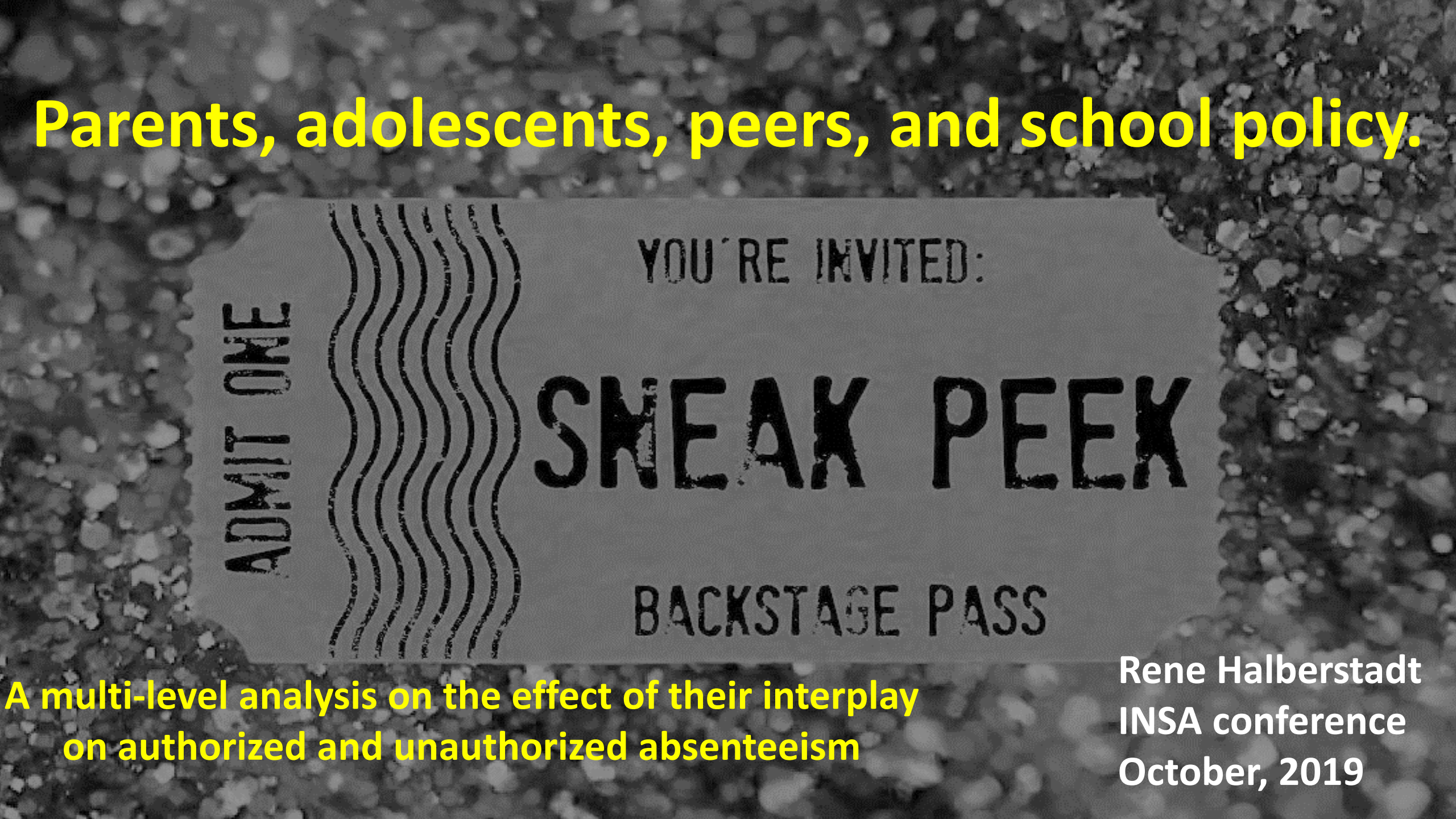
Parents, adolescents, peers, and school policy.



