

# VET and Higher Education: two worlds, two frameworks?

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# Basic points

- Starting point is to explain the Austrian system and policy in comparative perspective
  - high and early selectivity
  - low higher education
  - high VET with permeability into HE
  - ‚dual‘ qualification framework (Y, separation of higher education and VET at 6-8)
- Approach to find structures of VET and its relation to tertiary education in OECD data (PISA and EAG 2006) and relate these structures to NQF-structures and policies
  - discuss feasibility
- Basic ideas: to identify the mix of ‚heating up‘ and ‚cooling out‘ in structures of HE and relate this to institutional structures of professionalism
- Results mixed: to some degree expected relations VET-HE-QF

# Agenda

- Research questions and methodology
- Starting point: the Austrian development
- Hypotheses for an explanation
- Findings
- Conclusions and further questions

# Research questions and methodology

## ■ Research questions

- In Austria the relation of VET and HE is continuously disputed under the catchword of parity of esteem („gleichwertig aber nicht gleichartig“). The EGF/NQF process has put this relationship on the agenda. Despite the deliberate plan to develop a comprehensive overarching NQF, the political process has led to a split of two frameworks at the levels 6-8: Dublin descriptors for HE, EQF descriptors for VET qualifications
- how does this experience fit into a comparative picture? Is the gap between VET and HE a common phenomenon, or specific to certain structures of systems?
- which factors can explain a gap between VET and HE? Is it a gap between different kinds of knowledge, or a certain embeddedness in the social structures, or have political mistakes been made during the development and implementation process? or all of this?
- how is this development related to questions of permeability of the system?

## ■ Methodology: institutional analysis

- case study of QF in Austria
- comparing institutional structures of VET and HE
- relationship of institutional structures of VET and HE to QF

# Starting point: the Austrian development

- Feasibility study of QF and HE (2006): an overarching frame
  - conditions for QF in HE
  - Relationship to other processes: Bologna, University reform act 2002, lifelong learning
- Set up of political-institutional structure of QF-development (2007-08)
  - main player: federal VET-administration
  - layered process of management and steering bodies
  - provider institutions not included in the process
- Consultation process (2008)
  - issues: character of QF; learning outcomes; forms of learning; levels
  - mixed results
- Conflicts and political decision: two frames at level 6-8
  - separation of higher education programmes and post-secondary programmes

# Hypotheses for explanation

- (1) there is a **lack of language** for the political communication of the different kinds of knowledge processed in different parts of education, in particular about knowledge needed for innovation; because of this lack the relationships of VET and HE tend to be traditionally posed into a contradictory frame:
  - theory vs. practice
  - radical vs. incremental innovation
  - VET vs. HE
- (2) a tendency to increase **a social gap and competition** between VET and HE is inherent in systems which are still resembling to past structures of elite HE systems (resistance of univ. to professionalism)
- (3) a **political structure related to status competition** makes the development of an overarching qualification framework particularly difficult

# Findings Austria

## (1) Kinds of knowledge and lack of language

- Key aim of Austrian QF-policy: to present the system in a better way compared to other systems
  - Key problem: comparatively low rate of higher education
  - ‚Solution‘: Austrian sec./post sec. programmes equivalent to HE elsewhere
- Political proposal during EQF-consultation: to eliminate research as a main descriptor of levels 6-8 (research should not be distinctive)
  - Successfully accepted in revised EQF; difference Dublin / EQF descriptors
- Steps toward overarching frame that would allow to bring post secondary programmes at levels 6-8 have been taken
  - Feasibility study about QF in higher education: proposal of overarching frame seemed undisputed
- However, no debate about what makes HE distinctive, ‚power-game‘
  - Resulting in defensive power dispute between HE-stakeholders and VET-stakeholders

# Findings, hypotheses comparative

## (2) Social gap and elite systems

- Structures of ET-systems differ according to how the expansion of HE has been institutionalised:
  - **parallel sectors** of elite, mass, and universal HE, related to each other by ‚cooling out‘-mechanisms (USA)
  - blocking mass and universal systems by institutional **segmentation/layering** and **academic drift** within HE: ‚educational schism‘ (Austria, Germany)
- VET plays a key institutional role in the development of HE structure
  - different kinds of VET-systems: early VET vs. delayed VET
  - early VET is related to a ‚blocking-mechanism‘, tendency to retain ‚elite structure‘ in HE despite factual ‚massification‘, different forms of ‚professionalism‘
  - Key point in Austrian discussion: lack of resources (estimates: one third missing)
- early VET constitutes, processes, and retains social gap to HE
  - ‚gleichwertig aber nicht gleichartig‘ (equivalent but not uniform)
  - retaining ‚language problem‘ about knowledge
  - basic rhetoric: theory versus practice
    - (1) *conceptual simplification/onthologisation*; (2) *practice over theory (devaluation)*



# **PISA 2006: A first classification of VET structures (age 1st selection; VET at 15y.)**

1: one programme, 1<sup>st</sup> selection 16, no VET at 15

*AUS, CND, NZ, UK, US*  
*DK, FIN, IS, N, S*  
*PL, E, LV*

**Comprehensive,  
late selection,  
(no early VET)**

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2: 1<sup>st</sup> selection 13-15, low VET at 15 (below 20%)

*EL, IT, PT, LUX, EE, LT*

**Medium age selection,  
low or medium VET**

3: 1<sup>st</sup> selection 13-15, medium VET at 15 (20-40%)

*IRL, JP, KOR, RO*

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4: 1<sup>st</sup> selection 10-12, low VET

*CZ, HU, SK, BG, MEX, TR*

**Early selection, low VET**

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5: 1<sup>st</sup> selection 10-12, medium VET

*BE, GER, CH*

**Early VET, early  
selection**

6: high VET

*AT, NL, SI*

# PISA & EAG 2006: A second classification of VET structures (age 1st selection, upper secondary VET )

1: early selection and low/medium VET

*HU, MEX, TR*

2: med/late selection and low/medium VET

*EL, IRL, IT, JP, KOR, PT*

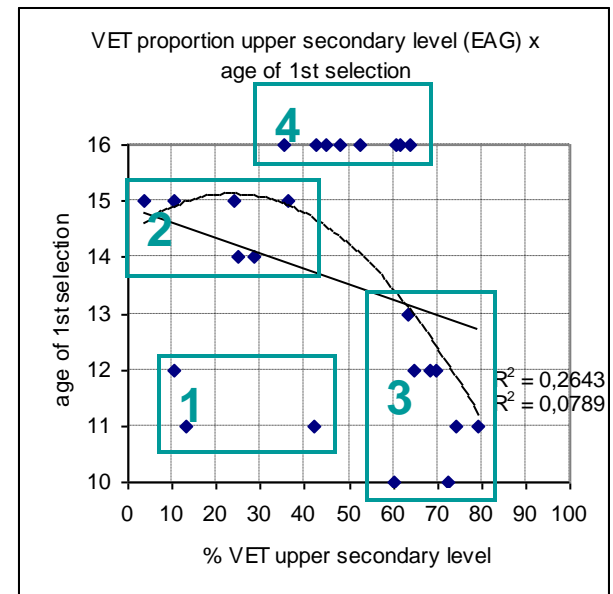
3: early/med selection and high VET

*AT, BE, CZ, GER, LUX, NL, SK, CH*

4: late selection and medium/high VET

*AUS, DK, FIN, IS, N, PL, E, S*

*NOTE: the anglo-saxon countries, and some new member states are missing in the EAG-classification*

