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**Searching for a democratic equalizer: citizenship education's moderating effect  
on the relationship between a political home and internal political efficacy**

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**Data availability statement:**

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request due to privacy restrictions and the age of the participants at the *Steunpunt Toetsontwikkeling en Peilingen* of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the University of Antwerp (UA).

**Ethical statement:**

The data was collected by the *Steunpunt Toetsontwikkeling en Peilingen* of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the University of Antwerp (UA), adhering to the highest ethical standards (see Ameel et al., 2016 for more details).

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The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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### Abstract

Internal political efficacy (IPE) is an important yet unequally distributed driver of political action. Following cultural sociological explanations for political disengagement, we study how students' political home environment reproduces inequalities in IPE and how citizenship education moderates this. We test whether citizenship education compensates, reproduces, or accelerates inequalities in IPE due to differences in one's political home environment. These moderating effects are tested for three components of citizenship education; the number of civic learning experiences, open classroom climate for discussion, and active student participation at school. We consider the school a potential equalizer and a segregated breeding ground for democracy. Based on multilevel analyses employing cross-sectional data (3838 students across 147 schools) gathered to test the attainment targets in citizenship education among Flemish senior high school students (Belgium), we show that privileged students receive more citizenship education. However, each citizenship education component increases IPE and has a small yet significant compensation effect. This paper makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature on inequalities in political socialization processes while critically investigating the school's functioning as a democratic equalizer.

*Keywords:* political socialization; citizenship education; inequality; political behavior; political attitudes

## Introduction

Inequality in political participation challenges the democratic potential of political systems. People from underprivileged backgrounds participate less in politics, which causes an under-representation of their interests (J. M. Avery, 2015; Brand & Burgard, 2008; Marx & Nguyen, 2016). Their societal position is often transmitted from generation to generation, causing a generation-long political under-representation (Brady et al., 2015). Scholars traditionally explain political disengagement by a lack of individual-level resources (Verba et al., 1995). Due to unequal access or possession of resources, such as political sophistication, people encounter various barriers to taking up their civic rights to participate politically. Education, especially citizenship education, is traditionally believed to lower these barriers and increase the knowledge and skills necessary to participate politically. More educational opportunities are equated with higher political participation levels. However, this simple equation fails to explain why political participation levels, especially among youngsters, have decreased in the past century while educational levels have risen drastically (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022).

This paper argues that differential individual resources, such as political knowledge, are only part of the explanation. Political participation is not solely a rational activity in which citizens balance the costs and benefits in deciding whether to participate. Following cultural sociological explanations, we approach political behavior from the reproduction theory of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and focus on a psychological driver for political action, someone's internal political efficacy (IPE). IPE refers to individuals' self-perception about their competencies in the political field, which relates to feelings of political entitlement and is an essential precursor of political behavior (Levy & Akiva, 2019). We challenge traditional resource-based thinking by studying inequalities in IPE while controlling for political knowledge.

We study the reproduction of inequality in IPE by looking into high school students' political home environment. Drawing on Bourdieu and Passeron's general reproduction theory (1990), we argue that a stimulating political home environment reproduces inequalities in IPE and leads to persisting inequalities in IPE. Furthermore, we investigate to what extent schools are potential democratic equalizers. Often, schools are proposed as ideal socialization environments to tackle inequalities in students' home environment, and citizenship education aims to foster active citizenship among all future citizens. We investigate how citizenship education moderates the relationship between someone's political home environment and IPE; more specifically, we test three competing hypotheses to examine whether citizenship education compensates,

reproduces, or accelerates IPE inequalities due to differential political home environments. By doing so, this paper makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution to the literature on inequalities in political socialization processes while critically investigating the school's functioning as a democratic equalizer.

Based on data from 2016 commissioned by the Flemish educational ministry (Belgium), we examine three components of citizenship education: civic learning experiences, an open classroom climate for discussion, and active student participation in school. We analyze several multilevel models exploring the moderating role of these components of citizenship education. Our models show that a political home environment matters as much for students' IPE as their civic knowledge. This highlights the importance of enhancing someone's political resources, such as political knowledge, and being sensitive to how a home environment influences someone's feelings of efficacy in a political setting.

We start this paper by theorizing the relationship between someone's home environment and IPE. Then we explain the possible moderating effects of different citizenship education components on the lack of such a politically stimulating home environment. After that, we reflect upon the school as a segregated socialization environment and its influence on children's political socialization process. After the theoretical section, we discuss the method used and our main results. We conclude by reflecting upon our results and the implications for the broader discussion on political inequality.

### *Unequal political cradles*

The development of someone's IPE is a product of a political socialization process happening at different places and influenced by several socialization agents. The home environment is arguably one of the most influential, with parents as its primary socialization agent (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Parents transmit attitudes to their children, which sustain enduring inter-generational inequalities. Children inherit political inclinations from their parents, and the political cradle they are born in can significantly influence their adult political life, giving rise to intra-generational differences between those with more or less politically stimulating home environments. We argue that this difference depends on one's social class (Grasso & Giugni, 2022). Drawing on Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) general reproduction theory, we theorize how this transmission of political engagement occurs.

According to Bourdieu (1989), parents' capital in the educational field is transmitted to their children through cultural reproduction. Cultural capital can be understood to be 'widely

shared, high-status cultural signals (attitudes preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods, and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion' (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 156). It consists of objectified capital – including material cultural goods such as books –, institutionalized capital – including institutionally recognized cultural credentials such as a diploma –, and embodied cultural capital – including a way of being and knowing, possessing a specific cultural taste and knowledge, mannerism, etc. (Bourdieu, 1976, 1986).

The parent-child relationship is the primary transmission channel for reproducing inequality in cultural capital. Early life experiences within one's family are generally considered also the basis for political attitudes and behavior (Gidengil et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2009; Lindgren et al., 2019), where parents with high cultural capital create stimulating home environments that pass down objectified, embodied, and institutionalized cultural capital to children in the household. The first channel through which this happens is by transmitting objectified cultural capital. For instance, children in families with more books are likelier to participate in politics than children with fewer books at home (Lopes et al., 2009). Secondly, parents pass down embodied cultural capital by cultivating their children's interest in politics, which increases the likelihood that they will participate in politics later in life (McIntosh et al., 2007) and introduce their children to politically interested social circles (Dalton, 1982). Thirdly, parents' institutionalized capital, such as their educational degrees, influences their political attitudes in dispositions granted to them through social institutions, which are, in turn, passed down to their children (Schlozman et al., 2012).

This political socialization process is often not a conscious act of parenting. Children imitate and adopt their parent's behavior and attitudes in the political arena (Dryler, 1998; Kam & Palmer, 2008). Parents with high cultural capital also pass on a sense of entitlement to their children (Lareau, 2002). Children from these families can access more cognitive resources and feel more entitled to participate. For them, it is a regular daily activity integral to their habitus. Habitus can be understood as an active residue or sediment of the past that functions in the present to shape perception, thought, and actions regularly (Crossley, 2001). In this way, social behavior is regulated by dispositions, schemas, and forms of know-how that are so deeply internalized that they often operate unconsciously. A stimulating home environment creates a habitus that molds children to boast higher levels of IPE. Therefore, tackling inequalities in political efficacy requires closing a knowledge gap and bridging the entitlement gap that lies beyond it.

### *Schools as democratic equalizers*

As in many inequality debates, schools are often portrayed as possible democratic equalizers because children from all strata attend school, creating unique possibilities to provide educational opportunities to all children, including those from less privileged backgrounds. Creating equal educational opportunities is a widely accepted and democratic aim (Shields et al., 2017). Education considerably influences life chances, and these life chances should not be determined by arbitrary conditions such as students' political home environment.

