



Organization of American States  
Unit for Social Development and Education



## **Strengthening Democracy in the Americas through Civic Education:** An Empirical Analysis Highlighting the Views of Students and Teachers

Washington, D.C. January 2004

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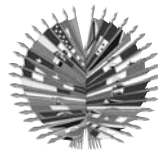
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Strengthening Democracy in  
the Americas through Civic Education:  
An Empirical Analysis Highlighting the  
Views of Students and Teachers



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ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
UNIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

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“ *The consolidation of democracy in the region requires a culture based on profound democratic principles and values and on their daily observance. These values should be fostered through education for democracy.* ”

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*Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust:  
A New Commitment to Good Governance for the Americas*

Approved on June 10, 2003 in Santiago, Chile, on the occasion of the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States



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Celeste Lay prepared an early draft of chapter 6 of this report, while Vera Husfeldt and Roumiana Nikolova provided analyses included in chapters 3 and 4. Tiffany Murphey worked on the references.

Full acknowledgement of those who conducted and funded the IEA Civic Education Study's data collection is found in the primary reports from the study (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz, 2001, and Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002, [www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/](http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/)). In particular the role of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the IEA Organization in funding the IEA Civic Education Study's planning, data collection and primary analysis and the role of Rainer Lehmann (Humboldt University of Berlin) and Wolfram Schulz in the study's coordination are gratefully noted. Special thanks are due to the national research coordinators in the four countries included in this report.

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# PRESENTATION



The defense, preservation and advancement of democracy are priority issues for the countries of the Americas and, therefore, for the Organization of American States. The role of education in this effort has been emphasized in the declarations of the Summits of the Americas and, accordingly, by the Ministerial Meetings. The Inter-American Democratic Charter, approved by the OAS General Assembly on September 11, 2001, in the section dedicated to actions required for the promotion of democracy, states in article 27 that, “*Special attention shall be given to the development of programs and activities for the education of children and youth as a means of ensuring the continuance of democratic values, including liberty and social justice.*” Clearly, the Charter underlines the importance of education in strengthening democracy in the Americas and points to the strategic importance of youth.

At the Second Meeting of Ministers of Education in 2001, the Ministers committed themselves to emphasize non-violence and a culture for peace in national and sub-regional initiatives for the formation of values and to promote the development of a Continental Program for the Education of Values. They pointed out that, “*working for peace means strengthening a school system in which children and youth feel welcome and where they learn to better understand their society and the world around them. This implies developing their capacity to think, to engage in dialogue, to understand and transform themselves and their environment by means of dialogue. It also implies the promotion of the study of history, of a better knowledge of societies and their cultures, of the understanding of the processes of change affecting humanity, and of rooting their own identity within diversity.*” Later, within the framework of the Third Meeting of Ministers of Education in 2003, the Ministers acknowledged the importance of “forming democratic awareness, culture and values among present and future generations.”

Education is the most direct path for building a democratic culture. Such a path requires an education that views teaching and learning as part and parcel of the same process, that allows for consensus building with room for dissent, that presents reality with all its problems and fosters critical thinking. A democratic education is one that is anchored in facts and data, and helps form opinions based on a respect for diversity in beliefs and values without losing sight of the common good. Education for democracy is much more than educating young people on the merits of representative democracy, rather it is premised on the need to form civic and ethical values in order to allow them to become free, informed and critically-minded citizens, capable of acting responsibly to transform their environment.

Within the framework of this background and mandates, and in order to advance in the design of strategies for the promotion of a democratic culture, the General Assembly of the OAS approved in 2002 Resolution AG/RES. 1869, whereby it requests that the Unit for Social Development and Education (UDSE)



of the OAS General Secretariat, undertake a study to establish the ways in which member states incorporate the teaching of democratic principles and values in their educational curriculums. Likewise, Resolution AG/RES.1957 on the Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy, requests that the Permanent Council organize a special session on the topic “Promotion of a democratic culture through education.” This backdrop provides a frame of reference for the research project entitled “Strengthening Democracy in the Americas through Civic Education”, whose results are presented in this book.

Given that the General Assembly’s mandate underscores the need to strengthen democracy through education, we directed our attention to the most important actors in this process, young people and their teachers. The contribution we submit today in this report is the result of this approach: The voices of young girls and boys, aged 14 and 17, reflecting on democracy and its processes, as well as on their expectations and the underlying values that support democracy. This study also takes into account the voices of educators entrusted with the teaching of civic education. What we offer today is a research report and an opportunity to place young people and teachers at the center of our debates about the challenges posed by an education for democracy. We cannot forget that we live in continents where close to 40% of the total population in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as more than a quarter of the population of Canada and the United States, is under 18 years of age.

As explained before, in designing the study we felt it was appropriate to focus on the analysis of the opinions and points of view of young people on themes such as: What do young people think about democracy? Do they understand how democratic institutions work? Do they expect to vote and to take part in other civic activities as adults? Do they believe in and practice tolerance?

This report analyzes the responses to questions such as these, and some of their implications for education policy. The research project was coordinated by UDSE and was made possible by a grant from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS. The study is based on a secondary analysis of the data collected by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement’s (IEA) Civic Education Study in 28 countries during 1999 and 2000. Specifically, this report presents the results of mining the data from the three countries in the Americas that participated in the IEA study: Chile, Colombia and the United States.

We chose to carry out this study for three reasons. In the first place, the recognized prestige of IEA evaluations, which, based on its methodological rigor, guaranteed the validity and reliability of the data. Secondly, the theoretical frame of reference that guided the design of the questionnaires and scales evolved from a consensus reached by 28 country delegations. This participatory process took into account the historical uniqueness and the diversity of political regimes that characterize democratic societies. Lastly, Dr. Judith Torney-Purta, International Coordinator of the IEA study, and Dr. Jo-Ann Amadeo, IEA researcher, both from the University of Maryland, agreed to undertake the research and look at the three American countries, with Portugal added for comparative purposes. We express our recognition and gratitude to Professors Torney-Purta and Amadeo for their dedication, commitment and academic excellence.

In order to ensure the highest possible relevance of the study to member states, we organized two meetings with a high-level advisory group, where research progress was discussed and guidance and suggestions were offered. We would like to give special recognition to the members of the advisory group for their valuable contribution: Angela Bermúdez, Clara Victoria Colbert, Cristian Cox, Lenore García, Paulina González-Pose, Scott Keeter, Noel McGinn, Jeffrey Puryear, Alan Sears, Elizabeth Spehar and Myriam Waiser.

The chapters in this report contain information about the civic knowledge, attitudes and activities of 14- and 17- year-old students, as well as the opinions of teachers who teach civic education. These data, in turn, were correlated with characteristics of the students' households, the more or less democratic environment in the schools, use of mass media, and students' participation in social movements. Based on the results, the researchers suggest policy implications in areas such as: curriculum reform; teacher training; design of teaching materials; mass media education; inclusion of economic related topics in civic education; and participatory processes in the classroom, the school and the community.

It is important to underscore that no single or uniform approach in citizenship education is recommended in this report, nor does it suggest that regional generalizations can be made from the data obtained for the three countries. However, we feel that the observed patterns and relations can be useful for countries considering research or policy agendas on this issue. From a broader perspective, we hope that the knowledge gained will provide input and suggestions to the tasks envisioned by the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and by the Ministers of Education who declared that: *“to work for peace is to work for human development and social progress, it is to contribute to the search for fulfillment in life on the part of children, youth and adults, and to the recuperation of their hope in a better future and of their faith in their own capabilities to build it.”* Only in this way can we contribute to the fulfillment of the OAS' mandate to promote a democratic culture in the Americas.

Starting with this experience, and in coordination with the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, the UDSE will continue gathering and analyzing information, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to contribute in the identification of the best educational practices for citizenship formation in democratic societies.

Sofialeticia Morales Garza  
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## The Promotion of Democracy through Civic Education: An Introduction to a Project sponsored by the Organization of American States

*Francisco Pilotti\**

In this chapter:

- Project background and expected outcomes and impact.
- The OAS role in promoting a culture of democracy through civic education.
- General socioeconomic, political, and demographic information about the countries included in the study to facilitate the framing of the empirical research reported in the following chapters.
- Overview of some of the key issues that affect young people's socialization.

In response to a mandate from the Organization of American States' General Assembly, the Unit for Social Development and Education of the OAS General Secretariat (UDSE)<sup>1</sup> designed and is presently coordinating a project on the role of civic education in the process of strengthening democracy in the Americas (OAS/UDSE, 2001).

In order to carry out the empirical phase of the project, UDSE commissioned a project consisting of a secondary analysis of data gathered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) study on civic

knowledge and engagement in 28 countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002). Of particular interest to the UDSE project is the mining of the data for the three American countries that participated in the IEA study: Chile, Colombia, and the United States.

Through an in-depth and comparative analysis with a focus on these three countries, the study concentrates on the civic knowledge and skills, civic attitudes, and civic engagement of 14- and 17-year-old students. It seeks to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between civic education, citizenship participation, and democracy. Additionally, it will also identify policy-relevant predictors and moderating factors that might prove useful for countries contemplating actions in this field. Ultimately, the results are expected to inform the inter-American debate on mechanisms to promote a democratic culture.

The results of the OAS-sponsored analysis are reported in this document. To facilitate the interpretation of the findings and implications contained in subsequent chapters, this introductory

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\* Francisco Pilotti, Social Policy Coordinator, Unit for Social Development and Education of the OAS (Civic Education Project Leader).

<sup>1</sup> Acronym from the Spanish: Unidad de Desarrollo Social y Educación



chapter provides background and context information including an overview of the political and socioeconomic setting that frames the socialization of children and youth in the Americas.

## **An Overview of Recent Economic and Political Developments in Latin America**

Analysts agree that around 1997 Latin America saw the end of a growth cycle and the beginning of a persistent economic slowdown which has caused a rise in unemployment, inflation and poverty levels. Regional economic activity in 2002 fell by approximately 0.5% and per capita output was two percent lower than in 1997. Open unemployment reached 9.1% in 2002, considered the highest point in the region's history. After decreasing during the early 1990s, poverty levels have surged during recent years, affecting approximately 44% of the Latin American population in 2002 (ECLAC, 2002; CEPAL, 2002). Thus, many argue that measures to jump-start the economy will have to go hand in hand with innovative social policies based on a more equitable distribution of income and assets, as well as on enhanced stakeholder participation. Clearly, the region is faced with formidable obstacles in its efforts to meet the Millennium Declaration goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

During the 1990s most Latin American countries attempted to implement the ambitious economic reform package known as the "Washington Consensus," which was focused primarily on efficiency, not equity. As a result, emphasis was placed on reforms dealing with fiscal discipline, financial and trade liberalization and privatization. The macroeconomic equilibrium thus achieved was rewarded with record private capital inflows, which later proved to be highly volatile in response to a series

of international financial crises that struck during the late 1990s. In general, the results of the application of the Washington Consensus were disappointing in terms of poverty reduction and income distribution. As a result, the social conditions of the poor changed little and vast sectors of the middle class descended perilously close to the poverty threshold. In response, authors such as Birdsall and De La Torre (2001) propose that the prudent economic policies contained in the consensus be maintained, but incorporated into a broader paradigm in which the central objectives should be equity and poverty reduction.

In a later article, Birdsall (2002) elaborates on some of the features of such a model, which she characterizes as an open-economy social contract: emphasis on job-based growth and directed not only to the poor but also to the vulnerable middle-income sectors. As implied by the term *social contract*, this approach is predicated on political negotiation and consensus building, as opposed to top-down technocratic directives. This way of facing the challenges posed by inequity and poverty is closely linked to issues of democratic governance and political stability.

In recent decades economic reform in Latin America was accompanied by an intense process of democratic reconstruction, following the collapse of most of the dictatorial and authoritarian regimes that ruled during the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, basic democratic features were restored, such as elections, free press, rule of law, and respect for human rights. Advances in dialogue, negotiation, transparency, and consensus-building were achieved in great measure thanks to the active participation of civil society and a widespread process of decentralization and devolution to local governments. However, recent international economic turmoil and the resulting loss of capital inflows have aggravated

unemployment and the living conditions of broad sectors of the population, at the same time depriving social policies of needed resources. Fatigue with and disbelief in policies based solely on the trickle-down benefits of economic growth has led to massive discontent and fears of a resurgence of populist or authoritarian alternatives.

Pollsters and pundits alike indicate that both democracy and the free market are now perceived by an ample majority of Latin American adults as the preferred political and economic paradigm to advance development, modernization, and integration to the global economy. However, this broad acceptance is severely strained at times of economic hardship and rising inequality, leading to widespread discontent with the efficiency-driven version of the model. As a result, in the words of Lago (2001, p. 138), in most of Latin America, “democracy is suspended somewhere between stability and crisis. It is neither consolidated nor in imminent crisis.”

Lago’s assessment is based on the results of the *Latinobarómetro* public opinion polls.<sup>2</sup> Results from the 2002 survey, reveal that close to 70% of respondents adhere to the notion, attributed to Churchill, that “Democracy is the worst form of government, with the exception of all others.” However, 50% are willing to accept an authoritarian government if it means a solution to the country’s problems, and 75% agree that solutions to these problems do not necessarily depend on the existence of a democratic regime. Although 52% feel that political parties and congress are indispensable for democracy, only 14% express trust in the former. Overall, *Lati-*

*nobarómetro* analysts conclude that a minimalist understanding of democracy prevails in Latin America, since it is mainly understood as consisting of liberty and elections (*Latinobarómetro*, 2002). This notion of democracy contrasts sharply with conceptions that are more focused on the preservation and enhancement of the institutional foundations of the democratic process.

The latest policy report issued by the Inter-American Dialogue (2003) reaches similar conclusions, pointing out that most Latin Americans are losing faith in market policies and in current democratic governments and institutions, although they value democracy and wish to preserve it. To tackle these issues, the Inter-American Dialogue underlines the need for bolstering democratic politics through revived representative political parties, stronger political leadership, and improved economic and trade cooperation schemes.

Clearly, these challenges require immediate attention, but they also point to the longer term efforts required to ensure that individuals participate in the public sphere as informed and competent citizens. Increased civic competency regarding the fundamental processes of democracy, together with a better understanding of the economic impact of public actions, are essential for active, participatory, and effective citizenship. Thus, life-long learning strategies are required in order to promote and reinforce civic literacy as an ongoing educational activity. As has been widely recognized in recent times, civic education in schools occupies a central role in the process of citizenship formation.

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<sup>2</sup> *Latinobarómetro* is an annual public opinion survey carried out in 17 Latin American countries since 1996. Using an identical questionnaire applied to representative samples of the populations of the countries involved, the study surveys opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and values in the following areas: economy and international trade; integration and regional trade; democracy; politics and institutions; social policies and wealth distribution; civic culture, social capital, and participation. Additionally, each year the survey features a principal theme and questions about current topics. See: <http://latinobarometro.org>

## Renewed Interest in Civic Education Worldwide

A recent report underscores the pivotal role occupied by schools and civic education in the promotion of citizenship and democracy: “Schools are the only institutions with the capacity and mandate to reach virtually every young person ....Of all institutions, schools are the most systematically and directly responsible for imparting citizen norms” (Carnegie Corporation & Circle, 2003, p. 5). Additionally, a variety of factors has contributed to a renewed interest in this field.

According to Torney-Purta et al. (2001), the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a renewed interest in civic education due to a series of factors such as the establishing or reestablishing of democracy in Eastern Europe and Latin America, as well as the perception of a “democratic deficit,” especially among youth, in countries characterized as well-established democracies. The authors also hint at broader cultural factors at work, particularly the intensification of a global youth culture characterized by a decreasing interest in hierarchically organized political groups such as political parties, in favor of active grass-roots involvement in causes such as the protection of the environment and the promotion of human rights. In the United States, for example, the political participation of youth has declined over the last 30 years, where voter turnout among Americans under 25 has declined nearly 15 percentage points since 1972 (Keeter, 2002). A recent poll on the political beliefs and behavior of Americans of different ages, shows that, compared to their parents and grandparents, young people are more conservative in many of their views of government and more tolerant in many of their social values, but are not expressing them at the polls due to their increasing political disengagement (Goldstein & Morin, 2002).

Other authors argue that the nature of the challenges posed by globalization require that the formal approach usually favored by traditional civic education be replaced by a citizenship education not only focused on political knowledge and engagement, but also on social and moral responsibility as well as community involvement. Given the profound effects that globalization is having on citizens’ lives and identities, Giddens (2000) contends that citizenship education must be reframed as a priority issue. Referring to the situation in the West, particularly in Europe, he stresses that national identity is undergoing deep changes due to the reshaping of the nation-state and the resulting “fuzzy sovereignty” which gives rise to multiple identities.

Globalization has also contributed to the spread of diverse forms of governance and democratic participation, many of which have been introduced or reinforced in Latin America in the recent past. Some of these processes include, among others, decentralization and devolution, strengthening of local governments, and the development of a more robust civil society through the promotion and practice of novel patterns of deliberative or direct democracy. Globalization has also encouraged a massive and rapid embrace of information and communications technology, which has significantly altered the political socialization of children and youth. These and other changes present enormous challenges to citizenship formation and, especially, to the approaches and curricula traditionally used for teaching civic education.

Perhaps one of the most profound changes that is reorienting citizenship education, is the recognition that it is valuable *for children as children*. In other words, citizenship education is no longer considered solely as a content area designed to prepare young people for their adult roles in society, but, rather, as a tool that will help them improve and

understand their lives and interactions in society. This outlook, in turn, usually demands considerable changes in the structuring of adult-child relations in the family and in the school, in order to allow "...children to be empowered to define and understand themselves as individuals with the capacity to act and exercise their voice in a meaningful manner on matters of concern to them" (Devine, 2002, p.307).

It should be noted, additionally, that this view is consistent with the children's rights framework, as set forth by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly in Articles 12, 13, 14, and 15, which establish a set of participation rights for children and adolescents. The convention is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Furthermore, it is the most widely adopted international human rights treaty in history, since a record 191 countries have ratified it.

The effects of globalization and the full recognition of children's rights within the human rights framework, together with country-specific factors, have contributed to a renewed interest in the role of citizenship education as reflected in recent curriculum reforms being implemented in various countries: In England, starting in 2002, citizenship education will become a new statutory foundation subject in secondary schools, and part of the nonstatutory framework in primary schools; in France, the reform of the *lycée* system initiated in 1999, involves for the first time the introduction of a compulsory program of *éducation civique, juridique et sociale* (Tate, 2000).

In Latin America, countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile initiated in the mid-1990s major educational reforms, prioritizing citizenship educa-

tion as an indispensable requisite for the advancement of both socioeconomic development and democratic culture. The latter goal is particularly relevant considering that during the 1980s the three countries initiated a transition to democracy after years of authoritarian rule (Cox, 2002). In Colombia, the adoption in 1991 of a new constitution accelerated the Curricular Renovation Program initiated during the mid-80s. Thus, in 1995 the General Law on Education was enacted, which decentralizes education and gives greater autonomy to individual schools in educational decisions, within a framework of enhanced teacher, parent, and student participation. In this new context, traditional courses on civic education, many based on rote learning, were replaced by Education for Democracy as a cross-curricular theme which stresses the importance of "living democracy at school" (Rodriguez Rueda, 1999).

Initiatives being implemented by individual countries in order to reform their citizenship education, are better understood when framed in a broader, regional, and comparative perspective. In this sense, it is helpful to consider some of the challenges faced by Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, as well as the benefits of undertaking collective actions to strengthen democracy and citizenship education through collaborative efforts facilitated by a regional organization.

## **The Organization of American States and the Promotion of Democracy in the Americas**

As many countries of the Americas initiated transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic forms of government during the 1980s, the Organization of American States, the region's premier political forum for multilateral dialogue and action, also

embarked on significant changes in its charter and mission in order to reflect the hemisphere's strengthened commitment to representative democracy.

In 1991 the General Assembly of the OAS adopted Resolution 1080—known as the Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System—which establishes a mechanism for collective action in the case of a sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process or of the legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government in any of the organization's member states. As a political crisis management tool, Resolution 1080 has been invoked four times: in Haiti (1991), Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993), and Paraguay (1996).

Resolution 1080 paved the way for a broader understanding of the OAS's role in the regional promotion of democracy. In this sense, the member states expressed their conviction that the organization's mission must not be limited to the defense of democracy only when its fundamental values and principles have collapsed. Rather, the OAS should engage in ongoing and creative work to consolidate democracy as well as develop mechanisms to prevent and anticipate the very causes of the problems that affect the democratic system of government. This view is clearly articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted by the OAS's General Assembly at a special session held in Lima, Peru, September 11, 2001.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter declares that the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. It considers democracy as essential for the social, political, and economic development of the hemisphere. The integral view of

democracy espoused by the charter, is set forth in a series of articles which clearly assert that democracy is intertwined with human rights, equitable economic growth, the eradication of poverty, and the preservation of the environment. The charter entrusts the OAS with a series of functions in order to assist member states in the strengthening and preservation of democratic institutions, including diplomatic initiatives and electoral observation missions.

Recognizing that democracy is a way of life, the charter considers the promotion of a democratic culture as fundamental in order to advance democratic principles and practices. To this end, it states that the OAS shall carry out programs and activities to promote good governance, sound administration, democratic values, and the strengthening of political institutions and civil society organizations. Article 27 of the charter underlines the importance of education in this area, emphasizing that, "...Special attention shall be given to the development of programs and activities for the education of children and youth as a means of ensuring the continuance of democratic values, including liberty and social justice."

### **Promoting and Strengthening Democratic Culture in the Americas through Civic Education: The Role of the Unit for Social Development and Education of the OAS**

On February 22, 2002, the secretary general of the OAS presented a report to the Permanent Council of the Organization, outlining a strategy for disseminating the Inter-American Democratic Charter.<sup>3</sup> One of the suggestions contained therein under-

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<sup>3</sup> CP/doc.3550/02: Report of the secretary general on the strategy for disseminating the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

lines the importance of incorporating the study of the charter in the high school curricula of the national education systems, in order to link its principles with the teaching of citizens' civic values. In order to achieve this, the report urges that the topic be placed on the agenda for the next hemispheric meeting of ministers of education, scheduled to take place during 2003. It should be noted that the latter suggestion is in line with the priorities set at the Second Meeting of Ministers of Education held in Punta del Este, September 24-25, 2001, where it was agreed to support the design and implementation of a Continental Program for the Education of Values by 2003.

With a specific focus on these issues, the General Assembly of the OAS adopted on June 4, 2002, Resolution AG/RES. 1869, entitled "Promotion of Democratic Culture," whereby it requests "...the General Secretariat of the Organization to support this initiative, most particularly through the work of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), the Unit for Social Development and Education (UDSE), and other entities that might be deemed appropriate, *specifically as it regards a study to determine how member states include instruction on democratic values and principles in their educational curricula.*"<sup>4</sup>

In light of this background, and in response to the specific mandate mentioned above, the UDSE, in close consultation with the UPD, the lead OAS entity in matters pertaining to the promotion of democracy, has embarked on a study designed to provide OAS political bodies and the education ministers' forum with relevant information regarding key aspects of the political socialization of children and youth, with special reference to the role played by civic education. The strategy developed

by UDSE for this purpose is guided by the following key assumption: Although there is no single or uniform approach in citizenship education, member states can benefit from a regional outlook that fosters the sharing of lessons learned and best practices in the field.

Consistent with a children's rights approach, which prioritizes young people's participation and opinion, UDSE's attention is directed to questions such as: What do young people think about democracy? Do they understand how democratic institutions work? Do they expect to vote and to take part in other civic activities as adults? Do they believe in and practice tolerance? The interpretation and policy implications of queries such as these, fall within the realm of a conceptual framework that focuses on the relationship between citizenship education and the political socialization of children and youth. Such an approach considers the combined socialization effects of networks that include schools, parents, local communities, media, and peers. In this context, and given the central role of schools in the promotion of civic knowledge, attitudes, and involvement, civic education was chosen as the key component of this project. Furthermore, UDSE's close working relationship with the region's ministries of education should facilitate the planning of strategic interventions in this area.

The general approach described above, although independently derived, presents a significant degree of similarity with the pioneering work carried out by the IEA, as evidenced in its recent cross-national Civic Education Study which examines educational programs and tests students' knowledge about fundamental democratic principles and processes in 29 democratic nations. Chile,

<sup>4</sup> AG/RES. 1869 (XXXII-O/02) (our emphasis)

Colombia, and the United States are the American countries that participated in the study (with the remainder of the countries largely from Europe).

The first phase of this effort analyzed curriculum frameworks, national standards and textbooks, in order to establish the expectations for student learning about topics such as elections, individual rights and obligations, national identity, relations with other nations, political parties, civil society, the role of the media, local problems, and links between economics and politics (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). On the basis of these observations, in the second phase of the study nationally representative samples of nearly 90,000 students in the usual grade for 14-year-olds in the 28 countries were surveyed in 1999 on topics ranging from their knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and skills in interpreting political information to their attitudes toward government and willingness to participate in civic activity (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Finally, over 50,000 upper-secondary students were surveyed in 2000 in an effort to examine the influence of three or four additional years of schooling on students closer to the transition to adulthood. Items on economic literacy and political efficacy were included for this group. Chile and Colombia participated in this part of the IEA study (Amadeo et al., 2002).

Considering the nature and scope of the IEA study, particularly its international and comparative approach, as well as IEA's recognized methodological rigor, UDSE prepared a project designed to benefit from the wealth of theoretical, methodological, and consensus-building experience obtained by the IEA research effort (OAS/UDSE, 2001). Specifically, the proposed study seeks to mine the IEA data for Chile, Colombia and the United States. Data mining is understood as a systematic effort aimed at discovering interesting patterns from large

data sets; predictive mining in particular is an attempt to perform inference on stored data in order to make predictions (Han & Kamber, 2001). The data mining in this report is a type of secondary analysis supplementing the primary analysis contained in Torney-Purta et al. (2001) and in Amadeo et al. (2002) by focusing on a smaller number of countries in depth.

The proposed data analysis is expected to yield a deeper understanding of the role of civic education in the three countries, as well as the identification of policy-relevant predictors in this area. It should be noted that this approach does not suggest that the results obtained for the three countries can be used to make inferences about other countries in the region. Quite the contrary, a valid interpretation of the findings must take into account the unique historic, socioeconomic, and political conditions that characterize each one of the three countries included in this report. However, similar efforts that might be carried out elsewhere can benefit from a proven theoretical and methodological approach, developed and applied in consultation with close to 30 countries. Furthermore, observed patterns and relations can provide insights to other nations and aid in identifying key issues to be considered in a research or policy agenda. Ultimately, the knowledge obtained is expected to provide the basis for input and suggestions to the broader, hemispheric effort envisioned by the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the OAS's mandate to contribute to the promotion of a democratic culture in the Americas. Therefore, the outcomes and expected impact of this report are as follows:

#### *Outcomes*

- In-depth analysis of the IEA data from 14-year-olds and upper-secondary students for Chile, Colombia, and the United States from a com-

parative point of view (with data from Portugal included to give further perspective).

- Empirical analysis of the status of civic education in these countries.
- Identification of school policy-relevant predictors and moderating factors.
- Specification of a set of issues and priorities to be considered in a regional plan of action on citizenship education.

#### *Expected Impact*

- To aid in the framing and systematizing of a set of issues for consideration by the region's ministers of education and by other high level forums.
- To contribute to the dissemination of a tested assessment methodology, which might prove relevant to countries interested in conducting studies similar to that of IEA.
- To provide input for policy-oriented research and action in areas such as curriculum reform, approaches for teaching civic education, teacher education, and young people's rights and participation.
- To inform the inter-American debate on mechanisms to promote a democratic culture for individuals of all ages.

The chapters that follow this introduction represent the results achieved by the OAS-sponsored project's empirical phase, based on the analysis of the IEA data for Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States. The next and final sections of this chapter provide background information, deemed relevant for framing the findings of the OAS-sponsored research.

## **An Overview of the Status of Democracy in Latin America, According to *Latinobarómetro***

After more than ten years of democratic rule in most of Latin America and the Caribbean, the post-authoritarian era is under intense scrutiny in order to assess the public's commitment to democratic institutions and practices. This concern has gained urgency given that populist and authoritarian tendencies are still evident in the region, particularly at a time when economic performance is poor, with the attendant rise in unemployment, poverty, and social unrest. Also, cohorts of young people are being raised and educated in this rapidly changing context, characterized by the oftentimes conflicting influences of past authoritarian legacies and the demands of modern democracy. Therefore, the study of political socialization in periods of transition can offer valuable insights about the role of education in the process of consolidating democracy.

Considering that the IEA data cover 14- and 17-year-olds, information about the adult population, such as that provided by *Latinobarómetro*, allows for a broader framing of the status of citizenship in Latin America, particularly in the countries included in the IEA study: Chile and Colombia. Furthermore, this data has the potential to suggest interesting leads regarding the relationship between the political socialization of young people and adults' civic beliefs and attitudes.

*Latinobarómetro* results for Colombia, Chile, and Latin America as a whole (17 participating countries) are presented in the accompanying panel. They include support for and satisfaction with democracy, economic development, and privatizations, trust in institutions, and interpersonal trust.



Graph 1 (Figure 1.1) shows results regarding support for democracy, measured as agreement with the statement: “Democracy is preferable to other forms of government.” Colombia and Chile show lower levels of support for democracy when compared to the regional average. It should be noted that, based on responses to other questions, Chileans are considered among the most indifferent with regard to preferred type of government. Low support for democracy in Colombia is probably linked to the strains brought about by years of conflict.

Support for democracy is usually contrasted with satisfaction with democracy; the former deals with the legitimacy of democracy and the latter with the efficacy of democracy in resolving economic, social, and political issues. The following question is used by *Latinobarómetro* to measure satisfaction with democracy: How satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in your country? Graph 2 (Figure 1.1) indicates that, at a regional level, satisfaction with democracy decreased from 37% in 2000 to 32% in 2002.<sup>5</sup>

Colombia and Chile exhibit less satisfaction with the functioning of democracy when compared to the Latin American average. Overall, with the exception of a few countries such as Uruguay and Costa Rica, a significant majority of Latin Americans declare that they are unsatisfied with democracy. One explanation for this phenomenon is that the populations of these countries do not make a clear distinction between the performance of the political system and the performance of the government and the economy. It should be noted, for instance, that in Argentina only 8% of respondents declared themselves to be satisfied with democracy in 2002, which was a year characterized by a pro-

found economic crisis. In this respect, analysts have pointed out that the assessment that respondents give of the economic situation is a significant predictor of their support for democracy (Lago, 2001). Adolescents’ views on economic practices and their knowledge in this area are discussed in Chapter 4 of this report.

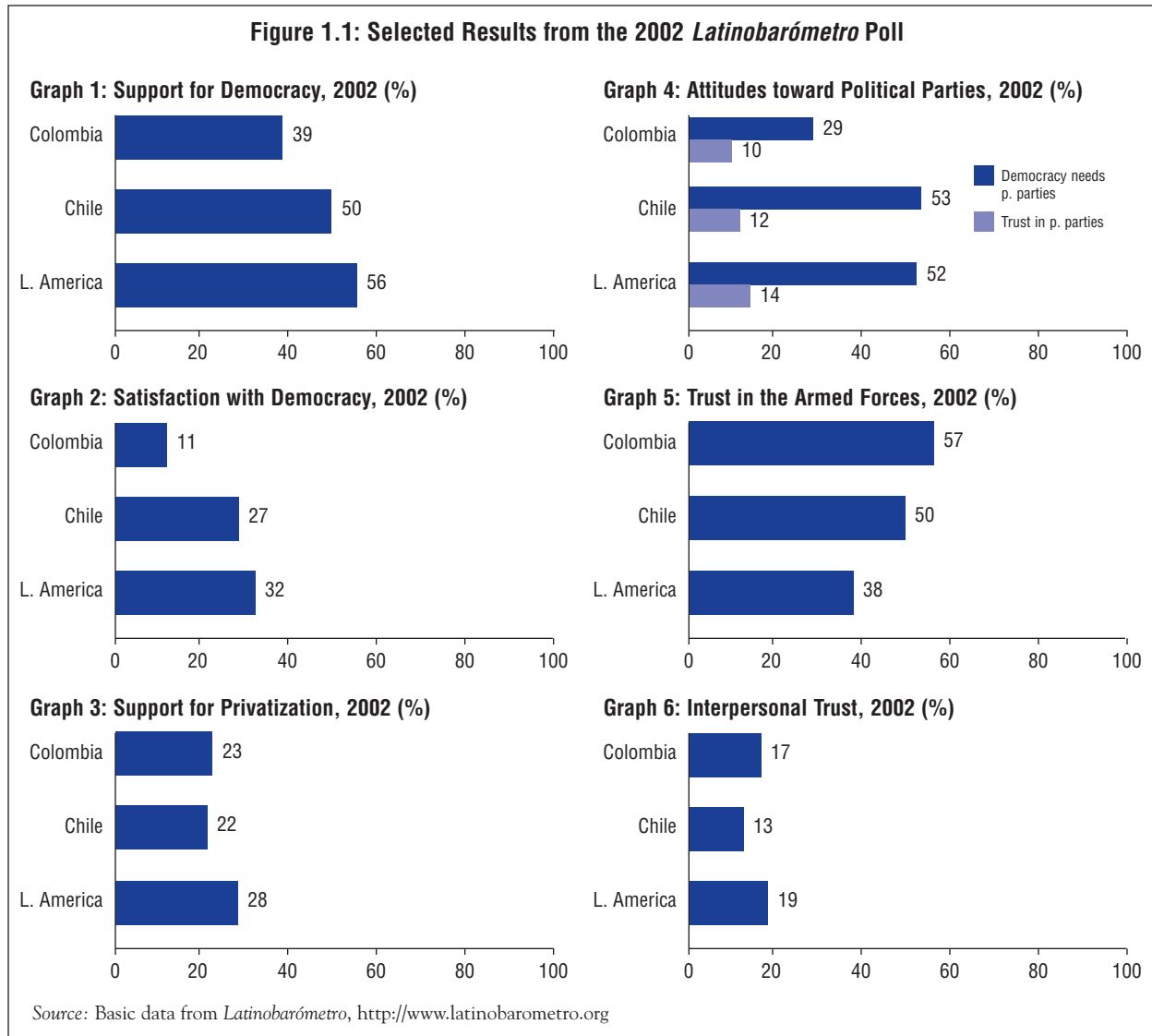
In 2002, 52% of respondents to the poll declared that economic development was more important than democracy, 17% assigned equal importance to both and 24% believed that democracy is more important. *Latinobarómetro* analysts argue that this state of affairs signals a major weakness of democracy in the region since support for it is strongly mediated by economic performance (*Latinobarómetro*, 2002). With regard to the economy, it should be noted that in recent years diminished or negative growth has led to widespread unrest and criticism of privatization—one of the centerpieces of the economic reforms initiated during the 1990s—accompanied by calls for a more active role of the state in regulating the economy. Graph 3 (Figure 1.1) shows weak support for privatization in Latin America, Chile, and Colombia.<sup>6</sup>

Respondents also declared that they had little trust in many institutions that are central for the functioning of democracy, particularly political parties. In the words of *The Economist*, “There is generalized contempt for political parties,” which are trusted by only 14% of all respondents to the 2002 *Latinobarómetro* poll (*The Economist*, 2002, p. 32). Graph 4 (Figure 1.1) shows that although some respondents felt that political parties were a requisite for a healthy democracy, most were profoundly distrustful of them. The striking fact that close to half of all respondents in Latin America feel that

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<sup>5</sup> Includes “very satisfied” and “reasonably satisfied” responses.

<sup>6</sup> Includes “totally agree” and “agree” responses to the statement: “Privatizations have been good for the country.”



there can be democracy without political parties, is highly revealing of the overall weakness of democratic institutions.<sup>7</sup> Congress and the Judiciary are also ranked low in trust, and, across the region, some eight out of ten respondents believe that corruption has increased in the past three years. The most trusted institutions are the Church (71%),

television (45%), and the armed forces (38%). With regard to the latter, Graph 5 (Figure 1.1) shows that both Colombia and Chile exhibit more trust in the armed forces than the average for Latin America. Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela were the countries with the highest trust in the military.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Trust in political parties includes “plenty” and “some” trust. “Democracy needs political parties” represents agreement with the statement “without political parties there can be no democracy.”

<sup>8</sup> In the case of the armed forces, includes “plenty” and “some” responses to the question: “How much trust do you have in the armed forces?”

Trust in political institutions is closely linked to the more basic trust that drives interpersonal relations, a key component of social capital. *Latinobarómetro* includes questions designed to measure this aspect of trust, such as the one that asks: Can you trust most people? From a regional perspective, interpersonal trust is quite low in Latin America where only 19% of respondents declared in 2002 that most people can be trusted. Comparatively, it should be noted that, according to 1990 results reported by the World Values Survey, close to 70% of respondents in advanced industrialized countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Finland, declared that they trust other people. The corresponding value for the United States was 50% (Inglehart, 1997).

As shown in Graph 6 (Figure 1.1), interpersonal trust in Colombia and Chile is slightly lower than the regional average. Chronic political violence, as well as high numbers of people victimized by crime, are often mentioned as root causes of widespread distrust. However, profound social and cultural changes are probably involved as well. A recent report on human development in Chile, suggests that Chileans' sense of identity is undergoing deep transformations as a result of a series of processes that have gained in intensity during the past decade, such as cultural globalization, redefinition of the role of the state, predominance of market- and consumer-centered relations, and the increasing dominance of the media, especially television, as a vehicle for social communication. Additionally, the report notes a growing identity divide along generational lines, as a result of age differentials in the knowledge and use of some of the basic tools of modernity: English language, personal computers, cell phones and the Internet. Whereas 82% of respondents aged 55 or more indicated lack of skills to use these tools, 56% of respondents aged 18 to 24 declared to have a good or acceptable mastery of them (PNUD, 2002). Chapter 6 of this report addresses young people's trust and national identity.

*Latinobarómetro* also includes information that provides insights regarding the cognitive dimension involved in understanding democracy as a concept, derived from responses to the question, "What is the meaning of democracy?" Forty percent of Colombian respondents answered "I don't know" and 4% did not answer the question; the corresponding figures for Chile are 18% and 6%. The difficulties that a sizeable number of Colombians and Chileans have in defining democracy, clearly indicate the need to probe deeper into past and current approaches to citizenship education and its relation to the promotion of a democratic culture. Chapter 3 of this report includes data about conceptions of democracy among young people.

Incorporating age and educational attainment considerations, the lead researcher of *Latinobarómetro* reaches a troubling conclusion, highly relevant for the purpose of this study: "Our recent survey data also challenge the assumption that a new democratic cohort is being socialized throughout Latin America in the post-authoritarian era. Far from having absorbed a new democratic culture, younger people with medium to high levels of education tend to be indifferent to the type of political regime. The younger cohort does not seem to be ushering in the cultural orientations that would deepen and consolidate democracy in the region, nor do rising levels of education ensure stronger support for democracy" (Lago, 2001, p. 139).

### **Socioeconomic and Demographic Background of the Countries Analyzed in this Report, with Special Reference to Youth**

Throughout this report, the data for the three American countries that chose to participate in the

IEA study from 1994 to 2002—Chile, Colombia and the United States—will be analyzed in depth, and relevant comparisons will be made amongst them. In several instances, results for the three countries will be contrasted with those reported for Portugal which also participated in the IEA study. This European country is a particularly interesting reference point since, although most of its socioeconomic characteristics place it in the developed world, it is still close to the threshold that marks the dividing line with developing nations such as Colombia and Chile. Furthermore, Portugal is a country that in the mid-1970s initiated a transition to democracy after a long period of authoritarian rule, later implemented a civic education reform program (Education Act of 1986), and where the Catholic Church has played an influential role in education and politics, all relevant factors for the Latin American case (Menezes et al., 1999). Table 1.1 presents selected demographic, political, and socioeconomic characteristics for Chile, Colombia, the United States and Portugal, which provide the necessary backdrop for the analysis of the IEA data in subsequent chapters of this report.

Demographically, as shown in columns 1 and 3 of Table 1.1, the four countries exhibit wide differences in terms of the size of their populations and striking similarity with regard to their advanced level of urbanization. When the population under 18 years of age is taken into account (column 2), the fact that these countries are positioned in different stages of the demographic transition is apparent. Thus, Colombia and Chile present a more youthful profile than Portugal and the United States, although the size of the latter's young population is noteworthy due to the effects of its unique immigration and fertility trends.

Overall, the four countries exhibit good or satisfactory standing with regard to the Under-Five-Mortal-

ity-Rate (U5MR), shown in column 4. According to UNICEF, the U5MR is the single most important indicator of the state of a nation's children because it is the result of a wide variety of inputs such as: the nutritional health and the health knowledge of mothers; the level of immunization and oral rehydration therapy use; the availability of maternal and child health services (including prenatal care); income and food availability in the family; the availability of clean water and safe sanitation; and the overall safety of the child's environment (UNICEF, 2000). From a children's rights-based approach, the U5MR is the one of the best tools to gauge a country's progress in complying with the right to survival and development enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all the countries included in the IEA study, except for the United States which has signed but not yet ratified (column 17). As nations advance in meeting the survival and development rights of children, the "beyond survival" challenges become more apparent, particularly those related to the participation rights contained in the CRC and which are intimately linked to citizenship education.

