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WHEN AGE MATTERS: PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT:

After a long history, research on the relation between participative and communicative practices was revived in the late 1990s because of the proliferation of new media. New studies have taken into account both online and offline participation and the ability of new media to provide citizens with easier access to information and a broader repertoire of actions. In this article, which is based on a representative survey of the adult Czech population and a survey of Czech adolescents, we address participative and communicative practices as intertwined sets that are typically preferred by certain groups of citizens. As media-related and political practices usually vary due to generational and historical experience, the aim is to discover whether people with similar generational backgrounds and with similar repertoires of action manifest similar sets of communication practices, i.e. similar media ensembles. Hence, we build this study on the assumption that the political- and media-related agencies are structured by historical experience as well as by biographical experience linked with life-cycle phases. Using cluster analysis, we focus on the various participative and communicative practices employed by three distinct adult generational groups and by contemporary adolescents, all of whom experienced the process of socialization in their own specific historical contexts.

KEY WORDS:

adolescents, generations, mass media, new media, news reception, online participation, political participation

Introduction

With the swift decrease of electoral participation in Western and post-socialist countries, the topics of political participation and political communication have gained – across the academic disciplines – significant attention in past two decades. Moreover, since the late 1990s, research on the relation between political

participation and media practices, and specifically those linked with the use of ICT (information and communication technologies), has become a prominent topic.[1] As use of media comes with political consequences, at least in terms of issue salience[2] or the way people engage in political processes,[3] the research into the relation between political and media practices is obviously not a new topic and it often builds upon classical studies from the mid-20th century.[4] However, even current studies usually focus only on selected reception or interaction practices (typically news reception and news discussions) and on their links with particular forms of political participation.[5]

In this article, we employ a different point of view. We draw on the notion that participative and communicative practices are not discrete, singular forms of agency. Instead, they should be seen as complex and temporarily variable sets of practices. Thus, in the case of political participation, we use the concept of *repertoires of action*.[6] And, in relation to communication practices, we use the concept of *media ensembles* that encompass the channels our respondents use for the reception of news, as well as face-to-face and mediated interactions.[7]

At the same time, we take into consideration that participative and communicative practices can be shaped by belonging to a particular generation. By this we simply mean that various contextual influences linked with respondents' ages could play a role in the whole picture – not only the age itself, but also the historical specifics of the era of their political socialisation and/or their previous political experience.

Therefore, with a predominant emphasis on participative practices, we ask whether it is possible to identify – within the distinct generational groups – **clusters of respondents who manifest specific constellations of repertoires of action and whether these clusters differ in their media ensembles**. The answers draw on the analyses of two survey data sets collected in 2014 in the Czech Republic, one focused on the participative and communicative practices of the adult population and the other focused on adolescents (aged 14–17).

Political Participation and Communicative Practices

Functioning democracy is crucially conditioned by citizen engagement in the political process and public events.[8] Though particular theories of democracy see the role of civic activities and the citizens' role in the political process differently,[9] it is voting that is considered to be crucial and, more or less, the primary form of participation across the whole theoretical landscape.[10] Electoral behaviour is, at the same time, a sensitive and important issue because of the continual decline of voter turnout that has been witnessed in Western

countries[11] as well as in the Czech Republic, and even in some of the other post-socialist countries where the transition from the non-democratic regimes was initially accompanied by high political mobilisation.[12]

Importantly, while voter turnout has been dropping, a new hope linked with the Internet specifically, and new media in general, has emerged in vernacular and expert discourses about the political and public spheres. The early – highly speculative, enthusiastic, and techno-centric – debate on the democratic potential of new media powerfully influenced the political, as well as theoretical, notion of the topic.[13] This notion included optimistic expectations that employed several arguments: new media were supposed to reverse the trend of decreasing interest in politics; they were expected to lower participation barriers and to become an affordable and easily accessible source of political information; they promised to enable a new public sphere and to recreate the political community; and last but not least, new media were seen as a tool for opening political participation to the excluded and disadvantaged, including the youngest and politically detached generation.[14] Unsurprisingly, these expectations were not fulfilled; the consequences of new media for political agency were revealed to be rather ambiguous. Nevertheless, researches on the relations among new media and participation, and on the new, online forms of political participation and communication, remain popular in international academia,[15] as well as in the Central and Eastern European context,[16] addressing both adult citizens and the younger generation that is being socialised with new media in their everyday lives.[17]

While a broader consensus on the actual causal mechanisms is lacking, the current understanding is usually based on a shared theoretical assumption that exposure to information could increase the knowledge of politics and community, and that could eventually trigger civic and political participation.[18, 19] However, the debate – challenged by numerous calls for the revision of concepts not reflecting recent changes in political behaviour – is highly fragmented in the theoretical and conceptual apparatus that is used to define both participation and communication practices.[20] Therefore, on the one hand, many studies still employ outdated

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19   Below we distinguish between *political* and *civic* participation. While *political* participation addresses the sphere of institutionalised politics, *civic* participation targets the broader public space beyond the institutionalised politics (remark by the authors of the article).
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and inaccurate concepts of participation,[21] and, on the other hand, the field of political communication has witnessed numerous attempts for the reconsideration of the concepts that emphasise the blurred lines that separate participation and the uses of new media for political purposes.[22]

Following these debates and building on our previous research,[23] in this article we explicitly distinguish between participative and communicative practices. We define *political participation* – as we are inspired by works by N. Carpentier and J. Teorell et al. – as any action that aims to take part in decision-making process-es[24] and that takes form of an intentional action that addresses the political field to uphold demands.[25] Such action is structured by opinions and values but it is ontologically distinct from them. This concept of political participation does not include the broader, politically-oriented *communication practices*, which do not explic-itly address the political field and which do not aim directly to uphold demands. However, these communica-tion practices need to be kept in the frame because they envelop and condition the actual participation.

