



FONDECYT N°1210847  
Meritocracia en la Escuela

XX ISA World Congress of Sociology

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# The socialization of meritocracy at school and the justification of economic inequality

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# Context & motivation



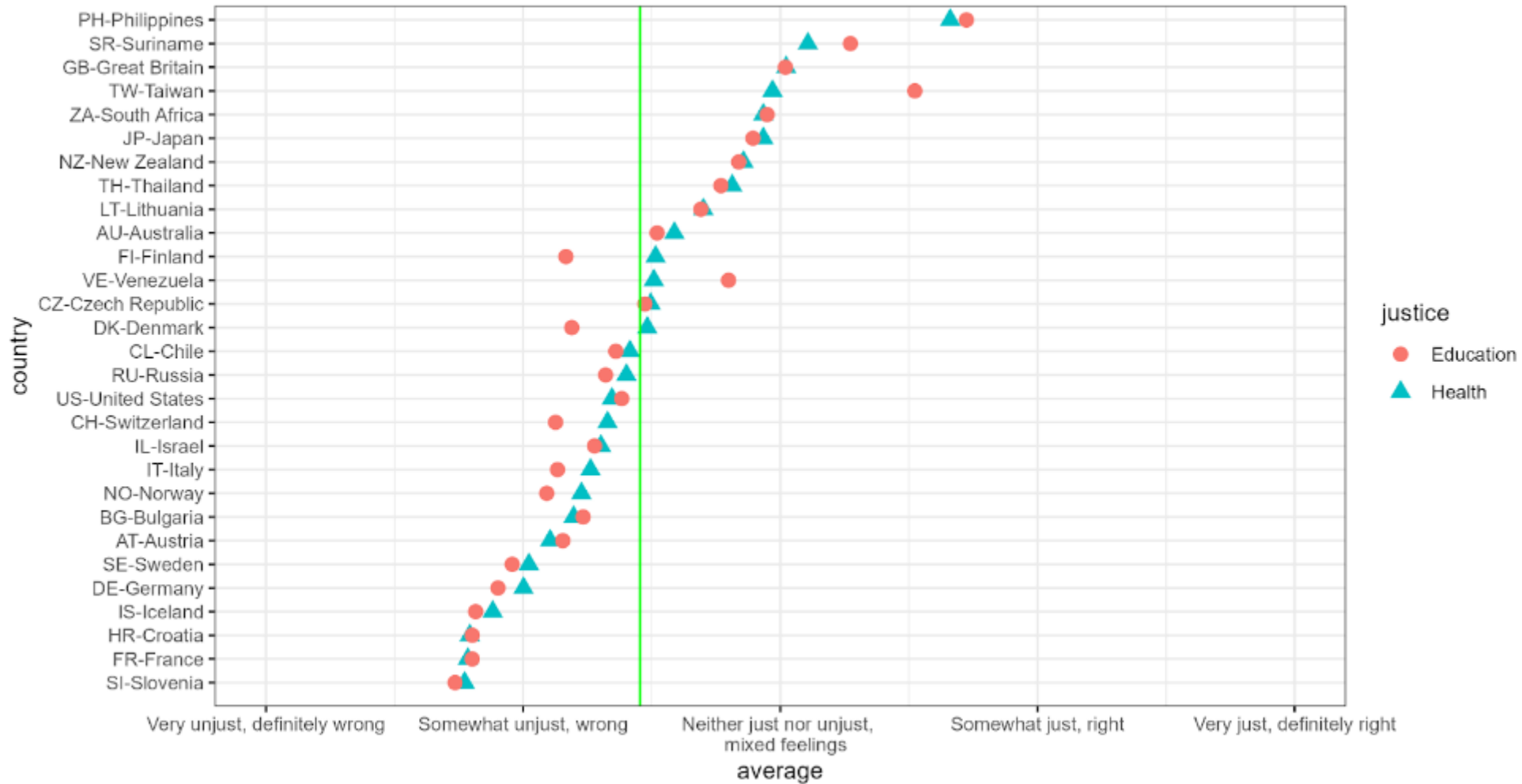
# Meritocracy at school: Moral foundations of educational markets and implications for citizenship education

