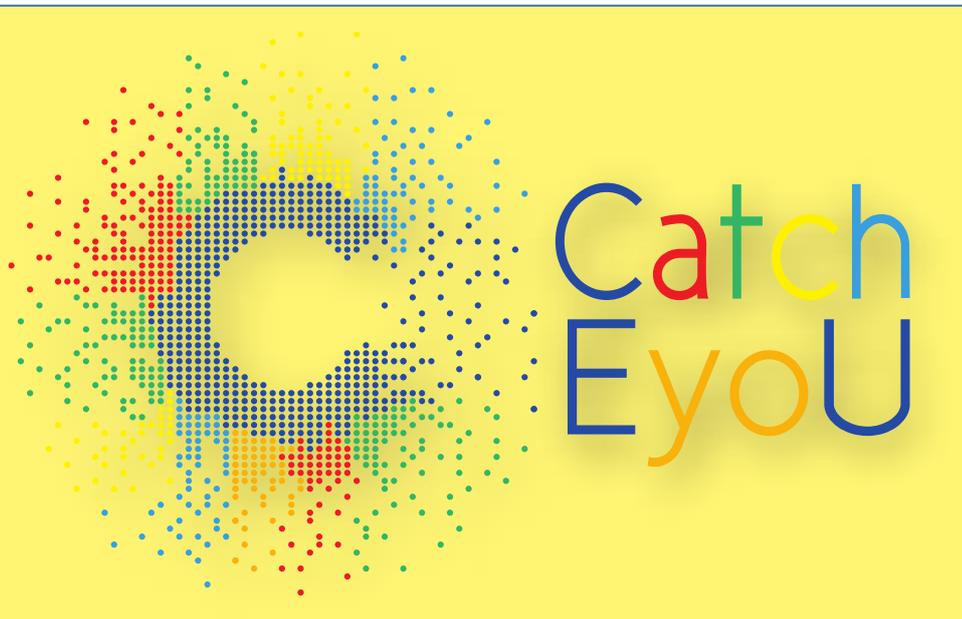




Inequalities in youth active citizenship

Blue paper



Question #1	Question #2	Question #3
How do individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, immigrant background, or socioeconomic status) affect active European citizenship in youth?	How is youth active European citizenship formed by the context? What is the role of schools and what is the effect of country-level differences?	How can we employ contextual forces to reduce individual inequalities in active European citizenship?

Focusing on inequalities in youth active citizenship: Findings from large European surveys

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Being an active citizen represents a way to make one's voice heard and to effectively influence public issues. If there are systematic differences in active citizenship between people coming from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, attending different schools, or living in different countries, it means that the voices of people in

society are represented in an unequal and possibly undemocratic way. This paper presents results from a re-analysis of several large European surveys. Focusing on young people **between 14-30 years** of age, we examine individual and contextual influences that affect youth active citizenship at the European level. By active European citizenship, we mean people's psychological connection to the European community and its institutions (psychological citizenship) and their active involvement with this community (participatory practices).





How do we understand active European citizenship?



Psychological citizenship is formed, for instance, by ...

- European identity (“Do I perceive myself as a European and is this important to me?”)
- Trust in European institutions (“Do I trust the European Union or the European Parliament?”)
- Attitude to European unification (“Should European unification go further?”)

Participatory practices are formed, for instance, by ...

- Civic and political participation (e.g., working in political parties, signing petitions, demonstrating or voting)
- Work in civil associations (e.g., youth organizations or leisure clubs)
- European and international level volunteering

Methodological addendum:

