

# **Learning Citizenship through Social Participation Outside and Inside School: An international, Multilevel Study of Young People's Learning of Citizenship**

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## **Abstract**

In this article we revisit and re-analyse data from the 1999 IEA CIVED transnational study to examine the factors associated with the ways in which young people learn positive attitudes towards participation in, and knowledge and skills about democracy. Less formal learning, wherever it takes place, has recently been conceptualised as a process of social participation, and we explore its effects using Lave and Wenger's and Wenger's understanding of learning through communities of practice. This is then contrasted with the effect of the volume of civic education. The analysis shows that learning through social participation, both inside and outside school, and in particular through meaning-making activities shows a strong positive relationship with citizenship knowledge, skills and dispositions across a wide range of countries. Moreover, it demonstrates the usefulness of situated learning theory in the field of civic learning, and its applicability in large-scale, quantitative studies.

## **Introduction**

With increasing concern about levels of social cohesion and the democratic deficit in Europe, finding ways to increase the levels of active citizenship of young people, and in particular those who had fewer opportunities in life, has become essential. Education has been identified time and again within quantitative research (Lipset, 1959; Putnam, 2000, Hoskins 2008a) and political theory (Barber 2003; Crick and Porter 1978; Gutmann and Thompson 2004) to be the key to developing active citizens but the question of exactly what type of learning plays this pivotal role remains inadequately explored. Since Almond and Verba's (1963) seminal and comparative study, there have been various attempts to shed some light on this question, most notably through the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) International Civic Education Study (CIVED) 1999. The focus of that research, conducted across 28 countries, was to provide explanations about how school strategies for citizenship education develop the learning of civic knowledge and skills (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). However, there has been limited research on the ways in which young people learn both knowledge and skills, as well as participatory attitudes, beyond formal learning within the school context. In this article we will focus on these issues by performing multilevel analysis on the CIVED data, and using explanatory variables from both inside and outside the school environment.

In order to move away from the bounded notion of discrete categories of formal and non-formal learning, often connected with underlying beliefs about the superiority of one versus the other (Colley et al., 2003), our concern is to investigate aspects of learning that cut across the different learning environments of the school, the home and the neighbourhood. As Colley et al. (2003) emphasise, learning in both formal and less

formal environments needs to be understood equally through the lens of participatory practice. This study is therefore underpinned by a theoretical approach to learning as social participation in different communities of practice, be it in the school, home, or the neighbourhood (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). We begin, then, by considering key aspects of this theoretical approach.

### **Communities of practice**

The concept of communities of practice is a contested and elusive concept (Jewson 2007). Wenger defines a community of practice as a specific type of community that has three shared characteristics: 'mutual engagement', 'joint enterprise' and 'shared repertoire' (1998 p.72-85). In addition, community of practice is defined by Wenger, as an environment where our 'enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognizable as competence' (Wenger 1998 p5.). One of the complexities of this concept is that communities of practice refers to both a social grouping and at the same time to the practice of the individual members, who have a sense of identity and of belonging to that group (Jewson 2007). What is particular to the concept of communities of practice is that the members participate in the process of negotiation of meaning and actions and have a common language for everyday 'routines' and 'ways of doing things' (Jewson 2007 p. 70-71). A person may belong at any one time to different communities of practice, which may even have contradictory enterprises and repertoires.

### **Learning as social participation**

The original and seminal text in the communities of practice field was the book by Lave and Wenger (1991), who noted through anthropological explorations how learning was socially situated. They developed an analytic approach to learning where learning is understood to happen through social participation in different communities of practice. From this perspective, learning develops through relationships, interactions and conflicts that occur in the process of reproducing and adapting communities. The community forms the context in which meaning is actively negotiated between different actors. Meaning is the product of past interactions, is temporal in nature and develops both through participation (in common activities) and reification (visible codification and recognition of learning achievements). Thus the emphasis of this model is on social participation in the communities and the collaborative development of meaning as opposed to instruction and the transference of knowledge via cognitive acquisition. Integral to this approach is a view that the individual is an engaged agent in the learning process, with a growing sense of membership and belonging. The learner is therefore involved in constructing knowledge and skills, and this entails the construction or reconstruction of his/her identity in the process. Wenger (1998) later developed the communities of practice model further through developing a social theory of learning. Within the social theory of learning he creates a typology of learning that includes four dimensions: meaning making = learning as experience; practice = learning as doing; community = learning as belonging; and identity = learning as becoming.

Learning, within the model of communities of practice, is thus considered to be a part of normal everyday social activity. From a similar social perspective on learning, Boud and Miller (1996) have emphasized that learning often takes place when individuals do not

realise that they are learning and do not consider themselves to be learners. Equally, they could be in a learner relationship with a co-learner who may not recognise their relationship as a learning relationship, or their role as a teacher. An example of this is that 'community development activities can be conceptualised as the promotion of learning, even though participants in such activities may not recognise themselves as learners' (Boud and Miller, 1996, p.8.)

The Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory emphasizes the importance of role models in learning, as they embody the form of practice combining the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for successful performance. Learning is regulated through the organisation of communities by role models or 'masters', who decide on the level and speed of access to information, position within the community and degree of transparency in this process. 'Masters' of communities hold positions of power, and act as gatekeepers by controlling and describing the process of progress to high performance and acceptance into full membership of the community (see Fuller et al., 2005; and Jewson et al., 2007, for more detail).

Lave and Wenger's original research focused largely on traditional work-based apprenticeship contexts. It is equally possible, though, to apply the concept as an analytic lens to examine the ways in which young people in school settings engage in learning as social participation, practice and collaborative construction of meaning, and their work has more recently been applied to formal learning settings and classrooms (Hodkinson et al. 2007). In the school context, teachers tend to be viewed as gatekeepers to subject knowledge, and students as having only partial access to this. However, if the school and the classroom itself are considered as a community of practice, the main focus is not the acquisition of subject knowledge, but the social practices of participation of both teachers and students in that broader learning environment. Using this conceptual basis, it could be said that the school, the family, the circle of friends and local communities form the prime communities within which students live, act and learn different identities including the identity of an active citizen. These differ somewhat from Lave and Wenger's original concept, since they are not as specifically orientated as occupational communities sharing a common goal of production. Hughes et al. (2007: 172) argue, nevertheless, that a more contemporary concept of communities of practice would need to embrace their 'interlinked, overlapping and nested' nature, and that contemporary society is comprised of 'constellations' of multiple and sometimes contradictory learning communities. In this article, therefore, we conceive the social groupings of family, school and neighbourhood to be multiple and interlinked communities, within which individuals can develop their identities of the 'active citizen' and which at times, may conflict with the identity of the 'good student'.

In addition, membership of wider social groupings that was not examined in the original model of analysis of communities of practice could play a role in the learning. Hughes et al. (2007) have noted that social categories such as age, gender, ethnicity and class help to shape the experience of different communities, in particular the power relations within them. They can serve to enhance or obstruct learning. Thus within the analysis, it is necessary also to take into account membership of social groups and inequalities between

them. We will incorporate these additional dimensions into a model of communities of practice and learning as ‘active social participation’. We first review the existing knowledge about the learning of active citizenship.