Several studies have found that civic and citizenship education positively impacts IPE (Dassonneville et al., 2012; Martens & Gainous, 2013; Pasek et al., 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) and that this effect can partially mediate future political participation (Maurissen, 2018). However, the relationship between citizenship education and IPE is not straightforward. Some citizenship education experiences may negatively impact self-efficacy, especially among students who struggle with challenging academic tasks (Bandura, 1977). For example, a quasi-experiment involving a youth parliament showed decreased participants' IPE (Matthieu et al., 2020), and a quasi-experiment of on-site citizenship education did not affect IPE (Mulder, 2021). However, these studies are based on short-term exposures. A review of the field by Geboers et al. (2013) shows how an open classroom climate for discussion and formal curriculum, including citizenship education projects are effective ways of promoting civic engagement, and Willeck and Mendelberg (2022) review emphasizes active learning strategies as promising to increase political participation, especially among historically marginalized groups.

In line with previous studies (Dassonneville et al., 2012; Maurissen, 2018), we investigate three components of civic and citizenship education in the school environment. Firstly, we study the civic learning experiences of students in the classroom. This component captures how much students have learned about civic subjects in a classroom setting. It is, therefore, often equated with the acquisition metaphor in which the student is referred to as 'a consumer of knowledge transferred by the teacher to the student' (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019, p. 16). However, since many operationalizations of this concept (Dassonneville et al., 2012; Maurissen, 2018), including the measurement in this study, cannot distinguish how these students acquired this knowledge, we cannot draw any conclusions about the learning strategy employed. This knowledge acquisition can, for example, happen dynamically with civic projects or in formal civic education in the classroom taught in an ex-cathedra fashion. Since we cannot distinguish the pedagogical approach, this component solely aims to capture the civic learning experiences defined as how much they

have learned about civic issues. The effect of civic learning experiences on both cognitive outcomes, such as civic knowledge, as well as on civic dispositions, such as IPE, has been empirically confirmed (Campbell, 2019; Dassonneville et al., 2012; Hoskins et al., 2017; Maurissen, 2018; Pasek et al., 2008).

The second and third components tap into the participation metaphor that ‘understands the student as an active participant in the learning process’ (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019, p. 16). This learning-by-doing approach emphasizes experiential learning (Dewey, 1938). Experiential learning occurs in a classroom climate that is receptive to discussions (P. G. Avery et al., 2013; Campbell, 2008; Maurissen et al., 2018) and is fostered by participating in political activities at school, such as school councils (Keating & Janmaat, 2016). In line with previous studies (Dassonneville et al., 2012; Maurissen, 2018), we distinguish between an open classroom climate for discussion and active student participation at school. An open classroom climate for discussion focuses on the school as a miniature society (Dewey, 1916), emphasizing inclusive and respectful discussions and highlighting the need to teach how to appreciate conflict during controversial talks (Campbell, 2008; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Parker & Hess, 2001). According to a review of publications on the IDEA civic education dataset by Knowles et al. (2018, p. 13), ‘a single finding consistently emerged across countries, contexts, times and groups: that an open, participatory and respectful discussion climate is associated with civic knowledge and engagement’. Whereas the open classroom focuses on discussions, active student participation focuses more on how often students indicate to participate in collaborative projects in school, such as participation in the school council. Most research confirms higher levels of IPE after participating in such activities (Campbell, 2019; Pasek et al., 2008). However, an important caveat is that those studies often employ a cross-sectional approach which does not allow them to make strong causal claims.

Besides the direct effects of citizenship education on IPE, we are mostly interested in the heterogeneity of these effects, i.e., does this citizenship education effect on IPE differ across groups? According to previous studies (Hoskins et al., 2021; Neundorf et al., 2016), citizenship education can have three possible moderation effects on social class inequalities in political engagement. The inequalities gap can be compensated (compensation effect), reproduced (reproduction effect), or accelerated (acceleration effect). The compensation effect is the most beneficial for promoting equality in IPE. This implies that citizenship education is more beneficial for children from less privileged backgrounds than those from more advantaged backgrounds. Compensation occurs when children with less exposure to politics at home benefit more from



initial exposure to politics, leading to a catch-up effect. Research has shown that well-designed citizenship education can compensate for a disadvantaged background and help to close the political inequalities gap for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Campbell, 2019; Deimel et al., 2020; Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; Neundorf et al., 2016). It is argued that students with a lower starting point have more room for growth.

Citizenship education may, however, also reproduce or widen inequalities in political engagement. In such a case, the gap between privileged and less privileged students persists or grows after an intervention, with privileged children experiencing a greater increase in political engagement than their less privileged peers (Neundorf et al., 2016). This may be due to privileged students' prior experience and skills that allow them to navigate the school environment better and build upon existing knowledge (Hoskins et al., 2021). Conversely, less privileged students may struggle to acquire new knowledge or skills, leading to reduced self-confidence and further entrenchment in feelings of disempowerment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Some empirical studies have shown that citizenship education can potentially re-produce or even accelerate inequalities, with different effects emerging in different contexts (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2011; Persson, 2012).

We study how the number of civic learning experiences, an open classroom climate, and active student participation at school moderate the inequalities in IPE due to students' political home environment. Research is inconclusive about how these components function as democratic equalizers. Studies have shown how well-designed civic learning opportunities compensate for a disadvantaged background (Campbell, 2019; Deimel et al., 2020; Neundorf et al., 2016). However, other studies temper this finding by showing a reproduction effect in some regions, such as Flanders (Deimel et al., 2020), or even point to an acceleration effect regarding political knowledge (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2011). Also, regarding an open classroom climate and active student participation, studies show both compensating (Campbell, 2008; Eckstein et al., 2012) and reproduction effects (Deimel et al., 2020; Persson, 2015).

### ***Schools as segregated breeding grounds for democracy***

Schools are socializing institutions and have an allocation function by assigning children based on previous achievements. However, this is not a merely meritocratic process but is shown to be highly influenced by children's habitus and social background. Instead of emancipating, the school often reproduces inequality and legitimizes someone's social position in the system of social stratification (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). An extensive literature on the topic highlights

that schools are segregated breeding grounds for democracy and that this segregation results in unequal access to citizenship education among high school students (Deimel et al., 2020; Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; Sampermans et al., 2021). When students experience unequal access, they are hindered by schools' institutional barriers to fully participating in citizenship education. This implies that citizenship education can be less effective in these schools, leading to lower levels of IPE among high school students.

Segregation has many faces, but we focus on two of them. First, we study segregation along the lines of socioeconomic status (SES). This type of segregation refers to a situation where children of a particular socioeconomic background are concentrated within the same school (Anyon, 1997; van Ewijk & Slegers, 2010). It is well-documented in the literature that schools with a lower SES are less participative and less likely to offer empowering kinds of civic education (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Others have argued that a concentration of SES leads to peer effects and school responses that are detrimental to educational achievement (van Ewijk & Slegers, 2010; Willms, 2010). Schools, for instance, often assume that the best way to teach students with a low SES status is by curtailing their voices and securing their obedience (Nolan, 2018). Hence, segregation along the lines of SES is expected to impact IPE negatively.

Furthermore, some schools are segregated through educational tracks (Spruyt & Kuppens, 2015; Spruyt et al., 2015). Schools in the Flemish community differentiate, for example, children by allocating them to general academic, vocational, or technical tracks (Kavadias et al., 2017). Some studies argue that tracking is a way of segregation conducive to inequalities in political attitudes and knowledge (Nieuwelink et al., 2019; Sampermans et al., 2021). Students and teachers know the prestige associated with different tracks, often higher in academic tracks than in technical and vocational tracks (Boone & Demanet, 2020). This results in a self-reinforcing peer and school response that lowers vocational and technical students' access to citizenship education. Agirdag et al. (2012) argue that these students experience feelings of futility as they do not believe in themselves, being 'mere' vocational or technical students. As such, we can expect tracking to affect students' IPE in lower-status tracks negatively.

