

Institutional structures shaping social reproduction by ‘heating up’ and ‘cooling out’: the role of VET in Austria

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purpose

- paper available, so rather open comment on some issues which might be difficult/problematic
 - review: conceptual ideas more powerful than empirical implementation
- analysis of **position of VET** in the Austrian educational and social structure,
and mechanisms of how it contributes to social reproduction and mobility
- **focus on the institutional level**, to understand interaction between social origins and the strongly differentiated and complex institutional structures of education
- interprets empirical patterns of enrolment and educational attainment by social background in longer term development of the overall education and training system

theory 1: ,constuctivist abilities‘ estimation-prediction-bias in reproduction

- **basic background intuitions abt. VET in social reproduction**
(idiosyncratic, common, original?)
- at issue is management of supply and demand of **abilities**,
- however, abilities are in last resort **unobservable & unpredictable**,
- thus social strata fight over **estimation of abilities** which ,pays off‘,
- **education is basic machinery for this estimation**
- and **estimation will always be biased** in favour of the more powerful, predictions being a main source of bias
- **two general problems** to be solved
 - quantitative relation between (estimated) supply and demand of abilities
(with exceptions) systematic tendency of ,oversupply‘, thus meritocratic good
 - problem of processing ,mismatch‘ abilities/social positioning, resolving of p,errors‘

theory 2: asymmetry high-low strata institutional devices for ,management‘

- social reproduction implies different constellations along positioning
 - **higher strata**: potential **overestimation** of abilities (Peters pinciple)
high positions > too low abilities
 - **lower strata**: potential **underestimation** of abilities (Paula principle, T.Schuller))
how avoid too low positioning relative to abilities
- two basic conceptual elements of **institutional mechanisms**
 - Arum/Gamoran/Shavit 2007: ,**stratification regimes**‘ through institutional differentiation and diversification
 - Brint/Karabel 1989: ,**management of ambitions**‘ through institutional practices
institutional differentiation/diversification parallel to expansion (broadening, extending)
patterns/perceptions/ideologies of abilities/ambitions increasingly complex choice/position.
extended sequences of imposed choices, shifted to later cycles,
integrating/differentiating institutions, creation/postponing institutions
vertical/hierarchical positioning of institutions always included
increasingly complex institutions include increasingly complex positioning and selection processes, internalised into differentiated institutions
basic pattern of **creating** additional opportunities for the ,able‘ (,heating up‘) and **restricting** opportunities for ,less able‘ (,cooling out‘), **with the ,valuing‘ (estimation) as a critical process**, interplay of selection, counselling and self-selection
- **paradigmatic case**: diff. in US HE, rise/change CommunityColleges

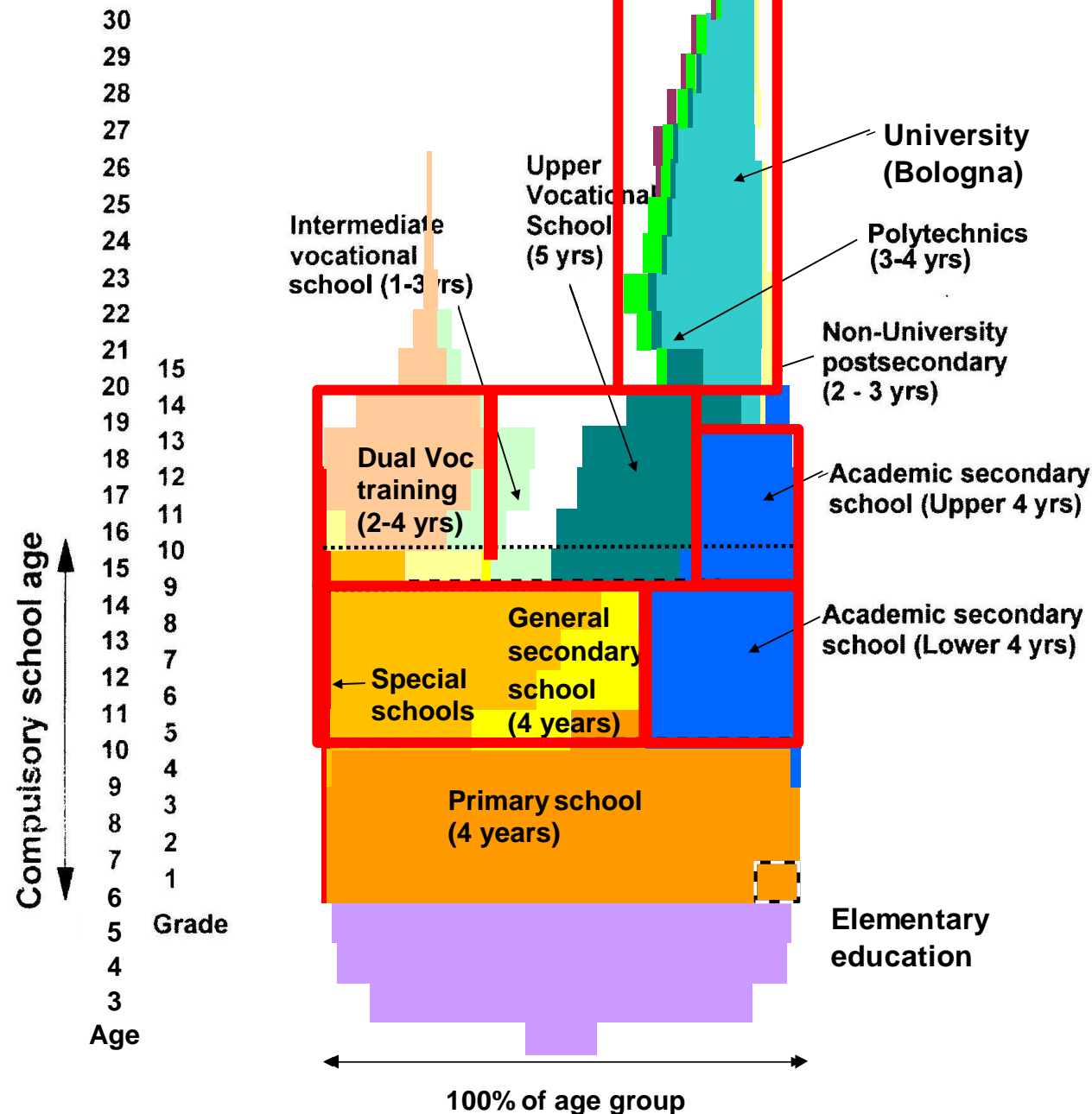
theory 3: institutional strategies expansion and differentiation

