Modes of citizens' participation: associations between and determinants of social, civic, and political participation in cross-national perspective

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1 Introduction

Citizens participate in various spheres of society. In this chapter we focus on social, civic, and political participation. *Social participation* takes place in the informal sphere and encompasses all social contacts and informal help relations with relatives, friends, and neighbors. *Civic participation* occurs in associational life, by being a member of, participating actively in, doing voluntary work for, and/or donate money to voluntary associations like sports clubs, trade unions, and human right organizations. *Political participation* covers all modes of participation that aim to influence the policy process and its outcomes, like campaigning, contacting politicians, and protesting (Verba et al. 1978).

Previous studies have shown that each of these three forms of participation is influenced by the institutional environment (e.g., Curtis et al. 2001; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001; Van Oorschot & Arts 2005; Meulemann 2008; Gesthuizen et al. 2008; Karp & Banducci 2008; Van der Meer et al. 2009a). However, only a small number of these cross-national studies have focused on more than one form of participation, like social and civic participation (cf. Pichler & Wallace 2007; Gesthuizen et al. 2008), or even social, civic, and political participation (Van Oorschot & Arts 2005). These few authors made explicit in their study that these three forms of participation have something in common. Yet, the three forms of participation have not truly been analyzed in symphony. So, up to this point the three forms of participation (i.e., social, civic, and political) were effectively treated as independent from each other in cross-national studies.

However, social, civic, and political participation are likely to be related to each other. On the one hand, participation in one sphere provides citizens with social resources (social networks, social skills, social mindset) that may facilitate participation in other spheres (Lichterman 2005). On the other hand, resources (time, money) spent in one sphere of participation cannot be spent in the other

two. Moreover, too intensive participation in a family or a voluntary association may induce isolationism (Banfield 1958). A third possibility is that relationships may be absent. We aim to assess the relationships between social, civic, and political participation simultaneously. Therefore our first research question is:

1.   *To what extent are social, civic, and political participation related?*

Secondly, the relationship between social, civic, and political participation need not be the same in all countries. Recent studies have shown that the strength of the relationships indeed differs across countries (Bowler et al. 2003; Van der Meer & Van Ingen 2008). Yet, these country level differences in relationship strength remain unexplained. We hypothesize that the institutional setting may (very well) explain these differences. Specifically, two institutional explanations are examined. First, the relationships between social, civic, and political participation may be stronger in longstanding democracies than in former authoritarian and especially former communist countries, where citizens 'compartmentalized' their social lives (Völker & Flap 2001; Mars & Altman 1992; Howard 2003a). Second, different types of state bureaucracies may differently affect the entrance of citizens from civil society to the political sphere and vice versa (Jepperson 2000; 2002; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001). Our second research question therefore reads:

2.   *To what extent does variation in state institutions condition the strength of the relationship between social, civic, and political participation?*

Finally, the relationships between the three forms of participation are likely to be spurious to some extent: selection effects might explain why citizens who are active in one sphere of society are also active in another one, while no direct causal relationship exists. Importantly, individual level resources like income and education increase the likelihood of social, civic, and political participation (c.f. Van der Meer et al. 2008; Gesthuizen et al. 2008; Van Deth 2008). Therefore, we expect that the associations between the three forms of participation are (at least partly) explained by these individual level resources. Country characteristics like economic development or social security expenditure might similarly explain the three forms of participation. Our third research question is:

3.   *To what extent do individual and country level characteristics reduce the strength of the relationships between social, civic, and political participation?*

2   Theory and hypotheses

Social, civic, and political participation might reinforce each other (Bowlby 1988; Lichterman 2005), be unrelated, or even have an adverse relation with each other (Banfield 1958; Eliasoph 1998; Völker & Flap 2001). However, most of the literature argues that the three forms of participation are positively related, for which several mechanisms have been proposed (Van Deth 1997).

2.1 Positive or negative relationship

The first rationale for a positive relationship is the „schools of democracy" theory that has been extensively applied to interpret for civic and political partic- ipation (Van der Meer & Van Ingen 2008). It is argued that civic participation leads to political participation through the acquisition of political skills and inter- est. This line of reasoning can be extended to the relationship between social and political participation: participation in the informal sphere (i.e., within the fami- ly) creates skills and willingness to participate in the wider world (Bowlby 1988).[1]

The schools of democracy theory is grounded in a causal scheme, in which social and civic participation determine political participation (e.g. Putnam 1993). Van der Meer and Van Ingen (2008) and Van Deth (2006)) have shown that this strictly unidirectional causal scheme is unlikely. Moreover, theoretical- ly, it is not plausible. The acquisition of social skills and pro-social attitudes takes place in (and consequently might benefit from) all aspects of social life. Informal contact with family and friends provides citizens with social skills and values that benefit associational or political life. Vice versa, skills and norms learned through civic and political participation can be used to manage and main- tain informal ties. The „dynamic of selection and socialization" (Hooghe 2003) might drive all forms of citizen participation. First, there is a selection effect: citizens with a pro-social attitude are more likely to engage in social, civic, and/or political participation. These participants engage others with pro-social attitudes, which would in turn reinforce the pro-social norms of all participants. Such selection-and-socialization effects are highly likely to be reciprocal: they should be apparent in each form of participation, spilling over to all others.

A second rationale for positive relationships is that all forms of participation generate social networks. And through these social networks, citizens are asked to participate in social events. Social networks thus appear to be self-reinforcing.

