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### Influencing youth citizenship

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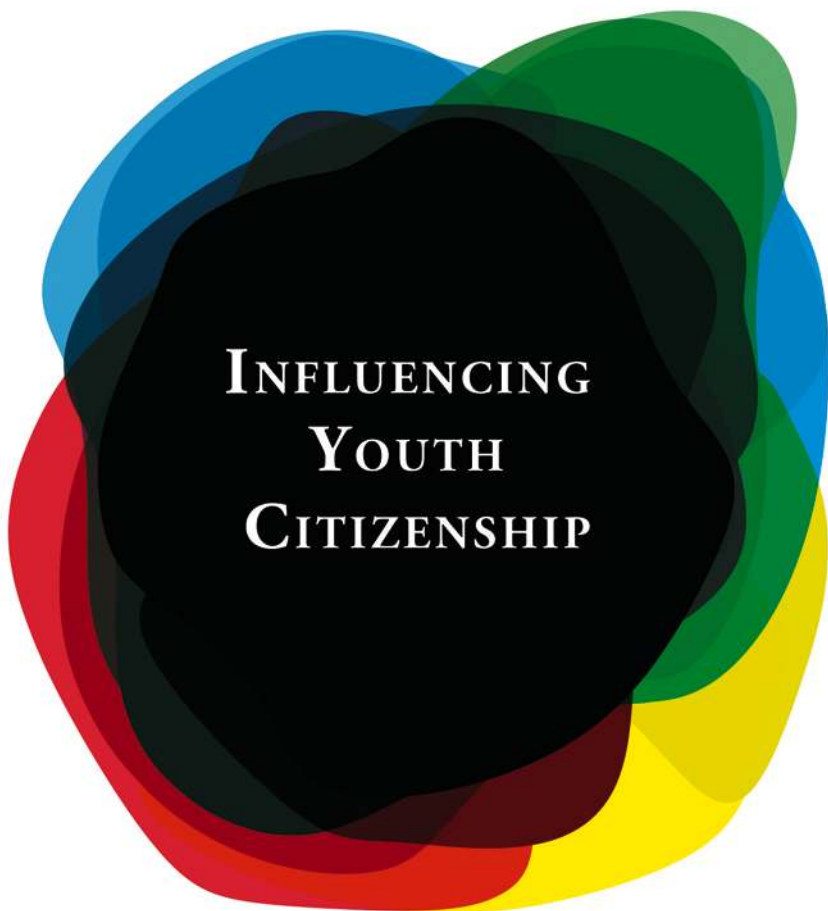
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**BRAM EIDHOF**



# **Influencing Youth Citizenship**

**Bram Eidhof**

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# Influencing Youth Citizenship

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# 1. General Introduction

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To develop, sustain or improve democratic qualities of a society, democratic institutions and civic practices can only fulfill their potential when individuals and communities hold democratic convictions, have democratic competences and are motivated to use them. Yet, human beings are not born as engaged and democratic citizens. Equipping young citizens with the means necessary to participate in, reflect on and shape democratic societies requires conscious effort. Citizenship education is one of the foremost ways of organizing these efforts.

A coherent and elaborated perspective on what it means to be a good citizen and identification of factors that may effectively contribute to youth citizenship development are essential in realizing the potential of citizenship education. This dissertation aims to advance understanding of these prerequisites, by complementing existing knowledge on citizenship education programs with research on generic educational factors that influence citizenship development.

## **The call for citizenship education**

Both citizens and policymakers have been expressed concerns about a range of social and democratic issues in the past three decades (Bronneman-Helmers & Zeijl, 2008; Den Ridder, Posthumus, & Dekker, 2013; Verhue, Verzijden, & Nienhuis, 2006). The range of social and democratic issues mentioned is large, and includes worries about the erosion of social cohesion, a decline in political knowledge and engagement of younger generations, and increases in political engagement inequality between young adults with different educational backgrounds (Abendschön, Schäfer, & Rossteutscher, 2014, Bartels, 2009; Gallego, 2007; Galston, 2001).

Some authors have suggested that young adults are still civically engaged, but in other spheres than those of formal democratic institutions (Syvertsen, Wray-Lake, Flanagan, Osgood, & Briddell, 2011). While this may be the case, a decline in and growing inequality of engagement remains problematic, as formal democratic institutions shape many of the structural conditions within which civic society operates. Similarly, in analyses

of the perceived erosion of social cohesion it is argued that the development of commonly held civic norms and conflict resolution skills may require active government policies (Educational Council, 2003; WRR, 2003). In recognition of these problems, policymakers and the majority of citizens contend that schools should make greater efforts in preparing students for dealing with these challenges (Eurydice, 2012; Verhue et al., 2006).

### **The unique position of schools in society**

There are three conditions that give schools a unique position in current society. First of all, the school is generally considered a place for explicit learning. In other words, schools are thought to have a certain degree of legitimacy and authority in the development of students, both in the process of learning and the contents of learning (i.e., what should be learned). In doing so, they also instill certain norms and values in students. For instance, teachers may impose some order and structure on the classroom by setting rules and norms to facilitate the learning process. Moreover, even stimulating independence of mind is a value-driven enterprise, after all. Hence, education is not a neutral, but an inherently normative and frequently contested endeavor.

Secondly, educational systems typically reach virtually all non-adult citizens, due to compulsory education legislature. Very few other institutions reach all citizens of a certain age category, if any. This characteristic was underlined by former minister of Education Jo Ritzen, calling schools *'the only common experience'* in plural Dutch society (Ritzen, 1997). However, although countries such as the Netherlands and Germany exhibit a fair amount of national standardization of examinations and have organized quality control by national Inspectorates, very little national guidance and regulations pertain to citizenship education. In the Netherlands, schools' autonomy with regard to citizenship education is safeguarded by so-called 'freedom of education' legislation (i.e., article 23 of the Dutch constitution).

Thirdly, schools have student populations with a diversity of student backgrounds and abilities. While most schools display less diversity than local and national communities due to parental preferences and tracking by cognitive ability, they nevertheless tend to exhibit more diversity than is present in families and peer groups. As such, schools have often been conceptualized as 'playing grounds' for practicing democracy in plural societies. At the same time, critical scholars have also pointed at the potentially negative consequences of how diversity is dealt with by educational institutions for marginalized

groups, as schools may implicitly be geared at dominant societal groups, diminishing marginalized groups' self-respect and equality of opportunity (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Mellink, 2013; Merry, 2014).

### **Implications of schools' position in society**

From the special position of schools, a few implications follow. First of all, as schools cannot provide education that is value neutral, the following questions arise: Are there any values that all schools should stimulate in particular, and if so, which? How much freedom should be given to schools to instill students with their own school-specific values? And which balance should schools strike between instilling values in students and allowing them to develop their own values? While an extensive treatment of these questions falls outside the scope of this dissertation, it shows that schools need to develop a conscious position with regard to the normative aspects of the education they provide.

Secondly, as they reach virtually all non-adult citizens, schools can be positioned to not only raise the general level of citizenship competences, but to address inequalities in democratic ability and agency as well. As such, schools are uniquely situated to improve equality of democratic opportunity.

Finally, increasing diversity in both society at large and schools themselves places a much greater demand on the cultural awareness and professionalism of education professionals. Moreover, it forces schools to not only equip students individually, but also to deal with intergroup dynamics in schools and general society.

### **Previous research on citizenship education**

Currently, policymakers in many nations have made the provision of democratic citizenship education mandatory, including the Netherlands (Eurydice, 2012), as they have good reason to consider schools as places in which students may develop democratic citizenship. Studies have shown that students who receive deliberate instruction in civics gain more civic knowledge than students who do not (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta, Wilkenfeld, & Barber, 2008). Moreover, international comparisons, in-depth research on specific schools and meta-analyses have all identified that students' citizenship attitudes, knowledge, skills and political engagement increase when they experience a safe and open classroom climate in which they are encouraged to discuss controversial topics from

different perspectives (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, & Ten Dam, 2013; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). The majority of empirical studies have been performed on dedicated citizenship programs (e.g. Lin, 2015; Pauw, 2013; Verhoeven, 2012; SCDRD, 2010) or citizenship-specific curricula (Geboers et al., 2013; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010), yet large parts of school- and class-level variance are left unexplained (Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Notably, the mechanisms that may influence individual citizenship behavior and development have received little attention in the literature.

At the same time, schools and teachers still struggle with the normativity inherent in citizenship education and often feel insufficiently equipped in these matters (Akar, 2012; Cassidy, Brunner, & Webster, 2014; Chin & Barber, 2010; Keating et al., 2010). For instance, teachers both in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands report difficulties in facilitating discussions on controversial issues (Hess, 2009; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004; Radstake & Leeman, 2010). In the Netherlands, relatively few schools develop a concrete and specific perspective on citizenship education, and often fail to provide citizenship education in a focused and systematic manner (Inspectorate of Education, 2013).

### **The main research question**

While a great number of empirical studies have been performed on dedicated citizenship programs and citizenship-specific curricula, research on generic factors in education that may contribute to citizenship development is still scarce. Generic factors are factors that are not necessarily a component of a citizenship program or curriculum, but instead are an inextricable part of education. Importantly, generic factors can serve multiple educational goals. Therefore, the central question of this study is:

*Which generic factors in education may contribute to students' citizenship development?*

In answering this question, various cognitive and motivational processes that are argued to be essential for dealing with citizenship situations will be investigated. Although none of the processes concerned are developed in social isolation, we distinguish between intrapersonal and interpersonal generic factors that may stimulate citizenship development.

The first category concerns predominantly intrapersonal factors that shape how individuals relate to the world, such as language ability (chapter 3) and perspective taking (chapter 5). The second category includes interpersonal factors that influence citizenship development. In particular, the potential contribution of the peer language environment (chapter 4) and norms communicated by significant others (chapter 5) are examined. Insight into these generic factors may inform citizenship education programs and practice, while potentially contributing to other disciplines and application contexts.

Before addressing these questions, this dissertation commences with a study investigating the normative aspects of citizenship education that explores whether, and if so how, coherent and explicit perspectives on citizenship education can be formulated (chapter 2). Many studies on citizenship education are non-empirical and frequently argue towards a normative position. As schools and teachers nonetheless still find the normative aspects of citizenship difficult and feel insufficiently prepared in these matters, answering this question may help schools formulate more concrete and specific perspectives on citizenship education, which is an important prerequisite for focused efforts in this area.

The assessment of generic factors that potentially contribute to the citizenship development of students is performed in various ways. Chapter 3 explores the influence of individual language ability on youth citizenship attitudes, knowledge, reflection and skills at the end of primary education, as students at this age experience a potentially sensitive period for citizenship development. After the mechanisms through which language may contribute to citizenship development are explored, the influence of language ability is isolated from the impact of other cognitive abilities using a quasi-longitudinal design. In chapter 4, the influence of the peer language environment on citizenship knowledge of grade 6 students is investigated. As classroom compositions remain more intact in primary education than in other periods of formal education, this allows for more precise establishment of potential peer effects. Finally, chapter 5 scrutinizes mechanisms that may improve intergroup tension resolution on higher education students using an experimental design. In doing so, it attempts to expose whether behavioral and motivational mechanisms may still influence this underexposed citizenship competence at a relatively late age.



## 2. Consensus and Contested Citizenship

### Education Goals in Western Europe<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** As schools are increasingly expected to develop their students' political and social engagement in order to promote good citizenship, they are struggling to define what good citizenship is. In this chapter, we put forward a way of formulating perspectives on citizenship that specifies the normative aspects of good citizenship in a systematic manner. In doing so, we distinguish between citizenship education goals which are generally shared and citizenship education goals that are often disputed. Subsequently, an exploratory data analysis is conducted to investigate to which degree educational level in current Western European educational systems is associated with outcomes regarding these consensus and contested citizenship education goals. The findings provide support for our hypothesis that educational level is predominantly associated with general democratic citizenship outcomes, rather than with outcomes that are emphasized by more specific, but contested citizenship perspectives.

**Keywords:** citizenship education, democratic citizenship, political theory, good citizenship, contested citizenship

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## Introduction

Expansion of mass education over the last century has led to a nearly universal reach of formal education, in one form or another (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). Schools are among the most important public institutions that prepare children and adolescents for their functioning in further education, on the labor market and in democratic society. But while schools have a long history of giving form and substance to the first two tasks, the role they are expected to perform in the preparation of students as citizens in democratic societies is relatively new (OECD, 2007). Moreover, the discussion on which citizenship goals to pursue is politically charged, due to the normativity that is inherent in the different conceptions of good citizenship. Some authors even argue that the notion of good citizenship is essentially contested (Osborne, 2000; Van Gunsteren, 1998). This leads to either rather general conceptualizations of citizenship education which almost everyone can agree on or to very specific interpretations from a particular point of view which are more frequently disputed. In the maze of different and sometimes divergent interpretations of good citizenship schools must find their way in accordance with their own philosophical foundation and value orientation.

Although schools are given much room with regard to citizenship education, we consider the current situation as problematic due to the demands it places on teachers' professionalism. Professional autonomy presupposes that the professional has received sufficient training to make high-quality autonomous decisions. Notwithstanding the compulsory character of citizenship education in many countries around the world (Euridyce, 2012), a majority of teachers did not receive any training to teach citizenship education (Barr et al., 2015; Chin & Barber, 2010; Euridyce, 2012; Thornberg, 2008; Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). As a consequence, they do not feel confident about teaching it or struggle with how to establish citizenship education practices (Akar, 2012; Cassidy, Brunner, & Webster, 2014; Chin & Barber, 2010; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004).

This holds in particular for the normative aspects of citizenship. For example, in a small-scale qualitative study on ethnically diverse classes in the Netherlands, most teachers indicated that they do not feel sufficiently equipped to discuss sensitive topics related to issues of (in)equality and social justice with their students in ethnically mixed classrooms (Radstake & Leeman, 2010). A survey study on citizenship education in England (Oulton

et al., 2004) shows that the majority of teachers in both primary and secondary education report that they have not received formal training to teach controversial issues, with a substantial part indicating that they do not feel well prepared to teach controversial issues. Importantly, approximately a quarter of the surveyed teachers indicate that changing pupils' values is not important or should not be a learning outcome, even though virtually all perspectives on citizenship education hold the promotion of democratic values to be essential. Apparently, these teachers prefer taking a neutral or non-normative position.

School-wide policies on citizenship education are also rather general and appear to seek common ground. For instance, the majority of Dutch schools have formulated a perspective on citizenship education, but this typically allude to general democratic goals, such as promoting democratic norms and values, social competence, and tolerance for diversity. Many schools do not formulate more concrete citizenship education goals and fail to implement their citizenship education in a systematic manner as a result (Inspectorate of Education, 2013). This lack of concrete goals may stem from the rather abstract level at which citizenship education is typically conceived, as well as a lack of information on more specific conceptualizations of citizenship from which schools can make their own, educated choice. Currently, teachers across Europe mention normative and political citizenship aims - such as anti-racism and political engagement development goals - least frequently as important citizenship goals (Kerr, Sturman, Schulz, & Burge, 2010). A relatively abstract, limited notion of citizenship may underlie the observed lack of confidence of teachers and may lead to a social, apolitical view of citizenship that excludes critical thinking and discussion of controversial issues (Davies, 2006; Patterson, Doppen, & Misco, 2012).

The goal of this chapter is to provide a more systematic and explicit way of formulating a vision on citizenship education that distinguishes between general democratic (consensus) citizenship goals and more specific (contested) citizenship goals. Subsequently, the relation between educational level and citizenship attitudes corresponding to these two types of citizenship goals will be empirically explored in five Western European countries. This analysis will investigate the hypothesis that education in these countries is more strongly associated with general, consensus citizenship goals, rather than with more specific, contested citizenship goals.

## **Theoretical background**

An important feature of democracy is that there is room for various citizenship conceptualizations and practices. This characteristic defines important aspects of a community's or society's civic culture and is echoed in the educational literature on citizenship education where authors take divergent and sometimes even opposite standpoints on the desirability of certain citizenship education goals. While some authors argue in particular in favor of promoting autonomy-enhancing and critical thinking competences in students, others emphasize instilling a sense of obedience in students and a focus on functioning in a socially accepted and responsible manner within a given community (for an overview, see Kohn, 1997; Veugelers, 2011; Westheimer & Kahn, 2004; Westheimer, 2008). A more systematic framework for identifying citizenship education goals can be provided based on political theory. Specifically, it can provide guidance on the competences students ought to be equipped with for participating in their communities and society at large. In this section, we disentangle the various views on communities and the role members of these communities are expected to perform, thereby identifying the central citizenship goals for four political theoretical perspectives. We will first discuss which citizenship goals are relatively uncontested, and then proceed to discuss political theoretical perspectives which illustrate a way of selecting more contested, yet more specific citizenship goals that may be pursued through education.

### **Democratic citizenship goals**

A fair amount of consensus exists between various political theories with regard to the promotion of democratic citizenship. As such, these consensus citizenship goals can serve as common ground. To stimulate or sustain democracy, societies cannot depend on the existence of democratic institutions alone. A democracy is defined by its practices as much as its principles: principles are most effective when supported and practiced by all citizens. According to various authors, a society therefore needs certain values and norms to be shared among its citizens for it to be truly democratic (e.g., Barber, 1984; Kymlicka, 1999). The following citizenship goals are among those commonly understood to be important for the democratic functioning of society.

First of all, democratic interaction between individuals that are different from one another in one or multiple ways is aided by tolerance of diversity. In addition to general

attitudes of tolerance and civility, conflicts based on cultural, ethnic, socio-economic or religious differences are better dealt with when a country and its citizens support equal rights (Barber, 1984; Galston, 2001; Kymlicka, 1999; Van Gunsteren, 1998). Secondly, democratic interaction is further facilitated if the manner in which individuals seek to resolve conflicts in personal, public and political affairs is nonviolent. Such a democratic way of life is dependent on support of democratic principles and practices (Galston, 2001). Finally, civic engagement in the form of volunteering is held to be essential for the political and social vitality of a democratic society as it promotes informal ties between members of different groups, opportunities for cooperative interaction and interpersonal trust (Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 2001).

### **Political theory and specific, contested citizenship goals**

The aforementioned general citizenship goals are typically safeguarded or implied by democratic constitutions. While they are also shared by most political theories, the various political theories add and emphasize their own specific values and orientations. Following Miller (2000), we discuss four well-defined political theories that specify citizenship goals on the basis of their views on the social nature of man and the ordering of social relations.<sup>2</sup> These political theories are liberal individualism, liberal communitarianism, egalitarian communitarianism and conservative communitarianism. Although a great number of variations exist within all four schools of political theory, we have attempted to characterize these political theories in a general manner. As such, these summaries do not do justice to the richness of positions and nuances within every theoretical school, but nevertheless serve the purposes of this chapter.

#### *Liberal individualism*

Liberal-individualistic political theory views the social nature of man as one in which individuals are independent, freely choosing individuals capable of forming their own beliefs, desires and intentions. With regard to the ordering of social relations, liberal-

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<sup>2</sup> Miller also calls the social nature of man a political theory's "philosophical anthropology or general account of the human person", while the ordering of social relations is form a political theory's "prescriptive principles or political doctrine." In essence, these two elements represent the assumption about the object of socialization (individuals, students) and the subject of socialization (civil society).

individualistic theoreticians stress the importance of democratic processes, democratic attitudes and critical reflection, but do not take an explicit position on how social relations should be ordered. For example, Gutmann (1995, 1999) emphasizes the need for conscious social reproduction, a process in which society's members consciously choose their way of living, rather than merely accepting current norms, values and traditions.

With regard to citizenship goals, authors within liberal political theory stress the importance of personal autonomy, knowledge of individual freedom rights and conscious social reproduction (Callan, 1997; Gutmann, 1999). Common individual citizenship goals are critical reflection, perspective taking ability, knowledge about different conceptions of the good life, moral reasoning skills, and knowledge and respect for individual rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, full suffrage and equality of rights) (Callan, 1997; Gutmann, 1999). For an overview of these characteristics and those of the other aforementioned political theories, see table 1.

### *Liberal communitarianism*

Liberal communitarians (Kymlicka, 1989; Raz, 1986) agree that no single model or principle can define what the conception of the good life should be for all individuals. Rather, they believe there are many valuable ways of life that individuals may choose to pursue. In addition, they hold that the choice for any way of life should be an autonomous choice, made after conscious reflection on alternatives, rather than as a result of social inducement (Miller, 2000).

According to Miller (2000), they share these convictions with liberal individualists, but believe that communities are important as they provide autonomy-supporting practices and institutions. As such, they emphasize the importance of communities for the development of personal autonomy. Their main critique on traditional liberal individualism is that individuals do not develop autonomy nor function in isolation of others (i.e., are not unencumbered selves). Moreover, they claim that being able to freely choose to enter or leave different communities increases freedom of choice and opportunity for reflection on different ways of life. As such, they hold that having a number of different communities with low barriers to entry and exit is essential for the development of individual autonomy (Miller, 2000). With regard to the individual citizenship goals of education, liberal communitarians find the same goals desirable as liberal individualists, however, as the main

distinction between liberal individualists and liberal communitarians lies in which ordering of social relations they advocate.

*Egalitarian communitarianism*

Egalitarian communitarians (Miller, 2000; Walzer, 1984) view the social nature of man as one that strives for recognition from others, valuing autonomy but in an egalitarian manner: individuals choosing a way of life together by means of critical reflection on what they value and the way of life they have in common. With regard to the ordering of social relations, egalitarian communitarians strive for communities in which members enjoy equality of status. Moreover, they strive for active and collective self-determination of the communities' way of life, rather than conforming to existing norms and tradition. In addition to the various different egalitarian communities that may exist within a society, egalitarian communitarians stress the importance of an inclusive political community that is able to combat between-group inequalities in life chances.

The main citizenship goals advocated by egalitarian communitarianism are individual autonomy, the development of egalitarian attitudes, the ability to critically reflect on society (both individually and with others), and the ability to discuss and cooperate.

Table 1. Overview of the discussed political theories as defined by Miller (2000)

	<b>Liberal individualism</b>	<b>Liberal communitarianism</b>	<b>Egalitarian communitarianism</b>	<b>Conservative communitarianism</b>
<b>Social nature of man</b>	Autonomous, freely choosing.	Individuals can develop autonomy, but are dependent on others/communities for doing so.	Able to develop autonomy, but dependent on others for this development, individuals seek recognition from others.	Highly dependent on others/the community.
<b>Ordering of social relations</b>	No imposed ordering, self-organizing.	Choice between different communities, which have no barriers to entry or exit.	An inclusive and self-determining community, equality of status of individuals, equal opportunities, equality of status of subcommunities.	A single, inclusive community that serves as a source of authority, high barriers to exit, shared language, norms and tradition.
<b>Main citizenship goals</b>	Personal autonomy, conscious social reproduction, respect for individual freedom rights, critical reflection, democratic attitudes; knowledge of other conceptions of the good life.	Personal respect for individual freedom rights, critical reflection, democratic attitudes, knowledge of other conceptions of the good life.	Personal autonomy combined with an egalitarian attitude and joint decision making; active self-determination of the community, knowledge of other conceptions of the good life; the ability to communicate and cooperate.	Identification of individuals with the community, willing subjugation of individuals to the community, knowledge of and respect for existing values, traditions and norms.

*Conservative communitarianism*

Compared with other forms of communitarianism or liberal individualism, conservative communitarians view the social nature of man as one that makes individuals rather dependent on others for their social and moral functioning, both as children and adults. As such, they emphasize the role of the community as a source of authority (Miller 2000). Such a community would be unifying its members, by promoting a common language, shared associations, traditions and history. As such, conservative communitarians see the nation-state as the basis for political order and would thus favor a careful approach towards immigration, as substantial immigration without sufficient assimilation would weaken the common culture supporting the nation-state. Conservative communitarians view the community as providing a common morality; some would not object to a marginalization of minority values by the existing, dominant social order (Scruton, 1996). Furthermore, the community would preferably be hard to leave, as the individual is viewed as dependent on the community. Accordingly, the preferred attitude of the individual would be one of willing obedience to the community (see Miller, 2000).

According to conservative communitarianism, important individual citizenship goals are acquisition of knowledge of traditions, instilling respect for tradition, identification with and recognition of the authority of the community. In addition, as conservative communitarian principles delineate not one but rather a range of communities, a variety of citizenship goals that cater to the specific community's interests can be conceived as desirable from this perspective. Education would serve as a means of transmitting the traditional cultural identity to new generations.

**The present study**

As schools are challenged by the normative aspects of citizenship, a systematic approach on formulating citizenship education goals offers several advantages. Firstly, it is explicit on two normative elements that are either implicitly or explicitly assumed in every view on good citizenship: the social nature of man and the preferred social ordering of relations. When these assumptions are made explicit, one can scrutinize whether they are jointly consistent and coherent from a theoretical perspective. Secondly, the distinguished perspectives allow schools to identify more specific citizenship education goals.



In sum, liberal individualism and liberal communitarianism mainly differ on their assumptions with regard to the optimal social environment for the development of the individual; both find personal autonomy and a positive attitude towards freedom crucial. As such, they cannot be distinguished on the individual citizenship goals they favor, although these two perspectives take different positions on the role communities play with regard to the formation of good citizens. Egalitarian communitarians distinguish themselves from these liberal political theories by putting additional emphasis on the presumed strength of an egalitarian community. Importantly, to establish and maintain a community in which individuals enjoy equal political status, an egalitarian attitude is required, ad minimum. Finally, conservative communitarianism proposes an encompassing type of community, in which community members have knowledge of and protect community customs and values, while being in willing obedience to the authority of the community.

The aim of the following exploratory analysis is to investigate whether outcomes that serve these specific, more contested citizenship goals advocated by the aforementioned perspectives are less strongly associated with education than outcomes serving more general democratic citizenship goals. As general, democratic citizenship goals enjoy a higher degree of consensus, it can be assumed that they are easier to transfer, whereas transfer of contested citizenship goals would require more explicit discussion and effort from schools. In our study, we explore these relationships in five Western European countries. As schools do not seem optimally equipped to deal with the normative nature of citizenship, the following hypothesis will be tested: educational systems display stronger associations with general democratic citizenship outcomes that enjoy a fair degree of consensus than with more specific and often contested citizenship outcomes. For each of the consensus and contested citizenship perspectives a number of corresponding citizenship outcomes will be described in the next section.

