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Civic attitudes and behavioural intentions in the 2016 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS): New evidence for education and training policies in Europe

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Executive Summary

In the current context of rising populism, racism, intolerance and scepticism among European Union (EU) citizens, coupled with a decreasing level of electoral participation rates in several Member States, the European Commission has the clear mandate to reinforce EU citizens' commitment to Europe's common democratic values. Educational institutions are essential agents in promoting a learning environment that can support a Europe that is fair, inclusive and more democratic. To serve this goal, schools are expected to contribute to civic and citizenship knowledge creation as well as to the shaping of students' beliefs and attitudes. Both from a research and a policy perspective, it is important to improve our understanding of current civic and citizenship attitudes in the EU, as well as of the educational processes shaping them.

In 2016, 14 EU Member States participated in the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), including Belgium (Flemish region), Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia region), Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden. The study offers substantial new data on the civic knowledge as well as the civic attitudes and behavioural intentions of the 14-year-old student population in these countries and regions. Besides assessing these civic and citizenship education (CCE) outcomes in great detail, ICCS also offers data on students' background characteristics and the school and community context where the learning process takes place.

The present policy brief is based on a detailed analysis of the ICCS 2016 data from the EU Member States, focusing on adolescents' civic attitudes and behavioural intentions (non-cognitive outcomes), and their drivers, with a particular emphasis on the broader role of education.¹

From our analysis, six key findings with relevant policy implications for CCE in the EU emerge.

- 1. Maintaining an open classroom climate is the single most effective factor associated with positive civic attitudes and behavioural intentions. These include citizenship values, trust in democratic institutions, willingness for future political participation as well as level of acceptance of equal rights for minority groups.*
- 2. Students' active participation in democratic practices in school is also positively related to students' expected future political participation. Further, in some countries a positive association occurs between students' active community involvement and some non-cognitive civic outcomes, pointing to the potential benefits of community work.*
- 3. Non-cognitive civic outcomes are at most partially related to school and education. Students' demographic and social characteristics, together with their civic and citizenship knowledge and civic self-efficacy, play a bigger role in the attitude-shaping process than educational approaches, and so do other factors that the ICCS study cannot account for.*

¹ For a Science for policy report with the full research background and methodological details see (Blasko, Costa and Vera-Toscano 2018)

4. *The level of civic and citizenship knowledge is only loosely and in some cases even negatively related to positive civic attitudes. At the same time, formal learning in school about social issues is also relatively weakly associated with students' attitudes.*
5. *Civic self-efficacy, that is students' self-beliefs in undertaking various civic actions, is consistently positively related to all the civic attitudes and behavioural intentions discussed here.*
6. *Civic attitudes reported by students with an immigrant background show no systematic difference from the attitudes of the non-migrant student population. The only notable exception is intention for electoral participation, where a significant gap favouring native students is apparent in most of the Member States that participated in ICCS 2016.*

Overall, results from our analyses indicate that in contemporary Europe, schools have a moderate but non-negligible impact with respect to adolescents' attitudes and behavioural intentions related to civic life. How much students can learn about political and civic issues, to what extent they experience democracy within the school, and whether or not they can get involved in the broader community are all related to how they think and how they feel about democracy and society, although different educational approaches might promote one area more than another.

In terms of policy implications, these findings provide further support to some key messages of the latest Eurydice report on citizenship education in Europe (European Commission et al., 2017). Besides, they also offer new, extensive evidence both to the European Commission and to Member States, for designing strategies for education policies and initiatives geared towards enhancing students' civic and democratic outcomes.

1. Background

1.1. Policy context

Recent financial, social and political crises across EU countries have provoked a significant number of proposals from European institutions in an attempt to stimulate renewed reflection on the meanings of citizenship among EU citizens and to reinforce their emotional attachment to the European project. The core example is President Juncker's recent State of the Union speech. There, he emphasises the importance of a Union of fundamental and unshakeable values, namely freedom, equality and rule of law.² Indeed, he argues that these values "must remain the foundations on which we build a more united, stronger and more democratic European Union".

In this regard, schools and educational systems are meant to be central to nurturing the mentality of younger generations in relation to these values, and hence to supporting democratic and socially inclusive societies. Social and civic competencies were included among the eight key competencies for lifelong learning listed by the European Parliament and Council of the European Union in 2006 as fundamental to each individual.³ Further, in the light of recent extremist attacks and the migration challenge in Europe, the 2015 Paris "Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education" includes "Ensuring that children and young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competencies, by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination as well as active citizenship" among the main common objectives of EU Member States (European Commission et al., 2016).

In 2016, a working group on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education has been set up within the framework for European Cooperation in education and training (ET2020). The Communication on Improving and Modernising Education adopted on 7 December 2016⁴ recommends actions related to inclusive education and the promotion of common values. Last but not least, Country-Specific Recommendations/Council Recommendations often set out the EU position on common values, suggesting how they can be promoted through education, training and non-formal learning at national level. Overall, it has been widely acknowledged that the diverse and multi-ethnic social fabric of current European society poses significant opportunities and challenges to the role of education policies and education and training systems in fostering inclusion and common values so as to facilitate the coexistence of EU citizens in a peaceful and democratic Europe (Council of the European Union, 2016).⁵

Our policy report further contributes to the call for empirical evidence on these issues. Using data from ICCS 2016 for 12 EU Member States, it provides a detailed analysis of European adolescents' civic attitudes and behavioural intentions, and the mechanisms shaping them, with a particular emphasis on the broader role of education.

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ac11090>

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0941>

⁵ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2017.062.01.0003.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2017:062:FULL

1.2. The ICCS 2016 study – main features and selected findings from the IEA reports

ICCS 2016 seeks to respond to the emerging challenges of educating young people as citizens in a world where contexts of democracy and civic participation continue to change (Schulz et al., 2016 - See also Box 1 for some details).

The IEA International Report (Schulz et al., 2017), together with the report based on the European questionnaire (Losito et al., 2017), provides a comprehensive overview of the main global findings from the ICCS 2016 study, as well as those from the European Member States. Overall, the reports reveal that students' civic knowledge has increased across participating countries since the previous study in 2009. In 2016, EU students scored relatively highly on the civic knowledge scale, when compared with the ICCS average. Students in eight EU Member States had a national average above the overall ICCS average, which was 517 points. The Netherlands and Lithuania scored very close to this value and only Latvia, Malta and Bulgaria fell significantly below this level.