Thus, in our model, we talk about the communication practices of *reception* and *interaction*. *Reception practices* include the reception of mediated news content and of content produced and distributed by other individual or collective actors (e.g. reading posts and comments on online social networks, weblogs, etc.). *Interaction practices* include interpersonal and group interactions, both direct and technologically mediated (e.g. debates with family members or friends, using messengers or other technologies for micro-coordination with others, interacting in online debates, etc.).

With these concepts of *participation*, *reception* and *interaction*, we can more clearly grasp the role that news reception and interpersonal interactions play in participation, i.e. work with the assumption that infor-mation shared by new media is the source for further political discussion and that this discussion broadens the shared knowledge and increases the possibility of participation.[26] The positive effect of reading about partici-pation has been recently evidenced by M. Sotirovic and J. M. McLeod,[27] and a similar effect has been linked with the reception of television news[28] and, importantly, the effect was observed across all generations, includ-ing the young cohorts.[29]

Moreover, other studies suggest that even face-to-face and online interactions are positively linked with civic and political participation.[30] Nevertheless, a more detailed understanding to the link between online communication practices and participation is needed because these studies suggest that different forms of participation can be linked with different specific communication practices. This is one of the reasons why we find it beneficial to look closer at the types of repertoires and their relationships with media ensembles.

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Political Participation and Generational Groups

The participative practices experienced and practiced a proper and important change over time.[31] They are structured by a wide range of influences, including the political and historical context of political socialisation and by the particular biographical experiences that form political behaviour.[32] This assumption is at the heart of the con-cept of *political generation,* which describes a cohort influenced by shared socialisation factors that are typical for a specific social context and historical period.[33] The formation of a political generation could be linked with so-called *impressionable years*, which are the period of life when adolescents, through interactions with others, go through political socialisation and eventually stabilise their political attitudes and patterns of behaviour.[34] Such political gen-erations – re-constructed as ideal typical models – could be defined by specific attitudes and agency and, therefore, serve as the key for the interpretation of major political changes. Moreover, political behaviour could be influenced by age itself,[35] because it even refers to the shared life cycle and to the social actors' developmental phase.

The generation-based specifics of the repertoires of participative practices and media ensembles, thus, could be understood as the permeation of socialisation experiences and age-linked specifics. It is worth noting that this point of view is, in terms of the evidence, necessarily limited in this study. Both of our data sets enable us to describe the distribution of the participative and communicative practices but – since they do not employ a longitudinal design – they do not enable us to clearly distinguish the generation- and age-based influences.

At the same time, it is necessary to underline that the forthcoming text does not talk about political genera-tions *stricto sensu,* but rather about broader *generation groups*. For the purpose of the study, we work with three generation groups of Czech adults and with one group of contemporary Czech adolescents. The delimitation of the generation groups – inevitably reductive and arbitrary to some degree – is, firstly, motivated by our intention to take into account the crucial changes within the political and socio-technical contexts of Czechoslovakia (and, later, in the Czech Republic). Secondly, we aim to create proportional sub-samples that acknowledge that more detailed fragmentation of the original sample (N=1998) would be impractical for the purpose of the analysis.

First generation group, born 1954 and earlier (aged 60+)

The respondents in this group were politically socialised under the most specific circumstances when compared to the others – the oldest in the late 1930s during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, and the majority of the group in the post-World War II, limited democracy and in the era of Stalinism (the 1950s). Since the 1990s, this generation group shows the highest average voter turnout.[36] These respondents were socialised in a "pre-television" context, where the main news media were the press and radio – and these two media types still play an important role in this group's practices.[37] The youngest of the generation group were confronted with television broadcasting in their impressionable years but, in comparison to the role of radio and newspapers at the time, TV could be considered marginal.[38] Later in their lives, the respondents from this group became a routine TV audience; however, in the case of new media, they remain among the least frequent users.[39]

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Second generation group, born 1954–1979 (aged 35–59)

The respondents in the second generation group were born in the later, post-Stalinism phase of the communist regime. They are currently at a productive age and even the oldest of them have experienced the new democratic system since the relatively young age of 35. The voter turnout of this group is lower than in the previous case.[40] These respondents grew up in an environment where TV was fully domesticated and a more or less dominant medium; they usually had their first experience with new media in their late adolescence or in adulthood.

