten er dette en stor og viktig livserfaring, mener (ung politiker). (GD 041015)

En annen inngang til forståelsen av deltakelse som læring er vektleggingen av i hvilken grad ungdom er modne nok til å stemme. Manglende modenhet var et mye brukt argument mot nedsatt stemmerettsalder i 2011 og har vært en av hovedinnvendingene også i andre land (Ødegård og Aars 2011). Argumenter knyttet til modenhet følger samme logikk som at stemmerettsforsøket er et læringsprosjekt. Stemmerett handler ikke om hvorvidt unge er berettiget til å stemme, men hvorvidt de er kapable til å stemme. Modenhet har imidlertid noen ganger et mer statisk preg enn det som bare handler om læring. Løsningen på modenhetsproblemet fremsettes som at tiden må gå: Unge modnes etter som de vokser til. Men modning kan også skje gjennom læring, og i oppslagene om stemmerettsforsøket tas modenhet og læring gjerne opp sammen: Dersom ungdom ikke er modne nok til å stemme, så må de lære det – modningen kan skyndes på.

Mens modenhet ved forrige stemmerettsforsøk ble brukt som en innvending mot nedsatt stemmerettsalder, blir modenhet i oppslagene som har blitt analysert rundt 2015-valget, tatt opp som innvending for så å bli tilbakevist kategorisk. Ungdom og politikere får spørsmål av journalister om hvorvidt unge er modne nok til å stemme, og svaret fra samtlige intervjuobjekter er at det er de, slik denne ungdommen uttrykker:

Tro det eller ei, men det er vi og kan være like så oppegående som en 30-åring på dette temaet. (L 070915)

Ved at modenhet som tema overhodet tas opp, sås imidlertid tvil om hvorvidt ungdom er modne. Modenhet ville ikke vært et tema dersom dette handlet om hvorvidt 40-åringene skulle stemme, men det er en ramme det innbys til å tenke innenfor i oppslagene som handler om stemmerett for dem under 18 år.

Vektleggingen av modenhet fremstår i stor grad som journalistdrevet – dette er en ramme journalistene tenker innenfor, og er kanskje et forsøk på å balansere den nokså entydig positive vinklingen på nedsatt stemmerettsalder. Det er nokså stor forskjell mellom avisene når det gjelder hvorvidt og hvordan de omhandler modenhet. Mens *Lindesnes*, som i mindre grad enn de andre avisene fokuserer på modenhet, beskriver ungdom på en respektfull måte, fremstilles unge, særlig i *Gudbrandsdølen Dagningen* og *Tidens Krav* i en del tilfeller på måter som grenser opp til latterliggjøring, slik som i dette intervjuet:

Jeg synes sekstenåringer fint kan stemme. Det er ikke så vanskelig, sier (ung velger) (16), som gleder seg til å gå og stemme. Man trenger ikke fordype seg i spørsmålene. Vi trenger egentlig bare å ta en valgomat på nettet for å finne ut hvor vi står politisk. (GD 120915)

Manglende modenhet indikeres også noen ganger ved at journalistene bruker et barnslig eller ungdomsaktig språk. Sitatene under kommer fra samme artikkel. Gjennom en samtale med journalisten portretteres ungdommene som naive, skråsikre og i opposisjon til foreldrene:

Hvordan har dere blitt så sikre? – Det gjelder å snakke litt med foreldrene sine, mener (ung velger). – Men har de peiling, da? – Å ja. De har sterke meninger, vet du. I tillegg ble jeg veldig overbevist etter å ha tatt en valgomat på nettet. For klassekameraten er ikke løsningen å stemme det samme som mor og far. – For meg er det helt motsatt. De ble skikkelig irriterte da jeg fortalte dem hva jeg skulle stemme, forteller (ung velger) fornøyd.

Indirekte kommer synet på ungdom som umodne frem også fra eldre politikere. I et leserbrev sier for eksempel to listekandidater på belærende vis at alle kan finne noe de er engasjert i. Det er grunn til å tro at politikerne ikke ville ordlagt seg på denne måten dersom det var en voksen målgruppe de skulle oppfordre til å stemme:

Jeg skjønner at politikk kan virke komplisert, men tenk på dette: Politikk handler om skolen du går på, bussen du tar, og hvor mye den koster, fritidstilbudet i kommunen eller hjelpen du får i helsevesenet hvis du trenger det. Jeg er sikker på at alle har noe de er engasjert i, men jeg er ikke sikker på om alle har tenkt over at dette faktisk er politikk. (TK 140915)

Interessant nok underbygger unge selv også bildet av unge som umodne, men de gjør det ved å kritisere voksne politikeres vanskelige talemåter. «Snakk så unge forstår det» er et gjennomgangstema. En ung listetopp sier for eksempel:

For å få flere unge til å interessere seg i politikk tror (ung politiker) det er viktig at informasjon om politiske saker blir gjort tilgjengelig for ungdom. – Der har NRK gjort en veldig god jobb med å lage spesifikt ungdomsinhold om politikk. Til og med jeg synes Dagsnytt 18 kan bli litt kjedelig. Vi unge snakker et annet språk, sier han. (GD 210815)

Det er ellers svært få som gjør annet enn å snakke om betydningen av å kommunisere enkelt og forståelig. De fleste nøyer seg med å påpeke at det er viktig.

Temaet modenhet rammer også de unge kandidatene og de unge innvalgte politikerne. Dette kommer til syne i denne journalistens forventninger til hva stemmerettsforsøket vil bringe:

Noen jubler for den unge politiske vinden som feier over byen. Andre frykter barnehagetilstander på Rådhuset når dessertgenerasjonen inntar politikken. (TK 221114)

Journalistene gjør ofte et overdrevent stort nummer av at de unge er unge. Dette gjør de blant annet ved å portrettere dem som litt latterlige. Eksempelet under er hentet fra *Tidens Krav*, der kandidaten fra Høyre beskrives slik:

Kristiansund, ta imot Høyres nye, ambisiøse skravlebøtte! (Ung kandidat) legger et sort buksebein over det andre; begge ender i svarte, høyhælte støvletter. Store øyne. Rolig og trygg. (TK 221114)

Et annet eksempel er dette fra *Gudbrandsdølen Dagingen*, der en ung, innvalgt politiker omtales slik:

Politikerens talemåte er allerede inne, i den forstand at hun snakker tydelig, får med seg trykket på siste stavelse og nødig lar seg avbryte. Det kan komme godt med, for (ung politiker) har et ambisiøst mål. Hun setter et par blå øyne i oss og sier: «Jeg skal bli utviklingsminister». (GD 061115)

Variasjon mellom kommuner

Som vi har sett ovenfor, var stemmerett forstått som rettighet representert i litt flere oppslag enn stemmerett forstått som læring. Her var det imidlertid forskjell mellom kommunene, og det var det også når det gjaldt vinkling på valgdeltakelse og på saker. I tabell 4.1 oppgis andelen innlegg som tar for seg de ulike aspektene ved nedsatt stemmerettsalder. Fordi den totale dekningen varierer – den er mer enn dobbelt så høy i Mandal og Kristiansund som i Gausdal – vil de absolutte tallene også være interessante, fordi de er et uttrykk for den absolutte eksponeringen med de ulike typene vinkling. Den relative andelen sier noe om hvor sterkt en innramming står i forhold til de andre innrammingene. Absolutte tall er oppgitt i parentes.

Tabell 4.1. Prosentandel innlegg i hver kommune, kodet for ulike temaer. Absolutte tall er oppgitt i parentes

	Mandal	Kristiansund	Oppegård	Gausdal
Stemmerett som rettighet (slått sammen)	87 (20)	65 (15)	50 (7)	82 (9)
Berørthet	57 (13)	30 (7)	21 (3)	36 (4)
Representativitet	48 (11)	22 (5)	36 (5)	18 (2)
Makt	65 (15)	39 (9)	14 (2)	27 (3)
Plikt	26 (6)	43 (10)	7 (1)	9 (1)
Stemmerett som læring (slått sammen)	57 (13)	78 (18)	36 (5)	64 (7)
Læring	35 (8)	52 (12)	29 (4)	64 (7)
Modenhet	30 (7)	52 (12)	21 (3)	45 (5)
Saker	48 (11)	61 (14)	50 (7)	54 (6)
Valgdeltakelse	65 (15)	57 (13)	50 (7)	36 (4)
<i>N (antall oppslag i perioden)</i>	23	23	14	11

Antallet oppslag er for noen kategorier svært små, og i disse tilfellene gir det ikke alltid mening å oppgi tallene i prosent. Å sammenlikne de relative fordelingene gir likevel noen interessante indikasjoner på hvilken forståelse av stemmerett som de unge i kommunen eksponeres for – enten direkte dersom de leser aviser selv, eller indirekte gjennom andres lesning. For eksempel ser vi at det i Mandal legges størst vekt på stemmerett som rettighet, og at det fokuseres på at stemmerett gir ungdommen makt. Det legges mindre vekt på at stemmerett gir læring. I Kristiansund er forholdet omvendt: Her er det i størst grad skrevet om at stemmerett er en måte å lære å delta på, mens det legges noe mindre vekt på at stemmerett er en rettighet. Videre ser vi at Mandal, som hadde forsøket for annen gang, er opptatt av valgdeltakelse. En mulig årsak til dette er at deltakelsen ved forrige valg har skapt forventninger, og at de har noe å sammenlikne med. Det er også dette som er tema i mange av oppslagene: Vil valgdeltakelsen bli like høy som den var i 2011? (Valgresultatet viste at det ble den (Bergh 2016).)

Oppegård skiller seg ut ved at relativt sett færre oppslag handler om betydningen av stemmerett for 16- og 17-åringer overhodet. Flere av oppslagene har ikke nedsatt stemmerettsalder som hovedtema, men stemmerettsforsøket nevnes i forbindelse med den ordinære valgkampdekningen. I denne kommunen får derfor saken mindre plass i avisen enn antallet oppslag tilsier. I Gausdal,

derimot, som er den kommunen med færrest avisoppslag, handler størsteparten av oppslagene direkte om stemmerettsforsøket, og forsøket fremstår sånn sett som bedre dekket her, til tross for at oppslagene er færre.

Oppsummerende diskusjon

Målet med denne medieanalysen har vært å si noe om hvilken forståelse av stemmerettsforsøket og av det å stemme ungdom i forsøkskommunene har blitt eksponert for. Analysen viser at forsøket fikk en del oppmerksomhet, og at denne oppmerksomheten nesten utelukkende var positiv: Få eller ingen argumenter ble anført *mot* senkning av stemmerettsalderen. En spørreundersøkelse til prosjektlederne i alle de 20 forsøkskommunene viser at mediedekningen også i de øvrige kommunene i hovedsak ble oppfattet som positiv. Med tanke på at nedsatt stemmerettsalder er et politisk spørsmål, vitner den ensidige positive vinklingen om litt slapt journalistisk håndverk. Et av pressens oppdrag er jo kritisk å belyse flere sider av en sak, men det har pressen i forsøkskommunene i liten grad gjort. Analysen kom derfor ikke til å handle så mye om for- og motargumenter, den har heller konsentrert seg om på hvilken måte stemmerettsforsøk presenteres som noe positivt. Motforestillinger er likevel indirekte representert ved at problematiske sider ved å senke stemmerettsalderen trekkes frem for så å tilbakevises. Spesielt gjelder dette spørsmålet om hvorvidt 16-åringer er modne nok til å avgi stemme. Selv om det i samtlige av de analyserte avisene konkluderes med at denne aldersgruppen er moden nok, gjør det at spørsmålet i det hele tatt stilles, likevel at tvilen angående modenhet får rom. Det gir noen rammer som forsøket kan forstås innenfor.