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[1] See also Andeweg and Van den Berg (2003) who explain the overrepresentation of first-borns and singletons in politics by the sense of social obligation they develop in the relation with their parents.

On the one hand, they are an invaluable prerequisite for social, civic, and political participation (Ruiter & De Graaf 2006): often, citizens need to be asked to do voluntary work or to become politically active. On the other hand, citizens obtain social networks through social, civic, and political participation (Halpern 2005). All in all, this may result in a virtuous circle in which new contacts from one form of participation spill over and allow entrance to another form of participation. Participation does not only function as a means to obtain new social ties, but may also reinforce pre-existing ties. Shared activities (for instance joining a sports club with a good friend; protesting together with your family or peers) function to affirm already established relations. Again, there is no a-priori reason to assume a unidirectional causal scheme from one form of participation to another.

Yet, these mechanisms overlook „complications of a more practical nature" (Van Deth 1997): citizens suffer from a scarcity of resources, especially time. Social, civic, and political participation all consume resources like free time and money: time spent on one social activity cannot be spent on another. Consequently, the three forms of participation may very well function as alternatives. Given the scarcity of time, social, civic, and political participation are in fact rather likely to be negatively related.[2]

Hirschman (1979) extends this line of reasoning with his theory of shifting involvements. According to this theory, novice participants generally underestimate the time and effort they need to invest in their social activities, be it social, civic or political. The discrepancy between expectations and experiences leads to frustration among the participants and a re-evaluation of his or her activities. Increasingly frustrated, the participant will turn to another activity in which to engage. Due to these shifting involvements, social, civic, and political participation would be negatively related at each moment in time.

A second reason to expect a negative relationship is referenced as the „dark side of social capital" (Fiorina 1999). According to that line of reasoning, participation in specific groups (like sects or hate groups) breed anti-social norms, and limit the inclination to participate in other spheres. More generally, intense participation in any type of environment may lead to such anti-social attitudes. In Southern Italy, close (bonding) family ties due to intensive social participation may induce isolationism of the family (Banfield 1958), which consequently is negatively related to civic and political participation (Putnam 1993). Similarly, Eliasoph (1998) found that American citizens who did voluntary work (i.e., civic participation) reaffirmed their mutual distrust from politics, and refrained from political action.

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[2] This would explain why at the macro-level, civic participation may be on the decline (Putnam 2000), while social participation is on the rise (Stolle & Hooghe 2003).

Therefore, two opposite hypotheses are formulated on the relationships between social, civic, and political participation:

H1a.   Social, civic, and political participation are all positively related.

H1b.   Social, civic, and political participation are all negatively related.

2.2   Conditional relationship

Societies differ in the extent to which the three forms of participation are associated. In previous studies, small but significant cross-national differences in the association between civic and political participation were found (Bowler et al. 2003; Van der Meer & Van Ingen 2008). We propose two explanations according to which the institutional environment conditions the relationship between social, civic, and political participation.

The first theory distinguishes between (former) democratic and former authoritarian and totalitarian regimes (Mars & Altman 1992; Gibson 2003; Howard 2003b; Van der Meer et al. 2009b). It is argued that citizens in communist and authoritarian states refrained from voluntary associations and political life, seeking „refuge, a shelter, from the meddling by the government and political party into their private lives" (Völker & Flap 2001). Broad, informal networks, voluntary associations and political communities were a liability, due to the high level of social distrust. As an overlap of several forms of participation would be dangerous, citizens „compartmentalized their lives into small social networks made up of people whom they know well" (Uslaner & Badescu 2003), while retreating from more public forms of participation. Voluntary associations play a different role in communist and authoritarian states. They were either colonized and controlled by the state apparatus or functioned as opposition rather than a gateway to political life (Fung 2003). In these politicized and distrusted states, social participation and participation in leisure organizations might be a retreat from a distrusted political life (cf. Eliasoph 1998).

Consequently, social participation is less likely to breed civic or political participation, or vice versa, in communist and authoritarian states than in longstanding democracies. In communist and authoritarian states, citizens do not obtain pro-social attitudes that can spill-over in other forms of participation, because of the untrustworthiness of civil society and political life. Moreover, because social networks are segmented, they are less likely to be a common resource for all forms of participation: citizens are less likely to be triggered to participate in other forms if their social network is strictly segmented and specifically utilitarian.

Although authoritarian and communist regimes have been dissolved in most of Europe, decades of communist rule may still have its effects on social life (Howard 2003b). Despite the democratic transition, the established ways of life live on, at least among cohorts that were previously strongly socialized into these ways. In other words, it takes time for social and political trust to arise (Rose 1994): the longer countries have been democratic, the stronger the relationships between social, civic, and political participation have evolved. In other words, the relationships between social, civic, and political participation are stronger in longstanding democracies (i.e., countries with democratic rule since the Second World War) than in countries that had a democratic transition since the 1970s.[3] So our second hypotheses reads:

H2.   The positive relations between social, civic, and political participation are stronger in established democracies than in former authoritarian and communist regimes.

