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# **Monitorial Citizens or Civic Omnivores?**

## **Repertoires of Civic Participation**

### **among University Students**

#### **Abstract**

In present-day societies, the extent to which young people still participate in civic life is an important matter of concern. The claim of a generational ‘decline’ in civic engagement has been contested, and interchanged with the notion of a ‘replacement’ of traditional engagement by new types of participation, and the emergence of the ‘monitorial citizen’ who participates in more individualized ways. Concurrently, this study explored the assumption of a ‘pluralization’ of involvement, advancing a new concept: the ‘civic omnivore’, characterized by an expanded civic repertoire. Drawing data from a sample of 1493 Belgian and Dutch university students, we identify five repertoires of participation: disengaged students, classical volunteers, humanitarian citizens, monitorial citizens, and civic omnivores. Our findings support the pluralization thesis, by showing that young citizens are not exclusively engaged in new monitorial ways, yet also expand their civic repertoire by combining traditional and new forms in more complex ways. (149 words)

#### **Keywords**

Citizenship, civic participation, expanding repertoires of participation

## **Introduction**

In the debate on social capital, a fundamental generational shift is claimed to have caused a systematic decline in civic engagement. According to Putnam (2000), America's younger generations are substantially less involved in social and political life than the 'long civic generation', the cohort of men and women born between 1910 and 1940, and the growing civic disengagement can be traced back to different socialization experiences in the formative years. While older cohorts experienced the economic deprivation of wartime as well as the great depression and the mutual efforts to rebuild society, younger cohorts were raised in times of economic prosperity and a growing emphasis on individual autonomy and self-expressive values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). As such, today's youth may miss a crucial opportunity to develop certain virtues and skills to participate successfully in civic life throughout adulthood (Hooghe, 2003a; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Verba, et al., 1995).

It follows that if such a generational shift is occurring, it could have detrimental consequences for Western societies – as large stocks of social capital are positively associated with healthy democracies, high levels of institutional performance, economic wealth, and social well-being (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 1993). Consequently, the stakes are high, and a growing number of studies worldwide are devoted to assessing the level and nature of social and political involvement among youth (see, among others, Flanagan, et al., 1998; Handy, et al., 2009; Hustinx, et al., 2005; Marsh, et al., 2007; Norris, 2003; O'Toole, et al., 2003; Perks & Haan, 2010; de Vreese, 2007).

## **Transforming repertoires of participation**

An important line of critique that has emerged from these studies is that the 'decline thesis' is focused too much on traditional measures of participation, such as

membership-based voluntary associations, and fails to acknowledge the emergence of new styles of engagement. Instead of a straightforward *decline*, a gradual *transformation* of modes of civic involvement would be taking place along two main axes: changes in the modes or channels of participation on the one hand, and changes in the substantive issues addressed on the other hand (Micheletti, 2003; Norris, 2003; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005).

First, it is argued that citizens today, and in particular members of younger generations, no longer feel attracted to highly institutionalized and hierarchical organizations with fixed membership structures. Instead, they prefer more loosely structured and decentralized networks that allow for more informal and sporadic 'easy-entrance, easy-exit' modes of involvement (Norris, 2003). Rather than formally joining through paying membership dues, people consider themselves belonging simply by showing up for a particular event or signing an online petition. Typical examples of the new modes of participation are consumer politics (buying or boycotting certain products for political or ethical reasons), passive support for advocacy organizations, the signing and forwarding of e-mail petitions or the spontaneous organization of a local protest event.

Second, new repertoires of participation have shifted the focus of attention from institutional affairs and group-based loyalties to cause-oriented actions that focus on specific issues or policy concerns. An important characteristic is that they blur the traditional distinction between the public and the private sphere by mobilizing citizens around a variety of identity and lifestyle issues, such as a personal concern about the quality of food or the emotional involvement with the family of asylum seekers that are living next door (Bennett, 1998; Micheletti, 2003; Micheletti & Stolle, 2007).

As a consequence, rather than an apathetic or alienated civic generation, the new modes of involvement seem to reflect a new type of post-modern citizen, who remains interested in societal affairs, and strongly supports basic democratic and egalitarian values, but is critical of conventional systems of representation and mediation, and prefers to participate in more horizontal and autonomous ways (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Norris, 1999, 2003). Schudson (1998) coined the notion of '*monitorial citizenship*' to refer to this transformed citizenship practice. The monitorial citizen still shows high levels of political and social interest and internal efficacy and by no means is a passive citizen. However, s/he tends to avoid institutionalized and routine-based forms of participation, instead critically monitors the system from a distance and only intervenes when deemed imperative, typically relying on individualized repertoires of action (see also Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007).

