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BECOMING POLITICAL

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BECOMING POLITICAL

*Comparative Perspectives
on Citizenship Education*

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State University
of New York
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P R E F A C E

Consistent with the fundamental democratic principle of government by the people, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that all citizens have the right to participate in their government both directly and indirectly. Specifically, it asserts the rights to vote and run for public office. The declaration further specifies that women as well as men possess such rights. Reflecting another fundamental democratic principle, it states that governments shall not abridge individual rights to freedom of expression. Similarly, the European Convention on Human Rights, regional human rights documents, and the national constitutions of many democratic nations further reinforce the individual citizen's rights to civic participation and free expression.

While sharing these basic goals, democratic nations also share the reality that in order for political rights to be realized, citizens must want to participate in the political arena, and they must respect the rights of others—regardless of gender, ethnicity, class, or belief—to exercise their civil and political rights. Toward that end many theorists from Aristotle, Rousseau, and Thomas Jefferson to John Dewey and contemporary writers like Benjamin Barber and Amy Gutmann have argued that the future of democracy is dependent on the education of young citizens. But what manner of education is most effective in developing democratic citizens? That question remains unresolved as we approach a new millennium.

At the end of the twentieth century, newly emerging democracies in diverse parts of the world are in the process of revamping their educational systems to instill democratic values in youth. At the same time, in the old democracies many politicians, educators, and the public decry the state of their own educational systems and a growing political apathy and cynicism among their citizenry. It is, therefore, an appropriate time to consider: Under what educational conditions do democratic values and beliefs take root and flourish? The purpose of this book is to shed light on that question through a comparative study of citizenship education and youth attitudes in differing democratic cultures.

I believe that, to answer that and other educational questions, a comparative perspective has several advantages. It is useful for revealing alternative forms education can and does take, for showing the consequences of various alternatives in diverse settings, and for raising ques-

tions about what one has previously taken for granted in his or her own educational system and political culture. For these reasons, in 1985 I began a study of citizenship preparation and adolescent political attitudes in five western democracies.

I deliberately chose five nations that might be expected to be quite similar—the United States, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. They are all post-industrial societies with similar and often intertwined political, economic, and cultural histories.¹ Further, these countries had established universal suffrage and education early in this century. Yet, even among these western democracies with many shared experiences and values relevant to this study, there are considerable differences in the ways that they prepare their young people to participate as citizens.

For this study I attempted to focus my lens on diversity in citizenship education within a set of boundaries where the ideals of citizenship, democracy, and education were somewhat similar. However, the more time I spent within these countries the more I came to appreciate the depths of unique cultural perspectives. I am now more convinced than ever that the forms education takes reflect the distinct set of values of a particular culture and for that reason “what works” in one cultural context cannot be simply adopted in another setting with differing traditions, values, and meanings. Rather, I believe we can gain insights from other contexts that, when considered in light of one’s own experiences and values, can be helpful. Today with integrated global economies and communication systems, youth in many countries share similar experiences, aspects of culture, and future challenges that demand creative thinking about how to best ensure the future of democracy on the global stage.

RESEARCHER’S PERSPECTIVE

Like many middle-class American youth of the 1950s and 1960s, my taken-for-granted experiences in citizenship education included daily social studies lessons (primarily United States history with some civics, and a little world cultures and world history) and out-of-class experiences in student government and scouts. Three powerful experiences, however, stimulated my early reflections on the connections among democracy, citizenship, and education.

The first was when my seventh-grade teacher (who had taken seriously my goal and encouraged me to become a teacher) was fired by the local school district. When called before the House Un-American Activities Committee to answer questions about possible Communist ties in the past, he exercised his fifth amendment protection against self incrimination and

did not answer questions. Then, as a determined thirteen-year-old, with the support of my parents, I passed a petition among students which was presented to the school board (a very American institution) to no avail—except that the experience began my lifelong interest in civil liberties. The second experience built on the first, in that my high school United States history teacher planned much of our course around investigations of civil liberties issues. With his encouragement I conducted research and wrote a report on the earlier case. That teacher further presented to the class a series of landmark Supreme Court cases from United States history and continually asked, To what extent do you think individual liberties or community security should be protected? The third event occurred just a few years later, when as a member of student government at one of the University of California campuses during the time of the Free Speech Movement, I wrestled with issues of students' and citizens' rights.

These were some of the serendipitous experiences in my personal citizenship education that would lead me almost thirty years later to a cross-national study of youth and citizenship. At another time and place, the specific events would have been different, but what made these events meaningful for me could happen to many young people—a parent or a social studies teacher encouraging a student to confront controversial public policy issues rather than ignore or gloss over them. Before I was old enough to vote, I was challenged by key adults to think for myself about how democratic principles ought to be applied in difficult concrete situations.

Having had such formative experiences, it is not surprising that during my preparation to become a secondary school social studies teacher and in my early years of teaching in San Francisco and Kentucky, I was particularly impressed by the ideas of Hunt and Metcalf (1968) and Oliver and Shaver (1966). I was persuaded by Hunt and Metcalf in their book *Teaching High School Social Studies* that in a democracy the appropriate preparation for the task of citizenship is open inquiry into the “closed areas” of society; to set off any topics as taboo for investigation is to adopt totalitarian practices. Later, as a beginning teacher, I found the Harvard Project materials especially helpful in getting students to confront enduring social issues in historic and contemporary contexts (Oliver & Shaver, 1966). I tried to organize the courses I taught around problematic issues and to stimulate students to reflect upon issues in the daily newspapers as well as those contained in the standard topics for history, government, and world studies courses. Professionally coming of age during the period of “the new social studies” in the United States was a stimulating and fortunate experience.

In later years, as a graduate student and professor of social studies education I was touched by the women's movement and its implications

for social studies education. I wanted social studies instruction to teach about the female as well as male experience in history and contemporary society. I explored why female students sometimes did less well than males on measures of social studies achievement and why they seemed to develop differing orientations from males toward the political world. I also joined the ranks of global educators who felt that to adequately prepare youth for the future we needed to do a better job of teaching about such global issues as human rights, the environment, and peace and security.

During those years I was actively involved in the National Council for the Social Studies, leading to my term as President in 1983. I was then made aware of the many incidents of censorship involving school librarians and teachers in communities across the United States. In my travels, social studies teachers told me that they had found themselves beginning to avoid controversial issues so as not to draw the attention of community members to their teaching; they said it was important for their professional association to assert the importance to citizenship education in a democracy of the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn in an open inquiring atmosphere. Thus, by 1985 my interests in citizenship education, youth political attitudes, the role of controversial issues exploration in social studies, and issues of free expression and gender equity influenced my perspective—but all in the context of experiences in the United States. It was time that I practiced what I preached about global perspectives and begin to learn about my own field in cross-national perspective.

In 1985–86, therefore, I began a study in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States to explore the following questions: How are political attitudes similar and different among samples of adolescents in the five countries? In what similar and different ways do adolescents in the five countries describe their political attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, and their social studies classroom experiences? Are there gender differences in student political attitudes? Is there a relationship between classroom climate, or the extent to which students are encouraged to explore controversial public policy issues in an open classroom environment, and their political attitudes across the five countries? What differences and similarities occur across national contexts in what we in the United States call “social studies”?

THEORETICAL TRADITIONS

This study bridges three fields, social studies education, political socialization or learning, and comparative education, and draws on a fourth,

feminist studies. Within social studies, this study, with its focus on citizenship preparation in a democracy and issues-exploration, falls in the tradition of what has been called at various time periods a problems approach, reflective inquiry, and issues-centered social studies (Hahn, 1996b). That tradition rests on John Dewey's (1916/1966) theory that participatory dispositions needed by citizens in a democracy are learned through practice in school and community. This study contributes empirical evidence to support that philosophic assumption.

Research on political learning tends to fall into two traditions. The dominant tradition in the 1960s and 1970s was political socialization. Associated with structural functionalist and systems theories, socialization research focuses on the macro level and is concerned with the processes used to instill in individuals concepts, beliefs, attitudes, and values which in the aggregate will sustain the political system. From the socialization perspective, researchers identified the importance of the family, media, and schooling in transmitting normative sets of attitudes and behaviors from one generation to the next. That approach, however, was limited by its tendency to assume that young people passively receive messages from their environment.

The second tradition in research on political learning is based on a cognitive developmental model whereby the focus is on the micro level or how individuals construct meaning about the political world. Researchers in this tradition analyze interviews with children and adolescents to demonstrate that individuals actively construct meaning (Coles, 1986; Connell, 1974; Stevens, 1982; Torney-Purta, 1990, 1991b). Scholars in this tradition posit that learners relate new ideas to their prior knowledge and beliefs, either by assimilating new information into their prior mental structure or when necessary restructuring their thinking to accommodate new information. As Haste and Torney-Purta (1992) explain, individuals selectively retain messages from parents, teachers, the media, and other sources in their environment.

This study attempts to use in a complementary manner the two lines of research on political learning. It uses concepts, questionnaire items, and quantitative analyses from the political socialization tradition in combination with qualitative analyses of student interviews in the cognitive developmental tradition. Further, by giving attention to the concepts of political and educational cultures and by triangulating data from diverse informants, from participant observations, and from surveys, a more complete picture of political learning is obtained than was previously available.

In comparative education, this study is in the tradition of those who believe it is insightful to examine the relationship of global phenomena, such as the mass media, on education in cross national perspective.

Finally, this study draws on and contributes to feminist studies by revealing ways in which gender and political learning interact across national settings.

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CHAPTER 1

Studying Civic Education: Setting the Stage

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in education for democracy. In related discussions, as well as in the statements of international leaders, one frequently hears the phrase “Western democracies,” suggesting there is a set of shared characteristics common to all. Such a characterization, however, tends to diminish attention to the rich variety among the countries with democratic traditions. Even within the five societies that are the focus of this study, three are constitutional monarchies, four have parliamentary forms of government, and two have federal systems (see appendix, “Political Context”). Additionally, these five democratic societies take very different approaches to preparing young people to be participating citizens. This chapter describes the method of the study and the school contexts in which the students in this study develop a sense of what it means to be a democratic citizen.

THE STUDY

In 1985–86, I began a study in England, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States to explore the following questions: How are political attitudes similar and different among samples of adolescents in the five countries? In what similar and different ways do adolescents in the five countries describe their political attitudes, beliefs, and experiences and their social studies classroom experiences? Are there gender differences in student political attitudes? Is there a relationship between classroom climate, or the extent to which students are encouraged to explore controversial public policy issues in an open classroom environment, and their political attitudes across the five countries? What differences and similarities occur across national contexts in what we in the United States call “social studies”?

Sample

To answer those questions, I faced the difficult challenge of identifying a sample of adolescents in five countries. I began by contacting people

whom I had met at various international conferences on social studies, citizenship, and global education. In some cases those people put me in contact with other people, who put me in contact with others, and so on. In other cases, teachers volunteered their own classes directly.¹ I solicited and obtained classes of students, primarily ages fifteen through nineteen, in varied types of secondary schools in five countries. That is, in Germany, the sample contained students in *Realschulen*, *Gymnasien*, and *Gesamtschulen*; in Denmark the sample contained *folkeskoler*, *gymnasier*, and *Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF)* programs. In England I used classes in state schools and in one of the traditional British "Public" Schools (independent, boarding schools that charge high fees). In the Netherlands, *vbo*, *mavo*, *havo*, *vwo*, and agricultural schools were represented in the sample. The schools in the United States were primarily four-year public high schools, but there was one religiously affiliated private school.²

Further, schools were selected from diverse communities and regions within each country. For the most part, schools were located in small cities or suburbs of large metropolitan areas. A few schools in each country contained relatively substantial portions of students who were members of ethnic minorities in their respective countries, but overall the proportions of such students were relatively low in 1985. Ten years later, several of the schools in each country experienced an influx of immigrants. Additionally, the schools drew primarily from families in the lower to upper middle class, with only a few schools enrolling students from many working-class or wealthy families. Truly inner city and rural schools were not included; political socialization in such areas is another story to be told by other researchers.

Through this process students in this sample came from schools in Sussex, Wiltshire, Birmingham, Warwickshire, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, and Humberside in England; Lower Saxony (Barsinghausen, Hannover, Osnabrück), North Rhine Westphalia, and Hesse in Germany; Copenhagen, Farum, Herlev, Køge, Roskilde, Stenløse, and Vipperød in Denmark; Breda, Eindhoven, 's Hertogenbosch, and Tilburg in the Netherlands; and California, Colorado, Missouri, Massachusetts, and Georgia in the United States. Because it was not possible to obtain national random samples of students in the five countries,³ findings cannot be generalized to the wider population of adolescents in these countries. Nevertheless, I hoped that by exploring relationships among variables for these particular samples, and by comparing findings with other research conducted in other communities in these countries, partial insights might be obtained about the complex relationships that influence political development across national contexts.

Method

Building on the work of previous researchers I constructed a questionnaire with scales measuring political attitudes of interest, efficacy, trust, and confidence; political behaviors such as following news and discussing politics; attitudes toward free speech and press for diverse groups; beliefs in equal political rights for females as well as males; and perceptions of a classroom climate in which students are encouraged to express their beliefs about controversial issues. Questionnaires were translated into German, Dutch, and Danish and back-translated. Items on the English questionnaire were written to reflect English, as opposed to American, usage. Nationals with expertise in social studies and an interest in political education in each country reviewed the questionnaires to ensure that similar meanings were captured across countries and that the items would be understandable to pupils ages fourteen through twenty. During the first administration of the questionnaires, more than fourteen hundred students completed questionnaires in secondary schools in the five countries. European students completed them in the spring and autumn of 1986, and the students in the United States completed theirs the following year. During the 1985-86 school year, while living in England, I also made visits to the European schools, observing what would be the equivalent of social studies classes.

In the period following the initial data collection, responses to questionnaire items were factor analyzed, and item analyses were conducted. Means by items and scales were compared by country, age, and gender. Frequency distributions by items and correlations between scales were examined. Field notes from initial observations were examined for themes across and among countries. Over the next several years, changes occurred in each of the countries that affected social studies or citizenship education so I decided to "return to the field" in 1992-93 and again in 1994-95. Wherever possible I returned to the same schools or identified others of similar types in the same region of each country. Some questionnaire items were revised in light of the previous statistical analyses, and a new scale was added to reflect new conceptions of civic tolerance. The revised questionnaires were again translated and back translated. Subsequently, they were administered to almost twenty-three hundred European adolescents in the spring of 1993 and to more than seventeen hundred American high school students during the 1993-94 academic year.

During the 1992-93 and 1994-95 school years I made further classroom observations in the European schools, and in 1995 I made observations in the participating schools in the United States. I made a final set of visits to several schools in each country in 1996. While observing

classes, I focused on similarities and differences across countries to get a sense of the context in which adolescent students develop political views in secondary schools. Further, I paid particular attention to “classroom climate”—the extent to which students discuss public policy issues, especially those that are controversial, and the atmosphere in which such discussions occur. I did so because that variable had been suggested by earlier researchers to be of importance to civic outcomes. The class sessions I observed were conducted, as usual, in the national language. I followed the general flow of conversation and the student-teacher interaction to determine whether or not pupils were encouraged to express their opinions on controversial issues in an open environment. I took field notes during observations, including both student and teacher comments in English and German and the sense of the conversation in Danish and Dutch classes, as well as descriptions of behavior and interactions. After each class session I would review my notes with the teacher to be sure that I had understood the general substance of the lesson, main points made by the teacher and students, and the process of interaction. I recorded my impressions from the observation periods in my field diary at the end of each day. I also collected for analysis documents such as handouts, texts, and student assignments. Over the course of the study I visited classes in each school at least once, and up to five times, over the eight-year span for those schools that participated during both time periods. The intent was to provide a context for the questionnaire data; no attempt was made to write ethnographies of classrooms.

Further in 1992–93, 1994–95, and 1996, I conducted interviews with teachers and students to gain further insight into adolescent political attitudes and beliefs and into the process of citizenship education in each country. I conducted interviews with small groups of from two to eight students and spoke with whole classes, asking for hands to show general agreement or disagreement with comments made by individual students. I used a semistructured interview format, asking the same questions or similar questions on the same topics with all groups.⁴ Because most upper secondary school students in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands are fluent in English, most interviews were conducted in English. When students preferred to talk to me in their first language, teachers or other bilingual adults who were familiar to the students acted as interpreters. The use of such translation occurred primarily with students under age sixteen and in Germany and Netherlands those not enrolled in preuniversity tracks.

Teacher interviews took place in staff rooms, restaurants, and in cars or on trains riding to and from school. I asked about course content, methods, and purposes. I asked for teacher perceptions of student atti-

tudes and the context that might influence them. Additionally, I asked about teachers' philosophies with regard to handling controversial issues.

I analyzed the quantitative data using factor analyses, item analyses, frequency distributions by item, means of items and scales, analyses of variance and effect sizes between means,⁵ and correlations among scales and items. Tables throughout the book report the results of those analyses.

I analyzed each component of the qualitative data set (field notes, interviews, documents, and my field diary) using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) to generate themes from the raw data. I examined each line and assigned to meaningful data segments a code that suggested to me how the segment might be categorized with others that were similar. Some category codes reflected my reading of research, but whenever possible I assigned "in vivo" codes using the student's or teachers's own language to capture the participants' meanings. Codes, complete data sets, and my diary were examined for themes and counterexamples. As recommended by Strauss (1987) I looked for causes, conditions, processes, and consequences. I shared my preliminary interpretations and drafts of the manuscript with some participating teachers and other nationals in each country as a form of "member check" on the veracity of my observations.

The understandings that I came to about the development of political attitudes among the youth and citizenship education in the schools in my sample in five countries are presented in the chapters that follow. To preserve the anonymity of individuals and schools, all names that appear in the text are pseudonyms. I am acutely aware that other researchers surveying other students, visiting other classes and schools, and coming to a similar study with different perspectives from my own might come to different understandings. I look forward to future discussions in which groups of researchers and teachers with their own particular experiences and perspectives in differing countries can come together and compare their views of students becoming politically conscious citizens in varied contexts.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN FIVE COUNTRIES

In the remainder of this chapter I draw on insights gained from my observations, interviews, and document analyses to describe civic education in five countries.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland is a constitutional monarchy with a strong Parliamentary system that

has evolved over the course of eight centuries (appendix). Perhaps because the nation was not established following a revolution, or because it does not have a written bill of rights that asserts the supremacy of citizens (technically Britons are subjects rather than citizens), or for other reasons, the concepts of ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship education’ are not of central importance as they are in the United States or several other western democracies (Heater, 1990; Lister, 1991; Oliver 1991).

In the United Kingdom, politics and education traditionally have been viewed as two distinct and separate realms (Harber, 1987). Politics is the province of opposing political parties, and education is to instill knowledge. Citizenship education has been suspected by both the right and the left as being indoctrinating. The few people who have become professional politicians were trained either by attending British Public Schools (independent private boarding schools that charged high fees) or by engaging in union activity. Thus, social class was a powerful variable in understanding political socialization, as well as in understanding other features of society. For the most part, pupils received their political education through their families, the media, or through the hidden curriculum of the school. As described by Ian Lister, “in the elite Public Schools, Eton and Harrow, for example, the select few—the silver spooners—learned leadership, and in the mass elementary schools the majority—the wooden spooners—learned followership” (Lister, 1987, p. 47). Whether one accepts the notion that the masses were prepared to be followers, it is clear that the vast majority of youth received their preparation for citizenship incidentally, rather than deliberately (Hahn, 1987; Lister, 1991).

Over the years, however, there have been brief periods when some people called for greater attention to citizenship education. For example, in the 1930s, the Association for Education in Citizenship was formed to prevent the rise of totalitarian tendencies that were becoming evident on the continent. However, the movement failed to have much sustained influence. In the 1970s the Politics Association and its offspring, the Programme for Political Education, promoted “political literacy,” which advocated the investigation of issues in school to counter the lack of political awareness in youth. The political literacy movement was followed in the 1980s by movements on the left for peace education, environmental education, and antiracist education which in turn were followed by countermovements against what the right called “appeasement education” and for a return to “the basics.”

The interest in citizenship preparation expressed during the political literacy movement was not heard in parliamentary debates over the “active citizen’s” role in the 1980s. Similarly, when the 1986 Education

Reform Bill, which instituted radical changes in the control of education, was debated, citizenship education was of little concern. Rather, the educational reforms focused on a redistribution of power. The previous autonomy of local education authorities diminished as schools were permitted to “opt out” of the local authority to become “grant maintained” and receive funding directly from the office of the secretary of state for education.

Whereas previously curricula were determined by individual school staffs and local authorities, under the 1988 Education Act all state schools became responsible for teaching a national curriculum and for administering national assessments at four key stages (ages seven, eleven, fourteen, and sixteen). The national curriculum includes the teaching of the specific subjects of history or geography, which were to be assessed at the four key stages. Citizenship was identified as a cross-curricular theme—along with environmental education and health education—to be infused into other subjects and not specifically assessed. Today the primary incentive for schools to provide citizenship education seems to be that teams of school inspectors for the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) look for evidence of social, cultural, moral, and spiritual development.

In the 1990s, several centers continue to support citizenship education by providing in-service training for teachers and developing teacher and student materials. The Centre for Citizenship Education at the University of Leicester, the Citizenship Foundation in London, and the Education Department at the University of York remain active in the area. The Politics Association is a professional association whose members tend to teach Advanced (A) level Politics to a relatively small number of students ages sixteen through eighteen. Their interest focuses on preparation for A-level Politics exams.

While not explicitly preparing youth for citizenship, British schools do send implicit messages about citizenship in a variety of ways. For example, elements of the ethos of the British school, such as the wearing of uniforms, the presentation of moral messages at daily (or, at least, twice weekly) assemblies, and schoolwide charity drives all carry civic messages. Additionally, a secondary school prospectus, which is given to visitors, typically says that all year 9 students follow a common curriculum that includes all subjects in the national curriculum (history, geography, maths, English, instructional technology, a foreign language, and science). In year 10, students begin their two-year “options” that prepare them for General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) exams (taken at ages fifteen to sixteen, replacing the old O-levels).

History and geography classes are the subjects in the national curriculum that might be expected to carry messages related to citizenship.

However, their purpose is primarily to teach the academic subjects, not to achieve another end, such as preparing citizens for democratic participation (Lister, 1991). In history and geography classes, teachers typically review material that is on the syllabus for the exam that the particular class will take. The history teachers I observed were masters at telling stories and historical anecdotes to hold their young pupils' attention. The geography teachers drew on their deep knowledge of the discipline to explain geographic theories and information such as that on energy use in Britain. Students take notes and "revise" (study) for exams given at the end of each year. Some schools require religious education or religious studies (RE/RS) as a separate subject for one or two lessons a week; others integrate it with personal and social education.

Many schools require in addition to national curriculum subjects one or two lessons per week (thirty-five to ninety minutes) in something called "personal and social education" (PSE). The course usually contains lessons in health, sex education, and careers preparation. It is not assessed; that is, one does not take a GCSE exam in PSE. As part of the course, year 10 students often have a week of work experience in a local business or service agency. Because much attention is given to career awareness and preparation for work, the course is often coordinated by the school's career officer, with teachers of all subjects teaching PSE groups.

PSE lessons tend to focus on personal decision-making. Photocopied exercises and videos are usually the stimulus for small group discussions. Typical lessons focus on identifying one's strengths and interests related to careers, equal opportunities and gender stereotyping, traffic safety, and alcohol and drug abuse. In some schools local Members of Parliament (MPs) are invited to be guest speakers when the students "do politics."

At both the independent "Public Schools" and state schools, exposure to controversial public policy issues occurs primarily in a course called General Studies (GS) for students who stay in school past age sixteen. Such a course, which, like PSE, is not usually assessed, is the one common experience for "sixth formers" (years 12 and 13, ages sixteen to eighteen), with the remainder of the two-year program devoted to preparing for A-level exams.⁶ Students hear speakers and discuss issues, but as with PSE usually each week's lesson focuses on a different topic. There are no textbooks, no homework, and for most students, no exams.

There is a strong pastoral system in British schools. Tutor groups are clusters of approximately twenty students under the responsibility of one teacher who provides student guidance, contacts parents, and often teaches the personal and social education component of the curriculum.

Because tutor groups are often the basis for personal and social education, a mathematics or foreign language teacher is as likely to teach the subject as is a history or health teacher. Often tutor groups elect members to a year or school council, which plans parties, raises money for charity, and discusses uniform, homework, and discipline problems. Some schools no longer have such councils.

Overall then, the citizenship education that does occur in British schools happens indirectly in the pursuit of academic and personal development goals. In such a context, it is not surprising that despite the Government policy that citizenship was to be a cross-curricular theme in the national curriculum, in my visits to secondary schools in 1993–96, no teacher mentioned the government publication on citizenship guidelines, and the publication was not visible in any of the classrooms I visited.

Denmark

Denmark, like the United Kingdom, is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government that has evolved over hundreds of years. However, in Denmark, unlike Britain, proportional representation, a multitude of political parties, and the need for compromise are important to the political context (appendix). Danish educational traditions, particularly with respect to citizenship education, are distinctly different from those of Britain as described in the last section.

Danish students attend a *folkeskole* until age sixteen, when they make the choice to stay an additional year, go to work, or begin their further studies in a commercial or vocational school or a *gymnasium* (academic, university preparation). The *folkeskole* law emphasizes that a primary purpose of the school is to model democracy in order to prepare citizens for participation and decision making. Toward that end, until 1994 there was, by law, a scheduled weekly class meeting in which students from the first grade on discussed and resolved class and school problems, heard from and advised their representatives to the student council, and decided on topics to be studied and methods to be used. Although in 1994 the law changed, no longer requiring a scheduled class meeting, the new law still encourages teachers to take advantage of every possible opportunity for student decision making. The student council has a budget from the school council or board. Further, the student council elects two student representatives to the school board. Student representatives have equal voice with the two teacher representatives and five to seven parents on the *folkeskole* board.

A pervasive atmosphere of participation and democratic learning is found in *folkeskole* classes. The classroom climate is generally relaxed:

students call their teachers by their first name, and students and teachers alike are frequently dressed in jeans and sport shoes. A class of students usually stays together with the same class teacher from the first through the ninth or tenth grade. However, it is not unusual for a class to have one main teacher through the primary grades and another in the upper grades. When the children are in the primary grades, their class teacher (with a support teacher for some lessons in some communities) normally teaches most of their lessons. As the students mature, specialist teachers begin to teach them in some subjects, and their class teacher teaches other students in his or her specialty subjects. Usually their class teacher continues to teach them in Danish and contemporary studies (a subject under the old law which focused on the investigation of contemporary issues) or social studies (the new integrated subject that draws on economics, politics, sociology, and international relations).

Using class meetings for deliberation and decision making, students in one *folkeskole* decided what topics to study in contemporary studies, planned their yearly class trips, and advised their school council representatives on such school issues as whether to use their money for a new bike shed or to repair damage to a building by some unknown student vandals. In prior years the students decided to conduct research on pollution in local lakes and to create peace games about environmental issues. At the end of the eighth grade, when they were to decide on the topics for contemporary studies in the ninth grade, students deliberated between studying about the conflict in the former Yugoslavia or the debate over the Maastricht Treaty. They decided to investigate the Yugoslavian conflict first and then Maastricht. Other classes decided to investigate the topics of video violence, drugs, and crime.

After grades 9 or 10, about 40 percent of Danish sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds enter a *gymnasium*, where they specialize in either a mathematics/sciences line or a languages line. Regardless of line or track, for three years students have three lessons in history each week; 20 percent of this class time is devoted to social science and 33 percent covers history since 1945. In both the mathematics and the languages line students may take social science at a medium or high level. Regardless of level, the social science courses must include attention to sociology, economics, political science, and international relations; and part of the course is based on a major social science investigation. Instead of attending a gymnasium, approximately 15 percent of students choose to take a two-year program to prepare for an (*Højere Forberedelseseksamen, HF*) exam that includes history and social science. In recent years, increasing numbers of students have begun to take another route of attending a commercial or technical school, in which they also take a course in social science in their first year. Those who take social science

at the medium level have four lessons a week in either the second or third year. Students who take the high-level course have five lessons a week in both their second and third year, and at the end they take a written examination in social science.

At one *gymnasium* about an hour from Copenhagen, a second-year medium-level social science class had decided in the spring of 1993 to investigate various aspects of the Maastricht Treaty, particularly as it was presented by the media prior to a second referendum. Two students compared the treatment in various newspapers, two others compared the Maastricht and Edinburgh versions of the treaty, and five others analyzed a survey they gave to students at two different *gymnasier*. At the same time, at another *gymnasium*, a high-level social science class did their social science project on topics related to socialization. They, too, divided into groups, with each group investigating a different issue related to the topic.

Students sitting in the commons area of one *gymnasium* with cups of coffee and cigarettes explained that their student council decided to sell condoms in machines in the bathrooms and on the location of the smoking areas in the school. The council also organized their school's efforts related to the annual work day, *Operation Dagsvæk* (Operation Work Day) in which students took a day from school to do jobs such as baby-sitting or helping with garden work to raise money for a cause. One year the money that was raised went to refugees and another to save the forests in Brazil. Until 1997 most *gymnasium* and HF students participated in the program. In preparation for the day, speakers from the receiving organizations visited schools and booklets were distributed that showed how the topic could be related to various school subjects.

Finally, before turning to other countries in the study, a few points should be noted about teacher education related to civic education in Denmark. Danish *folkeskole* teachers attend a *seminarium*, or teacher training college, in which they have courses that integrate content and pedagogy in social studies. They frequently conduct group projects. *Gymnasium* teachers attend a university, where they specialize in two subjects. In the past they did a six-month apprenticeship in a *gymnasium* before being hired as a regular teacher; today they are first hired and then do their apprenticeship. The preparation of teachers with specific training in social studies or social science is similar to that of teachers in Germany.

Germany

Much of the German context is similar to that of the other nations in this study, while some aspects are unique. For example, like the United

States, Germany has a federal system, which places the primary responsibility for education at the state level. Like the other European countries in this study, Germany has a Parliament. Part of one house of the German Parliament is elected by proportional representation, in contrast to Denmark and the Netherlands where proportional representation is used for all parliamentary, as well as regional and local, elections (appendix). The experience of the Nazi past and a desire never to repeat it influences much of the political system, as well as civic education, in Germany.

In Germany, primary responsibility for education lies with the individual states, or *Länder*, although the schools are financed mainly by local communities. Because education is a state responsibility, course titles and content, as well as organization of schools varies somewhat from one *Land* to the next. Despite much debate about comprehensive secondary schools and a period of trial in some areas, most *Länder* still have the traditional three types of schools for students after the fourth or sixth grade of the *Grundschule* (elementary). The leaving certificates for completing programs in these schools are given after grades 9, 10, and 13, respectively, and represent a hierarchy from least to most academic: *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*. Even in areas which have *Gesamtschulen*, or comprehensive schools, through grade 10, students are tracked for most of their classes by ability, and in grades 11–13 they take classes similar to British A-level classes while they prepare to take the *Abitur*—a rigorous academic examination. Students who successfully pass the *Abitur* are eligible for university admission.

Regardless of school type they attend or *Land* in which their school is located, all students take a course that includes civics instruction. They also have lessons in history, geography, and religion. In some *Länder* for grades 7–9 those subjects are integrated into a single course, usually called *Gesellschaftslehre* (social studies). In other *Länder*, *Sozialkunde* (civics) is taught in addition to history and geography. In grades 11–13, when students are preparing for the *Abitur*, the course is most often called *Gemeinschaftskunde* (social science) or “GK” and includes content from political science, economics, and sociology, with history and geography taught as separate courses. Whatever the form or title of the civic education course, its primary purpose is to prepare youth for their role as democratic citizens. The development of such courses was part of the massive reeducation or democratization that occurred after World War II. At the same time, most schools introduced student councils to give students practice in participating in democracy.

Social science, civics, and social studies courses, as well as history and geography, are taught by specialist teachers in Germany. Once they complete university degrees and undergo some professional preparation,

prospective teachers do their apprenticeship teaching in two areas of specialty in schools under the guidance of state officials. At the end of their university-based program and their apprenticeship, they take the civil service exams for teachers, exams containing written and performance parts.⁷ Because each candidate has two areas of specialty, such as history and social studies, social science and English, or geography and mathematics, individual backgrounds and teaching responsibility vary slightly.

Regardless of the school type I visited—*Realschule*, *Gymnasium*, or *Gesamtschule*—and whether it was in Hesse or Lower Saxony, I noticed that social studies/science lessons were usually based on a teacher-led recitation reviewing a photocopied article. Also prevalent was the practice of having a class discussion in which students identified opposing arguments on an issue. Examples of those practices are described in chapter 5.

When this research project began the most controversial issues in West Germany were security in the Cold War era and West Germany's position vis-à-vis East Germany and the Soviet Union. Needless to say, much has changed since then. In 1993–95 the topics that generated the strongest—and most divided—opinions from students were related to reunification and immigration policies. Additionally, in the 1990s, in the German schools I visited, students were deeply troubled by incidents against foreigners.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands, like Denmark and the United Kingdom, is a constitutional monarchy with the monarch serving as head of state and the prime minister, as head of the government. Like Denmark, the Netherlands has many political parties and assigns seats in legislative bodies at the local as well as national levels by proportional representation. However, in most other respects, the political system is unique (appendix). Similarly, the social and educational environments are unique, primarily due to the phenomena of *verzuiling* or “pillarization.”

The pillars or separate subcultures were Catholic, Protestant (including Dutch Reform, the orthodox Reformed, and other smaller Protestant churches), Socialist or Social Democrat, and Liberal. Catholic, Protestant, and Public (neutral) pillars had their own ideology, political party or parties, labor unions, employers' associations, farmers' groups, broadcasting stations, newspapers, health insurance programs, and schools from kindergarten to universities. In recent years there has been some discussion about the formation of a new Moslem pillar.

Although some see the pillars as a form of social apartheid in which

one interacts only with people of similar backgrounds and beliefs, others emphasize their stabilizing tendencies. For example Lijphart (1975) argued that the deep cleavages in society according to religion and social class did not threaten democracy because they were offset by “the politics of accommodation” at the elite level, resulting in a consensus or “consociational democracy.” That is, although the separate pillars stand apart, they are joined at the top by political leaders who make compromises to support the roof of Dutch society (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993, p. 35). The “Pacification of 1917” is viewed as the exemplar of this process. After seventy years of debate over the public funding of private schools and the Liberals’ desire to have universal suffrage, political leaders made an accommodation whereby both policies were implemented simultaneously. Although there are critics of Lijphart’s theory of consociational democracy, and the cohesiveness of pillars has been breaking down in recent years, still the Netherlands is a country of religious and political minorities (and recently ethnic minorities as well), whereby political leaders realizing they can not win a majority seek accommodation. That is important for understanding the context in which the political socialization of youth occurs.

Since the Pacification of 1917, full and equal funding by the central government is provided to private schools based on a specific ideology alongside nondenominational (neutral) public schools, administered by the municipality. About 70 percent of students attend private schools, with most attending Roman Catholic or Dutch Reformed Protestant schools and a small percentage of students attending Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu schools. The central Ministry of Education prescribes the subjects to be studied, the numbers of lessons to be provided, and the syllabi and attainment targets for national examinations—for both public and private education. Teachers in both publicly and privately run schools are paid by the central government based on the same salary scale for all (Hooghoff, 1995).

Dutch education is also influenced by the value that society places on high-quality work as reflected by the large investments in vocational education and the selective educational system which channels students toward various kinds of work. From age fifteen, students begin to attend different schools for vocational education (e.g., agricultural work, the trades, the service sector), general education, or preuniversity education. In recent years increased immigration is reflected in school enrollments at particular kinds of schools. For example, two schools with students enrolled in junior secondary vocational (*vbo*) and junior general secondary (*mavo*) programs in this study went from having fewer than 10 percent “foreigners” to 50 percent in the student population from 1986 to 1996. However, the preuniversity (*vwo*) schools and agricultural

schools I visited had very few immigrant students at either time period.

Civic education as a formal part of the curriculum is relatively new in the Netherlands. In 1968 *maatschappijleer*, or "study of society," was introduced for the purpose of social and political education. During the years of this study it moved from an experimental course to a compulsory non-examined course for students twelve to sixteen years old (for two lessons per week for one year or for one lesson a week for two years). Since 1990 it has also been offered (in a two-year course for four lessons per week) as an option for the national exam at the end of secondary school. My informants agreed that over its twenty-year history, however, the course remained a comparatively low-status subject and fewer than 10 percent of the schools offered it for the exam. One teacher explained that civic education is a cross-curricular responsibility. Not surprisingly, then, in 1996 and 1997 when a new "profile" system was adopted to be put in place for upper-secondary students (sixteen and older) there was debate about whether *maatschappijleer* would be required at all or in combination with history.⁸

In the Netherlands, I observed *maatschappijleer*, history, geography, and religion classes at a variety of school types: preuniversity (*vwo*), general education (*mavo*, *havo*) and vocational schools (*vbo*) including agricultural schools (administered by the Ministry of Agriculture rather than the Ministry for Education). The various school types serve secondary students from ages twelve through eighteen/nineteen and vary in the type of job or further education for which students are preparing, as well as the length of the program (for example, a four-year *mavo*, five-year *havo*, and six-year *vwo*). *Maatschappijleer*, history, geography, and religion were part of the general curriculum that all students took through the age of sixteen and which they could include as subjects for the examinations they took before leaving a particular school.

The central Ministry of Education produces subject guidelines for examination subjects, and at the beginning of each year announces which three topics will be covered on the *maatschappijleer* exam for that year. The examination subject thus has a fixed content consisting of six themes; one topic is always political decision-making, and the other topics change every two years. Because paperback books are available that address the topics covered for the exam, many teachers decide to use those same topics for the required course. From 1985–95 the topics covered included: political decision-making, criminality and justice, family and society (including socialization, family life, sex education), work and leisure, technology and society, the mass media, multicultural society, the environment, and international relations.

When *maatschappijleer* was first offered as a new subject, few teachers had specialist training. Since 1982, however, teachers of the

course have been expected to have specialist training, which includes both relevant content and pedagogical preparation. As late as 1991, however, only a minority of *maatschappileer* teachers had specialized in the subjects. Some had majors in history, geography, or religion, and 27 percent were "other" (Vis, 1991).

Many Dutch students told me that they were not interested in politics per se or said that it was too difficult to understand. However, the students showed considerable interest in social issues. For example, at all of the schools I visited in the Netherlands in 1993, students told me that they were concerned about the rising incidents of racism in Europe. Many had participated in a postcard-sending campaign initiated by the disk jockeys of a popular morning program of a radio station. The postcards said, "I am angry," and were sent to German leaders to protest the perceived growth of violence and racism against foreigners in Germany. By 1996 that particular issue had receded but others drew student attention in the Netherlands.

The United States

In classrooms across the United States, many students hear that the colonial experience instilled in the nation's founders a skepticism of strong central government, a skepticism reflected in the Constitution, and that the individualism fostered on the frontier and the challenge of bringing together immigrants from diverse backgrounds into a united nation all contributed to the development of American political culture. Those features are evident as one compares the political context (appendix) and citizenship education in the United States with the other Western democracies in this study.

From the time of Thomas Jefferson, American scholars, political leaders, and the public have emphasized that the future of democracy is inexplicably tied to the education of citizens. In the 1800s as public schooling spread, a primary function of education was to be the education of citizens. The great wave of immigration in the 1900s posed an important challenge to create out of a nation of immigrants one American. Despite the many failings of the myth of the melting pot, it is the case that a major task of the public schools in the United States was to prepare youth for their role as citizens.

Early in this century, representatives from academic disciplines such as history and progressives concerned about improving conditions for immigrants in the cities agreed that the schools should play a role in preparing citizens. An integrated social studies at the elementary school level and modern American history, civics, and a course called Problems of Democracy at the secondary level would play a special role in that

process. Throughout the history of social studies in the United States, there has always been disagreement over the relative emphases that should be placed on disciplinary knowledge, practice in reflective inquiry, and practical decision making within the social studies curriculum. Nevertheless, schools everywhere in the country teach social studies to prepare citizens for democracy.

With fifty different state departments of education and more than fifteen thousand local school districts setting curriculum policy, there is considerable variety in the particular content that students study at any point in their educational career. However, given the power of tradition, the dominance of textbooks that are produced by commercial publishers for schools all over the country, the national diffusion of innovations or “fads,” and the similarities in teacher training and public expectations, there is a remarkable similarity across the states and districts. The typical pattern is for primary grade children to learn several patriotic songs, to celebrate national holidays such as Presidents’ Day and Thanksgiving with art projects and stories, and to say a daily salute to the flag. Primary grade children often study about “community helpers,” such as the police and firefighters, and about the need for rules and laws. In grades 4–6, children are usually introduced to United States history and the basic principles of the Bill of Rights and the United States Constitution. Most high school students take a year-long course in United States history and a semester-long course in government (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).⁹ Courses in state history, economics, law, and civics are also prevalent in many states and further contribute to the civic education of youth in the United States.

In the United States, as in other countries, the hidden curriculum plays a role in citizenship education. A poster showing the presidents of the United States, a flag in the front of the room, and the national anthem being played at the beginning of high school football games are all familiar across the country. Most middle and high schools have student councils, and numerous after-school activities give practice in the associational life of democratic communities. The extent to which these features vary in different locales will be described in chapters 2 and 5 when discussing American students’ political experiences and perceptions of classroom climate.

Although we speak often of Western democracies, and it is expected that particularly those in the postindustrial societies of northern Europe and the United States are quite similar, there is much variety among their political systems and cultures (see appendix). At the same time that the forms of democratic structures and processes vary considerably, the cit-

izens of all these countries inherited enlightenment values of individual liberty and a belief in representative democracy where, ultimately, the people rule.

Moreover, for almost seventy-five years the five countries that are the focus of this study have had universal suffrage and for longer than that universal public education. During this period unique features of each national educational system evolved within shared ideas about the purposes and fundamental form of schooling.

The young people who are the subjects of this research grew up in these varied environments that have, at the root, shared political and educational values. They also participated in their own nation's form of civic education. At the same time, they were exposed to the global youth culture of music, dress, and cinema. They watched television coverage of the same politicians, wars, and environmental disasters. To what extent are their political attitudes converging? What insights can be gained by examining their attitudes with an eye toward improving citizenship education to ensure a healthy future for democracy everywhere? These issues are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Becoming Political: Adolescent Political Attitudes and Behaviors

Citizen participation in public affairs is at the heart of the democratic ideal. However, the form that participation is expected to take varies among democratic societies (see appendix), as does their approach to preparing young citizens for participation. Civic education in the five democracies that are the focus of this research was described in the first chapter to establish the varied contexts in which young people develop dispositions toward or away from participation. In this chapter adolescent political attitudes, behaviors, and expectations for future participation are compared.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Political socialization researchers have long been interested in the political attitudes and beliefs of young people for the presumed connection between those early attitudes and later adult behavior. Early researchers established two links in the chain between youth attitudes and adult behavior. The first was between adult political behavior and adult attitudes or beliefs. For example, adults who expressed a strong sense of political efficacy—a belief that citizen action can influence public policy—were found to be more politically active than adults expressing lower levels of efficacy; conversely those who expressed a low sense of political efficacy tended to be the individuals who were least likely to vote and be active in the political process in other ways (Almond & Verba, 1963; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1964).

The second important link established by researchers was the one that connected adult attitudes to attitudes formed early in life. That is, adult attitudes, including dispositions toward participation or alienation, were found to be related to attitudes and experiences in childhood and youth (Almond & Verba, 1963; Campbell et al., 1964; Langton,

1969). Further, recent longitudinal studies have demonstrated that political attitudes and behaviors of youth do indeed predict adult civic participation (Damico, Conway, & Damico, *in press*; Miller & Kimmel, 1997).

Since those early studies appeared some thirty years ago, scholars have conducted considerable research on the development of political attitudes and beliefs in young people. The research reported here is in that tradition, although, unlike early political socialization researchers, I do not assume that young people passively receive political messages from their environment. Rather, this study is consistent with constructivist theories, in that it illustrates that young people—often in dialogue with others—actively construct meaning of the political realm. As learners relate new information to prior knowledge and beliefs, they are able to assimilate some ideas into their existing mental framework. Sometimes, however, new information causes individuals to restructure their thinking to accommodate new information (Coles, 1986; Connell, 1974; Stevens, 1982; Torney-Purta, 1990, 1991). As I interviewed students for this study, it was clear to me that they constructed their political knowledge by making connections between what was taught in school; what they learned from their own experiences in the family, school, and community; and what they observed in the media and the wider political culture in their country.

In the tradition of earlier political socialization work, several key concepts are used in this study to explore students' orientation toward political participation. As Massialas wrote in 1972,

Political participation is the expected or actual involvement in political activity, including discussing political issues and attending meetings. *Political efficacy* is the belief or feeling that citizens have the power to influence decisions. *Political trust* is a feeling of confidence that one develops toward officials. (p. 4)

Additionally, the concepts of political interest and political confidence have been the focus of past research and are used here. *Political interest* is defined as a general interest in political matters. Political confidence grew out of the concept of efficacy. Because an individual might believe that citizens in the abstract can influence government, yet, at the same time, feel that he or she personally has little or no influence, scholars began to distinguish between those two perceptions by using a new concept, 'political confidence'. In recent research, political efficacy is reserved for beliefs about the political system's sensitivity to the will and actions of citizens;¹ *political confidence* is the term used to apply to beliefs about one's own influence on decisions made in the groups of which he or she is a part (Ehman & Gillespie, 1975).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON YOUTH POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Labeling the period since the 1970s a "bear market" in political socialization research, Cook (1985) called for renewed efforts to understand political socialization in light of new perspectives, such as schema and other constructivist theories. This study is an effort to address that need.

During the heyday of research on student political attitudes, researchers working in the United States identified a number of patterns in adolescent political development. For example, they found that American students' levels of political interest, efficacy, and confidence increased over the secondary school years. High school students' levels of political trust, however, appeared to decline from the idealistic, naive views of childhood (Ehman, 1980b; Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Merelman, 1971; Merelman & Mc Cabe, 1974).²

Political socialization research of the 1960s and 1970s was not restricted to the United States. British researchers found that in the United Kingdom, secondary school students' levels of political efficacy, trust, and interest were quite low (Stradling, 1975). Indeed, in one national study of British fifteen-year-olds, only 29 percent of students agreed that "politics was not too complicated to understand." In the same study, 55 percent of the secondary students surveyed said they were not interested in politics (Stradling, 1975).³

In Germany one researcher studying the political attitudes of secondary students found German students to be quite interested in politics (Krieger, 1986). The sampled German students, however, reported low levels of political efficacy. Nearly half of the twelfth graders surveyed said that people cannot influence political leaders by expressing their opinion, and half said that their own participation would not have much effect (Krieger, 1986). Yet, more than half of the students in the sample still said that people should do more than just vote; they said that people should also join political parties. Moreover, 86 percent of the sample students said that they would join a political group that looked out for their interest.⁴

In summarizing research published in the Netherlands in the 1980s, Dekker (1991) reported that among Dutch youth there was very little interest in national politics but some interest in international politics and certain issues such as disarmament. Further, one third had a low level of political efficacy, and half were politically cynical.

In the 1990s several studies examined Dutch students' political attitudes (Dekker & Portengen, 1995; Wittebrood, 1995). In a 1994 study of students from a nationally representative sample of 1444 Dutch secondary students, 35 percent of the students said that they were interested or very interested in politics, while 54 percent said they were not

(very) interested in politics. Many more, however, reported being interested in a variety of social issues. In the same study, a majority of students indicated general trust in politicians and feeling that people like the respondent have a say in what the government does. A clear third of the Dutch youth, however, did not think that people like themselves had any influence, and they were not trusting of politicians.

Unfortunately, we have very little data that compare students' political attitudes across national contexts. The major exception to that is the large cross-national study of civic attitudes conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in 1971. Using a two-step stratified, random sampling technique (student within school) the IEA researchers surveyed a representative sample of students in each of nine countries (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975). Questionnaire data were obtained from more than thirty thousand ten-year-old, fourteen-year-old, and preuniversity students and their teachers. Three of the countries that are the focus of this study—West Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States—participated in that project. The major finding of the IEA researchers was that "the widely-held objective of producing loyal, informed, critical, and actively participating citizens was not successfully attained in any of the [nine] countries." In some countries, such as the United States, there was strong support for the central government but below average support for democratic values, which included support for free speech and equality. In other countries, such as West Germany and the Netherlands, there was strong support for democratic values of tolerance and equality, but below average support for the central government.

In the IEA study, fourteen-year-olds from the United States were more likely than those in West Germany or the Netherlands to indicate that they thought of the government as friendly, warm hearted, and popular. Additionally, students in the United States, as compared to their Dutch and German peers, indicated a higher level of political trust; they were less likely to agree that "the government doesn't care about me and my family." Further, the American students, as compared to the Dutch and German students, were more likely to agree that the government was deserving of citizens' trust. Finally, students from both the United States and Germany showed much interest in discussing political issues with their friends and parents. In contrast, students from the Netherlands had little interest in viewing public affairs television programs, discussing political matters, or participating in civic activities (Torney et al., 1975).

Several other researchers, unlike the IEA researchers, used small nonrepresentative samples to look at student political attitudes in comparative perspective. In one study, researchers administered question-

naires to samples of convenience in England, West Germany, and the United States, as well as in Italy and Sweden (Farnen & German, 1972). The American students reported higher levels of efficacy and trust than the English students; they also gave more general support for democracy than did the English students. Similarly, in another study, researchers found that only 3 percent of the American seventeen-year-olds in their sample, as compared to 29 percent of English students said that government usually does more harm than good (Dennis, Lindberg, & Mc Crone, 1971). Further, more than half of the English sample aged eight to seventeen said that people could get along fine without government. The English students more than the American, German, or Italian students in that study characterized the government as making mistakes (Dennis et al., 1971).

In another study comparing political attitudes of twelfth-grade students in the United States and West Germany, researchers concluded that students in the two countries were equally supportive of conventional political participation, such as voting, attending local political meetings, campaigning, and contributing money to campaigns (Hepburn, Napier, & Cremer, 1990). However, the German students were more supportive of less conventional political participation, such as marches and demonstrations, than were the American students. Additionally, the German youth expressed less confidence in national politicians than did American youth (Hepburn, Napier, & Krieger, 1988). Compared to the American students, German students also were less likely to think that members of the national legislature listened to citizens.

In summary, much of the cross-national data available are more than twenty years old. When they were obtained, it appeared that students in the United States had comparatively high levels of political interest and political efficacy. They were also more trusting of government officials than were students from other countries—but even among samples of American students, levels of political trust declined over the secondary school years. British students appeared to be less politically interested, efficacious, and trusting than their counterparts in the United States. West German students revealed relatively high levels of political interest, but low levels of political trust and efficacy. Dutch students of 1971, as compared to British, American, and German students at the time, reported low levels of political interest. Unfortunately, I located no studies that indicated the relative position of Danish students on measures of political attitudes—an important omission in political socialization research, given the Danish emphasis on democratic participation in schooling and the wider political culture as noted in chapter 1 and the appendix.

One purpose of this study was to ascertain trends among youth of the 1980s and 1990s in Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States with respect to levels of political trust, efficacy, confidence, interest, intended future political participation, and political experiences. For that reason, questionnaires were administered to students in the four European countries in 1986 and 1993 and in the United States one year later, 1986-7 and 1994. Qualitative data were obtained by making classroom observations in 1986, 1993, and 1995 and by interviewing students and teachers in 1993 and 1995.

POLITICAL TRUST

In representative democracies where elected political leaders are expected to act on behalf of citizens, it is important that citizens perceive politicians to be honorable people with the best interests of their constituents at heart. However, in recent years the public has become quite cynical—the reverse of trusting. They are cynical not only about politicians but also about people in formerly respected occupations, such as medicine, the military, and law (Dalton, 1988; Lipset & Schneider, 1987). The general cynicism has been exacerbated with regard to politics by widely publicized scandals, such as Watergate and Irangate in the United States, and Tamilgate in Denmark. In such a climate, what attitudes are young people developing toward politics and government? That is one of the questions addressed in this study.

Political Trust: Survey Results

To answer that question, a Political Trust scale was included in the questionnaire that was administered in 1986 and 1993.⁵ The means for responses to the Political Trust scale in 1986 revealed very little variation across the samples from the five countries (effect sizes ranged from .07 to .26). Nevertheless, the means for the 1986 Dutch and American samples were comparatively high. In contrast, the means for both the 1986 and 1993 German samples were comparatively low. In 1993 the magnitude of the difference between the German students' means and the mean for the Dutch and Danish students was large (effect size 1.37 and 1.44), as can be seen in table 2.1

Looking at the item by item frequency distributions, it is possible to discern what is contributing to that pattern (table 2.2). As to whether or not students thought that "people in government can be trusted to do what is right for the country," in 1993 nowhere did more than a quarter of the students agree except in the Netherlands. There, a third of the students at both time periods said the people running the govern-

TABLE 2.1
Political Trust: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for
Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	Germany	England	Denmark	United States	Netherlands
Mean	2.67	2.74	2.79	2.84	2.85
(s.d.)	(.64)	(.66)	(.75)	(.66)	(.74)
n	147	344	311	374	249
England	.11 (.06)	—	—	—	—
Denmark	.17 (.12)	.07 (.05)	—	—	—
United States	.26 (.17)	.15 (.10)	.07 (.05)	—	—
Netherlands	.26 (.18)	.16 (.12)	.08 (.06)	.01 (.01)	—
	1993				
	Germany	United States	England	Netherlands	Denmark
Mean	2.28	2.42	2.52	2.84	2.87
(s.d.)	(.59)	(.63)	(.65)	(.68)	(.66)
n	506	1730	1055	475	305
United States	.36 (.15)*	—	—	—	—
England	.58 (.28)*	.22 (.09)*	—	—	—
Netherlands	1.37 (.56)*	1.02 (.15)*	.79 (.32)*	—	—
Denmark	1.44 (.59)*	1.08 (.44)*	.89 (.35)*	— (.03)	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that politicians and government officials can be trusted. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1420) = 2.539, $p = .04$; 1993 F (4, 4066) = 79.73, $p = .04$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate the internal consistency of the Political Trust scale were .78 for the total 1986 sample and .78 for the total 1993 sample. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .79, England .74, Germany .72, Netherlands .77, and United States .77.

*Significant at the .001 level.

ment can be trusted. However, equal percentages of Dutch students said the people in government cannot be trusted or said they were uncertain. As many as 60 percent of the German students said people in government could not be trusted. That was true for the 1986 sample as well as the 1993 one, so that it could not be simply attributed to promises and policies related to reunification. In the United States and England, per-

TABLE 2.2
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Trust Items

1. People who are in government can be trusted to do what is right for the country.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	35	38	26
1993	35	39	25
England			
1986	45	20	35
1993	56	30	13
Germany			
1986	62	19	19
1993	60	26	13
Netherlands			
1986	33	33	33
1993	32	35	33
United States			
1986	32	37	30
1994	51	34	14

2. Most people in the government are honest.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	27	38	34
1993	53	33	15
England			
1986	19	42	39
1993	56	34	9
Germany			
1986	20	51	28
1993	67	28	4
Netherlands			
1986	18	49	33
1993	38	49	12
United States			
1986	19	48	33
1994	63	29	6

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Trust Items

3. People running the government are smart (clever) and usually know what they are doing.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	37	28	33
1993	36	31	33
England			
1986	32	20	48
1993	42	31	27
Germany			
1986	38	34	27
1993	50	31	18
Netherlands			
1986	44	38	17
1993	46	35	19
United States			
1986	27	32	40
1994	36	32	30

4. People in government [do not] waste a lot of taxpayers' money.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	51	28	19
1993	34	36	28
England			
1986	67	24	12
1993	66	23	10
Germany			
1986	68	24	7
1993	77	19	5
Netherlands			
1986	32	50	17
1993	41	39	20
United States			
1986	63	27	9
1994	76	16	7

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Trust Items

5. I think that people in government care about what people like me and my family think.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	43	23	33
1993	29	32	38
England			
1986	51	22	27
1993	44	29	27
Germany			
1986	45	21	34
1993	54	22	23
Netherlands			
1986	41	26	30
1993	34	29	37
United States			
1986	37	29	33
1994	47	28	25

6. There are some powerful people in the government who are running the country and they [do] care about the opinions of ordinary people.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	34	23	42
1993	23	29	47
England			
1986	56	20	26
1993	49	28	23
Germany			
1986	26	31	43
1993	54	27	19
Netherlands			
1986	31	24	44
1993	25	24	51
United States			
1986	43	33	24
1994	60	25	14

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Trust Items

7. People in government care a lot about what all of us think.

Sample	<i>Strongly Disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> (%)	<i>Uncertain</i> (%)	<i>Agree</i> / <i>Strongly Agree</i> (%)
Denmark			
1986	58	28	13
1993	47	37	14
England			
1986	55	27	17
1993	52	32	15
Germany			
1986	75	13	12
1993	80	16	4
Netherlands			
1986	41	32	27
1993	39	36	24
United States			
1986	43	35	23
1994	53	34	13

* The wording of these items and direction of response has been reversed from the original questionnaires so that 1 = low trust and 5 = high trust.

Note: Sample *n*'s were Denmark 1986: 311, 1993: 305; England 1986: 344, 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 147, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 249, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 374, 1994: 1730.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off, thus the totals may not always equal 100 percent.

centages of sample students agreeing that people in government could be trusted to do what is right for the country declined from 1986 to 1993 by about 20 percent.

Perceptions of government honesty were no better. Everywhere, perceptions of honesty declined by about 20 percent from 1986 to 1993. In 1993, the only countries in which as many as 10 percent of sample students said most people in government are honest were in the Netherlands and Denmark, where still only 15 percent or fewer agreed that most were honest.⁶

When asked if students thought that people in government are smart (or in British English "clever") and usually know what they are doing, in 1986, 40 percent and 48 percent of the students in the United States and England, respectively, responded positively. However, the percent-

ages in those countries were lower in 1993, so that nowhere did more than one-third of the students agree that politicians know what they are doing. The German and Dutch sample students were the least likely to say that government officials are smart people and usually know what they are doing.

In terms of perceptions that government officials waste taxpayers' money, student views were again quite negative, with a majority of students in most countries agreeing that officials do waste money. Again, the countries in which there were the least cynical respondents were in the Netherlands and Denmark. Everywhere else, close to 70 percent of the students said governments do waste taxpayers' money.

Three items related to perceptions of government officials as caring about "people like me and my family," "ordinary people," and "all of us." To the first two items in 1993 Danish and Dutch perceptions were more positive than they were in the other three countries. Further, in those two countries the percentages of students with positive perceptions were greater in 1993 than in 1986. The trends were contrary to those in the other countries, where smaller percentages of students said government cares, and where the percentages were even lower in 1993 than they had been in 1986. In response to the third item about government caring, although the largest percentage of students reporting some trust in government was in the Netherlands, even there fewer than 30 percent of the sample agreed that the government cares about all of us. In response to these three items, the German students were clearly the most negative, with 80 percent of sample German students in 1993 disagreeing that "people in government care a lot about what all of us think." Furthermore, with the exception only of the Danish students, smaller percentages of students in 1993, as compared to those in 1986, said the government cared; the Danes were more likely to say they were uncertain as to whether or not people in government cared about citizens.

Another interesting point is that in England there was a difference in reported perceptions between the students in state schools and those in the British Public School (an independent boarding school) with regard to this set of items; state school students reported lower levels of trust than did students in the Public School. In 1993, 37 percent of the sample Public School students, compared to 22 percent of the state school students, agreed that "people in government care what people like me and my family think"; only 29 percent of the independent school students disagreed with that statement, as compared to 51 percent of the state school students. On the other two items, 10 percent more of the Public School students said the government cared than did the state school students.

Overall, the questionnaire responses are quite dismal. Although teachers, parents, and the public do not want students to be naive about people in government, most would like them to have at least a moderate level of respect for government officials. The depth of students' political cynicism as represented by the responses to the Political Trust scale is troubling. Few students have met any elected government officials, and they rarely hear adults talking about the good, hard working representatives. "Politics," "politicians," and "government" seem to be dirty words for many youth in this study, as was further illustrated by student comments in the various countries.

Political Trust: Qualitative Findings

Denmark When I talked with Danish students about their views of politics and government, several mentioned that they had heard of two scandals. In one, referred to as "Tamilgate," a minister was found to have not followed the law with regard to admitting Tamil immigrants from Sri Lanka. In the other case, the finance minister was accused of lying to a Parliamentary committee, which led to a no confidence vote in the *Folketing* (Danish Parliament). Not only did the minister have to step down, but a new Government based on a new ruling coalition was formed as well. Students followed those scandals in the news, where the focus is on bad things politicians do; the hard work of honest politicians is less likely to make headlines in Denmark as well as in the other countries of this study.

Despite some Danish students' awareness of scandals and their apparent influence on questionnaire responses, no cynical comments were initiated by Danish students in any of my discussions with them. Moreover, when public opinion was deeply divided over the Maastricht Treaty for European Union, only one Danish student cited that as any indication politicians were out of touch with the people.

In talking about politicians, one group of Danish students said:⁷

RASMUS. They aren't always honest, but they care about the workers.

SIGNE. They don't always say what they mean, but on the whole, they are good.

DORTE. In general I believe what they say. (Field notes, 4/24/96)

Student views in England were quite different.

England In England, when I asked students what they thought of when I said, "politics, politicians, and government," all referred to the television image of debates in the House of Commons. State school students said, "House of Commons, jumping up and shouting," (3/13/95) and "too much talking, you see it on the telly, they sit there for about four

hours talking about nothing" (6/19/95). A few English students also referred to general impressions that politicians were corrupt and they "say things, then end up doing something else." However, students seemed rather vague about any details and did not cite particular evidence.

Students in one working-class community, both on the questionnaire and in interviews, expressed especially negative views of government and politics. Two fifteen-year-old females commented thus: "They don't see what is happening. They ignore things that are important to people, not them, like little things," and "It's basically just about making money, and they don't help people out of work" (6/19/95). Roger mentioned a personal experience with an MP and the local council:

They say we'll do this and we'll do that, but they never do, so it's a waste of time. This is with the local council, I wrote to them for my grandmother, she's disabled, and to get the travel tokens, she asked me to write to the MP and I did, and he just totally ignored me and there's nothing you can do about it. I wrote three times but he never replied. (6/19/95)

Older students at a school in a middle-class community also reflected negative impressions of government and politics. Peter, a sixth-form student, reported that his A-level Classics class (in preparation for the advanced-level examination) studied about ancient Athenian democracy. Peter reasoned that any Athenian citizen could have a say, but

now a days, just a few decide things. The Government [Ministers] makes most of the decisions. I know the British Government isn't doing a particularly good job now. Our country is in a bit of a mess now and so is the Government. We need a system like with more referendums that is closer to democracy. (6/25/93)

At the British Public School, when I asked what students thought of politicians, they seemed slightly more knowledgeable about the political arena than most state school students, but they still had a generally negative view of politicians. Jonathan named not only Prime Minister John Major but also Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin, and Jacque Chirac as politicians who came to mind. Emma responded, "I think more about England, John Major, and the political parties." Sally went on to say that she thought some politicians were "trustworthy and hardworking, but you can't tell which ones." Allen added, "You hear all about the sleaze—in the papers." The other three agreed with him (6/8/95). Edward said simply, "corrupt," when I mentioned politicians, and Margaret added, "They're all rubbish." Edward further explained, "Now that we can see Parliament on television, we see them just sleeping or

shouting." Even Chris, who was interested in politics and followed political news said, "I have no respect for any of them, Major, Ashdown, or John Smith. . . . This country is in a mess—there's an increase in murder, they're closing the docks, there is unemployment everywhere, and none of them can do anything." As for local government, Chris explained, "It's my impression that they don't do anything." Despite his attitude toward the current state of affairs, Chris would consider joining a political party if they changed and "if I thought there was anybody who cared." To which Edward responded with apparent incredulity, "You must be joking!"

Germany When I asked German students what came to mind when I said "politics," "politicians," and "government," they usually said, Kohl, CDU, SDP, the Freidemokratische Party (naming the major political parties), "men in suits," "men in Bonn." Many also added negative comments describing politicians as being far removed from the concerns of the people, sometimes corrupt, and often making promises at election times that they do not keep. As one *Gymnasium* student, Jorg, explained:

There is a big distance between us and them. You see politicians on the news, but they are as far away from us as if it was four hundred years ago. And we can't believe in what politicians say. They said there would be no new taxes for the union of the east with the west of Germany, but now we have new taxes. (3/15/93)

His comments were echoed by other students who said "the parties in Bonn don't listen." "They say lots of things before an election, and after they say 'nothing can happen to me, so I don't have to do what I said I would'" (3/15/93). "The politicians say we have been elected for five years and so you have to be satisfied with what we do until the next election in five years" (3/17/93).

In every group of German students with whom I spoke some students associated politicians and political parties with broken promises. Several mentioned promises made by the Government before reunification, such as that there would be no new taxes in the west and that the economy in the east would improve to equal that in the west. Wolfgang vented about broken promises:

Parties say we'll do this [at the time of the election], then they do the opposite. Like they said there would be a place for every child in kindergarten, then they were elected, and they don't do it. And they said we need more teachers, then they are elected and now they say we don't have enough money to hire the teachers. And there was a decision about nuclear waste, but now the *Land* [state] says not here." (2/16/95)

In two *Realschule* classes students' cynicism did not extend to the local level. They did agree that "Kohl and the Government are not interested in what we think," but they said that local politicians and the new local political parties might be more responsive to public concerns "because they know you." "The big national parties have a responsibility for the whole society but you have the feeling that the local parties work for you, yourself, and your family." Gerd, a *Gymnasium* student had another view. He had been thwarted in trying to influence a decision of the local council, leading him to conclude that local politicians were as bad as those at the national level in thinking they could ignore public opinion between elections.

Several other comments made in one *Gymnasium* class in a *Kooperative Schule* with students of mixed ability are also relevant to political trust. "I can't trust any of the politicians in our government." "Many are corrupt." "We often have politicians who have done something wrong, for example, sell nuclear weapons to Iraq" (3/17/93).

Some German students voiced concern about the danger that could result when low levels of trust enabled extremists on the right to gain influence. "In the last election in one state, the big parties lost many votes. Many people didn't vote because there is much mistrust in the government, but the Republicans (right-wing extremists) voted and so they won." "We need a strong party to work with the problems of the economy, because when there is too much unemployment, people get frustrated and they become Republicans" (3/17/93).

The Netherlands When I asked Dutch students what they thought of when I said "politics, politicians, and government," most cited the prime minister (Lubbers and Kok were named at different times during the study), ministers in The Hague, political parties, *Tweede Kamer* (second chamber of Parliament), the queen. Corinne, one young woman, in a preuniversity school, explained, "they take care of people" (2/23/95).

Although some Dutch students associated broken promises with politicians, none mentioned any scandals, and no one was particularly negative toward politicians. Four fifteen-year-olds at a lower vocational (agricultural) school told me that most people in government are honest, commenting, "I hope so. We choose them, with the parties" (2/24/95). The four further disagreed that people in government don't care about ordinary people and explained that "people give them power, and they must think of people and the country. Because you vote on them." Only Daan acknowledged that "some politicians are corrupt," but then he referred to "ones in Belgium"—notably not in the Netherlands (2/24/95).

The theme of broken promises was voiced in the Netherlands, as it was in the other countries, but here it appeared to be a minority view. Piet said: "politicians sometimes make promises, like to rebuild the dikes, but they don't. Or the politicians said they would help education, but then they got in government and said they didn't have the money so they would cut education" (2/22/95).⁸

Adults attributed the generally positive view of politicians to several factors. Politicians were viewed not as "superstars" but rather as "normal people with normal houses and normal jobs." Even the queen was seen as being "like the rest of us." Perhaps that is why on the questionnaire Dutch students did not rate people in government low, thinking they are no more—or less—smart than average people. Several Dutch adults speculated that there had not been financial scandals because judges and politicians were well paid—or perhaps because the Protestants in power were somewhat puritanical.

Dutch students were not bombarded with negative images of politicians and government officials in the press, nor did they hear cynical comments from their families, so it is not surprising that on the questionnaires they appeared to be more trusting than students in other countries.

The United States To my question about what comes to mind when I say politics, politicians, and government, American students named Clinton, Gingrich, their state's governor, and sometimes a senator. The American teenagers also said they associated corruption, "cover-ups," and arguments with politics. Most, however, acknowledged that not all politicians were bad; that was just what they often heard in the news and from their parents. They mentioned Watergate and Whitewater, and in Massachusetts students mentioned the sexual scandals associated with the Kennedys and accusations against Clinton. Students said that local politicians were "okay" or said they "just don't think about them."

