



# ICCS 2009 Latin American Report

Civic knowledge and attitudes  
among lower-secondary students  
in six Latin American countries

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**Università degli Studi Roma Tre**  
*Laboratorio di Pedagogia sperimentale*

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The Secretariat

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

Herengracht 487

1017 BT Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Telephone + 31 20 625 3625

Fax + 31 20 420 7136

Email: [Department@IEA.nl](mailto:Department@IEA.nl)

Website: [www.iea.nl](http://www.iea.nl)

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, known as IEA, is an independent, international consortium of national research institutions and governmental research agencies, with headquarters in Amsterdam. Its primary purpose is to conduct large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement with the aim of gaining more in-depth understanding of the effects of policies and practices within and across systems of education.

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# Foreword

Since the IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED) was conducted in the late 1990s, educational researchers and policy-makers have increasingly recognized the regional context as an important aspect of civic and citizenship education and influence on how people undertake their role as citizens. In recognition of this development, the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) research team initiated, as part of the study, regional modules for Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Within each module, ICCS researchers developed regional student instruments that were administered to sampled Grade 8 students after they had completed the international test and questionnaire material.

ICCS was carried out between 2006 and 2010, with most of the data collection conducted during 2008/2009 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). An independent, international cooperative of national research agencies, IEA has undertaken, for over 50 years, large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement and reported on key aspects of education systems and processes.

Six countries involved in ICCS took part in the Latin American regional module. This module was linked to a broader Latin American initiative—SREDECC (Regional System for the Development and Evaluation of Citizenship Competencies), which is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). SREDECC was set up with the aim of establishing a common regional framework for citizenship competencies and an evaluation system and criteria for effective citizenship education.

All six of the ICCS Latin American countries form part of SREDECC. The desire to establish an evaluation system in the region prompted the participation of these countries in IEA ICCS, which became one of the central components of SREDECC's work. As a group, the six countries gathered data from almost 30,000 students in their eighth year of schooling in more than 1,000 schools. These student data were augmented, where relevant, by contextual data collected from teachers, school principals, and the study's national research centers.

The *ICCS 2009 Latin American Report* presents results of analyses designed to investigate a number of important aspects of civic and citizenship education in Latin America. These aspects include students' civic knowledge, their perceptions of public institutions, government, and rule of law, and their basic dispositions toward the peaceful coexistence of diverse groups within society. The results are drawn from data collected through the regional student test and questionnaire and, where relevant, the international instruments.

This current report is the fourth—after two international reports and the European regional report—in the ICCS publication series. It will be followed by three other publications: a regional report for the Asian ICCS countries, an ICCS encyclopedia on approaches to civic and citizenship education in participating countries, and a technical report documenting procedures and providing evidence of the high quality of the data that were collected. An international database that the broader research community can use for secondary analyses will also be made available.

The Latin American module was coordinated by a team directed by Dr Wolfram Schulz from the ICCS International Study Center at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in Melbourne, Australia, in cooperation with other members of the ICCS consortium: the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in Slough, the United Kingdom; the Laboratorio di Pedagogia Sperimentale (LPS) at the Roma Tre University in Rome, Italy; the IEA Secretariat; the IEA Data Processing and Research Center; and the national coordinators of the project. Members of the ICCS Project Advisory Committee along with other consultants helped move the study through its successive stages.



The development of the regional instruments followed the recommendations of an expert group consisting of representatives from each participating country and chaired by Professor Fernando Reimers (Harvard University, United States). Dr Eugenio Gonzalez from the IEA-ETS Research Institute contributed to the process of instrument preparation and implementation of the regional module.

I would like to express thanks, on behalf of IEA, to all researchers involved in the success of the Latin American module. Special thanks go to the authors of the report: Wolfram Schulz, John Ainley, Tim Friedman, and Petra Lietz. We are grateful to Professor Cristian Cox (Catholic University of Santiago, Chile), who, as expert reviewer, provided valuable comments on the draft version of the report.

We also extend gratitude to the national research coordinators from the six participating countries for their comments on that draft. IEA studies rely on national teams headed by the national research coordinators who manage and execute the study at the national level. Their contribution is always highly appreciated.

The IEA Publication and Editorial Committee provided helpful suggestions for improvement of the draft of the report. Paula Wagemaker edited the document and contributed greatly to its final form.

No cross-national study of educational achievement, such as ICCS, would be possible without the participation of the many students, teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers involved. The education world benefits from their commitment.

Finally, I would like to thank the study's funders. A project of this size is not possible without considerable financial support. Funding for the Latin American module of ICCS was assured by the Inter-American Development Bank through SREDECC and by the ministries of education of the participating countries.

*Dr Hans Wagemaker*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IEA



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# Executive Summary

## About the Latin American regional module of ICCS

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) focused on the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens. Preparing students for citizenship involves developing relevant knowledge and understanding as well as encouraging the formation of positive attitudes toward being a citizen. Descriptions of the conceptual background for and the design of ICCS appear in the publication detailing the ICCS assessment framework (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008).

Regional contexts are important for civic and citizenship education because they shape how people undertake their roles as citizens. ICCS included, in addition to the core international survey, regional modules in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

This report from ICCS focuses on the six countries that participated in the study's Latin American regional module. It is based on a regional student survey and an assessment of knowledge specific to the region as well as on data from the international student and school instruments. We recommend viewing this Latin American report within the context of the international reports on the findings from ICCS (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito, 2010a, 2010b).

The results reported in this publication are based on data gathered from random samples of almost 30,000 students in their eighth year of schooling in more than 1,000 schools from the six ICCS Latin American countries. The regional module for Latin America was connected to a broader initiative known as the Regional System for the Development and Evaluation of Citizenship Competencies (SREDECC), the aim of which is to establish a common regional framework for citizenship competencies, basic criteria for effective citizenship education, and a system for evaluating the outcomes of this area of education.

The Latin American module of ICCS investigated variations in civic knowledge across the ICCS Latin American countries as well as region-specific aspects of civic knowledge. It generated information about students' perceptions of public institutions, forms of government, corrupt practices, and obedience to the law.

The data gathered also gave insight into students' dispositions with respect to peaceful coexistence. This body of data included information on students' attitudes toward their country and the Latin American region, sense of empathy, tolerance toward minorities, and attitudes toward use of violence. Data also allowed exploration of the contexts for learning about citizenship, namely, home, school, and community. The report also profiles the particular context for civic and citizenship education evident in each of the six countries.

## Contexts for civic and citizenship education

Common themes across all six ICCS Latin American countries in relation to the curricular agenda for citizenship included the following: violent conflict, democracy, general interest in sustainable development and the environment, issues related to globalization, tolerance, and plurality, and the social and political inclusion of large, formerly excluded segments of society.

The countries deemed civic and citizenship education important. In three of the six countries, this area of education had been the focus of public debate. Most of the countries had seen a broadening of civic and citizenship education toward the inclusion of democratic values and participatory skills. However, the data also show that evaluation and assessment of civic and citizenship content were not common practice.



## **Civic knowledge**

The results from ICCS suggest that civic knowledge in the ICCS Latin American countries tends to be relatively low. The average civic knowledge score in the six Latin American countries was over half an international standard deviation lower than the average from all participating countries. In five out of the six countries, more than half of the students had civic knowledge achievement scores at or below Proficiency Level 1.

These findings indicate that majorities of students in these countries are not familiar with the concept of representative democracy as a political system and that they lack specific knowledge about institutions, systems, and/or concepts. The civic knowledge of many students in these countries did not extend beyond basic knowledge of fundamental principles or broad concepts.

The results for the regional civic knowledge items illustrated that consequences of dictatorships in Latin America and characteristics of authoritarian governments were largely unknown to students in this region. However, majorities of students were able to identify reasons for the inappropriateness of vigilante justice and bans on providing minors with alcohol and tobacco. Within the region, those countries with relatively higher scores on the Human Development Index were also those whose lower-secondary students had higher levels of civic knowledge.

## **Perceptions of public institutions and government**

Students in the ICCS Latin American countries expressed relatively low levels of trust in political parties, courts of justice, and the police whereas larger majorities of students expressed trust in the armed forces, schools, and the media. However, there were also considerable differences in levels of trust across countries. In addition, a considerably larger percentage of students in Mexico and the Dominican Republic than in Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay said that they preferred one political party more than others. Even though most students did not agree with authoritarian forms of government, more than half believed that dictatorships were justified when they brought order and safety or economic benefits. Male students tended to be more positively disposed than females toward authoritarian governments.

Generally, students did not accept corrupt practices in government. However, male students were more inclined than females to accede to such practices. Male students were also more inclined than female students to accept disobedience to the law in some circumstances. Students' acceptance of disobeying laws depended on circumstances; acceptance was highest when it was considered to be the only way to help one's family.

Attitudes toward authoritarian government, corrupt practices in government, and acceptance of disobeying the law were associated with civic knowledge. More knowledgeable students tended to be less accepting of authoritarian government, corruption in government, and justifications for disobeying the law. This pattern suggests that increasing levels of civic knowledge constitute an important element in the development of democratic societies.

## **Dispositions toward peaceful coexistence**

Students in the ICCS Latin American countries generally expressed positive attitudes toward their country and had a relatively strong sense of Latin American identity. Students with more positive attitudes toward their country also reported a stronger sense of regional identity.

Majorities of ICCS students in Latin America expressed empathy for classmates experiencing adversity, but female students were more compassionate than males. More than half of the students tended to accept minority groups as neighbors. However, acceptance was lowest for homosexuals or people with AIDS. Students with more positive attitudes toward neighborhood diversity were also those with higher levels of civic knowledge. Most students said they did



not agree with the use of violence. However, in all but one country, more than half agreed that vigilante justice was justified when authorities failed to act.

### **Home, school, and community**

As in most ICCS countries, civic knowledge in Latin America was strongly associated with family background. Students whose parents were employed in higher-status occupations and those whose parents were more interested in political and social issues had higher levels of civic knowledge. There were also large differences between students from private and government schools. In three of the six countries, these differences between types of school remained significant even after controlling for the socioeconomic status of students and the social context of the schools.

Most students in the Latin American ICCS countries were being taught civic-related content by teachers of subjects related to human and social sciences. Generally, majorities of students in each country said they had discussed a wide range of civic-related issues at school, including citizens' rights and responsibilities, illegal drug use, AIDS, integration of minorities, and provision of facilities for people with disabilities.

In all six countries, there were differences in civic knowledge between students in urban communities and students in non-urban communities. However, these differences tended to disappear when allowance was made for the effects of students' socioeconomic backgrounds and for the social context of schools.

### **Conclusions**

The data revealed many common contextual factors for civic and citizenship education in the region. Curricular frameworks for civic and citizenship in all six countries were concerned with building and strengthening more inclusive, peaceful, and democratic societies. However, the scores of students on the ICCS civic knowledge scale showed that many students in the ICCS Latin American countries had only limited such knowledge. There was a general lack of knowledge about non-democratic forms of government, and majorities of students believed that dictatorships could be justified under certain circumstances. The link between higher levels of civic knowledge and rejections of authoritarian government, corrupt practices, and excuses for breaking the law suggests that improving civic learning would be an important step in strengthening democracy and civil society in Latin America.

Socioeconomic factors appeared to influence students' civic knowledge in different ways. Students were directly influenced not only by their home background but also by school context factors interacting with other school and community factors. This pattern of influence can also be seen from a broader perspective: those countries with higher economic, social, and educational development also had students with higher levels of civic knowledge. The important point here is the apparent link between lack of civic knowledge and a general lack in equity both across and within the participating countries in the region.





## CHAPTER 1:

# Introduction

This report describes results from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) for the six countries participating in the Latin American region. The report focuses on aspects of particular relevance for this geographic region and should be viewed as part of the broader context of publications on this study (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010a, 2010b).

ICCS investigated the ways in which countries prepare their young people to undertake their roles as citizens. It studied student knowledge and understanding of civics and citizenship as well as student attitudes, perceptions, and activities related to civics and citizenship. It also examined differences among countries in relation to these outcomes of civic and citizenship education, and it explored how differences among countries relate to student characteristics, school and community contexts, and national characteristics.

As part of this international study, many countries participated in regional modules, namely Asia, Europe, and Latin America, each of which was designed to address aspects of civic and citizenship education specific to it. The regional module for Latin America was part of a broader initiative known as SREDECC (Regional System for the Development and Evaluation of Citizenship Competencies). SREDECC is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and its purpose is to establish a common regional framework for citizenship competencies, an evaluation system, and basic criteria for effective citizenship education. All six countries in the region that participated in ICCS belong to SREDECC. Their agreement to take part in the ICCS regional module aligned with SREDECC's commitment to establish an evaluation system in Latin America. The countries' participation in the ICCS regional module became one of the central elements of SREDECC's initiative.

The ICCS research team, in association with the national research coordinators (NRCs) and experts from the six countries, developed a regional student instrument consisting of a short cognitive test and a questionnaire. The questions were designed to gather data on region-specific aspects of civics and citizenship that related to the general assessment framework for ICCS (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008) but were not included in the international instruments.

In this report, we not only present findings from the regional data collection but also draw on data collected through the international student, school, and teacher instruments. We examine variation among the six participating countries, compare the regional with the international ICCS results, and review factors associated with learning outcomes in civics and citizenship.

## Background

ICCS builds on the previous International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) studies of civic education, including the IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED), which was carried out in 1999 (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). In Chile and Colombia, both of which participated in CIVED, the results of this study influenced the content and nature of each country's national standards and curriculum (Reimers, 2007). A comparative study that used CIVED data from Chile, Colombia, Portugal, and the United States and was funded by the Organization of American States (OAS) revealed relatively low levels of civics-related comprehension in the two Latin American countries as well as distrust of formal political institutions (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004).



Since the early 1980s, most of Latin America has returned to democratic rule after a long period of military rule in a majority of the countries in the region (Payne, Zovatto, & Mateo Díaz, 2007). With the exception of Cuba, all Latin American countries now hold competitive elections, and most of them have advanced their human rights and democratic traditions. However, a study of public opinion in Latin American countries carried out during 2004 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) revealed that fewer than half of the adult citizens (43%) had clear democratic orientations. Twenty-seven percent of adults expressed anti-democratic convictions, and this percentage was slightly higher (29%) among young adults. Also, more than half of the respondents agreed with authoritarian forms of government if those forms resolved economic problems (UNDP, 2004).

Recent public opinion research in seven Latin American countries including Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico suggests that support for democracy is associated with the educational background of respondents: adults with completed secondary education were much more likely to agree that democracy was the best form of government (Valenzuela, Schwartzman, Biehl, & Valenzuela, 2008). The same research study also revealed high levels of distrust of political institutions with more than half of the respondents stating that they had no or not much trust in the government, Congress, elected representatives, or local authorities.

Reimers (2007, p. 7) identified the following issues as having significant consequences for democratic citizenship:

- Persistent poverty and inequality constraining opportunities for social and political participation of large segments in the population;
- The reappearance of authoritarian forms of government in some Latin American countries;
- The expansion of crime and violence (often associated with drug-trafficking) that undermine the rule of law and democratic institutions; and
- The persisting subservience of public institutions to the interest of political parties, politicians, bureaucrats or unions as well as corruption, both of which undermine the effectiveness of public services and citizens' trust.

Despite the introduction in Latin America of public education at the beginning of the 20th century, there are still sizable parts of the region's population with limited access to secondary education, and higher education tends to be restricted to the more privileged sectors of Latin American society (Reimers, 2006). Since the 1990s, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of education for overcoming poverty and strengthening democracy in Latin America. The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), for example, recommended increases in educational resources, decentralization of education systems, and more accountability in education (United Nations ECLAC, 1992).

Data collected by ECLAC show considerable increases in the numbers of students completing primary and secondary education between 1990 and 2005. Although the association between the educational completion of young people and the educational levels of their parents continues to be strong, inequality with respect to educational attainment seems, today, to be a somewhat less prominent issue than income inequality (Cox, 2010, p. 21).

Within the context of initiatives to improve evaluation, an increasing number of countries has implemented, since the 1990s, assessment and evaluation programs that include participation in international surveys (conducted by the IEA or the OECD) and/or regional studies (conducted by the regional office of UNESCO) (Reimers, 2003). In 1999, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) commissioned a review of civic education in Latin America that resulted in recommendations on using education to promote democracy (Tibbits & Torney-Purta, 1999). Later research that drew on Chilean and Colombian CIVED data led to recommendations for a





regional evaluation in this learning area (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004). Further papers on the status of civic and citizenship education (Cox, Jaramillo, & Reimers, 2005; Reimers & Villegas-Reimers, 2005) served as a basis for the regional initiative in this area funded by the IDB. As noted earlier, the IDB also supported the participation of Latin American countries in ICCS.

### General research questions and conceptual framework

The ICCS Assessment Framework (Schulz et al., 2008) contains the general research questions that guided this study. These questions are concerned with:

1. Variations in students' civic knowledge;
2. Changes in students' civic content knowledge since 1999;
3. Students' interest in and disposition to engage in public and political life;
4. Students' perceptions of threats to civil society;
5. Features of education systems, schools, and classrooms related to civic and citizenship education; and
6. Aspects of student background related to the outcomes of civic and citizenship education.

When reporting findings for the Latin American region in this publication, we follow these general research questions. However, we also focus on aspects that were of particular relevance for the region.

The regional instrument was designed in line with a regional framework that was developed and linked to the international framework but identified elements deemed relevant to the region. Using, as their basis, a review of current definitions of such elements, the ICCS regional expert group, consisting of scholars from each participating country, delineated the knowledge, attitudes/values, and competencies to be investigated. Within each of these dimensions, the group identified three themes: "peaceful coexistence," "democratic participation," and "plurality and diversity."

In his review of the differences between international and regional conceptualizations of civics and citizenship, Cox (2010, p. 41f) identified the following differences with respect to Latin America:

- The region's emphasis on the risks associated with both democratic and authoritarian governments as well as on issues related to the transition from dictatorial regimes to democracy that reflects the historical context of Latin America;
- The region's more restrictive concept of civic society, which excludes matters pertaining to the economy;
- The inclusion of international dimensions in the international but not the regional conceptualization of civics and citizenship, especially those dimensions related to supranational or intergovernmental institutions;
- The emphasis within the international ICCS framework of *citizen* participation as *civic* participation and within the regional framework as *democratic* participation;
- The non-inclusion of some notions (such as citizenship self-efficacy and negotiation/resolution) in the Latin American conceptualization of civics and citizenship.

The main issues that the regional instrument was designed to assess included the following:

- Students' sense of Latin American identity;
- Students' knowledge about and attitudes toward authoritarian government and dictatorship;





- Students' knowledge about and attitudes toward corrupt practices in government and/or public services;
- Students' knowledge about and attitudes toward the rule of law;
- Students' knowledge about discrimination and their attitudes toward diversity;
- Students' knowledge about and attitudes toward the use or role of violence in society.

## Instruments

Several instruments were administered to the students sampled to participate in the Latin American ICCS countries. They included:

- *The international student cognitive test*: this consisted of 80 items measuring civic and citizenship knowledge, analysis, and reasoning. The assessment items were assigned to seven booklets (each of which contained three of a total seven item-clusters) according to a balanced rotated design (see Table A.1 in Appendix A). Each student completed one of the 45-minute booklets. The cognitive items presented to students generally contained contextual material that served as a brief introduction to each item or set of items;
- *A 40-minute international student questionnaire*: this was used to obtain students' perceptions about civics and citizenship as well as information about each student's background;
- *A 15-minute Latin American student cognitive test*;
- *A 15-minute Latin American student questionnaire*.

The overall assessment time for students in these countries was about two hours. Students responded first to the international cognitive test and then to the international student questionnaire, followed by the Latin American test and questionnaire.

ICCS also included a set of international instruments designed to gather information from and about teachers, schools, and education systems. The set consisted of two instruments:

- *A 30-minute teacher questionnaire*: this asked respondents to give their perceptions of civic and citizenship education in their schools and to provide information about their schools' organization and culture as well their own teaching assignments and backgrounds;
- *A 30-minute school questionnaire*: here, principals provided information about school characteristics, school culture and climate, and the provision of civic and citizenship education in their respective schools.

The national research coordinators (NRCs) for the region coordinated the information procured from the national experts via an online national contexts survey. This information concerned the structure of the education system, civic and citizenship education in the national curricula, and recent developments in civic and citizenship education.

Development of the international and Latin American ICCS instruments comprised three phases:

- *Writing the test and questionnaire items*: this work was guided by the ICCS assessment framework and included smaller pilots in some of the participating countries as well as extensive consultations with the national research coordinators and expert consultants.
- *Implementation of an international field trial in all participating countries*: collection of data from smaller samples of schools, students, and teachers also occurred during this phase.
- *Final revision of the material in light of the field trial results and further feedback from national centers and expert consultants*.



More detailed information about the development of the Latin American module will appear in the ICCS technical report (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, forthcoming). Given the importance of ensuring comparability and appropriateness of the measures in this study for such a diverse range of participating countries, the ICCS field trial data were used to enable a thorough review of cross-national validity for both the test and the questionnaire items.<sup>1</sup>

### Participating countries, population, sample design, and data collection

Thirty-eight countries<sup>2</sup> participated in ICCS. Among these were 26 from Europe, six from Latin America, five from Asia, and one from Australasia. All six Latin American ICCS countries participated in the regional module. As occurs with other IEA studies, IEA invited all countries affiliated with it to participate. The authorities in each invited country decided whether their country should participate or not.

Figure 1 shows the geographical position of the participating Latin American countries on a map of the region. Chapter 2 of this report provides more detailed information about the contexts for civic and citizenship education in these countries.

*Figure 1.1: Countries participating in the Latin American regional module of ICCS 2009*



1 Schulz (2009) provides and describes examples of the different methodological approaches used to assess measurement equivalence of questionnaire scales.

2 A few of the “entities” that participated in ICCS are distinct education systems within countries. The term “country” in this report refers to both countries and other entities within countries that participated in the study.



This report draws primarily on data from the ICCS student population and is augmented by data from the ICCS teacher survey. The ICCS student population comprised students in Grade 8 (students approximately 14 years of age), provided that the average age of students in this grade was 13.5 years or above at the time of the assessment. If the average age of students in Grade 8 was below 13.5 years, Grade 9 became the target population.

The population for the ICCS teacher survey was defined as all teachers teaching regular school subjects to the students in at least one of the classes of the target grade (generally Grade 8) at each sampled school. It included only those teachers who were teaching the target grade during the testing period and had been employed at that school since the beginning of the school year.

The samples were designed as two-stage cluster samples. In the first stage of sampling, PPS (probability proportional to size as measured by the number of students enrolled in a school) procedures were used to sample schools within each country. The numbers required in the sample to achieve the necessary precision were estimated on the basis of national characteristics. However, as a guide, each country was told to plan for a minimum sample size of 150 schools. The sampling of schools constituted the first stage of sampling both students and teachers.

Within each sampled and participating school, an intact class from the target grade was sampled randomly, and all students in that class were surveyed. The achieved student sample sizes in the participating Latin American countries ranged from 3,399 to 6,576 students and the school sample sizes from 145 to 215 schools. Appendix A documents the coverage of the target population and achieved samples for each country.

Up to 15 teachers were selected at random from all teachers teaching the target grade at each sampled school. In schools with 20 or fewer such teachers, all teachers were invited to participate. In schools with 21 or more such teachers, 15 teachers were sampled at random. Because of the intention that teacher information should not be linked to individual students, teachers from civic-related and non-civic-related subjects were surveyed. This approach differed from that used in CIVED, where nearly all of the teachers surveyed were in fields such as the humanities and social sciences.

The participation rates required for each country were 85 percent of the selected schools and 85 percent of the selected students within the participating schools, or a weighted overall participation rate of 75 percent. The same criteria were applied to the teacher sample, but the coverage was judged independently of those for the student sample. Given that all six Latin American countries met the minimum sample participation requirements, we have not had to include annotations about participation rates in the tables in this report.

The ICCS data collection in Chile and the parts of Colombia with a Southern Hemisphere school calendar took place between October and December 2008. In all other countries and the part of Colombia that follows a Northern Hemisphere school calendar, data were collected between February and May 2009.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Guatemala and Paraguay have school calendars that follow those for Southern Hemisphere countries, but it was not possible to collect data in these countries in the corresponding testing period from October to December 2008. In both countries, students were assessed at the beginning of the new school year when they were already in Grade 9. Results for these two countries accordingly are annotated with regard to this deviation from the international survey procedures.

## Overview of the Latin American report

This report on findings from the ICCS Latin American module is one of a series of publications on ICCS and its findings. Other reports include a publication detailing the initial international findings (Schulz et al., 2010a), the extended ICCS international report (Schulz et al., 2010b), and the regional reports for the European and Asian regions. These reports will be complemented by the ICCS technical report (Schulz et al., forthcoming) as well as the ICCS international database and user guide. A compilation of accounts of policy and practice in civic and citizenship education in each of the participating countries is also scheduled. The compilation will take the form of an ICCS encyclopedia.

This report for Latin America has seven chapters. These present the findings for the different aspects addressed by the Latin American instrument as well as selected findings from the ICCS international cognitive test and student questionnaires. Each chapter concludes with a summary of findings.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, we summarize the national contexts for civic and citizenship education in the six Latin American countries that participated in the regional module. Here, we address basic demographic, economic, and political features. We also provide information about the education system and how the countries were approaching civic and citizenship education.

Chapter 3 reports on data and findings from the international and Latin American cognitive tests. While the regional cognitive items were designed to measure cognitive abilities similar to those measured by the international test, their content referred to aspects of particular importance for the region. The chapter describes the extent and variation of civic knowledge in the region and how much students know about specific cognitive aspects as measured in the regional test.

Chapter 4 examines students' views of public institutions and government, including trust in institutions, support for political parties, and acceptance of corrupt practices. Students' attitudes toward authoritarian government are also covered.

Chapter 5 describes students' perceptions of different aspects related to a peaceful coexistence in the Latin American region. It includes students' attitudes toward their own countries, their sense of Latin American identity, their acceptance of minority groups, their experience of abuse and/or violence, and their attitudes toward the use of violence.

Chapter 6, which describes aspects of the learning context for civic and citizenship education in Latin America, is concerned with the role of the family context (parental occupational status and parental interest), and the role of the school context (school management, organization, student participation, and discussion of social issues at school). The chapter also considers the community context (school location and community resources).

In the final chapter, Chapter 7, we summarize the main findings from the preceding chapters that are specific to the Latin American region.

We conclude the report with a preliminary discussion of the possible implications of our findings for policy and practice related to civic and citizenship education in Latin America.





# Contexts for civic and citizenship education in Latin America

The ICCS assessment framework (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008) explicitly recognizes the importance of the wider community, which comprises influences at national, regional, and local levels, for civic and citizenship education. Important national influences on civic and citizenship education include the historical background and the political system in each country as well as the general structure of its education system.

This chapter describes the national contexts for civic and citizenship education in the six Latin American ICCS countries that participated in the Latin American regional module. It relates to one of ICCS's general research questions, Research Question 5— “What aspects of schools and education systems are related to knowledge about, and attitudes to, civics and citizenship?”— and, more specifically, to the sub-question regarding countries’ “general approach to civic and citizenship education, curriculum and/or program content structure and delivery.” Data presented in this chapter come either from published sources or were collected by the ICCS national contexts survey.

The online national context survey, which was directed at the researchers involved in each of the ICCS national research centers, collected detailed information on each country. This information included the structure of the education system, education policy related to civic and citizenship education, school curriculum approaches to civic and citizenship education, approaches to teacher training and assessment in relation to civic and citizenship education, and the extent of current debates and reforms in this area. Drawing upon expertise in their countries, the researchers within the national centers completed the survey during the early stage of ICCS.

In this chapter, we address three research questions specifically pertaining to the six countries that participated in the ICCS module for the Latin American region:

1. What are the general demographic, economic, and political characteristics of these countries and what characterizes their education systems?
2. What are the backgrounds to, and goals of, civic and citizenship education in these countries?
3. How is civic and citizenship education implemented in these countries?

## Characteristics of countries and their education systems

Valid interpretation of the results for the Latin American countries in this study means taking account of the differences among them. These differences relate to demographic factors, including the economic wealth and social composition of the countries’ populations. The need to consider differences in the characteristics of the countries’ political systems is also particularly relevant within the context of a study of civic and citizenship education.

Reimers (2007) identified a series of social problems that have implications for civic and citizenship education in the Latin American region. These include persistent poverty and inequality, the expansion of criminality and violence, and corrupt practices in government and bureaucracies. Cox (2010) emphasized public distrust in institutions and low citizen participation as risks for the sustainability of democracy in these countries. However, he also cited increases in the number of individuals participating in education as a potential positive factor for the functioning of democracy.

Table 2.1 presents a number of demographic and economic characteristics of the six Latin American countries that participated in the regional module. The first column of the table shows considerable differences in population size, ranging from about 6 million inhabitants in Paraguay to over 112 million in Mexico.



The next column shows scores, international ranks, and classifications according to the Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup> The HDI scores range from 0.704 in Guatemala to 0.878 in Chile. Three of the countries (Chile, Colombia, and Mexico) can be classified as having “high” human development whereas the other three countries (the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Paraguay) fall in the “medium” human development category. These differences are also reflected in the variation in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (Column 3), which ranges from \$US1,997 in Paraguay to \$US 9,878 in Chile.

