The contribution of schools to societal participation of young adults

The role of teachers, parents, and friends in stimulating societal interest and societal involvement during adolescence

Wanders, F.H.K.

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Chapter 1

Introduction
Introduction

Rapidly changing Western European societies are accordingly confronted by significant new challenges. Growing individualization and social fragmentation have spurred worries about the interdependency of citizens and social coherence in society (Bruijn et al., 2012; Putnam, 2000; Rasborg, 2017). Recent welfare state reforms in several of these societies have also increased the importance of citizens’ interdependency in participatory societies (Fuller, Kershaw, & Pulkingham, 2008; Hameleers & Vliegenthart, 2016; Newman & Tonkens, 2011). As such, governments have been appealing to their citizens to participate in society without relying heavily on governmental institutions. Stimulating citizens’ activity in society is expected to contribute to social coherence and facilitate the reform toward participatory societies. Societal participation includes the notions that citizens are self-reliant and responsible for their own lives, that they support their own communities, overcome common good problems, and collaborate with others to change and improve their own and others’ well-being (Barrett & Brunton-Smith, 2014; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006).

Several countries have implemented policies to promote societal participation (Cogan & Derricott, 2014; Dijkstra, 2012; Eurydice, 2017; Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen [Dutch Ministry of Education and Science], 2005). These policies consider schools key institutions for motivating students to participate in society. However, there is little knowledge of the contribution of schools to future participation in society. Few longitudinal empirical studies have examined the extent to which schools can stimulate societal participation in adulthood, and if so, most of these studies focus on political participation (e.g. Keating & Janmaat, 2016; Quintelier, 2015a; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011). Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to study the extent to which schools can contribute to societal participation of students in adulthood.

Even if research on the long-term effectiveness of schools on societal participation in adulthood is scarce, several studies have focused on the role of school during adolescence. These show that schools can prepare adolescent students for their role as future citizens in society in a number of ways. This includes, for example, by participating in extracurricular activities, service learning, and civic courses (Claes, Hooghe, & Marien, 2012; Dassonneville, Quintelier, Hooghe, & Claes, 2012; Dijkstra, Geijsel, Ledoux, Van der Veen, & Ten Dam, 2015; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Flanagan, Kim, Collura, & Kopish, 2015; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Earlier research showed the schools’ contribution to preparing students for societal participation is largely explained by an open climate. An open climate is an environment that fosters students’ ability and willingness to participate through positive student-student and teacher-student

In this thesis, three conditions for an open climate are expected to provide the basis for an environment in which students feel safe and are willing to participate and discuss societal issues: teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, and raising awareness of social issues. Participating in discussions—in an open climate—is then expected to increase students’ motivation to participate in society in adulthood by stimulating their societal interest and societal involvement. Societal interest equates to curiosity or attentiveness toward societal issues, and societal involvement is a deeper personal importance and affective relation toward societal issues. To understand the extent to which schools contribute to societal participation, this thesis first assesses to what extent open climate conditions can stimulate societal interest and societal involvement. Next, this thesis examines to what extent stimulating societal interest and societal involvement lead to greater societal participation in early adulthood.

The effectiveness of an open climate can vary among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g. Campbell, 2008; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2011; Langton & Jennings, 1968; Neundorf, Niemi, & Smets, 2016). If an open climate is more effective for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, for example, it offers schools the opportunity to reduce inequalities in societal interest and societal involvement. Campbell (2008) calls this phenomenon the compensation effect. However, if an open climate is more beneficial for students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, it enhances the inequalities in societal interest and societal involvement between students from various backgrounds. This is what Campbell (2008) refers to as the acceleration effect. As the effectiveness of an open climate can differ among students, to further understand the extent to which schools contribute to societal participation, this thesis explores whether open climate conditions are equally beneficial for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

The following section elaborates on the conceptualization of societal participation as the main variable of interest and goes on to discuss the concepts and relationships between societal interest and societal involvement as motivators for societal participation. We next argue that adolescence is a crucial period for socialization, and then focus on the role of the school. During adolescence, socializing agents, such as parents and friends, also play an important role in the development of students; therefore, we focus on both these socializing agents and their roles alongside school. Finally, we describe our data and their contexts and conclude with the research aims and research questions of this thesis.
Theoretical framework