### ***Hypotheses***

We propose the following hypotheses following previous research's theoretical and empirical findings. The first hypothesis posits that a more stimulating political home environment increases IPE (H1). The second hypothesis posits that higher levels of the different components of citizenship education, the number of civic learning experiences (H2a), open classroom climate for

discussion (H2b), and active student participation at school (H2c) increase IPE. The last set of hypotheses posits that the different components of citizenship education can moderate the effect of a political home environment on IPE in three ways. More civic learning experiences (H3a), an open classroom climate (H3b), or active student participation (H3c) might decrease the effect size of a stimulating political home environment on IPE, resulting in a compensation effect. More civic learning experiences (H4a), an open classroom climate (H4b), or active student participation (H4c) might not change the effect size of a stimulating political home environment on IPE, resulting in a reproduction effect. More civic learning experiences (H5a), an open classroom climate (H5b), or active student participation (H5c) might increase the effect size of a stimulating political home environment on IPE, resulting in an accelerated effect. Finally, we test these hypotheses while considering the school as a segregated breeding ground for democracy by including a school's average SES and students' educational track and investigating the (un)equal access to the different components of citizenship education.

## **Method**

### ***Data and study setting***

To study the democratizing potential of citizenship education, we employ data commissioned by the Flemish educational ministry in 2016 to test the attainment targets of citizenship education. Belgium is a federal state with three linguistic communities – the Dutch-speaking Flemish, French-speaking, and German-speaking communities. Education is an authority of these communities. The Flemish school system is an interesting laboratory to test our theoretical expectations about IPE since pupils are divided into educational tracks early. From the seventh grade onward, students are allocated to the academic track or a (pre)- vocational track. Two years later, students are further separated into four educational tracks: vocational secondary education (BSO), technical education (TSO), art education (KSO), and general education (ASO). Given that there are few students in art education, we omitted them from the dataset.

The employed dataset is collected from senior high school students (3262 students across 147 schools). The dataset relies on a stratified cluster sampling design, drawing a random sample of high schools across educational tracks, educational providers, school types, and urbanization levels. A list-wise deletion of missing values was employed to conduct the multilevel analysis since this requires complete cases. Design weights were not employed since this is not available for this dataset. This implies we must be careful when interpreting the means, and the results may not be as representative of the population as they would be with proper survey weights. The data

were simultaneously collected with the second ICCS wave. As a result, the constructs measured by this dataset and the ICCS are very alike (Schulz et al., 2016; Schulz et al., 2018). See AHOVOKS (2017) and Ameel et al. (2016) for the technical information about the data collected with the senior high school students. This information is, however, only available in Dutch. An English translation of the survey items can be consulted in Appendix B. The knowledge test items cannot be reported due to legal constraints. We conducted one-factor confirmatory factor analyses on these measurement scales. Its fit indices can be consulted in Table 1.

### *Variables*

#### *Internal political efficacy*

The main dependent variable of our paper is internal political efficacy (IPE). We measure this theoretical construct using the ICCS' citizenship self-efficacy scale (Schulz *et al.*, 2016, p. 35). The scale consists of five items ( $\alpha = .77$ ) about how well they think they would discuss a newspaper article about a conflict between countries; run for school election; argue their point of view on a controversial political or social issue; follow a televised debate on a contentious issue; and give a presentation in class about a social or political topic. The scale has a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'not good at all' to 'very good'.

#### *Political home environment*

As argued in the theoretical section, we expect one's political home environment (PH) to affect students' IPE. We measure this theoretical construct empirically by operationalizing parents' cultural capital that shapes the home environment in three main ways. First, we measure objectified cultural capital through the number of books at home as a proxy. These cultural capital items align with the conceptualization of Bourdieu (1986) and previous empirical applications studying inequality in students' political socialization processes (Hoskins et al., 2017; Neundorf et al., 2016). Students could indicate five answer options ranging from none to three or more bookcases. Second, institutionalized cultural capital is measured by looking at the highest educational degree obtained by both the father and the mother, which was collected through the parents' survey. Paternal and maternal education are key variables in measuring the social status of children and adolescents (Hauser, 1994), which was also included in Neundorf et al. (2016, p. 930) operationalization of "various parental socialization influences". Finally, embodied cultural capital is measured by including parents' political interests and political talk with their children. Political interest is operationalized as students' perception of how politically interested their father and mother are, separately measured on a four-point scale. Likewise, political talk was

measured on a four-point scale by asking students how often they talk about political or social issues with their parents. This is comparable to Neundorf et al. (2016) operationalization as well. The final political home scale comprises six internally consistent items ( $\alpha = .70$ ).

Usually, inequalities in home environments are measured by the concept of socioeconomic status (SES). Although this concept is highly related to the political home environment, the theoretical focus and scope differ. The SES of a home environment is often operationalized by combining the diploma, occupation, and income of the student's parents (Hauser, 1994). Likewise, the original dataset includes a variable made with those indicators. However, the original measurement of SES does not capture important elements of the political home environment to understand inequalities in political socialization processes. Although Neundorf et al. (2016) do not explicitly claim to measure a political home environment, they implicitly used a similar approach. We also prefer to theoretically and empirically develop the concept of the political home environment and use this concept in the analyses instead of SES.

Nonetheless, also empirically, there is a difference between the explaining power of students' SES and their political home environment in relation to IPE. Table 2 reports the coefficients and model fit of multilevel models in which either SES or political home is used to predict students' IPE levels. The model fit of models 1 and 2 shows how the model with the political home scale has a better fit. In model 3, where both SES and the political home scale are included, the effect of SES is reversed. However, multicollinearity is probably causing this reversal effect and indicates that using both variables in the same model is not advisable. Furthermore, model 4 shows that their effects on IPE are not dependent on each other since their interaction terms are insignificant.

#### *Citizenship education as moderating variables*

We are interested in testing the hypothesized moderation effect of three citizenship education components: civic learning experiences (CLE), open classroom climate for discussion (OCC), and active student participation (ASP). We rely on scales developed to measure these theoretical constructs by the ICCS (Schulz et al., 2016). Since previous research indicates that individual-level measurements and aggregated school variables influence relationships independently from each other, we include both constructs in the analysis (Barber et al., 2015; Campbell, 2008, 2019; Lüdtke et al., 2009). Hence, besides having individual-level scales, we also include an aggregated scale consisting of the average individual responses of a school. Because of empirical limitations, we cannot distinguish between the class and school levels.

The first form of citizenship education, civic learning experiences, is measured on a six-item scale ( $\alpha = .77$ ). The six items measure how much students report to have learned about how laws are changed, how citizens can vote, how civil rights are protected, how to look critically at media coverage, how to solve local problems, and whether they learned about political issues and events abroad. The items are measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from nothing to a lot.

Secondly, the open classroom climate for discussion is measured with a six-item scale on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never to often ( $\alpha = .77$ ). The scale is based on six items that stem from students' experiences. The items are about how often teachers encourage students to express their views, share their opinion, talk with others with different ideas, take the initiative to discuss political topics, express dissenting opinions, and discuss the different sides of an argument while discussing political issues.

Thirdly, active student participation is measured by a scale based on five items with three answer categories each: yes, I participated in this in the last 12 months; yes, I participated in this but more than a year ago; no, I have never participated in this before ( $\alpha = .75$ ). The items ask students if they have engaged in the following activities: nominating themselves as a class representative or as a member of the student council, voting for class representatives or being involved in the composition of the student council, participating in decision-making about how things are arranged at school, participate in discussions during student meetings, and actively participating in a debate.

#### *School variables*

Because we consider the school environment a segregated breeding ground, we consider this while studying the moderating effect of citizenship education. Firstly, we include the educational track to which individual students are allocated. As discussed above, tracking might foster feelings of futility in those in lower-perceived groups (Spruyt et al., 2015). Secondly, we include a school-level variable measuring the average amount of the SES of the pupils (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). The SES variable was made by the researchers who collected the data and was calculated based on the diploma, profession, and income of the student's parents.

#### *Control variables*

We have also included several control variables in our models. As is customary, we control for gender, home language, and migration background at the individual level, including dummies for these variables (Arens & Watermann, 2017; Beaumont, 2011). To distinguish between male and female students, we include the variable gender, which asked the students about their sex

(Schulz et al., 2018, p. 139). Male students are the reference category<sup>1</sup>. Migrating status is a dummy variable indicating if the students' parents were born in Belgium. Students with an immigration background are the reference category. Home language is a dummy variable indicating if both parents speak Dutch with their children or, on the other hand, if one or both parents speak another language. We also control for an individual knowledge test about the Flemish cross-curricular final objectives regarding civic education. Including this variable allows us to isolate differences in IPE due to feelings of (dis)entitlement from an objective assessment of one's political knowledge (Spruyt & Kuppens, 2015).