*Table 2.1: Selected demographic and economic characteristics of Latin American ICCS countries*

| Country            | Population Size<br>(in thousands) | Human<br>Development Index<br>(value, rank, and<br>category) | Gross Domestic<br>Product<br>(GDP) per Capita<br>(in USD \$) | Corruption<br>Perceptions Index<br>(index value and<br>international rank) | Homicide<br>Statistics<br>(number per 100,000<br>inhabitants by year) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chile              | 16,746                            | 0.878 (44) High                                              | 9,878                                                        | 7.2 (21)                                                                   | 8.1 (2008)                                                            |
| Colombia           | 44,205                            | 0.807 (77) High                                              | 4,724                                                        | 3.5 (78)                                                                   | 38.8 (2007)                                                           |
| Dominican Republic | 9,824                             | 0.777 (90) Medium                                            | 3,772                                                        | 3.0 (101)                                                                  | 21.5 (2007)                                                           |
| Guatemala          | 13,550                            | 0.704 (122) Medium                                           | 2,536                                                        | 3.2 (91)                                                                   | 45.2 (2006)                                                           |
| Mexico             | 112,469                           | 0.854 (53) High                                              | 9,715                                                        | 3.1 (98)                                                                   | 11.6 (2008)                                                           |
| Paraguay           | 6,376                             | 0.761 (101) Medium                                           | 1,997                                                        | 2.2 (146)                                                                  | 12.2 (2007)                                                           |

**Notes:**

Data for population size relate to 2010 unless otherwise stated and were taken from the Population Division of the U.S. Census Bureau.  
Data for Human Development Index and for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per Capita were taken from the *Human Development Report 2009* and relate to 2007.  
Data for Corruptions Perceptions Index were taken from the 2010 publication of Transparency International.  
Data for homicide rates were taken from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

**Sources:**

Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/> [12/08/10]  
Human Development Report 2009—Human Development Index: <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/87.html> [09/06/10]  
Human Development Report 2009—GDP per capita (\$US): <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/152.html> [09/06/10]  
Transparency International: <http://www.transparency.org>  
United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC): <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/homicide.html>

Given the relevance of corruption (or lack of transparency in government) in the Latin American region, Table 2.1 also includes data on the international Corruptions Perceptions Index (CPI), which scores countries on a scale from 10 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt).<sup>2</sup> The data column (Column 4) shows both the scores and the international ranking. The scores for the six countries range from 2.2 in Paraguay (ranked 146 out of 178) to 7.2 in Chile (ranked 21 out of 178). The relatively low scores on this index for all countries except Chile indicate comparatively high levels of perceived corrupt practices.

Another important aspect viewed as relevant for the Latin American region is the level of violent crime, often associated with drug trafficking. The last column of Table 2.1 shows, for each participating country, the number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, as collected by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The data are the latest statistics available from each country, and the years of reference can be seen in brackets. According to these figures, Colombia and Guatemala have the highest homicide rates and Chile has the lowest.



- 1 The HDI, provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is “a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development including a healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living” (UNDP, 2009). The HDI ranges from 0 to 1 and has four categories: *very high* (HDI greater than 0.9), *high* (HDI between 0.8 and 0.9), *medium* (HDI between 0.5 and 0.8), and *low* (HDI less than 0.5). The HDI is also used as one of the means of classifying a country as *developed* (very high HDI) or *developing* (all other HDI categories).
- 2 The Corruption Perceptions Index is published annually by Transparency International and consists of an aggregate measure combining different surveys of the perceptions of corrupt practices in 178 countries.



Table 2.2 shows selected political characteristics for the six countries, including voter turnout at the last presidential and legislative elections before the ICCS survey, whether voting is compulsory, the number of political parties in parliament, and the percentages of seats in parliament held by women.

*Table 2.2: Selected political characteristics of Latin American ICCS countries*

| Country            | Voter Turnout at Last Presidential Election (%) | Voter Turnout at Last Legislative Election (%) | Compulsory Voting (Y/N) | Number of Political Parties in Parliament | % Seats Held by Women in Parliament |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chile              | 84.4 (2006)                                     | 87.7 (2005)                                    | Yes                     | 4 <sup>a</sup>                            | 14 <sup>a</sup>                     |
| Colombia           | 40.5 (2006)                                     | 40.5 (2006)                                    | No                      | 20 <sup>a,b</sup>                         | 8 <sup>a</sup>                      |
| Dominican Republic | 71.4 (2008)                                     | 56.5 (2006)                                    | Yes                     | 3 <sup>a</sup>                            | 21 <sup>a</sup>                     |
| Guatemala          | 48.2 (2007)                                     | 60.5 (2007)                                    | No                      | 11                                        | 12                                  |
| Mexico             | 58.6 (2006)                                     | 58.9 (2006)                                    | Yes                     | 7 <sup>a</sup>                            | 28 <sup>a</sup>                     |
| Paraguay           | 60.3 (2008)                                     | 65.5 (2008)                                    | Yes                     | 8 <sup>a</sup>                            | 13 <sup>a</sup>                     |

**Notes:**

Data for voter turnout relate to elections held between 2004–2009 and are taken from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

Data relating to the number of political parties in parliament were correct from the date of the last parliamentary election in country and were taken from IPU PARLINE database on national parliaments. Alliances of a number of small parties may be counted as just one party.

Data for % seats held by women in parliament were correct as of date of last parliamentary election in country and were taken from IPU PARLINE database on national parliaments.

<sup>a</sup> Bicameral structured parliament. Data refer to Lower House.

<sup>b</sup> As at September 8, 2010, the Election Commission had not published the final results of the election in March 2010; data therefore refer to previous election period.

**Sources:**

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)—parliamentary—voter turnout: <http://www.idea.int/uid/fieldview.cfm?field=221> [09/06/10]

IPU PARLINE database on national parliaments—number of political parties in Parliament: <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp> [08/09/2010]

IPU PARLINE database on national parliaments—seats in parliament (% held by women): <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp> [08/09/2010]

The table shows considerable variation in voter turnout across the six countries. In Colombia, only about 40 percent of the country's eligible citizens voted in the national election, but in Chile the percentage was above 80. Although voting is compulsory in four of the six countries, the degree to which each enforces compulsory voting likely differs.

The number of parties in parliament varies between three (in the Dominican Republic) and 20 in Colombia. The percentage of women in parliament is highest in Mexico, with 28 percent, and lowest in Colombia (8%).

Table 2.3 records selected characteristics of each country's education system. These include the adult literacy rate, public expenditure on education in percentages of GDP, the years of compulsory education, and the proportions of children enrolled in primary and secondary education.

Adult literacy rates are lowest in Guatemala where about one quarter of the population is reported as illiterate, and highest in Chile, with over 96 percent of adults being literate, followed by Paraguay, with almost 95 percent. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP ranges between 2.2 percent in the Dominican Republic and 4.8 percent in Mexico.

In three countries, education is compulsory for nine years, whereas in Chile and Mexico children are required to attend education for 12 years. However, in Mexico, this number includes years in pre-primary education.

In five of the six countries, 90 percent or more of the corresponding age groups are enrolled in primary education; only in the Dominican Republic is the percentage less than 85. When looking at the number of adolescents enrolled in secondary education, we can see considerably more variation, with the range extending from less than 40 percent in Guatemala to over 85 percent in Chile. The numbers of years that children spend in primary and secondary education<sup>3</sup> are fairly similar across the countries, but in Colombia primary education is one year less than in other countries.





Table 2.3: Selected education characteristics of Latin American ICCS countries

| Country            | Adult Literacy Rate (%) | Public Expenditure on Education (% of GDP) | Years of Compulsory Education | Percentage of Corresponding Age Group in Primary Education (length in years in brackets) | Percentage of Corresponding Age Group in Secondary Education (length in years in brackets) |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chile              | 96.5                    | 3.4                                        | 12                            | 94.4 (6)                                                                                 | 85.3 (6)                                                                                   |
| Colombia           | 92.7                    | 3.9                                        | 10                            | 90.3 (5)                                                                                 | 70.3 (6)                                                                                   |
| Dominican Republic | 89.1                    | 2.2                                        | 9                             | 83.6 (6)                                                                                 | 59.1 (6)                                                                                   |
| Guatemala          | 73.2                    | 3.2                                        | 9                             | 95.0 (6)                                                                                 | 38.1 <sup>a</sup> (6)                                                                      |
| Mexico             | 92.8                    | 4.8                                        | 12 <sup>b</sup>               | 97.9 (6)                                                                                 | 70.9 (6)                                                                                   |
| Paraguay           | 94.6                    | 4.0                                        | 9                             | 92.4 <sup>a</sup> (6)                                                                    | 57.7 <sup>a</sup> (6)                                                                      |

**Notes:**

Data for adult literacy rate were taken from the *Human Development Report 2009*, relate to 2007, and refer to the % of those aged 15 and above, unless otherwise stated.

Data for public expenditure on education relate to 1999–2006 and were taken from the *CIA World Factbook*.

Data for years of compulsory education were taken from the ICCS National Contexts Survey.

Data for secondary education enrolment were taken from CEPALSTAT and refer to 2007 unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>a</sup> Data refer to the year 2006.

<sup>b</sup> Years include pre-primary education.

**Sources:**

*Human Development Report 2009*—adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and above): <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/89.html> [09/06/10]

*CIA World Factbook*—field listing—education expenditures: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2206.html?countryName=&countryCode=&regionCode=++> [09/06/10]

CEPALSTAT—educational statistics: <http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idAplicacion=1&idTema=2&idioma=>

Other differences regarding the structure of educational programs also exist. In Paraguay, for example, students attend primary and lower secondary programs encompassed within one school type.

## Background and aims of civic and citizenship education

As Cox, Jaramillo, and Reimers (2005) point out, civic and citizenship education cannot be disassociated from the historical context of the country where it is taught. Past and/or current conflicts and problems need to be embedded in the curriculum if the learning experience is to be authentic. Cox (2010) identifies several threats to democracy that clearly emerge from the history of those countries and that provide important themes for Latin American civic and citizenship education. Among these are authoritarian forms of government and issues related to the transition from dictatorship to democracy are two such.

Since the 1990s, the role education can play in strengthening democracy has received official recognition throughout Latin America (Reimers, 2007). Citizenship education has seen a general shift from an exclusive focus on knowledge about politics, laws, and nations toward a broader conception that also includes skills and attitudes as well as knowledge (Cox et al., 2005). Cox (2010) found differences with regard to the explicit aims of civic and citizenship education as defined by the six Latin American countries participating in ICCS: whereas two countries—Chile and Colombia—define general goals (in the case of Chile, these also apply to content) for this learning area, the other four countries provide detailed syllabuses of what should be learned about civics and citizenship.

The ICCS national contexts survey provided detailed information about the historical, cultural, and contextual backgrounds that have influenced civic and citizenship education in the six participating countries. The survey also provided descriptions of the main aims that each country has with respect to student learning of citizenship competencies. In this section, we describe the background to and main goals of civic and citizenship education in each of the six countries.



3 Primary and secondary education levels were defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education—ISCED (UNESCO, 1997).

In *Chile*, the implementation of civic and citizenship education was influenced by the transition from dictatorial to democratic government after 1989. The social perception of low levels of youth participation in formal activities (such as voting and participating in political parties) and of their increasing involvement in informal civil organizations (such as groups with common interests or causes) also shaped the curriculum in this learning area. The following encompass the main aims of civic and citizenship education in Chile:

- Ensuring students know their personal rights and responsibilities;
- Developing among students the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are coherent with democracy;
- Promoting students' commitment to their country, and to human rights and democracy;
- Developing students' ability to critically assess public information and to expose their own opinions;
- Providing students with opportunity to study history in a way that allows them to understand current problems;
- Promoting students' civic participation and involvement in addressing problems in their communities.

Current citizenship educational policy in *Colombia* is influenced mainly by social struggle, warfare between guerrilla, paramilitary, and armed forces (which is worsened by drug trafficking), corruption, social disintegration, and human rights violations. The high rates of aggression, bullying, and other forms of violence evident in interpersonal relationships at school and within families and communities have emphasized the need for civic and citizenship education. The main aims of this form of education in Colombia are the following:

- Empowering schools so that they can improve their capability to establish and carry on school projects and school improvement plans;
- Achieving higher levels of student learning for all students;
- Strengthening school governance;
- Developing the competencies—and not just the knowledge—that individuals need to live in harmony with others in society;
- Developing the cognitive, emotional, communicative, and moral development skills and attitudes that help to build peaceful relationships, democratic participation, responsibility, and acknowledgement of cultural differences, at both the interpersonal and the community level.

In the *Dominican Republic*, civic and citizenship education faces the challenge of changing institutional and cultural practices characterized by authoritarianism and exclusion of large sectors of the population. This situation is a product of the colonial heritage of the country and its long history of political dictatorships and increasing social inequality.

One of the most important historical events in the development of civic and citizenship education in the Dominican Republic was its 10-year plan (1992–2002) for education (*Plan Decenal de Educación*), which was a product of participation and consensus among different sectors of society. In 1999, the country established a program for civic education because educational stakeholders considered the cross-curricular approach assumed by the 10-year plan an insufficient means of promoting citizenship education.

The main objectives of civic and citizenship education in the Dominican Republic include:

- Promoting education in general so that individuals can lead a socially productive life that will enable them to fully exercise their rights and fulfill their duties in a democratic, pluralist, and participatory society;



- Enabling students to critically identify and analyze collective needs and goals and to promote and participate in processes of decision-making and of co-management in school and community environments;
- Developing students' democratic attitudes and leadership in decision-making through active, critical, reflective participation as people committed not only to themselves, their families and communities but also to their work and to society in general.

In *Guatemala*, cultural and ethnic diversity has historically been reflected in exclusion for large segments of the population. Educational policy in civics and citizenship has also been influenced by the heritage of a civil war that lasted for 30 years and a high crime rate that developed after the signing of the peace agreements that formally ended the armed conflict. Social and economic disparities have caused further serious conflicts among groups in the country. This background stimulated an emphasis on civic and citizenship education, the primary goals of which are the following:

- Educating, not merely instructing, students;
- Developing a positive disposition among the populace toward learning;
- Promoting recognition that a priority for the country has to be that of developing, with respect to the spheres of ethics and morality, people who can act with autonomy yet responsibly within society;
- Contributing to the positive development of students' characters.

*Mexico's* long tradition in civic and citizenship education extends back to the end of the war of independence (from Spain) in the 19th century. The country's strong emphasis on national identity and national values prevailed throughout the 20th century. Globalization and the increasing importance of Mexico's relations with other countries, as well as the crisis precipitated by the authoritarian political system at the end of the 20th century, led to reform of civic and citizenship education in terms of incorporation of content relating to human rights and democratic values in the curriculum. This reform initiative also saw the scope of civic and citizenship education widened so that the needs of society and institutions could be linked to the needs of individuals. The reform furthermore stressed the important role that ethical and critical thinking play in the development of a democratic morality.

The new curriculum for civic and citizenship education in Mexico focuses on developing students' civic and ethical competencies so that these young people can contribute to democratic coexistence, participate responsibly, and consider the interests and needs of others when they make decisions.

The main aims of civic and citizenship education in Mexico are the following:

- Preparing students for living in a democracy with democratic institutions;
- Developing democracy and a democratic way of life;
- Fomenting gender equality and the establishment of fair and equitable intercultural and international relationships;
- Contributing to a sustainable way of life at both the individual and the collective level;
- Strengthening the skills, knowledge, and values needed for democratic participation;
- Preparing students to act according to democratic principles and procedures and enabling them to defend, in later life, human rights;
- Promoting obedience to the law and recognition of its significance for peaceful coexistence as well as preparing students to act critically with regard to public representatives and authorities.



The transition in *Paraguay* from dictatorial government to democracy after a long period of military dictatorship (1954–1989) had a strong influence on the country’s policies relating to civic and citizenship education. Paraguay views education as playing an important role in the country’s efforts to construct a new society and a democratic culture. The main goals of civic and citizenship education in Paraguay include:

- Developing knowledge and concerns about human rights;
- Developing a citizenship for democratic participation;
- Eliminating any form of discrimination as well as promoting plurality within society and a respect for differences;
- Developing a gender perspective in social relations.

A look across the background and aims of civic and citizenship education in these six countries makes apparent several major aspects:

- The general interest in most countries in sustainable development and the environment as well as in globalization;
- The theme of internal violent conflict—of particular relevance in Colombia and Guatemala;
- The social and political exclusion of large parts of the population that is prevalent in most of the countries;
- The strengthening of a democratic citizenship culture associated with plurality and tolerance within these societies.

### **Approaches to civic and citizenship education**

In Latin America, the traditional focus in civic and citizenship education on teaching students about institutions, patriotic symbols, and the functioning of government is giving way to thinking that embraces the additional inclusion of the attitudes and skills needed for active and responsible participation in society (Reimers, 2007).

In his comparison of curricula for the six Latin American countries in the regional module, Cox (2010) found that “institutions” made up little of the curricular content and that neither common welfare nor social cohesion received a lot of attention. However, there was a shift toward emphasizing interpersonal relations and attitudes toward others in the community as important for peaceful coexistence in society. Four of the six countries (i.e., other than Chile and Mexico), gave more importance in their curricula to “civics” (in terms of interpersonal or inter-group relationships) than to “citizenship” (citizens’ relationship with state and government).

When asked about the priority that is assigned to civic and citizenship education in current educational policy and reform, members of the ICCS national centers in three countries (Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico) said it had high priority. However, those from the other three countries (Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay) saw this area of learning as having medium priority.

According to reports from the national centers, all six countries included extra-curricular activities, student participation, school ethos, culture and values, parent/community involvement, school governance, school–community links, and student and teacher involvement in the community as contexts for civic and citizenship education.

In Chile, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, every public and subsidized school must have a school board that represents the school’s community (teachers, parents, students). In Guatemala, schools now have to form committees composed of teachers and parents to manage



school resources. Mexico, however, has only general recommendations regarding school governance. In Paraguay, although schools are expected to establish school councils in order to encourage student participation, the guidelines at hand on this matter are only general.

Student participation at school is often viewed as an important element of civic learning in education (see, for example, Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008). In Chile, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, student representation via elected representatives is mandatory and school boards include student spokespersons. In the other three countries, student participation is encouraged but not compulsory.

Table 2.4 shows the approaches to civic and citizenship education in the lower-secondary schools of the six Latin American ICCS countries. In all six countries, civic and citizenship education is defined either as a specific subject or as integrated into several subjects.<sup>4</sup> In the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Paraguay, civic and citizenship education is taught as a specific subject and is also integrated into other subjects. In Chile, Colombia, and Guatemala, civic and citizenship education forms part of the curriculum of other subjects.

In all six countries, extra-curricular activities form part of the curriculum for this learning area. With the exception of Paraguay, civic and citizenship education is seen as cross-curricular<sup>5</sup> and as encompassing assemblies and special events as well as classroom experiences and ethos.

Three of the six countries specify the amount of instructional time to be spent on civic and citizenship education in the ICCS target grade. The Dominican Republic mandates one hour per week of “moral and civic education.” Mexico requires that about 10 percent of time in

*Table 2.4: Approaches to civic and citizenship education in the curriculum for lower-secondary education in Latin American ICCS countries*

| Country               | Approaches to Civic and Citizenship Education in the Curriculum for Lower-Secondary Education |                             |                            |                                  |                  |                               |                             |                            |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                       | Specific subject (compulsory)                                                                 | Specific subject (optional) | Name of curriculum subject | Integrated into several subjects | Cross-curricular | Assemblies and special events | Extra-curricular activities | Classroom experience/ethos |
| Chile                 |                                                                                               |                             | N/A                        | ●                                | ●                | ●                             | ●                           | ●                          |
| Colombia <sup>1</sup> | *                                                                                             | *                           | Standards of Citizenship   | ●                                | ●                | *                             | *                           | ●                          |
| Dominican Republic    | ●                                                                                             |                             | Moral and Civic Education  | ●                                | ●                | ●                             | ●                           | ●                          |
| Guatemala             |                                                                                               |                             | N/A                        | ●                                | ●                | ●                             | ●                           | ●                          |
| Mexico                | ●                                                                                             |                             | Civic and Ethics Formation | ●                                | ●                | ●                             | ●                           | ●                          |
| Paraguay              | ●                                                                                             |                             | Ethics and Civic Formation | ●                                |                  |                               | ●                           |                            |

**Approaches:**

● For all study programs and school types

\* For some study programs

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> Data relate to the ICCS target grade because there are differences in approach between grades within the lower-secondary phase. Civic and citizenship education is organized as cross-curricular projects at the school level.

**Source:** ICCS 2009 National Contexts Survey; reference year is 2008/2009.



4 In countries where civic and citizenship education is taught as content integrated into subjects, such as history and the social sciences, the curricular content of this learning area is studied as part of these subjects. For example, knowledge about the political system of a country might be studied as part of the subject history whereas citizen participation might form part of the subject social studies.

5 Cross-curricular teaching of civic and citizenship education means that this learning area is understood as cutting through traditional subject matters and that related topics are relevant for the teaching of all subjects. For example, encouragement of student participation at school might be viewed as the responsibility of all subject teachers as well as of school management.

general and within vocational lower-secondary schooling in particular be given to this area, whereas the time given over to it in Paraguay is two hours weekly. In Chile and Guatemala, instructional time is allocated only to those subjects that have civic and citizenship education content integrated into them. In Colombia, this learning area is positioned as part of school projects managed autonomously by schools. The amount of instruction time therefore varies across schools.

With the exception of Guatemala, students in lower-secondary schools are assessed in civic and citizenship education, with the assessment methods including written examinations, written tasks or essays, tests, projects, presentations, and student responses in class. However, not all of these assessment methods are mandatory: in some countries, civics and citizenship content is assessed only as part of civic-related subjects such as the social sciences.

In Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, civic and citizenship education is evaluated through visits by school inspectors and/or self-evaluation. In Chile, evaluation takes place as part of the country's national assessment program, which includes an assessment of social sciences, given that this learning area is the one that tends to incorporate civics and citizenship content.

With the exception of Guatemala, parents in all countries receive information about civic and citizenship education at school from teachers, school managers, and education ministry brochures. Some countries have in place public awareness campaigns. Ministry websites and parents' associations also keep parents informed about this learning area.

In three countries (Chile, Colombia, and Mexico), educational policy on civic and citizenship education was being debated at the time of the ICCS survey. In Chile, debate about this learning area is associated with the secondary school movement, which has strengthened since 2006, as well as with decreasing participation in elections. In Colombia, national attention tends to focus on civic-related matters in terms of discussion about educational policy, teachers disagreeing with the need to have national standards in this learning area, and media claims and commentary that the country needs better learning environments. In Mexico, discussions concern teaching students about gender rights and rights for people with different sexual orientations. Discussion also focuses on which values should be included in the curriculum.

In the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay, the respective curricula for civic and citizenship education were being revised at the time of the ICCS survey. In Chile, the curriculum is constantly revised so that its content aligns with changes in society. Curriculum reform in the Dominican Republic has included the establishment of performance indicators.

School approaches to civic and citizenship education were also being revised at the time of the ICCS survey in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Mexico.

## Summary

The comparison of country characteristics for the six Latin American ICCS countries shows notable differences with regard to population size, economic strength, and human development. There are also considerable differences with regard to perceived corruption and homicide rates. Despite this diversity, the countries in the region can be characterized, on average, as having relatively low levels of economic strength and development as well as relatively high homicide rates, and high levels of perceived corrupt practices.

All six countries have presidential forms of government but there are marked differences with regard to voter turnout, fragmentation of parties, and the numbers of seats in parliament held by females.





The characteristics of the countries' education systems differ considerably. In all but one country, adult literacy rates are quite high. However, in all but one country, attendance in secondary education among the corresponding age group is below 75 percent.

The background of civic and citizenship education is strongly influenced by the historical and cultural context of each country. The need to establish democratic culture and participation, limit violent conflict, include and empower formerly excluded parts of the population, and create a climate of tolerance and plurality is a main priority in the curricula of these countries.

Three of the six countries have a specific subject for this learning area; all six have integrated civic-related content into other subjects. Three of the countries view civics and citizenship as having high priority for educational policy; the other three rate it as having medium priority.

In general, all six countries saw student participation at school as an important part of civic and citizenship education. Three countries mandate elected student bodies and student representatives on the school board. School evaluations and assessments in civics and citizenship are present in some and thus not all countries. In most countries, attempts are made to inform parents about the contents and aims of civic and citizenship education.

In four of the six countries, revisions were being made at the time of the ICCS survey to civic or citizenship education within the school curriculum of the ICCS target grade or to school approaches to this learning area. In addition, in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, educational policy for civic and citizenship education was the subject of public debate.

These various developments are evidence of the considerable attention that the six Latin American ICCS countries have paid to this learning area during the first decade of the 21st century. They also provide evidence of the importance that these countries are currently assigning to civic-related issues.





## CHAPTER 3:

# Students' civic knowledge

Our focus in this chapter is on the levels of students' civic knowledge in the six Latin American countries. In it, we draw on data from both the international assessment and the Latin American cognitive test. The findings presented here relate to one of the general ICCS research questions—Question 1, which asks about the extent of variation existing among and within countries with respect to student knowledge and understanding of civics and citizenship as defined in the ICCS assessment framework (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008).

The chapter also seeks to examine aspects of civic knowledge with particular relevance to the Latin American region. As such, we consider findings relating to three questions specific to the Latin American region:

- To what extent does the civic knowledge of Latin American students vary across countries in the region?
- How does the civic knowledge of these students compare to the civic knowledge of students in the other countries that participated in ICCS (i.e., the international average ICCS civic knowledge score)?
- To what extent do students demonstrate civic knowledge about specific issues relevant in the Latin America region?

Two previous IEA international studies assessed civic knowledge. In 1971, the Civic Education Study (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975) assessed 14-year-olds in nine countries using a 47-item test of civic knowledge. The 1999 CIVED study incorporated two tests of civic knowledge—a 38-item test for 14-year-old students in 28 countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001), and a 42-item test for 17- to 18-year olds in 16 countries (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002). In addition to preparing an international civic knowledge test, the ICCS research team developed, for the first time in the series of IEA surveys of civic and citizenship education, a test concerned with aspects of knowledge specific to geographic regions such as Latin America.

CIVED data from lower-secondary students in 1999 showed rather low levels of knowledge and skills in Chile and Colombia, the only two Latin American countries that participated in this study (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004). A survey that included some CIVED questions and was undertaken in Mexico indicated that in this country fewer than half of the surveyed lower-secondary students understood the concept of representative government. They also had similarly low levels of knowledge of the country's constitution, laws, and political institutions (Guevara & Tirado, 2006).

We begin this chapter by discussing how the ICCS research team measured and described civic knowledge. We then present selected example items from the Latin American student test and compare the percentages of correct responses across the six participating countries in this region. In the next section of the chapter, we explore the performance of the students in the Latin American countries. We compare national averages within the region as well as regional performance levels against those at the international level.



## Assessing civic knowledge

The ICCS international civic knowledge test comprised 80 items, of which 79 were used to form a scale in the analysis. Seventy-three of the items had a multiple-choice format with four response options: one correct option and three distracters. The remaining six items allowed for open-ended responses, with students requested to write a short response to each question. The test, which included 17 items from the 1999 CIVED item pool, was presented in a balanced rotated cluster design, which meant that any individual student completed approximately 35 test items. In ICCS, the civic knowledge test covered aspects of civic knowledge mapped to four content domains (civic society and systems, civic principles, civic participation, civic identities) and two cognitive domains (knowing, reasoning, and analyzing) as defined in the ICCS assessment framework (Schulz et al., 2008).

The international ICCS test items were scaled using the Rasch model (Rasch, 1960). The resulting scale of civic knowledge had a high reliability of 0.84.<sup>1</sup> Plausible value methodology with full conditioning was applied to derive summary student achievement statistics (von Davier, Gonzalez, & Mislevy, 2009). The international civic knowledge reporting scale was set to a metric that had a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 for equally weighted national samples. The ICCS technical report (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, forthcoming) will provide more details on the scaling procedures for the test items.

Analysis of item map and student achievement data from the ICCS international civic knowledge test established three proficiency levels, each with a width of 84 points, ranging from 395 to 478 points (Level 1), 479 to 562 (Level 2), and 563 points and above (Level 3). Student scores below 395 scale points indicate civic and citizenship knowledge proficiency below the level targeted by the assessment instrument. The scale is hierarchical in the sense that civic knowledge becomes more sophisticated as student achievement progresses up the scale. However, it is also developmental because of the assumption that any given student is probably able to demonstrate achievement of the scale content below his or her measured level of achievement.

Table 3.1 provides a detailed description of each of the proficiency levels. Each description gives examples of the types of learning content and cognitive processes that students employ when responding to items from that level. The table includes descriptions of the scale's contents and the nature of the progression between each of the proficiency levels.

## Student performance on the Latin American civic knowledge items

The Latin American ICCS civic knowledge test consisted of 16 multiple-choice items, each of which focused on aspects of knowledge specifically relevant for the Latin American region. As was the situation with the development of the international civic knowledge test, the development of items for the Latin American test was guided by the ICCS assessment framework. The test was administered to students in all countries participating in the Latin American regional module after they had completed the international student test and questionnaire.

The items performed similarly to the items in the international dataset, and the range of item difficulties covered all three proficiency levels. Although the test items were developed for students in Latin American countries and thus addressed aspects that might not be relevant in other geographical regions of the world, the regional test items were designed to measure the same content and cognitive dimensions as those in the international test. Responses to these items therefore reflected the same latent construct of civic knowledge.