Since 2009, students' civic and citizenship knowledge has significantly increased in Sweden, Belgium, Estonia, Bulgaria and Slovenia, while in the other countries no change was detected. All in all, in 2016 across the EU Member States, the majority of the 14-year-olds reached at least level B in civic and citizenship knowledge, implying that they are at least generally familiar with the concepts of representative democracy and that they can understand the ways in which institutions and laws are

Box 1: The ICCS 2016 study

ICCS 2016 is the largest international study of civic and citizenship education in the world, and is carried out by the International Education Association (IEA) in collaboration with the participating countries. The ICCS assessment addresses students' civic knowledge, understanding, perceptions, attitudes, engagement, and behaviour, while also collecting information on students' home background and learning environment.

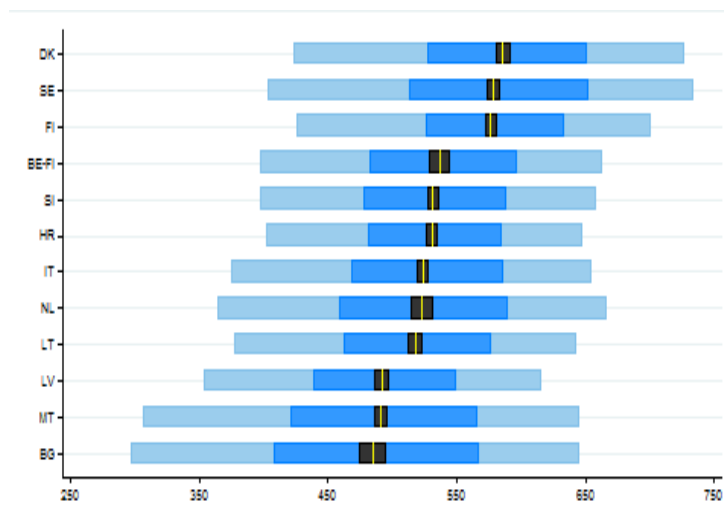
The target population is students enrolled in Grade 8, provided that the average age of students at this level is 13.5 years or above. In countries where the average age of students in Grade 8 is less than 13.5 years (e.g. Malta), Grade 9 is defined as the target population. Besides the students, their teachers and school principals are also interviewed on various civic and citizenship education-related aspects of the participating educational systems, and their schools and classrooms, so as to provide ample contextual information on the students' learning process.

A total of 24 countries participated in the 2016 survey, including 14 EU Member States: Belgium – Flemish region (BE – FI), Bulgaria (BG), Denmark (DK), Germany – North Rhine-Westphalia region (DE – NRW), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Lithuania (LT), Latvia (LV), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Sweden (SE) and Slovenia (SI). In the European countries, the survey data collection took place between February and June 2016. Data are collected in a systematic and comparable manner, to allow for cross-country comparisons, and also for monitoring changes in students' attitudes and achievement over time, taking advantage of previous versions of ICCS (Schulz et al., 2016, 2017). Further, a European Questionnaire is administered to European students to explore topics that are specifically relevant to this region, such as recent European economic conditions, free movement of EU citizens within European borders, and immigration from outside Europe (Losito et al., 2017). For a full account of the content and study design, see Schulz et al. (2016).

used to preserve society's values.⁶ Particularly low levels of knowledge were typically found in 5% or less of the student body, with the exceptions of Bulgaria (22%), Malta (19%) and Italy, Lithuania and the Netherlands (8–9%). As students' civic knowledge scores showed greater variance within the countries than across them, it is important to understand the main drivers of these variations. (The distribution of the civic knowledge score across the EU Member states is represented in Figure 1.)

Internationally, girls score higher on the civic knowledge tests in the majority of ICCS countries, as do students who expect to achieve a higher education degree and also those (in a smaller number of countries) who say that they are interested in social and political issues. Further, student socioeconomic background was also found to be an important predictor of civic knowledge in all participating countries.

Figure 1. Distribution of civic knowledge



Note: Countries are ranked by the mean of civic knowledge.

Source: Own elaboration from 2016 ICCS data.

The student questionnaire allows measuring and reporting on students' immigrant background and language usage at home. Results show a consistent gap in the level of civic and citizenship knowledge between immigrant and native students across almost all the EU Member States with a significant share of immigrant students.⁷ Only in Croatia, Lithuania and Malta did immigrant students achieve test results similar to natives. At the other end of the scale, greatest disadvantages for immigrants (more than 50 points) were found in Finland and Sweden.⁸ The associations between civic knowledge and language spoken at home also

point to the disadvantages for immigrants, as students who do not speak the test country's language at home score between 15 (Malta) and 49 (Sweden) points lower than native students with a comparable profile.

Open classroom climate that leaves room for discussion is an important constituent of successful civic learning in 19 ICCS participating countries (including EU Member States). At the same time, participation in democratic practices in school also makes some difference in 13 countries, and learning about civic issues in seven countries. These associations remain significant when controlling for students' characteristics, i.e. students with similar characteristics are compared.⁹

Additionally, ICCS 2016 collected and analysed an extensive array of data on students' values and attitudes towards important issues in society. Results show that in 2016 only

⁶ Five levels of students' civic knowledge were identified, ranging from the lowest (below Level D) to the highest (Level A). These proficiency levels represent a hierarchy of civic knowledge in terms of increasing sophistication of content knowledge and cognitive process. (Schulz et al., 2017, p. 46).

⁷ The numbers of students from immigrant families was too small for Bulgaria, therefore results on immigrants in this country are not reported in the IEA reports or in this policy report.

⁸ These differences between immigrant and non-immigrant students are observed without keeping their other characteristics constant.

