

Gender specific constraints in the Austrian early VET system and review of countervailing policy attempts

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 Input to conference

“Career orientations, education systems, and gendered school-to-work transitions”

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Institutional argument in case of Austria

- VET structures and socio-economic context reinforce each other in creating gender specific bias in the choice of education, and degree of segregation is crucial
 - Strongly segregated education and training (ET) system
 - Early choice between alternatives at age 15*
 - Segregation of pupils/students and teachers reinforcing each other*
 - Migration is reinforcing segregation*
 - Cumulative effects of strongly segregated broader structures
 - Occupational segregation and ‚divided labour‘ market constitutes opportunity structure*
 - Income bias and divided labour market reinforce segregated choice by negative incentives*
 - Conditions of child care reinforce segregated choice*
 - Social security structures and family policy reinforce segregated choice*
- Effects of policy attempts trying to reduce this bias are dependent on these conditions
 - Paradox1: strongly segregated context conditions need and dampen at the same countervailing policy attempts (policy also dependent on context)
 - Paradox2: policy evaluation undermines rather than supports policy activities because of probability of weak results that weaken advocates

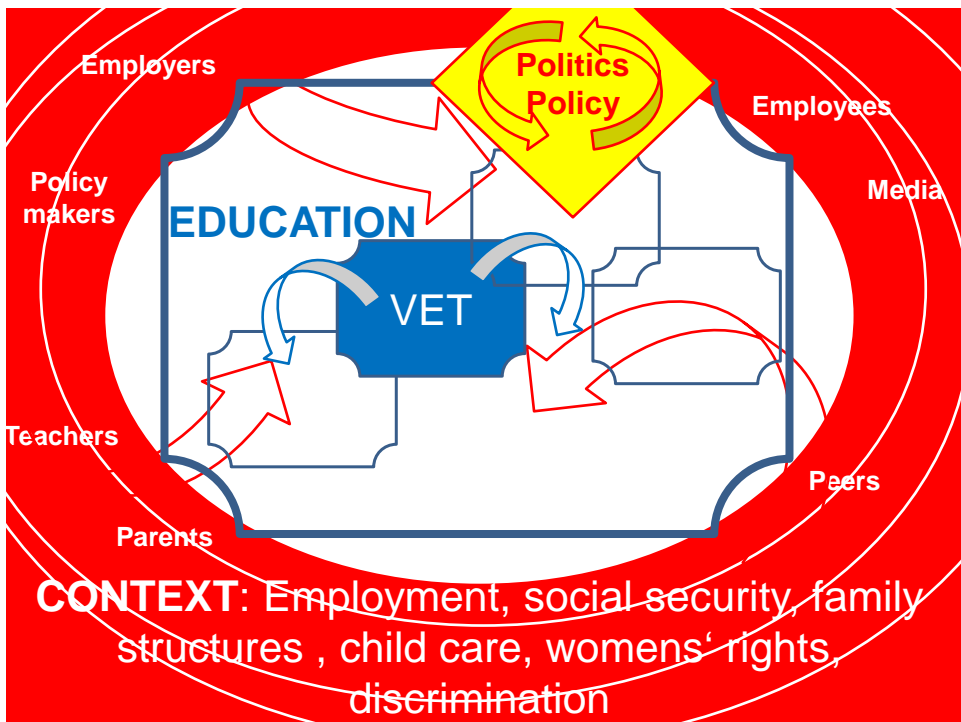
Theoretical/conceptual assumptions

- The old debate about **either** ,external' structural (sociological) **or** ,internal' individual (psychological) causes for segregation does not make sense, segregation is caused by an **interplay** of these dimensions
- **Contextual and systemic** structures are reflected in the basic conditions for choice among the younger generation (,circumscription'), and reinforce the process of choice (,compromise') through parents' and teachers' practices and opportunity structures
 - The **degree** of contextual sex or gender specific segregation is the key factor in these interactions (*difficult to explain this degree, not purpose of the paper*)
- **Policy** directed to education reflects context and structures and will have disappointing results in case of strong contextual influence
 - Creates necessity for ,radical' policy positions (,sustain and contextualise')
- Comparative analysis might give insights in these interactions

