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CHAPTER 7

One of a kind, or all of one kind? Groups of participants and their distinctive outlook on society¹

7.1 Introduction

Civic and political engagement have since long been seen as indispensable for a well-functioning democracy (Verba & Nie, 1972). The large range of such activities runs from being a member of a political party, or demonstrating against policy proposals, to helping organize a community event. All of these types of voluntary participation aim to improve society or small parts of it. However, the manner in which they seek to improve things is very different. In this chapter, I theorize and test the extent to which societal pessimism, political trust and social trust are related to specific types of participation. This project serves two aims, namely, to contribute to the understanding of societal pessimism, and to make a broader contribution to the participation literature. To these ends, this chapter's research question is what differentiates types of participants from each other. To stick to the same examples: are members of political parties, people who join demonstrations, and those who join political parties different types of people?

Despite the large number of studies on civic engagement in recent decades, it is still not fully clear which factors differentiate participants from each other. Previous research has established comprehensive knowledge on the factors that drive voluntary participation *in general* in the public domain. Individual characteristics known to increase the likelihood of participation range from political interest and efficacy, resources, and personal and collective motivations, to social network and social capital (e.g. Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995; Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004). However,

¹ A previous version has been presented in Maastricht, as Steenvoorden, E.H. (2015) 'One of a kind, or all of one kind? Groups of participants and their distinctive outlook on society', at the Politicogen Etnaal 2015.

these common explanations compare non-participants and participants, attempting to explain *why* people participate. Studies that do compare types of participants examine which characteristics stimulate a specific type of participation, compared to the general population. However, they do not compare participants to each other. Therefore, in this chapter I aim to shed more light on what differentiates types of participants from each other, that is, *which* people participate in certain types of participation. I argue and show that such differentiation needs to take *societal* attitudes into account – including not only societal pessimism but also political trust and social trust. I thus show that the role played by societal pessimism becomes clear by unpacking ‘the’ participant, demonstrating that it is associated with some but not other types of participation. More generally, I show that *societal outlook*, rather than resources and interests, is key to differentiating participants of various sorts.

After all, different types of participation are likely to be performed by different types of people, given that the overlap between types of participation is quite low. Whereas various types of political and civic participation – such as contacting a politician, signing a petition, demonstrating, or being a member of a community organization – are related, correlations are only weak to moderate (Verba & Nie, 1972; Dekker, Koopmans, & Van den Broek, 1997; Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007; Van der Meer, 2009).

In research on participation, various types have been compared, including institutional and non-institutional political participation (Kaase, 1999; Hooghe & Marien, 2013), individual versus collective participation (Van Deth, 2012), various types of civic participation (Badescu & Neller, 2007; Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, & Scheepers, 2009), and online versus offline participation (Oser, Hooghe, & Marien, 2013). These studies compare types of participants with the general population, including non-participants. This means that we still do not know the extent to which participants differ from each other. Two studies on political participation are an exception: they do single out participants of individual versus collective political participation (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2012) and institutional and non-institutional political participation (Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010), respectively.

In this chapter, I aim to further the understanding of differences among types of participants, and I propose to do so by moving beyond established factors based on resources and interests, to consider citizens’ outlook on society. After all, although established factors such as resources, efficacy and interest explain why people participate, these factors are likely to be high among *all* participants. Therefore, they are unlikely to differentiate between specific participants. In line with studies that propose the ‘matching hypothesis’, I assume that people participate in an organization,

movement or initiative that matches their values and societal perceptions (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Granik, 2005). We can expect societal outlook to differentiate among participants because it influences the domain of society in which people think change or improvement can best be established. Therefore, I examine the relationship between types of participation and three aspects of societal outlook: societal pessimism, political trust and social trust. I assume societal pessimism to reflect whether people think change is possible in formal, institutional participation or whether they instead engage in non-institutional, protest participation. In line with the literature, I propose political trust and social trust to reflect whether people think changes can or cannot be accomplished within the political institutional domain. Three types of participants are compared along these lines: institutional political participants, non-institutional political participants and civic participants.

The question of who participates in which type of activity is very relevant for several reasons. From an academic perspective, differentiation among types of participants can further our understanding of motivations for participation. Although research has successfully predicted which people participate, their motivations are less clear (Granik, 2005; Leighley, 2008). Furthermore, the proposition that participation levels are declining (Putnam, 2000) is often countered by pointing to new, non-institutional forms of participation (Dalton, 2008). If some forms of participation are declining while others are rising, it is essential to know what distinguishes participants in these types of participation from each other. Moreover, understanding the differences among groups of participants is important with respect to the democratic function of participation. If different groups of citizens engage in different types of participation, the voices of those groups are only heard equally loud if all types of civic engagement resonate to the same degree in the political arena, which is not the case (Hooghe & Marien, 2012).

In what follows, I first discuss which types of participation I compare, and then why the societal outlook should be able to differentiate between them. Next, I theorize about the specific relationships of societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust and the three types of participation under study. I proceed by describing the data and method used, and then I present the results. Although this chapter focuses on differences among participants, I include a small, extra analysis to show how societal pessimism relates to non-participation. This chapter concludes by discussing the main findings and suggestions for further research.

7.2 Theory

Types of participation

Because the focus of this chapter is on differentiating types of participants, it is important to elaborate which types are compared. The comprehensive literature on civic engagement, which is too large to do justice here, lacks consensus on both a definition of civic engagement or the less broad concept of political participation, and the types of participation that these definitions encompass (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Berger, 2009; Van Deth, 2014). Part of the conceptualization discussion is whether all types of participation are to be considered or whether there should be a distinction among the area of participation (e.g., political institutions or civic organizations), the type of activity (individual or collective), and the level of activity (only behavior or a broader political involvement).

This lack of consensus shows in the various typologies of participation that are proposed and the operationalizations used. Some studies consider civic engagement and examine all types of civic and political participation in the public domain (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). Many focus on either political (Scott & Acock, 1979; Cohen, Vigoda, & Samorly, 2001; Vecchione & Caprara, 2009) or civic participation, with the latter often split up into various types of organizations, such as interest, leisure time and sports, social-cultural and religious associations (Badescu & Neller, 2007) or interests, leisure and activist organizations (Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, & Scheepers, 2009). Some authors draw a line between institutional and non-institutional political participation (Sabucedo & Arce, 1991; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). Others distinguish voting from other forms of institutional political participation (Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007), or further specify forms of non-institutional political participation such as protesting and consumer participation (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005; Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007). Still others distinguish between individual and collective participation (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003; Van Deth, 2012; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2012; Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Finally, although most studies compare active and non-active citizens, theorization about non-participation is a small stream a literature in itself (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Amnå & Ekman, 2014).

