

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, DEMOCRATISATION AND CITIZENS' VALUES IN EUROPE

Abstract. This article addresses the issue of political participation in the context of the process of democratisation, social development, and social changes in general. Particular emphasis is placed on the attempt to explain the differences in the levels of political participation, the differences between European countries, and the role that values play in these differences. Based on data from the "European Social Survey" (ESS), multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the analytical model of the factors of political participation in various European countries at both the individual level and the macro societal level. In so doing, changes over time and differences between old and young democracies were also observed. The results suggest that the differences between old and new democracies persist. In light of this trend, one particularly important finding is that values play an important role in political participation, but only in the developed countries of Western Europe which have a long democratic tradition.

Keywords: *political participation, self-transcendence values, human development, democratisation, multiple linear regression, comparative research*

If we analyse the process of democratisation, then the political participation of citizens is usually understood as an important (or even the key) component of this process (Almond & Verba, 1963; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Many researchers have attempted to address the relation between political participation and the process of democratisation. Therefore, the last wave of democratisation in post-socialist Eastern European and Southeastern European countries is not an exception (see Kluegel and Mason, 1999; Barnes, 2006; Fink-Hafner & Kropivnik, 2006; Hafner-Fink et al., 2011). Much of the literature also suggests that the democratisation process is related to the general process of socio-economic development (Lipset, 1959) and the process of modernisation (see, for example Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart &

* Assistant Professor dr. Mitja Hafner-Fink, PhD, professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

Welzel, 2005). Moreover, since a vibrant civil society with engaged citizens is the core of a democratic system (Lipset, 1994), it is indisputable that the extent and nature of political participation is also related to the process of social development in general. A broad range of research and literature on political participation confirms this relationship both on the macro-societal level (the relationship between the level of participation and the level of socio-economic development) and on the individual level of participation (the political participation and the positions of individuals within social structure) (Almond & Verba, 1963; Nie et al., 1969; Verba, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Newton & Montero, 2007). Therefore, my main focus here will be the relationship between the level and/or the style of the political participation of citizens and the nature of social development in general following the collapse of socialist systems at the end of the 1980s. I will analyse this relationship within the European social space – both at the level of individuals and at the macro societal level of European countries. My main concern will be to examine the state of political participation in Slovenia, which on the one hand could be said to belong to the developed world, whilst on the other hand still contends with the problems of democratic transition. The results of a number of studies demonstrate that, in terms of volume and patterns of political participation, Slovenia (as a post-socialist country) belongs among the countries of the most recent wave of democratisation in Eastern Europe (see Newton & Montero, 2007; Deželan et al., 2007; Hafner-Fink, 2009; Hafner-Fink et al., 2011). I will conduct empirical analyses using the European Social Survey (ESS) data for the period from 2002 to 2010 (ESS Round 1 Data, 2002 to ESS Round 5 Data, 2010). We will thus be able to observe the situation and the dynamic of political participation in the second decade of democratic transition in Eastern Europe.

The Starting Point and the Research Problem

The current research into political participation was inspired by the most recent wave of democratic transition and has highlighted the following key global findings:

- In the developed world, which is considered to be the relatively stable democratic core of the world, political participation is in decline (see Wattenberg, 1998). This trend can be witnessed first of all (in spite of the differences among countries) in the decline in conventional political participation (i.e. institutional forms of political activity such as elections and participation in election campaigns).
- Following the initially intensive political mobilisation in post-socialist countries during the transition phase, it is possible to observe this same trend in decline in conventional political participation as seen in the

West, albeit having started at a lower level than that achieved in the West (see Kluegel and Mason, 1999).

- Comparisons between countries or cultures in the world at the turn of the millennium reveal a larger share of unconventional political participation or support in the wealthiest countries with usually the highest democracy scores (see Dalton and van Sickle, 2005; Deželan et al., 2007). Unconventional political participation usually takes place outside of institutional channels and includes various forms of pressure and the expression of demands for modern-type politics (signing petitions, participation in boycotts, non-authorised demonstrations and strikes, and the occupation of buildings). Sabucedo and Arce (1991) have argued that such activities are good for social development as long as they are non-violent. In addition, it also seems that the new type of political engagement is less territorially determined and that at least some of the newly emerging types of political activism focus their activities thematically, across borders and *ad hoc* (Beck, 2006).
- Regarding political participation in general, research at the global level reveals a fairly unique distribution of political participation among citizens: the extent of political participation is the highest in those economically developed countries with long democratic traditions, while younger democracies (which are also less economically developed) lag behind them with a substantially lower level of participation (Deželan et al., 2007; Newton & Montero, 2007).

Given the assumption that political participation is related to the democratisation process as well as to the processes of modernisation or development processes in general, some of these findings may appear surprising. However, if we consider the last two decades of democratisation in Eastern and Southeastern Europe to be the concluding phase of the modernisation process, whilst in the same period the old democracies of Western Europe were already heading towards a post-modern phase, then the above findings appear less surprising. Old and young democracies share some “benefits” of “late modernity” (the decline of conventional political participation), but at the same time the older democracies are surpassing the younger ones by enjoying the “benefits” of “post-modernity” (non-conventional political participation).

