

Does school make people believe in meritocracy?

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Abstract

This paper aims at explaining the perception of social inequalities and the support for an education-based meritocracy (EBM) among individuals. The level and type of education impact has been closely investigated – at a macro and micro level –, as education is theoretically supposed to influence the support for dominant ideologies. To this end, the third wave of Isp survey dataset has been used, as well as the results of a survey conducted in France among tertiary students attending different tracks and fields of study (Sts, Iut, Classes préparatoires and University). This research shows that education influences the representations of meritocracy at both micro and macro levels. From an individual point of view, it has been established that people with higher degree and lower degree tend to perceive more often their society as meritocratic (“U” curve effect of education on representations), and that more educated people defend more the importance of diplomas than the others. In addition to this relative effect of diploma, it has been evidenced, at a more macrosocial level, that the school system organization and development also has an effect on the representations of meritocracy: the educational stock of a country, measured by the percent of persons attending tertiary education, increases the justification of social inequality, while the percent of social science students decreases it. The French case has been specifically examined. In France, the criticism of diplomas seems to derive from its incapacity, according to students, to reflect one's competencies or merits.

Key words: justice belief, social perception of inequalities,

Introduction

Sociological analysis has mainly focused on the objective side of meritocracy, since most researchers have been investigating the actual correspondence between individual merit – mostly measured by educational attainment – and social position. On the contrary, the subjective side of this justice principle has been mainly left aside. However, the social distribution of the belief in meritocracy could be as much important as the effective link between merit and social position, as meritocracy comprises an important ideological dimension: it enables unequal and liberal societies to justify social inequalities.

The following research aims at measuring empirically and explaining the perception of social inequality and the support for an education-based meritocracy (EBM) among individuals, through the third wave of ISSP Social Inequality survey (1999). The level and type of education impact has been closely investigated – at a macro and micro level – through this study. Education is in fact supposed to play an important role in the perception of social inequalities, as most young children are at school confronted to social diversity and socialized to dominant ideologies. This is at least an important hypothesis made by Bourdieu and Passeron (1970), who postulate that school vehicles the conviction that every one deserves its social position. However, this hypothesis has almost never been empirically tested, and diplomas can have an ambiguous impact on representations (Baer and Lambert, 1982; Guimond, 1995).

1. Theoretical framework

Concerning the possible impact of education on the belief in meritocracy, the theoretical framework of this research mainly derives from a previous research conducted by Baer and Lambert (1982). Four hypotheses are described by both Canadian sociologists. According to the “socialization” hypothesis, educated people should value more meritocracy, because the more they succeed in school, the more they get used to the dominant ideologies. The “instruction” hypothesis predicts an opposite effect of educational level: the more people go to school, the more they learn arguments to criticize dominant ideology such as meritocracy because they learn alternative ways of explaining social inequality. According to the “reproduction” hypothesis, education should not have any differentiating impact on representations, because the school system as a whole conveys this ideology. Finally, individual support for meritocracy can be due to

the return of oneself diploma on the job market: this last hypothesis is named as the “investment” hypothesis.

Two hypotheses have been added to this model concerning an impact of the type of education rather than the level of education: first, according to Guimond (1995), the field of study could affect how people justify social inequality. Students attending social science courses should be more conscious of the social (external) factors leading to inequalities, and then should believe less that social differences are due to differences in merit. On the contrary, students attending management courses could be more socialized to dominant ideology. It has also been hypothesized that academic selection may affect representations: selected pupils could feel more deserving than others and believe then more that the society in which they live is meritocratic (Felouzis, Demazière Berlie).

Table 1 below summarizes the different hypotheses used in this paper :

	Hypotheses	Expected effect on the belief in meritocracy
<i>Education-level hypotheses</i>	Socialization	<i>Positive effect</i>
	Instruction	<i>Negative effect</i>
	Reproduction	<i>Neutral effect</i>
	Investment	<i>Depending on the individual return of education</i>
<i>Education-type hypotheses</i>	Field of study	<i>Depending on the field of study</i>
	Selection	<i>Depending on the type of selection</i>

Table 1: Six hypotheses concerning the level and type of education impact on the belief in meritocracy.

In Baer and Lambert (1982), the effect of education has been mainly investigated at a micro level. However, a further hypothesis in this article is that education may also affect representations at a macro level. For example, not only the individual investment in education but also collective investment may affect representations. Organizational patterns in educational system could then also explain the cross-country differences in the belief in meritocracy. The different patterns which have been tested are exposed in the methodology part of this article.

The aim of the present paper is then to compare micro and macro effects of education on perception of inequality and individual support for education-based meritocracy, in order to measure and to explain the possible specificity of French attitudes. A similar research was conducted by Kunovich and Slomczynski (2007), but the authors worked with ISSP 1992 data – it did not include France –, and elaborated a general meritocracy scale, without analyzing specifically the belief in education based meritocracy. At a macro level, they found that the

objective degree of meritocracy explains 23.5% of the between country variations. Belonging to the former communist block as well national wealth and educational stock also explain the current support for meritocracy. At an individual level, opinions are influenced by gender, age, income and educational attainment. Being a woman, being older, having a high income or a high level of education increase the support for meritocracy across countries. However, this article will mainly focus on the educational variables, at a macro and micro level.