## **Learning active citizenship**

### **Active Citizenship**

Active Citizenship is also a contested concept. Some definitions contain a political element, for example, describing active citizenship as an eclectic collection of participatory activities including political participation (de Weerd et al. 2005) in a deliberative manner (Ivančić et al. 2003) and a political literacy enabling individuals to effect political change (Crick 2003). Other definitions have placed greater weight on community and voluntary action (Irish Government Taskforce 2007; de Weerd et al. 2005). Scholars using concepts similar to active citizenship such as social capital have tended to focus more on the volunteering, community participation and actions that support community cohesion (e.g. Putnam 2000). Whilst the researchers who have used the concept of political participation, which is also close to active citizenship, have focused more on traditional forms of politics in terms of voting and party membership (Lipset 1959). Researchers working with policy at a European level (Hoskins and Mascherini 2009) and at the national level in England (Crick 1998) have combined the different facets of community and political participation into the concept of active citizenship. At a European level active citizenship has been defined as, ‘Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy’ (Hoskins 2006), thus encompassing a broad spectrum of qualities including both participatory activities and specific civic values. Likewise, in England education for active citizenship has been understood as the learning of ‘social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy’ (Crick 2003 2.12 p.13).

In this article we focus on two aspects of the competences needed for active citizenship: knowledge and skills, and positive attitudes towards participation. The positive attitudes towards participation relate to participation in the community, in school and in politics and tap both traditional (e.g. voting) and non-traditional forms of participation. Knowledge and skills have been argued to be the key qualities for engaged and beneficial forms of citizenship (Glaston 2001). They further enable us to examine both the quality and the quantity of future participation, which we believe is essential for a proper assessment of civic engagement. Knowledge- and skills-based participation will enhance the probability of effective participation (Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995). Moreover, a lack of knowledge has been shown to affect the quality of the political choices made: uninformed citizens tend to base their decisions on the personal and social characteristics of political leaders rather than on the content of party programs (Popkin and Dimock 1999). Knowledge has also been associated with wider horizons and a stronger engagement with societal issues (Galston 2001). For these reasons we focus on the two aforementioned qualities as our outcomes of interest.

## **Learning citizenship**

The literature in the field of the learning for active citizenship suggests that social participation (i.e. meaning making and practice) is indeed associated with the learning of civic knowledge, skills and attitudes. An earlier study using the CIVED data showed that an open climate for classroom discussion on social and political issues was positively related with civic knowledge and intention to vote (Torney-Purta 2002). In half of the European countries in the CIVED study, school parliaments were a significant factor in the learning of civic knowledge (Torney-Purta 2002). In a separate study, Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that, in the US, all experiences that focus directly on civics and political issues had an impact upon commitment to community participation. In particular, they highlighted that the most significant results were related to learning through volunteering (service learning). They also noted that extra curricular activities (but not sport), exposure to civic role models and open debates were predictors of the intention to participate in the community. A positive impact of volunteering on participation levels in later life was also found in other US studies (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995; Campbell, 2006).

The most up-to-date research on citizenship education in England is from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) (2001-2010) which has identified certain social aspects of the school that inform learning. In particular it highlighted the importance of a democratic ethos of schools for enhancing an individual's self-efficacy and willingness to participate (Benton 2008). Until now the CELS researchers could not find a positive association of participatory intentions with citizenship education per se (whether cross curricular or within specific individual lessons) but they did find positive relationships between reading or watching the news and out of school participation on the one hand and the intentions to participate in civic activities on the other. They further found active teaching methods in the classroom to be much appreciated by the students and to have positive learning effects, yet observed at the same time that students sometimes did not explicitly grasp the learning objectives of these methods. In addition, they pointed to learning that is happening outside the classroom in schools and outside the school with the example of collecting money for charities (Keatings et al. 2009). However, details of how and why learning is taking place within voluntary activities were not explored.

As well as the school, the family has also often been cited as the source for the learning of active citizenship. From early childhood onwards, political socialisation, including identification and transmission of values, has been considered an important element in the development of active citizenship. It has been found to be a strong predictor of political interest, political participation and community participation, in particular through discussions with parents on these topics (Lauglo and Oia 2008, Kahne and Sporte 2008, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Moreover, levels of parental political participation and parental educational attainment were found by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) to be important drivers of young people's learning of active citizenship.

Given these findings, it is not surprising that the concept of communities of practice was influential in developing the large scale international IEA CIVED 1999 study on citizenship (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001 p. 21). Nevertheless, operationalising it into a large quantitative study is not straightforward, as it is based on highly qualitative,

anthropological research on apprenticeships (Felstead et al. 2007). To the best of our knowledge there has only been one attempt to test this theory from the CIVED study and this was in a recent conference paper that studied the learning of self-efficacy in Nordic countries. Barber et al (2007) explored three distinct types of communities; the discourse community, which involved cognitive deliberation in the classroom; the affective community, which examined trust and belonging; and the participatory community, where the young people put their knowledge into practice. They found mixed results and different patterns across three Nordic countries. Their conclusions were that variables representing the discourse and participatory communities had the strongest associations with self-efficacy. However, as yet, an in-depth analysis of the usefulness of this theory as a lens for explaining the learning of active citizenship has yet to be completed. Here, then, we examine data from the CIVED study on learning reflecting social participation in communities of practice. We focus in particular on those aspects of learning that refer to collaborative meaning-making and practice, and examine their effect on citizenship outcomes.

### **Data Source**

In this paper, we use data from the IEA CIVED study (the survey among a sample of 14 year-olds conducted in 1999). The CIVED study aimed to “understand how young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens” (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). It collected information on 14 year-olds in schools in 28 different countries on their knowledge and skills and their attitudes and perceptions towards democracy. The study sampled students randomly using a two-stage stratified cluster design. In the first stage schools were selected using a probability proportional to size strategy. In the second stage one intact classroom per school from the target grade was selected. Using this design the study surveyed approximately 3000 students in 150 schools (i.e. classrooms) in each country. The student response rate of the five countries we selected for the current study (see below) was 89 percent and higher. The schools’ participation rate after replacement ranged between 79 percent (England) and 96 percent (Italy) (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001, pp 34, 35). The random sampling in combination with the very high response rates assured us that the samples were representative and met the conditions for the type of statistical analysis discussed below.

The CIVED study focused on three domains;

1. Democracy/citizenship,
2. National identity/international relations
3. Social cohesion and identity.

Within the three domains information was gathered on knowledge of the content, skills in interpretation and concepts, attitudes and actions. Knowledge of the content and skills in interpretation were surveyed using items with one correct answer. Concepts, attitudes and actions were studied through items using Likert-type scales. The data on attitudes and actions, thus, only portrays self-reported measures and does not look at actual behaviour. This means that certain aspects of civic competence cannot be fully captured by the measures derived from CIVED (see Hoskins et al. 2008b). It is also important to note that the survey was carried out in 1999. The data is thus relatively old. However, we do not

consider this to be a major problem because the aim of this article is to explore the communities of practice approach as a way of understanding the learning of active citizenship more generally, i.e. not specifically in 2010 or any other distinct point in time. This does not mean that we discount the possibility of variation across time and space in how youngsters learn active citizenship. In fact we will explore the variation between countries in this article (see below).

