

# RESEARCH ARTICLE

## the 'good european citizen': congruence and consequences of different points of view

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### Abstract

In a search for the 'good European citizen', the prevalent views of European Union (EU) policymakers, civil society bodies, and citizens are confronted. The civil society and ordinary citizens are both content with strengthening the position of civil society and not increasing the participatory demands on citizens. Ideas among EU policymakers about civil society as a means to integrate citizens and to close the gap between citizens and the EU are misplaced and incongruent with other images of the 'good European citizen'.

**Keywords** European integration; citizenship; civil society; democracy

Citizenship includes engagement in public and political affairs and the acceptance of particular norms and values, as well as particular duties. In fact, it is the very recognition of a balance between rights and duties that characterises democratic citizenship.<sup>1</sup> The general consent about this balance disappears rapidly when we take a closer look at specific depictions of the 'good citizen'. Political philosophers from Aristotle and Plato to Michael Walzer and Benjamin Barber have dealt with the relationships between the requirements of the community on the one hand and the rights and obligations of people living in that community on the other. Interesting and stimulating as these ideas might

be, it remains unclear *which* conceptualisations of the 'good citizen' are actually used by policymakers and citizens. What image do these actors have of citizens and citizenship? How are these images distributed in democracies? These questions appear to be especially relevant for the opportunities to develop (more) democratic decision-making processes and active citizenship in the European Union (EU). Almost by definition, the 'good citizen' is a *national citizen*; that is, the rights and duties that come with citizenship are the rights and duties of citizens towards the national state (cf. Hix, 2005: 345–346; Olsen, 2003: 104; Weale, 2005: 3–9; Bellamy, 2006). The rise of the EU system of multi-level

governance has affected this situation deeply. A complex system of national, sub-national, international, trans-national, and supra-national institutions has emerged, whose democratic character is increasingly approached sceptically (cf. Majone, 1998; Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Eriksen and Fossum, 2007). Political decision-making is more and more characterised by 'Europeanisation' (cf. Graziano and Vink, 2007), and the 'good citizen' seems to have difficulties keeping up with the rate of change in Europe.

Images of the 'good citizen' are, by definition, normative statements about desirable orientations and behaviours of individuals in a democratic polity. As such, appraising the specific content of these images is the domain of political philosophers, ideologues, politicians, and, of course, citizens themselves. Interesting as normative questions about the desirability of particular orientations and behaviours are, they are not the main concern here. Instead, the principal empirical question here is: *what types of orientation and behaviour do various actors in Europe consider desirable for the 'good citizen'?* Incongruence between these images might effectively block the chances of improving democratic decision-making processes. On the one hand, incongruence can hamper improvements if policymakers have unrealistic images of the 'good citizen' and base their plans on these ideas directly. On the other hand, citizens will be frustrated if they are constantly confronted with proposals based on either exaggerated or underestimated expectations about citizens' orientations and behaviour. Since the alignment of the various images of the 'good citizen' appears to be problematic, further development of democracy in Europe will be problematic too. In particular, EU policymakers are left behind with their ideas about civil society as a means to integrate ordinary citizens and close the gap between citizens and the EU.

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### THREE POINTS OF VIEW

With respect to the large number of conceptualisations of, and the century-old discussions about, the 'good citizen', it is remarkable that relevant empirical research is rare. Empirical research into images of the 'good European citizen' is even more difficult to find. Research into the different images of the 'good citizen' in Europe used in practice is outlined here. Following a conventional top-down approach, the ideas of *EU policymakers* (Commission and Council) about the further democratisation of the EU and the expected role of citizens are examined first. Since a civil society is presumed to perform essential functions in these democratisation processes by linking the various levels of decision-making, the second point of view considered is that of *civil society bodies*. Finally, the images of the 'good citizen' among *EU citizens* are examined.

