Meaningful Participation?
Political Efficacy of Adolescents in 24 countries

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Abstract

This 24-nation European–US study (1999–2000) of the democratic political values, attitudes, and behavior of adolescents uncovers a generally high level of self-predicted future political participation as adults. Four of five 14-year-olds regard themselves as future voters, and 61% predict involvement in protest activities. Moreover, law breaking as an act of protest is almost as attractive in theory as acting through representative institutions. A two-level, combined individual- and country-level regression analysis of political efficacy made use of the new SEM analytic tools. Individual-level internal efficacy appears to play a major role in explaining the predicted participation intensity. At the country level, internal efficacy could above all explain the predicted participation in representative forums, but not a disposition to vote. In contrast to post-materialistic theory adolescents of southern Europe self-predicted the widest range of political participation, while adolescents in the most post-materialistic countries, such as the Nordic countries, for whom voting is most important, predicted the narrowest. Through internal efficacy, two sets of contextual factors respectively erode and boost participatory motivations. Revealing the tensions existing between political institutions and civic norms is above all a clue to understanding what strengthens internal efficacy and makes political participation meaningful.

Key words: Political efficacy, internal efficacy, external efficacy, political participation, adolescents, representing, law-breaking, protesting, voting, two-level analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM).
1. The Formative Adolescence

Although it is unclear whether political participation is increasing or decreasing in western democracies, scholars largely agree that it is becoming less institutional and more individual, diverse, and unconventional—in other words, postmodern. Overall, the repertoire of citizen activism has expanded, taking in “non-political” arenas as well (Dalton, 1996, 2000; Leighley, 1995; Norris, 2002; Topf, 1995). These changes call for multi-faceted reappraisal of political participation, and a feature of such reappraisal would be a questioning of the very representative character of political systems.

Since much of the discussion focuses on youth, the development of political values, attitudes, and behavior among youth needs to be better scrutinized. Though understanding youth is a key to understanding the development of contemporary democracies (Jennings & Stoker, 2001), international research has paid little attention to political socialization for decades (Jennings, 2001; Niemi, 1999; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). There is, however, a growing realization of both the necessity and possibility of contributing theoretically and empirically to building understanding of the values and behavior of youth, among both political scientists (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Stolle & Hooghe, 2002) and development theorists (Stattin & Kerr, 2002).

This article analyses selected results of a comparative study conducted by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) 1999–2000 among 14-year-olds in 23 European democracies and in the United States (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). It is the
motivational aspect of participation—recognized as an under-investigated field (Norris, 2002)—that we explore in this research.

More precisely, we investigated the explanatory power of political efficacy as pertains self-expectations of four modes of political participation—voting, representing, protesting, and law-breaking—controlling for social, political institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural dimensions. By comparing the level of internal and external political efficacy in the 24 studied countries, we sought to determine whether it varied according to specific, theoretically deduced contextual hypotheses described by external data sources. Two-level analysis helped us explain these relationships at the individual and country levels; based on the preceding, we could locate the significant individual and contextual factors affecting internal and external efficacy as well as the self-predicted participation intensity and type.

2. Political Efficacy in Cross-National Analysis

Two decades ago, Paul R. Abramson concluded that, “next to party identification, no political attitude has been studied more extensively than feelings of political effectiveness” (Abramson, 1983, p.135). Although political efficacy is still studied fairly frequently (see e.g. Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990; Finkel, 1985; Goul Andersen, 2000; Jennings, 1990; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Soss, 1999), surprisingly little attention has been paid to the concept in the ongoing debate on political behavior, which seeks to explain and compare political participation in postindustrial democracies (Klingemann & Fuchs, 1995; Norris, 2002). Although political efficacy has not been entirely neglected, the focus has been on the macro and
intermediate (meso) levels (Putnam, 2000, 2002). At the individual (micro) level, on the other hand, theories explaining cross-national differences in political activism are scarcer. At the individual level, the socioeconomic status (SES) model focuses on resources and mainly helps explain differences within a society. This could also be said of the important findings of Verba and his colleagues, who deal solely with the American context (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).¹

Political efficacy has been studied for 50 years, since Campbell et al. introduced the concept in 1954. These political efficacy pioneers defined the concept as “the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e., that it is worthwhile performing one’s civic duties. It is the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change” (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954, p.187).

As seen from the Campbell et al. definition, political efficacy was originally defined in one-dimensional terms. However, Lane and others have demonstrated that both the concept and the items employed to measure it in fact contain two separate components: (1) *internal efficacy*, that refers to the individual’s belief about his or her own competence to understand and to make a difference in political matters, and (2) *external efficacy*, that refers to the individual’s belief that decision makers will listen to citizens’ opinions, that is, that the political system is responsive (Balch, 1974; Lane, 1959). In an overview of the political efficacy literature, Abramson claims, however, that many scholars have not paid attention to this important distinction (Abramson, 1983, p. 144-5).
The 1960s saw many studies of political efficacy (Agger, Goldstein, & Pearl, 1961; see e.g. Farris, 1960; McClosky & Schaar, 1965). Of these, Almond and Verba’s comparative study of political attitudes in five nations and Easton and Dennis’s article about feelings of political effectiveness among American school children were perhaps the most important. Easton and Dennis is still among the most exhaustive studies of adolescent attitudes towards political action in general, and of their perception of political efficacy in particular. Another of their contributions, but of a more theoretical kind, is their attention to the normative dimension of political efficacy, that is, the belief that citizens should feel able to act effectively in politics and that decision makers should be responsive to citizen demands (Easton & Dennis, 1967, p. 26). In fact, this was and is by no means an uncontroversial statement: formerly, excessive participation was sometimes regarded as a threat to political stability (see e.g. Schumpeter, 1944); today it is more commonly seen as a threat to political equality (Verba et al., 1995).

In an enlightening early 1970s article, Pateman builds on criticism of early studies of political efficacy. She argues that scholars of the 1950s and 1960s seemed overly concerned with the psychological dimension of political efficacy (Pateman, 1971). Scholars such as Almond and Verba take external efficacy for granted; differences in individuals’ political efficacy are viewed as a matter of political self-esteem, the roots of which are said to be traceable to childhood. Pateman, on the other hand, argues that political efficacy is a multi-dimensional concept, that there is also a cognitive and, as stated by Easton and Dennis, a normative dimension. Lack of external efficacy, for example, has to do with experiences and perceptions of the operation of the political structure—an explanation in terms of cognitive, not psychological, factors. For this
reason, she argues that under some circumstances even opting out of the political process could be a logical response (Pateman, 1971, p. 298).

Over the last few decades modern democracies have made important progress that has changed their societies in some respects. For example, citizens today have more years of formal education than before, although not to be mistaken for a better knowledge of politics (Milner, 2002). In sum, citizens of contemporary democracies are more critical of political parties and decision makers (Norris, 1999).

The field of comparative political behavior has an ambiguous relationship to this somewhat new political climate in established Western and in new democracies. On the one hand, as Dalton puts it, “the field has generated a dramatic increase in the understanding of how people think about politics, how they become politically engaged, and how they make their political decisions. Empirical data on citizens’ attitudes are now available on a nearly global scale” (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000, p. 912). On the other hand, the individualization and diversity of political participation limits our ability to explain the behavior using the most common models and theories. We cannot rely on an overly simple, monocausal explanation as to why citizens engage in political activism (see e.g. Dalton, 2000; Norris, 2002).

Bearing this and the political efficacy debate in mind, political efficacy could be expected to have become an important variable in the field of comparative political behavior, that is, in attempts to explain political participation in modern democracies. However, this expectation has not be borne
out in actual research. Political efficacy is often an issue in theoretical discussions, being mentioned in the same context as matters such as political interests or trust in institutions, that is, when discussing political attitudes. Nevertheless, it emerges rarely in contemporary empirical data, and when it does, the data are often insufficient. For example, when Verba et al. analyze political efficacy in their study of civic voluntarism in the United States, they surprisingly fail to distinguish between internal and external efficacy, which they admit makes it difficult to draw any conclusions from the analysis (Verba et al., 1995, p. 276). The same could be said of Dekker et al., who investigate political efficacy using a one-item indicator that, in our opinion, makes it almost impossible to draw any conclusions (Dekker, Koopmans, & van den Broek, 1997). The effects of internal and external efficacy on political participation have been found to be different; so possibly are the factors explaining these two types of political efficacy. We will examine both types of efficacy in our analysis.