Based on the abovementioned findings and in line with the fact that the findings mostly refer to the first decade after the point of transition (the 1990s), I will take the following general research question to be the starting point of this article: *Has the social development of young democracies during the last decade been followed by a decrease in the differences among the consolidated older democracies and the young democracies in terms of the*

volume and characteristics of political participation, or are these differences between the two groups still perpetuating?

To answer this general question a hypothetical model has been developed based on the idea that the (political) participation of free citizens lies at the heart of a democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963; Lipset, 1994). Since the development of democracy is related to the general state of socio-economic development and the (post-) modernisation process (Lipset, 1959; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), it logically follows that political participation is also related to these processes. Within this framework, the following two hypothetical questions can help to focus my analysis:

- What is happening to the factors of political participation (both at the individual level and at the macro societal level)? Are there differences between developed countries and less developed countries, between old democracies and young democracies, and does the importance of these factors change over time?
- How is political participation related to the values that are typically associated with social change and development?

Owing to the close association between political participation, democratisation and socio-economic development in general, the factors of political participation in our model are taken from various models that explain the development of democracy. For example: the legitimacy approach (e.g. institutional trust); the communitarian approach (e.g. interpersonal trust); and the human development approach (e.g. values) (see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Apart from the models explaining the development of democracy, some other models and empirical research that explain political participation according to the socio-economic profile of individuals (for example: resources, class, gender, age) were also a source of inspiration for our model (Burstein, 1972; Beeghley, 1986; Brady et al., 1995; Burns et al., 2001; Li & Marsh, 2008).

I will focus in particular on the role played by values in explaining the differences in political participation. Various authors associate social (human) development with values in such a way that certain types of values are considered to be good predictors of development (Schwartz, 2007), or even more specifically, to be a consequence or a cause (stimulus) of socio-economic development and democratisation (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In this context, I consider to be of particular importance those values that, according to various authors, support the general process of democratisation or human development: Inglehart describes these values as post-materialist and self-expression values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005); Schwartz speaks of values clustered in a self-transcendence value orientation and the openness value

orientation (Schwartz, 2007); according to Hofstede, these values are constituted on a spectrum from collectivism to individualism (Hofstede, 1984). These authors associate the value dimensions with social change, social development in general, and specifically with the processes of democratisation as factors or as consequences. Some authors explicitly emphasise the connection between values and political participation – both at the individual level as well as on macro-societal level (cf. Schwartz, 2007).

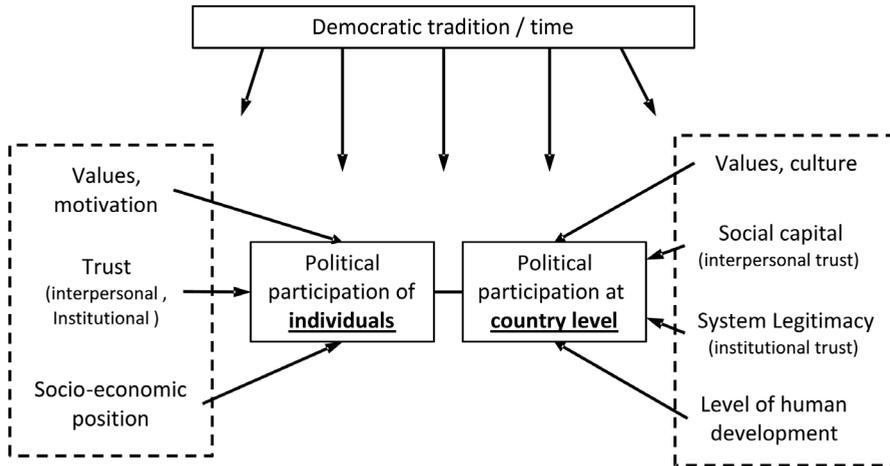
In this article, my focus will be on *self-transcendence value orientations* as measured in the European Social Survey (see ESS Round 5 2010 Documentation Report, 2012). According to Schwartz, the self-transcendence value orientation includes *benevolence* and *universalism* as two basic values (Schwartz, 2007). Benevolence as one of the basic values is, according to Schwartz, understood as the “preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact” (ibid. 174), whilst universalism includes the following virtues: “understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and the protection of the welfare of all people and of nature” (ibid. 174). This group of values has proved to be an important factor in political participation: the higher the rating these values obtain, the higher the degree of political participation (ibid: 195/196). Based on the assumed relationship between political participation, values and human development, my central hypothesis is that *self-transcendence values are a more important factor (predictor) of political participation in developed countries with longer democratic traditions than in recently democratised less-developed countries*. The hypothesis is based on the modernisation theory according to which post-materialist values are correlated with social development (including the development of democracy) towards a post-industrial society (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Thus, we may expect post-materialist values to become a factor of further development only when a society reaches a high enough level of socio-economic development to move towards the post-industrial phase of development or towards post-modernity.

To test the explanatory power of self-transcendence values, a combined (cross-national and cross-time) two-level analytical model of factors (predictors) of political participation was prepared (see Figure 1)

- At the individual level (within a country), in addition to the values, the socio-economic position of an individual, institutional trust and interpersonal trust were included as predictors of political participation and also as control variables. The model was applied separately (a) in different countries to test the differences between young and old democracies, and (b) at two time points (2002 and 2010) to test changes in time.
- At the macro-societal level, the following key predictors were included: human values, trust, human development and the democratic tradition of the countries investigated. The democratic tradition may be conside-

red to serve as a control function in the model, since it is expected (as with the individual level) that the influence of self-transcendence values is stronger in the group of developed countries with longer democratic transition than in the group of countries which have recently experienced democratic transition.