Neither do we claim that communities for learning cannot vary over time and place. For example, in Poland prior to the fall of communism there was a tradition of learning active citizenship outside school through the church and resistance movements (Buk-Berge 2006) whereas since the arrival of democracy a civic education curriculum has been developed in schools which is orientated towards everyday life in a democracy, in particular focusing on civil society and the community (Slomczynski and Shabad 1998). Thus school could well have become more important as a community of learning in post-communist countries. However, from the community of practice perspective what remains important is the role of social relationships, of whatever nature, as a source of learning within these communities.

Despite its limitations, CIVED is the only existing international data source collected from nationally-representative samples that measures learning through forms of social participation, tests young people's knowledge and skills in the field of democracy and asks questions on attitudes towards participation. As such, it offers a unique opportunity to investigate the learning of active citizenship through the lens of the theory of communities of practice.

### **Selection of countries**

We aim to explore the extent to which learning active citizenship through social participation is context-dependent: is this learning strategy effective across a wide range of countries with disparate cultures and histories or is it conducive to active citizenship in only a handful of countries? To assess this question, we focus on five countries representing regions with distinct social, political and educational traditions within the European Union:

- Finland: the Nordic countries
- England: the English-speaking countries
- Germany: Continental Western Europe
- Italy: Southern Europe
- Poland: Eastern Europe

Numerous authors have highlighted the special and durable character of these regional traditions (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990, Brubaker 1992; Hutton 1995; Green, Preston and Janmaat 2006; Green, Janmaat and Han 2009). The Nordic states have been portrayed as egalitarian societies with a strong tradition of social democracy, universalistic and well-resourced welfare arrangements and comprehensive school systems. By contrast, the English-speaking countries have often been described as classic examples of liberal states characterized by relatively large inequalities, a heavy reliance on the market, a less-well resourced public sector and a diverse offer of both public and private schools. Christian

democracy, school systems marked by early selection, and welfare systems aimed at retaining occupational status differences and the traditional breadwinner model have been seen as the typical features of the German-speaking countries of Continental Western Europe. Centralized states with education systems characterised by uniform curricula and encyclopaedism have been said to be emblematic of Southern Europe. Finally, the transition countries, although they have successfully adopted liberal democracy, have been characterised as societies with exceptionally low levels of civic engagement due to decades of communist rule (Schoepflin 2000; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1997). It has been argued that each of these traditions constitutes a ‘regime’ – i.e. a relatively stable and unique configuration of institutional and cultural conditions that shapes attitudes and limits a country’s policy options (Esping Andersen 1990; Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009).

We selected England and Germany as they can be seen as the typical examples of a liberal Anglo-Saxon and a conservative continental tradition, respectively. Finland rather than Sweden was selected as representing the Nordic countries because of the quality of its national sample (the sample of Sweden has many missing values). Finland moreover displays all the properties associated with Nordic states. Italy was chosen to represent Southern Europe as it was the only sizeable country from this region that participated in the CIVED study. Finally, we opted for Poland to exemplify the transition countries because it is the largest post-communist state currently in the EU.

These distinct regional traditions, as represented by the five countries, could well impact on the ways in which youngsters learn active citizenship. It might, for instance, be hypothesized that learning through social participation is more important than traditional whole-classroom teaching styles in countries marked by liberalism, individualism and egalitarianism. On the other hand, formal and conventional ways of teaching may be more effective for the promotion of active citizenship in countries with uniform curricula and a marked sensitivity for social hierarchies.

## **Variables**

### **Dependent Variables**

This article explores the effects of variables relating to communities of practice on two aspects of civic competence: knowledge and skills for democracy, and attitudes towards participation.

In order to measure these qualities we have used two dimensions from the Civic Competence Composite Indicator (CCCI) developed by Hoskins et al. (2008b): cognition about democratic institutions and participatory attitudes. These dimensions were built combining Item Response Theory (IRT) scales<sup>i</sup> derived from the IEA, the Civic Education Data and Researcher Services (CEDARS) at the University of Maryland and from the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The dimensions have the advantage of summarising complex phenomena in a single number, making its exploration easier.



The *cognition about democratic institutions* dimension was formed as the linear combination of three scales: knowledge of content, skills in interpretation of material with civic or political content and attitudes towards democracy. *Knowledge of content* and *skills in interpretation* are IRT scales developed by the IEA based on the answers to the civic knowledge and skills test (see Schulz and Sibberns, 2004). The scale *attitudes towards democracy*, on the other hand, was expected to tap attitudes towards democracy and was nonetheless found to be closely related to the knowledge and skills items (see Hoskins et al 2008b). It was developed by Hoskins et al. (2008b) using IRT modeling and comprised items asking students to express their views on how good or bad for democracy issues such as government control of the media are. Reliability analysis on the three scales loading on the *cognition about democratic institutions* component produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.779, indicating that this component is sufficiently coherent.

The participatory attitudes dimension, is formed as the linear combination of 5 IRT scales: Internal political efficacy, expectation of community participation, expected participation in political activities, self-confident participation in schools, and expectations associated with voting. *Participatory attitudes* includes items mainly related to attitudes towards future participation in different contexts: community, politics or school, as well as interests in participating in political discussion in a school context. *Participatory attitudes* has a satisfactory internal consistency in view of the number of scales that it comprised (the Cronback alpha<sup>ii</sup> is 0.652).

### **Table 1 about here**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of these outcomes<sup>iii</sup>. The five countries appear to differ slightly more on mean levels of participatory attitudes than on mean levels of cognition about democratic institutions. Poland and Italy clearly show higher levels of participatory attitudes than the other three countries. This is surprising as other studies relying on surveys among adults have found civic participation levels to be relatively low in the first-named countries (Hoskins et al 2009 (using European Social Survey data); Almond and Verba 1963). The contrasting findings suggest that there are marked cross-generational differences in these countries. It can further be seen that cognition levels are higher in Finland, Poland and Italy than in England and Germany. The relatively high score of Finland and low score of Germany are in agreement with the results of the OECD PISA studies on literacy and numeracy.

### **Explanatory variables**

In this article we are interested in exploring the associations of specific aspects of communities of practice (CoP) with civic knowledge and participatory attitudes. In addition, we have included an alternative explanatory variable in our model: the number of hours of civics and social science lessons per week. This variable can be said to compete with the CoP perspective on learning as it represents a quantitative approach to understanding learning: it focuses on the amount of time devoted to citizenship related topics. In contrast, the CoP perspective draws attention to the quality of learning as it emphasises the *manner* or *process* in which students develop civic competences. Niemi and Junn (1998, p. 138) found that the time devoted to civics (measured as 0, 1 or 2 hours

per week) positively impacted on twelfth graders' knowledge of four areas of American government, controlling for many other factors. Thus there is some evidence in support of the more traditional quantity-based approach to understanding the learning of citizenship competences.