## Methods

### Sample

The 2008 European Value Survey (EVS, 2011) dataset is used for all analyses.<sup>3</sup> The analyses were performed on data from five Western European countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, and Finland. These countries share similar socio-economic profiles as measured by their Gini-coefficients and GDP per capita (World Bank, 2014), exhibit established democracies (based on Inglehart, 1997) and score relatively high on child well-being (Currie et al., 2012). A total of 2781 respondents were included in the analyses. As the effects of educational level cannot be assumed to be identical across countries due to differences between national educational systems and cultures, we have conducted separate analyses for every country included.

### Analyses

Ordinary least squares regression and logistic regression analyses are conducted to explore to which degree educational level influences general democratic citizenship outcomes and specific citizenship outcomes put forward by the four aforementioned political theories. We assume that if education yields citizenship outcomes, a lengthier exposure to the education system shall result in larger citizenship outcomes for citizenship goals that are implicitly or explicitly stimulated in education. For logistic regressions, the marginal effects are reported as it allows for comparing the effects of educational level on different social outcomes. We attempt to improve causality by means of instrumental variable regression analysis (see Appendix 1). We have chosen to report the standard regression results, because the instrumental variable regression approach requires that good instrument variables affect the predictor variable (educational level) but not the response variable (indicators of civic engagement and citizenship). Given that the available instruments (social origin) are likely also directly influential on the outcome variables, standard regression techniques are preferred. We cannot make strict causal claims regarding the relationship between educational level and citizenship outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> To exclude respondents that were still receiving education at the time, respondents younger than 25 years were excluded. In addition, as we are primarily interested in relatively recent incarnations of the educational system, respondents older than 50 years were excluded from the analyses as well.

### **Independent variable**

The independent variable Educational Level consists of four levels that indicate the highest level of education achieved by the respondents. The four levels are primary education or less, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, and tertiary education, based on the ISCED-97 one-digit classification system as employed in the EVS 2008 (EVS, 2011).

### **Control variables**

To exclude variance caused by other factors than educational level, we control for religiosity, ethnicity, age, gender, whether the respondent discussed politics with her or his parents, the occupational status of the parents and the educational level of the parents.

*Religiosity* is measured by the question “Are you a religious person?” with answer options “Yes”, “No, I’m not a religious person” and “No, I am a convinced atheist”. The latter two answers were coded as 0, the first as 1.

*Ethnicity* is scored 1 if the respondent has indicated being born or having one or more parents that were born outside the nation in which the survey was conducted and 0 if none of these situations apply.

*Political Discussion with Parents* is constructed by calculating the maximum the respondents has reported to questions asking to what degree s/he discussed politics with her/his parents when about 14 years old on a 4-point scale with 0 indicating no political discussion.

*Occupational Status of Parents* is measured by the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI) score of the father of the respondent, or mother of the respondent if the respondent lived only with her/his mother at the age of 14 (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1992).

*Educational Level of Parents* is given by the reported ISCED-97 one-digit classification score of the mother of the respondent or the father of the respondent, if the respondent lived only with a father at the age of 14.

### **Dependent variables: general democratic citizenship outcomes**

*Support for equal rights* is measured by the items “Jobs are scarce: give men priority”, “Jobs are scarce: give [nationality] priority”, with 0 indicating disagreement and 1 indicating agreement. *Tolerance of diversity* is measured by tolerance of neighbors that differ in terms of

religion, sexual preference, ethnicity or nationality (with 0 indicating no intolerance of any group, 6 indicating intolerance of all groups), and the item "Should children be taught to be tolerant at home?", with 0 indicating disagreement and 1 indicating agreement.

Democratic attitudes are measured by the items *Intention to Vote* (0 indicating no intention, 1 indicating intention), agreement to the statements *It is good to have a democracy* and *Democracy is the best political system* (1 indicating a lack of favorable attitude, 4 indicating a favorable attitude), the extent to which respondents are *Willing to engage in political action* (a score of 1 indicating having never having engaged in political action nor having any intention to engage in political action, 15 indicating have participated in various types of political action) and the scale *Interest in Politics* (1 indicating no or low interest in politics, 5 indicating high interest in politics).<sup>4</sup> The latter scale consists of the items "How often do you follow politics in the media?", "Are you interested in politics?", "How important is politics in your life?" and "How often do you discuss politics with friends?" Internal consistency of *Interest in Politics* is acceptable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73.

Civic engagement is measured by *Volunteering*, with 0 indicating no volunteering activity and 1 indicating volunteering activity in one or more of the following groups: welfare organizations, religious organizations, trade unions, cultural organizations, political parties or groups, local community action groups, environmental groups, professional associations, youth work, sport/recreation groups, women's groups, peace movement or voluntary health organizations, following Ruiter and De Graaf (2006). Volunteering activity is here defined as having done unpaid work for one of these associations.

### **Dependent variables: specific, contested citizenship outcomes**

The following EVS 2008 variables allow for an exploratory investigation that shows to which degree educational level is associated with social outcomes that serve specific, contested citizenship goals. Liberal individualism and liberal communitarianism emphasize the value of autonomy and freedom. The degree to which a respondent has a favorable attitude towards autonomy or *Independence* is measured by the question "Should children be taught independence at home?"

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<sup>4</sup> While a number of dependent variables are of ordinal nature, we have chosen to conduct OLS regression analyses on these variables, as the proportional odds assumption is violated for the various dependent variables.

The relative preference of a respondent for *Freedom or Equality* is measured by the question "What do you find more important: freedom or equality?" An egalitarian attitude is one of the central citizenship goals of egalitarian communitarianism. Hence, this item gives an indication of the degree to which educational level is associated with either liberal or egalitarian attitudes. The variable *Job: Equal Treatment* indicates the degree to which one has egalitarian attitudes, as measured by the (dis)agreement to the statement "I find it important in a job that people are treated equally."

A central citizenship goal for conservative communitarianism would be obedience to the social structure one is part of. Therefore, the effect of education on support for obedient attitudes is measured by the variable *Obedience*, as indicated by agreement to the statement "Should children be taught obedience at home?". In addition, the aforementioned support for independence is analyzed, as this represents that opposite of obedience. In addition, conservative communitarianism puts a strong emphasis on the unity of the community, as measured in traditions and customs, among other things. This citizenship outcome is measured by the attitude indicated by the answer to the question "Should immigrants be free to keep their own traditions or should they adopt the traditions of [country]?"

All of the aforementioned items are measured dichotomously, with 0 indicating disagreement and 1 indicating agreement, except for the latter question, which is measured on a 10-point scale, with a score of 10 indicating complete agreement with regard to whether immigrants should adopt the traditions of the country in which the survey was taken and 0 indicating complete disagreement.

## **Results**

### **Educational level and citizenship outcomes in Western European countries**

#### *General democratic citizenship outcomes*

Most countries included in the current study show a similar profile for identified citizenship outcomes; a profile that indicates that educational level is associated with higher interest in politics, higher support for a democratic political system, higher support for equal rights for immigrants on the labor market and a higher intention to vote. A smaller number of countries show an association between educational level and increased self-reported tolerance, volunteering, higher support for gender equality on the labor market, higher

willingness to engage in political action and more tolerance of neighbors that belong to sexual minority, religious or ethnic groups (table 2 and 3).

**Table 2.** OLS regression analysis of effects of Educational Level on general democratic citizenship outcomes

Dependent variables	Interest in Politics	Good to have democracy	to a best political system	Democracy: Intolerance towards Neighbors	Engage in Political Action
<hr/>					
Country					
Netherlands	.110* (.047)	.196*** (.039)	.195*** (.038)	-.252** (.084)	.558*** (.137)
Belgium	.299*** (.050)	.244*** (.037)	.154*** (.042)	-.040 (.047)	.353** (.133)
Germany	.264*** (.057)	.188*** (.056)	.108* (.052)	-.228* (.089)	.279 (.185)
Sweden	.152* (.067)	.127* (.058)	.125* (.058)	-.125 .097	.114 (.188)
Finland	.184* (.073)	.219*** (.061)	.088 (.062)	-.110 (.118)	-.310 (.232)

Standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; Source: EVS 2008. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, Political Discussion with Parents, Occupational Status of Parents, and Educational Level of Parents.

**Table 3.** Marginal effects logistic regression analysis of effects of Educational Level on general democratic citizenship outcomes

Dependent variables	Tolerance		Jobs: give priority		Jobs: men priority		Jobs: give national priority		Volunteering		Intention to Vote	
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Netherlands	.012	.020	-.017**	.008	-.146***	.034	.052	.034	.034	.021	.012	.012
Belgium	.043*	.021	-.054**	.016	-.067*	.034	.082*	.032	.032	.014*	.007	.007
Germany	.072*	.036	-.085**	.029	-.154**	.051	.091*	.036	.036	.070*	.029	.029
Sweden	.020	.021	-.004	.004	-.102**	.035	-.002	.047	.047	.028	.015	.015
Finland	.022	.025	-.005	.004	-.119*	.053	-.046	.044	.044	.072**	.024	.024

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, Political Discussion with Parents, Occupational Status of Parents, and Educational Level of Parents.

**Table 4.** Marginal effects logistic regression analysis of effects of Educational Level on specific citizenship outcomes derived from political theories.

Dependent variables	Independence		Obedience		Equality/Freedom		Job: Equal Treatment	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Netherlands	.056	.033	-.055*	.025	.062*	.030	-.059*	.025
Belgium	.042	.042	-.118***	.031	.046	.032	-.029	.031
Germany	.002	.034	-.017*	.018	-.004	.042	.062	.041
Sweden	.084	.045	-.048	.027	.002	.051	-.110*	.051
Finland	-.036	.047	-.002	.036	.017	.051	-.025	.044

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. For the dependent variable Equality/Freedom, equality = 0 and freedom = 1. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, Political Discussion with Parents, Occupational Status of Parents, and Educational Level of Parents.

Educational Level is least associated with democratic citizenship outcomes in Sweden and Finland. Democratic citizenship outcomes related to tolerance show no significant correlation with Educational Level in both countries. Interestingly, predominantly those democratic citizenship outcomes that relate to democracy as a political system rather than a way of life are found to be significant.

*Contested citizenship outcomes derived from political theory*

The majority of the specific citizenship outcomes derived from political theories are not significantly associated with educational level (table 4). Exceptions are attitudes towards obedience (negatively associated with educational level in Belgium and the Netherlands), attitudes favoring freedom over equality (positively associated with educational level in the Netherlands) and the importance of equal treatment in a job (negatively associated with educational level in the Netherlands and Sweden).

With regard to the stances respondents have on integration, the conservative communitarian orientation emphasizes assimilation over allowing immigrants to maintain their customs and traditions. In all but one of the countries, no significant correlation between educational level and such stances towards immigration exists. Only in the Dutch sample, a significant negative correlation between educational level and a conservative communitarian orientation towards integration is present ( $\beta = - 0.248$ , S.E. = 0.123 at  $p=0.044$ ).



## Discussion

Policymakers are increasingly expecting schools to shape their students' citizenship. Yet, primarily general, broadly shared conceptualizations of what it means to be a good citizen in democratic society have been put forward by policymakers, allowing schools to further refine their notion of good citizenship as deemed appropriate. Previous research suggests that schools find it hard to deal with this task, in particular due to the normative nature of citizenship. The importance of specifying concrete citizenship goals based on a clear definition of what good citizenship entails cannot be understated, however. In order to yield optimal results, schools and teachers should be able to design citizenship education in alignment with their philosophical and value orientation, while also preparing students for a role in society at large. In this chapter, we have illustrated a way of formulating more precise perspectives on good citizenship that specifies the normative aspects of citizenship in a systematic manner and allows for the assessment of theoretical consistency, based on political theory (Miller, 2000). Moreover, we have empirically explored to what extent education is associated with different types of citizenship outcomes.

In our study, we have made a distinction between democratic citizenship goals that are commonly shared and specific citizenship goals derived from political theory, which are often disputed. While the promotion of general democratic citizenship goals is surrounded by a relatively high degree of consensus, such consensus exists to a much lesser extent with regard to specific citizenship goals suggested by the various political theories. Yet, substantial value can be derived from these political theories, as they can offer richer accounts of what it means to be a good citizen. As such, they can serve as theoretical instruments that suggest specific citizenship goals in a systematic manner, by basing citizenship education on explicit assumptions and preferences regarding both the social nature of man and the ordering of social relations. In addition, being explicit about these two elements allows for internal coherency and compatibility checks, as for a given ordering of social relations individuals need certain knowledge, skills and attitudes for the ordering to be stimulated or sustained. For example, a political theory that assumes man to be highly dependent on social relationships for moral decision-making will emphasize the importance of communities, as strong communities would provide necessary support to individuals. Similarly, an egalitarian community might not be sustained if new members are not socialized to have egalitarian attitudes. Despite the overlap in citizenship goals

advocated by the political perspectives (i.e. the general democratic citizenship goals), they exhibit clear differences in orientation and as such can serve as a useful theoretical framework to base the selection of more specific citizenship education goals on.

The findings of our exploratory data analysis provide support for our hypothesis that educational level is predominantly associated with general democratic citizenship outcomes, rather than outcomes that are prominent in more specific, but contested citizenship perspectives. The democratic citizenship outcomes of education that are most universally correlated with educational level across the selected countries are democratic attitudes and support for equal rights of women and immigrants on the labor market.

For the specific citizenship outcomes emphasized by the various political theories, it appears that educational level only has a modest positive effect on the liberal outcome of having a favorable attitude towards freedom in the Netherlands, but no significant effect on the attitude towards independence in any of the selected countries. Interestingly, educational level appears to have modest negative effects on respective egalitarian and conservative communitarian outcomes such as the ascribed importance to equal treatment in a job and a favorable attitude towards obedience in some countries included here. Importantly, the majority of the specific citizenship outcomes corresponding to specific, contested citizenship goals are not associated with educational level. This is in line with our hypothesis, as suggested by the indications from previous research on the difficulties schools have with the normative nature of citizenship education.

In all countries educational level is significantly correlated with a number of general democratic citizenship outcomes. The general democratic citizenship outcomes most often associated with educational level among countries are in political interest and positive attitudes towards democracy. Although Sweden and Finland display somewhat different profiles from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, findings are similar across countries, with few specific citizenship outcomes derived from political theory being associated with educational level. Only one specific citizenship outcomes is associated with educational level in more than two countries: instilling a sense of obedience in children, which is negatively associated with educational level in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The current study encountered a number of limitations. First of all, while educational level can be used as a proxy for education in general, given the additional years participants have spent in the education systems, it remains an imperfect indicator for

assessing the influence of education. In addition, the correlational design of our study warrants careful interpretation with regard to the causal nature of the relationships. We have attempted to further investigate causality by conducting instrument variable analyses (see Appendix 1). The results of the instrument variable analyses display a similar overall profile for the various outcomes. Nevertheless, more extensive, longitudinal research would be required to further improve causal inference, explore reciprocal relationships and investigate whether any differences between countries aspects can be explained by differences in educational goals, educational system characteristics or culture. Finally, many measures used here are self-reported. Especially with regard to attitudes, the associations between educational level and citizenship outcomes might be influenced by differences in individual reference frames or social desirability bias, respectively (Schwarz, 2007).

As democratic societies continue to be challenged by a variety of social and citizenship issues, carefully defining what good citizenship is and how education may contribute to the formation of good citizens remains of crucial importance. The contested nature of specific conceptions of citizenship should not dampen the discussion among education professionals, academics and policymakers; rather, it should invite them to sharpen their beliefs and practices. However, as most democratic governments restrain themselves in providing specific conceptions of good citizenship for schools, schools should similarly allow students to discover and develop their own norms and values. In addition to offering citizenship education that includes consensus goals, they may let students experience different contested conceptions of good citizenship, so that students are enabled to gain an understanding of the variety of citizenship practices present in society, on the basis of which they would be able to make an informed choice. Such an indirect approach to citizenship education also appears more effective than direct approaches in which students are merely instructed to follow certain rules and norms, without shaping and reflecting on these matters themselves (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, & Ten Dam, 2013; SCDRD, 2010). While combining a school's own perspective on good citizenship with preparing students for a role in a world characterized by a plurality of citizenship perspectives and practices certainly requires effort, we consider this more desirable than leaving normative aspects of citizenship education implicit, as the latter approach risks educational efforts to be insufficiently focused and reflected upon by schools, students, parents are societal stakeholders alike. As some schools indicate that they

do not always feel adequately equipped in these matter, the burden may be lightened through national provision of facilitation and interschool cooperation. By putting forward a systematic procedure for defining and selecting citizenship goals, we intend to contribute to the conceptual clarity of citizenship education and strengthen the empirical basis for further discussion, needed to reach clear and practical perspectives on citizenship education for both common and specific citizenship goals.



### 3. Youth Citizenship at the End of Primary School: The Role of Language Ability<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Schools are expected to fulfill different types of goals, including citizenship development. An important question is to what extent schools can simultaneously promote different learning outcomes. In this chapter we investigate the relationship between language ability and youth citizenship. Using a representative sample of 2429 grade 6 pupils (age 11-13) in 138 primary schools in the Netherlands, our findings confirm that language ability is strongly associated with pupils' youth citizenship outcomes, in particular with citizenship attitudes and knowledge. Contrary to popular belief, we conclude that stimulating pupils' language development need not compete with investing in pupils' citizenship development. Rather than a trade-off, our findings suggest a positive relationship between language ability and citizenship development.

**Keywords:** citizenship education, democratic citizenship, language ability, trade-off

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<sup>1</sup> Based on: Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Youth citizenship at the end of primary school: The role of language ability.

## Introduction

Cognitive ability has been reported to be an important predictor of citizenship outcomes. Higher achieving adolescents know more about citizenship than lower achieving adolescents (Geijsel, Ledoux, Reumerman, & Ten Dam, 2012; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Higher cognitive ability is also positively related to democratic participation indicated by for example voter participation and support for free speech (Dee, 2004; Hauser, 2000). In citizenship studies, cognitive ability is typically measured by a general measure of intelligence, a measure that combines verbal and mathematics ability, or by using (expected) educational level as a proxy (Cassel & Lo, 1997; Geijsel et al., 2012; Hoskins, Janmaat, & Villalba, 2012; Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Lopez, Levine, Dautrich, & Yalof, 2009; Schulz et al., 2010; Quintelier, 2010). However, educational level has been shown to have an effect on civic engagement independent of cognitive ability (Hauser, 2000), while general measures of cognitive ability or measures that combine different types of cognitive ability may veil which component of cognition positively relates to citizenship development. To tackle these methodological challenges, our study includes various, more specific measures of cognitive ability.

In this chapter, we specifically investigate the role of language ability in youth citizenship. In general, language is the most important tool for social interaction and serves as a vehicle by which people make sense of the outside world and their own position therein (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). We therefore hypothesize that the development of language ability strengthens youth citizenship development, and is more important than other facets of cognitive ability or school achievement.

Gaining further insight into the relationship between language ability and citizenship outcomes is important for educational practice. Schools are expected to fulfill a myriad of goals. As a consequence, the schools' curricula may put teachers and principals under pressure, given time constraints and the risk of curriculum overload. In addition to the development of academic learning outcomes such as language and mathematics ability and school subjects like history or biology, schools are asked to promote healthy behavior, prepare pupils for the 21<sup>st</sup> century labor market, stimulate creativity and promote road traffic security awareness, among others. As all of these goals compete for scarce educational resources, and in particular for time, curriculum overload is being reported in many countries (NCCA, 2010).

Of these educational goals, particular emphasis has been put on improving results of the so-called cognitive core curriculum in the last decade, spurred by international comparisons provided by the PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS studies. As a result, language, mathematics and science tend to be in the center of attention of schools. At the same time, a renewed focus on citizenship education can be observed; in almost all Western countries schools are obliged to develop pupils' citizenship (Eurydice, 2012; Osler & Starkey, 2006; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Which of these various goals should receive priority is debated both within and outside of academia (Biesta, 2009; Hanushek, 2013; Nussbaum, 2012; OECD, 2010). Yet, advancing language ability and citizenship competences of pupils might not exclude one another. Rather, development of one might stimulate development of the other. By scrutinizing this relationship, this chapter aims to provide additional insight into prerequisites for effective citizenship interventions in schools as well.

## **Theoretical background**

In order to clarify the relation between language ability and citizenship competence, it is important to first specify what kind of citizenship we are studying. This is an important matter in its own right, as the conceptualization of what good democratic citizenship entails for school-going youth not only differs, but has been changing in recent years as well (Knight, Abowitz, & Harnish, 2006; Oser & Veugelers, 2008). Given the important differences in the exposure to citizenship situations between adults and youth, authors are increasingly starting to recognize that notions of citizenship for school-going youth should not only reflect prerequisites for citizenship in adult life, but also be specific to the situation young people find themselves in (Biesta, Lawy, & Kelly, 2009; Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Ten Dam, Geijsel, Reumerman, & Ledoux, 2011). For example, the right to participate in decision-making on political issues is typically withheld from children and adolescents. On the interpersonal level, relationships and roles are of a different nature for youth than for adults as well. As a result, the development of citizenship for people of different ages is dependent on different contexts and experiences. Hence, when attempting to gain insight into the development of citizenship of youth it is important to focus on the actual citizenship practices of pupils themselves, rather than to just concentrate on their distant citizenship-to-be.



For these reasons, we use a conceptualization of citizenship that embeds citizenship into the daily lives of young people and at the same time recognizes challenges posed by the plurality present in modern society. Our notion of youth citizenship includes the interpersonal and societal dimension of future citizenship competences in situations that have relevance for pupils in their current life, encompassing knowledge and skills centered around four key tasks that can be considered as exemplary for citizenship: being able to act democratically, being able to act in a socially responsible manner, being able to deal with conflicts and being able to deal with differences (for more information, see Ten Dam et al., 2011). This definition of youth citizenship enjoys a fair degree of consensus in the Netherlands.

So far, studies investigating citizenship education have identified a number of factors that influence citizenship competence (Dijkstra, De la Motte, & Eilard 2014; Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, & Ten Dam, 2013). At the level of the individual, factors such as household socio-economic status, political engagement of parents and gender have been shown to influence citizenship competence and civic engagement (Geijsel et al. 2012; Schulz et al., 2010; Smets & Neundorf, 2014). These are all factors that fall outside the sphere of influence of schools. With regard to the impact schools can have on citizenship, having an open classroom climate, in which controversial issues are discussed and multiple perspectives are shared, is among the most consistently mentioned effective factors (Flanagan, Bowes, Johnsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Geboers et al., 2013; Gniewosz & Noack, 2008; Isac et al., 2014; Torney-Purta, 2004). Moreover, specific school subjects (e.g. social studies, history), citizenship programs and well-defined goals in citizenship education can positively influence pupils' citizenship (Dijkstra et al., 2014; Geboers et al., 2013). Unfortunately, existing research has examined youth citizenship and civic outcomes in isolation, ignoring the multiple tasks that schools have to foster 'standard' academic achievement outcomes and civic outcomes at the same time. A closer inspection of the relationship between different forms of academic achievement and citizenship outcomes helps us to understand whether there would indeed be a trade-off between two of the central tasks of schooling. Gaining further insight into the relationship between development of language ability and citizenship development would therefore provide important information to teachers and school leaders about the possibilities for pursuing different types of learning goals simultaneously and purposefully. In the next

section, we provide theoretical arguments in favor of language ability being particularly relevant for the development of citizenship competence.

### **The role of language ability in citizenship competence**

Why might language be so important for citizenship competences? Various disciplines underline the role language plays in fostering the development of meaning. Social cognition scholars ascribe a central role to language in processes of meaning making and exchange of meaning (Holtgraves & Kashima, 2008). Through language, young people attach meaning to the world around them, so they can develop a picture of society and themselves as citizens. In language philosophy, two dominant perspectives relate language to meaning (Lepore & Smith, 2008; Taylor, 1985; Wertsch, 2000).

Taylor (1985) defines the designative approach as based on the assumption that language provides meaning to individuals by representing an independent or objective reality. In this perspective, words have meaning as they refer to what they designate. This approach implies that language allows for abstraction and discussion of the social and physical environment, by using the lexicon to draw attention to external phenomena, describe observations and explore relations. The latter also resonates with an aspect of language described by social cognition scholars, who view language as *'a semiotic tool for converting a speaker's inchoate experience into an explicit and communicable form'* (Holtgraves & Kashima, 2008).

The expressivist approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of language in sense making and expressing oneself, according to Taylor (1985). Language can be used to denote what is happening in both the outside world and in our inner world (i.e., feelings and thoughts). In line with this approach language serves as a socially communicative act and as a medium for meaningful internal organization of experiences. Allowing for sense making of subjective experiences and perceptions, language also enables the individual to self-reflect and self-regulate emotions. Moreover, in expressing oneself in dialogue with other members of a community, intersubjectivity can develop. In empirical language research, the process of establishing that interlocutors have reached a shared representation of reality in a way that is sufficient for the current purpose is called (common) grounding the utterance (Clark, 1996; Kashima, Klein, & Clark, 2007). Additionally, the use of language can stimulate the ability to mutually experience the thoughts and emotions of

others. Recent evidence on reading demonstrates that experiencing high involvement in reading general fiction, or reading literary fiction in particular tends to increase one's engagement in empathic ability (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Kidd & Castano, 2013). Empathy, in turn, is positively associated with prosocial and cooperative behavior (Stocks, Lishner, & Decker, 2009).

Both approaches to language substantiate the presumed relation between language development and citizenship. First of all, the designative approach implies that language development is relevant to citizenship as language enables one to describe and discuss objects and ideas in the outside world. As such, the accumulation of citizenship knowledge and discussion of, for example, recent political events, depends at least partly on language ability. Secondly, the expressivist approach emphasizes that language development is not only a prerequisite for understanding and giving meaning to the world and oneself, but is also important for self-regulation, (self-)reflection and the development of intersubjectivity, or establishing a shared representation of reality. The development of citizenship is closely associated with the ongoing process of semiotic mediation as citizenship concerns how a person relates to the world. Moreover, by expression one's own feelings and thoughts and exchanging these with others, one may also be informed on the subjective states of others, which is an important requirement for the prosocial aspects of good citizenship.

