CHAPTER 18:

IEA Civic Education Studies in Latin America: Paths of Influence and Critique in Policy and Research¹

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Abstract For the last two decades the international civic education studies of IEA have included a small group of Latin American countries. The results, in terms of learning outcomes in civic knowledge of their 14-year-old students, as well as the patterns of their attitudes and dispositions regarding political participation and coexistence, have been compared to other regions of the world. Describing the contribution of this type of international large-scale assessment to citizenship education and its renewal in the region is the purpose of this chapter, which in its first part addresses the issue of country participation. A second section describes the genesis of a Latin American module for assessing region-specific civic knowledge and attitudes, used both in the 2009 and 2016 cycles of IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). Its relevance and potential are discussed. Parts three and four describe the evolution of the influence of IEA civic studies upon both the policymaking and research fields of countries of the region using concepts from the policy transfer literature.

Introduction

Democracy in Latin America as elsewhere has been historically linked to education. Since the struggles for independence in the first third of the 19th century, the construction of national states in Latin America has been inseparable from the vision that the school was of key importance for “educating the sovereign.” The prolonged 20th century’s effort to attain universal schooling had to contend with democracies that were frequently interrupted, distorted, and threatened. However, few questioned the ideal, which included communicating to new generations about how to organize government and peaceful coexistence. Periods of democratization and de-democratization (Tilly 2010) characterize the political trajectories of individual countries and the region. At the same time the conflict between the democratic ideal and authoritarianism has in the last quarter century given way to new political developments variously characterized as populism, consumer citizenship, and illiberal democracies (Philip 2003; Smith 2005; Oxhorn 2011; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan 2013; Rovira Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert 2019).

Since 2000, major surveys of adults have consistently found that about half the population across all countries of the region sustain consistent democratic beliefs and preferences. A quarter is non-democratic and, varying between years and studies, another quarter or more sustain “delegative conceptions of democracy” (O'Donnell 1994). These adult respondents are prepared to justify authoritarian government on security or economic grounds (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2004; Valenzuela et al. 2008; Seligson et al. 2013; Cohen et al. 2017). The concept of delegative democracy was defined by O'Donnell to refer to countries where free and clean elections take place, but where the government and especially chief executives feel authorized to act without institutional restrictions. These findings are analogous to those produced by consecutive International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) studies of the young at school, showing that a majority reject most but not all authoritarian practices in government (Schulz et al. 2011, 2018). There are fundamental questions about the

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nature of the political socialization that the school experience typically produces in the region and how this replicates or interrupts larger institutional and cultural dynamics embedded in differing national political contexts.

For the last two decades a small group of Latin American countries has joined the international civic education studies of IEA. The learning outcomes in civic knowledge of their 14-year-old students, as well as patterns of their attitudes and dispositions regarding political participation and coexistence, have been compared to the larger canvas that contains other regions of the world. Rationales for this participation, and the nature of the influences these studies have had on the policy and research fields of participating countries are discussed here. Examining the contribution of this type of international large-scale assessment to citizenship education and its renewal in the region is the purpose of this chapter.

I shall first characterize Latin American countries' participation in the studies, identifying patterns in the political and institutional contexts that favor participation. This includes discussing why only four countries, Colombia, Chile, Dominican Republic, and Mexico (out of 19 in the region), have participated in two or more studies. In a second section I will describe the genesis of the Latin American module assessing region-specific civic knowledge and attitudes in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2009 and ICCS 2016. Its development involved a process of inter-institutional as well as academic and expert cooperation that bridged the north/south divide. Then I will refer to features of the evolution of the influence of IEA civic studies upon the region's policymakers and researchers. In a concluding section, I will bring together the descriptive and analytical threads. In particular I will discuss the potential for future developments in the relationships between IEA studies and the enhancement of Latin American schools' contribution to democracy. As a cross-cutting theme I will put forward possibilities for the use of international large-scale assessment studies (ILSAs) by national policymakers and other stakeholders to do more than "scandalize" or "glorify" national performances (Steiner-Khamsi 2012).