Societal participation
Socialization literature has only recently begun to focus on societal participation. Previous studies on sociopolitical socialization primarily focused on conventional political participation and orientations, including voting, partisanship, and influencing “political elites” (e.g., Brady, Schlozman, & Verba, 1995; Conway, 2001; Milbrath, 1981; Verba et al., 1995). In more recent years, the broadening discussion has broached civic engagement (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Skocpol & Fiorina, 2004). Scholars began to devote attention to the growing significance of the personal development and responsibilities of citizens and the role of participating in society for stable democracies (Oser & Veugelers, 2008; Geboers et al., 2013). Conceptualized as behavior with the intention to shape and improve the conditions of others and the future of society (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Jacoby, 2009; Skocpol & Fiorina, 2004), civic engagement is still partially conceived as political participation. That is, voting or partisanship is considered behavior that is intended to improve the future of society and the situation of others.

This thesis continues this line of reasoning by focusing on participation in society rather than political participation. Following Barrett and Brunton-Smith (2014, p1), we define societal participation as “a voluntary activity focused on helping others, achieving a public good or solving a community problem, including work undertaken either alone or in cooperation with others in order to effect change.” Since relationships between citizens and within communities and families are progressively important in individualized and participatory societies, this conceptualization of societal participation captures the activity of citizens in society supporting their communities and taking responsibility for their own lives through positive relationships. Studying societal participation, by omitting political activities that citizens are increasingly expected to rely less on, allows us to estimate more accurately the role of schools in stimulating students to be active in society.

Societal interest and societal involvement
As stated earlier, the first objectives of this thesis are to study the extent to which open climate conditions stimulate societal interest and societal involvement and to explore to what extent societal interest and societal involvement lead to greater societal participation in early adulthood. In the upcoming section, we elaborate on the concepts of societal interest and societal involvement.

From early childhood onward, the state of “being interested” is considered a vital motivator of activating behavior (Deci, 1992; Katz, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Bereby-Meyer, 2006; Krapp, 1999; Subramaniam, 2009). Becoming interested starts from situational interest,
which encompasses a temporary, flexible, context-specific form of interest. After this, as interest grows, it develops into a more stable, internalized form of individual interest, which persists outside specific contexts without external stimuli (Harackiewicz, Durik, Barron, Linnenbrink-Garcia, & Tauer, 2008; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Krapp, 2007; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 2014; Russo & Stattin, 2016). Due to its momentary and context-specific nature, situational interest has little impact on behavior. Individual interest, as an internalized, enduring form of interest, is more likely to motivate behavior that is based on the subject of interest. Most previous studies on the role of interest in socialization implicitly or explicitly focused on individual interest as the motivator for active participation (Prior, 2010; Robison, 2017; Shani, 2009; Shehata & Amnå, 2017).

Studies on the role of individual interest as a motivator for political participation conceptualized interest as an arousal of curiosity (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; Van Deth, 2000) or attentiveness toward political issues (Koskimaa & Rapeli, 2015; Lupia & Philpot, 2005). Interest is then an incentive as it arouses curiosity, stimulates attentiveness, and thus motivates students to become active in politics. This thesis also considers societal interest as an individual interest, as it is expected to motivate behavior. In line with this literature, societal interest is conceptualized as curiosity and attentiveness toward societal issues. It is implied to be an enduring, stable form of individual interest, and is expected to motivate students to participate in society. Where taking an interest in politics leads to greater political participation, this thesis posits that taking an interest in society leads to greater societal participation. Furthermore, in line with the previous argument concerning omitting political notions to estimate the role of schools on societal participation more accurately, this thesis considers that societal interest also includes taking an interest in societal issues. Previous studies uncovered differences between the political and societal interests of adolescents (Abdelzadeh, 2016; Lauglo & Øia, 2007) and found that students are less supportive of conventional politics and more supportive of social and societal issues (Munniksma, Dijkstra, Van der Veen, Ledoux, & Van de Werfhorst, 2017). Omitting political notions in studying societal interest allows us to estimate the role of the school on societal interest more precisely, without the added negative connotation of with politics, and examine to what extent societal interest leads to greater societal participation.