Vocational education and training [VET] structure and segregation

- General participation of females in education similar or better than that of males, however, in VET **strong and persistent segregation** into different specialisations
- Segregation not only holds for students, but also for **teachers and principals**; this stabilises segregation through reinforcing experience (role models)
- The **relative size of VET** at upper secondary level might lead to increased segregation
- The degree and persistence of segregation may be influenced by the **age-specific structuring** of specialisation and choice: early VET might lead to increased segregation

Mapping



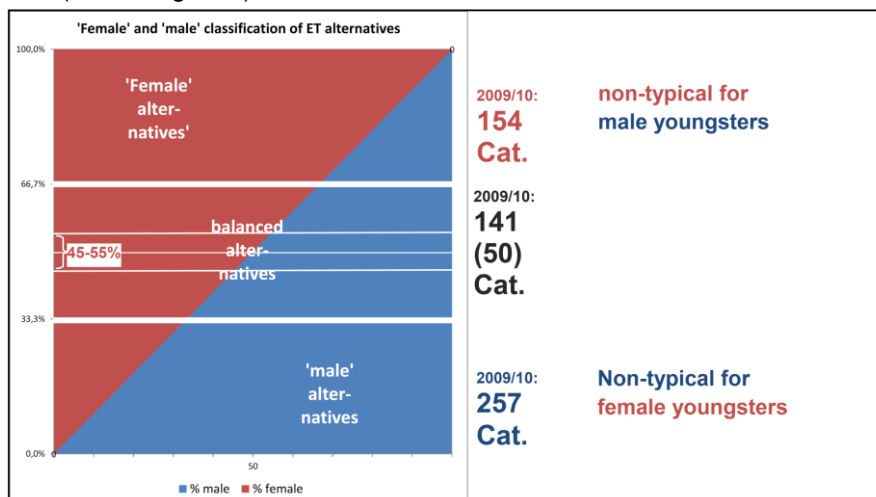
Aspects of VET in Austria

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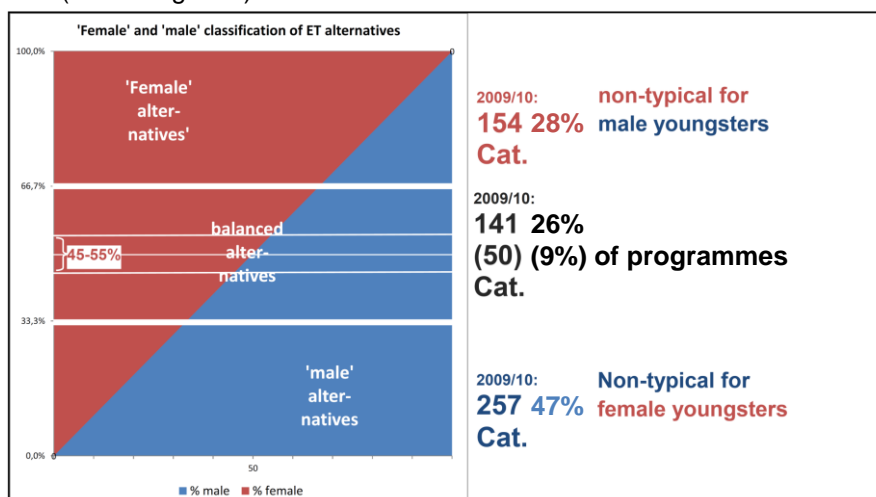
Strong and persistent segregation in Austria

- Classification of ET alternatives at grade 10 by gender (552 categories)

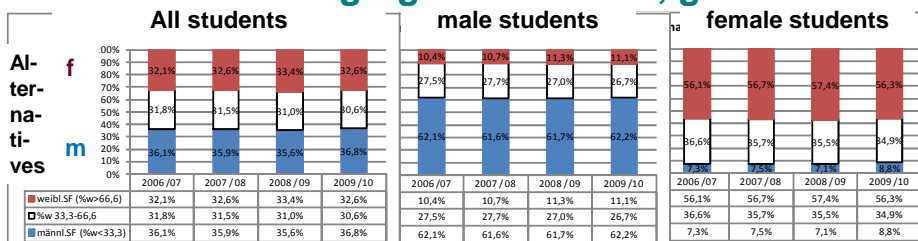


Strong and persistent segregation in Austria ,male', ,female' and ,balanced' programmes