Comparative analyses have been very scarce over the past few decades. In 1979, internal and external efficacy were carefully analyzed in five countries, both in terms of their significance for conventional participation and for protest potential (Barnes, Kaase, & al, 1979). It was concluded that in basically every country there was a relationship between internal efficacy and both conventional participation and protest potential. For external efficacy the situation was different: in all the studied countries it was significantly related to conventional participation, but not to protest potential. That is, there was no significant difference in terms of protest potential between those who believed the political system to be responsive and those who did not (Farah, Barnes, & Heunks, 1979, pp. 433-440). Another interesting conclusion that could be drawn from the analysis is that younger people seemed to have a higher feeling of political efficacy than did
their parents (Allerbeck, Jennings, & Rosenmayr, 1979). In their four-country analysis of data from the mid 1980s, moreover, Hayes and Bean concluded that a minority in all four countries could be said to be both internally and externally efficacious; Americans, however, clearly felt the most efficacious, in both respects (Hayes & Bean, 1993).

One of the few cross-national analyses of the past few years is Norris’s study of political activism in some twenty countries, in which she analyzes the significance of internal efficacy for voting in elections (Norris, 2002, p. 83-100). However, her analysis falls short in two ways. First, she only has political efficacy data pertaining to electoral turnout, and not to other kinds of participation (today’s citizens participate in a variety of ways, not only by voting). Second, since she makes no comparisons between the studied countries, she is unable to draw any conclusions as to whether political efficacy differs between countries, and if so, why this is the case. This article aims to address both these omissions.

3. Data, Measurement, and Method

3.1 Student and Country-Level Data

The survey data that is relevant for our research task—gaining an understanding of the democratic values and behavior of young people—is exceptionally rich. We chose to analyze two vast international surveys with nationally representative samples: (1) The IEA Civic Education Study (IEA CES) of 14-year-olds, data collection 1999–2000, and (2) The European Value Study/World Values Survey (EVS/WVS), of people aged 16–84, data collection 1995–2000. The IEA dataset of students, age ranges from 13 to 15 includes representative samples from 23
European countries as well as the United States—about 70,000 students from 24 countries in all (dataset DATA24). EVS/WVS data are available for all the same countries except Cyprus (dataset DATA22 of European countries only, excluding the USA and Cyprus) (see Appendix). The research strategy for obtaining additional country-level contextual data was to cover a wide range of explanatory dimensions concerning social, political, and cultural issues. Such data were obtained from as close as possible to the year 2000 from the UNDP, World Bank, and Transparency International (Appendix).

In selecting what available data to use, the aim was to capture each researched concept and dimension, though not directly observable, with as many indicators as possible. When such a set of indicators forms a well-defined factor and at the same time includes data from IEA and other sources, we can check the validity of the answers of the 14-year-olds. The IEA measures of women’s rights and of patriotism are examples of high country correlations between measures obtained from different sources (Munck, 2002).

3.2 Analytic Tools and Two-level Modeling

The statistical tool, Structural Equation Modelling SEM, is able to handle measures of theoretical constructs, like internal and external political efficacy, as well as data at individual and country level. As efficacy and other constructs cannot be observed directly a measurement model is defined in SEM by several indicators of the underlying phenomena, termed ‘latent variable’, or ‘factor’. This methodology is particularly efficient when observations, ‘manifest variables’, are not perfectly valid and reliable. Such statistical analysis using regression modeling with latent variables represents an advancement over ordinary regression analysis since measurement errors
in the independent variables, biasing estimated regression coefficients, are taken into account (MacCallum & Austin, 2000). Another feature of SEM is the capacity to explore the multidimensionality of the political efficacy concept, enabling us to identify two well defined unidimensional measures, internal and external efficacy.

Furthermore, two-level SEM modelling can estimate factors related to both individual characteristics and country-specific elements, of special interest in comparative analysis. In comparison to traditional regression analysis, we are thereby able to handle measurements at both the micro and macro levels simultaneously (Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998). Analytically this is important, since the contextual effects are not simply “… ‘add-on’ elements to be included after the individual effects are taken into account: rather, they are implicated in the ‘individual’ effects from the outset” (Jones, Johnston, & Pattie, 1992, p. 378).

We use two programs to conduct the analysis: the Amos SEM program, operating within the STREAMS interface (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Gustafsson & Stahl, 2000). In a simultaneous SEM analysis, based on two covariance matrices “Within” and “Between” as inputs to the STREAMS program, the results achieved at both levels cover: (1) goodness-of-fit test of the model, (2) estimated regression coefficients, (3) $t$-values for these estimates for significance tests, and finally, if a one-factor measurement model is applied, (4) reliability estimates for a sum composite of the indicators defining the latent variable or factor.
3.3 Modeling strategy

The strategy was guided by the desire to differentiate the efficacy analysis with reliable measures of internal and external efficacy at individual and country level and also to focus the contextual effects on efficacy and participation\textsuperscript{10}.

The following SEM models were analyzed: Model 1: Two-level measurement model for efficacy (Figure 1); Model 2: Two-level regression model of participation on efficacy (Table 2); Model 3: Two-level correlation model for explanatory variables, internal efficacy and participation (Table 3); Model 4: Integrated measurement model for corroding and nourishing factors of internal efficacy (Figure 4); Model 5: Two-level regression model of participation on internal efficacy, corroding and nourishing factors (Table 4).

3.4 Measurement

The IEA data contributed three kinds of variables to this study: (1) IEA International scales, “IEA scales,”\textsuperscript{11} (2) composites based on sums of items, “IEA sums” (where these are divided by the number of items involved they are referred to as “IEA means”), and (3) latent variables based on several indicators and tested in SEM for unidimensionality, referred to as “IEA factors.” The outcome variables are predicted participation intensity, measuring the overall predicted involvement in political action, and voting, representing, protesting, and law-breaking, which capture the students’ positive answers regarding these four types of participation. Predicted political participation is based on an instrument about political action which asks the students: “When you are an adult, what do you expect that you will do?” The alternative answers are “I
will certainly not do this,” “I will probably not do this,” “I will probably do this,” “I will certainly do this,” and “Don’t know (DN)”. Nine items ask the students to predict their behavior pertaining to: voting, representing (joining a political party, running for local office), protesting (writing letters to the editor, collecting signatures, or peacefully protesting), and law-breaking (spray-painting, blocking traffic, or occupying buildings). The “definitely passive” group, answering that they would certainly not participate in any of the nine activities, comprised less than 1% of the pooled 24-country dataset (which gave each country equal weighting). The “DN” rate was also low, only 1.1% of respondents answering all nine questions with “don’t know”. Only 1.7% of the students did not answer the participation questions at all.

- Predicted participation intensity: “PPI” is defined as the sum of nine types of activities which respondents indicated they would either “probably” or “certainly” do.
- Voting: “V” is the code 1 to 4 of the 4-point scale for the item, “Vote in national elections.” “Voting %” counts those who responded positively (“probably” or “certainly”) to this item.
- Representing: “R” is the mean of codes 1 to 4 for the two items, “Join a political party” and “Be a candidate for a local office.” “Representing %” counts those who have responded positively (“probably” or “certainly”) to one or two of these items.
- Protesting: “P” and “Protesting %” are consistently defined by the variable “R” above, but are based on three different types of protesting behavior: “Write letters to newspaper about social or political concerns,” “Collect signatures for a petition,” and “Participate in a non-violent, peaceful, protest march or rally.”
Law-breaking: “L” and “Law-breaking %” are based on three alternative types of civil disobedience: “Spray-paint protest slogans on walls,” “Block traffic as a form of protest,” and “Occupy public buildings as a form of protest.”

