

PIDOP NEWSLETTER



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<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/>

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About the PIDOP project

PIDOP is a multinational research project funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme. The project is examining the processes which influence civic and political participation in eight European states - Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.

The project is drawing on the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Politics, Social Policy and Education.

It is examining macro-level contextual factors (including historical, political, electoral, economic and policy factors), proximal social factors (including familial, educational and media factors) and

psychological factors (including motivational, cognitive, attitudinal and identity factors) which facilitate and/or inhibit civic and political participation.

A distinctive focus of the project is the psychology of the individual citizen and the psychological processes through which macro-level contextual factors and proximal social factors exert their effects upon citizens' civic and political participation.

Young people, women, minorities and migrants are being examined as four specific groups at risk of political disengagement.

The research is exploring the differences as well as the overlap between civic and political engagement, and both direct and representative participation.

A summary of the PIDOP project's activities and findings so far: a mid-project report

After the first 18 months of operation, the PIDOP project has now reached its halfway point. The theoretical and empirical work which has been performed to date falls under six different work packages (work packages 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), all of which have made substantial progress since the start of the project.

Work package 2 (WP2) is collating and analyzing current policies. It is examining key policy discourses on citizenship and democratic participation at EU, national and regional level, with a particular focus on women, young people, migrants and minorities. This work package is also investigating the extent to which there is coherence or tension between relevant policies at these different levels. The time frame chosen for the selection of policy documents for analysis is 2004-2009, which has allowed the project to explore issues relating to active citizenship, civic engagement and Europeanisation, as well as the level of engagement of civil society organisations with the overall policy priorities of the EU itself.

Three policy discourses have emerged as dominant from the analysis of the official policy texts, relating respectively to social exclusion, equal opportunities and civic engagement. What is interesting to note with regard to the texts produced by civil society organisations is that there is little evidence of any coherent or consistent counter-narrative to current European policy discourses being articulated by these organisations. In addition, there is little evidence of meaningful engagement with the challenges of intersectionality in most of the policy documents apart from the interaction between gender and religion. The analysis of the national policy documents also highlighted an absence of

general references to European debates. Although official documents produced by national governments and civil society organisations are, on the whole, aligned with EU political priorities, there is little evidence of open engagement with European meta-narratives. These policy analyses by WP2 provide the backdrop against which the PIDOP project will be developing its own policy recommendations on how civic and political engagement and participation may be enhanced among young people, women, minorities and migrants.

Work package 3 (WP3) is developing a political theory of participation. A new typology of different forms of participation has been produced by WP3, with the aim of capturing all forms of political behaviour relevant to the study of civic engagement and political participation. This typology not only considers participation on both individual and collective levels, but also discriminates between latent and manifest forms of political behaviour. The typology distinguishes between the civic and the political, and also incorporates a non-participation category, thereby capturing the full spectrum of participation.

In addition, WP3 has drawn up a specification of the factors which facilitate participation (opportunities and benefits) and those which hinder it (obstacles and costs). The determinants of participation function at three levels: the individual, the institutional and the country level. The individual level includes factors such as political interest, efficacy and identity. However, the institutional level is also of key importance. The rules and design of the electoral system, points of access to the political system, opportunities for participation, mobilising channels, inequalities in society and civic education can all be used to operationalise political opportunity structures. In relation to minorities and migrants, the right to formally participate is also of central importance.

The role of associations and networks in providing civic skills and building social capital is also crucial. Contextual factors at the country level include recent political history and economic development, and religion. Although these factors have been separated into the individual, institutional and country levels by WP3, it is recognised that these different levels overlap, interact and indeed act together to mediate, encourage or discourage participation.

Working in parallel to WP3, work package 4 (WP4) is developing psychological theories of participation. Several advances in psychological theory have been made by WP4. First, WP4 has identified a range of psychological factors which have been implicated by previous research as drivers of civic and political engagement and participation. Second, WP4 has drawn up a specification of the range of social influences which are known to impact on civic and political engagement and participation.

