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# Moving through the political participation hierarchy: a focus on personal values

Gail Pacheco\* and Barrett Owen

*Department of Economics, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand*

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This study empirically explores the determinants of political participation. Using data from the European Social Survey, we investigate the relationship between political participation and personal values, using the Schwartz (1992) values inventory. A political participation hierarchy is theorized, and activities are categorized into four levels of participation (none, weak, medium and strong), based on the cost of participating and how unconventional the activity is. Empirical analysis points to individuals who are more open to change and more self-transcendent, being more likely to participate. Sub-sample analysis, contrasting East and West Europe, suggests that the role for personal values is more subdued in the East, with respect to moving individuals from not participating to at least voting. Furthermore, the use of a generalized ordered logit model in this study illustrates the complex nature of many of the determinants of political participation. In particular, we find that the influence of the majority of individual characteristics is not monotonic in nature, as you move up through the political participation hierarchy. These findings are important for researchers and policy-makers who may be interested in understanding determinants of and/or enhancing the level of political participation in an economy.

**Keywords:** personal values; political participation

**JEL Classification:** D72; P16

## I. Introduction

Well-functioning democracies must have citizens who participate in the political environment of their country (Alesina and Guiliano, 2009). Such participation is associated with a number of benefits to both individuals and society at large – arising not just from

the outcome of participation, but from the actual process of participating itself. For example, Davidson and Cotter (1989) find that participation plays a role in developing a sense of community, while both Stutzer and Frey (2006) and Pacheco and Lange (2010) present evidence that participation has a significant impact on life satisfaction.

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [gail.pacheco@aut.ac.nz](mailto:gail.pacheco@aut.ac.nz)

Therefore, with the intent of upping the level of political participation, such that the democratic process operates efficiently, and with the added expectation that increased participation raises utility of the individuals involved, understanding the key determinants of participating in political activities is key.

The first gap in the literature this study aims to fill is the theorization and empirical construction of a political participation hierarchy. Previous literature in the field of political science often models the act of participating versus not (for instance, numerous studies investigate the determinants of voting probability, e.g. Blais and St-Vincent (2011), Denny and Doyle (2008) or reasons for leaning left versus right in the political spectrum of ideologies (e.g. Veiga and Veiga, 2004). There is scant attention paid to going beyond the initial threshold of participating in the electoral system, that is, what are the determinants of moving an individual from not participating towards weak participation (perhaps just the act of voting, or wearing a campaign badge)?, and how do these determinants differ (or not) relative to individuals who are more aggressive with the political process and involved in more time-consuming activities aimed at influencing political outcomes? The concept of a participation hierarchy is not a new one; it first appears in the literature by Milbrath (1965), where he argues that based on presumed difficulty or cost of participating, political activities can be grouped into three levels: (i) spectator, (ii) transitional and (iii) gladiatorial activities. In a similar fashion, we create three analogous groups of participatory activities (based on the cost of conventionality of the activity), which we class as weak, medium and strong participation, with no participation being the reference group.

The second contribution of this study is the methodology used to investigate the determinants of movement through the participation hierarchy. More specifically, we employ a generalized ordered logit model, which does not require the restrictive assumption of proportional odds and therefore allows the influence of independent variables to vary from one level of political participation to the next. Previous empirical investigations may have oversimplified the influence of certain independent variables, with respect to their role in determining political participation.

For instance, Siaroff and Merer (2002) examine cross-national determinants of voter turnout in Europe and find amongst other variables that the level of unionization is a significant driver (at the 10% level) of political participation. While such results are helpful in understanding factors at play in influencing voting numbers, it does not tell the full story – is unionization (or in the case of individual level data, being a union member) significant only with regard to moving individuals from not participating to at least voting? and does it lose importance, gain in importance, or otherwise, with respect to shifting individuals from voting to more intensive forms of engaging with the political process, for example working for a political party?. As recent research by de Rooij (2012) has pointed out, little is known about what factors influence the choice of one mode of political participation versus another. De Rooij looks at one angle of this story and analyses the determinants of unconventional versus conventional participation. This study therefore extends that line of enquiry, by going a step further and categorizing different levels of participation (in a hierarchical structure), based partly on how conventional the activity is, and employing an econometric approach that allows for different slope levels for each independent variable as you move from one level of political participation to the next.

The third and final contribution of this study is the focus on personal values, a psychological predisposition defined as follows: *learned beliefs that serve as guiding principles about how individuals ought to behave* (Parks and Guay, 2009, p. 676). These values operate as an individual's guidelines for how they wish to act and affect the behavioural choices that one makes. Serving as benchmarks against which we judge behaviour, events and people (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010), personal values are expressed in all domains of life, underlying all of an individual's attitudes and opinions (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2006). Intuitively, they are also closely linked to motivation (Parks and Guay, 2009), in terms of both what goals we are attentive to (and thus choose to pursue) and how we go about pursuing them (Mitchell, 1997). It follows that personal values will influence both whether someone engages with political participation (in any form) and

which forms of participation they elect to engage in. However, while personal values are acknowledged in the literature as underlying political attitudes and ideologies, organizing and giving coherence to an individual's core political values (e.g. Caprara *et al.*, 2006; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010), the existing literature around the role of personal values in relation to political participation remains relatively unexplored. Rather, political scientists have traditionally focussed empirical efforts on the role of attitudes and values that relate directly to concepts such as egalitarianism, civil liberties, patriotism, social order and the role of government, collectively referred to as 'core political values'<sup>1</sup> (e.g. McCann, 1997).

Given the apparent gap in the literature with respect to focussing on personal values and the limited evidence on investigating movement through a political participation hierarchy, this study investigates the determinants of political participation using the 2010 wave of the European Social Survey. The remainder of this article is structured as follows: **Section II** reviews the relevant literature, conceptualizes the participation hierarchy and details the Schwartz (1992) values inventory; **Section III** details the data and outline the generalized ordered logit model; **Section IV** reports the key findings; and **Section V** provides concluding remarks, with possible further directions for this research.