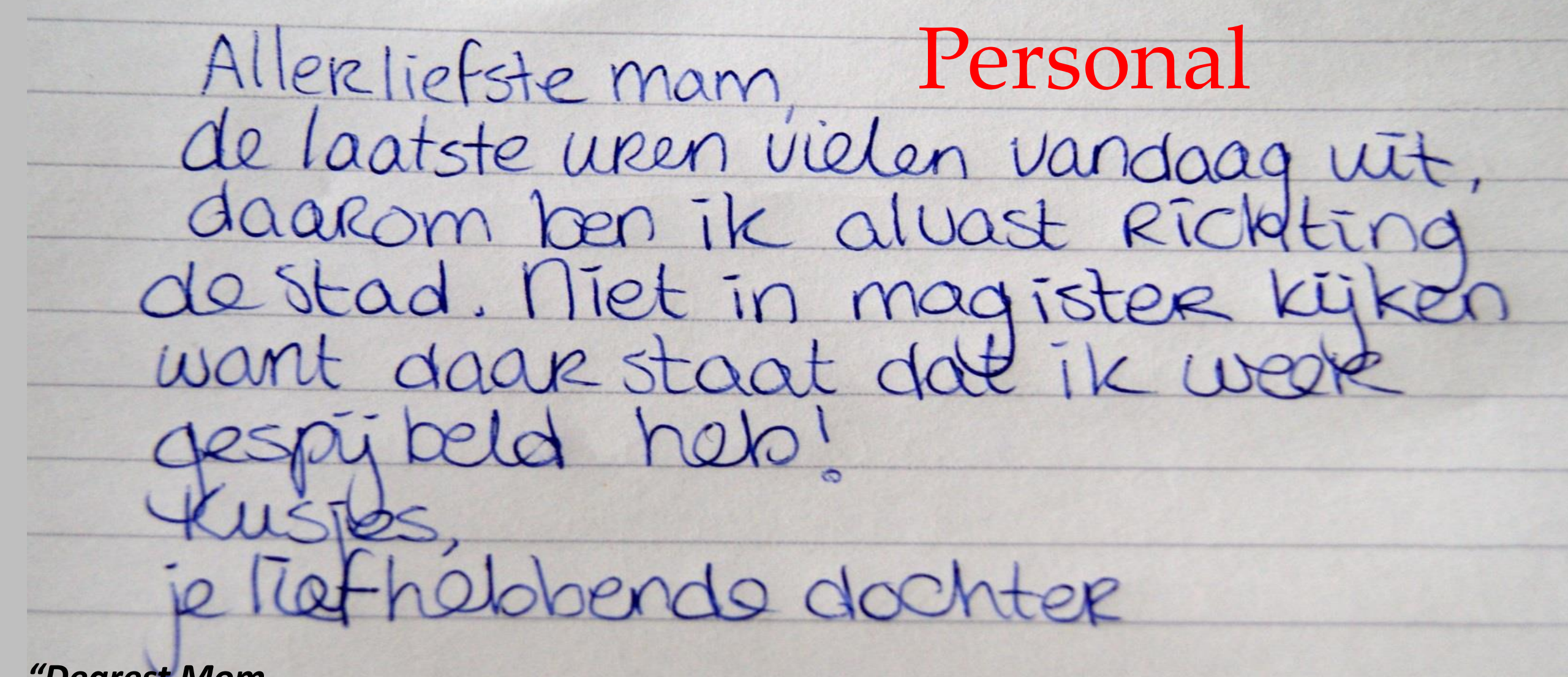
A multi-level analysis on the effect of their interplay on authorized and unauthorized absenteeism

Rene Halberstadt
INSA conference
October, 2019

Professional
INGRADO

Scientific

Personal


Allerliefste mam,
de laatste uren vielen vandaag uit,
daarom ben ik alvast richting
de stad. Niet in magister kijken
want daar staat dat ik weer
gespijbeld heb!
kusjes,
je liefhebbende dochter

“Dearest Mom,
The last hours were cancelled, that’s why I’m going shopping. Please do not call school, because they will say I was truant again!
Kisses,
Your loving daughter”

