

A high-angle, blurred photograph of a crowd of people walking on a light-colored pavement. The people are in motion, creating a sense of a busy public space. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Intergenerational differences in social and political participation in Western Europe

Presentation at the ESA RN30 Midterm
Conference 2017, in association with ISA
RC34

‘Global Youth Futures: Perspectives and
Prospects’

Ericeira, 15.-18.01.2017

Christiane Meyers, University of Luxembourg

INSIDE |

INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH UNIT
ON SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL
DEVELOPMENT

The logo of the University of Luxembourg, featuring the letters 'uni.lu' in a stylized, colorful font (red, blue, and black).

UNIVERSITÉ DU
LUXEMBOURG

Content

A. Research context and research questions

B. Theoretical concepts

1. Civic voluntarism model
2. Generational theories

C. Data and methods

1. European Values Study
2. Factor and Cluster analysis

D. Results

E. Synopsis and discussion

A. Research context and research questions

- The global crisis and its negative consequences on living conditions in Europe have led in some countries to massive protests, especially among young persons. 2 competing theories (Kern et al., 2015):
 - grievance theory: individuals whose interests are threatened react by engaging themselves politically -> more political participation
 - civic voluntarism model: political participation is explained especially by socio-economic factors -> less political participation of unemployed people
 - Differentiation of short-term and long-term effects
- Research questions:
 - Are there signs that the young generation disengages from society? Do they engage themselves in other ways than the older generation?
 - How can the civic voluntarism model help to explain the differences between older and younger generations?

B.1. Theoretical concepts – The Civic Voluntarism

Model

- The Civic Voluntarism Model of Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995)
- “[...] ask why people don't take part in politics. Three answers immediately suggest themselves: because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked.”
 - Resources: time, money, civic skills
 - Engagement with politics: interest in politics, sense of political efficacy, civic values, concern with public issues...
 - Recruitment networks
 - Influences of socio-economic status (education, income and occupation), social position (family background) and experiences in social institutions (family, school, workplace, non-political associations)
- Focus of analysis is not only voluntary political activity, but a broad definition of participation → political and social engagement

B.2. Theoretical concepts - Generations

- Societal concept of generation (cohorts) vs generations inside a family
- Definition of generation by Mannheim (1928) (Mauger, 2011)
 - Group of individuals of similar ages
 - Influenced by the socio-historical environment
 - During the time of their youth
 - Develop a common generational consciousness that influences their lives as adults
- Political generations theory (Grasso, 2014)
 - “political generations are differentiated in their patterns of participation based on the ascendancy of certain repertoires of political action in the historic context of their political socialization”

C.1. Data and methods – European Values Study

- Data from European Values Study (EVS) 1999(-2001) and 2008(-2010)
- 18 Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain, Northern Ireland
- Selection of two cohorts:

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Born in	1941-1955	1976-1990
Formative years	1961-1975	1996-2010 (2008)
Age in 1999	44-58 years	18-23 years
Age in 2008	53-67 years	18-32 years
N (weighted)	10.763	8.960

C.2. Data and methods – Factor analysis and cluster

- Factor analysis = tool to group a lot of items that measure the same characteristic into a single factor to reduce complexity
- Cluster analysis = tool to group objects in such a way that objects in the same group (cluster) are as similar as possible and the groups as dissimilar as possible to the other groups
- Factor analysis of 5 questions on unconventional political participation («have done») and 13 questions on engagement in different types of associations («working unpaid for»)
- Principal components analysis with a varimax rotation; Missing values are all excluded; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0,796; 44% of the total variance is explained by 5 factors; the factors are saved using regression values
- Cluster analysis of the 5 factors using Ward method; 6 clusters which were checked with the 18 original questions and named accordingly
- Descriptive analysis of the clusters with significant differences

D. Results - 5 factors of social and political participation

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	
do you work unpaid for: 3w-development/human rights	,602					Engagement in an association with social aims
do you work unpaid for: peace movement	,567					
do you work unpaid for: voluntary health organisations	,554					
do you work unpaid for: welfare organisation	,537					
do you work unpaid for: womens groups	,492					
do you work unpaid for: local community action	,489					
do you work unpaid for: environment, ecology, animal rights	,475					
political action: have signed a petition		,766				Legal unconventional political participation
political action: have joined in boycotts		,714				
political action: have attended lawful demonstrations		,684				
do you work unpaid for: trade unions			,723			Conventional political participation
do you work unpaid for: political parties/groups			,675			
do you work unpaid for: professional associations			,532			
do you work unpaid for: sports/recreation				,725		Engagement in an association
do you work unpaid for: youth work				,596		
do you work unpaid for: cultural activities				,505		
political action: have occupied buildings/factories					,810	Illegal unconventional political participation
political action: have joined unofficial strikes					,719	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

D. Results – 6 clusters of participation types

Clusters	5 factors of social and political participation					N	% of Total
	legal unconventional political participation	illegal unconventional political participation	engagement in an association	social engagement in an association	conventional political participation		
1	-0,51	-0,24	-0,34	-0,20	-0,12	9.751	54%
2	1,49	-0,40	-0,31	-0,21	-0,22	2.579	14%
3	-0,08	-0,30	2,08	-0,17	-0,28	2.022	11%
4	0,54	2,69	-0,07	0,01	-0,35	1.510	8%
5	-0,12	-0,24	-0,29	2,41	-0,13	1.239	7%
6	0,35	0,18	0,41	-0,39	3,40	901	5%
Total	-0,02	0,00	0,00	-0,01	0,00	18.002	100%