In view of the above we decided to focus on three explanatory variables of interest: (1) meaning making, (2) practice and (3) hours of citizenship related instruction. The first two represent the CoP perspective; the last one reflects a more conventional approach. All variables are presented in table 2.

### **Table 2 about here**

It is always difficult to translate theoretical constructs into quantitative categories, especially if these constructs have been developed within qualitative research, as is the case with the CoP concept. As proxies for meaning-making we used CIVED variables that focus on the process of situated learning in relationships where the learner is actively engaging. The process of learning here occurs through the dialogue, reflection and co-construction of knowledge and attitudes. The variables selected include: talking about politics and social affairs with parents, peers and teachers; open classroom climate; and reading newspapers and listening to radio and television news. The practice variables are those that directly demonstrate social participation in a more formally organised socio-political context. They include items asking about participation in student councils (although we note the caveat that only a comparatively small number of students are able to participate in this activity), volunteering to help the community, collecting money for a social cause, participation in an organisation sponsored by a religious group, and participation in an art, music or drama organisation. It is necessary to note that it is not possible to state the causal direction between the learning of knowledge and skills and participatory attitudes and the participation itself. However, the communities of practice approach would suggest that the learning has occurred through the process of becoming an identity within a community. Therefore, from this perspective, the student who gains the identity of an elected member of a student council has taken part in a journey from starting out as a member of the class to ending up in the centre of the participatory community of the school. It can be argued that these individuals have been in the process of developing this identity before the moment of the election, thus having already developed some positive attitudes towards to participation. However, according to the communities of practice approach, this moment of social confirmation from peers through the election, will have been an important part of the process of confirming this identity and will have helped to reinforce the positive attitudes towards participation. If the community of practice model is effective we would then expect a similar process to occur for the other practice variables mentioned above.

Three of the meaning-making variables are scales, that is to say, compounds of individual items from the CIVED questionnaire. The classroom climate scale was created by the IEA and is comprised of six items that asked the students about whether they feel encouraged to discuss political and social issues openly in the class and feel able to give their opinion. In addition, they were asked whether their opinions would be respected when they disagreed with the teacher or other students on these matters. A high score on

this scale reflects an open classroom climate for discussion. A low score on this scale suggests a traditional style of teaching where students are expected to listen and not to contribute. This scale was created by the IEA and the overall Cronbach's Alpha for this scale is 0.77: for England, it was .80; for Germany, .78; for Finland, .80; for Italy, .79; and for Poland, .82 which demonstrates the cross country reliability of this scale.

The next meaning-making scale is based on items related to engagement with news in different media. The Media scale was comprised of four items which asked the respondent about frequency of reading newspapers, about what was happening in their own country and in other countries, and frequency of listening to TV and radio news. The Cronbach's Alphas for this scale were overall 0.68: for England it was .75; for Germany .67; for Finland .65; for Italy .62; and for Poland .71 which again demonstrates the cross country reliability of these scales.

The items for talking about politics were split into two scales based on the results of a factor analysis. The four items on talking with people of your own age and parents about national and international politics were developed into one scale with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82 for countries, .845 for England, .804 for Germany, .868 for Finland, .791 for Italy and .829 for Poland. The two items on talking with teachers on national and international politics were developed into a second scale with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 for all countries. .83 for England; .87 for Germany; .89 for Finland; .81 for Italy and .87 for Poland which indicates very high cross country reliability for these scales. The remaining variables were individual items.

### **Table 3 should go here**

Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for the social participation variables. With regard to the meaning making variables, it can be seen that the mean of talking about politics with peers, parents and teachers is considerably lower in England and Finland<sup>iv</sup>. It would thus seem that politics does not play as important a role in everyday discussions in these two countries by comparison to the other countries. England and Finland also have somewhat lower levels of students reporting an open climate for classroom discussion. The pattern on the practice variables is rather different. While England shows relatively high participation levels, Italy and Poland clearly lag behind the other countries. Finland and Germany assume middling positions. This geographic pattern is broadly in line with the notion that civic society is stronger in Western Europe than in Southern and Eastern Europe. As Almond and Verba (1963) have observed a similar cross-national pattern more than 30 years ago, the propensity to participate in all kinds of associations could well represent an enduring aspect of national (or regional) culture.

### **Table 4 should go about here**

As noted before, we also examine the effect of the sheer volume of citizenship related instruction, as measured by the number of hours of history, social science and civics lessons. It must be noted that in countries with centralized planned curricula, there may be little variation in the number of hours of history and civics lessons. If the number of

hours is indeed practically constant across schools, history and civics education cannot be considered *variables* and will thus not be able to influence outcomes. Table 4 shows the variation in hours for the countries under consideration. The degree of variation appears to differ significantly across countries. While all schools practically teach the same number of hours of history and civics in Poland and Finland, schools show much more differentiation in Italy, Germany and (above all) England. Consequently, if the quantity of citizenship related instruction makes a difference for participatory attitudes or cognition, we would expect this effect to be visible in the last-named countries. In England this effect should be particularly pronounced given the large variation between schools in the number of hours of history and social science.

### **The control variables**

In our models, we control for social categories that Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) had not explored in their original formulation of the concept of communities of practice: gender, ethnicity and class. Ethnicity is measured through language spoken at home and social background is measured through the number of books at home. We also included two variables at the classroom level (social status and ethnic composition) as previous research has highlighted the importance of these contextual conditions for performance and attitudes outcomes. The full list of control variables is provided below. Variables marked with an asterisk are class-level variables.

#### Control variables

- Gender (Girl 1, Boy 0)
- Expected education (how many years of further education do you expect to complete. 7 possible responses: 0 years, 1 or 2 years...10 years & More than 10 years)
- Ethnicity (language of test spoken at home. 3 possible responses: Never, Sometimes & Always/almost always)
- Social background (number of books at home. 6 possible responses: None, 1-10, 11-50, 51-100, 101-200 & More than 200)
- Classroom social status (class mean books at home) \*
- Classroom ethnicity (class mean of language spoken at home) \*

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for these variables. The countries do not show large differences on these variables, with the exception of expected education. It can be seen that the average number of expected years of further education is substantially higher in Poland and Italy than in Germany and England. As differences in the age of compulsory education in these countries can not explain these results (Poland and Germany 18 and Italy and England 16), this suggests that people attach more value and status to formal education in the first-named countries.

### **Table 5 about here**

## **Method**

In order to explore the effects of the selected factors on the specific components of civic competence, we conducted multilevel analysis (MLA) using the mixed methods option in SPSS. MLA is necessary because of the nested structure of the data. A structure of this kind, with students being nested in classes, classes in schools, and schools in countries, precludes the use of more conventional multiple regression techniques, since these require that observations are independent. Using such techniques to analyze nested data would result in an underestimation of the standard errors of the contextual variables and therefore an overestimation of the effects of these variables (Hooghe et al. 2007; Snijders and Bosker 1999).<sup>v</sup> We used only two levels: classroom and student. The reason for this is the one classroom per school sample mentioned above. We conducted this two level model for each of the five states. The analyses performed are random intercept models, meaning that we assume the coefficients of the individual level variables to be constant across classes within a country. Since we perform the analyses for each country separately, these coefficients can vary across countries.