Vårt hovedspørsmål var hva forsøket ble presentert som å handle om. Hvilken forståelse får vi av hvorfor det er viktig å gi 16-åringer stemmerett, når vi leser lokalpressen i de fire kommunene Kristiansund, Mandal, Oppegård og Gausdal? I noenlunde lik dosering presenteres forsøket som å handle om stemmerett som en *rettighet* og stemmerett som *læring*. Stemmerett som rettighet innebærer at ungdom fortjener retten til å stemme fordi de utgjør en viktig del av befolkningen, og fordi de berøres av de politiske beslutningene som fattes. Stemmerett som deltakelse innebærer at ungdom bør få stemmerett fordi de trenger å lære å delta i politikk og samfunnsliv. Stemmerett for 16- og 17-åringer presenteres altså både som en rettighet og som et opplæringsprosjekt.

At læring trekkes frem som et perspektiv, er ikke unaturlig all den tid stemmerettsforsøket innebærer at folk som ikke har stemt før, skal stemme for første gang, og at nye representanter skal inn i kommunestyret. Det interessante er

hvor tyngden i argumentasjonen ligger. Analysen viste at flere oppslag handlet om stemmerett som rettighet enn om stemmerett som læring. I alle kommuner var imidlertid perspektivet læring fremme i en betydelig andel av oppslagene, og i Kristiansund kommune var styrkeforholdet omvendt – her fikk læringsperspektivet mer oppmerksomhet enn rettighetsperspektivet.

Spørsmålet er hva dette gjør med unges syn på seg selv som stemmegivere. Hva innebærer det å introduseres til stemmegivning som et opplæringsprosjekt versus det å introduseres til stemmegivning som en rettighet? Vektlegging av deltakelse finner ideologisk ammunisjon i deltakerdemokratiske teorier, i moderne tid anført for eksempel av Pateman (1970). Slike teorier sier at selv om hovedmålet med politisk deltakelse er å sikre at gode politiske beslutninger fattes, er det en heldig bieffekt av deltakelsen at de som deltar, utvikler et demokratisk sinnelag, at de lærer å se seg selv som medansvarlige borgere og at de tvinges til å prioritere mellom ulike saker. Det å lære å delta politisk er åpenbart en forutsetning for politisk deltakelse, og dermed en forutsetning også for å kunne benytte seg av stemmeretten, forstått som en rettighet. En kan likevel spekulere i hva det gjør med ungdom å bli presentert for stemmeretten som et opplæringsprosjekt: «Du skal stemme fordi du skal øve deg til du blir voksen.» En mulig konsekvens av at stemmegivning regnes som læring er at valgdeltakelse knyttes til opplærings situasjonen i skolen. Vi ser at valgdeltakelsen faller hos 19-åringer, altså når de unge forlater skolen. Dette har antakelig først og fremst praktiske årsaker – mange unge bor ikke lenger i hjemkommunen, og det å avgi stemme er både litt mer komplisert og føles kanskje mindre relevant. Samtidig kan en tenke seg at dersom de yngste velgerne tenker om det å stemme som noe de gjør for å øve seg på å bli demokratiske medborgere, så vil de kanskje måtte begrunne valgdeltakelsen på en ny måte for seg selv når de endelig blir voksne og skal se på seg selv som fullverdige demokratiske medborgere. Ødegårds analyse av ungdommenes motiver for å stemme ved siste valg viser at de unge opplevde det å stemme som noe viktig og voksent (Ødegård 2013). I så fall er ikke det å presentere stemmegivning som et opplæringsprosjekt en innfallsvinkel som harmonerer med de unges motivasjon for å stemme. En kan videre tenke seg at det er mindre motiverende å få stemmerett fordi det er en del av et opplæringsprosjekt, enn det er å få stemmerett fordi en ses på som meningsberettiget, slik som er tilfellet når stemmerett presenteres som en rettighet. Mot dette kan det innvendes at ungdom er vant til å være i en opplæringsposisjon, og at de derfor opplever det som helt naturlig at det å stemme presenteres som et opplæringsprosjekt.

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5 Recruitment of young councillors: Driven by parties or voters?

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Introduction

What happens to the recruitment of young candidates when the electorate is expanded with younger voters? The under-representation of youth in elected assemblies challenges political parties (the main recruiters of candidates for election) to field young candidates, preferably in positions that enhance their chances of getting elected. In this paper, we aim to explore whether—and how—a lowering of the voting age to sixteen years may affect the recruitment of young local councillors. In Norway, twenty municipalities took part in a trial in which the voting age was lowered to sixteen in the 2011 local elections. The same number participated in a parallel trial in the 2015 elections; ten municipalities from the 2011 trial, together with ten new municipalities, were selected as participants in 2015.

While the voting age was lowered in the trial municipalities, nothing was done about the rules of eligibility. Sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds were allowed to vote, but they were not eligible for elective office. Nevertheless, the lowering of the voting age may have influenced the election of young candidates. First, to attract the newly enfranchised young voters, parties have an incentive to field and promote young candidates. Hence, we assume that the altered voting age regulations spill over to the recruitment process. Second, a lower voting age may also affect the behaviour of the voters—who also may give precedence to younger candidates. So, to what degree do parties and voters respectively give priority to young candidates at the ballot box? Our aim with this paper is to pursue these two demand-sided explanations in a local electoral setting; one explanation emphasizing parties as agents for the enhancement of youth representation, the other highlighting the importance of voter preferences for young candidates' likelihood of getting elected.

Two contextual aspects are significant for our study. First, the Norwegian local electoral system allows for both party and voter influence over the election of individual candidates. Parties may give precedence to a limited number of candidates on the list, and voters may give preferential votes to specific candidates—but only after having stated a preference for a party list. Hence, the electoral system allows for different configurations of party and voter influence over the election of individual candidates. Second, since only a sample of municipalities took part in the trial, it allows for a quasi-experimental design where trial municipalities may be compared to non-trial municipalities. We assume that the question of youth representation will be particularly salient in the trial municipalities. Accordingly, in trial municipalities we expect parties and voters to have an extra incentive to further young candidates.

The paper proceeds with a short section on voting age regulations before entering into a description of the relevant context of our study. Subsequently, we give a presentation of our theoretical framework as well as methods and data. Next, we present the results of the study before summing up our findings in a conclusion.

Voting age regulations: No uniform trend

In many countries, voting age regulations are up for debate. At least two factors have been instrumental in raising the issue. First, whereas the general tendency has been a fall in turnout across most Western countries, the decrease has been particularly severe among young voters; this fall in youth voter turnout is among the important causes for the reduction in overall turnout.¹⁵ A prominent argument has been that setting the voting age to eighteen (which is most common) is harmful to the participation of young people since many are between school and work or higher education. Moreover, the argument posits that voting habits are often settled at a young age. Thus, people who abstain as first-time voters are more likely to stay at home in subsequent elections, whereas first-time voters who do take the opportunity to vote when first given the opportunity are more likely to do so in later elections (Franklin, 2004). Therefore, a lowering of the voting age to sixteen may contribute to a strengthening of overall turnout in the long run.

Second, an ageing population in many western countries also means that the electorate steadily gets older. Parties may be expected to point their efforts

15 See IDEA (2013) Annual Democracy Forum 2013 Youth Participation in Politics and Elections BACKGROUND PAPER, p.9.

towards the centre of gravity of the electorate, i.e. the older voters. The ageing population provides an incentive for the political parties to address the elderly voters in their programs. Conversely, young voters may expect less attention from the parties since their share of the electorate is declining.

An institutional response to these developments has been to lower the voting age, granting 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote. Not many countries have implemented a full-scale lowering of the voting age in national elections. At the time of writing, Austria is the only European country with 16 years as the voting age for all elections. Scotland has lowered the voting age to 16 for Scottish and local elections, and 16-year-olds could vote in the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. However, Scottish voters must be aged 18 to vote in UK and European elections. Some states in Germany and Switzerland have a voting age of 16 in local elections, and the Estonian parliament has decided to lower the voting age in local elections.

In the case of Norway, the lowering of the voting age to 16 is thus far not a permanent arrangement. It is a trial carried out in 20 municipalities. Moreover, the arrangement only applies to local elections, not parliamentary elections or elections for county councils.

Context: The case of Norway

Local government and local elections in Norway

There are three tiers of government in Norway: The national level, 19 counties (regions), and (at the time of writing) 428 municipalities. Decisions are made by a directly elected council in all counties and municipalities. Norway is a unitary state, but fairly decentralized (see e.g., Baldersheim & Rose, 2011). All Norwegian municipalities are generalist municipalities with equal status and are responsible for a broad spectrum of public services. The Scandinavian countries, with their particular emphasis on universal welfare values, have been identified as social democratic welfare states in which local government plays a significant role in welfare service provision. Local government is characterized by a combination of wide functional responsibilities and a fairly high degree of discretion, as can be seen in Sellers and Lidström's (2007, p.617) comparative index of local government capabilities. However, municipal discretion is also limited by national regulations and standards, as well as earmarked grants. The levels are thus strongly integrated.

The Norwegian party system is strongly nationalized. Seven parties have had almost continuous representation in the Norwegian parliament: The Socialist Left Party, the Labour Party, the Centre Party, the Christian Peoples' Party, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, and the Progress Party. The Green Party won its first parliamentary seat in 2013. Local lists compete with national parties in several municipalities (Aars & Ringkjøb, 2005, 2008). They constitute a significant element of the party system in some municipalities, but received less than three percent of the national vote in the 2015 municipal elections. The party alternatives are thus generally the same at all tiers of government.

Municipal and county council elections are held simultaneously in all municipalities and counties every four years, whereas parliamentary elections are held at a different time. The Norwegian municipal electoral system is based on proportional representation, where the whole municipality constitutes a single multi-member district. The municipal council itself decides its number of seats, but there is a nationally determined minimum number—ranging from 11 seats in the smallest municipalities to 43 in the largest.