A consistent but nonetheless striking finding is that the overlap between types of participation is weak to moderate (Verba & Nie, 1972; Dekker, Koopmans, & Van den Broek, 1997; Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007; Van der Meer, 2009). A mean correlation of .25 across thirteen types of participation indicates a “weak unitary model of participation”, whereas within categories, the correlations are moderate but not high,

except for different instances of voting (Verba & Nie, 1972: 58-59). These outcomes point to the relevance of both categorizing types of participation and understanding differences among types of participants.

The typology used here is a combination of categories of participation in the literature: institutional political participation, non-institutional political (or protest) participation, and civic participation. Institutional political participation can be defined as conventional political participation, namely, as “all acts directly related to the institutional process” (Hooghe & Marien, 2013: 133). Non-institutional political participation is often distinguished from institutional political participation because it attempts to influence the state or politics from outside the political system (Sabucedo & Arce, 1991; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). In line with the literature (Badescu & Neller, 2007; Van der Meer, 2009; Van Deth, 2014), civic participation in this chapter refers to voluntary participation in organizations in the public domain but outside the institutional political domain, which aim to contribute to a specific collective problem or a specific community.²

Differentiating participants by their outlook on society

To examine whether people in these three types of participation are similar or instead one of a kind, we need to know which characteristics should be able to differentiate among types of participants. Surprisingly, the literature does not offer a clear expectation of which characteristics can do so. In the comprehensive literature on participation, the central focus has been on explaining why certain people participate and others do not. Various theoretical models are proposed to answer that question, all of which have a different take on what drives participation. These models are referred to in slightly different terms by different authors (Clary et al., 1998; Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004; Granik, 2005), but can be called either structural-based (such as civic voluntarism, equity-fairness and the social capital model) or choice-based theories (the cognitive engagement model and the general incentives model) (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004). These models are not mutually exclusive in the factors that they identify as causes of

² Electoral participation is not included in this chapter for several reasons. First, because electoral systems differ considerably, a decision to vote or not to vote is difficult to compare internationally. Furthermore, a protest vote as an alternative to abstention is determined by the presence of anti-system parties. Moreover, voting can be considered an atypical form of institutional political participation, because it is explicitly requested by the state, it has a clear boundary in terms of time and effort, and it is done by large groups of citizens, whereas only a small proportion of people engage in institutional political participation.

participation, but do have a unique combination of these factors that includes resources (as in time, money, education, or income), political efficacy, political interest, social network, and incentives (or motivations).

Although informative in regard to explaining participation, these ‘established’ factors in participation research are less useful when we want to compare types of participants, because participants score similarly on them. From the small number of studies that compare various groups of participants, it can be concluded that although the effect sizes of these factors may differ to some extent, the direction of the effects is the same (Badescu & Neller, 2007; Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, & Scheepers, 2009; Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010; Van Deth, 2012; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2012; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). For instance, people involved in boycotting are not distinct from the other types of participants under study (Van Deth, 2012). Two studies on types of civic participants also show no diverging patterns in the characteristics studied (namely, education, employment, size of locality, network, social trust, church attendance and civic duty), only a smaller or larger influence of the characteristics considered (Badescu & Neller, 2007), or only a difference in source of income but not in educational level, income level or political interest (Van der Meer, Te Grotenhuis, & Scheepers, 2009).

That said, these studies do not compare participants with each other but with the general population, including non-participants. Therefore, they do not provide a picture of the similarities and differences among participants. To my knowledge, only two studies have compared types of participants only; those studies have yielded contradictory findings. Quintelier and Hooghe (2012) find no important differences between types of participants, whereas Marien et al. (2010) show institutionalized participants to be less educated, more politically interested and older than those in non-institutionalized participation. However, these studies do not include societal pessimism, political trust or social trust.

Instead of using the established characteristics, I suggest considering societal outlook to distinguish groups of participants. It is likely that people participate in an organization, group or movement of people who ‘think like them’, i.e., who have the same worldview. Clary and Snyder propose the ‘matching hypothesis’, which states that participation results from congruence between individual and organizational values (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Granik, 2005). However, where they mention values, I suggest focusing on societal attitudes to differentiate among participants. Attitudes are more directive and informative with respect to how people evaluate the current situation, and I expect that people participate in organizations that match their view of society and the status quo. Values can be incentives for participation, but the point is that the same values can be related to different types of participation. For instance, there

are many ways in which people can strive for less inequality or a better environment. The manner that they choose will depend on their societal outlook.

What aspects of societal outlook are important in differentiating between types of participants? All of the types of civic engagement studied here can be seen as attempts to improve society, or small parts of it, in the public domain. What differs between types of participation is the way to do that, and I propose that two characteristics of the arena in which participation takes place are particularly important to consider: whether participation takes place within or outside formal, institutional settings and within or outside the political setting. A person's outlook on society should be able to differentiate along these two lines. Specifically, I propose considering societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust to determine how people think change or improvement can be best established. Societal pessimism can be expected to indicate whether people believe change is possible within the established institutions and/or organizations (political and non-political) and are willing to be involved in long-term participation – or whether instead, they do not expect change to be easily established and are only interested in expressing their discontent through protest. In line with the literature, political trust and social trust indicate whether people think participation within or outside the political domain can make a difference. Research shows that political trust is positively related to participation in institutional political participation and negatively to participation in non-institutional political participation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaase, 1999; Hooghe & Marien, 2013), whereas social trust is positively related to civic and non-institutional political participation (e.g. Kaase, 1999; Uslander & Brown, 2005; Badescu & Neller, 2007; Hooghe & Marien, 2013), but negatively related to institutional political participation (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003; Uslander & Brown, 2005; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). In the next section, I further discuss these assumptions and the hypotheses involved.

