



**Students'
Concepts of
Democracy,
Citizenship and
Government**

HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO CIVIC CONCEPTS

- Fourteen-year-olds across countries recognize the importance of some basic attributes of democracy that are highlighted by political theorists. For example, they believe that free elections and the availability of many organizations for people to join strengthen democracy. They believe democracy is weakened when wealthy people have undue influence on government, when politicians influence the courts, and when people are forbidden to express ideas critical of the government.
- Fourteen-year-olds believe that obeying the law is the most important attribute of the good adult citizen. Voting in elections is also seen as important. In many countries, young people believe that joining a political party and discussing political issues are of little importance for citizenship. Activities in the community and in relation to social movement groups have considerable importance, however.
- Fourteen-year-olds are already members of a political culture. They possess concepts of the social and economic responsibilities of government that largely correspond to those of adults in their societies. They are more likely to believe that the government should take responsibilities such as providing education or preserving order than take responsibility for activities associated with the economy, such as reducing income inequalities or controlling prices.
- Fourteen-year-old males and females possess similar concepts of democracy and government responsibility.

What does democracy mean to young people in different parts of the world? What is their implicit theory regarding what a democracy is and what is likely to strengthen or to weaken it? They are exhorted to be good citizens, but what does that concept imply? If young people read that ‘the government’ should (or should not) be expected to take certain responsibilities, what do they think that means?

Understanding the concepts of democracy, citizenship and government is an educational expectation that all the participating countries mentioned for young people in the Phase 1 case studies (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999). These concepts are embedded in each of the three domains of the content framework—especially *democracy*, *democratic institutions and citizenship*, but also in *national identity* and in *social cohesion and diversity*. Social representation has a meaning similar to the term concept as used in this study.

We have measured the attributes which students in different countries think strengthen democracy, the attributes of good citizenship for adults, and the responsibilities of the government. Because it is important to understand the content of young people’s concepts, we present more detail at the item level in this chapter than we do in the chapter about attitudes, where scale scores predominate.

CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRACY

Relation of this Area to the Study's Design

'Democracy and democratic institutions' comprise the first domain identified in the country reports submitted during Phase 1 of the IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 1999). In countries establishing democratic governments there were especially pressing questions. For example, do young people see ways that democracy might be threatened as well as strengthened? How much consensus exists across countries about what is good or bad for democracy?

Other evidence in Phase 1 indicated that the emphasis in textbooks and curricula was on giving students a positive view of democracy. Schools generally focused on a few prominent elements such as elections, good citizenship involving responsibilities as well as rights, and government as providing essential services to citizens. Democracy and its development was often studied in history courses, as well as in classes with 'civic' or 'citizenship' in their titles.

Some questions about the principles or pivotal ideas of democracy were successfully formulated with right and wrong answers for the test. If we had been limited to questions of this type, it would have been impossible to cover the content topics emphasized in the Phase 1 material, however. We therefore designed a measure of the concept of democracy using a rating scale without designated correct and incorrect answers, and we consulted the theoretical and research literature to identify the elements that should be included (see Panel 4.1).

Development of Items on Democracy in the 1999 IEA Instrument

We laid out several contrasting models of democracy based on theories and previous research with adults and youth, and held on-line conferences to debate these models. The models include a generic or rule of law model, a liberalism model, a pluralism model, a participation model, a communitarian model, a social welfare model and an élitism model. The items that we wrote to cover these models (some items relating to more than one model) were phrased in a way that would allow us to ascertain whether respondents believe that a given situation or condition would be good or bad for democracy. An example follows:

When many different organizations [associations] are available [exist] for people who wish to belong to them that is _____ [alternatives: very good for democracy, good for democracy, bad for democracy, very bad for democracy].

This formulation allowed the inclusion of items concerning threats to democracy (for example, political corruption) as well as positive factors (for example, free elections). Although the emphasis was on Domain I, we also included items related to the other domains. After pilot testing, we reduced the 39 items to 25.

PANEL 4.1 Previous Research on Concepts of Democracy

Political theories on concepts of democracy

Political theorists have written extensively about concepts of democracy. Held (1996) described republicanism, classical democracy, liberal democracy and direct democracy as among those with long-standing roots. Twentieth century models included competitive élitist democracy, developmental democracy and participatory democracy, among others. Dahl's often-cited work (1998) described the ideals and realities of democracy. Fuchs (1999) referred to constitutionally guaranteed rights, free elections and rule of law as 'minimal elements of democracy', adding three supplemental elements emphasizing social rights. Beetham (1994) dealt with indices of democracy covering basic freedoms, citizenship and participation, administrative codes, public notification and social rights.

Previous research on students' and adults' concepts of democracy

The 1971 IEA Civic Education Study (described in Chapter 1) required students to rate the democratic system of government. The respondents endorsed items indicating that they thought democracy gave people a chance to write or say what they think and that it helped people to make important decisions about their lives (Torney, Oppenheim & Farnen, 1975).

Some researchers have asked open-ended questions of youth to probe their concepts of democracy. Sigel and Hoskin (1981) asked (through an interview) 1,000 American Grade 12 students to imagine that they had to explain to a student from a non-democratic country what makes a country democratic. More than half gave answers that were simplistic, often little more than slogans. The most prevalent themes were individual political freedoms or people having a voice in government through elections. Menezes and Campos (1997) conducted research in Portugal on the meaning of freedom, documenting in particular the extent to which adolescents take a self-centered perspective. Sinatra, Beck and McKeown (1992) found that students' concepts relating to democracy such as representation were sometimes poorly formed. Young people knew that their country had elections or a legislature but had little grasp of their function for democracy. Ascertaining the attributes of the concept of democracy held by adolescents therefore seemed an important topic for the IEA survey.

A survey of university students in the United States who were participants in community service programs investigated their endorsement of several models of democracy, for example, participant involvement by individuals, election of strong leaders and group participation (Walt Whitman Center at Rutgers University, 1997).

In another empirical study (Moodie, Markova & Plichtova, 1995), adults in Scotland and Slovakia were presented with 30 political terms and asked to write the first word that came to mind. They also rated the extent to which each of the terms characterized an ideal democratic society. In both countries, freedom, individual rights and justice were important parts of the social representation of democracy, especially for the younger adults. The second most important cluster of terms related democracy to institutions and processes such as voting. There was considerable similarity between the two countries.

Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998) used data from the New Democracies Barometer in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (also Belarus and the Ukraine). They identified five non-democratic attributes such as dismantling parliament and a military takeover of government, and found in 1990 that nearly half of this adult sample endorsed none of these attributes, with small numbers endorsing one or two.

Confirmatory factor analysis showed one factor with items relating to the generic or rule of law model. A second factor, participatory democracy, did not meet IEA scaling standards.

On some individual items there was great consensus across countries; on others very substantial differences between countries. One alternative, quickly discarded because of length limits on this volume, was to present country patterns on each of the 25 items. Instead, we chose to look at the international means for all countries and the overall amount of consensus or lack of consensus about democracy across countries for all the items. We did not examine individual country patterns or within-country variation (leaving that for later analysis).

