

The process of democratic values in Cyprus and Germany

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The process of democratic values in Cyprus and Germany: The IEA civic education study

Civic education and its role in democracy have a significant place on the agendas of many countries. Many researchers emphasize distinctions between the older and new democracies, but there is no compelling reason to think of them as having completely different sets of problems related to civic education (*Torney-Purta 2002*). The democratic societies recognized that their own methods of preparing young people for citizenship were far from ideal. Studies have shown that young people relatively were reluctant to participate in civic and in conventional political activities.

In 1994, the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) began the process of conceptualizing the subject area of civic education with a goal of developing a measurement instrument and conducting a test and survey students at secondary schools (*Torney-Purta, et al 2001*). Twenty-eight countries and over 93 thousands students participated in this Civic Education Study. The population includes all students enrolled on a full time basis in the grade in which most students aged 14:00 to 14:11 are found at the time of testing (*Torney-Purta, et al 2001*)

School can be seen as an agency determining how students learn the different subjects in school, in this case civic education. A student's home environment is another significant factor that aids in the construction of student political interest and political environment. (*Young 1971; Young/ Whitty 1977; Apple 1991, 1993*). In general schools encourages students to be involved in voluntary activities both within the school itself and in their community. It has been argued that performance is a social product and that social cultural diversity is interpreted and evaluated as students' deficiency, mainly because knowledge and the curriculum are related to the interests of particular classes and professional groups. Parsons (*Parsons 1961, 1971*) deny the competition of interests and promote the idea of a central culture. Additionally Giroux (*Giroux 1981, 1983*) stresses the voluntaristic nature of resistance theory and the importance of self-determination in the education system, which prevent direct reproduction. Other interpretive, interactive and phenomenological attempts to understand schooling and students inequalities stress the role of teachers in coping with students' differences (e.g. *Wexler 1987; Pinar/ Reynolds 1992*). All the above discourse is grounded on the fact that social and school factors affect performance (*Blackledge/ Hunt 1985*). The question that arises concerns the extent to which home background and school climate affect students' social and political understanding and participation.

Theory of citizenship has been extensively discussed for half a century (*Turner 2001*). According to Lawson (*Lawson 2001*) citizenship is understood to be a conditional relationship between rights and responsibilities. Citizenship is considered as a set of provisions to counter-act the negative consequences of class or social inequality (*Turner 1993*) and can be defined as a participation in the civic, political and social institutions of modern society (*Marshall 1963, 1997*). According to the results of this study it is obvious that a vicious circle is created when home background and school climate may prevent social participation, which is one of the most important elements of active citizenship. In that case, citizenship remains a theoretical system of rights and obligations that cannot counter-act the negative consequences of home-social inequality. A further problem arises from the fact that, while human rights are universal in the sense that they belong to all, rather than to members of any particular nation, race, social class, human beings are not identical and consequently they don't have the same opportunity for participation. In that sense, citizenship has a subjective component: Willingness to act. Legal possession of rights does not in itself ensure that individuals will feel themselves to be citizens of the country. As Heywood (*Heywood 1994*) put it: "Members of groups that feel alienated from their state, perhaps because of social disadvantage or social discrimination, cannot properly be thought of as 'full citizens'" (p. 156).

Active citizenship can be a straightforward as helping a neighbor (*Lawson 2001*). For some comes naturally, as a result of family, or of an inspirational teacher, or from democratic values. For others it needs to be encouraged, developed and practiced. Active citizenship has to contribute to the common good rather than furthering the interests of specific group in society. Voluntary associations can provide opportunities for social participation, for democratic involvement at the local level, and thus for active citizenship (*Turner 2001*).

