



Students' Civic Engagement and Political Activities

HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Fourteen-year-olds are only moderately interested in politics in most countries. Generally, females are less interested than males, although this is not true in some countries.
- Among 14-year-olds in almost all countries, news broadcasts on television are the most prominent sources of political information. Newspapers rank second, followed by news broadcasts on the radio.
- Voting in national elections is the most preferred future political activity of 14-year-old students. Collecting money for charity work ranks second.
- Only a minority of students—mainly males—believe that they are likely to engage in protest activities such as spray-painting slogans on walls, blocking traffic and occupying buildings. These are activities that would be illegal in most countries.
- A majority (approximately four-fifths) of 14-year olds in all countries *do not* intend to participate in conventional political activities like joining a party, writing letters to newspapers about social and political concerns, and being a candidate for a local or city office.

This chapter deals with a central characteristic of a democracy—political participation in the process by which political demands and objectives are formulated. A prerequisite of responsible participation is political interest and the search for information. This chapter therefore is divided into two sections. The first covers students' political interest and exposure to political news, and the second looks at students' expected participation in political activities.

POLITICAL INTEREST AND EXPOSURE TO POLITICAL NEWS

Relation of this Area to the Study's Design

During Phase 1 of the IEA Civic Education Study, most participating countries mentioned creating political interest in students as a goal of civic education. In addition, countries frequently mentioned reading newspapers, watching news on television, and interpreting material in media messages as important in relation to all three content domains (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999). Some countries described programs of media education (or the need for them). Most 14-year-old students are avid consumers of the mass media, and educators recognize the importance of the media in the transmission of civic information and orientations. However, the extent to which students are explicitly encouraged to read or analyze newspapers or view news programs as part of civic education seems to vary across countries.

PANEL 6.1 Previous Research on Interest in Politics

The 1971 IEA Civic Education Study used a measure of ‘interest in public affairs television’. Here, students were asked how likely they would be to watch six different programs dealing with news and current events (embedded in a longer list of program topics). This scale was a positive predictor of civic knowledge and of participation in political discussion in all the participating countries but was not analyzed individually for between-country differences.

Political interest as an attitude toward the political system is part of what Dalton (1996) has called cognitive political mobilization. For example, it is one of the strongest predictors of voting. Political interest among adults and—on a lower level—among adolescents increased in western industrialized societies between the 1960s and the 1990s, and decreased in some countries during the 1990s. The growth of political interest over almost 40 years is, according to Gabriel and van Deth (1995) and Inglehart (1997), related to an increase in post-materialist values. However, the average political interest of young people in most countries is only moderate. It is generally higher in the older and the better-educated students (Dalton, 1996; Nie, Junn & Stehlik-Barry, 1996). In former communist countries like the German Democratic Republic, political interest of students increased dramatically during the times of radical political change and the introduction of democracy, but then decreased during the 1990s as a result of some disillusionment with the democratic system and the free market economy (Oswald, 1999).

Numerous studies in many countries have shown that males are more interested in politics than females. However, there are indications that the gender gap is narrowing in some countries like England, the Netherlands, the United States (Hahn, 1998) and Germany (Kaase, 1989), and among better-educated young people. In addition, there is evidence (Shapiro & Mahajan, 1986) that policy preferences regarding political issues are different for males and females. In a study of young East Germans’ political participation, Oswald and Schmid (1998) found that replacing general questions about political interest with questions about specific political topics revealed female students as more interested than males in political issues like ecology, peace and third world problems.

This study therefore examined, first, the adolescents’ interest in politics and, second, the extent to which students in different countries report exposure to news media. Interest in politics and exposure to political news (via newspapers, radio and television) may contribute to students’ political knowledge. Political interest as well as reading, listening and watching the news may also be related to students’ attitudes and concepts of citizenship and democracy. In order therefore to form a predictor of knowledge and attitudes scales (see Chapter 8), students were asked about the frequency with which they read newspapers, listen to the radio and watch television news broadcasts. (For reviews of recent research in the areas of political interest and exposure to political news, see Panels 6.1 and 6.2.)

PANEL 6.2 Previous Research on Exposure to Political News

Putnam answered the question as to why civil society is waning in the United States by proposing 'the culprit is television' (1996, p.46). According to Putnam, the more people watch television in the United States, the less interested they are in politics and the less they participate in political activities. Norris replicated this result (1996). However, she also found that the more people watch television news, the more they engage in political actions. In a review of the literature, Comstock and Paik (1991) reported that exposure to political news (both on television and in newspapers) is associated with higher levels of political knowledge among adults.

In their pioneering work, Chaffee, Ward and Tipton (1970) found that for American adolescents the mass media were by far the most important source of political information compared to parents, friends and teachers. Similar results have since been found in four West-European countries (Hahn, 1998). Using data from surveys and a current events test, Linnenbrink and Anderman (1995) found that American adolescents who watched and read news more frequently than their peers had higher knowledge scores. They also found that depth in understanding news content was more likely to result from reading the news than from viewing news on television. Other research has yielded conflicting results related to the effectiveness of viewing news on television as compared to reading the news, and most studies have included questions about both.

Reading and watching news in the mass media seem to have positive effects on adolescents' political knowledge and political involvement. However, many adolescents are not very interested in obtaining political information. One study in the United States (Bennett, 1998) and two in England (Walker, 1996; Buckingham, 1999) found a marked indifference among young adults and youth to using the media in order to become informed about politics.

Several studies conducted by Chaffee and his associates reported evaluations of programs that encourage students to read newspapers. Chaffee, Morduchowicz and Galperin (1998) evaluated one such program for early adolescents in Argentina and found that newspaper use in class was associated with higher knowledge scores and with more newspaper reading outside class. The effects were maximized when teachers coordinated other classroom activities with media use.

There is some evidence suggesting gender differences in this area. Dowse and Hughes (1971) found a sharp difference between the percentage of English males and females who indicated that they watched news on television: males watched more than females. In a more recent study, Owen and Dennis (1992) found that ten- to 17-year-old males in the United States watched television news and read print sources for political news more frequently than did females. In a German study, males watched more television news and found newspapers more important than did females (Kuhn, 2000). However, the same study found that the reading and watching of news in the media were positively related to political interest, political efficacy and the willingness to engage in political actions for males and females alike. In contrast, an Australian study concluded that the impact of mass media on political attitudes and voting behavior is stronger for adult males than for females (Hayes & Makkai, 1996).

Development of the Items on Political Interest and Exposure to Political News in the 1999 IEA Instrument

Political interest was measured by a single item, ‘I am interested in politics’, with a four-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Four items (with a four-point scale ranging from 1 = never to 4 = often) assessed the frequency with which students listen to news broadcasts on television and radio and read articles about what is happening in their own country and in other countries in newspapers. An item about using the Internet to obtain news was included as an international option. Because the response patterns of using different media are quite dissimilar, it was not possible to form a summary scale. We therefore report the responses to the questions about the use of newspapers, radio and television as individual items.

Results for Political Interest and Exposure to Political News

Fourteen-year-olds’ interest in politics in most countries is moderate. Only in four countries—Colombia, Cyprus, the Russian Federation and the Slovak Republic—do more than 50 percent of the students agree or strongly agree with the item ‘I am interested in politics’. In three countries—England, Finland and Sweden—only a quarter (or fewer) of the students give this answer (see Table 6.1).