#### VIEWPOINT I: EU POLICYMAKERS

For a long time, citizens were not considered to be very relevant actors for the democratic character of the EU (or its predecessors). Until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the democratic legitimacy of the EU was presumed to be based mainly on the democratic character of its member states (Majone, 1998). Consequently, the phrase 'democratic deficit' became fash-

ionable only recently. With the publication of the *White Paper on European Governance*, the Commission took the initiative to improve the democratic character of the EU by encouraging citizens to engage more frequently with its institutions (COM, 2001). In a speech to the European Parliament in February 2000, Commissioner Prodi '... called for a civic participation in all stages of the policy-making process' (as cited by Sloat, 2003: 130). In a similar manner, the Council launched a 'Community action programme to promote active European citizenship (civic participation)'. The main objective of this programme is '... to bring citizens closer to the European Union and its institutions and to encourage them to engage more frequently with its institutions'.<sup>2</sup> These goals indicate a withdrawal from conventional approaches, based on the role of member states and a restrictive interpretation of representative democracy. Although citizens' involvement and the wish to 'bring citizens closer to the European Union' are the main targets of EU policymakers, citizens are not expected to play major roles in the efforts to resolve presumed deficiencies in this area. Instead, 'bodies engaged in the promotion of active and participatory citizenship' and 'civic participation' are the main mechanisms proposed to improve the democratic character of the EU. In order to make decision-making in Europe more open, transparent, and participatory, a wide range of collective actors – not citizens – from varying institutional, territorial, or thematic areas or levels are to be mobilised and offered access to these decision-making processes.<sup>3</sup> The more recent *Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Discussion* of the Commission is evidently directed at citizens, but here too, the dominant role of 'civil society' is clear: 'Plan D has played a key role in testing innovative ways in which civil society organisations could involve citizens from all walks of life

in debates on the future of Europe' (COM, 2008: 4).

With their focus on 'civil society' and 'civil society bodies', EU policymakers apparently aim at collective actors and only indirectly at individual citizens (Sánchez-Salgado, 2007). This aim is based on two different, but complementary lines of reasoning. First, civil society, by definition, encompasses non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are presumed to offer a kind of countervailing power to the institutionalised political actors of conventional, representative democratic decision-making processes. As Friedrich notes civil society opens '... the possibility for thoughts about additional, complementary institutionalisations that are capable of rendering policy-making process more democratic, which cannot (and perhaps even should not) rely predominantly on representative mechanisms' (2007: 9). In this respect, it is important to emphasise that NGOs are often presumed as being able to act as a counterbalance to other interests and to provide a voice for those not sufficiently represented in other ways.<sup>4</sup> Second, the renaissance of communitarian and neo-Tocquevillean ideas in the 1990s evidently had an impact on European policymakers by strengthening the belief in the benevolent consequences of civil society and social capital for the functioning of democracy. Putnam summarised these ideas neatly: 'Good government in Italy is a by-product of singing groups and soccer clubs' (1993: 176). By now, the notion that democracies are dependent on a well-developed civil society and a considerable stock of social capital is widely accepted. From the perspective of EU policymakers, then, civil society bodies have the potential to enhance the quality of political decision-making processes by expanding the group of participants beyond the conventional borders of representative democracy. Furthermore, 'civic participation' of citi-

zens within associations is expected to generate democratic orientations and values, which, in turn, strengthen democracy and reduce the distance between citizens and the EU.<sup>5</sup>

EU policymakers have not only presented ideas about the improvement of democracy and the need to narrow the gap between the EU and its citizens. The strong focus on civil society bodies has also materialised in the context of opulent and continuous subsidies for these organisations (cf. Greenwood, 2007; Sánchez-Salgado, 2007). Almost each and every citizens' group in Brussels or Strasbourg receives EU funding, and some groups are almost completely financed by the EU. In order to strengthen 'civic participation', the EU is apparently willing to pay the bill of mobilising potentially critical citizens' groups. We do not need to go into plausible motives for this, at least partly, masochistic behaviour here – what is clear is that the EU takes the mobilisation of civil society organisations very seriously. In practice, the EU goes much further than providing cheap rhetoric about civil society or by inviting collective actors to participate.

From the perspective of EU policymakers, the 'good European citizen' disappeared rapidly behind the benign horizon of civil society bodies. Even *Plan D* reserves a central position for civil society (COM, 2008). The arguments used seem to be characterised by ideas mainly focussing on the expected (positive) consequences of civil society involvement. Behind these lines of reasoning, the contours of an image of the 'good citizen' become visible and can be summarised in a few points. In broad terms, from the perspective of EU policymakers, a 'good European citizen' is somebody who:

- uses the opportunities offered by representative democracy;
- supports a variety of civil society organisations;

*'the notion that democracies are dependent on a well-developed civil society and a considerable stock of social capital is widely accepted'.*

- supports the role of civil society organisations in decision-making processes;
- develops (more) positive orientations towards the EU due to the mobilisation of civil society organisations in EU policy-making processes;
- is not concerned about possible inconsistencies between the results of electoral participation and participation of civil society organisations.

