Chapter 2
The Reserved Young Citizens of the Nordic Countries

Jonas Lieberkind and Jens Bruun

Abstract Both in citizenship education research and public debate, interest in understanding the role and significance of young people in the current state and future of democracy is ongoing. From one point of view, young people are seen as alienated and passive, thus raising concern. From another point of view, young people are seen as drivers for change, thus raising hope. This chapter intends to explore such contradicting roles of the young Nordic citizens. The basic questions are as follows: (1) What are the characteristics of the Nordic youth relative to the youth in other regions? (2) What are their main perceptions and attitudes towards the active and passive dimensions of citizenship? (3) Have these characteristics and perceptions changed over time? Empirically, the analyses and interpretations are based on IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2009 and ICCS 2016 data applied to demonstrate the regional trends, similarities, and differences among youth. In general, the Nordic youth are relatively passive with regard to political participation. At the same time, however, they are knowledgeable and democratically engaged. We propose a new analytical concept to understand this "double-sided" civic engagement of the Nordic youth as the *reserved* young Nordic citizens.

Keywords Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) · Civic education · Civic knowledge · Political attitudes · Citizen types · Political engagement · Monitorial citizen · Stand-by citizen · Reserved citizen · Bildung · Political formation · Nordic youth

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2.1 Introduction

We are currently witnessing young people around the world engaging in political issues and giving new life to contemporary political agendas. The Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and Fridays For Future are examples of the movements driven by young people's political engagement during the last decade. In particular, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has drawn considerable attention from young people towards climate change. Since August 2018, when 15-year-old Thunberg started the first school strike in protest against climate change in front of the Swedish parliament in Stockholm, her engagement has been a strong driver for young people's attitudes towards the climate change crisis. She has become a global icon of young people's political engagement. Millions of young people and school children from more than 200 countries have participated in thousands of Fridays For Future strikes. Thunberg is an example of how global and local engagement can become interrelated in reaction to a global issue that transcends national boundaries. On a global scale, Thunberg has at the same time triggered multiple discussions about how, why, and when the active political participation of people at her age is appropriate. In this chapter, we focus on her generation of the Nordic youth by investigating some fundamental questions about their political engagement in an international comparison. The basic intention is to investigate what is characteristic of this generation of young citizens of the Nordic countries, that is, those born in the early 2000s in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The empirical context for this investigation and discussion is IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) from 2009 and 2016. The young people that participated in ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 were all grade 8 (or equivalent) students; thus, most of ICCS 2016 participants were born around 2002 and were between 14 and 15 years of age at the time of the study. The study therefore provides a special opportunity to gain insights into this age group comprising young people nearing the end of compulsory schooling, albeit still on an ongoing educational journey. The following are some questions of interest: Is this generation of young people from the Nordic countries characterized by the same kind of active and global engagement as Greta Thunberg? Is the way they are engaged comparable to the political youth activism of the 1960s and 1970s? What can comparisons of the Nordic youth with young citizens from other regions tell us about the differences and similarities between them?

Based on a descriptive statistical analysis of ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 data, this chapter explores and discusses these questions with the aim of outlining the characteristics of this generation of young people as citizens. ICCS studies are designed to gain insights into many different aspects of the shaping, creation, and formation (becoming) of young citizens for future life in a modern democracy. ICCS covers a wide range of citizenship dimensions, such as civic knowledge, gender and ethnic equality, political efficacy, political discussion, electoral participation, conventional political attitudes, social-movement related activities, and personal responsibility. By combining the empirical findings for a range of such citizenship dimensions,

we capture and characterize the civic education[1] of young people (i.e., their *politische Bildung* or political education). We include the data from both ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 because this allows us to demonstrate how the perceptions of the Nordic youth have changed (or not changed) from one generation to the next, relative to each other and relative to the young people from other regions. The vast ICCS data may thus provide unique insights into the civic education of this "Greta-generation" of the Nordic youth. Every ICCS study cycle provides a snapshot of young people at a particular time and age. By gaining an insight into the civic education of this generation—that is, the generation investigated in ICCS 2016—we can view the components of this civic education as the foundation of how the young people of this generation will continue creating and shaping their identities as citizens.

The empirical inspiration and foundation for this chapter is inspired by previous insights from the international reports on ICCS 2009 and 2016 (Schulz et al. 2010, 2018a) and Nordic national reports (Bruun et al. 2018; Huang et al. 2017; Skolverket 2017; Mehtäläinen et al. 2017). In particular, ICCS 2016 results highlighted seemingly contradictory characteristics of Nordic students. On the one hand, the ICCS data demonstrated Nordic students as being highly engaged young citizens; on the other hand, the data showed them as having relatively low expectations with respect to active participation, for example, in protests and social-movement-related activities (Schulz et al. 2018a).

In research literature, *political engagement* is often used as an umbrella concept covering both the passive/indirect and active/direct aspects of citizens' approaches to society—for example, attitudes, political interest, knowledge, political discussions, political self-efficacy, and political participation (Andersen and Hoff 2001). The *engagement* of young people in this chapter is considered in this broad sense. However, based on the empirical results of ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016, we want to make the analytical distinction and discussion of how to characterize young people's political engagement more nuanced. We aim to show and discuss how a comprehensive interpretation of the Nordic youth as a certain kind of citizen is made possible by the introduction of a new analytical concept. The thesis of the chapter is that the civic engagement of the Nordic youth is comparable to neither the long-lasting political activism of the 1960s and 1970s nor a short-lived or passive attitude. On the contrary, we characterize the political engagement of the Nordic youth as existing outside of a simple active/passive dichotomy and instead being simultaneously active and passive. We have named these young Nordic citizens and their double-sided engagement as the *reserved citizen.*

[1] When referring to "civic education" in this chapter, paying attention to the specific meaning of the concept is important. The Nordic languages distinguish between two different meanings and understandings of "education" and thus also of "civic education." Using Danish as an example, the word "uddannelse" articulates "education" as the formal teaching and the academic learning outcome ("education" as a formal qualification). The word "dannelse," however, articulates "education" as a lifelong process of personal and cultural cultivation ("education" as an informal experience). Often, "dannelse" is indirectly explained by a reference to the German concept of "Bildung" as used by Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1767–1835). See also Lieberkind (2020).