In essence, the advocates of the transformation thesis thus accept the claim that established modes of participation are disappearing, but argue simultaneously that new civic repertoires are replacing the traditional ones (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). An important limitation of this claim, however, is the implicit polarization between traditional and new repertoires of participation. The notion of a replacement implies that old and new realities are somehow irreconcilable. While Putnam's work has been critiqued because of his one-sided emphasis on traditional participation, current approaches can be equally vulnerable to critique because of their bias towards 'new' forms of participation (Hustinx, 2004). Rather than avoiding institutionalized channels of participation per se, the new civic generation's style of involvement may be characterized increasingly by *expanding and blending* established forms with newly emerging ones. Instead of replacing the old forms, the new types of civic

engagement allow citizens to broaden their radius of action (Dalton, 2008; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Sampson, et al., 2005; Schudson, 2006; Stolle, et al., 2005).

### **Participatory versatility**

The idea of expanding repertoires of action has already been expressed by classical scholars of participation. Barnes and Kaase (1979) argued that ‘conventional’ participation on the one hand, and emerging ‘non-institutionalized’ types of involvement on the other, did not need to be mutually exclusive but were (somewhat) convergent. They focused on “the study of modern political versatility” (p. 152) and observed that in the 1960s and 1970s, emerging protest politics indeed operated jointly with conventional institutionalized participation.

Recent research suggests that the thesis of expanding repertoires of participation is also highly plausible in present-day societies. First, an exploratory comparative study of political consumerism among university students found no evidence of the so-called ‘crowding out’ of traditional forms by new forms of participation (Stolle, et al., 2005). These authors found that political consumers have more experience with unconventional forms of participation (demonstrations, culture jamming, and civil disobedience), and they do not avoid more conventional forms of participation. They concluded that “political consumerism reveals itself not as an entirely new phenomenon, but as part of an array of activist performances that serve to broaden the spectrum of politics” (p. 260). Furthermore, recent analysis of Belgian and Scandinavian population data revealed that only a minority of respondents could be classified as ‘monitorial citizens’; very few participated exclusively in unconventional forms of participation (Dejaeghere & Hooghe, 2006; Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007). Finally, counter to the overall observation of a process of ‘de-institutionalization’ of young people’s civic engagement, there is a simultaneous push

towards a stronger formalization of participation, induced by ‘third parties’ such as institutions of higher education and corporations (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2010). In some countries, participation in formal voluntary engagement plays an important ‘signaling role’ in making one’s way into higher education and the labor market (Handy, et al., 2009). In an environment characterized by increased levels of competition, young people are compelled to use volunteer experiences as a signal of their superior qualities in terms of, for example, leadership abilities and social skills. Thus ‘formal credentials’ of one’s civic engagement are necessary for resume building – and consequently a continued interest in formal types of participation are predicted.

In this study, we complement the concept of the ‘monitorial citizen’ (Schudson, 1998), which is based on the transformation thesis, with a new and presumably equally valid civic model originating from the pluralization thesis: the ‘*civic omnivore*’, characterized by a *blended civic taste pattern* that blurs traditional distinctions between old/institutionalized and new/individualized forms of participation. We emphasize that we do not see the civic omnivore at odds with the monitorial citizen, but as varied expressions of contemporary citizenship.

The term ‘*civic omnivore*’ is adapted from the field of cultural studies where Bourdieu’s classical ‘distinction thesis,’ positing a complete homology between high social status and so-called high culture, was fundamentally undermined by recent research that revealed a broad cultural taste pattern among higher status groups, rather than a high degree of exclusivity. Peterson coined the term ‘cultural omnivore’ to refer to this phenomenon (Peterson, 1993; Peterson & Kern, 1996). We infer from these insights the notion that today’s young and higher educated generation may be

more creative and resourceful in combining different forms of participation ‘à la carte’.

To assess the empirical validity of this ‘pluralization thesis’, this paper explores repertoires of participation in a sample of approximately 1500 students from a Belgian and a Dutch university. Given that the new and more individualized citizenship practices are assumed to be significantly more prevalent among young and highly educated groups within society (e.g., Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007; Norris, 2003; Marsh, et al., 2007; Stolle, et al., 2005), university students are an ideal population for this purpose. Thus, we expect to observe a high ‘participatory versatility’ in our sample. In the analysis, we first examine which repertoires of participation are prevalent based on the co-occurrence of various types of activities. Second, we further explore how observed differences in repertoires of participation can be explained on the basis of a number of individual correlates. Although we are dealing with a relatively homogeneous group of young and highly educated students, we expect some significant variation to occur across social background indicators, attitudinal differences, study-related variables, socialization experiences, and measures of political interest.