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This study is based on data from the student questionnaires which were collected in 1999. In Germany, one hundred and sixty nine (169) schools participated in this project. Altogether, 3700 students participated in the study. The subset of students used in this research project was obtained as follows. Of the 3700 students only those who had completed the entire subset of variables chosen for the study were used in the analysis. In other words, any missing data or multiple responses led to student deletion from the data set. This led to a final sample of N=1057. The four questions that reduced the number of students from 3700 to 1057 are: " An adult who is good citizen would be willing to ignore (disregard) a law that violated human rights-16 percent of students gave the answer "I do not know" or they did not answer this question". "Participation in a non-violent [peaceful] protest march or rally-15.5 percent did not know what to answer". "To help people [benefit] [poor or elderly] in the community voluntary" "to collect signatures for a petition". For each of the last two questions 14 percent of German students gave the answer "I do not know". In Cyprus, the whole population of schools (61 gymnasia-the secondary junior schools) participated in this project and from each school two classes of 9th graders were selected. In total, 3106 students participated in the study (about 30% of the entire population). The subset of students used in this research project was obtained in the same way as in the case of Germany. This led to a final sample of N=1788. The two questions, " Teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions " and " An adult who is good citizen would be willing to ignore (disregard) a law that violated human rights ", reduced the number of students from 3106 to 1788 are: In total 4.2 percent and 12.6 of Cypriot students gave the answer "I do not know" in the first question and the second question respectively.

Student indicators

The twenty-nine variables, which were relevant to this study, were grouped into six factors: home background, school climate, democratic values, social participation, political interest, and home political environment factors. The variables used to define the conceptual areas are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Latent variables, Items, Means, s.d. and N

Latent variables	Questionnaire items	Germany		Cyprus		
		\bar{X}	s.d.	\bar{X}	s.d.	
F1	b1. How far to school did your mother go?	3.36	1.20	3.90	1.67	
	b2. How far to school did your father go?	3.36	1.39	4.07	1.75	
Home	b3. About how many books are there in your home?	4.42	1.30	4.01	1.19	
Background	b4. Do you get a daily newspaper at home?	1.81	0.39	1.49	0.50	
	b5. How many years of further education do you expect to complete after this year?	3.54	1.45	4.16	1.19	
F2	c1. Students feel free to disagree openly with their teachers about political and social issues during class.	2.88	0.91	3.03	0.93	
	c2. Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues	3.36	0.81	3.43	0.75	
Class-school Climate	c3. Teachers respect our opinions and encourage us to express them during class.	3.09	0.92	3.14	0.93	
	c4. Students feel free to express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students.	3.29	0.82	3.33	0.78	
F3	c5. Teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions.	2.79	0.89	2.70	0.96	
	d1. When everyone has the right to express their opinions freely	3.33	0.78	3.75	0.64	
Democratic values	d2. When newspapers are free of all government control	2.44	0.99	2.49	0.96	
	d3. When private business has no restrictions from government.	2.32	0.84	2.05	0.81	
F4	d4. When people demand their political and social rights	2.98	0.86	3.30	0.89	
	d5. When citizens have the right to elect political leaders freely	3.50	0.80	3.68	0.73	
Social participation	Good citizens is the one who ...					
	e1. participates in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust.	2.82	0.88	3.27	0.81	
F5	e2. participates in activities to benefit people in their community (society).	3.12	0.75	3.44	0.68	
	e3. takes part in activities promoting human rights.	3.43	0.74	3.61	0.64	
Political interest	e4. takes part in activities to protect the environment.	2.93	0.76	3.16	0.88	
	e5. has the will to ignore (disregard) a law that violates human rights.	2.48	1.31	2.74	1.17	
F6	e6. helps voluntarily poor or elderly people in the community	2.58	0.69	3.11	0.69	
	e7. collects money for a social cause.	2.51	0.69	3.05	0.72	
F7	e8. collect signatures for a petition.	2.32	0.81	2.70	0.81	
	e9. participates in a non-violent (peaceful) protest march or rally	2.25	0.88	3.22	0.76	
F8	The frequency of ...					
	f1. reading articles(stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in my country.	2.87	0.91	2.94	0.96	
F9	f2. reading articles(stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in other countries	2.82	0.93	2.83	0.94	
	f3. listening to news broadcasts on the radio	2.85	1.01	2.61	0.97	