2. Data and measures

Comparative data from ISSP Social Inequality III (1999) survey were examined. The analysed sample consists of 31 348 individuals from twenty-six countries. The support for education based meritocracy was tested through the following question: “In deciding how much money people ought to earn, how important should be, in your opinion, the number of years spent in education and training?” Six items were displayed for answering the question: “Essential”, “Very important”, “Fairly important”, “Not very important”, “Not important at all” and “Cannot choose”. It is obvious that this unique question can only imperfectly measure the support for education based meritocracy, because the salary is only a partial indicator of one's social position. However, since social position is often correlated to the salary, our results should be an indication of how people value education in justifying social inequalities.

A further model was tested in this research to examine whether education may affect the perception of social inequalities. The two following questions were analysed: “Would you say that in your country, people are rewarded for their efforts?” and “Would you say that in your country, people are rewarded for their skills?”. Five items were displayed for answering the question: “Totally agree”, “Agree”, “Neither agree, neither disagree”, “Disagree” and “Totally disagree”. From these two questions, highly correlated, a meritocracy perception scale was build, summing the answers given by individuals (the scale takes then values from 1 to 10).

As macro social variables, some educational patterns were taken into account in the countries:

- Ratio of tertiary education students (Pisa 2006 data);
- Age of first selection (Pisa 2006 data);
- Percentage of law and social science students enrolled in tertiary education (Unesco, 2004);
- Social inequalities (gini coefficient – UNO data).

At a macro level, it is expected that collective investment in education – measured by the ratio of tertiary education students – should positively affect the perception and support for meritocracy, while the percentage of social science students should decrease it. The age at first selection is more uncertain : an early selection could mean that pupils are less longer confronted to social inequalities at school and may then increase the belief in meritocracy. However, a late selection at school could be more visible for individuals and lead them to defend the legitimacy of social positions they have been competing for.

It has been hypothesized that educational patterns could only reasonably affect young people representations. Consequently, only 26-35 year old people were analysed from the initial sample. The 18-25 year old were excluded as a major part of this population could still be studying, and their educational attainment at the time of the survey should then be incomplete.

As micro social variables, gender, age, educational attainment were kept. Educational attainment was – of course imperfectly (see Schneider, 2008) – measured through the variable “EDUCYRS”, which represents the years spent in formal education. Since the relative impact of education was tested in this research, this variable was centered and standardized in each country. For testing the investment hypothesis, a variable concerning the perceived fairness of salary was also introduced in the analysis build on the following question : “Would you say that you earn... 1) much less than you deserve, 2) less than you deserve, 3) what you deserve, 4) more than you deserve, 5) much more than you deserve?” (V13 variable in Issp Dataset). The new variable scores from 1 to 3, “1” representing the dissatisfaction with one's salary (corresponding to values 1 and 5 of V13), and “3” representing the satisfaction with one's salary (corresponding to value 3 of V13).

3. Results

3.1 At an individual level, a “U” impact of education on perceptions and a positive impact of education on the support for an education based meritocracy

In the whole sample, the individual level of education affects negatively the justification of social inequalities. The more people frequent school, the less they think that efforts and skills are rewarded in life. However, the linear impact of education differs across countries (see Table 2). While education has a positive impact on representations in France, Portugal, Germany and the United States, it has a negative impact in countries like Russia, Japan and Chile. However, a closer

look at the answers by level of diplomas (see Table 3) shows that education could have a more complex impact on representations, more precisely it may have a quadratic effect on representations. In each countries, more educated and less educated persons seem to believe more that their society is meritocratic, while persons with intermediate levels of education appear to be more critical.

Such results can be interpreted if it is assumed that education has both a socialization and an instruction effects on representations. For people with low levels of education, the instruction impact of education would be predominant, because the more people frequent school, the less they justify social inequalities. The reverse effect is observed for more educated people. Beyond a threshold value, the longer people go to school, the more they believe that merits are rewarded in society, the socialization effect of education being then prevailing (see Figure 1). In some countries, however, the effect of education is purely linear. In France, for example, the socialization effect of education is dominant, as education has only a positive impact on representations.

The impact of education is less equivocal concerning the support for education-based meritocracy. The longer people have been to school, the more they think that it is important to pay education and training, and this can be observed in all participant countries, when other characteristics are controlled, as sex and age (see Table 4).

3.2 A multilevel approach of representations

Perception of social inequalities differ not only at an individual level but also at a country level. In fact, almost 30% of the total variance is due to between-country variations. Multilevel analysis was then conducted to see if between-country variations can be explained by both individual and contextual variables (see Model A, Table 5). Multilevel analysis shows that a large part of between-country variance remains unexplained by individual variables. In fact, individual variables only explain 3% of within-country variation and 9% of between-country variations in answers (see Model B, Table 5). Macrosocial variables have then been introduced in the multilevel analysis, in order to explain the residual differences between countries.

