

# **Mitigating the political participation gap from the school : the roles of civic knowledge and classroom climate**

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## **Abstract**

Empirical evidence has consistently shown that political participation is positively related with socioeconomic background. Furthermore, recent research suggests that children who come from low status families are already less willing to get politically involved. The present paper aims to analyze the possible impact that schools can have in mitigating the effect of parents' socioeconomic status on students' expected electoral participation, focusing on two variables: civic knowledge and classroom climate. The analyses are based on a series of multilevel models using Chilean data of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2009. The results support the influence of students' socioeconomic background on expected electoral participation. Furthermore, civic knowledge and classroom climate show a positive and similar influence on students' expected participation. However, classroom climate appears less affected by students' background than civic knowledge, opening the discussion about which strategy should be emphasized when aiming to mitigate the political participation gap.

## **Keywords**

Citizenship, Civic knowledge, Political participation, Social background, Classroom climate.