In addition to societal interest, this thesis also studies to what extent societal involvement motivates societal participation. It is expected that students will become increasingly involved in society as their societal interest grows. Involvement supposes that a person feels a certain topic is important or feels an affection for that topic (Manfredo 1989; Prebensen, Woo, Chen, & Uysal, 2013; Zaichkowsky, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1994). Societal involvement includes how students personally understand and relate to certain issues
and comprehend their importance or impact on society. Distinct from simple curiosity or attentiveness toward societal issues, societal involvement encompasses a personal significance, a deeper feeling, and a certain form of affection toward these issues. As societal interest becomes more meaningful and internalized, it stimulates students’ personal importance and affection toward these issues, which leads to greater societal involvement. This implies that societal involvement is expected to develop from societal interest. This personal and affective component is then argued to motivate students to participate in society because they are willing to contribute to or resolve the underlying issues they feel are important. Along with societal interest, societal involvement is expected to motivate students to participate in society later in life.

In sum, we expect that an increase in interest, representing a relatively enduring internalized curiosity, and attention to societal issues stimulate societal participation. Societal interest also positively influences societal involvement as it assumes that adolescents begin to care—or feel a relationship with—societal issues, making them more willing to participate, which in turn enhances societal participation. Figure 1.1 presents a schematic overview of this argumentation and visualizes the first objective of this thesis to explore to what extent societal interest and societal involvement lead to greater societal participation in early adulthood.

![Figure 1.1: Schematic overview of the relations between societal interest, societal involvement, and societal participation.](image)

**Adolescence**

The development of societal interest and societal involvement during adolescence is central in this thesis to study the extent to which both lead to greater societal participation. Adolescence is considered a crucial period for socialization, even if the debate on the lasting effects of adolescence is continuing. This debate focuses on stability versus change of
sociopolitical attitudes during and after adolescence and, taking a broad perspective, consists of two central opposing views on socialization: *lifelong openness* and *lifelong persistence* (e.g. Alwin, 1994; Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Sears, 1983). At one pole, the *lifelong openness view* states that people are susceptible to changes in sociopolitical orientations throughout life. On the opposite end, the *lifelong persistence view* states that sociopolitical orientations and attitudes are resistant to change in adulthood and that stability of these attitudes throughout life is key (Sears, 1983). Recently, a growing body of studies has shown that attitudes toward politics and societal issues are shaped mostly in adolescence (Abdelzadeh & Lundberg, 2017; Dinas, 2013; Jennings & Niemi, 1981; Osborne, Sears, & Valentino, 2011; Russo & Stattin, 2016; Sears & Brown, 2013; Shehata & Amnå, 2017; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001), and they are generally stable in adulthood (Prior, 2010).

These studies demonstrate that adolescents are most susceptible to changes in their social and political orientations and support a more nuanced version standing between the opposing views: *the impressionable years hypothesis* (Krosnick, 1991; Krosnick & Alwin, 1989). According to these studies, the impressionable years occur during adolescence, as adolescents are generally more open to change and more susceptible to the influence of socializing agents (Abdelzadeh & Lundberg, 2017; Russo & Stattin, 2016; Sears & Brown, 2013; Shehata & Amnå, 2017). As they grow older, they become less open to changes in attitudes, and their predispositions become more stable (Osborne et al., 2011; Prior, 2010). This hypothesis is therefore central in this thesis, as we expect adolescents to be impressionable and open to becoming more interested and involved in society—after which their attitude stabilizes—and this leads to future societal participation.

