Title. Knowledge and participation rights as a predictor of intercultural empathy.

A study of participation rights, knowledge and school diversity intercultural empathy among Norwegian and Danish school students


Author: Professor Trond Solhaug. Institute for teacher education (ILU), Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU, Norway.

Trond.Solhaug@ntnu.no

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Abstract:
In recent decades Norwegian and Danish schools experience increased cultural diversification among their students. Growing heterogeneity in origin and culture may enhance the risk of students’ marginalization, segregation or exclusion. In response to these challenges, this study is theoretically framed in an inclusive education perspective. It focuses on how knowledge of diversity and participation rights in school predicts student’s intercultural empathy. The study draws on primarily quantitative data gathered on paper questionnaires from 895 students in two upper secondary schools in Denmark and two in Norway. First, knowledge and information about culture and diversity predicts certain aspects of intercultural empathy. Second, participation rights is a more moderate predictor of intercultural empathy. Third, we find that there are substantial differences between boys’ and girls’ scores on intercultural empathy. Fourth school diversity context matters for student’s intercultural empathy. The results and their implications for teaching are discussed.
Introduction

The Danish and Norwegian context

The theme of this article is intercultural empathy among students in the context of immigration and the rapid increase in ethnic and cultural diversity in schools in Denmark and Norway. Both Denmark and Norway have long histories of immigration (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2008; (DST, 2015 [Statistics Denmark]; SSB, 2014; Togeby, 2003). More recently, their policies of recognising the free movement of people from within the European Union and their subsequent signing of the 1995 Schengen agreement have opened up migration and increased diversity, particularly in the central urban areas. The current minority population (including both migrants and children of migrants) is around 15% of the total in Norway (SSB, 2014) and 12% of the total in Denmark (DST, 2015). Net immigration has increased from 0.3% of the total population in 2005 to close to 1% in 2011 (SSB, 2012).

At the beginning of this century, new laws and rules for immigration created several (Midtbøen, 2009) differences among Denmark, Norway and Sweden with respect to their approaches to immigration. Denmark adopted the clearest assimilationist policy, while Sweden (compared to Norway and Denmark) adopted the clearest multiculturalist policy. In preparing for the new laws in Norway, a majority of the lawgiver’s commission joined forces to support a multiculturalist stand; however, they were overruled by political decisions in favour of more assimilationist policies (Midtbøen, 2009). With the arrival of over one million refugees and irregular migrants in Europe in 2015 (IOM, 2015), the European as well as the Scandinavian countries have introduced tighter border controls, witnessed increasingly fierce public debate over immigration and ultimately become more alike in their immigration policies.

Historically, the public debate over immigration has been voiced primarily by the far-right Progress Party in Norway and the Danish People’s Party, but now, every political party follows a political programme addressing immigration, integration and their societal impacts (Aardal, 2007). This reflects a pattern across Europe in which far-right political movements and parties in most nations are expressing concerns about immigration and making claims about the inevitability of security threats, unemployment and ethnic, religious and cultural conflicts (Gutwirth & Burgess, 2011).

Among adult Norwegians, there has been an increase in the number of people who believe that migrants abuse the Norwegian welfare system (SSB, 2011). Such accusations have been prevalent in the public debate, particularly following the Brochmann Commission report ‘Welfare and migration’ (NOU, 2011). However, the overall picture of Norwegian attitudes toward immigration appears more positive: 3 out of 4 Norwegians recognise immigrants’ contributions to business and professional life, 9 out of 10 think migrants should have the same professional career options as Norwegians and 7 out of 10 think that immigrants contribute positively to the economy (SSB, 2014).