Results for Concepts of Democracy

Panel 4.2 presents the items in three categories—those for which there is a *high level of consensus* across countries about an aspect of democracy, those for which there is *moderate consensus* across countries, and those for which there is a *lack of consensus* across countries. Items were classified into these three categories according to the *range from the highest to the lowest country mean*. Other methods, such as the standard deviation of the countries' means around the international mean and the amount of variance accounted for by country, gave highly similar classifications. We did not examine either the amount of variation or consensus within each country or the particular countries in which the means were low or high, leaving that for later analysis.

The international mean, averaging across all countries, for each item is also given in Panel 4.2. Within the three consensus categories, items are ranked by that mean. Means of 3.00 to 3.99 are interpreted as indicating that the average respondent believes that the attribute is 'good for democracy'. Means between 2.00 and 2.99 are classified as 'mixed' (usually meaning that some country means are in the 'good for democracy' range and some in the 'bad for democracy range'). Means between 1.00 and 1.99 are interpreted as indicating that the average respondent believes that the attribute is 'bad for democracy'.

Panel 4.2 reveals *seven items with strong consensus across countries*. Three of them refer to attributes that the respondents judge to be good for democracy (free elections, strong civil society in the form of organizations, and support for women entering politics). Four items refer to attributes that the respondents judge to be bad for democracy (limitations on speech critical of government, monopoly newspaper ownership, political influence in the judicial sphere, and special influence by the wealthy on government). It is noteworthy that 14-year-olds across countries recognize the importance of many of the same basic attributes that political theorists believe strengthen or weaken democracy.

In the previous section we reported that there was one strong dimension in the confirmatory factor analysis representing the generic or rule of law model of democracy. This factor includes the large majority of the high consensus items listed in the previous paragraph. Factors that might have emerged corresponding to other models of democracy (for example, participation, communitarianism or élitism) did not appear clearly in these students' concepts across countries. Not surprisingly, 14-year-olds do not make the subtle

PANEL 4.2 Consensus on Concepts of Democracy based on the Range of Country Means

IS IT GOOD OR BAD FOR DEMOCRACY . . . ? (4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = bad, 1 = very bad)

Items with high consensus across countries (range of country means: less than .70)

- . . . When citizens have the right to elect political leaders freely? (good for democracy, 3.43)*
- . . . When many different organizations exist for people who wish to belong to them? (good for democracy, 3.14)
- . . . When political parties have rules that support women to become political leaders? (good for democracy, 3.07)
- . . . When people who are critical of the government are forbidden from speaking at public meetings? (bad for democracy, 1.86)
- . . . When one company owns all the newspapers? (bad for democracy, 1.85)
- . . . When courts and judges are influenced by politicians? (bad for democracy, 1.73)
- . . . When wealthy business people have more influence on the government than others? (bad for democracy, 1.62)

Items with moderate consensus across countries (range of country means: .70–1.00)

- . . . When everyone has the right to express their opinions freely? (good for democracy, 3.41)
- . . . When a minimum income is assured for everyone? (good for democracy, 3.03)
- . . . When people peacefully protest against a law they believe to be unjust? (good for democracy, 3.07)
- . . . When laws that women claim are unfair to them are changed? (mixed, 2.65)
- . . . When newspapers are forbidden to publish stories that might offend ethnic groups? (mixed, 2.44)
- . . . When private businesses have no restrictions from government? (mixed, 2.33)
- . . . When all the television stations present the same opinion about politics? (mixed, 2.16)
- . . . When people refuse to obey a law which violates human rights? (mixed, 2.08)
- . . . When immigrants are expected to give up the language and customs of their former countries? (bad for democracy, 1.96)
- . . . When political leaders in power give jobs in the government to members of their families? (bad for democracy 1.85)

Items with a lack of consensus across countries (range of country means: greater than 1.00)

- . . . When people demand their social and political rights? (mixed, 2.97)
- . . . When young people have an obligation to participate in activities to benefit the community? (mixed, 2.80)
- . . . When differences in income and wealth between the rich and the poor are small? (mixed, 2.70)
- . . . When political parties have different opinions on important issues? (mixed, 2.57)
- . . . When people participate in political parties in order to influence government? (mixed, 2.52)
- . . . When newspapers are free of all government control? (mixed, 2.50)
- . . . When government leaders are trusted without question? (mixed, 2.33)
- . . . When there is a separation between the church and the state? (mixed, 2.27)

Note: *International item means appear in parentheses.

distinctions that characterize the thinking of political theorists. Nevertheless, the international item means and the range of country means provide useful information regarding 14-year-olds' thinking about aspects of democracy.

There are *eight items with a lack of consensus across countries*. Many of the means are categorized as 'mixed'. In some countries these attributes are thought to be good for democracy and in others bad for democracy. Two items on which there is very little consensus deal with political parties having different opinions on important issues and people participating in political parties in order to influence government. This is the first of several examples of the ambivalent or even negative images of political parties held by adolescents in some countries, especially when parties are associated with conflict and differences of opinion. Another item with marked lack of consensus across countries asks whether it is good or bad when 'government leaders are trusted without question'.

There are *ten items with moderate consensus across countries*. A selection of these items will be discussed along with other items on the same topics in the next section.

Several items deal with the role mass media plays in democracy. Fourteen-year-olds widely agree that having one company own all the newspapers is a threat. This is the only item about the media on which there is consensus across countries. Political theorists also suggest that freedom from government control of newspapers can be important for strong democracy, but in fact young people in many countries believe that some control is a good thing. Likewise, the respondents in some countries express little concern about the situation in which television stations all present the same opinion about politics. If newspapers were forbidden to publish stories that might offend ethnic groups, this would be neither very good nor very bad for democracy, according to the average respondent across countries. It is possible that when two values are counterposed in a question, as they are here, many students focus on one value and downplay the other value.

Furthermore, although many would argue that it is bad for democracy when political leaders in power give jobs to members of their families, these 14-year-olds do not necessarily agree. Students across countries are also mixed in their opinions about whether it is advisable for government to place restrictions on private business.

There is also relatively little consensus across countries about whether it is good or bad for citizens to participate actively in support of causes promoting justice or community improvement. No item on this topic appears in the highest consensus category. There is a moderately positive view of the contribution made by peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust (with moderate consensus across countries). There is somewhat less agreement across countries about whether it is good or bad for democracy when people demand their social and political rights. The item about whether it is good or bad when young people have an obligation to participate in activities to benefit the community is relatively low in consensus. Average responses from some countries indicate that this obligation is seen as somewhat good for democracy, while averages from other countries indicate that it is seen as somewhat bad for democracy (perhaps because of the term 'obligation').

Encouragement by political parties to women entering politics is seen as good for democracy across countries. Changing laws that women claim to be unfair, however, is viewed in a mixed way and with only moderate consensus across countries. With respect to another group often experiencing discrimination, requiring immigrants to give up their language and customs was seen on average as bad for democracy.

Summary for Concepts of Democracy

Fourteen-year-olds across the 28 participating countries seem to have a fairly strong grasp of most of the basic tenets of democracy, including factors likely to strengthen or weaken it. Their concepts of democracy include not only formal structures like elections but also civil society organizations. There are substantial differences across countries in the perceived role of political parties. Fourteen-year-olds' view of the mass media is not clear from these responses. In some countries, respect for government leaders is a hallmark of stable democracy, while in others it is viewed negatively. Likewise, participation and conflict of opinion seem to be viewed as part of the political culture of a strong democracy in some countries but not in others. Fourteen-year-olds in most countries give evidence that they can recognize the most basic attributes of democracy. More sophisticated ideas about political process seem to elude them. This large cross-national data set confirms previous research conducted with interview or open-ended questions in a few countries.

