

**Title:** Why are middle-class parents more involved in school than working-class parents?

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**To appear in:** Research in Social Stratification and Mobility

**Accepted:** 20 December 2018

**Please cite this article as:** Barg, K., Why are middle-class parents more involved in school than working-class parents?, Research in Social Stratification and Mobility (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2018.12.002>.

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*Abstract:* This article studies why middle-class parents are more involved in school than working-class parents. From theoretical approaches developed in different disciplines hypotheses on the mediating effects of five mechanisms are derived: cultural capital or educational resources, concerted cultivation, economic and time resources, parents' own school experience and status maintenance motives. Using data from a French national survey on students in 9th grade, I analyse to what extent these mechanisms mediate social class differentials in (1) attendance at parents' evenings, (2) PTA-membership and (3) being parent representative. I find that educational resources mediate the largest parts of the social class differences. Concerted cultivation, status maintenance, parents' working status, number of siblings and single-parenthood have mediating effects, too. In contrast to a claim made in much of the literature in the field, parents' own experience has no effects on parents' school involvement.

## 1. Introduction

Parent-school interactions play an important role in the processes that link student social class origin to educational success and attainment. They are related to the child's learning approaches, interest in school, communication with teachers, scores on standardised tests,

teacher performance assessments, school track propositions by the teachers, parents' knowledge of the education system and how to support learning at home, students' academic self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (Barg 2013; Bodovski and Farkas 2008; Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Dufur et al. 2013; Fan and Williams 2010; Lareau 1987; Weininger and Lareau 2003; Lee and Bowen 2006). At the same time, parents' involvement in school varies over social classes (Barg 2013; Bhargava and Witherspoon 2015; Caille 1992; Lareau and McNamara Horvat 1999; Lee and Bowen 2006; Sui-Chu and Willms 1996).

This paper aims to explain why parents from higher social classes are more likely to be involved in school than working-class parents. This is relevant because the theoretical arguments in the literature are ambiguous. Relying on both qualitative and quantitative research, different disciplines propose a range of factors as determinants of parents' decisions to be involved. These include cultural capital (Lamont and Lareau 1988; Lareau and Weininger 2003) and resources such as parents' formal and informal knowledge of the education system (Crozier 1996; Masson 1997), linguistic skills (Blackledge 2001; Reay 1999), self-confidence (Lee and Bowen 2006; Reay 1999; 2005), trust in school staff and system (Crozier 1996), and educational aspirations and expectations (Bodovski and Farkas 2008; Cheadle and Amato 2011).

The sociological literature referring to cultural capital also suggests that cultural logics create differential involvement with schools (Lareau 2002, 2003). Cultural logics are sets of beliefs on how, and to what extent, parents 'should' be involved. This concept corresponds to role construction, one of three factors in the psychological model on parental involvement by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995; 1997). Psychological and economic studies argue that an unequal distribution of economic and time resources, which are typically linked to parents' working conditions and family situation, drive social inequality in parent-school interactions (Bisin and Verdier 2001; Chin and Phillips 2004; Patacchini and Zenou 2011; Ritblatt et al. 2002). Parents' own school experience is another factor addressed across different disciplines (Reay 1999; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1995; 1997; Walker et al. 2005).

Apart from the breadth and multifacetedness of the theoretical arguments, it appears difficult to explain social class differences in parent-school interaction because the qualitative studies conducted on this topic cannot detect and quantify the contribution of

each mechanism (Lareau 2002: 771-2). Moreover, quantitative research combines different types of parental involvement at home and in school, and, in particular, does not consider mechanisms that explain differences in parent-school interactions (Cheadle and Amato 2011; Ritblatt et al. 2002). However, even analysing different school-involvement types separately is important to understand parents' detailed decision-making process (Bhargava and Witherspoon 2015). Finally, some of the proposed factors have not been operationalized in comprehensive quantitative studies yet, and hence their contribution to social class differences in parental school-involvement is not fully understood. These factors are for instance parents' cultural logics, their own experience in school, and status maintenance motives.

In view of this, the purpose of the present paper is two-fold. First, it provides an interdisciplinary overview over core mechanisms suggested in qualitative and quantitative research and shows where the mechanisms overlap, complement, and challenge each other. Distinguishing then between three different types of parental involvement in school, I derive hypotheses on the size of social class effects on each involvement type and the role of the mechanisms in explaining these social class effects. I differentiate between (i) attendance at parents' evenings, (ii) membership of a parent teacher association (PTA), and (iii) being parent representative in the school staff meeting. Second, using a national data set on a cohort of students in French secondary schools, the *panel d'élèves du second degré (recrutement 1995 - 1995-2006)*, I test the hypotheses through, firstly, analysing the sizes of social class effects on the different involvement types. Secondly, I run logistic regression models including variables that attempt to measure the mechanisms. I focus on parental involvement when the child is around 14 years old and about to proceed from lower to general or vocational upper secondary education.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Cultural capital, educational resources and cultural logics**

Seminal sociological literature on social inequality in parental involvement argues that Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is of great use for the analysis of family-school contact (Lamont and Lareau 1988; Lareau and Weininger 2003). When interacting with school staff, middle-class parents use cultural resources in terms of class-specific knowledge and skills in order to obtain advantages for their children. These middle-class cultural resources are

rewarded in the school context because they correspond to the school culture. While such skills and knowledge or familiarity with the education system are termed cultural capital in some literature, they are often also referred to as educational resources.

Within the same research tradition, Lareau (2002, 2003) studied parents' interactions with school, their organization of extra-curricular activities for their children and academic communication and engagement with them at home. She argues that parents of different social classes follow different cultural logics in child rearing. Middle-class families act according to 'concerted cultivation', which involves critique of, and initiation of contact with, the school staff. In contrast, parents from lower social classes follow a logic Lareau labels as 'accomplishment of natural growth', which implies that parents do not take initiative when it comes to involvement in their children's schooling. They tend to depend on the school, feel powerless and frustrated, and experience conflicts between their childrearing behaviour at home and those required by the school. Lower-class parents are less informed about their children's school life and not confident when communicating with school staff. Social class determines what role parents think they should play in their children's life, whether they should be strongly and broadly involved to foster their abilities or let them develop their capacities on their own while taking care only of their emotional and existential needs. This idea seems also in line with studies on social inequality in volunteerism and PTA-membership showing that some parents perceive or justify school involvement as moral duty towards their child, and an act of civic engagement (Barthélémy 1995; Héran 1988; Carr et al. 2015; Fisher 2018).

