

Building a Composite Indicator to measure Active Citizenship in Europe

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Paper included in the UN Comparative Issues session (session id: 49)

Abstract

This paper presents the definition and framework for developing composite indicators of active citizenship, the process of building a composite indicator and the results obtained from the indicators in terms of European cross-country comparisons. The framework and indicators used in this report are based on recommendations emerging from the research project on “Active Citizenship for Democracy” coordinated by the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) of the European Commission. The Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (ACCI) covers 19 European countries and is based on a list of 63 basic indicators for which the data has been principally drawn from the European Social Survey of 2002. The results of the ACCI shows a heterogeneous Europe where Nordic countries lead and southern European countries display positive performances in Democratic Values and Representative Democracy but lag behind in Protest and Social Change and Community Life dimensions. Finally, in order better to understand the phenomenon of active citizenship the relationship between the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator and other social cultural and economic indicators were explored.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is two fold: first, to measure and compare active citizenship across Europe through the development of a composite indicator and second, to explore the factors which influence the development of active citizenship. Section one of this article, on the measurement of active citizenship, defines and makes operational this concept including taking into account the broader aspects of participation and the values involved in engagement. It goes on to describe the data selected and the process of building the composite index. The results are given in the form of a ranking for the different countries for the overall composite and the four dimensions. Section two of the paper explores the factors involved in the development of active citizenship including exploring correlations of the active citizenship composite indicators with other indices and in particular focusing on culture and the possible impact of regional cultural differences in both the cause and the explanation for the results. When exploring the notion of culture and active citizenship we discuss to what extent we are capturing this phenomenon and not simply capturing the Nordic model of active citizenship which is currently well represented within current survey data. Finally we will address the complex and inherently sensitive question of whether all cultures are equal when it comes to the development and continuation of democracy.

Measuring Active citizenship

In order to build a measure of active citizenship the first step was to define active citizenship. Building on the foundations of Marshal (1950) in terms of rights and obligations of citizenship and Verba and Nie (1972) in terms of participatory and influential action, in this research paper we used the definition of active citizenship as;

Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy. (Hoskins, 2006¹)

As can be seen within this definition, Active citizenship thus incorporates a wide spread of participatory activities containing political action, participatory democracy and civil society and community support. However, and in our view correctly, action alone is not considered active citizenship, the examples of Nazi Germany or Communist Europe can show mass participation without necessarily democratic or beneficial consequences. Instead participation is incorporated with democratic values, mutual respect and human rights. Thus what we are attempting to measure is value based participation. The difference between this concept and social capital is that the emphasis is placed on the societal outcomes of democracy and social cohesion and not on the benefits to the individual from participation. For further details on the conceptual development of active citizenship we address the reader to Hoskins and Mascherini, 2008.

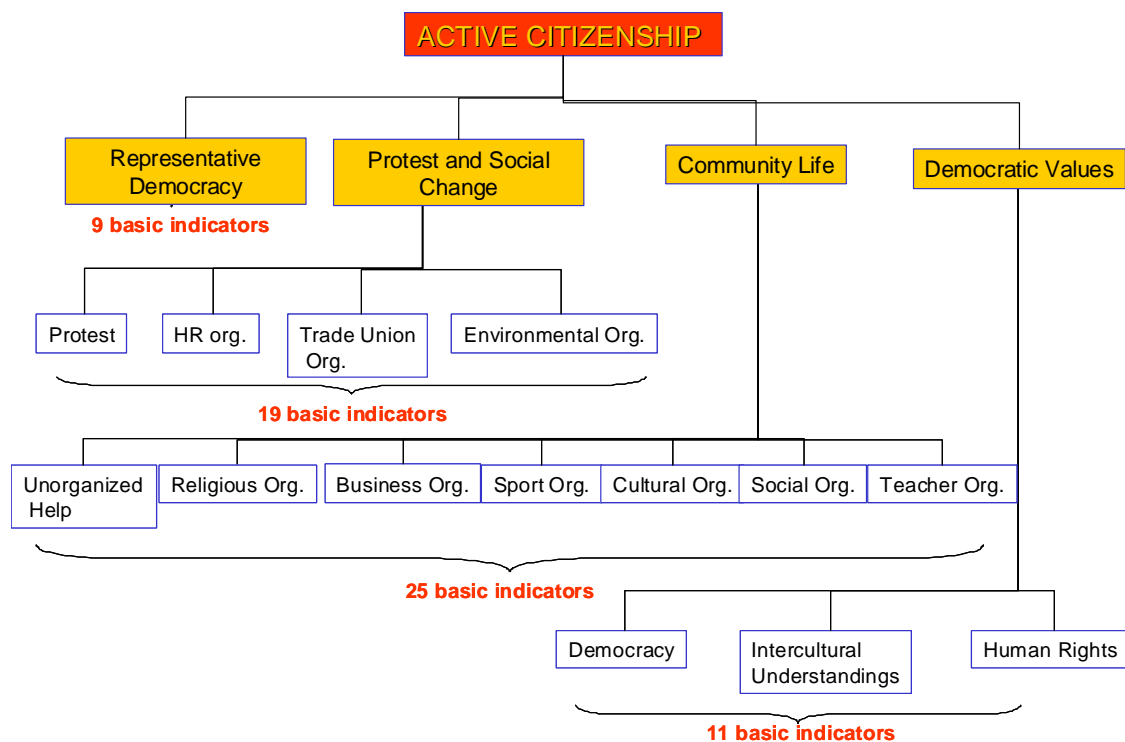
After defining the concept, the second step is to make operational the model of active citizenship. The operational model of active citizenship is based on four measurable and distinct dimensions of *Protest and social change*, *Community life*, *Representative democracy* and *Democratic values*. The dimension on *Protest and Social change* organisations is comprised of four components. The first component is protest activities which is a combination of 5 indicators: signing a petition, taking part in a lawful demonstration, boycotting products and contacting a politician. The next 3 components are three types of organizations; human rights organisations, trade unions and environmental organisations. Each of these components is comprised of four indicators on membership, participation activities, donating money and voluntary work. The *Community life* dimension is comprised of seven components. Six of these are community organisations: religious, business, cultural, social, sport and parent-teacher organisations. These 6 components contain 4 indicators each on membership, participation activities, donating money and voluntary work. The 7th component is a single indicator on unorganized help. The dimension *Representative democracy* is built from 3 sub-dimensions; engagement in political parties, voter turnout and participation of women in political life. The sub-dimension on engagement in political parties contains 4 indicators on membership, participation, donating money or voluntary work for political