In political socialization theory, the above insights and findings are echoed as well, as well-developed language skills are seen as important in enabling successful citizenship behavior. For example, in their model of political participation, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) not only distinguish time, money and civic skills as important resources for political participation. They also stress the importance of language ability, as it enables one to convince, engage and organize others in spoken or written word. For the same reasons, language can be a non-violent means to influence or resolve a dispute or a tense situation. This contributes to a peaceful coexistence of citizens in a plural society. Brady et al. (1995) note that the school is an important institution in which these skills are acquired.

In sum, theoretical reasons for assuming an important role for language in the development of citizenship outcomes are provided by various academic fields, ranging from philosophy of language to social cognition science and political socialization studies. In the next section, the present study will be elaborated upon.

### **The present study**

The aim of the current study is to investigate the relationship between language ability and citizenship outcomes of grade 6 pupils in primary schools. We focus on the citizenship outcomes of primary education pupils, as this can be a potent period for citizenship development in comparison with parts of secondary education. Geijssel et al. (2012) and Cleaver, Ireland, Kerr and Lopes (2005) show that stagnation of or even a dip in citizenship development occurs during early adolescence in citizenship attitudes, personal efficacy and citizenship reflection development, among others. Anticipating this delay or backslide, it might be effective to boost the level of these individual citizenship outcomes in advance, serving as a buffer or facilitating higher growth rates.

In studying the role of language ability in youth citizenship, we control for other measures of cognitive ability, in particular mathematics ability and non-academic intelligence. On the basis of the reviewed literature, we hypothesize that language ability stimulates the development of youth citizenship in a broad sense, including both knowledge, skills, attitudes as well as reflection. A strong version of our theory on the importance of language would predict that general intelligence is only associated to citizenship outcomes to the extent that it translates into higher language ability, and that mathematics ability is unrelated to citizenship outcomes once language ability is controlled. A weaker version of our theory would predict that other measures of cognitive ability may have their own partial association to citizenship outcomes, but that the strongest partial association is with language ability.

## **Methods**

### **Data**

The analyses have been performed on the Cohort Research on Educational Careers (Cohort Onderzoek Onderwijsloopbanen, COOL) data, a nationally representative school cohort study in the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>. We used the outcomes of a school-based survey of about 2429 pupils in 138 primary schools (Driessen, Mulder, Ledoux, Roeleveld, & Van Der Veen, 2009; Driessen, Mulder, & Roeleveld, 2012). The citizenship outcomes constituting our dependent variables are assessed in grade 6. The longitudinal character of the cohort's cognitive ability data allows us to examine the relationship with level of grade 3 language test scores and growth in language scores between grade 3 and grade 6. The data for grade 3 (language) was collected in 2008, while the data for the same pupils in grade 6 (language and citizenship competences) was collected in 2011. As missing data rates were low for the longitudinal data (typically <2%, approximately 9% for non-academic intelligence), complete case analyses are conducted.

### **Analytical design**

Given the nested structure of the data, a multilevel analysis was performed for each dependent variable. As the large majority of schools often provided only one class in the dataset, the school and class level were collapsed. Level 1 models were estimated twice; once with the original missing data and once excluding respondents with missing data in the Level 2 model. In addition, a regression analysis with school fixed effects was conducted.

To obtain a precise estimation of the association between language ability and pupils' citizenship outcomes, a number of confounding factors need to be controlled for. At the individual level, several factors have been shown to influence youth citizenship outcomes. For our conceptualization of youth citizenship in particular, Geijsel and colleagues (2012) have shown that gender, parental ethnicity and parental education contribute to the prediction of youth citizenship outcomes in the Netherlands. Girls tend to score significantly higher on the knowledge, attitude, skill and reflection components of citizenship competence, while pupils with higher educated parents appear to particularly

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<sup>2</sup> The COOL study is funded by The Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

benefit from their parents in terms of citizenship knowledge. Interestingly, having a non-Dutch mother is shown to be associated by higher youth citizenship attitude, skill and reflection scores, but lower citizenship knowledge scores (Geijsel et al., 2012). The substantial number of immigrant children in the Dutch educational system therefore necessitates controlling for the influence of ethnicity.

To isolate the effect of language ability, the influence of other aspects of cognitive ability also needs to be taken into account. For that reason, both general intelligence and mathematics ability will be controlled for. Moreover, influences due to the distribution and level of classmate language ability will be controlled for as well.

## Measurements

### *Dependent variables*

For measurement of youth citizenship outcomes in the COOL data, the Citizenship Competences Questionnaire (Ten Dam et al., 2011) was used. This instrument aims to measure citizenship practices as situated in the lives of young people, by putting emphasis on the four citizenship tasks: acting democratically, acting in a socially responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences. Pupils' citizenship attitudes, skills, reflection, and knowledge regarding these tasks were tested.

The knowledge test consisted of multiple-choice questions with three response options for each question (dichotomous level of measurement) and the instruction to indicate which option best answers the question. For instance: "*All children have a right to: a) an allowance, b) choose who they want to live with or c) education*" (correct answer is 'c.')

Attitudes, skill and reflection were assessed using survey items rated along four-point Likert scales. The general question accompanying the attitude items is *How well does this statement apply to you?* A sample statement would be: *I like knowing something about different religious beliefs.* The basic form of the skill (i.e., self-efficacy) questions is: *How good are you at...* and then, for instance: *finding a solution which everyone is satisfied with for a disagreement?* The basic form of the reflection questions is: *How often do you think about (for instance) whether pupils are listened to at your school?*

As such, the four dependent variables used here are *citizenship attitudes*, *citizenship skills*, *citizenship reflection* and *citizenship knowledge* in grade 6. As the instrument has been

designed for pupils in grade 6 and above, dependent variables are not available for grade 3. The scores on all four dependent variables are  $z$ -standardized.

#### *Independent variables*

At the individual level, two independent variables were selected to measure language ability. *Individual language ability in grade 3* is based on a standardized reading comprehension test developed by national testing agency Cito. *Growth in language ability* is measured by subtracting the reading comprehension score in grade 3 from the reading comprehension score attained in grade 6. The Cito language ability tests are part of a nationally standardized achievement test and are commonly used to monitor academic achievement in primary schools and for track placement in secondary education. All independent variable scores were  $z$ -standardized; the growth variables were standardized after calculating the differences between the raw ability scores. By including both language ability from grade 3 and growth in language ability, potential influence from non-controlled confounding factors is reduced, while explicitly modelling the influence of change in language ability.

#### *Control variables*

To exclude variance caused by other factors than pupils' language ability, the control variables *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), *parental ethnicity* (0 = both parents were born in the Netherlands, 1 = one or both parents were born outside the Netherlands) and *parental education* were included. For the latter, three categories denoting the highest level of education completed were included: pre-vocational education (1), general/vocational secondary education or senior vocational education (2) and higher education (3).<sup>3</sup>

For the same reason, mathematics ability and non-academic cognitive ability are included as control variables as well. *Level of mathematics ability in grade 3* is measured by the score on a standardized mathematics test, which was also developed, validated and standardized by the Dutch national testing agency Cito. *Growth in mathematics ability* is

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<sup>3</sup> In our Dutch sample, these levels are operationalized as pre-vocational education, consisting of primary education (LO, BaO) and lower pre-vocational education (VBO)(1); general (HAVO, VWO) and vocational (MAVO) secondary education, senior vocational education (MBO)(2); and higher education (HBO/WO)(3) as the highest levels of education completed by one or more parents.

measured by the difference between mathematical ability score in grade 3 and the mathematical ability score attained in grade 6 by individual pupils.

To further control for the possible effect of general cognitive ability on citizenship outcomes, an intelligence measure designed to measure *non-academic cognitive ability* (henceforth, *NACAT*) is included in the analyses. The *NACAT* (or *NSCCT*, in Dutch) measures intelligence for primary school children and is a nationally standardized and validated test that was administered in grade 3 (Van Batenburg & Van der Werf, 2004).

Finally, average school level and variation of school level of language ability in grade 3 is controlled for by aggregating individual language scores into school averages and school standard deviations. These variables are called *Class average reading ability* and *Class S.D. reading ability*, respectively. Descriptives of all variables included in the analysis are provided in appendix B.

## Results

As can be seen in table 1, school and class level factors explain a minor proportion of variance. It appears that factors at the individual level within classes explain the large majority of variance for all four citizenship outcomes, particularly for reflection.

**Table 1: Variance components for the four citizenship outcomes**

	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Reflection</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>
<b>Individual level</b>	.87	.89	.92	.90
<b>School level</b>	.13	.11	.08	.10

Note: the school and class level are collapsed.

Gender is significantly correlated with all dependent variables, with girls scoring particularly higher on citizenship attitudes. Interestingly, the variables indicative of the class language environment are not found to be significant for any of the citizenship outcomes. For all models, the model fit of models 1a and 1b improves significantly compared to the null model. Model 2 fit only improves model fit significantly compared to models 1a and 1b for citizenship knowledge. In the next section, the separate results for each of the outcomes variables will be reported in greater detail.

As can be seen in table 2, individual language ability and growth of language ability are significantly correlated with citizenship attitudes. In addition, both ethnicity and



the educational level of pupils' parents are significantly associated with pupils' citizenship attitudes.

**Table 2. Regression coefficients for citizenship attitudes**

	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2	
<b>Fixed effects</b>						
Constant	-1.250***	(0.116)	-.271***	(0.129)	-.273***	(0.131)
<b>Individual level</b>						
Gender	0.354***	(0.036)	0.372***	(0.040)	0.371***	(0.043)
Educational Level of Parents	0.082**	(0.027)	0.088**	(0.030)	0.091**	(0.031)
Ethnic background	0.466***	(0.060)	0.427***	(0.066)	0.428***	(0.066)
Language ability grade 3	0.158***	(0.022)	0.164***	(0.024)	0.182***	(0.030)
Growth in language ability	0.122***	(0.020)	0.130***	(0.022)	0.144***	(0.025)
Mathematics ability grade 3					-0.019	(0.040)
Growth in mathematics ability					-0.031	(0.031)
Non-academic cognitive ability					-0.024	(0.028)
<b>Class level</b>						
CA language ability grade 3	-0.035	(0.038)	-0.056	(0.042)	-0.058	(0.042)
SD language ability grade 3	0.009	(0.038)	0.063	(0.043)	0.064	(0.043)
<b>Random effects</b>						
Level 1 variance	0.771	(0.023)	0.785	(0.025)	0.786	(0.026)
Level 2 variance	0.095	(0.018)	0.083	(0.019)	0.083	(0.018)
Observations	2429		2023		2023	
Deviance	3222.3		2699.7		2706.6	

Note: fixed coefficients are followed by their standard error. CA = Classroom Average, SD = standard deviation; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: COOL waves 2008 and 2011. All continuous variables are z-standardized, classroom variables are z-standardized at the classroom level.

Individual language ability and growth in language ability are significantly correlated with citizenship knowledge as well (table 3). The ethnic background and educational level of the parents do not have significant effects on pupils' citizenship knowledge. Moreover, individual mathematical ability and growth of mathematical ability are significantly associated with citizenship knowledge.

**Table 3. Regression coefficients for citizenship knowledge**

	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2	
<b>Fixed effects</b>						
Constant	-0.243*	(0.104)	-0.206	(0.114)	-0.268*	(0.115)
<b>Individual level</b>						
Gender	0.174***	(0.033)	0.174***	(0.036)	0.226***	(0.038)
Educational Level of Parents	0.046	(0.025)	0.045	(0.027)	0.027	(0.027)
Ethnic background	-0.063	(0.053)	-0.085	(0.058)	-0.084	(0.058)
Language ability grade 3	0.458***	(0.020)	0.450***	(0.021)	0.368***	(0.026)
Growth in language ability	0.270***	(0.018)	0.283***	(0.020)	0.222***	(0.022)
Mathematics ability grade 3					0.172***	(0.035)
Growth in mathematics ability					0.120***	(0.028)
Non-academic cognitive ability					0.021	(0.025)
<b>Class level</b>						
CA language ability grade 3	-0.024	(0.031)	-0.018	(0.035)	-0.009	(0.035)
SD language ability grade 3	0.018	(0.031)	0.005	(0.035)	0.007	(0.035)
<b>Random effects</b>						
Level 1	0.644	(0.019)	0.628	(0.020)	0.618	(0.020)
Level 2	0.052	(0.052)	0.052	(0.013)	0.051	(0.013)
Observations	2429		2023		2023	
Deviance	2987.5		2465.4		2457.4	

Note: fixed coefficients are followed by their standard error. CA = Classroom Average, SD = standard deviation; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: COOL waves 2008 and 2011. All continuous variable scores are standardized.

Similar to citizenship attitudes, citizenship reflection is associated with the ethnicity and educational level of pupils' parents. While individual language ability in grade 3 is not significantly correlated with citizenship reflection in grade 6, growth in language ability between grade 3 and 6 is significantly associated with citizenship reflection (see table 4).

**Table 4. Regression coefficients for citizenship reflection**

	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2	
<b>Fixed effects</b>						
Constant	-1.015***	(0.122)	-0.997***	(0.134)	-1.034***	(0.136)
<b>Individual level</b>						
Gender	0.216***	(0.039)	0.226***	(0.043)	0.241***	(0.046)
Educational Level of Parents	0.074*	(0.029)	0.081*	(0.032)	0.081*	(0.032)
Ethnic background	0.426***	(0.062)	0.383***	(0.067)	0.396***	(0.068)
Language ability grade 3	0.049*	(0.023)	0.043	(0.026)	0.046	(0.032)
Growth in language ability	0.035	(0.021)	0.042	(0.023)	0.056*	(0.026)
Mathematics ability grade 3					-0.003	(0.042)
Growth in mathematics ability					-0.060	(0.033)
Non-academic cognitive ability					-0.016	(0.030)
<b>Class level</b>						
CA language ability grade 3	0.007	(0.034)	0.009	(0.039)	0.005	(0.039)
SD language ability grade 3	0.002	(0.034)	0.024	(0.039)	0.029	(0.039)
<b>Random effects</b>						
Level 1	0.901	(0.027)	0.897	(0.029)	0.896	(0.029)
Level 2	0.053	(0.014)	0.053	(0.014)	0.052	(0.014)
Observations	2429		2023		2023	
Deviance	3384.1		2815.5		2820.2	

Note: fixed coefficients are followed by their standard error. CA = Classroom Average, SD = standard deviation; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: COOL waves 2008 and 2011. All continuous variable scores are standardized.

Both individual language ability and growth in language ability are significantly associated with citizenship skills in grade 6 (see table 5). While educational level of pupils' parents is not significantly correlated with citizenship skills, the pupils' ethnic background is substantially associated with citizenship skills scores. In addition, the school fixed effects regression showed similar results as reported above in terms of significance and size of the various associations.

**Table 5. Regression coefficients for citizenship skills**

	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2	
<b>Fixed effects</b>						
Constant	-0.960 <sup>***</sup>	(0.122)	-0.983 <sup>***</sup>	(0.135)	-0.998 <sup>***</sup>	(0.137)
<b>Individual level</b>						
Gender	0.236 <sup>***</sup>	(0.039)	0.257 <sup>***</sup>	(0.043)	0.269 <sup>***</sup>	(0.046)
Educational Level of Parents	0.058 <sup>*</sup>	(0.029)	0.051	(0.032)	0.051	(0.032)
Ethnic background	0.409 <sup>***</sup>	(0.063)	0.385 <sup>***</sup>	(0.068)	0.384 <sup>***</sup>	(0.069)
Language ability grade 3	0.101 <sup>***</sup>	(0.023)	0.098 <sup>***</sup>	(0.025)	0.111 <sup>***</sup>	(0.031)
Growth in language ability	0.095 <sup>***</sup>	(0.021)	0.102 <sup>***</sup>	(0.023)	0.110 <sup>***</sup>	(0.026)
Mathematics ability grade 3					0.016	(0.042)
Growth in mathematics ability					-0.014	(0.033)
Non-academic cognitive ability					-0.048	(0.030)
<b>Class level</b>						
CA language ability grade 3	-0.009	(0.038)	-0.031	(0.041)	-0.031	(0.041)
SD language ability grade 3	-0.022	(0.038)	0.028	(0.042)	0.030	(0.042)
<b>Random effects</b>						
Level 1	0.869	(0.026)	0.885	(0.029)	0.885	(0.029)
Level 2	0.085	(0.018)	0.070	(0.018)	0.070	(0.018)
Observations	2429		2023		2023	
Deviance	3358.3		2810.9		2817.1	

Note: fixed coefficients are followed by their standard error. CA = Classroom Average, SD = standard deviation; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: COOL waves 2008 and 2011. All continuous variable scores are standardized.

## Discussion

Stimulating language and citizenship development are both central goals of education today. So far, the relation between these two goals has received little attention in the literature. The aim of this study was to gain insight into the role of language ability in youth citizenship knowledge, skills, attitudes and reflection of grade 6 pupils in primary education. Our main findings show that language ability is strongly associated with positive youth citizenship outcomes, in line with our hypothesis. That this relationship holds specifically for language ability, rather than other aspects of cognitive ability such as general intelligence or mathematics ability, is further supported by our analyses showing that both past language ability and growth in language ability are significant for nearly all citizenship outcomes. Interestingly, the magnitude of the correlation of language ability with the four outcomes differs. In particular citizenship attitudes and knowledge are strongly correlated with language ability.

What might explain these differences? Presumably, the mechanisms underlying the indirect effects of language ability on attitude formation, knowledge acquisition, skills development and of reflection processes are of a different nature. Citizenship attitudes frequently concern norms on how to treat others and how to relate to society. Therefore, the influence of language ability may be larger, as language enables one to develop a shared understanding of reality and to discuss emotions, norms and values in interaction with others (Kashima, Klein, & Clark, 2007; Taylor, 1985). Higher language ability is also associated with empathic engagement, which is an important citizenship attitude, among other relevant for dealing with others in a prosocial manner (Astington & Jenkins, 1999; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Milligan, Astington, & Dack, 2007). In addition, language ability may be strongly associated with citizenship knowledge, as such knowledge is typically acquired verbally or in written form. Knowledge construction is a dynamic, active and collaborative process in which learners constantly strive to make sense of new information (Afflerbach, 1990; Driver, 1994; Taboada, 2006). Language ability facilitates this process. Given that the acquisition of a citizenship skill is relatively complex compared to the other citizenship outcomes, as it draws on knowledge, contextual awareness and experience, a relatively weaker relationship with language ability can be explained. Remarkably, citizenship reflection is the only citizenship outcome that demonstrates a modest correlation with just growth in language ability. From an expressivist perspective of

language this result is surprising, as language ability is seen as a constitutive element for reflection. Nevertheless, this result coincides with earlier empirical findings (Geijsel et al., 2012) showing only a small effect of educational level on the reflection component of citizenship. This finding may be explained by the type of language teaching that typically takes place in primary schools, which typically lacks reflective and critical educational practices (Starkey, 2005).

In this study, we have controlled for the peer language environment. Both class average language ability and the variation of language ability within a class are not significantly associated with the citizenship outcomes, suggesting that the peer language environment in classes does not play a major role in citizenship development. Although a direct effect of the language environment in schools has not been demonstrated, the analytical design of this study is not sufficiently strong to unequivocally demonstrate (absence of) such compositional or peer effects (Sacerdote, 2014).

In addition to language ability, non-academic cognitive ability may also influence pupils' citizenship. To our knowledge, this relation has not been studied to date. In the present study, our findings show no significant association between non-academic cognitive ability and any of the four citizenship outcomes. One potential explanation is that such a relationship is indeed lacking within a normal range of intelligence. However, an alternative explanation would be that the outcomes of fluid intelligence may have been captured already, by the inclusion of the language ability, language ability growth, mathematics ability and mathematics ability growth variables (Gray, 2006; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2009). In addition, it is surprising that the inclusion of the mathematics ability control variables does not yield a different overall picture. Both control variables are not significantly associated with citizenship attitudes, reflection and skills. This demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between language ability and mathematics ability when studying the effects of cognitive ability on citizenship outcomes.

While it may appear that a simple rise in language ability would result in higher citizenship outcomes, we would like to caution against generalizing this finding without consideration for the schools' citizenship education practices. After all, in addition to being exposed in greater or lesser degree to citizenship education programs, pupils encounter multiple perspectives in interaction with peers and teachers in schools, which is an important factor for citizenship development (Geboers et al., 2013). Moreover, especially

in primary education teachers often pay explicit attention to the social development of their pupils by attempting to create a learning climate characterized by mutual respect and room for dialogue. Several studies regarding adolescents have shown that such a school climate enhances pupils' citizenship (e.g. Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Flanagan et al., 1998; Gniewosz & Noack, 2008; Torney-Purta, 2002). Such factors might be necessary conditions for the relationship between language ability and citizenship development to exist. On the other hand, our findings suggest that taking pupils' language ability levels into account may further increase the positive effects of discussion in an open classroom climate.

A limitation of our study is that the statistical analysis does not allow for the establishment of a causal relationship, as data on the pupils' citizenship outcomes in grade 3 were not available. Rather, we have offered various lines of research that suggest a positive influence of language ability on citizenship outcomes (Astington & Jenkins, 1999; Brady et al., 1995; Taylor, 1985). As such, we consider it likely that language ability is predictive of pupils' citizenship outcomes, although further research is required to establish a causal link. An additional limitation is that our operationalization of language ability utilizes a reading comprehension measure, which indicates command of academic Dutch. Future research might include more aspects of language proficiency, such as conversational, expressive and non-native language ability. To assess the impact of education on the relationship between language ability and youth citizenship development, additional classroom variables such as method of language teaching may be included. One might expect different effects on citizenship outcomes for language instruction that focuses on comprehension and takes pupils' experiences and meanings into account compared to instruction that aims to improve technical reading, for instance. Some authors even argue that education for democratic citizenship should be much more strongly integrated in language teaching (Starkey, 2005). As such, future research may also focus on which type of language education is most beneficial for the development of citizenship outcomes.

Finally, our findings have a number of implications for educational practice. First of all, our results can be taken as evidence that a trade-off between development of cognitive abilities and development of youth citizenship, so often taken for granted, does not exist for language ability at the individual level. This can be interpreted as good news for educators struggling with curriculum overload, who may see an opportunity to combine these two educational goals more efficiently. Secondly, while in recent years more empirical

studies have been conducted, relatively little is known about educational effectiveness with regard to citizenship education (Dijkstra et al., 2014; Geboers et al., 2013). As schools are increasingly expected to contribute to the citizenship development of pupils, the importance of informing school practices with empirical insight is growing. Our findings suggest that interventions might improve their effectiveness when they take the role of language ability in citizenship development into consideration. Vice versa, we join Starkey (2005) in suggesting that language teaching may also be geared more towards equipping pupils with linguistic tools for dealing with specific citizenship situations. Indeed, such integration of democratic citizenship education content in language teaching may also make language learning more personally relevant for pupils, growing two trees from one seed.





## 4. Inequalities in Youth Citizenship Knowledge: Does the Peer Language Environment Matter?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Amidst worries about growing inequalities in citizenship competences of younger generations, policymakers increasingly call on schools to prepare students for functioning in democratic society. The degree to which teachers can address inequalities in citizenship outcomes of their students may depend on the composition of the classroom, however. Here, we investigate to what degree language peer characteristics are associated with youth citizenship knowledge in primary education for early adolescents (grade 6) in the Netherlands, using nationally representative data. Our findings suggest that inequalities in citizenship knowledge may be reduced when low language ability students are surrounded with classroom peers who display both variation in and high average levels of language ability. Being surrounded with high language ability peers was shown to have a negative general effect on citizenship knowledge for the average student, in line with the big-fish-little-pond effect.

**Keywords:** citizenship knowledge, language, peer effects, compositional effects, inequalities, primary education

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<sup>1</sup> Based on: Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Inequalities in youth citizenship knowledge: does the peer language environment matter?

## **Introduction**

For the past two decades, policymakers, professionals and scholars have been worried about erosion of social cohesion, youth's disengagement with politics and socially unsafe schools in many democratic societies (Eurydice, 2012; Galston, 2007). As of recently, increases in social and political inequalities by educational level can be added to the list of worries. For instance, in the last few elections, the youngest European generations of voters show substantially greater inequalities in democratic participation according to educational level than the generations before them did when they were young (Abendschön, Schäfer, & Rossteutscher, 2014; Bartels, 2009; Gallego, 2007). These inequalities pose a fundamental threat to democracy: after all, how can the democratic system claim legitimacy or equality of democratic opportunity when large parts of the electorate – in particular, younger and lower educated citizens – are disengaged from politics? As such inequalities already manifest themselves at an age at which individuals reach the legal voting age, they must be caused by mechanisms that are present during pre-adulthood, when most youngsters are still at school.

Education is often seen as an instrument with the potential to address these problems. As educational systems typically reach virtually all young citizens due to compulsory education legislature, they are thought to be particularly suited to perform two tasks. First, they may elevate the general level of citizenship competence of students. Secondly, in reaching practically all young citizens, education may alleviate pre-existing inequalities between students. As such, schools are thought to be able to increase the overall quality of citizenship competence in a population and provide more equality of civic opportunity.

Indeed, in response to the aforementioned challenges, policymakers in many democratic societies have called on schools to equip their students for civic participation, typically by means of civic or citizenship education (Eurydice, 2012; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Providing citizenship education can be considered an important task for schools. As policymakers and educators have recognized the relevance of this task, researchers have begun to investigate which citizenship outcomes are particularly desirable for schools to pursue and how to achieve them. Common findings are that giving structural attention to citizenship in the curriculum,

fostering an open classroom climate in which controversial topics are discussed from multiple perspectives, and reflection on community service can stimulate citizenship knowledge and skills (Geboers, Geijssel, Admiraal, Ten Dam, 2013; Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010; Torney-Purta, 2002; Van Goethem, Van Hoof, Orobio de Castro, Van Aken, Hart, 2014).

These findings suggest that classroom peers may play an important role in the development of citizenship knowledge and skills during classroom discussion and reflection. At the individual level, language ability has been shown to be strongly associated with citizenship outcomes (Chapter 3, this dissertation). Are individual citizenship outcomes also influenced by the language abilities of classroom peers? The contribution of this chapter lies in addressing this question, while investigating whether pre-existing inequalities in citizenship knowledge are influenced by the language characteristics of classroom peers. To our knowledge, educational citizenship outcomes, such as citizenship knowledge, have not been used as outcome variables of interest in the literature on peer effects<sup>2</sup>, not in general nor in relation to the effects of peer language ability. So far, authors studying other social outcomes of education, such as interethnic friendships, have predominantly focused on the effects of peers' ethnicities (Graham, Munniksma, & Juvonen, 2014; Moody, 2001; Quillian & Campbell, 2003).