Concerning the *perception of meritocracy*, the more significant variables were found to be the degree of social inequalities (measured by the Gini coefficient), the percentage of tertiary education students and the percentage of social science students enrolled in tertiary education. As predicted at an individual level, the more each country collectively invest in education, the more people

justify social inequalities. On the contrary, the more students attend social science courses in a country, at a macro level, the less people believe that merits are rewarded. Finally, the more a society is unequal, the more people tend to justify inequalities. All three macro variables explain 50% of between-country variance (see Table 5, model C).

Models B and C confirm the results found at an individual level, as education seems to have a quadratic impact on representations (“U” effect). Moreover, a positive impact on the perceived fairness of salary has been found. The more people believe that they deserve their salary, the more they believe that people are rewarded in life for their efforts and skills. Meanwhile, model C shows that women and younger persons tend to believe that efforts and skills are rewarded in their country.

Concerning the *support for education-based meritocracy*, the more significant macro variables were found to be the age at first selection and the actual degree of social inequalities (Gini coefficient). While the first has a negative impact on the support for EBM, the latter has a positive impact. All variables included in model C explain 34,50% of between-country variance (see Table 6). At an individual level, education has a positive impact while being a woman and believing to have a fair salary have a negative impact on representations. This result may be interpreted by the fact that these two categories of persons, feeling or being unfairly treated according to their education, would lead them to claim for more recognition of diplomas.

3.3 A French specificity? Further investigation on the French case

It has been focused in this last part of the paper on the French case, as it is better known by the author, and as there seems to be a puzzling contradiction in France between a tradition of meritocracy and the French international position in both perception of social inequalities and support for EBM.

A French “taste” for meritocracy and diplomas?

In French mentalities, education appears to play a major role in determining social positions. French people are described as particularly obsessed with academic achievement (Van de Velde, 2008), and seem to believe that their school choices could determine their entire social trajectory. Van de Velde mentions the “gravity” of French young people toward studies and life, compared to Danish or English young people. In another comparative study between France and United States, usually considered as meritocratic countries, Lamont (2002) shows that while American workers more often resort to moral virtue, French worker consider inequalities to derive from

differences in intelligence. Conceptions of meritocracy turn up to be slightly different in both societies.

The French obsession for school achievement could be explained by three different hypotheses. First, French “taste” for titles and hierarchy has been analysed as a cultural characteristic of this country: French sociologist Iribarne (1989) wrote in 1989 that France can be considered a “land of titles, ranks, opposition between noble and low, orders, corps”. Moreover, the virtues of education based meritocracy have been advertised since the French Revolution and closely linked to the foundation of the Republic. These historical characteristics of French society could explain why educational hierarchy could have a specific connotation in France.

Beyond a cultural disposition for accepting school verdicts and hierarchy, the reasons of French specific attitudes could be found in the economic situation in France, especially in the actual link between diplomas and social positions. Are social positions solely determined by educational level in France, from an objective point of view? While Bauer and Bertin-Mouroit (1995), analysing the situation of big firms in France, stress the “tyranny” exercised by diplomas in professional life, further comparative research conducted at a larger scale bring some evidence to qualify this statement. Selz and Thélot (2004) or Couppié and Mansuy (2004) show that France is at an intermediary position in Europe concerning the link between social position and diplomas.

However, ISSP data shows that education is undervalued in France at an international point of view (see Table 7). The French average score is among the lowest, just before Japan – where people support the least education based meritocracy –, Sweden and Latvia. On the opposite side, countries where people endorse most meritocratic attitudes are Chile, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Philippines and the United States. However, all scores are superior to the average of 2.5, thus indicating that education based meritocracy is still a desired model in all countries.

Education is not only undervalued in France compared to other countries, but also compared to other remuneration criteria. (see Table 8). Only 10,7% of French interviewees consider that education is an essential criterion for defining the salary, and 28,7% consider it very important, while 44,8% consider that education is only “fairly important”, 14,5% not important and 1,4% not important at all. Quality of work and hard work are much more valued, as 38,2% and 23,2% of French interviewees consider them as essential criteria. More surprisingly, the need principle appears to be demanded since respectively 30,8% and 20,1% of surveyed people find it essential that salary is correlated with the number of children and the size of the family.

How can the French specificity be explained?

As France occupies an intermediary position in the macro variables selected in multilevel analysis compared to the other surveyed countries (age at first selection, percentage of tertiary education students, percentage of law and social science students enrolled in tertiary education), it seems that previous results presented in this paper partially fail to explain this French specificity. That is why, in order to understand the reasons for this weak support for EBM in France, a complementary survey was conducted in France among up to 800 students attending different tracks in their first year of tertiary education (Sections de techniciens supérieurs – STS, Institut Universitaire de technologie – IUT, Classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles – CPGE and University). The objective of this complementary survey was also to compare more precisely the type of education impact. In fact, the four retained tracks differ in terms of selection and professional orientation : while CPGE students are highly selected students receiving a general formation, STS students and IUT students, less selected, receive a professionally oriented formation. University students, finally, oppose to the three other categories, by being not selected students receiving mostly a general formation.