⁹ In the models a range of individual characteristics (including students' reports on discussion of political and social issues outside school and exposure to media information) and social background are controlled for.

students in Italy, Croatia and Lithuania attached a higher than average level of *importance to conventional citizenship values*, while in the other EU countries an opposite trend can be seen. For *social-movement-related citizenship*, Bulgaria, Croatia and Italy reported a high endorsement, with the rest of the European countries scoring below the average. The importance of *personal responsibility for citizenship* was also highly valued in Croatia and Italy, as well as in Finland and Malta. (For the average values of these attitudes scales in the EU MSs see the Appendix.)

Students' *endorsement of equal rights for ethnic and racial groups* has increased in the EU MSs since 2009 in all the countries that participated in both ICCS surveys. The only exception is Bulgaria, where no significant change occurred. Nevertheless, European countries do not score very well in an international comparison, as only Sweden reports a value higher than the overall cross-country average.

Attitudes towards equal rights for immigrants were only assessed in the European countries. As reported in the European Report (Losito et al., 2017), between 2009 and 2016 a slight decrease in this attitude was observed in all European countries except for Belgium, Denmark and Italy, with the most marked decrease observed in Bulgaria.

The only non-cognitive outcome for which a detailed analysis was carried out in the IEA reports is students' expected future active civic participation.¹⁰ This reveals that students' citizenship self-efficacy together with their civic and citizenship knowledge and perceptions of conventional citizenship and trust in civic institutions are important factors associated with expected active participation. Very importantly, students' civic knowledge had significant negative associations with expected active political participation in all but two countries (the Netherlands and Sweden). IEA concludes that these results "have implications for what higher levels of learning may lead to with regard to civic engagement because they indicate that students who achieve higher scores on the civic knowledge scale will hold more critical views of the functioning of conventional channels of political participation" (Schulz et al., 2017, p. 197).

Between 2009 and 2016 some growth in the level of both types of predicted activism was observed in Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark and Finland, while in Sweden and Estonia only level of predicted electoral participation increased. During the same time, in Italy, Lithuania and Malta, interest in political activism has grown somewhat. Still, with the exception of Denmark, Italy, Lithuania and Sweden, European students in 2016 expressed no more – or even less – intentions to participate in future elections than did the average ICCS participants. Their interest in active political participation also remained below the average in all EU Member States except Croatia, Denmark, Italy and Lithuania.

¹⁰ ICCS measured students' expectations of future civic participation through both legal and illegal activities, as well as their intended future civic participation in terms of electoral participation and political participation.

1.3. Why focus on non-cognitive civic outcomes?

The analyses presented in the IEA reports establish relationships between civic knowledge, civic engagement at school, and several relevant characteristics. Thus they provide an excellent starting point for discussing the importance and effectiveness of CCE as a way to make young people more aware of their role as democratic citizens.

This current policy report complements IEA's work in at least three ways: first by focusing on non-cognitive (rather than cognitive) civic outcomes; second by trying to respond to challenges posed by recent immigration trends in Europe; and third by assessing the contribution of schools and CCE in a detailed and systematic way.

Corresponding to a large body of earlier research,¹¹ the IEA reports give particular attention to cognitive learning, that is, the development of civic and citizenship knowledge. At the same time, less attention is devoted to the non-cognitive civic learning outcomes, which include attitudes that promote real engagement in democracy and a responsible and active participation in political and social life. It is generally accepted that to effectively and responsibly participate in society a combination of civic knowledge and attitudes are needed.¹² Given the detailed analysis of civic and citizenship knowledge provided by IEA and the pressing need to better understand the broad set of attitudinal and behavioural intentions, in this policy report we focus on a series of non-cognitive elements of civic and citizenship outcomes. See Box 2 for the list of non-cognitive civic outcomes considered.

Box 2. Non-cognitive civic outcomes in ICCS 2016

- *Students' perception of the importance of conventional citizenship*
- *Students' perception of the importance of social-movement-related citizenship*
- *Students' perception of the importance of personal responsibility for citizenship*
- *Students' trust in civic institutions*
- *Students' expected electoral participation*
- *Students' expected active political participation*
- *Students' attitudes towards equal rights for ethnic/racial groups*
- *Students' attitudes towards equal rights for immigrants*

Second, this report also aims to reflect the challenges that come from the increasing ethnic diversity across Europe. It does so by including the acceptance of equal rights for immigrants among the attitudes studied, but also by providing a systematic exploration of potential differences between immigrant and native students. Further, we also investigate how the presence of immigrant students in the classroom can influence the civic and citizenship learning process.

Third, as mentioned above, the contribution of CCE to adolescents' attitude development is assessed in a systematic and detailed way. We

distinguish between three educational approaches: formal learning in the school; informal learning in the school; and informal learning outside the school. Formal learning in the school refers to learning about different civic and citizenship topics in the classroom. Informal learning in the school involves practical experiences gained in the school (also referred to as democracy in the school). Finally, informal learning outside the school refers to practical experiences in the wider society (active community involvement). Details of how the different educational approaches were measured in the study are given in Table 1.

¹¹ See e.g. Alivernini and Manganelli, 2011; Isac et al., 2014; Schulz et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, 2001.

¹² See e.g. Schulz et al., 2010, 2016; Sherrod, et al., 2002; Torney-Purta and Lopez, 2006

Table 1. Educational approaches measured in ICCS 2016

FORMAL LEARNING IN SCHOOL	Students' report on the opportunities to learn about civic issues at school
INFORMAL LEARNING IN SCHOOL	Principals' perceptions of engagement of the school community Students' perception of openness in classroom discussions Students' participation in democratic activities at school
INFORMAL LEARNING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL	Students' active involvement in the community

Finally, to make sure that we correctly identify the additional role that the different educational approaches play in shaping students' civic attitudes, we also pay attention to a range of student characteristics that might influence their non-cognitive civic outcomes. These include not only students' social background, but also some of their individual dispositions, most importantly their level of civic and citizenship knowledge and civic self-efficacy. Further, some school-characteristics will also be considered.

The following pages present the key findings from a detailed analysis of the above-described processes.¹³ Results from the analysis will be described and policy implications

discussed. (For a detailed discussion of the theoretical and empirical background as well as the data and methodology, please see Blasko, Costa and Vera-Toscano 2018).