## **VIEWPOINT II: CIVIL SOCIETY**

Civil society associations do not usually present explicit ideas about images of the desirable orientations and behaviours of the activists, volunteers, or members of their organisations.<sup>6</sup> Neither do they offer ideas about the 'good citizen'. Instead, they articulate the aims of the organisation and claim to act as a voice for the interests and viewpoints of particular groups among the population – certainly not just of the members of the organisation concerned. The relevance of civil society bodies is based on their perceived functions as collective actors in democratic decision-making processes and not on probable normative ideas about the 'good citizen'. As Saurugger remarks, civil society associations are 'supposed' to come with grass-roots involvement and accountable leadership (2007: 388), and these presumptions are often taken for granted.



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How do civil-society organisations view their members and citizens in general? Empirical research in this area is rare, but the available findings seem to be coherent (cf. Maloney and van Deth, 2008). A century after Robert Michels predicted the unavoidable rise of oligarchic tendencies in each organisation, civil-society bodies in the EU are confronted with exactly these developments. Studying the role of associations in development policies, Warleigh, for instance, found that these bodies are staff-dominated and made '... little or no effort to educate their supporters about the need for engagement with EU decision-makers' (2001: 623). Later he notes that several group leaders conceded that a lack of membership participation '... was a problem for their credibility' (2001: 634; cf. Warleigh, 2006). In their extensive study of campaign groups in Britain, Jordan and Maloney (2007: 158–159) also cite similar evidence of staff dominance and the attractiveness of passivity for members of these groups. Working in a very different policy area, Sudbery (2003: 90) found

that with limited resources, groups preferred 'effective results' to raising awareness. She quotes a senior representative of the European Environment Bureau who said, 'While ideally it would be good to get people involved ... my role is not to encourage the most participatory governance, but to ensure the best results for the environment' (2003: 91–92). Civil-society bodies, then, are increasingly characterised by staff dominance (professionalisation) and the need to concentrate on their mission (cf. Sauruger, 2007: 397–398; Grande, 2002: 130).

The flipside of the professionalisation of associational life is the relative passivity of members and supporters. Empirical studies on this linkage have been especially stimulated by the fruitful application of approaches based on rational expectations of both leaders and members. From the perspective of civil-society associations, the urge to show effective results has a significant impact on the nature of the 'demands' it makes from its membership. For instance, Crenson and Ginsberg (2002) draw attention to

the need for expertise and technical knowledge in new policy areas that is much more important for reaching associational goals than the mobilisation of large numbers of citizens. As they conclude, a new policy area is open '... to all those who have ideas and expertise rather than to those who assert interest and preferences' (2002: 147). Skocpol points to a similar mechanism: 'If a new cause arises, entrepreneurs think of opening a national office, raising funds through direct mail, and hiring pollsters and media consultants ... Organisational leaders have little time to discuss things with groups of members' (2003: 134). Consequently, a 'protest business' of increasingly professionalised organisations emerges, articulating interests and demands and mobilising expertise and power (Jordan and Maloney, 1997).

These rather practical restrictions on the opportunities to stimulate grassroots activities seem to be remarkably congruent with the demands and expectations of ordinary citizens. If civil-society bodies are urgently looking for opportunities to be involved in political decision-making processes, many citizens are willing to leave that job to those associations and their professionals. As Jordan and Maloney (2007: 160–161) note, most members and supporters '... are content to embrace a politically marginal role and contract-out their participation' to groups, and many do not see membership of groups as a means of being 'active in politics'. The opposite seems to be the case for ordinary citizens. Many citizens perceive passive involvement as a 'benefit' and would happily leave to organisations the 'cost' of active involvement.<sup>7</sup> Although the evidence is convincing, simple generalisations should be avoided:

*it is too simplistic to suggest that groups want **only** passive cash-cow members, rather than activists. More*

*accurately it should be seen that groups are prepared to accept membership on that basis, and may welcome more active involvement. However, they may not always be keen to roll out the red carpet for a **policy-making** membership. (Jordan and Maloney, 2007: 161; emphasis in original)*

'Cheque-book participation' seems to be a division of labour that combines the best of both worlds, enabling organisations to focus on policy-making and citizens to provide resources.<sup>8</sup> At the EU level, this mutual support is stimulated by the considerable support provided for European civil-society bodies by the EU. As mentioned, the EU subsidises citizens' groups in Brussels and Strasbourg. This generous funding relieves civil-society bodies from the need to secure their resources based on contributions of members and supporters. Put bluntly, for civil-society bodies, 'Members are a nonlucrative distraction' (Skocpol, 2003: 134). There is no need to spend organisational resources in seeking and servicing members or supporters, when EU subventions enable fully focussed professional lobbying.

