Cristina N. Azevedo/ Isabel Menezes

Transition to Democracy and Citizenship Education in Portugal: Changes and Continuities in the Curricula and in Adolescents' Opportunities for Participation

Abstract

The intense historical transformations in Portugal during the last 30 years have had a profound impact on the educational system and on its role in citizenship education. During this period, Portugal experienced dictatorship, the last socialist revolution in Europe (1974) (Barreto, 2002), the end of colonial empire and of colonial wars, the stabilization of a democratic regime and the entrance in the European Economic Community later to be transformed into the European Union. Such deep social and political transformation had strong implications in education and its mission in promoting democratic citizenship has been intensively discussed, with fears of ideological inculcation and a tension between conservative *vs*. emancipatory goals underpinning the curricular decisions in the field. This paper considers these transformations and articulates them with the perspective of adolescents in basic and secondary education regarding citizenship, politics and civic engagement and the actual opportunities for participation they feel they have in the family, the school, and the community. The bases for this discussion are two studies with Portuguese adolescents: the IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd 2000-2001) that involves three national representative samples of students from grade 8, 9 and 11; and a longitudinal study (2005-07) with adolescents from grades 9, 10 and 11. Results from both studies show a tendency for a dissatisfaction/distrust that young people have in relation to key-institutions of democracy (government, political parties) but, at the same time, the valuing of active citizenship and the emergence of new forms of participation. That oxymoron appears as a challenge to both researchers and teachers that might take advantage in being more aware of the quality of youngsters' participation experiences in their various life contexts.

Contents

Keywords

Civil education, civil culture, post-communist society, school practices, democratic institution building

The historical and political background of citizenship education in Portugal

The XXth century has been a time of deep political transformations across Europe, and Portugal is no exception. However, the path of change has been quite specific in the Iberian Peninsula, as both Portugal and Spain have experienced a democratic transition in the mid-seventies (together with Greece), after almost fifty years of dictatorship (unlike Greece). Both Portugal and Spain faced war, a civil war in the late thirties in the case of Spain, while the Portuguese experience is of colonial wars from 1961 to 1974, in Africa. In the Portuguese case, dictatorship was instituted in the late twenties, after a period of intense social, economic and political crisis that followed the institution of the republican regime in 1910. The regime was led by the same dictator

from 1928 to 1968 and the refusal to discuss the independence of overseas colonies in Africa led to the emergence, in 1961, of colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. The levels of infant mortality, (il)literacy and income per inhabitant were symptomatic of the huge gap that isolated Portugal from Europe. Education, with the lowest mandatory period in Europe, was conceived as a vehicle for social control with an emphasis on God, Fatherland and the Family, mandatory classes of Moral and Religious Education after 1947 (that replaced the republican Civic and Moral Education) and a strictly authoritarian climate in the schools (Bento 2001) – in line with the general ambience of a public space that Gil views as disappearing "under the strokes of censorship and the prohibitions of freedom of speech and association" (2005, 24). Therefore, citizens' participation in the public sphere was limited to recreational or cultural associations, a trace of the civil society that is still visible today as the majority of voluntary engagement occurs in these types of contexts (Viegas 2004).

The "carnation revolution" of April 25 1974 had profound implications in terms of citizens' participation and involvement: the revolution resulted in the rapid and intense emergence of politics in the public sphere – overnight, everyone had the right and the occasion to express a view, and a clear participatory wave invaded the country. The motto of this revolutionary period was the so-called three "Ds": democratization, development, and decolonization.

This last socialist revolution in Europe (Barreto 2002) viewed education as an essential instrument to the development of democracy in the path to socialism. Educational initiatives (see Stoer, 1986, for a detailed analysis of this process) included a variety of devices that aimed to promote the country's literacy and the democratic and civic consciousness of the younger generations, as well as dealing with inequalities from the past: alphabetization campaigns led by the military and inspired by the Cuban revolution; a year of civic community service prior to university entrance – a solution for two obvious problems, the fact that there was a 46% increase in university admissions and that universities were under profound renewal, as they were under the strict control and censorship of the previous regime (with innumerous examples of intellectuals who were critical of the regime being expelled from universities and forbidden to teach in public institutions) – with students being involved in a variety of activities in the "real" world, frequently poorly coordinated or hardly organized, including alphabetization campaigns; an area of civic and polytechnic education, that would involve a variety of activities (field trips, community work, …) coordinated by interdisciplinary teams of teachers during one morning or afternoon per week, aiming to promote young people's involvement in the community and closing the gap between learning and doing by interacting with the world of work (Bettencourt 1982; Stoer 1986).

The practical impact of these initiatives was diverse, but they were ultimately abandoned on the grounds of risk of ideological inculcation – a recurrent concern that characterizes the debate surrounding citizenship and participatory education in Portugal, no doubt due to the experience of an intense use of education as an ideological inculcation device during the dictatorship (Brederode Santos, 1985). The revolution also had implications in the History curricula, with the personification and glorification of Portuguese heroes and deeds characteristic of the dictatorship being replaced by a focus on collective movements and societal structural changes, as "a reaction to the previous indoctrination" (Roldão 1995, 34).

Grácio (1981), in a balance of the most relevant changes of this period, also underlines the curricular renewal that intended to eliminate typical non-democratic values that permeated the curricula, the establishment of a democratic model of school management, and the support measures for less privileged groups. But the most persistent decision was the creation of a comprehensive one-track system until grade

9, which continues until today, thus eliminating the two-track system (opposing lyceums and technical or commercial schools) that prevailed during the authoritarian regime – and that was clearly an elitist device associated with socio-economic selection (Pardal, Ventura & Dias 2003).

During the normalization period that followed the revolution – and culminated with the entrance, in 1985, into the European Economic Community (EEC) – concerns with citizenship education were present at the level of the academic and political discourses, but never managed to have practical implications. It was only in 1986, during the discussion and approval of the new Education Act that these concerns found a translation both in terms of the general goal of education, and in terms of the definition of a curricular area of personal and social education (PSE), following the trends in Europe and Canada and under the influence of the community of education sciences, that included civic and democratic participation.

