

PIDOP NEWSLETTER



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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, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, 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.

Update on the PIDOP project

The PIDOP project is nearing completion. Having started in May 2009, the project will finish at the end of April 2012, when it will have achieved all of its research objectives. At the outset of the project, these objectives were specified as being:

- *To audit existing theory and research on civic and political engagement and participation*
- *To audit and analyse existing policy on civic and political engagement and participation within Europe*
- *To identify empirically the factors and processes which are responsible for civic and political engagement and participation within Europe*
- *To develop a multi-level theoretical understanding of the processes responsible for civic and political engagement and participation*
- *To formulate new evidence-based policy recommendations for key stakeholders at regional, national and European levels*

Existing theory and research on civic and political engagement and participation have been audited by two work packages of the PIDOP project, WP3 and WP4. WP3 focused primarily on the research literatures in politics, sociology and social policy, while WP4 focused primarily on the research literatures in psychology, political science and education. These two work packages have also developed a range of theoretical perspectives on the macro, social and psychological factors which facilitate and/or hinder civic and political participation.

Another work package, WP2, has audited and analysed current policies on civic and political participation. A qualitative approach was used by WP2 to analyse the contents of relevant policy documents, and interviews with policymakers and representatives of civil society organisations were used to probe further into the findings of the documentary analysis. This work has provided a detailed overview of policy priorities and political intentions at the national and European levels.

In order to identify the factors and processes responsible for civic and political participation, two additional work packages, WP5 and WP6, have carried out a substantial body of empirical work. WP5 analysed data from existing surveys which have been conducted into conventional, non-conventional and civic participation. The data from these surveys were analysed using advanced statistical techniques to identify patterns of political and civic participation in different countries, and to identify differences in these patterns within countries and between countries. The data were also analysed to explore possible causes (at the macro, demographic and psychological levels) of these differences in patterns of participation.

By contrast, WP6 collected new data to address a large number of more specific questions concerning the processes and factors underlying civic and political participation. The first qualitative wave of research in WP6 involved focus groups which were conducted with members of 27 minority and majority ethnic groups living in different national contexts across Europe. Qualitative interviews were also carried out with individuals who were identified as being significant influences on the focus group participants. The second wave of data collection in WP6 involved a large-scale survey in which quantitative data were collected from members of the same 27 ethnic groups. A large amount of data has been obtained on a wide range of social and psychological factors through this means.

The findings from WP5 and WP6, and the conclusions from WP3 and WP4, are currently being used to develop a multi-level theoretical understanding of the processes responsible for civic and political engagement and participation. The integrative models which are being developed encompass factors operating at the macro, social and psychological levels.

The empirical findings from the project, and the theoretical understandings which have been developed, are being used to formulate new evidence-based policy recommendations for stakeholders at regional, national and European levels. These stakeholders include politicians, political institutions, media organisations, educational professionals, educational institutions, youth workers, and youth and leisure centres. The full set of recommendations that are being developed will be unveiled at a briefing meeting for policymakers that will take place in Brussels, Belgium, on the 24th April 2012.

Spotlight on the University of Örebro team, Sweden



The Swedish team is led by **Professor Erik Amnå**, a political scientist. His main research interests include public administration, local democracy, civil society and civic engagement. Between 2002 and 2006 he led the Young Citizens Program, a research network based at Göteborg University. Between 1997 and 2000 he was the Executive Director of the Swedish Government's Commission on Democracy. In addition to PIDOP he is involved in the following major research activities: a longitudinal and inter-disciplinary study on political socialisation from adolescence to adulthood and an international study of 14 year olds' civic skills, attitudes and behaviour (ICCS).

Other members of the team are **Professor Margaret Kerr** and **Professor Håkan Stattin**, Co-directors of the Centre for Developmental Research at Örebro University. The members of the Örebro team work together in the Youth & Society (YeS) research unit at Örebro University. Researchers who are or were also involved in the PIDOP project include: **Joakim Ekman** who is a Professor of Political Science, with a special focus on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe, at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Södertörn University (involved in PIDOP between 2009 and 2011); **Marta Miklikowska** who is a postdoctoral researcher in Psychology at the Centre for Developmental Research (CDR) at Örebro University (joined PIDOP in January 2012); **Ali Abdelzadeh** who is a doctoral candidate in Political Science in the Political Socialization Program (PSP) at Örebro University; **Tatiana Trifan** a PhD student at the Centre for Developmental Research at Örebro University (joined the project in January 2012); **Viktor Dahl**, a Ph.D. student in Political Science at Örebro University; **Tara Lindén**, who has worked as a research assistant for the project since September 2011; **Kajsa Andersson** who worked as a research assistant for the project in the summer of 2011; **Bonnie Sjöblom** who worked as a research assistant for the project between 2009 and 2011; and **Marie Nilsson** has worked as a research assistant for the project since September 2011.