To explain differences in repertoires of participation, we first look at a number of traditional social background predictors of social and political participation. For example, higher socio-economic status and church attendance are classic predictors of formal volunteering (Musick & Wilson, 2008). And the new and more individualized forms of participation are considered a preeminent platform of female mobilization, because they typically blur the distinction between the public and the private sphere, hence give political meaning to private and lifestyle related concerns (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). Earlier research already demonstrated that women are more strongly



inclined to participate in political consumerism than men (Stolle & Micheletti, 2005; Stolle, et al., 2005). In addition, in the literature, new and unconventional patterns of civic involvement would be associated with more post-materialist values such as individual autonomy and self-expression (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005; Hooghe & Dejaeghere, 2007), so we also consider students' value orientations.

Looking at a student population, study-related variables also need to be accounted for. Earlier research has noted differences in students' program of study. Students in business programs were more likely to be competitive and career-oriented than those in other programs including social sciences (Handy, et al., 2009). Furthermore, there has been a progressive institutionalization of curricular community service into institutions of (higher) education (Haski-Leventhal, et al., 2010; Hustinx, et al., 2005). Civic participation thus increasingly becomes a formal or recommended requirement for graduation. This provision not only raises the awareness of volunteering among students but also gives them opportunities to volunteer, thereby raising their rates of participation.

Research on youth participation has further shown important socialization effects. Variables such as being embedded in a family tradition of volunteering, and being encouraged to participate, have been found to be important predictors of participation in volunteering (Bekkers, 2007; Caputo, 2009; Hustinx et al., 2005). In addition, we test the hypothesis that signaling the instrumental value of participation may lead to a higher incidence of formal types of activities among university students.

Finally, we study the impact of students' media use. Putnam (2000) has argued that an important factor in the decline of civic engagement is the emergence of 'electronic entertainment', in particular the increasing number of hours of television watching. The free time consumed in front of the television obviously cannot be spent

in voluntary associations; hence creating a more passive and isolated citizenry.

However, others have argued that watching the news and other informative programs on television could enhance citizens' social and political knowledge (Hooghe, 2003b; Norris, 1996).

## **Method**

In this paper, we use survey data drawn from a convenience sample of university students from a university in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium (N=891), and a Dutch university (N=602). In both countries, the survey was administered in Dutch. The sample was stratified along academic disciplines (social science, humanities, business and economics, natural sciences, engineering, and other). Questionnaires were distributed at the start of a class session, and took 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Although participation was voluntary, there were no reports of students declining to take part in the study, thus reducing the risk of respondent self-selection.

## Measures

To map students' repertoires of participation, the survey included questions on three general categories of involvement: volunteering, donating money, and political participation. Participation in formal volunteering was defined as 'having donated your time freely to an organization in the past 12 months', and respondents were offered a list of 7 types of organizations that commonly rely on volunteer labor (Salamon, et al., 2004): religious, social services, sports/culture, advocacy, neighborhood, youth, and – specific for the student population under consideration – university. For the purposes of this study, we made a distinction between formal volunteering within the university (dummy variable; yes=1, no=0), and formal volunteering outside the university (i.e., any of the other organizations). In addition,

we asked whether students also volunteered informally, using the example of ‘organizing a fundraising event with your friends’ (yes=1, no=0). Finally, we asked about online volunteering for an organization (yes=1, no=0).

Next, we asked students whether they had donated money or bought any items for a good cause or organization in the year preceding the interview. If so, students could indicate to which type of cause or organization they had donated (religious, disaster relief, human rights, environment, or medical research). Two types of binary variables (yes=1, no=0) were generated: a general one for having donated money, and separate ones for each type of cause/organization.

Finally, to measure political participation, the survey included a list of political actions that students could indicate they had undertaken. We divided this list into ‘conventional’ forms of political participation (contact a politician, participating in a legal demonstration, writing a letter to a newspaper), and ‘unconventional’ forms of political participation (signing a petition, participating in illegal protest, wearing a badge or t-shirt with a political message, forwarding an e-mail or sending text message with political content, participating in an online discussion forum). The various activities were aggregated into two dummy variables: conventional and unconventional political participation (yes=1, no=0). We also used a separate measure of political consumerism, defined as ‘consciously buying or boycotting consumer products out of ethical, environmental or political concerns’ (yes=1, no=0).