<sup>1</sup> The reliability estimate was derived from the ACER ConQuest software and is based on the average inter-correlation of plausible values.

*Table 3.1: List of proficiency levels with text outlining the type of knowledge and understanding at each level of the international civic knowledge scale*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Level 3: 563 score points and above</b></p> <p>Students working at Level 3 make connections between the processes of social and political organization and influence, and the legal and institutional mechanisms used to control them. They generate accurate hypotheses on the benefits, motivations, and likely outcomes of institutional policies and citizens' actions. They integrate, justify, and evaluate given positions, policies, or laws based on the principles that underpin them. Students demonstrate familiarity with broad international economic forces and the strategic nature of active participation.</p> <p><i>Students working at Level 3, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify likely strategic aims of a program of ethical consumption</li> <li>• Suggest mechanisms by which open public debate and communication can benefit society</li> <li>• Suggest related benefits of widespread cognitive intercultural understanding in society</li> <li>• Justify the separation of powers between the judiciary and parliament</li> <li>• Relate the principle of fair and equal governance to laws regarding disclosure of financial donations to political parties</li> <li>• Evaluate a policy with respect to equality and inclusiveness</li> <li>• Identify the main feature of free market economies and multinational company ownership.</li> </ul>                                                          |
| <p><b>Level 2: 479 to 562 score points</b></p> <p>Students working at Level 2 demonstrate familiarity with the broad concept of representative democracy as a political system. They recognize ways in which institutions and laws can be used to protect and promote a society's values and principles. They recognize the potential role of citizens as voters in a representative democracy, and they generalize principles and values from specific examples of policies and laws (including human rights). Students demonstrate understanding of the influence that active citizenship can have beyond the local community. They generalize the role of the individual active citizen to broader civic societies and the world.</p> <p><i>Students working at Level 2, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate the independence of a statutory authority to maintenance of public trust in decisions made by the authority</li> <li>• Generalize the economic risk to developing countries of globalization from a local context</li> <li>• Identify that informed citizens are better able to make decisions when voting in elections</li> <li>• Relate the responsibility to vote with the representativeness of a democracy</li> <li>• Describe the main role of a legislature/parliament</li> <li>• Define the main role of a constitution</li> <li>• Relate the responsibility for environmental protection to individual people.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Level 1: 395 to 478 score points</b></p> <p>Students working at Level 1 demonstrate familiarity with equality, social cohesion, and freedom as principles of democracy. They relate these broad principles to everyday examples of situations in which protection of or challenge to the principles are demonstrated. Students also demonstrate familiarity with fundamental concepts of the individual as an active citizen: they recognise the necessity for individuals to obey the law; they relate individual courses of action to likely outcomes; and they relate personal characteristics to the capacity of an individual to effect civic change.</p> <p><i>Students working at Level 1, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate freedom of the press to the accuracy of information provided to the public by the media</li> <li>• Justify voluntary voting in the context of freedom of political expression</li> <li>• Identify that democratic leaders should be aware of the needs of the people over whom they have authority</li> <li>• Recognise that the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is intended to apply to all people</li> <li>• Generalize about the value of the internet as a communicative tool in civic participation</li> <li>• Recognize the civic motivation behind an act of ethical consumerism.</li> </ul>                                                                               |

Multi-dimensional analysis showed a high correlation between the international and regional test components ( $r = 0.84$ ). As such, the regional items were calibrated on the ICCS international civic knowledge scale so that the item parameters were comparable with the ICCS international civic knowledge scale and could be reported against the international proficiency levels.

Tables 3.2 to 3.6 present the results of example items from the Latin American cognitive test. The items were chosen because, among other things, they represent a range of levels of difficulty across proficiency levels. Each table reports the percentage of students who answered the item correctly per country as well as the regional average (where the mean of each country is weighted equally). An asterisk indicates the correct response option for each item.

Example Item 1 (Table 3.2) assessed student understanding of the consequences of Latin American dictatorships. On average, across all participating countries, only a quarter of students answered this item correctly by stating that many dissidents had to flee from countries ruled by dictators. The proportion of correct answers was equivalent to the percentage expected if all students had responded by simply guessing. Across countries, the national percentages of students answering this item correctly ranged from 17 percent in Mexico to 36 percent in Paraguay. Of all the items within the Latin American cognitive test, this was the one that students found most difficult to answer correctly. Correct responses to this item indicated a Level 3 standard of proficiency on the ICCS civic knowledge scale.

Example Item 2 (Table 3.3) required students to recognize the characteristics of an authoritarian government. On average, across all countries, 41 percent of students answered this item correctly by choosing the option that citizens' opinions do not have an influence on government decisions made under authoritarian government. More than half of all students in Chile answered this question correctly, while about a third of students in Guatemala were able to identify the correct answer. This item corresponded to a Level 2 standard of proficiency on the ICCS civic knowledge scale.

Table 3.4 presents example Item 3, an item that required students to think about the implications of organized crime for people within their country. Here, identifying the weakening of the power of the state as an effect of organized crime constituted the correct option. With the exception of the Dominican Republic (34% of students), all the countries had national percentages of correct responses relatively close to 50 percent. The average percentage correct across all countries was 47 percent. Correct responses to this item indicated a Level 2 standard of proficiency on the international ICCS civic knowledge scale.

Table 3.2: Example regional release item 1 with overall percent correct

| Example Item 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Country                     | Percent Correct Response |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p><b>Which of the following was one of the consequences of last century's Latin American dictatorships?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poverty was significantly reduced in countries ruled by dictatorships.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Many new immigrants settled in countries ruled by dictatorships.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Many common criminals were freed in countries ruled by dictatorships.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Many dissidents had to flee from countries ruled by dictatorships. *</p> | Chile                       | 32 (0.9)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Colombia                    | 21 (0.6)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Dominican Republic          | 27 (1.0)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 18 (0.8)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Mexico                      | 17 (0.6)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 36 (1.5)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Latin American ICCS average | 25 (0.4)                 |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Table 3.3: Example regional release item 2 with overall percent correct

| Example Item 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Country                            | Percent Correct Response |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>What characterizes an authoritarian government?</b><br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fewer police officers and military personnel are needed because the country is at peace.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Citizens' opinions have no influence on government decisions. *<br><input type="checkbox"/> Citizens must take the law into their own hands.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Citizens vote directly on laws . | Chile                              | 54                       | (1.2)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Colombia                           | 46                       | (1.1)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Dominican Republic                 | 35                       | (1.1)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Guatemala <sup>1</sup>             | 33                       | (1.5)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Mexico                             | 37                       | (1.0)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Paraguay <sup>1</sup>              | 40                       | (1.1)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Latin American ICCS average</b> | <b>41</b>                | <b>(0.5)</b> |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Table 3.4: Example regional release item 3 with overall percent correct

| Example Item 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Country                            | Percent Correct Response |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Which of the following is one way organized crime groups affect the lives of all citizens?</b><br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Improving the financial situation of citizens.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Helping citizens to feel safer.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening reliability on the government.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Weakening the power of the State. * | Chile                              | 44                       | (1.1)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Colombia                           | 54                       | (0.7)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Dominican Republic                 | 34                       | (1.5)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Guatemala <sup>1</sup>             | 50                       | (1.7)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Mexico                             | 56                       | (1.0)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Paraguay <sup>1</sup>              | 43                       | (1.6)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Latin American ICCS average</b> | <b>47</b>                | <b>(0.5)</b> |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Example Item 4 (Table 3.5) assessed students' understanding of state responsibility for administering the justice system by asking about the appropriateness of a situation where citizens resort to vigilante justice. On average, across countries, the question was answered correctly by 59 percent of the students. They chose the option that such behavior is inappropriate because the state is the only entity responsible for administering justice. National percentages ranged from 43 percent to 68 percent. Correct responses to this item indicated a Level 1 standard of proficiency on the ICCS civic knowledge scale.

Table 3.5: Example regional release item 4 with overall percent correct

| Example Item 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Country                            | Percent Correct Response |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Residents of a town thought a person was guilty of stealing. They caught him and beat him up before the police arrived. Why is the behavior of the residents inappropriate?</b><br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Because the State is the only entity responsible for administering justice. *<br><input type="checkbox"/> Because theft is not a grave enough offence to justify beating someone.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Because the punishment was not severe enough.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Because only the police are authorized to beat this person for what he did. | Chile                              | 62                       | (1.1)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Colombia                           | 68                       | (1.0)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Dominican Republic                 | 43                       | (1.2)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Guatemala <sup>1</sup>             | 67                       | (1.0)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Mexico                             | 59                       | (0.8)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Paraguay <sup>1</sup>              | 56                       | (1.2)        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Latin American ICCS average</b> | <b>59</b>                | <b>(0.4)</b> |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Table 3.6 shows the item wording and percentages of correct responses for example Item 5, which assessed the ability of students to identify the reason for banning the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors. The item difficulty of this item, which was one of the easiest items in the Latin American test instrument, corresponded to Proficiency Level 1 on the ICCS civic knowledge scale. An average of more than 70 percent of students answered this item correctly by choosing the option that the reasons were a consequence of the belief that young people are not mature enough to decide about tobacco and alcohol consumption. The national percentages of correct responses ranged from 50 percent to 85 percent.

Table 3.6: Example regional release item 5 with overall percent correct

| Example Item 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Country                            | Percent Correct Response |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p><b>Why do some countries enact laws banning the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To keep young people from contaminating the environment with cigarette butts and empty alcohol containers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because they believe young people should save this money to buy food, clothing, and educational material.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To keep young people from buying tobacco and alcohol for their parents.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because they believe young people are not mature enough to make decisions concerning the use of tobacco and alcohol. *</p> | Chile                              | 85 (1.0)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Colombia                           | 83 (0.9)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Dominican Republic                 | 50 (1.2)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Guatemala <sup>1</sup>             | 64 (1.3)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Mexico                             | 78 (0.9)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Paraguay <sup>1</sup>              | 69 (1.3)                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Latin American ICCS average</b> | <b>71 (0.4)</b>          |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

The location of each of the example items on the international civic knowledge scale is presented in Table 3.7. The different levels of shading represent the different proficiency levels. The item locations were determined using a response probability of 0.62. Thus, for example, a student with a measured ability of 529 on the international civic knowledge scale would have a 62 percent likelihood of answering release item 2 successfully. He or she would have a less than 62 percent chance of correctly answering release item 1 correctly and a greater than 62 percent chance of correctly answering release items 3, 4, and 5.

### Variation in civic knowledge in Latin America

International student scores were derived from the 79 international test items that were used for scaling. Table 3.8 sets out student achievement on the civic knowledge test for all Latin American countries participating in ICCS. The distribution of student scores for each country is represented graphically by the length of the bars. The table details the average age of the participating students and presents Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>2</sup> data for each of the countries.

Average performance on the civic knowledge test across the countries in the Latin American region ranged from 380 to 483; the average for the six countries was 439. Three countries (Chile, Colombia, and Mexico) had average civic knowledge scores significantly higher than the Latin American ICCS average; Paraguay and the Dominican Republic scored significantly lower.<sup>3</sup>



2 The HDI, provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is “a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development including a healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living” (UNDP, 2009). Values on the HDI lie between 0 and 1, with values above 0.9 indicating “very high development.”

3 In this report the term “significantly different” is always used with regard to the statistical significance of a difference and refers to statistical significance at  $p < .05$ .

Table 3.7: Location of regional release items on the international civic knowledge scale

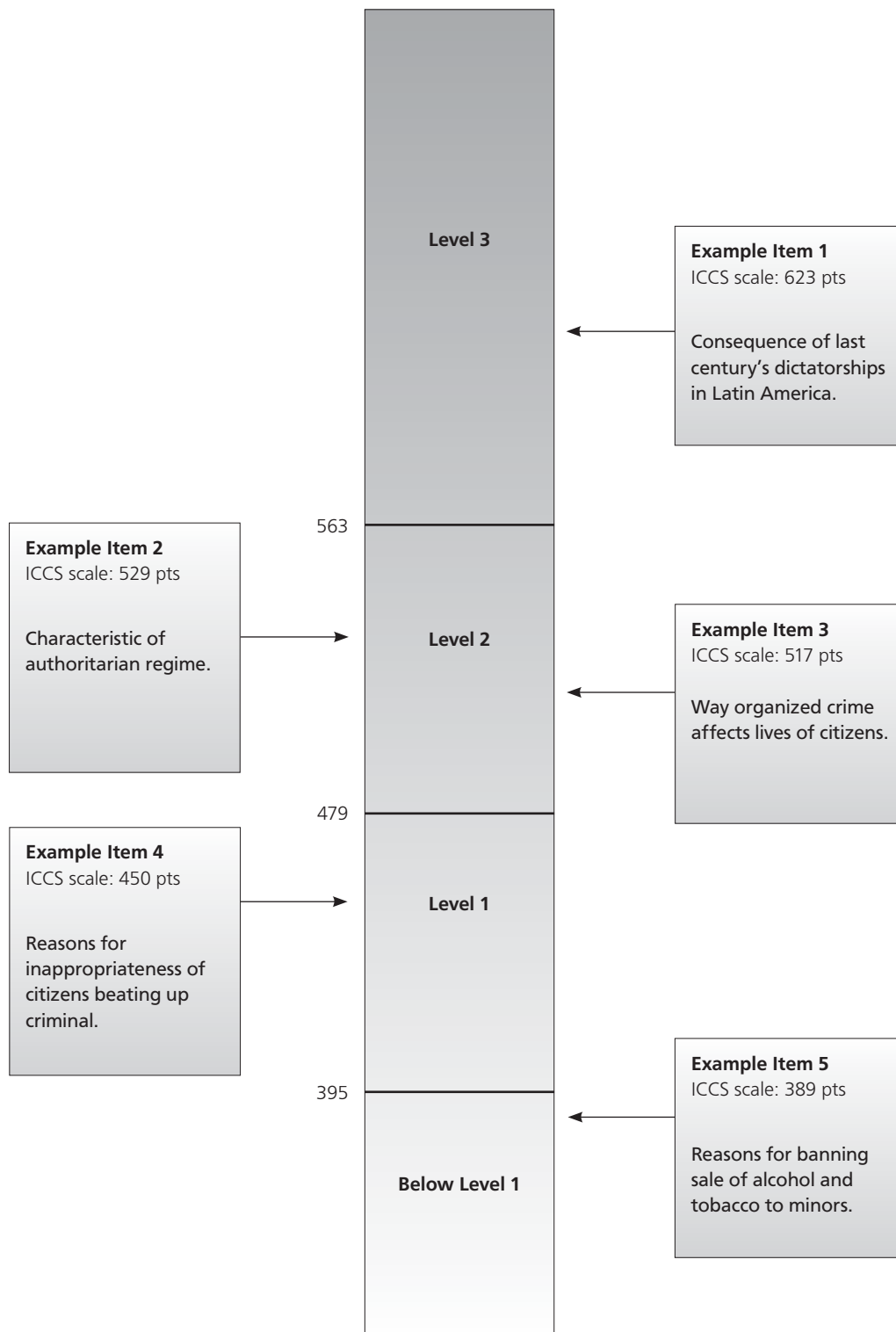
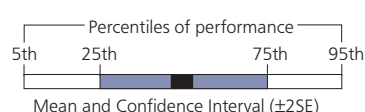




Table 3.8: Country averages for civic knowledge, average age, and Human Development Index, and percentile graph

| Country                     | Civic Knowledge |     |     |     |     |     |     | Average scale score | HDI  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|------|
|                             | Average age     | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 | 700 |                     |      |
| Chile                       | 14.2            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 483 (3.5) ▲         | 0.88 |
| Colombia                    | 14.4            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 462 (2.9) ▲         | 0.81 |
| Mexico                      | 14.1            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 452 (2.8) ▲         | 0.85 |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 15.5            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 435 (3.8)           | 0.70 |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 14.9            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 424 (3.4) ▼         | 0.76 |
| Dominican Republic          | 14.8            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 380 (2.4) ▼         | 0.78 |
| Latin American ICCS average | 14.7            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 439 (1.3)           |      |
| International ICCS average  | 14.4            |     |     |     |     |     |     | 500 (0.6)           |      |



▲ Achievement significantly higher than Latin American ICCS average  
▼ Achievement significantly lower than Latin American ICCS average

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

The three countries with the highest achievement scores all had relatively high HDI scores (HDI between 0.8 and 0.9), whereas the remaining three countries, all with relatively lower achievement scores, showed medium human development indices (HDI between 0.7 and 0.8). The average ICCS civic knowledge scale scores in all six Latin American countries were significantly below the ICCS international average (500); the Latin American average civic knowledge was more than half a standard deviation below the ICCS international average.

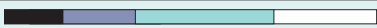
Students' average age across countries ranged from 14.1 years in Mexico to 15.5 years in Guatemala. Within the Latin American region, the countries with higher average student age were also those with students who had the lower civic knowledge scores. Schulz et al. (2010b) provide a more detailed analysis of the association between average age and civic knowledge.

Table 3.9 reports the percentages of students within each country at each proficiency level. The countries are ranked in descending order of percentages of students positioned within Proficiency Level 3 on the scale. Within the Latin American ICCS average, 68 percent of students fall within Proficiency Levels 1, 2, and 3, compared with 84 percent of students on average across all ICCS countries. On average, the scores of almost one third of the Latin American students positioned them at below Proficiency Level 1, which means that they lacked knowledge about even the broadest and most basic concepts of civics and citizenship.

The order of the countries follows a similar pattern to the order of countries in Table 3.8, which suggests that the general shape of the distribution of achievement was similar across the six countries. The majority of students from Chile had test scores at Proficiency Levels 2 and 3, indicating that these students demonstrated familiarity with more specific concepts of civics and citizenship as well as an understanding of the interconnectedness of civic and civil institutions and the processes through which they operate. In four countries (Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico), Level 1 had the highest percentages of students. In two countries (the Dominican Republic and Paraguay), the highest percentages were found among the group of students with scores below Proficiency Level 1.



Table 3.9: Percentages of students at each proficiency level across the Latin American countries

| Country                     | Below Level 1                 | Level 1                        | Level 2                        | Level 3                     |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | (fewer than 395 score points) | (from 395 to 478 score points) | (from 479 to 562 score points) | (563 score points and more) |                                                                                     |
| Chile                       | 16 (1.3)                      | 33 (1.2)                       | 32 (1.3)                       | 19 (1.1)                    |  |
| Colombia                    | 21 (1.3)                      | 36 (1.0)                       | 32 (1.1)                       | 11 (0.8)                    |  |
| Mexico                      | 26 (1.3)                      | 36 (1.1)                       | 27 (1.0)                       | 10 (0.8)                    |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 38 (1.9)                      | 35 (1.6)                       | 20 (1.2)                       | 7 (0.7)                     |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 30 (1.7)                      | 42 (1.6)                       | 22 (1.4)                       | 5 (1.2)                     |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 61 (1.6)                      | 31 (1.3)                       | 7 (0.6)                        | 1 (0.2)                     |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 32 (0.6)                      | 35 (0.5)                       | 23 (0.5)                       | 9 (0.4)                     |  |
| International ICCS average  | 16 (0.2)                      | 26 (0.2)                       | 31 (0.2)                       | 28 (0.2)                    |  |

**Notes:**

Countries ranked in descending order by percentages in Level 3.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

 Below Level 1      Level 1  
 Level 2      Level 3

## Summary

This chapter explored general civic knowledge across the countries participating in the ICCS Latin American module. It presented cross-country comparisons for selected release items from the regional civic knowledge test and also documented students' overall performance on the international civic knowledge test.

Five release items from the Latin American instrument were presented, each with varying levels of difficulty for students. The results show that fewer than half of the students were able to correctly identify a possible consequence of military dictatorships in Latin America and that in all but one country only minorities among students were able to indicate what characterizes authoritarian governments. Relatively high percentages of correct responses were found for test questions asking about reasons for the inappropriateness of vigilante justice and for banning the sale of alcohol and tobacco for minors.

On average, students from the Latin American countries performed below the international average on the international civic knowledge test. The sizeable variation among countries in mean civic knowledge scores was found to be associated with the Human Development Index values of these countries.

The majority of students in all but one country performed at Proficiency Level 1 or below of the international civic knowledge scale. The percentages of low-performing students were considerably higher than the overall ICCS average. In the Dominican Republic, the majority of students performed below Proficiency Level 1.





## CHAPTER 4:

# Students' views of public institutions and government

This chapter reports on how the students who participated in the ICCS Latin American regional module viewed public institutions and government and forms of behavior affecting the functioning of these organizations. The findings presented in this chapter relate to ICCS Research Question 3— “What is the extent of interest and disposition to engage in public and political life among adolescents and which factors within or across countries are related to it?”—and to affective-behavioral variables (attitudes) as defined in the ICCS assessment framework (Schulz, Fraillon, Losito, & Kerr, 2008).

In this chapter, we also address research questions specific to the Latin American region:

- To what extent do students express trust in civic institutions and support for political parties?
- To what extent do students endorse authoritarian forms of government or dictatorship?
- How much do students endorse corrupt practices and disobedience to the law?
- To what extent are students' perceptions of authoritarian government, corruption, and disobedience to the law related to their civic knowledge?

The data presented in this chapter were derived through use of the Latin American and international student questionnaires. We present the results as percentages for categories of single items and as score averages for scales. Appendix C outlines the scaling procedures for questionnaire items using IRT (Item Response Theory), how scales were described in item-by-score maps, and how scale score averages were graphically presented.

## Students' trust in institutions and support for political parties

Sufficiently high levels of trust in civic institutions have been widely regarded as an important aspect of democratic stability. Inglehart (1997) distinguishes between generalized interpersonal trust and institutional trust, seeing the latter as relating more to cultural and economic factors than to political stability. Klingemann (1999), however, shows that low levels of trust in political institutions are typical in societies that have recently undergone political transitions.

Studies such as the Word Values Survey that monitor citizen trust in institutions over time suggest a decline in trust in institutions among adults over the latter decades of the 20th century (Newton & Norris, 2000). Some researchers, however, denote this decrease as relatively insubstantial (see, for example, Fuchs & Klingemann, 1995). Recent studies of citizen trust in the Latin American region show relatively low levels of trust in government, congress, elected representatives, and local authorities (Valenzuela, Schwartzman, Biehl, & Valenzuela, 2008).

The international ICCS student questionnaire included a question that required students to rate their trust (“completely,” “quite a lot,” “a little,” “not at all”) in a number of civic institutions, including the national government, political parties, courts of justice, the police, the armed forces, the media, schools, and “people in general.” Table 4.1 shows the percentages of the Latin American students who expressed quite or a lot of trust in institutions in their respective countries.

On average, percentages of trust in the national government were at the same level as for the international ICCS sample (62%). These percentages ranged from only 45 percent in Guatemala to 74 percent in the Dominican Republic. Trust in political parties was somewhat lower than was the case internationally (36%); the range extended from 26 percent in Guatemala to 51 percent in the Dominican Republic.





Table 4.1: National percentages of students' trust in different civic institutions

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Trusting Completely or Quite a Lot in ... |                   |                   |            |              |            |            |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
|                             | National Government                                               | Political Parties | Courts of Justice | Police     | Armed Forces | Schools    | Media      | People In General |
| Chile                       | 65 (1.0) △                                                        | 34 (1.0)          | 56 (1.2) △        | 71 (0.9) ▲ | 81 (0.5) ▲   | 80 (0.8) ▽ | 74 (0.7) △ | 52 (0.9)          |
| Colombia                    | 62 (1.2)                                                          | 35 (1.1)          | 50 (1.0) ▽        | 55 (1.1) △ | 80 (0.7) ▲   | 87 (0.6) △ | 72 (1.0)   | 49 (0.9) ▽        |
| Dominican Republic          | 74 (1.3) ▲                                                        | 51 (1.2) ▲        | 63 (1.3) ▲        | 56 (1.3) △ | 68 (1.9)     | 88 (1.3) △ | 76 (1.0) △ | 61 (1.3) △        |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 45 (1.4) ▼                                                        | 26 (1.0) ▽        | 48 (1.3) ▽        | 33 (1.2) ▼ | 63 (1.0) ▽   | 88 (1.0) △ | 70 (1.0)   | 47 (1.1) ▽        |
| Mexico                      | 58 (1.0) ▽                                                        | 35 (1.0)          | 49 (0.9) ▽        | 43 (0.9) ▽ | 62 (1.1) ▽   | 72 (0.9) ▼ | 57 (0.8) ▼ | 47 (0.8) ▽        |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 66 (1.3) △                                                        | 32 (0.9) ▽        | 49 (1.1) ▽        | 45 (1.1) ▽ | 61 (0.9) ▽   | 88 (0.8) △ | 74 (1.5) △ | 57 (1.0) △        |
| Latin American ICCS average | 62 (0.5)                                                          | 36 (0.4)          | 53 (0.5)          | 51 (0.4)   | 69 (0.4)     | 84 (0.4)   | 70 (0.4)   | 52 (0.4)          |
| International ICCS average  | 62 (0.2)                                                          | 41 (0.2)          | 67 (0.2)          | 66 (0.2)   | 71 (0.2)     | 75 (0.2)   | 61 (0.2)   | 58 (0.2)          |

#### National percentage

▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average

#### Notes:

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

For both courts of justice and police, the percentages of student trust in the Latin American countries were lower (52% and 51% respectively) than for the ICCS averages (67% and 66% respectively). However, there was considerable variation with regard to trust in the police force. Whereas only 33 percent of students in Guatemala expressed quite a lot or a lot of trust in the police, 71 percent of the students in Chile indicated that they had quite a lot or a lot of trust in the police.

Trust in the armed forces in Latin America was at a similar level to the average across all ICCS countries, but there were differences among countries in the region. In Chile and Colombia, about 80 percent of students expressed trust in this institution. However, only about 60 percent of students were of the same opinion in Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay.

Students' average levels of trust in both schools and the media were higher in the Latin American region (84% and 70% respectively) than internationally (75% and 61% respectively). For both institutions, Mexican students had much lower levels of trust than their peers in the other countries of the region.

Only about half of the students in the Latin American countries expressed quite a lot or a lot of trust in people in general, whereas 58 percent of the students across all ICCS countries did so. The percentages for the Latin American countries ranged from 47 percent in Guatemala and Mexico to 61 percent in the Dominican Republic.

Political parties play a critical role as representatives of societal interest in democratic societies (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Gunther & Diamond, 2001). Traditionally, identification with political parties has been considered a product of age, the assumption being that identification strengthens with increasing age. However, there is evidence that, in recent times, young people have become considerably less interested and engaged in political parties than they were in the past (Dalton, 2002). There are also signs that youth sections of political parties as a traditional channel for recruitment are losing importance (see, for example, Hooghe, Stolle, & Stouthuysen, 2004).

Recent public opinion research in the Latin American region (Corral, 2010) shows that only minorities among adult citizens agree that political parties represent voters. There was considerable variation in the levels of agreement: among the countries participating in the ICCS regional module, agreement was highest in the Dominican Republic (50%) and lowest in Paraguay (24%).

The international ICCS student questionnaire included two questions that asked students whether they liked a particular political party more than others and, if they did, how much they were in favor of this party ("a little," "to some extent," "a lot"). The resulting variable, with its four categories, was designed to measure level of support for political parties.

On average, across the six countries of the region, the percentages of students without any preferences were somewhat lower (43%) than the international ICCS average (52%). However, there were considerable differences in student support for political parties within the region (see Table 4.2). In the Dominican Republic, only 23 percent had no preference and almost a third of the students expressed a lot of support for a particular political party. Fifty-nine percent of the Chilean students did not like any political party more than others, and only 9 percent expressed a lot of support for one of their parties. Just over 50 percent of students in Colombia and Paraguay did not have a preference for a particular political party.



Table 4.2: National percentages of students' support for political parties

| Country                     | Do <b>not</b> like any political party more than others | Percentages of Students Who ... |                |          |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|
|                             |                                                         | Like one party more than others |                |          |
|                             |                                                         | a little                        | to some extent | a lot    |
| Chile                       | 59 (0.9) ▲                                              | 8 (0.5)                         | 24 (0.7)       | 9 (0.5)  |
| Colombia                    | 52 (1.2) △                                              | 12 (0.5)                        | 26 (1.0)       | 10 (0.6) |
| Dominican Republic          | 23 (0.8) ▼                                              | 22 (0.7)                        | 23 (1.3)       | 32 (1.1) |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 44 (1.4)                                                | 10 (0.5)                        | 25 (1.2)       | 20 (1.1) |
| Mexico                      | 24 (0.8) ▼                                              | 29 (0.8)                        | 32 (0.9)       | 15 (0.7) |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 53 (1.1) ▲                                              | 8 (0.6)                         | 24 (0.9)       | 15 (1.0) |
| Latin American ICCS average | 43 (0.4)                                                | 15 (0.2)                        | 26 (0.4)       | 17 (0.4) |
| International ICCS average  | 52 (0.2)                                                | 9 (0.1)                         | 24 (0.2)       | 14 (0.1) |

**National percentage**

▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

## Students' attitudes toward authoritarian government and dictatorship

Research on democratic attitudes conducted in the early part of last decade among citizens in Latin America (United Nations Development Programme, 2004) showed that only 43 percent of adult citizens had clear democratic orientations and that 30 percent held ambivalent opinions. Twenty-seven percent were categorized as having non-democratic orientations. The same study revealed that majorities of adult citizens expressed support for authoritarian governments if they solved economic problems and agreed that economic development was more important than democracy. Drawing on 2007 public opinion survey data from seven countries in the region, Cox (2010) showed that respondents with higher education were much more likely than those who had only completed primary education to support democracy as the best form of government.