Before doing so, I want to clarify how I view the causality between attitudes and types of participation. In the established theoretical models of participation, societal outlook or attitudes are not often included; instead, they speak of incentives, values and motives for participation.³ This is not surprising: these models are causal, and the role of attitudes is very difficult to study if one wants to distinguish cause and effect in

3 Examples include collective incentives (public goods such as policy outcomes that the individual thinks benefit the country as a whole), altruistic motives (sense of duty) and expressive motives (affective attachments to the country or political system) in the general incentives model (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004). Similarly, value motivations (i.e., the opportunity for an individual to express or act on important values) is part of the functional approach (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999). The social capital model points to social trust both as a stimulus of participation and as a result (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004).

participation. People might become participants because of certain attitudes, or they might adopt attitudes while participating. However, my focus is to differentiate types of participants from each other, not whether the differentiation took place because of people's attitudes before participating or whether these attitudes were shaped by participation. Therefore, the question of causality with respect to societal attitudes and participation is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Patterns of societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust among participants

How do the three attitudes differentiate among the three types of participants? The literature shows a large number of studies that include political or social trust in research participation, but to consider a set of attitudes is relatively rare. Many studies examine the influence of either political or social trust on participation, but only a few examine both political and social trust (Kaase, 1999; Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005; Allum et al., 2010; Hooghe & Marien, 2013; Suh, Yee, & Chang, 2013). However, these studies compare just one or two groups of participants, and they do not include societal pessimism. Moreover, they do not use these attitudes to differentiate participants from each other. Below, I theorize about the differences in attitudes among participants, disregarding non-participants. Because to my knowledge, there are no prior studies that focus on how participants' societal attitudes vary, these theoretical assumptions are based on the literature which makes no explicit comparison among types of participation.

It is proposed in the previous chapters of this book that societal pessimism is a sentiment among citizens that their society is in decline; the term refers to a sense of unmanageable societal deterioration and collective powerlessness. Because research into societal pessimism is scarce, there are no studies on its relationship with participation to build on. To my knowledge, the only study of this nature is that of Uslaner and Brown (2005), who refer to general optimism but operationalize it with an item that I would consider societal pessimism: 'the lot of the average person is getting worse'. They find a negative relationship between this measure and political institutional, political non-institutional and civic participation, but their aggregated, state-level data from the USA do not tell us about the individual-level relations in which I am interested.

In line with descriptions of societal pessimism as the perception of unmanageable societal deterioration and collective powerlessness, and more specifically, the first element of societal unease in Chapter 2 – distrust of human capability – I think societal pessimists do not expect that improvement in our conditions can easily be made in the current setting. I expect societal pessimism to indicate whether people believe

change is possible within established institutions and/or organizations (political and non-political) and are willing to be involved in long-term participation, or whether they instead do not expect that change can be (easily) established and are primarily interested in expressing their discontent through protest. This means that I expect societal pessimism to distinguish between institutional political participation and civic participation, on the one hand, and non-institutional political participation, on the other hand.

Because the three types of participation under study likely overlap (which I show below to be the case), it is impossible to formulate hypotheses that compare the types of participation to each other, because to do so would imply mutually exclusive groups. Therefore, the hypotheses in this chapter describe the relationship between attitudes and types of participation, not comparisons of types of participation.

H1: societal pessimism is negatively related to political participation

H2: societal pessimism is positively related to non-institutional political participation

H3: societal pessimism is negatively related to civic participation

Both political trust and social trust can be expected to offer insight into whether people want to participate within or outside the political institutional domain. I start by discussing the nature of, previous studies on and hypotheses about political trust, and then proceed to social trust.

Political trust has been defined and operationalized in various ways. Theoretically, trust in the political community can be differentiated from the political regime (performance and institutions) and the political authorities or incumbents (Easton, 1975; Norris, 2011). One example of a definition of political trust is that it is “a summary judgment that the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Miller & Listhaug, 1990: 358). Empirically, there is clear evidence for a latent coherent factor of political trust that includes various institutions and authorities (Marien, 2011; Hartevelde, Van der Meer, & De Vries, 2013). Here, I focus on trust in the political regime and political authorities: it is likely that people engage in participation because they are either dissatisfied or inspired by the political leaders and political institutions in their country, and not so much the political community.

Research assumes and demonstrates that participants' levels of political trust vary. Political trust is found to be positively related to institutional political participation but negatively related to non-institutional political participation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaase, 1999; Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). Similarly, Stolle et al. (2005) find that political consumers (considered non-institutional political

participation) distrust political institutions. Intuitively, this makes sense: why would one engage in a political party if one does not trust political parties, politicians or the political system? Conversely, if you distrust political institutions and authorities, it is likely that you express your dissatisfaction or frustration with how things are going or decisions made outside the political setting, thus in non-institutional political participation. To my knowledge, the relationship between political trust and civic participation is only sporadically discussed in the literature. Studies show that people involved in civic participation are politically distrustful (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eliasoph, 1998). Brehm and Rahn theorize that this negative relationship follows from a do-it-yourself mentality (1997). With regard to political trust, I therefore formulate the following hypotheses:

H4: political trust is positively related to institutional political participation

H5: political trust is negatively related to non-institutional political participation

H6: political trust is negatively related to civic participation

Social trust has also been the focus of a great deal of scholarly attention that has not resulted in a consensus on the definition of social trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005). There are two types of literature with different conceptualizations of social trust, namely, strategic trust (based on one's interests), which follows a rational choice logic (Hardin, 2002), and moralistic trust (based on an outlook on human nature), which sees trust as resulting from culture and socialization (e.g. Uslaner, 2002). The latter can be further distinguished in generalized trust – i.e., “the belief that most people can be trusted” – and particularized trust – i.e., “the notion that we should only have faith in people like ourselves” (Uslaner, 2002: 21). The difference between the two is the size of the moral community that you consider trustworthy: people in general or your particular group, your ‘type of people’.

Following the literature on participation, I focus on generalized social trust. In recent decades, social capital and its relation to civic and political participation have often been studied, inspired by the seminal work of Putnam (1993; 2000). In such studies, social capital has been used in different ways, for instance, by looking at social networks' membership and level of activity (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003; Tillie, 2004). Although cause and consequence are debated here, social trust (as a form of social capital) is seen as one of the merits of social and civic involvement. Social trust, the sense of a larger community, stimulates and results from participation in organizations, actions, or initiatives of that community and thereby overcomes collective action problems in producing public goods (for an overview of the literature see Van Deth,

2001). Many studies show that social trust is positively related to civic participation (e.g. Dekker, Koopmans, & Van den Broek, 1997; Uslaner & Brown, 2005; Badescu & Neller, 2007). The relationship between social trust and non-institutional political participation follows the same logic as it does in the context of civic participation; this relationship is also underlined by many studies (Kaase, 1999; Benson & Rochon, 2004; Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005; Hooghe & Marien, 2013), although other studies reject it (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003).

