STUDENTS AND JUSTICE
Some students' judgements

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The study area

A broader survey on higher education
France
April-June 2009
Rhône-Alpes Region
About 10 500 questionnaires
to students of the third year of higher education (last year of Bachelors')
1464 answers

<u>Main groups of formations and abbreviations:</u>

Universities (U)
(1368 students)

Literature and language (Lit.-Lang)
Human and social sciences (HSS)
Law
Economics
Mathematics and sciences (Math.-Sc.)
Engineering (Eng.)

Selective colleges "grandes écoles" (S)
(96 students)

Mathematics and sciences
Engineering

The question of justice

- Inequalities are not always unfair when they are to the benefit of the most disadvantaged people (Rawls)
- People are more prone to judge impartially when they have not yet an established position in life (the veil of ignorance)
- In the process of educating the equality of opportunity is at stake
- Students are those people who soon will have in charge the reshaping of the society

$\Rightarrow$ Is higher education just through the eyes of the interested people ?

$\Rightarrow$ What are student's conceptions of social justice ?

Main points of the presentation

1. Is higher education as students live it seems just ?
   - Studying conditions
   - Do students master their life or studies ?
1. What could be a fairer society, a fairer education system according to the students ?
2. Do some of them suffer or benefit from inequalities and does it interfere with their success in studies ?
$\Rightarrow$ For each point : some answer by students categories when relevant

4. Track to go further

! Analyse is not achieved. Here is only a stage

1. Is higher education as students live it seems just ?

– Is the way teaching is offered in higher education could be interpreted as a lack of equality ? When we ask students on the teaching qualities we notice differences according to disciplines or institutions and also gender oriented answers (Table 1)

– When we ask students about teachers' behaviours, we must unfortunately conclude that part of them are note seen as just. Students in Law and Economics are more sensitive or more exposed to the inequalities of treatment (Table 2)

– Do students feel responsible for their achievement ? If they do, do society have to compensate for inequalities ? Aren't they then the reflect of liberty of choice and action ? (Table 3)

Table 1 - Differences in the evaluation of teaching quality

Answers to the question : *« In your formation you are offered … »*
(Choose a proposal)

% of answers (even missing ones, for the first two columns)	University	Selective colleges	Populations with specific positions (with significant difference) % of effective answers	Comparisons Men/ Women (with significant difference)
The same teaching quality for every student	76,4	63,5		M: 71<W: 79 (sign. <0,001)
	U>E (sign. = 0,002)			
A fulfilling teaching for every student	14,8	18,8	Eng-U : 24,1 (sign. =0,03) HSS : 18,9 (sign. =0,007)	M:19 >W: 15 (sign. =0,008)
A better quality teaching for best students	6,5	14,6	Law : 11,9 (sign. =0,018)	M: 10 >W: 6 (sign. =0,004)
	U<E (sign. = 0,001)			
A better quality teaching for weakest students	0,6	1	6	

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Table 2 - Equality of treatment. How students comment teachers' behaviour?
Answer to the question : *« In my formation … »*

% of answers (even missing answers : from 1,4 to 2,8%)	« Agree » *Desagree »*		Specific positions (with significant difference)	Comparisons men / women (with significant difference)
	University	Selective colleges		
Teachers behave with me in justice	88,2 **10,3**	89,6 **9,3**	Law : **17,1**% (=0,001) Economy : **15,8**% (=0,028) Rest of universities : **9,1**%	=
Teachers respect every students	77,2 **21**	77,1 **20,8**	Law : **29,6**% (=0,002) Rest of universities : **20,2**%	=
Marks received by students are rigth	70,7 **26,6**	78,1 **19,8**	Law : **36,4**% (=0,002) Rest of universities : **25,4**%	=
Teachers better treat :				
- best students	41,1	36,5	Law : 56,3% (<0,001) Reste universités : 39,8%	=
- French students than foreigner ones	7,3	6,2	Ingeneering : 17% (=0,004) Economy : 11,8% (=0,048) Law : 10,3% (=0,023) Rest of universities : 6,2%	=
- women than men	6,3	19,8	Ingeneering : 24,1% (<0,001) Rest of universities : 5,7%	U : M>W (<0,001) S : M>W (=0,005)

Table 3 - Responsible for their results

Answers to the question *« In which proportion do you believe be personally responsible for your results ?»*
(% from 0 to 100)

	Means Universities	Means Selective colleges	Significant comparisons	Comparisons men / women (with significant difference)
In your studies	80,3 *18%*	80,8 *17%*	S : Eng.: 84 > Math-Sc.:76 (sign. = 0,007)	U : M : 81<W: 79 (sign. = 0,015)
In your personal life	79,3 *21%*	79,6 *26%*	U : Math-Sc. > Lit.-Lg. : (sign. = 0,048)	

2. What could be a fairer society, a fairer education system according to the students ?

- Students were offered political choices concerning educational purposes. The idea was to compare their choice with types of justice theories: the first proposal is near to the pragmatic position holds by Ministers of education in democratic countries, the second can reflect a position according to the Rawls theory, the third insist on social cohesion, the last one can be compare with the utilitarian approach (Table 4)

- The question of justice is always torn between the wish to an equal treatment and the desire to adapt specific individual difficulties. There is here a consensus to consider that a fair education system leaves nobody aside and ensures success to everyone thanks to particular treatments (Table 5)

- How characterize a society of justice thanks to the students point of view ? Mastering knowledge and work to everyone constitute its hard core. Students in Social sciences and Literature and languages more favour the equal distribution of resources while students in law and Economics favour it less (Table 6)

Tables 4 - If I was Ministry of education …

Answers to the question *« If you were Ministry of education , your goal would be : »* (Only one choice is possible)

% of answers (even missing)	University	Selective colleges	Populations with specific positions (with significant difference) % of effective answers
Raise to a maximum the mean level of education and making sure that the basic level of knowledge and ability is acquired.	48,1	57,3	Health : 65,2 (sign. =0,002)
	U<S sign. = 0,041		
Make certain that pupils, when going out school, have reached the most high minimum level.	26	27,1	
Raise to a maximum the mean level of education and shrinking differences.	17,7	10,4	HSS: 23 (sign. =0,002)
	U>S sign. = 0,034		
Raise to a maximum the mean level of education	6,1	3,1	

