What does democracy need from its citizens?

Initiating a debate on the conceptual framework for measuring civic competence.

Dr Bryony Hoskins
What does democracy need from its citizens?

- Building from the experience
  - 2 composite indicators on civic competence
  - Project advisory committee
- Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that citizens need today in order for democracy to flourish?
- Look at this question in the context of the development of a new IEA study on Citizenship
Unique about IEA citizenship studies

- Leading on the possibilities to measure a competence
- ‘Complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world in a particular domain’ (Hoskins 2010 p.120)
- Bring the background questionnaire to the forefront
- Comparative learning of citizenship on the map
What does democracy need from its citizens?
Turkish Protester
What we already know

- Learning citizenship is complex
- Learning can be everywhere from the moment you are born
- Learning outcomes/ civic competence is contested in terms of agreeing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes
  - Cross national differences
  - Evolves across time
What does democracy need from its citizens?

- Explore 4 citizenship models;
  - Liberal
  - Civic republican
  - Critical
  - Cosmopolitan
Liberal model

- Thin democracy
- Choice to participate
- Vote from a small choice of reasonable parties
- Minimum state space for civil society
Liberal model

- Civic competence;
  - Autonomous citizens
  - Basic level of political knowledge and skills
  - Understanding self interest
  - Conformity to the procedural rules
  - Equality before the law
Liberal model

Critique

- Implicit values
- Tolerance – cultural relativism
- Teaches the importance of weighing up arguments based on ‘strengths, weaknesses and reasonableness of alternatives’ ...(Parry 2003 p. 41).
- Model based on self-interest and too much self interest can lead to corruption and not caring about others
- Reliance on unpaid work
Civic Republican model

- Active citizens are required for democracy to function and to assure freedom & prevent corruption
- Expectation/civic duty of political engagement (national level)
- Common purpose (beyond family or self interest)
- Nationalistic/patriotic element
- Values more explicit
- Higher level of knowledge and skills required
Civic republican model

Critique

- Critiqued for undermining critical thinking in the name of the common good
- Privileging the dominant group: white, male elite
Critical model

- Creating social justice
- Critiquing and improving equality in society through social and political action
- Analyse ‘social issues and injustices’
  - learning to ask why people are homeless instead of merely collecting money to feed them (Westheimer and Kahne 2004: 4)
- Empathy and care (Veugelers 2011)
- Few national governments particularly within the economic crisis have been advocating this
Cosmopolitan model

- Moving beyond national citizenship to a sense of global humanity
- Interest in common world problems like the environment or poverty
- Recognition of global human rights
- Celebration of diversity
Cosmopolitan model

- Cultural relativism
- The evidence from actual data on outcomes does not suggest this
Knowledge & skills for democracy

Ideally measures the knowledge and skills needed for active citizenship which are wide ranging. It builds on all three models; higher level of knowledge, skills from the civic republican model; emphasis on critical thinking from the critical model; and is influenced by liberal market emphasis on basic skills of reading literacy and ability to take autonomous decisions.

Social Justice

Measures the beliefs in equal opportunities, equal rights and the democratic process. It draws predominantly from critical citizenship and cosmopolitan values of human rights and respecting equality and diversity. In addition, it draws on the liberal values of respecting the democratic process.

Citizenship values

Measures the norms regarding the concept of a good citizen. They include questions on engagement in diverse activities from the more traditional voting to the less conventional protest activities. The dimension draws more heavily on civic republican traditions in terms of the conceptions of civic duty.

Participatory attitudes

Measures the intention to engage and political self-efficacy. The types of activities covered are broad. The dimension draws more from the civic republican traditions of the importance of citizenship engagement. However, this is broader than national policies and also includes critical citizenship aspects of protest and liberal activities such as volunteering.
Main findings from using these models with ICCS & CIVED data

Europe

- Young people at 14 have quite different attitudes towards participation than adults in their country.
- Young people in more recent democracies are generally much more enthusiastic about engagement and have a stronger sense of civic duty.
- Young people’s values across Europe have not significantly converged over the 10 years between the studies.
Gaps

- Liberal and civic republican models quite well covered
  - Motivation missing (self interest, helping others or common good)
- Critical and cosmopolitan less covered
  - Empathy and care
  - Analysing social injustice
  - Identify with global humanity
  - Interest in common world problems like poverty and environment
- Presenting, persuading and defending ideas
- Use of social media
Conclusions

- Focus on the political theories of what is being measured
- Need to reflect on the relevance to today
  - Getting different stakeholder involved in the debate
- Mindful of the trends
Publications using the models


- Composite Indicators