In the United States, as in Germany, the theme of broken promises was heard. Massachusetts students cited cuts in education despite earlier promises made by state legislators to support schools and California students said their governor "said he would cut taxes, but then he cut taxes for the rich and raised them for the poor people" (4/5/95).

One class of Missouri students said:

ELAINE. At first they are hard working, but then they want to get reelected, so they need money for campaigns.

GARY. Most aren't corrupt. But they get caught up when their priority is to get reelected.

MARK. Given the resources that are required, they take money from the AMA (American Medical Association), the tobacco industry, etc. (5/9/96)

Overall, then, the results obtained from the surveys that were administered to sample students in 1986 and 1993 with respect to students' levels of trust in government were reinforced by the qualitative data obtained in 1993–96. Students in all of the countries held politicians and government officials in generally low esteem. However, in Denmark and the Netherlands, students were less vehement about their political cynicism, particularly when compared with students in Germany and England.

Given the generally negative opinion that students have of people who hold political office, particularly their impression that many politicians do not care about people like them, it is somewhat surprising that many still believe it is worthwhile for citizens to try to influence public officials, as it appears that many do from their responses to questions about political efficacy.

POLITICAL EFFICACY

Political efficacy is perhaps the most studied of political attitudes. People who feel that citizens can influence political decision making are more likely to feel it is worthwhile to participate and be more inclined to do so than are people with a low sense of political efficacy (Campbell et al., 1964). Unfortunately, research on political efficacy has been somewhat confused by the problem that researchers have measured the concept in three distinct ways. Adults and youth have been asked if they think citizens in the abstract can influence political decision making, whether they think they personally can influence decisions, and whether politics is too complicated to understand or—like the weather—there is nothing one can do about it. In this study, Political Efficacy items were used to reflect the first of those meanings—a general belief that citizens are able to influence the decision-making process.⁹

Political Efficacy: Survey Responses

Examining means for responses to the Political Efficacy scale for sample students in 1986 and 1993, country differences are evident. Students from the United States and Denmark tended to report the highest levels of political efficacy, and students from Germany tended to indicate low levels of political efficacy. The magnitude of the difference between the means for German students and students from Denmark and the United States in 1993 was large (effect size 1.33 and 1.58), as can be seen in table 2.3.

By looking at the distribution of responses to each item, a more precise picture can be seen (table 2.4). The range of responses is most

TABLE 2.3

Political Efficacy: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	Netherlands	Germany	England	Denmark	United States
Mean	3.14	3.15	3.19	3.44	3.47
(s.d.)	(.73)	(.64)	(.57)	(.61)	(.58)
n	249	147	344	312	374
Germany	.01 (.00)	—	—	—	—
England	.09 (.04)	.07 (.04)	—	—	—
Denmark	.45 (.30)*	.47 (.29)	.47 (.25)*	—	—
United States	.51 (.33)*	.54 (.32)*	.49 (.28)*	.05 (.03)	—
	1993				
	Germany	England	Netherlands	United States	Denmark
Mean	3.00	3.23	3.25	3.40	3.47
(s.d.)	(.60)	(.51)	(.56)	(.56)	(.50)
n	506	1055	475	1730	305
England	.77 (.23)*	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	.82 (.24)*	— (.02)	—	—	—
United States	1.33 (.40)*	.54 (.17)*	.52 (.16)*	—	—
Denmark	1.58 (.47)*	.81 (.24)*	.76 (.23)*	— (.07)	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that citizens can influence government decisions. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1421) = 19.916, $p = .000$; 1993 F (4, 4066) = 65.147, $p = .000$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Political Efficacy scale were .64 for the total sample in 1986 and .62 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .58, England .59, Germany .69, Netherlands .62, and United States .66.

*Significant at the .001 level.

apparent with regard to the item that reads, "The way people vote is important to deciding how things are run in this country." In all countries except Germany, about 70 to 80 percent of students at both time periods agreed that the way people vote has some influence. The majority of German students in both the 1986 and 1993 samples, however, did not agree.

TABLE 2.4
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Efficacy Items

1. The way people vote is important to deciding how things are run in this country.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	10	10	80
1993	4	10	85
England			
1986	11	10	78
1993	9	15	76
Germany			
1986	55	18	27
1993	39	23	37
Netherlands			
1986	15	15	69
1993	16	11	73
United States			
1986	8	10	81
1994	11	13	76

2. People like me and my parents can influence political (government) decisions.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	42	27	30
1993	30	35	33
England			
1986	51	30	19
1993	45	35	19
Germany			
1986	69	11	21
1993	68	13	19
Netherlands			
1986	32	45	21
1993	37	35	28
United States			
1986	31	39	29
1994	31	34	35

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.4 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Efficacy Items

3. My family does have a say about what the government does.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	36	25	38
1993	28	31	40
England			
1986	36	27	37
1993	34	29	36
Germany			
1986	48	16	35
1993	53	22	25
Netherlands			
1986	36	30	34
1993	36	29	35
United States			
1986	23	30	47
1994	26	27	47

4. When we become adults we will have much say about how the government runs things.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	25	22	51
1993	22	29	48
England			
1986	35	27	37
1993	30	33	36
Germany			
1986	27	18	55
1993	30	23	46
Netherlands			
1986	33	23	43
1993	34	30	36
United States			
1986	15	18	67
1994	20	21	59

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.4 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Efficacy Items

5a. Voting and joining pressure groups are effective ways for people like me and my parents to have a say about how the government runs things.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1986	12	36	49
England 1986	19	34	46
Germany 1986	23	19	57
Netherlands 1986	16	36	48
United States 1986	11	35	54

5b. Joining pressure groups and giving them money are effective ways for people like me and my parents to have a say about how the government runs things.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	42	36	20
England 1993	35	39	25
Germany 1993	33	33	33
Netherlands 1993	26	48	24
United States 1994	38	41	19

6. A government policy can be changed if enough people tell government officials they disagree with it.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	7	13	77
England 1993	11	33	55
Germany 1993	17	26	56
Netherlands 1993	10	29	61
United States 1994	12	25	63

(continued on next page)

As to whether "People like me and my parents can influence political decisions," and "My family does have a say about what the government does," the percentages of students everywhere and at both time periods were about equally distributed between those who agreed, dis-

TABLE 2.4 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Efficacy Items

7. Citizens can influence decisions made by government by signing petitions or joining a demonstration.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	10	18	71
England 1993	14	23	61
Germany 1993	17	27	55
Netherlands 1993	12	26	62
United States 1994	9	16	74

* The wording of these items and the direction of the responses have been reversed here from the questionnaire so that 1 = low efficacy and 5 = high efficacy as with the other items on this scale.

Note: Sample n's were Denmark 1986: 312, 1993: 305; England 1986: 344, 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 147, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 249, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 374, 1994: 1730.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off, thus the totals may not always equal 100 percent.

agreed, or were uncertain. Nevertheless, the largest percentage of students reporting that their family does have a say were from the United States, where 47 percent agreed. On the other hand, the German students were the most likely to disagree that people like themselves and their parents could influence political decisions, with 69 percent in 1986 and 68 percent in 1993 disagreeing.

It is interesting that in each country but England, students seemed to be more optimistic about their eventual influence than they were about their families' current ability to influence political decisions. Once again, the American students reported the most optimism, with 67 percent in 1986 and 59 percent in 1994 agreeing that "when we become adults we will have much say about how the government runs things." Somewhat surprisingly, in Germany as well as in Denmark, close to half of the sample students agreed that they would have an influence as adults; however, in both countries a quarter disagreed. In England and the Netherlands,¹⁰ students were almost equally divided as to whether they would, or would not, or were uncertain as to whether or not they would have influence.

In 1986 one item referred to the efficacy of both voting and joining pressure groups, with half of the students in each country saying they

agreed with the statement that "Voting and joining pressure groups are effective ways for people like me and my parents to have a say about how the government runs things." About a third in each country were uncertain, except in Germany where a majority agreed. Because combining voting with pressure groups could have caused some confusion, in 1993 those activities were separated. A new item asked about the effectiveness of joining pressure groups and giving them money. Still, well over a third of the students were uncertain about that; Dutch students expressed the most uncertainty. Only in Germany, where environmental interests formed the Green Party and successfully won seats in Parliament, did as many as a third of the students say that pressure group activity might be effective. However, similar percentages disagreed that pressure groups could be effective or said they were uncertain. That is, in Germany, students were as likely to agree that pressure groups could be effective as they were to agree that voting could be, whereas in the other countries, far more students said voting could be effective than said pressure groups were effective means to influence political decisions.

In 1993 two new items were added to the scale. Students were asked if they thought government policies could be changed if enough people would tell government officials they disagree with them and if they thought citizens could influence decisions by signing petitions and joining demonstrations. More than 70 percent of sample students in Denmark agreed with both of those statements. More than 70 percent of the students in the United States agreed that signing petitions and joining demonstrations was effective. Although students were not quite as positive in the other countries about the effectiveness of these activities, still more of them agreed than disagreed with those statements.

Overall, youth seemed to think that citizens in the abstract can influence public policy making, and they were optimistic about their own influence in the future. However, they expressed some doubts about the influence of their family on government decision making at the present time. As they considered various dimensions of citizen influence on policy making, American students and Danish students reported the highest levels of efficacy and the German students the lowest. Listening to comments from students revealed more about those attitudes.

Political Efficacy: Qualitative Findings

Denmark All of the Danish students with whom I spoke said they would vote, saying such things as, "If you don't vote, you can't complain" or "You can't change things." Some Danish students also said that they thought citizens could influence government decisions by joining

demonstrations and interest groups. As Ole explained, "You can't influence just as an individual, but when people get together in groups they can" (4/25/96). Further, Jytte said, "for example, people protested about the French exploding nuclear tests in the South Pacific, and the Government [Ministers] followed and then pressured the French to stop. I don't think the Government would have done that if people hadn't protested" (4/24/96). Some mentioned joining political parties as another way to exert influence, but only one or two said they would join parties.

Although on the questionnaires and in conversations Danish students said that citizens can influence government decisions, one of the major factors contributing to their skepticism about the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 was their worry that a small country like Denmark may not have much influence in the international arena. However, in answer to one student's feeling that "I don't think we will have much influence in the community," another said:

Because we voted no in June, changes have been made, like in the ECU and the army (permitting Denmark exemption in the common monetary and defense policies). It was changed in Edinburgh so we do have influence and it's better now, but I worry that in the future we won't have so much influence. (4/2/93)

England When asked about their attitudes toward politics and government, English students typically responded as one young man did: "It's too complicated. When you see it on the telly, you haven't got a clue about what they are talking about" (6/19/95). Also English students would refer to what they perceived to be constant fighting among the political parties, as if policy were determined by the political party struggle rather than by citizens giving direction to their representatives.

At the school in the working-class community, all of the students I spoke with said that people like themselves and members of their families did not have any influence on what government decides. Several said they weren't likely to vote, or were uncertain if they would, because "I don't know why bother" or "I don't understand what it is about." When I asked if any of them would ever write to an MP, they all agreed they would not. Roger cited his experience in trying to get an MP and the local council to get his grandmother's bus tokens, claiming he had been ignored, so "it's just a waste of time" (6/19/95).

Even among sixth-form students in a middle-class community, students were not sure if they would vote, because "nothing really changes" and "I feel I don't know enough. I wish I knew more" (3/13/95). When two young women at their school complained about the lack of leisure facilities for young people and poor public transportation in their area, I asked if they had thought about going to the local council about the

problems. They responded: "There's not much point. They wouldn't do anything. Their children go to the private schools" (6/25/93).

Responses were different, however, at the British Public School, where all of the students told me they expected to vote and said that people like them and their families could influence public policy. Jonathan explained, "but then people like us are pretty privileged" (6/9/95). Chris, Jonathan, James, and Katherine said they might write to an MP if they cared about something. Sally and Margaret said they knew that some people write to their MPs, but they didn't think they would be likely to. When I asked if they might demonstrate or join an interest group, two student responses were typical of others at their Public School. The demonstrators "go over the top" and demonstrating is "not a done thing" (6/9/95).

Germany German students were divided about whether or not citizens could influence policy making. Often they placed an emphasis on the point that one person cannot have much influence, rather than on the idea that many citizens acting together might have some influence. Typical of comments I heard in many classes, were these two dialogues,

I don't think we have any influence.

Sure you have influence. You can vote for parties and go to party meetings.

Yes, of course, you can have some influence, but not much.

One vote more or less does not matter. (6/13/95)

People can't do much about politics. When you are just one person you can't do much.

If you join protests and march then you can influence.

If you vote then you can influence.

But with so many million voters, one can't have any influence.

If everybody thinks like that nothing will change, then we can't have influence. (2/18/95)

Several different reasons were given by German students as to why they felt that citizens could not have much influence: elections occur only every four or five years; once elected, politicians feel they can do what they want until the next election; there isn't a significant difference among political parties; Europeans have tried democracy many times before and have been disappointed. The last perspective may be rooted in the students' knowledge of the failure of the Weimar Republic prior to the Third Reich.

Despite what appeared to be a low sense of efficacy among many German students, virtually everyone said that still they would vote because "it's your duty," "everyone does it," or "if you don't, then the right could come to power." One teacher, Mrs. Meyer, said, "Of course students say they will vote, because it's easy. You just have to walk

around the corner and place three crosses" (for the party or individual running in a particular local, state, or general election) (9/1/96).

A few German students revealed more optimistic views about their ability to influence local than national decision making. For example, two girls explained: "Now there are many new political parties in our area at the local level. Some are working on saving birds, some are concerned about developing a commercial area, and some are saving villages," and "I think there is a greater ability to work on the local level" (5/17/93). However, for one student at least, personal involvement in local politics appeared to have reduced his sense of efficacy. Gerd, a *Gymnasium* student mentioned earlier, became less efficacious as a consequence of working with a local group to influence a decision about the location of an autobahn and became discouraged because the local council seemed to have ignored the group's objections. "It's no use, nothing happens," he explained, "the politicians say we have been elected for five years and so you have to be satisfied with what we do until the next election in five years" (3/15/93).

In all of the German schools I visited between 1993 and 1996, students said they were worried about recent attacks on foreigners. When I asked if they thought there was anything they could do about it, one boy answered, "I don't know what I can do; they are so violent," but a girl said she went to a concert in Frankfurt against racism, and another girl reported that she joined a demonstration in her town (5/19/93). In another class, when students expressed concern about racism, I asked if there was anything they could do to influence their government to do anything about that; a third boy said: "Yes. I go to demonstrations and write letters" (3/15/93). Two boys at that school had worked with a church group to talk to young children about the evils of racism (3/15/93). At another school nearby a boy said, "It's necessary to talk to those people, to see what their reasons are, then try to talk to them about it," and a girl in the same class added, "If any of them says in public right-wing views, then it's important to say, I disagree with you. It's important for us to speak up" (5/18/93).

Thus, in interviews German students reported generally low levels of efficacy vis-à-vis citizens' influence on government policy making, which they perceived to occur in Bonn. However, the German students did not sound powerless. Many said that people could have influence through pressure groups and through actions at the local level. Moreover, many of the students had already exerted action that they hoped would counter racism and xenophobia. As one German educator explained, "Although young people are not interested in joining groups to influence policy, they do individually respond to opportunities for action, as when demonstrations are called" (9/2/96).

The Netherlands Most of the Dutch students with whom I spoke said they thought citizens' votes did make a difference in determining public policy. Many also said that participating in demonstrations or strikes and joining pressure groups could be effective.

All but three of the Dutch students said they planned to vote. Several fifteen-year-olds reasoned, "it's important for the country, the people have to decide," and "you can say something that way, to have a voice, if you vote your own party" (2/24/95). Marian, an eighteen-year-old explained, "It's your duty." Femke added: "I think it is important to tell your opinion, to have my vote listened to. We have many parties and there is a big contrast between right and left. I am left" (2/24/95). The three students who were the exceptions and said they would not vote were eighteen-year-old males who said they were not interested. One added, "You can vote for people who have the same ideas the voters have, but they can always do something else" (2/23/95). Several Dutch students emphasized that voting is important because "If you don't vote, then you can't have influence. There is here CD [far right opposed to immigration of foreigners]. If many people vote for CD then the government will think about it. So it's important to vote for the other parties if they don't agree with CD" (2/22/95).

Because of the system of proportional representation used in the Netherlands, voting determines the allocation of parliamentary seats to various political parties. Consequently, MPs do not represent specific districts or constituencies, and citizens would not have a particular MP to contact to express their view. Rather, individuals or groups might lobby with leaders of political parties to try to influence legislation. That was done by some *maatschappijleer* advocates before the course was made a requirement in the national curriculum. However, students did not seem to think of that kind of action as something that many citizens were likely to do.

In June of 1993 everywhere I went in the Netherlands, students explained that "The Breakfast Club on the morning radio started a campaign after the Turks were killed in Solingen [Germany, May 29, 1993] to send cards to the German government to say 'I'm angry.' You can get the cards in the supermarkets and everywhere." All of the students seemed to know about the cards, but only a few had actually mailed them.

Henk, one student at a Dutch agricultural school, complained: "The Government has brought foreign people here and now they have to care for them. I don't blame the people. But the government is responsible for all. They should do the same for their own people." I then asked the students if they could influence such decisions. To which one student responded, "When enough people feel that way, like with the cards, but alone I can't do anything" (6/29/93).

Several Dutch students said they thought strikes and demonstrations

were effective means of expressing an opinion. Some had gone on a demonstration to protest the proposed cuts in transportation tokens (subsidies) for students over eighteen. Those who had not gone on the demonstration still seemed to think it was an effective means of protest. Students at one school (*a mavo*) with a large immigrant population, said they would be willing to demonstrate against racism. Students at other schools mentioned recent strikes by bus drivers and construction workers; they seemed to think those were effective ways for workers to influence policies that affected their salaries, pensions, and working conditions.

The United States Most of the students I spoke with in the sample schools in the United States said that they believed citizens can have an influence on public policy, and they supported their view with examples, such as the Brady Bill (citizens organizing and influencing Congress to put some limits on handguns) and people protesting for and against abortion rights. At the Massachusetts school, students also cited local actions: "Kids got rid of cigarette machines"; local citizens kept a race-track out of their area; and other issues were resolved by citizens at town meetings, a characteristic of New England towns. In a California school, Ron, a twelfth-grade student, said, "Yeah, I think citizens can have influence, through labor unions and giving money" (4/4/95). None of the students with whom I spoke in the United States said that voting or joining interest groups was a waste of time. Some recognized that officials may not always act as you wanted them to, because they were elected by people with diverse goals, but as Ken said, "Most politicians go by what the public wants" (4/5/95). Several students said they would write letters to Congress about an issue they "cared about."

Once again, the qualitative data reinforced findings from questionnaires and revealed particular meanings for students in specific contexts. Students in the United States and Denmark reported the highest levels of political efficacy, citing instances of citizen action influencing public policy. In England, students in a working-class community clearly saw themselves as less efficacious than did students in a British Public School. In Germany, many students emphasized that one person or one person's vote has little influence on politicians in Bonn. Nonetheless, German students cited examples of citizen activism influencing local policies and many asserted the importance of citizens taking action to fight racism and xenophobia among other citizens.

POLITICAL CONFIDENCE

Political confidence is a relatively new concept that has grown out of the need to distinguish between a belief that in the abstract citizens

can influence decisions and confidence in one's personal ability to influence decisions in the groups in which one participates.¹¹

Political Confidence: Survey Responses

Examining means for responses to items on the questionnaire designed to measure political confidence reveals that the differences between sample means were quite small. Nevertheless, in 1986 the means for samples from the United States and Denmark were higher than for students from England (effect sizes .58 and .32). The 1994 American sample mean was considerably higher than that for sample students from the Netherlands (effect size 1.33) and Germany (effect size .87), as can be seen in table 2.5.

Looking more precisely at the percentage distribution of responses by item, that same pattern is evident, as can be seen in table 2.6. Responding to the central statement, "I am able to influence decisions in groups," in both 1986 and 1993, no more than 22 percent of students, across all the countries, reported they could not influence decisions. Although the smallest percentages of students indicating political confidence on this item were from the Netherlands both times, a larger percentage of Dutch students in 1993 than in 1986 said they could exert influence.

Across the five countries, smaller percentages of students agreed with the statement, "Although it is not the most popular thing to do, I can often get my way in groups." Even among the samples from the United States and Germany, who had the largest percentages agreeing, only 51 percent or fewer agreed. Again, the 1986 Dutch students expressed the least confidence in getting their way in groups.

The statement "I am the kind of person who is able to influence others in decision-making situations" generated less agreement from the 1993 samples than it did from the 1986 samples—with the only instances in 1993 in which a majority agreed coming from the United States and the British Public School. In both Germany and the Netherlands, a sizable 30 percent fewer students agreed with this statement in 1993 than did in 1986—an apparent inconsistency with responses to the first item.

Moving to a clearly political context, the questionnaire asked students to agree or disagree with the statement "I am the kind of person who can influence how other people decide to vote in elections." Only for the 1994 sample from the United States did as many as a quarter of the students say they could influence how others voted, and even then more students said they were uncertain about their influence. Another similar item was added to the 1993 scale: "I can convince others to sup-

TABLE 2.5
Political Confidence: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for
Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	England	Germany	Netherlands	Denmark	United States
Mean	2.88	2.98	2.99	3.05	3.19
(s.d.)	(.50)	(.60)	(.45)	(.57)	(.57)
n	344	147	249	311	374
Germany	.19 (.11)	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	.23 (.12)	.02 (.01)	—	—	—
Denmark	.32 (.17)*	.12 (.07)	.12 (.05)	—	—
United States	.58 (.31)*	.36 (.21)*	.38 (.19)*	.25 (.14)*	—

	1993				
	Netherlands	Germany	England	Denmark	United States
Mean	2.88	3.06	3.15	3.18	3.39
(s.d.)	(.65)	(.60)	(.60)	(.59)	(.64)
n	475	506	1054	305	1730
Germany	.47 (.18)	—	—	—	—
England	.72 (.28)*	.25 (.10)	—	—	—
Denmark	.78 (.30)*	— (.12)	— (.02)*	—	—
United States	1.33 (.51)*	.87 (.33)*	.61 (.23)*	.55 (.21)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that one can influence decisions in groups to which one belongs. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1420) = 15.91, $p = .000$; 1993 F (4, 4065) = 79.792, $p = .000$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate the internal consistency of the Political Confidence scale were .69 for the total sample in 1986 and .84 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .82, England .82, Germany .79, Netherlands .77, and United States .86.

*Significant at the .001 level.

port candidates I am supporting for elections." Although the percentages agreeing were slightly larger than for the previous item, still most students were uncertain. Only in the United States did as many as one-third of sample students agree that they could influence others to support their candidates.

Students were asked also to speculate about whether they would be

TABLE 2.6
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Confidence Items

1. I am able to influence decisions in groups.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	8	21	70
1993	4	20	74
England			
1986	17	36	47
1993	10	32	57
Germany			
1986	20	23	57
1993	18	28	52
Netherlands			
1986	22	54	24
1993	20	36	44
United States			
1986	12	25	62
1994	8	21	70

2. Although it is not the most popular thing to do, I can often get my way in groups.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	21	43	35
1993	18	38	43
England			
1986	35	32	33
1993	22	40	37
Germany			
1986	25	32	41
1993	15	34	51
Netherlands			
1986	57	29	14
1993	44	36	19
United States			
1986	22	37	41
1994	16	35	48

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.6 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Confidence Items

3. I am the kind of person who is able to influence others in decision-making situations.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	15	25	60
1993	19	39	41
England			
1986	23	27	50
1993	16	38	45
Germany			
1986	11	15	74
1993	25	33	41
Netherlands			
1986	10	29	60
1993	30	39	31
United States			
1986	14	29	57
1994	13	31	55

4. I am the kind of person who can influence how other people decide to vote in elections.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	54	30	14
1993	37	45	17
England			
1986	52	38	10
1993	33	48	17
Germany			
1986	58	20	22
1993	42	46	12
Netherlands			
1986	41	55	5
1993	49	37	13
United States			
1986	31	46	23
1994	22	46	32

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.6 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Confidence Items

5. I can convince others to support candidates I am supporting for elections.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	23	54	22
England 1993	25	51	23
Germany 1993	31	51	18
Netherlands 1993	40	46	13
United States 1994	18	42	39

6. If I joined a political (party) organization, I would be the kind of member who is able to change people's minds on important issues.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	28	44	25
1993	25	49	25
England			
1986	26	43	30
1993	14	51	35
Germany			
1986	35	39	25
1993	19	47	32
Netherlands			
1986	11	54	36
1993	16	35	49
United States			
1986	15	40	44
1994	13	36	51

7a. I can have much influence on how other people live.*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1986	49	22	27
England 1986	48	29	22
Germany 1986	48	14	40
Netherlands 1986	33	44	21
United States 1986	40	26	34

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.6 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Confidence Items

7b. I can usually persuade others to agree with my opinions about political matters.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	27	52	20
England 1993	22	51	26
Germany 1993	31	42	26
Netherlands 1993	40	43	16
United States 1994	17	43	39

8. I can be effective in political situations (influencing decisions made in school and community).

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1986	32	37	29
England 1986	40	43	16
Germany 1986	40	29	31
Netherlands 1986	11	57	33
United States 1986	26	46	27

* The direction of the responses have been reversed here from the questionnaire so that 1 = low confidence and 5 = high confidence as with the other items on this scale.

Note: Sample n's were Denmark 1986: 311, 1993: 305; England 1986: 344, 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 147, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 249, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 374, 1994: 1730.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off and missing data are not reported on the tables so the totals may not always equal 100 percent.

able to change people's minds on important issues if they joined a political organization. Close to 40 percent of students in all of the countries said they were uncertain about this. Nevertheless, the students from the United States were still more likely than students in other countries to agree that they might be able to change opinions.¹²

Summarizing the survey results in terms of student political confidence shows that a majority of students, except in the Netherlands, reported they were confident of their ability to influence decisions in general. However, when the decision to be made had a clearly political

content, then students were less certain of their influence. With regard to some aspects of political confidence, larger percentages of students in the United States reported influencing group decisions as compared with smaller percentages of students in the Netherlands. Moreover, despite their comparatively low levels of reported efficacy when asked about citizens' influence on politicians, the German students in the study did not express any less confidence than students in other countries in their own ability to influence decisions in the groups of which they are a part. Finally, looking at the English student data, broken down between state schools and the independent school, from 10 percent to 20 percent more of the students in the Public School than those in the state schools said they could influence decisions in groups.

Responses to political confidence measures may be attributable to a confluence of cultural and school experiences. For example, students in the United States as well as in Denmark often do group work in their social studies classes, whereas that was quite rare in the Dutch *maatschappijleer* classes I observed. Further, the American emphasis on individualism, the frontier experience, and the "American dream" that inspired immigrants contribute to what some would say is an inflated naive belief in individual ability to influence events. American students thus receive cultural messages saying they can make a difference, and their school experience has to some extent reinforced that experience. The Danish students have the most group decision-making experiences in school; consequently a characteristically Danish optimism may be tempered by the realism of experiences in which sometimes they do and sometimes they do not influence others. Indeed, perhaps the reason that large numbers of students in all countries responded "uncertain" to the confidence items is because in the give and take of democratic decision making they find that sometimes they do have influence and other times they do not. The explanation for the comparatively low levels of confidence among the Dutch students is apparently attributable not only to their lack of much experience in group decision making in school, but also to the fact that they learn in their culture that it is not right to try to persuade or influence others to your position—as will be seen from student interviews in the next section.

Political Confidence: Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data shed some light on why Dutch students in the 1993 sample scored lower on the Political Confidence scale than did students in the other countries. Like students in the other countries, Dutch students reported that they did have some influence on groups in their school, and their self-esteem did not seem to be any lower than that of students in

other countries. However, unlike the German eighteen-year-old who told me if a topic interested him, he would "find some arguments to try to change their minds" (3/3/95), the Dutch students said if their ideas differed from others' they would not try to persuade the others to their view. Students in the middle general secondary school explained to me that it would not be right to try to influence others to your opinion, "because everybody must have his own opinion about something." They said they would not try to persuade others to support the same political party as they were because "everyone thinks different . . . it's just your own choice, your own way . . . it's the Dutch way" (2/22/95). Even an adult who was a political activist and put up posters for his party during a provincial election told me that although his friends discuss politics in the pub, they never try to persuade one another to their view. He speculated that norm might come from the traditional emphasis on religious toleration and ensuring that everyone's religious beliefs are respected. The importance of that was reinforced by the negative experiences during the five years of occupation by German Nazis and reaction to their indoctrination programs. "Pillarization" (see chap. 1) may also contribute, as one's political beliefs tended to correspond to those of others in the same pillar (Protestant, Catholic, or nondenominational) and were not likely to change in a discussion. These cultural norms are reinforced by the Dutch Constitution's first amendment, which asserts the importance of respect for all, regardless of religion, race, gender, and sexual preference.

In contrast to that tradition in the Netherlands, where I never observed students in class trying to persuade others to their point of view, in the United States and Germany I frequently observed students in whole class discussions or recitations try to persuade one another to their views. I also observed that in the General Studies class at the British Public School where sixth formers (sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds) were expected to air their opinions on diverse issues. However, I did not see such discussions in English state schools. Also, I did not see them in England in any classes, such as history, in which the primary purpose was to prepare for examinations.

Dutch classes differed from those in other countries, not only with regard to discussion and persuasion, but also in relation to the use of small groups. I never observed or heard of Dutch students working in small groups in class.¹³ I also observed group work only infrequently in German schools, and then only with students in the tenth grade or earlier. In contrast, Danish students frequently worked in groups to design and execute research projects. Depending on the teacher they had for social studies, some American students frequently participated in a variety of group activities, whereas in other classes they had primarily whole class lectures and discussions. In English schools, for a single lesson in

religion, personal and social education, or history, students sometimes worked in groups. As students share ideas and make decisions in small groups they may come to feel they are—or are not—able to influence others, a possible precursor to a sense of political efficacy. The opportunities students have to participate in decision making in student councils and school activities that will be described later in this chapter also may contribute to their sense of political confidence.

In summarizing the data on political confidence, I observed country differences in the opportunities that students have to experience the give and take of policy making in small groups. Overall, however, most students do not feel powerless to affect decisions in the groups of which they are a part—an important finding. Important also is that students did not seem to be naive, with an exaggerated sense of their personal influence. They recognize that their arguments and views are balanced with those of others in the group to reach decisions. Such attitudes indicate a healthy situation from which young people might extrapolate their experience with immediate political environments to the broader political stage. A first step may be helping them to see the “political” aspects of their own experiences with group decision making, as no students I spoke with ever said they associated “political” with decisions that are made in the school, family, or community.

POLITICAL INTEREST

In order for participatory democracy to move from an ideal to a reality, citizens must be interested in participating in the body politic. Some citizens must be interested in taking leadership positions, and many others must be interested in following public affairs and casting informed votes. Although there is disagreement among political scholars as to how much of the electorate should be actively interested in politics, most people would agree that, for democracy to thrive, citizens should be aware of general policy decisions being made on their behalf and should express their own views, at least through voting in periodic elections. The goal of many civic educators is loftier than that—they would like their students to grow into adult citizens who regularly follow public affairs, vote, express their views, and sometimes take actions to influence decisions. Whether or not young people are developing an interest in the political arena is, therefore, of paramount concern.

Political Interest: Survey Responses

The questionnaire that was administered to students in the five nations in 1986 and 1993 contained eight items to measure political interest and

TABLE 2.7
Political Interest: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for
Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	Netherlands	England	United States	Denmark	Germany
Mean	2.45	2.91	2.98	3.06	3.18
(s.d.)	(.73)	(.78)	(.88)	(.80)	(.73)
n	249	344	374	312	147
England	.61 (.46)*	—	—	—	—
United States	.64 (.53)*	.08 (.07)	—	—	—
Denmark	.79 (.61)*	.19 (.15)	.10 (.08)	—	—
Germany	1.00 (.73)*	.35 (.27)	.24 (.20)	.15 (.12)	—
	1993				
	Netherlands	England	Germany	United States	Denmark
Mean	2.41	2.94	2.96	3.10	3.29
(s.d.)	(.84)	(.86)	(.79)	(.87)	(.74)
n	475	1055	506	1730	305
England	.74 (.53)*	—	—	—	—
Germany	.77 (.55)*	— (.02)	—	—	—
United States	.96 (.69)*	.23 (.16)*	.19 (.14)	—	—
Denmark	1.24 (.88)*	.49 (.35)*	.46 (.33)*	.27 (.19)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent higher levels of interest in politics and the political arena. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1421) = 28.49, $p = .000$; 1993 F (4, 4066) = 73.26, $p = .000$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Political Interest scale were .85 for the total sample in 1986 and .88 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .83, England .88, Germany .82, Netherlands .86, and United States .89.

*Significant at the .001 level.

yielded similar results for the two samples seven years apart.¹⁴ As can be seen in table 2.7, in 1986 the German and Danish sample means were the highest. In 1993 the Danish and American sample means were the highest. Both in 1986 and 1993, the Dutch sample means were the lowest on the Political Interest scale (Effect sizes were .79 and 1.00 in 1986 and .96 and 1.24 in 1993 between the Dutch means and those for the Danish and American respondents).

Moving beyond a comparison of means for the scale and examining the percentage responses for each item reveals distinctions by country for various dimensions of political interest (table 2.8). Because responses to items on this scale for English students in 1993 varied considerably depending on whether or not the students attended state schools or a Public School, the two sets of responses are reported separately although they are combined on the frequency distribution table.

In response to the three items, "I am usually interested in political matters," "I would enjoy having lessons where politics and government are discussed," and "I would be interested in finding out how political parties work," in 1986 the largest percentage of students reporting interest were from Germany and the second largest percentage were from Denmark. Those two relative positions reversed in 1993. The percentages of sample German students in 1993 indicating interest in the political arena were less than they had been for the 1986 German sample. The reverse was true for the Danish samples; the percentages of students reporting interest were greater in 1993 than they had been in 1986. Despite those shifts, however, at both time periods larger percentages of Danish and German students expressed an interest in the political arena as indicated on these three items than did students in the other three countries, with the notable exception of students in the British Public School in 1993 who also indicated comparatively high levels of political interest. At both time periods, more than two-thirds of sample students in both Germany and Denmark said they would enjoy having lessons in which politics and government are discussed, as did the British Public School students in 1993.

In contrast, only about 20 percent to 30 percent of the Dutch students expressed such an interest, with half saying clearly that they would not like to have lessons on government and politics and that they are not interested in politics.¹⁵ The group showing the second lowest level of interest in terms of those three items were the English students in state schools in 1993. Additionally, more students in all of the countries at both times (except for the English state school students in 1993) said they would like lessons in which politics is discussed than said they are usually interested in politics; perhaps they thought that if they had such lessons they might become more politically knowledgeable so that they could follow political events, making them more interesting to them.

In 1993 students were asked on the questionnaire whether they thought hearing or watching news about politics and politicians was interesting.¹⁶ The responses to that item yielded a pattern similar to that seen for responses to items about general political interest and interest in learning about political parties. That is, the largest percentages of students reporting interest came from the British Public School and from

TABLE 2.8
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Interest Items

1. I am usually interested in political matters.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	29	16	52
1993	17	18	65
England			
1986	49	11	40
1993	35	16	48
Germany			
1986	22	14	65
1993	29	20	50
Netherlands			
1986	64	14	20
1993	56	14	29
United States			
1986	39	17	42
1994	31	20	48

2. I would enjoy having lessons where politics and government are discussed.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	14	10	76
1993	2	9	88
England			
1986	38	14	46
1993	31	21	47
Germany			
1986	13	4	82
1993	22	10	68
Netherlands			
1986	56	23	20
1993	54	20	26
United States			
1986	32	23	44
1994	23	23	54

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.8 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Interest Items

3. I would be interested in finding out how political parties work.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	20	12	68
1993	10	15	75
England			
1986	33	17	49
1993	27	22	50
Germany			
1986	13	17	71
1993	17	22	60
Netherlands			
1986	49	18	43
1993	45	22	33
United States			
1986	27	23	49
1994	24	23	53

4. I think hearing or watching news about politics and politicians is interesting.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	19	16	66
England 1993	37	15	47
Germany 1993	34	13	53
Netherlands 1993	62	17	21
United States 1994	35	18	47

(continued on next page)

Denmark and Germany; the largest percentages of students saying they were not interested came from the Netherlands, followed by students in English state schools. Students in the United States fell in the middle, with fewer than half reporting interest and a third saying they were not interested.

The same pattern was obtained with regard to interest in learning how political parties work. It is somewhat surprising, however, that the different nature of political parties in the various countries and their perception among the public did not seem to affect student attitudes toward

TABLE 2.8 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Interest Items

5a. I enjoy political campaigns.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	—	—	—
1993	—	—	—
England			
1986	60	22	17
1993	52	20	27
Germany			
1986	53	20	27
1993	70	13	17
Netherlands			
1986	55	21	23
1993	55	19	27
United States			
1986	48	28	23
1994	43	22	34

5b. I participate in political activities.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	68	11	19
1993	73	11	15

6. I think I would enjoy being involved in making (political) decisions that affect my school or community.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark 1986	18	22	59
England 1986	20	14	66
Germany 1986	21	18	60
Netherlands 1986	22	16	61
United States 1986	24	23	54

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.8 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Interest Items

7. I think I would enjoy participating in political groups.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	50	29	20
1993	32	30	38
England			
1986	49	30	21
1993	46	28	26
Germany			
1986	42	25	33
1993	49	24	27
Netherlands			
1986	71	20	8
1993	68	18	14
United States			
1986	42	32	23
1994	40	30	30

8. I think it would be interesting to run (stand) for political office such as the local (town/city) council or Parliament (the legislature).

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	51	23	25
1993	48	23	28
England			
1986	42	24	34
1993	44	26	30
Germany			
1986	49	20	29
1993	56	16	27
Netherlands			
1986	56	22	22
1993	65	15	21
United States			
1986	42	19	40
1994	38	21	41

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.8 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Interest Items

9. I would enjoy being on a committee (group) nominating candidates for political office.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	47	32	19
1993	41	32	26
England			
1986	33	26	30
1993	44	28	28
Germany			
1986	49	21	30
1993	46	25	29
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	—	—	—
United States			
1986	35	29	36
1994	32	26	41

9b. I would like to be a member of a political party.

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Uncertain (%)</i>	<i>Agree/ Strongly Agree (%)</i>
Netherlands			
1986	74	16	10
1993	71	16	12

Note: Sample n's were Denmark 1986: 312, 1993: 305; England 1986: 344, 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 147, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 249, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 374, 1994: 1730.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off, thus the totals may not always equal 100 percent.

learning about political parties as much as one might expect. For example, in both Denmark and the Netherlands where there is proportional representation, there are many political parties and coalitions of parties govern. Yet, whereas many Danish students said they were interested in finding out how political parties work, most of the Dutch students in the sample said they were not interested. In the United Kingdom, the parties are highly ideological, television coverage of Parliament gives the

appearance of a constant shouting match between opposing parties, and in television interviews MPs are continually attacking the other parties' positions. Yet, when exposed to those same external stimuli, British Public School students said they were interested in learning how parties work, while English state school students, for the most part, said they were not interested. In the United States one hears the frequent complaint that the parties are not very different from one another, congressional leaders and the president periodically express a desire for "bipartisan support," and there is a tradition among the electorate of the independent voter. Despite such differences in the nature of political parties in the United Kingdom and the United States, the American students' reported interest in finding out how political parties work fell between that for the two groups in England.

The question about interest in political campaigns was probably not equally meaningful to students across countries. In the United States campaigns last for many months, and have much "hoopla" associated with them, making the process unlike that in European countries. Indeed, because it was felt by the Danish nationals who reviewed the questionnaire that "campaigns" along the American model were so different from the Danish experience that students would not associate the idea with elections in Denmark, the question was not asked there. The American students who completed the questionnaires in 1993-94 observed a presidential campaign the previous year. Following that experience, interestingly, more of the American students said they did not enjoy campaigns than said they did. In the European countries in this study, "campaigns" like those in the United States are beginning to reflect the influence of media consultants, pollsters, and image makers, as was evident in the 1997 British general election. However, they are still restricted to approximately a month in duration, far less money is spent on them than in the United States, and television coverage has not been characterized by the negative campaigning seen in the United States in recent years.

In 1986 students were asked to respond to an item designed to measure attitudes toward the "political" in local communities, as opposed to the national level. The item read, "I think I would enjoy being involved in making (political) decisions that affect my school or community."¹⁷ Across the five countries, between 54 percent and 66 percent of the students said they would be interested in decision making that touched their lives, whereas between only 18 percent and 24 percent of the students said they would not be interested. This is the one item to which slightly larger percentages of English and Dutch students expressed an interest than did students in the other three countries. One wonders if Dutch and English students are more interested than other

students in community involvement but do not see such involvement as political. In 1993, the question about local political activity was replaced by another focusing on the wider political world depicted in the news; the question was designed to be more consistent with the other items intended to measure political interest.

The remaining questions on this scale address whether one is sufficiently interested in politics to become a political activist. It is interesting that as students reflect upon the likelihood of their own personal activism, larger percentages of students in each country were undecided about their own involvement than they had reported for their abstract level of interest. Nevertheless, the Dutch students in the samples here expressed the least interest in becoming an activist by running for political office (despite their positive response to participating in school or community affairs, acts that apparently carry less of a "political" connotation than does running for a position on the local town council or Parliament). In contrast, slightly larger percentages of students in the United States than those in the other countries—but still fewer than half the students—said they might be interested in running for political office and in serving on committees to nominate candidates for political office.

Overall, then, the questionnaire responses point to several general patterns related to levels of political interest. Danish and German samples at both time periods and British Public School students in 1993 appeared to be the most interested in following political affairs; the Dutch students reported the least interest. More American students than students in other countries expressed interest in running for political office or serving on a committee to nominate candidates for office, but even in the United States fewer than half of the students reported such interest. Students in England and the Netherlands appeared to be no less interested in participating in decisions that affected their school or community than were students in the other countries, despite their comparatively lower interest in the political arena; it is likely that they did not perceive such activity to be political. These overall impressions were further reinforced and elaborated upon by student comments in interviews.

Political Interest: Qualitative Findings

Denmark When I interviewed Danish students, virtually all of them said they were interested in politics, government, and current events. In particular they said that they were interested in the debate over the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the environment, racism, and political incidents, such as the resignation of a minister over a financial scandal. Noticeably, interviews with students enrolled in *HF* programs and with *folkeskole* students as young as the seventh grade also revealed consid-

erable interest in and knowledge of political issues. In almost all of the classes in the study in 1993, students had chosen to study about the Maastricht debate and about the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Students in a third-year *gymnasium* class (approximately nineteen years old) said they were interested in "really big issues like the Gulf War," local political issues, and environmental issues such as pollution and ozone. Ingrid explained that there was currently much interest in politics "because of the change in government and discussion about whether the old social democracy had been ruined—also about the EF [European Union]" (3/30/93). No one in the class said he or she was not interested in politics and current events. No matter what topic we would start on, the Danish students would bring the discussion back to the European Union.

METTE. I will vote no, because the EF is for the economy, not for the environment . . . the other countries don't have as strict laws as Denmark about pollution.

INGRID. The first treaty was about a common market and that was good for the economy, but Maastricht and now Edinburgh go further to more integrated union and I don't think that is good. And too many decisions are made by bureaucrats who aren't elected.

STEEN. I have another view. I will vote yes because I think it will help the Danish economy. For the last ten years we have had unemployment and the Danish farmers are having a difficult time, and I think it will help.

SØREN. I will vote no because Denmark is so small that we are not able to have much influence on decisions.

HENRIK. Even though we are small we have more influence than some of the bigger countries.

JAKOB. I will vote yes because I think it is good to have a common security force, rather than each nation having their own.

INGRID. I think young people today are also very concerned about problems of racism.

SØREN. Students are also interested in pollution and the environment. (3/30/93)

The students said they talked about all these topics in social science, history, and Danish lessons. When I asked how many follow current events on the television, all raised their hand indicating they do. They explained that they watch Danish news, and one said, "CNN."

Several of the teachers cautioned me that students might sound more politically interested than they really were because in a Danish gymnasium "it's not cool" to not be interested in political and international issues. Nevertheless, when I asked members of an *HF* class (two-year program to prepare for an exam) if they were interested in politics

and current events, all raised their hands to say they were interested, and even in a seventh-grade *folkeskole* class children eagerly raised their hands to express their opinions about the European Union, to explain about their mayor becoming the new finance minister, and to ask me about President Clinton and about the Los Angeles riots that followed the first Rodney King verdict. A ninth-grade teacher in the same *folkeskole* said her pupils had been aware of current events and concerned about issues such as the environment ever since they were very young.

Two of the Danish teachers said that in 1993, as opposed to 1986, they felt like students were watching more cable television. Consequently, some were getting more international news on CNN—as well as watching MTV. The teachers went on to speculate that the increased time spent passively watching television seemed to correspond with a drop in political action that was more characteristic of earlier generations of Danes. As one teacher put it, "Fifteen years ago, people joined political parties, seven years ago they joined activist groups for peace and the environment, but today they just follow events on television and talk about them." Other Danish teachers also commented on the declining participation in political groups, despite the apparent increased interest among students in issues such as the Maastricht debate and changes in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

England In the English schools I visited, students explained that although a few students were interested in politics, most were not. Additionally, there appeared to be a clear difference between students fifteen years old and younger and sixth formers (ages sixteen to eighteen). Before entering the sixth form, most students did not seem very interested in talking about political matters. Students at the comprehensive school in a working-class area explained, "It's boring" and "It's too complicated." They said they did not talk about politics or current events in any of their classes. Richard, one of the few interested students in a school in a middle-class area, said that he was concerned about the environment, so he tried to buy environmentally friendly products. None of the under-sixteens in state comprehensive schools was any more specific than that in talking about public issues, politicians, or government.

A few sixth-form students at state schools reported an interest in politics, but they also said that they had not talked about politics or current events in any of their classes. Peter explained, "I'm very interested. I follow the news fairly closely. I will vote and follow the news, but I won't join action groups . . . I discuss with my family when we are watching the news." Similarly, David said, "I'm very interested. I talk

about them in the pub and at the dinner table. We talked about education and competence. I don't like the minister for education." When I asked David what I should know about students his age and their opinions, he said, "that we do understand what is going on. We know more than they think we do. We care especially about racism, crime, and war" (6/25/93). Anita and Margaret, at the same school, said that sometimes in the sixth form Common Room, where students gather, they talk about current events, as they had the previous day when a minister resigned. However, when I asked students for their opinions about the European Union and the Maastricht treaty, subjects of a major debate that year in Parliament and the press, most said they did not know anything about it. Indeed, in a conversation with a group of sixth formers at a middle-class school, several times students said they wished they knew more about politics and current issues. The teacher who heard the conversation later told me she was surprised that they wanted to know more. She admitted the school does not do much with that in the sixth form social education course, which met once a week, "because it is difficult. If you have someone from one party, then you have to have someone from the other parties too."

When I asked three fifteen-year-old males in the Public School where students completed questionnaires if they were interested in politics, government, and current events, they replied, "I'm half interested," "I don't think much about it," and "I'd want the Conservatives to win, but that's about all." One of the boys who listens to his radio in his room during breaks mentioned a story he had heard about that day. Additionally, another speculated that they were less interested in politics and current events than students their age in other countries, "we travel like to Germany and France and they talk about those things with their families, but we don't, except maybe elections."

Among a group of Public School sixth formers, one said, "I'm not so interested," another, "mediocre," and only the third, Chris, whose uncle is an MP, claimed to be "very interested." However, even Chris later qualified his interest to say, "local government, I don't really care about that." Only Chris thought that he might join a political party later, "if they become viable." And only he was confident that he knew what the Maastricht debate was about; he proceeded to explain it to his friend who had asked me "what is Maastricht about anyway?" Chris was taking A-level Business Studies and was applying to a university to study economics and politics. He explained that he got his information about the EU and Maastricht, not from school, but from reading newspapers and his own general interest (6/24/93).

Other sixth-form students at the school told me that they were not interested in politics, but many did think it was important to keep up

with "what's happening in the nation," so they read newspapers in their boarding house. A conversation with one group of sixth formers further confirmed that although most students were not interested in politics, a few clearly were.

RAY. The majority aren't interested.

JONATHAN. Some are very interested.

JAMES. Some are very obsessed, trying to impose a label on themselves too early. Those people, as it were, who identify with a particular political label and are identified as an intellectual, two things happen. Either they become extreme left-wingers or they are the traditional anti-Labour type.

JONATHAN. I am interested. I have to be. I'm doing A-level Politics and have to pass the exams. [Eleven students out of two hundred in year 12 at the school take A-level Politics.]

RAY. And I am interested. I used to write articles on politics for the school paper.

KATHERINE. I am interested in politics, but I haven't really formed a specific outright opinion myself.

JAMES. I'm more interested in international conflicts than British politics, especially the Tories [Conservative Party], which I loathe. I'm anticapitalist and antimaterialistic, probably sort of left wing, social reform type. (6/9/95)

Unlike students in the other countries in the study, the majority of British students are not directly taught lessons about politics and government. Consequently, any interest these students develop is stimulated at home and usually is not evident except among the minority of students who stay in school past age sixteen. Furthermore, to British students an interest in politics is perceived as primarily an interest in the political party contest, which some observe on television or hear references to by their parents. German students, on the other hand, have lessons about politics and government in their social studies classes beginning in seventh grade.

Germany Several themes relating to political interest ran through my interviews with German students. First, students were clearly divided in their level of interest. In most classes, some students said, they were "a little" interested. Those who were not interested said, "it's complicated," "I don't know enough," or "it's boring." Several of the sixteen-year-olds said they were not interested now but expected that when they were old enough to vote, they would know more and then they would be more interested. Indeed, there did seem to be fewer disinterested students in grades 12 and 13 than in the lower grades. Among the German students who said they were interested, several said, "because it has an influence on our future." Several explained that they were "not so interested" but they thought it was important to know about politics anyway.

A second theme that was evident among German students was that many made a clear distinction between politics, which they did not find interesting, and news, which did interest them. Several made statements such as "I'm interested in national and international news, but not politics," or "news about catastrophes, wars, and things in the world is interesting, but not politics." To them, politics was what the chancellor, ministers, and political parties in Bonn do.

When I talked to students I often began the conversation by telling them that I was comparing attitudes of students eight years apart, as well as among the five countries. I would then ask if they thought there was more or less interest in politics, government, and current events among German students in 1993 than there had been in 1986. Responses differed, depending on whether the speaker emphasized concern about issues or attitudes toward people in national politics. A few said they and others today were not interested in politics because politicians were unresponsive, as described previously with regard to political trust and efficacy, or because students were too busy with other things, such as sports or studying for the *Abitur* (exam) to get politically involved. Yet other students hypothesized that German students of 1993 were more politically interested than students were in past years "because," as Stephan, a tenth-grade *Realschule* student, explained, "There are more problems today. It is important to stop Fascism." He went on to say that he personally was very interested in political issues, such as those involving Germany's new states (those formerly composing East Germany), the European Union, Parliament, and whether Germany will get involved in the war in what was Yugoslavia (3/15/93).

Teachers and administrators in different German schools commented that students of the 1990s did seem to them less politically active than earlier generations, in the sense that very few joined political organizations such as the youth groups of the political parties. Indeed, among the students with whom I spoke, all said they were not members of such organizations, and few thought they would even join parties as adults. Teachers had various explanations for the reduced political activism. Some attributed it to more time spent watching videos and cable television or playing on home computers after school. Others said that it was consistent with trends in the adult population of reduced party membership and declining voter turnouts. Mrs. Meyer explained that students were interested in news—"the catastrophes" as her students put it—but it was "not fashionable any more to fight for ideas." One of her students earlier that day told me, "if you say you are for the Greens others will laugh at you" (2/18/95).

Several students argued that being active in political organizations was not the only indicator of their political interest. They said that fol-

lowing news on television, caring about the environment, and working to stop racism showed they were interested. In one class, two boys had worked with a local environmental group trying to stop a new road going through part of the forest near the town, another two had worked with a church group teaching young children about racism, and a girl worked in a center for refugees.

In all the German social studies classes I visited, students did comment on topics related to politics and international relations. For example, I observed one tenth-grade *Gymnasium* social science class during a discussion of political parties in the Parliament. Every student in the class spoke at some time during the lesson and many enthusiastically raised their hands and clicked their fingers to be recognized to answer teacher questions. In another class when I asked about student opinions on the changes in Germany since reunification, everyone seemed to have an opinion, and I could not write down comments quickly enough. In all classes when I asked students what they thought of the European Union, they expressed informed opinions, mostly speaking for the benefits of the union, but acknowledging some negative aspects for Germany, expressing more skepticism in 1996 than in 1993.

As a group, the student comments do reinforce the quantitative data indicating that many—but not all—German students are politically interested in the sense that they are interested in public policy issues. However, not many are particularly interested in participating in a political party or joining activist groups, as students were in earlier times.

The Netherlands Dutch students I talked with, on the other hand, seemed not to be very interested in political matters. Indeed, even in the one teacher's classes (see chap. 5) in which students claimed to have the most interest, only a third of the students said that they were interested in politics, government, and current events. In classes at an agricultural school, no more than two students in each class said they were interested in such matters. Most said, "it's boring," or "it's difficult to understand," "the way they (politicians) talk is above us." In one class when I asked if females were any less interested than males in politics, one girl said, "there's no difference; most males and females are not interested in politics and just a few of each are interested." (See chap. 3 for discussion of gender differences.)

Even the few Dutch students who said they were somewhat interested explained that they were interested in news, like about the fighting in Bosnia and Chechnya, an earthquake in Japan, and the local bus strike, but "not politics." This is similar to a finding among nationally representative samples that Dutch students who said they were not interested in politics reported high interest in issues such as criminality, pol-

lution, and discrimination (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

The interested students with whom I spoke said they would vote and follow the news but would not join political parties. Further, they said they were not interested in campaigns, because "here it is boring." At the time there was to be a provincial election in two weeks, but the only indication were billboards in town that had posters on them for the various political parties. Only one party had a slogan: Full is Full, meaning they did not want any more immigrants in the Netherlands. I only saw one poster with an individual's face on it—a local woman who was high on the list for her party; if her party received many votes in the proportional representation she would have a seat in the provincial council. Students said they would never wear a button or a sticker for a political party; if they did "people will laugh at you."

In the Netherlands "politics" seemed to be perceived as a job that politicians do in The Hague or at the provincial or local level. Most citizens vote for their party in national elections at least once every four years, but the election period was not perceived to be very exciting. Dutch students might have had some lessons in politics in their *maatschappijleer* class, but they were not seen as very interesting by the students with whom I spoke. As one Dutch scholar has noted, in the Netherlands students are not normally introduced systematically to political topics until they possibly encounter them at age sixteen in *maatschappijleer*. By then their political perspective—or disinterest—is firmly established (Vis, 1991). The majority of students who took only the one-year mandatory course were not required to undergo any instruction at all in politics and government. Indeed, one researcher found that half of the teachers teaching *maatschappijleer* did not want to devote classroom time to the study of politics and government (Dekker, 1986 cited in Dekker, 1991). The primary reasons they gave for their reluctance to teach about politics were that (1) teachers lacked a background in political science, (2) students were not interested in the topic, (3) parents and administrators were not supportive, and (4) teachers feared being accused of indoctrination. Despite their limited instruction in politics and their general declarations of disinterest, some Dutch students were interested in current events on the news and in social issues. However, they saw such subjects as distinct from politics.

The United States In most of the classes I visited in the United States, one or two students said they were definitely interested in politics, government, and current events. An equal number said, "definitely not," with the majority saying they were "sort of" interested. In a Massachusetts school a few students said they became more interested after participating in statewide programs that simulated a legislature or local

government. "It was so interesting and you were involved and you got to participate and actually do it, like you were involved and I think that was good. And you did learn too" (3/27/95). Others said that as they were approaching eighteen and could soon vote they were paying more attention and becoming more interested. Some had found the MTV coverage of candidates in the last election interesting.

In California, a group of six immigrant students whose teacher regularly talked to them about current events all said that they were interested in current events, politics, and government:

So you know what's going on.

Because if you're not involved then you never know what's going to happen in the future.

Like the things that go on, the Congress, is about the public, so we should know about it. And it's about the public and it refers to us. (4/5/95)

The qualitative data on political interest thus confirmed and elaborated upon the picture conveyed by questionnaire responses. Nowhere were all of the students interested or disinterested in the political arena. Even in Denmark, where most *gymnasium* students claimed to be interested, at the *folkeskoles* some students said they were not interested. In the other countries within most classes some students were interested and others were not, and across countries the students who had reached voting age or were close to it were more interested than younger students. Moreover, in all countries students expressed more interest in issues in the news than in what they defined as more narrowly "politics"—what political party leaders do. And, finally, interest was greatest where parents and teachers talked with students about the political issues they otherwise passively observed on television.

FUTURE POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Another measure of student political orientation is how politically active young people think they will be when they are adults. Several items on the questionnaire were designed, therefore to measure students' intended political activity.¹⁸

Future Political Activity: Survey Responses

Examining the mean responses to this scale in 1993, it appears that Danish students, followed by American students, were the most likely to

anticipate that they would be politically active adults. The group of sample students who thought they were the least likely to be politically active were those from the Netherlands in 1993 (table 2.9). As with the other scales, an examination of the frequency distribution by item reveals more specifics about students' anticipated future political activity (table 2.10).¹⁹

TABLE 2.9
Future Political Activity: Comparing Means of Samples by Countries
for Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

1986					
	England	Netherlands	United States	Germany	Denmark
Mean	1.69	1.83	1.85	1.89	2.03
(s.d.)	(.34)	(.37)	(.40)	(.40)	(.37)
n	342	247	372	147	312
Netherlands	.40 (.14)*	—	—	—	—
United States	.43 (.16)*	.05 (.02)	—	—	—
Germany	.56 (.21)*	.16 (.07)	.10 (.04)	—	—
Denmark	.96 (.35)*	.54 (.21)*	.47 (.19)*	.37 (.14)*	—

1993					
	Netherlands	Germany	England	United States	Denmark
Mean	2.48	2.52	2.55	2.74	2.87
(s.d.)	(.59)	(.50)	(.48)	(.50)	(.47)
n	470	506	1049	1714	305
Germany	.07 (.04)	—	—	—	—
England	.14 (.07)	.06 (.03)	—	—	—
United States	.50 (.26)*	.44 (.22)*	.39 (.19)*	—	—
Denmark	.71 (.40)*	.72 (.36)*	.67 (.32)*	.26 (.14)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent expectations of greater involvement in political activities than do lower means. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1415) = 36.45, p = .000; 1993 F (4, 4039) = 60.62, p = .000

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Future Political Activity scale were .66 for the total sample in 1986 and .75 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .70, England .73, Germany .75, Netherlands .74, and United States .75.

*Significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 2.10
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Future Political Activity Items

1. In the future, how likely are you to vote in national (general) elections?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	4	12	84
1993	2	9	89
England			
1986	11	33	56
1993	9	24	66
Germany			
1986	6	23	71
1993	12	39	48
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	31	27	41
United States			
1986	8	22	69
1994	7	17	75

2. In the future, how likely are you to vote in local elections?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	6	20	74
1993	8	34	58
England			
1986	15	39	46
1993	12	40	47
Germany			
1986	7	29	64
1993	15	41	43
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	29	38	32
United States			
1986	9	27	64
1994	7	26	66

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.10 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Future Political Activity Items

3. In the future how likely is it that you will let your MP (Member of Parliament) [United States: Congressperson] know what you think about a public issue?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	47	36	17
1993	40	45	14
England			
1986	36	45	18
1993	35	43	21
Germany			
1986	56	33	11
1993	48	40	10
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	—	—	—
United States			
1986	31	48	20
1994	28	45	25

4. In the future, how likely are you to run (U.S., England: stand) for political office (for example, the local council or Parliament)?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	81	16	2
1993	79	17	4
England			
1986	86	11	2
1993	86	12	2
Germany			
1986	—	—	—
1993	90	9	1
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	84	13	2
United States			
1986	80	16	3
1994	79	17	3

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.10 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Future Political Activity Items

5. In the future, how likely is it that you will join a political organization (for example, Denmark: Conservative Youth, Social Democratic Youth, Socialist Party Youth; Germany: Youth Union, Young Socialists, Young Liberals, Green Party; England: Young Conservatives, Young Labour, Young Social Democrats/Liberals, the National Front; United States: Young Republicans, Young Democrats, League of Women Voters)?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	62	28	10
1993	61	26	12
England			
1986	75	15	8
1993	80	16	4
Germany			
1986	60	30	10
1993	83	12	4
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	74	18	7
United States			
1986	68	22	9
1994	68	23	6

6. In the future how likely is it that you will join a pressure or protest group? (For example, Denmark: Greenpeace, an organization against nuclear power; Germany: Greenpeace, Stop Atomic Power; England: Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, animal rights groups; United States: Greenpeace, Animal Rights, Right to Life, MADD, SADD.)

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	18	37	44
1993	32	40	27
England			
1986	57	28	14
1993	48	33	18

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.10 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Future Political Activity Items

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Germany			
1986	30	50	20
1993	47	37	15
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	32	41	27
United States			
1986	40	43	16
1994	32	41	25

7a. United States and England: In the future, how likely is it that you will work for a political candidate?

7b. Germany and the Netherlands: In the future how likely is it that you will work for an established political party?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Germany			
1986	57	37	7
1993	83	14	2
England			
1986	84	13	2
1993	85	12	2
Netherlands			
1986	—	—	—
1993	56	34	9
United States			
1986	63	27	9
1994	71	22	5

7c. Denmark: In the future how likely is it that you will support a political party or candidate?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Definitely Not or Not Very Likely (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Denmark			
1986	—	—	—
1993	26	40	33

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.10 (*continued*)

Frequency Distribution for Responses to Future Political Activity Items

Note: Sample *n*'s were Denmark 1986: 313, 1993: 305; England 1986: 343, 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 147, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 276, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 372, 1994: 1730.

Note: Due to errors on the 1986 Dutch version of the questionnaire, many of the responses from the Netherlands in 1986 were not useable; similarly responses to question 4 for the 1986 German questionnaire could not be used.

Note: On the 1993-94 question a category definitely not was added, but to facilitate comparison with the earlier time period, it is collapsed here with not very likely.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off, thus the totals may not always equal 100 percent.

Voting In both 1986 and 1993, the largest percentage of students—well over 80 percent—who reported they were “very likely” to vote in national elections were from Denmark. The country in this study where the smallest percentage of students said they were likely to vote in national elections was the Netherlands in 1993.²⁰ Moreover Dutch student estimates were lower than the percentages of adults who usually vote in Dutch national elections would indicate—between 78 percent and 88 percent turnout in Parliamentary elections from 1971 to 1994 (Dekker & Portengen, 1995). In contrast, American students saying they were very likely to vote in national elections—69 percent in 1986 and 75 percent in 1994—were greater than the percentages of eligible adults who usually vote in national elections in the United States. The interesting, but not surprising, finding in England was that once again there was a distinction between state school students and Public School students. Whereas 83 percent of the Public School students said they would very likely vote in general elections, only 58 percent of the state school students said they were very likely to do so. That difference is masked by the 66 percent reported for the total sample in England.

Concerning the likelihood of voting in local (as opposed to national or general) elections, in 1986 Danish students were again most likely to say they were very likely to vote, but a smaller percentage of Danish students in the 1993 sample agreed. Surprisingly, greater percentages of students in the United States in 1994 reported they would be very likely to vote in local elections than did American students in 1986 and than did students in other countries in 1993. That is surprising, because turnouts in local elections in the United States are dismally low, with rarely more than 30 percent of eligible voters casting ballots. With local as well as national elections, it was the Dutch students who thought they were the least likely to vote.

Persuading Moving to more activist political behaviors, many fewer students in all countries said they are likely to engage in such activities as expect to vote. Students in the United States and England, where it is a common practice to contact members of the legislature, were the most likely to say they would contact their representatives. In social studies classes in the United States, students are often taught that in addition to voting a good citizen writes to his or her congressional representative. In the United States interest groups from the American Civil Liberties Union to the American Rifle Association encourage their members to write, telephone, fax, or e-mail their representatives expressing views on particular pieces of legislation. In the United Kingdom, MPs hold regular “surgeries” in their constituencies so that citizens can express their views on matters before Parliament. In Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, on the other hand, without single member districts, it is rare for adult citizens to contact MPs. Rather, interest group representatives meet with leaders of the parliamentary political parties.

Office-holding and Campaigning Everywhere fewer than 5 percent of the students in the samples said they would be very likely to run for political office, such as the local council or Parliament. Only as many as 17 percent of the students in Denmark and the United States reported they were even somewhat likely to run for office. An overwhelming 90 percent of German students in 1993—and English state school students—said they would “definitely not” or were “not very likely” to run for office.

Political activists in the different countries are active in different ways so questions had to be worded differently, making comparisons across countries difficult. All that can be said is that English students were less likely than American students to say they might in the future work for a political candidate.

Joining Political Groups In 1986 larger percentages of students in Denmark and Germany said they would be likely to join political organizations than did students in the other countries, but even there a majority said they did not think they would. In 1993, again more students in Denmark than in the other countries reported they might join political organizations, but the percentages of those in Germany who said they might join had dropped even lower than in the other countries.

In all countries, students said they would be more likely to join a protest or pressure group than a political organization. In both Denmark and Germany the percentages anticipating that they would be very likely to join a pressure group were smaller in 1993 than in 1986; in Germany the influence of the Greens was not as great in the 1990s as it had been earlier. Only in England in 1986 did as many as half of the students say they were not very likely to join a pressure or protest group.

On the other hand, everywhere 60 percent or more said they were not very likely to join a political organization.

Overall, sample students in Denmark anticipated that they would be most politically active in the future. In 1986, the German student sample expected to be quite active, but the German sample in 1993 anticipated considerably less activity—a change that was noted by teachers in 1993–95, as well.

Intended Future Behavior: Qualitative Findings

When I asked German students in the 1990s how many thought they would vote, join political parties, and join pressure groups, most responded as did one tenth-grade class in which all said they would vote, and many said they might join an interest or pressure group; indeed, several had already. However, none said they would join a political party, except one boy whose father was a local politician. In other classes, one or two students said they might join one of the new local parties, but most said they would not. Rather, German students said they would probably join environmental groups or groups against racism. Moreover, German students seemed to have accepted protests and petitions as a normal way of expressing grievances. At one school, the student council had organized a demonstration against racism and at another, a class had submitted a petition to the *Direktor* (principal/headmaster) in support of a teacher they did not want to lose.

In England, when I interviewed students at one of the state schools, Simon and Rupert in years 11 and 12 both said they would vote but not join any action groups or a political party. At the same school, Charlotte (year 12), said she was already a member of Greenpeace. At the British Public School several students expressed displeasure with activist groups on the left.

In the Netherlands, in one class of fifteen-year-olds at an agricultural school, twelve students said they would vote, five said they would not, and three said “maybe.” None said they would join political parties. A few said they might join action groups, depending on the cause. One boy said, “for something local,” another added, “against environmental legislation.” Similar distributions were reported in other classes in the school. Two girls who said they would not vote explained, it’s “too complicated,” and it’s “not interesting.” No one in their class said they would join a political party (6/29/93). At a general secondary school where more students claimed to be interested in politics, half said they might join action groups, but when I asked for examples they were vague: one said, “something against racism” and another said maybe Greenpeace (6/28/93).

Overall, students' expectations of their likelihood of engaging in a variety of political activities as adults reflected their statements about their current interest in the political arena.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCES

Finally, students were asked on the questionnaire about the extent to which they had already engaged in a number of political activities. For this scale, as with the others, the frequency distribution by item reveals some distinctions among sample students from different countries (table 2.11).

Following Current Events

Questionnaire Responses All but 15 percent of the sample students except in the Netherlands in 1986 said they use television at least two to three times per week to follow public affairs, current events, and political issues. Both in 1986 and 1993, 87 percent of students in Denmark said they used newspapers as frequently as two or three times a week to learn about current events and political issues, whereas fewer than two-thirds of the sample students from the United States and the Netherlands reported reading newspapers that frequently. With regard to using the radio to keep up with public affairs, more than 75 percent of the sample students in Denmark and Germany in both 1986 and 1993 reported listening to radio news at least two or three times a week. Fewer Dutch students than students in the other countries said they regularly used radio to follow public affairs. Clearly, then, television is the medium that the adolescent students in these samples used the most to keep up with current affairs. Newspapers appeared to be second, except in the United States. Interviews revealed, however, that although students across countries claimed to read newspapers, they read them in varying degrees of depth for serious news. In English state schools students often said the newspapers they read are the tabloids, which actually carry very little "hard news." In the United States, many adolescents said they use the newspapers primarily to follow sports news and sometimes in the process they catch the headline stories. Comments from student interviews elaborate upon these and other themes.