Definitions absenteeism

Authorized =

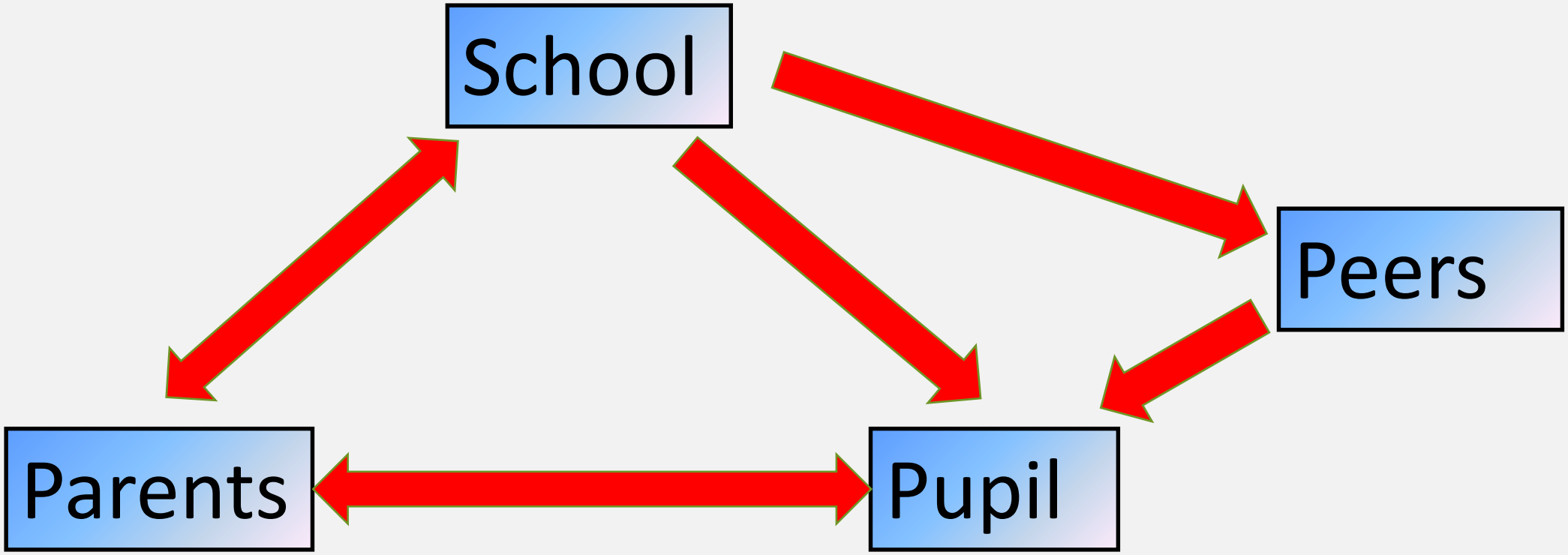
(e.g.) Illness

Unauthorized =

(e.g.) Truancy

(Dutch Compulsory Schooling Law, Leerplichtwet 1969)

Key actors



Example: Playing sick from school

(Sheppard: 2005, 2007, 2008)

"I ordered applepie with cream and lemonade!"

Data & Method

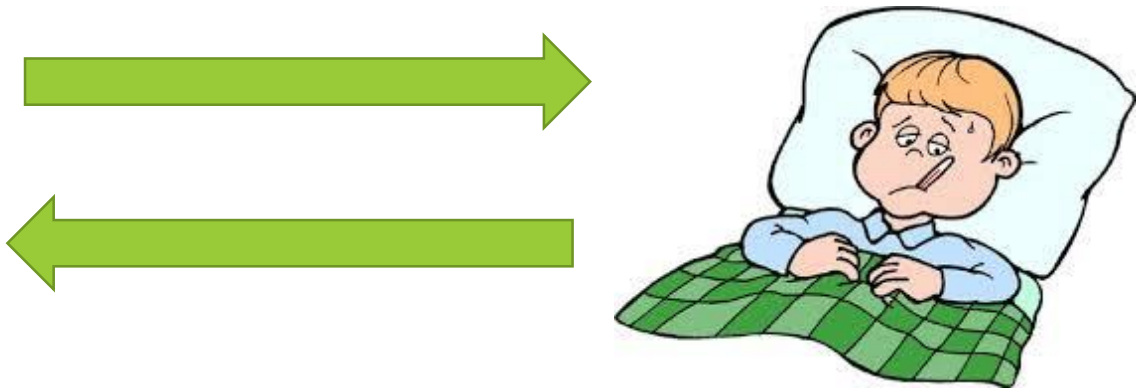
- **Three Surveys**
  - **pupils**
    - **2979 pupils**
  - **Parents**
    - **1785 Parents**
      - **884 matches**
  - **Schools**
    - **12 secondary schools**
    - **337 mentors, teachers, managers**