## II. Literature Review

### *Defining political participation*

A common definition for political participation is that penned by Verba and Nie (1972, p. 2): *acts that aim at influencing the government, either by affecting the choice of government personnel or by affecting the choices made by government personnel*. In modern society, political participation is recognized as coming in many shapes and forms, such as protesting or boycotting, political discussions and community involvement, in addition to more traditional acts, such as voting (e.g. Fearon, 1998; Teorell, 2006). The broad nature of

political participation can cause an issue for empirical efforts aimed at understanding its varying drivers, as we risk losing the value and explanatory power of this variable if defined too broadly (Conge *et al.*, 1988). Consequently, rather than conduct separate analysis for each type of activity, in an un-parsimonious fashion, we make use of information regarding how *conventional* and *costly* an activity is, to place it in a continuum of weak to strong political participation.

Conventionality is a popular way of categorizing types of participation (e.g. Milbrath, 1981; de Rooij, 2012). This dimension essentially contrasts more traditional and institutional types of participation – such as voting, community activities and involvement, electoral activities and contacting representatives, with activities that may be viewed as more directed or extreme in nature. The latter involves engagement that exceeds and/or goes against social and cultural norms (Krampen, 1991), including legal activities, such as protests and boycotts, as well as illegal ones, such as damage to property, violence and illegal strikes. Given that norms need to be considered within a context, the following analysis will control for country-specific differences via clustering and will also conduct sub-sample analysis of East versus West. Unlike their democratic counterparts, for much of the twentieth-century, Eastern Europe was subjected to totalitarian communist regimes, which removed power from the people – generating cultures of conformity, as opposed to the autonomy, and egalitarianism enjoyed in the West. The implications of these cultural differences include (i) low inter-personal trust and lower egalitarian values (the latter being expected determinants of political participation), (ii) citizen passivity (related to the paternalistic nature of communist regimes), (iii) citizens with limited experience with democratic politics and (iv) ongoing corruption. We therefore conduct this regional sub-sample analysis to investigate whether cultural differences translate into varying drivers across the hierarchy of political engagement.

The second key dimension of political participation is that of cost. This concept is commonly

<sup>1</sup> McCann (1997) defines core political values as normative principles and beliefs held about government, citizenship and society.

discussed in the literature (for example see Brady *et al.* (1995); Ruedin (2007)). There are several factors that influence cost; the more knowledge, time, money and civic skills (such as communication and organizational ability) an individual has, the less costly it is for them to undertake political activities, increasing their likelihood of participation. As de Rooij (2012) explains, resource-poor individuals will find it more difficult to participate in any activity and, in particular, high cost (in terms of time, money and effort) activities such as working for a political campaign or participating in a strike.

### *Conceptualizing the political participation hierarchy*

We propose that an individual's level of political participation can be conceptualized based on the cost of participating and how unconventional the activity is, resulting in a hierarchal framework with four levels of participation: none, weak, medium and strong. This approach allows us to explore the differences between those who are prone to abstain from the political process altogether from those who elect to participate, as well as examine what motivates people to go from engaging in the conventional electoral system via voting (a relatively easy and habitual form of participation to undertake) and other relatively un-costly activities, to undertaking more unconventional, extreme and costly forms of participation.

Milbrath (1965) appears to be the first to theorize a hierarchical structure to political involvement, based on the presumed difficulty or cost involved. This resulted in three groupings: spectator activities (the most common activities such as voting and wearing a button), transitional activities (including donating money to a party and attending a rally) and gladiatorial activities (such as active party membership and holding office). Within this framework, individuals are influenced to move within the hierarchy by external stimuli, interpersonal communication and individual characteristics such as sociability and socio-economic status. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this pyramid of participation has not to date been used in an empirical setting.<sup>2</sup> The framework presented in this article will therefore reflect the

pyramid structure for participation put forth by Milbrath (1965), drawing upon the dimensions discussed earlier – conventionality and cost.

We construct a political participation variable which is ordered and categorical in nature (denoted *pp*) where 1 = no participation, 2 = weak participation (which includes people who have engaged in the conventional and relatively low-cost acts of voting and/or wearing a campaign badge), 3 = medium participation (encompassing individuals who have boycotted and/or signed a petition) and 4 = strong participation (taking part in a lawful public demonstration and working in a political party or action group).

The choice of which activities belong in which group is driven by past evidence of what is deemed costly, and unconventional, that is, requiring the individual to go beyond previously held cultural norms (de Rooij, 2012). Although, this is not to say that there is consensus regarding what is akin to the cultural norm and what is beyond it. For instance, Inglehart and Catterberg (2002) find evidence to suggest that traditionally unconventional acts are increasingly becoming the norm as societies move into an era of post-materialism and self-expression (particularly in the case of petition signing). In contrast, de Rooij (2012) finds that in Western Europe, signing a petition still remains more closely aligned with unconventional acts. Consequently, while we initially place signing a petition in the medium category, we later test the robustness of our results, by constructing an alternative participation hierarchy where we move the act of signing a petition to the weak category. We find this makes no difference to our findings.