Following the guidelines for MLA, we first defined the empty model to assess the distribution of the variance in the outcome measures across the two levels of analysis.<sup>vi</sup> We then defined a full model (Model 1) that encompasses all the variables that we were interested in as explanatory variables.

Following this we deleted the two hours of instruction variables, obtaining a new model (Model 2) containing only the CoP variables and control variables. This model provides a more accurate picture of the effect of the CoP variables as removing the hours of instruction variables reduces considerably the amount of the missing values (see Table 5). Thus Model 2 is the focus for our results<sup>vii</sup>.

We further note that we standardized the explanatory variables before including them in the models. This has the advantage of making the estimates of their effects comparable. The standardization process was based upon the grand mean and centered across the entire sample of the database (i.e. all 28 countries). Variables were standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

## **Results: Cognition about democratic institutions**

The empty model for cognition shows that the proportion of the variance located at the class level is considerably above the 5% threshold in all five countries, justifying the inclusion of class-level variables in the models and thus the use of MLA (see note 5). We also see that this proportion varies considerably across the five countries (see Table 6). For Germany 40% of the variance is found at the class level, while in Finland it is only 8%. Consequently, class level factors, both observed and unobserved, are much more important in shaping cognition in some countries than others. This finding may well be rooted in differences in education systems between the three countries. Germany's early selection system produces much greater cross-class and -school differentiation in social composition and academic performance than the full comprehensive system of Finland

does (Green et al. 2006), and it is therefore understandable that the between-class variation is relatively large in the former.

The table further shows that the inclusion of all explanatory variables (i.e. Model 1) reduces the amount of unexplained variance at the class level considerably across the five states (in Germany, for instance, nearly 82% of the between-class variance is explained by the variables included in the model). The explanatory variables are less successful in diminishing this variance at the individual level. While they still explain 30% of the variance in Finland, for instance, they account for a mere 7.7% of the individual-level variance in Italy. The other countries fall between these two extremes. Overall, these proportions of explained variance are quite similar to those of other studies focusing on knowledge as outcome of interest (e.g. Langton and Jennings 1968; Niemi and Junn 1998).

We have to note here that the numbers of observations in the empty model and in the full model are considerably different. This is due to the high number of missing values produced by the inclusion of all explanatory variables. In Finland for instance, the sample was reduced from 2722 respondents to 964 (i.e. 35.4% of the original sample). Likewise in Germany the full model retained only 40% of the observations of the empty model.

However, as noted above, removing the two hours of instruction variables from the analysis (Model 2) significantly enhances the number of observations. As the last row of the table shows, the Model 2 analyses have proportions of valid cases ranging between 65% (Germany) and 82.2% (England) of the N of the original samples. Thus these analyses are at least based on selections of two-thirds or more of the original samples. Moreover, the percentages of explained variance of Model 2 do not differ much from those of Model 1, indicating that missing values have not produced a large bias. Germany forms an exception to this pattern but this is understandable given the very large difference in numbers of missing values between Models 1 and 2 for this country.

**Table 6 about here**

**Table 7 about here**

We mainly examine the coefficients of Model 2 to assess the links between the communities of practice variables and cognition because this model has the least missing values. Model 1 is only used to assess the impact of the two indicators of volume of instruction. We will follow the same procedure for participatory attitudes, our second outcome of interest (see below).

*Communities of practice variables: meaning making*

The standardised estimates of Table 7 show that three of the meaning making variables - talking with parents and friends about politics, classroom climate and media - are positively related to cognition.<sup>viii</sup> These relations are all significant at the .001 level indicating a high level of certainty in the relationship and apply, with few exceptions, in

all five countries. In this article we use three levels of significance (.05, .01 and .001) in order to demonstrate the degree of certainty in the given strength of the relationship. The effect of talking with parents and friends is particularly strong. In Finland, for example, this variable, as it moves from minimum to maximum, has the effect of increasing cognition by 15.5 points on a scale ranging from 27.5 to 98.1 ( $5.6 \text{ (max-min)} \times 2.775 \text{ (coefficient)} = 15.5$ ). The positive links of the three meaning making variables across the board suggest that social participation is a key mode of learning active citizenship for youngsters irrespective of the political and cultural tradition of their countries. Only on talking with teachers about politics do we see substantial cross-country differences; while this condition is negatively related to cognition in England, Finland, and Poland, it shows a positive link with this outcome in Italy.

#### *Communities of practice variables: practice*

The practice variables show a less uniform pattern of relations across the five countries and are generally not as strongly correlated with cognition as the meaning making variables. Participation in school councils would appear to be the most effective among the practice variables demonstrating a positive effect on cognition in all countries although this effect is significant only in England, Germany and Poland. Volunteering and collecting money for charities are related in a negative way to cognition in some of the countries. Volunteering has a negative impact on cognition in Italy and collecting money has a negative impact in Finland and Poland. Participation in an event run by a religious organisation and participating in drama and arts activities has no significant results for any of the countries. The pattern of results suggests that practice activities in the form of student councils are those which have the greatest influence on cognition. Evidently, it is not participation as such that drives cognition, but particular kinds of participation.

#### *Hours of instruction*

The number of hours of history, citizenship and social studies has no effect on cognition in any of the countries (see Model 1). Moreover, adding these variables to the model hardly affects the relationships of the CoP variables with cognition. In other words, through using the communities of practice model, we have been able to identify the meaning making processes as being effective in the learning of citizenship. In contrast, we have not found any support for the volume of citizenship-related instruction as a driver of active citizenship. This is not to say that meaning making, is not or could not, happen in a classroom situation – quite the reverse: the open classroom climate variable suggests that it is happening and that it is having a strong effect. All that these results are suggesting is that merely increasing the number of hours of citizenship education is unlikely to be a successful strategy to enhance civic knowledge and skills. Interestingly, these findings contrast sharply with those of Niemi and Junn (1998) who, as noted before, did find a positive association between the number of hours of civic education and civic knowledge and skills.

#### *Control variables*

Most of the control variables are related in the expected way to cognition (see once again Model 2). Thus we see that the number of years of expected education and the number of books at home (that could be referring to family cultural capital) are the two variables that have the strongest impact on cognition across all five countries. Use of the language of the test at home likewise shows a positive and significant effect in all countries except Poland.

## **Results: Participatory attitudes**

**Table 8 about here**

**Table 9 about here**

For participatory attitudes it is individual characteristics rather than class-level conditions that appear to have greater importance compared to the cognitive outcome. This can be seen from the low levels of class-level variation with none of the countries recording class-level variance components of 10% or more. Yet with the exception of Finland these components all exceed the 5% threshold implying that MLA is warranted. Similar to the full models for cognition, the full models for this outcome manage to account for more than half of the variation at the class level (except Poland). Unlike the full models for cognition, however, they account for much larger proportions of the individual level variance. In short, for both the class and individual levels the explanatory variables entered in the models are very effective in explaining the variance in participatory attitudes. The impressive performance of the explanatory variables is all the more remarkable as other studies focussing on attitudes usually do not have proportions of explained variance exceeding 10%. Niemi and Junn's (1998: 141) analysis of attitudes about government responsiveness, for instance, records an explained variance of a mere 5%. As in the case of cognition, the Model 2 analyses substantially increase the number of valid observations by comparison to those of Model 1 (i.e. the full model), and the percentages of explained variance do not differ greatly between the models (except Finland). Thus, we do not expect missing values to have produced a large bias for participatory attitudes either.