¹ Developed by the CRELL research network “Active Citizenship for Democracy” as part of this project

parties. The sub-dimension on voter turn out contains two indicators on voting, one on the national elections and one on European elections. The third sub-dimension is comprised of one indicator on the percentage of women in national parliaments. The fourth dimension is called *Democratic values* and consists of 3 sub-domains: democracy, intercultural understanding and human rights. The democracy sub-domain is comprised of 5 indicators on Democratic Values asked in relationship to citizenship activities. The intercultural sub-dimension contains 3 indicators on immigration. The human rights sub-dimension is comprised of 3 indicators on human rights in relationship to law and rights of migrants.

The operational model adopted to measure Active Citizenship is described in figure below. For the complete list of indicators we address the reader to and Hoskins and Mascherini 2008.

Figure1 – The structure of Active Citizenship



Data and methods.

In the field of active citizenship availability of data is a serious problem, given that not all dimensions are sufficiently covered and multi-annual data are generally not available. For example, there is limited data available on more informal and less conventional methods of participation, which have been seen to rise in recent years and which are often more culturally specific. Where possible non-conventional participation such as ethical

consumption and unorganised participation have been included in the model, but the data for traditional forms of participation are more plentiful and easier to access from survey data.

With this in mind, the selection of indicators for the composite measure of active citizenship has been based mostly upon one source of data, which helps to maximise the comparability of the indicators. The source of data chosen was the European Social Survey (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>) which ran a specific module on citizenship in 2002. The European Social Survey (ESS) aimed to be representative of all residents among the population aged 15 years and above in each participating country. The size and the quality of the sample make the country coverage of Europe in the ESS data reasonably good, with 19 European countries, including 18 EU member states, providing sufficient quality of data.

Overall, the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator presented in this paper is based on a list of 63 basic indicators. As stated above, most of these indicators use data collected in the European Social Survey of 2002. In addition, voter turnout at national and European elections has also been considered, as well as the proportion of women in national parliaments. In order to complete the dataset, one missing value has been imputed for Norway. The list of the 19 countries included in the analysis is given in Table 1 below. The list of the basic indicators can be found in the appendix of the paper.

Table 1: List of countries that have been analysed

<i>List of Countries</i>			
<i>Austria</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>
<i>Italy</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Greece</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Hungary</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	

Nardo et al. (2005) define a composite indicator as “a mathematical combination of individual indicators that represent different dimensions of a concept whose description is the objective of the analysis”. Following this logic, here we summarize the concept of active citizenship into one number, a composite indicator, which encompasses different dimensions.

We built the composite indicators following the methodological guidelines given by Nardo et al. (2005). In this paper the different phases of the construction process of the composite indicators are just sketched and we address the reader to Hoskins and Mascherini, 2008 and Hoskins et al. 2006 for details and wider description.

Given the structure of the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator shown in figure 1, the composite indicator is a weighted sum of the indices computed for the four dimensions D_i (Representative Democracy, Protest and social change, Community, Democratic Values) with weights w_i . The indices of each dimension D_i is then a linear weighted sum of of the sub-dimension indices SD_{ij} with weights w_j^* . Finally, each sub-dimension index SD_{ij} is a linear weighted aggregation of the s_{ij} normalised sub-indicators $I_{h_i,j}^c$ with weights $w_{h_i,j}^\#$

The integration of the different equations into one gives the general formula for the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator:

$$Y_c = \sum_{i=1}^4 w_i \sum_{j=1}^{k_i} w_j^* \sum_{h_{ij}=1}^{s_{ij}} w_h^{\#} I_{h_{i,j,c}}$$

Having defined the aggregation rule of the composite indicator, the construction and evaluation of the composite indicator (CI) involve several steps. In the next step the variables must be standardised and the weighting scheme for the indicators specified. Due to the fact that the 63 basic indicators have been constructed using different scales, a standardisation process is needed before the data for the different indicators can be aggregated. Different standardisation techniques are available for this (Nardo et al., 2005). The basic standardisation technique that has been applied is the Min-Max approach. Each indicator, q , was standardised based on the following rule:

$$I_{qc} = \frac{x_{qc} - \min_c(x_{qc})}{\max_c(x_{qc}) - \min_c(x_{qc})} .$$

Using this method, all the indicators have been rescaled and the standardised values lie between 0 (laggard $x_{qc} = \min_c(x_q)$) and 1 (leader, $x_{qc} = \max_c(x_q)$).