The basic ideas associated with democracy are implicitly transmitted to young people as they participate in many societal institutions, including their families and peer groups. None of the countries in this study, however, appears to believe that this implicit process is sufficient to prepare young people for citizenship (Schwille & Amadeo, forthcoming). Curricula, textbooks and teaching activities of various sorts (ranging from recitations to mock elections) are designed to provide an explicit focus on democracy, usually on core elements such as elections and lack of restrictions on citizens who wish to express political views. These emphases are among those found in the responses of the students in this IEA study.

Education about the media exists in some countries, but it is usually concerned with teaching students to read articles with a critical attitude, not with discussing the role of the news media in preserving or enhancing democracy. Economic issues are seldom linked explicitly to the study of democracy. These features of the curricula noted in Phase 1 help to interpret both some of the consensus and some of the lack of consensus about the concept of democracy in the data reported here.

Some of these topics will also be taken up in later sections dealing with concepts of citizenship and government responsibility and those dealing with attitudes toward political rights for women and immigrants.

CONCEPTS OF CITIZENSHIP

Relation of this Area to the Study's Design

The dimensions of citizenship and ways to create the qualities of the good citizen in young people were central concerns in the Phase 1 case studies. One sub-domain of the democracy and democratic institutions domain focuses on citizenship. When questions were formulated with right and wrong answers for the test, it was much easier to include citizens' rights than citizens' responsibilities. We included this concept scale in order to focus some attention on responsibilities.

Citizenship can have a very broad meaning, including, for example, national identity, legal or social entitlement, obligations such as military service, and opportunities such as political participation. In this section we are concerned with the concept of the good citizen for adults that young people actually have and how it relates to what others have found (see Panel 4.3).

Development of the Citizenship Scales in the 1999 IEA Instrument

Questions from the 1971 IEA Civic Education Study served as the basis of the item pool for the concept of citizenship. The stem was as follows: 'An adult who is a good citizen . . .'. The response options were 4 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 2 = somewhat unimportant, 1 = not important. The pilot instrument contained 21 items; the final instrument contained 15.

Confirmatory factor analysis revealed two factors, importance of conventional citizenship (six items) and importance of social-movement-related citizenship (four items). (See Panel 4.4 for the wording of these items and Appendix Table C.1 for alpha reliabilities.) We use the term 'social movements' to refer to non-partisan mainstream groups acting in their communities or improving the environment of their schools, in order to link these data to recent research.

In this section we present both a display that describes young people's concepts of citizenship across countries (including the same information about consensus and non-consensus items across countries as in the previous section) and also comparisons between countries using the two scaled scores (conventional citizenship and social-movement-related citizenship). As in the previous section, when comparing items, we classified the international means between 3.00 and 3.99 as 'important for citizenship' and those between 2.00 and 2.99 as 'mixed'. There were no items with international means less than 2.00 (which would have been 'unimportant for citizenship').

Results for Concepts of Citizenship

Items forming the concept of citizenship

Here, we are looking again at consensus and level of rating internationally. The first thing to notice in Panel 4.4 is that there are only two items about which there is consensus across countries according to this categorization. The first item, 'an adult who is a good citizen obeys the law', is rated as very important (international mean of 3.65). The second, ' . . . engages in political discussion', is rated much lower (international mean of 2.37). Among the items rated as quite important on which students have different opinions in different

PANEL 4.3 Previous Research on Concepts of Good Citizenship

The 1971 IEA Civic Education Study used a 16-item measure of the meaning of citizenship. Two scales, active citizenship and non-political citizenship, were developed, but the items received little analysis at the student level.

There has been useful theorizing and empirical research on adults. Janoski (1998) derived models of adult citizenship relating to three models: liberal democracy, communitarian democracy and social or expansive democracy. Theiss-Morse (1993) found four concepts of citizenship among adults in the United States: representative democracy (responsibility to be an informed voter); political enthusiast (advocacy through protest and little trust in elected officials); pursued interest (joining groups to pursue issues); and indifferent (trusting leaders and placing a low priority on trying to influence them).

Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith and Sullivan (1997) identified citizenship concepts among a sample of teachers in the United States. Almost half believed students should be taught to be questioning citizens, about one-quarter focused on teaching from a culturally pluralistic perspective, and fewer than 15 percent stressed learning about government structures or obedience to law and patriotism. A study by Davies, Gregory and Riley (1999) of teachers in England also found that social concern and tolerance for diversity received the greatest support, with percentages comparable to those in the United States for government structure and obedience or patriotism. Prior (1999) in Australia also found that social concerns or social justice and participation in school/community affairs were important to teachers. In Hong Kong, Lee (1999) found that teachers were more likely to endorse the socially concerned citizen and the informed citizen, and less likely to endorse the obedient citizen.

Conover, Crewe and Searing (1991) found that adults in the United States saw the citizen as someone with freedom and rights, as well as responsibilities to vote. British adults placed more emphasis on identity within a community. In a second study, adolescents, parents and teachers in four communities in the United States were interviewed about citizenship practices (Conover & Searing, 2000). Obeying the law, voting in elections, being loyal to the country, performing military service during war, and taking part in activities to protect the environment were among the citizenship duties that students most highly endorsed. The students had a more highly developed sense of citizens' rights than of their responsibilities. The authors called this a minimalist version of citizenship.

Ichilov and Nave (1981) reported that Israeli youngsters conceptualized citizenship in relation to the political sphere rather than as a commitment to a broader community. They emphasized obedience and loyalty more than active political participation. Whether a student was in an academic or vocational track also had an effect that seemed to be mediated through the curriculum, interaction with a particular set of peers and prospects for future mobility (Ichilov, 1991).

Vontz, Metcalf and Patrick (2000) in a study of the effectiveness of a civic curriculum in Latvia, Lithuania and the United States found a positive impact on students' knowledge and skills but not on their sense of citizen responsibility.

Plasser, Ulram and Waldrauch (1998) found in a survey of adults in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia that there had been a considerable drop in citizen participation in social and political movements in the years between 1991 and 1995, especially in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.

countries are patriotism and loyalty to the country and being willing to serve in the military to defend the country. These two items were not included in either of the scales, however.

Across countries the items relating to participation in social movement groups are more likely to be endorsed as important for citizenship than are conventional citizenship activities (Panel 4.4). Three out of four of the social movement items have means above 3.0 (indicating an overall rating of important), while only one out of six of the conventional citizenship items, voting in every election, has a mean above 3.0. The least important activities are joining a party and engaging in political discussions, both from the conventional scale.