The ICCS regional questionnaire for Latin American countries included two questions about students' views on government, its leaders, and the power it should have. Students were asked to "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" with the following items:

- It is better for government leaders to make decisions without consulting anybody;
- People in government must enforce their authority even if it means violating the rights of some citizens;
- People in government lose part of their authority when they admit their mistakes;
- People whose opinions are different than those of the government must be considered its enemies;
- The most important opinion of a country should be that of the president;
- It is fair that the government does not comply with the law when it thinks it is not necessary;
- Concentration of power in one person guarantees order;
- The government should close communication media that are critical;
- If the president does not agree with Congress, he or she should dissolve it.





The items formed a scale that had a reliability of 0.83 (Cronbach's alpha) and was standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the pooled regional database.

Figure 4.1 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for this scale. A student with an average regional score of 50 was expected to disagree with all but two items. On average, the percentages of agreement with these items ranged from 18 percent (considering people with different opinions as enemies) to 58 percent (concentration of power in one person guaranteeing order).

Table 4.3 shows the national averages on this scale for the six countries in the region. Students in the Dominican Republic held the most positive attitudes towards authoritarian government (four points above the Latin American ICCS average) whereas the averages of students in Chile and Colombia were significantly lower than the regional ICCS average.

Table 4.3: National averages for students' attitudes toward authoritarian government overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Attitudes Toward Authoritarianism in Government |       |   |         |       |       |       |                              |       |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------------|-------|--|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
|                             | All students                                                           |       |   | Females |       | Males |       | Differences (males–females)* |       |  | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |  |  |
| Chile                       | 48                                                                     | (0.3) | ▽ | 47      | (0.4) | 49    | (0.3) | 2                            | (0.4) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Colombia                    | 48                                                                     | (0.2) | ▽ | 47      | (0.2) | 50    | (0.3) | 2                            | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 54                                                                     | (0.3) | ▲ | 53      | (0.3) | 56    | (0.4) | 3                            | (0.4) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 50                                                                     | (0.3) |   | 49      | (0.4) | 51    | (0.3) | 2                            | (0.4) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Mexico                      | 49                                                                     | (0.3) | ▽ | 47      | (0.3) | 51    | (0.4) | 4                            | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 50                                                                     | (0.2) |   | 49      | (0.3) | 52    | (0.3) | 3                            | (0.4) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50                                                                     | (0.1) |   | 49      | (0.1) | 51    | (0.1) | 3                            | (0.1) |  |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |

#### National average

▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

■ Female average score +/- confidence interval  
■ Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding authoritarian government with:

|              |
|--------------|
| Disagreement |
| Agreement    |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

In all countries, the male students' scale scores were significantly higher than those of the female students. On average, the gender difference was three scale points, which is about a third of a standard deviation.

Two of the regional questionnaire items asked students for their views of possible benefits of dictatorships. Students were asked to rate their agreement with statements that dictatorships were justified "when they bring order and safety" and "when they bring economic benefits." Table 4.4 shows the percentages of agreement with these items overall and by gender.

On average, across the countries, 71 percent of students agreed that ensuring order and safety would justify a dictatorship. Sixty-eight percent agreed that economic benefits would serve as justification. The highest percentages of agreement for both items were found in Guatemala; the lowest in Chile. However, in all countries, majorities of students supported the view that dictatorships could be justified under these two conditions. Only in Colombia and Guatemala were significant gender differences found, with males having significantly higher percentages of agreement with the view that economic benefits may justify a dictatorship.





Table 4.4: National percentages of students' agreement with justifications for dictatorships overall and by gender

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Agreeing That Dictatorships Are Justified When They Bring Order and Safety |          |          |                              | Percentages of Students Agreeing That Dictatorships Are Justified When They Bring Economic Benefits |          |          |                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|
|                             | Gender differences                                                                                 |          |          |                              | Gender differences                                                                                  |          |          |                              |
|                             | All students                                                                                       | Females  | Males    | Differences (males-females)* | All students                                                                                        | Females  | Males    | Differences (males-females)* |
| Chile                       | 65 (1.1) ▽                                                                                         | 65 (1.4) | 66 (1.3) | 1 (1.7)                      | 64 (1.0) ▽                                                                                          | 63 (1.5) | 65 (1.1) | 2 (1.8)                      |
| Colombia                    | 74 (0.7) △                                                                                         | 75 (0.9) | 73 (0.8) | -2 (1.1)                     | 70 (0.6) △                                                                                          | 69 (0.8) | 71 (1.0) | 3 (1.3)                      |
| Dominican Republic          | 70 (1.0)                                                                                           | 71 (1.2) | 71 (1.4) | 0 (1.5)                      | 66 (1.1)                                                                                            | 66 (1.4) | 66 (1.4) | 0 (1.7)                      |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 78 (0.8) △                                                                                         | 78 (1.3) | 79 (1.0) | 2 (1.5)                      | 75 (0.9) △                                                                                          | 72 (1.2) | 77 (1.3) | 4 (1.7)                      |
| Mexico                      | 69 (0.8) ▽                                                                                         | 69 (1.0) | 68 (1.1) | -1 (1.3)                     | 66 (0.7) ▽                                                                                          | 65 (1.0) | 67 (0.8) | 2 (1.2)                      |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 69 (1.0)                                                                                           | 70 (1.4) | 69 (1.5) | 0 (2.1)                      | 65 (0.9) ▽                                                                                          | 64 (1.2) | 65 (1.4) | 1 (1.8)                      |
| Latin American ICCS average | 71 (0.4)                                                                                           | 71 (0.5) | 71 (0.5) | 0 (0.6)                      | 68 (0.4)                                                                                            | 67 (0.5) | 69 (0.5) | 2 (0.6)                      |

#### National percentage

- ▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

#### Notes:

- \* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.
- ( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- <sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

## Students' perceptions of corruption and obedience to the law

Corruption is generally viewed as one of Latin America's major problems. With the exception of Chile and Uruguay, countries in this region tend to fare poorly in comparative surveys of corruption (Transparency International, 2010). Morris and Klesner (2010) assert that there is mutual causality between perceptions of corruption and trust in political institutions among citizens in Mexico. Recent comparative public opinion data from the *Latinobarómetro* survey in 18 Latin American countries show that many citizens consider bribing public servants a widespread practice in their countries. The same survey shows considerable proportions of citizens in a number of countries reporting direct experience with corruption (Morris & Blake, 2010, p. 7).

World Values Survey data have revealed Latin America as one of the regions with high levels of acceptance of corrupt practices among the population (Moreno, 2003). Data from the same source have also shown that younger adults are much more likely than older people to see corruption as justifiable (Torgler & Valev, 2004).

The Latin American student questionnaire for ICCS included a question about student views of corrupt practices in government or the public service. Students were asked to "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" with the following statements:

- It is acceptable for a civil servant to accept bribes if his/her salary is too low;
- It is acceptable for a civil servant to use the resources of the institution in which he/she works for personal benefit;
- Good candidates grant personal benefits to voters in return for their votes;
- Paying an additional amount to a civil servant in order to obtain a personal benefit is acceptable;
- It is acceptable that a civil servant helps his/her friends by giving them employment in his/her office;
- Since public resources belong to everyone, it is acceptable that those who can keep part of them.

The items formed a scale with a high reliability—0.82 (Cronbach's alpha). The scale was standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the pooled regional database. Figure 4.2 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for this scale. A student with a Latin American ICCS average score of 50 would have been likely to disagree with all but one of the items. On average, the percentages of agreement with these statements ranged from 27 percent (acceptable to accept bribes if salary is low) to 52 percent (acceptable that civil servant helps friend/family with employment).

Table 4.5 shows the scale averages overall and by gender across the six participating countries. Only the Dominican Republic had an average scale score considerably higher (five scale score points) above the Latin American ICCS average. There was little variation in scores across the other five countries. Gender differences were significant in all countries, with male students having more positive attitudes than female students toward accepting corrupt practices in government. On average, the difference between the two gender groups was two score points (about one fifth of a standard deviation).

World value surveys data show that civil morality (i.e., moral behavior and non-acceptance of breaking the law) is mixed in the Latin American region: some countries have very low scores; others have quite high scores (Letki, 2006). There is evidence that young people, in particular, are more accepting than older adults of breaking rules (Torgler & Valev, 2004).



Table 4.5: National averages for students' attitudes toward corrupt practices in government overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Attitudes Toward Corrupt Practices in Government |          |          |                              |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
|                             | All students                                                            | Females  | Males    | Differences (males–females)* | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |  |  |
| Chile                       | 49 (0.3) ▽                                                              | 47 (0.4) | 50 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Colombia                    | 48 (0.2) ▽                                                              | 47 (0.2) | 49 (0.3) | 2 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 55 (0.3) ▲                                                              | 54 (0.3) | 56 (0.3) | 3 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 50 (0.3)                                                                | 49 (0.4) | 51 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Mexico                      | 49 (0.3) ▽                                                              | 48 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 3 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 50 (0.3)                                                                | 48 (0.4) | 51 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50 (0.1)                                                                | 49 (0.1) | 51 (0.1) | 2 (0.1)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |

#### National average

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

- Female average score +/- confidence interval
- Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding corrupt practices in government with:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | Disagreement |
|  | Agreement    |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

The Latin American student questionnaire included a question about students' acceptance of reasons for breaking the law. Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree") with statements about the following situations where the law may be disobeyed. Thus, "A law may be disobeyed ...":

- when it is the only alternative left for achieving important objectives;
- when it is the only way one has to help one's family;
- when others who disobeyed it were not punished;
- when others do it;
- when one distrusts the enacting body;
- when one is sure nobody will realize;
- when nobody gets hurt;
- when it is not done with bad intentions;
- when one is not familiar with the law;
- when one distrusts the authority executing the law;
- when one can obtain economic benefits.

These 11 items formed a scale with a satisfactory reliability of 0.83 (Cronbach's alpha) for the pooled Latin American sample. Figure 4.3 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for these items. A student with a regional average ICCS score of 50 was expected to have agreed with five of the items and disagreed with the other six. On average, across the countries, the percentages of agreement ranged from 32 percent (being sure nobody will realize) to 74 percent (when only way to help one's family).



Table 4.6 shows the scale score averages across the participating countries. Acceptance of disobeying the law was highest in the Dominican Republic, where students' scores tended to be four points above the Latin American ICCS average. The national averages across the other countries covered a narrow range. Gender differences were significant in all countries, with male students being more in agreement than female students with the statement that laws may be disobeyed in certain situations. Across countries, the difference was two score points (equivalent to one fifth of a standard deviation).

Table 4.6: National averages for students' attitudes toward disobeying the law in comparison overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Attitudes Toward Disobeying the Law |          |          |                              |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|--|----|----|----|----|----|
|                             | All students                                               | Females  | Males    | Differences (males–females)* |  | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |
| Chile                       | 49 (0.3) ▽                                                 | 48 (0.4) | 50 (0.3) | 2 (0.5)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Colombia                    | 49 (0.2) ▽                                                 | 48 (0.2) | 50 (0.3) | 2 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Dominican Republic          | 54 (0.3) ▲                                                 | 53 (0.3) | 55 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 50 (0.3)                                                   | 49 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 2 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mexico                      | 49 (0.2) ▽                                                 | 48 (0.2) | 51 (0.3) | 3 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 49 (0.2) ▽                                                 | 48 (0.3) | 50 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50 (0.1)                                                   | 49 (0.1) | 51 (0.1) | 2 (0.1)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |

#### National average

▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

Female average score +/- confidence interval

Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding disobeying the law with:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | Disagreement |
|  | Agreement    |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

To examine the extent to which positive attitudes toward authoritarian government, corrupt practices, and disobeying the law are associated with civic knowledge, we computed national tertiles for each questionnaire index and then compared test scores across the corresponding tertile groups (thirds). Table 4.7 shows the average civic knowledge scores across tertiles for each of the three indices. The right-pointing and left-pointing triangles in the table highlight positive and negative associations respectively. Triangles point to the right for a positive association and to the left for a negative one. The countries flagged with a triangle pointing to the right are countries where the medium-tertile group had a significantly higher average than the lowest-tertile as well as a significantly lower average than the highest-tertile group. Countries with triangles pointing to the left denote countries where the medium-tertile group had significantly lower averages than the lowest-tertile group and significantly higher averages than the highest-tertile group.

The data in Table 4.7 indicate that students with the higher scale scores on each of the scales tended to have lower levels of civic knowledge. The relationship across tertiles appears to be approximately linear for each of the scales. The differences between lowest and highest tertiles are 101 civic knowledge score points for attitudes toward authoritarian government, 98 for attitudes towards corrupt practices, and 76 for disobeying the law. Note, however, that because these results show only bivariate relationships, they do not necessarily indicate causality.





Table 4.7: National averages for civic knowledge by tertile groups of students' positive attitudes toward authoritarian government, toward corrupt practices, and toward disobeying the law

| Country                     | Attitudes Toward Authoritarian Government |                      |                       | Attitudes Toward Corrupt Practices in Government |                      |                       | Attitudes Toward Disobeying the Law |                      |                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Lowest-tertile group                      | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group | Lowest-tertile group                             | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group | Lowest-tertile group                | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group |
| Chile                       | 545 (3.1)                                 | 485 (3.4)            | 416 (3.5) ▲           | 538 (3.4)                                        | 490 (3.0)            | 422 (3.6) ▲           | 535 (3.4)                           | 484 (3.9)            | 437 (3.8) ▲           |
| Colombia                    | 512 (2.9)                                 | 464 (3.1)            | 413 (3.0) ▲           | 510 (2.9)                                        | 470 (2.6)            | 413 (3.2) ▲           | 504 (3.1)                           | 464 (3.2)            | 427 (3.2) ▲           |
| Dominican Republic          | 421 (3.5)                                 | 376 (2.5)            | 350 (2.8) ▲           | 421 (3.5)                                        | 372 (2.8)            | 354 (2.9) ▲           | 409 (4.0)                           | 377 (3.7)            | 361 (2.6) ▲           |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 483 (5.2)                                 | 431 (3.3)            | 391 (2.9) ▲           | 488 (5.3)                                        | 437 (2.9)            | 385 (3.3) ▲           | 474 (5.7)                           | 432 (3.6)            | 403 (3.2) ▲           |
| Mexico                      | 506 (3.5)                                 | 451 (3.0)            | 399 (2.6) ▲           | 503 (3.3)                                        | 452 (3.0)            | 403 (2.8) ▲           | 491 (3.2)                           | 445 (3.7)            | 418 (2.6) ▲           |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 478 (4.1)                                 | 422 (3.5)            | 373 (4.4) ▲           | 475 (5.1)                                        | 431 (3.3)            | 370 (4.3) ▲           | 472 (5.1)                           | 418 (4.1)            | 384 (3.8) ▲           |
| Latin American ICCS average | 491 (1.5)                                 | 438 (1.3)            | 390 (1.3) ▲           | 489 (1.6)                                        | 442 (1.2)            | 391 (1.4) ▲           | 481 (1.7)                           | 437 (1.5)            | 405 (1.3) ▲           |

▲ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lowest-tertile group and significantly **lower** than in highest-tertile group

△ Average in highest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lowest-tertile group

▽ Average in lowest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group

▼ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **lower** than in lowest-tertile group and significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group

#### Notes:

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

## Summary

The results presented in this chapter show that students in the participating Latin American countries tended to express less trust in political parties, courts of justice, and the police than did students, on average, across all ICCS countries. However, the Latin American students also appeared to be (on average) more trusting of schools and media than the students from the other countries participating in ICCS.

Notable differences were apparent across the Latin American countries: students from the Dominican Republic were more likely than the students in the other five countries to express trust in most institutions, whereas students in Chile and Colombia were more trusting of the armed forces than were their counterparts in the other four countries. Mexico appeared to be the country where students' levels of trust were relatively low for most of the civic institutions included in the analysis.

On average, the percentage of students without any preference for a political party was higher than the ICCS average; there were also notable differences within the region. Students in the Dominican Republic reported being more disposed to a particular political party than did students in other countries. Differences among countries in the percentages expressing party support coincided with levels of general trust in this institution.

In general, Latin American students expressed little support for authoritarian government behaviors; however, there was widespread agreement with statements justifying dictatorships that brought benefits to the country. Female students tended to be less supportive than male students of authoritarian government.

On average, across countries, majorities of students did not agree with corrupt practices in public services except for situations in which public servants could give jobs to friends and family. Male students were more inclined than females to express acceptance of corrupt practices. Agreement with respect to situations where it would be acceptable to break the law depended very much on the situation: majorities considered breaking the law is acceptable if it is done in order to help the family, if there "is no alternative," if nobody is likely to get hurt, or if the intention behind the act is not bad. Only minorities of students endorsed the view that laws could be broken because others do it or because nobody would realize it had happened.

Associations were evident between attitudes (toward authoritarian government, corrupt practices, and disobeying the law) and civic knowledge. Students with high scores on these scales were also the students who had much lower levels of civic knowledge.







## CHAPTER 5:

# Students' attitudes toward peaceful coexistence

In this chapter, we discuss the views of lower-secondary students in the six Latin American countries regarding peaceful coexistence in their societies and in the region. Among the issues related to this topic are students' sense of national and Latin American identity, their acceptance of and tolerance toward minorities, and their feelings of empathy. Also covered are students' experience of and attitudes toward aggression and violence.

This chapter relates mainly to Research Question 3—"What is the extent of interest and disposition to engage in public and political life among adolescents and which factors within or across countries are related to it?"—and includes consideration of a number of affective-behavioral variables (attitudes). It also addresses several research questions specific to the Latin American region. These are:

- What attitudes do students hold toward their own countries and to what extent do they identify with the Latin American region?
- What is the extent of feelings of empathy with others among students in lower-secondary schools?
- To what extent do students accept minority groups and what are their attitudes toward people with different sexual orientations?
- What experience do students have of abuse and violence at school?
- What are students' general attitudes toward violence, peace, and punishment of criminals outside the law?
- To what extent are students' acceptance of minority groups and their attitudes toward violence associated with civic knowledge?

The data that we consider in this chapter were collected with both the Latin American and the international ICCS student questionnaires. We report scale scores for those constructs where reliable scales could be derived from item sets. For other questions where items could not be combined to form meaningful scales, or where particular items were of interest, we provide percentages.

## Students' attitudes toward their country and their sense of Latin American identity

Perceptions of one's own country are developed gradually during childhood and adolescence (Nugent, 1994), and different forms of national attachment have been identified (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Anderson (1992) distinguishes between nationalism (comparing one's nation with others) and patriotism (positive attachment that does not involve comparison with other countries).

Positive attitudes toward one's nation are often seen as vital for sustaining democracies (Dalton, 1999). Data from the World Values Survey showed considerable variations in national pride across countries (Inglehart, 1997), while data from CIVED that showed positive attitudes among adolescents toward their nation increased with age: upper-secondary students held more positive attitudes than lower-secondary students (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002).

The ICCS international student questionnaire included a question that asked students to rate their agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree") with eight statements about their attitudes toward the country in which they lived. The following seven items were used to construct the scale:

- The <flag of country of test> is important to me;



- The political system in <country of test> works well;
- I have great respect for <country of test>;
- In <country of test> we should be proud of what we have achieved;
- I am proud to live in <country of test>;
- <Country of test> shows a lot of respect for the environment;
- Generally speaking, <country of test> is a better country to live in than most other countries.

The seven-item scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.82 for the combined international dataset. The scale was standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for all equally weighted countries that participated in ICCS. Figure 5.1 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map and the average Latin American percentages in each category. The item map illustrates that students with an average ICCS score of 50 were likely to agree with all seven statements. Average percentages of agreement in the six Latin American ICCS countries ranged from 60 percent (country showing a lot of respect for the environment) to 89 percent (having great respect for country of residence).

Table 5.1 shows the average scale scores for the six countries in the region as well as the averages for females and males in each country. The Latin American average score of 53 shows that Latin American students tended to express more positive attitudes toward their countries than did the average ICCS student in other countries. In addition, within the region, Colombia and the Dominican Republic had average scores significantly above the Latin American average whereas the average scores for Chile, Mexico, and Paraguay were significantly below.

Table 5.1: National averages for students' attitudes toward their own country overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Students' Attitudes Toward Their Own Country |          |          |                              |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
|                             | All students                                                        | Females  | Males    | Differences (males-females)* | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |  |  |
| Chile                       | 51 (0.2) ▽                                                          | 50 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 1 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Colombia                    | 55 (0.2) △                                                          | 55 (0.3) | 56 (0.3) | 1 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 56 (0.6) △                                                          | 57 (0.6) | 56 (0.6) | 0 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 54 (0.3)                                                            | 54 (0.3) | 53 (0.4) | -1 (0.3)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Mexico                      | 52 (0.2) ▽                                                          | 52 (0.3) | 53 (0.3) | 0 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 52 (0.2) ▽                                                          | 52 (0.3) | 53 (0.3) | 1 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 53 (0.1)                                                            | 53 (0.1) | 54 (0.2) | 0 (0.1)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| International ICCS average  | 50 (0.0)                                                            | 49 (0.1) | 51 (0.1) | 1 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |

#### National average

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

- Female average score +/- confidence interval
- Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding attitudes toward their own country with:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | Disagreement |
|  | Agreement    |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



Gender differences were generally small. In two countries (Chile and Paraguay), male students had slightly but significantly higher average scores than the female students. In Guatemala, however, females had significantly higher average scores than males.

The issue of Latin American political and economic cooperation has received much attention in recent years and is associated with the question of the extent to which Latin Americans identify with the geographic region. The Latin American student questionnaire collected data on students' sense of Latin American identity by asking students to what extent they agreed ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree") with the following statements:

- We Latin Americans have a lot in common even if we come from different countries;
- In Latin America more things unite us than separate us;
- I feel I have a lot in common with other Latin American youths;
- Sometimes I support teams from other Latin American countries during international competitions;
- I often support teams from other Latin American countries when my country has been eliminated from a competition.

The resulting scale reflecting students' sense of Latin American identity had a rather low reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.62 and scale scores were standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the combined Latin American dataset. Figure 5.2, in Appendix D, which presents the item-by-score map and the average Latin American percentages in each category, shows that students with a Latin American ICCS average score of 50 were likely to agree with all five items. The average percentages of student agreement ("strongly agree" and "agree") ranged from 68 percent (support other Latin American teams when own team eliminated) to 91 percent (Latin Americans have a lot in common).

Table 5.2 shows the average scale scores for each country and by gender groups. Generally, there was little variation across countries. Guatemala had an average score significantly above the Latin American average whereas Mexico was found to be significantly below that average. Male students had significantly higher scores than female students in all six countries. On average, the difference was two score points. However, the average scores for both gender groups, which appear in the darker shaded area of the table, indicate that male and female students both tended to agree with statements reflecting a sense of Latin American identity.

When interpreting the results for this scale, we need to recognize that student responses could have been influenced by how they understood the term "Latin America." In addition, the reference in some of the items to sporting events may explain the relatively higher scale scores for male students.

To examine the association between positive attitudes toward the country of residence and students' sense of Latin American identity, we computed average scores of the latter within each tertile group of students' attitudes toward their country. Table 5.3 shows a strong positive and linear association between students' attitudes toward their country and their sense of Latin American identity.

In all countries, average scores of sense of Latin American identity in the medium-tertile group were significantly higher than in the lowest group and significantly lower than in the highest-tertile group. This pattern indicates that students who expressed a strong sense of attachment to the geographic region also tended to express strong attachment to their country of residence.



Table 5.2: National averages for students' sense of Latin American identity overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Sense of Latin American Identity |          |          |                              |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|--|----|----|----|----|----|
|                             | All students                                            | Females  | Males    | Differences (males-females)* |  | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |
| Chile                       | 50 (0.2)                                                | 49 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 2 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Colombia                    | 50 (0.2)                                                | 48 (0.2) | 52 (0.3) | 4 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Dominican Republic          | 51 (0.5)                                                | 50 (0.5) | 52 (0.5) | 2 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 52 (0.2) △                                              | 51 (0.3) | 52 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mexico                      | 48 (0.2) ▽                                              | 47 (0.2) | 49 (0.2) | 2 (0.3)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 50 (0.2)                                                | 48 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 2 (0.4)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50 (0.1)                                                | 49 (0.1) | 51 (0.1) | 2 (0.1)                      |  |    |    |    |    |    |

#### National average

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

- Female average score +/- confidence interval
- Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding feelings of Latin American identity with:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | Disagreement |
|  | Agreement    |

#### Notes:

- \* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.
- ( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- <sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Table 5.3: National averages for students' sense of Latin American identity by tertile groups of students' attitudes toward their own country

| Country                     | Attitudes Toward Country |                      |                       |   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                             | Lowest-tertile group     | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group |   |
| Chile                       | 47 (0.3)                 | 50 (0.2)             | 52 (0.4)              | ► |
| Colombia                    | 47 (0.2)                 | 50 (0.2)             | 53 (0.4)              | ► |
| Dominican Republic          | 48 (0.6)                 | 50 (0.4)             | 54 (0.4)              | ► |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 50 (0.3)                 | 52 (0.4)             | 53 (0.3)              | ► |
| Mexico                      | 47 (0.3)                 | 49 (0.3)             | 50 (0.3)              | ► |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 48 (0.4)                 | 50 (0.3)             | 52 (0.4)              | ► |
| Latin American ICCS average | 48 (0.1)                 | 50 (0.1)             | 53 (0.2)              | ► |

#### National percentage

- Average in medium-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lower-tertile group *and* significantly **lower** than in highest-tertile group
- ▷ Average in highest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lowest-tertile group
- ◁ Average in lowest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group
- ◄ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **lower** than in lowest-tertile group *and* significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group

#### Notes:

- ( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- <sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



## Students' feelings of empathy and attitudes toward diversity

A feeling of empathy with others is one of the aspects that civic and citizenship education typically aims to encourage and is included as an explicit goal of citizenship education in some countries (see, for example, Ministry of Education of Colombia, 2004; Ramos, Nieto, & Chaux, 2007). To be empathic is generally viewed as being able to enter someone else's world without being influenced by one's own views and values (Rogers, 1975). A distinction is made between affective or emotional components (Eisenberg, 1995; Strayer, 1987) and the cognitive process of imaginatively assuming other roles (Piaget, 1965). Emotional empathy is regarded as behavior that motivates and helps others and that the individual concerned exhibits because he or she feels compassion or concern for other human beings (Hoffman, 1981).

One of the questions in the Latin American student questionnaire asked students to indicate how they felt ("I think it's fun," "I don't care," or "It bothers me") when observing the following situations at their school:

- A classmate falls and gets hurt;
- A classmate gets beaten up;
- A classmate gets unfairly reprimanded;
- A classmate gets unfairly punished;
- A classmate gets something stolen from him/her;
- A classmate gets ridiculed;
- A classmate gets insulted;
- A classmate looks very sad;
- A classmate gets bad grades;
- A classmate has nobody to play with.

The resulting scale reflecting students' feelings of empathy had high reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.84 and was standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the pooled Latin American ICCS database. Figure 5.3 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for this scale, which shows that students with an average ICCS score of 50 were likely to report that it would bother them to see all but one of these situations. Average percentages of students reporting that witnessing these situations bothered them ranged from 37 percent (a classmate getting bad grades) to 80 percent (a classmate getting unfairly punished).

Table 5.4 shows the average scale scores for each country overall and for females and males separately. National average scale scores were significantly above the regional average in Colombia, Guatemala, and Paraguay. The lowest average score was found in Mexico (47 points). There were significant gender differences in all six countries. Female students had considerably higher scale scores than male students; on average, the difference was four score points.

The Colombian Program of Citizenship Competencies (Ministry of Education of Colombia, 2004; see also Chaux, Lleras, & Velásquez, 2004), which has become a model for many other countries in the region, includes a dimension that encompasses pluralism, identity, and respect for diversity as well as issues related to discrimination and exclusion.

The Latin American student questionnaire collected data on students' attitudes toward neighborhood diversity by asking students how they would react ("I would like it," "I wouldn't care," or "I would dislike it") to having the following groups as neighbors:

- People with different skin color than yours;
- People of a different social class than yours;
- People of a different religion than yours;



Table 5.4: National averages for students' feelings of empathy toward classmates overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Students' Feelings of Empathy Toward Classmates |          |          |                              |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
|                             | All students                                                           | Females  | Males    | Differences (males–females)* | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |  |  |
| Chile                       | 49 (0.2) ▽                                                             | 51 (0.2) | 46 (0.3) | -5 (0.3)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Colombia                    | 51 (0.2) △                                                             | 52 (0.3) | 49 (0.3) | -3 (0.3)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 50 (0.6)                                                               | 52 (0.6) | 47 (0.6) | -5 (0.5)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 52 (0.3) △                                                             | 54 (0.3) | 50 (0.3) | -4 (0.3)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Mexico                      | 47 (0.2) ▽                                                             | 49 (0.2) | 45 (0.2) | -4 (0.3)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 52 (0.3) △                                                             | 54 (0.3) | 50 (0.4) | -4 (0.4)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50 (0.1)                                                               | 52 (0.1) | 48 (0.2) | -4 (0.1)                     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |

#### National average

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

- Female average score +/- confidence interval
- Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to the notion that they would be bothered if they witnessed bad things happening to classmates by saying:

|  |                                               |
|--|-----------------------------------------------|
|  | They would think it is fun and would not care |
|  | It would bother them                          |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

- Homosexuals or lesbians;
- People who come from another region of the country;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People with mental disorders;
- People of a different nationality than yours;
- People with AIDS;
- People of indigenous origin.