After the standardisation process, the data have then been transformed to ensure that for each indicator a higher score would point to a better performance. This step was clearly necessary to make a meaningful aggregation of the different indicators. Based on the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator structure an equal weights scheme was applied within each dimension and within each sub-dimension, Hoskins et al. 2006. The assignment of equal weights to dimensions prevents rewarding dimensions with more indicators (e.g. Community Life) as compared to dimensions with fewer (e.g. Representative Democracy). This means that the four dimensions have the same weights for calculating the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator. In a similar way, all indicators within a sub-dimension were assigned the same weight. For example, the sub-domains of participation in protest activities, human rights, trades union, and environmental organisations would have equal weights when calculating the index for the domain "Protest and social change." Therefore, as a result of the structure in which there are different numbers of indicators for the different sub-dimensions, the basic indicators will not have equal weights in the composite indicator.

In Hoskins and Mascherini, 2008, the weights were assigned after the consultation of experts in the field of active citizenship. This was done in order to assign different weights to the various dimensions on the basis of experts judgment which was elicited with a survey designed following the budget allocation approach. Moreover in Hoskins et al. 2006 and Hoskins and Mascherini, 2008 a consistent sensitivity analysis was performed in order to show the robustness of the composite indicator which is not affected by the assumption made in the construction process.

Results.

The results of the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator are presented here; first, according to each individual dimension, and then as combined indices.

Protest and social change

In the dimension of Protest and social change the Nordic countries, where NGOs thrive, have high scores, and they are followed by western European countries. The lower-scoring countries are from eastern and southern Europe. The driver of this result is mainly the sub-dimension of *protest* (see Table 2), which is relatively high for all countries considered, whereas the Achilles heel is *participation* (especially in trades union). The low score of Poland and Hungary is especially driven by a low value in *working in organisations* (6.5% for Poland and 3% for Hungary, vis á vis the 30% of the top performer) and in *participation in human rights organisations* (1% for both countries, while the top performer reaches 4.3%). Portugal shows better performance in this latter variable (2%) and Greece is particularly strong in the dimension of *protest*.

Table 2: Protest and social change index

Rank	Country
1	Norway
2	Sweden
3	Denmark
4	Belgium
5	Austria
6	Netherlands
7	United Kingdom
8	Germany
9	France
10	Ireland
11	Luxembourg
12	Finland
13	Slovenia
14	Spain
15	Italy
16	Portugal
17	Greece
18	Hungary
19	Poland

Community Life

The dimension of community life shows a slightly different picture (Table 3). Here high scores are achieved by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom as well as by the Nordic

countries. Participation and membership in *sports and cultural activities* are the driving force of the result. The low position of Italy is mainly the result of low *participation* and *voluntary work*, even if positive signs can be found in the sub-dimension *business* (especially for membership and participation). Spain compensates for its low score in participation and membership with excellence in *teacher organisations*. For Southern Europe, the variable *non-organised help* is probably not sufficient to represent the informal networks and family support that characterise this region. In countries like Italy, for example, activities like preserving the food heritage (e.g. the Slowfood movement), or keeping cities lively with evening street activities could be considered relevant. Community Life scores low in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, even though it is the country of Solidarnosc and performed quite well in the IEA 1999 CIVED survey. Furthermore, in Poland religious activities are more frequent than elsewhere in Europe. However, data availability prevents further analysis.

Table 3: Community Life dimension index

Rank	Country
1	Norway
2	Netherlands
3	Sweden
4	United Kingdom
5	Belgium
6	Ireland
7	Denmark
8	Germany
9	Austria
10	Slovenia
11	Luxembourg
12	France
13	Finland
14	Spain
15	Hungary
16	Portugal
17	Greece
18	Italy
19	Poland

Representative Democracy

The pattern of results for the dimension of Representative Democracy (Table 4) differs slightly from that of Protest and social change and Community Life participation.

In this dimension, Austria and Belgium achieve high scores along with the Nordic countries. Austria comes out ahead of the Nordic countries (in spite of a relatively lower value of *women's participation in national parliament*), the only occasion in all four dimensions of active citizenship that this region does not score the highest. Austria's high score is partly due to the very high number of persons who are involved in political parties. Belgium ranks high in this dimension as a result of its policy of compulsory voting. France and UK perform less well in this dimension than in the previous two indices. Eastern European and some southern European countries have lower scores.

Poland has low *voting* scores but performs relatively well in *donating money to political organisations*, whereas Hungary performs well in *democratic values* and *voting* (75% in national elections and 38% in European parliament elections) but not in *participation in politics*. Overall the countries that perform better are not those with the highest voting rates for national or European parliaments but those where participation in politics is higher.

Table 4: Representative Democracy index

Rank	Country
1	Austria
2	Norway
3	Belgium
4	Sweden
5	Denmark
6	Luxembourg
7	Germany
8	Ireland
9	Netherlands
10	Greece
11	Finland
12	Spain
13	Slovenia
14	Italy
15	United Kingdom
16	France
17	Portugal
18	Hungary
19	Poland

Democratic Values

The dimension of Democratic Values (Table5) shows a significantly different pattern from the previous three dimensions, with some countries demonstrating different behaviour and overall fewer regional distinctions. Poland scores quite well in this index and enters the top five. Portugal also scores well in sixth place.

