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ICCS 2009 framework revisited – political differential scales

ICCS Arbejdsrapporter nr. 1



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Om ICCS og ICCS Arbejdsrapporter

ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study) er en international undersøgelse i regi af IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement). I Danmark gennemføres ICCS ved DPU (Danmarks institut for Pædagogik og Uddannelse). ICCS Arbejdsrapporter er kortere tekster med metodiske, teoretiske eller anvendelsesmæssige perspektiver på ICCS, der supplerer de officielle rapporter og bogudgivelser.

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ICCS 2009 framework revisited

– political differential scales

Introduction (abstract)

The main idea of this paper is to discuss the IEA¹ ICCS² 2009 framework (Schulz et al., 2008) in order to explore possible changes for the ICCS 2016 framework. The main issue is how to deal with the fact that civic and citizenship education (hereafter referred to as CCE) is both a contested matter and a contestable matter. The paper proposes to establish a meta-consensus accepting ‘contestedness’ as an ‘essential’ part of CCE. Contestedness defines CCE and therefore it is important to compare students and countries by comparing contestable aspects of citizenship rather than (only) by measuring degrees of well-defined latent traits within a pre-established international consensus. The paper proposes so-called *political differential scales* as a possible operationalization of the essential contestedness of CCE.

ICCS as consensus about contested concepts

The ICCS 2009 framework has proven to be very successful in the way it arranges and organizes CCE, thereby making international consensus possible.

This paper discusses the feasibility of another perspective where CCE is regarded as contestable as well as contested. The point of departure is that CCE is a contested matter (Davies, 2001; Arnot & Dillabough, 2000; Davies, Gregory & Riley, 1999; Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000; Osler, 2000; Pearce & Hallgarten (Eds.), 2000; Sears & Hughes, 2006; Topolski & Leuven, 2008 – and many others) because it relates to the contested nature of politics and democracy. Especially there are many different and competing views on basic concepts like ‘citizen’ and ‘society’.

From contested concepts to ‘essential contestedness’

CCE is not only a contested matter but characterized by ‘*essentially* contested concepts’³. The essential ‘*contestedness*’⁴ of a matter is something inherent in the matter making it impossible to establish one single proper view of this matter in order to settle a dispute about it. Due to the contestable nature of the matter it is by definition impossible to claim that one specific interpretation of an essentially contested concept is the ‘best’. For the perspective of this paper, however, the most important thing about essentially contested concepts is that as a starting point they involve widespread agreement on a concept (‘freedom’ for example) but not on the best interpretation or realization of the concept.

¹ International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

² International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, 2009

³ The term ‘essentially contested concepts’ is inspired by Gallie, 1956.

⁴ The term ‘contestedness’ is inspired by Swanson, 1985.

The main point for this paper is the fact that political issues are always (and always already) politically contestable. The political nature of political concepts means that they are strategic and ideological, because they are in opposition to other uses of the same concepts. In other words, there is no place 'inside' politics where political concepts or phenomena may be given a universal meaning because qua political they will always be contestable. Also there is no place 'outside' politics (external to any political or moral perspective) from where a concept can be judged the 'best' in a neutral or scientific manner. The same logic applies to CCE.

When dealing with contestedness it is always (and always already) contested in which way the matter is contested. *Basically politics is to make political decisions, but any political decision might always have been another decision.* Politics is an endless process of decisions that might have been other decisions (for equally good reasons). It is this un-decidedness *within the decisions* that constitutes the 'essential contestedness'.⁵

A possible order within contested contestedness

The contested contestedness does not result in a need to redefine CCE as some kind of disorder but rather to discuss whether or not some new ways of ordering may become relevant within the view of CCE as an essentially contested matter. As indicated, the essential contestedness opens the possibility for many interpretations of CCE, but for the purpose of this paper the basic question is whether or not some ideal types⁶ or other systematic features may be identifiable as a kind of ordering principle

To measure contestedness

It is evident that the re-definition of CCE as contestedness involves a discussion about measurement issues. This paper is based on the experience that the 'traditional' international scales (in CIVED and ICCS) tend to eliminate both the contested nature of political concepts and the contestedness of the matter. A reappearing problem is that it is difficult to interpret relatively low scale scores as anything other than relatively 'bad' results. Even though this is misleading and a misinterpretation, the one-dimensional scales invite the reader to this misunderstanding because data is viewed as measurements of quantities of a given latent trait which is generally regarded as desirable – implicitly or explicitly. Therefore the idea is to develop alternative or supplementary scales where this kind of problem might be avoided within a perspective of contestedness.