When asked whether they think that more educated people should be paid more than the others, French students express some doubts. Less than 48% agree with this proposition, while 24% of students believe that diplomas are not a legitimate criterion, and 28% cannot answer this question. This means that even after 15 years in educational system, and their starting preparing a degree in tertiary education, French students nevertheless criticize the legitimacy of diplomas. Of course, this can be due to the fact that students consider that studies are not rewarded only by salary. But when they are asked whether the role of studies in France for getting a job seems too important, almost 50% of students declare it is too important (more than 50% in short term tertiary education courses), while 17% find it not important enough and 37% think it is normal (see Table 9). There is then no unanimous support for an education-based meritocracy among students, which seems to contradict Bourdieu & Passeron reproduction theory, but confirms the results found in Issp survey.

How can this attitude be explained? Students were asked to justify their answers : “Why would you say that more educated people should or shouldn't be paid more than the others?”. For most students, if diplomas should be rewarded, it is essentially because “studying represents a sacrifice of time and money”. This answer is given by 241 students, while the fact that education makes people more competent in their jobs is only mentioned by 99 students. On the contrary, students

who criticize the importance of studies consider mostly that “more education does not necessarily means more competencies” (see Table 9). Such results also contradict Bourdieu and Passeron “idéologie du don” theory: the support for EBM cannot be explained by the fact that students believe that more educated persons are the most talented.

Some differences in perceptions were found when comparing the answers of students attending different tracks. CPGE students, highly selected and from higher social backgrounds, believe more than others that diplomas should be rewarded, but at the same time, they seem to be more conscious that social inequalities exist at school (see Table 9 and 10). Such a result confirms the simultaneous effects of “socialization” and “instruction” on representations. However, the socialization effect appears to be dominant here, as CPGE students, even knowing that social inequalities exist at school, nevertheless defend the legitimacy of diplomas. This prevailing effect of the socialization effect could explain why in France education has a positive and linear effect on perceptions of meritocracy.

Conclusion and discussion

This research shows that education influences the representations of meritocracy at both micro and macro levels. From an individual point of view, it seems that more educated people and less educated people consider more that they live in a meritocratic society (“U” curve effect of education on representations). In addition to this relative effect of diploma, this study has shown that, at a more macrosocial level, the school system as a whole, in some of its organizational and social patterns, also has an effect on the representations of meritocracy.

The results indicate that education may play a role in what people believe to be fair in society. Especially, opinions upon education based meritocracy appear to vary across countries, depending on some organizational aspects on education and individual social positions. Surprisingly, French people don't seem to over-value education compared to other criteria and compared to other countries. This could be explained by the relatively low level of inequalities in France and the weak position of social sciences, but also by the fact that French students do believe that diplomas are unable to reflect one's merits.

Of course, some limits could be found to this study. First, it should be discussed whether questions with predetermined propositions may help understanding justice beliefs. The value of

poll results has already been questioned by Bourdieu (1973), but justice opinions seem particularly delicate to apprehend as people resort to contradictory norms (Dubet, 2006). For judging the fairness of a single situation, more principles can be used, sometimes in a reversible way, leading individuals to adopt “critical rounds” in their discourses. A questionnaire, by forcing people to choose a single answer, could thus imperfectly represent individual opinions. However, two objections can be made to these critics. First, it has been shown in comparable studies as in Forsé and Parodi (2006) that internationally collected justice opinions still respect a social logic. People mostly agree across countries on a consensual order between the three justice principles of need, merit and equality. This means that individuals do have a preference a priori for some principles and that international surveys can reveal these preferences. Secondly, the use of precise questions should certainly reduce the “critical round” phenomenon, or at least it should incite people to reveal their salient justice principle.

As a second limit, the countries surveyed among the Issp program are mostly rich and developed countries, and the results could sensibly differ with developing countries for example, where education remains a priority. However, this homogeneity also assures that comparable cases are represented in this research and that results should be more reliable.

A third limit concerns the actual impact of objective inequalities on representations. This variable should be examined carefully, as it is not sure that people are really conscious of it. For a same degree of inequalities between two countries, inhabitants of the first country could feel it more intensely – if inequalities have rose importantly in the last years –, while inhabitants of the second country could consider them “natural” and “fair”. Chauvel (2003) has for example shown that the objective degree of inequalities and the way people feel them could not correspond at all.

At least, it should be insisted again on the fact that the observed impact of education (especially at a macro level) does not necessarily imply that education do have a causal and direct impact on representations. Many hidden variables could in fact affect individual opinions, as education could simply be an indicator of ideological orientations in a country. The results should then be interpreted with care, and it is necessary not to extrapolate from them. However, it seemed important to emphasize some macro variables impact to analyse representations on meritocracy not remaining at a country particular level.