Spotlight on the Queen's University of Belfast team, UK

The Belfast team includes members of the Schools of Psychology, Education and Politics, International Studies and Philosophy at Queen's University.



The team is led by **Professor Evanthia Lyons**, a psychologist and Director of the Centre for Research in Political Psychology (CResPP), who is the Co-coordinator of WP6. Her research interests are in political psychology, with a particular focus on understanding conflictual versus harmonious inter-group relations, new forms of political engagement, active citizenship and political cognitions in the context of multi-cultural and multi-faith societies.

Other members of the QUB team are: **Professor Yvonne Galligan**, a political scientist and Director of the Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics (CAWP), who is the Coordinator of WP3; **Professor Shane O'Neill**, Professor of Political Theory; **Dr John Garry**, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Political Science; **Dr Cillian McBride**, Lecturer in Political Theory; **Dr Karen Trew**, Reader in Psychology; **Dr Victoria Montgomery**, Research Fellow; and **Dr Patrick Martens**, Research Fellow.



Spotlight on the University of Surrey team, UK

The Surrey team includes individuals from the Departments of Psychology, Politics and Sociology in the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences at the University of Surrey.



The team is led by **Professor Martyn Barrett**, Professor of Psychology and Academic Director of the Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (CRONEM). He is also the Coordinator of the PIDOP project, the Coordinator of WP1, and the Co-coordinator of WP4 and WP8. His research interests include national and ethnic enculturation, the development of prejudice and stereotyping, the identifications and cultural practices of majority, minority and mixed heritage individuals, intercultural competence, and the development of political cognition, attitudes and active citizenship. In addition to leading the PIDOP project, he has been working as an expert advisor for the Council of Europe since 2006, developing resources for use in intercultural education and education for democracy. He is an Academician of the Social Sciences and a Fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Other members of the Surrey team are: **Professor Nick Emler**, Professor of Social Psychology; **Dr Roberta Guerrina**, Senior Lecturer in Politics and **Professor Rachel Brooks** (Brunel University) who are the Co-coordinators of WP2; **Dr Tereza Capelos**, Senior Lecturer in Politics, and **Dr Ian Brunton-Smith**, Lecturer in Sociology, who are the Co-coordinators of WP5; **Nicholas Walters**, Visiting Senior Fellow in Politics; **Professor Patrick Sturgis** (University of Southampton); **Dr Dimitra Pachi**, Research Fellow; **Dr Cristiano Bee**, Research Fellow; and **Dr David Garbin**, who is the PIDOP Project Manager.



Spotlight on the research being conducted for Work Package 6 by the Surrey team

The ethnic groups studied by the Surrey team

The Surrey team studied British Bangladeshi, Congolese and English individuals. Data collection among the English participants mainly took place within the Greater London and the suburban South East area. According to the 2001 UK Census, the proportion of White English in London is just below 60%, while the total proportion for the country as a whole is around 85%. It is predicted that the growing ethnic pluralisation of London during the past decade will increase this overall tendency still further. In order to capture the diversity within such a broad category as the 'majority population', we took into consideration a number of factors, including class background, education and place of residence.

The Bangladeshi population in the UK comes predominantly from the district of Sylhet, a rural area in the North-Eastern corner of the country. Today, Bangladeshis in Britain are a largely young population (283,063 Bangladeshis live in the UK according to the 2001 census). The vast majority lives in the Greater London area, in particular in Tower Hamlets (comprising 22.8% of the UK's Bangladeshi population) but also in Newham, Hackney and Camden. Despite evidence of social mobility, British Bangladeshis experience disproportionately high rates of unemployment.

In contrast, the settlement of Congolese in the UK, the largest African francophone group in the country, is more recent and can be attributed to a range of factors, mainly linked to economic and political instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another wave of migration to the UK also recently occurred through Congolese coming from France, Belgium, Holland, or Germany. Some were attracted by what they perceived as better labour market conditions in Britain with lower levels of discrimination. UK Congolese communities can be found in Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and London in the boroughs of Newham and Camden. Congolese youth experience disproportionately high rates of unemployment.

Data were collected from both Bangladeshis and Congolese in London.