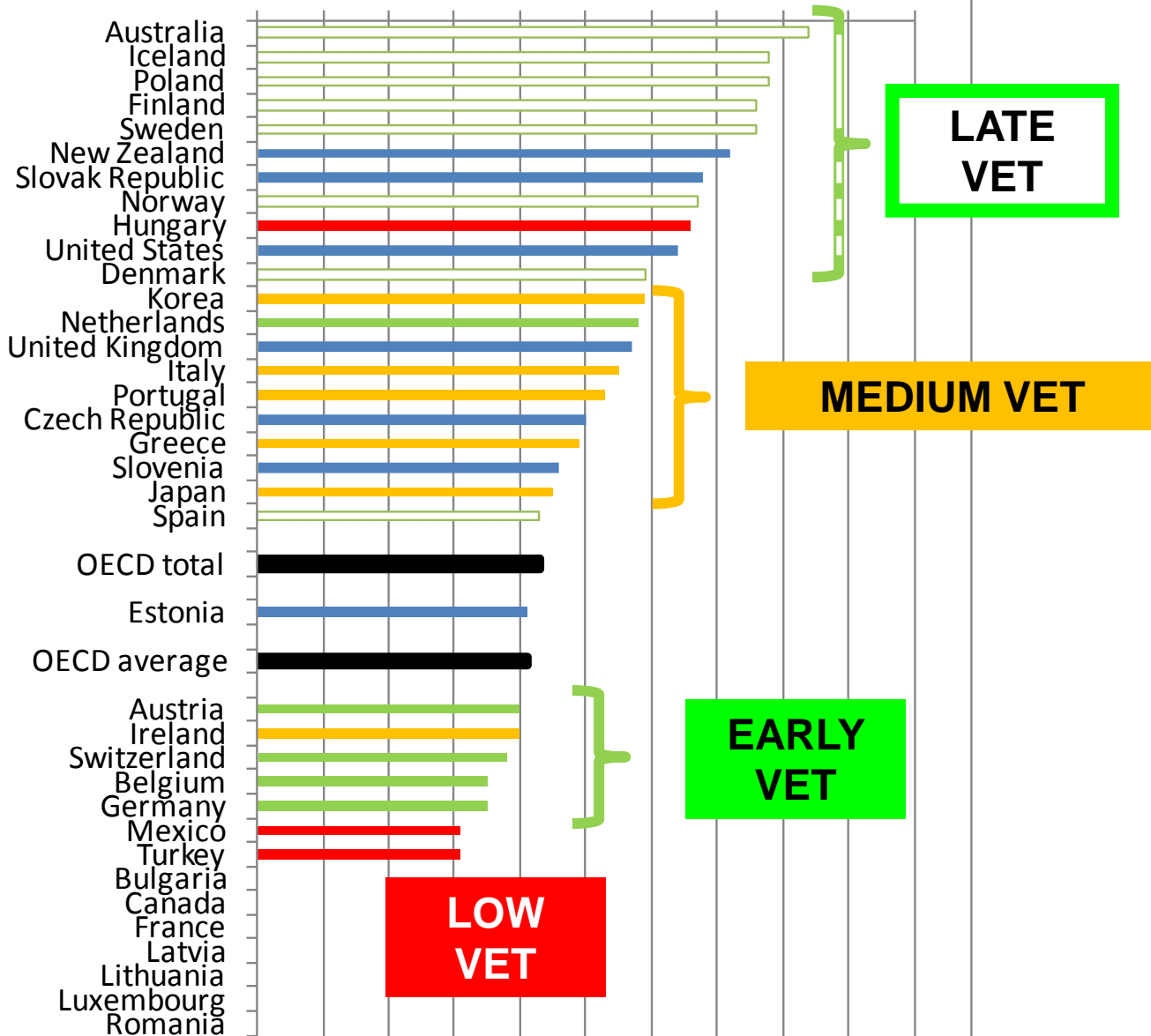


# VET Classification 1(15y) x VET Classification 2 (upper secondary)

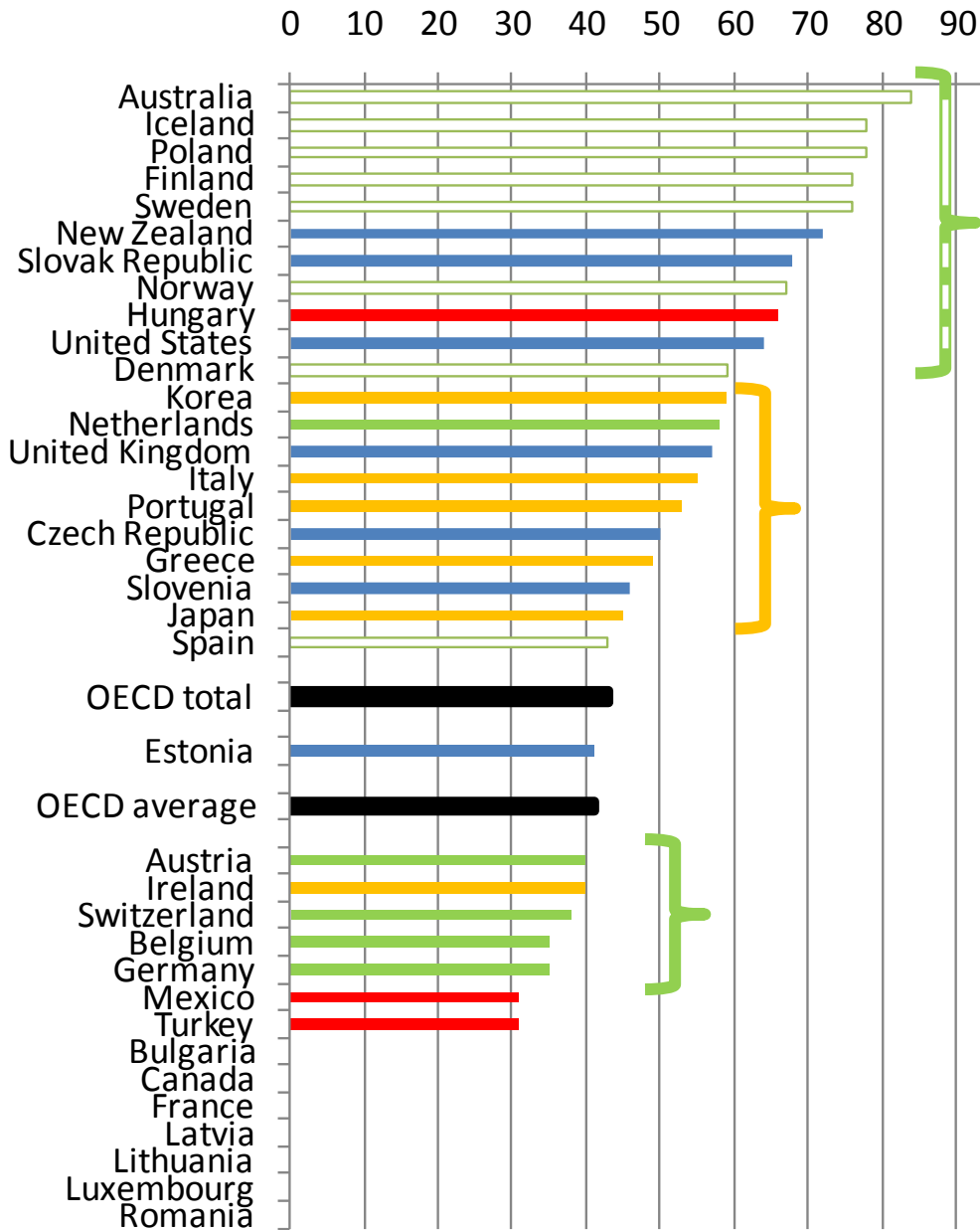
	(1) early sel., low-med VETupS	(2) med/late sel., low-med VETupS	(3) early/med sel., high VETupS	(4) late sel., high VETupS
(1) late sel., no VET15 (CND, NZ, UK, US, LV)				AUS, DK, FIN, IS, NOR, S, PL, E <b>LATE VET</b>
(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		EL, IT, PT, <b>MEDIUM VET</b>	LUX	
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)		IRL, JP, KOR,		
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR <b>LOW VET</b>		CZ, SK,	
(5) early sel., medium VET15			BE, GER, CH <b>EARLY VET</b>	
(6) early sel., high VET15 (SI)			AT, NL,	

