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Patterns of Civic and Political Commitment in Early Adolescence

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Abstract

Interest in understanding how civic engagement emerges has been fueled by worries about the decline of youth participation in conventional political activities. Acknowledging the developmental nature of civic engagement, this study analyzes involvement in civic activities during early adolescence. We used latent class analysis to identify patterns of participation in a representative sample of Chilean adolescents. A four-class model was highlighted by two contrasting classes: an *involved* class, with high probabilities of participation, and an *uninvolved* class, with low probabilities of participation. A third class—*volunteers*—mostly participates in organizations involved in community service, religious or social causes. This type of participation conforms to the preservation of the status quo, in contrast to a more political or activist form of participation that challenges it. Classes were partially invariant by gender and socioeconomic status. Females were more prevalent in the *involved* class, and males in the *uninvolved* class. Adolescents' interest in politics, discussion of political issues, citizenship self-efficacy, and school involvement were associated with higher odds of belonging to the *involved* class.

Keywords

civic engagement, school context, positive youth development, prosocial behavior

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Interest in understanding how civic engagement emerges and evolves over time has been fueled by worries about the decline of youth participation in conventional political activities (Amnå, 2012). However, findings from several studies (Dalton & Crosby, 2008; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Carpini, 2006) indicate that young people express their political interest and ideas in activities and domains not necessarily associated with formal politics. For example, involvement in volunteering, activism, and social organizations has been on the rise in many countries (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Hooghe, Oser, & Marien, 2015; Instituto Nacional de la Juventud [INJUV], 2012; Martínez, Silva, Carmona, & Cumsille, 2012; Syvertsen, Wray-Lake, Flanagan, Osgood, & Briddell, 2011).

The apparent decline in youth participation in conventional politics concurrent with increasing involvement in volunteering, service in social organizations, and different kinds of activism (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Hooghe et al., 2015; INJUV, 2012; Martínez, Silva, Carmona & Cumsille, 2012; Syvertsen et al., 2011) raises questions of whether these are different forms of engagement and at what ages these manifest. Furthermore, it is important to understand when interest in civic and political involvement begins, and whether preferences for different types of civic involvement are already apparent in early adolescence.

Volunteer and activist participation are many times conceptualized and lumped together, but they need to be distinguished. Whereas volunteer work is usually oriented to help people in need from a top-down perspective, activist work is more oriented toward social transformation, that is, to alter the underlying causes of social disadvantage or injustice (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Several studies highlight the importance of participation as the main venue for developing the attitudes and duties of civic commitment (Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, 2012; Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010). In this article, we assume that opportunities for engagement and, consequently, manifestations of civic behaviors will vary by person and context, depending on the values and expectations that socializing institutions such as families and schools place on young citizens. To understand when and how youth engage in society (Obradović & Masten, 2007), it is important to gain insight into the emergence and development of attitudes, commitments, and behaviors in young populations. This study analyzes middle adolescents' involvement in civic organizations in Chile, a country that has seen an increase in youth unconventional political involvement since the restoration of democracy in the early 1990s. The analysis of configuration of participation in early adolescence, as opposed to a continuous measure of participation, affords us the opportunity to look at differences in the quality, and not just the quantity

of participation. Furthermore, we look at two essential contexts that promote participation: family and school.

Emergence of Civic Involvement in Early Adolescence

Early adolescence is signaled as a particularly relevant period to explore emergent profiles of civic interest and involvement, as the quest for identity-expanded autonomy provides opportunities for adolescents to explore interests, and develop commitments to others beyond the family. Interest and involvement in civic issues may vary across adolescence depending both on individual characteristics and contextual opportunities for involvement in school (e.g., student organizations) and community (e.g., volunteering, community service; Metz & Youniss, 2005). Examination of the opportunities young adolescents have to exercise participation rights can shed light on how to enrich experiences for emergent citizenship, particularly those available in developmental niches such as schools (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2011).

Knowledge about the emergence of civic dispositions and attitudes in early adolescence is limited. Empirical findings can help refine conceptual notions of what constitutes civic engagement early in life, and whether behaviors observed early in adolescence configure different profiles of civic expression (volunteering, activism, or engagement in social mobilizations; Torney-Purta, Amadeo, & Andolina, 2010). Given evidence that civic engagement can take different forms at specific moments of life, and documentation of new forms of civic engagement in young generations (Zukin et al., 2006), it is important to empirically identify early manifestations of civic dispositions and behaviors, and subsequently examine whether early patterns of dispositions are predictive of civic engagement beyond adolescence. Identifying early configurations and following these patterns over time can help to understand precursors of civic engagement in adulthood (Torney-Purta et al., 2010; Winlkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010).