## **2.2 Economic, time resources, and status maintenance**

Lareau's observations reflect the general findings of the vast literature on childrearing practices, but it is also claimed that there are 'important elements of potential ill fit or mischaracterization' (Cheadle 2008: 3). Chin and Phillips (2004), for instance, argue that different classes have similar attitudes and 'logics' of parenting but that lower levels of necessary resources restrict lower-class parents' possibilities to invest in their children's development. At the same time, this literature has arguments overlapping with the concerted cultivation theory as it says that these unequally distributed resources also include parents' human and cultural capital in the form of knowledge of how to invest and promote children's education, and social capital (Chin and Phillips 2004; Cheadle 2008).

Psychological literature maintains a similar line of argument. Families' life contexts are crucial in understanding their involvement decisions, and examinations of the impact of class or socioeconomic background are more fruitful if they focus on the resources that are associated with them (Grolnick et al. 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005). Lower-class parents are less involved because they tend to have less time and energy for involvement, due to inflexible, long or unpredictable working schedules (Griffith 1998; Guryan, Hurst and Kearney 2008; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997; Lareau and McNamara Horvat 1999; Reay 2005; Weiss et al. 2003). Parents become involved to facilitate the achievement of the aspirations they have for their children (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992), which is in line with the finding that parents are more involved in school for matters that concern their individual child's progress than for general school matters (Ritblatt et al. 2002). Economic resources are strongly related to time resources as they enable parents to, for example, hire a babysitter, and pay for transportation costs to go to the school and for material necessary to support school events. Furthermore, single-parenthood is found to negatively affect involvement in school, even when socio-economic status is taken into account (Grolnick et al. 1997). Economic literature on parental involvement assumes, too, that parents decide rationally and invest time and economic resources to maximise utilities of their children's educational attainment (Bisin and Verdier 2001; Patacchini and Zenou 2011).

I further propose that rational choice models explaining decisions at educational transitions (Boudon 1974; Breen and Goldthorpe 1997; Erikson and Jonsson 1996) can be applied to parents' decision to be involved in school (Barg, 2019). These models propose that educational decisions on a secondary school track (Stocké 2007) or on higher education (Becker and Hecken 2009), for example, are based upon families' assessment of three factors: the probability that the child successfully completes a selected educational pathway, costs associated with that pathway, and benefits. The benefits are determined by the extent to which the child's completion of the selected pathway will lead to maintenance of the family's social status. This factor, also referred to as relative risk aversion, is derived from the assumption that parents and students want to preserve the family's social class. As a consequence, social class differentials in educational decisions emerge because the children of middle-class families have to attend 'higher' educational pathways to maintain

the family's social status while the status of a lower-class family is preserved even when the child does not attend that 'higher' pathway.

Consequently, it can be argued that parents become more involved when their children have to attain a high educational level to maintain the family's social status. This status maintenance assumption goes contrary to that of the literature arguing that all parents want to be involved but cannot due to their restricted resources (Chin and Phillips 2004). Even though resources, namely economic resources, are a core factor of the decision-making model, social classes also differ in their 'willingness' to engage in parental involvement.

### **2.3 Psychological models and personal experience**

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) developed a model on parents' decision to become involved that contains three major determining constructs: role construction, self-efficacy, and invitations, demands and opportunities to get involved. While invitations, demands and opportunities have a comparatively smaller effect, the other two factors are of high relevance. Role construction is based on parents' beliefs about how children's skills and talents develop, what childrearing practices are effective, and what parents should do at home to promote their children's school success. Parents' personal experiences with schooling influence their role construction (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005; Walker et al. 2005). Self-efficacy corresponds to parents' belief that they have the skills to improve their children's educational success (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1995; see also Deslandes and Bertrand 2004). Like role construction, self-efficacy is socially constructed and grounded in personal experiences (Bandura 1989).

This model contains elements that correspond to arguments found in the literature emphasizing class-based mechanisms (Lareau 2002, 2003). Role construction has similarities with the cultural logic that underlies parents' engagement in concerted cultivation or accomplishment of natural growth: both concepts are sets of beliefs about how parents can and should influence their children's development and school outcomes. Moreover, both are determined by the expectancies and behaviour of significant others, and by personal experience. The model thereby also supports an idea that is put forward in qualitative sociological literature: parents' personal experience is a mediator for social class effects on parent-school interactions (Reay 1999). Middle-class parents are more likely to have

positive memories in relation to their own school career while working-class parents might have experienced more 'counter-school culture' when they were young (Willis 1977). This creates differences in confidences and in attitudes towards their children's school (Räty 2003). Similarly, quantitative studies that find strong effects of parental educational attainment on involvement argue that it is parents' own school experience that is underlying these effects (Kohl et al. 2000, Manz et al. 2004). Hence, parents' personal school experience seems a factor that connects literature from different disciplines.

### **3. The secondary school context in France**

At the end of lower secondary education, when students are in grade 9 and around 14 years old, it is decided whether they will attend a general or vocational upper secondary school track. This decision is generated through an institutionalised dialogue between family and school. First, families make a school track request and second the annual meeting of the so-called 'staff meeting' makes a school track proposition. This staff meeting happens in the second half of the school year and is attended by the students' teachers, the head teacher, orientation advisors and parent representatives. As a third step of the dialogue, families can reject the proposition of the staff meeting but only few do so. Overall, the transition from lower to upper secondary education in France is characterised by a relatively high level of decision-making power of the teachers (Masson 1994; Masson 1997).

In terms of parental involvement, the French Ministry of Education generally requires schools to ensure that all parents are involved in school life. They implement regular parents' evenings and other events that inform the students' families (Masson 1994). Parent representatives are elected annually by all parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the school. PTAs as well as parents who are not members in a PTA can submit a list of candidates. Parent representatives are elected for the different councils within the school and they attend the staff meeting (Masson 1997).

In France, PTAs are prevalent and have – through their representatives in different councils – influence on educational issues at various school and governmental levels (Barthélémy 1995). They mainly exert influence through 'their' parent representatives who do not only take part in councils at school-level (e.g. school council and staff meeting) but can also be selected into important committees at higher governmental levels. Members of a PTA pay a small annual subscription fee and, apart from having their interests represented by the PTA,

they can benefit from several informing services through hotlines and brochures. Research on PTA social composition and functioning, which differs by country (Fisher 2018), is sparse.