The second conditional theory, specifically for the association between civic and political participation, finds it origins in the writings of De Tocqueville. De Tocqueville (2000 [1835–1840]) focuses on the relationship between civic and political participation, which – he claims – depends on the type of bureaucracy. He distinguishes between strong, extensive, centralized bureaucracies and weak, small, decentralized bureaucracies. In societies that have centralized bureaucracies, states need not involve voluntary associations in the policy process, neither for input nor for implementation. Vice versa, in societies with a small state bureaucracy, civic organizations are needed for policy input and for the implementation of state policy. Consequently, members of voluntary associations are more likely to develop political skills, political interests and a network of others who are involved in politics in countries with a small and localized state bureaucracy than in countries with a large and centralized state bureaucracy.

A similar reasoning is put forward by Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001). Following Jepperson (2000), they distinguish between statist and non-statist societies. Statist societies like France and Germany are characterized by autonomous and often centralized state bureaucracies.[4] „In such countries, the state constitutes a separate and superior order of political governance [...]. Civil society, on the other hand, is regarded as a source of chaos and anomie." Conse-

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[3] A further distinction between the former authoritarian countries that had a democratic transition in the 1970s (in the ESS data set: Spain, Portugal, and Greece), and the former communist countries that had a democratic transition in the late 1980s or early 1990s (in the ESS data set: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia) methodologically suffered from small n.

[4] The German federal system is politically decentralized, but is considered to have strong and autonomous bureaucracies (cf., Jepperson 2000).

quently, civil society organizations are kept at bay by the state bureaucracy or subjected to some form of state control. Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas contrast this with the non-statist societies like the Anglo-Saxon countries, where the state apparatus derives its legitimacy from representing civil society. The state bureaucracy involves voluntary associations in the policy process more often in non-statist societies than in statist societies, where the bureaucracy discourages civic participation. The bottom-up approach towards voluntary associations of non-statist countries would therefore be more likely to induce spill-over effects between civic and political participation (Bowler et al. 2003).

These institutional differences impose differing constraints on citizens' activities. The Tocquevillian ideal is more likely in non-statist societies: because they interact with state institutions and state officials, association members obtain political skills, political values and a political network that stimulate political participation. Vice versa, because they interact with voluntary associations, political activists develop civic skills, civic values and a civic network that stimulate civic participation. By contrast, in statist countries association members are kept at bay from the state organization, thereby giving them fewer means and less incentives to participate politically. Consequently, we expect stronger relationships between civic and political participation in non-statist countries than in statist countries:

H3.   *The positive relation between civic and political participation is stronger in non-statist societies than in statist societies.*

2.3 Spurious relationships

When we find significant relationships between the three forms of participation, we need to assert that they are not spurious due to selection effects. For instance, citizens with more resources have more means to engage in several forms of participation simultaneously: they have money and/or time to engage in family, associational and political life. Consequently, a relationship may be found, even if there is no actual (reciprocal) causal relationship. Once we take these selection criteria into account analytically, the relationships between the three forms of participation should be lower. At the individual level, characteristics like income, education, gender, age and religiosity affect all forms of participation. Therefore, we take these characteristics into account to control for possible spuriousness.

State level characteristics might also lead to an overestimation of the relationships between social, civic, and political participation: citizens are more likely to participate in several forms, because of characteristics of the country they live in. We focus on three aspects that have repeatedly been found to be

relevant determinants (c.f. Curtis et al. 2001; Gesthuizen et al. 2008; Van der Meer et al. 2009b): economic development, corruption and democratic rule. Citizens of developed, incorrupt and/or longstanding democratic countries are more likely to participate socially, civically and politically than citizens of opposite countries. Consequently, a cross-sectional study may very well show a positive individual-level relationship between the three forms of participation due to these contextual characteristics that weaken or even disappear once we control for them.

Spuriousness may hinder the actual test of hypotheses H1a and H1b. Therefore, to determine the extent to which social, civic, and political participation are causally related, these spurious effects should be taken out, both at the individual and at the country level. In a cross-sectional analysis we propose to only control for background characteristics. Otherwise, there is a risk of over-controlling the relationships by introducing intermediate factors, i.e., factors that in a causal scheme lie between two forms of participation. Therefore, the analyses below control only for those individual and contextual background characteristics that are theoretically highly unlikely to function as intermediate variables. In hypothesis H4 the effect of possible spuriousness is summarized:

H4.   The positive relations between social, civic, and political participation will become less strong by the inclusion of individual and contextual level characteristics.

3   Data and measurement

Before we test the above mentioned hypotheses on the relationships between social, civic, and political participation, we need to construct variables that measure these three forms of participation. We choose to use confirmatory factor analysis to construct a measurement (or: factor) model, based on a large number of variables (paragraph 4). This factor model can be used to estimate, explain and condition the relationships between social, civic, and political participation in a structural equation model (paragraphs 5 and 6).

3.1 Data

The analytical design puts high demands on the data. First, the data set should obviously include valid measurements on all these modes of participation. Second, to test whether state institutions affect the individual level associations, the data set needs to be cross-national and contain a sufficient number of coun-

tries that also substantially differ from each other on these institutional characteristics. Unfortunately, such cross-national survey data are scarce. Some data sets contain respondents from a large set of countries, but lack (detailed) measures for all three forms of participation in a single wave (WVS, ISSP, Eurobarometer). Others are very rich and detailed, but are based on a set of countries that is too small and homogeneous for the purposes of this study (CID).

