Students' Views of Opportunities for Civic Engagement in Classrooms, Schools and Youth Organizations

HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO SCHOOLS AND CIVIC EDUCATION

- Fourteen-year-olds generally believe that actions taken by groups of students in school can be effective in school improvement. This sense of 'school efficacy' may be as important as the broader sense of political efficacy relating to the government that has frequently been the subject of civic education research.
- Fourteen-year-olds in general perceive that their schools do not place much emphasis on teaching about the importance of voting in local and national elections.
- About one-quarter of the students say that they are often encouraged to voice their opinions during discussions in their classrooms, but an equal proportion say that this rarely or never occurs. Many of the countries that recently experienced political transitions appear to have a less open climate for discussion.
- Fourteen-year-olds in about one-third of the countries report low rates of participation in civic-related organizations. Charities, volunteer organizations and student councils or parliaments are the most frequent sites for participation in the remaining countries.

Are schools and organizations places where students develop practices of citizenship and confidence in their ability to be effective participants in a broader community? What do students believe they are learning about their country, society and government? Do they feel free to explore their attitudes or beliefs or to discuss issues that they find interesting in their classrooms? And to what extent do they belong to associations in and outside school? These questions all contain elements of the formal and informal aspects of schooling that can be thought of as either outcomes of civic education or influences on it.

RELATION OF THIS AREA TO THE STUDY'S DESIGN

The character of civic education at school and the influence of formal education on outcomes such as civic knowledge and engagement are emphases of the study. The octagon model (see Figure 1.2) identifies this impact at the level of face-to-face interactions with teachers, other students and in informal community settings. All of these interactions were highlighted and interconnected in the Phase 1 case studies. The need to build confidence in students that allows them to participate effectively in groups, ranging from those at school to citizens' groups, was a theme in some but not all countries. Focus groups were conducted with students as part of some Phase 1 case studies. These groups often identified gaps between what the school intended to teach and what the students believed they were learning, highlighting the importance of finding out what the students themselves believe to be the emphases of their schools in this area. There was also widespread acknowledgment among educators of the ideal of a school and classroom atmosphere that would give students a model of democratic process. Many doubted that students were having this experience. Some case studies also highlighted the value of membership in school and out-of-school organizations.

This chapter covers four sections of the survey that deal with these issues—students' responses concerning their confidence in the effectiveness of participation at school, what students perceive they are learning in school, the openness of the classroom climate for discussion, and the organizations in which students participate. Only the first of these, the confidence in participation at school scale, has been identified as an outcome for analysis by country in the same way as the concepts and attitudes covered in the previous chapters. The other three serve as predictors of other scales in Chapter 8. However, country differences in all four sets of items are presented here.

CONFIDENCE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL

The sense of political efficacy is usually defined as the attitude that citizens can make a difference in government decisions. It is often thought of as having two parts. External efficacy is the belief that government officials are responsive to citizen input, while internal efficacy is the belief that the individual can mobilize personal resources to be effective. The sense of efficacy is of long-standing interest in studies of politics and political socialization (for examples of early work in this area, see Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, 1964; Hess & Torney, 1967). The community and the school are among the settings in which such efficacy can be experienced, especially by young people (see Panel 7.1), although the majority of previous research has dealt with efficacy in relation to the government.

Development of the School Confidence Scale in the 1999 IEA Instrument

In developing the area of political efficacy relating to the government, we began with the 1971 IEA items. The final 1999 test included nine efficacy items. We also included a measure in the pilot study that contained 12 items relating to perceptions of school authorities and the student's view of the efficacy of group participation. We reduced this measure to seven items in the final test. The response scale had four points, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

For political efficacy items about government, the confirmatory factor analysis failed to produce a scale that met IEA standards across countries. In regard to items about efficacy at school, the confirmatory factor analysis revealed two factors. We retained a four-item scale dealing with confidence that groups of students who participate in school-based groups can have an impact on solving school problems.

PANEL 7.1 Previous Research on Confidence in the Effectiveness of Participation at School

In her study of political efficacy in relation to the government, Hahn (1998) used a measure of political confidence that focused on a person's belief in his or her ability to influence decisions. The items within this measure were phrased this way: 'I am the kind of person who can influence. . .' followed by 'how others vote' or 'others' decisions'. Hahn found that among the countries she surveyed, students in the United States were most confident, followed by those in Denmark and England, and those in Germany slightly less so. She found small gender effects, with males more confident, perhaps because the emphasis in these items was on using assertiveness to convince someone else of a point of view.

Yeich and Levine (1994) proposed a measure to augment the frequently studied topics of external political efficacy (a belief that the government is responsive to citizens) and internal political efficacy (a belief that the individual citizen can understand political events and have an influence). Their measure involved collective political efficacy, that is, the belief that getting together in groups is effective in solving community problems. They studied adults in the United States who were attempting to mobilize community action.

In a recent study of seven countries, Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo and Sheblanova (1998) used a measure of sense of membership at school that included such items as 'feeling like someone whose opinion counts'. Australian students had the highest sense of membership, followed by students from Bulgaria, Hungary and the United States. Students in the Czech Republic, Sweden and Russia had lower scores. Gender differences tended toward a greater sense of membership among females. Sense of membership at school was an important predictor in some countries of civic commitment (the desire to make a contribution to one's country and society) for both males and females.