Contestedness as a perspective on CCE

The 'Crick report'⁷ lists a number of "essential elements to be reached by the end of compulsory schooling". It does so by listing a number of key concepts in pairs. Interestingly, even though all the concepts in these pairs are considered to be positive, they are (for no apparent reason) set up in contrasting pairs (op. cit.).

⁵ This resembles the definition of politics as a never-ending process and of citizenship as political relationships (Frazer, 2007).

⁶ 'Idea-constructs' (Weber, 1988).

⁷ Crick, 1998, p. 44 and p. 45.

This is relevant for this paper because these pairs may (contra-intentionally that is) be read as implicit *examples* of contestedness.

The most important ones are:⁸

<i>equality</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>diversity</i>
<i>the rule of law</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>human rights</i>
<i>order</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>freedom</i>
<i>community</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>individual</i>
<i>rights</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>responsibilities</i>

All these concepts may be defined as desirable phenomena involving widespread agreement (the reason why they are seen as essential goals for education). For our purpose, however, the point is that they point to an inherent contestedness which may be located within (or rather in-between) each pair of concepts. As an example, you need not be against diversity if you are for equality, but being for equality there must be some limits to diversity. As another example, you need not be against order if you are for freedom, but being for freedom there must be some limits to order. Also most political ideologies give more or less emphasis to either side of these pairs of concepts. Within the contestedness perspective these concepts are seen as being endlessly decided upon. While one might prefer one side or the other, it is *impossible* to choose one side only, because each concept is the implicit precondition for the other in the pair. Equity and diversity may be articulated as opposites but still precondition each other. Many other similar pairs of concepts may be constructed.

<i>civil</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>civic</i>
<i>private</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>public</i>
<i>difference</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>similarity</i>
<i>moral</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>law</i>
<i>inclusion</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>exclusion</i>
<i>culture</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>politics</i>

It is evident that these concepts involve widespread agreement but at the same time involve a political contestedness. You should defend your private point of view but also respect the point of view of others in public. You should act on personal motivations (difference) but still consider the needs of the community (similarity). You should observe the law but act morally. In other words, pairs of concepts like these may form an analytical ordering of contestedness.⁹

Contestedness and ICCS content domains

In the ICCS framework there are four content domains: 1: Civic society and systems, 2: Civic principles, 3: Civic participation and 4: Civic identities. How does the framework deal with this type of contested concepts and contestedness? This will be briefly discussed below.

⁸ Some of the left-right positions have been changed for this paper

⁹ Each side of the pair of concepts may be seen as an ideal type (a unified analytical construct), Weber, 1988.

Domain 1: Civic society and systems

This domain (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 16) has three “sub-domains”: “citizens”, “state institutions” and “civil institutions”. It seems quite evident that an analytical distinction between the citizen as related to the state and the citizen as related to civil society might be highlighted as an area of contestedness. This distinction is important because many conflicts and controversial issues of being a citizen relate to this analytical distinction. The state is based on the rule of law and universal principles whereas civil society is based on particular interests and values. Also, the relationship between *demos* and *kratos* (people and power) remains the basic essential contestedness that no version of democracy can totally eliminate (if it did it would be a totalitarian regime of some sort).

This basic contestedness forms the basis for the concepts measured by the ICCS in the ‘citizens’ sub-domain, namely conventional citizenship and social movement related citizenship. These two aspects of citizenship are quite closely related to the distinction between state and civil society since social movement related activities take place in civil society as an articulation of conflict, while conventional citizenship is closer related to state institutions. Therefore this is an area where the essential contestedness is visible: There is widespread agreement that both these types of citizenship are desirable, but there is no single and universal definition of the good citizen. The two types of citizenship may be viewed as complementary (as the framework does) or as in latent conflict with each other (as the perspective of contestedness would do). However, the problem remains that these two types of citizenship are measured by the quantitative degree of support only. This is a problem because there is no reason to believe that the citizen that supports both types the most is the ‘best’ citizen.