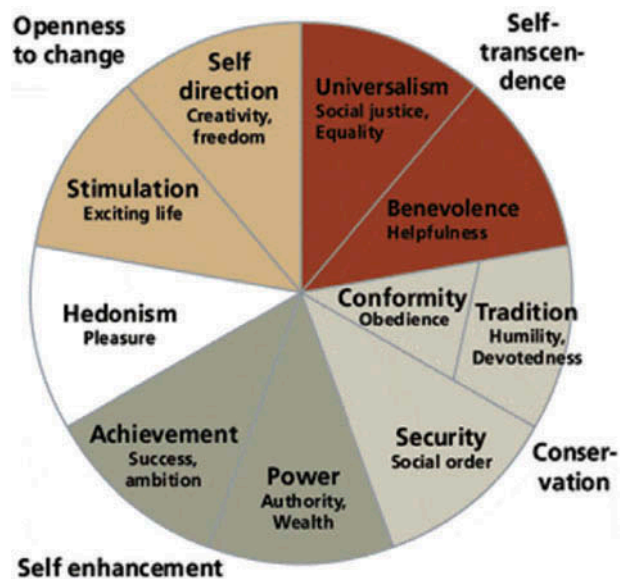
### *Role of personal values*

Personal values can be defined as: *learned beliefs that serve as guiding principles about how individuals ought to behave* (Parks and Guay, 2009, p. 676). They serve as benchmarks against which we make judgements and are acknowledged in the literature as underlying political attitudes/ideologies, organizing and giving coherence to an individual's core political values (e.g. Caprara *et al.*, 2006; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010). Despite this, the existing literature around the role of personal values in relation to the political participation remains relatively unexplored, perhaps due to the potentially abstract

<sup>2</sup> Also arguing a multidimensional approach, Verba *et al.* (1987) conceptualizes and empirically tests, using factor analysis, participation as different ladders representing different 'modes' of activity.

and broad nature of basic personal values, and the consequent difficulty of defining dimensions within which to categorize the comprehensive range of values. For instance, early work by Rokeach (1973) posits that two overarching values, equality and freedom, form orthogonal dimensions for opposing political ideologies – equality representing universalism values, and freedom that of self-direction values. However, empirical evidence provides no support as to the existence of a freedom dimension, with freedom consistently failing to provide independent prediction power for political orientation beside that provided by equality (see Helkama *et al.* (1992) for a summary of relevant studies).

Also adopting a single-dimension approach, Inglehart (1990) categorizes values in terms of whether they reflect materialism or post-materialism. Where materialists are preoccupied with satisfying immediate physiological needs, post-materialists are more secure in this regard, enabling them to invest their energy into more remote and external concerns such as individual freedom, equality and of course citizen involvement. Placing more value on self-expression, post-materialists are more likely to engage in boycotts, petitions or political protests than are materialists, the latter being more likely to participate solely through conventional electoral means (Inglehart and Catterberg, 2002).



**Fig. 1. Schwartz 10 personal values continuum with four higher-order values**

Source: Schwartz *et al.* (2010, p. 425).

To date, the most commonly used model of personal values in the psychology literature is Schwartz's (1992) values inventory. As shown in Fig. 1, the Schwartz (1992) model encompasses 10 broad basic personal values (these are further defined, with reference to the European Social Survey, in Table 1) presumed to cover the full range of human motivations (Purko *et al.*, 2011). The 10 personal values are further categorized into four 'higher-order' values with two opposing dimensions: openness to change versus conservation, and self-transcendence versus self-enhancement (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010). Where openness to change values (stimulation, self-direction) favours change and promotes pursuit of new ideas/experiences, conservation values (tradition, security, conformity) emphasize a desire to maintain the status quo and avoid threat. Likewise, where self-transcendence values (universalism, benevolence) promote concern for the welfare of others, self-enhancement values (achievement, power) encourage the pursuit of self-interest.

Schwartz's model is acknowledged as being remarkably comprehensive, overlooking no major distinct values across societies (de Clercq *et al.*, 2008) and offering a multi-dimensional approach to categorizing values. Another significant appeal is that it has been shown to be relevant across a variety of cultures, time horizons and political contexts (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010; Bilisky *et al.*, 2011). Within the political science domain, this model is usually utilized in examining the role of personal values on political orientation, as opposed to political participation (e.g. Caprara *et al.*, 2006). One exception to this is the recent study by Caprara *et al.* (2012) which looks at determinants of voting propensity. In line with the theoretical view found in psychology literature that 'people are more inclined to act when they perceive that the action is relevant for affirming, promoting, and protecting their important values' (p. 276), the authors find that Italians in the 2001 and 2008 national elections were more likely to vote if they perceived congruence between their personal values and those of a political party on offer. For example, nonvoters were found to attribute less importance to universalism than centre-left voters, as well as less importance to security and power values than centre-right voters.

In this study, we are interested in identifying what personal values are associated with an individual engaging with political participation (in any form), as well as determining whether particular values

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics**

Variables	Definition	Mean (SD)
Political participation	Ordinal, categorical variable: 1 if no participation, 2 if weak participation, 3 if medium participation and 4 if strong participation	2.284 (0.842)
<b>SES</b>		
Male	Dummy variable: 1 if male, 0 = if female	0.460 (0.498)
Age	Age in years	50.240 (17.213)
Medium education	Dummy variable: 1 if upper secondary or post-secondary (nontertiary) education, 0 = otherwise	0.524 (0.499)
High education	Dummy variable: 1 if tertiary education, 0 = otherwise	0.224 (0.417)
Immigrant	Dummy variable: 1 if person born in another country other than the one currently living in, 0 = otherwise	0.073 (0.260)
Medium household income	Dummy variable: 1 if mid-range household net income from all sources, 0 = otherwise	0.423 (0.494)
High household income	Dummy variable: 1 if high-range household net income from all sources, 0 = otherwise	0.246 (0.431)
Number in household	Number of people regularly living in household	2.615 (1.363)
Good health	Dummy variable: 1 if person subjectively ranked their health as good or very good, 0 otherwise	0.618 (0.486)
Employed	Dummy variable: 1 if main activity is in paid work, 0 = otherwise	0.508 (0.500)
Minority	Dummy variable: 1 if person belongs to a ethnic minority, 0 = otherwise	0.055 (0.228)
<b>Mobilization/Recruitment</b>		
Social meetings	Ordinal, categorical variable: How often socially meets with friends, relatives or colleagues. 1 = never, 2 = less than once a month, 3 = once a month, 4 = several times a month, 5 = once a week, 6 = several times a week, 7 = every day	4.737 (1.587)
Union member	Dummy variable: 1 = has been or is a member of a trade union or similar organization, 0 = otherwise	0.458 (0.498)
Religious activity	Dummy variable: 1 = attends religious services once a month or more, 0 = otherwise	0.244 (0.430)
Urban	Dummy variable: 1 if person stated that they live in a big city, suburbs or outside of big city, or town or small city, 0 if person stated that they live in country village or farm or home in countryside, 0 = otherwise	0.641 (0.480)
Marital status	Dummy variable: 1 if married or in a civil union, 0 = otherwise	0.547 (0.498)
<b>Psychological predispositions</b>		
Social trust	How much can you trust other people? Categorical variable: 0 = can never be too careful, 10 = most people can be trusted	4.956 (2.441)
Trust in parliament	How much can you trust parliament? Categorical variable: 0 = no trust at all, 10 = can completely trust parliament	4.003 (2.588)
Life satisfaction	All things considered how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays? Ordinal, categorical variable: 0 = completely unsatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied	6.679 (2.336)
Political interest	Dummy variable: 1 if person is very interested or quite interested in politics, 0 = otherwise	0.481 (0.500)