The Latin American Region's Participation in Civic and Citizenship Studies

Latin American countries' participation in ILSAs started in the last third of the 1990s, when these studies became an option for policymakers, and when their countries' educational agendas initiated a turn from coverage and student enrollment to quality and equity challenges. Only two countries participated in CIVED 1999, Colombia and Chile, revealing an early interest that remained, as they participated in ICCS 2009 and 2016. Together with Mexico and Dominican Republic, which participated in both cycles of ICCS, these are the only countries of the region to have participated more than once in IEA's sequence of civic studies. Guatemala and Paraguay participated only in ICCS 2009, and Peru only in ICCS 2016, thus composing the seven national educational systems of the region whose participation will be discussed.

Average performance on the civic knowledge test across the countries that participated in ICCS 2009 ranged from 380 to 483 scale points (international average 500); with a significant improvement in the results of both Colombia and Mexico, practically the same range obtained in ICCS 2016 (380 to 482 scale points), whilst the international average increased to 517 (Table 1).

Latin American education does not fare well in test results from international studies. Results in civic knowledge have consistently been well below the international average, positioning the countries of the region at the bottom of the rankings.

This may be important in the politics of decision making about participation of Latin American countries. That is, the public nature of the results is a potential source of "embarrassment and humiliation" (Kamens and Benavot 2012). To this needs to be added the more contested nature of civic knowledge compared to language and mathematics. In many Latin America countries'

Table 1: Latin America country averages for civic knowledge in ICCS 2009 and 2016.

	Civic Knowledge		
	ICCS 2009	ICCS 2016	Differences 2016-2009
Chile	483	482	-1
Colombia	462	482	+ 20 (*)
Mexico	452	467	+15 (*)
Peru	—	438	-
Guatemala	435	—	-
Paraguay	424	—	-
Dominican Republic	380	380	0
Latin American ICCS average	439	450	+11
International ICCS average	500	517	+17

Sources Schulz et al. (2011), ICCS 2009 Latin American report, Table 3.8; Schulz et al. (2018), ICCS international report, Table 3.11.

Notes (*) Statistically significant at 0.05 level.

political and intellectual fields, the contrast is often between “liberal” and “communitarian” views of democracy (Fierro 2016; Magendzo and Arias 2015; Riquelme 2019). The perception may be that IEA studies represent “developed liberal democracies” that are somewhat distant from Latin America’s poverty and marked socioeconomic inequalities, together with cultural features of communitarian traditions. These cultural and/or ideological features may help explain the lack of expansion in country participation across the years.

Considering stark differences in the political cultures, the levels of development and the educational and political systems of the participating countries across two decades, I see three factors as relevant for interpreting the issue of participation. First is the degree of development of national institutions for the evaluation of education. This is not a necessary condition. Some of the countries that participated do not have these robust institutions, but Colombia, Mexico, and Chile certainly do. The consistency of their participation may be associated with the accumulation of professional and institutional capacities in national evaluation institutions for education, ICFES, INEE, and SIMCE, respectively.²

Secondly, policy-options are framed in terms of power and identity in certain national educational policy arenas in Latin America. The concepts of citizenship and democracy underlying the ICCS instruments may differ from those emphasized by national curriculum and evaluation, explaining non-participation. Trust building among key players in IEA and in countries’ ministries, cost considerations in some countries, and unpredictable political and policy circumstances may advance or hinder decisions to participate.

Inter-institutional cooperation has been a feature of the history of IEA civic studies in the region. Two multilateral institutions have had a crucial role: the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The first was instrumental in asking Torney-Purta and Amadeo to prepare a secondary analysis of the results of Colombia and Chile in the Civic Education Study (CIVED) of 1999, comparing these two countries with the United States and Portugal. The OAS supported the analysis and preparation of a report entitled *Strengthening Democracy in the Americas through Civic Education: An Empirical Analysis Highlighting the Views of Students and Teachers* (Torney-Purta and Amadeo 2004). Published in English and in Spanish I consider this report as being at the founding intersection between empirical research and policy in the citizenship education domain in the region.

² Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (ICFES), of Colombia; Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEE), of Mexico; and Sistema de Medición de la Calidad Educativa (SIMCE), of Chile.

The IADB, in its turn, contributed to the setting-up and development of a consortium of countries interested in evaluating citizenship education, the Sistema Regional de Evaluación de Competencias Ciudadanas (*Regional System for the Development and Evaluation of Citizenship Competencies*) (SREDECC), which was instrumental for the elaboration of the Latin American module of ICCS 2009. Further, the IADB helped fund the participation of some countries in this study. I shall return to this mediating role of multilateral institutions in the concluding section.