Domain 2: Civic principles

The framework states that this domain focuses on “shared ethical foundations of civic societies” (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 19). In other words, ‘civic societies’ are defined by an *ethical* foundation claimed to be common to the state and civil society. This foundation is defined by three principles: “freedom”, “diversity” and “social cohesion”. Two simple questions may point to the essential contestedness: 1: Is it true that *civic principles* are the same for the state and for civil society? 2: Is it true that *civic principles* are ethical? The answer to the first question is a no since in many ways civil society and the state may be in conflict with each other. The answer to the second question is that in a democratic system the perspective of contestedness would certainly claim that the basic *principles* of the state are *political*. Whether or not these political principles are in accordance with moral values (within civil society for example) is a contestable matter. Moral values cannot define politics from outside politics.¹⁰ As the framework mentions: “there may be tensions within societies between social cohesion and diversity of views” (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 19). This phrase is important because it seems to recognize that different values may be in conflict with each other. This implies that it is uncertain in what way the three principles establish an ethical foundation when they are in potential conflict with each other despite widespread agreement that each of them is important. In other words, the interesting issue at stake is the relative *value of values* as something quite different from the idea that all values should be supported as much as possible. When the degree of

¹⁰ At least not within the perspective of contestedness.

acceptance of each of these principles is measured quantitatively, the contested contestedness (that there are many legitimate attitudes and that no attitude can be defined as the best) vanishes.

In this domain it would seem appropriate to distinguish between *political principles* and *moral values*. This distinction is also relevant because it is parallel to the distinction between two types of citizenship in domain 1 and thereby associated with the potential conflict between civil society and the state. The 'good' citizen might be the one who is able to apply different values and principles in different settings, i.e. able to cope with contestedness.

Domain 3: Civic participation

The framework (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 20) defines the domain "Civic participation" by three levels of participation ("decision-making", "influencing" and "community participation"). Similar to the distinctions made in domains 1 and 2, it might be appropriate to distinguish between civil participation in civil society and civic participation related to state institutions.¹¹ Again this relates to the idea that rather than measuring participation quantitatively as levels of participation it might be more interesting to look at the attitudes towards different kinds of participation in different spheres of society. Participation is not defined as contested in the framework. This is probably due to the fact that by definition participation is viewed as something 'good' and (so-called) passive citizens as 'bad'. Nevertheless participation may be re-defined as contestedness: No kind of participation or level of participation is essentially good. Representative democracy is based on indirect participation rather than direct participation so in many situations direct participation may be considered a problem. It might also be argued that even though a low level of participation might be viewed as a problem (democratic deficit), it is also possible for a high level of participation to be viewed as 'too much' (democratic overload). All citizens need to be passive to some degree to avoid chaos. The question is: To which degree? In other words, the most important thing seems to be that citizens are able to balance their level and way of participation in differing contexts. This also fits into the concept of contestedness because any political participation relates to a potential conflict. It is the very nature of a political action to articulate something as a conflict since any participation is for something and against something else.

Domain 4: Civic identities

The domain "Civic Identities" is defined as "the individual's civic roles and perceptions of these roles" (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 21), with the additional remark that the individual may have "multiple articulated identities" (op. cit.). Identity is both defined as a kind of personal identity and as a kind of membership of a community (communities). The framework states that these roles (and values) may be "in harmony or in conflict" (op. cit.). In other words, there is a potential conflict of interests within the individual citizen. This is important as it points in the direction of the essential contestedness as an identity issue. An example may be given from the concepts stated as important in the framework. One such concept is 'nationalism' and another is 'multiplicity'. Potentially 'nationalism' could, however, be in deep conflict with 'multiplicity'.

¹¹ A third subdomain (or a new domain) might be 'the media'.

National identity, collective identities, supra-national identities and individual identities are all important identities that may coexist either in harmony or conflict. Also they are contested phenomena. It is quite common to define 'national identity' as something important and positive, but national identity may also be seen as a delicate balance between 'chauvinism' (too much) and 'patriotism' (an appropriate level of positive identification). In any case, the matter of identity is highly relevant for the perspective of contestedness because the relationship between assigned and/or desired identities (in different parts of society) more or less defines the citizen as someone within a conflict of interests. Especially the relationship between the individual (personal) identity and various civic community identities is an issue of much sociological debate. Individualization is often seen as a potential problem for maintaining social cohesion, tradition and mutual values but is also viewed in an opposite manner¹². Furthermore, different identities may support each other in new ways as it is known from 'glocalization' (the mixing of global and local identities, globalization and localization). In other words, the issue of identity is highly relevant for the perspective of contestedness because relationships between different identities are essentially contested and contestable matters.