Only a few studies have prospectively examined the evolution of attitudes and behaviors in young adolescents. In a large sample of urban middle school students in the United States, Voight and Torney-Purta (2013) identified three distinct profiles of civic behaviors and attitudes, each representing close to a third of the sample. The authors classified (a) those with low endorsement of attitudes and behaviors as civic moderates (30%), (b) those with high endorsement of attitudes but low civic behaviors as social justice sympathizers (34%), and (c) those high both on civic attitudes and behaviors as social justice actors (37%). Based on longitudinal measurements of civic values, behaviors, and

future expectations of involvement, Wray-Lake et al. (2014) identified four patterns of engagement in a sample of 3,701 eighth to 12th graders. In this sample, the largest class (39%) had low scores on every civic dimension except moderate expectations of voting. Alternatively, a group labeled civic leaders (14%) scored high on all three civic dimensions assessed (i.e., values, behaviors, and expectations of future participation). Their third class, labeled informed future voters (35%) had future expectations of voting, kept themselves informed of current events, and read the news. Most participants' profiles (62%) were stable over the 5-year time of the study, and the remaining 38% showed higher probability of transitioning into classes with greater civic engagement mostly toward the end of secondary education.

Although informative, previous evidence of early profiles of civic engagement comes from North American samples (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Less research has examined whether patterns of involvement reproduce in the same way in youth coming of age within different cultural contexts. It is reasonable to assume that expectations for adolescents to be involved in society, as well as opportunities for engagement particularly in the educational system, vary culturally depending on the sociopolitical reality of societies. Specifically, the ways children become members of institutions such as schools and community organizations vary by national contexts, as well as the beliefs and opportunities each society provides to prepare youth for full citizenship.

Gender and Socioeconomic Differences in Civic Engagement

Gender systems shape the political preferences and civic action commitments of males and females (Gordon, 2008). Males and females are socialized into different types of activities and interests, and differentially situated in roles within social institutions (e.g., families, schools); thus, their political orientations and civic participation can differ. In fact, evidence not only shows differences in the political preferences of males and females but also shows males have higher probabilities of participating in political activities than females (Schlozman, 2012). Alternatively, female adolescents value their involvement in noninstitutionalized forms of participation (e.g., promotion of human rights, care of the environment, community support; Hooghe et al., 2015). Similarly, findings from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study's (ICCS) Chilean sample show significant differences between male (72%) and female (80%) expectations of participating in volunteer activities (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). To promote political equality, it is important to examine whether males and females are equally represented in

profiles of engagement and disengagement, and whether attitudes about future involvement are differentially represented in clusters of involvement or follow similar pathways over the life course.

In a society segregated by socioeconomic status (SES) as the Chilean, the practices of schools may reinforce social class effects. Furthermore, over the years, they may contribute to widen the gap between groups. Although schools may provide opportunities for students to become engaged, the cumulative disadvantages of growing up poor and the socioeconomic segregation in the school system may result in differential opportunities for civic and political involvement for different socioeconomic groups.

SES is also significantly related to certain types of civic participation. Using expectations to enroll in higher education as a proxy of SES, Syvertsen et al. (2011) report that high-SES students have 2 or 3 times higher probabilities of becoming involved in conventional and nonconventional civic activities, and twice the chances of engagement in community service, compared with their low-SES counterparts. Furthermore, high-SES youth have higher disposition toward political and activist participation compared with their middle or low-SES counterparts (Hooghe et al., 2015; Martínez, Silva, & Hernández, 2010). Similarly, Chilean figures indicate a significant association between electoral participation and SES (Castillo, Miranda, Bonhomme, Cox, & Bascopé, 2014). Whereas 35% of Chilean youth from the highest 5% of the income distribution report interest in politics, only 12% of those from the lowest 5% income (INJUV, 2012) do. Interestingly, this SES gap significantly reduces for activist participation (52% in high- vs. 47% in low-income distribution; INJUV, 2012).

Acknowledging the developmental nature of civic engagement and its contextual embeddedness (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2011; Torney-Purta et al., 2010), this study analyzes involvement in civic organizations during early adolescence. Considering the secular trend of participation in volunteer organizations, particularly in older Chilean adolescents (INJUV, 2012), we hypothesized that a significant proportion of early adolescents will show a pattern of participation in organizations that pursue social and community service projects, and that youth disenchantment with formal politics (Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2007; INJUV, 2012) would translate in low probabilities of participation in political organizations in all profiles. In terms of predictors, we expected that patterns characterized by high probability of participation would be associated to family experiences of discussion of social and political issues, and opportunities for decision making at school.