2.2 New Theoretical Trends in the Perceptions of the Nordic Youth

Previous attempts in the research literature to characterize young citizens have revealed a widespread concern about their lack of desire to participate in society and democracy in general. One common point of departure is the claim that the young citizens of post-industrial societies are becoming particularly individualized—that is, detached from the values preserving culture and society (Dalton 1988; Lasch 1979; Norris 2002; Putnam 2001; Riis and Gundelach 1992; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999). In the Nordic context, a similar concern exists for the alleged lack of democratic and political engagement of young people (Amnå 2019; Riis and Gundelach 1992). In recent years, however, a new interest has developed among researchers in understanding the political profile of young citizens in new and more positive ways (Amnå and Ekman 2014; Amnå and Zetterberg 2010; Hegna 2018; Hooghe and Dejaeghere 2007; Oser and Hooghe 2013). These researchers still share the widespread concern about the possible negative implications of an unengaged young generation for democracy, but they also tend to agree that previous research has used too narrow an understanding of the political engagement of young people and painted an unnecessarily bleak picture of this generation. In this chapter, we draw on the insights derived from some of these studies, especially those that focus on the political engagement of the Nordic youth. In doing so, we share the ambition of challenging the conventional and narrow understanding of the political commitment of these young people (Amnå and Zetterberg 2010; Hooghe and Dejaeghere 2007; Oser and Hooghe 2013).

Previous research also argues that there is good reason to focus on the Nordic region as a group of countries with special democratic and political conditions. Amnå and Zetterberg (2010) refer to a "distinguished Nordic Civic Activism" (p. 44) characterized by cultural factors (tolerant, emancipative, and Protestant values), a relatively uncorrupted public sector, a high degree of social capital from membership of civic organisations, and strong socioeconomic development. Similarly, Oser and Hooghe (2013) find that:

> …the Scandinavian countries always clearly outperform all other countries in the world with regard to the prevalence of 'new' democratic norms and citizenship concepts. In fact, we would expect that if a scavenger hunt for engaged citizens were conducted throughout the globe one would find that this norm is most prevalent in the Scandinavian countries. (p. 321)

Using a distinction from Dalton (2008), Oser and Hooghe (2013) term this new type of citizen as the *engaged citizen*, as opposed to the more conventional and so-called *duty-based citizen*. This new, engaged citizen constitutes a greater challenge to the political elite and is engaged in protests and issues such as human rights and the environment. As indicated above, they expect that, in particular, the Nordic youth will be the global forerunners of a more dedicated citizen type who is politically involved in democracy in a broad and critical manner. Therefore, they also assume that the Nordic youth are more engaged than young people elsewhere in the world and that the level of their engagement is increasing.

Oser and Hooghe (2013) use data from the IEA studies CIVED[2] 1999 and ICCS 2009 to test their assumptions. However, their analysis cannot confirm the hypothesis that this new and more engaged type of citizen has become increasingly important in the Nordic region from 1999 to 2009. They use 12 normative indicators which are, in fact, identical to 12 questionnaire items from CIVED 1999 and ICCS 2009. All items relate to the ways in which adult citizens could or should behave as citizens. In the ICCS 2009 study, some of these items are used as indicators for *conventional citizenship* and others for *social-movement-related citizenship* (detailed in the sections below). Oser and Hooghe (2013) link the concepts of duty-based and engaged to the same variables. Their trend analysis concludes that "All but two of the traditional normative indicators increased in importance over time … Not a single element of committed citizenship increases between 1999 and 2009" (p. 328). In other words, they find that real development is the exact opposite of their expectation. They also state that this unexpected change—that is, the fact that the duty-based citizen is gaining support and the committed citizen is losing support—is unique only to the Nordic countries and is not a general trend in the countries participating in both surveys. Our analysis (see below), shows how the trends from 2009 to 2016 play out in this context.

Hooghe and Dejaeghere (2007) use Schudson's concept of the *monitorial citizen* as the theoretical basis of their analysis. Schudson's (2000) theory is that the generations of conventional citizens characterized by traditional and routine forms of participation are being replaced by new generations of more individualized young people for whom traditional loyalties and roles are becoming less important. However, he does not believe that this development is a problem for the relationship between citizens and their political system. This new monitorial citizen is not characterized by alienation or mistrust because, in Schudson's (2000) view, the absence of traditional political activity is a rational choice. Hooghe and Dejaeghere (2007) explain that the monitorial citizen is a citizen who has "sufficient" political knowledge, "enough" political efficacy, and keeps the surveillance of the political system to a "minimum." The monitorial citizen is passive but, to this limited degree, supervisory, reflective, and hesitant. The monitorial citizen is thus prepared to actively intervene if the need arises and possesses some level of political self-efficacy. By drawing on Schudson's theoretical concept of the monitorial citizenship, Hooghe and Dejaeghere, to some extent, challenge the traditional expectation that a democratic citizen ought to be an active citizen. Nevertheless, the monitorial citizen is regarded as a good citizen because this citizen is *passively active*. Four aspects characterize the monitorial citizen: (1) political interest (i.e., monitoring political events), (2) internal and external political efficacy, (3) activity, but only if needed, and (4) absence of membership of a political party or other interest in organized long-term political participation. Hooghe and Dejaeghere (2007) examine the data from the European Social Survey to determine how widespread this type of citizen is among the adult citizens of the Nordic countries. They find that only 8.7% of Nordic adults

[2]CIVED = IEA Civic Education Study. Phase 1 of the study was conducted in 1996–1997. Phase 2 data were collected in 1999 (standard population) and 2000 (optional population).

show all four aspects mentioned above. The group of monitorial citizens has the same average age as the other types of citizens. Therefore, there is no indication that this type of citizen is very important, either in general or among younger citizens. Almost 27% of participants of the sample in the survey combine political interest, self-confidence, and some occasional participation; but the vast majority of them are well-integrated into the conventional system, so the contrast between the monitorial citizen and the traditional citizen is by no means evident.