Third generation group, born 1980–1996 (aged 18–34)

This group was made up of young adults. The older of them experienced the end of Communism in 1989 as children. They were politically socialised in the 1990s and the early 2000s, in a period of "trust into the political regime",[41] and this could be illustrated by the optimism and trust they manifested in relation to the societal and political changes in the 1990s.[42] The younger respondents of this group were politically socialised in past decade. The whole third generation group shares the experience of the decrease of political legitimacy of the newly established political institutions. This generation group shows the lowest voter turnout of the whole sample. At the same time, the cohorts in this group were the first to experience socialisation in the context of newly emerging new media. Networked and mobile technologies have been a routine part of their everyday lives, at least since their adolescence; on the other hand, in their case, we witness a continual departure from some of the more traditional media channels.[43]

Adolescents, born 1997–2000 (aged 14–17)

The youngest group included in the analysis is rather specific. Firstly, these respondents are too young to have the right to vote and, moreover, they are living during the period of impressionable years. Therefore, we know less about their political behaviour than in the other generation groups. At the same time, in contrast to all three previous generation groups, the group of adolescents – collected in a separate survey – is strictly consistent as a generation. These respondents are being fully politically socialised in a context of liberal democracy and capitalism, which makes them more oriented towards materialistic values.[44] One of the crucial characteristics of the adolescents is that the new information and communication technologies have been a taken-for-granted part of their lifeworld since they were born. In other words, new media has belonged in their everyday lives since their primary socialisation. Accordingly, the existing evidence proves that most of this generation's political participation takes place on the Internet.[45]

Research Goals

This study aims to identify – within the four generation groups – clusters of people who prefer certain types of political behaviour (i.e. certain types of repertoires of action) and to examine these clusters to find out whether they share similar patterns of communication practices (i.e. media ensembles). We expect to find differences between the generation groups, both in repertoires of action and in media ensembles; these differences, we suggest, will be explicated by our assumptions that the respondents' agencies are shaped by experienced historical contexts and by life cycle.

Therefore, the research questions are:
- What clusters of respondents defined by specific repertoires of action can we find in each of the four generation groups?
  - How do these clusters differ from others in their participative practices?
  - How do these clusters differ from others in terms of socio-demographics and their interest in politics?
- What are the media ensembles of the identified clusters?
  - How do the clusters identified on the basis of repertoires of action differ in their media ensembles?

Methods and Data

This research study builds on two surveys conducted in the Czech Republic in 2014. The first survey mapped the participative and communicative practices of a representative sample of the adult Czech population (18+, N=1998). The second focused on the participative practices of Czech adolescents (aged 14-17, N=1959). Information about the survey of the adult population will be marked with the letter "A". Information linked with the survey of adolescents will be marked with the letter "B".

A. The survey of the adult population took place from October to November 2014, using CAPI and quota sampling. Further details are available in research reports published in 2015.[46] For the purpose of this article, this sample was split into three subsamples of the previously defined three adult generation groups.[47]

B. The survey of adolescents took place from May to June 2014, using CAWI or pen-and-paper data collection. The sampling was based on randomly chosen primary and secondary schools in four of the 14 Czech Regions (South Moravia, Pardubice, Zlín, and Vysočina):[48]

Variables

Variables identifying participative practices

A cluster analysis was conducted using dichotomous indicators of political participation in order to determine whether a respondent had practiced certain activity in the preceding 12 months. Since the two projects differed in some aspects, some of the items are more difficult to compare. While Survey A was oriented towards political participation in a narrow sense, Survey B addressed a broader scope of activities and even indicated civic participation (like using questions about societal and environmental issues). As a result, the adolescents (B) in this article show obviously higher activity in some of the indicators when compared to the adult respondents (A). Therefore, in comparing the adult generation groups with the adolescents, we identify the mere presence or absence of certain types of participation instead of the statistically more precise (but unavailable) comparison of absolute levels of participation.

As the indicators of political participation, we included in the cluster analysis *voting in elections* (for the adult respondents only, Survey A); *taking part in a protest*; *signing a printed petition*; *signing an online petition*; expressing *support for a politician / political party / a political event*; expressing *online support* of some kind;

40   LINEK, L.: *Kam se ztratili voliči? Vysvětlení vývoje volební účasti v České republice v letech 1990-2010.* Brno : CDK, 2013, p. 103-105.
41   LINEK, L.: *Kam se ztratili voliči? Vysvětlení vývoje volební účasti v České republice v letech 1990-2010.* Brno : CDK, 2013, p. 193.
42   MACEK, P., MARKOVÁ, I.: Trust and Distrust in Old and New Democracies. In MARKOVÁ, I. (ed.): *Trust and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Europe.* Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 173-194.
43   MACEK, J. et al.: *Old and New Media in Everyday Life of Czech Audiences (Research Report).* Brno : Masaryk University, 2015, p. 8-9.
44   ŠEREK, J. et al.: Twenty Years after the Velvet Revolution: Shifts in Czech Adolescents' Perceptions of Family, School and Society. In *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 2014, Vol. 29, No. 6, p. 738-764.
45   ŠEREK, J., PETROVIČOVÁ, Z., PORUBANOVÁ-NORQUIST, M.: *Mladí a nevšední.* Brno : MUNI Press, 2012, p. 73-90.

