

The Relationship of Attitudes toward Education, Social Origin and Educational Success

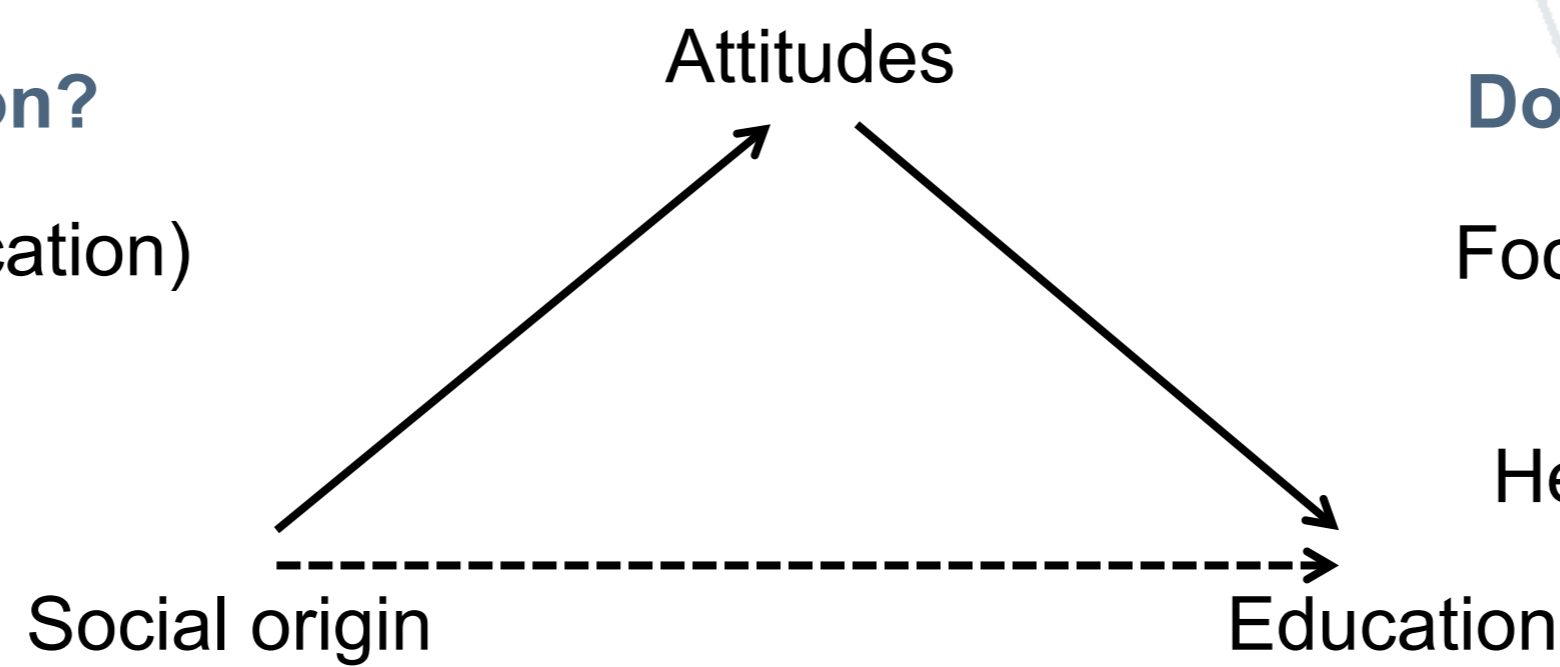
Research context and overarching questions

What shapes attitudes toward education?

Focus on social origin (esp. parental education)

Other theoretically relevant factors:

Type of school, performance, aspirations



Do attitudes impact educational success?