Figure 1: THE FACTORS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – ANALYTICAL MODEL



Data and Methods

To answer the research questions, and to test the analytical model, I used the European Social Survey (ESS) data from the period 2002 to 2010¹. Since I was also interested in electoral participation, all analyses were limited to adult respondents (18 years or more). For carrying (comparative) analyses at the macro societal level (countries as cases) the survey data was aggregated. Statistical data for measuring social development was also included – the Human Development Index (HDI) was used (see Human Development Reports).

¹ The European Social Survey (ESS) is an ongoing study of the changing social attitudes and values in Europe. The ESS is funded jointly by the European Commission, the European Science Foundation and the various scientific funding bodies in each participating country. The first round of the ESS was carried in 2002 and every second year since then. In the first round (ESS 2002) 22 countries participated; 26 countries took part in Round 2 (ESS 2004); 25 in Round 3 (ESS 2006); 31 in Round 4 (ESS 2008); and according to the last data issue, 26 countries participated in Round 5 (ESS 2010) (see more at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>). So far, all the ESS surveys have also been carried out in Slovenia. In my analyses only those concepts were used that were measured with identical survey questions in all the ESS Rounds.

In the first step of my analysis of political participation, I developed a *measurement of intensity* of political participation and a *typology* of political participation using data illustrating the individual level. To conduct macro-level analyses, the data was also aggregated at the country level (for example: the country mean value of different political activities in which individuals took part; the percentage of individuals practising individualised forms of political participation). At the descriptive level, countries were compared and classified in terms of the intensity and typology of political participation at two time points, 2002 and 2010. Based on this classification, I selected six countries (including Slovenia) for further analysis: two old democracies, two young democracies from the 1970s, and two post-communist countries.

In the second step, I tested the analytical model of factors of political participation (Figure 1). Firstly, I conducted multivariate linear regression analyses on the individual data for 2002 and 2010 for each of the six selected countries. Secondly, at the macro-societal level (country level aggregated data), I conducted linear regression analyses: (a) one for all countries included in the ESS 2010 survey; and (b) two separate analyses, one for the group of countries with longer democratic transition and another for the group of countries which had more recently experienced democratic transition.

Forms of Political Participation: Typology and Intensity

Research into political participation must contend with the problem of the various types or forms of political participation. Within the research into political participation, political activities have most commonly been classified in two typical groups: conventional and unconventional (or protest) types of political participation (Barnes, 2006; Newton and Montero, 2007). Yet there are also other classification possibilities as well as other forms of participation which do not fit this 'traditional' typology. We can discuss how to classify an interest in politics or, say, how to classify work in different voluntary associations. We can also ask whether it is appropriate to understand electoral voting equally (on the same 'list') with other forms of political participation and involvement. In line with the emerging social theories on the process of individualisation there has been a shift towards typologies that differentiate between institutionalised and individualised forms of political participation (Dalton, 1996; Fink-Hafner and Kropivnik, 2006; Deželan et al., 2007).

Usually, social surveys measure three aspects (or levels) of political participation: (a) interest in politics, which is not yet real participation, but more a kind of motivational background for real political involvement; (b) electoral participation as cyclical and rather 'passive' involvement in politics,

but nevertheless important for the functioning of a democratic system; and (c) active and continuous participation in various forms of political activity. Active forms of participation are primarily discussed here, while interest in politics is not investigated.

The following seven forms of active citizen participation (for each of which respondents were asked whether they had engaged in the activity during the previous twelve months) were observed at five points in time (see ESS Round 1 to Round 5 Documentation Report, 2011, 2012):

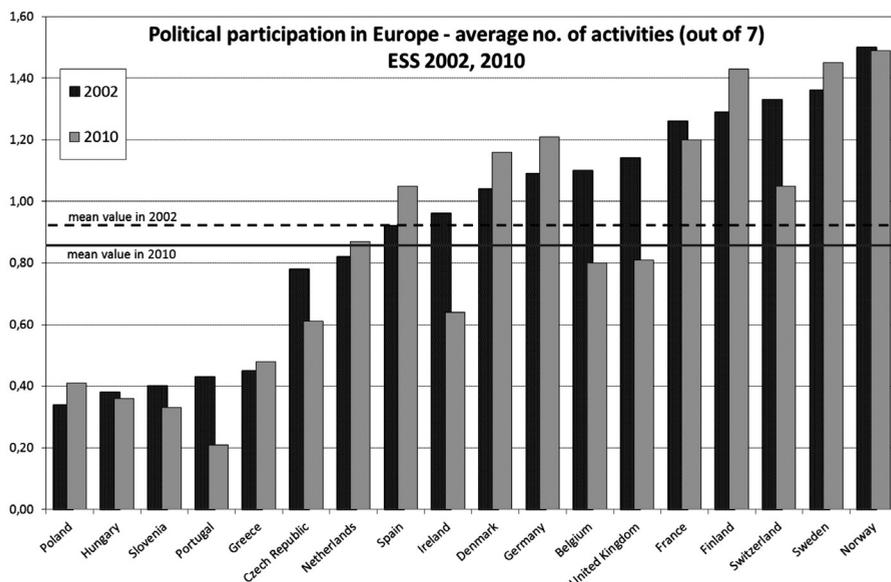
- contacting a politician, government or local government official;
- working in a political party or action group;
- working in another organisation or association;
- wearing or displaying a campaign badge/sticker;
- signing a petition;
- taking part in a lawful public demonstration;
- boycotting certain products.