In Denmark, immigration has been a prime political issue for 25 years. Shortly after the 2015 election, the new government struck an agreement with the other right-wing parties to launch a new introductory benefit for immigrants and refugees that matched the level of the national study entitlements, reducing previous benefits by half. Furthermore, the government introduced a new Danish language test for individuals seeking naturalization, requiring respondents to answer 32 of 40 questions correctly to pass the test and earn a monthly benefit supplement.
The 2013 ISSP survey ranks Denmark highly among countries supporting the concept of monoculturalism, with 7 out of 10 respondents stating that a country fares best when groups adapt to the dominant culture. Timm and Horst and Gitz-Johansen similarly emphasised the Danish assimilationist policy and the cultural hegemony in Danish schools (Horst & Gitz-Johansen, 2010; Timm, 2009). Younger generations, however, are significantly more supportive of multiculturalism; thus, it seems reasonable to speak of a multi-cultural generation of individuals who are acquainted with and tolerant of immigrants and descendants. These individuals are also more optimistic concerning immigrants’ chances of becoming ‘real Danes’ without necessarily sharing Danish norms and traditions (Larsen, 2016).

To summarise, immigration continues to rapidly extend population diversity in both Norway and Denmark, potentially impacting daily life and citizenship practices. Attitudes towards minorities are politically contested, and the accompanying questions of integration and segregation have become major issues in both schools and public and professional life. While Denmark and Norway seem to share similar immigration restrictions, scientific discourses suggest that Denmark has the clearest assimilatist policies. This article addresses the challenges to integration accompanying immigration by focusing on students’ intercultural empathy. The research question is;

How may participation and knowledge contribute to student’s intercultural empathy in school?

To address this focus, three aspects of intercultural empathy are included, which together comprise the measure of intercultural empathy. Schools always face the challenges to provide equal opportunities for all and provide a safe and learning environment. Also, schools task is to contribute to students social integration and well-being outside school. To provide opportunities for students participation as well as contributing to their knowledge of diversity are perhaps schools main ways to fulfil their goal of an inclusive education and awareness of difference in a diverse society.

Matching samples of students have been selected from the general branches of two upper secondary schools in Denmark and Norway, yielding a total sample of 895 students. Participation rights and knowledge is particularly focused in the analysis and discussion as both these cover major options for empathy support in schools. Also control variables such as gender, and indicators of school diversity are included and discussed.

Previous research
Rasoal and colleagues empirically investigate whether empathy and ethnocultural empathy were the same or different. Using different scales, they find that the two share considerable overlap (Rasoal, Jungert, Hau, & Andersson, 2011). Intercultural empathy has been found to increase perceived concern about other people’s welfare, spark attitude changes towards groups experiencing oppression (Wang et al., 2003) and challenge distinctions between the ‘citizen and the other’ (Hall, 2010; Zembylas, 2012). By contrast, a lack of empathy has been linked to intergroup aggression and social dominance (Wang et al. 2003). Zhu regards intercultural empathy as a foundation of communication and understanding of ‘the other’ (Zhu, 2011), while Hofmann links empathy to prosocial behaviour (Hofmann, 2000). A school culture of “multiculturalism” may prevent violence and facilitate community engagement and respect for diversity (Chang & Le, 2010; Le & Johansen, 2011). Tangen finds that empathetic teachers may promote wellbeing and support motivation among students (Tangen, 2009). Further research on teachers’ understanding of cultural differences and cross-cultural sensitivity has been conducted by Mahon and Mahon and Cushner (J. Mahon, 2006; J.
and research on new scales has been done by Mallinckrodt et al., who published their work after the present study was developed (Mallinckrodt et al., 2014). In Finland, key research has been done by Dervin and colleagues and (F. Dervin, 2015; Fred Dervin, Paatela-Niemenen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012), who focus specifically on a much broader aspect of intercultural competences in teacher education. In addition, a number of Norwegian publications address dialogue, inclusion within teaching and learning without explicitly touching upon empathy (Børhaug, 2015; Hylland-Eriksen & Sajad, 2015; Skrefsrud, 2012; Westrheim & Tolo, 2014). Research and scholarship designed to support teachers and students in addressing diversity, social change, inclusion and social justice has been most comprehensively conducted by Banks and colleagues (2009), who explore multiculturalism in education (James A. Banks, 2009). By building on this body of research, our study shows that intercultural empathy facilitates intergroup relations and may promote a feeling of inclusiveness among students. We found no similar studies in Norway and consider our study to be an original scientific contribution.