Figure 1.2 presents the population pyramids for Colombia, Chile, Portugal, and the United States, which serve to illustrate the relative weight of the young population, when compared to other age groups. The pyramids are useful for understanding the basic demographics of competing public policy choices in areas such as health, education, and social security, as well as the age and sex makeup of the electorate. Thus, the expansive base exhibited by Chile, and especially Colombia, place children and youth as the biggest age group, a fact that has enormous implications both for primary health and educational policies. Portugal is more typical of an aging society at an advanced stage of the demographic transition, where labor issues, higher education, and social security are probably high on the public agenda. The two bulges

**Table 1.1: Selected Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Political Characteristics, Chile, Colombia, United States, and Portugal**

Country	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)		(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
													No. of sets per 1k pop (1996)	TV Radio					
<b>Chile</b>	14.8	5.0/34%	85.4	12	0.825 39 High	8,625	57.5	10.1	20.6	3.6	95.6	58	215	354	6.2	45.9	n/a	Ratified	Free
<b>Colombia</b>	40.8	16.1/39.5%	73.5	30	0.765 62 Medium	5,749	57.1	19.2	54.9	4.1	91.5	46	123	565	1.9	36.2	54.6	Ratified	Partly free
<b>USA</b>	274.0	71.2/26%	77.0	8	0.934 6 High	31,872	40.8	0.3	n/a	5.4	99.0	90	805	2115	179.1	48.3	21.1	Signature not yet ratified	Free
<b>Portugal</b>	9.9	2.1/21%	62.7	9	0.874 28 High	16,064	35.6	1.9	n/a	5.8	99.0	n/a	336	306	17.7	82.4	15.5	Ratified	Free

n/a: data not available

Sources: Columns (1), (2), and (4) from UNICEF (2000), *The Progress of Nations 2000*, New York: UNICEF (pp. 35-36).  
 Columns (3), (5), (6), (7), (8-USA & Portugal), (10), (11), (12), (14), (16), and (17) from UNDP (2001), *Human Development Report 2001*, New York: UNDP (pp. 141-233).  
 Columns (8-Chile & Colombia) and (9) from CEPAL (2001), *Panorama Social de America Latina 2000 - 2001*, Santiago: United Nations (pp. 57 & 217).  
 Column (13) from UNICEF (2000), *The State of the World's Children 2000*, New York: UNICEF (pp. 96-97).  
 Column (15) from International IDEA, *Turnout in the World - Country by Country Performance*, in web site: <http://www.idea.int>  
 Column (18) from Freedom House (2000), *Censor Dot Gov: The Internet and Press Freedom 2000*, New York: Freedom House (p. 7).

in the United States pyramid, represent the effects of increased fertility during the baby boom (1948-1968) and, later, during the period known as the “baby boom echo” (approximately 1978-1998). As a result of the latter, between 1985 and 1999 enrollment increased significantly at the elementary school level, and secondary school enrollment is expected to rise by 9% between 1999 and 2009, as current elementary school students move into high school (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1999).

Responses to children’s needs and rights are tied to available resources, public expenditure, and governance. In terms of their economic performance, the four countries show significant disparities, as evidenced by their GDP per capita (column 6). Furthermore, Chile and Colombia not only have limited resources, but also exhibit a highly unequal distribution of income as reflected in the Gini indices and low public expenditure on education (columns 7 and 10). Together with high unemployment rates (column 8), these factors are strongly associated with the high poverty rates shown in column 9. The combination of poverty and a youthful age structure, has led to a characterization of Latin America and the Caribbean as a region where “the majority of the poor are children and the majority of children are poor”.

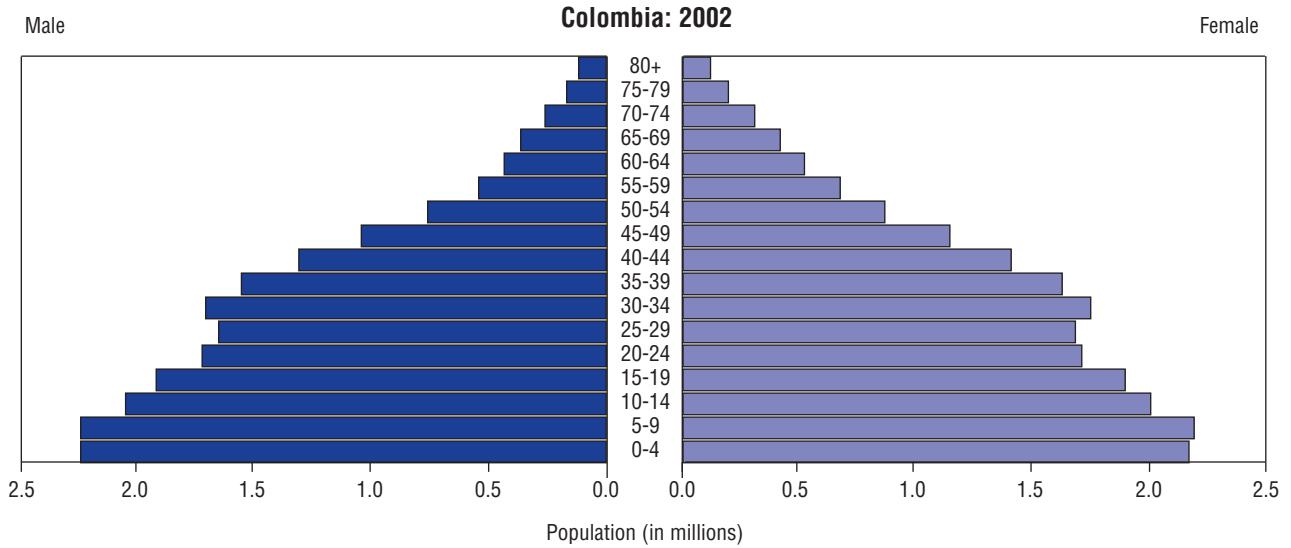
In spite of relatively good standings in the human development index ranking and high levels of adult literacy (columns 5 and 11), both Colombia and Chile show low net secondary enrollment ratios, as evidenced in column 12. When considering the latter, it should be noted that the region is also characterized by high drop-out rates, particularly during the first years of the secondary education cycle. Estimates for the year 2000 by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations (ECLAC), indicate that close to 37% of the region’s adolescents (15 to 19 years of age) drop out

of school before completing secondary education. For 1999, Chile’s global drop out rate was 17% and Colombia’s 32%. Dropping out is far more common among adolescents from lower income households: In 11 of the 17 countries included in the ECLAC study, more than half of all children not finishing primary school belonged to these households (CEPAL, 2002). These statistics suggest that what students learn in school by age 14 is especially important.

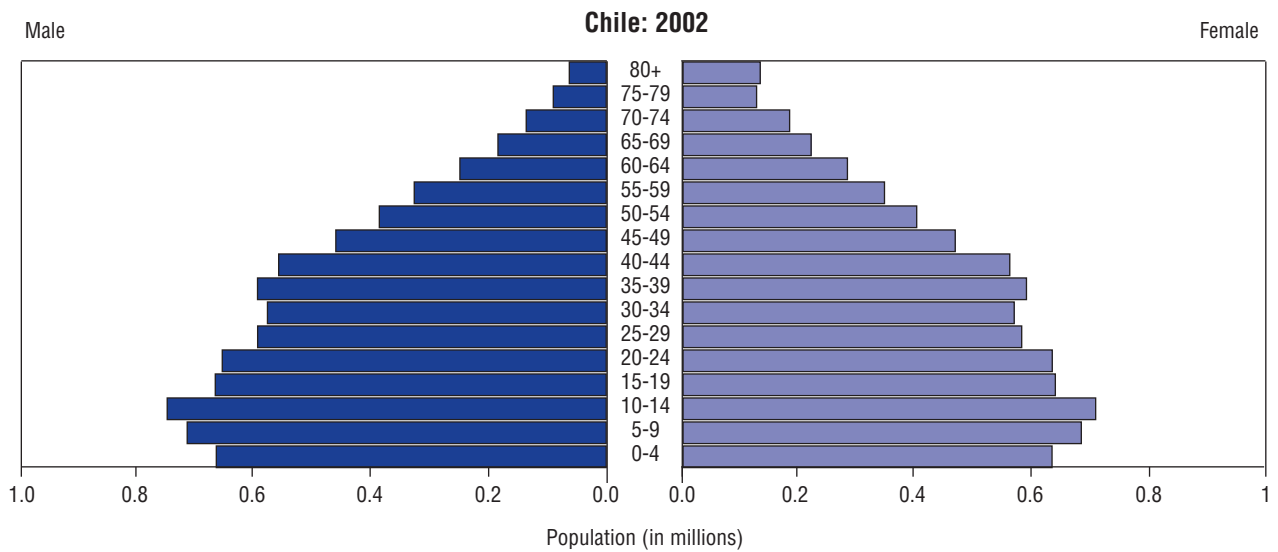
In general, the shortcomings of the educational system together with social and economic constraints faced by families living in poverty, result in low school-retention rates in Latin America. Proximate factors that contribute significantly to dropping out, include child and adolescent labor, teenage pregnancy and low academic performance in school. However, one of the most powerful predictors of this phenomenon is the mother’s low educational level (five years or less of studies), which increases the risk of dropping out by over 170% (CEPAL, 2002). Given that the human capital assets accumulated by drop outs are generally minimal, their access to the formal job market is severely limited, as evidenced by the higher than average unemployment rate of young persons: between 1994 and 1999, unemployment among the 15-24 age group rose from 14% to 20% in the region as a whole (CEPAL, 2001). Young dropouts also miss out on the content areas designed to transmit civic knowledge and values, as well as on opportunities to participate in school governance and in activities that build social capital. Furthermore, dropping out distances a significant number of young people from mainstream institutions and role models.

Most studies about retention concentrate on the economic impact of leaving the educational system before completing secondary school, particularly in terms of reduced earnings and productivity. ECLAC, for example, estimates that in some Latin American countries leaving secondary school two

**Figure 1.2: Distribution by Age and Sex of the Population of Colombia, Chile, Portugal, and the United States, 2002**

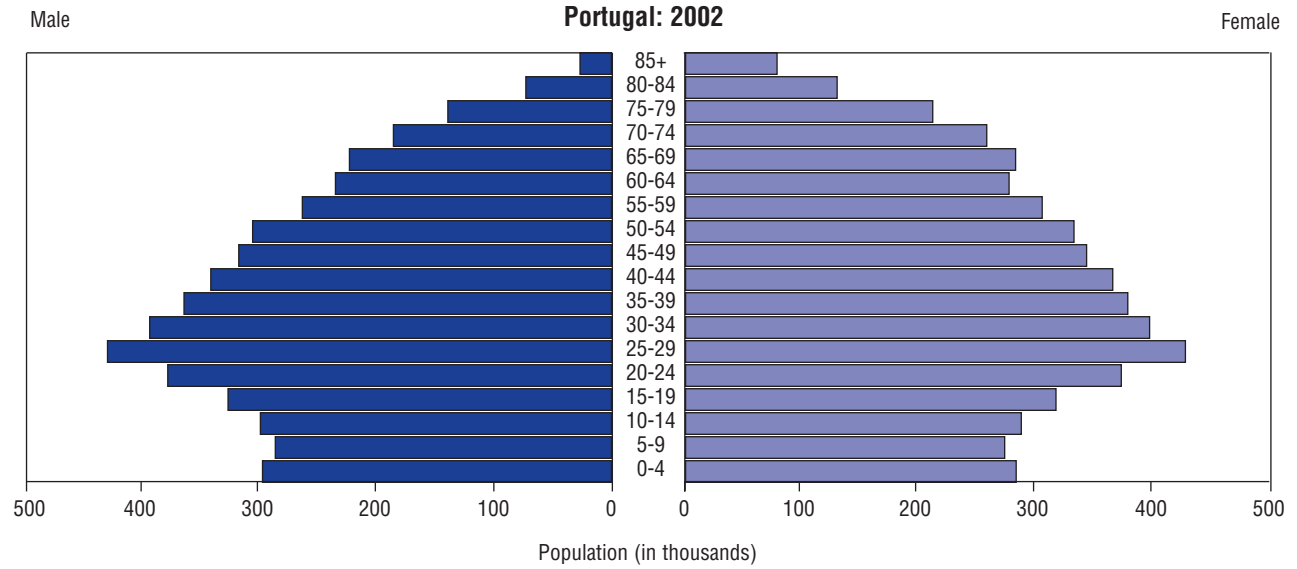


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, <http://www.census.gov>

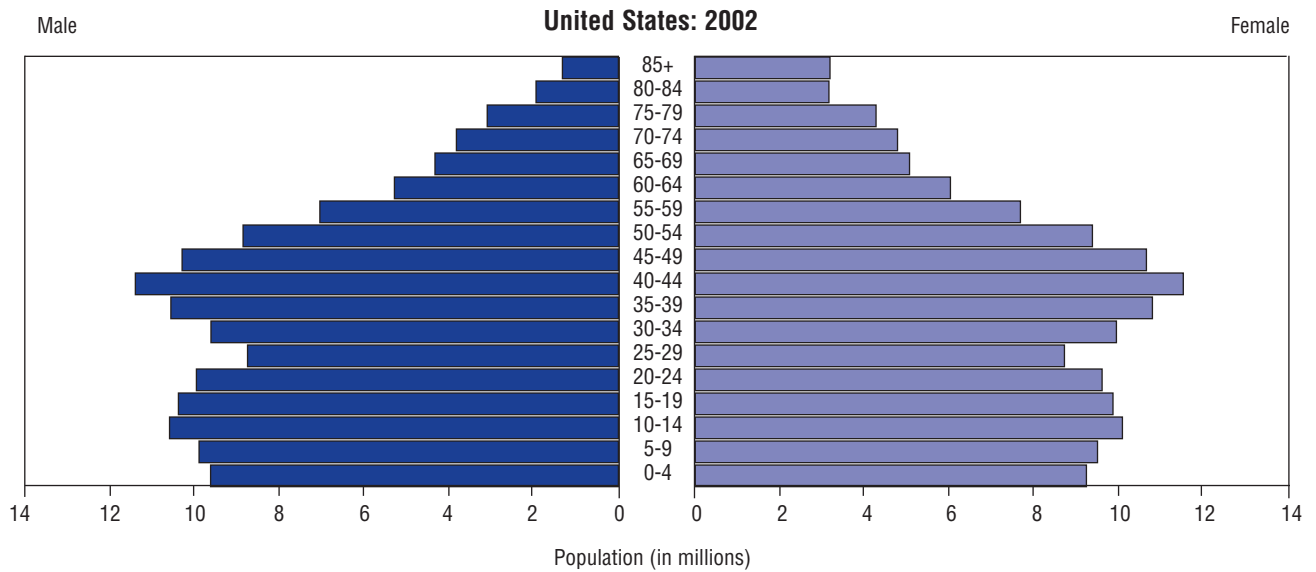


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, <http://www.census.gov>

**Figure 1.2: Distribution by Age and Sex of the Population of Colombia, Chile, Portugal, and the United States, 2002 (Continued)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, <http://www.census.gov>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, <http://www.census.gov>



years before completing it results in a 20% to 30% loss of personal income (CEPAL, 2001). Concern with the effects that low levels of human capital have in terms of reducing individual employment opportunities and national global competitiveness, often leads to reform proposals that focus more on the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and skills that will facilitate entry into the labor force and less on civic skills and attitudes.

The current emphasis on the promotion of marketable skills is also reflected in people's expectations and assessments of their school experience. For instance, in a survey carried out in Chile in 2001 by UNDP (PNUD, 2002), respondents were asked to evaluate what was the most important educational outcome of their stay in school: useful knowledge for their experience in the labor market or appropriate values for good citizenship. Among the younger respondents (ages 18-24), 40% chose the first alternative and 27% opted for the second, whereas the older group (ages 45-54) showed opposite results: Thirty-nine percent consider values as the most important legacy of their school years and 34% chose labor skills. Young people's expectations for their future political participation are found in Chapter 5.

In general, young people have been singled out as particularly apathetic and disaffected toward political and electoral processes. As shown in column 15 of Table 1.1, during the past decades voter turnout in Chile and Colombia, as well as in the United States, has been comparatively low. Within this context, recent surveys in Chile have confirmed that youth is less committed to the electoral process when compared to older age groups (PNUD, 2002).

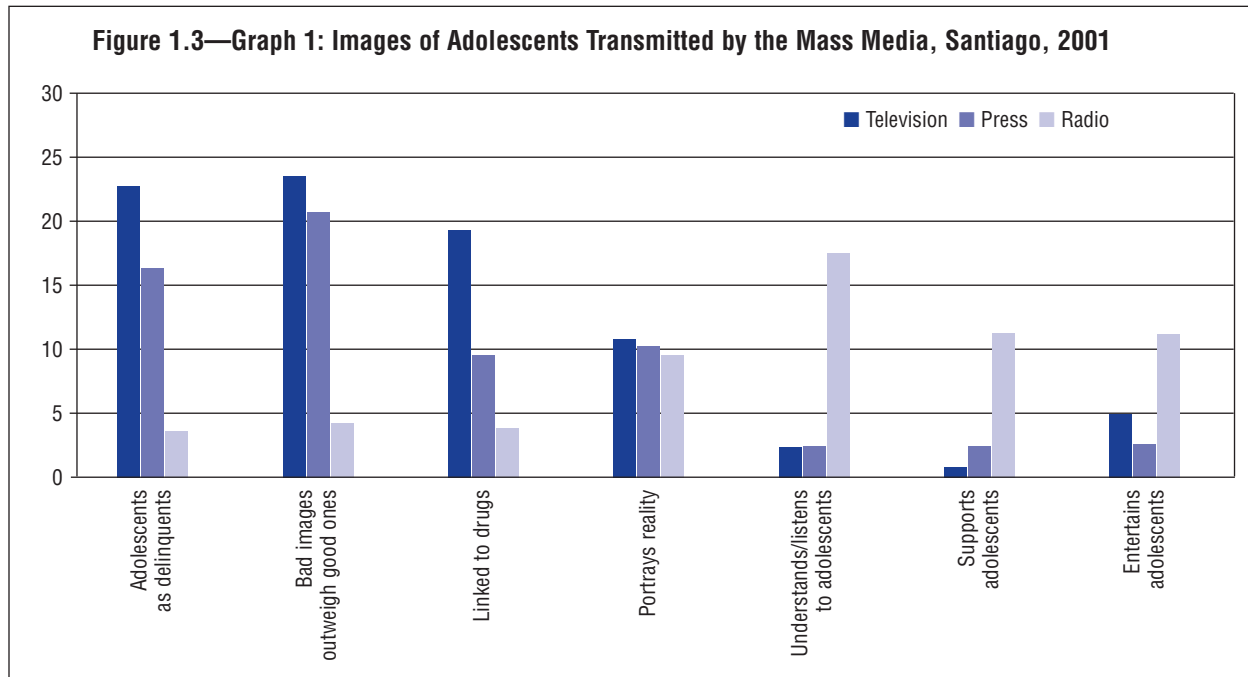
This phenomenon is usually framed in the broader cultural dynamic that shapes the social construction of youth, where fear, mistrust, and exclusion are often the dominant elements. In this respect, personal

security is often cited by adults as their main concern about youth, particularly in urban areas where violent crime is widespread. In cities such as Bogotá, over 50% of the population claims to have been victimized by crime (column 16). Young, urban, poor, uneducated, and jobless males are usually identified as the perpetrators: In 1998, in Chile, 48% of robberies with violence were attributed to persons under 19, and between 1995 and 1998 arrests of 14- to 18-year-olds accused of committing this offense rose by 207% (Paz Ciudadana, 1999). In many Latin American cities, homicide has become the main cause of death for the young: In 1989, Colombia registered 126 homicides per 100,000 for the 20-to-24-years age group, a rate which is six times higher than the one for the United States (Franco Agudelo, 1997). Usual responses are legal initiatives to lower the age of penal responsibility and zero tolerance policies in public spaces and schools.

The intense generational divide is apparent when young people's opinions are taken into account. A recent survey sponsored by UNICEF in Santiago, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires, designed to poll the opinions of 14- to 18-year-olds with regard to violence and safety, confirms that young people feel discriminated against and excluded by mainstream institutions. Selected information from the UNICEF survey is presented in Figure 1.3 and discussed below.

When asked about the portrayal of youth in the media, respondents in Santiago feel that negative stereotypes predominate, particularly on television broadcasts, as shown in Graph 1 (Figure 1.3). As evidenced in Graph 2 (Figure 1.3), adolescents in Santiago are distrustful of the administration of juvenile justice: Over 50% of respondents feel that a judge's sentence is based on the appearance of the young person accused of a crime, rather than on the nature of the offense. Lack of trust in key democratic insti-

Figure 1.3: Selected Adolescents' Views on Safety and Violence: Santiago, 2001

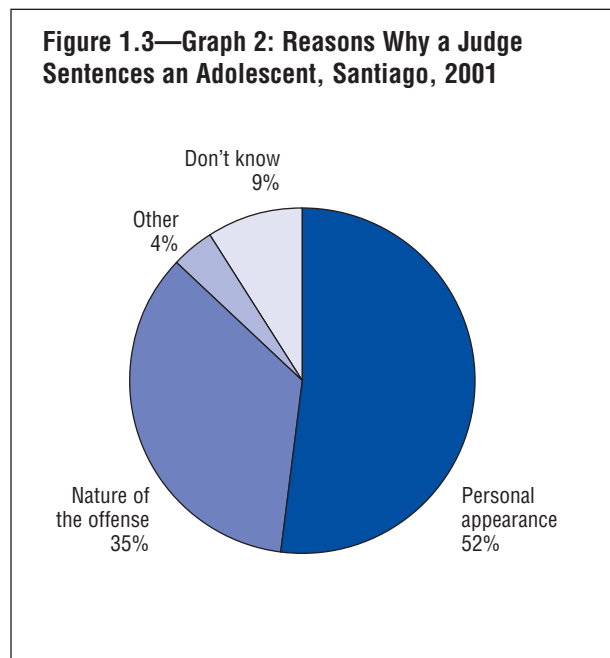


tutions, such as the judiciary, is accompanied by a lack of interest in politics, as shown in Table 1 (Figure 1.3), which ranks the topics most often discussed among friends. Music, television, and sex appear as the leading themes, and politics as the least common for young people in Santiago. Table 1 also shows that school issues occupy an important part of peer interaction, which underscores the central place it occupies in the lives of adolescents. It is also a place where they feel safe, as shown in Graph 3 (Figure 1.3). Young people's views of the media are covered in Chapter 7 of this report.

### Summary

A major and profound cultural and policy shift is required in order to tap the rich potential of youth in the Americas, particularly if the region is to take

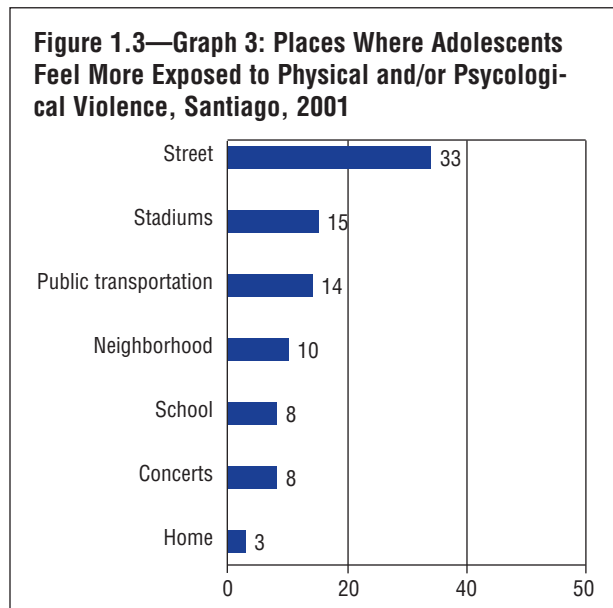
Figure 1.3—Graph 2: Reasons Why a Judge Sentences an Adolescent, Santiago, 2001



**Figure 1.3: Selected Adolescents' Views on Safety and Violence: Santiago, 2001 (Continued)**

**Figure 1.3—Table 1: Topics Most Often Discussed with Friends, Santiago, 2001 (%)**

Music	89
Dating	69
Sex	67
Television	66
School/studies	61
Family	51
Sports	49
Drugs	43
Alcohol	42
Delinquency	32
Politics	19



Source: UNICEF (2001), “La voz de los adolescentes: Percepciones sobre seguridad y violencia en B. Aires, Montevideo y Santiago de Chile,” *Justicia y Derechos del Niño* (No. 3), Santiago: UNICEF, pp. 191-198.

advantage of the demographic dividend that results from the age structure that characterizes the actual stage of its demographic transition. The dividend derives from the low dependency ratio estimated for the coming decades, as a result of the coexistence of a “youth bulge” with a relatively small dependent group made up of children and the elderly. However, as a recent report notes, this advantage does not kick in automatically: The realization of its potential is dependent on the implementation of the right set of policies, among which education is at the forefront (Bloom, Canning, & Sevilla, 2003).

Inclusion of children and youth requires participatory citizenship formation in diverse settings, chief among them a democratic school environment equipped with renewed civic education approaches. In order to advance in this direction, the following chapters present measurements about key areas in

civic education in three American nations. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the IEA Civic Education Study. The chapters that follow describe and examine young people’s civic knowledge and skills (Chapter 3); their knowledge of economic processes and institutions (Chapter 4); the activities they engage in—both now and in the future (Chapter 5). The report also explores adolescents’ attitudes toward some of the broader societal institutions—such as young people’s trust in government institutions (Chapter 6); their use of and trust in the media (Chapter 7). In Chapter 8, attitudes toward the political and economic rights of women and of ethnic groups are discussed, and Chapter 9 focuses on the influence of schools and teachers. The report concludes with a summary of findings and policy-relevant suggestions in Chapter 10.

## The Framing and Methodology of the IEA Civic Education Study and the Choice of Countries for the OAS-Commissioned Analysis<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter:

- How the interests of the OAS relate to data gathered by the IEA Civic Education Study.
- The three OAS-member countries that participated in the study and reasons for the choice of a fourth country for analysis in this report.
- How the IEA Civic Education Study was framed as a two-phased consensus-based study in nearly 30 countries during the 1990s.
- Which theories and policy-related questions guided the design.
- How the framework for design of the test and survey was developed.
- What samples were tested in the IEA Civic Education Study.
- The data analysis presented in this report and how it supplements other publications such as the reports issued by IEA.

**T**he Organization of American States (OAS) and its Unit for Social Development and Education (UDSE) responded to a mandate to formulate policy recommendations relating to strengthening democracy and sought to ground these recommendations in rigorous empirical

research on young people. Staff of the UDSE learned about the existence of a large data set gathered in 1999 and 2000 from a total of more than 140,000 adolescents in 29 countries during the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Civic Education Study. Two researchers who had participated in coordinating that study were asked to focus on mining the data collected from the three OAS members who had participated (with the addition for comparison purposes of data from a fourth country sharing the Iberian cultural heritage). The focus in this report is on analysis that could serve as the basis for reflection on policy directions by the UDSE in consultation with educational experts from the region.

Two reports from the IEA study, reporting data from 14-year-olds and 16- to 19-year-olds, respectively, had been prepared and published prior to this OAS initiative (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002). The focus of this OAS-commissioned report is on in-depth analysis of data that had been presented only in broad summary form or on data that had not been

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this chapter were originally prepared by Judith Torney-Purta or Jo-Ann Amadeo for inclusion in one of the two IEA volumes reporting the basic results of the study.

included at all in these reports because of limits of resources for analysis and length.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Initiation and Framing of the IEA Study and its Relevance to the Aims of OAS**

In the early 1990s the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, a consortium of educational research institutes in nearly 50 countries headquartered in Amsterdam, responded to requests from member countries and initiated planning for a cross-national test and survey of civic education. Nearly 25 years earlier, in 1971, IEA had tested students in nine countries in this area, but during the intervening years the emphasis of the association's studies had been on science, mathematics, and literacy.

A statement of purpose was developed for data collection to take place in the late 1990s: to identify and examine in a comparative framework the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens in democracies.

Support for a democratic system of government and human rights were among the issues to be covered. A major focus of the study was the school. This was not limited to the formal curriculum in any particular school course, but included several subject areas. Opportunities for discussion in the classroom and the school culture were important, along with textbooks and curriculum. A primary purpose was to obtain a picture of how young people are initiated into the political communities of which they are members, including in- and out-of-school experience. The concept of the political

was not limited to formal governmental organizations or legislative structures.

During the mid-1990s all 50 member countries of IEA were invited to join a study based on this statement of purpose. More than 30 took part in some part of the research. Twenty-eight countries completed the test and survey phase of the study for 14-year-olds (grades 8 or 9) and sixteen countries tested upper-secondary students (grades 11 or 12). No Caribbean nations and very few Latin American nations were members of IEA at that time (a situation that continues to the present). Three countries that are members of the Organization of American States did test 14-year-olds: Chile, Colombia, and the United States. Chile and Colombia also tested the older group. Canada was one of several countries that participated in the first phase of the study but did not collect the test and survey data. Of countries with an Iberian cultural heritage and identity, Portugal participated but Spain did not. During a discussion among Latin American educational experts early in the OAS/UDSE planning, it became clear that there would be advantages to including a fourth country with similar cultural background and language to Chile and Colombia in this report. Published analysis of data from both young and older adults from the World Values Survey clearly placed Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico in a cluster with Portugal and Spain (Tilley, 2002). Therefore Portugal was chosen as a fourth country for analysis.

The next section of this chapter will set the IEA Civic Education Study as a whole within the history and structure of the sponsoring organization and the participating countries by describing the context of its two-phased design; a second section

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<sup>2</sup> Additional publications reporting analysis of parts of the data with different purposes and points of view include Torney-Purta 2001 (also in Spanish), 2002a, 2002b; Torney-Purta and Richardson, 2002, 2003; and Torney-Purta and Amadeo, 2003.

will briefly summarize theoretical and research frameworks and a set of policy questions guiding the study; a third section will describe the design of the framework on which the test and survey was based; a fourth section will deal with sampling and testing; a final section will lay out the plan for analysis and its presentation in the report. Special attention will be paid to the four countries whose data are being analyzed in this report. A section describing the development of the test and survey for 14-year-olds and development for the older population of upper-secondary students will appear in Chapter 3. More detailed methodological material can be found in Torney-Purta et al. 2001 and Amadeo et al., 2002 (and will appear in a technical report by Schulz et al., forthcoming).

## The Civic Education Study and its Two-Phase Design

Responding to the expressed need of many countries for empirical data as they began to reexamine their civic education programs in the early 1990s, IEA planned a two-phase study. The first phase would consist of qualitative case studies to examine the contexts and meaning of civic education in different countries and provide background for the development of the instruments to be administered to students and teachers. The second phase would consist of a test and survey for statistical analysis.

The IEA had previously conducted a survey in this area (in 1971), with nationally representative samples of three age groups in eight Western European countries and the United States (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975). About 30,000 students responded to instruments measuring knowledge

and attitudes: Five thousand teachers and 1,300 principals and headmasters described pedagogy and schools. The intervening 20 years have seen many changes in schools and political systems raising new issues and intensifying concern for old ones, thus creating the need for another study.

In the mid-1990s the General Assembly of IEA (its governing body) appointed an International Steering Committee to guide the research and an International Coordinating Center to coordinate its day-to-day operations.<sup>3</sup> National research coordinators were appointed in each participating country; their work, including data collection, was funded by within-country sources, from both governments and foundations.

### *Participating Countries*

Twenty-eight IEA member countries accepted the invitation to participate in the test and survey. Approximately two-thirds of the participating countries collaborated in the research from its inception. They completed case studies for Phase 1 (having a formative influence on the framework and item development); they sent representatives to meetings to develop consensus about the design; they contributed or critiqued items; they pilot tested the preliminary forms of the test and survey. The other one third of the countries joined the study later, the last in November 1998. The United States, Colombia, and Portugal joined the study during its first year (1994-95); Chile joined the study in March 1998.

Both large and small countries participated in the study. On the U.N. Human Development Index, about three-quarters of the countries fall into the

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<sup>3</sup> The major funder of the Phase 1 Coordinating Center at the University of Maryland was the Pew Charitable Trusts; the major funder of the Phase 2 Coordinating Center at the Humboldt University of Berlin was the German Science Association; the major funder of analysis of Phase 2 data at the University of Maryland was the William T. Grant Foundation.

“highly developed” category and about one quarter into the “medium developed” category. Of the four countries of interest, Colombia falls into the “medium” category while the others are “high.” All participating countries could be classified as liberal or electoral democracies, according to Diamond (1999). The age of first vote is 18 years in all the countries in the study. Further details about demographics are found in Chapter 1.

### *The Two Phases of the Civic Education Study*

When a study in this area was first discussed, relatively little was known about what civic education meant in many of the countries that were interested in participating. Thus the study was designed with a more qualitative case-study phase followed by a test and survey phase.

In Phase 1, each participating country completed a national case study of civic education. In each participating country four documents were submitted: 1) a summary of the current status of civic education; 2) a review of empirical literature; 3) information regarding current policies, practices, and issues concerning preparation for citizenship organized around a set of 18 case study framing questions; 4) an in-depth analysis of core issues in democracy, citizenship, national identity and diversity, including an examination of textbook treatment of these issues and teaching methods. Many countries collected data from focus groups or interviews in addition to examining printed materials as they prepared these documents.

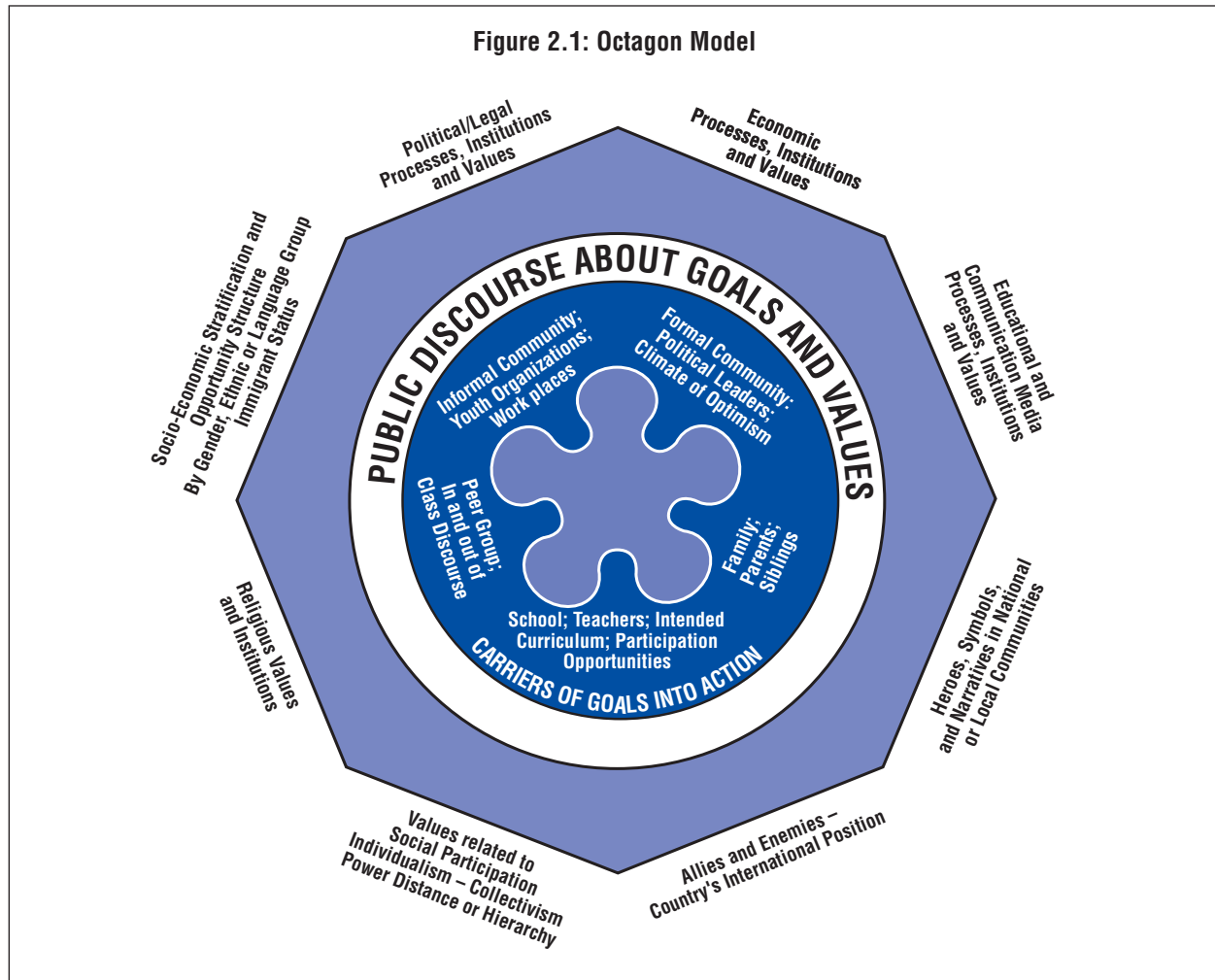
National research coordinators prepared chapters for the first volume from Phase 1, entitled *Civic Education across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Study* (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). These documents have also been used in the preparation

of a second volume from Phase 1, reporting cross-national analysis of the case study material (Steiner-Khamsi, Torney-Purta, & Schwille, 2002). This phase provided a view of the intended curriculum in civic education as well as extensive contextual material and suggestions about how schools might focus their activities in order to enhance the civic education process (Schwille & Amadeo, 2002). Colombia, Portugal, and the United States all were Phase 1 participants; Chile was not. However, a curriculum analysis by Cox (2003) provided some parallel information for this report. Menezes and Bermudez provided updated material on Portugal and Colombia respectively.

Phase 2 of the study consisted of a test and survey covering knowledge of content, skills in understanding political communication, concepts, attitudes, and participation or practices. Nationally representative samples of 14-year-olds in 28 countries were tested and surveyed. The major findings of the study are reported in a volume published by IEA. Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz (2001) reported results from 90,000 14-year-olds in 28 countries. In addition, another IEA volume by Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, and Nikolova (2002) reported results from 50,000 16- to 19-year-olds from 16 countries.

## **Theoretical Frameworks and Policy Questions Guiding the Design**

The national research coordinators at their first meeting developed an overall model for the study. This model described as the Octagon is a graphic representation for organizing the information collected in both phases (Figure 2.1). It is a graphic formulation of ways in which the everyday lives of young people in homes, with peers, and at school serve as a nested context for their thinking and



action in the social and political environment. Learning about citizenship involves engagement in a community and development of an identity within that group. These “communities of discourse and practice” provide the situation in which young people develop progressively more complex concepts and ways of behaving. The model has its roots in two contemporary psychological theories, ecological development (Bronfenbrenner, 1988) and situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991). At the center of this model is the individual student. The public discourse and practices of the society have an impact on the individual student through

contacts with family (parents, siblings, and sometimes extended family), school (teachers, intended curriculum, and participation opportunities), peer group (both in and out of class), and neighbors (or those in out-of-school youth organizations).

In addition to these face-to-face relationships, there is also a broader society that has an impact through its institutions and through the mass media. The outer octagon that circumscribes these processes includes institutions, processes, and values in domains such as politics, economics, education, and religion. It also includes the country's



position internationally, the symbols or narratives important at the national or local level, and the social stratification system, including ethnic and gender group opportunities.

These models from the social sciences suggest that young people move from peripheral to central participation in a variety of overlapping communities (at the school or neighborhood level, as well as potentially at the national level). Learning about citizenship is not limited to teachers explicitly instructing young people about their rights and duties. The political community itself (and its everyday practices of discussion) surrounds and provides a situation or context for developing political understanding (Wenger, 1998; Torney-Purta, Hahn, & Amadeo, 2001).

In addition to these theoretical or research-based models, a list of policy-relevant questions was developed to focus the study and enhance its value to those who make education policy, educate teachers, prepare curriculum materials, provide guidance to student associations, or conduct research across the participating countries. An overarching question was to what extent changes in education policy or practice might enhance opportunities for the growth of civic knowledge and engagement.

Some of these more specific policy-relevant questions dealt with the organization of educational programs, for example:

- To what extent is there agreement among nations about priorities within formal civic education?
- Around what instructional principles and through what courses are formal programs of civic education organized?

There was sufficient agreement among countries during Phase 1 to constitute a consensus about what should be included in an instrument for students. Civic education is not a curriculum-bound subject, but most experts thought that the school had an important role. However, the participants recognized considerable diversity in the extent to which citizenship education was addressed through subjects such as history, through more interdisciplinary programs such as social studies or social science, through courses focused on conduct such as moral education, through specific courses in civic education or government, or through an infusion into all subjects. There was also variation in the extent to which the school was thought of as an arena in which the student should practice citizenship or in the extent to which a children's rights perspective was accepted.

The case studies prepared for Phase 1 showed agreement among specialists that civics-related courses should contain meaningful content and should be participative, interactive, related to life in school and community, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, cognizant of diversity within the country, and co-constructed with parents and the community. Educators in many countries, however, saw difficulties in implementing this kind of civic education and that these difficulties were sometimes exacerbated by general problems with educational quality or equality.

Some policy-relevant questions were focused on describing students, for example:

- For what rights and responsibilities of participation are students being prepared in their own political system or society?
- Do male and female students develop different conceptions of citizenship and do they develop different potential roles in the political process?
- Are there socioeconomic differences in students'

understanding or attitudes or in the way their civic education is structured?

In democratic societies participation in the community and political system is vital, though the nature of that participation may vary. Information from Phase 1 indicated that educators often seek to make students aware of the excitement of politics and the importance of participation. Students, however, often show a general disdain for politics.

On the issue of disparities by gender or socioeconomic status, it is clear that beliefs about the role of women in politics still vary across countries, even though there have been rapid changes in the past decade. Research in political socialization and civic education suggests that there are important differences in civic knowledge between students from homes with ample educational and economic resources and those from homes that are less well endowed. These disparities were discussed in the case studies from the countries analyzed here.

Some policy-relevant questions focused on teachers and teaching, for example:

- How does the way in which schools and instructional programs are organized influence students' civic education?
- How do teachers deal with civic education in their teaching, and what is the influence of different types of classroom practices?

Research suggests that different pedagogies make a difference, in particular how rigorous expectations are, whether discussion is encouraged and how controversy and conflicting beliefs are handled. The case study material across countries confirmed that teachers are expected to balance cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral goals in preparing students for citizenship. The opportunities schools provide

for meaningful participation, self-government, and respect for rights are also among the factors potentially influencing students' attitudes and behaviors. The idea that schools should be models of democracy is often stated but appears difficult to put into practice.