3.5 Efficacy Measurement Model - Model 1

Two dimensions, internal efficacy and external efficacy, are measured by means of latent variables defined by multiple indicators. Three items in the IEA CES survey pertain to the political self, each with four alternative responses (strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree) and DN: “I know more about politics than most people my age,” “When political issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say,” and “I am able to understand most political issues easily.” These items cover knowledge, discussion, and understanding as three aspects of internal efficacy, of which two explicitly include a comparative assessment of the student’s relationship to others.\textsuperscript{12}

To measure the external dimension of efficacy we were interested in respondents’ evaluations of their political systems’ responsiveness to the demands and needs of ordinary people (Abramson, 1983). External efficacy was captured by five items using the same response scale as did the political-self items: “The government cares a lot about what all of us think about new laws,” “The government is doing its best to find out what people want,” “The powerful leaders in government care very little about the opinions of people,”\textsuperscript{13} “The politicians quickly forget the needs of the voters who elected them,” and “When people get together to demand change, the leaders in government listen.” These questions defining external efficacy probed what people think and want, and whether they think leaders are listening.

Figure 1 here
The basic two-level measurement for efficacy, Model 1, is depicted by a path diagram in Figure 1, representing the manifest variables described above and the latent variables, at both the individual (“Within”) and country (“Between”) levels. The factor loadings and the correlations between the two dimensions, estimated for 22 countries\textsuperscript{14}, show acceptable goodness of fit (RMSA = 0.02), significant factor loadings at both the individual and country levels, and the following reliability estimates: for internal efficacy—individual level, $r = 0.61$, and country level, $r = 0.82$; and external efficacy—individual level, $r = 0.57$, and country level, $r = 0.68$. For the study as a whole we found satisfactory reliability for internal efficacy, while the reliability of external efficacy is weaker. SEM was also used in estimating the correlation between internal and external efficacy (represented by a two-direction arrow, $\leftrightarrow$, in the path diagram); taking measurement error into account the correlation was 0.23 (significant p<0.01) at the individual level, and –0.46 (significant p<0.10) at the country level.

4. Comparative Participation Patterns

Table 1 here

We start our description by looking at anticipated patterns of political participation among 14-year-olds in 24 countries. Looking at Table 1, we note that more than four out of five respondents (80%) regard themselves as being voters (voting) when they are adults. Of these self-predicted voters, 24% say that voting is the only political activity they will perform, so the vast majority of self-predicted voters claim that they will do more than just vote. For this majority, demonstrating, writing letters to the editor, and signing petitions (protesting) are by far the most attractive other
forms of participation, as many as 61% of them declaring that they will participate in such activities. Engaging in the representative arena through party membership and/or running for local office (representing) attracts 29% of the sample, while breaking the law for political purposes (law-breaking) attracts almost as many (25%). Being a non-voter 20%, on the other hand, does not imply total withdrawal from political activities; as a matter of fact, only 7% of the 14-year-olds expect to lead an adult political life of complete passivity.

Some conclusions can be drawn. There are still reasons to talk about “the uniqueness of the vote” (Verba et al., 1995, p. 23). But in contrast to the sometimes pessimistic and even youth-blaming debate on the future of democracy (Putnam 2000), there seem to be no indications of widespread passivity among the younger generation. To repeat, fewer than one in ten adolescents predict leading a completely passive political life; rather, our data indicate vigorous future citizens. However, the participation pattern foreseen by the 14-year-olds differs somewhat from contemporary participation patterns. For example, if our data are capable of indicating at least something about the true future political participation of the younger generation, we could expect a wider spectrum of political activity than has traditionally been the case. In this respect our data support the findings of Inglehart (Inglehart, 1997) and those of Klingemann and Fuchs (1995). Interestingly, considerably more adolescents say that they will participate in protest activities than join a political party or become a candidate. To a 14-year-old, breaking the law for a political purpose appears to be almost as attractive as acting through traditional political channels. There thus seems to be a generally greater readiness to react critically and evaluatively re-act than to pro-act by shaping the input to the political system (Norris 1999).
Considerable country variation exists regarding self-predicted participation. Less than 60% of 14 years olds in Bulgaria and Switzerland say they will vote, while the proportion is over 90% in Cyprus, Denmark, Hungary, and Slovakia. Similarly, self-predicted becoming a party member and/or running for local office ranges from 15 % in Denmark and Finland to 45% in Cyprus and 49% in Latvia. A distinctive pattern is evident: the lowest levels of predicted future “representing” are mainly found in older democracies in Scandinavia and in other western European countries. Likewise, self-predicted participation in lawful protest activities ranges from 35% in Finland to 89% in Cyprus, and of breaking the law as a political act from 13% in Finland to 54% in Greece.

*Figure 2 here*

The regional differences, also shown in Figure 2, can be seen to lie along a north–south axis, where southern European youth anticipate the most intense political participation, occupying top positions in nearly all participation modes. In contrast to Italian, Portuguese, Greek, and Cypriot youth, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Swedish (Nordic) youth self-predict the lowest participation levels. Interestingly, in both these regions the predicted levels of voting are high. What distinguishes them most of all are attitudes towards other modes of political activism. In the Nordic countries voting seems to be the primary type of political expression, most obviously in the case of Finland. The range of the southern Europeans appears to be much wider: voting is just one of many considered ways to make yourself heard. To a lesser extent, this is also true for American and eastern European (Russian, Bulgarian, and Rumanian) youth.

This north–south pattern is striking in another way. As indicated above, it is mainly in representing that the youth of western and northern Europe differ from those of all other regions.
The youth of the older democracies seem less willing to participate in established representative institutions than the youth of others parts of Europe and in the US.

5. Understanding Participation: Political Efficacy Analyses

5.1 The Role of Political Efficacy

Having examined the predicted intensity of political participation, our next task is to investigate whether political efficacy can help explain preferences among the four modes of participation. In doing so, we begin our efficacy analysis at the individual level.

Table 2 here

Model 2.1 (Table 2) shows that political efficacy does indeed matter. There is an apparent and substantial correlation between efficacy and every one of the four participation types. Interestingly enough, however, the pattern is not the same for internal and external efficacy. Internal efficacy seems to explain far more than does external efficacy, and in every one of the four cases: voting (0.13), representing (0.24), protesting (0.21), and law-breaking (0.11). Internal efficacy generally seems to have a direct positive effect on political participation, also shown in the overall participation intensity disposition (0.35). For all participation types external efficacy explains much less than does internal efficacy.

5.2 Controlling for Other Factors

After having controlled for other factors that are supposed to affect both efficacy and political participation, including variables from social, political, institutional, socioeconomic and cultural dimensions, the significant correlations with internal efficacy persist (Model 2.2 in Table 2). All
in all, no other explanatory factor had greater explanatory power than did internal efficacy—the self-understanding of one’s political competence and potential to make oneself heard. This factor appears to be crucial in determining whether and how an adolescent will choose to get politically involved. Internal efficacy simply seems to be the lens through which a young citizen’s potential range of political activity is viewed.

6. Explaining Efficacy and Participation at the Country Level: A Two-level Model

Many efficacy analyses halt here, satisfied by showing that efficacy matters at least to some extent for various modes of participation (see e.g. Dekker et al., 1997; Farah, Barnes, & Hanks, 1979). After having shown that socioeconomic characteristics may partly account for political efficacy, Hayes and Bean call for a more detailed exploration of explanatory factors in cross-national research (Hayes & Bean, 1993). We want to accept their challenge by entering into a comparative country analysis concerning political efficacy.

Figure 3 here

When looking at country levels of internal efficacy, we find a rather conspicuous pattern: countries having low internal efficacy values are about the same as those having a comparatively low predicted level of participation intensity, and vice versa (Figure 3). Hence, there is a strong, positive correlation of 0.75 between internal efficacy and predicted political activity, at the country level. Once again, the Nordic countries are part of a group of countries including Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and England characterized by relatively low values in both respects. Conversely, the youth with the highest internal efficacy and with the highest predicted
participation intensity are found in two southern European countries, Cyprus and Greece, and in Romania.