Results for Confidence in the Effectiveness of Participation at School

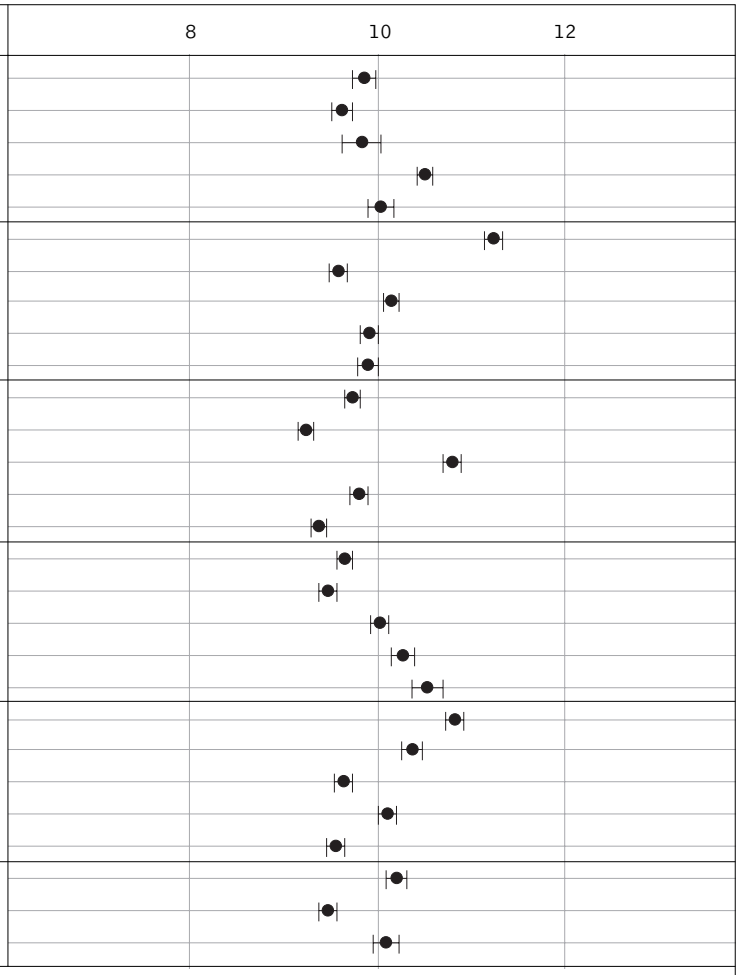
Analysis of scale scores

The items in this scale deal with the value of students working together in groups or as elected representatives to solve school problems. Approximately 30 to 40 percent of students 'strongly agree' and approximately 50 percent 'agree' with these items. To look at this finding another way, only 10 to 15 percent of the students disagree with these items. The large majority of students across countries have had some positive experience with students getting together at school in either formal or informal groups to promote school improvement and solve problems. (For details of scaling and item responses, see Figure B.2j in Appendix B.)

As Figure 7.1 indicates, confidence in the effectiveness of school participation is especially high in Cyprus, Greece and Portugal. Other countries with means significantly above the international mean are Chile, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden. Confidence in the effectiveness of school participation is relatively low in Germany, Hungary, Latvia and Switzerland. Other countries with means significantly below the international mean are Belgium (French), the Czech Republic, Finland, Hong Kong (SAR), Italy, the

Figure 7.1 Confidence in Participation at School

Country	Mean Scale Score	
Australia	9.9 (0.06)	
Belgium (French)	▼ 9.6 (0.06)	
Bulgaria	9.8 (0.10)	
Chile	▲ 10.5 (0.04)	
Colombia	10.0 (0.07)	
Cyprus	▲ 11.3 (0.05)	
Czech Republic	▼ 9.6 (0.05)	
Denmark	▲ 10.2 (0.04)	
England	9.9 (0.05)	
Estonia	9.9 (0.05)	
Finland	▼ 9.7 (0.04)	
Germany	▼ 9.2 (0.04)	
Greece	▲ 10.8 (0.05)	
Hong Kong (SAR)	▼ 9.8 (0.05)	
Hungary	▼ 9.4 (0.04)	
Italy	▼ 9.7 (0.04)	
Latvia	▼ 9.5 (0.05)	
Lithuania	10.0 (0.05)	
Norway	▲ 10.3 (0.06)	
Poland	▲ 10.5 (0.08)	
Portugal	▲ 10.8 (0.05)	
Romania	▲ 10.4 (0.06)	
Russian Federation	▼ 9.7 (0.05)	
Slovak Republic	10.1 (0.05)	
Slovenia	▼ 9.6 (0.05)	
Sweden	▲ 10.2 (0.06)	
Switzerland	▼ 9.5 (0.05)	
United States	10.1 (0.07)	



( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

▲ Country mean significantly higher than international mean of 10.

▼ Country mean significantly lower than international mean of 10.

= Mean (± 2 SE).