In summary, the study did not try to identify a single best definition of citizenship or advocate a particular approach to improving civic education. Rather it tried to describe possibilities and practices in civic education as it takes place in different contexts and some of the correlates of these practices. The same approach characterizes this OAS-commissioned report.

## Framework Development

In this section we review the two-year process of identifying a common core of topics to form a content framework relating to citizenship and democracy valid across the countries that participated in the civic education study.

The Phase 1 national case studies provided the material from which the testing framework was developed. The data collected during Phase 1 included summaries of what panels of experts in participating countries believed that 14-year-olds should know about 18 topics relating to democratic institutions. These topics included elections, individual rights, national identity, political participation, the role of the police and the military, organizations that characterize civil society, relations of economics to politics, and respect for ethnic and political diversity.

In 1995 following the analysis of available Phase 1 material from more than 20 countries and voting by the national project representatives on the most important of the 18 original topics, three domains

were chosen for extensive study as “core international domains”:

*Domain I: Democracy*

What does democracy mean and what are its associated institutions and practices? The three subdomains were

- A. Democracy and its defining characteristics.
- B. Institutions and practices in democracy.
- C. Citizenship and its rights and duties.

*Domain II: National Identity, Regional, and International Relationships*

How can the sense of national identity or national loyalty among young people be described and how does it relate to their orientation to other countries and to regional and international organizations? The two subdomains were

- A. National Identity.
- B. International/regional relations.

*Domain III: Social Cohesion and Diversity*

What do issues of social cohesion and diversity mean to young people and how do they view discrimination?

Three other issues—the media, economics, and local problems (including the environment)—were also identified as important, but these were explored in a less systematic fashion.

As a next step in developing a content framework, personnel at the Phase 1 Coordinating Center developed general statements about what young people might be expected to know and believe about the three domains, elaborating and illustrating these with quotations from the national case studies. This material formed the *Content Guide-*

*lines for the International Test and Survey*, which served as a concise statement of content elements in the three domains that were important across countries. This document provided guidance for those writing the test items. It was clear from the case study material that the greatest emphasis in the test should be on Domain I: democracy, democratic institutions, and citizenship.

In 1996 in addition to giving input on content domains to be covered, the national research coordinators defined the types of items to include in the instrument:

- Type 1 items: assessing knowledge of content.
- Type 2 items: assessing skills in interpretation of material with civic or political content (including short text passages and cartoons).

Type 1 and 2 items formed the test. These items had keyed correct answers.

Because civic education is an area where students’ content knowledge and skills are important but not the sole focus, the national research coordinators suggested three other item types:

- Type 3 items: assessing how students understand concepts such as democracy and citizenship.
- Type 4 items: assessing students’ attitudes (for example, feelings of trust in the government).
- Type 5 items: assessing students’ current and expected participatory actions relating to politics.

Type 3, 4, and 5 items formed the survey. These items did not have correct answers.

Intersecting these five item types with the three study domains produced the following matrix, which served as the basis for the test and survey design.

Item Type	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Domain I</b> Democracy/Citizenship					
<b>Domain II</b> National Identity/ International Relations					
<b>Domain III</b> Social Cohesion/ Diversity					

A little less than half of the testing time was devoted to a test including cognitive items that could be “keyed” with correct and incorrect answers (the first two columns). Most of the remaining testing time was devoted to a survey including non-keyed items that assessed concepts, attitudes, and actions. The rest of the instrument asked about students’ perceptions of classroom climate and their confidence in the value of participation at school, and obtained background information (including home literacy resources and the associations or organizations to which students belonged). Further details regarding the development of the test and survey are found in subsequent chapters.

## Sampling

### *Sampling from Internationally Defined Populations for 14-year-olds*

The internationally desired population for 14-year-olds was defined as all students enrolled on a full-time basis in that grade in which most students aged 14:00 to 14:11 (years: months) are found at the time of test-

ing. A two-stage stratified cluster design for sampling was employed in consultation with an IEA sampling referee. At the first stage, schools were sampled using a probability proportional to size.<sup>4</sup> At the second stage the sample consisted of one intact classroom per school from the target grade. The chosen class was not tracked by ability and was, where possible, to be in a civic-related subject (e.g., history, social studies).

Testing of 14-year-olds (8th or 9th graders, according to whether the testing was late or early in the school year) took place during 1999.

- In Chile 180 schools and 5,688 8th-grade students participated. The mean age of students was 14.3 years.
- In Colombia 144 schools and 4,926 8th-grade students participated. The mean age of students was 14.6 years.
- In Portugal 149 schools and 3,261 8th-grade students participated. The mean age of students was 14.5 years.
- In the United States 124 schools and 2,811 9th-grade students participated. The mean age of students was 14.7 years.

<sup>4</sup> The general procedure followed closely the one adopted for the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) as described in Foy, Rust, and Schleicher (1996).

All IEA requirements were met in these samples and appropriate sampling weights were applied to all countries' data to assure national representation (see Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

#### *Sampling from Internationally Defined Populations for Upper-secondary Students*

Because of country differences in the organization of schooling, the internationally desired population for the upper-secondary students was defined independently in each participating country and was not expected to cover any particular age level. A coverage index was developed to index what proportion of the relevant age cohort was available for sampling. Usually this number was closely related to the proportion remaining in school at the grade chosen for testing. The coverage index ranged from 0.39 in Switzerland (covering German-speaking students only) to 0.99 in Norway.

- In Chile, 180 schools and 5,777 12th-grade students participated. The mean age was 17.9 years and the coverage index was 0.64.
- In Colombia 149 school and 5,347 11th-grade students participated. The mean age was 17.7 years.
- In Portugal 149 schools and 2,795 11th-grade students participated. The mean age was 17.6 years and the coverage index was 0.76.

This grade was the last year of secondary education in Chile and Colombia, and the second to the last in Portugal. The United States decided not to test upper-secondary students. Because of missing information on schools, the Colombian upper-secondary student data could not be weighted, and a

coverage index could not be computed. Colombian data were left out entirely from the tables and figures in the body of the IEA report on upper-secondary students and are reported here with a caveat about the need for caution in interpretation. Details of translation, testing, data cleaning and weighting, and analysis may be found in Torney-Purta et al., 2001 and Amadeo et al., 2002.

## **Analysis in the IEA Report and this Report on Four Countries**

### *Summary of Analysis in the IEA Report*

The analysis of the international data reported in Torney-Purta et al. (2001) and in Amadeo et al. (2002) consisted of several steps:

- Computation of item statistics for all test and survey items.
- Exploratory factor analysis and computation of classical scale reliabilities for the theoretically expected scales for each country.
- Confirmatory factor analysis with structural equation modeling on an international random sample of 200 students from each country, followed by the checking of models for each country.
- Selection of scales based on theoretical and empirical grounds. Calibration of Rasch models for the selected scales on an international random sample of 200 students per country. Item adjudication to examine scales by country and make further refinements.<sup>5</sup>
- Preparation of figures (for IRT scales) and tables (for individual items) comparing country means

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<sup>5</sup> Developing scales based on an Item Response Theory methodology (IRT scales) is the practice in all IEA studies. In the Civic Education Study a Total Civic Knowledge test score and three subscores (Content and Skills for both age populations and Economic Literacy only for upper-secondary students) were developed and are found in the IEA-published reports. These IRT scales for the items with right and wrong answers each have means of 100 and standard deviations of 20. They allow comparisons across countries and age levels (and compensate for missing data). Eleven IRT scales for attitude and concept items were also computed (each with a mean of 10 and standard deviation of 2).

to the international mean and to other countries (Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Amadeo et al. 2002).

- Computation of two models predicting the Civic Knowledge score and likelihood of voting using a series of predictors (correlates) such as home literacy, open classroom climate, and watching TV news (Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Amadeo et al. 2002).

### *Analysis in This Report*

With these published analyses as background, this OAS-commissioned report was planned. Many items in the test and survey were not included in IRT scales or in the IEA-published reports because of limited resources for scaling and analysis. Thus there was a great deal of data that had never been comprehensively analyzed (and some of these data appears in this report). For example, for this report an additional IRT subscore based on questions with right and wrong answers (knowledge of economic principles) has been developed and is reported for both age populations (Chapter 4). In addition item averages are reported for several participation measures (Chapter 5) and for a measure of support for the rights of ethnic groups (Chapter 8). Reports of results on individual items (rather than scales) form a large proportion of the data included in this report. Analysis of this level of detail is not possible when one is dealing with 28 countries, but is extremely informative when four countries have been selected (in this case because they come from a region or cultural grouping).

Most chapters begin with analysis that compares the four selected countries with each other (with a focus on IRT scales when they are available). In most chapters there is some analysis of individual item response patterns. The significance of differences were examined, but detailed statistical information has not been included in the report itself because of length limitations and a desire to reduce the complexity of the presentation. In many chapters there is a description of the differences between the early and late adolescents (with data available only for Chile, Colombia, and Portugal). Finally, for several of the knowledge or attitudinal variables, a number of correlates are examined within each country (using a form of regression analysis), with special emphasis on school-based factors. These analyses are intended to suggest aspects of school policy and practice that might be explored in enhancing civic education.

The organization of chapters and the topics to be highlighted are based on the issues drawn to our attention by UDSE/OAS as being of special importance in Latin America (Chapter 1). For example, we give special attention to data about what students understand as constituting threats to democracy; social, economic, and cultural rights as they relate to economic attitudes and knowledge and to women's and disadvantaged minorities' rights; civil and political rights as they relate to participation, trust and the development of certain aspects of national identity; and the role of the mass media.



## Civic Knowledge Performance and the Understanding of Democracy and Citizenship

In this chapter:

- Why a test of civic knowledge was included but was not the only student outcome emphasized in the Civic Education Study.
- How the test of knowledge and survey of concepts and attitudes were developed.
- How students in the four countries and the two age groups performed on the civic knowledge test as a whole and on two subscales.
- How 14-year-old students in four countries performed on all individual test items.
- How upper-secondary students in the three countries performed on a selection of individual test items.
- The predictors of high civic knowledge performance at both age levels.
- What students believe is good and bad for democracy.
- Students' beliefs about the characteristics of good citizenship for adults.

**W**hat students know and believe about democracy and citizenship is of tremendous importance in understanding the strong points and the challenges in the civic education process. Much of this chapter will concentrate on the test in which right and wrong answers were scored. The IEA Civic Education Study was different

from its inception from other subject areas such as science and mathematics where the test was of overwhelming importance. In the Civic Education Study, slightly less than half of the time the students spent on the instrument was devoted to questions with right and wrong answers. National research coordinators asserted the importance of a survey including questions about concepts and beliefs about democracy and citizenship that were not keyed for correct answers (and some of those items are reported in this chapter). Nevertheless, an achievement test is central to studies conducted by IEA and was also of great interest to this OAS-commissioned analysis and report.

The majority of what was known about civic knowledge at the time the Civic Education Study began came from the first civic education study (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975) and from within-country studies in the United States (Delli, Carpini, & Keeter, 1996; Lutkus et al., 1999; Niemi & Junn, 1998), Australia (Doig, Piper, Mellor, & Masters, 1993/4), and Canada (Bogner, Cassidy, Lew, & Manley-Casimir, 1991). These studies have frequently concluded that youth and adults possess a relatively poor knowledge base relating to citizenship. On the basis of an examination of others' research and program models in both formal and informal education in 15 countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean, Villegas-Reimers



(1994) pointed to gaps in students' knowledge of concepts such as constitutions, voting, and democracy. Some reviews have pointed to the poor performance of Chilean students in international and national assessments (Eyzaguirre & LeFoulon, 2001) and to problems Chilean students experience in integrating meaning from text passages with prior knowledge, an especially important skill in the area of political and civic information (Thierry, 1996).

The interaction of student performance with curriculum is a complex one. The Chilean curriculum in place at the time of the testing in 1999 had been developed nearly a decade earlier. A mapping of the items in the civic education instrument against that curriculum showed that only about one third were covered there (Cox et al., 2001). Thus some aspects of Chilean performance may be interpreted by referring to lack of exposure to the content in school. This will be noted at several points in the discussion of performance on particular items in the test.

The situation in Colombia appears to be somewhat different (Bermudez, personal communication, 2003). Decentralization in Colombian education has replaced national programs specifying details of content. Achievement indicators on which students are to be assessed have replaced detailed content programs for teachers to follow. Bermudez also suggests a problem that students are especially likely to face in Colombia in learning about democracy, which she refers to as a paradox. Colombia has a long tradition of democratic government with only one short episode of military government and a tradition of regular elections and (after a new constitution of 1991) enhanced mechanisms for participation including the specification of various rights. However, existing along side this formal institutional democracy described in legal documents,

there are numerous threats to democracy such as extensive poverty, formal authority challenged by illegal armed groups who use violence as a political strategy, and various difficulties that hamper the normal functioning of political parties and the justice system. There are thus two mechanisms through which political knowledge is transmitted each of which specializes in a different kind of information. One is constituted by formal education which teaches about democracy and elections as they appear in the constitution and in a relatively idealized sense. At several points in the description of findings it appears that students are responding based on this relatively formalized or idealized knowledge. There is a second mechanism through which students also learn, however, and that is the "real politics" of everyday life—what young people see in the streets or hear in family conversation. In short there is a conflict between the discourse of democracy taught in school and the reality of everyday political life. Evidence of that can also be found in students' responses.

The first part of this chapter deals with the test (content and skills items, Types 1 and 2) while the last section examines beliefs and concepts of democracy and citizenship (item Type 3) focusing on responses that enrich an understanding of the test results.<sup>1</sup> The chapter begins with a description of the development of the test and survey items and scales.

## **Test and Survey Development for 14-year-olds**

Because there were no large existing sets of items suitable for international administration, extensive item writing was required. We began by reviewing materials in the content guidelines, the 1971 IEA Civic

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<sup>1</sup> See table in previous chapter where item Types are described.

Education instrument, released items from United States and Canadian assessments, and the published research literature. Members of the International Steering Committee and national research coordinators suggested items, which were entered into an item database keyed to the content guidelines.

The result was the development of 140 knowledge and skills items (Type 1 and 2), each with one correct answer and four incorrect answers, each of which was entered into the database for the 14-year-olds. The items focused on principles, pivotal ideas, and general examples. For example, Type 1/Domain I items covered the principles of democracy and its associated institutions across the countries participating in the study. The test did not include items about specific mechanisms of the electoral process or government structure in any particular country. This emphasis differs from that in many national tests where items about each country's political structure predominate.

Some of the items of Type 2 (skills) asked students to distinguish between statements of fact and opinion. Others were based on a leaflet of the type issued during an election campaign, on the interpretation of a short article from a mock newspaper, or on a political cartoon. The ideas for cartoons came from those published in newspapers. They were redrawn to communicate a single message that a 14-year-old in a range of countries could be expected to understand.

#### *Pre-piloting and Piloting of Item Types 1 and 2 (Knowledge and Skills)*

In September 1997, 80 multiple-choice knowledge or skills items with correct answers were sent to national research coordinators for a pre-pilot testing. National research coordinators obtained small groups of 14-year-olds for testing in 20 countries.

Following a meeting of national research coordinators held in March 1998, 68 items were retained for further piloting.

Between April and October 1998, 25 countries (including all four of the countries considered here) conducted pilot studies on two forms of the test (Types 1 and 2 items with correct answers described above) and survey (Types 3 through 5, most answered using four-point rating scales, described below).

National research coordinators were provided with item statistics for their countries and discussed each item at a November 1998 meeting. The small number of items that was unacceptable to one fifth of the countries was dropped in accordance with the rule used by IEA to promote test fairness across countries. The research coordinators chose 38 knowledge and skills items from the 68 that had been piloted and met psychometric criteria. Coverage of the content framework and the research coordinators' judgments were the decisive factors in choosing items.

The ratios of number of items written to number piloted to number accepted were similar to IEA tests in other subject areas. The alpha reliabilities for the final 38-item civic education test among 14-year-olds was .87 in Chile, .86 in Colombia, .86 in Portugal and .90 in the United States. The scale analysis reported here is based on IRT scales (described in Chapter 2).

#### *Piloting of Item Types 3, 4, and 5 (Concepts, Attitudes and Actions) and the Resulting Final Survey*

The national research coordinators reviewed lists of suggested topics and some prototype items at the March 1998 meeting. An answer format (with 4 choices such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree,

and Strongly Disagree and a separate Don't Know response) was used for the large majority of the survey. Attitude items were rewritten from versions used with adults to make them shorter, more easily translated, and more suitable for 14-year-olds.

In mid-1998 the research coordinators piloted the survey items along with the knowledge and skills test. Items for the survey were chosen through a process of negotiation similar to that described in the previous section. Items assessing student background, school experience, organizational membership, and peer group involvement were also included. Policy in some of the participating countries prohibited questions about families' social or political values, and no such items were included. The final test and survey were designed so that they could be administered in two class periods. The texts of all of the Types 3, 4, and 5 items and of about half of the Types 1 and 2 items have been released for use by other researchers (<http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/>).

The survey instruments for teachers and for school heads (principals) covered the same content domains as the student instrument, along with questions about the school context and instruction. These instruments were piloted in the same countries and at the same time as the student instruments.

### **Test and Survey Development for Upper-secondary Students (17-year-olds)**

The test and survey for the upper-secondary population was built directly on the instrument developed for 14-year-olds. For the test (keyed items) the first three domains were the same as those covered in the 14-year-old version, while economics was tested only in the upper-secondary version. Although the difficulty levels of the cognitive items were adequate for 14-year-olds, a test composed only of these items was

likely to be too easy for students who were two to four years older. Therefore, some new items were developed and piloted. The test for upper-secondary students was formed of the items assessing knowledge of civic content and skills in interpretation of material with civic or political content (including short-text passages and cartoons), as well as 14 items about economic literacy. A number of these items were modeled after the Test of Economic Literacy (Beck & Krumm, 1999), and will be more fully described in Chapter 4. The alpha for the Total Civic Knowledge score in Chile was 0.83 and in Portugal 0.76. The final survey for the upper-secondary students included all attitude items from the survey for 14-year-old students, and two added item sets.

As was the case for the 14-year-olds, a little less than half of the testing time was scheduled for the test and the same amount of time for the survey. The rest of the testing time was devoted to questions about students' perceptions of classroom climate, their confidence in participation at school, and background information. The study of upper-secondary school students did not survey teachers. Between April and May 1999, six countries including Chile and Colombia conducted classroom-based pilot studies of the upper-secondary test and survey. In July 1999 the analysis of the pilot data of upper-secondary school students was performed and a subgroup from the International Steering Committee and the national research coordinators made a final decision about items to include.

### **Presentation of Data from the Test of Civic Content and Skills**

Data from the test can suggest a picture of the emphases, strengths, and weaknesses of civic education in a given country. In one sense the students

can speak to us about what they know and believe through the wrong as well as the correct answers that they chose.

The summary reports issued on the study present test performance on scales emphasizing comparisons between the 28 participating countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001) or 16 countries (Amadeo et al., 2002). Because of the interests of an OAS audience in more specificity about students' knowledge and beliefs, this report addresses the general comparative findings briefly and then reports on the 38 items from the test for 14-year-olds, presenting previously unpublished details regarding performance on each item. The items are considered in groups. For example, those that deal with more abstract definitions of democracy are separate from those that deal with knowledge of political institutions or the ability to understand the concept of rights in different contexts. There appears to be a distinction between a basic level of knowledge, which these countries seem equally able to transmit to students, and more subtle or advanced types of understanding which prove difficult for countries such as Chile (which is in the midst of political change and curriculum reform) and Colombia (where there is considerable disjunction between the ideals of democratic process discussed in school and the reality of young people's everyday experience).

The next section of the chapter presents models predicting civic knowledge achievement within each of the four countries for both 14- and 17-year-olds and will contrast civic knowledge scores for students who come from more and less educationally advantaged home backgrounds. Nearly every study of Latin America and the Caribbean finds that students from more privileged homes and those attending schools where students expect to enter higher education perform better than students from less privileged homes. One example of

research findings in the political domain in Trinidad and Tobago is Philip, 1993, although other scholars such as Villegas-Reimers, 1994, draw similar conclusions based on review of programs across Latin America. The final section of this chapter presents data regarding students' concepts of democracy and citizenship to elaborate data from the keyed items in the test and further highlight the ways in which students think about these issues.

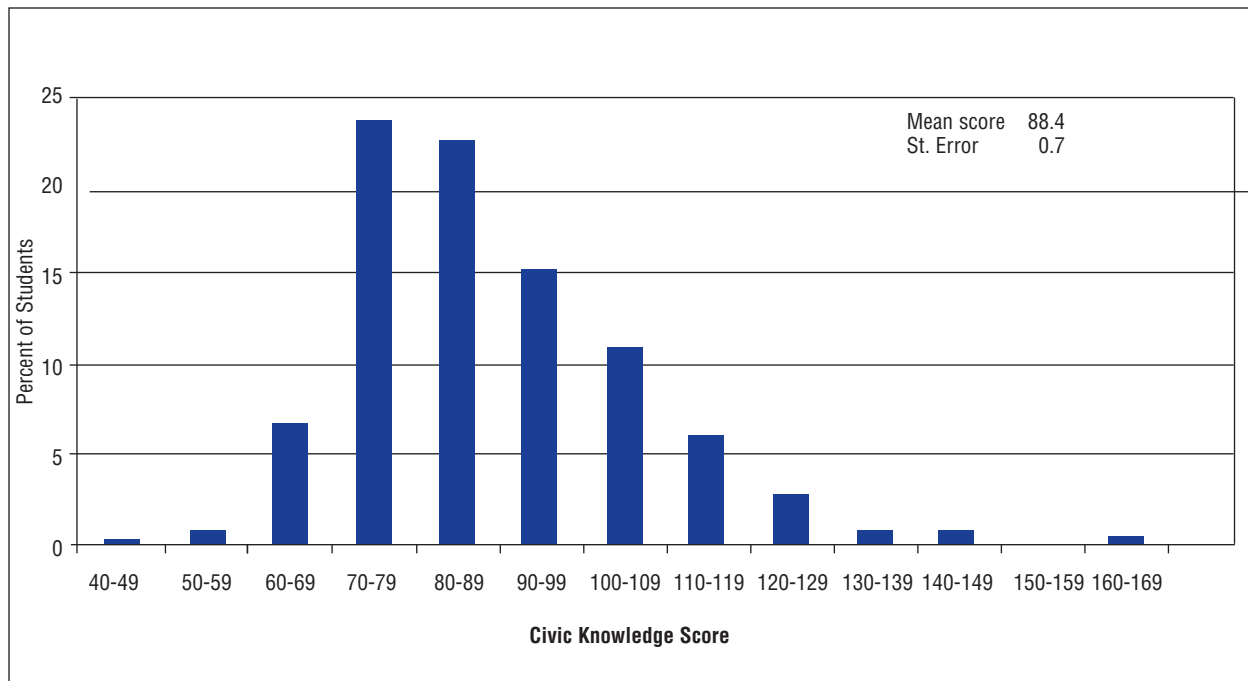
### **Performance on the Civic Knowledge Test across Four Countries**

The civic knowledge test consisted of 38 items primarily concentrated in the content domain of democracy and citizenship (Domain I), but included some items about national and international identity (Domain II) and about social cohesion and diversity (Domain III). The average score for the 28 countries was 100, with a standard deviation of 20.

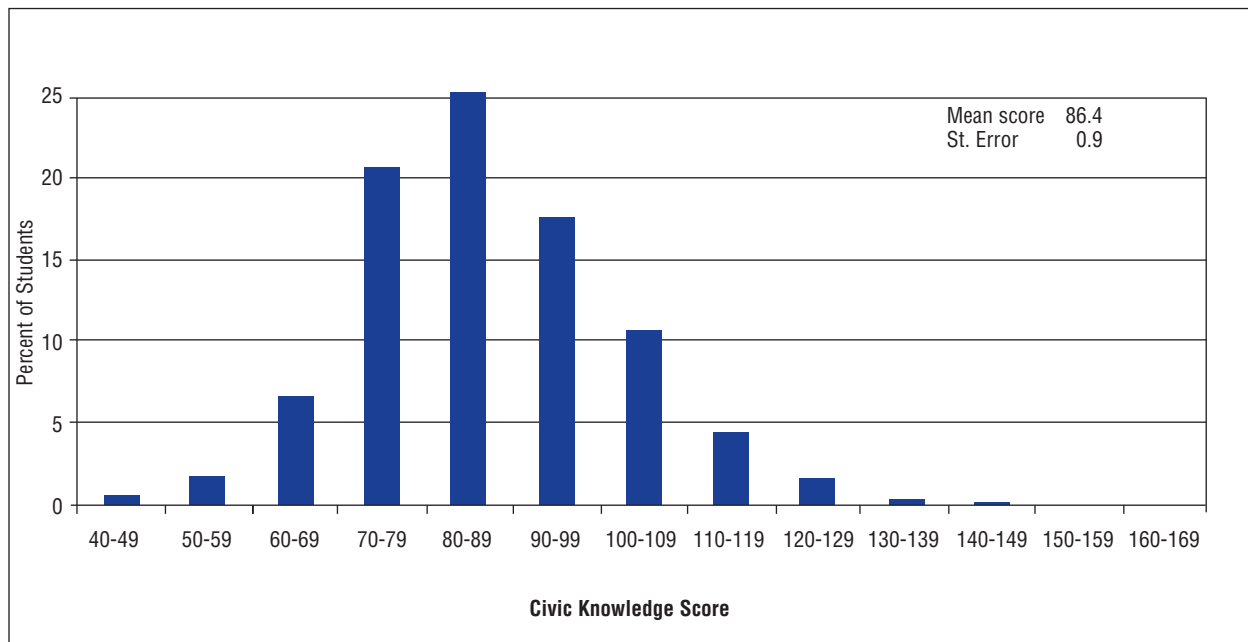
- Chilean students achieved a mean score of 88.
- Colombian students achieved a mean score of 86.
- Portuguese students achieved a mean score of 96.
- U.S. students achieved a mean score of 106.

Nine countries scored similarly to the United States, including Finland and Norway. Chile, Colombia, Romania, and Latvia had similar scores (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

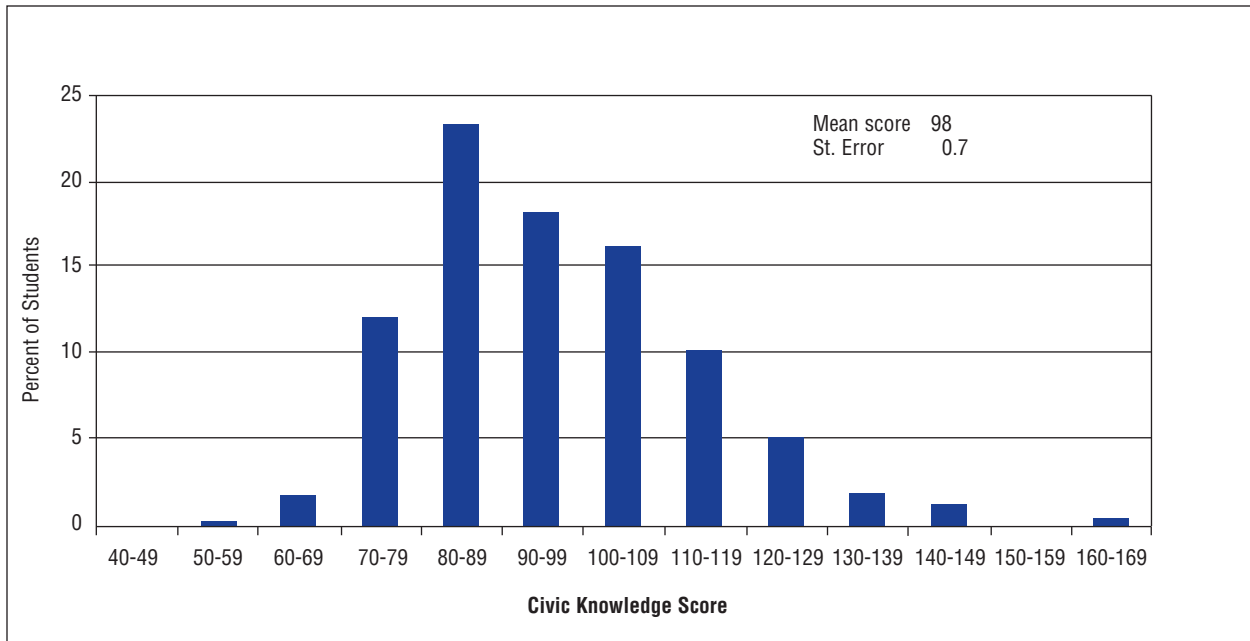
**Figure 3.1: Chile: 14-year-olds**



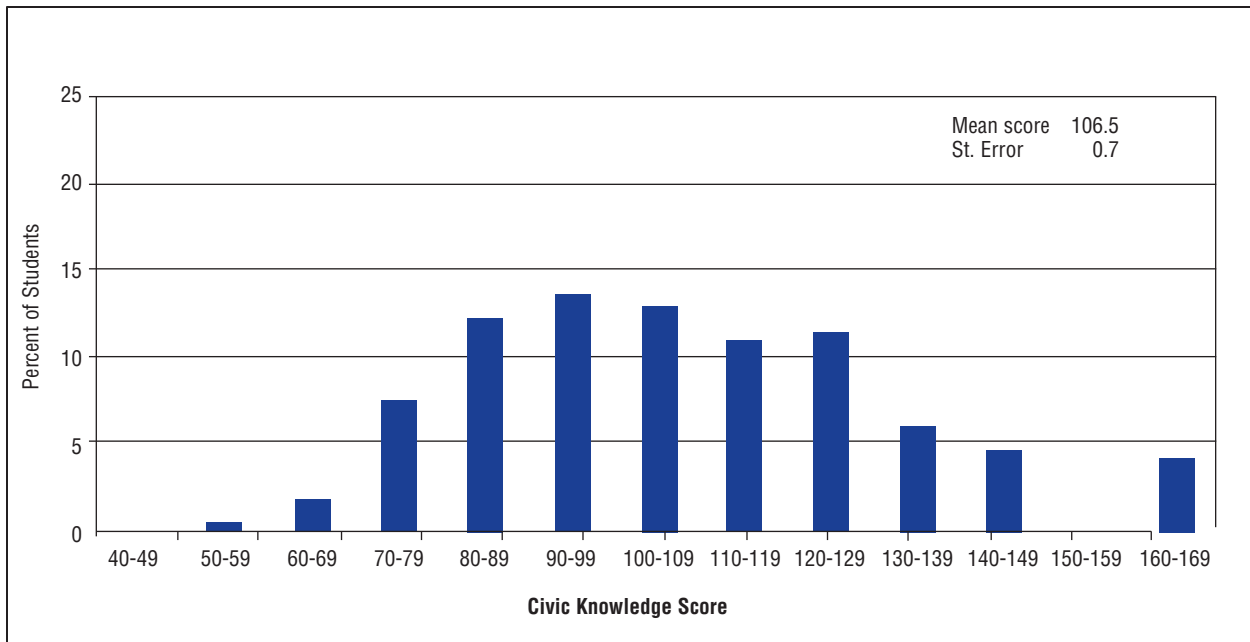
**Figure 3.2: Colombia: 14-year-olds**



**Figure 3.3: Portugal: 14-year-olds**



**Figure 3.4: United States: 14-year-olds**



The averages mask some interesting patterns, and so a bar graph indicating the percentage of students achieving within each 10-point scale category for each of the four countries is found in Figures 3.1 through 3.4. They show that:

- In Chile a small proportion of students scored below 60, most of students scored between 70 and 99, and a few students scored above 140.
- In Colombia a small proportion of students score below 60, most of the students scored between 70 and 99, and almost no students scored above 130.
- In Portugal a very small proportion of students scored below 60, most of the students scored between 80 and 109, and a small number scored above 140.
- In the United States a very small proportion of students scored below 60. A substantial number of students scored in each of the score categories between 80 and 129. Nearly five percent of the students got perfect or almost perfect scores on the test, scoring between 160 and 169.

In other words, Chilean, Colombian, and Portuguese students had score distributions that are similar to what would be expected on an educational outcome measure. Variability of performance was considerably greater in the United States, and there was a group of very highly knowledgeable students that did not exist in the other three countries.

### **Performance of the Younger and Older Adolescents on the Civic Knowledge Test in Three Countries**

The design of the test and statistical scaling make it possible to compare the 14-year-olds with the upper-secondary students. The rate of growth in

knowledge was similar for Chile and Colombia (and also similar to the growth rate in other countries such as Norway). Students in Portugal showed a slightly sharper rate of growth in test scores. The United States did not test upper-secondary students.

Latin American students perform relatively poorly at age 14, but it appears that they do not fall any farther behind during the upper-secondary years. The lower average scores at both ages may be traceable in part to deficits in educational experiences before the age of 14. This suggests the importance of reform in civic education to enhance the students' opportunities to learn about these issues in the early years of schooling coupled with literacy education. As the previous section indicated, however, this poor performance may be the result in Chile of a time lag in curriculum reform after the massive transitions of the early 1990s and may be the result in Colombia of the paradox of conflicting messages in school and in everyday life about democracy, political institutions, and civic life.

### **Country Differences in Sub-scores on Content and Skills for Both Age Groups**

This section will briefly review performance of 14-year-olds in the four countries on the two subscales used in the study's original report (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The major differentiation within the 38 items forming the Total Civic Knowledge Score in the IEA report was between Content Knowledge (Type 1 items) and Skills in interpreting political communication (Type 2 items). Sub-scores were formed (consisting of 25 Content items and 13 Skills items). When the subscale totals (from Torney-Purta et al., 2001) are examined for 14-year-olds:

- Chile had the lowest or next-to-lowest score on both the Content and Skills subscales (89 and 88, respectively).
- Colombia had the lowest score or next to lowest score on both the Content and the Skills subscales (89 and 84, respectively).
- Portugal had scores of 97 and 95 on Content and Skills, respectively (slightly below the international average for 28 countries).
- The United States had a score of 114 on the Skills subscale (the highest score in any country out of the 28). In contrast, students in the United States had a score on the Content Knowledge subscale of 102 (tied for tenth rank with the Russian Federation, Hungary, and Slovenia out of the 28 countries).

To summarize the upper-secondary results, Portuguese students (aged 17) performed above the international average on Content Knowledge and below the international average on Skills. Chilean students performed below the international average on both (Amadeo, et al., 2002). The United States did not participate in testing this older group and the Colombian data are unweighted and cannot be compared on this scale.

### **Performance on Individual Items from the Civic Knowledge Test across Four Countries**

An in-depth analysis of individual items considered in groups shows how and where civic education is succeeding in different countries as well as areas where improvement might be needed. An examination of country differences for individual test items is informative, especially for the 14-year-olds where the samples are representative and can be weighted for all four countries. This section provides data

comparing percentage correct for the individual items in the 14-year-old test in the four countries. In this section the actual texts of several items are presented (chosen from the 18 items that were released by IEA). The correct answer and the most frequently chosen incorrect answer (the most popular distracter) are indicated. These incorrect answers not only help to understand the specific misunderstandings that students possess, but also contribute to an understanding of both curricular gaps and the impact of conflict between the ideal discourse of democracy studied in school and everyday experience with the governmental and justice systems.

The presentation of skills is organized by type of item (e.g., items asking about political cartoons together). The presentation of the content items is organized by type of information required to give a correct answer (e.g., all the items requiring an understanding of democracy in one section, all items requiring knowledge of international topics in another section). In the case where the same items were administered to the upper-secondary population, the text will note whether items that are difficult at age 14 remained difficult even for students who were about to complete their secondary education.

#### *Country Differences in Performance on Individual Skills Items by 14-year-olds*

Nearly a third of the instrument was devoted to items measuring skills because these are capacities and types of understanding that a citizen is likely to need as he or she navigates the political process, for example, understanding the positions of political parties as described in a political leaflet, interpreting cartoons criticizing government policies, or reading reports in the newspaper which present situations where trade-offs or different perspectives are examined. These analyses will show whether



students in one country are strong and those in another less strong on the subscale on items measuring different types of skills.

Political cartoons appear in the newspapers of all four countries. However, the extent to which the

cartoons present material critical of the regime in power may differ according to whether the ownership of newspapers is concentrated in a group with particular political leanings. Table 3.1 shows the percentages of students who correctly answered each of the three items about cartoons.<sup>2</sup>

<b>Item Category, #, and Topic:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<i>Political Cartoon Illustrating:</i>				
IIA 36 History textbook erasure	49%	48%	49%	79%
IA 14 Opinion differences/democracy	42	43	57	77
IB 33 Political leader entangled in reforms	65	54	64	87

An examination of patterns of response by item shows that the U.S. students were very proficient in answering skills items that required interpreting cartoons. Portuguese, Chilean and Colombian students were less skilled in interpreting political cartoons.

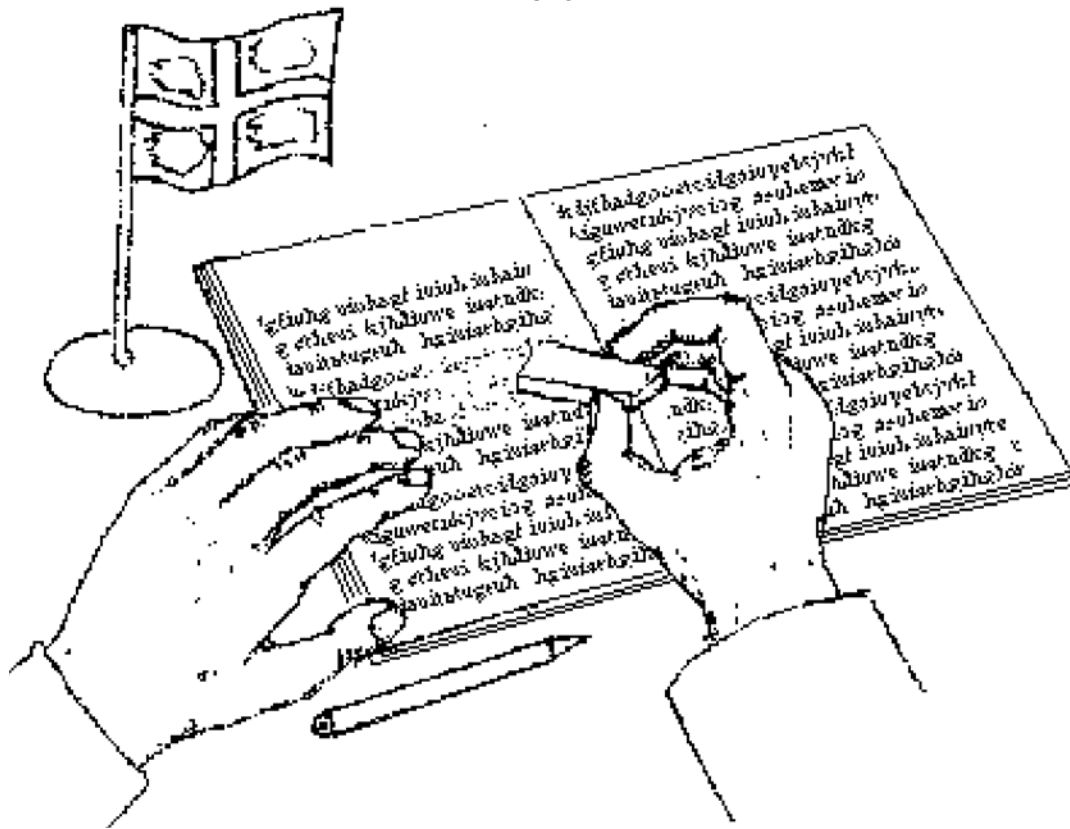
One of the cartoon items illustrates both what these items demanded and performance patterns. Item 36 (Box 3.1) was designed to measure a point in the content framework that was advocated during Phase 1 by a number of countries. Civic experts in many countries said that there are events in their histories of which the country is not proud and that young people should be aware of those events. The cartoon shows someone erasing words from a history book. A flag next to the book indicates that someone in an official national capacity is doing the erasing. The range of correct answers was very large (ranging from 26% correct in Romania, 39% correct in Estonia, to 79% in the United States). The 48 to 49% of students in Colombia, Chile, and

Portugal who answered correctly found this item about as difficult as did the students in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation. These are all countries with troubling events in their pasts, regime changes, and very recent alterations in the civic education system. The curriculum may not yet have incorporated ways to teach about troubling periods; in fact Cox’s analysis of curriculum indicates that this topic was not covered in the Chilean curriculum being followed in 1999. Another possibility is that educating 14-year-old students about different types of media may not be widely accepted. This item was also included in the test for the population of upper-secondary students. Approximately 75% of the older students in Chile and Colombia answered this item correctly (a substantial difference), showing that schools and experience can transmit this kind of awareness.

A second cartoon (an unreleased item retained by IEA for future tests) showed a boat titled “democracy” crowded with passengers each of whom was

<sup>2</sup> The content categorization of each item appears as a Roman numeral and a letter. See Appendix

Box 3.1



36. What is the message or main point of this cartoon? History textbooks ...

- A.  are sometimes changed to avoid mentioning problematic events from the past.
- B.  for children must be shorter than books written for adults.
- C.  are full of information that is not interesting.
- D.  Should be written using a computer and not a pencil.

pointing out a different course. This item addresses part of the content guidelines about the plethora of legitimate points of view in a functioning democracy. The differences in performance were about as large between the United States and Chile or Colombia as in the preceding cartoon

item. Students in Portugal performed somewhat better here than on the item dealing with erasure from the history book. The third cartoon, about a political official becoming entangled in a steering wheel labeled “political reform,” showed a similar pattern of performance.

These items require skill in interpreting cartoons as a form of political communication and also deal with topics that are more difficult to teach than facts about government structures. Countries that recently experienced both changes in the political system and reforms in the civic education system may first attempt to ensure good teaching about the basics then consider more subtle points. The political environment in the country—where there may or may not be willingness to confront troubling events in the past or where pluralism of opinion may or may not be encouraged—sends a message to young people that may contradict aspects of the school curriculum. It also appears that educational systems in new democracies undergoing transitions first attempt to integrate civic education content into existing academic structures. It may be because they prefer not to emphasize political communication media because they are thought of as more appropriate for adults.