Table 5 - Describing a fair education system

Answers to the question « *What is for you a fair education system ? It is a system that :»*
From 0 : not at all, to 6 : very strongly

Means Coefficient of variation	Means University	Means Selective colleges	Populations with specific positions (with significant difference) % of effective answers	Comparisons Men/ Women (with significant difference)
Mind everyone's success	4,9 *26%*	5,0 *25%*	HSS : 5,1 > Law : 4,7 (0,032)	U : M<W (0,008)
Don't enclose in scolastic norms	4,8 *29%*	4,5 *35%*		
Take into account every differences (personal, ethnical, cultural …)	3,9 *47%*	3,9 *53%*	U : HSS : 4,3 > Eng.-U : 4,3 (0,015) > Law : 3,5 (<0,001) > Math-Sc. : 3,6 (<0,001) S : Math.-Sc. 3,2 =3 < Eng. : 4,3 (0,006)	U : M<W (<0,001)
Standardize curricula, courses and methods of teaching	2,7 *68%*	2,1 *87%*		U : M<W (<0,001)

Table 6 - Defining a society of justice

Answers to the question « *According to you, are the following points able to improve justice in society ?*»

From 0 : not at all, to 6 : very strongly	Means University	Means Selective colleges	Comparisons Men/ Women
Ensure the master of basic knowledge to the greater number	5	5,2	U : M<W (=0,041)
Ensure a work to everyone	5	5	U : M<W (<0,001) E : M<W (=0,005)
Ensure to everyone the same financial resources to study	4,7	4,5	U : M<W (=0,001)
Dedicate more educational resources to students in trouble with their study (pedagogical support, tutorial)	4,6	4,4	U : M<W (<0,001)
Reward those who devote most energy, effort	4,2	4,2	=
Enable to everyone a same success in study	4,2	4,3	U : M<W (= 0,034)
Give to everyone the same capabilities to manage with life.	4,1	3,4	U : M<W (=0,001) E : M<W (<0,021)
	U>S (<0,001)		
Give to everyone the same resources (rights, liberties, financial resources…) to manage with life.	4,1	3,3 (=3)	U : M<W (<0,001) E : M<W (<0,001)
	U>S (<0,001)		
Ensure to all a same work income	2,8	2,2	U : M<W (=0,014) E : M<W (<0,001)
	U>S (0,005)		
Guide best students towards the picked formation	2,1	2,7 (=3)	U : M>W (<0,001)
	U<S (<0,001)		
To set up a selection to put by the entry to higher education to the « most talented » (competitive examinations or files…)	1,7	2,2	U : M>W (=0,03)
	U<S (0,010)		

Ensure a work to everyone	5 *26%*	5 *29%*	U : HSS : 5,2 >Law : 4,7 (=0,007) > Eco. : 4,6 (=0,04)
Ensure to everyone the same financial resources to study	4,7 *30%*	4,5 *35%*	U : Eco : 4,1 <HSS : 4,9 (<0,001) <Lit.-Lg. : 4,8 (=0,003) <Math.-Sc. : 4,7 (=0,05) U : Law : 4,4 <HSS : 4,9 (=0,048) <Lit.-Lg. : 4,8 ((=0,002)
Dedicate more educational resources to students in trouble with their study (pedagogical support, tutorial)	4,6 30%	4,4 *31%*	U : SHH : 4,8 <Eco. : 4,2 (=0,028) <Health : 4,2 (=0,041)
Give to everyone the same capabilities to manage with life.	4,1 *41%*	3,4 *55%*	S : Ing : 3,1 <Math.-Sc. : 3,9 (=0,023)
	U>S (<0,001)		

Give to everyone the same resources (rights, liberties, financial resources…) to manage with life.	4,1 43%	3,3 (=3) 61%	U : HSS : 4,5 (sign. ≤0,004) and Lit.-Lg : 4,4 (sign. ≤0,026) S : Ing : 2,9 <Math.-Sc. : 4,3 (<0,001)
	U>S (<0,001)		
Ensure to all a same work income	2,8 66%	2,2 80%	U : HSS : 3,2 >Eco : 2,4 (=0,026) >Law : 2,3 (<0,001) >Health : 2,2 (<0,001) U : Lit.-Lg. : 3 >Law : 2,3 (=0,001) >Health : 2,2 (=0,022) S : Ing : 1,9 <Math.-Sc. : 2,8 (=0,01)
	U>S (0,005)		
Guide best students towards the picked formation	2,1 91%	2,7 (=3) 72%	U : HSS : 1,7 <Eco. : 2,7 (<0,001) <Health : 2,7 (<0,001) <Law : 2,5 (<0,001) <Math.-Sc. : 2,2 (=0,049)
	U<S (<0,001)		
To set up a selection to put by the entry to higher education to the « most talented » (competitive examinations or files…)	1,7 101%	2,2 82%	U : HSS : 1,5 <Eco. : 2,3 (=0,021)
	U<S (0,010)		

3. Do some of students suffer or benefit from inequalities and does it interfere with their success in studies ?

- Some inequalities may have more determinant effects on failure or success in studies. We collected students' perceptions (Table 7)

- If we look at the answers' distribution, it is clear that the point on financial resources is seen as fundamental (Table 8)

- Through the same points we asked students if they have suffered from some inequalities that could have influenced their studies' success. On each point, at least 10% of students answered positively (Table 9) . Two groups seems to live more disadvantages : students in Economics and in Social Sciences (Graph 1)

- Distribution of answers about advantages of inequalities shows that nearly every source of inequalities benefits to at least a quarter of students (Table 10). Students in Health seems to be more advantaged (Graph 2)

Table 7 - Inequalities that entail success or failure in studies

Answers to the question *« According to you which importance have those inequalities between students on success or failure in their studies ? »*