Another way to describe student responses is to examine the percentage distribution of responses of the weighted pooled sample for the ten items that appear on the two scales (see Appendix B, Figures B.2a and B.2.b). Eighty percent or more of the respondents rate participating in environmental groups, in human rights groups, in activities to benefit the community, and voting in every election as 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. All these items, except voting, appear on the social movement dimension of citizenship. The next category includes items with a somewhat lower level of endorsement. Between 65 and 75 percent of the respondents rate showing respect for government representatives, knowing about political issues, knowing about history, and participating in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust as 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. All these items, except the one concerning peaceful protest, appear on the conventional dimension of citizenship. Then there is a big gap in endorsement level. Between 30 and 45 percent rate joining a political party and engaging in political discussions as 'somewhat important' or 'very important'. Both appear on the conventional dimension of citizenship.

In summary, by looking at both means and percentages, we can see that these 14-year-olds are somewhat more likely to include social movement participation than more conventional political activities in their concepts of good citizenship for adults. Voting is important to these young people, but activities that imply conflict of opinions (political party membership and political discussion) are not highly rated on average. There are quite a few differences across countries, however, and we explore some of these in the next section.

Analysis of scale scores by country

Figure 4.1 shows that *conventional citizenship activities are most important to the concept of adult citizenship in Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland and Romania*. Other countries whose means are significantly above the international mean are Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and the United States. The majority of these countries have experienced within the past three decades dramatic political changes that have strengthened conventional political institutions and forms of participation. These institutions are now receiving enhanced attention in schools, and young people seem to be developing a concept of citizenship that includes conventional political activities. Whether these concepts will be translated into actual participation once these young people are adults remains an open question.

PANEL 4.4 Consensus on Concepts of Adult Citizenship based on the Range of Country Means

AN ADULT WHO IS A GOOD CITIZEN . . . (4 = very important; 3 = somewhat important; 2 = somewhat unimportant; 1 = very unimportant)

Items with high consensus across countries (range of country means: less than .70)

- . . . Obeys the law. (important, 3.65)*
- . . . Engages in political discussions. (mixed, 2.37) Conv**

Items with moderate consensus across countries (range of country means: .70-1.00)

- . . . Takes part in activities promoting human rights. (important, 3.24) SocMo
- . . . Takes part in activities to protect the environment. (important, 3.15) SocMo
- . . . Participates in activities to benefit people in the community. (important, 3.13) SocMo
- . . . Votes in every election. (important, 3.12) Conv
- . . . Would be willing to ignore a law that violated human rights. (mixed, 2.86)
- . . . Follows political issues in the newspaper, on the radio or on TV. (mixed, 2.85) Conv
- . . . Joins a political party. (mixed, 2.11) Conv

Items with a lack of consensus across countries (range of country means: greater than 1.00)

- . . . Is patriotic and loyal to the country. (important, 3.20)
- . . . Would be willing to serve in the military to defend the country. (important, 3.18)
- . . . Works hard. (important, 3.13)
- . . . Knows about the country's history. (mixed, 2.96) Conv
- . . . Shows respect for government representatives. (mixed, 2.89) Conv
- . . . Would participate in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust. (mixed, 2.83) SocMo

NOTE:

* International item means appear in parentheses.

**Conv indicates that the item appears in the scale for conventional citizenship.

SocMo indicates that the item appears in the scale for social-movement-related citizenship.

Items without a label do not appear on either scale.

Figure 4.2 shows that *social-movement-related citizenship activities are especially important in Colombia, Cyprus and Greece*. Other countries with means significantly above the international mean are Chile, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic and the United States.

In contrast, Figure 4.1 shows that *conventional political activity receives low ratings for importance to citizenship in Belgium (French), the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia and Finland*. Other countries whose means are also significantly below the international mean are Australia, Germany, Norway, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.

Social-movement-related citizenship is rated low in importance for citizenship in Belgium (French), England, Estonia and Finland (Figure 4.2). Other countries whose means are also significantly below the international mean are Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hong Kong (SAR), Latvia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland. The countries that have low ratings on both scales are a mixture of Northern European, Nordic and post-Communist countries (and also Australia). Phase 1 case studies indicated that Australia, Belgium (French),

England and Hong Kong (SAR) recently identified weaknesses in students' knowledge or engagement and instituted new policies or programs in education for citizenship. These efforts were not implemented in time to influence these student respondents in 1999, however. Several of the other countries are new democracies that have only recently begun the process of instituting democratic civic education.

Norway is the only country that is significantly below the international mean on conventional citizenship but significantly above the mean on social movement citizenship. Hungary has scores relatively near the mean on both conventional and social-movement-related citizenship.

Analysis of scale scores by gender

Figures illustrating gender differences by country are presented only for those scales where there is a significant difference between males and females in at least half of the countries. There are no significant gender differences in 25 countries on the importance of conventional citizenship scale. There are significant gender differences in Portugal, the Russian Federation and the Slovak Republic. Males are higher than females in each country.

There are no significant gender differences in 19 countries on the importance of social-movement-related citizenship scale. There are significant gender differences, with females having higher scores than males, in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