- Shavit/Arum/Gamoran 2007: diversion/integration parallel processes in higher education, quantitative relation not fixed in advance
 - MMI maximally maintained inequality (*sequential saturation from above*)
 - EMI effectively maintained inequality (S.R.Lucas *shift mechanisms, indicators*)
- practices and strategies of the actors (institutional, individual) influence expansion and differentiation-stratification-tracking
 - Clark 1980, seven **institutional strategies**
 - 1cooling out, conselling + self-selection
 - 2pre-selection (previous institutions, entrance)
 - 3streaming (internal selection), also tracking
 - 4open failure (drop out...)
 - 5guaranteed graduation, versions of competence based education (crit.ref.+time variation)
 - 6comprehensiveness > pool for cooling out
 - 7upstream-movement of selection > typical in Nordic systems (selective universities/HE)
- **Basic idea:** use of these mechanisms of **heating up – cooling out** as more general devices for the analysis of the institutional contribution to social reproduction in education (also B.Lutz 1983)

methodology, argument

- interpretive-descriptive-analytical approach (no sufficient data for rigorous empirical analysis available)
 - literature, secondary analysis
 - some original data (official statistics, LFS, PISA)
- basic argument about Austrian mechanisms:
 - **strongly tracked and differentiated system** from first selection point at age 10 through to tertiary education; high proportion of early that is also tracked to three levels; low higher education; moderate expansion; system should produce high inequality
 - **traditional structure retained**, mainstream ,modernisation‘ (comprehensiveness, tertiarisation) delayed, politically disputed, but also perceived as success story, in particular VET
 - **inequality** is perceived high in national terms, however, by comparative indicators **moderate**
 - overall economic position is favourable (recently problematic), inequality in society is at lowest levels in EU/OECD, and redistributive power of welfare state is very high, **educational inequality is not reflected in societal inequality**
 - **challenge**: to explain why stratified educational structure does not translate in more stratified ,outcomes‘?