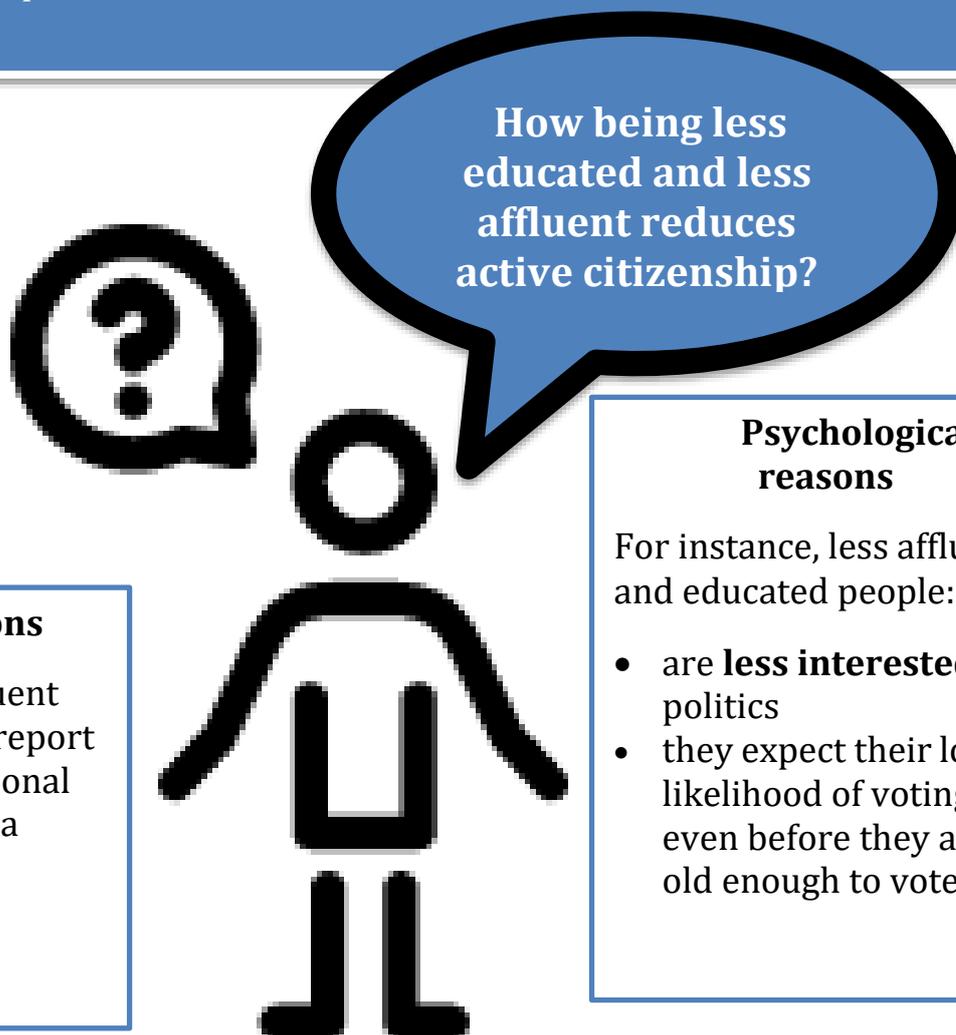
The analyses were done as part of the CATCH-EyoU project aiming at strengthening ties between the young citizens of the EU and EU-institutions, and connecting ideal and real-world policies towards youth active citizenship. Results presented in this paper are based on statistical analyses (multilevel regression models) of large survey data from the following research projects: Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation (2011), International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (2009), European Social Survey (2002-2012), Eurobarometer (2007-2014), Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency 2010/03: Youth Participation in Democratic Life (2011), and International Social Survey Programme (1995-2013).



Individual inequalities in active European citizenship (#1)

Socioeconomic status has many powerful effects on active European citizenship. Young people coming from **less affluent and educated backgrounds** are:

- less politically active
- less likely to vote both at the national and the European level
- less involved in various civil associations and groups
- less communicating about European issues
- less involved in activities and projects aiming at the European or the international level
- less involved in activities in which they can meet people from different European countries
- less psychologically connected to Europe in terms of their European identity and trust in European institutions



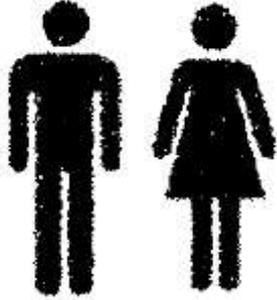
Structural reasons

For instance, less affluent and educated people report not only less international volunteering but also a **lower** number of **opportunities** for it.

Psychological reasons

For instance, less affluent and educated people:

- are **less interested** in politics
- they expect their lower likelihood of voting even before they are old enough to vote.



Even in the young generation, there are still **gender** differences. Women are:

- less interested in politics, which is a likely reason for their slightly lower conventional political participation (e.g., working for political parties)
- slightly less involved in civil associations and groups
- having a somewhat lower number of opportunities for international volunteering
- feeling slightly lower identification with Europe

On the other hand, women's involvement in less institutionalized civic activities (e.g., boycotting products for political reasons or donating money) is comparable to or sometimes even higher than men's.

However, it should be stressed that all these **gender inequalities are typically present not in every but only in some European countries.**

Immigrant or ethnic minority background has no clear effect on active European citizenship.



Active European citizenship of people from these backgrounds might be weaker, stronger, or the same compared to people from the majority, **depending on the context and the specifics of their group.**

However, it seems that people with immigrant background, compared to non-immigrants, are generally **more supportive of the mobility within Europe and European unification.**

They also tend to be more involved in the activities and communication related to European topics.



With **age**, i.e., moving from adolescence to the late twenties, young people tend to be:

- less trusting in European institutions
- less supportive of European unification

They also become more involved in conventional political activities. On the other hand, their participation in international projects slightly decreases, which is probably caused by some more general changes typical for this life period (e.g., having children, leaving school, and finding a stable job).



Active European citizenship in context (#2) FOCUS ON SCHOOL

There are at least two ways in which **school** context affects youth active European citizenship:

Every school or classroom has its own norms, i.e. collectively shared expectations of what a person should think and do.

Students are typically aware of these norms and might be influenced by them. Some norms relate also to ctive European citizenship, hence students from schools with pro-active citizenship norms have greater chances of developing active citizenship. For instance, students from schools where it is common for students to positively identify with their country do develop stronger national and European identities.

Schools differ in the **amount of opportunities for learning about Europe and European issues**. Consequently, students from schools that offer more opportunities are more involved in the activities and communication about European topics.