#### 4. Hypotheses

From the theoretical and institutional background I derive two groups of hypotheses. Both are based on the assumption that different types of involvement in school require different resources or motivations, which differ over social classes. The first group of hypotheses (H1 to H3) predict the extent to which the size of social class effects varies by attendance at parents' evenings (PE), PTA-membership, or being parent representative (PR). The second group of hypotheses (H4 to H6) are based on assumptions about the extent to which the mechanisms mediate the social class differences in parents' involvement. In sum, five mechanisms are considered: (1) cultural capital or educational resources, (2) cultural logics, (3) economic and time resources, (4) parents' own general school experience and (5) status maintenance motives.

#### *Table 1*

Table 1 gives an overview over the involvement types, mechanisms and hypothesised ranking of sizes of social class differences. The number of '+' indicates the relative extent to which a mechanism drives the social inequalities. Cultural capital or facets of it that correspond to educational resources in terms of linguistic abilities, knowledge of the education system, familiarity with the school culture and, hence, being comfortable and confident in dealing with school staff are required the most for being parent representative (row 1, Table 1). This is because this involvement requires parents to sit in a meeting with school staff including the headmaster and to discuss general school matters (Masson 1994). Attending parents' evenings requires cultural capital as well but to a lesser extent. As shown in qualitative research for the UK, parents can be quiet and passive (McClure and Walker 2000). PTA-membership requires no contact with teachers and is a less 'direct' form of school-involvement (Bhargave and Witherspoon 2015: 1703).

Similar processes apply in terms of parents' own school experience. PR requires parents to be comfortable and confident in the school context and this confidence depends on their belief and experience that they can have an influence on school matters, either as a parent



or when they were students themselves. Involvement in terms of PE is less driven by this mechanism, and PTA-membership is the least.

The status maintenance motive can be expected to mainly explain social class differences in involvement types that have a strong influence on a student's further educational pathway. In the French context at the transition to upper secondary school, the most influential involvement seems being PR as holding this office implies sitting in the staff meeting. Given that this meeting makes the virtually binding school proposition on which upper secondary school track a student will attend, social class should have the strongest impact on being parent representative. Attendance at parents' evenings means obtaining information about the critical institutional procedures at the transition to upper secondary school and could be used to signal teachers interest in the child's education (Barg 2013; 2019). Therefore status maintenance motives are important as well but to a lesser extent. PTA-membership gives access to information, too, but more general information. Hence, the mechanisms educational resources, personal experience, and status maintenance yield a similar hypothesis: social class differences are the strongest for PR and the smallest for PTA, while PE lies in the middle (H1).

In contrast, according to the theory of cultural logics, it can be assumed that social class differences are of the same size for every type of involvement (H2). Concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth are 'deep-seated, relatively stable, class-specific childrearing dispositions' (Lareau and Weininger 2008: 120) that motivate parents to be either involved in a broad range of ways or generally opposed to and distant from school (Willis 1977). Therefore, it can be assumed that middle-class parents are engaged in all possible ways to fairly the same high extent while working-class parents are not.

An unequal distribution of time and economic resources leads to high social class differences in PR and PE because both of these involvement types require parents to have flexible time schedules. The parent evenings and staff meetings happen on specific days, which are set by the school, and at times that may be unsuitable for parents with young children, non-flexible working hours and single-parents with no possibility to hire a baby-sitter. Working-class parents might also have fewer resources to live close to the school. Therefore, it can be expected that social class differentials are larger for PE and PR than for PTA (H3).

Moreover, the theoretical arguments presented in Section 2 above predict that cultural and educational capital, cultural logics and personal experience mediate large parts of the relationship between social class and parent-school interactions, and have independent effects once social class is controlled (H4). Similarly, rational-choice theory on educational decision-making predicts that status maintenance motives explain a large part of the social class differences (H5), while the literature stressing economic and time resources predicts that family and work situation will have strong mediating effects (H6).

## 5. Data, variables and method

I used data obtained from the French representative national study *Panel d'élèves du second degré – recrutement 1995 - 1995-2006* (Iil-0182, Ministère de l'Éducation, DEPP, ADISP-CMH). This study followed 17,830 students starting lower secondary school in 1995 up to their further education and beyond. In 1995, head teachers reported student demographics and in 1998, at the beginning of grade 9, parents completed a survey collecting information on childrearing practices and attitudes towards school, family situation and socio-demographics. The analysis sample was reduced to 11,027 students. This reduction is due to a step-wise exclusion of 2,540 students whose parents did not complete the 1998 survey, 2,757 students whose nationality is not French, and 157 students who did not live with at least one parent. Finally, the sample was reduced by 1,349 students through list wise deletion of cases with missing values.<sup>1</sup>

Three types of parental involvement in school represent the dependent variables: (1) attendance at parents' evenings (PE), (2) membership in a parent association (PTA), and (3) holding the office as parent representative (PR). Each variable indicates with '1' that parents were involved during the school year 1997/1998 and with '0' that they were not. At the beginning of the survey questionnaire it was indicated that the questions about parenting all refer to the two adults (parents or their partners) who usually follow the student's studying. The PE-variable is based on parents' answers to the question 'since the beginning of the school year, have you had the chance to meet one of your child's teachers', which had as one of three answering categories 'parents' evenings'.<sup>1</sup> PTA- and PR-information are obtained through two separate questions asking the parent directly about PTA-membership and being parent representative. Table 2 lists means for all variables for the full analysis sample and by social class.

The social class variable follows the EGP-class schema (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero 1979), which categorises occupations based on their labour-market situations. Following the literature employing the EGP-scheme in the French context (e.g. Ichou and Vallet 2011), six classes were differentiated:

- 1) EGP I: higher service-class (higher grade professionals, administrators and officials; managers in large industrial establishments; large proprietors),
- 2) EGP II: lower service-class (lower grade professionals, administrators and officials; higher grade technicians; managers in small industrial establishments; supervisors of non-manual employees,
- 3) EGP III, V: routine non-manual workers of lower and higher grade, lower grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers,
- 4) EGPVI, VIIa: skilled manual workers, semi- and unskilled manual workers,
- 5) EGP IVc, VIIb: farmers and agricultural workers,
- 6) EGP IVa, IVb: (non-agricultural) self-employed and petty bourgeoisie.

