

attentiveness to opinion formation, and indicated that the influence of education may operate primarily through its impact on interest. But the best fitting model also suggests some refinements to the theoretical model. In particular the influence of attentiveness on political opinion formation may be mediated by its impact on responsiveness to politics and thence upon political action.

Motives to become involved and their role for civic engagement and potential political activity

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Citizenship education in adolescence is confronted with increasing political apathy and adolescents' distance towards political institutions. The low involvement of young people is often explained with reference to a value shift towards more individual and egocentric values and a lack of taking on long term responsibility. The paper investigates motives of young people for involvement and their correlations with civic engagement and potential political activity. Analyses are based on a survey of 850 14- to 20-year olds from east and west Germany. Various motives to become involved are tested in a model differentiating reliable subscales that represent intrinsic and extrinsic motives, power and success related goals, and the need for fun and sociability. Civic engagement is captured in terms of assuming duty in various group activities, e.g. sport clubs, boy/girl scouts, and conservation groups. Potential political activity addresses the usual areas of conventional and unconventional (up to illegal) political action.

Results show that the different motives to be involved are not mutually exclusive. Besides little age related shifts, young people are pursuing a complex set of goals by being involved in services and political action. Correlation patterns with different sorts of services and different areas of political activity are reported and discussed.

The developmental quality of political participation

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Participation in voluntary associations within the civil society has been stated as central for democracy. Research stresses the relevance of participation in terms of personal development (empowerment, skills, sense of community, ...) (e.g., De Piccoli, Colombo & Mosso, 2002; Stewart & Weinstein, 1997; Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1998; Zimmerman, 1995) and the quality of democracy itself: participation allows citizens to get involved in the process of public deliberation over the common good (Habermas, 1999), increasing both social pluralism (Arendt, 1958), interpersonal trust and tolerance (Morgan & Streb, 2001; Putnam, 2001; Stewart & Weinstein, 1997). Additionally, involvement in voluntary associations during adolescence and young adulthood seems to be a good predictor of political engagement during the adult years (Hahn, 1998; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995; Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1998). However, participation can also have less positive effects, such as reinforcing in-group bias and intolerance (De Piccoli, Colombo & Mosso, 2002; Menezes, 2003). We argue that the developmental quality of participation – in terms of meaningfulness, opportunities for lasting genuine and challenging action and interaction with different others, balanced with systematic occasions for personal integration (Sprinthall, 1991) – is a powerful mediator of the impact of experiences. The QEP (Questionnaire of Participation Experiences, Ferreira & Menezes, 2001) is a two-dimensional instrument to evaluate these features of current participation experiences within the civil society. Research with the QEP shows that when action and personal integration are high and balanced the impact of participation is consistently more positive in dimensions of adolescents and youngsters political development.

Community service and civic engagement in adolescence

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Democratic systems rely on the covert and overt support of their actual and future citizens. Given that adolescence is a time when young people begin to view themselves from a societal perspective, it seems worthwhile to ask whether and how adolescents come to support the ideas and the principles of democracies. These questions refer to attitudes (e.g., tolerance of differences) as well as behaviors (e.g., voting) and may be even more relevant in contemporary societies where youth seem to be somewhat distant from political processes. Several approaches have been discussed concerning the induction of adolescents into the complex structure of politics such as improved civic education and