Naming of clusters:

- 1 – “The inactive type”
- 2 – “The petition type”
- 3 – “The leisure organization type”
- 4 – “The protest type”
- 5 – “The socially engaged type”
- 6 – “The traditional active type”

D. Results – participation types in the younger and older generation

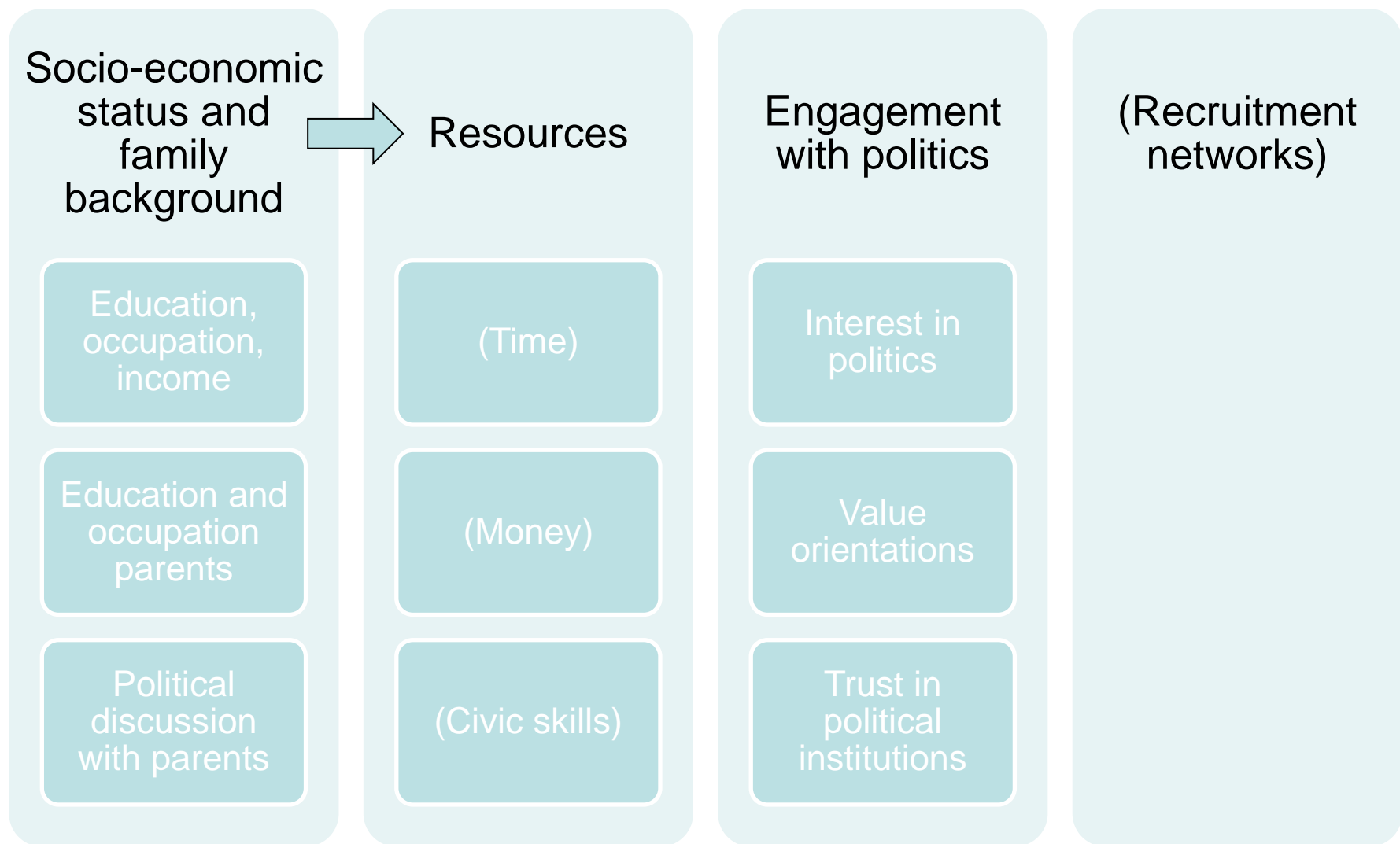
	EU18		Total
	born 1941-1955	born 1976-1990	
6 clusters of participation types			
“The inactive type”	52,3%	56,4%	54,2%
“The petition type”	14,5%	14,1%	14,3%
“The leisure organization type”	9,4%	13,5%	11,2%
“The protest type”	8,4%	8,4%	8,4%
“The socially engaged type”	8,9%	4,4%	6,9%
“The traditional active type”	6,5%	3,2%	5,0%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

- **Similarities** between younger and older generation concerning clusters: same ranking of clusters; similar percentage of cohort is part of legal / illegal unconventional political participation cluster
- **Differences:**
 - concerning the percentage of the cohort that is inactive
 - concerning the engagement in associations (with social aims, conventional political participation)