EGP I and II are also jointly referred to as middle-class or 'service class' as is common in some of the social stratification literature. In the analysis, the higher and lower service class are still studied as separate categories in order to allow for variations within the middle-class (Van Zanten 2002; Wong 2004). Information from the 1998 survey is used and when this was missing the head teachers' responses (1995) were used. The parent with the 'higher' social class defines the social class of the family (Erikson 1984).

To measure cultural logics, I employ a variable representing parents' opinions of parent-teacher relationships (Author A2). In the 1998-family survey, parents chose one item (out of five) that corresponds the most to their opinion. The original questionnaire items were: (i) 'the teachers have so much to do with their students that they cannot solve all problems. Meeting them does not change much', (ii) 'it is better to let the teachers do their work and to inconvenience them as rarely as possible', (iii) 'parents should meet the teachers as soon as there is a problem', (iv) 'it is important for the parents that they build up a good communication with the teachers and meet them even when there is no problem',

(v) 'teachers can do their work only in close collaboration with the parents'. I condensed the answers to three categories: (1) 'Better not meet teachers' including (i) and (ii), (2) 'meet teachers when there is a problem' containing (iii), and (3) 'meet teachers frequently' subsuming (iv) and (v). Category (1) corresponds to accomplishment of natural growth because it reflects parents' belief that their child's education is the responsibility of the teachers and that they have little influence (Lareau 2003). Category (3) represents concerted cultivation because it captures parents' belief that their involvement with school is critical and that they are entitled to this involvement. Category (2) is an intermediate set of beliefs that approximates a continuous scale measure of concerted cultivation behaviour (Cheadle 2008). Given that the opinion is measured in the same year as the involvement, it must be taken into account when interpreting the results that there is a risk of inverse causality – parent's opinion might be shaped by their involvement.

Parents' personal school experience is also operationalised through information from 1998. For both parents, it was asked 'what are your memories of your time in primary school and secondary education', and they could indicate (1) very bad, (2) bad, (3) good, or (4) very good, for primary and secondary education separately. Based on their answers I constructed a variable that mainly indicates parents' secondary school experience and represents parents' primary school experience if information on secondary school is missing (e.g. because the parent did not attend secondary school). I calculated the average of both parents' experiences. In line with the psychological involvement model considering personal experience as one determinant of self-efficacy and role construction (Hoover-Dempsey et al 2005; Walker et al. 2005), the variable represents parents' general experience in school in order to capture not only educational failure but also for instance experiences with teachers.

As an attempt to operationalize parents' status maintenance motive I used parents' answer to the question 'which educational attainment is most useful to find a job'. The reasoning behind the use of this variable is that 'not finding a job' implies unemployment and therefore represents a very likely status decline. I distinguished three categories: (1) parents who answered 'no attainment', vocational attainments and 'don't know', (2) parents who answered 'general *bac*' and 'technological *bac*', which are upper secondary attainments likely leading to tertiary education, and (3) parents who directly answered that a tertiary

attainment is most useful for finding a job. While the first category represents families who have a low status maintenance motive, parents in the second category believe it is essential that the child completes at least the general track in upper secondary education. Parents in the third category have a very strong wish that their children attend this general track because this is the minimum degree necessary for higher education and therefore for maintenance of a high social class position. Measuring status maintenance motives is a difficult task that has been addressed and discussed in a number of recent studies (see e.g. Barone et al. 2018). While primary data research can use well-defined questionnaire items, secondary data studies often have to rely on 'cruder' measures, which – when interpreted carefully – provide important and powerful findings. The variable used in the present study has limitations but is appropriate enough given that secondary survey data is used. Status maintenance is about the child's future occupational status and therefore an item that refers to 'jobs' and the link between education and the labour market appears suitable (see also Becker and Hecken 2009; Stocké 2007).

To represent families' educational resources I build a variable that combines father's and mother's highest educational attainment surveyed in 1998. Parents' educational attainment can be an appropriate measure for educational resources, as it shows how much time parents have spent in education and, hence, their familiarity with the school context and knowledge of it. Despite research showing that mothers tend to be more involved than fathers, I combine mother's and father's education in order to capture the *accumulation* of resources through both parents (Beller 2009) and to follow suggestions in cultural capital literature (Bourdieu 1966). The operationalisations also corresponds to that in similar studies with French data (Caille 1992) and is suitable because all parenting questions in the survey refer to both adults taking care of the child's education. I build a variable with six categories:

- 1) 'no education': two parents with no attainment;
- 2) 'mainly primary education': parents highest educational degree is primary education;
- 3) 'mainly vocational qualification': both parents with vocational degree, or one parent with vocational degree and the other parent has a lower or no degree;

- 4) 'mainly vocational secondary degree': at least one parent with vocational secondary degree and the other parent with a lower degree, one parent with general secondary degree and one parent with no educational qualification;
- 5) 'mainly general secondary degree': at least one parent having a general secondary degree and one parent having a lower degree than that;
- 6) 'general/higher education' both parents have at least a general secondary degree or higher educational attainment.

As addressed in the literature review (section 2.1), educational resources encompass also cultural capital and have a similar theoretical background as cultural logics. Given that the educational attainment variable is a broad measure of the mechanism it is likely to capture elements of other mechanisms such as cultural logics. Table A1 in the online appendix also shows a relatively strong relationship with the status maintenance motive indicating that the isolation of its effects from that of parents' education might be difficult.

*Table 2*

To capture time and economic resources given that the data set does not provide a direct measure of economic resources in the form of parental income, I used three variables generated with information from the 1998 survey: number of siblings, parents' employment status and one-parent household. This is a basic measure of the concept economic resources but I use a set of variables that captures well relevant structural circumstances (e.g. Grolnick et al. 1997). More children imply lower levels of economic, cultural and time resources per child (Blake 1981, Jaeger 2009) and the employment status-variable distinguishes between (1) families with two working parents including employed single-parents, (2) two-parent families with one parent who is working, and (3) families with no working parent. While category (1) likely implies a relatively high income but low levels of time resources, category (2) includes families where one non-working parent – often the mother – is present and therefore time resources are available. Category (3) represents a low household income because both parents are not employed. Table 2 shows lower rates of families with two employed parents and higher rates of families with no employed parents in the working-class than in the service classes. Therefore, this variable seems a relatively good proxy for economic resources or other 'disadvantages' associated with two

non-working parents in the household. The one-parent variable distinguishes between single-parent families (value '1') and households with two parents including step-parents (value '0'). It can be expected that one-parent families have less time and lower levels of economic resources, and are therefore less involved (Epstein 1987; Grolnick et al. 1997; Ritblatt et al. 2002).