The demands are probably best met by the European Social Survey 2002 (ESS). It contains various measures for the three forms of participation. Furthermore, eighteen countries in the ESS have valid measures for all three forms of participation, although only seventeen are used in the analysis, as Luxembourg is an outlier on several characteristics (like economic development and share of foreigners). These seventeen countries also differ sufficiently on the key institutional characteristics. However, even the ESS does not fully meet our demands with respect to the measurement of social participation: although it includes several measures of participation in a broad, informal network, it does not contain specific information on participation in the primordial network of the (nuclear) family and the best friends. Nevertheless, the ESS is the best data set at our disposal for the purposes of this study. Therefore, when we speak of social participation, we strictly refer to participation in a broad, informal network.

3.2 Dependent variables: Eight modes of participation

To construct a three-factor model of social, civic, and political participation, we reduce a number of measures used in previous studies. Social participation is measured through three variables: (y1) meeting socially with friends, relatives or colleagues, (y2) having anyone to have intimate discussions with, and (y3) providing help to others, not counting (paid) work nor work for voluntary organizations (cf., Van der Meer et al. 2008). Civic participation is measured by the three scalograms (hierarchical Mokken scales), based on type of organization: (y4) involvement in leisure organizations, (y5) involvement in interest organizations, and (y6) involvement in activist organizations (cf., Van der Meer et al. *under review*). Lastly, political participation is measured through two variables: (y7) conventional political action (contacting a politician, working for a political party, wearing a campaign badge and/or donating money to a political organization), and (y8) non-conventional political action (participating in a lawful demonstration, product boycott, signing a petition, boycotts and/or illegal protests)

(cf., Van der Meer & Van Ingen 2008).[5] We reduce these eight variables to three factors in paragraph 4.

3.3 Country level conditioning factors: former regime type and statism

Hypothesis H2 refers to regime type as a conditional factor. For former regime type we distinguish between two groups. On the one hand we group the established democracies that have been continuously democratic since at least 1950 (Austria, Belgium, West Germany, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). On the other hand we lump together the former authoritarian regimes that had a transition in the 1970s (Greece, Portugal and Spain) and the former communist regimes that became democratic in the late 1980s and early 1990s (East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia). Using this dummy variable does not harm our use of years of democracy as a control factor for possible spurious relationships.

The distinction between statist and non-statist societies is derived from the typology by Jepperson (2000; 2002) and Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001). Jepperson (2000; 2002) classifies most countries in our data set on historical grounds: historically the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries have been non-statist, while continental Europe and former authoritarian regimes followed the statist design of a strong state bureaucracy. However, not all countries fit the typology that clearly (Jepperson 2000). Although considered a bit of a mixture, Belgium is in the end characterized as a statist country by both Jepperson (2000) and Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001). According to Jepperson (2000), the Netherlands are a hybrid of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian types, and therefore a non-statist regime. However, other studies show that the design of the Dutch polity also has continental characteristics (scp 2001; Gelissen 2001). We therefore alternated the Dutch case between the typology, finding no substantial differences. Finally, Greece is not mentioned by Jepperson (2000; 2002), and altogether left out of the analysis by Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001). However, considering that Jepperson (2000) claims former

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[5] We also do not include voting turnout. First, voting is often a rather ritualistic activity, needing little political skills. Second, it is strongly affected by the voting and party systems, which we are not able to pay proper attention to within the confines of this study. Countries like Belgium, Luxemburg, Italy, Greece, and Austria, for instance, know a system of compulsory voting that is in some cases actively sanctioned by law. Including *some* countries with compulsory voting would affect the relationships of turnout with social and civic participation. To control for this effect would not be possible within the methodological confines of this contribution (see paragraph 6).

authoritarian regimes to be statist, Greece is included as a statist regime in this study.

3.4 Individual and contextual level determinants

To control for spurious effects, we include several background characteristics. These characteristics are theoretically highly unlikely to operate as intermediate variables, meaning they do not intermediate the relationships between social, civic, and/or political participation. To test hypothesis H4, we include the following determinants: sex, level of education, household income (ranked into 12 groups), the income source (salaries/profits, pensions, unemployment benefits, other social benefits, and other), age (as well as age-squared to capture non-linear tendencies), marital status (married, divorced, separated, widowed and those who did not marry), household size, religious denomination (non-religious, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, other), attendance to religious services, citizenship length of residence in a community, and level of urbanization. Moreover, we use three contextual determinants. As a measure of economic development we used gdp/capita pps (purchasing power standards), i.e., the national income per head of the population corrected for differences in price levels. This index (where the score of 100 represents the EU average) was provided by Eurostat. Perceived corruption was measured through the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2002, issued by Transparency International. It ranges from 0 (no corruption) to 10 (highly corrupt). Length of democratic rule indicates how long a country has been democratic without interruption (topping off in 1920, giving the oldest democracies a maximum score of 82 years of democratic rule).

3.5 Missing values

Respondents with missing values on one of the eight indicators of social, civic, and political participation (dependent variables) were left out of the analysis. Respondents with missing values on the individual level determinants were scarce, except for the variable income. Respondents with missing values on income were assigned the average score, and controlled for with an additional dummy variable (not displayed in the models). For the other background characteristics, respondents with one or more missing values were left out of the analysis. All subsequent models are based on the same set of respondents.

3.6 Multi-level data structure

The cross-national data in this analysis have a multi-level structure: individual citizens (at level 1) are nested in countries (at level 2). We need to take this multi-level structure into account. First, it is problematic to deal with the multi-level structure in constructing a measurement model, as a multi-level factor model with few higher level cases ran into converging problems. Therefore, we performed confirmatory factor analysis on the pooled data set first, and subsequently tested to what extent the measures were factorially invariant across all countries. Second, in the structural model we corrected for the multi-level data structure using the Huber-White sandwich estimator (Huber 1967; White 1982; Freedman 2006), which is robust to non-normality and clustering.