(continued)

Table 1. Continued

Variables	Definition	Mean (SD)
<b>Personal values</b>		
All personal values are ordinal categorical variables, ranked on a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 = if the individual believes the statement is 'Not at all like me', and 6 = if the individual believes the statement is 'Very much like me'		
Openness to change		
ST1	Stimulation	3.966 (1.368)
ST2	Looks for adventures and likes to take risks.	3.026 (1.433)
SD1	Self-direction	4.394 (1.272)
SD2	Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important. It is important to make own decisions ... and not depend on others.	4.794 (1.101)
Conservation		
TR1	Tradition	4.312 (1.259)
TR2	It is important to be humble and modest. It is important to follow the customs handed down by his/her religion or family.	4.413 (1.331)
CO1	Conformity	3.928 (1.343)
CO2	People should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching. It is important to always behave properly ... avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	4.483 (1.185)
SEC1	Security	4.734 (1.210)
SEC2	Important to live in secure surroundings ... avoid anything that might endanger his/her safety. Important that government ensures safety against all threats.	4.753 (1.195)
Self-enhancement		
PO1	Power	2.962 (1.328)
PO2	Important to be rich ... have a lot of money and expensive things. Important to get respect from others.	3.938 (1.359)
AC1	Achievement	3.892 (1.384)
AC2	Being successful is important ... hopes people will recognize his/her achievements. Having a good time is important ... likes to spoil himself/herself.	3.856 (1.349)
HE1	Hedonism	4.000 (1.353)
HE2	Important to do things that give pleasure.	3.912 (1.374)
Self-transcendence		
UN1	Universalism	4.990 (1.016)
UN2	Everyone should have equal opportunities in life. Important to listen to people who are different ... even when disagrees with them.	4.644 (1.053)
UN3	Looking after the environment is important.	4.911 (1.013)
BE1	Benevolence	4.874 (0.963)
BE2	Important to help people around him/her. Important to be loyal to his/her friends.	5.112 (0.873)

Notes: Reference categories: Low education, Low household income, Not employed or retired.  $N = 29\,439$ . SES, Socio-demographic.



stand out as being associated with engagement at different levels of participation. If we believe that acts of political participation are expressive in nature (e.g. Carter and Guerette, 1992), it is reasonable to expect that individuals who are open to change – valuing self-direction and stimulation over tradition, conformity and security – are more likely to engage in higher levels of participation than their conservative counterparts. Such individuals may place less stock in the conventional electoral process, instead trying more unconventional types of participation, such as protesting, to ensure their voice is heard. In contrast, concerning themselves with the conservation of existing societal structures, individuals who have greater orientation towards conservative values are expected to be less likely to participate in unconventional forms of participation, than those who are open to change. Caprara *et al.*'s (2012) finding that Italian nonvoters demonstrate orientation towards the openness to change dimension provides some empirical support for this hypothesis.

In terms of the second dimension of personal values, self-enhancement versus self-transcendent, an individual who places more emphasis on self-enhancement is likely to be less motivated to participate in the political process due to less concern with the fate of wider society (to which political platforms are orientated) than matters relating to their own pleasurable experiences (Schwartz, 2006; Caprara *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, an individual who values self-enhancement is also likely to be further deterred by the opportunity costs associated with increasing levels of participation. In contrast, individuals who place more importance on the values of universalism and benevolence – that is, those who lean toward self-transcendence – are more likely to engage in political participation as they are more concerned with the welfare of others and the state of wider society.

### III. Statistical Analysis

#### Data

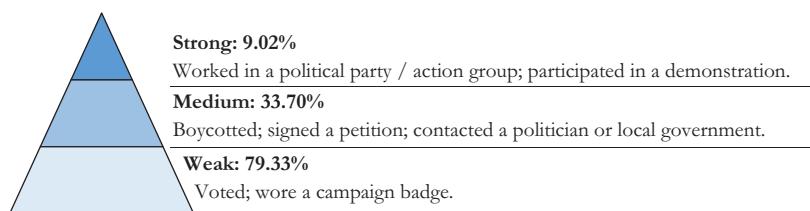
The data utilized in this study are the fifth wave of the European Social Survey conducted in 2010/2011 (ESS, 2012). This cross-sectional survey

encompassed 50 781 individuals across Europe on a range of demographic, psychological, social, economic and political issues. Individuals below voting age were removed from the data-set, and after then accounting for any missing information in key independent variables, the final sample consisted of 29 439 individuals, from the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine (from Eastern Europe); and Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (from Western Europe).

The ESS presents a rich source of information, with which to construct the dependent variable, for the purposes of this study. Based on the concepts outlined in Section II, Fig. 2 illustrates the hierarchy for political participation. Approximately 16% of the samples do not engage in any political activity. Additionally, as shown by the proportion of the sample that engage in weak, medium and strong activities, the sum is greater than 1 (specifically 1.221), illustrating that there is overlap across different levels of participation. This is expected, by definition, categories are not required to be mutually exclusive. For instance, it would not be surprising if those who participate in strong activities are also involved in weak and medium ones. It would be expected that as acts become more costly and more unconventional, participation in them would become rarer. Indeed, it can be seen that while close to 79.33% of the sample participate in weak activities, only 33.7% are involved in medium activities, while less than 10% are involved in strong activities.