From 0 : not important at all, to 6 : very important	Means University (coefficient of variation)	Means Selective colleges	Populations with specific positions
Inequalities of financial resources	4,6 *31%*	3,9 *42%*	U : HSS : 4,8 >Math.-Sc. : 4,4 (<0,001)
	U>S (<0,001)		
Inequalities in work abilities acquired at school (method, tools work habits)	4,3 *29%*	4,4 *32%*	
Inequalities linked to cultural family background	4,2 *37%*	4 *44%*	
Inequalities of talent (natural quality or disability)	3,7 *43%*	4,1 *38%*	U : HSS : 3,4 <Math.-Sc. : 3,9 (<0,001) <Health : 4,2 (<0,001)
	U<S (=0,01)		
Inequalities linked to familial networks of relationship	3,7 *46%*	3,1 *56%*	U : Math.-Sc.: 3,2 <Eco. : 4,3 (<0,001) <Law : 4,2 (<0,001) <HSS : 3,9 (<0,001) <Lit.-Lg. : 3,7 (=0,032) U : Health : 3,2 <Eco. : 4,3 (=0,002) <Law : 4,2 (=0,001)
	U>S (<0,001)		
Inequalities linked to relatives' professional activities	3,4 *52%*	3,1 *64%*	U : Math.-Sc. : 3 < SHS-SH : 3,6 (<0,001) < Law : 3,6 (=0,008)
	U>S (=0,041)		
Inequalities linked to the parents' academic level	3,2 *56%*	3,2 *57%*	U : Math.-Sc. : 2,9 < SHS-SH : 3,4 (=0,003) < Law : 3,4 (=0,028)

Table 8 - Inequalities weight on studies 'success
Answers' distribution (all the students)

	Financial resources	Acquired abilities	Family culture	Talent	Networks	Parents' professions	Parents' studies
6	Q3	D9	D8	D9	D8	D8	D9
5	ME	Q3 D8	Q3	Q3 D8	Q3	Q3	D8 Q3
4	Q1	Q1 ME	ME	ME	ME	ME	
3	D2	D1 D2	D2 Q1	D2 Q1	Q1		ME
2	D1		D1		D2	D2 Q1	Q1
1				D1	D1	D1	D1 D2
0							

Answer given by 0% to 4,9% of the students	Di : i[th] decile (10-quantile)
Answer given by 0% to 9,9% of the students	Qi : i[th] quartile (4-quantile)
Answer given by 10% to 19,9% of the students	ME : Median
Answer given by 20% to 29,9% of the students	
Answer given by 30% to 39,9% of the students	

Table 9 - Weight of inequalities' disadvantages experienced by students on their studies 'success Answers' distribution (all the students)

	Financial resources	Acquired abilities	Networks	Family culture	Parents' professions	Talent	Parents' studies
6							
5	D9		D9				
4	Q3 D8	D9	D8	D9	D9	D9	D9
3		Q3 D8	Q3	D8	D8	D8	
2				Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3 D8
1	ME	ME	ME			ME	
0	Q1	Q1	Q1	ME	ME	Q1	ME

	Answer given by 0% to 4,9% of the students	Di : ith decile (10-quantile)
	Answer given by 0% to 9,9% of the students	Qi : ith quartile (4-quantile)
	Answer given by 10% to 19,9% of the students	ME : Median
	Answer given by 20% to 29,9% of the students	
	Answer given by 30% to 39,9% of the students	
	Answer given by 40% à 49,9% of the students	
	Answer given by 50% à 55% of the students	

Graph 1 - To which extend do you think to have been victim in your studies to some of those inequalities? From 0: not victim at all, to 6 : very strongly victim.

Means
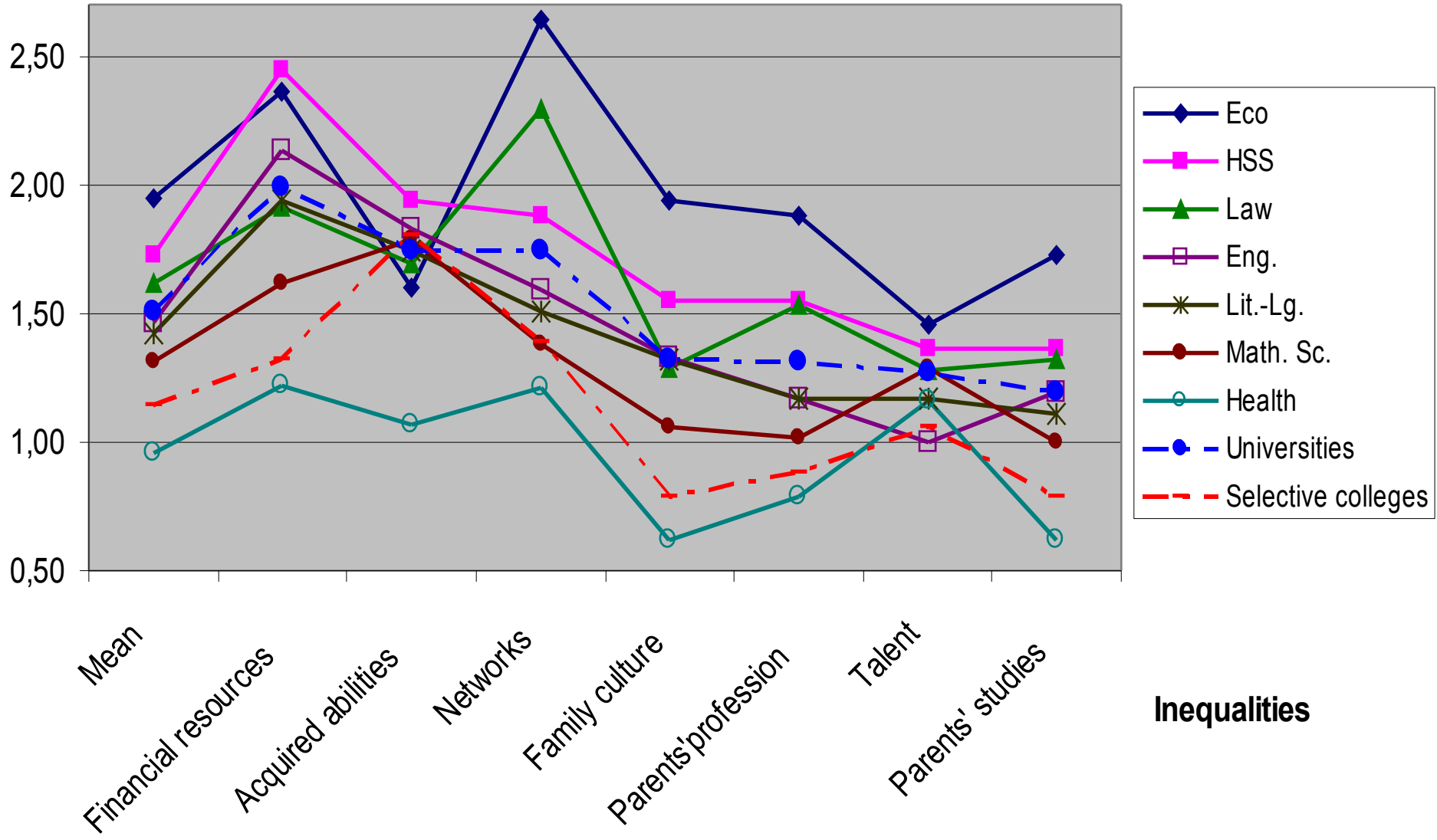
Legend:
- Eco
- HSS
- Law
- Eng.
- Lit.-Lg.
- Math. Sc.
- Health
- Universities
- Selective colleges