Third, WP4 has developed three models of how psychological variables might be causally related to one another in this domain. The first model postulates that there may be a causal chain which starts from political interest and/or having a sense of civic duty, which impacts on attentiveness to political knowledge, which in turn impacts on the formation of political opinions and the construction of an ideological or political identity, which in turn results in civic and/or political participation. The second model concerns the sources of social influence which impact on the individual such as the family, education, the workplace, social networks, the mass media, etc. It postulates that the social influences which exert effects on any given individual are determined by intra-individual psychological factors including perceptual, attentional and cognitive-representational processes, and affective and motivational processes. The third model

provides a specification of the causal relationships which exist between all of the psychological factors which are known to operate in this domain, including: perceived social opinion support; perceived social action support; identification with a group or community; identity threat; internalisation of group norms and values; perceived injustice; group-based anger; motivational need fulfilment; cost-benefit calculations; collective efficacy, internal efficacy and external efficacy; institutional trust; and beliefs about good citizenship. This third model also subsumes the factors of political interest, sense of civic duty, political attentiveness, political knowledge, opinionation and ideological identity which are covered by the first model.

The theoretical models that have been developed by WP3 and WP4 are being used to generate theoretically motivated research questions for empirical investigation by work package 5 (WP5) and work package 6 (WP6), and the data from these two empirical work packages will subsequently be used to evaluate the empirical adequacy of the models.

The first of these work packages, WP5, is testing the theoretical models using existing survey data. WP5 is constructing a description of patterns of citizenship across countries and across key social and demographic groupings. It is also applying predictive models to develop an understanding of the causes of variation in the development of citizenship. This work is still ongoing. Analyses to date have revealed the extent of the variations which exist between countries in both conventional and non-conventional forms of participation, with there being considerably more variability between countries in non-conventional forms of participation (such as involvement in humanitarian and environmental groups) than in conventional forms (such as voting).

Significant variations between countries in the magnitude of some of the individual drivers of participation (such as citizenship beliefs and social trust) have also been identified, as well as differences based on demographics. The existence of these patterns demonstrates the need for theoretical explanations to encompass not only individual level drivers of political and civic participation but also macro level drivers.

WP6 is collecting new data to address the goals of the project and is focusing on areas not covered by the existing survey data. In particular, WP6 is examining the social and psychological processes involved in the co-construction of citizenship in different life contexts, including the family, the peer group, education, the media, non-political organisations and political institutions. It is also examining how constructions of citizenship and patterns of interaction in different life contexts are related to the skills, attitudes, identities, motivations and belief systems which are necessary or likely to encourage active civic and political engagement and participation. Focus groups have been conducted in all nine national contexts with women and men aged between 16 and 26 years old from different national and ethnic backgrounds to explore their understandings of citizenship and participation. In addition, interviews have been conducted with other individuals who have been identified during the focus groups to be important sources of influence on the focus group participants.

The focus groups have revealed that the participants felt that they had no voice because they are not taken sufficiently seriously by older adults and politicians are not genuinely interested in their issues. Although they considered politics to be important, they had other interests. They were also aware of their limited capacity to influence politics, and felt they did not have the competencies, the power or the access

to information, resources and opportunities to have any influence. There was some tension between identity and citizenship, especially for migrants due to their ambiguous position in relationship to their countries of origin and to their host countries. Minority and migrant participants also commented on problems that were related to racism and discrimination. In general, there was a distrust of politicians and ambivalent perceptions of the effectiveness of civic and political participation.

Family, school, youth workers, peers and media were referred to by the participants as their main sources of influence and information. Concerning visions of democracy, migrants tended to compare the political systems of their host country and their country of origin, and so the experience of migration seemed to produce a more critical vision of democracy. There was diversity in participation experiences involving environmental groups, voluntary work, signing petitions, demonstrating and recycling. Trade unions and political parties were mentioned less frequently, and participation tended to be more significant for older participants. Although there were some complaints of tokenism, there was a recognition of the personal benefits of participation and sometimes of its effectiveness, especially at the local level. The participants' discourses tended to refer to the local level. The European level and even the national level were seldom mentioned. European policies regarding immigration were also not mentioned by either minorities or migrants.

The interviews with sources of influence (parents, teachers, youth workers, etc.) revealed that the conceptions of citizenship which were deployed by the interviewees focused mainly on the legal status of citizenship and the practical issues related to participation opportunities.

The interviewees stressed the need to overcome institutional discrimination in order to promote equal access for immigrants and young people, and also emphasised the connection between education, employment, financial situation and full-rights citizenship. They recognised the general interest and involvement of young people in environmental and human rights issues, despite their levels of engagement not matching the interviewees' expectations.

