

Young People's Support for Authoritarianism, Trust in Institutions and Expected Political Participation in Five Latin American Countries

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Abstract

Research in recent years has indicated a concerning lack of commitment in support for democratic government across Latin American countries, both among adults and young people. This paper investigates the extent of lower-secondary students' support for authoritarian government practices and its relationships with trust in civic institutions and expected political engagement. The analysis also focuses on the role of civic learning factors with regard to students' perceptions of public institutions. The results confirm strong negative associations of civic knowledge with authoritarian orientations as well as with trust in civic institutions and more active as well as illegal forms of expected political participation.

Background

This paper provides an analysis of lower-secondary students' support for authoritarian government practices in five Latin American countries, and in particular investigates its associations with trust in institutions and expected political participation as adults. It describes the extent of students' endorsement of authoritarianism in 2016 and changes since the previous cycle of ICCS in 2009. Furthermore, it uses multivariate analyses to shed light on the associations between students' social background, civic learning, trust in institutions, authoritarian orientations and expected political participation as adults.

Unlike more established Western democracies, most countries in Latin America returned to democratic rule only three or four decades ago or even more recently, and their political, social, and economic stability is still called into question (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005). Recent surveys have consistently found that commitment to democracy among adults in this region is not well established (see Cohen, Lupu, & Zechmeister, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2015; Valenzuela, Schwartzmann, Biehl, & Valenzuela, 2008), and that majorities of adults tend to endorse non-democratic governments provided they solve economic problems (see, for example, United Nations Development Programme, 2004). Research has also indicated that support for non-democratic governments is related to educational background, and that more educated citizens tend to be the citizens less in favour of authoritarian government practices (Cox, 2010).

Surveys in the Latin American region have also shown lower levels of political trust than adults in other regions of the world (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Mainwaring, 2006). In comparison with people European countries, people in Latin American countries have particularly low levels of trust in parliament and public services (Segovia Arancibia, 2008). Research further suggests that political trust in Latin American countries is sensitive to changes in political contexts, shows considerable within-country variation over time, and is associated with respondents' political inclinations (Castillo, Bargstedt, & Somma, 2017).

Inglehart and Norris (2016) regard recent increases in populist vote for authoritarian and non-democratic government as related to societal changes and loss of trust in institutions. Other studies have confirmed declines in institutional trust, in particular among older voters, related to economic factors such as unemployment, which impacts on rising support for populist and non-democratic movements (Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou & Passari, 2017). Research also suggest that populist and authoritarian orientations may have positive effects on political engagement but not necessarily, as

may be expected, on participation in non-conventional or illegal activities (Anduiza, Rico & Guinjoan, 2016).

The two ICCS surveys among lower-secondary students in Latin America from 2009 and 2016 provided evidence about a wide-spread lack of commitment to democracy as well as relatively low levels of trust in democratic institutions (Schulz, Ainley, Cox, & Friedman, 2018; Schulz, Ainley, Lietz, & Friedman, 2011). Results showed lower levels of trust in civic institutions among students with higher levels of civic knowledge, however, these students were also less inclined to support non-democratic government. With regard to expected active political participation, in particular among Latin American students civic knowledge had a negative association with type of expected engagement while it had consistently positive correlations with expected electoral participation (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, Agrusti, & Friedman, 2017).

Methods

ICCS 2016, with representative samples of lower secondary students from five Latin American countries, provides a good basis for investigating students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices, trust in civic institutions and expected political participation as adults. To measure student support for authoritarian government practices, the ICCS 2016 Latin American student questionnaire used a set of items to gauge extent to which students agreed with non-democratic government practices. Further item sets from the international student questionnaire were used to measure trust in civic institutions and four types of expected political participation (legal and illegal activities to express opinions, electoral participation, and active political participation). All item sets allowed the computation of scales with high reliabilities across participating countries.

Furthermore, ICCS 2016 gathered data about individual characteristics, home background and school contexts from students (as well as teachers and school principals with regard to schools), as well as other student perceptions (e.g. regarding the openness of classroom discussion. In addition, a test consisting of 80 items provided data regarding the students' level of civic knowledge.