¹³ Single-level multiple linear regressions were estimated for 12 EU participating countries. Germany – North Rhine-Westphalia region failed to meet the IEA sample participation requirements and for this reason it is not considered in the multivariate analysis. Estonia was also not included because of the very high share of missing data in the variables used. For the countries included, multiple imputation techniques were applied to deal with the missing data. For full information on the methodological and empirical approach followed, see Blasko, Costa and Vera-Toscano 2018.

2. Which factors influence students' civic outcomes?

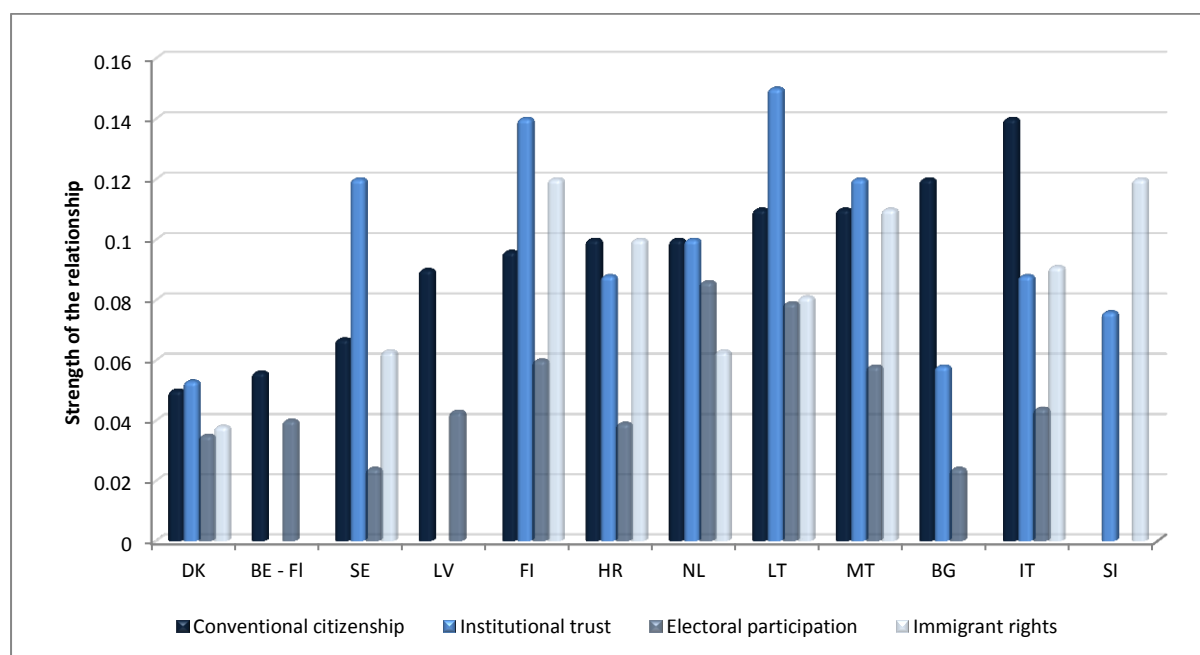
1. **Maintaining an open classroom climate is the single most effective factor associated with positive civic attitudes and behavioral intentions. These include citizenship values, trust in democratic institutions, willingness for future political participation as well as level of acceptance of equal rights for minority groups.**

Open classroom climate stands out across the various elements of a democratic school environment as a key tool that is associated with non-cognitive civic outcomes in the school. Students who perceive their teachers to be encouraging and open to different opinions and discussion within the classroom tend to attach higher importance to the citizenship values, trust more the democratic institutions and are more ready to accept the idea of equal rights for immigrants and ethnic minorities.

These results were rather consistent across all the countries. The perception of an open classroom climate is related to students' various citizenship values in eleven to twelve countries, to their trust in democratic institutions in ten countries, and to their willingness to vote in the future in eight countries. Students who report an open classroom climate are also more open towards immigrants' equal rights in nine countries and towards equal rights for ethnic minorities in all the countries. (Associations between Open classroom climate and selected outcome measures are shown in Figure 2)

This finding is an important contribution to existing knowledge, as it makes it clear that having an open classroom climate is not only relevant for promoting students' civic knowledge and later political engagement plans (as suggested by Schulz et al., 2017), but it also nurtures a number of other positive civic attitudes.

Figure 2. Relationship between students' perception of open classroom climate and selected civic outcomes¹⁴



Note: EU Member States are ranked by the strength of the relationship of conventional citizenship.

¹⁴ In the Figures only statistically significant associations are shown.

In an open classroom climate, students are encouraged to express their views freely, ask questions openly and contrast different opinions. Open classroom climate is closely related to what is called interactivity and is listed among the six characteristics of effective teaching in citizenship education in Eurydice's latest report (European Commission et al., 2017). As explained in the report, interactive learning happens "through discussion and debate (and) offers students an opportunity to develop their understanding of others, their ability to express their views and experience in negotiating conflicting opinions through discussion and debate" (European Commission et al., 2017, p. 85).

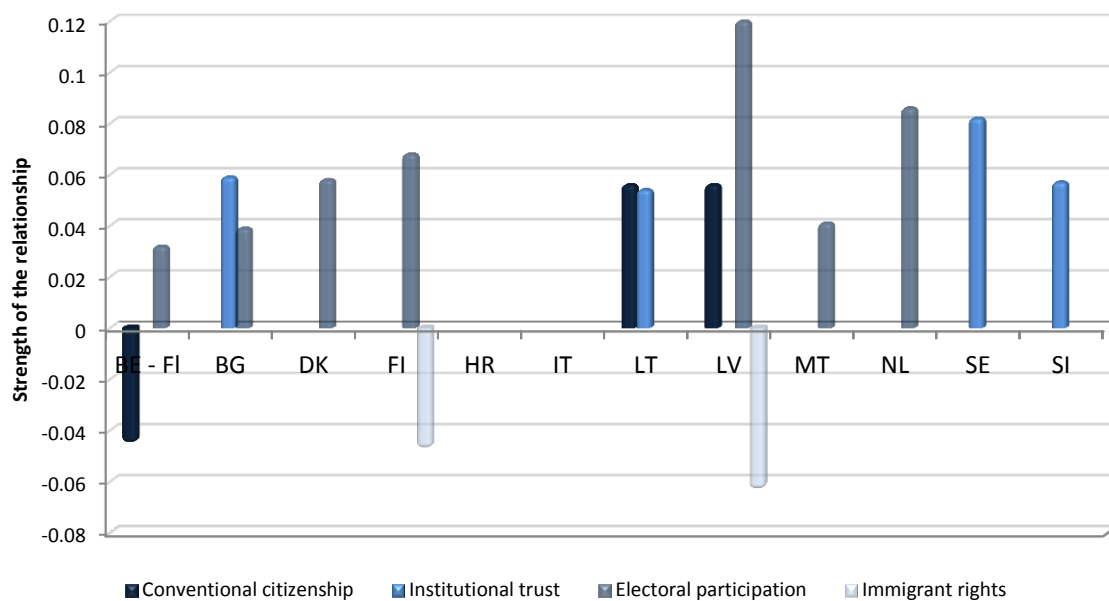
In the light of our findings, it is particularly welcome that school and classroom climate is among the frequently considered aspects of external school evaluation across Europe. External evaluation of schools currently assesses students' opportunities to participate and to express themselves with confidence in debates and classroom discussions in 14 Member States (European Commission et al., 2017, p. 124).