Theory

Inclusive citizenship.

Immigration, increased diversity and calls for integration and inclusion in schools as well as society at large is an important context for focus interpersonal relations and particularly empathy in this article. A theory of inclusive citizenship addresses inclusiveness at both personal and system level and is therefore applied to the analysis. Feminist theories of citizenship practices emphasise several criteria of an inclusive citizenship; these are; justice, recognition, self-determination, solidarity (Kabeer, 2005). Lister ads to criteria, participatory parity and universality of difference (Lister, 2008).

To start with, justice is understood as when it’s fair to treat people equally and when it’s fair to treat students differently. Such dilemmas of justice reflects that we are all different and should be treated as such. It follows from this that recognition of equal worth across difference is of utmost importance. It acknowledges the intrinsic worth of all human beings as well as respect for difference. Thirdly, self-determination understood as people’s ability to exercise some control over their own lives is vital to inclusive citizenship. Self-determination could mean quite few different aspects such as self-efficacy, the person believes in own capabilities to attain goals in life as well as self-worth and self-respect (Bandura, 1997). Also inclusiveness as self-determination is dependent on resources like qualification in education and subsistence through work. Four, solidarity can be seen both as a societal goal and as one of particular importance in education (Kabeer, 2005). The author believes that participation rights (and knowledge) provides vital options in developing self-determination as well as showing solidarity with groups within school or in society at large. Linking the four aspects, Lister writes of “the capacity to identity with others and to act in unity with them in making claims.” The ability to establish relations, join forces with others and act collectively is socially and politically is vital to achieve obtain a favourable outcome. She therefore stresses “participatory parity” or the ability of members in society to interact with one another as peers (Lister, 2008). The latter is of particular interest to intercultural empathy, reflecting the capacity (or willingness) to identify with others in a spirit of solidarity. Finally, (Lister (2008:51) suggests the politics of difference requires an “ethos of pluralization” to avoid an exclusive identity and politics one has to recognize the right to be different and to promote a reflective solidarity as “universalism of difference”.

A. Mahon & Cushner, 2014), and research on new scales has been done by Mallinckrodt et al., who published their work after the present study was developed (Mallinckrodt et al., 2014). In Finland, key research has been done by Dervin and colleagues and (F. Dervin, 2015; Fred Dervin, Paatela-Niemenen, Kuoppala, & Riitaoja, 2012), who focus specifically on a much broader aspect of intercultural competences in teacher education. In addition, a number of Norwegian publications address dialogue, inclusion within teaching and learning without explicitly touching upon empathy (Børhaug, 2015; Hylland-Eriksen & Sajad, 2015; Skrefsrud, 2012; Westrheim & Tolo, 2014). Research and scholarship designed to support teachers and students in addressing diversity, social change, inclusion and social justice has been most comprehensively conducted by Banks and colleagues (2009), who explore multiculturalism in education (James A. Banks, 2009). By building on this body of research, our study shows that intercultural empathy facilitates intergroup relations and may promote a feeling of inclusiveness among students. We found no similar studies in Norway and consider our study to be an original scientific contribution.
Dependent variable: intercultural empathy

A key debate is whether culture is “distinct, relatively homogenous and stable”, as in the culture relativist approach, or neither clearly bound, tightly integrated nor unchanging (Hylland-Eriksen, 2009; Jagoda, 2012). Like Hylland-Eriksen (2009) and Jagoda (2012, 300), we regard culture as “a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena”. Following these scholars, we see intercultural relations as subjective encounters between humans in which perceptions of culture as similar or different are defined and constructed by individuals.