Consequently, the goals of this study were as follows:

a. identify patterns of civic participation in a large normative sample of young adolescents,
b. examine whether identified patterns of participation differ by gender and SES, and
c. examine the role of individual attitudes, family practices, and school experiences in predicting different patterns of participation.

Method

Participants

Data for this study were collected in Chile as part of the ICCS in 2009 (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, 2011; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). ICCS used a multistage stratified sampling strategy, with geographic region, urbanization level, and source of financing as strata. The target population was defined as all students attending eighth grade at the time of the survey. In the first stage, schools were randomly selected according to stratification criteria. A total of 180 schools were selected, from which 177 participated in the survey. In the second stage, at least one class was selected from each school (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, 2011). The final sample included 5,192 adolescents enrolled in eighth grade (51% female, age $\bar{X} = 14.17$ years, $SD = 0.6$ years). School coverage for eighth graders is Chile is over 90% (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, 2012).

Measures

Latent classes were estimated based on students' responses to eight questions about their participation in the following organizations or groups: an organization affiliated with a political party or union, an environmental organization, a human rights organization, a voluntary group doing something to help the community, an organization collecting money for a social cause, a religious group or organization, a cultural organization based on ethnicity, and a group of young people campaigning for an issue. Response options were *within the last 12 months, more than a year ago*, or *never*. Answers were collapsed into two categories: current or past participation (1) and no participation (0). Because items of participation were used as indicators of latent variables, it is not relevant to estimate the internal consistency of the scale. However, as a reference point, Cronbach's alpha estimate was .69 for the eight items.

Several individual, family, and school dimensions available in the ICCS data set were used as predictors of class membership. The scores for these

scales were generated using item-response modeling (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, 2011) and were transformed to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. As a reference, for each scale, we report the internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha.

Civic participation at school was measured by six items that assessed whether students took part in school-based drama or music activities, a debate, voting for class representatives, or becoming a candidate in school elections as well as the extent they participated in discussions and decision making at school. Response options were *within the last 12 months, more than a year ago*, and *never*. Internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha was estimated at .59.

Adolescents' interest in politics and social issues was measured by five items tapping students' interests in local, national, or international politics. Response options ranged from *not interested at all* (1) to very *interested* (4). Cronbach's alpha internal consistency estimate was .84.

Support for democratic values was measured by five items tapping adolescents' beliefs in freedom of expression and respect for political rights. Response options ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agre*e (1). Internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha was estimated at .61.

Trust in civic institutions was measured by six items that assessed students' trust in national and local government institutions (e.g., parliament, justice courts) and the police. Response options ranged from *not at all* (1) to *completely* (4). Internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .82.

Attitudes toward own country were measured by seven items that assessed students' pride and respect for their country, its national symbols (e.g., flag), and the political system. Response options ranged from *completely disagree* (1) to *completely agree* (4). Internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .82.

Citizenship self-efficacy was measured by asking students how well they would perform in six types of activities such as discussing a newspaper article about a conflict between countries, arguing own point of view about a controversial political issue, being a candidate at school. Response options ranged from *not at all* (1) to *very well* (4). Internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha estimate was .81.

Parents' interest in political and social issues was measured by one question asking students to report the level of interest they perceived their mother and father had on political and social issues. Response options ranged from *not interested at all* (1) to *very interested* (3). Mother and father scores were averaged to reflect parental interest.

Discussion of political and social issues outside of school was measured by four items that assessed the frequency in which students talked with parents and friends about political issues or events happening in other countries. Response options ranged from *never or hardly ever* (1) to *daily or almost daily* (4). Internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .51.

Influence on school decisions was measured by six items tapping the extent students perceived they had a say on how classes were taught, class or school rules. Response options ranged from *not at all* (1) to *a large extent* (4). Internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .81.

Quality of student-teacher relations was measured by five items tapping the extent students perceived their teachers were interested in, listened to, and treated students fairly. Response options ranged from *strongly agree* (4) to *strongly disagree* (1). Internal consistency estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Analytical Strategy

We used Proc LCA in SAS (LCA; Collins & Lanza, 2010; Lanza, Collins, Lemmon, & Schafer, 2007) to identify different patterns or profiles of participation. Latent class analysis (LCA) allows to identify for different classes or profiles of participation, patterns that can be obscured when participation in different types of activities are just summed up. The analytical model was set with the eight items of participation in civic and political groups as indicators of latent classes. Selection of the best fitting model usually considers a number of information criteria (Akaike information criterion [AIC], Bayesian information criterion (BIC), consistent Akaike information criterion [CAIC], adjusted Bayesian information criterion [adjBIC]), size of the classes, interpretability of the solutions, and parsimony (Collins & Lanza, 2010; Lanza, Bray, & Collins, 2013). Once the optimum number of classes was determined, predictors of class membership were introduced.