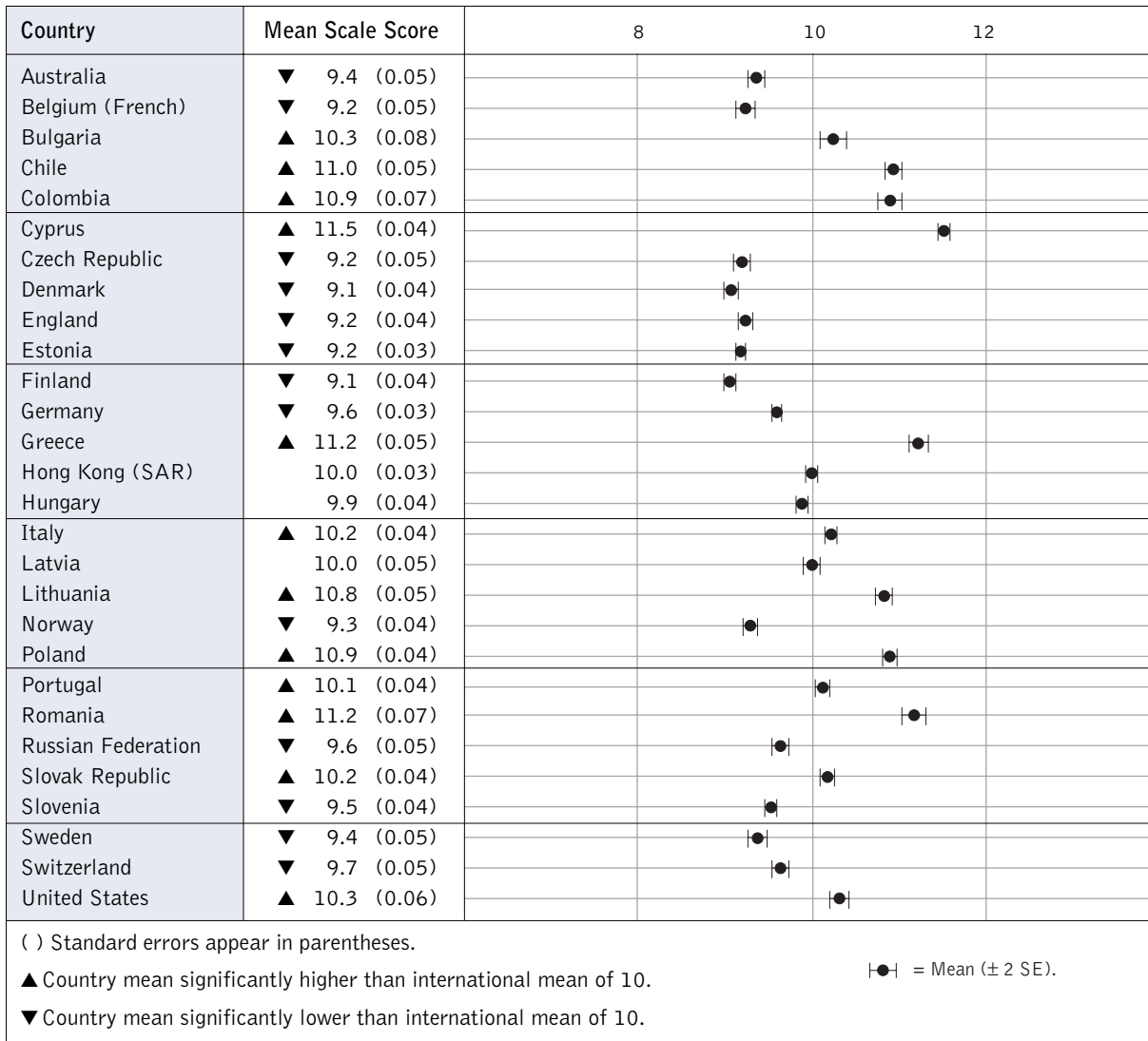
Summary for Concepts of Citizenship

There is somewhat less consensus across countries about the components of the concept of adult citizenship than about the concept of democracy. Obeying the law is clearly important. Among conventional political activities, voting is most likely to be thought important. Political party membership and participation in political discussion are not important according to the 14-year-olds in most countries (although parties receive support in a few countries). In contrast, these young people believe that it is important for adult citizens to participate in environmental, human rights and community betterment organizations.

Some theorists contrast minimal and maximal aspects of citizenship, usually placing voting, party membership, media use and political discussion at the minimal level. Peaceful protests and membership in social action groups are thought of as activities that might be added on to these minimal activities. This model does not apply very well to the data from this cohort of students. The generation of young people represented by the study's 14-year-olds is gravitating to affiliation and action connected to social movement groups and not to political discussions or formal relations with political parties.

The differences between countries present another perspective. Students in some countries believe that both conventional and social movement activities are very important to citizenship for adults. Students in some other countries believe that both types of activities are unimportant. Young people in several countries that have recently experienced changes strengthening formal political institutions are likely to prescribe conventional citizenship

Figure 4.1 Importance of Conventional Citizenship



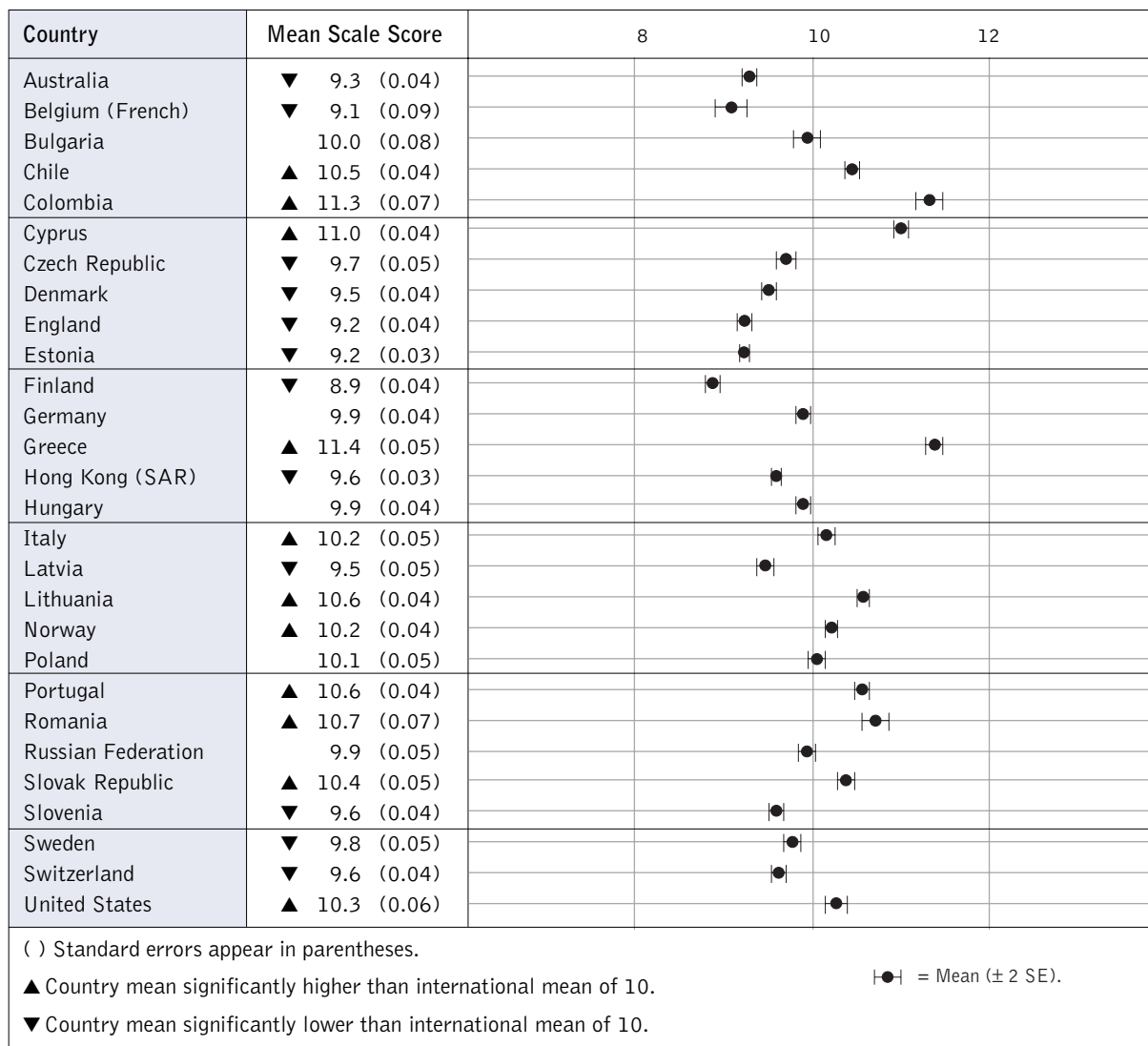
Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

responsibilities for adults. They may be more idealistic than some adults in those nations about the possibilities that these channels of influence present. Phase 1 case studies showed an emphasis on voting and other conventional activities when citizenship is discussed in schools. Students are urged to see competitive elections and independent political parties as resources to be used by citizens to take control of the political system. Civic education may be a major source of belief in the importance of conventional citizenship in some of these nations.

Females in about one-third of the countries are more likely than males to endorse social-movement-related citizenship. This includes all the Nordic countries, several Western European countries and the United States.

Aspects of adult political culture appear to be reinforced by what is presented in schools. At the same time, youth (of the next generation) are attracted to and sometimes are creating for themselves a set of less hierarchically organized groups to take the place of the political parties and voter-interest groups prominent in the past. Chapter 6 addresses the extent to which students believe they will participate in these activities when they are adults.