Firstly, an index (on a scale of 0–7) was formed by counting the number of different activities. The index can be understood as a measure of the diversity of an individual's political participation. Since the relationship between the different forms of political participation is often understood as hierarchical and cumulative (see Milbrath, 1965, cf. Newton & Montero, 2007), a high diversity of participation may also indicate more intense participation. Therefore, the index may be also understood as a measurement of the intensity (or extent) of political participation. The measurements using this index reveal a considerably low diversity (or intensity) of individual political participation: during the entire period from 2002 through 2010, the mean number of activities does not reach to two activities in any of the countries investigated (see Figure 2); furthermore, in 2010, in only 7 of the 26 countries (Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland) were more than half of respondents engaged in at least one of the listed forms of political participation (ESS Round 5 Data 2010). If we compare the years 2002 and 2010, we can see a small decrease in the intensity. Since the forms of participation included in the index is not exhaustive, we cannot challenge the high level of certainty that this decrease is an indicator of a real fall in the extent of citizen participation. However, some significant falls (Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland) support the findings mentioned earlier.

At both time points (2002 and 2010) a sharp division can be seen between the old and young democracies: the intensity of participation in old democracies is at least twice as high as in the young democracies. Comparing the relative position of countries (in relation to the average level of political participation) at both time points we can observe some minor changes which

do not substantially alter this pattern (see Figure 3). However, some changes also suggest a possible trend in the decreasing differences between old and young democracies. We can observe that some old democracies (especially Ireland, Belgium, and the United Kingdom) experience quite a substantial fall in participation (countries below the diagonal in the Figure 3), while the young democracies are mostly stable in their relatively low position. Slovenia as a young democracy is not an exception, being stable at the bottom with only Portugal behind it.

Figure 2: LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – THE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES WHICH RESPONDENTS ENGAGED IN



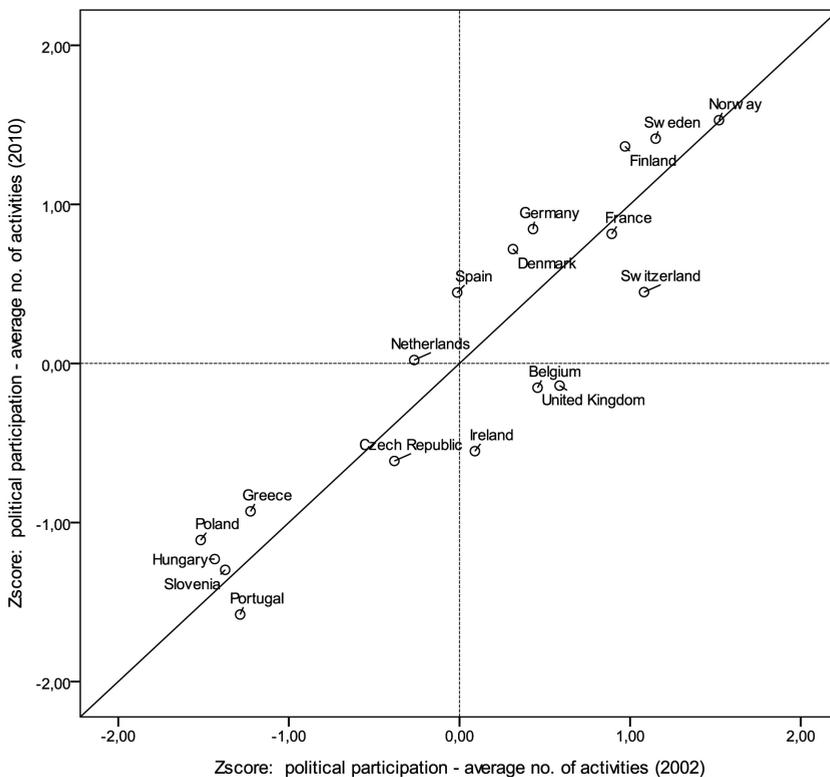
(Source: ESS Round 1 Data 2002, ESS Round 5 Data 2010)

Social change and development appear to have no significant effect on the intensity of political participation. We can, however, observe changes that support the already mentioned trend of growing unconventional participation (e.g. Dalton & van Sickle, 2005). The data does not reveal this trend - the levels of engagement in individualised forms of participation (e.g. boycotting products, signing a petition) have not changed significantly in the period observed: in 2002 on average 31.6% of respondents were engaged in these forms; in 2010 this proportion slightly decreased (30%). Furthermore, we cannot confirm any significant changes in the differences between the old and young democracies either. The level of individualised participation remains more than twice as high in old democracies than in

young democracies throughout the entire period 2002–2010: on average, measurements show only minor oscillations of around 40% in old democracies, and an oscillation of between 15% and 16% in young democracies.

Figure 3: THE RELATIVE LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – STANDARDISED VALUES (Z-SCORE) FOR THE INDEX MEASURING THE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE ENGAGED.

Here we present the changes from 2002 to 2010: a value below the diagonal indicates a relative decrease in participation levels.