In some sense the various conditions referred in this section, can be thought of as constituting emergent properties that set the context and capacities for the countries' participation.

ICCS Latin American Module: Striving for Regional Relevance

It is a major difference with other ILSAs that IEA's civic studies include regional-specific instruments or modules. The Latin American module was generated through extensive and effective cooperation between ICCS's central team and academics (along with ministries' personnel) from participating countries of the region. This was in the framework of a larger initiative to enhance civic education in the region supported both by the IADB and the OAS. The opportunity to include region-specific topics and issues in the evaluation framework and instruments decisively increased the relevance as well as interest in and impact of the studies. The overall process is a clear case of an emergent result, where actors and contingencies converged upon something not planned or visualized in the initial definitions of participants (Torney-Purta and Amadeo 2015; Pritchett 2015).

The threads of this emergent result involved individuals and institutions from north and south. In the early 2000s Fernando Reimers, a Harvard University professor from Venezuela, who had been publishing on the need to prioritize civic education in the region (Reimers 2004), became aware of the CIVED study and invited Judith Torney-Purta to make a presentation about Hispanic students' civic preparation in the United States. This was the starting point for a closer examination of results from Chile and Colombia, the only Latin American countries that had participated in CIVED. Reimers presented his view that schooling in this region was doing a poor job regarding civic education to sector leaders in education and development at the IADB. He argued that the IADB could make a significant contribution by funding a "regional public good" consisting of an observatory of effective programs of citizenship formation to facilitate exchange of best practices among countries. Individual country teams could request support from the IADB for such a "regional public good." The Bank in 2005 put this at the center of the agenda of the regional meeting of education ministers (Trinidad and Tobago, August 2005), supported by OAS. It provided them with a document that offered a conceptual framework and evidence that justified a regional project for citizenship education's enhancement (Cox et al. 2005). The initiative received almost unanimous support and Colombia and Mexico proposed the project. A center was set up in Bogota, Colombia: the SREDECC. Two years after its creation while debating its larger priorities, the center decided that member countries' participation in the upcoming ICCS 2009 was important. Concurrently, OAS supported a survey on curricular and teacher-related features of citizenship covering 25 Latin American countries (Amadeo and Zepeda 2008).

The SREDECC convoked a regional expert group, coordinated by Fernando Reimers and consisting of consultants from Colombia (Enrique Chaux), Chile (Cristián Cox), Dominican Republic (Josefina Zaiter), Guatemala (Otto Rivera), Mexico (Amelia Molina), and Paraguay (Lilian Soto), who agreed upon a framework relevant for the region. The ICCS team had as its international study director Wolfram Schulz, who is fluent in Spanish and had done socio-political research in Latin America. With the contribution of Eugenio Gonzalez from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), a test and questionnaire were developed that gathered data on region-specific aspects of civics and citizenship fitting within the framework of the international test and questionnaires.

An examination of conceptual relationships between the framework developed by the Latin American group and the ICCS 2009 framework revealed differences in concepts and emphases (Cox 2010; Schulz et al. 2011). These were embedded in Latin American countries' recent political history as well as resulting from deeper and longer-term cultural features of the region. An example of the first is the salience of issues related to the history of authoritarian governments and the transition from dictatorial regimes to democracy, and also a less active concept of citizen participation than the one at the core of the international framework. An example of the second, was the Latin American group's restricted conceptualization of civil society, which did not include the economy or business organizations (see Oxhorn 2011).

After refining the common material to be measured from the ICCS assessment framework, the main issues assessed by the regional instrument were students':

- sense of Latin American identity;
- knowledge about and attitudes toward authoritarian government and dictatorship;
- knowledge about and attitudes toward corrupt practices in government and/or public services;
- knowledge about discrimination and their attitudes toward diversity; and
- knowledge about and attitudes toward the presence of violence in society (Schulz et al. 2011, p. 15).

In ICCS 2016, the regional student questionnaire covered most of these region-specific aspects, except for the "sense of Latin American identity" (Schulz et al. 2018). I believe this inadvertently removed from the assessment module the only dimension which was positive rather than negative about politics and citizenship in the region. The module concentrated on fundamental democratic deficits—dictatorships, corruption, violence, law disobedience. In my view this needs to be complemented with bases for construction of a democratic culture through schooling. Comparative analysis of curricula reveals three relevant dimensions of this culture receive scant or no attention: political tolerance, the common good in unequal societies, and the centrality of elections and voting. (Cox et al. 2014). To this it should be added that dictatorships or the risk of their return are no longer the focal political issue in the region. Instead it is the complex mix of populism, weak institutions, and a crisis or malaise in representation (Oxhorn 2011; Joignant et al. 2017; Bargsted et al. 2017; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2013).