46   For more information, see: MACKOVÁ, A., MACEK, J.: *Old and New Media in Everyday Life of Czech Audiences (Research Report).* Brno : Masaryk University, 2015; MACEK, J. et al.: *Old and New Media in Everyday Life of Czech Audiences (Research Report).* Brno : Masaryk University, 2015.
47   *The first generational subgroup* consists of respondents born in 1954 and earlier (N=446; Mage=68.34, SD=5.72, 55 % women); *the second generational subgroup* consists of respondents born between 1955 and 1979 (N=818; Mage=46.27, SD=7.16, 54 % women); *the third generational subgroup* consists of respondents born between 1980 and 1996 (N=556; Mage=26.07, SD=5.21, 54 % women). Respondents with missing data on key variables were excluded from the analysis (remark by the authors).
48   N=1959; Mage=15.60, SD=.70; 52 % women. Students from 68 schools and 130 classes (in 9th and 10th grades) participated in the survey. The students of 9th grade comprised 45 % of the sample (of these, 93 % were in the 9th grade of a primary school and 7 % in the corresponding grade of academically-oriented grammar schools); 55 % were students of 10th grade (70 % in the first grade of vocationally-oriented high schools, 23 % in the first grade of four-year academically-oriented grammar schools, and 7 % in the corresponding year of six- or eight-year academically-oriented grammar schools). Respondents were from four (out of 14) regions in the Czech Republic: 36 % from the South Moravia Region, 16 % from the Pardubice Region, 22 % from the Zlín Region, and 26 % from the Vysočina Region (remark by the authors).

and *contacting a politician offline* or *online*. Out of the eight total indicators, three refer to online political activities, three refer to the same activities but done offline and two refer to offline activities that have no online counterpart.

Variables identifying communicative practices

Regarding communication practices, we focused on the reception of news and on interaction practices. Indicated reception practices included reception through broadcasting and print media — *watching news on TV or listening to it on radio* and *reading news in print version*; and using online sources — *using social networking sites [SNS] for receiving news* and *receiving news from the Internet*. The interaction practices were measured using two indicators: *discussing politics with family* and *discussing politics with friends*.

Other explanatory variables

The other used variables were socio-demographic factors — *gender, education* [A], and *type of school* [B] — and declared *interest in politics*.

Analysis

The data were analysed using hierarchical cluster analysis (using SPSS.20), which was conducted separately for each of the four subsamples. Since the data was of binary character, we used a *complete linkage* clustering method with *simple matching*. The cluster analyses included the following variables: *printed petition, online petition, protest, contacting a politician, support, online support,* and *voting in elections* (the last was not included for the group of adolescents).

The final number of clusters was selected upon the consideration of the change in the agglomeration coefficients and the inspection of the dendrogram. The differences in gender, education, SNS, news consumption, and frequency of political discussions were examined using chi-square test (or Fischer's exact test, in cases with low expected count). The differences in political interest were examined using ANOVA, with Tukey post-hoc tests.

Results

An overview of the clusters identified within the generation groups is available in Table 1. A detailed overview of the clusters and their comparison, which takes into account the independent variables, is below.

Table 1: An overview of the clusters identified across the generation groups

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
(A) 1954 and older	The Non-Participating (n=187; 42 %)	The Voters (n=244; 55 %)	The Participating (n=15; 3 %)	x	x
(A) 1955–1979	The Non-Participating (n=388; 47 %)	The Voters (n=367; 45 %)	The Participating (n=31; 4 %)	The Interpellating (n=32; 4 %)	x
(A) 1980–1996	The Non-Part. (n=355; 63 %)	The Voters (n=177; 32 %)	The Part. (n=15; 3 %)	The Activists (n=12; 2 %)	x
(B) 1997–2000	The Non-Participating (n=701; 39 %)	The Supporters (n=416; 23 %)	The Traditional Supporters (n=318; 18 %)	The Activists (n=195; 11 %)	The Distinction-Seekers (n=159; 9 %)

Source: own processing

The adults

In the sample of the adult population (A), the most frequent activity in all of the generation groups was voting in elections. The other activities were rather marginal. The respondents from the youngest adult generation group more often employed online practices (online petition and support) but, at the same time, they were less engaged in activities directly linked with institutionalised politics, i.e. with contacting politicians and voting (see Figure 1).
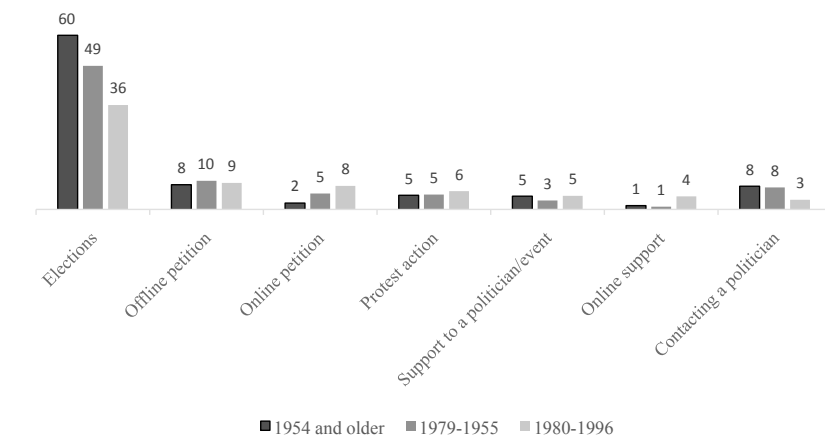

Figure 1: Political participation as employed by the adult generation groups (A; in %)
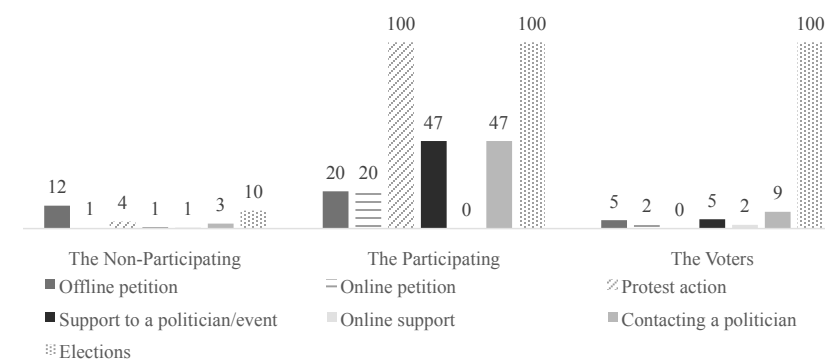
Source: own processing