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Table 2 : Regressions of perception of social inequalities on age, sex and education in 25 countries, 1999

Country	N	Intercept		AGE		SEX		EDUCYRS		R-Squared
Australia	1310	0,653	***	0,001	**	-0,007	ns	0,002	ns	0,007
Germany	1249	0,659	***	0,001	***	-0,045	***	0,003	+	0,038
UK	741	0,669	***	0,000	ns	-0,008	ns	-0,002	ns	0,001
USA	1169	0,697	***	0,001	*	-0,043	***	0,006	***	0,036
Austria	887	0,657	***	0,001	*	-0,029	*	0,000	ns	0,013
Hungary	1131	0,526	***	0,001	*	-0,030	**	-0,003	+	0,015
Norway	1073	0,655	***	0,000	ns	-0,015	+	-0,002	ns	0,004
Sweden	985	0,626	***	0,001	*	0,001	ns	-0,003	*	0,014
Czech Repu.	1682	0,514	***	0,000	ns	-0,005	ns	-0,001	ns	0,001
Slovenia	874	0,572	***	0,000	ns	-0,020	+	-0,004	*	0,008
Poland	842	0,672	***	0,000	ns	-0,017	ns	-0,005	*	0,009
Bulgaria	1011	0,233	***	0,001	**	-0,013	ns	0,002	+	0,010
Russia	1474	0,437	***	-0,001	+	-0,004	ns	-0,005	**	0,006
New Zealan	1021	0,591	***	0,001	+	-0,019	+	0,004	*	0,008
Canada	843	0,690	***	0,000	ns	-0,036	**	0,002	ns	0,013
Philippines	1179	0,764	***	-0,001	ns	0,011	ns	-0,004	*	0,005
Israël	1165	0,745	***	0,000	ns	-0,014	ns	-0,009	***	0,027
Japan	1129	0,543	***	0,002	***	0,000	ns	0,001	ns	0,028
Spain	1082	0,552	***	0,001	*	0,004	ns	0,000	ns	0,005
Latvia	957	0,508	***	0,000	ns	0,001	ns	-0,003	ns	0,002
France	1667	0,339	***	0,002	***	-0,032	***	0,009	***	0,056
Cyprus	844	0,635	***	-0,001	ns	-0,002	ns	-0,003	ns	0,002
Portugal	996	0,488	***	0,001	+	-0,008	ns	0,005	**	0,009
Chile	1397	0,671	***	0,001	*	-0,017	+	-0,010	***	0,052
Slovakia	943	0,424	***	0,000	ns	-0,003	ns	-0,003	+	0,004

*** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$; + $p < 0,15$

Dependent variable : perceived meritocracy scale

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Table 3: Perceived role of merit in society (1: not important at all to 10: very important) at different levels of education in 25 countries

	DEGREE						General mean	F	Association coefficient (tau C)
	None or incomplete primary	Complete primary	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Incomplete University	University complete			
Australia	--	6,88	6,99	7,07	7,18	7,08	7,04	0,51	0,02
Germany	7,12	6,89	6,73	7,08	--	7,06	6,87	2,16+	-0,014
UK		--	6,29	6,30	6,20	6,21	6,27	0,41	-0,01
United States	--	7,76	7,23	7,22	7,35	7,80	7,42	6,12***	0,085***
Austria	6,16	6,53	6,52	6,90		6,18	6,56	2,45*	0,020
Hungary	4,98	5,09	4,80	4,56	5,02	4,79	4,86	3,30**	-0,054*
Norway		6,11	5,90	6,01	5,99	5,89	5,97	0,53	-0,018
Sweden		6,61	6,20	6,31	6,17	6,01	6,28	3,74**	-0,064*
Czech Republi	5,07	5,19	4,82	4,87	4,88	4,98	4,91	1,48	-0,014
Slovenia	5,76	5,01	4,86	4,76	4,66	5,07	4,95	4,03**	-0,036
Poland	5,81	6,01	5,93	5,81	5,89	5,48	5,85	1,52	-0,047+
Bulgaria	2,52	2,81	3,03	2,75	3,00	3,01	2,80	1,49	0,051**
Russia	3,83	3,65	3,81	3,37	3,37	3,50	3,53	2,78*	-0,058**
New Zealand	6,36	6,43	6,28	6,46	6,47	6,74	6,44	1,57	0,062*
Canada	--	6,61	6,63	6,49	7,12	6,77	6,66	2,55*	0,061*
Philippines	7,13	7,28	7,52	7,40	6,89	7,11	7,25	2,80*	-0,024
Israël		6,33	6,33	6,06	5,48	5,48	5,86	9,32***	0,130***
Japan		6,92	7,07	6,51	6,66	6,63	6,67	2,62*	-0,039+
Spain	6,04	5,98	6,02	5,67	5,78	5,90	5,94	0,79	-0,031
Latvia	5,00	4,56	4,45	4,71	4,73	4,46	4,63	0,87	0,005
France	5,19	5,30	5,30	5,41	5,40	6,11	5,51	12,87***	0,123***
Cyprus	6,24	5,89	5,34	5,91	5,24	5,55	5,74	4,57***	-0,057*
Portugal	6,01	5,45	5,44	5,70	6,29	6,18	5,66	3,75**	0,009
Chile	6,38	6,37	5,55	5,41	5,03	5,54	5,76	17,64***	-0,164***
Slovakia	3,43	4,00	3,87	3,77	3,25	3,89	3,85	1,33	-0,026

The means by degree level have not been computed when $N < 10$.