**The influence of schools**

Among institutions that can motivate students to participate in society, schools hold a unique position. First, in most Western European countries, schools can reach most non-adults from early childhood until late adolescence. Schools are likely the primary institution to reach most adolescents in many countries, which emphasizes the possible contribution of schooling in stimulating students to become active citizens. Second, schools have a legitimacy and authority to influence students and instill certain norms and values in them. This is embodied in most countries’ citizenship education as a mandatory or essential component of the school curriculum (Eurydice, 2017). Third, school populations and students’ contacts within the school are often more diverse with respect to cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds than students would otherwise encounter. The ability of schools to reach most adolescents, their legitimacy to influence students, their use of policies to instill values, and their diverse student population demonstrate why many policies address schools as target institutions necessary for stimulating societal participation (Eidhof, 2016).
This thesis perceives the school as a democratic community (Geboers et al., 2013; Lawy & Biesta 2006). In this community, students can develop as citizens by discussing societal issues, learning about society, and participating in societal practices. This can be understood against the background of cognitive developmental theory, according to which socialization occurs through interactions and exposure to new ideas, perspectives, and discussions of political and societal issues (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, & Torney-Purta, 2010). In this view, students develop ideas, insights, and knowledge about society (Bruner, 1996) and grow as citizens, mostly through interaction with others—teachers, parents, friends, and fellow students—and through participation and engagement in different social and cultural practices in their daily lives (Klofstad, 2009; Lawy & Biesta, 2006). Since education is compulsory until late adolescence in many countries and schools play a major part in the lives of most adolescents, interactions in school can play a significant role in their development. It is therefore important that schools create the conditions for an open climate that facilitates these interactions. An open climate is an environment in which students feel willing and able to participate, where relationships between teachers and students, and among students, are positive, and where discussions on societal issues are encouraged (Geboers et al., 2013; Isac et al., 2014). This thesis studies three conditions at the basis of an open climate.

First, positive teacher-student relationships are expected to cultivate an environment in which students feel safe, willing, and able to participate in discussions (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007; Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Wentzel, 2016). Students who perceive relationships that are more positive with their teachers feel safer, more able, and thus more willing to interact with fellow students and their teachers. This brings them into contact with other ideas and thoughts—in an open environment—and in turn stimulates their interest and involvement in society (Dostie-Goulet, 2009; Klofstad, 2009; Koskimaa & Rapeli, 2015; McIntosh, Hart & Youniss, 2007; Neundorf et al., 2016). Second, previous studies showed that teachers in an open climate have a direct, active role in encouraging discussions on social issues (Campbell, 2008; Isac et al., 2014; Thapa et al., 2013). By raising students’ awareness of social issues, such as health-care, poverty, immigration, or environmental issues, teachers create opportunities for students to discuss and address these issues among themselves. Raising awareness of social issues signals to students that they have the opportunity to talk about these issues. As students feel allowed to broach these issues in class, they feel empowered to participate in discussions about them. Teachers are thus important for creating a climate of open discussions, dialogues, and the opportunities for democratic practices (Dijkstra et al., 2015; Geboers et al., 2013; Homana, Barber, & Torney-Purta, 2006; Keating & Janmaat, 2016). Finally, having positive relationships with fellow students also contributes to an open climate where students feel safe, willing, and able to participate (Baker, Grant,
& Morlock, 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; O’Conner, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Wentzel, 1998). If students feel safer through better relationships with their peers in class, they will more likely participate in discussions and therefore become more interested and involved in society. In an open climate, the relationships between students are thus expected to encourage participation in discussions on societal issues, and stimulate students’ interest and involvement in society.

Figure 1.2 adds the open climate conditions to the model shown in figure 1.1. The second objective of this thesis is to study the extent to which these open climate conditions stimulate societal interest and societal involvement.

Figure 1.2: Schematic overview of the role of conditions of an open climate on societal interest and societal involvement and the relation between societal interest and societal involvement.

