**Equality of Opportunity in Education: A Case Study of Chile and Norway[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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**Abstract**

One of the most important determinants of the distribution of income and life opportunities is education. Increasing levels of formal schooling have contributed to raise standards of living and eradicate extreme poverty worldwide in recent decades. However, inequality in the distribution of income –which is the single most important indicator of relative access to material well-being- remains stubbornly high in most regions of the world. In this paper, I focus on two countries, Chile and Norway, which have very different educational systems, and follow the same analytical methodology of Schütz et al (2008) to detect differences in equality of opportunity between the two countries. In a slight variation, the family-background effect here is represented by a larger number of variables –including household income-, in order to pinpoint the specific characteristics that it comprises in each country. Surprisingly, I find that the family-background effect is stronger in Norway than in Chile, which would denote a potential higher inequality. However the higher achievement inequality in Chile is determined by other factors, which need urgent reform.

**Keywords**: Chile, Norway, education, inequality, equality of opportunity

**JEL codes**: O15, I24, I25

1. First draft, June 2015, while the author was working at Durham University [↑](#footnote-ref-1)