4   Measurement model

The test of the hypotheses requires data reduction of the eight above-mentioned variables of social, civic, and political participation. Both practically and methodologically, it is hardly feasible to relate these eight variables to each other. Without data reduction, these eight variables would produce no less than 28 unique relationships between pairs of variables, from which it is difficult to proceed. Moreover, the characteristics of the eight variables differ so strongly (with regards to scale and distribution), that these 28 relationships can not be compared to each other. To solve these issues, the number of variables is reduced through comfirmatory factor analysis (cfa). As an additional advantage the (until now assumed) distinction between three factors and the (similarly assumed) assignment of variables to these factors can be tested.

   Lisrel 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom 2006) was used for the construction of the factor model. The eight variables were used as indicators of the underlying factors, taking the non-normal, non-metric distribution of the indicators into account through the estimation of a polychoric correlation matrix.[6] A first set of analyses was based on the pooled data set. Several factor models were compared: a one-factor model, a two-factor model, and two separate three-factor models (see Figure 1). The latter two are most interesting.

   The first three-factor model (Figure 1c; Model C in Table 1) distinguishes between the three spheres of society central in this study: the intimate sphere (social participation), civil society (civic participation) and the state (political participation). Following this distinction, the three modes of social participation

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[6] Three of the eight indicators are dichotomous, three are ordinal, while only two are quasi-metric.

(y1-y3) should be related to one factor (f1), the three modes of civic participation (y4-y6) to a second (f2), and the two modes of political participation (y7-y8) to a third (f3), therefore assuming crossloadings to be absent. This model is represented in Figure 1c.

The second three-factor model (Figure 1d; Model D in Table 1) is an extension of the first, now allowing cross-loadings to differ from zero. In line with Cohen and Arato (1992), we can divide the sphere of civil society (i.e. civic participation) into three parts, reflecting the three corners of the triangle: leisure organizations (serving leisure interests, as it were, near the intimate sphere), interest organizations (serving predominantly economic interests, as it were, near the market sphere) and activist organizations (serving overarching societal interests, as it were, near the sphere of the state). From this distinction, participation in leisure organizations (y4) has some characteristics of social participation (f1), while participation in activist organizations (y6) has some characteristics of political participation (f3). Consequently, the second three-factor model also allows for two indicators to have crossloadings on two constructs. This model is represented in Figure 1d.

Figure 1: Four factor models of citizens' participation
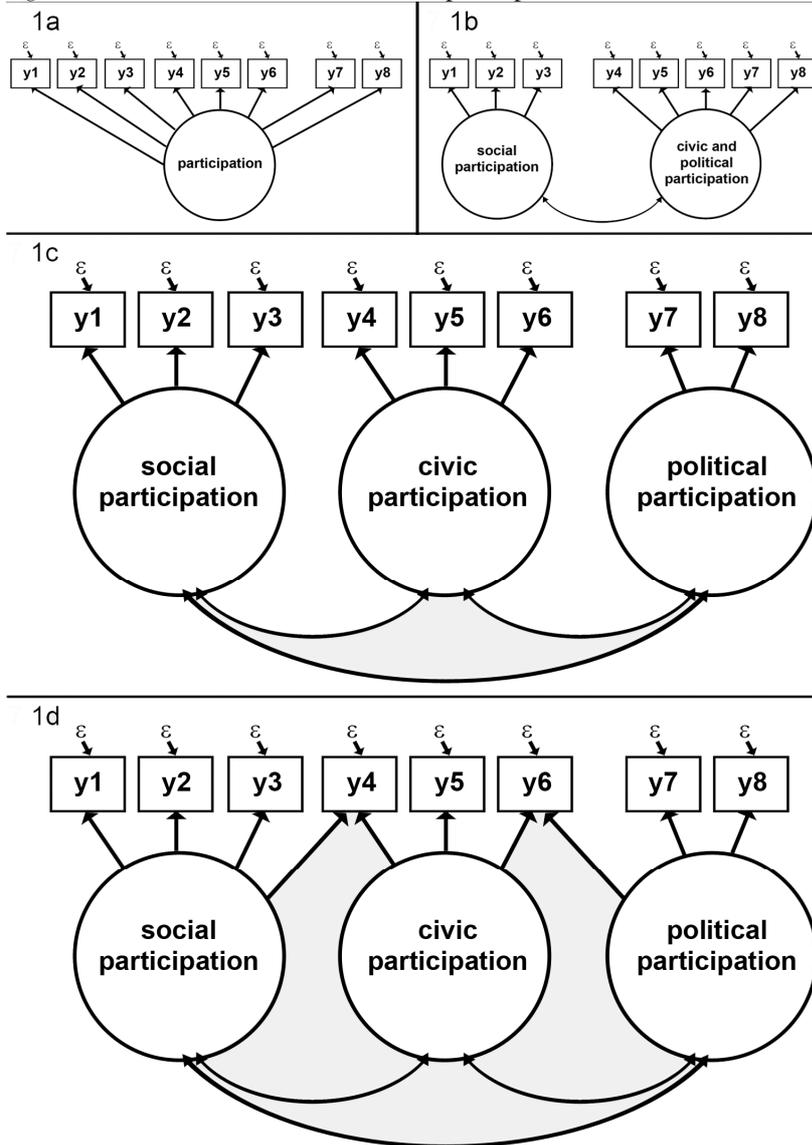
Both three-factor models fit the data well, and have a significantly better fit than the one- and two-factor models. With a RMSEA of 0.044 the more extensive model (Model D) fits significantly better than the less extensive model (Model C) which has an RMSEA of 0.053 (see Table 1).[7] With two additionally estimated parameters, the Chi-square value of Model D is significantly lower than that of Model C. However, in the extensive model, several factor loadings are rather weak.