Qualitative Findings In Denmark, whether I was talking with students in a ninth-grade *folkeskole* class, a twelfth-grade *gymnasium* class, or a first year *HF* class, everyone said they watched television news. They reported watching international, national, and local news. In each class from one to three male students reported watching CNN *World News*

TABLE 2.11
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

1. How frequently do you use *television* to learn about public affairs, current events, and political issues?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Not at all or 3-4 times per month (%)</i>	<i>2-3 times per week or daily (%)</i>
Denmark		
1986	6	89
1993	4	94
England		
1986	10	88
1993	11	88
Germany		
1986	7	92
1993	4	95
Netherlands		
1986	33	65
1993	14	85
United States		
1986	16	84
1994	12	86

2. How frequently do you use *newspapers* to learn about public affairs, current events, and political issues?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Not at all or 3-4 times per month (%)</i>	<i>2-3 times per week or daily (%)</i>
Denmark		
1986	7	87
1993	11	87
England		
1986	22	76
1993	21	77
Germany		
1986	19	80
1993	24	73
Netherlands		
1986	44	54
1993	31	67
United States		
1986	33	65
1994	36	63

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.11 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

3. How frequently do you use *radio* to learn about public affairs, current events, and political issues?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Not at all or 3-4 times per month (%)</i>	<i>2-3 times per week or daily (%)</i>
Denmark		
1986	15	77
1993	19	77
England		
1986	49	44
1993	32	67
Germany		
1986	19	75
1993	16	79
Netherlands		
1986	56	41
1993	39	60
United States		
1986	28	70
1994	28	69

4. How often do you discuss current events and politics with your *parents*?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Hardly ever or Never (%)</i>	<i>Sometimes or Very Often (%)</i>
Denmark		
1986	24	74
1993	23	76
England		
1986	55	45
1993	37	62
Germany		
1986	32	67
1993	34	66
Netherlands		
1986	—	—
1993	54	44
United States		
1986	43	56
1994	36	63

(continued on next page)

TABLE 2.11 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

5. How often do you discuss current events and politics with your *friends*?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Hardly ever or Never (%)</i>	<i>Sometimes or Very Often (%)</i>
Denmark		
1986	29	70
1993	22	76
England		
1986	66	33
1993	55	42
Germany		
1986	37	63
1993	41	58
Netherlands		
1986	—	—
1993	75	23
United States		
1986	61	39
1994	51	47

6. How often do you discuss current events and politics in your *classes*?

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Hardly ever or Never (%)</i>	<i>Sometimes or Very Often (%)</i>
Denmark 1993	12	84
England 1993	43	55
Germany 1993	23	77
Netherlands 1993	42	55
United States 1994	14	84

(continued on next page)

on cable. The remainder of the students got their television news from the Danish channels. Many of the Danish students also reported that they regularly read serious newspapers, such as *Politiken*, with a few saying they look at a daily tabloid paper, the *Ekstra Bladet*.

At the English state school in a working-class community, some students reported watching the regional news and reading tabloid newspapers—*The Sun*, *The Star*, and *News of the World*—“to find out what’s going on in your area, if someone has been attacked or something.” When I asked for examples of news they had followed recently, the stu-

TABLE 2.11 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

7. Have you ever worn a sticker, badge, or button for a candidate for political office? [Denmark 1986: . . . for an issue?]

<i>Sample</i>	No (%)	Yes (%)
Denmark 1986	38	61
England 1986	90	8
Germany 1986	—	—
Netherlands 1986	—	—
United States 1986	72	27

<i>Sample</i>	Never (%)	Once or Twice (%)	More than Twice (%)
Denmark 1993	37	28	33
England 1993	82	14	3
Germany 1993	84	10	6
Netherlands 1993	86	11	2
United States 1994	67	21	10

8. Have you ever helped a candidate for political office by doing things for him or her such as handing out badges, stickers, or buttons with the candidates name on them? [Denmark 1986: . . . helped a pressure or political group by handing out pamphlets, collecting signatures on a petition, etc?]

<i>Sample</i>	No (%)	Yes (%)
Denmark 1986	71	28
England 1986	90	9
Germany 1986	—	—
Netherlands 1986	—	—
United States 1986	79	19

(continued on next page)

dents responded, "about Michael Jackson and about him agreeing to pay a lot in an out of court settlement so now people think he did the abuse," "about the coach [bus] crash going to Turkey because we were going to Turkey for our holiday," and "about England losing to New Zealand [in rugby] (6/19/95).

At a middle-class school, Gill said she learns about the news "from

TABLE 2.11 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Never</i> (%)	<i>Once or Twice</i> (%)	<i>More than Twice</i> (%)
Denmark 1993	60	22	19
England 1993	85	10	4
Germany 1993	91	6	3
Netherlands 1993	82	13	4
United States 1994	79	15	4

9. Have you ever been a representative to the student council or an officer in a club? [England: . . . or a form captain or prefect? United States: . . . or a team captain?]

<i>Sample</i>	<i>No</i> (%)	<i>Yes</i> (%)
Denmark 1986	44	45
England 1986	36	63
Germany 1986	46	54
Netherlands 1986	—	—
United States 1986	42	57

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Never</i> (%)	<i>Once or Twice</i> (%)	<i>More than Twice</i> (%)
Denmark 1993	42	40	17
England 1993	44	34	20
Germany 1993	43	40	16
Netherlands 1993	38	37	23
United States 1994	36	31	32

(continued on next page)

the telly and radio. I hear the radio when I wake up. I read *The Mail*. It's like a mix of serious news and a bit of gossip. When it's related to you, you listen to the news." Two sixth-form girls added

SARAH. I read some papers but only occasionally or see TV news if it's on, not intentionally. We only get *The Sun* at home, but where I work at the supermarket, at lunch time on Saturday or at night, I might look at *The Telegraph* or *The Guardian* because that's what the managers have out. . . . People have so much homework. There's no time to follow current events.

TABLE 2.11 (*continued*)
Frequency Distribution for Responses to Political Experiences Items

10. Have you ever belonged to a school club? [Denmark 1986: . . . belonged to a national student union or a political organization such as the Young Conservatives?]

<i>Sample</i>	No (%)	Yes (%)
Denmark 1986	21	36
England 1986	17	83
Germany 1986	—	—
Netherlands 1986	—	—
United States 1986	27	72

<i>Sample</i>	Never (%)	Once or Twice (%)	More than Twice (%)
Denmark 1993	90	7	3
England 1993	15	36	47
Germany 1993	—	—	—
Netherlands 1993	74	17	6
United States 1994	18	28	52

11. Have you ever collected for a charity?

<i>Sample</i>	Never (%)	Once or Twice (%)	More than Twice (%)
Denmark 1993	24	30	45
England 1993	20	35	44
Germany 1993	50	34	16
Netherlands 1993	42	26	30
United States 1994	29	28	42

Note: Sample n's were Denmark 1986: 270, 1993: 305; England 1986: 323; 1993: 1056; Germany 1986: 137, 1993: 506; Netherlands 1986: 276, 1993: 475; United States 1986: 372; 1994: 1730.

Note: Percentages have been rounded off and missing data are not reported on the table, thus totals may not always equal 100 percent.

HELEN. And then they'd rather watch a comedy to relax than serious news after they've done their homework. I see *The Sunday Times* at home. (6/25/93)

Other sixth-form students at the same school said they did not follow the news very much because "it's depressing" and "the run of the mill news is monotonous." Individuals did note some stories they found interesting, "like about Barings" (the collapse of that bank and the disappearance of the broker in Singapore) or "natural hazards."

Three boys I interviewed at a comprehensive school in a middle-class area stood out as exceptions because they said they were interested in current affairs and regularly watch the 6:00 P.M. or 9:00 P.M. television news. David, who expressed the most interest in politics, added that he also watches *Question Time* and *Newshight*, two weekly programs in which the main political issues of the week are explored in depth. Peter, as well as David, reported regular reading of newspapers. Peter explained, "*The Times* daily and *The Observer* on Sunday—that's what we get at home." David said that he read "*The Telegraph* at home, it's Conservative. And at the weekends, *The Independent*, *The Mail*, and *The Mirror* from the shops. They're Labour." William reported watching the news when his stepfather had it on, whereas Thomas noted, "My mum points things out from the television news. And at home, my mum gets *The Mail*, and I read it a bit. My dad gets *The Mirror*; it's more Labour."

In the Public School, student news habits fit around the tight schedule of the boarding school. They could read the newspapers during the breaks, but could only catch television news at night after "prep" (the required time to work at their desks on homework). Edward and Harry, two fifteen-year-olds, reported they watched the news when they were at home during school breaks and their parents had it on. They both said they like the international parts of the news the best. Ian added, "It's easier to watch TV news here than it was in prep school. We watch the headlines, after prep you can see the ten o'clock news." One of the boys' house parents remarked that the students have their Walkman radios plugged in their ears any minute they can and are most likely to hear headline stories that way. Indeed three of the boys mentioned recent events they heard about on their radios.

As for newspaper reading, most of the sixth-form students at the Public School said they regularly read the various newspapers that come to their house (dormitory)—*The Mail*, *Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, or the *Daily Mirror*. Ray said he read all the papers that come to the house, whereas James said, "I stick to *The Times*." But not everyone preferred the serious papers. Ian explained: "*The Daily Mail*. It's what you're

brought up with. I like *The Daily Mail* because there's some of everything. I actually hate those others that have so much." Emma, on the other hand, said that she wasn't interested enough to read the papers. She said that she hears from her friends anyway what's happening.

In Germany virtually all of the students in the classes I spoke with said that they watch television news daily. Most said they like the international and national news, which they saw primarily on the German state television station. Additionally, in two *Gymnasien* students said that they regularly watched CNN *World News*. In the *Gymnasium* classes, about 75 percent of the students said they also listen to radio news regularly, but in the *Realschule* classes and lower-track classes in comprehensive schools only about half of the students said they also listened to radio news regularly. Similarly, in the *Gymnasium* and upper-ability classes the majority of the students said that they regularly read the newspapers, whereas with lower-ability students only a few students in each class said that they regularly read the newspaper. They explained they did so for local news, sports, comics and the weather, and to learn about disasters. When asked which papers they read, most of the students identified the dominant serious paper for their region. Students in one class explained to me that there are also *Bildzeitungen* (picture newspapers), which can be bought in kiosks, but none of the German students I talked to said that they read such papers to obtain news.

In the Netherlands, following the news was not a part of most students lives. At the two agricultural schools I visited, only about one-third of the students in any class reported watching the television news regularly. Fewer said they read newspapers and listened to radio news. In classes at the pre-university school, about half of the students said that they read local or regional newspapers and followed the news on television or the radio. However, at a middle level general secondary school, most of the students in one class said they did watch the eight o'clock news in the evenings with their families after dinner.

In summarizing research conducted in the 1980s on Dutch youth, Dekker (1991) noted that Dutch students tended to read local newspapers and focus on local news. They would often scan headlines, then attend to human interest stories, sports, and sensational events such as disasters and crime. Those patterns were evident among the Dutch students with whom I spoke.

In the United States, although few students sounded intensely interested in the news, most seemed to keep up with the main stories of the day—primarily by watching some of the major networks' national evening news programs when their parents had it on and late-night local news broadcasts. A few students mentioned CNN news, and several said

they liked MTV news "because they present it in an interesting way, they try to get you hooked in." One young woman said that she usually caught the news on the *Good Morning America* program when she prepared for school and another awakened to the news on her clock radio. One male student said he watched the ten o'clock news when he came home from his after-school job. At one school all students were exposed to the daily Channel One news broadcast for teenagers. In order to receive "free" televisions, schools such as theirs agreed to show the program with the accompanying commercials aimed at a high school audience.

Fewer American students said they received their news from newspapers than from television. In 1996, two Missouri students reported that they check the news daily on the Internet. The students who did read newspapers tended to focus on the front page headlines, sports, comics, weather, and local news. A few students also mentioned advice columns and the arts section.

Discussing Current Events

Questionnaire Responses On the questionnaires fewer students reported talking about the news than following it. Still, more than two-thirds of the students in Denmark, Germany, and the British Public School reported discussing current events and politics with their parents sometimes or very often. Similarly, as many as 76 percent of Danish students in the 1993 sample, 63 percent of German students in 1986, and 63 percent of the British Public School students in 1993 reported on the questionnaire that they discussed current events and politics with their friends "sometimes" or "very often." Close to half of the sample students in the Netherlands and in English state schools in 1993 reported they did not discuss current events with their parents. As for discussing news with friends, 75 percent of the Dutch students and 66 percent of the English state school students in 1993 checked on the questionnaire that they did not. Those patterns were reinforced in interviews with students and teachers in 1993.

Qualitative Findings A Danish *folkeskole* teacher said she often hears her students discussing current news events with one another, and she deliberately does not enter the conversation because she fears that when the teacher gets in it, then the students think it gets boring (4/1/93).

In England, at the school in the working-class community, students said the only news they discussed with their friends was about sports or upsetting news such as that about a rape in their area. The following comments made at a middle-class state school by three young women are typical of statements made by their classmates:

HELEN. I might talk about the news with my parents. They talk about it because they work for the NHS [National Health Service].

ANITA. When the coal pits closed we discussed and students talked about it in Common Room [where sixth-form students gather between classes, to drink coffee and talk]. We talked about the gay serial killer.

MARGARET. Yesterday when the news was Mapes [a scandal involving the minister for Northern Ireland] some stuck up for him and some were against him—if they were for or anti-Tory. I'm anti-Tory. It's such a conservative area here. (6/25/93)

Alice, however, explained that she did not join in the Common Room talk about politics or news: "I get frightened off because I don't know anything" (3/13/95).

Peter, a sixth former who was unusual in saying he was interested in politics and read the serious newspapers, said that he discusses the news "with my family, but not with my friends—when we are watching the news, and at meals. We talked about world events, Yugoslavia. I think we should pull out and let them sort it out. People don't seem that politically aware these days."

When I asked two fifteen-year-old Public School students if they discussed current events with their friends, they replied, "no, I don't think we know much about them." "We just talk about what happened in the day, like if you are upset about a teacher or how you did in cricket." As for discussing with their parents, one replied, "you discuss elections" (6/24/93). However, many of the sixth formers at the school said they did discuss news with their friends. Ray said he would talk about any major headline during the break, especially "if it's good for an argument." Other sixth formers had discussed Bosnia, the disputes between Spanish and British fishing fleets, and the case of Private Lee Clegg—all incidents involving substantive public policy issues. Sally, however, said that "you just say like wasn't the Oklahoma thing terrible. You don't really talk about it in depth. No deep discussion" (6/8/95).

In Germany, a few students mentioned discussing the news with their parents when they watched it together. More frequently, however, German students in the academic *Gymnasien* and the advanced tracks in comprehensive schools reported discussing current events and public issues with their friends. Students in less academic schools or tracks were less likely to do so. For example, in year 12 and 13 *Gymnasien* classes, students said that they had talked with friends about numerous international and national issues—Iraq and the Kurds, the war in former Yugoslavia and whether or not Germany should send soldiers, the development of young democracies in Eastern Europe, European integration, the rise of neo-Nazism, the transportation of atomic waste, and the pro-

posed sinking of the Shell oil rig. Similarly, in a year 10 *Gymnasium* class, students said they had discussed Yugoslavia and skinheads with friends, and in an advanced-track class in a comprehensive school members of a year 9 class said they had discussed the Gulf War, Yugoslavia, and racism with their friends. However, in a low-track class in a comprehensive school, students said they do not discuss such issues with their friends.

In the Dutch schools I visited, students said that they did not usually discuss politics, current events, or social issues with their friends. However, a few said they talked about sports news with their friends and they had discussed the floods of 1995 that threatened much of the southern part of the Netherlands and a bus strike that made getting to school difficult. Only a few Dutch students said they sometimes discussed the television news with their parents after watching it together. Similarly, a few of the American students reported discussing the news with older family members, particularly when watching it together at dinner time. Unlike the Dutch students, however, a few of the American students also said they sometimes discussed the news with their friends. Students in one Advanced Placement Government class, like other American students, reported discussing with friends sports news, abortion, and sensational events, such as the capture of the suspected Unabomber and the plane crash of a child pilot, Jessica. They also had talked with their friends about events in Israel and Hong Kong, the presidential election, and a proposed bill to limit pornography on the Internet.

Responses to the questions about using media to follow current affairs and the frequency of discussion about such events with family and friends reinforces the other indicators of student interest. Sample Danish, German, and British Public School students appeared to be the most interested in following and discussing current events. The Dutch students, on the other hand, were the ones least likely in the samples to report following or discussing current events.

Talking Politics in School

Questionnaire Responses In the United States and Denmark in 1993, 84 percent of the students said on the questionnaire that they discuss current events and politics in their classes sometimes or very often. In contrast only 45 percent of the English state school students and 55 percent of the Dutch students said that they discuss current events and politics in their classes.

Qualitative Findings All of the Danish students with whom I spoke said that they did discuss current events in their classes. At a *gymnasium*, students said they discuss current events and issues in history, and Dan-

ish classes, as well as social science. The only exception to this trend occurred in an *HF* class in which one student explained, "We don't have time to discuss, except in this [social science] class because we have to get ready for the [*HF*] exam" (3/2/93).

When I asked students in an English state school if they ever discussed the news in school, Thomas and Gill, year 11 students agreed, "not at school"; but they did mention discussing issues not tied to current events, such as birthrates and Third World aid in geography and in personal and social education (PSE) about jobs and not to discriminate against handicapped people. Similarly, Sarah, a sixth former said that in A-level German they talked about German politics and reunification, and in Social Education the class "split up in small groups and talked about the judicial system and racism." Helen reported they didn't talk about any issues in her A-level science classes and "we don't talk about Parliament or political parties in any classes." David agreed with her, but he did say that in A-level Classics they had compared Greek democracy to democracy today in a comical way. One of the fifteen-year-olds, Richard, also agreed there was no discussion of politics in classes: "No, definitely not in school . . . we did discuss racism, sexism, and global warming in RE [religious education] . . . and the greenhouse effect in geography. History is mostly set so we don't discuss" (6/25/93).

At the British Public School, students said they had not discussed the European Union, Maastricht, Parliament, or political parties in school. Several of the sections of General Studies subscribed to *The Spectator*, a news magazine, but only a few of the teachers had their students discuss any of the articles in the class. One student told me he talked about current events in General Studies, because he "had a history teacher for General Studies, he talks about current events." But the other students with whom I spoke said they did not discuss current events in their General Studies sections: "it's just supposed to be relaxed" to "air your views." The handful of students who take A-level Politics are expected to keep up with the news, but that accounts for only about 26 students out of the 350 in upper and lower sixth forms at the school.

Neither Dutch teachers nor students mentioned lessons in which students were encouraged to discuss events in the news. When serious flooding and a bus strike affected their area, there was some talk in class about the students' concerns. Overall, however, discussing current events was not part of the expectations for Dutch *maatschappijleer* classes.

In Germany, students who reported discussing current events with their friends said they rarely talked about them in their classes. Several sixth form students said that when they were younger they talked about the news more in school but less with their friends, and now that they were in upper secondary school they discussed more with their friends

and less in school, where the focus was on preparing for the *Abitur* exam. Although some of the German classes referred to events in the news to illustrate points in the lesson, such as the role of the United Nations in Bosnia when talking about functions of international organizations, the purpose was to capture student interest by referring to something familiar rather than to explicitly promote dialogue about current events.

In contrast, in many of the American social studies classes, teachers made deliberate efforts to have students follow and discuss the news in class. In one Missouri school, all students are encouraged to take a news magazine: *Time* for the ninth- and tenth-grade classes and *Newsweek* for the eleventh- and twelfth-grade classes. In California, one teacher, Mr. Stanton, had his students write in their daily journal about something in the news, and then each day one student would talk about their entry and the other students would then join in a discussion of the event. The students reported that as a consequence "now I watch the news" and "now I understand what is happening." Other teachers in the school lead their classes in discussions of current events one day a week.

The environmental science teacher at the Massachusetts high school also began each day by having one student report on an event in the news related to the environment and public policy. This school was the one showing Channel One news after lunch each day. After the news program another social studies teacher at the school frequently led a brief discussion of an issue raised in the program. However, because of the rotating schedule, students met with her only one day each week for the Channel One period following lunch. On the other days, the class just began the day's topic in whatever subject followed the broadcast. Not all American social studies teachers had routine ways of having students discuss the news, however. For example, although one California teacher, Mr. Thomas, sometimes illustrated points in his government and economics classes by referring to things that had happened in the news in recent years, he did not deliberately plan instructional activities to give students practice in discussing current issues.

Other Political Experiences

Additional items on the questionnaire related to political activities that adolescents might engage in, such as being on the student council, wearing buttons in support of political candidates, or handing out materials or passing a petition for a protest group. However, because activities that people regularly engage in vary so much from one country to another, items had to be worded differently, making comparisons across countries difficult.

Political Activities Students were asked if they had already engaged in the political activities of wearing a political button, badge, or sticker or helping with a campaign by handing out such things. Because in Denmark those activities occur in relation to issues rather than candidates, students were asked if they had worked for an issue or worn a button for one; in the other countries students were asked if they had worn buttons with candidates' names on them or helped with an individual's campaign. Sixty-one percent of the Danish students said they had worn something for a political issue, whereas smaller percentages of students in the other countries had worn something in support of a particular candidate—perhaps more would have said they wore them for issues if that had been asked instead of candidates. In 1986, 28 percent of the Danish students said they helped a pressure or political group by handing out things compared to 41 percent in 1993. Some of that activity could have been related to student activism leading up to the two referenda on the European Union, which occurred over the previous six months in Denmark.

Student Government On the questionnaires, in all but the English state schools, more than half the students reported they had held leadership positions—on student councils, as form leaders, prefects or team captains, or as officers in a club. Moreover in the United States and the British Public School in 1993, 30 percent of sample students said they had had such experiences more than twice. The main argument for having student councils is to develop leadership abilities and to give students practice in the political process of elections and decision making for the local community. In England, students are appointed "prefect" or "form captain" to enforce school rules and, it is hoped, to develop leadership and responsibility in the process.

In Denmark the Danish *folkeskole* law requires that every school have a school council or board composed of two students, seven parents, and two employees. At one school the student representatives were seventh and eighth graders elected by the student council. Their *rektor* (principal or headmaster) said that although much of the business of the school board was boring for the students, "sometimes they speak." The student councils usually comprise two representatives from each class. At one school the student council discussed and found solutions to real problems such as providing towels in the bathrooms, a pay telephone for student use, a refrigerator for their milk, and goals for soccer. At another *folkeskole* the student council had to allocate some of its funds to repair damage done by unknown student vandals. In one class, where the two representatives had little interest in the council, their disinterest spread to the rest of the class. Nevertheless, they all remained active in

class meetings, which were seen by teachers to be the basis of democratic preparation.

Danish *gymnasier*, like *folkeskoler*, have both a student council and a school board with representatives from the students, as well as teachers, and parents. One student council dealt with the smoking policy and other rules and regulations, leaving the planning of parties to another committee. Another council worked on obtaining new soccer playing fields and condom-dispensing machines in the school. At only one school did students complain that regardless of their recommendations, the *rektor* did what he wanted. The student councils at many of the Danish schools worked with the national organization of students to organize Operation Work Day. Until 1997 when a new policy was instituted, on that day there was no school, and students did various kinds of jobs to raise money for a charity. Millions of kroner were raised for relief in Somalia, for refugees in the former Yugoslavia, and for rainforests in Brazil.

Most of the secondary schools in Germany have student councils, but sometimes interest wanes and they are discontinued. At two comprehensive schools with student councils, there had been no interest for several years, but then it was revived again; at a third school there remained insufficient interest to have a student council. At other schools there was much interest and their representatives took part in national student conferences and school councils, consisting of teacher, parent, and student representatives. At one school they organized social events and discussed issues such as how to keep drugs and violence out of the school. At another school the council "raised money for kids in Bosnia and collected candles and things to go in boxes to Bosnia. They also organized a demonstration against the Gulf War" (3/3/95). At another school, students enthusiastically reported: "it organized the demonstration against violence," "we went to the first conference in Germany of Children to Save the Environment, and several other representatives went to a conference in Geneva of Kids for Europe. Last year's school president went to the [nongovernmental] conference in Rio on the environment." A boy in a lower ability class in that school was not so impressed with the student council, and described it as "mostly eco females" (5/18/93).

At one English state school there was a pupil council with elected representatives from tutor groups. One boy who was serving on the council said they discussed lockers, because some people wanted lockers. They sold the "organizers" which students write their homework assignments in at the end of each class. They also discussed changes in the uniform policy, such as permitting girls to wear trousers, and possibly replacing blazers with jumpers (pullover sweaters), and they gave a

survey asking students what rules they should and should not have at the school. The council was also discussing "getting prefects, they patrol the halls, so students don't mess around." "There are some born leaders," "it looks good on your report," and "you get privileges, like being in the main corridor without special permission and they have their own room" (6/19/95). A teacher added that the council also decided how to spend the money they raised from events such as non-uniform day, contributing it to several charities for people with disabilities.

At another state school a student explained, there is a year council, but not a student government: "It's more organizing events, discos, and it raises money . . . for UNICEF. You pay fifty pence so you don't have to wear a uniform one day and then you go to the disco. That was for cancer research." In addition to the year councils, which have one elected male and one elected female from each tutor group, there is a "head boy" and a "head girl" for each year group with "deputy heads" and "prefects" who are appointed by the school administration to help the teachers enforce school rules. Helen explained:

They're the enforcers, an extension of what the teachers do. They [the school council] don't seem to carry the same respect that the enforcers do. We also have year councils, they meet with the head [headteacher, principal] of the school in years 7 through 9. In year 10 they plan the school fete. In year 11, the year council organizes the leavers' dinner and dance. But there are just prefects in lower sixth. The year council organizes the discos and trips and if there is any tension between teachers and students. Like now they are trying to get a compromise about signing out, the teachers want it one way and the students want it another way . . . the school council has pushed for recycling at school. (6/25/93)

At the Public School, there are no elected representatives to any student council. Rather, each boarding house has prefects appointed to be responsible for behavior. In one house, there was a society that started collecting aluminum cans and papers in the house.

In the Netherlands, one student at an agricultural school explained: "No, we don't have a student government, but we do have a school newspaper. You can write letters, but just a few do it. It's mostly poems and drawings." At the pre-university school, students were not elected to the student council but rather volunteered. They had talked with the teachers and obtained implementation of policies, such as no more than five tests in one week, and they organized buses to take students to a strike against education cuts. At a junior general secondary school (*mavo*) a student council existed only in 1995, thanks to the encouragement of one teacher. At the time of my visit they had been talking about having sodas in machines that would be available during the breaks. However, a year later the council had died out again.

In the United States, all of the schools that I visited had student councils. At the Massachusetts school, students gave speeches and students voted on the officers and council members. One student explained: "They do dances. They run homecoming, a volleyball tournament, and if the clubs want to do any fundraising they have to go through them." (3/27/95) At one California school Margie explained, "They plan dances and activities like the Secret Santa lunch to make the campus better" (12/15/95).

At another California high school with a major student activities program, I visited the day candidates for student body officers (president, vice president, and secretary) gave speeches in the gym before the election. Several candidates promised to improve "school spirit," while others pledged to improve multicultural week, work on a recycling program, and "have a task force to reduce the generation gap between teachers and students." The officers meet in the mornings before school starts with a legislative council composed of students appointed from the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes. The officers, council members, and representatives from various activities such as the school newspaper, yearbook, pep squad, band, and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)—some eighty-five students in all—meet in a daily "leadership class." The leadership class organizes morning assemblies, lunch activities and after-school rallies. Its members also discuss proposed changes in school policy, such as one dealing with attendance. Also, they sponsor fund-raising activities to help finance homecoming, the prom, and teacher appreciation week. Interestingly, a goal of this extensive student activity program is to bring students together from diverse ethnic groups and to bridge their different interests.

Clubs and sports also give opportunities for some students to develop leadership skills as well as meet student interest through some extracurricular activity. With regard to belonging to school clubs, fewer than 20 percent of English and American students said they had never belonged to school clubs in 1993. In Denmark students answered a different question, with 36 percent in 1986 and 10 percent in 1993 saying they did belong to a national student union or political organization.

In interviews, students at one English state school said they had school clubs devoted to sports including hockey, football (soccer), cricket, rugby, tennis, badminton, and rounders (a game similar to baseball, which is usually played by girls); an arts club; and a homework club after school. At their school there were no clubs for social issues. At the British Public School, where students had "games" every afternoon, there were clubs such as a debate society, a cinema society, and a newly formed Amnesty International club. In the Netherlands and Denmark, students said they didn't really have clubs; there were after-school sports programs at nearby youth centers.

In the American high schools, many students reported participating in before- and after-school activities: band, orchestra, a vast array of sports teams, and groups that perform dances or flag presentations at sports events as well as clubs such as speech and debate, Model UN, Mock Trial, and Amnesty International. In an ethnically diverse Missouri class, students said they also participated in community youth groups for Chinese, Indian (Asian), Jewish, and Christian students. Several belonged to citywide organizations designed to bring students from various groups together and to work on community service projects.

In 1993 a question was added to the questionnaire asking if students had collected money for a charity, a kind of political activism for issues. More than 70 percent of the sample students everywhere, except in the Netherlands and Germany, said they had collected for a charity. As noted above, student councils in English state schools often collect money for charities and in Denmark there was a tradition of students all over the country raising money on the one day when they missed school to do various jobs to raise money for the year's cause. A few Danish students had also collected money for the Red Cross and to save the rainforest. At one junior general secondary school in the Netherlands, one student reported that, "before Easter, we raised money to go to Foster Parents, the Red Cross, and UNICEF. You get people like friends and neighbors to sponsor you to swim or bicycle or something for some distance. We raised ten thousand guilders [approximately three thousand dollars]." But at the other schools in the Netherlands, students did not mention charities. In the United States, some individual students had raised money for causes, such as being sponsored in a walk for AIDS; but there was not the kind of organizing for charities that I saw in England and in Denmark.

Community service work was promoted in the English school in a working-class community. Students assisted the elderly or helped in a primary school as part of their personal and social education course. Government students in one American school district were given the option of doing a community service project or a more traditional research paper as a course requirement. Those who selected the community service option were to relate their volunteer work to discussion of local public policy.

Looking at the variety of political activities that secondary school students might be engaged in, several trends appear. Following the news and discussing it with friends, family, and in school appears to be quite common in Denmark, Germany, and the United States. In the Netherlands and in English state schools, many students may catch the main stories if their family has the television news on, but only a few particularly interested students take actions to keep up with the news on a regular basis, and fewer still initiate discussions with friends and in school.

Student councils are an accepted part of life in Denmark and the United States. They are allocated funds and make decisions about a variety of school policies in Denmark. In the United States they are more likely to plan social activities. In Germany student councils are more or less active in different years. When they are active they organize protests and charity drives for social issues of concern to youth.

In England, year councils and student councils in state schools plan parties, raise money for charities, and advise the school administration on school matters such as uniform policies. Some state and Public schools appoint responsible students to help monitor uniform and behavior standards in place of or in addition to representative councils. In the United States, extensive activities programs involve many—but not all—students in community life.

SUMMARY

Taken together, all of the questionnaire and interview data related to adolescent political attitudes, experiences, and anticipated political activity reveal clear country differences that correspond to differences in political culture and schooling noted in the appendix and in chapter 1.

Danish students indicated comparatively high levels of political interest and efficacy. They often followed the news and discussed it with family, friends, and teachers. They often tried to persuade others to their views and exhibited a high level of political confidence. They participated in class decision making and indirectly in school decision making. They observed debates and engaged in discussion about a national referendum. Danish students, who appear to be the most politicized of the students in this study, attend schools in which political discussion and participation is practiced, and they live in a wider political culture in which political discussion and participation are also prevalent. It is not surprising then that in a context of democratic discourse and participation that young Danish youth construct a view of the political realm that both reflects and supports participatory democracy to a greater extent than is evident in the other countries in this study.

English students who attended a traditional Public School were interested in politics and current events, which they followed and discussed with family and friends but not in their classes. However, with the exception of a few sixth-form students, English students in state schools expressed little interest in the political arena; they were not likely to have studied politics or government in classes. English students perceived politics as the contest between parliamentary parties, and, with the exception of some of the Public School students, tended to

think that citizens could not have much influence on government decision making. The English case also demonstrates the interaction between school and cultural experiences as youth construct political meanings.²¹ State school students had relatively few opportunities to discuss political issues in school and for the most part saw only MPs on television engaged in political discourse. The ethos of the Public School and the expectations of upper-middle-class families for political participation provided stimulus for participatory attitudes when deliberate political education was not part of the school curriculum.

Sample German students in 1986 for the most part indicated a high level of political interest, but their counterparts in 1993–95 reported less interest. Both samples reported low efficacy, doubting that citizens have much influence on policy making. Nevertheless, German students reported that they would definitely exercise their right to vote, and they were well informed about public affairs. Both the school curriculum and the political culture were characterized by political discourse. Yet in observing the media and events around them, many young Germans came to the conclusion that average citizens have little effect on political decision making.

The Dutch samples indicated comparatively low levels of political interest; and very few said they ever discussed politics or current events with their friends. Further, they said they would not try to persuade others to their point of view out of respect for each person's right to their own opinion. Dutch students observed similar attitudes and experiences among adults in the culture around them.²²

The American students in the sample stand out for their comparatively high levels of political confidence and efficacy. They reported frequent discussions with friends during which they would try to persuade others to their view, and they cited both contemporary and historic examples of citizens influencing government decision making. Again, school and cultural messages are consistent in the ecology in which American youth construct their political worldview and their role in it.

The attitude for which there was the least divergence across countries and time periods was political trust. Students everywhere were cynical about politicians, citing broken political promises once candidates took office. Students in the United States, England, and Germany also cited political scandals they had heard or read about in the media. They took these images into account in constructing their mental schema about political leaders.

This picture of cross-national similarities and differences in political attitudes and experiences will be expanded upon in the remaining chapters, as the roles of gender, societal norms of civic tolerance, and classroom climate are examined.

CHAPTER 3

Gender and Political Attitudes

Equality and justice, along with liberty and freedom, are core values on which democracy rests. They are also fundamental principles underlying the assertion in the Declaration of Human Rights that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights . . . and that everyone is entitled to all . . . rights and freedoms . . . without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion.” Because abstract rhetoric about equality has been insufficient to ensure women’s civic equality, the United Nations’ Convention on the Political Rights of Women states explicitly that in addition to having the right to vote, “women shall be entitled to hold public office” and “women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies . . . on equal terms with men.”

In this century, and particularly since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in many parts of the world, most nations have removed the legal barriers to women’s suffrage and office holding. Nevertheless, even in the industrialized Western democracies, which have long had women’s suffrage, women do not hold public office in numbers at all comparable to men. The situation in the five nations that are the focus of this study illustrates that point.

In the United States, where school children have been taught the myth that anyone can rise from “the log cabin to the White House,” and where women have had the legal right to vote and hold office for eighty years, political leaders are still for the most part males. Nineteen ninety-seven was the first year that more than three women served on the president’s Cabinet at once. When the first woman was appointed to the Supreme Court, the first woman was nominated by a major political party to a vice-presidential position, and when as many as five women were candidates for the Senate, these achievements were hailed as great leaps forward. The fact remains, however, that still in 1997, a mere 9 percent of the Senate and 11.5 percent of the House of Representatives were female (Center for the American Woman and Politics, 1997). The situation is no better in the other four democracies in this study.

In Germany, for example, the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (art. 3, sec. 2) states that “men and women shall have equal

rights." However, the constitutional guarantee and the fact that women's suffrage has existed in Germany since 1919 have had little effect on positions of political leadership. Only 21 percent and 15 percent of the lower and upper houses of the German parliament, respectively, were female in 1994 (United Nations, 1995).

Even in Denmark, which in 1915 became the earliest country of those in this study to institute women's suffrage, and which has a long social welfare tradition guided by concern for justice and equality, women are not represented in policy-making bodies in proportion to their numbers in the population. Although the constitution of Denmark does not make specific reference to gender, it has been assumed to apply equally to females and males. Section 29 of the Danish Constitution states that "any Danish subject whose permanent residence is in the Realm and who has the age qualification for suffrage . . . [now eighteen] shall have the right to vote, and section 30 continues "any person who has a right to vote at *Folketing* (Parliament) elections shall be eligible for membership in the *Folketing*." Although in 1994 33 percent of the members of Parliament were females—more than other countries in this study—still only 13.6 percent of the ministers were women (United Nations, 1995) and no woman had achieved the post of prime minister.

In the Dutch constitution, article 4 guarantees equal rights of all citizens to vote and stand for election as a member of representative bodies. That is set in the context of article 1 of the constitution, which emphasizes that "all persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted." Furthermore, the Netherlands has had a female monarch on the throne for more than a century (Queens Wilhelmina, Juliana, and Beatrix). As of 1994, 31 percent of the lower house and 25 percent of the upper house were women. However, only 6 percent of the ministers were female, (United Nations, 1995) and no women had ever served as prime minister.

The United Kingdom, with an unwritten or uncodified constitution and a highly visible female prime minister throughout the 1980s, is not much different from the other four countries in regard to the political status of women. At the turn of the century, the large and militant women's suffrage movement won for British women the right to vote and hold office. Yet almost eighty years later, in 1994, only 9 percent of the House of Commons and 6 percent of the House of Lords were women (United Nations, 1995). No women served in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet except the prime minister herself, and, after that, no more than two women at a time served in Prime Minister John Major's cabinet. Nineteen ninety-seven was a banner year when five women

were appointed to the cabinet and the Speaker of the House was female.

The small percentages of women political leaders in all of these countries may be attributable not only to stereotypical attitudes toward women holding political leadership positions but also to females' disinclination to participate in the political realm. Both of those explanations will be explored in this chapter.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In chapter 2, adolescent political attitudes and behaviors related to citizen participation were examined from a comparative perspective in that similarities and differences across national contexts were analyzed. In this chapter, a focus on gender as a variable that may affect attitudes will add further insights about the political development of young people.¹

Most of the previous research by political scientists that is relevant to an examination of gender and political attitudes, like that on political socialization generally, grows out of classical liberal democratic theory. Classical liberalism assumes that in a democracy individuals have the right to participate—either directly or indirectly through elected representatives—in the decisions that affect the public. Moreover, liberal democratic theory assumes that an abstract right is meaningless if it is not exercised. From this perspective, researchers studying gender effects begin with concern that the female half of the population has not held public office and engaged in other public policy-making activities to the same extent as have males; such scholars thus revealed barriers to equal access for all citizens' participation in the body politic.²

Gender Differences in Political Knowledge, Interest, and Participation

Beginning with Greenstein's (1961) analysis of the New Haven Child Study data, political socialization researchers of the 1960s and early 1970s focused on gender differences in political learning. Greenstein found that elementary school boys were more likely than girls to recognize the names of political leaders and to attend to political news.³ By defining "political" in terms of public figures who were primarily males and political news as news about public events and government action, this early work established the narrow definition of politics that still persists. Consequently, researchers may have missed the meanings that many females—and males—construct of such political concepts as power, authority, justice, freedom, civic responsibility, and decision making (Rettinger, 1993).

Using traditional measures of political knowledge and interest that

focus on the narrow conception of politics, many researchers concluded that females are less knowledgeable about and interested in the political realm than are males. For example, in the early 1970s in the United States, the researchers who conducted the large-scale National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which uses nationally representative stratified random samples, reported that at ages thirteen and seventeen American females did less well than males on items measuring knowledge of facts about government, the law, and international problems (Education Commission, 1971, 1973, 1974). On the national assessments conducted in 1972, 1982, and 1988, at ages thirteen and seventeen males tended to score higher than females—but the differences were quite small—a 4 percent difference or less in average proficiency (Educational Testing Service, 1990). Moreover, on the 1976 assessment, thirteen-year-old females scored higher than males on citizenship items (NAEP, 1978). In 1988 at grades 4 and 8, males and females performed comparably, on average, but males had a slight proficiency advantage at grade 12. The gap was the widest at the high proficiency levels. That is, 12th-grade males were considerably more likely than 12th-grade females to be represented among the highest scoring students. The gender gap for 12th graders occurred primarily on items about the structure and function of political institutions and secondly on items about political processes. Females did as well as males, and in some cases better, on items about rights, responsibilities, and the law (Educational Testing Service, 1990).

Similarly on a large statewide assessment in California in the 1980s, males scored higher than females on questions related to the structure of government. Females, however, did better on items about democratic processes, rights, and responsibilities, and where the subject was a woman (Kneedler, 1988). In another study at about the same time gender differences were reported by Owen and Dennis (1988). They interviewed 366 pairs of students and their parents a year after a presidential election and found that among both adults and adolescents, males exhibited greater knowledge than females. Male adolescents reported following political debates on television more than did the females. However, females said they helped with campaigns more than did their male peers.

Research on gender differences in political knowledge and interest is not limited to the United States. In the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) research on civic education in nine nations, a study that used large nationally representative samples, researchers concluded that males scored substantially higher than females on items measuring knowledge of national and international politics, and they reported more political discussion than

did females (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975; Torney-Purta, 1991). Studies of British youth from the 1960s through the 1980s also concluded that male students were more knowledgeable about and interested in politics and government than females; they were also more likely than females to say they frequently followed news on radio and television (Denver & Hands, 1990; Dowse & Hughes, 1971b; Nossiter, 1969; Stradling, 1975). Similarly, political socialization researchers in Germany and the Netherlands reported that male students in their countries were more interested than females in politics (Dekker, 1991; Dekker & Portengen, 1995; Vis, 1991).

Contrary Findings: No Gender Differences

A few researchers found, contrary to the general trends, no gender differences in political knowledge, interest, or behavior. Whether these findings were anomalies or whether they were beginning to signal a change in political orientation among some groups of young people was not yet clear, as other studies conducted during the same period still found males to be more politically knowledgeable and interested in the political arena than were females. The studies concluding there were no gender differences included a survey of more than two thousand students in grades 4 through 12 in which the researchers found no gender differences with regard to political participation or amount of political discussion (Orum, Cohen, Grasmuck, & Orum, 1977). In other small-scale studies of American secondary students, researchers also found no significant gender differences in political interest (Avery & Hahn, 1985; Blankenship, 1990; Segall, 1975). In one study of American and German twelfth graders, no gender differences were found in attitudes toward conventional political participation, such as voting, attending public hearings, joining a political party, and contributing money to a political campaign (Hepburn, Napier, & Cremer, 1990). Similarly no gender differences were found in regard to less conventional political participation such as demonstrations.

A few researchers even found some females to be more politically interested than males. For example, although Hepburn and Napier (1982-83) found no significant gender differences in their 3rd- and 12th-grade subjects in one southeastern school district, 8th-grade girls had significantly more positive political attitudes than did boys, and at all grade levels females had higher scores on thirty-four out of thirty-six subtests than did males. And in the study of twelfth graders, American high school females were more likely than males to participate in school political activities (Hepburn, Napier, & Cremer, 1990). Similarly, in a study of fifteen-year-old English students, Wormald (1983) concluded

that girls were slightly more knowledgeable about and interested in politics than were boys, and they were considerably more likely than the males to report discussing politics with parents. Further research was warranted to ascertain whether male advantage in political interest was a thing of the past.⁴

Political Trust, Efficacy, and Confidence

For the most part, researchers have found no gender differences among high school students in levels of political trust and external political efficacy, the belief that citizens can influence policy. On the other hand, there is evidence that females sometimes express lower levels of political confidence and internal political efficacy—confidence that they can understand politics—than do males.

In regard to levels of political trust in secondary school students, researchers consistently have found no gender differences (Avery & Hahn, 1985; Blankenship, 1990; Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Orum et al., 1977). In one study of American and German twelfth graders, although there were no gender differences in the American sample in attitudes toward political leaders and politicians, German females were more skeptical about politicians and the political process (Hepburn, Napier, & Krieger, 1988). Most researchers studying political efficacy concluded there were few or no gender differences⁵ (Blankenship, 1990; Farnen & German, 1972; Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Lyons, 1970; Owen & Dennis, 1988). However, contrary to the general trend, several researchers did find gender differences in political efficacy. One researcher in the United States found male adolescents had higher levels of political efficacy than did females (Vaillancourt, 1972) as did researchers in one study in England and Wales (Denver & Hands, 1990). Another British researcher, however, found that female students had higher levels than males (Wormald, 1983). German males showed greater confidence in the responsiveness of the national legislature than did females, but no gender differences were found in American students in the same study (Hepburn, Napier, & Krieger, 1988).

Rapoport (1981) was interested in determining whether there are early antecedents to a finding among adults that females are less likely than males to persuade others to vote. For that purpose, he administered questionnaires to 1,384 students in Michigan and compared their reported attitudes to those of adults in the University of Michigan's National Election Survey of 1972. Among both the high school and adult respondents, males not only appeared to possess more political knowledge, but also demonstrated stronger attitudes toward political figures than did the females; females, on the other hand, showed con-

sistent patterns of "attitude constraint." Controlling for knowledge differences in the high school sample reduced the gap somewhat, but still males exhibited stronger feelings than did the females toward the individuals listed. The finding of attitude constraint is interesting because it may reinforce studies of political confidence.

For example, when political confidence was defined as one's personal influence in decision-making situations, high school females in one Atlanta school system reported lower levels of confidence than did males (Avery & Hahn, 1985), but in another study in the Atlanta area there were no gender differences in political confidence (Blankenship, 1990). In the IEA study, which used representative samples in nine countries, females reported lower levels of political confidence than did males (Torney-Purta, 1991a). It is possible that the lower levels of internal efficacy found in female adults as compared to males begin during the school years, with some females exhibiting lower levels of confidence than males in their ability to influence decisions.

To determine whether gender differences found in earlier research on political attitudes persisted into the 1990s, I conducted a case study of civics instruction in one school in the southeastern United States in 1991 (Hahn, 1996a). I used questionnaires to measure the political interest, efficacy, trust, and confidence of students in five ninth-grade civics classes. The quantitative data were complemented by qualitative data obtained in two of the civics classes, where I observed lessons over the course of one semester and interviewed students. The overall finding of that study was that the male and female adolescents in that particular sample were equally political or apolitical; many students of both genders expressed low levels of political interest and trust and negative views of politics and politicians. The few gender differences in attitudes, interests, and behaviors that appeared in the interviews were quite subtle. Like earlier researchers, I found no difference in the degrees of political efficacy and trust between males and females. I also found no gender difference in political interest or confidence, corroborating several of the more recent studies.

Interestingly, in that case study females expressed stronger opinions than males about political issues, contradicting earlier research that relied solely on questionnaires asking about interest in "politics." Gender differences seemed to exist in responses to the issues that interested students, with more females mentioning issues that could be labeled "social," such as welfare, abortion, or rape, and more males mentioning patriotic issues, such as the military or world peace and the United States' competitiveness with other countries. Slight differences were detectable in media consumption, which might influence how males and females viewed politics. The males seemed to follow national and inter-

national news more closely than did females, and they appeared to have a higher rate of news consumption.

That study, using both quantitative and qualitative data, was restricted to a single school. One purpose of this five-nation study was to determine whether similar findings would be obtained from samples of students in the fifty schools in five countries.

Attitudes toward Women Politicians

In all of the studies in this review, the term *political* on questionnaires and in interviews was probably interpreted by students to mean the public arena in which males more often hold office and carry out the work of governments. Similarly, research on attitudes toward women as political leaders looks at support for women being elected to public, governmental positions.

In a large cross-national study of students ages ten, fourteen, and seventeen years old, IEA researchers found that young people were not completely supportive of women holding political office (Torney et al., 1975). Among the students from the nine nations that were sampled, West German students were the most supportive of women's political rights.⁶ Yet, even among the German students, only a little more than half of the fourteen-year-olds strongly agreed that "women should run for political office and take part in government much the same as men do." A mere 27 percent of the American fourteen-year-olds strongly agreed with that statement. Furthermore, the researchers found gender differences in support of women's right to hold political office. Within each of the nine countries sampled, females were more likely than males to support such rights (Torney et al., 1975; Torney-Purta, 1991).

Five years later, in the nationally representative 1976 NAEP sample, 76 percent of the American seventeen-year-olds said they thought that women should run for public office and take part in government much the same as men do, and 78 percent disagreed that women should stay out of politics (Jones, 1980). Not only were those data collected more recently than the IEA data, but also "agree" as well as "strongly agree" responses were reported, giving a more positive picture for the American sample than had the IEA reports cited above in which fewer than a third of American fourteen-year olds strongly agreed that women should be as politically active as men.

Research conducted in Nebraska in the 1990s suggested that American students and adults who observed more female candidates than had their counterparts in earlier generations were becoming more supportive of women in government (Gillespie & Spohn, 1987; 1990). Students were surveyed following campaigns that drew much media attention to

female firsts—when Geraldine Ferraro ran for vice president and when two women were the major party candidates for governor. The researchers found an increasing willingness of white females and black males and females to support the idea of women holding political office. They speculated that the continuing reluctance of white males to support females holding office might be attributable to a perceived threat that if women held more offices, then the traditional winners, white males, would be the losers in terms of political and other opportunities (1990).

The research on youth attitudes toward women in political roles as well as that on gender differences in political attitudes can be extended by pursuing those lines of inquiry with the cross-national sample in this study.

FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

First, to determine whether gender differences existed in political attitudes and behaviors among the students in this five-nation study, the responses of male and female students were compared on the Political Interest, Political Efficacy, Political Confidence, and Political Trust scales of the questionnaire in both 1986 and 1993.⁷

Using the System for Statistics—better known as “Systat”—computer software (Wilkinson, 1986), percentage frequencies and means for scales by gender were obtained. Means of responses for males and females on each scale were compared using effect sizes for the total sample at both time periods, and within countries in 1993 as can be seen in table 3.1

In 1986 the gender differences for the total sample obtained on the Political Efficacy and Political Trust scales were negligible. For the total sample in 1986, males scored higher than females on the Political Confidence and Political Interest scales, but the magnitude of the differences were small (effect size .18 and .20). Males reported only slightly higher levels of political confidence and interest than did females.

Looking at the total sample in 1993 there were no gender differences on the four political attitude scales. However, on some scales differences did occur in some countries. On the one hand, in 1993 there were no appreciable gender differences in political interest among samples in England, the Netherlands, and the United States. However, in Denmark and Germany in 1993, there was a small effect for gender, with males from those two countries scoring higher than females on the Political Interest scale (effect size .41 and .39). On the Political

TABLE 3.1
Gender Differences on Political Attitude Scales

	<i>Interest^a</i>		<i>Efficacy^b</i>		<i>Trust^c</i>		<i>Confidence^d</i>	
	Mean (sd)	n	Mean (sd)	n	Mean (sd)	n	Mean (sd)	n
All 1986								
Males	2.98 (.83)	702	3.24 (.71)	710	2.80 (.74)	702	3.16 (.57)	706
Females	2.83 (.81)	707	3.29 (.65)	707	2.78 (.65)	696	3.05 (.53)	701
Effect Size	.18		.07		.03		.20	
All 1993								
Males	2.99 (.90)	1959	3.28 (.58)	1939	2.50 (.70)	1950	3.24 (.66)	1936
Females	2.95 (.84)	1908	3.33 (.50)	1880	2.52 (.63)	1918	3.18 (.63)	1907
Effect Size	.05		.09		.03		.09	
Denmark 1993								
Males	3.48 (.75)	110	3.50 (.57)	103	2.97 (.74)	109	3.29 (.66)	105
Females	3.18 (.72)	180	3.45 (.45)	171	2.81 (.61)	178	3.12 (.55)	177
Effect Size	.41		.10		.24		.29	
England 1993								
Males	2.93 (.89)	557	3.23 (.54)	557	2.51 (.68)	563	3.17 (.64)	557
Females	2.93 (.83)	446	3.25 (.47)	433	2.49 (.60)	445	3.14 (.51)	444
Effect Size	.00		.04		.03		.05	
Germany 1993								
Males	3.11 (.82)	245	3.05 (.60)	244	2.30 (.61)	243	3.13 (.58)	234
Females	2.81 (.73)	240	2.97 (.59)	232	2.24 (.56)	241	2.98 (.59)	238
Effect Size	.39		.13		.10		.26	

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3.1 (*continued*)

Gender Differences on Political Attitude Scales

	<i>Interest^a</i>		<i>Efficacy^b</i>		<i>Trust^c</i>		<i>Confidence^d</i>		
	Mean	(sd)	n	Mean	(sd)	n	Mean	(sd)	n
Netherlands 1993									
Males	2.45	(.87)	242	3.28	(.56)	239	2.89	(.71)	238
Females	2.39	(.81)	223	3.23	(.55)	219	2.83	(.65)	224
Effect Size	.07		.09			.04			.31
United States 1994									
Males	3.11	(.87)	805	3.34	(.59)	796	2.38	(.66)	797
Females	3.11	(.84)	819	3.47	(.51)	825	2.46	(.60)	830
Effect Size	.00		.24			.13			.03

Note: A higher mean (closer to 5.0) indicates higher reported levels of political interest, efficacy, trust, and confidence, and a lower mean (closer to 1.0) indicates lower reported levels of the four attitudes.

a. Cronbach alphas for the Political Interest Scale were: All 1986, .85; All 1993, .88; 1993 alphas by country: Denmark .83; England .88; Germany .82; Netherlands .86; United States .89.

b. Cronbach alphas for the Political Efficacy Scale were: All 1986, .64; All 1993, .62; 1993 alphas by country: Denmark .58; England .59; Germany .69; Netherlands .62; United States .66.

c. Cronbach alphas for the Political Trust Scale were: All 1986, .78; All 1993, .78; 1993 alphas by country: Denmark .79; England .74; Germany .72; Netherlands .77; United States .77.

d. Cronbach alphas for the Political Confidence Scale were: All 1986, .69; All 1993, .84; 1993 alphas by country: Denmark .82; England .82; Germany .79; Netherlands .77; United States .86.

Efficacy scale in 1993, there were negligible gender differences, except in the United States where there was a small effect for gender (effect size .24). American females in 1993 reported slightly higher levels of political efficacy than did males. On the Political Trust scale in 1993, there were no gender differences in four countries. However, in Denmark sample males reported higher levels of political trust than did females; the effect of gender was small (effect size .24). On the Political Confidence scale in 1993, there were negligible gender differences for samples in the United States and England. However, in the other three countries in 1993 and for the total sample, the males scored higher than the females on the Political Confidence scale. The small effect for gender ranged from .20 for the total 1986 sample to .31 for the 1993 Dutch sample.

Looking across scales by country in 1993 reveals only a few small gender differences. Danish males scored higher than Danish females on all scales, but the effect size was small—below .50 on all scales. No gender differences were found among English students in the 1993 sample. German males scored higher than females on the Political Interest and Political Confidence scales, the Dutch males scored higher than the females on the Political Confidence scale, and the American females scored higher than the males on the Political Efficacy scale, but again the effects were small in all instances.

Overall, then, few or no gender differences were found in political attitudes. On twenty out of twenty-eight possibilities, the magnitude of the difference between means of males and females were too small to be of any importance. The small gender differences that did occur were primarily in political interest and political confidence, with males scoring slightly higher than females in Denmark and Germany in 1993 and for the total sample in 1986. Additionally, in 1993 Dutch males reported slightly higher levels of political confidence than did Dutch females, and Danish males reported slightly higher levels of political trust than did Danish females. Moreover, only for the 1993 American sample on the Political Efficacy scale did females score higher than males.

The qualitative data from interviews and observations further support the overall finding of little to no difference by gender in political attitudes. As was evident in chapter 2, both females and males in Denmark said they were interested in politics, whereas in the Netherlands neither males nor females indicated much interest. The latter finding is contrary to that of Dutch researchers who measured a national sample of Dutch youth in 1995 (Dekker & Portengen, 1995), reporting that males said they were more interested in politics and that they were more likely to vote in parliamentary elections than did females.

In this study, no gender differences were detectable for either effi-

cacy or political trust in interviews in any of the countries. In Denmark and Germany, males did seem to speak up more than females, expressing their views on political topics, and a few students in each of those countries said they thought males were more interested as can be seen later in this chapter where qualitative data are reported. In most Dutch classes I observed, few females spoke, except in a class with an assertive female teacher who confessed that she tells the boys: "I don't want to hear from the boys. I want to hear from the girls." She hypothesized that might be the reason female students seemed more politically interested than males in her classes (9/5/96).

ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN POLITICS: RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

To measure attitudes toward women in politics, the Equal Rights scale was developed and administered during both time periods. The Equal Rights scale contained the one item used in the IEA study to measure support for women's political rights in the abstract. It read, "women should run for political office and take part in government much the same as men do" (Torney et al., 1975). Four additional items were written for the Equal Rights scale stating that women should have the same rights as men to be mayor, to be on a city council, and to be a member of Parliament or Congress.⁸ Responses were examined for country differences on the Equal Rights scale at both time periods as can be seen in table 3.2.

In 1986, the Danish students in the sample reported the most support for women's political rights (mean 4.65), followed by sample students in Germany (mean 4.22). The mean was the lowest on this scale for sample students in the Netherlands in 1986. The effect sizes for the magnitude of the difference between Danish and German means were moderate (.70); they were large (1.32) between the Dutch and Danish means. The differences between the Dutch means and those of the American and English samples were too small to be of consequence. Again in 1993 the Danish students had the highest means on the Equal Rights scale, with moderate effect sizes for the magnitude of the difference between their mean and those in the other countries. The differences among the other four countries were negligible (effect sizes .03-.23).⁹

For all items on the Equal Rights scale the overwhelming majority of students in all countries either agreed or strongly agreed that women should have equal rights to be political leaders as men. Although this may reflect what students perceive to be the socially acceptable thing to

TABLE 3.2
Equal Rights: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for
Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Denmark</i>
Mean	3.84	3.96	3.99	4.22	4.65
(s.d.)	(.76)	(.85)	(.81)	(.84)	(.47)
<i>n</i>	249	374	344	147	312
United States	.15 (.12)	—	—	—	—
England	.19 (.15)	.04 (.03)	—	—	—
Germany	.48 (.39)*	.31 (.27)*	.28 (.24)	—	—
Denmark	1.32 (.82)*	.98 (.70)*	.99 (.67)*	.70 (.43)*	—
	1993				
	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Denmark</i>
Mean	4.21	4.23	4.25	4.35	4.63
(s.d.)	(.78)	(.82)	(.84)	(.68)	(.59)
<i>n</i>	475	506	1730	1055	305
Germany	.03 (.02)	—	—	—	—
United States	.06 (.04)	.04 (.02)	—	—	—
England	.23 (.14)	.17 (.12)	.12 (.10)	—	—
Denmark	.61 (.42)*	.56 (.40)*	.64 (.38)*	.48 (.20)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that women should hold equal political rights with men. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1420) = 55.35, 1993 F (4, 4066) = 19.28, $p = .001$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Equal Rights scale were .83 for the total sample in 1986 and .89 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .86, England .88, Germany .92, Netherlands .89, and United States .92.

*Significant at the .001 level.

say rather than their true feelings, student comments in interviews seemed to confirm a strong commitment to gender equality in political rights. Shifts in support from 1986 to 1993 were most apparent by looking at the increased percentages of students who "strongly agreed" with statements in 1993. For that reason, only the strongly agree responses are reported in table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3
Percentage of Students by Country
Strongly Agreeing with Items on Equal Rights Scale

	n		Denmark		England		Germany		Netherlands		United States	
			1986	1993	1986	1993	1986	1993	1986	1993	1986	1994
			312	305	344	1055	147	506	249	475	374	1730
1.	Women should have the same opportunities to be on the city council	80	81	43	55	66	58	45	56	44	44	60
2.	Women should be mayors just like men are	80	85	43	50	64	54	21	55	42	42	53
3.	Heads of government like the prime minister should not be men only	72	72	43	60	55	47	44	47	33	33	48
4.	Women should take part in government as much as men do	78	74	37	51	64	51	24	47	-	39	57
5.	Women should run for public office as often as men	-	69	-	50	-	47	-	50	-	-	52
6.	Women can be strong political leaders	-	73	-	60	-	50	-	48	-	-	58
7.	I would be just as likely to vote for a woman as a man for Parliament (Congress)	63	73	25	46	31	50	24	37	24	24	48

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate the internal consistency of the Equal Rights scale for the total sample were .83 in 1986 and .89 in 1993.

Clearly, on all items at both time periods, sample students from Denmark reported the most support for women holding positions as political leaders. Additionally, support for women political leaders on most items was stronger among 1993 samples than 1986 samples in most countries. That was not true, however, for the German samples. For the four questions that were asked at both time periods, 8 percent fewer German students in 1993 than in 1986 strongly agreed that women should be political leaders.

In all countries in 1986, students were the least likely to say that they strongly agreed that they would be as likely to vote for a woman as a man who ran for the national legislature—Parliament or Congress. However, in all countries the percentage in 1993 was 10 percent to 20 percent higher than it was in 1986. Also of interest is the fact that more of the 1993 English students strongly agreed that women could be strong political figures than strongly agreed women should hold many leadership roles. Apparently knowing that Thatcher had been a formidable leader did not lead them to feel strongly that women should be as prevalent in politics as men.

Responses to the Equal Rights scale, like those for the other scales in the last section, were examined for possible gender differences (table 3.4). In 1986 the mean for females in all countries was 4.39 and for males was 3.86. The effect size for the magnitude of the difference was .70, a medium effect. In 1993 the mean for females in all countries was 4.63 and that for males was 3.98. The effect size for the magnitude of the difference was .92, a large effect. The gender differences for responses to this scale at both time periods were larger than for the other scales on the questionnaire. Females were clearly more supportive of women as political leaders than were males. Furthermore, there were clear gender differences within each country at both time periods, with large effect sizes (except in Denmark and the Netherlands in 1986 where the effects were medium and small, respectively).

Moreover, both in 1986 and 1993, Danish females in the samples reported the most support for women holding political office and American males the least support. Means for samples in 1993 were higher in each country than they had been in 1986, except for Danish males, but their mean was still higher than it had been for males in any of the other countries.

In summary, several trends were evident from the questionnaires on attitudes toward women in politics. First, most students in all countries said they strongly agreed that women should have the same political rights as men. Nevertheless, there was one country difference: in both 1986 and 1993, sample Danish students indicated higher levels of sup-

TABLE 3.4
Gender Differences on the Equal Rights Scale

	<i>Males</i>			<i>Females</i>			<i>Effect Size</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	(<i>s.d.</i>)	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	(<i>s.d.</i>)	<i>n</i>	
All							
1986a	3.86	(.87)	714	4.39	(.63)	714	.70
1993b	3.98	(.87)	1981	4.63	(.49)	1946	.92
Denmark							
1986	4.51	(.56)	141	4.77	(.34)	172	.58
1993c	4.37	(.81)	110	4.81	(.29)	184	.81
England							
1986	3.76	(.84)	218	4.43	(.55)	125	.90
1993d	4.13	(.74)	573	4.62	(.46)	455	.78
Germany							
1986	3.86	(1.03)	66	4.52	(.48)	81	.85
1993e	3.88	(.94)	249	4.61	(.43)	244	1.00
Netherlands							
1986	3.73	(.83)	107	3.93	(.67)	169	.27
1993f	3.93	(.90)	242	4.52	(.47)	222	.87
United States							
1986	3.55	(.81)	187	4.38	(.64)	181	1.14
1994g	3.87	(.89)	807	4.64	(.55)	841	1.05

Note: A higher mean suggests greater support for women holding political positions than does a lower mean.

- a. Coefficient alpha .83
- b. Coefficient alpha .89
- c. Coefficient alpha .86
- d. Coefficient alpha .88
- e. Coefficient alpha .92
- f. Coefficient alpha .89
- g. Coefficient alpha .92

port for gender equality in politics than did students in other countries. In all countries except Germany, there was greater reported support for women in politics in 1993 than 1986. There were sizable gender differences in reported support for equal rights, at both time periods and in all countries, with females reporting higher levels of support for equality than males. The qualitative data from the various countries reinforce these findings and add depth to understanding student views in this area.

GENDER AND POLITICS: THE QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Denmark

Danish teachers reported that there were more women in political positions in 1993 than there had been in 1986. They estimated that about one-third of the members of their local council as well as ministers in the national government were women. Danish teachers also said that the female students expected to work, as their mothers did, with the exception of immigrants from Yugoslavia, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iraq who held more traditional attitudes toward the role of women. Students in one Danish *gymnasium* explained:

METTE. I think in Denmark we are more tolerant about women leading in government than in other countries.

ELLEN. There are women in Parliament and in the local government.

LISE. But I think it will take generations before there are equal numbers of women as men in government. Before people believed in the old-fashioned ways and many of the older people who vote still have those attitudes. (4/2/93)

Most of the Danish females and males said that the females they know are as likely as males to discuss political issues and be interested in politics. Only two Danish students voiced different views. Lise said, "I don't think women are as interested as men in politics" (4/2/93). Poul took the position: "I don't think we'll see equality for ten or twenty years, but I don't think it's just people our parents age voting. Women aren't as interested in politics as men" (3/30/93).

Danish students said that they had talked about gender and roles in the sociology parts of their social science classes. They were more likely to focus on differences in career paths and lifestyles than in political leadership, however. In 1995 part of the national social science examination dealt with women and power.

Germany

In the German schools, students said that women should have opportunities for political leadership. Many thought that there was considerable support in the country for political equality, citing increased female presence in political bodies in the 1990s as compared to earlier time periods. A few students in each school were more pessimistic about the speed of change, however. Typical of German student comments were these:

NATASHA. I hope there will be more women in politics in the future.

NINA. I agree.

STEPHAN. I don't think it is as much of a problem as it used to be. Now women are 30 percent [an overestimation] of the Parliament, but there are still only two women ministers. I think in the future people will be as likely to vote for a woman as a man. If she is good, I will vote for her. If she is bad, I won't. [All heads nod in agreement.] (3/15/93)

In other classes German students said that although there still are not many women in Parliament, there are more at the local levels of government than there used to be. Indeed, in one community the principal's wife was the mayor, and in another a female teacher who taught part-time was on the district council. One student noted that the head of the Parliament was then a woman, and several mentioned that it was the policy of the Social Democratic Party to try to offer 40 percent female candidates; the Greens had always had 50 percent female candidates. The Christian Democratic and Liberal Parties were also trying to increase the number of women candidates, but they did not have quotas. In one of the classes, students expressed their views about quotas, with several of the females opposing them, saying: "I don't think they are a good idea"; and "women themselves are tired of hearing it. If women don't want to be in *Parliament*, then it's OK" (6/14/95). In some classes, it was the males who were the more outspoken about the need to have a greater number of women in politics. For example, Will said: "I think it's important to have more women in government. We must give the possibility for women to lead policy. We let the men do it and it didn't work, now we should see if women can do better" (3/17/93).

Although in most German classes in which I raised this topic students were optimistic about women achieving political equality with males, there were a few reservations. Sebastian said, "I think women could do the work, but there won't be more women because they are not interested and people still don't vote for them" (5/19/93). In one class where most of the males, but only one of the females, claimed to be interested in politics, the politically interested female told me that because she was Croatian and all of her family was living where the fighting was, she was very interested in news and politics. She said, however, that the other girls in her class were "only interested in being pretty and things" (3/18/93). Only one student actually opposed women in leadership positions. Maria said, "I think it is better for men to be the politicians and women to be the housewives and stay home and care for the children." Her classmates laughed and didn't seem to believe her because she is a generally outspoken student. She later explained to me that she did mean it because she was concerned about children not getting adequate attention from their parents (5/18/93). Many of the students at Maria's school said they thought that there would be more women in political leadership in the future because they observed at

their school that females were politically active. The student council president was female, as was the class president, and most of the students on the student council were females who had been activists with regard to environmental issues and speaking out against violence and racism. However, students acknowledged that even in such a school there are still displays of sexism, as when males tell jokes about females (5/18/93).

In thinking about their own lives, for the most part German females said that they expected to work, and many males said they thought their wives would work. However, in each class where this matter was discussed, some students indicated they would be concerned were no one at home. They tended to resolve that problem with reasoning such as "whoever has the better career, should have it and the other one take care of the children" (3/18/95). Or as Heidi explained: "still not everyone wants to be a career woman. Many more women do have part time jobs than in the past" (3/15/93). When I asked students if they thought German couples felt they had to have two salaries to make ends meet, students and teachers alike told me no, that still in Germany a family can be supported on one salary.