(Source: ESS Round 1 Data 2002, ESS Round 5 Data 2010)

We did not observe any changes either in the pattern of the level of political participation in general or in the specific forms of participation. But could we observe any shift in the more complex types or typology of participation? By 'typology of participation' I mean a set of participation categories that are the result of a combination of different forms of participation. To prepare this political participation typology, the membership of a political party was added to the list of seven activities (presented earlier)

and then the principal component analysis was conducted. The analysis was conducted on data pooled for all countries included in the ESS Round 5 in 2010 and separately for the following six countries from the 2002 and the 2010 data: Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Germany, and Sweden. The results were in agreement with the two dimensional structure of political participation – seven forms of political participation and political party membership were unambiguously ‘classified’ in the following two components (types of political participation):

- political party (institutional) or conventional participation, which in all countries includes *membership of a political party* and *working in a party*;
- individualised or unconventional participation, which includes *boycotting* and *petitioning*.

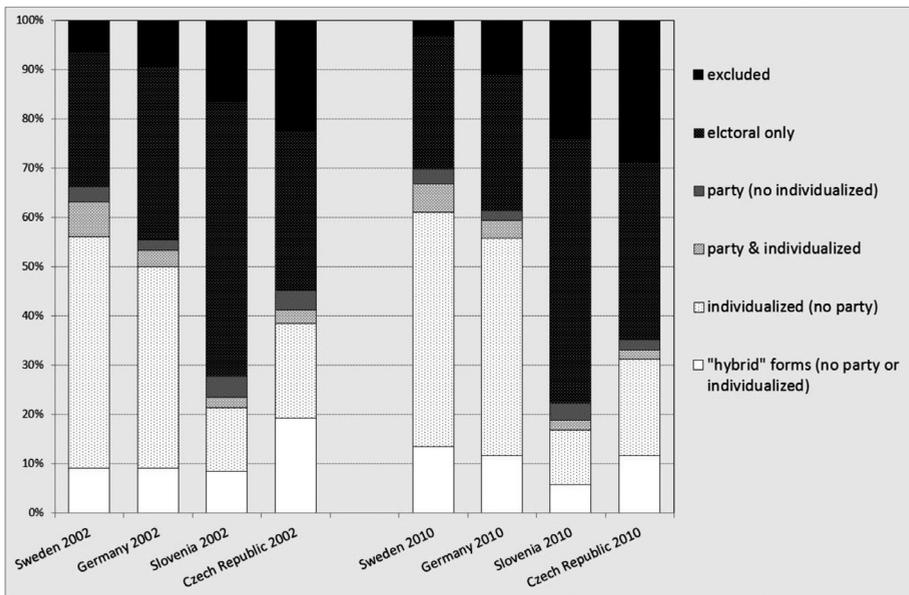
Other forms of participation are not clearly attached to a single dimension: *lawful demonstration*, *work in another organisation*, *wearing a campaign badge*, *contacting a politician or government official*. There are two problems with these forms: (a) similar weights on both the principal components (this is true especially of contacting a politician or government official); (b) in some countries these forms ‘fall’ into the institutional dimension, whilst in other countries into the individual dimension, but never as unambiguously as the other four forms. We can say that these forms are ‘hybrids’ between institutional and individualised participation.

Based on the results of the principal component analysis, three binary variables (1 – the presence of at least one activity; 0 – no activity present) were prepared: party or institutional participation; individualised participation; and ‘hybrid’ forms of political participation. Combining these three variables with election participation (voting in the last national election), the following typology of six types of political participation of citizen was developed:

- excluded (non-active)
- voters (only election participation)
- party specialists (party participation, no individualised forms) (+election)
- a combination of party (institutional) and individualised participation (+election)
- individualists (individualised participation, no party participation) (+election)
- ‘hybrid’ forms of participation (non-party, non-individualised) (+election).

A comparison of countries reveals clear differences between countries: in new democracies voters are the largest group or type, while in old democracies the group (type) of individualists is the largest (See Figure 4). This pattern did not change significantly from 2002 to 2010. These results support one aspect of the modernisation theory: developed countries with longer democratic traditions demonstrate higher levels of individualisation, not only in values, but also in practising individualised forms of political participation (cf. Bang & Soerensen, 2001).

Figure 4: TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN YOUNG AND OLD DEMOCRACIES IN EUROPE



(ESS 2002 and ESS 2010)

Factors of Individual Political Participation: the Importance of Values

According to my analytical model (see Figure 1), my main interest is in the factors of political participation, both at the individual level and at the macro-societal level. Within this framework the key hypothetical question concerns the relative importance of self-transcendence values as a factor of political participation compared to other relevant factors. To answer this hypothetical question, the ESS data was also used. Within all five ESS Rounds, the self-transcendence values were measured using Schwartz's value scale (see Schwartz, 2007). To prepare the index of self-transcendence

I used those items from the ESS human values scale that were prepared to measure two basic human values: universalism and benevolence (*ibid.*). The index includes five items (with answer categories from 1 to 6): the equal treatment of every individual person; tolerance and understanding of people who are different; environmental care; the importance of helping people; and loyalty to friends (ESS Round 5 Documentation Report 2010, 2012; Schwartz, 2007). To correct individuals' response tendencies, I did not use absolute scale values, but rather applied centring to individual's responses on an individual's overall mean value for all items (Schwartz, 2007: 180). In this way I formed an index representing the relative importance of self-transcendence value orientations to each respondent in comparison to other high-order value orientations within the theoretical model of ten basic human values, which were measured on the ESS human values scale (*ibid.*).