System of Education



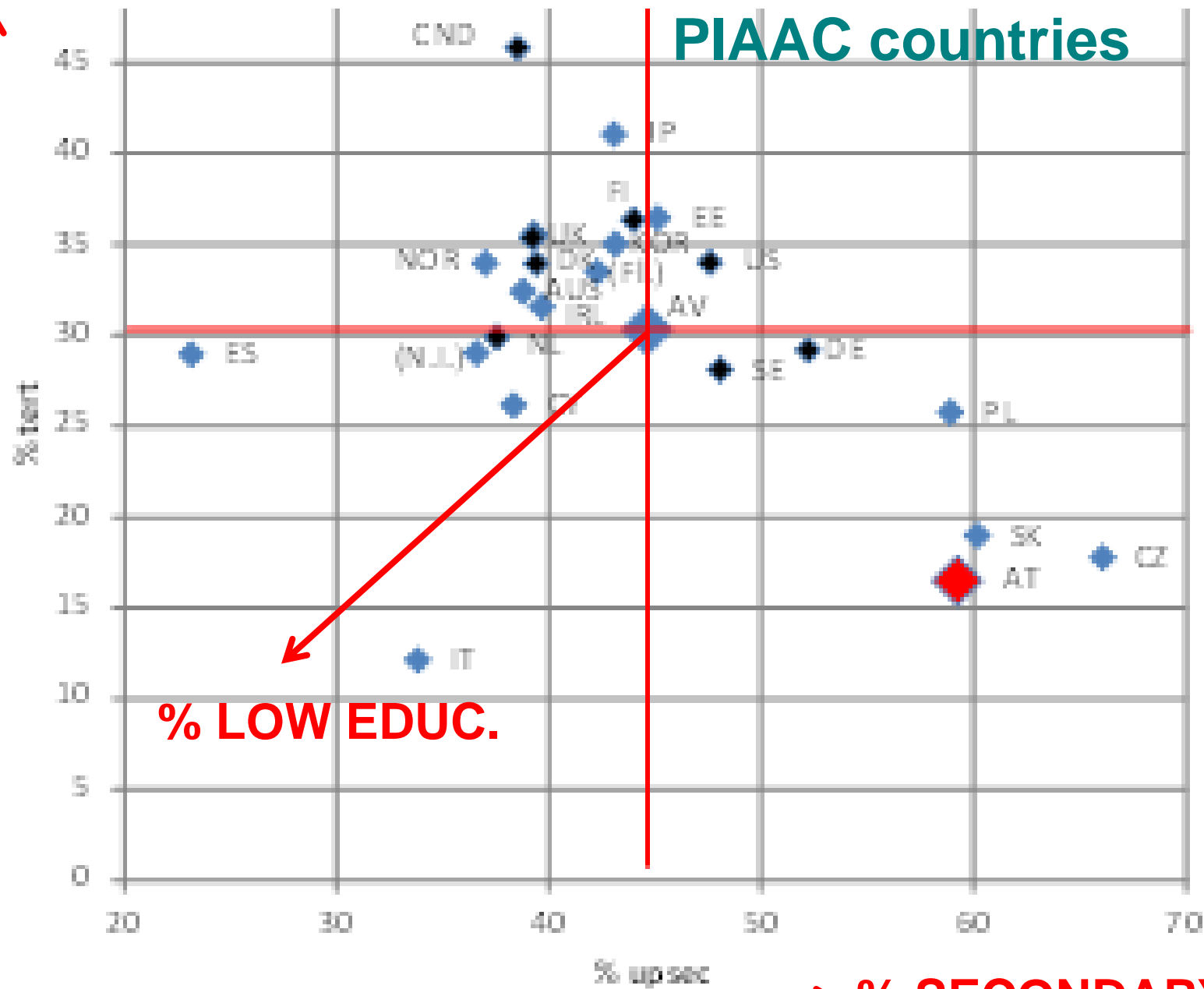
STRUCTURE

- differentiated structure from age 10 (very early)
- one of the highest proportions of vocational education
- 'DUALISM': strong apprenticeship and strong full-time vocational schools
- long and narrow HE with university dominating