# VET & HE Tert A

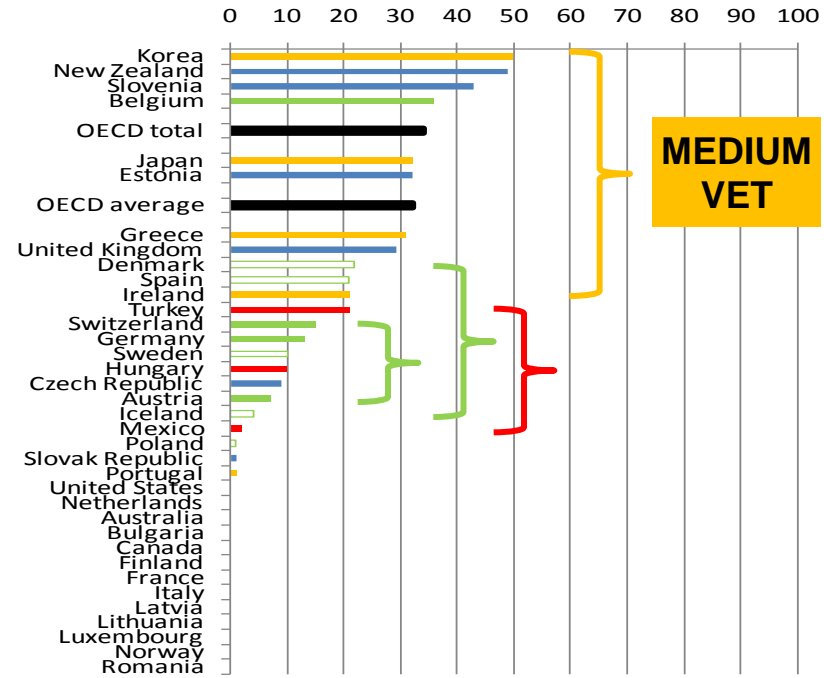
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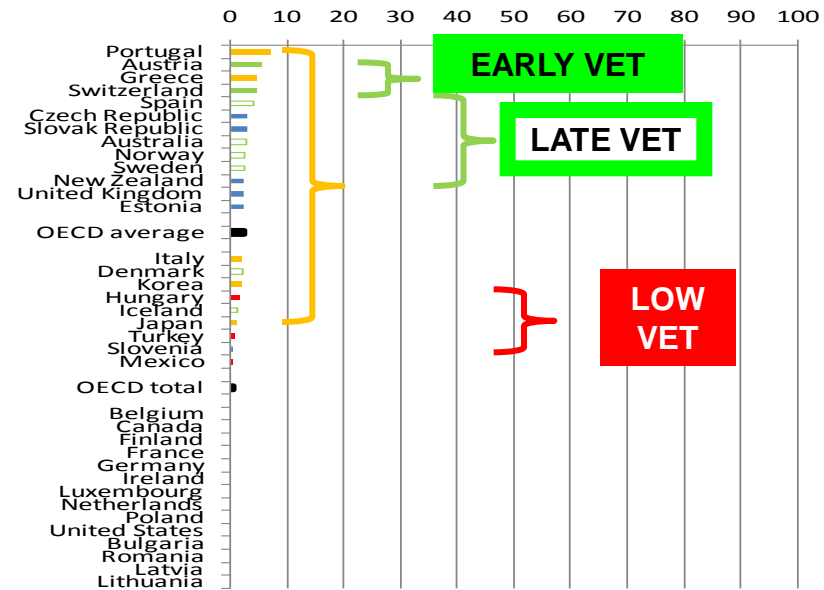
# VET & HE Tert A