In a first step this paper provides information on the extent to which students supported authoritarian government practices and expressed trust in civic institutions, and whether there were changes since 2009 in four countries with comparable data. In a second step, multiple regression models were estimated to explain variation in students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices and four different types of students' expected participation: (a) electoral participation, (b) active political participation, (c) participation in legal activities to express an opinion, and (d) participation in illegal activities to express an opinion (see further details in Schulz & Friedman, 2018). To account for the cluster sample design, standard errors were estimated using jackknife repeated replication (see Schulz, 2018).

Results

The ICCS 2016 Latin American student questionnaire included two questions, each with 11 items, designed to measure student attitudes toward authoritarian forms of government and authoritarian practices. Students rated their level of agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree") with statements endorsing authoritarian government practices as well as two additional items justifying the establishment of dictatorships. The latter two items contained justifications for dictatorial rule as "bringing law and safety" and "bringing economic benefits" and were endorsed by about two thirds of students across participating Latin American countries (see Schulz, Ainley, Cox, & Friedman, 2018). Given that these items measured a different aspect, they were not included in the

analyses of this paper which focuses on the other nine items reflecting students' support for authoritarian government practices.

Table 1 Percentages of students agreeing with statements regarding authoritarian government practices

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------------|
| It is better for government leaders to make decisions without consulting anybody | 14 (0.8) | 13 (0.8) | 31 (1.1) | 26 (1.1) | 20 (0.9) | 21 (0.4) |
| People in government must enforce their authority even if it means violating the rights of some citizens | 23 (0.9) | 22 (0.9) | 37 (1.1) | 30 (1.1) | 31 (1.0) | 29 (0.5) |
| People in government lose part of their authority when they admit their mistakes | 35 (0.9) | 46 (1.1) | 64 (1.1) | 53 (1.0) | 52 (1.0) | 50 (0.5) |
| People whose opinions are different than those of the government must be considered its enemies | 15 (0.7) | 12 (0.8) | 29 (1.0) | 25 (0.9) | 18 (0.8) | 20 (0.4) |
| The most important opinion of a country should be that of the president | 38 (1.1) | 50 (1.3) | 69 (1.2) | 41 (1.1) | 56 (1.2) | 51 (0.5) |
| It is fair that the government does not comply with the law when it thinks it is not necessary | 21 (0.8) | 21 (1.0) | 38 (1.0) | 29 (0.9) | 28 (1.1) | 28 (0.4) |
| Concentration of power in one person guarantees order | 44 (1.0) | 54 (1.4) | 74 (0.9) | 56 (1.2) | 63 (1.1) | 58 (0.5) |
| The government should close communication media that are critical | 22 (0.9) | 20 (1.0) | 36 (1.0) | 32 (1.1) | 29 (0.9) | 28 (0.4) |
| If the president does not agree with Congress, he/she should dissolve it | 35 (0.9) | 31 (1.2) | 49 (1.0) | 39 (1.0) | 43 (1.0) | 40 (0.5) |

Table 1 displays the percentages of students in each countries who agreed or strongly agreed with these items. While more than half of the students shared the view that concentration of power in one person guarantees order (58%), about half of them agreed that governments lose part of their authority when admitting mistakes (50%) and that the most important opinion should be that of the president (51%). Less than half but more than a third of students endorsed a dissolution of parliament (Congress) in case the president disagrees with it (40%) and more than quarter of students agreed that people in government must enforce their authority even it means violating citizens' rights (29%), that it is fair if a government does not comply with the law if it deems it unnecessary (28%), and that governments should close critical communication media (28%). Every fifth students endorsed that government leaders should make decision without consultations (21%) and that governments should consider people with different opinions as enemies (20%). Overall, while students disagreed with a majority of these statements, the results from ICCS 2016 show that endorsement of authoritarian government is shared by sizable proportions of young people in lower secondary education.