Figure 4.2 Importance of Social-Movement-related Citizenship



Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

CONCEPTS OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENT

Relation of this Area to the Study's Design

Democracy and citizenship are relatively abstract concepts. Government is somewhat more concrete. The areas in which government is expected to take action (or refrain from action) are important parts of the web of concepts covered in the democracy domain. In developing the measure of concepts of democracy (presented earlier in this chapter), we found it challenging to formulate the aspects dealing with economic or social welfare processes. Students had difficulty relating economic issues to the concept of democracy, which is usually taught as a political concept without much attention to its economic ramifications.

In this area there was an existing instrument dealing with government in relation to economic and social issues, namely a set of adult items in the General Social Survey and the International Social Survey Project (ISSP) that seemed simple enough to be used with 14-year-olds. These items are usually

called ‘role of government’, ‘government responsibility’ or ‘scope of government’ items (Kaase & Newton, 1995; Robinson, Shaver & Wrightsman, 1999). Considerable research with adults has been published (see Panels 4.5 and 4.6).

Development of the Government Scales in the 1999 IEA Instrument

We started with seven basic ISSP items and added nine from other sources. In the final survey we included 12 items. The response scale was 4 = definitely should be the government’s responsibility, 3 = probably should be the government’s responsibility, 2 = probably should not be the government’s responsibility and 1 = should not be the government’s responsibility.

A confirmatory factor analysis showed two separable factors. The first was economy-related government responsibilities, (five items—guarantee a job, keep prices under control, support industries, provide for unemployed, reduce income differences). The second was society-related government responsibilities (seven items—provide health care, provide for old people, provide education, ensure political opportunities for women, control pollution, guarantee order, promote moral behavior). See Appendix Table C.1 for alpha reliabilities.

Results for Concepts of Government

Items forming the concept of government

The international percentage distributions of item responses for the weighted pooled sample and the wording of these items are given in Appendix Figures B.2c and B.2d. Adding together the two response categories for ‘probably should be the government’s responsibility’ and ‘definitely should be the government’s responsibility’ produced percentages about as high as or a little higher than those reported in the research literature on adults. To put this in another perspective, only about 10 percent of the students in the present study say that economy- and society-related activities definitely should not be the government’s responsibility; this is similar to adults’ responses.

In general, 14-year-olds are more likely to think of societal items rather than economic items as the government’s responsibility. The items most frequently endorsed as definitely government responsibilities are ‘to guarantee order and stability within the country’, ‘to provide free basic education for all’, and ‘to provide basic health care for everyone’. The two least endorsed items are ‘to reduce differences in income and wealth among people’ and ‘to provide industries with the support they need to grow’ (refer Appendix Figures B.2c and B.2d). This finding matches quite well with previous findings for adults. It is worth noting that school curricula and instruction described in Phase 1 emphasize the societal rather than the economic responsibilities of government.

PANEL 4.5 Previous Research with Adults on Concepts of Government including Social and Economic Responsibility

The large majority of studies of adults have used the items from the International Social Survey Project (ISSP). Kaase and Newton (1995) argued that Western Europeans are willing to expand the extent to which government takes responsibilities for social and economic well-being. In 1990 a large majority of respondents believed that the government has a responsibility to be involved in health care, elder care, unemployment, controlling prices and reducing differences in income. Miller, Timpson and Lessnoff (1996) qualified this by showing a contrast of 90 percent support by respondents for government responsibility in health, education and housing with 70 percent support for action relating to jobs and living standards in Britain. Roller (1994) found that East Germans placed more emphasis on government responsibility than did West Germans. A number of these studies found social class position and party identification to be good predictors of concepts of the government's responsibility. Some studies found females more supportive of the government's social and economic role than males.

A few studies have focused specifically on items relating to economics, sometimes in relation to other priorities. Using ISSP data, Roller (1995) found high levels of support for government providing a job and reducing income inequities in Australia and Italy, more moderate support in Germany and Great Britain, and lower support in Switzerland. Weiss (1999) studied adults in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, and found that a majority of respondents believed that the government should control industries and fix prices. Sapiro (1998) used Eurobarometer data, finding particular concern for poverty as a problem in Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom, with less concern in Denmark and Germany, where environmental concerns predominated. Rasinski and Smith (1994), using 1990 ISSP data, found that Hungary, Norway and West Germany had the highest support for government spending for the environment.

Inglehart and Baker (2000) found using World Values Survey data considerable variation in the extent to which adults in different countries were concerned with economic survival values (as contrasted with values of self-expression). Russia and all other post-Communist countries were at one end of the continuum, voicing much more concern for economic survival. Belgium, Chile and Finland were in a moderate position. The other Nordic countries, along with Australia, Britain and the United States, scored toward the end of the continuum that emphasized self-expression over economic survival. Adults from countries with low GNP per capita expressed more concerns about economic survival than about self-expression. (Note that countries included in Inglehart and Baker's study that were not in the IEA study have not been included in this summary.)

PANEL 4.6 Previous Research with Youth on Concepts of Government including Social and Economic Responsibility

The 1971 testing by IEA of civic education included ratings of social welfare agencies. These concepts were not well developed among students in some countries, but generally the respondents believed that these agencies contributed to ensuring fair shares for everyone.

Using an adolescent sample in Britain, Furnham and Gunter (1989) found that unemployment was rated as the most important problem (out of a list of nine), while reducing numbers of very rich and very poor people was the least important.

A recent study in seven countries focused on distributive justice and the interpretation of the social contract by Grades 8 and 11 students (Jonsson & Flanagan, 2000). A widening economic gap was perceived especially among respondents in Bulgaria, Hungary and Russia. The importance of government support for the unemployed, housing and health was highest in Russia and moderate in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Sweden. This aspect of the government's activities received a lower rating in Australia and the lowest in the United States. Females were more likely than males to perceive an economic gap, but there were quite modest gender differences in ratings of government responsibility.