They also recognised that there is often a lack of interest in other civic and political issues, with low levels of participation occurring because of limited opportunities and a lack of information by young people. The strategies which the interviewees used to encourage civic and political involvement among young people included: providing opportunities and information; trying to overcome parental disinvestment in the education of their children; counteracting the inflexibility of school curricula by creating conditions for the promotion of civic and political participation; encouraging flexibility, commitment and freedom of choice; and acting as role models.

The PIDOP project will continue for a further 18 months, with new lines of enquiry being pursued by WP3, WP4, WP5 and WP6. Towards the end of the project, a new work package, WP7, will attempt to integrate the outcomes of all the preceding work packages, and will develop a series of concrete recommendations for policy and practice which will be targeted at politicians, policymakers, educators, parents, the mass media and other civil society actors.

Those who are interested in finding out more about the project can download project outputs from the project website at:

<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/>

Policy briefing papers

The first two PIDOP policy briefing papers for policy makers, the media and civil society organisations have now been published.

The first briefing paper describes the policy recommendations which have emerged from WP2, which collated and analysed current policies relating to the civic and political participation of women, youth, migrants and minorities at European, national and local levels. Relevant policy documents at all three levels were analysed, and elite interviews were conducted with policy makers and representatives of civil society organisations. Drawing upon this research, the paper outlines six key recommendations for policy makers, NGOs and civil society organisations.

The second briefing paper describes the policy recommendations which have emerged from the qualitative phase of WP6. In this phase of the work, focus group discussions about civic and political participation were conducted with 16- to 26-year-old men and women from the majority national group and from two minority ethnic groups in each of the nine national contexts, and interviews were conducted with individuals identified by the focus group participants as being important sources of influence for them in this domain. Drawing on this research, the briefing paper outlines nine key recommendations for politicians, policy makers, educators, media organisations and other non-political organisations.

To download copies of these first two briefing papers, please click on the link below:

<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/Policy-briefing.htm>

The PIDOP project will be publishing further policy briefing papers every few months. If you would like to receive a copy of these briefing papers by email as they are published, please send an email to Dr David Garbin ([email](mailto:David.Garbin@surrey.ac.uk)).

Spotlight on the Liège team, University of Liège (ULg), Belgium

At the University of Liège, researchers from Psychology (Faculty of Psychology and Education), Sociology (Institute for Human and Social Sciences) and Political Sciences (Faculty of Law and Political Sciences) are working together to form the PIDOP interdisciplinary team for Belgium. Their main contribution consists in the analysis of the processes influencing the construction of citizenship, civic engagement, and political participation (Work Package 6). They are also contributing to the elaboration of the political theory of engagement and participation (Work Package 3), the development of the psychological theory of participation (Work Package 4) and the modelling of existing survey data (Work Package 5).

Liège's team leader is Michel Born. The other members of the team are Claire Gavray, Bernard Fournier, Charline Waxweiler, Line Witvrouw and Julia Cop.

Professor Michel Born is a clinical psychologist and Psychology lecturer in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, School of Criminology, University of Liège. His research interests link social issues, delinquency and the developmental psychology of adolescents. Michel Born used to be the Dean of the Faculty of Psychology of Liège University.

Claire Gavray is a sociologist. Within the University of Liège she was first teaching/research associate in Psychology then in Criminology. In 2003, Claire Gavray obtained her PhD in Sociology, her doctoral work focusing on gender relations and professional careers. Most of her research and teaching activities are influenced by the reworking of the category of gender within an inter-disciplinary perspective (Sociology, Economics, Psychology and Criminology).

Originally from Québec in Canada, **Bernard Fournier** holds a PhD in Political Sciences. His main research interest is political behaviour (in Canada and Europe), and in particular the connection between youth and politics. He has expertise on youth in Belgium and more precisely on the political interests of Liège's youth, the subject of a major survey carried out between 1990 and 2007. He has published a book about political socialisation (*La socialisation politique*, De Boeck Editions).

Charline Waxweiler has a degree in clinical psychology and is dividing her professional activities between clinical medicine and research for the PIDOP project (mainly in collecting data for WP6).

Line Witvrouw graduated in Criminology and works as an assistant within the Faculty of Psychology and Education and the Institute for Human and Social Sciences. In 2011 she started working on her PhD about youth social networks.