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

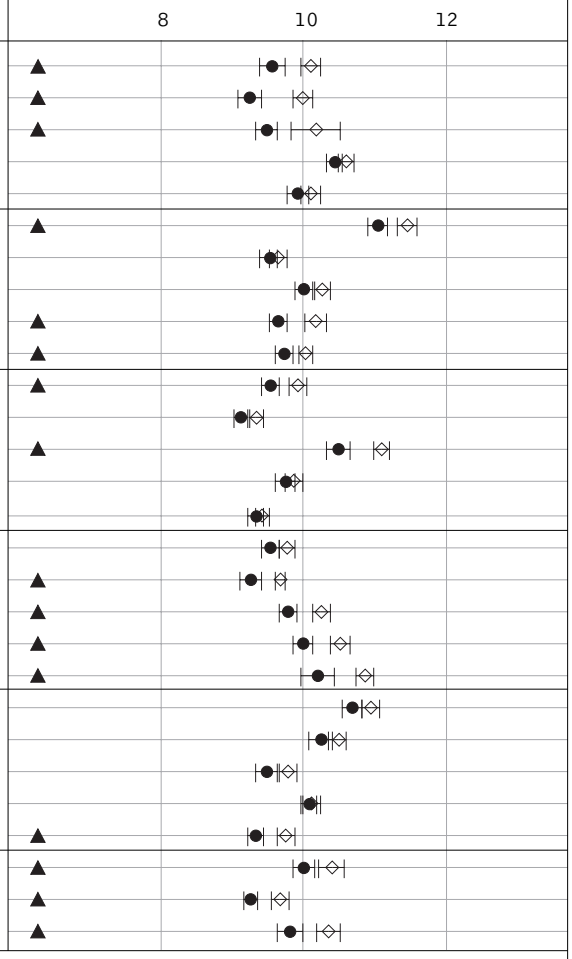
Russian Federation and Slovenia. A number of these countries' Phase 1 case studies reported attempts, which often met with unexpected difficulties, to enhance students' participation at school.

Analysis of scale scores by gender

Significant gender differences are evident in 16 countries. Figure 7.2 shows that these are all in the direction of females having more confidence than males in the effectiveness of school participation. This finding is the opposite of the gender difference that Hahn (1998) found. She, however, asked students about their individual feelings of confidence or assertiveness and not about whether they thought group participation was likely to be effective.

Figure 7.2 Gender Differences in Confidence in Participation at School

Country	Mean Score Females	Mean Score Males
Australia	10.1 (0.07)	9.6 (0.09)
Belgium (French)	10.0 (0.07)	9.3 (0.08)
Bulgaria	10.2 (0.17)	9.5 (0.08)
Chile	10.6 (0.05)	10.4 (0.05)
Colombia	10.1 (0.07)	9.9 (0.08)
Cyprus	11.5 (0.07)	11.0 (0.07)
Czech Republic	9.7 (0.06)	9.5 (0.06)
Denmark	10.3 (0.06)	10.0 (0.06)
England	10.2 (0.07)	9.7 (0.06)
Estonia	10.1 (0.05)	9.7 (0.06)
Finland	9.9 (0.06)	9.5 (0.06)
Germany	9.4 (0.05)	9.1 (0.05)
Greece	11.1 (0.06)	10.5 (0.08)
Hong Kong (SAR)	9.9 (0.06)	9.7 (0.07)
Hungary	9.4 (0.05)	9.3 (0.05)
Italy	9.8 (0.05)	9.5 (0.06)
Latvia	9.7 (0.04)	9.3 (0.07)
Lithuania	10.3 (0.06)	9.8 (0.06)
Norway	10.5 (0.07)	10.0 (0.07)
Poland	10.9 (0.06)	10.2 (0.12)
Portugal	11.0 (0.06)	10.7 (0.07)
Romania	10.5 (0.06)	10.3 (0.08)
Russian Federation	9.8 (0.06)	9.5 (0.08)
Slovak Republic	10.1 (0.06)	10.1 (0.06)
Slovenia	9.8 (0.06)	9.3 (0.06)
Sweden	10.4 (0.09)	10.0 (0.08)
Switzerland	9.7 (0.06)	9.3 (0.05)
United States	10.4 (0.08)	9.8 (0.09)



( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level.

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

Summary of Confidence in the Effectiveness of Participation at School

Young people daily experience the school as a social and political system. Solving problems that arise there in interaction with others can foster a sense of membership in this community. Confidence that participation at school can make a difference is valuable in itself. Those who prepared the Phase 1 case studies expressed the hope that schools could become more open to such participation, but they also noted the difficulties involved.

For many years, studies in civic education and political socialization have used a measure of political efficacy that asks about the relation of citizens to the national government. The IEA measure of confidence in participation at school seems equally valuable in understanding young people's motivations and actions because it deals with environments that are part of their everyday lives, problems that matter to them, and actions that they can actually undertake rather than anticipate.

The countries that are high on school confidence also score high on scales relating to concepts of citizenship as involving both conventional and social movement activity and on the scale indicating willingness to participate in political activities as adults. We will discuss this matter more fully in Chapter 10.

A question for future analysis is how confidence in effective participation relates to other measures of engagement within countries.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THEIR LEARNING

IEA studies in many subject areas since the First International Mathematics Study of more than 40 years ago have used measures of 'opportunity to learn' to ensure the fairness of coverage of a test and to interpret patterns of performance. In these studies, teachers have usually been the ones to rate the extent to which students have studied the material required to answer each test item.

Development of the Views of Learning Items in the 1999 IEA Instrument

'Opportunity to learn' instruments are very time-consuming to administer. In both the 1971 IEA Civic Education Study and the current one there were other reasons for not including an item-by-item rating by teachers of students' opportunity to learn. Civic education is influenced by schooling, but that influence is nested within a much larger set of systems—families, peer groups, community organizations, media presentations and the political culture. Much of the effect of civic education is the product of cumulative learning, not merely of that gained in the current grade but also in previous grades and in a variety of classes including history and mother tongue (and through school and community experience). It would be misleading to discuss opportunity to learn solely on the basis of ratings by a current teacher of one civic-related subject.

Knowing something about the emphases that schools place on learning about civic-related matters is valuable, however. Students were a possible source for this information, but we could not ask them to rate every test item. Based on National Research Coordinators' suggestions, we identified a scale that asked students about what they had learned in school. The scale consisted of seven items, among them 'In school I have learned to cooperate in groups with other students'. Other items dealt with learning to solve community problems, acting to protect the environment, being a patriotic citizen and the importance of voting in national and local elections. We analyzed them as single items.