- **Data: School and municipality, The Hague**
- **Schools: background variables, attendance and performance**
  - **N= 5663**

- **Multi-level analysis (pupils-class-school)**

Previous study

- **Adolescents with attendance problems will try both forms of absenteeism in order not to attend school**
  - **Unauthorized absence on an individual level predicts authorized absence and vice versa**



(Halberstadt, 2015)

Current study: Influence peer behavior

Unauthorized absenteeism in the classroom

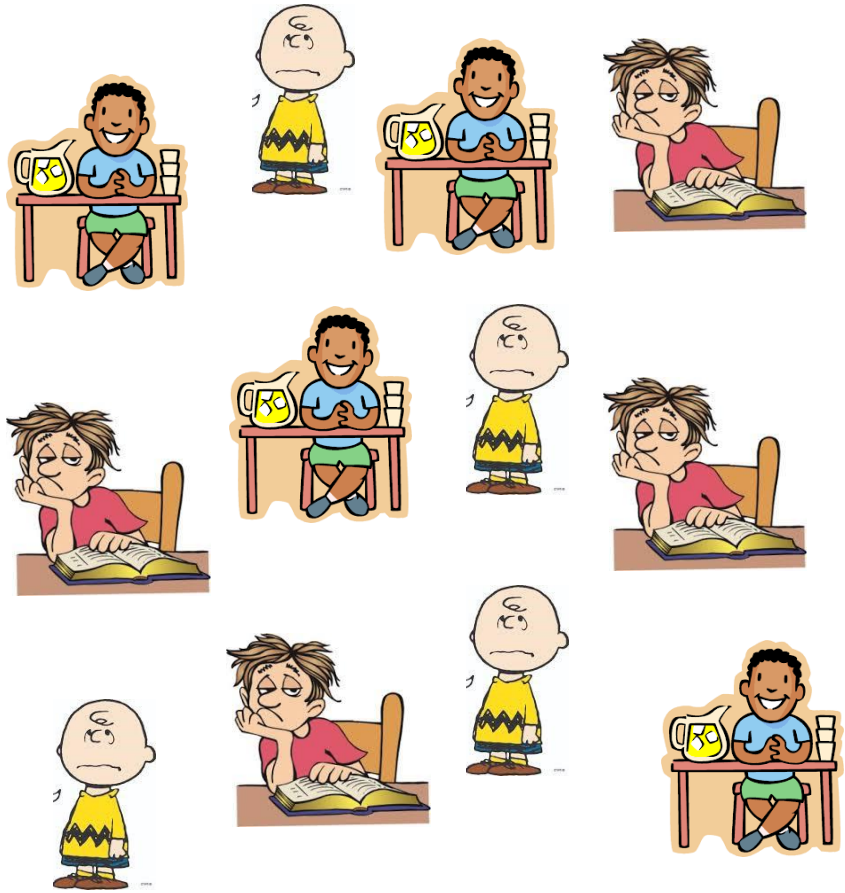
predicts

individual unauthorized absenteeism

Authorized absenteeism in the classroom

predicts

individual authorized absenteeism



Classic sociological variables

Social Economic status (SES) and ethnicity (1)

A traditional (authoritarian) parenting style is more recognizable for parents with a low (SES) and migrant background

Authoritarian Parenting

Motivated school behavior (conformist) is more recognizable for youngsters with a low SES and migrant background

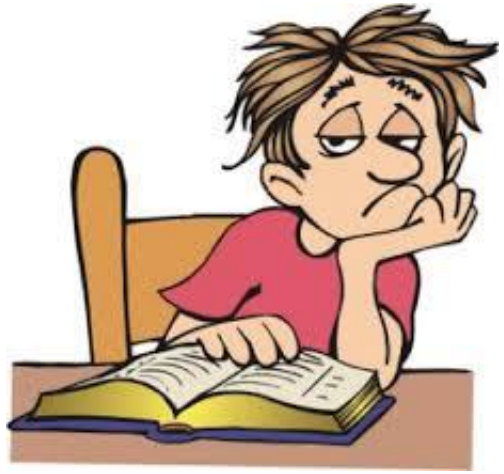
Classic sociological variables

Social Economic status (SES) and ethnicity (2)