Figure 2: Clusters within the first generation group (born 1954 and earlier) (A; in %)

Source: own processing

The first cluster in the oldest generation group are *the non-participating* (n=187; 42 %) people, including rarely active respondents. In contrast to the other clusters (all of them voting), only 10 % of *the non-participating* voted in any election in the preceding 12 months (see Figure 2). The biggest cluster in the group are *the voters* (n=244; 55 %), who participate mainly through voting. Besides these two dominant clusters, we have identified a small cluster of politically active respondents – *the participating* (n=15; 3 %), who employ, along with voting, the practices of protest, offline support for politicians, and contacting the politicians.

Table 2: The clusters in the first generation group of Survey A and selected variables

	The Non-Participating	The Voters	The Participating	p
Females	54 %	57 %	20 %	0.02[a]
Males	46 %	43 %	80 %	
Primary education	18 %	12 %	7 %	0.21[a]
Secondary	75 %	75 %	80 %	
Tertiary	7 %	13 %	13 %	
SNS	4 %	8 %	0 %	0.54[a]
TV/radio news	95 %	97 %	100 %	0.47[a]
Print news	27 %	45 %	60 %	<0.01[a]
Online news	16 %	31 %	27 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with family	65 %	83 %	100 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with friends	68 %	85 %	100 %	<0.01[a]
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	
Interested in politics	3.40(1.79)	4.49(1.78)	6.27(1.10)	<0.01[b]

[a] Fisher's exact test.

[b] ANOVA. $F_{(2,443)}=31.69$; all groups were significantly different from each other ($p<0.05$, Tukey post-hoc test).

Source: own processing

Unsurprisingly, *the non-participating* express an obviously lower interest in politics than the *voters* and the – male-dominated – *participating* (see Table 2). Considering reception, the share of TV viewers is in all the three clusters similarly high; however, the non-participating use print and online sources less than the other two 'active' clusters, while using SNS is low in this generation group in general. Considering interactions with family and friends, there is a similar trend: *the non-participating* talk least of all about politics (yet more than half of the cluster) while the most active is again *the participating*.
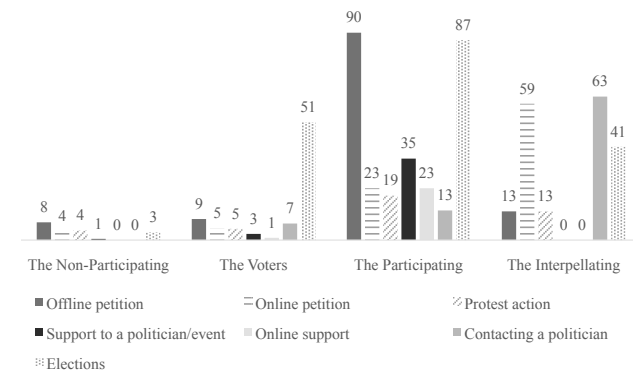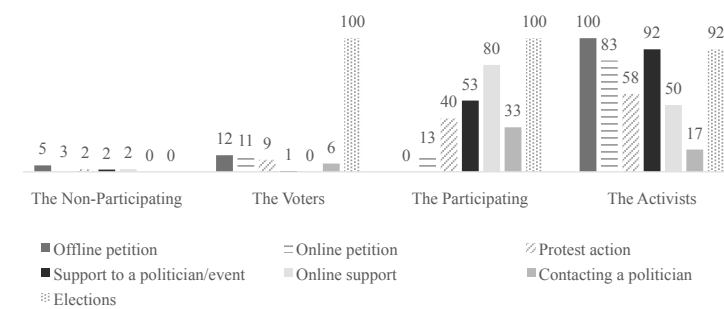

Figure 3: Clusters within the second generation group (born 1955–1979) (A; in %)

Source: own processing

An interpretation for the second generation group includes four clusters (see Figure 3). Again, the two major clusters are *the non-participating* (n=338; 47 %) and *the voters* (n=367; 45 %). Besides these, there are two other, proportionally minor clusters of active respondents: *the participating* (n=31; 4 %) and *the interpellating* (n=32; 4 %). Along with voting, *the participating* employ a wide range of practices, with signing an offline petition being the most prominent (90 %). *The interpellating* differ in several aspects: with their low electoral participation and in their preference for online petition (59 %) and contacting a politician (63 %). (For their willingness to proactively 'interpellate' political actors, we call the respondents in this cluster *the interpellating*.)

Table 3: The clusters in the second generation group of Survey A and selected variables

	The Non-Participating	The Voters	The Participating	The Interpellating	p
Females	54 %	54 %	55 %	47 %	0.88[a]
Males	46 %	46 %	45 %	53 %	
Primary education	6 %	8 %	3 %	0 %	0.02[a]
Secondary	84 %	78 %	74 %	75 %	
Tertiary	9 %	13 %	23 %	25 %	
SNS	26 %	21 %	29 %	27 %	0.37[a]
TV/radio news	85 %	93 %	90 %	72 %	<0.01[a]
Print news	23 %	34 %	40 %	38 %	<0.01[a]
Online news	42 %	53 %	67 %	59 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with family	66 %	81 %	83 %	81 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with friends	70 %	85 %	87 %	84 %	<0.01[a]
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)		
Interested in politics	2.81(1.66)	3.91(1.67)	4.23(1.54)	3.56(1.95)	<0.01[b]

[a] Fisher's exact test.