Results for Students' Views of Their Learning

As Table 7.1 indicates, in many countries the proportion of students who believe they have learned in school about the importance of voting is less than that for the other learning objectives. Specifically, in only 14 countries do the majority of students say they have learned in school about the importance of voting (international mean percentage of 55). In contrast, in 22 countries, the majority of students believe they have learned in school about being a

Table 7.1 Students' Reports on What They Believe They Have Learned in School

Country	Percentage of Students who 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with...						
	In school I have learned to cooperate in groups with other students	In school I have learned to understand people who have different ideas	In school I have learned how to act to protect the environment	In school I have learned to be concerned about what happens in other countries	In school I have learned to contribute to solving problems in the community	In school I have learned to be a patriotic and loyal citizen of my country	In school I have learned about the importance of voting in national and local elections
Australia	90 (0.9)	88 (1.0)	76 (1.1)	70 (1.2)	67 (1.1)	60 (1.0)	55 (1.5)
Belgium (French)	90 (1.1)	80 (1.8)	74 (1.7)	71 (1.7)	62 (1.7)	47 (1.2)	49 (2.5)
Bulgaria	82 (1.3)	77 (1.7)	73 (1.8)	60 (1.5)	65 (1.4)	63 (1.5)	42 (2.2)
Chile	94 (0.5)	94 (0.4)	89 (0.7)	77 (0.9)	81 (0.7)	87 (0.6)	76 (1.1)
Colombia	96 (0.4)	93 (0.6)	94 (0.6)	78 (1.0)	91 (1.0)	90 (0.9)	89 (0.9)
Cyprus	93 (0.6)	88 (0.7)	88 (0.8)	81 (0.9)	80 (0.8)	91 (0.7)	72 (1.1)
Czech Republic	90 (0.9)	74 (1.2)	78 (1.1)	57 (1.5)	69 (1.6)	58 (1.1)	42 (1.6)
Denmark	92 (0.5)	72 (0.9)	78 (1.1)	68 (1.1)	63 (1.0)	44 (1.1)	39 (1.3)
England	94 (0.7)	90 (1.0)	77 (0.9)	74 (1.1)	70 (1.1)	54 (1.3)	41 (1.2)
Estonia	91 (0.7)	84 (0.9)	76 (1.0)	71 (1.1)	54 (1.3)	48 (1.3)	43 (1.5)
Finland	93 (0.6)	83 (0.9)	67 (1.5)	67 (1.2)	32 (1.3)	55 (1.5)	34 (1.4)
Germany	86 (0.7)	77 (1.0)	69 (1.2)	74 (0.9)	69 (1.1)	48 (1.3)	39 (1.3)
Greece	92 (0.6)	87 (0.9)	82 (0.8)	68 (1.0)	83 (0.8)	79 (1.1)	72 (1.1)
Hong Kong (SAR)	91 (0.6)	85 (0.8)	85 (0.8)	72 (0.8)	65 (0.9)	57 (1.1)	71 (1.0)
Hungary	90 (0.6)	71 (1.0)	84 (1.0)	57 (1.2)	45 (1.1)	69 (1.3)	52 (1.2)
Italy	91 (0.7)	87 (0.9)	65 (1.2)	79 (1.1)	77 (1.1)	61 (1.3)	54 (1.2)
Latvia	87 (1.0)	81 (1.1)	76 (1.4)	72 (1.3)	61 (1.5)	52 (1.6)	48 (1.6)
Lithuania	87 (0.8)	79 (1.0)	84 (0.9)	74 (1.0)	62 (1.2)	57 (1.2)	43 (1.3)
Norway	92 (0.6)	79 (1.1)	74 (1.1)	76 (1.0)	61 (1.3)	55 (1.0)	48 (1.3)
Poland	89 (1.1)	79 (1.5)	77 (1.3)	74 (1.7)	74 (2.1)	81 (1.1)	70 (1.4)
Portugal	96 (0.5)	95 (0.5)	92 (0.6)	76 (0.9)	82 (0.9)	84 (0.8)	48 (1.1)
Romania	91 (0.8)	89 (0.8)	93 (0.5)	69 (1.2)	83 (1.2)	88 (1.0)	78 (1.2)
Russian Federation	88 (0.8)	87 (0.8)	80 (1.5)	78 (1.2)	45 (1.2)	66 (1.3)	64 (1.8)
Slovak Republic	95 (0.5)	87 (0.8)	88 (0.8)	76 (1.0)	86 (0.9)	79 (1.1)	68 (1.2)
Slovenia	92 (0.6)	80 (1.0)	78 (1.0)	57 (1.0)	80 (1.1)	64 (1.2)	35 (1.2)
Sweden	91 (1.1)	84 (1.4)	73 (1.5)	76 (1.6)	61 (1.2)	42 (2.0)	57 (1.8)
Switzerland	92 (0.8)	83 (0.8)	64 (1.4)	77 (1.1)	74 (0.9)	48 (1.7)	44 (1.8)
United States	91 (0.9)	89 (1.1)	76 (1.2)	75 (1.1)	73 (1.0)	68 (1.3)	73 (1.4)
International Sample	91 (0.1)	84 (0.2)	79 (0.2)	72 (0.2)	68 (0.2)	64 (0.2)	55 (0.3)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses.

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

patriotic and loyal citizen (international mean percentage of 64). In 25 countries the majority of students agree that they have learned to solve community problems (international mean percentage of 68). And in all 28 countries, the majority of students agree that they have learned about protecting the environment, what happens in other countries, cooperating in groups, and understanding people (international mean percentages ranging from 72 to 91).