### *Analysis*

We first gauged the need to engage in multi-level modeling to test the moderating effects of three different citizenship education approaches on the relationship between one's political home environment and IPE. Multilevel modeling is well suited to study students clustered in classrooms within schools (Gelman & Hill, 2006). In our analysis, we can only distinguish between the student and school levels because of data limitations<sup>2</sup>. After estimating the intra-class correlation coefficient, we find that 10% of the variance in IPE can be explained at the school level. Consequently, we followed a stepwise procedure for each citizenship education component, estimating several multilevel models. We use random intercept models. Tables 3 and 4 in the appendix showcase the multi-level models we ran to test our theoretical expectations. All constructed variables were standardized before estimating the models as suggested when testing interaction effects (Gelman & Hill, 2006), allowing us to compare effect sizes. We assessed the model fits, and all models were improvements compared to the previous ones, where the models with the interaction effects have the best fits based on the AIC, the BIC, and the Log-likelihood. Since we use variables that might cause issues with multicollinearity, we estimated the generalized variance inflation factor (GVIF) in Tables 5, 6, and 7. We reported the correlation matrix in Table 8 (Fox & Weisberg, 2019). The GVIF did not reveal multicollinearity issues; the highest correlation is 0.6. All tables are presented in the appendix. We report all relevant estimates in the text and visualize the most important relationships in plots in the paper to ease their interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> There are too few non-binary people for the analysis, but we acknowledge that there are more than these two genders.

<sup>2</sup> In the received dataset, no identifier of the classroom was provided, and because of the sampling method, too few classrooms were sampled to distinguish between the classroom and the school in the multilevel analysis.

## Results

Firstly, we describe our results by presenting which inequalities emerged in our analysis. In this section, we describe the relationship between a political home environment and internal political efficacy on the one hand and discuss the influence of school characteristics on students' internal political efficacy and access to citizenship education on the other hand. Secondly, we present the results of the potential of citizenship education as democratic equalizers while considering specific school characteristics.

### *Inequalities in internal political efficacy*

The first hypothesis, assuming a positive relationship between a politically stimulating home environment and IPE, is confirmed by our results in model 2 of Table 3 ( $b = 0.19, p < .001$ ). The effect size of having a more or less politically stimulating home environment is comparable to scoring higher on the civic knowledge test of acting democratically ( $b = 0.20, p < .001$ ). This shows that being born in a family with characteristics theorized to benefit one's confidence in a political setting might matter almost as much as how much someone knows about the political world. Also, being a female student has a similar negative effect size ( $b = -0.19, p < .001$ ), students without a migration background have significantly lower IPE ( $b = -0.31, p < .001$ ), and students speaking another language than Dutch as their home language score significantly higher regarding IPE ( $b = 0.17, p < .001$ ).

Besides personal characteristics, we also include school variables in model 3 to explain inequalities in IPE. Firstly, we find significant individual differences in IPE due to tracking. TSO students report lower levels of IPE than ASO students ( $b = -0.21, p < .001$ ). Similarly, BSO students have a lower self-perception of their IPE than ASO students ( $b = -0.29, p < .001$ ). We did not find significant effects of a school's SES composition on IPE. However, the descriptive statistics in Table 9 show significant and large differences in the mean SES of a school by the educational track, where ASO students go to schools with much higher average SES scores than TSO and BSO students. However, its independent effect is being explained away due to the political home environment and the students' educational track. To analyze how much access certain students have to citizenship education, we ran additional analyses shown in Table 10. Having a politically stimulating home environment is positively associated with all three components of citizenship education (citizenship learning  $b = 0.07, p < .001$ ; open classroom climate  $b = 0.06, p < .001$ ; active participation  $b = 0.14, p < .001$ ). Hence, students with a more stimulating home environment also indicate higher levels of citizenship education, possibly enlarging their advantage even more. Also,



educational tracking significantly influences the amount of citizenship education a student reports to have received. Students from the technical track report lower levels of citizenship education compared to the academic tracks (citizenship learning  $b = -0.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ; open classroom climate  $b = -0.14$ ,  $p < .05$ ; active student participation  $b = -0.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and student from the vocational tracks report even lower levels (citizenship learning  $b = -0.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ; open classroom climate  $b = -0.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ; active participation  $b = -0.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### *Citizenship education's potential as a democratic equalizer*

This section analyzes how the three citizenship education components influence IPE and how they moderate the relationship between IPE and a student's political home environment. Models 4, 5, and 6 of Table 3 show the direct effects of the three citizenship education components on IPE for the individual level and aggregated variables. The results of model 6 confirm our second hypothesis, which posits that civic learning experiences (H2a) ( $b = 0.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ), open classroom climate for discussion (H2b) ( $b = 0.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and active student participation at school (H2c) ( $b = 0.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) increase IPE. Civic learning experiences and an open classroom climate for discussion have about the same effect size, but the effect of active student participation turns out to be much bigger.

Besides the individual level variables, we also included the citizenship education components aggregated on the school level. Here we noticed that active student participation aggregated on the school level negatively affects IPE ( $b = -0.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This might indicate that in schools where, on average, many active student opportunities occur, non-participating students feel less efficacious. However, this effect is only present when the individual-level variables are included in the model. Since in these models, there is only 1 to 2% variance in the intercept attributed to the school level; we are doubtful about the validity of the results on the aggregated level.

The results from models 1, 2, and 3 in Table 4 allow us to confirm the hypotheses positing compensation effects cautiously. We find a modest compensation effect for each citizenship education component, where more citizenship education results in a lower effect on someone's political home environment. More civic learning experiences (H3a) ( $b = -0.04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), an open classroom climate (H3b) ( $b = -0.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and active student participation (H3c) ( $b = -0.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ) decrease the effect size of a stimulating political home environment on IPE, resulting in a modest compensation effect. The interaction effects are not strong. The plots of the marginalized

interaction effects in Figures 1, 2, and 3 show large error bounds for each component of citizenship education, implying carefulness.

**Figure 1.** Interaction plot of the marginal effects between internal political efficacy, political home, and the amount of civic learning.

[insert figure 1]

*Note: This plot is generated with the coefficients of Table 4, model 1. This is made with the R ggpredict function of the ggeffect package. All scale variables are standardized, and 95% confidence bands are shown.*

**Figure 2.** Interaction plot of the marginal effects between internal political efficacy, political home, and the amount of open classroom climate.

[insert figure 2]

*Note: This plot is generated with the coefficients of Table 4, model 2. This is made with the R ggpredict function of the ggeffect package. All scale variables are standardized, and 95% confidence bands are shown.*

**Figure 3.** Interaction plot of the marginal effects between internal political efficacy, political home, and the amount of active student participation.

[insert figure 3]

*Note: This plot is generated with the coefficients of Table 4, model 3. This is made with the R ggpredict function of the ggeffect package. All scale variables are standardized, and 95% confidence bands are shown.*

## Discussion and conclusion

This paper challenges traditional resource-based models of inequalities in political participation and argues that differential individual resources, such as political knowledge and skills, are only part of the explanation. This answers a recent call in the literature querying for more research regarding citizenship-related self-efficacy beliefs since they "are often neglected in the literature on citizenship education, although they appear to play a crucial role in learning processes, among others as explanatory factors for the inequalities between students in different educational tracks" (Eidhof & De Ruyter, 2022, p. 64).

We theoretically and empirically advance political socialization research by combining insights from cultural sociology and citizenship education. Although some scholars already took similar steps in that direction (Hoskins et al., 2017; Neundorf et al., 2016), we aimed to take this approach further. We argue that students' political home environment is theoretically and empirically important to understand the generational transmission of inequality in political action, besides studying the effect of SES, which is the variable traditionally employed. Although these concepts relate, we argue that SES does not capture important elements of the political home environment to understand inequalities in political socialization processes. Hence, our first contribution to the field is how we theoretically and empirically operationalize students' political home environment based on the distinction of cultural capital types of Bourdieu (1976, 1986).