The Norwegian local electoral system allows for both party and voter influence over the election of individual candidates. It is an open list system with extensive preferential voting rights (van der Kolk, 2007; Bergh et al., 2010). Voters first choose a party list and may then give preferential votes to specific candidates. Voters can give a preferential vote to an unlimited number of candidates on their chosen party list and to a limited number of candidates on *other* lists. The distribution of seats within each party is determined by the number of preferential votes. However, parties may also secure the election of a limited number of candidates by giving them priority. Prioritized candidates receive an *additional* number of preferential votes, corresponding to 25 percent of all votes for the party list. Hence, the electoral systems allows for different configurations of party and voter influence over the election of individual candidates. In recent municipal elections, about one quarter of the councillors were elected as a result of preferential votes, i.e. they would not have been elected if the list order had been decisive (Bergh et al., 2010, p.113).

Candidates are generally selected at a nomination meeting. A nomination committee is usually appointed and this committee proposes a candidate list to the meeting. If a municipal branch has its own youth organization, it will usually be represented in the committee. The meeting then makes the final decision. However, unlike candidate selection for national elections, the degree of institutionalization of the nomination process may vary considerably (Ringkjøb and Aars, 2007). In many cases, all branch members can participate

in the nomination meeting. In some cases, usually in small parties, non-members can also participate. In some large branches, the nomination meeting may be composed of elected delegates from sub-municipal units. Practice also varies with regards to the role of the nomination committee. In some cases, a separate committee is appointed; in other cases the executive committee does the job, and some branches simply have too few active members to appoint a committee.

The voting age trial

Norway carried out two trials in which the voting age was lowered to 16 years in selected municipalities in the 2011 and 2015 municipal elections (Bergh, 2013, 2014; Saglie et al., 2015; Ødegård et al., 2016). The government's aim was to find out if voting rights increased political consciousness and engagement among adolescents. Of the then 430 municipalities, 143 applied to participate in the 2011 trial. The Ministry of Local Government selected 20 of these as participants. The ministry aimed to achieve variation in terms of size, region, urbanization, the mayor's party, and the age composition of the population, but also selected municipalities that had actively tried to involve their youth in community affairs. Four years later, in 2015, another trial was held in 20 municipalities: 10 of the 2011 trial participants and 10 newcomers. Turnout was quite high among the 16- and 17-year-olds: 58 and 57 percent in 2011 and 2015 respectively (Ødegård et al., 2016). This is somewhat lower than the overall turnout level (65 and 60 percent), but much higher than turnout among voters in their twenties.

The extraordinary circumstances of the 2011 elections

Norway was struck by a terror attack on July 22 2011, less than two months before the elections in September. A car bomb killed eight people in and around the central government offices, and 69 people—mostly teenagers from all around Norway—were massacred at the Labour Party's youth camp on the island Utøya. Peaceful mass mobilizations were later organized throughout the country, to show sympathy for the victims and embrace openness and democracy. This dramatic collective experience appears to have made a strong impression on young people (Wollebæk et al., 2012a; Bergh, 2015; Ødegård et al., 2016). The fact that the perpetrator targeted teenagers at a political summer camp might have strengthened young people's awareness of fundamental democratic values and created sympathy for young politicians throughout the electorate. The circumstances of the 2011 municipal elections were thus extraordinary. However, it is important to keep in mind that the terrorist attacks took

place after the candidate selection had been completed. The attack may thus have affected the preference votes cast by the voters, but not the candidate selection before the 2011 election.

Theoretical framework

In the literature, political recruitment is often conceptualized as a multi-step ladder, where a selection takes place at each step. The starting point is all eligible citizens, but only a small number of aspirants want to run for office. The parties select some of these aspirants as candidates before the election. On Election Day, the voters make their choices from among these nominated candidates.

According to Prewitt (1970, p.11), we can distinguish between two processes: a) ‘how the politically ambitious focus on particular offices’, and b) ‘how political institutions fill the many posts that keep the institutions operating’. This corresponds to Norris and Lovenduski’s (1993, 1995) distinction between *supply-side* and *demand-side* explanations of candidate selection. Supply-side explanations suggest that the outcome reflects the supply of potential candidates; their motivation to run for office as well as their political resources. On the demand side, we find the selectors and voters who choose their preferred candidates. Norris and Lovenduski regard both supply and demand as micro-level factors: Both depend on individual preferences. The choices made by individuals are nevertheless constrained and shaped by the context, including the electoral system and how parties organize their candidate selection.

In this paper, we focus on two different demand-side explanations, representing different steps in the recruitment process: The selectors (parties) and the voters. To what extent do municipal party branches act as agents for the enhancement of youth representation? And what is the importance of voter preferences for young candidates’ likelihood of getting elected? The supply side—whether young people want to be nominated on the electoral lists—will of course also affect youth representation. However, our data is not suited for analyses of supply factors (although we will utilize data on how parties perceive young people’s willingness to be nominated).

In a rational actor approach, voters are regarded as interest maximizers and parties as vote maximizers (see e.g., Downs, 1957). If we take this as our starting point, there is reason to believe that a reduced voting age will affect the recruitment of young candidates. First, we assume that a younger electorate may

vote for younger candidates, in order to strengthen representation for their own age group. Preferential voting will increase youth representation directly. Second, parties will adapt to the new situation. A younger electorate forces campaigners to take into account the interests of young voters and thereby alters the campaign agenda. In turn, this may favour young candidates. A younger electorate also makes it rational for parties to field younger candidates and/or improve their list standing, in order to obtain more votes from young voters.

Rational choice theory assumes that actors respond to changes in the environment in a manner that serves their interests. However, political organizations, like organizations in general, rely on a set of standard operations that are not easily changed even when they are exposed to new impulses from outside. Hence, a set of routine operations helps to focus the activities of an organization as well as buffering the organization from external instability. Allison (1972), in his seminal work on the Cuban missile crisis, pointed out that even in a situation characterized by great flux, standardized organizational processes continue to play an important role. If we take this organizational perspective as our starting point (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963), our expectations will be different from the ones deduced from the rational perspective: There is no reason to expect any substantial effects. Here, parties are regarded as routine-oriented organizations. Candidate selection is made according to a set of standardized procedures, which tend to be unaffected by changes in the environment.

This perspective cannot be directly transmitted to individual voters since it relies heavily on processes taking place between individuals in a given organizational setting. Yet, it may be argued that voters may also act according to a set of simplifying rules or procedures. Such rules enable voters to reach decisions in ambiguous situations. Thus, voting is seen as habitual behaviour. People tend to support the party they usually vote for, on the basis of party identification (Campbell et al., 1960), rather than those individual candidates who are nominated. Party identification serves as a cognitive shortcut: It assists voters in their decisions by reducing their need to obtain detailed information on the candidates.

This gives us the following hypotheses, based on the rational explanations:

H1: Parties will field more young candidates when the voting age is lowered to 16.

H2: Parties will nominate more young candidates in prominent list positions when the voting age is lowered to 16.

H3: Young candidates will more often be elected on a personal ticket when the voting age is lowered to 16.

With respect to H1, the idea is that parties will be induced to raise the overall share of young candidates on the electoral lists. H2 addresses the top echelons of the lists, referring to candidates that are given priority by their parties as well as the number-one candidates, i.e. the ones who head the list. As for H3, we would have preferred to include the measure of personal votes in our analysis. Unfortunately, this data was not available at the time of writing. Instead, we use a measure indicating whether or not a councillor has been elected by personal votes.

Contrary to these hypotheses, the organizational process perspective assumes little or no impact from the lowering of the voting age. The reform trial will have little bearing on the actions of parties since their reliance on standardized procedures makes them conservative actors. Likewise, voters will not be overly affected by the trial if they are essentially acting according to pre-defined patterns of identification.

Methods and data

The trial provides us with a quasi-experimental setting since a selection of municipalities carried out a trial with 16-year voting age whereas the rest of the municipalities held on to the customary 18-year voting age. Thus, we employ a comparative approach where we compare different categories of trial municipalities with non-trial municipalities. In both the 2015 and 2011 local elections in Norway, 20 municipalities took part in the trial. Ten municipalities took part in both trials. Ten of the 2011 trial municipalities were replaced with ten new ones in 2015. This gives us four categories, as shown in table 5.1 below: The ten municipalities who participated in both trials (cell 1), the ten municipalities who took part in the 2011 trials only (cell 2), the ten municipalities who took part in the 2015 trials only (cell 3), and the rest of the country, i.e. municipalities that did not take part in any of the trials (cell 4).

Table 5.1. Categories of municipalities

		Took part in 2015	
		Yes	No
Took part in 2011	Yes	Double trialists	2011 trialists
	No	2015 trialists	Non-trialists

In addition to these two most recent elections, we use data from the 2007 elections in order to investigate whether the introduction of the trial has had a more widespread effect, i.e. also on the municipalities that did not take part in the trial. We assume that the question of youth representation will be particularly salient in the trial municipalities. Accordingly, in trial municipalities we expect parties and voters to have an extra incentive to further young candidatures.

We use two data sources in this paper. First, we use three data sets from Statistics Norway, with information on all candidates in the 2007, 2011, and 2015 Norwegian municipal elections. The data allow us to compare the municipalities that are subject to the voting age trial with the ones that are not. Moreover, we can compare the experienced trial municipalities (two trials) with the newcomers and those who left the trial. We use information about the municipality and party of the candidates, their age, their rank on the electoral list, whether they were prioritized by their party (given additional preferential votes), whether they were elected or not, and how many seats their electoral list received.

Second, we use two surveys to municipal party branches and independent lists. The first survey, from 2011, only included the trial municipalities. A web-based questionnaire was sent to the all the leaders of party branches and independent lists that fielded candidates in these municipalities. A total of 157 questionnaires were distributed after the elections in September 2011; the response rate was satisfactory: 58 percent. The questions covered the municipal party’s candidate selection process and election campaign, focusing on the recruitment and promotion of young candidates.

The survey design was different in the 2015 survey, which also included non-trial municipalities. The web-based questionnaire was sent to branch leaders in all 2011 and 2015 trial municipalities (the ten municipalities with trials both years, the ten municipalities that only participated in the 2011 trial, and the ten municipalities that only participated in 2015). In addition, the questionnaire was

sent to branch leaders in an additional control group of ten municipalities. Each of these was selected to match one of the ten two-trial municipalities (they represented the same counties, with a similar population size). A total of 312 questionnaires were distributed; this time the response rate was lower: 33 percent. Presumably, party branches in non-trial municipalities were less motivated to respond.

Results

As pointed out earlier, the trial that lowers the voting age to 16 does not make 16- and 17-year-olds eligible for office. Yet it is conceivable that the attention given to young voters in the trial municipalities spills over to the process of councillor recruitment. In other words, when the electorate is extended to younger sections of the population, to what degree will the recruiters (i.e. parties) make efforts to nominate younger candidates? The reasoning is that parties are induced to field young candidates, and that young voters will be attracted to lists that can present young candidates. To provide an answer to these questions, we follow two lines of inquiry: a) We look at the composition of electoral lists and local councils, and b) We look at the parties' self-reported activities aimed at recruiting young candidates.¹⁶

Young candidates

Our first measure is the percentage of list candidates aged 18 to 25. This measure is given for three layers of candidates: a) all candidates; b) candidates with increased vote share (given priority by their party); and c) the number-one candidates, i.e. those occupying the top position. Table 5.2 provides figures for three subsequent elections: 2007, 2011, and 2015. We also distinguish between the four categories of municipalities presented in table 5.1: 1) The double trialists; 2) municipalities that only took part in the 2011 trials; 3) municipalities that only took part in the 2015 trials; and 4) the non-trialists, i.e. the ones who did not take part in any of the trials. Although the voting age trial was first introduced in 2011, we have included data from the 2007 elections as a reference. The 2007 data also serves to identify a possible selection effect. We have already seen that an active youth policy was among the selection criteria. A favourable predisposition towards the young may also explain why the municipality applied for participation in the trial.