X-axis (Inequalities): Mean, Financial resources, Acquired abilities, Networks, Family culture, Parents'profession, Talent, Parents' studies

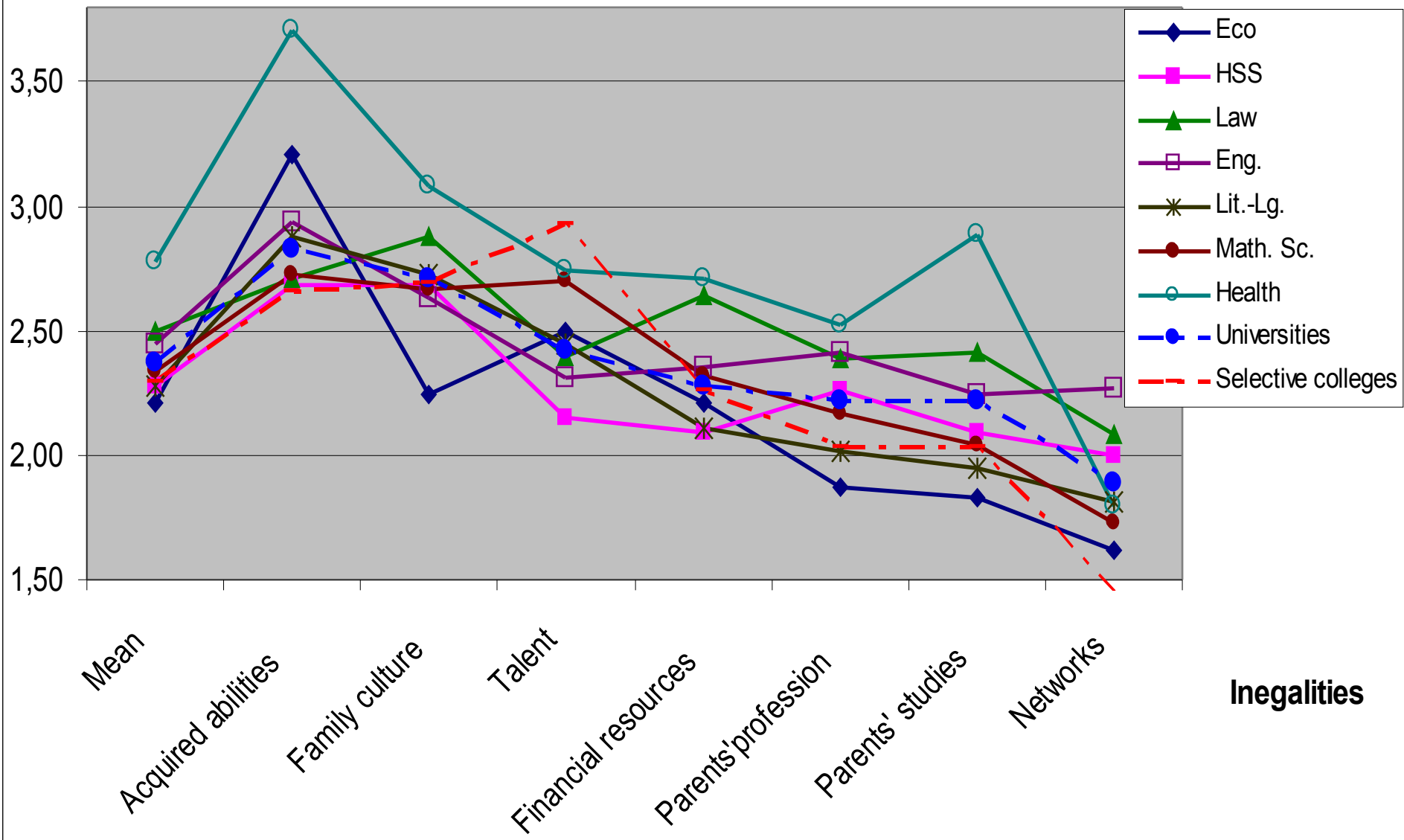|	Acquired abilities	Family culture	Talent	Financial resources	Parents' professions	Parents' studies	Networks
Table 10 - Weight of inequalities' advantages experienced by students on their studies 'success Answers' distribution (all the students)							
6							
5	D9	D8 D9	D9	D9	D9	D9	
4	Q3 D8	Q3	Q3 D8	Q3 D8	Q3 D8	Q3 D8	D9
3	ME	ME	ME				Q3 D8
2				ME	ME	ME	ME
1	D2 Q1	Q1					
0	D1	D2	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
	Acquired abilities	Family culture	Talent	Financial resources	Parents' professions	Parents' studies	Networks

	Answer given by 0% to 4,9% of the students	Di : ith decile (10-quantile)
(lightest)	Answer given by 0% to 9,9% of the students	Qi : ith quartile (4-quantile)
(light)	Answer given by 10% to 19,9% of the students	ME : Median
(dark)	Answer given by 20% to 29,9% of the students	
(darkest)	Answer given by 30% to 39,9% of the students	

Graph 2 - To which extend do you think you have been favoured in your studies by some of those inequalities ? From 0 : not at all favoured to 6 : very strongly favoured.