However, the German teachers with whom I spoke seemed less optimistic about gender equality than did their students. One teacher, Mrs. Meyer, said that she had been reading that things had not changed as much as people believed; that even at the local and state level, there were still only a few more women in political and other leadership positions than there had been in the past, and although more women worked, many worked only part-time. Another teacher of *Gymnasium* students in grades 11–13 observed that in his classes females seemed to talk less than the males when the subject was politics, but they became more involved when the topic was a social issue. Additionally, one school director (principal) observed that "girls of today have been turned off by the girls who take the dominant feminist position, such as those who want quotas" (6/4/95).

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, teachers and students alike explained that in the 1990s there were more women in the labor force than there had been in earlier times, but, as in Germany, many worked part time. In an academic secondary school from which students go on to the university or higher vocational training, of sixty-five teachers, only fifteen were women and all of them worked part-time. At a middle general secondary school, where 50 percent of the teachers were female, the *maatschappijleer* teacher, Mrs. de Vries, was the only woman in the

school working full time. She estimated that among her female students only 3 percent would go on for full-time employment. Another 60 percent would have part-time clerical or service jobs. The remainder would not be employed outside the home, because "Holland is a rich land so it hasn't been necessary for women to work full time, and now it's just common that if you have kids, women stay home" (2/22/95).

Dutch teachers and students noted that although there were currently some female ministers in the government, in contrast to previous time periods, there were still fewer female than male ministers and they were found in the social service ministries. Of 14 ministers in 1993, Mr. de Witt explained, three were women. They headed the ministries of transport, internal affairs, and culture and welfare. Out of 150 members of the Second Chamber, 41 were females in 1993. When there were elections in 1994, most parties had female political candidates, except for the conservative religious party that opposed women in politics. Mrs. de Vries reported that in 1995 there were five females out of 12 ministers in the Cabinet. Although people said there were more women in local and provincial positions than there had been in the past, Mrs. de Vries said that students did not know much about local politics or politicians.

Dutch student comments reflected these points made by teachers. At a lower agricultural school in both 1993 and 1995 students said that although there was more equality than in the past, they still thought women should stay home with small children. One group of students told me that they thought "heads of government, like the prime minister, should not be men only." They said, "men and women are all the same [equal]." They reasoned that there were fewer women than men in Parliament "because older people in our country are more for men than for women." Maayke said that she and her female friends would work part time, "when we have small children, and we have to clean the house, too." Others agreed with her that most students at their school thought women should have jobs, except when they had small children (2/23/95).

Concerning their own interest, Danielle said, "There is no difference in students—most males and most females are not interested in politics, and just a few of each are interested" (6/27/93). That seemed to be true, as only one or two of the students of either gender in each class expressed an interest in political matters. Marian explained: "We don't talk about politics. We talk about boyfriends and things" (6/28/93).

It is interesting that in most Dutch schools where students observed women teachers, like other women in society, holding part-time jobs, the students expected women to stay home with young children, and although they were supportive of women in political life, their support was not as strong as was that of students in the other countries. How-

ever, in Mrs. de Vries' classes, where students saw the exception of a strong, assertive woman in a full-time job, they expressed greater support for women in politics on the questionnaire than did students in the other Dutch schools (means 4.66, and 4.12, effect size .71); moreover, their mean was as high as the mean for sample students in Denmark. When Mrs. de Vries' student responses are removed, the mean on the Equal Rights scale for the remaining Dutch sample is 4.12, considerably lower than that for any other countries.

England

In England, students did not seem to have given much thought to gender and political life. Teachers and students at different schools told me that the topic of women's rights was dealt with in the religious education (RE) class; and a few mentioned personal and social education (PSE) lessons dealing with gender equality, but not related to politics. At one school with a largely working-class population, there was an Equal Opportunities Week when assemblies and various classes addressed the topic of equality in different ways. In the PSE lessons exercises carried the message that one should not stereotype people by gender. At an assembly, speakers included a female engineer and a male nursery school teacher. The equal opportunities activities did not, however, mention political leadership. The head of the Careers department who planned the activities said that there was a woman Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the local area. However, explained the teacher, the MEP was not very visible and the students probably didn't know about her. The teacher added that students often said they "loathed" Thatcher, just as their "mums and dads" did (6/19/95).

Interviews with students at another English state school, where students came from middle-class families living in small villages, revealed that students held quite egalitarian attitudes. Nevertheless, they seemed to have given more thought to women being priests in the Anglican Church than being elected to political office. Women in the priesthood was an issue that divided British society at the time. It was covered in the media and discussed at home and in RE classes at school. Richard said that in RE lessons, the class had talked about "sexism, racism, and how Christians think about those things." In his personal and social education class they had also talked about sexism.

We continued talking about that after class—if you should give boys tractors and girls dolls to play with. I think it should be their choice of what they want to play with. About women in government, I think it will change in the future. More people in this generation don't mind if women are in government. More women will stand for office in the

future. I don't particularly mind if there are women in government. And some of the female students are interested in politics. (6/25/93)

Richard's points were further reinforced by two other students at his school:

MARGARET. I really am interested in politics and issues.

ANITA. I do sometimes talk about current events

MARGARET. During last year's general election, we got real active. We had a mock election at school.

ANITA. When the coal pits closed we talked about it in geography and students talked about it in Common Room [where the sixth formers congregate] and yesterday we talked about the minister who resigned. . . . Males and females are more accepting of women's careers and in government. I think it is changing. Students don't think it's a man's world anymore.

MARGARET. We are a transitional generation. A few still believe in separate roles but most don't. But, I don't think males expect their wives to work. (6/25/93)

Other students in the same middle-class English school explained,

HELEN. I think women should be priests. Most students probably don't think about it but they wouldn't say no.

SARAH. Yeah, people our age don't think about those issues much but they don't seem so against women having power as people were in the past. People have so much homework. There's no time to follow current events.

HELEN. And then they'd rather watch a comedy to relax than serious news after they've done their homework.

SARAH. But boys seem to know more about politics and news. I don't really know why they do. (6/25/93)

At the British Public School in the study many students came from homes where their mothers are professionals or own their own businesses. Others come from homes where their mother is a full-time homemaker and their father a successful businessman. The girls at the school, which was all male until several years earlier, were as assertive as males in their classes. Teachers said that the girls seemed to expect to have careers and that some of the boys seemed to think their wives would have careers; others expected their wives to stay home and care for children.

Because these students live in a dormitory at a boarding school, their teachers think they are not likely to be aware of whether there are any women in local politics either in their home community or in the area where the boarding school is located. Certainly, none of the students mentioned any local politicians. One history teacher, Miss Smith,

explained that problems such as racism or gender issues do not disturb students the way they did a few years earlier (2/19/93).

When I asked some of the boarding school students what they thought about women in government, Chris said he thought it would "change when we are older, because things are changing, like there are women priests now" (6/24/93). When I then mentioned to his group that students from their school scored lower on the Equal Rights scale than did students from other schools in England, the students responded:

JACK. It doesn't surprise me. This school was all males, and our group is the first one to go all through together.

CHRIS. I think it will take a while.

JACK. Like the controversy over the senior prefect for next year. There was a boy and a girl and the headmaster chose the girl over the bloke who was a rugby player.

LAURA. And everyone thinks the boy would be better. (6/24/93)

The United States

American students tended to say that women ought to be political leaders as much as men are, and they said that gender equality in politics was slowly being achieved. They said they had not talked about the issue of women in politics in any of their classes, and they seemed to feel that fights for women's rights were something of the past.

In the American history classes students had studied about the struggle for female suffrage, and in one California class students had seen a video about Margaret Sanger's leadership in the fight for birth control. In that class students were expected to write an essay on a "big idea" at the conclusion of each unit. Alice chose to write her essay on how women's rights changed in the twentieth century (4/5/95). Other students said they thought of women's liberation as something that had concerned their mothers in past years.

Summary

Danish students, who had the highest scores on the Equal Rights scale in both 1986 and 1993, were the most likely among the students in this study to observe women holding national political office. They also observed most women holding full time jobs. Moreover, Danish male and female adolescents expected that as adults the females in their class would be as likely as the males to have careers, and they knew that the state provided parental leave and child care so that they would not feel they had to make a choice between having children and a career.

In contrast, Dutch students (except those in Mrs. de Vries' classes), who had the lowest scores on the Equal Rights scale in both 1986 and 1993, observed the fewest female politicians and the fewest women in full-time employment—including in their own schools. Many of the Dutch students said that women should be able to be political leaders but at the same time they said when children are young their mothers should stay home to care for them. A notable exception to these trends was that students in the classes of a strong woman who worked full time and taught political matter with confidence had high scores on the Equal Rights scale.

In the other three countries, which shared comparable levels of support for women in politics, there were similarities in the numbers of women observed in politics and the labor force. In England, Germany, and the United States, students said that things were changing, but slowly. Although they tended to blame older generations for not supporting women in politics, a few students in most classes said they thought, among their peers, females were less interested than males in politics. The questionnaire data, however, had revealed that only in Germany and Denmark did males tend to express any more interest than females in politics.

DISCUSSION

Equality of political rights for women and men is an abstract principle that the students in all five countries in the study said they supported. However, only Danish students seemed prepared to uphold that principle consistently in concrete instances. While many students in all countries blamed older generations for the presence of fewer women than men in political roles, a few students in many classes were pessimistic about change. This minority of students attributed their pessimism to females being less interested than males in politics or a feeling that mothers should stay home with young children. Additionally, on the questionnaires, some students reported a willingness to vote for women only at the local, not national, levels.

This topic generated emotional responses from students—sometimes from young women asserting their rights and sometimes from young men articulating a belief in fairness and justice. But nowhere did students say that they had studied gender equality in the political arena as an issue facing citizens or political elites. In England students discussed the controversial issue of women priests, and in the United States students studied briefly about the struggle for women's suffrage. But nowhere had students studied the research on barriers to women hold-

ing public office. No one mentioned the difficulties women candidates have had obtaining their party's nomination or raising funds to campaign. Only in Germany did students mention that some political parties had policies to promote women candidates, policies they had learned about in the news—not in school.

In the previous chapter it was noted that when students thought of "politicians," their images were of men in suits who were based in Bonn, London, Washington, The Hague, and Copenhagen and who appeared on the nightly news. In discussions about women in politics, a few students would mention a lone female cabinet minister and make vague generalizations about increasing numbers of women in politics at the local level. No teacher or student ever mentioned any lessons in which the work or view of a female politician was discussed. I had the feeling that things may be slowly changing in the halls of state or provincial legislatures, but students in secondary schools would be the last to hear about it. Further, although women are now, and long have been, active in interest groups and community organizations trying to influence public policy, students for the most part do not study about such grass-roots political activity.

In the past, when researchers found gender differences in political attitudes, politicians were primarily seen debating military, diplomatic, and economic policies. In recent years as debates have shifted to health, child care, environmental, and social policies, adolescent females have seemed to be almost as likely as males to see they have a stake in public policies, and to be interested in following the issues. However, in many classes there is no encouragement to investigate such issues as will be seen in chapter 5.

In this study male and female students reported equally optimistic views that citizens, through voting and other means, could influence government. Male and female students also reported equally low levels of trust in government and politicians. There was only one exception to each of those patterns. In the United States in 1993, female students were slightly more optimistic than males that citizens could influence government, and in Denmark males were slightly more trusting than females in government and politicians. The general trend of no gender difference in political trust and efficacy suggests that an earlier view of naive, trusting females with low levels of political efficacy can be set to rest. At least, they do not apply to these cross-national samples of students in the 1980s and 1990s.

Small gender differences in political confidence that were found in 1986 and in three of the countries in 1993 corroborated one earlier study (Avery & Hahn, 1985) that examined political confidence levels by gender. The finding that females were slightly less likely than males

to believe they themselves could influence decisions in groups of which they are a part could suggest that there is sex discrimination in those groups, or it could indicate a difference in students' sense of confidence in themselves. More research is needed to determine if female students' opinions are given less weight by peers in group decision making. If that is found to occur, then experimental studies with adolescents viewing videotapes and reflecting upon sex discrimination in their own interactions might be useful. On the other hand, if differences in political confidence are rooted in self-confidence, then experimental treatments with female students that are modeled after the consciousness-raising groups of the women's movement may be more appropriate.

This study suggests that if the ideals of equality and full civic participation asserted in international documents and in the constitutions of Western democracies are to be realized, then further attention is needed to generate support among both female and male youth for women as political leaders. Although a majority of students in the sample in all five countries did support women's rights to political leadership, still a sizable minority—particularly among males—did not support such rights. In the 1971 survey of students in nine countries, males were also considerably less supportive of women as political leaders than were females (Torney-Purta, 1984). Moreover in the 1971 IEA study and in this study in 1986 and 1993, the males in the samples from the United States were less enthusiastic than females and males in the other countries about women in positions of political leadership.

I have been unable to identify any studies on experimental treatments designed to increase students' support for women as political leaders. Most curriculum projects related to gender equity have focused on the inclusion of women and women's perspectives in history courses, particularly in the United States, or on teaching about gender stereotyping in general, as seen in many equal opportunities lessons in England. In the 1990 case study of two American civics classes mentioned earlier, I found that even though textbook authors had added females to examples in photographs, special sections, and exercises in the civics textbook, the two teachers whose classes I observed skipped those parts of the book that were not in the main narrative (Hahn, 1996a). Further, they did not address the topic of female political participation directly any time during the semester that I observed. Case studies are needed of classes in which there is a deliberate goal of increasing females' interest in the political world and of fostering support among both male and female students for equal political involvement by both genders.

Perhaps the national differences in support for women's political leadership can best be understood in light of the consistency of messages students receive. For example, students in the United States hear mixed

messages. In their social studies classes they are taught that anyone can become president or can aspire to other political roles, without regard to gender, class, or race—yet they observe few female political leaders. Likewise, German students also hear that anyone can hold office but observe primarily male politicians. Students in England do not take courses in civics or government. They knew that Margaret Thatcher was the prime minister through much of the 1980s, but she was seen as an exception. Students saw only a handful of women in Parliament and never more than one or two in the cabinet.

Students in the Netherlands received a more consistent message, which said women's traditional place was in the home, not politics. Some scholars attributed that conservative expectation to the fact that in the Netherlands the Roman Catholic and Dutch Reformed Protestant churches, as well as labor unions, emphasized the importance of women's traditional role in the family (Oudijk in Morgan, 1984, p.469). More than the women in the other countries studied, Dutch women who do enter the labor force take part-time jobs in traditionally female occupations. The present-day generation of young females is the first that is both expected and willing to enter the labor force permanently, but the norm of the man as the primary breadwinner and the woman as housewife and mother persists. In annual studies of Dutch youth, males take it for granted that females will care for the children. The young woman's choice is to work part time or to quit work when children are small (du Bois-Reymond, 1995).

In Denmark, there were also fewer women political leaders than men, but their proportions were larger than in the other three countries. Gender role expectations and social welfare policies fostered the belief that parenthood and career were not incompatible for either gender—even for politicians. Furthermore, Danish students observed active females in their school settings. Female as well as male students in Danish schools were active in class meetings and school councils. In class discussions, female students also appeared to be as assertive as their male classmates. In contrast, in the other countries males seemed to dominate many secondary social studies class discussions (except in Mrs. de Vries' classes in the Netherlands where students observed a very assertive woman teacher who encouraged the female students to speak). Country and gender differences found in responses on the Political Confidence scale in 1986 further suggest that in Denmark the expectation that males and females will be equal participants in society may be conveyed more consistently within the cultural milieu.

CHAPTER 4

Freedom of Expression and Civic Tolerance

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

—Universal Declaration of Human Rights

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than, he, if he had the power, would be in silencing mankind.

—John Stuart Mill

Freedom of expression, along with participation, is a fundamental concept underlying liberal democracy. While viewed as inalienable rights in the context of human rights, freedom of speech and of the press also serve the function of protecting the democratic ideal in several ways. First, to prevent tyranny, citizens must have the right to criticize their government. Second, by hearing and expressing diverse views in the “free marketplace of ideas,” members of the public and their elected leaders can make wise policy decisions after considering alternatives. Third, by providing outlets for dissent, freedom of expression may increase the stability of the political system (Corbett, 1982, as cited in Avery, 1990). Because freedom of expression is so important, international and national documents assert that governments shall not infringe on citizens’ dual rights of free speech and press—except in particular limited circumstances.

RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

At the international level, freedom of expression is a fundamental freedom asserted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The extent to which the ideal is realized in practice is a key distinction between oppressive regimes and democratic states. Indeed, leaders of the Western democracies loudly condemn governments that disband newspapers,

close television stations, or jail journalists for criticizing government policies. Belief in the right to free speech and free press is deeply held in the stable democracies of Europe and the Americas; it is asserted in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Organization of American States' Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (*sic*), as well as in the Universal Declaration.¹ Free expression rights are enshrined also in the national constitutions of the five countries that are the focus of this study.

Rights to Free Expression

In the United States, the primacy of free expression rights was established in the first amendment to the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. . . ." Additionally, in a series of interpretations, the Supreme Court prohibited state and local governments from abridging those fundamental freedoms.

The national constitutions of the European countries that are included in this study also assert the right to free expression. The legal systems of the various countries have further ensured that right, permitting infringements only in narrowly specified conditions. For example, the Danish Constitution declares that "any person shall be entitled to publish his thoughts in printing, in writing, and in speech, provided that he [or she] may be held answerable in a court of justice. Censorship and other preventive measures shall never again be introduced" (sec. 77). The constitution of the Netherlands states, "no one shall require prior permission to publish thoughts or opinions through the press" (art. 7, sec. 1). The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany says that every German citizen "shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinion by speech, writing, and pictures and freely to inform himself from generally accessible sources" (art. 5, sec. 1). Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and film also are guaranteed in Germany.

In the United Kingdom, which does not have a codified constitution,² over the past two centuries courts have developed the doctrine that the individual is free to do anything not forbidden by a specific law. That is, the state cannot interfere with the civil and political liberties of its citizens unless Parliament authorizes such interference. It is assumed, therefore, that citizens generally enjoy freedom of association, speech, conscience, and movement.

Limits to Free Expression

Despite the national and international assertions that freedom of expression is guaranteed, courts in all five of these democracies have upheld

the rights of the state to limit expression in specific situations in order to protect other rights of citizens. Newspapers and other media can be punished if they commit libel or slander individuals. In the United States a series of landmark Supreme Court decisions established a set of guidelines. They include the principle that freedom of speech can be limited to protect public security if there is a “clear and present danger,” as in the case of someone falsely shouting fire in a crowded theater or if it is probable that a riot will occur, endangering lives. Courts in the United States have not been willing to limit free expression simply because an idea being expressed is unpopular, offensive, or even abhorrent. Classic cases ensured that Communists and members of the Ku Klux Klan have the same right to speak, write, and assemble as people with mainstream views. In recent years local ordinances and university policies designed to limit “hate speech” have been successfully challenged by civil libertarians.

Limits to free expression in the United Kingdom have been justified on the grounds of national security. In the 1980s, the Government—under the protection of the Official Secrets Act—prevented former officials from speaking or writing on various topics deemed to be threats to national security. Limits were also imposed to protect the public against terrorism. From the mid 1980s until 1994, the words of Irish Republican Army (IRA) members could not be carried on television or printed in newspapers. However, Communist newspapers and the right-wing National Front were allowed by the British legal system. Currently, antiracist legislation limits speech and press in some cases, and increasingly tabloid newspaper editors are being challenged for invading the privacy of individuals.

In postwar West Germany, Article 21.2 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany was written to ensure that nothing like a Hitler and his National Socialists (Nazis), who rose to power in the Weimar Republic, could ever again threaten society. Article 21.2 specifies, “those parties which, according to their goals and the attitudes of their membership, seek to strike at the fundamental free and democratic order, to topple it, or to compromise the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany” will be outlawed (Mény, 1993, p. 93). Under that provision the constitutional court banned a neo-Nazi party and the Communist Party in the 1950s. Later, however, the *Länder* (state) home secretaries decided to tolerate a new Communist party. The extreme right resurfaced in the 1960s, and by avoiding language used by the old Nazis has been able to continue to exist. In 1992 the Nationalist Front, however, was outlawed by the German Constitutional Court after the organization was found guilty of racist arson and murder (Mény, 1993). Other extreme right groups march and hold rallies today because a

group is assured the right to free expression until it is outlawed. As the expression of some ideas would be seen to be in violation of Article 21.2, groups must be careful about how they express their ideas if they want to avoid being outlawed.

The Contemporary Context

In Germany in recent years, incidents of antiforeign violence have once again raised the issue of whether individuals espousing racist and antiforeign beliefs ought to have freedom of expression. During the years of this study, Germany was reunited, the Soviet Union broke up, and eastern European countries underwent dramatic changes. Millions of immigrants from diverse backgrounds moved to the newly united Federal Republic. That context is important to understanding the meanings that German students developed about civil and political rights for all. The diverse immigrant population in Germany in the 1990s included: German descendants who had been living in Russia and Poland and were considered German citizens upon their arrival; guest workers who came earlier from Greece and Italy and were integrated into German society; large numbers of Turks, primarily in Berlin, some of whom came long ago as guest workers and others who arrived more recently; asylum seekers from places like Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and Turkey; Sinti and Roma (gypsies or travelers) from Rumania; and people from western countries in the European Union, such as England, France, and Denmark, who came to work for European companies. Additionally, there were people from East Germany who worked in the western part of the country during the week and returned to their homes on the weekend.

When I visited German schools, students often spoke of their concern about groups who attacked foreigners. In several communities I heard students say that they wanted to help foreigners and that they thought people should be welcoming. Some German students told me that they did volunteer work in community centers for new refugees. Adults with whom I spoke participated in local groups determined to speak out, hold vigils, and take actions saying that what the extreme right "black boots" were doing against foreigners was wrong. In such an environment, there was a widespread inclination among youth to limit the rights of racists.

In the Netherlands, concern about increased xenophobia and attacks on foreigners in recent years has also led people to question the extension of rights for racists. The principle of nondiscrimination according to religion, race, gender, and sexual preference conflicts with and sometimes takes precedence over the principle of free expression for

all in the Netherlands. That may stem from the Dutch experience under Nazi occupation or from a long cultural tradition of protecting religious diversity. Regardless, the general principle, as it was explained to me by Dutch teachers and students, is that people have the right to free expression unless they are discriminating against others or showing disrespect, in which case they can be taken to court to appear before a judge.

Among the four European countries in this study, Denmark's position remains the most permissive, or tolerant, in this area. However, the fact that racist groups have moved to Denmark to avoid restrictive laws in Germany has led to new policies making it illegal to engage in activities that are illegal in one's home country. The creation of a new right-wing radio station and demonstrations by the far right in 1995 were causing some Danes to wonder if they should begin to restrict what has been considered an almost absolute right to free expression.

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it is clear that a principle as fundamental to liberal democracy as freedom of expression is not fully resolved. Rather, it faces difficult challenges ahead. Practices that have been permitted in one nation are carried by cable television and computer networks into nations and cultural contexts with differing levels of tolerance for those practices. Indeed, even in earlier times, when freedom of speech and press were proudly proclaimed by defenders of democracy, issues surrounding their application were never unproblematic.

Many citizens of the old democracies never internalized the values underlying constitutional principles and their own rhetoric. They claimed that they valued freedom of speech and press, but when given specific examples of applications to groups with which they disagreed, many citizens were often inclined to restrict those freedoms. For example, in one national poll in the United States, 52 percent of the adults interviewed said that newspapers that preach revolution should be banned (Erskine & Siegel, 1975). In the same year, in another national poll, 32 percent of the American adults said that newspapers should not be allowed to criticize police (Wilson, 1975). It is ironic that citizens in Western democracies are less than fully committed to free expression guarantees when their political leaders scold other nations for not respecting human rights of free speech and press and insist that newly emerging democracies ensure such freedoms in order to receive foreign aid.

Because a commitment to freedom of expression is both fundamental and problematic in Western democracies today, it is an area of focus for this study. How is the principle understood by young people? How is it addressed in civic education? What differences do national context and differing political cultures make to students' support of free expression and other civil liberties? Has their support changed with time? These questions are addressed in the remainder of this chapter.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The discrepancy between citizens' support of democratic procedural norms, such as free expression, in the abstract and their lack of support for those norms in applications to specific situations has been studied over many years by researchers primarily working in the United States. The initial studies were conducted during the McCarthy period and at the height of the Cold War. The classic study is Stouffer's 1955 analysis of Gallup poll data. Using a national probability sample of more than six thousand adults, Stouffer found that only 27 percent of the adults interviewed would permit Communists the right to free speech. Similar, but slightly less intolerant attitudes were expressed toward rights for socialists and atheists. Not all respondents were uniformly intolerant, however; community leaders, people with comparatively more education, and people who perceived the least threat from the particular groups appeared to be more tolerant than were citizens with less education and those who perceived a greater threat from the specific group (Stouffer, 1955).

In the years that followed Stouffer's initial study, other researchers also found that many American adults who professed to believe in free speech and democratic procedural norms would not extend those rights to Communists, socialists, or atheists. Further, the researchers found that education and income levels were positively correlated with what they then called "tolerance" (Prothro & Grigg, 1960). Although Harris polls conducted in the United States over the years following the first studies seemed to indicate an increasing willingness to extend rights to Communists and atheists, in 1974 almost 40 percent of American adults still would not extend free expression rights to those groups (Wilson, 1975).³ And as recently as 1994, about 30 percent of adults said they would not permit a Communist or an atheist to speak in their community (National Opinion Research Center, 1994).

Comparing data collected in the 1960s and 1970s with Stouffer's original findings, researchers concluded that there was an increase in political or civic tolerance over time. By 1978, almost 60 percent of one sample claimed they would let Communists speak, and 65 percent said they would permit atheists to speak (Nunn, Crockett, & Williams, 1978). In 1994, 67 percent of the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) national sample said they would let Communists speak, and 73 percent said they would allow atheists to speak. However, the claim that such changes indicated an increasing tolerance on the part of the American public was challenged.

Studying samples in Minnesota, John Sullivan and his colleagues found that although 64 percent of adults would allow Communists and atheists to speak, 50 percent of the respondents would restrict rights for

members of other groups that they disliked (Sullivan, Marcus, Piereson, & Feldman, 1978; Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1979). The researchers concluded that the number of extremist groups on both the right and the left increased during the 1960s, such that most people did not see any one group as being particularly threatening or dangerous. When considering a list of extremist groups, only 38 percent of the respondents named Communists, socialists, or atheists as their least-liked group. Further, whereas 30 percent cited groups on the right, such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), fascists, or members of the John Birch Society, 15 percent named groups on the left, including the Black Panthers and the Symbionese Liberation Army.

Sullivan and his colleagues argued that political or civic "tolerance" was present only if respondents were willing to apply democratic norms without disfavor to those whose ideas or interest they opposed (Sullivan et al., 1978, p. 116). That is, if an individual finds the ideas of the KKK repugnant but is not bothered by Communists, the only test of tolerance for that person is whether he or she is willing to let KKK members make public speeches. According to Sullivan and his colleagues, researchers had identified a growing acceptance of Communists, socialists, and atheists among the American population from the 1950s through the 1970s, but not any greater "tolerance" or appreciation of the principles of free expression. Sullivan and his colleagues noted that tolerance was affected by the degree of threat perceived by the respondents and by the degree of support the respondents gave to abstract democratic principles (Sullivan, Marcus, Feldman, & Piereson, 1981).⁴

Recent national surveys continue to bear out the idea that American adults may be more accepting of some groups but are not necessarily willing to extend rights to all. For example, in the annual NORC surveys, whereas 15 percent more people were willing to allow Communists to speak in 1994 than had in 1972 and 18 percent more were willing to allow a homosexual to make a speech, there was only an 8 percent increase in support for atheists' rights and almost no change in the percentage—almost 60 percent—allowing racists to make a speech in their community (NORC, various years).

Looking for the roots of these adult beliefs and attitudes in early socialization, researchers since the 1950s have asked American youth about their support of free expression at both the abstract and concrete levels. A few researchers explored those issues with students in other countries as well.

Attitudes of Students in the United States

Beginning this line of research in 1951, pollsters working with the Purdue Opinion Poll interviewed nationally representative samples of

American high school students. The teenagers, like the adults of the period, indicated distinctly Cold War attitudes. In response to the statement, "Newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything they want except military secrets," only 45 percent and 29 percent of the students agreed in 1951 and 1961, respectively (Remmers & Franklin, 1962). During those periods of Mc Carthyism and the Cold War, even less support was given to extending free expression to concrete situations involving Communists. To the question, "Some cities have passed laws against printing or selling Communist literature. Do you think such laws should or should not be passed?" more than 60 percent of both the 1951 and 1961 samples said such laws should be passed.⁵

Since the 1950s researchers have continued to explore the degree to which young people, as well as adults, are supportive of free expression in both abstract and concrete terms. In 1968 and 1971, samples of California students aged nine through fourteen completed a questionnaire in which they responded to the abstract statement, "I believe in free speech for all, no matter what their views might be" (Zellman & Sears, 1971). Although 60 percent of the students agreed with the abstract principle—an increase over findings a decade earlier—they were still not very supportive of applying it to concrete situations. Only 21 percent and 13 percent, respectively, would let a Communist speak or allow the head of the American Nazi Party to hold a meeting on a street corner.⁶ Comparing the results from that sample with results obtained from another sample of students aged nine through eighteen and with adult samples, Zellman (1975) concluded that by age eleven, American children possessed clear attitudes toward free expression at both the abstract and concrete levels, and that support at both levels increased through the secondary school years followed by a decline in adulthood. Close to 98 percent of the high school seniors supported the abstract principle, compared with 60 percent of the preadolescents and 89 percent of the adults sampled. A similar pattern was evident with regard to concrete applications. Whereas 75 percent of the high school seniors would allow a Communist Party member to make a speech in their city, only 26 percent of the preadolescents and 34 percent of the adults would allow it (Zellman, 1975).⁷

In the 1990s a few researchers in the United States have continued to investigate students' support for free expression and other civil liberties. For example, Broudy (1994) assessed whether a civics curriculum had any effect on the development of students' attitudes toward rights for diverse groups. He compared the attitudes of high school students who participated in the *We the People* program, developed by the Center for Civic Education, with students of high school government teachers who did not use that program.⁸ Further, the responses of both groups

of students were compared to responses to the same items obtained from adults ten years earlier by McClosky and Brill (1983). The program students used the *We the People* text, which tells the history of ideas that influenced the development of the Bill of Rights and addresses their application to current issues. Teachers are expected to facilitate discussions and encourage students to give their opinion about historical and contemporary issues dealing with the United States Bill of Rights. Upon completion of the curriculum, classes are supposed to simulate a congressional hearing during which students give presentations on constitutional topics and answer questions raised by community members acting as members of Congress. Classes are encouraged to go beyond school-wide competitions to ones at the state and national levels.

In comparing program students with nonprogram students, Broudy concluded that students who participated in the program were more "politically tolerant" on his freedom of speech scale than were students who did not participate in the program (effect size .75); both groups appeared to be more tolerant than adults a decade earlier. Items on the scale specified different groups and a variety of activities they might engage in as had much of the earlier research.⁹ Responses to most items indicated that students of the 1990s were more tolerant, in the sense that they were more willing to extend rights to a variety of groups, than the adults had been earlier. Further, students who studied the curriculum that specifically focused on the principles underlying the Bill of Rights and had the opportunity to express their opinions in class about the application of those principles to contemporary issues were more willing to extend free speech rights to all groups than were students enrolled in traditional United States history and government courses in which free speech issues may have received less attention.

Broudy further examined differences within the program group of students. He found that the higher the level of competition in which the students participated, the higher was their level of tolerance. In particular, students in classes that participated in the national level of competition were more tolerant of offensive speech than were students who did not participate in any competition. Students in such competitions spent more time—often many hours after school—researching and studying the history of free expression rights as well as other aspects of constitutional history. They reviewed and received feedback on their performance, explained and defended their points of view, and heard the viewpoints of others more than did students whose exposure was limited to class discussions or school-level competitions. Intensive preparation for competitive experiences were associated with a willingness to extend free expression rights to diverse groups. However, there was no way of knowing if students would have appeared as tolerant if they had

responded in terms of extending rights to their least-liked group, as Sullivan suggested.

In recent years several researchers have incorporated the reconceptualization of tolerance proposed by Sullivan and his colleagues into research on adolescents. Avery (1987) found among her sample of ninth- and eleventh-grade students (approximately fourteen and seventeen years old) in one southeastern school district that students were no more likely to identify Communists or atheists as their least-liked group than a range of other groups. Obtaining findings similar to those in other studies, she noted that perceived threat, level of cognitive moral reasoning, and political participation did appear to contribute to increased levels of civic tolerance.¹⁰

Researchers at the University of Minnesota developed a curriculum designed specifically to increase students' levels of political tolerance (Avery, Bird, Johnstone, Sullivan, & Thalhammer, 1992). The four-week curriculum unit, *Tolerance for Diversity of Beliefs*, includes case studies, role playing, simulations, and mock interviews to facilitate students' consideration of the psychological, sociological, and historical dimensions of tolerance and intolerance. In a series of vignettes, students are encouraged to decide for themselves what limits, if any, should be placed on freedom of expression in concrete situations. In an evaluation of the project, students who were exposed to the curriculum were compared to similar students who had not been exposed to it. The curriculum group scored higher on a measure of political or civic tolerance, one in which students considered rights for disliked groups, than did students not included in the curriculum group. Most curriculum group students moved from mild intolerance to mild tolerance. Moreover, although curriculum group students' tolerance, when measured as willingness to extend rights to disliked groups, increased, their level of dislike for the group and the degree to which they perceived the group to be threatening did not change. One of the strongest predictors of post-test tolerance scores was students' knowledge of the curriculum material (Avery et al., 1992). This study and Broudy's used the two different ways of measuring attitudes toward free expression and civic tolerance and concluded that instruction could influence students' attitudes toward rights for diverse groups.

European Students' Attitudes

Some evidence about students' support for free expression in cross-national perspective was provided by the study of youth civic attitudes conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in 1971 (Torney et al., 1975). Looking par-

ticularly at samples of students from the same countries that are the focus of this study, some interesting patterns were evident. Secondary students in West Germany and the Netherlands were more likely than students in the other seven nations included in the 1971 survey to agree with the abstract principles, "citizens must always be free to criticize the government," "people who disagree with government should be allowed to meet and hold public protest," and "newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything they want except military secrets." Students from the United States, on the other hand, were distinctly less supportive of those principles than were their German and Dutch counterparts (Nielsen, 1977; Torney et al., 1975).

In the IEA study, among students from the United States, the Netherlands, and West Germany, 80 to 90 percent of the pre-university students sampled felt that Communists should have the same rights and freedoms as other people. Similarly, a general tolerance of rights for Communists among German students was found again in another study fifteen years later (Krieger, 1986). In a sample of West German twelfth graders, 86 percent agreed that Communists and extremists should be allowed the rights to speak and vote.

Gender and Attitudes toward Free Expression

Over the years, researchers sometimes have found a relationship between gender and willingness to extend free expression to specific groups. In early studies of adults, some researchers found that women were less willing than men to grant Communists the right to free speech (Stouffer, 1955), but others found no gender differences in willingness to extend rights to Communists, socialists, and atheists. In some studies of adults and students, researchers found that gender was related to which target groups were selected as least liked, but not to levels of tolerance (Sullivan et al., 1981; Zellman, 1975).

In his study of California high school students, Grossman (1975) found no gender differences in response to a freedom of speech scale that included items about the abstract principle. However, gender differences did appear in responses on a tolerance of dissent scale in which references were made to specific groups and actions. Females were less likely than males to approve of dissent activities for extreme rightist or leftist groups. Females were also less willing than males to permit concrete and physical manifestations of dissent.

In a secondary analysis of the 1976 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data obtained from a nationally representative sample of American youth, Jones (1980) found that thirteen- and seventeen-year-old females were, in general, more tolerant than males. How-

ever, Jones included tolerance for gender and ethnic equality, as well as for rights for sociopolitical groups in her measure of tolerance. Looking particularly at rights for atheists—a target group included in many of the other studies—she found that seventeen-year old females were more tolerant than were their male counterparts.

Avery (1988) measured tolerance using a scale that contained items about social and economic rights, such as rights to education and medical care, as well as free expression rights for disliked groups. She found that females in her sample from the southeastern United States were slightly more tolerant than were males.¹¹

Two secondary analyses by gender were conducted on the IEA data obtained from nationally representative samples. Looking at results from all nine countries in the study, Torney-Purta (1984) found that girls were more likely to agree with general statements about tolerance and equality, and boys were more likely to see the importance of conflict and critical interchange among differing members of society. Nielsen (1977), however, found no statistically significant gender differences for the fourteen-year-old students in Germany and the United States on abstract items saying that citizens ought to be able to criticize the government, people ought to be able to protest, and the press ought to be allowed to print anything.

Among samples of American and German adolescents, females were more likely than males to agree with the abstract statements that “all citizens should have freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the freedom to vote regardless of their political or religious convictions.” Females also were more likely than males in both countries to apply those freedoms in specific situations. For example, females were more likely than males to disagree with the statement, “I would not allow certain people such as Communists or other extremists to speak in public” (Hepburn, Napier, & Krieger, 1988).

Looking at the cumulative research conducted from the 1960s through the 1980s relative to possible gender differences in support of free expression or civic tolerance, several studies found no gender differences. Others found that gender did relate to support for free expression rights. However, the particular target group named and the way in which tolerance was measured had an effect, making it difficult to make generalizations across studies.

Summary

In reviewing the research since Stouffer’s early work on support for free expression, it appeared that young people, like adults, were still more likely to say they believe in free expression than they were to extend

such rights to particular groups; however, the role of gender in this area was unclear.

Adolescent students in several of the countries that are the focus of this study were more willing in recent years to extend rights to Communists and atheists than were their counterparts in earlier periods. However, using the reasoning of Avery (1987), Sullivan, and others (Sullivan et al., 1978, 1979), there was no evidence as to whether the adolescents were becoming any more tolerant. The question remained: Were students of the 1980s and 1990s any more willing to extend the rights of free speech and free press to groups with which they disagreed? That question is of particular relevance as the nations of northern Europe and the United States face the challenges of protecting the rights of all groups to free expression at the same time that they are facing a rising tide of racism and xenophobia.

LEARNING ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Before looking at the attitudes of students in this study toward free expression and levels of civic tolerance, it is important to understand the differing cultural contexts in which students developed such attitudes. The differing instruction about these fundamental freedoms that is presented to students and the varied meanings young people develop across these countries reveal the role of political culture in this aspect of their political socialization. Drawing on data from classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and analyses of textbooks and other instructional materials, clear patterns emerge for each national setting. In this section, the instruction that students receive about free expression and about extremist groups is described. A few examples of student views are given to convey the context in which students in a particular country learn about free expression and diverse groups.

The United States

Four of the social studies teachers I interviewed in California, Massachusetts, and Missouri said they taught about freedom of expression. They all reported using case studies of Supreme Court decisions to teach how freedom of speech has been applied in particular cases. In his twelfth-grade government class, Mr. Thomas presented the *Tinker* case. In that case, the United States Supreme Court upheld students' First Amendment rights to free speech; the justices declared that students wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam War did not "give up their rights at the school house gate." Ms. Foster, Ms. Baxter, and Mr. Stanton presented the *Skokie* case to their United States' history or gov-

ernment classes for discussion. In that case the Court said that neo-Nazis who planned to march in Skokie, Illinois, where many Jewish families lived, should not have been prevented from marching; their First Amendment rights should not have been limited by prior restraint before it was clear that the march would turn into a dangerous riot.

As well as learning about free expression, students in the United States also learn in school about the dangers of racism. In the four schools in which the Supreme Court cases were taught, students also studied about Nazism in their world history classes. Further, in their United States history classes they studied about racism in the context of American slavery, the Jim Crow South, and the struggles of the civil rights movement.

In one class I visited, California students were viewing a video about an Aryan Nation group in Alabama. Earlier that year, when some students in their school had written White Pride on signs, the teacher told them how upset he was to see it. He also shared with the class newspaper articles about racist groups that were active in their community in the 1950s. In the two California schools where more than a third of the school populations were minorities, white, black, Hispanic, and Asian students alike expressed negative attitudes toward racists, although they acknowledged that a few people in their school were racists. In the Massachusetts school where virtually all of the students were white, issues of racism seemed less pressing, but still students expressed a dislike of racists both in interviews and on the questionnaire.

Germany

German students also study about freedom of expression and racist groups, but, unlike the Americans, they learn that the speech and writings of antidemocratic groups are not protected. In one *Realschule* and in two comprehensive secondary schools in Lower Saxony, students studied freedom of speech and the press in their eighth- and ninth-grade social studies classes. In a comprehensive secondary school in Hesse, students learned about freedom of expression when they studied the French Revolution.

In all of the German schools I visited, students had studied Nazism and the Holocaust. They learned that, to prevent such things from occurring again, the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany said that no antidemocratic political parties could exist. In classes where I spoke with students, the young people expressed much concern about recent incidents against foreigners in Rostock, Solingen, Frankfurt, and other German cities. The students said they talked about the incidents in social studies and German lessons, as well as among themselves. In one

school I visited, a school with about 25 percent of its students from immigrant families, "Turkish Power" was scrawled across a blackboard and the principal explained that in a survey students had said school was the one place they felt secure from prejudice.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, students studied freedom of expression in units on human rights and mass media in their *maatschappijleer* course. In the book that was used in the required course in two of the schools I visited, the four rules for limiting free press were listed: it is forbidden to lie, to ask people to do criminal things, to do something against the common good (pornography), and to discriminate. Those students who select *maatschappijleer* as one of the optional courses for coverage on the national examination might study those topics further. However, that varies from one year to the next, depending on the topics to be covered on the *maatschappijleer* exam that particular year.

At one upper-level secondary school (containing *havo* and *vwo* tracks in which students prepare for university entrance) students took additional lessons for the exam in the same year that they were taking required lessons. Consequently, they had the topic mass media twice in the year that I visited because it was one of the topics, along with crime and government, that had been announced for the national examination. At a junior general secondary school or *mavo* in the same city, students took the required course in their third year and the optional course in the fourth year, covering only those topics in the fourth year that had been announced for that year's examination. In both of the schools in that city students in the required course also studied a unit on racism and refugees. However, it was not one of the selected topics for the exam the particular years that I visited.

The topic of racism and refugees had been added to the *maatschappijleer* curriculum in the schools I visited during the period between the two administrations of my questionnaire, reflecting a dramatic change in Dutch society. Two of the schools with lower- and middle-level (*vbo* and *mavo*) tracks in the study experienced substantial changes in their student population between 1985 and 1995. Mrs. de Vries estimated that in 1985 only about 2 percent of the students in her school were non-Dutch, but by 1995 60 percent of the overall student body and 80 percent of the first year class were non-Dutch. At the other school a teacher reported that the immigrant population had increased from fewer than 5 percent of students to 30 percent in the first two classes of the school. However, in the school that prepared students for university entrance, in 1995 there were still only five or six immigrants out of 1070 students.

Similarly, in the agricultural schools, there were virtually no immigrant students. The administrators there explained that most immigrant families considered agricultural work low status and did not want their children to prepare for it. Regardless of the fact that across all schools in the sample students studied about free speech rights, racism, and laws against discrimination, in the schools with fewer immigrants, students appeared to be more willing to extend free expression to racist groups. Racist groups probably seemed less threatening to them than to students in schools with many immigrants.

Denmark

In Denmark, where much choice of topics for investigation is left up to each class, there is less uniformity in the taught curriculum of social studies at the *folkeskole* level (grades 1–10) and social science at the *gymnasium* (grades 10–12/13) level than is the case in the Netherlands, which has a national core curriculum. Indeed, in 1993 no Danish teacher or student mentioned that the topic of free speech and press had been taught. Nevertheless, most students seemed to know that in Denmark such rights were assured, even for extremist groups. Teachers explained to me that there were recent cases in which judges ruled that within the Constitution, racist groups could hold public meetings and print newspapers, as long as they did not cause violence. However, the teachers had not discussed the cases with their students. Teacher trainers speculated that Danish schools did not deliberately teach about free expression because it was taken for granted.

Danish students were more likely to study about racism and racist groups than they were to study free expression. Guidelines for history instruction, as distinct from social science, specified that particular time periods be covered in preparation for written and oral examinations that occurred at the end of the *folkeskole*, the *gymnasium*, and *HF* programs. Most Danish students studied Nazism, the Holocaust, and World War II in history lessons, and some history classes studied racism in the United States. Some classes also chose to study related topics in their social studies or social science class. In one ninth-grade social studies class in a *folkeskole*, students had chosen to study racism and neo-Nazis to understand more about the recent incidents in Europe. However, in another social studies class in the same school, students did not choose such topics. In a *gymnasium* social science class, students chose to investigate different national minorities in Eastern Europe and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to fulfill the requirement that 25 percent of the course deal with international relations. Additionally, that class planned to take a class trip to the new states in the east of Ger-

many. At another *gymnasium*, students studied changes in Germany and about minorities. In 1995, students in one school were upset by a parade of extreme rightists in a nearby town. It was not at the time when they were selecting topics to study, however, so the students' interest was not reflected in their coursework. Two other classes saw a video about neo-Nazis in Denmark and discussed whether they should be allowed to have a radio station.

Although in urban *folkeskoler* in Copenhagen there are now many immigrant students, at the time the surveys were administered there were only a few immigrant families, primarily from Turkey or the former Yugoslavia, and a few adopted Korean children in the schools in this study, which were primarily located in suburban communities and small towns. In some communities people organized to help new refugees, and in most villages people were welcoming of foreigners. Nevertheless, some of the resistance to the Maastricht treaty for further integration of the European Union was thought to reflect fear among some people that opening up borders to many foreigners would change the traditional Danish way of life. In the small, previously homogeneous Danish society, there was an assumed cultural norm of tolerance for all. When I was writing the civic tolerance scale and asking for names of groups to list as possible disliked groups, Danish educators had difficulty thinking of such groups, explaining that most diverse groups were accepted as part of the society. Although the teachers said that students probably would not like racists, it was difficult for them to think of other disliked groups. Further, they said that Danish students were not likely to know any racists or to perceive a strong threat by them in their society. One teacher, Christine, explained, "racism is not a controversial subject, because all agree it is bad, so it would be hard to have a discussion about it" (3/29/93). Three years later, however, several incidents had brought attention to extreme right wing groups in Denmark, and some classes were beginning to want to investigate related issues.

England

Because there is no specific course to prepare citizens, English students are not required to study the structure and function of government. There is no written Bill of Rights that students are expected to learn, and there is no concerted effort to deliberately teach about freedom of expression. Mr. Archer, a teacher in one British Public School (independent boarding school), said that at his school they did not teach about free press and free speech because "we take it for granted in the West and I guess we think it is not necessary" (6/8/95). That year, for the first time, one of his students had chosen to give a presentation on the topic

because his father worked for Reuters news agency. In the presentation, the student compared what newspapers were allowed to print in France and Britain.

In three English state schools that I visited, students had one or two lessons on the Declaration of Human Rights in their personal and social education (PSE) course. The emphasis in the lessons was on protection from torture and the debate over capital punishment, not on the right to free expression. Teachers used materials developed by Amnesty International and asked students to discuss their views on capital punishment. The topic of human rights was also addressed in religious education (RE) or religious studies (RS) classes in both state and independent schools in the study; however, again, the emphasis was on capital punishment and discrimination.

When I asked English students if they had ever studied about free speech, free press, and racism, all agreed that they had not studied free speech and press, but that they had studied about racism. They talked about racism in their PSE or general studies class and in their RE/RS classes. They also studied about Nazism and World War II in their history classes. One student said he remembered talking about freedom of press and the royal family. Additionally, only at the independent boarding school did students report that they had a school newspaper, and they said that the adviser told them what they could print.

Although most English students do not study freedom of expression in school, the students I interviewed knew that they had free speech and press in their country, with some limits. Further, these topics were addressed in some elective classes taken by a few students. For example, freedom of press is a topic that is addressed in the course Media Studies, but only three of the students that I interviewed had selected it as an option in preparation for their required General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE) exams at age sixteen (see chapter 1). Students who took Advanced (A)-level Politics were exposed to the topic also. In one such class, I observed Mr. Browne introducing a comparative study of the United States' and Britain's political systems thus:

In Britain, it is assumed that we have certain basic rights and freedoms, such as the right to speak and write freely. In addition there are constraints on people's activities to make sure they don't deny rights to others. You can write and say what you want. However, there are constraints about what you can say. . . . In theory I have the right to march in a group or procession, but that is constrained in practice by the Public Order Law. . . . [W]hen racist groups marched through areas with many minorities they argued they had the right to do so, but the police said no because it would incite a riot. In some places those groups have been able to march and in other areas they have not. . . . What does

this show? That rights and freedoms aren't guaranteed. They can be changed fairly easily by Parliament; the rights are flexible. That's important, because now we are going to look at the United States, where people know their rights; they are fairly inflexible. [The teacher then handed out a photocopied list of the U.S. Bill of Rights.] (7/3/95)

Although freedom of expression is a fundamental freedom asserted in all five of these Western democracies, the role of the school in teaching students about that freedom clearly varies by national context. American students in this study received deliberate instruction about free expression and related Supreme Court cases, as well as about historical struggles to overcome racism. In Germany students study about Nazism and they learn that free expression has been limited to prevent such a phenomenon occurring again. Dutch students study free expression in units on human rights and the mass media, and they study racism and policies against discrimination. In Denmark and England there is less deliberate instruction in this area, but for different reasons. In England there is no course whose context necessarily deals with free expression. Several courses, however, give attention to racism. In Denmark, because classes choose different topics for study, there is little uniformity. There has been, however, a general ethos of tolerance in the small relatively homogeneous Danish population. Whether such differences in instruction and cultural ethos are related to differences in student support for free expression both in the abstract and when applied to specific groups was explored on the survey and in interviews with students.

SUPPORT FOR FREE EXPRESSION AMONG STUDENTS IN THIS STUDY

In order to measure the similarities and differences of student attitudes toward free expression across the five countries, the Free Expression scale was developed and administered to sample students in 1986 and 1993. The means for student responses in the five countries at both time periods can be seen in table 4.1.

Students' willingness to extend rights to everyone was likely influenced by the extent to which they perceived a threat by some groups in the society. In 1986, on the scale overall, Danish students indicated the most support for free expression for diverse groups, and English students the least (means 3.34 and 2.89, effect size .68). Denmark had traditionally extended rights to all—regardless of their beliefs. In England, however, there was much concern in the mid-1980s about the dangers posed by IRA terrorists, there was some concern about the racism of the National Front, and Communists were viewed as threat-

TABLE 4.1
Free Expression: Comparing Means of Samples by Country for
Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	England	Germany	United States	Netherlands	Denmark
Mean	2.89	2.93	3.01	3.21	3.34
(s.d.)	(.65)	(.61)	(.73)	(.55)	(.68)
n	344	147	374	249	312
Germany	.06 (.05)	—	—	—	—
United States	.17 (.12)	.12 (.08)	—	—	—
Netherlands	.53 (.31)*	.49 (.27)*	.30 (.20)	—	—
Denmark	.68 (.44)*	.58 (.40)*	.47 (.33)*	.21 (.13)	—
	1993				
	Germany	England	United States	Netherlands	Denmark
Mean	2.88	3.21	3.27	3.41	3.63
(s.d.)	(.61)	(.59)	(.72)	(.61)	(.62)
n	506	1055	1730	475	305
England	.76 (.32)*	—	—	—	—
United States	.90 (.38)*	— (.06)	—	—	—
Netherlands	1.24 (.52)*	.47 (.20)*	.33 (.14)*	—	—
Denmark	1.76 (.75)*	1.00 (.43)*	.86 (.37)*	.53 (.23)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that free expression should apply to everyone. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1421) = 23.62; 1993 F (4, 4066) = 74.54, $p = .000$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Free Expression scale were .59 in 1986 and .67 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .64, England .58, Germany .66, Netherlands .62, and United States .71.

*Significant at the .001 level.

ening during the Thatcher years. All of those factors could have contributed to English students' comparatively low score on this scale.

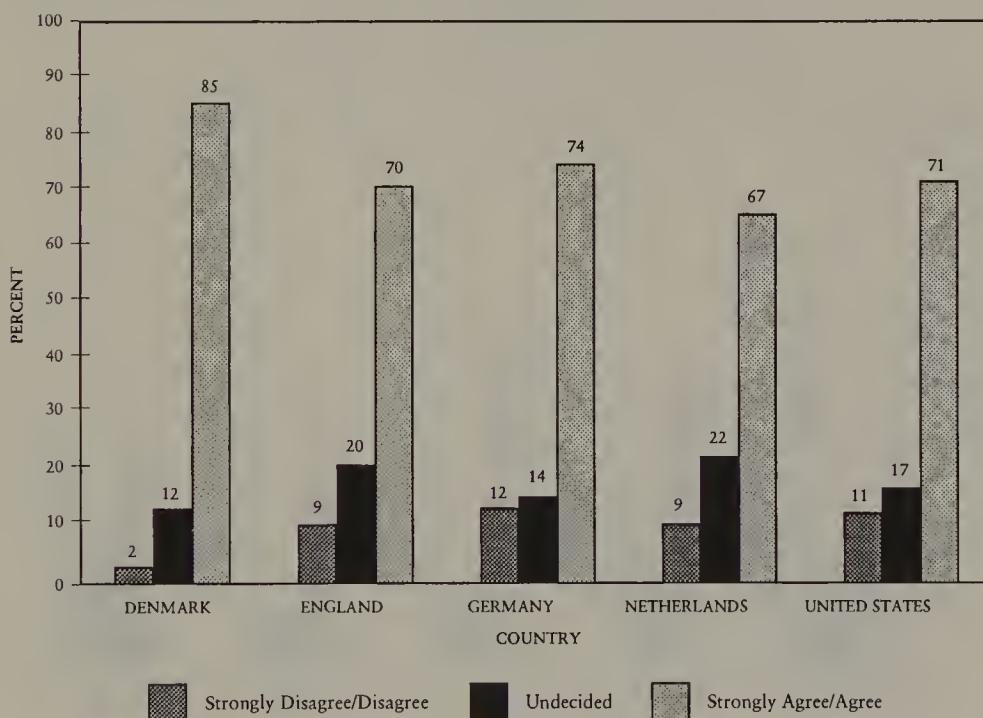
In 1993 students from Denmark were again the most supportive of free expression for diverse groups, and German students were the least supportive (means 3.63 and 2.88, effect size 1.76). The large effect sizes for the magnitude of the differences between German students'

responses and those from other countries (.76 to 1.76) indicated a considerable difference. The large effect sizes for the magnitude of the differences between Danish student means and those in other countries (.53 to 1.76) indicated considerable difference also. The German students of 1993 were quite troubled by media stories about attacks on foreigners in various parts of Germany, and some were concerned about the role of Communists from the east in German political life, contributing to their lower means both vis-à-vis students in other countries in 1993 and German students of 1986. Higher means in the other countries in 1993 as compared to their means in 1986 may be explained to some extent by student perceptions of a reduced threat of Communists after the end of the Cold War. Because attitudes toward particular groups influence responses for many individuals, it is important to look at the distribution of responses to particular items.

Support for Abstract Principles

First, responses to free speech and press in the abstract are presented in figures 4.1 and 4.2. In 1993, the largest percentage of students saying

FIGURE 4.1
I Believe in Free Speech for All People
No Matter What Their Views Are, 1993



Note: This question was not asked in 1986.

FIGURE 4.2a
**Newspapers and Magazines Should Be
 Allowed to Print Anything They Want, 1986**

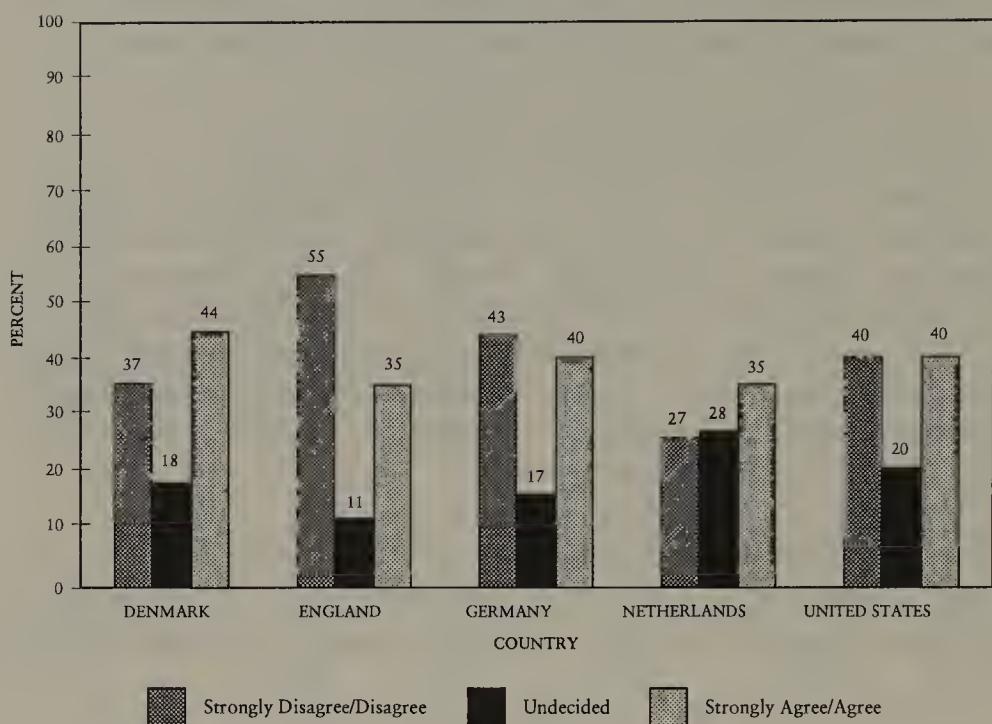
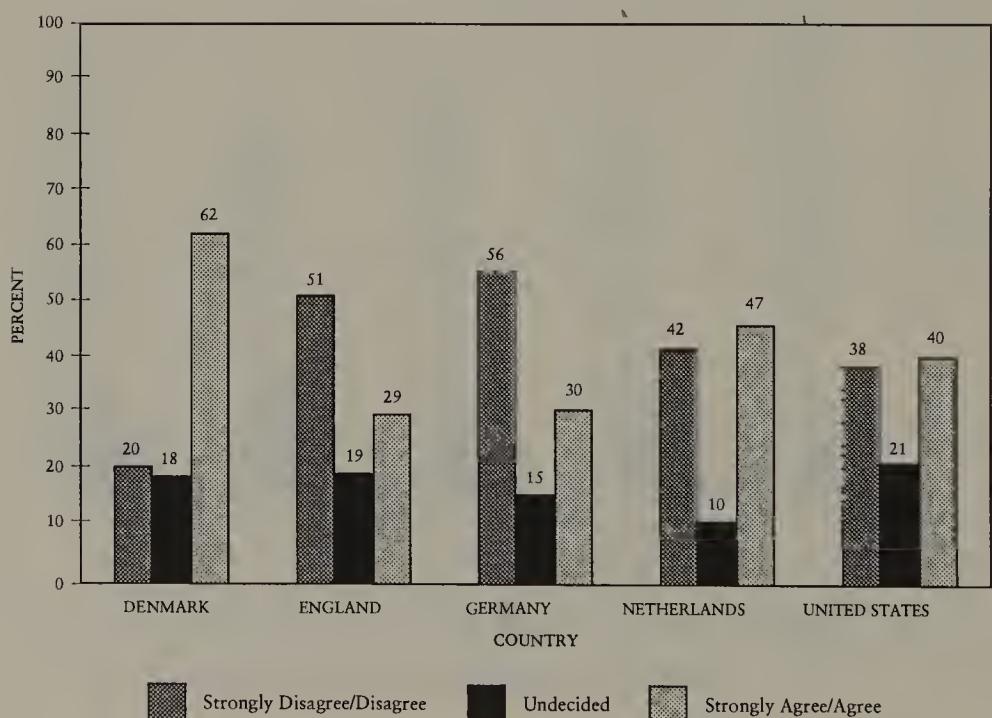


FIGURE 4.2b
**Newspapers and Magazines Should Be
 Allowed to Print Anything They Want, 1993**



they believed in "free speech for all people," regardless of their views, was from Denmark: 85 percent of Danish students agreed with the statement and only 2 percent disagreed.¹³ In the other four countries, approximately 70 percent of the students reported that they believed in the abstract principle of free speech for all; close to 10 percent disagreed.

Interestingly, students everywhere were considerably more skeptical about support for freedom of press than for free speech, as can be seen by comparing distributions in figure 4.2 to those in figure 4.1. Indeed, except for sample Danish students in 1993, fewer than half of the students in the other countries agreed that "newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything they want."¹⁴ At both time periods, the Danish students in the study were more willing than students in the other countries to guarantee freedom of press. And at both times, more than half of the English state school students disagreed with the principle that newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print anything. In Germany, 56 percent of the students disagreed with the statement in 1993, as compared to 43 percent in 1986.

The willingness of Danish students to guarantee free speech and free press rights to anyone regardless of their views and of German and English students to qualify their support for these abstract principles was evident in interviews with the students. In a class of Danish students who were approximately nineteen years old, a young woman said that she thought "people today are very concerned about racism." Her classmates elaborated,

KNUD. It is difficult because we have freedom of press and of speech but these organizations stand for exterminating other people, so I don't think they should be able to write that, but it is difficult.

INGRID. Although most of us think it is bad, maybe they are right, so they should be able to say it. (3/30/93)

No one in the class disagreed with Ingrid's belief that even racists should have the right to express their opinions.

The English students' attitudes toward freedom of the press seemed to be influenced by their perception that the tabloid press went too far with sensationalism and invading peoples' privacy. As two sixth-form (ages sixteen to eighteen) girls at one state school explained to me:

FIONA. You can say some things, but not everything. You can't slander, you have to have proof, evidence or they could take you to court.

CLARE. You shouldn't be able to say personal stuff like about the Queen and Diana.

FIONA. Michael Jackson, that should have been kept out of the papers.

CLARE. They put in bits to make it interesting but they exaggerate. That shouldn't be allowed. (6/19/95)

When I raised the issue of free expression in the abstract, several American students answered with reference to controversies over lyrics in songs. In Massachusetts a sixteen-year-old male said he heard about the issue on MTV and that "Newt Gingrich wants to ban offensive rock groups and that's not good, First Amendment." His tenth-grade classmates responded with mixed views:

TRACY. I think it is a difficult issue because like if rappers say things that are offensive to women over the radio, it is pumped into people's heads when they are little so they think it is right. Then women will have low self-esteem. . . . [A]nd I don't agree that you can play a racist song on the radio. . . . [I]f you hear these things every day in the newspaper and on the radio, then whether or not you realize it, it's going to affect your views.

SANDY. Actually, I think people should be able to say their views, it's freedom of speech, the Constitution guarantees it in America, but we'll have to deal with the ramifications of anger. But they can say it. (3/28/95)

The German students' attitudes toward free expression were always qualified by their belief that neo-Nazis and racists did not have the same rights as other people. As students in the ninth and tenth grades in one comprehensive school said:

"I think it is important that everybody can say what they think and not have to fear if they speak against the government, but there should be limits."

"But you can't say anything, like for Hitler."

"You can say what you like and you won't be censored. You can talk from your mind."

"I don't think the Nazis should be allowed to say things because what they say is false." (6/3/95)

Students in grades 11, 12, and 13 at several different German *Gymnasien* gave similar explanations:

"You can write something against someone, but the person can file a complaint and you can be arrested and have to go in front of a judge." (3/3/95)

"It is forbidden for the Right political party to speak about Hitler. . . . You don't have the right to discriminate." (3/3/95)

"You can't tell lies, like that the Jews weren't killed, you shouldn't be able to say that." (6/14/95)

You can't say racist things, "because this is Germany, we have to be careful about that. There's no room for that in Germany." (2/16/95)

Only one German student I interviewed said, "I think you should be able to say anything," and he seemed to be thinking primarily of song lyrics when he said his music class discussed that issue (6/3/95).

Most of the items on the questionnaire moved beyond abstract statements. Rather, they asked about the application of free expression rights to specific groups.

Rights for Communists

To determine whether student attitudes had changed since the 1960s and 1970s, two items asked whether Communists should be able to exercise free speech and free press rights (figs. 4.3 and 4.4). In both 1986 and 1993, the largest percentages of accepting students were in Denmark, with 84–85 percent agreeing that "If a Communist wanted to make a speech in our city (town), he or she should be allowed to speak." Almost 75 percent of the Danish students also agreed that "A Communist newspaper which criticizes our government should not be punished."¹⁵ In 1985–86, when President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher were avid warriors in the Cold War, English and American students may have perceived Communists as a threat; they were the least likely among students in the five countries to think that Communists ought to be able to speak or publish freely. However, by 1993, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, in both countries considerably larger percentages of students were willing to extend free speech and free press rights to Communists than had been willing to do so earlier. Indeed, on both the speech and press items, 20 percent more English students were willing to extend rights to Communists in 1993 than were in 1986. Similarly, 20 percent more students in the United States in 1994 than in 1986 were willing to grant free press rights to Communists; only 7 percent more were willing to grant speech rights over the time period.¹⁶

The data from students in the United States were similar to data obtained from nationally representative samples of adults at the same time periods. In 1986, 57 percent of adults (59 percent in 1984 and 1987) on the NORC survey said they would permit a Communist to speak in their community, as compared to 60 percent of the students in this study. In 1994, 68 percent of the adults in the NORC study, like 67 percent of the students, said they would allow a Communist to speak (NORC, 1994).