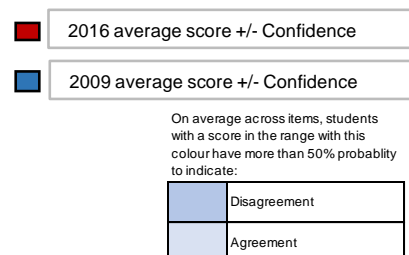
The scale was equated to ensure the resulting scale scores could be compared with those collected in the 2009 survey, and a value of 50 reflected the average and a value of 10 the standard deviation for this variable for the pooled and equally weighted Latin American sample in ICCS 2009. The ICCS 2016 scale had high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85) on average across the participating countries. When comparing scale scores from ICCS 2016 with those from the previous survey in 2009 (Table 2), only in Chile statistically significant and relatively strong decreases in the endorsement of authoritarian government practices were recorded (with a different of almost three score points). In all other countries differences were not significant and overall a (significant but small) decrease of 0.6 score points was observed. While Chilean students expressed least support for authoritarian government practices, the highest level of endorsement was measured in the Dominican Republic.

Table 2 National average scale scores indicating students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices in 2016 and 2009

| Country | | | | Differences (2016 - 2009) | 40 45 50 55 60 | | | | |
|---|------------|----------|--|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| | 2016 | 2009 | | | | | | | |
| Chile | 45 (0.3) ▼ | 48 (0.3) | | -2.9 (0.5) | [Chart showing scores for Chile: 2016 at 45, 2009 at 48] | | | | |
| Colombia | 48 (0.3) ▽ | 48 (0.2) | | -0.3 (0.5) | [Chart showing scores for Colombia: 2016 at 48, 2009 at 48] | | | | |
| Dominican Republic | 55 (0.3) ▲ | 54 (0.3) | | 0.7 (0.5) | [Chart showing scores for Dominican Republic: 2016 at 55, 2009 at 54] | | | | |
| Mexico | 49 (0.3) | 49 (0.3) | | 0.3 (0.5) | [Chart showing scores for Mexico: 2016 at 49, 2009 at 49] | | | | |
| Peru | 51 (0.2) △ | - | | - | [Chart showing scores for Peru: 2016 at 51, 2009 not available] | | | | |
| Latin American ICCS 2016 average | 50 (0.1) | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Average common countries</i> | 49 (0.2) | 50 (0.1) | | -0.6 (0.2) | | | | | |

National ICCS 2016 results are:

- more than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▲
- significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average △
- significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▽
- more than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▼



() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in **bold**.

- No comparable data available.

The ICCS 2016 student questionnaire included a set items (many of them with an identical wording as in ICCS 2009) to measure student trust in civic groups and institutions. The items asked students to use the following rating scale—“completely,” “quite a lot,” “a little,” or “not at all”—to express their level of confidence in institutions, groups, and sources of information. Table 3 shows the percentages of students who expressed complete or quite a lot trust in schools, the Armed Forces, political parties and the national government for both first ICCS cycles in 2016 and 2009 in comparison.

Table 3 Students' trust in schools, the Armed Forces, political parties and the national government

| Country | Percentages of students who completely or quite a lot expressed trust in: | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|----------|------------------|
| | Schools | | | Armed Forces | | | Political parties | | | National government | | |
| | 2016 | 2009 | Difference | 2016 | 2009 | Difference | 2016 | 2009 | Difference | 2016 | 2009 | Difference |
| Chile | 71 (1.0) ▽ | 80 (0.8) | -9 (1.3) | 74 (1.0) △ | 81 (0.5) | -7 (1.1) | 33 (0.8) ▽ | 34 (1.0) | -2 (1.3) | 50 (1.0) ▽ | 65 (1.0) | -15 (1.4) |
| Colombia | 85 (0.7) △ | 87 (0.6) | -2 (1.0) | 78 (0.8) △ | 80 (0.7) | -3 (1.1) | 28 (1.0) ▽ | 35 (1.1) | -7 (1.5) | 55 (1.2) ▽ | 62 (1.2) | -7 (1.7) |
| Dominican Republic | 91 (0.6) ▲ | 88 (1.3) | 3 (1.5) | 74 (1.0) △ | 68 (1.9) | 6 (2.1) | 50 (1.1) ▲ | 51 (1.2) | -1 (1.7) | 78 (1.1) ▲ | 74 (1.3) | 4 (1.7) |
| Mexico | 73 (1.0) ▽ | 72 (0.9) | 1 (1.3) | 71 (0.7) ▽ | 62 (1.1) | 9 (1.3) | 37 (1.0) | 35 (1.0) | 3 (1.4) | 57 (1.1) | 58 (1.0) | -1 (1.5) |
| Peru | 78 (0.7) ▽ | - | | 64 (1.0) ▽ | - | | 33 (0.9) ▽ | - | | 49 (1.0) ▽ | - | |
| Latin American ICCS 2016 average | 80 (0.4) | | | 72 (0.4) | | | 36 (0.4) | | | 58 (0.5) | | |
| Common country average | 80 (0.4) | 82 (0.5) | -2 (0.6) | 74 (0.4) | 73 (0.6) | 1 (0.7) | 37 (0.5) | 39 (0.5) | -2 (0.7) | 60 (0.5) | 65 (0.6) | -5 (0.8) |