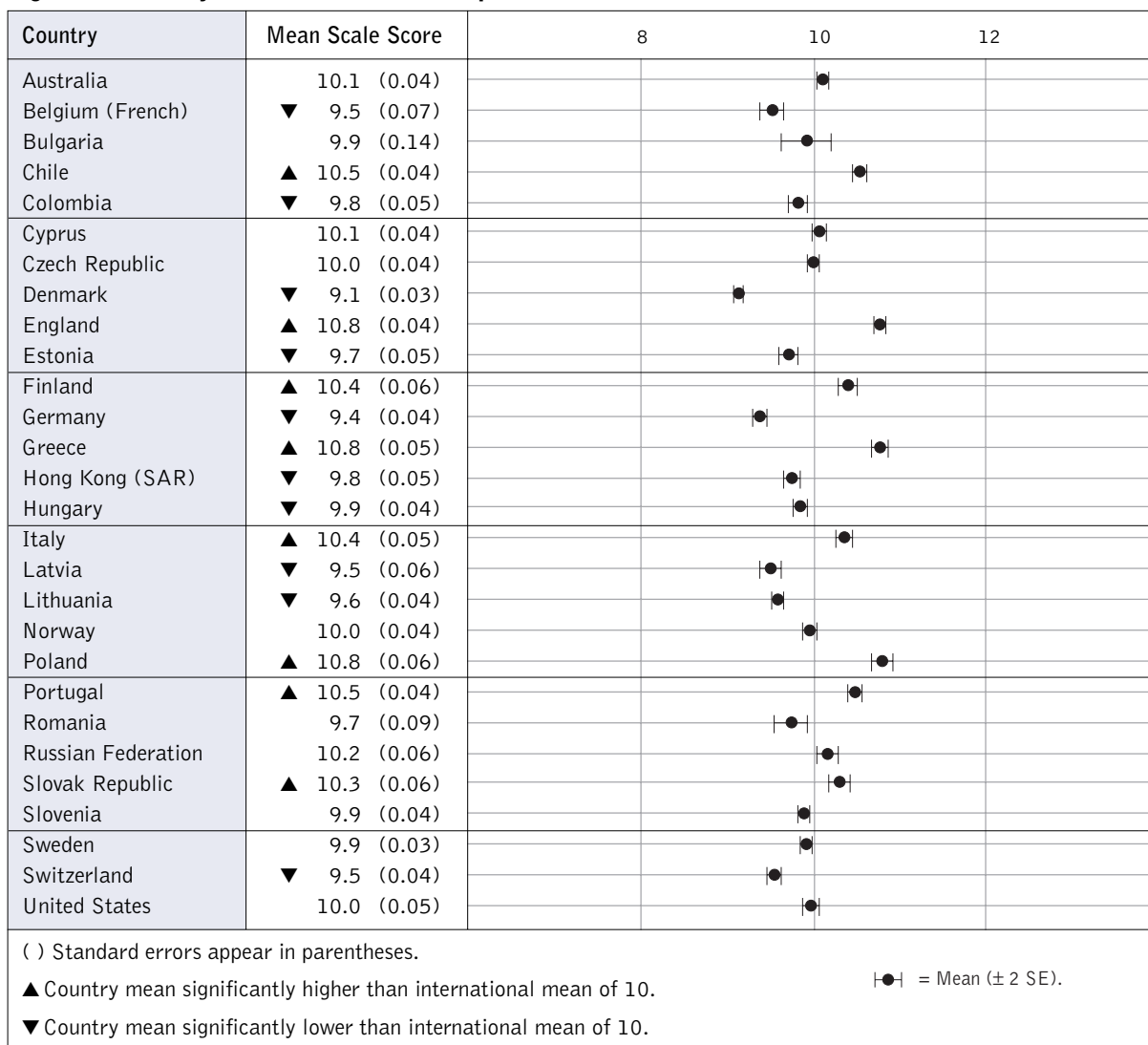
In many ways these findings paralleled the adult findings cited in Panel 4.5.

Analysis of scale scores by country

The results by country in Figure 4.3 indicate that *the concept that government has society-related responsibilities is most likely to be endorsed by students in Chile, England, Greece, Poland and Portugal*. Other countries with scores that are significantly above the international mean on the scale for society-related government responsibilities are Finland, Italy and the Slovak Republic. In contrast, *students in Belgium (French), Denmark, Germany, Latvia and Switzerland are least likely to include responsibilities for society in their view of government*. Other countries with scores that are significantly below the international mean on society-related government responsibilities are Colombia, Estonia, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary and Lithuania.

Figure 4.4 indicates that *students in Bulgaria and the Russian Federation are the most likely to endorse concepts of government that include responsibility for economy-related activities*. Other countries with scores on economy-related government responsibilities significantly above the international mean are Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. In contrast, *students in the United States and Denmark are least likely to believe that the government should take action in the economic sphere*. Other countries with scores on economy-related government responsibilities significantly below the international mean are Australia, Belgium (French), Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Norway and Switzerland.

Figure 4.3 Society-related Government Responsibilities



Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

Analysis of scale scores by gender

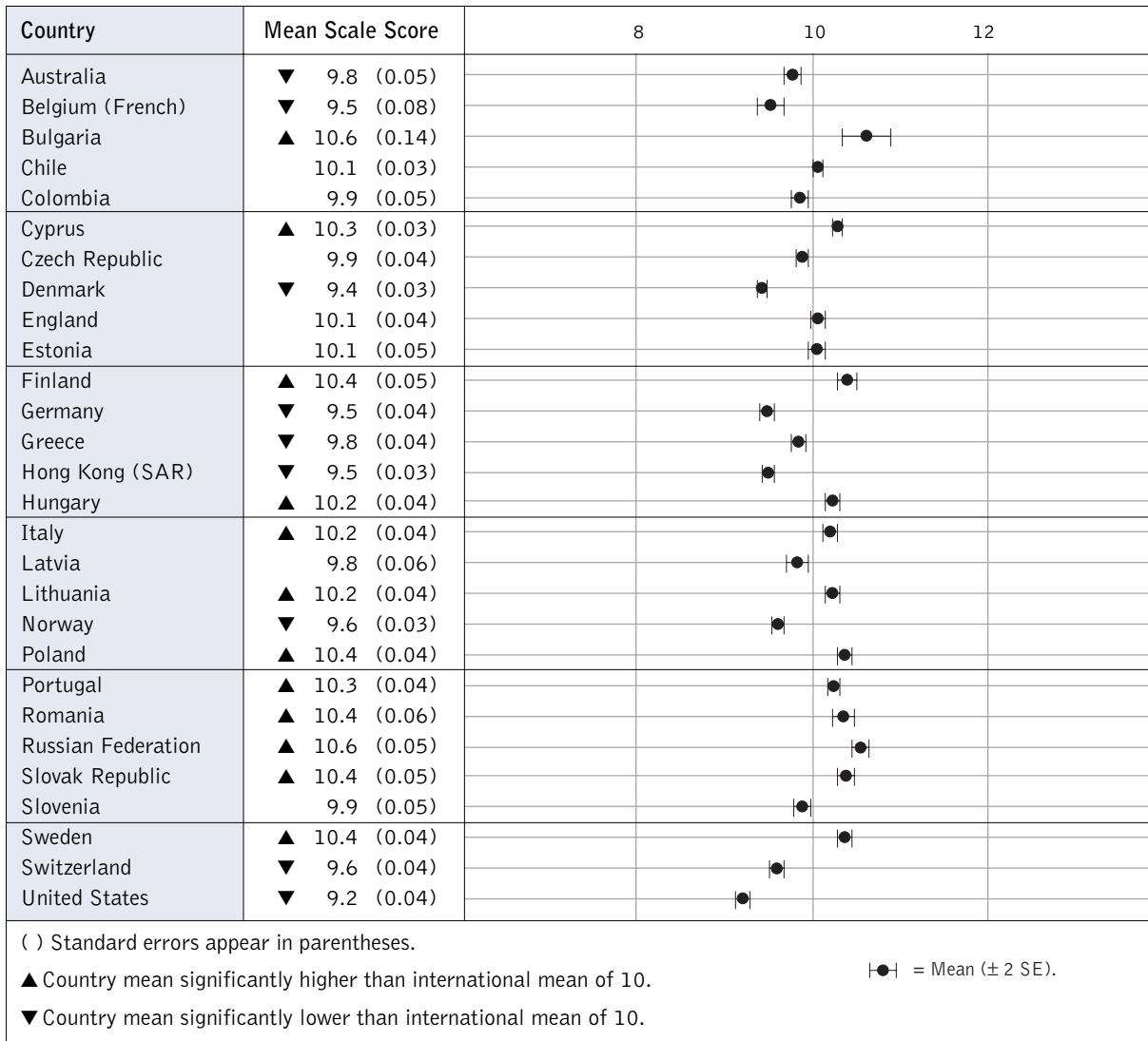
There are no significant gender differences in 20 countries in rating society-related government responsibilities. There are significant gender differences, with females attributing more society-related responsibilities than males, in Belgium (French), England, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and the United States.