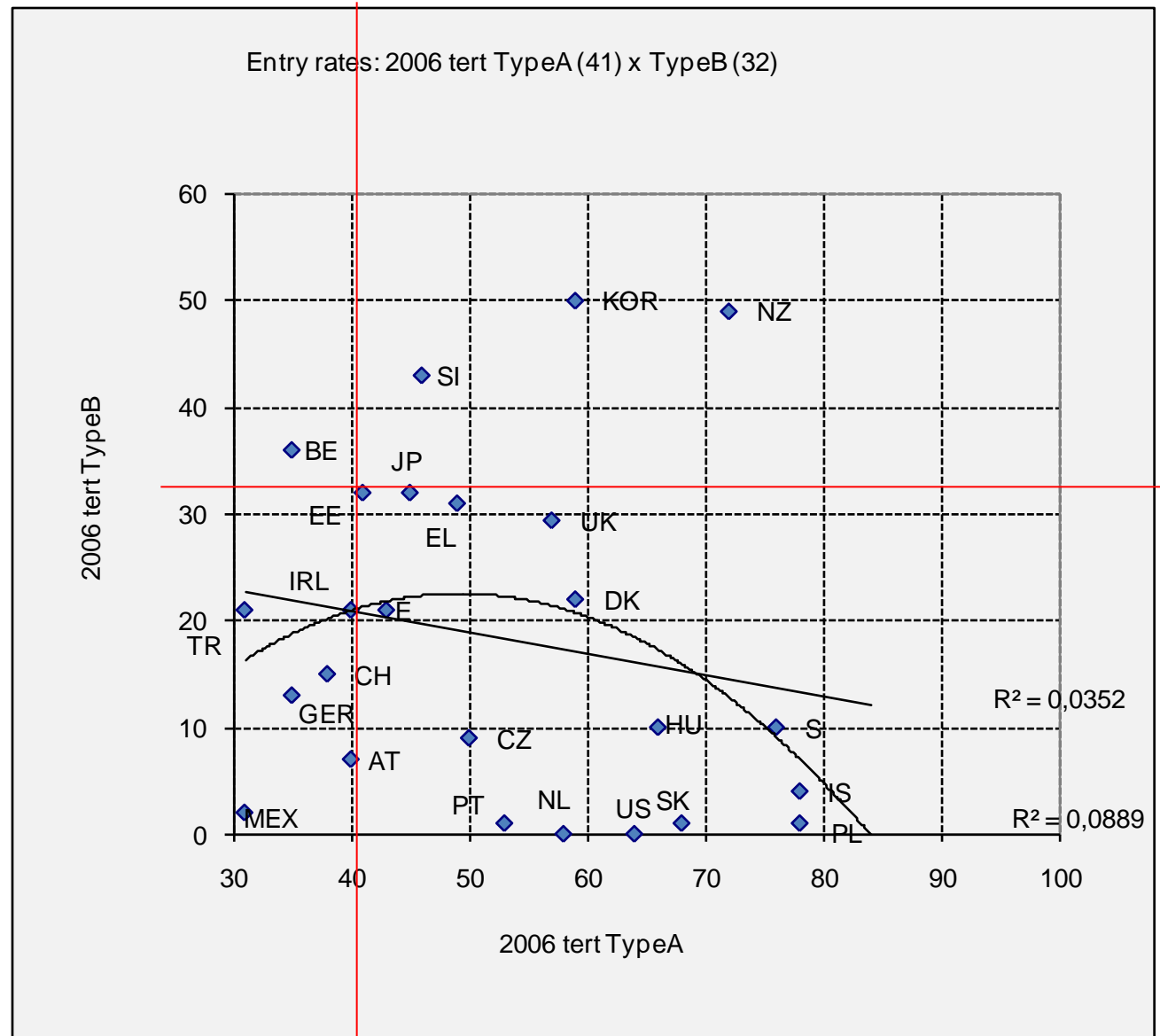
## Tert B



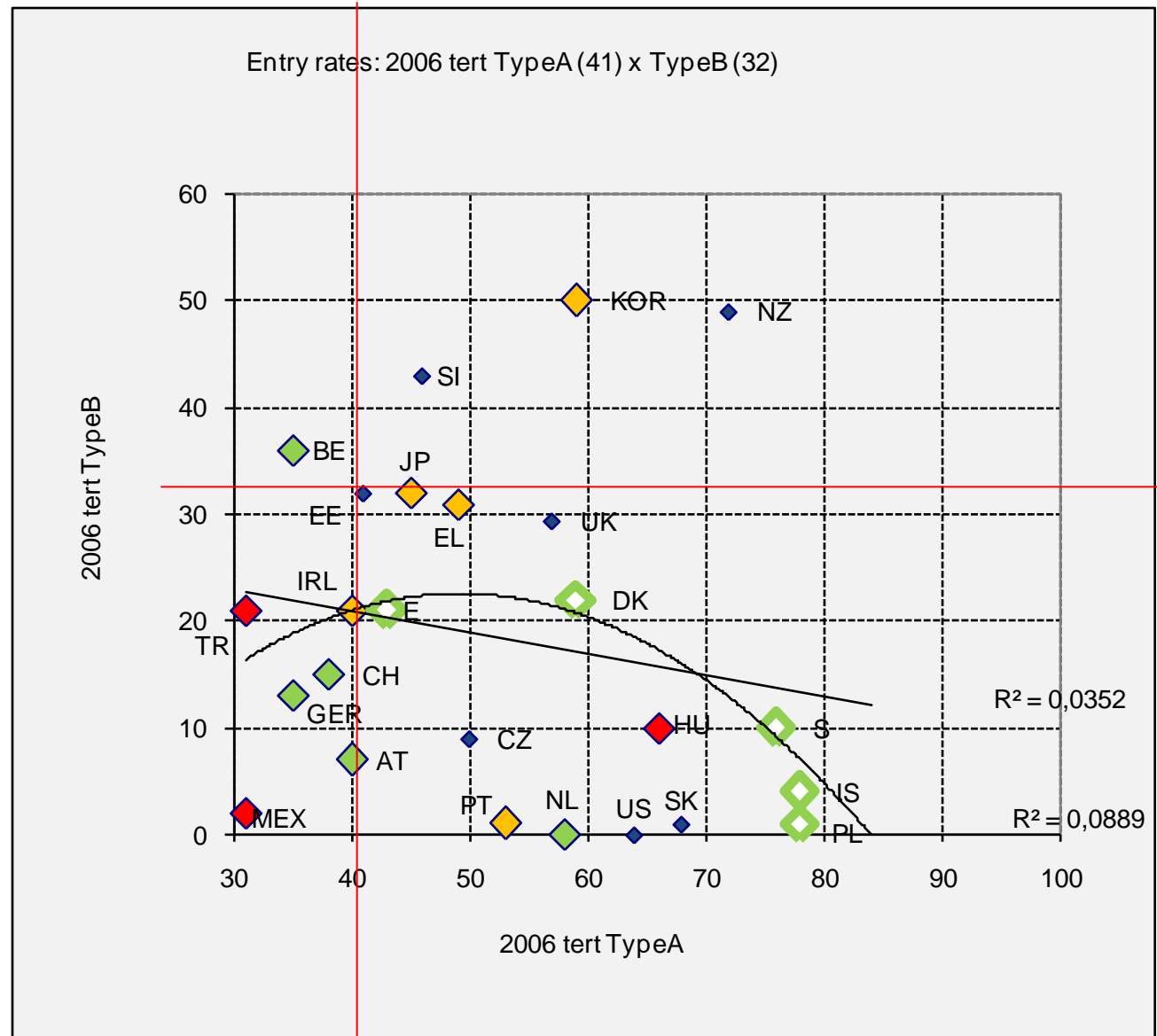
## Tert C



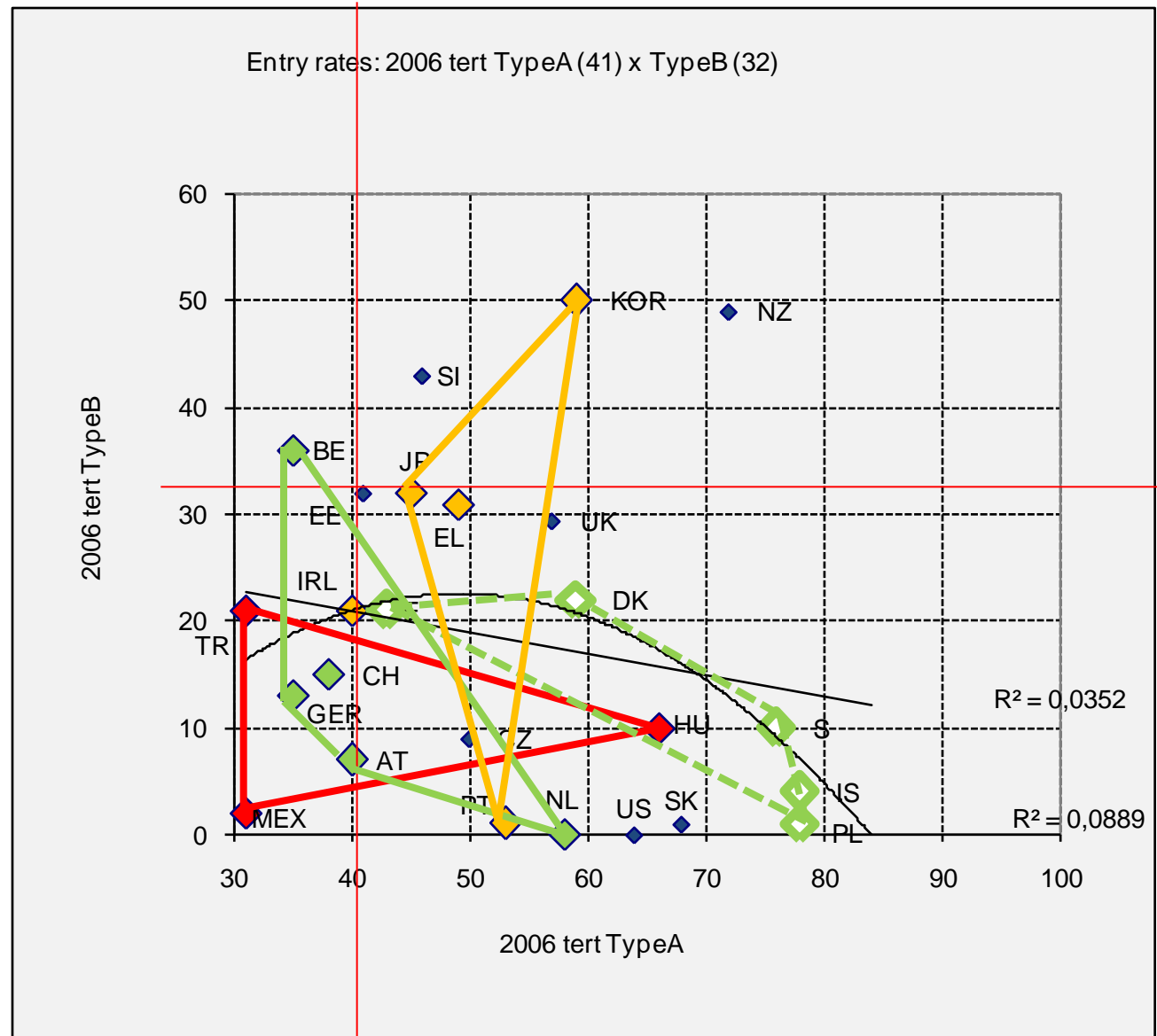
# Tertiary entry rates A x B



# Tertiary entry rates A x B and VET Typology

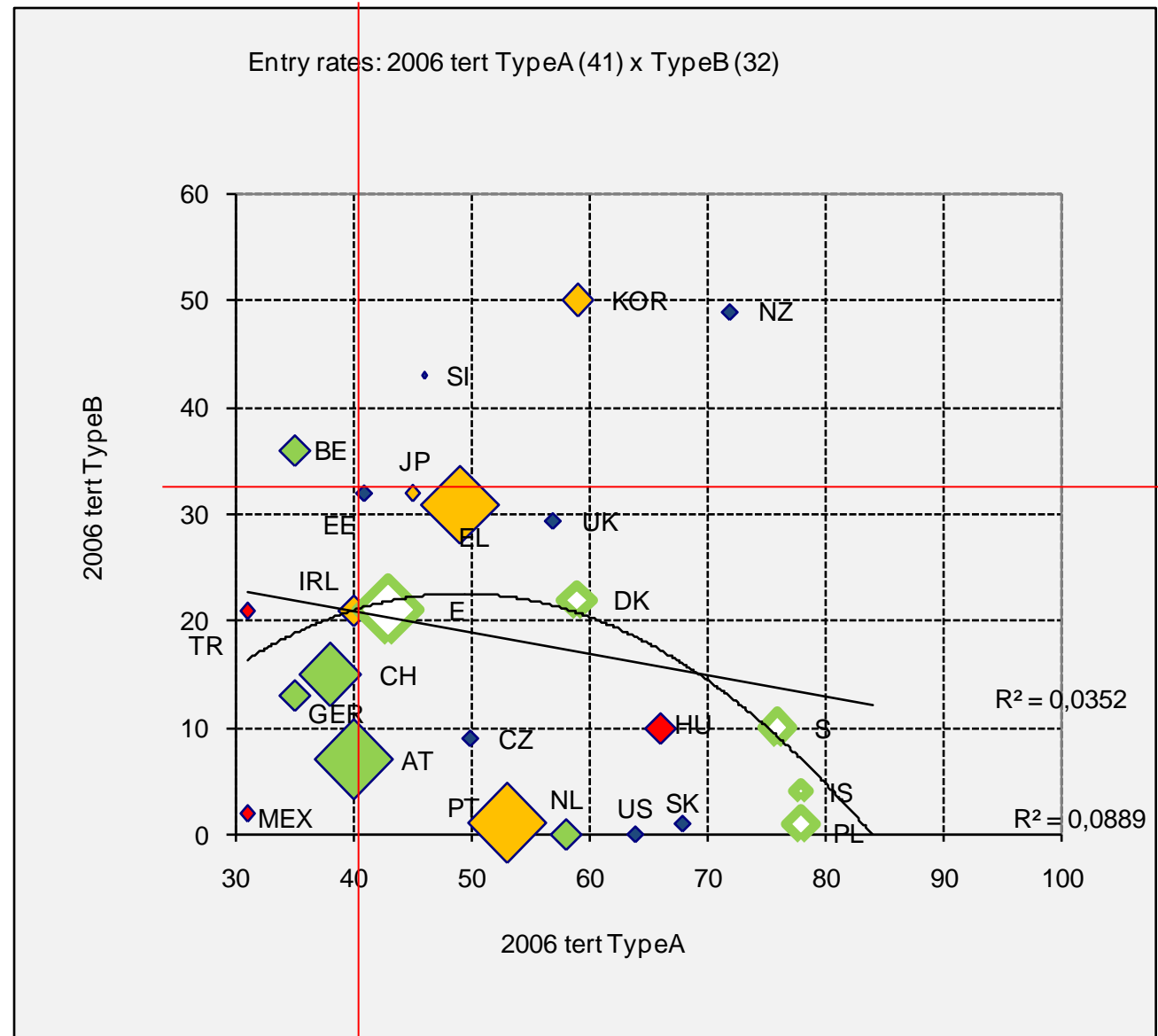


# Tertiary entry rates A x B and VET Typology

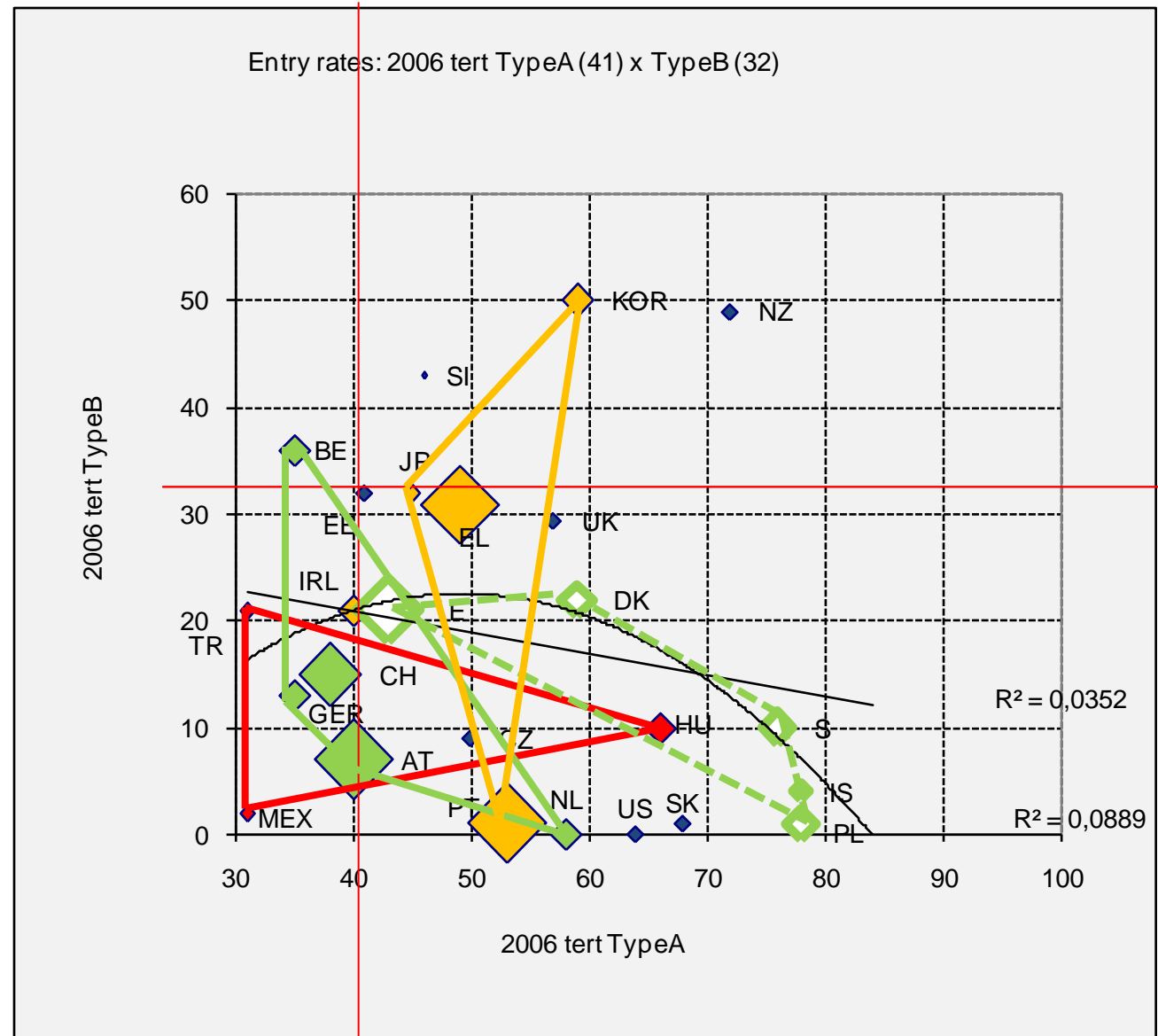




# Tertiary entry rates A x B x C and VET Typology



# Tertiary entry rates A x B x C and VET Typology



# VET structures and tertiary education

- Tertiary A quite clear relationship
  - Entry rates rise from LOW > EARLY > MEDIUM > LATE VET
- Tertiary B
  - MEDIUM VET higher than others
- Tertiary C
  - Entry rates rising from LOW > LATE > EARLY; MEDIUM distributed
- Interrelation A x B
  - B rather low with HIGH and LOW VET; higher, but distributed with MEDIUM VET
- Interrelation A x B x C
  - Within EARLY and LATE VET high C related to relatively low A (not in others)