To test for invariance of class configurations by demographic characteristics, gender was binary coded (0 = female, 1 = male). The ICCS data set includes the highest level of parental education of each student, measured according to the International Standard Classification of UNESCO. Based on the highest level of parental education, participants were classified as low (incomplete secondary education, $n = 912$), middle (completed secondary education, $n = 2{,}225$), or high SES (postsecondary education, $n = 1{,}989$).

Table 1. Fit Indices of Latent Class Model With Two to Six Classes.

	G^2	AIC	BIC	CAIC	AdjBIC	Entropy	*df*
2	933.94	967.94	1,079.3	1,096.30	1,025.28	0.69	238
3	404.01	456.01	626.34	652.34	543.72	0.68	229
4	301.04	371.04	600.32	635.32	489.10	0.60	220
5	262.73	350.73	638.98	682.98	499.16	0.56	211
6	232.38	338.38	685.58	738.58	517.16	0.57	202

Note. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion; CAIC = consistent Akaike information criterion; AdjBIC = adjusted BIC.

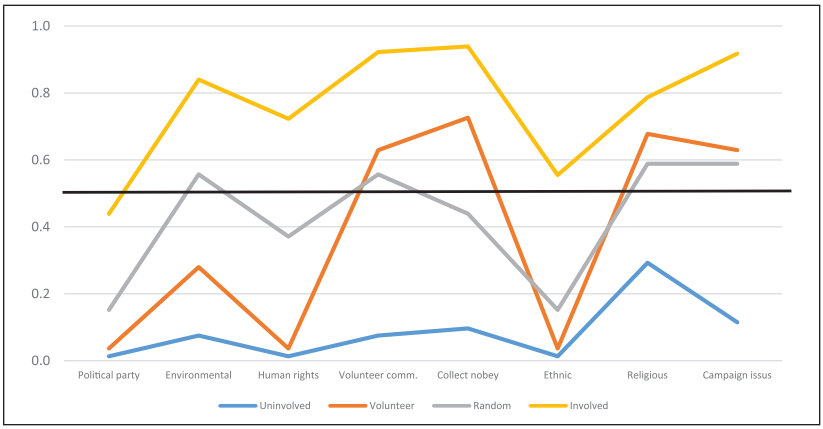

Figure 1. Item-response probabilities of participating in different groups or organizations, conditional on class membership.

Results

We started by fitting a series of latent class models with number of classes varying from two to six. As indicators in Table 1 suggest, neither model stood out as the best fitting relative to the other models. However, BIC, CAIC, and adjBIC favored the four-class model, whereas only AIC favored the five-class model. To test for model identification, we run the analysis with a set of 20 starting values; 100% of the four-class model converged to the same solution, whereas only 80% of the five-class model converged to the same solution. Inspection of the item-response probabilities for the four- and five-class models supported the selection of the four-class solution, as the five-class solution had two classes with similar patterns of responses, and one relatively small class (less than 6%).

Patterns of item-response probabilities by class are presented in Figure 1. The line drawn at $p = .5$ represents the point of random probability of participation. Class 1 (*uninvolved*) is the most prevalent (44%), and presents low probability of participation in all the organizations assessed. In contrast, Class 4 (*involved*) is the least prevalent (7.47%), and has a high probability of participating in most organizations assessed. Class 2 (volunteer, 27.48%) presents a higher than chance probability ($p > .6$) of participating in community volunteering, organizations collecting money for a social cause, religious organizations, and campaigns for a specific issue. In contrast, Class 3 (random, 20.93%) presents probabilities near chance ($.4 \leq p \geq .6$) for six of the nine civic organizations assessed, a pattern of participation that is probably reflecting circumstantial reasons for participation, rather than a clear commitment. None of the four classes identified has higher than chance probabilities of participation in organizations related to political parties.

Next, we tested the invariance of the patterns of item-response probabilities by gender. The chi-square differences test indicated no strict invariance ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}148) = 69.3$, df = 32, $p < .001$). However, analysis of the item-response probabilities and the graphical display (Figure 2) revealed differences in the magnitude of the item-response probabilities but not in the pattern of the classes. Following suggestions by Collins and Lanza (2010), we tested for partial measurement invariance. Partial invariance was achieved ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}148) = 35.06$, df = 27, $p = .1373$) by releasing restriction of four items for the *involved* and the *random* classes, whereas the *uninvolved* and the *volunteer* classes were completely invariant. With two exceptions (i.e., participation in political party and ethnic group for the *involved* class), differences in item probabilities between males and females were in magnitude, but not in the direction of response probabilities. Consequently, the substantive meaning of the classes was deemed equivalent for males and females.