Contestedness and questionnaire design

The general method in the ICCS questionnaires is to use Likert scales with forced choices (at least when measuring attitudes, values and intended behaviours). These Likert scales do not have any neutral midpoint or a 'don't know' but in most cases two levels of acceptance (agreement) and two levels of non-acceptance (disagreement) only. Even though some students might have chosen a neutral answer or not to answer at all if they were given the opportunity to do so, this method of forced choice is relevant both within the ICCS strategy and within the perspective of contestedness. This is due to the fact that making political choices is in fact about making a kind of forced choices. Besides, this method is quite consistent with the perspective of contestedness where choices are seen as being made in contrast to other equally possible choices.

Even though the respondents must make a choice (declare themselves for or against some attitude or issue), this information is primarily used in the construction of latent variables – measured on international scales as the degrees of acceptance of these latent traits (attitudes, principles or values). While these scales function very well as a way of reducing the vast amount of data, it seems that the basic information vanishes. The problem is that from a qualitative point of view one might argue that in a political sense a person being in favour of attitude A is quite different from a person being against attitude A. This information vanishes in the scale construction because even respondents who are generally negative towards a given phenomenon are defined as respondents who are in favour of the phenomenon (albeit only to a relatively small degree). In other words, the latent scale hides the conflict that the manifest scale highlights. Naturally one might argue back and forth about the relevance of these scales, but in the perspective of contestedness the main problem is not so much whether or not a latent trait is measured in a valid manner but rather that the 'negative answers' are not taken seriously enough when they only count as 'low' scores compared to 'high' scores. The contestedness of the matter implies that in most cases there is no way to define whether or not a high score is better than a low score which means that low scoring students are not

¹² Bauman, 2000, and (versus) Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2000.

necessarily 'bad' citizens and high scoring students not necessarily 'good' citizens. Consequently, it might be better to apply the logic from the perspective of contestedness in a measurement of attitudinal choices between attitude A and attitude B, rather than measuring the level of acceptance towards attitude A only.

Semantic differential scales

A main question is whether or not alternative scale types are available (or might be developed). One possibility might be to use scales on the lines of the semantic differential scale (SDS). The SDS was created by psychologist Charles E. Osgood in the 1950s (Osgood et al., 1957). It is designed to identify and measure an individual's perceived meaning of (for example) a concept, an object or an individual. Of special interest for the ICCS is the fact that such scales have been used for measuring social roles, attitude formation and attitudes towards organizations, minorities and political concepts. The SDS scale is set up using polar adjectives (related to the matter in question) at each end of a scale with a number of positions in the space between the poles. It might be worth mentioning that the so-called EPA dimensions (Heise, 1970) in SDS scales, namely Evaluation (good-bad), Potency (powerful-powerless) and Activity (fast-slow), do have parallels within citizenship (as in good-bad citizens, powerful-powerless citizens, active-passive citizens). However, the psychological perspective is not the main issue within an ICCS context, and the basic limitation of this method is that the two poles are defined as strict opposites, one being positive and the other negative.

Political differential scales

Nevertheless the basic idea of SDS as scales (that the answer is given as a relative position between two choices) might apply to the perspective of contestedness; especially if the two poles were both defined positively with a virtual political attitudinal space in-between them. Such a scale might be defined as a *political differential scale* (PDS).

The advantage of such a scale is that the 'negative' pole from the forced Likert scale or the SDS scale could be transformed into a second positive pole. The point being that in a conflict, a choice, a decision or a political solution regarding a contested matter the task always is to decide between competing ideologies, values or principles. The political choice is not per se between 'good' and 'bad' or 'right' and 'wrong' or 'weak' and 'strong' (as in SDS scales) but a choice between different principles. It is a matter of priority one might say. While the traditional ICCS scales measure intensity (the relative degree of a latent trait), a PDS measures ways of political thinking. What do students regard as the most important thing when judging political principles or other values: Freedom for the individual or social coherence and security? The rights or the obligations of citizens? Diversity and multitude or equity and homogeneity? And so forth.