The resulting scale reflecting students' attitudes toward neighborhood diversity had high reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.82 and was standardized to have a metric with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the Latin American ICCS database. Figure 5.4 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for this scale. Students with an average ICCS score of 50 were likely to respond by saying either that they would like having these groups in their neighborhood or that they would not care—would not be concerned—about having them in their neighborhood. The average percentages of students who would either like it or not care (both indicative of acceptance) ranged from 57 (homosexuals and lesbians) and 65 percent (people with AIDS) to 95 percent (people of different nationality), 96 percent (people from another region in the country), and 97 percent (people with different skin color).

Table 5.5 shows the average scale scores for attitudes toward neighborhood diversity for the six countries in the Latin American region. Whereas Chile, Guatemala, and Mexico had significantly higher scores than the regional average, Paraguay recorded a significantly lower average score—in fact, the lowest average (47 scale score points). With the exception of Paraguay, female students in all countries had significantly higher scores than male students. On average, across countries, the difference was two score points.

These results indicate that the participating students generally expressed no resentment toward having minority groups as neighbors. The location of the average scores for both females and males in all countries in the darker shaded areas of Table 5.5 indicates that students were likely





Table 5.5: National averages for students' attitudes toward neighborhood diversity overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Students' Attitudes Toward Neighborhood Diversity |       |   |         |       |       |       |                              |       |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------------|-------|--|----|----|----|----|----|
|                             | All students                                                             |       |   | Females |       | Males |       | Differences (males–females)* |       |  | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |
| Chile                       | 52                                                                       | (0.2) | △ | 53      | (0.2) | 51    | (0.3) | -2                           | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Colombia                    | 50                                                                       | (0.2) |   | 51      | (0.3) | 50    | (0.2) | -1                           | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Dominican Republic          | 50                                                                       | (0.3) |   | 51      | (0.4) | 49    | (0.3) | -2                           | (0.5) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 51                                                                       | (0.3) | △ | 52      | (0.3) | 49    | (0.3) | -2                           | (0.4) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Mexico                      | 51                                                                       | (0.2) | △ | 52      | (0.2) | 50    | (0.2) | -2                           | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 47                                                                       | (0.2) | ▼ | 47      | (0.3) | 46    | (0.2) | 0                            | (0.3) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50                                                                       | (0.1) |   | 51      | (0.1) | 49    | (0.1) | -2                           | (0.2) |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| International ICCS average  | 50                                                                       | (0.1) |   | 51      | (0.1) | 49    | (0.1) | -2                           | (0.2) |  |    |    |    |    |    |

#### National average

▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

Female average score +/- confidence interval

Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to the notion of having diverse social groups as neighbors by saying:

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
|  | They would not like it               |
|  | They would not care or would like it |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

to say that they would not care or would even like to have members of one of these groups as neighbors. However, as the average percentages in Figure 5.4 illustrate, there were considerably higher proportions of students who said they would dislike having homosexuals or people with AIDS as neighbors.

Given that one frequently stated aim of civic and citizenship education is to foster openness to diversity in society, it is of interest to examine the extent to which higher levels of civic knowledge are associated with more positive attitudes toward neighborhood diversity.

Table 5.6 shows the average civic knowledge in national tertile groups of students' attitudes toward neighborhood diversity. In all countries, students in the highest national tertile group had significantly higher civic knowledge scores than those in the bottom group. In Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Paraguay, there was an even stronger linear association, with average scores in the medium-tertile group being significantly higher than in the bottom group and significantly lower than in the highest-tertile group.

The results show that students with more positive attitudes toward neighborhood diversity tend to have higher levels of civic knowledge. However, this association does not necessarily imply any causal relationship and may be due to other factors, such as socioeconomic status, influencing variation in both variables.

Research shows not only considerable differences in attitudes toward homosexuality across countries but also associations of these attitudes with age, gender, education, and religious beliefs (Kelley, 2001). Survey data from the Latin American region suggest that opinion is divided about whether society should accept homosexuality. This same survey shows considerable variation with respect to this opinion among countries in the region (Pew Center, 2003).

The Latin American student questionnaire included a question designed to capture students' attitudes toward people with different sexual orientations. It asked students to rate their agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree") with the following statements:



Table 5.6: National averages for students' civic knowledge by tertile groups of students' attitudes toward neighborhood diversity

| Country                     | Students' Attitudes Toward Neighborhood Diversity |                      |                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | Lowest-tertile group                              | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group |
| Chile                       | 471 (4.2)                                         | 485 (4.3)            | 494 (3.7) ►           |
| Colombia                    | 452 (3.2)                                         | 460 (3.7)            | 481 (3.4) ►           |
| Dominican Republic          | 376 (2.9)                                         | 376 (2.8)            | 396 (3.1) ▷           |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 422 (6.1)                                         | 431 (3.7)            | 455 (3.1) ►           |
| Mexico                      | 438 (3.0)                                         | 444 (3.8)            | 474 (3.1) ▷           |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 407 (4.6)                                         | 424 (3.9)            | 451 (4.5) ►           |
| Latin American ICCS average | 428 (1.7)                                         | 437 (1.5)            | 459 (1.4) ►           |

#### National percentage

- Average in medium-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lower-tertile group *and* significantly **lower** than in highest-tertile group
- ▷ Average in highest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lowest-tertile group
- ◁ Average in lowest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group
- ◄ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **lower** than in lowest-tertile group *and* significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group

#### Notes:

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

- Persons of the same sex should have the right to get married;
- The morale of a country is affected by the presence of homosexuals and lesbians;
- Homosexuals and lesbians deserve having the same rights as the rest of the citizens;
- In my school, homosexuals and lesbians should not be accepted;
- Homosexuality should be treated as a mental disorder.

Two of these statements indicate positive attitudes toward people with different sexual orientations; the other three are negatively worded. Although the five items did not form a reliable scale, we consider it is of interest to report percentages of student agreement ("strongly agree" or "agree") with each of these statements.

Table 5.7 shows the percentages of agreement for the six Latin American countries. The highest percentages were found for the statement that homosexuals should have the same rights as all other citizens. On average, 77 percent of students agreed with this view. Percentages ranged from 72 percent in the Dominican Republic to 84 percent in Mexico. About half of the students (49%) agreed (on average) that persons of the same sex should have the right to get married. There were notable differences in agreement across countries: whereas 64 percent of the students in Mexico and 58 percent of those in Chile agreed with the statement, only 31 percent of students in Guatemala shared this view.

On average, 41 percent of students agreed that a country's morale is affected by the presence of homosexuals. However, there were considerable differences across the countries, with the percentage agreements ranging from 35 percent in Mexico and 37 percent in Colombia to 54 percent in the Dominican Republic. On average, across all six countries, more than a third of students (37%) agreed that homosexuality should be treated as a mental disorder. National percentage agreement levels ranged from 30 percent in Mexico to 51 percent in the Dominican Republic. Across countries, 32 percent of students, on average, agreed with the statement that homosexuals should not be accepted at their school. Again, there was notable variation, with percentages ranging from 24 percent in Mexico to 45 percent in the Dominican Republic.



Table 5.7: National percentages for students' agreement with statements reflecting attitudes toward homosexuality

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Agreeing with Following Statements:  |                                                                                 |                                                                                     |                                                               |                                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Persons of the same sex should have the right to get married | The morale of a country is affected by the presence of homosexuals and lesbians | Homosexuals and lesbians deserve having the same rights as the rest of the citizens | In my school, homosexuals and lesbians should not be accepted | Homosexuality should be treated as a mental disorder |
| Chile                       | 58 (1.1) △                                                   | 40 (1.0)                                                                        | 79 (0.9) △                                                                          | 30 (0.9) ▽                                                    | 33 (0.9) ▽                                           |
| Colombia                    | 49 (1.2)                                                     | 37 (0.8) ▽                                                                      | 82 (0.9) △                                                                          | 28 (0.9) ▽                                                    | 29 (1.1) ▽                                           |
| Dominican Republic          | 49 (1.4)                                                     | 54 (1.0) ▲                                                                      | 72 (0.7) ▽                                                                          | 45 (1.1) ▲                                                    | 51 (0.9) ▲                                           |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 31 (1.4) ▼                                                   | 43 (1.1)                                                                        | 74 (0.9) ▽                                                                          | 30 (1.0)                                                      | 46 (1.3) △                                           |
| Mexico                      | 64 (0.9) ▲                                                   | 35 (0.9) ▽                                                                      | 84 (0.6) △                                                                          | 24 (0.9) ▽                                                    | 30 (0.8) ▽                                           |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 42 (1.3) ▽                                                   | 38 (1.3) ▽                                                                      | 73 (1.0) ▽                                                                          | 33 (0.9)                                                      | 36 (1.2)                                             |
| Latin American ICCS average | 49 (0.5)                                                     | 41 (0.4)                                                                        | 77 (0.3)                                                                            | 32 (0.4)                                                      | 37 (0.4)                                             |

**National percentage**

- ▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

**Notes:**

- ( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- <sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



In summary, while majorities of students tended to endorse equal rights for people with a different sexual orientation, on average only about half of them endorsed gay marriage and about a third of students agreed with negative statements about homosexuality. Attitudes toward people with a different sexual orientation were also clearly more positive in some countries than in others. Students in Mexico, where gay marriage has recently become legally possible, held much more positive attitudes than their counterparts in most other countries.

### **Students' perceptions of aggression, violence, and conflict**

Violence and crime associated with drug trafficking are among the most pressing problems across Latin American countries. Many countries and cities of the region are recognized as violent places, and in a good number of them the situation has worsened over the past decade.

Growing up in a society affected by violence and crime has implications for the development of citizenship competencies, attitudes, and behaviors (Reimers, 2007). Research suggests that exposure to violence leads to higher levels of aggressive and violent behavior among adolescents (Chaux, 2009; Chaux & Velásquez, 2009). This same research documents Colombia's implementation of initiatives aimed at increasing citizenship competencies that help students interact more peacefully

To measure students' exposure to different forms of violence, aggression, and rejection, the Latin American student questionnaire included a question that asked students if they had experienced verbal or physical aggression at school during the month prior to the survey. Students reported how often ("never," "only once," "two to four times," or "five times or more") the following had happened to them during that month:

- Someone in your school hit, slapped, kicked, pushed, or pinched you;
- Someone in your school insulted you;
- Someone threatened to hit you;
- Someone rejected you and did not allow you to join their group;
- A classmate called you an offensive nickname.

Table 5.8 shows the percentages of students who reported having experienced these types of aggression at school at least two times a month. Of these types of aggression, the most frequently experienced was being insulted. On average, 60 percent of students across the six countries reported having experienced insults at least twice during the past month. The national percentages ranged from 55 percent in the Dominican Republic to 67 percent in Mexico. Being called an offensive nickname was another relatively frequent experience: 52 percent of students, on average, reported having been subjected to this type of aggression. The percentages ranged from 45 percent in Guatemala to 56 percent in Chile.

About one third of students on average (35%) reported having experienced physical aggression at least twice a month. National percentages ranged from 25 percent in the Dominican Republic to 45 percent in Mexico. Across countries, 34 percent of students stated that they had been threatened at least twice during the past month; the percentages ranged from 28 percent in Guatemala to 39 percent in the Dominican Republic. Twenty-nine percent of students, on average, said that they had been rejected by someone at their school more than once over the last month. Percentages ranged from 24 percent in Guatemala to 36 percent in the Dominican Republic.



Table 5.8: National percentages of students reporting personal experience of physical and verbal aggression

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Reporting That During the Past Month They Had Two or More Times Been ... |                                     |                                       |                                                         |                                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--|
|                             | hit, slapped, kicked, pushed, or pinched by someone in their school                              | insulted by someone in their school | threatened by someone in their school | rejected by someone and not allowed to join their group | called an offensive nickname by a classmate |  |
| Chile                       | 41 (0.8) △                                                                                       | 65 (1.1) △                          | 35 (0.9)                              | 29 (0.8)                                                | 56 (1.1) △                                  |  |
| Colombia                    | 33 (0.8) ▽                                                                                       | 58 (1.3)                            | 30 (0.9) ▽                            | 30 (1.0)                                                | 54 (1.0) △                                  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 25 (0.7) ▽                                                                                       | 55 (1.3) ▽                          | 39 (0.9) △                            | 36 (1.8) △                                              | 52 (0.9)                                    |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 33 (0.9) ▽                                                                                       | 57 (1.0) ▽                          | 28 (1.0) ▽                            | 24 (1.0) ▽                                              | 45 (1.2) ▽                                  |  |
| Mexico                      | 45 (0.8) ▲                                                                                       | 67 (0.8) △                          | 35 (0.8)                              | 26 (0.7) ▽                                              | 51 (1.0)                                    |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 34 (1.1)                                                                                         | 58 (1.1)                            | 38 (1.4) △                            | 27 (1.1)                                                | 54 (1.5)                                    |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 35 (0.4)                                                                                         | 60 (0.5)                            | 34 (0.4)                              | 29 (0.5)                                                | 52 (0.5)                                    |  |

**National percentage**

▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



The Latin American student questionnaire included one question designed to measure students' attitudes toward the use of violence. It asked students to rate their agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree") with four statements:

- He who does me harm will have to pay for it;
- Watching fights between classmates is fun;
- If you cannot do it the easy way, do it the hard way;
- You have to fight so people do not think you are a coward.

The resulting scale reflecting students' attitudes toward the use of violence had satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.76 and was standardized to have a metric with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the Latin American ICCS database. Positive values indicate more positive attitudes toward the use of violence. Figure 5.5 in Appendix D shows the item-by-score map for this scale. Students with a Latin American ICCS average score of 50 were likely to disagree with all four items. Percentages of agreement ranged from 17 percent (having to fight so people do not think you are a coward) to 43 percent (the person who harms you will have to pay for it).

Table 5.9 shows the average scale scores for students' attitudes toward the use of violence. There was relatively little variation across the six countries. Averages significantly below the ICCS average were found in Colombia and Guatemala whereas averages significantly above the regional Latin American ICCS average were found in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

Table 5.9: National averages for students' attitudes toward use of violence overall and by gender

| Country                     | Gender Differences for Attitudes Toward Use of Violence |          |          |                              |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
|                             | All students                                            | Females  | Males    | Differences (males-females)* | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 |  |  |
| Chile                       | 52 (0.2) △                                              | 50 (0.3) | 53 (0.2) | 4 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Colombia                    | 49 (0.3) ▽                                              | 47 (0.3) | 50 (0.3) | 3 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 51 (0.3) △                                              | 50 (0.3) | 53 (0.4) | 3 (0.5)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 48 (0.2) ▽                                              | 46 (0.3) | 49 (0.3) | 2 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Mexico                      | 51 (0.2) △                                              | 49 (0.3) | 53 (0.3) | 4 (0.3)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 50 (0.3)                                                | 49 (0.3) | 51 (0.3) | 3 (0.4)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 50 (0.1)                                                | 49 (0.1) | 52 (0.1) | 3 (0.1)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |

#### National average

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

- Female average score +/- confidence interval
- Male average score +/- confidence interval

On average, students with a score in the range indicated by this color have more than a 50% probability of responding to positive statements regarding the use of violence with:

|              |
|--------------|
| Disagreement |
| Agreement    |

#### Notes:

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) gender differences in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

In all countries, male students expressed more positive attitudes than females toward the use of violence. On average, across countries, the difference was three score points.

Table 5.10 shows the average civic knowledge scores within national tertile groups of students' positive attitudes toward the use of violence. The results show that, on average, students with the most positive attitudes toward using violence had lower civic knowledge scores. In Chile and Mexico, a linear association was found, with students in the medium-tertile group having significantly lower civic knowledge scores than students in the highest group and significantly



Table 5.10: National averages for students' civic knowledge by tertile groups of students' positive attitudes toward the use of violence

| Country                     | Attitudes Toward Violence |                      |                       |   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                             | Lowest-tertile group      | Medium-tertile group | Highest-tertile group |   |
| Chile                       | 502 (4.5)                 | 492 (3.7)            | 462 (4.1)             | ◀ |
| Colombia                    | 472 (3.7)                 | 467 (3.6)            | 454 (3.2)             | ◁ |
| Dominican Republic          | 401 (3.6)                 | 398 (3.3)            | 360 (3.1)             | ◁ |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 436 (3.7)                 | 437 (3.6)            | 433 (7.6)             |   |
| Mexico                      | 470 (3.9)                 | 463 (3.2)            | 427 (2.9)             | ◀ |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 434 (4.9)                 | 439 (3.9)            | 406 (3.9)             | ◁ |
| Latin American ICCS average | 452 (1.7)                 | 449 (1.4)            | 424 (1.8)             | ◀ |

#### National percentage

- ▶ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lower-tertile group *and* significantly **lower** than in highest-tertile group
- ▷ Average in highest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in lowest-tertile group
- ◁ Average in lowest-tertile group significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group
- ◀ Average in medium-tertile group significantly **lower** than in lowest-tertile group *and* significantly **higher** than in highest-tertile group

#### Notes:

- ( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- <sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

higher scores than those in the bottom group. In Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay, the students' civic knowledge scores were significantly lower in the highest tertile group compared to the bottom group. No significant differences were recorded in Guatemala.

The results indicate that, in general, the students holding more positive attitudes toward the use of violence tended to have lower civic knowledge scores. However, this finding does not necessarily imply a causal relationship; the correlations were simple measures of association and no attempt was made to control for possible effects of other (third) variables such as socioeconomic background.

The Latin American student questionnaire also included a question asking students for their views on conflict resolution and on citizens disobeying laws in order to punish criminals. Students were asked to rate their agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree") with the following four statements:

- Peace is only achieved through dialogue and negotiation;
- To achieve peace, the end justifies the means;
- If the authorities fail to act, citizens should organize themselves to punish criminals;
- Hitting is a justified punishment when someone commits a crime against my family.

Table 5.11 shows the percentages of agreement ("strongly agree" or "agree") with these items. About three quarters of students across all six countries (76%) agreed that peace is achieved only through dialogue and negotiation. National percentages ranged from 65 percent in Guatemala to 88 percent in the Dominican Republic. Sixty-eight percent of the students, on average, agreed that to achieve peace the end justifies the means. For this item, percentages ranged from 64 percent in Colombia to 71 percent in Paraguay.

When asked to respond to statements endorsing disobeying the law in the face of crime, a majority of students across countries (60%) agreed that citizens should organize themselves to punish criminals if the authorities failed to act. The highest percentage of agreement was found in the Dominican Republic whereas less than half of the students in Colombia (48%) endorsed this statement.





Table 5.11: National percentages of students agreeing with statements about peace and punishing criminals

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Agreeing with the Following Statements: |                                             |                                                                                         |                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Peace is only achieved through dialogue and negotiation         | To achieve peace, the means justify the end | If the authorities fail to act, citizens should organize themselves to punish criminals | Hitting is a justified punishment when someone commits a crime against my family |
| Chile                       | 80 (0.7) △                                                      | 68 (0.8)                                    | 61 (1.0)                                                                                | 54 (1.0) △                                                                       |
| Colombia                    | 88 (0.5) ▲                                                      | 64 (0.8) ▽                                  | 48 (1.1) ▼                                                                              | 38 (1.0) ▽                                                                       |
| Dominican Republic          | 70 (0.9) ▽                                                      | 69 (0.9) △                                  | 66 (1.7) △                                                                              | 53 (1.1) △                                                                       |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 65 (0.9) ▼                                                      | 66 (0.9) ▽                                  | 66 (1.1) △                                                                              | 49 (1.2) △                                                                       |
| Mexico                      | 77 (0.8)                                                        | 68 (0.8)                                    | 60 (0.8)                                                                                | 42 (0.8) ▽                                                                       |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 79 (0.8) △                                                      | 71 (1.1) △                                  | 60 (1.1)                                                                                | 41 (1.1) ▽                                                                       |
| Latin American ICCS average | 76 (0.3)                                                        | 68 (0.4)                                    | 60 (0.5)                                                                                | 46 (0.4)                                                                         |

#### National percentage

▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS average

△ Significantly above Latin American ICCS average

▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS average

▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS average

#### Notes:

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

On average, 46 percent of students agreed that hitting someone is justified when the person has committed a crime against their family. The percentages were highest in Chile (54%) and the Dominican Republic (53%) and lowest in Colombia (38%).

## Summary

The results presented in this chapter show that the lower-secondary students in the six Latin American ICCS countries tended to express very positive attitudes toward their countries. At the same time, majorities of students also agreed with statements denoting a sense of Latin American identity. Although no gender differences emerged with respect to attitudes toward one's own country, male students tended to express a stronger sense of Latin American identity than females. Students who held more positive attitudes toward their country were also more likely to express a stronger sense of Latin American identity.

Most students stated that they felt concerned when classmates were in difficult situations. Female students tended to express more empathy than male students. In most countries, females were also somewhat more likely to take a positive or neutral stance when considering the presence of neighbors from minorities in their neighborhood. Acceptance of social diversity was found to be positively associated with students' civic knowledge.

When the students were asked about their agreement with positive and negative statements regarding people with a different sexual orientation, there was considerable variation across countries. Majorities of students supported gay marriage in Chile and Mexico, but only minorities did so in Guatemala and Paraguay.

Students reported relatively frequent occurrences of being subjected to verbal and physical aggression at their schools. Sizeable minorities of students said they had been subjected to physical aggression by classmates at least twice during the month preceding the survey. Only minorities agreed with statements indicating positive attitudes toward the use of violence.



Female students tended to hold less positive attitudes toward using violence than males. There were weak to moderate associations between this measure and civic knowledge: students with more positive attitudes toward use of violence tended to be less knowledgeable than their peers.

Most students agreed with statements that peace could only be achieved through negotiation and that achieving peace would justify any means. However, majorities of students in five of the six countries also endorsed vigilante justice when authorities fail to act against criminals, and sizeable minorities agreed that people could use violence against criminals—could act outside the law—if those individuals had acted against their families.





## CHAPTER 6:

# The learning contexts for civic education

In this chapter, we describe the learning context for civic education in the six Latin American countries that participated in ICCS. More specifically, we examine the context as it pertains to schools, communities, and families and, in some instances, relate it to student achievement in civic education. Thus, the content of this chapter revolves around Research Questions 5 and 6 of the ICCS assessment framework (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008, p. 10), which address aspects of school organization, program structure, and delivery, as well as students' personal and social backgrounds.

Two specific research questions were used to address family context:

- What level of parental occupational status do students report, and is there an association between status and in civic education knowledge?
- What level of parental interest in political and social issues do students report, and is there an association between parental interest and students' civic knowledge?

Four were used to address school context:

- How are schools managed, and is there an association between school management and civic knowledge?
- How do schools organize the teaching of civic and citizenship education?
- What is the level of students' civic participation at school?
- According to students, how frequently are social issues discussed at school?

And two were used to address community context:

- Where do students attend school, and is there an association between school location and civic knowledge?
- What community resources can schools access?

## Family context

The factor that has probably been shown to have the strongest and most consistent association with student achievement across subject areas is the socioeconomic background of parents (see, for example, Doyle, 2008; Mere, Reiska, & Smith, 2006; Perry & McConney, 2010). One element of family socioeconomic background is parental occupational status. The ICCS student questionnaire contained questions that were aimed at obtaining details regarding the jobs held by students' parents. These jobs were coded according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). Occupational codes were subsequently transformed into scores that accorded with the Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (SEI), which is viewed as providing comparable measures across countries (Ganzeboom, De Graaf, & Treiman, 1992; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996).

Using as our basis the SEI, we created three groups of occupational status, namely, low, medium, and high. Table 6.1 provides information on the percentages of students in each of these groups, together with the average civic knowledge score for the students from all six countries and all ICCS countries, respectively, and information regarding the influence of parental occupation on students' civic knowledge.

The averages in the last two rows of Table 6.1 indicate that the proportion of students from families of low occupational status was higher for the Latin American countries than for all ICCS countries. More than half (53%) of the students in the former group of countries reported having parents with a low occupational status compared to just over a third (36%) for all ICCS countries. Correspondingly, the average proportions of students from homes with medium and high occupational status were lower for the Latin American ICCS countries than for the ICCS countries.



Table 6.1: National percentages of students in categories of parental occupation and its association with civic knowledge

| Country                     | Low Occupational Status (SEI below 40) |                      | Medium Occupational Status (SEI 40 to 59) |                      | High Occupational Status (SEI 60 and above) |                      | Influence of SEI on Civic Knowledge                           |                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                             | Percentages                            | Mean civic knowledge | Percentages                               | Mean civic knowledge | Percentages                                 | Mean civic knowledge | Difference in score points for one standard deviation in SEI* | Variance explained |
| Chile                       | 50 (1.6)                               | 458 (3.5)            | 34 (1.1)                                  | 496 (3.8)            | 15 (1.1)                                    | 545 (4.4)            | <b>33</b> (0.5)                                               | 13 (1.5)           |
| Colombia                    | 49 (1.5)                               | 445 (3.2)            | 35 (1.0)                                  | 471 (3.1)            | 16 (1.0)                                    | 502 (5.0)            | <b>22</b> (0.7)                                               | 8 (1.1)            |
| Dominican Republic          | 46 (1.3)                               | 372 (2.7)            | 33 (1.0)                                  | 389 (3.4)            | 21 (1.1)                                    | 397 (4.1)            | <b>10</b> (0.7)                                               | 3 (0.8)            |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 63 (2.0)                               | 420 (3.3)            | 30 (1.4)                                  | 456 (4.7)            | 7 (1.1)                                     | 499 (14.4)           | <b>33</b> (1.0)                                               | 13 (3.4)           |
| Mexico                      | 58 (1.2)                               | 437 (2.7)            | 23 (0.7)                                  | 462 (3.3)            | 19 (1.0)                                    | 489 (5.0)            | <b>21</b> (0.3)                                               | 7 (1.3)            |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 54 (1.6)                               | 404 (3.6)            | 28 (1.4)                                  | 442 (4.8)            | 17 (1.0)                                    | 474 (7.2)            | <b>28</b> (0.5)                                               | 12 (1.9)           |
| Latin American ICCS average | 53 (0.6)                               | 423 (1.3)            | 31 (0.5)                                  | 453 (1.6)            | 16 (0.4)                                    | 484 (3.1)            | <b>25</b> (0.3)                                               | 9 (0.8)            |
| International ICCS average  | 36 (0.2)                               | 471 (0.7)            | 40 (0.2)                                  | 507 (0.7)            | 23 (0.2)                                    | 543 (1.0)            | <b>29</b> (0.1)                                               | 10 (0.3)           |

**Notes:**

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) coefficients in **bold**.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

What can be seen clearly in this table is that average civic knowledge increases with increasing occupational status, a pattern that reinforces the general research finding that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to achieve at a higher level than their peers from less advantaged homes.

To review the influence of parental occupation on civic knowledge, we did a regression analysis of civic knowledge scores, with the highest parental SEI scores as the predictor variable, the metric of which was standardized to have a standard deviation of 1 for the combined ICCS database with equally weighted samples. The results of this analysis appear in the last two columns of Table 6.1.

Here we can see that the differences in score points among the students in the three parental occupational status groups were statistically significant in all Latin American countries. However, the size of the difference varied across the six countries. In the Dominican Republic, the difference of 10 score points in civic knowledge made for a one standard-deviation difference in SEI. The difference in favor of students from homes where parents enjoyed a higher occupational status was smallest in the Dominican Republic and largest in Chile and Guatemala. The difference for both of the latter two countries of 33 score points was associated with one standard deviation in SEI.

On average, parental occupation explained nine percent of the variance in civic knowledge scores. The proportion of explained variance ranged from a low of 3 percent in the Dominican Republic to 13 percent in Chile and Guatemala.

Another crucial element of family context for civic and citizenship education is the level of parental interest in political and social issues. Students in families where there is greater parental interest in political and social issues are likely to hear more discussions and be exposed to more information in the media about these issues. This situation fosters greater interest in and motivation to learn about political and social issues and ultimately may lead to a higher level of civic knowledge (Lauglo & Øia, 2006; Richardson, 2003).