Julia Cop graduated in Psychology and is an assistant at the Faculty of Psychology and Education.



The main aims of the research unit directed by Michel Born are:

1. The exploration of the processes of psycho-social development among adolescents and young adults, including a gender perspective
2. The analysis of social relegation processes: marginalisation, deviance, delinquency, criminality and drug addiction
3. The study of the processes of social and psychological integration

4. The description and analysis of forms of intervention and possible solutions (treatments, follow up, reinsertion, prevention) at individual, family and institutional levels

More information about the University of Liège and about our unit can be found on these websites:

http://www.ulg.ac.be/cms/c_5000/accueil

and

<http://www2.ulg.ac.be/psydel/>.



Liège's PIDOP team (from left to right): Charline Waxweiler, Claire Gavray, Michel Born, Line Witvrouw, Bernard Fournier (box), and Julia Cop

Spotlight on the research conducted for Work Package 6 by the Team of the University of Liège

The target groups

In addition to the majority population, the Liège team works with two minority target groups for the purpose of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the WP6 research: Turkish and Moroccan communities in Belgium.

Turks

In relation to the other PIDOP target groups, Turks in Belgium are comparable to the Turkish community in Germany. Most Turks in Belgium are Muslim but only one third actually actively practise Islam, according to recent research. Among the Turkish population in Belgium, 78% attended secondary school and 12% eventually gained access to higher education levels (*Manço, 2009*) - the rate of unemployment remains high among Turkish population in Belgium (35%).

Moroccans

In Belgium there is a population of 90,000 Moroccans, most of them also Muslim. In terms of education level reached, Moroccans are comparable to Belgium's Turkish population, with almost 80% of Moroccans who have attended secondary school and 12% higher education (*Rapport de la Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2009*). Employment levels among Moroccans are also similar to those of the Turkish population in Belgium, with around one-third of Moroccans unemployed (*Rapport de la Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2009*).

Preliminary findings

The themes and issues discussed during the focus groups with young people from the three target groups (majority population, Turks and Moroccans) and two age groups (16-18 years old and 20-26 years old) include: environmental and human rights issues, meaning of citizenship, identities, civic engagement and participation, and sources of knowledge on social and political issues.

Environmental issues

The youngest participants from each target group showed a great deal of interest in environmental issues, in particular wildlife protection, oil and air pollution. While other themes were also important to them, such as poverty and human rights, the oldest participants raised a set of issues around racism and discrimination, which were linked to issues of integration and youth unemployment, anxiety and insecurity about the future, mainly in professional terms - a common theme for all target groups.

We send CVs and they see that we are Arab, Moroccan, or whatever... They don't take us. They see our name, on paper...(Belgian Moroccan male, 16)

Identities and belongings

While young Belgian Turks and Moroccans were particularly concerned about racism and discrimination, which, they argued, were impacting on their personal and professional lives, they also expressed a strong affiliation to a 'hyphenated' sense of belonging (Belgian-Moroccan and Belgian-Turkish). During the discussions, these youth were often commenting on the fact they navigate between different social worlds - growing up in Belgium while also being exposed to distinctive cultural and religious references in their everyday lives.

Their sense of identity was described as quite flexible and changing according to different contexts such as public space, school, peer group or the domestic sphere. Their sense of belonging to multiple communities was quite salient. Some young Belgian Turks were prioritising their Muslim identity, others their Belgian citizenship. Others were stressing a sense of 'in-betweenness', saying how they feel 'different', sometimes as 'foreigners' (*étrangers*), both in Belgium and Turkey (when they go on family visit and holidays).

Most youth did not express a strong sense of exclusive belonging to Belgium or Europe. The youth argued that, in Belgium, a real sense of national pride and patriotic feeling was lacking (recurrent theme in other focus groups we conducted outside the PIDOP project). Interestingly some Belgian Turkish youth were comparing Belgian and Turkish sense of national pride during one of the focus groups:

- *I have noticed something among Turkish people, they are more nationalistic. They really like their country, more than the Belgians. A Belgian, it's like he doesn't have any love for his country ('pas d'amour pour son pays').*

- *He doesn't have pride*

- *He doesn't have any pride at all!*

(Focus group with young Belgian Turks aged 16-18)

Citizenship and politics

For most participants the idea of 'citizenship' was connected to the formal political realm and the opportunity to vote, which, in Belgium, is compulsory. Accordingly, some younger participants said they would feel as 'citizen' only when they reach the legal age to vote and in one focus group some participants even introduced the notion of 'pre-citizen'. Youngest majority participants perceived voluntary work as an opportunity to be a citizen though they underlined to which extent their age was a barrier to the possibility of full involvement.