Table 1: FACTORS (PREDICTORS) OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN 6 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – OLS STANDARDISED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

predictors:	Slovenia	Czech Republic	Spain	Greece	Germany	Sweden
Year 2002						
- age	-0.031	**0.095	-0.056	0.001	**0.066	-0.043
- gender (binary: man)	**0.087	**0.140	**0.079	0.033	**0.059	**0.079
- place of abode (urban-rural)	-0.032	0.033	-0.036	**0.065	-0.006	0.046
- education	**0.164	**0.167	**0.257	**0.192	**0.257	**0.194
- religiosity	0.043	*0.075	-0.023	-0.011	0.035	**0.073
- self-transcendence values	0.041	-0.007	**0.161	0.020	**0.131	**0.140
- interpersonal trust	-0.028	0.058	*0.061	0.031	0.021	0.035
- trust in institutions	0.015	0.055	**0.072	**0.086	0.007	-0.008
Weighted N	1345	1099	1396	2409	2656	1605
Adjusted R ²	0.037	0.070	0.140	0.042	0.106	0.066
F	**7.386	**11.331	**29.421	**14.264	**40.361	**15.218
Year 2010						
- age	0.015	0.008	0.044	**0.071	*0.039	*0.067
- gender (binary: man)	**0.126	**0.077	*0.050	0.013	**0.094	*0.067
- place of abode (urban-rural)	0.001	-0.003	**0.067	*0.041	-0.004	0.033
- education	**0.193	**0.136	**0.291	**0.231	**0.264	**0.216
- religiosity	-0.014	**0.099	-0.018	**0.116	**0.108	**0.100
- self-transcendence values	0.049	-0.002	**0.080	**0.108	**0.158	**0.163
- interpersonal trust	-0.015	0.033	0.042	**0.059	**0.067	0.021
- trust in institutions	0.049	*0.047	-0.008	*0.047	-0.005	0.019
Weighted N	1188	2133	1783	2524	2808	1399
Adjusted R ²	0.049	0.035	0.082	0.084	0.131	0.090
F	**8.677	**10.726	**20.985	**29.914	**54.019	**18.299

** sig. < 0.01; * sig. < 0.05

(ESS 2002 and ESS 2010)

We would expect self-transcendence values to be a more significant determiner of individual political participation in developed countries with longer democratic traditions. I also tested the hypothesis that the importance of these values changes over time. Individual level multiple linear regression analyses were conducted for two post-communist countries (Slovenia and the Czech Republic), two new democracies from the 1970s (Spain and Greece) and two consolidated democracies (Germany and Sweden). The analyses were run for each country selected separately on the ESS data for 2002 and for 2010. In the regression model the following predictors of political participation were included:

a. Values

- Self-transcendence values as a predictor of political participation: this predictor was chosen in light of my main focus on the relationship between political participation, democratisation and socio-economic development in general.
- Religiosity: this predictor represented traditional value orientations. Religiosity was measured as a composite index (on a scale of 0-10). The index included three indicators of religiosity: religious faith, church attendance, and individual prayer.

b. Trust

- Interpersonal trust: the rationale for selecting this predictor was rooted in theories of social capital - higher participation is expected to correlate with higher interpersonal trust. Interpersonal trust was measured with a scale index (0-10) that included three items from the ESS survey: (1) "Would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"; (2) "Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?"; (3) "Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?" (ESS Round 1 to 5, 2011-2012)
- Institutional trust: Based on the legitimacy approach I expected that higher trust would stimulate more intense participation. Institutional trust was measured on an index scale (0-10) including trust in the following institutional actors: the national parliament, the legal system, the police, and politicians.

c. The socio-economic position and demographic characteristics of individuals

- Age and gender: it was expected that importance of age and gender is lower in more developed older democracies.
- Education: since education comprised at least two important factors of participation, social class and competency, it was expected to be the most important factor affecting political participation. Education level was measured by the number of years of study completed.

- Place of abode: I expected a higher likeliness of participation among respondents from urban areas.

My main idea for the regression model was to investigate the importance of self-transcendence values as factors of political participation in different societies at the beginning and at the end of the last decade and to control the effect of values for all other variables included in the model. The results confirm my expectations as to the importance of education: it is the most important factor of political participation in all countries at both time points (see Table 1). Other socio-economic or demographic predictors are less important: although they are statistically significant, their regression coefficients are mostly low, showing a poor contribution to the common explanatory power of the model. The results also support the hypothesis that self-transcendence values are a more important predictor of political participation in developed countries with longer democratic tradition: only data for Germany and Sweden show relatively high regression coefficients at both time points. On the other hand, the effect of self-transcendence values is hardly present in Slovenia and the Czech Republic (see Table 1).

Social Development and Values as Factors of Political Participation at the National Level

Finally, I prepared a regression model of the macro-societal level with countries as units of analysis. The ESS data for both time points, 2002 and 2010, was available only for 18 countries, so I decided to test the model using only the 2010 data, which included 25 countries. Here my main goal was to test the relative importance of the factors of political participation at the country level within the European cross-national context. More precisely, I tested the relative importance of self-transcendence values compared to the level of human development, interpersonal trust and institutional trust.