Next, a second set of analyses tested the robustness of the factor models over countries. The pooled data set was broken down into each of the seventeen countries to estimate the structure and the model fit for each country separately. Extensive analyses show that the configural invariance is rather good for Model C, but not for Model D. In Model D, in eight of the seventeen countries, one or more factor loadings (especially those of the cross-loadings) were either much stronger or much weaker, or even flipped sign, compared to the overall model. This was not the case for the less extensive Model C. This model is therefore used for the subsequent analyses.[8]

Table 1:   Results: Measurement model fits

	One factor model (a)	Two factor model (b)	Three factor model (c)	Three factor model with cross-loadings (d)
RMSEA	0.079	0.064	0.053	0.044
Chi-Square	3595.63	2291.73	1373.33	858.86
Degrees of freedom	20	19	17	15
Change in Log-likelihood	-	1303.90	918.40	514.47
Number of parameters added	-	1	2	2
Significance	-	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: Confirmatory factor analysis, eight indicators. Estimated through polychoric correlation matrix. Pooled data set.

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[7] As a rule of thumb, below an RMSEA of 0.05 models are considered to fit the data very well, between .05 and .08 reasonably well, and below 0.03 there is a close fit.

[8] An additional test of measurement invariance was not done, because the large N within countries is very likely to produce significant results. Rather, we tested whether the use of the alternative factor model D would produce different results in the subsequent analyses. When comparing the results in paragraphs 5 and 6 (which builds on model C) with a similar analysis that builds on model D, substantially the same results were obtained, albeit with weaker associations between social and civic, and civic and political participation.

Finally, three latent variables were constructed using factorial regression scores and a standardization of the eight indicators on the pooled data set.[9] The three factors, constructed through the Lisrel analyses in line with Figure 1c, can now be used for further analysis.

5   Structural model: associations and spurious effects

The measurement model allowed the construction of the three factors; structural models allow the assessment of the individual level relationships between these factors. For that purpose, the hierarchical structure of the data should again be taken into account. Citizens are nested in countries, and the simultaneous inclusion of individual and country level characteristics necessitates a correction of the standard errors. We did this correction with the Huber-White sandwich estimator (Huber 1967; White 1982; Freedman 2006) in the software package MPlus 4 (Muthen & Muthen 2004). This estimation method is robust to non-normality and clustering, and suffices for the purposes of this study. The Satorra-Bentler scaled Chi-squared difference test (TRD) allows the comparison of the overall model-fit with this estimator (Satorra & Bentler 2001; Muthen & Muthen 2004).[10]

First, the model with the reciprocal relationships between the three factors is presented to test hypotheses H1a and H1b (see Model I in Table 2). Hypothesis H1a expects social, civic, and political participation to be positively related, whereas hypothesis H1b claims the opposite. Model I shows that social, civic, and political participation are all positively related, thereby supporting hypothesis H1a. The correlation between social and civic (0.37) and social and political participation (0.36) are moderately strong, whereas the correlation between civic and political participation (0.55) is strong.

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[9] Using country specific regression scores and within country standardized indicators is not an option, as standardization within countries rules out any between-country variance and makes the cross-national analysis of the association between the three forms of participation relative and hard to interpret. Indeed, many individual and country level determinants were no longer significant in paragraph 5, when the country specific factor scores were used instead of the overall scores.

[10] Usually, the model fit improvement is conventionally tested for its significance by the change in the −2LogLikelihood (−2LL), which is Chi-square distributed with the number of additionally estimated parameters as the degrees of freedom. However, to compare models that are estimated with the robust maximum likelihood, it is necessary to take the difference test scaling correction (cd) into account. This is calculated by the scaling correction factors (SCF) and the degrees of freedom (df) with the formula: cd=(df0*SCF0 − df1*SCF1)/(df0-df1). Next, the change in −2LL divided by the test scaling correction (TRD) is again chi-square distributed.

6   Structural model: conditional associations

Next, we assess whether these correlations are similar across groups of countries, in order to test hypotheses H2 and H3. According to these hypotheses the correlations between social, civic, and political participation differ across groups of countries: they should be stronger in longstanding democracies and non-statist countries than in newly established democracies and statist countries, respectively. Cross-level interaction effects are not an option to test these hypotheses, due to the reciprocal character of the relationships. Yet, they can be tested by multiple group analyses in structural models. In multiple group analysis the structural model is estimated for the (two) groups of countries separately, while only specific parameters are allowed to vary. If the model fit improves significantly compared to the original single model, the conclusion is justified that the countries differ with respect to these parameters. This technique is available in MPlus, which continues to take the nested data structure into account even within the groups of countries.