Amnå and Ekman are also inspired by Schudson's optimistic analysis of the relatively passive postmodern citizen, including Schudson's description of the monitorial citizen as passive but potentially active (Amnå and Ekman 2014; Ekman 2013). Based on a study of Swedish young people and young adults, they develop their theoretical concept: the *stand-by citizen.* Their ambition is to move "beyond the simplistic active/passive distinction" (Amnå and Ekman 2014, p. 261). At first sight, their basic idea resembles that of Schudson (2000): "Such 'stand-by citizens' are those who stay alert, keep themselves informed about politics by bringing up political issues in an everyday life context, and are willing and able to participate if needed" (Amnå and Ekman 2014, p. 262). However, their empirical operationalization is considerably less strict than that of Hooghe and Dejaeghere (2007) or Schudson (2000), because they reduce the four aspects of the monitorial citizen to two specific requirements for the stand-by citizen. Hence, they can claim that the stand-by citizen is much more widespread than the monitorial citizen. The main empirical criterion for the stand-by citizen is the combination of a relatively high level of political interest with an average level of occasional political participation when the results of this group are compared with the average results. Amnå and Ekman (2014) find that precisely this combination is a characteristic of the largest group of young adults in their sample and draw the conclusion that these young people, i.e., those highly interested but with an average level of activeness, are "prepared for action" (p. 262). Therefore, they also claim that this group of passive young people may be an asset, rather than a problem, to democracy (Amnå and Ekman 2014, p. 262).

Amnå and Ekman (2014) emphasize that political passivity is not a unidimensional phenomenon, as previous research has claimed. The study shows that in addition to the active citizen—that is, the citizen who is simultaneously interested and active, three different types of passive citizens exist: the unengaged citizen, the disillusioned citizen, and the stand-by citizen. Stand-by citizens are only passive relative to the citizens actively participating in political events. However, because they actively observe and monitor the society's state, they are prepared to become active. Hereby, Amnå and Ekman (2014) argue that describing this type of citizen as a special variation of the passive citizen type—that is, again, as a passive-active citizen—is analytically possible. In a previous article solely based on the theoretical discussions of the categories, they define these specific forms of passive activities as "latent political participation" (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

To be very clear, the civil actions we refer to are of course manifest (observable) behaviour as well, but "latent" in relation to specific *political* parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actions. Again, this reflects our wish to cover not only activities intended to influence actual political outcomes by targeting relevant political or

societal elites, but activities and forms of engagement that could very well be of great relevance for, e.g., future manifest political action, even if "pre-political" or "potentially political" rather than directly political as such (p. 292).

In this chapter, we pursue the main theoretical ambition of the previously mentioned authors to challenge the simple passive/active dichotomy. We also support the idea that the passive citizen is, in fact, an asset for democracy, even though our arguments differ from the ones mentioned above. Nevertheless, we want to hold on to the fact that both Oser and Hooghe (2013) and Amnå and Zetterberg (2010), on the basis of CIVED and ICCS data, show that the Nordic youth actually do have a relatively passive attitude. For example, Amnå and Zetterberg (2010) state: "The Nordic youth anticipated the least involvement in politics when becoming adults" (p. 59). Amnå and Ekman (2014) claim that this may change when young people grow older because the stand-by citizen will eventually become a good active citizen for some time. However, we are living in a time when political activities have led to both climate demonstrations and right-wing national activities or other radical movements. In other words, the different movements and political activism of our time appear to be phenomena that are unpredictable or, as Rancière (2013) says, uncontrollable. Regarding political activity as something good per se is therefore somewhat questionable. We will claim that this passivity is in fact a characteristic of the Nordic youth and that this passivity can be differently interpreted.

From our theoretical perspective, the most important problem with the monitorial and stand-by citizens is that in this way of thinking, the passive-active citizen is, as a rule and as a point of departure, a passive citizen. In other words, the young stand-by citizen is not included in democratic practice because it takes place at various levels of society. Staying alert and being prepared is thus an indication that the young stand-by citizen only occasionally participates in special events "when needed" but is not a part of democratic life in general. In other words, for the stand-by perspective, young people are only potentially political on an off/on or latent/manifest basis.

In this chapter, we argue in favour of an understanding of the Nordic youth as reserved citizens. This analytical category turns the stand-by citizens' passive/active (i.e., off/on and latent/manifest) dichotomy upside down. Expressed in the passive-active vocabulary, the reserved citizen could be described as *active* as well as *passive* (active-passive). However, our theoretical ambition is to move beyond the passive/active dichotomy by introducing another perspective and vocabulary. The main point here is that the reserved citizen is simultaneously relatively *active* and relatively *passive*. The reserved citizen is always already engaged, i.e., not passive as a rule and not active only when and if needed. Later in this chapter, we present international comparisons, based on ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016, across a range of different civic dimensions of life as a young citizen. The ambition is to demonstrate and discuss this phenomenon, i.e., that a characteristic of the Nordic young people is that they understand and engage in society both passively and actively. This double-sided pattern of engagement is the empirical context for coining Nordic youth as reserved citizens.

2.3 Methods and Methodological Issues

This chapter primarily uses descriptive statistics based on ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 to characterize the Nordic youth as citizens. Hence, the analytical interest in the empirical data is primarily concerned with the generational characteristics. Because the focus is on young people's attitudes and perceptions in general within a shared imaginary political reality, the analysis will not include the specific life conditions of any individual young person or any sociological subgroups or subcultures.

The following sections are based on international comparisons of the youth of the four Nordic countries participating in the ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 studies. When tables and descriptions related to trends are presented, only the countries participating in both studies are included. In some cases, the Nordic region is compared with other regions, especially with the countries from the rest of Europe and Latin America that participated in the studies. These comparisons across regions are relevant because regional patterns and international trends are important for understanding the Nordic region in a broad international context. Countries in such regions usually display some common characteristics, especially relative to other regions.

Concerning the use of specific data from ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016, the descriptions mainly use the results from several scales examining important dimensions of young people's perceptions of citizenship, democracy, and politics. The scales measure these latent traits using multiple indicators. All scales were developed for ICCS 2009 and were used in an identical form in ICCS 2016. This enables us to document how the perceptions of the generations of young people change over time. These scales are advantageous for investigating and documenting the psychometric properties for each survey and all countries according to the well-established IEA technical standards (Köhler et al. 2018; Schulz et al. 2018a). The scales have proven to be suitable for trend analyses as they are relatively unaffected by random fluctuations over time. Note that previous research about the Nordic youth, as presented and discussed above, is often implicitly or explicitly based on results from some of the same scales. This chapter will use the analytical concept of the reserved citizen (active-passive citizen) as an interpretive key to identify Nordic young people's attitudes towards civic engagement. We place the results within an ongoing discussion about the theoretical concept that functions as the main interpretative grip.