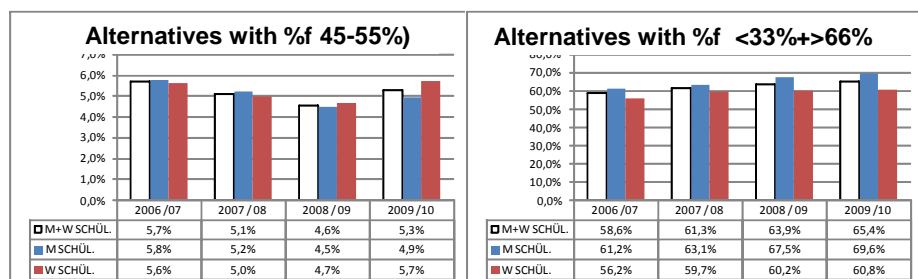
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Persistent segregation 2006-09, grade 10



Students by sex in **female**, **male** and **balanced** alternatives (33%, 66%)



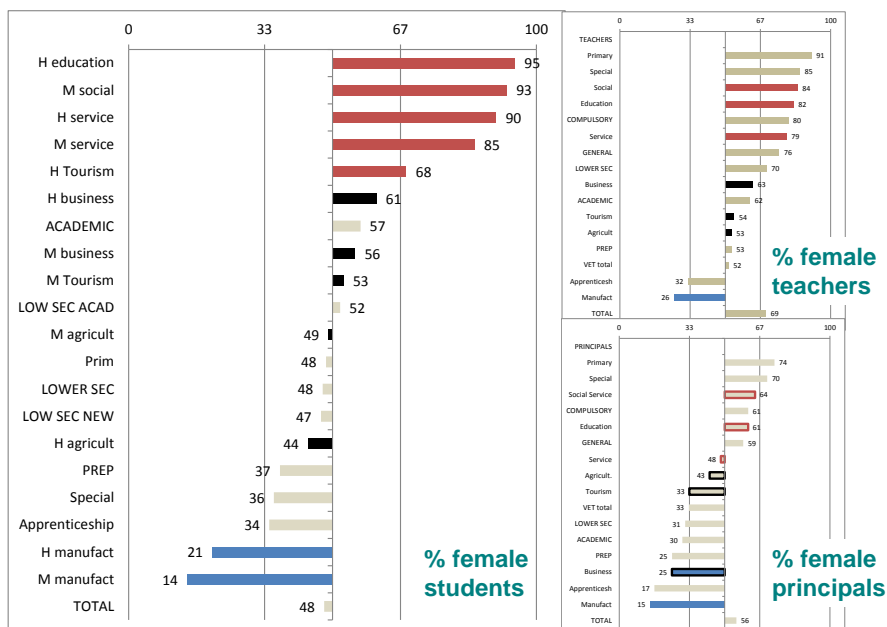
Students in **balanced** progr.

Students in **segregated** progr.

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Segregation of students, teachers, principals