The term ‘empathia’ stems from the Greek language and means understanding others by entering their world (Zhu 2011). In recent literature, empathy has been described as “the immediate experience of the emotions of another person” or “the intellectual understanding of another’s experience” (DeTurk, 2001; Duan & Hill, 1996). A cognitive aspect of intercultural empathy is the ability to take on the role(s) or perspective(s) of another person (Gladstein, 1983). In many situations, it is important to respond with similar emotions (emotional empathy), as this shows an ability to “know another person’s inner experiences” (Duan and Hill 1996, 262). Building on this, we consider empathy as having both cognitive and emotional traits and as being present in most encounters between individuals. As pointed out in the previous section, experiencing a certain level of empathy is important for wellbeing and feelings of inclusion (e.g. in school). Furthermore, empathy may be learned through experience. This implies that schools might actively support the development of empathy, a concept that is implicit in our regression models.

Empirically, intercultural empathy is multi-dimensional (Nicovich, Boller, & Cornwell, 2005). The emotional and the cognitive aspects of empathy are built using dimensions proposed by Wang et al. (2003), who identified four empirical aspects: empathetic feeling and expression, empathetic perspective-taking, acceptance of cultural difference, and empathetic awareness. These four dimensions reflect the multidimensionality of the concept. Empathic feelings and expressions are measured with six items (D1, D4, D5, D6, D7 and D8), which reflects one’s willingness to act upon perceived discrimination and injustice. Intercultural awareness reflects subjective indifferences to perceived unequal treatment (D2 and D3). Attitudes towards difference are measured by D11 and D12, which express negative attitudes towards inviting students to take an active stand. Finally, with regard to intercultural perspective-taking, we used two items (D9 and D10), which aim to measure an individual’s abilities to take another’s perspective (see Appendix for item text, factor loadings and Chronbach’s α; explained variance for factors in all scales available at: http://www.ntnu.edu/employees/trond.solhaug).

Independent variables –

Participation rights

Democracy requires effective participation rights in order to counterbalance power. To participate also is about more than influence but also imply taking responsibility and learn from practice. Mansbridge reviews the history of participation rights, learning and Bildung from the deliberative assembly in Greece to present (Mansbridge, 1999). Pateman goes as far as to advocate participation and learning as the major goal democracy (Pateman, 1970), while Barber advocates participation as vital to the strength of democracy (Barber, 1984). From an educational point of view John Dewey provide a comprehensive theory of participation in teaching and democracy (Dewey, 1938). Paolo Freire and Ira Shor points to students involvement and the role of empowerment in participation.
Gert Biesta advocates a political and social education building on Arendt, Ranciere and Chantal Mouffe’s radical democracy (Biesta, 2007). Recent comprehensive research has been done by Amnå and colleagues in Sweden see their comprehensive report: (Amnå, Ekström & Stättin 2016).

Pupils have participation rights in all Norwegian schools, which are framed in Opplæringslova (The Law on education) (Opplæringslova, 1998). The level of participation is being assessed yearly in the “elevundersøkelsen” (The pupil study). The average level of participation has since late 1990-ties until now been astonishingly consistent somewhat below mean of the scale. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2015) [Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training].