In contrast, institutional political participation is not per se driven by membership in a generalized community; instead, it is driven by political camps that have very different ideas and values about what should be done. Therefore, several authors expect and find a negative association between social trust and institutional political participation (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003; Uslaner & Brown, 2005; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). Kim also finds a negative relationship between social trust and political participation, but provides an alternative interpretation of this relationship. He argues that socially trusting individuals are more involved in society and therefore perceive more social problems and policy failures (Kim, 2005). Table 7.1 provides an overview of all of the hypotheses posited in this chapter.

H7: social trust is negatively related to institutional political participation

H8: social trust is positively related to non-institutional political participation

H9: social trust is positively related to civic participation

Table 7.1 Summary of hypotheses

	Institutional political participation	Non-institutional political participation	Civic participation
Societal pessimism	-	+	-
Political trust	+	-	-
Social trust	-	+	+

7.3 Data and Method

Data

To test the hypotheses, I use wave 3 of the European Social Survey (2006), which includes variables not only on all three types of participation and the three attitudes under study, but also on many of the established factors of civic engagement. Despite the similarities between the waves, the ESS 2012 wave does not include variables on political efficacy, which is an important factor in participation research. I included data

from 19 European countries⁴ in the analyses. I left out Russia and the Ukraine because they score not free and partially free, respectively, on the Freedom House index, which measures political rights and civil liberties.⁵ It is likely that this affects the types of participation in which people engage. I also did not include Estonia and Hungary because in these countries income level, which is an important indicator of people's resources available for participation, is not measured. Respondents younger than 18 are excluded because they are atypical on many independent variables (e.g., income, education or marital status). To be able to compare groups of participants, people who do not participate in any way are excluded from the analyses.

The three types of participation are measured by three or four items on specific forms of participation. This general introduction preceded the items: "There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following:". The only exceptions are two items on civic participation, 'Involved in work for voluntary or charitable organization' and 'Help or attend activities organized in local area', which are separate questions in the survey. The operationalizations are presented in Table 7.2, which also shows the percentage of respondents involved in these forms of participation. Here, to enable comparison with other studies, non-participants are included (as well as in Figure 7.1 and Table 7.3). Institutional political participation is measured by four items, namely, whether one is a member of a political party, has contacted a politician in the last 12 months, has worked in a political party or action group in the last 12 months or has worn a campaign badge or sticker in the last 12 months. Non-institutional political participation consists of whether one has signed a petition, demonstrated, or boycotted any products in the last 12 months. Civic participation is measured by whether one has worked in another organization or association (other than a political party or action group), has been involved in a voluntary or charitable organization, or has either helped organize or attended local activities. All of the items are dummies (did or did not participate in such activity in the last 12 months), except for the last two items in Table 7.2, which are recoded to 0 (never) or 1 (ranging from at least every six months to at least every week) to resemble the other items. A yes on one of the variables establishes a yes on being such a type of participant. This operationalization is chosen instead of taking the summary score, because participation in more than one activity does not inform us about the level of activity. Respondents with missing values on any of the ten

4 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia.

5 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world#VJBZ83trVkh>

forms of participation are excluded from the analyses, because they cannot be placed into a group of participants. Among the participants, this applies to 339 respondents, resulting in a final number of 17,398 respondents. Table 7.2 shows that civic participation (58%) is relatively popular compared to institutional political participation (23%) and non-institutional political participation (32%). It also tells us that 31% of respondents do not participate in any form of participation that is measured here.

Table 7.2 Measures of types of participation^a (in %)

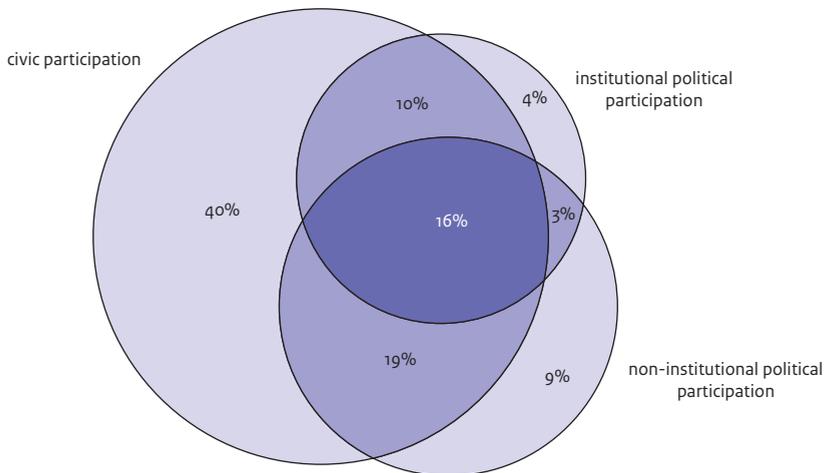
	No	Yes
Institutional political participation	77	23
Member of political party	95	5
Contacted politician or government official	85	15
Worked in political party or action group	96	4
Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker	92	8
Non-institutional political participation	68	32
Signed petition	76	24
Taken part in lawful public demonstration	94	6
Boycotted certain products	84	16
Civic participation	42	58
Worked in another organization or association	85	15
Involved in work for voluntary or charitable organizations	62	38
Help or attend activities organized in local area	53	47
No participation	69	31

a All but the last two items are answers to the following question: "There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following:"

Figure 7.1 shows the percentages of all possible combinations, from participants who participate in one, two, or three of the types of activities. The sizes of the circles relate to the size of the groups. Fifty-two percent of the participants are involved in one type of participation, 32% in two and 10% in all three types of participation. As we know from Table 7.2, the circle of institutional political participation is the smallest (23%), whereas civic participants form the largest group (58%). If we look at the overlap, the combination of institutional and non-institutional political participation is rare (3%), with 10% involved in both institutional political participation and civic participation and 19% involved in both non-institutional political participation and civic participation. From Figure 7.1, we can conclude on the one hand that the majority of participants specialize in one type of participation, as suggested in the literature (Verba & Nie, 1972; Keeter et al., 2002). On the other hand, the overlap indicates

that we cannot view these types of participants as entirely different people. Therefore, I control for this overlap in the analyses, which I clarify in the next section.