This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Australia, England, Finland, Sweden and the United States were the countries that scored relatively high on skills. These countries, all long-standing democracies, appear to emphasize interpretation of common forms of political communication and skills in their classes. Media education, a package of techniques which attempts to help students decode and critically analyze cartoons and persuasive communications found in television and the press, has a relatively long history in English-speaking and Nordic countries (Masterman's review, 1993). Presenting a contrasting pattern, there is evidence that civic education has been incorporated into strong academic and disciplinary traditions in fields such as history in many of countries that have recently experienced political transitions. For example, in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Russian Federation students scored higher on the civic content items than on civic skills (Torney-Purta

et al., 2001). Interpreting media materials is not an emphasis in these countries.

Arguably a young person could grow to adult citizenship and be competent in many cognitive tasks required to understand politics without learning to interpret political cartoons. Fully functioning citizenship in democracy is enlivened by familiarity with such modes of expressing political opinion, however. It may also be that a history of media suppression in some nations in transition from dictatorship has made it more difficult to incorporate materials including cartoons or other media materials into education. Education about political media is a topic for further exploration in later chapters.

Similar performance patterns by country were found for items in which students were required to analyze text to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion or value judgments (see Endnote Table A3.1).

Differences between countries were somewhat less striking in the other five skills items. One set required extracting information from a leaflet of the type that might be issued by a political party and interpreting partisan positions found in it (Box 3.2). Another set of skills items required comprehending a mock newspaper article dealing with the closing of a factory because of environmental pollution.

The first two items about the party leaflet required comprehension of the text given, while the third required inference from that text synthesized with content information that did not appear there (Table 3.2). Students from the United States were able to understand which party issued the election leaflet and to infer something about the policy that was stated in the text in order to answer the first two items correctly. In the third item about the leaflet, it was necessary to make an inference about

**Table 3.2: Percentage Correct by Country for Five Items requiring Comprehension and Inference Skills for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, #, and Topic:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
<i>Political Leaflet:</i>				
IB 23 Which party issued leaflet	54%	40%	55%	83%
IB 24 Party's view of stated policy	51	39	77	83
IB 25 Implied policy	58	63	51	72
<i>News Article on Environment/Economics:</i>				
IC 34 Main point stated in article	23	20	34	47
IC 35 Implied economic trade-offs	52	41	70	67

positions not explicitly stated in the item. On that item students in the United States did slightly less well, while those in Colombia did somewhat better than on the previous item.

Two items about a mock newspaper article were designed to raise the issue of environmental pollution (which is of interest to many students) and then to pose a trade-off between solving that problem and the loss of jobs when a polluting factory is closed. Both economics and the environment were important aspects of the content framework constructed by participating countries during Phase 1. When economic issues are involved, such as the possible trade-off of environmental improvement for jobs, students in the United States had more difficulty answering correctly than they did on the skills items

previously described. Colombian and Chilean students performed poorly on four of out five of the skills items in Table 3.2. The Chilean analysis suggests that these topics or skills were not covered in the curriculum studied in 1999 (Cox, 2003). The lack of access to newspapers may also play a role.

#### *Country Differences in Performance on Individual Items with Political Content*

Performance by students in these four countries on items from the Civic Content Subscale is found in Tables 3.3 through 3.7. Those in Table 3.3 deal with the ability to understand the defining features of democracy. The first two are more general, while the last three deal with situations that may threaten democracy.

**Table 3.3: Percentage Correct by Country for Five Items about Definitions and Characteristics of Democracy for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, #, and Topic:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
IA 12 Who ought to govern democracy	53%	77%	69%	69%
IA 19 Necessary parts of democracy	61	67	58	65
IA 9 Serious threat to democracy	57	74	73	75
IA 17 Non-democratic government.	45	38	55	53
IA 29 Democratic action after dictator	37	37	46	47

**Box 3.2**

**We citizens have had enough!**

A vote for the Silver Party means a vote for higher taxes.  
It means an end to economic growth and a waste of our nation's resources.

Vote instead for economic growth and free enterprise.

Vote for more money left in everyone's wallet!

Let's not waste another 4 years! VOTE FOR THE GOLD PARTY

**23. This is an election leaflet which has probably been issued by...**

- A.  the Silver Party.
- B.  a party or group in opposition to [running against] the Silver Party.
- C.  a group which tries to be sure elections are fair. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]
- D.  the Silver Party and the Gold Party together.

**24. The authors of the leaflet think that higher taxes are ...**

- A.  a good thing.
- B.  necessary in a [free] market economy.
- C.  necessary for economic growth. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]
- D.  a bad thing.

**25. The party or group that has issued this leaflet is likely also to be in favor of ...**

- A.  reducing state [government] control of the economy.
- B.  lowering of the voting age.
- C.  capital punishment.
- D.  more frequent elections. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]

**Box 3.3**

**12. In a democratic political system, which of the following ought to govern the country?**

- A.  Moral or religious leaders.
- B.  A small group of well-educated people.
- C.  Popularly elected representatives.
- D.  Experts on government and political affairs. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]

Students in Colombia displayed considerable strength in answering the two general items about positive defining features of democracy. Items 12 and 19 were answered correctly by about 60% of the students over the four countries, and on both items Colombia had relatively high percentages of students answering correctly. This is consistent with the interpretation (discussed earlier) that in Colombia presentation of the ideals of democracy has been a positive feature of the school curriculum. Chile, in contrast, had the lowest percentage correct on the item asking about who should govern in a democracy (choosing instead the incorrect answer that

experts ought to govern). This is consistent with earlier suggestions that these topics were not in the curriculum followed in Chile in 1999.

On item 19, asking about citizen's freedom to influence public debate as a necessary characteristic of democracy, students in the four countries performed in an essentially similar fashion. On this item the percentages correct for the upper-secondary students were above 90% suggesting that positive defining attributes of democracy had been successfully transmitted to many students by the age of 14 and to nearly all students by the age of 17.

**Box 3.4**

**17. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non-democratic?**

- A.  People are prevented from criticizing [not allowed to criticize] the government.
- B.  The political parties criticize each other often.
- C.  People must pay very high taxes. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]
- D.  Every citizen has the right to a job.

Colombian students were about as likely as those in Portugal and the United States to identify “national leaders ignoring human rights” as a serious threat to democracy (Table 3.3, item 9). Chilean students performed relatively poorly on this item. The topic of this item is again one which the Colombian curriculum covered (as part of the ideal structure of democracy) while the Chilean curriculum did not. On the last two items in Table 3.3, an item about problems that lead to a government being called non-democratic (item 17 and Box 3.4) and an item about the value of free elections in the reinstatement of a democracy after a dictatorship (item 29), both Chile and Colombia performed relatively poorly when compared to Portugal and the United States. In all four countries high taxes were thought of as undemocratic; and in Chile, criticism by political parties also was viewed in this way. The results for the upper-secondary group indicated substantial growth in the understanding of actions of govern-

ment that are undemocratic and of transitions to democracy. However, in none of the countries did more than 90% of the students evidence this understanding (as they did in understanding positive definitions of democracy discussed previously).

In summary, Colombians appear to be adequately educating their students who are 14 years old about the ideal characteristics of a functioning democracy and about the importance of national leaders’ respect for human rights in the preservation of democracy. Chile appears to have had somewhat less success in transmitting these ideas. The picture is less positive in both countries when the test item requires understanding other threats to democracy.

The next section deals with items about civic content concerned with the function of several aspects of political and civic structures and organizations in democracy (Table 3.4 and Box 3.5).

**Table 3.4: Percentage Correct by Country for Eight Items about Political and Civic Structures in Democracies for 14-year-olds**

<b>Item Category, #, and Topic:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
IB 28 What constitutions contain	50%	66%	60%	69%
IC 7 Function of civic organizations	69	60	59	78
IB 2 Function of laws	68	57	72	81
IB 30 Example of corruption	49	64	65	65
IB 22 Function of periodic elections	16	27	50	37
IB 11 Function of p. parties	60	54	84	72
IB 13 Function of nat'l legislature	32	25	60	72
IC 18 Function of press diversity	40	49	34	59

The first three lines in Table 3.4 (items 28, 7, and 2) show that there are relatively large percentages of students in all four of the countries who correctly answered basic questions about political institu-

tions. This is similar to the pattern of response identified for definitions of democracy in the previous section. Understanding that constitutions set overall blueprints for government, the intended role of

civic organizations, and the function of laws compose information that all the countries appear to be successfully transmitted to a majority of 14-year-olds. The topics covered by these items did appear in the Chilean curriculum in use in 1999 and were also likely to be taught in the Colombian schools.

Looking at the upper-secondary data the large majority of students (more than 80%) answered these items correctly. This is what we might call the basic uncontested core of civic understanding, and all four countries seem to be transmitting this knowledge to most students.

### Box 3.5

#### 2. Which of the following is an accurate statement about laws?

- A.  Laws forbid or require certain actions [behaviors]
- B.  Laws are made by the police.
- C.  Laws are valid only if all citizens have voted to accept them. [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]
- D.  Laws prevent criticism of the government.

#### 11. In democratic countries what is the function of having more than one political party?

- A.  To represent different opinions [interests] in the national legislature [e.g., Parliament, Congress]
- B.  To limit political corruption [*most frequently chosen incorrect answer*]
- C.  To prevent political demonstrations
- D.  To encourage economic competition

There were also country differences, however (Table 3.4). Corruption was less well understood in Chile than in the other three countries. Chilean and Colombian students (both 14- and 17-year-olds) were less likely to understand the function of periodic elections and of political parties and the national legislature than were the students in Portugal and the United States. In Colombia this may be because although the formal role of elections in democracy is covered in that curriculum, students'

everyday experience is that candidates are threatened with assassination and the local elected official's power is likely to be marginalized by the influence of guerrillas or paramilitary groups.

The negative consequences if one publisher owned all the newspapers was not well understood by 14-year-olds in Portugal (Table 3.4) but the large majority of upper-secondary students did grasp this point.



**Table 3.5: Percentage Correct by Country for Five Items about Citizenship and Rights for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, #, and Topic:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
IC 3 Citizens' political rights	56%	67%	64%	75%
IC 4 Reporter's rights	61	68	78	80
IC 1 Citizen's right to vote for representatives	47	36	63	76
IC 15 Violation of civil liberties	34	32	51	55
IC 10 Limits on violent actions	41	24	63	70

There appears to be a basic understanding by students in Chile, Portugal and the United States of another uncontested core idea—citizens' right to vote (Table 3.5, item 3). In Chile the most popular

incorrect answer was the right to have a job, an economic right. In the other countries those who did not answer correctly were more likely to choose A, learning about politics.

**Box 3.6**

**3. Which of the following is a political right? The right ...**

- A.  of pupils to learn about politics in school. [*popular distracter*]
- B.  of citizens to vote and stand for [run for] election.
- C.  of adults to have a job. [*popular distracter*]
- D.  of politicians to have a salary.

By age 17 more than 80% of students in all the countries answered this item correctly. There is corroborating information from other sections of the instrument that will be dealt with in more detail later in the chapter. For example, an item indicating that free elections are “good for democracy” was widely endorsed in these countries.

A somewhat more subtle idea is found in item 1 (Table 3.5); that the citizen has the right to vote for representatives who then vote for laws. The lower percentage of students who answered the item cor-

rectly results from the students in Chile and Colombia who believed that citizens vote directly on matters such as the national budget. The idea of direct democracy is appealing to young people and the idea of a chain of representation less clearly understood. In item 2, discussed previously, students were attracted by the wrong answer saying that citizens can vote directly on laws. It may be the case that the effort to promote civil society in some countries without corresponding attention to political institutions results in students focusing on direct rather than representative democracy.

Freedom of the press, in the form of a reporter's right to obtain information without fear of reprisals, was better understood by 14-year-olds in Portugal and the United States than in Chile or Colombia (Table 3.5, item 4). Other items in the survey also showed different answering patterns in countries with different historical experience in the control of news and journalists.

One of the most difficult items in the instrument required students to distinguish between the seriousness of several different threats to civil liberties. The correct answer was that breaking up a private meeting featuring criticisms of government leaders could be a serious threat to civil liberties (Table 3.5, item 15). Students in the United States and Portugal performed better on this item than those in Chile and Colombia. But even in the better performing countries only slightly more than half the students answered correctly. This remained a relatively difficult item at age 17. Students seemed to have considerable difficulty making subtle distinctions between rights, especially identifying free speech rights that are critical for democracy.

An item that asked about violence as a mode of political protest for a citizens' organization was answered correctly by a relatively small proportion of Colombian students (Table 3.5, item 10). This may reflect the turmoil of the current political situation in which the boundaries for legitimate action by political organizations have become

blurred or the paradox suggested previously that the curriculum in school identifies a set of ideal political norms that are contradicted by everyday observations of civic and political life.

#### *Country Differences in Performance on Items with International Content by 14-Year-Olds*

These items with international content tended to be easier than the average item on the test (Table 3.6). On the first two items Colombia and Chile performed somewhat less well than the other countries. In responding to item 20, students in the United States and Colombia seemed relatively unaware of what is contained in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, while students in Chile and Portugal, where this was part of the curriculum, performed well. Information about interest in various news topics and in teaching practices suggests that civic educators in the United States are more likely to place an emphasis on national than on international issues.

#### *Country Differences in Performance on Economics Items by 14-Year-Olds*

Only a few items with explicit economic content were included in the instrument for 14-year-olds, largely because the national researchers thought them too difficult for this age group. More items dealing explicitly with economics were included for upper-secondary students (Chapter 4).

**Table 3.6: Percentage Correct by Country for Three Items about the United Nations for 14-year-olds**

<b>Item Category, #, and Topic:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
IIB 16 Purpose of United Nations	74%	68%	88%	80%
IC 6 Universal Declaration/Human Rights	62	69	73	79
IC 20 Conv/ Rights of Child	88	77	91	78

**Table 3.7: Percentage Correct by Country for Three Items about Economics for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, #, and Topic:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
IC 8 Purpose of labor union	62%	67%	75%	60%
IB 27 Essentials of market economy	47	20	46	46
IIB 21 Owner of multinational corp.	48	41	45	50

A number of items discussed under previous content categories have implicit economic content (usually an incorrect answer), and often these were items where students had difficulty choosing the correct answer. The three items with explicit economic content included in Table 3.7 also indicate that this area is relatively difficult. Responses to the first item in the table suggest that young people living in countries where labor unions are a recognized political force were more aware of their purpose in addressing pay and working conditions. By the age of 17, however, students in these countries had percent correct figures of 80% or higher.

In the item that asked students to recognize a definition of the market economy as involving competition between businesses, Chile, Portugal, and the United States were very similar in their percentage of correct responses (though less than half the students answered correctly). Students in Colombia performed poorly on this item, choosing the alternative that a market economy guarantees wealth for everyone. This was also a popular incorrect response in other countries.

The third item in Table 3.7 with specific economic content asked who owns multinational corporations. Fifty percent or less of students in the four countries answered correctly, identifying ownership concentrated in developed countries. The percentages were similar across countries. The most frequently chosen incorrect answer was that an international organization owns these companies.

Compared with other subject matters covered in the instrument, the items with economic content were difficult for 14-year-olds. The next chapter discusses the upper-secondary scale that concentrated on economic topics and a new IRT scale formulated for 14-year-olds that uses items with both explicit and implicit economic content.

*Items in the Instrument about Discrimination*

The content framework included a Domain III on social cohesion and diversity. A number of attempts were made to write test items with correct and incorrect answer relating to this domain. This task proved difficult, especially because different types of groups experience discrimination in different countries, but two items dealing with gender discrimination in employment were included (see Endnote Table 3.2 for the results by country).

*Conclusions from the Analysis of Individual Test Items*

There are some knowledge items that appear to tap uncontested core knowledge about democracy and civic structures understood by the majority of students in all four of these countries and by the large majority by the age of 17. The topics of these items include general definitions of democracy, constitutions, laws, the role of civic organizations, and the right of citizens to vote.

Students learn what is explicitly taught in a way that is meaningful to them at their level of under-

standing. They often miss the subtle points—for example, direct as contrasted with representative democracy. They find it difficult to distinguish between the value of specific activities in promoting democracy or the threat implied by actions relating to citizens' rights. It is unrealistic to assume that as a result of studying a relatively abstract topic, such as the history of the evolution of rights or important ways in which civic organizations have contributed throughout a country's history, young people will generalize to other topics such as legitimate limitations on rights or situations in which actions such as protest are justified.

Economic issues appear to be problematic for students. This issue is clear both from items in this instrument, that explicitly dealt with economic issues and other items where understanding of economic issues was necessary in order to choose the correct answer (e.g., in the item requiring an understanding of the trade-off between environmental cleanup and jobs lost from a polluting factory that has closed).

The next section discusses findings within countries, in particular the correlates or predictors of knowledge.

## **Predictors of Total Civic Knowledge Scores for 14-year-olds and Upper-secondary Students within Countries**

### *Correlates of Civic Knowledge for 14-year-olds*

Although information about country differences is useful to those who plan civic education, knowing the factors within individual students and the school environment that are associated with high performance within a given country is also of value. Table 3.8 presents regression models showing the factors that predict high civic knowledge for 14-year-olds. The variables listed in Box 3.7 were chosen for examination in these analyses, based on previous research and also on a desire to identify aspects of school that might be amenable to change fostered by policy actions or recommendations concerning practice.

### Box 3.7 Variables Included in the Models

- Gender with the higher scores assigned to females.
- Home literacy resources measured by the students' report of how many books are to be found in their homes. Other ways of looking at the quality of the home preparation for education were considered but rejected. For example, many 14-year-olds left out the questions about parents' educational level.
- Expected years of future education measured by students' estimates of vocational and/or higher education expectations. The students' answer may reflect individual aspirations, school track in which they are enrolled, parent pressures or peer influences.
- Open classroom climate for discussion measured by a scale assessing students' perceptions of the atmosphere in their classes encouraging (or discouraging) the expression of opinion and discussion of issues about which there may be disagreement.
- Reported participation in student council or school newspaper measured by the students' report of these activities.
- Reading news in the newspaper measured by the students' report of the frequency of this activity.
- Confidence in school participation measured by a scale assessing the students' perceptions of the nature of the school culture and opportunities for effective participation by students.
- Trust in government-related institutions measured by a scale assessing extent of trust in national legislative and judicial institutions and local institutions.
- Learning about voting measured by the students' report of the extent to which the importance of voting and elections was emphasized in their schools.

As is the case in nearly all academically based areas, the most powerful predictors of civic knowledge were home literacy resources and expected years of future education. These are among the aspects of the student that are least amenable to school influence or policy change. On the positive side for education, important contributions to knowledge were also made by having a school culture that valued student input (in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal), having an atmosphere in the classroom that values student discussion and helps students learn to respect each others' views (in Chile, Portugal, and the United States), and students reading the newspaper (in Chile and the United States). At age 14 neither student council nor school newspaper experience seemed to add much value, and an explicit stress on elections and voting had a very small negative influence in Chile on general knowledge of civic matters and no influence in the other countries. It should be remem-

bered that school councils or newspapers are not a regular feature of schools in some countries until students are older than 14 years.

Colombia is the country where the prediction was least successful (the lowest R squared) and thus where the guidance for practice and policy is least certain. Most of the school-related variables (with the exception of the general school culture) did not make a significant contribution to civic achievement. Similar results were found with a slightly different set of predictors in the general report (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The level of trust in government (or its lack) seems to play a greater role in this country than the others. It may be that the chaotic situation in Colombia is reducing the effectiveness of educational programs generally. An alternative explanation is that many students are coming to school from homes that lack support for literacy, and so the school is severely hampered in

**Table 3.8: Regression Models for Civic Knowledge of 14 Year Old Students by Country**

Predictor Variables	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
Gender (female)	-0.07		-0.09	
Home Literacy Resources	0.21	0.17	0.19	0.26
Expected Years of Education	0.26	0.20	0.27	0.27
Open Classroom Climate	0.08		0.10	0.11
Student Parliament/School Newspaper				
Reading News in Newspaper	0.10			0.06
Confidence in School Participation	0.12	0.07	0.18	
Trust in Government-related Institutions	-0.04	-0.14		
Learned about Voting	-0.04			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.21	0.12	0.22	0.22
Weighted N	4,860	4,373	2,765	2258

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Non-significant coefficients were omitted.

its effectiveness. Twenty-nine percent of Colombian 14-year-olds come from homes where there are fewer than 10 books. The corresponding figures are 14% for Chile, 22% for Portugal, and 9% for the United States.

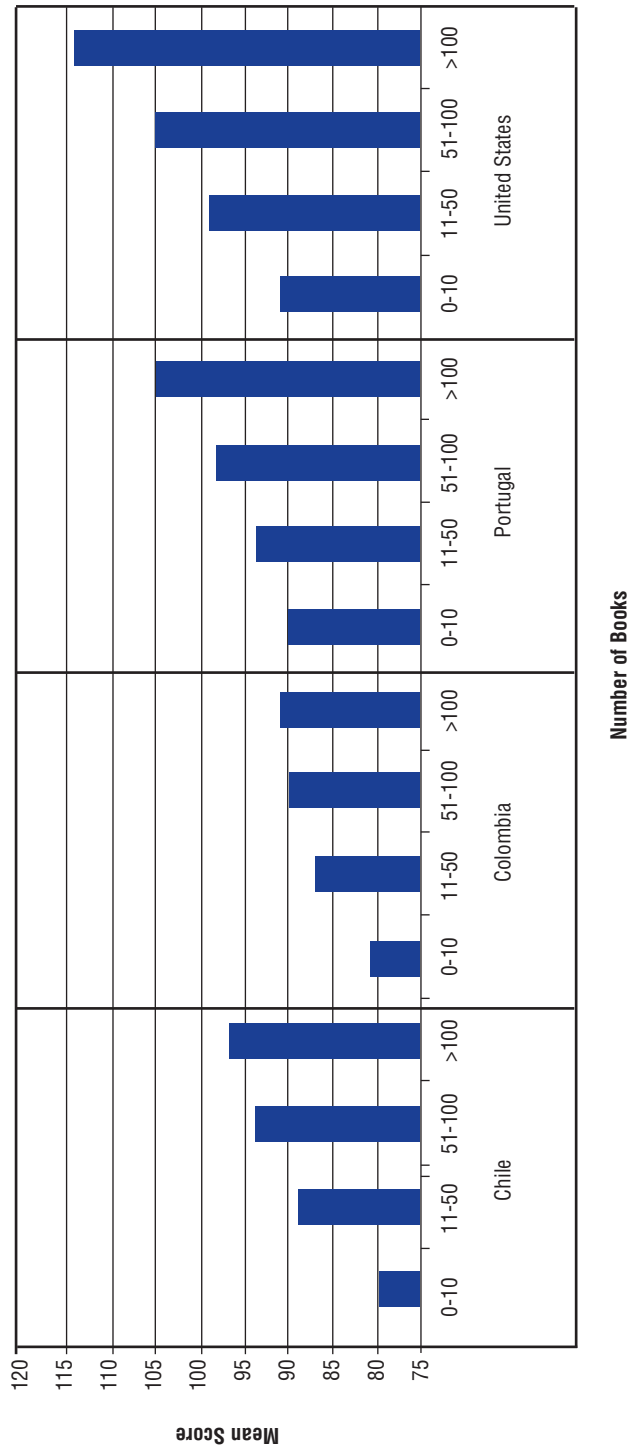
To make more concrete the magnitude of the differences in civic education performance associated with home background, Table 3.9 and Figure 3.5 present the mean civic knowledge scores separately

for each category of home literacy resources. With each increase in number of literacy resources at home, there was an increase in the average civic knowledge. The differences within country between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged students were the greatest in the United States (23 points separation) and least in Colombia (10 points separation). It is also the case that many more students in Colombia fell into this lowest category (as noted above).

**Table 3.9: Mean Civic Knowledge Scores by Home Literacy Resources and Country for 14-year-olds**

Country:	0-10 books	11-50 books	51-100 books	> 100 books
Chile	80	89	94	97
Colombia	81	87	90	91
Portugal	90	94	98	105
United States	91	99	105	114

Figure 3.5: Mean Civic Knowledge for Different Levels of Home Literacy



Looking at this information in another way, the students coming from homes with poor literacy resources in Chile and Colombia had almost the same Civic Knowledge Scores. In contrast, looking at the highest level of literacy resources, students in Chile scored six points higher than the Colombian students. To illustrate a similar pattern at a different level of performance, the students with poor resources at home in Portugal and the United States had almost the same score. In contrast, looking at the highest level of literacy resources, the scores of students in the United States were nearly 10 points higher, on average, than those of comparable Portuguese students.

To summarize, many students in Colombia come from homes with poor literacy resources. Disadvantaged Chilean students possess just about as much civic knowledge as the disadvantaged Colombian students, but the Chilean students with stronger

literacy backgrounds at home perform quite a bit better. Disadvantaged students in the United States also have just about as much knowledge as students with the same types of home background in Portugal, but the advantaged students in the United States perform much better than comparable Portuguese students.

These findings relate to two points. First, especially in Colombia, there is a low-performing group of substantial size by age 14. Second, in the United States there is a group that is low performing at 14 but there is also a group that is already performing very well (for the most part students from strong home backgrounds).

*Correlates of Civic Knowledge for 17-year-olds*

Similar patterns of correlation held for the older students (Table 3.10). (Note that the Colombian

<b>Predictor Variables</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
Gender (female)	-0.10	-0.13	-0.17
Home Literacy Resources	0.20	0.17	0.14
Expected Years of Education	0.33	0.17	0.27
Open Classroom Climate	0.04	0.12	0.08
Student Parliament/School Newspaper		0.05	
Reading News in Newspaper	0.11		
Confidence in School Participation	0.04	0.07	
Trust in Government-related Institutions		-0.14	
Learned about Voting	-0.06		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.16	0.14	0.16
Weighted N	5,371	4,719*	2,596

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Non-significant coefficients were omitted.

\* Unweighted data for Colombia.



data were unweighted because of missing documentation.) Gender differences favoring males were more substantial at this age than at 14. Home literacy and expected education were still the strongest predictors of civic knowledge. Openness of the classroom climate was important in all three countries. Confidence in the school culture's openness to student action was a predictor in Chile and Colombia, and participating in a student council or newspaper was important in Colombia. At this level the predictions were the most comprehensive in Chile, and school factors such as newspaper reading were of particular value there. As was the case for 14-year-olds, there was a negative relation between trust and knowledge in Colombia.

The analysis presented to this point has dealt with items that could be scored right or wrong. The remainder of the chapter deals with concepts and beliefs about democracy that were rated rather than scored for correct answers. These items elaborate and concretize some of the previously presented analyses.

### **Ratings of what is Good (and Bad) for Democracy: Basic Rights, Participation, Dissent, and Threats to Democracy**

Many national researchers argued during Phase 1 that the textbooks and formal curricula emphasize the positive view of democratic processes and institutions and wondered if students were gaining enough awareness of potential threats to democracy, as well as its strengths. As a consequence, in addition to test items that could be scored for correct and incorrect answers (items Types 1 and 2), there were also Type 3 items dealing with democracy and citizenship that did not have right and wrong answers

but were answered on a rating scale. The remainder of this chapter presents results from some of these items that provide corroborating evidence for the individual test item results discussed previously.

In order to assess students' grasp of the processes of a functioning democracy and what strengthens and weakens it, a series of items asked whether a given situation or condition was 1) very bad, 2) bad, 3) good, or 4) very good for democracy. The mean scores on this four-point scale are presented in Table 3.11. Scores between 3 and 4 indicate that the large majority of students think that what was listed is either good or very good for democracy. Scores between 2 and 3 indicate that some students think it good and some think it bad for democracy. Scores below 2 indicate that most students thought that what was listed was bad or very bad for democracy. Most of the characteristics listed toward the top of the table would be thought of as strengths of democracy, and we would expect the average scores to be above 2.5. The items at the bottom of the table deal with what are often seen as threats to democracy and we would expect those to be below 2.5 (indicating that students thought them bad or very bad for democracy).

Many trends observed in the test items discussed previously (and in Torney-Purta et al., 2001) are confirmed by the survey items about democracy presented here. First, there was wide agreement and little country difference in the extent to which freedom of speech and the right to participate in free elections were rated as good for democracy. Colombian and U.S. students were the most likely to agree. These survey items correspond to the basic uncontested core understandings discussed for the knowledge test items. Students generally seemed to understand the importance of these institutions and rights, in part because they tend to be part of the curriculum in these countries.

The next category of items, dealing with participation and dissent, did show some differences between countries (Table 3.11). The organizations of civil society were more valued by the students in the United States than in the other countries (confirming results from a test item on a similar topic). The value of peaceful protest, the function of conflict between parties, and the role of people mobilizing through parties were less appreciated in Chile and Portugal than in Colombia and the United States. In

Colombia people demanding their rights was thought of as especially good for democracy and trusting government leaders without question was thought of as especially bad for democracy (both echoing an earlier set of responses in the test). Chilean students were the most likely to think of the positive rather than the negative ramifications of unquestioning trust of government leaders (also echoing previously discussed results in the test and perhaps resulting from the recent democratic transition).

**Table 3.11: Mean Level of Agreement for Items about Students' Concepts of What is Good (and Bad) for Democracy by Country for 14-year-olds**

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Items:</b>				
<b><i>Basic Rights:</i></b>				
Everyone has the right to express opinion	3.32	3.65	3.28	3.49
Citizens have right to elect freely	3.33	3.63	3.31	3.50
<b><i>Participation/Dissent:</i></b>				
Many organizations available	3.12	3.18	2.96	3.35
Parties have different opinions	2.57	2.68	2.51	2.94
People peacefully protest unjust laws	2.84	3.13	2.75	3.13
People participate to influence parties	2.52	2.88	2.51	2.81
People demand their political rights	2.95	3.42	2.64	2.88
Government leaders trusted without question	2.70	1.97	2.18	2.28
<b><i>Threats to Democracy:</i></b>				
People in power give jobs to their family	2.36	2.51	2.03	1.96
Courts/judges influenced by politicians	2.07	2.07	1.68	1.96
Those critical of government forbidden to speak	1.96	1.81	1.89	1.79
One company owns all the newspapers	2.08	1.88	2.14	1.86
All television stations present the same political opinion	2.26	2.15	2.47	1.96

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = very bad for democracy; 2 = bad for democracy; 3 = good for democracy; 4 = very good for democracy.

Students were also given the option of saying "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

Finally there are five items in Table 3.11 that presented threats to democracy. Nepotism was not recognized as a threat to democracy in Colombia (receiving an average rating of neither good nor bad, in contrast to other countries where most students thought it is bad for democracy). There were differences in recognizing the threat posed by political influence on the judicial process, with the Latin American respondents less likely to see this problem. In Colombia this may be related to the tendency for the school to deal with the ideals of a democratic system, which contrast with the practices that young people observe when they or their relatives have contact with the justice system or local politicians.

The large majority of students recognized that for-

bidding those with critical opinions to speak at meetings threatens democracy, though students in Chile were less likely to recognize this problem than students in the other countries. Portuguese and Chilean 14-year-olds failed to see the potential threat inherent in newspaper ownership concentrated into the hands of one company and in homogeneity of political views presented on television (echoing test results previously discussed). This may result from the tendency of early adolescents to believe that when there is agreement among sources of information, this is likely to be because there is a single correct or true position. It also suggests, however, that there may be special difficulty in teaching about the role of media in democracies with histories of dictatorship.

**Table 3.12: Mean Level of Importance for Items about Students' Concepts of the Characteristics of a Good Adult Citizen by Country for 14-year-olds**

Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
<b>Items:</b>				
Obeys the law	3.66	3.67	3.59	3.75
Votes in every election	3.50	3.38	2.92	3.13
Patriotic and loyal to the country	3.69	3.57	3.12	3.36
Knows the country's history	3.47	3.27	2.98	2.94
Follows political issues in newspaper	3.08	2.78	3.03	2.70
Takes part in activities promoting human rights	3.27	3.57	3.28	3.18
Takes part in activities protecting the environment	3.51	3.54	3.44	3.19
Would participate in peaceful protest against an unjust law	2.73	3.15	2.97	2.93

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = very important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = somewhat unimportant; 4 = not important. Students were also given the option of say "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

Table 3.12 presents another set of concept items, these dealing with the actions of a good adult citizen. The large majority of students agreed that the citizen should obey the law (see also Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Amadeo et al., 2002). The Latin

American students were especially strong in their belief that the citizen should vote as well as be patriotic and loyal to the country; students in Portugal and the United States were less likely to endorse these qualities. Chilean students were

especially likely to believe that knowing the country's history and following current political news in the newspaper were important characteristics of citizens, perhaps seeing these activities as guarding democracy against dictatorship.

The Colombian students were the most likely to value participation in social movement and protest activities. They were the most likely to say that the good adult citizen should take part in activities promoting human rights, protecting the environment, and protesting against injustice. Students in the United States were least likely of these four countries to think that actions promoting human rights and protecting the environment were part of the adult citizen's responsibility. Chilean students were the least likely to believe that citizens should peacefully protest unjust laws. This pattern also corresponds to that for items in the test reported in earlier sections of this chapter.

## Summary

Scores on the full-scale measure of civic knowledge were the highest in the United States and lower in Portugal, Chile, and Colombia at age 14. The performance of students in different countries was similar on many items measuring basic civic content knowledge. Chilean students were relatively strong on items covered in their curriculum, while Colombian students performed well on items having to do with human rights. The U.S. students excelled on items requiring skills in interpreting civic information (from political cartoons, leaflets, and newspaper articles).

### *Policy-related Issues*

- There were relatively few differences between countries in the extent to which students under-

stood the basic ideas about democracy and citizenship—the uncontested core of democratic understanding. Students in Colombia were especially strong in supporting participatory activities by citizens for strengthening democracy. However, a number of students in Chile and Colombia failed to grasp some threats to democracy, such as corruption, nepotism, and media control. In many cases these could be traced to the inclusion (or absence) of related issues about political institutions and the ideals of democracy in the curriculum. However, the everyday experience of students with “real politics” in the community also appeared to be influential, especially in Colombia. Balancing education about democratic ideals while incorporating the realities of everyday experience poses a policy challenge. This challenge might be the central issue in a renewed debate about civic education in and outside school and about the points where education policy can make an important difference.

- When the knowledge scores of the younger and older groups were compared, there was a substantial difference favoring the older students in each of the three countries where both groups were tested. The rate of growth between the two ages was similar in Chile and Colombia (and similar to the growth rate in countries such as Norway and Sweden). This suggests that civic education needs to be improved in the years of school before students are 14 years old, since the relative deficits of understanding already exist at that age.
- Literacy resources in the home and expected years of future education were the most important correlates of civic knowledge in each of these countries at both age levels. Some school-related factors such as the openness of the classroom climate for discussion and encouraging

students to read newspapers show potential for improving civic education's results. Programs incorporating such features and also attempting to improve literacy resources and skills more generally are especially important in Latin America.

- The items with keyed correct answers (Types 1 and 2 from the test) and those where there was a freer response (Type 3, concepts from the survey) gave similar perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of students in these four countries. There is an uncontested core of civic knowledge and beliefs, especially dealing with basic democratic principles, elections, and freedom to express opinions where students across the four countries showed understanding. When the questions dealt with more subtle points about rights, with economics, with some threats to democracy (including certain types

of corruption), the Chilean students tended to perform poorly. The Colombian students did not understand threats such as nepotism and did poorly on the items that required interpreting political communications. The history of relatively recent dictatorship seems to have left some marks on both the Chilean and Portuguese students.

- Schools appear to have many opportunities to foster civic knowledge. Curriculum reform that includes a set of explicit statements about meaningful content is important. Preparing teachers to hold discussion in class appears to have potential, as do reforms of the school culture that make students feel that their participation can make a difference. Programs of media education that use newspapers in class also appear to have considerable potential.

**Endnote Table A3.1: Percentage Correct by Country for Three Items requiring Distinctions between Facts and Opinions for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, # and Topic :	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
IB 38 Taxes and economic inequality	26%	26%	25%	69%
IIA 32 Flags and national identity	54	40	65	80
IIB 31 Nature of environment problem	37	33	45	76
IIIA 37 Women and politics	52	46	67	78

**Endnote Table 3.2: Percentage Correct by Country for Two Items about Discrimination for 14-year-olds**

Item Category, # and Topic :	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
IIIA 5 Discrimination/employment	65%	65%	68%	80%
IIIA 26 Discrimination/pay equity	31	32	41	76



## Economic Knowledge and Attitudes

In this chapter:

- Reasons for considering economic knowledge as a component of civic knowledge in studying Latin American youth.
- How students in the four countries and two age groups performed on a set of test items measuring the understanding of economic principles.
- School-related and personal factors which are associated with high levels of understanding of economic principles.
- What students believe about economic issues in democracy and the government's role in the economy.

One dimension of the Octagon model framing this study of civic education is economic conditions and values. It was difficult, however, to reach consensus about whether it was appropriate to expect young people of age 14 to have had sufficient opportunities to be informed about the topic, and so there were few items about economics at this level. There was clear agreement that upper-secondary students would have had such opportunities, and emphasis was placed on items about economics in testing at that level.

This topic merits consideration in this OAS-commissioned report because economic disadvantage

either in a country as a whole or affecting individuals within a country is a serious problem in Latin America (as Chapter 1 has indicated). Both country-level statistics about GDP per capita and individual statistics about available home literacy resources point to Colombia and Chile as experiencing economic problems. Poverty and the absence of provisions for elderly relatives or unemployed parents are part of the everyday experience of many adolescents. Economic uncertainty, as well as political unrest, often characterizes their lives. In their local communities they may see more evidence of an informal economy than of the economic processes discussed in their textbooks. If students are receiving somewhat conflicting messages from school curriculum and from their everyday experience, this is likely to show up in answers to items about economics. To put it in other terms, both political rights and economic needs may seem important to the young people who responded to the civic education instruments in Latin America.

The majority of previous research conducted on young peoples' understanding of economics has used the Test of Economic Literacy, a standardized instrument designed for 11th and 12th graders originally developed in the United States but also used in German translation (in Germany, Austria, and parts of Switzerland), as well as in the United King-

dom, the Republic of Korea, and Australia (Beck & Krumm, 1999; Walsted, 1994; Walsted & Watts, 1994). The understanding of seven central concepts is assessed, including interdependence of decisions, exchange, productivity, and markets (Saunders, 1994).

The process of designing this test dealt with controversies defining economic concepts in both a theoretical and an empirical way. Watts (1994) reported on the theoretical controversies, proposing that economic education can be distinguished both from business education and from ideologically oriented programs because it adopts its program content from “the current practice of academic economics, as established by professional economists at leading colleges and universities in the United States and around the world” (p. 62). The empirical approach to gathering the information necessary to define concepts on which the test would be based consisted of a survey mailed to about 4,000 teachers, journalists, and academics in 1992 and returned by slightly more than 20% of them. (Canadian and Western European respondents were included in Watts’ survey, but Latin American and post-Communist countries’ respondents were not.) The results suggested that there was great similarity in the thinking of North American and European economists on economic issues (Becker, Walstad, & Watts, 1994). Although the methodology used in developing the Test of Economic Literacy differed from the case studies that preceded construction of the IEA Civic Education Study, the end result was quite similar—the decision that there was sufficient consensus to move ahead in test development and international comparisons.

This test of economic literacy was designed not only to assess results of one or two courses in eco-

nomics during secondary school but the infusion of these topics into other courses as well. It, therefore, seemed an appropriate base of items for the Civic Education Study of upper-secondary students, and 14 items explicitly covering this topic were included, most from the Test of Economic Literacy<sup>1</sup> with a few constructed by the IEA test development group. As noted in the previous chapter, three items with explicit economic content were included in the test for 14-year-olds, as well as a number of items with implicit economic content.

This chapter reviews students’ performance on items in the test (item Types 1 and 2) with both explicit and implicit economic content for both age groups. A second focus of this chapter will be on the economic-related items where no correct answer has been designated (item Type 3). Responses will be presented to items referring to economic matters in the concept of democracy scale and in a scale in which respondents were asked about their views of the extent to which the national government should be responsible for economic provisions associated with social welfare and for intervention in the economy. Because four rather than three countries can be compared when 14-year-olds are examined, those results will be considered first.

## Students’ Performance on Economic Items across Countries

### *Performance by 14-year-olds in Four Countries on Items with Implicit Economic Content*

The previous chapter reported results from some test items focused on political content where one or more of the incorrect response alternatives dealt

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<sup>1</sup> IEA obtained permission to use these items but they have not been released on the web page and so their texts cannot be presented here.

with economics and also from three test items with a specific focus on economics (one about unions, one about market economies, and one about multinational corporations). Generally these items with implicit economic dimensions were difficult for students in Colombia (and in some cases for the other three countries as well). In particular 14-year-old students in Colombia did poorly on an item requiring them to choose the definition of a market economy. Many chose the incorrect alternative indicating that a market economy makes everyone wealthy. Likewise an item requiring respondents to distinguish a fact from an opinion in the area of taxes was the most difficult of the four items of this type (Endnote Table in A3.1 in Chapter 3 of this report). The statement that was mistaken for a fact by students had to do with an opinion about taxation as a way to reduce inequality, and it was frequently chosen in Colombia. This suggests the hypothesis that students' concerns about their own economic well being (and that of their country) may blunt their ability to grasp certain economic and democratic principles.

*Performance by 14-year-olds and Upper-secondary Students (age 17) in Four Countries on Knowledge of Economic Principles*

When the test for the upper-secondary students was formulated, the linkage of citizenship to economic matters such as taxation, school funding, and unemployment was noted, and a decision was made to test students at the upper-secondary level on explicit economic issues that are closely related to politics. The upper-secondary students answered a total of 14 questions dealing explicitly with domestic and international economic matters. Using these items together with anchor items with implicit and explicit economic content

answered by both 14-year-olds and upper-secondary students, a new IRT scale with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 20 was scored for each 14-year-old student and each upper-secondary (17-year-old) student.<sup>2</sup> To distinguish this new scale from the scale computed only for upper-secondary students (called Economic Literacy and reported in Amadeo et al., 2002), this combination of implicit and explicit economic understanding was called the Knowledge of Economic Principles Subscale.