[b] ANOVA. $F_{(3,814)}=30.11$; significant differences were between the non-participating and the voters, and between the non-participating and the participating ($p<0.05$, Tukey post-hoc test).

Source: own processing

The respondents from both active clusters differ from the *non-participating* and *the voters* by their higher level of education (see Table 3). *The interpellating* then use at least TV and radio as their source of news while *the participating* are the most intensive consumers of online news within the generation group. The cluster of *the non-participating* is again quite clearly shaped: they read less print and online news, they talk less with their relatives and friends about politics, and they are less interested in politics than the other respondents in the other generation groups.

Figure 4: Clusters within the third generation group (born 1980–1996) (A; in %)

Source: own processing

Even in the case of the third generation group we have identified two major and two minor clusters (see Figure 4). Again, the major clusters are *the non-participating* (n=335; 63 %) and *the voters* (n=177; 32 %). The respondents in the first minor cluster of *the participating* (n=15; 3 %) are typical for their preference of political practices that address institutionalised political actors, i.e. they support both online and offline, and contact politicians. At the same time, they do not practice the use of petitions, which is, in contrast, an activity symptomatic for the other minor cluster called, with some license, *the activists* (n=12; 2 %). Moreover, *the activists* – often utilising the Internet in their practices – employ activities directed towards institutionalised politics as well as protest actions.

	The Non-Participating	The Voters	The Participating	The Activists	p
Females	53 %	53 %	47 %	50 %	0.97[a]
Males	47 %	47 %	53 %	50 %	
Primary education	22 %	10 %	0 %	33 %	<0.01[a]
Secondary	69 %	72 %	73 %	58 %	
Tertiary	9 %	18 %	27 %	8 %	
SNS	65 %	67 %	93 %	83 %	0.07[a]
TV/radio news	70 %	76 %	80 %	58 %	0.30[a]
Print news	13 %	23 %	40 %	42 %	<0.01[a]
Online news	45 %	68 %	73 %	75 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with family	50 %	78 %	87 %	100 %	<0.01[a]
Debating with friends	52 %	79 %	80 %	100 %	<0.01[a]
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)		
Interested in politics	2.21(1.46)	3.41(1.80)	4.53(2.07)	4.67(1.72)	<0.01[b]

[a] Fisher's exact test.

[b] ANOVA. F(3.552)=35.47; all groups were significantly different from each other (p<0.05, Tukey post-hoc test); the only exception was that there was no difference between the participating and the activists.

Source: own processing

The participating and *the voters* usually have higher level of education. *The participating* and *the activists* are more interested in politics. And *the activists*[49] talk more about politics with their families and friends (see Table 4). The *non-participating* are typically – and similar to the *non-participating* in the other clusters – least interested in politics as well as in the news. Though the difference in the share of the respondents using SNS is beyond the established significance level (p=.07), we still find it meaningful to point to the higher number of SNS users among *the participating* and *the activists*. Regarding the interaction practices, from the least active *non-participating* (less than a half of them talk about politics) to the very active *activists* (all of them talk about politics), there is a clear and increasing intensity. The reception of print news and online news is most often practiced by *the participating* and *the activists* – and *the activists* relatively less often choose TV as their source of news.
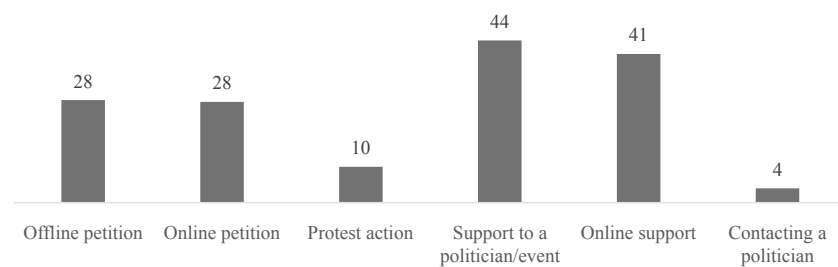
The adolescents

Figure 5: Political participation as employed by the adolescents (B; in %)

Source: own processing

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49   *The activists* in this cluster are quite interesting: they have lower education (when compared to the other 'active' clusters), and they are older, more often male, mostly single, and mostly without children (remark by the authors).

When observing the data representing the adolescents (B, see Figure 5), we can see that these respondents express more frequent engagement in monitored activities than was the case with the adult generation groups (A). It is worth noting again that this is caused by the fact that the indicators of participation included in this sample measured more broadly conceived forms of civic participation and, therefore, the adolescents are seemingly more active than the adult respondents.