Summary of Students' Views of Their Learning

Schools are places where students believe that they learn to understand and live in harmony with others. This is a vitally important goal, of course. National and local elections are not everyday events, while getting along with others is faced daily. However, in most countries, the importance of voting receives the lowest rating or next to lowest rating of the seven learning objectives. If schools do not explicitly promote this basic level of electoral participation, then students may lack a basic commitment upon which to build later motivation to participate in the political system. Furthermore, as we have noted elsewhere in this volume, students appear to have few opportunities to learn about the kinds of conflict that lead to different political positions and to the debate and discussion that takes place during election campaigns.

In some respects, these findings match the models of good citizenship endorsed by teachers in the early 1990s in Australia, England, Hong Kong (SAR) and the United States (for previous research in this area, see Panel 4.3 in Chapter 4). Getting along with others, involvement in solving community problems, and participation in environmental protection were more acceptable learning objectives for those teachers than instruction about the formal political system. Another reason that some schools may not teach about voting is concern about raising issues of political partisanship. In Chapter 8 we will examine how this measure of students' views on opportunity to learn in school relates to expected civic engagement (likelihood of voting) within the participating countries. In Chapter 10 we will examine the gap between teachers' and students' reports about the opportunity to learn about voting.

OPEN CLASSROOM CLIMATE FOR DISCUSSION

The effectiveness of student participation in the school as a whole and the opportunities for learning about civic processes provided by the curriculum are certainly important. The extent to which students experience their classrooms as places to investigate issues and explore their opinions and those of their peers has been found to be an even more vital part of civic education (see Panel 7.2; also Torney-Purta, Hahn & Amadeo, 2001). One of the most important findings of the 1971 IEA Civic Education Study was that the students' belief that they were encouraged to speak openly in class was a powerful predictor of their knowledge of and support for democratic values, and their participation in political discussion inside and outside school.

PANEL 7.2 Previous Research on Open Classroom Climate for Discussion

The 1971 IEA Civic Education Study used a four-item measure of 'independence of opinion encouraged in the classroom' to assess the classroom climate for discussion. It was an important predictor of all of the study's outcomes, including civic knowledge.

Hahn's (1998) study in five countries' using an augmented set of the IEA classroom climate items' found that students reporting the most issues-related discussion in a supportive classroom were also those students most likely to report high levels of political interest and trust. The ways these discussions took place differed. In Denmark, where the most open classroom climate was reported, elementary children held class meetings to resolve class problems and to advise the school council. Older students conducted inquiries into public policy issues. In the United States, where the climate was moderately open, students were most likely to hold discussions in the context of current events or public policy debates.

Conover and Searing (2000) found through interviews with students in the United States that those from suburban and rural communities were considerably more likely than those from urban or immigrant areas to report that political issues were discussed in their classrooms.

Ichilov (1991) found that Israeli students who participated in classroom discussion were more politically efficacious than those who did not.

There are many ethnographic studies of schools, but one of the few that has focused on citizenship was conducted in Finland and England (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000). The relationships between the official school, the informal school and the physical school were explored, particularly in terms of the impact on these of depersonalizing student roles, encouraging gendered citizen roles and marginalizing students.

Democratic school practices with respect to the teacher's authority were investigated in the recent seven-country study of adolescents described in Panel 7.1. Students in Australia were most likely to agree that they were encouraged to express their opinions even if they disagreed with those of their teachers. Students in Hungary, Sweden and the United States were in a middle position regarding agreement, while those in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Russia were least likely to agree (Jonsson & Flanagan, 2000).

Development of the Open Classroom Climate Scale in the 1999 IEA Instrument

The scale that we developed included 12 items (many of them from the 1971 study) covering classroom climate for open discussion and stress placed by the school on factual learning. The response scale was 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often.

A confirmatory factor analysis revealed a classroom climate factor with six items about openness for discussion, and also a smaller factor that dealt with the use of lectures and the stress placed on factual learning. This smaller factor did not, however, scale to IEA standards. We therefore retained the classroom climate scale for analysis, leaving the other items for later examination.

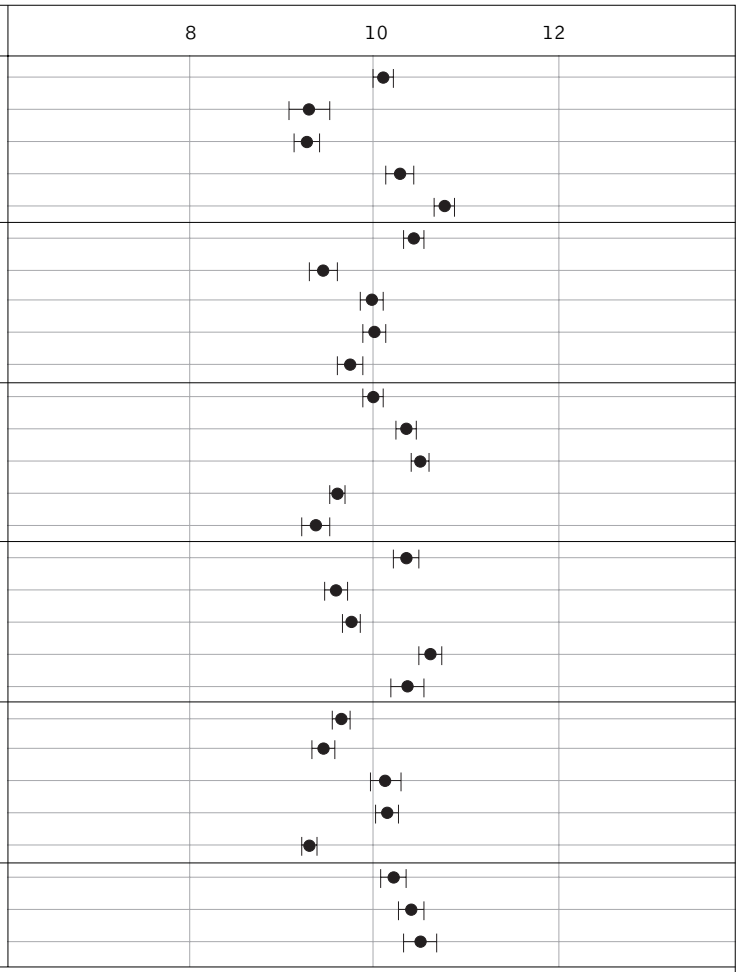
Results for Open Classroom Climate for Discussion