Before running the model, individual (micro) data from the European Social Surveys was aggregated in such a way that the country means for the indices presented earlier were used as data for the countries as units of analysis. However, this data should not be read in the same way as it would be read at the micro (individual) level – it should be read as the characteristics of the macro-level units (countries). Of course when using aggregated data we must avoid the simplification, such as the following one: taking aggregated “scores” for the individual religiosity of a country’s inhabitants as “scores” representing the religiosity of that country.

In my regression model the following aggregated individual data was used:

- Political participation* as a country level *dependent variable (outcome)* was measured with the average number of the various forms of political

- participation (out of 7). This could be read as an indicator of the level of participatory political culture in a country.
- b. *Self-transcendence values* as a country level *predictor* of political participation fell within the scope of my interest and could be regarded as an indicator of human values that influence a country's social life.
 - c. *Interpersonal trust* as a country level *predictor* of political participation, which could be regarded as an indicator of the level of social capital in a country.
 - d. *Institutional trust* as country level *predictor* of political participation, which could be one of the indicators of the legitimacy of the political system in a country.

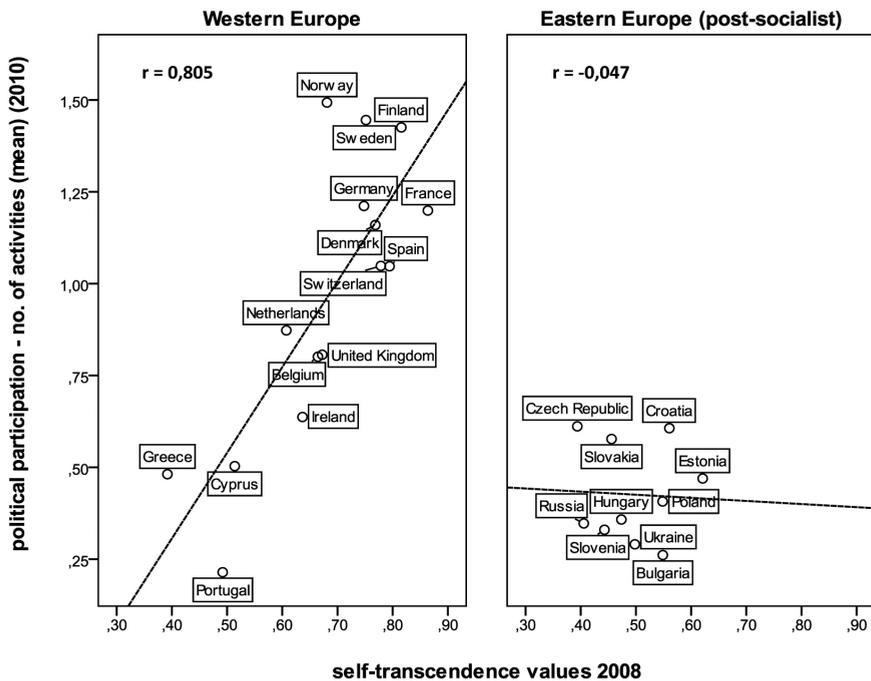
The fourth *predictor* of political participation in the model was the level of *human development (socio-economic development)*, which was measured using the Human Development Index, which included three dimensions of development: living standards (GDP per capita); education (mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling); and health (life expectancy at birth) (see Human Development Reports).

I made the assumption that values, interpersonal trust (social capital), institutional trust (system legitimacy), and human development have a causal effect on the level of political participation. Data for the dependent variable (political participation) was taken from the ESS 2010 data, whilst data for the causes (predictors) was taken from previous years (trust and values from the ESS 2008, and the Human Development Index for 2009).

At the bivariate level, all observed predictors exhibit a high correlation with the level of political participation – from 0.776 (the Human Development Index for 2009) to 0.828 (self-transcendence values). These results support our expectations regarding the importance of self-transcendence values as a factor determining the extent of political participation at a country level: the higher the priority of self-transcendence values the greater the extent of political participation. The results also suggest that self-transcendence values are a more important factor than the other predictors in our model. Nevertheless, the question is whether we can also confirm the hypothesis that self-transcendence values constitute a less important factor in explaining the differences between countries in post-socialist Europe (new democracies) than between countries in Western Europe (old democracies). Separate analyses for Eastern Europe and for Western Europe confirmed the expectations: the correlation between the level of political participation and the self-transcendence values in the post-socialist countries of Europe is virtually non-existent and even shows a negative trend ($r = -0.047$), whilst, by contrast, the correlation in the group of countries from West European is reasonably high and positive ($r = 0.805$) (see Figure 5). As regards

the other predictors, the differences between East and West are not as significant, although correlations in the West are higher (from 0.688 to 0.740) than in the East (from 0.369 to 0.544). Additionally, the correlation between economic development (measured in GDP per capita) and political participation can be shown to be higher in post-socialist Europe if Slovenia as an outlier is excluded from the analysis (0.769 vs. 0.590).