The dependent variable constructed from this hierarchy is denoted *pp* and, as shown in Table 1, is categorical in nature, with 1 indicating no participation ... 4 equating to strong participation. The remainder of Table 1 illustrates the covariates to be employed in this study. These can be broadly grouped under the categories of socio-demographic (SES) characteristics, indicators of recruitment and mobilization, psychological predisposition and the core variables of personal values. SES variables often highlight the resources<sup>3</sup> that one has or lacks when it comes to participation. Therefore, those who are lower on the SES scale would be expected to

<sup>3</sup> Brady *et al.* (1995) develop a resource model of political participation. The focus is on specific resources, beyond SES, such as money, time and civic skills.



**Fig. 2. Political participation hierarchy**

*Source:* Data sourced from the 2010 European Social Survey. Author's compilation.

*Note:* Nonparticipation (i.e. individuals who do not fall into any of the hierarchy categories) equates to 16.27% of the sample.

participate less (Leighley and Vedlitz, 1999; Uslaner, 2003). Standard SES variables include age, gender, education, household income. Based on research by Blakely *et al.* (2001), an indicator for health of the individual is also included, and de Rooij (2012) motivates the inclusion of a dummy variable for immigrant status.

While SES variables could impact willingness to participate, individuals may still not participate unless they are asked to. Uslaner (2003) points out that simply asking is not enough and that many people participate only when organized and mobilized to do so. We therefore include five proxy variables intended to capture drivers of recruitment and mobilization: an indicator for how often a person meets socially ('social meet'); an indicator of religious activity (several studies have found mobilization through religion to be imperative – see Uslaner (2003) and Verba *et al.* (1995)); a dummy variable for living in an urban area (expected to capture greater access to various associations that can mobilize individuals to participate – see Teorell *et al.* (2007)); marital status; and union membership (Norris, 2002).

There is recent evidence to suggest that the incentives and benefits one can receive from participating are not only limited to the outcomes achieved, but also through utility gained via the processes involved (Stutzer and Frey, 2006). For example, the political process may provide some individuals an opportunity to express and reaffirm their identity (Calvert, 2002). We therefore contend that while many incentives do exist for individuals to participate, whether individuals respond to these incentives depends on their psychological predispositions. These attitudinal predictors include life satisfaction (Flavin & Kaene, 2012),

political interest (Hadjar and Beck, 2010) and trust (both the level of trust that one has for others around them (*social trust*) and trust of their government and/or political system (*trust in parliament*)). Given the possible high level of correlation between the two trust indicators, the latter of these variables (*trust in parliament*) was orthogonalized with respect to the former (*social trust*), to reduce the impact of multicollinearity.

#### *Personal values data*

As Table 1 illustrates, there are 21 variables that encompass the 10 basic values structure proposed by Schwartz. Each variable is ordinal and categorical in nature, ranging from 1 to 6, where 1 indicates that the individual believes that the statement is 'Not at all like me', and 6 equates with 'Very much like me'. Given the high correlation between the variables (as alerted to by Piurko *et al.* (2011)), principal component analysis is used to capture two orthogonal dimensions: openness to change versus conservatism (opposing self-direction and stimulation values to security, conformity and tradition) and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence (opposing power and achievement values to universalism and benevolence values).<sup>4</sup> The first two components under each domain had eigenvalues above 1 and are therefore employed as key independent variables in the forthcoming analysis. Specifically, the first two components under the realm of openness to change versus conservation (*open1* and *open2*) explained 47% of the variation in this index, and under the domain of self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, the first two components (*self1* and *self2*) explained 52% of the variation.

<sup>4</sup>The Hedonism indicators were excluded, due to the large crossover this category has with both openness to change and self-enhancement.

### Methodology

Given the ordered nature of the categories for political participation (none, weak, medium and strong), a possible econometric tool to employ is an ordered logit model. However, one of the limitations of this model is the assumption of fixed threshold values. For instance, we would need to assume that the influence of variables such as political trust is similar in direction and magnitude whether considering the movement from none to weak political participation, or for that matter medium to strong participation. On a number of counts, the literature review gives a strong theoretical warning that the parallel-lines assumption is conceptually difficult to justify. For example, while lack of political trust is expected to deter electoral turnout and hence have a negative impact on weak levels of political participation; such mistrust may have the reverse impact at higher levels of participation. For instance, Norris (1999) points to the potential for alienation with a political regime to foster unconventional activism. Consequently, a formal test of parallel regression lines was run, and the chi-square test indicated the need to reject the null hypothesis of proportionality. Based on these findings, a generalized ordered logit model (GOLOGIT) is implemented to account for threshold random heterogeneity. This allows for some of the coefficients to differ for the various outcomes of the dependent variable, while some are able to remain the same. The general specification is:

$$Pr(Y_i > j) = \frac{\exp(\alpha_j X_{1i}\beta_1 + X_{2i}\beta_2 + X_{3i}\beta_3)}{1 + \{\exp(\alpha_j + X_{1i}\beta_1 + X_{2i}\beta_2 + X_{3i}\beta_3)\}},$$

$$j = 1, 2, \dots, M - 1$$

where  $Y$  (political participation) can take on the values of 1, through to  $M$ , which in this case it is four (none, weak, medium and strong participation).