Across all countries, between 27 and 39 percent of the students say that they are 'often' encouraged in their schools to make up their own minds, encouraged to express their opinions, free to express opinions that differ from those of other students and of the teacher, and are likely to hear several sides of an issue. A smaller number of students, 16 percent, say that the teacher 'often' encourages discussion of issues about which people have different opinions (see Figure B.2k in Appendix B for these figures and for the item-by-score map). These findings indicate the extent to which emphasis on agreement rather than on discussion of differences of opinion is the practice in many classrooms.

Figure 7.3 indicates that students report especially open climates for classroom discussion in Colombia, Greece, Norway and the United States. Other countries with means significantly above the international mean are Chile, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. In contrast, fewer students on average perceive an open climate for discussion in Belgium (French),

Figure 7.3 Perceptions of Open Classroom Climate for Discussion

Country	Mean Scale Score	
Australia	10.1	(0.1)
Belgium (French)	▼ 9.3	(0.1)
Bulgaria	▼ 9.3	(0.1)
Chile	▲ 10.3	(0.1)
Colombia	▲ 10.8	(0.1)
Cyprus	▲ 10.4	(0.1)
Czech Republic	▼ 9.5	(0.1)
Denmark	10.0	(0.1)
England	10.0	(0.1)
Estonia	▼ 9.7	(0.1)
Finland	10.0	(0.1)
Germany	▲ 10.4	(0.1)
Greece	▲ 10.5	(0.1)
Hong Kong (SAR)	▼ 9.6	(0.0)
Hungary	▼ 9.4	(0.1)
Italy	▲ 10.4	(0.1)
Latvia	▼ 9.6	(0.1)
Lithuania	▼ 9.8	(0.1)
Norway	▲ 10.6	(0.1)
Poland	▲ 10.4	(0.1)
Portugal	▼ 9.7	(0.1)
Romania	▼ 9.5	(0.1)
Russian Federation	10.1	(0.1)
Slovak Republic	10.2	(0.1)
Slovenia	▼ 9.3	(0.0)
Sweden	▲ 10.2	(0.1)
Switzerland	▲ 10.4	(0.1)
United States	▲ 10.5	(0.1)



( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

▲ Country mean significantly higher than international mean of 10.

▼ Country mean significantly lower than international mean of 10.

= Mean (± 2 SE).

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

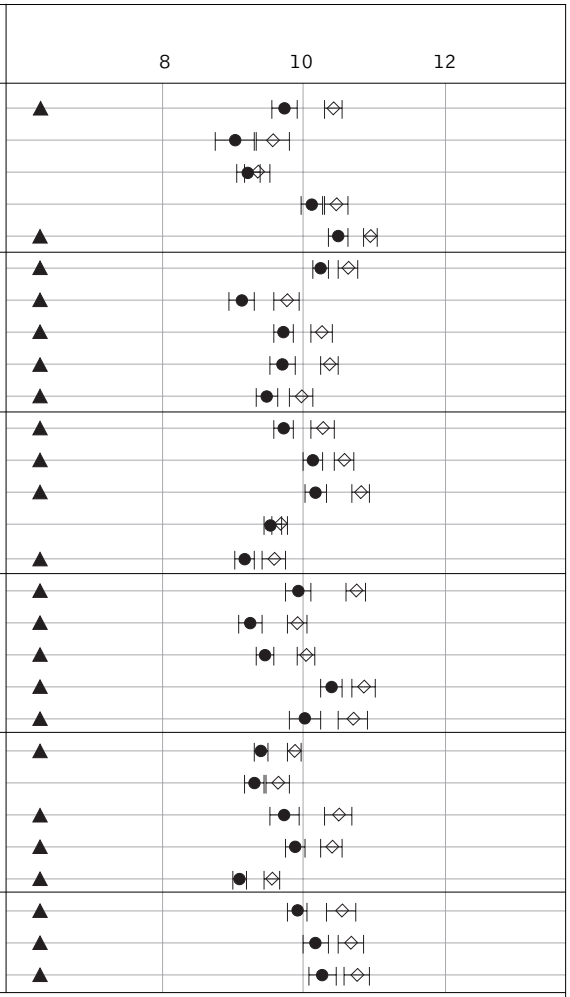
Bulgaria and Slovenia. Other countries whose means are significantly below the international mean are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania. The countries where students express little openness in their classroom are primarily those that have experienced considerable changes in civic education over the last decade. The pressure to include new content about democracy and the challenge of preparing teachers who are new to the subject seem to have resulted in little attention to fostering an open climate for classroom discussion in some countries.