Various relevant theories attempt to explain differences in participation at country level. Roughly speaking, some of these theories deal with the social, interpersonal relationships among the people of a nation, while others concern the effect the political institutions. Still others pay attention to socioeconomic development, while a fourth category concentrates on the cultural composition of a country. Having shown the vast impact that internal efficacy has on predicted participation intensity, we will try out each of these theories, to see whether they can explain the internal efficacy variation. Starting with a summary of the theories, we then do the analysis.

6.1 Social Dimension

Countries could be categorized in terms of the role of mobilizing agencies, such as political parties, voluntary associations, and other civic mediating organizations (Norris, 2002). Their common function, though not always their aim, is to channel and encourage engagement by means of their capacity to bring people together and empower them in social-capital–building networks (Putnam, 2000). In turn, political trust and political self-reliance will improve (Warren, 2001).

We used the IEA data on social capital to measure, on the one hand, the extent to which a nation’s students say they can trust fellow citizens, and on the other, the extent to which they participate in voluntary associations of various kinds. If social capital theories are correct, we will
find that the more social capital a country’s youth possesses, the higher their aggregated level of internal and external efficacy.

6.2 Political Institutional Dimension

Another set of frequently tested explanatory theories more directly focuses on core political institutions, such as the state structure, party system, and electoral laws. A number of assumptions could be made as to how political institutions can affect political efficacy. We are mainly interested in investigating three of them: the overall functioning of the political system, citizens’ views of the welfare state, and citizens’ trust in political institutions.

Starting with the first assumption, it could be argued that the more open and effective a political system is, the more responsive its elected politicians will be (see e.g. Dekker et al., 1997). It could further be suggested that in an open society with a small gap between the citizens and the elite and with a low level of corruption, it is easier for citizens to understand politics, and thus to get involved in political matters. Hence, low corruption and an effective government could also have a positive impact on the internal efficacy of the citizens. The more the government is marked by equal and fair treatment of the citizens, the fewer citizens will feel powerless.

Concerning the second assumption, about the citizens’ view of the welfare state, it has been argued that a large welfare state more or less unintentionally disempowers and renders passive its citizens. The “omnipotent” welfare institutions facilitate everything citizens need for their well-being, and it is assumed that this has a negative effect on participation (Hayek, 1976). If this theory is correct, it could be expected that in countries where adolescents expect the government
to take responsibility for a great many matters, the internal efficacy of 14-year-olds would be low. That is, there would be fewer reasons for the individuals themselves to be involved in political matters, and the self-perceived political competence would thus be relatively low, since the political–administrative elite will take care of them. For that reason, IEA scales pertaining to ideological attitudes towards the economic and social responsibilities of the government have been included.

Regarding trust in political institutions, Soss has proposed that “…public bureaucracies should be studied as sites of political learning” (Soss, 1999, p. 376). Four dynamics that build or undermine civic capacity have been identified: creating incentives for mobilization, fostering civic skills, supply resources for political mobilization, and influencing processes of political learning and patterns of political belief (Mettler & Soss, forthcoming).

We have chosen three measurements of such institutional learning that could be significant for students’ political efficacy and that the IEA data enables us to use: internal school efficacy, trust in schools, and trust in national political institutions. The focus on the school system has to do with the fact that it comprises adolescents’ first (and to most adolescents thus far, probably the only direct) experience of a public institution. To understand adolescents’ political values, school thus deserves our special attention (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

Internal school efficacy is reflected in the students’ reported willingness to act on behalf of an unfairly treated schoolmate, in their interest to discuss school issues, and in their self-estimation as to whether they have any say when school questions are discussed. We regard these attitudes
as important indications of the role the school system has taught them to play in society, which in turn may influence their civic identity. Trust in schools, on the other hand, could be seen as an overall evaluation of their individual experiences of probably the most significant political institution in which they have come in contact. It may have spill-over effects for their general understanding of whether the government and representative institutions are trustworthy or not, an aspect we measure as trust in national political institutions. If we find high values for these aspects, we suppose high values for internal efficacy.

6.3 Socioeconomic Dimension

There is also a socioeconomic dimension to consider, since we are conscious of the dynamics existing between economic development and level of democracy (Sen, 2001; Welzel, Inglehart, & Klingemann, 2003). The assumption is that a country’s socioeconomic level of development, as indicated by, for example, access to education, life expectancy, and gross national product, acts so as to favor both internal; people will rely more on their own resources as well as appreciate their governments for what are regarded as precious deliveries. To see whether a positive relationship exists, we used a measure called the human development index (HDI), developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), that takes these aspects into account (UN, 2002). IEA data on home literacy and parental education were used as SES indicators. We also exploited the IEA women’s rights scale as an indicator of a country’s overall gender equity, fully aware of that it also contains crucial information about cultural conditions; we have found that it also covaries with HDI (Munck, 2002).
6.4 Cultural Dimension

Closely connected to socioeconomic theory, post-materialization theory, as presented by (Inglehart & Baker, 2000), is said to explain both the absolute and relative values of efficacy, and the combination of internal and external efficacy in a country’s youth. It is claimed that there has been a social-change–driven cultural value shift in post-industrial societies, especially in the younger generation. In step with the economic and social evolution of a country, post-materialistic, emancipatory values and self-expressive activities are given higher priority at the expense of economic aspects, traditional organizations, and conformist values such as familism and patriotism. We want to test whether this theory holds for efficacy as well; if so, modernization would coexist with high internal efficacy, which mainly results from education. On the other hand, modernization gives rise to an increasingly critical attitude towards established and traditional authorities, and this will probably cause lower external efficacy than in culturally less modernized countries.

Easily related to this cultural change theory are more specific norms concerning citizenship. Many participation studies have persuasively demonstrated the importance of access to resources of various kinds, resources such as education, time, skills, and knowledge (Verba et al., 1995). Part of the IEA survey consists of a civic knowledge test, which not only confronts students with questions about the principal characteristics of a democracy, but, among other matters, also asks them to interpret political propaganda cartoons. Aggregated at country level the test results can help us determine whether, for example, a high level of knowledge about civic affairs among a country’s 14–15-year-olds coexists with high internal efficacy.
Motivational factors, finally, comprise a different kind of factor. As Norris mentions, these have been far less investigated in empirical research than has access to resources (Norris, 2002). Of these motivational factors, interest and engagement have been more intensively analyzed than has the influence of civic norms. Fortunately the IEA survey collected not only data on interest and engagement and media consumption, but also on individual attitudes towards civic norms regarding both conventional and social-movement–oriented citizenship. A reasonable hypothesis derived from this theory could be that a country’s level of interest in politics and/or its civic norms of active citizenship would correlate with high internal efficacy.

6.5 Results of the Country-level Analysis

Table 3 here

Turning to the test of these theories, Table 3 shows the correlation between internal efficacy and each of the explanatory factors tested by means of the two-level SEM.\textsuperscript{15} The correlation analysis helps us to grasp the contextual factors that are relevant for the outcome of country-level internal efficacy, as discussed earlier.

A fascinating pattern seems to exist. In general, the social dimension, as measured by IEA variables concerning social capital, associational life, and trust in people, apparently contributes nothing to explaining efficacy. However, the influence of the remaining dimensions is quite powerful, yielding highly significant correlations. First, as appeared in Table 3, the socioeconomic dimension seems to operate negatively, internal efficacy being strongly negatively correlated with high rankings on \textit{human development} and \textit{women’s rights} (correlations of – 0.70 and – 0.74, respectively).
Second, the impact of the political institutional dimension is more contradictory. On the one hand, we found negative correlations between internal efficacy and absence of corruption (−0.81), government effectiveness (−0.79), and trust in political parties (−0.43). On the other hand, we found positive correlations between internal efficacy and trust in schools (0.62), internal school efficacy (0.45), and favoring a strong governmental responsibility in economic affairs (0.55).

Third, regarding the cultural dimension, emancipative values were negatively correlated with internal efficacy (−0.73) indicating an underlying relationship with the other negatively correlated dimensions. The remaining explanatory variables were correlated positively and unambiguously with internal efficacy, yielding the following correlations: patriotism, 0.54; engagement, 0.69; interest in politics, 0.74; civic norms about conventional citizenship, 0.82; and civic norms about social-movement–oriented citizenship, 0.72. Conformative values, as measured by EVS/WVS data, were also positively correlated but not significantly so.