% TERTIARY



**Educational structure
PIAAC countries**

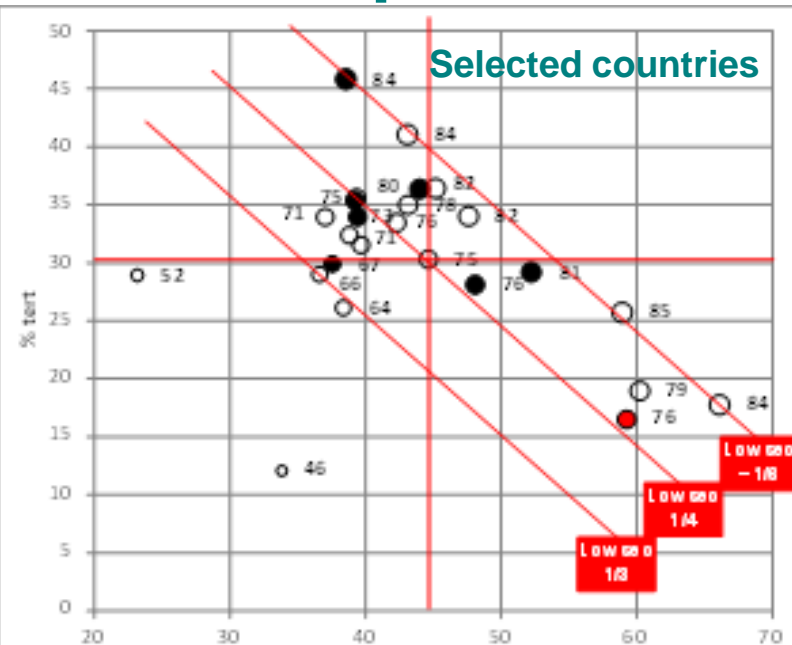
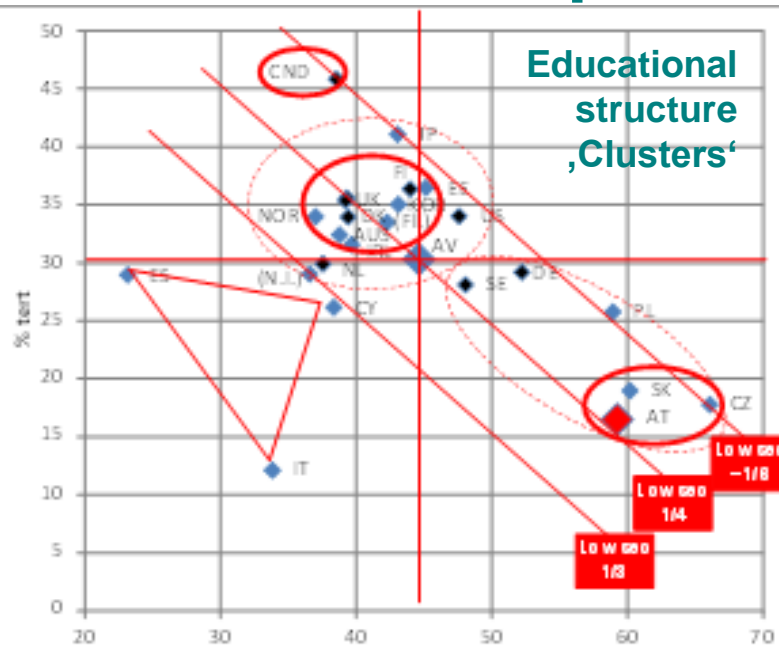


% LOW EDUC.

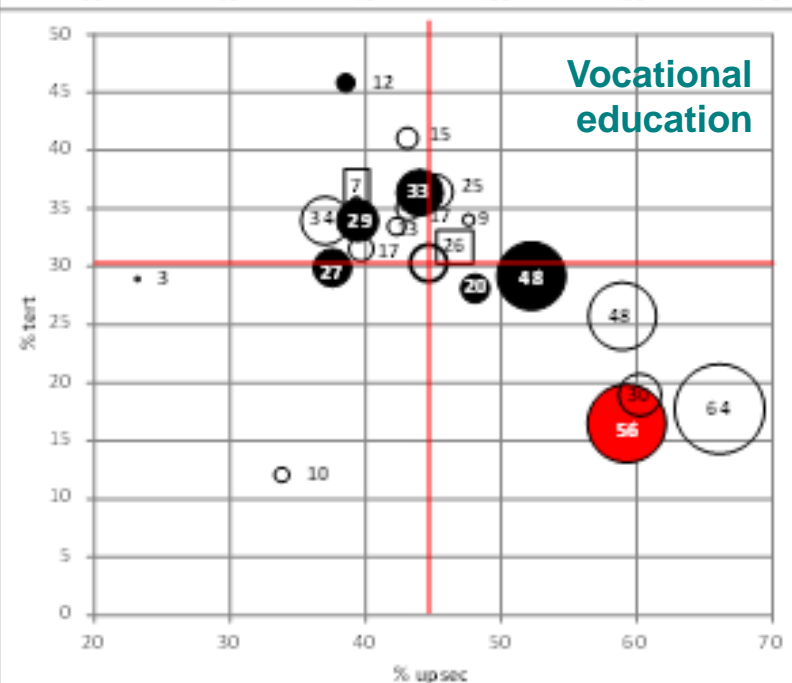
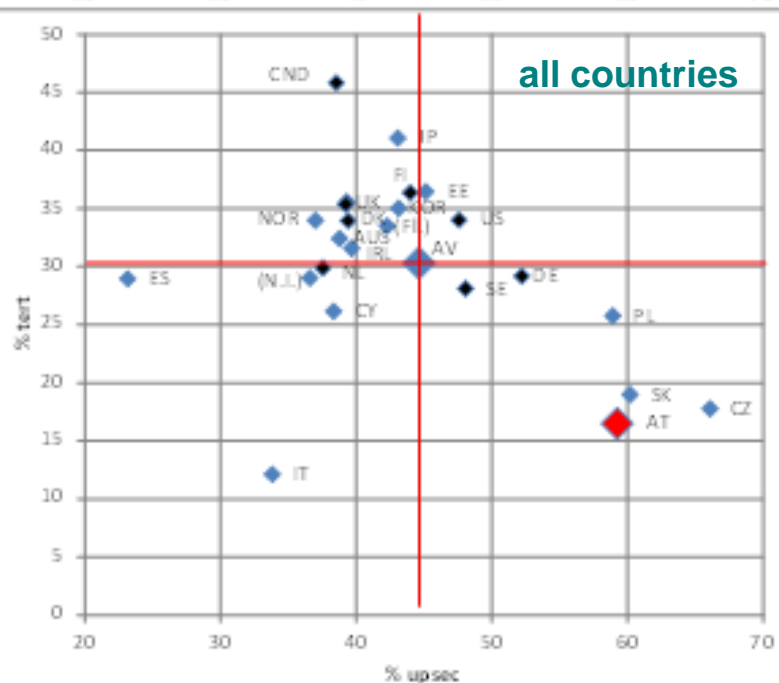