Table 2:   Results: Structural model

	Model I. Basic model (determinants set at 0)
Model fit	
AIC	1801797.055
Log-likelihood	-900779.527
Scaling correction factor	75.187
Number of estimated parameters	9
Change in Log-likelihood	-
Number of parameters added	-
CD	-
TRD	-
Significance	-
Correlations	
Social and civic participation	0.37 (0.02)
Social and political participation	0.36 (0.01)
Civic and political participation	0.55 (0.02)

Note: Structural model, factor loadings set. Huber-White sandwich estimator.

There are two limitations to multiple group analysis here. First, although hypotheses H2 and H3 propose two institutional characteristics that might condition the relationships between social, civic, and political participation (namely former regime type and statism), these conditional effects cannot be estimated simulta-

neously as the classifications overlap empirically: all newly established democracies are also statist, while longstanding democracies are rather equally dispersed across types of bureaucracy. This calls for prudence in the interpretations of the findings. Second, when the correlations between the three forms of participation are allowed to vary over the groups of countries in the multiple group analyses in MPlus, *all* parameters are effectively released to vary. Especially when we take individual and contextual determinants into account below, it becomes more difficult to pinpoint a possible significant improvement of the model fit to single parameters. We cope with this issue by doing multiple group analyses both on Model I (Table 2) and on a model where we take these individual and contextual determinants into account. In multiple group analyses of Model I, changes in model fit are more clearly pinpointed to differences in correlation strength. However, these correlations are not controlled for individual and contextual characteristics. In multiple group analyses of the extensive model these controls have been inserted, but consequently differences in the correlation sizes are not considered in isolation across the two groups of countries and therefore cannot be tested for significance separately. However, the analyses do show the strength of the – controlled – correlations in the two groups of countries, which can be compared and post-hoc tested for significance by equality of correlation coefficients tests.

In hypothesis H2, the correlations between the three forms of participation were expected to be weaker in newly established democracies than in longstanding democracies. Model II in Table 3 shows that compared to Model I (Table 2), the distinction between longstanding and newly established democracies significantly improves the model fit: with only 9 additionally estimated parameters[11] the TRD decreases with 54835.75. The correlations are much lower for newly established than for longstanding democracies; especially for the relationship between civic and political participation this difference is striking (respectively 0.33 and 0.54, note that both correlations are positive). These findings support hypothesis H2 Similarly, according to hypothesis H3, the correlations between social, civic, and political participation are expected to be lower in statist than in non-statist countries. In Model III (Table 3), the results of the multiple group analysis on the basic model (Model I in Table 2) first show that the model fit improves significantly (df = 9; TRD = 9515.68). In line with expectations, only the correlation between civic and political participation is significantly smaller in statist countries (0.48) than in non-statist countries (0.54). This lends support to hypothesis H3 although the difference (0.06) is rather small.

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[11] Next to the three correlations between the forms of participation the three group mean scores and the three within group variances are calculated resulting in 9 extra parameters.

Table 3: Results: Multiple group models, without controls for
background characteristics

	Model I Basic model (Model I in Table 2)	Model II Multiple group regime type		Model III Multiple group statism	
Model compared to		Model I		Model I	
Model fit					
AIC	1801797.055	1627820.550		1570449.709	
Log-likelihood	-900779.527	-813892.275		-785206.854	
Scaling correction factor	75.187	39.178		49.739	
Number of estimated parameters	9	18		18	
Change in Log-likelihood	-				
Number of parameters added	-	9		9	
CD	-	3.169		24.291	
TRD	-	54835.754		9515.678	
Significance	-	0.000		0.000	
Correlations		**Longstanding Democracies**	**New Democracies**	**Nonstatist regimes**	**Statist regimes**
Social and civic participation	0.37 (0.02)	0.34 (0.01)	0.24 (0.02)	0.33 (0.01)	0.33 (0.03)
Social and political participation	0.36 (0.01)	0.33 (0.01)	0.24 (0.03)	0.31 (0.01)	0.33 (0.02)
Civic and political participation	0.55 (0.02)	0.54 (0.01)	0.33 (0.04)	0.54 (0.01)	0.48 (0.05)

Note: Structural model, factor loadings set.Huber-White sandwich estimator.Comparison to multiple
group models.

7   Structural model: conditional associations and background characteristics

In a final step, we build our most extensive models by including individual and contextual level determinants to test hypothesis H4. Hypothesis H4 emphasized the risk of spurious relationships: the correlations found above might be (partly) spurious due to individual or contextual level characteristics (like resources and incentives), while no direct causal relationship exists between the forms of participation. If hypothesis H4 holds, the inclusion of these characteristics should reduce the strength of the relationship between the three forms of participation considerably.

Model IV, V and VI in Table 4 show that the inclusion of individual and contextual level determinants indeed leads to a rather strong decline in the correlations between the three forms of participation compared to Models I, II and III, respectively. In Model IV, the correlation between social and civic participation drops significantly to 0.23, between social and political participation to 0.22 and between civic and political participation to 0.37. Additional analyses show that most of this drop is caused by individual level determinants. All in all, we find support for hypothesis H4. Note, however, that the correlations remain positive and moderately strong, and that the correlation between civic and political participation remains strongest. This still supports hypothesis H1a.