There are no significant gender differences in 23 countries in rating economy-related government responsibilities. There are significant gender differences, with females attributing more economic responsibilities to government than males, in England, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia.

Summary for Concepts of Government

To a great extent the 14-year-olds in these countries endorse the views about government responsibilities for economics and society that have been held by adults in their countries for several generations. In particular, students from countries that were socialist in the recent past expect government activity in

Figure 4.4 Economy-related Government Responsibilities



Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

the economy. This is especially true if they are currently experiencing economic difficulties. Students in Sweden, where there has been a strong social democratic tradition, also include responsibilities for the economy in their concept of government. Students from countries with free-market traditions, especially Denmark and the United States, but also to some extent Belgium (French), Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR) and Norway, have a concept of government responsibilities that is less likely to include economic activities in support of either individuals or industries. These concepts of government are also fostered through textbooks and instruction. However, everyday life interchanges and discussions with parents and peers, as well as media experience, can also be credited (or blamed) for the economic and social dimensions of students' concepts of government.

The finding that 14-year-olds in countries with low GNP per capita are more likely than those in countries with high GNP per capita to emphasize government's responsibilities for economic actions such as reducing the gaps between rich and poor and keeping prices under control is in line with

Inglehart and Baker's (2000) analysis of adult data. A number of the attitudinal patterns among the 14-year-olds also resemble those reported in the ISSP data for adults. A look at youth research reveals that the results of the present study correspond closely to those of Jonsson and Flanagan (2000), especially the high expectation of government involvement in the economy from Russian young people and the low expectations for this type of involvement from young people in the United States.

SUMMARY

We have dealt in this chapter with three distinct yet related concepts held by young people—democracy, citizenship and government. Although there are certainly gaps and lack of depth in their understanding, many 14-year-olds in these diverse countries are aware of both the ideal functioning of democratic political systems and what is actually happening in their societies. There is considerable consensus across countries about the most basic and core meaning of democracy, and some agreement about the responsibilities of the adult citizen. These beliefs, for the most part, correspond to the emphases in schools. They also are responsive to the current and past economic situation of the country as well as to the adult political culture.

Support for many types of conventional political participation appears to be relatively weak. Young people still believe that it is important to vote, but discussion of political issues does not seem to be important in their concepts of good citizenship. In many countries, political parties are not seen as contributing to a strong democracy or as groups with which citizens can affiliate in order to have political influence. Several factors could account for these aspects of the concept of citizenship.

Although some schools attempt to foster discussion of issues, there are constraints on teachers against making statements that might be interpreted as politically partisan. In some countries it appears that the media present an image of parties that stresses conflict in the political process, while the schools avoid discussing partisan conflict. Furthermore, political parties are hierarchically organized and usually focus on attracting adults who are eligible to vote, not youth.

Young people, however, are looking for organizations with which to affiliate. They are likely to see joining activities within the community, as well as environmental and human rights groups, as part of the citizen's role. Although the issues around which these organizations mobilize actually have political dimensions, young people often do not perceive them in this way. According to the Phase 1 case studies, most schools do not encourage young people to look at the political dimensions of these issues. (For further data about group affiliations and activities, see Chapter 6.)

Organizations that take action on these issues are usually not hierarchically organized and give young people the opportunity to see more immediate results from their actions than do conventional political organizations. Some argue that these associations are developmentally appropriate for adolescents, in part because they allow them to work with peers. Whether this kind of

participation can create a sense of legitimacy for the government among citizens and input for the political system to the same extent as more conventional political participation is an open question, however.

With respect to concepts of government's responsibility for aspects of the society and the economy, 14-year-olds already appear to be members of the political culture that they share with adults. If they are growing up in societies with a legacy of socialism or a strong social democratic tradition, they believe in heavier government responsibilities for certain aspects of the economy. If they are growing up within a long-standing free-market tradition, they are less likely than those from other economic traditions to believe that the government should intervene in the economy, for example, by providing jobs, controlling prices or reducing income inequality. If they are in a country experiencing economic difficulties (for example, a low standard of living), they are especially likely to want the government to assume economic responsibilities.

Dalton (2000) has observed that 'there is not just one civic culture that is congruent with the workings of a democratic system' (p. 919) and that the current period is characterized by significant cultural change and new dynamism. Clark and Hoffmann-Martinot (1998) have found evidence of a 'new civic culture' that is characterized by less hierarchy and more individual decision-making. There is considerable evidence in the IEA data about young people's concepts of democracy, citizenship and government to support these positions. Additional analysis and further research can greatly increase our understanding of the role schools are playing and might play in civic concept development.

5

**Students' Attitudes
toward the Nation,
the Government,
Immigrants and
Women's Political
Rights**

HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO CIVIC ATTITUDES

- Fourteen-year-olds across countries are moderately trusting of their government institutions. Courts and the police are trusted the most, followed by national and local governments. In contrast, political parties are trusted very little. Most young people also seem to have a positive sense of national identity, although less so in some countries than in others. In almost all the participating countries, however, the average young person seems to have a sense of trust or attachment either to the country as a political community or to government institutions (or to both).
- Fourteen-year olds across countries are generally positive about immigrants and especially believe they should have educational opportunities. The majority of these young people also support the right of immigrants to vote and to retain their language and culture. There are national differences, however.
- Fourteen-year-olds across countries are largely supportive of women’s political and economic rights. Females are much more likely to be supportive of these rights than are males, the most substantial gender difference found in the study.
- Fourteen-year-olds overall have mostly positive attitudes toward the institutions and groups asked about in the survey. The minority of those with negative attitudes may be large enough to cause some concern, however.

Knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the nature of government are important to creating and sustaining democratic institutions, but they are by no means sufficient for that purpose. Democracy requires a certain degree of adherence to underlying principles, along with common values and attitudes. The IEA Civic Education Study gives as much attention to attitudes and beliefs as to knowledge. In this chapter, we focus on attitudes from each of the three major domains of the study—*democracy and democratic institutions*, *national identity*, and *social cohesion and diversity*—choosing those scales where special interest was expressed by participating countries:

- For the first domain, we report on trust in government, addressing the fear in some countries that young people are losing confidence in their public institutions.
- For the second domain, we also deal with issues of support or alienation, touching more specifically on national feeling and attachment to the country and its political symbols. Scales in these first two domains address both support for the political community (national pride) and support for the regime (trust and confidence in political institutions) (Dalton, 1999; Norris, 1999).
- For the third domain, social cohesion and diversity, we selected two scales. The first ascertains the extent to which students support certain rights or opportunities for immigrants, and the second scale probes the extent to which they endorse political and economic rights for women.