We hypothesized how parents' objectified, institutionalized, and embodied political capital matter for students' IPE. The choice for this psychological driver of political action while controlling students' political knowledge is deliberate. IPE is a concept that relates to Bourdieu's concept of political competence (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 406). To understand feelings of disengagement or indifference toward politics, we should go beyond investigating traditional political action resources such as political knowledge and skills (Eidhof & De Ruyter, 2022) and look into how feelings of disempowerment are transmitted. Hence, we empirically investigated inequalities in IPE, which can be considered a distinct yet related concept to political disempowerment due to students' political home environment. We empirically confirm for Flemish high school students that students' political home environment is as important for their IPE levels as their level of political knowledge. This confirms that a sense of political entitlement goes beyond someone's political knowledge or skill set. That we find these inequalities while controlling for political knowledge is an important finding for citizenship educators. IPE is a strong predictor of future political action (Levy & Akiva, 2019). When citizenship education aims to be a democratic

equalizer that cultivates active citizens across all layers of the population, investing in these feelings of IPE is a worthwhile endeavor, especially when students are not growing up in a stimulating political home environment.

According to our results, citizenship education also has the potential to be such a democratic equalizer for inequalities in IPE driven by unequal political home environments. After all, we find that all three citizenship education components positively affect students' IPE. Civic learning experiences, an open classroom climate for discussion, and active student participation at school are positively associated with higher levels of IPE. In line with a recent review of the field (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022), we find that active student participation has the largest direct positive effect on students' IPE compared to the other components of citizenship education. We did not only study citizenship education's direct effects but also how citizenship education moderates the relationship between a political home environment and IPE. We find modest evidence of compensation effects. Each citizenship education component indicates the potential to weaken the impact of the home environment, which is a promising finding. Citizenship education can potentially empower those not born in a political cradle. However, we should be cautious about the validity of the findings because of the large error bounds.

Moreover, our results and those of most previous research are based on cross-sectional data. This calls for a careful interpretation of the causality of effects. Especially the large effects of active student participation can be questioned since the most efficacious and privileged students are those actively participating in a school context. This was also the case in our citizenship education access models. Students from stimulating political home environments indicate higher levels of civic learning experiences, open classroom climate, and active student participation. Likewise, students from lower educational tracks with lower IPE levels than academically tracked students indicate lower access to all three components of citizenship education. This potentially harms disadvantaged students who have lower chances of becoming politically active in their adult life and have systematically poorly represented interests (Bovens & Wille, 2017). It is alarming that students who need citizenship education the most receive the least.

We hope these results inspire citizenship educators and future research in several ways. Firstly, multi-level modeling allows social scientists to study social life at different nested group levels. In our case, it allowed us to deal with the fact that students are clustered within schools. However, future research could validate these results with longitudinal or quasi-experimental data to solidify the relationships found in this cross-sectional study. Although there is an indication of

citizenship education's potential as a democratic equalizer, more research is needed to consolidate this. Also, since educational tracking is important in generating inequalities in IPE and access to citizenship education, future research might investigate how these relationships differ across educational tracks. Secondly, we conducted our research in the Flemish educational research context. Although our findings from the Flemish case can be expected to apply to comparable European countries like Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria, which employ early tracking like is the case in Flanders, research might investigate if these results hold in very different educational contexts where there is, for example, late or no institutionalized tracking exists.

Thirdly, inspired by Bourdieu (1989), cultural theories of class-based inequalities in political participation argue that educational environments construct "class-based identities of active or passive citizens" (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022, p. 94). Researchers and policymakers aiming to level the playing field for those not growing up in politically stimulating environments should be more aware of the often-neglected inequalities in feelings of efficacy which emerge in home and school environments. Concretely, teachers could be trained to recognize these inequalities, and schools could be encouraged to explicitly reflect on their hidden curriculum.

### **Data availability statement**

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request at the Flemish Department of Education and the Steunpunt Toetsontwikkeling en Peilingen of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the University of Antwerp (UA). The data are not publicly available due to privacy restrictions.

### **Ethical standards**

The data was collected by the Steunpunt Toetsontwikkeling en Peilingen of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the University of Antwerp (UA), adhering to the highest ethical standards. More information on the data collection procedure can be consulted in Ameel et al. (2016).