→ % SECONDARY

'exceptional' Austrian position



3 DIM
%tert
%obst



%beruf

results: cycles of evolving heating up / cooling out - dynamics

- gradual introduction of ,cooling out‘ in **compulsory education** preceding VET; mix of pre-selection (AHS, tracked Hauptschule, ability grouped Hauptschule) and recently increasing self-selection in individualised ,Neue Mittelschule‘
- long-term pattern of **expansion of tracked VET**: mix of pre-selection (AHS) and heating up by the ,up-grading‘ quantitative shift from bottom apprenticeship towards higher level VET colleges
- social composition in VET-tracks and social reproduction: **sponsored reproduction** ups (AHS) // **achievement-related upward mobility** (BHS) // reproduction lows by **failure/cooling out**
- **institutional mechanisms of reproduction**: complex mixture, shift from ,generalised heating up‘ towards increased ,cooling out‘?
- VET and **higher education**: basically pre-selection, means heating up at secondary level, unclear mix of cooling out+open failure in HE

gradual introduction of ,cooling out' in compulsory education

- **Cooling out:** self-selection instead of predetermined tracking
- Tracking at lower secondary level changed...
 - from three tracks as schooltypes until 1920s...
 - to two (+one) schooltypes including three tracks until 1970/80s
 - to two schooltypes including 2 tracks including 3 achievement levels until 2000s
 - to two tracks with internal differentiation currently into the future