It is worth mentioning that we found a significant negative correlation of −0.46 between internal and external efficacy (Figure 1). The fact that our dimensional analysis of external efficacy showed up as a reversed picture of internal efficacy prompts us to look for underlying mechanisms (Table 3).
Looking at the country pattern of predicted participation, the findings are, not surprisingly, very much in accordance with the results of the efficacy analysis. While no connection was found with the social dimension, there was a significant negative correlation between the socioeconomic dimension and predicted participation in representative fora (Table 3). Concerning the political institutional dimension the contradictory pattern remains; on the one hand negative correlations between above all representative and protesting dispositions and absence of corruption, government effectiveness and trust in political parties, on the other positive correlations with trust in schools, internal school efficacy, and favoring a strong governmental responsibility in economic affairs. Regarding the cultural dimension, emancipative values seem to have negative impact on representing, while the remaining cultural variables positively correlates with various modes of expected participation, lowest values being associated with law-breaking actions.

7. Nourishing and Corroding Factors - An Integrated Model

7.1 Competing Contextual Factors

*Figure 4 here*

Elaborating the findings in 6.5 resulted in two contradictory, not to say hostile, sets of contextual factors which we have demonstrated to affect adolescents’ internal efficacy. Integrating the negative and positive indicators, respectively, into two measures captures the underlying explanatory dimensions, seen as latent variables. As illustrated in model 4 (Figure 4), we can now capture these new factors, at both the individual and country levels, and their correlations with internal efficacy. Regarding the variables and dimensions shown in Table 3, we have identified a
common corroding factor by seven indicator variables using IEA as well as external data: corruption perception, government effectiveness, trust in national political institutions and parties, the human development indicator, the women’s rights scale, and emancipative values (all these having significantly negative correlations with internal efficacy).

On the other hand, we have constructed a nourishing factor operating in the reverse direction. It consists of conformity values and patriotism, civic norms regarding conventional activities as well as social movement–oriented activism, and attitudes toward governmental responsibilities in economic and social affairs (all having significantly positive correlations with internal efficacy).

In this integrated measurement model we are able to show how the underlying mechanisms operate vis-à-vis internal efficacy on the right hand side of the model (Figure 4). There is a significant negative correlation, – 0.79, between the corroding factor and internal efficacy, on the one hand, and a significant positive correlation, 0.88, between the nourishing factor and internal efficacy, on the other, at the country level. Not surprisingly, there is a strong negative correlation of – 0.51 between the nourishing and corroding factors.

The left hand side of the model (Figure 4), showing the individual level, illustrates the relationships between trust in institutions and civic norms (0.16), both corresponding to the IEA indicators included in our country analyses as well as to our nourishing and corroding factors, respectively. Only positive correlations appear, demonstrating that high internal efficacy in itself promotes both trust in institutions (0.27) and civic norms (0.14).
Taking the analysis one step further, to clarify the originally stated problem of the motivational foundations of political activism, we finally built integrated model 5 with our three main explanatory variables, internal efficacy, corroding and nourishing factors, of participation (Table 4). This model is divided up at the Between level in two submodels; Model 5.1 At the individual level, after controlling for internal efficacy and trust in institutions, civic norms generally prove to be a positive factor, particularly favoring a young person’s tendency to vote, voting (0.15). Self-predicted future participation in representing and protesting, and overall participation intensity, however, seem to be most strongly related to internal efficacy, producing correlations of 0.24, 0.20, and 0.34, respectively.

At the country level, the corroding factor has a strong, direct and negative influence most of all on the disposition to represent, representing (– 0.42), while it, although weakly and positively, affects the tendency of protesting (0.28). The other participation modes as well as overall participation intensity are, however, not significantly correlated with the corroding factor. The representing activities, at the same time, appear to be utmost dependent on the civic norms (0.76). Summarizing its effects at the country level, internal efficacy is overwhelmingly positive in its correlation with the following forms of political participation: voting, 0.42; representing, 0.75; protesting, 0.34; law-breaking, 0.37; and participation intensity, 0.73.

7.2 Competing Motivational Logics
Underlying the indicators we perceive incentives for participating that result from at least three different considerations regarding whether someone ought to, need to, or may get involved. The
first type of motivation relates to civic duties (Barber, 1984). It deals with the question whether the citizen feels obliged to enter actively into the political sphere because of certain virtues. Participation is seen as a non-negotiable aspect of citizenship, as something which has an individual or collective value in itself.

Even the “need” dimension of the motivational logic of political participation can be seen as resulting from long rational choice-like deliberation on the necessity of one’s activism. Activism is appraised in terms of its instrumental value (Downs, 1957). Is it worth my while to get involved? Do I have a reasonable chance of adding a value, or can I tolerate or even enjoy the probable public performance and delivery?

The “may” aspect, finally, is more reflective of the opportunity structure of politics (Tarrow, 1994). My participation could be desired or not. I could be invited to take part or to remain uninvolved. Citizens could experience inclusion or exclusion depending, among other things, upon institutional openness but also individual’s gender, age, or ethnic background. Whether or not you dare to participate also reflects how you have been treated by political actors and governmental institutions—such as schools—of various kinds. This may or may not result from a conscious decision, influenced either by structural or individual factors.

Looking at the results of our integrated model 5, it is evident that the norms (“ought to”) seem to play the most influential role, giving rise to different, competing sets of motivational factors in different civic cultures. It seems that a secular, well-managed welfare state fails to foster the very internal efficacy that is so important for a person’s willingness to become politically active
beyond voting. It is a strain on the imperatives that you ought to take part and gives room for questioning necessity and effectiveness. A democratic development that seems to be progressive in many other ways loosens its citizens’ bonds of duties by transforming them, to critical and rationalistic citizens, maybe ready to re-act but relatively unwilling to pro-act. Representing, that is, the most intense, loyal and long-term involvement paradoxically seems to be the first victim of democratic and human development. This is demonstrated over-explicitly in the Nordic countries, where strong emancipative beliefs and great trust in political institutions paradoxically coexist with weak civic norms and low internal school efficacy and low internal efficacy. This corresponds to the lowest level of predicted political activism, except for voting (Figure 2). The youth of Southern Europe, on the other hand, show a reversed combination of low trust in political institutions, strong civic norms, high internal school efficacy, and high internal efficacy, ending up with the highest level of activism. Although excluded from our modeling due to its extreme position, the United States should be mentioned because of a relatively successful coexistence of strong civic norms, great trust in political institutions, and high internal efficacy (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). In other words, a comparatively high governmental effectiveness has not necessarily destroyed the youths’ internal efficacy, as seems to be the case in the Nordic countries.

7.3 Individual—institutional interplay

So, different countries have different mixes of two competing or balancing factors that either corrode or nourish the predisposition to participate. In varying proportions these motivational factors constitute the distinctive civic cultures that result in different self-predictions of how adolescents will act as grown-ups. Ironically, though understandably from a rational choice
perspective, the more trustworthy and efficient political institutions are, the weaker the citizen’s need to engage. In turn, this calls for further analysis of what we have found to be the eroding and nourishing factors that reveal or foreshadow the sharply contrasting democratic features of postmodern welfare states.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. The motivational factors not only appear to be important but vary significantly between countries that are similar in many other respects. This leads us to moderate some of the theories mentioned above. For example, theories of social capital (Putnam, 2000) were not supported by our measurements, and in contrast to Inglehart our study of adolescents does not indicate any overall shift in post-materialist societies from voting to more active, issue-specific forms of participation (Inglehart, 1997, p. 43). Rather, we have found that teenagers in the most post-materialistic countries, such as the Nordic countries, predict the least diversified range of activism. Furthermore, they are the ones for whom voting is the most important way to participate in politics. And while he concludes that post-materialists are much more likely to engage in unconventional political activities (Inglehart, 1997, p. 312), we have found tendencies in the opposite direction in the northern, western, and southern parts of Europe, in the form of a factor that in general appears to overall erode adolescents’ views of active citizenship through a tricky interaction between institutional and individual conditions. Since good institutions seem to disengage the citizens, active citizenship tends to be a “bad weather”-phenomenon.