### **Declaration of interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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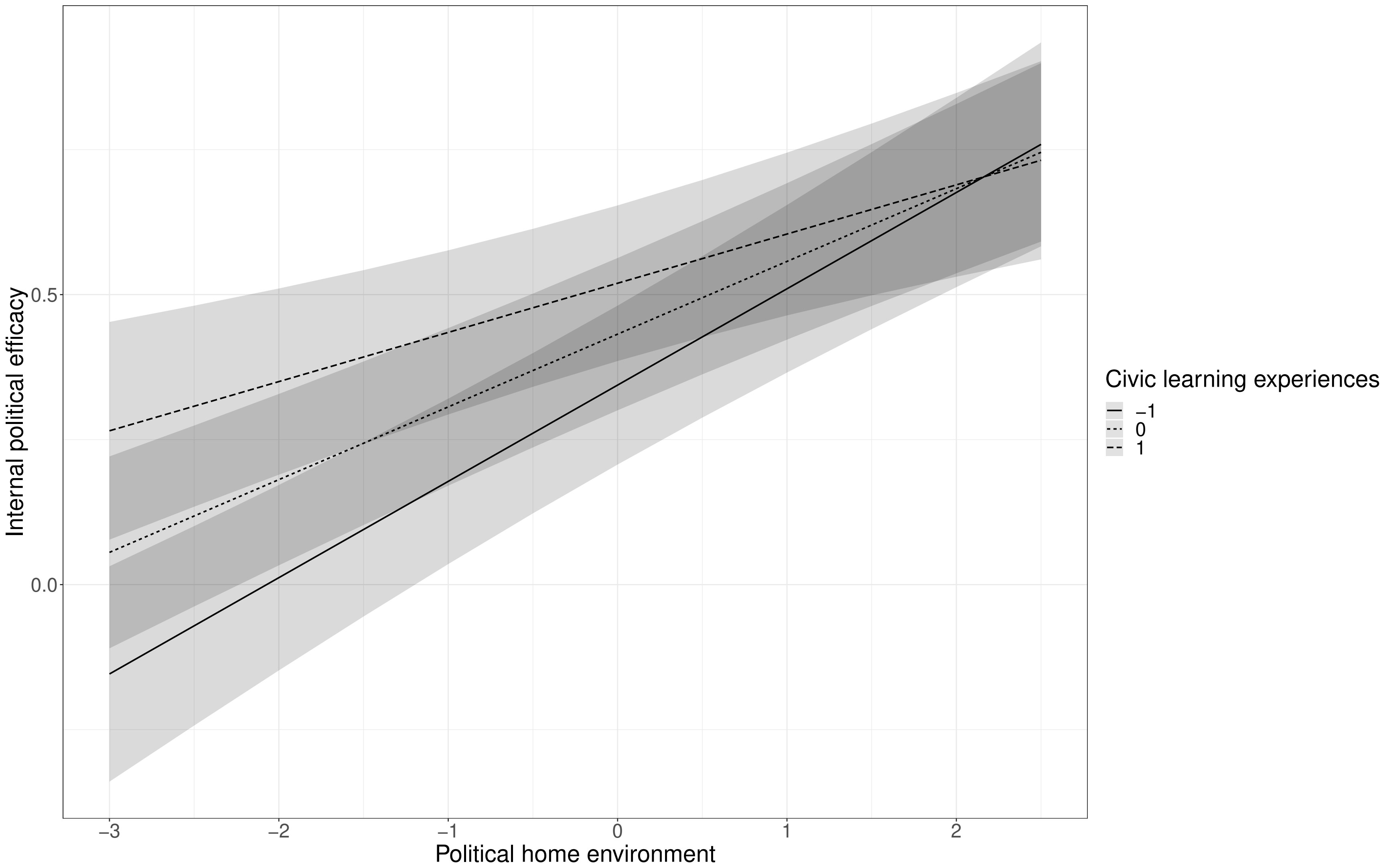
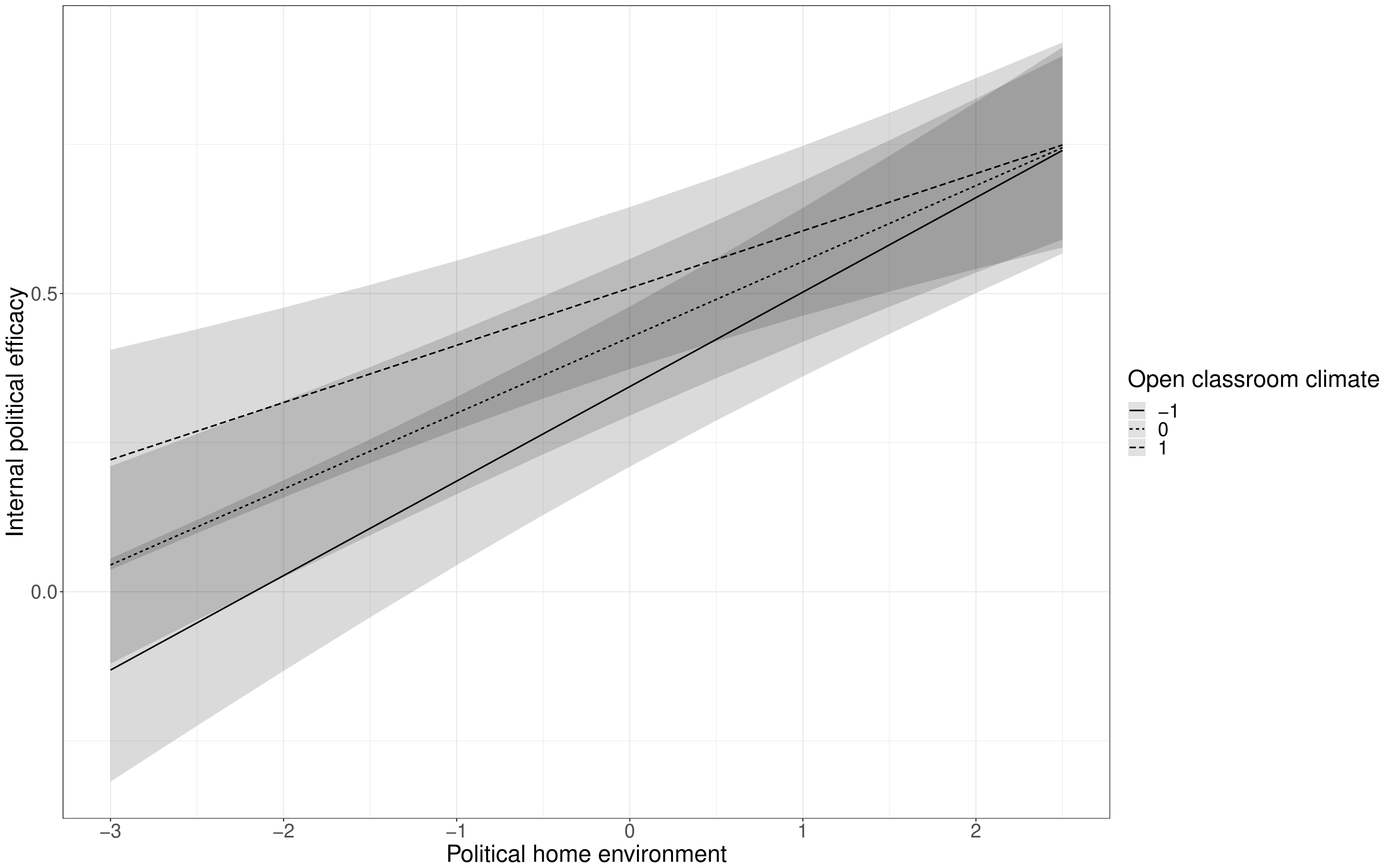
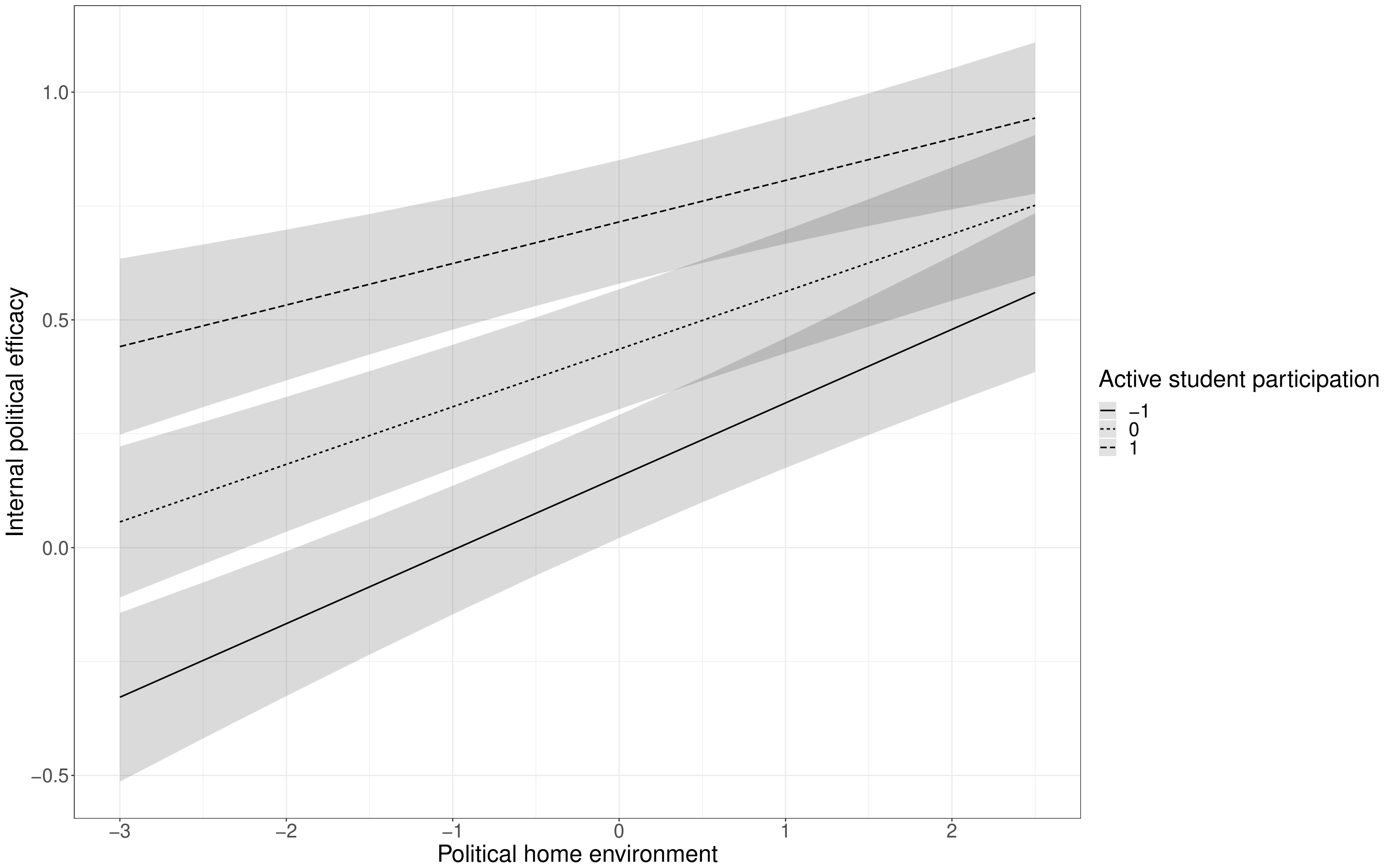


Figure 2





## Appendix A

**Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model fit indices of the latent constructs**

	Internal political efficacy	Civic learning	Open classroom	Active student participation	Political home
chisq	90.6604623	101.8252302	459.0056879	58.7269185	671.0600113
df	5.0000000	8.0000000	9.0000000	5.0000000	9.0000000
pvalue	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000	0.0000000
cfi	0.9942040	0.9865580	0.8895705	0.9945608	0.8842900
tli	0.9884080	0.9747963	0.8159508	0.9891217	0.8071501
rmsea	0.0656420	0.0542093	0.1115256	0.0518365	0.1564607
srmr	0.0333355	0.0358564	0.0781895	0.0424290	0.0933643

Note: the one-factor CFA's of these scales are made with the R lavaan package and the "WLSMV" estimator.