2.4 International Trends from ICCS 2009 to ICCS 2016

2.4.1 Increasing Civic Knowledge

One of the recurring discussions about young people as democratic citizens is related to whether they have sufficient knowledge about, and understanding of, democracy to act in appropriate ways in society. These concerns are probably as old as the concept

of youth, and a difference in the civic knowledge of young people and older generations will always exist. All generations have and share historical experiences that differ from each other. From an inter-generational perspective, understanding that knowledge and concepts of democracy are interpreted in different ways in history and by different generations, which may generate some concern and incomprehension between generations, is important. The concern about young people's potential lack of knowledge rests on the traditional perception of democracy as founded on the rational arguments and well-considered engagement of knowledgeable citizens (Svensson 1979). In itself, this perception rests on the assumption that knowledge and commitment to society as a political community are positively correlated. An implicit or explicit assumption in the literature is that political knowledge and interest will lead to political participation.

In the ICCS studies, students' knowledge and skills are tested across a range of content sub-dimensions, including the functions of basic political institutions, the role of free media, electoral procedures, rights and duties of citizens, roles of international organizations, and a range of further topics covered by a total of 87 test items. The ICCS 2016 study shows that civic knowledge is related to various types of political participation in different ways, depending on the type of activity in question. In almost all countries, students' expected active political participation is negatively related to their civic knowledge, whereas their expected electoral participation is positively related to their civic knowledge (Schulz et al. 2018a, pp. 102, 104).[3]

One of the most interesting results of the ICCS 2016 study is that since 2009, the grade 8 students across countries and regions have gained more knowledge about social, political, and democratic topics and issues (see Table 2.1). The test results very clearly show that the average level of civic knowledge has increased across the eighteen countries that participated in both ICCS 2016 and ICCS 2009. This particularly applies to the Nordic countries. Some of the largest increases in the level of civic knowledge are measured in Sweden and Norway. Denmark and Finland show no increase; both countries have some of the highest average scores in the two ICCS studies. Any concern about the Nordic youth being ignorant about democracy and lacking the potential to function as enlightened citizens in the future is difficult to maintain in this comparative perspective. The Nordic youth are among the young people worldwide who are the most knowledgeable in this context, and thus have a unique point of departure for understanding and monitoring societal developments and forming their own opinions and perceptions.

2.4.2 Increasing Political Engagement

In this sub-section, we focus on nine scales from the ICCS study that are crucial for assessing students' political socialization and education. The first four scales

[3] We understand that any relation or association between civic knowledge and types of participation is an interrelatedness, where any cause and effect most likely is a mutual causation.

Table 2.1 Changes in the average civic knowledge between the results of ICCS 2016 and ICCS 2009 on the ICCS civic knowledge test

	Average scale score ICCS 2016		Average scale score ICCS 2009		Difference (absolute value)	
Sweden[a]	579	(2.8)	537	(3.1)	42	(5.2)
Russian Federation	545	(4.3)	506	(3.8)	38	(6.5)
Norway[a, c]	564	(2.2)	538	(4.0)	25	(5.5)
Belgium (Flemish)	537	(4.1)	514	(4.7)	23	(6.9)
Taiwan (Chinese Taipei)	581	(3.0)	559	(2.4)	22	(5.0)
Estonia[a]	546	(3.1)	525	(4.5)	21	(6.3)
Colombia	482	(3.4)	462	(2.9)	20	(5.5)
Bulgaria	485	(5.3)	466	(5.0)	19	(8.0)
Slovenia	532	(2.5)	516	(2.7)	16	(4.8)
Mexico	467	(2.5)	452	(2.8)	15	(4.9)
Lithuania	518	(3.0)	505	(2.8)	13	(5.2)
Latvia[a]	492	(3.1)	482	(4.0)	11	(5.9)
Denmark[b]	586	(3.0)	576	(3.6)	10	(5.6)
Malta	491	(2.7)	490	(4.5)	2	(6.1)
Dominican Republic	381	(3.0)	380	(2.4)	1	(5.0)
Finland	577	(2.3)	576	(2.4)	0	(4.5)
Chile	482	(3.1)	483	(3.5)	-1	(5.6)
Italy	524	(2.4)	531	(3.3)	-6	(5.1)

Source Table data adapted from Schulz et al. (2018a, p. 62). *Notes* The table is sorted in descending order by country difference between 2016 and 2009. Differences in bold are significant ($p < 0.05$). Standard errors are placed in parentheses. [a]Covers 90–95% of the national target population. [b]Met sampling participation rate only after replacement schools were included. [c]Norway surveyed the adjacent upper grade where the average student age was equivalent to the other Nordic countries. In ICCS 2009, Norway surveyed both the target grade and adjacent upper grade. Both results shown here are for the adjacent grade (grade 9). The scale was established in ICCS 2009, with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 for equally weighted national samples

are related to what we here label the *democratic culture*. Of these, the first two are about equality across different groups in society and the other two are about students' perceptions of themselves in political deliberation. The remaining five of the nine scales are related to what we here label the *political system*; of these, two scales are about the expectations of becoming politically active as an adult and three scales are about the endorsement of three different types of citizens. For each scale, we indicate the main content of the items used.

I. *The democratic culture*

1. Gender equality (equality between women and men in politics, jobs, and life)
2. Equal rights of ethnic groups (equal educational, political, and cultural rights across all ethnic groups)

3. Political self-efficacy (self-confidence in being able to understand and contribute to political matters)
4. Discussions about political and social issues (with friends and parents, about various issues)

II. *The political system*

1. Expected electoral participation (voting in various types of elections as an adult)
2. Expected political participation (supporting candidates and collecting money as an adult)
3. Conventional citizenship (voting, following political news, interest in party politics; see more below)
4. Social-movement-related citizenship (willingness to protest, support human rights; see more below)
5. Personal responsibility citizenship (support one's family, work hard; see more below).

We investigated the differences in the scale scores between the ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 datasets for eight of these scales (personal responsibility citizenship was excluded because it was not measured in the ICCS 2009 study). A clear tendency is that the grade 8 students in 2016 have become more supportive of all these dimensions of political life than grade 8 students in 2009 (see Fig. 2.1). Across countries and regions, they show an increasing level of identification and interest in these social, political, and democratic norms and values.[4] The differences in all eight scales are statistically significant.

The endorsement of equal rights for different groups in society (here, the examples are gender and ethnic groups) has substantially increased. Compared with the students in 2009, the students in 2016 had a higher expected turnout and an increasing ambition to actively participate in the political system, for example, by joining a political party or political association or by supporting a politician or a party during an election campaign. The fact that the students across the participating countries have become more engaged is also indicated by their increased participation in conversations about social and political issues with parents and friends than the students in 2009. In addition, students have become more trusting in their abilities to understand political matters and to form and present their opinions. The trends (Fig. 2.1) indicate that the students have become more positive towards conventional citizenship—that is, the citizen type that supports the formal democratic system. The only almost unchanged result (the difference between the ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 results is only 0.32 scale points) is that of to the endorsement of social-movement-related citizenship: a type of citizen who is very active and, for example, protests outside the formal system.