Most young people we talked to supported the idea of compulsory voting, and value voting as an important right, a key instrument of political participation. However one participant who mentioned the 'Swiss model' argued that this model was '*more participative with more referendums and with freedom to choose whether to vote or not...and a lot of people are voting, young and old, despite the fact that voting is not compulsory*' (white Belgian male, 24). In addition some also pointed to the fact that even those who do not 'feel concerned' and are not informed about politics have the obligation to vote. Some, mainly among the Belgian Turkish youth, also raised the issue of language barrier among Belgian citizens from immigrant origin, which can lead to an exclusion from the formal civic sphere despite the compulsory voting.

Among the 20- to 26-year-old participants, there was a shared view that politicians 'do not listen to people'. One youth talked about the recent street protests in France where many youth were out on the streets against government reform on employment and pensions: '*Politicians are really ... they do not listen to people. They see people out on the streets to protect the economy and yet they do not withdraw [the reform], they do not call into question the law. So it inevitably fails.*' For them, politics involves not listening to citizens, let alone young people. Youth said that politicians believe that demonstrations organised by young people are not 'serious', that 'it's an excuse to not go to school' and they do not understand laws and politics. But as the participants stressed, when journalists question young people during these street protests, they do show real interest and knowledge in politics. For young people participating in the focus group, strikes and protests are seen as a means for youth to express themselves yet, as the pointed out, these forms of action do not seem to work.

It is important to note the specificity of the current political situation in Belgium - the recent successions of governments and elections. It is worth mentioning that, in Brussels, thousands of young Belgians took part in a demonstration called 'Shame' to denounce this political crisis and to demand the formation of a sustainable government. During the focus groups, young people had the tendency to link this political 'instability' to a loss of trust in the national political system.

However, some also stressed that despite this political crisis, everyday life in Belgium had not changed, thus minimising the effect of the political crisis upon the 'ordinary citizens'.

The participants from Turkish origin felt that they were not represented in the elections and expressed a strong feeling of social and political marginality. Young people from Moroccan origin felt that politicians are often 'playing with youth': *'When we talk to the mayor, he says that he will see what he can do but nothing happens. When it is election time, they are coming to the Mosque because they need us...'*. While they thought that there was not enough information concerning their rights and duties as 'citizens', they stressed to which extent the needs and responsibilities of youth and adults were different. This in turn would restrict their involvement in civic and political issues.

Liège's PIDOP team



PIDOP Conference, Bologna, Italy, May 11th-12th, 2011

Engaged Citizens? Political Participation and Civic Engagement among Youth, Women, Minorities and Migrants

The PIDOP consortium is organising an international multidisciplinary conference in collaboration with the University of Bologna, Italy and which will take place **May 11th-12th, 2011**, in Bologna. The response to the Call for Papers has been considerable, and there will be three parallel sessions at the conference, plus a roundtable devoted to a discussion of policy issues. Confirmed keynote speakers are **Therese O'Toole**, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol, UK, and **Bernd Simon**, Institute of Psychology, Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, Germany.

While the Call for Papers is now closed, there is still plenty of time to register for a place at the conference, which is open to all researchers, academics, policy makers and practitioners with interests in civic and political participation.

For further details, please see the PIDOP Conference website at:

<http://www.pidop.unibo.it/>



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Past and Future PIDOP events

Five meetings of the PIDOP consortium have taken place so far: at the University of Surrey, UK, in May 2009; at the University of Liège, Belgium, in July 2009; at the University of Porto, Portugal, in November 2009; at the University of Surrey in July 2010; and at the University of Örebro, Sweden on 4th and 5th November, 2010. The sixth meeting of the consortium will take place at the University of Bologna, Italy, May 13, 2011.

The PIDOP Conference in Bologna, Italy, will take place on May 11-12, 2011.

Further information

For further information about the PIDOP project, please either consult the project website at:

<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/>

or contact Dr. David Garbin, the Project Manager, at: D.Garbin@surrey.ac.uk

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