

Participation in context

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Propositions accompanying the thesis

“PARTICIPATION IN CONTEXT: CONTEXTUAL AND INDIVIDUAL DETERMINANTS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE AND THE NETHERLANDS”

by Rik Linssen

1. Citizens cumulatively engage in conventional and unconventional political actions. Citizens who engage in more difficult and time-consuming forms of political action also engage in easier, less time consuming, political actions, in Western Europe.
2. There is neither a trend towards massive withdrawal from participation in politics, nor a trend of shifting repertoires from conventional to unconventional political actions in Europe in recent decades. Rather, between 1980 and 2010, levels of conventional and unconventional action in Europe have remained stable.
3. The degree of ethnic diversity of countries in Europe as well as the degree of ethnic diversity in the context of neighbourhoods and even smaller localities in the Netherlands does not affect citizen's levels of conventional and unconventional political participation.
4. Although conventional and unconventional modes of political participation are often considered qualitatively different phenomena in the literature, higher educated individuals participate more in both conventional and unconventional political actions compared to lower educated citizens.
5. The recent economic downturn in the Netherlands only affected levels of political participation to a small extent and privileged and underprivileged societal groups did not systematically diverge in their levels of political participation.
6. In order to understand citizens' political behaviour, researchers need to take into account the context in which these citizens reside explicit in theories and empirical analyses.
7. Fluctuations in attitudinal aspects of social cohesion, such as social, political, and institutional trust, do not unequivocally result in changes in behavioral aspects of social cohesion, such as political participation.
8. As democracies wellbeing depends on actively engaged citizens, disruptions in social cohesion in general and lower levels of political participation particularly, have the potential to drain the lifeblood out of democracy.