As in numerous studies across time and nations, males more than females in the majority of countries in our study state that they are interested in politics. However, in ten countries, the gender gap is smaller than reported in previous research. The difference between males and females is not significant in Belgium (French), Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United States (Table 6.1).

In all countries, students watch more television news broadcasts than they listen to radio news broadcasts or read in the newspapers about what is happening in their country (Table 6.2). The most extensive average consumption of television news broadcasts is found in Colombia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the Slovak Republic. The least extensive consumption is found in Australia, Bulgaria, England and the United States.

In most countries, students more frequently read in newspapers about what is happening in their country than they listen to news broadcasts on the radio; in other words, newspapers follow television as the most important source of political information in most countries. However, in six countries the difference between reading about what is happening in the country and listening to news broadcasts on the radio is very small. These countries are Australia, Belgium (French), Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania (Table 6.2).

In most countries we did not find gender differences in the two most important sources of political information: television and newspapers. In most cases in which we found gender differences, an interesting pattern emerged: males watch more television news than females (in Cyprus, Estonia, Germany and the Slovak Republic), and females read more in newspapers than males (in Belgium/French, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithuania). An exception to

Table 6.1 Students' Reports on Their Interest in Politics

Country	Percentage of Students Who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' With the Statement 'I am Interested in Politics'		
	Total	Females	Males
Australia	▲ 31 (1.2)	28 (1.4)	35 (1.7)
Belgium (French)	38 (1.4)	35 (1.8)	41 (2.3)
Bulgaria	40 (1.4)	36 (1.6)	44 (2.2)
Chile	46 (1.4)	46 (1.9)	46 (1.6)
Colombia	63 (1.4)	63 (1.9)	64 (1.7)
Cyprus	▲ 66 (0.9)	60 (1.5)	73 (1.4)
Czech Republic	▲ 28 (1.0)	20 (1.4)	36 (1.5)
Denmark	▲ 30 (1.0)	26 (1.7)	34 (1.2)
England	▲ 25 (1.0)	21 (1.5)	28 (1.4)
Estonia	▲ 34 (1.1)	30 (1.3)	39 (1.4)
Finland	▲ 21 (1.1)	17 (1.5)	26 (1.5)
Germany	▲ 42 (1.1)	36 (2.1)	50 (1.6)
Greece	▲ 38 (0.9)	32 (1.2)	45 (1.5)
Hong Kong (SAR)	▲ 37 (1.2)	29 (1.4)	45 (1.6)
Hungary	▲ 39 (1.2)	35 (1.4)	43 (1.8)
Italy	▲ 44 (1.0)	38 (1.4)	50 (1.3)
Latvia	▲ 41 (1.1)	38 (1.6)	45 (1.5)
Lithuania	40 (1.0)	37 (1.6)	42 (1.4)
Norway	▲ 31 (1.1)	25 (1.3)	37 (1.6)
Poland	43 (1.9)	40 (2.7)	46 (3.1)
Portugal	35 (1.2)	32 (1.6)	38 (1.4)
Romania	45 (1.5)	41 (1.7)	49 (1.9)
Russian Federation	▲ 54 (1.6)	50 (2.0)	59 (2.1)
Slovak Republic	▲ 54 (1.1)	48 (1.7)	62 (1.8)
Slovenia	▲ 35 (1.1)	29 (1.3)	40 (1.4)
Sweden	23 (1.5)	20 (1.8)	25 (2.0)
Switzerland	▲ 33 (1.1)	25 (1.5)	42 (1.6)
United States	39 (1.4)	37 (1.7)	41 (2.2)
International Sample	39 (0.2)	35 (0.3)	44 (0.3)

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses.
▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level, for direction see text.

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

this pattern was Poland, where females watch slightly more television news than males.

A much clearer gender difference emerged with respect to news broadcasts on the radio. In 15 countries significantly more females than males listen to news on the radio. In no country do males listen more than females.

EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Relation of this Area to the Study's Design

Democracy and citizenship comprise the first domain identified in the country reports submitted during Phase 1 of the IEA Civic Education Study.

Encouragement of young people to become citizens who vote, participate in other attempts to influence political decision processes or take action in their communities was mentioned in all of the country case studies. It was the central focus of some. Several sub-sections of the content framework of the