Democratic values	d3. When private business have no restrictions from government.	2.32	0.84	2.03	0.81
	d4. When people demand their political and social right	2.98	0.86	3.50	0.89
	d5. When citizens have the right to elect political leaders freely	3.50	0.80	3.68	0.73
Good citizen is the one who ...					
	s1. participates in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust.	2.82	0.88	3.27	0.81
	s2. participates in activities to benefit people in their community (society).	3.12	0.75	3.44	0.68
	s3. takes part in activities promoting human rights.	3.43	0.74	3.61	0.64
F4 Social participation	s4. takes part in activities to protect the environment.	2.93	0.76	3.16	0.88
	s5. has the will to ignore (disregard) a law that violates human rights.	2.48	1.31	2.74	1.17
	s6. helps voluntarily poor or elderly people in the community	2.58	0.69	3.11	0.69
	s7. collects money for a social cause.	2.51	0.69	3.05	0.72
	s8. collects signatures for a petition;	2.32	0.81	2.70	0.81
	s9. participates in a non-violent (peaceful) protest march or rally	2.25	0.88	3.22	0.76
The frequency of...					
F5 Political interest	i1. reading articles(stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in my country.	2.87	0.91	2.94	0.96
	i2. reading articles(stories) in the newspaper about what is happening in other countries	2.82	0.93	2.83	0.94
	i3. listening to news broadcasts on the radio		2.85	1.01	2.61
					0.97
F6 Political environment	e1. The discussions with parents or other adult family members of what happening in the county politics.	2.68	0.97	2.98	0.93
	e2. The discussions with parents or other adult family members of what happening in international	2.52	0.98	2.91	0.94

Model

Incorporating accepted research, and based on the assumed latent variables, a hypothetical initial factor model is presented in Figure 1.

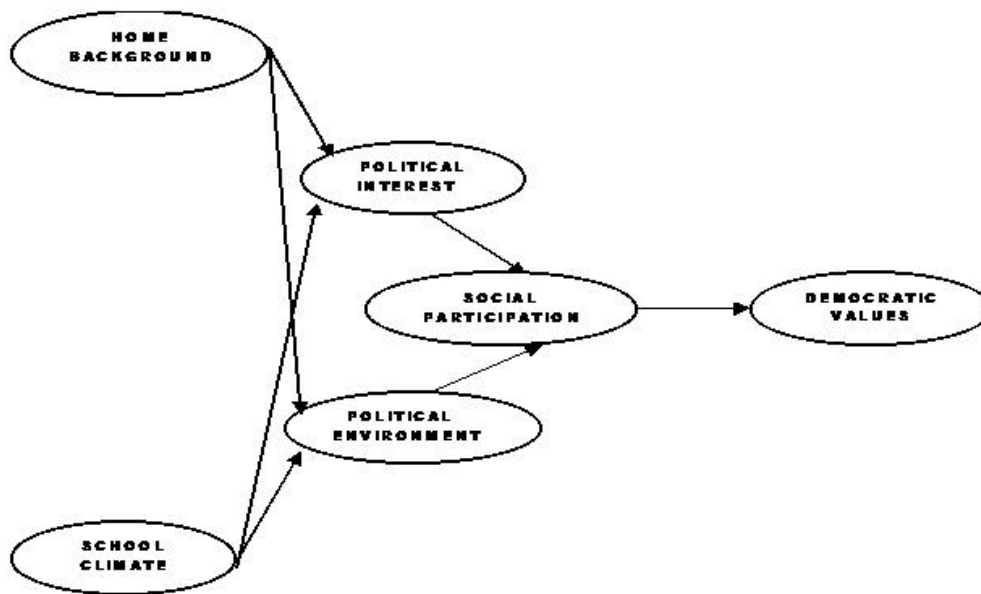


Figure 1: Hypothetical initial model

The hypothetical model portrayed in Figure 1 indicates that two latent variables, the school climate and home background were included since they were hypothesized to influence the two endogenous factors, political interest and home political environment, that were hypothesized to influence social participation of students to social actions. Finally social participation is supposed to influence directly democratic values. In general, data collected through questionnaires or interviews are usually based on ordinal observed variables, i.e., the responses are classified into different ordered categories although they are conceptually continuous. Structural equation modeling supposes that cross-product covariances or Pearson correlations have been derived from variables that are continuous and measured on an interval scale, this is rarely the case for survey data (Coenders et al. 1997; Papanastasiou 2002a, 2002b). For solving of this problem the polychoric correlation matrix, as well as the asymptotic covariance matrix of the variances and covariances were computed.

Table 2 presents the factors, the items that were used in this study, the weighting least squares LISREL estimates, the standard errors and the corresponding t values, which show that all lambdas-X and lambdas-Y are statistically significant.