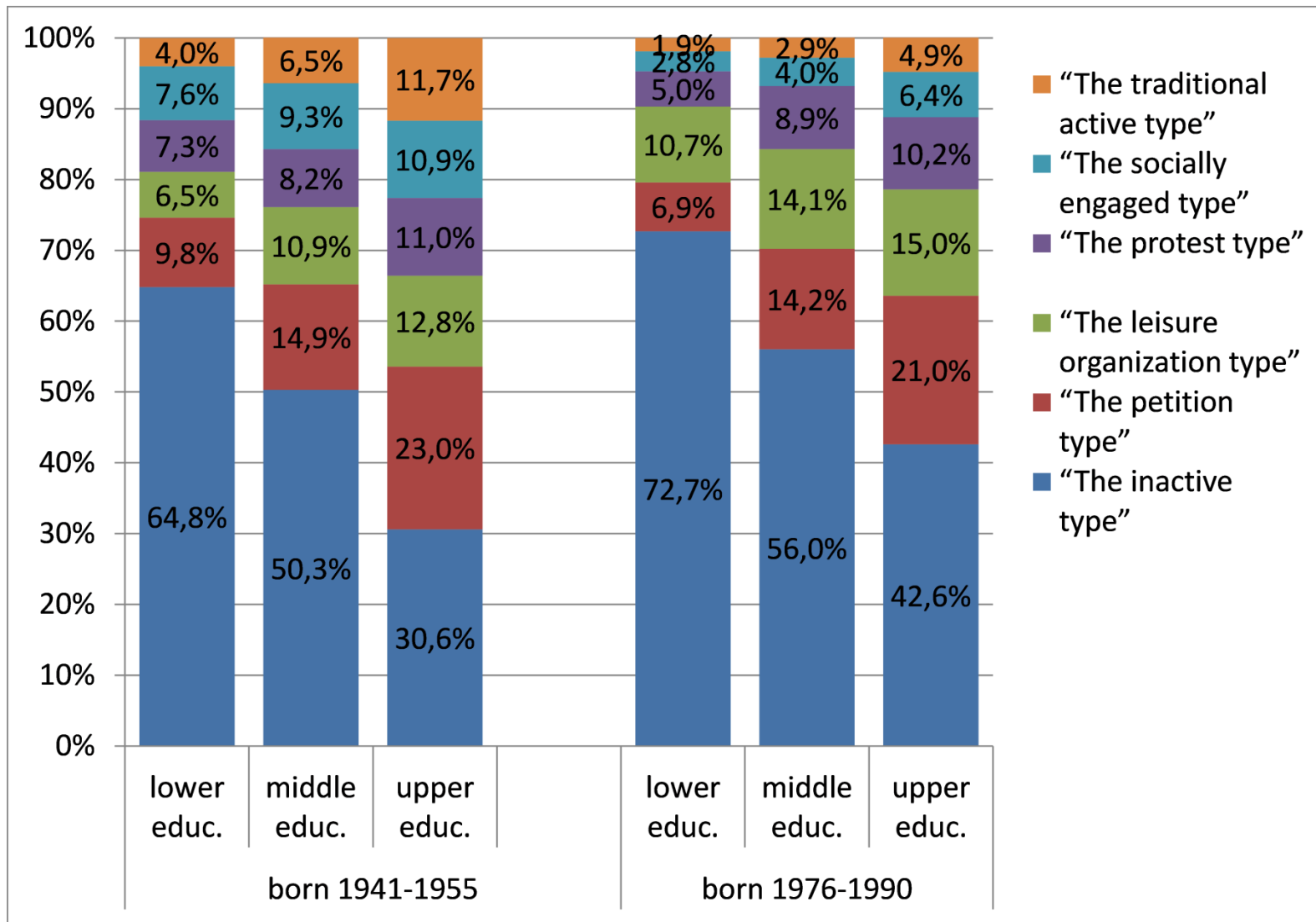
D. Results – different national participation

6 clusters of participation types	Netherlands			Luxembourg		
	born 1941-1955	born 1976-1990	Total	born 1941-1955	born 1976-1990	Total
“The inactive type”	24,9%	27,1%	25,7%	48,6%	38,6%	43,6%
“The petition type”	14,8%	4,4%	11,1%	12,4%	16,0%	14,2%
“The leisure organization type”	23,5%	50,9%	33,2%	14,3%	22,5%	18,4%
“The protest type”	6,5%	6,2%	6,4%	4,8%	11,6%	8,2%
“The socially engaged type”	21,7%	5,5%	15,9%	12,6%	6,0%	9,3%
“The traditional active type”	8,7%	5,9%	7,7%	7,2%	5,3%	6,3%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
6 clusters of participation types	Greece			Portugal		
	born 1941-1955	born 1976-1990	Total	born 1941-1955	born 1976-1990	Total
“The inactive type”	58,6%	52,2%	55,0%	77,3%	77,1%	77,2%
“The petition type”	9,8%	5,1%	7,1%	9,5%	9,2%	9,3%
“The leisure organization type”	4,8%	5,8%	5,4%	4,5%	5,4%	5,0%
“The protest type”	9,1%	25,7%	18,4%	2,7%	1,7%	2,1%
“The socially engaged type”	9,8%	7,8%	8,7%	3,4%	4,6%	4,1%
“The traditional active type”	7,8%	3,5%	5,4%	2,5%	2,0%	2,2%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