I include three control variables. One variable indicates whether the school a student attends is located in an 'education priority zone' (ZEP – *zone d'éducation prioritaire*). ZEP-schools lie in disadvantaged areas and the student social composition is lower as compared to public schools (Guillaume 2001). Another variable denotes whether the school is private. Families in France are relatively free to choose schools and as middle-class parents make more use of this choice there is high social segregation in schools (Van Zanten 2002). School's social composition influences parent-school interactions as working-class parents can feel more uncomfortable in schools with high rates of middle-class parents. Also, teachers' support of parental engagement might differ between ZEP-schools or private schools and public schools because teachers' interests in these schools are different. A third control variable indicates the number of inhabitants of the city or town the student's school is located in. The social class distribution differs over urban and rural areas in France, and so do attitudes towards education and educational aspirations (Roux and Davailon 2001). To some extent this variable also captures distance from home to the school. It has four categories: (1) rural to 5,000 inhabitants, (2) 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, (3) 20,000 to 200,000 inhabitants and (4) 200,000 to 2,000,000 inhabitants, and Paris.

As the dependent variables are binary I use logistic regression models in the main analyses. Robustness analyses were run with linear regression models producing very similar results. When analysing the degree to which social class effects on the three involvement types are due to each of the proposed explanatory mechanisms (e.g. personal school experience, cultural logics), I subsequently include the mediating variables in different models and compare the social class coefficients over these nested models. In order to cope with the rescaling problem that emerges when the coefficients of nested non-linear regression models are compared, I calculate Average Marginal Effects (AME) and apply the KHB-method (Karlson, Holm and Breen 2012; Kohler, Karlson and Holm 2011).<sup>1</sup>

## 6. Results

Table 2 presents distributions of the dependent and main explanatory variables by EGP-class. This is a bivariate test of the association between social class, the different involvement types and mechanisms that are supposed to explain this association. The total rate of attendance at parents' evenings is very high (86 per cent) and the rates of PTA-membership and being parent representative are very low with 17 and 10 per cent. Farmers and agricultural workers (EGP IVc, VIIb) as well as self-employed and the petty bourgeoisie (EGP IVa, IVb) show rates that are not following a hierarchical order of classes, which is common for France (Ichou and Vallet 2011). I generally find expected associations between social class, and the different dependent and explanatory variables. For instance, rates of working-class parents who are PTA-members and parent representative are strikingly lower than corresponding rates for higher classes. The few minor deviations from expected relationships include that the mean number of children is slightly higher in EGP I-families than in families from EGP II or III, V. Still, it is lower than in the working-class (EGP VI, VIIa). Another interesting pattern appears for the association between class and cultural logic measured through parents' opinion on parent-teacher relationships: fewer higher service-class families (EGP I, 54 percent) than lower service-class families (EGP II, 58 percent) seem to follow the concerted cultivation logic, believing that parents should meet teachers frequently. Parents thinking they should approach teachers when their children have problems in school are more prevalent in the higher than lower service-class. As predicted, the percentage of parents who think that they should 'better not meet' with their children's teachers decreases as a family's position in the EGP-schema increases.

Figure 1 presents social class differentials in the three types of parental involvement in school. It graphs AMEs for each EGP-class and 95 per cent confidence intervals. The reference category is the working-class (EGP VI, VIIa); hence, the AMEs indicate the average discrete change effects over all cases in the analysis sample for each EGP-class as compared to the working-class. In other words, Figure 1 shows the extent to which the predicted probability of involvement for parents from a certain EGP-class differs from the predicted involvement probability for parents from EGP VI, VIIa. This enables me to test hypotheses H1 to H3. The strongest impact of social class is found for PTA-membership: the likelihood that EGP-I parents are PTA-members is more than 25 percentage points higher than for working-class parents. The corresponding social class differentials are smaller and similar for



attending parents' evenings (almost 15 percentage points) and being parent representative (16 percentage points). This result provides no clear evidence in favour of any of the hypotheses as none of them predicts social class effects on PTA-membership to be the largest. This could be indicating that another mechanism than those hypothesised is at work. It could be that parents' knowledge of PTAs services or general motives of civic engagement are strengthening these social class differences.

*Figure 1*

Figure 2 explores the mechanisms underlying the relationships between social class and each type of parental involvement (hypotheses H4 to H6). The presented results are based on nested regression models to which the KHB-method was applied. The symbols on the horizontal line indicate the percentage to which the AME of EGP I and II – the higher and lower service class – were reduced when the following variables were successively introduced in the following order: 1. parents' personal experience in school, 2. educational resources, 3. number of siblings, 4. one-parent family, 5. presence of one or two non-working parents, 6. cultural logic, and 7. parents' status maintenance motive. Figure 2 indicates, for instance, that the AME of EGP II on attendance at parents' evenings (PE) is explained by 10 per cent through status maintenance, whereby it is important to note that these variables are still limited in the extent to which they can capture each mechanism fully.

Supporting H1, parents' educational resources mediate to a large extent the social class effect on attendance at parents' evenings, PTA-membership and being parent representative. These resources explain between around 58 and 70 per cent of the AMEs of EGP I and II on all involvement types. Other than one would expect, it does not explain more of the social class differences in involvement types that were assumed to require a lot of educational resources (i.e. being parent representative). Cultural logic tends to explain more of EGP II-effects than of EGP I-effects and slightly more of the social class effects on parents' evenings than on other involvement types. The findings generally speak against the assumption that cultural logic has a strong explanatory power but show that it has some relevance.

Supporting hypotheses H3 and H6, which predict that economic and time resources explain a considerable part of social class effects on involvement that requires a lot of time flexibility, number of siblings explains a relatively high percentage of AMEs of EGP I (26 per cent) and EGP II (21 per cent) on PE. For PTA-membership I find a suppression effect indicating that when social class is held constant parents are more likely to be member the more children they have. This is due to a positive relationship between sibling number and PTA-membership and a negative one with social class. Number of siblings hardly explains any of the effects on being parent representative. When the variable for one-parent family is controlled, a similar suppression effect appears for EGP II on all involvement-types. This is because one-parent families are less likely to be involved but there are more single-parent families among EGP II-families than among working-class families (see Table 2). Overall, it seems that single-parent families or families with many children benefit in some way from membership in a PTA-association. Whether a student has no working parents, one working parent or two working parents explains only little of the social class differentials in PTA-membership and being parent representative. However, it explains between 12 and 15 percent of social class differentials in PE. For EGP I the mediating effect of parental employment status is even larger than the one of cultural logics and for EGP II-families it exceeds the mediating effect of status maintenance motives. In sum, evidence is found in favour of the assumption that time and economic resources represented through family and work situation are mediating social class effects.