However, the consensus that surrounded this initial political decision was soon to evolve into a major political and academic discussion regarding the aims, methods and contexts of PSE during the curricular reform that followed, in 1989 (see Menezes 2003a, for a more detailed discussion). In fact, conservative vs. emancipatory perspectives of PSE were in intense dispute: for conservative standpoints, PSE was mainly conceived as a subject of moral and values education, and therefore in direct competition with the moral and religious education mostly coordinated by the Catholic Church in the schools; for the emancipatory perspectives, PSE was predominantly viewed as a combination of cross-curricular dissemination, whole school approach and a curricular area (not a subject) that involved knowledge, dispositions and competencies. The option for curricular areas, which also appeared in other European countries (Menezes 1999), aimed to reinforce the idea that a subject-type organization, with tests, grades and textbooks, was not the most suited for the promotion of disposition and skills central to PSE – and in Portugal the fears of a re-edition of an ideological bias was even more vivid. In the end, the governmental decision was clearly favouring the more conservative view with PSE being defined as a cross-curricular goal, the object of a project area, and of a specific subject that was alternative to Moral and Religious Education – but the implementation of specific subject was a complete failure after the generalisation of the Reform following 1992, mainly for lack of teacher training and probably of a strong political will to persist as a back to the basic discourse, with an emphasis on the more "traditional" areas of the curricula such as Language and Mathematics, became more prevalent.

In 1998, a socialist government, following again the tendencies within the European Union, postulated citizenship education as a fundamental goal of school education. Following a process of participatory revision of the curricula, from 1996 to 2001, basic education (grade 1 to 9) is to include a mandatory curricular space of Civic Education (1 hour per week) and a Project Area (2 hours per week). There spaces have very board curricular guidelines, no specific syllabus, and can be coordinated by any teacher, preferably the class tutor, independently of his/her initial training area (i.e., Mathematics, Maternal Language, Sciences, History, …) or of having done any in-service training or post-graduation in this domain. Students are evaluated using a different grid (3 levels, descriptive) from the current evaluation format in other subjects (a 1 to 5 point scale). Contrary to PSE, the political decision that resulted in this reorganization appeared consensual, with no expression of opposition or disagreement (see Menezes 2003a), even if the resulting curricular strategies clearly show some continuity with the more emancipatory perspectives of the early nineties. This might be due to the recognition that the initial solution failed and the growing consciousness on the significance of citizenship as an educational goal for the schools, in line with its increasing emphasis in both academic and public discourses across Europe – but, there is always an inevitable gap between policy documents and practice. So far, we

can speak of a successful generalisation of these new curricular spaces from grades 1 to 9, which also accounts for the interest of commercial editors that have published several textbooks (e.g., Cruz, Dinis, Correia & Pais 2004; Reis, Leite, Lemos, Guimarães & Januário 2002), even if there is no information on how frequently they are used. Additionally, little is known about the contents and methods involved in Civic Education and Project Area; episodic case-studies reveal, however, an emphasis on interpersonal dimensions of "living in a society", such as social skills, conflict resolution, … with a low political focus, and the inexistence of a clear relationship between the two areas that could stimulate action and involvement in the school or the community (Neves 2006; Roriz 2007). Obviously, more research is necessary to explore implementation issues and further our knowledge on how schools are facing demands for the promotion of youth citizenship and participation.

Finally, in a country that experienced so much political and social change in a 30-year period, from an authoritarian regime to democracy, how do young generations conceive citizenship and politics and what are their actual experiences as participative citizens of their own right?

Young people's views on citizenship and politics

In the nineties, the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA) conducted a cross-national study on civic education in 28 countries (CivEd). Portugal participated through the *Instituto de Inovação Educacional* (IIE, Institute of Educational Innovation), with three national representative samples of students from basic (grades 8 and 9) and secondary (grade 11) education, involving a total of 9,275 adolescents. On the whole results for Portuguese adolescents show that there are low levels of political interest and of trust in politicians and in the responsiveness of the government; low levels of trust in political institutions, but high levels of trust in schools; a willingness to become politically involved in the future, that increases with age, but mainly regarding passive-conventional or social activities; low levels of current participation in civil society; and a tendency for adolescents to discuss politics mainly with parents, and very rarely with teachers (Menezes, Afonso, Gião & Amado 2005). Results reveal a certain skepticism towards politics mixed with a low level of social and political participation, a profile that equals that of Portuguese adults (Magalhães 2004; Villaverde Cabral 2007), even if there seems to be a clear support for a social or expansive model of democracy (Janoski 1998), emphasizing fundamental liberties, criticizing power abuses, supporting economic equality and defending the rights of women, immigrants and minorities (Menezes *et al.* 2005).

But let us look more thoroughly to the main similarities and differences between basic and secondary school students on topics such as citizenship conceptions, dispositions to be politically active in the future, and evaluation of school climate and learning opportunities in this domain.

Citizenship conceptions were analyzed based on a list of adult responsibilities, that students felt were *important* or *very important* (Graph 1). It is significant to note that obeying the law and participating in activities to help the poor, to protect the environment and to promote human rights are the most valued characteristics of good citizenship for both age groups; the less valued are membership in a political party or involvement in political discussions. There are interesting results regarding attitudes towards the law, with significant age differences: younger students strongly devalue disobeying the law, even if it violates human rights, and also do not favor demonstrating against an unjust law – which is probably typical of middle adolescence moral reasoning (Kohlberg 1981). The importance of voting and patriotism increases