In 1993, German students were the least willing to extend free

FIGURE 4.3a
**If a Communist Wanted to Make a Speech in Our City (Town),
 He or She Should Be Allowed to Speak, 1986**

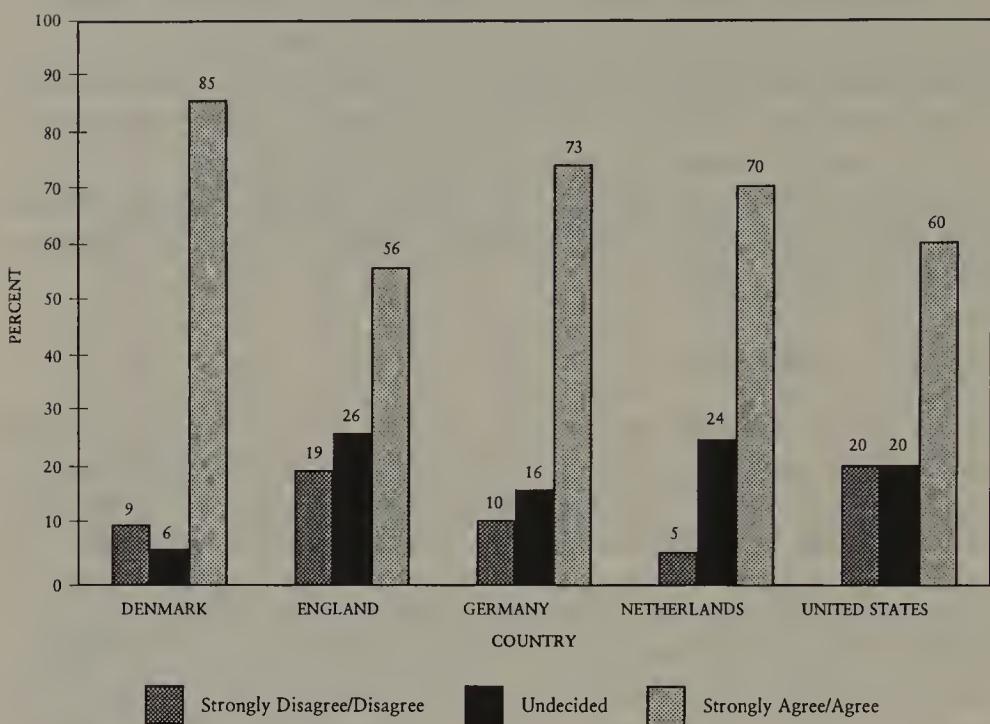


FIGURE 4.3b
**If a Communist Wanted to Make a Speech in Our City (Town),
 He or She Should Be Allowed to Speak, 1993**

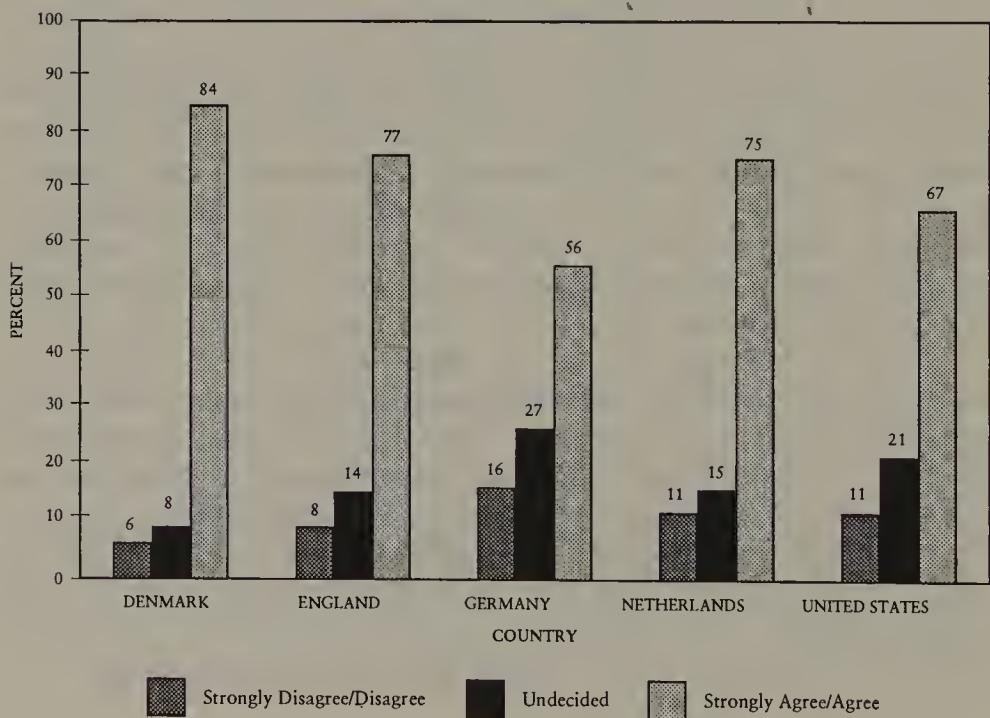


FIGURE 4.4a
**A Communist Newspaper that Criticizes Our Government
 Should Not Be Punished, 1986**

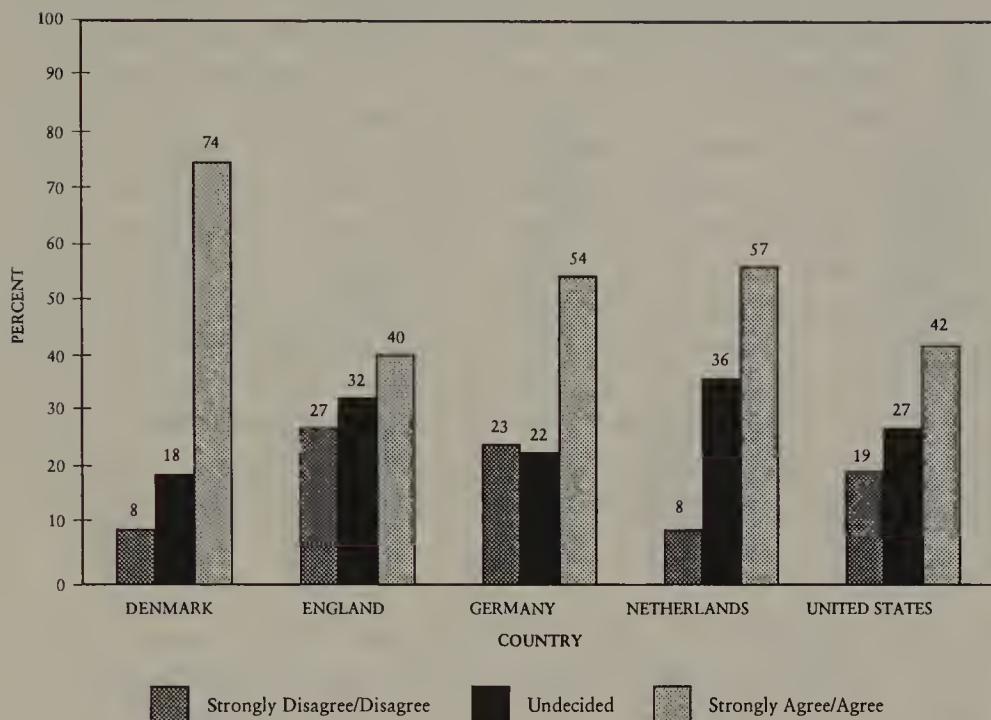
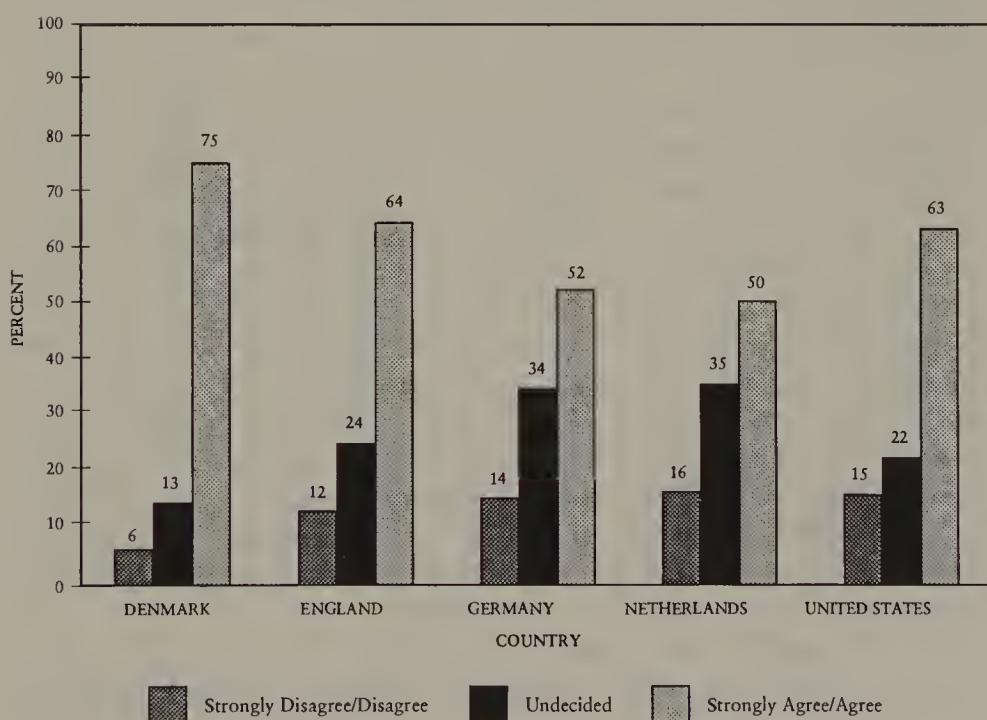


FIGURE 4.4b
**A Communist Newspaper that Criticizes Our Government
 Should Not Be Punished, 1993**



speech to Communists, and the German and Dutch students were the least willing to extend free press to Communists. One Dutch teacher said, “We used to talk about communist ideas, our Communist Party was a democratic party so they could say any communist ideas,” but by 1995 Communists were no longer an influential political force in the Netherlands, so perhaps students no longer thought of them as a normal political group. During both time periods, Dutch students were more willing to grant speech rather than press rights to Communists, however. In regard to German student responses, because the Berlin Wall had fallen and former East Germans were being integrated into the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1993 German students seemed to have in mind the former Communists in the eastern states. As one teacher explained, “There is still some concern for Communists. There is a party in the Parliament that is left over from the old German Democratic Republic. Still Communist parties are suspect” (2/18/95).

Rights for Atheists

Because researchers since the 1950s measured attitudes toward extending free expression rights to atheists, and in order to make comparisons across time, one item on the questionnaire asked about rights for atheists (fig. 4.5). In 1986 German and Danish students were the most willing to extend rights to atheists. In contrast, English and Dutch students were the least willing to grant rights to atheists. Indeed, close to one-fourth of the students from England and the Netherlands in 1986 disagreed that “If an atheist wanted to make a speech in our city (town) against churches and religion, he or she should be allowed to speak.” The levels of agreement were higher among samples in both countries in 1993 than in 1986. However, still only 62 percent of the students in the Netherlands were willing to extend free speech rights to atheists, 16 percent more than had been willing earlier. Also, English students were more willing in 1993 to extend rights to an atheist than they had been in 1986. Moreover, their relative support in 1993 was greater than was that of students in the United States. In 1994 students in the United States were almost as reluctant as students from the Netherlands to permit atheists to speak.¹⁷ The distribution of responses for students in the United States was similar in 1994 to what it had been in 1986 (66 percent support). The data obtained in 1986 were similar to what NORC researchers found in their survey: 65 percent support in 1985 and 68 percent in 1987. However, more adults said they would allow an atheist to speak than did students, with 73 percent of adults permitting them to speak (NORC, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1994).

Several factors may contribute to Dutch and American students’ hesitancy in this study to extend rights to atheists. Although the United

FIGURE 4.5a
If an Atheist Wanted to Make a Speech in Our City (Town) Against Churches
and Religion He or She Should be Allowed to Speak, 1986

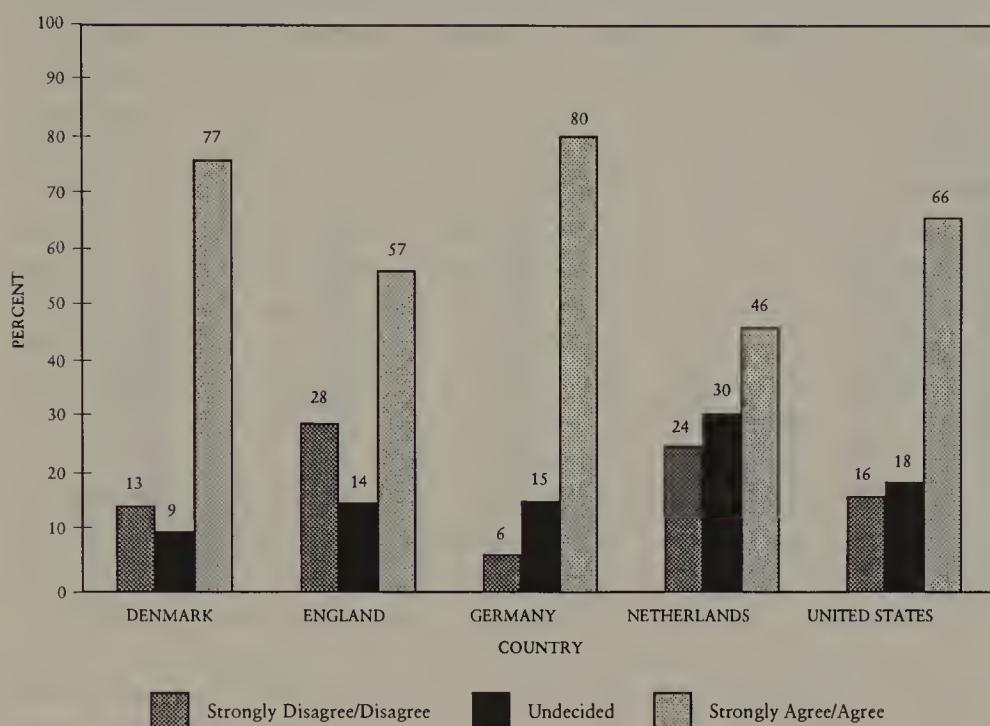
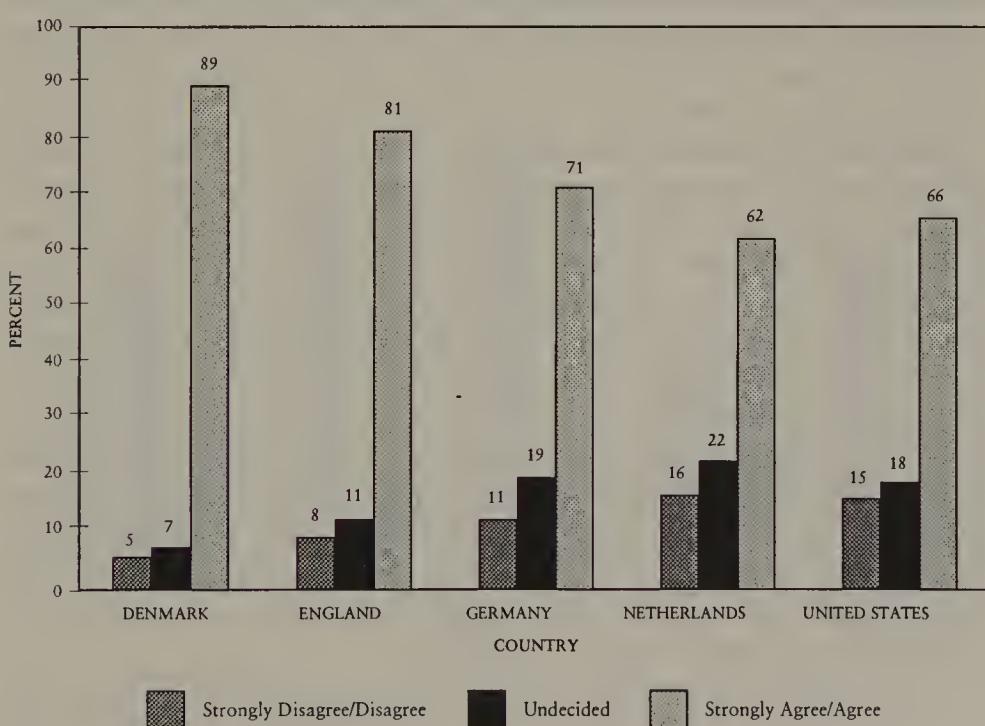


FIGURE 4.5b
If an Atheist Wanted to Make a Speech in Our City (Town) Against Churches
and Religion He or She Should be Allowed to Speak, 1993



States is the only country of the five studied that does not teach religion in the public schools, larger percentages of the population regularly attend church than in the other countries. Christian radio stations, cable television channels supported by the religious right, and demands for school prayer in the political arena were all familiar to students in the United States at the time of this study. In the Netherlands, most sample students attended religiously affiliated schools, and they lived in a society in which television stations, newspapers, sports clubs, and trade unions were often identified as either Protestant or Catholic. One Dutch teacher, Mr. deWitt, said that he used the Salman Rushdie affair to illustrate that "it's all right to have your own ideas about religion but you must respect the ideas of other religions . . . Rushdie has certain ideas and he may tell those ideas, but we also have to allow fundamentalist ideas too, except not to punish and murder."

Even in the Netherlands and the United States where religious groups were quite visible, strong traditions protecting religious pluralism seemed to have an effect; no more than 15 percent of the students surveyed would restrict free expression rights for atheists. As Maria, a Hispanic female in one California school, said: "Well, that's freedom of religion, the establishment clause and the other clause. The government shouldn't take any sides. So as long as it's not dangerous, they should be able to say what they believe, it's their religion."

Rights for Racists

Three items on the questionnaire dealt with granting rights to racists, and clearly this was the area in which students in all countries were most likely to suspend the rights to free expression (figs. 4.6 and 4.7). For both time periods, the majority of students in all countries, except in the Netherlands, said newspapers should not be able to print racist articles against blacks, Asians, or foreigners. Similarly, in 1993 a majority of the students in Denmark, England, and Germany; one-third of the students in the Netherlands, and just little less than one-half of the students in the United States said that newspapers should not be allowed to write articles in support of the National Front's, Ku Klux Klan's, or Nazi Party's racism. At least one-quarter of students everywhere but Germany in 1993 said they would extend freedom of press even to such organizations. More than 65 percent of the German, English, and American students in 1986 and more than 75 percent of the students from Germany and England in 1993, however, took the position that newspapers should not be able to print racist articles. Furthermore, close to 70 percent of the German students said newspapers should not be able to publish articles supporting neo-Nazis' racism.

In 1993, in every country but Germany, students said they were

FIGURE 4.6a

Newspapers Should Be Able to Print Racist Articles Against Blacks and Asians
(Denmark: Turks, Pakistanis, and Refugees; Netherlands: Foreign Workers), 1986

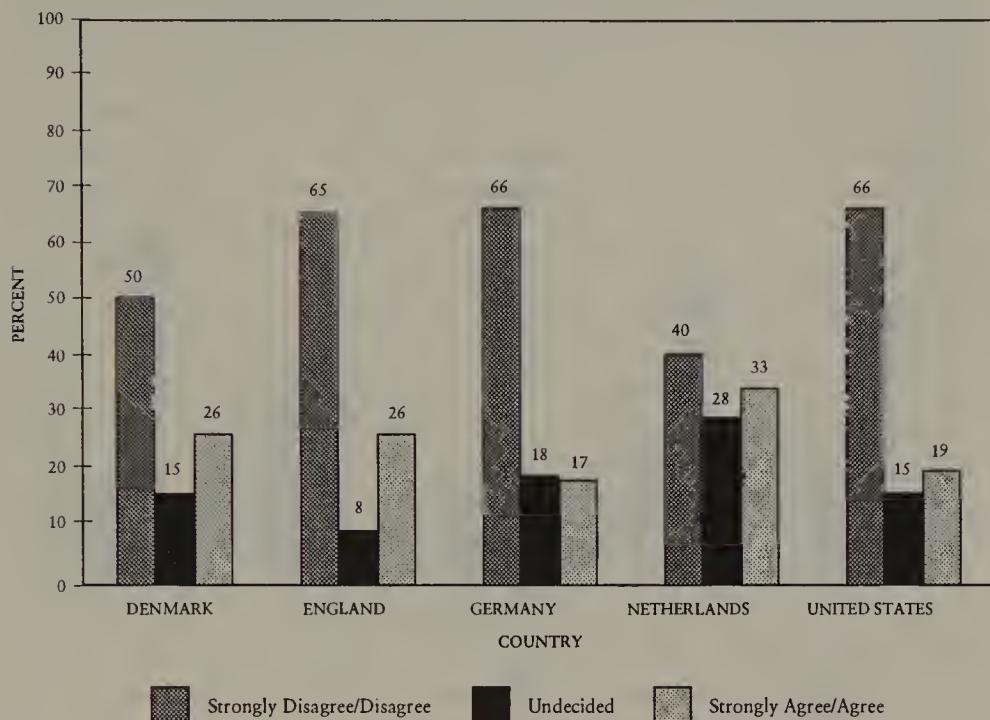


FIGURE 4.6b

Newspapers Should Be Able to Print Racist Articles Against Blacks and Asians
(Denmark: Turks, Pakistanis, and Refugees; Netherlands: Foreign Workers), 1993

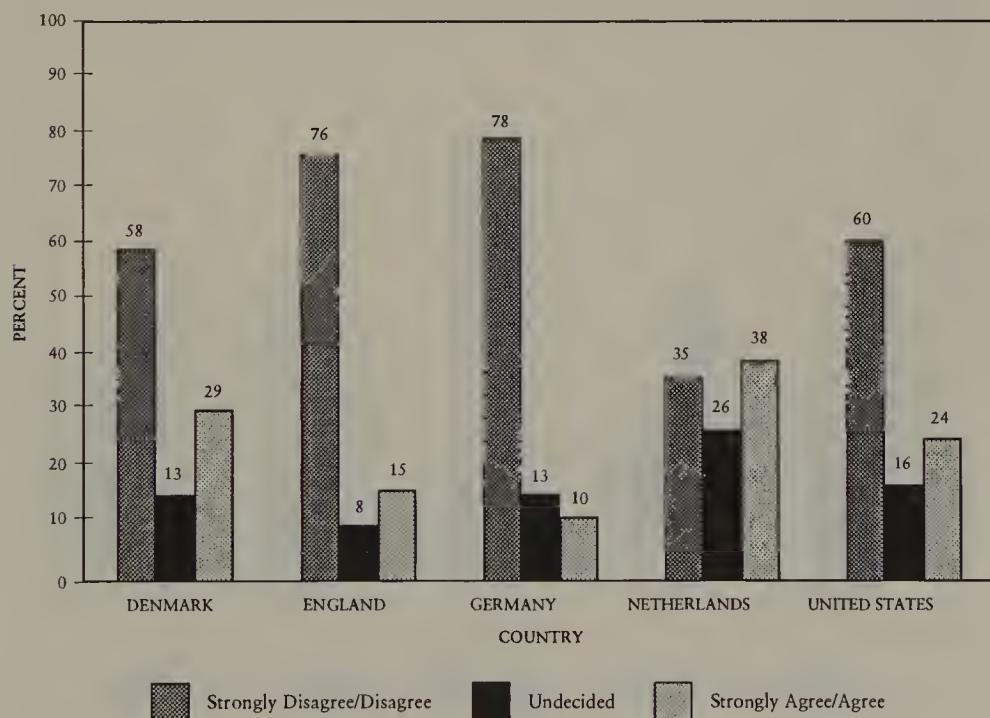


FIGURE 4.7a

Newspapers Should Be Allowed to Write Articles Supporting the National Front's (Denmark: Nazi Party's; United States: Ku Klux Klan's) Racism, 1986

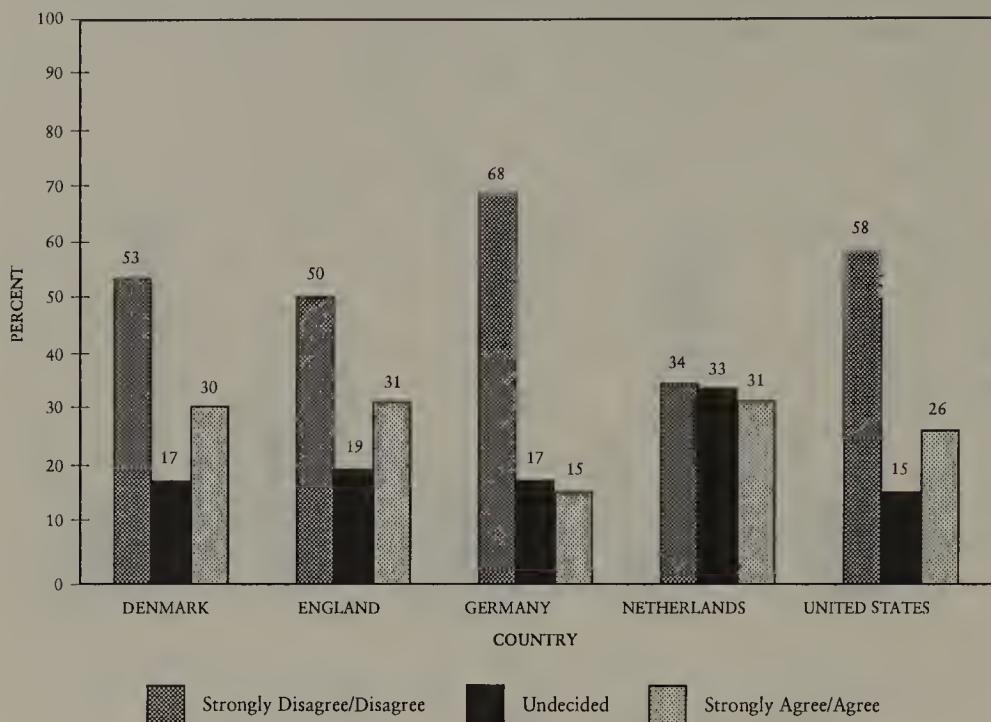
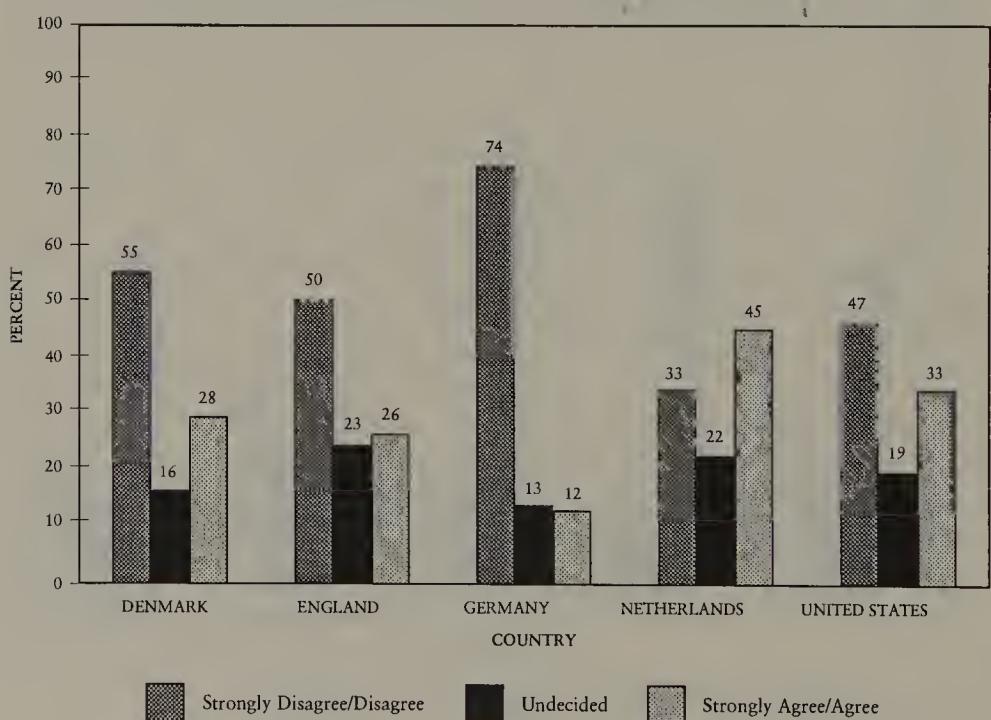


FIGURE 4.7b

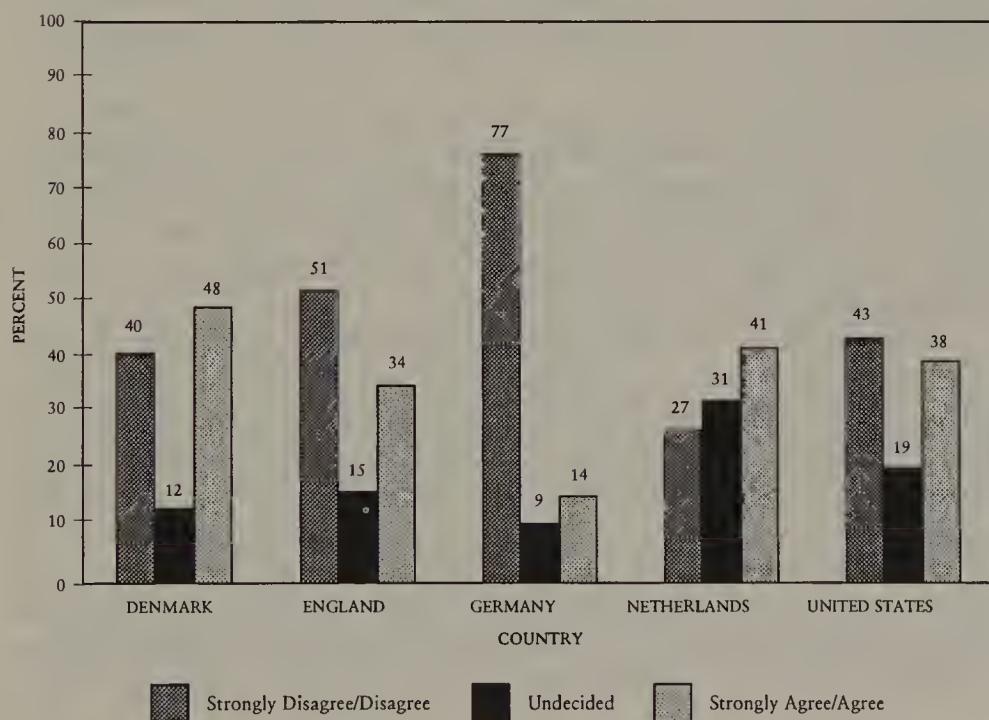
Newspapers Should Be Allowed to Write Articles Supporting the National Front's (Denmark: Nazi Party's; United States: Ku Klux Klan's) Racism, 1993



more willing to extend free speech than free press rights to racists (compare fig. 4.8 with figs. 4.6 and 4.7).¹⁸ In 1993, more than three-quarters of the German students responded that a member of a neo-Nazi party should not be allowed to make a speech against Turks or Jews—a situation reminiscent of the German past. The English students were the next most reluctant to extend speech rights to racists as they had been with regard to press rights. Students from Denmark and the United States, where courts have upheld the free speech rights of racist groups, were divided over this issue, with 48 percent of the Danes and 38 percent of the Americans responding that racists should have such rights, and close to 40 percent in each country saying they should not. The responses from the American students were considerably less tolerant of rights for racists than were adults of the period, although adults were also less willing to grant racists free speech than other groups. On the 1994 NORC survey, 61 percent of adults said they would let a racist give a speech in their community (NORC, 1994).

In every German class with which I spoke, when I asked students in 1993 and 1995 what issues interested them, they always responded: "racism"; "the actions of extreme right groups"; "it is important to stop

FIGURE 4.8
If a Member of the National Front (United States: Ku Klux Klan)
Wanted to Make a Speech in This City (Town) Against Blacks,
He or She Should be Allowed to Speak, 1993



fascism." As one tenth-grade female said, "we are concerned about the hatred against foreigners." In her school, the student council organized a demonstration against racist violence, and many students participated in it. Students proudly showed me the banner hanging in the stairwell that they had all signed to say they were opposed to racist violence (5/18/93).

German students in a year 13 *Gymnasium* class summed up what many students in their country told me:

RAINER. There was a party that said Auschwitz never happened, it's all a lie. You're not allowed to say that. It is forbidden. It's good to have that law, because in my opinion racism is a crime. Here you can say anything to a friend, but you can't say racist things in a big group.

BRIGITTA. It depends on the history of the country. On this topic, it is very difficult in Germany.

MANFRED. Here we have to learn from our history, although there is racism everywhere, because we have asylum seekers and there are still people who believe in the right-wing parties and they burn down the homes, the whole world is staring because of our history. (2/16/95)

One German teacher, Mrs. Meyer, further explained that "There are people who want others to be violent against others, but they are not allowed. This is not freedom of speech. That can't be an achievement of a democratic state to allow racist speech. You need limits where others are discriminated against" (2/18/95). Another teacher, however, emphasized that until a group is declared by the court to be enemies of the Constitution, they have free speech rights—a fact that she taught to her tenth-grade *Realschule* class.

In England, four students attending a Public School agreed that newspapers should not be allowed to print racist ideas. Allen explained: "There is a TV commission that is a watchdog so they won't. They can be fined." All of the English students with whom I spoke had less to say about the press and racists than they did about the tabloid press' sensationalism and coverage of the royal family.

Students in the United States and Denmark were divided in their opinions about these issues. In both countries students were disturbed about racism, but their countries also had the tradition of extending rights to groups, no matter how extreme their positions. In the United States, some students argued that there should be limits on speech that offends or hurts others, such as racial remarks. Other students in the same classes, however, would argue, "but it's freedom of speech." Ms. Foster's approach to teaching about rights for racist groups in the United States was based on her belief that although one might despise another's ideas, "I will defend until death your right to express your

opinion." She said that was a principle that was difficult for students to understand, when they have a negative "gut reaction—so do I—and that's when I talk about the *Skokie* case or another one about the Ku Klux Klan." She said that students come to understand the position of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) whether or not they agree with it. She said that she, personally, supports the ACLU although she is not a member.

Missouri students made the following mixture of comments about allowing free speech for extremist groups, such as racist ones:

DAVE. No, they shouldn't be allowed if it is harmful.

RON. If the KKK wanted to march in an area on Martin Luther King's birthday in a neighborhood where that would cause violence, then I think the city council can tell them to march someplace else.

TIM. If we let them speak out, then maybe they are less likely to do something rash.

AL. I'm not fond of extremist groups, but if the government limits them, it's a pretty scary precedent. I'm not in favor of limits on free speech.

TIM. We have a kid at this school who writes for the [school] newspaper and he says all kinds of stuff. (5/9/96)

Students in two of the Danish classes saw a video about skinheads and talked about the radio station recently started by neo-Nazis. The students in those classes articulated the difficulty they felt in balancing two opposing commitments.

ANNE. They shouldn't be able to have radio because it's too close between racism and Nazism. Weak souls could be drawn in. I would allow Nazism if only they could tell their beliefs but not speak against others.

FREDERIK. Stopping a station won't prevent them from believing. If you start preventing radio, then they would become a political group.

INGALISE. Everybody should be allowed to have their own opinion. I don't agree with them, but if it's their opinion it's okay. (4/23/96)

TRINE. I think they should have the right to believe what they want and to say what they believe. I don't agree with them, but as long as they aren't violent they should be able to say their beliefs.

ELLEN. I think they can be free to express their thoughts, because to deny them would be to discriminate against them. I'm against racism because they discriminate against Jews. We shouldn't then discriminate against Nazis.

NIKOLAJ. I think that because we have free speech, they should have their opinion, but of course, there are problems. (4/24/96)

Overall, students in the Netherlands tended to say they were the most willing to extend rights to racists—with the exception of the one

school with a large immigrant population and a teacher who emphasized nondiscrimination over free expression. The teacher, Mrs. de Vries, explained that she presented the dilemma over rights for racists in the following terms:

In Holland it's the law. The First Amendment in Holland says it's forbidden to discriminate by race, gender, or sexual preference. The Second is free speech. First you have to respect someone before you can open their mind. The way I handle it is, first respect someone, then open your mouth. If you don't respect someone, then shut up. (2/22/95)

When I asked students in Mrs. de Vries' school—a junior general secondary school (*mavo*) with a multicultural population—what issues they were concerned about they replied, "racism." A male student said, "there is some here, but not so much as in Germany." Then a female student explained, "*The Breakfast Club* on the morning radio started a campaign after the Turks were killed in Solingen [May 29, 1993] to send cards to the German government to say, 'I'm angry.' You can get the cards in the supermarkets and everywhere" (6/28/93). Four students in the group of eight had mailed cards, and the others thought it was a good idea.

Students in other Dutch schools were less likely to say that free expression rights should be denied to racists. At one school that prepared students for higher education at universities and other schools, the teacher talked about the freedom of speech and press, and the four instances in which it could be limited (lies, criminal acts, pornography, discrimination). Students in that school were divided as to whether racist groups should be able to exercise free expression rights. Some students had been detained for posting signs that said, "keep NL white" and "white power": they had violated the law against discrimination.

In a lower agricultural school with no minority students, many students thought sending the cards against racism was a good idea. However, they were divided about whether free speech rights in the Netherlands should apply to racists. As one young woman said, "It should be forbidden for groups like the Nazis to speak." A male classmate disagreed, "They should have the right to free speech but what they say is bad." Other students said; "There is no difference between groups. Although some say nonsense, all have the right to speak"; "People have the right to speak, even about racism"; and "It's good to have them say it, then when you hear it, you can take action and find a solution" (6/29/93).

Clearly, although substantial numbers of Dutch students, like their peers in the other countries, thought that free expression rights should

be suspended for racists, there was a larger percentage of students (except in Mrs. de Vries classes) in the Netherlands than in the other countries who would insure rights even for those groups.

Summary: Attitudes toward Free Expression

It is clear from students' responses in interviews and on the questionnaire that despite the fact that they said they supported free expression in the abstract, student positions were influenced by the group in question at a point in time and the degree of perceived threat. For the most part, the Dutch students were more likely to deny rights to atheists than were students in other countries. During the Cold War, students in the United States and England were the most likely to say they would deny rights to Communists. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, German students were the most reluctant among sample students to extend rights to Communists who live in the eastern part of their reunited country and are represented in Parliament by a new political party.

The German students learned that to prevent another Holocaust, Nazi organizations had been outlawed at the end of World War II. Recent incidents against foreigners generated concern about a resurgence of fascism. The German students were wary of permitting groups opportunities to spread racist messages. In Denmark, and in most Dutch schools, students were outraged by recent attacks that had occurred against foreigners in many places in Europe. Nevertheless, they still felt that the threat of xenophobia was not yet great in their own country. Consequently, many students felt secure in upholding their cultural tradition of tolerance for diverse groups.

In the United States, racism had persisted for three hundred years; students learned about slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement. They also studied landmark Supreme Court cases in which the Court upheld the rights of extremist groups—even racists—to speak and write, so long as they did not incite a riot. It is not surprising, then, that students in the United States were divided in their views on this issue. In England, students studied the issue of racism in their personal and social education and religious studies classes, but they were not taught about free speech and free press, which were assumed to exist. English students were generally supportive of those freedoms, except for racist groups, for whom a majority thought such rights should be suspended.¹⁹

These findings are consistent with the view of civic tolerance proposed by Sullivan, Avery, and others. Students' increased willingness to extend rights to Communists—except in Germany—probably reflected a changed attitude toward Communists, not an increasing (or in Germany, decreasing) level of tolerance over the period. Many students of

1993 were not "tolerant" when it came to applying rights to racist groups that they believed posed an increasing threat in parts of Europe and an enduring one in the United States.

LEVELS OF CIVIC TOLERANCE AMONG STUDENTS IN THIS STUDY

To measure students' level of tolerance, a Civic Tolerance scale was developed in 1993.²⁰ Drawing on Avery's (1988) definition of political tolerance, the items were intended to measure students' willingness to extend basic human rights to their least-liked sociopolitical group. First, students were asked to identify their least-liked group from a list of groups that existed in their country, or they could write in another that might not be on the list. Students in most countries identified a racist group from the list as least liked, except in England where the majority of students said that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was their least-liked group (table 4.2).

TABLE 4.2
Least-Liked Group

	<i>Percentage Identified</i>				<i>United States</i>
	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>United States</i>
Neo-Nazis/ Skinheads	79	26	84	51	23
Ku Klux Klan	—	—	—	—	40
IRA	—	56	—	—	—
Anti-abortionists	5	—	4	17	6
Pro-abortionists	—	2	—	2	5
Communists	—	2	2	2	3
Homosexual (Rights) organization	—	4	—	5	9
Atheists	—	—	—	2	5
Religious organization	4	—	—	—	—
Association of Danes (right)	2	—	—	—	—
Coalition for European Union	2	—	—	—	—
Asylum seekers	—	—	5	9	—
Animal Rights group	—	—	—	2	—

Note: Other groups were selected by less than 1% of respondents.

In Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands a majority of students (79 percent, 84 percent, and 51 percent, respectively) identified neo-Nazis or skinheads as their least-liked group. In the Netherlands 17 percent identified antiabortionists. In England 56 percent named the IRA, and 26 percent named neo-Nazis or skinheads. In the United States 40 percent of the respondents named the Ku Klux Klan, and an additional 23 percent named neo-Nazis/skinheads. All other groups were identified by fewer than 10 percent of the students in any one country.

Students were then asked to respond to a list of possible activities that a member of their least-liked group might engage in and which relate to political and civil rights that are asserted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each item describing an activity was followed by a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Instrument reliability as estimated by Cronbach's alpha was .84 ($n = 3791$). Means for student responses to this scale by country were compared (table 4.3).

Overall, students from the United States scored the highest on this scale and were followed by students from Denmark. That is, American and Danish students in the 1993 sample were the most likely to say they

TABLE 4.3
Civic Tolerance: Comparing Means of Samples by Country—
Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	Germany	England	Netherlands	Denmark	United States
Mean	2.63	2.87	2.99	3.12	3.36
(s.d.)	(.73)	(.88)	(.71)	(.39)	(.87)
<i>n</i>	502	1033	448	301	1681
England	.29 (.24)*	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	.50 (.36)*	.14 (.12)	—	—	—
Denmark	.78 (.50)*	.31 (.25)*	.22 (.14)	—	—
United States	.87 (.75)*	.56 (.50)*	.44 (.39)*	.29 (.25)*	—

Note: The means are presented in ascending order. Higher scale scores indicate greater tolerance. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 3785) = 106.41, $p = .001$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency for the Civic Tolerance Scale in 1993 were: total sample .84; Denmark .25, England .85, Germany .81, Netherlands .76, and United States .86.

*Significant at the .001 level.

would extend a variety of democratic rights to their least-liked group. Students from Germany scored the lowest on this scale, meaning that most German students said their least-liked group—usually neo-Nazis—should not be extended the same rights as other citizens. There was a large effect for the magnitude of the difference between American and German student means and Danish and German student means. However, there was very little difference between the means for England and the Netherlands.

The percentages of students from each country who agreed or strongly agreed that members of their least-liked group should have the same rights as other citizens with respect to the activity described in each particular item are shown in table 4.4.

The largest percentages of students who thought that police should need as much evidence to arrest someone from their least-liked group as anyone else, or thought that a member of that group should have a right to a public trial, were from Denmark and the United States, with close to 80 percent of the students agreeing that such rights should apply. Similarly, the largest percentages of students who thought that someone from their least-liked group should be allowed to vote were again from Denmark, with 71 percent agreement, closely followed by students from the United States, with 67 percent agreement. Larger percentages of students from the United States and Denmark than from the other countries were willing to let someone from their least-liked group run for Congress or stand for Parliament. Yet even in Denmark and the United States, more students thought that members of the group should not be

TABLE 4.4
Levels of Tolerance in Five Countries

<i>Agree Strongly or Agree that Members of Least-Liked Group Should:</i>	<i>Denmark (%)</i>	<i>England (%)</i>	<i>Germany (%)</i>	<i>Netherlands (%)</i>	<i>United States (%)</i>
1. Need evidence to be arrested	79	61	56	51	70
2. Have right to trial	86	66	72	67	80
3. Be protected from wiretaps	48	30	34	42	59
4. Be allowed to distribute pamphlet	45	37	13	27	47
5. Be allowed to vote	71	40	34	38	67
6. Be allowed to be a member of organization	44	31	17	30	46
7. Be allowed to make a public speech	40	38	11	44	42
8. Be allowed to run for office	35	25	15	23	35
9. Be allowed to organize a rally	34	22	16	22	38

allowed to be candidates for office than thought they should be allowed to be candidates.

In England a majority of students agreed that the government ought to be able to tap the phones of members of the disliked group—the IRA or a racist group for most students—without first obtaining a search warrant. In England and Germany 60 percent of sample students responded that it should be against the law to be a member of the disliked group. Indeed, it was against the law in the United Kingdom to be a member of the IRA and in Germany to be a member of a Nazi organization. In both countries, however, right-wing groups espousing racist beliefs could and did exist legally, but they would be punished for violent acts or other illegal activities.

In regard to free expression issues on the Civic Tolerance scale, the smallest percentages of students who would extend rights to their least-liked groups were from Germany, which further reinforced findings from the Free Expression scale. In this case only 11 percent of the German students in the sample said that members of their least-liked group—most of whom were responding in terms of neo-Nazis—should be allowed to make a public speech. Further, only 16 percent of the German students would allow a member of their least-liked group to organize a public rally. Additionally, only 13 percent of the German students said that their least-liked group should have the right to distribute a pamphlet expressing the group's views.

On the other hand, 42 percent and 40 percent of the American and Danish students said that members of their least-liked group should have the right to make a public speech, while 38 percent of the American students and 34 percent of the Danish students said members of their least-liked group should be allowed to organize a public rally. Finally, 47 percent and 45 percent of the American and Danish students said the group should have the right to distribute a pamphlet expressing their views.

Another way to look at this set of responses is to ask which rights are students from a given country most and least willing to extend to their least-liked group. Everywhere, the largest percentages of students said that their least-liked group should have the same rights as other citizens to a trial and to protection against arrest without evidence. However, the percentage willing to extend such rights ranged from highs of 86 percent (right to trial) and 79 percent (evidence needed) in Denmark and 80 percent and 70 percent in the United States to only 67 percent and 51 percent in the Netherlands.

Everywhere, except in Germany, the rights students were least willing to extend to the disliked group were the rights to organize a rally and run for national office (Congress or Parliament). In Germany, there was the least support for letting members of the disliked group make a pub-

lic speech or distribute a pamphlet. Rights to run for office and hold a rally for group members also received little support from German students.²¹ Thus, in all countries protection from arbitrary arrest and detention were seen as basic, even for disliked groups. Additionally, in every country activities that would enable the disliked group to extend their influence over others were most likely to be suspended for the group in question.

Looking at comparable findings obtained from the two scales that measure political tolerance in different ways is revealing. For example, on the one hand, 85 percent of the Danish students claimed that they believed in free speech for all, with almost as many Danish students agreeing that Communists and atheists ought to be allowed to give speeches in their city or town. On the other hand, only 48 percent of the Danish students were willing to let a member of the National Front make a speech in their city or town against blacks, and only 40 percent would allow a member of their least-liked group to speak.

In the other four countries, close to 70 percent of students said that they believed in free speech for all. Yet with respect to letting a Communist speak, only 56 percent and 60 percent of English and American students in 1986 and 56 percent of German students in 1993 would permit it. Other groups were more consistent in applying the abstract principle to Communist speakers. The German students at both times and the English in 1993 were quite willing to let the atheist speak—but not as many students in the other countries were as certain about atheists giving speeches. Concerning a member of the National Front making a speech, only about 40 percent of the students in England, the Netherlands, and the United States would allow it. Moreover, only 3 percent more of students in each of those three countries said they would allow a member of their least-liked group to make a speech as had said they would allow a National Front speech. Only 14 percent of the German students would permit the National Front's speech, and 10 percent would let their least-liked group speak.²²

These data make especially clear several themes that run throughout this chapter. (1) Regardless of country, students are more supportive of free expression in the abstract than when it is applied to some particular groups. (2) Willingness to extend rights to particular groups is affected by the level of perceived threat at a particular point in time. In 1986, American and English students perceived Communists to be a threat; in 1993 German students did. (3) In the 1980s and 1990s fewer than half of the students in all five countries say that racists should have the same free expression rights as other citizens. (4) Similarly, fewer than half of the students in all countries say they would allow members of their least-liked group to make a public speech. (5) There are clear

country differences, with students from Denmark and the Netherlands being more willing to extend free expression rights to diverse groups than students in other countries (however, rights to expression for racists were not supported in one Dutch school and rights for atheists were not supported across all Dutch schools); German students in 1993 were the least likely to grant free expression rights—except for atheists, whose rights they would clearly guarantee.

Gender and Attitudes

Finally, responses on the Free Expression and Civic Tolerance scales were examined for possible gender differences (table 4.5). Although the means for males tended to be higher than those for females on the Free Expression scale and those for females tended to be higher than males on the Civic Tolerance scales, the magnitude of the effects were quite small, ranging from .03 to .31. This finding of little or no gender difference in support of free expression rights contradicts the earliest research in this area (Stouffer, 1955) but reinforces research by others since then (Grossman, 1975; Nielsen, 1977; Zellman, 1975). The fact that the

TABLE 4.5
Gender Differences on Free Expression and Civic Tolerance Scales

	Males			Females			Effect Size
	Mean	(s.d.)	n	Mean	(s.d.)	n	
Free Expression							
All, 1986	3.05	(.69)	710	3.00	(.59)	718	.08
All, 1993	3.30	(.71)	1963	3.19	(.63)	1873	.16
Denmark 1993	3.76	(.70)	105	3.57	(.57)	168	.31
England 1993	3.27	(.62)	572	3.13	(.53)	435	.24
Germany 1993	2.95	(.66)	246	2.84	(.55)	241	.18
Netherlands 1993	3.46	(.68)	235	3.35	(.51)	211	.18
United States 1994	3.33	(.74)	805	3.20	(.69)	818	.18
Civic Tolerance							
All, 1993	3.02	(.93)	1901	3.15	(.79)	1848	.15
Denmark 1993	3.10	(.40)	110	3.14	(.38)	170	.10
England 1993	2.76	(.94)	555	3.00	(.80)	432	.27
Germany 1993	2.55	(.80)	241	2.70	(.64)	235	.21
Netherlands 1993	2.97	(.75)	220	2.99	(.66)	199	.03
United States 1994	3.36	(.93)	833	3.39	(.83)	812	.03

Note: A higher mean suggests greater willingness to extend rights or "tolerance."

effect of gender on the Civic Tolerance scale was so small corroborates the findings of Sullivan and his colleagues (Sullivan et al., 1981) that there are few or no gender differences in civic tolerance, but contradicts Avery's (1988) findings.

Summary

This research supports several trends identified by earlier researchers. In the 1980s and 1990s, sample students in the five Western democracies supported free speech in the abstract more than they did when the principle was applied to concrete examples with specific groups. Additionally, students in this study were more hesitant to permit free press than free speech. Contrary to findings in the 1971 IEA study (Torney et al., 1975), however, American students in this sample were no less willing than Dutch and German students to support freedom of the press; indeed, it was German and English students in this study who were the most reluctant to allow free press for all.

Further, although the American students in this study did appear to be more willing to extend free expression rights to atheists and Communists than had cohorts in the 1950s and 1960s (Remmers & Franklin, 1962; Zellman & Sears, 1971), comparisons after 1970 are not as clear cut. The students from the United States, Germany, and the Netherlands were no more willing to grant rights to Communists than had cohorts from their countries in the 1970s and 1980s (Krieger, 1986; Torney et al., 1975). Indeed there appeared to be a decline over time in German students' willingness to grant rights to Communists when data from this study are compared to those obtained earlier (Krieger, 1986).

The American students in this sample appeared more willing to extend rights to atheists than were students in another study conducted at about the same time (Broudy, 1994) but less so than were students in other countries in this study. In this study American students' inclination to restrict the rights of groups like the Ku Klux Klan was at a level similar to that obtained in the other study (Broudy, 1994). In all countries in this sample, many students would restrict free expression rights for racists and some political or civil rights for members of their least-liked group. Unfortunately, little evidence on this aspect of students' attitudes has been gathered across time or national context.

DISCUSSION

This research extends earlier work by linking student survey responses to the context in which they learn about rights for diverse groups. It is clear that the issues here raise dilemmas when two cherished values are

in conflict at both the individual and the societal level. In the United States and Denmark, courts have upheld the right to free expression even for groups that discriminate against others. In the Netherlands, where traditionally there has been a willingness to extend rights to all, recent incidents have caused some people to shift the balance toward placing a higher priority on nondiscrimination than on free expression.

In Germany, where the memory of Nazism is strong, and where there have been recent incidents against foreigners, the law restricts the rights of groups that might undermine the democratic order. Students learn about their country's history and about constitutional limits in school. In England, students do not study about civil liberties in school. They do, however, learn about racism and laws against discrimination in both religion and social education lessons.

Interviews with students in all five countries reveal that young people recognize that free expression is fundamental to democracy at the same time they are deeply troubled by racist incidents. As they confront this difficult dilemma facing pluralistic democracies, one hears the differing priorities that are characteristic of each unique political culture among the democracies. It becomes clear that the meanings of core principles of individual liberty and respect for all are constructed in light of a student's national history, cultural tradition, school instruction, and individual values.

In visiting schools in these five countries I sensed that educators have not given much deliberate attention to developing in students the capacity to extend fundamental freedoms and basic civil rights to groups that are the most disliked. Even in the schools in the United States where students had been exposed to the *Skokie* case, in interviews students respond with slogans about free speech rather than articulating a carefully reasoned argument. In the European countries, neither teachers nor students mentioned studying specific concrete cases where free expression rights were in conflict with other human rights. Recent studies on extended in-depth exposure to such dilemmas point to the fact that when students have the opportunity to investigate the reasoning behind the application of abstract principles to specific controversial cases, they can become more tolerant (Avery et al., 1992; Broudy, 1994). If a goal of civic education is to instill in youth a willingness to extend rights granted in national and international documents to all citizens, then students ought to experience instruction that prepares them for that task with respect to the most difficult challenges they will face in the years ahead.

CHAPTER 5

Democratic Inquiry and Discourse: Classroom Climates in Cross-National Perspective

Educators have often argued that for young people to become active, involved citizens in a democracy, they ought to experience democratic dialogue and open inquiry in their social studies classes (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Griffin, 1992; Hunt & Metcalf, 1968; Newmann, 1970; Oliver & Shaver, 1966; Parker, 1996). Since the period 1915 to 1925, when “social studies” was first evolving as a field in the United States, and when the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the professional organization of social studies teachers in the United States, was being established, there have been ongoing debates over the best form of education for citizens in a democracy, with some factions advocating the study of society’s problems rather than a discipline focus. In those early years, advocates promoted the development of courses in civics and in problems of democracy to give students opportunities for inquiry into and discussion about unresolved social problems facing citizens.

Later, in the years following World War II, advocates of a “problems approach” to social studies encouraged teachers to design units of instruction in which students investigated contemporary and historic issues that interested them and were of concern to society (Quillen & Hanna, 1948). In the 1960s Hunt and Metcalf (1968) argued that the focus of high school social studies instruction should be reflective inquiry into the “closed areas” or controversial issues of society. They emphasized that because citizens must be able to resolve intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts in a democratic context, young people ought to practice investigating problematic social, political, and economic issues in their social studies classes. Moreover, Hunt and Metcalf argued, to set aside any issues as taboo for student inquiry because of their controversial nature would be to adopt totalitarian practices. Over the years, NCSS has repeatedly asserted that students ought to explore controversial public policy issues. For example, their 1951 statement declared:

Education for citizenship in a democracy must emphasize the study and discussion of controversial issues and must teach the skills needed for this study and discussion. . . . [For that reason] the National Council for the Social Studies recommends that it be the explicit policy of the nation's public schools to encourage and maintain the study of the unsolved problems and the current, controversial issues of our society. Only through this study can children develop the abilities they will need as citizens of a democracy. (NCSS, 1977, p. 26)

The rationale that social studies instruction ought to include controversial issues exploration was furthered by curriculum projects designed specifically for the purpose of giving students practice in the investigation of public policy issues. In the United States, the Harvard Public Issues Series (Oliver & Shaver, 1966) was designed for student exploration of public policy issues in both historic and contemporary settings. In the United Kingdom, the Humanities Project, under the direction of Lawrence Stenhouse, was based on the principle that secondary school students should investigate and discuss controversial public issues (Rudduck, 1983). In Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, textbooks and curriculum projects written for courses similar to social studies focused on social problems. Yet, despite these advocates' and curriculum developers' beliefs that the proper preparation for democratic citizenship is inquiry into and dialogue about problematic public policy issues, many teachers and school administrators across these countries have been reluctant to implement such practices.

A variety of reasons have been given for the omission or avoidance of controversial issues in schools. For example, Lister (1991) argued that the heavy subject matter orientation of history and geography teachers in the United Kingdom mitigated against issues exploration in preparation for civic life. McNeil (1986) found that the American social studies teachers she observed omitted controversial issues. She concluded that in order to cover much material and maintain an orderly classroom, teachers found it easier to avoid controversial material than to open up issues to an exploration of differing views. Further, surveys of state- and district-level social studies curriculum specialists in the United States indicated that some teachers seemed to self-censor out of fear that if they did bring controversy into the classroom, parents or community groups might object (Gross, 1977; Hahn, 1985). In the 1980s and 1990s conservative groups in all of the countries in this study called for a "back to the basics" emphasis to promote the acquisition of factual knowledge of history and geography rather than the development of critical thinking and valuing processes.

Against this background, an important question to explore in cross-national perspective was whether student exploration of controversial

public policy issues and discussion of alternative views on issues is important to the development of democratic attitudes. The five countries in this study have differing traditions with respect to this theme and, thus, provide a rich environment for exploring the question. Moreover, within each country one finds a range of practices, with some classes frequently exploring controversial issues and others rarely engaged in such explorations. In this chapter, previous research on controversial issues teaching and classroom climate is reviewed, student perceptions of their classroom experiences in the five countries of this study are reported, and classroom practices are described with respect to issues investigation and classroom climate.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Before examining research on the effects of controversial issues teaching,¹ it is important to realize that without such an emphasis instruction has proven to be inadequate. Without attention to problematic issues, the effects of social studies instruction are limited to knowledge acquisition; influence on student attitudes and behavior is negligible. That is, most instruction that teaches students about the structure and function of government institutions and tells them that citizens should be informed about civic affairs, should vote, and should respect civil liberties seems to have little effect on student attitudes and behavior (Baughman, 1975; Ehman, 1980a; Grossman, 1975/1976; Langton & Jennings, 1968; Litt, 1963; Miller, 1985). On the other hand, researchers have found that instruction can influence political attitudes and behaviors in a positive way when students perceive their class to have an "open climate" in which they are encouraged to explore and express differing views on controversial public issues.

Classroom Climate and Political Attitudes and Behaviors

The earliest research that linked adult political attitudes with school discussions of problematic issues was the five-nation study by Almond and Verba (1963). In that study, adults with the highest levels of political efficacy were those who remembered discussing and debating social and political issues in school. That was particularly true for British and American adults; to a lesser extent it was true also for the adults in Germany, Italy, and Mexico who were interviewed. Researchers since the time of Almond and Verba's study, rather than rely on adult memories, have interviewed and surveyed secondary school students during their school years to ascertain their perceptions of class experiences and their political attitudes.

Several studies conducted by Lee Ehman in the midwestern United States were particularly important in identifying a connection between adolescent political attitudes and a classroom climate in which democratic discourse is modeled. To operationalize the concept of 'democratic classroom climate', Ehman (1969) developed a Classroom Climate scale.² It contained items to measure the extent to which students perceived their social studies teachers dealt with social problems, presented at least two sides of an issue, took neutral positions on issues, and encouraged students to express their own views in a supportive atmosphere (Ehman, 1969).

In Ehman's (1969) first study, Detroit high school students with the highest levels of political efficacy were the ones who had the highest scores on the Classroom Climate scale, reported the most exposure to controversial issues in their classes, and took the most social studies classes. Additionally, the students in the open-climate classrooms also reported higher levels of political participation, a sense of citizen duty, and lower levels of cynicism than did other students (Ehman, 1969).³ Moreover, for students who experienced a closed classroom climate, one in which teachers did not present multiple views on social problems and students did not feel comfortable expressing their opinions, students reported low levels of political efficacy, participation, and citizen duty. In subsequent small-scale studies of adolescents in different parts of the United States, researchers similarly found positive correlations between an open classroom climate and political efficacy and between an open climate and political interest (Baughman, 1975; Blankenship, 1990; Ehman, 1980b; Hahn, 1991; Harwood, 1991).

Additionally, in the open-climate classrooms that Ehman (1970) observed, teachers and students expressed more value-laden statements, characterized by such words as *should*, *ought*, *good*, or *bad*, than occurred in other classes. Interestingly, students in those classes appeared to become more politically cynical, or less trusting of government officials, over a two-year period. In subsequent studies, researchers similarly found an inverse relationship between open climate and students' level of political trust (Baughman, 1975; Long & Long, 1975; Zevin, 1983). Thus, it appears that when teachers and students make evaluative comments in issues discussions, adolescents may move away from the idealistic trusting view of government officials that is often found among young children to a more realistic, slightly skeptical view of politicians and government officials.

In a later study of classroom climate in nine midwestern high schools, Ehman (1980b) added further insights to an understanding of classroom climate by paying attention to one aspect: the range of views examined or presented. Students who recalled that a wider range of

views was explored in their social studies classes, as compared to students who recalled only one perspective being presented, reported higher levels of both school- and societywide political interest and confidence in their ability to influence decisions (Ehman, 1980b). They were more trusting of others in school and society—although not necessarily of politicians, as the scale used in this study did not specify particular groups in society. Additionally, they were more socially integrated than their peers. Finally, in this study, as in the earlier one in Detroit, students' perception that they were free to express their views in class discussions was the strongest predictor of positive political attitudes at both the school and societal level (Ehman, 1980b).

Other researchers found that adolescent political behaviors, as well as attitudes, were related to classroom climate. For example, students in one study who reported the most open classroom climates had the highest scores on an index of political behaviors (Long & Long, 1975). Those students reported the greatest frequency of discussing political matters with friends and family and following current events in the media. They also were the most involved in student activities, such as student government, clubs, and sports. Additional research on classroom climate related climate to toleration of dissent and support for civil liberties, another area of interest in this study.

Classroom Climate and Support for Free Expression, Dissent, and Civil Liberties

One rationale for students exploring and discussing public policy issues in democratic countries is based on the assumption that by experiencing a model in which ideas are exchanged openly in school, young citizens will come to value dissent, pluralism, and civil liberties that protect diversity of belief in democratic societies. There is some evidence to suggest that may occur, but the prior research in this area is not conclusive.

In one study of California high school students, Grossman (1975/1976) found that students' toleration of dissent and their participation in dissent activities, such as protests, had a very slight positive correlation (.11) with the number of controversial issues classes students had taken. However, no relationship was detectable between toleration of dissent and student perceptions of freedom to express their views in class (correlation coefficient .07). In another study, however, a positive correlation was found between perceptions of an open climate, or what the author called a "participatory" climate and support for rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights portion of the United States Constitution (Baughman, 1975).

Additionally, two researchers using samples in Minnesota found that the use of particular curriculum units in which students explored

issues related to civil liberties and rights for diverse groups was associated with the development of positive attitudes. In one study, students explored the application of abstract constitutional principles to concrete situations by conducting group investigations on topics such as freedom of expression and due process of law (Goldenson, 1978). Students spoke with police, lawyers, members of the American Civil Liberties Union and others in the community to obtain varied perspectives on their topics. At the conclusion of the unit, 20 percent more experimental group students showed attitude changes in support of civil liberties than did students in a comparison group.

Recently, in another experimental study, Minnesota students studied the psychological, sociological, and historical dimensions of tolerance for diverse beliefs. The experimental group students discussed concrete scenarios dealing with freedom of expression in a democratic society, and they were encouraged to express their own views as to what limits if any should be placed on free expression. Most experimental group students moved from mild intolerance to mild tolerance over the treatment period, and the changes persisted four weeks after the conclusion of the treatment. No similar effects were found with the comparison group (Avery et al., 1992).

Country and Gender Differences in Classroom Climate

The large cross-national study of civic education conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) on nationally representative samples obtained some data that relate to classroom climate. The IEA researchers concluded that when students had the opportunity to participate regularly in classroom discussions in which they were encouraged to express their opinions, the students were not only more knowledgeable but more politically interested and less authoritarian than other students (Torney et al., 1975). Conversely, the students who received their civics instruction primarily in the form of lectures, recitation, and patriotic rituals were less politically interested and more authoritarian.

Findings from that cross-national study and from a variety of smaller studies conducted within countries that are part of this study yield some information about possible country differences in classroom climate. Among samples of students in the United States, about 70 percent characterized their social studies classes as ones in which students were encouraged to discuss controversial issues and express diverse views (Ehman, 1969; Torney et al., 1975). Smaller percentages of samples in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands described their classes as having open climates (Almond & Verba, 1963; Torney et al., 1975).

German students of the 1970s described their classes as having more discussion than did the adults who recalled their school experiences in the 1940s and 1950s (Almond & Verba, 1963; Torney et al., 1975).⁴

Although no studies were located that examined a relationship between gender and perceptions of classroom climate, the possibility of such a relationship warranted study. Teachers and researchers often observe that females tend to be more reticent to speak out than males in social studies classroom discussions (Hedrick & Chance, 1977). Such a finding might point to a gender difference in perceived classroom climate.

Summary

Although many social studies educators over the years have believed classrooms ought to model democratic discourse in order to develop democratic citizens, there has been very little comparative research on the role of open inquiry and discussion. Studies conducted more than twenty years ago suggested that perceptions of classroom climate varied by national context. Moreover, in several studies of American adolescents, researchers found small positive correlations between perceptions of an open classroom climate and student political interest, efficacy, and confidence. The relationships between climate and gender, political trust, and free expression or tolerance of dissent were less clear. This five-nation study offered an opportunity to extend those lines of inquiry.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE IN THIS STUDY: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

To assess the extent to which students perceived their classes to be characterized by an open climate, a Classroom Climate scale was included in the questionnaires that were administered to students in Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States in 1986 and 1993.⁵ Four items developed by Walberg and Anderson (1968, cited in Torney et al., 1975) and used by the IEA researchers in their Independence of Opinion Encouraged in Classroom scale formed the basis of the Classroom Climate scale used in this study. In addition one new item was written for the 1986 administration of the questionnaire and used again in 1993, and three more items used by other researchers (Ehman, 1969; 1980b; Hahn, 1991; Harwood, 1991) were added in 1993.⁶ Further, the Political Efficacy, Political Interest, Political Trust, Political Confidence, and Free Expression scales described in chapters 2 and 4 were used to correlate responses to the Classroom Climate scale with political attitudes and attitudes toward free expression.⁷

Country Comparisons

In both 1986 and 1993, sample students from Denmark had the highest means on the Classroom Climate scale. In 1986 sample students from England and the Netherlands had the lowest means, and in 1993 students from the Netherlands once again reported the least open classroom climate (table 5.1). In 1986 the magnitude of the difference

TABLE 5.1
Classroom Climate: Comparing Means of Samples by Country
for Two Time Periods Using Effect Sizes (and ANOVA)

	1986				
	England	Netherlands	United States	Germany	Denmark
Mean	3.46	3.47	3.58	3.69	3.79
(s.d.)	(.54)	(.55)	(.61)	(.57)	(.60)
n	344	249	374	147	312
Netherlands	.02 (.02)	—	—	—	—
United States	.23 (.13)	.19 (.11)	—	—	—
Germany	.42 (.23)*	.40 (.22)*	.18 (.11)	—	—
Denmark	.56 (.34)*	.55 (.32)*	.35 (.21)*	.17 (.10)	—
	1993				
	Netherlands	England	Germany	United States	Denmark
Mean	3.50	3.71	3.71	3.74	3.87
(s.d.)	(.66)	(.54)	(.59)	(.65)	(.57)
n	475	1055	506	1730	305
England	.57 (.21)*	— (.00)	—	—	—
Germany	.57 (.21)*	—	—	—	—
United States	.65 (.24)*	— (.03)	— (.03)	—	—
Denmark	1.00 (.37)*	.43 (.16)*	.44 (.16)*	.35 (.13)*	—

Note: The means of responses are presented in ascending order. Higher means represent agreement that the classroom climate is open. The grid is organized to present all pairwise comparisons and indicates the delta for the magnitude of the effect. ANOVAs are reported in parentheses.

Note: 1986 F (4, 1421) = 18.02; 1993 F (4, 4066) = 20.46, $p = .000$

Note: Cronbach alpha coefficients to indicate internal consistency of the Classroom Climate scale were .58 for the total sample in 1986 and .80 in 1993. The alphas by country in 1993 were: Denmark .80, England .77, Germany .80, Netherlands .80, and United States .85.

*Significant at the .001 level.

between English and Dutch student means was inconsequential; and in 1993 the magnitude of the difference between the means for students from Germany, the United States, and England was also too small to be of any importance.

Similarities, as well as differences, across samples in different countries are evident in examining the frequency distributions for responses to particular items (figures 5.1–5.9). When asked if teachers respected student opinions and encouraged them to express them, between 60 percent and 75 percent of students in all countries at both time periods agreed they did. Only in Germany in 1986 and the Netherlands in 1993 did as many as 20 percent of the students disagree that teachers encouraged them to express their opinions. In addition, when asked if teachers encouraged students to make up their minds about issues, again, approximately 60 percent to 75 percent of students everywhere at both time periods agreed they did.

In response to another similar item, there was a greater range of students' perceptions but with similar relative positions of country samples both times. In 1986 and 1993, 85 percent and 82 percent of the Danish students agreed that teachers encourage them to speak freely and openly. Samples from England, Germany, and the United States, with from 81 percent to 71 percent agreement, also reported at both time periods that teachers try to get students to speak freely. However, at both time periods, only 54 percent of the Dutch students agreed.

In 1986, 93 percent of the German students said that pupils felt free to disagree openly with their teachers, followed by 76 percent to 77 percent agreement for Danish and Dutch samples. In contrast only 64 percent of the American students agreed with that item. In 1993 the item was changed slightly to read, "In our classes pupils feel free to express their opinions even when they are different from the teacher's." The Danish and German students were in the most agreement about that, with 85 to 86 percent agreement. In comparison, only 75 percent of the American students agreed. Comfort in disagreeing with other students yielded similar results. The wording of this item also changed slightly from 1986 to 1993 and at both times the Danish, German, and Dutch students were the more likely to say they would be comfortable disagreeing with other students, whereas English and American students were less likely to agree both in 1986 and 1993. Overall, these adolescent students reported they felt more comfortable disagreeing with the teacher than with other students; the one exception was Dutch students in 1993, who were a little more likely to feel comfortable disagreeing with the other students than with the teacher.