ANID/FONDECYT Grant 2021-2024

- First stage:
  - qualitative study
  - analysis of secondary data
- Second stage
  - panel study
  - survey experiments

This study

Figure 1: Average of justification of inequality by country



Source: ISSP 2019

## Justification of inequality

- Rational interests (homo economicus)
- Cultural factors and policy feedback effects
- Chile, marketization & neoliberal reforms

## Meritocracy

- Effort and talent (Young, 1958)
- Normative and perceptual elements (Duru-Bellat & Tenret, 2012; Castillo et al, 2019)
- School context (Batruch, 2023; Wiederkehr, 2015; Resh & Sabbagh; Lampert, 2012)

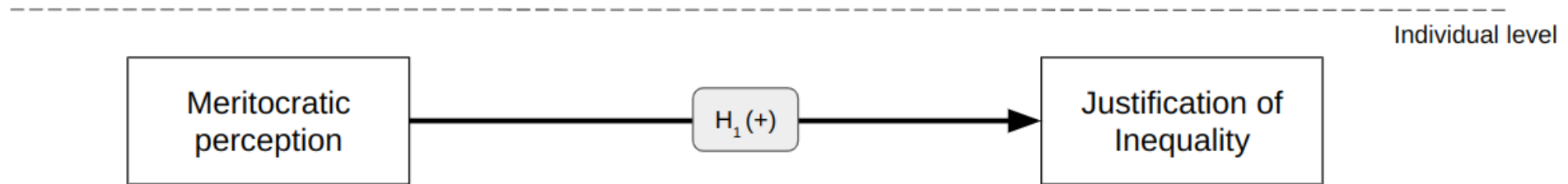
Meritocratic  
perception



Justification of  
Inequality

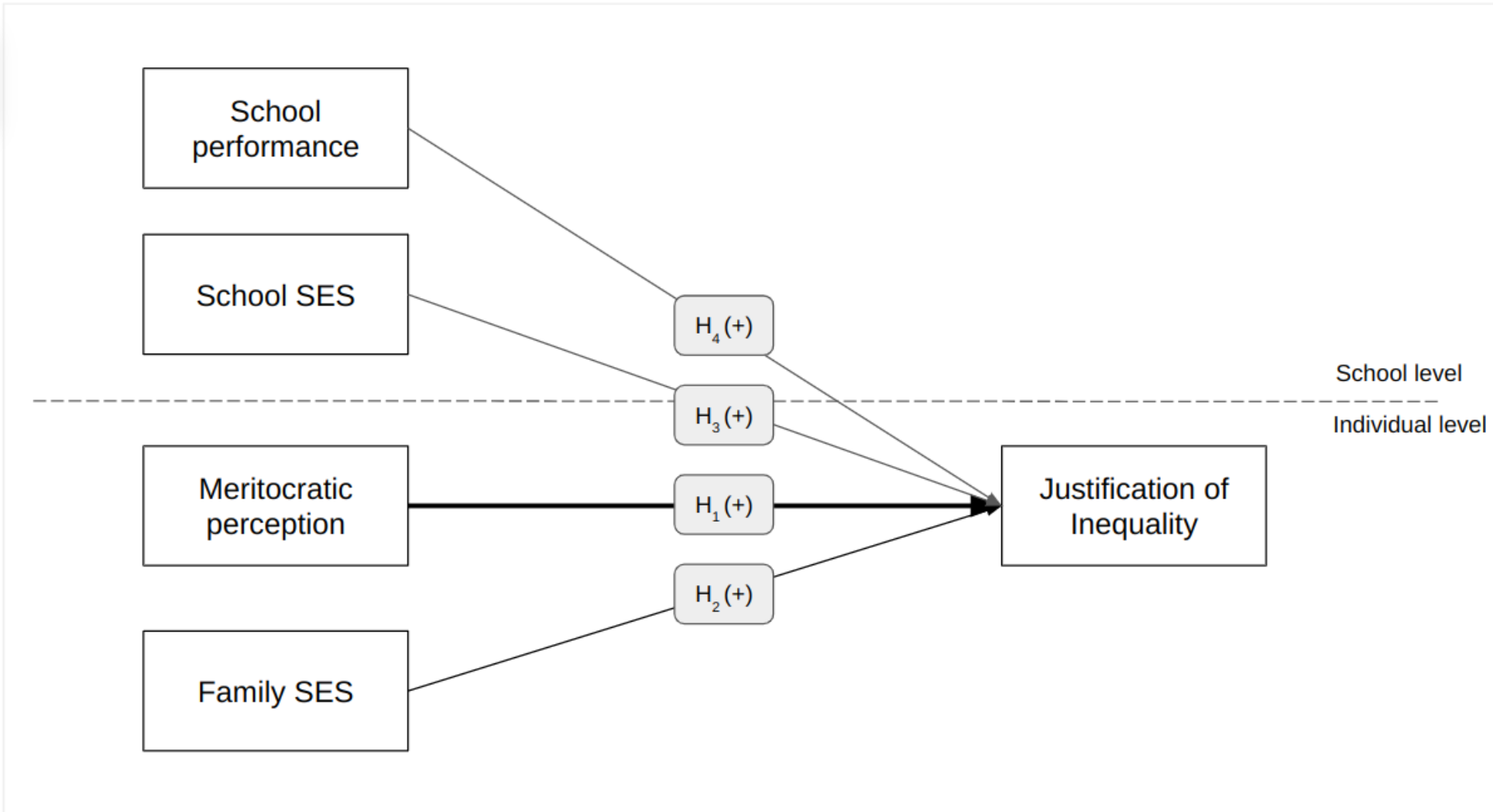
Family + School socialization

# Hypotheses

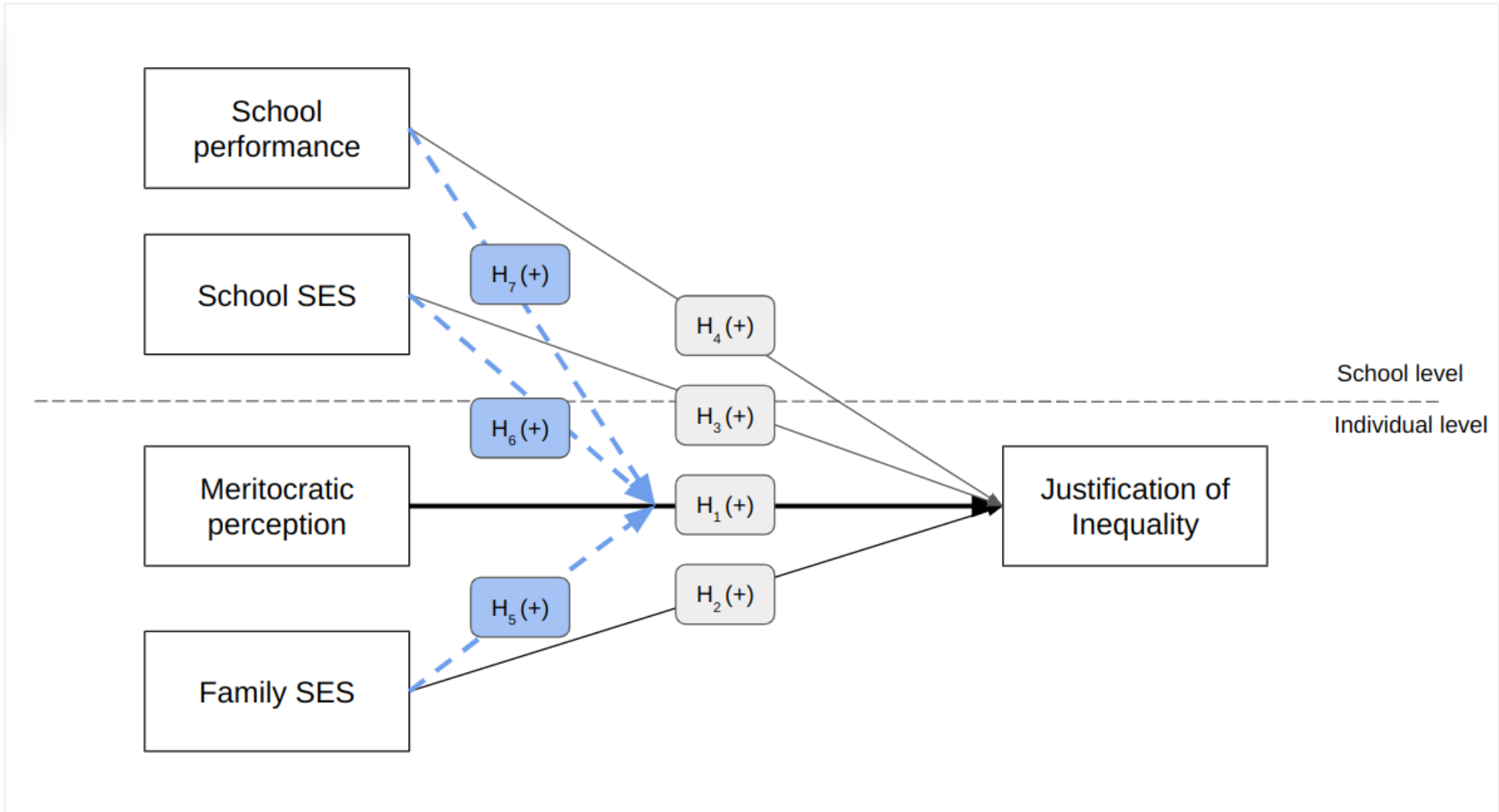




# Hypotheses



# Hypotheses



# Methods

# Data

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- First National Study of Citizenship Education 2017