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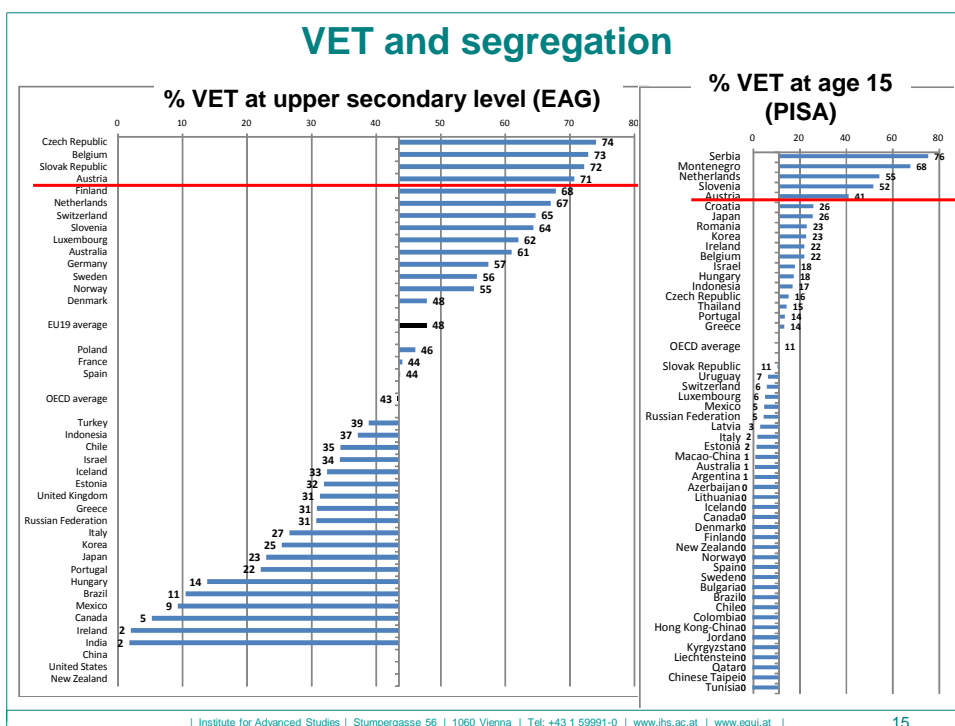
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Classification of VET structures a (PISA 2006: age 1st selection; VET at 15y.)

- 1: one programme, 1st 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)**

- 2: 1st selection 13-15, low VET at 15 (below 20%)
EL, IT, PT, LUX, EE, LT
**Medium age selection,
low or medium VET**

- 3: 1st selection 13-15, medium VET at 15 (20-40%)
IRL, JP, KOR, RO

- 4: 1st selection 10-12, low VET
CZ, HU, SK, BG, MEX, TR
Early selection, low VET

- 5: 1st selection 10-12, medium VET
BE, GER, CH
**Early VET, early
selection**

- 6: high VET
AT, NL, SI

Classification of VET structures b (PISA&EAG 2006: age 1st sel., upsec.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

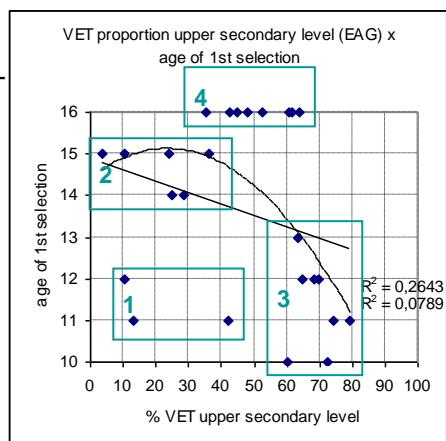
3: early/med selection and high VET

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

4: late selection and medium/high VET

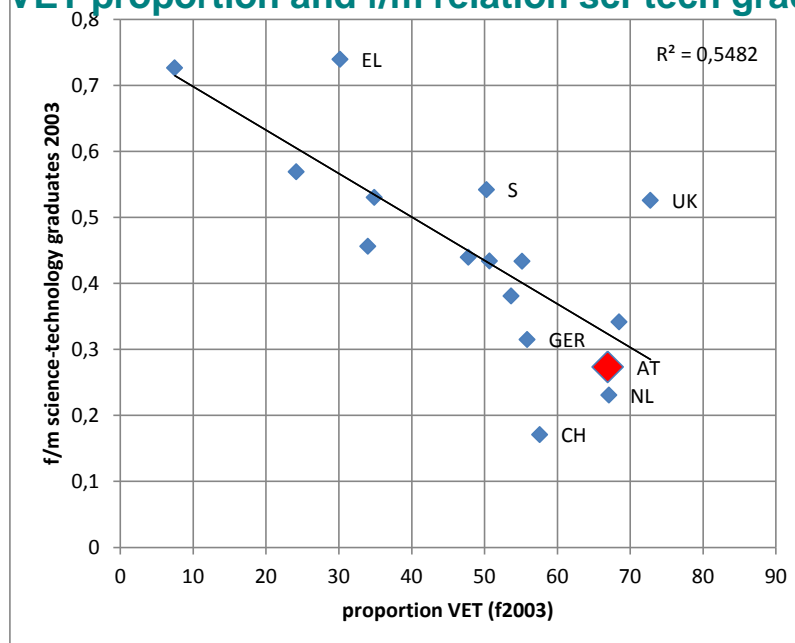
AUS, DK, FIN, IS, N, PL, E, S

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



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VET proportion and f/m relation sci-tech grad