TABLE 2
Lisrel estimates (Weighted Least Squares)

<i>Factors/Items</i>	<i>Cyprus</i>			<i>Germany</i>				
	<i>lambda-X</i>	<i>s.e</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>lambda-X</i>	<i>s.e</i>	<i>t</i>		
Home								
Background								
b1 (mother)	1.00	----	----	0.98	.04	23.21		
b2 (father)	0.96	.04	23.51	1.00	----	----		
b3 (books)	0.44	.03	15.26	0.73	.04	19.03		
b4 (newspaper)	0.50	.03	14.90	0.27	.05	5.63		
b5 (further-ed)	0.49	.03	18.29	0.66	.03	17.08		
Class Climate								
c1 (disagree)	0.92	.05	18.56	0.82	.04	23.01		
c2 (encouraged)	1.00	----	----	0.92	.03	29.13		
c3 (respect)	0.78	.04	18.09	1.00	----	----		
c4 (express)	0.87	.05	18.88	0.99	.03	28.31		
c5 (discuss)	0.88	.05	19.25	0.80	.03	26.52		
Democratic Values								
d1 (opinions)	0.71	.08	9.27	0.86	.06	13.97		
d2 (news-control)	0.52	.07	7.89	0.51	.05	10.64		
d3 (restrictions)	0.13	.05	2.44	0.00	.05	-10.00		
d4 (rights)		0.71	.07	9.49	0.67	.06	12.03	
d5 (elections)	1.00	---	---		1.00	---	----	
Social Participation								
s1 (protest)		0.64	.03	19.64	0.49	.03	14.36	
s2 (benefit)		0.90	.03	28.57	0.73	.04	20.26	
s3 (promoting H.R.)	0.93	.03	28.72		0.69	.04	19.23	
s4 (protect-envir.)	0.70	.03	13.12		0.60	.04	16.33	
s5 (ignore)		0.10	.03	3.21		0.37	.04	10.43
s6 (voluntarily)	0.88	.03	29.73		0.93	.03	27.58	
s7 (collects money)	1.00	----	----		1.00	----	----	
s8 (petition)	0.71	.03	23.55		0.97	.03	30.20	
s9 (peaceful)	0.73	.03	24.54		0.74	.04	20.74	
Political Interest								
i1 (net-articles)	1.00	----	----		0.85	.03	25.01	
i2 (int-articles)	0.97	.03	28.85		1.00	----	----	
i3 (radio)	0.35	.03	13.80		0.45	.03	13.81	
Political Environment								
e1 (nat-politics)	1.00	----	----		0.90	.03	28.70	
e2 (int-politics)	0.99	.05	19.70		1.00	----	----	

s4 (protect-envir.)	0.70	.03	13.12		0.60	.04	16.33	
s5 (ignore)		0.10	.03	3.21		0.37	.04	10.43
s6 (voluntarily)	0.66	.03	29.73		0.93	.03	27.58	
s7 (collects money)	1.00	---	---		1.00	---	---	
s8 (petition)	0.71	.03	23.55		0.97	.03	30.20	
s9 (peaceful)	0.73	.03	24.54		0.74	.04	20.74	
Political Interest								
i1 (nat-articles)	1.00	---	---		0.85	.03	25.01	
i2 (int-articles)	0.97	.03	26.85		1.00	---	---	
i3 (radio)	0.35	.03	13.60		0.45	.03	13.81	
Political Environment								
e1 (nat-politics)	1.00	---	---		0.90	.03	26.70	
e2 (int-politics)	0.99	.05	19.70		1.00	---	---	

Figures 2 and 3 present the path model-the unstandardized solution, based on the Germany and Cyprus data. In this models the factor class-school climate has very strong direct effect on home political environment and student political interest in both countries. As Figure 2 shows, the paths from class-school climate to home political environment (0.47), and student political interest (0.48) were significant. The same paths for the Cyprus model (Figure 3) from school-class climate to home political interest is (.70) and to student political interest (.55) were also significant. The paths from home background to political interest (0.41), and to student political interest (0.34) were also significant. The same picture can be seen in the Cyprus model. That is, the path from home background to political interest and to student political environment were (.24) and (.19) respectively. The picture for both models (Figure 2 and 3) about the effects from political environment (0.22 and .21), and political interest (.38 and .27) to social participation of students to social actions are statistical significant. The most significant factor between the two was for both countries the path from political interest to social participation. Finally the path from social participation to democratic values (0.50) for the Germany model (.34) and for the Cyprus model were statistical significant, which means that social participation is a strong indicator for democratic values.