As parents' general own experience with school seems to have practically no explanatory power, a part of H4 can be rejected. Status maintenance motives, or the labour market value parents attach to different educational degrees, explain a relatively large part of EGP I-effects on PE providing some evidence in favour of H5. Other than expected, this mechanism explains relatively little of social class effects on being parent representative. Status maintenance seems to particularly drive effects of EGP I, while cultural logics appear to mediate EGP II-effects. These results are in line with the bivariate findings presented in Table 2, which indicate that EGP II-parents are more likely to have a set of beliefs that corresponds to concerted cultivation. The results regarding the higher service class (EGP I) support the assumption that status maintenance motives are important, while results for the lower service class (EGP II) speak in favour of cultural logics or role construction.

Figure 2

Contributions of each mechanism have so far been analysed separately, leaving two questions unanswered. First, can all mechanisms jointly explain social class differences or are additional processes contributing to the differences? Second, do the different mechanisms have independent effects that operate even when social class and all mechanisms are considered at once? To answer these questions Table 3 presents results of logistic regression models that contain all mediating variables. The results show that social class differences on attending parents' evenings are almost fully mediated by the mechanisms; only small effects of EGP II and III, IV ( $p < 0.05$ ) remain. By contrast, highly significant effects ( $p < 0.001$ ) of all EGP-classes persist on PTA-membership and being parent representative. For instance, taking into account all mechanisms, the probability that parents from EGP I are PTA-members is almost 10 percentage points higher than the probability for parents from the working-class (EGP VI, VIIa), on average over all cases in the analysis sample. Hence, it appears that the employed variables are not sufficient for the operationalization of the theoretical mechanisms and processes might be at work that the theory and literature do not address. Further, this seems evidence against the argument that all parents want to be involved but are not because of unequally distributed resources (Chin and Phillips 2004). The results rather show that given the same educational resources, family and work situation, and even given the same beliefs about the value of education and cultural logics, middle-class parents are significantly more likely to be PTA-members or parent representatives than working-class parents.

In line with the results presented in Figure 2, parents' memories of their own schooling have no significant effects even though it must be noted that the coefficient for attendance at parents' evenings has borderline significance ( $p = 0.052$ ). The negative effect of number of siblings on parents' evenings indicates that time and economic resources have a considerable influence regardless of social class, educational resources, status maintenance motives and cultural logics. At the same time, number of children in the family appears to increase the likelihood of parents' PTA-membership. The relevance of time and economic resources seems further supported through the relatively strong negative net effects of the variable for one-parent family. Presence of two non-working parents and one non-working parent as compared to both parents being employed has a negative highly significant impact

on PE. When it comes to PTA-membership and being parent representative the effect of having one working and one non-working parent is positive and significant at intermediate level. This shows that in families where one parent is at home and more time resources are available these types of involvement are more likely than in families with only working parents. Net effects of the status maintenance motive, or labour market value attached to educational degrees, are strongest, and significant at higher levels, on visits to parents' evenings and less powerful on being PTA-member or parent representative. Finally, cultural logics measured through parents' opinion on parent-teacher interactions have a comparatively strong, and highly significant effect over all involvement types. It becomes apparent that school context has some effect, too: parents of children in a ZEP-school are more likely to attend parent evenings and parents of children in private schools are less likely to be PTA-members or parent representative. Holding constant social class and other factors, the positive ZEP-school coefficient might be reflecting schools' additional efforts to integrate the parents. In private schools staff might already be acting in line with parents' interests and therefore parents do not feel the need to be PTA-member or representative.

*Table 3*

## **7. Discussion and conclusion**

This paper attempts to answer the question 'why are middle-class parents more involved in school than working-class parents?' by empirically testing mechanisms advanced by different research traditions and disciplines and by analysing French national data on students in grade 9. I find that social class effects on PTA-membership are slightly higher than on attendance at parents' evenings or being parent representative. This result does not give a clear indication of which mechanisms generally drive parental involvement in school. One could interpret this as evidence for the relevance of educational resources in terms of knowledge of the educational system because becoming a PTA-member may require information about the existence of PTAs and their benefits. It is also in line with research on the relationship between social class and membership in associations indicating that parents become involved because of motives of civic participation, i.e. they want to support the whole school community (Héran 1988; Barthélémy 1995; Fischer 2018). Further, social class effects on all involvement types are reduced by far the most when parents' educational

attainment is taken into account. This finding corresponds to qualitative and quantitative research in the field, regardless of its disciplinary background (e.g. Chin and Phillips 2004; Cheadle 2008; Lareau 2003), but has to be interpreted with caution because parents' educational attainment is a measure broad enough to capture also other mechanisms.

Whether parents have a positive memory of their own school time explains hardly any of the social class differences, even when a direct measure of it is included before all other mediating factors. It only has a very minor explanatory effect when it comes to social inequality in attendance at parents' evenings. This finding is very interesting as it challenges an idea put forward in sociological literature which is that parents' own experience explains their negative attitudes towards education and lower involvement levels (Reay 1999; Raty 2003; Kohl et al. 2000, Manz et al. 2004). Another interesting finding is that status maintenance motives and cultural logics both have relatively strong independent effects on parent-school interactions, even though they are based on theories that are quite in opposition to each other. While the rational choice approach argues that parents make conscious utility-maximizing decisions, cultural capital literature assumes that more normative behaviours shaped by class culture, tastes and preferences are at work. Like research on educational decision-making combining both approaches, this paper shows that concepts and methodologies applied in one research tradition can be effectively used in the other (Glaesser and Cooper 2014).

In terms of the impact of parents' economic and time resources as represented through family and work situation, this paper provides some evidence that confirms previous research showing that family's life context matters (e.g. Guryan, Hurst and Kearney 2008; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997) and mediates social inequalities (Lareau and McNamara Horvat 1999; Reay 2005). Parents with many children who are therefore limited in their time resources and non-working parents who are likely to have lower economic resources and self-confidence, are less likely to attend parents' evenings and be parent representative. However, surprisingly, the more children are living in a household the more likely it is that parents are PTA-members. It could be that this kind of involvement provides benefits that increase with number of children and is a convenient way for parents with limited time to access information and services. It is also possible that the more children parents have, the more they have been exposed to the opportunity of becoming PTA-member.