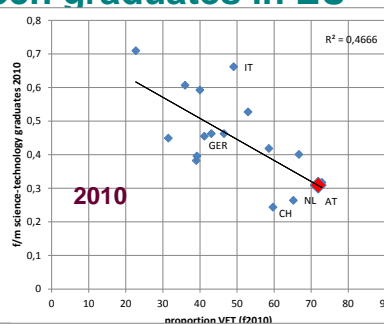
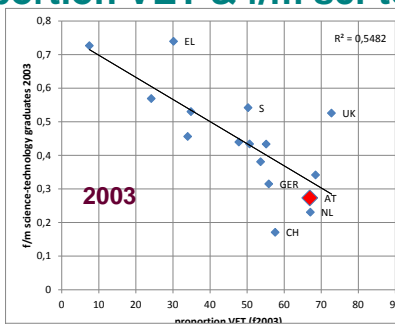


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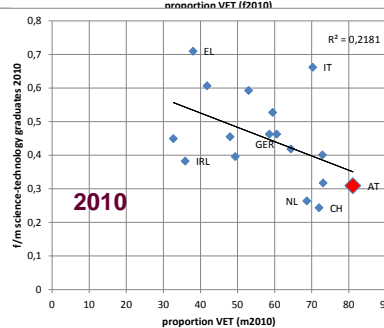
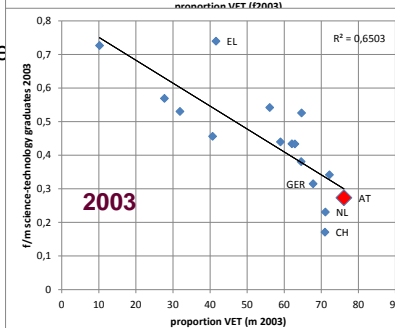
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Proportion VET & f/m sci-tech graduates in EU