## IV. Results

A GOLOGIT model is employed with the data outlined in Section III, where the dependent variable has four levels of political participation, and the vector of independent variables includes all controls defined in Table 1 (SES and mobilization/recruitment characteristics, as well as psychological predispositions) as well as the two principal components produced for

each of the personal value dimensions (*open1*, *open2*; and *self1*, *self2*). When fitting a GOLOGIT, a series of Wald tests are first conducted with each variable to see whether the coefficients differ across thresholds. When the test is insignificant<sup>5</sup> for one or more variables, the variable with the least significant value is constrained to have a fixed effect across thresholds, and the model is then refitted with this constraint. This process is continued until there are no more variables that meet the parallel-lines assumption, at which point a global Wald test is conducted to compare the final estimated model with the original unconstrained version to ensure that the final model does not violate the parallel-lines assumption. As the results in Table 2 show, 10 variables are constrained to meet the parallel-lines assumption – medium education, high education, medium income, high income, employed, minority, social meet, union member, social trust and *self1*.

To interpret coefficients from Table 2, the first panel contrasts no participation with weak, medium and strong levels of participation; the second panel contrasts no and weak participation with the medium and strong levels, while the third panel contrasts no, weak and medium participation with strong. In general, the positive coefficients indicate that as the relevant independent variable increases, the more likely that the respondent will be in a higher category of  $Y$  than the current one; and negative coefficients indicate the greater the likelihood of the respondent being in the current or lower category. Additionally, to literally interpret the impact of the explanatory variables, odds ratios were calculated and are provided in Table 3.

As evidenced in Tables 2 and 3, in many cases (for 14 out of 24 variables), the parallel regression lines assumption did not hold. In particular, there are interesting trends evident when comparing the first panel with the second and third panel. This is because the first panel is capturing determinants of moving from no participation into some forms of participation, whereas the latter panels capture something quite different – the determinants of moving through the participation hierarchy. For example, in terms of the SES characteristics, the gender variable illustrates the possible different influences depending on where on the political participation ladder an individual is located. The negative coefficient in Table 2 (significant at the 1% level) in the first panel indicates that

<sup>5</sup> Parallel-lines assumption tested using the 0.05% level of significance.

**Table 2. Generalized ordered logit model**

Variables	Participation levels (1 = none, 2 = weak, 3 = medium, 4 = strong)		
	1 versus 2, 3 and 4	1 and 2 versus 3 and 4	1, 2 and 3 versus 4
<b>SES</b>			
Male	-0.136*** (0.039)	0.076** (0.037)	0.310*** (0.060)
Age	0.021*** (0.003)	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.006* (0.003)
Medium education	0.266*** (0.079)	0.266*** (0.079)	0.266*** (0.079)
High education	0.629*** (0.073)	0.629*** (0.073)	0.629*** (0.073)
Medium income	0.113** (0.051)	0.113** (0.051)	0.113** (0.051)
High income	0.113 (0.089)	0.113 (0.089)	0.113 (0.089)
Number living in household	0.032 (0.024)	-0.004 (0.022)	0.029 (0.026)
Good health	0.126** (0.064)	-0.023 (0.068)	-0.064 (0.081)
Employed	0.144*** (0.036)	0.144*** (0.036)	0.144*** (0.036)
Minority	-0.0004 (0.067)	-0.0004 (0.067)	-0.0004 (0.067)
Immigrant	-0.898*** (0.155)	-0.264** (0.105)	-0.212** (0.106)
<b>Mobilization/recruitment</b>			
Social meet	0.112*** (0.017)	0.112*** (0.017)	0.112*** (0.017)
Union member	0.243*** (0.048)	0.243*** (0.048)	0.243*** (0.048)
Religious activity	0.362*** (0.076)	0.069 (0.059)	0.307*** (0.085)
Urban	-0.191*** (0.067)	-0.026 (0.062)	0.115 (0.072)
Marital status	0.362*** (0.057)	0.084*** (0.030)	-0.025 (0.054)
<b>Psychological predispositions</b>			
Social trust	0.110*** (0.029)	0.110*** (0.029)	0.110*** (0.029)
Political trust	0.234*** (0.047)	0.074*** (0.028)	-0.011 (0.048)
Life satisfaction	0.048*** (0.015)	0.014 (0.019)	-0.049** (0.022)
Political interest	0.980*** (0.061)	0.692*** (0.051)	0.812*** (0.080)
<b>Personal values</b>			
<i>Open1</i>	0.105*** (0.025)	0.213*** (0.018)	0.135*** (0.035)
<i>Open2</i>	0.018 (0.018)	0.133*** (0.016)	0.151*** (0.025)
<i>Self1</i>	0.097*** (0.015)	0.097*** (0.015)	0.097*** (0.015)
<i>Self2</i>	0.096*** (0.027)	0.240*** (0.034)	0.145*** (0.048)
<i>Constant</i>	-1.158*** (0.212)	-1.923*** (0.254)	-3.721*** (0.363)
<i>N</i>		29 439	
Probability > chi <sup>2</sup>		0.000	
Log likelihood		-32259.082	

Notes: Significance at: \*10%, \*\*5% and \*\*\*1% levels; robust SEs in parentheses, adjusted for country clusters. SES, Socio-demographic.

males are more likely to stay in the no participation category, relative to females. Specifically, the odds ratio of 0.873 in Table 3 indicates that males are 14.55% (1/0.873) less likely to move out of the no participation category, relative to females. However, the positive coefficients (significant at least at the 5% level) in the second and third panel indicate that once the individual is participating in the political process, males are more likely to move up the steps from weak to medium, and to strong, relative to females.

The findings for age indicate that the older someone is, the more likely they are to move from nonparticipation to participation. When it comes to the higher-order participation categories, those who are younger

actually have a greater likelihood of moving up to participate in stronger activities. The argument that Norris (2002) puts forth for this is a generational effect between participating in conventional compared to unconventional activities. Specifically, those who are younger are not likely to perceive more extreme and direct means of participation as 'unconventional' and may even prefer these methods.