To explain differences in repertoires of participation, we included the following independent measures. First, we accounted for *individual background indicators*: gender (women=1; men treated as the reference category), age in years, household income (high income class=1; middle or lower income class treated as the reference category), and church attendance (no=0; yes=1). We excluded education as

a variable as our cohort represents university students who have graduated from high school but not university, hence belong to the same category. To assess the influence of individual attitudes and value orientations, we first include a measure of ‘material’ versus ‘nonmaterial’ values by means of two additive scales (Cronbach’s alpha .75 and .57, respectively; factor loadings separate items in parentheses). Individuals who score high on material values attach high importance to: making a lot of money (.65); being successful in one’s studies or work (.73); living a happy, comfortable life (.76); and being able to do what you want (.78). Those who support nonmaterial values, on the other hand, consider it more important to: help people in need (.81); make the world a better place (.80); and have a religious faith (.60). Second, the survey included an established measure of ‘generalized trust’, asking students to rate on a scale from 0-10 whether in general, ‘most people can be trusted’, or on the other hand, ‘you can’t be too careful in dealing with people’.

We also included two *study-related variables*: the program of study (business programs as reference category, versus all other programs), and the presence of some form (optional or compulsory) of service program in high school or university (no=0, yes=1). To assess the impact of *socialization experiences*, we first account for the tradition of volunteering in students’ family (measured by the number of volunteers and former volunteers in the students’ closest environment), as well as active encouragements to volunteer by that environment (no=0, yes=1). In addition, we measure the signaling value of formal participation by counting the number of times different agents in students’ social environment (parents, peers, teachers and the media) had emphasized the direct instrumental (getting a job or admission into educational institutes) and diffused social benefits of volunteering (making friends, increasing social contacts). Finally, we introduce three measures of media use in the

model: the daily amount of time spent watching television news, reading the newspaper and watching entertainment programs. The first two measures could be considered proxies for students' level of political interest. The third one could be classified as 'electronic entertainment', which Putnam (2000) has argued to be an important factor in the decline of civic engagement.

### Statistical procedures

To map existing repertoires of participation, we conducted an exploratory latent class analysis (LCA) using the LEM program (Vermunt, 1997). This method allows us to classify respondents on the basis of their participation or non-participation in different types of activities (coded into eight binary variables – see above). Such an approach has proved successful in revealing patterns of cultural and civic participation (Hustinx, 2005; Vander Stichele & Laermans, 2005), and various types of youth behavior (Brown, 2007; Reboussin, et al., 2007; Sullivan, et al., 2009). In a first step, LCA was used to generate latent class and conditional probabilities. Latent class probabilities are “the proportions of the population that are associated with each of the classes, and these must sum to 1.00, indicating that in addition to being mutually exclusive, the classes are exhaustive” (McCutcheon, 1987, p. 33). Conditional probabilities indicate “the probability that an observation (individual) in a latent class will score a particular way on an observed measure” (p.33). In a second step, observed latent class scores were computed from the latent class model. Observations were assigned to the latent classes on the basis of the ‘modal classification rule’; that is, a person will be assigned to that latent class for which the estimated classification probability (i.e., the conditional probability that a person belongs to a certain latent class) is largest, given the manifest scoring (Hagenaars, 1993; McCutcheon, 1987).

To explain variations in repertoires of participation, binary logistic regression analysis was used. Thus, we predict which of the above described correlates increase or decrease students' likelihood of belonging to a particular class or repertoire of participation.

## **Results**

### Mapping repertoires of participation

To discern different repertoires of participation, an exploratory LCA was conducted. A series of successive latent class models, from a one-class to a six-class solution, were fitted to the data. The five-class model provided the most parsimonious model with an adequate fit (complete independence:  $L^2=820.84$ ,  $p<.001$ ; two-class model:  $L^2=433.32$ ,  $p<.001$ ; three-class model:  $L^2=318.42$ ,  $p<.001$ ; four-class model:  $L^2=264.85$ ,  $p=.02$ ; five-class model:  $L^2=208.21$ ,  $p=.54$ ; six-class model:  $L^2=177.75$ ,  $p=.89$ ). The quality of classification was further assessed by looking at the performance of the modal classification rule. The five-class model has a closeness of association measure  $\lambda$  of .52. The closer this measure is to 1, the better the classification performance of the model (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). Thus, it should be cautioned that some classification error is involved in our model. However, even with a basic two-class model, classification errors are not ruled out ( $\lambda=.66$ ). **Table 1** shows the probabilities of the selected latent class model, while **Table 2** presents the proportional distribution of respondents across a more detailed set of measures of participation after they were assigned to their modal class.

*\*\*\* Insert Table 1 and Table 2 about here \*\*\**

The five latent classes reflect a broad and varied spectrum of participation repertoires that range from a category of disengaged students over more formal and

conventional modes of involvement to an unconventional pattern and an all-round class of participants. We interpret the different classes as follows:

1. *Disengaged students* – The first class (.19) represents university students that are underrepresented in all types of activities and thus can be labelled as the group of ‘disengaged’. About one out of five students belongs to this category. In spite of their remarkable passivity in comparison to the other classes, this group nevertheless has a reasonable likelihood (.41) of donating money or buying items supporting organizations or causes, in particular with regard to disaster relief (e.g., Tsunami, earthquake in Pakistan). Volunteering for sports or leisure organizations, signing a petition, and buying products out of ethical, environmental, or political reasons are activities in which this group still may participate.