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Figure 1: A « U » effect of education on representations: a possible interpretation.

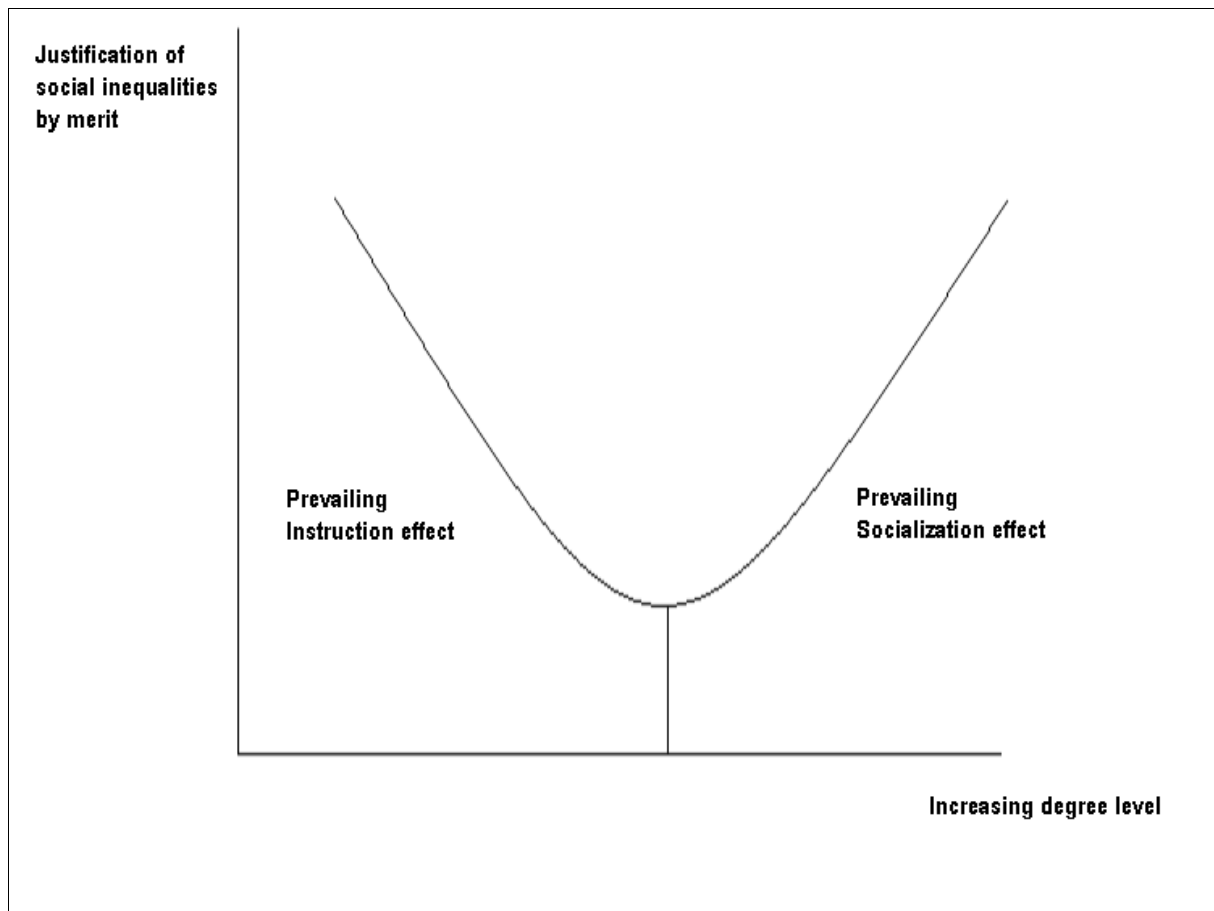


Table 4: Regression on support for education based meritocracy on age, sex and education in 25 countries, 1999