Table 6.2 Students' Reports on Their Exposure to Political News

Country	Percentage of Students who Sometimes or Often...											
	read newspaper articles about own country				watch news broadcasts on television				listen to news broadcasts on the radio			
	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males
Australia	65 (1.2)	67 (1.4)	63 (1.9)	80 (0.8)	81 (1.1)	80 (1.2)	▲ 63 (1.1)	69 (1.4)		63 (1.1)	69 (1.4)	55 (1.5)
Belgium (French)	▲ 60 (1.5)	66 (2.0)	55 (1.8)	81 (1.1)	81 (1.6)	81 (1.4)	▲ 56 (1.4)	60 (1.8)		56 (1.4)	60 (1.8)	52 (1.6)
Bulgaria	72 (1.4)	75 (1.4)	69 (2.5)	73 (1.7)	74 (1.9)	73 (1.9)	47 (1.4)	48 (1.9)		47 (1.4)	48 (1.9)	47 (1.7)
Chile	61 (1.1)	63 (1.7)	59 (1.2)	89 (0.6)	87 (0.9)	90 (0.8)	47 (1.1)	49 (1.6)		47 (1.1)	49 (1.6)	46 (1.3)
Colombia	77 (1.3)	78 (1.4)	74 (1.8)	92 (0.7)	92 (0.9)	93 (1.0)	56 (2.3)	55 (3.6)		56 (2.3)	55 (3.6)	57 (2.2)
Cyprus	68 (1.1)	67 (1.4)	70 (1.4)	▲ 89 (0.6)	86 (0.9)	93 (0.7)	55 (1.2)	53 (1.5)		55 (1.2)	53 (1.5)	57 (1.7)
Czech Republic	▲ 69 (1.1)	73 (1.5)	65 (1.6)	94 (0.5)	94 (0.6)	93 (0.8)	▲ 60 (1.2)	66 (1.4)		60 (1.2)	66 (1.4)	55 (1.6)
Denmark	65 (1.1)	67 (1.6)	63 (1.4)	83 (0.7)	81 (1.0)	86 (1.2)	47 (1.2)	49 (1.6)		47 (1.2)	49 (1.6)	46 (1.3)
England	70 (1.2)	72 (1.5)	68 (1.8)	78 (0.9)	78 (1.2)	78 (1.3)	▲ 55 (0.8)	59 (1.2)		55 (0.8)	59 (1.2)	50 (1.5)
Estonia	75 (1.0)	76 (1.3)	74 (1.1)	▲ 84 (0.8)	81 (1.2)	87 (1.1)	▲ 70 (0.9)	73 (1.2)		70 (0.9)	73 (1.2)	67 (1.4)
Finland	73 (1.0)	76 (1.3)	70 (1.5)	89 (0.8)	89 (1.1)	90 (1.0)	▲ 45 (1.1)	53 (1.5)		45 (1.1)	53 (1.5)	36 (1.5)
Germany	68 (1.0)	69 (1.4)	67 (1.3)	▲ 83 (0.7)	80 (1.1)	85 (1.1)	▲ 65 (1.0)	70 (1.3)		65 (1.0)	70 (1.3)	60 (1.6)
Greece	57 (1.1)	57 (1.4)	58 (1.3)	89 (0.7)	90 (0.7)	88 (1.1)	42 (1.1)	41 (1.3)		42 (1.1)	41 (1.3)	43 (1.5)
Hong Kong (SAR)	73 (0.9)	73 (1.0)	73 (1.2)	87 (0.7)	89 (0.8)	86 (0.9)	▲ 59 (0.9)	63 (1.1)		59 (0.9)	63 (1.1)	55 (1.2)
Hungary	61 (1.2)	63 (1.4)	58 (1.5)	90 (0.6)	91 (0.8)	90 (0.9)	▲ 59 (0.9)	63 (1.3)		59 (0.9)	63 (1.3)	54 (1.5)
Italy	62 (1.2)	65 (1.5)	60 (1.7)	90 (0.7)	91 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	▲ 41 (1.0)	46 (1.5)		41 (1.0)	46 (1.5)	36 (1.1)
Latvia	▲ 69 (1.4)	73 (1.8)	64 (1.8)	89 (1.0)	90 (1.0)	88 (1.6)	62 (1.4)	64 (1.5)		62 (1.4)	64 (1.5)	60 (2.0)
Lithuania	▲ 71 (1.0)	77 (1.2)	65 (1.3)	84 (0.8)	83 (1.0)	85 (0.9)	▲ 52 (1.1)	56 (1.4)		52 (1.1)	56 (1.4)	48 (1.6)
Norway	82 (0.9)	83 (1.3)	80 (1.1)	90 (0.6)	91 (0.9)	90 (0.9)	▲ 47 (1.1)	50 (1.5)		47 (1.1)	50 (1.5)	43 (1.5)
Poland	73 (0.9)	76 (1.7)	70 (1.7)	▲ 91 (0.6)	93 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	▲ 71 (1.3)	77 (1.6)		71 (1.3)	77 (1.6)	64 (1.7)
Portugal	69 (1.0)	68 (1.3)	71 (1.3)	93 (0.5)	93 (0.6)	94 (0.8)	55 (1.0)	56 (1.4)		55 (1.0)	56 (1.4)	53 (1.3)
Romania	60 (1.5)	62 (2.0)	58 (1.7)	86 (0.8)	87 (1.1)	86 (1.1)	62 (1.3)	65 (1.4)		62 (1.3)	65 (1.4)	59 (1.7)
Russian Federation	75 (1.4)	79 (1.4)	71 (2.1)	89 (0.7)	88 (1.0)	90 (1.1)	57 (1.8)	59 (2.6)		57 (1.8)	59 (2.6)	55 (1.7)
Slovak Republic	71 (1.1)	71 (1.4)	70 (1.3)	▲ 92 (0.6)	90 (0.9)	94 (0.7)	58 (1.0)	60 (1.4)		58 (1.0)	60 (1.4)	55 (1.3)
Slovenia	65 (1.1)	64 (1.5)	65 (1.3)	84 (1.0)	84 (1.2)	84 (1.3)	56 (1.2)	57 (1.7)		56 (1.2)	57 (1.7)	54 (1.7)
Sweden	79 (1.2)	80 (1.9)	78 (1.4)	84 (1.2)	83 (1.2)	86 (1.5)	▲ 47 (1.2)	54 (1.8)		47 (1.2)	54 (1.8)	40 (1.3)
Switzerland	65 (1.1)	63 (1.5)	66 (1.3)	84 (0.9)	83 (1.0)	85 (1.3)	59 (1.0)	61 (1.4)		59 (1.0)	61 (1.4)	57 (1.4)
United States	62 (1.3)	63 (1.6)	60 (1.8)	79 (1.1)	81 (1.5)	77 (1.2)	▲ 44 (1.6)	48 (1.9)		44 (1.6)	48 (1.9)	40 (1.7)
International Sample	68 (0.2)	70 (0.3)	67 (0.3)	86 (0.2)	86 (0.2)	87 (0.2)	55 (0.2)	58 (0.3)		55 (0.2)	58 (0.3)	52 (0.3)

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses. ▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level.

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

current study deal with participation. Items in the test as well as some of the items measuring concepts of democracy and citizenship in the survey deal with young people's ability to recognize the role of citizens' participation. It is vital, however, to know the extent to which young people actually participate in the activities that are open to them in their communities and the extent to which they expect to participate in adult activities (such as voting) in the future. Panel 6.3 provides a review of previous research relating to participation in political activities.

Development of the Political Activities Items and Scale in the 1999 IEA Instrument

Five items in the final IEA Civic Education survey deal with conventional institutionalized participation. A confirmatory factor analysis identified a three-item scale (join a political party, write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns, be a candidate for a local or city office). The scale identified by using this method did not include intention to vote. We therefore report intention to vote as a single item in this volume.

Five additional items deal with social movement activities (collect signatures for a petition, participate in a non-violent protest march or rally) and unconventional illegal forms of political behaviors (spray-paint protest slogans on walls, block traffic as a form of protest, occupy public buildings as a form of protest). A last item deals with volunteer commitment for charity causes (collect money for a social cause). As with the voting item, these six items can only be presented singly because they do not fulfill the requirements of Rasch scaling. The answer format of all participation items presented in this chapter was 1 = I will certainly not do this, 2 = I will probably not do this, 3 = I will probably do this, 4 = I will certainly do this.

Results for Expected Participation in Political Activities

Conventional participation

The 'conventional participation' scale comprises three items: join a political party, write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns, and be a candidate for a local or city office. The majority of students in all countries do not intend to participate in these actions. In the sample across all countries, roughly one-fifth of the students 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the three items (see Figure B.2i in Appendix B.2).

The highest scores on the conventional participation scale are found in Colombia, Hong Kong (SAR), Latvia, Poland, Romania and the United States (Figure 6.1). Other countries that are significantly above the international mean on this scale are Chile, Cyprus and Portugal. With the exception of the United States, these countries have experienced considerable political changes within the last 30 years. Even in these high-scoring countries, however, only a minority of the students intend to participate in those activities that go beyond voting.

The lowest scores on the conventional participation scale are found in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany and Lithuania. Other countries that are significantly below the international mean are Australia, Belgium (French),