■ fem



■ male



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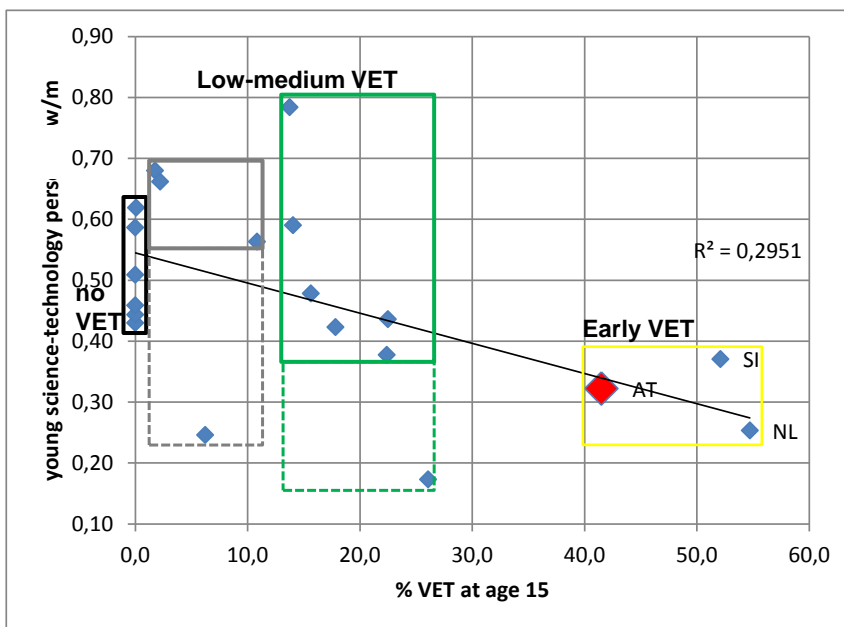
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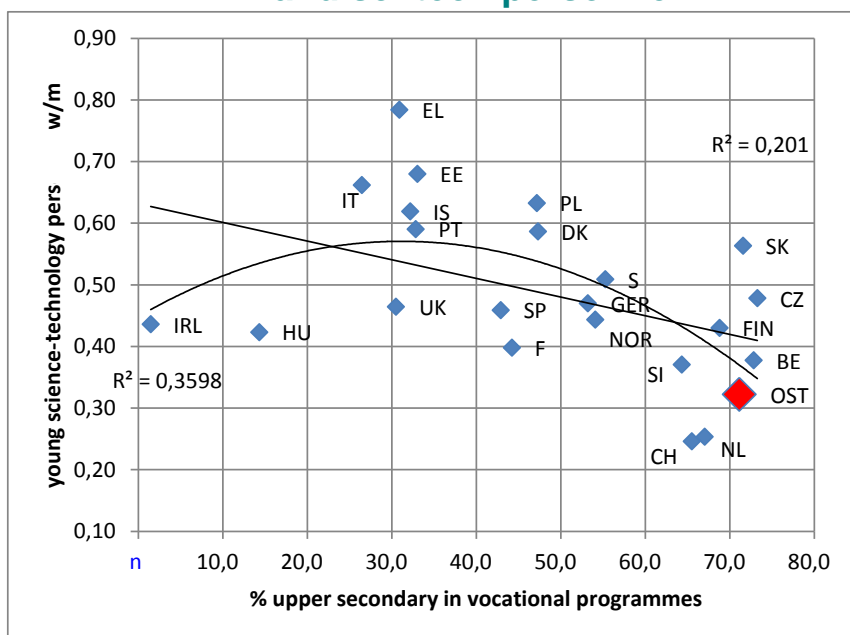
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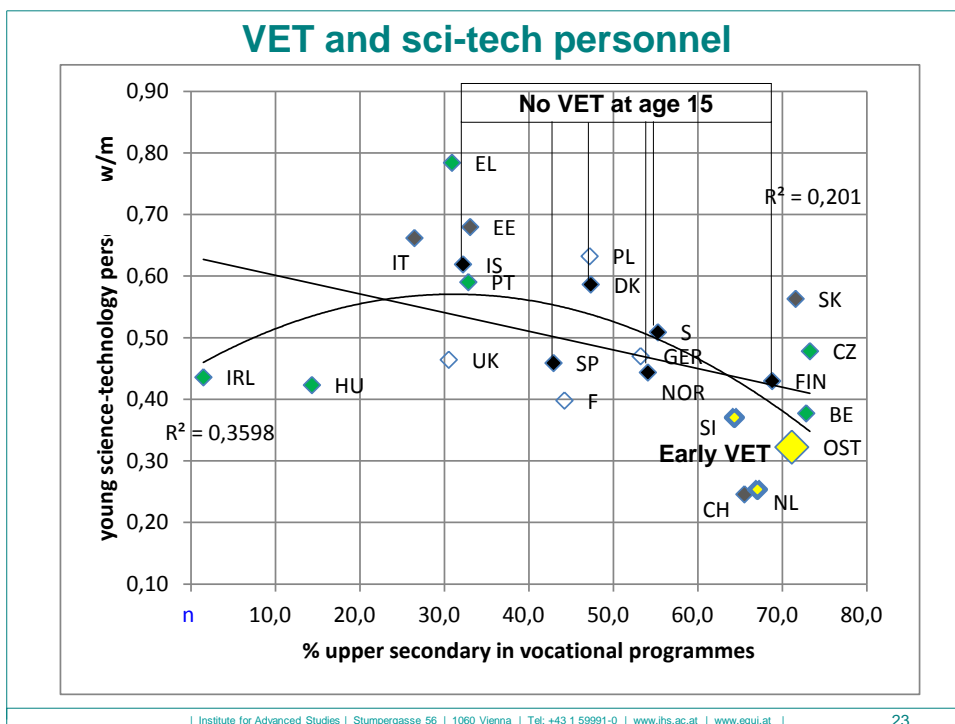
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VET at age 15 and f/m sci-tech personnel