with age. This pattern of responses is similar to those of adolescents in other countries (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehman, Husfeld & Nikolova 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald & Schultz 2001), with a strong emphasis on what might be designated as a social-movement citizenship, even if conventional citizenship is also significant. However, might the fact that more than 80% of Portuguese students consider it is *important* or *very important* to respect government representatives be sign of the persistence of an authoritarian culture?
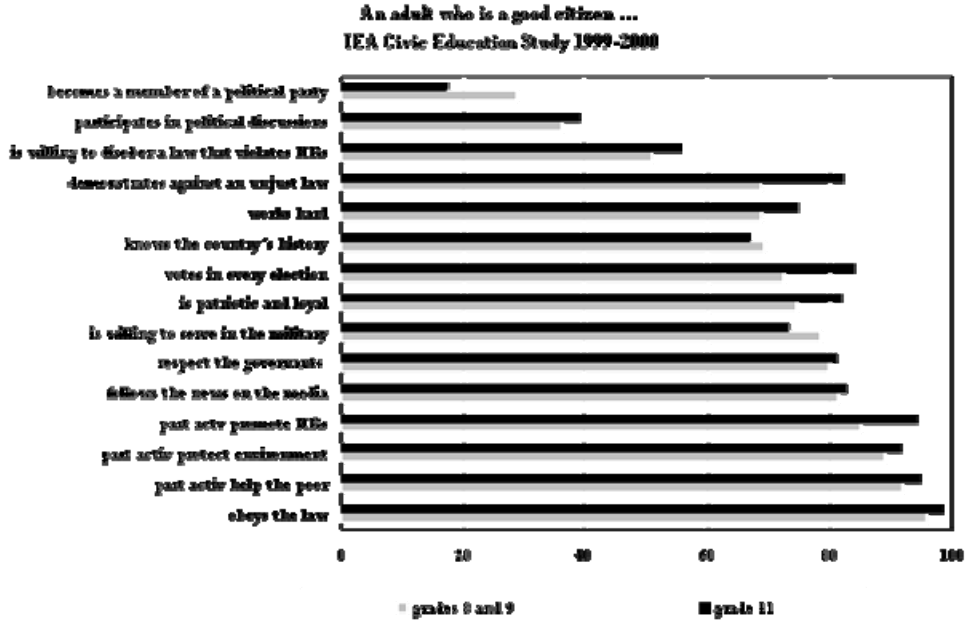
Graph 1: Citizenship conceptions for Portuguese students (IEA Civic Education Study)
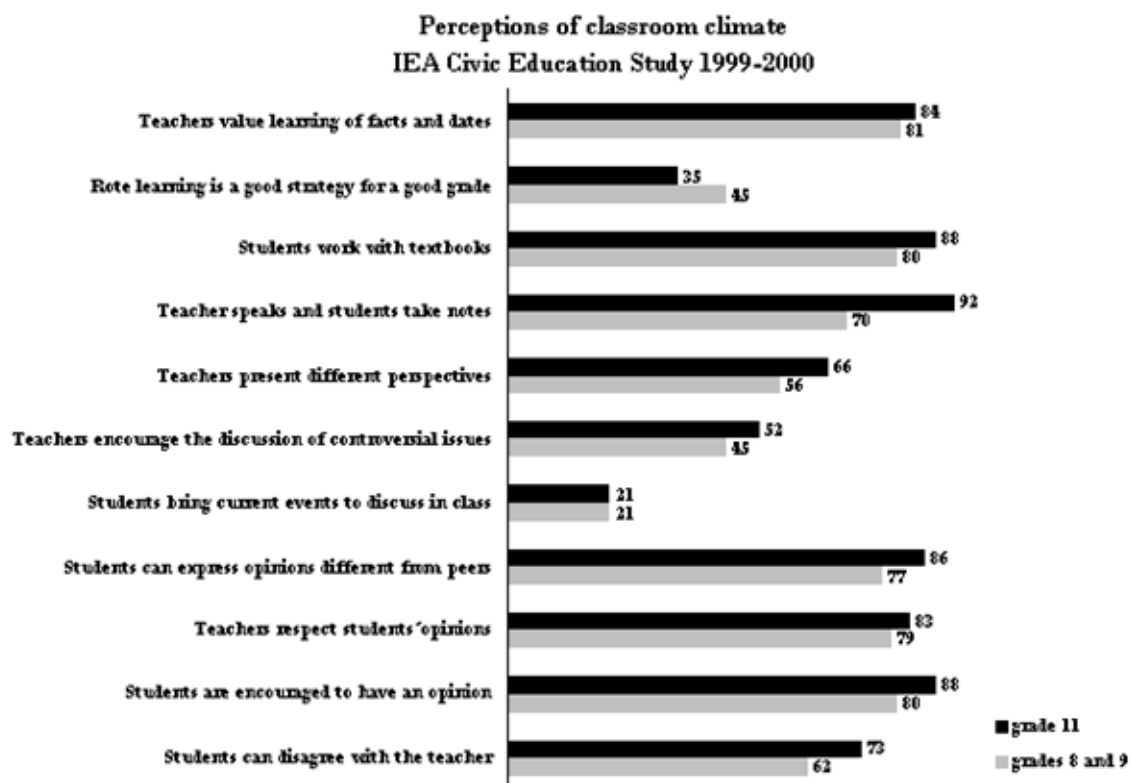
If we look at the dispositions to be politically active in the future, it is again the involvement in social-movement citizenship that emerges as more relevant, with more conventional activities being less valued, with the exception of voting (Graph 2).
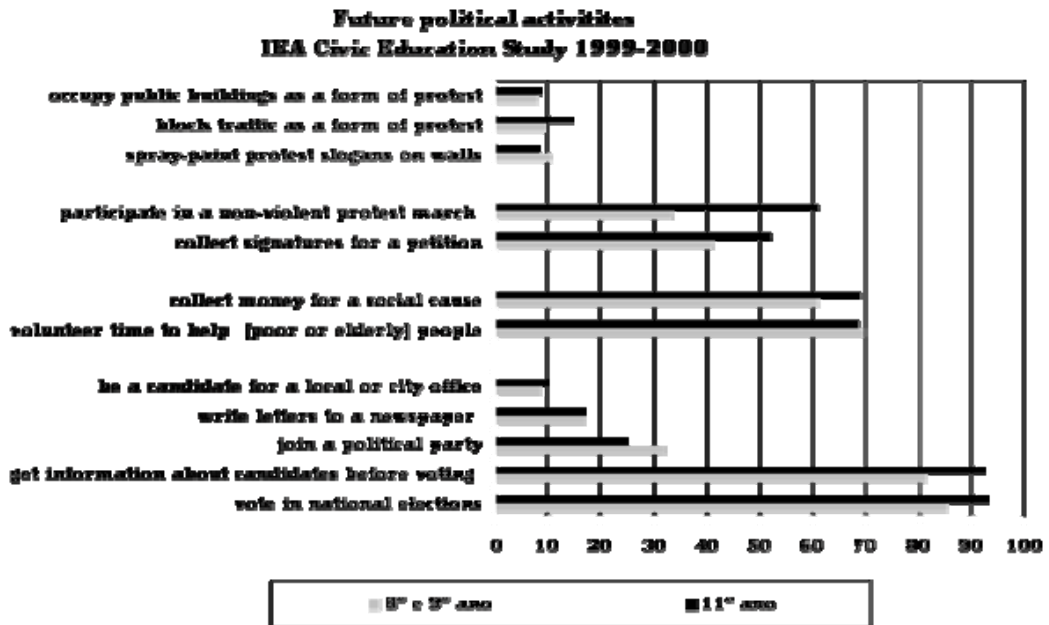
Graph 2: Dispositions for future political activities for Portuguese students (IEA Civic Education Study)