Figure 7.1 Overlap between types of participation



Turning to the independent variables, *societal pessimism* is measured by the summary score of two items: ‘For most people in [country], life is getting worse’ and ‘Hard to be hopeful about the future of the world’ ($r=.48$)⁶. These are the same two items as in the previous chapter (in which I used ESS data from 2012) and two out of the three items that measured societal pessimism in Chapter 3. The first shows a high level of similarity with an item used by Keyes for social actualization (Keyes, 1998; Keyes & Shapiro, 2004) and one used by Uslaner to measure (a lack of) optimism (Uslaner, 2002; Uslaner & Brown, 2005), which I both refer to as the opposite of social pessimism in Chapter 2. Although the correlation is lower here than in Chapter 3, it is the same as in Chapter 6. As I also argued in the previous chapter, these items both adequately measure the core of societal pessimism, given that they capture a diffusely directed concern over society *in general* going in the wrong direction. Moreover, although this correlation would ideally be higher, given the fact the first item is more socioeconomic and the second is very general, this is not overly surprising. Because both aspects are important to include in a measure of societal pessimism, the best option use them both. Table E1 of the Appendix E shows the correlation between these two items for all 19 countries separately, ranging from .32 in Spain to .55 in Germany.

6 The reported correlations are polychoric correlations in this chapter in the case of the 1-5 Likert scales.

Political trust is measured by the sum score of three items, which ask the extent to which people trust politicians, political parties, and the national Parliament on a scale from 0-10. These items show correlations ranging from .69 to .86. *Social trust* is also measured by the sum score of three items on a scale from 0-10: 'Most of the time people are helpful or mostly looking out for themselves', 'Most people try to take advantage of you if they had the chance, or try to be fair' and 'Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful in dealing with people'. The correlations range from .49 to .57. I standardized the resulting scales of societal pessimism, political trust and social trust to facilitate direct comparison of the effects. The correlations between the resulting scales are -.35 between societal pessimism and political trust, -.34 between societal pessimism and social trust, and .42 between political trust and social trust.

Of course, I control for a range of factors that are known in the literature to affect participation (e.g. Armingeon, 2007; Badescu & Neller, 2007). For example, gender, age groups (18-34, 35-54, 55+), resident in a rural area or small city versus (the suburbs of) a large city, marital status (married or official partner versus divorced/separated, widowed or single), size of household, number of children and level of religiosity ('How often attend religious services apart from special occasions', ranging 1 to 7: never to every day) are included as established demographic factors related to civic engagement. As an assurance that the measure of societal pessimism reflects only sociotropic concerns, I include a variable on satisfaction with life, which asks how satisfied one is with life as a whole currently, from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied).⁷

I also control for established factors in participation research, namely, resources, political interest and political efficacy. Resources are operationalized with educational level (low means whether lower secondary education was completed, medium means whether upper secondary education was completed, and high means whether post-secondary or tertiary education was completed), source of income (salary or profit versus pension, unemployment benefit, other benefit or other source) and level of income (household's total net income, in 12 categories). Political interest is measured with two variables: an item asking how interested one is in politics on a 1-4 scale, with 4 being not interested at all (item is reversed in analyses), and the ratio of time spent following political news and current affairs on TV to all time spent watching TV. Political efficacy is measured by the summary score of two items: 'Politics is too complicated to understand' (reversed) and 'Making mind up about political issues', ranging from 1-5, indicating very difficult to very easy ($r = .49$).

⁷ Excluding this variable yields the same conclusions.

Method

Because the three groups of participants overlap, separate logistic regression analyses for the three types of participation are the most appropriate research method. Alternative solutions would be to exclude all participants who engage in more than one type of participation or to perform multinomial analysis among all seven of the groups in Figure 7.1. The first excludes 48% of all respondents and is theoretically not valid: for instance, you are no less an institutional political participant if you are also an active in civic participation. The second alternative is not valid because it disables a comparison among the three types of participation. However, I need to control for the overlap in types of participation because the people who participate in more than one type come from a specific group – the relatively highly educated and efficacious – which otherwise dominates the analyses and yields different results.⁸ Therefore, I include a dummy in all of the analyses, which is 1 when respondents participate in more than one type of participation. The results of the logistic regressions of the three types of participation are then compared to draw conclusions. In all of the regressions, I eliminate all cross-national variance in the dependent variables by including country dummies. As robustness checks, the logistic analyses are repeated on the ten items that constitute the three types of participation separately and in all countries individually.

7.4 Results

Correlations between types of participation

Before going to the regression analyses, I show the correlations between the ten items on participation, both to examine the interrelatedness of the forms of participation and to show the effect of excluding non-participants. In the literature, correlations are often reported to be low (.0-.3) to moderate (.3-.5) between types of participation, whereas within types of participation, correlations range widely, from low to strong (>.5) (Verba & Nie, 1972; Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007). In Table 7.3, the correlations between all ten items on civic engagement are presented, with within-type correlations placed in boxes. For the correlations in Table 7.3, non-participants are also included. In line with the literature, the correlations are generally low to moderate *between* types of participation. The only four between-type correlations that reach .5 and can be called

8 Without this control variable, the results on the societal attitudes are the same, but some control variables show a different pattern. For instance, the effect of being highly educated is positively significant for all three types of participation without this control variable because the group that engages in more than one type of participation is more often highly educated.

strong are those of wearing a badge during a campaign (no.4) with signing a petition, demonstrating and working in a civic organization. Working in a political and in a civic organization are also relate strongly. Again in line with the literature, the *within*-type correlations vary considerably, from .40 to .79.

