

Equalizing Opportunity by Stratifying Education?

Intergenerational Mobility in Germany across Institution Types

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes class origins, social mobility and educational and occupational trajectories among Germans citizens using the National Educational Panel Study adult cohort survey (N=7,087). I conduct two analyses. First, I predict educational outcomes by social origins. Then, I test whether the ‘U-Shaped’ relationship – that only mid-tertiary degrees offer social mobility – exists in Germany as it does in the United States (Torche 2011) and France (Falcon and Bataille 2018). I use two outcomes to measure social mobility: occupational status and pre-taxed monthly income.

GERMANY AS A CASE

- Educational inequality, or the relationship between social origins and educational outcomes, has decreased over the past century (Becker and Mayer 2019)
- The education system became more differentiated – split into multiple educational types – over the past century (Mayer, Müller, and Pollak 2007)
- There is a strong relationship between credentials and occupational destinations (Müller, Steinmann, and Ell 1998)

METHODS

Model 1: Predicting Educational Achievement by Social Background

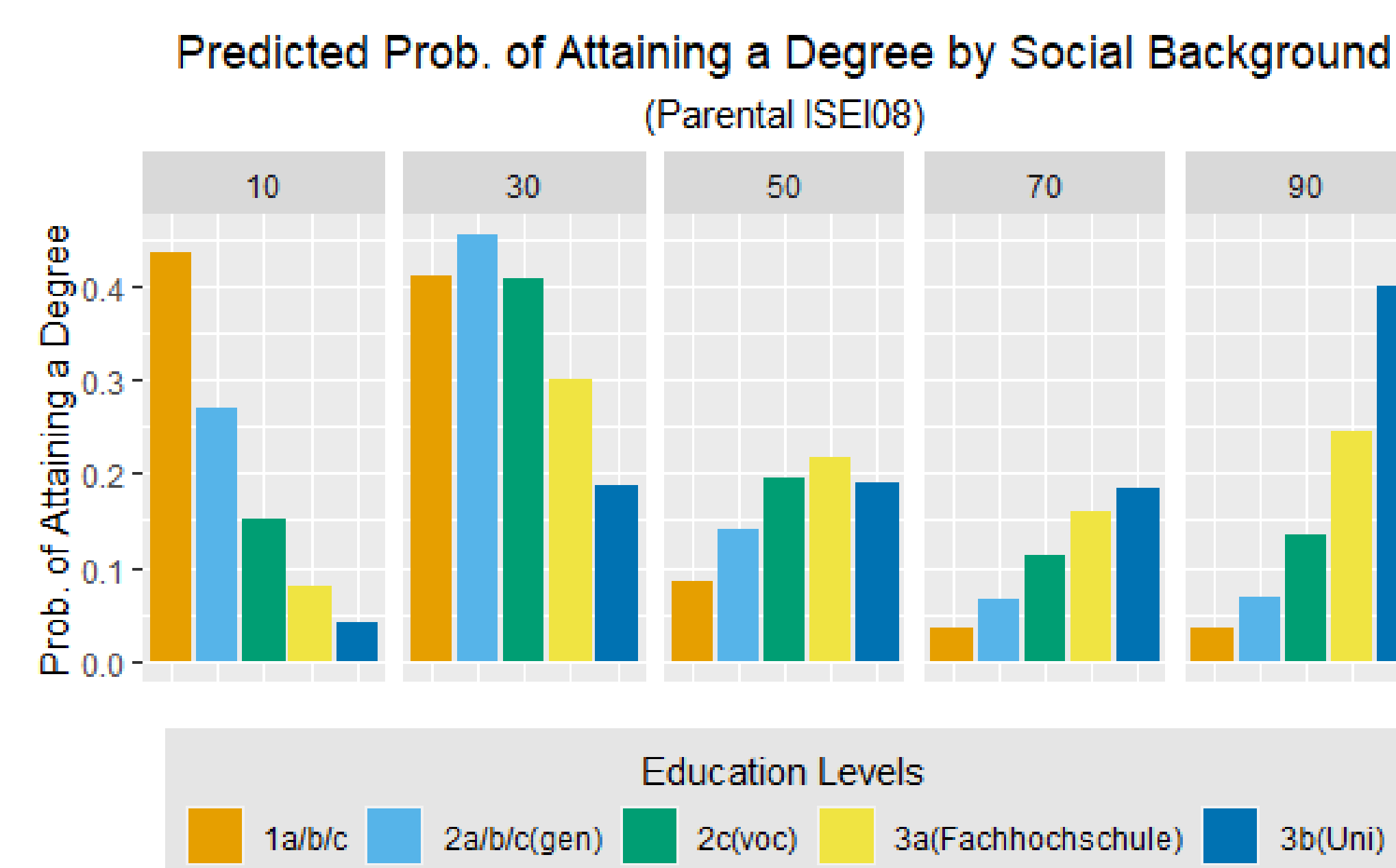
- Ordinal logistic regression predicting educational outcomes (using a CASMIN scale)
- Measure social background using parent’s ISEI-08
- Control for: region of Germany (East vs. West), sex, and age
- Uses robust standard errors.