The Latin American regional module has made a key critical contribution up to this point. Now it needs to move toward including positive dimensions of educational renewal relevant for current political times and contexts.

Paths of Influence on Policymaking: How Context Rules

The general question about how CIVED and ICCS studies have influenced the education policy field of participating countries in Latin America may be fruitfully approached with categories from the policy transfer and knowledge utilization literatures (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Dolowitz 2007; Stone 2004). A driving notion in analyses of policy transfer from one national or international context to another, apart from cases "in which one sees a photocopy emerge from the process" (Dolowitz 2007, p. 41), is that knowledge mobilized from one context to another is equivalent to knowledge transformed. This takes place through processes of selection, filtering, mixing, and translation shaped by political, institutional, ideological, circumstantial, and personal factors. What is borrowed will generally undergo substantial modifications. How hybridization, adoption, and mutation occur is key.

There has been no systematic research on how the IEA studies—their conceptual frameworks, instruments, and results—have affected Latin American countries' policy-fields and their decision-making regarding curriculum, evaluation, and teacher policies. Thus, questions about knowledge transfer and re-contextualization processes cannot be answered systematically. Instead, I will

refer to key features of these processes for the Chilean case, where I have first-hand experience, and I will discuss some features of the Colombian and Mexican cases, attempting to identify aspects of the studies' impact on policymaking across these three national cases.

To start, let us examine early reaction to the gaps in curriculum revealed by the evaluative framework of CIVED 1999 and the poor results of Chile's students in specific items of the civic knowledge test (Torney-Purta et al. 2001 with details in Torney-Purta and Amadeo 2004). This process illustrates a key principle regarding influence. That is, national context in education is decisive in what gets selected and for what purposes from international comparative evaluations. In this case, CIVED's evidence and categories were used by a politically plural high-profile national commission, the Comisión Formación Ciudadana, to diagnose and propose improvements to civic education. This commission was convened by the Government reacting to pressure from the Chilean Senate. The focal problem at the time was the decreasing participation of the young generation in elections.

The Commission analyzed the country's results in CIVED's student test of civic knowledge, identifying particularly poor results related to specific curriculum features: a weak presence of contents referring to the political system's institutions and processes, absence of contents which referred to risks to democracy, and a curricular focus on historical knowledge and civil competencies. By this was meant competencies for day-to-day living with proximate others, or *convivencia*, rather than *citizenship* (Ministerio de Educación 2004). The Commission invited CIVED's study leader Judith Torney-Purta and her collaborator in the OAS-supported secondary analysis, Jo-Ann Amadeo, to present the comparative CIVED results of the three countries of the Americas (United States, Colombia, and Chile). They focused on how the responses to specific items (and the wrong answers frequently chosen) provides more insight into shortfalls in the curriculum than the averages of civic knowledge scores that make media headlines (Torney-Purta and Amadeo 2015; Torney-Purta and Amadeo 2004).

Later, in 2009, during a different government, the Commission's proposal to fill vacuums and redress imbalance was partially implemented, after working its way through the Ministry of Education. A major curriculum adjustment of 2009 defined civic and citizenship contents (within history and the social sciences) in terms close to the Commission's. These were significantly based upon the civic knowledge test evidence of CIVED and its secondary analysis. A relevant example of what this analysis revealed is that on items assessing "risks to democracy" in CIVED Chilean (as well as Colombian) students did particularly poorly. This was one factor prompting the curriculum adjustment of 2009.

Further, in 2012, again under a new government, a modified curriculum framework for grades 1 to 6 was issued that explicitly referred to both the 2004 Commission and CIVED as the basis of its concept of "citizenship formation" (Mineduc 2013). The same curriculum reform effort, for grades 7 to 10, cites ICCS 2009 in elaborating definitions for history and social sciences. The Ministry's official document clarifies that even more influential than this study was the benchmarking use of relevant curricula of countries with good results in ICCS 2009 (Mineduc 2013). Finally, the Agency for the Quality of Education, which is responsible for evaluation of students and schools, carried out the first national assessment of students' civic knowledge in 2016. The questionnaire on civic attitudes and values and test on civic knowledge were designed using the ICCS 2009 framework and instruments. In 2018 the same *Agencia*, issued a publication describing the ICCS 2009 released items, as a way to enhance teaching in the area (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación 2018).