**Table 2. Multilevel models predicting IPE by SES and political home scale.**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)
Socioeconomic status (SES)	0.07*** (0.02)		-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.14*** (0.02)
Political home environment (PH)		0.28*** (0.02)	0.37*** (0.02)	0.37*** (0.02)
SES:PH				0.02 (0.02)
AIC	9082.50	8879.99	8847.52	8854.19
BIC	9106.86	8904.35	8877.96	8890.73
Log Likelihood	-4537.25	-4436.00	-4418.76	-4421.10
Num. obs.	3259	3259	3259	3259
Num. groups: IDSCHOOL	147	147	147	147
Var: IDSCHOOL (Intercept)	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.05
Var: Residual	0.90	0.86	0.85	0.85

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

Note: The models are estimated with the R nlme package and the table is made with the sjPlot package. All scale variables were standardized beforehand.



**Table 3. Multilevel models predicting IPE with direct effects.**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>	<b>Model 6</b>
Intercept	0.33*** (0.07)	0.36*** (0.07)	0.50*** (0.07)	0.40*** (0.07)	0.44*** (0.07)	0.43*** (0.07)
Gender - Female	-0.18*** (0.03)	-0.19*** (0.03)	-0.20*** (0.03)	-0.25*** (0.03)	-0.23*** (0.03)	-0.26*** (0.03)
Migration - native	-0.27*** (0.06)	-0.31*** (0.06)	-0.30*** (0.06)	-0.26*** (0.06)	-0.30*** (0.06)	-0.26*** (0.06)
Home language - other	0.17** (0.06)	0.18*** (0.05)	0.17** (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	0.14* (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)
Knowledge test	0.26*** (0.02)	0.20*** (0.02)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)
Political home environment		0.19*** (0.02)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)
Educational form - TSO			-0.21*** (0.06)	-0.09 (0.05)	-0.09 (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)
Educational form - BSO			-0.29*** (0.07)	-0.11 (0.06)	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.15* (0.07)
SES school			-0.04 (0.05)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Civic learning experiences (CLE)				0.10*** (0.02)		0.09*** (0.02)
Open classroom climate (OCC)				0.10*** (0.02)		0.09*** (0.02)
Active student participation (ASP)				0.27*** (0.02)		0.27*** (0.02)
Civic learning environment (CLE-school)					0.04 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Open classroom climate (OCC-school)					0.14*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)
Active student participation (ASP-school)					0.03 (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
AIC	10447.15	10337.16	10334.66	9803.97	10224.07	9787.64
BIC	10490.92	10387.18	10403.44	9891.51	10311.61	9893.94
Log Likelihood	-5216.58	-5160.58	-5156.33	-4887.98	-5098.04	-4876.82
Num. obs.	3838	3838	3838	3838	3838	3838
Num. groups: IDSCHOOL	147	147	147	147	147	147
Var: IDSCHOOL (Intercept)	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.01
Var: Residual	0.85	0.83	0.83	0.73	0.83	0.73

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

Note: The models are estimated with the R nlme package and the table is made with the sjPlot package. Gender is a dummy variable (1 = female, 0 = male), home language is a dummy variable (1 = another language, 0 = Dutch), migration is a dummy variable (1 = Native, 0 = otherwise), and tracking is a categorical variable (1 = ASO, 2 = TSO, 3 = BSO). All scale variables were standardized beforehand.

**Table 4. Multilevel models predicting IPE with interaction effects.**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Intercept	0.43*** (0.07)	0.43*** (0.07)	0.44*** (0.07)
Gender - Female	-0.26*** (0.03)	-0.26*** (0.03)	-0.26*** (0.03)
Migration - native	-0.25*** (0.06)	-0.25*** (0.06)	-0.26*** (0.06)
Home language - other	0.11* (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)	0.12* (0.05)
Knowledge test	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)
Political home environment	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.14* (0.07)
Educational form - TSO	0.12*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)
Educational form - BSO	0.13*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)
SES school	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Civic learning experiences (CLE)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)
Open classroom climate (OCC)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)
Active student participation (ASP)	0.28*** (0.02)	0.28*** (0.02)	0.28*** (0.02)
Civic learning environment (CLE-school)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Open classroom climate (OCC-school)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)
Active student participation (ASP-school)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
PH:CLE	-0.04** (0.01)		
PH:OCC		-0.03* (0.01)	
PH:ASP			-0.04* (0.01)
AIC	9781.38	9784.59	9783.33
BIC	9893.92	9897.14	9895.87
Log Likelihood	-4872.69	-4874.29	-4873.66
Num. obs.	3838	3838	3838
Num. groups: IDSCHOOL	147	147	147
Var: IDSCHOOL (Intercept)	0.01	0.01	0.01
Var: Residual	0.73	0.73	0.73

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

Note: The models are estimated with the R nlme package and the table is made with the sjPlot package. Gender is a dummy variable (1 = female, 0 = male), home language is a dummy variable (1 = another language, 0 = Dutch), migration is a dummy variable (1 = Native, 0 = otherwise), and tracking is a categorical variable (1 = ASO, 2 = TSO, 3 = BSO). All scale variables were standardized beforehand.

**Table 5. Generalized variance inflation factors of model 1 in table 4**

	<b>GVIF</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>GVIF<sup>1/(2*Df)</sup></b>
Gender	1.109128	1	1.053151
Migration	1.510239	1	1.228918
Language	1.556765	1	1.247704
Track	3.079816	2	1.324742
Knowledge	1.700140	1	1.303894
PH	1.327257	1	1.152066
SES_school	1.934037	1	1.390697
CLE	1.454454	1	1.206007
CLE_school	1.306046	1	1.142824
OCC	1.275794	1	1.129510
OCC_school	2.033660	1	1.426065
ASP	2.045015	1	1.430040
ASP_school	2.538948	1	1.593408
PH:CLE	1.021937	1	1.010909

**Table 6. Generalized variance inflation factors of model 2 in table 4**

	<b>GVIF</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>GVIF<sup>1/(2*Df)</sup></b>
Gender	1.109332	1	1.053248
Migration	1.510472	1	1.229013
Language	1.555041	1	1.247013
Track	3.084643	2	1.325260
Knowledge	1.704307	1	1.305491
PH	1.330624	1	1.153527
SES_school	1.939025	1	1.392489
CLE	1.442185	1	1.200910
CLE_school	1.319570	1	1.148725
OCC	1.276846	1	1.129976
OCC_school	2.027215	1	1.423803
ASP	2.047896	1	1.431047
ASP_school	2.540350	1	1.593848
PH:OCC	1.018325	1	1.009121

**Table 7. Generalized variance inflation factors of model 2 in table 4**

	<b>GVIF</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>GVIF<sup>1/(2*Df)</sup></b>
Gender	1.108574	1	1.052889
Migration	1.508646	1	1.228270
Language	1.552500	1	1.245993
Track	3.117215	2	1.328745
Knowledge	1.695145	1	1.301978
PH	1.324880	1	1.151034
SES_school	1.935305	1	1.391152
CLE	1.440074	1	1.200031
CLE_school	1.304182	1	1.142008
OCC	1.289334	1	1.135488
OCC_school	2.022528	1	1.422156
ASP	2.043173	1	1.429396
ASP_school	2.532709	1	1.591449
PH:ASP	1.032853	1	1.016294

**Table 8. Correlation matrix**

	IPE	PH	Knowledge	CLE	OCC	ASP	CLE_school	OCC_school	ASP_school	SES_school
IPE	1	0.266	0.280	0.257	0.224	0.386	0.192	0.207	0.255	0.186
PH	0.266	1	0.433	0.119	0.089	0.256	0.146	0.135	0.343	0.478
Knowledge	0.280	0.433	1	0.132	0.069	0.277	0.189	0.128	0.423	0.538
CLE	0.257	0.119	0.132	1	0.407	0.265	0.469	0.284	0.225	0.057
OCC	0.224	0.089	0.069	0.407	1	0.231	0.230	0.374	0.199	0.044
ASP	0.386	0.256	0.277	0.265	0.231	1	0.217	0.242	0.451	0.194
CLE_school	0.192	0.146	0.189	0.469	0.230	0.217	1	0.611	0.480	0.121
OCC_school	0.207	0.135	0.128	0.284	0.374	0.242	0.611	1	0.539	0.134
ASP_school	0.255	0.343	0.423	0.225	0.199	0.451	0.480	0.539	1	0.427
SES_school	0.186	0.478	0.538	0.057	0.044	0.194	0.121	0.134	0.427	1

Note: The correlation matrix is made in R with the Hmisc package.