Models 2 & 3: Predicting Occupational Destination by Educational Attainment and Social Background

- Two linear regression models predicting occupational status (ISEI-08) and pre-taxed monthly income
- Same education, social background, and control variables as previous analysis
- Uses robust standard errors
- Keep individuals ages 30 to 64 and who earn a monthly income below 20,000 euros per month
- Includes an interaction effect between educational attainment and social background

RESULTS

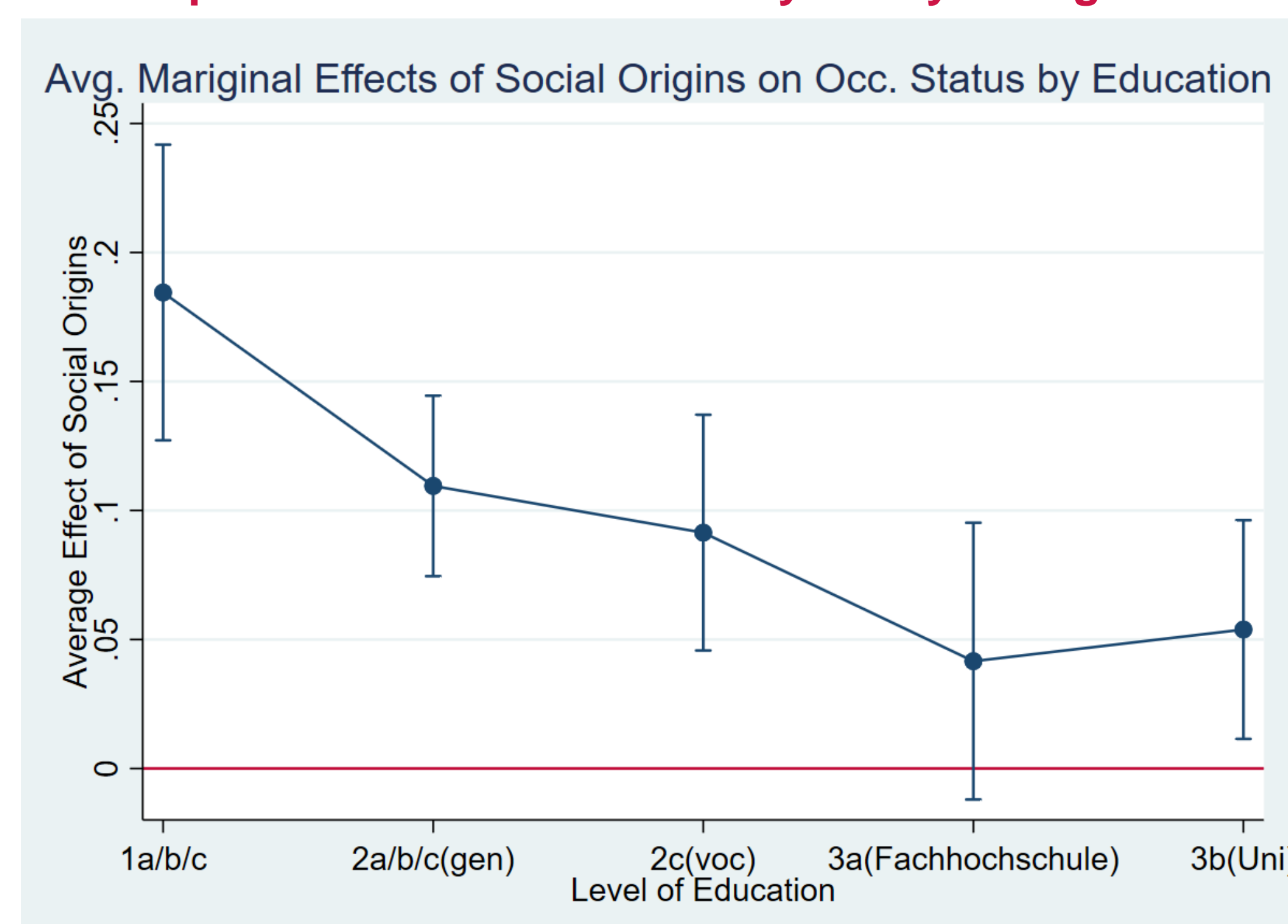
Analysis 1: Does social background predict educational attainment?



Summary:

Social origins continue to predict educational attainment. The university is overrepresented by individuals of the highest social origins, while non-tertiary education is overrepresented by individuals of the lowest social origins.