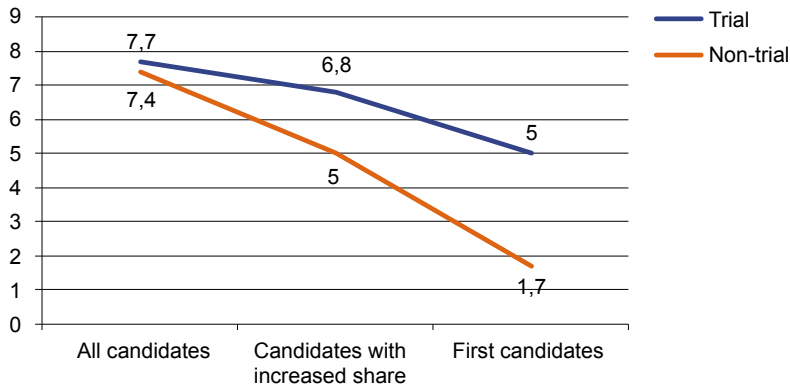
¹⁶ For further analysis of the 2011 data, see Saglie et al., (2015).

Table 5.2. Percentage of candidates aged 18 to 25

	2007			2011				2015			
	Double trials	2011 trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2011 trials	2015 trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2011 trials	2015 trials	Non-trials
List candidates	6.5	6.0	6.0	8.8	8.5	8.2	6.9	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.4
N	1,930	3,363	54,355	2,072	3,521	3,242	54,814	2,101	3,507	3,256	53,431
Prioritized candidates	7.8	4.8	3.7	7.3	5.8	7.3	4.3	6.1	6.5	6.8	5.0
N	129	291	5,141	178	343	317	6,034	181	341	309	6,054
First candidates	5.0	1.9	1.4	1.3	0.7	0.8	1.9	4.8	3.8	5.0	1.7
N	50	104	1,984	78	148	130	2,684	84	158	140	2,774

With respect to the percentage of young candidates, the observed pattern in table 5.2 is somewhat complex. When looking at the full lists there is little difference between trial and non-trial municipalities. If we move to a narrower and more elitist sample of candidates, i.e. those who are given extra voting weight by their party, the general tendency is that the young candidates' share is reduced as compared to the entire list. This tendency becomes even clearer when observing only the number-one candidates. The percentage of young candidates holding the top position is indeed very low. Yet, the 2015 elections represent something of an exception to this picture. In the non-trial municipalities, the 18- to 25-year-olds' share of candidates clearly diminishes as we move towards the upper echelons of the lists. This is in line with the general results from 2007 and 2011. In 2015 however, young candidates in the trial municipalities are able to maintain a stronger position even as we move towards the top layers of the candidate lists. The difference in representation (between trial and non-trial municipalities) is no more than 0.3 percentage points for all candidates, but this difference increases to 3.3 percentage points when we look at the number-one candidates on the lists. This widening discrepancy can be witnessed in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Share of candidates 18–25 among different layers of candidates, 2015. Trial and non-trial municipalities compared



Moreover, table 5.2 shows that in 2015, the pattern in the previous trial municipalities—those that participated in 2011 but not in 2015—is more or less at the level of the 2015 trial municipalities for prioritized candidates and lies between the trial municipalities and the other non-trial municipalities for number-one candidates. This indicates that the 2011 trial still had an effect four years later, but that this effect is wearing off.

Party efforts to increase the representation of young candidates

We have seen that parties in trial municipalities have given priority to young candidates—but not what these parties did to achieve this. We therefore turn to our municipal party branch survey, to see how the parties themselves described the situation.

Table 5.3. Local branches’ efforts to promote young candidates, 2015. Percent ‘yes’

	Trial	Non-trial
Did the municipal branch/list do anything beyond the usual to:		
Recruit young candidates?	48*	32
Make young candidates visible in its election campaign?	52*	34
N	71	47

Survey to municipal party branches and lists. ‘Don’t know’/no answer are included in the calculations.

** Difference significant at the .05 level, * Difference significant at the .10 level

First, table 5.3 confirms that parties and lists in the trial municipalities had a more active approach to recruiting young candidates. Half the branches in trial municipalities stated that they had done something beyond the usual to recruit young candidates and make them visible in the campaign. Only a third of the branches in the non-trial municipalities had done this. As mentioned above, the non-trial group consists of those 2011 trial municipalities that did not participate in the 2015 trial, plus an equal number of municipalities that did not take part in any of the trials. However, the former trial municipalities do not appear to be more active than those that had never participated (not shown in the table).

Table 5.4 shows the extent to which young people themselves participated in the candidate selection. If trial municipalities actively tried to recruit young candidates, this was not primarily because party youth were given a more active role in the nomination process. There is only one statistically significant difference between trial and non-trial parties: Parties in trial municipalities were more likely to have participants below the age of 18 at their nomination meetings.

Table 5.4. Youth participation in candidate selection, 2011 and 2015. Percent ‘yes’

	2011	2015	
	Trial	Trial	Non-trial
Were any members of the nomination committee 25 years or younger?	35	20	26
Were any of the participants at the nomination meeting below 18?	20	28**	13
Were any of the participants at the nomination meeting 25 or younger?	58	62	57
Did participants below 18 have the right to vote at the nomination meeting?	62	58	49
Did the nomination meeting alter the committee’s proposal in a way that gave young candidates a better place on the list?	25	21	15
N	91	71	47

Survey to municipal party branches and lists. ‘Don’t know’/no answer are included in the calculations.

** Difference from non-trial group significant at the .05 level, * Difference from non-trial group significant at the .10 level

We also asked the municipal branches whether it was difficult to recruit young candidates. The results are presented in Table 5. A minority of branches reported that they simply did not have any young people who could be candidates.

Among those who had any, there is a clear difference between trial and non-trial parties: Branches in trial municipalities found it much easier to recruit young candidates. Interestingly, there are no differences between the trial and non-trial groups regarding *general* difficulties to recruit candidates.

Table 5.5 thus indicates that the trial not only affected the parties' demand for young candidates, but also the supply side. The trial presumably led to more attention to the role of youth in politics in the selected municipalities. It is possible that young people consequently regarded the idea of running for election as less far-fetched.

Table 5.5. How local branches assess recruitment of candidates in general and young candidates, 2011 and 2015. Percent

	2011	2015	
	Trial	Trial	Non-trial
CANDIDATES IN GENERAL:			
It is not that difficult to get candidates for the electoral list	N/A	54	53
People often say no, when they are asked to be a candidate	N/A	47	47
Significance (chi-square tests, p-value)		.972	
YOUNG CANDIDATES:			
It is not that difficult to get young candidates for the electoral list	50	59	36
Young people often say no, when they are asked to be a candidate	32	20	40
Young people are not asked to be a candidate	3	6	2
We don't have any young people who can be potential candidates	14	16	21
Significance (chi-square tests, p-value)		.034	
N	90	71	47

Survey to municipal party branches and lists. 'Don't know'/no answer are excluded from the calculations. Question: 'Here are two statements about recruitment to municipal politics. Which of these fits your municipal branch/list best? (choose only one statement)'; 'And here are four statements about recruitment of young people (25 years and younger) to municipal politics. Which of these fits your municipal branch/list best? (choose only one statement)'.

Young councillors

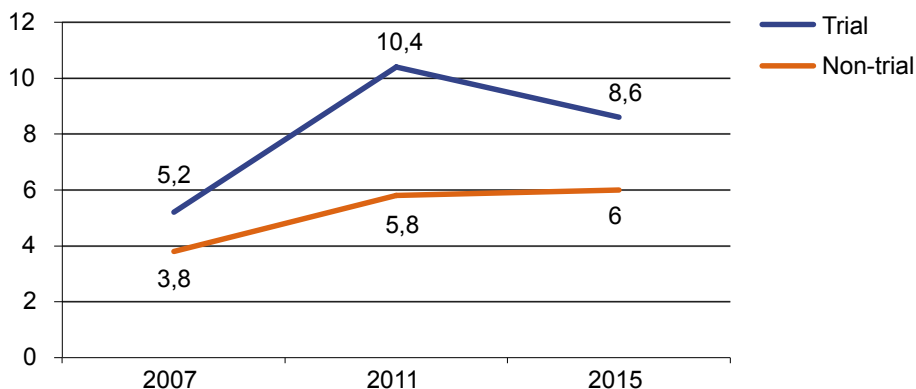
We now move on from the candidate level to look at the age composition of the local councils. More specifically, we examine the share of the 18 to 25-year-olds among the councillors. This is shown in table 5.6.

Table 5.6. The representation of 18- to 25-year-olds in municipal councils. Trial and non-trial municipalities compared

	2007			2011			2015		
	Double trials	2011 trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2011 trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2015 trials	Non-trials
Percentage 18–25 among councillors	6.4	5.2	3.8	11.7	10.4	5.8	8.5	8.6	6.0
N	265	503	8,761	316	586	9,992	316	522	9,805

The table shows a marked increase in the percentage of young councillors between 2007 and 2011. It is also clear that the increase is considerably greater in the trial municipalities than in the remaining municipalities. Some of the discrepancy between trial and non-trial municipalities persists in 2015, but the differences are smaller than those of the preceding election. The differences are visualized in figure 5.2. The figure represents the municipalities that took part in the 2011 trials and the 2015 trials respectively; the trial municipalities shown for 2007 are those that took part in the 2011 trials. However, as can be seen from table 5.6, the picture would not look very different if we relied on the municipalities who took part twice.

Figure 5.2. The representation of 18- to 25-year-olds in municipal councils



Seemingly, we are witnessing the combination of a trial effect and a contextual effect. The trial effect is demonstrated by the continuing discrepancy between the two groups of municipalities. The contextual effect is seen in the exceptionally high rise in representation in the 2011 elections and most likely reflects a wave of sympathy for young candidates in the aftermath of the July 22 terrorist attacks. To a certain extent the contextual effect also comes across in the non-trial group. However, the effect is boosted in the trial municipalities, possibly due to a greater general emphasis on the representation of young people in these municipalities.