VET and sci-tech personnel





Development hypothesis and age-specific structure of choice

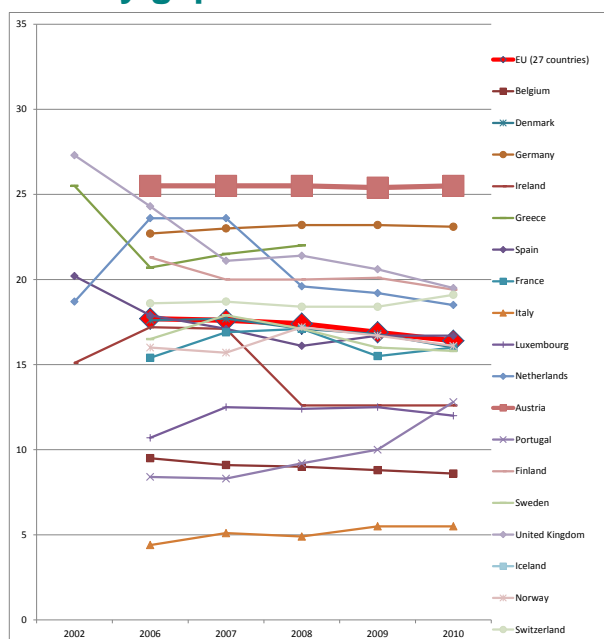
- Age specific phases from career theory are not very much considered in current research
- The circumscription&compromise theory (Gottfredson) sees the development
 - of a range of alternatives for choice in an early age (circumscription), in parallel with strong sex-gender stereotypes (6-8y.),
 - followed by a period of narrowing down the perspective when the broad range of alternatives comes increasingly to the attention of the individual (9-13y.), and the stereotypes might be used as decision criteria in the period,
 - before a more reflective mode develops after age 14.
- The age-specific structure of choice might be an important factor, that reinforces segregation, if the choice must be done at specific points in the life course
 - the coincidence of early VET and possibly more strongly segregated structures at least should support more research about this
 - This kind of research cannot be easily done within one system, but would need comparative research between different age-specific structures

Contextual conditions

- The contextual conditions in Austria point to **comparatively strongly and traditionally segregated structures** which provide a set of self reinforcing mechanisms for the perpetuation of segregated choices
- Elements of this structure are, in addition to the occupational segregation the following
 - a large gender **pay gap**
 - long and generous conditions for a **retreat** from employment in case of child birth (maternity leave, financial support („Kinderbetreuungsgeld“))
 - **return to employment** is very often related to part-time work and low level employment
 - a high proportion of **part-time work**, that is performed predominantly by women
 - deficits in **child-care** facilities that are compatible with full-time employment
 - a **half-days** compulsory school, with a further lack of caring facilities
 - a high share of social benefits based **on family support**
 - even the support of higher education is based on family benefits
 - the **pension age** is earlier for women than for men