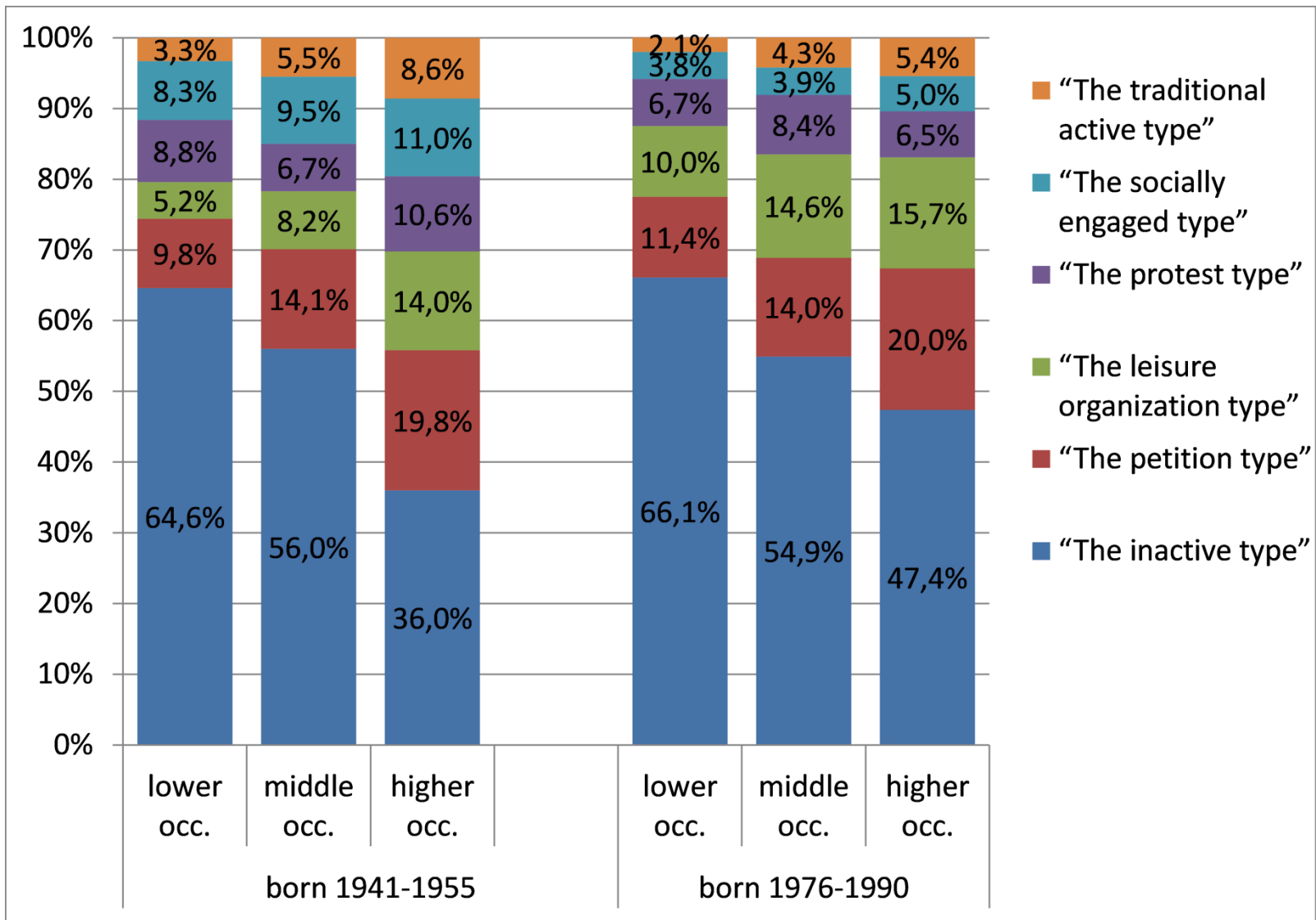
D. Results – Explaining participation using the Civic Voluntarism Model