With regard to academic achievement outcomes, a wide range of studies on peer effects have been conducted, however. In a review, Sacerdote (2014) finds that methodologically more advanced studies commonly report modest effects of peer characteristics such as high prior ability and socio-economic background on outcomes such as language and mathematics scores. Typically, higher ability students have a positive effect on the achievement of their classroom peers under *ceteris paribus* conditions. The main goal of this chapter is to investigate what impact language classroom composition has on the development of citizenship outcomes. To what extent is the average classroom language level and variation in language level associated with inequalities in citizenship knowledge of primary school students? Insight into this question would allow schools and

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<sup>2</sup> The term peer effects is used in multiple ways in the literature. Here, we use it to denote compositional and differential effects of peer group characteristics, in which the peer group is defined as all students belonging to the same primary school classroom.

teachers to adapt their policies and practices to exploit these compositional characteristics in order to raise the citizenship knowledge of lower performing students.

We focus on youth citizenship knowledge of grade 6 primary education students, as it allows us to study the development of citizenship knowledge and relate it to the language composition of the classroom at an early part of the formative phase. Pre-adolescence appears to be a relatively potent period for youth citizenship development, given the stagnation of citizenship development that occurs during early adolescence in personal efficacy and citizenship development (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2011, who point at the great potential of this developmental phase for acquiring citizenship skills and dispositions, see also Keating et al., 2010; Geijsel, Ledoux, Reumerman, Ten Dam, 2012). Therefore, we expect changes in inequalities to be both more likely and impactful in pre-adolescent years, as both early individual differences in ability and continued exposure to peer effects may accumulate over time (Heckman, 2006; Lauder et al., 1999). Moreover, raising citizenship knowledge has been shown to be an effective strategy to revitalize and sustain democratic citizenship (Galston, 2007). Finally, we conceptualize youth citizenship in accord with Ten Dam, Geijsel, Reumerman, and Ledoux (2011), who have put forward a notion of youth citizenship that is embedded into the daily lives of young people (see also Lawy & Biesta, 2006). This conceptualization is centered around four exemplary citizenship tasks: acting democratically, acting in a socially responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences.

### **Theoretical background**

In the social sciences, there has been a growing literature on the effects of peer group characteristics on individual outcomes. The different econometric, sociological and psychological studies have considered both a great number of individual outcomes and definitions of peer groups, ranging from neighborhood peers to within-classroom peers. The study of peer effects in education has thus far largely focused on academic achievement outcomes such as language ability, mathematics ability and GPA scores. On the basis of the studies carried out on peer effects, we argue that peers may also influence one's citizenship knowledge. In particular, we hypothesize that the level of and variation in language ability of classmates may affect inequalities in students' citizenship knowledge,

with sufficiently high level of and variation in peer language level improving low language ability students' performance.

### **Peer effects on traditional academic achievement outcomes**

The study of peer effects in education started with the landmark *Equality of Educational Opportunity* study by Coleman *et al.* (1966). In this U.S. study, Coleman colleagues report that students' achievement was "[...] strongly related to the educational background and aspirations of other students in the school." Subsequently, a Canadian study found student performance to increase with average classroom IQ score (Henderson, Mieszkowski, & Sauvageau, 1978), although this relationship was reported to be nonlinear, with diminishing marginal returns. Both studies suggested that academic achievement of students depends in part on the characteristics of other students sharing the same classroom or school. Typically, these characteristics include students' socio-economic background and prior achievement variables, which are aggregated into school or class averages.

While the study of underlying mechanisms has received little attention, peer effects have been studied in a variety of countries and educational contexts in recent years. In reviews of reported findings, evidence about the existence and magnitude of peer effects were found to be inconclusive, however (Thrupp, Lauder, & Robinson, 2002; Vigdor & Nechyda, 2007). These observations have led to a critical evaluation of the methodological soundness of many peer effect studies (Ammermueller & Pischke, 2009; Glewwe, 1997; Manski, 1993; Thrupp, Lauder, & Robinson, 2002). Recent research has attempted to incorporate these methodological considerations. Three such studies will be used to illustrate the current state of affairs in the academic achievement literature on primary education peer effects.

Firstly, Ammermueller and Pischke (2009) analyse the degree to which the number of books peer students report to have at home influences reading test scores of primary school students in six European countries. Taking the influence of selection of students into schools and measurement error into account, they find that on average across countries, a one standard deviation increase in peer language ability level leads to a 0.17 standard deviation increase in reading test scores. Secondly, Vigdor and Nechyba (2007) find that characteristics of the classroom peer group correlate substantially with individual achievement for both reading and mathematics scores, using lagged test scores of North

Carolina primary school students. However, in a set of additional analyses on schools that exhibit more year-to-year variation in peer group characteristics, they find little evidence that relatively rapid change in peer group composition influences individual achievement levels. This suggests that peer composition either needs to be stable over a period of time to impact individual achievement or that the relationship between peer group characteristics and individual achievement is not causal in nature. Thirdly, in a study on the primary school desegregation program Metco in Boston, Angrist and Lang (2004) analyze to which degree peer effects are present by exploiting policy-driven exogenous shocks in classroom composition. They find that potential peer effects on four traditional academic achievement outcomes are modest and short-lived at best after addressing multiple methodological considerations such as using instrument variable analysis to control for omitted variable bias.

Taken together, these three studies illustrate that the findings of studies which investigate the effect of peer group's characteristics on academic achievement outcomes in primary school remain somewhat inconclusive, despite methodological advances. The majority of the studies on primary and secondary education use linear-in-means models. This model assumes a general effect of the mean characteristic of the peer group, which implies that more subtle relationships between peer characteristics and individual outcomes may be overlooked. In a recent review of the literature on peer effects, Sacerdote (2014) finds that approximately half of the peer effects studies that assume linear-in-means effects report modest or large effects on test scores. The other half of the studies do not find peer effects on academic achievement scores. In a qualification of this finding, Sacerdote reports that estimated peer effects can be found more often when the assumption of the linear-in-means model are replaced by assumptions that allow for a more sophisticated analysis of peer effects. In particular, taking into account that the effect may vary by both the distribution of peer characteristics and the student's position in the distribution of test scores leads to reporting of more robust peer effects (Hoxby & Weingarth, 2005; Imberman, Kugler, & Sacerdote, 2012).

### **Peer effects on social outcomes**

Relatively few studies have scrutinized to what degree peer effects are relevant for social outcomes. While citizenship knowledge is cognitive in nature, it also pertains to

interpersonal and democratic processes that are distinctively social. For the purposes of this study, we broadly define social outcomes here to be outcomes that relate to situations in which social interaction plays an important role, be they of interpersonal, public or political nature. Sacerdote (2014) finds that larger peer effects are found for social outcomes than for academic achievement outcomes. Peer effects studies on social outcomes find substantial effects of peer characteristics on binge drinking, smoking, taking up paternity leave, church going and the likelihood of joining a fraternity or sorority, among others (Dahl, Loken, & Mogstad, 2012; Duncan, Boisjoly, Kremer, Levery, & Eccles, 2005; Gavira & Raphael, 2001; Huisman, Van de Werfhorst & Monshouwer, 2012; Sacerdote, 2001).

### **Peer effects on youth citizenship: potential mechanisms**

As mentioned, studies on peer effects in education have not always investigated the mechanisms that allow such effects to manifest themselves. A few hypotheses have nevertheless been put forward. The first explanation that is mentioned by various authors, is that peer effects may be caused by increases in performance due to social comparison mechanisms (Blanton, Buunk, Gibbons, & Kuyper, 1999; Eisenkopf, 2010; Huguet, Dumas, Monteil, & Genestoux, 2001). However, the reference point central to social comparison theory is that of the specific other (i.e., a comparison made by a student with a specific other student), rather than that of the generalized other (i.e., the average performance of the peer group). As the latter is the reference point of interest for our purposes, the big-fish-little-pond-effect (BFLPE) hypothesis provides more relevant insights. Among others things, the BFLPE hypothesis states that after controlling for individual ability, students develop a relatively lower academic self-concept in higher performing classes or schools. Academic self-concept, in turn, is predictive of a range of academic achievement outcomes (Marsh et al., 2008). As such, average peer language ability may also have a negative effect on citizenship knowledge of all students after controlling for individual ability.

There is also evidence that suggests a positive relationship between peer language ability and youth citizenship outcomes. For instance, in addition to an open classroom climate, the quality of dialogue among students has been shown to influence youth citizenship outcomes (Schuitema, van Boxtel, Veugelers, Ten Dam, 2009; Schuitema,



Veugelers, Rijlaarsdam, Ten Dam, 2011). Therefore, if one's peers display higher language ability, they are more able to express themselves verbally, which may lead to higher quality classroom dialogue. To our knowledge, no existing studies have suggested mechanisms that may explain potential differential peer effects in relation to citizenship knowledge acquisition.

### **Hypotheses**

One of the most potent influences on student citizenship outcomes is the so-called open classroom climate. This concept indicates to which degree students feel safe in expressing their opinions and controversial topics are discussed from a variety of perspectives. A meta-analysis has shown that an open classroom climate is associated with high citizenship outcomes (Geboers et al., 2013). Another factor that is associated with high citizenship outcomes is individual language ability (chapter 3). Language ability has been shown to be important for social interactions, of which citizenship situations are a subset. In particular, language is thought to be essential for developing meaning, reflection and perspective taking ability (Astington & Jenkins, 1999; Hughes et al., 2005; Taylor, 1985). Moreover, verbal ability is seen as essential resource for political participation, given its role in being able to reason, persuade and organize (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995).

Given the importance of both language ability and classroom discussion for the development of citizenship knowledge and skills, we expect that peer language ability characteristics may also influence these outcomes, in multiple ways. In exploring these outcomes, we will investigate two research questions. First of all, we will investigate whether the peer language environment affects students of varying ability differently, by testing two differential peer effect hypotheses. The respective hypotheses accompanying these research questions are informed by previous findings that low language ability students' potential for citizenship learning in relation is higher relative to their high language ability peers (chapter 3). As such, exposure to high quality classroom interaction may lead to relatively more opportunities for citizenship learning. The first differential peer effect hypothesis states that low language ability students perform better in classrooms with a high average language levels, given their relatively higher potential for acquisition of citizenship knowledge. The second differential peer effects hypothesis states that low language ability students perform better in classrooms with sufficient variation in language

level. The motivation for this hypothesis again lies in the higher potential for citizenship learning in these classrooms (as compared to classrooms with little or no variation in language ability), in addition to the assumption that teachers and fellow students are more likely to ensure that language used in classroom discussions is more accessible to and inclusive of low language ability students when more variation in language level exists in the classroom.

The second research question that will be explored is how better performing students positively influence their peers' citizenship development. Although the academic achievement peer effects literature suggests a positive relationship between classroom average achievement and individual student achievement (e.g., Hoxby & Weingarth, 2005; Sacerdote, 2014), citizenship education is not subject to the same formal requirements and systematic assessment as language and mathematics education in the Netherlands, preventing straightforward prediction. Therefore, two competing hypotheses will be tested. The first hypothesis is that controlling for individual language ability, students will perform less in higher language ability classrooms, due to the big-fish-little-pond-effect, which may negatively impact relatively cognitive learning outcomes such as citizenship knowledge acquisition (Marsh et al., 2008). The second hypothesis is that higher peer language ability may increase citizenship knowledge by increasing the quality of classroom discussion, based on Schuitema and colleagues' findings (2009; 2011).

### **Primary schools in the Dutch context**

As mentioned, our conceptualization of youth citizenship is centered around four exemplary citizenship tasks: acting democratically, acting in a socially responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences. Students who are equipped with citizenship knowledge and skills are expected to be able to deal with these tasks in a way that is desirable in democratic societies. Primary schools in the Netherlands are by law expected to contribute to the active citizenship and social integration of their students.

Typically, Dutch primary schools do not sort their students in classes by ability, although a minority of primary schools has indicated that they sort students by reading ability to some degree. Using representative data, Ammermueller and Pischke (2009) do not find evidence for non-random assignment of students to classes in the Netherlands, nor do they find much difference in reading scores between classes in schools that indicate

the use of tracking and those that do not. Unlike in secondary education, primary education in the Netherlands is predominantly untracked, with identical classroom compositions across subjects.

## **Methods**

### **Data**

The analyses have been performed on the Cohort Research on Educational Careers data, a nationally representative school cohort study in the Netherlands. The samples of this school-based survey consisted of 17,403 students in 1,081 grade 6 classes at 671 primary schools in the Netherlands (Driessen, Mulder, & Roeleveld, 2012). The average age of the grade 6 Dutch primary schools that participated was 12 years and 5 months (S.D. = approximately 7 months).

### **Addressing methodological concerns in the study of peer effects**

As mentioned, a number of methodological concerns have been raised in the study of peer effects in recent years, spurred by the various conflicting results that have been reported. In this section, we explain how we address a number of methodological concerns.

First of all, Calvó-Armengol, Patacchini, and Zenou (2009) argue that the boundaries of the peer group are often arbitrary in studies on peer effects. We address this concern by taking the classroom as the boundary for the peer group, as this gives peers a higher likelihood of interaction than using the school as the boundary. In particular, as classrooms represent the basic unit in which learning takes place in schools, peer effects are more likely as classroom discussions involving all students take place in this setting. This assumption is supported by Vigdor and Nechyba's findings (2007), which show classroom peer effects to be more frequently and substantially correlated with individual achievement than grade-level peer effects.

Secondly, Ammermueller and Pischke (2009) note that measurement error can lead to substantial bias in the estimation of peer effects. Our peer characteristics suffer less from measurement error, as they are not measured by self-reports but assessed objectively. Moreover, to avoid imprecise measurement of aggregated peer characteristics due to high proportions of missing data at the classroom level, classrooms with more than 30% missing data are removed.

Thirdly, Manski (1995) and others have pointed out that peer effect studies in education may suffer from selection bias, as students may not sort randomly into schools. Instead the characteristics of the peer population may influence school selection by students and parents. In studies that have explicitly controlled for contextual effects (Ammermueller, & Pischke, 2009; McEwan, 2003), the magnitude of such effects was found to be small and of little practical significance. We nonetheless include school fixed effects analyses to control for contextual effects caused by selection bias.

An additional methodological criticism is directed at the linear-in-means approach, in which the mean peer characteristic is assumed to have a similar, linear effect on all students. However, means are likely not the only peer group characteristic that matters, while possible also affecting students of different ability in different ways (Glewwe, 1997; Hoxby & Weingarth, 2005; Sacerdote, 2014). We address this methodological consideration in two ways: (1) by including the standard deviation of peer language ability and (2) by including the interactions between individual language and mathematics ability on the one hand and the peer group characteristics on the other hand. The latter allows us to investigate whether low ability student are impacted differently by peer group characteristics than high ability students.

### **Analytical design**

Given the nested structure of the data, multilevel analyses were performed. The results of three models are given; model 1 includes student-level variables control variables, model 2 adds class-level variables to model 1, while model 3 removes schools with only one class and includes school fixed effects. Cohorts from both 2008 and 2011 were present in the sample. Possible cohort effects were controlled for by including *cohort* as a control variable.

### **Measurements**

#### *Independent variables*

With regard to peer language characteristics, both *class average language level* and *class standard deviation in language level* have been included. The latter is constructed by taking the standard deviation of students' language performance scores. These variables are also including in the cross-level interactions with students' z-standardized *language ability* scores, as measured

by standardized national reading comprehension tests provided by national testing agency Cito.

#### *Control variables*

To exclude variance caused by other factors than language ability, the control variables *age*, *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), *household religion* (operationalized as a student's mother's religion), *ethnicity* (*Surinam Dutch*, *native Dutch*, *Turkish Dutch*, *Moroccan Dutch* and *Other*), *parental education* (highest level of education completed = pre-vocational education (1), general/vocational secondary education or senior vocational education (2) and higher education (3)<sup>3</sup>), z-standardized *language ability* and *mathematics ability* scores were included, using scores on tests provided by national testing agency Cito. For *household religion*, 34% of respondents displayed missing data. Multiple imputation was used to impute missing values for *household religion* using the dependent variables, parental education and ethnicity as predictor variables. At the class level, the variable *Classroom Climate* is included. *Classroom Climate* indicates the proportion of students scoring higher than 3 points on a 5 point scale. This scale consisted of six items, measuring agreement to statements such as '*I have a lot of contact with my classmates*' and '*My classmates and I get along well.*'

To control for the socio-economic composition of the classroom, variables for the proportions of students with parents that have completed pre-vocational education (1), general/vocational secondary education or senior vocational education (2) and higher education (3) have been included. Moreover, the ethnic composition of the classroom was controlled for by variables indicating the proportions of students with Surinam Dutch, native Dutch, Turkish Dutch and Moroccan Dutch ethnic backgrounds per classroom, as these represent the largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands. To improve reliability of classroom composition measures, classes were only included if five or more students provided data without missing values and no more than 30% of students exhibit one or more missing values after multiple imputation on household religion.

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<sup>3</sup> In our Dutch sample, these levels are operationalized as LBO (including LO, BaO, VBO), MBO (including MAVO, HAVO and VWO) or HBO/WO as maximum levels of education completed.

*Dependent variables*

For measurement of youth citizenship knowledge in the COOL data, the Citizenship Competences Questionnaire (Ten Dam et al., 2011) was used. This instrument aims to measure youth citizenship by putting emphasis on four citizenship tasks: acting democratically, acting in a socially responsible manner, dealing with conflicts and dealing with differences. The knowledge test consisted of 27 multiple-choice questions with three response options for each question and the instruction to indicate which option best answers the question. For instance: “*All children have a right to: a) an allowance, b) choose who they want to live with or c) education*”. The citizenship knowledge scores were z-standardized.

**Results**

The descriptives of the data can be found in Appendix C. As can be seen in table 1, most variance is explained by factors at the individual level, with school and class factors jointly explaining 10,8% of the total variance in citizenship knowledge.

**Table 1. Variance components for citizenship knowledge.**

<b>Level</b>	<b>ICC</b>
<i>School</i>	0.052
<i>Class</i>	0.056
<i>Individual</i>	0.893

As shown by the different models in table 2, regression coefficients are similar when controlling for class level variables and non-random selection into schools. All significant regression coefficients are similar in magnitude and direction across the three models.

As model 3 shows, the two cross-level interactions are significant: lower language ability students report relatively higher citizenship knowledge scores in classes with a high average language level. This differential peer effect is even stronger when the peer characteristic is variation in average peer language level, in line with the second differential peer effect hypothesis. These peer language ability coefficients represent 14.5% and 30.9% of students’ individual language ability coefficient, respectively. Thus, particularly low language ability students appear to have higher citizenship knowledge when surrounded by

classroom peers of which some have a higher language ability and others display a level of language ability similar to their own.

The main effect of class average language level is negatively correlated with individual citizenship knowledge, with a one standard deviation rise in classroom average language level corresponding to a 0.14 standard deviation decline in citizenship knowledge, representing 25,5% of students' individual language ability coefficient. This finding is in line with the BFLP-hypothesis. In an additional analysis, removal of individual language ability control variables resulted in the disappearance of a significant average peer language ability effect, in support of the potential presence of a BFLPE mechanism.

**Table 2. Regressions for Citizenship Knowledge - Peer Effects and Interactions**

	(1)		(2)		(3)	
	Effect	Interaction with Language ability	Effect	Interaction with Language ability	Effect	Interaction with Language ability
Class average language level	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.12*** (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.14*** (0.03)	-0.08*** (0.01)
Class SD language level	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.16*** (0.03)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.17*** (0.03)
Individual language ability	0.55*** (0.03)	n/a	0.55*** (0.03)	n/a	0.55*** (0.03)	n/a
Student-level variables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Class-level variables			✓	✓	✓	✓
Only schools >1 class					✓	✓
School fixed effects					✓	✓
N (students)	16812		16812		12687	
N (classes)	1037		1037		782	
N (schools)	653		653		402	

Note: Model 1 includes student-level control variables; Model 2 add class-level variables to Model 1; Model 3 only includes schools with more than 1 class and includes school fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses; \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001



## Discussion

Schools are expected to prepare students for their functioning in democratic society. Therefore, teachers attempt to increase the citizenship learning outcomes of their students. Moreover, they potentially address pre-existing inequalities in students' citizenship outcomes due to differences in social background. Does classroom language ability composition need to be taken into account as well when pursuing these objectives? Our findings suggest a cautious affirmative answer to this question.

First of all, we investigated whether the relation between peer language characteristics and students' citizenship knowledge holds equally for students of different ability levels. Our findings suggest that this is not the case. Instead, low language ability students report relatively higher citizenship knowledge in classrooms with a high average language ability and variation when controlling for other factors. This differential peer effect is strongest when the peer characteristic is variation in average peer language level, supporting the second differential peer effect hypothesis. Thus, particularly low language ability students appear to have higher citizenship knowledge when surrounded by classroom peers of which some have a higher language ability and others display a level of language ability similar to their own. In other words, one might say that low language ability students report lower citizenship knowledge scores when surrounded by low language ability peers with little variation in ability.

Do better performing students positively influence their peers' academic achievement? Here, we find that a high class average language level is negatively associated with citizenship knowledge, in line with the BFLP-hypothesis. The additional analysis, in which individual language ability control variables were removed, resulted in the disappearance of a significant average peer language ability effect, in line with the potential presence of a BFLPE mechanism. However, this does not completely refute the competing hypothesis – the influence of peer language ability on citizenship knowledge via the quality of classroom discussion may be present as well, yet less pronounced. Importantly, the findings only provide support for this relationship for students that report scores near 0 on the interaction variables, given our analytical design.

An alternative explanation for this finding specific to the Dutch context might be that classes with many low language ability students may experience more conflicts that are addressed by nonverbal, aggressive means. This may in turn spur additional allocation of

resources to citizenship programs. Indeed, one of the most frequently implemented primary education citizenship programs in the Netherlands, the Peacable School (in Dutch, “*De Vreedzame School*”), was initially often implemented as a means to restore classroom order. Implementation of this program may have been more effective at schools with pupils from predominantly lower educated immigrant households, perhaps due to the greater allocation of resources (Pauw, 2013; Verhoeven, 2012).

When the peer effects on citizenship knowledge are considered in unison, these findings add a qualification to Hoxby and Weingarth’s (2005) Boutique model of peer effects, which states that being surrounded by peers with similar characteristics may result in higher achievement, as the learning environment adapts more to the presence of a certain type of students when these students are more numerous. The qualification suggested by the results is that while higher ability students indeed benefit from an environment of peers with similarly high language abilities, lower language ability students not only benefit from the presence of higher language ability students, but from a variation in language ability level as well. One can indeed imagine that low language ability students are increasingly catered to in classroom discussions when they are more numerous or vice versa: that they are less taken into account when their numbers are small. In other words, classrooms that are diverse with respect to language ability might increase low language ability students’ opportunities to learn, as they may feature more accessible language use that would fall within low language ability students’ zones of proximal development more frequently.

A number of questions are spurred by the results reported here: Do teachers adapt their teaching strategies and educational priorities to the ability distribution present in the classroom? And to which degree can the inequalities in citizenship outcomes be impacted by classroom composition or teaching strategies in the long run? Further research may address these questions by using a combination of longitudinal and (quasi-)experimental designs. While our findings may be interpreted as a reason to distribute low language ability students across classes with sufficient variation in language ability (rather than concentrating them in one class), we warn against using these findings to base policy on, for two reasons. First, additional evidence must be gathered to establish the causal nature of the relationships suggested by our analyses. Secondly, changes in peer group composition can lead to unexpected outcomes, as the falling apart of artificially created social groups spurred by peer effects studies has illustrated (Carrell, Sacerdote, & West,

2013). Nevertheless, the presented findings can be used to argue that at the very least, teachers need to be aware of potential compositional effects and ways to respond to avoid further increases of inequalities in citizenship knowledge. Finally, our findings demonstrate that when policymakers or school officials consider making deliberate changes to classroom composition, they may affect not only academic achievement outcomes, but also citizenship outcomes differently for students of varying ability. Therefore, the possible effects of such changes in classroom composition need to be considered along multiple dimensions.





## 5. Using Significant Others and Perspective Taking to Resolve Intergroup Tensions<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Sustained intergroup tension is an important threat to social cohesion, as it may lead to hostilities and conflict between social groups within society. Individuals typically have difficulty resolving intergroup tension in a mutually beneficial manner. We argue that in contemporary societies, the ability and willingness to resolve intergroup tension is an important yet underexposed citizenship competence. Using goal-framing theory as a model of individual behavior and development, two mechanisms that may stimulate resolution of intergroup conflict are identified: perspective taking and the use of significant others. Our findings confirm that perspective taking and significant others can increase both the motivation for intergroup cooperation and actual cooperative intergroup reciprocation. Finally, the implications for citizenship education are discussed.

**Keywords:** intergroup tension, intergroup conflict, goal framing theory, Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma, citizenship education

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<sup>1</sup> Based on: Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Lindenberg, S.L., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Using significant others and perspective taking to resolve intergroup tensions.

## Introduction

Over the last decades, many societies have developed increasingly heterogeneous populations. Due to immigration flows and increasing differences between individuals of lower and higher socio-economic status, societies have come to harbor a greater variety of social groups (Pedersen, Pytlikova, & Smith, 2008; Piketty & Saez, 2006). In a globalizing world, societies have become more connected to and dependent on each other as well (WTO, 2014). Individuals' preferences to form social ties with those who are alike (i.e., homophily) have not disappeared, however, contributing to group formation and segregation (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). As these groups come across each other, intergroup tensions can manifest themselves in societies and schools. Yet, individuals find intergroup tensions hard to resolve in a way that is in the interest of all (Bornstein & Ben-Yossef, 1994; Goren & Bornstein, 2000).