2. *Classical volunteers* – The second class (.13) represents a group of ‘classical volunteers’ who are involved in typical youth activities through formal organizations. They predominantly volunteer for sports and cultural organizations as well as youth associations. In the countries under investigation, these are very common fields of volunteer activity, with sports also being the most frequent type of volunteering for the general population (Dekker, et al., 2007). This group has a relatively low probability of different types of political participation, with the lowest likelihood of political consumerism of all participation repertoires. They are also underrepresented in donating behavior, with a probability of donating comparable to that of the class of disengaged students.

3. *Humanitarian citizens* – Like the ‘classical volunteers’, this category (.12) is highly likely to participate in formal volunteering, but appears to be active in different fields of activity. Although sports, culture and youth also attract the largest numbers of formal volunteers in this class, this group of participants is

overrepresented in other types of organizations: religious, social services, advocacy, and neighborhood groups. In addition, this class combines formal volunteering with donating money and political consumerism, while being underrepresented in political participation. This suggests that this class of participants mainly acts out of social or humanitarian reasons; hence we refer to this repertoire as ‘humanitarian citizens’.

4. *Monitorial citizens* – The fourth class (.39) differs from the ‘classical volunteers’ and the ‘humanitarian citizens’ as it is underrepresented in all types of formal participation. This category combines various types of activities that are usually considered as typically ‘new’ or ‘unconventional’: donating money, unconventional political participation, political consumerism, and online participation. In particular, donating money for disaster relief or humanitarian causes, signing a petition, boycotting certain consumer products, and participating in an online discussion forum are the most popular activities in this category. This pattern most closely corresponds to Schudson’s (1998) ‘monitorial citizenship’.

5. *Civic omnivores* – although a majority of students indeed seems to practice a more monitorial style of engagement, a small but distinct group of students (.17) instead combine all types of activities available – formal and informal, conventional and unconventional. Rather than substituting traditional forms of participation with new ones, this group provides evidence of a broadening civic repertoire in which formal and institutionalized practices are not at odds with informal and individualized, but on the contrary are integrated and combined. As argued, the debate on declining-versus-transforming-participation has overlooked a third alternative: the possibility that today’s young and highly educated citizens may be more creative and resourceful in combining different forms of participation ‘à la carte’, hence



representing a new category of ‘civic omnivores’ that broaden, rather than shift, their horizon of action.

### Predicting repertoires of civic participation

In the second part of the analysis we examine which students belong to a particular latent class or repertoire of participation by means of five binary logistic regressions (Table 3). We account for country differences and, as indicated above, five categories of determinants: individual background characteristics and attitudes, study-related variables, socialization experiences, and media use.

First, significant country effects exist. Belgian students are significantly more likely than Dutch students to resemble one of the new citizen concepts: civic omnivores and monitorial citizens. For Belgian students, the odds of belonging to the category of civic omnivores (vs. other repertoires) are almost twice as large as the odds for Dutch students. Dutch students, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to be disengaged or to belong to the group of humanitarian citizens.

Next, concerning students’ background characteristics, important gender differences exist. Male students are significantly more likely to be among the civic omnivores and the classical volunteers. Female students, on the other hand, are more likely to have a monitorial civic repertoire. Second, students’ class background is relevant in explaining whether students participate or not, but not in relation to their style of engagement. Students from high-income households are less likely to be disengaged in comparison to students from middle or low-income families. Students’ age and church attendance, finally, do not influence their repertoire of participation.

Students’ attitudes and value orientations are also positively associated with their repertoires of participation. The results first show that the higher students’ material values, the more likely they are to represent classical volunteers. Stronger

support for nonmaterial values, on the other hand, increases their chance of an omnivorous civic repertoire and decreases their odds of being a classical volunteer or being disengaged. Model 4 further indicates that the higher students' generalized trust, the more likely they are to belong to the category of civic omnivores, and the less likely they are to be classical volunteers. An analysis of variance (ANOVA with Scheffe test,  $F=5.949$ ,  $p<.001$ ) indicates that, at a .05 significance level, the civic omnivores' average level of generalized trust (6.18 on a 10-point scale) is significantly higher than that of the classical volunteers (5.37) and disengaged students (5.27). The average trust levels of the monitorial (5.75) and humanitarian (5.86) citizens are situated in between.