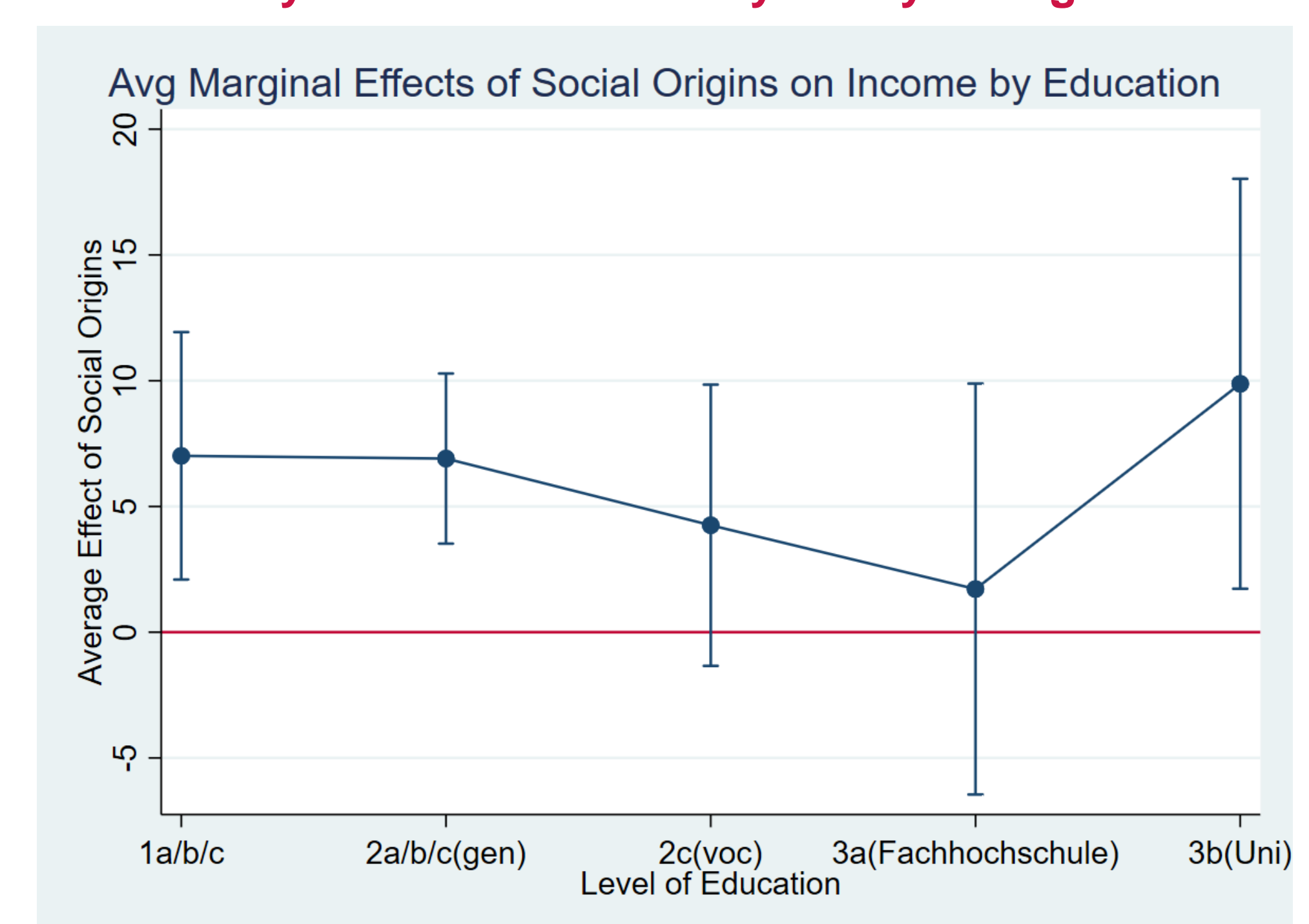
Analysis 2: Is the effect of educational attainment on occupational status mediated by family background?



Summary:

Only graduates of the *Fachhochschule* show, on average, no correlation between social origin and occupational status.

Analysis 3: Is the effect of educational attainment on monthly income mediated by family background?



Summary:

Only graduates of the *Fachhochschule* and the *Berufsakademien* show, on average, no correlation between social background and income.

CONCLUSIONS

- In Germany, social background continues to influence individuals’ educational trajectories.
- The relationship between educational attainment and occupational outcomes is mediated by social background at all levels of education except for mid-tertiary degrees. This finding resembles patterns found in the United States (Torche 2011) and France (Falcon and Bataille 2018).
- Future work should continue to investigate how the differentiation of tertiary education relates to status attainment and maintenance.

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