

**50) A time series study of the impact of social background on students' achievements**

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The primary school systems of the Nordic countries have an explicit aim of ensuring social equity, as evident in various reforms of the sector. Primary school systems in the Nordic context are characterised by being non-selective, publicly funded and without tracking until secondary school. Despite these features, the role of the schools in enhancing social mobility has previously been shown to be relatively low. By comparing the explanatory power of measures of social background on student academic achievement across Denmark, Norway and Sweden, over a period of a decade, this paper aims to qualify the existing knowledge on the role of social background in the Nordic welfare states. Applying data on 4th grade students' academic achievement from the 2007, 2011 and 2015 waves of the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), hierarchical linear models with academic achievement in mathematics as the dependent variable are employed. These models will determine the explanatory power of the reported number of books at home, as a proxy-variable for social background, while controlling for relevant covariates both on student level such as language spoken in the home, and school level such as socioeconomic composition of classrooms. This allows for looking at the changes in the relationship between social background and academic achievement over time, across the Nordic countries. Results will be interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and Coleman's understanding of equality in education. Furthermore, changes over time will be related to structural changes in the respective primary school systems of the three countries, e.g. reforms – thus the paper contributes to an improved understanding of the effectiveness of the Nordic welfare states in reducing inequality of educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** educational inequality, social stratification, TIMSS, Nordic countries