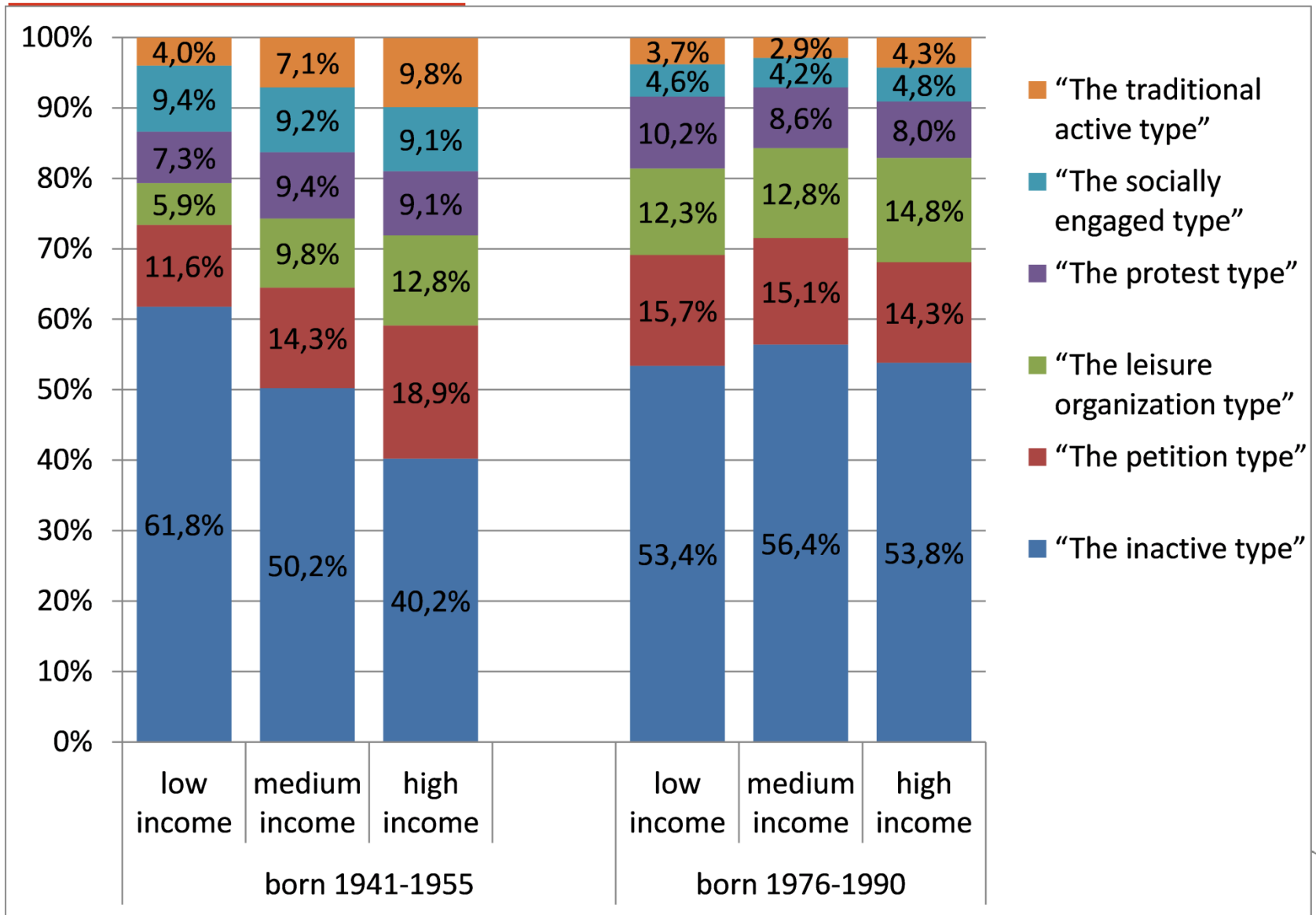
D. Results – educational level



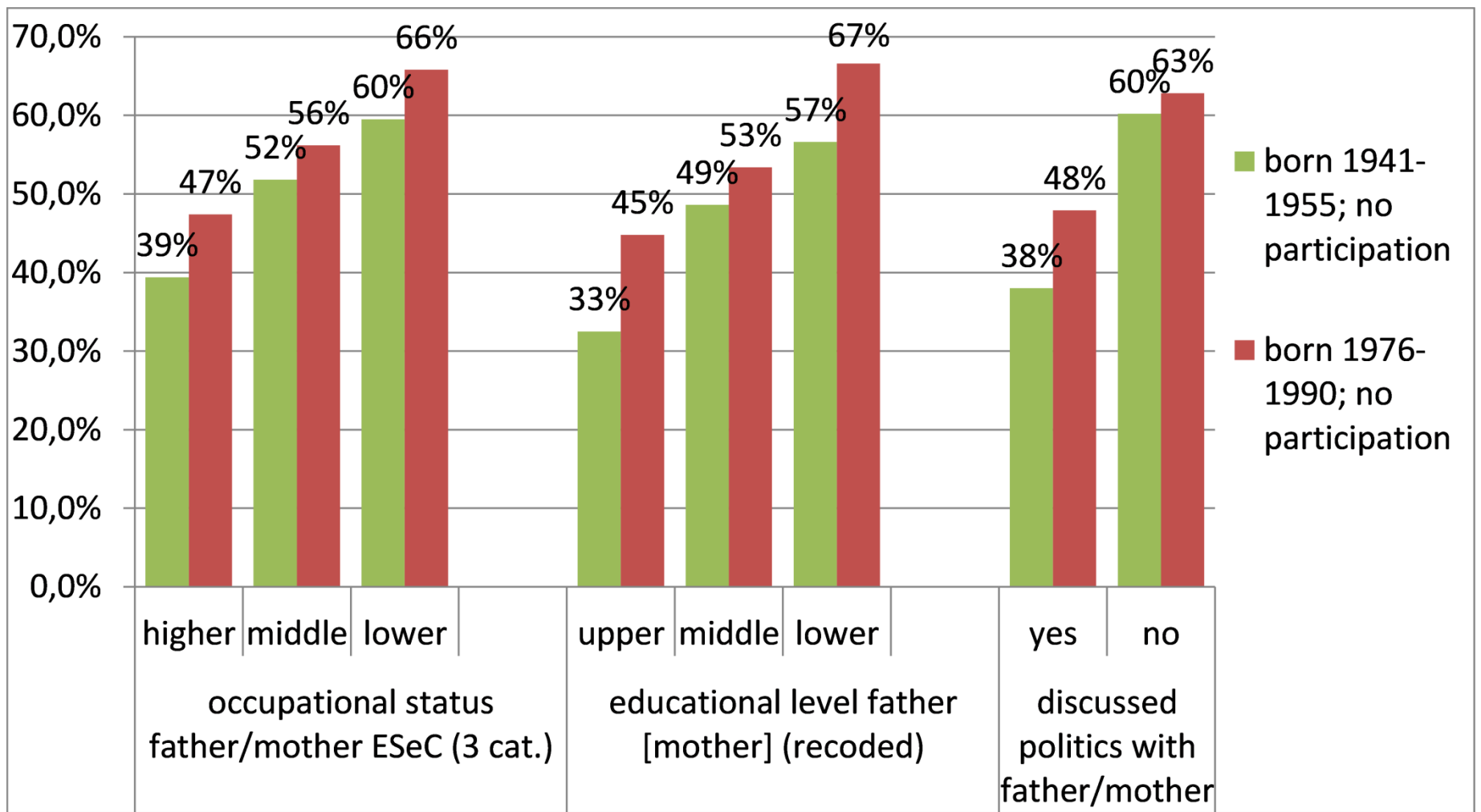
D. Results – occupation



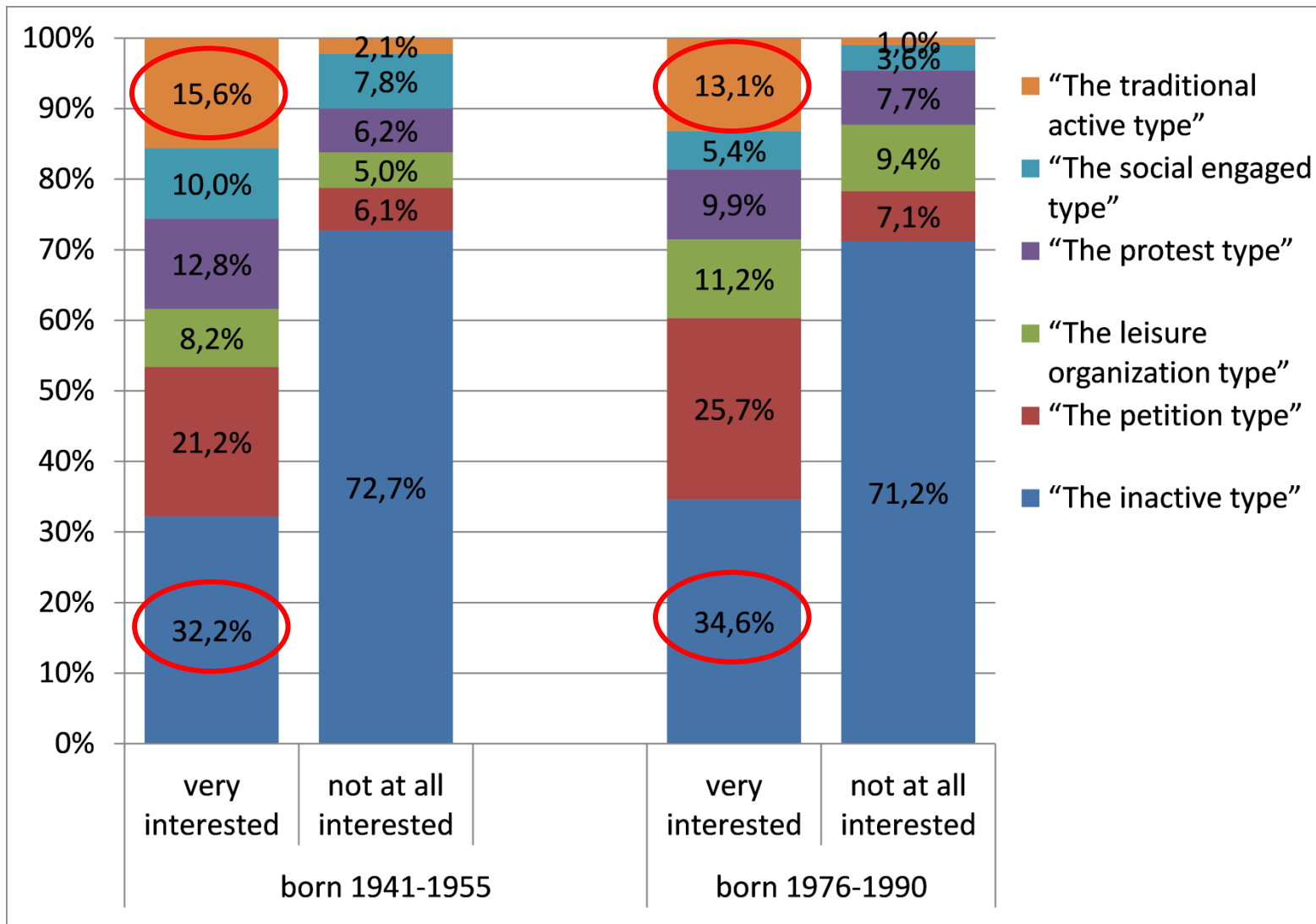
D. Results – income



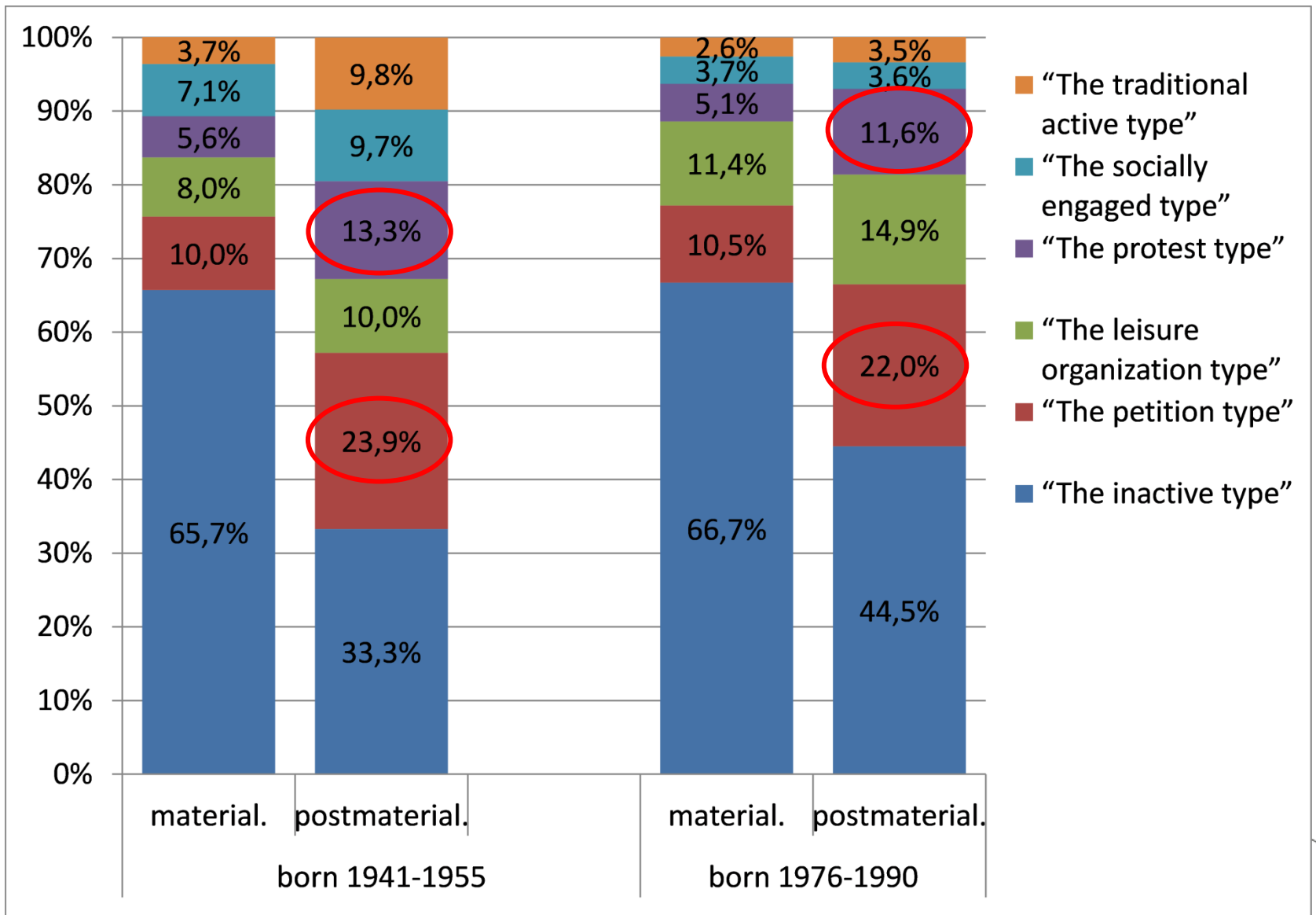
D. Results – family background



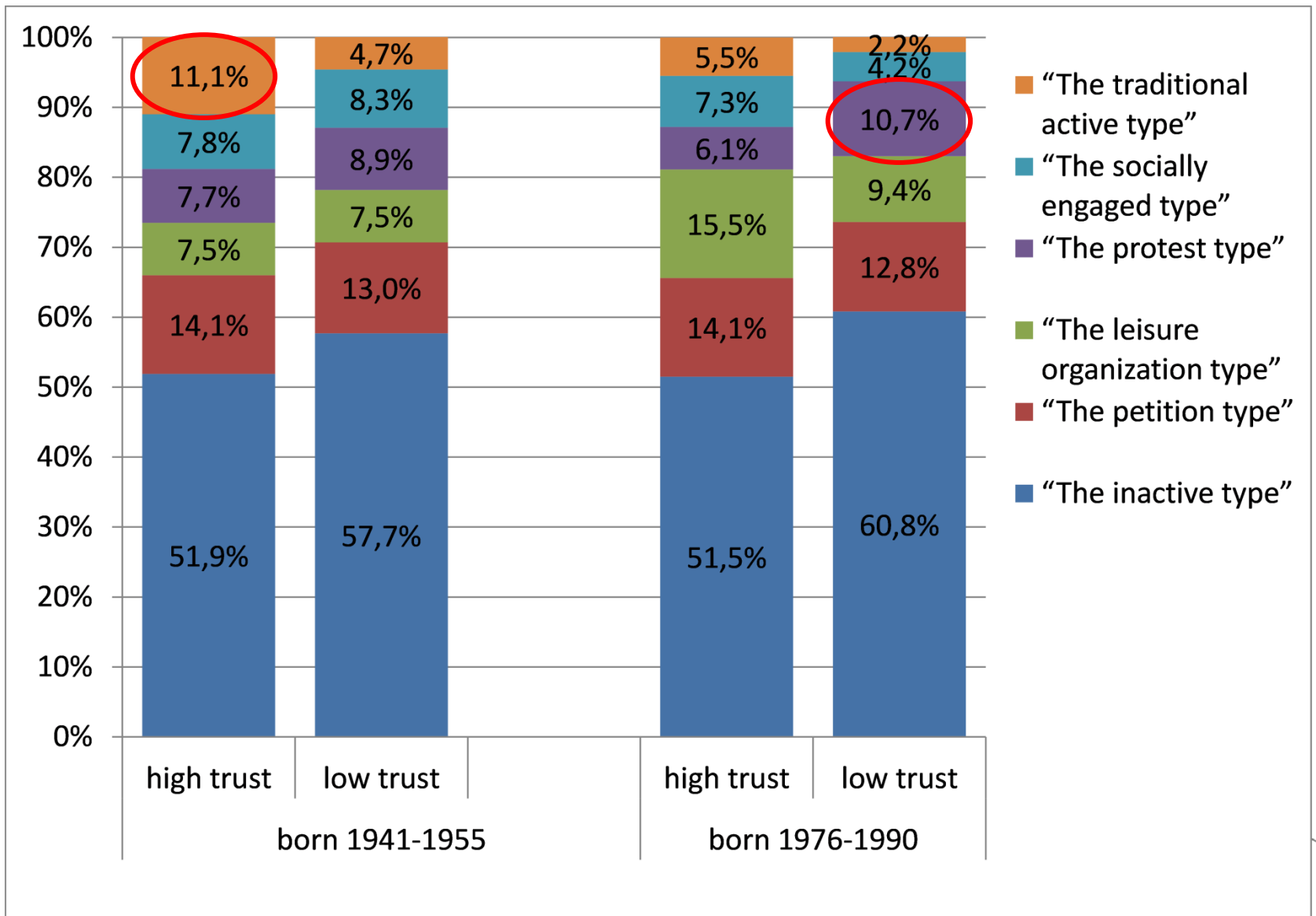
D. Results – political interest



D. Results – values



D. Results – trust in political institutions



E. Synopsis

Positive influences on participation	Sign. for older gen.	Sign. for younger gen.	% older generation	% younger generation	
Higher education	++	++	22%	24%	↗
Higher occupational status	++	++	35%	29%	↘
Higher income	++	+	34%	31%	↘
Higher education parents	++	++	9%	21%	↗
Higher occupational status parents	++	++	18%	29%	↗
Discussed politics with parents	++	++	29%	30%	⇒
Very interested in politics	++	++	16%	10%	↘
High trust in pol. inst.	++	++	6%	7%	⇒
Post-materialistic values	++	++	18%	18%	⇒