Finally, we should also note a possible selection effect in the material. As Figure 2 reveals, in 2007 there is already a discrepancy in the representation of young candidates in the trial and non-trial municipalities. The municipalities that were selected for the trial were not chosen at random. As described above, municipalities that had actively tried to involve their youth in community affairs were preferred. In addition, they had themselves decided to apply for participation, so they are partly self-selected. Moreover, it seems that they did not seek participation in the trial in order to rectify a comparatively low representation of young candidates in the council. On the contrary, the municipalities who took part in the trial were at the outset relatively better off in terms of young representation than the non-trial municipalities.

The voters' contribution

Up to now, we have mapped the representation of young candidates, first on the lists and subsequently in the councils. We cannot, however, tell from the data presented thus far whether the observed changes in the representation of young people are due to the parties' efforts to promote young candidates or whether the voters, through their entitlement to cast personal votes, have boosted the representation of 18- to 25-year-olds.

In order to investigate whether candidates are being elected through the personal vote, we have simply examined whether a councillor's initial position on the list would have given him/her a seat, if personal votes had not counted. If a candidate, for example, is elected from a position as number six on a party's electoral list, but the party only acquired four council seats, she/he must necessarily have been elected with the help of personal votes.

The share of representatives elected on a personal vote is shown in table 5.7. In general, there is a tendency in all groups of municipalities that the younger councillors are more frequently elected on a personal ticket than their older

counterparts. Moreover, we observe once more that the 2011 elections stand out with a greater emphasis on young candidates. The July 22 context effect probably explains the rise in young representatives elected on the personal vote even among the non-trial municipalities from 2007 to 2011. However, there is also a trial effect apparent in the 2011 data since the increase in the trial municipalities surpasses that in the other municipalities.

Table 5.7. Share of representatives elected on a personal vote

	2007		2011			2015		
	Double trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2011 trials	Non-trials	Double trials	2015 trials	Non-trials
All representatives	23.0	24.7	25.6	23.9	23.4	24.1	24.5	22.8
N	265	8,761	316	586	9,992	316	522	9,805
18–25 year-old representatives	6	27.4	37.8	37.7	33.9	11.1	26.7	29.6
N	17	329	37	61	582	27	45	584

The tendency shown in the 2011 data does not persist in the 2015 elections. A slightly surprising result is that the share of young candidates elected on the personal ticket in 2015 is lower in the trial municipalities than in the non-trial ones. The opposite was the case in the 2011 elections. Leaving aside the differences between trial and non-trial municipalities, the pattern is the same as that seen in 2011 in the sense that more young than older candidates are elected through the personal vote. However, the difference between the young and the older is smaller than that seen in the 2011 elections. Generally, this may be interpreted as an effect of the July 22 terrorist attacks. Many voters cast a personal vote for young candidates as a token of solidarity with the young after what happened at Utøya.

Yet, the difference between the two groups of municipalities (trial versus non-trial) may be understood in light of a result that has been presented above (table 5.2 and figure 5.1); that the share of young number-one candidates is markedly higher in the trial municipalities, and that the share of young prioritized candidates also is higher. Accordingly, more young candidates in the trial municipalities were given a high-ranking place on the electoral list, which would have also given them a seat *without* preferential votes.

Conclusions

First, the lowered voting age apparently had an impact on the election of young candidates to the municipal council. More young candidates were elected in the trial municipalities than in the non-trial municipalities. The data does thus not support the organizational process perspective. We must add that the quasi-experimental design was imperfect, as the selected trial municipalities also had more young top candidates and councillors before the trial. However, this pre-trial difference was smaller than the difference during the trial.

Second, the data does not give any clear results regarding the mechanisms that led to the increased representation of young councillors. The results from the 2011 and 2015 trials differ. We should point out that the 2011 election took place under extraordinary circumstances: The terrorist attacks that took place after the candidate selection was completed, but less than two months before the election.

Support for H1 is limited: When we look at all the list candidates, there is only a slight difference between trial and non-trial municipalities. H2 is supported in 2015, when trial municipalities stood out by giving young candidates more prominent list positions, but the picture is less clear in 2011. Regarding the voters, it is evident that young candidates benefited from personal votes in all municipalities in 2011, but more so in the trial municipalities. H3 is therefore supported in 2011, but not in 2015—when young candidates benefited more from personal votes in the non-trial municipalities.

This does not necessarily mean that young candidates received few personal votes in the trial municipalities in 2011—this information was not available in our data. Since young candidates were given better list positions by their parties in trial municipalities in 2015, a plausible interpretation is that they did not need personal votes to be elected. In other words, the data suggests that there are different paths to increased youth representation. In the trial municipalities in 2015, young candidates were prioritized by their parties to a greater extent. This was not so much the case in the 2015 non-trial municipalities and for both groups in 2011. In these cases, the voters took the matter in their own hands and cast personal votes for young candidates who had not been prioritized by their parties.

We cannot say for certain why the results differ between years, but there may be an interaction between the trial and other circumstances. Our data is, to some extent, compatible with the rational choice perspective, but there are also other possible mechanisms. The trial was a prestige project for many trial

municipalities, and some of them made considerable efforts to make it work – without necessarily having interest maximization in mind. The trial may also have led to increased attention to young candidates among both parties and voters, and increased young candidates' motivation to run for office. Such attention-related mechanisms may work, as long as the lowered voting age is a trial, but may be weakened if a lowered voting age becomes permanent – and thus a routine element of local politics. Comparative studies, including countries where the voting age has been permanently lowered, would therefore be useful.

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6 Influential politicians or ‘youth alibi’?

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Introduction

Young people are underrepresented in democratically elected assemblies at the national and local level, throughout the world (IPU, 2014). Although age is an important characteristic, relevant for political representation, the underrepresentation of youth in elected assemblies has received little political or scholarly attention (Lisi & Freire, 2012; IPU, 2014, p.6). While some studies have focused on mechanisms of policy consultation, such as youth parliaments or youth councils (Knudtzon & Tjerbo, 2009; Matthews, 2001; Patrikios & Shephard, 2014), little attention has been given to the election of young people to formal political positions in representative bodies such as national parliaments or local councils (IPU, 2014, p.5), and the bulk of studies on youth political participation have focused on the youth’s voting habits and participation in social movements (Carroll, 2011; Desrues, 2012; Diuk, 2013).

A reason for this neglect may be that youth is seen as a temporary phase; the young generation will gradually slide into formal political positions as they come of age. Still, excluding youth may exclude policy issues of particular concern to young people as well as the perspective of people in this phase of life (IPU, 2014), resulting in sub-optimal political decisions. Moreover, the absence of youth in formal representative structures may lead to political alienation and disengagement, whereas the presence of young people in elected assemblies can motivate other young people to become politically involved, by demonstrating that politics includes youth perspectives and by providing role models (Bouza, 2014). Youth representation may therefore be important for recruitment and, ultimately, for the survival of the representative political system.

To secure continuous youth representation it is important that the young representatives experience their term as meaningful and that they thrive in their role; since happy councillors can be expected both to seek re-election and to

encourage other young people to run for election. In this paper, we explore how young councillors experience their term in Norwegian municipal councils. More specifically we study what factors enhance or hamper young councillors' sense of political influence and what factors motivate them to continue with politics. Considering the main argument for youth representation is that youth's interests shall be better represented, it seems likely that young representatives will be expected to represent youth interests. Such expectations can be conceptualized through role orientation; through survey data from young councillors in twenty Norwegian municipalities, we will explore how a sense of influence and motivation is affected by role orientation. The municipalities all participated in a trial in the local election of 2011, lowering the voting age to 16. Partly as a result of the voting age trial, more young councillors were elected in the trial municipalities than in other municipalities (Saglie, Ødegård, & Aars, 2015). The increased representation of young councillors was a desired consequence of the lowered voting age, and the experiment contributed to improving the representation of young councillors. However, if increased representation is to improve recruitment in the long run, the experience of young councillors must motivate them to continue with politics within the formal political system. Studying whether these councillors feel they have gained influence in different political arenas and how their role perception and sense of influence affect their motivation to continue with politics may help us understand what makes young councillors stay and what make them go. The survey data makes it possible both to describe the results of the voting age experiment in terms of heightened youth representation, and to generate hypothesis about the relationship between role perceptions, sense of influence, and motivation.

Theory

To shed light on the question of motivation, we elaborate on theories of representation and theories of political efficacy. Merging these theoretical strands enables us to develop expectations regarding the relationship between role conceptions, perceived influence, and motivation.

Nearly every account of political representation starts with the point made by Hanna Pitkin (1967) that to represent in its literal sense means to 'make present again', thus describing the activity of making citizens' opinions and perspectives present in the policy-making processes (Dovi, 2014). But what does it mean to make present? In her seminal work *The Concept of Representation* (1967), Pitkin discerns between descriptive and substantive representation.

While descriptive representation denotes the extent to which a representative resembles ('stands for') those being represented, substantive representation describes the extent to which the representative advocates ('acts for') the policy preferences of the represented, without regard for shared characteristics. Descriptive representation focuses on the descriptive features of the representative, whereas substantive representation focuses on the actions of the representative, and how he or she acts on the behalf of those being represented, the voters (Dovi, 2104; Black, 2013).

Because representatives are assumed to advance the interests of those resembling themselves, descriptive representation is expected to result in substantive representation. Research on female and minority representatives show that this is at least partially the case. For example, female representatives have been shown to assign more importance to problems faced by women as a social group, compared with male representatives (Allern et al., 2014; Black, 2013); and minority representatives in the US propose minority legislation more often than their white colleagues (Fowler et al., 2014). Whether this is the case with youth representation is unclear. A study of members of the Norwegian Parliament actually indicates that those aged between 40 and 50 are more concerned with youth issues than younger representatives (Allern et al., 2014). To our knowledge there exist no conclusive studies of youth representatives' inclination to favour youth issues.

Mansbridge (1999) argues that descriptive representation may enhance substantive representation because the personal quality of being a member of a certain group gives representatives moral force in making an argument on issues important to that group. Although a certain point of view, in theory, requires only a single representative in the deliberative assembly to get the relevant facts, insights, and perspectives into the deliberation, in practice, disadvantaged groups often need proportional representation to make themselves heard; they need a critical mass to convince the majority that the perspectives they are advancing are widely shared within their own group (Mansbridge, 1999). Another reason for favouring descriptive representation is that representatives and voters who share common experiences more easily can forge bonds of trust based on the shared experience (Mansbridge, 1999), which may make them function as role models. This argument is often made for women's representation, asserting that elected women candidates 'raise women's self-esteem, encourage others to follow in their footsteps, and dislodge deep-rooted assumptions on what is appropriate to women and men' (Phillips, 1998, p.228, cited in Bühlmann & Schädel, 2012). In the same way, youth can serve as role

models to other young people, signalling that politics is an arena open to youth and increasing their sense of political competence (Bühlmann & Schädel, 2012).