Conclusion

The knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, participative behaviours and identities of citizens may all be regarded as interwoven elements of the ability of citizens (students) to exert discernment or judgment. An example from ICCS 2009 is the way students from all over the world judge different principles – almost all showing very positive attitudes toward democratic values. As such an important result, but the interpretation of the result would be more interesting if the measure of value beliefs as quantities was supplemented by the perspective of contestedness; the measure of

choices between competing points of view on contestable matters and the ever present weighing of the pros and cons of different values. The implementation of PDS might highlight differences in attitudes at various levels (student, class, school, country) that traditional scales tend to conceal, thereby adding to a more complex understanding of political and democratic values among the youth.

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Postscript in Danish

Efterskrift

I forbindelse med gennemførelsen af IEA's internationale undersøgelse ICCS på DPU (se liste over anvendte forkortelser nedenfor) udføres fra tid til anden forskelligt arbejde med udvikling og analyser etc., der ikke finder en plads i den løbende rapportering.

Dette arbejdspapir er et eksempel på dette. Arbejdspapiret er oprindeligt skrevet som et bidrag til en international konference om de forskellige IEA-undersøgelser (TIMMS, PIRLS, ICILS og ICCS). Arbejdspapiret var på et tidspunkt tilgængeligt på IEA-konferencens hjemmeside, men i lighed med adskillige andre bidrag blev det aldrig udgivet, da IEA har begrænsede midler til den form for udgivelser.

Arbejdspapiret er et første udkast til en idé om at udvikle og benytte det, der i papiret introduceres som såkaldte political differential scales. I relation til ICCS ses disse som et muligt supplement (delvist alternativ) til de internationale skalaer, der normalt arbejdes med i ICCS-undersøgelsen. Sidstnævnte kan findes beskrevet i detaljer i både danske og internationale rapporter om ICCS.

Eftersom denne grundidé fortsat er aktuel, og i et vist omfang har været implementeret i forskellige forundersøgelser til ICCS 2016, benytter vi her genren 'arbejdspapir' til at lade den være tilgængelig som baggrundsmateriale for ICCS 2016. Genren arbejdspapir er altså her også et udtryk for, at indholdet vedrører igangværende arbejder. Det er således muligt, at der senere kan udgives en opdateret udgave med eksempler på empiriske resultater.

Med hensyn til selve idéen bag papiret er grundspørgsmålet, hvordan man eventuelt kan udvikle 'instrumenter', der respekterer den i politik iboende uenighed om politiske værdier og principper. Konteksten for diskussionen er her ICCS-undersøgelsen og dets såkaldte 'framework' (idégrundlag, struktur, opbygning). Deraf titlen.

I ICCS-spørgeskemaerne benyttes i vid udstrækning en klassisk spørgeteknik, hvor respondenterne eksempelvis skal erklære sig mere eller mindre enige eller mere eller mindre uenige i forskellige udsagn. Med andre ord er der en principiel forskelsmarkering (*for* eller *imod* et udsagn). Når en flerhed af sådanne svar gøres op på én kvantitativ skala, sker der imidlertid det, at det så at sige kun er graden af enighed, der bliver til måleenheden. Sagt på en anden måde antages det implicit, i og med alle respondenters indplacering på samme skala, at stigende uenighed i princippet er det samme som en mindre og mindre grad af enighed.

Der er imidlertid ikke helt uproblematisk, når det implicit antages, at måleinstrumentet er éndimensionalt (måler én 'egenskab'). Når man undersøger, som det typisk gøres i ICCS, om eleverne er enige eller uenige i givne udsagn om vigtige værdier, principper, rettigheder, deltagelsesformer etc., er det nemlig ikke nødvendigvis sådan, at 'meget uenig' er helt det samme som 'meget lidt enig'. Uenigheden kan jo være et udtryk for noget helt andet.

Denne type problematik omkring de eksisterende skalaer har været en god del af motivationen for at forsøge at give et bud på, hvordan man eventuelt ville kunne *tillægge uenigheden en selvstændig*

værdi ved at udvikle spørgeteknikker, hvor det 'negative' svar (uenig) ville kunne fungere som andet og mere end blot en afsvækket version af det 'positive' svar (enig). Det vil sige som et svar med en (anden, alternativ) værdi i sig selv. Eller med andre ord et forsøg på at se et 'negativt' svar på de eksisterende skalaer som et latent 'positivt' svar, der eventuelt ville kunne gøres til en manifest dimension.