Again, there are interesting age differences: older students revel higher intentions to vote, willingness to participate in a peaceful demonstration or to collect signatures for a petition, and to perform illegal actions (even if residually). Whether these intentions actually translate into actual behaviors is obviously unknown, but as young people approach voting age (18 years in Portugal) their apparent disposition to become more politically involved seems also to increase.

The impact of learning at school seems to be mostly on social competencies instrumental to civic actions, such as understanding people who have different ideas or cooperating in groups, and less on explicit political issues, such as the importance of voting or of being a patriotic citizen (Menezes, Afonso, Gião & Amado 2005). But the picture that emerges from perceptions of classroom climate (Graph 3) is a very positive one, with students considering that they can openly disagree with their teachers and peers about political and social issues and that they are encouraged to have an opinion, again with older students being more affirmative – thus suggesting that classrooms are organized as democratic spaces.

Perceptions of classroom climate
IEA Civic Education Study 1999-2000

Category	grade 11	grades 8 and 9
Teachers value learning of facts and dates	84	81
Rote learning is a good strategy for a good grade	35	45
Students work with textbooks	88	80
Teacher speaks and students take notes	92	70
Teachers present different perspectives	66	56
Teachers encourage the discussion of controversial issues	52	45
Students bring current events to discuss in class	21	21
Students can express opinions different from peers	86	77
Teachers respect students´ opinions	83	79
Students are encouraged to have an opinion	88	80
Students can disagree with the teacher	73	62

Graph 3: Perceptions of classroom climate for Portuguese students (IEA Civic Education Study)

On the whole, the picture that emerges from these results is not disappointing, and even if some results might be related to the relative newness of the democratic regime, adolescents seems to favor a social-movement related citizenship and, although not very interested in politics, are willing to become civically engaged in the future even if not in the activities we conventionally designate as political. This profile has also been described by other researchers (Flanagan *et al.* 2005), with young people participation experiences including the so-called *unconventional political activities* both within and outside schools, including volunteering, helping neighbours and participating in activities to protect the environment or support human rights (Ferreira & Menezes 2005). Additionally, it is also interesting to note that interest in politics grows with age, be it because adolescents are closing the gap to becoming a full citizen – as they approach the voting age – or because they become aware of a wider meaning of

politics that goes beyond the traditional party politics to include all the decisions and regulations that influence our everyday life.

In order to have a deeper look into young people' s experiences in various contexts and across adolescence, and their impact on political interest and dispositions, we recently implemented a sequential-longitudinal study with Portuguese adolescents. Our goal is to consider how political interest and dispositions for future political activity are influenced by adolescents' participation in the family, the school and the civil society, particularly through involvement in youth associations, with a specific attention on the democratic ethos that adolescents experience in these life contexts.

Young people's views on citizenship and politics

The main goal of this study is to trace changes in adolescents' political development across time, using a cohort-sequential design composed by 3 initial cohorts (grade 9, 10 and 11) observed in 4 different moments with 9 months breaks. The sample was collected in 5 schools from the metropolitan area of Porto, selected on the basis of their potential for either school or community involvement; classes were selected randomly in every school. The questionnaire included scales on political attitudes, dispositions to be politically active in the future and quality of participation experiences in a varied sequence to control order effects.

a) Participants

The initial sample was constituted by 1299 adolescents from grades 9, 10 and 11, aged between 14 and 21 years old (Mean = 16.17; SD = 1.24). In terms of gender, there are 563 boys and 736 girls, a gender balance which is typical in secondary education. Social-economical status (SES) was determined using parents' educational level and occupational status, with the modal SES being the medium-low level (Table 1). The second wave involved 963 subjects with ages between 14 and 21 (Mean = 16.60; SD = 1.09), including 563 females and 400 males. All participants were now in grades 10, 11 and 12, and the attrition rate was 25.8%. The third wave involved 651 students (a 32% attrition rate), 355 girls and 296 boys, with ages between 15 and 20 (Mean = 16.95; SD = 0.81). The higher attrition rate from wave 2 to 3 is explained by the fact that many students left the secondary school and proceeded to university, where it is was almost impossible to track them; obviously, this implies that older students were not followed up. Finally, the forth wave of data collection included 649 adolescents, 366 females and 283 males, aged from 16 to 23 years old (Mean =19.54; SD = 12.67). This time the attrition rate regarding wave three was particularly low (0.3%) because students were observed during the same school year.