In contrast with Chile, where curriculum is the policy domain that most clearly and consistently has been impacted by IEA's civic international studies, in Colombia, it has been the domain of evaluation. As mentioned, Colombia has a robust evaluation institution, ICFES, which was responsible for the country's participation in CIVED and ICCS studies. Since 2012, its SABER

assessments applied to the whole cohort of students of years 5 and 9, include a citizenship thinking (*pensamiento ciudadano*) test, and a civic actions and attitudes test. This distinction and its components is clearly derived from the ICCS 2009 evaluative framework. The influence of ICCS 2009 is especially visible in the citizenship thinking test. Its four dimensions—knowledge, argumentation, multi-perspectivism, systemic thinking—can be seen as elaborations of ICCS 2009's cognitive domains—knowing, and reasoning and analyzing (Schulz et al. 2008). In the actions and attitudes test the dimension of participation and democratic responsibility is mainly framed in terms that replicate the three issues that structure the Latin American regional module of ICCS 2009: not complying with the law, corruption, and support for authoritarian government. On the whole this picture gives credence to the notions of knowledge-borrowing and active re-contextualizing. This was conveyed by a judgment of an expert at ICFES: “In fact, our test of citizenship competences has similar components, at least in structure, to ICCS” (C. Lopera, personal communication, February 3, 2019).³

In the case of Mexico, an analysis produced for SREDECC examined the presence/absence of ICCS 2009 categories in the curricula of the six Latin American participating countries (Cox 2010); this prompted Secretaría de Educación Pública to recognize that critical issues (such as voting and the judiciary), were not receiving adequate attention in the civics and ethics subject of 2006, which led to its redefinition in the curriculum of 2011.⁴ However, there are no traces of ICCS framework's influence on the new re-adjustment of the area decreed in 2016 for primary education and 2017 for secondary education (Secretaría de Educación Pública 2017), nor in the evaluative studies carried out after 2013. (S. Conde, personal communication, February 2, 2019).

Two other dimensions should be mentioned. First, there may be more direct and specific effects than this long-route of curriculum and assessment traced in Chile. There is an effect on the political level of policymaking in the public arena where government, legislatures, and media interact, particularly in relation to law-making processes (Kingdon 2003). President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet (in her second term in office, 2014–2018), used the poor civic knowledge results of Chilean students in ICCS 2009, to argue for a law requiring every school in the country to implement a plan for citizenship formation.⁵ This was a clear case of direct political use of the information produced by ICCS. The law was passed in January 2016. Secondly, there is another type of influence of the international studies, which is indirectly related to the policymaking process. This is the capacity-building process (Grindle and Thomas 1991). For every study, there has been a national expert team in the ministries and associated agencies whose capacities have been enriched (Cox and Meckes 2016; Cariola et al. 2011).

The arc of policy influence of the IEA civic studies in different countries converges on the curriculum and assessment areas. It is clear that context determines what gets selected and reorganized for appropriation and integration into schooling in different countries. At the same time, every national context is, to some extent, modified by its exposure to the new knowledge from the studies.

Underlying the interrelations between national context and new knowledge there is, in my view, a fundamental outcome about what ILSAs in Latin America accomplishes. When a country's educational authorities agree to administer international instruments that make the national education system accountable, it establishes a new public view-point on that system. Policymakers and public must grapple with the evidence presented by the performances of other national systems and this allows discovering and discussing if and how their country is advancing or not.

3 Carolina Lopera, ex-coordinator of the citizenship competences team, (responsible for the application of both SABER and ICCS tests) at ICFES.

4 Country overview. Report of Mexico to ICCS 2016.

5 President Bachelet message N° 312-363 to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, initiating a law mandating a plan for citizenship education in every school. Santiago, May 5, 2015.

I interpret this as an all-embracing but non-specific influence of the studies on policymaking in education in the participating countries. Indeed, a potentially clearer vision by all concerned parties about the country's education via international comparison may be seen as an increase in reflexivity of the policy-field. This takes place through dialogue and the raising of questions (Heyneman and Lee 2012; Reich 1988; Rosanvallon 2010).