Et eksempel på dette kunne være, at når (hvis) man opfatter en høj grad af vilje til politisk deltagelse som noget positivt (udtryk som en høj grad af enighed i givne udsagn), så bliver en lav(ere) grad af politisk engagement (udtrykt som en uenighed i de samme udsagn) let opfattet som noget negativt (passivitet). Imidlertid kan der være gode og legitime grunde til uenigheden /den passive indstilling, som er et udtryk for andet og mere end en afsvækket version af den 'positive' indstilling/den aktive indstilling.

Tanken her er, at hvis man ser på politiske værditilkendegivelser (både 'positive' og 'negative') som et udtryk for, at der er forskellige opfattelser af 'værdien af de pågældende værdier', så vil man måske også kunne få et bedre greb om det fænomen, man eventuelt ville kunne betegne som elevernes politiske dannelse. I det perspektiv ville det ikke (kun) handle om at undersøge elevernes grad af tilslutning til givne værdier, men om elevernes opfattelse af værdiernes forhold til hinanden (deres konflikter med hinanden, uforenelige karakter etc.). I den forbindelse er spørgsmålet også, om der kan udvikles en spørgeteknik, der i mindre grad udtrykker en implicit 'politisk korrekthed' (ved at lade det stå mere åbent, hvad det 'positive' svar overhovedet er).

Resultater fra ICCS 2009 peger i retning af, at elever på 8. klassetrin (den primære deltagergruppe i ICCS) kun sjældent har en særlig klar politisk profil. Det er eksempelvis en erfaring fra ICCS-empirien, at denne aldersgruppe er vanskelig at inddele i klare politiske 'borgertyper', der modsvarer demokratiteoretiske forventninger om, at demokratiske borgere kan inddeles i typer. Derfor kan det være relevant at nævne, at forventningen lige netop *ikke* er, at de 14/15-årige elevers svar nødvendigvis vil (eller skal) afspejle traditionelle politiske uenigheder i form af systematiske opdelinger (som højre-venstre opdelingen af det politiske spektrum). Ikke desto mindre kan sådanne traditionelle opdelinger eventuelt bruges spørgeteknisk som eksempler på modstridende holdninger.

Under alle omstændigheder er metodens mulige relevans ikke afhængig af, om empirien vil genfinde traditionelle opdelinger eller ej i form af 'typer' eller 'profiler' af unge. I princippet kan det være mindst lige så interessant, hvis elevernes svar ikke følger traditionelle opdelinger af politiske værdier og principper på politiske fløje – som hvis de følger dem. I det hele taget står det til diskussion, hvad de afgørende forskelle på forskellige politiske ideologier egentlig er – og hvordan de løbende udvikles og forandres.

Selv om diskussionen i dette papir præsenteres som et spørgsmål om spørgeteknik, ligger det implicit i diskussionen og problematikken, at det (også) er et spørgsmål om andet og mere. Først og fremmest vedrører denne diskussion nemlig spørgsmålet om, hvad det er for et eksplicit eller implicit demokratisk borgerbegreb og borgerideal, der ligger i (og måles med) forskellige måder at spørge på.

I den forbindelse skal det understreges, at ICCS ikke kan siges kun at repræsentere ét bestemt borgerideal. ICCS undersøger en lang række dimensioner og aspekter af unge demokratiske borgere

med forskellige metoder. Ikke desto mindre er det som antydnet klart, at der med den traditionelle målemetode let opstår et fokus på graden af (den kvantitative størrelse af) givne forskellige egenskaber, holdninger og vurderinger. Det inviterer som antydnet til den forståelse af ICCS, at der skulle være tale om parametre, som det handler om at optimere (skabe mere af). Også i de tilfælde, hvor det ikke er intentionen.

Med et fokus på forskelle i værdier (political differential scales) er det som nævnt tanken at fremhæve, at 'negative' svar fra de deltagende elever også kan opfattes som positive alternativer. Tanken er samtidig, at det med et fokus på den omstændighed ville kunne blive tydeligere, at en politisk dannelse ikke kun handler om styrken (graden, omfanget, udbredelsen) af givne værdier, men lige så meget om forholdet imellem dem.

Forkortelser

IEA:	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ICCS:	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
DPU:	Danmarks institut for Pædagogik og Uddannelse
TIMMS:	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
ICILS:	International Computer and Information Literacy Study