Means

Legend:
- Eco
- HSS
- Law
- Eng.
- Lit.-Lg.
- Math. Sc.
- Health
- Universities
- Selective colleges

X-axis (Inegalities): Mean, Acquired abilities, Family culture, Talent, Financial resources, Parents'profession, Parents' studies, Networks

4. A link between inequalities' benefits or disadvantages and the socio-economic background

- Less High level managerial workers amongst fathers of students in Economics and Social Sciences than in other disciplines. Students in Health appears more socially favoured (Graph 3)

- We can compare it to what should be 'normal' according to the fathers' occupation of young people in the 1999 census (Graph 4). The most disadvantaged are not in higher education .

- We tried to build an aggregate indicator of advantages and disadvantages as felt by students by summing up the difference between the two scores for each type of inequalities (Graph 5 & 6). It gives a global index that holds significant relation with the variable 'percentage of fathers high level managerial workers' (Graph 7).

Main socio-occupational categories and subcategories	
Farmers (self employed)	-
Craftsmen, retailers and entrepreneurs	Craft workers Retailers and related professions Head of a company with 10 or more employees
High level managerial workers	Self employed professionals Managerial occupations in Government Secondary- and higher-education teachers, scientists Professions of information, arts and entertainment Administrative and sales / marketing managers in the business sector Engineers and technical managers in the business sector
Intermediate level professions	Primary-school teachers and related professions Intermediate professions in the healthcare and social work sector Clergy and religious professions Intermediate administrative professions in government Intermediate administrative and sales/ marketing professions in the business sector Technicians Foremen / women and supervisors
Lower service professions	Civilian employees and service workers in Government Police and armed forces Administrative employees in the business sector Sales / marketing employees Workers providing direct domestic services
Manual workers	Skilled industrial workers Skilled craft workers Drivers Skilled workers in the handling, warehouse and transportation sectors Unskilled industrial workers Unskilled craft workers Farm labourers

Graph 3 - Professions et social categories of fathers
University students consulted by formation

%

Legend:
- Economics
- HSS
- Lit. -Languages
- Math. -Sciences
- Law
- Engineering
- Health

Data labels visible: 59,1 · 46,2 · 31,4 · 14 · 5,8 · 4,3 · 17,5 · 11,4 · 20 · 13,5 · 6,8 · 17,5 · 8,8 · 4,3 · 2,4
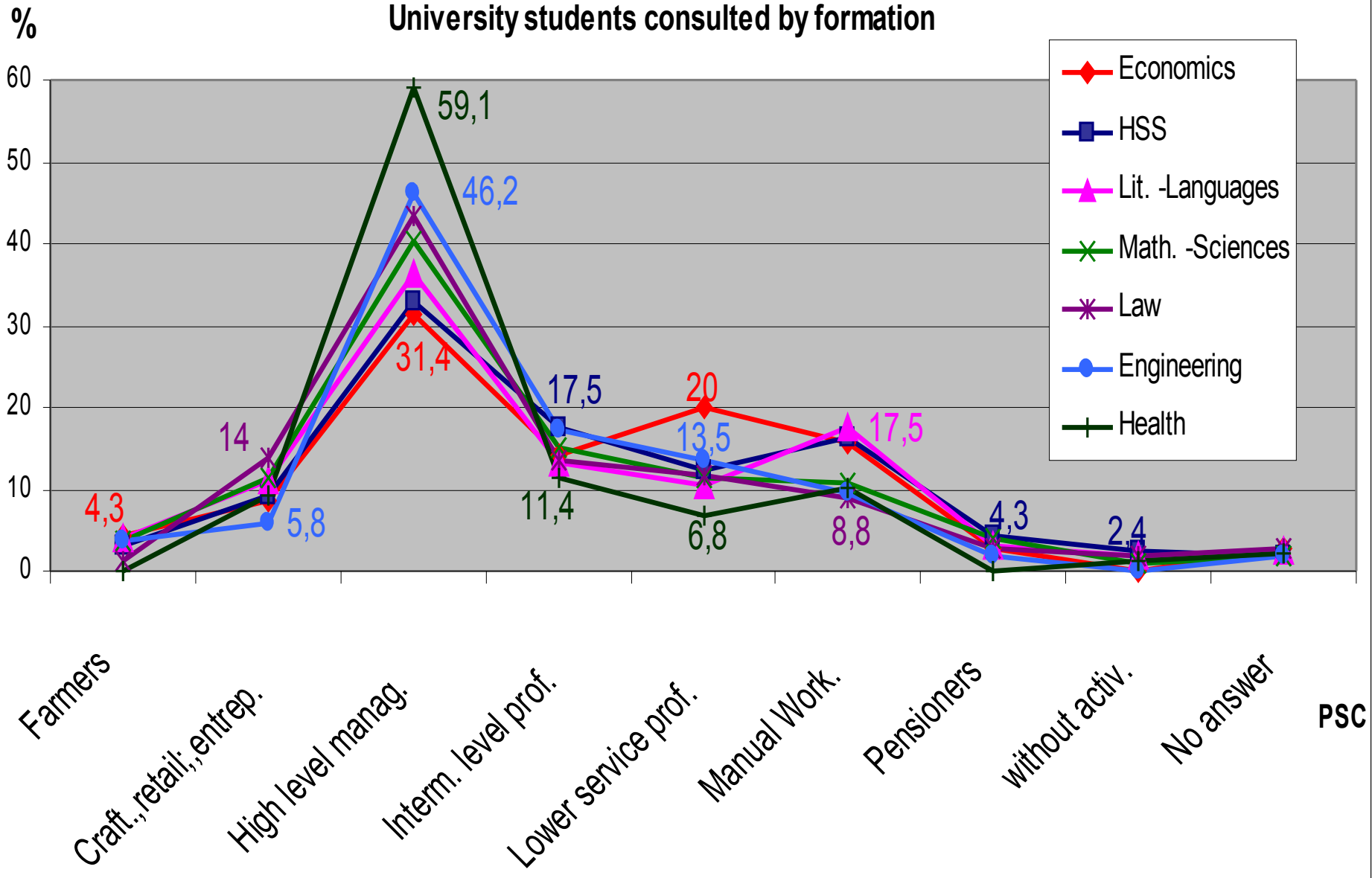
X-axis categories: Farmers · Craft.,retail;,entrep. · High level manag. · Interm. level prof. · Lower service prof. · Manual Work. · Pensioners · without activ. · No answer · **PSC**