Consistent with previous findings by Brady *et al.* (1995) and others, education appears to have a strong impact in terms of increasing the likelihood of participating and moving to higher levels of participation. For instance, relative to the control group of low education, individuals with a medium level of

**Table 3. Odds ratios – full sample**

Variables	Participation levels (1 = none, 2 = weak, 3 = medium, 4 = strong)		
	1 versus 2, 3 and 4	1 versus 2, 3 and 4	1 versus 2, 3 and 4
<b>SES</b>			
Male	0.873***	1.079**	1.364***
Age	1.021***	0.994***	0.994*
Medium education	1.305***	1.305***	1.305***
High education	1.876***	1.876***	1.876***
Medium income	1.119**	1.119**	1.119**
High income	1.119	1.119	1.119
Number living in household	1.032	0.996	1.029
Good health	1.134**	0.977	0.938
Employed	1.155***	1.155***	1.155***
Minority	1.000	1.000	1.000
Immigrant	0.408***	0.768**	0.809**
<b>Mobilization/recruitment</b>			
Social meet	1.119***	1.119***	1.119***
Union member	1.275***	1.275***	1.275***
Religious activity	1.437***	1.072	1.359***
Urban	0.826***	0.974	1.121
Marital status	1.436***	1.087***	0.975
<b>Psychological predispositions</b>			
Social trust	1.116***	1.116***	1.116***
Political trust	1.264***	1.077***	0.989
Life satisfaction	1.050***	1.014	0.952**
Political interest	2.665***	1.998***	2.251***
<b>Personal values</b>			
<i>Open1</i>	1.111***	1.238***	1.144***
<i>Open2</i>	1.018	1.142***	1.164***
<i>Self1</i>	1.101***	1.101***	1.101***
<i>Self2</i>	1.100***	1.271***	1.156***
<i>Constant</i>	0.314***	0.146***	0.024***

Notes: Significance at: \*10%, \*\*5% and \*\*\*1% levels.  $N = 29\ 439$ . SES, Socio-demographic.

education are 30.5% more likely to move up from no participation, and the same magnitude of influence applies with regard to moving up to medium and strong participation (as the parallel-lines assumption holds for this variable). Having high educational attainment (relative to low) results in an individual being 87.6% more likely to move to a higher order of participation. These findings for education are expected and relate largely to the necessary civic skills and other nonphysical resources that people need in order to participate (Brady *et al.*, 1995)

Both medium and high incomes, relative to low household income, appear to have a positive and significant impact on increasing the likelihood of moving up the participation hierarchy. A similar finding is made with respect to the employment status of the respondent. It is interesting to note

that while being a minority has an insignificant impact on political participation (odds ratio of 1.000 across all panels), being an immigrant has a strong and negative influence on the likelihood of participation. In particular, an odds ratio of 0.408 in the first panel implies that an individual is more than twice as likely (relative to nonimmigrants) to remain in the mode of not participating; an odds ratio of 0.768 and 0.809 in the second and third panels indicate that the individual is 30% and 24% less likely to move up from weak and medium participation, respectively. These empirical results corroborate research by de Rooij (2012) and Uslaner (2003), who also indicate that being an immigrant has a detrimental effect on an individual's likelihood to participate. Interestingly, these results indicate that the reduced likelihood

of participating is smaller as you move up the hierarchy into more unconventional forms of participation.

Having good health has shown up as being an important predictor of moving from not participating at all to participating in any activity. However, it appears to have no significant influence when moving through to higher levels of participation. A possible explanation for this is that health is only relevant insofar as someone's health is bad enough to prevent them from participating all together. In terms of the indicators of mobilization and recruitment, the majority of the independent variables within this category (except for urban status) appear to have a positive impact on the likelihood of participating in political activities, which is consistent with the expectations from the literature review discussion on these factors (see Brady *et al.*, 1995; de Rooij, 2012). For example, belonging to a union increases the likelihood of moving upwards from no participation by 27.5%, relative to nonunion members. An interesting and unexpected finding is the impact of the urban status variable. The odds ratio in the first panel of 0.826 is significant at the 1% level and implies that individuals in urban areas are 21% less likely to move upwards from no participation, relative to individuals in rural areas. Better participation in rural areas may stem from stronger community ties and the consequent perceived greater impact of participation (Uhlener and Harper, 2003). However, the impact becomes insignificant in the second and third panels of Tables 2 and 3. This result indicates the importance of not assuming parallel regression lines across all levels of political participation, as it appears that being in an urban area actually has a negative influence on the likelihood an individual will engage in the political process and is irrelevant in determining movement up the hierarchy. The nonmonotonic nature of the impact of many of the mobilization variables is also apparent with religious activity and marital status. For instance, increasing levels of religious activity appear to be the key at the start and end of the participation spectrum, that is, pushing individuals into some forms of participation and pushing individuals into the strongest forms of participation, and are irrelevant in the middle of the participation ladder.

In terms of psychological predispositions, social trust has a positive and significant impact on participation in political activities. The impact is also constant across the participation hierarchy (odds ratio of 1.116, significant at the 1% level). This finding is in line with the literature (Inglehart, 1990; Kaase, 1999), as participation entails at least some forms of interaction with other people, thereby requiring a degree of trust. Political trust on the other hand has a significant and positive impact in the first panel, but insignificant in the third panel. This is an expected outcome, as a higher level of trust in parliament means that individuals will trust that their vote will be worthwhile and so will be more likely to engage in weak, rather than strong activities. There is empirical evidence to support that those with lower political trust have been found to participate at via direct, unconventional means (Norris, 1999). Political interest appears to have the greatest economic significance out of all of the variables, with odds ratios ranging from 1.998 to 2.665. Intuitively, this makes sense since it greatly increases the incentive for one to both participate and have a greater understanding of both the political process and how to participate (Hadjar and Beck, 2010). However, caution needs to be taken when interpreting the influence of political interest, as well as life satisfaction, due to the potential endogenous nature of these variables, in terms of their relationship with political participation.