Figure 5: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-TRANSCENDENCE VALUES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – A COMPARISON BETWEEN WESTERN AND EASTERN EUROPE



(ESS 2008 and ESS 2010)

In the final test of my analytical model a multiple linear regression analysis was applied to all 25 European countries from the ESS 2010 (excluding Israel). When all four abovementioned predictors (human development, self-transcendence values, interpersonal trust, and institutional trust) were include in the model, only human development (HDI 2009) and self-transcendence values (2008) were shown to have a significant influence. The explanatory power of the model is reasonably high (adjusted $R^2 = 0.802$); however, when interpersonal and institutional trust are excluded from the model the explanatory power of the model is not significantly reduced ($R^2 = 0.794$) (see Table 2). The combination of interpersonal or institutional trust

with human development (and without self-transcendence values) reduces the model's explanatory potential ($R^2 < 0.700$).

We can also see that self-transcendence values become the most important factor of political participation at the country level. The results suggest that these values represent an even more important predictor of political participation than the level of human development. When a separate analysis for the post-socialist countries and for West European countries was applied, the results were in line with the above findings of the bivariate analysis. Self-transcendence values had no influence on political participation in post-socialist group, while in Western Europe they appeared to exert a significantly stronger influence (0.604) compared to human development (0.456).

Table 2: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE VALUES AS PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – LINEAR REGRESSION WITH REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (B) AND STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (BETA)*

	All countries		Eastern Europe (Post-socialist)		Western Europe	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
intercept	-2.790		-0.781		-4.662	
- human development: HDI 2009	3.093	0.441	1.528	0.546	5.118	0.456
- human values: self-transcendence values 2008	1.589	0.567	0.027	0.015	1.750	0.604
N	25		10		15	
Adjusted R ²	0.794		0.095		0.785	

* 25 European countries from the 5th round of the ESS are included (Israel is excluded)
(Data sources: ESS 2010; ESS 2008; Human Development Report)

The results suggest that post-socialist Eastern and Southeast European countries are still below the threshold of economic development that would allow them to prioritise post-materialist values over materialist values. In this area Slovenia occupies an ambivalent position: it is among the most developed post-socialist countries (the highest GDP per capita), but when it comes to political participation (not counting voting at an election) Slovenia is at the bottom of the group of post-socialist countries (see Figure 5). It seems that the low priority of self-transcendence values in Slovenia is not the main reason for the low level of political participation, as can be witnessed in the opposite situation in the Czech Republic, which demonstrates the lowest support for self-transcendence values but the highest level of political participation among the post-socialist countries (see Figure 5).

Conclusions

Let us now consider these results from the perspective of our main research question and the hypothetical model. My general research question concerned the changes in political participation (intensity, forms of participation, and the factors of participation) in European countries over the last decade. The precise focus of my interest was the differences between the old democracies (Western Europe) and the new-democracies (post-socialist East and Southeast European countries). Based on the results presented, we can draw the general conclusion that no significant changes have occurred during the last decade: the new democracies (post-socialist countries) remain far behind the old democracies as regards the intensity (amount) of their citizens' political participation. According to the results of the European Social Survey data analysed, the gap between both groups in 2010 had not changed since the first measurement in 2002.

My next research question concerned the factors of political participation and included several sub-questions about the differences between factors, about the differences between old and young democracies, and about the temporal changes in a factor's significance. Within this framework, special attention was paid to the role of human values – self-transcendence value orientations in particular. Analysing the situation in six European countries (Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Germany, and Sweden), no substantial change in the factors of individual political participation was discovered from the first to the second measurement; namely, in 2002 and in 2010, education was the most important factor determining individual political participation, both in old and new democracies. As far as other factors are concerned, only gender still appears somehow to be a more important factor in post-socialist countries, however, the pattern is not clear.

In addition to the consistent role of education, I also discovered another consistent pattern in the factors of individual political participation. In both the post-socialist countries analysed (Slovenia and the Czech Republic) self-transcendence value orientation did not prove to be a significant predictor of political participation, but did in both countries from the group of old democracies (Germany and Sweden). This result suggests that post-materialist values are less important motivational factors in participation in post-socialist countries. This was confirmed by the analysis at the macro-societal level, where results clearly showed that the importance of self-transcendence values at the country level was the decisive factor (compared to human development, interpersonal trust, and institutional trust) in explaining cross-national differences in political participation. Moreover, these values were an important predictor of the different levels of political participation among West European countries; although they could not explain the differences among post-socialist countries.

The results offer us various indices that indicate problems with the explanation of political participation in post-socialist countries. For instance: the ambivalent position of Slovenia and the Czech Republic; the low level of political participation in general; the poor explanatory power of the observed macro-level factors of political participation in the post-socialist group of countries; the vagueness and inconsistencies in the explanation of the differences among countries in this group. It seems likely that some explanation could be found in the persistent habits formed during the socialist system in which the communist party monopolised politics. Political participation in these systems used to be institutionalised (from above) and on a massive scale, although the citizens enjoyed no real influence in political decision-making. In fact, political participation in these socialist systems mainly (or almost exclusively) served as a legitimating function (Bernik, 1992). In such conditions, the differences between countries and the possible temporal oscillations in the intensity of political participation are probably the result of current events (elections, political affairs, conflicts between social partners etc.) in each country (see Hafner-Fink et al., 2011). Ultimately, we must not forget that the democratic transition is still ongoing and that we should not expect major structural social changes to have taken place in a short period (some twenty years after the collapse of the socialist systems). It should therefore not be surprising that it has not been possible to detect significant changes in the differences in political participation between old and new European democracies given that my analysis was limited to an observation of the past decade only.

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