Graph 4 - Students distribution by professions and social categories of fathers

Legend:
- total Universities
- Economics
- Health
- total Selective colleges
- Young people from 17 to 24; 1999 Census

Y-axis: % (0 to 60)

X-axis categories: Farmers, Craft.,retail;,entrep., High level manag., Interm. level prof., Lower service prof., Manual Work., Pensioners, without activ., No answer

Data labels:
- Farmers: 4,3
- Craft.,retail;,entrep.: 12,8 / 8,6 / 8,5
- High level manag.: 59,1 / 51,1 / 39 / 31,4 / 13,0
- Interm. level prof.: 18,1 / 11,4
- Lower service prof.: 20 / 14,1 / 12,8 / 11,8 / 6,8
- Manual Work.: 31,6 / 15,7 / 13,8 / 10,2 / 4,3
- Pensioners: 6,2 / 3,3
- without activ.: 5,4
- No answer: 2,9

13/11/2010   A. Compeyron   25

Portions of advantaged or desadvantaged socio profesional categories of fathers with regard to studies

Bar chart showing "Advantaged" and "Desadvantaged" percentages:

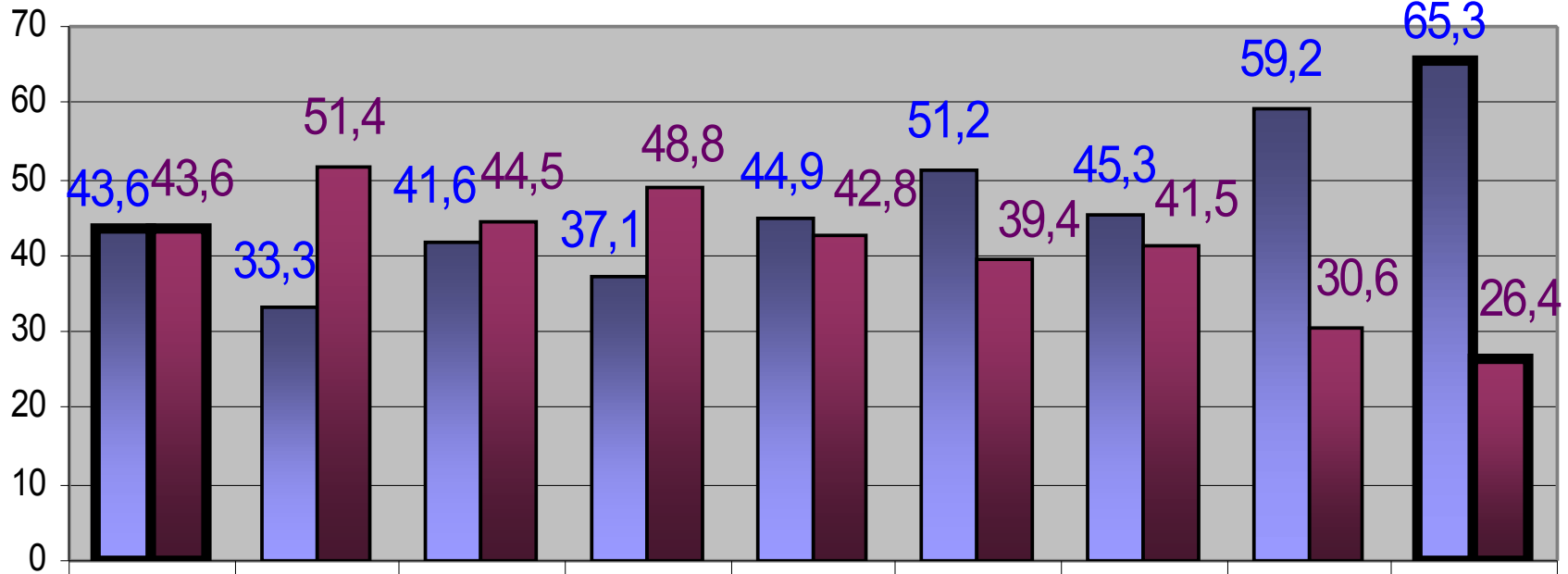| Category	"Advantaged"	"Desadvantaged"
total Universities	64,4	28,6
Economics	54,3	40
HSS	59,6	31,8
Lit. -Languages	60,6	31,9
Math. -Sciences	67	25,9
Law	69,3	26,9
Engineering	70,8	21,7
Health	79,6	17
total H-Schools	78,8	18,2
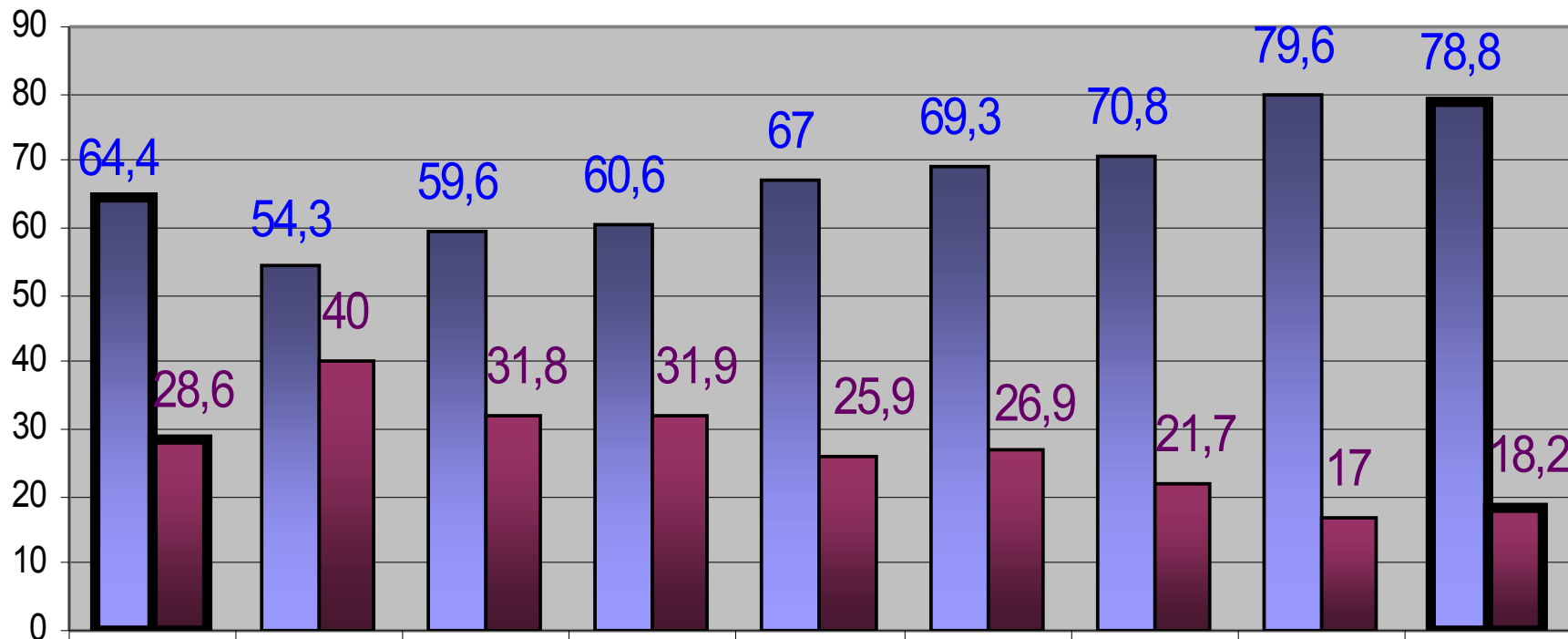
Portions of advantaged or disadvantaged socio professional categories of mothers with regard to studies