Country	Intercept 1	Intercept 2	Intercept 3	Intercept 4	EDUCYRS		AGE		SEX		-2logL
Australia	-5,218	-2,457	0,064	2,382	0,041	*	0,026	***	0,588	***	-1431,000
Germany	-2,350	0,282	2,175	4,878	-0,056	**	0,006	+	0,292	**	-1572,459
UK	-4,140	-1,968	0,283	1,966	0,040	ns	0,021	***	0,427	**	-943,139
USA	-2,116	-0,024	2,286	3,951	0,025	ns	0,005	+	0,177	+	-1420,547
Austria	-2,968	-0,819	1,436	4,136	0,019	ns	0,019	***	0,156	ns	-1150,037
Hungary	-2,794	-1,359	0,755	3,072	0,043	*	0,007	*	0,352	**	-1520,554
Norway	-5,295	-2,598	0,087	2,538	0,106	***	-0,001	ns	0,683	***	-1208,597
Sweden	-5,001	-2,270	-0,035	2,199	0,049	**	0,014	***	0,458	***	-1216,251
Czech Republic	-2,841	-1,185	0,968	3,534	0,024	+	0,012	***	0,140	+	-2291,042
Slovenia	-2,524	-0,811	1,645	3,477	0,024	ns	0,008	*	0,152	ns	-1156,241
Poland	-3,494	-1,609	0,487	2,289	0,086	***	0,017	***	0,253	*	-1214,862
Bulgaria	-2,229	-0,647	1,596	3,881	0,078	***	0,016	***	-0,094	ns	-1256,927
Russia	-2,255	-0,449	0,940	2,803	0,002	ns	0,011	***	0,192	*	-2107,042
New Zealand	-3,698	-1,617	0,547	3,546	0,028	ns	0,015	***	0,502	***	-1260,606
Canada	-3,886	-2,094	0,157	2,305	0,096	***	0,012	**	0,346	**	-1119,355
Philippines	-1,232	0,986	2,524	4,078	0,002	ns	0,002	ns	0,070	ns	-1421,751
Israel	-1,550	0,298	1,541	2,958	0,013	ns	0,005	+	0,187	+	-1546,681
Japan	-6,110	-3,895	-1,385	0,896	0,003	ns	0,019	***	0,587	***	-1283,695
Spain	-2,610	-0,294	2,336	5,775	0,031	*	0,007	+	-0,055	ns	-1258,039
Latvia	-3,934	-1,419	0,015	1,377	0,034	+	0,013	**	0,257	*	-1324,473
France	-3,958	-2,151	-0,011	2,379	0,009	ns	0,017	***	0,406	***	-2127,520
Cyprus	-1,932	0,362	2,241	5,175	0,024	ns	0,017	**	-0,049	ns	-975,899
Portugal	-2,327	-0,216	0,873	3,019	0,029	+	0,006	ns	0,230	*	-1334,510
Chile	-2,005	0,634	2,467	4,823	0,060	***	0,006	+	0,007	ns	-1524,823
Slovakia	-2,818	-1,208	0,649	2,438	0,044	*	0,010	*	0,156	ns	-1309,784

*** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$; + $p < 0,15$

Dependent variable : support for education based meritocracy

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Table 5: Multilevel regression of the belief that merits are rewarded in society

Parameters	Model A (empty model)	Model B (individual variables)	Model C (all variables)
Fixed effects			
Constant	0,5619 (0,025)***	0,4381 (0,039)***	0,4422 (0,035)***
Individual-level variables			
Years of education		-0,0055 (0,003)+	-0,0054 (0,003)+
Squared years of education		0,0038 (0,002)*	0,0038 (0,002)*
Age		0,0015 (0,001)+	0,0015 (0,001)+
Sex		-0,0091 (0,005)+	-0,0091 (0,005)+
Deserved salary		0,0408 (0,003)***	0,0407 (0,003)***
Country-level variables			
Gini			0,0457 (0,020)*
% of tertiary education students			0,0519 (0,020)*
% of social science students enrolled in tertiary education			-0,0554 (0,019)**
Random effects			
Between-country variance	0,0140	0,0127	0,0070
Within-country variance	0,0319	0,0309	0,0309
% of between-country variance explained		9,29%	50,00%
% of within country variance explained		3,13%	3,13%
-2logL		-2728,2	-2725,8
N (countries)	23	23	23
N (individuals)	4507	4507	4507

***p<0,001, **p<0,01, *p<0,05, +p<0,10

All level-1 predictors have been centered around their grand means

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Table 6: Multilevel regression of the support for education based meritocracy

Parameters	Model A (empty model)	Model B (individual variables)	Model C (all variables)
Fixed effects			
Constant 1	-1,9159 (0,145)***	-2,3274 (0,375)***	-0,1068 (0,947)
Constant 2	0,0663 (0,141)	-0,3259 (0,355)	1,8968 (0,978)+
Constant 3	1,9926 (0,145)***	1,6192 (0,356)***	3,8428 (0,949)***
Constant 4	3,9743 (0,173)***	3,6117 (0,368)***	5,8349 (0,954)***
Individual-level variables			
Years of education		0,1529 (0,028)***	0,1531 (0,028)***
Age		0,0034 (0,010)	0,0034 (0,010)
Sex		0,2990 (0,057)***	0,2988 (0,057)***
Deserved salary		-0,0799 (0,038)*	-0,0796 (0,038)*
Country-level variables			
Gini			0,4435 (0,134)***
% of tertiary education students			0,1108 (0,151)
Age at first selection			-0,1533 (0,062)*
Random effects			
Between-country variance	0,4159	0,4175	0,2724
% of between-country variance explained			34,50%
N (countries)	22	22	22
N (individuals)	4300	4300	4300

***p<0,001, **p<0,01, *p<0,05, +p<0,10

All level-1 predictors have been centered around their grand means

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Table 7: “Should education be important in deciding how much money people ought to earn?” Average scores by countries