■ Offline petition   ＝ Online petition   ⁄⁄ Protest action   ■ Support to a politician/event   Online support   Contacting a politician
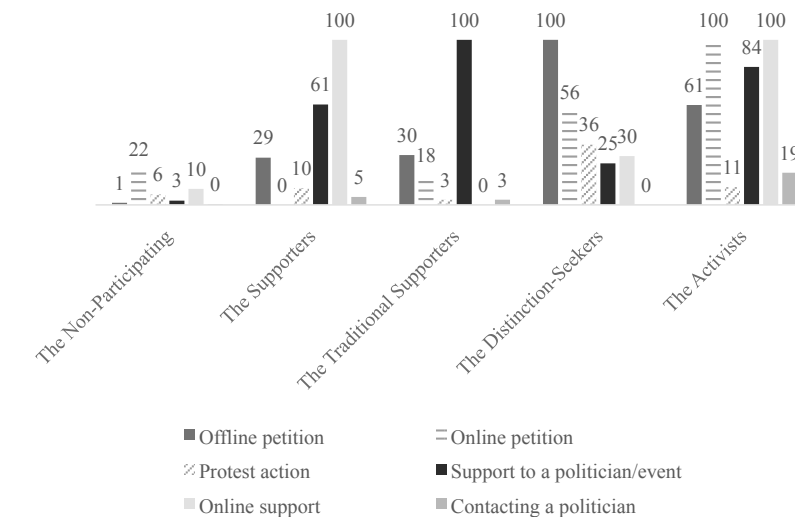
Figure 6: Clusters within the group of adolescents (B; in %)

Source: own processing

The cluster solution consists of five clusters (see Figure 6). As the major cluster we have again identified the just minimally active *non-participating* (n=701; 39 %). The respondents in the cluster of *the supporters* (n=416; 23 %) limit their practices mostly to offline and online support. Similar to them are *the traditional supporters* (n=318; 18 %), who strongly prefer the offline forms of support. The most specific for the group of adolescents are *the distinction seekers* (n=159; 9 %), who practice mainly offline and online petitions, protest actions, and, less frequently, provide offline/online support. The last cluster in the group are *the activists* (n=195; 11 %) – they are similar to the activists from the youngest adult generation group, but emphasise online forms of activities.

Table 5: The clusters in the adolescents in Survey B and selected variables

	The Non-Participating	The Supporters	The Trad. Supporters	The Dist.-Seekers	The Activists	2	p
Females	50 %	52 %	65 %	54 %	48 %	23.83	<0.01[a]
Males	50 %	48 %	35 %	46 %	52 %		
Primary education	47 %	43 %	39 %	36 %	37 %	13.75	.088[a]
Secondary	35 %	37 %	39 %	44 %	37 %		
Tertiary	18 %	20 %	22 %	20 %	25 %		
SNS	83 %	88 %	84 %	88 %	92 %	12.47	0.01[a]
TV/radio news	82 %	88 %	85 %	77 %	85 %	12.00	0.02[a]
Print news	65 %	75 %	75 %	66 %	81 %	28.27	<0.01[a]
Online news	84 %	93 %	90 %	83 %	94 %	29.90	<0.01[a]
Debating with family	58 %	72 %	71 %	65 %	87 %	62.49	<0.01[a]

Debating with friends	56 %	75 %	68 %	67 %	82 %	63.30	<0.01[a]
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)		
Interested in politics	1.57(0.78)	1.81(0.91)	1.71(0.88)	1.67(0.83)	2.13 (1.03)		<0.01[b]

[a] Pearson's x^2 test.

[b] ANOVA. $F_{(4.1773)}= 17.257$; significant differences were among the non-participating and the supporters and activists; and between activists and all other groups ($p<0.05$, Tukey post-hoc test).

Source: own processing

The non-participating adolescents are different from their adult counterparts in their lower interest in print news media; from their peers they differ in their low willingness to talk about politics and in their lower interest in politics (see Table 5). Both clusters of supporters have similar media ensembles that differ only in the preference of online practices; moreover, the traditional supporters less often talk about politics with their friends and include more females. The distinction seekers receive less news and debate less often than their other active peers. As in the other generation groups, the activists are exceptionally interested in politics and active in all dimensions and, importantly, they differ from other clusters with a relatively high interest in print media.

Conclusions and Discussion

In general, the picture provided by our analysis of the participative practices confirms the findings of other studies:[50] The overall participative activities of the adults increase with their age, which is basically caused by the higher electoral activity of the older respondents. While in the oldest generation group (born 1954 and earlier) the share of non-participating (or almost non-participating) is 42 %, in the youngest adult generation group (born 1980–1996) it reaches 63 %. At the same time, it is clear that even the preferred media channels used for news reception change along with age – younger cohorts use new media more frequently, eventually replacing traditional broadcasting and print media. Indeed, this picture is not really surprising; however, in our analysis it gets a more detailed and complicated texture. When analysing the patterns of participative and communicative practices, and indicating the relationships between them, we focused on these practices as preferred sets of practices – as on repertoires of action and media ensembles. This approach bypasses the risk of the reduction of the obvious complexity of the analysed practices and enables us to conclude that both repertoires of action and media ensembles vary in a way that finds possible explanation in the assumed specifics of the generation groups.

Thus, what constellations of participative repertoires can be found across the generation groups and what communication practices are linked with them? When taking into account their share in the population, the most important clusters are the non-participating and the voters, both identified in all three adult generation groups. The number of the non-participating decreases in the adult population with the age of the citizens, while the share of the voters – whose participation is more or less limited to voting in elections – increases with age. What is typical for these two dominant clusters in terms of their media ensembles? When compared to the other clusters, the clusters of the non-participating, who express a low interest in politics in general, manifest a lower willingness to join talk about politics with their peers.[51] The cluster of the voters, who express a higher interest in politics as well as a higher willingness to talk about politics, receive news content distinctly more frequently than the non-participating (who mainly use TV broadcasting where they are more intensive recipients than the respondents from the other, more politically active clusters).

