Politics, Protest and Young People

“Sarah Pickard is a foremost scholar and researcher in the field of youth political participation – her new book offers critical insights that will undoubtedly inform thinking and shape debate within this field for years to come.”

—Matt Henn, Professor of Social Research, Nottingham Trent University, UK

“Young people are the future of democracy, but many, perhaps most, are alienated from politics as it is practiced in contemporary liberal democracies. This is the issue with which this book engages in an accessible and stimulating way. It should be read by those interested in democracy's future.”

—David Marsh, Professor of Political Sociology, University of Birmingham, UK

“Addressing political participation of young people in institutional and non-institutional forms (from electoral behavior and party membership to alternative lifestyle and protest), this most interesting research shows how the precarious and repressed generation of young citizens nowadays is very much involved in creative politics and pivotal in producing progressive political innovations.”

—Donatella della Porta, Professor of Political Science, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy

“While focused on Britain, Politics, Protest and Young People offers manifold insights on young people’s involvement in politics more generally. With this outstanding book, Sarah Pickard bridges the traditional divides between electoral and nonelectoral political participation, as well as between quantitative and qualitative research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of young people’s politics.”

—Marco Giugni, Professor, University of Geneva, Switzerland

“This book is a must read for all those interested in the way young people are now playing a major political role in contemporary Britain. Based on solid research and accessibly written, Sarah Pickard offers highly original and provocative insight into the ways young people are reshaping the future of British electoral and non-electoral politics.”

—Judith Bessant, Professor, RMIT University, Melbourne

“In this supremely important and very timely study, Sarah Pickard dispels, once and for all and in rich empirical detail, a series of potent and pervasive myths about youth political engagement and participation in Britain. Highly recommended.”

—Colin Hay, Professor, Sciences Po, Paris, France
“As age becomes one of the biggest dividing lines in contemporary politics, Sarah Pickard has written a timely and engaging book, full of facts and figures and insights into young people’s participation in both mainstream and more challenging political activity. A great read for anyone interested in the past, the present and the future.”

—Tim Bale, Professor of Politics, Queen Mary University of London, UK and co-lead ESRC Party Members Project

“Politics, Protest and Young People turns a welcome interdisciplinary gaze on youth political participation in Britain—but in so doing offers analytical insights and critical methodologies for interrogating our own contexts, wherever we find ourselves in the world. Sarah Pickard pulls off an impressive feat of explaining in-depth how young people’s political participation is kaleidoscopic: an ever changing interaction between generation, dissent, voting, citizenship education and what she calls “Do-It-Ourselves” politics. She combines theory, data and thoughtful commentary to show how and why young citizens are using and reimagining their political agency. A fabulous contribution to this contemporary phenomenon in youth studies, sociology and political science.”

—Sharlene Swartz, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and President of Sociology of Youth Research Committee RC34, International Sociological Association (ISA)
Sarah Pickard

Politics, Protest and Young People

Political Participation and Dissent in 21st Century Britain
This book on young people, political participation and protest is dedicated to my lovely children Noé and Flora, who are too young to vote … but old enough to protest.
This book has been some time in the writing, as my knowledge has widened and my thoughts have evolved over the years. I started doing research about young people and politics when I was young myself, but this is certainly not the case now! Colleagues, students, friends and family have helped me along the way and I am very grateful.

First, I would like to thank especially Judith Bessant and Nicole Gallant for mulling over ideas about the political participation of young people and for always being inclusive, generous and enthusiastic. From Paris to Melbourne to Quebec we are on the same wavelength and that is uplifting. You make the world a kinder place. Similarly, Rob Watts, Sharlene Swartz, Cécile van de Velde, Matt Henn, James Sloam, Analicia Mejia Mesinas and James Côté among many others have provided very welcome intellectual and humane food for thought. I am lucky to have met you and work with you.

Thank you, Emmanuelle Avril, Judith Bessant and Franck Bourcereau, as well as Yann Béliard, Thibaud Harrois, Sebastián Lopez, Bénédicte Miyamoto, Pauline Schnapper, Ophélie Siméon, James Sloam and Rob Watts for generously taking the time to read and make constructive comments on earlier versions of chapters. You made the book better. Thanks also go to the anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive comments. Any errors in the book are of course my own.

Thanks also go to the helpful library staff at the Institut du Monde Anglophone for their aid in acquiring and accessing material, as well as university colleagues for their continued support.

As I have been writing this book, my mind has often wandered to memories of Professor Monica Charlot (1933–2005), my PhD supervisor at
the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle who gave me valuable advice about the importance of drawing on both Political Science and Sociology; she believed my research on young people had a future and I am ever grateful that she took a punt on me when I arrived in France.

Crossing the boundaries of Political Science, Sociology and Youth Studies makes for interdisciplinary and multicultural inspiration. I am very appreciative of my research group CREW (EA 4399) at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle for generously financing opportunities to participate in conferences and congresses.

As a result, I am now fortunate enough to be a convenor for the Young People’s Politics specialist group of the British Political Studies Association (PSA), a member of the Executive Board of the RC34 Research Committee on the Sociology of Youth of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and a member of the research committee of the Observatoire Jeunes et Société (OJS). These inclusive organisations have widened my horizons and permitted me to meet great researchers on young people in Britain and around the world. It is encouraging and heartening to see such vibrant and rich research being carried out by so many committed academics working near and far.