PANEL 6.3 Previous Research on Political Activities

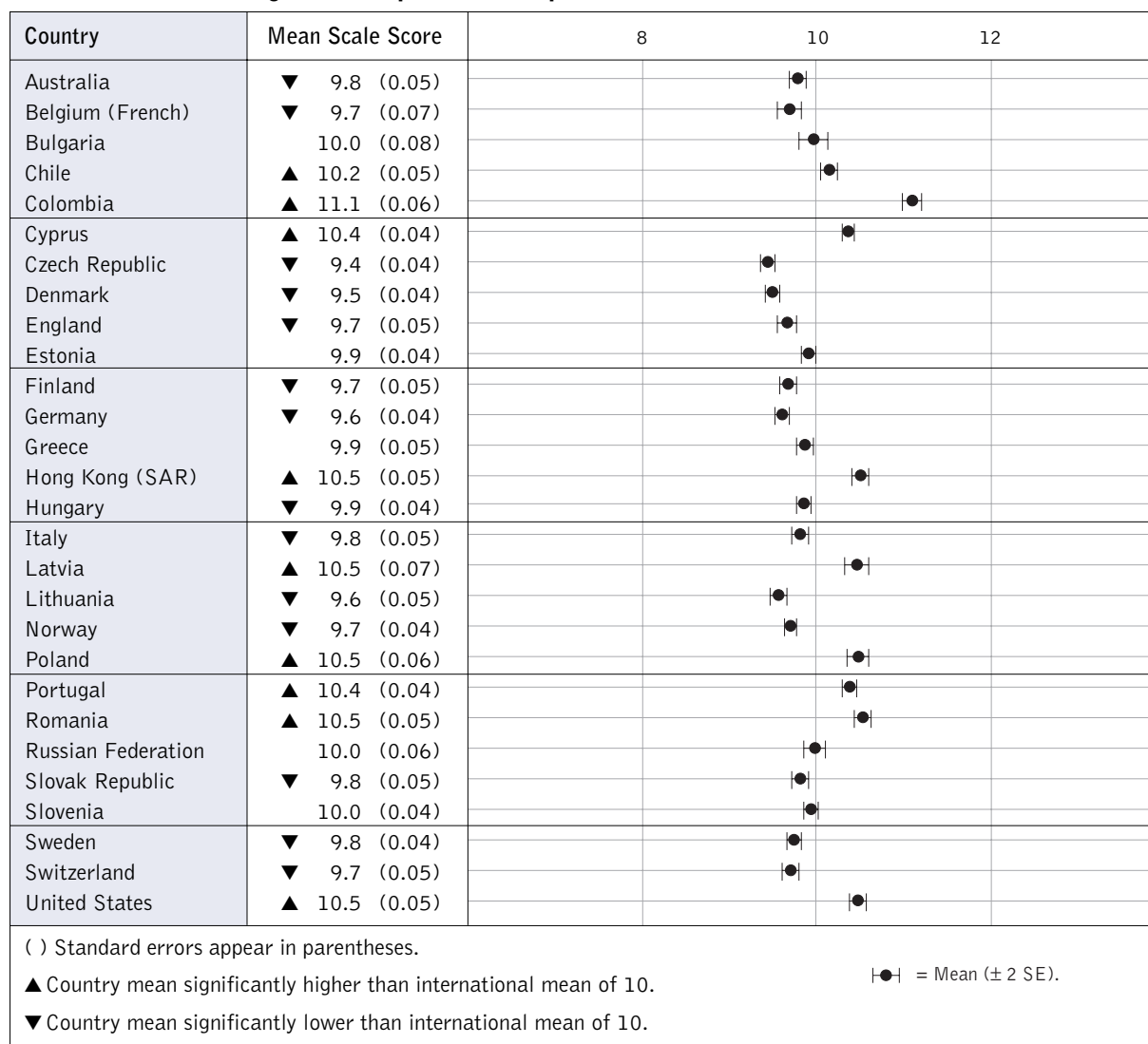
The 1971 IEA Study used a single summed score—participation in civic activities. It included listening to political broadcasts, being a candidate in school elections, helping collect money for good causes, asking parents about political parties (and three other items). In the current study, we included a number of scales dealing separately with these different types of participation (for example, exposure to political news and confidence in participation at school). These scales are discussed in other sections of this report. The 1971 study did not ask about expected future activities or about protest activities.

The ‘participatory revolution’ (Kaase, 1984) of the 1960s in western democracies resulted in a large number of national and cross-national studies about ‘protest behavior’. A pioneering and comprehensive study in five western democracies was ‘Political Action’ (Barnes, Kaase *et al.*, 1979). In this study, Allerbeck, Jennings and Rosenmayr (1979) analyzed intergenerational continuity and change with respect to protest behavior. Seven to eight years later, Jennings and van Deth (1990) replicated the ‘Political Action’ study in three countries to show that the term ‘protest behavior’ was no longer appropriate because of the ‘normalization of the unconventional’ (Fuchs, 1991). Some illegal but non-violent actions like blocking traffic have been termed civic disobedience. In a 1990 article, Kaase differentiated between conventional and unconventional political participation, and, among the latter, between legal and illegal political behaviors. In several chapters of this volume, we refer to unconventional legal behavior as ‘social movement activities’.

The communist countries behind the iron curtain saw a long chain of singular protest events, uprisings and subversive actions that were severely oppressed by the authorities. Because the state suppressed the growth of even non-political grassroots movements, a lively tradition of every-day civic activities could not develop in these countries. This situation changed dramatically during the 1980s, with the change beginning in Solidarnosc in Poland and continuing until the iron curtain disappeared as symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall. From then on, the different forms of civic and political participation known in the western democracies developed and became accepted in the post-Communist countries (see, for example, Meyer & Ryszka, 1991; McAllister & White, 1994; Flanagan *et al.*, 1999). The development was similar in some countries with former right-wing dictatorships. It is therefore appropriate for the IEA Civic Education Study to administer a survey that includes differentiations between conventional and unconventional (social movement) political activities, and between legal and illegal political activities in all countries included in the study. These differentiations have proved to be valid and have been adopted in recent studies comparing, for example, adolescents’ political action potential in West and East Germany, the former Federal Republic of Germany and the former communist German Democratic Republic (Gille & Krüger, 2000).

Some studies using samples of different countries have explained political participation according to characteristics of the individual like age, education, gender, family background, family education and values (Parry, Moyser & Day, 1992; Gundelach, 1995; Topf, 1995; Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995; Nie *et al.*, 1996; Flanagan *et al.*, 1998). Other studies have revealed that contextual factors of countries (like organizational affiliation and socioeconomic conditions) seem to predict legal participation but not illegal activities (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1993; Roller & Wessels, 1996).

Figure 6.1 Expected Participation in Political Activities



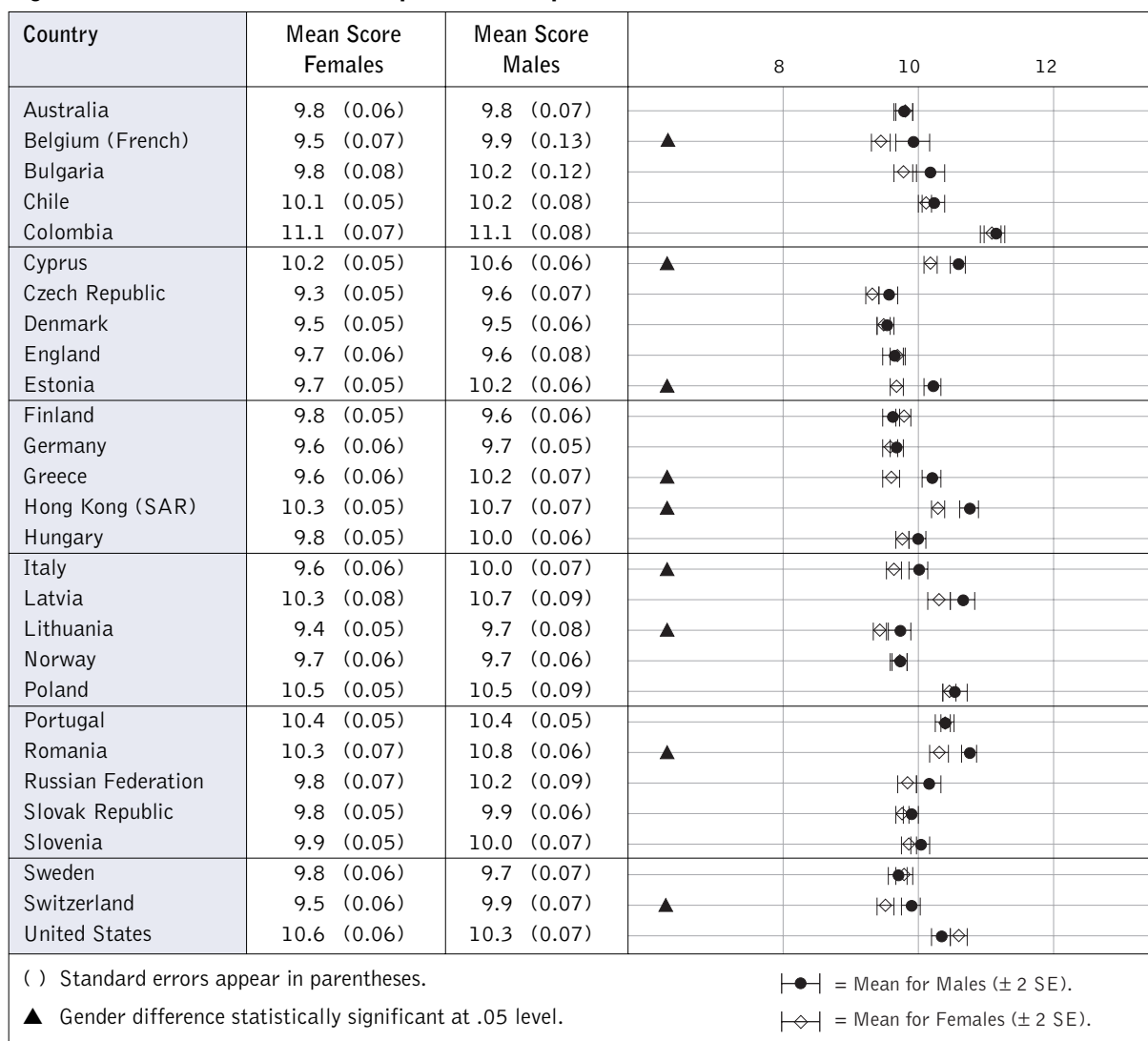
Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.

England, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Sweden and Switzerland.

In 19 countries there is no significant gender difference in conventional participation. In nine countries more males than females intend to participate in these conventional political activities, namely Belgium (French), Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Switzerland (Figure 6.2). (Note: a figure is presented here because of attention to this issue in previous research.)

The most common conventional political activity among the 14-year-olds is voting (Table 6.3). In all countries, more than half of the students are willing to vote in general elections ('I will probably do this' or 'I will certainly do this'), with a range from 55 percent in Switzerland to 95 percent in Cyprus. More than 90 percent of the students give these answers in Cyprus, Denmark, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. In Belgium (French), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany and Switzerland, less than 70 percent of the 14-

Figure 6.2 Gender Differences in Expected Participation in Political Activities



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

year-olds are potential voters. In all the other countries, between 70 and 90 percent of these young people are potential voters.

In 16 countries significantly more females than males intend to vote. In 12 countries there are no significant gender differences (Table 6.3). However, in Germany and Switzerland more males than females intend to vote, these differences being significant before the Dunn-Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons.

In some countries in this study, voting is compulsory or is defined as a duty in the constitution, for example, in Australia, Belgium (French), Chile, Greece and Italy. Compulsory voting is generally related to high voter turnout (Lijphart, 1997). With the exception of Belgium (French), the readiness of students to vote is high in these countries but not generally higher than in some other countries where voting is not compulsory. An important point, however, is that the intention to vote or not to vote assessed at age 14 is not necessarily predictive of future voting behavior.