Table 7.3 Correlations between the items on participation *including* non-participants^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. member of a political party	1									
2. contacted a politician	.45	1								
3. worked in political organization	.79	.62	1							
4. worn or displayed badge	.39	.39	.56	1						
5. signed a petition	.16	.37	.37	.51	1					
6. demonstrated	.21	.32	.48	.57	.57	1				
7. boycotted products	.08	.31	.23	.39	.52	.39	1			
8. worked in civic organization	.39	.49	.57	.51	.43	.37	.35	1		
9. voluntary organization	.27	.35	.38	.35	.30	.25	.27	.60	1	
10. local activities	.20	.33	.31	.26	.30	.24	.23	.40	.62	1

a These are tetrachoric correlations because the variables are dummies. The correlations shown are significant at $p < .05$

Table 7.4 Correlations between the items on participation *excluding* non-participants^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. member of a political party										
2. contacted a politician	.36	1								
3. worked in political organization	.76	.55	1							
4. worn or displayed badge	.31	.29	.50	1						
5. signed a petition		.21	.25	.40	1					
6. demonstrated	.12	.22	.42	.50	.47	1				
7. boycotted products	-.05	.16	.12	.28	.38	.28	1			
8. worked in civic organization	.29	.38	.50	.41	.27	.27	.21	1		
9. voluntary organization	.08	.12	.22	.15	-.02	.05		.43	1	
10. local activities	-.05	.02	.09		-.11		-.12	.11	.24	1

a These are tetrachoric correlations because the variables are dummies. The correlations shown are significant at $p < .05$

In Table 7.4, the correlations are shown for the participants only. And that paints a different picture. The correlations are overall much lower, some lose significance, and some turn out to be negative. This points to several important conclusions. First, correlations between types of participation are ‘artificially’ high because non-participation on one type is positively related to non-participation on another type. This explains why correlations are lower when we exclude non-participants. Second,

participation in one type does not always increase participation in another type. Instead, some types of participation show a negative correlation, meaning the opposite is in fact true. Finally, these correlations underline the need to establish what differentiates types of participants, because they are even less alike when we look at them without the ‘noise’ of the non-participants.

Examining differences among types of participants

Table 7.5 shows the results of the regression analyses (the country dummies are shown in Table E2 of the Appendix E) and Table 7.6 summarizes which hypotheses are supported and which are rejected (the latter between brackets). If we first look at the effects of societal pessimism, the results are in line with two of the three hypotheses. Societal pessimism is positively related to non-institutional political participation and thus, people involved in non-institutionalized, protest types of participation are indeed relatively pessimistic about society, which confirms H2. There is support for H3 because there is a significant negative relationship between societal pessimism and civic participation. The relationship between societal pessimism and institutional political participation is not significant and the expected negative relationship (H1) therefore is not supported by the data.

When we turn to political trust, we see that it is positively related to institutional political participation, as anticipated by H4. Those involved in political parties and with politicians indeed are more trusting of these actors and institutions than people who do not participate in this way. The expected negative relationship with non-institutional political participation is also confirmed (H5). These “protest” types of political participation are performed by participants who have relatively low trust in political actors or institutions. The hypothesis on the negative relationship between political trust and civic participation needs to be rejected because they are actually positively related. However, this unexpected finding does not hold in the robustness checks that I discuss below, and therefore, we should not pay attention to the positive effect but instead interpret it as a non-finding. Therefore, political trust is not a differentiating characteristic for civic participation. This differs from earlier studies that report this group as low in political trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eliasoph, 1998). One explanation for this different finding could be that these previous studies focus on a broader range of civic participation and that they include social participation.

Moving on to social trust, Table 7.5 shows social trust to be negatively related to institutional political participation, as hypothesized (H7). People involved in institutional politics are less trusting of the general other than are other types of participants. Social trust is positively related to civic participation (H8) and non-institutional political participation (H9), in line with the literature.

Table 7.5 Logistic regression analyses of three types of participation^a

	Institutional political participation		Non-institutional political participation		Civic participation	
	b	se	b	se	b	Se
Demographic characteristics						
male	0.09*	(.04)	-0.46***	(.04)	0.35***	(.05)
age (18-34)						
* 35-54	0.18**	(.06)	-0.12*	(.06)	0.07	(.07)
*55+	0.31***	(.08)	-0.32***	(.08)	0.01	(.09)
City	-0.22***	(.04)	0.43***	(.05)	-0.26***	(.05)
marital status (married or partnership)						
* divorced or separated	0.01	(.07)	0.12	(.07)	-0.16*	(.08)
* widowed or partner died	-0.18	(.09)	-0.06	(.09)	0.13	(.10)
* single	-0.10	(.06)	0.25***	(.06)	-0.21**	(.07)
household size	0.02	(.02)	-0.05*	(.03)	0.10***	(.03)
children living at home	-0.13*	(.06)	0.04	(.07)	0.01	(.07)
attendance religious services	0.02	(.02)	-0.16***	(.02)	0.27***	(.02)
satisfaction with life	-0.01	(.01)	-0.03**	(.01)	0.03**	(.01)
Resources						
education (medium)						
* low	0.11	(.06)	-0.19**	(.06)	-0.04	(.06)
* high	0.10*	(.05)	0.05	(.05)	0.08	(.06)
source of income (profit/salary)						
* pension	0.06	(.07)	-0.16*	(.07)	0.06	(.08)
* unemployment benefit	0.37*	(.16)	-0.17	(.16)	-0.00	(.16)
* other benefit	0.32*	(.13)	-0.00	(.14)	-0.07	(.14)
* other	0.29*	(.14)	0.17	(.15)	-0.12	(.16)
Household income	-0.05***	(.01)	0.00	(.01)	0.03*	(.01)
Political interest and efficacy						
ratio political news / all news	0.09	(.07)	0.08	(.08)	0.08	(.09)
political interest	0.31***	(.03)	0.17***	(.03)	-0.23***	(.03)
political efficacy	0.08***	(.01)	0.02	(.01)	-0.08***	(.01)
Societal outlook						
societal pessimism	-0.04	(.02)	0.12***	(.03)	-0.14***	(.03)
political trust	0.08**	(.03)	-0.18***	(.03)	0.06*	(.03)
social trust	-0.15***	(.03)	0.07**	(.03)	0.10***	(.03)
more than 1 type of participation	3.02***	(.05)	3.00***	(.04)	2.16***	(.06)

a Coefficients are log odds, with * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Overall, the results confirm seven out of the nine hypotheses on the relationships between the three societal attitudes and three types of participation (see Table 7.6). The societal outlook of the three groups of participants can be summarized as follows: institutional participants trust politics rather than people, non-institutional political

participants are societal pessimists who trust people rather than politics, and civic participants are societal optimists who trust other people.