[4]To compare the international results over time, the results in Fig. 2.1 are shown as the total international average only for the countries participating in both ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016. The line in Fig. 2.1 is only intended to make the results clearly stand out as a pattern. As a rule, the international average for each scale was set at 50 and with a standard deviation of 10 in ICCS 2009. Therefore, note that the various scales are not directly comparable to each other.

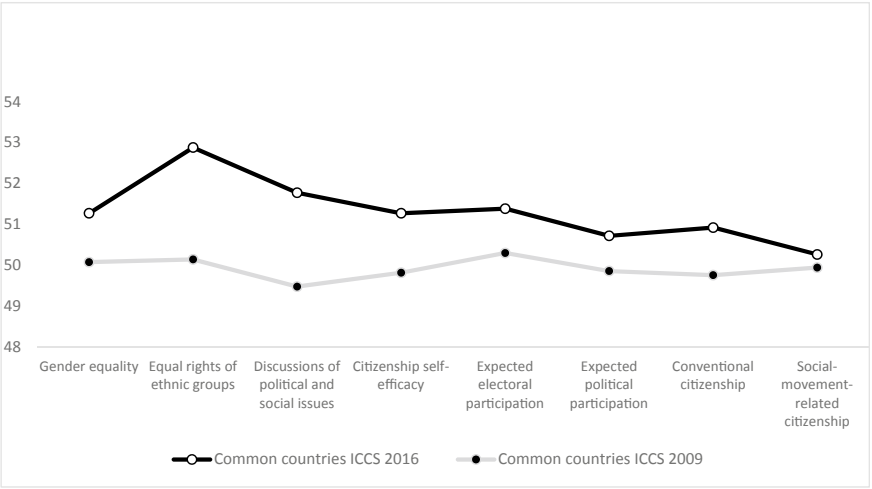


Fig. 2.1 Differences in the average scale scores from ICCS 2009 to ICCS 2016 for all countries participating in both studies (*Source* Data have been obtained from scale score tables provided by the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg for countries participating in ICCS 2016. For six of these scales, a table with rounded averages at country level can be found in Schulz et al. (2018b) on the following pages: Gender equality, p. 126; Equal rights of ethnic groups, p. 128; Expected electoral participation, p. 100; Expected political participation, p. 103; Conventional citizenship, p. 117; and Social-movement-related citizenship, p. 120. *Notes* The scales were constructed for ICCS 2009 with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all countries participating in ICCS 2009. All the differences are statistically significant. For every average scale score shown here, the standard error is 0.1 or below. The symbols indicating the average scores are placed with a precision of one decimal)

Since 2009, young people across countries have become more knowledgeable about democratic societies and the world they live in and their general democratic education has also strengthened, at least in the sense that the endorsement of values and equal rights, the commitment to political participation, and the level of political self-confidence have all increased. In other words, their general democratic education appears to be supportive, and increasingly so, of democracy in all of these important dimensions. This development provides a relatively strong indication that young people have become more informed, democratic, and committed.

These results challenge the idea that young citizens only participate when there is a specific need, which is the behavioural pattern that characterizes the monitorial and stand-by citizens. In short, there are strong indications that the endorsement of democracy as both a political system and a democratic culture is currently growing stronger. However, the next section will show and discuss another side to the understanding of the Nordic youth relative to the youth in other regions.

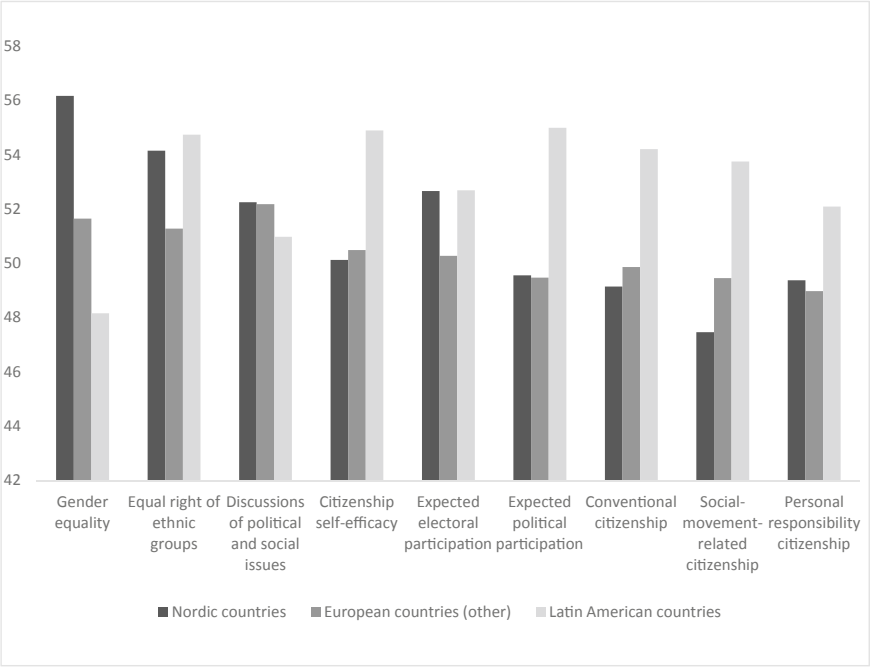


Fig. 2.2 ICCS 2016 scale averages for students' perceptions of the nine citizenship dimensions in three regions (*Source* The regional averages have been obtained by recalculating the scale statistics originally provided by the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg for the participating countries in ICCS 2016. *Notes* The first eight scales from the left were constructed for ICCS 2009 with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all ICCS 2009 countries. The last (ninth) scale was constructed with the same properties for all ICCS 2016 countries. The only benchmarking participant in ICCS 2016, North Rhine-Westphalia, is not included)

2.5 Regional Differences and Trends

2.5.1 Regional Differences

Another overall result from ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 is that how young people understand and form their political engagement and interests substantially differs between regions. The young people from the various geographical regions represented in the ICCS studies (mainly European, Asian,[5] and Latin American countries) have different views on the norms and values associated with being and becoming a political citizen (Fig. 2.2). The young people from the Latin American countries were

[5]The Asian countries are not included as a region due to the small number of Asian countries participating in both ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016. Neither is the Russian Federation included in any region nor as a region in itself.

often significantly more committed and involved in matters of political participation,[6] especially when compared with the young people from the European countries.