The position of Belgium results from its relatively lower scores in the indicators on *human rights* and *voting*. About 2/3 of Belgian respondents said that they would give the same rights to immigrants and about the same number considered important the approval of laws against discrimination in the workplace or against racial hatred. In Sweden the proportions were closer to 90% and 80% respectively. On the topic of voting behaviour, in Belgium (where it is compulsory) 65% judged that voting was important (the top score is Denmark with 90%), and 34% think it is important to be active in politics (Greece has the top score here with 53%).

Sweden and Norway are again ranked high and are joined by Luxembourg in the top three.

Table 5: Democratic Values index

Rank	Country
1	Sweden
2	Luxembourg
3	Norway
4	Finland
5	Poland
6	Portugal
7	Ireland
8	Denmark
9	Austria
10	Germany
11	Netherlands
12	Italy
13	Spain
14	United Kingdom
15	Slovenia
16	France
17	Greece
18	Hungary
19	Belgium

The overall picture: the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator

Based on the model and structure proposed earlier, the indices in the four dimensions of active citizenship have been combined into one composite indicator. The results for the 19 countries are given in Table 6 and are considered in the analysis below.

Overall it can be seen that the Nordic countries Norway, Sweden and Denmark score highest. The exception seems to be Finland, which features in the middle of the table in all dimensions except Democratic Values. Among the western European countries high scores are recorded by Austria and the Benelux countries although with different profiles; whereas the Netherlands and Luxembourg have consistent performances in all dimensions considered, Belgium compensates for low scores in the dimension of Democratic Values with outstanding performance in Representative Democracy. Generally eastern and southern European countries figure lower in the rankings. Hungary has relatively high scores in *national voting* and *non-organised help*, but has a lower overall score.

Not surprisingly the overall ranking has a strong correlation with the results of the dimension of Protest and social change. Therefore, countries with an active Protest and social change generally appear to have the most active citizens.

Table 6: Active Citizenship Composite Indicator

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>
1	Norway
2	Sweden
3	Denmark
4	Austria
5	Ireland
6	Belgium
7	Netherlands
8	Luxembourg
9	Germany
10	United Kingdom
11	Finland
12	France
13	Slovenia
14	Spain
15	Portugal
16	Italy
17	Poland
18	Greece
19	Hungary