In sum, this paper shows that focusing on many factors and looking beyond the borders of research traditions and disciplines provides a more comprehensive picture of the processes at work. This reduces the risk of emphasising the dominance of some factors while ignoring the power of others and overlooking that underlying processes are more complex than one would think (see also Grolnick et al. 1997). The present study demonstrates that complementing research conducted with qualitative and quantitative data is important and while many conclusions from qualitative research can be supported with this quantitative study, the relevance of some factors – parents' personal experience in school – could not be maintained. The quantitative approach also enabled an examination of the relative impact of different mechanisms showing which resources are more impactful than others and that most of them have independent influences.

It must be noted that the study has limitations due to shortcomings in the available data. Measurements such as parents' opinion on parent-school relationships might be influenced by actual involvement and not the other way around. The variables educational attainment and school experience refer to time points prior to parents' social class acquisition, which limits their suitability for the operationalization of mechanisms explaining social class differentials in the involvement. I was able to show that the mechanisms as measured with the present data cannot explain the full extent of social inequality in the different involvement types. This could indicate that the data was not sufficiently rich or that the addressed theories do not capture all of the processes at work. The inclusion of more and better direct measures of the various resources, motives and beliefs as well as variables for teacher behaviour and parents' networks (Grolnick et al 1997; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997; Ritblatt et al 2002), and school-level factors (e.g. initiatives undertaken by the school) can provide important further insights. A potentially critical factor that should be taken into account empirically and theoretically seems parents' civic engagement motivations, in particular because the decision to become a PTA-member and its consequences appears to be distinct from that of other school involvement (Author A1; Bhargava and Witherspoon 2015),

Finally, this paper studies parental involvement in an interesting institutional context. The transition from lower to upper secondary education in France represents a setting in which teachers have important decision-making power and hence parents with high educational

aspirations for their children may want to be particularly involved. Institutional settings in which teachers have an important say in crucial decisions can be found in many educational systems and at various educational stages. Comparative research on how and why institutional circumstances shape parents' decisions to become involved in their children's school appears to be an important task for future research.

**Word count: 9,989 including references and endnotes; 10985 words with tables and figures**

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Most of the reduction through list-wise deletion is driven by missing information on the variables parental education and measures of parents' attitudes and opinions. Rates of missing information for the involvement-variables are very low at less than 1 per cent of the sample before list-wise deletion.

<sup>2</sup> This question had also meetings initiated by the parents and by the teachers as answering categories, which due to their special relationship with student's difficulties and school performance must be analysed separately (Barg 2019).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed and formal explication of the rescaling problem see e.g. Kohler, Karlson, Holm (2011). Even though the approach enables the inclusion of all mediating variables at once, I add them stepwisely in approximate causal order to see the explanatory contribution of each variable before a 'causally subsequent' variable is included.



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Author A2

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Table 1: Theoretical mechanisms and predicted ranking of social class differences in parental involvement in school

Hypothesis		Attendance at parents' evenings (PE)	PTA-membership (PTA)	Being parent representative (PR)	Ranking of social class differences
H1	Educational resources	++	+	+++	PR>PE>PTA
	Parents' own school experience	++	+	+++	
	Status maintenance motives	++	+	+++	
H2	Cultural logic	+++	+++	+++	PR=PE=PTA
H3	Time and economic resources	+++	+	+++	PR=PE>PTA

Note: '+' indicate how much of a resource is necessary for an involvement-type and contributes to social class differences in that involvement; for instance, a middle level (++) of educational resources is needed for attendance at parents' evenings.

Table 2: Descriptives of variables included in analysis for full analysis samples and by social class (percentages)

	Total	EGP I	EGP II	EGP III, V	EGP VI, VIIa	EGP IVc, VIIb	EGP IVa, IVb
Parents' evenings	85.7	91.2	91.2	85.4	77.2	84.5	86.3
PTA-membership	17.0	32.3	24.6	11.7	05.9	19.9	14.0
Parent representative	10.3	17.9	16.1	07.7	03.6	12.9	08.4
<i>Educational resources (combination of both parents' degrees)</i>							
No education	07.3	00.4	00.4	05.8	21.9	06.0	05.6
Mainly primary education	06.6	00.4	01.0	07.6	14.6	08.9	05.8
Mainly vocational qualification	41.4	08.5	17.5	57.1	58.2	54.1	52.2
Mainly vocational secondary degree	09.4	07.9	13.2	12.0	02.9	14.2	11.6
Mainly general secondary degree	16.0	25.3	35.2	12.5	02.1	08.9	13.9
General/higher education	19.3	57.5	32.7	04.9	00.5	07.9	10.8
<i>Cultural logic – opinion on parent-teacher interaction</i>							
'better not meet'	12.5	09.3	09.5	12.4	16.9	13.6	13.5
'meet when there is a problem'	36.4	36.4	32.5	38.0	35.7	33.6	38.5
'meet frequently'	51.2	54.3	58.0	49.6	47.4	52.8	48.0
Number of siblings (mean)	1.766	1.633	1.577	1.590	2.319	1.966	1.649
Include standard deviation	[1.257]	[0.997]	[1.059]	[1.100]	[1.622]	[1.315]	[1.246]
One-parent family	12.6	09.3	12.7	16.4	11.2	05.5	12.1
<i>Employment status</i>							
Both parents working	68.4	72.4	81.2	72.2	48.1	75.6	70.3
One parent working, one not working	25.6	25.2	16.1	22.3	38.6	20.5	25.0
Both parents not working	06.0	02.4	02.6	05.5	13.3	03.9	04.7
Personal experience, 1-4 (mean)	2.953	3.060	2.948	2.934	2.892	2.949	2.923
	[0.551]	[0.521]	[0.522]	[0.551]	[0.598]	[0.478]	[0.546]
<i>Status maintenance motive</i>							
None/low	49.4	22.2	39.7	55.8	69.1	60.1	53.5
Intermediate	12.1	06.9	11.2	14.3	13.8	12.9	13.1
High	38.6	70.9	49.1	29.9	17.0	27.0	33.4