Schools are at the forefront of social-cultural developments in society, and have to deal with challenges posed by such trends. They aim to provide a safe learning environment in which students can equip themselves for functioning in society at large. In recent years, Western policymakers have stimulated schools to equip the youngest generation of citizens with competences for maintaining and improving social cohesion and the quality of democratic society (Eurydice, 2012; Osler & Starkey, 2006; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Conflict resolution is an area of widespread concern and a prominent citizenship competence in most citizenship education conceptualizations (Ten Dam, Geijssel, Reumerman, & Ledoux, 2011; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Van Gunsteren, 1998; Veugelers, 2007). While an open classroom climate has been identified as an important factor in citizenship education (Geboers, Geijssel, Admiraal, & Ten Dam, 2013), relatively little is known about the characteristics of effective citizenship education, especially with regard to intergroup conflict resolution. In the citizenship education literature, large parts of classroom and school variance are left unexplained (Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010).

Training for citizenship is not just a preparation for the encounter of intergroup conflict outside school. With increasing heterogeneity in society, schools often experience intergroup conflict among their students, of which ethnic group dynamics are best documented. For instance, in schools that have climates characterized by more interethnic

conflict, peer victimization is higher (Agirdag, Demanet, Van Houtte, & Van Avermaet, 2011). In addition, racial diversity corresponds to lower levels of political discussion in the classroom (Campbell, 2007), while friendship segregation peaks in moderately heterogeneous schools (Moody, 2001). Larger ingroups among minorities buffer the adverse effects of ethnic tension somewhat, as members of ethnic minorities report less peer victimization in schools that have higher minority concentrations (Agirdag et al., 2011; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006). The direct exposure to intergroup conflict implies that teachers and students have to have a good understanding of what drives such conflict and which conditions can mitigate it. We therefore contend that for good citizenship education, teachers have to have tools that are based on good behavioral theories.

Previous research on intergroup conflict demonstrates that groups with adult members also have difficulty to cooperate with each other in situations of intergroup tension. Psychological and sociological studies show that mere membership of a group can lead to hostilities toward other groups (e.g., Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif, 1961; Durlauf, 1999). Once intergroup conflict starts, intragroup processes may cause changes in perception, beliefs and values that increase intragroup cohesion, but may also undermine the tractability of the intergroup conflict. Such processes are outgroup deindividuation and dehumanization (Zimbardo, 2007), and may also induce perception of the outgroup members as differently motivated, leading to substantial bias (Waytz, Young, & Ginges, 2014). In experimental settings that mimic real-life situations, the majority of groups fail to reach collectively optimal outcomes (Goren & Bornstein, 2000). Theories of behavior originally used to explain behavior in strategic interaction such as rational choice theory and agency theory typically fail to incorporate insights on the social nature of man (Coleman, 1990; Eisenhardt, 1989). For instance, they often assumed individuals to be strictly self-interested, although the presence of other-regarding preferences has long been documented (e.g., Bogaert, Boone, & Declerck, 2008). While recognizing that humans have social preferences is an important step, by itself it does not help us to explain the dynamics of intergroup conflict.

In the present chapter, we explore mechanisms that focus on the dynamics of intergroup conflict and may increase students' resistance to intragroup processes that lead to competitive behavior toward outgroups. They are selected to be useful to teachers who may wish to stimulate intergroup cooperation to prevent or resolve situations of intergroup



tension in schools themselves, while potentially equipping students for resolving intergroup tension in civic society. These mechanisms are derived from goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2013) and are tested by modelling intergroup tension through an Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma (IPD) game. In doing so, this chapter addresses a number of issues in the citizenship education literature. First of all, it studies individuals' functioning in groups, rather than studying individuals in isolation. Secondly, it studies citizenship by measuring actual behavior while providing insights on the mechanisms at play, rather than intended behavior or democratic competences, which do not necessarily lead to actual participation (Fjeldstad & Mikkelsen, 2003). Thirdly, it uses an explicit model of behavior to base hypotheses on, rather than leaving mechanisms underlying behavior implicit. Finally, it employs an experimental research design that allows for causal inference, rather than drawing on correlational methods.

The next section will further elaborate on undesirable intergroup conflict scenarios, after which goal-framing theory will be described and applied to identify mechanisms that may stimulate citizenship behavior during situations characterized by intergroup tension.

## **Theoretical background**

### **Intergroup tension and conflict**

In a society where a great variety of social groups are present, an important threat to social cohesion stems from situations in which intergroup tension deteriorates into intergroup conflict. Importantly, intergroup conflicts are not necessarily undesirable; they merely indicate that groups may have different goals and may need to compete for resources to achieve those goals (Campbell, 1965). They may even bring about desirable within-group outcomes, such as within-group solidarity, bonding social capital or emancipation. However, two types of intergroup conflict scenarios are not desirable if one values social cohesion.

The first scenario is one in which the process of resolution seeking stalls or breaks down. A societal example would be when a labor union and employers do not reach agreement over a collective labor agreement resulting in long strikes and loss of production, to the detriment of both employees and employers. In education, two groups may compete for dominance in classroom discussions, preventing others to voice their own perspective on a given issue. This may lead to less democratic citizenship development for all students,

as a safe and open classroom climate in which multiple perspectives are discussed stimulates democratic citizenship development (Geboers et al., 2013; Isac et al., 2014; Torney-Purta, 2002). The second, related scenario manifests itself when groups seek conflict even when cooperation would be more beneficial for both the collective and the individuals. For example, when two groups of students engage in fights, individual students risk serious harm and the school climate may become dominated by fear as a result.

A model of behavior that can be applied to citizenship education needs to explain how individuals may react when goals are in conflict and how individuals are sensitive to social influences. Moreover, a suitable model of behavior would also need to suggest feasible educational interventions that may enhance students' resistance to intragroup dynamics that increase competitive behavior toward outgroups. We suggest that paying attention to the dynamics of overarching goals can serve this purpose. Goal-framing theory meets these conditions.

### **Goal-framing theory as a model of behavior for citizenship development**

Goal-framing theory (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007; Lindenberg, 2013) is a theory that combines insights from cognition and motivation research to address several of the aforementioned requirements. It assumes goals to be essential organizing constructs of human behavior and perception: human beings tend to understand and process their environment in terms of goals. In turn, sets of goals are embedded in overarching goals. The theory distinguishes three overarching goals that shape behavior in important ways when they are strongly activated. The first overarching goal is the 'hedonic' goal, which is characterized by behavior that serves an individually motivated short-term goal that improves the way one feels in the moment, for instance by having fun or economizing on effort. The second overarching goal is the 'gain goal', in which individuals are concerned with guarding and building up one's own resources (i.e., serving individually motivated long-term goals, such as saving for later or investing in one's skills). The third overarching goal can serve both short- and long-term goals and is motivated by the collective interest (i.e., to a feeling of obligation to act appropriately, for example by helping others or contributing to a public good). This is the 'normative' goal. When it is strongly activated, the individual acts as a member of a group or dyad, not as an individual. These overarching goals are called "goal-frames" when they are strongly activated and thereby influence what

we attend to, which knowledge is activated, what we appreciate, what we expect others to do, which alternatives we consider and how we process information (Lindenberg, 2013). As activation of the normative goal-frame may stimulate citizenship behavior, the next section describes how goal-frames may be activated.

#### *Activation of goal-frames*

The activation of an overarching goal depends on at least three factors: its *a priori* strength, the degree to which it is being activated by the environment, and the degree to which the individual is motivated to self-regulate its activation.

The *a priori* strength of goal-frames is determined by evolutionary and social influences, such as one's upbringing (Lindenberg, 2008). The hedonic goal is *a priori* the strongest, as it is aimed at satisfying basic needs, which are supported by an emotional-motivational system. The gain goal is *a priori* weaker than the hedonic goal, because even though it is related to the individual's benefits, its results are more removed in time and less directly linked to emotions. The normative goal is *a priori* the weakest as it often asks for individual sacrifices in the interest of the collective without yielding direct personal advantages. Thus in order to have the normative goal be stronger than the other two overarching goals, it needs to be especially activated in a given situation. Two mechanisms are particularly relevant for this activation (Lindenberg, 2013): stimulating perspective taking and significant others. Both mechanisms can also be used to stretch the application range of the normative goal, so that a particular normative goal (e.g., cooperation) is applied to the entire collective, rather than just the ingroup.

#### *Boosts and stretches in perspective taking*

For the activation of the normative goal-frame, the individual's perspective taking ability is highly relevant (Lindenberg, 2013). Without being able to take the perspective of others and of the group as a whole, the individual will not act as member of the group or dyad.<sup>2</sup> Thus, stimulating (and thereby boosting) perspective taking will increase the relative strength of the normative goal. The same method can be used to stretch the range of the

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, this perspective taking is also crucial for the gain goal, as the individual has to be able to put him- or herself into the shoes of itself in the future. Thus, investment behavior also requires perspective taking.

normative goal by pushing a more inclusive collective than the present ingroup. The citizenship education literature has established findings in line with this relationship, as an open and safe classroom climate in which perspective-taking is practiced has also been found to be positively associated with the development of social and political citizenship competences (Geboers et al., 2013; Isac et al., 2014; Torney-Purta, 2002).

### *Stretching significant others*

According to goal-framing theory, activation and stretching of the normative goal may also be strengthened by the actual or mental presence of significant others that value normative goals, Shah (2003) demonstrated the important impact significant others may have on goal commitment, goal accessibility and goal pursuit. The closer the subject was to the significant other, the bigger the effect of being primed with the significant other was on goal pursuit. If the significant other clearly stands for a wider collective than the present ingroup, he or she will not only activate but also stretch the normative goal. In education, teachers can exert normative influence on pupils in their role as significant other as well. For example, when teachers are perceived to take an active stance against bullying by pupils, bullying reduces over time (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014). In addition, classes with teachers who believe that bullying could be attributed to external factors (i.e., a disengaged stance) report a higher victimization rate (Oldenburg, Van Duijn, Sentse, Huitsing, Van Der Ploeg, Salmivalli, & Veenstra, 2015). Finally, social bonds with significant others such as teachers and parents appear to protect at-risk youth against continued truancy (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Tinga, & Ormel, 2010).

### **The present study**

Stretching the range of people who are covered by the normative goal can create a form of “weak solidarity” shown to both in- and outgroups, thereby facilitating positive interactions between different groups (Lindenberg, in press). Activating and simultaneously stretching the normative goal may thus boost the motivation for intergroup cooperation.

In the present study the two ways to activate and stretch the normative goal as described will be used to test whether intergroup cooperation can be stimulated in situations in which intergroup tension is salient, using a repeated Intergroup Prisoner’s Dilemma (IPD) game. Firstly, stretching the application of the normative goal of

cooperation to the outgroup will be stimulated by having individuals take the perspective of the collective that includes the outgroup. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*H1: Stimulating subjects' perspective taking of the collective (that includes the outgroup) leads to higher motivation for intergroup cooperation compared to subjects not stimulated.*

Secondly, the activation and stretching of the normative goal will be stimulated through a significant other, who will suggest he typically tried to find a solution that is 'good for all', after telling individuals that they may play the game as they wish. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*H2: Exposing subjects to significant others who stand for a more inclusive collective leads to higher motivation for intergroup cooperation compared to subjects not exposed.*

Additionally, as increased motivation to establish intergroup cooperation may lead to frustration and competitive behavior when the outgroup does not reciprocate cooperative signals in the repeated IPD game, higher variation in intergroup cooperation is also expected in both experimental conditions.

## Methods

### Modelling intergroup tension: the Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma game

In this study we chose to induce intergroup tension by a repeated Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma (IPD) game, which is a continuous public good game (Bornstein, 2003). This game forces individuals to choose between behavior that is rational from their own, the group, or the collective perspective, and to engage in behavior that is either cooperative or hostile towards the other group. In other words, the game assesses the extent of intergroup cooperation in a situation that is structured to make the possibility of intergroup conflict salient. Using an adaptation of Bornstein's description of team games in symmetric form, the repeated IPD game is structured as follows:

1. The game is played by two groups, A and B, with  $n$  members in each group
2. In every round, each member of groups A and B receives an endowment of size  $e$  ( $e > 0$ ), and subsequently decides individually whether or not to contribute his or her endowment.
3. The number of contributors per group is given by  $m_A$  and  $m_B$ , respectively. If  $m_A > m_B$ , all members of group A receive a payoff of  $r$  units, and vice versa for group B. The payoff structure of the IPD game reflects the relative amounts of effort made by the two groups, as is often the case in potential real-life intergroup conflicts. The reward a player in group A obtains is defined by the following function:  $r/2n (m_A - m_B) + r/2$ , with  $r/2n < e < r/2$ . If  $m_A = m_B$ , then each of the players in both groups receives a payoff of  $s$  ( $0 \leq s \leq r$ ) units.
4. All players are aware of the rules of the game and the value of the parameters  $n$ ,  $e$ , and  $r$ .
5. The game is played in 8 blocks, each of which contain five rounds.
6. Players are given a within-group discussion time of 4, 2, and 1 minute(s) before blocks 1, 2, and 3-10, respectively.

The payoff structure of the IPD game reflects the relative amounts of effort made by the two groups, as is often the case in potential real-life intergroup conflicts. Contributed endowments are not refunded; non-contributed endowments are added to the player's payoff in a given round. As this renders an individual contribution ( $e$ ) larger than the additional payoff by contributing ( $r/2n$ ), individual payoff decreases when contributing. With the parameters  $m_A = m_B = 3$ ,  $e = 2$ ,  $r = 6$ , the following payoff structure emerges for

individual players in a given round (table 1). The resulting game includes a Prisoner's Dilemma game both within and between groups. As can be seen, the dominant individual strategy for pay-off maximizing individuals is to not contribute in a given round.

**Table 1.** *Payoff for an individual in group A for the Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma game*

	<b>m<sub>A</sub> - m<sub>B</sub></b>						
	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-3</b>
Contribute	6	5	4	3	2	1	-
Not contribute	-	7	6	5	4	3	2

When all individuals are taken together as a group, the payoff structure is as follows (table 2). Groups that want to maximize their payoff regardless of what the other group does will tend to designate all members as contributors, as this leads to an outcome that is at best the maximum group payoff and at worst a draw. Such a competitive strategy is typically met by use of the same competitive strategy by the outgroup in a repeated IPD game (Goren & Bornstein, 2000), leading to the lowest collective payoff of 18 points (see the cell in the lower right corner of table 2). In contrast, the collectively optimal or Pareto-efficient outcome is that both groups designate zero contributors, as this allows all members to keep their endowment (collective pay-off is maximal at 30 points; see the cell in the upper left corner of table 2). Hence, the cooperative strategy entails non-contribution by a group. In other words, there are two Nash equilibria at the team level. On the intergroup level, the competitive strategy can be seen as escalating intergroup tension into intergroup conflict, whereas the cooperative strategy can be interpreted as the resolving intergroup tension by intergroup cooperation.

**Table 2.** *Group Payoff Matrixes for the IPD game*

<b>m<sub>B</sub></b>	<b>m<sub>A</sub></b>			
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>0</b>	15, 15	12, 16	9, 17	6, 18
<b>1</b>	16, 12	13, 13	10, 14	7, 15
<b>2</b>	17, 9	14, 10	11, 11	8, 12
<b>3</b>	18, 6	15, 7	12, 8	9, 9

The achievement of the collectively optimal outcome is dependent on cooperation from both groups. Similarly, the competitive strategy is dependent on within-group cooperation, which is undermined if a player follows the dominant individual strategy. In sum, contribution can be interpreted as within-group cooperation causing intergroup conflict, while non-contribution can be interpreted either as a signal indicating willingness towards intergroup cooperation or free-riding if the group pursues a competitive strategy.

### **Participants**

A total of 240 students from the University of Amsterdam and the VU University Amsterdam participated in the experiments. Participants were recruited through e-mails promising a variable monetary reward (with a minimum of 10 euros) for participating in a decision-making experiment.

### **Procedure**

Participants were randomly assigned to the treatment or control condition in clusters of six, within which participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups consisting of three members. They were subsequently directed to their cubicles, which were arranged so that participants could not see each other's monitors, and received an overview of the experiment and explanations on the rules of the repeated IPD game. No reference was made to cooperation, defection, competition or maximization of individual, group or collective payoffs at this point. Participants' understanding of the payoff structure was verified by including a number of comprehension questions. If a participant did not answer these questions correctly, the experimenter explained the payoff rules until the participant was thought to understand. A payoff table and note taking paper were available to participants for the duration of the experiment.

### **Experimental design**

#### *Experiment 1: perspective taking*

120 participants were randomly assigned to the treatment or control condition, resulting in 10 six-person clusters per condition. The experimental condition treatment consisted of a set of questions that the participants were required to answer in between the instructions of a game and the actual play. These questions prompted the participant to take the



perspectives of the collective (including the outgroup) and of the outgroup's members during the game. They included questions tailored to the dynamic of the IPD game, such as *"Both groups contribute with 1 person per round for a while. In one of the groups, someone then proposes to contribute with 3 people in the next round. If you consider this proposal from the perspective of all 6 players together, which advice would you then give?"* and *"In a given round, group A contributes with 3 people, while group B contributes with 1 person. How do you think group B will react in the next round?"*. In the control condition, participants answered a number of math questions.

Subsequently, the IPD game was played for 40 rounds, in 8 blocks of 5 rounds each. The start of the last block was announced on the PCs of every participant. After every round, participants were informed who of the in- and outgroup members had contributed, the number of points they received in this round, and the total number of points received. Before every block, group members could communicate with each other via an online chat channel. These chats were recorded.

After playing the repeated Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma game, participants filled in a questionnaire that measured their perceptions of the motivation of themselves, their group members and the other group's members. At the end of the experiment, the participants were debriefed and received their respective monetary compensations individually. Participants were represented by an identity number during the game, so that they could ascertain that they could inform themselves of the actions of the other participants after every round of play, while ensuring anonymity.

#### *Experiment 2: the significant other*

120 participants were randomly assigned to the treatment or control condition, resulting in 10 six-person clusters per condition. The treatment consisted of a pre-experiment in which the instructor offered instrumental help to the participants to gain the status of significant other. In this pre-experiment, participants were instructed to solve three logical puzzles that were presented in order of increasing difficulty, while the time to solve them was limited to 7 minutes. All participants were helped by the instructor, who provided a plenary hint and could be asked to offer private advice or tips on these puzzles once by every participant.

Subsequently, the instructor told the participants in the experimental condition that they were free to do as they desired, but that s/he always tried to find solutions that 'were

best for everyone' (i.e., the collective) in these type of games. In the control condition, the pre-experiment was conducted in identical fashion, but no subsequent comments were offered on the norm with which the instructor typically approached these games. Both the game and the post-game procedure were identical to the respective procedures in experiment 1.

### **Content analysis of within-group chats**

Communication in the within-group chats was coded to distinguish between cooperative and competitive inclinations of groups, following Goren and Bornstein's (2000) coding scheme:

- 1) Expressions of within-group distrust;
- 2) Explicit understanding that lowering contribution levels is optimal for both groups;
- 3) Explicit willingness to signal cooperative intentions to the outgroup by lowering ingroup contributions;
- 4) Explicit belief that the outgroup understood the collectively optimal outcome;
- 5) Interpretation of a sudden drop in outgroup contribution as a signal of cooperative intentions;
- 6) Expressions of competitive intentions toward the outgroup.

## Results

The overall mean proportion of contribution differed per condition and experiment. For the Perspective Taking experiment, the experimental condition displayed a lower overall mean ( $M = 0.77$ ,  $S.D. = 0.28$ ) than the control condition ( $M = 0.83$ ,  $S.D. = 0.19$ ), suggesting more intergroup cooperation took place in the experimental condition. In the Significant Other Norm experiment, these differences were even larger, with mean proportions of contribution of 0.59 ( $S.D. = 0.33$ ) and 0.70 ( $S.D. = 0.23$ ) for the experimental and control conditions, respectively. In both experiments, the variation differed significantly between conditions. Moreover, all standard deviation scores are relatively high, replicating earlier findings of the within-group communication variant of the IPD game (Goren & Bornstein, 2000).

The 2 (conditions) by 40 (rounds) RM ANOVA found no significant main effect or interaction for the Perspective Taking experiment. The RM ANOVA for the Significant Other experiment revealed a significant interaction between condition and round for the Significant Other experiment ( $F(39, 702) = 1.80$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , or a Huynh-Feldt corrected  $p$ -value of 0.056<sup>3</sup>), indicating that clusters in the experimental condition decrease their contributions more over time. As mentioned, the experimental conditions displayed significantly more variation than the control conditions. In other words, the clusters in the experimental conditions differ more from each other than the clusters in the control conditions. What explanation might there be for the higher variation in contribution rates in the experimental conditions? A more detailed look at the data suggests that the experimental treatments induce substantial differences in motivation for intergroup cooperation, and that the aggregated results are not prototypical for any of the clusters nor the different interaction patterns at play.

### Cluster-level behavioral dynamics

To what extent do clusters<sup>4</sup> reach actual intergroup cooperation, and does this change over time? Figure 1 displays the proportion of contribution per block in each of the experimental Perspective Taking clusters separately, with contribution rates shown for each group. When

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<sup>3</sup> We provide this measure as the RM ANOVA assumption of sphericity was not completely met.

<sup>4</sup> A cluster consists of two groups. These groups played with or against each other for the full duration of the game, or 40 rounds.

both groups show near zero contribution rates, this can be interpreted as intergroup cooperation, while high contribution rates indicate intergroup conflict. Figure 2 displays the same information for the control condition.

Different intergroup dynamics are suggested by the graphs. These patterns were classified into three types, in similar fashion as Goren and Bornstein (2000): cooperative, in which the two groups eventually reached the collectively optimal outcome of no contribution (sessions 2 and 8 in the experimental condition); intermediate, in which intermediate contribution levels characterized the game and no full or maximal contribution levels were reached (sessions 4 and 6 in the experimental condition; sessions 3 and 4 in the control condition); and competitive, in which the two groups reached the maximum contribution levels at least once for all rounds in a block (all other sessions).<sup>5</sup> In the control condition, the collectively optimal outcome of no contribution was not reached once for a given block by any cluster.

Figure 3 and 4 show the same figures for the Significant Other experiment. Again, the experimental condition contained more clusters with cooperative sessions (sessions 4, 8 and 9 in the experimental condition versus session 8 in the control condition). Intermediate sessions were more prevalent in the control condition (sessions 3, 5, 6 and 9) than in the experimental condition (sessions 2, 5, and 6), as were competitive sessions (sessions 1, 2, 4, 7 and 10 versus sessions 1, 3, 7 and 10, respectively). Fully cooperative interactions<sup>6</sup> were present for only one block in the control condition, while 10 such blocks emerged in the experimental condition clusters.

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<sup>5</sup> In sessions that contained blocks with both zero and maximum contribution, the blocks that occurred latest were used to score the session.

<sup>6</sup> Fully cooperative interactions are characterized by zero contribution from both groups.