Finally, we turn to the multiple group analyses in which individual and contextual level determinants are taken into account (Models V and VI in Table 4). First, with regards to the two former regime types, we find that the model fit is significantly better in Model V than in Model IV (df = 90, TRD = 107172.34). This implies that the model is not similar for the two groups of countries. However, it is even more difficult to pinpoint this general significant dissimilarity to specific differences in correlations between the three forms of participation. Nevertheless, the correlations are weaker in newly established than in longstanding democracies by a wide margin. All differences in correlation size are significant, according to an equality of correlation coefficient test. These findings again support hypothesis H2.

Model VI in Table 4 shows that multiple group analysis of the extensive model improves the model fit significantly when we distinguish between statist and non-statist countries (df = 90; TRD = 133002.36). After the inclusions of all control factors, the correlations are lower in statist countries than in non-statist countries for all forms of participation. The correlation between civic and political participation is 0.33 in statist countries and 0.43 in non-statist countries.

Table 4   Results: Multiple group models, with controls for background characteristics

	Model IV	Model V *Multiple group regime type*		Model VI *Multiple group statism*	
Model compared to	Model I	Model IV		Model IV	
Model fit					
RMSEA					
AIC	1787931.236	1618267.228		1558869.602	
Log-likelihood	-893875.618	-808953.614		-779254.801	
Scaling correction factor	8.575	4.926		5.357	
Number of estimated parameters	90	180		180	
Change in Log-likelihood					
Number of parameters added		90		90	
CD		1.277		2.139	
TRD		133002.356		107172.339	
Significance		0.000		0.000	
		Longstanding Democracies	**New Democracies**	**Nonstatist regimes**	**Statist regimes**
Correlations					
Social and civic participation	0.23 (0.02)	0.27 (0.01)	0.16 (0.01)	0.26 (0.01)	0.21 (0.02)
Social and political participation	0.22 (0.01)	0.26 (0.01)	0.17 (0.01)	0.25 (0.01)	0.21 (0.02)
Civic and political participation	0.37 (0.03)	0.44 (0.01)	0.25 (0.02)	0.43 (0.01)	0.33 (0.04)

Note: Structural model, factor loadings set. Huber-White sandwich estimator. Comparison to multiple group models.

Although a test for equality of correlation coefficients finds this difference to be significant, the difference remains rather small.

All in all, the analyses taking into account spuriousness fail to reject both hypothesis H2 and hypothesis H3: the positive relations between social, civic, and political participation tend to be stronger in established democracies than in

former authoritarian and communist regimes (H2) and stronger in statist societies than in non-statist societies (H3). Methodologically, we find support for both. Effectively, we would argue that the distinction between democracies and authoritarian/communist has more relevance than the statist/non statist distinction, especially when we consider the empirical overlap between the clustering of countries by democratic history and by statism. Considering (a) the empirical overlap and (b) the strong differences reported in Models II and V, one would expect some of these differences to spill over to the analyses reported in III and VI.

8   Summary and discussion

This study focused on the relationships between social, civic, and political participation simultaneously and from a comparative perspective. In previous studies, they have been analyzed only separately. Although social, civic, and political participation were apparently considered to have something in common, their empirical relationships were not considered. To test hypotheses on contextual influences, it is very useful to keep different forms and modes of participation indeed unrelated – a necessity even when scholars refrain from structural modeling. However, this also clouds three questions. First, to what extent are social, civic, and political participation related? Second, to what extent are these relations conditioned by the institutional context? And third, to what extent are these relations spurious? These three research questions were central to this study.

First of all, this study shows that social, civic, and political participation are all positively related. This is rather surprising, as time and financial resources are scarce. Apparently, the positive effect of socialization is more important than scarcity of resources (even though both may be in play): through participation, citizens develop the mindset, the skills and a broader social network that incite or enable them to participate through a social spiral. Second, these positive relationships are explained for 30 to 40 percent by background characteristics like income, education, and religiosity, implying that the original relationships were to some extent spurious. Nevertheless, sizable, positive relationships remain between the three forms of participation. Third, these relations are conditioned by the institutional context. In longstanding democracies, the relations between social, civic, and political participation are stronger than in newly established democracies – although they are positive in both groups. In other words, citizens that participate in one sphere of society are more likely to participate in another sphere as well, but even more so when they live in a longstanding democracy. Again, in other words, the informal, associational and political communities

show a stronger degree of overlap in longstanding than in newly established democracies.

We would expect that these differences between the longstanding and newly established democracies in Europe diminish over time. They might very much be a legacy of the former authoritarian and totalitarian regimes of Southern and Eastern Europe. Currently, the former authoritarian regimes of Southern Europe (until the 1970s) and the former totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe (until the late 1980s or early 1990s) are very much in living memory, as several living generations have been socialized under these regimes. It will most likely take considerable time for this social legacy of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes to fully disappear: more than a decade after the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and nearly three decades after the end of authoritarianism in Southern Europe we still find significant differences.

For social scientists these findings may stimulate further research. Cohort studies might reveal that the legacies of former regimes indeed play a smaller part amongst generations that were raised under democratic rule. Furthermore, longitudinal analyses can test whether cross-national differences become smaller as time progresses. For society as a whole our findings imply that democratic transition is only a starting point for societal changes in citizens' participation in various aspects of social life. It takes time for people to adapt socially to institutional changes, and social changes are slow at best.

Nevertheless, when countries make a successful transition to a democratic regime and are able to develop a stable and neutral public sphere, a liberal-democratic tradition may arise in which citizens do not need to segment their social networks, but rather step into the social spiral of citizen participation.

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