Structural and organisational aspects enable civil-society bodies to be indifferent about images of the 'good European citizen'. Consequently, the arguments seem to be based on a rather limited conception of that citizen. In broad terms, a 'good European citizen' is somebody who:

- supports civil-society organisations, which, in turn, participate in decision-making processes;
- supports the role of civil-society organisations in decision-making processes (direct involvement of citizens is superfluous);
- judges civil-society organisations on the basis of the results they obtain in decision-making processes;

- is not concerned about possible inconsistencies between the results of electoral participation and participation of civil-society organisations.

### **VIEWPOINT III: ORDINARY CITIZENS**

What image do citizens have of the 'good citizen'? How are norms of citizenship distributed in democracies? Astonishing as it may sound, there is little empirical evidence available to answer these questions (cf. van Deth, 2007), although Lane (1962) long ago asked people what they considered important characteristics of 'good citizens'. Conover and her collaborators relied on focus groups and found a fairly clear picture of a 'good citizen' in Britain and the United States. First, a 'good citizen' understands his or her rights mainly as civil rights (United States) or social rights (Britain) and does not consider political rights to be equally important or relevant. Second, a 'good citizen' understands his or her duties mainly as duties and responsibilities that are required to preserve civil life. A 'good citizen' certainly values social engagement and active involvement in community matters, but no consensus exists over the reasons for this engagement (cf. Conover *et al*, 1990, 1991, 1993, 2004).

Focus groups are useful to trace images of the 'good citizen', but the findings do not provide information about the distribution of these images among the population. Survey research can fill this gap. Major examples of international studies covering these images are the Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy project (CID) and the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS).<sup>9</sup> Questions about the image of a 'good citizen' used in these two surveys direct the attention of the respondents to the contested meaning of the concept as well as to his or her personal opinions about the 'good citizen':

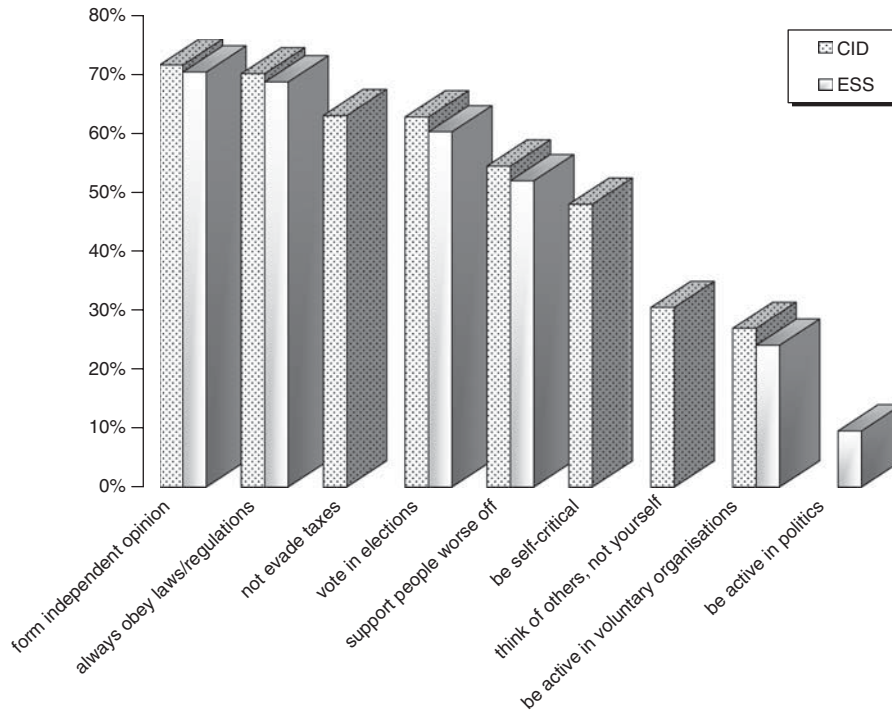
*'for the majority of respondents a "good citizen" is someone who visits the ballot box – not someone who is engaged in public and political affairs beyond voting'.*