National ICCS 2016 results are:

- more than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▲
- significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average △
- significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▽
- more than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS 2016 average ▼

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

Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in **bold**.

- No comparable data available.

While more than three quarters of students expressed trust in schools (80%) and over two thirds in the Armed Forces (72%), only little more than half of them trusted the national government (58%) and only a little more than a third the political parties in their countries (36%). The results also show that

there was considerable variation in levels of trust for government and political parties across countries (with Dominican students expressing much higher levels of trust than those in other countries). In both Chile and Colombia there were significantly lower levels of trust than in the previous ICCS cycle, while trust in the Armed Forces had increased in both the Dominican Republic and Mexico.

To study the factors associated with students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices, we regressed the corresponding scale scores on the following variables, some of which had shown significant bivariate associations (Schulz, Ainley, Cox & Friedman, 2018): gender (female = 1, male = 0); socioeconomic background (composite index derived as factor scores based on parental occupation, parental education and the number of books at home); expected university degree (1 = yes, 0 = no); urban school location (1 = yes, 0 = no); civic knowledge (1st plausible value, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); citizenship self-efficacy (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); and trust in civic institutions (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1).

Table 4 Multiple regression results explaining students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gender (female) | 0.2 (0.3) | -0.8 (0.3) | -0.4 (0.3) | -1.2 (0.3) | -1.7 (0.2) | -0.8 (0.1) |
| Socioeconomic background | -0.6 (0.2) | -0.7 (0.2) | -0.3 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.1) | -0.4 (0.1) |
| Expected university degree | -0.9 (0.4) | 0.3 (0.5) | -1.3 (0.3) | -0.3 (0.3) | -0.9 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.2) |
| Urban school location | -1.3 (0.4) | -0.7 (0.4) | 1.0 (0.5) | 0.3 (0.4) | -0.1 (0.3) | -0.2 (0.2) |
| Civic knowledge | -5.8 (0.2) | -5.4 (0.2) | -5.0 (0.3) | -6.2 (0.2) | -4.8 (0.2) | -5.4 (0.1) |
| Citizenship self-efficacy | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.0 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.2) | 1.0 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.1) |
| Trust in civic institutions | 2.4 (0.2) | 1.6 (0.2) | 1.1 (0.2) | 2.1 (0.2) | 1.0 (0.1) | 1.6 (0.1) |
| Explained variance | 33 (1.6) | 35 (2.1) | 33 (2.0) | 40 (1.6) | 35 (1.4) | 35 (0.8) |

() Standard errors in parentheses. Statistically significant regression coefficients (p<0.05) displayed in bold.

Civic knowledge was the strongest predictor in the model, statistically significant in all countries and the effect on average was more than five scale score points on average (Table 4). Trust in civic institutions was also a statistically significant positive in all countries, and an increase of 1.6 score points was associated with one (national) standard deviation. While the negative effect of civic knowledge is hardly surprising and in line with previous findings, one could have expected students with higher levels of trust in the existing civic institutions to be less inclined to endorse authoritarian solutions, however, this may be a reflection of perceptions of how current situations in these countries, which all have presidential systems that assign a powerful role to the figure of the president.