A problematic side of descriptive representation is the inherent assumption that members of a certain group have an essential identity and that others cannot adequately represent them. The assumption that a single trait (for example age) binds individuals together and gives them a common interest, may induce people to see themselves as members of a group at the expense of being members of a community, and this may be 'tearing at the connected fabric of the whole' (Mansbridge, 1999, p.639). It may also lead to distrust towards representatives who are not descriptively alike and undermine the belief that representatives in general want the best for all. Moreover, expectations of descriptive representation may make the representatives feel obliged to represent the group with which they are associated. In that respect, descriptive representation has similarities with bounded mandate; descriptively elected councillors may feel that they are expected to act as delegates, acting for their electoral constituents' desire, and not as trustees, acting for what they believe to be best for the municipality. Were there no specific descriptive expectations as to which groups young councillors should represent, they would have more room for their own judgements and reflections and could exercise their term as trustees. However, while ascribed youth representation may make the young councillors feel unfree and bounded, it may also give them a legitimate place in the party group and make them feel safe and needed. Ascribed youth orientation can hence make young councillors feel reckoned with and empowered, or marginalized, disempowered, and confined to address only a fragment of the vast landscape of political issues. In our study, we say that young councillors stating a particular interest limited to youth topics have an *avowed youth orientation*, whereas young councillors reporting that others expect of them to represent youth have an *ascribed youth orientation*. While the former orientation is self-chosen, the second orientation is not, and therefore implies a kind of bounded mandate associated with the representational role of delegates. Role orientation is a matter of degree, and the categories are also overlapping. A young councillor may, for example, simultaneously feel strongly about youth issues and be expected to front such issues.

First, we want to explore how role orientation is related to a sense of influence and motivation, bearing in mind that different mechanisms may be at play simultaneously; role orientation may therefore affect a sense of influence and motivation in different ways.

Whereas descriptive representatives are expected to advocate the interest of the group they stand for, a contrasting representational role is that of public interest. Those with a public interest orientation are motivated to serve the community and the public at large with an eye on what is best for all, not favouring any group in particular (Pedersen, 2014). Those young councillors particularly interested in a wide array of topics can be regarded as having public interest orientation.

Second, we will explore the effect of is the sense of political influence or political efficacy. While we have opposing expectation as to how role orientation affects motivation, there is less doubt about how a sense of influence affects motivation: Feeling influential is motivating, and motivation has been shown to be affected by sense of political efficacy—the belief that one can understand and influence political affairs. In their much-cited article, Campbell and colleagues define political efficacy as ‘feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change’ (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954, p.187). There is a distinction between internal efficacy, denoting the belief that one can understand and therefore participate in politics; and external efficacy, denoting the trust in the responsiveness of a government to a citizen’s demands (Niemi et al., 1991). An aspect of perceived political efficacy that is especially important in settings of collective action is the sense of inclusion—the sense of being acknowledged as a legitimate actor. In party politics and within councils, established politicians possess the key to such acknowledgement. Whether young councillors feel included or excluded by different political arenas within the council, such as their own party group or in council meetings, is likely to affect their sense of political efficacy.

The concept of political efficacy is a much-discussed factor in explaining political apathy and non-voting among youth. The literature on motivation among elected representatives, however, tends to focus on whether or not they want to obtain something for themselves and on their particular motivation for being elected. Since there is competition for the nominations, the motivation of a representative is normally taken for granted: To be able to fight ones way through the nomination process, strong motivation is seen as a premise. However, research shows that not all councillors are happy with their tenure (Berglund & Winsvold, 2005; Baldersheim, 2011; Bergh, 2013), and the dropout/defection rate is high (Berglund & Winsvold, 2005). Motivation can hence drop throughout the election term. Not all representatives at the local level are motivated to be elected in the first place either, but have agreed to be

on a party's list on the premise that they deem it unlikely they will get elected (Aars & Offerdal, 1998).

Successful recruitment requires that representatives stay motivated throughout their period and that they take re-election; for re-election to seem attractive, young representatives need to feel that they can understand and influence political affairs within the council. In other words, motivation will profit from some degree of political efficacy. The theory of political efficacy is little used to explain the motivation of councillors or delegates, with some exceptions. In their study of why school board members choose to seek or not seek re-election, Robinson and Wood (1987) show that members with feelings of high efficacy and trust were likely to be candidates for re-election, whereas members with feelings of low efficacy and trust were likely to be retirees. In her study on young Swedish councillors, Isaksson (2009) finds that a lack of external political efficacy is part of the reason why young representatives chose to resign. They consider council work tedious and many complain of having little influence.

In her study of the relationship between representational orientation and perceived influence among local Danish councillors, Pedersen (2014) finds that councillors who are mainly motivated by a commitment to public interest feel more influential than representatives with a user orientation. She explains this finding through the fit between the motivations of the public interest oriented councillors and the expectations of the environment: Since the mandate of councils is to define the public interest in their community, those with a public interest orientation will experience a higher legitimacy for their concerns than those favouring a specific group such as youth. Interestingly, councillors with a user orientation are considered significantly less influential by their fellow councillors. Pedersen's interpretation of this is that there is legitimacy in denying particular interests in favour of the common good in local councils (Pedersen, 2014).

Based on the findings of Pedersen, we expect youth representatives with an orientation towards their own group—youth oriented young councillors—to feel less influential than those with a public interest orientation. Moreover, we expect those who feel influential to be more motivated to continue with politics than those displaying low levels of political efficacy.

Data and methods

Our main source for studying how role conception is related to perceived efficacy and how perceived efficacy is further related to the motivation to continue with politics, is a survey conducted in trial municipalities mentioned previously. In May 2015, a web-based survey questionnaire was sent to all 79 elected representatives who were between the ages of 18 and 25 when they were elected, in the 20 Norwegian municipalities that had participated in a trial with lowered voting age. At the time the survey was conducted, the councillors had almost finished their four-year term, starting in 2011. There are two reasons why we set the upper age-limit to 25. First, the group between 18 and 25 represent the very youngest group of councillors, and are also traditionally the most underrepresented. We were interested in how representatives who were unquestionably identified as young experienced their term. We considered this group to be the most likely to suffer from ascribed youth representation. Second, nationwide, council representatives aged between 18 and 25 increased their representation substantially between 2007 and 2011—by 46 percent (from 450 to 659 candidates)—whereas the same was not the case for those aged between 26 and 29. This group, although still a little better represented in relative terms, actually decreased their representation by three percent between the two elections. This makes the age group between 18 and 25 stand out as a cohort that differs from the group of relatively young representatives aged between 26 and 30.

The gross sample consists of the entire universe of young councillors in the Norwegian trial municipalities. Of the whole sample, 42 out of 79 (53%) responded to the survey. One of the respondents was elected as a substitute representative, but had participated in council meetings throughout the period. The respondents came from 13 of the 20 trial municipalities, which means that for seven of the municipalities, there were no respondents. Two reminders were sent by email, as well as one through Facebook. The survey was closed in mid-November 2015.

Table 6.1 Councillors in the trial municipalities and survey respondents

Municipality	Number of councillors	Number of respondents
Austevoll	21	0
Gjesdal	27	2
Grimstad	35	2
Hamar	39	5
Hammerfest	29	2
Kautokeino	19	0
Kåfjord	17	1
Luster	25	2
Lørenskog	47	2
Mandal	35	2
Marker	25	0
Namdalseid	19	0
Osen	15	0
Porsgrunn	49	4
Re	25	1
Sigdal	21	0
Stavanger	67	11
Tysfjord	17	0
Vågå	21	1
Ålesund	49	7
Total	602	42

Possible biases in the survey are likely to affect many of our core research variables such as sense of influence, inclusion, and motivation. It is likely that those feeling little involvement, inclusion, and motivation are less likely to answer the questionnaire than those who feel influential, included, and motivated. If so, the average sense of influence, inclusion, and motivation among the respondents is probably higher in the sample than in the universe. The relation between these variables, however, should not be affected by the skew of the sample.

The trial municipalities are relevant illustrations of how young councillors assess their term for at least two reasons. First, they provide a sort of best case for youth representation. In the trial municipalities, youth issues were high on the local media agenda and the local political agenda during the election

campaign, and the young councillors were voted into the council in a climate favourable for youth representation and youth issues. Moreover, since youth representation went up, many of the young representatives in these municipalities were accompanied by other young councillors. Most of them were not alone and, in some of the trial municipalities, even formed groups of young councillors, which is likely to have made the work in the council easier. One may argue, therefore, that the conditions for young councillors to experience their term as positive are present in the trial municipalities and that they therefore, in some respect, represent critical cases: If young councillors do not thrive in these councils, they are not likely to thrive anywhere. An objection to the best-case argument is that in the trial municipalities several young candidates were not prioritized by their party, but were elected due to personal votes. These councillors may have a low standing in the party group, which may give them fewer positions and less influence. We still deem the positive effect of being brought into the council on a tide of favourable attitudes towards youth representation as important, and think that it might counterbalance the eventual negative effect of being voted in by the voters.

Although the sample is too small to make generalizations about the entire universe of 428 Norwegian municipalities that existed in 2011, the trial municipalities were chosen by the government to ensure diversity with regard to size, geography, demography, and the political composition of the council. They therefore resemble the entire municipality population in some respects. Still, given the small size of the sample, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of young councillors, and the paper's main contribution is to generate and eventually strengthen hypotheses about the relations between young councillors' experiences and orientations on the one hand and their sense of influence and motivation on the other.

When possible, we compare the results from the survey in the trial municipalities with official statistics and other surveys conducted among Norwegian councillors.

Since our sample represent the universe of young councillors in the trial municipalities, significance testing is not as relevant as with representative samples. The significance level is still an indication of the strength of the correlation between variables.

Background

Norwegian municipalities are run by a municipal council, elected every fourth year by the inhabitants of the municipality. The general voting age is 18, and was lowered to 16 in 20 municipalities selected by the government. The municipal council is the highest municipal body, and being elected as a councillor entails responsibilities for important public assets and dispositions. The municipal council is, among other things, in charge of primary and lower secondary school, elderly care, and primary health care; they dispose of approximately 18 percent of the GDP and employ 19 percent of the workforce.

Within the council, some executive power is delegated to a proportionally elected executive board, which forms a sub-group of the council. The executive board includes the most prominent politicians in the council, often the party leaders, and is led by the mayor. Compared to their older counterparts, young councillors rarely sit on the executive board or get other important assignments such as being board members in municipal companies (Baldersheim 2011). Although few young councillors are elected, young politicians still have a relatively strong position within political parties at the local level. The largest parties often have local youth chapters, and special positions are often designated for members of the youth chapters in important strategic forums such as the program committees. The existence of youth chapters may entail a division of labour between youth and adults, increasing the expectation that young politicians shall indeed represent the young voters. It is likely that being a young elected councillor is different in municipalities with active youth chapters and in municipalities where young politicians are recruited directly into the mother party. Moreover, nearly all Norwegian municipalities have consultative youth councils (Knudtson & Tjerbo, 2011), including youth under voting age. Youth councils are consultative municipal bodies composed of youth. They meet at irregular intervals, from once a year to monthly, and they give their opinion in political issues concerning youth. The youth councils are important to youth representation both through the focus they provide on youth issues and interests and because they have proved to be important arenas for recruitment into party politics (Berglund & Winsvold, 2005).