The emphasis on children’s participation rights or political rights is what distinguishes the UN Convention on Child’s Rights (CRC) article 12 (UN, 1989) from previous efforts to codify children’s human rights. The article goes like this:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Items on participation rights in our measurement scale provide us with the possibility of assessing whether, from the perspective of students, effective measures are in place to guarantee children’s provision and protection rights. Since participation rights enable students them to claim their other rights and speak out when these rights are being infringed they are of considerable significance in schools, where regardless of whether democratic practices are adopted, there remain asymmetrical power relationships between adults and children, as in the wider community. Participation is authorized in the article 12 of the CRC of children’s right to be consulted in matters affecting them. Perhaps the most important theoretical study of student voice and student participation rights, set explicitly within the framework of children’s human rights, is that of Laura Lundy, who critically examines commonly held notions of voice (Lundy, 2007). She points out that children need to know they have the freedom to speak freely (CRC Article 19) and emphasises the overarching principle of non-discrimination (Article 2) so that voice is extended to all. Her model for implementing Article 12 encompasses four key elements: space (opportunity); voice; audience; and influence. Influence relates to the opinion of the child being given “due weight” as stated in Article 12. We started out trying to include these aspects in our measure but did not fully succeed when we applied factor analysis to our data. The author assume that participation, particularly open discussions and voice generates contacts and learning of views of otherness and sameness, which provide basis for understanding and reflections. It is also assumed that such information also might favour a positive development of empathy among the students. The scale measures the effectiveness of participation rights (C1, C2, C3, C4 and C6). We argue that students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of individual educational rights in school are important contextual signs of respect and an effort to provide a true
“inclusive education” for all students. Therefore, we expect that these variables are positively associated with aspects of intercultural empathy.

Knowledge
Schools have always focused on important knowledge. Much research has therefore been devoted exploring what knowledge is important for political participation (Carpini & Keeter, 1993; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Popkin & Dimock, 1999; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010; Solhaug, 2006; Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001; Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 1997). However, research has also shown that a much wider array of skills is needed for general participation in society, not to mention for political participation. This has led to the exploration of a variety of skills considered of vital importance for democracy (see below). Instead of “knowledge”, the term “competence” has therefore been introduced as a more comprehensive description of knowledge and skills. The idea of stimulating a variety of skills may be implicit in the idea of student participation in schools as democratic institutions. In the present study, such knowledge and skills are related to the growing diversity in our societies. Knowledge of “the other” is highly emphasised in the literature as a basis for understanding, reflection, inquiry and solidarity (James A. Banks, 2009; James A Banks, 2004). Our measure of cognitive skills is developed by Munroe and Pearson where we use four items F1, F2, F3 and F4 (Munroe & Pearson, 2006). It is expected that to be informed about diversity of cultures are positively associated with intercultural empathy.

Gender
The Scandinavian countries are known for gender equality (Hausmann, Tyson, Bekhuche, & Zadia, 2014), and gender differences among students in school are a much emphasised and debated issue in Norway and Denmark. Much of the current research explores differences in academic achievements (Aasen, Lekhal, Drugli, & Nordahl, 2015; Imsen, 2000). Knudsen discusses gender and pedagogy, and Skelten has edited a large publication on gender and education, though she lacks research on gender and empathy (only three hits) (Knudsen, 2012; Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006). It is expected that girls display more favourable attitudes toward diversity than boys.

The ‘contact hypothesis’.
The ‘contact hypothesis’ proposes that personal contact between social groups tends to make them less hostile toward one another (Pettigrew, 1998). The hypothesis is particularly relevant in schools because various groups may be present. If so schools become an arena for intercultural contact over time and this contact may have a variety of qualities like common interest, collaboration, friendship or just attending the same class. Also, the relationships in school last quite some time. This fact makes schools important. Personal contact in schools, therefore, has the potential to ‘produce’ more harmony and mutual understanding in society. However, as emphasized by (Allport, 1954)262–3), the nature of contact is essential. Contact is most powerful when occurring under facilitating conditions like status equality, the pursuit of common goals or cooperation. A recent Scandinavian study is done by Frølund Thomsen on a large Danish sample (not schools) exploring the link between interethnic contact and the development of tolerance (Frølund Thomsen, 2012). He finds some support for the hypothesis that intergroup contact may promote tolerance. But this link is far from unconditional. We measure contact with two variables; R1 The number of native languages spoken I school. R2 percentage of bilingual pupils in school. It is expected that the more diverse the school is the more likely it will be for students to me more empathetic toward different students.
Methodology.
The study is based on a quantitative methodology supplemented by additional interviews with school leaders and teachers.