- Chile had a mean score on Knowledge of Economic Principles of 92 at age 14 and of 105 at the upper-secondary level.
- Colombia had a mean score on Knowledge of Economic Principles of 90 at age 14; tied with Romania, this was the lowest score of the 28 countries.<sup>3</sup>
- Portugal had a mean score on Knowledge of Economic Principles of 96 at age 14 and of 117 at the upper-secondary level.
- The United States had a mean score on Knowledge of Economic Principles of 104 at age 14; this score placed them in sixth place out of 28 countries (tied with Norway and very similar to Denmark and Sweden).

Denmark and Sweden had the greatest growth in knowledge of economic principles between lower and upper-secondary levels, placing them in first and second place among upper-secondary countries.

*Performance on Selected Individual Items on Economics across Three Countries*

Information about performance on some of the items with implicit or explicit economic content provides an elaboration of the scale results.

<sup>2</sup> The assistance of Vera Husfeldt in conducting this analysis is gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>3</sup> Absence of documentation made it impossible to weight the data, and therefore, to report a mean for the upper-secondary level.



**Box 4.1**

**35. If there were a high protective tariff [tax] in Brazil on cars made in Japan, who would most directly benefit?**

- A.  Carmakers in Japan
- B.  People in Brazil who buy cars made in Japan
- C.  Carmakers in Brazil
- D.  The government in Japan

The item about the effects of protective tariffs in Box 4.1 was answered correctly by slightly more than 65% of the 17-year-old students in Denmark and Sweden. In Chile and Portugal slightly more than half of the students answered correctly. In Colombia only about a third of the 17-year-olds answered correctly.

Items with international economic content were neither more nor less difficult than those with national or more general economic content. One of the most difficult economics items in the upper-secondary instrument dealt with understanding the principle of supply and demand domestically (fluctuations in the costs of a product). Slightly less than 20% of the 17-year-olds students in Colombia, slightly more than 20% in Chile, and about 35% in Portugal answered this item correctly.

A question about the meaning of an international balance of trade was also quite difficult, with only about 30% of Chilean and Colombian students and slightly more than 50% of Portuguese students answering correctly. A somewhat larger percentage of students (about 40% in the Latin American countries and 65% in Portugal) understood a domestic budget deficit.

The easiest economics item for the older students dealt with labor unions (an item discussed

for 14-year-olds in the previous chapter). A question about the likely result when the IMF makes loans contingent on economic reform was answered correctly by slightly less than half of the Colombian students and slightly larger proportions of the Chileans and Portuguese. A question about the kinds of countries to which the World Bank gives aid was answered correctly by about a third of Colombian students, half of Chilean students, and three-quarters of Portuguese students.

Economic corruption was also a topic which students in some countries appear to understand better than those in other countries (Box 4.2).

Item 30 was answered correctly by 85% of the students in Portugal but by only 64% in Chile and 48% in Colombia. The especially low performance in Colombia may relate to the difficulty of attempting to enhance students' knowledge of norms of behavior for politicians through the curriculum when young people regularly see or hear about instances of corruption in their everyday lives.

Items that require an understanding of factors relating to government provision of social welfare benefits were also likely to be difficult for the Colombian students, as item 22 in Box 4.3 illustrates.

**Box 4.2**

*The next question is based on the following part of an article from an imaginary newspaper.*

**MINISTER ASKED TO RESIGN**

Company X was chosen by the Minister of Transport [national equivalent] to build a road despite the fact that its cost was higher than other companies. It was later revealed that the Minister's brother is a major shareholder in Company X. Members of Parliament [or national equivalent] are calling for the Minister's resignation.

**30. Why do members of Parliament [or national equivalent], want the Minister to resign?**

- A.  The Minister should not decide who is to build roads.
- B.  The Minister's family should not be shareholders in any company.
- C.  The Minister was given money by the company who built the road.
- D.  The Minister's decision was affected by his private interests.

**Box 4.3**

**22. A country has a declining birthrate and an increasing life span. Which of the following problems will have to be solved as a result? How to ...**

- A.  build school buildings.
- B.  fund [finance] pensions for the elderly.
- C.  build low-income housing.
- D.  combat crime and violence.

When asked about the economic demands placed by an increasing life span and a decreasing birth rate, only about 15% of Colombian students chose the need to support pensions for the elderly (Box 4.3), which is the answer keyed as correct. The incorrect answers that dealt with combating crime and violence or with providing housing for the

poor were chosen by more than four times as many students as the correct response. For young people living in poor economic circumstances every issue may be viewed through the prism of survival—having a house to live in and not being a victim of crime or violence. There was a similar, though less pronounced, tendency among the Chilean students

**Box 4.4**

**21. The government has lowered tax rates on income from interest and investment [finance income] and raised tax rates on salaries. A large group carried signs in protest in front of the government's buildings. The protesters are most likely to be ...**

- A.  people who have large savings accounts.
- B.  people who own shares in companies.
- C.  unemployed people who receive government benefits.
- D.  people who are employed in factories.

(where about a third answered this item correctly). Nearly two-thirds of the Portuguese students answered correctly. A similar pattern can be observed in Box 4.4, item 21.

Almost as many Colombian students chose the answer relating to the unemployed as chose the correct answer relating to people employed in factories. They may believe that so many are unemployed that this group is most likely to protest whatever the policy in question. In other words, if one has a job, one has little to protest about. Or this may have to do with the existence of an extensive informal economy in Colombia and young people's limited experience with wages, interest, or investments.

There is no area of economics where it can be argued that all countries succeed in transmitting a minimum level of understanding about basic concepts. There were such items about definitions of democracy in the general civic section of the test discussed in the previous chapter. There are several plausible reasons for this. Economics may be thought of as a technical subject that is not essential for all students, or it may be that insufficient time and effort is devoted to it in schools, especially

in the lower-secondary school (where the basic political topics appear to be successfully taught). The Colombian students' answers suggest another possibility. Chaotic economic systems in countries with high levels of poverty where it is impossible to provide a threshold of basic support to unemployed workers or families provide an especially difficult context. Poverty and ways to overcome it become more important than any other aspect of economic understanding for students who live in such situations. They find it difficult to decenter from the economic problems they experience to look objectively at issues such as market competition or the effects of demographics or tax policy.

### **Predictors of the Knowledge of Economic Principles Subscale Score for 14-year-olds**

In the previous chapter the variables that predicted high civic knowledge were described. In this chapter the same type of analysis has been conducted for the Economic Principles score (Table 4.1). Home literacy resources and expected education were again the most powerful predictors of achievement (especially in Chile and the

**Table 4.1: Regression Models for Economic Principles Subscale for 14-year-old Students by Country**

Predictor Variables	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
Gender (female)	-0.06		-0.08	-0.06
Home Literacy Resources	0.18	0.14	0.15	0.23
Expected Years of Education	0.23	0.16	0.22	0.25
Open Classroom Climate	0.08		0.10	0.12
Student Parliament/School Newspaper	-0.05			
Reading News in Newspaper	0.10			
Confidence in School Participation	0.13	0.07	0.17	
Trust in Government-related Institutions	-0.04	-0.13		
Learned about Voting	-0.04			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.18	0.09	0.16	0.19
Weighted N	4,860	4,373	2,765	2,257

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Non-significant coefficients were omitted.

United States). Male students' scores were superior to those of female students except in Colombia. In Chile reading news in the newspaper, perceiving a classroom climate where discussion is encouraged, and a school climate that develops confidence in participation were positively associated with knowledge of economic principles. Participation in the school parliament, the school newspaper or a curricular focus on voting showed small negative influences only in Chile. In the United States the only positive factor from the school setting was an open classroom climate for discussion. In Colombia the only positive factor from the school setting was confidence in participation. Colombian students who had less trust in government institutions had higher scores on understanding economic principles.

In the next section items about concepts and attitudes related to economics are discussed. Responses to these items were not scored as correct or incorrect.

### Ratings of Economic-related Items about Students' Concepts of what is Good (and Bad) for Democracy

Results from ratings on a scale of what is good and bad for democracy serve to elaborate some of the findings from the test items. They give further evidence of the impact on young people of the fact that Chile is a country whose economy and government have recently experienced a transition and that Colombia is a country where the material taught in school is often at variance with what young people observe in their everyday lives. The scale format for these economy-related items was the same as for the government-related aspects of democracy described in the previous chapter. These items were not scored for right and wrong answers. The higher the mean score the more likely that students believed the situation was "good for democracy" while, conversely, the lower the score the

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Items:</b>				
When private businesses have no restrictions from government	1.93	1.89	2.72	2.21
When a minimum income is assured for everyone.	2.82	3.13	2.77	2.85
When wealthy people have more influence on government than others	1.78	1.59	1.81	1.74

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = very bad for democracy; 2 = bad for democracy; 3 = good for democracy; 4 = very good for democracy. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know" but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

more likely that students believed the situation was "bad for democracy." In Table 4.2 three items, with economic content, are presented.

The first of the items in Table 4.2 illustrates the belief on the part of some students that the total absence of restraints on business is likely to have negative consequences. Students in Portugal and the United States were much more likely than those in Chile or Colombia to think of a lack of economic restrictions as moderately good for democracy rather than as negative, however.

Assuring a minimum income for everyone was especially likely to be thought of as good for democracy in Colombia, illustrating the tendency for students in that country to view some items through the prism of concern about economic conditions. As noted earlier, poverty appears to be the overriding concern of these students and having income support would be a good thing from their point of view.

The last item in Table 4.2 expresses a "threat to democracy," the disproportionate influence of the

wealthy on the political process. This is a threat that Colombian students were especially likely to understand. In all four countries the majority of students thought that skewing of political influence to the rich was bad or very bad for democracy. Dislike for the disproportionate influence of the wealthy was even more pronounced among the upper-secondary students.

In summary, on the items dealing with economics and democracy the Colombian students showed a sharp profile of responses—more likely than those in other countries to think that a minimum income is good for democracy and to think that political power concentrated in the hands of the wealthy is bad for democracy than students in the other countries. This result is interesting in view of the fact the Colombian students were the least knowledgeable about democratic and economic principles when answering items with right and wrong answers. Their answering patterns suggest that they are viewing many of the items through a perspective that gives priority to basic economic issues. For example, on an item previously cited they chose

the incorrect answer that a market economy guarantees wealth for all its citizens and on another item that governments should give the highest priority to alleviating crime and violence. The extent to which Colombian students seem overwhelmed by concerns about community violence and war has also been suggested by the research of Frydenberg, Lewis, Ardila, Cairns, and Kennedy (2001) in Australia, Colombia, and Northern Ireland.

## Ratings of the Responsibilities of Government in the Economic Sphere

### *Country Differences on the Scale Rating Government's Economic Responsibilities*

A government can take on different kinds of responsibilities relating to economic matters, some that have a clear impact on citizens (especially social welfare provisions for the less affluent) and others that influence the operation of the economy and business more generally and have a less visible influence on citizens. A number of studies of adults have noted that there is a tendency for citizens to expect governments to take on a broad scope of activities in the economic area. Looking at Trinidad and Tobago, an empirical study (Philips, 1992) and a report (Ellis, 2002) both suggest that economic inequality and problems of unemployment are of greater concern to young people than other issues.

An IRT scale of economy-related government responsibilities combined items that dealt with social welfare provisions benefiting citizens and other types of government intervention in the economy (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). On this scale students' responses were aggregated to form an index of the extent to which they believed it was the government's responsibility to

- Guarantee a job for everyone who wants one.
- Keep prices under control.
- Provide industries the support they need to grow.
- Provide an adequate standard of living for the unemployed.
- Reduce differences in income and wealth among people.

On this scale, which had an international mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 2 (for the 28 countries), these country differences were observed:

- Chilean students at age 14 had an average score of 10.1 and at age 17 had an average score of 10.7.
- Colombian students at age 14 had an average score of 9.9 and at age 17 had an average score of 10.1.
- Portuguese students at age 14 had an average score of 10.3 and at age 17 had an average score of 10.7.
- U.S. students at age 14 had an average score of 9.2.

Several things are notable here. Students at age 14 in the United States supported less economic intervention by government than the students in any of the other countries. Chilean and Portuguese students showed a pattern similar to each other—some support at age 14 and more at age 17 for the government undertaking economic responsibilities. Colombian students at both ages were modest in their expectations that the government would assume responsibilities for social welfare or would intervene in the economy.

### *Country Differences on Individual Items about Government's Economic Responsibilities*

A more differentiated view of attitudes toward social welfare can be gained from the average scores on individual items as seen in Table 4.3 (some but not all of which were part of the scale presented in the previous paragraph). Average

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Items:</b>				
To provide basic health care for everyone	3.69	3.63	3.63	3.40
To provide an adequate standard of living for old people	3.62	3.41	3.62	3.31
To guarantee a job for everyone who wants one	3.36	3.05	3.52	2.84
To provide an adequate standard of living for the unemployed	3.30	3.12	3.32	2.66
To reduce differences in income and wealth among people	2.95	2.98	3.07	2.76

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = Definitely should not be the government's responsibility; 2 = Probably should not be the government's responsibility; 3 = Probably should be the government's responsibility; 4 = Definitely should be the government's responsibility. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from this computation of means.

scores between 3 and 4 indicate that the large majority of students think that governments should provide the social welfare benefit listed. Scores between 1 and 2 indicate that the large majority of students think that governments should not provide the benefit. Scores between 2 and 3 indicate a split opinion.

The country differences in item results in Table 4.3 show that students in the United States were considerably less likely than those in other countries to be favorable about government support of health care, the elderly, and those who are unemployed.<sup>4</sup> Of the four social-welfare-related items, universal health care was most likely to be supported across countries, with an adequate standard of living for the elderly also garnering a fair amount of support.

In contrast, guaranteeing a job for everyone who wants one and providing an adequate standard of living for the unemployed were supported by substantial numbers of students in Chile and Portugal, by somewhat fewer in Colombia, and by far fewer in the United States. Chile and Portugal looked quite similar to each other (and also to Sweden) in these attitudes about the government and its role in fostering the social and economic well-being of the population.

The type of government economic intervention that would be required to reduce inequalities between rich and poor was not especially popular in any of these countries, but received the greatest support in Portugal. These findings show considerable similarity to those from studies of adults.

<sup>4</sup> It is not the case that students in the United State fail to support any responsibilities for government, however. Outside the economic sphere they were equally likely as those in other countries to agree that the government should provide free basic education and should reduce gender inequalities.

## Summary

There is less information about economy-related curriculum in these countries than there is about politically-related curriculum, and it appears that the opportunity to learn in this area may be relatively modest, at least when compared to the opportunity to learn about political institutions and civil society more generally.

Nevertheless, young people share the beliefs about economics that are common in the political cultures which they share with adults. For example, the belief that government has the responsibility to make social welfare provisions for the aged or unemployed was least likely to be supported by students in the United States and most likely to be supported by students in Chile and Portugal. Colombian students appeared to be aware of the needs for such programs but had few expectations about the government being able to take on such responsibilities.

### *Policy-related Issues*

- There does not seem to be a basic core of information about economics that students in all four countries have acquired. This contrasts with the situation for definitions of democracy and political institutions, where most students by age 14 and almost all students by age 17 appeared to have acquired certain basic knowledge. This suggests that economics is not a central theme of civic-related education in these countries (confirming the perception of many educators). If this lack of basic concepts is thought to be important, considerable effort at curriculum reform tailored to the economic situation of young people is needed.
  - Some economic and political concepts are connected in the awareness of young people.
- Colombian students (who were especially likely to experience economic disparities) were likely to be sensitive to the potential threat to democracy posed by unequal wealth distributions, and they were also likely to show concern about the economic situation more generally. Young people whose families and communities are in monetary distress appear to be aware of economic problems but relatively unaware of the ways in which many specialists define the sources and remedies for those problems. Students' concerns about their own economic well-being (and that of their family and their community) may provide a breeding ground for misconceptions. If curriculum or teaching is to address these issues, more extensive information should be gathered about students' everyday life experience with economic matters (including the informal economy) as well as their beliefs and misunderstandings. Otherwise there may be a danger that the statements about the government and democracy in the curriculum will be hard for young people to reconcile with the everyday situation in which they find themselves. This is the case for some political issues, but is even more the case for issues relating to economics.
- Substantial gender differences in knowledge of economic principles exist at both age levels, suggesting the special importance of economic-related education for female students.
  - Experiencing a classroom where these issues are discussed and students are actively involved in understanding each others' situations and opinions appears to foster knowledge of economic principles. This has a number of implications for the preparation of teachers and the ways in which they are encouraged to foster interactions in their classrooms.





## Civic and Political Participation

In this chapter:

- What activities outside of the formal classroom young people engage in.
- What political or civic-related actions they expect to undertake within the next few years.
- What factors predict future political and civic participation.

The extent to which children and adolescents understand democracy and participate in the life of their communities is a topic of great interest to educators, researchers, and policy-makers alike. Young people have the potential to contribute to civil society and to shape, as well as be shaped by, the environments in which they live. As political, social, and economic structures change, along with technology, access to information and demographic trends, the need to involve young people seems especially pressing. Further, in many countries around the world, the U. N. Convention on the Rights of the Child has focused adults' attention on children's rights—and responsibility—to be involved in their communities (Hart, 1997). More specifically, as written in *The State of the World's Children Report*:

The goal for children and young people is not simply to increase their participation but to optimize their opportunities

for meaningful participation. The social give and take of participation encourages children to assume increasing responsibilities as active, tolerant and democratic citizens in formation (UNICEF, 2002, p. 4).

However, there appear to be conflicting views of youth, and their willingness to become active, informed members of their societies. While some social surveys suggest a decline in young people's involvement with community institutions, other youth observers argue that the negative views of adolescents are largely exaggerated (Youniss & Yates, 1999). There is also resistance from some adults about involving children and adolescents in decision-making as many fear this kind of participation will undermine "adult authority within the family and society" (UNICEF, 2002, p. 4). In many countries, well-publicized acts of violence by adolescents have led to a great deal of rhetoric about the state of the youth subculture. Yet, while some observers see adolescents as hedonistic, disengaged, and apathetic, others see promise in young people.

Debate about the condition of today's youth is not restricted to any one country or region. Throughout the world, educators and researchers are concerned about engaging children and adolescents in

civic life. As Francisco Pilotti discusses in Chapter 1 of this report, children and adolescents constitute the largest population age group in Chile and Colombia; a demographic trend that has implications not only on formal education and health, but also on community-based youth organizations. As one observer notes:

Only through direct participation can children develop a genuine appreciation of democracy and a sense of their own competence and responsibility to participate (Hart, 1997, p. 3).

How does early participation contribute to an understanding of democracy or the development of attitudes or skills necessary for citizenship in democratic societies? There are several views. For example, Youniss, McLellan, and Yates (1997) employ a developmental approach to understanding the notion of civic identity and participation among youth and adults. They focus on the “construction of civic identity” and address the question of how youth become adults whose “civic engagement helps to sustain, reform or transform civil society” (p. 620). Based on a review of the literature in the United States, Youniss, McLellan and Yates contend that research supports the hypothesis that adolescents involved in school or civic activities are likely to grow up to be involved adults. The authors argue that organized group participation has a lasting impact because it introduces adolescents to basic group roles and processes, and because it helps adolescents to incorporate civic involvement into their personal identities at a time when identity issues are particularly salient. Thus, the formation of civic identity—enhanced by participation—is the developmental link between active adolescents and involved adults. Seen from this perspective, the authors argue that researchers should draw the question away from how civil soci-

ety disappeared, and focus more on how we can enhance opportunities for youth to participate in a broad range of activities.

France (1998) also addresses the issue of young people’s identities as citizens in his examination of perceptions and experiences of citizenship. Based on interviews with more than 50 individuals (aged 14 to 25 years) in a working-class community in England, France argues that community life is important to citizenship identity because community life can provide the young person with safety and familiarity at a time when “moving into the adult world” may seem risky. For example, attending a youth center may help young people develop social relationships with both peers and older adults, offering them a “common identity with others and a feeling of security in numbers” (p. 103). The extent to which the participants in the study developed these social relationships and felt like they were accepted by the community seemed to influence their willingness to accept social responsibility.

Furthermore, France identifies poverty as a second factor which may influence young people’s social involvement. Many of those in the study seemed to view poverty as an inevitable consequence of living in their community, and saw this as a major life obstacle. Consequently, the reaction of many of the young people in France’s study was to get out of their community, or have as little to do with it as possible.

France, therefore, concluded that the relationship between citizen rights and responsibilities is quite important. He argues that his field work indicates that both economic and cultural rights (which are often not part of the discussion of citizenship) are key elements to the development of social responsibility. If the cultural rights of young people are respected, then they may be more inclined to accept the social responsibilities of their commu-

nity. Cultural rights, in this view, are more negotiated than legalized, and include such issues as dignity and identity. Thus, while Youniss and his colleagues take a developmental approach to understanding civic identity and participation, France emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cultural and economic rights as they relate to the development of citizen identity and responsibility.

Fuentealba (1998) also examined citizenship and citizenship identity from a cultural and economic perspective. Based on his survey of 3,200 families in two cities in Chile, he identifies five types of political participation: protest, political parties, localities, trade unions, and elections. While formal participation in trade unions and political parties has diminished among the urban Chilean poor since the 1970s, Fuentealba argues that their local and neighborhood participation and protests have actually increased.

Welti (2002) reviewed research on the situation of youth in Latin America for a volume covering several areas of the world. First, he found that in North America and Europe there are many formally constituted youth organizations, but in Central and South America informally organized groups including gangs are much more common. Second, many young people in this area experience disruptions of their life plans for education or for employment because of the economic situation in their countries. Finally, political institutions such as the parties are thought of as having little positive impact in solving these problems. This presents a rather particular context for participation, and many of France's comments about poverty's influence are probably relevant.

Hahn (1998) explored how adolescents develop a sense of what it means to be a citizen from a com-

parative perspective. Her study, conducted in England, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, takes a comparative look at the political beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of adolescents as well as the classroom climate in which citizenship education occurs. Hahn used a questionnaire to collect data related to the adolescents' political beliefs and attitudes and used classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, and document analyses to enhance her understanding of the development of political beliefs. Hahn found clear country differences in adolescent political attitudes, experiences, and anticipated activities that are related to differences in the countries' overall political culture and schooling.

The examination of schools and classrooms as well as the political, institutional, and social culture in a broader sense may be vital to understanding the political beliefs and civic involvement of adolescents. In fact, institutions in the social world play a significant role in the lives of adolescents. This may be particularly true in late adolescence as young people take on the roles and responsibilities of adult citizens (for example, as consumers, employees). Even before late adolescence, the one institutional experience many children and adolescents have in common is formal schooling. However, as noted in Chapter 1 of this report, in many countries, including Chile and Colombia, large numbers of adolescents drop out of formal schooling before completion, especially during the first years of secondary school.

Therefore, focusing on formal institutional structures such as the school is not the only means of understanding adolescent civic development and participation. Schools are certainly not the sole agency for preparing young people for citizenship. The political socialization model used as the framework for the IEA Civic Education Study takes into

account the social and political ecology in which civic education is embedded and acknowledges the many norms, values, and activities that may influence the attitudes and knowledge of young people.

Moreover, while formal institutions of government, the economy, or political parties may affect the lives of children and adolescents, they may not be particularly salient to youth. The examination of the everyday lives of children, adolescents, and young adults may be important to understanding the development of civic participation, knowledge, and identity. Ethnographic studies of adolescents, their social interactions, activities, and peer networks have shed considerable light in recent years on what some researchers refer to as the adolescent or youth culture. Though adolescents should not be thought of as monolithic, these qualitative studies inform about the daily lives and developmental issues facing many of today's children and young people. For example, ethnographies have examined Mayan children's engagement in their daily world (Gaskins, 1999); student culture and identity in a Mexican secondary school (Levinson, 2001); the lives of U.S. urban adolescents (Way, 1998); and the daily lives of adolescents living in an American suburb (Hersch, 1998).

In addition to ethnographies, researchers have employed a variety of qualitative methods to explore various aspects of the lives of adolescents. Green (1998) interviewed children living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean; Howe, Kahn, and Freedman (1996) used semi-structured interviews to assess Brazilian children's understandings of the environment; and Larson and Lampman-Petratis (1989) used electronic pagers and journal to determine how adolescents in the United States spend their time. Heath (1996) conducted extensive observations of effective youth organizations in U.S. inner-city communities

including data collection by "junior ethnographers" who were members of those groups. Finally, Bhavnani (1991) interviewed adolescents in England in community settings including a shopping mall to explore the ways young people discuss politics. Taking a broad definition of politics, Bhavnani interviewed the participants in the study on a wide-range of topics including (but not limited to) school, employment/unemployment, voting, racism, police, and the future.

The qualitative studies mentioned above do not represent an exhaustive list of the literature in this field. Rather, they are offered here as examples of the kind of work that has been done in recent years. They were all designed to place development and/or participation into cultural and everyday context. The studies also shed light on the many influences on the development of children and adolescents: As youth develop, their opportunities for participation expand "from private to public spaces, from local to global influence" (UNICEF, 2002, p. 3). These opportunities may provide young people with the skills, knowledge, and motivation they need to become active adult citizens.

Consistent with the studies discussed above, the theoretical framework of the IEA Civic Education Study (from which the data from Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States were analyzed for this OAS-sponsored report) conceptualizes the ways in which "the everyday lives of young people in homes, with peers and at school serve as a 'nested' context for young people's thinking and action in the social and political world" (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 20). This theoretical model has its roots in ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1988) and situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In short, the model posits that adolescents' engagement in the community, and the development of an identity within the

group allows young people to learn about citizenship and democratic processes. Face-to-face interactions with families, teachers, peers as well as the impact of broader society such as the media and other institutions influence the development of civic knowledge, attitudes, and actions.

It is those three strands of citizenship that are the focus of this OAS-commissioned report—civic knowledge and skills, civic attitudes, and civic engagement. Research suggests that the development of civic knowledge among young citizens, while quite important, is not sufficient. Tolerance, willingness to participate in civic life, and developing an understanding of responsibilities as well as rights are important elements of citizenship in democratic societies (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Amadeo et al., 2002). It is unlikely that there is a single approach that will enhance all facets of citizenship; schools, peers, families, and other societal institutions all play a role.

Many educators and researchers advocate the importance of participation in extracurricular activities, both in and out of school, as a means of teaching civic knowledge and promoting citizenship. The strategy—to teach democratic values and practices by providing opportunities for students to engage in democratic activities—can be seen in many schools and out-of-school programs. Many would argue that this kind of “hands-on” education is an especially effective means of teaching citizenship. By “learning by doing” students not only acquire valuable skills, but society also implicitly acknowledges that adults are not teaching students to become citizens, rather young people already are citizens, of their schools, communities, and nations.

As discussed above, some research suggests that young people who are politically or socially active become involved adults. Therefore, understanding the current activities and future plans of adolescents is important to gaining a holistic view of young people’s civic knowledge and engagement. The focus of this chapter is twofold. First, we describe what activities students are currently engaged in, what they plan to do in the next few years, and what they expect they will do as adult citizens. Second, we will examine the predictors of students’ expected future civic actions.

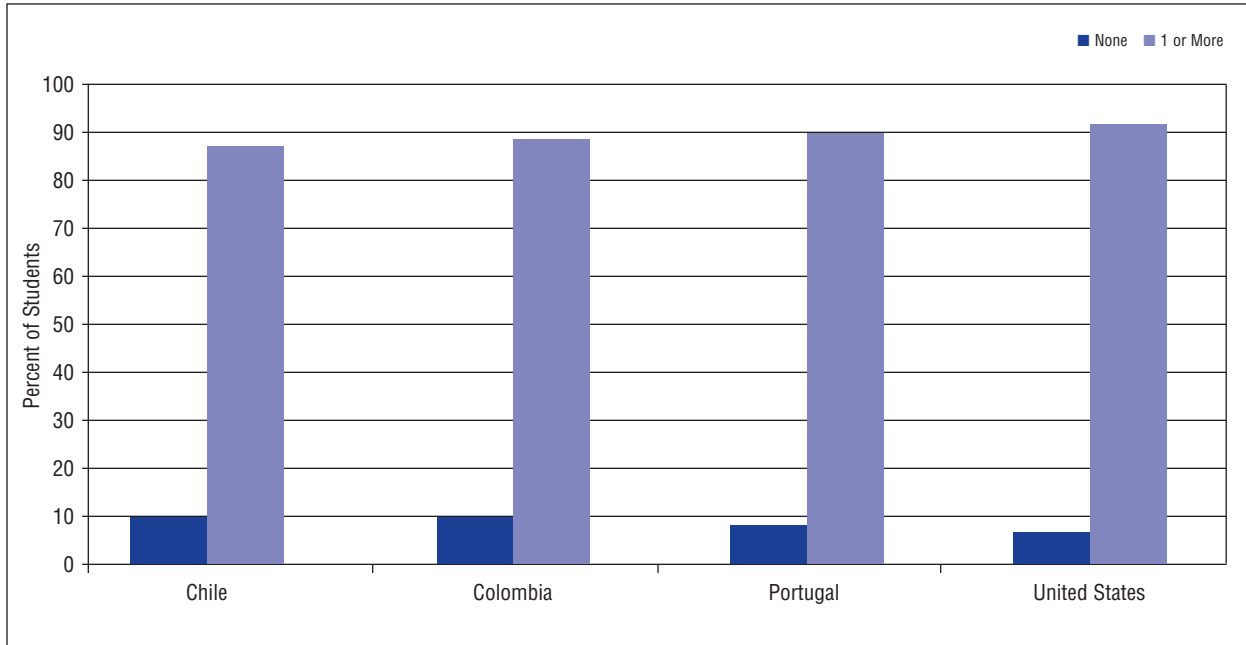
## Students’ Current Participation in School and Community Activities

One question on the survey administered to students examined an aspect of their lives that may fall outside of the formal classroom or official curriculum. Specifically, a list of voluntary organizations both inside and outside of school to which students might belong was developed. The list included a wide variety of organizations, ranging from school newspapers and student councils to sports teams and religious groups.<sup>1</sup> Students were asked to indicate to which organizations they belonged.

It appears from these data that most 14-year-old students participate in at least one school or community organization (Figure 5.1). Organizational membership for these young adolescents appears to be quite strong in all four countries. In the United States, for example, over 90% of the students indicated that they belonged to at least one organization.

<sup>1</sup> The organizations they were asked about include the following: student council; youth organization affiliated with a political party; school newspaper; environmental organization; UN or UNESCO club; student exchange; human rights organization; group helping community; charity collecting money for social cause; Boy/Girl Scouts; ethnic cultural organization; computer club; art, music, drama organization; sports team; organization sponsored by religious group.

**Figure 5.1: Participation in School and Community Activities: Percentages of 14-Year-Old Students by Country**



Students’ participation in certain types of activities and organizations most likely reflects national norms, traditions, and opportunities. There are, nevertheless, some similarities across countries. For example, as seen in Figure 5.2, in all four countries relatively few 14 year-old students (under 10%) participate in youth organizations that are affiliated with political parties or in human rights organizations. (Figure 5.2 presents a selection of organizations which loosely fit the definition of being civic related.) These kinds of organizations may not be available to students of this age, or they may be deemed too “political” by the students and therefore not of interest to them. In contrast, many more students (in all four countries) are involved in activities that are more distinctly school-related such as student councils and school newspapers.

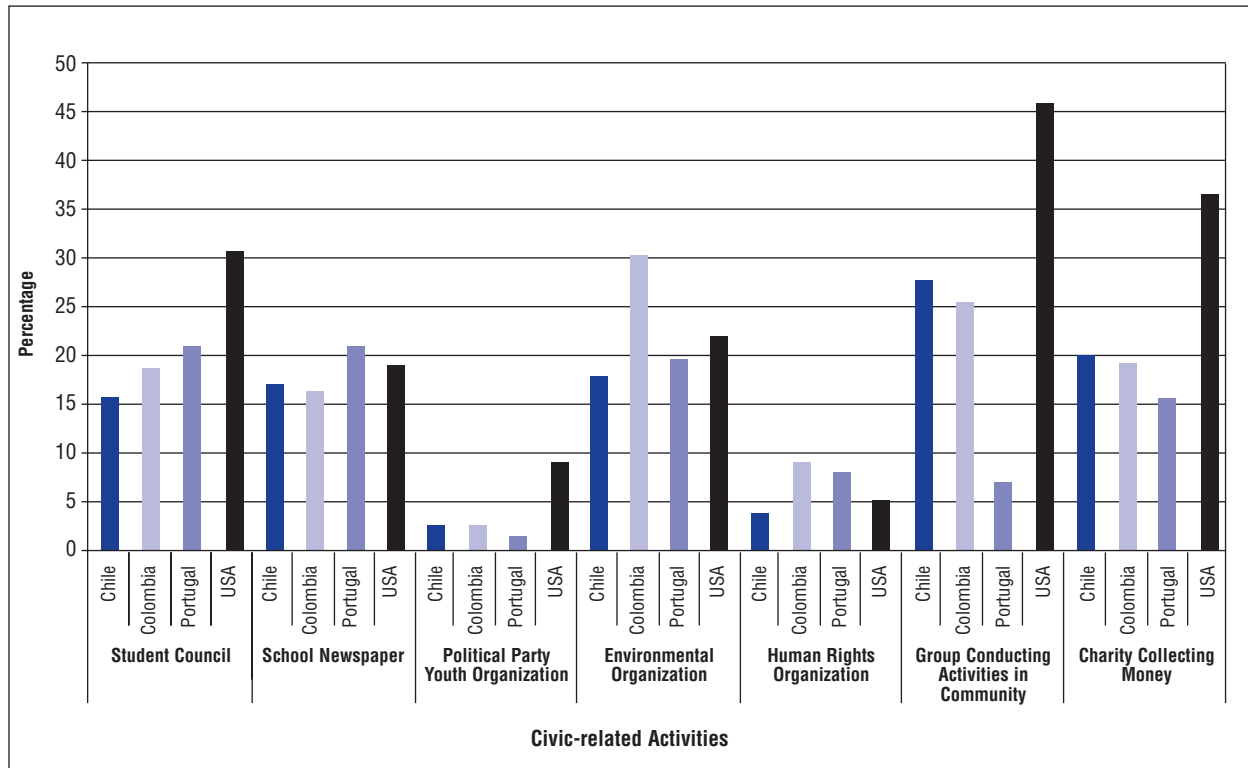
There are also several obvious national differences. For example, 30% of the Colombian students indi-

cated participation in environmental organizations. And, large percentages of U.S. students indicated that they participate in groups conducting voluntary activities in the community and collecting money for charities. This finding most likely reflects the movement in the United States during the 1990s to require community service and/or service learning in the high school curriculum.

### **A Description of Students’ Expected Civic Participation and Political Actions**

In addition to being asked about the organizations to which they belong, students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States were also asked about political or civic-related actions they may undertake within the next few years. From those items, two scales were formed to measure students’

**Figure 5.2: Percentage of 14-year-old Students who Participate in Civic-related Organizations**



expectations of participating in: 1) social-movement activities and 2) protest activities that may be illegal. The items on the Social-movement Activities scale include the extent to which students thought that they were likely to undertake the following actions in the next few years.

- Volunteer time to help poor elderly people in the community.
- Collect money for a social cause.
- Collect signatures for a petition.
- Participate in a nonviolent protest march.

The Cronbach's alpha values for Social-movement Activities scale are reported below.

- For the 14 year olds: Chile: .64; Colombia: .67; Portugal: .70; and the United States: .78.

- For the 17 year olds: Chile .72; Colombia 70; and Portugal .74

The items in Illegal Protest Activities scale include the following:

- Spray paint protest slogans on walls.
- Block traffic as a form of protest.
- Occupy public buildings as a form of protest.

The Cronbach's alpha values for Illegal Protest Activities scale are reported below.

- For the 14 year olds: Chile: .80; Colombia: .78; Portugal: .85; and the United States: .88.
- For the 17 year olds: Chile: .86; Colombia: .84 and Portugal: .82.



Finally, there are certain types of actions that adults can undertake in democratic societies. Students were asked to consider these actions and indicate whether they expected to participate in these activities when they reached adulthood. The items were combined to form the Conventional Activities scale and include the following:

- Vote in national elections.
- Get information about candidates before voting in an election.
- Join a political party.
- Write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns.
- Be a candidate for a local or city office.

The Cronbach’s alpha values for the Conventional Activities scale are reported below.

- *For the 14 year olds:* Chile: .70; Colombia: .64; Portugal: .67; and the United States: .77.
- *For the 17 year olds:* Chile: .78; Colombia: .68 and Portugal: .69.

For each item on all three scales, students were given five response options ranging from “I will certainly do this” (4) to “I will certainly not do this” (1). Higher mean scores indicate greater expectations among the students that they will engage in those

kinds of civic or protest actions. The mean scores for each scale are reported by country in Table 5.1.

As illustrated in Table 5.1, in every country and at both ages, students were more likely to expect to engage in social-movement activities than in illegal protest activities. Indeed, many of the activities (such as collecting charity money and volunteering in the community) are quite similar to the activities discussed in the previous section—activities which students may already engage in. In contrast, most students in all countries indicated that they will probably not spray paint slogans, block traffic, or occupy buildings. This could be because those actions place the student at risk of sanctions, and thus far no cause or issue has resonated so strongly with them that they are willing to take that risk. Or, it could be that students (who completed this survey in their classrooms at school) were responding in what they perceived to be a socially desirable way.

Students were also more likely to report plans to engage in conventional activities than in illegal protest activities. The adolescents in Colombia were especially likely to report that they expected to participate in conventional activities such as voting, joining a political party, or running for public office. This could be because Colombia has a new constitution (1991), and civic education now

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>		<b>Colombia</b>		<b>Portugal</b>		<b>United States</b>
<b>Type of Activity</b>	<b>Age 14</b>	<b>Age 17</b>	<b>Age 14</b>	<b>Age 17*</b>	<b>Age 14</b>	<b>Age 17</b>	<b>Age 14</b>
Social Movement	2.98	2.98	2.96	2.93	2.73	2.68	2.60
Illegal Protest	1.78	1.75	1.74	1.79	1.65	1.65	1.67
Conventional	2.44	2.45	2.72	2.70	2.52	2.53	2.52

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = I will certainly not do this; 2 = I will probably not do this; 3 = I will probably do this; 4 = I will certainly do this. \*Colombian 17-year-old data unweighted.

includes the “study of the Constitution and experience of democratic practices for the purpose of learning the principles and values of citizen participation” (Rodríguez Rueda, 1999, p. 141). Rueda also notes, however, that many anti-democratic elements still persist in the country and what the students learn in school may be at odds with what they see in their communities.

In the United States, there was little difference between students’ expectations of engaging in social movement activities and their expectations of engaging in conventional political activities as adults. However, in all other countries, students were more likely to report plans to participate in social movement activities than in conventional activities. This could be related to adolescents’ general disenchantment with conventional politics—a theme that ran through more than 20 national case studies of civic education during Phase 1 of the IEA Study (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). Students do seem to be inclined to participate in social and community organizations, but appear to be less interested in the formal political institutions.

The mean scores of the 14-year-olds and 17-year-olds on these measures of future civic engagement were remarkably similar. This similarity could be that expectations developed by early adolescence persist to late adolescence. It is particularly interesting to note that students who are very close to the age of first vote in their countries are no more likely than their younger counterparts to express their intentions to vote.

### **Predictors of Students’ Expected Civic Participation and Political Actions**

In order to examine correlates of students’ expectations of future civic involvement or political activity,

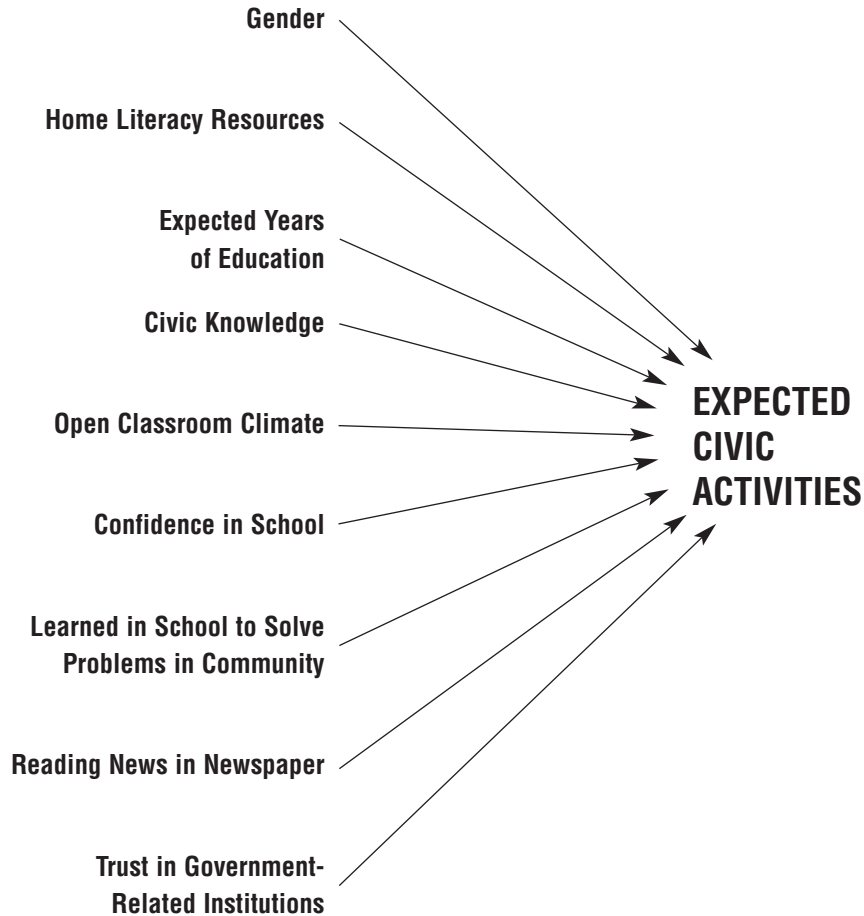
three sets of simultaneous regression analyses were run for each country. First, predictors of the students’ expectations of participating in social-movement activities in the next few years were examined. Second, we looked at predictors of students’ likelihood of undertaking protest activities which may be illegal in their communities. Third, and finally, a regression was run to examine the correlates of expected conventional citizenship activities during adulthood. All three of these models were run separately for the 14-year-old students and the 17-year-old students. Therefore, the results will be discussed by type of participation, by country, and by age.