Influences Upon Research: The Emergence of a Field

At the beginning, scholarly research on IEA's civic studies' data was conducted by the same teams that generated the studies; two decades after CIVED, there is a community of Latin American scholars doing high-level research on the conceptual frameworks and data from the studies. I shall briefly describe the landmarks in this evolution and refer the types of research and intergenerational features of this emergent field. Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2015) phrased it this way: "political socialization and civic education as a *field of research* in Latin America can be thought of as emerging over time as a complex system through a process of multiple influences in a variety of contexts" (p. 54).

Research specific to Latin American students' civic knowledge and attitudes may be said to have started with the secondary analysis of CIVED 1999 results carried out for the OAS by Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2004). As mentioned, their study reviewed results from Chile and Colombia and compared them with results from the United States and Portugal. The publication focused on similarities and differences in the civic-related views and knowledge of students, and on the views of teachers. A decade later, the participation of six countries from the Latin America region in ICCS 2009 (Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay) resulted in a wealth of evidence that could be examined in the emergent field of research on civic and citizenship education, decisively moving forward to examine questions, methodologies, and results. As the ICCS 2016 Latin American report summarizes:

"Today, researchers in this area are increasingly conducting more sophisticated multilevel and/or multivariate analyses. They are also investigating patterns of civic knowledge and attitudes in quite diverse national contexts (both regional and global) and exploring associations between these patterns and socioeconomic and home background variables as well as key features of countries' educational contexts, such as school resources, curricula, and pedagogical approaches" (Schulz et al. 2018, p.10).

Over thirty papers and two books based on ICCS 2009 results have been produced in the last five years by researchers from Chile, Mexico, and Colombia (see Sandoval-Hernandez and Miranda chapter). There are clearly identifiable groups and lines of research which are developing relevant knowledge in the three countries, with increasing cross-regional initiatives. Additionally, credit should be given to Latin American researchers who moved to Europe and, through work in international organizations (including IEA) became involved in secondary analysis of the international data sets. Sandoval-Hernandez's work, first at IEA Hamburg and now at the University of Bath, clearly stands out.

Two types of research are visible in this emergent field. One is characterized by multivariate, multi-level quantitative analyses aiming to discover factors and associations likely to produce new knowledge about the school experience of political socialization and its myriad component processes. In this domain I especially value findings on the weakness of schooling regarding attitude formation (Diazgranados and Sandoval-Hernández 2017; Treviño et al. 2017). These authors deeply question how teaching and learning in citizenship education is typically organized and provided in Latin America.

Another direction points to the potential of education in mitigating negative circumstances. Castillo et al. (2015) examined students' socioeconomic background in relation to expectations of political participation using the Chilean data of ICCS 2009. They acknowledge the contributions

of both students' civic knowledge and perceptions of an open classroom climate in fostering expected political participation. Using a series of multilevel models they found support for the influence of students' socioeconomic background on expected electoral participation. Furthermore, civic knowledge and classroom climate showed a positive and similar influence on students' expected participation. However, classroom climate appeared less affected by students' background than civic knowledge, opening a discussion about strategies that could be prioritized when aiming to mitigate political participation gaps.

A second type of research is qualitative and has the preparation of teachers as its prime object. The key points are conceptual: how does the framework of ICCS covering citizenship and democracy compare with the definitions in the curricula of Latin American countries and the contents of teacher education programs? Key findings are that the curricula of the six countries that participated in ICCS 2009 disproportionately emphasize peaceful coexistence or the civil dimension of "living with others," over the civic (political) one. Voting receives intriguingly scant attention (Cox et al. 2014; Riquelme 2019). This imbalance is replicated in teacher education programs, where the thematic categories most commonly omitted are those related to the political dimensions of citizenship (OREALC-UNESCO 2017). These characteristics of curricula have received little attention and have implications for policy.

At the basis of these broad lines of development of the "emergent field" of Latin American studies of citizenship education are capacity, networking, and cooperation-building processes that consistently cross the north/south classification in new ways. Research on Latin America is now mainly based in the region, and its volume and quality is consistently increasing. This would not have happened without the openness to cooperation and capacity-building initiatives of the civic studies' leadership and IEA's technical core groups. From this nucleus of cooperation, the features of the emergent field developed. It has increasingly rich synergies across countries and the north/south gap. There are three generations of researchers at work—senior, mid, and early-career. The resulting accumulation of knowledge and expertise has possibilities for projection in policy and to support practice. The importance of this last aspect cannot be overstated: the use-potential of any international study is crucially dependent on national capacities to interpret its conceptualizations and data and go deeper into their implications for practice. That there is now an international field of Latin American scholars and researchers in the area cognizant of the studies' generation, methods and results, strongly suggests that those capacities now exist and are further developing.