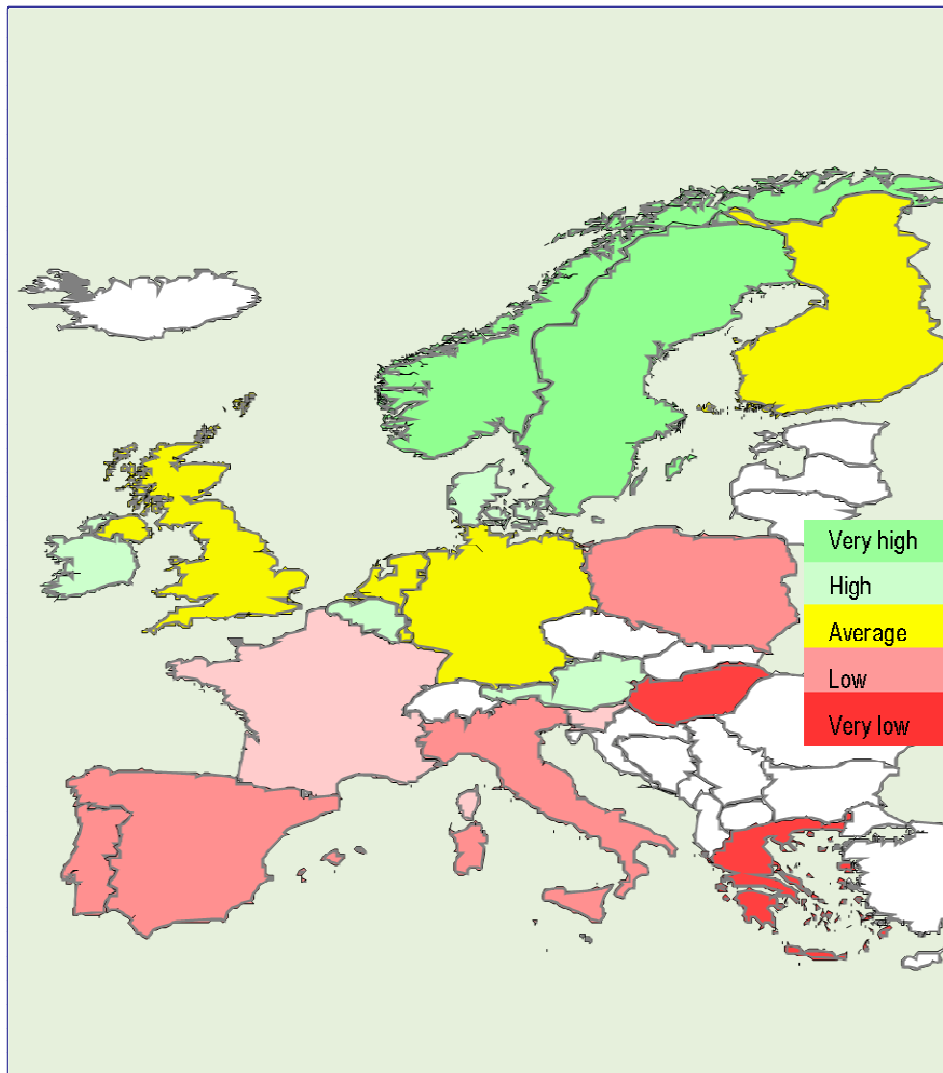


Figure 2: The Active Citizenship Composite Indicator

Correlation with other social and economic indicators

In order better to understand the phenomenon of active citizenship the relationship between the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (ACCI) and other social and economic indicators was explored. A comparison was made with the Corruption Perceptions index (CPI), GDP per capita, the Human Development Index (HDI), the Social Cohesion Index (SCI), the Global Gender Gap Index. In addition we also performed a comparison with the dimensions of Survival/ Self-expression values and of Traditional/Secular-rational values as presented in the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World.

	Active Citizenship				Active Citizenship CI
	<i>Protest and social change domain</i>	<i>Community Lifey domain</i>	<i>Democratic Values domain</i>	<i>Representative Democracy</i>	
Corruption Perceptions Index	0.862	0.763	0.432	0.604	0.840
Global Gender Gap Index	0.629	0.581	0.589	0.459	0.695
Human development index 2002	0.84	0.71	0.30	0.68	0.79
Social cohesion index	0.63	0.44	0.23	0.44	0.59
Social cohesion index -2	0.77	0.48	0.35	0.49	0.77
GDP per capita (PPP US\$ 2002)	0.83	0.75	0.30	0.65	0.79

Table7: Correlation between the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (and its four dimensions) and some indicators in the social and economic domain

The results are presented in Table 7. Overall, the ACCI shows a high correlation with the Corruption Perceptions index, the Human Development Index and GDP per capita. The correlation is slightly lower with the Global Gender Gap Index and evidence is mixed when the benchmarks in education are considered.

Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index²

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index assesses 163 countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, a poll of polls, drawing on corruption-related data from expert and business surveys carried out by a variety of independent and reputable institutions. The CPI reflects views from around the world, including those of experts who are living in the countries evaluated. The Corruption Perceptions Index scores have a theoretical range between 0.0 (perceived as highly corrupt) and 10.0 (perceived as very clean). The nineteen countries we study have Corruption Perceptions Index scores ranging between 3.7 (Poland) and 9.6 (Finland), close to or better than the world's average performance (4.1) which corresponds also to the 66.6 percentile, as 1/3 of the countries score higher. Finland, Iceland and New Zealand are the world's top performing countries.

The correlation between the Corruption Perceptions Index scores and the ACCI scores is high (- 0.840), particularly in the relationship with the dimension of Protest and

² http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

social change (*political non-governmental action*) and then with the dimension of Community Life.

*Per capita GDP*³

The correlation with GDP per capita (measured in PPP US Dollars) is also high (0.79) and even higher when considering the connection to the dimension of Protest and social change (0.83); it is still high for Community Life participation (0.75). However, the correlation is quite low when compared to the dimension of Democratic Values (0.30). It should be noted that it is the level of per capita GDP that matters rather than its distribution, given that the correlation between the ACCI and the Gini index is below 0.4 for all the dimensions considered. This raises a number of challenging issues for future research.

There might well be some kind of Kuznets' curve for citizenship, also linked to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, implying a lower level of citizenship at early stages of development, a positive relationship between active citizenship and GDP per capita up to a certain point at which, due to the improved economic situation, citizenship stabilizes. Citizenship might decline at a later stage of development due to other factors like economic anxiety about loss of jobs or fear of globalisation.

*3.8.3 Human Development Index*⁴

The Human Development Index (HDI) can be thought of as a measure of well-being as well as a measure of the impact of economic policies on quality of life. It includes comparative measures of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living for countries worldwide, ranking them on a scale ranging between 1 and 0. GDP per capita is one component of the HDI. The index was developed in 1990 by the economist Mahbub ul Haq and has been used since 1993 by the United Nations Development Programme in its annual Human Development Report (<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/>). The link with active citizenship can be found in the Human Development Report itself (UNDP, 2004, p. 6):

Human development requires more than health, education, a decent standard of living and political freedom. People's cultural identities must be recognized and accommodated by the state, and people must be free to express these identities without being discriminated against in other aspects of their lives. In short: cultural liberty is a human right and an important aspect of human development—and thus worthy of state action and attention.

Table 7 shows a high and significant correlation between the HDI and the ACCI (0.79) and with two of its dimensions: Protest and social change (0.84) and Community Life (0.71). Not surprisingly this resembles the relationship between the ACCI and GDP per capita. Thus, both results provide evidence to support the argument that high levels of prosperity are linked to high levels of civil and Community Life participation. The direction of this causal link is, however, difficult to determine.

³ Source World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>

⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/>

The absence of time series data prevent any statistical testing on causality. Moreover, the fundamental difficulty in establishing causal links resides in the inherent complexity of phenomena like active citizenship and the feedback and reinforcements that these variables have. On the other hand, the strong correlation found with the TICI also points to the existence of more general “enabling factors,” such as respect for the rule of law, trust and attention to the common good, such as providing a developed welfare system.

Worthy of mention is the fact that both Democratic Values and Political Participation seem to have a weak relationship with all the indicators presented in Table 7.