The role of parents and friends
Adolescent development involves a complex interplay of different contexts in which students mature and in which socializing agents each play a role (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Schools are only one of a multitude of contexts where students develop, and accounting for the influence of other socializing agents allows for a more precise estimation of the actual contribution of schools to societal participation. Even though several socializing agents are important in adolescent development, their teachers, parents, and peers are most responsible for their socialization (Dostie-Goulet, 2009; Koskimaa & Rapeli, 2015; Neundorf et al., 2016; Shani 2009; Quintelier, 2015b). To evaluate the extent of a school’s contribution to students’ societal interest and societal involvement, this thesis investigates the role of parents and friends as two additional socializers in the social development of adolescents. The role of both socializers is briefly outlined below.
Parents can, directly and indirectly, stimulate societal interest and societal involvement in their children. Through discussions, activities, and conversations with their spouses, parents can directly stimulate children to become interested and involved in society (e.g. Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003; Dostie-Goulet, 2009; Koskimaa & Rapeli, 2015; Neundorf et al., 2016). More precisely, parents can raise awareness of social issues and encourage discussions about them. Discussing these issues is then expected to stimulate societal interest and societal involvement. Parents can indirectly stimulate societal interest and societal involvement by being interested or active in society and acting as civic role models themselves (McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2015a; Quintelier, Hooghe, & Badescu, 2007; Zaff, Malanchuk, & Eccles, 2003). Besides direct socialization, this thesis explores indirect socialization by focusing on parental socioeconomic background. Socialization is closely related to parents’ socioeconomic status (SES) (McIntosh et al., 2007; Plutzer, 2002; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Verba et al., 1995). The argument underlying this relation is that parents with higher SES have more resources available for socialization (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2011) and that SES is an important indicator of the ability to transmit values and stimulate social development (Brady et al., 1995; Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Pfaff, 2009; Quintelier, 2015b; Yuen, 2014). Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are therefore expected to be more interested and involved as their parents often have resources that are more adequate and are generally more likely to transfer values and stimulate their spouses’ own social development.

Friends can also stimulate societal interest and involvement. Whereas the role of friends in the development of adolescents has been studied thoroughly (e.g. Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Maxwell, 2002; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2002), their role in developing interest and involvement in society is less clear. Previous studies have had ambiguous outcomes. Some studies consider friends as one of the primary socializers (Dostie-Goulet, 2009; Jaros, 1973); other studies are more reticent about the role of friends (Dawson & Prewitt, 1969), and still others argue that adolescents have friends who are likeminded and only amplify certain attitudes and orientations (Koskimaa & Rapeli, 2015). Nevertheless, friends seem to contribute to adolescent development, even though the extent to which they contribute is not so apparent.

The role of friends—and parents—also changes during adolescence. As adolescents grow up, they increasingly spend more time with their friends (Larson & Richards, 1991), gain a wider network of friends, and become more influenced by their friends (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). Moreover, adolescents gradually disengage from their families as they age, which enhances the importance of their friends in shaping a certain identity and socialization (Blyth & Traeger, 1988; Dostie-Goulet, 2009). Adolescents become more
committed to friendships during adolescence and perceive more support from friendships over time (Buhrmester, 1990; Claes & Poirier, 1993; Hojjat & Moyer, 2017). They show higher levels of commitment to friends, including approaching them for advice on personal issues and becoming more influenced by them (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). The changing role of friends and parents emphasizes the need to study these changes during adolescence. It implies that the role of schools can also change, and it is important to study these changes to examine the relative influence of schools to parents and friends on societal interest and societal involvement throughout adolescence.

To give an estimation of schools’ contributions to societal interest and societal involvement, studying the—changing—role of parents and friends is thus necessary (see figure 1.3).

![Figure 1.3: Schematic overview including the role of parents and friends on societal interest and societal involvement.](image)

**Do students benefit equally from an open climate?**

Earlier research has shown that the effect of an open climate differs among students from various SES families (Campbell, 2008; Crosnoe, 2004; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2011; Langton & Jennings, 1968; Neundorf et al., 2016). Campbell (2008) addresses two opposing effects of an open climate: *compensation* or *acceleration*. The *compensation* effect states that students from less advantaged backgrounds gain more from an open climate than students from more advantaged backgrounds. As stated earlier, lower SES parents are less
likely to participate in society themselves and often have fewer resources for stimulating societal interest and societal involvement of their spouses. Adolescents from lower SES backgrounds often have less experience of discussions on social issues, and an open climate is more beneficial for them (Campbell, 2008; Langton & Jennings, 1968). The *acceleration* effect asserts that students from higher SES backgrounds gain more from an open climate. Here, it is expected that the previous experiences in these discussions in their home environment benefit participating in discussions in an open climate, which implies that students from advantageous backgrounds benefit more from an open climate in which these discussions take place.