The young people from the Latin American and Asian countries show more positive perceptions regarding their expected participation in political activities, their political self-confidence, and different types of citizenship, compared to their European peers. However, exceptions are present, especially in the perception of gender equality and, to a lesser degree, in the engagement in discussions about political and social issues with friends and parents, where the perceptions of the Nordic students are more positive than those of the Latin American students.

In general, the European students are less active, especially when compared with the Latin American students and in matters related to the political participation of citizens. However, when comparing the Nordic countries to other European countries, we still find that the Nordic youth are relatively active in some areas and relatively passive in others. In particular, they share a reluctant or passive attitude towards a more direct and active form of political participation. Most importantly, the scores of the Nordic youth are below the European average scores for social-movement-related citizenship, but their passive attitudes are also present in relation to conventional citizenship and their citizenship self-efficacy. As a contrast, we can point to the strong endorsement of gender equality and equality between ethnic groups (especially in Sweden and Norway). In addition, there is a high expectation among Nordic young people to vote in national elections and to some degree a widespread engagement in discussions with friends and family about political and social issues (particularly in Denmark). These forms of endorsements and engagements are extremely political but often more passive and indirect rather than direct and active. This indicates that the civic education of the Nordic youth (i.e., their *politische Bildung* or political formation) has some unique similarities.

2.5.2 Regional Trends

Compared with the students from countries in other regions (Fig. 2.3), the Nordic students represent the most positive trends from 2009 to 2016. The generation of Nordic youth born at the beginning of the twenty-first century seem to be more

[6]The interpretations of such differences are sometimes problematized as expressions of *cultural bias*—that is, the judging of phenomena based on the norms in one's own culture. However, here we do not claim that high average scores in ICCS are better per se than low average scores. Another common discussion is to what degree students' self-reported attitudes are expressions of *social desirability*—that is, bias stemming from the tendency of respondents to give answers they expect to be acceptable to other people. Here, we view civic education (*politische Bildung*) as an analytical object that by definition differs in various educational, societal, cultural, economic, and political contexts. In other words, civic education is a matter wherein social desirability may be interpreted as an expression of students' understanding of cultural normativity. In any case, the analytical object is a social phenomenon. From this perspective, all students' answers are in fact true answers.

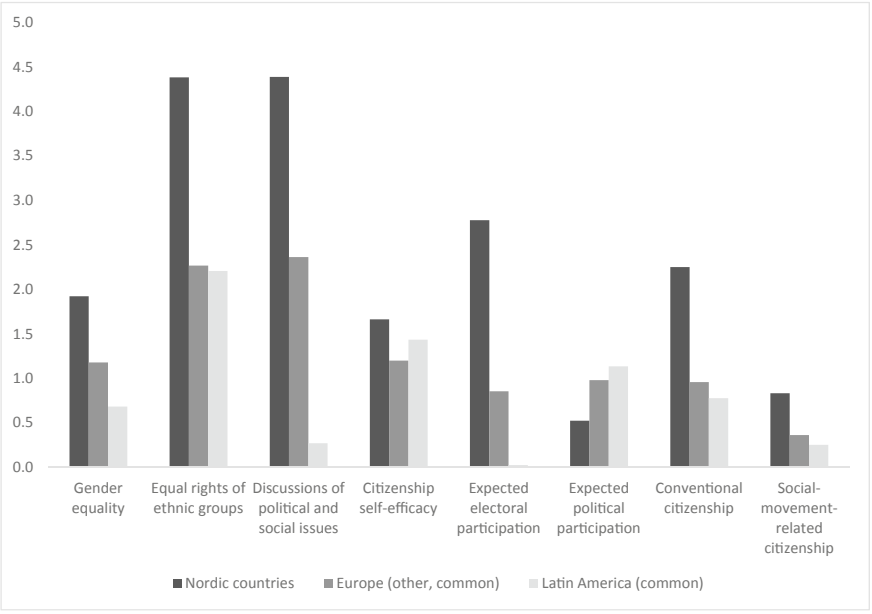


Fig. 2.3 Differences in average ICCS scale scores for students' perceptions of eight citizenship dimensions in three regions from ICCS 2009 to ICCS 2016 (*Source* The regional differences have been obtained by recalculating the scale statistics originally provided by the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg for the participating countries in ICCS 2016. *Notes* The eight scales were constructed for ICCS 2009 with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all ICCS 2009 countries. For each of the four Nordic countries, almost all the increases are statistically significant differences. The only exceptions are found on the scale for expected political participation [significant increase was observed only for Finland] and the scale for social-movement-related citizenship [significant increase was observed only for Finland and Sweden])

engaged than their counterparts born at the end of the twentieth century. Interestingly, although this development is not only a Nordic phenomenon, the trends are particularly significant among the Nordic youth.

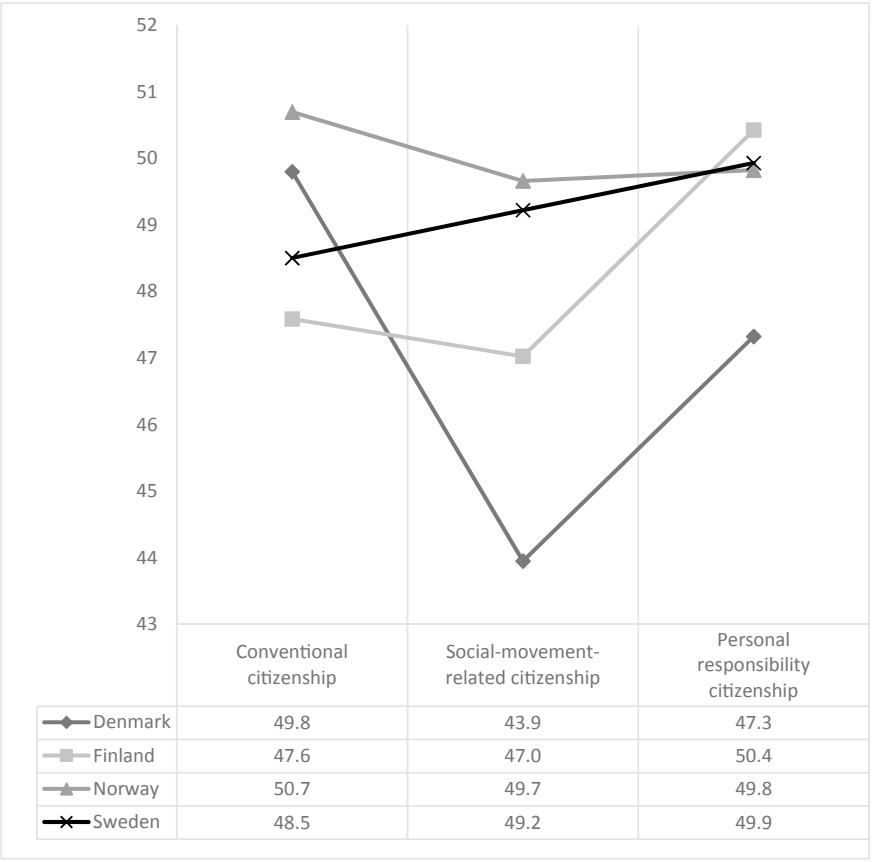
The most noteworthy Nordic developments are related to the issues from the scales labelled "democratic culture." Nordic students especially have gained much more positive views regarding gender equality, equal rights for ethnic groups, and participation in discussions about social and political issues (Fig. 2.3). They are increasingly engaging in these dimensions of democratic culture and more so than the students in other regions. Nordic students are characterized by their immense concern about some of the democratic values that are crucial in everyday activities, jobs, and schools. This relation to everyday democratic life in civil society is also evident when looking at their increasing participation in political discussions with friends and family.