*As you know, there are different opinions as to what it takes to be a good citizen. I would therefore like to ask you to examine the characteristics listed on the card. Looking at what you personally think, how important is it:*

- To show solidarity with people who are worse off than yourself?*
- To vote in public elections?*
- Never to try to evade taxes?*
- To form your own opinion, independently of others?*
- Always to obey laws and regulations?*
- To be active in organisations?*
- To think of others more than yourself?*
- To subject your own opinions to critical examination?*

Respondents expressed their opinion for each item on an 11-point scale ranging from 'very unimportant' to 'very important'. The ESS uses a similar instrument including the items A, B, D, E, and F as well as an additional item 'Be active in politics'.<sup>10</sup>

The results of both the CID and ESS findings are summarised in Figure 1. In spite of the use of different items and different sets of countries, the results are remarkably similar for the two studies. To form independent opinions and to obey laws and regulations are unreservedly supported by about 70 per cent of the respondents, whereas not evading taxes, casting a vote, and supporting people worse off are considered to be important by about 60 per cent. On the other hand, we see that only about one out of every



**Figure 1** Support for aspects of being a 'good citizen'.

*Notes:* Percentages of respondents scoring 8, 9, or 10 on 11-point scales. Countries are weighted with design weights (correcting for different selection probabilities) and population weights (ensuring each country's representation in the pooled data set proportional to its population size).

– ESS: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.  
 – CID: Denmark, Germany, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

four respondents supports the neo-Tocquevillean idea that engagement in voluntary associations is an important aspect of being a 'good citizen'. Even more remarkable is the clear lack of support for the idea that a 'good citizen' should be active in politics: less than 10 per cent of the respondents support the norm that a 'good citizen' is – generally speaking – a politically active citizen.<sup>11</sup>

These results are confirmed by several other analyses. Denters *et al* (2007) analyse the CID questions and report a high degree of integration of the various aspects as well as a remarkably high level of support for independence, law-abidingness, and solidarity as major aspects of being a 'good citizen'. Using ESS data,

Rossteutscher (2004) and Denters and van der Kolk (2008) show high levels of support for law-abidingness, solidarity, and autonomy in all countries. This high level of support can also be revealed for the norm to vote in elections. Much lower, however, is the support for the norm to be active in organisations. British and American surveys applying measures from the CID project found high levels of support for 'civic duties and obligations' and a corresponding limited 'sense of duty to become politically engaged' beyond voting (Pattie *et al*, 2004: 48–50; Dalton, 2008b: 88, respectively). Based on completely different sources, Schudson (1998) describes the rise of 'monitorial citizens' in modern democracies in a

similar way. The crucial point is that they ‘... tend to be defensive rather than proactive’ (Schudson, 1998: 311; cf. Hooghe and Dejaeghere, 2007). People do take their rights and duties as citizens seriously, but they are reluctant to get involved in public and political affairs beyond voting.<sup>12</sup>

As these results show, for the majority of respondents, a ‘good citizen’ is someone who visits the ballot box – not someone who is engaged in public and political affairs beyond voting. Moreover, these findings do not support the idea that engagement in voluntary associations can be seen as a substitute for political engagement. People are consistently reluctant to place much value on both social and political participation as core aspects of being a ‘good citizen’ (cf. Theiss-Morse and Hibbing, 2005: 242–245). Obviously, the ‘... ideal citizen is not the enlightened political participant cognizant of the common good but the effective one’ (Gross, 1997: 233). This is a remarkably restricted conception of the ‘good citizen’, which is not only far away from ideas presented by political theorists from Pericles to Benjamin Barber, but also from the ideas presented by EU policymakers.

Although no empirical information is available about the images of the ‘good European citizen’, it is very unlikely that these images would incorporate more importance to engagement in political affairs beyond voting or to activities in civil-society associations than that found in images of a ‘good citizen’. From the perspective of citizens, the ‘good European citizen’ is probably rather similar to the ‘good citizen’ at best. The arguments seem to be characterised by the following aspects. A ‘good European citizen’ is somebody who:

- supports the norms of independence, law-abidingness, and solidarity;

- supports the norm to cast a vote in elections, but not necessarily the norm to be involved in other political activities;
- does not necessarily support the norm to be involved in civil-society organisations;
- supports the role of civil-society organisations in decision-making processes (direct involvement of citizens is superfluous);
- is unlikely to develop (more) positive orientations towards the EU due to the mobilisation of civil-society organisations in EU policy-making processes;
- is not concerned about possible inconsistencies between the results of electoral participation and participation of civil-society organisations, because the latter is not salient.