### *Community of practice variables: meaning making*

The performance of the meaning-making variables for participatory attitudes is even more impressive than for cognition (see Model 2 of Table 9). All four variables show positive and strongly significant ( $p < .001$ ) links with participatory attitudes in all five countries. The coefficients are consistently the highest for talking with peers. In other words, dialogue and interaction with peers and adults are vital for a commitment to participation everywhere regardless of political and social conditions.

### *Community of practice variables: practice*



Though slightly less impressive than the meaning making variables, the practice variables also generally perform well in explaining the variance in participatory attitudes. All variables show positive correlations across the board. However, only in the case of participation in school councils are these correlations also significant for all countries. Thus, as was the case for cognition, school council participation is clearly the most important among the practice variables for explaining participatory attitudes. Nonetheless, the other practice variables do show quite strong links as well, with volunteering, collecting money for charities and participation in drama and arts activities demonstrating significant relationships in four countries. The only practice variable which has a minimal impact on participatory attitudes is participation in religious organizations, showing a significant link in just one country (Finland). In short, the practice variables are much more important for participatory attitudes than for cognition, which undoubtedly is also reflected in the larger proportions of explained variance of the former by comparison to the latter. It seems that the *kind* of participation or the location where this participation takes place matters less than participation *as such* for the effects on participatory attitudes.

### *Hours of school instruction*

As was the case for cognition, we find the number of hours of history or social studies to be quite unrelated to participatory attitudes across the board (except England) (see Model 1). In England, remarkably, the number of hours of history shows a significant negative link to participatory attitudes. In other words, the more hours of history English pupils receive, the *less* they expect to participate in political or civic organizations in their adult years. Clearly what applied for cognition applies to an even greater degree for participatory attitudes. The learning of civic knowledge and participatory attitudes thus appears not to be enhanced by expanding the volume of instruction of citizenship-related topics. Evidently what matters is the *quality* of citizenship education in terms of the social processes involved, not its *quantity*.

### *Control Variables*

Among the control variables, expected years of further education and number of books at home show the expected (i.e. positive) associations with participatory attitudes. The other control variables have more unpredictable relationships, showing either considerable cross-country variation in the association with participatory attitudes (use of state language at home) or no or negative effects (the two contextual variables).

## **Conclusion**

Due to the age of the data (1999) it is necessary to be cautious in drawing overly strong conclusions about the applicability of the results for educational practice today. In England, for instance, the data were collected before the introduction of citizenship education as a discrete subject in the curriculum. On a wider scale recent events related to the war on terror may have changed the citizenship orientations of youngsters. However, we do not expect these events to have significantly influenced the *ways* in which

youngsters learn active citizenship (i.e. the subject of the current study) since they pertain primarily to the *orientation* of citizenship values rather than to the manner in which knowledge and skills and attitudes towards participation are learned. Research using more recent data can establish how durable the strategies of learning that we identified in this study are.

The results firstly indicate that teaching more subject matter through additional hours of citizenship related topics for civics, social science and history has no positive effects in any of the countries studied for both cognition and participatory attitudes. This more crude way of modelling citizenship, compared to the communities of practice approach, enables us to suggest that simply expanding the volume of civic education is not a useful strategy for enhancing active citizenship dispositions. These results confirm the recent findings from the Ofsted report on citizenship in schools (2010) that it is the quality and not the quantity of citizenship education which is providing beneficial results for young people.

A drawback of the quantity of hours approach is that it does not give educational practitioners any ideas about why the lessons are working or not. Our results shed light on this enigma by suggesting that learning in a classroom which is not situated in a social context and does not provide an open climate for class discussion has no positive impact on knowledge and skills for democracy or participatory attitudes. This type of learning context can be referred to as a 'restrictive learning environment' (Fuller and Unwin 2004 p.3).

By contrast, the results of this study do support the 'communities of practice' perspective on learning. The variables tapping in- and out-of-school meaning-making activities, which are not necessarily understood by the student as learning activities, showed highly significant positive links with cognition on democracy and participatory attitudes, our two learning outcomes of interest. The strongest association was for talking with parents and peers. Thus we can conclude that the family and peers provide the strongest learning relationships and the most effective community for citizenship learning. This has important implications for citizenship education and supports the use of methods such as peer led citizenship education or the involvement of parents active in politics and/or the community into schools.

The practice variables had stronger relationships with attitudes towards participation and it was participation in school councils that showed consistent cross-country associations with this outcome. What we can conclude from the positive findings in relationship with the student councils is that the process of gaining the identity of a member of a student council through a social process of interaction and election by peers has brought them to the centre of the school participatory community and this has either supported or reinforced their learning of knowledge and skills on democracy and participatory attitudes. As our analyses were cross-sectional, we acknowledge that we cannot confirm the levels before this moment of participation in the council in order to determine the direction of causality. However, we can suggest that the moment of the election is part of a longer journey to the centre of this participatory school community and the

confirmation of this identity and the journey is positively associated with our outcomes of interest. Thus we suggest that school council can have positive effects on learning citizenship.

The identification of the meaning-making variables is perhaps the strongest contribution to the communities of practice literature, as it has helped us to identify the common thread between the variables with the highest association with learning (talking with parents and peers about politics, media consumption on politics and an open classroom climate for discussion). The commonality between these variables is the individual's search for understanding of politics and wider societal issues through a process of reflection and self-directed dialogue within positive learning relationships. This has implications for both the learning of citizenship and for future quantitative and qualitative research on learning citizenship. Firstly, future surveys on learning citizenship could be developed with a clearer focus on measuring communities of practice items. Secondly, qualitative research on learning citizenship could take the communities of practice approach as its starting point.

What should be noted from our results is the apparent cross-country consistency of the positive results for meaning making variables inside and outside school. Thus the argument that *one size does not fit all* because of diverging traditions is not supported by our findings. What can be concluded is that less formalised strategies and approaches to learning inside and outside school through meaning-making activities are working for students across cultural divides. This suggests that strategies involving learning through dialogue, relationships and practice have a pan-European potential for developing the qualities needed for active citizenship.