Sampling
Research pressure in schools has severely limited our options; however, we have attempted to select schools and students experiencing a variety of cultural diversity. Specifically, we selected schools from two different geographical regions that vary according to cultural diversity. The design assumes that increased diversity in schools offers opportunities for the learning and development of inter-relational attitudes across diverse populations.

We selected students from three general classes on each of our three levels of study. In addition, in one of the schools, we included students from an international baccalaureate programme (N1 and Dk2). The sample sizes and diversities are displayed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N1</th>
<th>N2</th>
<th>DK1</th>
<th>DK2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of different languages spoken</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of bilingual students (%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=895</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research assistants made appointments with teachers, attended classes, informed and sought the consent of students, distributed the questionnaires and collected responses. The response rate varied from 85 to 94% and included between 77 and 85% of the student population, which we consider to be high. On average, 9% of students were not present in their classes when the data collection took place. The questionnaires and file were processed in a scanner at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

Analytical procedures
The data were processed using IBM SPSS. All distributions were checked for skewness and kurtosis, which were well below 1.0 (threshold is 2.0). Missing data of 1 to 3% were replaced in the sample and assigned the mean value.

Our scales were developed from theory and international studies. We used a semi-confirmatory item analysis (principal axis factoring) with a non-rotation option. Factor loadings, Chronbachs α and R2 were used as measures for the factors’ explained variance and are reported in the Appendix (Ringdal, 2013). Considerations of concept validity and statistical validity were the basis for decisions on items in sum scores, which were the basis for the empirical analysis.

Analytically, we started with correlations between explanatory variables and aspects of intercultural empathy (see below). In order to achieve the scientific goal of a simple model explaining the maximum amount of variance (Kline, 2005), the variables with significant bivariate correlations are presented in the first multiple regression model. The second and final regression models include only
the significant variables from the first regression model. This procedure was followed for all four aspects of our dependent variable. Methodology

Standard quantitative methodology using questionnaires to reveal a number of variables which is assumed to influence intercultural empathy of which knowledge and participation rights is focused in this study. Data is analysed in SPSS, using factor analysis and Cronbach’s α to validate concepts. Correlations and regressions are used to analyse the results.

**Results**

The analysis starts with using the whole sample from the two countries and then continue with regression analysis country wise. First the results from bivariate correlations between three aspects of intercultural empathy and participation rights, knowledge, gender, number of mother tongues, percentage bilingual home.

Table 2. Correlations between three aspects of intercultural empathy and participation rights, knowledge, gender, number of mother tongues, percentage bilingual home. Numbers are Persons r and probability P. N=895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intercultural empathy</th>
<th>Social indifference</th>
<th>Accept of diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rights</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.407</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1 Number of languages</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Percent bilingual study</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that effective participation rights have moderate but significant associations with both intercultural empathy and particularly acceptance of difference. Also having knowledge of difference and diversity predicts all three aspects of intercultural empathy. There are substantial differences between boys and girls in terms of intercultural empathy with girls being the more empathetic. The variables measuring diversity in school have moderate but significantly associated with the three aspects of intercultural empathy. An exception is R2 and Social indifference. The significant associations lend some support for our assumptions in the theory section. The elaboration of the results continue with the multiple regression on the whole sample.
Table 3. Multiple regression total sample. Dependent variables are three aspects of intercultural empathy. Independent variables are; participation rights, knowledge, gender, number of mother tongues, percentage bilingual home. Numbers are Persons r and probability. N=895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Intercultural empathy</th>
<th>Social indifference</th>
<th>Accept of Diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rights</td>
<td>,17</td>
<td>,000</td>
<td>,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>,165</td>
<td>,000</td>
<td>,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>,385</td>
<td>,000</td>
<td>,29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1 Number of languages</td>
<td>,09</td>
<td>,000</td>
<td>,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Percent bilingual stud</td>
<td>,055</td>
<td>,003</td>
<td>,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>,23</td>
<td>,13</td>
<td>,09</td>
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</table>