There are also significant gender differences across countries (Figure 7.4). In 23 participating countries, females more than males perceive that their classrooms are open to discussion. The exceptions are Belgium (French), Bulgaria, Chile, Hong Kong (SAR) and Romania.

Open classroom climate is used in Chapter 8 as a within-country predictor of student outcomes.

Figure 7.4 Gender Differences in Perceptions of Open Classroom Climate for Discussion

Country	Mean Score Females		Mean Score Males		
Australia	10.4	(0.1)	9.7	(0.1)	▲
Belgium (French)	9.6	(0.1)	9.0	(0.1)	
Bulgaria	9.4	(0.1)	9.2	(0.1)	
Chile	10.5	(0.1)	10.1	(0.1)	
Colombia	11.0	(0.1)	10.5	(0.1)	▲
Cyprus	10.6	(0.1)	10.3	(0.1)	▲
Czech Republic	9.8	(0.1)	9.1	(0.1)	▲
Denmark	10.3	(0.1)	9.7	(0.1)	▲
England	10.4	(0.1)	9.7	(0.1)	▲
Estonia	10.0	(0.1)	9.5	(0.1)	▲
Finland	10.3	(0.1)	9.7	(0.1)	▲
Germany	10.6	(0.1)	10.1	(0.1)	▲
Greece	10.8	(0.1)	10.2	(0.1)	▲
Hong Kong (SAR)	9.7	(0.1)	9.6	(0.1)	
Hungary	9.6	(0.1)	9.2	(0.1)	▲
Italy	10.8	(0.1)	9.9	(0.1)	▲
Latvia	9.9	(0.1)	9.3	(0.1)	▲
Lithuania	10.1	(0.1)	9.5	(0.1)	▲
Norway	10.9	(0.1)	10.4	(0.1)	▲
Poland	10.7	(0.1)	10.0	(0.1)	▲
Portugal	9.9	(0.1)	9.4	(0.1)	▲
Romania	9.6	(0.1)	9.3	(0.1)	
Russian Federation	10.5	(0.1)	9.7	(0.1)	▲
Slovak Republic	10.4	(0.1)	9.9	(0.1)	▲
Slovenia	9.6	(0.1)	9.1	(0.1)	▲
Sweden	10.5	(0.1)	9.9	(0.1)	▲
Switzerland	10.7	(0.1)	10.2	(0.1)	▲
United States	10.8	(0.1)	10.3	(0.1)	▲



( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

▲ Gender difference statistically significant at .05 level.

= Mean for Males (± 2 SE).

= Mean for Females (± 2 SE).

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

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

The literature on the potential importance of organizational membership in building civil society, 'social capital' and trust or confidence in the government has expanded enormously in the last decade. Special attention should be given, however, to studies that have looked at school-based groups that offer students opportunities for governance or civic experience (see Panel 7.3). Those conducting the Phase 1 case studies saw organizations such as these as particularly important.

Development of the Organizational Participation Items in the 1999 IEA Instrument

Our goal was to develop a list of voluntary organizations inside and outside school to which students might belong. To ensure that the list would be applicable across the range of countries in the study, we had to make some language translations (for example, 'school parliament' for 'school council') and also look for organizations with parallel purposes and types of activities. The National Research Coordinators' input was essential in developing a list of ten organizations for the pilot test, which expanded to 15 organizations in the

PANEL 7.3 Previous Research on Civic-related Participation in Organizations

Research on social capital and organizational membership has been conducted in nearly all the countries of Western Europe as well as in the United States (see, for example, Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993; Van Deth, Maraffi, Newton & Whiteley, 1999; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Nearly all the empirical studies have used a similar measure in which respondents are asked to indicate the organizations to which they belong. In some studies, all organizations have been considered in deriving a score (thus, sports teams and musical clubs have been given the same weight as political parties and student government). In other studies, distinctions have been made either between civic-related and non-civic related organizations or between volunteering time or making a special effort as part of one's membership in an organization and being simply a member.

A number of recent studies in the United States have used longitudinal data to trace the links between participation in activities with a civic component during secondary school and later involvement in the community (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995; Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1997; Hart, Atkins & Ford, 1998). Such a linkage appears to be especially strong for females, according to Damico, Damico and Conway (1998).

Hofer (1999), Marta, Rossi and Boccacin (1999), Oswald (1999), Roker, Player and Coleman (1999) and Yates (1999) presented a picture of organizations through which young people provide service to their communities in Italy, Britain, Germany and the United States. The themes mentioned across countries included the independence of these organizations from political partisanship (and often from connections to political involvement). A sense of civic responsibility and a sense of solidarity are potential results of voluntary involvement. Nearly all the researchers in this area have agreed that giving students a chance to reflect about and discuss their experiences increases the value of the experience itself. Such an opportunity often occurs in the context of connections between school or class work and activities that help others in the community.

final. School heads (principals, directors) were given the list of organizations as well, and were asked whether each was available to students. In order to get a picture of peer group activities outside of organizations, students were asked how often they spent time informally with friends after school and also in the evening.