We can thus conclude that for learning citizenship, it is the less formalised and more contextualised approaches to learning citizenship and the more student-led learning through dialogue and discussion in and outside school contexts which are the most effective strategies. The challenge these results imply for teachers is how to enhance and motivate students to engage in their own meaning-making activities in the classroom, the school, the family and in wider communities in which the students engage. In addition, it is necessary for schools to consider how to improve these connections and to build on democratic learning experiences within the school, the community and the family towards enhancing further students' learning of citizenship.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables by country

		Cognition about democratic institutions	Participatory attitudes
DEU	N	3661	3220
	Cronbach alpha	0.78	0.58
	Mean	52	46
	Std. Deviation	14	14
ENG	N	2847	2431
	Cronbach alpha	0.75	0.70
	Mean	53	46
	Std. Deviation	14	15
FIN	N	2722	2285
	Cronbach alpha	0.79	0.66
	Mean	59	45
	Std. Deviation	15	14
ITA	N	3793	3383
	Cronbach alpha	0.79	0.59
	Mean	57	51
	Std. Deviation	15	13
POL	N	3351	2997
	Cronbach alpha	0.80	0.66
	Mean	56	55
	Std. Deviation	16	14

The results which are not statistically significant (using a t-test) are Germany and England for Participatory attitudes and Italy and Poland for Cognition.



Table 2. Full list of explanatory variables

Social participation through communities of practice
Meaning making
▪ Talking with parents and friends about national or international politics
▪ Classroom climate (open)
▪ Talking with teachers about national or international politics
▪ Reading newspaper articles about what is happening and listening and watching the news
Practice
▪ Student council
▪ Volunteering to help the community
▪ Collecting money for a social cause
▪ Participation in an organisation sponsored by a religious group
▪ Participated in an art, music or drama organisation
School instruction (in hours)
– History (<1 hour up to 5-6 hours) *
– Social Sciences/ Civic Education (<1 hour up to 5-6 hours) *
* Class level variable

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the communities of practice variables by country.

		Meaning making				Practice *				
		Talking with parents and friends	reading/ listening/ watching news	Talking to teachers	Classroom climate	Student council	Volunteering to help the community	Collecting money for social cause	Participation in an art, music or drama organization	Participation in religious group
DEU	Mean	0.16	0.00	-0.11	10.35	0.12	0.15	0.21	0.45	0.23
	Std. Deviation	1.00	1.00	1.02	1.97	0.33	0.36	0.41	0.50	0.42
	N	3170	3170	3170	3608	3155	3100	3109	3200	3143
ENG	Mean	-0.60	0.12	-0.23	10.02	0.19	0.25	0.55	0.39	0.13
	Std. Deviation	0.95	1.12	0.86	2.05	0.39	0.43	0.50	0.49	0.34
	N	2505	2505	2505	2704	2985	2985	2985	2985	2985
FIN	Mean	-0.36	0.12	-0.37	10.01	0.23	0.07	0.23	0.40	0.12
	Std. Deviation	0.93	0.92	0.82	1.92	0.42	0.25	0.42	0.49	0.33
	N	2558	2558	2558	2726	2636	2580	2593	2622	2591
ITA	Mean	-0.03	-0.19	0.53	10.37	0.15	0.08	0.06	0.19	0.21
	Std. Deviation	0.94	0.94	0.99	2.04	0.36	0.28	0.24	0.39	0.41
	N	3451	3451	3451	3775	3678	3655	3647	3663	3659
POL	Mean	0.02	0.26	0.24	10.51	0.23	0.06	0.09	0.20	0.11
	Std. Deviation	0.94	0.93	1.03	2.14	0.42	0.24	0.29	0.40	0.32
	N	3135	3135	3135	3326	3191	3125	3124	3142	3111

\* The practice variables were all binary variables with answer categories 0 (no) and 1 (yes). A mean value of .12 thus means that 12 % of the respondents are participating in the activity.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics on history and social studies by country.

	Germany	England	Italy	Poland	Finland
History	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
< 1 hour a week	8.4	1.5	.3		
1-2 hours	87.7	57.5	87.5	99.4	93.8
3-4 hours	3.9	37.5	12.2	.6	6.2
5-6 hours		3.1			
Civics / social studies					
< 1 hour a week	36.6	52.3	52.5	1.9	84.2
1-2 hours	57.9	45.5	46.4	97.8	15.8
3-4 hours	5.5	2.2	1.0		
5-6 hours				.3	

Table 5 Descriptive statistics for the control variables by country.

		Gender (girl=0 boy=1)	Expected education	Ethnicity (language spoken at home)	Books at home	Class mean books at home	Class mean ethnicity
DEU	N	3646	3624	3157	3659	3700	3700
	Mean	.50	3.54	2.90	4.42	4.42	2.90
	Std. Deviation	0.50	1.45	0.33	1.30	0.63	0.16
ENG	N	2960	2955	2925	2982	3043	3043
	Mean	.50	3.66	2.95	4.40	4.40	2.95
	Std. Deviation	0.50	1.32	0.22	1.31	0.53	0.08
FIN	N	2776	2760	2424	2761	2782	2782
	Mean	.48	3.98	2.97	4.25	4.25	2.97
	Std. Deviation	0.50	1.12	0.21	1.17	0.38	0.09
ITA	N	3808	3802	3541	3801	3808	3808
	Mean	.48	4.36	2.74	3.84	3.84	2.74
	Std. Deviation	0.50	1.49	0.51	1.29	0.60	0.21
POL	N	3362	3358	3177	3356	3376	3376
	Mean	.48	4.75	2.98	4.25	4.25	2.98
	Std. Deviation	0.50	1.35	0.18	1.33	0.65	0.06

Table 6. Distribution of the variance in cognition across the two levels of analysis by country

COGNITION	Germany	England	Poland	Italy	Finland
Empty model					
Variance at individual level (L1) in %	60	81	75	61	92
Variance at class/school level (L2) in %	40	19	25	39	8
N	3361	2847	3351	3793	2722
Full model (Model 1)					
% of L1 variance explained	15.3	18.2	24.5	7.7	30.7
% of L2 variance explained	81.9	73.3	49.0	74.3	71.0
% of the total N	40.0	67.3	77.2	64.9	35.4
Model without school instruction (Model 2)					
% of L1 variance explained	5.0	19.9	25.0	7.9	27.4
% of L2 variance explained	96.1	71.9	46.6	72.0	68.4
% of the total N	65.0	82.2	79.5	80.1	74.3

Table 7. Determinants of cognition (coefficients of multilevel models)