2.6 Nordic Differences and Similarities

So far, the analysis in this chapter has demonstrated how the Nordic youth born in the early 2000s is a generation of reserved citizens. Even though we label this generation of young Nordic people as reserved, these reserved citizens come in somewhat different forms and sizes in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, a significant increase is observed in several scale score averages from 2009 to 2016. This trend is unmatched in any other Nordic country. In the following sections, other Nordic differences will be analyzed based on three different scales (Fig. 2.4), measuring the endorsement of three different types of citizens: conventional, social-movement-related, and personal responsibility citizenship. These are the last three scales in the previous overview of scales; however, here we take a closer look at the scale constructs and the Nordic results across these dimensions.

In the ICCS studies, students' endorsement of *conventional citizenship* is measured by the extent to which they agree that an adult citizen ought to be voting in every national election, joining a political party, learning about their country's history, showing respect for government representatives, engaging in political discussions, and following political issues in the newspaper or on the radio, television, or internet. In the broad comparison of all the participating countries participating in ICCS 2016 the average level of endorsement of conventional citizenship is relatively similar across the Nordic countries; all scores are below the total international average score. Nevertheless, there is some variation: Norway has the highest average score and Finland has the lowest (Fig. 2.4). The trends (Fig. 2.5) show that the endorsement has substantially increased in all four countries since 2009. In other words, young people across all the Nordic countries are increasingly becoming supportive of conventional citizenship behaviours.

The second type of citizenship is the so-called *social-movement-related citizenship* that is measured by the extent to which students endorse adult citizens who are participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust, in activities to benefit people in the local community, in activities to promote human rights, and in activities to protect the environment. The scores of all the Nordic countries are below the international average level of endorsement for social-movement-related citizenship. However, the level of endorsement is significantly higher in Norway and Sweden compared to Finland and Denmark (Fig. 2.4). The average scale score of Denmark is the lowest of all Nordic countries, and the average scale score of Finland the third lowest. Another issue is that the Nordic trends differ. The trends (Fig. 2.5) show a relatively significant increase in the endorsement of social-movement-related citizenship in Sweden and Finland. In Denmark, the ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 results are almost identical (with a lower average in ICCS 2016 but not statistically significant). Note that the level of endorsement in all Nordic countries is below that in many other countries. Therefore, these Nordic differences do not challenge the fact that the Nordic youth as a mutual trait are reserved. They do, however, indicate that the nature and degree of this reserve varies. This observation becomes even more evident when the third citizenship type is included in the comparison.



	Conventional citizenship	Social-movement-related citizenship	Personal responsibility citizenship
Denmark	49.8	43.9	47.3
Finland	47.6	47.0	50.4
Norway	50.7	49.7	49.8
Sweden	48.5	49.2	49.9

Fig. 2.4 Nordic scale score averages for students' perceptions of three types of citizenship in ICCS 2016 (*Source* The Nordic averages have been obtained from the scale statistics originally provided by the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg for the participating countries in ICCS 2016. *Notes* The scales for conventional citizenship and social-movement-related citizenship were constructed for ICCS 2009 with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all ICCS 2009 countries. The scale for personal responsibility citizenship was constructed in the same way for ICCS 2016. All standard errors in Denmark, Finland, and Norway are 0.2 or below. All standard errors in Sweden are 0.3 or below)

The third type of citizenship measures students' perceptions of the importance of *personal responsibility citizenship.* This type of citizenship is less associated with public life than the previous types. The personally responsible citizen is the one who as a person is situated in private life and sees society and the world from that private position. For this person, the most important dimensions of life as a citizen are individual responsibilities, personal efforts, and self-disciplinary attitudes; therefore, this type of citizen is of a more moral and dutiful nature than the previous ones. The personally responsible citizen is a private person, but their obligations and

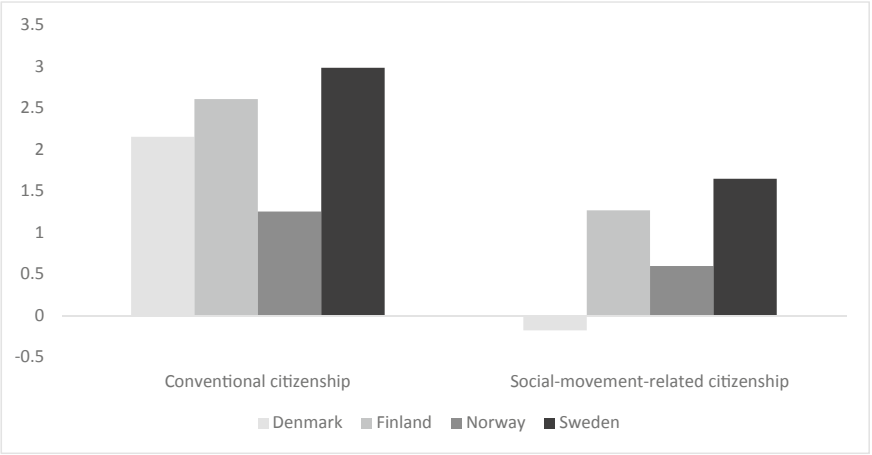


Fig. 2.5 Nordic differences in scale score points in ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 for students' perceptions of two types of citizenship (*Source* The Nordic differences have been obtained from the scale statistics originally provided by the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg for the participating countries in ICCS 2016. *Notes* These citizenship scales were constructed for ICCS 2009 with an international mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all ICCS 2009 countries. For each of the four Nordic countries, the increases in the scale scores for conventional citizenship are statistically significant differences. On the scale for social-movement-related citizenship, the increases/decreases are statistically significant differences in Finland and Sweden)