Qualitative phase

In the qualitative phase of the study, we conducted 14 focus groups, with a minimum of 5 participants in each group. We divided the sample into two age groups (16- to 18-year-olds and 20- to 26-year-olds) and with a good gender balance. We were particularly interested in the ways in which minority status (in relation to age, gender, ethnicity and religion) relate to the understanding and use of 'traditional' and new forms of political participation and civic engagement. We explored the relationship between understanding/perceptions of citizenship, opportunities and resources to participate, and the potential influence of a range of sources of civic and political information. In addition, we interviewed key individuals, such as teachers, community or youth leaders, in order to examine their possible influence on the civic and political practices and identities of young people.

Summary of findings of the qualitative phase (focus groups)

Most youth linked the notion of citizenship to the idea of 'legal' status, which involved a number of rights and duties, such as paying taxes, right of residence, voting, etc. This legal dimension - often connected to the idea of '*jus soli*', i.e. birth in Britain - was considered an important component of nationhood and citizenship by the majority of participants. However, some among the younger Congolese participants also pointed out how, with the evolution of immigration laws, this notion of (legal) citizenship had gradually become restrictive and exclusionary. In other words, they argued that minorities in British

were not considered 'full-rights citizens' as it was becoming increasingly difficult for migrants and their families to gain 'legal' British citizenship.

Many participants had taken part in public demonstrations. Several British Bangladeshis (including girls) of our Camden focus groups discussed, for instance, their participation to a demonstration in support of the extension of the Harrow mosque, opposed by right-wing groups. Some Congolese mentioned participating in demonstrations about the political situation in the Congo, for instance in front of the Congolese embassy in London or in Belgium. While the Bangladeshi youth stressed the positive dimension of their participation in terms of resistance (to right-wing groups), belonging and 'religious rights' in Britain, some Congolese youth criticised the organisation of political demonstrations which were seen as mostly benefiting a handful of 'community leaders' and politicians.



One of the focus groups with Congolese youth in London conducted by Dr Dimitra Pachi

Most agreed, however, that while demonstrations were important forms of organisation related to collective modes of belonging, they were also most of the time ineffective in triggering change, in political or civic terms. More 'radical' forms of expression and 'direct action' (some examples used were occupation of building, chaining oneself to a tree, or writing graffiti) were also perceived by the participants as ineffective. However, while violence was generally considered counter-productive, some Bangladeshi youth stressed the legitimacy of active resistance, for instance against oppressive and discriminatory police practices. Here it should be noted that some discussed at length how they were regularly 'stopped and searched', sometimes several times a day, while 'hanging out' in Camden.

Most youth thought that there should be more opportunities for young people to actively participate in British society. They stressed how youth have the possibility of publicly expressing themselves in a wide range of ways but they also deplored the fact that young people's opinions were being marginalised and not taken seriously. However, several youth (especially among older Congolese participants) argued that young people's lack of participation was due more to passivity than to the absence of real opportunities.

Not surprisingly, most of the youth stated that they were informed about political and 'societal' issues through the Internet (including social networking sites), the TV, but also at school or university. Some Congolese participants also referred to the influence of hip hop lyrics - though remaining critical of 'gansta rap'. It is worth emphasising that although friends were mentioned consistently as a source of influence across all ethnic and age groups, families did not appear to have the same role across all ethnic groups. Issues related to the culture and the socio-economic status of parents appeared to influence the level of influence by parents. English participants from middle-class background, for instance, appeared to take their parents' opinions into consideration more than working-class Bangladeshi participants.

Negative representations and stereotyping were important issues which emerged from the focus groups conducted among Congolese youth. Indeed, most participants thought that the image of Congo conveyed by the dominant British media has been very negative. For instance, youth felt that news and some documentaries shown on mainstream media (BBC, Channel 4) were biased, choosing to focus only on violence and poverty while ignoring the political reasons of the current situation of the country. For many, recent stereotypical representations of Congo and Congolese in the media were adding to pre-existing negative representations of black British and African communities in general.

Summary of findings of the quantitative phase

In total, survey questionnaires were collected by the Surrey team from 376 English, 247 Bangladeshi and 207 Congolese youth aged between 16 and 26 years old.

Statistical analyses revealed that there were pervasive differences in these young people's participation as a function of their ethnicity, age and gender. In particular, there were widespread differences not only in levels of participation as a function of these demographic factors, but also in the psychological factors which were related to civic and political participation.

Gender on its own was not a major differentiating factor on a wide range of matters concerning the perception of the social world (such as social norms, social well-being, aspects of sense of community, and perceptions of citizenship). These variables appeared to vary more in relationship to ethnicity and age rather than gender. Furthermore, with the exception of trust, there were no significant interactions between gender and age for any of the social or psychological factors that were measured.

