The influence of students’ citizenship competences on their political and social participation in early adulthood

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General overview of the PhD project

Introduction
The research proposal concerns an interlinked project. It is a joint endeavor of the University of Groningen and the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

The current Dutch legislation and policy about citizenship education in primary and secondary school are based on two assumptions.
1. Schools can contribute to the development of citizenship competences (project UvA).
2. Better citizenship competences will lead to more active citizens (current project).

This project is directed towards studying the outcomes of citizenship education in terms of political and social participation in early adulthood. The dissertation will be based on four studies.

Scientific importance
This project is important because research so far has hardly captures outcomes beyond secondary education. Moreover, through the follow-up of students a wide time span and longitudinal design will be obtained.

Feasibility
A potential risk is the willingness of students to take part in the project, and drop-out. Through contacting young adults individually by student assistants, non response will be minimized for the follow-up of ICCS.

Research question: To what degree is the political and social participation of young adults influenced by their citizenship competences?

Method
The sample of study 1-3 includes 300 students from the Dutch ICCS 2009 (circa 2000 students). The sample of study 4 includes 200 students from the Dutch ICCS 2009 Netherlands (excluding the first sample).

Data collection
A questionnaire will be developed for political and social participation of young adults. In addition, data on students’ experiences in upper secondary education will be collected. The questionnaire will be administered using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. The interviews will be held by student assistants who are recruited from various universities. The interviewers will be trained in advance.

Data analysis
Multilevel analysis will be used to analyze the effect of each of the civic competences (derived from ICCS 2009), social structure (e.g. parental interest in civic issues), and academic achievement (taken from data of Statistics Netherlands) on participation in early adulthood. In the fourth study a path model will determine the relative effect of civic competence, social structure and academic achievement on the young adult’s political and social participation.