Although there is a high level of acknowledgment of the importance of the issue, it has to be noted that maintaining an engaging, participative classroom climate is a complex and challenging task for teachers. Moreover, it cannot be achieved through external assessment only; intense professional support and training opportunities are also necessary.

2. **Students' active participation in democratic practices in school is also positively related to students' expected future political participation. Further, in some countries a positive association occurs between students' active community involvement and some non-cognitive civic outcomes, pointing to the potential benefits of community work.**

Students' present participation in democratic activities at school is positively related to their expected later participation, both in expected electoral voting (9 countries) and in political activism (10 countries). Students who reported past and present involvement in voting for student representatives, or who took part in discussions in the student assembly or in the school decision-making process, are also more likely to report greater interest in future political activities. Associations between students' participation in school and their other civic outcomes are more sporadic, and a small number of negative associations even occur. (Selected associations are shown in Figure 3)

Figure 3. Relationship between students' participation in democratic practices at school and selected civic attitudes



Further, **students who are involved in community activities** also have more positive attitudes towards social-movement-related citizenship in nine countries.¹⁵ By active community involvement we mean performing an activity in an environmental action group or organisation, a human rights organisation, a voluntary group doing something for the community, an organisation collecting money for a social cause, or an animal rights or animal welfare group.

It has to be noted that, from our analysis, it is not entirely clear that current activism either inside or outside the school can indeed facilitate the non-cognitive civic outcomes. In fact, it is possible that a third factor – e.g. civic efficacy – promotes all of these. Indeed, our analysis allows us only to observe associations and not causality.

¹⁵ Students reported whether they have been involved in activities "within the last 12 months", "more than a year ago" or "never". Students who had any involvement in at least one of the five groups in the last year were distinguished from students without any experience.

Still we argue that the associations explored here suggest that there is room for intervention. Motivating students to take part in various forms of within-school activism, such as voting for student representatives, taking part in discussions in the student assembly, etc., is most likely to help to improve their interest in actively taking part in democratic processes later in life. Similarly, encouraging active community involvement can also have beneficial effects.

Experiencing democracy in the classroom needs to be further reinforced by the wider school community. The whole-school approach can integrate democracy into the everyday school experience, offering the opportunity for students to observe as well as to practise democracy in their school (European Commission et al., 2017). However, within-school democratic activities seem to be very specific in promoting expected later political participation without being systematically related to any other civic attitude. Moreover, other aspects of the whole-school approach, such as teachers' and parents' involvement in the school, as perceived by the principal, do not seem to be directly related to 14-year-olds' democratic attitudes.

As noted above, active community involvement in this study refers to any extra-curricular activities carried out outside the school that involve some (unpaid) activity for the community. This form of citizenship learning might be done either voluntarily, or as an activity considered obligatory or recommended by the school as part of the CCE curriculum.

Besides the general positive associations between social-movement-related citizenship values and active community involvement, some further country-specific patterns were also found. In the Netherlands, for example, active community involvement is also positively associated with expected electoral participation, as well as with positive attitudes towards equal rights for ethnic minorities. In Denmark, active community involvement positively relates to responsible citizenship as well as to intended political participation and support for equal rights for immigrants. In other countries, sporadic positive associations also occur.

As active community involvement might have a very different nature in the different countries, it would be particularly important to better understand the country-specific contexts here. It is possible, for example, that these activities take the form of school-initiated voluntary work in one country but not in the other. Also in some countries students' community involvement might be more inclined towards helping people through practical work while in others they might focus more on supporting community goals through activism.

These findings, taken together with earlier (mostly US) research evidence, are rather encouraging and show some potential for increasing students' future civic engagement and openness by involving them more in activities that serve the wider community. There is clearly room for further improvement in Europe in this field, as at present voluntary work is only included in the citizenship curricula of eight Member States at the primary level, nine Member States at the lower secondary and twelve Member States at the upper secondary level (European Commission et al., 2017).

3. Non-cognitive civic outcomes are at most partially related to school and education. Students' demographic and social characteristics, together with their civic and citizenship knowledge and civic self-efficacy, play a bigger role in the attitude-shaping process than educational approaches, and so do other factors that the ICCS study cannot account for.

Overall, students' civic attitudes and behavioural intentions are to a large extent dependent on factors unrelated to their school experiences. These include their individual characteristics, such as socioeconomic status and immigrant background, but also their personal interest in political and social issues, and their habits of discussing political and social phenomena outside the school or online. Further, their civic and citizenship knowledge and civic self-efficacy are also important and need to be taken into account.