Country	N	Average score	Rank	N (26-35 year old)	26-35 year old average score	Rank
<i>Chile</i>	1503	4,02	1	287	4,01	1
<i>Cyprus</i>	1000	4,01	2	227	3,89	4
<i>Bulgaria</i>	1102	3,97	3	174	3,95	2
<i>Philippines</i>	1200	3,95	4	318	3,94	3
<i>Israel</i>	1208	3,89	5	292	3,81	5
<i>United States</i>	1272	3,86	6	244	3,77	6
<i>Poland</i>	1135	3,8	7	166	3,74	7
<i>Austria</i>	1016	3,73	8	145	3,7	8
<i>Portugal</i>	1144	3,67	9	203	3,64	10
<i>Spain</i>	1211	3,62	10	247	3,62	11
<i>Russia</i>	1705	3,62	11	235	3,49	16
<i>Germany</i>	1432	3,61	12	228	3,45	17
<i>Canada</i>	974	3,61	13	240	3,64	9
<i>New Zealand</i>	1108	3,6	14	171	3,52	15
<i>Great Britain</i>	804	3,59	15	120	3,33	21
<i>Slovenia</i>	1006	3,58	16	190	3,54	14
<i>Australia</i>	1672	3,58	17	188	3,44	18
<i>Hungary</i>	1208	3,56	18	204	3,59	12
<i>Cz. Republic</i>	1834	3,52	19	273	3,44	19
<i>Slovakia</i>	1082	3,51	20	187	3,58	13
<i>Norway</i>	1268	3,39	21	278	3,43	20
<i>France</i>	1889	3,33	22	271	3,32	22
<i>Latvia</i>	1100	3,32	23	229	3,16	24
<i>Sweden</i>	1150	3,3	24	203	3,17	23
<i>Japan</i>	1325	2,67	25	215	2,48	25

1: “not important at all” ; 5: “essential” ; Source : Issp 1999

Source : Issp Dataset, 1999

Table 8: The French perceived determinants of salary

<i>In deciding how much money people ought to earn, how important should be, in your opinion...</i>					
	Essential	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Not important at all
<i>... the number of years spent in education and training</i>	10,7	28,7	44,8	14,5	1,4
<i>... whether the job requires supervising others</i>	14,4	36,4	40,8	7,3	1,1
<i>... how much responsibility goes with the job</i>	30,5	39,1	27	3,2	0,3
<i>... what is needed to support a family</i>	30,8	29,7	28,1	7,1	4,3
<i>... whether the person has children to support</i>	20,1	29,4	29,6	12,6	8,3
<i>... how hard the person works at the job</i>	23,2	36,5	33,3	6,2	0,9
<i>... how well the person does the job</i>	38,2	41,3	19,2	0,8	0,4

Source : Issp 1999 Dataset, N = 1889

Table 9: Recoded answers to the question : « Do you think that more educated people should be paid more than others? »

Should more educated people be paid more than others?	Why?	N
“Yes”	<i>Studying represents a sacrifice of time and money</i>	241
	<i>Education makes people more competent in their jobs</i>	99
	<i>Education leads to higher responsibilities</i>	38
	<i>No one would study if it was not the case</i>	14
	<i>“it is like this”</i>	16
“No”	<i>More education does not mean more competencies</i>	136
	<i>It depends of the job</i>	73
	<i>Not anyone has a chance to study</i>	36
	<i>It depends of the job and of the diplomas</i>	14
	<i>People have chosen to study</i>	14

Source : Caen survey 2005-2006

Table 10: « Should more educated people be paid more than the others? » and « According to you, is the role of education too important to get a job in France? » The answers by tracks.

« Should more educated people be paid more than the others? » (row percents)			
Track	Yes	No	Do not know
Classe préparatoire	55,6	16,1	28,3
STS	45,1	24,9	30
IUT	48,3	31,9	19,8
Université	48,2	24	27,8
All	47,9	24,4	27,7

« According to you, the importance of education to get a job in France is... »			
Track	Too important	Normal	Not important enough
Classe préparatoire	32,1	54,4	13,5
STS	50,8	39,3	10
IUT	52,2	42,2	5,6
Université	43,6	34,7	21,8
All	45,2	37,5	17,3

Source : Caen survey 2005-2006

Table 11: Answers by tracks about the fairness of school and social inequalities at school

		« In France, pupils are rewarded for their efforts at school »	« In France, pupils are rewarded for their skills at school »	« Do you think that social background can influence someone's achievement? »
Classe préparatoire	Agree	52,8	69,9	82,9
	Neither agree, neither disagree	13,8	13,3	13,3
	Disagree	33,4	16,8	3,8
STS	Agree	37,4	48,8	64,8
	Neither agree, neither disagree	28,1	23,9	19,6
	Disagree	34,5	27,3	15,6
IUT	Agree	44,6	58,7	58,7
	Neither agree, neither disagree	26	21,1	25,8
	Disagree	29,4	20,2	15,5
Université	Agree	34,5	55,7	75,6
	Neither agree, neither disagree	24,9	19,2	18,5
	Disagree	40,6	25,1	5,9
Ensemble	Agree	37,1	55,3	72,2
	Neither agree, neither disagree	25,1	20,1	19,1
	Disagree	37,9	24,6	8,8
		N = 600 F = 1,54	N = 598 F = 4,74**	N = 605 F = 7,47****

Source : Caen survey 2005-2006