When the Latin American students were asked about their parents' level of interest in these issues, about half of them, on average, reported that their parents were quite or very interested, whereas the other half considered their parents to be not very or not at all interested (see Table 6.2). This level of interest was somewhat lower than the average across all ICCS countries,



Table 6.2: National percentages of students in categories of parental interest and its association with civic knowledge

| Country                     | Very Interested |                      | Quite Interested |                      | Not Very Interested |                      | Not Interested At All |                      | Influence of Parental Interest on Civic Knowledge                                      |                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                             | Percentages     | Mean civic knowledge | Percentages      | Mean civic knowledge | Percentages         | Mean civic knowledge | Percentages           | Mean civic knowledge | Difference in score points by parental interest (very or quite interested vs. others)* | Variance explained |
| Chile                       | 20 (0.7)        | 489 (5.3)            | 35 (0.8)         | 500 (3.9)            | 42 (0.9)            | 472 (3.4)            | 3 (0.3)               | 428 (9.4)            | <b>28</b> (3.2)                                                                        | 2 (0.5)            |
| Colombia                    | 30 (0.8)        | 464 (3.6)            | 25 (0.8)         | 482 (4.1)            | 41 (1.0)            | 459 (3.0)            | 5 (0.4)               | 413 (5.6)            | <b>18</b> (2.9)                                                                        | 1 (0.3)            |
| Dominican Republic          | 29 (1.3)        | 380 (3.4)            | 15 (0.8)         | 396 (5.1)            | 41 (1.6)            | 385 (2.9)            | 15 (0.6)              | 362 (4.6)            | <b>6</b> (3.0)                                                                         | 0 (0.2)            |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 32 (1.0)        | 433 (4.8)            | 26 (0.8)         | 452 (5.7)            | 40 (1.1)            | 430 (3.3)            | 3 (0.3)               | 372 (10.6)           | <b>15</b> (4.5)                                                                        | 0 (0.3)            |
| Mexico                      | 23 (0.6)        | 443 (4.0)            | 21 (0.8)         | 473 (5.4)            | 51 (0.9)            | 452 (2.8)            | 5 (0.4)               | 409 (5.5)            | <b>9</b> (3.9)                                                                         | 0 (0.1)            |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 25 (1.0)        | 419 (5.1)            | 21 (0.9)         | 453 (4.9)            | 47 (0.9)            | 422 (4.5)            | 7 (0.5)               | 387 (6.2)            | <b>17</b> (5.8)                                                                        | 0 (0.4)            |
| Latin American ICCS average | <b>27</b> (0.4) | <b>438</b> (1.8)     | <b>24</b> (0.3)  | <b>459</b> (2.0)     | <b>44</b> (0.4)     | <b>437</b> (1.4)     | <b>6</b> (0.2)        | <b>395</b> (3.0)     | <b>15</b> (1.6)                                                                        | <b>1</b> (0.1)     |
| International ICCS average  | 23 (0.2)        | 511 (1.0)            | 48 (0.2)         | 510 (0.7)            | 26 (0.2)            | 484 (0.8)            | 3 (0.1)               | 443 (2.1)            | <b>29</b> (0.9)                                                                        | 2 (0.1)            |

**Notes:**

\* Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) coefficients in **bold**.

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



where 71 percent of students reported their parents as either very or quite interested in political and social issues.

When we compared civic knowledge scores across categories of parental interest, a non-linear association emerged. Thus, although we found an increase in civic knowledge amongst students who said their parents were not interested at all to students who said their parents were quite interested in political and social issues, we also found that students who said they had very interested parents had considerably lower civic knowledge scores than those who said their parents were quite interested.

Because of this non-linear association, we used a dichotomous indicator variable with two values as a predictor in a regression analysis of students' civic knowledge. We assigned a value of 1 to students who reported having at least one parent who was very interested or quite interested, and a value of 0 to students who said that both of their parents were either not interested or not very interested.

The results of this analysis appear in the last two columns of Table 6.2. We can see here that, in all six Latin American countries, students with parents said to be very or quite interested had significantly higher civic knowledge scores than those students who said their parents were not interested or not very interested in political and social issues. On average, the difference between the two groups was 15 score points, with the range extending from 6 in the Dominican Republic to 28 in Chile. However, on average, only about one percent of the variance in civic knowledge could be explained by this variable.

### School context

Research literature contains accounts of numerous studies undertaken to explore the effect of private schooling on achievement. Although some (US American) studies show that students in private schools in many countries outperform those in public schools (see, for example, Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987), international comparisons illustrate very different effects of private schooling across countries as well as considerably smaller differences once the socioeconomic background of students is taken into account (see, for example, Organisation for Economic and Community Development, 2007). A multi-level analysis with data from a number of Latin American countries found no consistent or strong effects after controlling for students' socioeconomic background (Somers, McEwan, & Willms, 2004).

The ICCS researchers used the ICCS school questionnaire to obtain contextual information about the participating schools. The principals of these schools were asked, among other things, if their school was managed by a public education authority or a non-government organization. Table 6.3 presents the results.

As can be seen in this table, the six Latin American countries differed considerably with respect to the percentages of students taught in public and private schools. In Chile (50%) and Guatemala (65%), half or more of the Grade 8 students were enrolled in private schools. In contrast, only nine percent of the Mexican students in Grade 8 were attending private schools. In Colombia (22%), the Dominican Republic (19%), and Paraguay (24%), around one fifth of the target population was attending private schools.

Table 6.3 also shows the average achievement in civic knowledge for students enrolled in public schools (Column 3) and students enrolled in private schools (Column 4) as well as the difference in average achievement between the two types of school management. Except in Guatemala, the students in the private schools achieved at a significantly higher level than their peers in public schools. The differences in favor of private schools ranged from 34 points in the Dominican Republic to 79 points in Mexico.

When reviewing differences in civic knowledge between public and private schools, it is important to take the socioeconomic background of students into account. This is because





Table 6.3: National percentages of students and average civic knowledge by school management and its association with civic knowledge

| Country                     | Percentages of Students in ... |                 | Average Civic Knowledge Scores in ... |                 |                              |                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Public schools                 | Private schools | Public schools                        | Private schools | Differences (private–public) | Difference (private–public) after controlling for socioeconomic background* |
| Chile                       | 50 (1.4)                       | 50 (1.4)        | 459 (4.2)                             | 507 (5.0)       | 47 (5.9)                     | 1 (5.9)                                                                     |
| Colombia                    | 78 (1.9)                       | 22 (1.9)        | 449 (3.1)                             | 507 (6.7)       | 58 (7.4)                     | 25 (6.9)                                                                    |
| Dominican Republic          | 81 (2.4)                       | 19 (2.4)        | 375 (2.7)                             | 410 (6.3)       | 34 (6.9)                     | 16 (8.0)                                                                    |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 35 (2.9)                       | 65 (2.9)        | 433 (5.9)                             | 439 (6.2)       | 6 (8.6)                      | -18 (5.6)                                                                   |
| Mexico                      | 91 (1.1)                       | 9 (1.1)         | 444 (2.8)                             | 523 (8.8)       | 78 (9.3)                     | 22 (8.6)                                                                    |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 76 (3.2)                       | 24 (3.2)        | 407 (4.3)                             | 477 (9.2)       | 70 (10.5)                    | 5 (8.9)                                                                     |
| Latin American ICCS average | 68 (0.9)                       | 32 (0.9)        | 428 (1.6)                             | 477 (2.9)       | 49 (3.4)                     | 9 (3.0)                                                                     |

**Notes:**

\* Regression coefficient for school type (1 = private, 0 = public) after controlling for students' individual socioeconomic background and average student socioeconomic background at the school level.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

students from lower income families are typically not able to access private education and also tend to have lower levels of achievement. In order to control for socioeconomic background, we conducted a regression analysis where civic knowledge scores were explained by way of school management (1 = private, 0 = public) and where students' individual socioeconomic background and the school's average socioeconomic background served as additional predictors.<sup>1</sup>

The last column of Table 6.3 shows the differences in civic knowledge between public and private schools after we had controlled for individual and school-level differences in socioeconomic status. On average, controlling for this variable produced a much smaller difference (9 points). We found, after controlling for socioeconomic background, significant achievement differences in favor of private schools in Colombia (25 points), the Dominican Republic (16 points), and Mexico (22 points). The differences in Chile and Paraguay, however, were not significant. In Guatemala, students at public schools had significantly higher average scores than those at private schools once socioeconomic background had been controlled.

Another important piece of contextual information was the way in which schools approached the teaching of civic and citizenship education. Here, principals were asked whether this content was taught as a separate subject, taught by teachers of subjects related to human and social sciences, or integrated into all subjects taught at school. Principals could also indicate other approaches, such as schools making civic and citizenship education available as an extra-curricular activity. They could furthermore indicate whether their school considered civic and citizenship education to be an outcome of the school experience as a whole or whether the school considered that this area of education had no part in the school curriculum or experience. If applicable, school principals could indicate more than one approach.

Table 6.4 shows the differences among the Latin American countries with respect to the teaching of civics and citizenship as a separate subject. Here, the range was from a low of 12 percent of students in Chile experiencing this approach to more than three quarters (79%) of students in Paraguay being taught this way.

<sup>1</sup> The composite index of socioeconomic background was derived as factor scores from a principal component analysis with highest parental occupation (SEI scores), highest educational attainment (in years of schooling), and number of books at home as indicator variables. The index had been standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 within each country, with the higher scores reflecting higher socioeconomic status. A detailed description of how this index was constructed will appear in the ICCS technical report (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, forthcoming).



Table 6.4: National percentages for school approaches to teaching civic and citizenship education

| Country                     | Percentages of Students at Schools Where Civic and Citizenship Education Is:        |                                                                     |                                               |                              |                                                       |                                                |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Taught as a separate subject by teachers of civics and citizenship-related subjects | Taught by teachers of subjects related to human and social sciences | Integrated into all subjects taught at school | An extra-curricular activity | Considered the result of school experience as a whole | Not considered a part of the school curriculum |
| Chile                       | 12 (2.0)                                                                            | 93 (2.3)                                                            | 51 (4.5)                                      | 8 (2.1)                      | 66 (3.9)                                              | 29 (3.4)                                       |
| Colombia                    | 28 (3.6)                                                                            | 90 (2.0)                                                            | 62 (3.6)                                      | 14 (2.7)                     | 69 (3.3)                                              | 36 (4.0)                                       |
| Dominican Republic          | 49 (5.0)                                                                            | 85 (3.0)                                                            | 78 (3.8)                                      | 17 (3.7)                     | 68 (6.4)                                              | 44 (4.8)                                       |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 28 (3.7)                                                                            | 95 (2.5)                                                            | 65 (4.1)                                      | 29 (4.4)                     | 69 (4.2)                                              | 55 (4.8)                                       |
| Mexico                      | 65 (3.3)                                                                            | 75 (2.8)                                                            | 76 (3.2)                                      | 8 (1.9)                      | 60 (3.3)                                              | 55 (3.5)                                       |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 79 (3.7)                                                                            | 88 (2.9)                                                            | 72 (4.2)                                      | 12 (2.9)                     | 70 (4.2)                                              | 23 (3.8)                                       |
| Latin American ICCS average | 43 (1.5)                                                                            | 87 (1.1)                                                            | 67 (1.6)                                      | 15 (1.3)                     | 67 (1.8)                                              | 40 (1.7)                                       |
| International ICCS average  | 53 (0.6)                                                                            | 77 (0.5)                                                            | 55 (0.7)                                      | 24 (0.5)                     | 70 (0.6)                                              | 23 (0.5)                                       |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Across the Latin American countries, a fairly homogeneous pattern regarding approaches to teaching civic and citizenship education emerged, as can be seen in Table 6.4. Most of the students (87%) across these countries were being taught the content as part of subjects related to human and social sciences. With respect to the range of percentages, three-quarters (75%) of the students in Mexico and 95 percent of the students in Guatemala were experiencing civic and citizenship education as part of their history, geography, law, and/or economics lessons.

In five of the six Latin American countries, principals reported that around 10 percent of their students encountered civic and citizenship content as an extracurricular activity, with the range in percentages extending from 8% in Chile and Mexico to 17% in the Dominican Republic. The proportion of Guatemalan students experiencing content in this form was somewhat higher (29%).

On average across the Latin American ICCS countries, two thirds (67%) of students were attending schools where principals considered civic education to be part of the school experience as a whole. The small range in percentages across countries indicated a fairly homogeneous pattern with respect to this approach.

The last column of Table 6.4 shows whether, according to the principals, schools considered civic and citizenship education to be part of the school curriculum. On average, across the countries of the region, 40 percent of students were said by their principals to be attending schools that had no provision in the school curriculum for this area of education. The proportions of principals who said as much ranged from 23 percent in Paraguay to 55 percent in Guatemala and Mexico.

However, when interpreting the results from this question, we need to acknowledge that because the official curriculum is defined at the national level, schools are generally not in a position to define their curricula. Therefore, the way that these principals responded to the question was likely to reflect their subjective perception of the importance of this subject area in their school's curriculum.

Scholars have provided evidence that more democratic forms of school governance contribute to civic learning at schools (see, for example, Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008). Students were asked whether they had encountered aspects of civic and citizenship education as part of their experience at school as a whole. More specifically, students were asked if they had ever done any of the following activities:

- Voting for class representatives or school parliament;
- Taking part in decision-making about how the school is run;



- Taking part in discussions at a student assembly;
- Becoming a candidate for class representative or school parliament.

Table 6.5 presents the proportions of students from all six Latin American countries who said they had participated in these events. The table also presents, for each statement, the average percentage of Latin American students and the average percentage of all ICCS students who said they had engaged in the particular activity.

*Table 6.5: National percentages for students' civic participation at school*

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Reporting Having Participated in the Following Activities: |                                                            |                                                    |                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Voting for <class representative> or <school parliament>                           | Taking part in decision-making about how the school is run | Taking part in discussions at a <student assembly> | Becoming a candidate for <class representative> or <school parliament> |
| Chile                       | 89 (0.7)                                                                           | 39 (1.1)                                                   | 35 (1.0)                                           | 47 (1.0)                                                               |
| Colombia                    | 90 (0.5)                                                                           | 57 (0.9)                                                   | 41 (0.9)                                           | 44 (0.8)                                                               |
| Dominican Republic          | 61 (1.5)                                                                           | 59 (1.1)                                                   | 49 (1.2)                                           | 58 (1.2)                                                               |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 94 (0.8)                                                                           | 63 (1.0)                                                   | 51 (1.2)                                           | 56 (1.2)                                                               |
| Mexico                      | 74 (0.9)                                                                           | 54 (0.9)                                                   | 41 (1.0)                                           | 36 (0.7)                                                               |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 87 (1.0)                                                                           | 56 (1.2)                                                   | 54 (1.4)                                           | 58 (1.3)                                                               |
| Latin American ICCS average | 82 (0.4)                                                                           | 55 (0.4)                                                   | 45 (0.5)                                           | 50 (0.4)                                                               |
| International ICCS average  | 76 (0.2)                                                                           | 40 (0.2)                                                   | 40 (0.2)                                           | 42 (0.2)                                                               |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

A large majority of students across the Latin American ICCS countries (82%) reported that they had participated in voting for a class representative or school parliament. The proportions ranged from about two thirds (61%) in the Dominican Republic to 94 percent in Guatemala. In contrast, only half (50%) of the students from all six countries said that they had been a candidate for class representative or school parliament.

Interestingly, more than half (55%) of the students across the six countries of the region reported that they had taken part in decision-making relating to the running of their school. This finding suggests that schools in Latin America allow students to have at least some say in some aspects of how their schools are run, although the extent to which this occurs in each of the Latin American countries differs, with Guatemala (63%) apparently being the most receptive to student input and Chile the least (39%). The comparison of the average percentage for the Latin American region with the percentage for all ICCS countries (40%) suggests that schools in Latin American countries are more receptive to students' civic participation than are schools in other ICCS countries.

The activity that attracted the least amount of student involvement was taking part in discussions at a student assembly. Here, less than half (45%) of the Latin American students indicated that they had participated in this activity. Again, the range was quite large, from 35 percent in Chile to 54 percent in Paraguay.

In an effort to make clear the part that school context plays in students' civic participation and engagement, the ICCS regional questionnaire for Latin America included a question regarding the frequency with which students discussed various social issues at school. Students were asked to indicate whether they discussed the following items "not at all," "a little," "sometimes," or "often":



- The rights and duties one assumes as a citizen when becoming an adult;
- Consequences of consuming illegal drugs;
- Integration of people with different sexual tendencies and orientations in the community;
- Discrimination against people with different sexual orientations;
- Advantages and disadvantages of non-governmental organizations operating in a democratic country;
- Integration of people from different cultural backgrounds in the school, neighborhood, or community;
- Respect for different religious rites;
- Facilities that people with physical and mental disabilities should have in different environments (e.g., school, street, workplace);
- Difficulties that people with AIDS have in terms of being accepted by society.

In Table 6.6, which summarizes the students' responses to these statements, the percentages of students who reported that they had discussed the various issues sometimes or often are combined. A fairly homogeneous picture emerged across the six countries with respect to the frequency of discussing (sometimes or often) these social issues at school. Overall percentages ranged from 50 percent for advantages and disadvantages of non-governmental organizations to 68 percent for rights and duties of adult citizens and consequences of illegal drug consumption.

The averages for the Latin American countries showed that at least half of the participating students reported that discussions of all of the listed social issues took place at their school sometimes or often. The highest averages were recorded for two topics directly concerned with the students, namely, the rights and duties one assumes as a citizen when one becomes an adult (68%) and the consequences of consuming illegal drugs (also 68%). Respect for different religious rites was the next most frequently discussed issue, with an average of 64 percent of the students reporting this as a discussion topic. This was followed by topics with a community focus—the integration of people from a different cultural background (59%), provision of facilities for people with physical and mental disabilities (61%), and acceptance of people with AIDS (59%). Similar frequencies were reported for discussion of topics with a focus on different sexual orientations (56% with respect to integration and 54% with respect to discrimination). Although the least discussed issue was the advantages and disadvantages of non-governmental organizations operating in a democratic country, 50 percent of the students nonetheless reported discussing this matter at school sometimes or often.

### Community context

Schools are located within the communities that they serve so it is important to understand of the context in which they operate. In this section, we consider two aspects of community context—school location and the community resources to which the school had access.

Schools in non-urban communities have frequently been shown to perform at a lower level when compared with schools in urban communities (see, for example, Istrate, Noveanu, & Smith, 2006; Webster & Fisher, 2000; Williams, 2005). Data from a Latin American study confirmed this finding for a large number of countries in the region (UNESCO, 2008). Some studies show that rural disadvantage in educational outcomes is no longer evident once family and community attributes are taken into account (see, for example, Williams, Long, Carpenter, & Hayden, 1993). However, Phelps and Prock (1991) illustrated that rural poverty may have a greater impact on educational outcomes than urban poverty.

We operationalized location in terms of the size of the community in which each participating school was located. We subsequently combined the initial five response categories into two



Table 6.6: National percentages for students reporting discussion of social issues at school

| Country                     | Percentages of Students Reporting Discussion of Following Issues Sometimes or Often |                                         |                                                                                          |                                                                  |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                      |                                       |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                      |  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                             | Rights and duties one assumes as a citizen on becoming an adult                     | Consequences of consuming illegal drugs | Integration of people with different sexual tendencies and orientations in the community | Discrimination against people with different sexual orientations | Advantages and disadvantages of non-governmental organizations operating in a democratic country | Integration of people from different cultural backgrounds in the school, neighbourhood, or community | Respect for different religious rites | Facilities that people with physical and mental disabilities should have in different environments (school, street, workplace, etc.) | Difficulties that people with AIDS have in being accepted by society |  |
| Chile                       | 67 (1.2)                                                                            | 77 (1.0)                                | 61 (1.0)                                                                                 | 57 (1.0)                                                         | 45 (1.1)                                                                                         | 62 (1.1)                                                                                             | 63 (1.0)                              | 64 (0.9)                                                                                                                             | 58 (1.1)                                                             |  |
| Colombia                    | 70 (1.1)                                                                            | 72 (1.1)                                | 57 (1.0)                                                                                 | 53 (1.2)                                                         | 50 (1.1)                                                                                         | 60 (1.2)                                                                                             | 70 (1.0)                              | 62 (1.0)                                                                                                                             | 54 (1.1)                                                             |  |
| Dominican Republic          | 58 (1.5)                                                                            | 51 (1.9)                                | 46 (1.0)                                                                                 | 45 (1.2)                                                         | 46 (1.0)                                                                                         | 52 (1.1)                                                                                             | 58 (1.2)                              | 54 (1.3)                                                                                                                             | 57 (1.5)                                                             |  |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 77 (1.2)                                                                            | 73 (1.1)                                | 59 (1.0)                                                                                 | 57 (1.2)                                                         | 55 (1.1)                                                                                         | 62 (1.0)                                                                                             | 68 (1.1)                              | 64 (1.2)                                                                                                                             | 65 (1.3)                                                             |  |
| Mexico                      | 64 (0.9)                                                                            | 68 (1.0)                                | 59 (1.0)                                                                                 | 60 (0.9)                                                         | 50 (0.8)                                                                                         | 56 (0.8)                                                                                             | 57 (0.8)                              | 61 (0.8)                                                                                                                             | 65 (1.0)                                                             |  |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 70 (1.0)                                                                            | 64 (1.2)                                | 55 (1.2)                                                                                 | 51 (1.2)                                                         | 51 (1.3)                                                                                         | 60 (1.3)                                                                                             | 65 (1.0)                              | 64 (1.1)                                                                                                                             | 58 (1.2)                                                             |  |
| Latin American ICCS average | 68 (0.5)                                                                            | 68 (0.5)                                | 56 (0.4)                                                                                 | 54 (0.5)                                                         | 50 (0.4)                                                                                         | 59 (0.4)                                                                                             | 64 (0.4)                              | 61 (0.4)                                                                                                                             | 59 (0.5)                                                             |  |

**Notes:**

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



categories whereby we classified communities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants as non-urban and communities with a larger number of inhabitants than this as urban communities. Results are presented in Table 6.7.

The table shows that the six Latin American countries differed considerably in terms of the percentages of students in schools in urban and non-urban communities. The largest proportion

*Table 6.7: National percentages of students and averages of civic knowledge by school location and its association with civic knowledge*

| Country                     | Percentages of Students in ...                |                                           | Average Civic Knowledge Scores in ...         |                                           |                              |                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Non-urban communities (< 100,000 inhabitants) | Urban communities (> 100,000 inhabitants) | Non-urban communities (< 100,000 inhabitants) | Urban communities (> 100,000 inhabitants) | Difference (non-urban–urban) | Difference (non-urban–urban) after controlling for socioeconomic background* |
| Chile                       | 49 (3.3)                                      | 51 (3.3)                                  | 465 (4.3)                                     | 500 (4.7)                                 | -35 (6.2)                    | -8 (4.9)                                                                     |
| Colombia                    | 46 (3.2)                                      | 54 (3.2)                                  | 448 (3.8)                                     | 474 (4.4)                                 | -26 (5.5)                    | -4 (5.9)                                                                     |
| Dominican Republic          | 86 (2.8)                                      | 14 (2.8)                                  | 377 (2.6)                                     | 402 (9.5)                                 | -25 (10.3)                   | 8 (9.3)                                                                      |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 77 (3.5)                                      | 23 (3.5)                                  | 422 (3.6)                                     | 475 (12.0)                                | -52 (12.4)                   | 15 (6.8)                                                                     |
| Mexico                      | 55 (2.8)                                      | 45 (2.8)                                  | 435 (4.6)                                     | 471 (3.9)                                 | -36 (6.3)                    | 6 (5.3)                                                                      |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 70 (4.4)                                      | 30 (4.4)                                  | 408 (5.1)                                     | 460 (7.9)                                 | -52 (10.5)                   | 8 (5.4)                                                                      |
| Latin American ICCS average | 64 (1.4)                                      | 36 (1.4)                                  | 426 (1.7)                                     | 464 (3.1)                                 | -38 (3.7)                    | 4 (2.6)                                                                      |

**Notes:**

\* Regression coefficient for school type (1 = non-urban, 0 = urban) after controlling for students' individual socioeconomic background and average student socioeconomic background at the school level.

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

of students in non-urban schools was recorded for the Dominican Republic (86%), followed by Guatemala (77%) and Paraguay (70%). In Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, approximately one half of the students were in schools located in an urban community and the other half were in non-urban schools.

Table 6.7 also presents the average civic knowledge scores for students from schools in non-urban and urban communities. The second-last column of the table sets out the differences in scores between the two locations and whether these differences were significant. As can be seen, in all six Latin American countries, students in urban schools significantly out-performed their peers in non-urban schools. The smallest, but still significant, difference of 25 points in favor of schools in urban communities was recorded for the Dominican Republic, while the largest difference—52 points in favor of schools in urban communities—was shown for Guatemala and Paraguay.

Given that families living in non-urban communities often tend to have lower socioeconomic status, it is important to take this factor into account when comparing achievement results for students from urban and non-urban communities. The last column in Table 6.7 shows the difference between students in non-urban and urban schools after we had controlled for socioeconomic status at the student and school levels.<sup>2</sup> Guatemala was the only country where the difference (of 15 score points) was still statistically significant after we had controlled for this variable. This finding suggests that differences in civic knowledge between the students in the urban and non-urban communities were largely due to associated differences in socioeconomic background.



<sup>2</sup> The difference after controlling for socioeconomic background was derived as the (unstandardized) regression coefficient for an indicator variable (1 = urban, 0 = non-urban), with socioeconomic status of the individual student and the average socioeconomic status of sampled students as additional predictors.



Students' civic learning is influenced not only by what happens at school but also within their wider social context. More particularly, civic learning is affected by social and cultural stimuli arising out of the cultural and social resources in the schools' respective communities (Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2001). The ICCS school questionnaire included a set of items that asked principals about the cultural and social resources existing at the local community level, such as public libraries, cinemas, theaters, and concert halls, as well as language schools, museums or art galleries, public gardens, religious centers, and sports facilities (swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball courts, football fields). Table 6.8 shows the percentages of students in schools where principals reported the availability of each of these resources.

As is illustrated by the Latin American ICCS average in the table, availability of different resources varied widely across the six countries. On the one hand, only about a quarter of the students, on average, had access to a museum or art gallery (23%), a cinema (25%), or a theater or concert hall (27%). On the other hand, large proportions of students had access to a religious centre (93%) or a sports facility (84%).

When we compare these results with the averages from all ICCS countries given in Table 6.8, we can see that the Latin American students were only about half as likely as their international peers to study at a school with cultural resources in the community (cinema, theater/concert hall, museum/art gallery).

The six countries were fairly heterogeneous with respect to the proportion of students in schools for which principals reported the availability of a playground, public library, or cinema. Thus, whereas only 45 percent of students were in schools with access to a playground in Guatemala, 89 percent of students enjoyed such access in Paraguay.

Smaller but still considerable differences emerged with respect to the availability of a cinema and a public library. Only 10 percent of students in schools in Paraguay had access to a cinema, whereas the percentage of students having access to a cinema in Mexican schools was 41. At a generally higher level, but with similar differences across countries, the percentages of students in schools with access to a public library ranged from 46 percent in Paraguay to 74 percent in Mexico.

## Summary

Our focus in this chapter was on the context in which civic education was taking place in the six Latin American countries that participated in ICCS. When we looked at common aspects across the six countries, we found that students with parents of higher occupational status and greater interest in political and social issues performed at a significantly higher level than students from less advantaged homes.

Also, and consistently across the countries in the region, the results showed that students in private schools performed at a significantly higher level in civic knowledge than students in government schools in five of the six Latin American countries. However, the differences were substantially reduced when the socioeconomic background of students at the individual and the school level was taken into account.

Across all participating countries, civic and citizenship education was being taught mostly by teachers of subjects related to human and social sciences, such as economics, geography, history, and law. Rights and duties as adult citizens and the consequences of illegal drug consumption were the topics that students in all countries reported as being most frequently discussed at school.







Table 6.8: Principals' reports on community resources (in percentages of students)

| Country                     | Percentages of Students at Schools Where Principals Report the Availability of: |          |                         |                 |                       |            |                       |                  |                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                             | Public library                                                                  | Cinema   | Theater or concert hall | Language school | Museum or art gallery | Playground | Public garden or park | Religious centre | Sports facility |
| Chile                       | 68 (3.6)                                                                        | 33 (3.8) | 39 (4.4)                | 21 (3.1)        | 27 (3.6)              | 74 (3.3)   | 85 (2.6)              | 96 (1.9)         | 79 (3.5)        |
| Colombia                    | 63 (3.6)                                                                        | 31 (3.6) | 28 (3.8)                | 24 (3.3)        | 17 (2.6)              | 75 (3.3)   | 75 (3.1)              | 91 (2.2)         | 82 (2.8)        |
| Dominican Republic          | 48 (5.9)                                                                        | 11 (2.8) | 15 (3.0)                | 44 (5.4)        | 17 (3.3)              | 74 (3.8)   | 57 (5.2)              | 91 (2.7)         | 80 (3.3)        |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup>      | 58 (4.0)                                                                        | 23 (3.9) | 20 (3.4)                | 19 (4.0)        | 16 (3.2)              | 45 (4.2)   | 59 (4.5)              | 88 (3.5)         | 83 (3.0)        |
| Mexico                      | 74 (3.3)                                                                        | 41 (3.0) | 35 (3.2)                | 45 (3.2)        | 33 (3.3)              | 71 (3.0)   | 80 (2.9)              | 96 (1.4)         | 87 (2.2)        |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>       | 46 (4.3)                                                                        | 10 (2.5) | 23 (3.4)                | 34 (4.0)        | 28 (3.7)              | 89 (2.8)   | 77 (3.4)              | 93 (1.7)         | 92 (2.7)        |
| Latin American ICCS average | 59 (1.7)                                                                        | 25 (1.3) | 27 (1.5)                | 31 (1.6)        | 23 (1.3)              | 71 (1.4)   | 72 (1.5)              | 93 (1.0)         | 84 (1.2)        |
| International ICCS average  | 81 (0.5)                                                                        | 48 (0.6) | 50 (0.6)                | 44 (0.6)        | 49 (0.6)              | 87 (0.4)   | 83 (0.5)              | 94 (0.3)         | 92 (0.3)        |

**Notes:**

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.

Students in schools located in urban communities showed a significantly higher level of civic knowledge than students in non-urban schools in all six Latin American countries. However, these differences became non-significant in five countries after we controlled for the socioeconomic backgrounds of students and schools. While only about a quarter of students were studying in schools with access to a museum, cinema, or theater or concert hall, more than 80 percent of students were attending schools with access to a religious centre and a sports facility.