Table 6.3 Students' Reports on Expected Political Activities as an Adult

Country	Percentage of Students who Expect Probably or Definitely to...																					
	vote in national elections				collect money for a social cause				collect signatures for a petition				participate in a non-violent protest march									
	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males							
Australia	▲ 85 (1.0)	89 (1.0)	82 (1.4)	▲ 62 (1.3)	72 (1.5)	51 (1.9)	▲ 53 (1.2)	59 (1.8)	47 (1.8)	41 (1.2)	41 (1.6)	40 (1.6)	▲ 69 (2.0)	76 (2.2)	62 (2.8)	▲ 47 (1.8)	71 (1.4)	53 (2.3)	57 (1.4)	58 (1.4)	55 (1.7)	
Belgium (French)	▲ 69 (2.0)	76 (2.2)	62 (2.8)	▲ 47 (1.8)	56 (1.7)	40 (2.5)	▲ 62 (1.4)	71 (1.4)	53 (2.3)	38 (1.7)	35 (1.8)	42 (2.8)	58 (1.9)	62 (2.4)	55 (2.0)	48 (1.9)	34 (1.7)	37 (2.0)	38 (1.7)	35 (1.8)	42 (2.8)	
Bulgaria	58 (1.9)	62 (2.4)	55 (2.0)	51 (1.6)	55 (2.1)	48 (1.9)	81 (1.0)	77 (0.8)	75 (1.0)	▲ 47 (0.8)	42 (1.6)	51 (1.2)	74 (1.0)	75 (1.1)	74 (1.3)	81 (1.0)	78 (1.3)	75 (1.0)	▲ 47 (0.8)	42 (1.6)	51 (1.2)	
Chile	74 (1.0)	75 (1.1)	74 (1.3)	▲ 85 (0.9)	89 (1.8)	81 (1.0)	77 (0.8)	78 (1.3)	75 (1.0)	▲ 66 (1.2)	67 (1.6)	65 (1.7)	87 (1.3)	89 (1.4)	84 (1.7)	73 (1.5)	77 (1.1)	72 (1.7)	66 (1.2)	67 (1.6)	65 (1.7)	
Colombia	87 (1.3)	89 (1.4)	84 (1.7)	▲ 79 (1.3)	83 (1.4)	73 (1.5)	75 (1.2)	83 (1.4)	72 (1.7)	86 (1.0)	87 (0.8)	85 (1.1)	95 (0.5)	97 (0.5)	94 (0.8)	77 (1.2)	65 (1.2)	63 (1.5)	86 (1.0)	87 (0.8)	85 (1.1)	
Cyprus	95 (0.5)	97 (0.5)	94 (0.8)	▲ 82 (0.7)	87 (0.9)	77 (1.2)	64 (1.0)	82 (0.7)	87 (0.9)	28 (1.0)	26 (1.6)	31 (1.6)	65 (1.7)	63 (1.9)	66 (2.0)	24 (1.4)	33 (1.7)	24 (1.4)	28 (1.0)	26 (1.6)	31 (1.6)	
Czech Republic	65 (1.7)	63 (1.9)	66 (2.0)	▲ 28 (1.0)	33 (1.4)	24 (1.3)	▲ 29 (1.0)	33 (1.4)	24 (1.4)	46 (1.2)	47 (1.6)	45 (1.5)	91 (0.7)	93 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	38 (1.5)	46 (1.8)	39 (1.4)	46 (1.2)	47 (1.6)	45 (1.5)	
Denmark	▲ 91 (0.7)	93 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	▲ 51 (1.3)	65 (1.8)	38 (1.5)	43 (1.2)	46 (1.8)	39 (1.4)	28 (1.0)	28 (1.2)	27 (1.4)	80 (1.0)	82 (1.2)	78 (1.7)	46 (1.6)	54 (1.4)	36 (1.4)	28 (1.0)	28 (1.2)	27 (1.4)	
England	80 (1.0)	82 (1.2)	78 (1.7)	▲ 57 (1.2)	68 (1.4)	46 (1.6)	45 (1.0)	54 (1.4)	36 (1.4)	37 (1.2)	34 (1.3)	39 (1.6)	68 (1.1)	72 (1.3)	64 (1.7)	36 (1.5)	35 (1.8)	31 (1.4)	37 (1.2)	34 (1.3)	39 (1.6)	
Estonia	▲ 68 (1.1)	72 (1.3)	64 (1.7)	▲ 41 (1.2)	46 (1.6)	36 (1.5)	33 (1.2)	46 (1.6)	31 (1.4)	19 (1.2)	19 (1.2)	19 (1.2)	87 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	84 (0.9)	32 (1.5)	31 (1.5)	22 (1.4)	21 (1.0)	23 (1.6)	19 (1.2)	
Finland	▲ 87 (0.7)	89 (1.1)	84 (0.9)	▲ 45 (1.3)	57 (2.0)	32 (1.5)	27 (1.0)	57 (2.0)	32 (1.5)	38 (1.3)	38 (1.6)	37 (1.0)	67 (1.1)	65 (1.5)	71 (1.3)	45 (1.6)	47 (1.7)	35 (1.4)	38 (1.3)	38 (1.6)	37 (1.0)	
Germany	67 (1.1)	65 (1.5)	71 (1.3)	▲ 54 (1.2)	62 (1.4)	45 (1.6)	41 (1.3)	62 (1.4)	45 (1.6)	78 (1.0)	78 (1.0)	78 (1.0)	86 (0.9)	91 (1.0)	82 (1.4)	71 (1.4)	40 (1.6)	51 (1.6)	78 (1.2)	78 (1.3)	78 (1.0)	
Greece	▲ 86 (0.9)	91 (1.0)	82 (1.4)	▲ 79 (0.9)	87 (1.2)	71 (1.4)	46 (1.2)	87 (1.2)	71 (1.4)	46 (0.8)	46 (0.8)	52 (1.3)	80 (1.0)	83 (1.3)	78 (1.2)	73 (1.1)	59 (0.8)	59 (0.9)	46 (0.8)	41 (1.1)	52 (1.3)	
Hong Kong (SAR)	80 (1.0)	83 (1.3)	78 (1.2)	▲ 78 (0.9)	84 (1.1)	73 (1.1)	59 (0.8)	84 (1.1)	73 (1.1)	37 (1.1)	35 (1.5)	39 (1.7)	91 (0.7)	93 (0.7)	89 (1.0)	43 (1.5)	51 (1.4)	39 (1.5)	37 (1.1)	35 (1.5)	39 (1.7)	
Hungary	▲ 91 (0.7)	93 (0.7)	89 (1.0)	46 (1.2)	49 (1.5)	43 (1.5)	45 (1.1)	49 (1.5)	43 (1.5)	70 (1.0)	74 (1.0)	66 (1.6)	80 (1.1)	84 (1.3)	77 (1.6)	56 (1.4)	50 (1.5)	45 (1.4)	70 (1.0)	74 (1.0)	66 (1.6)	
Italy	▲ 80 (1.1)	84 (1.3)	77 (1.6)	▲ 65 (1.2)	73 (1.2)	66 (1.4)	47 (1.0)	73 (1.2)	66 (1.4)	39 (1.5)	38 (1.7)	40 (1.9)	71 (1.3)	78 (1.4)	64 (1.9)	52 (2.1)	46 (2.2)	42 (1.7)	39 (1.5)	38 (1.7)	40 (1.9)	
Latvia	▲ 71 (1.3)	78 (1.4)	64 (1.9)	▲ 57 (1.6)	62 (1.8)	52 (2.1)	44 (1.5)	62 (1.8)	52 (2.1)	35 (1.1)	33 (1.4)	37 (1.6)	80 (1.1)	83 (1.3)	76 (1.6)	43 (1.6)	35 (1.4)	34 (1.7)	35 (1.1)	33 (1.4)	37 (1.6)	
Lithuania	▲ 80 (1.1)	83 (1.3)	76 (1.6)	▲ 49 (1.1)	53 (1.3)	43 (1.6)	34 (1.1)	53 (1.3)	43 (1.6)	39 (1.2)	40 (1.7)	38 (1.7)	87 (0.7)	89 (1.0)	85 (1.1)	58 (1.5)	33 (1.5)	31 (1.5)	39 (1.2)	40 (1.7)	38 (1.7)	
Norway	87 (0.7)	89 (1.0)	85 (1.1)	▲ 68 (1.1)	78 (1.4)	58 (1.5)	32 (1.2)	78 (1.4)	58 (1.5)	43 (1.1)	41 (1.8)	45 (1.9)	88 (1.2)	92 (0.8)	83 (1.8)	45 (2.4)	51 (1.3)	44 (2.0)	43 (1.1)	41 (1.8)	45 (1.9)	
Poland	▲ 88 (1.2)	92 (0.8)	83 (1.8)	▲ 57 (1.7)	68 (1.7)	45 (2.4)	48 (1.1)	68 (1.7)	45 (2.4)	42 (1.3)	38 (1.8)	45 (1.6)	88 (0.8)	87 (1.0)	88 (1.0)	70 (1.5)	54 (1.3)	51 (1.7)	42 (1.3)	38 (1.8)	45 (1.6)	
Portugal	88 (0.8)	87 (1.0)	88 (1.0)	▲ 74 (1.0)	79 (1.2)	70 (1.5)	54 (1.3)	79 (1.2)	70 (1.5)	41 (1.7)	41 (1.7)	48 (1.5)	82 (1.1)	84 (1.5)	81 (1.6)	71 (1.6)	44 (1.7)	48 (2.1)	41 (1.7)	32 (1.8)	48 (1.5)	
Romania	82 (1.1)	84 (1.5)	81 (1.6)	73 (1.2)	75 (1.6)	71 (1.6)	46 (1.7)	75 (1.6)	71 (1.6)	46 (1.0)	45 (1.7)	52 (2.1)	82 (1.0)	85 (1.4)	78 (1.5)	55 (2.0)	34 (1.0)	36 (2.2)	46 (1.0)	41 (1.7)	52 (2.1)	
Russian Federation	▲ 82 (1.0)	85 (1.4)	78 (1.5)	56 (1.4)	58 (1.6)	45 (1.7)	32 (1.2)	58 (1.6)	45 (1.7)	35 (1.2)	35 (1.9)	43 (1.6)	93 (0.6)	95 (0.7)	91 (0.9)	35 (1.8)	35 (1.8)	30 (1.7)	39 (1.2)	35 (1.9)	43 (1.6)	
Slovak Republic	▲ 93 (0.6)	95 (0.7)	91 (0.9)	▲ 40 (1.3)	45 (1.7)	35 (1.8)	32 (1.2)	45 (1.7)	35 (1.8)	35 (1.2)	32 (1.4)	38 (1.5)	84 (1.0)	87 (1.2)	80 (1.3)	60 (1.4)	34 (1.5)	38 (1.7)	35 (1.2)	32 (1.4)	38 (1.5)	
Slovenia	▲ 84 (1.0)	87 (1.2)	80 (1.3)	▲ 68 (1.0)	77 (1.2)	60 (1.4)	36 (1.2)	77 (1.2)	60 (1.4)	36 (1.8)	35 (2.0)	36 (2.5)	75 (1.4)	79 (1.9)	71 (1.4)	30 (1.9)	32 (2.2)	29 (2.1)	36 (1.8)	35 (2.0)	36 (2.5)	
Sweden	▲ 75 (1.4)	79 (1.9)	71 (1.4)	▲ 42 (1.3)	53 (2.1)	46 (1.3)	31 (1.8)	53 (2.1)	46 (1.3)	40 (1.1)	40 (1.3)	40 (1.5)	55 (1.3)	52 (1.8)	58 (1.8)	46 (1.3)	47 (1.5)	37 (1.4)	40 (1.1)	40 (1.3)	40 (1.5)	
Switzerland	55 (1.3)	52 (1.8)	58 (1.8)	▲ 55 (1.2)	64 (1.6)	46 (1.3)	42 (1.1)	64 (1.6)	46 (1.3)	39 (1.5)	42 (1.6)	36 (1.8)	85 (1.0)	89 (0.9)	80 (1.6)	49 (2.2)	56 (2.2)	44 (1.8)	39 (1.5)	42 (1.6)	36 (1.8)	
United States	▲ 85 (1.0)	89 (0.9)	80 (1.6)	▲ 59 (1.5)	69 (1.8)	49 (2.2)	50 (1.5)	69 (1.8)	49 (2.2)	44 (0.3)	43 (0.3)	45 (0.3)	80 (0.2)	82 (0.3)	77 (0.3)	66 (0.3)	66 (0.3)	43 (0.3)	44 (0.2)	43 (0.3)	45 (0.3)	
International Sample	80 (0.2)	82 (0.3)	77 (0.3)	59 (0.2)	66 (0.3)	52 (0.3)	45 (0.2)	66 (0.3)	52 (0.3)	48 (0.3)	43 (0.3)	45 (0.3)										