Concluding Remarks

What the countries' educational discourse and practices achieve by their participation in IEA's civic and citizenship studies varies according to national contexts. This applies equally to the policy and the research fields. The same instruments and information lead to a range of different broader outcomes that accord with national, political, and institutional factors. A generation of early career scholars are taking interest. But what is the essence of what gets transferred and re-contextualized in the processes? This question lies at the center of what defined CIVED and ICCS studies—their design and conceptual contents, their implementation, and how their results have been communicated.

I propose that what gets mobilized and exchanged is a conceptualization of democratic citizenship and its principles, institutions, and defining processes. A further issue is how these are known or not, and believed or not, by the new generation in stunningly diverse school settings. How has this conceptualization been arrived at? What is the value of examining the interplay between the knowledge and attitudes of the young in each country's policy and research fields? These are questions that connect with key distinctive features of the civic and citizenship studies of IEA and their potential influence.

What the studies measure can be seen as the distilled democratic tradition and its interpretation in post-modernity. This interpretation has initially been conceptualized and organized by the studies' leaders and the Project Advisory Committees (PAC). They are then adjusted and refined by exchanges with representatives from the participating countries. In my experience in two cycles of PAC, a major motivation has been to arrive at a construct that is as representative and balanced as possible. It is a difficult articulation process aiming to identify the common threads at the core of the democratic tradition. This effort looks back to the discourses about its core. It also looks to the present world of politics and its dynamism that contains many puzzling aspects. What should be selected and prioritized? Which trends should be recognized and included? Of course, the answers to these questions inevitably reflect the socio-cultural, institutional, and personal limits of those who participate in their construction. The study has a "democratic first-world" imprint inseparable from the studies' original conceptualization in the academic fields of the United States, Europe, and Australia. It also has features of a common, shared vision about the democratic ideal. In other words, it contains a core that nowadays is deemed crucial for schooling to communicate in our increasingly common as well as increasingly unequal world. I consider these features to be attributable to the international and intercultural nature of the civic studies' decision-making bodies along with their openness to the input of the participating countries. They have found ways to construct regional instruments that search for contextual relevance. I consider this of utmost importance and value, as the studies incarnate both horizontality and openness in the interpretation of the democratic tradition, which is a condition for their legitimacy.

Seen from the viewpoint of any single country, each study raises a mirror that reflects both the core of the democratic tradition in its contemporary international interpretation and how its young generation understands and appreciates it. Additionally, both the assessment framework and the results produced by each study's instruments, reflected in that mirror, have the potential to provide a rich basis for reflexivity in the policy, research, and practice fields. I see the studies offering the national policy and research arenas (and the schooling systems) the possibility of puzzling over and learning from comparative knowledge that is intrinsically empowering (Freeman 2008).

If the provision of a particularly rich and open-ended basis for reflexivity is at the core of the contribution of the civic studies, how could their influence be enhanced in Latin America? The following suggestions merit consideration.

The international public good that the studies offer could be an advantage to more countries in the region: the expansion of participation should be a serious goal. From this perspective the mediating role played in the past by multilateral agencies like OAS and the IADB, merit consideration. They could bridge over cultural and ideological factors hindering participation of some countries and provide political justification for participation by others.

The Latin American regional module of questions could play a role in the effort to expand country participation in the region. An effort could be made to update it by more fully incorporating researchers and educators from participating countries in the process of its development.

In the long run, probably the most secure basis for optimizing the studies in the countries of this region is the strengthening of internal research capacities. Policies would have a different basis if there were capacities among scholars across generations in more countries to utilize the reflexivity potential provided by the studies and their freely available data. Governments would feel less doubtful about embarking on the "international-comparison risks" if they could count on a research field able to provide explanations after results appears. Interest could be fostered in the concepts, the data and the public discussion potential of the comparative evidence. How to connect the studies' products and circuits of communication not only with governments and their ministries, but consistently with universities and their research leaders is worth pursuing.

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