Table 1

Sample

Wave	Gender (%)		Grade (%)				Socio-Economic Status (%)				
	♂	♀	9	10	11	12	High	Medium-high	Median	Median-low	Low
1	43.3	56.7	31.9	42.3	25.8		4.7	28.7	24.4	40.7	0.8
2	41.5	58.5		28.7	43.3	28.0	2.5	27.2	25.8	41.7	2.4
3	45.5	54.5		4.0	36.2	59.8	3.5	28.4	24.1	43.0	0.8
4	43.6	56.4			38.5	61.5	3.2	28.8	25.0	42.4	0.5

b) Instrument

The instrument is composed of several scales adapted and revised from other studies (e.g., IEA Civic Education Study) to observe students' perceptions, attitudes and literacy (knowledge and skills). Cognitive items use a multiple choice format, with increasing levels of difficulty, based on the IEA CivEd data, on each wave; cognitive items focus on civic knowledge and competencies to interpret political messages, such as political leaflets of cartoons. The remaining items are Likert-type with a 7-point scale including the following dimensions: perceptions of classroom and family climates, political tolerance, interpersonal trust, trust in political and social institutions, quality of participation experiences, political interest, collective political efficacy and dispositions to be politically active in the future.

c) Research questions

As mentioned above, we will concentrate on two issues: (i) what are adolescents' perceptions of the participation opportunities they have in the family, the school and the civil society, and do these change across adolescence?, and (ii) what are the most relevant predictors of young people's dispositions to be politically active in the future?

In this study we considered adolescents' perceptions of dimensions of family and classroom climate and of the experiences they have in the civil society. The role of the family in political and civic development has been well established, both because of the role of parents as models for adolescents and in terms of the family climate (Hart et al. 2004; Ichilov 1988). We focused on perceptions of control, that is, whether adolescents feel there are set rules and procedures to govern family life, indicating some degree of rigidity and low opportunities for adolescent involvement in the definition of rules. A democratic classroom climate, where students have opportunities to express their own views and to openly disagree with teachers and peers, is a strong predictor of political and civic development (Hahn 1998; Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Loukas & Robinson 2004; Teixeira & Menezes 2004; Flanagan et al. 2005). Finally, research has also consistently found that participation in associations within the civil society has a relevant impact of adolescents and predicts their future political engagement – however, the (positive) impact seems to depend of the quality of these experiences in terms of balanced opportunities for action and reflection (Azevedo & Menezes 2007; de Picolli, Colombo & Mosso 2004; Ferreira 2006; Teixeira & Menezes 2004; Theiss-Moss & Hibbing 2005). Finally, we analyzed how these experiences – in the family, the school and the community – predict adolescents' dispositions to be politically and civically involved in the future.

d) Results

i)   adolescents' perceptions of the participation opportunities in the family, the school and the civil society

As shown in Graph 4, adolescents' perceptions of control in the family tend to increase as adolescents grow older; similarly, perceptions of learning opportunities to speak out in the classroom diminish, whilst perceptions of opportunities to communicate increase.
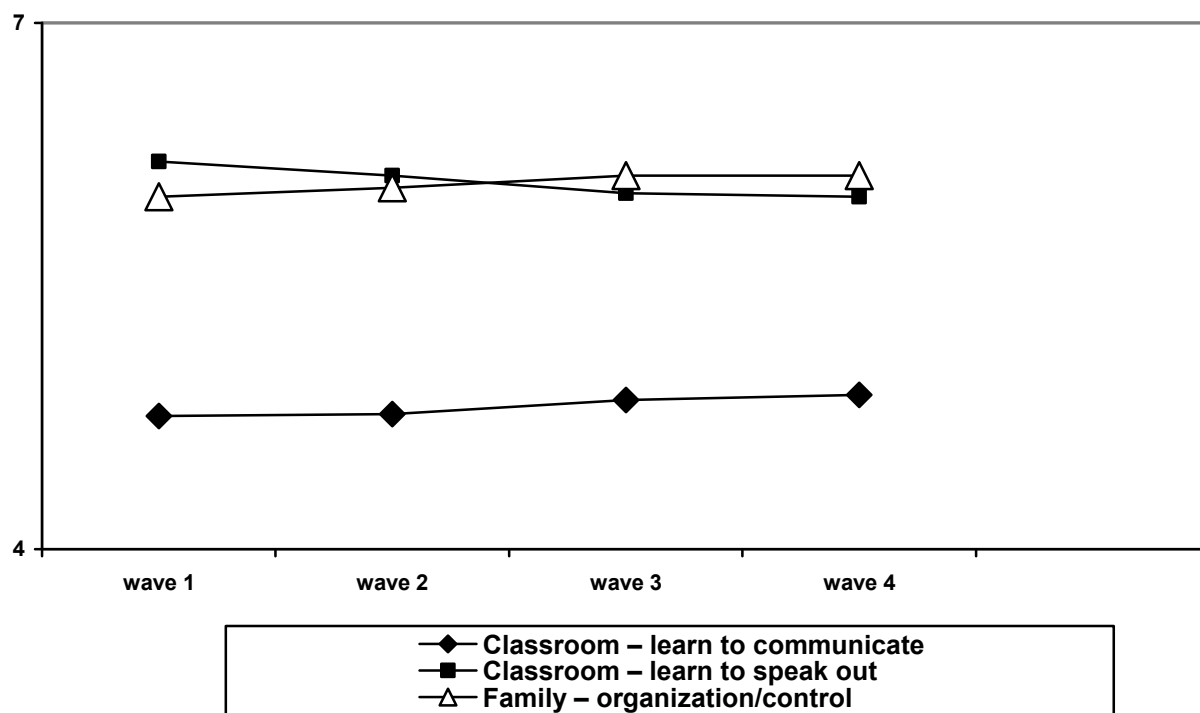
Graph 4: Adolescents' perceptions of participation opportunities in the family and the classroom

Even if these tendencies are mild, with mean variations being quite small, these results might reveal that adolescents have, in fact, limited opportunities to participate either in the family or in the classroom, or that they are particular critical of the existing opportunities for participation, probably because they are less tolerant of parental or teacher control. It is also interesting to note the variations between perceptions of learning opportunities to speak out and to communicate in the classroom: adolescents seem to feel that they are learning efficiently to communicate with colleagues and teachers inside the classroom but the opportunities that they have of learning to speak out are much lower. One should take into account that learning to communicate deals with opportunities for expression about classroom issues (e.g., "I talk with other students about how to solve problems"), but learning to speak out involves students can give their opinions (e.g., "It's OK for me to speak up for my rights") – and here adolescents clearly feel that this is not necessarily the case.