- National Agency for Educational Quality, Chile
- 8,701 8th grade students, 242 schools

# Dependent Variables: Justification of inequality

Label	Stats / Values	Freqs (% of Valid)	Graph	Valid	Missing
It is just that in Chile people with higher incomes can have better pensions than people with low incomes	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	2410 (30.0%) 2630 (32.7%) 2178 (27.1%) 818 (10.2%)		8036 (95.5%)	382 (4.5%)
It is just that in Chile people who can pay have a better education for their children	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	2307 (28.9%) 2363 (29.6%) 2291 (28.7%) 1010 (12.7%)		7971 (94.7%)	447 (5.3%)
It is just that in Chile people with higher incomes can access better health services than people with low incomes	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	2942 (37.1%) 2302 (29.0%) 1876 (23.6%) 818 (10.3%)		7938 (94.3%)	480 (5.7%)
Inequality justification index	Mean (sd) : 2.2 (0.9) min ≤ med ≤ max: 1 ≤ 2 ≤ 4 IQR (CV) : 1.7 (0.4)	13 distinct values		8128 (96.6%)	290 (3.4%)

# Indepentent variables: meritocracy

Variable	Label	Stats / Values	Freqs (% of Valid)	Graph	Valid
School talent	Intelligence is important to get good grades	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	510 ( 6.3%) 1263 (15.7%) 3960 (49.2%) 2322 (28.8%)		8055 (95.7%)
School effort	Effort is important to get good grades	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	157 ( 1.9%) 127 ( 1.6%) 1965 (24.4%) 5817 (72.1%)		8066 (95.8%)
Social effort	In Chile, people are rewarded for their efforts	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	709 ( 9.0%) 2330 (29.6%) 3462 (44.0%) 1375 (17.5%)		7876 (93.6%)
Deservingness	In Chile, people get what they deserve	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	816 (10.6%) 2610 (33.8%) 3154 (40.8%) 1143 (14.8%)		7723 (91.7%)
Social talent	In Chile, people are rewarded for their intelligence and skill	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree	698 ( 9.1%) 2099 (27.3%) 3579 (46.6%) 1301 (16.9%)		7677 (91.2%)