Voter turnout at local elections has fluctuated around 60 percent over the last 20 years. Elections for local municipal councils in Norway are conducted using a proportional open list system. On Election Day, voters choose ballots/lists to vote for, but they can also provide preferential (personal) votes for individual candidates. An unusual feature of the local electoral system in Norway is that voters can give preferential votes to any number of candidates on their ballot of

choice, as well as voting for (a more limited number of) individual candidates on other ballots. Political parties can limit the impact of preferential votes and thus keep some say over the selection of council members, by giving priority to some candidates. These prioritized candidates have an advantage over other candidates that, in most cases, cannot be overcome. In practice, parties are therefore able to secure the election of some of their preferred candidates. Voters are increasingly making use of the preferential voting system. In the 2015 local elections, 47 percent of voters cast at least one preferential vote. As noted earlier, the high number of young representatives in the trial municipalities in 2011 can be explained in part by preferential votes for young candidates. The preferential votes might be the result of the addition of a new and young voter group, but it may also be that older voters have given preferential votes to young candidates. In July 2011, two and a half months before the election, a terrorist shot and killed 69 young politicians at a political summer camp for the Norwegian Labour party. This incident unleashed a wave of goodwill towards young politicians. Both the election result and the experiences of the young elected representatives must be analysed in light of this event.

Analysis

What characterises the young councillors?

A study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union showed that as of 2013, young people between the ages of 18 and 30 were heavily underrepresented in national parliaments throughout the world (IPU, 2014). The Norwegian parliament was at the better end of the scale, with 5.9 percent of the delegates being between the age of 18 and 29 (ssb.no), and 2.3 percent between the age of 18 and 25. Still, as this population group made up about 13 percent of the eligible population in 2013, young people were also significantly underrepresented in Norway.

One might suspect youth to be better represented at the local level, where the competition for electoral seats is less fierce; this is in fact the case. As shown in table 6.2, local youth representation in Norway is somewhat higher than national youth representation, with the representation ratio varying between 0.33 and 0.36 in the elections of 2003, 2007, and 2011.¹⁷ In contrast, youth

17 For the election of 2015, the age cut in the statistics was different, and data was only gathered on the number of representatives aged between 18- and 29-years-old: In 2015, 9.3 percent of councillors were under 30 when elected, the same percentage as in 2011, and an increase from 7.3 percent in 2007. However, for 2015, we do not know the distribution of representatives within the youngest group.

between the age of 18 and 25 in the trial municipalities were proportionally represented, with a proportion ratio of 1.0.

Most of the councillors in the trial municipalities responding to the survey were elected for their first term, but 7 of the 42 (17 percent) had already served one period in the council. The very youngest representatives (18- and 19-years-olds) were better represented than those in their early twenties, and the same tendency is found in the entire population of local councillors in Norway. The age distribution within the group of young councillors, 25 years or younger, in the trial municipalities and in the entire Norwegian councillor population is displayed in table 6.3.

Table 6.2. Local elected representatives, aged 18–25

	2003	2007	2011	2011 Trial municipalities
Council members 18- to 25-years-old in the election year, percent	4.6	4.1	6.1	13.1
18- to 25-years-old, percent of eligible	12.6	12.6	13.4	(13.1)
Representation ratio (share of council members/ share of eligible voters)	0.37	0.33	0.46	(1)
N Council members	11,138	10,952	10,785	602
N Eligible (18+)	3,476,541	3,585,131	3,805,931	

Table 6.3. Age distribution within the group of young councillors (18–25) when elected in 2011. Percent

Age	Trial municipalities (N=42)	All municipalities (N=659)
18	28,6	15,2
19	16,7	17,1
20	14,3	11,4
21	9,5	11,1
22	4,8	12,6
23	7,1	9,9
24	4,8	11,1
25	14,3	11,7
Total 18–25	100	100,1

We do not know why the very youngest are better represented than those in their twenties. One plausible reason may be that 18- and 19-year-olds are more available than those in their twenties, who have often moved out of their parents' home and are perhaps studying in other cities (Berglund & Winsvold, 2005). Furthermore, the very youngest may have been preferred by the nomination committees since they are so visibly and obviously young. Whereas a 25-year-old can be mistaken for an adult, in representative terms, an 18-year-old representative is more likely to be perceived as fulfilling the expected norm of youth representation. The survey also confirms that the youth council is an important recruiting platform, as shown by Knudtson and Tjerbo (2009) in a nationwide study of Norwegian youth councils. Before being elected, 41 percent had previously been members of the municipal youth council. Some of the 18- and 19-year-olds might be fresh from the youth council.

The gender distribution among the young councillors deserves a comment. As found in a study of representatives in national assemblies (IPU, 2014), female representatives are generally younger than male representatives. This is also the case in Norwegian municipalities as well as in the trial municipalities. More than half of the respondents in the survey, 57 percent, were female. Nationwide, the percentage of female representatives in the 18- to 25-year-old age group was 52. Interestingly, the national data reveal that gender distribution becomes increasingly unequal with age, slightly tipping in favour of male representatives after the age of 30, and then increasing steadily towards old age. Among councillors aged 60 years and older, only 23 percent are women (ssb.no). The ratio between male and female representatives gradually changes in favour of female representation in all age groups except for the eldest one, implying that younger generations of women in Norway are increasingly integrated in formal political structures.

Role orientation

We want to investigate whether young councillors' sense of influence and motivation vary according to their role orientation. Our first questions are therefore concerned with the issues or groups that the councillors orient themselves towards and the degree to which they are expected to front typical youth issues. In the survey, the respondents were asked what policy issues interested them. We argue that interests represent orientation and that those interested in typical youth issues can be viewed as youth oriented, whereas those who display a high interest level across a larger number of issues can be considered public interest oriented. Interest is reported on a four-point scale with the values of very uninterested, rather uninterested, rather interested, and very interested.

The table below show the percentages of the sample reporting to be very interested in different issues.

Table 6.4 Percentage of young councillors being very interested in different issues. N = 42

School	76
Conditions for child and adolescent development	48
Health	43
Pre-school	38
Culture and sport	38
Elder care	36
Social politics/welfare	36
Immigration and integration	33
Housing	33
Municipal economy	31
Urban development/area planning	29
Climate	29
Taxes	24

Since we have no data on the political interests of older councillors, we cannot say anything about the relative level of interest in youth issues among the youngest councillors. However, two surveys with Norwegian MPs from 1996 and 2012 indicate that there is no clear relation between age and youth orientation. The surveys showed that representing young peoples' interests was deemed to be important by the majority of representatives and that there were no significant differences between age groups (Allern et al., 2013). A reason for the high priority of youth interest may be that youth are in need of representation since they cannot represent themselves, at least not until the age of 18. Youth interests may also be considered a worthy issue; the question of whether one find youth interests important may therefore suffer from an acquiescence bias. In the survey, this tendency is attenuated by the fact that the respondents report their interest on a four-point scale from very uninterested to very interested.

We made an index measuring degrees of youth orientation, composed of three variables that can be regarded as youth issues: School; conditions for child and adolescent development; and culture and sport. The index is theoretically founded. We assume that school politics is especially important to this group since the majority of them either are or have just been in school or other

secondary education. The conditions for child and adolescent development are also obviously a topic that affects young people in particular. Culture and sport is subsumed under the same label since they are often grouped together in Norwegian politics. Sport in particular is a policy area that adults regard as important to young people, since young people are more involved in organized sport than older people. The same is true of culture, as organized cultural activities, such as music and theatre lessons, are provided by local authorities. Moreover, culture is the policy area where youth are considered to have the most influence (Knudtzon & Tjerbo, 2009). The index is only an indication of youth orientation. The three policy issues included are regarded as important to young people, but whether young people or the young representatives themselves regard these as youth issues, we do not know. Moreover, it may be that some of the young representatives would regard climate or housing policy to be of high importance, perhaps higher than youth, and consequently would regard themselves as youth oriented even though they were not interested in, for example, school politics. There may moreover be a tension between representing what youth themselves regard as important and what the individual representative regards as important to youth.

Bivariate correlations show that the interest for child and adolescent development and for culture and sport are significantly correlated (0.434), whereas interest for school is uncorrelated to the other two variables. We include all three variables in an additive index, which we assume represents the degree of orientation towards issues affecting youth. The index ranges from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating low interest in all three youth issues and 4 indicating high interest in all three issues. The young councillors' overall interest in youth issues is high; the respondents' value on the index ranged between 2.67 and 4, the mean value being 3.46.

As we can see, the large majority of young representatives are very interested in what we regard as typical youth issues. The big picture, however, is that the young councillors are interested in a variety of topics. We interpret the number of topics in which the counsellors are very interested as the degree of public interest orientation. Two of three councillors deem four or more policy issues to be 'very interesting', showing that most young politicians are broadly oriented. Interest is surprisingly unrelated to party membership, with the exception that the respondents reporting to be interested in tax policies come from the two right wing parties that have tax reduction as part of their ideological platform. A high degree of public interest orientation was found across parties.

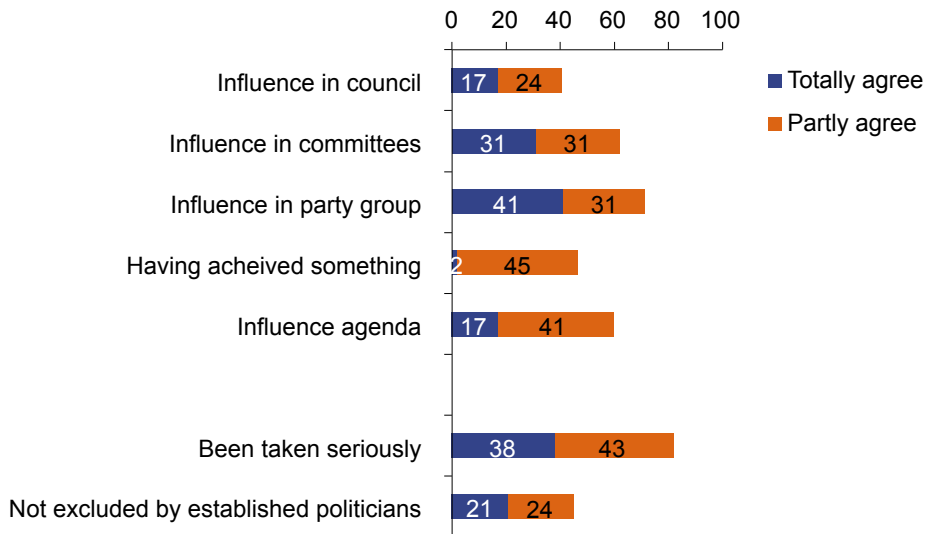
Whereas reported interest in youth topics can be regarded as self-chosen or avowed youth orientation, we are also interested in measuring what we called ascribed youth orientation, denoting that the young councillors are expected to act as descriptive representatives, advocating youth issues. Two questions in the survey indicate such ascribed youth orientation. The first is the councillors' assessment of whether other politicians in the council expect them to front youth issues; on a five-point scale, the majority (67 percent) of young councillors somewhat or totally agree that other politicians do. The second is their reporting of whether they were nominated by their party because of their age, which is the case for half of the sample. Combined into an index, we say this measures the degree of ascribed youth orientation. One could suspect that those who are elected because of their age and who feel that others expect them to represent youth, will be motivated to meet this expectation and that this will affect the representational focus. Ascribed and avowed youth orientations do not, however, correlate in the sample, indicating that no such mechanism is at play.