If we look at participation opportunities within the community, consistent with other Portuguese studies with adolescents (Menezes *et al*. 2003b), sports and cultural organizations congregate the highest level of participation (Graph 5). This clearly de-politicized option is probably related with the adolescents' management of leisure time. On the other extreme, is interesting to note (as expected) that participation in political parties is residual, even if constant across adolescence. In the remaining experiences, there seems to be a tendency across adolescence for a decrease in engagement, probably due to the selective higher education national examinations on grade 12.
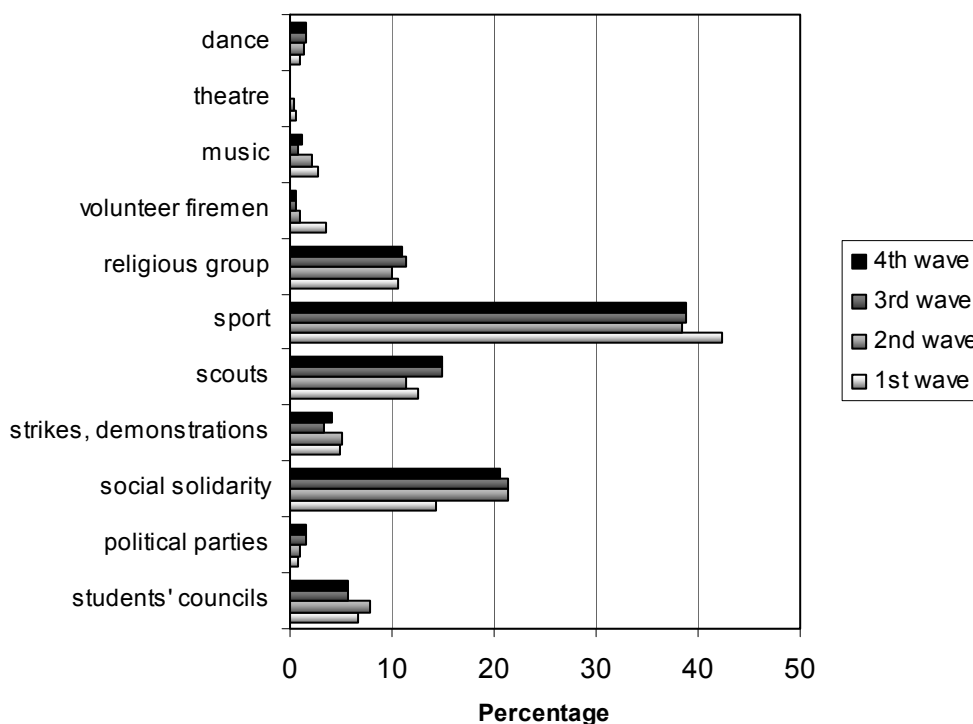
Graph 5: Adolescents' involvement in community organizations

In general, as similarly to the profile of Portuguese adults (Viegas 2004), adolescents are involved in social organizations; a significant number of adolescents are involved in scouts, social solidarity organizations and, in a lesser degree and with a decreasing tendency across time, in religious groups. This profile of declining trajectories of school-based and sports activities and increasing involvement in social solidarity and scouts organizations is corroborated by other studies (Pedersen 2005) that demonstrate the existence of a decreasing tendency in engagement across adolescence. On the whole, however, there seems that the pattern of a low politicized participation that Viegas (2004) discusses for Portuguese adults as revealing the "debility of the civil society" (p. 47), has an equivalent for adolescents. This is also why Villaverde Cabral (2007) argues that in Portugal there is no "distinction between active («be politically active» and «be active in voluntary associations») and passive («obeying the law», etc.) citizenship" (p. 49) – which obviously is still the heritage of the authoritarian past and the short democratic history of the country.

However, it is also important to look at the quality of these experiences, as participation is not necessarily good (Menezes 2003a; de Picolli, Colombo & Mosso 2004; Theiss-Moss & Hibbing 2005). As mentioned above, we operationalized the quality of participation experiences as a result of a combination between opportunities for active engagement and opportunities for pluralism and critical reflection within associations (Ferreira 2006; Ferreira, Ribeiro & Menezes 2003). Youth participation endorses social contacts with (different) others, involving the mobilization of active behaviors and the critical reflection about these experiences. In this sense, experiences are qualified as high quality if they present balanced and frequent opportunities for action and reflection; unbalanced if there are variations in one of the dimensions, with high levels of action/reflection being paired with low levels of reflection/action; and low quality in both action and reflection are consistently low.

Results show (Graph 6) that the large majority of adolescents are involved in some kind of participation experience (90% and more), and that a significant number of young people have high quality participation experiences. The graph also shows a tendency across time for an increasing unbalanced quality of experiences, and a decrease of both low and high quality participation experiences.
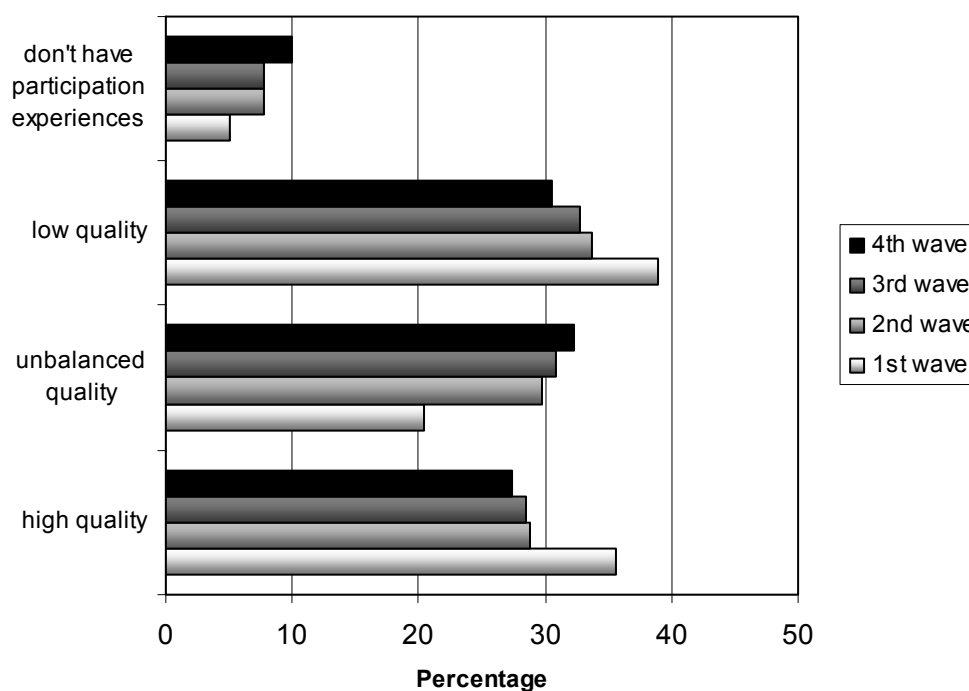