## CONGRUENCE AND CONSEQUENCES

Since the differences in the images of the ‘good European citizen’ between the EU policymakers, civil-society organisations, and ordinary citizens are considerable, the consequences will be considerable too. First, we see that the ideas of EU policymakers to integrate citizens more intensively in democratic decision-making processes is not met with equal enthusiasm among these very same citizens. Apart from casting a vote, ordinary citizens do not support the idea that a ‘good citizen’ is necessarily characterised by political and social engagement. The restricted importance attached to involvement in voluntary associations, moreover, makes it rather unlikely that mobilising civil-society bodies as proposed by EU policymakers will change this reluctance. Whether successful mobilisation, in turn, would have positive consequences for the development of support for broader conceptualisations of citizenship is still a controversial topic. Some authors argue forcefully that

**Table 1: Images of the 'good citizen' from various points of view**

A 'good citizen' is somebody who:	Points of view:			Congruence and likely consequences:
	EU policymakers	Civil society	Ordinary citizens	
Supports the role of civil society organisations in decision making	Strongly supported	Strongly supported	Strongly supported	congruent and unproblematic 😊
Supports civil society organisations	Strongly supported	Strongly supported	Partly supported	not incongruent and probably unproblematic 😊
Is not concerned about inconsistencies between electoral and social participation	Implicitly accepted	Not considered	Not relevant	not incongruent and probably unproblematic 😊
Develops (more) positive orientations towards the EU	Strongly supported	Not considered	Not considered	not incongruent but probably problematic 🤔
Uses opportunities of representative democracy (voting)	Idea supported	Not considered	Strongly supported	not incongruent but probably problematic 🤔
Supports law-abidingness, independence, and solidarity	Not considered	Not considered	Strongly supported	not incongruent but probably problematic 🤔

participation does not seem to be necessary for the development of support for aspects of citizenship such as solidarity (cf. Segall, 2005). Others draw a more complex picture (cf. Theiss-Morse, 1993; Mansbridge, 1999; Verba *et al*, 1995: 500) or underline the benevolent impacts of 'deliberation' (Luskin and Fishkin, 2005). The need for a 'European public sphere' is also stressed (cf. Koopmans and Erbe, 2004), and the 'absence of a system of party competition at the European level' (Weale, 2005: 138) is seen as the main cause of all problems.

Second, attempts to include civil-society organisations in EU decision-making processes will be much more effective than efforts to mobilise citizens, because they fit seamlessly into the ideas of these organisations about their main tasks. Both EU policymakers and spokespersons of voluntary associations stress the need for a more prominent role of civil society. The increasing integration of civil society bodies in decision-making processes has a number of positive consequences: expertise is made available, measures can be attuned to specific needs, societal demands can be articulated early, European bureaucracy is met with countervailing powers, complementary opportunities are offered outside the representative institutions, and so on. Although on the negative side the prospects for patronage, 'closed shops', and corruption are also evident, the congruence of the ideas of EU policymakers and civil society will further strengthen integration of these organisations into EU decision-making processes.

The third conclusion is based on the different expectations about the benevolent aspects of citizens' engagement in democratic decision-making processes among EU policymakers and civil-society bodies. For EU policymakers, the need to mobilise ordinary citizens is an important pillar of their pleas for a stronger position of civil society. Yet, as we have seen,

*'only the idea that civil-society bodies should play an important role in democratic decision-making processes is strongly supported from all three perspectives considered here'.*

these organisations stress their role as collective actors and are, in practice, under virtually no pressure to mobilise members or supporters – a strategy that is nicely met by the apparent lack of eagerness among citizens to participate. Consequently, civil-society organisations and ordinary citizens will be content with the dual process of strengthening the position of civil society and not increasing the participatory demands on citizens. EU policymakers are left behind with their ideas about civil society as a means to integrate ordinary citizens and to close the gap between citizens and the EU.