#### *Significance of personal values*

The first two variables under the personal values domain (*open1* and *open2*) reflect openness to change versus conservatism. The significant odds ratios (all greater in value than one) show that individuals more open to change are more likely to move up the political participation hierarchy. For example, the odds ratio of 1.238 for *open1* illustrates that individuals who are more open to change (i.e. higher value responses to questions regarding self-direction and stimulation) are 23.7% more likely than conservative individuals (i.e. higher value responses to security, conformity and tradition) to move upwards from none and weak political participation. It should also be noted that *open2* indicates a rising

influence of these personal values when moving up through the levels of political participation. The argument behind this is that those who are more open to change and less conservative are expected to have a similar inclination to participating in weak activities (hence the low odds ratio of 1.018 for *open2* in the first panel), but the likelihood of participating in stronger and more unconventional methods of participation will be much greater for these individuals (hence the rising odds ratios of 1.142 and 1.164, respectively).

The next two variables of *self1* and *self2* reflect the self-transcendence versus self-enhancement domain, where a higher value of these variables indicates that the individual is close to the self-transcendence end of this continuum. Those who are self-transcendent as opposed to self-enhancing (i.e. higher value responses to questions on power and achievement) are more likely to move up the political participation ladder. Unlike *self1*, where the impact is unvarying across the categories of participation, the influence of *self2* is nonconstant. Self-transcendence as opposed to self-enhancing appears to have the greatest impact when moving from weak participation upwards (27.1% more likely to move higher than weak participation compared to 10% and 15.6% more likely to move from no and medium participation, respectively). This may be a reflection of the limits to values of universalism and benevolence, whereby they increase participation to a particular level of signing petitions, contacting local politicians, etc., but then start to wane, when opportunity costs increase at the strong levels of participation (working in a political party, etc.)

Overall, these findings provide strong empirical evidence that personal values, and in particular these two value dimensions proposed by Schwartz, are powerful determinants of whether someone will participate and whether they will go beyond just participation into higher levels of participation.

#### *Sub-group analysis by region*

We next disaggregate our analysis by region. As explained earlier, Eastern Europe has been subjected to communist regimes in the past, which encourage cultures of conformity, as opposed to autonomy/self-direction. Hence, we expect lower variation in

personal values, and it is this lower variation that could translate into personal values having less of an impact on political participation. Table 4 illustrates that this is the case with respect to moving off the first rung of the political participation ladder. In particular, personal values appear to be irrelevant (bar the 10% significance on *self1*) in determining whether or not individuals move from none to weak participation in Eastern Europe. Such values only begin to play a role when moving from weak to higher levels of political engagement. In contrast, the results for Western Europe mirror the findings for the full sample, with personal values significant at all levels of political participation.

The findings within Table 4 beg the question – if personal values are no longer important in getting people to participate in the electoral process, what is? In results not reported here, for the sake of brevity, we find that the key difference in the first panel of covariates for Eastern Europe, relative to Western Europe, is the odds ratios on educational attainment. Therefore, the driving force for those who vote, rather than simply abstain, is potentially premised on practical reasons – for instance, those with higher education see more practical value in their vote, perhaps securing better economic growth, employment and business opportunities, etc. Another potential explanation is that information is not freely available in this region and that the highly educated have greater access to information required to push them beyond the level of no participation.

## **V. Concluding Remarks**

This study made use of recent European data (via the 2010/2011 European Social Survey) to assess the determinants of an individual participating in the political process. The rich data source presented an array of potential political activities, from voting, to participating in lawful public demonstrations and working in a political party or action group. This allowed categorization of political participation (along the lines of cost and convention) into four possible outcomes: no, weak, medium and strong participation. A generalized ordered logit model was used to capture the nonconstant impacts of determinants across the participation hierarchy. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study to empirically inspect the changing influence of

**Table 4. Odds ratios for sub-group analysis by region**

Personal values	Participation levels (1 = none, 2 = weak, 3 = medium, 4 = strong)		
	1 versus 2, 3 and 4	1 versus 2, 3 and 4	1 versus 2, 3 and 4
East Europe			
<i>Open1</i>	0.987	1.100***	1.164***
<i>Open2</i>	1.007	1.162***	1.104**
<i>Self1</i>	1.041*	1.007	1.085**
<i>Self2</i>	1.007	1.113***	0.989
West Europe			
<i>Open1</i>	1.130***	1.219***	1.114**
<i>Open2</i>	0.998	1.107***	1.157***
<i>Self1</i>	1.124***	1.124***	1.124***
<i>Self2</i>	1.068**	1.241***	1.171***

Notes: Significance at: \*10%, \*\*5% and \*\*\*1% levels.  $N = 11\ 654$  in the East and  $17\ 785$  in the West.

determinants across the participation spectrum in this manner.

The rejection of the null hypothesis of proportionality of regression lines for 14 out of 24 independent variables in this analysis indicates that this is an important step forward in understanding the varying role of determinants when moving up the political participation ladder. Several interesting patterns emerged: (i) the impact of age, good health and marital status had a significant positive impact with regard to pushing individuals from none into some forms of participation and then either lacked significance or had a small significant negative impact with respect to moving up the participation ladder to medium and strong levels of participation, (ii) the impact of religious activity has an interesting U-shaped impact on participation, where there is a strong positive influence of such activity at either end of the participation hierarchy, (iii) males appear less likely to participate in general, but if participating, more likely to move to higher and more unconventional levels of participation, relative to their female counterparts, (iv) living in an urban area appears to decrease the likelihood of participation, contrary to much past evidence on this front, and interestingly is irrelevant with regard to moving up to higher levels of political participation.

In terms of the independent variables of focus (personal values), this study lends further credence to the results of Besley (2006) in that being open to change and self-transcendent increases the likelihood of participation. Extending Besley's findings, we find a rising influence of openness to change personal

values when predicting movements into stronger levels of participation, compared to simply moving from nonparticipation to participation. Importantly, in regional sub-sample analysis, we find personal values to be less relevant in Eastern Europe, in terms of whether or not individuals move upwards from no participation and only begin to play a role when moving from weak to higher levels of political engagement. In contrast, our findings for Western Europe mirrored that for the full sample. Empirical evidence signals that with personal values playing a more subdued role in the East, higher levels of education are predominantly the push factor in engaging individuals in the political process in this region.

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