Study-related predictors do not produce any additional effects on students' participation repertoires. In contrast, there is a strong impact of being embedded in a family tradition of volunteering. Having more (former) volunteers in one's nearest environment significantly decreases the likelihood of being disengaged and increases students' probability of belonging to the category of civic omnivores or classical volunteers. Next, being encouraged to volunteer has a positive effect on the socially engaged and omnivorous civic repertoires, and decreases the likelihood of being a monitorial citizen.

Finally, there is an effect of students' media use, as a proxy of their level of political (dis)interest. It appears that more hours of watching television entertainment on an average day significantly decreases students' likelihood of being a civic omnivore or a humanitarian citizen, but on the other hand increases the likelihood of being a monitorial citizen. The more daily time they spent reading the newspaper, the less likely the students are to be disengaged. There is no effect of watching the television news on any of the repertoires of participation.

## Discussion and conclusion

In present-day post-modern societies, young people's level of social and political participation is an important matter of concern. The claim of a major generational decline in civic engagement has been contested, because it fails to acknowledge the emergence of a new type of citizen who critically monitors the social and political environment and intervenes in more intermittent and individualized ways. While existing research has noted a process of *replacement* of traditional repertoires of participation by new ones, this study explored a *pluralist* approach, namely the assumption of *expanding* and *diversifying* repertoires of participation. That new types of participation are emerging should not, by definition, incite citizens to turn their backs on more conventional forms. Instead, they may take the opportunity to broaden their radius of action and combine available traditional and new forms in more flexible and complex ways. We explored this assumption empirically based on data drawn from a survey of 891 Belgian and 602 Dutch university students in the year 2006. Although the sample was not representative of the general population, it allowed us to delineate existing repertoires of participation in a group of young and highly educated people, characteristics that are commonly associated with new and more individualized citizenship practices.

Our findings first of all indicate that the overall majority of respondents reported to be participating in various social and political activities. The analysis revealed four distinct patterns of involvement that ranged from the more traditional participation in formal voluntary associations by the classical volunteers and humanitarian citizens to the prototypically de-institutionalized style of engagement of the monitorial citizens and the expanded repertoire of the civic omnivores. Thus, as we hypothesized, students' repertoires of participation were complex and diverse.

Nevertheless, the largest group of students was classified as ‘monitorial citizens’ who exclusively participated outside the formal and institutionalized channels. This result points to the existence of a new and distinct repertoire of participation that is clearly separated from more traditional forms. On the other hand, our study could also identify a distinct, albeit small, group of students with an extremely versatile civic taste blending conventional and formal types of participation with unconventional and more informal ones. This category of civic omnivores, consequently, suggests that the transformation thesis, by presenting traditional and new forms as irreconcilable, may be failing to grasp the full complexity of present-day citizenship. By examining systematic and multiple interactions across a broad range of forms of participation, this study indicated that new forms do not necessarily substitute old forms; but also enable young citizens to expand and diversify their repertoire of participation. Although the trend towards a monitorial civic repertoire is most noticeably present, it is important to recognize a concurrent process towards a broadening spectrum of forms of participation.

In this respect, the intriguing question seems to be what factors explain the difference between what we may consider two key expressions of contemporary citizenship: the monitorial citizens and the civic omnivores. It first of all seems that national context plays an important role. Belgian students are significantly more likely to embody either of both civic models; their odds of an omnivorous repertoire are even twice as high as those of Dutch students. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, traditional civic involvement in social and leisure associations is more prevalent. These country variations could point to important cross-national differences in opportunity structures. Research has shown that Belgium exemplifies recent changes in protest politics, with participation in demonstrations becoming less

revolutionary and more commonplace. Far from threatening the state, it has become a major channel of public participation with demonstrators being similar to the Belgian population in general (Norris, et al., 2005; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). Moreover, the issues around which the Belgian population recently has been mobilized may be particularly engaging for young people, as they related to young and innocent victims of abduction and crime. For instance, in October 1996, a 'White March' of some 300,000 people took place to protest against the inaction of the nation's police and juridical forces in the face of kidnapping and killing of young girls (Hooghe & Deneckere, 2003). A very recent example of this new and more emotion-driven wave of protest was the mobilization of about 80,000 Belgian citizens against meaningless violence. The rally took place in April 2006, in the wake of the brutal killing at Brussels' central train station of a young man who refused to hand over his MP3player to two young robbers, a case that also massively mobilized young people to share their grievance and resentment at various internet forums.