In general, girls' civic attitudes are significantly different from those of boys in several ways, even when their other characteristics are held constant. Teenage girls attach more importance to personal-responsibility-related citizenship and in all the countries they are also more open towards immigrants. Further, they also appear to be more tolerant than boys towards ethnic minorities in most of the countries.¹⁶ On the other hand, girls show a lower level of interest in active participation in political activities in the future in all the countries except Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. Parental socioeconomic background exhibits relatively little association with civic attitudes. The most consistent associations appear between family socioeconomic background and expected electoral participation: higher status students are more likely to intend to participate in seven out of the twelve countries. For the other outcomes, however, social background showed no or weak and rather mixed effects. This does not mean that family is not important in shaping teenagers' civic attitudes, but that it plays its role through some specific channels. Those students, who, for example, consider their parents to be very interested in political and social matters, score higher on all the citizenship scales as well as on the international trust scale, and also express more intentions to participate both in elections and in other political activities, in at least half of the countries.

In almost all the countries, students who are more interested in political and social issues also demonstrate significantly more interest in participating in both electoral activities and other political activities, and they attach higher importance to conventional citizenship values as well. In at least five countries, students who discuss political and social issues outside the school score higher on the personal-responsibility-related citizenship and conventional citizenship scales (5 and 6 countries), and have more intentions to vote in elections when they grow up (6 countries).¹⁷

Active engagement with social media, on the other hand, has a more controversial role in the civic-attitude-forming process. First, in seven countries we find that students who actively use social media to obtain and share information on social and political issues also have an increased level of support for conventional citizenship values. In 10 countries, they also demonstrate a higher interest in active political participation in the future. At the same time, in a small number of countries, online activities are linked to a lower level of personal-responsibility-related citizenship (Finland, Italy, Malta and Sweden) and to lower institutional trust (Finland and the Netherlands).

Further, students who expect to earn a university degree in the future have stronger intentions to participate in political elections, and they also have more positive attitudes towards equal rights for ethnic minorities in a number countries.

¹⁶ These confirm earlier research, e.g. Caro and Schulz, 2012; De Groof et al., 2008; Keating and Benton, 2013; Kokkonen et al., 2010.

¹⁷ All these findings support earlier results from Isac et al. (2014), which also demonstrated the importance of both students' and parents' level of interest in political and social issues, and the significance of discussions outside the school.

Besides students' individual characteristics, a range of **school characteristics** were also considered in our study. The first set relates to the school's neighbourhood: whether or not the school is in an urban setting, and whether or not there are social problems in the neighbourhood, according to the principal's perception. None of these factors seems to have any notable and systematic effect, however. The only apparent pattern is that students in urban schools have somewhat more positive attitudes towards immigrants in Belgium, Finland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Slovenia.

Interactions between students, and between students and teachers, also have some role in improving the attitudes that CCE seeks to foster. Most importantly, **positive teacher–student relations** are linked to personal-responsibility-related citizenship, and both positive teacher–student relations and **student–student interactions** foster institutional trust, suggesting that everyday experience of mutual trust and personal support can have an impact extending beyond the boundaries of a small community.

4. The level of civic and citizenship knowledge is only loosely and in some cases even negatively related to positive civic attitudes. At the same time, formal learning in school about social issues is also relatively weakly associated with students' attitudes.

Students with more **civic and citizenship knowledge** tend to be more positive towards social-movement related and personal-responsibility-related citizenship. They also demonstrate more intentions to participate in elections and have more positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities and immigrants. These patterns hold in practically all the countries in this study.

However, these students also have a limited interest in participating in future political activities in almost every country; they attach less importance to conventional citizenship than others in some countries, and have a decreased level of trust in democratic institutions in countries with more recently established democracies.

Table 2. Relationship between civic and citizenship knowledge and selected civic attitudes

Negative relationship	Positive relationship	No relationship
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	Conventional citizenship	Institutional trust	Electoral participation	Immigrant rights
BE – FI				
BG				
DK				
FI				
HR				
IT				
LT				
LV				
MT				
NL				
SE				
SI				

In particular, civic and citizenship knowledge demonstrates a negative association with institutional trust in Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania and Malta. At the same time, it is weakly but positively related to institutional trust in Denmark only. (Table 2) Further, civic and citizenship knowledge is significantly and negatively related to expected active political participation in all the countries except the Netherlands and Sweden.

At the same time, **formal learning in the school** – that is, students' perception of learning about various civic issues – is also only weakly and sporadically related to non-cognitive civic outcomes. A positive association between students' reports about formal civic learning in school and their conventional citizenship attitude occurs only in six countries. Formal learning is positively related either to institutional trust, or to intention to vote in elections or intention to participate in future political activism, in five countries. Social-movement-related citizenship is related to the amount of formal learning in school in Malta and Bulgaria only. At the same time, tolerance both for ethnic minorities and for immigrants remains largely independent of the amount of CCE as measured here.

From all these it follows that discussing social and political issues and improving students' cognitive understanding in the civic domain in the school is not a general tool for the improvement of civic attitudes. Instead, its role is dependent both on the specific social and historical context and the attitude education seeks to develop.

The negative associations between knowledge and institutional trust provide further support as well as further details to the findings presented in the IEA report (Schulz et al., 2017). Together

they suggest that a better understanding of civic life might also imply more critical thinking and questioning of some established institutions. Certainly, less trust towards democratic institutions among more knowledgeable students in the younger democracies of Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania and Malta points in this direction.

The rather uniform tendency of more knowledge being linked to lower likelihood of intending to participate in future political activism (together with the negative associations between conventional citizenship values and knowledge in some countries) seems to deliver more general and potentially more troubling messages about how the most knowledgeable teenagers in Europe might see politics and political engagement. However, we would by no means interpret this finding as calling for a reduction in the amount of citizenship education in schools.

A good understanding of how society works remains a key constituent of becoming an active and responsible citizen, and the role of education in this learning process should not be underestimated. However, acquiring cognitive knowledge on how society and politics work is not sufficient to develop positive attitudes towards civic issues. To internalise more positive attitudes towards democratic institutions and become open towards minorities, teenagers also need other experiences, inside but also outside the school. If educational systems are expected to cater to students' civic attitudes and behavioural intentions, they need to do more than provide civic and citizenship knowledge to the student body.

5. Civic self-efficacy, that is students’ self-beliefs in undertaking various civic actions, is consistently positively related to all the civic attitudes and behavioural intentions discussed here.