# Independent variables: socialization

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## Family

- Parents' educational level
- Books at home
- Technology access

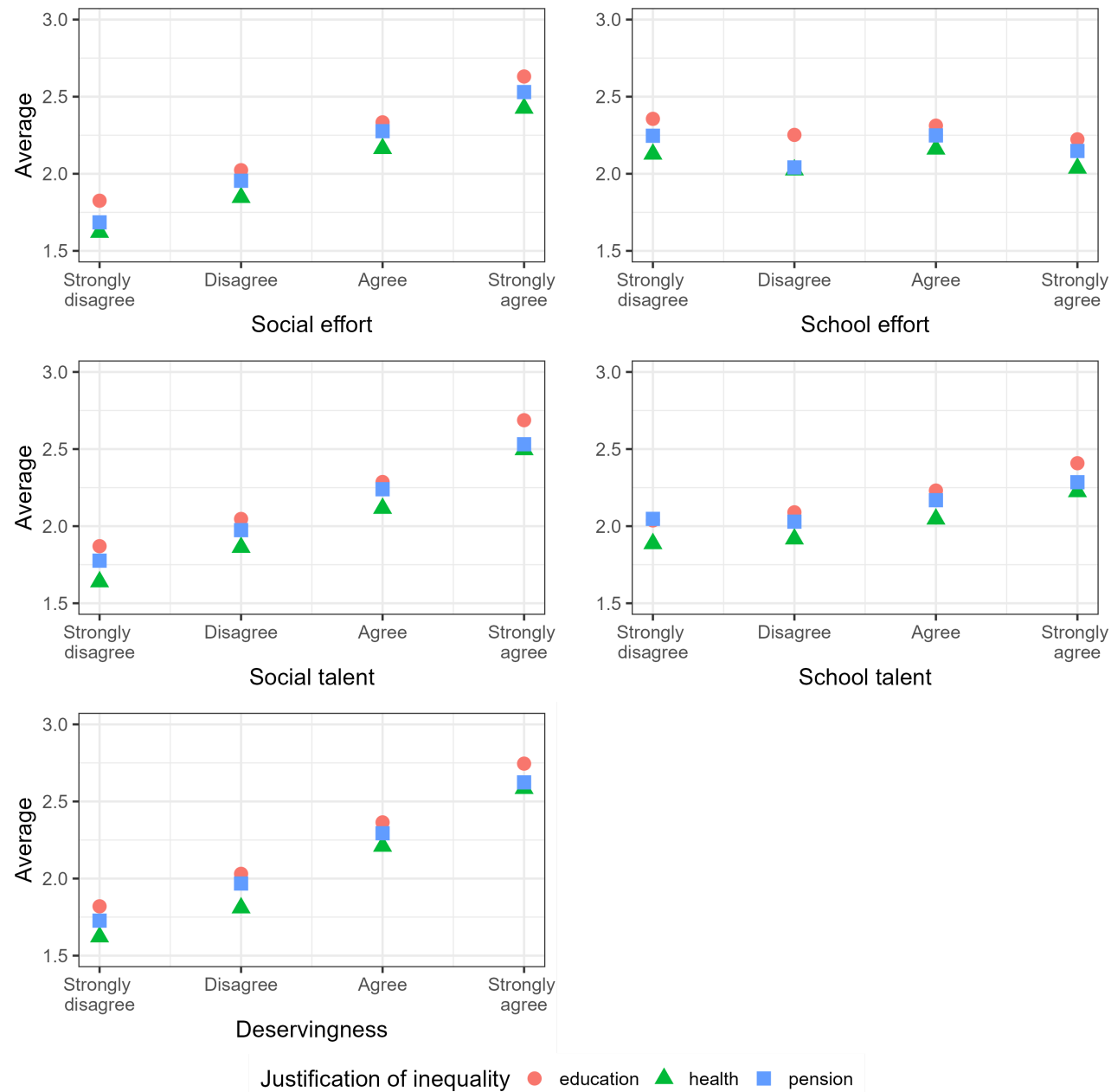
## School

- Rate of parents with university education
- School administration
- Socio economic level
- Average school achievement SIMCE test