The common aspects of the three perspectives on the images of the 'good European citizen' are summarised in Table 1. From this sketchy overview, it is clear that only the idea that civil-society bodies should play an important role in democratic decision-making processes is strongly supported from all three perspectives considered here. The consequences of two of the remaining aspects are unclear, because the importance attached to these points appears to vary. Finally, three aspects seem to be problematic. From a *top-down perspective*, the strong expectations among EU policymakers that integrating civil-society bodies into decision-making processes will eventually result in (more) positive

attitudes towards the EU is not met by similar ideas among civil-society bodies or ordinary citizens. Frustration is likely to accumulate on both sides: policymakers will not reach their goals and citizens will be constantly reminded of something they do not care much about. From a *bottom-up perspective*, the importance of casting a vote is especially stressed by citizens but much less by the other actors. Furthermore, the core elements of the image of the 'good citizen' amongst the population – independence, law-abidingness, and solidarity – are not very important for the 'good citizen', as conceptualised by EU policymakers and civil-society bodies. Frustration is likely to accumulate here, especially among ordinary citizens whose ideas about citizenship are not met with similar ideas from other actors.

People do take their rights and duties as citizens seriously, and they strongly support norms of independence, law-abidingness, solidarity, and casting a vote. Ordinary citizens will not, however, develop (more) positive orientations towards the EU as a consequence of the increased involvement of civil-society

bodies in democratic decision-making processes. EU policymakers and ordinary citizens seem to emphasise different aspects of a 'good citizen' – as a result, neither of them will be satisfied. Consequently, pleas for 'reconstituting democracy in Europe' (Eriksen and Fossum, 2007) can only be successful if these very different images of the 'good European citizen' are taken into account and integrated.

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## Notes

1 See Heater (2004) for a general overview of the history of the concept, or van Deth (2007) and Dalton (2008a) for applications in empirical political science. A detailed analysis of the historical development of citizenship in the United States is presented by Schudson (1998).

2 Council Decision of 26 January 2004 (2004/100/EC) Art. 1 (b).

3 See for overviews of approaches to the role of civil society organisations in European democratic decision-making processes: Mair (2005), Kohler-Koch (2007), and especially Finke (2007). Haug (2008: 4) stresses the need to include 'less institutionalised transnational spaces of communication'.

4 See Olsen (2003) and especially Finke (2007: 6–7) for overviews of the debates about governance, participation, and legitimacy that lie behind these lines of argument. For the EU Weale (2005) presents an extensive discussion of 'democratic citizenship', whereas Bellamy (2006) stresses the 'democratic limits of EU citizenship'. Vibert (2007: 138–143) presents a very interesting discussion about 'fundamental failures' resulting from an 'incompatibility' of existing power-sharing arrangements in the EU and the role of civil society associations. Case studies of actual decision-making processes usually show that contacts are mainly concerned with the exchange of expertise in advisory bodies and written consultations (cf. Dąbrowska, 2007; Sánchez-Salgado, 2007). Smismans (2006: 18) speaks of a 'participatory myth' and characterises decision-making processes as '... a narrow, opaque and technocratic process ... in a closed policy network'.

5 For an evaluation of this last part of the argument, virtually no empirical research is available. Van den Berg (2006) presents a highly original study of the ways Dutch voluntary associations enable their members to (further) develop attitudes towards Europe.

- 6 Political bodies (including political parties) are usually considered to be part of civil society. Because of the strong emphasis on non-political bodies in the current debates on democracy and citizenship in Europe and the lack of empirical information on political bodies, no distinction between political and non-political bodies is used here. For an overview of the various arguments for such a distinction see Morales (2004: 93–109).
- 7 As participation research shows, highly active civil society groups can quickly erode the willingness of people to become involved in political decision-making (cf. Fiorina, 1999).
- 8 See Morales (2004: chapter 4) for an elaborate discussion of the individual determinants of membership in (political) voluntary associations.
- 9 See for the CID project: <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/cid> and van Deth *et al* (2007). For the ESS see: <http://ess.nsd.uib.no>.
- 10 For dimensional analyses of these items see Denters *et al* (2007: 92–95), Rossteutscher (2004: 187), and Denters and van der Kolk (2008: 140–142).
- 11 Dekker and de Hart (2002) also show that politics is an astonishingly unimportant aspect of the image of the 'good citizen' in the Netherlands. Carmines and Huckfeldt (1996: 250) conclude that '... a revised model of citizenship has emerged – a model of the citizen as a cost-conscious consumer and processor of political information who, while taking her duties seriously, has successfully reduced the impulse to be consumed by politics and political affairs'.
- 12 Ordinary citizens, then, probably do not have much trouble with the idea of 'delegated citizenship' (Bellamy, 2006: 254) in the EU.

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