Social cohesion

To the best of our knowledge the only index of social cohesion is the Social Cohesion Index (Green et al., 2003), which combines measures for general trust and trust in democracy, civic cooperation (attitudes to cheating on taxes and public transport), and violent crime. This index scores 15 countries (11 of which are also in the ACCI) without explaining the methodology used to assemble data coming from different sources. Another difference from the ACCI is the year of the dataset used (1996), which could partially explain the modest correlation found with the ACCI. Note that this correlation rises significantly if two countries (Sweden and Poland) are eliminated from the dataset due to the rise in correlation between the ACCI and civic cooperation and violent crime. The lack of disaggregated data prevents further analysis.

3.8.5 Gender Gap Index⁵

The Gender Gap Index was first launched in May 2005 by the World Economic Forum in an attempt to assess the size of the gender gap in 58 countries using economic, education, health and politically-based criteria (Hausmann *et al.*, 2006). The Global Gender Gap Index 2006, the second in the series, covers over 115 economies, which comprehends over 90% of the world’s population and was compiled by researchers from Harvard University, the London Business School and the World Economic Forum. The index measures gaps between men and women in four areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. By quantifying differences between the sexes in access to resources or opportunities, rather than measuring absolute levels, the researchers sought to remove the impact of economic development. The Gender Gap Index scores have a theoretical range between 0.00 (perfect inequality) and 1.00 (perfect equality). The nineteen countries we study have Gender Gap Index scores ranging between 0.64 (Italy) and 0.81 (Sweden), close to or better than the world’s average performance of 0.66. It is worth mentioning that only 1/3 of the 115 countries have scores greater than 0.68. Sweden is the top performing country in the entire set of 115 countries included in the Gender Gap Index.

The scores in Table 16 show that there is a statistically significant correlation between the Gender Gap Index scores and the ACCI scores (0.695). Nevertheless, at

⁵ <http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm>

similar levels of Gender Gap there is high variation in the ACCI scores, whilst at similar levels of ACCI scores the variation in the Gender Gap scores is much lower. The spread in scores is greatest at lower levels of Gender Gap. For example, Luxembourg does far better than Hungary in active citizenship at a similar level of Gender Gap. Germany achieves much higher levels of Gender Gap than Luxembourg at a similar level of active citizenship. Four of the five Nordic countries in this study (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Sweden) have top scores in both the ACCI and the Gender Gap, but Finland's performance in active citizenship is much lower than in the Gender Gap Index.

Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World⁶

The Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World reflects the fact that a large number of basic values measured with the World Values Survey are closely correlated. In fact, the World Values Surveys were designed to provide a comprehensive measurement of all major areas of human concern, from religion to politics to economic and social life. Inglehart and Welzel identified two major dimensions that dominate the picture: (1) Traditional/ Secular-rational and (2) Survival/Self-expression values. These two dimensions explain more than 70 percent of the cross-national variance in a factor analysis of ten indicators-and each of these dimensions is strongly correlated with scores of other important orientations.

Following Inglehart, 2005, the Traditional/Secular-rational values dimension reflects the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not. A wide range of other orientations are closely linked with this dimension. Societies near the traditional pole emphasize the importance of parent-child ties and deference to authority, along with absolute standards and traditional family values, and reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. These societies have high levels of national pride, and a nationalistic outlook. Societies with secular-rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics.

The second major dimension of cross-cultural variation is linked with the transition from industrial society to post-industrial societies-which brings a polarization between Survival and Self-expression values. The unprecedented wealth that has accumulated in advanced societies during the past generation means that an increasing share of the population has grown up taking survival for granted. Thus, priorities have shifted from an overwhelming emphasis on economic and physical security toward an increasing emphasis on subjective well-being, self-expression and quality of life. Inglehart and Baker (2000) find evidence that orientations have shifted from Traditional toward Secular-rational values, in almost all industrial societies. But modernization, is not linear-when a society has completed industrialization and starts becoming a knowledge society, it moves in a new direction, from Survival values toward increasing emphasis on Self-expression values.

⁶ http://margaux.grandvinum.se/SebTest/wvs/SebTest/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54

In order to perform a comparison between the two dimensions and the Active Citizenship Composite indicator we assess two simple regression models between the ACCI and the two dimensions identified by Inglehart-Welzel.

Figure 3 combined the score of the Active Citizenship Composite indicators with the Survival/Self-expression values dimension. There seems to be a consistent positive correlation with between the two. In fact a correlation coefficient equal to 0.81 was found which correspond to a Adj. R-squared equal to 0.64.

Although the series seems to break down for Southern European Countries, which achieved a lower ACCI score than expected, the positive correlation can be read in terms of the higher are the Survival/Self-expression values, the higher is the value of the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator.