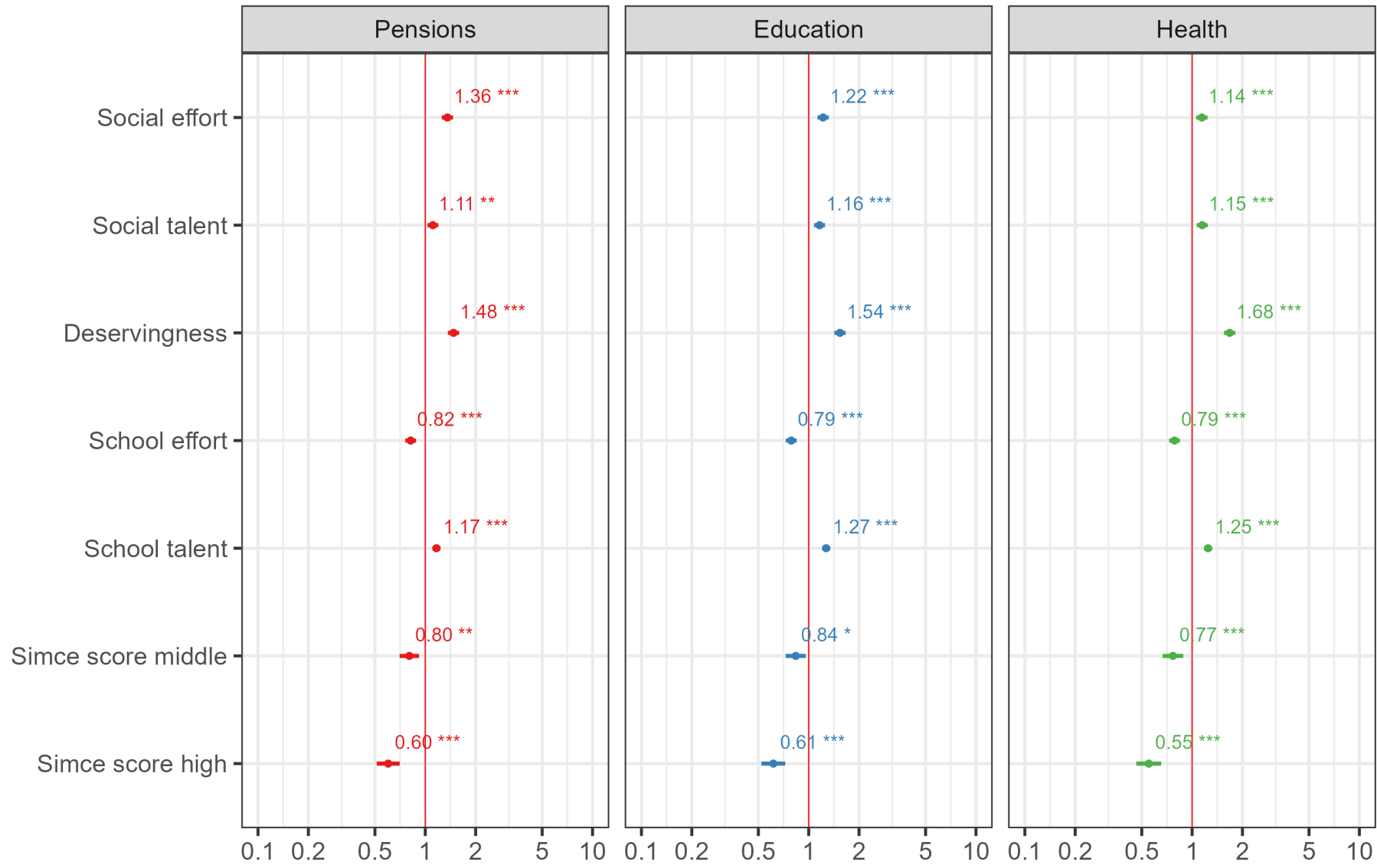
# Results



# Justification of inequality and perception of social meritocracy

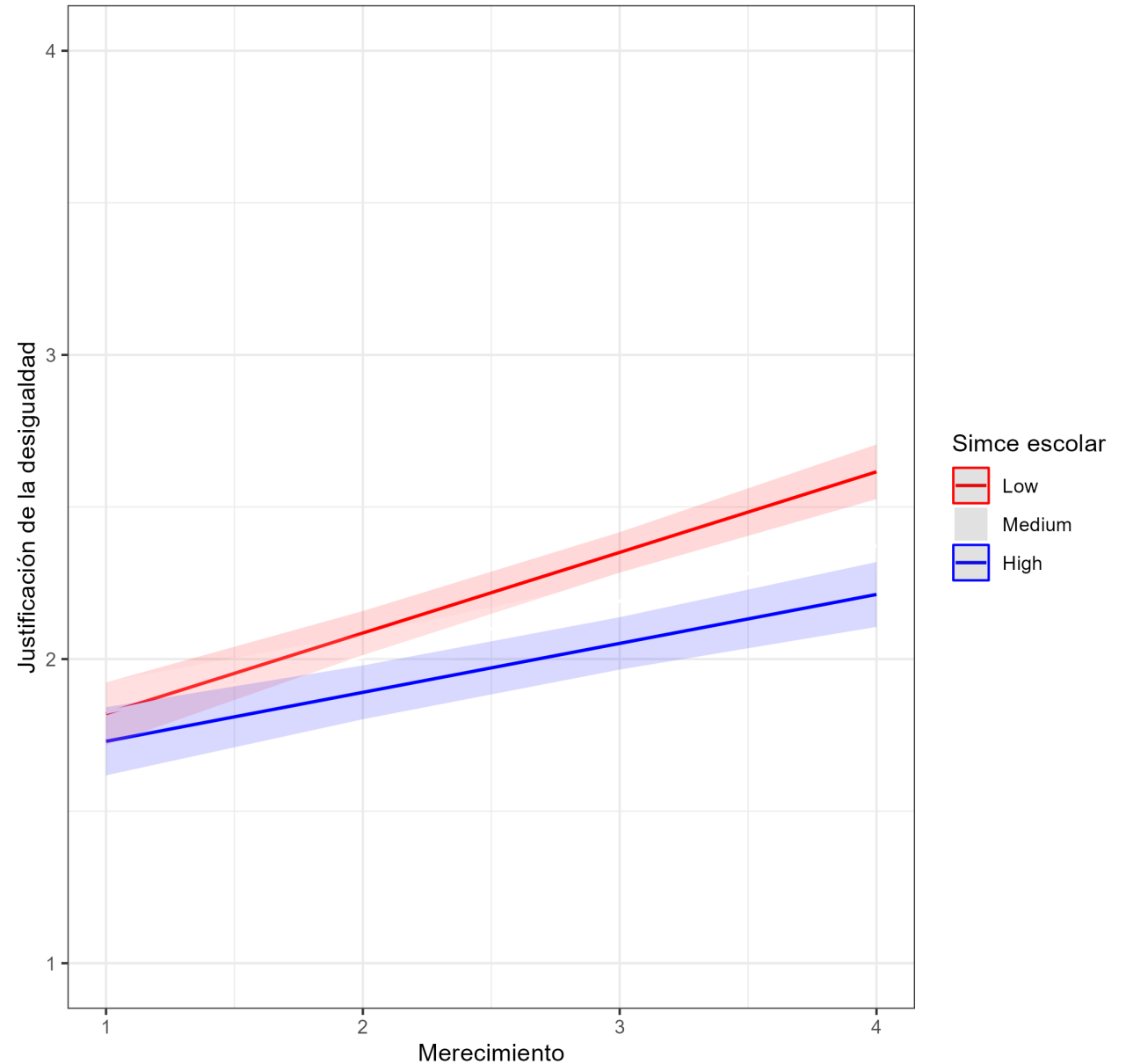


# Multilevel ordinal logit models - Jusification of Inequality



# Interactions

Inequality justification  
(index) by deservingness  
x school achievement



# Conclusions

- Perception of meritocracy **in society**: positively related with inequality justification
- perception of meritocracy **at school**: mixed links with inequality justification
- **socialization** and role of school achievement: education enlightenment effect (?)

# Future

- survey experiments
- 3 wave panel study
- refine measures of school meritocracy and socialization
- collaboration :)

# ¡Muchas gracias!

Github Repo: [github.com/educacion-meritocracia/meritocracia-escuela-agencia/](https://github.com/educacion-meritocracia/meritocracia-escuela-agencia/)

More information about this and other projects:

[www.ciudadania-escolar.cl](http://www.ciudadania-escolar.cl)



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