Change: 1920s

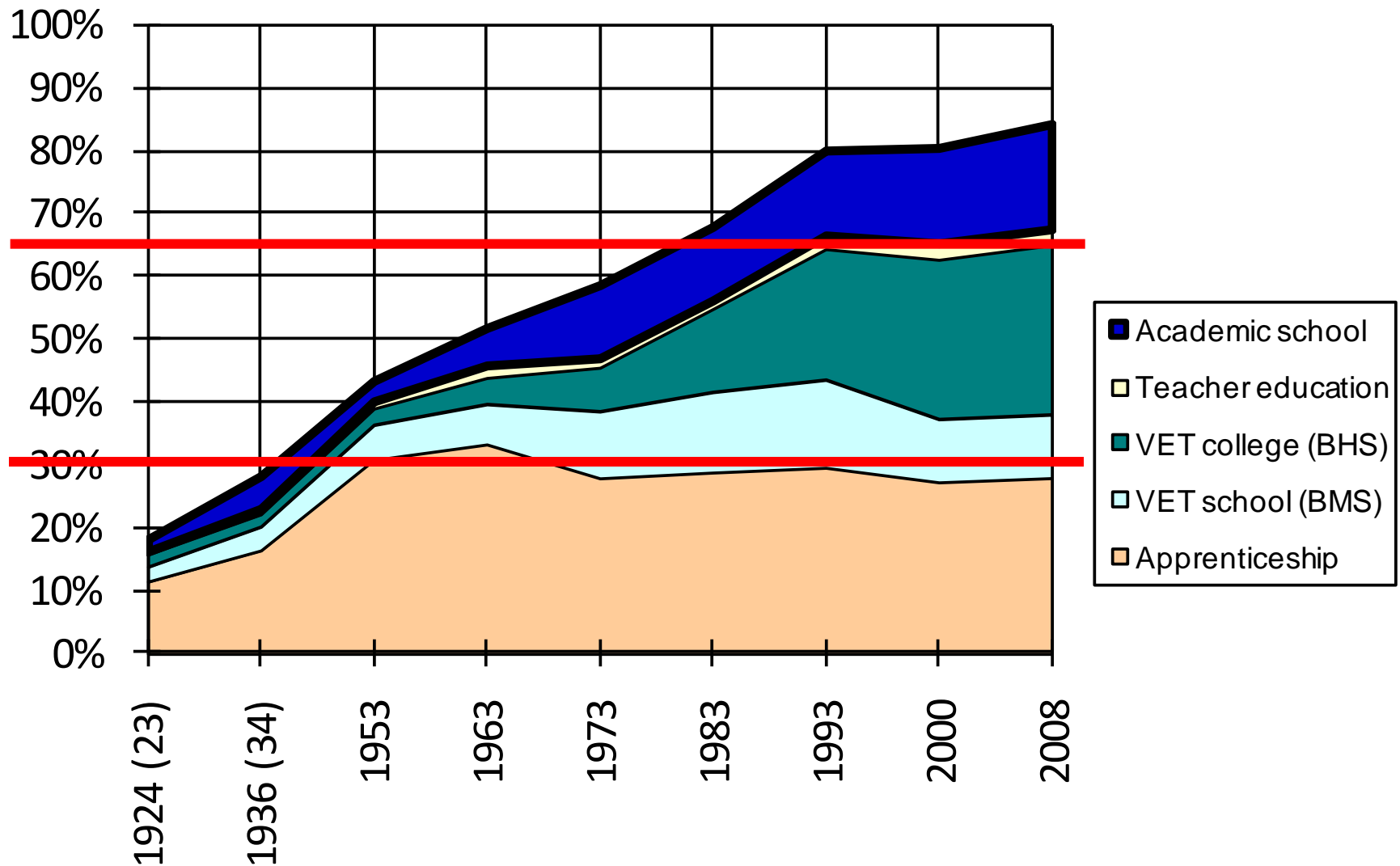
Academic ,elite'