Table 7.6 Confirmed and rejected (between brackets) hypotheses

	Institutional political participation	Non-institutional political participation	Civic participation
Societal pessimism	(-)	+	-
Political trust	+	-	(-)
Social trust	-	+	+

The control variables used are selected for their known importance to the question of whether people participate. Therefore, it is interesting to see the extent to which they also differentiate between participants. Starting with the demographic factors, men are more often involved in civic participation, whereas women are more often involved in non-institutional participation. The youngest age group (18-35) is more often involved in non-institutional political participation, whereas the oldest age group (55+) is more often involved in institutional political participation. Non-institutional political participation is more often found in urban areas, whereas the other two types of participation are more common in rural areas. Being single increases the chance of non-institutional political participation but decreases civic participation. Religiosity increases civic participation.

Turning to the established participation factors, low-educated people are less often active in non-institutional political participation than the other two types of participation, whereas the institutional political participants are slightly more often highly educated. In addition, being unemployed or on benefits increase the chance of institutional political participation, as is having a low income, whereas a high income increases civic participation. Civic participants stand out because they are not politically interested, and they show lower levels of political efficacy.

Most studies do not find contrasting effects of demographic factors or 'established participation factors'. It is likely that I find such effects here because non-participants are excluded, which creates a reference group of other participants. Additionally, I control for the overlap between groups of participants. The results are intuitively logical and in line with the one study that does find that institutional and non-institutional participants differ on these factors (Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010).

Finally, it is informative to report the pseudo-explained variance of the models. This is artificially high in the models as presented in Table 7.5 because of the inclusion of the control variable of whether people are active in more than one type of participation, namely, 29%, 36% and 18% for the models of institutional political participation, non-

institutional political participation and civic participation, respectively. Without that variable, the explained variance reaches 6%, 11% and 6%. These numbers are quite low, but they are not unexpected given earlier studies on participation (e.g. Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2003).

I performed two robustness checks on the results. First, I analyzed the ten participation items separately with logistic regressions to check whether doing so would yield the same results. Table 7.7 shows the effects of societal attitudes on institutional political participation, non-institutional political participation and civic participation as reported in Table 7.5 in bold signs. Below each type of participation, we see the effects for the individual items, with significant effects indicated by plus and minus signs and a non-significant effect indicated by an empty cell. Although as could be expected, there are some deviances from the findings in Table 7.5, the results support the previous analyses. Within all three types of participation, the effects of societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust are in line with those in Table 7.5 for most or all of the items on participation. The only exception is the unexpected positive relationship of political trust and civic participation, which appears to be driven by the item on local activities only and therefore should not be interpreted as evidence that contradicts H6.

Second, I ran the models per country to see whether the results can be repeated in single countries. Although this yields small, skewed groups of participants per country, it is still informative on the robustness of the results. These country models generally resemble the findings in Table 7.5: in the majority of countries, the same effects are found with one-sided tests ($p < .10$). However, there are a few important differences. The unexpected positive association of political trust is only positive in two countries and therefore should not be interpreted as strong evidence opposing H6. The significant relationship of social trust with non-institutional political participation and civic participation appears only in 5 and 4 countries, respectively. This means that the hypotheses on social trust (H8 and H9) are driven by a relatively small number of countries and therefore, they should be treated with some reservations. This finding is surprising because it contradicts the comprehensive literature on the relationship between social capital and civic engagement. It could be the case that social trust is significant in a small number of countries because I compare participants among each other, not to the general population.

Table 7.7 Effects of attitudes on form of institutional political participation, non-institutional political participation and civic participation.

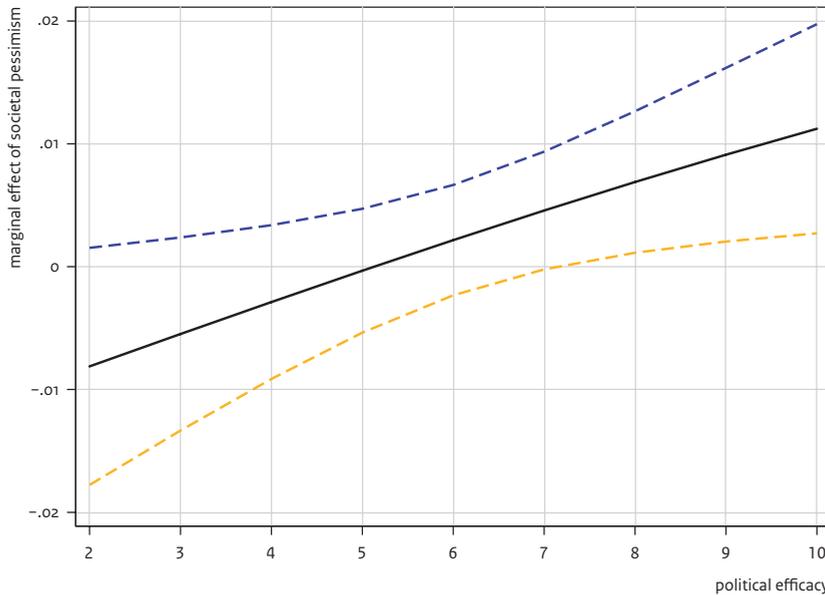
	Societal pessimism	Political trust	Social trust
Institutional political participation			
Member party		+	-
Contacted politician	-		-
Worked in political organization		+	-
Worn/displayed badge		+	
Non-institutional political participation	+	-	
Signed petition	+	-	+
Demonstrated	+		
Boycotted products	+	-	
Civic participation	-	+	+
Worked in civic organization	-		+
Voluntary organization	-		+
Local activities	-	+	+

What about societal pessimism among non-participants?

Although this chapter focuses on differentiating participants, to examine whether societal pessimism is higher among non-participants than among participants adds to our understanding of this attitude. If one is pessimistic about society, one can either raise one's voice and turn to action or refrain from any involvement whatsoever (i.e., the exit option, as discussed by Hirschman (1970)). Although causality is an important issue here (are participants less pessimistic because they are able to put their sentiments into action?), it is still worthwhile to briefly answer this question with a quick look. In descriptive terms, societal pessimism seems related to non-participation. Taking the respondents who answer a 4 or a 5 on the two items on societal pessimism, 30% can be labeled as societal pessimists. We know from Table 7.2 that 69% of the respondents are involved in any type of civic engagement. Among the pessimists, this share is 62%, and among the non-pessimists, this share is 72%, which is a significant difference. This result seems to point to an exit pattern. However, a logistic regression in which non-participants are compared to all participants, using the same variables as in Table 7.5, shows a non-significant finding for societal pessimism. Thus, controlling for all other factors, there is no difference in societal pessimism between participants and non-participants.