Active European citizenship in context (#2)

FOCUS ON COUNTRY LEVEL PARTICIPATION & EU IDENTITY

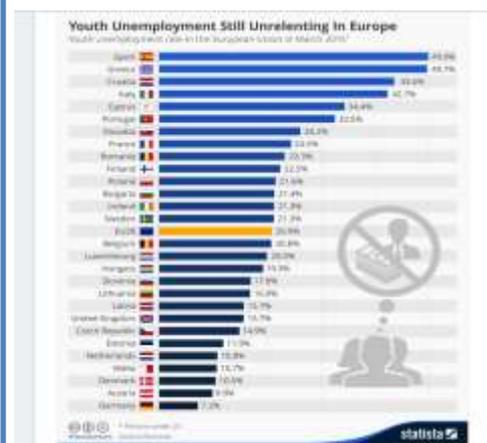
Country-level context also matters. Active European citizenship is less common in countries characterized by greater **economic and gender inequalities**. Young people from these countries are:

- less politically active, particularly in nonconventional political activities and protests
- less interested in politics
- feeling lower identification with Europe

European and international participation is limited in the countries that have been recently **affected by the economic crisis and/or are affected by massive youth unemployment**. Young people from these countries report

- lower participation in international projects fostering cooperation between youth
- lower participation in international volunteering
- having less opportunities for international volunteering.

In contrast, young people from **wealthier** European countries have somewhat stronger European identity and do more voluntary activities targeting European and international issues.



Employing contextual forces to reduce individual inequalities

Contextual forces might play an important role not only by globally affecting all people across the context, but also by moderating (reducing or augmenting) the inequalities caused by people's individual characteristics.

What does inequality look like in Europe?

Darker countries are most unequal

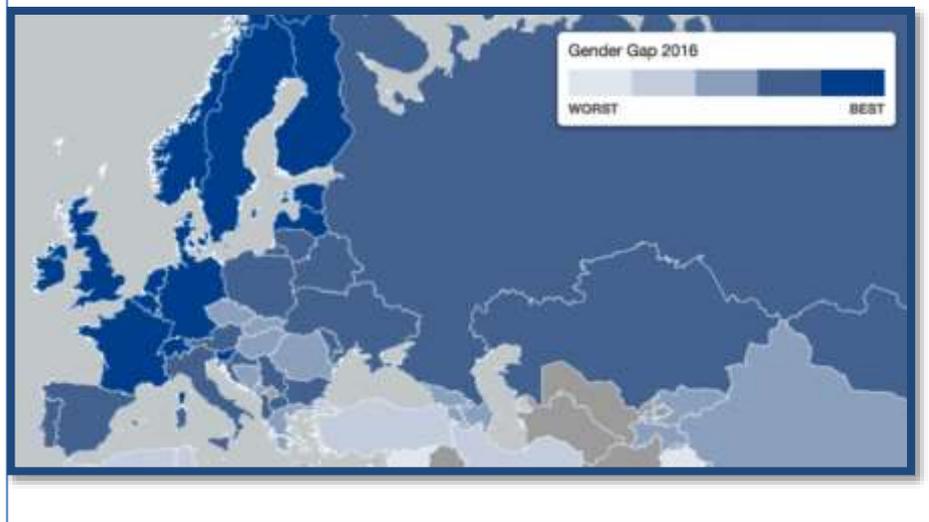
GINI Score, 2013 or latest year

Source: World Bank

Numerous inequalities given by socioeconomic status are greater in less wealthy countries. This is the case for trust in European institutions and participation in activities at the European level.

Moreover, the impact of socioeconomic status is stronger in countries with greater income inequalities. This is the case for involvement in civil associations.

Men's and women's chances of voting are equal (or even in favor of women) in countries with high gender equality in multiple domains.



A greater identification with one's country leads to a greater identification with Europe and the European Union.

However, this positive effect of national on European identity is lessened in countries with high economic and gender inequalities.



Implications and recommendations for boosting active European identity in youth

School curricula should involve ample opportunities for students' learning about Europe. This also implies that schools need to be sufficiently resourced to offer opportunities for exchange with other European countries.

Schools should provide their students with opportunities to foster positive identifications with their countries. Fostering positive identification with one's country can have important psychological consequences as it is positively connected to European identity.

Individual-level inequality can be counteracted by addressing contextual inequality.

While it is unlikely that socioeconomic inequalities will cease to exist, our findings point to possibilities to counteract individual inequalities in schools and through decreasing economic and other inequalities at the country level.



Measures for reducing youth unemployment should be implemented.

Unemployment not only lowers one's individual socioeconomic status (e.g. income), which has negative effects on active European citizenship. Countries with massive youth unemployment are generally characterized by decreased opportunities for European and international level participation of young people.

Economic inequalities but also inequalities in relation to gender must be targeted.

Living in an unequal society clearly has a negative impact on youth's psychological European citizenship and their participatory practices. Thus, economic redistribution within the European Union but also policies that help to reduce gender inequality are supportive of youth active citizenship.



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