The item that yielded the greatest differences among students within a single country was the one that said, "In our classes we often discuss

FIGURE 5.1a
**Our Teachers Respect Our Opinions and
 Encourage Us to Express Them, 1986**

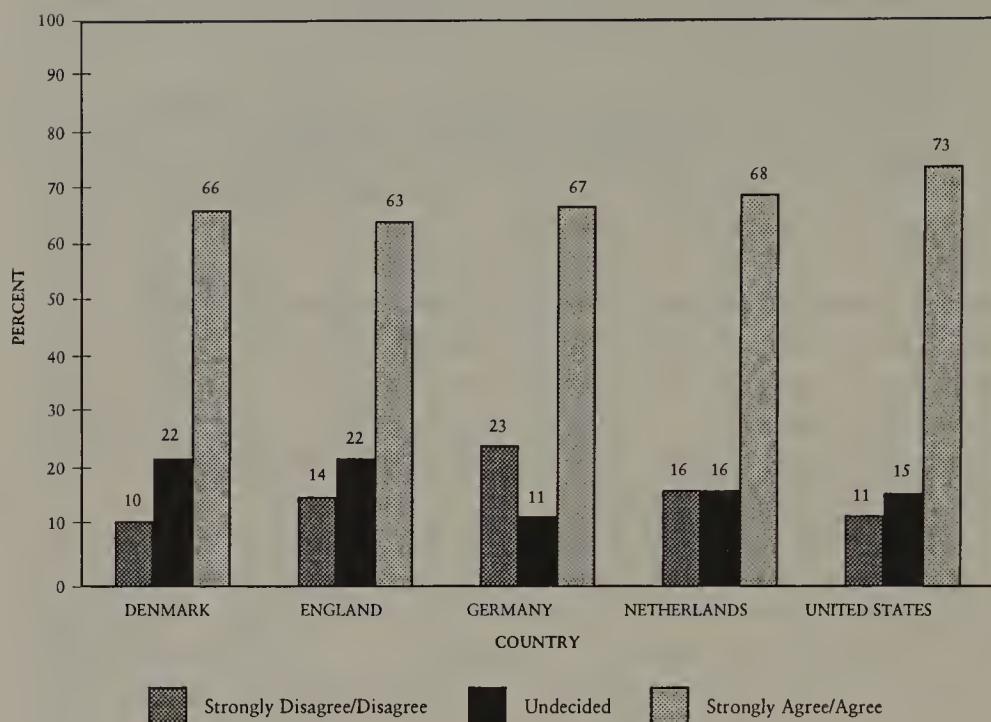


FIGURE 5.1b
**Our Teachers Respect Our Opinions and
 Encourage Us to Express Them, 1993**

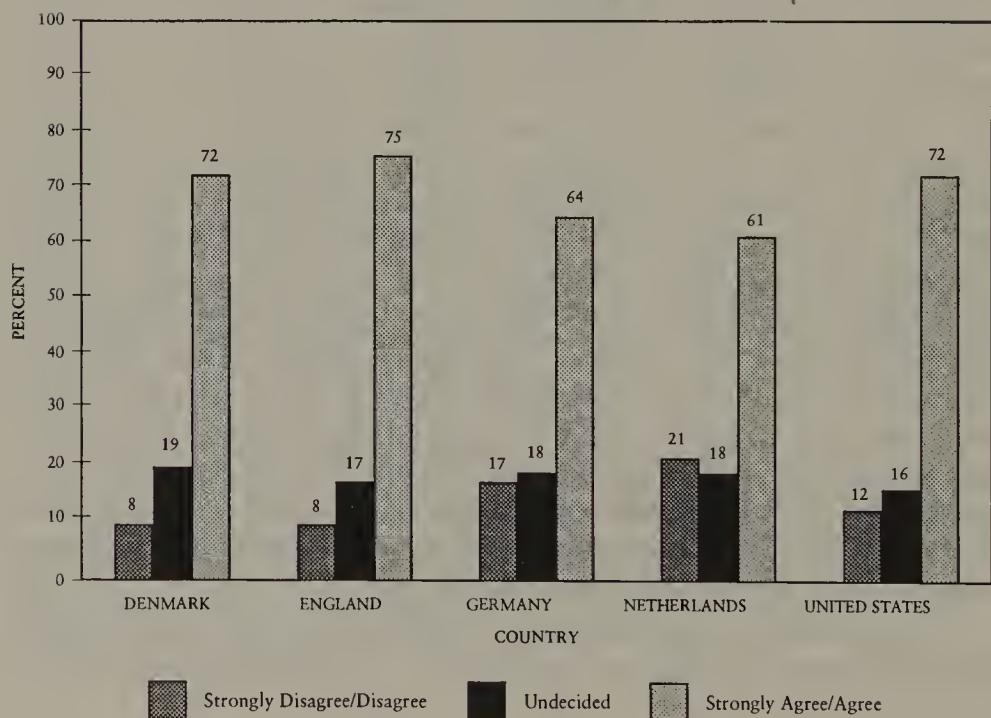


FIGURE 5.2a
In This Class Pupils Are Encouraged to
Make Up Their Own Minds About Issues, 1986

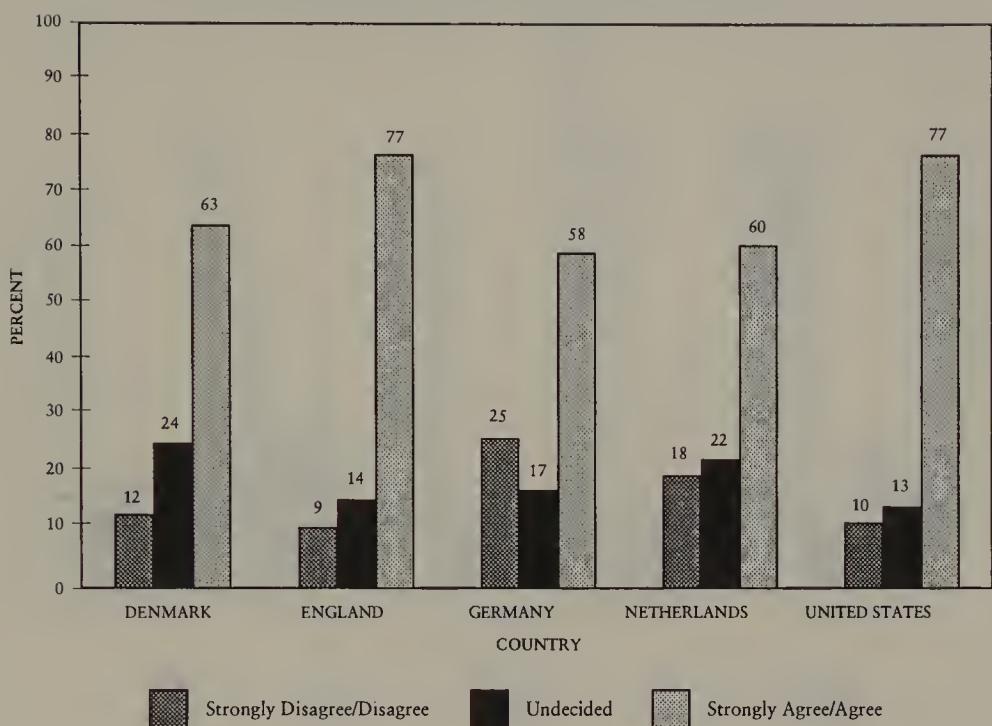


FIGURE 5.2b
In Our Classes Pupils Are Encouraged to
Make Up Their Own Minds About Issues, 1993

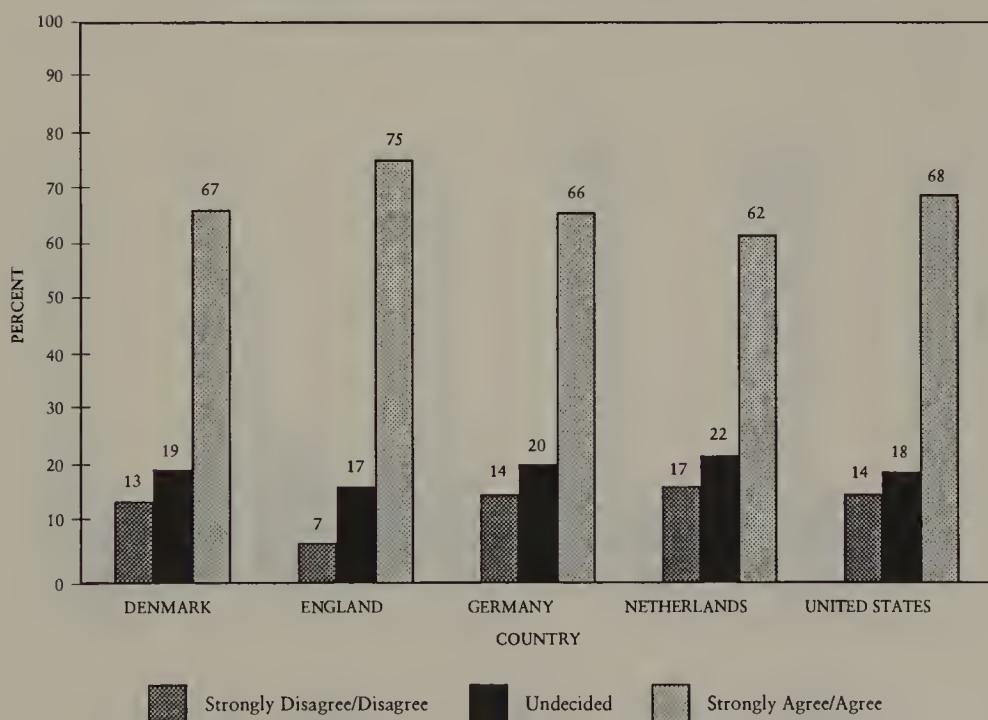


FIGURE 5.3a
**In Our Classes the Teachers Try to
 Get Students to Speak Freely and Openly, 1986**

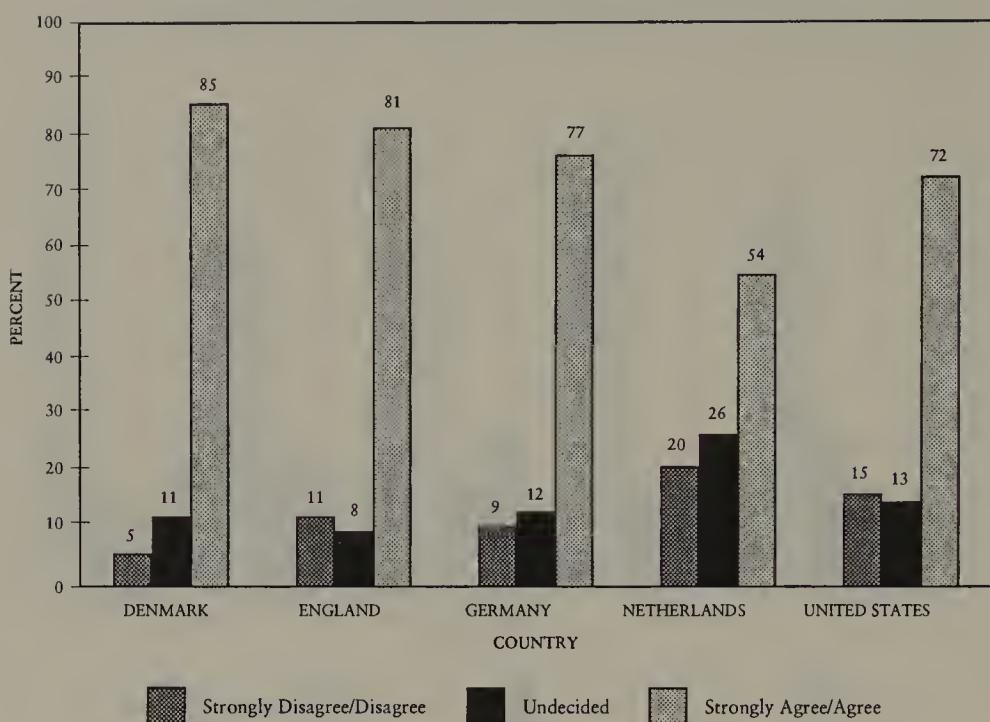


FIGURE 5.3b
**In Our Classes the Teachers Try to
 Get Students to Speak Freely and Openly, 1993**

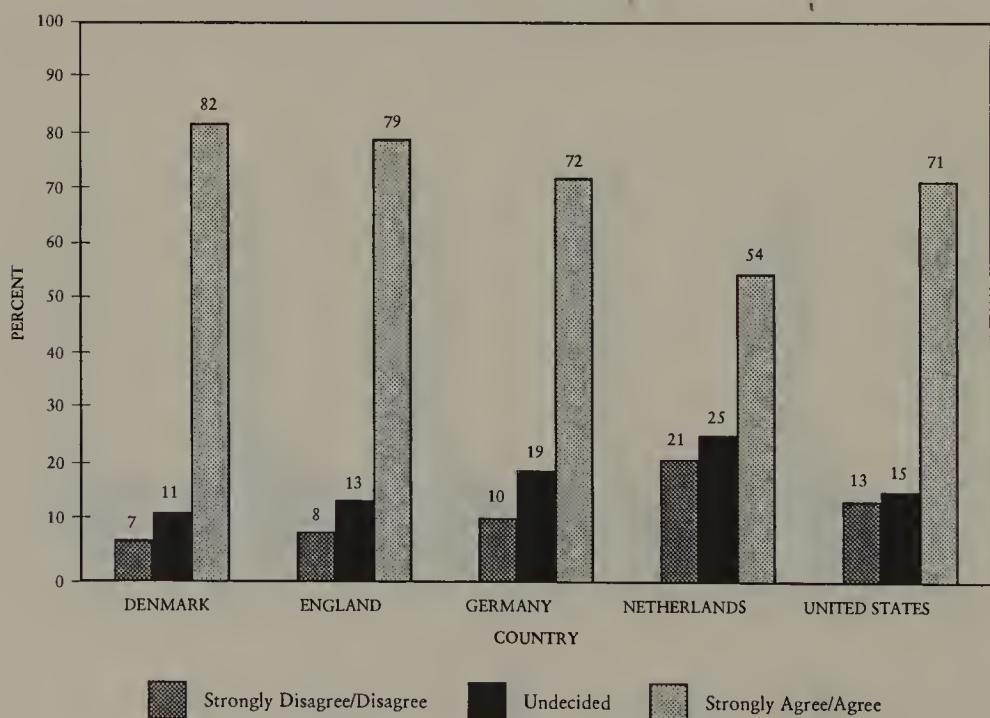


FIGURE 5.4a
Pupils Feel Free to Disagree Openly with Their Teachers, 1986

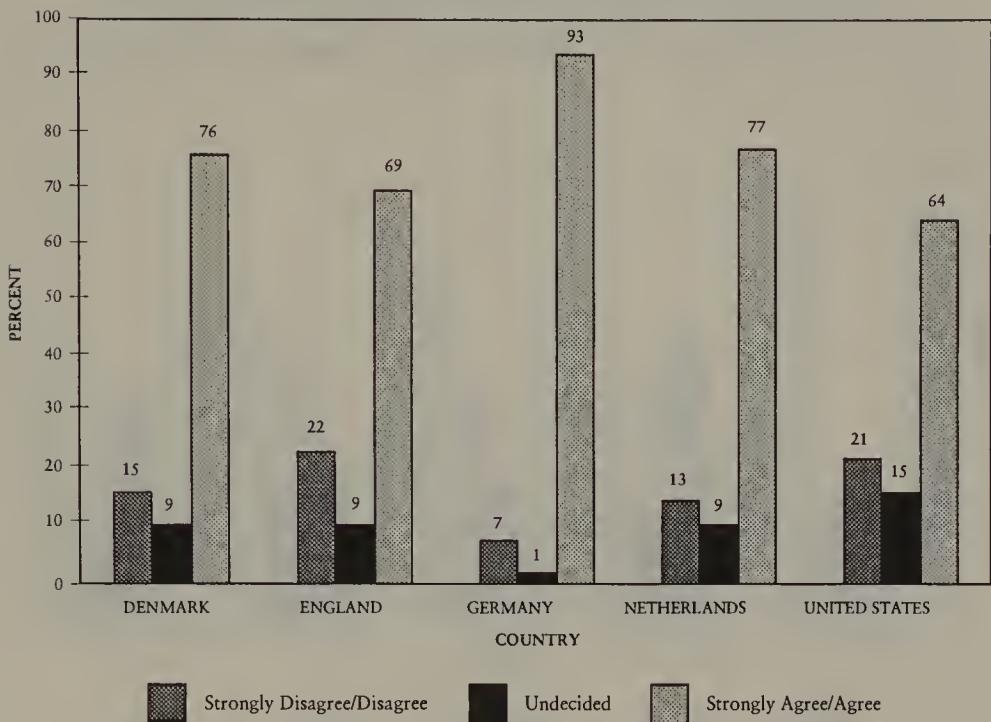


FIGURE 5.4b
In Our Classes Pupils Feel Free to Express Their Opinions Even When They Are Different from the Teacher's, 1993

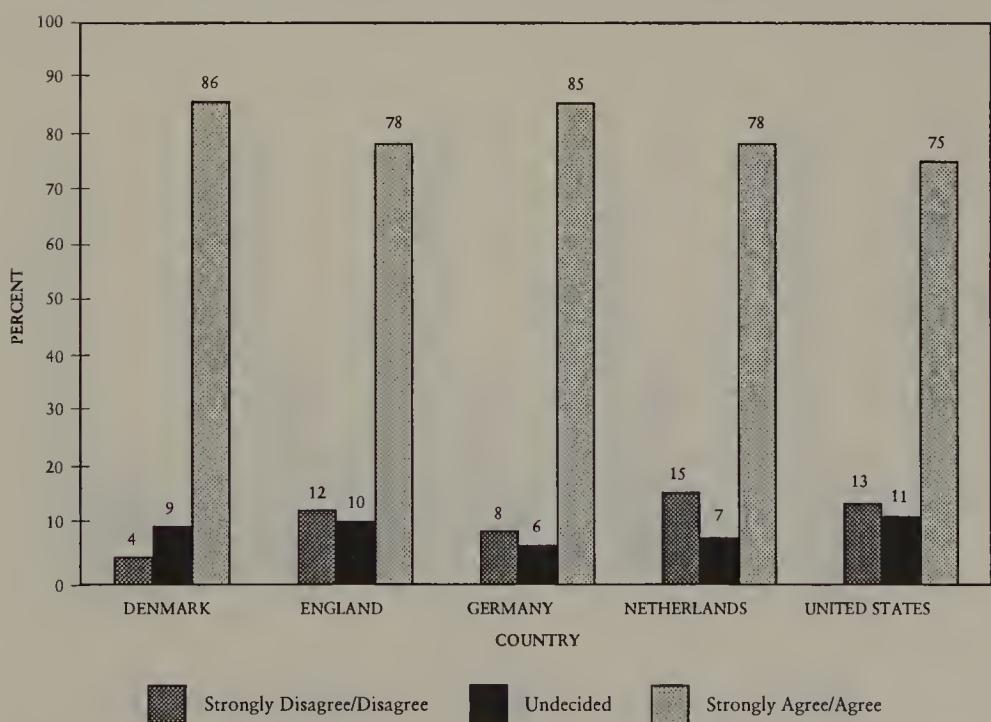


FIGURE 5.5a

When My Opinion Is Different From Most of the Other Students and from the Teacher, I Feel Comfortable, and Am Likely to Speak, 1986

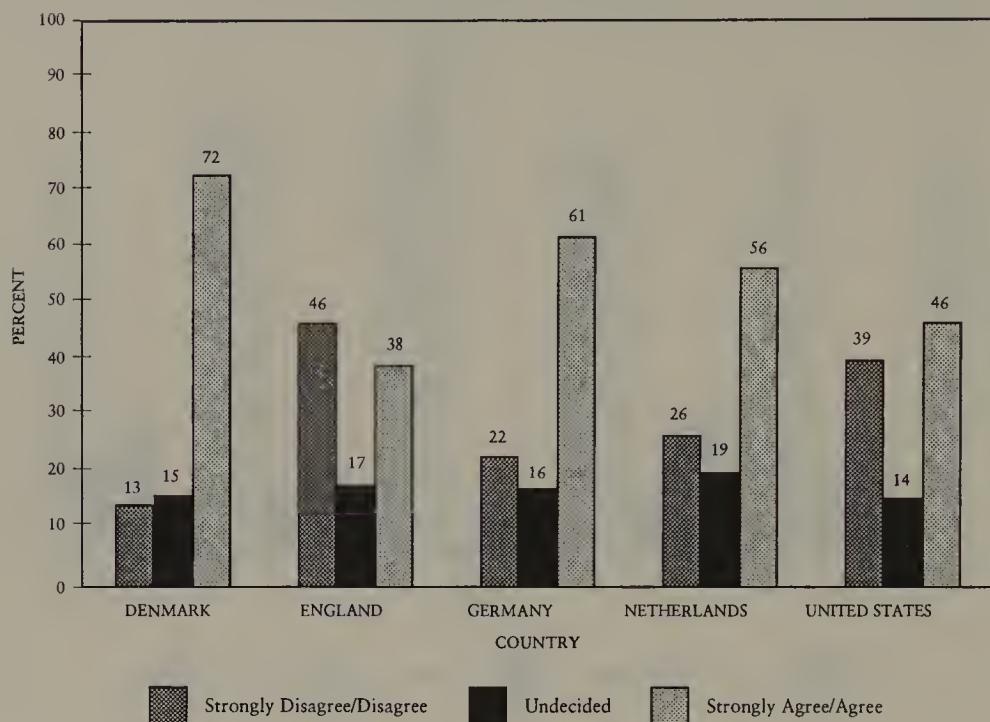


FIGURE 5.5b

I Feel Free to Express My Opinions in My Class Even When I Disagree with Most of the Other Students, 1993

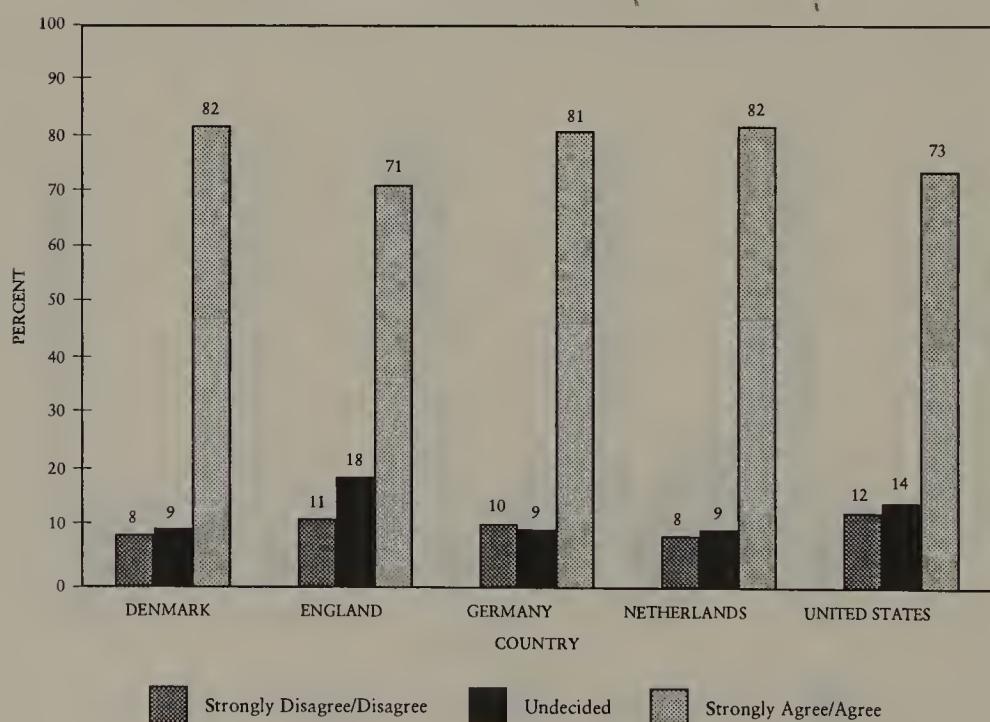


FIGURE 5.6a
**In Our Classes We Often Discuss Controversial
 Political, Economic, and Social Issues, 1986**

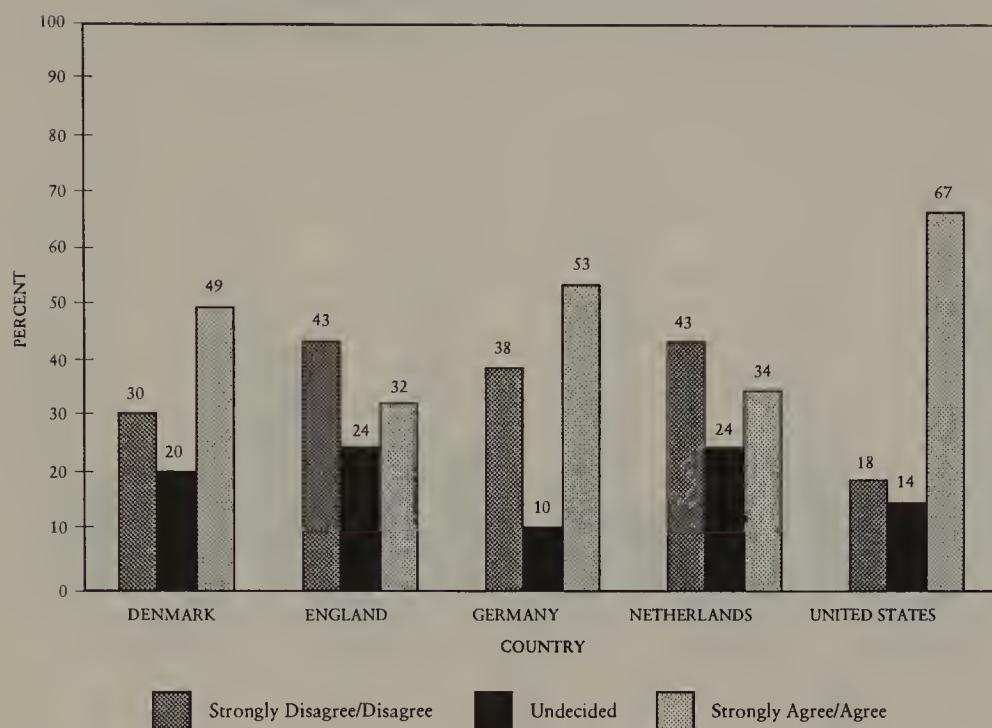


FIGURE 5.6b
**In Our Classes We Often Discuss Controversial
 Political, Economic, and Social Issues, 1993**

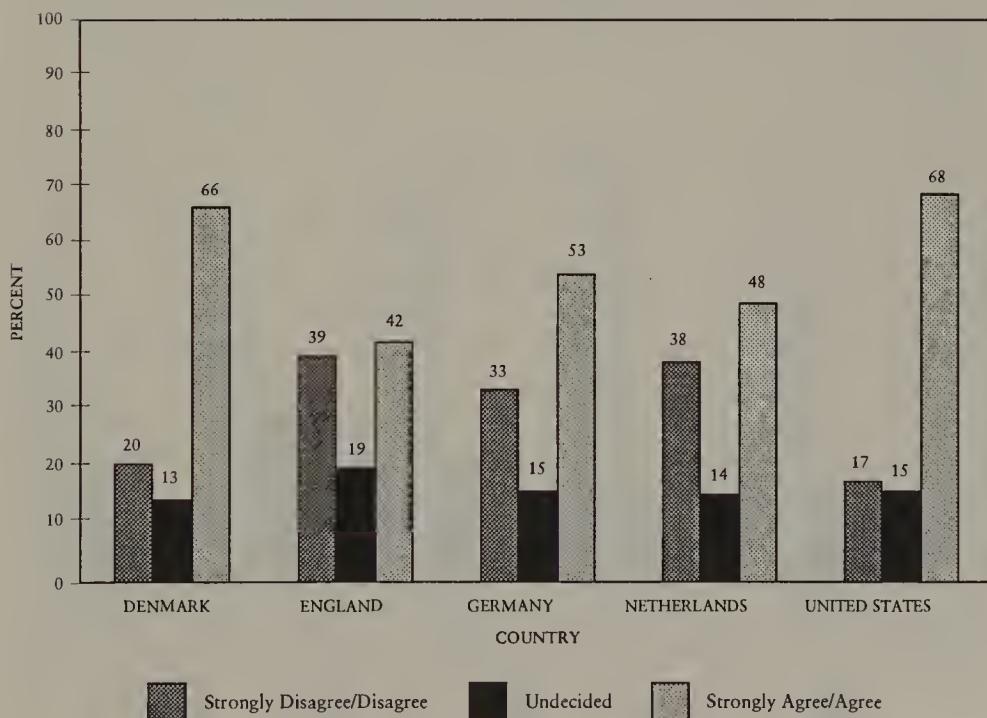


FIGURE 5.7
In Our Classes Teachers Usually Present More Than One Side to an Issue When Explaining Them in Class, 1993

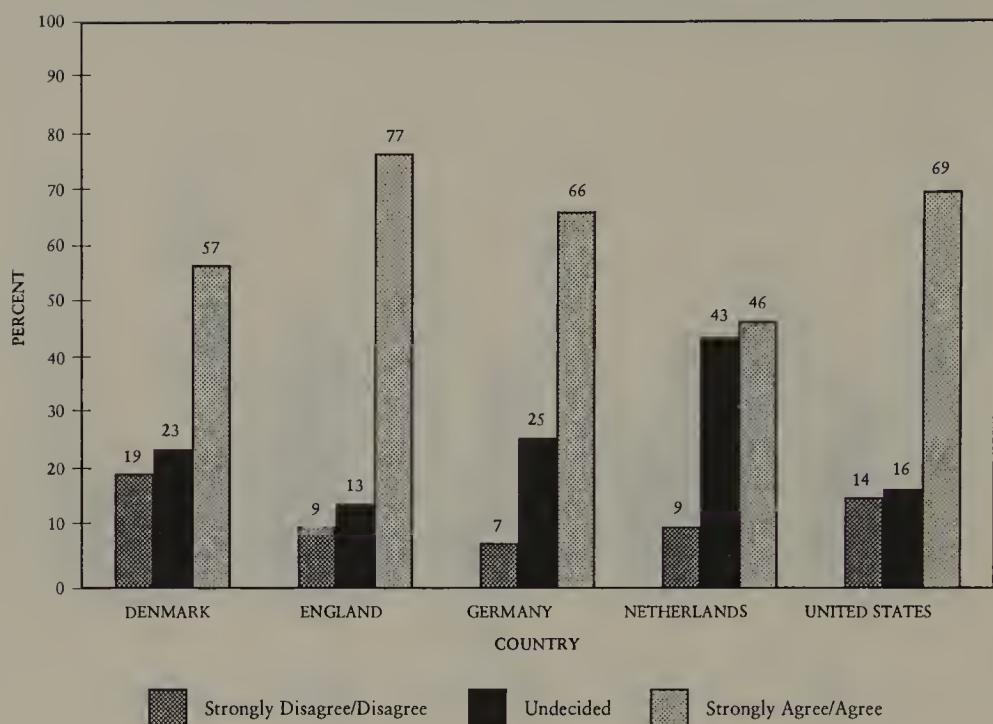


FIGURE 5.8
In Class Discussions We Are Encouraged to Consider Many Points of View on Issues, 1993

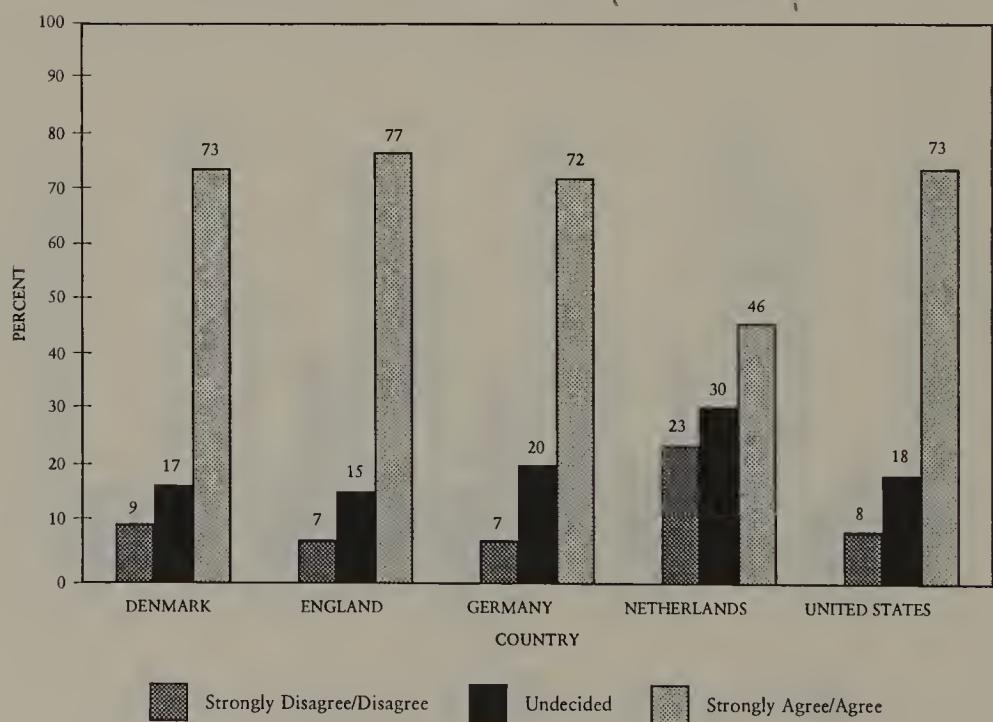
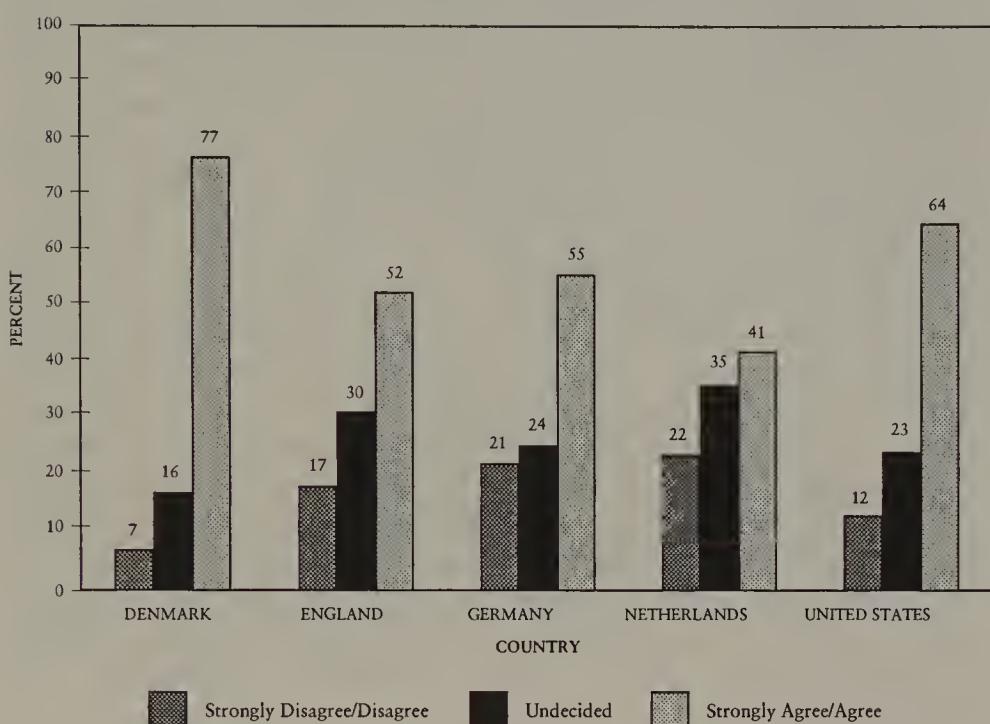


FIGURE 5.9
Our Teachers Are Interested in Students' Ideas About Politics and Government and Like to Hear What We Have to Say, 1993



controversial political, economic, and social issues." At both time periods the largest percentage of students agreeing with the statement—67 to 68 percent—were from the United States, with almost the same agreement from Danish students in 1993. At both time periods students from the Netherlands and England were the most likely to disagree with that statement, with 43 percent disagreement in both country samples in 1986 and 38 to 39 percent disagreement in 1993.

In 1993, three new questions that had not been asked in 1986 were added to the scale. Two asked students whether teachers usually present more than one side on an issue and whether in class discussions students were encouraged to consider many points of view. Interestingly it was the English students who were the most likely to agree with those two statements, with 77 percent agreement. In the Netherlands only 46 percent agreed with those two items, and 43 percent and 30 percent were uncertain. Similarly, the Dutch students were the least likely to agree with the third new item, measuring whether students perceived their teachers to be interested in their ideas about politics and government and liking to hear what students had to say. In contrast, the Danish students were the most likely to agree with that statement, with 77 percent agreement.

Overall, then, Danish students tended to report their classes were open as measured by more items on the Classroom Climate scale than did students in the other countries. However, the American students in this study were more likely than Danish students in 1986 and equally likely in 1993 to say that they discussed controversial issues in their classes. Additionally, English students were more likely than students in the other countries to say that teachers presented more than one side on issues and that in class discussions they explored more than one side to an issue, questions not asked in 1986, which probably explains the differing position of the English means vis-à-vis those of the other samples at the two time periods. American and English students were also at least as likely as Danish students to say that students were encouraged to make up their minds on issues and to express them. German students were as likely as Danish students to say that they were comfortable expressing views that differed from those of the teacher or other students. In response to most of the individual climate items, Dutch students in both 1986 and 1993 were the least likely to perceive an open climate in which they were encouraged to hear and to explore multiple views on controversial issues, and to express their opinions. The one exception was that Dutch students were as likely as Danish and German students to say they were comfortable disagreeing with other students.

A clear difference between Danish and Dutch student perceptions of classroom climate was most evident in comparing school by school responses to the various items on the scale in 1993. First, it was clear that for the classes of one teacher in the Netherlands, Mrs. 'de Vries, student perceptions of classroom climate were as open as that for students in the middle of the range in Danish classes and those responses were so distinct from that of other Dutch classes that her classes will be described separately in reporting qualitative findings. In particular, the mean of responses to the Classroom Climate scale for her students was 4.3 as compared to a mean of 3.4 for students in the other Dutch classes (effect size, 1.67, a large effect). Once the responses from Mrs. de Vries' students were removed, student perceptions for the most closed classroom climates in Denmark were equal to or more open than those for the most open classes in the Netherlands.

In response to the four items that had to do with perceptions that pupils are encouraged to make up their minds on issues, teachers encourage students to express their opinions, teachers try to get students to speak openly and freely, and teachers are interested in students' ideas about politics and government, the lowest percentage agreement among Danish schools (which occurred in *folkeskoler*) was 63 percent, 64 percent, 68 percent, and 65 percent, respectively for

those four items. The highest percentage agreeing to those four items from Dutch schools (once responses from Mrs. de Vries' students were removed) were exactly the same: 63 percent, 64 percent, 68 percent, and 65 percent, respectively. In response to the two items saying that teachers usually present more than one side of an issue and in class discussions students are encouraged to consider many points of view, the Dutch highs (again with the exception of Mrs. de Vries' students' responses) were 49 percent and 61 percent agreement, respectively, for the two items. That compared to Danish lows of 55 percent (when an extreme low for one *folkeskole* of 35 percent agreement to the one item was removed) and 70 percent. In terms of comfort in expressing views that differ from the teacher's, the range for Danish students was 82 percent to 93 percent agreement and for Dutch students was 71 percent to 79 percent agreement with comfort in disagreeing with a teacher. The only area in which there was little difference between students in these two countries had to do with student willingness to express ideas when they were different from those of other students. The range for Danish students was 65 percent (or 81 percent if *folkeskole* responses are removed) to 93 percent and 74 percent to 90 percent for Dutch students.

Gender Comparisons

Responses to the Classroom Climate scale were also examined for possible gender differences. Only in the Netherlands in 1993 was there an effect for gender (table 5.2). The Dutch males perceived the classroom climate to be less open than did the Dutch females (Means, 3.37 and 3.68, effect size .49).⁸ Indeed, the Dutch males had the lowest mean on the Classroom Climate scale of any group. The low means on the Classroom Climate scale reported above for the Dutch students were, thus, primarily attributable to Dutch males' perceptions that their classroom climate was not very open. Unfortunately, the qualitative data shed no light on this matter. Both the Danish males and females reported the most open climate among samples in the different countries.

Climate and Attitudes

Because earlier researchers consistently found modest positive correlations between classroom climate and some political attitudes, those relationships were examined in this study (table 5.3). For the data obtained in both 1986 and 1993, there were small positive correlations between classroom climate and political interest, efficacy, confidence, and trust. However, the correlations between classroom climate and support for free expression at both time periods were too small to be meaningful.

TABLE 5.2
Gender Differences on Classroom Climate Scale

	Males			Females			Effect Size Delta
	Mean	(s.d.)	n	Mean	(s.d.)	n	
All Countries							
1986	3.60	(.65)	713	3.68	(.62)	712	.13
1993	3.67	(.61)	1954	3.77	(.60)	1908	.17
Denmark 1993	3.88	(.62)	109	3.85	(.55)	182	.05
England 1993	3.70	(.55)	568	3.73	(.52)	447	.06
Germany 1993	3.68	(.62)	243	3.75	(.54)	240	.12
Netherlands 1993	3.37	(.63)	233	3.68	(.64)	215	.49
United States 1993	3.71	(.63)	801	3.79	(.65)	824	.13

Note: Higher means indicate perceptions of a more open climate than do lower means.

Note: Cronbach alphas for internal consistency of this scale were .58 for the total sample in 1986 and .80 for the total sample in 1993. Cronbach alphas for samples in particular countries in 1993 were: Denmark .80; England .77; Germany .80; Netherlands .80; and the United States .85.

TABLE 5.3
Correlations between Classroom Climate^a and Political Attitude Scales

	1986 <i>n</i> = 1459	1993 <i>n</i> = 3153
Political Interest ^b	.21	.18
Political Efficacy ^c	.20	.26
Political Confidence ^d	.16	.14
Political Trust ^e	.21	.17
Free Expression ^f	.02	.00

- a. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .58; 1993, .80
- b. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .85; 1993, .88
- c. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .64; 1993, .62
- d. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .69; 1993, .84
- e. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .78; 1993, .78
- f. Cronbach alphas: 1986, .59; 1993, .67

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

As explained earlier, I made visits to schools in the five countries over the period 1985–96, observing classes most similar to “social studies” in the United States and interviewing the teachers of those classes. Further, during the visits in the 1990s, I was able to interview students—sometimes as whole classes, other times in small groups or one-to-one. From the observations and interviews I obtained data that reinforced and extended the quantitative findings on classroom climate. In particular, I observed Danish students to be the most likely to explore public policy issues in an open climate and the Dutch students to be the least likely to have such experiences. Although the overall degree of openness in climate did not seem to vary among the other three countries, there were still distinct patterns and practices that varied among them.

Denmark

As noted in chapter 1, in Denmark all students attend a *folkeskole* through the ninth or tenth grade, remaining with the same group of students and the same class teacher, whom they address by his or her first name, for the nine or ten years.⁹ As one student put it, “its a good thing, because then you can talk to her about if your parents are getting a divorce” (4/1/93). This feature means that Danish *folkeskole* students discuss issues and make decisions in a familiar supportive community. Additionally, *folkeskole* classes held through 1994, when most of the data for this study were collected, were required by law to have a weekly scheduled class meeting in which pupils discussed class and school issues. The *folkeskole* law also required that students have lessons in “contemporary studies” from the seventh through the tenth grades in addition to history, which was taught as a separate subject. In their class meetings the students, in consultation with their teacher, selected the topics they would study in contemporary studies. Consequently, there was much variation in topics studied from one class to another. As of 1995, contemporary studies was replaced by social studies, which was to address issues related to politics, economics, sociology, and international relations. Students continue to select particular topics for study.

At one *folkeskole*, Adrian’s ninth-grade class chose to study the breakup of the Soviet Union, the war in the former Yugoslavia, and racism and neo-Nazism in Europe. In the previous year they studied about Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and the Gulf War; the recent presidential election in the United States; and the Danish referendum on the Maastricht treaty for European Union. Tine’s ninth-grade class in the same school chose none of those foreign policy issues. Rather, from the sixth through

the ninth grades, her class studied environmental and peace issues. The students collected data on pollution in nearby water holes, studied about the rainforest, made and sold badges or buttons to raise money to buy a piece of rainforest, and they made and sold peace games about the rainforest, pollution, and ozone problems. Other classes chose to study video violence and drugs. However, this broad freedom to select such diverse topics for study was restricted somewhat by the 1995 *folkeskole* law, which recommended four fields of study. Additionally, class meetings were no longer required to be held at a scheduled time each week but rather whenever a teacher saw a spontaneous opportunity for decision making. Neither change seemed to change the openness of the classroom climate. Students continued to be involved in selecting topics for science as well as social studies.

The 40 percent of Danish students who continue their schooling beyond the *folkeskole* in a *gymnasium* take a course, *samfudsfag*, or social science, in which they select topics for study within each of the four areas of politics, economics, sociology, and international relations. Consequently, in the classes I visited, students had chosen to study a variety of topics including: the European Union and whether or not Denmark should join; Yugoslavia (with attention to nationalism, minorities, and human rights); the changes in Germany; planned and market economies; changes in the Danish welfare system; the advantages and disadvantages of a high minimum wage; political ideologies, parties and elections; unemployment policies; socialization; education; criminality; and alternate forms of living. Clearly, the content of social science courses focused on public policy issues. Students also said that in their social science, history, and Danish classes they had discussed environmental problems, euthanasia, the death penalty, smoking, and genetic engineering—issues that they identified as controversial and ones that were of concern to them. Moreover, social science is not the only subject in which students are involved in selecting topics. At one *gymnasium* students said they chose to study: the French Revolution in history, football [soccer] in sports, environmental chemistry in chemistry, and the novels they read in English class. Indeed mathematics and physics were the only courses in which they said they had no choice of subject matter.

The national law for Danish *gymnasier* requires students to conduct at least one group investigation in each of the three years they are in the school. In the first year students do a project in their Danish class and in the second year, in history. In the third and final year they conduct a project in a subject they are taking at a high level (five lessons per week) for their written and oral *gymnasium*-leaving examination. For that reason, the third-year high-level social science classes that I observed were

conducting group investigations. In one class the inquiry projects were in the sociology area and focused on the concept of 'socialization'. One group was conducting a poll at their school and at another school in the town to assess differences in socialization at the two schools. In another class, which also chose to do their projects in sociology, some students investigated youth groups, and others looked into issues of abused children. Another class decided to do their projects in the politics area. Various groups investigated different political parties giving attention to changes over time, a comparison of the backgrounds of MPs and their supporters, and party positions toward recent school laws. In one class that decided to do their projects on international issues, topics that were the focus for various groups' investigation were: institutions and problems in the European Union, the future of NATO, a comparison of using United Nations forces or undertaking unilateral actions, and the effect on Denmark of other Scandinavian countries joining or not joining the European Union (in Danish, *EF*).

In one of Henriette's classes, all of the group projects focused on the upcoming second referendum on Denmark's possible entry into the EF. Student groups, sitting comfortably in the multipurpose commons area where they could smoke (a policy set by students), were discussing how they would collect their data. The focus of the various groups was on the treatment of the issue by different newspapers, the difference between the original treaty and the revised Edinburgh version, and attitudes of people in their community toward the EF. When I observed another teacher at the same school giving directions to her class in preparation for their projects, she explained that students were to include an introduction, history of the issue, and a question or problem statement, an analysis of the problem and, then, finally, to give their own assessment based on those factors. Students were to follow established procedures for notes, quotations, and references. Teachers at all of the schools told me that because the libraries were limited in their resources, the students obtained the information for their social science projects from articles the teacher located, from the local *Kommune* library, and from surveys conducted by the students themselves.

Although students said they were comfortable expressing their views, it should be noted that the primary purpose of the projects, class discussion of texts, and questions in oral and written exams was to give Danish students practice in using an analytic social science method, rather than to develop a position on an issue. As one teacher, Jonas, explained, "You should be able to give arguments for each of several positions and be able to critique them all." He would not ask for students' "personal moral positions," especially not on an examination, "because that is not social science" (4/22/96).

Students who enroll in *HF* programs or commercial schools rather than *gymnasier* also have lessons in social science in which they cover the four broad areas of sociology, politics, economics, and international relations. If students select social science for six lessons a week (higher level) in an *HF* program they also conduct a social science project. However, if they do not select social science at the higher level, they need not undertake a project.

While visiting both *gymnasium* and *HF* programs, I had many opportunities to observe lessons on days when students were not engaged in project work. At such times, the teacher often had photocopied an article for review or discussion. I observed several classes in both social science and history during which the teacher did most of the talking, periodically inserting questions for brief student responses. Important points were emphasized by the teacher, who would write on the board key phrases, which the students would record in their notes. I also observed numerous classes in which students were reviewing written materials in twos or small groups or during which the class was engaged in a teacher led discussion of an article.

In one *HF* class, students were discussing whether there should be government policies to control the balance of payments. In a *gymnasium* class students had seen a video on various alternatives to deal with unemployment. During the forty-five-minute discussion, every student spoke, usually elaborating at length. The teacher wrote the students' main points on the board, categorizing the points into advantages and disadvantages of each policy and adding further information (3/30/93). Later that day, in another class where students were telling me about the issues they were interested in and had discussed in school, Katrina said,

I hear that in other European schools and in American schools, students just study the cold facts—objective. They don't speak out so much. We put up our own opinion. I think Danish students discuss international issues more than in other countries. I think we get more information, like about the EF, from school and in some ways we are brought up like that. Our parents want us to have our own opinion." (3/30/93)

At two *gymnasier*, students told me that the whole school attended a panel presentation in the commons area where they heard speakers from different political parties present arguments for and against Denmark joining the European Union. There was much interest, as the country was deeply divided on the issue and most of the second- and third-year students were old enough to vote in the referendum. When I commented to a group of three teachers that I noticed in discussions, on essays, and in projects, students often present several sides of an issue

and then express their own view and give reasons, Karin laughed and said, "Well, they know they have to do that to get a good mark. It's the Danish system" (3/29/93). Teacher educators at a *seminarium* (teacher training college) for *folkeskole* teachers explained to me that the practice of examining at least two sides on any issue and expecting students to form an opinion came into fashion, as did project work, in the 1960s and is used throughout teacher training programs. Oluf explained: "and it is part of the whole culture. We Danes aren't great believers; we are great doubters, like Hamlet, therefore, when we hear something we always want to know what will be the arguments against that" (3/31/93).

In my interview with Henriette, the gymnasium teacher whose class I observed working in groups, she explained,

We're supposed to use controversial issues as a point of departure, work from the issue to the topic, such as theories of democracy. For example, if there is a controversy in a newspaper article on welfare policies, start with that and then go to the basis of the welfare state and ask questions like why have a system with a 50 percent tax. (11/31/94)

Henriette said she thought that most Danish social science teachers had internalized that approach. Most of them were students themselves during the youth revolts in the sixties and early seventies, and consequently, Henriette thought, they valued the inductive methods of doing topic work and group investigations. She further explained that the *gymnasium* law says that teachers must teach in a "pluralistic way," presenting many sides. If the students think the teacher is just indoctrinating students into the teacher's point of view, they can complain, and inspectors for the ministry will observe classes. However, she was not aware of that ever happening. Henriette said it was easy to present multiple views on issues in Denmark because there were many political parties with different views, and students regularly see the parties working through differences to form policies (11/31/94).

With so much attention to controversial public policy issues, exploration of alternative views, and student expression of opinion, it is not surprising that Danish students reported on the average a more open climate than did students in other countries. However, one wonders why 100 percent of the students were not in agreement on all items. Several factors may account for that. First, because the experience in *folkeskoler* varied by the interests of the teachers and students, in two *folkeskoler* 26 percent and 42 percent of the students said they did not discuss controversial political, economic, and social issues. Even among the *gymnasium* students, there was some variation: only 60 percent of students at one school said they often discuss issues, while 87 percent of students in

another school said they did so. From my observations, it was clear that some teachers used a presentation and recitation approach more than discussion and even those who encouraged discussions still had students take notes on their presentations on some days.

In all of the Danish schools from 80 percent to 90 percent of the students said that they were encouraged to speak openly and freely and that they felt comfortable expressing their views even when they differed from the teacher's. In interviews no Danish students ever said they were uncomfortable expressing their views. Additionally, on the questionnaires more than 70 percent of the Danish students, regardless of school, said that they were encouraged to consider many points of view on issues; fewer said that teachers usually present more than one side of an issue when explaining them in class, possibly because multiple views often come from student investigation and discussion, rather than from teacher presentation.

Finally, some of what may be occurring is something like a "rising tide of expectations." One Danish young woman who had attended an American high school for a year and an English state school for several weeks said, "about student input being valued, compared to my experience in schools in other countries, it is, but when I'm in the middle of it, it doesn't feel like that" (12/1/94). Danish students who participate in class decision making through their school years, who regularly do group project work and select topics for study, and who expect to express their opinions in the family and in school, are not totally satisfied that they have enough opportunities to express their views on controversial public policy issues. Much of what they study in history, mathematics, and other subjects does not relate to such issues, and even the topics they study in social science are not all perceived by the students to be very controversial. Further, much of Danish social science instruction, like that in other countries, is spent reviewing factual knowledge for exams, but unlike other countries, the knowledge is to be used in oral and written exams to analyze public policy dilemmas. Finally, when I asked Danish students what issues interested them, what issues were controversial, and then if they talked about those issues in school, all agreed that the issues that interested them, that were controversial, and that were discussed were the same sets of issues. Perhaps the proportion of school time spent in such discussions was less than the students would have considered ideal; however, it was greater than that experienced by students in the other countries in this study.

The experience of most Danish students tends to be quite different particularly from that of most Dutch students in the study with regard to classroom climate, as was noted from the quantitative analysis. That will become even more apparent from the qualitative data.

The Netherlands

In studies of representative samples of Dutch secondary school students, the majority of students say they are interested in issues related to community, pollution, discrimination, unemployment, foreign aid, and foreigners in the Netherlands (Dekker & Portengen, 1995), but the extent to which such subjects are investigated in school varies. The instructional units that Dutch students study in the optional course in *maatschappijleer* as an examination subject do relate to social issues. The same topics are addressed—but in less depth—in the compulsory non-examination course in some schools. However, there is no requirement that any particular topic or issue be covered in the required course. Although one teacher, Mr. de Witt, said that the goal of the course at his school was "to teach students a way of thinking about social and political problems" (2/23/95), it was possible that other teachers and schools did not emphasize the problematic nature of social issues. Indeed, the way in which *maatschappijleer* classes were conducted in most of the Dutch schools I observed in 1986, 1993, and 1995 indicated that students tended neither to examine alternative public policy positions nor to express their views in a model of democratic discourse.

Over the ten-year period of the study, the subject *maatschappijleer* moved from an optional subject with a somewhat experimental status to a required subject in the national curriculum for all schools, whether they were vocational or university oriented. Further, by 1993, *maatschappijleer* could be taken at an advanced level for the national examination for secondary school completion. Over the period of the study, topics for the examination course changed slightly, but they all touched upon social issues. Titles of instructional units that were used by classes in the study were: mass media, criminality, pollution, refugees, socialization or social relationships (including marriage and sexuality), technology and society (including computers and gene manipulation), political decision making, and international relations.

The curriculum at vocational schools, lower- and middle-level secondary schools (*vbo*, *mavo*), and senior-level general secondary and university-preparatory schools (*havo*, *vwo*) varied slightly in terms of the topics that might be treated in a given year. Nevertheless, I observed general trends across the varied Dutch schools in the study. Students in the non-examined compulsory *maatschappijleer* class had either one lesson a week for two years or two lessons a week for one year. The minority who took the examination subject had four lessons a week for two years. Additionally, all students had lessons in history, geography, and religion. One or two specialist teachers at a school usually taught *maatschappijleer* to all of the students in the school, resulting in a

teacher having more than two hundred students for only two lessons a week—a far cry from the Danish *folkeskole* teacher who had spent nine years with a class of sixteen students.

In most of the Dutch schools I visited students sat at individual desks or tables for two students facing forward. The exceptions to this trend were Mrs. de Vries' class and those in the academic *vwo* that prepared students for university entrance; in those classes students sat at tables in the shape of a horseshoe, with the opening facing the teacher.

Almost all of the *maatschappijleer* classes I visited in the Netherlands were teacher-led reviews of text materials. At a junior general secondary school (*vbo/mavo*) and an agricultural school, where students were fourteen to sixteen years old, teachers had students read aloud paragraphs from paperback texts. The teachers inserted comprehension questions and elaborated on points between paragraphs. Topics dealt with questions about the meaning of life, relationships and sexuality, addictions, and mass media. In classes for students over age sixteen at other schools, teachers also asked comprehension questions and elaborated on points made in texts and in videos on such topics as news production, computer technology, political parties, and fascism. A fifteen-year-old boy at one agricultural school verified my observations: "We have one lesson a week. Most days, like today, we read something from the booklet and answer the teacher's questions. Then at the end we see part of a video. We had drugs, alcohol, sex, and now, fascism" (2/24/95).

I had the experience of visiting Mr. de Witt's class at the university-preparatory school several times over the ten-year period. In 1993 I had an acute *déjà vu* experience of my 1986 visit. While Mr. de Witt sat at the front desk, talking on for the full hour, facing students sitting at tables in a horseshoe shape, pausing only one or two times in each class to ask comprehension questions, some students unobtrusively read books for other classes, a few worked surreptitiously on assignments for other classes and pretended to be paying attention, while others appeared to be daydreaming and some stifled yawns. The teacher seemed to be a very nice man who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about his subject. There was no open rebellion in the classes I saw in either 1986 or 1993. The students and the topics differed on the two occasions—but not the classroom or its climate. In an interview in 1995, Mr. de Witt described himself as "a very traditional teacher. I like to talk and talk" (2/23/95). But, he explained, the school was trying a more student-centered approach to develop self-reliance—an emphasis that was being promoted by the current Government. Consequently, in 1995 Mr. de Witt and other teachers in the school were trying a new approach that was extended to more classes in 1996: for four lessons

students worked individually through sections of the paperback textbook and wrote answers to questions at the end. Then during every fifth lesson the teacher would review the answers with them. Although that meant that the teacher was not lecturing as he had previously, neither were students researching or investigating alternative positions on issues as I observed in classrooms in other countries. They were still working their way through a body of factual information about social issues for the purpose of coming up with correct responses to questions in the text, ones asked by the teacher, or ones that might be asked on an examination.¹⁰ When I asked students at the school if they expressed their opinions much in class, one replied, "the teacher tries to get students to express their views but no one says anything because the class is too big and we are shy" (2/23/95).

As noted earlier, on the questionnaires, students in Mrs. de Vries' classes in 1993 reported a distinctly more open climate than did students in the other Dutch classes (means 4.3, 3.4, effect size 1.67).¹¹ That difference was clearly evident in observations and in further interviews with students. Mrs. de Vries began each new topic with a "discussion lesson." With lively gestures, facial expressions, and voice inflection, she told stories in a humorous and dramatic style, raised provocative questions, or used an activity to encourage students to express their views on an issue. During such a lesson, most of the students talked, with some elaborating extensively on their positions. No one took notes. In discussions of the death penalty, positive discrimination (affirmative action), and justice for different social classes, all students appeared attentive throughout the forty-five-minute class periods I observed. On the second day of a topic, Mrs. de Vries gave students something to read and asked them comprehension and opinion questions. For the third lesson on a topic, she dictated main ideas for the students to write down as notes, and in the fourth lesson she usually gave a test.¹²

Mrs. de Vries provided some variety by bringing in speakers, showing videos, and, in some cases, taking the class on field trips, such as to a court and to a television station. At the culmination of a unit on human rights, some students wrote to the president of the United States expressing their views on capital punishment, other students wrote to the Turkish government about the treatment of the Kurds, and yet others wrote to the government of Nicaragua. After the unit on racism, each student wrote a personal statement committing herself or himself not to be a racist or to discriminate, and some students undertook research in another school that had some racial problems. The student population at Mrs. de Vries' school was diverse, including students of many nationalities, some of whom experienced racism, hostile treatment toward Kurds in Turkey, positive discrimination in the Netherlands, and varied

policies toward capital punishment in different countries. The classroom climate was clearly one in which students were encouraged to confront issues that were controversial to them and the wider society and to express their views on public policies that affect those issues. The teacher's practices reflected her conviction that, in her own words, "I want students to hear different opinions and I want them to have their own opinions" (2/26/93). However, it was probably her use of humor and interesting examples that conveyed a supportive, inclusive environment even when the teacher did most of the talking.

At other Dutch schools in the study only students over sixteen years old at the senior level general/pre-university school and the upper agricultural school conducted investigations into social and political issues, and the emphasis was more on reporting information than on developing a position from among alternatives. As part of the final examination to complete the *maatschappijleer* course at those two schools, the students were to write a report in which they described a problem, the people involved, the laws related to the problem, where the decisions were to be made, some possible solutions, and several possibilities for action. Students had not had prior experience in conducting independent research before they undertook this one project at the completion of their secondary schooling. One teacher told me that the purpose was for students to see that many problems are not easy to solve because people have different views (2/24/95). At the pre-university school where students have an oral examination on their project, the teacher said that students were not expected to give their opinions in the paper but they might be asked to do so in the oral exam. Student reports at his school focused on international issues or how at least two countries were dealing with the same issue. Topics that were researched included Dutch and Irish policies on abortion, euthanasia in the Netherlands and the United States, gypsies in Europe, pollution of the Rhine River, and extreme right-wing parties in Europe. Students at the agricultural school were doing their reports on problems of the environment, manure, acid rain, population growth in the Netherlands, and a recent bus strike. Students tended to write to organizations for information and a few went to municipal libraries, rather than using a school library as students do in the United States or conducting surveys as the Danish students do.

Although the emphasis in most *maatschappijleer* classes was not on exploring the controversial nature of questions, teachers did not deliberately avoid controversy; it simply was not the emphasis of the curriculum or the dominant instructional approaches. Mr. de Witt emphatically said that he would not avoid any issues, but he explained that he would be careful in how he handled some issues. For example, when he realized some boys in one of his classes were sympathetic to extreme

right-wing racist organizations, he let the students do their report on the groups but he guided them to consider arguments against the groups as well as in support of them. In talking about political parties, he raised with students the question of whether a conservative religious political party that did not permit women to be members and which advocated abolishing the vote for women should be considered anti-democratic and consequently banned from Parliament. Further, when Mr. de Witt's classes planned their visit to the national Parliament, the students wanted to talk to representatives of right-wing groups to try to reason with them. However, when the other parties found out that the students would be talking to the extreme right, they refused to meet with the students. That upset the students, and they wrote letters of protest, with Mr. de Witt's support. At another time, when students missed school to participate in a student demonstration against government cuts in grants for students over eighteen years old, students were simply asked to bring notes saying the parents were aware that their children had taken such action. Clearly, Mr. de Witt did not try to restrict study to the dry "structure and function" of political bodies. But for the most part, he, like the other Dutch teachers I observed, followed the prescribed topics for the course and did not regularly bring current events to the attention of students. Indeed, the only current event that any students mentioned discussing in their *maatschappijleer* class was a local bus strike that hindered some students getting to school.

Overall, then, I found that in the curriculum of some *maatschappijleer* classes in the Netherlands students were given information about social and political issues. However, there was no requirement that they do so. Before completing their secondary schooling, students in some, but not all, schools conducted independent research on one social issue in which they identified alternative solutions to a problem. However, Dutch students in this study were far less likely than students in Denmark to develop and express their own views on public policy issues that were in the news and that divided citizens of the day. The differing experiences reflect the different names of the course; in the Netherlands "study of society," and in Denmark social science, contemporary studies, or social studies. Moreover, the nonconfrontational style of Dutch classrooms is consistent with the cultural context in which each person is entitled to his or her own beliefs but should not try to convert others to those beliefs. In contrast, in Denmark the course and the teachers' view of how best to teach it grew out of the student activism of the 1960s.

Student perceptions of classroom climate in the other three countries in this study fell between the two extremes of the Danish and Dutch experiences. Moreover, there was little difference among the three coun-

try samples in terms of overall degrees of openness as identified in the quantitative analysis. However, observations and interviews revealed characteristic patterns for each country in terms of typical classroom climates.

Germany

Because Germany has a federal system with responsibility for education centered at the *Land* (state) level, there is some variation in the form and content of social studies or social science education from one Land to another. Nevertheless, as I visited schools in different parts of the country during the years 1986, 1993, and 1995, characteristic patterns were evident related to classroom climate. In secondary level I (grades five through ten, ages eleven to sixteen), students take a course in social studies; this may be integrated with history and geography or taught separately. For example, Secondary I students studying *Gesellschaftslehre* (teaching about society) spend part of the year in each geography, history, and social studies (a mixture of some politics, economics, sociology, and current affairs) for three lessons a week. Other Secondary I students have lessons in *Sozialkunde* (civics), which includes politics, economics, sociology, and current affairs; they have separate lessons in history and geography. Tenth-grade students at one school told me they had studied social behavior, political parties, and the law in *Sozialkunde*. In their separate history class, they studied about how Germany moved from democracy in the Weimar Republic to dictatorship under Hitler and the National Socialists. At another school, tenth-grade students said that in *Gesellschaftslehre* they had studied the two world wars and the differences in the economic systems of the United States and Russia before 1990.

German students who stay in school past age sixteen to prepare for the *Abitur* (secondary school leaving exam required for university entrance) in Secondary II have separate courses in history, geography, and *Gemeinschaftskunde* (GK; social science), which includes politics, economics, sociology, and international relations. The content is similar to that of the social science course that Danish students take. And similar to students in both Denmark and the Netherlands, German students take separate history and geography courses. The emphasis of the German social science course tends to be more on information and theoretical perspectives and less on the social science research process and independent student investigation than is the case in the Danish course. At one Secondary II school, in GK students studied: Germany's relations with eastern Europe, the West and the Third World, political parties and participation, theories of democracy, and economic problems. At another

Secondary II school, students said in GK they had learned about developing countries, the parliamentary system, the legal system, the political directions of different newspapers, and minorities in Germany and other countries.

Regardless of the title of the course or the school, the pattern of instruction in the German classes I observed varied little. Students wearing jeans and sweaters sat at tables that formed a horseshoe, and their teacher asked them questions about a text they had read the night before. The text selection might be from a paperback *Sozialkunde* book, a newspaper article, or a photocopied article that the teacher had located in a magazine or a book. In Secondary II history classes, some of the texts were primary sources in hardback textbooks that had line numbers next to them so that students could refer to particular evidence in the text during the recitation. In response to the teacher's questions, German students raise their index finger and click their fingers if they want to be recognized to give an answer or express an opinion. During the lesson, the teacher writes key words on the board for emphasis and elaborates on points that he or she wants the students to understand. In these teacher-led recitations, a few students tend to answer most of the questions—often elaborating at length. There is little student-to-student interaction. The tone is serious, yet relaxed. I observed lessons that followed this format in which the topic for “discussion” or recitation was Athenian democracy, Napoleon’s movements, events during the Cold War, the European Union, political parties in Parliament, the role of the United Nations in Bosnia, marginal social groups in Germany, and a proposed *Autobahn* that would run through nearby fields. When I asked students what a typical day in their class would look like, they repeatedly said something like, “same as today, read from a text and talk” (6/13/95).

A second pattern that I often observed in German classes in different subjects and in different states—but more frequently in Secondary I classes than above tenth grade—was the teacher asking students to identify arguments for and against (or advantages and disadvantages of) a particular policy and explain their opinion on the issue, citing reasons. In one class I observed when students gave the advantages and disadvantages of lowering the driving age in Germany from eighteen to sixteen, they went to the board and wrote their reason under one of the two lists (advantages/disadvantages). Teachers and students told me about many other discussions they had following that format—not only in social studies and history classes, but also in German, English, and religion or ethics classes. Topics that were analyzed and discussed in this manner included: changes in Germany’s asylum law, the unification of East Germany and West Germany, prohibition of extremist groups, direct election of may-

ors, changes in the abortion law (para. 218 in the West to correspond to the more liberal policy in the East), gene manipulation, animal use in medical experiments and cosmetic testing, and tax increases to pay for garbage removal. In one *Sozialkunde* book there were several lessons with pictures or drawings of people with accompanying "bubbles" in which they gave their arguments for or against a policy. Additionally, in an English textbook, there was a box listing the arguments for and against having national parks like those in the United States.

One lesson that I observed in Mrs. Meyer's tenth-grade class is typical of others I observed in the German schools I visited.

TEACHER. Do you think the SPD proposal [reported in the morning's newspaper] to vote in local elections and for Lower Saxony Parliament at sixteen is a good idea? What are the advantages? What could be said against this idea in your opinion? In groups of two and three find as many arguments as you can for and against.

[Students work in groups for about fifteen minutes.]

TEACHER. Now those of you who are for this idea go sit by the windows, if you are against go to the other side, if not sure, sit in the middle.