We also found some unique features in several Latin American countries. Compared to the other five Latin American countries, Chile showed the largest difference in civic knowledge in favor of students who reported higher levels of parental interest in political and social issues. Colombia had the largest proportion of students attending schools in urban communities, whereas the Dominican Republic had a relatively smaller percentage of students attending schools in urban communities.





## Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) was to study how different countries prepare their young people for citizenship in the 21st century. One aim of this study was to address aspects of citizenship education relevant for particular geographical regions by including additional regional instruments for students to complete.

In this report, we investigated a number of important aspects of civic and citizenship education in Latin America. These included:

- The national contexts in which civic and citizenship education was taking place;
- Variations in students' civic knowledge across the region as well as region-specific aspects of students' civic knowledge;
- Students' perceptions of public institutions, forms of government, corrupt practices, and obedience to the law;
- Students' basic dispositions toward peaceful coexistence, including attitudes toward their country and the Latin American region, sense of empathy, tolerance toward minorities, and attitudes toward the use of violence;
- Contexts for learning about citizenship, including the home, school, and community.

In this final chapter, we summarize the main findings for each of these aspects of civic and citizenship education in Latin America. We also discuss possible implications of the findings for policy and practice relating to civic and citizenship education in the region and provide an outlook for future regional research in this field.

### National contexts for civic and citizenship education

The national contexts for civic and citizenship education in the six Latin American ICCS countries included a number of factors common to all. However, we also observed notable differences among these countries on the indices published by international agencies and cited in Chapter 2. Generally, the countries have medium to high human development indices and are characterized by relatively high crime rates and widespread perception of corruption in government. Almost all of these countries record high rates of adult literacy but participation in secondary education tends to be relatively low (ranging from less than 40 percent in Guatemala to over 85 percent in Chile). There are also quite marked differences in economic, social, and educational indicators within the region.

Data from the national contexts survey suggest that the historical and cultural contexts of each country strongly influence civic and citizenship education. Common themes that dominate the curricular agenda for citizenship include violent conflict, sustainable development and the environment, tolerance and plurality, and the inclusion of large, formerly excluded segments of society.

There is evidence that a number of countries in the region view civic and citizenship education as important; this area of educational provision has recently been the focus of public debate in three of the six countries. We also found in most of the countries a broadening of civic and citizenship education toward the inclusion of democratic values and participatory skills. However, the data also show that evaluations and assessment of civic and citizenship education are not common practice and that elected student representation on forums or organizations concerned with school governance has yet to be implemented in all of these countries.



## Variations in and region-specific aspects of civic knowledge

The results from ICCS show that levels of civic knowledge in the Latin American region tend to be relatively low: the average civic knowledge score in the six Latin American countries was over half an international standard deviation lower than the average from all participating countries. In five out of the six countries in the Latin American regional module, more than half of the students had civic knowledge achievement scores at or below Proficiency Level 1. These findings suggest that majorities of students in these countries are not familiar with the concept of representative democracy as a political system and that they lack specific knowledge about institutions, systems, and concepts. The findings also suggest that the civic knowledge of many students in these countries does not extend beyond basic knowledge of fundamental principles or broad concepts.

The results for the regional civic knowledge items that were scaled on the international ICCS test illustrate that consequences of dictatorships in Latin America and characteristics of authoritarian regimes are largely unknown to students in this region. However, majorities of students were able to identify reasons for the inappropriateness of vigilante justice and bans on providing minors with alcohol and tobacco.

The results also showed considerable variation across the six participating countries with respect to general economic and social factors. The countries that gained the higher scores on the Human Development Index were also those whose lower-secondary students had higher levels of civic knowledge.

## Perceptions of public institutions and government

The ICCS results for the Latin American countries showed students expressing relatively low levels of trust in political parties, courts of justice, and the police. However, larger majorities of students expressed complete or quite a lot of trust in the armed forces, schools, and the media. There were notable differences in levels of trust across countries. The same was true for the percentages of students expressing preferences for a particular political party: whereas majorities of students in Mexico and in the Dominican Republic reported liking one party more than other parties, over half of the students in Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay expressed no such preference.

Even though most students did not agree with items measuring positive attitudes toward authoritarian forms of government, more than half of the students in each of the participating countries did agree that dictatorships are justified when they bring order and safety or economic benefits. Male students tended to hold significantly more positive attitudes than the female students toward authoritarian governments.

Significant gender differences were also found with regard to attitudes toward corrupt practices in government or toward disobeying the law. Male students were more inclined to endorse corruption as well as disobedience to the law in certain situations. Generally, students did not agree with corrupt practices in government. Students' acceptance of disobeying laws depended very much on circumstances; acceptance was highest when it was considered to be the only way to help one's family.

The results also showed that attitudes toward authoritarian government, corrupt practices in government, and acceptance of disobedience to the law were associated with civic knowledge. More knowledgeable students tended to be less accepting of authoritarian government, corruption in government, and justifications for disobeying the law. This pattern underlines the value of civic and citizenship education for the development of democratic societies.



## Dispositions toward peaceful coexistence

Latin American lower-secondary students generally expressed positive attitudes toward their country and had a relatively strong sense of Latin American identity. Students with more positive attitudes toward their country were also those who expressed a stronger sense of regional identity.

In societies where violence and crime are important social and political issues, citizenship education tends to aim at developing compassion and respecting diversity. Majorities of ICCS students in Latin America expressed empathy for classmates experiencing adversity, with female students showing themselves to be more compassionate than male students. More than half of the students, on average, also tended to accept minority groups as neighbors. However, acceptance was lowest for homosexuals or people with AIDS. Students with more positive attitudes toward neighborhood diversity were also those with higher levels of civic knowledge.

The ICCS Latin American results also highlighted considerable differences with regard to students' attitudes toward people with different sexual orientations. In all countries, a majority of students agreed that homosexuals should have the same rights as other citizens, but only in Chile and Mexico did a majority agree that these people should also have the right to get married.

One in every three students in the six Latin American countries reported that they had been victims of physical aggression or had been threatened by someone at their school, and majorities of students stated that they had been verbally abused by classmates. Most students said they did not agree with the use of violence, but in all but one country more than half agreed that vigilante justice was justified when authorities failed to act.

## The influence of home, school, and community contexts

As in most ICCS countries, civic knowledge in Latin America appears to be strongly influenced by the family background. Students whose parents were employed in higher status occupations and those whose parents were more interested in political and social issues also tended to be those who had higher levels of civic knowledge. There were also large differences between students from private and government schools. In three of the six countries, these differences remained significant even after we had controlled for the socioeconomic status of students and the social context of schools.

Most students in the Latin American ICCS countries were being taught civic-related content by teachers of subjects related to human and social sciences. Generally, majorities of students in each country said they had discussed a wide range of issues at school, including citizens' rights and responsibilities, illegal drug use, AIDS, integration of minorities, and provision of facilities for people with disabilities.

In all six countries, notable differences in civic knowledge emerged with regard to community type, with students studying in urban communities having higher levels of civic knowledge than students studying in non-urban communities. However, these differences tended not to be statistically significant once we had taken the effects of socioeconomic background of students and the social context of schools into account. The ICCS regional data for Latin America also showed that, on average, Latin American students had less access than their ICCS international peers to a range of community resources such as public libraries, museums and art galleries, or theaters and concert halls.



## Possible implications for policy and practice

Given the notable differences in contexts between countries, we consider that it is difficult to formulate specific policy recommendations and have therefore limited our discussion in this section to broad issues relating to findings that were common across the six Latin American ICCS countries.

Data from ICCS show many common contextual factors for civic and citizenship education in the region. The goal held by the governments of all six countries of building and further strengthening more inclusive, more peaceful, and more democratic societies has clear implications for educational practice. In this respect, the regional initiative to evaluate citizenship education within the context of ICCS shows promise for further cross-national cooperation in general and improving policy and practice in civic and citizenship education in particular.

The civic test results for the Latin American region show clearly that many students in these countries have only limited civic knowledge. Some region-specific aspects of these findings, such as the general lack of knowledge about authoritarianism and dictatorship, are particularly concerning, especially when considered in conjunction with the finding that majorities of students believed that dictatorships may be justified under certain circumstances. The link between higher levels of civic knowledge on the one hand and rejections of authoritarian government, corrupt practices, and excuses for breaking the law on the other suggests that improving civic learning would be an important step in strengthening democracy and civil societies in Latin America.

Although most of the Latin American students tended to hold generally tolerant and empathetic views on a number of issues, some ambivalence was evident in the ICCS results with regard to breaking the law and to taking citizen action when laws were not upheld. Within the context of these findings, it is interesting to note that, among the six countries, Colombia, in particular, has set in place citizenship education initiatives designed to specifically address violence as a social problem. This experience may provide guidance on how school education can react with positivity to society-based issues (Chaux, 2009; Chaux & Velásquez, 2009).

Not unexpectedly, socioeconomic factors appeared to influence students' civic learning outcomes in the six countries in different ways. Students were being influenced directly not only by their home background but also by school context factors interacting with other school and community factors. This pattern of influence can also be seen from a broader perspective because those countries with higher economic, social, and educational development also had students with higher levels of civic knowledge. The important point here is the apparent link between lack of civic knowledge and a general lack in equity both across and within the participating countries in the region.

We acknowledge that it is difficult to develop policies with the potential to change the pattern of socioeconomic factors and educational outcomes in these countries. However, the ICCS results for the Latin American region also indicate that civic and citizenship learning is not available in the same way to all students. Many of the participating students were studying at schools where principals did not think that this learning area was part of the school curriculum. Even though these results are likely to reflect rather subjective judgments, they suggest shortcomings in how schools implement this learning area—shortcomings that could be improved through educational policy.





Furthermore, even though, in all countries, majorities of students reported having voted in school or classroom elections, other forms of student participation appeared to be limited. According to the ICCS national contexts survey, student participation in all of the ICCS participating countries is considered an important part of civic and citizenship education. As such, there is probably considerable opportunity in the Latin American countries for improving student access to, and interest in, this aspect of school life.

### **Future directions for research in Latin America**

This report provides an overview of findings from ICCS with regard to the six Latin American countries participating in this study. As such, and as occurred with respect to the IEA CIVED study, we expect that this report will be followed by a large number of secondary analyses. Although we have reported important associations between contexts, attitudes, and civic knowledge, we know that further research is needed to provide a more complete picture. This future research could employ more complex multivariate analyses in order to allow further investigation of contextual influences on students' civic attitudes and knowledge.

We also hope, and again in line with the experience of the IEA CIVED study (Reimers, 2007), that ICCS will have a long-term effect on policy and practice in the Latin American region. We need to keep in mind, however, that the participation of the six Latin American countries in ICCS was part of a broader regional initiative that reflects the region's strong interest in this learning area. Because ICCS data provide an important point of reference, they have the potential to further inform policy initiatives at both national and regional levels.

ICCS has not only built on previous studies such as IEA CIVED but also provided baseline data useful for future evaluations of civic and citizenship education both internationally and regionally. Moreover, in addition to bringing to fruition a rich international database that contains information collected at different levels and from different perspectives, ICCS has collected data that address issues of particular relevance to various regions of the world, including Latin America. These regional module data have considerable potential in terms of helping researchers broaden the scope of secondary analysis and conduct further regional-specific research on civic learning outcomes.





# Appendices

## APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENT DESIGN, SAMPLES, AND PARTICIPATION RATES

*Table A.1: ICCS test booklet design*

| Booklet | Position |     |     |
|---------|----------|-----|-----|
|         | A        | B   | C   |
| 1       | C01      | C02 | C04 |
| 2       | C02      | C03 | C05 |
| 3       | C03      | C04 | C06 |
| 4       | C04      | C05 | C07 |
| 5       | C05      | C06 | C01 |
| 6       | C06      | C07 | C02 |
| 7       | C07      | C01 | C03 |

**Note:**

CIVED link cluster shaded in grey.

*Table A.2: Coverage of ICCS 2009 Latin American target population*

| Country            | International Target Population | Exclusions from Target Population |                          |                    |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                    | Coverage                        | School-level exclusions           | Within-sample exclusions | Overall exclusions |
| Chile              | 100%                            | 0.1%                              | 1.6%                     | 1.6%               |
| Colombia           | 100%                            | 1.1%                              | 0.3%                     | 1.5%               |
| Dominican Republic | 100%                            | 0.0%                              | 0.0%                     | 0.0%               |
| Guatemala          | 100%                            | 0.6%                              | 1.3%                     | 1.9%               |
| Mexico             | 100%                            | 1.0%                              | 0.2%                     | 1.2%               |
| Paraguay           | 100%                            | 2.3%                              | 0.1%                     | 2.4%               |

**Note:**

Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.



Table A.3: Participation rates and sample sizes for student survey

| Country            | School Participation Rate (in %) |                              |                                | Total Number of Schools that Participated in Student Survey | Student Participation Rate (weighted) in % | Total number of Students Assessed | Overall Participation Rate (in %) |                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                    | Before replacement (weighted)    | After replacement (weighted) | After replacement (unweighted) |                                                             |                                            |                                   | Before replacement (weighted)     | After replacement (weighted) |
| Chile              | 98.3                             | 99.4                         | 99.4                           | 177                                                         | 96.2                                       | 5192                              | 94.6                              | 95.7                         |
| Colombia           | 93.2                             | 99.5                         | 99.5                           | 196                                                         | 95.3                                       | 6204                              | 88.8                              | 94.8                         |
| Dominican Republic | 99.4                             | 99.4                         | 99.3                           | 145                                                         | 95.6                                       | 4589                              | 95.1                              | 95.1                         |
| Guatemala          | 98.2                             | 100.0                        | 100.0                          | 145                                                         | 97.4                                       | 4002                              | 95.7                              | 97.4                         |
| Mexico             | 97.8                             | 97.8                         | 97.7                           | 215                                                         | 94.5                                       | 6576                              | 92.4                              | 92.4                         |
| Paraguay           | 95.3                             | 99.4                         | 99.3                           | 149                                                         | 96.3                                       | 3399                              | 91.8                              | 95.8                         |

Table A.4: Participation rates and sample sizes for teacher survey

| Country            | School Participation Rate (in %) |                              |                                | Total Number of Schools that Participated in Teacher Survey | Teacher Participation Rate (weighted) in % | Total number of Teachers Assessed | Overall Participation Rate (in %) |                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                    | Before replacement (weighted)    | After replacement (weighted) | After replacement (unweighted) |                                                             |                                            |                                   | Before replacement (weighted)     | After replacement (weighted) |
| Chile              | 98.7                             | 99.5                         | 99.4                           | 177                                                         | 97.7                                       | 1756                              | 96.4                              | 97.2                         |
| Colombia           | 87.8                             | 95.6                         | 95.4                           | 188                                                         | 92.3                                       | 2010                              | 81.1                              | 88.2                         |
| Dominican Republic | 98.9                             | 98.9                         | 99.3                           | 145                                                         | 95.4                                       | 778                               | 94.3                              | 94.3                         |
| Guatemala          | 97.1                             | 100.0                        | 100.0                          | 145                                                         | 99.0                                       | 1138                              | 96.1                              | 99.0                         |
| Mexico             | 92.3                             | 92.3                         | 91.8                           | 202                                                         | 89.4                                       | 1844                              | 82.4                              | 82.4                         |
| Paraguay           | 87.1                             | 93.2                         | 92.7                           | 139                                                         | 85.3                                       | 1176                              | 74.3                              | 79.5                         |



## APPENDIX B: PERCENTILES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

*Table B.1: Percentiles of civic knowledge*

| Country                | 5th Percentile | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | 95th Percentile |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Chile                  | 344 (7.2)      | 420 (5.0)       | 544 (4.6)       | 629 (6.3)       |
| Colombia               | 329 (6.1)      | 405 (4.2)       | 518 (4.2)       | 594 (5.0)       |
| Dominican Republic     | 280 (4.0)      | 333 (5.3)       | 423 (4.9)       | 498 (5.0)       |
| Guatemala <sup>1</sup> | 312 (5.7)      | 384 (4.8)       | 485 (6.5)       | 564 (9.2)       |
| Mexico                 | 321 (5.2)      | 392 (5.0)       | 510 (4.8)       | 591 (5.0)       |
| Paraguay <sup>1</sup>  | 280 (6.3)      | 362 (5.4)       | 483 (6.1)       | 575 (4.4)       |

**Notes:**

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

<sup>1</sup> Country surveyed the same cohort of students but at the beginning of the next school year.



## APPENDIX C: THE SCALING OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

ICCS used sets of student, teacher, and school questionnaire items to measure constructs relevant in the field of civic and citizenship education. Usually, sets of Likert-type items with four categories (e.g., “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree”) were used to obtain this information, but at times two-point or two-point rating scales were chosen (e.g., “Yes” and “No”). The items were then recoded so that the higher scale scores reflected more positive attitudes or higher frequencies.

The Rasch Partial Credit Model (Masters & Wright, 1997) was used for scaling, and the resulting weighted likelihood estimates (Warm, 1989) were transformed into a metric with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for equally weighted ICCS national samples that satisfied guidelines for sample participation. Details on scaling procedures will be provided in the ICCS technical report (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, forthcoming).

The resulting ICCS scale scores can be interpreted with regard to the average across the countries participating in ICCS, but they do not reveal the extent to which students endorsed the items used for measurement. However, use of the Rasch Partial Credit Model allows for mapping scale scores to item responses. Thus, it is possible for each scale score to predict the most likely item response for a respondent. (For an application of these properties in the IEA CIVED survey, see Schulz, 2004.)

Appendix D provides item-by-score maps, which predict the minimum coded score (e.g., 0 = “strongly disagree,” 1 = “disagree,” 2 = “agree,” and 3 = “strongly agree”) a respondent would obtain on a Likert-type item. For example, for students with a certain scale score, one could predict that these students would have a 50 percent probability of agreeing (or strongly agreeing) with a particular item (see example item-by-score map in Figure D.1, Appendix D). For each item, it is possible to determine Thurstonian thresholds, the points at which a minimum item score becomes more likely than any lower score and which determines the boundaries between item categories on the item-by-score map.

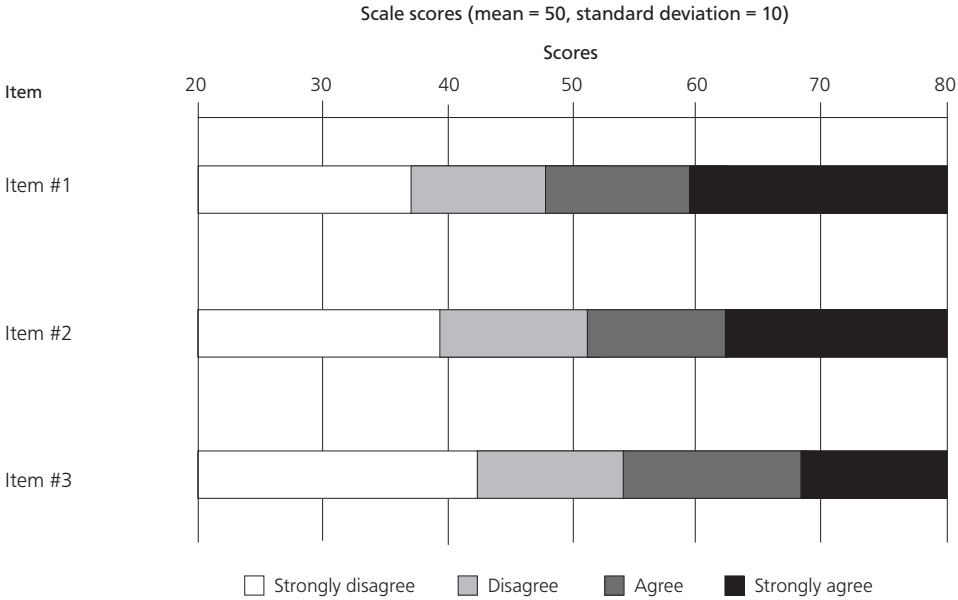
This information can also be summarized by calculating the average thresholds across all items in a scale. For four-point Likert-type scales, this was usually done for the second threshold, making it possible to predict how likely it would be for a respondent with a certain scale score to have (on average across items) responses in the two lower or upper categories. Use of this approach in the case of items measuring agreement made it possible to distinguish between scale scores with which respondents were most likely to agree or disagree with the average item used for scaling.

National average scale scores are depicted as boxes that indicate their mean values plus/minus sampling error in graphical displays (e.g., Table 4.3 in the main body of the text) that have two underlying colors. If national average scores are located in the area in light blue, then, on average across items, students’ responses would be in the lower item categories (“disagree or strongly disagree,” “not at all or not very interested,” “never or rarely”). If these scores are found in the darker blue area, then students’ average item responses would be in the upper item response categories (“agree or strongly agree,” “quite or very interested,” “sometimes or often”).



APPENDIX D: ITEM-BY-SCORE MAPS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE SCALE

Figure D.1: Example of questionnaire item-by-score map



Example of how to interpret the item-by-score map

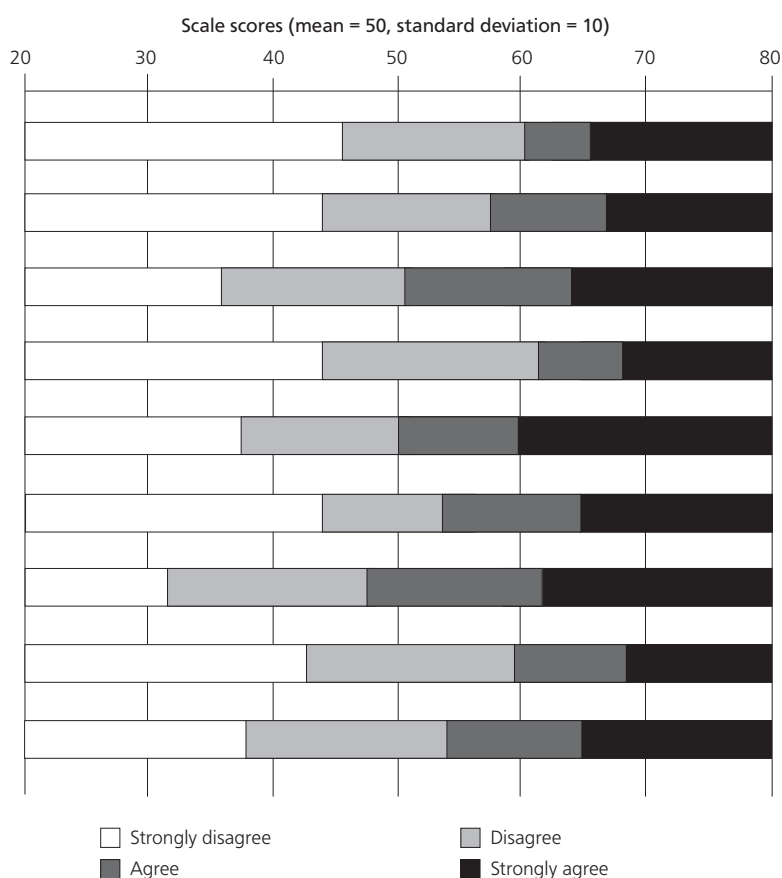
|     |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| #1: | A respondent with score 30 has more than a 50 percent probability of strongly disagreeing with all three items                                                  |
| #2: | A respondent with score 40 has more than a 50 percent probability of <b>not</b> strongly disagreeing with Items 1 and 2 but of strongly disagreeing with Item 3 |
| #3: | A respondent with score 50 has more than a 50 percent probability of agreeing with Item 1 and of disagreeing with Items 2 and 3                                 |
| #4: | A respondent with score 60 has more than a 50 percent probability of strongly agreeing with Item 1 and of at least agreeing with Items 2 and 3                  |
| #5: | A respondent with score 70 has more than a 50 percent probability of strongly agreeing with Items 1, 2, and 3                                                   |





Figure 4.1: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward authoritarianism in government

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the government and its leaders/its power?



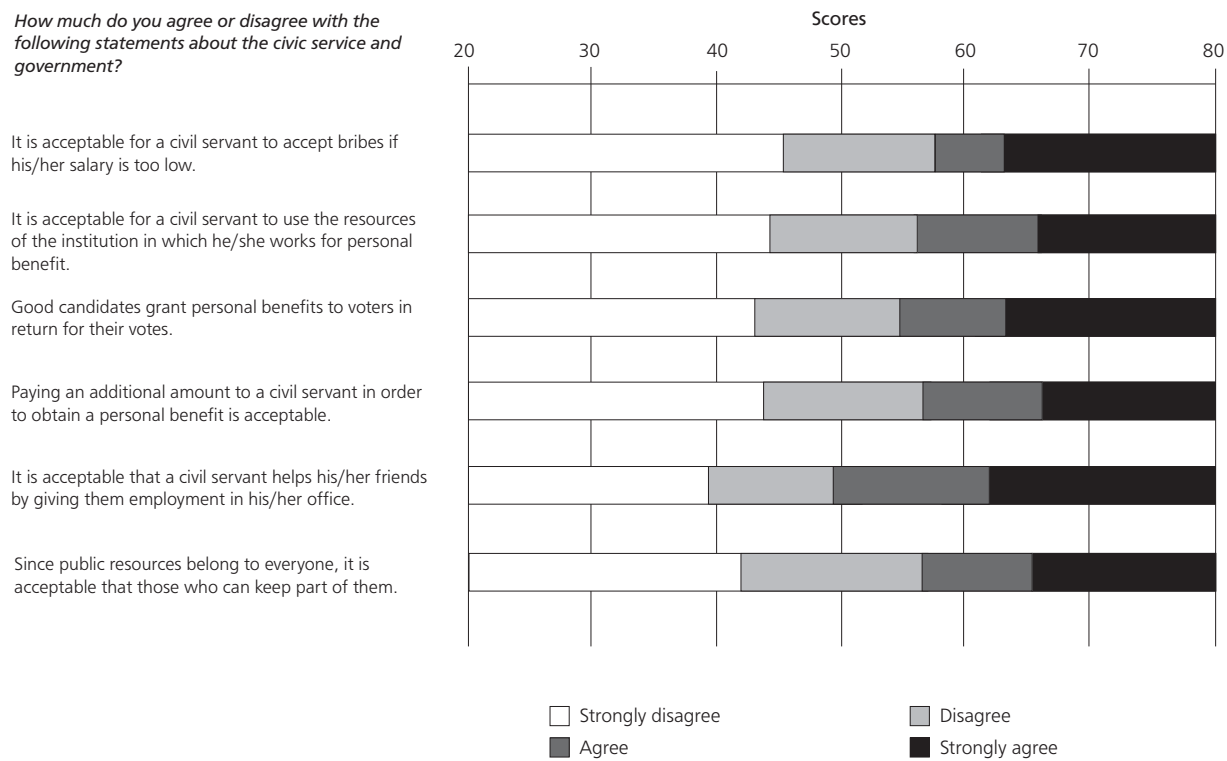
Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                                                                           |    |    |    |    | Sum |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| It is better for government leaders to make decisions without consulting anybody.                         | 37 | 43 | 12 | 9  | 100 |
| People in government must enforce their authority even if it means violating the rights of some citizens. | 32 | 40 | 19 | 8  | 100 |
| People in government lose part of their authority when they admit their mistakes.                         | 15 | 36 | 35 | 14 | 100 |
| People whose opinions are different from those of the government must be considered its enemies.          | 35 | 48 | 12 | 6  | 100 |
| The most important opinion of a country should be that of the president.                                  | 17 | 30 | 31 | 22 | 100 |
| It is fair that the government does not comply with the law when it thinks it is not necessary.           | 32 | 37 | 20 | 11 | 100 |
| Concentration of power in one person guarantees order.                                                    | 9  | 33 | 39 | 19 | 100 |
| The government should close communication media that are critical.                                        | 31 | 47 | 16 | 7  | 100 |
| If the president does not agree with <Congress>, he/she should dissolve it.                               | 19 | 43 | 27 | 12 | 100 |

**Note:**

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries that met sample participation requirements.

Figure 4.2: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward corrupt practices in government



Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                                                                                          |    |    |    |    | Sum |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| It is acceptable for a civil servant to accept bribes if his/her salary is too low.                                      | 33 | 40 | 15 | 12 | 100 |
| It is acceptable for a civil servant to use the resources of the institution in which he/she works for personal benefit. | 31 | 38 | 23 | 9  | 100 |
| Good candidates grant personal benefits to voters in return for their votes.                                             | 27 | 37 | 24 | 12 | 100 |
| Paying an additional amount to a civil servant in order to obtain a personal benefit is acceptable.                      | 30 | 40 | 21 | 10 | 100 |
| It is acceptable that a civil servant helps his/her friends by giving them employment in his/her office.                 | 18 | 29 | 36 | 17 | 100 |
| Since public resources belong to everyone, it is acceptable that those who can keep part of them.                        | 25 | 43 | 23 | 10 | 100 |

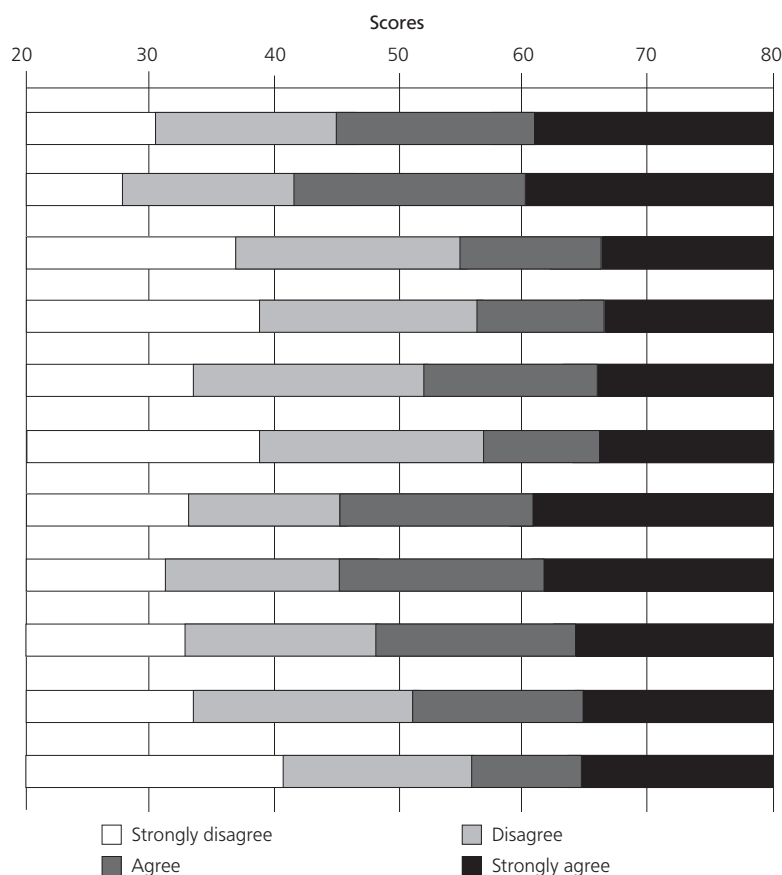
Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries that met sample participation requirements.