Female gender was a negative predictor in Colombia, Mexico and Peru (on average with an effect of less than a score point), while student with higher socioeconomic background were slightly but significantly less likely to endorse authoritarian practices in Chile, the Dominican Republic and Peru after controlling for all other factors. Urban school location was negatively associated with positive attitudes toward authoritarianism in Chile, but there was a positive relationship in the Dominican Republic. Citizenship self-efficacy was a weak positive predictor in the Dominican Republic and Mexico but had no net associations in other countries, which shows that having more confidence in one's own abilities to engage does not lead to less endorsement for assigning power to governments. The model explained 35 percent of the variance on average, ranging from 33 in Chile and the Dominican Republic to 40 percent in Mexico.

To study the factors associated with expected participation in the future, we used similar models for each of the four expected forms of engagement (electoral participation, active political participation, legal activities, and illegal activities). The corresponding scale regressed the corresponding scale scores on the following variables: gender (female = 1, male = 0); socioeconomic background (composite index derived as factor scores based on parental occupation, parental education and the number of books at home); parental interest (1 = at least one parent quite or very interested in political/social issues, 0 = others); students' interest (1 = quite or very interested, 0 = others); civic knowledge (1st plausible value, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); citizenship self-efficacy (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); students' civic participation in the community (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); students' civic participation at school (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); trust in civic institutions (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1); endorsement of authoritarian government practices (IRT scale, nationally standardised with mean of 0 and SD of 1).¹

Table 5 Multiple regression results for students' expected electoral participation

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gender (female) | 0.5 (0.3) | 0.2 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.4) | 0.6 (0.3) | -0.3 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.1) |
| Socioeconomic background | 0.2 (0.2) | -0.2 (0.2) | 0.0 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.2) | -0.2 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.1) |
| Parental interest | 3.0 (0.4) | 1.9 (0.4) | 2.2 (0.4) | 2.0 (0.4) | 1.4 (0.3) | 2.1 (0.2) |
| Students' interest | 1.7 (0.4) | 1.6 (0.3) | 0.7 (0.5) | 1.6 (0.4) | 1.3 (0.3) | 1.4 (0.2) |
| Civic knowledge | 3.9 (0.2) | 3.0 (0.2) | 2.2 (0.3) | 3.2 (0.2) | 3.4 (0.3) | 3.2 (0.1) |
| Citizenship self-efficacy | 2.7 (0.2) | 2.1 (0.2) | 2.5 (0.2) | 2.1 (0.2) | 2.0 (0.2) | 2.3 (0.1) |
| Community participation | 0.1 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.1 (0.3) | 0.1 (0.2) | -0.2 (0.1) | 0.1 (0.1) |
| School participation | 1.2 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.2) | 0.9 (0.3) | 0.6 (0.2) | 0.6 (0.1) | 0.7 (0.1) |
| Trust in civic institutions | 3.2 (0.2) | 2.1 (0.2) | 1.9 (0.2) | 2.7 (0.2) | 1.4 (0.2) | 2.2 (0.1) |
| Endorsement of authoritarianism | 0.8 (0.2) | 0.1 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.3) | 0.1 (0.2) | -0.2 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.1) |
| Explained variance | 31 (1.4) | 21 (1.2) | 19 (1.4) | 24 (1.3) | 24 (1.4) | 24 (0.6) |

() Standard errors in parentheses. Statistically significant regression coefficients displayed in **bold**.

The results for expected electoral participation show that civic knowledge, citizenship self-efficacy, trust in civic institutions, and parental interest were consistent positive predictors in the model (Table 5). Students' interest also had a significant net effects in all countries except the Dominican Republic, while past/current school participation had relatively weak but significant associations in all countries except Colombia. Only in Chile there was a weak albeit significant net effect of endorsement of authoritarian government on expected electoral participation. The model explained 24 percent of the variance, ranging from 19 percent in the Dominican Republic to 31 percent in Chile.