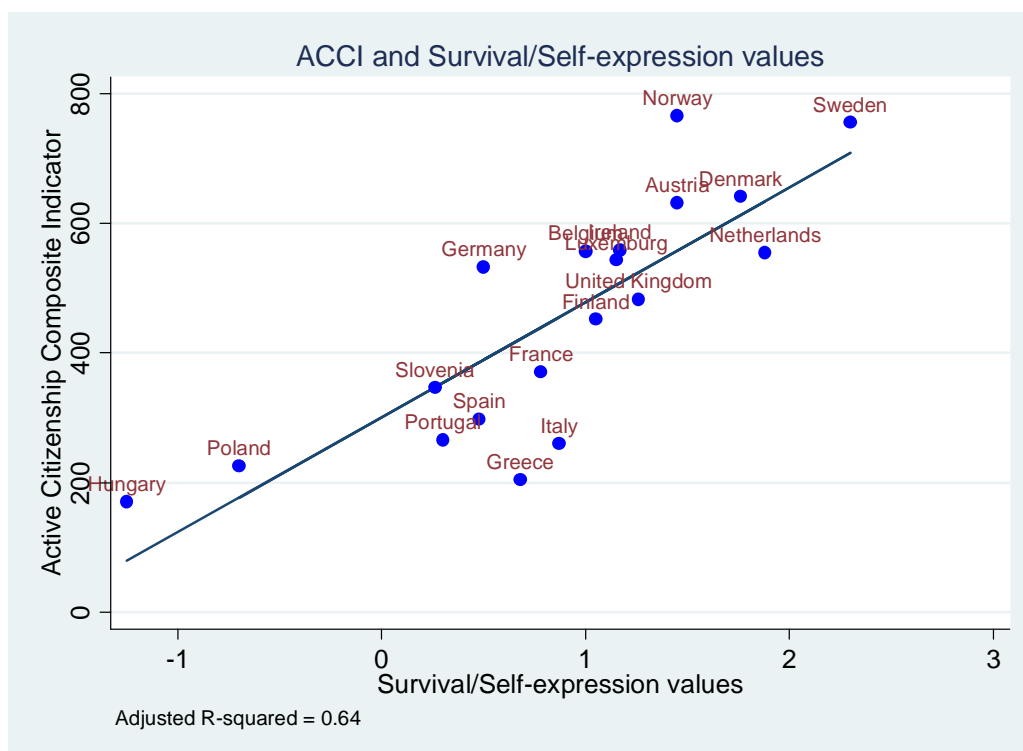


Figure 3 - The ACCI and Survival/Self Expression Values Dimension

The comparison between the ACCI and the Traditional/Secular-rational dimension is shown in Figure 4 and a low positive correlation is assessed. In fact a correlation coefficient equal to 0.47 is found, which correspond to an R-squared equal to 0.22. In The series is broke down by the low performance of Poland, Portugal and Ireland which achieve a lower performance in the Traditional/Secular-Rational Dimension than expected.

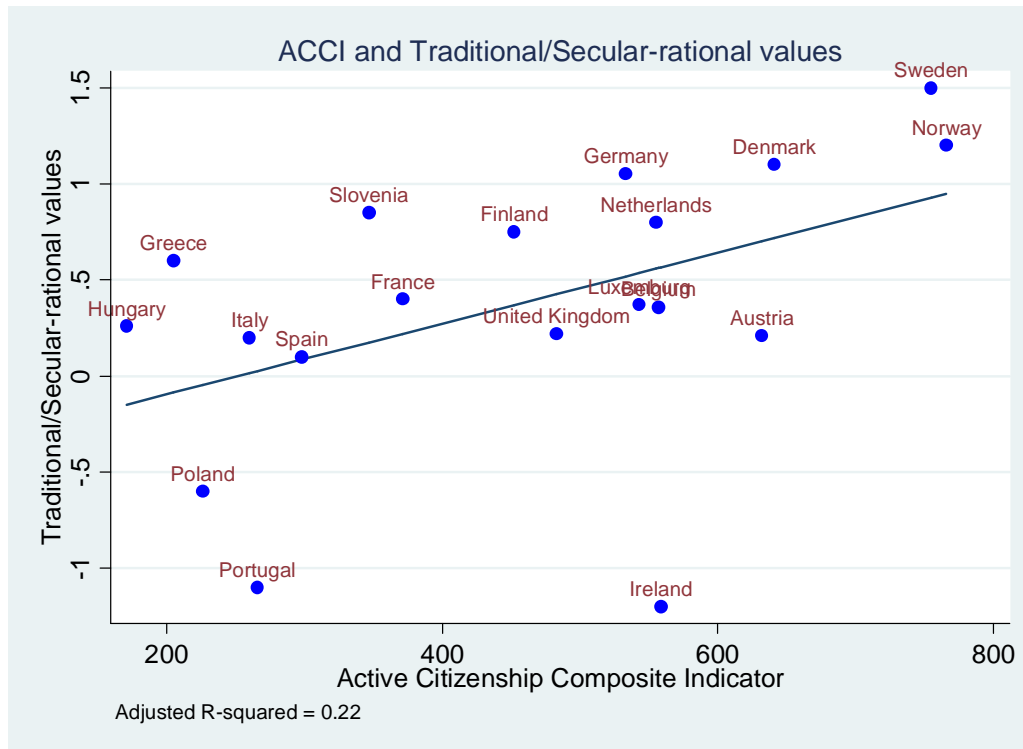


Figure 4 - The ACCI and Traditional/Secular-Rational Values Dimension

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has defined the phenomena of Active Citizenship as a broad range of value based participation. A framework was developed which combines the four dimensions of Protest and social change, Community life, Representative democracy and Democratic values. The European Social Survey 2002 provided the best data coverage available for participation activities and values and covered 19 European Countries. There were some high-quality measurements for Protest and social change with indicators on participation in demonstrations, petitions, boycotts and ethical consumption. It did, however, lack measurements on new forms of participation that include the use of ICT. The domain of Representative democracy also contains some good measures with indicators on voter turn out, women in parliament and participation in political parties. Community life, had some useful measures on community organisations, however, the informal helping practices were limited due to the restrictions of the data. The democratic values domain had good measurements for democracy and how much people valued citizenship practices, however, the indicators on human rights and intercultural understanding were again limited by the data availability.