It further appears that important gender differences are at play. While male students are significantly more likely to participate in an omnivorous way, their female colleagues have a higher chance of belonging to the group of monitorial citizens. Given that the civic omnivore is overrepresented in all types of formal participation as well as conventional political activities, this finding is in accordance with other studies showing that in most nations, women remain less active in the public sphere (Burns, et al., 2001; Inglehart & Norris, 2003). However, feminist writers have criticized the modern conception of a public sphere for being too distinct from private life and personal interests and the more informal networks and activities in which women more often are involved (Fraser, 1995). This study confirms the

observation that women feel more attracted to a more informal and monitorial repertoire of participation (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005).

Socialization into volunteering is a third major predictor of participation repertoires. Respondents embedded in a family tradition of civic participation are more likely to participate; that is, the more (former) volunteers they have in their closest environment, the smaller their likelihood of being disengaged, and the greater their probability of an omnivorous civic repertoire. If students are encouraged to volunteer and if their environment has signalled the benefits of participation, they are more likely to belong to the group of civic omnivores. Interestingly, being embedded in a civically engaged family environment has no effect on the monitorial civic repertoire, and being encouraged to volunteer even decreases the likelihood of such practice. Socialization experiences within the family appear to be associated with formal participation as the positive effects on the categories of classical volunteers and socially engaged students further suggest.

It finally seems that higher levels of generalized trust and support for nonmaterial values are positively associated with the omnivorous civic repertoire of participation. Civic omnivores have the highest average trust levels and stand in clear contrast to the disengaged students who are the least trusting of all groups. Although the monitorial citizens on average have a slightly lower trust level than the civic omnivores, the difference is not significant. On the basis of our findings, Putnam's (2000) concern about the rise of a passive TV-generation may not be totally unfounded, as both civic omnivores and socially engaged students tend to spend less time watching entertainment shows on television. More television entertainment viewing, on the other hand, increases the likelihood of being a monitorial citizen.

Watching TV seems to be associated with less participation in traditional forms of participation, but not with lack of participation in general.

To conclude, our data points to the existence of a rich diversity of repertoires of participation amongst young and well-educated people. By showing that university students engage in both traditional and new forms of participation, we support earlier critical observations with regard to Putnam's (2000) decline-of-social-capital thesis (Micheletti, 2003; Norris, 2003; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005), yet further add to the debate by showing that students are not exclusively engaged in new monitorial styles of involvement. Rather, we provide support for a pluralization claim. A considerable group stays within a more or less traditional repertoire either concentrated through formal organizations such as for sports, cultural and youth programs (much like the classical volunteers) or more on religious, service-delivery, advocacy, and neighborhood activism combined with a higher likelihood of donating money (humanitarian citizens). While the new monitorial style of engagement clearly prevails in our sample, we also found evidence of an expanded, omnivorous repertoire.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that common and straightforward distinctions between 'old' and 'new' types of participation are not warranted, and that trends in civic participation are not linear. Future work should attempt to replicate these results using a random sample from the general public in these and other countries to assess the extent to which our findings are universally relevant. It is likely that different repertoires of participation will be detected in other populations and countries, but we believe that in general, the pluralization thesis is a valid approach for understanding the complex variety of contemporary repertoires of civic participation.

**Table 1**  
**Repertoires of Participation: Parameter Estimates of the Latent Class Model**

	I	II	III	IV	V	
<i>Latent class probabilities</i>	0.19	0.13	0.12	0.39	0.17	
	<i>Conditional probabilities</i>					% in
						total
						sample
Formal volunteering outside university	0.36	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0.83</b>	0.42	<b>0.87</b>	61.2
Formal volunteering within the university	0.11	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.40</b>	0.09	<b>0.30</b>	19.9
Informal volunteering	0.03	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.29</b>	0.00	<b>0.43</b>	15.1
Donating money	0.41	0.40	<b>0.90</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.90</b>	67.6
Conventional political participation	0.04	0.20	0.01	0.19	<b>0.52</b>	19.6
Unconventional political participation	0.32	0.61	0.65	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.99</b>	71.9
Political consumerism	0.34	0.25	<b>0.98</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.95</b>	67.2
Online participation	0.03	0.34	0.09	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.78</b>	40.0

I=Disengaged; II=Classical volunteers; III=Humanitarian citizens; IV=Monitorial citizens; V=Civic omnivores

N = 1493;  $L^2=208.21$ ; DF=211;  $p=.54$ ;  $E=0.29$ ;  $\lambda =.52$



**Table 2**  
**Repertoires of Participation According to a More Detailed Set of Participation**  
**Measures (% of Students in Each Class Involved in a Given Activity)**