Graph 6: Quality of adolescents' participation experiences across adolescence

However, results reveal that together with the expected profile of low (strictly) political involvement of adolescents, high quality experiences are not underrepresented in the whole "picture" of young people engagement.

ii)   predictors of dispositions to be politically active in the future

Participation experiences in adolescence are particularly relevant because they have been found to predict adult political engagement. In this sense, it is important to consider whether adolescents' experiences in the family, the school and the community predict their dispositions to be politically active in the future. But first it is important to consider what type of activities adolescents are willing to engage in the future. Graph 7 illustrates the activities that adolescents are willing to perform "most of the time" from waves 1 to 4. As expected, voting is the most popular activity, with all the others showing less than 10% of adolescents' preferences. The activities that are more closely associated with political parties are clearly the most unpopular – a trend that is consistent with results in other European countries (Hahn 1998; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schult 2001; Torney-Purta & Barber 2005; Lyons, Chrysanthaki, Verkuyten, Selivanov & Pavlenko 2008); but less conventional citizenship behaviors, such as donating and joining an association, are selected by some adolescents, even if less and less as they grow older. Interesting is the slight increase in wave 4 in dispositions to be a candidate or to talk about political issues and events.
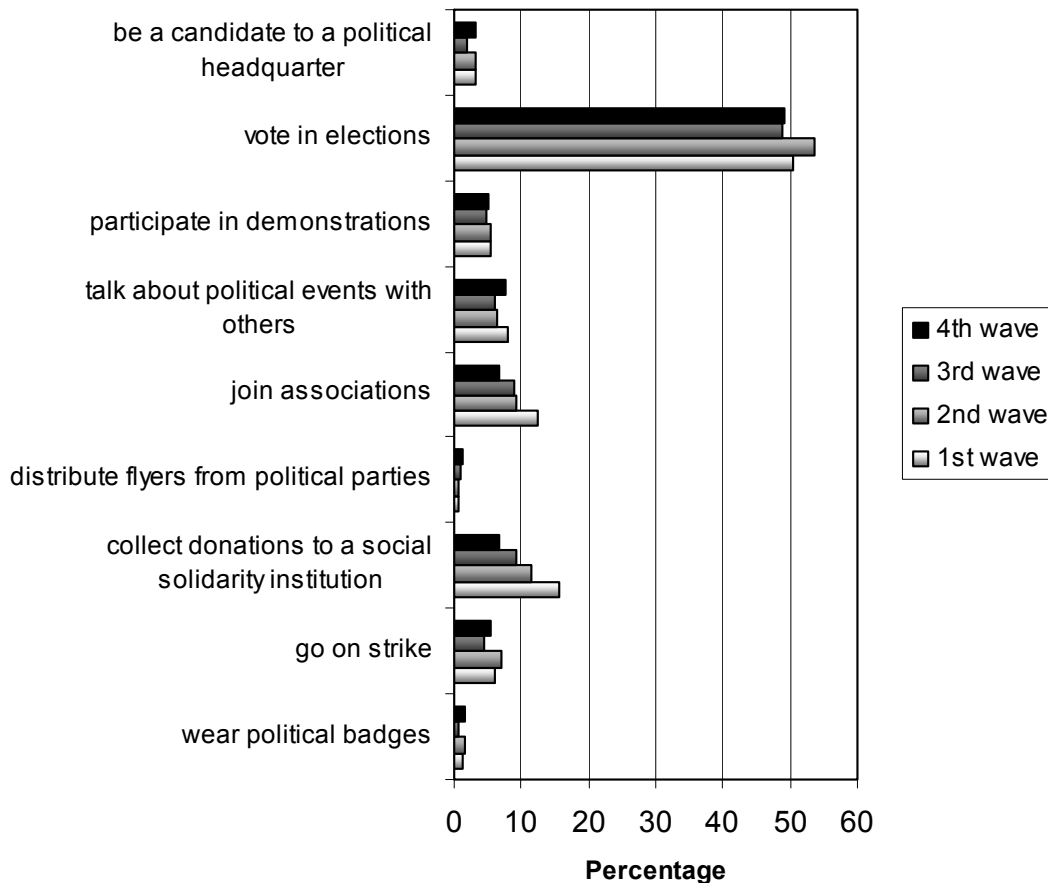
Graph 7

Political activities that adolescents are willing to perform most of the time in the future

Finally, we used multiple linear regressions to explore whether perceptions of family, classroom and community opportunities for participation significantly predicted dispositions to be politically engaged in the future (Tables 2 and 3). As shown in Table 2, quality of participation experiences and classroom climate are significant predictors of future political activities, indicating that current participations experiences play an important role in promoting adolescents' dispositions to be politically engaged in the future. It is interesting to note that family climate dimensions do not appear to have a significant impact, suggesting that parental influence in adolescents' political development is exerted through other channels, for instance family discussions about politics and parents role as models of participatory citizens. Classroom climate, on the other hand, is consistently important across adolescence in predicting dispositions to engage – again stressing the centrality of the schools as a life context for adolescent political development, particularly when there is an emphasis in establishing connections with the outside world (Table 3). Finally, current opportunities to actually "do things" in community associations seem to promote dispositions to get involved in the future, that is, action generates intentions to act – and the significance of action is more consistent than that of critical reflection (Table 3). But note that action here means that adolescents feel they are actually being given the opportunity to get their hands on real issues – and obviously, this experience might generate a sense of power and efficacy that will encourage future actions.