The nine predictors used in the regression models were selected to examine: 1) the personal characteristics of the student, such as gender, home resources, and expected years of further education; 2) school variables such as the extent to which students perceive an open classroom climate for discussion, have confidence in the value of their participation in school activities, and learned in school to solve problems in the community; 3) civic knowledge as measured by the students’ scores on the test of civic knowledge and skills; 4) political interest, measured by the frequency with which they read the newspaper; and 5) the students’ level of trust in government-related institutions (such as the police, courts, and Parliament). The model is illustrated below (Figure 5.3).

### **Social-movement Activities**

In Chile, the most potent predictors of 14-year-olds’ expectations of participating in social-movement actions such as collecting money for charity or participating in a nonviolent march are the extent to which the students have confidence in their participation in school and the frequency with which they read the newspapers (Table 5.2). If a student at age 14 is interested enough in the community to read the

**Figure 5.3: Model for Predicting Students' Civic and Political Activities**



newspaper and has a sense of efficacy that his/her actions in school have meaning, then it seems reasonable that this student will expect to undertake civic-related actions in the next few years.

Interestingly, the third most potent predictor of the 14-year-old's expectations for social-movement-related actions in Chile is a negative relationship. That is, the higher the students' scores on the test of civic knowledge and skills, the less likely they are to anticipate social actions in the future. Looking next at the 17-year-old students in Chile, we

find a slightly different pattern than that found among the 14-year-olds. As noted in Table 5.3, among the 17-year-olds, the most potent predictors of future social-movement activities are gender (that is being female) and the extent to which the students learned in school the importance of solving problems in their communities. The third most potent predictor of future activities was reading the newspaper.

In summary, it appears that in Chile, for both the younger and older students, school factors play an important role in the students' plans for future

social-movement activities. However, the civic knowledge predictor is negatively associated with the outcome variable at both age levels and the personal characteristics of the students, such as home literacy resources and expected years of further education are only weakly related (or not related at all). Students in less resourced homes are more likely to consider participation in social movement activities. Gender is a predictor, with females more likely to plan to be active in social movements.

School variables are also significant predictors of 14-year-olds' social-movement expectations in Colombia (see Table 5.2). In fact, two of the three strongest relationships are school-related variables—the students' perceptions of classroom climates that are open for discussion and the extent to which students learned in school about the importance of helping to solve problems in the community. Similar to the Chilean students (at both age levels), reading newspapers is also positively related to social-movement expectations. And, once again, the relationship between civic knowledge and the outcome variable was negative, though weak.

Unlike in Chile, the models for the Colombian 14-year-olds and 17-year-olds look essentially the same. That is, among the students at age 17, learning in school about solving community problems, perceiving an open classroom climate, and reading newspapers are the three strongest predictors. There is only a weak relationship between gender and social movement expectations (unlike in Chile), and once again a negative (albeit weak) relationship between civic knowledge and social-movement expectations. This negative relationship has held for 14- and 17-year-olds in both Chile and Colombia.

Once again, the school variables and newspaper reading are among the strongest predictors of social-movement expectations among the 14-year-olds in

Portugal. Also, there is a negative, but weak, relationship between knowledge and participation.

The school variables are also strong among Portuguese 17-year-olds. But, here, as in Chile, being female is the second most potent predictor of students' expectations of social-movement participation (Table 5.3).

In the United States, the strongest predictor of students' expectations is the frequency with which they read the newspaper, followed by gender (being female), and learning in school about the importance of helping solve community problems as well as confidence in the value of school participation. In the United States, the relationship between knowledge and expectation was not significant (unlike the other three countries where the relationship was negative and significant). Students were not tested in the United States at age 17.

In conclusion, across country and age, school factors and media use were positively related to students' expectations for social-movement actions. Gender was significantly related and the home background (or personal characteristics of the students) tended not to be significant.

## Illegal Protest Activities

Looking next at protest actions that may be illegal, it is clear that the model did not fit well in any of the countries at either age. The explained variance was less than 0.05 in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal for both age groups, and only 0.14 for the 14-year-olds' model in the United States.

However, one of the most consistent relationships across countries and ages was the negative relationship between gender (that is, being female) and

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Predictor Variables</b>				
Gender (female)	0.06	0.10	0.06	0.17
Home Literacy Resources	-0.04	-0.04		
Expected Years of Education			0.07	0.07
Civic Knowledge	-0.12	-0.05	-0.05	
Open Classroom Climate	0.11	0.19	0.12	0.06
Confidence in School Participation	0.15	0.08	0.16	0.13
Learned in School to Solve Problems in Community	0.10	0.11	0.15	0.14
Reading News in Newspaper	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.21
Trust in Government-related Institutions		0.09		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.17	0.16	0.14	0.21
Weighted N	5,666	4,912	3,213	2,741

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Significant at 0.01 level. Nonsignificant coefficients were omitted.

expectation to participate in illegal protest actions within the next few years. In all four countries at both ages, this relationship was negative and significant. In Chile, it was the strongest predictor of the 14-year-old students' likelihood of participating in actions that may be illegal. Stated another way, males are much more likely than females to expect to participate in illegal protest activities in all four countries (and this relationship is especially strong in Chile). This finding is consistent with other research on gender and politics (Reviewed in Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Amadeo et al., 2002).

Similarly, in all countries, except Colombia, the higher the students' score on the test of civic

knowledge and the more trust they have in government, the less likely they were to expect to participate in illegal protest activities. Interestingly, in Colombia, the relationship between trust in government-related institutions and illegal protest actions was positive (though quite weak). School factors were unrelated.

### **Conventional Political Activities**

The frequency with which students read the newspaper was the most potent predictor of the Chilean 14-year-olds students' expectations that they would engage in conventional citizenship activities as

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>Predictor Variables</b>			
Gender (female)	0.17	0.04	0.13
Home Literacy Resources	-0.04		
Expected Years of Education	0.05	0.04	
Civic Knowledge	-0.07	-0.08	
Open Classroom Climate	0.05	0.14	0.06
Confidence in School Participation	0.13	0.08	0.11
Learned in School to Solve Problems in Community	0.16	0.15	0.17
Reading News in Newspaper	0.12	0.13	0.11
Trust in Government-related Institutions		0.06	0.07
R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.13	0.12
Weighted N	5,715	4,904*	2,672

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Significant at 0.01 level. Nonsignificant coefficients were omitted. \* Colombian data unweighted.

adults, such as voting. This, in fact, was the case for the 14-year-olds across all four countries; see Table 5.4. The students' trust in government-related institutions and the students' perceptions of the classroom climate for discussion were also positively and significantly related to expectations of conventional citizenship actions. In contrast, civic knowledge, gender, home literacy resources, and expected years of further education were not related to conventional citizenship expectations among the Chilean 14-year-olds.

At age 17, the relationships are somewhat different in this model predicting conventional citizenship activities. While reading the newspaper and trust

in government are still the most potent predictors, there are also significant and positive relationships between conventional citizenship and the students' expected years of further education, civic knowledge, and gender. These relationships were not significant in the model for 14-year-olds and could reflect the cumulative effects of civic education or a more selective sample of older students.

In the regression model for 14-year-olds in Colombia the same pattern of relationships as that found among the Chilean 14-year-olds is evident. That is, the three most potent predictors of the outcome variable are reading newspapers, an open classroom climate for discussion, and trust in government-

**Table 5.4: Regression Models for 14-year-old Students' Expected Conventional Citizenship Activities by Country**

Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
<b>Predictor Variables</b>				
Gender (female)				
Home Literacy Resources		0.04		0.09
Expected Years of Education		0.04	0.07	0.07
Civic Knowledge			0.06	0.15
Open Classroom Climate	0.13	0.19	0.14	0.06
Confidence in School	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.08
Learned in School to Solve Problems in Community	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.16
Reading News in Newspaper	0.21	0.22	0.14	0.21
Trust in Government-related Institutions	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.12
R <sup>2</sup>	0.16	0.18	0.13	0.27
Weighted N	5,666	4,912	3,213	2,741

Note. Standardized beta coefficients were reported. Significant at 0.01 level. Nonsignificant coefficients were omitted.

related institutions. Learning about community issues, school climate, home literacy resources, and expected years of further education, are weakly associated with students' expectations of conventional citizenship.

Looking at the 17-year-olds surveyed in Colombia, we find the same pattern as above—reading newspapers, trust in government-related institutions, and classroom climate are the strongest predictors. Learning in school about solving community problems and expected years of further education were also positively related to conventional citizenship. The pattern found among 14-year-olds held. The three strongest relation-

ships were with reading newspapers, trust in government-related institutions, and an open classroom climate for discussion.

### Summary

The development of political engagement and civic involvement is an expectation many societies hold for their youth. The data presented in this chapter shed light on some aspects of that goal. Many young people, it seems, are already engaged in school and community activities. In fact, relatively few students belong to no groups or organizations at the age of 14. And, it seems that what

fosters their expectations for participating in the future, has as much to do with school variables as with home background or personal characteristics (with some notable exceptions relating to gender). Students' perceptions of open classroom climate, the confidence they have in participating in school activities, and learning in school about the importance of helping to solve community problems are all positively related to students' expectations for social-movement and conventional participation in the future.

#### *Policy-related Issues*

- In all countries by age 14, most students reported that they belonged to at least one school or community organization. This involvement is a positive sign given the fact that research suggests that youth organizations provide places for students to develop democratic skills and that participation in activities during adolescence is linked to civic participation during adulthood. Policies that encourage schools and communities to work together to provide opportunities for young people may foster the development of civic skills, knowledge, and identity.
- In all countries and with both age groups, the school factors in the prediction model (an open classroom climate for discussion, confidence in school participation, and learning in school to solve community problems) were among the most substantial predictors of students' expectations of participating in social-movement activities. This suggests that schools and teachers have an important role to play in the development of civic engagement and this may have implications for teacher training (especially related to the use of discussion in the classroom).
- For both 14-year-olds and 17-year-olds, the association between civic knowledge and willingness to participate in social movement activities was negative. That is, the higher the students scored on the test of civic knowledge, the less they expected to participate in social-movement activities. This held true for every country examined here except the United States (at age 14) and Portugal (at age 17). One interpretation of this finding may be that students with higher academic achievements are more focused on the private rather than the public domain. Leadership programs—both in and out of school—may be one way to encourage all young people to consider actions they can undertake for the public good.
- In all countries at both ages, males were more likely than females to express a willingness to participate in protest activities that may be illegal. Conversely, there were significant associations between being female and willingness to participate in social-movement activities (especially at age 17). This may be a reflection of cultural gender roles, but does hold implications for school-related policy.
- In all countries, one of the most significant predictors of both the 14-year-old and 17-year-old students' expectations of participating in social movement and conventional activities was the frequency with which they read the newspaper. Therefore, school-based programs which introduce students to newspapers and foster skills in interpreting political information may be of value. In Chapter 7 of this report, one such program is described.





## Generalized Trust and Trust in Institutions<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter:

- How political transitions may affect trust in institutions among adults.
- How the items on trust were formulated in the IEA study.
- Country differences in students' responses when trust in government institutions and in personally related groups are compared.
- What relates to trust in institutions within countries.
- Differences between countries in sense of threat originating outside the country.

The adoption of democratic reforms in both Chile and Colombia in a little more than ten years has created a new set of institutions to which youth and children as well as adults relate. As Mishler and Rose (1999) and McAllister (1999) note, trust tends to be somewhat unstable after democratic transitions. In fact, considerable research on trust following political transitions has been conducted in post-Communist countries. Sztopka (1996) considered trust in various segments of Polish society (the government or the schools) and contrasted it with positional, organizational, interpersonal, and diffuse trust. When trust is high there is

more likely to be both mobilization and activism on the part of citizens. Sztopka's analysis of *Eurobarometer* results shows Poland to be a "culture of distrust," which may prevent democratic growth. Kunioka and Woller (1999) argue from the New Democracies Barometer data from eight post-Communist countries that indicators of social trust and public confidence are more important than economic variables in explaining differences in citizens' participation. Differences in the character of the democratic political transition in Bulgaria, Hungary, or Poland and in Chile caused Munck and Leff (1999) to suggest that the nature of citizens' activism in the year following the changes may differ.

*Latinobarómetro* results from the late 1990s data were examined in Chapter 1 of this report, showing that both Chilean and Colombian adults are relatively less trusting of government institutions than the average for Latin American adults in general. This diverges from the results of the World Value Survey conducted in 1994 to 1997 by Inglehart and his colleagues (Klingemann, 1999). In that study the Chileans had the highest level of trust among the six Latin American that participated (the other five were Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela). This level of trust may either result

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<sup>1</sup> Material for an early draft of this chapter was prepared by Celeste Lay.

from the timing of the surveys, before and after an economic decline in the later 1990s or because the base of countries to which Chile is being compared in the *Latinobarómetro* differs (including countries such as Costa Rica where trust is high). What is clear from analysis of the World Values Survey data is that in countries which have recently experienced political transitions citizens tend to have low levels of political trust. Further, it is clear that depending on which question is used (confidence in the government or in parliament or satisfaction with democracy) and which countries are compared, the results differ. In fact, the IEA study's fine-grained measures of trust give us an opportunity to make relatively clear comparisons using both scales and individual items.

A full review of the literature on institutional trust, interpersonal trust, and the related concept of "social capital" among adults is beyond the scope of this volume (see Levi & Stoker, 2000, for a recent review from the point of view of political science). However, in interpreting the findings from the IEA study for adolescents Bynner and Ashford's (1994) analysis of longitudinal data from England is valuable. They concluded that coming from a working-class family background and poor achievement at school (often exacerbated by unemployment after leaving school) were associated with cynicism about politics among young people and lack of interest in participating. Many students in Latin America have similar experiences in school and employment (see also discussion of research by France, 1998, cited in Chapter 5). Further, in a Latin American context, McIlwaine and Moser (2001) studied Colombia and Guatemala, asking adults and young people to map groups in the community that they believed were associated with different types of violence (economic, social, and political), with different types of social capital (inclusive or exclusive, productive or perverse), and with different emotions (trust or

fear). Their purpose was to identify community organizations (especially those run by women) which can "successfully transform fear into trust and perverse into productive organizations" (McIlwaine & Moser, 2001, p. 981). Other attempts to analyze the educational system and formulate programs that will generate trust, especially in the judicial and legal system, can be found in descriptions of programs of law-related education in the United States and Latin America (Godson, 2003; Hanson, 2002; Sanchez & Wray, 1994).

### **Development of the Trust Measure in the IEA Study**

A set of specific institutions similar to the list used by other researchers was selected for the student instrument. These included governmental institutions (the national government, national parliament, and local government), justice institutions (courts and police), and political parties. These were scaled to form a Trust in Government Institutions IRT scale (reported in the next section of this chapter). In addition, one item asked about "trust in people who live in this country," similar to the interpersonal trust item used by other researchers. Another item administered in all countries asked about trust in the schools. Several other items were included as national options in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal, including trust in the military and the Church. Three items on trust in media sources are discussed in the next chapter.

### **Country and Gender Differences in Average Trust in Government-related Institutions**

The level of trust in government institutions was relatively modest, as will be seen when mean levels

**Table 6.1: Mean Level of Trust in Government-related Institutions for 14-year-olds by Country**

Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
Items:				
Courts	2.74	2.59	2.70	2.82
The National Parliament	2.58	2.45	2.47	2.74
The National Government	2.35	2.50	2.37	2.69
The Local Government	2.55	2.56	2.32	2.80
The Military	2.32	2.37	2.37	not admin.
Political Parties	1.94	2.07	1.93	2.23

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = never trust; 2 = only some of the time; 3 = most of the time; 4 = always. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

of item endorsement are presented. The average scores on the IRT scale for trust, useful in comparing countries (international mean of 10, standard deviation of 2), were as follows (Torney-Purta et al., 2001):

- Chilean students had a mean of 10.0 at the international mean for the 28 participating countries.
- Colombian students had a mean of 9.9, also at the international mean.
- Portuguese students had a mean of 9.6, below the international mean, but considerably higher than the lowest scoring country (Slovenia).
- The U. S. students had a mean of 10.4, above the international mean but considerably lower than the highest scoring country (Denmark).

At the upper-secondary level the trust scores were significantly lower. For example, Chilean 17-year-olds had a mean of 9.2, Colombian students of 9.1 (unweighted data) and Portuguese students a mean of 9.1 (Amadeo et al., 2002). Denmark was again the highest scoring country and the only country in which older students had a higher

score than younger students, and Slovenia was again the lowest scoring country. The lower scores in Chile and Colombia among the older students are especially striking. Although the younger Latin American students are able to maintain a relatively trusting view of their government's institutions, the older students look more like adults in lacking trust. There were only minor gender differences in trust in these countries at both age levels.

### Trust in Specific Governmental and Nongovernmental Institutions

Although the cross-country differences in scale scores are important, of even greater interest are the patterns of trust in relation to particular institutions. Table 6.1 shows the mean level of trust (on a scale from 1 to 4, with higher numbers representing higher levels of trust). No mean is greater than 3 (corresponding to trusting "most of the time"), suggesting at best a moderate level of trust among these respondents. Across nations the highest level

of trust was expressed in the courts and the least in the political parties. This corroborates evidence presented earlier suggesting that students think it unimportant for citizens to belong to political parties and question the value of parties in democracy.

As to national differences in responding to these government-related institutions, students in the United States clearly had the highest levels of trust. Across studies the adult citizens of countries with more durable and long-standing democratic systems have been found to have higher levels of trust (Inglehart, 1997). Students in Colombia were less trusting of the courts than those in the other countries (echoing an earlier-cited finding that they perceive considerable political influence in the judicial system and the findings of a study conducted in Bogotá by Bermudez & Jaramillo, SEC, 2002).

In Chile and the United States the local government was trusted more than the national government; in the other two countries the trust levels for local and national government were quite similar. There were no substantial differences by country in trust in the military, but in each of the three countries where this optional item was administered the male students expressed more trust than the female students.

### **Interpersonal Trust and Trust in Institutions with Personal Contact**

The previous section dealt with the more distant and institutionalized parts of government. This section considers how much trust young people reported in community groups with personal representatives whom they are likely to meet on an everyday (or regular) basis—the police, the Church, and the schools (Table 6.2). The school was the most trusted of these institutions; the

Church was also trusted to a considerable degree in Chile and Colombia. When the four countries were compared, the police were most likely to be trusted in Chile. In Chile and Colombia all three of these groups were rated higher than the institutionalized and national groups reported in the previous table.

Students in the United States rated schools as less trustworthy than did the students in the other three countries (Table 6.2). However, the U.S. students expressed relatively high levels of trust in institutionalized groups (such as national and local government) when compared with students in other countries (Table 6.1). To look at it in another way, students in the United States trust local government and schools to about the same extent; students in Chile and Colombia trust schools considerably more than they trust the local government. Schools appear to be safe havens for students in Chile and Colombia, and may have a strong potential as a site for socialization, an interpretation supported by a recent study on younger Colombian students (Ardilla-Rey & Killen, 2003).

A similar pattern appears for the question about trusting “people who live in this country.” Students in the United States were least trusting with those in Chile and Colombia the most trusting (Table 6.2). These findings diverge from those of Inglehart (1997) collected about a decade earlier among adults, but may result from a different phrasing of the question about interpersonal trust (so that it could be administered as one of a list of written questions in the IEA survey with other trust questions, rather than in an interview, which is the format of many other studies). In the interview format used by Inglehart, respondents are asked to make a forced choice about whether most people can be trusted. The IEA survey instrument whose results are reported here asked for a rating of trust in “people who live in this country.”

**Table 6.2: Mean Level of Trust in Groups with Personal Contact for 14-year-olds by Country**

Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
Items:				
Police	3.00	2.76	2.73	2.76
Church	3.17	3.08	2.37	not admin.
Schools	3.33	3.32	3.15	2.86
People in This Country	2.78	2.81	2.53	2.29

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = never trust; 2 = only some of the time; 3 = most of the time; 4 = always. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

## Correlates of Trust

Regression analyses were used to examine the correlates of the IRT scale for Trust in Government-related Institutions. Among the important correlates for 14-year-olds was the extent to which students reported that they were encouraged to discuss issues in their classrooms and respect the opinions of others, especially in Chile, Portugal, and the United States. The extent to which students had developed a sense of confidence in the value of participation in their schools was also a positive correlate, especially in Colombia. The amount of civic knowledge students possessed showed an interesting pattern. In Chile, Colombia, and Portugal, the three newer democracies, the more knowledgeable students trusted government less. The association between higher knowledge and lower trust was especially strong in Colombia. In the United States, the more knowledgeable students trusted their government more. Home background and expected education were not associated with trust (but are nevertheless controlled in the other analyses).

The correlates for 17-year-olds were substantially the same, especially the positive relationship to the climate of the classroom for discussion. Again the

association between high knowledge and low trust was especially strong in Colombia.

## Beliefs about the Nation

Several questions about the nation were included. The large majority of students in all the countries supported national symbols, agreeing that flag and national anthem were important (see Rippberger, Staudt, & Velez-Ibanez, 2002 for a more in-depth current analysis of this issue in Texas and Mexico; Hess & Torney, 1967, for a discussion of the roots of these beliefs in early childhood). Students at the upper-secondary level, however, were less likely to be supportive of the nation than 14-year-olds when scales scores were compared (Amadeo et al., 2002).

Looking at individual items, the first line of Table 6.3 shows that in 1999 students in Chile and Colombia were more likely than those in Portugal or the United States to agree that "there is little to be proud of in this country." It appears that the legacies of dictatorship and internal warfare against the government have not gone unnoticed by this generation of youth.

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
There is little to be proud of in this country.	2.05	2.60	1.78	1.81
Should be alert to stop threats from other countries to our political independence	3.41	3.24	3.41	3.36
Should stop outsiders from influencing this country's traditions and culture	3.01	2.71	3.10	2.43

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know," but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

The other two items in Table 6.3 deal with a sense of threat to the nation. In each of these countries the students were likely to be concerned about threats to their country's political independence. Even by the age of 14 young people appear to be staunchly supportive of their country's desire to make its own way politically without outside interference. In contrast, young people were less concerned about changes in traditions and culture that might originate outside the country. Compared to students in the other three countries, students the United States in this 1999 testing expressed the least amount of concern about outside influence on cultural traditions. It appears that this generation takes a certain amount of globalization of culture for granted without seeing it as negative or threatening. However, young people in all of these countries remain concerned about their country retaining its political independence.

## Summary

Pride in membership in one's national community, trust in its national political institutions, and trust in institutions whose representatives are contacted on a daily basis are conceptually distinct and show distinct national patterns. National trust and pride decline over the period from early to late adolescence.

### *Policy-related Issues:*

- Students in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal were less likely than those in the United States to trust national and institutionalized groups and more likely to trust the institutions in which they participate regularly, such as the Church and the school, as well as the people in the country. Schools may have a special niche as trusted locale in which preparation for citizenship can take place.
- Knowledge of civic issues plays a mixed role in fostering trust. Among both younger and older adolescents, those who possess more knowledge of civics and politics are less trusting. There is an ongoing debate on these issues, which these findings can inform. Many political scientists would argue that too much trust in elected officials on the part of citizens results in complacency and lack of responsiveness on the part of officials. These issues will play out differently in different countries, especially those in the process of consolidating democracy and creating more trustworthy institutions. It appears that trust in courts and police may be especially important to young people's civic socialization. Thus programs of law-related education may be especially valuable to explore.

## Attention to Media and Trust in Media Sources

In this chapter:

- What role mass media have been found to play in young people's political development.
- Which media young people use to get information about politics.
- How much students in different countries trust news in the press, on television, and on the radio.
- What correlates with media use.

The role the media plays in the development of young people's civic knowledge and engagement can be examined from multiple perspectives. The media (in particular television and newspapers) have been used in classrooms explicitly to engage students in the acquisition of current events knowledge. Television viewing also has been used, in educational settings, to break down gender and racial stereotypes, and to complement classroom learning on issues ranging from elections and campaigns to violence reduction. On the other hand, there are also unintended consequences of media use which should not be discounted when examining the media's role relating to the civic education and engagement of youth. While the media can provide opportunities for learning in this area, they can also present obstacles.

Furthermore, an important aspect of young people's engagement in civic life is their ability and motiva-

tion to acquire knowledge and understanding of current events. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, questions were included in the IEA test to assess students' ability to understand and interpret information that might be found in news articles and political cartoons.

Over the past 25 years, many studies have explored the relationship between television viewing and/or newspaper reading and the recall of current events. For example, research conducted in the 1980s in the United States strongly suggests that viewing television news and reading newspapers both play important roles in the acquisition of current events knowledge (Garramone & Atkin, 1986; Conway, Wyckoff, Feldman, & Ahern, 1981). The research yielded conflicting results related to the effectiveness of viewing news on television as compared to reading the news. Some researchers argue that while individuals can be exposed to large amounts of news by viewing television, the information may be presented from a biased viewpoint, has less depth, and does not require the same effort as reading a newspaper. Therefore, individuals viewing television news are not challenged to think critically about issues (Linnenbrink & Anderman, 1995). And, while much is known about the acquisition of current events knowledge from the mass media, less is known about classroom prac-



tices that emphasize the value of current events knowledge and motivate students to seek news, or to read news carefully and critically (what is sometimes called media education).

To explore these issues Linnenbrink and Anderman (1995) examined the acquisition of current events knowledge, attitudes about the news, and motivation to seek the news in a sample of 451 adolescents in the United States. Using data from surveys and a current events test, the researchers found that those students who watch and read news the most have the “most adaptive” responses on measures of knowledge, attitudes, and motivation. They also found that reading the news is more strongly related to increased knowledge, depth of understanding of the news, and motivation than viewing news on television. In a related, but much smaller study, the researchers attempted to assess classroom practices that would increase current events knowledge and motivation. The sample, however, was too small to yield significant differences, although the researchers speculated that the students in the class in which the teacher related current events to everyday life and used in-class discussion to follow up television news viewing tended to value news more. Linnenbrink and Anderman’s research suggests that reading the news may be of greater value than watching television news, and that classroom discussion of television news may be of more value than viewing the news absent class discussion.

While knowledge and understanding of current events may be important to the development of citizenship skills, many believe that formal classroom study of current events common several decades ago, went through a period of decline. Nowadays, adolescents have immediate access to up-to-the-minute information over the Internet. (Though, it should be noted here the number of Internet hosts

varies greatly among the four countries discussed in this report. See Chapter 1, Table 1). In addition, during the last decade in the United States and elsewhere, Whittle’s Channel One and CNN have brought television news into the classrooms of a significant number of students. In a study designed to examine the influence of viewing television news in the classroom, Anderman and Johnston (1994) surveyed and tested 798 students in the United States. Among their findings was that viewing television news at school was related to higher scores on the current event tests and the willingness to seek news outside of school.

A note of caution should be raised here, however. While television news may engage children and adolescents, it may also present a distorted view of reality. For example, Dorfman, Woodruff, Chavez and Wallack (1997) analyzed the content of local news broadcasts in California over a 12-day period in September and October of 1993. They found that violence dominated the news coverage and that adolescents were rarely portrayed in a positive way. While this research raises a cautionary flag, it should be noted that it was limited to 12 days of content analysis and to local news. However, it is consistent with findings from a study in Chile. As reported in Chapter 1 of this report, a UNICEF-sponsored study found that young people in Santiago perceived that negative images of adolescents dominated the media, especially television. Further, even when the media are invited to cover youth issues—as they often are with children’s environmental projects—some have accused the media of “trivializing the important work of which young people are capable as the coverage is often superficial” (Hart, 1997, p. 53).

Despite these distorted views, it seems clear that children and adolescents prefer electronic media to the printed media. This tendency to prefer elec-

tronic media was substantiated in a study of thousands of students participating in a civic education program designed to promote voting in the United States. Even when required by their teachers to use multiple sources of election campaign information, the students overwhelmingly preferred television and radio (Simon, 1996). This preference for television news was replicated with the data analyzed for this OAS-commissioned study.

It seems from several of the studies discussed above, that one way to optimize political interest among children and adolescents is to link media use with classroom instruction. Yet, the media are sometimes looked at with skepticism (even suspicion) by educators. For example, in Colombia, the IEA national researcher speculated in his national case study that there is a negative view of the educational value of mass media among teachers, the media are “seen as doing nothing more than supporting passive consumption of information” (Rodríguez Rueda, 1999, p. 153). Another example is the Newspapers-In-School program in Argentina, established in 1986 with the support of the national association of daily regional newspapers, and which was initially resisted by teachers and school authorities. The program was designed to bring local newspapers into Argentine classrooms, promote the discussion of current events, and encourage political interest among students.

The teachers who volunteered for the program received training and guidelines for classroom activities. However, many teachers did not volunteer for the program. Some teachers—many of whom had little training in media education—viewed the media as a “competing form of socialization.” Moreover, teachers often discuss the past, while newspapers deal not only with current issues but also with current controversies which are often difficult to discuss. Finally, promoting and facilitat-

ing debates in class is often challenging for teachers and the debates may even be viewed as a threat to teachers’ authority (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, & Galperin, 1998).

Despite these concerns, a 1995 evaluation of the Newspapers-In-School program found positive student outcomes associated with the use of local newspapers in classrooms. Using a quasi-experimental design, Chaffee and his colleagues collected questionnaire data from 3,387 fifth- and sixth-grade students and 130 teachers in Argentina. The researchers found that newspaper use in the classrooms had a positive influence on students’ discussions of politics with their families and friends, their interest in politics, their expression of support for democracy and their tolerance for diversity. Strong effects were also found on students’ formation of political opinions and increased use of the mass media. Finally, and quite interestingly, with the exception of increased mass media use, all of the outcomes were affected more strongly among students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, & Galperin, 1998).

In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, an important element of citizenship education is the development of tolerance and an appreciation for life in a diverse society. For many of these children, television provides their primary exposure to others from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In this area, television can combat (or exacerbate) racial and ethnic stereotyping. Given the power of the medium, and its attractiveness to children, a prejudice reduction curriculum (*Different and the Same*), employing the use of videotapes has been developed for elementary school children in the United States (Graves, 1999). Also, as discussed above, newspaper use in classrooms also had a positive effect on the development of tolerance among students in Argentina.

In addition, media initiatives worldwide have given children and adolescents opportunities to express their opinions and participate. A news show in Albania, produced by children aged 13 to 18, uses the media to build ethnic tolerance and promote understanding. In Brazil, the Casa Grande Foundation produces videos, newsletters, comic books, and radio programs for children and adolescents. Young people are involved in the planning and decision-making and even the management of the foundation (UNICEF, 2002). In Brazil, through the arts curriculum, students at a public school for adolescents aged 12 to 18 use videos to document their community projects (Hart, 1997). Other media projects involving youth have developed in other parts of the world and address a variety of issues that affect young people.

Finally, the unintended role of the media is an interesting question, especially when focusing on children and adolescents. In most industrialized countries, the use of the media as a source of socialization exists to an extent unimagined at the beginning of the 20th century. Studies have shown that television is an important source of information for many social and political beliefs and issues. For example, Signorielli (1993) found that heavy television viewing is positively related to adolescents' desires for high-paying, prestigious jobs and positively related to the adolescents thinking that the actual work involved in the jobs is easy. These occupational messages may be important as citizenship requires more than voting and volunteering. That is, one's contribution to the economy is also an important element. In that regard, research suggests that television provides many images—not all realistic.

Numerous other researchers have argued that they found an association between heavy television viewing and social and political attitudes. For example, Carlson (1985) surveyed adolescents and

found that those who watched many television crime shows reported a distorted version of the criminal justice system and a belief that the world is a violent and “scary” place. Morgan and Shanahan (1991), also using survey data, found an association between authoritarian political views and heavy television consumption among Argentinean adolescents. In a related study, Shanahan (1995) concluded that adolescents in the United States, particularly those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, were more likely to report attitudes consistent with an authoritarian political orientation if they were heavy television viewers.

In an investigation related to television violence and aggressive tendencies, Eron, Lefkowitz, Huesmann, and Walder (1972) found that among boys assessed at age 8 and again at age 18, preference for television violence at the earlier age predicted aggressive tendencies at age 18. When this sample was followed to age 30, Huesmann and Miller (1994) found that viewing television violence at age 8 predicted violent crime at age 30. Interestingly, there were no significant associations between television violence and aggression found for females.

In conclusion, many claims have been made about the influence of television on the viewer's perceptions of social and political reality. The research, however, has several gaps. First, much of the research is based on an effects model, and conceptualizes the viewer as passive and easily swayed by media messages. Second, since television is produced for a mass audience, it is reasonable to assume that its messages are open to multiple interpretations. In particular, it is possible that children and adolescents analyze television messages in a manner different from researcher-generated content analyses. Finally, the interpretation and influence of television images may differ based on personal traits, including gender.

## Exposure to Media

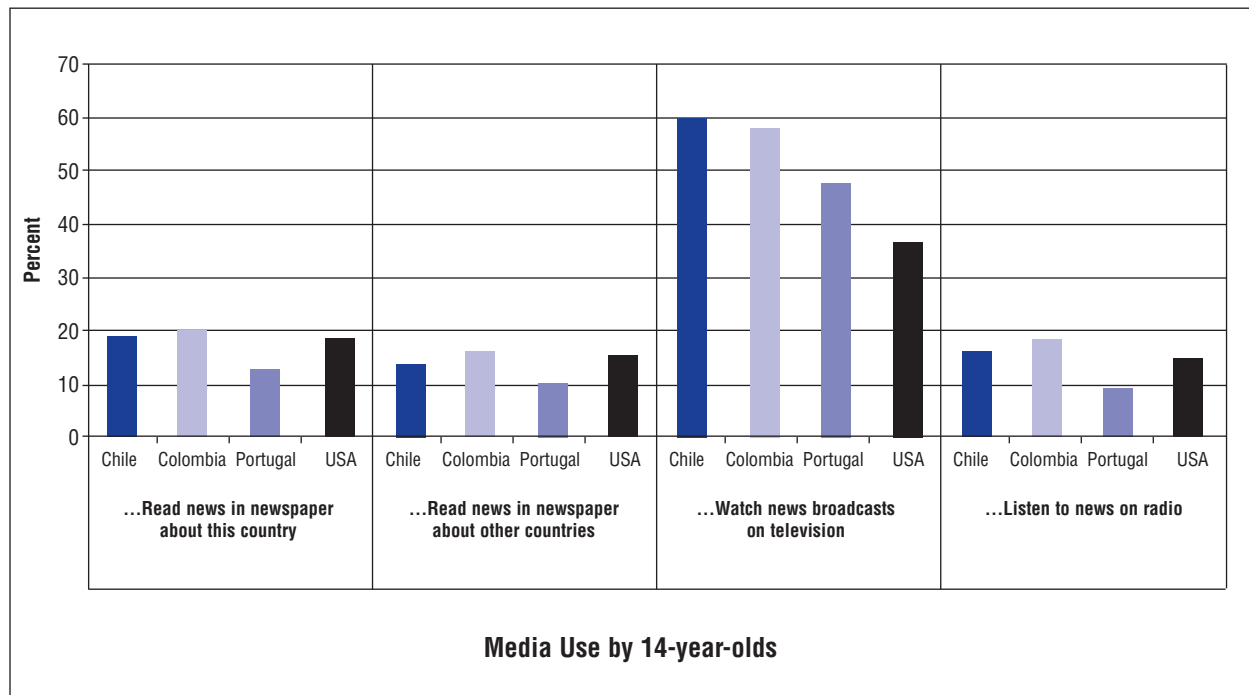
As discussed above, many researchers and educators have acknowledged the role the media can and do play in the development of young people’s social attitudes and political knowledge. In the United States, more than a decade ago, the president of a foundation dedicated to the advancement of teaching concluded:

It is no longer enough simply to read and write. Students must also become literate in the understanding of visual images. Our children must learn how to spot a stereotype, isolate a social cliché, and distinguish facts from propaganda, analysis from banter, and important news from coverage (Boyer as cited in Kubey & Baker, 1999, p.1).

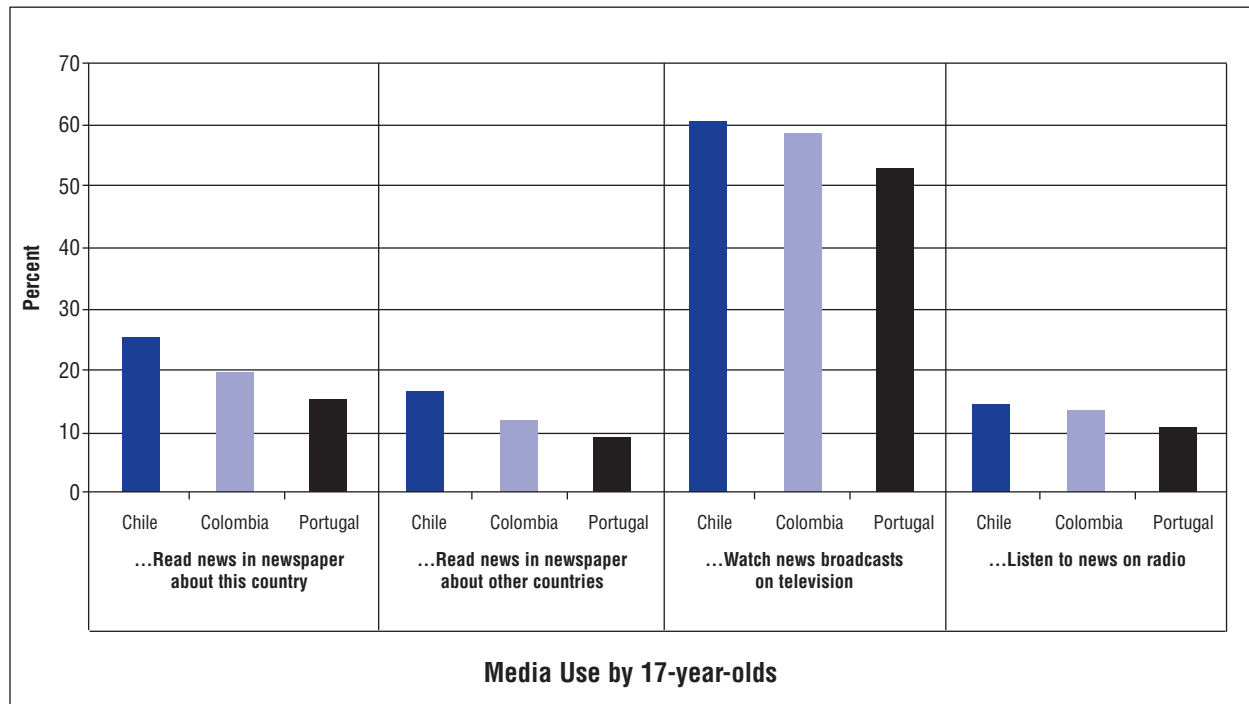
The findings reported in this OAS-commissioned report seem to reinforce the conclusion above because one thing is quite clear: Across countries and age groups, television is the primary source of political news for young people. This holds true not only in all four countries and at both age groups, but also for males and females.

As illustrated in the bar graphs below (Figures 7.1 and 7.2), the 14-year-old and the 17-year-old students watched television news broadcasts far more frequently than they listened to news on the radio or read news in the newspapers. For example, while 60% of the Chilean 14-year-olds reported that they often listen to news broadcasts on television, only 18% reported that they read news about their country in newspapers. This gap was slightly smaller but still evident in Colombia, where 58% of the Colombian students watched television news

**Figure 7.1: Media Use by 14-year-olds: Percent of Students who Often...**



**Figure 7.2: Media Use by 17-year-olds: Percent of Students Who Often...**



often, but only 20% read newspaper stories about their country with the same frequency. In Portugal, 48% of the 14-year-olds often watched television news, and 13% read newspaper stories about Portugal. Finally, in the United States, the gap between watching television news and reading newspapers was the smallest. Whereas 37% of the U.S. students reported that they often watched television news, 19% reported reading newspaper stories.

This same pattern of widespread television viewing held among the 17-year-old students. Higher percentages of 17-year-old students in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal reported that they often watched television news than read newspaper articles about their own countries. The United States did not test 17-year-olds.

Looking at age differences, in Chile a slightly higher percentage of 17-year-olds (25%) than 14-

year-olds (18%) indicated that they often read newspaper articles about their country. In Colombia and Portugal, the percentages of younger and older students who read newspapers were essentially the same. Finally, the television-viewing frequencies of the 14-year-olds and 17-year-olds were quite similar in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal.

The percentages and graphs presented above relate to the frequency with which the students watched news broadcasts on television. However, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, young people may absorb a great deal of social information from television programs that are not explicitly designed to transmit news or information. Therefore, students were also asked to indicate how many hours per school day they spend viewing television or videos in general. While these data cannot tell us what the students are watching or what images they perceive from their viewing; they do provide a snap-

shot of how many hours a day adolescents spend in front of a television. The findings are consistent with previous media research and indicate a fair amount of television viewing among adolescents. About 20% of the 14-year-old students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States reported that they watch three to five hours of television or videos on a school day. Slightly higher percentages of 17-year-olds in Chile and Portugal (about 25%) stated that they watched three to five hours of television or videos on school days whereas slightly under 20% of the Colombian 17-year-olds did so.

Given the frequency with which young people are exposed to television, it seems important for students to be taught how to interpret and analyze the often powerful images they see and hear on television. More and more schools across countries are considering the value of media education, though many report a gap between the rhetoric and the practice (Schwille & Amadeo, 2002).