In sum, except in the USA (cf. Haynes & Bean, 1993), the youth of the most post-materialistic countries self-predict the lowest rate and narrowest range of political participation as adults.
Hence, in contrast to the USA, there is some feature of the most advanced European democracies that diminishes their citizens’ motivation to participate politically. If participation in addition to voting is valued as a decisive characteristic of a sustainable democracy, this is a troubling result. Finding out what distinguishes the USA from northern and western European countries is thus important if we wish to learn more about various institutional spill-over effects on citizen participation. In this respect our comparative study underlines the potential of what others have argued for in terms of merged studies of public policy and mass politics. The structure and content of various welfare state policies may affect the motivations underlying political participation in characteristic ways rather early in the citizen’s life (Mettler & Soss, forthcoming; Smith & Ingram, 1993; Soss, 1999). Comparative studies could help us discover how and why such discrete meaning-making processes operate (Mettler & Soss, forthcoming; Wedeen, 2002).

8. Conclusions and discussion

Our comparative two-level modeling analysis of the attitudes of adolescents in the United States and 23 European countries (1999–2000) started by showing a substantially variable pattern of self-predicted future adult active political participation. We found no general political apathy; on the contrary, four out of five predicted that they would vote, while only 7% foresaw total political passivity. However, more young people said they would likely prefer protest activities to serving representative institutions from within. In fact, breaking the law for political purposes appears to be almost as attractive as acting through traditional political channels.
We have shown that there exists an apparent regional difference. Southern European youth anticipate the most intense political participation, occupying top positions for nearly all participation modes. This stands in sharp contrast to the lower participation levels predicted in the Nordic countries, where voting seems to be by far the dominant political activity. In southern Europe young people predict a much wider range of political activity, and voting is just one of many considered way to make yourself heard. This is also true, but to a lesser extent, for American and eastern European youth. This north–south pattern is striking in another way. The youth of western and northern Europe differ from those in all other regions in terms of representing: the youth of these older democracies seem less willing to use established representative institutions than youth in others parts of Europe and in the USA.

Internal efficacy was able to explain both the varying levels of self-predicted participation and the preferences between different stated modes of participation among individuals within each country. For three of the four modes of participation—representing, protesting, and law-breaking—no other explanatory factor determined more than did internal efficacy. Representing was the most determined by internal efficacy, while voting seemed more determined by conventional civic norms. External efficacy, however, generally had very little explanatory power for any of the participation modes at the individual level.

Turning to the explanatory power of political efficacy at country level, the pattern persists: external efficacy is poor at explaining political participation, while internal efficacy appeared to have quite high explanatory power. Strikingly, the same countries that were low in political participation intensity were also found to be relatively low in internal efficacy, and all the old and
stable democracies of the Nordic countries belong to this group. Given these countries’ general reputation of being comparatively participatory—with strong political parties, high voter turnout, and numerous voluntary associations—this is a very confusing finding. The contrast to the American combination of high internal efficacy and intense anticipated political activism further emphasizes the potential of our finding—not to mention the contrast to their parents’ and grandparents’ actual political participation.

Our findings make a strong case for keeping internal and external efficacy separate in future research. Since internal and external efficacy have quite different meanings and also vary in terms of their explanatory power, it is not reliable to merge them into one “political efficacy” measurement, as others have done (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Dekker, Koopmans, and van der Broek 1997).

Attempting to explain the regional differences connected with internal efficacy, we then found that levels of internal efficacy are closely and positively related to norms, such as conformity values, patriotism and civic norms regarding conventional and social-movement citizenship. At the same time there is a negative impact from government effectiveness, trust in political parties, trust in political national institutions, and a low perception of corruption. Thus, it seems that a secular, well-managed welfare state fails to foster the very internal efficacy that is so important for a person’s willingness to become politically active. Rather, well-functioning institutions seem to disengage the citizens. This is an important contribution to the political efficacy and political participation discourse, due to the importance of internal efficacy for understanding cross-national differences in political participation among youth. In some crucial respects this gives us
reason to moderate some of the theories that try to explain country differences in political participation. In contrast to Inglehart (1997), for instance, our analysis does not indicate any overall shift in post-materialist societies from voting to more active, issue-specific forms of participation. Rather, we have found that, except in the USA, teenagers in the most post-materialistic countries, such as the Nordic countries, predict the least diversified range of activism. What seems to be missing in Inglehart’s analysis is the political dimension and the role of political institutions on citizens’ readiness to engage in politics.

Even though we are unable to differentiate definitively between generational, life-style, and period effects, we have reason to believe that the future, especially of representative democracies, mainly depends on managing the empowerment potentials that lie in the interplay between civic norms and internal efficacy that largely takes place in public institutions such as schools.

So, if political participation is an important aspect of a democracy, it is a great concern to comparatively understand what contextual factors that favors and unfavors it, respectively, by a tricky interplay with motivational factors at the micro level in different countries.
Appendix

1. International Dataset

The IEA Civic Education Study (www.iea.nl) collected data from representative samples of 14-year-olds in 1999–2000 using a two-stage design: the first stage used a random sample of schools, while the second stage used a randomly selected class of students in the selected schools at the grade level where most 14-year-olds were found. Data from 23 countries in Europe and from the United States were analyzed, the sample sizes being reported in the table below. The IEA samples (weighted) are representative for 14-year-olds in each country, except for Belgium where only French-speaking students were sampled.

The contextual analysis data were taken from many resources with country data, but individual data were also used, aggregated to the country level, mainly from IEACES and the third wave of the European Value Study, EVS. In all, 20 of the IEA countries collected EVS data in 1999; two countries, Norway and Switzerland, collected data most recently in 1995. A parallel dataset for the United States was compiled in 2000; it provided national representative samples of adults aged 16 and up from 23 countries (missing only Cyprus from among the IEA countries).

All SEM modeling analyses are based on the DATA22 dataset, relating to 22 European countries, defined by eliminating all students in the IEA 14-year-old samples who either did not answer or answered DN (about 13%) in the item concerning understanding political issues, the key item pertaining to internal efficacy.
Country | IEA Name | Code | EVS Sample size | WVS Sample size | Year of data collection | Modelling Dataset countries
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Belgium | BFR | 1922 | 1905 | 1999 | 1678 | DATA22
Bulgaria | BGR | 2413 | 1000 | 1999 | 1915 | -
Switzerland | CHE | 2734 | 1204 | 1995 | 2353 | -
Cyprus | CYP | 2814 | - | - | - | -
Czech Republic | CZE | 3546 | 1902 | 1999 | 3224 | -
Germany | DEU | 3681 | 2034 | 1999 | 3201 | -
Denmark | DNK | 2923 | 1023 | 1999 | 2517 | -
England | ENG | 2777 | 971 | 1999 | 2360 | -
Estonia | EST | 3181 | 1005 | 1999 | 2721 | -
Finland | FIN | 2655 | 1020 | 1999 | 2291 | -
Greece | GRC | 3121 | 1111 | 1999 | 2927 | -
Hungary | HUN | 3075 | 997 | 1999 | 2927 | -
Italy | ITA | 3516 | 2000 | 1999 | 2946 | -
Lithuania | LTU | 3346 | 1018 | 1999 | 2716 | -
Latvia | LVA | 2343 | 1013 | 1999 | 1987 | -
Norway | NOR | 3148 | 1127 | 1995 | 2687 | -
Poland | POL | 3125 | 1095 | 1999 | 2859 | -
Portugal | PRT | 2848 | 1000 | 1999 | 2538 | -
Romania | ROM | 2868 | 1146 | 1999 | 2446 | -
Russian Fed. | RUS | 2046 | 2500 | 1999 | 1837 | -
Slovak Republic | SVK | 3440 | 1331 | 1999 | 2459 | -
Slovenia | SVN | 3014 | 1004 | 1999 | 2630 | -
Sweden | SWE | 2949 | 1015 | 1999 | 2459 | -
United States | USA | 2629 | 1200 | 2000 | - | -
Sample size | ALL | 70114 | 29621 | 56231 | - | -

2. Explanatory variables

Social dimension

*Social capital:* 2-item IEA factor: a) *Association participation:* sum for 15 associations (two points scale), and b) *Attendance at meetings* (4 points scale)

*Trust in people:* IEA question ‘How much of the time can you trust /…/ the people who live in this country?’ (4 points scale, DN)
Political institutional dimension

*Corruption:* Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index 2002 based on perceptions and analyses of business people and country specialists; composite index of about 15 different surveys of nine independent institutions (*Corruption Perception Index*, 2002).