E. Discussion

- In general less participation in younger generation and a shift from more conventional participation and social engagement to leisure time engagement
- Confirmation of the civic voluntarism model concerning importance of resources (education, *income*, *occupation* and family background) as well as engagement with politics (interest in politics, trust, values) for both generations
- Socio-economic factors and family background point at more participation of younger generation; lower political interest of younger generation supports lower participation of younger generation → support of the political generations theory
- Further research:
 - Further analysis on income and occupational status in younger generation
 - Integration of explanations concerning engagement in social organisations e.g. importance of leisure time and aims
 - Looking at gender differences
 - Looking forward to the next wave of EVS in 2017, where also impact of crisis after 2008 can be analysed

Thank you for your attention!

References:

- Brady, H. E., Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. L. (1995). Beyond Ses: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *The American Political Science Review*, 89(2), 271–294.
- Grasso, M. T. (2014). Age, period and cohort analysis in a comparative context: Political generations and political participation repertoires in Western Europe. *Electoral Studies*, 33, 63–76.
- Kern, A., Marien, S., & Hooghe, M. (2015). Economic Crisis and Levels of Political Participation in Europe (2002–2010): The Role of Resources and Grievances. *West European Politics*, 38(3), 465–490.
- Mannheim, K. (1990). *Le Problème des générations. Essais et recherches*. Paris: Nathan.
- Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (MENJE), Luxembourg, & Université du Luxembourg (UL) (Eds.). (2015). *Rapport national sur la situation de la jeunesse au Luxembourg 2015. La transition de l'adolescence vers l'âge adulte. Nationaler Bericht zur Situation der Jugend in Luxemburg 2015. Übergänge vom Jugend- ins Erwachsenenalter*. Luxembourg.
- Sloam, J. (2014). New Voice, Less Equal: The Civic and Political Engagement of Young People in the United States and Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(5), 663–688.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Wyn, J., & Woodman, D. (2006). Generation, Youth and Social Change in Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(5), 495–514.

Contact: Christiane Meyers

Université du Luxembourg - FLSHASE - UR INSIDE

christiane.meyers@uni.lu; <http://www.en.uni.lu/recherche/flshase/inside>

INSIDE

INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH UNIT
ON SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL
DEVELOPMENT