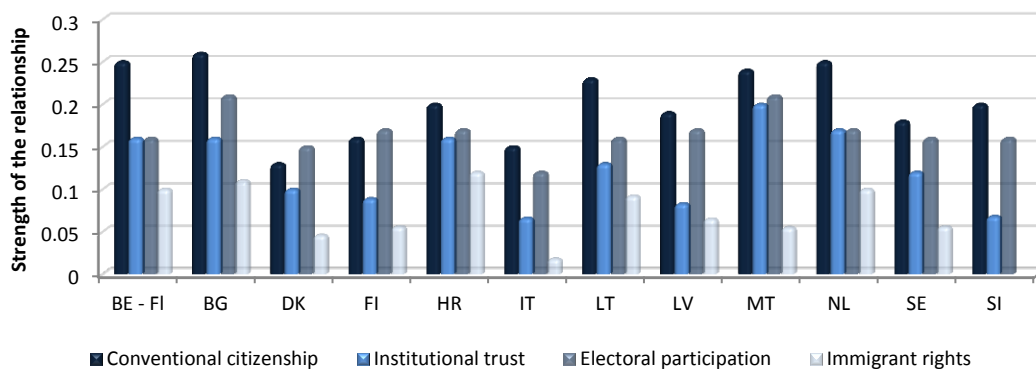
Students’ **civic self-efficacy**¹⁸ refers to self-confidence in their ability to handle different situations and take actions related to civic issues and civic participation. Examples include feeling confident to be able to discuss a newspaper article about a conflict between countries, or to speak in front of their class about a political or social issue.

Civic self-efficacy remains a very important predictor of all the non-cognitive civic outcomes discussed here. It is consistently and positively related to all the non-cognitive outcomes across all the countries in our study. Students’ expected active political participation and the perceived importance attached to conventional citizenship are particularly strongly linked to this virtue. On the other hand, in most countries, support for equal rights for either the immigrant or the ethnic minority population is less strongly – although still significantly – associated with students’ self-efficacy. (Selected associations are shown in Figure 4)

Even though concerns might be raised over whether civic self-efficacy does indeed influence the non-cognitive civic outcomes discussed here, or whether they rather mutually reinforce each other, it is clear that educational systems that aim to improve students’ civic attitudes also need to foster their civic self-beliefs. Students need further help to expand their capacities to participate in civic issues, and to become aware of their civic skills.

Evidence suggests that self-efficacy is linked to an open classroom climate and also to participation in voluntary work in the community.¹⁹ Still, at present, the development of self-efficacy is at most partially related to what students learn and experience in the school. This suggests that there is still room to strengthen the links between education and civic self-efficacy, which in turn will also facilitate more positive civic attitudes in young generations.

Figure 4. Relationship between students’ civic self-efficacy and selected civic attitudes



Our results confirm that civic self-efficacy is positively related to civic and citizenship knowledge,²⁰ even though they serve different functions in the process of civic development. Knowledge and self-efficacy therefore need to be improved simultaneously, as they mutually reinforce each other and both contribute to the improvement of different civic and citizenship qualities that education seeks to foster.

¹⁸ “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

¹⁹ Knowles and McCafferty-Wright, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2007.

²⁰ See also Isac et al., 2014; Solhaug, 2006.

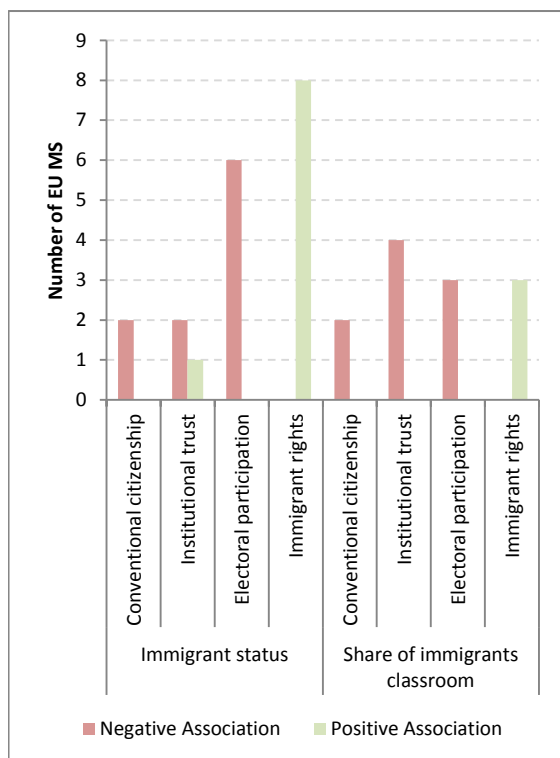
6. Civic attitudes reported by students with an immigrant background show no systematic difference from the attitudes of the non-migrant student population. The only notable exception is intention for electoral participation, where a significant gap favouring native students is apparent in most of the Member States that participated in ICCS 2016.

Our analysis has not revealed a systematic, universal gap between native and immigrant students' non-cognitive outcomes. Hence it is not confirmed that immigrant students are in general at a disadvantage in internalising democratic values.

The only systematic difference that favours native students relates to intention to participate in future elections. There is a negative relationship between being an immigrant and expected electoral participation in six countries (Slovenia, the Netherlands, Malta, Italy, Finland and Denmark). This finding is in full accordance with research evidence from all over Europe pointing to the low voting participation of immigrants,²¹ and shows that these deficiencies of immigrants' political integration are already tangible at age 14.

Other small native-immigrant gaps found include a reduced level of trust in civic institutions (Sweden and the Netherlands), a lower level of personal-responsibility-related citizenship (Latvia only) and lower intentions for later active political participation (Lithuania).

Figure 5. Relationship between immigrant status/share of immigrants and selected civic attitudes



On the other hand – as it was expected²² – immigrants are generally more in favour of equal rights for minorities, whether ethnic minorities or immigrants. In particular, compared with natives, immigrant students prove to be significantly more open towards immigrants in general, with the exception of Bulgaria (which has a very small number of migrants in the sample), Croatia, Latvia and Lithuania. In these countries, it is likely that students with an immigrant background are either national minorities or border change immigrants who do not necessarily identify themselves with the general term “immigrant”. At the same time, immigrant students also demonstrate an increased level of openness towards ethnic minorities in seven out of the twelve countries.