%

Category	"Advantaged"	"Desadvantaged"
total Universities	43,6	43,6
Economics	33,3	51,4
HSS	41,6	44,5
Lit. -Languages	37,1	48,8
Math. -Sciences	44,9	42,8
Law	51,2	39,4
Engineering	45,3	41,5
Health	59,2	30,6
total H-Schools	65,3	26,4

Graph 5 - Inequalities to the benefit or to the disadvantage of students in Economics

Scores

Inegalities

- Difference
- Advantaged
- Victimes

Global indica...; Acquired abili...; Family cultu...; Talent...; Financial ressou...; Parents' profess...; Parents'stud...; Networks

0,3
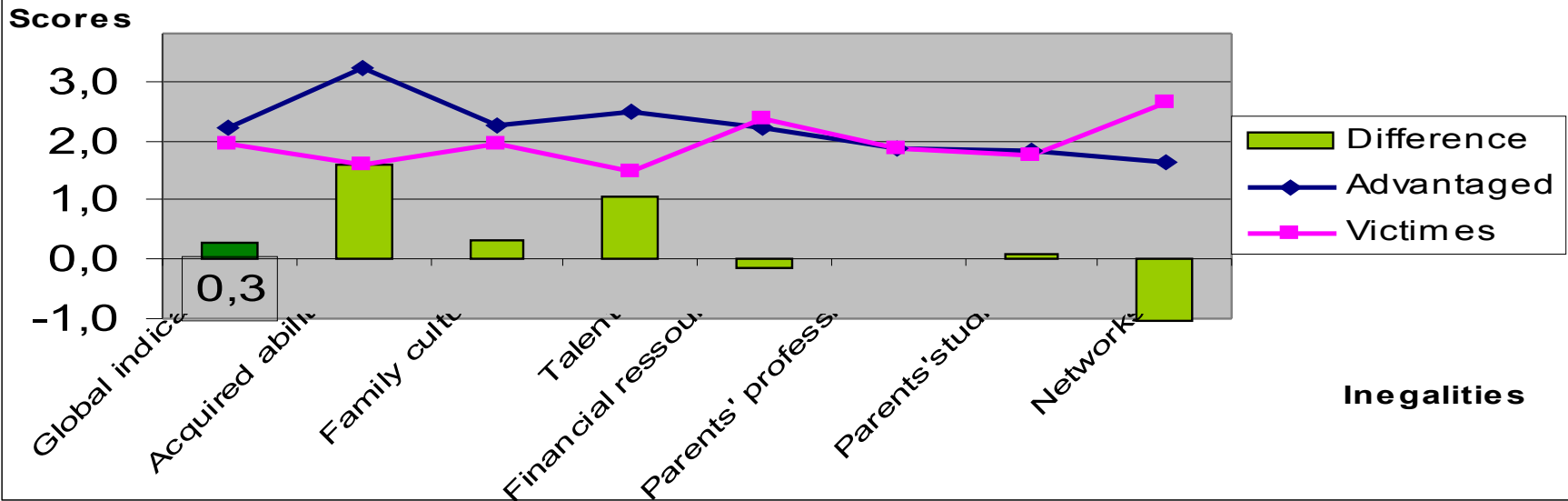
Graph 6 - Inequalities to the advantage or to the disagvantage of students in Health

Scores

Inegalities

- Difference
- Advantaged
- Victimes

Global indicat...; Acquired abilitie...; Family cultur...; Talent; Financial ressourc...; Parents' profession...; Parents'studie...; Networks