# VET structures and tertiary education

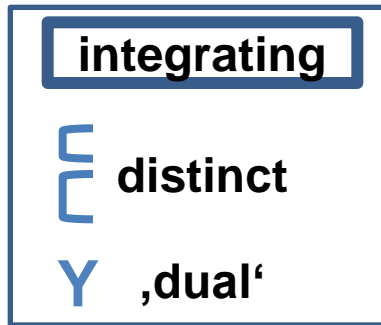
	(1) early sel., low-med VETupS	(2) med/late sel., low-med VETupS	(3) early/med sel., high VETupS	(4) late sel., high VETupS
(1) late sel., no VET15 (CND, NZ, UK, US, LV)	A medium B higher C distributed	EL, IT, PT,	LUX	AUS, DK, FIN, IS, NOR, S, PL, E
(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		<b>MEDIUM VET</b>		A high B low C high+
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)		IRL, JP, KOR,		lower A higher C
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR		CZ, SK,	A low B low C high++
(5) early sel., medium VET15	<b>LOW VET</b>		BE, GER, CH	lower A higher C
(6) early sel., high VET15 (SI)	ABC ~ low		AT, NL,	<b>EARLY VET</b>

# Result mixed

- Low A + high C means high transition into C > elite system...
- ...somehow related to early VET...
  - Austria and Switzerland; but not Germany, Belgium, Netherlands
- ...and in other VET types to mediterranean countries
  - Spain, Portugal, Greece, but not Italy
- Austria quite unique structure:
  - Early VET
  - Access and admission from VET into HE
  - ‚elite system‘ (low A, low B, high C)

# VET and HE in Qualification frameworks (CEDEFOP 2011)

- Comprehensive (integrating), distinct, vertically separating (6-8 Dublin), dual, horizontally separating (6-8 two sectors)



several countries have developed HE-QF before LLL-QF

- no clear relationship between VET types and QF
- relationship between 'elite systems' and QF: mostly not classified
  - signs into direction of distinct or dual structures

# VET Classification 1(15y) x VET Classification 2 (upper secondary): Qualification Frameworks

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(1) late sel., no VET15 (CND, NZ, UK, US, LV)				AUS, DK, FIN, IS, NOR, S, PL, E
(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		EL, IT, PT,	LUX	
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)		IRL, JP, KOR,		
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR		CZ, SK,	
(5) early sel., medium VET15			BE, GER, CH	
(6) early sel., high VET15 (SI)			AT, NL,	

**MEDIUM VET**

**LOW VET**

**LATE VET**

integrating  
distinct  
,dual'

**EARLY VET**

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(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		EL, IT, PT, <b>MEDIUM VET</b> IRL, JP, KOR,	LUX	<b>integrating</b> E distinct Y ,dual'
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)				
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR <b>LOW VET</b>		CZ, SK,	
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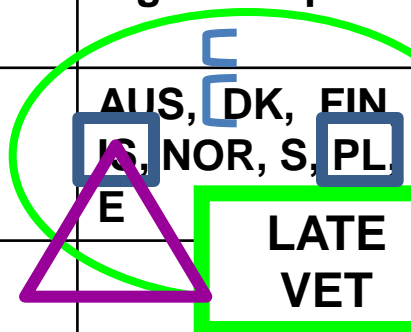
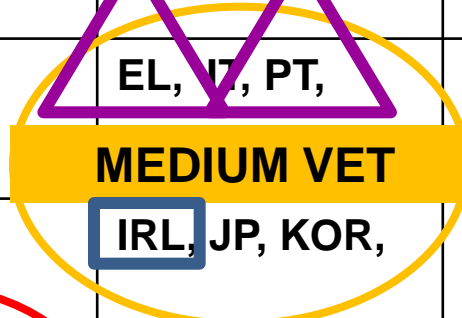
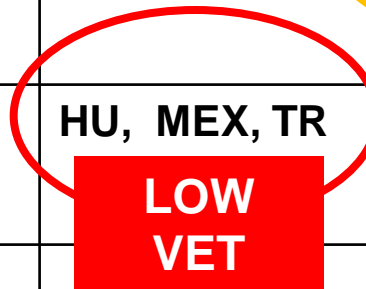
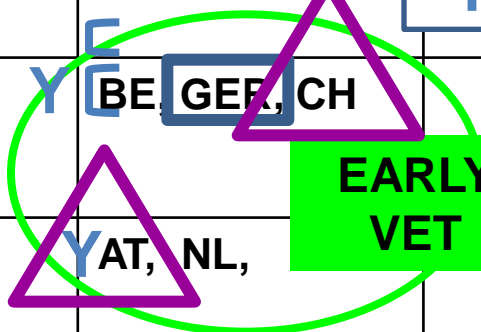

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(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)				integrating distinct ,dual'
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR LOW VET		CZ, SK,	
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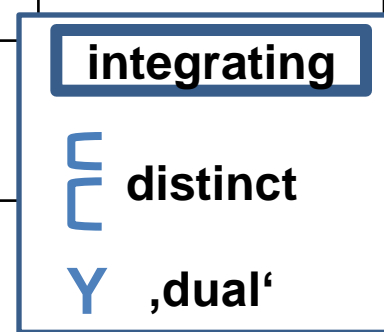
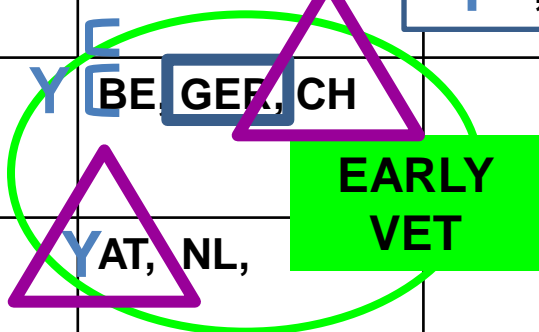
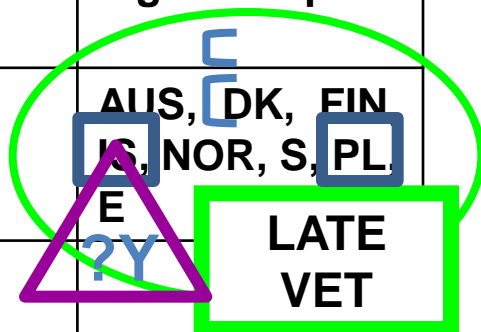
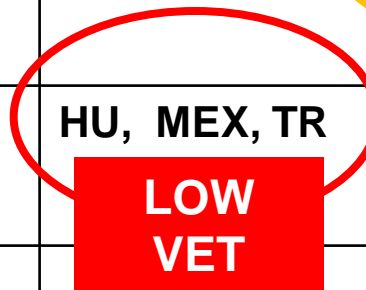
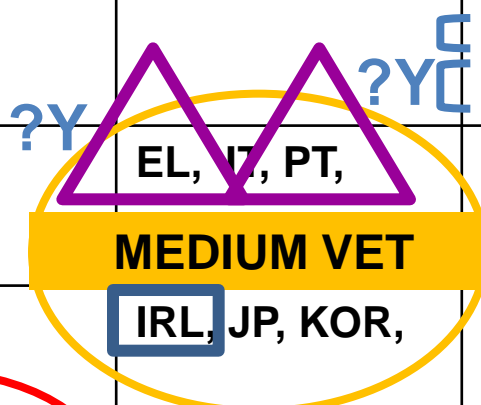
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(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		EL, IT, PT, <b>MEDIUM VET</b>	LUX	
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)		IRL, JP, KOR, <b>LOW VET</b>		integrating distinct ,dual‘
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR <b>LOW VET</b>		CZ, SK,	
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(1) late sel., no VET15 (CND, NZ, UK, US, LV)				 <p>AUS, DK, FIN IS, NOR, S, PL E</p> <p><b>LATE VET</b></p>
(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		 <p>EL, IT, PT,</p> <p><b>MEDIUM VET</b></p> <p>IRL, JP, KOR,</p>	LUX	
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)				<p>integrating</p> <p>distinct</p> <p>Y, dual'</p>
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	 <p>HU, MEX, TR</p> <p><b>LOW VET</b></p>		CZ, SK,	
(5) early sel., medium VET15			 <p>BE, GER, CH</p> <p><b>EARLY VET</b></p>	
(6) early sel., high VET15 (SI)			 <p>AT, NL,</p>	