The share of immigrant students in the classroom also shows some interesting associations with students' attitudes. On the one hand, students in classrooms with a higher share of migrants are more likely to report positive attitudes towards immigrants. This is the case in Nordic countries. They are also more likely to support attitudes towards racial/ethnic minorities in Latvia and Denmark. Further

²¹ André et al., 2014.

²² Similar findings were presented in Keating and Benton, 2013; Kokkonen et al., 2010; Losito et al., 2017, p. 201; Prokic and Dronkers, 2010.

positive associations are observed in Sweden (social-movement-related citizenship values) and Denmark (social-movement-related citizenship and personal-responsibility-related citizenship values). However, a reduced level of institutional trust is found in classes with many immigrant students in the Netherlands, Malta, Latvia and Belgium, and less intention to participate in elections in Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. Lithuania seems to be an unusual case, with four attitudes significantly and negatively associated with high shares of immigrants in the classroom. (For a summary of some of these associations see Figure 5.)

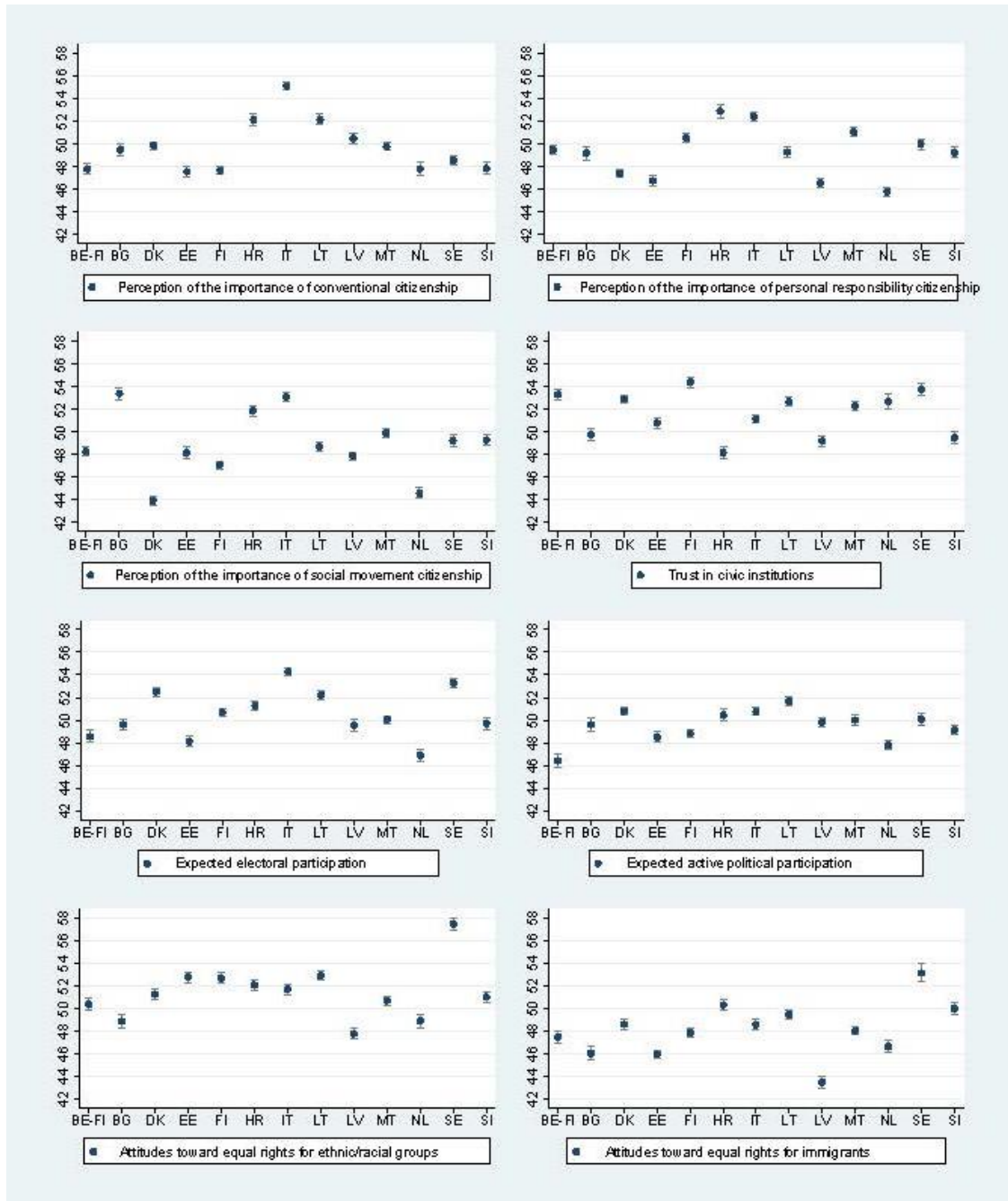
Without doubt, these mixed findings reflect the diverse nature of the immigrant population across (but also within) countries, as well as the differences in the ways educational systems attempt to integrate immigrant students into European classrooms. These diversities, and how the various educational systems can handle them, require further investigation.

The only rather general pattern found suggests that low electoral participation rates of European citizens with an immigrant background seem to be predicted by adolescents' intended electoral participation. Clearly, more work needs to be done on improving the political participation of European immigrants from an early age, to mitigate later challenges for the legitimacy of representative democracies.

Still, the absence of a major, systematic attitude gap between immigrant and native students is an important positive finding that signals some success in the integration process of young immigrants in the EU. Even though intra-EU mobile students are also included in this immigrant population, we can interpret this result as good news from the perspective of Europe's identity. It is also notable that this overall similarity of civic attitudes exists despite the considerable gap in the level of civic and citizenship knowledge between native and immigrant students (Schulz et al., 2017).

Appendix

Average and 95% confidence intervals for non-cognitive civic and citizenship outcomes by EU Member State²³



Source: Own calculations using ICCS 2016 data.

23 Note that the Germany – North Rhine-Westphalia region did not meet IEA sample participation requirements, even after the inclusion of replacement schools. Denmark met guidelines for sampling participation rates only after replacement schools were included. Estonia, Latvia and Sweden: National Defined Population covers 90% to 95% of National Target Population.

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