**Figure 1. Proportion of Contribution by Group and Block in the 10 clusters of the experimental condition of the Perspective Taking experiment.**

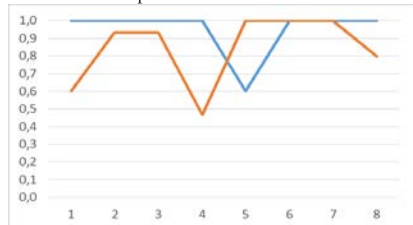


**Figure 2. Proportion of Contribution by Group and Block in the 10 clusters of the control condition of the Perspective Taking experiment.**

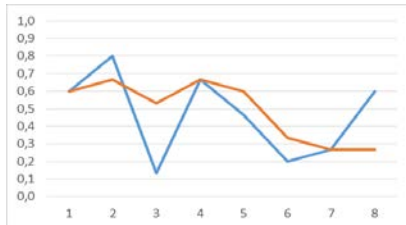


**Figure 3. Proportion of Contribution by Group and Block in the 10 clusters of the experimental condition of the Significant Other Norm experiment.**

session 1 - competitive



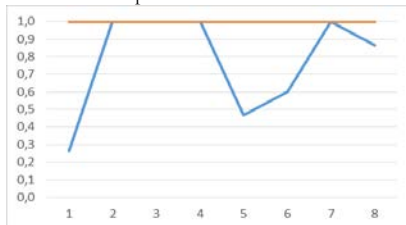
session 6 - intermediate



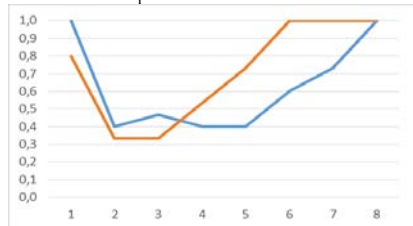
session 2 - intermediate



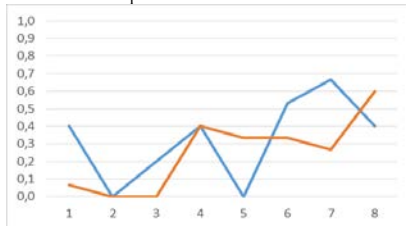
session 7 - competitive



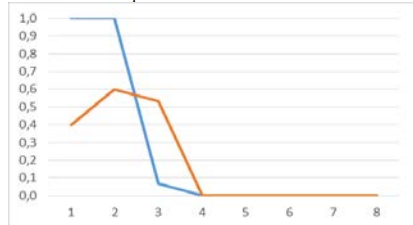
session 3 - competitive



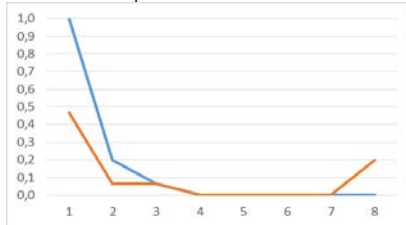
session 8 - cooperative



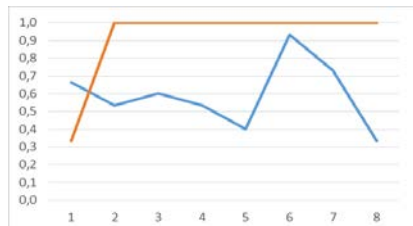
session 4 - cooperative



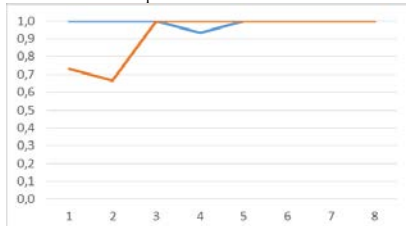
session 9 - cooperative



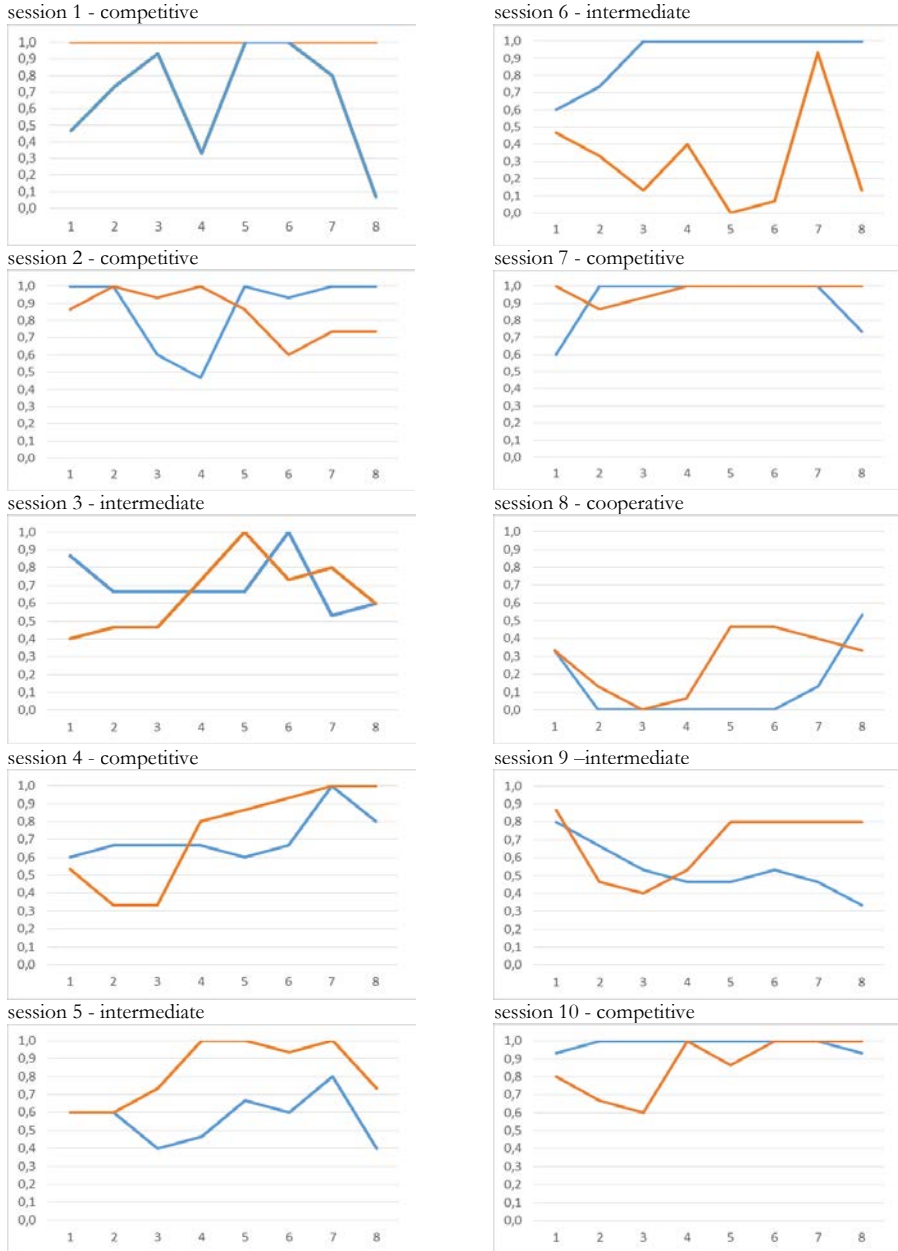
session 5 - intermediate



session 10 - competitive



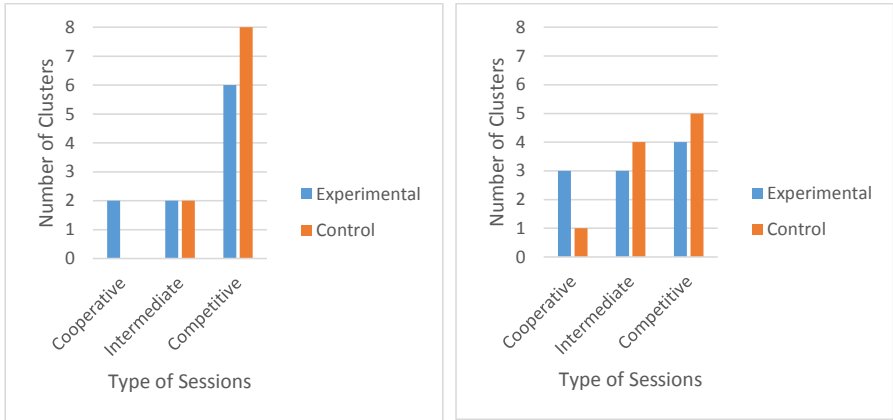
**Figure 4. Proportion of Contribution by Group and Block in the 10 clusters of the control condition of the Significant Other Norm experiment.**





Overall, more cooperative sessions and fewer competitive sessions can be observed in the experimental condition clusters of both experiments as compared the control condition clusters (see figure 5 and 6).

**Figure 5 and 6. The number of Clusters per Type of Session for the conditions in the Perspective Taking (left) and the Significant Other (right) experiment.**



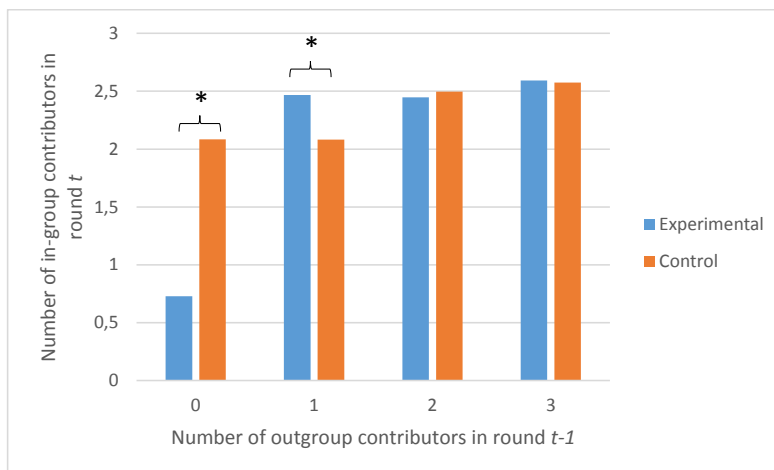
**Motivation for intergroup cooperation and between-group reciprocation**

A closer look at the processes underlying intergroup cooperation can shed light on why groups in the experimental conditions could establish prolonged intergroup cooperation more easily. To establish intergroup cooperation, both understanding of the collectively optimal outcome and the motivation to reach it can be of great help. Content analysis of the within-group chats reveals that the experimental treatment particularly induced a difference in motivation for intergroup cooperation in the Perspective Taking experiment. While groups in the experimental and control condition equally often explicitly indicate that low contribution levels are optimal for both groups (12 times), groups in the experimental condition more frequently show a willingness to lower their own group contribution rate so as to show their cooperative intentions (12 times versus 3 times in the control condition). This pattern appeared rather independently from the type of session groups were in: even in competitive sessions groups in the experimental condition more frequently expressed the willingness to show their cooperative intentions by lowering their

contribution rate (6 times on a total of 6 clusters) than groups in the control condition did (2 times on a total of 8 clusters).

A requirement for actual intergroup cooperation is reciprocation of cooperative signals by both groups. How do groups in the Perspective Taking experiment respond to cooperative signals of the outgroup? Figure 7 shows the number of ingroup contributors in round  $t$  per number of outgroup contributors in round  $t-1$  (i.e., the previous round) for the Perspective Taking experiment. Clearly, groups in the experimental condition reciprocate no-contribution by the outgroup more often in relative terms. In absolute terms they do so as well, with 72 versus 7 of such occurrences in the control condition. However, when the outgroup contributes with one member, experimental groups tend to designate more members as contributors in the following round.

**Figure 7. Number of ingroup contributors in round  $t$  per number of outgroup contributors in round  $t-1$  in the Perspective Taking experiment.**

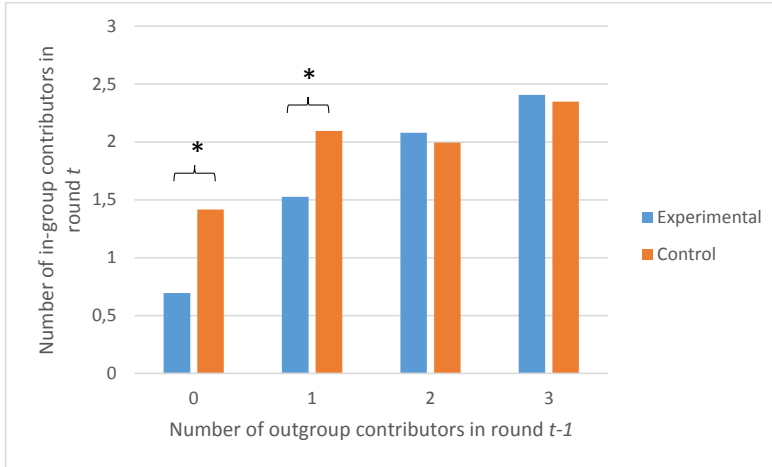


In the Significant Other experiment, content analysis of the within-group chats reveals that far fewer clusters in the control condition show explicit understanding of the collectively optimal outcomes (3 versus 16 occurrences in the experimental condition), fewer control condition groups are willing to show their cooperative intentions to the outgroup by lowering their contributions (1 versus 10 occurrences in the experimental condition), while none indicate that they believe the outgroup to understand the collectively

optimal outcome (versus 10 occurrences in the experimental condition), and none interpret a lowering of contributions by the outgroup as a cooperative signal (while 3 such interpretations were mentioned by experimental condition groups). Moreover, there were 13 occurrences of competitive intentions towards the outgroup in the control condition, while the experimental groups displayed such intentions 9 times. In competitive sessions, the experimental condition groups expressed understanding of the collectively optimal outcome (6 times) and their willingness to show cooperative intentions by lowering their contribution (5 times) more often than groups in the control condition (1 and 0 times, respectively). At the same time, within-group mistrust was voiced more frequently in competitive sessions of the control condition groups (10 times) than in the experimental condition groups (1 time). Analysis of the post-game questionnaire revealed that experimental condition groups rated themselves significantly more motivated for the collective interest ( $M=3.96$  out of 5) than groups in the control condition rated themselves in this regard ( $M=3.44$  out of 5), at  $p < 0.01$ .

These differences in understanding and motivation are reflected in the behavior exhibited in both conditions: experimental condition groups respond less competitively to outgroup contributors (figure 8), as groups in the experimental condition respond with significantly less contribution on average when the outgroup does not contribute or contributes with only 1 person. Again, they do so in both relative (e.g., the average number of contributors) and absolute (frequency of zero or single contributor rounds) terms.

**Figure 8. Number of ingroup contributors in round  $t$  per number of outgroup contributors in round  $t-1$  in the Significant Other Norm experiment.**



The differences in motivation to send maximally unambiguous cooperative signals to the outgroup is indicated by within-group dynamics as well. In both experiments, participants in the experimental condition display significantly more no-contribution responses after other group member had not contributed either in the previous round as compared to the participants in the control condition. While in the Perspective Taking experiment the number of within-group distrust indications as voiced in the chats were equal between conditions, they were higher in the control condition (22) than in the experimental condition (13) in the Significant Other experiment. Failure to trust other group members led to decreasing contributing rates in a subset of the control condition groups, even when all members identified the maximal group contribution option as the best strategy. This dynamic specifically occurred when one group member continued to abstain from contributing after having agreed on the latter strategy (i.e., displayed free-rider behavior). For both experiments, all clusters in which intra-group distrust was voiced 3 times or more failed to establish a cooperative session (7 groups in total).

### **Intergroup timing**

Notably, while endurance of cooperative intentions towards the outgroup was typically conditional on the outgroup's reciprocation, groups who continued to send cooperative

signals to the outgroup for several blocks (even if initially unreciprocated) were more successful in establishing intergroup cooperation. The establishment of intergroup cooperation did not always lead to warm feelings between the two groups, however. For instance, group A in session 9 of the Significant Other experimental condition signaled its cooperative intentions early. As the outgroup responded to these signals somewhat slowly, group A decided to play the competitive strategy in the final rounds of the game, out of spite. The great majority of groups in cooperative sessions did not display such competitive behavior after establishing a cooperative equilibrium, however, and voiced within-group distrust less frequently than groups in intermediate and competitive sessions. Moreover, most cooperative sessions were only established after both groups understood the collectively optimal outcome in early blocks, showing the importance of intergroup timing. Only one cluster managed to establish a cooperative equilibrium towards the end of the game, after a long competitive dynamic.

## Discussion

In most societies and schools, individuals are bound to experience intergroup tensions at some point in their lives. Whether such tensions come about between groups of different ethnicity, social class, gender or political inclination, peaceful resolution is for many intergroup tensions in the interest of all parties. The ability and willingness to resolve intergroup tension in a nonviolent manner when possible is therefore an important citizenship competence for both students and adults in many increasingly plural and interdependent societies. Yet, under conditions typical of real-life intergroup tensions, individuals find it challenging to reach collectively optimal outcomes and often resort to competitive behavior towards outgroups.

The aim of this chapter was to identify mechanisms that may be used in citizenship education to enable students to better deal with intergroup tensions. We examined whether cooperative resolution of intergroup tension could be stimulated using treatments based on goal-framing theory as a model of individual motivation and behavior (Lindenberg, 2013). In particular, the experiment scrutinized whether the combination of normative goal-frame activation and stretching could increase motivation for intergroup cooperation, using perspective taking and significant other mechanisms.

Can intergroup tension resolution be influenced by these mechanisms? Our findings suggest an affirmative answer, in line with our hypotheses. In the Perspective Taking experiment, the larger variation in aggregated contribution rates suggested that the processes in and interactions between groups in the experimental condition may have been of a different nature than those in the control condition. Subsequent analyses of the interactions per cluster revealed that the experimental treatment led to more cooperative sessions. Analyses of between-group dynamics show that the perspective taking treatment induced more cooperative responses from individuals when the outgroup did not contribute, but relatively more competitive responses when the outgroup contributed with one member. This suggests that better understanding of the collectively optimal outcome, induced by perspective taking, may also induce spite when an outgroup member is perceived as uncooperative. Experimental groups were much more frequently willing to show their cooperative intentions towards the outgroup by lowering their contributions, and did so to indicate that they were more motivated to establish intergroup cooperation. These results corroborate earlier findings indicating that while taking the perspective of an

outgroup is difficult (Gutsell & Inzlicht, 2010), individuals' engagement in such processes can be enhanced (Schumann, Zaki, & Dweck, 2014).

In the Significant Other experiment, intergroup cooperation increased more over time in the experimental condition as compared to the control condition. Variation of contribution rates in the experimental condition clusters was higher than variation in the control condition clusters as well. Individuals in the experimental condition responded with lower average levels of contribution to non-contribution by group members, suggesting that they were more eager to establish a situation in which their entire group signaled cooperative intentions toward the outgroup. In contrast to the Perspective Taking experiment, the experimental condition also induced better understanding of the collectively optimal outcome, perhaps as the treatment preceded rather than followed the explanations of the IPD game. In addition, the treatment motivated increased signaling of cooperative intentions towards the outgroup. As a result, cooperative sessions were much more prevalent in the experimental condition. In establishing the effect of significant others' norms, we corroborate earlier findings in this area (Veenstra et al., 2014).

Overall, the findings show that the motivation for and actual intergroup cooperation is more prevalent among groups whose normative goal-frames were activated and stretched by the experimental treatments, demonstrating the suitability of goal-framing theory for stimulating citizenship behavior. Interestingly, the inclination to cooperate was found to be larger in experimental clusters in both experiments, even when these clusters primarily experienced intergroup competition. This indicates a fairly robust effect on the motivation for intergroup cooperation, as it appeared independent of game dynamic. Moreover, as all clusters who frequently displayed within-group distrust experienced either intermediate or competitive intergroup dynamic, further research may investigate to which extent ingroup cohesion is required for intergroup cooperation.

Taken together, the findings suggest that there are multiple requirements for establishing intergroup cooperation. Firstly, groups need to understand that a collectively beneficial outcome exists. Secondly, they need to be willing to show cooperative intentions, while organizing sufficient within-group cooperation to clearly indicate these intentions. Thirdly, reciprocation by the outgroup is required to establish sustained intergroup cooperation. Finally, if the outgroup initially fails to understand what the collectively beneficial outcome is, or is slow to interpret and respond to cooperative signals,

perseverance of the ingroup's sending of cooperative signals is required to potentially establish intergroup cooperation.

The relevance of equipping students with the ability to overcome intergroup tensions for student learning and well-being in schools is clearly indicated by the findings of previous educational ethnic diversity studies. As the current study took place in an experimental setting, the relevance of the presented findings for educational practice should be interpreted with care. The results nevertheless indicate that teachers may consider stimulating perspective taking of their students and voicing citizenship norms, particularly as the treatments used have been brief and of low intensity, suggesting that effects of real-life interventions such as those in schools can be larger in magnitude. With regard to perspective taking, the current results underline that perspective taking is an important process for citizenship development, as indicated by previous studies, but also suggest that perspective taking processes can be induced in a structural manner. With respect to communication norms as significant others, some teachers would need to overcome the desire to take a strictly neutral stance on citizenship, however (Oulton et al., 2004). Moreover, two further nuances can be made with regard to expression of norms by significant others such as teachers. Firstly, while expression support of a certain norm can certainly have an effect, treatment of students in accordance with these norms appears equally important (Abdelzadeh, Zetterberg, & Ekman, 2015). Secondly, direct approaches to citizenship education in which norms are simply imposed on students in the forms of rules, appear ineffective (SCDRD, 2010; Haidt, 2013). In addition, we speculate that the effectiveness of this approach is higher when not one, but all teachers engage in voicing citizenship norms, as students may then be more likely to process the citizenship norm to be a general, rather than a teacher-specific norm. Shared school-wide norms are generally considered to improve schools' performance as well (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Elmore, 2005).

In addition to direct benefits students might reap from being able to resolve intergroup conflict in the context of school, successful use of the identified mechanisms may also allow students to benefit from the use of their intergroup tension resolution abilities outside the school context and in later life. As the current design did not measure potential impact on individuals' future ability to resolve intergroup tension, further research is required to establish whether this is the case. Increased awareness, motivation and ability



to successfully resolve intergroup tensions may prevent societal groups from keeping each other in mutually detrimental competitive dynamics. As the presence of a multitude of social groups has become a defining feature of many of today's societies, these have become indispensable abilities for maintenance and improvement of social cohesion and the pursuit of the public interest.

All in all, we have demonstrated the value and feasibility of employing a game-based experimental design to model and study citizenship behavior, using interventions based on goal-framing theory as an explicit model of behavior. In particular, a game-based design enabled inspection of motivational and behavioral dynamics over time, while the use of goal-framing allowed for identification of influential psychological mechanisms. As such, we hope to have advanced the citizenship education literature from both a theoretical and methodological point of view.





## 6. Influencing Youth Citizenship: Summary and General Discussion

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Citizenship education can fulfill a crucial role in contemporary society, by equipping students with an understanding of collective issues such as democracy, social cohesion and sustainability, while providing them with the competences and motivation necessary to tackle and critically reflect on these matters in local, national and international contexts. A coherent and specific perspective on what it means to be a good citizen and an understanding of which factors may effectively contribute to youth citizenship development are pivotal in realizing the potential of citizenship education.

This dissertation draws on insights and methods from political theory, sociology, economics, psychology and the educational sciences to provide additional insight into these requirements, aiming to investigate how perspectives on citizenship education may be developed and which generic factors in education may contribute to citizenship development. After proposing a general framework that allows the formulation of coherent and systematic perspectives on citizenship education, it scrutinized whether and how various generic educational factors may effectively contribute to citizenship education. These generic factors are education features that are an inextricable part of education and can potentially serve multiple educational goals. They are often, rather than a characteristic of a dedicated citizenship education, an inherent part of education. Two categories of generic factors can be distinguished. The first category of intrapersonal factors included language ability and perspective taking, which shape how individuals relate to the world. The second category involved factors that influence citizenship development through interpersonal interaction, in particular the peer language environment and norms communicated by significant others.

### **Summary of findings**

#### **Study 1: Consensus versus contested citizenship education goals in Western Europe**

The first study of this dissertation investigated the normative aspects of citizenship education and attempted to increase theoretical clarity by putting forward a systematic an

explicit way of formulating a vision on citizenship. Subsequently, an exploratory data analysis was conducted to examine the degree to which five Western European educational systems are associated with outcomes affiliated with these different types of citizenship goals.

The literature revealed that many schools have difficulty with the normativity inherent in citizenship education. Despite the compulsory character of citizenship education in an increasing number of countries, the majority of teachers report not having received any formal training to teach citizenship education (Barr et al., 2015; Chin & Barber, 2010; Euridyce, 2012; Thornberg, 2008; Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008; Willemse, Ten Dam, Geijssel, Van Wessum, Volman, 2015). Not surprisingly, teachers across Europe report a lack of confidence or feel insufficiently equipped to teach about citizenship education and controversial issues, as some teachers resort to a social but apolitical view of citizenship that excludes critical thinking and discussion of controversial issues (Akar, 2012; Cassidy, Brunner, & Webster, 2014; Chin & Barber, 2010; Davies, 2006; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004; Patterson, Doppen, & Misco, 2012; Radstake & Leeman, 2010). In the Netherlands, most schools have formulated rather general perspectives on citizenship education. These schools not only fail to specify more concrete citizenship goals, but as a result do not succeed in the systematic implementation of citizenship education either (Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2013).

As academics have argued that the conception of what good citizenship entails is essentially disputed (Osborne, 2000; Van Gunsteren, 1988), we have set out to make the contested aspects of citizenship explicit and systematic. In doing so, we have distinguished between so-called consensus citizenship goals, that are generally shared in democratic societies, and contested citizenship goals, which are more frequently discussed within and across societies. Drawing on Miller's (2008) classification of political theories, we identify two central assumptions that explicitly or implicitly underlie conceptions of good citizenship: the social nature of man and the ordering of social relations. Positions taken with regard to these two assumptions are typically normative in nature, for instance when one's position is that social relations should be ordered in the form of a tightly-knit, egalitarian community. We subsequently discussed four political theories in the light of their assumption with regard to the social nature of man and ordering of social relations.

In addition, the exploratory data-analysis revealed that in the five Western European countries investigated, educational level is associated with outcomes that are affiliated with consensus education goals. However, education level does not appear to be systematically associated with outcomes derived from more contested citizenship goals, perhaps as only few schools have developed a specific, potentially contested perspective on good citizenship. Both findings were in line with our hypotheses.

### **Study 2: Youth citizenship at the end of primary school: the role of language ability**

Schools are expected to stimulate a number of learning outcomes. Of these outcomes, mathematics ability and language ability have received ample attention in recent years, spurred by the outcomes of PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS studies. At the same time, worries about erosion of social cohesion and a lack of democratic engagement have led to renewed interest in citizenship education (Eurydice, 2012; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Traditional achievement outcomes and citizenship development are often presented as if they are in competition with each other. However, we argued on several grounds that a positive relationship between particularly language ability and youth citizenship development is plausible.

First of all, language plays a central role in processes of meaning making, or how individuals relate to the world. It does so not only by allowing individuals to describe outside objects, developments and their relations, but also by allowing one to reflect upon one's own experiences and developing a shared representation of reality with others (Holtgrave & Kashima, 2008; Kashima, Klein, & Clark, 2007; Lepore & Smith, 2008; Taylor, 1985). Moreover, recent evidence on reading shows that experiencing high involvement in reading fiction, or reading literary fiction in particular increases one's empathic engagement (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Kidd & Castano, 2013). Empathy, in turn, is positively associated with prosocial and cooperative behavior (Stocks, Lishner, & Decker, 2009). These language-related abilities, such as being able to self-reflect, discuss and develop a shared perspective on reality with others, and being able to take the perspective of others are all important requirements for citizenship behavior. Political socialization authors have recognized these insights, by ascribing an important role to language ability, as it enables one to convince, engage and organize others for political action (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995).

Our findings confirm the hypothesized positive relationship between language ability and youth citizenship outcomes. Language is particularly associated with positive citizenship attitudes and knowledge. Interestingly, cognitive ability as such was not found to be significantly correlated to most of the four citizenship outcomes (more specifically, intelligence was correlated to none of the outcomes, while mathematics ability was only significantly correlated to citizenship knowledge, but much weaker than language ability). Taken together, these results point to a special role for language ability in youth citizenship development processes.

### **Study 3: Inequalities in youth citizenship knowledge: does the peer language environment matter?**

Study 3 investigated the influence of the peer language environment on (inequalities in) youth citizenship knowledge of grade 6 primary education students. Amidst worries of rising inequalities in political engagement between lower and higher educated members of younger generations, policymakers are turning towards schools in an effort to provide more equality of democratic opportunity. Schools have been shown to be able to contribute to youth citizenship development, for instance through fostering an open classroom climate (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, Ten Dam, 2013; Isac, Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010; Van Aken, Hart, 2014). Given the apparent influence of one's classroom's peers' social characteristics, we have examined how the composition of one's classroom peers' language abilities may influence youth citizenship knowledge development, as citizenship knowledge is one of the most important predictors for citizenship behavior (Galston, 2007).

To our knowledge, this is the first study to employ a rigorous peer effects design on a youth citizenship outcome. Moreover, in studying the interaction between levels of ability and both the variation of and average level of peer language ability, it overcomes the limitations posed by the often used linear-in-means model of peer effects. In particular, the analysis of study 3 sheds light on the impact of the distribution of peer language ability, while also differentiating in the effect students of different ability may experience.

The findings demonstrate that low language ability students perform worse when surrounded with peers that display low language abilities themselves. They benefit from classrooms with variation in language level and a high average language ability level. The

findings also show that the average language level appears to have a slightly negative impact on overall youth citizenship knowledge, in line with the big-fish-little-pond-effect hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that after controlling for individual ability, student develop a lower academic self-concept and subsequently perform less in higher ability classrooms.