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses. ▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level.

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

Unconventional participation (social movement activities)

The results for two single items relating to social movement activities—collecting signatures for a petition and participating in a non-violent demonstration—are quite different (Table 6.3).

In two countries, Chile and Colombia, three-fourths of all students say they are prepared to *collect signatures*. In six countries, one-third or less of the students are willing to collect signatures, namely in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Norway, the Slovak Republic and Sweden. The percentages in all the other countries are neither high nor low. Females have higher scores than males in nine countries—Australia, Belgium (French), the Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland and the United States. Only in one country, Greece, do more males than females report their willingness to participate in this way. In 18 countries there are no gender differences.

In four countries (Colombia, Cyprus, Greece and Italy), two-thirds or more of the students expect to *participate in non-violent demonstrations*. In three countries (the Czech Republic, England and Finland), less than one-third intend to act in such a way. The percentages in all the other countries are neither high nor low. In a majority of 22 countries, no gender differences are apparent with respect to non-violent demonstrations. In five countries (Chile, Hong Kong/SAR, Romania, the Russian Federation and the Slovak Republic), more males than females intend to demonstrate; in one country (Italy), more females than males intend to act in this way.

Volunteer commitment for charity or social causes

In all but four countries, more students are willing to collect money for a social cause than to collect signatures, participate in non-violent demonstrations or engage in illegal actions. The four exceptions are Belgium (French), Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Italy. In almost all countries, more students are willing to vote in national elections than to collect money for a social cause. However, in Chile the 14-year-olds mention collecting money more often than they mention voting, and in Switzerland the same percentage of students report their readiness to vote and to collect money.

In a majority of countries, females are more likely than males to express readiness to collect money. However, we did not find significant gender differences in four countries—Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and the Russian Federation.

Unconventional illegal actions

In most countries only small minorities of students intend to participate in illegal activities such as spray-painting, blocking traffic or occupying buildings (see Table 6.4). Among these three behaviors, ‘spray-painting protest slogans on walls’ is the most preferred activity. However, in only three countries (Chile, Cyprus and Greece) do as many as 30 percent of the students imagine the possibility of behaving in such a way. In seven countries less than 15 percent of the 14-year-olds speak of spray-painting as a possible activity. In all the other countries, between 15 and 30 percent of the 14-year-olds are potential spray-painters of protest slogans. This type of activity seems to have become a relatively conventional political activity in some countries.