Cognition	England		Germany		Finland		Italy		Poland	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<b>CoP Meaning making</b>										
Talking parents/friends	1.05***	1.17***	1.51***	1.37***	3.20***	2.78***	1.5***	1.25***	1.43***	1.49***
Class climate	1.71***	1.84***	1.66***	1.62***	-0.35	0.44	0.94***	1.28***	0.89***	0.84***
Media	1.5***	1.48***	1.29***	1.0***	1.46**	1.87***	0.42	0.44	0.79***	0.81**
Talking with teachers	-1.14***	-1.33***	-0.47	-0.18	-2.09***	-1.86***	0.54*	0.52*	-0.87***	-0.92***
<b>CoP Practice</b>										
School council	1.6***	1.43***	0.38	0.87**	0.22	0.4	0.14	0.36	1.20***	1.25***
Volunteering	0.14	-0.04	-0.07	-0.29	-0.7***	-0.39	-0.61	-0.66*	0.50	0.45
Charity collecting money	0.02	0.07	0.27	0.27	-1.61	-1.72***	0.15	0.28	-1.59***	-1.66***
Religious organisation	-0.55	0.56	0.16	0.34	-0.02	-0.18	-0.13	-0.18	-0.31	-0.3
Drama	0.05	0.17	-0.22	-0.13	0.3	0.3	-0.5	-0.5	0.11	0.13
<b>Quantitative approach</b>										
Hours of History	-0.44		-1.67		1.23		0.11		-0.77	
Hours of Social Science	-0.94		-1.19		-1.17		-0.04		0.22	
<b>Control variables</b>										
Gender	0.7*	0.59*	1.9***	1.91***	0.29	0.1	0.43	0.2	1.08***	1.12***
Expected education	2.19***	2.18***	2.0***	1.74***	7.02***	6.74***	2.37***	2.2***	5.88***	5.8***
Language spoken home	1.6***	1.58***	0.95**	0.9***	0.11	1.66***	1.21***	1.22***	0.16	0.23
Books at home	3.04***	3.18***	0.83*	1.2***	1.52**	1.15**	0.85**	0.97***	0.74*	0.77**
Mean of books	3.0***	3.43***	6.16***	6.8***	1.6	2.38**	3.99***	4.36***	1.78**	2.2***
Mean of Language	-2.16*	-2.1*	0.65	-0.02	2.06*	1.92**	2.46***	2.31***	2.47	2.28

\* P < 0.05; \*\* P < .01; \*\*\* P < .001.

Table 8. Distribution of the variance in participatory attitudes across the two levels of analysis by country

PARTICIPATORY ATTITUDES	Germany	England	Poland	Italy	Finland
Empty model					
Variance at individual level (L1) in %	91	94	94	92	95
Variance at class/school level (L2) in %	9	6	6	8	5
N	3220	2431	2997	3383	2285
Full model					
% of L1 variance explained	37.0	41.8	28.4	31.8	40.8
% of L2 variance explained	83.9	93.1	46.9	80.8	77.4
% of the total N	38.0	72.7	78.9	66.2	37.6
Model without school instruction					
% of L1 variance explained	36.7	40.0	28.7	31.1	37.8
% of L2 variance explained	82.3	95.6	39.5	84.5	100
% of the total N	62.4	88.6	81.2	82.0	78.2

Table 9. Determinants of participatory attitudes (coefficients of multilevel models)

Participatory attitudes	England		Germany		Finland		Italy		Poland	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
CoP Meaning making										
Talking parents/friends	5.79***	5.84***	5.54***	5.3***	5.78***	6.04***	5.67***	5.7***	4.9***	4.98***
Class climate	1.31***	1.35***	0.87*	1.1***	0.59	1.09***	1.6***	1.46***	2.36***	2.31***
Media	4.25***	4.11***	3.43***	3.77***	2.82***	3.17***	3.55***	3.72***	3.6***	3.61***
Talking with teachers	2.82***	2.46***	1.73***	1.99***	2.38***	2.26***	1.75***	1.72***	1.38***	1.47***
CoP Practice										
School council	1.59***	1.6***	1.85***	1.92***	1.67***	1.38***	1.13***	1.13***	0.59*	0.69*
Volunteering	0.7**	0.76**	1.18***	1.1***	0.11	0.22	1.15***	0.99**	1.11**	1.05*
Charity collecting money	0.75**	0.95***	1.03**	1.22***	0.62	0.81**	0.38	0.19	0.94*	0.89*
Religious organisation	-0.12	0.13	0.29	0.29	1.1*	1.07***	0.17	0.26	0.39	0.38
Drama	1.28***	1.05***	0.5	0.29	0.91*	0.76**	1.0***	0.85***	0.94**	0.99**
Quantitative approach										
Hours of History	-0.65*		-0.78		-0.5		0.44		-1.86	
Hours of Social Science	-0.04		0.38		0.71		-0.12		1.15	
Control variables										
Gender	-0.6*	-0.6*	0.53	0.31	-0.98*	-0.85**	0.08	-0.53	-0.52*	-0.44
Expected education	0.96**	1.11***	0.3	0.57*	0.86	1.36***	1.37***	1.3***	0.77*	0.72*
Language spoken home	-0.84	-0.88	1.29***	0.99***	-0.45	0.12	0.16	0.22	-1.03	-1.08*
Books at home	0.48	0.62*	0.71	0.61*	0.35	0.63	0.6*	0.7**	0.2	0.3
Mean of books	0.69	0.53	1.11	0.58	-0.02	0.25	-0.77	-0.78*	-0.65	-0.85*
Mean of Language	0.35	0.14	-1.46*	-1.32***	0.92	0.96	-0.21	-0.22	-0.00	0.22

\* P < 0.5; \*\* P < .01; \*\*\* P < .001.



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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Item response theory (IRT) refers to the way the scales have been built modeling responses to the items, as opposed to classical test theory that models a whole test. See Baker (2001) for more information.

<sup>ii</sup> Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency) that measures the intercorrelations between, in this case, the scales comprising Participatory attitudes. It is primarily used as a measure to determine to what extent a set of variables measures a similar construct.

<sup>iii</sup> The two dependent variables are positively and significantly correlated in each country ranging from a low correlation of 0.141\*\* in Poland to a higher level of correlation in Germany of 0.499\*\*. However, these correlations are not high and the Cronbach's Alpha scores, which range between 0.257 for Poland to 0.440 for Germany, suggest that these are distinct phenomena.

<sup>iv</sup> We have used a t-test in order to identify statistically significant differences. Only statistically significant differences have been reported on. This applies to tables 1, 3 and 5.

<sup>v</sup> We also conducted all the analyses using traditional OLS regression. The results from the OLS regression departed significantly from those of the MLA regression in that the former showed some classroom-level variables, including the school instruction ones, to be significantly related to the two outcome measures while the latter did not. In Germany, for instance, the two school instruction variables had a significant negative effect on cognition in the OLS regression (with coefficients -.08 and -.07 and a significance of .001 and .003, respectively) while no significant relation with cognition appeared in the MLA regression. These differential results illustrate the point about using MLA to avoid overestimating the effect of contextual variables.

<sup>vi</sup> This is an essential first step to assess whether an MLA with classroom-level conditions is at all necessary. If less than five percent of the variance is at the classroom-level we may assume that the impact of classroom-level conditions on the two outcomes is only minimal (see Duncan and Raudenbusch 1999 for this rule of thumb), implying that we might as well use traditional regression models including only individual-level variables.

<sup>vii</sup> We have also investigated a 3rd model for both the cognition and attitudes towards participation outcomes. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> model we have removed all insignificant variables for each country to see if their omission had any effect on the remaining variables. We observed no changes in terms of our variables of interest as all coefficients remained significant. The control variables all remained significant except in the case of

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Participatory attitudes in Poland where language spoken at home and the class level mean of books at home both became insignificant. Due to the similarity of model 2 and 3, in particular for our variables of interest, we have reported only on model 2. The results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> model can be obtained from the authors.

<sup>viii</sup> The independent variables entered in the models of cognition and participatory attitudes do not exceed critical collinearity levels. None of them have a VIF value of more than 2.