Using this partially invariant configuration, we tested the invariance of latent class prevalences between males and females. As Table 2 shows, significant differences between male and female prevalences were found ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}148) = 117.2$, df = 4, $p < .001$). Males have higher prevalence in the *uninvolved* class, whereas females almost double the prevalence of males in the *involved* class (10.27 vs. 5.56 for males and females, respectively) and the *volunteer* class (35 vs. 19.56 for males and females, respectively).

To explore socioeconomic differences, we tested for measurement invariance and class prevalence by highest level of parental education as a proxy for SES. There was no strict measurement invariance in item-response probabilities for the four classes by SES ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}114) = 99.33$, df = 64, $p = .003$), only partial invariance ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}114) = 76.07$, df = 58, $p = .0559$). As Figure 3 depicts, the *uninvolved* and *volunteer* classes were totally invariant,

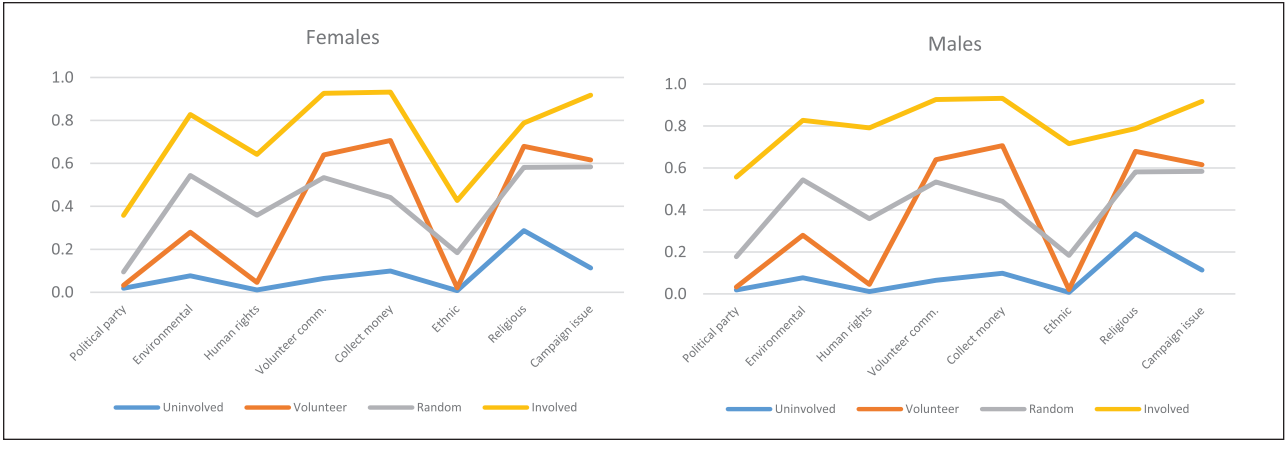

Figure 2. Item-response probabilities of participating in different organizations by gender.

Table 2. Prevalence of Each Class by Gender, Using Partially Invariant Configurations.

Sex	Uninvolved	Volunteer	Random	Involved
Male	0.5112	0.1956	0.2377	0.0556
Female	0.3634	0.3500	0.1839	0.1027

whereas the *involved* and *random* classes were partially invariant. Again, observed differences were in the magnitude but not in the pattern of responses.

Table 3 presents the prevalences of each class by SES. Invariance tests of class prevalences by SES indicated that classes were not invariant ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}114) = 147.28$, df = 6, $p < .001$). Specifically, prevalences of the *uninvolved* and *involved* classes were invariant ($\Delta\chi^2(n = 5{,}114) = 2.03$, df = 2, $p = .362$) for the high- and middle-SES groups. As Table 3 presents, prevalence in the *involved* class was highest for the low-SES group, and lower for the middle- and high-SES groups. Interestingly, the *volunteer* class was more than 20 percentage points higher in the high-SES compared with the low-SES group (35% vs. 14%, respectively) and 11 percentage points higher than the middle-SES group (35% vs. 24%, respectively).

To examine individual and contextual correlates of class membership, we run a multinomial logistic regression model, using the *uninvolved* class as the reference category. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Overall, males have higher odds than females of belonging to the *uninvolved* class; alternatively, females have higher odds of belonging to the *involved* and *volunteer* classes. Age increases the odds of belonging to the *involved* class, and SES decreases the odds of belonging to the *involved* class but increased the odds of belonging to the *volunteer* class. Adolescents' interest in politics, frequency of discussion of political and social issues with family and friends, and citizenship self-efficacy increase the odds of belonging to the *involved* classes, and decrease the odds of belonging to the *uninvolved* class (compared with the involved class). More interestingly, citizenship self-efficacy, attitudes toward own country, discussion of political and social issues increase the odds of belonging to the *volunteer* class, compared with the *uninvolved* class. Surprisingly, support for democratic values decreases the odds of belonging to the *involved* and *volunteer* classes. Finally, parental interest in politics was not related to participants' involvement in social or political organizations.