attitudes may, to some degree, transcend the private family sphere and extend into the community. A similar type of citizen is defined in the writings of Westheimer (2015). Because this is a new scale constructed for ICCS 2016, we have no trends to discuss here. In ICCS 2016, this kind of citizenship is measured by the degree to which students endorse an adult citizen who is working hard, always obeying the law, ensuring the economic welfare of their family, making personal efforts to protect natural resources, respecting the rights of others to have their own opinions, supporting people who are worse off than them, and engaging in activities to help people in less developed countries. On this scale, students from Norway, Finland, and Sweden have an almost identical level of endorsement that is close to the international average. In statistical terms, only the average of Finland is significantly higher than the international average. Given the fact that the Finnish students show relatively low support for both the conventional and social-movement-related citizens, the level of endorsement of the personally responsible citizen in Finland is surprisingly high. The Danish students deviate from the Nordic average endorsement level with lower support for this type of citizen.

We find different patterns in the way the active-passive citizenship unfolds. In Norway, the average level of endorsement of all three types of citizenship is close to the average level of endorsement in Europe. The patterns differ the most in Denmark and Finland, where the reserved nature is most evident, albeit with one clear exception in each country. In Denmark, endorsement of conventional citizenship is surprisingly

high (relative to the low scores for the other scales), whereas in Finland, endorsement of the personally responsible citizen is surprisingly high (relative to the low scores for the other scales). In Sweden, the level of endorsement of the social-movement-related citizen and personally responsible citizen is close to the average level in Europe, whereas the support for conventional citizenship is relatively low. Thus, a special feature in Sweden is that social-movement-related citizenship is endorsed at a relatively higher rate than conventional citizenship. In general, the Norwegian and Swedish results are on the same level and seem to indicate that the main perceptions of citizenship in these two countries tend to include a broader range of citizenship dimensions than in Denmark and Finland.

Although some of these Nordic differences are quite substantial and could be worth exploring further, note that they all fall within a range that in the overall international and regional comparison still makes them relatively similar. In other words, we do not claim that all Nordic students or all Nordic countries share the same reserve, but relatively speaking, they do. Most of the Nordic trends in the comparison between ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 are remarkably similar, despite some exceptions. The comparisons and trends indicate that a characteristic of the young Nordic citizens is a special kind of active-passive citizen. As described in the previous sections, the Nordic youth are relatively active but, at the same time, they are also relatively passive. We call this citizen the reserved citizen.

2.7 Concluding Discussion

To sum up, the findings of ICCS clearly indicates that the Nordic youth are not left out of democracy in a stand-by position. Instead, they are increasingly engaged, albeit that their endorsement of the democratic culture in everyday life and political engagement generally is articulated in more passive and indirect forms. Most of the Nordic young people seem to be reluctant to participate actively and directly in public spheres. This line of reasoning corresponds to that of Hegna (2018), who differentiates between "engagement" (interest, taking part in discussions, and informal commitment) and "participation" (in organizations and formal democratic procedure). The work of Hegna is based on the observations of Norwegian ICCS results, where she finds that the students are engaged but not very participative. Based on similar observations across the Nordic countries, we characterize the young people of these countries as *reserved* (actively passive). The international comparison reveals that Nordic young people have some unique similarities regarding the way in which they understand themselves and engage as citizens.

From the comparative perspective, the Nordic results indicate that the young Nordic citizen is not easily defined by the categories from the simple active–passive dichotomy. In general, this complexity—that is, that the Nordic youth are neither simply active nor simply passive—has also been addressed by previous research (Amnå and Ekman 2014; Hooghe and Dejaeghere 2007; Oser and Hooghe 2013). Amnå and Ekman (2014, p. 270) make similar observations; however, within their

theoretical scope of the stand-by citizen, political engagement in everyday private life is a *preparation* for future public action. This implies that young people will stay alert and prepared for action if the need arises, or as Ekman and Amnå (2012) said in the quote above, that they are "pre-political" or "potentially political," i.e., first passive and preparing and then active if necessary. We propose another interpretation suggesting that the Nordic youth are not on stand-by. The ICCS 2016 results and the trends since 2009 demonstrate that young people actually are engaged in democratic processes (knowledgeable on social, political, and democratic issues, expect to vote, deliberative, and with strong attitudes towards gender equality etc.). As such, gender equality is a good example of how the same political issue is, in fact, political in both indirect forms and private spheres and from time to time more directly and in public life. We suggest that the Nordic youth cannot be considered *passive-active*, as is the case in the stand-by position, where citizens have not yet made their decision to intervene (i.e., they are passive), but may change if necessary (i.e., become active).

The growing engagement of young people in a democratic society, as documented by the trends from ICCS 2009 to ICCS 2016 and the ICCS 2016 regional results, demonstrates that the Nordic youth continually are highly involved in everyday democratic life and that democracy is and is becoming still more important to them. The Nordic students possess the knowledge and skills that provide them with a strong foundation when forming their own opinions and independently contributing to the ongoing development of society. Every young generation may engage in society and democracy in new ways based on their experiences and interests in contemporary society; or they may follow the traditional ways of being a citizen in new contexts. The ICCS studies provide numerous findings that the Nordic youth prefer the non-partisan, indirect, and values-based forms of engagement (knowledge, discussion, and inclusive values). This combination of an engaged and non-partisan citizen is a characteristic of the reserved citizen. The civic education (i.e., the *politische Bildung* or political formation) of the Nordic youth is characterized by an active-passive disposition. They mainly engage in the political community through indirect participation. At first sight, this could be negatively perceived as a form of unengaged passivity or more positively as a temporary standby mode. However, based on our analysis of the Nordic youth civic engagement as double-sided (active as well as passive), we propose to describe the Nordic youth as continually engaged, but in a reserved way: the reserved citizen.

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