Finally, while television viewing patterns were quite similar across countries, adolescents' reported exposure to newspapers in their homes varied greatly. For example, in Chile and Colombia, well over half of the 14-year-olds reported that they did not receive a daily newspaper at home (75% and 62% respectively). In

Portugal and the United States, the percentages of 14-year-olds who reported that they did not receive a daily newspaper at home were lower—55% in Portugal and 41% in the United States. The responses to this question among 17-year-old students in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal were quite similar to the responses of the 14-year-olds in their countries. If newspaper consumption is related to an increase in political and civic knowledge (Linnenbrink & Anderman, 1995), then encouraging the use of newspapers at school may be beneficial as many students do not receive newspapers at home. And, this lack of newspapers at home could partially explain why so many of the young people surveyed reported that they most often received their news from television.

## Trust in Media

Adolescents are not only heavy consumers of television news broadcasts, but it appears from these data that they also have confidence in what they are seeing and hearing. This was particularly evident in Chile and Portugal where the 14-year-old students' mean levels of trust in the news they see on television was higher than their levels of trust in the other media sources, and much higher than their trust in their national governments. In Colombia, the stu-

**Table 7.1: Mean Level of Trust in Media Sources and the National Government for 14-year-olds**

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Students' trust in:</b>				
News in the Press	2.66	2.73	2.81	2.66
News on Television	2.88	2.78	3.00	2.58
News on the Radio	2.72	2.73	2.88	2.49
National Government	2.35	2.50	2.37	2.69

Note. Higher mean scores indicate higher levels of trust.

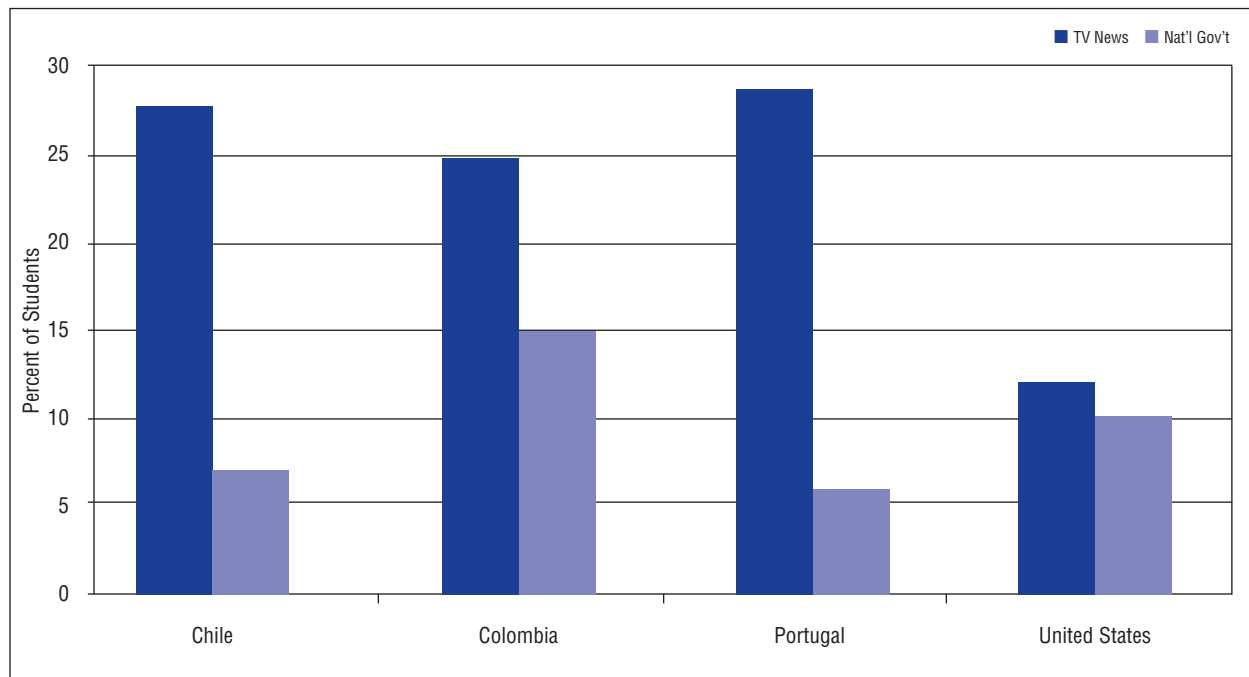
dents' levels of trust in the different media sources was essentially the same, but higher than their level of trust in their national government. The United States was the only country which did not follow this pattern. The U.S. students expressed the greatest trust in newspapers and the national government (Table 7.1). Thus, it might be argued that media education is important not only because adolescents are using media sources, but also because they seem to believe what they hear.

Another way to look at this issue of trust in the media is to examine the differences between the percentages of students who report that they always trust television (the most frequent media source) versus the percentages who report that they always trust their national governments. Here, the differences are stark. For example, in Chile and Portugal almost 30% of the 14-year-olds (28% and 29%

respectively) indicated that they always trust news on television whereas less than 10% (7% and 6%) of the Chilean and Portuguese 14-year-olds expressed the same level of trust in their national government. In Colombia this difference in trust was evident, but not as pronounced with 25% of the Colombian students responding that they always trust television news and 15% indicating that they always trust their national government. Finally, the difference in levels of trust was smallest in the United States, but the extent to which television news was trusted was also the lowest in the United States (12% responded that they always trust television news and 10% responded they always trust their national government). See Figure 7.3.

Looking next at the responses from the older students, we find that the 17-year-old students, on average, also expressed higher levels of trust in

**Figure 7.3: Percentage of 14-year-olds Reporting They Always Trust Television News and Their National Government**



**Table 7.2: Mean Level of Trust in Media Sources and the National Government for 17-year-olds**

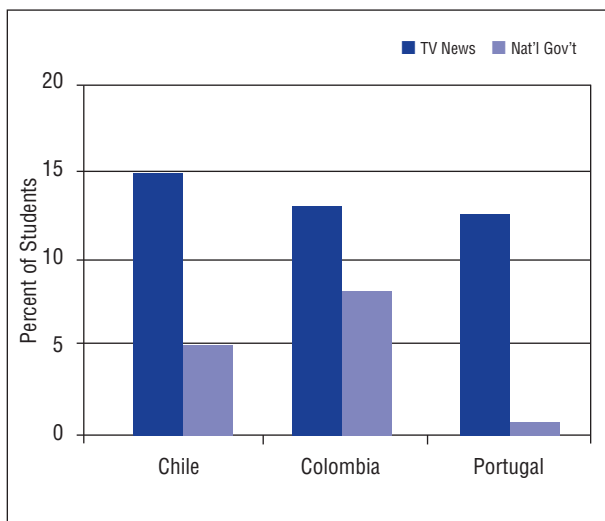
Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal
Students' trust in:			
News in the Press	2.63	2.64	2.70
News on Television	2.71	2.62	2.81
News on the Radio	2.67	2.62	2.75
National Government	2.40	2.28	2.20

Note. Higher mean scores indicate higher levels of trust. Colombian data unweighted.

media sources than they did in their national governments. See Table 7.2 for the mean scores of 17-year-olds in levels of trust.

Figure 7.4, illustrates the percentages of 17-year-old students who reported that they always trust television news versus the percentages that always trust their national government. About 5% (or less) of the 17-year-olds in Chile and Portugal and about 8% of the Colombian students indicated that they always trust their national government. In

**Figure 7.4: Percentage of 17-year-olds Reporting They Always Trust Television News and Their National Government**



contrast, almost 15% of these same students (in all three countries) expressed that they could always trust the news they viewed on television broadcasts. Similar, though somewhat lower, percentages of older students expressed the same levels of trust in radio news and newspapers.

In conclusion, while both the 14-year-olds and the 17-year-olds are more likely to trust the media than the national government, it should be noted that the older students were less trusting of both the media and their national governments than the younger students. This is consistent with other research in this area, and is reported in greater detail in the IEA Civic Education Study of Upper Secondary Students (Amadeo, et al., 2002).

## Correlates of Media Use

The sections above provide a description of adolescents' media use and contrast their levels of trust in the media versus their trust in national government. In the remainder of this chapter, the relationships between media use and civic knowledge and engagement will be examined. To examine those relationships, partial correlations were run. All correlations reported in this chapter controlled for the number of books in the home (home liter-



acy resources)—a latent socioeconomic measure. It should be noted that the analyses discussed below do not establish a causal link between media use and civic knowledge and/or engagement. However, they do provide a general description of the relationship between media use and civic-related outcomes, as well as provide direction for future research. Four questions will be examined, starting from the general to the more specific.

The first question addresses general television viewing and its association with civic knowledge. More specifically, is there a relationship between heavy television and/or video viewing on school days and performance on the test of civic knowledge and skills? Many researchers (not to mention countless parents and teachers) have argued that the more time students spend watching television, the less time they have to study or otherwise engage in school work or activities. In fact, a great deal of previous research suggests that excessive television viewing is related to lower levels of academic performance. For example, in all countries participating in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (1995), adolescents who watched more than five hours of television each day had the lowest average math scores (Child Trends, March 2003, [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)). Somewhat surprisingly, this negative relationship between television viewing and test scores did not hold with the civic data. In Chile, Colombia, and Portugal there were statistically significant (albeit weak), positive relationships between the amount of time 14-year-olds spent watch-

ing television/videos on school days and their scores on the test of civic knowledge and skills. Stated another way, the more hours students spent watching television and videos, the higher their scores were on the test of civic knowledge. In contrast, the relationship was negative (and statistically significant) in the United States.

The correlations were also positive and significant among the 17-year-olds in Chile and Colombia. No relationship was found between time spent viewing television and civic knowledge scores in Portugal at age 17 (Table 7.3). The United States did not test the older group of students.

A second question looks more specifically at viewing television news rather than television viewing in general. Here, the findings are consistent with research discussed in the introduction to this chapter. That is, watching television news is positively and significantly associated with scores on civic knowledge test in all countries and at both ages (14- and 17-year-olds). This relationship between television news and civic knowledge scores is consistent with the theoretical framework of the study (the Octagon). There are multiple influences on the development of civic knowledge, including the media and the home (on the assumption that many of these adolescents are watching television news at home with their families). A third question relates to newspapers. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, some research suggests that reading newspapers provides students with a more in-depth understanding of current

<b>Table 7.3: Partial Correlations between Time Spent Viewing Television or Videos and Students' Scores on Civic Knowledge Test</b>							
<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>		<b>Colombia</b>		<b>Portugal</b>		<b>United States</b>
Age of Student	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years
Correlation Coefficient	0.12	0.07	0.19	0.15	0.11	ns	-0.11

Note. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Correlations controlled for books in home.

**Table 7.4: Partial Correlations between Time Spent Viewing Television News and Students' Scores on Civic Knowledge Test**

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>		<b>Colombia</b>		<b>Portugal</b>		<b>United States</b>
Age of Student	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years
Correlation Coefficient	0.12	0.11	0.05	0.05	0.09	0.08	0.12

Note. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Colombian data from 17-year-olds unweighted. Correlations controlled for books in home.

**Table 7.5: Partial Correlations between Time Spent Reading Newspapers about Their Countries and Students' Scores on Civic Knowledge Test**

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>		<b>Colombia</b>		<b>Portugal</b>		<b>United States</b>
Age of Student	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years
Correlation Coefficient	0.14	0.15	0.05	0.05	0.06	ns	0.13

Note. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Colombian data from 17-year-olds unweighted. Correlations controlled for books in home

events and politics than does television viewing. What are the effects on civic knowledge of reading newspapers among the students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States? Similar to what was found with regard to television news viewing, the associations were positive, significant, but weak at both age groups and in all countries. The countries where the relationship between reading newspaper articles about their own country and scores on the civic knowledge test were the strongest were Chile ( $r = 0.14$  for 14-year-olds;  $r = 0.15$  for 17-year-olds) and the United States ( $r = 0.13$  for 14-year-olds).

A fourth and final question examines the relationship between media consumption and one form of civic engagement—the adolescents' expectations that they will vote in national elections. Here, positive relationships were found, and are stronger than those found with media use and civic knowl-

edge. More simply put, students who reported that they read newspapers and watch television news were more likely to indicate that they expect to vote as adults than students who are less frequent consumers of news. In every country, and at both age groups, the associations between reading newspapers and students' expectations that they will vote were stronger than the associations between television news viewing and voting. The one exception was the Portuguese 17-year-olds, where relationships between news consumption and expectations of voting were essentially the same for both media sources.

## Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter seem to indicate that adolescents are frequent viewers of televi-

**Table 7.6: Partial Correlations between Reading Newspaper Articles about Their Countries and Students' Expectations of Voting in National Elections**

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>		<b>Colombia</b>		<b>Portugal</b>		<b>United States</b>
Age of Student	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years	17 Years	14 Years
Correlation Coefficient	0.24	0.28	0.27	0.23	0.19	0.16	0.27

Note. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Colombian data from 17-year-olds unweighted. Correlations controlled for book in home.

sion in general, most often receive their news from television broadcasts, and generally trust the medium. In fact young people expressed more trust in media news sources than they did in their governments. And, while the associations between media use and civic knowledge were positive, the relationship between media use (especially newspaper reading) and expectations of voting were stronger. This may be because students who are more interested in politics, therefore more likely to vote, are the students who most likely read newspapers. This is consistent with previous research, and may have implications for classroom instruction.

*Policy-related Issues*

- In general, young people use and trust the mass media. The media can provide information, powerful images, and engage young people. Further, as discussed in Chapter 9 of this report, teachers in this sample frequently list the media as one source of information they draw on to plan civic education activities. These findings imply that teacher training should include use of the media and that students should receive media education. That is, students should be given the opportunity to learn to interpret information, critically analyze the images they see and hear, and separate fact from opinion.
- Media news consumption, especially reading newspapers, is positively associated with civic

knowledge (albeit weakly) and students' expressed willingness to vote (more strongly). These associations hold even when controlling for the socioeconomic status of the students, as measured by home literacy resources. However, many students—especially in Chile and Colombia—do not receive newspapers at home. This reflects the broader cultural norms and traditions of the societies (as discussed in the Octagon model) and may imply that only the most wealthy students have access to newspapers in their homes. One suggestion arising from this finding is to provide newspapers in schools and to incorporate newspapers in formal instruction. The Newspapers-in-School program (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, & Galperin, 1998) described in this chapter is one example of how this can be accomplished.

- Young people in all four countries reported that they spent several hours watching television each day, that they most often get their news from television, and that they trust television news. Since much of this television viewing is likely to occur at home, it is important to consider the influence of the family on young people's civic development. Thus, programs that link the home with the school, that bring parents into the school, may enhance the civic development of young people.

## Support for Women's Rights and Attitudes toward Ethnic Groups

In this chapter:

- Why women's rights are important in the American states and the intersection of adolescents' development of gender identity and attitudes in relation to country, school, family, and prospective adult status.
- How the IEA Support for Women's Rights Scale was framed and developed.
- What country and gender differences exist in support for women's rights.
- What relates to support for women's rights within gender in Chile, Colombia, and the United States, and how these findings relate to schools.
- How countries frame their concern about tolerant attitudes and how countries differ in students' ethnic attitudes.
- What this research means for the role of schools in fostering egalitarian participation and engagement in democracy.

Support for women's rights was not especially high on the list of important outcomes of civic education in most countries participating in the IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Schwille & Amadeo, 2002), but nevertheless it is a vital to a full picture of democracy and democratic values in the American states.

In contrast, values emphasizing tolerance and positive attitudes toward ethnic groups were important in nearly every participating country.

### Support for Women's Rights

Researchers reviewing results from polls in Europe and the United States have found that there is considerable support for women's political and economic rights. When commitment to the goals of different social movements is compared using large representative data from European countries, however, there is less substantial support for the goal of enhanced women's rights than for goals such as environmental protection (Mertig & Dunlap, 1995; Sapiro, 1998).

A number of authors studying adults in Latin America have noted important connections between women's general level of political engagement and their participation in women's organizations, including both groups that do and groups that do not have explicit aims to influence political institutions or further human rights (Bosch, 1998; Finn, 2002; Geske & Bourque, 2001). Adams (2000) detailed the ways in which participation in women's art workshops organized by the Catholic Church enhanced socialization into a political

movement and its associated ideology by encouraging Chilean women to give short speeches, observe the group as a model for democracy, and empathize with the experiences of others rather than remaining isolated. Some of the aims achieved were part of the plan for the workshops, while others were unintended consequences. Waylen (2000), comparing democratic consolidation in Chile and Argentina through 1998, noted the importance not only of associations with voluntary organizations but the value of encouraging women to organize to have an impact upon government institutions and political party systems. They concluded that as a result of women activists and nongovernmental organizations pressuring victorious political parties during the transition to democracy, some laws favorable to women's interests were passed after the restoration of electoral politics in Chile.

Hofstede's (2001) study of adults in 53 countries worldwide in the early 1970's showed that Venezuela, Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, Ecuador, the United States, and Argentina could be characterized by relatively high levels of masculine focus in the work culture (defined as a focus on assertiveness rather than nurturance in occupational goals). Studies collecting data more recently have also included scales of gender differentiation in the culture of the workplace (Javidan & House, 2001). Those authors placed Latin American countries in a category of moderate gender differentiation (with Nordic countries having less and with Asian and Middle Eastern countries having more gender differentiation). Tilley's (2002) re-analysis of World Value Survey data showed that the Hispanic/Iberian countries (Mexico, Portugal, Spain, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil) had moderately traditional attitudes toward the roles of women, with the Eastern Europeans the most traditional and the Nordic countries the least traditional.

In a number of studies, adolescent and young adult females have consistently been found (across generations and European countries) to be more supportive of women's rights than adolescent males (Anvik & von Borries, 1997; Furnham & Gunther, 1989; Hahn, 1998; Torney et al. 1975; Tilley, 2002). Bonard (2000) investigated the specific attitudes and expectations of government voiced by young Argentinian women in the 1990s. Several studies, including two in Chile (Doss, 1998; Fadda & Jiron, 1999), have suggested that research on increasing support for women's rights should not be confined to the perspective of either gender. Doss, for example, developed a scale of masculine ideology. Masculine posturing (including toughness) was more characteristic of the Chilean responses than of the responses given by Anglo- and African-Americans.

The effects of schools upon attitudes toward women's rights have not been extensively studied. Research in the United States (Stake & Hoffman, 2001) found that enrollment in university-level women's studies courses had positive effects on egalitarian attitudes and potential social activism. Increases in these attitudes were positively impacted in a small but significant way by pedagogical practices in which an instructor provided a social context for understanding the course content and explicitly discussed social activism (Stake & Hoffman, 2001). In an earlier study, men's attitudes toward women's rights outside the home were found to be influenced by general level of education (Miller, 1984).

In summary, it is clear that both males and females develop their attitudes about women's rights in a context which includes the roles of adult males and females in their country's political and economic system, their families, their schools, their teachers, and their organizational memberships.

## Development of the IEA Support for Women's Rights Scale

The first IEA study of civic education (Torney et al. 1975), included four items dealing with support for women's rights and these served as the basis for the development of the scale used in the study of 14-year-olds whose data are analyzed here. In this study three items dealt with political participation (one stated positively, about running for political office, and two stated negatively, one about women staying out of politics and the other about men being better political leaders than women). One item was general, about women having exactly the same rights as men. Two dealt with economic issues (one stated positively, about equal pay for the same jobs, and one stated negatively, about men having more rights to a job during economic hard times). These items had a Cronbach alpha of 0.79 (and also were scaleable with an IRT scale).

## Country Differences in Average Support for Women's Rights

Examining all the countries and both genders participating in the IEA study in 1999, the average support level of support for women's rights was quite high (that is, the large majority of students agreed with the positively stated items and disagreed with the negatively stated ones). The IRT scales allow comparison of means across countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

- Chilean students at age 14 had a mean score of 9.8, significantly below the international mean of 10 and tied with Hungary for 18th rank out of 28 countries. Bulgaria, Latvia, and Romania had the lowest level of support for women's rights.
- Colombian students at age 14 had a mean score of 10.2, close to the international mean and 11th in rank out of 28 countries.
- Portuguese students at age 14 had a mean score of 10.1, close to the international mean and to Colombia.
- U.S. students at age 14 had a mean score of 10.5, significantly above the international mean (at about the same level as Finland, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland and below Australia, Denmark, England, and Norway, which were the countries with the highest women's rights support).

A similar pattern of country differences was found among upper-secondary students.

These countries have widely differing representations of women in their national legislative bodies. Looking across the 28 countries, those countries where support for women's rights was high among 14-year-olds were the countries where more than 25% of the seats in the national legislative body were held by women. In the group of countries examined here, Chile had the lowest percentage of women in parliament – slightly less than 9%, while Portugal had the largest percentage of about 19%. One must be tentative in making inferences, but there are at least two possibilities. It may be that young people see women holding governmental positions, view them as role models, and develop more positive attitudes toward women's rights. Other explanations having to do with political culture shared by adults and adolescents, with the strength of recent organized political efforts by women's groups, or with slating procedures designed to ensure women a place on the ballot are also plausible.

## Gender Differences in Support for Women’s Rights

In all countries and at both age levels females had significantly higher levels of average support for women’s rights than males. These were the largest gender differences in the entire instrument. Of the four countries testing 14-year-olds being considered here, the gender differences were the largest in the United States and the smallest in Portugal. To look at the results in another way, among females in the United States there was considerably higher support for women’s rights than there was among females in Portugal or Colombia. Among males in the United States there was slightly lower support for women’s rights than among the males in Portugal or Colombia. The apparently strong women’s rights support in the United States can be attributed primarily to young women’s responses (Table 8.1).

These data show that adolescents believe that there is a role for females in politics, but attitudinal barriers still exist to women running for political office (Table 8.1). The positively stated item which is least likely to be endorsed in these countries is “women should run for political office and take part in the government just as men do.” Substantial proportions of male students in Chile and Portugal agreed with the negatively stated item, “men are better qualified than women to be political leaders.” Gender differences were large on this item in Chile, Portugal, and the United States, and there were also substantial gender differences in Chile, Colombia, and the United States on the item, “if jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.”

In addition to these items, one of the items dealing with ideas about the responsibilities of government is related to this topic. The average student in these four countries agreed that the government had some

**Table 8.1: Mean Level of Agreement for Attitude Items about Women’s Rights by Country and Gender**  
 [In first three items lower numbers indicate higher support for women’s rights; in the remainder items higher numbers indicate higher support for women’s rights]

Countries:	Chile		Colombia		Portugal		United States	
Items:	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Men are better qualified to be political leaders.	2.47	2.04	1.84	1.91	2.21	1.92	2.04	1.39
Women should stay out of politics.	2.37	2.30	1.79	1.55	1.62	1.42	1.77	1.27
If jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job.	2.30	1.95	2.03	1.70	1.95	1.80	2.03	1.63
Women should run for political office.	3.20	3.45	3.25	3.45	3.29	3.41	3.13	3.60
Women should have same rights as men.	3.42	3.70	3.42	3.62	3.33	3.55	3.30	3.72
Men and women should get equal pay in same jobs.	3.38	3.56	3.42	3.62	3.44	3.64	3.25	3.65

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree. Students were also given the option of saying “don’t know,” but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

responsibility to ensure equal political opportunities for the two sexes. Females in Colombia, Portugal, and the United States were more likely than males to endorse this role for government. Females in the United States were most likely to believe that this should be a governmental responsibility. This is interesting because students in the United States were less likely than those in any other country to endorse an interventionist role for government in economic matters (Chapter 4, Table 4.3).

### Correlates of Support for Women's Rights

High civic knowledge, confidence in participation at school, and learning at school to get along with other people with diverse ideas were significant predictors of support for women's rights across countries. Open climate for classroom discussion was a less important predictor than in the analyses reported in previous chapters for other outcomes of civic education. It appears that schools have the opportunity to enhance the political equality of males and females by teaching content, establishing ways for students of both genders to participate in effective school betterment initiatives, and explicitly teaching students to get along in diverse groups. The level of home literacy did not appear as significant predictors of support for women's rights. Corroborating item results presented earlier, gender was an especially strong predictor of support for women's rights in the United States and Chile. Because of the substantial gender differences in attitudes to women's political and economic rights regression models were computed separating the samples by gender as well as by country. The same variables predicted high support for both males and females.

### Emphasis on Tolerant Attitudes toward Diverse Groups and Development of Items for the IEA Instrument

There was an emphasis in many of the civic education case studies on tolerance for diverse groups (Torney-Purta et al., 1999). There is an enormous literature in the United States and beginning to be substantial work in Latin America on these attitudes (Dunn, Fritzsche, & Morgan, 2003), on attempts to change teachers' attitudes toward children from native cultures (Arratias 1997 study in Chile), and on the effectiveness of various programs in increasing tolerance or ability to negotiate to solve conflicts in several Latin American countries (Moreno Garcia, 2002; Nakkula & Nikotopoulos, 2001).

Frydenberg and her colleagues (2001) found that Colombian students rated discrimination as a less important social issue than community violence, pollution, and global war. This was in contrast to Australian and Northern Irish youth, where discrimination was the second most important issue (after community violence). Chaffee and his collaborators (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, & Galperin, 1998) described an extensive program using newspapers in schools which had the effect of increasing tolerance, among other positive outcomes. Previous research evidence for schools' role in increasing tolerant attitudes toward ethnic and racial groups is less extensive in Latin America than in the United States, however.

The framers of the IEA survey had difficulty arriving at a formulation of items about ethnic and cultural tolerance that could be used internationally. Each of the 28 countries participating in the study had a slightly different group in mind as the subject of intolerance and discrimination. In some of the



**Table 8.2: Mean Level of Agreement for Attitude Items regarding Discrimination by Country**

Countries:	Chile	Colombia	Portugal	United States
<b>Items:</b>				
All ethnic groups should have equal chances to get a good education in this country.	3.37	3.55	3.45	3.46
All ethnic groups should have equal chances to get good jobs in this country.	3.34	3.53	3.42	3.44
Schools should teach students to respect members of all ethnic groups.	3.25	3.54	3.36	3.25
Members of all ethnic groups should be encouraged to run in elections for political office.	2.70	3.17	3.00	3.14

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree. Students were also given the option of saying "don't know", but those responding in this way have been excluded from the computation of means.

post-Communist countries it was gypsies, in the Baltic states it was linguistic minorities, in England immigrants from the Caribbean or Africa, in Portugal immigrants from former Portuguese colonies, and in the United States African-American. Although four items were developed and administered they were not scaled and have not previously been analyzed for country differences.<sup>1</sup>

### Country Differences in Average Support for Ethnic Group Rights

The patterns of responses for students' willingness to subscribe different aspects of rights are found in Table 8.2. The figures suggest that general statements about equal chances for education and employment were the most likely to be endorsed in these countries. The responsibility of schools to

teach students to respect others was moderately likely to be endorsed, although less than the general statements about rights in Chile and the United States. Colombian students were relatively strong in their support for schools teaching students to respect others. In all four countries encouraging a wide diversity of candidates to run for political office was least likely of the four statements to be supported. Encouragement for members of ethnic groups to run for election was least likely to be endorsed in Chile.

As in the scale on women's rights, the gender differences were especially large in the United States on all four items dealing with attitudes toward diverse ethnic groups. Male students were less likely than females to subscribe to rights for diverse groups. Gender differences were relatively modest in the other three countries.

<sup>1</sup> In the IEA reports, Torney-Purta et al., 2001 and Amadeo et al., 2002, an IRT scale on Support for Immigrants' Rights was reported as the focus of this area. Because there are so few immigrants in Chile and Colombia, that seemed a poor choice for this report, thus the reporting of results on these ethnic relations items.

## Correlates of Attitudes Toward Diverse Groups

Two of the same variables that were important in predicting support for women's rights were also the most important predictors of positive attitudes toward diverse ethnic and racial groups: confidence in the value of participation at school and learning how to understand diverse groups at school. Civic knowledge was also important, especially in Colombia and the United States. An open classroom climate was somewhat more important than it had been in predicting women's rights support. Home literacy resources were not associated with ethnic attitudes. The gender differences were substantially smaller than for support for women's rights. However, males were less tolerant of ethnic groups, and the differences were largest in the United States.

### Summary

It is clear that among students in these four countries gender identity, which is under rapid development during adolescence, can be thought of as acquiring a political dimension during this period. By age 14 young people respond to women's rights issues in a way consistent with their gender identi-

ties. In other words, female students are more supportive of women's rights than are males and also more supportive of rights for ethnic and racial groups.

### *Policy-relevant Issues*

- The school has several avenues through which it can encourage egalitarian student attitudes including both curricular content and experiences in the classroom and school as a whole. Teaching and practicing democracy at school are effective in political gender identity development, in enhancing support for women's political and economic rights, and in enhancing support for positive attitudes toward ethnic groups.
- Equal rights for women and for ethnic groups are least likely to be supported when the issue is running for public office. Job equality is somewhat less likely to be supported than general personal rights or rights to an education. Males are less likely to be tolerant with respect to either women's rights or the rights of ethnic groups than are females in several of these countries. However, school interventions are likely to have similar effects for both their male and female students.



## Teachers, Schools, and Students' Perceptions of Civic Education

In this chapter:

- Who the teachers of civic education described in this report are.
- What place teachers believe civic education should have in the curriculum.
- What sources teachers rely on to teach civic education.
- What improvements teachers think are needed with regard to civic education in their schools.
- What emphases schools place on civic-related matters (perceptions of students and teachers).
- How students perceive the classroom climate for discussion in their schools.
- How students perceive opportunities for participation in their schools.

Through both implicit and explicit means, schools and teachers play an important role in the development of civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Although many institutions and cultural values play a part in the development of young citizens (as discussed in Chapter 5), the central role of the school cannot be disputed. Yet, educators face distinct challenges in this area. Across nations, educators and researchers point to a general disdain for politics among young people as well as the diminished status of civic education as compared with other sub-

ject areas such as math and science (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a USAID-sponsored study in the early 1990s found relatively little information about the status of civic knowledge and skills among citizens, yet all 15 countries in which the surveys were administered had a formal civic education curriculum. Further, despite calls for improvement, results from the survey suggest that education remains “traditional and authoritarian” and “teacher preparation is a major weakness” (Villegas-Reimers, 1994). This finding related to lack of teacher preparation in civic-related subjects was replicated among the Chilean teachers in this OAS-commissioned study and is discussed below.

Similarly, in the United States, during the first phase of the IEA Civic Education Study, Hahn (1999) found that in several urban schools it was difficult “to teach about democracy and freely express an opinion when the atmosphere of the school worked against it” (p.593). Another teacher complained that little responsibility was placed on students, and the focus in the school was on order, not free expression of ideas. In Colombia, the Phase 1 IEA researcher spoke of significant gaps between national expectations in the area of civic education and actual achievements (Rodriguez Rueda, 1999).

A similar conclusion was reached in Portugal where Menezes and her colleagues argued that “what actually happens in schools has apparently little to do with what is supposed and intended to happen” (Menezes et al., 1999, p. 501).

There are, however, several successful initiatives both in Latin America and the United States. Not all schools in Hahn’s case study discouraged participation and responsibility, there were also schools where students had many opportunities to become involved in projects and activities and thus learn about being “active participating citizens.” And, among the most prominent examples of successful school initiatives are the Escuela Nueva schools in Latin America. The original model—first established in rural Colombia—was a response to a unique political context (McEwan & Benveniste, 2001). It has gone from a grassroots model to something more formalized and has been adopted in other Latin American countries (for example, Honduras, Guatemala, and Guyana). In Guatemala, after years of civil war, the role of education in creating a “culture of peace” which included “learning to participate with others to make decisions and valuing cultural and linguistic differences” was discussed during the peace negotiations (Baessa, Chesterfield, & Ramos, 2002, p. 206). The Escuela Nueva model adapted in Guatemala (and called Nueva Escuela Unitaria) was one effort taken by the government to improve the quality of education, and to meet the goals of participation and tolerance. The approach involves teachers, parents, and students and stresses active learning. A recent study indicates that children in the Nueva Escuela Unitaria schools exhibit more democratic behaviors than students who did not attend Nueva Escuela Unitaria schools. In addition, the researchers found that greater democratic behavior and participation in small groups led to students’ higher levels of reading (Baessa, Chesterfield, & Ramos, 2002). In sum,

the Escuela Nueva methodology stresses children’s rights, democratic participation, cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution (UNICEF, 2002) and is associated with positive student outcomes.

It seems from the IEA Phase 1 data that in many countries experts see a discrepancy between what societies expect adolescents should know in the area of civic education, and the students’ actual achievement—a gap between rhetoric and reality. And, it appears from the IEA Phase 2 data that there is also often a gap between teachers’ perceptions of what civic education objectives are emphasized in schools and what teachers think should be emphasized. For example, teachers who were surveyed in 1999 as part of the IEA Civic Education Study of 14-years-olds were asked which broad objective was currently emphasized in their schools—knowledge, independent thinking, political participation, or values. The teachers were also asked to indicate which objective they thought should be emphasized. In most countries, higher percentages of teachers thought that knowledge transmission was emphasized in their schools than thought it should be emphasized. In Chile, 41% of the teachers who responded to this question reported that they thought that knowledge transmission was emphasized in their schools but only 13% thought that it should be. Similarly, in Portugal 63% of the teachers thought knowledge was emphasized, but 40% thought the emphasis should be placed on knowledge. (Teacher data on this item were not available for Colombia and the United States.) Also, in most countries (including Chile and Portugal), very few teachers thought that political participation was emphasized in their schools, though many thought it should be. Finally in Chile, 45% of the teachers who responded to this question thought that their schools emphasized values, whereas only 29% of them thought the emphasis should be placed on values (Losito & Mintrop, 2001). This pattern was the same in Portugal where

21% of the teachers thought that values were emphasized but only 12% thought that values should be emphasized. In sum, there seems to be a gap in many cases between what teachers perceive to be the objective of civic education in their schools and what they think the objective should be.

Understanding the objectives of civic education—and education in general—is an important issue. A UNESCO document outlines the role that education can play in building peace, promoting social cohesion, and the adoption of prosocial behaviors. The development of skills and values for peace and diversity was emphasized in the report, as was the need to have time in the curriculum to practice and discuss these values and life skills (UNESCO, 2002).

During the 1990s, Chile, Colombia, and Portugal all embarked on educational reform (Cox, 2002; Rodriguez Rueda, 1999; Menezes et al., 1999). Chile and Portugal have more centralized systems of education than do the United States and Colombia. For example, in Chile, the central government defines the curriculum and “frames schools’ activities” (Cox, 2002). On the other hand, the United States Constitution gives to its 50 states the authority and primary responsibility for education. Thus, the national contexts for civic education differ from country to country, and reflect differences based on national norms and values.

## Description of Teachers of Civic Education

It is important to first note that the teacher samples discussed in this chapter are not nationally representative samples of all teachers of civic-related subjects in their countries. The three samples of teachers discussed here are different from each other, especially in terms of number of respondents.

Schools were asked to approach up to three teachers of civic-related subjects teaching the tested class of students, and ask them to fill out the survey. If three teachers could not be selected in this way (that is, three teachers who taught the tested class of students), then the schools were asked to choose teachers of civic-related subjects of “a parallel, previous or following grade within the school” (Losito & Mintrop, 2001, p. 159). Thus, the questionnaires were administered to teachers who were both “linked” and “not linked” to the group of students who were tested in the schools. In some countries only one teacher per school was asked, and in some schools no teacher responded. In other countries, three teachers per school were asked and most responded. This results in some discrepancies in sample size between countries. In the United States 116 teachers filled out questionnaires (from 124 schools where testing took place), whereas over 500 Chilean teachers did so (from 180 schools where testing took place). Comparisons across countries, therefore, should be made with caution.

To better understand the data reported in this chapter, it is useful to not only be aware of national context of civic education, but also the personal characteristics of the teachers who were surveyed. Their age, gender, and training may all influence their views on civic education. And, while the teachers are not nationally representative samples of all teachers of civic-related subjects in Chile, Portugal, and the United States, these data do provide some insight into the conditions under which civic education takes place and can be seen “as glimpses into the world of civic education teaching” (Losito & Mintrop, 2001, p. 158).

Many of the teachers who answered the questionnaire—but not all—taught civic-related courses to the 14-year-old students who were tested and surveyed (those students whose responses were

described in the previous chapters of this report). Questionnaires were not administered to upper-secondary school teachers; therefore, no data are available from the teachers of 17-year-olds. Also, data are not available from the Colombian teachers of 14-year-olds. To summarize, what appears in the paragraphs and table below is a general description of those who teach civic-related subjects to 14-year-old students in schools which participated in the IEA Civic Education Study in Chile, Portugal, and the United States.

As illustrated in Table 9.1, the teachers in Chile and Portugal were overwhelmingly female. This holds true especially in Portugal where slightly over 80% of the teachers were female. In contrast, the opposite was found in the United States, where more than half the teachers surveyed were male.

The age distributions of teachers also varied across countries, with an interesting pattern seen in Chile. That is, only about 10% of the Chilean teachers reported their age as under 30 years, with only about 1% under the age of 25. Teachers in their 40s constituted the largest percentage of teachers in the Chilean sample (34%). Not surprisingly, the teachers in Chile also reported the highest average number of years in the teaching profession (18 years); twice as many years as that reported by the Portuguese. The average number of years teaching in the United States sample was 15 years. It appears that the teachers in this Chilean sample were older and had, on average, more years of teaching experience than the teachers in Portugal and the United States.

However, the gap between average number of years teaching and number of years teaching civic-related courses was the largest in Chile. This discrepancy between mean number of years teaching and mean number of years teaching civic education

suggests that many Chilean teachers in this sample have only recently been recruited to teach in this subject area. This gap (6 years) is similar to that found in several Eastern and Central European countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Latvia and Romania, all countries experiencing rapid changes in civic education after moving from an authoritarian regime. In most Western European countries, the gap between years of work experience in teaching and years of work experience in civic education was relatively small. In Portugal, where regime changes took place a couple of decades ago, there was no gap between number of years teaching and number of years teaching civic education. This is most likely because almost a third of the Portuguese teachers in this sample were under 30 years of age.

Finally, large percentages of teachers in both Chile and Portugal reported that they did not hold a degree from an academic/teacher education institution in a discipline related to civic education. In contrast, in the United States, 81% of the teachers reported holding a degree in a discipline related to civic education. In Chile, this is most likely due to the fact that Grade 8 (14-year-old students) is part of Basic School and preparation for Basic School teaching is not subject specific.

The data in the Table 9.1 provides a description of some of the personal characteristics and professional training and experience of the teachers in these three samples. In the sections that follow, an examination of some of the teachers' beliefs and attitudes is provided. For example, what place do these teachers think civic education should have in the curriculum?

<b>Table 9.1: Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Sample: Percentages and Mean Years of Teaching</b>			
<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Number of Teachers Surveyed</b>	536	420	116
<b>Gender of Teachers</b>			
Female	67.5%	81.2%	34.5
Male	32.5	18.6	64.7
<b>Age of Teachers</b>			
Under 25	1.3%	6.4%	5.2%
25-29	8.8	26.2	16.4
30-39	30.4	45.0	20.7
40-49	34.3	17.6	27.6
50-59	22.8	3.8	27.6
60 and over	2.2	1.0	1.7
<b>Degree Related to Civic Education</b>			
Yes	10.6%	17.1%	81.0%
No	86.2*	77.6	14.7
Mean years of teaching experience	18 Years	9 Years	15 Years
Mean years teaching civic-education course	12 Years	9 Years	11 Years

Note. Samples are not nationally representative. Data are unweighted. Percentages may not equal 100 because of missing data.

\* In Chile, Grade 8 is part of Basic School and Basic School training is not subject specific.



## Teachers' Preferences on the Place for Civic Education in the Curriculum

In some school systems, civic education exists as a discrete subject. In others, it is spread throughout

the curriculum, as well as interwoven into extra and cocurricular activities. How do these teachers think civic education should be taught to young people? Teachers were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements:

<b>How should civic education be taught?</b> <i>Please rate the statements below on the following scale:</i>				
	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
<i>Civic education ...</i>	1	2	3	4
A1 should be taught as a specific subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2 should be taught integrated into subjects related to human and social sciences, like history, geography, languages, religion, ethics, law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3 should be integrated into all subjects taught at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A4 should be an extracurricular activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Table 9.2: Mean Level of Agreement with Statements about Civic Education's Place in the Curriculum by Country</b>			
<b>Countries:</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Place in Curriculum:</b>			
Specific Subject	2.98	2.66	2.99
In Human and Social Sciences	3.27	2.91	3.21
In All Subjects	3.20	3.39	3.04
As Extracurricular Activity	1.78	1.82	1.90

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree.

In all three countries, on average, teachers agreed that civic education should be integrated into social science subjects and into all subjects taught at the school. To a slightly lesser extent, they also reported that civic education should be offered as a specific subject. The teachers, however, disagreed that civic education should be taught as an extracurricular subject. Table 9.2 reports the means for each item. Higher mean scores indicate agreement with the statement.

It appears from these data, that teachers of civic-related subjects generally favor spreading civic education across the curriculum and infusing it into all courses taught at the school as well as maintaining a discrete subject. The preference for infusion rather than either teaching in the social sciences or as a specific subject is the strongest in Portugal where, according to Menezes (2001), this is the prescribed approach. The preference for civic education in the social sciences is strong in the United States, where teaching civic education through the "social studies" is usual in the curriculum. The Chilean teachers resemble both those in Portugal (with a relatively high rating for infusion in all subjects) and those in the United States (with a relatively high rating for teaching in the social sciences). In other words, these preferences by teachers generally reflect the policies in their countries (Cox, 2002; Hahn, 1999; Menezes, 1999).

The least satisfactory option to these teachers was teaching civic education through extracurricular activities, though we do not know from these data if they think extracurricular activities can complement what is going on in the formal classroom. As discussed in Chapter 5 of this report, there is some evidence that participation in extracurricular and community activities teaches students civic skills and fosters civic identity. Also, it appears in all three countries discussed here (as well as in Colom-

bia) that in many schools extracurricular activities are available to students. Wiseman (2003) reports that about 50% of the schools in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal report the availability of extracurricular organizations in schools or community. In the United States, 70% of the schools that participated in the IEA study reported the availability of extracurricular activities. Wiseman's analysis is based on data from the IEA Civic Education Study administered to school heads in each of the participating schools.