In terms of school variables, both students' participation and perceived influence at school increase the odds of belonging to the *involved* compared

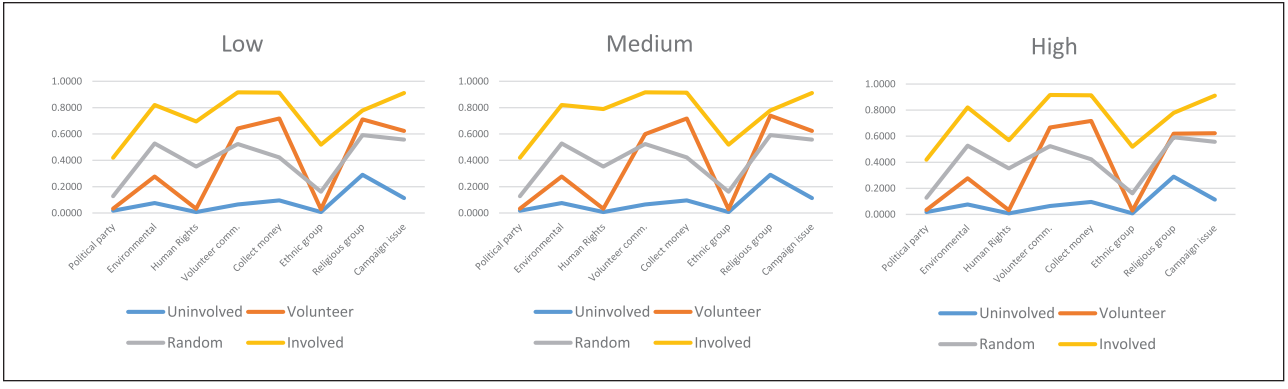

Figure 3. Item-response probabilities by SES, with two classes totally invariant (*uninvolved* and *random*) and two classes partially invariant (*involved* and *volunteer*).
Note. SES = socioeconomic status.

Table 3. Class Prevalence by Highest Level of Parental Education, Using Partially Invariant Configurations.

SES	Class 1 Uninvolved	Class 2 Volunteer	Class 3 Random	Class 4 Involved
Low	0.39	0.14	0.35	0.12
Middle	0.43	0.24	0.25	0.08
High	0.43	0.35	0.14	0.08

Note. SES = socioeconomic status.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients and Odds Ratios for Multinomial Regressions Predicting Class Membership Using Beliefs as Predictors.

	Classes					
	Volunteer		Random		Involved	
Predictors	Beta	OR	Beta	OR	Beta	OR
Gender (males)	−0.495	0.61[a]	0.008	0.98	−0.275	0.76[a]
Age	−0.011	0.99	0.087	1.09	0.192	1.21[a]
SES	0.087	1.09[a]	−0.289	0.75[a]	−0.216	0.81[a]
Adolescent's interest in politics	0.022	1.00	0.030	1.01[a]	0.047	1.03[a]
Citizenship self-efficacy	0.009	1.01[a]	0.017	1.02[a]	0.018	1.02[a]
Attitudes toward own country	0.016	1.02[a]	0.004	1.00	0.017	1.02[a]
Support for democratic values	−0.009	0.99[a]	−0.023	0.98[a]	−0.027	0.97[a]
Trust in institutions	0.005	1.00	0.007	1.01	0.003	1.00
Discussion of political and social issues	0.022	1.02[a]	0.030	1.03[a]	0.047	1.05[a]
Parent interest in politics	0.024	1.02	0.067	1.07	−0.001	0.99
Student influence at school	0.006	1.01	0.023	1.02[a]	0.049	1.05[a]
Participation in school	0.051	1.05[a]	0.043	1.04[a]	0.100	1.11[a]
Quality of teacher-student relationship	−0.001	0.99	0.001	1.00	−0.017	0.98[a]

Note. OR = odds ratio; SES = socioeconomic status.
[a]95% confidence interval does not include 1. Uninvolved is reference class.

with the *uninvolved* class, whereas students' participation in school also increased the odds of belonging to the *volunteer* class. Contrary to expectations, quality of teacher-student relationships decreases the odds of belonging to the *involved* class.