<i>Table 2 continued</i>	Total	EGP I	EGP II	EGP III, V	EGP VI, VIIa	EGP IVc, VIIb	EGP IVa, IVb
ZEP-school	08.2	02.9	05.9	09.2	15.4	04.5	05.4
Private school	21.8	27.6	21.3	18.9	15.2	34.6	29.0
<i>Size of city or town</i>							
Rural to 5,000 inhabitants	20.3	11.5	19.2	19.7	24.6	50.7	22.3
5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants	18.4	12.8	17.3	19.1	20.9	28.9	20.8
20,000 to 200,000 inhabitants	26.5	24.4	30.2	26.8	27.3	16.0	27.2
200,000 to 2,000,000 inhabitants, and Paris	34.8	51.3	33.2	34.3	27.1	04.5	29.7
<i>N (per cent of total)</i>	11027	2327 (21.1)	1414 (12.8)	3613 (32.8)	2278 (20.7)	381 (03.5)	1014 (09.2)

*Note:* all variables are dummy-variables except personal experience, which ranges from 1 to 4; standard deviations are presented in square brackets. *Source:* Panel d'élèves du second degré, recrutement 1995 - 1995-2006, Ministère de l'Éducation, DEPP, ADISP-CMH; own calculations.

Table 3: Explanation of social class differentials in parental involvement, taking into account all mechanism at once (AMEs and standard errors)

	Parents' evenings		PTA-membership		Parent representative	
	AME	SE	AME	SE	AME	SE
<i>Social class (Ref. VI-VIIa)</i>						
EGP I	0.015	0.014	0.098 <sup>***</sup>	0.014	0.060 <sup>***</sup>	0.011
EGP II	0.030 <sup>*</sup>	0.014	0.078 <sup>***</sup>	0.014	0.057 <sup>***</sup>	0.012
EGP III, V	0.017 <sup>*</sup>	0.009	0.044 <sup>***</sup>	0.011	0.031 <sup>**</sup>	0.009
EGP IVc, VIIb	0.008	0.018	0.130 <sup>***</sup>	0.023	0.088 <sup>***</sup>	0.020
EGP IVa, IVb	0.023	0.013	0.053 <sup>***</sup>	0.014	0.034 <sup>**</sup>	0.012
Personal experience	0.011	0.006	-0.006	0.006	-0.003	0.005
<i>Educational resources (Ref. no education)</i>						
Mainly primary education	0.015	0.019	0.021	0.013	0.020	0.011
Mainly vocational qualification	0.067 <sup>***</sup>	0.015	0.072 <sup>***</sup>	0.010	0.048 <sup>***</sup>	0.007
Mainly vocational secondary degree	0.103 <sup>***</sup>	0.018	0.128 <sup>***</sup>	0.015	0.101 <sup>***</sup>	0.012
Mainly general secondary degree	0.100 <sup>***</sup>	0.018	0.167 <sup>***</sup>	0.013	0.113 <sup>***</sup>	0.010
General/higher education	0.121 <sup>***</sup>	0.018	0.252 <sup>***</sup>	0.016	0.137 <sup>***</sup>	0.012
Nb. of siblings	-0.017 <sup>***</sup>	0.002	0.012 <sup>***</sup>	0.003	0.000	0.002
One-parent family	-0.068 <sup>***</sup>	0.012	-0.071 <sup>***</sup>	0.010	-0.044 <sup>***</sup>	0.008
<i>Employment status (Ref. both parents working)</i>						
One parent working, one not working	-0.024 <sup>**</sup>	0.008	0.025 <sup>**</sup>	0.009	0.022 <sup>**</sup>	0.007
Both parents not working	-0.051 <sup>***</sup>	0.015	-0.034	0.019	-0.019	0.016
<i>Status maintenance motive (Ref. low)</i>						
Medium	0.028 <sup>**</sup>	0.010	0.017	0.012	0.011	0.010
High	0.033 <sup>***</sup>	0.008	0.023 <sup>**</sup>	0.008	0.018 <sup>**</sup>	0.007
<i>Opinion on parent-teacher interaction (Ref. 'better not meet')</i>						
'meet when there is a problem'	0.134 <sup>***</sup>	0.013	0.052 <sup>***</sup>	0.010	0.035 <sup>***</sup>	0.007
'meet frequently'	0.181 <sup>***</sup>	0.012	0.110 <sup>***</sup>	0.010	0.086 <sup>***</sup>	0.007
ZEP-school	0.028 <sup>*</sup>	0.011	-0.002	0.015	0.021	0.013
Private school	0.014	0.008	-0.024 <sup>**</sup>	0.008	-0.053 <sup>***</sup>	0.006



Table 3 continues

<i>Size of city or town (Ref. 200,000 to 2,000,000 inhabitants, and Paris)</i>						
Rural to 5,000 inhabitants	0.002	0.009	-0.009	0.010	0.018*	0.009
5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants	0.002	0.009	-0.013	0.010	0.011	0.008
20,000 to 200,000 inhabitants	-0.009	0.009	-0.017	0.009	-0.002	0.007
Percentage of EGP-effects explained through all variables						
EGP I	88.16		63.16		63.33	
EGP II	77.25		59.25		57.73	
<i>N</i>	11027		11027		11027	

*Note:* Coefficients of control variables not shown; standard errors adjusted for school-level clustering; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . *Reading Note:* e.g. on average over all cases and controlling relevant variables, the likelihood that EGP II parents attend PE is 3 percentage points higher than the likelihood that EGP VI, VIIa parents do so. *Source:* Panel d'élèves du second degré, recrutement 1995 - 1995-2006, Ministère de l'Éducation, DEPP, ADISP-CMH; own calculations.

## Online appendix

Table A1: Correlations between variables representing the mechanisms (spearman's rank correlation coefficients and p-values in italics)

	Parental education	Opinion on parent-teacher interaction	Status maintenance	Personal experience	Employment status
Opinion on parent-teacher interaction	0.0950	-			
<i>p-value</i>	<i>0.000</i>				
Status maintenance	0.4133	0.0740	-		
<i>p-value</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.000</i>			
Personal experience	0.1330	0.0424	0.0959	-	
<i>p-value</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.0000</i>		
Employment status	-0.1961	-0.0537	-0.0636	-0.0053	-
<i>p-value</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.0000</i>	<i>0.5805</i>	
One-parent family	-0.0657	-0.0212	-0.0311	0.0355	-0.0133
<i>p-value</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.0260</i>	<i>0.0011</i>	<i>0.0002</i>	<i>0.1628</i>

Source : Panel d'élèves du second degré, recrutement 1995 - 1995-2006, Ministère de l'Éducation, DEPP, ADISP-CMH; own calculations.