We studied to what extent teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, and raising awareness by teachers in social issues are equally or differently beneficial for students from different parental backgrounds. The final objective of this thesis is thus to examine whether the effects of open climate conditions are similar for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.
Data

First, to study the long-term influence of schools on societal involvement in the Netherlands, the Cohort Onderzoek OnderwijsLoopbanen (Cohort Research into Educational Careers) (COOL5-18) study provided a rich variety of data on students in Dutch schools. It includes scales on citizenship outcomes (Driessen, Mulder, & Roeleveld, 2012; Driessen, Mulder, Ledoux, Roeleveld, & Van der Veen, 2009; Ten Dam, Geijsel, Reumerman, & Ledoux, 2011) as well as socialization and longitudinal data from the end of primary school until the end of secondary school. Despite its rich features, COOL5-18 does not contain data on societal interest, and it does not follow up on students in adulthood for societal participation.¹

To study the development of societal interest and societal participation in early adulthood, we used a complementary dataset. To select a complementary dataset, we defined several conditions that it was required to meet. First, the dataset should contain data available throughout adolescence and early adulthood. Second, data on societal involvement had to be available and conceptualized similarly to the COOL5-18 dataset. This means that it should include questions that imply a perceived importance toward societal issues. Third, the additional dataset should contain data on societal interest and societal participation in early adulthood. Fourth, the data should contain information on teachers, parents, and friends, with a specific focus on teacher conditions for an open climate at school. Finally, both contexts should have sufficient common grounds to estimate the relations as a single theoretical model.

After considering multiple datasets appropriate for studying socialization, we opted to use the Swedish YeS (Youth and Society) dataset, which contains rich data on political socialization in six data waves and five cohorts ranging from ages 13 to 30. It also includes a range of data on socialization, schools, citizenship, and political and societal participation. The YeS study provided data on societal participation in early adulthood and on the role of teachers, parents, and friends as socializing agents. Both COOL5-18 and YeS datasets offer rich data for studying the role of schools in motivating students to participate in society. It should be noted that this thesis does not aim to compare both contexts but instead aims to generate a generalized conclusion on the role that schools—or more specifically, open climate conditions—have on societal interest and societal involvement, which motivate societal participation. Combined, both contexts can be used to study the expected relations in our schematic model. In summarizing the results, in the final chapter, this thesis reflects on the implications of using these two contexts.

¹ We did not do a follow-up study on the last wave of COOL5-18 data due to Dutch privacy regulations that made it difficult to obtain the necessary information to trace these students.
Aims and research questions

The main aim of this thesis is to study the extent to which schools can contribute to societal participation. In the previous theoretical framework, three objectives were posited to achieve this aim, summarized as the following: (1) to assess the extent to which open climate conditions stimulate societal interest and societal involvement, (2) to explore the extent to which societal interest and societal involvement stimulate societal participation in early adulthood, and (3) to examine whether the effects of open climate conditions are equally beneficial for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

To reach these objectives, we postulated four main research questions with five sub-questions\(^2\) that will be addressed in the upcoming chapters. In chapters 2 and 3, data from the COOL\(^5\)\(^{-}\)\(^{18}\) cohort are used to answer research questions 1 and 2, which focus on societal involvement. In chapters 4 and 5, the YeS data were used to address research questions 3 and 4.

**Question 1:** To what extent do teacher-student and student-student relationships stimulate societal involvement in secondary school?
- To what extent is this different for students with lower and higher educated parents?

**Question 2:** To what extent do teacher-student and student-student relationships stimulate societal involvement in primary school?
- To what extent is this different for students with lower and higher educated parents?
- If there is a relation between teacher-student relationships and student-student relationships in primary school, to what extent is there an effect in secondary school?

**Question 3:** To what extent does raising awareness of social issues by teachers, parents, and friends stimulate the development of societal interest during adolescence?
- To what extent is this different for students with lower and higher educated parents?

**Question 4:** To what extent does the development of societal interest and societal involvement during adolescence stimulate societal participation in early adulthood?
- To what extent does raising awareness of social issues by teachers, parents, and friends stimulate societal interest, societal involvement, and societal participation in late adolescence and early adulthood?

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2 We are aware that this terminology (e.g., stimulate, lead to, influence) implies causality, which we strictly did not observe and examine. In chapter 6, we will further address causality; however, for the sake of readability we will address these questions as causal statements.