¹ The scales used in these models are described in detail in the ICCS 2016 technical report (see Schulz & Friedman, 2018)

Table 6 Multiple regression results for students' expected active political participation

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gender (female) | -0.9 (0.3) | -0.6 (0.3) | -0.8 (0.4) | -0.1 (0.3) | -0.3 (0.3) | -0.5 (0.2) |
| Socioeconomic background | -0.5 (0.2) | -0.5 (0.2) | -0.4 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.1) | -0.9 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.1) |
| Parental interest | 2.1 (0.3) | 1.0 (0.4) | 2.1 (0.4) | 1.0 (0.3) | 1.0 (0.4) | 1.4 (0.2) |
| Students' interest | 1.6 (0.4) | 1.4 (0.4) | 1.0 (0.5) | 1.3 (0.3) | 1.4 (0.3) | 1.3 (0.2) |
| Civic knowledge | -1.2 (0.2) | -1.4 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.2) | -0.6 (0.3) | -1.8 (0.3) | -1.1 (0.1) |
| Citizenship self-efficacy | 3.8 (0.2) | 2.8 (0.2) | 3.1 (0.2) | 3.4 (0.2) | 2.9 (0.2) | 3.2 (0.1) |
| Community participation | 0.6 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.9 (0.3) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.5 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.1) |
| School participation | 1.1 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.3) | 0.6 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.1) |
| Trust in civic institutions | 2.7 (0.2) | 2.6 (0.3) | 2.6 (0.3) | 2.7 (0.2) | 2.3 (0.2) | 2.6 (0.1) |
| Endorsement of authoritarianism | 1.7 (0.2) | 0.9 (0.2) | 0.8 (0.3) | 2.2 (0.3) | 0.5 (0.2) | 1.2 (0.1) |
| Explained variance | 29 (1.3) | 26 (1.5) | 30 (1.8) | 33 (1.2) | 28 (1.1) | 29 (0.6) |

() Standard errors in parentheses. Statistically significant regression coefficients displayed in **bold**.

The results for expected active political participation show that citizenship self-efficacy and trust in civic institutions are consistently the strongest predictors in the model (Table 6). Both parental interest and students' interest are also consistently positive predictors, while civic knowledge is in all Latin American countries a negative predictor of expected active participation, in particular in Chile, Colombia and Peru. Interestingly, also socioeconomic background has weak but significant negative associations with this form of expected engagement in all countries except the Dominican Republic. Endorsement of authoritarianism is also a positive predictor across the five Latin American countries, suggesting that positive attitudes toward less democratic forms of government goes along with increased disposition to engage in political organisations. The model explained 29 percent of the variance on average, ranging from 26 percent in Colombia to 33 percent in Mexico.

Table 7 Multiple regression results for students' expected participation in legal activities to express their opinion

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gender (female) | 0.7 (0.3) | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.3) | 0.1 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.1) |
| Socioeconomic background | -0.3 (0.2) | -0.3 (0.1) | -0.1 (0.1) | -0.2 (0.1) | -0.2 (0.1) | -0.2 (0.1) |
| Parental interest | 1.9 (0.4) | 0.6 (0.3) | 0.7 (0.4) | 1.6 (0.3) | 0.4 (0.3) | 1.0 (0.1) |
| Students' interest | 2.2 (0.4) | 1.2 (0.3) | 1.0 (0.5) | 0.9 (0.4) | 1.2 (0.2) | 1.3 (0.2) |
| Civic knowledge | 0.5 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.0 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.4 (0.1) |
| Citizenship self-efficacy | 5.1 (0.2) | 4.1 (0.2) | 4.5 (0.2) | 4.0 (0.2) | 3.8 (0.2) | 4.3 (0.1) |
| Community participation | 1.1 (0.2) | 1.0 (0.2) | 0.6 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.1) | 0.8 (0.1) |
| School participation | 1.1 (0.2) | 0.7 (0.2) | 0.8 (0.2) | 0.5 (0.1) | 0.5 (0.1) | 0.7 (0.1) |
| Trust in civic institutions | 1.3 (0.2) | 1.8 (0.2) | 2.1 (0.2) | 1.2 (0.2) | 1.4 (0.2) | 1.6 (0.1) |
| Endorsement of authoritarianism | 0.6 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.1) | 0.5 (0.2) | 1.1 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.5 (0.1) |
| Explained variance | 34 (1.6) | 36 (1.8) | 37 (2.2) | 30 (1.4) | 33 (1.7) | 34 (0.8) |

() Standard errors in parentheses. Statistically significant regression coefficients displayed in **bold**.