Participation rights are still moderately but significantly associated with intercultural empathy and willingness to accept diversity. This lends some support for our assumptions Knowledge is slightly more than participation rights associated with intercultural empathy, social indifference and accept of diversity. Gender has the strongest predictions on particularly intercultural empathy and social indifference. As for the R1 and R2, the number of languages seem to be the stronger predictor of the two, but still both are very moderate. The total variance (R²) accounted for by these variables range from ,23 for intercultural empathy, more modest ,13 for social indifference and ,09 for accept of diversity.

Table 4. Multiple regressions by country. Dependent variable three aspects of intercultural empathy. Independent variable; participation rights, knowledge and gender. Numbers are Persons r and probability. NDK= 386 NNO= 497

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Intercultural empathy</th>
<th>Social indifference</th>
<th>Accept of diversity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Dk</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rights</td>
<td>β=,17</td>
<td>P=,000</td>
<td>β=,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>β=,16</td>
<td>P=,000</td>
<td>β=,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>β=,42</td>
<td>P=,000</td>
<td>β=,37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>,25</td>
<td>,15</td>
<td>,21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some important country differences between Norway and Denmark. First participation rights seem to be predict less in Denmark compared to Norway, particularly intercultural empathy and social indifference. Also in Denmark, knowledge predicts less variance in intercultural empathy and social indifference. The gender differences follow much of the same pattern in the two countries except for ‘accept of diversity’. The variables R1 and R2 have only two values by country and is not included in the analysis. The models predicts more variance in Norway than in Denmark.

**Discussion**

Starting with participation rights the participation framework in our measurement (see appendix) emphasise children’s right to voice their views and that this right is provided them in teaching. It is
quite implicit that they have an audience and that their views are respected is particularly emphasised. However, the article emphasise that children’s views are given “due weight” and is not included in our measure. To experience such a participation and diversity friendly framework and seem to be important for experiencing otherness in views and culture which also provide leaning opportunities. Such positive experiences from a diverse learning environment also may also (according to our empirical findings) support the development of intercultural empathy among children in the school.

Recall the framework for inclusive citizenship, participation in school may be perceived as citizenship practices. Effective participation rights for all in school is a signal of equal worth and respect. Participation in discussions may support the development of self-determination and learn from others. It forms the basis for building relationship, to act in unity with others and practice solidarity. Lundy rightly emphasise effective influence in her model for participation (Lundy, 2007). To influence is often the motive behind participation in democracy and school. It has been pointed out that being able to have effective influence is also vital to democracy. Enduring failure to give views due weight may rapidly lead to dissolution and only legitimize the stronger part in school (Solhaug, 2003). A last comment on the significance of the participation climate in school, is the importance of being respected and feeling safe from harassment and prejudice when voicing particular views. The safe classroom/school climate is not part of Lundy’s model, but the author argue that feeling safe is such of particular importance in school.

It seems that being informed (knowledge) about diversity is a steady predictor of intercultural empathy. First, this supports that empathy is a matter of intellectual reasoning as well as feelings. It is argued that there is dialectical relationship between participation and knowledge, which imply a possible interaction effect between the two. Knowledge is a prerequisite for participation and is enhanced from the participatory experiences while participation experiences imply active encounters in school, which in turn feeds learning from the other. In most cases (according to the empirical evidence), knowledge of the other supports empathy and positive feelings. However, there is a complex relationship between the two. Encounters between humans also result in negative experiences of major disagreement, clash of values and attitudes or simply disliking. Such experiences may result in understanding but the emotional aspect may not support enhanced empathy. Knowledge of diversity may also support inclusiveness in terms of showing solidarity, make friends and accept of difference.