Figure 4.3: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward disobeying the law

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about situations where the law is disobeyed? A law may be disobeyed ...



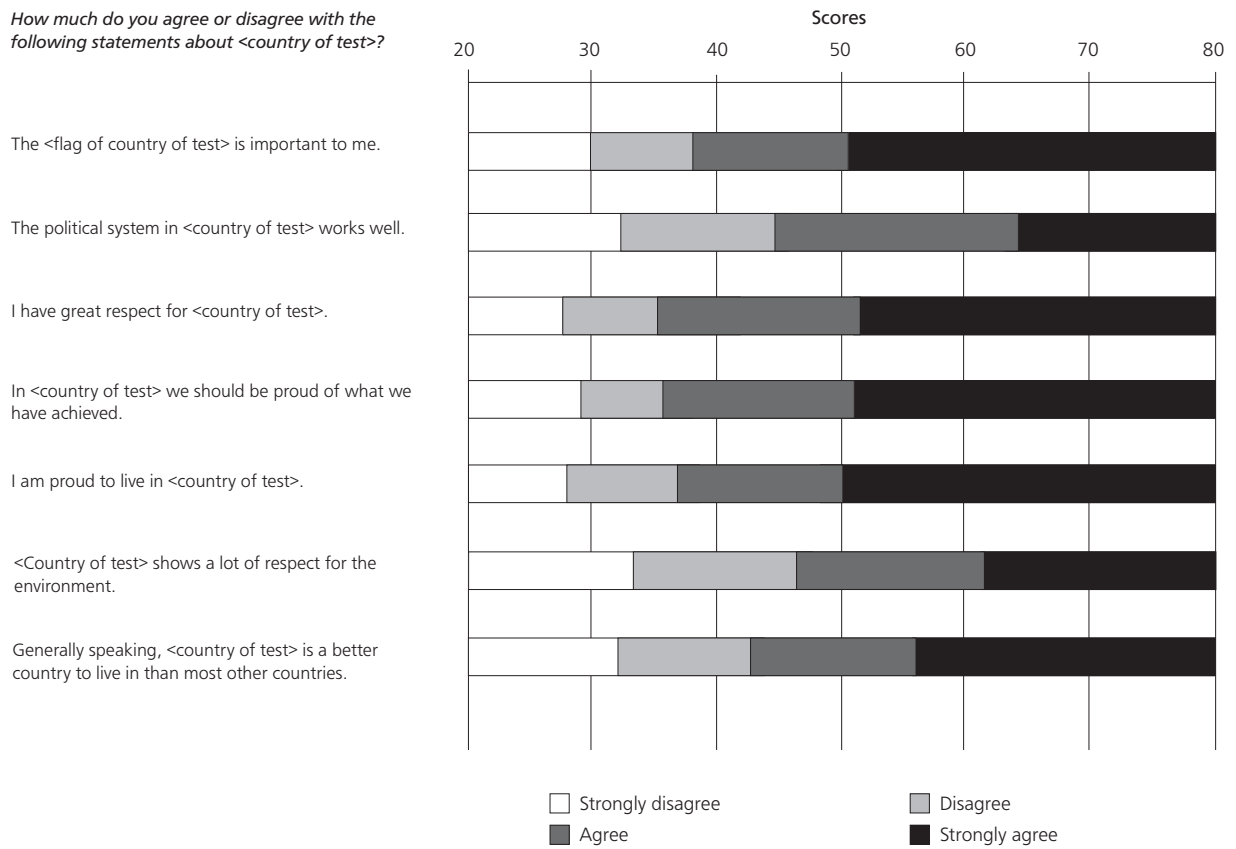
Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                                          |    |    |    |    | Sum |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| When it is the only alternative left for achieving important objectives. | 8  | 27 | 43 | 22 | 100 |
| When it is the only way one has to help one's family.                    | 6  | 20 | 49 | 25 | 100 |
| When others who disobeyed it were not punished.                          | 18 | 46 | 24 | 12 | 100 |
| When others do it.                                                       | 23 | 45 | 22 | 10 | 100 |
| When one distrusts the enacting body.                                    | 14 | 40 | 34 | 13 | 100 |
| When one is sure nobody will realize.                                    | 22 | 46 | 22 | 10 | 100 |
| When nobody gets hurt.                                                   | 11 | 25 | 42 | 22 | 100 |
| When it is not done with bad intentions.                                 | 10 | 27 | 44 | 20 | 100 |
| When one is not familiar with the law.                                   | 11 | 31 | 41 | 17 | 100 |
| When one distrusts the authority executing the law.                      | 13 | 39 | 34 | 15 | 100 |
| When one can obtain economic benefits.                                   | 26 | 40 | 21 | 13 | 100 |

Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries that met sample participation requirements.

Figure 5.1: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward their country



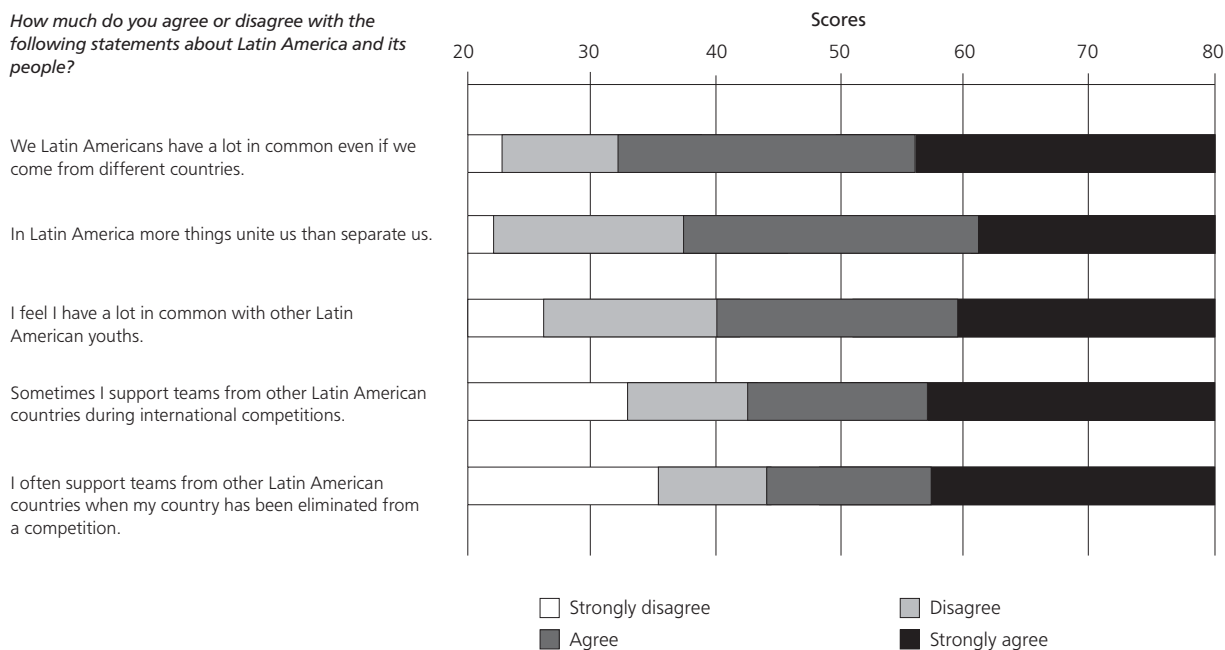
Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                                                                 |   |    |    |    | Sum |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|----|----|-----|
| The <flag of country of test> is important to me.                                               | 4 | 11 | 37 | 49 | 100 |
| The political system in <country of test> works well.                                           | 8 | 27 | 51 | 14 | 100 |
| I have great respect for <country of test>.                                                     | 2 | 9  | 43 | 45 | 100 |
| In <country of test> we should be proud of what we have achieved.                               | 3 | 9  | 42 | 46 | 100 |
| I am proud to live in <country of test>.                                                        | 3 | 10 | 38 | 49 | 100 |
| <Country of test> shows a lot of respect for the environment.                                   | 9 | 31 | 42 | 18 | 100 |
| Generally speaking, <country of test> is a better country to live in than most other countries. | 7 | 22 | 41 | 30 | 100 |

Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

Figure 5.2: Item-by-score map for students' sense of Latin American identity



#### Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

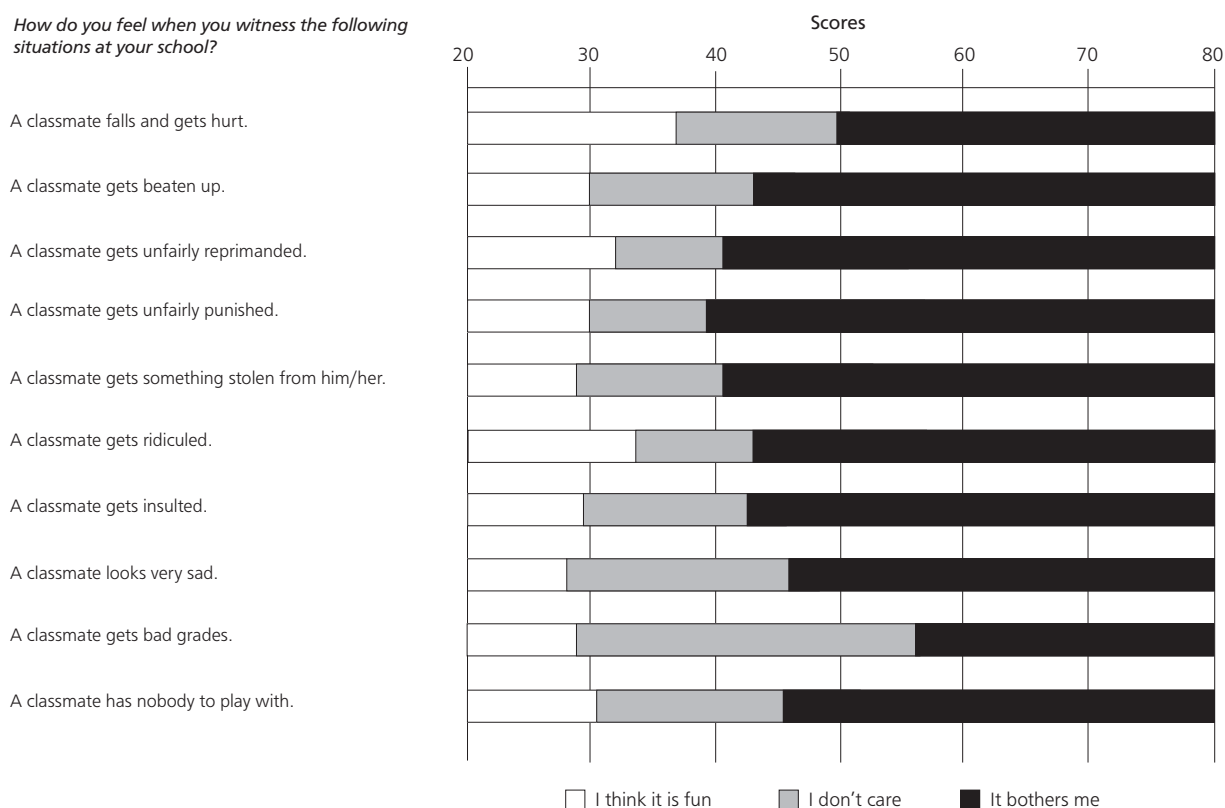
|                                                                                                                   |    |    |    |    | Sum |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| We Latin Americans have a lot in common even if we come from different countries.                                 | 1  | 8  | 58 | 34 | 100 |
| In Latin America more things unite us than separate us.                                                           | 2  | 16 | 61 | 22 | 100 |
| I feel I have a lot in common with other Latin American youths.                                                   | 3  | 20 | 51 | 25 | 100 |
| Sometimes I support teams from other Latin American countries during international competitions.                  | 7  | 21 | 43 | 29 | 100 |
| I often support teams from other Latin American countries when my country has been eliminated from a competition. | 11 | 21 | 40 | 28 | 100 |

#### Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.



Figure 5.3: Item-by-score map for students' feelings of empathy toward classmates



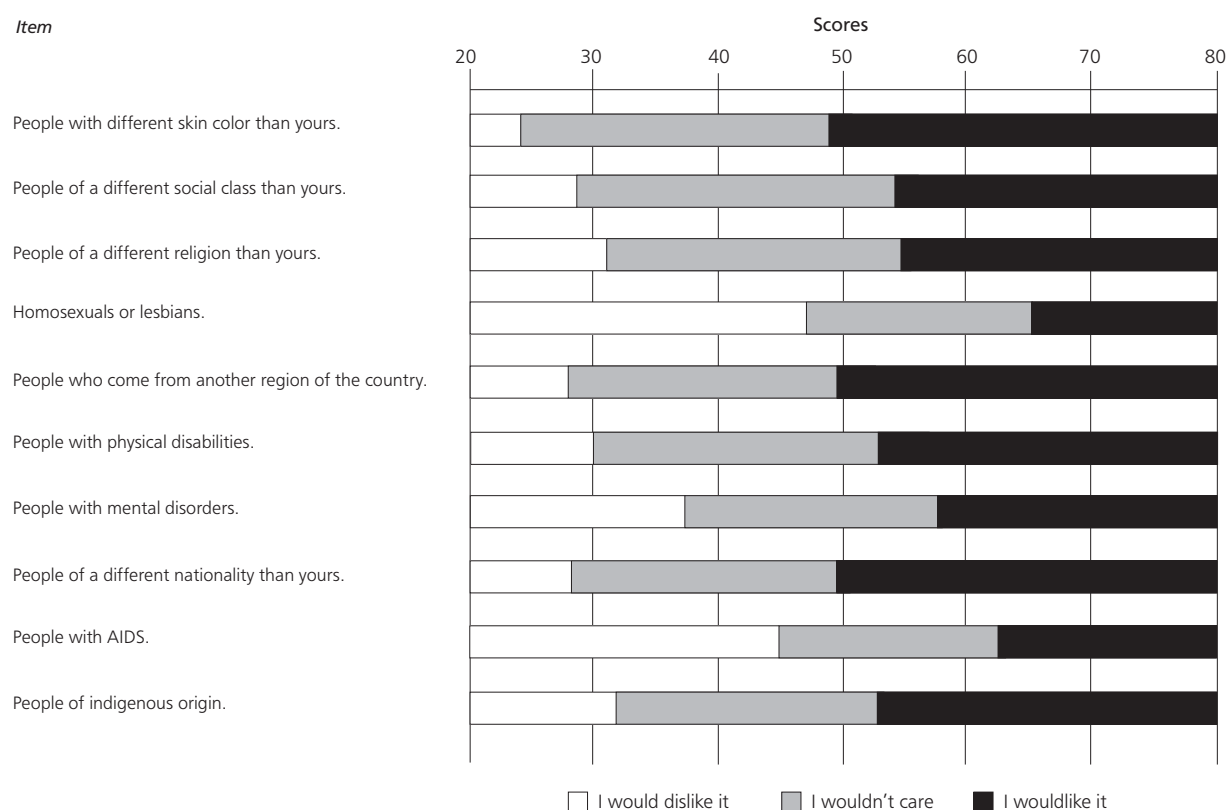
Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                 |    |    |    | Sum |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| A classmate falls and gets hurt.                | 15 | 33 | 53 | 100 |
| A classmate gets beaten up.                     | 5  | 23 | 72 | 100 |
| A classmate gets unfairly reprimanded.          | 6  | 16 | 78 | 100 |
| A classmate gets unfairly punished.             | 5  | 15 | 80 | 100 |
| A classmate gets something stolen from him/her. | 4  | 18 | 79 | 100 |
| A classmate gets ridiculed.                     | 8  | 22 | 71 | 100 |
| A classmate gets insulted.                      | 5  | 22 | 73 | 100 |
| A classmate looks very sad.                     | 4  | 32 | 64 | 100 |
| A classmate gets bad grades.                    | 5  | 58 | 37 | 100 |
| A classmate has nobody to play with.            | 6  | 30 | 65 | 100 |

**Note:**

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

Figure 5.4: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward neighbourhood diversity



#### Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

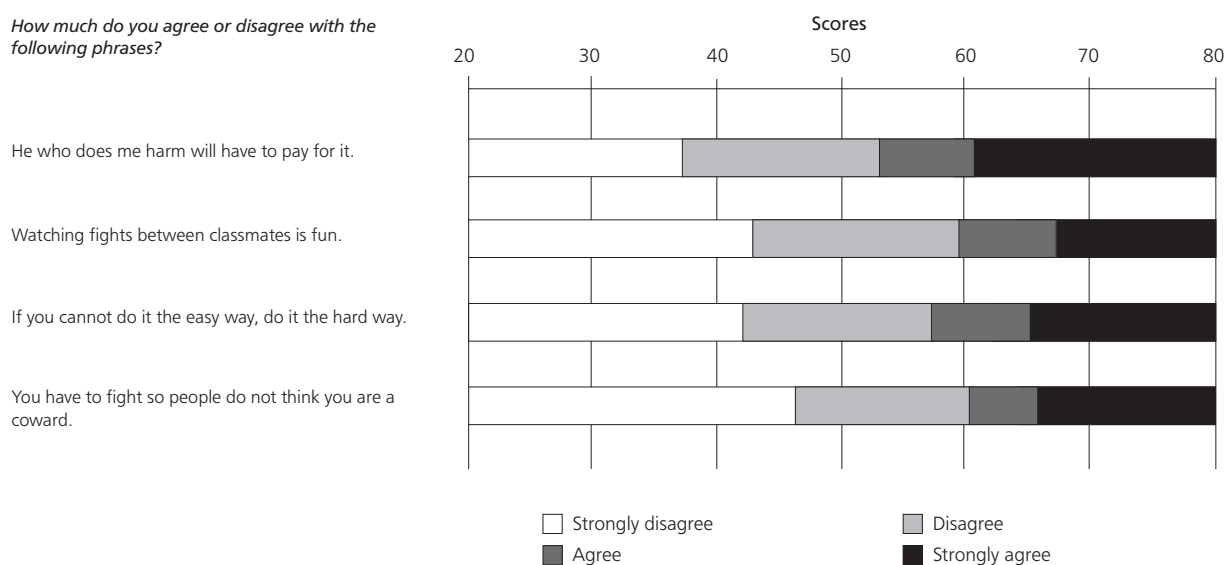
|                                                     |    |    |    | Sum |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| People with different skin color than yours.        | 3  | 45 | 63 | 100 |
| People of a different social class than yours.      | 4  | 57 | 37 | 100 |
| People of a different religion than yours.          | 9  | 56 | 35 | 100 |
| Homosexuals or lesbians.                            | 43 | 45 | 13 | 100 |
| People who come from another region of the country. | 5  | 44 | 62 | 100 |
| People with physical disabilities.                  | 6  | 51 | 42 | 100 |
| People with mental disorders.                       | 17 | 55 | 28 | 100 |
| People of a different nationality than yours.       | 5  | 45 | 50 | 100 |
| People with AIDS.                                   | 35 | 58 | 17 | 100 |
| People of indigenous origin.                        | 9  | 51 | 41 | 100 |

#### Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.

Figure 5.5: Item-by-score map for students' attitudes toward the use of violence

How much do you agree or disagree with the following phrases?



#### Latin American Item Frequencies (row percentages)

|                                                            |    |    |    |    | Sum |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| He who does me harm will have to pay for it.               | 14 | 43 | 26 | 17 | 100 |
| Watching fights between classmates is fun.                 | 28 | 50 | 15 | 6  | 100 |
| If you cannot do it the easy way, do it the hard way.      | 25 | 47 | 19 | 9  | 100 |
| You have to fight so people do not think you are a coward. | 37 | 46 | 11 | 7  | 100 |

#### Note:

Average percentages for six equally weighted Latin American ICCS countries. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.





## APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN ICCS

### *The international study center and its partner institutions*

The international study center is located at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and serves as the international study center for ICCS. Center staff at ACER were responsible for the design and implementation of the study in close co-operation with the center's partner institutions NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research, Slough, United Kingdom) and LPS (Laboratorio di Pedagogia Sperimentale at the Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy) as well as the IEA Data Processing and Research Center (DPC) and the IEA Secretariat.

#### **Staff at ACER**

John Ainley, *project coordinator*  
Wolfram Schulz, *research director*  
Julian Fraillon, *coordinator of test development*  
Tim Friedman, *project researcher*  
Naoko Tabata, *project researcher*  
Maurice Walker, *project researcher*  
Eva Van De Gaer, *project researcher*  
Anna-Kristin Albers, *project researcher*  
Corrie Kirchhoff, *project researcher*  
Renee Chow, *data analyst*  
Louise Wenn, *data analyst*

#### **Staff at NFER**

David Kerr, *associate research director*  
Joana Lopes, *project researcher*  
Linda Sturman, *project researcher*  
Jo Morrison, *data analyst*

#### **Staff at LPS**

Bruno Losito, *associate research director*  
Gabriella Agrusti, *project researcher*  
Elisa Caponera, *project researcher*  
Paola Mirti, *project researcher*

### *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)*

IEA provides overall support with respect to coordinating ICCS. The IEA Secretariat in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, is responsible for membership, translation verification, and quality control monitoring. The IEA Data Processing and Research Center (DPC) in Hamburg, Germany, is mainly responsible for sampling procedures and the processing of ICCS data.

#### **Staff at the IEA Secretariat**

Hans Wagemaker, *executive director*  
Barbara Malak, *manager membership relations*  
Paulína Koršňáková, *senior professional officer*  
Jur Hartenberg, *financial manager*



### **Staff at the IEA Data Processing and Research Center (DPC)**

Heiko Sibberns, *co-director*

Dirk Hastedt, *co-director*

Falk Brese, *ICCS coordinator*

Michael Jung, *researcher*

Olaf Zuehlke, *researcher (sampling)*

Sabine Meinck, *researcher (sampling)*

Eugenio Gonzalez, *consultant to the Latin American regional module*

### ***ICCS project advisory committee (PAC)***

PAC has, from the beginning of the project, advised the international study center and its partner institutions during regular meetings.

### **PAC members**

John Ainley (*chair*), ACER, Australia

Barbara Malak, IEA Secretariat

Heiko Sibberns, IEA Technical Expert Group

John Annette, University of London, United Kingdom

Leonor Cariola, Ministry of Education, Chile

Henk Dekker, University of Leiden, The Netherlands

Bryony Hoskins, Center for Research on Lifelong Learning, European Commission

Rosario Jaramillo F., Ministry of Education, Colombia (2006–2008)

Margarita Peña B., Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (2008–2010)

Judith Torney-Purta, University of Maryland, United States

Lee Wing-On, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR

Christian Monseur, University of Liège, Belgium

### **Other project consultants**

Aletta Grisay, University of Liège, Belgium

Isabel Menezes, Porto University, Portugal

Barbara Fraczak-Rudnicka, Warsaw University, Poland

### ***ICCS sampling referee***

Jean Dumais from Statistics Canada in Ottawa was the sampling referee for ICCS. He provided invaluable advice on all sampling-related aspects of the study.

### ***National research coordinators (NRCs)***

The national research coordinators (NRCs) played a crucial role in developing the project.

They provided policy- and content-oriented advice on the development of the instruments and were responsible for the implementation of ICCS in participating countries.

NRCs for countries participating in the Latin American module are marked with an asterisk (\*).

### **Austria**

*Günther Ogris*

SORA Institute for Social Research and Analysis, Ogris & Hofinger GmbH

### **Belgium (Flemish)**

*Saskia de Groof*

Center of Sociology, Research Group TOR, Free University of Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)



**Bulgaria**

*Svetla Petrova*

Center for Control and Assessment of Quality in Education, Ministry of Education and Science,  
Bulgaria

**Chile\***

*Marcela Ortiz Guerrero*

Unidad de Curriculum y Evaluación, Ministerio de Educación

**Chinese Taipei**

*Meihui Liu*

Department of Education, Taiwan Normal University

**Colombia\***

*Margarita Peña*

Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación (ICFES)

**Cyprus**

*Mary Koutselini*

Department of Education, University of Cyprus

**Czech Republic**

*Petr Soukup*

Institute for Information on Education

**Denmark**

*Jens Bruun*

Department of Educational Anthropology, The Danish University of Education

**Dominican Republic\***

*Ancell Schecker*

Director of Evaluation in the Ministry of Education

**England**

*Julie Nelson*

National Foundation for Educational Research

**Estonia**

*Anu Toots*

Tallinn University

**Finland**

*Pekka Kupari*

Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

**Greece**

*Georgia Polydorides*

Department of Early Childhood Education

**Guatemala\***

*Luisa Muller Durán*

Dirección General de Evaluación e Investigación Educativa (DIGEDUCA)

**Hong Kong SAR**

*Lee Wing-On*

Hong Kong Institute of Education

**Indonesia**

*Diah Haryanti*

Balitbang Diknas, Depdiknas

**Ireland**

*Jude Cosgrove*

Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College



**Italy**

*Genny Terrinoni*

INVALSI

**Republic of Korea**

*Tae-Jun Kim*

Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)

**Latvia**

*Andris Kangro*

Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Latvia

**Liechtenstein**

*Horst Biedermann*

Universität Freiburg, Pädagogisches Institut

**Lithuania**

*Zivile Urbienė*

National Examination Center

**Luxembourg**

*Joseph Britz*

Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale

*Romain Martin*

University of Luxembourg

**Malta**

*Raymond Camilleri*

Department of Planning and Development, Education Division

**Mexico\***

*María Concepción Medina*

Mexican Ministry of Education

**Netherlands**

*M. P. C. van der Werf*

GION, University of Groningen

**New Zealand**

*Kate Lang*

*Sharon Cox*

Comparative Education Research Unit, Ministry of Education

**Norway**

*Rolf Mikkelsen*

University of Oslo

**Paraguay\***

*Mirna Vera*

Dirección General de Planificación

**Poland**

*Krzysztof Kosela*

Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

**Russia**

*Peter Pologevets*

Institution for Education Reforms of the State University Higher School of Economics

**Slovak Republic**

*Ervin Stava*

Department for International Measurements, National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements NUCEM



**Slovenia**

*Marjan Simenc*

University of Ljubljana

**Spain**

*Rosario Sánchez*

Instituto de Evaluación, Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia

**Sweden**

*Marika Sanne*

*Fredrik Lind*

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)

**Switzerland**

*Fritz Oser*

Universität Freiburg, Pädagogisches Institut

**Thailand**

*Siriporn Boonyananta*

The Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education

*Somwung Pitiyanurva*

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment



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This report presents findings from the Latin American regional module of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Over the past 50 years, IEA has conducted 30 comparative research studies focusing on educational policies, practices, and outcomes in various school subjects in more than 80 countries around the world.

ICCS studied the ways in which a range of countries prepare young people to undertake their roles as citizens. The regional modules for the Asian, European, and Latin American countries that participated in ICCS supplemented the international survey by allowing investigation of aspects of civic and citizenship education specific to these regions.

Six countries participated in the Latin American regional module. The data gathered from almost 30,000 lower-secondary students (most were in their eighth year of schooling) in more than 1,000 schools throughout these countries provide unique evidence potentially useful for policies and practices directed at improving civic and citizenship education. The data also provide a new baseline for future research in this area.

The report describes and discusses the results of analyses of students' knowledge and understandings of civics and citizenship. It also looks at students' views of public institutions and government and students' perceptions of different aspects related to peaceful coexistence in the Latin American region. These analyses revealed considerable variation across the countries, variation that was associated with general economic and social factors. Countries with higher scores on the Human Development Index were also those whose students had higher levels of civic knowledge. More knowledgeable students presented, among other characteristics and attitudes, less acceptance of authoritarian government, corruption in government, and justifications for disobeying the law.

This report is the fourth publication featuring the ICCS project. The prior publications include two international reports and the regional report for the European countries that participated in ICCS. The regional report for Asia—the next planned report in the ICCS series—will address issues of civic and citizenship education of special interest in that part of the world. IEA also intends to publish a civic and citizenship education encyclopedia and a technical report, and it will make available an international database that the broader research community can use for secondary analyses.