*Trust in national institutions:* IEA question ‘How much of the time can you trust /…/ the national government?’ (4 points scale, DN)

*Trust in political parties:* IEA ‘How much of the time can you trust /…/ political parties?’ (4 points scale, DN)

*Trust in school:* IEA scale ‘How much of the time can you trust /…/ the schools?’ (4 points scale, DN)

*Internal school efficacy:* 3-item IEA factor ‘If members of my class felt they were unfairly treated, I would be willing to go with them to speak to the teacher’; ‘I am interested in participating in discussions about school problems;’ ‘When school problems are being discussed I usually have something to say’ (4 points scales, DN)

*Government economic responsibilities:* 5-item IEA International Scale concerning job, prices under control, industry support, living for unemployed, reduce difference wealth and income.
Government social responsibilities: 7-item IEA International Scale concerning health care, living for old people, free education, equal political opportunities, control pollution, peace and order, promote honesty and moral behaviour.

Socioeconomic dimension


*Socio-economic Status (SES):* 3-item IEA factor on a) 2-item composite ‘How far in school did your mother/father go?’ (7 points scale, DN), b) ‘Do you get a daily newspaper at home?’ (2 points scale), c) ‘About how many books are there in your home’ (6 points scale)

*Women’s right:* 6-item IEA International Scale: ‘Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do’, ‘Women should have the same rights as men in every way’, ‘Women should stay at of politics’, ‘When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than a women’, ‘Men and women should get equal pay for the same job’, and ‘Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women’.

Cultural dimension

*Emancipative values*: WWS/EVS 3 indicators on tolerance for human diversity (tolerance for homosexuals, immigrants, and people of another ethnic origin as neighbors), social trust (trust for others, and the importance of showing respect for other people), and liberty aspirations (preferences for giving people more to say in important decisions and the protecting of freedom of speech, respectively, in comparison to preferences for fighting inflation and keeping law and
order, respectively). (N.B. we have excluded the fourth WVS/EVS indicator on protest inclination, since it is one of our dependent variables) (Welzel et al., 2003).

Conformative values: WWS/EVS 4 indicators regarding religious values (the subjective importance of religion and trust in the religious institutions), familism values (the subjective importance of one’s family and traditional and strict intra-family relations), nationalism values (national identity and national pride), and authoritarian values (preferences for authoritarian relations in general, in work life, and in social relations). (Welzel et al., 2003)

Patriotism: IEA question ‘An adult who is a good citizen is patriotic and loyal to the country’ (4 grades scale, DN).

Interest in politics: IEA question ‘I am interested in politics’ (4 grades scale, DN).

Media consumption: 4-item IEA sum ‘How often do you read articles in the newspaper about what is happening in this country?’, ‘… what is happening in other countries?’, ‘… listen to news broadcasts on the television?’ ‘…on the radio?’ (4 grades scales, DN).

Discussion: 2-item IEA sum ‘How often do you have discussions of what is happening in your national with people of your own age?’, and ‘…with parents or other adult family members?’ (4 grades scales, DN).

Engagement: 3-item IEA factor: Interest in politics and Media consumption plus Discussion

Civic knowledge: IEA International Test of 38 multiple-choice items, 25 of which refer to knowledge of content and 13 to skills in interpretation.

Civic norms conventional: 2-item IEA factor ‘An adult who is a good citizen votes in every election’, and ‘…joins a political party’ (4 grades scales, DN).

Civic norms social movement: 3-item IEA factor ‘An adult who is a good citizen would participate in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust’, ‘…takes part in activities
promoting human rights’, and ‘…take part in activities to protect the environment’ (4 grades scales, DN).
REFERENCES


Figures

Figure 1
Model 1- Two-level measurement model for efficacy.


Note 1: SEM two-level modeling with STREAMS/AMOS unweighted pooled within and between covariance matrices based on DATA22 dataset. NW= 56209, NB=22. Missing imputated by means.

Note 2: Error terms for the manifest variables are excluded from the path diagram.

Note 3: Goodness of fit, RMSEA = 0.02, acceptable fit for RMSEA < 0.05.

Note 4: Variances for the latent variables are at both levels significant, p<0.01.

Note 5: All W-factor loadings for the latent variables are significant, p< 0.01. At B level IE factor loadings are all significant p<0.01 and EE factor loadings assumed to be equal.

Note 6: Factor loadings for Internal Efficacy: W-level: 0.60, 0.54, 0.57; B-level: 0.18, 0.09, 0.14

Note 7: Factor loadings for External Efficacy: W-level: 0.53, 0.64, 0.28, 0.47; B-level: 0.10, 0.10, 0.11, 0.11.

Note 8: Factor loadings for W-level and B-level are adding up to total standardized factor loadings.

Note 9: Correlations are significant at p<0.01 (**), at p<0.10 (*)

Note 10: Model estimated reliability for sum score: IE(Within)=0.61, EE(Within)=0.57, IE(Between)=0.82, EE(Between)=0.68.
Figure 2
Regional differences for predicted political participation as adult.

Note 1: Weighted analysis of DATA24, N=70114, with senate weights, giving each representative sample equal weight.
Note 2: Predicted Participation Intensity Index is computed as (zPPI*50) +100, where zPPI is the standardized PPI variable (defined in 3.4 Measurement) across the 24 countries achieving an index scale with mean 100 and s.d. 50.
Figure 3
Scatter diagram for the country, contextual level, relationship between internal efficacy and predicted participation intensity. Correlation 0.75 (significant, p< 0.05).

Note 1: Weighted analysis of DATA24, N=70114.
Note 2: International index scales, mean 100 and s.d. 50, based on the 24 countries involved.
Note 3: Predicted Participation Intensity Index (see Figure 2, note 2). Internal Efficacy Index is based on an IEA sum variable of three four grade indicator variables defining Internal Efficacy in Figure 1.
Figure 4
Model 4 - Integrated two-level measurement model for corroding and nourishing aspects of internal efficacy and structural model for correlations between the latent variables.

Note 1: SEM two-level modeling with STREAMS/AMOS unweighted pooled within and between covariance matrices based on DATA22 dataset. NW= 56209, NB=22. Missing imputed by means.
Note 2: Error terms for the manifest variables are excluded from the path diagram.
Note 3: Goodness of fit, RMSEA = 0.04, acceptable fit for RMSEA < 0.05.
Note 4: Variances for the latent variables are at both levels significant, p<0.01.
Note 5: All factor loadings for the latent variables at both levels are significant, p< 0.01.
Note 6: Factor loadings for Internal Efficacy: W-level: 0.59, 0.54, 0.58; B-level: 0.18, 0.09, 0.14 (see Figure 1 for indicators).
Note 7: Factor loadings for Corroding factor: W-level: 0.65, 0.54, 0.06; B-level: 1.0, 1.0, 0.12, 0.13, 1.0, 0.25, 0.87.
Note 8: Factor loadings for Nourishing factor: W-level: 0.26, 0.19, 0.42, 0.63, 0.70; B-level: 1.0, 0.17, 0.29, 0.20, 0.08, 0.11.
Note 9: Factor loadings for W-level and B-level are adding up to total standardized factor loadings.
## Tables

### Table 1

*Anticipated patterns of political participation for 14 year-olds in 24 countries. Percentages.*

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROM</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVK</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVN</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWE</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note 1:* Weighted analysis of DATA24, N=70114, with senate weights, giving each representative sample equal weight.