A more modern western (permissive) parenting style is more recognizable for parents with a high SES background

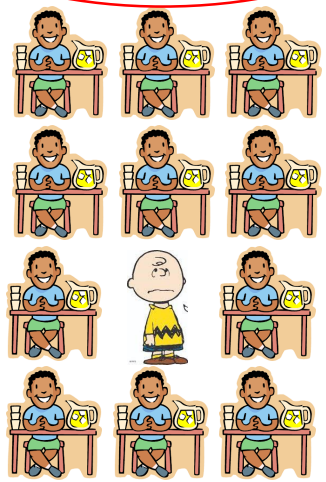
Permissive Parenting

Unmotivated school behavior (retreatist) is more recognizable for youngsters with a high SES, non-migrant background



Low Authorized
Low Unauthorized

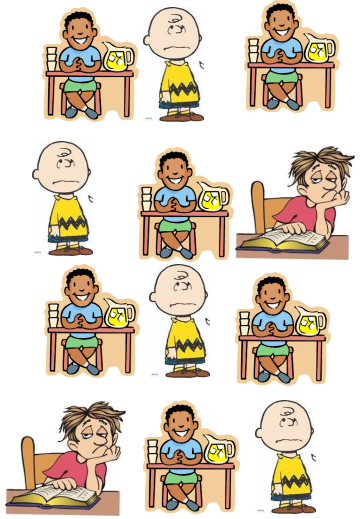
Strict



Lower level
Pre- vocational

High Authorized
Low Unauthorized

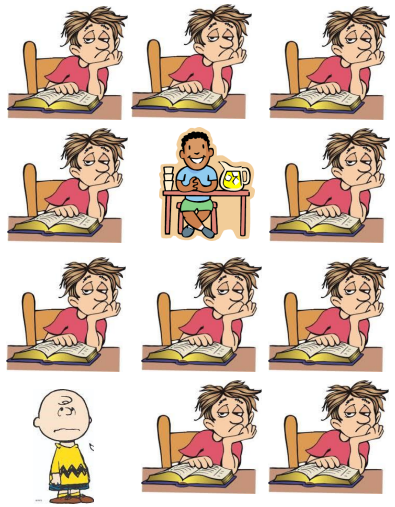
In between



Pre- Vocational
level

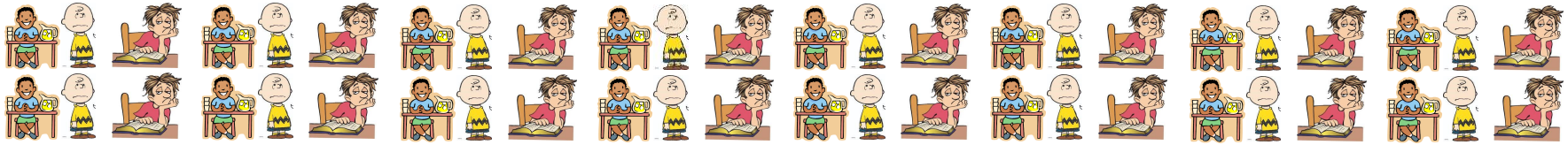
High Authorized
High Unauthorized

Lenient



High educational
levels (HAVO, VWO)

Primary school



Conclusions (1)

- **Authorized and unauthorized absenteeism are related in different ways at different levels**
- **SES and ethnicity are important factors**
- **The authoritarian parenting style influences authorized and unauthorized absence**
- **Strict school absenteeism policy influences unauthorized absenteeism**
- **The influence of school policy variables is subordinate to the influence of classroom absenteeism and individual background variables.**

Conclusions (2)

- **Parents choose schools based on recognizability with their parenting style.**
- **Schools choose an absenteeism policy based on expected parental support and future occupational environment*.**

* Correspondence principle: Bowles and Gintis, 1976

Recommendations

Cancel difference between authorized and unauthorized

Involve parents

Gather and present data

Analyze school population

Customize absenteeism policy

Do something!

Keep doing something!

That's all Folks!