Focus on performance indicators (grades) and educational transitions / decisions

Heterogeneous attitude effect by social origin

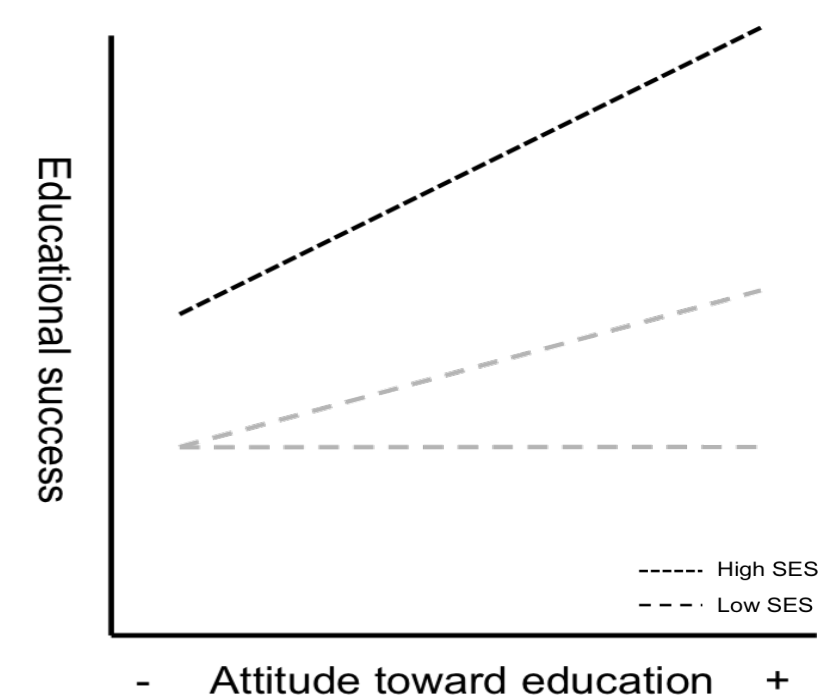
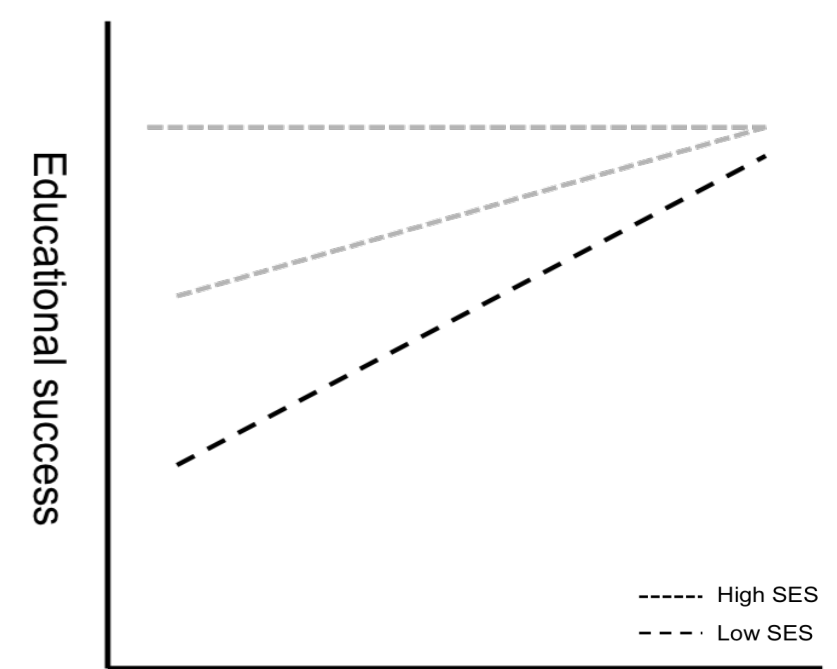
Theoretical background

“More resources, alternatives, choices, and options make any one resource less critical. People with the fewest resources are most dependent on any one resource” (Ross and Mirowsky, 2006: 1442)

- Positive attitudes toward education matter more for students of low social origin as they compensate for insufficient or fully absent parental resources
- Negative attitudes less consequential for students from advantaged family background
- Attitudes as potential for decreasing social inequality?

“When resources multiply each other's impact, the absence of one makes the presence of another less effective” (Ross and Mirowsky, 2006: 1440)

- Students from privileged backgrounds hold positive (status-consistent) attitudes
- Benefits gained from positive attitudes smaller for students from low social origin
- Attitudes as perpetuating social inequality (cumulative disadvantage) (DiPrete and Eirich, 2006; O’Rand 2000, 2002)



Resource substitution

Resource amplification

Attitudes (toward education)

... in theory

... in the NEPS

- Represent “[social] psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993: 1)
- Shaped by past and present experiences and circumstances (Allport, 1935)
- Directing thoughts and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)
- Attitude-achievement paradox (Mickelson, 1990)
- Attitudes towards education distinct from aspirations and expectations (yet correlated)

Questions about generalized attitudes toward education in SC3 (5th graders), SC4 (9th graders), SC5 (university students)

- Estimating intra-individual attitude change versus stability through repeated measurement (SC4 and SC5)
- Testing congruence of parental and student attitudes (SC4)
- Identifying one global education attitude versus multiple distinct attitude
- Measurement invariance testing across different subgroups (social origin, school type, migrant status etc.)

Items measured on five-point likert scale	Parental education		Type of secondary school					Parental attitudes	
	Academic	Non-Academic	Highest track	Intermed. track	Lowest track	Multiple tracks	Comprehensive	Academic	Non-Academic
A high educational level broadens the people's intellectual horizon	3.83	3.61	3.86	3.57	3.39	3.67	3.63		
A high educational level is essential for the cultural life in our country	3.39	3.11	3.40	3.09	2.94	3.12	3.17	3.99	3.75
A high level of education promotes the ability to think critically	3.47	3.22	3.54	3.18	3.02	3.13	3.28	4.46	4.26
Even children from working-class families can get ahead with a lot of education	4.25	4.20	4.28	4.17	4.02	4.11	4.18		
Even if you have a lot of education doesn't necessarily mean you'll make a lot of money	3.67	3.59	3.67	3.55	3.52	3.63	3.64		
Having a good education is valuable in its own right	3.96	3.89	3.96	3.87	3.86	3.90	3.92		
High levels of education in Germany secure the economy's international competitiveness	3.69	3.39	3.71	3.41	3.11	3.26	3.35		
If people go to school for a long time they become snobbish	1.71	1.93	1.59	2.07	2.29	2.16	1.90	1.25	1.45
Pupils should take the Abitur at any price	2.71	2.57	2.89	2.33	2.40	2.32	2.87	1.92	2.22
There are more important things in life than getting a higher level of education	2.91	2.75	2.94	2.80	2.72	2.54	2.59		
To go to school longer is a waste of time	1.94	2.10	1.91	2.16	2.43	2.15	2.03	1.34	1.46
Without Abitur you have to feel a little bit ashamed	1.62	1.51	1.69	1.42	1.48	1.40	1.65	1.38	1.51

Verbatim questionnaire SC4, wave 3 (students) and wave 5 (parents)