Discussion

Overall, our findings reveal considerable diversity in patterns of civic involvement in our sample. In terms of frequency of participation, two patterns that represent contrasting profiles emerge, namely, high and low levels of involvement in all the civic groups assessed. In addition, a third class—*volunteers*—similarly shows low participation in political, cultural ethnic, and human rights groups, but high participation in community volunteering groups, religious groups, and groups campaigning for a specific issue. The *volunteer* class reflects youth's preference for involvement in organizations that do not pursue conventional political aims. This finding probably reflects the normative opportunities for civic engagement available for adolescents, mostly in the form of community service and solidarity initiatives to help the less privileged. The organizations in which the *volunteer* class is more likely to participate mostly represent solidarity and service aims, rather than social transformation. Alternatively, the higher probabilities of participation of the *volunteer* class, compared with those of the *random* class, could also reflect a pattern of emergent civic participation, and indicate a different level of commitment.

Findings of this study extend current knowledge in three ways. First, by adding confirmatory evidence of distinctive configurations of civic participation in a different population of young adolescents. Second, by documenting the heterogeneity of civic configurations by gender and socioeconomic factors. Third, by highlighting specific family and school experiences that predict membership in different configurations of participation.

Patterns of civic involvement in our sample are similar to those reported by Menezes (2003) in a European adolescent sample drawn from the 2001 Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Although based on different indicators of civic behavior (i.e., involvement in school and neighborhood activities) and attitudes, profiles of civic engagement in our study also resemble the three clusters identified by Voight and Torney-Purta (2013), each representing mostly different levels of involvement as is the case of our sample. Furthermore, the two extreme classes (i.e., low and high civic behavior and attitudes) are somewhat comparable with the *uninvolved* and *involved* classes identified in our sample. Considering that measures are not equivalent across studies, consistency of the involved and uninvolved profiles in these different samples (i.e., North American, European, Chilean) suggest these contrasting patterns are already apparent in early adolescence. The latter does not imply, though, that they will be stable over time.

In terms of prevalences, students with high civic involvement in our study present prevalences close to those reported by Wray-Lake et al. (2014; *civic leaders*) and Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, and Alisat (2007; i.e., *activists*). As in other normative samples, steady involvement is low (Amnå, 2012). Alternatively, the pattern of uninvolvement in our sample is higher than the 30% reported in previous studies (Menezes, 2003; Pancer et al., 2007; Wray-Lake et al., 2014). Relatedly, Voight and Torney-Purta (2013) found a fairly balanced representation of each profile of engagement, whereas in our sample, the *involved* group represents a minority compared with the *uninvolved*, the most prevalent pattern. Differences in prevalence of configurations between samples probably reflect unequal contextual opportunities available for young adolescents in school and community settings, but could also reflect individual differences in motivations and dispositions to participate, or a combination of both. Further examination of these patterns would advance theoretical understanding of antecedents of civic engagement, as well as the design of civic education or intervention programs.

In light of their young age, it is reasonable to expect that a large number in our sample is not involved. However, a significant proportion is engaged in volunteer work. The uninvolved group can either have less access to conventional participatory settings or may perceive that formal political settings do not reflect or respond to their concerns. In the context of low trust in traditional organizations and increasingly individualized biographies, youth may perceive and cultivate a political stance in manifestations such as music or consumer activism (Harris et al., 2007) or exchange views or opinions in forums other than organizations (Vromen, Xenos, & Loader, 2015). It is still possible that some members of the uninvolved class are actually interested in political issues, and ready to act, should they perceive it as imperative (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Thus, we cannot conclude that the uninvolved class is necessarily disengaged as our measure defining classes of participation is basically capturing frequency of involvement in a limited number of organizations. At the same time, considering the new forms that civic engagement may take (Zukin et al., 2006), it is significant to identify a small group that, behaviorally, already exhibits a clear pattern of civic participation.

Heterogeneity of Profiles of Civic Participation by Gender and Socioeconomic Contexts

Considering the different ways in which boys and girls are socialized within society's institutions (e.g., families, schools), and the contrasting social roles and positions genders occupy in society (Eagly, 1987), it could be expected that females were less civically involved than males. This is not the case in

our sample, as males are overrepresented in the *uninvolved* and females in the *involve*d and *volunteer* classes. At the same time, acknowledging that gender inequality (i.e., low representation of women in politics, government, legislature, and power positions) is a major social and economic issue in Chile (Schkolnik, 2004), the fact that females are overrepresented in the *involved* class raises two issues for future research. First, how to sustain females' civic involvement in adolescence through adulthood. Second, to identify at what point in their life cycle women will give up their participation, particularly, in political organizations.