The results for expected participation in legal activities to express opinions show that citizenship self-efficacy is a strong and consistent positive predictor (Table 7). Trust in civic institutions again was a positive predictor in all five countries, and both community and school engagement were also (albeit somewhat weaker) positive predictors across countries. Students' interest had significant positive associations in all countries, while parental interest had significant positive net associations in all but

one country. Socioeconomic background and gender did not have any consistent significant effects. The model explained 34 percent of the variance, ranging from 30 in Mexico to 37 percent in the Dominican Republic.

Table 8 Multiple regression results for students' expected participation in illegal activities to express their opinion

| Predictor | Chile | Colombia | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Peru | Latin American ICCS 2016 average |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Gender (female) | -0.3 (0.3) | -1.1 (0.3) | -1.2 (0.4) | -1.5 (0.3) | -1.6 (0.3) | -1.1 (0.1) |
| Socioeconomic background | -0.5 (0.2) | -0.3 (0.2) | -0.3 (0.2) | 0.0 (0.2) | -0.4 (0.2) | -0.3 (0.1) |
| Parental interest | 0.7 (0.3) | 0.1 (0.4) | 0.4 (0.5) | 0.2 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.4) | 0.4 (0.2) |
| Students' interest | -0.7 (0.4) | -1.0 (0.3) | 0.2 (0.5) | -0.5 (0.5) | -0.8 (0.3) | -0.5 (0.2) |
| Civic knowledge | -2.4 (0.2) | -1.9 (0.4) | -2.1 (0.2) | -1.8 (0.2) | -3.3 (0.2) | -2.3 (0.1) |
| Citizenship self-efficacy | 2.1 (0.2) | 1.8 (0.2) | 2.0 (0.2) | 2.0 (0.2) | 1.5 (0.2) | 1.9 (0.1) |
| Community participation | 0.4 (0.2) | 0.5 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.1) |
| School participation | 0.5 (0.2) | -0.2 (0.3) | 0.3 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.2) | 0.1 (0.1) |
| Trust in civic institutions | -0.8 (0.2) | -0.1 (0.2) | 1.0 (0.2) | 0.3 (0.2) | 0.5 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.1) |
| Endorsement of authoritarianism | 0.5 (0.2) | 1.4 (0.4) | 1.7 (0.2) | 2.2 (0.2) | 1.6 (0.2) | 1.5 (0.1) |
| Explained variance | 12 (1.1) | 14 (1.2) | 23 (1.7) | 19 (1.3) | 23 (1.1) | 18 (0.6) |

() Standard errors in parentheses. Statistically significant regression coefficients displayed in bold.

When regressing expected participation in illegal protest activities on the same variables, civic knowledge appears to be a consistent negative predictor while citizenship self-efficacy was positively associated with this variable in all countries (Table 8). In all countries except Chile, female students were less inclined to consider illegal activities than males and there were relatively weak negative effects of higher socioeconomic background in Chile and Peru. Parental and students' interest did not have any consistent significant associations with the dependent variable, and also past/current school or community participation did not show any consistent associations. Interestingly, trust in civic institutions had a (small) negative effect in Chile but a (small) positive effect in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, students with higher levels of endorsement of authoritarian government were also more open to this type of political participation across the five Latin American countries. The model explained on average 18 percent of the variance, ranging from 12 percent in Chile to 23 in the Dominican Republic and Peru.

Conclusion

Our results show that students' support for authoritarian government practices is positively associated with trust in civic institutions, and that it also has positive correlations with some forms of expected active political engagement. Students with higher levels of civic knowledge were less inclined to endorse authoritarianism, which underlines the importance of civic education in promoting more democratic attitudes among young people. Students with higher levels knowledge about civic issues also tended to be more sceptical about civic institutions and less inclined to consider active political participations. This may suggest the influence of broader negative perceptions of democratic institutions as corrupt and inefficient across the Latin American region.

The analyses presented in this paper suggests a rather complex picture of students' perceptions of public institutions, government and their expected political participation. While civic knowledge goes along with more democratic orientations, it is negatively related to trust in civic institutions as well as more active forms of political engagement in the future. However, students who hold more authoritarian beliefs are not necessarily those rejecting conventional forms of political participation

and tend to have more trust in the civic institutions. Expectations to undertake illegal protest activities was associated with endorsement of authoritarian government, and it is worth noting that both of these variables are negatively related to students' civic knowledge.

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