Because the results in this chapter show that non-institutional political participants score high on societal pessimism compared to institutional political and civic participants, it could be the case that there is no significant difference in societal pessimism between non-participants and participants because it can be found in both exit and voice options, namely, in refraining from action or engaging in non-institutional political participation. Therefore, I explored the differences between non-participants and non-institutional political participants only, excluding institutional political and civic participants from the analysis. Again, the effect of societal pessimism is not significant, meaning that those groups do indeed have equal levels of societal pessimism, controlling for all other factors.

Figure 7.2 The marginal effect of societal pessimism on participation in non-institutional political participation compared to non-participation for different levels of political efficacy



It could be the case that non-participants and non-institutional political participants show equal levels of societal pessimism, but that their level of political efficacy explains whether societal pessimism transforms that pessimism into action. Indeed, this is the case. Comparing societal pessimism between non-participants and non-institutional political participation for different levels of internal political efficacy shows that while pessimism is not significant for low levels of political efficacy, it is for high levels, as can be seen in Figure 7.2. This means that for people with low political efficacy, societal pessimism is not significant; they will not participate regardless of their level of societal pessimism. For people with high levels of political efficacy, societal pessimism shows a positive effect on non-institutional political participation.

7.5 Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter aimed to examine the societal impact of societal pessimism by investigating how it relates to different types of political and civic participation. More generally, this chapter aimed to provide insight into what differentiates groups of participants from each other. Are participants all of one kind or are they different groups of people, each with a one of a kind set of characteristics? The large literature on participation has focused predominantly on causes of participation, leaving similarities and differences between participants understudied. Additionally, the studies that do examine various types of participants do not compare them with each other; moreover, they include

non-participants in their analyses, which blurs the picture. This chapter asked whether we can differentiate between institutional political, non-institutional political and civic participants based on their societal outlook. In line with the matching hypothesis (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Granik, 2005), I proposed that people engage in participation in an organization, group or movement in which people have the same world view. This outlook is likely to differ with respect to where people seek to make improvements: within or outside institutional settings and within or outside the political setting. Three attitudes are theorized to differentiate among types of participants, namely, societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust.

As a first step, I find that excluding non-participants from the analyses is quite important if we examine something as straightforward as correlations. These are already only moderate while including participants, but decrease substantially, and in some cases even lose significance or turn out to be negative instead of positive, when non-participants are excluded. This underlines both the need to differentiate among types of participants and to exclude non-participants from the process.

The logistic-regression analyses confirm seven of the nine hypotheses on the relationships between societal pessimism, political trust, and social trust and the three types of participation. Societal pessimism is positively related to non-institutional political participation and negatively related to civic participation; however, it is not negatively to institutional political participation as expected. Political trust is, as expected, positively related to institutional political participation and negatively related to non-institutional political participation. The expected negative relationship with civic participation is not supported. Social trust is negatively related to institutional political participation and positively related to both non-institutional political and civic participation. Analyzing the ten items on participation separately instead of taking the three categories as a robustness check yields the same conclusions. However, a reservation must be made with respect to the final two effects of social trust – on non-institutional political and civic participation – because they are driven by a small group of countries. In summary, if we compare types of participants with each other, we can characterize the institutional political participants as trusting politics rather than people, the non-institutional political participants as societal pessimists who trust people rather than politics, and the civic participants as societal optimists who trust other people.

This chapter also sheds more light on the nature of societal pessimism. Societal pessimists are people who either voice their discontent in protest-type activities (such as demonstrating, signing a petition or boycotting products) or do not participate at all. In contrast, they are less often involved in (long-term) organizational, institutional participation of either a political or civic type. This underlines a specific element

of societal unease, namely, distrust of human capability, which means that societal pessimists do not expect that improvement in our conditions can easily be made in the current (institutional and organizational) settings. Furthermore, non-participants are just as likely as non-institutional political participants to be societally pessimistic. Only among those with high levels of political efficacy does societal pessimism increase the likelihood of participating in non-institutional political participation. This means that for people with confidence in their political skills, societal pessimism results in participation, but this is only true for non-institutional political participation, whereas for people low in this type of confidence, societal pessimism does not translate into participation.

The results of this chapter have several implications. First, although societal attitudes are unable to examine causal patterns in participation, they show distinct patterns among participants and therefore can inspire more research into the role of attitudes and motivation in participation. Further research is needed to shed light on the question whether people internalize these attitudes as a result of their participation or whether they become involved in a type of participation because of their particular outlook on society. Although it is likely that both propositions are true, this is very much a hunch.

Second, future research should pay more attention to the influence of personality in differentiating types of participants from each other. Research on the influence of personality characteristics on participation in the public domain is not often integrated with political and sociological factors, with two promising exceptions. Bekkers shows that compared to non-participants, participants in political participation score relatively low on agreeableness, whereas those in non-political participation score higher on openness (Bekkers, 2005). Den Ridder et al. find that civic participants score higher on openness and extraversion compared to the general population (Den Ridder, Dekker, & Van Houwelingen, 2015). Therefore, this line of research seems to be a promising route to increase the understanding of what differentiate types of participants from each other.

Furthermore, the results add insight into the alleged decline in participation (Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2004). A decline in participation, especially institutional political participation, is unlikely to be counterbalanced by non-institutional political participation, because the two types of participation attract different types of people and there is particularly little overlap between institutional and non-institutional political participation. In addition to the differences in attitudes, the analyses show that non-institutional political participants are relatively young (18-34), whereas political participants are more often 55+.

Moreover, because the results show participants to come from different groups, the influence of one type of participation versus the other becomes more important. If civic engagement is seen as a way to raise one's voice and thereby to play an important role in the functioning of democracy, the influence of one type of voice over the other becomes more important when those voices belong to different people. Indeed, the types of political participation are rather different in terms of their perceived effectiveness (Hooghe & Marien, 2012). This underlines the importance of differentiating types of participation from each other in research on participation.