I am also indebted to the ever-upbeat Ambra Finotello, Poppy Hull and Sharla Plant at Palgrave Macmillan who have kept with me, thus allowing Young People Re-Generating Politics in Times of Crisis (Palgrave, 2017) to be published with Judith Bessant along the way, as well as analysis of the 2017 General Election and the inspirational young activist Greta Thunberg to be included in this book Politics, Protest and Young People.

Many students have unwittingly made this book better than it would have been without their enthusiasm, ideas and … youth. I am particularly grateful to Zaynab, Sophia, Grace and Inès. Thanks also go to all the marvellous young people who have allowed me to think, talk and write about their political participation.

I would also like to thank all my fab friends, especially Anne-Marie, Benedict, Cecilia, Christopher, Franck, Laurent, Patricia and Yumi in Britain and France who have put up with me talking (too much) about young people and politics through the years and have made me think about other things. You are fantastic and I am fortunate to know such kind, funny and clever people.

Most of all, thank you Sebastián, Noé and Flora for many cups of tea and much love.
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE   Association for Citizenship Education
ACPO  Association of Chief Police Officers
AEP   Attenuating Energy Projectiles
AGC   Advisory Group on Citizenship
ASBO  Anti-Social Behaviour Order
BEIS  Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BES   British Election Study
BIS   Department for Business, Innovation and Science
BME   Black and Minority Ethnic
BNP   British National Party
BYC   British Youth Council
CBO   Community-Based Organisation
CCC   Campaign against Climate Change
CCF   Conservative Collegiate Forum
CF    Conservative Future
CND   Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CREST Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends
CYCJ  Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice
DCFS  Department for Children, Families and Schools
DfE   Department for Education
DfES  Department for Education and Skills
DIO   Do-It-Ourselves politics
DTRTP Defend The Right To Protest
DWP   Department for Work and Pensions
EAN   Education Activist Network
ECHR  European Court of Human Rights
EDL   English Defence League
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<tr>
<td>EDR</td>
<td>Election Day Registration</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EGT</td>
<td>Evidence Gathering Teams</td>
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<td>EM</td>
<td>Everyday Makers</td>
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<td>EMA</td>
<td>Educational Maintenance Allowance</td>
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<td>ERO</td>
<td>Electoral Registration Officer</td>
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<td>ERS</td>
<td>Electoral Reform Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESAGC</td>
<td>Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>European Social Survey</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EVM</td>
<td>Electronic Voting Machines</td>
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<td>FCS</td>
<td>Federation of Conservative Students</td>
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<td>FIT</td>
<td>Forward Intelligence Teams</td>
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<td>FUCUA</td>
<td>Federation of University Conservative and Unionists Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<td>GLC</td>
<td>Greater London Council</td>
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<td>HMIC</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary</td>
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<td>IER</td>
<td>Individual Electoral Registration</td>
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<td>LDYS</td>
<td>Liberal Democrats Youth and Students</td>
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<td>LOY</td>
<td>League of Youth</td>
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<td>LPYS</td>
<td>Labour Party Young Socialists</td>
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<td>LRC</td>
<td>Labour Representation Committee</td>
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<td>MACR</td>
<td>Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>MPS</td>
<td>Metropolitan Police Service</td>
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<td>MSP</td>
<td>Member of the Scottish Parliament</td>
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<td>NACG</td>
<td>National Association of Conservative Graduates</td>
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<td>NALSO</td>
<td>National Association of Labour Student Organisations</td>
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<td>NCAFC</td>
<td>National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts</td>
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<td>NCC</td>
<td>National Curriculum Council</td>
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<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Citizenship Service</td>
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<td>NDNAD</td>
<td>National DNA Database</td>
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<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Executive Committee</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>NI</td>
<td>National Insurance</td>
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<td>NLEDP</td>
<td>National Law Enforcement Data Programme</td>
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<td>NLYL</td>
<td>National League of Young Liberals</td>
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<td>NOLS</td>
<td>National Organisation of Labour Students</td>
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<td>NUS</td>
<td>National Union of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYA</td>
<td>National Youth Agency</td>
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<td>ONS</td>
<td>Office for National Statistics</td>
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PLP  Parliamentary Labour Party
PM   Prime Minister
PMP  Party Members Project
PPC  Prospective Parliamentary Candidates
PPUK Pirate Party United Kingdom
PSHE Personal, Social, Health and Economic (education)
SDP  Social Democrat Party
SLL  Socialist Labour League
SNP  Scottish National Party
SSS  Socialist Sunday Schools
StWC Stop the War Coalition
SUBC Stand Up Be counted
SYL  Scottish Young Liberals
SYL  Scottish Young Liberals
TUC  Trade Unions Congress
UKIP United Kingdom Independence Party
ULS  Union of Liberal Students
WVS  World Values Survey
YC   Young Conservatives
YCC  Youth Citizenship Commission
YGEW Young Greens of England and Wales
YLM  Young Liberal Movement
YSC  Youth Select Committee
YSI  Young Scots for Independence
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