Although the Active Citizenship Composite indicator has been proved to be a robust tool for describing the phenomenon across Europe, a set of open questions remain and they are worth of additional analyses.

In particular, the explanations for the regional differences in the results given are likely to be caused by a number of factors, which from the political science literature would suggest is partly caused by the length of time democracy has been present in the country and by economists be partly to due to the economic development of the country. However, there are likely to be other factors between the regions which contribute to the results and below we explore the cultural differences between the regions to see if in fact if cultural factors could be playing a role in the results. Below we examine some of the comparative research on values and religion with the purpose to open up a set of questions in terms of the impact of culture on active citizenship.

In Europe there are significant cultural differences between these regions. As has been described in case studies performed by Daniel Blanch (2005) on young people's social capital, Southern European Countries have quite distinct cultures largely as a result of their catholic and historical heritage. He identifies a number of features of Southern European countries and they can be summarized as;

- Catholic
- Strong large families
- close networks of relationship between friends
- less strong economies
- greater sense of collectivism
- lower level of trust between citizens
- more exaggerated gender roles and gender led expectations
- lower divorce and abortion rates
- greater religious commitment
- greater dependence on the state than individual initiative

According to Lane and Ersson (2005), who analysed empirical data from the World values Survey to establish the links between culture and politics in the world, stated that culture matters when considering social, political and economic outcomes but in a very complex manner. The greatest impact they noted was type of religion claiming that the thesis of Weber on the protestant work ethic (1904) is remarkably accurate for socio and political as well as economic outcomes today.

Lane and Ersson (2005) finds that Protestant countries have a tendency towards higher social outcomes than catholic countries in the world according to 4 indexes. Catholic countries came lower than atheist countries on all indexes except income distribution.

- higher gender empowerment (Gem)
- gender development index (GDI)
- greater income distribution (GINI)
- greater human development (measured by HDI)

In terms of civil society and political outcomes, they state that protestant countries are correlated with Human Rights and are more likely to be democratic than catholic countries -although this is not particularly relevant in Europe since all countries are suppose to be democratic. They claim, in addition that a high level of corruption occurs with all religions except Protestantism. However, Europe is rapidly becoming more secular with religion declining across much of Europe in particular in terms of church attendance and with countries becoming much more diverse in their religious practices then other cultural beliefs may be important.

In this context we look at other values systems that are present within Europe. As we have seen in the previous section, Inglehart (2000) identifies two dimensions of Democratic Values that could be relevant for our work, which he claims to represent the whole world in terms of value systems. In particular he defined “Traditional versus Secular values” as those that perceive the importance of the traditional notion of the family rejecting divorce and abortion as well as secular values are those which are described as the opposite from these. On other hands, the “Survival versus Self expression values” dimension has been described in terms of the knowledge society this is when countries stop needing to worry to a large extent about security and economic survival and as a consequence then the citizens are able to concern themselves with well-being and quality of life. Self expression values have greater concern with the environment, tolerance and demand to be involved in socio-political life.

As we noted earlier the declining importance of religion has enabled most European countries to be quite high in terms of secular rational values compared to the rest of the world with the exception of Ireland and Poland (Ingleharts map). The variation in European results is predominantly caused by the difference between traditional and self expression/ post materialist values. It seems from the above analysis that the higher a countries post materialist values the more likely that the country has more active citizens.

In particular, following the Ingleharts point of view, what needs to be considered is that perhaps the phenomenon that we are looking for in Europe to monitor ‘Active citizenship’ is in fact the outcome of European self-expression/post materialistic values and that what we are trying to promote are the actions associated with these values (well-being, gender equality and human rights). It would be possible to hypothesize that these values may have their historical origins within protestant religion as they seem to be most prominent in the Nordic countries that predominantly have this religious background but as these countries are also some of the most secular it is less likely that it is the religion is the driving force for continuing these values.

In this respect trying to extract culture from active citizenship is to some extent impossible because the concept is a value based normative position. In other words active citizenship is a cultural phenomenon. This does not mean that is necessarily wrong approach for Europe to be monitoring progress in this direction but perhaps it needs to be made clearer that these indicators are based upon a certain set of cultural values.

The question is whether there is only model of value based action that continues and enhances democratic societies? Combined in the active citizenship composite indicator are a wide variety of activities but do they cover all possible cultural practices? Therefore the question is, are there alternative practices of active citizenship which provide representative democracy, protest and government accountability and Community Life support?

The case of the dimension of Community life is easiest to state in terms of weakness of alternative cultural actions that achieve similar results. In Southern Europe we would expect that the strong large family based culture and networks of friends that were mentioned by Blanch in 2005 would provide much of the Community Life support rather than organised community NGOs and therefore that this dimension could be changed to include indicators on informal networks of support from family and friends. However, the difficulty remains that the surveys that have been developed so far are built on the presumption that there is only one cultural model of action to achieve the democratic value based ends so such questions on informal help are small in number and weak in how the survey questions are developed. What needs to be explored is if active citizenship can be performed in other successful ways that are not based on the protestant Nordic model. Case studies on southern and eastern European countries would be useful starting point for this research that would help in the long run to improve measurements on active citizenship.