**Table 9. Descriptive statistics and bivariate relationships by educational track**

Characteristic	Overall, N = 3,838 <sup>1</sup>	ASO, N = 1,462 <sup>1</sup>	TSO, N = 1,360 <sup>1</sup>	BSO, N = 1,016 <sup>1</sup>	p-value <sup>2</sup>
IPE	7.8 (2.9)	8.8 (2.7)	7.6 (2.7)	6.8 (3.1)	<0.001
Political home	13.0 (5.2)	15.7 (4.6)	12.8 (4.7)	9.5 (4.4)	<0.001
Knowledge test	50 (10)	56 (8)	49 (7)	40 (7)	<0.001
Civic learning (CLE)	9.1 (3.9)	10.0 (3.8)	8.5 (3.6)	8.5 (4.1)	<0.001
Open classroom (OCC)	12.2 (3.4)	12.6 (3.2)	12.0 (3.3)	11.8 (3.7)	<0.001
Active participation (ASP)	4.5 (3.3)	5.8 (3.3)	4.2 (3.0)	3.1 (3.0)	<0.001
Migration background					<0.001
Migration	408 / 3,838 (11%)	150 / 1,462 (10%)	108 / 1,360 (7.9%)	150 / 1,016 (15%)	
Native	3,430 / 3,838 (89%)	1,312 / 1,462 (90%)	1,252 / 1,360 (92%)	866 / 1,016 (85%)	
Home language					<0.001
Dutch	3,271 / 3,838 (85%)	1,237 / 1,462 (85%)	1,198 / 1,360 (88%)	836 / 1,016 (82%)	
Other language	567 / 3,838 (15%)	225 / 1,462 (15%)	162 / 1,360 (12%)	180 / 1,016 (18%)	
Gender					<0.001
Male	1,830 / 3,838 (48%)	588 / 1,462 (40%)	708 / 1,360 (52%)	534 / 1,016 (53%)	
Female	2,008 / 3,838 (52%)	874 / 1,462 (60%)	652 / 1,360 (48%)	482 / 1,016 (47%)	
School's CLE	9.07 (1.82)	10.00 (2.05)	8.43 (1.39)	8.58 (1.35)	<0.001
School's OCC	12.14 (1.26)	12.58 (1.34)	11.93 (1.12)	11.79 (1.12)	<0.001
School's ASP	4.53 (1.49)	5.78 (1.15)	4.04 (1.16)	3.40 (0.90)	<0.001
School's SES	-0.01 (0.55)	0.38 (0.54)	-0.06 (0.31)	-0.53 (0.34)	<0.001

<sup>1</sup> Mean (SD); n / N (%)<sup>2</sup> Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test; Pearson's Chi-squared test*Note: The descriptive table is made in R with the gtsummary package.*

**Table 10. Citizenship education access models**

	Civic learning	Open classroom	Active participation
Intercept	0.23*** (0.06)	0.02 (0.05)	0.30*** (0.05)
Gender - Female	-0.10** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.03)	0.10** (0.03)
Political home environment	0.07*** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	0.14*** (0.02)
Educational form - TSO	-0.27*** (0.08)	-0.15* (0.07)	-0.40*** (0.06)
Educational form - BSO	-0.28** (0.09)	-0.20* (0.08)	-0.74*** (0.07)
SES school	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.06)	-0.13* (0.06)
AIC	10344.36	10616.87	10237.38
BIC	10394.39	10666.89	10287.40
Log Likelihood	-5164.18	-5300.43	-5110.69
Num. obs.	3838	3838	3838
Num. groups: IDSCHOOL	147	147	147

\*\*\* p < 0.001; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

Note: The models are estimated with the R nlme package and the table is made with the sjPlot package. Gender is a dummy variable (1 = female, 0 = male) and tracking is a categorical variable (1 = ASO, 2 = TSO, 3 = BSO). All scale variables were standardized beforehand.

## Appendix B

### Survey items

#### *Internal political efficacy*

How well do you think you would do the following activities?

- Discuss a newspaper article about a conflict between countries.
  - Argue your point of view on a controversial political or social issue.
  - Run for a school election.
  - Follow a televised debate on a controversial (or much-discussed) issue.
  - Give a presentation in your class about a social or political issue.
1. Not good at all
  2. Not so good
  3. Pretty good
  4. Very good

#### *Civic learning experiences*

How much did you learn in school about the following subjects?

- How citizens can vote in local or national elections.
  - How laws are introduced and changed in Belgium.
  - How you can contribute to solving problems in the local community.
  - How civil rights are protected in Belgium.
  - Political issues and events in other countries.
  - How to critically look at media coverage.
1. Nothing
  2. A little
  3. Somewhat
  4. A lot

#### *Open classroom climate*

When discussing political and social topics in class, how often do the following occur?

- Teachers encourage students to form their own opinion.
- Teachers encourage students to express their own opinion.
- Students themselves propose current political events to discuss in class.
- Students openly express their views in class, even if they differ from those of most other students.

- Teachers encourage students to discuss topics with people who have different opinions.
  - Teachers discuss different sides of the topics they are explaining in class.
1. Never
  2. Rarely
  3. Sometimes
  4. Often

#### *Active student participation*

Did you ever participate in any of the following activities at school?

- Actively participate in a debate or discussion.
  - Vote for class representatives or be involved in the composition of the student council.
  - Participate in decisions about how things are arranged at school.
  - Participate in discussions during student meetings.
  - Apply as a class representative or as a member of the student council.
1. No, I have never participated in this before
  2. Yes, I participated in this in the last 12 months
  3. Yes, I participated in this, but more than a year ago

#### *Political home environment*

Approximately how many books do you have at home? Do not count magazines, newspapers, comics, or school books. (Select only one answer.)

- None or very little (0-10 books).
- One bookshelf (11–25 books).
- One bookcase (26–100 books).
- Two bookcases (101–200 books).
- Three or more bookcases (more than 200 books).

What is the highest education diploma or certificate you obtained? (Select only one answer for each parent.)

- Mother
  - Father
1. Primary education not finished.

2. Completed primary education<sup>1</sup>.
3. Completed lower secondary education<sup>2</sup>.
4. Completed higher secondary education<sup>3</sup>.
5. Completed higher education<sup>4</sup>.

How interested are your parent(s) in political and social topics? (Mark only one answer on each line.)

- Mother
- Father

1. Not interested at all
2. Not so interested
3. Quite interested
4. Very interested

How often do you participate in each of the following activities?

- Talking about political or social topics with your parents.
1. Never or almost never
  2. Monthly (at least once a month)
  3. Weekly (at least once a week)
  4. Daily or almost daily

---

<sup>1</sup> Both mainstream and special primary education are eligible for this.

<sup>2</sup> This is a diploma, certificate, or certificate of successful completion of the first 3 years of mainstream or special secondary education (for example, A3, A4, or B3) or a certificate of part-time vocational secondary education or of the apprenticeship (VIZO/Syntra apprenticeship contract)

<sup>3</sup> This is a diploma or certificate of higher secondary education ASO, TSO, KSO, BSO, A2, B2, HTSL, or a diploma of the fourth degree BSO. Special secondary education is not eligible for this.

<sup>4</sup> This is a diploma from a college or university, for example A1, B1, graduate, bachelor, licentiate, master, engineer, doctor.