1,8
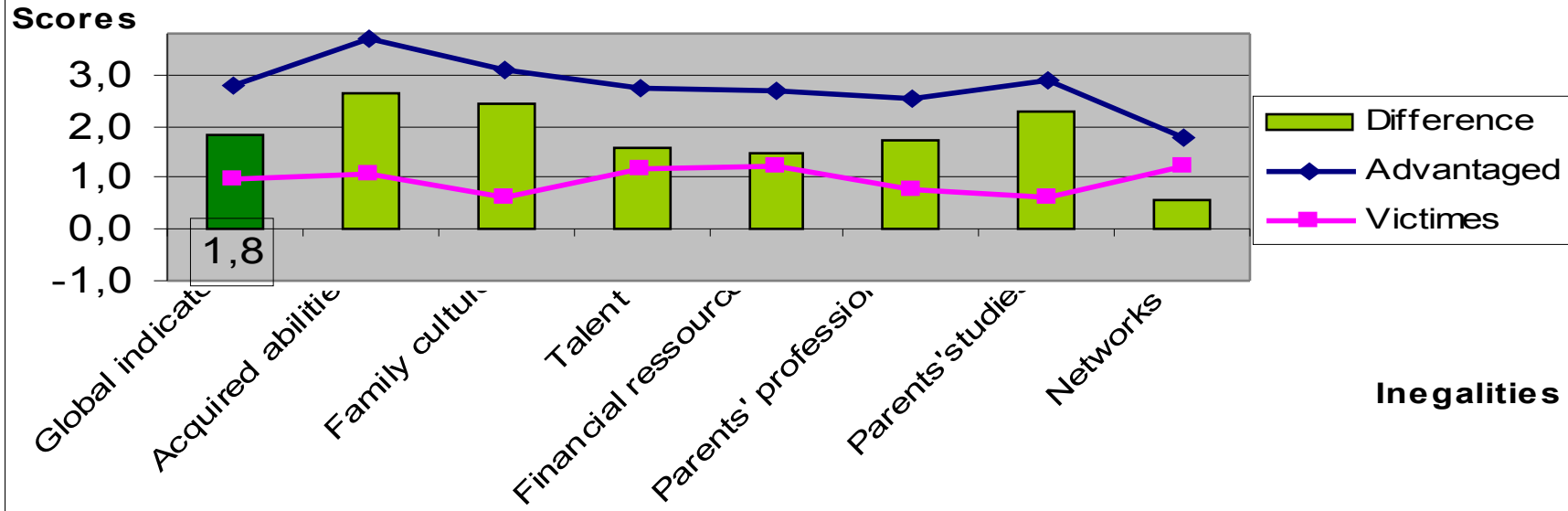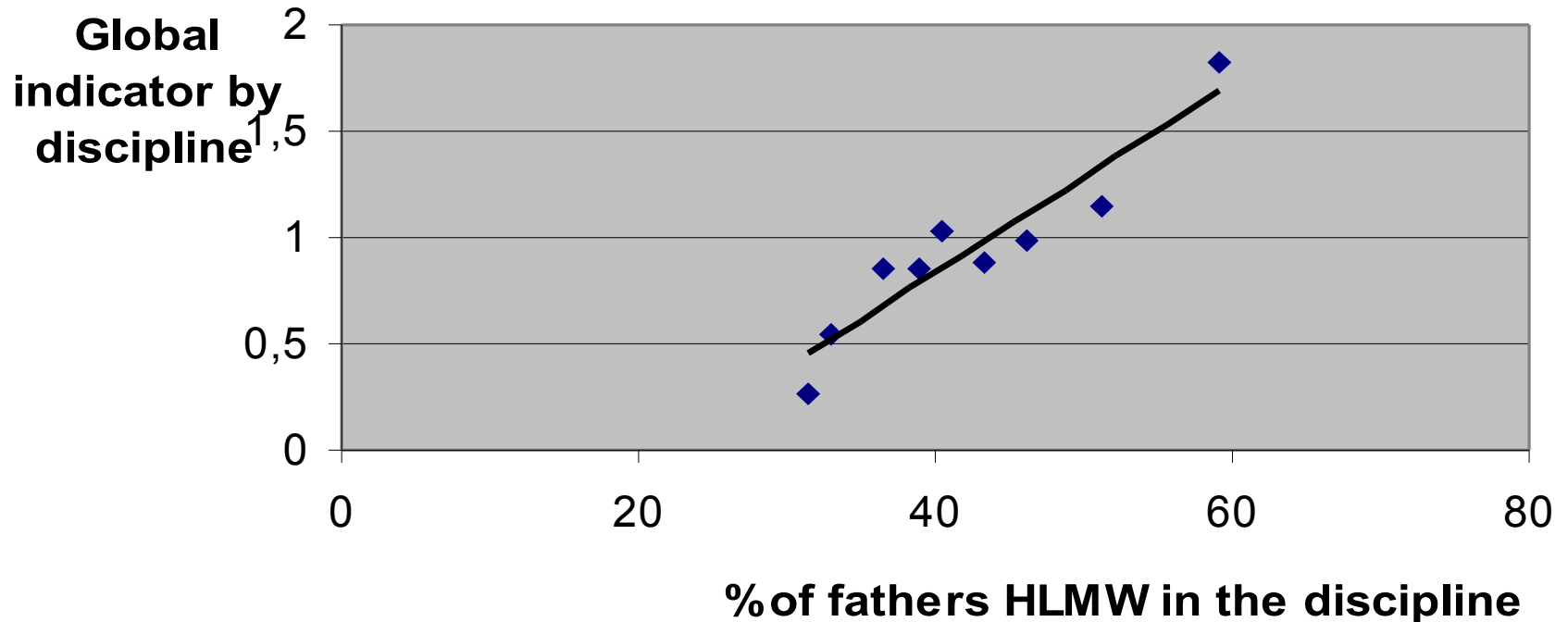
Y=0,0448.X-0,9585

(t=7,0)   (t=-3,49)

R²=0,8756

F=49

Graph 7 - Net advantages global indicator linked to the percentage of fathers high level managerial workers

Global indicator by discipline

%of fathers HLMW in the discipline

To conclude (for the moment)

- Felt advantages and disadvantages linked to effective difficulties

- Part of inequalities in studies strongly linked to socio-economic inequalities

- What means to avoid inequalities that entail difficulties in studies ?

- To which extend educational answer can be sufficient ?