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(2) med.sel., low VET15 (EE, LT)		EL, IT, PT	LUX	LATE VET
(3) med.sel., med VET15 (RO)		IRL, JP, KOR,		integrating
(4) early sel., low VET15 (BG)	HU, MEX, TR		CZ, SK,	distinct
(5) early sel., medium VET15			BE, GER, CH	, dual'
(6) early sel., high VET15 (SI)			AT, NL,	EARLY VET



# Findings Austria

## (3) Political structure and status competition

- QF policy process strongly controlled
  - between administration, stakeholders and social partners
  - education/training providers not included in the process  
*took part in consultation*
  - strong leading function by VET administration
- No HE-QF developed in advance
  - start of process with ‚feasibility-study‘ about comprehensive QF
- Consultation process strongly focused and oriented to levels in initial ET (VET colleges)
  - time pressure: allocation to levels before implementation of learning outcomes
  - low emphasis on conceptual issues
  - main aims on implicit agenda
- Finally no resultion between VET and HE
  - ‚Y-model‘ with separate frames at levels 6-8

# Permeability: VET and HE

- Higher education in Austria: small elite-system, dominated by traditional universities
  - University access+admission still controlled by upper secondary institutions
  - Speciality: VET-colleges provide similar entitlement as academic secondary schools
- Second tier (Fachhochschule-FH) established in 1990s
  - New framework, established from scratch (no upgrading of existing institutions)
  - New governance framework based on accreditation and institutional autonomy
  - Should provide new advanced VET-qualifications for industry and services
  - Should provide additional opportunities for access from apprenticeship, did not work, instead has shifted on top of VET colleges
  - Substantial ‚academic drift‘ (main qualification after Bologna: master)
- Consequences
  - VET-colleges are substantial pipeline to higher education (non engineering; fem.)
  - Many students are ‚doubling-up‘ their upper secondary qualifications in same field (VET-college 5y + Bachelor 3y + Master 2y = 10y)
  - FH only partly ‚real‘ new business related opportunities for additional students
  - Substantial increase of costs of educational pathways

# Different models of permeability

- Key issue: how is ‚professionalism‘ institutionalised within higher education, in particular position of universities?
  - within higher education: example Ireland
  - within VET, separate from higher education: example Austria
- Debates about Bologna focus on the ‚Humboldt Ideal‘ of the unity of research and teaching and the devaluation of VET and Professionalism
- New proposals: to create intermediate and short-cycle programmes outside higher education, with possibility to transfer into bachelor programmes

# Ireland 1

EQF NQF-IRL

8	10
7	9
6	8
	7
5	6
4	5
3	4
2	3
1	2
	1

Leaving Cert.
Leaving Cert.
Junior Cert.

**General Educ**

Advanced Cert.
Level 5 Cert.
Level 4 Cert.
Level 3 Cert.
Level 2 Cert.
Level 1 Cert.

**Further Educ**

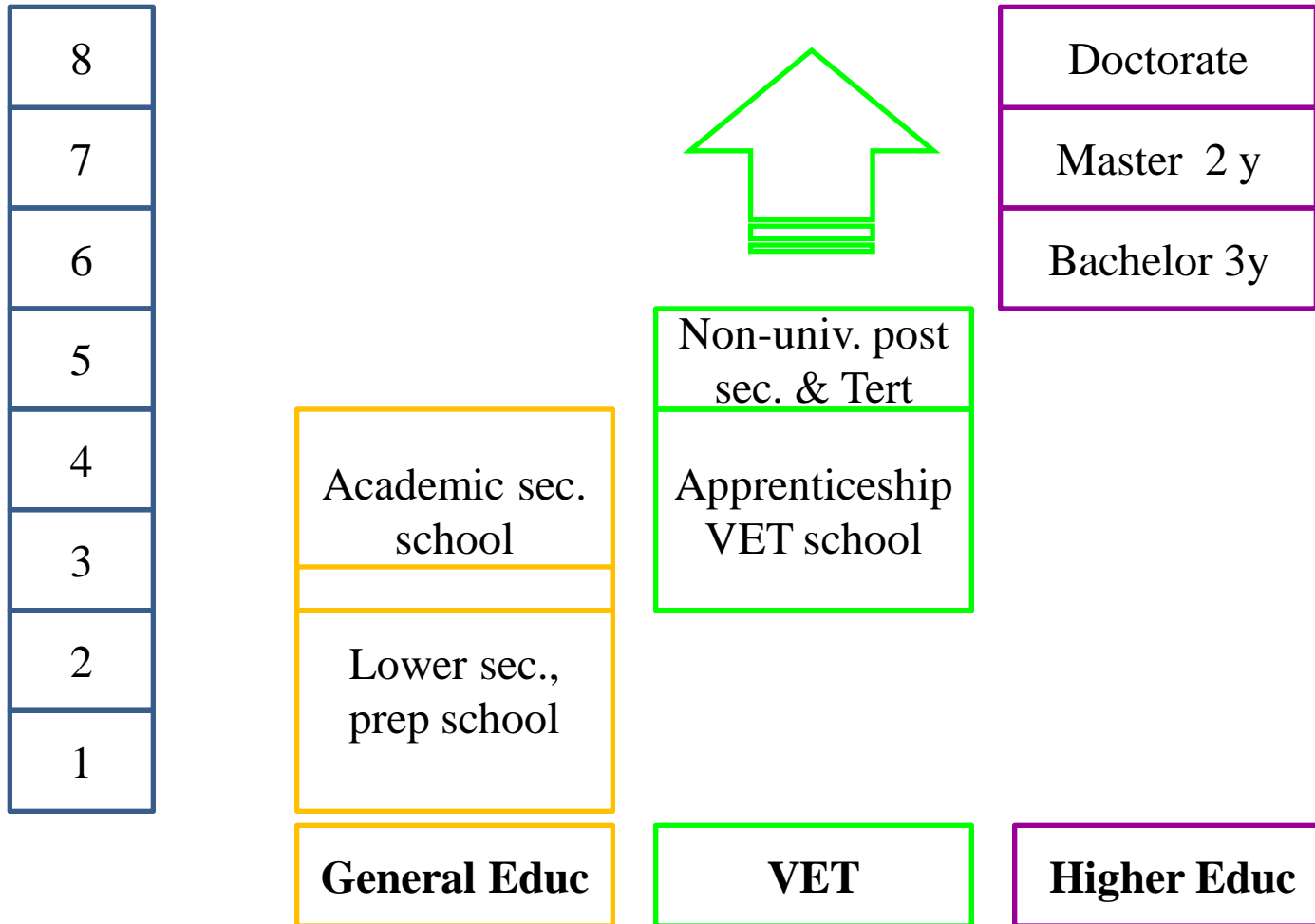
Postgrad.Dipl. 1y	taught/research Master 1-2/2y
Higher Diploma 1y	Honours Bac. 3-4y
	Ordinary Bac. 3y
Higher Cert. 2y	