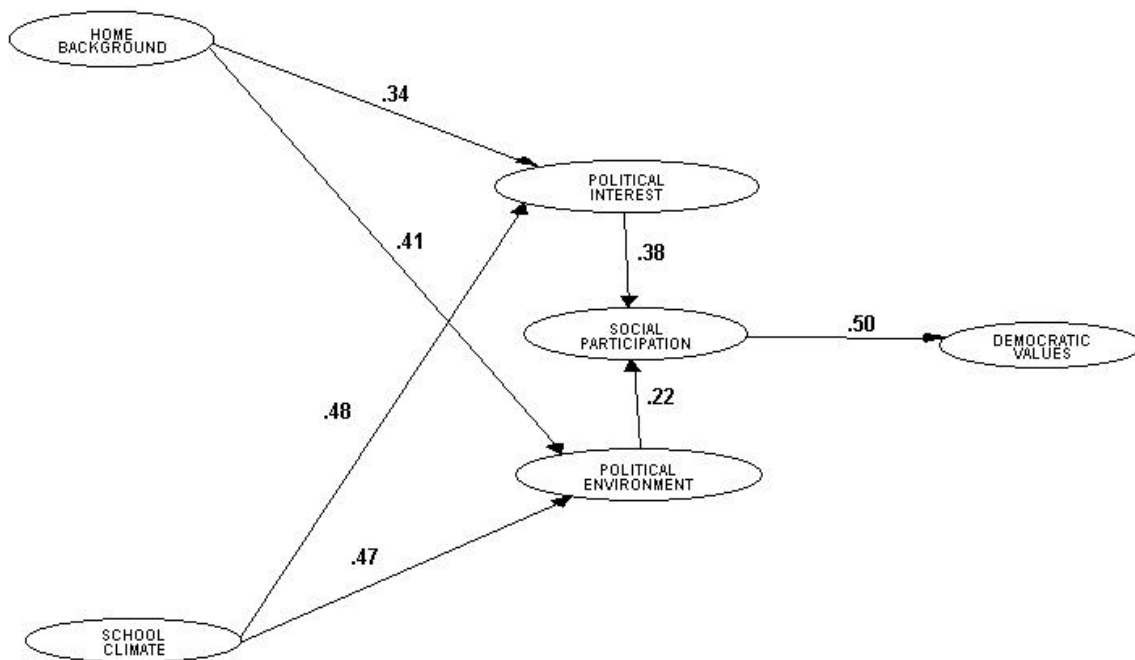
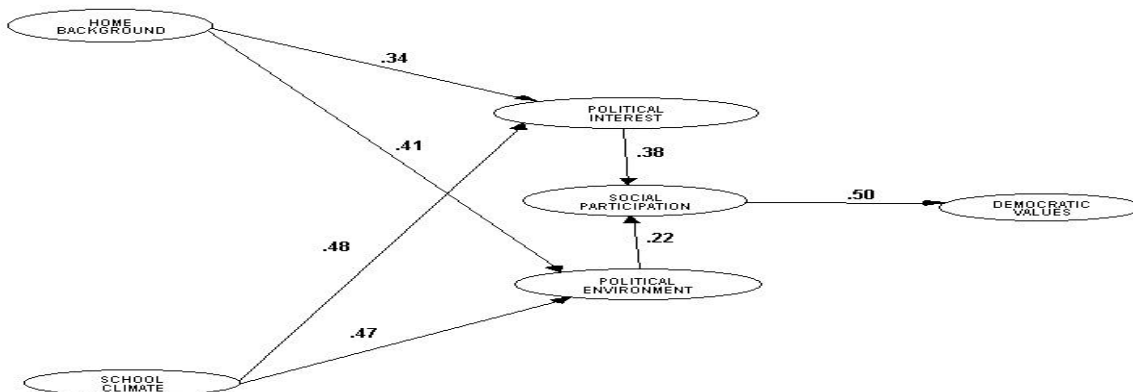


FIGURE 2. Model of social participation process (Germany)



