The Democratic School Climate: Active Citizenship at School

Ellen Claes based on the PhD research of Dorien Sampermans
One overarching idea…

The school as mini-polity
Hypotheses

1) Informal ways of Citizenship Education contribute to the development of young people’s citizenship competencies

2) Teachers play a crucial role in this informal process
School effectiveness literature

- The school’s social order
- Social relationships at school
- Teaching & learning practices
- School’s structure

The school climate

Student outcomes
Research Questions

The school’s social order
Social relationships at school
Teaching & learning practices
School’s structure

The democratic school climate

Students’ civic outcomes
Data

ICCS 2009, ICCS 2016
24 countries

Europe 16
- Belgium (Flemish)
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- North Rhine-Westphalia
- Norway
- Slovenia
- Sweden
- Russian Federation

Latin America
- Chile
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Mexico
- Peru

Asia 3
- Chinese Taipei
- Hong Kong SAR
- Republic of Korea
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>International cognitive questionnaire</td>
<td>Students, grade 8 or equivalent, 13-14 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>International student questionnaire</td>
<td>Students, grade 8 or equivalent, 13-14 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Teacher questionnaire</td>
<td>Teachers of any subject in the target grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>School questionnaire</td>
<td>School principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Regional student questionnaire</td>
<td>Students, grade 8 or equivalent, 13-14 years old, in Europe and Latin America</td>
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</table>
~ 94,000 students
about 4,000 per country

~ 3,800 schools
about 150 per country

~ 37,000 teachers
about 15 per school
Analytical strategy
Analytical strategy

1. What is the democratic school climate?
   structural equation analyses

2. What are citizenship education outcomes?
   Multilevel regression analyses

3. What is the teachers’ role within the democratic school climate?
   Multilevel regression analyses
   Multilevel latent class
Analytical strategy - Hierarchical structure

1. Opportunities
   - To examine different countries
   - To examine different school contexts (vocational/general tracks)

2. Selection effects
   - Multilevel weights
   - Control variables
Results
What is the democratic school climate?
Citizenship education outcomes?
What is the teachers’ role?
The democratic school climate?

- Problems at school
- Students’ social behaviour
- Student-teacher relationships
- Student-student relationships
- Open classroom discussions
- Participation at school

School’s order

Relationships at school

Teaching and learning practices

The Democratic School Climate
Citizenship Education Outcomes?

- Problems at school
- Students’ social behaviour
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School’s order

Relationships at school

Teaching and learning practices

The Democratic School Climate

Citizenship outcomes


Citizenship education outcomes

• The democratic school climate relates to:
  • students’ future political engagement
  • Students’ democratic attitudes
  • Students’ civic knowledge

Nevertheless…
• Teachers adhere differently to different types of good citizenship
• Teachers provide different kinds of citizenship education

… this can be a risk for citizenship inequality
Teachers’ role?

- Problems at school
- Students’ social behaviour
- Student-teacher relationship
- Student-student relationships
- Open classroom discussions
- Participation at school

School’s order

Relationships at school

Teaching and learning practices

The Democratic School Climate

Citizenship outcomes
Teachers as role models
Teachers as role models

Assumptions

- Each teacher is a democratic teacher
- All teachers perceive good citizenship in a similar way
- Teachers provide an ‘equal’ kind of citizenship to each student
Are all teachers similar?

- **Engaged (36.48%)**
- **Duty-based (19.24%)**
Do teachers provide an ‘equal’ kind of citizenship education to each student?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 7.3 + track &amp; interaction</th>
<th>Model 7.4 + track &amp; interactions + individual control variables</th>
<th>Model 7.5+ track &amp; Interaction + all control variables</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge variance</td>
<td>0.940***</td>
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<td>-0.131 n.s.</td>
<td>-0.098 n.s.</td>
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<td>Parents highest occupation</td>
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<td>IMM (0=no migration)</td>
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<td>Students’ expected education level</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLDISC</td>
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<td>0.052**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between</td>
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<tr>
<td>Track (0=voc)</td>
<td>0.706***</td>
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<td>Immigrants at school</td>
<td>0.502***</td>
<td>0.516***</td>
<td>0.302***</td>
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<td>Aggregated parents’ highest occupation level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td>0.374</td>
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General conclusions & Suggestions for future research
Democratic teachers

• Have authoritative relationships with students
• Pay attention to social justice
• Feel supported by the school
• Collaborate in a school team

Trainings and support are needed to provide good and ‘equal’ citizenship education to each student
Policy suggestions

• Pay sufficient attention to citizenship education
• Support for each teacher
• Pay attention to social justice
Suggestions for future research

• Use new methods (longitudinal, semi-experimental)
• Start from a normative viewpoint (focus on democracy)
• Consult teachers
Thank you for your attention!