#### **Study 4: Using Significant Others and Perspective Taking to Resolve Intergroup Tensions**

In many contemporary societies, individuals are likely to experience intergroup tensions. Yet they typically have difficulty to resolve such tensions in a way that serves the collective interest (Goren & Bornstein, 2000). The fourth study of this dissertation aimed to identify effective mechanisms for resolving intergroup tensions. Using goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2013) as a model of behavior, two mechanisms were identified to be suitable for educational practice: stretching the application of the citizenship norm of cooperation to the outgroup by activating the normative goal frame through (1) stimulation of perspective taking and (2) norms communicated by significant others. The repeated Intergroup Prisoner's Dilemma (IPD) game was used to model intergroup tension.

The results of the repeated IPD game show that the mechanisms increase both the willingness to cooperate with other groups and actual intergroup cooperation. Instances of intergroup cooperation were also associated with lower within-group distrust. Interestingly, the significant other treatment also induced higher understanding of the collectively optimal outcomes, suggesting that the perspective that one takes influences the processing and interpretation of subsequent information (e.g., the possibilities the rules of the game offer), in line with goal-framing theory. Typically, intergroup cooperation was established relatively early in the game, although a subset of teams realized the collectively optimal option in later phases of the game. This suggests that intergroup cooperation is most easily established early in situations of intergroup tension, as phases with competitive behavior appear to decrease trust in reciprocation by the outgroup. Finally, in virtually all sessions both within-group and intergroup cooperation was conditional; if team members of the outgroup failed to reciprocate cooperative signals, intergroup cooperation diminished, while free-riding by group members could also lead to breakdown of within-group cooperation.



Overall, the findings demonstrate the usefulness of goal-framing theory (Lindenberg, 2013) for identifying citizenship education interventions, while illustrating the value of a game-based experimental design to model and examine citizenship behavior in social contexts.

## **Discussion**

The findings presented in this dissertation shed light on multiple requirements for effective citizenship education. After elaborating on the value of the proposed framework for formulating coherent and systematic perspectives on citizenship education, the influence of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors on citizenship development will be discussed. Finally, the implications of the substantial differences in citizenship competence between students will be considered.

### *A framework for formulating coherent perspectives on citizenship education*

By putting forward a theoretical framework for dealing with the normativity inherent in citizenship education, we have enabled the formulation of more coherent and richer perspectives on citizenship education. Citizenship education scholars may draw on the framework for scrutinizing the theoretical consistency of a given perspective on citizenship education.

Although the distinction between consensus and contested citizenship goals on the one hand, and the central assumptions underlying contested citizenship perspectives on the other hand have proven useful, the specific political theoretical perspectives on citizenship presented are not collectively exhaustive. Within the proposed framework, refinements to the two central assumptions held by the political-theoretical perspectives can be considered. For instance, with regard to the social nature of man, one may also consider informing one's approach to citizenship education with empirical research that illustrates which impact social relations may have on the well-being of individuals (e.g., Grapin, Sulkowski, & Lazarus, 2015; Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993). Moreover, such research may demonstrate that the social needs and abilities of individuals may differ between individuals and within individuals over time. With regard to the ordering of social relations, one may not only aspire to prepare students for functioning in an ideal ordering of social relations, whether conceived as a specific type of community or not, but also for functioning in

current society, which may differ from one's ideal conception of the ordering of social relations. This underlines the importance of including consensus citizenship goals in citizenship education. In addition, schools should balance their own normative position on citizenship with facilitation of students' right to discover and develop their own position towards citizenship.

The literature suggests that education professionals find the normative aspects of citizenship education difficult to deal with, while most commonly held conceptions of citizenship in educational systems remain rather general. This is problematic, as it can inhibit further development of concretely operationalized citizenship education programs. The exploratory data analyses suggest that outcomes in line with specific, more contested citizenship goals are not associated with educational level. However, as these findings are based on national samples, they do not exclude the possibility that individual schools are generating such citizenship outcomes. Future research may explore how individual schools with richer conceptions of citizenship are dealing with the normative aspects of citizenship education, while also investigating which formal and informal training needs current education professionals have in this regard.

#### *Intrapersonal generic factors contributing to citizenship development*

How individuals relate to the world determines to a large extent how they will act in it. This dissertation has investigated two intrapersonal factors that are essential in shaping how individuals relate to the world. The first factor is language ability, which is one of the most fundamental tools human beings have for dealing with social interactions, as it enables one to make meaning, reflect, convince, communicate about perspectives and potentially establish a shared representation of reality with others. By explaining the various aspects of language that enable discussion, cooperation and conflict resolution, the conceptual relationship between language and citizenship competence has been further elucidated. The inclusion of specific and multiple measures of both language ability and other cognitive abilities allowed a precise examination of the unique contribution of language ability to youth citizenship development, whereas previous studies may have occluded effects of specific cognitive abilities due to imperfect operationalization of these abilities.

In addition, the effect of taking the perspective of the collective on the resolution of intergroup tension was demonstrated. This application of the perspective taking

mechanism enhanced the willingness to send potentially costly cooperative signals to the outgroup, increasing the likelihood of intergroup cooperation in a situation in which intergroup tension is salient. The findings suggest that perspective taking can induce a motivational process that is geared at establishing intergroup cooperation when possible.

Future research may investigate the endurance of perspective taking effects over time. It may also further scrutinize which aspects of language ability influence citizenship development in particular, and how different types of language instruction in schools may foster citizenship development.

#### *Interpersonal generic factors contributing to citizenship development*

This dissertation showed that interpersonal factors influence citizenship development as well. In particular, it examined which peer language environments may exacerbate or reduce inequalities in citizenship knowledge, while also analyzing the role norms of significant others may have in shaping citizenship behavior. The findings suggest that lower language ability students develop more citizenship knowledge in classrooms characterized by variation in peer language ability and relatively higher average peer language ability. These results imply that when schools or policymakers consider changing the classroom composition, effects on citizenship outcomes need to be taken into account as well, in addition to effects on academic achievement outcomes. For situations in which the classroom composition remains intact, the results point to the importance of classroom strategies for dealing with dynamics arising from particular classroom compositions. Future studies may include richer analysis of teacher and school factors to identify the precise mechanisms responsible for these effects. Is the language used in classrooms with more variation in language ability indeed more inclusive to lower language ability students, for instance when discussing issues relating to citizenship? In addition, future research may use other peer effects designs to replicate these findings, by exploiting random assignment of students to schools and classes, policy-induced natural experiments or other exogenous events.

Norms communicated by significant others are shown to significantly influence intergroup cooperation as well. Corroborating earlier findings in anti-bullying research (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014), these findings imply that significant others, such as teachers, may stimulate both normative motivation and behavior

of students if they express their own norms (provided these are in alignment with the desired outcome). If proven effective in educational settings, some teachers would need to overcome the desire to take a strictly neutral stance on citizenship matters, however (Oulton et al., 2004). The majority of teachers may nonetheless welcome this method, as it potentially enables schools to deal with in-school intergroup tensions in the short run, while enabling students to contribute to the social cohesion of tomorrow's diverse society in the long run. Of course, the same holds for the perspective taking mechanism explored in chapter 5.

#### *Addressing inequalities in citizenship competences*

Throughout this dissertation, significant differences in citizenship competence between different groups of students have been found. Students with lower educated parents and lower language ability score lower on virtually all citizenship outcomes, while ethnicity and gender also remain influential factors in large subsets of citizenship outcomes. Moreover, international comparisons show that Dutch students score low on a range of citizenship outcomes, such as citizenship knowledge, respect for equal rights of immigrants and women and interest in political and societal issues (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). This dissertation offers a number of insights that can be used to address these challenges. These will be discussed in the next sections.

### **Implications for policy**

The findings of this dissertation illustrate that for decision-making on matters such as classroom composition or prioritization of subjects the potential effects on both cognitive and citizenship outcomes should be considered. A fortiori, in times of widely reported curriculum overload (NCCA, 2010), generic factors in particular have the potential to alleviate pressure on the educational system by contributing to fulfillment of multiple educational goals at once. For example, one may argue that if one would need to choose between prioritization of mathematics or language ability in primary education, an advantage of language education lies in its positive relationship with youth citizenship development. Moreover, the relationship between student-level characteristics such as language ability and citizenship competence may also contribute towards beneficial reciprocal relationships at the school- or classroom-level, for instance through an improved

school climate, which is known to improve academic attainment and youth citizenship development (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). In other words, policies aimed at improving effectiveness of generic factors may reduce curriculum overload while potentially instigating positive emergent effects at the school- and classroom-level.

In addition, policymakers often approach the subject of citizenship education with great care, as they wish to respect freedom of education and avoid allegations of state-mandated indoctrination. As such, the requirements placed on schools in the Netherlands with regard to citizenship education are open to interpretation. While schools are expected to promote active citizenship and social integration, the degree to which schools are held accountable by the government is one in which they merely need to demonstrate having taken an effort towards these general goals. The Inspectorate of Education has shown that a substantial number of schools lack a concrete vision on citizenship education, and fail to systematically evaluate and improve their citizenship education (Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2013). In schools that hold rather general, implicit views on citizenship education teachers may also feel less support and confidence to discuss controversial citizenship issues, let alone express citizenship norms themselves. As the combination of general, abstract government-mandated citizenship goals and the apparent inability of a large number of schools to formulate their own perspective on citizenship prevents quality control of citizenship education, the Education Council has recommended the government to delineate various more explicit and detailed citizenship education objectives, while respecting the freedom of education (Education Council, 2012).

The framework provided in study 1 may be used to inform such efforts, as it specifies both democratic citizenship goals that enjoy a fair amount of consensus and more contested, specific citizenship education goals that allow schools to formulate a citizenship perspective in alignment with their own value orientation. By doing so, stagnation of citizenship education development due to the contested nature of specific conceptions of good citizenship may be mitigated, as teachers would then be able to focus their citizenship education efforts more. Such a change in policy would ideally be accompanied with additional school leader and teacher training on citizenship education.

Finally, the demonstrated influence of the peer language environment of students prompts consideration of potential policies that may exploit these dynamics to address

inequalities in citizenship competence, as they hamper equality of democratic opportunity and may threaten the quality of and support for democracy (Bartels, 2009; Gallego, 2007). While the findings need additional replication to suggest policy-induced changes to classroom composition, they do highlight the possibility that the language used in classroom discussions in primary schools may not always be accessible to all students. Further research is required to establish whether this is the case, however.

### **Implications for practice**

Which insights in this dissertation can be of value to educational practice? Firstly, the presented insights on generic factors can be used to inform decision-making and reduce curriculum overload in schools, as they may contribute towards the achievement of multiple educational goals at once. For instance, in addition to the examples mentioned in the previous section, one may argue that stimulating perspective taking of students may not only enhance intergroup conflict resolution, but can also stimulate the comprehension of topics that are multidimensional or complex in nature, as combining different perspectives on the matter can prompt fuller understanding of the topic at hand. Similarly, if teachers communicate establish a set of schoolwide citizenship norms, this may benefit students citizenship development, but may also improve the functioning of the organization as a whole (Elmore, 2005; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994). Secondly, as elaborated upon, the use of the proposed framework for formulating a coherent and rich conceptualization of citizenship education may enable schools to implement better quality control, while schools that find internal agreement on specific citizenship education objectives may find it easier to focus their efforts. At the same time, the framework is flexible enough to allow for alignment with schools' own, more specific philosophical and value orientations.

In addition, the finding that language ability is strongly correlated with citizenship development offers schools evidence that language and citizenship development may go hand in hand. The findings caution against neglecting language development when a school prioritizes students' citizenship development. We speculate that increased integration of language and citizenship education at the end of primary school may be effective, as it may provide students with a more personally meaningful learning experience. In order to gain further insight in factors that contribute to citizenship knowledge acquisition of lower

language ability students, schools are well advised to pay attention to the influence of classroom language composition on student interaction processes. Additional awareness of the accessibility and inclusiveness of classroom discussions may improve the citizenship knowledge development of lower language ability students in classes with low variation in language ability. Such practices may be easier to foster in primary education, as teachers in secondary education typically teach multiple classes, which all have unique dynamics.

Primary and secondary schools may also take advantage of the findings presented in study 4. For instance, they may prompt students to look at citizenship issues from the collective point of view more often to stimulate positive intergroup attitudes. Teachers can also express support for citizenship norms if they want to stimulate citizenship development. Importantly, while expression of support of a certain norm can certainly have an effect, treatment of students in accordance with these norms appears equally important (Abdelzadeh, Zetterberg, & Ekman, 2014). The way in which such norms are stimulated has an impact as well, as direct approaches to citizenship education in which norms are simply imposed on students in the forms of rules, appear ineffective (SCDRD, 2010). Finally, we speculate that the effectiveness of citizenship education is higher when not one, but all teachers engage in voicing citizenship norms, as students may then be more likely to process them as general, rather than teacher-specific citizenship norms.

As the generic factors examined in this dissertation have been shown to contribute to citizenship development of students, a final implication of these findings is that attention to citizenship development can be given by teachers regardless of their subject. In fact, the presented findings suggest that there are different processes through which citizenship development may be stimulated, whether this concerns language development, discussion of controversial issues from different perspectives, or speaking out about citizenship norms. This suggests that all teachers can contribute in a manner that is aligned with their own professional convictions and abilities, and that citizenship education certainly does not need to be confined to one or two subjects, but can rather be integrated across the curriculum.







## Appendix A: IV analyses chapter 2

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In addition to the OLS and logistic regression analyses performed in chapter 2, we conducted instrument variable OLS regression and instrument variable probit analyses on all the dependent variables, with Occupational Status Parents and Educational Level Parents predicting Educational Level of the respondent. The results can be seen in table 5-8, on the pages hereafter. While the associations of educational level with a subset of citizenship outcomes are less frequently significant in certain countries, they are nonetheless present. As in the other analyses, democratic citizenship outcomes are more frequently associated with educational level than citizenship outcomes derived from political theory. As such, a highly similar overall profile emerges from the instrument variable analyses.

**Table 5.** *Instrument variable OLS regression analysis of effects of Educational Level on general democratic citizenship outcomes*

Dependent variables	Interest in Politics	Good to have democracy	to a best political system	Democracy: Intolerance towards Neighbors	Engage in Political Action
<hr/>					
Country					
Netherlands	.219 (.124)	.365*** (.104)	.174 (.101)	-.185 (.225)	.495 (.367)
Belgium	.351*** (.099)	.339*** (.072)	.373*** (.084)	-.281** (.095)	.627* (.265)
Germany	.403*** (.117)	.106 (.111)	.184 (.105)	-.135 (.184)	1.284*** (.417)
Sweden	-.026 (.297)	-.083 (.300)	.108 (.314)	-.812 .465	-.105 (.885)
Finland	.409 (.415)	1.135** (.402)	.897** (.327)	-.608 (.657)	-2.458* (1.190)

Standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. Instrument variables are Occupational Status Parents and Educational Level Parents. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, and Political Discussion with Parents.

**Table 6.** *Instrument variable OLS regression analysis of effects of Educational Level on specific citizenship outcomes derived from political theories.*

Country	Attitude towards Assimilation of Immigrants
Netherlands	-.337 (.326)
Belgium	-.784** (.274)
Germany	.087 (.425)
Sweden	-.936 (1.025)
Finland	-1.521 (1.176)

Standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. Instrument variables are Occupational Status Parents and Educational Level Parents. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, and Political Discussion with Parents.

**Table 7. Instrument variable probit analysis of effects of Educational Level on general democratic citizenship outcomes**

Country	Tolerance		Jobs: give men priority		Jobs: give nationality priority		Volunteering		Intention to Vote	
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Netherlands	.804*	.322	-.066	.454	-.707**	.254	.299	.226	.702	.380
Belgium	.290	.194	-.547*	.230	-.618***	.178	.339*	.162	.176	.366
Germany	.711*	.237	-1.724***	.370	-0.362	.257	.824***	.235	.551	.288
Sweden	-.100	.858	-3.970	2.990	-.532	.644	-.190	.585	1.195	1.047
Finland	-.050	.795	-2.028	1.959	-1.312	.751	-0.908	.696	-.367	.933

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. Instrument variables are Occupational Status Parents and Educational Level Parents. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, and Political Discussion with Parents.

**Table 8.** *Instrument variable probit analysis of effects of Educational Level on specific social outcomes derived from political theories.*

Country	Independence		Obedience		Equality/Freedom		Job: Equal Treatment	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
Netherlands	-.226	.231	-.438	.263	.200	.244	-.652*	.269
Belgium	-.137	.166	-.648***	.172	.127	.159	-.065	.161
Germany	-.127	.229	-.823*	.365	-.195	.230	-.148	.214
Sweden	.378	.606	-1.675	.855	.815	.668	-.572	.566
Finland	.322	.619	-.387	.694	1.415	.890	1.310	.775

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Source: EVS 2008. For the dependent variable Equality/Freedom, equality = 0 and freedom = 1. Instrument variables are Occupational Status Parents and Educational Level Parents. Control variables included are: Religiosity, Ethnicity, and Political Discussion with Parents.



## Appendix B: Descriptives chapter 3

**Table 6. Summary statistics**

Variable	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
<b>Dependent variables</b>				
Citizenship attitudes	0	1.00	-4.55	2.40
Citizenship skills	0	1.00	-4.97	2.40
Citizenship reflection	0	1.00	-2.22	3.00
Citizenship knowledge	0	1.00	-4.50	1.44
<b>Independent variables</b>				
Language ability grade 3	0	1.00	-1.85	5.58
Growth in language ability	0	1.00	-3.80	5.05
<b>Control variables</b>				
Gender	1.51	0.50	1.00	2.00
Educational Level of Parents	2.05	0.76	1.00	3.00
Ethnic background	1.22	0.42	1.00	2.00
Mathematics ability grade 3	0	1.00	-5.66	3.58
Growth in mathematics ability	0	1.00	-4.81	4.53
Non-academic cognitive ability	0	1.00	-4.59	1.97
Class average reading ability	0	1.00	-3.22	5.65
Class <i>SD</i> reading ability	0	1.00	-3.69	4.69

*Note.* All independent and dependent variables were z-standardized with the exception of Gender, Educational level of parents and Ethnic background. These control variables were coded as follows: *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), *parental ethnicity* (0 = both parents were born in the Netherlands, 1 = one or both parents were born outside the Netherlands) and *Educational level of parents* (1 = pre-vocational education, 2 = general/vocational secondary education or senior vocational education and 3 = higher education. *SD* = standard deviation.





## Appendix C: Descriptives chapter 4

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**Table 3. Descriptives categorical variables**

	% students
<i>Sex</i>	
Boy	49.8
Girl	50.2
<i>Parental ethnicity</i>	
Non-migrant (Dutch)	76.3
Turkey	6.5
Morocco	5.5
Suriname	2.6
Other	9.1
<i>Household religion</i>	
None	32.7
Roman Catholic	30.2
Dutch Protestant Church	13.8
Protestant Orthodox Church	2.7
Evangelical	1.6
Other Christian	1.6
Islamic	14.6
Other	3.0
<i>Highest educational level of parents:</i>	
Pre-vocational education	26.4
Sec. education or senior vocational education	42.4
Higher education	31.2
<i>Year</i>	
2008	47.8
2011	52.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4. Descriptives continuous variables**

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<u>Dependent variable</u>				
<i>Citizenship knowledge</i>	0.00	1.00	-4.70	1.41
<u>Independent variables</u>				
<i>Language ability</i>	0.00	1.00	-4.39	5.35
<i>Class average language ability</i>	0.00	0.80	-3.20	3.24
<i>Class S.D. in language ability</i>	1.77	0.38	0.40	3.86
<u>Control variables</u>				
<i>Percentage non-migrant</i>	0.76	0.30	0.00	1.00
<i>Percentage Turkish</i>	0.06	0.13	0.00	0.88
<i>Percentage Moroccan</i>	0.06	0.13	0.00	1.00
<i>Percentage Surinam</i>	0.03	0.10	0.00	1.00
<i>Proportion high classroom climate scores</i>	0.93	0.07	0.50	1.00
<i>Proportion max. educational level parents = jun. sec. voc. Educ.</i>	0.27	0.22	0.00	1.00
<i>Proportion max. educational level parents = sen. sec. voc. Educ.</i>	0.42	0.17	0.00	1.00
<i>Mathematics ability</i>	0.00	1.00	-6.99	5.02

Note: the variables language ability and math ability were z-standardized, as were the dependent variables





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# Influencing Youth Citizenship: Nederlandstalige samenvatting

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Voor het in stand houden en ontwikkelen van een democratische en sociaal veerkrachtige samenleving is de aanwezigheid van democratische instituties niet genoeg. Pas wanneer burgers ook democratische competenties hebben en gemotiveerd zijn deze in te zetten in het sociale, maatschappelijke en politieke domein kunnen de democratische kwaliteiten van een samenleving worden gecultiveerd. Mensen worden echter niet democratisch vaardig en betrokken geboren. Het equiperen van jonge burgers met de benodigde kwaliteiten om aan de maatschappij deel te nemen, op de maatschappij te reflecteren en zelf vorm te geven aan de maatschappij vergt bewuste inzet. Burgerschapseducatie is een van de belangrijkste manieren om deze inzet te organiseren.

De doelstelling van dit proefschrift is om meer inzicht te verschaffen in zogenaamde generieke factoren die bij kunnen dragen aan effectief burgerschapsonderwijs. Deze generieke factoren zijn factoren die inherent zijn aan het onderwijs en meerdere onderwijsdoelen tegelijkertijd kunnen dienen. Hiermee complementeert dit proefschrift bestaande literatuur over burgerschapseducatie-specifieke factoren en programma's. Daarnaast zetten we in dit proefschrift een kader uiteen waarmee perspectieven op burgerschap op een systematische manier kunnen worden geformuleerd en waarin burgerschapsdoelen die een brede consensus genieten onderscheiden worden van burgerschapsdoelen waarover de meningen uiteenlopen.

## **De roep om burgerschapsonderwijs**

In de afgelopen decennia hebben zowel burgers als beleidsmakers hun zorgen geuit over erosie van sociale samenhang, afname in maatschappelijke en politieke betrokkenheid van jongeren, en groeiende ongelijkheid in politieke betrokkenheid naar onderwijsniveau (Abendschön, Schäfer, & Rossteutscher, 2014; Bronneman-Helmers & Zeijl, 2008; Dekker & Den Ridder, 2013; Verhue, Verzijden, & Nienhuis, 2006).

Een afname van en grotere ongelijkheid in democratische betrokkenheid is problematisch, aangezien de formele democratische instituties nog steeds sterke invloed hebben op de structurele condities waarbinnen de civiele maatschappij opereert. Een afname in sociale samenhang is tevens problematisch, temeer nu overheden een steeds groter beroep doen op de zelfredzaamheid van burgers. In analyses wordt dan ook gewezen op de noodzaak van actief overheidsbeleid om gemeenschappelijke waarden en normen en vermogens zoals het omgaan met conflicten te bevorderen (Onderwijsraad, 2003; WRR, 2003). Zowel een meerderheid van burgers als beleidsmakers erkennen deze problemen en stellen dat het onderwijs een grotere rol zou moeten nemen in het voorbereiden van leerlingen op deze uitdagingen (Eurydice, 2012; Verhue et al., 2006).

### **De unieke maatschappelijke positie van scholen**

Scholen kennen een bijzonder positie in de maatschappij. Ten eerste wordt de school doorgaans als autoriteit op het gebied van leren beschouwd. Het betreft dan zowel de manier van leren (het leerproces) als wat er wordt geleerd (de leerinhoud). De keuzes die worden gemaakt in zowel het leerproces als de leerinhoud kunnen leerlingen in belangrijke mate vormen en zijn niet neutraal. Zo zullen leerlingen in een klas met strikte orderegels en voornamelijk individuele leerprocessen en beoordelingen andere normen en waarden ontwikkelen dan leerlingen in een klas waarin veel wordt samengewerkt en leerlingen worden gestimuleerd om zelf schoolregels te formuleren (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintion, & Turner, 2004; Reeve, 2009; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Aangezien onderwijs per definitie niet waardeneutraal kan zijn, is het van groot belang om de normatieve positie die scholen ten aanzien van het onderwijs innemen te expliciteren. Zonder explicitering van deze positie kunnen ouders, leerlingen en andere belanghebbenden immers geen geïnformeerd oordeel vellen over deze positie, kan de school er zelf niet op reflecteren en vindt er mogelijk anderszins ongewenste vorming van leerlingen plaats.

Ten tweede is het onderwijs uniek in haar bereik: in vrijwel ieder land spendeert vrijwel iedere niet-volwassene meerdere jaren in het formele onderwijs vanwege leerplichtwetgeving. Hoewel de hoeveelheid nationale regelgeving met betrekking tot burgerschapsonderwijs in Nederland qua inhoudelijke voorschriften beperkt is, stelt deze positie scholen in staat om in potentie twee taken te vervullen. Allereerst kunnen scholen

het algemene niveau van burgerschapscompetentie verhogen. Daarnaast kunnen scholen bestaande ongelijkheden tussen leerlingen compenseren, oftewel een grotere gelijkheid in democratische kansen realiseren. Het laatstgenoemde kan in het bijzonder een belangrijke bijdrage leveren aan de legitimering van het democratisch systeem.

Ten derde kennen scholen doorgaans leerlingenpopulaties met een grotere diversiteit aan achtergronden dan veel leerlingen in vriendschappelijke relaties en binnen hun familie kennen. Daarmee zijn scholen in potentie oefenplaatsen voor het praktiseren van democratie in een plurale samenleving, hoewel kritische wetenschappers waarschuwen voor negatieve effecten op gemarginaliseerde groepen, aangezien scholen zich doorgaans naar het perspectief van dominante maatschappelijke groepen zouden voegen (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Mellink, 2013; Merry, 2012). In beide gevallen doet de toegenomen diversiteit in de samenleving en in scholen een groter beroep op het (inter)culturele bewustzijn en de professionaliteit van onderwijsprofessionals. Dit is zowel van belang voor het omgaan met spanningen tussen sociale groepen in de school als het voorbereiden van leerlingen op omgaan met spanningen tussen sociale groepen in de samenleving.