However, there were many interactions between ethnicity and age and between ethnicity and gender, particularly involving individuals' scores on the different psychological measures and on the measures of civic and political participation. These results highlight the importance of gender in relationship to psychological (rather than social) factors, whereas ethnicity and age appeared to be important for both psychological and social factors.

The existence of significant interactions between ethnicity and age, and ethnicity and gender, suggests the need for an anti-essentialist approach. These interactions show that it is not possible to make generalised statements about 'English youth', 'Bangladeshi youth' or 'Congolese youth' *per se*. Instead, there are significant differentiations within each of these three groups, both as a function of age and as a function of gender. It is therefore vital to take the intersectionality between ethnicity, age and gender seriously if the aim is to obtain an effective understanding of patterns of participation amongst these groups.

Turning to the relationships between the demographic, social and psychological factors and the different types of participation, these relationships were investigated using regression analyses. It was found that:

- The demographic, social and psychological predictors of the different forms of civic and political participation vary according to the ethnicity of individuals
- In addition, within each ethnic group, there are different demographic, social and psychological predictors for the different forms of civic and political participation
- Past participation and intended future participation are also related to different sets of demographic, social and psychological predictors

These findings show that not all young people living within a particular geographical region use the same forms of civic and political participation to the same levels, due to their differential experience of the social world, and due to their differential perception and psychological interpretation of the social world as a function of the interactions between their ethnicity, age and gender. In order to understand the nature and the predictors of civic and political participation, it is vital to pay close attention to the specifics of the demographic, social and psychological circumstances which characterise the lives of individuals.

Past and future PIDOP events

Consortium meetings

Seven 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; at the University of Örebro, Sweden in November 2010; at the University of Bologna, Italy in May 2011; and at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic in November 2011. The eighth meeting of the consortium will take place in April 2012, at the University of Surrey, UK.

The first PIDOP conference

The first international multidisciplinary conference organised by the PIDOP Consortium took place at the University of Bologna, Italy, on May 11th-12th 2011. The theme of the conference was 'Engaged Citizens? Political Participation and Civic Engagement among Youth, Women, Minorities and Migrants'. Members of the PIDOP consortium presented the initial findings from the project at the conference. In total, the PIDOP project contributed one plenary address, fourteen individual presentations organised within three convened PIDOP symposia, and two independent individual presentations. In addition, the consortium organised a roundtable discussion with activists and policymakers from four NGOs and from the Council of Europe. Keynote addresses were presented by Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK, and Bernd Simon, Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, Germany. The conference was attended by 103 participants, representing the full range of social science disciplines, from 17 different countries.



The opening session of the Bologna conference, with (from left to right) Dario Braga (Vice-Rector, University of Bologna), Bruna Zani (Conference Chair) and Roberto Farné (Director of the Department of Educational Sciences, University of Bologna)

The second PIDOP conference

The second international multidisciplinary conference organised by the PIDOP Consortium will take place on April 16th-17th 2012 at the University of Surrey, UK. The theme of this conference is 'Political and Civic Participation'. Submissions for the conference were received from over 180 participants in 49 countries from across the world, representing the full range of social science disciplines. Keynote papers will be given by Judith Torney-Purta, Professor of Human Development, University of Maryland at College Park, USA, and Bert Klandermans, Professor in Applied Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands. At the conference, the PIDOP consortium will be presenting one plenary paper, four convened symposia, and a number of independent individual oral and poster presentations, all reporting different aspects of the findings from the project.

Further details about the conference are available at:

http://www.surrey.ac.uk/cronem/newsandevents/conferences/pidop_conference_2012.htm

PIDOP briefing meeting for policymakers

A more focused briefing meeting which has been designed specifically for policymakers will take place at the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, on 24th April 2012. The purpose of this half-day meeting is to brief policymakers on some of the main findings which have emerged from the PIDOP project, and to describe and discuss the policy implications of these findings. This meeting will be of particular interest to:

- Policymakers and politicians at European, national, regional and local community levels, especially those with interests in the impact of policy initiatives on levels of political and civic participation among citizens
- Policymakers, community representatives, activists and youth workers concerned with the interests and needs of young people, women, minority ethnic communities and migrants
- Policymakers, educational professionals and youth agencies concerned with educational provision and youth services

To register for a place at the meeting, please send an email to the PIDOP Project Manager, Dr David Garbin, D.Garbin@surrey.ac.uk

Further information and contact details

For further information about the PIDOP project, please either consult the project website at:
<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/>

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

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