Results for Participation in Civic-related Organizations

Table 7.2 gives the percentages of 14-year-olds answering that they belong to selected civic-related organizations. Twenty-five percent or more of these young people report membership in school parliaments or councils in the following countries: Australia, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary, Norway, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States (with the largest proportions in Cyprus and Greece, more than 55 percent). Only in Cyprus do 20 percent or more of the respondents report

Table 7.2 Students' Reports on Their Participation in Civic-Related Organizations

Country	Percentage of Students who Report Having Participated in...					
	a student council/student government/ class or school parliament	a youth organization affiliated with a political party or union	an environmental organization	a human rights organization	a group conducting voluntary activities to help the community	a charity collecting money for a social cause
Australia	34 (1.4)	4 (0.4)	19 (1.0)	4 (0.6)	33 (1.3)	47 (1.4)
Belgium (French)	22 (1.5)	6 (0.7)	15 (1.3)	8 (1.0)	17 (1.0)	26 (1.5)
Bulgaria	14 (1.0)	4 (0.6)	9 (0.9)	9 (0.8)	8 (0.8)	12 (1.0)
Chile	19 (1.0)	4 (0.4)	21 (1.1)	5 (0.5)	33 (1.4)	24 (1.0)
Colombia	24 (1.4)	4 (0.5)	40 (1.6)	13 (1.3)	34 (1.1)	26 (1.4)
Cyprus	57 (1.1)	25 (1.0)	20 (0.9)	22 (1.2)	22 (0.9)	48 (1.3)
Czech Republic	13 (0.9)	1 (0.2)	13 (1.3)	2 (0.3)	22 (1.0)	18 (1.4)
Denmark	44 (1.3)	4 (0.4)	6 (0.6)	5 (0.5)	32 (1.0)	63 (1.2)
England	19 (0.9)	6 (0.5)	13 (0.8)	5 (0.6)	25 (1.0)	55 (1.4)
Estonia	21 (1.2)	3 (0.4)	8 (0.7)	4 (0.4)	8 (0.6)	10 (0.9)
Finland	22 (1.2)	2 (0.3)	6 (0.7)	2 (0.4)	6 (0.6)	24 (1.0)
Germany	13 (0.8)	5 (0.5)	10 (0.9)	2 (0.3)	16 (0.9)	23 (1.2)
Greece	59 (1.0)	9 (0.6)	32 (1.2)	16 (0.7)	29 (1.0)	53 (1.1)
Hong Kong (SAR)	45 (1.1)	5 (0.5)	12 (0.7)	6 (0.4)	34 (1.1)	37 (1.2)
Hungary	32 (1.5)	4 (0.4)	28 (1.4)	3 (0.4)	23 (1.0)	18 (1.1)
Italy	16 (0.7)	3 (0.3)	7 (0.6)	3 (0.3)	8 (0.6)	6 (0.5)
Latvia	18 (1.0)	2 (0.6)	7 (1.0)	5 (0.9)	12 (1.0)	9 (0.9)
Lithuania	23 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	16 (1.4)	4 (0.4)	7 (0.5)	14 (1.0)
Norway	47 (1.2)	6 (0.5)	16 (0.9)	6 (0.5)	18 (0.9)	84 (0.8)
Poland	19 (0.9)	1 (0.3)	14 (1.6)	3 (0.5)	5 (0.6)	9 (0.8)
Portugal	25 (1.1)	2 (0.3)	25 (1.1)	10 (1.0)	9 (0.7)	20 (1.0)
Romania	37 (2.2)	2 (0.3)	13 (0.9)	8 (0.8)	10 (1.0)	13 (0.9)
Russian Federation	43 (1.9)	2 (0.4)	12 (1.6)	4 (0.8)	11 (1.5)	7 (1.1)
Slovak Republic	3 (0.4)	1 (0.2)	5 (0.7)	1 (0.2)	6 (0.7)	5 (0.9)
Slovenia	18 (0.9)	1 (0.2)	15 (0.8)	4 (0.5)	11 (0.8)	33 (1.5)
Sweden	49 (1.8)	7 (0.6)	15 (1.2)	5 (0.7)	8 (1.0)	25 (1.7)
Switzerland	8 (0.7)	4 (0.5)	10 (0.8)	3 (0.3)	12 (0.7)	27 (1.2)
United States	33 (1.5)	10 (0.9)	24 (1.2)	6 (0.6)	50 (1.4)	40 (1.5)
International Sample	28 (0.2)	5 (0.1)	15 (0.2)	6 (0.1)	18 (0.2)	28 (0.2)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Percentages based on valid responses.

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

belonging to a youth organization affiliated with a political party or union or to a human rights organization. Twenty-five percent or more of the students report belonging to an environmental organization in Colombia, Greece, Hungary and Portugal. Twenty-five percent or more of the students report belonging to a group conducting voluntary activities in the community in Australia, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, England, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR) and the United States (with the largest proportion in the United States, 50 percent). The most frequent organizational membership relates to charities that collect money for a social cause. This form of membership involves 25 percent or more of students in about half of the countries. However, there are also countries where all types of organizational participation are low: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Slovak Republic.

We will explore the relation of school council/parliament membership to civic knowledge and engagement in Chapter 8.

SUMMARY

The majority of students have a moderately positive sense of the effectiveness of students working together to enhance the school and solve problems that may arise there. In their classrooms, many of these young people have an opportunity to participate in the discussion of issues and to feel that their opinions are respected. These discussions are not very frequent, however, especially in some countries that have recently experienced changes in civic education, resulting in teachers new to the subject content of the relevant courses. There seems to be an untapped potential for civic education to provide students with opportunities for meaningful engagement in their schools and classrooms.

In previous chapters of this report, we have noted that young people sometimes seem uncomfortable with disagreements about opinions and have generally poor impressions of organizations such as political parties that propose conflicting ideologies and policy positions. On the one hand, schools must avoid political partisanship, but on the other, before they become voters, students need to acquire a sense of how and why people disagree about issues. Achievement of this objective presents a challenge in some countries.

This chapter has also noted that there is a rich array of experiences in schools and organizations that can be used as predictors of civic knowledge and engagement. We explore this matter further in Chapter 8.