Table 2
Model summary for linear regression on dispositions to be politically active in the future

Wave	Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error	Change Statistics				
						R² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig F Change
1	1	,294 (a)	,086	,085	7,998	,086	57,402	2	586	**,000**
	2	,325 (b)	,105	,101	7,927	,019	6,451	4	582	**,000**
	3	,326 (c)	,106	,100	7,932	,001	,458	3	579	,711
2	1	,347 (a)	,120	,118	7,320	,120	63,349	2	587	**,000**
	2	,367 (b)	,134	,129	7,276	,014	3,785	4	583	**,005**
	3	,369 (c)	,136	,128	7,282	,002	,550	3	580	,648
3	1	,274 (a)	,075	,072	7,956	,075	26,244	2	585	**,000**
	2	,286 (b)	,082	,073	7,953	,006	1,120	4	581	,346
	3	,295 (c)	,087	,074	7,947	,006	1,288	3	578	,277
4	1	,241 (a)	,058	,055	8,058	,058	19,880	2	586	**,000**
	2	,279 (b)	,078	,069	7,998	,020	3,437	4	582	**,009**
	3	,282 (c)	,080	,067	8,008	,002	,460	3	579	,710

(a) Predictors: Quality of participation experiences (action and reflection)
(b) Predictors: Quality of participation experiences plus classroom variables (classroom climate where students can learn about the world, to speak out, to communicate and about science)
(c) Predictors: Quality of participation experiences and classroom variables plus family variables (cohesion/expressivity between family members, organization/control and cultural or intellectual orientation of family activities)

Table 3
Coefficients for dispositions to be politically active in the future

Wave	Significant predictors	Standardized β	t	Sig.
1	Quality of participation experiences			
	(action experiences)	,272	5,677	**,000**
	(reflection experiences)	,086	3,553	**,005**
	Classroom climate			
	(learning about the world)	,075	2,414	**,016**
	(learning to communicate)	,095	2,925	**,004**
2	Quality of participation experiences			
	(action experiences)	,212	5,613	**,000**
	(reflection experiences)	,179	4,734	**,000**
	Classroom climate			
	(learning about the world)	,096	2,588	**,010**
3	Quality of participation experiences			
	(action experiences)	,219	4,517	**,000**
4	Quality of participation experiences			
	(action experiences)	,273	5,146	**,000**
	Classroom climate			
	(learning about the world)	,107	2,292	**,022**
	(learning to communicate)	,103	2,125	**,034**

Discussion and conclusions

The history of citizenship education in Portuguese schools clearly mirrors the country's political history and the ways of conceiving the role of adults in the society (Roldão, 1999): from deprived citizens with almost no political rights to participatory full-right citizens in a democracy. Our goal was to consider how adolescents are constructing the meaning of being a citizen in this particular socio-historical context, by looking at two research projects that consider adolescents citizenship conceptions and practices, and allow us to look at participation opportunities for adolescents in the family, the school and the community.

Results from the IEA Civic Education Study show that even if Portuguese adolescents clearly value democracy and participatory citizenship, they still reveal the influence of an authoritarian climate – particularly in the emphasis on "respect" towards politicians and the law, and in some suspicion of criticism and pluralism. This tendency, combined with current signs of political apathy, disinterest and skepticism that they share with adolescents and adults in many European countries, might be of particular concern. However, the relevance of a social-movement citizenship (Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald & Schultz, 2001), that values "new" forms of participation (Flanagan *et al.*, 2005; Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin & Silbereisen, 2002), can be a positive sign, even if we must be critical of the perspective that participation is "naturally" or "necessarily" good in itself.

The second study presented here, allows us to look further into changes in youth participation experiences across adolescence as well as the consideration of their views of the democratic ethos they experience in the family, the classroom and the associations of the civil society. Results are not particularly positive, be it because adolescent are particularly critical of rules and regulations – as might be the case in their account of family organization or of the opportunities to speak out in the classroom – or because opportunities to communicate with teachers and peers in the classroom do not necessarily mean that they are expected to be critical and express a view of their own. In this sense, it is obvious that we must look further into these results, by listening to both adolescents' and adults' (teachers and parents) perspectives of current opportunities to be involved in the definition of rules and to be critical of regulations and practices either if the family and in the school.

However, results also show that many adolescents are engaged in a variety of experiences within their communities, even if many might view these experiences primarily as leisure opportunities and there tends to be a decline of engagement across adolescence. The profile of these experiences is similar to that of Portuguese adults and has been contended as having a limited potential in terms of promoting a more extensive civic and political engagement (Viegas, 2004; Villaverde Cabral, 2007). Nevertheless, participation in organizations of various types has been also found to have a positive impact on adolescent well-being (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Persson, Kerr & Statin, 2007), and might be associated with the development of participatory citizenship (Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1999). Our analysis of the quality of participation experiences across adolescence, operationalized as opportunities for action and critical reflection, shows that although most experiences can be characterized as having unbalanced opportunities for action and critical reflection, participation in a variety of contexts is clearly common for Portuguese adolescents, and many of them do have high quality participation experiences.

Finally, results suggest that the quality of participation experiences in these various contexts is a significant predictor of dispositions to be politically active in the future – demonstrating the relevance of this construct in explaining the personal impact of participation, even if further research is necessary to expand our understanding of the process. These findings encourage researchers, teachers, parents, community leaders

and policy makers to advocate and promote participation opportunities for young people that allow them to experience new roles and activities by acting and engaging in changing their families, schools and communities, and to consistently consider how this affects other people and themselves, how it could be done differently, how it makes them and other people feel, …. These experiences should be intentionally organized in diverse adolescent life contexts to guarantee that young people have opportunities for active engagement as well as opportunities for critical thinking, discussion and pluralism – that is, guaranteeing the adolescents have the occasion to act as full participatory citizens of their own right.

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