Bürgerschule

Primary school
upper cycle

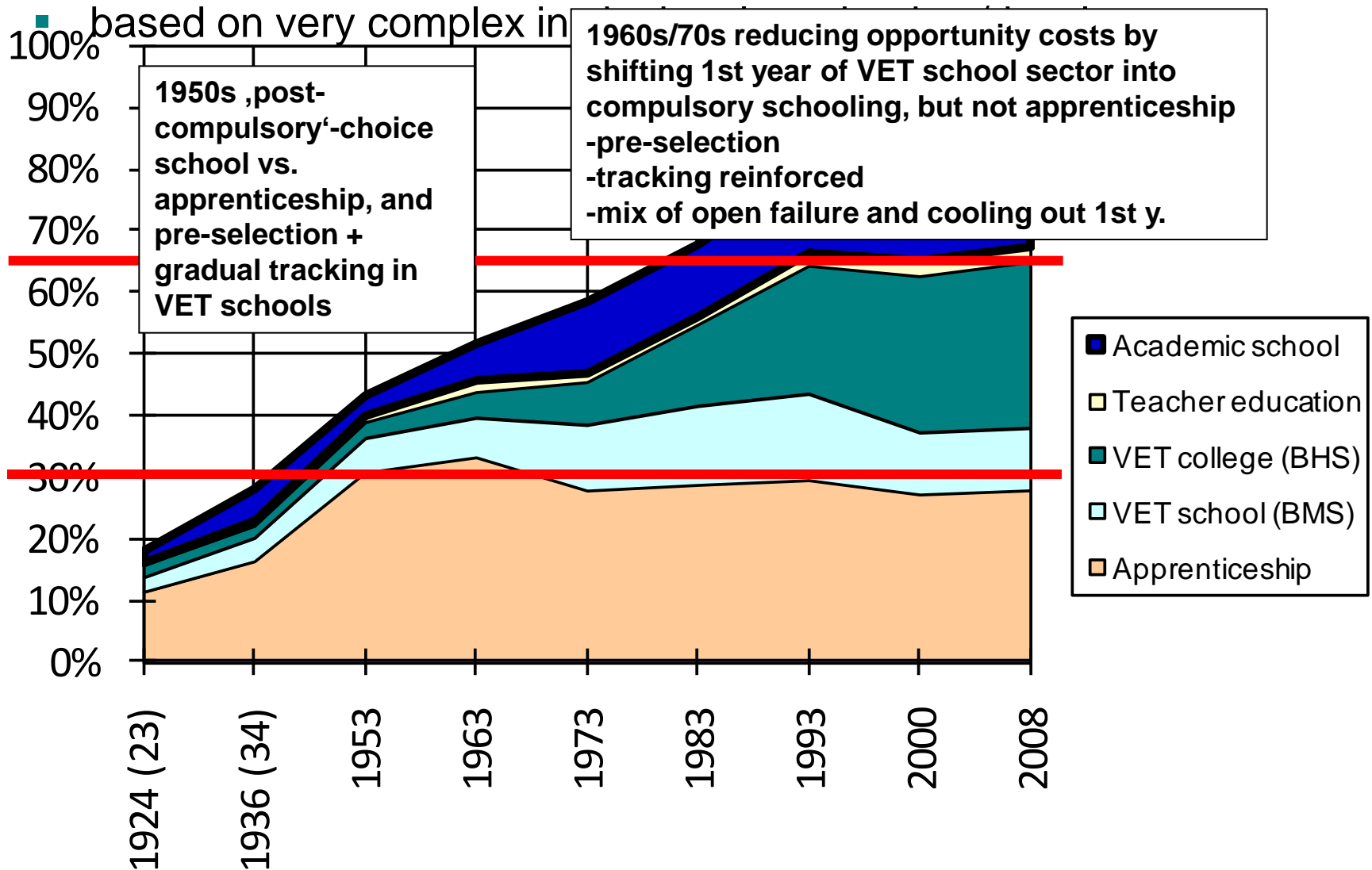
3 school types

long-term pattern of expansion of VET (1924-2008, 4-5 generations)