Nevertheless, besides the voters, we have identified, across the generation groups, other (though obviously smaller) clusters of active Czech citizens. The existence of these generationally specific clusters suggests that the generation groups cannot be satisfyingly characterised solely through the voter turnout linked with their age. The most numerous are the clusters of the participating (being present in all three adult generation groups); the activists (identified in the youngest adult generation group and in the group of adolescents); the interpellating (in the second oldest generation group born between 1955–1979); and in the group of adolescents who are the distinction seekers.

What are the similarities and differences of these clusters? The participating could be described as the more active voters – they usually vote in elections but, at same time, they selectively employ their participative practices. The activists, when compared to the participating, manifest a high level of participation in all of the measured activities, particularly in more direct activities, such as petitions. The interpellating are a cluster of respondents who were socialised during the post-Stalinist era, in the so-called normalisation of the 1970s and the 1980s, who now prefer protest actions and petitions as the means for shaping politics. And the distinction seekers are those adolescents who, besides protest actions and petitions, practice active support (both offline and online) for the political actors they prefer. The distinction seekers are typical for the practices that help them to delineate – symptomatically for exploration and identity formation[52] – their own political attitudes.

What are the media ensembles of these politically active clusters? The participating and the activists are quite similar in their communicative practices – they differ from the other more active clusters mainly in their preference for print and online sources of content; and they differ from the cluster of the non-participating and the voters in their higher interest in politics and in their willingness to interact with others and debate about politics. Similar practices exist in the cluster of the interpellating, though this group expresses lower interest in receiving TV and online news and their interest in politics is even lower than in the case of the voters from the same generation group. In these regards, the adolescents in the cluster of the distinction seekers are similar to the older interpellating group – they are weaker consumers of TV and online news and, when compared to other active adolescents, they show a lower rate of interactions and a lower interest in politics.

In general, we can note that the lower age of the respondents, the increasingly variable and colourful their repertoires of action. This could be illustrated by the presence of the clusters of activists in the two youngest generation groups – within their generation groups, the respondents in these clusters manifest the highest interest in politics, they debate about politics most frequently, and they consume news most intensely. Our suggestion is that their openness to politics is emphasised, on the one hand, by their low age (coming along with a sufficient amount of dispensable time) and, on the other hand, by the fact that they were (unlike the older groups) socialised in a democratic environment. Moreover, the repertoires of the action and media ensembles of the two youngest generation groups are more inscribed with the presence of new digital technologies – and our analysis shows that, in contrast to the uses of TV, the uses of new media (and print) draw one of the lines between the politically active respondents and the passive respondents.

Employing the logic of the repertoires of action enabled us to follow the role of online practices within the context of participative practices in general, without treating them as isolated from the offline practices. The online forms of participative practices are most common in the clusters of the activists (i.e. the most active clusters) – more or less all of the activists are active users of SNS and, unlike their less active peers, use the Internet as their main source of information. This could even explain why we did not identify similar clusters in the older generation groups: using the Internet and SNS is not widespread and intensive in the older groups and the older respondents usually do not consider online media as their main source of information.[53] This suggests that online political activities in general should not be conceived as a distinctive or qualitatively specific set of practices. The respondents employ them usually in synergy with other (offline) practices, which undermines the picture of online participation as detached or somehow isolated.[54]

50 For more information, see: LINEK, L.: Kam se ztratili voliči? Vysvětlení vývoje volební účasti v České republice v letech 1990-2010. Brno : CDK, 2013.
51 The clusters of the "non-participating" have a higher share of females and a lower share of respondents with tertiary education (remark by the authors).

52 For more information, see: ERIKSON, E. H.: Identity, Youth, and Crisis. New York : Norton, 1968; MACEK, P.: Adolescence. Praha : Portál, 2003.
53 MACEK, J. et al.: Old and New Media in Everyday Life of Czech Audiences (Research Report). Brno : Masaryk University, 2015, p. 8-9.
54 For more information, see: CHRISTENSEN, H. S.: Political Activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or Political Participation by

The obvious limit of our analysis that prevents us from more conclusive generalisations of our findings is that the two data sets come from two distinct surveys. Moreover, we are fully aware that our findings concerning participatory activities of the adolescents might be affected by the fact that they represent only four specific regions. Prior research in the Czech Republic showed associations between socio-economic factors or religiosity and diverse patterns of voting behaviour. It has also been shown that political orientations are, besides other factors, also linked with diverse factors tight to specific territories or locations.[55] The regions in the Czech Republic differ in terms of their socio-economic level[56] or levels of religiosity, with the Regions of Jižní Morava and Vysočina (included in our sample) being typical for higher concentration of Catholics population.[57] Therefore, it is not surprising that there are regional differences concerning e.g. voting behaviour.[58] However, our selection of the regions was intended to balance – at least partially – these specifics.

And last but not least, another important limit is that we do not work with longitudinal data that would enable us to analyse the changes of the generation groups over time. Consequently, we are not able to distinguish plausibly between the effects of the age and of the generationally specific conditions of the political socialisation. Therefore, it is appropriate to understand this research article as an exploratory and descriptive study that maps the basic features of the problem of researching participative and communicative practices as interrelated sets.

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