This pattern of responses related to civic education's place in the curriculum is consistent with that found among the other countries in the IEA study of 14-year-olds. It is of interest, however, that Chile does not follow the pattern of some of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that are establishing new programs of civic education by preferencing a separate subject in the curriculum to ensure instructional time (Losito & Mintrop, 1999).

## Sources Teachers Rely on to Teach Civic Education

In many countries, teachers have some flexibility in sources they rely on to teach civic education. To gauge what sources these teachers use, the respondents were asked to rate the level of importance they would attribute to eight different sources. The question, as it appeared on the teacher survey, is on the following page.

In all three countries, higher percentages of teachers rated original sources such as constitutions or declarations as more important than other materials when they planned civic education activities. For example, in Chile, more than half of the teachers who were surveyed rated original source

<b>How do you plan for civic education?</b>				
<i>Please rate the statements below on the following scale:</i>				
	not important	less important	important	very important
<b>When you prepare for civic education related activities, from what sources do you draw?</b>	1	2	3	4
G1 Official curricula or curricular guidelines or frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G2 Official requirements (standards) in the area of civic education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G3 Your own ideas of what is important to know in civic education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G4 Original sources (such as constitutions, human rights declarations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G5 (Approved) Textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G6 Materials published by commercial companies, public institutes, or private foundations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G7 Self-produced materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G8 Media (newspapers, magazines, television)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

materials as very important to their planning. Also, in contrast to the discussion in Chapter 7 about teachers' skepticism of the media, almost 40 percent of Chilean and Portuguese teachers thought it very important to use media sources in civic education. In the United States, a quarter of the teachers thought so. In fact, use of media materials was second only to original sources in all three countries. This could be because media sources provide current information, and/or because they are likely to capture the students' interest. (Students in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal did not perform as well as students in the

United States in interpreting one kind of media—political cartoons.) Finally, Chilean teachers relied on approved textbooks and self-produced material far more than their Portuguese and U.S. counterparts. Most striking was the difference between use of textbooks: Close to 30% of the Chilean teachers reported that they draw on approved textbooks to plan civic education; whereas less than 10% of the teachers from Portugal and the United States did so. (However, 14-year-old students in the United States reported extensive use of textbooks in the classroom.) The percentages of teachers who rated the materials as

**Table 9.3: Percentage of Teachers who Responded that it is Very Important to Use the Following Sources when Planning Civic Education**

	Chile	Portugal	United States
Curricular Guidelines	18.3%	6.9%	17.2%
Standards	18.3	17.5	20.6
Own Ideas	17.9	15.7	17.2
Original Sources	55.0	41.9	34.5
Approved Textbooks	27.8	8.1	8.6
Civic Material Published by Commercial Companies	15.1	11.3	4.3
Self-produced Material	25.6	8.8	12.9
Media	38.8	35.2	26.7

**Table 9.4: Teachers' Reports on Needed Improvements in Their Schools: Percentages of Teachers**

Need	More Material	Better Material	Training in Teaching	Training in Content	More Collegial Cooperation	More Time for Teaching	External Experts	Projects	Activities	More Autonomy
Chile	20.0	33.6	36.8	48.5	32.3	32.5	19.2	17.9	18.8	12.7
U.S.	12.1	37.1	20.7	16.4	31.9	32.8	19.0	25.9	28.4	11.2

Note. Data from Portugal and Colombia unavailable on this item.

very important when they plan civic education materials are reported in Table 9.3.

## Teachers' Views on Needed Improvements

In addition to being asked what materials they rely on, teachers were also asked what needed to be improved about civic education in their schools. To assess their views, the questionnaire listed ten areas in which the teachers might like to see improvement. From this list of ten, teachers were asked to select the three most important items. The items ranged from improved textbooks and materials to more autonomy, and included the following:

- More materials and textbooks.
- Better materials and textbooks.
- Additional training in teaching methods.
- Additional training in subject matter knowledge.
- More cooperation between teachers in different subject areas.
- More instructional time allotted to civic education.
- More cooperation with external experts.
- More opportunities for special projects.
- More resources for extra-curricular activities.
- More autonomy for school decisions.

As reported in Table 9.4, almost half of the Chilean teachers indicated that additional training in subject matter knowledge was needed. This is consistent with the data reported earlier: Only about 10%

of the Chilean teachers reported holding a teaching degree related to civic education.

A substantial portion of the teachers in Chile (about 37%) also reported that additional training in teaching methods was needed, as did about 20% of the U.S. teachers. Better materials and textbooks was also selected by teachers in both countries, although the teachers in the United States seemed to indicate (more so than the Chilean teachers) that what was needed was not more materials and textbooks, but better materials. Finally, the item that was selected the least—in both Chile and the United States—was more autonomy for school decisions. This pattern held true for most of the countries in the IEA sample of teachers—teachers expressed little concern about autonomy in decision making. (Data are not available on this item from the Portuguese teacher sample.)

## **Reports on Students' Learning at School: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions**

Civic education occurs not just within the formal classroom, but also in homes, peers groups, extracurricular activities, and from the media. Further, as discussed above, it is often spread across the curriculum in courses such as history, literature, religion, and mother tongue. In short, civic education often takes place across the curriculum and over multiple years of instruction. It would be misleading, therefore, to make “opportunity to learn” conclusions based on the ratings on one current civic-related teacher. However, it is quite valuable to know some of the emphases schools place on civic-related knowledge and skills—and both students and teachers are sources of this information. Therefore, both students and teachers were asked

to agree or disagree (on a four-point scale) that in school, students are taught the following:

- To cooperate in groups with other students.
- To understand people who have different ideas.
- How to act to protect the environment.
- To be concerned about what happens in other countries.
- To contribute to solving problems in the community.
- To be a patriotic and loyal citizen.
- About the importance of voting in national and local elections.

The percentages of 14-year-old students and percentages of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements are reported in Table 9.5. Among the largest discrepancies between what students believe and what teachers believe are found in Portugal and the United States in the area of opportunity to learn about the importance of voting. In both countries, higher percentages of teachers than students thought that in schools students learned about the importance of voting in local and national elections. On the other hand, there was little difference between the students' and teachers' reports of learning to vote in Chile. Data from the Colombian teachers are unavailable, but large percentages of the Colombian students agreed with all seven statements about what civic-related matters were emphasized in their schools. The smallest percentage of Colombian students (but still a substantial 78%) thought that in school they learned to be concerned about what was happening in other countries.

Looking across countries at the students' responses, some national differences become evident. For example, in the United States, fewer students agreed that in school they learned to protect the environment; solve problems in the community; and be a patriotic and loyal citizen than students in Chile,

**Table 9.5: Students' and Teachers' Reports on What They Believe They Learned in School: Percentage of Students (S) and Teachers (T) who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"**

	Cooperate in Groups		Understand People		Protect the Environment		Concern other Countries		Solve Comm. Problems		Patriotic Loyal Citizen		Voting	
	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)	(S)	(T)
Chile	94	95	94	87	89	93	77	76	81	75	87	86	76	78
Colombia	96		93		94		78		91		90		89	
Portugal	96	95	95	88	92	95	76	72	82	63	84	55	48	59
United States	91	95	84	88	79	75	72	70	68	68	64	61	55	86

Note. Data are from 14-year-old students. Colombian teacher data are not available.

Colombia, and Portugal. Students in the United States were also less likely than students in Chile and Colombia to report that in school they learned about the importance of voting in national and local elections. For example, in Colombia almost 90% of the students agreed that they learned about the importance of voting, whereas only slightly more than half (55%) of the U.S. students did so.

## Students' Experience of the Climate of the Classroom

Whether one uses the term "culture," "atmosphere," "environment," or "climate" as a way of describing schools or classrooms, it is clear that this is an important focus of those interested in school reform (Prosser, 1999; Reynolds et al., 2002). Freiburg and Stein (1999) speculate that this is because "climate is a real factor in the lives of learners and...it is measurable, malleable and material to those who work in schools" (p.17). Nearly every conference on the subject of preparing young people to be citizens notes that "democracy needs to be taught in a democratic atmosphere" or that it must be "modeled as well as preached." How schools' structures or teachers' pedagogies would have to change in order to

manifest this atmosphere has been less clear. Fraser (1999), an Australian and one of the most active researchers in this area for several decades, has called for separate assessment and interventions relating to classroom-level environment and school-level environment. This proposal matches the views of many social studies and civic educators of the importance of a classroom process that emphasizes opportunities for active participation in discussion in an open and respectful climate, and the democratic climate of the school as a whole, usually emphasizing students holding power over decisions within the school structure (Torney-Purta, Hahn, & Amadeo, 2001; Hahn, 1998; Harwood, 1992). An open classroom climate measure including the extent to which students perceived that they can disagree with each other and with the teacher and that controversial issues can be considered was a predictor of both knowledge and participation in the earlier Civic Education Study conducted by IEA (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975). School climate can be conceptualized as students' perception of the efficacy of participating with other students in solving school problems or joining together in a school council that debates and takes action on real issues (following the lead of Yeich and Levine, 1994 in their focus on collective efficacy).

An ideal design would have allowed the observation and videotaping of classrooms throughout the countries participating in the civic education study. This was financially not feasible. As previously indicated, although teachers were surveyed about their pedagogical practices, there were difficulties in Colombia (with the sampling documentation) and in Chile and the United States (in ascertaining which school subjects were “civic related” and which teachers of these subjects could be linked to particular students).

For this (and other) reasons questions about the ways in which students experience their classrooms and their perceptions about the techniques their teachers use were included in all countries. As Table 9.6 shows, textbooks were prominent in students’ reports about how courses in history and other civic-related subjects were taught; lectures by teachers with note-taking by students was also relatively common in Colombia and the United States. As noted above, teachers in Chile (but not Portugal or the United States) also reported heavy reliance on textbooks. Close to 30% of the Chilean teachers indicated that they drew on approved textbooks when they planned civic education activities. Teachers in all four countries emphasized facts and dates when presenting history or political events, but this emphasis was especially strong in Chile and Colombia. Some analysis in the United States indicates that this factual emphasis is a correlate of students’ civic knowledge but not of their engagement (Torney-Purta & Stapleton, 2002).

Table 9.7 indicates that in general students felt that they were encouraged to develop their civic opinions and that these opinions were respected in the classroom. This was true in Colombia, corroborating earlier data suggesting that the schools may be a “safe haven” for students living in situations of turmoil in the rest of society (Ardilla-Rey & Killen,

2003). This is also consistent with a recent study of Colombian students’ ways of coping with problems such as community violence in a study that also included Northern Ireland and Australia. Adolescents in Colombia were especially likely to try to take a positive approach as a coping strategy (Frydenberg et al., 2001).

In all the tested countries an emphasis on facts and on learning from textbooks or lectures (Table 9.6) was much more likely to be part of students’ school experience than was discussion of current political events or political or social issues about which people have different opinions (Table 9.7). Colombian students were especially likely to believe that the discussion of current social and political issues was encouraged by their teachers; this may be because of the prevalence of violence in other social settings (Chapter 1).

Chilean and Portuguese students did not report as much discussion of current social and political issues as did students in Colombia or the United States. The picture one gets of Portuguese schools is that there is not much focus on content-based material (textbooks, lectures) and not much discussion of political or social issues. This is consistent with infusing civic education content into a number of subjects described in the Portuguese case study (Menezes et al, 1999 & Menezes, 2001). The picture one gets of Chilean schools’ civic education is a focus on facts transmitted through reading of textbooks, but little discussion of social or political issues.

At several places in the previous chapters, the summary scale for Open Classroom Climate (averaging items such as those in Table 9.7) was identified as making a contribution to achievement in civic knowledge, various types of engagement, political trust, and other positive outcomes of civic education. These analyses of differences between stu-

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Items:</b>				
Teachers place great importance on learning facts or dates when presenting history or political events.	3.38	3.39	3.25	3.22
Teachers lecture and the students take notes.	2.92	3.11	2.93	3.14
Students work on material from the textbook.	3.31	3.55	3.14	3.32

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree.

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Items:</b>				
Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues.	3.11	3.33	3.12	3.31
Teachers respect our opinions and encourage us to express them.	3.31	3.57	3.15	3.17
Teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions.	2.58	3.04	2.36	2.84
Students bring up current political events for discussion in class.	2.53	2.90	1.90	2.59

Note. Ratings were made on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree.



dents within countries give important clues as to policy directions that might be taken.

## Students' Experience of the Climate of the School

A set of items measuring the climate of the school as a whole was also included in the Civic Education Study. Items dealing with the belief that electing students to serve on school councils or parliaments is effective and with the view that students working together can improve their schools formed an IRT scale entitled Confidence in Participation at School. The country differences in that scale at age 14 were as follows:

- Chilean students had a mean score of 10.5, above the international average for the 28 participating countries.
- Colombian students had a mean score of 10.0, at the international average.
- Portuguese students had a mean score of 10.8, above the international average.
- U. S. students had a mean score of 10.1, at the international average.

In contrast to the finding reported in the previous section, where Portuguese and Chilean students seemed to have little stimulus for engagement in political discussion in the classroom, at the school level they seemed to have a strong sense of participatory efficacy. Although these two factors, school climate and classroom climate, are often considered together, it appears that they are distinct. Only students in Cyprus had a stronger sense of participatory efficacy in school than students in Portugal, and only students in Greece, Portugal, and Cyprus scored higher on this scale than students in Chile. Students in Colombia and the United States were only moderately convinced about the openness of

the school itself to the participatory initiatives of students. Germany was the lowest scoring country on this scale among 14-year-olds.

Students in all three of the countries testing at the upper-secondary level expressed more confidence in the value of participation than did 14-year-olds.

## Summary

The characteristics of the teachers surveyed and whose data are presented in this OAS-sponsored report varied from country to country. Differences were found in the teachers' age, gender, and number of years teaching civic-related subjects. Not surprisingly, the Chilean teachers who overwhelmingly reported being trained in a subject area different from civic education also reported the need for improved content training when asked what most needed to be improved in their schools.

Students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States generally perceived that facts and dates were stressed when teachers presented history of political events. They also reported that textbooks were prominent in how civic-related courses were taught. Chilean teachers (but not teachers in Portugal or the United States) also reported that they drew on textbooks as sources for civic education activities. The Colombian students were especially likely to report that their teachers respected their opinions and were encouraged to express them. Students in Portugal and the United States were less likely to agree.

### *Policy-related Issues*

- More than three-quarters of the teachers surveyed in Chile and Portugal reported that they did not hold an academic degree in a subject related to civic education. And, almost half of the Chilean teachers indicated that one of the

areas most in need of improvement was additional training in subject matter knowledge. These findings suggest examination of teacher training methods (both pre-service and in-service) for teachers of civic education. Teachers also seek better materials, such as textbooks. Although teachers did not emphasize textbooks, when students reported on what materials they use in the classroom, they indicated that textbooks are very important in the teaching process.

- In general, there appears to be a discrepancy between what teachers in Chile and Portugal (from whom there is data on this item) think should be emphasized in civic education, and what they perceive is actually emphasized in their schools. To some extent, teachers perceive that knowledge transmission is emphasized more than it should be and participation is emphasized less than it should be. In addition, many students whose views are examined in this report, indicated only relatively moderate expectations that they would participate in conventional civic activities as adults (Chapter 5). This could be a reflection of curricular emphases. Thus, an examination of the goals and objectives of civic education found in policy statements and the extent to which there are opportunities in the curriculum to meet those goals may be warranted.
- In all four countries, but especially in Colombia, students expressed the belief that teachers respected their opinions and encouraged them to express them. This is a positive and hopeful finding, particularly in light of the fact that classroom climate is positively associated with civic knowledge, civic engagement, and trust. Democratic classrooms where students are encouraged to critically analyze and discuss issues seem to foster the civic development of young people.
- Students' sense of the value of participating in school activities was a substantial predictor of several aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Although this can be a contentious issue, discussion involving both youth and educators on ways to improve the extent to which schools can serve as models of democracy is warranted.



## Strengthening Democracy in the Americas: Summary of Findings and Directions for the Future

The empirical analysis reported in this volume examines the civic knowledge, attitudes, and activities of 14- and 17-year-old students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States. This report was commissioned by the Unit for Social Development and Education in response to a mandate from the Organization of American States General Assembly to explore the ways in which democracy and democratic institutions can be strengthened in Latin America.

The data presented had been previously collected as part of the IEA Civic Education Study, a cross-national study initiated in the mid-1990s to examine the ways in which young people are prepared for their rights and responsibilities as citizens in democratic societies (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Amadeo et al., 2002). During the second phase of the IEA study, tests of civic knowledge and surveys of civic attitudes and activities were administered to 90,000 14-year-old students in 28 countries (during 1999) and 50,000 16- to 19-year-old students in 16 countries (during 2000). Chile, Colombia, and Portugal collected data from both 14-year-olds and 17-year-olds, while the United States collected data only from the younger students. These data provide an opportunity to examine national as well as age-related similarities and differences and present the views of both younger and older adolescents.

In addition to assessing the civic-related views and knowledge of students, the perspectives of teachers were also examined. The survey questions administered to the teachers examined who is teaching civic-related subjects, what training they receive, and what improvements they think are needed in the area of civic education. Moreover, the teachers were also asked about what they perceived was emphasized in their schools, as well as their views on what should be emphasized. In short, the data provide a series of snapshots of teachers' views of civic education in their countries.

As policymakers and civic leaders endeavor to strengthen democracy through civic education, much can be learned from the students and teachers themselves. What messages can we glean from these students and teachers? What directions and policy options should be considered in moving forward if priority is to be placed on this area?

### Voices of Students

#### *Knowledge and Awareness of Civic Issues*

In the area of civic knowledge, assessed in the study by questions about democracy and skills in interpreting information, both age-related and national

differences were found. For example, with more years of formal schooling and more life experience, the 17-year-old students performed better than the 14-year-old students on the test of civic knowledge. This finding held true in all three countries that tested both age groups—Chile, Colombia, and Portugal—and is consistent with the findings from the entire group of 15 countries that tested both 14-year-olds and upper-secondary students in the IEA Civic Education Study (Amadeo et al., 2002). The rate of growth in knowledge from age 14 to age 17 was similar for students in Chile and Colombia, and similar to the rate of growth in other countries who participated in the IEA study, such as Norway. Students in Portugal showed a slightly sharper increase in test scores than did the students in Chile and Colombia. (See Chapter 3 of this report for a full discussion of scores on the tests of civic knowledge.)

Most students in all four countries—at age 14 and especially at age 17—have acquired basic knowledge of concepts relating to democracy and political institutions. However, there does not seem to be the same level of understanding among these students about more subtle aspects of political rights, citizens' responsibility, the role of the media or economic institutions. It may be easier to reach societal consensus about ideas and concepts relating to democratic principles than to agree about situations where citizens want to challenge the political status quo, where political leaders act to consolidate their power, or where political decisions seem to favor one economic group over another. In fact, there may be few opportunities for young people to learn about economics or about the application of principles in school. Further, in some cases, the everyday experience of young people may conflict with what they learn in school about political institutions.

At age 14, students in the United States scored the highest (of these four countries) on the full test of

civic knowledge and were especially strong on questions that required skills in interpreting information. In particular, the 14-year-old students in the United States were proficient in answering skills items that required interpreting political cartoons. Generally, Portugal occupied a middle position on interpretation skills, with the Chilean and Colombian students less skilled in understanding political cartoons, political leaflets, and material found in newspaper articles. These findings are likely a reflection of national differences in students' opportunity to learn skills of political interpretation in and out of school.

Between-country differences as well as similarities were found when patterns of answers were compared by item (rather than using a total score based on the full test). Some of the answering patterns could be explained by topics emphasized or omitted in the stated curriculum and the teaching. To give one example, Chilean and Colombian students appear to have much less chance to deal with material from media such as newspapers in their classes. Coupled with the fact that few students in these countries come from families where newspapers are received at home, this dearth appears to hamper their abilities to interpret political messages. To give another example, teaching in both Chile and Colombia appears to deal more with idealized views of democracy and less with potential anti-democratic conditions. Students' patterns of knowledge differ accordingly. Colombian students have apparently benefited from some emphasis on human rights in school or in their communities, while both Chilean and Portuguese students perform well on items dealing with children's rights. There are many other patterns of correct and incorrect answers to knowledge items discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

At both age groups and in all countries, the literacy resources available to young people in their homes

and the students' expectations of years of further education related very strongly to higher scores on the test of civic knowledge. Some school-related factors, such as students' perceptions that their classrooms allow for open discussion of issues also were related to higher scores on the test of civic knowledge. Therefore, preparing teachers to hold discussions in class and emphasizing its importance during both pre-service and in-service training may help to foster civic knowledge. Curriculum, teaching methods, and everyday life experiences with media, family, and peers are clearly interconnected in the ways that they foster knowledge and awareness of democracy in these four countries. The Octagon model, which shows students embedded in a variety of groups whose actions are influenced by the position of the country in the world as well as by economic and political values, expresses this well.

### *Engagement*

Many educators advocate participation in school and community organizations as a means of teaching civic knowledge and promoting citizenship. This kind of active and experiential education provides adolescents with opportunities to learn citizenship skills. It also acknowledges that it is not merely that adults are teaching students to become citizens, but that young people are already citizens with rights and responsibilities and are expanding their own understanding of what that entails. Further, research suggests that youth who are active in school and community organizations are more likely to become active citizens as adults.

The data analyzed for this OAS-commissioned report indicates that most students belong to at least one organization in their school or community. Many students, in all four countries, reported that they belong to groups that are distinctly school

related (such as student councils and school newspapers), whereas few students reported membership in organizations affiliated with political parties or human rights groups. This could be because political parties often do not focus their activities on citizens who are not yet of voting age. Activities demonstrating concern for human rights can be dangerous in some cases (especially in Colombia) or the terms may be confusing (especially in the United States where the term has multiple connotations including racial equality and personal rights as well as basic and political rights, such as those defined in international or regional declarations or conventions).

Looking at national trends, two patterns stand out: First, students in Colombia were especially likely to belong to environmental organizations, which may reflect the richness of civil society initiatives in Colombia relating to this topic. Second, while many students participated in groups conducting voluntary activities in the community, this was especially strong in the United States where the past decade has seen an emphasis on community service projects as part of the formal and informal curriculum.

In addition to assessing the activities young people currently engage in, students were asked about political or civic activities they might engage in over the next few years and as adults. The Colombian students were more likely to endorse conventional political activities such as voting, running as a candidate for public office, and joining a political party than were the students in the other countries. Looking at a different strand of potential participation, 14-year-olds in all four countries responded that they were much more likely to engage in social-movement activities such as collecting money for a charity or participating in a nonviolent protest march than to engage in activities that might be illegal such as spray painting graffiti or blocking traffic.

In Chile and Colombia, at both ages (14 and 17) and in Portugal at age 14, the relationship between civic knowledge and the students' expectations of participating in social-movement-related activities over the next few years was significant and negative. Stated another way, the more knowledgeable students were less likely to endorse social-movement activities. This raises the question of the extent to which the most academically successful students are looking at life trajectories that are not connected with public life.

However, across the four countries and two age groups, school factors were significantly and positively associated with students' expectations of participating in social-movement activities. More specifically, students' perceptions of open classroom climate; their confidence in the value of their participation in school activities; and the extent to which they thought that they learned in school to solve problems in the community were all positive correlates of expectations to be involved as adults. In addition, reading the newspaper was also positively related to social-movement expectations in all countries.

A somewhat different pattern of correlates emerges when one looks at the students' expectations of participation in conventional political activities such as voting or running for political office. The three strongest relationships (especially among the 14-year-olds) were with reading newspapers, trust in government institutions, and experiencing an open classroom climate for discussion. In the United States, civic knowledge was also strongly related in a positive direction to the students' expectations of future conventional civic participation.

It seems from these findings that schools have a role to play in the development of civic engagement beyond just providing organizations and

activities for students to join. That is, classrooms where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, schools where students see the value of participating in activities, and classrooms where students learn to solve problems in their communities seem to foster the development of students' expectations that they will participate in their communities as adults. Students who read newspapers are also likely to expect to become engaged, active adult citizens. These relationships are fairly consistent across age groups and countries. In contrast, there are many more age and national differences in the factors that foster the development of civic knowledge. In particular, home background variables have a greater association with civic knowledge than with civic engagement.

### *Trust*

Students of 14 and 17 years of age belong to a variety of communities, ranging from the nation, to the national political community of government institutions, to school or religious communities. They also may feel that they have a generally positive or negative view of other people in the country in which they live. All of these dimensions of communities and students' levels of trust in them were assessed in the IEA study.

In general, the older adolescents in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal expressed less trust in government-related institutions and expressed less national pride than the younger students (the United States did not test 17-year-olds). These results are consistent with other research in the area of political trust, and consistent with what was found among the other countries in the IEA Civic Education Study. Specifically, in well more than half of the countries that tested 14-year-old and 17-year-old students in the IEA study, the 17-year-olds expressed less trust than did the 14-year-olds. The

same trend appeared with the students' expressions of national pride.

Students in the United States when compared to the other three countries expressed the highest levels of trust in national political institutions. However, when the level of trust was assessed for institutions such as the school or when the level of trust in people in general was assessed, young people in the United States expressed less confidence than those in the other three countries. The relatively high levels of trust in schools expressed by Colombian and Chilean young people suggests that this may have special potential as an institutions for encouraging civic connection and social participation.

Some school factors were important in fostering trust in both age groups: Confidence in school participation, open classroom climate for discussion, and the opportunity to learn in school to respect the opinion of others were positively associated with students' trust in government-related institutions. However, in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal, the students with higher scores on the test of civic knowledge were less trusting of government than were students with lower scores. This pattern held true for both the 14-year-olds students and the 17-year-olds tested in these three countries and is the same direction as the relationship found between knowledge and social movement engagement.

#### *Media Use*

Reading newspapers was positively related to students' civic knowledge and their levels of expected engagement in social-movement and conventional activities. It could be that either the more knowledgeable, engaged students are interested in keeping up with current events, or that newspaper reading sparks political interest and enhances knowledge

among young people. Is newspaper reading widespread among young people? These data suggest that it is not. In all countries, the 14-year-old and the 17-year-old students watched television news broadcasts far more frequently than they read newspapers. Moreover, students appeared to trust the information they glean from television news broadcasts. In fact, in Chile, Colombia, and Portugal, both younger and older adolescents trusted television news more than they trusted their national governments.

Furthermore, as discussed Chapter 7 of this report, children and adolescents absorb a great deal of social information from television programs that are not explicitly designed to transmit news. This is important given the frequency with which young people watch television. For example, about 20% of the 14-year-old students in Chile, Colombia, Portugal and the United States reported that they watch three to five hours of television or videos on a school day. Slightly higher percentages of 17 year olds in Chile and Portugal stated that they watched three to five hours of television or videos on school days whereas slightly under 20% of the Colombian 17-year-olds did so. Therefore, given the frequency with which young people are voluntarily exposed to television, it seems wise to teach students how to interpret the images they see and hear on television. This may have implications for teachers about how the media can be used effectively in the classroom.

While television-viewing patterns were quite similar across countries, adolescents' exposure to newspapers in their homes varied greatly, reflecting cultural differences. In Chile and Colombia, and to a lesser extent in Portugal, high percentages of students reported that they did not receive a daily newspaper. This helps to explain the students' performance on the test of civic knowledge and skills: The Chilean and Colombian students tended to perform less well than the U.S. students on items



which required them to interpret political cartoons or mock newspaper articles. Stated another way, it is not surprising that students in Chile and Colombia had a difficult time interpreting political information—they seemed to lack the opportunity to learn these skills.

Finally, the associations between media use and civic knowledge were positive, but weak. The relationship between media use (especially newspaper reading) and students' expectations of voting were much stronger. This may be because students who are more interested in politics and, therefore, more likely to vote, are also the students who are most likely to read newspapers. This result is consistent with previous research, and may have implications for classroom instruction, particularly in light of the fact that a full 75% of the Chilean students reported that they did not receive newspapers at home.

### *Attitudes and Values*

In many respects 14-year-olds are already members of the political culture they share with adults. The political, economic, gender, and ethnic attitudes they hold show similar cross-national differences. In the IEA study attitudes toward the participation of women and of ethnic groups were major aspects of tolerance and values that were assessed.

Generally there were high levels of support for women's rights, even higher among 17-year-olds than 14-year-olds. However, the least likely type of political participation to be endorsed by the students was women serving in elected political office. There were very large differences by gender in these attitudes in all four countries and at both age levels, confirming recent research among both adolescents and adults. The gender differences were especially large in the United States (of the four

countries examined here), with male students especially likely to believe that men are better qualified to be political leaders than are women.

When attitudes toward ethnic groups were examined, it was also the case that their right to run for election was much less likely to be endorsed than rights to education or equal treatment in the workplace. Colombian students were especially strong in their belief that schools should teach students to respect members of all ethnic groups. Females also had more tolerant ethnic attitudes, though the differences were not as large as those seen for women's rights.

School-related factors had an impact on tolerant values. More knowledgeable students were more supportive of both women's rights and ethnic groups' rights in all four countries. Experience in a school culture where student participation is extensive and perceived to be effective was a very important correlate of both aspects of tolerant values in all four countries, as was the experience of learning in school to understand diverse individuals. Open classroom climate was also a positive factor.

## **Voices of Teachers and Students about Schools**

The perspectives of teachers provide valuable insight into how civic education is delivered, and what directions might be taken. Although many factors—ranging from the young person's family to broad cultural norms and values—influence the development of civic knowledge and attitudes, the central role of the school cannot be disputed. Throughout this report, school factors at the level of the curriculum, the classroom, and the school culture were positively related, often strongly, to the civic outcomes examined (knowledge, engage-

ment, trust, and tolerant attitudes). Thus, teacher preparation, school curriculum, materials including textbooks, and special programs such as those using media represent directions for policy attention. Ways of integrating these school-related factors into programs rather than as piecemeal reforms is also indicated.

What can the teachers tell us about these aspects of civic education? Teacher data were available from the teachers of 14-year-olds in Chile, Portugal, and the United States. In all three countries, teachers responded that they thought civic education should be integrated into all subjects in the curriculum—especially in social sciences and humanities subjects. Teachers also reported that when they prepare for civic-education-related activities, they most often draw from original sources such as constitutions or human rights declarations. High percentages of teachers in Chile and Portugal also reported that they thought it very important to use media sources in civic education. Given adolescents' interest in the media, and the lack of newspapers in the home, the study of media sources may be one way to capture students' interest and provide exposure to newspapers.

In addition to being asked on which materials they rely, teachers were also asked what needed to be improved about civic education in their schools. Almost half of the teachers in Chile indicated that additional training in subject matter knowledge was needed. This is consistent with that fact that only about 10% of the Chilean teachers reported holding a teaching degree related to civic education and reflects an institutional effect on how teachers are trained. That is, in Chile, teachers of 14 year olds (grade 8) are trained as Basic Education teachers, and subject specific training is not required as part of their program. (Colombian teacher data were not available.)

It is also interesting to note the perceptions of teachers as compared with students on what is being taught in the schools. These perceptions were generally consistent, but there were a few exceptions. For example, higher percentages of students than teachers in Chile and Portugal thought that students were being taught in school how to solve community problems. In contrast, higher percentages of teachers than students thought that students were being taught about the importance of voting. To give another example, many teachers thought they placed little reliance on textbooks, but students said that textbooks and factual material from them were very important (perhaps because this is what appears on their tests).

How do the students perceive other aspects of their school experience? Most students tended to believe that their opinions were respected in class, although some teachers appeared to steer away from discussing controversial topics. The Colombian students were especially likely to report that their teachers respected their opinions and were encouraged to express them in the classroom. At the school level, students in all four countries seemed to have confidence in the value of participating in school activities. This sense of participatory efficacy was especially strong in Chile and Portugal.

## **Interpretation of Findings within a Theoretical Framework**

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, the theoretical framework of the IEA Civic Education Study (from which the data from Chile, Colombia, Portugal and the United States were analyzed for this OAS-sponsored report) conceptualizes the ways in which “the everyday lives of young people in homes, with peers and at school serve as a ‘nested’ context for young people’s thinking and

action in the social and political world” (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 20). This theoretical model has its roots in ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1988) and situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In short, the model posits that adolescents’ engagement in the community, and the development of an identity within the group allows young people to learn about citizenship and democratic processes. Face-to-face interactions with families, teachers, peers as well as the impact of broader society such as the media and other institutions influence the development of civic knowledge, attitudes, and actions. A graphic illustration of this model—described as the Octagon—can be found in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.1).

The findings summarized above and discussed in the preceding chapters of this report clearly can be examined and interpreted within the context of the Octagon model. While factors related to schools play an important role in the development of civic knowledge, engagement and attitudes, other processes, both at the micro and macro levels are also influential. For example, the outer ring of the Octagon illustrated the broad, cultural and societal factors that impact civic development, such as the economy, political institutions, media, and societal values. Many Colombian students do not think it is especially problematic for democracy that politicians influence courts, that political jobs are given to family members, or that a government minister would make a decision influenced by private interest. The discourse of democracy that Colombian students hear at school is difficult for them to reconcile with what they observe in their neighborhoods, when they see political leaders on television, or in the experience of their families. Economic deprivation seemed an especially strong theme in their responses. The Colombian students’ confidence in their schools may be partially explained by the broad societal violence that has

been part of their lives from which the school is a kind of haven or safe space.

The position of one’s country in the world and the character of the political regime, aspects of the Octagon model, also were related to students’ responses. For example, the students in the United States were highly trusting of their government but were unlikely to read about international news in the newspaper. In Chile, the students’ performance on test of civic knowledge reflected a curriculum designed by a military regime and in a situation where media restrictions have been relaxed only quite recently. Students thus experienced a lack of opportunity for learning in several areas.

In addition, the influence of organizations and people that have daily contact with adolescents can also be seen. Community organizations—both informal and formal—contribute to the development of young peoples’ civic identity and often reflect societal priorities. In Colombia, for example, resources were directed to environmental organizations for young people, and in the United States, community service activities were mandated in many schools. These organizations allow students to gain skills, interact with peers, and develop habits of participation. They also provide young people the opportunities to be exposed to new ideas and people. Finally, families and home resources also contribute to civic learning. This is particularly apparent when examining students’ scores on the tests of civic knowledge.

From looking at the results in relation to the Octagon we, therefore, learn that the individual young person is embedded in a structure of schooling (including curriculum, classroom, and school culture), home (characterized by a level of general educational resources as well as parent interests), peers (including youth organizations), and the

neighborhood. In other words, in each of these countries a variety of potential niches or sites for civic education already exist. Each of these sites is influenced by political, national, economic, religious, and educational values. Individuals within these sites need to be energized, to work better together and to take advantage of the comparative advantage each has within both macro contexts and micro contexts. They need to be aware of potential gaps between ideals often presented in the school curriculum and realities in the everyday lives of young people. And the educational system needs policy support to do all of these things effectively within the political culture of the country.

#### *Looking to the Future*

The analyses provided in this report begin to show what can be learned about civic education in Latin America. They raise some issues for discussion, such as teacher preparation, media education, opportunity to learn provided by the curriculum, ways of enhancing the participatory aspects of classrooms and opportunities for students to develop confidence in the value of participation at the school level.

Some of these issues can be examined through further research and can lead to the delineation of policy options:

- There is a wide-ranging study currently underway in Bogotá designed to assess students' knowledge of basic democratic principles and institutions; students' attitudes; and students' development of social and ethical competencies. In general terms, the purpose of the study (which involves students in 7th, 9th, and 11th grades) is to assess the quality of education provided in Bogotá and use the information to improve pedagogical practices, in part by feeding

back results to individual schools. This study may shed light on a trend that seems apparent when looking at Colombia—a gap between expectations for democracy in the rhetoric of the curriculum and everyday experience of students.

- Comparative curriculum analyses such as that conducted by Cox (2002) in Brazil, Chile, and Argentina can be a starting point to examine what students know related to what they are given the opportunity to learn. Both ways of organizing the curriculum and its delivery and the coverage of specific topics can be studied.
- Research on the perspectives of youth outside of school can play a role especially in countries where there is special attention to youth policy. Studies such as those reviewed by Welti (2002) suggest that gangs rather than more formal youth organizations play a particular role in Latin America, that the study of indigenous people is vital, and that the consideration of issues such as uncertainty about employment or about access to university education are of particular importance to young people.
- In any country with a decentralized curriculum, it difficult to make general policy recommendations. In these situations qualitative analyses, such as observational and interview studies in and outside school, may enrich understanding of educational policy options that can be derived from quantitative data. Some studies such as that of Villegas-Reimers (1994) show the potential value of such syntheses and qualitative collection of information.
- Research on active learning methodologies (such as the Escuela Nueva curriculum) can also shed light on the development of democratic behavior and knowledge. One such study in

Guatemala used classroom observations to investigate the effects of different classroom environments. The researchers found that students attending schools where active participation methodologies were used exhibited more democratic behaviors than did students in schools that did not use the same pedagogical strategies (Baessa, Chesterfield, & Ramos, 2002).

It is clear that the views and voices of young people and teachers presented in this report cannot automatically be generalized to all the other countries in the region. There is no single or uniform approach to strengthening democracy through civic education that would be likely to be successful throughout the region. Further, civic education is part of a broader question concerning access and quality of education in Latin America and of even broader economic and political matters. Going beyond the empirical data in the report, and drawing on issues discussed in Tibbitts and Torney-Purta (1999), issues common to many countries in the region include the following:

- Young people who lack basic literacy.
- Students who have left school.
- The quality of education in remote areas.
- Teacher's initial and continuing preparation.
- Lack of sufficient quantity and quality of school materials.
- Societal violence and transient families.
- The challenges of decentralization.
- Indigenous populations speaking languages other than that of the school.
- School-dropout rates for girls.
- The relationship between the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations.
- Policy challenges of curriculum revision in the face of massive political transitions.

- Political traditions such as populism and political realities such as corruption.

The instrument and design used in the IEA Civic Education Study were built to be applicable across 28 countries and could not address some of these important issues directly. That is one of the reasons that a promising possibility for further work in this area is to construct a study of civic education built on the findings of this report and adapting the methodology to add components to address some of the issues identified above. All the countries in the region could be invited to join both in the building of consensus about what was to be studied and in collecting and interpreting the data. Both a more qualitative examination of policies, agencies, and programs and a more quantitative study of student outcomes and aspects of the school should be included. In other words, some of the processes developed for designing and conducting the IEA study as well as the instrument could provide useful starting points for collecting empirical data that could be connected to policy options in a wider range of Latin American countries.<sup>1</sup>

This option and a variety of other opportunities for regional cooperation in the area of civic education could be explored. Regional similarities and differences may enable policymakers to focus on questions of particular interest or salience to their societies or highlighting particular strengths, challenges, or sites for civic education. For example, Brazil as the largest, and only Portuguese-speaking country in South America, could examine how their students compare to others in the region. There are also special issues in the Caribbean and lessons that can be learned from an examination of democracy in that region. The indigenous populations of some countries require attention. Mexico is a member of

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Nordic countries participating in the IEA study collaborated and shared information on issues particularly relevant to their region.

NAFTA and may be more influenced by U.S. media and popular culture than some other countries. Costa Rica is notable for having a long-standing democracy and, as the home of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, a theme which runs through much of the material in this report but has not been fully explored.

## Summary

In conclusion, the data analyzed for this report were collected from students and teachers in Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States and reflect their voices on civic education in their countries. The picture that emerges from the analysis of these data provides direction to policymakers and educators in several areas, such as teacher training and instructional materials, classroom and school environment, curriculum reform, law-related education, and media education. The role of parents and out-of-school activities as well as the broad cultural norms and values of a society in the development of civic knowledge and attitudes are also apparent.

Beyond these lessons, however, are a series of meta-lessons or things that can be learned from the research process itself. First, it seems clear from this empirical examination of civic knowledge and engagement that looking at students' knowledge is not enough. If democracies thrive on an informed, active citizenry, then it is also important to examine the development of young people's attitudes, values, and willingness to participate in the political and civic process. Second, looking at only the students' overall score on a test of civic knowledge can also obscure valuable information. Examining students' performance on individual questions on the test can provide policymakers with more detailed information on opportunities to learn. And, analyzing the students' responses to individual questions and uncovering patterns across sets of questions may point out gaps between rhetoric and the everyday reality experienced by these young people. Third, and finally, it is clear that civic education will benefit from an interactive exchange of ideas between and among countries. It is unreasonable to assume that one approach will be appropriate to address each country's unique characteristics, but much can be learned from an active dialogue.



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# APPENDIX



**IEA Civic Education Study's Content Categories on which Test Items for 14-year-olds were based:** (from Appendix A1 of Torney-Purta, et al., 2001).

**Domain I: A**

*Democracy and its Defining Institutions:*

- Identify the defining characteristics of democracy
- Identify limited and unlimited government, undemocratic regimes
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of democratic systems
- Identify incentives to participate when there are factors undermining democracy
- Identify problems in transitions of government from non-democratic to democratic

**Domain I: B**

*Institutions and Practices in Democracy:*

- Identify characteristics and functions of elections and parties
- Identify qualifications of candidates for positions
- Identify a healthy critical attitudes toward officials and their accountability
- Identify basic character of Congress, parliament, judicial systems, law
- Identify provision of constitutions
- Understand basic economic issues and their political implications

**Domain I: C**

*Citizenship Rights and Duties*

- Identify general rights, qualifications, and obligations of citizens in democracies
- Identify citizens' rights to participate and express criticism and their limits
- Identify obligations, civic duties of citizens in democracy
- Understand the role of mass media in democracy
- Identify network of associations and differences of political opinion
- Identify the human rights defined in international documents
- Identify rights in the economic sphere
- Demonstrate awareness of tradeoff (environment and economy)

**Domain II: A**

*National Identity*

- Recognize sense of collective identity
- Recognize that every nation has events in its history of which it is not proud.

**Domain II: B**

*International Relations*

- Recognize international economic issues and organizations in the economy
- Recognize major international organizations

**Domain III: A**

*Social Cohesion and Diversity*

- Recognize groups subject to discrimination



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