### **Onderzoek naar burgerschapseducatie**

Beleidsmakers hebben in de afgelopen jaren in Nederland en vele andere landen het geven van burgerschapsonderwijs verplicht gesteld (WPO art. 8:3; WVO art. 17; Eurydice, 2012). Onderzoek laat zien dat scholen bij kunnen dragen aan de burgerschapsontwikkeling van leerlingen. Zo hebben leerlingen die regelmatig onderwezen worden over maatschappelijke thema's meer maatschappelijke kennis dan leerlingen die dergelijk onderwijs ontberen (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009). Daarnaast laat een veelvoud aan onderzoek zien dat zowel de politieke betrokkenheid als de burgerschapskennis, -vaardigheden, -houdingen, en -reflectie van leerlingen zich sterker ontwikkelen wanneer ze een veilig en open klasseklimaat ervaren waarin er vanuit verschillende perspectieven over controversiële onderwerpen wordt gesproken (Geboers, Geijsel, Admiraal, & Ten Dam, 2013; Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). De meerderheid van het empirische onderzoek naar burgerschapseducatie heeft zich gericht op specifieke burgerschapseducatieprogramma's of -curricula (e.g. Geboers et al., 2013; Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010; Lin, 2015; Pauw, 2013; Verhoeven, 2012; SCDRD, 2010). Toch blijft een groot deel van de variantie op klasse- en schoolniveau onverklaard (Isac,

Maslowski, Creemers, & Van Der Werf, 2014; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). In het bijzonder blijven mechanismes die individueel burgerschapsgedrag en –ontwikkeling verklaren onderbelicht. Tegelijkertijd voelen veel scholen en docenten zich onvoldoende toegerust om met de normativiteit die inherent is aan burgerschapsonderwijs om te gaan, of het nu gaat om het faciliteren van discussies over controversiële onderwerpen in de klas of het formuleren van een concreet en specifiek perspectief op burgerschapseducatie (Akar, 2012; Cassidy, Brunner, & Webster, 2014; Chin & Barber, 2010; Hess, 2009; Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013; Keating et al., 2010; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004; Radstake & Leeman, 2010). Zowel een coherent en specifiek perspectief op wat leerlingen nodig hebben om een bijdrage te kunnen leveren aan de maatschappij als verdere identificatie van factoren voor effectief burgerschapsonderwijs zijn noodzakelijk om de belofte van burgerschapsonderwijs te vervullen.

### **De centrale onderzoeksvraag**

Hoewel er empirische onderzoeken zijn gedaan naar burgerschapseducatie-specifieke factoren en programma's, is het onderzoek naar generieke factoren die bij kunnen dragen aan burgerschapsontwikkeling schaars. Generieke factoren zijn factoren die onlosmakelijk onderdeel zijn van het onderwijs, meerdere onderwijsdoelen tegelijkertijd kunnen dienen en tegelijkertijd niet noodzakelijkerwijs onderdeel zijn van op burgerschap gericht onderwijs. De centrale vraag van dit proefschrift is dan ook:

*Welke generieke onderwijsfactoren kunnen een bijdrage leveren aan de burgerschapsontwikkeling van leerlingen?*

Voor het beantwoorden van deze vraag hebben we verscheidende cognitieve en motivationele processen die essentieel zijn voor de omgang met burgerschapssituaties onderzocht. Hoewel geen van deze processen in sociale isolatie wordt ontwikkeld, maken we onderscheid tussen primair intrapersoonlijk en primair interpersoonlijke generieke factoren die bevordelijk kunnen zijn voor burgerschapsontwikkeling. De categorie van intrapersoonlijke factoren waaraan we in deze studie aandacht geven betreft factoren die een rol spelen in de wijze waarop individuen zich tot de wereld verhouden en mede vormgeven, zoals de ontwikkeling van taal (hoofdstuk 3) en het nemen van verschillende

perspectieven (hoofdstuk 5). De categorie van interpersoonlijke factoren die van invloed zijn op burgerschapsonwikkeling omvat de potentiële bijdrage van de taalomgeving zoals gevormd door klasgenoten (hoofdstuk 4) en de normen die worden gecommuniceerd door *significant others* (hoofdstuk 5). Inzicht in de werking van deze factoren kan bijdragen aan de effectiviteit van burgerschapsprogramma's en –praktijken en in potentie ook andere disciplines en toepassingscontexten informeren.

Voor we deze vragen behandelen begint dit proefschrift met een studie die de normatieve aspecten van burgerschapsonderwijs onderzoekt en verkent of, en op welke manier er samenhangende en expliciete perspectieven op burgerschapseducatie kunnen worden geformuleerd (hoofdstuk 2). Vanwege de normativiteit die inherent is aan noties van burgerschap, kan het beantwoorden van deze vragen scholen helpen om meer precieze en specifieke perspectieven op burgerschapseducatie te formuleren. Daarmee kan aan een belangrijke voorwaarde voor gericht werken aan de ontwikkeling van burgerschapsonderwijs worden voldaan.

## **Samenvatting van bevindingen**

### **Breed gedragen en betwiste burgerschapsdoelen**

Hoewel in veel landen burgerschapsonderwijs al enige jaren wettelijk verplicht is, hebben scholen juist met de normatieve aspecten van burgerschapsonderwijs moeite. De meeste docenten hebben geen cursus of opleiding genoten die hen voorbereidde op het geven van burgerschapsonderwijs en vele docenten voelen zich onzeker en onvoldoende voorbereid op het geven van burgerschapsonderwijs en het bespreken van controversiële onderwerpen in de klas (Akar, 2012; Barr et al., 2015; Cassidy et al., 2014; Chin & Barber, 2010; Euridyce, 2012; Oulton et al., 2004; Radstake & Leeman, 2010; Thornberg, 2008; Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008; Willemse, Ten Dam, Geijssel, Van Wessum, & Volman, 2015; Davies, 2006; Patterson, Doppin, & Misco, 2012). De meeste scholen in Nederland hanteren algemene perspectieven op burgerschapseducatie, en slagen er niet in om specifieke burgerschapsonderwijsdoelen te formuleren of hun burgerschapsonderwijs planmatig vorm te geven (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013). Academics erkennen dat de notie van goed burgerschap een inherent betwist concept is (Osborne, 2000; Van Gunsteren, 1988). De centrale vraag van de eerste studie in dit proefschrift vloeit hieruit voort: kunnen de normatieve aspecten van burgerschapseducatie waar veel discussie over



bestaat op een expliciete en samenhangende manier worden geformuleerd, terwijl ook recht wordt gedaan aan algemeen geldende democratische waarden?

In het beantwoorden van deze vraag hebben we onderscheid gemaakt tussen zogenaamde consensus en *'contested'* (betwiste) burgerschapsdoelen. Consensusdoelen zijn burgerschapsdoelen die breed worden gedeeld in democratische samenlevingen, terwijl betwiste doelen vaker onderwerp van discussie zijn en in mate van acceptatie verschillen, zowel binnen als tussen samenlevingen. Aan de hand van Miller's (2008) classificatie van politieke theorieën identificeren we twee centrale aannames die altijd expliciet of impliciet worden gemaakt in conceptualisaties van goed burgerschap, namelijk de aannames met betrekking tot de sociale natuur van de mens en de ordening van sociale relaties. De posities die worden ingenomen ten aanzien van deze aannames zijn doorgaans normatief, bijvoorbeeld wanneer wordt gesteld dat mensen voor hun sociale en morele functioneren afhankelijk zijn van anderen, of wanneer gesteld wordt dat sociale relaties het beste de vorm van een enkelvoudige hechte, egalitaire gemeenschap kunnen nemen. Vervolgens hebben we ter illustratie de posities van vier politieke theorieën ten aanzien van deze twee aannames besproken en een exploratieve data-analyse verricht.

Door onderscheid te maken tussen enerzijds consensus en *contested* burgerschapsdoelen en anderzijds de normatieve aannames ten aanzien van de sociale natuur van de mens en de ordening van sociale relaties te expliciteren kunnen burgerschapseducatieperspectieven concreter en rijker worden gemaakt, kunnen deze perspectieven worden getoetst op coherentie, en kunnen normatieve aspecten expliciet worden gemaakt. De exploratieve data-analyse laat zien dat onderwijsniveau in West-Europese landen weliswaar correleert met een aantal democratische consensusdoelen, maar niet systematisch samenhangt met *contested* burgerschapsdoelen. Op landniveau is er kortom geen evidentie voor stimulering van specifieke, *contested* burgerschapsdoelen op grote schaal in het onderwijs. Dit is in lijn met de eerder besproken literatuur over de moeite die vele scholen hebben met de normatieve aspecten van burgerschap. Deze bevinding sluit overigens niet uit dat een aantal individuele scholen wel degelijk meer betwiste en specifiekere noties van burgerschap hanteren en stimuleren.

### **De relatie tussen taalvaardigheid en burgerschapscompetenties**

Van scholen wordt verwacht dat ze een aantal leeruitkomsten bevorderen. Zo is er in de laatste jaren veel aandacht geweest voor taal- en rekenvaardigheid, onder meer vanwege zorgen over het gerealiseerd onderwijsniveau ingegeven door de uitkomsten van de internationaal vergelijkende PISA, TIMSS en PIRLS onderzoeken. Tegelijkertijd is er in vele landen hernieuwde interesse in burgerschapsonderwijs (Eurydice, 2012; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Vaak wordt gesteld dat aandacht voor taal en –rekenvaardigheid ten koste gaat van aandacht voor burgerschapsvorming en vice versa. We beargumenteren in studie 2 dat dit niet het geval hoeft te zijn, en dat in het bijzonder een positieve relatie tussen taalvaardigheid en burgerschapscompetentie plausibel is. Indien deze relatie aangetoond kan worden, zou dat de ontwikkeling van taalvaardigheid tot relevante intrapersoonlijke generieke factor voor burgerschapsontwikkeling maken.

Taalvaardigheid kan om verscheidene redenen van belang zijn voor het niveau van burgerschapscompetentie van een leerling. Ten eerste speelt taal een centrale rol in processen van betekenisgeving en in hoe individuen zich verhouden tot de wereld. Taal is niet alleen van belang om externe objecten, ontwikkelingen en hun verbanden te beschrijven, maar stelt mensen ook in staat om op eigen ervaringen te reflecteren en een met anderen gedeeld perspectief op de realiteit te ontwikkelen (Holtgrave & Kashima, 2008; Kashima, Klein, & Clark, 2007; Lepore & Smith, 2008; Taylor, 1985). Daarnaast laat recent onderzoek zien dat het lezen van literaire fictie en het ervaren van een hoge mate van betrokkenheid tijdens het lezen van fictie het empathisch vermogen kan verhogen (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Kidd & Castano, 2013). Empathie hangt samen met prosociaal en coöperatief gedrag (Stocks, Lishner, & Decker, 2009). De hiervoor beschreven taalgerelateerde vaardigheden zijn belangrijke voorwaarden voor burgerschapsgedrag (zoals dat typisch in Nederland gedefinieerd wordt, zie Ten Dam, Geijssel, Reumerman, & Ledoux, 2011). Ook in de politieke socialisatieliteratuur wordt een belangrijke rol aan taal toegeschreven, omdat taalvaardigheid mensen in staat stelt om anderen te overtuigen, te betrekken en politiek te organiseren (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995).

Onze bevindingen bevestigen de positieve relatie tussen taalvaardigheid en burgerschapscompetenties. Taal hangt in het bijzonder sterk samen met burgerschapshoudingen en –kennis. In tegenstelling tot wat eerdere literatuur suggereert

hangen burgerschapscompetenties niet of zwak samen met andere cognitieve vaardigheden, zoals intelligentie of wiskundig vermogen. Daarmee geven de resultaten een indicatie van de bijzondere rol van taalvaardigheid voor burgerschapsontwikkeling. Deze inzichten zijn vooral van belang voor de ontwikkeling van burgerschapsonderwijs en het gewicht dat aan de verschillende vakken in het curriculum wordt toegekend.

### **Ongelijkheid in burgerschapskennis: doen de taalkarakteristieken van de klas er toe?**

In recente jaren zijn er zorgen over groeiende ongelijkheden in politieke betrokkenheid naar onderwijsniveau, die zich het sterkst bij jongere generaties manifesteren. Eerder onderzoek laat zien dat scholen waarin leerlingen een positieve relatie hebben met klasgenoten (en er sprake is van een open en veilig klasseklimaat) betere resultaten boeken op het vlak van burgerschapsontwikkeling (Keating et al., 2010; Geboers et al., 2013; Isac et al., 2014; Van Aken & Hart, 2014). Gezien deze invloed van klasgenoten op de ontwikkeling van burgerschap hebben we in studie 3 onderzocht hoe de taalkarakteristieken van een klas van invloed zijn op (ongelijkheid in) burgerschapskennis, te meer daar burgerschapskennis een van de belangrijkste voorspellers van politieke betrokkenheid en burgerschapsgedrag is (Galston, 2007).

De bevindingen laten zien dat de taalkarakteristieken van de klas ertoe doen, in zowel algemene zin als voor de ongelijkheden tussen leerlingen van verschillend taalniveau. Een gemiddeld hoger taalniveau van een klas heeft een negatief algemeen effect op de burgerschapskennis van leerlingen, in lijn met het zogenaamde big-fish-little-pond effect (Marsh et al., 2008). Deze hypothese voorspelt dat leerlingen van gelijk niveau een lager academisch zelf-concept hebben in beter presterende klassen. Dit zou vervolgens tot mindere prestaties leiden. Daarnaast blijkt uit de analyses dat laagtalige leerlingen meer burgerschapskennis hebben in klassen met een gemiddeld hoog taalniveau en voldoende variatie in taalniveau. Vermoedelijk kunnen deze leerlingen in dergelijk samengesteld klassen optimaal van andere leerlingen leren. Mogelijk blijft de toegankelijkheid van taal in klassikale discussies in deze klassen gewaarborgd doordat er voldoende leerlingen van verschillend niveau in de klas zitten.

### Mechanismes om spanning tussen groepen coöperatief op te lossen

Samenlevingen kennen een verscheidenheid aan sociale groepen. Tussen deze groepen ontstaan soms spanningen en het omgaan met deze spanningen is een belangrijke burgerschapscompetentie. Individuen zijn echter van nature slecht toegerust om deze spanningen zodanig op te lossen dat het algemeen belang wordt gediend; de dynamiek binnen een groep leidt vaak tot vijandigheden en conflict tussen groepen (Bornstein, 2000; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). Op basis van *goal-framing theory* (Lindenberg, 2013) identificeren we twee mechanismes die in het onderwijs kunnen worden gebruikt om leerlingen weerbaarder te maken tegen processen die tot tussengroepse vijandigheden leiden. In het bijzonder wordt het nemen van perspectief (1) en normen die door zogenaamde *significant others*<sup>1</sup> worden gecommuniceerd (2) gebruikt om het normatieve doelkader te activeren en toe te passen op het collectief, zodat de norm van samenwerking niet slechts binnen de eigen groep maar op het hele collectief betrekking krijgt. Bij experimentele interventie 1 worden deelnemers aan de hand van een aantal vragen gestimuleerd om het perspectief van de andere groep en het collectief te nemen, terwijl bij experimentele interventie 2 een *significant other* benoemt dat ‘een oplossing vinden die voor iedereen goed is’ zijn eigen norm is. In dit experiment is het herhaalde Intergroup Prisoner’s Dilemma (IPD) spel gebruikt om een situatie van tussengroepse spanning te creëren.

De resultaten laten zien dat beide mechanismes zowel de bereidheid om samen te werken met de andere groep als daadwerkelijke samenwerking tussen groepen verhogen. Samenwerking tussen groepen hangt ook samen met lager binnengroeps wantrouwen. De meeste tussengroepse samenwerking ontstond in de eerste fases van het spel; dit suggereert dat een lange fase van competitie tussen beiden groepen in het IPD spel tot wederzijds wantrouwen kan leiden. In vrijwel elke sessie was binnen- en tussengroepse samenwerking voorwaardelijk; als de andere groep geen wederkerigheid toonde ging dit ten koste van de samenwerking tussen groepen, terwijl de aanwezigheid van een *free-rider* kon leiden tot het stopzetten van samenwerking binnen het team.

De bevindingen ondersteunen de geschiktheid van *goal-framing theory* (Lindenberg, 2013) voor het identificeren van onderwijsinterventies. Tegelijkertijd illustreert deze studie

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<sup>1</sup> *Significant others* is een term die in de sociaal-wetenschappelijke literatuur wordt gebruikt om de categorie mensen met wie een individu een belangrijke relatie heeft te beschrijven. Dit kunnen voor leerlingen bijvoorbeeld ouders, vrienden of docenten zijn.

de waarde van een spel-gebaseerd experimenteel ontwerp voor het modelleren en onderzoeken van burgerschapsgedrag in sociale context, aangezien er zowel causale verbanden als verschillende relevante processen en uitkomsten mee zijn blootgelegd. Gezien de korte duur en lage intensiviteit van de experimentele interventies zijn de resultaten van deze studie veelbelovend, te meer daar er in het onderwijs mogelijkheden zijn voor langere, herhaalde en daarmee meer effectieve interventies.

## Discussie

Aan de bestaande wetenschappelijke literatuur over burgerschapseducatie voegt dit proefschrift een aantal zaken toe. Ten eerste is gepoogd de theoretische helderheid van de discussie over perspectieven op burgerschapseducatie te vergroten, door de notie van burgerschap als ‘betwist concept’ (Osborne, 2000; Van Gunsteren, 1988) verder uit te werken en een theoretisch kader voor te stellen waarmee perspectieven op coherentie kunnen worden beoordeeld (studie 1). Ook is er empirisch onderzocht of er aanwijzingen zijn dat bepaalde (breed gedeelde of betwiste) burgerschapsuitkomsten in het onderwijs meer worden bevorderd dan andere. Verder onderzoek naar dit thema zou zich kunnen richten op de barrières die scholen ervaren bij het formuleren van perspectieven op burgerschapsonderwijs. Daarnaast is de relatie tussen de intrapersonlijke generieke factor taalvaardigheid en burgerschapscompetentie onderzocht, nadat de mechanismes die dit verband aannemelijk maakten zijn beschreven (studie 2). Dit betreft het eerste quasi-longitudinale onderzoek naar taal en burgerschapsontwikkeling waarin cognitieve vaardigheden systematisch van elkaar zijn onderscheiden. Hieruit blijkt dat taalontwikkeling, en niet intelligentie als zodanig, in belangrijke mate samenhangt met burgerschapsuitkomsten, in het bijzonder met burgerschapskennis en –houdingen. Toekomstig onderzoek zou zich kunnen richten op het relatieve belang van de verschillende deelaspecten van taalvaardigheid en de invloed van verschillen instructievormen in het taalonderwijs. Vervolgens is de invloed van de taalomgeving in de klas op burgerschapskennis onderzocht, met bijzondere aandacht voor ongelijkheden in burgerschapskennis naar taalniveau (studie 3). Aangezien dit de eerste studie met een rigoures *peer effects* design naar een burgerschapsuitkomst betreft, kan zowel replicatie als verder onderzoek naar de verantwoordelijke mechanismes en de rol van de docent van grote waarde zijn. Ten slotte is studie 4 op een aantal aspecten vernieuwend ten opzichte

van de huidige burgerschapseducatieliteratuur. Ten eerste baseert deze studie zich op een expliciete gedragstheorie, namelijk *goal-framing theory* (Lindenberg, 2013). Daarnaast gebruik het een spel-gebaseerd experimenteel ontwerp waarmee zowel motivationele als gedragsmechanismen kunnen worden onderzocht voor een tot dusver onderbelichte burgerschapscompetentie: omgaan met spanningen tussen groepen. Daarmee zijn individuen in een sociale context onderzocht, op een manier die causale inferentie mogelijk maakt.

De bevindingen van dit proefschrift vormen daarnaast de basis voor een aantal inzichten die relevant zijn voor beleid en praktijk. Allereerst onderstrepen de resultaten het belang en het potentieel van generieke factoren. Doordat deze factoren meerdere onderwijsdoelen tegelijkertijd kunnen dienen, bieden ze een mogelijkheid om de effectiviteit van scholen in tijden van *curriculum overload* te vergroten. Daarnaast illustreren de bevindingen dat voor besluitvorming over veranderingen in schoolcurricula of de organisatie van het onderwijssysteem het van substantieel belang is om zowel de effecten op cognitieve als op burgerschapsuitkomsten in overweging te nemen. Zo blijkt bijvoorbeeld de klascompositie niet alleen van invloed op onderwijsuitkomsten zoals taal en rekenen, maar ook op burgerschapskennis, en blijkt taalvaardigheid belangrijker dan rekenvaardigheid voor burgerschapsontwikkeling. Met ander woorden, wanneer er slechts uitkomsten die een enkelvoudig onderwijsdoel dienen in acht worden genomen, kunnen veranderingen in het onderwijs onbedoeld negatieve consequenties hebben voor de realisatie van andere onderwijsdoelen.

Daarnaast kan het theoretisch kader uit studie 1 de ontwikkeling van een inhoudelijk kompas voor burgerschapsonderwijs (Onderwijsraad, 2012) voeden. De noodzaak van een dergelijk kompas, dat scholen faciliteert om een richting te kiezen door verschillende perspectieven op burgerschap uit te werken, ligt in de observatie van de Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2013) dat de meeste scholen er algemene visies op burgerschap op nahouden en verzuimen om burgerschapsonderwijs systematisch en planmatig te implementeren. Scholen zouden het kader uit studie 1 kunnen gebruiken om intern tot een specifiek perspectief op burgerschap te komen, en daarmee docenten in staat te stellen om zelfverzekerder te staan ten opzichte van de normatieve aspecten van burgerschap alsmede meer gericht aan burgerschapsontwikkeling te werken in de lessen.

Docenten zouden daarnaast kunnen onderzoeken in welke mate de samenstelling van de klas invloed heeft op de toegankelijkheid van de gebruikte taal in klassikale discussies. Onder welke omstandigheden zijn deze discussies niet inclusief voor laagtalige leerlingen, en zijn er didactische werkvormen waarbij discussies aan toegankelijkheid winnen? Ten slotte zijn mechanismes zoals het stimuleren van perspectief nemen en het communiceren van normen manieren waarop iedere docent, ongeacht het vak dat wordt gegeven, een bijdrage kan leveren aan burgerschapsontwikkeling. Hoewel specialistische docenten van vakken als maatschappijleer en levensbeschouwing van grote waarde blijven, en er ook veel voor een apart vak burgerschapseducatie te zeggen valt om vrijblijvendheid te voorkomen, is het aannemelijk dat de effectiviteit van burgerschapseducatie toeneemt wanneer het daarnaast door alle docenten in het curriculum wordt geïntegreerd.







## List of publications

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Chapter 2 is based on:

Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (in press). Consensus and contested citizenship goals in Western Europe. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*.

Bram Eidhof reviewed literature, analyzed data and drafted the various versions of the manuscript. The research team further consisted of Anne Bert Dijkstra, Geert ten Dam and Herman van de Werfhorst, who were the PhD supervisors of Bram Eidhof. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. The supervisors audited the analysis and interpretation of the data, and contributed to reviews and revisions of the manuscript.

Chapter 3 is based on:

Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Youth citizenship at the end of primary school: The role of language ability.

Bram Eidhof reviewed literature, analyzed data and drafted the various versions of the manuscript. The research team further consisted of Anne Bert Dijkstra, Geert ten Dam and Herman van de Werfhorst, who were the PhD supervisors of Bram Eidhof. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. The supervisors audited the analysis and interpretation of the data, and contributed to reviews and revisions of the manuscript.

Chapter 4 is based on:

Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Inequalities in youth citizenship knowledge: does the peer language environment matter?

Bram Eidhof reviewed literature, analyzed data and drafted the various versions of the manuscript. The research team further consisted of Anne Bert Dijkstra, Geert ten Dam and Herman van de Werfhorst, who were the PhD supervisors of Bram Eidhof. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. The supervisors audited the analysis and interpretation of the data, contributed to reviews and revisions of the manuscript.

Chapter 5 is based on:

Eidhof, B.B.F., Ten Dam, G.T.M., Dijkstra, A.B., Lindenberg, S.L., Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (Submitted). Using significant others and perspective taking to resolve intergroup tensions.

Bram Eidhof reviewed literature, collected and analyzed data and drafted the various versions of the manuscript. The research team further consisted of Anne Bert Dijkstra, Geert ten Dam and Herman van de Werfhorst, who were the PhD supervisors of Bram Eidhof. The research team collaboratively conceptualized and designed the study. The supervisors audited the analysis and interpretation of the data, and contributed to reviews and revisions of manuscript. Siegwart Lindenberg contributed to the experimental design of this study, reviews and revisions of the manuscript.

## Reports

Eidhof, B.B.F., Dijkstra, A.B., & Ten Dam, G.T.M. (2014). *Verkenning Academische Werkplaats sociale opbrengsten*. Den Haag: Inspectie van het Onderwijs.

Eidhof, B.B.F., & Dijkstra, A.B. (2015). *Kengetallen voor meting en evaluatie van sociale opbrengsten van het onderwijs*. Den Haag: Inspectie van het Onderwijs.

## Professional publications

Eidhof, B.B.F., & Nieuwelink, H. (2014). Jonge burgers. *Didaktief* (November issue), 44-45.

Nieuwelink, H., & Eidhof, B.B.F. (2014). Werk gericht aan burgerschap. *Didaktief-online*.

Eidhof, B.B.F., & Nieuwelink, H. (2014). Welwillend maar onwetend? *Didaktief-online*.

Nieuwelink, H., & Eidhof, B.B.F. (2015). Aanpassen aan de maatschappij. *Didaktief-online*.





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## Curriculum vitea

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Bram Eidhof werd geboren op 21 april 1987 te Oldenzaal. Na het behalen van zijn VWO-diploma (het Thijcollege, 2005) behaalde hij zijn bachelor aan het University College Utrecht met als hoofdrichting Neurowetenschappen (cum laude). Vervolgens behaalde hij een MSc in Brain and Mind Sciences aan University College Londen, waarna hij aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen cum laude afstudeerde in de research master *Human Behaviour in Social Contexts*, met onderwijskunde als specialisatie. Tijdens zijn promotie-onderzoek publiceerde hij onder andere in onderwijsvakblad *Didactief*, presenteerde hij op internationale conferenties, was hij co-redacteur van de bundel *Onderwijssociologie* en nam hij zitting in verscheidene nationale adviescommissies. Hij werkt op dit moment bij het Instituut voor Publieke Waarden. Zijn interesses bestaan naast burgerschapseducatie onder andere uit instituties, individuele ontwikkeling, democratie, en duurzaamheid (zowel afzonderlijk als in combinatie).