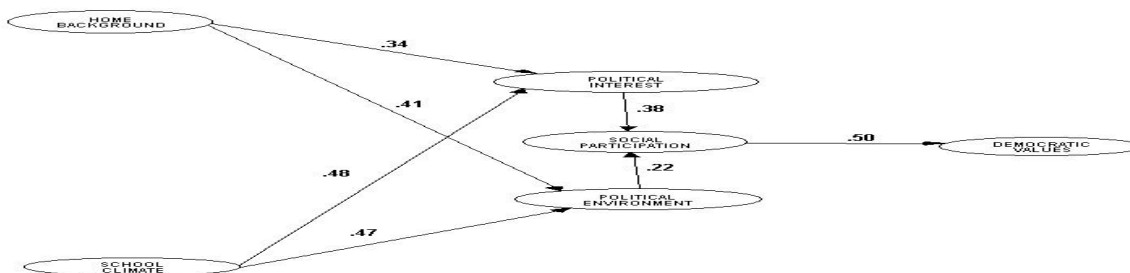


FIGURE 3. Model of social participation process (Cyprus)

Fit statistics

A variety of fit statistics were applied to assess the "goodness of fit" of the model. Measures of fit included the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI), the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR.) The four fit indexes GFI, AGFI, CFI and NFI with values above 0.9 (in general) represent reasonable fit (Broome et al., 1997). The CFI is the least affected by sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1995), and the RMSEA index, with its value less than 0.05, reflects a close fit. Browne and Cudeck (*Browne 1993*) believe that RMSEA values between 0.0 and 0.05 indicate a close fit, less than 0.08 reflect reasonable fit, and greater than 0.08 reflect poor fit. Table 3 presents the fit indices for both countries.

Table 3. Fit indices for Germany and Cyprus

Fit indices	Cyprus	Germany
GFI	.97	.95
AGFI	.96	.94
NFI	.94	.92
CFI	.95	.94
SRMR	.08	.10
RMSEA	.05	.06

From all these indices we can conclude that the models are good for both countries, although there are some differences about the strength of the paths although this was expected to be.

Discussion

The present study explored how the factor democratic values is stimulated by predictors related to family and school. For this study we began by posing a simple question: How can we best explain student democratic values in relation to home background, school-class climate, political environment, political interest and participation of students to social actions? To answer this, we chose to elaborate on a model comparing various background factors. Both models (see in *Figure 2* and *3*) seem to indicate that strong effect was exerted by the school climate on political environment and political interest. Between the political interest and the political environment, the strongest one on social participation is political environment. Although Germany and Cyprus have many differences the actual model for both countries are almost identical.

The results of this study indicated that two exogenous factors - school-class climate and home background - define a second-order factor structure which includes three endogenous predictors, political interest, political environment and social participation. These results indicate that the problem of democratic values is multidimensional in nature. It has been identified that an important element in values education is the school/class "ethos" (*Halstead/ Taylor 2000*), which indicates among others the nature of relationships, the dominant forms of social interaction, the way that conflicts are resolved, patterns of communication and pupils' involvement, discipline procedures, anti-racist policies, management styles.

Social participation was found to be a strong predictor of democratic values, and because social

participation can be reinforced, could become important educational objective. Participation in extra-curricular activities is a source of interest and challenge to many students and may provide opportunities to explore new roles, work in a team and develop

leadership skills.

This study revealed that home background and school climate affect the political environment within students, acquire democratic values and the willingness of participation. Thus, home background and school climate become obstacles that stand in the way of personal development and self-realization. These results have important implications in schooling and teaching. It can be argued that effective citizenship can be increased by the acknowledgement of students' differences in cultural, social and family capital, differences that cannot be met through an undifferentiated curriculum and instruction and without any extra-curricular opportunities for participation. Differentiated citizenship is a means for real universal citizenship. As Young (1997: 257) put it: "Differentiated citizenship' as the best way of realizing the inclusion and participation of everyone in full citizenship". Otherwise the notion of global citizenship remains utopian.

It would be of interesting to see if the model can be applied to other countries with varying degrees of students democratic values and of varying levels of social participation. As with any modeling approach, cross-validation and replication are required (*Bollen 1989*). The findings of this study are based on two samples, however generalization of the model would provide considerable support in the modeling of democratic values. The elements of the present model may provide empirical measures for a broad conceptualization of democratic values in the developmental model.

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