**Higher Educ**



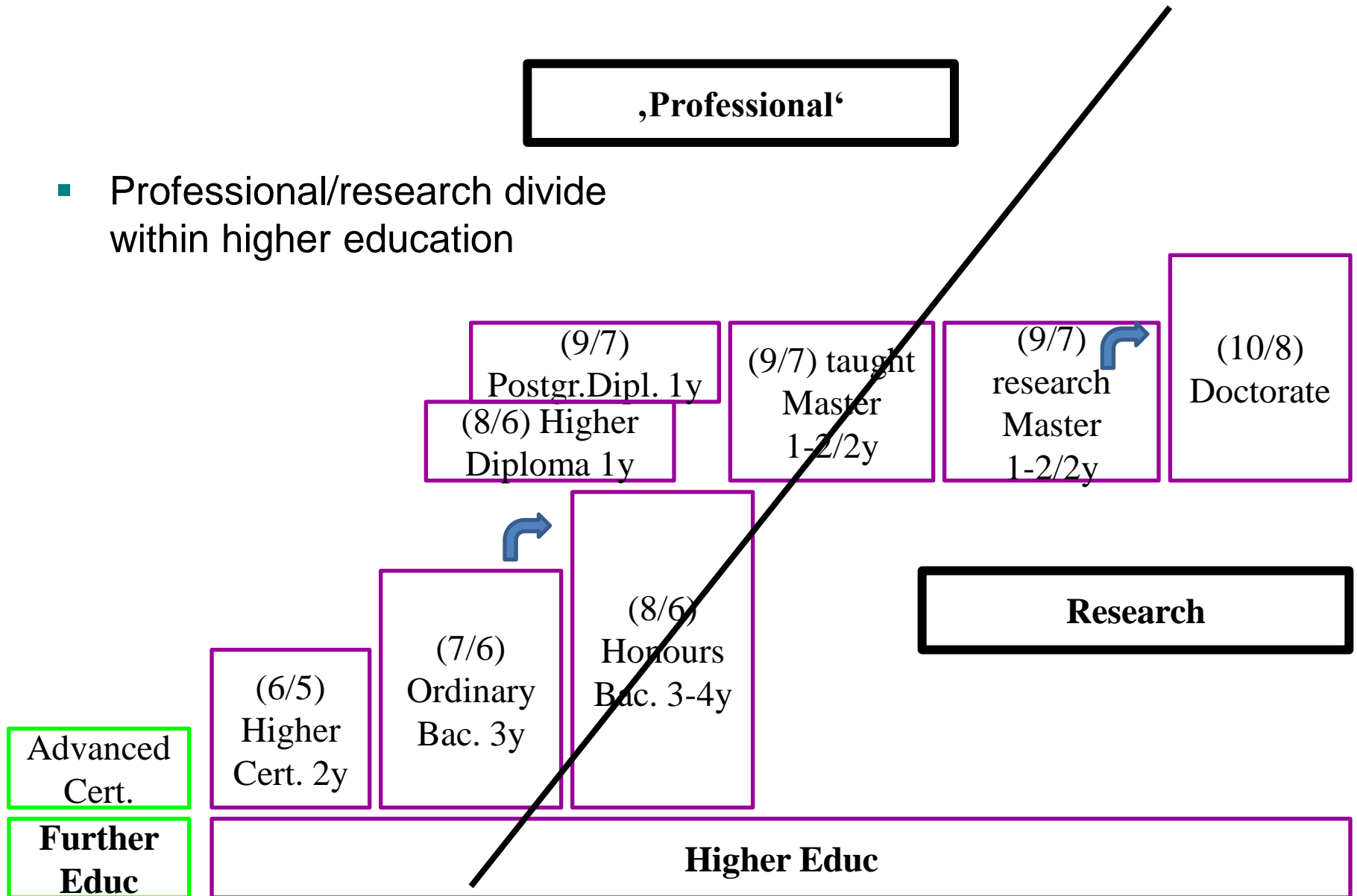
# Austria 1

EQF NQF-A



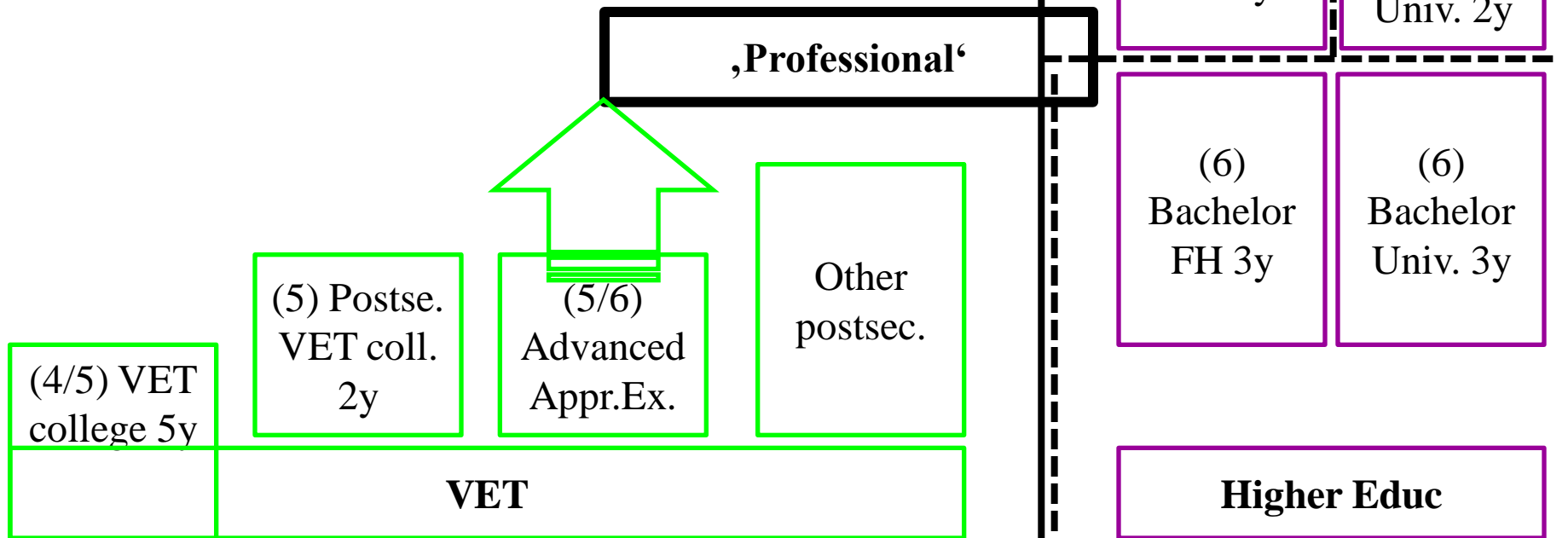
# Ireland 2, EQF 5-8

- Professional/research divide within higher education



# Austria 2, EQF 5-8

- Professional/research divide between VET and higher education
  - strongly contested and rejected within university
  - mixed within FH, 'academic drift'



# Conclusions

- A divided system ever produces new divides
- The university is constantly fighting against devaluation of theory, however has highest status socially from tradition
- The Fachhochschule is characterized by academic drift, trying to become a university
- The VET colleges are fighting for reputation, trying to get somehow at the upper levels
- Overall a language for the debate of ‚professionalism‘ is missing, and cannot be developed because all actors/institutions are defending their position (‚nothing fails like success‘)

# The End



# Material