Table 6.4 Students' Reports on Expected Illegal Protest Activities as an Adult

Country	Percentage of Students who Expect Probably or Definitely to...											
	spray-paint protest slogans on walls				block traffic as a form of protest				occupy buildings as a form of protest			
	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males
Australia	▲ 20 (1.1)	15 (1.1)	26 (1.6)	▲ 18 (1.2)	12 (1.1)	25 (1.7)	▲ 17 (1.1)	11 (1.1)	24 (1.5)	▲ 17 (1.1)	11 (1.1)	24 (1.5)
Belgium (French)	▲ 23 (1.3)	17 (1.3)	30 (2.1)	▲ 23 (1.6)	14 (1.6)	31 (2.2)	▲ 22 (1.6)	16 (1.3)	29 (2.4)	▲ 22 (1.6)	16 (1.3)	29 (2.4)
Bulgaria	▲ 22 (1.7)	18 (1.7)	26 (2.1)	▲ 22 (1.5)	16 (1.8)	27 (1.9)	▲ 20 (1.7)	15 (1.7)	25 (2.3)	▲ 20 (1.7)	15 (1.7)	25 (2.3)
Chile	▲ 31 (0.9)	22 (1.3)	38 (1.2)	▲ 19 (0.8)	14 (0.9)	23 (0.9)	▲ 14 (0.7)	10 (0.7)	18 (1.0)	▲ 14 (0.7)	10 (0.7)	18 (1.0)
Colombia	▲ 23 (1.5)	18 (1.5)	30 (1.6)	▲ 20 (1.3)	17 (1.7)	23 (1.7)	▲ 15 (1.1)	12 (1.1)	20 (1.6)	▲ 15 (1.1)	12 (1.1)	20 (1.6)
Cyprus	▲ 37 (1.1)	33 (1.3)	42 (1.4)	▲ 28 (0.9)	22 (1.3)	34 (1.3)	▲ 28 (1.0)	23 (1.3)	32 (1.6)	▲ 28 (1.0)	23 (1.3)	32 (1.6)
Czech Republic	▲ 12 (1.0)	6 (0.9)	18 (1.7)	▲ 7 (0.8)	4 (0.6)	11 (1.3)	▲ 7 (0.8)	3 (0.6)	11 (1.5)	▲ 7 (0.8)	3 (0.6)	11 (1.5)
Denmark	▲ 15 (0.9)	9 (0.9)	21 (1.3)	▲ 15 (0.9)	10 (1.0)	20 (1.2)	▲ 12 (0.8)	8 (1.0)	16 (1.2)	▲ 12 (0.8)	8 (1.0)	16 (1.2)
England	▲ 14 (0.9)	9 (0.9)	19 (1.3)	▲ 11 (0.8)	8 (0.7)	15 (1.4)	▲ 11 (0.8)	8 (0.9)	15 (1.2)	▲ 11 (0.8)	8 (0.9)	15 (1.2)
Estonia	▲ 22 (0.9)	15 (0.9)	30 (1.5)	▲ 12 (0.7)	8 (0.8)	17 (1.4)	▲ 9 (0.7)	6 (0.6)	13 (1.3)	▲ 9 (0.7)	6 (0.6)	13 (1.3)
Finland	▲ 10 (0.8)	7 (1.0)	13 (1.4)	▲ 5 (0.7)	3 (0.6)	9 (1.1)	▲ 8 (0.7)	5 (0.7)	12 (1.2)	▲ 8 (0.7)	5 (0.7)	12 (1.2)
Germany	▲ 16 (0.9)	12 (1.1)	21 (1.1)	▲ 13 (0.7)	10 (0.9)	16 (1.0)	▲ 12 (0.8)	9 (1.1)	15 (0.9)	▲ 12 (0.8)	9 (1.1)	15 (0.9)
Greece	▲ 30 (1.0)	24 (1.3)	36 (1.3)	▲ 42 (1.0)	38 (1.5)	46 (1.3)	▲ 41 (1.1)	37 (1.6)	44 (1.5)	▲ 41 (1.1)	37 (1.6)	44 (1.5)
Hong Kong (SAR)	▲ 18 (1.1)	13 (1.0)	23 (1.5)	▲ 17 (1.1)	13 (1.1)	22 (1.5)	▲ 17 (1.2)	12 (1.2)	22 (1.6)	▲ 17 (1.2)	12 (1.2)	22 (1.6)
Hungary	▲ 10 (0.7)	5 (0.7)	14 (1.1)	▲ 8 (0.7)	6 (0.8)	11 (1.1)	▲ 7 (0.6)	4 (0.6)	9 (0.9)	▲ 7 (0.6)	4 (0.6)	9 (0.9)
Italy	▲ 20 (1.0)	17 (1.2)	24 (1.4)	▲ 18 (1.0)	14 (1.0)	23 (1.5)	▲ 24 (1.0)	22 (1.4)	26 (1.3)	▲ 24 (1.0)	22 (1.4)	26 (1.3)
Latvia	▲ 21 (1.3)	13 (1.5)	29 (1.8)	▲ 17 (1.2)	9 (1.0)	25 (2.0)	▲ 15 (1.3)	10 (1.3)	21 (1.8)	▲ 15 (1.3)	10 (1.3)	21 (1.8)
Lithuania	▲ 15 (0.8)	10 (0.7)	21 (1.3)	▲ 13 (0.7)	6 (0.7)	20 (1.3)	▲ 10 (0.7)	4 (0.5)	16 (1.4)	▲ 10 (0.7)	4 (0.5)	16 (1.4)
Norway	▲ 15 (0.9)	9 (0.9)	20 (1.2)	▲ 12 (0.9)	8 (1.0)	16 (1.2)	▲ 12 (0.7)	6 (0.8)	18 (1.0)	▲ 12 (0.7)	6 (0.8)	18 (1.0)
Poland	▲ 18 (0.9)	11 (1.1)	25 (1.4)	▲ 17 (1.1)	9 (1.0)	25 (1.7)	▲ 16 (1.0)	9 (1.1)	22 (1.6)	▲ 16 (1.0)	9 (1.1)	22 (1.6)
Portugal	▲ 13 (0.8)	9 (0.8)	17 (1.3)	▲ 11 (0.7)	7 (0.8)	15 (1.2)	▲ 10 (0.7)	7 (0.8)	14 (1.1)	▲ 10 (0.7)	7 (0.8)	14 (1.1)
Romania	▲ 15 (1.1)	10 (1.1)	20 (1.6)	▲ 14 (0.8)	8 (1.1)	20 (1.1)	▲ 13 (0.8)	8 (1.2)	17 (1.1)	▲ 13 (0.8)	8 (1.2)	17 (1.1)
Russian Federation	▲ 23 (1.1)	19 (1.6)	27 (1.7)	▲ 13 (1.1)	8 (1.1)	18 (1.9)	▲ 9 (0.8)	6 (0.8)	13 (1.5)	▲ 9 (0.8)	6 (0.8)	13 (1.5)
Slovak Republic	▲ 13 (0.8)	9 (1.0)	16 (1.2)	▲ 7 (0.7)	5 (0.8)	10 (1.0)	▲ 6 (0.7)	4 (0.7)	8 (1.0)	▲ 6 (0.7)	4 (0.7)	8 (1.0)
Slovenia	▲ 18 (1.0)	9 (1.0)	27 (1.5)	▲ 12 (0.8)	6 (0.7)	18 (1.3)	▲ 12 (0.9)	5 (0.7)	18 (1.4)	▲ 12 (0.9)	5 (0.7)	18 (1.4)
Sweden	▲ 12 (1.2)	8 (1.2)	17 (1.9)	▲ 9 (0.8)	6 (0.9)	12 (1.2)	▲ 10 (1.0)	6 (0.8)	14 (1.6)	▲ 10 (1.0)	6 (0.8)	14 (1.6)
Switzerland	▲ 16 (1.1)	12 (1.3)	20 (1.3)	▲ 13 (0.8)	7 (1.0)	17 (1.1)	▲ 12 (0.9)	8 (0.9)	16 (1.4)	▲ 12 (0.9)	8 (0.9)	16 (1.4)
United States	▲ 15 (1.2)	9 (1.0)	21 (1.8)	▲ 13 (1.1)	8 (1.1)	18 (1.6)	▲ 14 (1.0)	11 (1.3)	17 (1.5)	▲ 14 (1.0)	11 (1.3)	17 (1.5)
International Sample	18 (0.2)	13 (0.2)	24 (0.3)	15 (0.2)	11 (0.2)	20 (0.3)	14 (0.2)	10 (0.2)	19 (0.3)	14 (0.2)	10 (0.2)	19 (0.3)

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses. ▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level.

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

The results for the two other forms of protest, blocking traffic and occupying buildings, are very similar. One country, Greece, ranks at the top, with slightly over 40 percent of the students reporting the possibility of participating in these forms of illegal action. Three other countries, Belgium (French), Bulgaria and Cyprus, have more than 20 percent (but below 30 percent) of their students ready to participate in these behaviors. Four countries have less than 10 percent of their students willing to undertake such protest—the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. The other countries have between 10 and 20 percent of their 14-year-old students ready to block traffic and/or occupy buildings as a protest.

In all countries there is a clear and striking gender difference for the three illegal forms of political actions. Males are more often ready than females to spray-paint protest slogans, block traffic and occupy buildings. In only three cases is the gender difference not statistically significant: in Colombia for blocking traffic, and in Italy and the Slovak Republic for occupying buildings.

SUMMARY

At age 14, adolescents are only moderately interested in politics in most countries. Only in four countries do a majority of the students seem to be interested. In response to the single item ‘I am interested in politics’, males express more interest than females in 18 countries. No gender difference is evident in ten countries. Television is the most often used source of information for political news. Newspapers rank second.

Voting in national elections is by far the most preferred future political activity of 14-year-old students. Readiness to vote is expressed by a majority of students across all countries. Gender differences, however, vary among countries. The second most frequently reported activity in most countries is charity work (collecting money for a social cause), which is more likely to be preferred by females than males. This activity is followed in importance for students by the legal social movement activities of collecting signatures and participating in non-violent demonstrations. Again, the gender differences vary across countries, with a slight tendency for females to prefer collecting signatures and males to prefer participating in protest marches. The majority of students across all countries do not intend to participate in conventional activities like joining a political party, writing letters to newspapers and being a candidate for a local office. Only a minority of students are ready to engage in illegal activities like spray-painting protest slogans, blocking traffic and occupying buildings. Across all countries, by far more males than females are ready to participate in these activities that would be illegal in most countries. In the area of participation this was the most pronounced gender difference.

The between-country differences in all topics dealt with in this chapter are dramatic evidence of differences in political culture as experienced by young students.