Patterns of civic involvement differ by SES in our sample. Only the *uninvolved* class was invariant across SES. Compared with the low-SES group, participants from high and middle SES present lower prevalence in the *involved* class, but higher participation in the *volunteer* class. The higher prevalence of low SES in the *random* class probably reflects that participation for this groups is contingent to contextual opportunities. Our finding of greater civic involvement in low-SES participants differs from the disadvantage in civic knowledge, skills, and participation documented in non-White, poor, and/or immigrant youth in the United States (Levinson, 2007), and calls for more specific analysis of cultural differences in expectations and opportunities for engagement.

Students in the two classes with mixed patterns (i.e., *volunteer, random*) are involved in community volunteering, religious organizations, and campaigns for a specific issue, and show similar prevalences in the middle-SES group. However, prevalences of these two mixed pattern classes differ between low and high SES. The *volunteer* class (collect money to support social cause) is more prevalent in the middle and high SES, whereas the *random* class in the middle and low SES. Unfortunately, our measures do not allow to explore whether differences in patterns of involvement reflect differential opportunities available for youth in their schools and residential communities, youth preferences of involvement, or parents' selective encouragement of their children's involvement in certain civic groups only. Future studies could test what processes account for the differences observed.

Adolescents' Attitudes and Profiles of Civic Engagement

Not surprisingly, age increases the odds of belonging to the *involved* class. This finding probably reflects adolescents' gains in autonomy, as civic involvement requires interaction in contexts outside the family. The two profiles with some kind of consistent involvement (i.e., *involved, volunteer*) provide evidence that these young citizens are active. Substantively, only the *involved* configuration includes participation in political organizations,

whereas the *volunteer* class is mostly involved in social or service initiatives. This finding calls for further examination of adolescents' ideas and expectations about citizenship that focus on social transformation versus helping or meeting the needs of less privileged others. Whether these profiles of involvement fade out, continue through young adulthood, or can be channeled into political profiles later in development is an empirical question (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2011). Pathways are not the same for civic and political engagement, and it is important to identify what processes might be specific for each type of involvement at later ages.

Our indicators of adolescent attitudes relate differently to class membership, and the pattern also differs by SES. Surprisingly, students' support for democratic values is inversely related to civic participation, as it decreases the odds of belonging to the *involved* and *volunteer* classes. This finding may reflect changing views of democracy and citizens' participation described in young generations (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Harris et al. (2007) argue that, in contemporary societies, youth's lives unfold disconnected with formal institutions or without participation in political processes. If conventional forms of political involvement are not available for youth and/or are perceived as ineffective, and identities becoming increasingly individualized (Coté & Bynner, 2008), youth create new spaces to connect with the civic sphere of society and manifest their political concerns. Youth participation, thus, becomes more closely connected to the proximal worlds of family and friends. In fact, Dalton and Crosby (2008) state that young citizens have a broader notion of democracy and participation that includes experiences of the personal life that may acquire a political dimension, whereas Welzel, Inglehart, and Deutsch (2005) characterized them by freedom and self-expression. If new forms are already in place that capitalize on youth connections with others outside formal organizations to build the civic or political realm, our measure may present a limited or adult-focused view of what civic engagement means for participants.

Consistent with previous reports, school experiences do matter for adolescents' civic engagement, as participation in civic and cultural activities in school is a significant predictor of participation in civic and political groups outside the school in our sample. Furthermore, students' perceived influence in school increases the odds of belonging to the involved compared with the uninvolved class. Regardless of SES, the school emerges as a key context to engage young students in quality participation experiences (e.g., school radio or newspaper, students' council) through which they can perceive their voice matters, have a sense of influence by taking part in decisions that matter to them. Students' participation in decision making and sense of influence in school may be experiences attuned to youth's personal needs of autonomy

and self-direction. Experiences of participation with others in contexts where youth feel their voice and perspectives are taken seriously build the ties that bind citizens together, and can actualize the values and tenets of the larger societal order (Flanagan, Lin, Luisi-Mills, Sambo, & Hu, 2015; Flanagan, Martínez, Cumsille, & Ngomane, 2011). Both frequency of involvement and quality (i.e., sense of influence) of participation in school activities can provide a context for young citizens to develop agency and political efficacy.

Considering that empirical evidence documenting the emergence and contextual variation of civic engagement in adolescence is still limited (Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013), identifying early patterns of commitment may be a first step toward understanding the precursor processes of trajectories of civic engagement in adult life, be these continuous or episodic, and to examine which patterns of involvement are more likely to continue in adult life (Torney-Purta et al., 2010; Winlkenfeld et al., 2010). Current findings raise questions regarding how early in adolescence, the profiles of engagement identified emerge relative to contextual opportunities for civic participation available in school or community settings. Documenting the developmental antecedents of early patterns of civic involvement is important to advance understanding about whether and how attitudes and commitments may continue or change in late adolescence and adulthood (Obradović & Masten, 2007).

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