	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
<b>FORMAL VOLUNTEERING</b>						
Type of organization						
Religious***	5.3	6.3	15.5	5.1	19.9	8.2
Social services***	2.4	6.8	18.1	6.5	28.8	9.9
Sports/culture***	19.4	66.3	55.5	28.3	54.5	37.8
Advocacy***	1.2	5.8	11.0	6.2	27.2	8.5
Neighborhood***	0.4	4.2	3.2	1.8	8.4	2.9
Youth***	10.1	37.4	29.0	21.3	52.4	26.3
University***	5.7	39.5	54.2	7.0	39.9	20.0
<b>INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING</b>	2.4	25.8	38.7	1.0	53.9	15.1
<b>DONATING</b>						
Church***	13.3	15.0	27.6	21.3	37.5	23.5
Disaster relief	58.7	43.3	54.8	59.8	65.6	58.8
Human rights***	37.9	37.5	65.4	55.4	70.6	56.2
Environment***	19.4	19.0	34.1	37.0	42.0	34.5
Medical research	40.0	38.8	46.5	48.6	40.5	45.3
<b>POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</b>						
Conventional						
Contact politicians***	2.5	16.8	0.0	9.9	40.8	12.6
Appear in media	0.0	4.7	1.3	7.5	24.6	7.5
Political party	0.4	3.2	0.0	3.7	23.0	5.2
Unconventional						
Sign a petition	16.3	57.4	47.0	86.6	95.3	68.6
Legal demonstrations	2.9	11.1	16.4	27.1	58.7	24.1
Illegal protest	0.8	2.6	1.3	4.2	15.7	4.7
Badge/t-shirt	0.4	5.3	1.3	11.6	38.7	11.4

Protest text message	2.1	5.3	3.9	11.3	23.0	9.8
Political consumerism						
Buycott	27.6	14.7	88.4	70.8	93.2	61.4
Boycott	18.8	11.1	59.4	49.7	74.3	44.0
ONLINE PARTICIPATION						
Online volunteering	0.0	6.3	3.9	6.2	15.7	6.2
Internet campaign	0.0	13.2	2.0	26.1	59.7	22.1
Online discussion forum	2.9	25.3	5.3	30.3	59.7	26.5

I=Disengaged; II=Classical volunteers; III=Humanitarian citizens; IV=Monitorial citizens; V=Civic omnivores

Note – Chi-Square Statistic: \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3**  
**Binary logistic regressions, odds ratios (Exp.(B))**

	DISENGAGED	CLASSICAL	HUMANITARIAN	MONITORIAL	CIVIC
		VOLUNTEERS	CITIZENS	CITIZENS	OMNIVORES
<b>Country (ref=Belgium)</b>	<b>1.56 **</b>	1.30	<b>2.38 ***</b>	<b>.65 ***</b>	<b>.62 **</b>
<b>Background characteristics</b>					
Gender (ref=male)	.83	<b>.69 *</b>	1.43	<b>1.40 ***</b>	<b>.69 *</b>
Age	.99	.97	.99	1.01	.99
Family income (ref=low/middle)	<b>.64 **</b>	.80	1.41	1.25	.80
Church practice	1.16	1.10	1.27	.89	.71
<b>Study-related predictors</b>					
Programs (ref= business)					
Social sciences	.71	.73	.89	1.04	1.41
Natural sciences	.93	1.21	1.17	.84	.90
Humanities	.82	.72	.80	1.07	1.39
Engineering	1.22	.32	.99	.74	.83
Service program	1.02	1.01	1.06	.94	1.14
<b>Socialization variables</b>					

Volunteers in closest environment	<b>.66 ***</b>	<b>1.24 **</b>	.91	1.00	<b>1.32 ***</b>
Former volunteers in closest environment	<b>.78 ***</b>	<b>1.18 *</b>	1.12	.99	1.13
Encouraged to volunteer	.73	1.04	<b>2.15 ***</b>	<b>.68 **</b>	<b>1.77 **</b>
Signalling direct benefits	1.01	.94	.89	.92	<b>1.33 ***</b>
Signalling diffused benefits	<b>.68 ***</b>	.94	1.10	1.04	<b>1.22 **</b>
<b>Individual values</b>					
Generalized trust	.96	<b>.91 *</b>	.99	1.04	<b>1.09 *</b>
Material values	1.02	1.08	.95	1.01	.94
Non-material values	<b>.89 **</b>	<b>.81 ***</b>	1.01	<b>1.07 *</b>	<b>1.19 ***</b>
<b>Media use</b>					
Television Entertainment	.99	1.09	<b>.79 *</b>	<b>1.12 *</b>	<b>.79 *</b>
Television News	1.10	.87	.94	.99	1.15
Newspaper	<b>.72 ***</b>	1.01	1.06	1.10	1.05
Constant	2.73	.69	.15	.23	.21
Nagelkerke R2	.19	.09	.11	.06	.21
Number of respondents	1405	1405	1405	1405	1405

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