Development of Young People's Political Efficacy During the Election Year: Effect of Political Discussion and Media Consumption

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Political efficacy

A type of self-efficacy expressed in a political domain

„Personal efficacy needed to produce results by enlistment of effort and proficient use of capabilities and resources“ (Bandura, 1997).

Associated with political activity, interest etc.
Development of political efficacy (Beaumont, 2010):

- mastery experiences
- models
- networks, discussion, encouragement
- empowering political outlooks

Discussion & media
Findings **not** consistent:

- different age groups
- different time perspectives

Short-term development in late adolescence: **first national election**

- „fresh encounter“ in sensitive developmental period (Sears & Levy, 2003)
- learning facilitated by the environment
Research questions

1. Stability of political efficacy during a 5-month period

2. Is political efficacy a cause, or a consequence?
   - Media consumption
   - Discussion with parents
   - Discussion with peers
Sample & procedure

- 19-year-old adolescents
- Czech Republic, 2010

Three-wave panel study:
- Wave 1: February/March
- Wave 2: May
- National election (May 28-29)
- Wave 3: June/July
Measures

**Political efficacy** – 4 questions (alphas from .78)

„I understand important problems of our society."
„I am able to work in a civic or political organization."

In the last month, how often did you follow political news:
1. on the television or radio?
2. in the newspaper?
3. on the internet?

In the last month, how often did you discuss politics with:
1. your parents?
2. your friends or classmates?
Stability of political efficacy

Initial level T1

February/March | May | June/July
---|---|---
All | Males | Females
Low | Middle | High
Political efficacy and total media consumption

**Total Med** = TV/Radio + Newspaper + Internet political news
Political efficacy and total media consumption

\[ \chi^2[2] = .37 \]
\[ \text{RMSEA} = .00 \]
\[ \text{CFI} = 1.00 \]
Political efficacy and newspaper reading

χ²[2] = 5.40
RMSEA = .10
CFI = .99
Political efficacy and internet news

\[
\chi^2[2] = .51 \\
RMSEA = .00 \\
CFI = 1.00
\]
Political efficacy and discussion with parents

\[ \chi^2[2] = 1.33 \]
\[ \text{RMSEA} = .00 \]
\[ \text{CFI} = 1.00 \]
Political efficacy and discussion with peers

\[ \chi^2[2] = 2.61 \]
RMSEA = .04
CFI = 1.00
Political efficacy and discussion with peers

Males

Females
# Political efficacy and discussion with peers

Does discussion initiated by an adolescent have greater impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Political efficacy at Time 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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- **Step 1**: Political efficacy (T1)
- **Step 2**: Discussion with peers (T1)
- **Step 3**: Level of activity (T1)
- **Step 4**: Interaction (Discussion T1 * Level of activity T1)

*Hierarchical linear regression model*

* p < .05. ** p < .01.
Political efficacy and discussion with peers

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<td>+ 2</td>
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Hierarchical linear regression model

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Conclusions

- Political efficacy was stable during a 5-month period
- Media consumption did not influence adolescents’ political efficacy
- Adolescents’ media consumption was influenced by their political efficacy
Conclusions

- There were no effects between discussion with parents and political efficacy
- Women’s engagement in peer discussions was influenced by their efficacy
- Men’s engagement in peer discussions was not influenced by their efficacy
- Men’s engagement influenced their efficacy
  - Greater activity → greater influence
Thanks for your attention!

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