*Note 2:* V = Voting%, NV = Non-voters%, R = Representing%, P = Protesting%, L = Law-breaking%, Active = responses “Certainly do this” or “Probably do this” on at least one of all nine items in the M instrument about predicted participation as an adult (see 3.4), Passive = responses “Certainly not do this” or “Probably not do this” on all nine items in the M instrument.
Table 2

Model 2 – Standardized regression coefficients, beta, for two-level regression model of participation on efficacy.
(Model 2.1 – Simple relationship; Model 2.2 – Controlling for other explanatory variables estimated at individual level only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable predicted participation</th>
<th>Estimated standardized regression coefficients beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two-level Model Model 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>EE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>0.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing</td>
<td>0.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protesting</td>
<td>0.21***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-breaking</td>
<td>0.11***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: SEM two-level modeling unweighted pooled Within covariance matrices based on DATA22 dataset. NW=56209. NB=22, Missing imputed by means
Note 2: Model 1 in Figure 1 is used as measurement model for Internal and External Efficacy
Note 3: Goodness-of-fit for Model 2.1, RMSEA = 0.02, and for Model 2.2, RMSEA = 0.02. Acceptable fit is RMSEA < 0.05.
Note 4: A Beta coefficient is significant at p<0.10 (*) for t > 1.64; significant at p< 0.05 (**) for t > 1.96; significant at p< 0.01 (***) for t > 2.58.
Note 5: The regression model controlling for other explanatory factors, Model 2.2, included the following independent variable; Association participation, Trust in people, Trust in institutions, Trust in political parties, Trust in School, Government Economic and Social Responsibilities, SES, Womens Right’s IEA scale Patriotism, Civic Knowledge IEA scale, Civic Norms Conventional IEA scale, Civic Norms Social Movement IEA scale (defined in Appendix).
Table 3
Model 3 – Correlation coefficients between contextual explanatory factors and internal efficacy and participation type at country level estimated by two-level correlation model.
Correlations coefficient estimates from model 3 between Contextual Explanatory Variables and Internal and External Efficacy and Participation Types at Country Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory variables</th>
<th>Internal Efficacy</th>
<th>External Efficacy</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Representing</th>
<th>Protesting</th>
<th>Law-breaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association participation</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.45 *</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in people</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Institutional Dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption (reversed) Z</td>
<td>-0.81 ***</td>
<td>0.68 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.64 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Effectiveness Z</td>
<td>-0.79 ***</td>
<td>0.52 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.65 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in national institutions</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.58**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in political parties</td>
<td>-0.43 *</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.45 *</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in school</td>
<td>0.62 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.52 **</td>
<td>0.42 *</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal School Efficacy</td>
<td>0.45 *</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.53 **</td>
<td>0.43 *</td>
<td>0.79 ***</td>
<td>0.55 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Economic Responsibilities</td>
<td>0.55 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Social Responsibilities</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.49 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.40 *</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDI Z</td>
<td>-0.70 **</td>
<td>0.54 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.64 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-0.69**</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.57**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Right’s</td>
<td>-0.74 ***</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.64***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipative Values Z</td>
<td>-0.73***</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.61**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity Values Z</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>0.54 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.75 **</td>
<td>0.43 *</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>0.69 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.56 **</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in politics</td>
<td>0.74 ***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media consumption</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.39 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Knowledge</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic norms conventional</td>
<td>0.82***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.40*</td>
<td>0.56 **</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>0.43 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic norms social movement</td>
<td>0.72***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 1. IEA Civic Education Data 14 year-olds, DATA22, N=56,231. 2. European Value Study, 3. UNDP, 4. World Bank, 5. Transparency International

Note 1: Definition of variables, see 3.4 for Internal and External Efficacy and Participation, and Appendix for Explanatory variables.

Note 2: IEA latent variables are, when used for two-level-modeling, estimating correlations at the country-level taking measurement errors into account. Explanatory variables from both IEA single questions as well as other sources, included as Z-variables, are only taking measurement errors into account vis-à-vis Internal Efficacy but not for the explanatory variable.
Table 4
Model 5 – Standardized regression coefficients, beta, for two-level regression model of participation on internal efficacy, corroding and nourishing factors. (Model 5.1 Between level model is participation on internal efficacy; Model 5.2 Between level model is participation on corroding and nourishing factors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables Predicted Participation</th>
<th>Beta coefficients for Explanatory Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Within</strong> Model 5.1 and 5.2 <strong>Between</strong> Model 5.1 <strong>Between</strong> Model 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>0.10***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing</td>
<td>0.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protesting</td>
<td>0.20***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-Breaking</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>0.34***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note 1: SEM two-level modeling with STREAMS/AMOS unweighted pooled within covariance matrices based on DATA22 dataset. NW= 56209 based on 22 European Countries. Missing imputated by means

Note 2: Model 1 in Figure 1 and Model 4 in Figure 4 are defining the latent explanatory variables; Internal Efficacy, Trust and Civic Norms at the individual W level, and Corroding and Nourishing Factors at the country B level.

Note 3: Goodness-of-fit for Model 5.1, RMSEA = 0.04, and for Model 5.2, RMSEA = 0.04. Acceptable fit is RMSEA < 0.05.

Note 4: A Beta coefficient is significant at p<0.10 (*) for t > 1.64; significant at p< 0.05 (**) for t > 1.96; significant at p< 0.01 (***) for t > 2.58.
NOTES

1 Verba et al. (1995) include political efficacy in their “civic voluntarism model,” but do not make the important distinction between internal political efficacy and external political efficacy. Moreover, the emphasis of their model is on resources, not motivational factors.

2 The item pertaining to political efficacy was: “If an unjust law were passed by the government, I could do nothing at all about it.” A brief look at the statement makes us wonder whether it is government responsiveness that is being examined or the individual citizen’s own belief about his or her ability to participate effectively. In short, is it the internal or external efficacy that is being examined?

3 In the analysis, external efficacy was called responsiveness.

4 The countries investigated were the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany.

5 The exceptions were the United States and Austria, where no significant relationship was found.

6 This was especially the case for the three continental countries, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands.

7 The countries investigated were the United States, Britain, West Germany, and Australia.

8 www.iea.nl; The IEA study, started in 1994, was designed as a two-phase study. The qualitative first phase aimed to describe the circumstances, content, and process of civic education, and the educational-related country contexts. The goal of the development of instruments and data collection in phase two was to design a study to examine the political socialization of adolescents within a comparative framework. Theories from the 1990s in the developmental sciences, mainly psychology and sociocultural studies, were taken as the point of departure for a student-focused design that aimed to discover how students interacted with the various arenas of socialization: home, school, and leisure. For the instruments, data collection, and main results for the 14-year-olds, see (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). The IEA survey, including international scales for civic knowledge and some ten attitudinal and behavioral dimensions, fulfills technical standards developed over some 30 years of school survey research into achievement in schools. Its use of international scales for knowledge and attitudes, strict manuals for data collection, and criteria for non-response have resulted in the highest possible data quality and comparability across countries. For more information, see (Martin, Rust, & Adams, 1999).

9 www.uvt.nl/evs; We thank Professor Thorleif Pettersson, Uppsala University, Sweden, for his cooperation.

10 In further analysis the within country variation has to be differentiated preferably with country wise between school models. The within covariance matrix is an unweighted pooled within country matrix capturing variances and co variances between individuals without taking the hierarchical school/class/student structure of the data into account.

11 The IEA scales are the result of a procedure for international scaling developed by IEA based on item response theory, IRT, and careful piloting of indicators for country specific deviations to be taken into account or if possible to be eliminated (see (Torney-Purta et al., 2001)

12 We are aware of that our concept of internal efficacy comes very close to that of “interest and engagement,” internal efficacy capturing the more self-oriented aspect, while interest and engagement captures the more general aspect (Weatherford, 1992).

13 Reversed scale used for this item and also the next one, “Politicians forget about needs of the voters.”

14 Since the United States and Cyprus represent extreme positions they have been excluded.

15 As the number of countries included in the analysis is limited to 22 European countries, there is not enough data to estimate the full two-level model with internal efficacy as dependent variable and the explanatory dimensions as independent variables.

16 Aggregated data to country level; for data sets, see Appendix

17 Aggregated data to country level; for data sets, see Appendix