Influence

Our next questions are how youth orientation and public interest orientation are each related to perceived influence. Regarding influence, we discern between formal political power on the one hand and perceived political influence, that is political efficacy, on the other. Formal political power is related to formal assignments such as, for example, being a member of the executive board, which was the case for 26 percent of the young councillors in the survey. Seven percent of the trial sample were leaders of a committee, and 45 percent had other assignments, for example, on the boards of municipal companies. In the further analysis, we use only membership of the executive board as an indicator of formal political power. As for perceived influence, we measure this through the councillors' sense of influence in the council, in committees, and in their own parties, and whether they feel that they have set the agenda in areas important to them. Perceived influence is also measured through the question of whether the councillors feel they have achieved something during their term. An aspect of political efficacy is the extent to which the young councillors feel included and reckoned with—whether they feel seen and heard. A sense of acknowledgement/inclusion is measured through the councillors' sense of being taken seriously by other politicians.

As we see from figure 6.1, the sense of external efficacy is rather high in the sample, as well as the sense of being taken seriously by other politicians.

Figure 6.1. Percentage of councillors who totally or partially agree with statements. N = 42



Regarding the measures of external efficacy, the councillors feel most influential in their party group and least in the council. This should come as no surprise, as both the party group and the committees are smaller arenas with fewer participants and more frequent meetings. Also, decisions in council meetings are made by vote, after a deliberation, which means that at some stage in the decision-making process, the councillors can only exert influence through their one vote. More than half of respondents felt they had succeeded in setting the agenda for one or more issues important to them. Interestingly, agenda setting is significantly correlated with influence in the party group and in committees, but not in the council. All influence variables and the sense of having achieved something are internally correlated.

The large majority of young councillors felt they had been taken seriously as politicians. Five percent, however, said that they felt they had not, and 14 percent had felt so only to a certain extent. Although 45 percent did not feel excluded by established politicians, 29 percent said they did, and the remaining 26 percent felt somewhat excluded. Feelings of being taken seriously and a sense of exclusion were significantly correlated.

Role orientation and influence

We have learned from the above paragraphs that the young councillors in the trial municipalities were oriented towards youth issues, but that many of them

extended their interests beyond mere youth politics and therefore to some extent also can be labelled public interest oriented. Moreover, we have learned that there is substantial variation in perceived political efficacy among councillors; but is representative orientation related to perceived political efficacy?

We look at the relation between orientation and the different types of political efficacy (because of the low N, we only display bivariate correlations).

Table 6.5. Bivariate correlations between orientation and efficacy.
Pearson's R. N=42

		Public interest orientation	Youth orientation	Ascribed youth orientation
External efficacy	Influence in councils	0.124	-0.068	-0.129
	Influence in committee	0.170	-0.034	-0.071
	Influence in party group	0.160	-0.249	-0.359**
	Sense of having achieved something	0.394**	0.118	-0.259*
	Set agenda	0.301	0.054	-0.410***
Sense of inclusion	Been taken seriously	0.276	0.149	-0.337**
	Excluded by established politicians	0.077	0.015	0.400***

Significant on a 0.10 level*, on a 0.05 level**, on a 0.01 level***

The expectation that public interest orientation should be more strongly correlated to political efficacy than youth orientation is only partly strengthened through this bivariate correlation analysis; a sense of having achieved something is positively and significantly correlated with public interest orientation, but not with youth orientation. What is most striking with this correlation analysis is that ascribed youth orientation is negatively correlated with several aspects of political efficacy: Those feeling that it is expected of them to be youth advocates feel less influential in their party groups, less successful in setting agenda in issues important to them, and have a higher sense of exclusion both in terms of being taken seriously and in terms of feeling excluded by established politicians.

Role orientation, influence and motivation

Our next question is whether role orientation and a sense of influence is related to the motivation to continue with politics. To do this, we have estimated the bivariate correlation coefficients between orientation and efficacy on the one hand and the statement, ‘The work in the council has given me motivation to continue with politics’, on the other. The results are displayed in table 6.6.

Table 6.6. Bivariate correlations between orientation, efficacy and motivation. Pearson’s R. N=42

	Motivated to continue with politics
Youth orientation	0.171
Ascribed youth orientation	-0.230
Public interest orientation	0.398**
Member of executive council	0.192
Influence in council	0.112
Influence in committees	0.193
Influence in party group	0.436***
Have achieved something	0.405***
Set agenda in important issues	0.521***
Been taken seriously	0.630***
Excluded by established politicians	-0.215

Significant on a 0.10 level*, on a 0.05 level**, on a 0.01 level***

We see from table 6.6 that those with public interest orientation are more motivated to continue with politics than those with narrower interests. Moreover, we see that whereas influence in the party group is important for motivation, influence in the council or in committees is not (or at least the coefficient is not significant). A sense of having achieved something is important to further motivation, as is a sense of being taken seriously, which is intended to measure the sense of acknowledgement/inclusion.

Discussion

We cannot tell from the results, whether the trial with lowered voting age had an effect on how the young councillors experienced their term. The study does tell us, however, that most young councillors had a positive experience, that many

of them felt that they achieved something, and that a large majority actually wants to continue with politics. The results should therefore not discourage further trials that result in the inclusion of more young people in municipal councils.

The majority of the young councillors participating in this study seem relatively happy with their term in the council. Most of them felt that they had been taken seriously by other politicians, and a majority felt that they had some degree of influence in their party group. At the same time, however, 60 percent felt that they had little or no influence in the council, and nearly half of the sample said that they felt excluded by established politicians. The picture, in other words, of how young councillors experience their term in the council is nuanced; for a number of them, serving the term as elected is no walk in park and may evoke feelings of powerlessness and impotence. This experience may be offset where there is a youth fraction established in the council; however, with the exception of the large cities, most young councillors are the only one of their kind in the council.

A sense of being taken seriously and of influence in the party group, along with the power to set the agenda on issues important to them, seem to be the most important factors motivating young councillors to continue with politics. Moreover, our analysis indicates that young councillors' issues of interest are important to their sense of influence and their motivation to continue with politics. Being broadly oriented towards a variety of policy issues is positively correlated both with perceived efficacy and with the motivation to continue with politics. This strengthens the assumption put forward by Pedersen (2014) that the normative mandate of municipal councils is to be oriented towards the whole community and not exclusively towards specific groups. The councillors sharing this implicit institutional norm succeed better in their work in the council and are also more motivated to continue. Another mechanism, which may account for the higher sense of influence and motivation among the broadly oriented, is that public interest oriented young councillors are more likely to enter into and be included in policy fields where established politicians are well represented and that have a higher status. Young councillors oriented primarily towards so called youth issues may feel less influential because youth issues have low status from the outset. When this is coupled with youth issues being fronted by politicians who lack political experience, networks, and the formal and informal positions necessary to set the agenda, the result is a low sense of influence. Young youth-oriented councillors also perhaps experience a situation where, although they possess more knowledge and insight than their older colleagues in relation to youth issues, they are still not influential. A sense of unrewarded effort and

unacknowledged competence may result in decreased motivation. Some of these may be young politicians burning for youth issues, who become disappointed in their role as representative when neither they nor their issues are sufficiently reckoned with.

Interestingly, what we have called ascribed youth orientation seem to be negatively correlated both with efficiency and the motivation to continue with politics (although the correlation is only statistically significant for efficacy). This group comes forth as a youth alibi. They are placed in a role they have not themselves chosen and are in charge of issues with a low status; a combination that may suffocate the inspiration and motivation to continue with politics. A possible lesson to learn from this is that it is important that young councillors define their own roles as politicians; the expectations of group representation seem to hamper this possibility.

Our study indicates that young councillors are confronted with a number of dilemmas in their representational role. For young politicians to experience the influence and respect necessary for continuous motivation, it is important to do as the established politicians do. Fronting youth issues is associated with a lower sense of influence and a lower motivation to continue with politics. However, if young elected representatives do not front youth issues, youth policy will not profit and will not be ameliorated from youth being represented. Moreover, if these young representatives do not front youth issues, their legitimacy as representatives will perhaps decrease in the eyes of young voters.

We have only scraped the surface of the question of how role conception, avowed or ascribed, is related to motivation and a sense of influence. The results have given us occasion to speculate on how different mechanisms may be at play and how these mechanisms, in different ways, affect the sense of influence and motivation of young councillors. To confirm the indicatory results, studies of larger, representative samples of councillors are needed. The contribution of this paper is first and foremost to point to possible mechanisms for motivation and dropout. To understand how different mechanisms work and to give robust estimates of statistical relations between the different factor affecting efficacy and motivation, studies with a larger N are required. To get a good grip on the mechanisms at play, qualitative studies among young councillors are needed.

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Hva skjer når 16-åringer får lov til å stemme?

Resultater fra evalueringene av to forsøk med nedsatt stemmerettsalder

I denne rapporten spør vi: Hva skjer når 16-åringer får lov til å stemme? Vi bruker resultatene fra to forsøk med stemmerett for 16-åringer i utvalgte norske kommuner (ved kommunestyrevalgene i 2011 og 2015) til å besvare spørsmålet. Det generelle bildet er at en eventuell senkning av stemmerettsalderen vil få små konsekvenser for det norske demokratiet.

Konkret finner vi:

- Valgdeltakelsen blant 16- og 17-åringer er overraskende høy, og ligger så vidt under deltakelsesnivået for alle velgere samlet. Den totale valgdeltakelsen blir altså uendret av at 16- og 17-åringer får stemmerett.
- Vi finner ikke noen indikasjoner på at de som får stemmerett i en alder av 16 eller 17 år etablerer en vane om å stemme som gjør at deres tilbøyelighet til å delta senere i livet øker. Resultatene tyder derfor ikke på at en senket stemmerettsalder vil ha en positiv effekt på valgdeltakelsen på lang sikt, slik mange har håpet eller ønsket.
- De sosiale forskjellene i valgdeltakelse som vi ser i den voksne befolkningen ser ut til å være like store blant ungdommer.
- Det er kun små forskjeller i politiske preferanser og stemmegivning mellom ungdommer og voksne.
- Lokalmedienes dekning av forsøket har alt overveiende vært positiv; kritiske stemmer har vært så å si fraværende.
- Når stemmerettsalderen senkes så øker den politiske representasjonen av unge. Det ble valgt inn flere unge kommunestyrepolitikere som følge av forsøkene med senket stemmerettsalder.