In our measure of the contact hypothesis, we use indicators of diversity, and not personal contact variables. This is applicable to schools because they are such special institutions were children and young people are obliged to attend, have close contact in class, get to know each other and often find new friends. Schools are simply arenas for contact, which increases the likeliness for development of positive attitudes. There are at least four theoretical/empirical processes which support such development (Pettigrew, 1998). First, in school learning about the outgroup takes place. Although such learning may result in positive as well as negative in terms of deeper relations, learning is held to be the major source of the development of intergroup relations. Schools offer such learning opportunities for long time in children’s life. The second follows from the first. If the intergroup contact between individuals are optimal changing behaviour is likely to occur. The third mechanism is related to emotions. Anxiety or tension often accompany first intergroup contact and may lead to negative experiences. Positive emotions of liking and joy may on the other hand develop
relations more positively and result in affective ties. (Pettigrew, 1998) Schools are precisely and important arena for making friends. The fourth rationale is that optimal intergroup contact may support in-group reappraisal (Pettigrew, 1998). This is a process takes time, but may precisely take place in schools because children and young people have the time it takes to develop such favourable attitudes. Schools may thus be an arena for practicing inclusive citizenship.

Conclusion

- Students’ information and understanding of cultural diversity is an important predictor of intercultural empathy, which offer opportunities for schools to support inclusive citizenship.

- Effective participation rights matters in school, particularly because it facilitates learning.

- Institutionalization of human rights particularly protection and participation rights predicts intercultural empathy moderately but significantly.

- There are important gender differences in intercultural empathy in both countries.

- There are some important school/country differences in the effects of knowledge and participation on intercultural empathy.

Limitations of study.

- First limitation is that the results are only valid to the selected students and schools.

- Second, there are some deficiencies in the indicators used where influence is not included in the participation rights measure. Also the author failed to create a good measure in perspective taking as prat of intercultural empathy.

- Third with only two schools sampled in each country one should avoid speaking of cluntry differences but use the present result as an indicator of possible differences in larger studies.
Literature


Solhaug, T. (2003). *Utdanning til demokratisk medborgerskap.* (Disertation), Unipub


Appendix. Table shows scale name, item text, their factor loadings, Chronbachs $\alpha$ and the percentage of total variance in the factor which is explained by the items for Norwegian and Danish sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale name</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Chronbachs $\alpha$</th>
<th>Explained Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Empathy feel and expression (Dependent Variable) | D1 I often speak up against anyone who tells jokes that could be perceived as discriminatory  
D4. When I know that my friends are treated unfairly because of their skin colour, I try to speak up for them.  
D5. I become angry or sad when someone at school is treated unfairly because of their skin colour or background.  
D6. I am easily affected by films and books in which someone who is different from me is discriminated against.  
D7. I will work actively to ensure that everyone, regardless of race or background, achieves equal rights.  
D8. I often feel sorry when people with a different skin colour or background than my own are discriminated against. | .44 .50                        | .53 .58                   | .79 .74                      | .81                      | 44% 46% |
| Empathetic awareness                   | D2. It does not bother me if people make statements that might seem racist towards some groups.  
D3. I don’t think much about how a joke about other people might be perceived by the victims themselves. | .64 .65                         | .58 .60                   |                           |                           | 44% 46% |
| Accept of difference                   | D11. Usually, I do not get on too well with people whose background is very different from mine.  
D12. I have little knowledge of people whose background is very different from mine. | .60 .65                        | .58 .59                   |                           |                           | 36% 41% |
<p>| Knowledge difference                   | F2. I know that there are big differences in how people practice their religion. | .66 .47                         | .65 .55                   |                           |                           | 44% 34% |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Q1 Sex, girl boy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language at home</td>
<td>Q2 What language do you speak most of the time at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>R1 Number of mother tongues in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>R2 Percentage of bilingual pupils at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3.</td>
<td>I am well aware that people’s sexual orientations may differ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4.</td>
<td>I am well aware that girls and boys may experience inequality and injustice in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.84 .80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.40 .42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>