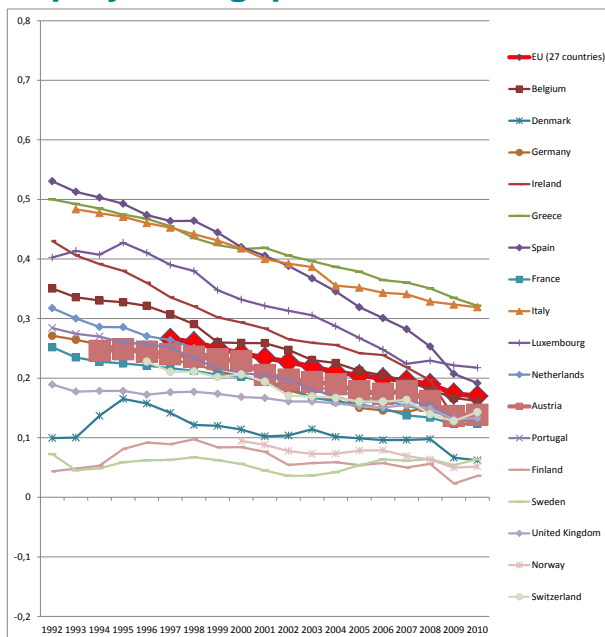
Pay gap

- Austria highest



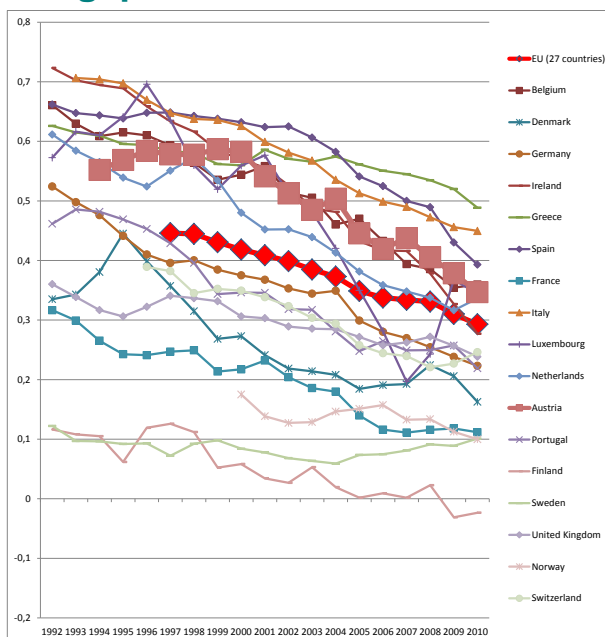
Employment gap

- Average



Employment gap of older workers

- High



Policy

Policy

“Ich konnte mein eigenes Geschwätz und das meiner Kollegen nicht mehr hören, dass wir Vielfalt und Gleichstellung forcieren; aber passiert ist nichts. Ich habe mich geschämt für meine Profession und für mich selbst.”

T.Sattelberger, Dt.Telecom



Source: "Die Presse", Print-Ausgabe, 17.11.2012;
<http://diepresse.com/home/wirtschaft/international/1313828/Maenner-skrupelloser-im-Ergreifen-von-Karrierechancen>

Policy



“I didn’t want to hear my own babble and that of my colleagues any more about forcing diversity and equalisation; but nothing happened. I felt ashamed for my profession and for myself.”

T. Sattelberger, Dt. Telecom

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A broad range of policy attempts for reducing segregation since decades

- Support of ‚women in male occupations‘ is one of the oldest programmes of labour market policy,
 - one of the first evaluations of labour market policy in the 1980s gave the result, that the engaged women, that have completed the programme, very often preferred not to work in their male occupation
- Another long standing type of activity are programmes that try to inform female pupils and students at different stages about non traditional ET-programmes and occupation, in particular in technology
- A broad network of non-profit institutions is providing support, guidance and orientation
- Within the education system several activities are trying to support and develop ‚gender-sensible‘ instruction

Policies

- The Austrian ‚National Education Report 2009‘ gives a very broad overview about the measures taken to develop a ‚gender equitable‘ school (geschlechtergerechte Schule)
 - 1975 coeducation was amended
 - 1995-2000 a number of basic regulations were created that made attention to gender specific issues mandatory in all areas of education (‚instruction principle; didactic principle‘ in syllabus for compulsory education); subsequently instruction material was developed and distributed
 - From 1997 three ‚action plans‘ were developed and implemented (97-00;00-03; 03-06), starting with 99 measures in the first, focused on 5 topics in the second,
 - Quality and equality of opportunity, occupational orientation, networking and support, balanced recruiting and responsibilities, language*
 - and three in the third
 - gender sensible instruction, occupational orientation, Gender Mainstreaming*
- Less is known about implementation
 - Surveys show that there is some attention to the topic of gender in the majority of schools, in half of schools the topic is mentioned in instruction
 - Only in 20% of school projects are implemented and half of schools pointed to an overemphasis on the topic
 - 80% of primary school teachers do not know the instruction principle, 15% use it

Policies and evaluation

- Recommendations in NEB 2009
 - Starting projects with analysis of status-quo
 - organisation, culture, norms, attitudes and expectations*
 - Defining indicators of success
 - Serious evaluation of activities
 - Consequences if no actions are taken
- Three issues important
 - Resistance to support of female opportunities
 - Those who are successful co-opted and against support*
 - New emphasis on boys/‘lads’/men
 - How to deal with disadvantaged males?*
 - Strength of intervention & uses of evaluation (‚Wittensky’s Law‘)
 - If interventions are endemically too weak, evaluation cannot bring positive results. Weak results delegitimise interventions and their advocates. Strengthen results. Advocates need positive results, undermining serious thinking about improvement*
- Sustain and contextualise, otherwise..



The End



Material