[The students group themselves thus: two boys for, two girls undecided, and the rest of the class against. On the board, the teacher writes: "Reducing age from eighteen to sixteen—a good idea? For Against"]

AGAINST. I think most people don't have enough knowledge and could be influenced.

FOR. I think the difference between sixteen and eighteen is not so big. The people over eighteen also don't know a lot about politics.

TEACHER. Now remember you are talking about yourselves. Don't you think you know enough and people can't influence you?

AGAINST. By eighteen, you have had more experience with the German way, like with the bureaucracy. Then you are of age, and have to get insurance.

AGAINST. There isn't a big interest in politics when you are sixteen to eighteen. At this age you do other things. There is no time to care for politics. You have to go to school, see your friends.

AGAINST. If I had to go for a party, I wouldn't know which one. I don't have much information about it.

UNCERTAIN. The people above eighteen don't have much knowledge either. Either you are interested or not interested. Some are and some are not. It's the same whatever your age is.

AGAINST. I don't think they know more over eighteen, but when you are sixteen you have so many other things to think about.

TEACHER. But after eighteen, you still have friends, school, and other things, too.

AGAINST. But now at sixteen, I am not interested.

AGAINST. If someone said they were for the Greens they would be laughed at [for taking politics seriously].

UNCERTAIN, THEN MOVES TO FOR. I think no matter how old you are you have to have your own personality.

AGAINST. When we are eighteen we have to pay taxes, but at sixteen we don't have to pay taxes

FOR. The politicians will decide on the opinions of youth too if we could vote.

TEACHER. There are one-and-a-half million potential voters your age in Lower Saxony.

FOR. Now the parties don't do things for the young people because they can't vote, but if we could vote then they would do things for young people.

AGAINST. But the small parties might get a larger percentage of votes, like the Greens, if young people could vote.

AGAINST. I think the change is only good for the parties.

FOR. I think youth should take responsibility. If we were allowed to vote, then we would try to learn more and be more responsible.

TEACHER. If you could vote now, do you think your interest would increase?

FOR. Before I go to vote, I would inform myself about politics.

TEACHER. In 1972, they lowered the vote from twenty-one to eighteen, because the young men had to go in the army but couldn't vote. Today, why might some people want to lower it?

FOR. Many leave school at sixteen and work and pay taxes and go into real life, but can't vote.

AGAINST. But when you first leave school you are interested in starting a job, not in politics.

AGAINST. When I'm older, I have to inform myself about parties. But now if I hear somebody talk about politics I'm not so interested. But I think it's important to know something, so I will deal with it when I have to.

TEACHER. But even when you are older you aren't obliged to vote. You don't have to.

AGAINST. But it's a moral obligation. When you are eighteen, if you don't vote, then you can't influence.¹³ (2/18/95)

Clearly students in classes such as these regularly heard several sides of issues and were encouraged to express their views on public policies. During such lessons, many students spoke, in contrast to the recitation lessons when only a few usually gave responses. There was also more student-to-student interaction during the discussion than during recitation classes.

Mr. Holtmann, a teacher in Hesse, also frequently used the advantages/disadvantages or for/against format. Furthermore, he remembered asking his students to write essays on whether they thought someone like Hitler could come to power again and whether freedom of the press should ever be limited. He explained that having students list arguments on two sides is:

a well known method that is taught to teachers, to have students collect information, then draw conclusions, and then afterwards to express their own opinion. For example when we compared Russia with the U.S.A.—geographic conditions and economic systems—students saw a video about farmers in both countries describing their situations. And the students had to draw their conclusions about what were the advantages and disadvantages of both. (6/13/95)

As for variety in instructional activity in the German classes I visited, there appeared to be little beyond the two types of lessons. Some students did mention seeing videos, a few classes had gone on school trips, and one teacher said her students used the local library for research projects. In one geography class students participated in a simulation for the first time. They represented scientists and citizens engaged in a debate about environmental policy. Two tenth-grade classes had conducted surveys in their community: one to ascertain opinions about the proposal to lower the voting age and another to find out how people planned to vote in an election. One *Realschule* teacher said that she periodically asked students to read newspaper articles about particular events and summarize them. Two others, one in a mixed-ability *Gesamtschule* and one at an academic *Gymnasium*, used current events to illustrate topics in their course. About half the German students with whom I spoke said they discussed current events in school; half said they did not.

Students preparing for the *Abitur* at a *Gymnasium* where I saw many text-recitation lessons said that they were encouraged to discuss current topics. One student described their GK class in the following manner:

There are three lessons a week of forty-five minutes. We have copies of texts to read and talk about, and we have about two videos a month, like on developing countries and the foundations of NATO. We read things and have questions about them, and discuss, but often we drift away from our topic to present issues, like from the daily press—like recently we talked about the conflict in Chechnya and the anniversary of the bombing of Dresden. (2/16/95)

However, students at another Secondary II school in a different *Land* said that they had few opportunities to talk about current events

and were reluctant to disagree with the teacher and other students. They explained: "In classes we don't speak up, we are dependent on the teacher. It's the same in society, if you feel different from others, you better shut up." Also: "It's difficult to discuss with the teacher about the subject because the teacher knows more." As Otto explained,

In my opinion, GK could deal with many issues but teachers have plans for lessons. In GK many themes are historical. If we would do more with current ones we might be more interested. They aren't flexible with their plans. We had more discussions at our previous schools (in Secondary I, through the tenth grade), but then less with friends. Now we discuss more with friends and less in lessons, because teachers have to cover their plan. (6/14/95)

Several teachers at that school had another explanation for the lack of discussion about current issues. They reported that students were generally "more passive than in earlier years. They just want to take notes . . . and teachers stay with their old ways and don't know how to relate to the students today. It is a problem. The average age of the teachers at this school is fifty-three" (6/14/95).

Although there did seem to me to be more open discussion of issues and variety of instruction in the tenth grade or earlier, there were often recitation lessons there as well, and some students were reluctant to speak. When I asked a group of ninth-grade students who said they often give their opinions at school whether they felt comfortable expressing their views when they were different from other students or the teacher, half of them said they would not and half said, maybe.

JOHANNES. I would because I think it is important that others know what you think.

KRISTINA. But maybe they will talk about you.

ANNA. And the other pupils may laugh at you. (6/13/95)

Teachers' and administrators' views on the handling of controversial public policy issues add further depth to an understanding of classroom climate in German classrooms. Mrs. Meyer, the teacher who led the discussion about the proposal to lower the voting age, explained that her goals for teaching social studies were

(1) to make students interested in politics so it would be something they might like to discuss and inform themselves about and (2) to help students make up their minds about things and support their opinions, to see the necessity of being informed before making up their minds and to be more sensitive to their preconceptions and prejudices. (2/18/95)

Mrs. Meyer further explained that it is in the guidelines for each subject that the teacher is to give an overview of different opinions on an issue.

Although she thought some teachers were hesitant to give their own opinion, her view was that it was more honest for teachers to be open about their opinions. She maintained that it is "more authentic, and in most cases the students want to know your views" (2/18/95). Her *Direktor* (principal) supported the idea that teachers should help students develop their own opinions about issues. When I asked him what he would do if a parent ever complained that a teacher was trying to influence the class to adopt his or her political opinion, he said that has never happened, but "the teacher is free to express their own opinion and to encourage the students to develop their own" (2/18/95).

Mr. Krentz, a *Gymnasium* teacher, was a bit more cautious in this area. He explained that although it was important,

It's hard because you want students to express their opinions, but you have to balance that with the fact that you have to educate them and they don't know enough yet. There are also some limits from the Government, like during the Gulf War, if students wanted to demonstrate and if we wanted to ourselves, we couldn't encourage them. And that happened with the recent cuts in education. Also this is difficult because we have to judge them. If you give students a 4 [barely passing], it has to be for how well they think and explain, not for the content of what they say. . . . Sometimes it also depends on age. With fifteen-year-old students you might not show a video about child prostitution that is very explicit. And a few years ago it wasn't allowed to say anything about Marxism or to talk about the DDR, you had to call it Germany. It was also not allowed to show a propaganda film from the far right. (2/16/95)

Mr. Krentz's *Direktor*, like that of Mrs. Meyer, said that he had never had a complaint from parents about the handling of controversial issues in class and he did not expect that he would. "It's not allowed" for a teacher to try to influence student opinion, he said. "You can explain your opinion, and the students are grateful, but you have to say 'this is my opinion and I allow you, even invite you to have a different opinion'" (2/16/95). Mr. Krentz said it was "very important" that students feel comfortable disagreeing with the teacher. When I asked if there were any topics he would not want students to discuss, his response was, "absolutely not. Even, if a pupil says he is sympathetic with the new Nazi Party and you think it is wrong, it is important to discuss it, to invite him to speak and test his ideas" (2/16/95).

In summary, the classroom climate in the German social studies classes that I visited tends to be serious, yet relaxed as teachers ask students questions to ensure that they have correctly understood the ideas in texts that they read. Teachers periodically ask students to express their views on topics under study. There is a general expectation that several

sides of an issue will be explored. In classes for students through the tenth grade, teachers feel they have the latitude to let students explore topics in diverse ways and to spend time on discussion. However, their willingness to solicit student opinion on controversial public policy issues is balanced with their concern that topics in the guidelines for their course be covered and that they take into account the maturity level of their students—many of whom are not academically oriented if they are not in a *Gymnasium*. Conversely, teachers of grades eleven through thirteen seem to feel that their academically oriented students are sufficiently mature to confront most complex, controversial issues. However, the teachers are influenced by pressure to cover all the material that is required for the *Abitur*, a challenging oral and written examination.

Interestingly, the classroom atmosphere and style of teacher and student interaction that I found in German classrooms in the 1980s and 1990s felt very similar to that which I encountered in American high schools. American high school teachers, however, seemed to use a wider repertoire of learning activities than did many of the German teachers, as will be seen in the next section.

The United States

A non-American visiting a social studies class in the United States might be struck by several things in the physical environment that may contribute to classroom climate. First, teachers tend to be based in one classroom, where they meet five classes of students each day, and the students move from one room to another over a six-period (more or less) day; the reverse is true in Denmark and Germany where the students are based in a room and the teachers move to meet different classes. In the one instance the classroom belongs to the teacher, in the other, to the students.

In a high school classroom in the United States, there is often a United States flag on the front wall and a television, video player, and sometimes a computer or two somewhere in the room. Students usually sit at individual desks often in rows or a horseshoe facing the front of the room, where the teacher stands to lecture, ask questions, and direct activities. Desks are often moved for discussions, group work, and simulations. The Classroom Rules posted on the wall of one California classroom are a kind of “culture trait” I saw in several schools:

Because teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn, Student Responsibilities are: 1) To come to class every day, on time, and prepared to work 2) To not disrupt class 3) To respect other people and their property. Consequences: 1st level, Teacher discuss. 2nd: Teacher contact parent. 3rd: Office referral. (4/5/95)

Other features of American classroom life that I did not see in European schools and that may contribute to a characteristic classroom climate are related to the organization of the schedule. For example, only in the United States do students attend lessons in the same subject for approximately fifty minutes each day, five days per week. Although some schools rotate the schedule such that the course that meets second period on Monday, meets first period on Tuesday, and so forth, and other schools have longer periods for some classes on some days, they are exceptions. Most high school students and teachers have the same schedule from one day to the next, and most social studies classes meet for one lesson each day of the week.

Also of importance is the policy that all students attend a comprehensive high school—usually, but not always—from the ninth through the twelfth grade. Students who leave school before age eighteen are stigmatized with the label “drop-out.” Although many classes are “tracked” by ability, a teacher usually teaches students with a broad range of abilities and interests within the same school and sometimes within the same heterogeneously grouped class. Added to diversity in abilities and interests, in several schools in this study there was also diversity in the cultures and experiences of students. These factors, added to the routine of students having the same classes every day, may underlie a primary concern among many in the education profession in the United States to motivate high school students and maintain their interest in the subject and class. On the one hand, critics complain that many classes are dull, unengaging places (Goodlad, 1984; McNeil, 1986; Shaver et al., 1979). On the other hand, many teachers observed in this study use a variety of activities to try to capture and maintain student interest and involvement.

Other factors affecting classroom climate relate to the content of the social studies curriculum. The curriculum of the American public high school is broadly set at the state level, as is the case in Germany. However, in U.S. schools, unlike those in Germany or other countries in the study, specific course content is primarily determined at the level of the local school district. This contributes to considerable variation in content for students of a particular age across the schools in this study. Yet, although the grade at which a specific course—much less topic—is taught varies, there is still much similarity in the content that secondary students in the United States study during the course of their high school career. Additionally, consistent patterns in the way content is delivered across schools and states makes it possible to see similarities in classroom climate across schools in the United States when they are compared with schools in other countries.

Students in one California high school had no ninth-grade social stud-

ies class. In tenth grade they had a daily course in world history; in eleventh grade, United States history; and in twelfth grade, one semester each of economics and government. Students in a Massachusetts school had in ninth grade a daily course in world civilizations; in tenth grade, either world cultures or modern Europe; in eleventh grade, United States history; and in twelfth grade they could choose from electives, which included anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, or United States history after 1945. For most of those courses, content coverage followed the chapters in a hardcover textbook. In addition, classes often used supplementary paperback textbooks and articles teachers photocopied, and the students viewed videos approximately once every two weeks. Most classes took a teacher-made test at the end of each unit or chapter in the textbook. The tests usually had mostly multiple choice items and one or two short essay questions. One teacher, Mr. Thomas, gave a multiple choice test at the end of each chapter in the economics textbook and had students write an "eight-paragraph" essay responding to questions or directions such as the following: Explain how immigration represents a cost to the United States economy. Contrast federal and state and local taxes. What would the U.S. be like if there was no set minimum wage? (12/15/94). Only one teacher, Mr. Stanton, said that he did not give tests in his United States history class. Rather, at the end of each unit he had students write essays in which they were expected to take an informed position on an issue they had studied, such as immigration policy. Students told me that in their essays they were expected to balance their opinion with factual information.

In each American high school, I observed some teacher-led recitations based on textbook readings with the teacher elaborating upon and extending student answers. Ms. Foster went over the period of Charlemagne with her world history class, and Mr. Thomas and Mr. Grant reviewed worksheets that their government classes had done on the chapters about the executive and legislative branches of government. In each of the schools in the United States, I also saw the use of simulations. United States history classes at one school were simulating the business cycle in the 1920s and 1930s. An economics class at another school was simulating the effects on aggregate supply and demand when employment and inflation rates change. Several economics classes in different states were playing the Stock Market Game, sponsored by the state affiliate of the National Council on Economic Education. At the beginning of the semester, students were given a fictional amount of money with which they were to invest in stocks. Once a week the students checked the newspaper to see how their stocks were doing and made decisions about buying and selling for the next "round" of the game.

Small group activities, guest speakers, and research reports were frequently used in social studies classes in the schools in this study. In one

United States history class as part of the study of reform, students read copies of newspaper accounts written by “muckrakers” about political corruption at the turn of the century. The class was divided into three groups of ten students each to create and act out a play to depict corrupt conditions in Philadelphia, New York, and St. Louis in 1900. Each group was assigned a leader and an evaluator, and after each play was completed the students wrote a summary of the play. On the board was a list of terms to identify: muckrakers, machine politics, graft, reformer, kickback, patronage, Tammany Hall (4/4/95). In addition to student-centered group activities such as this one for a history lesson, many teachers also used guest speakers to provide variety. In one law class, a police officer described what happens when one is stopped by the police. He reviewed the procedures that should be followed and the rights of citizens in such an instance. Students asked many questions, including: What are the most frequent problems in the town? What are the requirements to become a police officer? Is it illegal to take bets for others? and How do the police break up a party? (3/28/95).

Other instructional activities that were used by social studies teachers in the United States included students writing book reports on historical fiction, biographies, and other nonfiction books; writing poems or making posters on specified topics; playing a game modeled on the television program *Jeopardy* to review for a test; and doing a History Day project (a research project entered into competition at the school, state, and national level). The products of assignments were often displayed on the wall of the teacher’s classroom, and in one class a teacher showed me the computer disks on which her students had written their reports, using a HyperStack. Although the variety of activities used, like the level of formality in a school, is not an inherent part of modeling democratic inquiry and discourse, it does contribute to the climate or atmosphere of a classroom.

One practice I observed in social studies classes in the United States more than in other countries, was the assignment of a term paper or independent research project in which students research a topic in their school library. Topics for government, economics, and law or politics classes especially focused on public policy issues. Students were expected to describe a problem, report their research, and, usually in the conclusion, express their opinion and explain their reasons for coming to that position. Topics for reports at several schools included capital punishment, gay rights, affirmative action, gun control, immigration policies, euthanasia, homelessness, crimes and punishments, voter turnouts. Sometimes topics were stated as questions, such as: Should health care workers be tested for HIV? Should executions be televised? Should there be term limits? Should gays be allowed in the military? Should there be

drug testing in the workplace? Should there be equal pay for equal work? Should publicly funded art be censored? (12/16/94). In other classes, students researched and wrote reports on propositions and candidates that would be voted upon at an upcoming election and on public agencies and programs such as prisons, welfare, and social security.

Mr. Stanton had developed a technique of beginning each class with what he called a "conversation." Sitting on a high stool in a relaxed manner at the front of the room, he would pose a question to students to solicit their opinions. One day when I visited, he began by asking, "Do you think the federal government should get involved when there are disasters?" Students then voiced opinions about federal action following recent earthquakes, hurricanes, and fires. After several minutes the teacher made a transition to attitudes that some Americans had toward the government's responsibility to veterans during the Depression. Mr. Stanton then assigned students to read about the Bonus Army's demonstration in Washington, D.C. A student said that in addition to "having a conversation and doing work," they also did some writing every day. Many of the writing assignments asked the students to express their opinions on historic and contemporary issues, such as a recent state proposition to restrict welfare and other social services to legal residents.

In addition to exploring public policies in many social studies classes, most of the American high school students with whom I spoke reported that they discussed current events in their classes. Current events assignments and practices, however, varied by teacher. In some classes students were expected to write a summary of a news article once a week, and some summaries were presented orally. In other classes, teachers frequently began the class by asking students if they had heard about a particular event in the news or they related the content of the day to something that was currently in the news. Students in one Advanced Placement government class compared news coverage on the three television networks, CNN, and the public broadcasting station. In contrast, another teacher did not know if his students followed the news, indicating he rarely talked with them about current events.

Although all of the students that I interviewed in the United States agreed that they had some discussion in their classes and that there was some attention to current events, there was variation in students' ideas of controversial issues and the extent to which they believed such issues were discussed in school. In the Massachusetts school, students said the biggest controversy was the school policy on not wearing hats. They were upset that teachers were enforcing that policy more than the one prohibiting smoking in the rest rooms. Other issues that were perceived to be controversial among students at that school were the rotating school schedule, abortion, gay rights, and drugs. The students said that in the American

political studies class students talked about controversial issues "a lot," whereas in the other classes "it's basically, stick to the subject" (3/27/95).

At one California school students identified a number of issues as controversial. Within the school itself, the amount of resources that supported the athletic program and the presence of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) were seen as controversial issues. In the wider society such issues included welfare, drugs, immigration, "foreigners taking jobs away from American citizens," and "American companies going over to other countries because there people work for less" (4/5/95). All of the students agreed that they talked about those issues in school, particularly in their United States history class. I asked students if they felt comfortable expressing their opinions in class, to which one of Mr. Thomas's students, Gail, replied: "yeah, we do speak up. We like to disagree in here" (12/15/94). One of Mr. Stanton's students said: "we talk about the news and express our opinions, even if our opinion is different from everyone else, because you have to say what you think. Mr. Stanton gives his opinion and he wants you to express yours and we tell him when we disagree" (12/16/94). Students in another of Mr. Stanton's classes also said they were comfortable disagreeing with the teacher and, at first, claimed to be willing to say anything they felt. When someone mentioned attitudes toward the Ku Klux Klan, the story changed. Some students said they would be reluctant to admit in front of other students that they were sympathetic to the Klan.

BARBARA. I know I wouldn't admit it if I believed it.

JASON. But, freedom of speech.

BARBARA. You wouldn't admit it. I would be too scared to.

JASON. There is a lot of people who would admit it.

ANDREA. You'd get lynched for saying things like that at this school.

JOHN. But there are a lot at this school who would admit it.

ANDREA. Yeah? At this school? You think someone would admit it?

EMILY. I know people who would say it out straight. (4/5/95)

Teachers, for the most part, said that they would not avoid controversy. Mr. Thomas claimed he had no problems with controversial issues. "I say: 'These are my values. You may not agree with me.' You have to be even handed" (12/15/94). Ms. Foster said: "I can't think of any I wouldn't talk about. I went to a workshop on creating awareness of gay and lesbian issues, and I think I'll do more with that. There's still a lot of homophobia among kids" (3/28/95). The social studies department head at Mr. Stanton's school said: "I tend to be pretty libertarian. I'm willing to discuss anything the students bring up. I have to be aware of community standards though, so I often pull away from directly con-

fronting an issue and handle it more subtly, like in history mentioning that some great people like Langston Hughes were homosexuals, to show that people of talent in the past were homosexuals—that it's not something new, and it's not a big deal" (4/5/95). He had shown a video entitled *Confessions of a Hitler Youth*. When he showed *Schindler's List*, he sent a letter home to parents informing them that he would be showing it and why and asking the parents to telephone him if they had any concerns. He said he would skip over the sex scene in the video but would leave in the nudity because he felt it was important to understanding the humiliation Jews were forced to endure in the Holocaust. In a Missouri school, a social studies department head said individual parents had objected to their children learning about evolution in anthropology, and most recently supporters of the militia movement did not want their children to learn about the federal government. In Georgia, teachers reported that evolution, abortion, and race relations were topics they handled with particular sensitivity.

To summarize the situation with regard to classroom climate in social studies classes in the United States: There are features that are similar to the situation in other countries, and there are several distinct differences. Without a national curriculum such as the one that exists in the Netherlands, there is considerable variation in the issues that students discuss or explore. Whereas the Danish students tend to conduct social science projects working in groups using community resources, individual students in the United States are more likely to use the school library to obtain information on an issue. In both cases, however, the students are expected to develop carefully reasoned, informed positions on public policy issues. As in other countries, American students spend considerable class time receiving information from the teacher, text materials, and videos; but unlike their peers in other countries, many also participate in a variety of activities such as simulations, current events discussions, and small group activities. Students in the United States were more likely to name school issues as controversial than were students in other countries. They were also more likely to mention domestic issues, whereas students in the European countries were more likely to name international issues. American teachers said they were comfortable discussing most issues with students, and students claimed they were comfortable disagreeing with teachers. A few students admitted to hesitancy in expressing unpopular views in front of their peers, however.

England

Non-English visitors often find the climate of British schools to be rather formal, but the participants themselves do not describe them that way.

Visitors are struck by the fact that English students wear uniforms, or at least school colors, through year 11, when they reach the school-leaving age of sixteen. Dress codes are more relaxed for students who stay in school for years 12 and 13—called lower and upper sixth form. In some schools, girls are not permitted to wear trousers, and in the schools I visited athletic shoes are allowed only in physical education. During my visits I often saw teachers reprimanding students for uniform violations or for sloppiness—not “looking smart.” In several of the state schools as well as the British Public School, students wore blazers and neckties, stood at the beginning of class until the teacher said, “Please be seated,” and addressed teachers as “Miss” or “Sir.” English students, for the most part, raise their hands and wait until they are called upon to respond.

All of this is not to say, however, that the climate is rigid. Indeed, there was generally a feeling of warmth and mutual respect in the many classes I observed. Repeatedly, English adults defended the use of uniforms to me on the grounds that they conceal economic differences; students from less affluent families than their peers are not identifiable as such by their clothes. Further, uniforms and clothes in school colors are less expensive than designer styles, athletic shoes (called “trainers”), and sports jackets. Concern for students’ general welfare is further communicated by the “pastoral” emphasis, in which students stay with a tutor group (comparable to an American homeroom or German “class”) and “tutor” (teacher) for the five years of secondary school (age eleven/year 7 through age fifteen/year 11). Tutor groups are gathered into year groups (e.g., all year 10 students) for assemblies that meet the legal requirement for a “daily act of corporate worship.” At assemblies speakers regularly address moral issues and student welfare. In most classes, students sit at tables for two, usually with two boys or two girls sitting together, facing the front of the room, or in some classes grouped together so that there are four to six students per table group.

As for the dimensions of democratic classroom climate that relate specifically to inquiry and discourse, on an open-ended item on the questionnaire and in interviews, English students ages fourteen to sixteen said they discussed issues most often in their personal and social education (PSE) class, and students seventeen and eighteen named a course in general studies or social education that all sixth formers at their school were required to take. Two other courses that were named frequently by English students as classes in which they discussed issues were English and religious education (RE) or religious studies (RS). Some students also mentioned geography, and a few named history. The few students who took Advanced (A)-level Politics or Environmental Studies named those courses.

Lessons in personal and social education (PSE) or development (PSD) were required in all of the English state schools in my study, but not in the Public School. The classes usually met for one or two lessons of thirty-five to forty-five minutes per week through year 11 (age fifteen to sixteen). PSE courses for the most part consisted of units in self-awareness, health (including sex education), careers, and, in rare cases, citizenship. Lessons usually consisted of an isolated activity based on photocopied exercises that students worked through in pairs or small groups sitting at tables. I observed activities in which students designed a brochure for traffic safety, prioritized rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and acted out how to treat an elderly lady on a bus. At the conclusion of that last lesson, the teacher said, "The message I want you to take is, don't treat the elderly the way they did in the story" (7/3/95). In another lesson on equal opportunities and prejudice, students concluded "Don't judge people by their appearance" (2/25/93).

The emphasis on the personal or moral dimension of issues, as opposed to citizens' influence on public policies, is illustrated by another example. Brian told me that in his PSE class they discussed unemployment: "How people cope, how many people apply for a job, then they get one for a year, and then they have to do it again" (6/25/93). When I asked if they ever talked in school about government policies affecting unemployment, both Brian and Gill said that no, they did not.

English was the subject in which students received the largest amount of instruction during which they might be exposed to social issues. That is, most students had three or four lessons a week of English until they completed year 11, as compared to only one or two lessons of PSE. In English classes I observed students discussing novels and plays that dealt with conditions in Ireland, the Falklands, and inner-city London, offering students the opportunity to talk about moral dilemmas related to poverty, war, and violence. Students told me that in English classes they had also talked about capital punishment, animal rights, and prejudice. One teacher, Mr. Phillips, designed all of his units around human rights issues. Although some attention was given to the context in which stories were set, and students were encouraged to express their feelings about issues as well as characters, it must be said that the English lessons I saw did not explore alternative public policy issues.

Students and teachers alike in both English state schools and the Public School mentioned that issues of human rights, women's rights, racism, and capital punishment were discussed in religious education (RE), a class students attended once every week or two.¹⁴ Students in state schools said they learned about what Christians thought about issues and discussed moral issues: "relations between people, divorce, why we treat the earth as we do, nuclear wars, and like what's the dif-

ference between war and murder" (6/25/93). Mr. Archer, an RE teacher in the independent school, said that RE classes address discrimination of all sorts, drugs, and various gender and sex related issues such as marriage, divorce, abortion, and AIDS. Additionally, Mr. Archer's classes had talked about issues surrounding women priests and gay priests.

As someone from the United States who attended and taught in schools that maintained a separation between church and state, I was struck by the fact that discussing one's private religious beliefs in school was not considered controversial in English schools. When an RE class studied Hinduism, one of the questions that students discussed in small groups and later answered in their exercise books was: Do you believe in an afterlife? If so, describe it. If not, why not? (3/1/93). In an RE lesson in another school I saw groups talking about whether they were agnostics, atheists, or believers in God. Although all students are required by law to have lessons in RE through year 11, in some schools the subject is combined with PSE, and in many where it is taught separately, no grades are given. Lessons are sometimes activity based, as was one lesson in which students created newspapers filled with stories of Jesus Christ's life. Many other RE lessons I observed were teacher presentations and some student discussion. Some students have additional RE lessons in preparation for a General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) or A-level examination.

Approximately 10 percent of the English students responding to the questionnaire in 1993 named geography and/or history classes as ones in which they discussed issues. In geography classes I observed lessons on alternative energy sources in Britain, land use patterns, tourism, and aid to Third World nations. In some cases, the teachers gave a list of the pros and cons of a particular issue to be used in "revision" (when studying for a GCSE geography examination), but I never heard a teacher solicit a student's opinion on a public policy issue. Those students who took A-level geography, however, conducted research on a local issue and in some cases wrote conclusions about policies in light of their affect on the human and/or natural environment.

In history classes I regularly heard teachers tell interesting stories and anecdotes that stimulated periodic student laughter. In most history lessons, students examined copies of primary source documents that were printed in their paperback history books and were asked to consider what evidence supported particular interpretations. In years 7–9 students studied medieval Britain, the Tudors and the Stuarts, and the Industrial Revolution. In years 10 and 11, I observed history lessons on the Chartist movement, trench warfare in World War I, and propaganda in Nazi Germany. Sometimes students worked in small groups on activities, such as designing a piece of propaganda, but most often they took

notes while the teacher talked and periodically asked them questions to check their comprehension. I observed lessons in both geography and history during which the teacher was giving the students an organizational schema of topics covered in the class, to help with “revision.” Reviewing a module on the history of medicine, one history teacher directed students to write in their exercise books:

Put the main heading. Now what were the five reasons things changed after 1800? . . . Second topic, surgery, what were the three main problems? . . . And what were the four solutions to pain? . . . then two solutions to infection. (6/19/95)

The teacher’s role seemed to be that of a coach giving the game plan as an organized diagram. Such a schema, structure, or scaffolding would facilitate recall of information, so that students would succeed on the GCSE or A-level examinations, which are written and evaluated by external examiners.

In history and geography classes at the Public School, lessons were also teacher dominated and aimed toward success on examinations. I did not see teachers pressing students to express their views on public policy issues. To me, the Public School classes for fifteen-year-olds felt more like university-level history and geography courses in the United States than classes for tenth graders in terms of their seriousness, sophistication of challenging material, and level of cognitive demand. Teachers asked students to hypothesize, predict, and make connections between lines of reasoning. Students called out responses to the teachers’ divergent questions, sometimes offering hypotheses or generalizations, such as about international relations after World War II and geographic theories of population distribution. Teachers salted their information with anecdotes and the class atmosphere felt relaxed, yet always on-task, serious, and academic. One teacher, Miss Smith, said that although she, like all the teachers in the history department, firmly believed in relating history to the present, because of the pressure to cover much information before the GCSE examination, she was less likely to digress to contemporary examples for students in the second year of their GCSE course than for those in the first year, where she had mentioned about the situation in former Yugoslavia. Miss Smith explained the writers of the syllabus for the GCSE history course wanted students to be able to come up with generalizations, such as “when economies are unstable, then political instability follows.” The purpose of the course, she said, was more about “forming opinions than expressing them . . . the students are good at making connections.” Miss Smith’s students did not work on independent research projects, and she did not use small groups. With just thirty-five-minute

lessons to cover the day's material, "there isn't time" (2/19/93).

English students—in both state and independent schools—who stay in school past the school-leaving age to do sixth-form studies are treated more as adults than previously. School dress codes are relaxed for them, they have a room in which they can make coffee, relax, and talk with one another when they are not in A-level classes. Sixth formers are expected to develop an awareness of wider issues through a course variously titled something along the lines of General Studies (GS) or Social Education (SE). Whereas in A-level classes (or in classes offering preparation for retaking a GCSE exam or taking additional GCSEs) students attentively take notes while the teacher speaks, in GS and SE lessons students come prepared to listen or speak their opinion, but not to take notes. Although some sixth-form students decide to take a General Studies exam, the content of the exam ranges across the arts, social sciences, foreign language, and mathematics. The GS/SE course is not viewed as direct preparation for the exam. Interestingly, the social science section often asks students to discuss public policies, such as those dealing with refugees in Britain, income distribution, and the lottery, and there are some multiple choice items or figures in the news to identify.

At one school, three hundred upper and lower sixth formers (who accounted for 62 percent of students in year 11 who stayed in that school past age sixteen) met in a large assembly room on Monday afternoons to hear announcements about university applications and job opportunities followed by talks from guest speakers. Some years the local MP was invited to speak on the role of an MP. One day I observed a volunteer from Friends of the Earth speaking about nuclear energy; the previous week the students had heard a speaker from a nuclear energy plant address the same topic. At another time they heard speakers on animal testing: one for and another against. Instead of hearing speakers on some Monday afternoons the students met in small groups to talk about issues such as racism and sexism. The coordinator of the SE program, Mrs. Judd, explained its purpose:

To raise awareness about issues, to help students develop opinions about issues after they are aware through listening to others, sharing, and exchanging opinions, and to help them articulate their opinions. The topics are chosen partly for personal awareness and then moving out to get students to think about social issues and then the relationship between the social and the personal. Because they do not have religious education in the sixth form, I think they should be moral issues, but not spiritual or religious ones. It is also for filling in the gaps and broadening their education when in their A-level subjects they are specializing. (3/13/95)

A group of sixth-form students at that school told me that over the course of the term they had seen a video on AIDS and then discussed it, heard a speaker on Cardiff prison and then participated in a question-and-answer period, and learned about the rainforest.

And we watched a video on Public Schools and said if we liked to have them or not—a debate. And we saw a video on Medgar Evers and then we got into groups and talked about prejudice. And then we had options—some people chose capital punishment, others were the Japanese tea ceremony, cooking, going carting, first aid, juggling, playing bridge, watching French films, archeology, painting tiles, doing up a room, basically whatever staff are interested in. (3/13/95)

The students' perception of the course was "It fills in the gaps"; "It's social, political, industrial, moral, multicultural, and careers"; "We get to talk about all sorts of subjects"; "Other people give their views and it helps you. You have your idea, and then you hear another idea and you say, 'I'm wrong, I had the pig-headed attitude.'" When I asked students if they were comfortable giving their views when they differed from the teacher's or the other students, they said that sometimes yes, sometimes no. They said that when they were younger they were less likely to disagree with the teacher, but in sixth form "You aren't intimidated by the teacher, but maybe a little with your friends." The students explained they were more comfortable expressing their views in small groups than in large ones, and it depended on the person and the topic: "Some things it doesn't bother some people, but others it does" (3/13/95).

At the Public School, where students did not have a PSE course prior to sixth form, they were assigned to General Studies (GS) groups that met for two lessons a week. Lower sixth groups focused on humanities topics and upper sixth groups were more likely to address public issues, but the exact nature of a class varied greatly according to the teachers' interest. In different classes I observed students role playing incidents between youth and the police, talking about an imaginary budget for their adult life, reading a news article and then expressing their opinions about violence in society, and giving oral reports on topics from blood sports to the music of Beethoven. Students seemed to come to class prepared to talk and to listen to their peers' opinions. Teachers used a relaxed nonjudgmental conversational style, and students expressed their views on the topics of the day. Mr. Archer, who taught GS as well as RE, explained:

The purpose of GS is to broaden student experiences when their education from sixteen to eighteen would otherwise be narrow [usually three A-level subjects]. The emphasis is to get away from didactic

teaching, to use a seminar style, to feel that everybody—the teacher and the student—has something to contribute. That is the purpose of the student presentations. . . . [S]ome of the topics in my group were soccer hooliganism and Public Schools. One girl who wants to be an astronaut did hers on that. The royal family and Britain's aristocracy are topics that usually come up. They would take a position on it. Then there is general discussion . . . [other days] there would be lots of discussion, based on newspaper articles I bring, videos, that sort of thing. . . . A bill went through Parliament restricting fox hunting, and we had a rip-roaring discussion on that. Gay priests was another. You have to balance what one thinks will set kids alight with what is available in magazines and newspapers at the moment. The students in Upper Sixth take *The Spectator* magazine. It has lively and controversial issues sometimes. The students get it every week but we don't discuss it every week. (6/9/95)

One student at the Public School described their GS class as “a big talk group.” Others noted “It is deliberately non curricular. We talk about relationships, politics, social issues,” “and the arts”; “There is no set curriculum. We have discussion on things,” “euthanasia, drugs, suicide, child abandonment.” “The teacher puts a topic on the board and we talk about it.” “Some people get worked up about it. Some sit there with a blank expression on their faces” (6/9/95).¹⁵

Depending on the A-level courses that a sixth-form student takes, he or she might have the opportunity to explore some public policy issues in depth. For example, at one state school, 14 students (out of 150 in their year group) taking A-level Environmental Studies gave oral presentations on alternative energy resources. Their teacher had given each a packet of articles from which he or she obtained the information to be presented on wind, water, nuclear, biomass, and other energy sources. Two of the presenters concluded by giving their opinion about the energy source, but that was not part of the assignment. After each talk, a few students raised their hands to clarify factual information that was presented. At the conclusion of the day’s lesson, the teacher said, “the British are well placed for alternative energy sources, but we haven’t developed them yet” (3/1/93). At two state schools and the Public School, approximately 15 students out of each year group took A-level Politics; there they had the opportunity to consider in depth some political issues such as the differences in proportional representation and the “first past the post” or “winner take all” systems of Britain and the United States. The atmosphere in those classes was serious as students diligently took notes for “revision.” That was quite different from the free wheeling discussions in their GS and PSE courses, where they casually aired opinions. In one A-level Politics class the teacher gave a frame-

work for comparing the constitutional structures of Britain and the United States: "Put a title, British Constitution. Then list four sources. . . . Now the characteristics of the British Constitution. List five . . ." (7/3/95).

Although British students said they discussed controversial issues in PSE, GS, English, geography, history, RE, and A-level Politics and Environmental Studies courses, none of the teachers for those courses said that the purpose of the course they taught was to prepare students to explore public policy issues in preparation for citizenship. Indeed, two of the schools that included lessons in citizenship as part of their PSE programs in 1986 had fewer such lessons in 1993 and none at all in 1995. As Mrs. Mathews, a PSE coordinator, said:

As for citizenship, we used to do that with explicit instruction. I still have the materials on voting, proportional representation, etc., but that has been dropped. Five years ago "economic awareness" was the thing and I went to in-service meetings on it, but it has fizzled out. Now we just have some lessons on "cost." (6/19/95)

When I asked teachers if they dealt with controversial issues in their classes, responses varied. Mr. Archer, the RE and GS teacher at the Public School, said that he was comfortable dealing with any topics the students brought up. Furthermore, he initiated class discussions on many controversial issues—from fox hunting to gay priests. However, he said, there were some limits: "We cannot be seen to be advising a given student about contraceptives. Equally we cannot be seen to support under age or unmarried sex" (6/9/95). Mr. Phillips, the English teacher who addressed human rights themes in class reported that at his school serving a working-class population: "We know we can just about deal with any controversial issue. But that means that we as teachers have to be extremely careful so we don't abuse our powers, so we don't just do controversial issues for the sake of doing it" (6/19/95). Mr. Phillips explained that he selected books about racism that had a clear anti-racist message, and that the PSE teacher had a police speaker on drugs to ensure that in the drugs education program there was not an unintended effect of promoting drugs. Abortion was an issue about which many of his students chose to write essays expressing their views. Mr. Phillips was aware that when they discussed capital punishment in English class he was "encouraging students to look at more liberal arguments" than they would hear at home. He hypothesized that parents did not complain because "children often don't talk to the parents about what actually happens in school" (6/19/95).

At another, more middle-class school, the coordinator of a PSE program, Mrs. Chester, was far more hesitant than either Mr. Archer or

Mr. Phillips to have students confront controversial issues. She said that teachers would not initiate a discussion of a controversial issue. However, if a student brings it up and the teacher thinks students are mature enough, he or she might talk about it, but the teacher "is more likely to talk about it with the student privately" (3/13/95).

The prospectus sent to parents from one state school explained how controversial issues were handled at the school,

Sex education is subsumed within PSE . . . due regard is given to moral considerations and the value of the family. . . . [S]tudents are helped to appreciate the benefits of stable relationships and marriage as an institution. . . . [S]ensitive issues, e.g. homosexuality, AIDS, abortion, are introduced, and particular emphasis is placed on the danger of casual promiscuous sex. Birth control is explained in the context of stable relationships. (6/8/93)

Nothing was said about possibly controversial citizenship issues.

One headteacher (principal) said that he expected geography and environmental studies teachers to talk about environmental topics, PSE teachers in health units on sex education to talk about sex-related topics, and RE teachers to talk about relations between people and divorce. Several teachers noted that schools must not be seen to be promoting homosexuality; therefore, teachers had to be careful how they talked about AIDS. Students said they talked about racism and sexism in their PSE and RE classes, and contraception was mentioned when they talked about birthrates in their geography class. Only a few students said they had discussed the debates over the Maastricht Treaty in school, and that was in their business studies class when they talked about farm subsidies in the European Union. The only student to say that his classes ever discussed current events was Michael, a sixth-form Public School student. He said students regularly talked about current political issues in his A-level Politics class. When I asked other students if they ever talked about politics in school, a few said they had talked about Parliament "some in history."

The wearing of political buttons or other symbols is potentially a form of expression about controversial public policy issues. The prospectus at one school, however, explicitly said, "no slogans, badges, or motifs" except the school's emblem were allowed (6/8/93). That policy appeared to be followed in all schools I visited. One school head (principal) expressed concern about a teacher wearing a red AIDS ribbon on his lapel. The head would talk to the teacher about it if the practice continued because "to wear it during a charity drive was all right, but if he was using it to say that he was homosexual, then it must not be allowed" (7/3/95).

The overall picture that one gets with regard to school and classroom climate in English schools is that students feel that they are encouraged to express their opinions—in PSE, English, RE, sixth-form SE and GS classes, and some A-level courses. They do not, however, investigate public policy issues in depth for the purpose of becoming informed participating citizens. On the questionnaires, comparatively few students reported that they often discuss controversial economic, social, and political issues. For the few students enrolled in an A-level Politics course at one state school, 70 percent agreed that they did discuss such issues; and at the Public School, there was almost 60 percent agreement. But for students in the four other state schools, there was only 22 percent to 42 percent agreement that they often discussed controversial social, economic, and political issues. In the generally supportive, pastoral atmosphere of an English secondary school, students perceive that there is concern for their welfare, as teachers nurture them in their tutor groups, helping them to cope with issues in their personal lives and to develop a personal moral code. In academic subjects teachers tell them "the message I want you to get is . . ." and coach them to do well on examinations. Some might say that such a climate is appropriate to prepare most young people to be subjects where the monarch, the government, the church, and political party leaders will look out for their future welfare, rather than to prepare them for participatory citizenship. The few students in British Public Schools and those who take A-level Politics are the most likely to become political leaders themselves, and they are the few who say that they are getting practice in exploring and taking stands on public policy issues.

DISCUSSION

Although perceptions vary somewhat among students within a country, overall, across countries students report remarkably similar perceptions of their classroom climate, usually varying within only a 10 percent to 20 percent range. Nevertheless, country differences are still evident. Student perceptions in Denmark that their classroom climate is open relative to the perceptions of students in the other countries was reinforced by observations. Dutch student perceptions, that their classroom climate was considerably less open than that of students in other countries, was also reinforced by classroom observations. There were few opportunities for students to explore diverse views on issues and to express their own opinions on controversial public issues.

Differences among samples of students in various countries with regard to particular items on the questionnaire were also reinforced in

observations. Danish and German students did openly disagree with their teacher and other students quite readily in classroom discussions. Students in Denmark and the United States did investigate and discuss current controversial economic, political, and social issues, although not necessarily often. That occurred less frequently in lessons in England and the Netherlands.

By examining classroom climate in cross-national perspective it becomes clear that there are many different ways to model democratic inquiry and discourse. Content, pedagogy, and atmosphere are three distinct aspects of instructional climate that can be handled in differing ways.

The first dimension to climate is issues content. Danish students study social issues content in their group investigations; American students sometimes confront issues content in history lessons, current events discussions, and individual research reports; German students periodically confront issues content in between lessons where they acquire much factual information; English students confront social issues content in religion courses and in a cursory manner in some social education lessons; and Dutch students in examination courses study content in which social issues are presented. The second dimension is pedagogy that models democratic inquiry and discourse. It includes class discussions, independent and group research, and other activities during which students are asked to consider an unresolved policy issue, to examine alternatives, to express their own views, and to hear and weigh others' views in a "free marketplace of ideas." The extent to which one method or another is preferred for use by teachers varies somewhat by country. For example, Danish teachers tend to use group projects and American teachers are more likely than those in other countries to employ simulations and individual research projects. The third dimension to climate is an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable expressing diverse views in front of teachers and peers. That seems to vary by country as well as by individual classroom.

In every country some—but not all—teachers combined issues content, reflective pedagogy, and a supportive atmosphere to model democratic inquiry and discourse. Clearly, their own socialization led them to do that in distinctly Danish, English, German, Dutch, or American ways.

Finally the small positive correlations found between climate and political interest, efficacy, and confidence when questionnaires were administered in 1986 and 1993 corroborate findings from earlier studies conducted in the United States (Baughman, 1975; Ehman, 1969, 1977). Earlier research on climate and trust yielded mixed findings. Consequently, the positive correlation found here supports some, but

not all of the earlier work. The finding of no relationship between perceptions of an open climate and support for free expression reinforced the findings of some researchers (Long & Long, 1975), but contradicted that of others (Baughman, 1975; Grossman, 1975/76) conducted in the United States. No similar data from the other countries were previously available.

It thus appears that when students report that they frequently discuss controversial issues in their classes, perceive that several sides of issues are presented and discussed, and feel comfortable expressing their views, they are more likely to develop attitudes that have the potential to foster later civic participation than are students without such experiences. However, the small correlations indicate that an open classroom climate alone is not sufficient to develop positive political attitudes. For example, school environmental factors (Hepburn, 1983; Siegel, 1977) and family variables (Jennings & Niemi, 1981) have also been found to contribute to political attitudes. This study and others (Almond & Verba, 1963; Torney et al., 1975) also suggest that the wider cultural context further mediates the effects of classroom climate.

However, within that wider context, what occurs within a classroom can and does make a difference. Teacher educators and school leaders can use examples from different countries to demonstrate a variety of ways in which teachers can create and sustain a democratic classroom climate.

CHAPTER 6

Teaching Democracy

The purpose of this comparative study of citizenship education in five Western democracies was to identify similarities and differences in adolescent political attitudes and secondary school curriculum and instruction. It is hoped that through such a study civic educators might gain insights into how school policies and practices can effectively prepare youth for their roles as participating citizens in pluralistic democracies in an increasingly interdependent global society.

DIFFERING CONTEXTS

Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States were selected as the focus of this study because their citizens share similar commitments to constitutional or limited government, representative democracy, individual liberties, and widespread citizen participation, as well as intertwined histories and comparable levels of economic and educational development. Yet, at the same time, there are sufficient differences among these countries' political cultures and expectations of the school's role in preparing democratic citizens to warrant examination. In chapter 1 several key features of the political and educational traditions that bear on citizenship preparation in each country were identified.

A distinguishing feature of the Danish context is widespread participation in decision making, from the small child participating in frequent class meetings to the adult participating in national referenda. Proportional representation, multiple parties, and coalition building are important in Danish political life. In education, Danes value the teaching of social science content and methods to students. In contrast, in England, a long history of two major (and a few minor) adversarial parties facing one another in Parliament and a skepticism of citizenship education as potentially indoctrinating political party ideology are paramount. English schools emphasize preparing students to make personal moral and ethical decisions. They rarely give students deliberate practice in critiquing public policies.

The Netherlands has a unitary system of government and much

autonomy for different “pillars” of society. To protect a diversity of religious and political beliefs, separate pillars—be they Catholic or Protestant—have been granted autonomy in many areas of life. Moreover, all schools receive equal funding from the state whether they are affiliated with religious groups or are nondenominational. At the same time the Dutch Ministry of Education, through its oversight role in curriculum for examinations, is instrumental in ensuring greater uniformity in teaching about politics and other aspects of society across schools for examination subjects than is found in any of the other countries in this study. However, because so few students select to take social studies as an examination subject, there is little assurance that most Dutch students receive any instruction at all on government and politics.¹

Although Germany and the United States place varying demands on the individual citizen, both have federal systems of government, assigning primary responsibility for schooling to the states. Because of their particular histories, citizenship education is given an important place in the curriculum of schools in those two countries. In Germany, the fall of the Weimar Republic to Nazism serves as a constant reminder of the need to prepare citizens for democracy. In the United States, the colonial experience, the frontier, immigration, urbanization, and the history of public schooling have all contributed to the widespread expectation that schools should prepare youth to be democratic citizens. In these two countries the school curriculum deliberately addresses citizenship education.

Clearly, there is no one form of democracy and there is no one way of teaching for democracy. Wise people with deep commitments to democratic participation will continue to arrive at different answers as to what form of civic education is most appropriate for youth in their particular cultural context. Still, they can gain insights by raising questions across national boundaries.

THE STUDY

Recognizing that contexts varied across these five countries, this study was designed to answer a set of questions cross-nationally: How are adolescent political attitudes similar and different? To what extent is citizenship education similar and different? Is there a relationship between classroom climate—or the extent to which students are encouraged to explore controversial public policy issues in an open, supportive atmosphere—and student political attitudes?

Approximately fifty secondary schools were identified in the five countries. It was not possible to obtain a random sample, but schools

were selected to represent different school types, such as *Realschulen*, *Gymnasien*, and *Gesamtschulen* in Germany, and different locations in each country, such as Massachusetts, Georgia, Missouri, Colorado, and California in the United States. Most schools were located in the suburbs of large metropolitan areas or in small cities and large towns, leaving future researchers to explore similar phenomena in inner city and rural settings.

Questionnaires were administered to secondary school students (primarily fourteen to nineteen years of age) in 1986 and 1993–94. In addition observations were made in schools over a ten-year period, and interviews with students and teachers were conducted in the period 1993–96. The questionnaire data were compared by looking at frequency distributions and means on scales intended to measure: political trust, political efficacy, political confidence, political interest, anticipated future political activity, political behaviors, support for equal rights for women in politics, support for free expression, civic tolerance, and classroom climate. Country, gender, and school-within-country differences were examined. The qualitative data were examined for themes and counter-examples, looking particularly for causes, conditions, processes, and consequences.

INSIGHTS FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In reporting the results related to principle themes in the chapters, I emphasized that findings apply to the particular respondents in the sample at particular points in time. However, those findings raise questions that I believe are worth further reflection. Comparative research has the potential to offer insights that one might not see by looking only at familiar settings: after viewing diverse contexts it is easier to raise questions about previously taken-for-granted practices. In that spirit, the “implications” offered here are meant to stimulate discussion about what might be, rather than to provide closure on what is or has been.

To the dismay of those who like Olympic contests, comparative educational studies do not tell us who is “ahead” or which system is “best.” Rather, they can help us to identify variables associated with outcomes in particular contexts and signal issues of possible concern.

Political Attitudes

The four political attitudes that were examined in earlier political socialization studies—political trust, efficacy, confidence and interest—are not totally independent of one another. Clearly, school practices and the wider political culture have some effect on all of these areas at the same

time. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect patterns affecting particular attitudes, as were described in chapter 2.

One finding of the study was the generally low level of political trust that existed among sample adolescents in all of these Western democracies. Although a widespread cynicism regarding politicians has become commonplace among adults in recent years, and traditionally teenagers have been expected to exhibit some cynicism toward the adult population as a way of declaring their own autonomy and coming of age, one cannot help but wonder about the future of representative democracy if no more than 20 percent of our young people respect those who hold public office. Certainly, we do not want students to be naive about public life. However, I believe it is worthwhile for educators to reflect upon what they can do to stimulate a healthy skepticism that is tempered with sufficient levels of trust for citizens to feel that the ideal of representative democracy is worth striving for.

Clearly, levels of political trust are influenced by factors in the wider political context—the number of scandals that occur, treatment by the media, and attitudes voiced by parents. In this study, in the Netherlands where there have not been many political scandals, students were found to have slightly higher levels of trust than in the other countries. Danish student trust was higher in 1993 than in 1986, about the time of Tamiigate. In both countries, students mentioned that there are some dishonest politicians, but they acknowledged that most are hardworking and honest. That concession was rarely made by students in the other countries.

Few students in any of the five countries reported ever meeting politicians, and I could not help but wonder: If they had more opportunities to talk to people who worked on local councils, in state or provincial legislatures, or in grassroots political organizations, might students develop a more balanced sense of the work that many people do on behalf of the public? Students could also learn from daily examples about how policies are made in pluralistic democracies where citizens hold conflicting goals, thus putting what appear to be “broken promises” in a wider context.

In all countries, sample students said that they gained their negative views of politics and politicians primarily from the media. Indeed, many students sounded as cynical about the press as about the politicians. No students elaborated on the critical role that the press plays in democracies (although they all championed free expression in the abstract), yet almost all students reported that they get much of their political information from the media. Moreover, it was not unusual for cynical students to obtain their news from tabloid rather than serious newspapers, because to them they were more interesting and not so full of “the bor-

ing stuff." Students attending classes that explored issues in some depth appeared to have a more balanced picture of politicians and government than did students in classes that did not explore current events. That is, both within and across countries they were more likely to cite examples of both honest, hard working politicians and of some they felt were not trustworthy. Students who had not studied political issues in school seemed more likely to dismiss all politicians as bad.

Some students reported hearing their parents and other adults say that politicians were "rubbish" or "crooks." Indeed, while observing in one class in the United States, I heard the government teacher pass on his cynical views to students with off-handed remarks. Nowhere did students or teachers tell me that citizen trust or cynicism had been investigated systematically by students or discussed among teachers as a factor they might influence. Clearly, without addressing it, students will continue to simply catch the negativism in the wider environment. Perhaps by reflecting upon this dimension of system support, young citizens might become sufficiently confident in their representatives to care about participating in public affairs and at the same time be vigilant and supportive of appropriate institutions and processes to minimize abuses of the public trust.

Political efficacy, the belief that citizens can affect government policy making is closely related to trust and crucial to developing a will to participate. In this study, there were clear country differences in political efficacy that seemed to reflect both the wider political culture and citizenship education. German students, in this study and in others, were found to have comparatively low levels of political efficacy, as were students in English state schools. In contrast, sample students in Denmark, the United States, and in a British "Public School" had comparatively high levels of political efficacy. Whereas German students tended to emphasize that one person acting alone could not make much difference, American students emphasized that if people would vote along with others or join groups to affect policies, they could make a difference. One group of students saw the glass as half-empty while the other saw it as half-full. In Germany, politicians do not solicit voter input between elections; in the United States, they do. Yet within each political culture there is room for civic education to have an impact.

The situation in England illustrates what can happen when political education is not a deliberate goal for schools. Sadly, I heard many English state school students say that politics and current events were just too complicated to understand and that in school they did not study things that would help them to make sense out of the political world. The British Public School (independent boarding) students with whom I spoke picked up a positive sense of political efficacy from their families

and from the general ethos of the school, where students talked about how citizens like themselves would be able to influence decisions. In contrast, students in some American social studies classes learned about how citizens who organized made a difference in the nation's history, and some students were themselves active in school-sponsored groups, such as Students Against Drunk Driving or Amnesty International, to influence policies.

Without promoting naiveté, social studies teachers can make a deliberate attempt to draw attention to citizens making a difference in history, in current events on the news, and daily in the local community. Such lessons are most profound when students can observe in their own school that students, too, have an influence on policy making. The comparatively high sense of political efficacy among many Danish students corresponds with the many opportunities they have to observe the workings of direct democracy. In their own classes they have some influence on the way class and school problems are resolved, the topics that are studied, and the trips the class takes. Their representatives, along with those of teachers and parents, participate in making decisions that affect the school. Additionally, Danish youth tend to observe their parents and other adults participating in more decision-making bodies in the workplace and in the community than do students in the other countries in this study. Danish students learn that democracy is time consuming and not always easy, but they learn also that citizens can indeed make a difference. Although other societies and historic traditions are not the same as Denmark's, educators can gain insights from their experiences about ways in which they might better enable students to feel that they as citizens can influence policy at multiple levels of community life.

These latter points are related to the development of political confidence as well as to political efficacy, because political confidence is the belief that one can personally influence decisions in the groups of which one is a part. Not surprisingly, sample students in Denmark had a high sense of political confidence. But so did many students in the other countries as well. Students in England and the United States sometimes work in small groups in their classes, and many American students especially belong to student groups that meet after school. Everywhere teenagers gather with their friends and "talk about things." Only in the Netherlands is there a tradition that one does not try to persuade another to one's way of thinking; this has deep historic and cultural roots and is not indicative of a low sense of personal esteem.

Of particular concern with regard to political confidence is the finding that gender differences are more likely to occur with regard to this attitude and political interest than with other attitudes that were mea-

sured in this study. Moreover, in some—but clearly not all—classes boys talked more assertively than did girls when the topic was politics and current events. A few females said they were intimidated by the outspoken students who seemed to learn more on their own from the media. Because teachers who had deliberate policies of asking all students to keep up with the news and then engaging them in discussion seemed to be effective in bringing more students into conversations about public policies, I wondered if they might reduce potential gender differences in political confidence. It was not unusual for a teacher to remark that a few boys did most of the talking; however, I did not learn of any classes where the students along with the teachers were making deliberate attempts to overcome the problem and engage females and males in small group discussions of public policy, discussions in which all would participate equally.

Levels of political interest varied considerably within each classroom in the study, with some students at the interested end and some at the disinterested end of the spectrum. Nevertheless, where the majority of students fell tended to be influenced by several factors: country, age, academic track, and, within some countries, gender. Not surprisingly, in this study, older students in more academic tracks reported the greatest interest in the political arena. The older students are the closest to the voting age and more likely to think of themselves as soon assuming the role of adult citizen. Students in academic tracks are those from whom political elites are drawn; and in all countries, the most active adult citizens tend to be those with the most education. In 1986 males appeared to be slightly more interested in politics than females, but in 1993 those small gender differences were found only in the German and Danish samples, where males exhibited the highest levels of political interest.

The higher levels of political interest among Danish, German, and British Public School students as compared to Dutch students and students from English state schools in this study struck me as being connected to levels of expectation. That is, Danish students, particularly those at the *gymnasium*, are expected to be interested in the political arena. They are expected to take part in their class and school governance, to study politics as part of the social studies and social science courses that all take, and to engage in discussions of political issues. German students also study and discuss political issues as part of their social studies and social science courses. In England, Public School students, while not studying politics in school (except for a very few), are expected by their families, teachers, and peers to eventually engage in political affairs. Consequently, on their own they begin to follow the news and discuss it sometimes with friends and family. In contrast, Dutch students may study one unit on politics in their course "study of society," and the

other units do not emphasize public policy making; moreover the Dutch students in this study, except in the one class where students did become interested, said that they were not expected to discuss current events in their classes. Similarly, most students in English state schools who were not expected to learn about politics or to engage in discussions of current political events said they were not interested, primarily because they did not understand what was happening. As previously noted, students in one Dutch teacher's class and in several classes in the United States said they were not initially interested in politics and current events. However, when their teacher asked them to follow current events and talked to them about events in the news, they told me that over time they understood more and became interested in following politics and other current events. That leads me to believe that teaching practices may have more potential to influence political interest than other political attitudes.

Attitudes toward Equal Rights for Women in Political Leadership

The fact that women hold fewer positions of political leadership than men (discussed in chapter 3) was a topic addressed in interviews with students in the five countries. When asked to describe the image that they held of "politicians," students invariably described men in suits. Yet the survey revealed that the overwhelming majority of sample students agreed that women should have the same opportunities as men to hold political office. Interviews indicated that students had a vague idea that the situation was changing, particularly at the local level, and that in the future women's representation in political office would be closer to their proportion of the population. There were, however, for a few students some lingering doubts as to whether women should be political leaders, particularly when the offices are at the national level or when the women have small children.

For the most part, these students of the 1990s seemed not to have thought much about gender inequities in politics or about public policies that promote equal participation. The women's movement and feminism were, for them, associated with their parents' generation and did not inspire them to activism. Some students reported studying gender-related topics—the suffrage movement in the United States, stereotyping in England, lifestyle differences in Denmark, and positive discrimination (affirmative action) in the Netherlands. But none of the students or teachers reported that there were lessons specifically addressing gender and politics.

It is surprising that, despite the lofty statements in constitutions and human rights documents about the right of all to hold political office,

most students do not study why that right is exercised by so few women. Political scientists have written extensively about factors that contribute to differences in office-holding patterns. Such material could be used in instructional units. Similarly, feminist political scientists and social studies educators are developing new conceptions of public life that have implications for citizenship education (Elshtain, 1981; Noddings, 1992; Stone, 1996). That work could be discussed by students who are at an age where they are interested in both gender roles and becoming adult citizens. This is an area that is ripe for student reflection, instructional development, and valuable research.

Support for Free Expression and other Civil Liberties

Students in this study, like students and adults in previous studies, said they believed in the freedom of speech and press for all—in the abstract—yet most would suspend those freedoms for some groups. Groups that are perceived to be a threat at a particular point in time are less likely than other citizens to be granted rights by the youth in this study. Unlike many Americans of the fifties and sixties who would suspend rights for atheists and Communists, most students in this study said such individuals should have the same rights as other citizens. However, in the Netherlands and the United States where religion is particularly salient for large groups of citizens, a few students were skeptical of permitting free speech for atheists. And in Germany, where the Communists from the eastern states are represented in Parliament, some students were uncomfortable granting them the same rights as other citizens. In England, many students would not grant civil liberties to members of the IRA, a group that has been officially outlawed and has claimed responsibility for periodic bombings in that country.

The groups for whom sample students in all countries were most hesitant to grant rights of free expression and other civil liberties were those who discriminated against others—the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, skinheads, and members of the National Front. In Germany, where students study much about the Nazi past, where young people were deeply troubled by recent attacks against foreigners, and where right wing groups are not legally allowed to step beyond specific guidelines designed to protect the democratic order, students were almost unanimous in saying that neo-Nazis should not have the same rights as other citizens. Also, in the Netherlands and in England, where students learn about the Holocaust in their history classes and about laws against discrimination in their social education and other classes, many students opposed granting rights to racists. In the United States and Denmark,

courts have asserted that members of unpopular or objectionable groups, such as racist organizations, have the same rights as other citizens to free expression and other civil liberties unless they actually incite violence. In those two countries, many students wanted to restrict the rights of racists, but equal numbers were opposed to imposing limits on free expression, and many articulated the great difficulty they found in balancing two cherished values.

At a time when courts in all of these countries are wrestling with these questions, it was surprising to find that only a few classes were stimulating students to reflect upon the issues. Research that has been conducted on the effects of an instructional unit on civic tolerance is instructive. When students studied about the roots of prejudice, the history of civil liberties in different countries, and the reasoning used by leading scholars in balancing values of freedom and security, adolescents exhibited greater tolerance than they had before such instruction and as compared with students without such instruction (Avery et al., 1992). Civic educators who seek to promote tolerance and respect for civil liberties as well as a determination in students to struggle against racism and inequality could design similar instructional units that take into account their particular culture. It was clear from responses in the different democracies in this study that each country's cultural values, historic experiences, and contemporary challenges play a larger role in this area than in any of the areas explored in this study. Nevertheless, everywhere the topic is one for which students need to be better prepared than they are now if they are to meet the challenges facing pluralistic democracies in the twenty-first century.

Classroom Climate

This study grows out of a tradition in which scholars examine those aspects of classroom climate that have the potential to model democratic inquiry and discourse. As a comparative study of citizenship education in several different democracies, it makes an important contribution by revealing clear patterns in classroom climate that occur across countries as well as within countries. In particular, in this study an open classroom climate both within and across countries was correlated with positive adolescent political attitudes. Granted, the correlations between climate and attitudes found here, like those in other research, were small. That is not surprising, given the many other factors that influence students' political attitudes, such as family, peers, media, the wider political culture, and the many hours spent in classes in which one would not expect to explore and discuss public policy questions. Nevertheless, it is clear that within the few hours a week that are allotted to

something like social studies, the climate in which instruction occurs can have some effect on student attitudes.

When students have the opportunity to explore controversial public policy issues in a supportive atmosphere, where several sides of an issue are presented or explored, and they feel comfortable expressing their views even when they differ from the teacher's and the other students', then there is a greater likelihood that adolescents will express higher levels of political efficacy, interest, trust, and confidence than their peers without such experiences. Overall, students in Danish *gymnasier* demonstrated comparatively high levels of the various political attitudes, and they were the students most likely to have taken classes in which they regularly explored controversial public policy questions and were encouraged to express their views on such issues. In contrast, many students in Dutch schools and students under sixteen years old in English state schools had few opportunities to explore public policy dilemmas and to express their views on alternative positions. Not surprisingly, members of those groups, overall, expressed comparatively low levels of political efficacy and interest.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES: A VIDEO

In all countries in some classes on some days, some teachers conduct classes in ways that may stimulate participatory attitudes. At the same time, in all countries there are things that might be done to further enhance civic preparation. As I made regular visits to the same schools over a ten-year period I felt privileged to sit in classrooms and learn from a variety of teachers. I wished that I could share what I was seeing with teachers back home and with others everywhere who want to foster democratic participation. If I could capture what I saw onto a composite video, it would reveal a variety of techniques that teachers might want to add to their repertoire.

Scenes from Henriette's and Jonas' classes would show Danish students engaged in deliberations about what public policy issues related to politics, economics, sociology, and international affairs they might investigate; and once having selected their general issues, deciding how they might go about conducting a piece of social science research that would help them to understand one aspect of the issue. Scenes from Mr. Holtmann's and Mrs. Herzog's classes would show German students preparing the results of their local study for publication in a community newspaper. We would see Mrs. Meyer's class discuss the arguments for and against a public policy issue facing the local council, while Mr. Krentz' students debate the advantages and disadvantages of a choice

faced by people in a historic period. In these classes, it is clear that the teacher's role is that of a moderator who encourages students to respond to one another with respect, bringing as many students as possible into the conversation and trying to prevent a few from dominating. The teacher asks some students to elaborate and explain their reasoning further, to comment on whether they agree or disagree with what was said previously, and to consider other aspects not previously mentioned. While maintaining a supportive atmosphere the teacher is careful to press students to ground their views in careful logic, solid evidence, and relevant values.

The video might also show Mrs. Judd's sixth-form English students hearing two speakers from different interest groups who visit the class on consecutive weeks to give their reasons for and against a public policy, explain how they became involved in the issue, and discuss what they do as citizens to try to influence policy making. We would also see younger English students in their personal and social education classes and religious studies classes make connections between private moral choices and support for particular public policies, such as those related to abortion, animal rights, and the environment. We notice, that at the end of their investigations, English students in Mr. Archer's religion class and American students in Mr. Thomas's government class express their opinions in a well-articulated essay. Mr. Stanton and Mrs. de Vries begin new topics by leading a conversation in which students state their opinions on an issue, so that they will become engaged in the investigation that follows. Ms. Foster's students write position papers, and Mr. Webber's write extensive term papers, using the computers in the school media center to help them access information from back issues of periodicals. On different days students in all of these teachers' classes see videos, take parts in a simulation, work in small groups on projects, and together develop schema that help them to organize the information they are gathering on different perspectives or views on an issue.

On our composite video we see students moving beyond study to action. In the Netherlands, Mrs. de Vries' students write letters to heads of governments and policy makers in various countries about particular human rights issues, following their study of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and Mr. de Witt's students talk with MPs from different political parties about pending legislation they have studied related to conditions for new immigrants. In England in a state school, students are raising money for a charity that helps new immigrants, and at a nearby Public School, sixth-form students make plans to spend a year before going to university as volunteers in an international agency that works in the Third World. At a midwestern high school in the United States, students from diverse ethnic backgrounds cooperate to

promote positive intergroup relations at their school, and several German students tell of the volunteer work they are doing to assist new immigrants to their community. In schools in various countries student councils not only plan social activities to foster a positive sense of community in the school but also identify ways that students can become involved with community groups in tackling issues that affect them.

It becomes apparent from the video that classroom climates that foster open inquiry and are reinforced by school climates that encourage participatory civic behaviors can together give young people the opportunity to experience democratic life. We see in our composite video elements of what John Dewey (1966) described as the appropriate education for democracy. Students learn the theory of democracy by experiencing it in practice. Through a process of deliberation, reflection, and communication they develop commitments to the common good and to intellectual freedom, where diversity is valued. Preparation for adult civic life is school civic life in which the political and associational life of the community and of individuals are joined. In diverse democracies we see that dimensions of such an education occurs. So far, however, democratic education in its complete form has not yet been fully realized. There is much yet that can be done.

AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

In this study I attempted to look at variables related to citizenship education and democratic attitudes in countries that were fairly similar in a number of ways. Future researchers need to conduct additional studies in societies that differ from these in key respects to see if they would obtain differing results. In particular, Eastern societies based on Confucian values and African societies with strong communal values may envision democracy and education for democracy in ways that are quite distinct from those presented here. Additionally, much work is going on in new democracies of central and eastern Europe that can reveal insights about how youth develop a desire to participate in democratic communities when they have seen dramatic changes in their economic and political systems. Most importantly, this study reveals that even older democracies are never static; they too need constant attention to improving democratic education for all. Currently, in the five countries studied here, dramatic changes with regard to the integration of people from diverse political traditions present new challenges and opportunities to civic educators. There are other new challenges facing teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers worldwide. But most exciting is the opportunity to carry on a dialogue about these shared challenges with

colleagues in different countries.² Like our students, we will find that open inquiry into issues about which we have diverse views is not easy, but it is crucial to finding solutions to difficult problems. Moreover, in learning to live together in pluralistic societies, we, like our students, are likely to increase our commitment to democratic decision making.

APPENDIX: POLITICAL CONTEXT

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Today the United Kingdom, comprising England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, is a constitutional monarchy, with an unwritten constitution¹ and a monarch who retains the position of head of state while the prime minister is the head of the government. Over more than eight centuries, what was once an absolute monarchy has gradually become a limited one with the real power resting with Parliament. In the autumn of 1994, Prime Minister John Major responded to calls for a referendum on European policy by reminding the public that “this is a Parliamentary democracy,” with the implication that Parliament, rather than the citizens directly, should make major public policy decisions.

Tradition is a powerful force in British political life, as well as in other aspects of society. No single document asserts the rights and responsibilities of the citizen in relation to the government until the recent development of a Citizens Charter, which specifies rights of citizens to good service in dealing with public agencies.

In the United Kingdom, legislative, executive, and judicial powers are centered in Parliament. The bicameral Parliament, consisting of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, is the legislative body for the country. The House of Lords is the second house for legislative purposes and serves as the highest court of appeal.² Its members either inherit their position (peerage) or are appointed lifetime peers by the monarch upon the recommendation of the prime minister.

The House of Commons is the chamber in which legislation originates. Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to it in a “first past the post” system, whereby the candidate receiving the most votes in a constituency wins the seat.³ The political party that obtains the majority of seats in the House of Commons selects the prime minister, who appoints other MPs to form a cabinet (consisting of approximately fifteen to twenty secretaries of state), and some fifty ministers and junior ministers, who are all included in the terms “Government” and “front benchers.” Together they (supported by thousands of civil servants) per-

form the executive function of the government. The “prime” minister is the “first among equals,” and together with the secretaries of state share ministerial responsibility for decisions made by the cabinet.

The main check on potential abuses of power rests with “the loyal opposition.” Vigilance by the opposition is seen as so important that taxpayers’ money is used to support the offices of the “shadow cabinet,” made up of opposition party secretaries of state and ministers who monitor the work of official ministries on particular areas, such as education. During Question Time in the House of Commons, the appropriate shadow secretary or minister will put forth a question to his or her opposite and follow the response with a critique of Government policy. It is essentially an adversarial process, resting on the belief that the best policy will emerge from the airing of consequences of alternatives by the leadership of the political parties. To citizens observing parliamentary debates on television the scene often appears to be a shouting match in which speakers are heckled and booed by MPs from the opposing parties and cheered and encouraged by members of their own party. Although the real work of Parliament occurs in committees, the public debate is the means by which citizens are kept informed of changing policies and their alternatives.

The citizen’s role in the British political system is to pay taxes, obey laws, serve on juries and in the military when called, and to vote for a member of Parliament and local officials about every four or five years, depending upon when a prime minister calls an election. When voter dissatisfaction is sufficiently strong, policies may change even before voters replace one parliamentary majority with another, as was the case when the poll tax was withdrawn in the early 1990s. Also, to respond to voter dissatisfaction about particular policies between elections, cabinet members associated with a given policy can be dismissed from the cabinet by the prime minister, and the prime minister can be replaced by the majority of his or her party colleagues in the House of Commons. For the most part, political elites have the primary tasks of governing or being in active opposition; the media, political parties, and interest groups serve a mediating role; and citizens retain the ultimate power to change governments via periodic elections.

Alongside these shared institutions and traditions, variations within the United Kingdom are of major importance. For example, Scotland has a separate legal and educational system; the Scottish National Party regularly is successful in winning seats in Parliament, and there was overwhelming support for a Scottish legislature in the 1997 referendum. In Wales, religious nonconformity and nineteenth-century liberalism remain strong influences; Welsh nationalism is strong only in North Wales as was evident in the 1997 referendum on a Welsh assembly. In

Northern Ireland political culture is rent by religious allegiances.

Nevertheless, in all parts of the country, political culture is influenced by a tradition of strong political parties. An individual voter casts his or her ballot for the person nominated by the party. The assumption is that one is voting for a party rather than for a person. Once in Parliament, a British MP usually votes with other members of his or her party. With the dominance of party bloc voting on most issues, an MP faces the problem of whether to vote with one's party or constituency (district) less often than does a member of the United States Congress. When MPs refuse to go along with their party they can be removed from the parliamentary party, as occurred in 1994–95 when eight Conservative MPs refused to support their party's positions on Europe; they lost their committee positions and access to information while retaining the seat in Parliament to which they were elected.

Most British MPs remain accessible to citizens by holding weekly "surgeries" in their constituency during which citizens can have private appointments as they might with their doctor. At such appointments, citizens might ask the MP for assistance with some problem having to do with the administration of government or they might express their views on some issue. Additionally some people write their MP about issues on which they have strong feelings.⁴

British citizens vote for local district councilors as well as for MPs—but again they usually vote for a party rather than for an individual. Both local and parliamentary campaigns, which last only about one month, are characterized by party workers distributing party positions, or manifestos, door to door. During the month leading up to an election, television commercials carry party messages, which, with the recent influence of North American marketing companies, have begun to focus more on the personalities of the candidates than they did in the past. Annually, each major party holds a conference, and throughout the year the television carries "party political broadcasts" that present the party's position on issues. The official party manifestos (comparable to platforms in the United States) are published when the date of a general election is announced.

The average citizen debates party positions during the brief campaign period, votes, and the remaining time follows news coverage of political debates in Parliament. A minority of activists join a party and attend local party meetings. In general "politics" is perceived as the differences in political ideology among competing parties and as debates between opposing parliamentarians—not the work of average citizens. Ian Lister, a professor at the University of York and a leader in the political literacy movement of the 1970s and 1980s, likened British students'

perceptions of politics to passively observing gladiatorial contests (Lister, 1991).

With recent changes in society the citizen's role in policy making continues to evolve. For example, the growth in the service and government sectors and a corresponding decrease in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors has reduced the percentage of voters with traditional allegiances to either the party of labor or of the land and business owners. An increase in the percentage of the population with a post-secondary education and the widespread availability of political news on television means that more citizens are aware of political events. Media stories of political scandals contributed to declining levels of political trust among the electorate in recent decades. Thus, British citizens of today have weaker ties to political parties, less confidence in government to do what is best for them, and an increased awareness of controversial public policy issues that affect their lives than did earlier generations. National debates about Britain's role in international security, economic policies during a continuing recession, and the future of the welfare state all mobilized citizen interest (Dalton, 1988).

As a consequence of increased education, social mobility, the influence of the media, and weakening allegiance of voters to a particular party, scholars such as Russell Dalton argue that a new British citizen is emerging, one who is more likely to participate in the political process and less likely to rely on political elites than did his or her forebears (Dalton, 1988, p. 239).⁵ In earlier days, protests were the last resort of desperate people trying to overthrow a regime, but since the 1960s the use of planned political protests has become an accepted form of political activity. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the women at Greenham Common, numerous environmental groups, and animal rights groups have protested at such places as missile sites and NATO bases, nuclear energy plants, in front of stores that sell products tested on animals, or at ports from which live animals were to be exported to Europe for slaughter.⁶ Many interest groups appeal particularly to young people, and some of their recommendations eventually appear in political party manifestos. Individuals, many working through interest groups, demand to be heard. Although there is still no experience with initiatives, and referenda are used only rarely, when British citizens followed news of the French and Danish referenda on the Maastricht Treaty, some individuals began to demand that their Parliament also put the issue to a vote of the people. However, tradition and power won out, and the decision to move toward fuller integration into the European Union was made by Parliament.

In the years 1988–90 the concept of citizenship entered the political agenda. The three major political parties talked about it from the per-

spectives of their respective political ideologies. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State Douglas Hurd, and other Conservative Party leaders called for a return to "active citizenship," such as individual voluntary efforts to assist the needy and to fight crime through neighborhood watch schemes. They encouraged businesses to become active citizens by contributing money and in-kind support to local schools and hospitals. By 1990, however, *The Guardian* newspaper noted that "the 'active citizen' had vanished from public debate as if he had never been" (Heater, 1991, p. 144).

Labour Party leaders have traditionally emphasized that a basic principle of democratic socialism is that citizens' obligations to the community are best fulfilled when government improves social welfare provisions. The new Liberal Democratic Party, which brought together former Liberals and Social Democrats, taking yet another approach to citizenship, called for constitutional reforms, such as a written Constitution; a Bill of Rights based on the European Convention on Human Rights; adoption of proportional representation of parliamentary seats; a definition of entitlements to health, education, housing, and welfare; and devolution of power to national assemblies in Scotland and Wales and to regional assemblies in England. Thus, in the British context, the very concept of citizenship takes on different meanings in light of one's political party ideology (Heater, 1991; Oliver, 1991).

Britain's role in the European Union raises other issues related to citizenship. For example, some scholars have questioned whether Britons can develop a feeling of European citizenship simultaneous to their national citizenship (Heater, 1990). British voters, like those in the other European countries in this study, now elect members to the European Parliament and are affected by decisions made in Brussels. To the average citizen, an additional layer of government, geographically removed from them, may alienate them further from politics. Grassroots opposition to European policies on fishing and the treatment of animals for the veal industry was intense. The thought of monetary and military policies being made abroad is even more abhorrent to many British citizens.

DENMARK

Denmark is similar to the United Kingdom in that its constitutional monarchy evolved over hundreds of years. Unlike the British system, however, the modern Danish political system was established in a written constitution in 1849 and then amended several times until the current constitution was instituted in 1953. The 1953 constitution confirms that Denmark is a democratic constitutional monarchy.

While the monarch is the head of state, the executive power in Denmark is granted to the Government (ministers) headed by the prime minister. Legislative power is assigned to the unicameral legislature, the *Folketing*, to which members are elected by a process of proportional representation.⁷ There is an independent judiciary. The Danish Constitution further creates an office of ombudsperson—a feature of Scandinavian political systems—to investigate citizens' complaints against national and local administrations.⁸ Characteristic of Denmark and other Scandinavian countries is the periodic use of the referendum, which in recent years has focused public attention on the pros and cons of Danish participation in the European Union. Additionally, the Danish Constitution guarantees basic rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech and assembly, and it guarantees declaratory social rights such as rights to work and to social welfare assistance.

Danish culture is characterized by cooperation and negotiation, as opposed to confrontation. Denmark has never experienced a revolution and even the transfer of central power from a monarch to the people was achieved calmly. The country was neutral in World War I and was occupied by Germany in 1940, with an agreement that the Danes would remain in control of their major institutions (an underground Danish resistance movement was active during the occupation). After World War II, Denmark joined NATO and the Council of Europe. Referenda on Danish participation in the European Union were opposed in part because of a reluctance—like Britain's—to join other nations in a common defense policy, reservations about a single European currency, and fears of losing cultural identity. Additionally, some leftist parties opposed the union on the grounds that it benefited business and removed decision making further from the people.

Cooperation and negotiation are especially important in a political landscape of proportional representation and multiple political parties.⁹ In order to govern, several parties must form and sustain a coalition. Four of the political parties have existed since the turn of the century with other parties growing and waning from one election to the next. Since the 1920s, the Social Democrats have been the largest party, winning from 25 percent to 45 percent of the votes. However, when no single party obtains a majority of votes, parties seek others to form a coalition, sometimes leaving the largest single party out of the Government. At other times the Social Democrats are successful in forming coalitions with other parties, usually to their right. Citizens thus cast votes for a particular party's positions, giving it power to form coalitions. When a coalition government is formed, leaders of the parties decide which ministries will go to each of the governing parties. A similar process is followed by the multiplicity of parties that vie for voters' support at the

local (*Kommune*) level, with the largest party being assigned the most important local committees (councils), one of which is responsible for schools, and others for various social welfare programs.

In Denmark there is also a multiplicity of newspapers and news magazines, with each representing a different political viewpoint. National radio and television were run as a state monopoly until 1988. Now both the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, funded by a license fee, and independent stations supported by advertising are regulated by public service authorities. Equal time is given to all of the political parties during a three-week election campaign, but at other times most media attention focuses on the views of the largest parties. Although class perception was a major determinant of voting behavior in the past and most people identified with the party of their parents, in Denmark as in other European countries and the United States, party membership and loyalty has been on the decline in recent years (Fitzmaurice, 1981). Nevertheless, Danish youth are constantly exposed to the diverse messages of a variety of political parties.

Focused issues such as tax reform, the environment, immigration policies, and closer integration in the European Union have generated support for new parties at the same time that older parties adjust to changing concerns. Although there have been widely differing political and economic policies advocated by different parties, until recently Denmark has been a relatively homogeneous society. There were few immigrants and no deep religious or ethnic cleavages. That is now changing as immigrants from diverse backgrounds are settling in many areas, particularly in Copenhagen. Nevertheless, deciding among competing public policy choices within the context of widely shared cultural values continues to be the task for which Danish schools prepare future citizens.

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Written in the post-World War II period, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) of the Federal Republic of Germany, the de facto constitution¹⁰) was intended to overcome problems that were thought to have made the Weimar Republic vulnerable to the Nazi takeover. Under the Basic Law the German public would vote only every four years directly for the lower house of the legislature; presidential power would be neutralized in a primarily figurehead role; political parties would have to obtain at least 5 percent of the popular vote in a national election to be represented in Parliament;¹¹ and, rather than being concentrated into a central unified system, powers would be shared between the states and the cen-

tral government in a federal system. Moreover, Articles 1–19 of the Basic Law give civil and political rights a primary position, the Federal Constitutional Court is the watchdog protecting the Basic Law, and the articles dealing with human dignity and the right to resist any person seeking to abolish the constitutional order cannot be amended.

Four principles enshrined in the Basic Law are: democracy (all public authority emanates from the people, so that people vote directly for representatives to the lower house of Parliament and to state legislatures; other officials are selected indirectly), rule by law (actions of the state are subject to the Basic Law, which includes some separation of powers and processes of checks and balances), social welfarism (the state is obligated to support the socially weak citizens and to strive for social justice), and federalism (government power and authority are shared between the central government [*Bund*] and the states [*Länder*], with Article 70 of the Basic Law granting residual powers to the states so that those powers not specified for the central government are reserved for the states).¹²

The executive function of the central government is carried out by the president (*Bundespräsident*), the chancellor, and a cabinet of ministers. The legislative function is carried out by a bicameral legislature (*Parlament*) made up of a directly elected *Bundestag* (lower house) and an indirectly elected *Bundesrat* (upper house).

As head of state, the president, like many European monarchs, is primarily a figurehead representing the country to the world. The president is expected to be above politics. Elected every five years by a federal convention (electoral college) made up of all members of the *Bundestag* and delegates from the states, he (or theoretically, she, but so far no women have held this role nor that of chancellor) concludes international treaties and appoints ministers, federal judges, and civil servants, upon the advice of the chancellor. The president's role is one of mediator. The president proposes the candidate for chancellor, taking into account the majority in Parliament, and can dissolve the *Bundestag* and call an early election.

The chancellor is the head of the Government, just as the prime minister is in the other European countries in this study. He or she (so far, however, the six chancellors have been males) is elected by the majority in the *Bundestag* upon the nomination of the president, who proposes as chancellor designate the leader of the majority party or majority coalition in the *Bundestag* following an election. The chancellor selects the ministers, who are not usually members of parliament (MPs), and recommends their appointment to the president. The fifteen to twenty cabinet ministers tend to manage their departments “on their own responsibility,” with less collective input than occurs in other par-

liamentary democracies (Mahler, 1995, p. 244) such as Great Britain.

The *Bundestag* is the more powerful of the two houses of Parliament. It is elected by a mixed “personalized” vote every four years (or sooner if the Government loses a vote of confidence and the president, upon the advice of the chancellor, dissolves it early and calls an election). Half of the *Bundestag* is elected by a proportional representation system and half by a majority system. For that reason, each voter casts two votes. The first is for a person to represent the district or constituency (plurality wins). The second is for a party list at the *Land* (state) level for the purpose of proportional representation for the *Land*. Consequently, the first 331¹³ seats in the *Bundestag* go to the individuals who come in first in their constituencies (like MPs in Britain, or members of Congress in the United States). Parties winning at least 5 percent of the second vote are represented, proportionally, in the other half.¹⁴ The role of the *Bundestag* is to elect the chancellor and pass laws, which are initiated either by the legislative branch (the *Bundestag* or the *Bundesrat*) or by the executive branch (the chancellor and ministers).

The *Bundesrat* or upper house of the Parliament, represents the *Länder*, reflecting the importance given to the federal system. Members of the *Bundesrat* are appointed by the state governments and thus reflect the majority party in power at that level.¹⁵ Each *Land* has from three to six representatives, depending on its size;¹⁶ members of the state’s delegates are required to vote as a bloc. Some representatives are ministers in their *Land* (e.g., the *Ministerpräsident* [or head minister] and the ministers of finance, home affairs and justice), while others are *Land* representatives to the *Bund*. The presidents of the states, following a rotation, take turns acting as the chair. The *Bundesrat* must approve all legislation that affects the states; this has been interpreted widely to mean all legislation they must administer.

Parliamentary committees are constituted by proportional representation. Although they may hold open hearings, committee meetings are not regularly open to the public. The Government does have a question time, but most questions are answered in written form, so there are no open and visible challenges from the opposition as in the British House of Commons.

The Federal Constitutional Court, based in Karlsruhe, is the “guardian” of the Basic Law.¹⁷ The Court hears appeals on disputes between *Länder* or from individuals regarding fundamental freedoms. Only this court has the power to declare that a political party constitutes a threat to democracy and freedom and is, therefore, unconstitutional. In such an instance the Court dissolves the party. It also scrutinizes federal and state laws to ensure they conform to the Basic Law. The court can annul parts of laws or declare laws unconstitutional, leaving it up to

the Parliament to make any changes. Unlike the Supreme Court in the United States, the Constitutional Court is not a court of appeal for criminal and civil cases. Even in criminal and civil cases, most are settled by judges and lawyers, not juries.

The sixteen *Länder* are divided into 543 *Kreise* (districts), and 8,500 *Gemeinden* (communes), with 117 being both. Local government has a long tradition dating back to the privileges of the free towns in the Middle Ages ("town air makes people free"). Self-government of towns and counties is expressly guaranteed by the Basic Law. They are responsible for such things as local transportation, electricity, water, gas, sewage, and town planning.

Candidates for party lists (nominated candidates) for the *Bundestag*, as well as for the *Landestage* (state legislatures), and local councils are selected by party activists. Approximately 5 percent of the voters join political parties. They pay dues and are invited to local party meetings during which they vote for representatives to higher party levels, which draw up the party lists.¹⁸ Elections are held every four years at the national level, every four or five years at the state level, and every five years at the local level.

In Germany, there are usually high voter turnouts at elections—89 percent in West Germany in 1983, declining to 77 percent since reunification. There are few barriers to voting, as registration certificates are mailed to all eligible voters and voting is held on Sundays. With the use of proportional representation, there are no "lost votes" (unless one votes for a minor party that does not receive 5 percent of the vote for the *Bundestag*), so one can feel that his or her vote will make a direct difference on who sits on the local council, in the state legislature, and in the *Bundestag*, as well as an indirect difference on the selection of the chancellor, the president, and members of the *Bundesrat*. The traditionally high voter turnout may also be influenced by a sense of duty and responsibility lingering from old Prussian values, or out of a determination to prevent non-democratic forces like Nazism ever again coming to power. Moreover, there are no long lists of issues or offices about which to be informed, and campaigns are only about a month in duration, so the public is not bored by the time of the election.

After the election there is a general sense that one leaves the professional politicians alone to do their work. Government officials do not solicit citizen input for decision making, and there is no expectation that one would contact an MP to advise him or her on legislation. At the local level political parties do periodically hold meetings to hear citizens' opinions about local issues. However, it is primarily the local party leadership, rather than the citizens at large, who advise councilors on issues, both locally and at higher levels.

One author argues that today in Germany more people show their support for candidates than they did in the past, and they watch pre-election debates on television (Dalton, 1988). Nevertheless, most people are politically active only in terms of voting, with only 20 percent taking part in any other activities. The young are more politically active than their elders (a situation contrary to that found in the United States). Germans are less likely than the British or Americans to sign a petition, but more likely to participate in a demonstration (Dalton, 1988). In the 1970s there were youth demonstrations as there were in the other countries in this study. In the 1980s there were demonstrations for peace and environmental issues. In the 1990s demonstrations were primarily against racism. In Germany, as in the other Western democracies, unconventional forms of political activity have become more common than they were twenty years ago (Dalton, 1988).

Finally, with regard to current public policy issues facing citizens, there has been a move away from public ownership to privatization. Nevertheless, the state still owns some shares in the railways, airlines, auto, steel, coal, and banking industries. Germany has a long history of cooperation, or an unofficial partnership, between government and business. Associations and owners of factories and trade unions are autonomous social partners who negotiate. The state only mediates in some cases.

The Basic Law specifies rights for citizens and the right to asylum for all people. In the 1990s a controversial amendment to the Basic Law was passed by Parliament. The amendment continues to guarantee asylum for all those who are persecuted, for foreigners from European Union countries and from "safe" third countries (those in which the Geneva Convention on Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights are in force). The policy is to process requests for asylum as quickly as possible, so that those who are denied asylum cannot stay in the country and receive benefits over a long period.

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands¹⁹ is a constitutional monarchy whereby the monarch appoints a *formateur* or an *informateur* to form a government following parliamentary elections; the prime minister is the head of the government. But the Dutch prime minister, unlike his—or theoretically her—British counterpart, has few powers. He (so far no women have held the position) chairs Cabinet meetings, but he neither appoints nor removes ministers. The members of the Government represent the parliamentary parties who, together, hold a majority of seats in the *Tweede Kamer*

(Second Chamber). The Netherlands is similar to Denmark in that it has numerous political parties, and seats in the national legislature are allocated on the basis of proportional representation. However, in most other respects, the political context in which Dutch youth are socialized is quite distinct.

Since 1815, the Dutch Constitution has provided the basis for governmental structures and processes. The bicameral Parliament, or *Staten-Generaal* (States-General) as it is called, is the legislative branch of the central government. The *Eerste Kamer* (First Chamber) is the upper house and consists of 75 members who are elected by provincial councils. The *Tweede Kamer* (Second Chamber) is the lower house, consisting of 150 members who are elected directly by voters who must be over eighteen. Elections are held at least once in every four years, and seats in the Second Chamber are then assigned according to the proportion of the vote that each party received. With as many as twenty-five parties seeking seats in recent elections and nine obtaining sufficient numbers of votes to be seated in Parliament, no one party is able to garner a majority of seats, necessitating the creation of a coalition to form a Government.²⁰ Ministers, who may not simultaneously hold a seat in Parliament (unlike Britain, for example), are appointed by a negotiating group of party leaders who agree to form a coalition government.²¹ Ministers are sought as much for their expertise in particular fields as for their party affiliation (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993). With the aid of civil servants with years of experience in particular ministries, ministers draw up legislation. Individual MPs in the Netherlands rarely exercise their right to initiate bills. Bills passed by the Second Chamber are submitted to the First Chamber for adoption or, in rare cases, rejection, as they cannot be amended.

The executive function of central government is carried out by the monarch and the ministers. No one in the executive or judicial branches is elected (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993).

An independent judiciary is made up of judges who are appointed for life. The highest court can overrule decisions of lower courts. Judges cannot declare laws unconstitutional, but they can declare that a law is in conflict with international law, including that of the European Union. There are no trials by jury. Consequently, a citizen's role does not include serving on juries. Since 1982 the Netherlands has had a national ombudsperson whose job it is to examine relations between the government and citizens, a role similar to that of the ombudsperson in Denmark and the United Kingdom. If citizens feel they have been unfairly treated, they can file complaints with the ombudsperson.

The Netherlands is a decentralized unitary state, with some government responsibilities delegated to the twelve provinces and approxi-

mately 650 municipalities (in 1991). Each province has a provincial council that is directly elected by voters according to proportional representation every four years. Each council appoints its own provincial executive, which is responsible for the administration of the province. The Government appoints a queen's commissioner, who chairs the provincial council and the provincial executive. The management of canals, dikes, and irrigation is an especially important responsibility because half of the country is below sea level. This is managed by the regional water authorities, whose members are elected by the inhabitants of the particular region.

Municipal councils are directly elected every four years according to proportional representation; the process is similar to that at the provincial and national levels. However, the *burgemeester* (mayor) is appointed by the central government in consultation with the Queen's Commissioner and with advice from the municipal council. The municipal level is responsible for police and fire departments as well as public housing. They are also expected to provide billboards upon which political parties can display their posters at election times—one of the few visible indicators that a "campaign" is in progress.

Because the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, planning is of major importance at all levels of government. The central government lays down the main guidelines, within which the provincial authorities develop regional plans, and the municipalities administer zoning plans.

The principle of a decentralized unitary state is also reflected in the administration of education. Educational policies are developed centrally through detailed national legislation. Additionally, the central government pays for education. The municipalities implement the policies, distribute funds, and administer and manage public (neutral) schools, which do not have a religious affiliation.

As explained in chapter 1, the "pillarization" of Dutch society is an important influence on the political as well as social environment, giving it the character of a consociational democracy. According to Andeweg and Irwin (1993), consociational democracies such as the Netherlands depend on four principles: executive power sharing in a grand coalition, autonomy for each segment or pillar, proportionality, and minority veto. Andeweg and Irwin further argue that yes/no decisions are avoided at all costs. When a compromise is not possible, proportionality becomes the guiding principle. For example, proportionality is used not only in assigning seats in legislative councils but also in distributing funds to housing and health care associations and schools in the Netherlands. Issues that cannot be solved by compromise or proportionality are handled by various forms of "non decision-making"

(Andeweg & Irwin, 1993). That is, commissions investigate until an issue cools off. The issue remains unresolved until a judge's ruling can be applied—or as in the case of euthanasia a restrictive law was passed but not all violations are brought to court.

Campaigning in the Netherlands is not yet very well developed compared to that seen in some other democracies (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993). Dekker and Portengen (1995) note that in the pillarized period there were few reasons to expend effort to obtain new votes, because broadcasting organizations were part of the pillarized system and commercial television is a relatively recent phenomenon. Political parties, which are almost exclusively member financed, lack the necessary funds for commercial advertising; thus they have had to rely upon free publicity from the public television evening news and current affairs programs. Their goal is to attract journalists' attention with short campaign statements and surprises. Only recently have some of the parties started to promote their leaders as well as their political programs (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

Overall, the role of the citizen in the Netherlands is not particularly demanding. Although since 1970 it has no longer been compulsory to vote, there remains a high voter turnout (approximately 80 percent in national elections). Residents of a municipality are eligible to vote there. Elections are held about once a year for party representatives to one of four levels of government—the Second Chamber, provincial council, municipal council, or the European Parliament. Because MPs represent a party rather than a geographic district, citizens do not write to "their" MP. Although some municipalities have referenda on local issues, Dutch citizens do not vote on national referenda. They also do not serve on juries. Fewer than 10 percent of voting-age citizens join political parties, little money is spent on campaigns where all parties are given equal time on television and posters appear only on designated town boards. It has been argued by some that there is much reliance on facts and the role of experts to make wise decisions (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993). Ministers, queen's commissioners, mayors, civil servants, commissions at all levels, and judges are appointed for their expertise, as well as in most cases, their political affiliation. In surveys of adult political attitudes, the Dutch electorate has consistently over time and in comparison with voters in other European democracies indicated a general respect for and trust in government decision makers (Andeweg & Irwin, 1993, pp. 239–240).

THE UNITED STATES

The skepticism of a strong central authority is enshrined in the Constitution by the creation of a set of checks and balances among the

branches of the national government and the establishment of a federal system in which power is shared between national and state governments.²² Having inherited the principle of representative government from the English, the United States, however, is the only country in this study with a presidential rather than a parliamentary form of government.²³ Moreover, the president of the United States is both head of state (like the British, Danish, and Dutch monarchs and the German president) and head of government (like the British, Danish, and Dutch prime ministers and the German chancellor). Uniquely, the United States' president is elected, albeit technically indirectly through the electoral college, by the voters. The president appoints the cabinet, whose members belong neither to the legislative branch nor necessarily to the majority party in Congress—much to the chagrin of those who complained of gridlock during the Reagan and Bush presidencies when Congress was controlled by the Democrats and during the Clinton presidency when the Republicans controlled Congress. To many a European, this is a far less efficient system than is a parliamentary one; there the executive branch reflects the majority in the legislative branch, and together they implement a common policy agenda.

In the United States the legislative function at the national level rests in a bicameral legislature, with both houses directly elected by the voters—unlike the situation in the four European systems in this study. Moreover, members of the House of Representatives must face election every two years, far more frequently than do MPs in the other countries. The United States uses a “winner take all” system of electing representatives from single member districts. The tradition in the United States is that a member of Congress primarily represents his or her constituency; this contributes to less party discipline in Congress than is found in the four European parliaments. Many voters consider themselves “independents” and do not identify with either party or easily change allegiance from one election to the next. In the United States children are taught that a good citizen not only votes but also writes to his or her Congressional representatives, telling them how to vote on bills. Although only a minority of the voters do that very often, many do at some time.²⁴

At the top of the judicial branch is the Supreme Court of the United States, which is composed of judges who are appointed by the president for life terms—a feature similar to the Dutch justices’ lifetime appointments. The Supreme Court serves both as the court of highest appeal in civil and criminal cases, as do the Law Lords in Britain, and as the constitutional court with the power to declare laws passed by the state and national legislatures unconstitutional, a function similar to that of the German Constitutional Court. Because Supreme Court justices have the

power to interpret the Constitution, students study “landmark” decisions giving new interpretations to the Constitution in light of changing times. Of particular importance are decisions related to the Bill of Rights which protect individual liberties. The constitutional traditions in the other countries in this study also assert protection of individual civil liberties, with slightly different emphases, as is illustrated in chapter 4 dealing with the right to free expression.

Federalism is an important principle in the United States, just as it is in Germany. Whereas Germany had a long tradition of separate states and confederations prior to the modern era, the United States had a shorter period of confederation preceding the writing of the Constitution. And much as Germany’s people underwent a negative experience with a strong central government prior to writing the Basic Law, the Founders of the United States Constitution felt negatively about central power as they had experienced under King George III and the British parliament. It is not surprising then, that both constitutions assign all residual powers, that is, those not explicitly granted to the central government, to the state and local authorities and to the people.

In the United States, skepticism of government has also been reflected in the American frontier experience, Populist demands for voter power, and Progressivism’s responses to graft and urban corruption. Together those historic experiences led to placing greater demands on the average voter than are required in the European countries in this study. For example, only in the United States must the citizen make a special effort to register to vote. Then, he or she can vote in primary elections—a phenomenon unique among these countries—to name delegates to nominating conventions and to nominate candidates for office at all levels of government. Further, an American citizen has the opportunity at election time to vote on initiatives (proposed by people who signed a petition), on referenda (proposed by members of the state legislature), and amendments to the state and national constitutions, as well as for representatives to local councils, and state and national legislatures as is the case in other countries. American voters also, depending on their local situation, might elect the mayor, sheriff, judges, coroner, school board members, state superintendent of schools and/or state school board members, state attorney general, insurance commissioner, head of the public utilities regulation board, and others. Voters in the United States are asked to cast their ballots for many more offices and on many more issues than those in any of the other countries in this study. For example, one scholar noted that over one five-year period a resident of Cambridge, England, could have voted 4 times as compared to the 165 times that a resident of Tallahassee, Florida, could have voted (Dalton, 1988, p. 40). The overwhelming nature of this task is often

given as a major explanation for the low voter turnouts in the United States as compared to that in the other Western democracies. It also makes the challenge of educating a sufficiently well informed electorate daunting, particularly in light of the fact that so many citizens now, as well as in the past, come from diverse political traditions.

NOTES

PREFACE

1. From the time of the Vikings and the Saxons through the two World Wars, the histories of these northern European countries were intertwined. Their people shared the experiences of the Protestant Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, and a gradual evolution from absolute monarchies to republicanism which gave them shared values of individualism, capitalism, and democracy. Immigrants from the northern European countries in turn carried those values to North America.

1. STUDYING CIVIC EDUCATION: SETTING THE STAGE

1. Thus the networks that I used involved educators who were probably more cosmopolitan, international, and professionally oriented than "typical" teachers. Moreover, upon hearing the general purposes of the study teachers who volunteered their classes to participate may have been more likely than other teachers to address issues, values, and political topics than are other teachers. However, these limitations operated in all five countries, so the samples of teachers are likely to be comparable in this respect across the countries.

2. In Germany there are four types of secondary schools. *Hauptschulen* for grades 7 through 9 are the least academically challenging. They provide instruction for students planning to enter an apprenticeship upon leaving school. Once enrolling about one-third of students in West Germany, by 1995 fewer than 2 percent of students in the reunited Germany attended *Hauptschulen*. None were included in this study. *Realschulen*, for grades 7 through 10, are the next most academically challenging for students who later go on to an apprenticeship, directly to employment, or on to a *Gymnasium*, upon passing the *Realschule* exam. *Gymnasien* are the most academic schools where there is a tripartite system. In some areas, students enter a *Gymnasium* as early as grade 5 to begin their course for university preparation. At the end of grade 13, *Gymnasium* students take the *Abitur*, a school-leaving exam. A passing score enables them to enroll in a university. Traditionally fewer than 20 percent of students in West Germany attended *Gymnasien*, but in the 1990s the percentage in some areas was closer to 40 percent. In only a few areas in the west where the Social Democratic party was the majority and in the eastern states were *Gesamtschulen*

or "comprehensive" schools the norm. In such schools, students are "tracked" or "streamed" for all their subjects.

In Denmark, *folkeskoler* are the public schools that all students attend through grades 9 or 10. Approximately one-third of a cohort goes on to a three-year college preparatory course at a *gymnasium* leading to the upper secondary school leaving exam or a two-year course leading to the higher preparatory examination, known as the "HF" (*Højere Forberedelseseksamen*). Some students attend commercial or technical schools after age 16, but none of them were included in this study.

In the Netherlands, a *vbo* or junior secondary vocational school provides a four-year course of prevocational education and a *mavo* or junior general secondary education school offers a four-year general education that may lead to higher education or to employment. Senior general secondary schools (*havo*) offer a five-year course of study, usually leading to further education programs. The pre-university, or *vwo*, program is a six-year program that prepares students for university entrance. In addition to the four types of secondary schools administered by the Dutch Ministry of Education there are also junior and senior agricultural schools. All of these school types were included in this study.

The sample from the Netherlands overrepresented vocational schools and underrepresented upper secondary and preuniversity schools in the country. For that reason, whenever possible I refer to similar data obtained from nationally representative samples. In 1994, the proportion of school types administered by the Ministry of Education in the country were: 24 percent *vbo*, 24 percent *mavo*, 34 percent *havo* and *vwo*, with another 17 percent in a common first grade (Dekker & Portengen, 1995). All schools in the sample used for the quantitative analyses were coeducational. In England, because a small percentage of single sex schools exists, I additionally made observations in one girls school.

3. Unfortunately, some regions of each country were not represented. In the United Kingdom, when I began the study, a major teachers action made it inadvisable to make requests of schools in Scotland, and at that time I did not have contacts in Wales and Northern Ireland. Because both schooling and political cultures in those areas vary distinctly, and because I wanted to work with comparable samples in both time periods, in 1993 I decided to again restrict my sample to schools in England. In Germany in 1985, the Berlin Wall had not yet fallen, and all my contacts were in the west. In 1993, I resisted the temptation to expand the sample into the east because the pupils there had received their political socialization under very different conditions than those in the west; and again, I wanted to keep the sample as comparable as possible for the two time periods. In the Netherlands, despite conversations with several educators in the northern part of the country I was never able to obtain schools in the north. That was unfortunate because the north contains more Protestants and the south more Catholics, a factor that could influence political socialization. However, my findings from the Netherlands did not substantially differ from studies that used national samples and which are cited in the text. In Denmark, I did not meet social stud-

ies educators from Jutland until after the completion of my data collection.

4. I usually began student interviews by explaining that I was interested in finding out what secondary school students in different countries thought about politics, politicians, government, and current issues. I would then ask students if they were interested in politics and government and if they thought they were more or less interested than students in other countries, and than students in their school might have been in the past, and why. From there I would probe and follow up their comments with further questions, eventually trying to determine which issues did and did not interest them, what their opinions were on some of those issues and whether they had discussed them in school, what they thought of politics and politicians, how much they kept up with the news, whether they thought citizens could influence political decisions, whether they had gotten involved in political actions, and whether they thought females and males should be equally involved in politics. I also asked about what they had learned in the class that year and the instructional activities and methods that were used.

5. I report both effect sizes (deltas) and results of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) in tables appearing throughout the book. I discuss only effect sizes in the text, focusing on the importance of any difference. The samples used here were not randomly selected, a condition that is assumed with tests of significance. However, because some readers desire information about statistical significance, arguing that random samples are rarely available in educational research, they can find ANOVA results on the tables. Replication of the 1986 survey in 1993 and triangulation of survey data with student and teacher interviews and classroom observations are used to add to the validity of the findings. Robinson and Levin (1997) call for reporting both effect sizes and ANOVAs as ANOVAs answer the question: What is the likelihood the finding is due to chance?, and effect sizes address whether the size of an observed difference is important.

6. Some students do elect to take an extra A-level exam in General Studies, but in only one school I visited did all students do that. The exam covers a breadth of subjects including some social and political events, fine arts, and mathematics.

7. Because teachers are civil servants, the candidates with the top scores on the state level civil servants' test for teachers (and administrative or university positions) are assigned by the ministry of education to a particular school. As civil servants, they are relatively well paid and can be fired only in extreme cases.

8. All students take some common subjects, such as Dutch and a combination history-*maatschappileer* course, courses in four profile areas (history, geography, and economics can be taken in profiles III and/or IV), and some free choice courses. *Maatschappileer* may be offered only as a free choice.

9. These patterns have been changing slightly in the 1990s as many school districts and states are reworking their curricula, particularly in light of new voluntary national standards in social studies, civics and government, history, and geography.

2. BECOMING POLITICAL: ADOLESCENT POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

1. Political efficacy is seen by some as having both an internal and an external component. The external component refers to a perception of the system's sensitivity to citizen input. Internal political efficacy is closer to the new term *political confidence* and relates to whether one feels if politics is too complicated to be comprehensible, presumably to oneself.

2. Additionally, researchers who looked at subgroups of students concluded that black students and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tended to have lower levels of efficacy, interest, and trust than did white students and students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Ehman, 1972; Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Lyons, 1970).

3. Several researchers focused on the influence of social class and concluded that British students from working-class backgrounds and those attending secondary modern schools (general education) had lower levels of political interest, efficacy, and trust than did students from middle-class families and those who attended the more academic grammar schools or the British "Public" schools—*independent, expensive, usually boarding schools* (Abramson, 1967; Dowse & Hughes, 1971a, 1971b).

4. In that study researchers, unlike those in Britain, found that school type had virtually no relationship to political attitudes. No differences were found on seventy-six out of eighty attitude items when students in the more academic *Gymnasien* were compared with students in comprehensive secondary schools and vocational schools (Krieger, 1986).

5. The Political Trust scale contained items developed at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center and used in many political socialization studies in the past. The factor analyses conducted in 1986 and 1993 confirmed the construct validity of this scale. The Cronbach alpha to ascertain internal consistency for the total sample in 1986 was .78 and for the total sample in 1993 was again .78. The alphas by country for the 1993 samples were: .79, .74, .72, .77, and .77 for responses from Danish, English, German, Dutch, and American students, respectively.

6. Dutch student responses here were similar to those obtained in another study using a sample of students from schools that were nationally representative (Dekker & Portengen, 1995). In that study 19 percent of respondents agreed that a lot of politicians are corrupt; 33 percent disagreed, while 48 percent had no opinion or did not know.

7. Pseudonyms are used for all students and teachers in reporting qualitative data in this study. In addition to using first names for students, I use first names for Danish teachers because that is what their students call them. I use Mr., Ms., or Mrs. as students do with their teachers in the other four countries.

8. In another study, 68 percent of Dutch students agreed that "politicians consciously promise more than they can deliver"; 11 percent disagreed and 21.5 percent had no opinion or did not know (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

9. The items used in 1986 were originally developed at the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, but because they had previously

been used with items measuring other dimensions of this concept, there was no previously established validity and reliability of the scale used here. Factor analyses were conducted both in 1986 and 1993. Items for this scale loaded together on a single factor. The Cronbach alpha obtained for the responses to scale items in 1986 was .64. For the second administration, several new items were added, and the Cronbach alpha for the new, revised scale was calculated at .62 for the total sample, with alphas of .58, .59, .69, .62, and .66 for responses of students from Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, respectively. Stentz and Lambert (1977) argued that measures of political efficacy suffered from weak validity and reliability. Unfortunately, this work was unable to overcome the difficulties with this scale.

10. Among students in a nationally representative sample of Dutch schools in 1994, a majority of students said that people like them had some say about what the government does; 34 percent disagreed and 16 percent had no opinion or disagreed (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

11. The Political Confidence scale was developed by Ehman and Gillespie in 1975. Using factor analyses, in several studies researchers verified its construct validity and obtained reliability coefficients to measure internal consistency of the scale. Cronbach alphas in studies by Ehman (1977), Hahn & Avery (1985), and Harper (1987) were .83, .80, and .77, respectively. In this study a factor analysis of the responses obtained in 1986 further confirmed the construct validity of the scale. The Cronbach alpha for the 1986 data set was .69. For the 1993 administration of the questionnaire, two items were dropped from the original scale and replaced by two new items that were thought to better capture the spirit of the concept. A factor analysis of the revised scale confirmed its construct validity, and the Cronbach alpha for the total 1993 data set was .84; for the data from separate countries the alphas were .82, .82, .79, .77, and .86 for Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, respectively.

12. Surprisingly, in 1993, an equal percentage of Dutch students agreed with this statement, but the Dutch wording did not mean the same as the English; translated the Dutch version said, "If I should go into politics, I would be able to convince people of my opinion." This could have meant convince people that it was my opinion, rather than persuade them to my opinion.

Two questions used by earlier researchers were asked in 1986 but dropped in 1993 because they were not sufficiently similar to the other items on the scale. They were, "I can have much influence on how other people live," and "I can be effective in political situations (influencing decisions made in school and community)." Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of students either disagreed that they could influence how others lived or were uncertain. What is surprising is that as many as one-third of the students in the United States and Germany in 1986 agreed they could influence how others lived. As for influencing decisions in school and community, close to a third of the students in all of the countries agreed they had such influence, except that only 16 percent of the students from the Netherlands agreed.

13. The only exception to this was one school that had a project as part of the examination in the optional course and which encouraged students to work

on it in groups of two to four. After the end of this study, as part of a school-wide experiment, students worked in small groups to learn the material in text sections.

14. The Political Interest scale used in 1986 was developed by Ehman and Gillespie in 1975. It contained items originally developed at the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan and used in many studies of adult and student political attitudes since the 1960s. The construct validity of the scale was established by factor analyses in a series of previous studies (Ehman, 1977; Hahn & Avery, 1985; Harper, 1987). In those studies Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were found to be .82, .85, and .87, respectively, for the studies by Ehman (1977), Hahn & Avery (1985), and Harper (1987). In this study, factor analyses conducted on the data obtained in 1986 and 1993 further confirmed the construct validity of the scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient indicating internal consistency for the scale used in 1986 was .85. For the 1993 administration of the questionnaire, one item was changed. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the total sample in 1993 was .88. Cronbach reliabilities by country in 1993 were .83, .88, .82, .86, and .89, respectively, for the samples from Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States.

15. In the 1994 survey of a national sample of Dutch students, 35 percent replied that they were interested, while 54 percent said they were not interested (Dekker & Portengen, 1995). The overrepresentation of students from the agricultural schools and the underrepresentation of students in preuniversity courses in my sample may explain the lower levels of interest obtained here.

16. This item was substituted for another one that was dropped.

17. The item was developed by Ehman and used in three previous studies of adolescents (Ehman, 1977; Hahn & Avery, 1985; Harper, 1987), but it was not used in the large surveys conducted by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Institute.

18. The items on the Future Political Activity index were used in an earlier study by Merelman (1971).

19. None of the 1986 data from the Netherlands were available for this scale.

20. In a 1994 national sample of Dutch secondary students, 35 percent said they "would certainly" vote and 32 percent said they "would probably," 21 percent said they would probably not or certainly not vote "if elections for the Second Chamber were held tomorrow" (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

21. However, in my study, the thirteen students enrolled in an A-level Politics course at one state school did not show these tendencies. They reported higher levels of political interest, intention to vote, use of media for political news, and discussion of politics with friends than did other English students at other schools. In another large scale study of some six thousand A-level students across England and Wales, Denver and Hands (1990) found that students who took an A-Level Politics course reported higher levels of political efficacy, intention to vote, media consumption, and discussion of political news with friends.

22. I did not distinguish between students enrolled in the compulsory non-examination course and those in the examination course, who had four times as much instruction in the subject and who were required to cover the topic polit-

ical decision making. Using a representative sample of upper level schools (*havo* and *vwo*), Wittebrood (1995) found that students in the examination course showed a greater increase in political interest, political cynicism, political efficacy, and intention to vote in parliamentary elections than did students in the compulsory course, in which students did not necessarily have instruction on political decision-making. Although the students who selected the topic for an examination course had higher political interest scores than those in the compulsory course at the beginning of instruction, they did not initially differ from the other students substantially on the other scales.

3. GENDER AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES

1. An earlier version of this review appeared in C. L. Hahn (1996b). Gender and political learning, *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 24, 8-35.

2. The limitations of that research should be understood, however. Feminist scholars criticize classical liberalism's emphasis on individualism, rationalism, and the distinctions between the personal and political that insufficiently represent female's experiences. Feminist researchers are also critical of political socialization researchers for often merely identifying and describing sex differences rather than explaining the cultural, structural, and social realities of gender that affect both women and men (Dietz, 1989; Elshtain, 1981; Noddings, 1992; Sapiro, 1987).

Other critics of research on gender and politics are troubled by a reliance on survey research in a positivistic tradition (Bickmore, 1991), whereby researchers assume that the truth can be known by administering questionnaires to samples of people at particular points in time and using quantitative statistical analyses to identify relationships among variables. Researchers from psychosocial traditions, on the other hand, interview individuals to ascertain the meanings that they make of political phenomena. Although their interview research provides a rich description of children's views of the political world, most of it contains only hints at the role of gender in political learning—the exception being Rettinger's (1993) gender analysis of students' moral and political consciousness. Additionally, researchers from naturalistic and critical theory traditions conduct case studies of social studies classrooms, but they, too, give little attention to gender as a variable that may affect learning. The one exception is Bickmore's (1991) attention to inclusion of all students, particularly in regard to gender, in her ethnographic study of four teachers' classes.

Political scientists, feminist scholars, and social studies educators in differing Western democracies are conducting important research on gender and politics, but unfortunately little of it is disseminated across nations and languages. Consequently, this review draws primarily on work conducted in the United States and/or reported in journals published in the United States.

3. Because the five-nation study deals with secondary students, additional studies that use only elementary samples are not included in this review.

4. Further, in Sweden, a country that was not part of this study, female adolescents surveyed in one study were more likely to have signed a petition,

boycot products, written letters to editors, marched in demonstrations, contacted officials, and taken part in communal activities than were their male classmates (Westholm, Lindquist, & Niemi, 1990).

5. Research on political efficacy and gender has been confounded by the fact that efficacy was conceptualized slightly differently in various studies, as was noted in chapter 2. Usually efficacy items tap perceptions that the political system is responsive to the people and citizen actions can influence government policy making. Sometimes, but not always, scales measure beliefs that politics and government are—or are not—too difficult for respondents and people like them to comprehend. Some researchers label the latter perception “internal efficacy” and measure it separately from a sense of external efficacy or belief that citizens can make a difference. Other researchers described political confidence as a belief that one could personally influence decisions. Such a perception might be similar to internal efficacy. Most often researchers mixed those varied perceptions into a single category called “efficacy.”

6. Denmark was the one country in the study reported here that did not participate in the IEA civics study.

7. See chapter 2 for instrument details.

8. A five-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree was used for responses. The responses to the entire questionnaire were factor analyzed using a varimax rotation method. Responses from both 1986 and 1993 loaded on a distinct factor, thus establishing the construct validity of the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the scale at both time periods. Instrument reliability as estimated by Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .83 for the 1986 data set and .89 for the 1993 data set. The alphas for 1993 responses from different countries were: Denmark .86, England .88, Germany .92, Netherlands .89, and United States .92.

9. In 1993, within the Netherlands the mean for the students in Mrs. de Vries' class was 4.66, as high as that for many classes in Denmark and higher than that for many classes in the other countries. The mean for the Dutch students when Mrs. de Vries' classes were removed was 4.12, considerably lower than the mean of students in the other four countries as was true in 1986.

4. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND CIVIC TOLERANCE

1. The European Convention is enforced by the European Court of Human Rights. In the Americas, the Commission on Human Rights investigates claims and advises governments to change policies, but it does not have the power of enforcement. Exposure and public opinion are the mechanisms used to guide behavior toward the implementation of rights where there is no binding treaty.

2. Because parts of the constitutional tradition rest in written laws and court interpretations, it is more accurate to say that the constitution is uncodified than to say that it is “unwritten.”

3. The subgroups of the sample who were most likely to support free exercise of speech and of the press, regardless of the views expressed were males,

younger adults (twenty-one to twenty-nine), people who lived in metropolitan areas, and those who lived in the northeast or west. The strongest correlation was between levels of education and support for free expression (Wilson, 1975).

4. Not everyone prefers the least-liked approach. Gibson (1992) argues that the results obtained by specifying groups or by using the least-liked method are equally valid and reliable; they simply measure different things. Sniderman, Tetlock, Glaser, Green, and Hout (1989) found that tolerant people tended to be tolerant toward both groups on the right and the left, and that conservatives and liberals are intolerant of the same groups. Finding such consistency, the researchers prefer to name several specific groups rather than limit measures to only one least-liked group. I chose to use both measures in my study because they yield different kinds of information.

5. Only 21 percent of both samples said that such laws should not be passed. Similarly, in response to the item, "In peacetime, do you think that members of the Communist Party should be allowed to speak on the radio?" only 20 percent and 18 percent of the sample students in 1951 and 1961, respectively, said they would permit Communists to speak (Remmers & Franklin, 1962). Not all students, however, were as willing to restrict the rights of Communists as were those who responded in the Purdue Opinion Poll. Notably, one "elite" subsample of students, like elite samples of adults (McClosky, 1964; Stouffer, 1955), appeared to be more "tolerant." The children, aged nine through twelve who attended a California elementary school near a university, were assumed to represent a population of "elite" children because more than 90 percent of the children in the school had fathers who were professionals, mothers and fathers who graduated from college, and parents who voted in the previous presidential elections (Laurence & Scoble, 1969). The "elite" children indicated a greater willingness to extend free speech rights to specific groups than had the earlier samples of average high school students. From the elite sample as many as 85 percent, 88 percent, and 94 percent, respectively, would permit Communists, socialists, and atheists to speak. That led the researchers to declare that political elites are unique long before they reach adulthood.

6. Age, intelligence score, level of political knowledge, and media exposure all correlated with support for the abstract principle, but they had no relationship with support for specific applications. A general attitude toward Communists was related to letting Communists speak, but not to support for the abstract principle of free speech (Zellman & Sears, 1971).

7. Several researchers working in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s examined the factors that influenced levels of support for free expression among youth. In their national study of a representative sample of American high school students and their parents in 1965, Jennings and Niemi (1974) found the twelfth graders to be more willing than the adults to allow speeches against the church. The most accepting students were those whose parents were the most highly educated and the most Libertarian in their views. Weissberg (1974) concluded that students from families with high socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds gave more support to civil liberties than did low-SES students, and that race was not a factor; both black and white students were more likely to support free expression in the abstract than to apply it to specific cases.

In another study of high school students, Grossman (1975) concluded, as had the other researchers, that although basic free speech rights were supported in the abstract, they were not generally supported when they were applied to a specific controversial political group. In his study of students in nine California communities, however, socioeconomic level did not appear to be related to toleration of dissent. Level of dogmatism and ethnic group were related to toleration; black and Native American students were the most accepting of dissent, while Asian students in the sample were the least accepting (Grossman, 1975).

8. Using lists of teachers who received sets of free materials in congressional districts across the country, a random sample of teachers was contacted. The researcher administered questionnaires to 852 students. The nonprogram group was obtained by using a random sample of U.S. government and civics teachers provided by the National Council for the Social Studies. The teachers on the first list who turned out not to be using the project materials were also included in the nonprogram group. The nonprogram teachers administered questionnaires to 486 students.

9. Forty percent of students in the *We the People* program said they would allow atheists to preach against God and religion in a civic auditorium, and 30 percent of the nonprogram students in 1993 would allow it, as compared to only 18 percent of the adults in the 1983 study. Similarly, 13 percent of the program students and 11 percent of the nonprogram students would let the auditorium be used by the American Nazi Party to preach race hatred against Jews and other minorities, compared to only 6 percent of the adults who would have allowed such activity in 1983. (The majority of students were willing to let right-to-life groups and conservationists use the auditorium. However, fewer than half of the students would let the auditorium be used by patriotic groups advocating war against another country, revolutionaries advocating violent overthrow of the government, and the Palestine Liberation Organization calling for the destruction of Israel. Still, larger percentages of high school students would permit such activities than had the adults earlier.) On another item, 28 percent of the program students, 19 percent of the nonprogram students, and 18 percent of the adults would allow the American Nazi Party to use the town hall to hold a public meeting. Thirty-eight percent of program students and 27 percent of nonprogram students, compared to 29 percent of the adults, would allow groups like the Nazis and KKK to appear on public television to state their views. However, both groups of students were more willing than the adult public had been to follow the dictates of a referendum to halt publication of a newspaper that preached race hatred.

10. To assess differences in reasoning between tolerant and intolerant students, Avery later (1990) interviewed the 22 students who scored the highest and lowest out of 564 tenth and eleventh graders (ages fifteen to seventeen) responding to a civic tolerance scale. She found that tolerant students tended to say they would grant rights as long as there was no violence, because the group had constitutional rights to free speech and assembly just like anyone else. The intolerant students, rather than focusing on constitutional guarantees, focused on negative consequences that could occur (such as influencing others) or what they believed to be a probability of violence.

11. The mean for males was 37.9 (s.d. 9.6, $n = 249$) as compared to a mean of 40.3 (s.d. 7.5, $n = 231$) for females. The delta for the magnitude of the effect size was .28, indicating a small effect for gender.

12. Statements about free speech or free press in the abstract and when applied to specific groups were followed by a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Several items in this scale were used in earlier studies, but no previous reliability and validity data were available on the scale as a whole. Therefore, factor analyses were conducted on the 1986 and 1993 data sets. Clear factor structures emerged in each case. Instrument reliability as estimated by Cronbach's alpha for the scale containing seven items in 1986 was .59. For the 1993 administration, one item was added to measure support for free speech in the abstract. Instrument reliability as estimated by Cronbach alphas for the eight items used in 1993 were: .67 for total sample, .64 for Denmark, .58 for England, .66 for Germany, .62 for the Netherlands, and .71 for the United States. Although the factor analysis indicated that these items did form a construct that was distinct from other items on the questionnaire, the low reliabilities obtained on this scale were probably attributable to the fact that students tended to be supportive of rights in the abstract and for a number of specific groups—but not for all groups, as is revealed in the distribution of responses.

13. This was not included in 1986 questionnaires.

14. In 1986 the item said "anything except military secrets" as had similar items used in previous research. Because some students in 1986 expressed confusion about that phrase, it was dropped in 1993.

15. The original item was negatively stated, and 74 percent disagreed that the newspaper should be punished; however, for analysis the direction of responses was reversed. Although the Danish Communist newspaper that existed in 1986 was dissolved by 1993, there was little change in the Danish responses to this item in 1993.

16. In an additional analysis that compared state and independent school student responses in England in 1993, it was revealed that whereas 81 percent of the independent boarding school students were willing to extend free press to a Communist newspaper, of the state school students only 55 percent were willing to do so and 31 percent were uncertain. Perhaps the state school students were still not certain that Communists were nonthreatening.

17. In another study that also used nonrepresentative samples of secondary students in Denmark, England, and the Netherlands, close to 80 percent of the students in each of the countries agreed that "If an atheist wanted to make a speech in our town . . . he [sic] should be able to" (West, 1995). In the same study 75 percent to 80 percent of students in those three countries would permit a Communist to speak.

18. In 1986 there was no question asking students what they thought about applying free speech rights to racist groups, so one such item was added in 1993.

19. In national surveys conducted in Britain and the U.S., British and American adults held similar attitudes towards civil liberties (Davis, 1986, p. 98).

20. This scale was adapted from ones used by Avery (1987) and Avery et al. (1992) and was not available for use in 1986.

21. It is possible to compare some of these student responses to data obtained from adults in surveys conducted in the United States in 1987 and in Britain in 1990 (Barnum & Sullivan, 1990). Because some of the items on the adult survey were stated in terms of banning instead of permitting, some of the following data come from the percent of students disagreeing with an item, which is not included in table 4.4. On the items having to do with wiretaps and permitting a rally, the American and English students in this study were more tolerant than were the adults in their countries six years earlier. That is, 22 percent of the American students and 51 percent of the English students would permit wiretaps without a search warrant, but 63 percent of the American adults and 62 percent of the British adults said they would allow members of their least-liked group to be wiretapped. Similarly 40 percent of the U.S. students and 56 percent of the English students in 1993, as compared to 33 percent of the American adults and 34 percent of the English adults would permit members of their least-liked group to hold a public rally. Conversely, on the items related to running for office and allowing a public speech the adults were more tolerant. That is, 46 percent of the American students and 58 percent of the English students would not allow members of their least-liked groups to run for office, whereas only 27 percent of the American adults and 27 percent of the English adults would let them run for office. On one other item, the English students were less tolerant than the American students and than the adults in both countries. Thirty percent of the American students and 47 percent of the English students said that someone should not be allowed to be a member of their least-liked group, whereas 27 percent of the American adults would ban the organization and 27 percent of the English adults would ban it.

22. Unfortunately the items about free press on the Free Expression Scale are not as comparable to the one about pamphlets on the Civic Tolerance Scale.

5. DEMOCRATIC INQUIRY AND DISCOURSE: CLASSROOM CLIMATES IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Parts of this review are based on some of my other publications: Hahn, C. L. (1991). Controversial issues in social studies. In J. P. Shaver (Ed.), *Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning* (pp. 470–480). New York: Macmillan; Hahn, C. L. (1996). Research on issues-centered social studies. In R. Evans & W. D. Saxe, *Handbook on teaching issues-centered social studies* (pp. 25–41). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

2. For a discussion of alternative ways to measure classroom climate and the theories behind them, see Harwood (1992). The five-nation study reported in this book follows the tradition of measuring student perceptions on paper and pencil questionnaires—a high inference measure. This study also uses classroom observations but not the checklists of verbal interaction used by researchers in the low-inference tradition. Rather, field notes were taken with attention to top-

ics, classroom activities, and the general pattern of teacher and student participation in classroom dialogue. Those data were supplemented further by interviews with students and teachers who described frequent practices used in their classes. Such qualitative measures were not used by researchers working in the traditions cited in this review of earlier studies.

3. The magnitude of these relationships were, however, quite low, with the highest correlation coefficient being .25 for climate and participation.

4. No research was located relative to Danish students' perceptions of classroom climate. That may be because I was restricted to research published in English and/or because the exploration of issues is a taken-for-granted aspect of Danish education and overlooked for systematic study.

5. The quantitative findings for 1986 were also reported in Hahn, C. L. & Tocci, C. (1990). Classroom climate and controversial issues discussions: A five nation study. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 18, 344-362.

6. A five-point Likert scale was used for responses ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. To determine the construct validity of the scales, the responses to all six scales on the questionnaire were subjected to a factor analysis using a varimax rotation method. In both 1986 and 1993, the items designed to measure classroom climate loaded together on a single factor. To determine reliability Cronbach alphas were computed to estimate the internal consistency of the scales. The Cronbach alpha for the scale in 1986 was .58 for the total sample. For separate country samples the alphas were: .63 for Denmark, .34 for England, .42 for Germany, .28 for the Netherlands, and .62 for the United States. The Cronbach alpha for the longer scale in 1993 was .80 for the total sample. For separate country samples the alphas were: .80 for Denmark, .77 for England, .80 for Germany, .80 for the Netherlands, and .85 for the United States.

7. Information on the political attitude and free expression scales is reported in chapters 2 and 4.

8. The gender difference, however, did not occur in Mrs. deVries' classes, where students perceived the climate to be most open. That is, whereas the means for students in the other Dutch teachers' classes were 3.5 females and 3.3 males (effect size .35), in Mrs. de Vries' classes they were 4.3 for both females and males.

9. Some classes might have another teacher after three or four years, and as students get older they will have different teachers for some subjects.

10. Further evidence of the pattern of teacher- and text-centered instruction occurred in 1986. As part of my original research, several teachers participated in an experiment using a "value analysis" model. Mr. de Witt had to discontinue the experiment with one class because the students became too unruly when he diverged from his usual lectures. Further, I observed another teacher lecturing the value analysis model, saying something such as "these are the possible alternatives . . . , these are the likely consequences . . . etc." rather than having students generate alternatives and consequences in advance of expressing their own opinions.

11. Mrs. de Vries was not teaching in 1986. At that time the scores for students at her school in another teacher's classes were no different than the responses of other students in the Netherlands.

12. By 1996 Mrs. de Vries had changed her approach somewhat. Students used workbooks, and part of each lesson included the teacher's animated talk, student opinions, and teacher dictation.

13. In September of 1996, sixteen-year-olds voted for the first time in local elections. However, student opinion at the time was divided as to whether the new policy was a good idea.

14. Students in Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands also attended lessons in religion; however, they were less likely than the English students to name that class as the primary one in which they discussed controversial issues.

15. At the time of the study many sixth formers at this school voluntarily took the A-Level General Studies exam, but the following year it became a requirement for all students.

6. TEACHING DEMOCRACY

1. Indeed Dekker (1986 cited in Dekker, 1991) found that many social studies teachers preferred not to teach political topics.

2. Since beginning this work colleagues in western and eastern European countries, Barbados, and Australia have already used items from my questionnaire to replicate aspects of this study in their own national contexts.

APPENDIX: POLITICAL CONTEXT

Earlier versions of the sections on Denmark and the United Kingdom that appear here were published in A. Angell & C. L. Hahn (1996). *Global perspectives*. In W. Parker (Ed.), *Educating the democratic mind*, (pp. 337–368). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

1. Although the British constitution is generally referred to as “unwritten,” it includes written laws affecting institutional structures and political processes as well as legal precedents.

2. The Law Lords on the Judiciary committee are the highest court of appeal; there is no constitutional court.

3. This process makes it very difficult for third parties ever to gain many seats in Parliament. A similar phenomena occurs in the United States but not in European countries with proportional representation.

4. There is considerable divergence of opinion over how rare this is; nevertheless, students are not taught in school that part of the role of the citizen is to contact MPs to voice their opinion on legislation.

5. Democratic ideals that emphasized rule by elected elites in a republican or representative system may be shifting to a greater emphasis on grassroots participation.

6. Protests against a proposed poll tax went so far as to become riots.

7. Under a process of proportional representation, all of the votes cast in an election “count” toward the proportion of seats allotted to each political party. There are no single-representative districts or constituencies as in the United States and the United Kingdom.

8. The United Kingdom has also adopted this Scandinavian procedure, whereby complaints against the administration of local government or national services can be filed with the appropriate ombudsperson for investigation.

9. From left to right on the political spectrum the parties that were represented in Parliament were: Enhedslisten-de rod-gronne (the united Red/Green list) (O), Socialistisk Folkeparti (Socialist People's Party) (F), the three parties forming the Government—Socialdemokratiet (Social Democrats) (A), Radikale Venstre (Radical Left) (B), Centrum Demodraterne (Center Democrats) (D), followed by those which are right of center, Konservative Folkeparti (Conservative People's Party) (C), Venstre (V, Left, which is now right), and Fremskridtspartiet (Progressive Party) (Z). The Kristeligt (Christian) Party won less than 2 percent of the vote in the last election so were not in Parliament in 1996. The Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party) obtained seats when MPs split from the Fremskridtspartiet.

10. Adopted by the western states in 1949 to serve as a temporary constitution until some future time when the country would be united and could adopt a permanent one, it was extended to the eastern states when reunification took place in 1990.

11. In 1949 many thought it was wrong that after the 1930 election nine parties with fewer than 5 percent of the vote were able to influence who would form the Government.

12. Germany is the only major state of Western Europe that has a federal structure. It is consistent with Germany's long history of having separate powerful states. Following World War II, the suspicion of a strong central power such as that seen under National Socialism, further reinforced a commitment to federalism.

13. This figure varies slightly as adjustments are made so that the parties are represented in proportion to the second vote.

14. In the 1983 and 1987 elections, seats in Parliament were won by the Greens as well as by the four major parties (Christian Democrats, Social Christians, Social Democrats, and Free Democrats). By making exceptions to enable parties in the east to successfully compete in the 1990 and 1994 elections, the PDS of former communists and the Alliance 90/Greens won some seats. The extreme right-wing parties did not obtain 5 percent of the vote and therefore were not represented following the 1994 election.

15. In the 1990s the *Bundesrat* had an SPD majority, reflecting the majorities in the states while the *Bundestag* majority was composed of a coalition of members from the CDU/CSU and Free Democrats.

16. For example, Lower Saxony and North Rhine Westphalia had six representatives each, and Hesse had four. Those are the three states where schools in this study were located.

17. The Court is made up of sixteen members, appointed for twelve years. Half of the judges are appointed by the *Bundestag* and half, by the *Bundesrat*.

18. There are currently discussions about letting all who belong to the party determine the candidates and positions by way of mail ballots, rather than only those who attend meetings. Recently, the SPD tried that at the *Land* level, out of a concern over declining party membership and voter turnout.

19. Sources used for this section include pamphlets produced for English readers, such as *Municipalities in Dutch Public Administration* (1991), published by the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, and *The Netherlands in Brief* (1987) by Antoinette de Cock Buning and Leo Verheijen published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague. Andeweg and Irwin (1993) and Dekker and Portengen (1995) provided more scholarly analyses and are cited in the references. Henk Dekker and Karin Wittebrood also provided helpful explanations.

20. The major political parties are the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the Labor Party (PvdA), the (conservative) liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), the (progressive) liberal Democrats '66 (D66; the full name is no longer used), and Green Left (GL). The CDA was formed in 1980 after a merger of the former Catholic People's Party (KVP), the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) and the Christian-Historical Union (CHU). The Green Left was formed in 1989 after a merger of the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP), the Political Party for (Christian) Radicals (PPR), the Evangelical People's Party (EVP) and the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) (Dekker & Portengen, 1995).

21. Andeweg and Irwin (1993) claim that elections have little impact on which coalition is formed, such that "voters propose, and politicians dispose" (p. 116). The center position in the political spectrum has enabled the Christian Democrats to act as a fulcrum inviting either parties to their right or left to form a partnership with them, keeping them in government for many years.

22. I am acutely aware of the oversimplification of explanations in this section and hope that readers will forgive me in my attempt to highlight the similarities and differences of the United States context as compared with that in the other countries. I suspect that my descriptions in the previous sections are equally simplistic, but they are the features that strike me, as an outsider, as being noteworthy in a comparative sense. Readers will need to turn to specialists in comparative politics for more sophisticated explanations of phenomena I have observed.

23. Germany is usually described as having a modified parliamentary system because the chancellor is more independent—by virtue of not easily losing a vote of confidence—of the parliament than the head of government is in other countries (Mahler, 1995).

24. Dalton (1988, p. 48) reports that one out of every three Americans works with a community group or sometimes contacts a political official, whereas 75 percent of the British public is not active beyond voting.

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