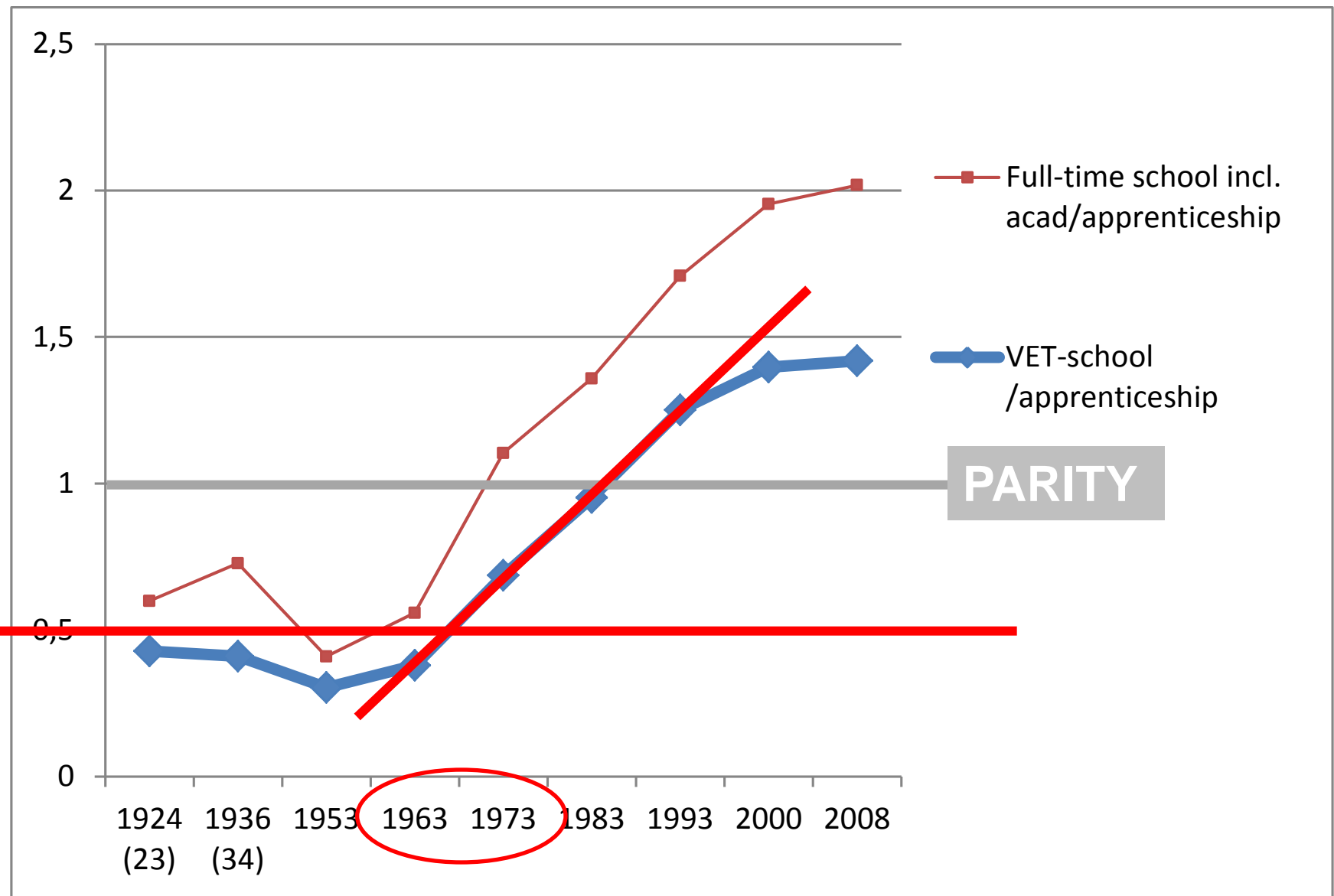


complex mixture of mechanisms in VET

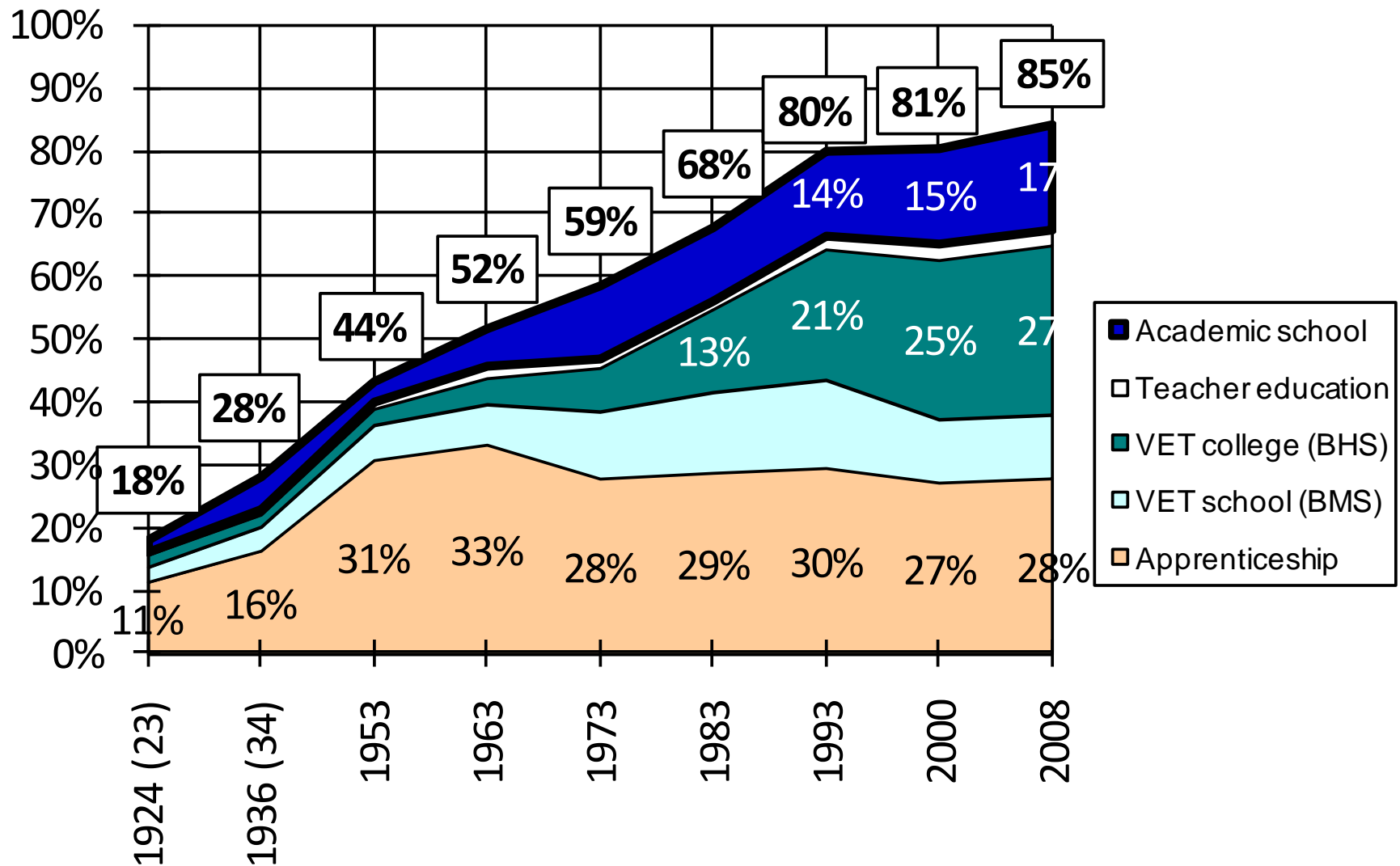
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Proportion full-time (VET) school/ apprenticeship

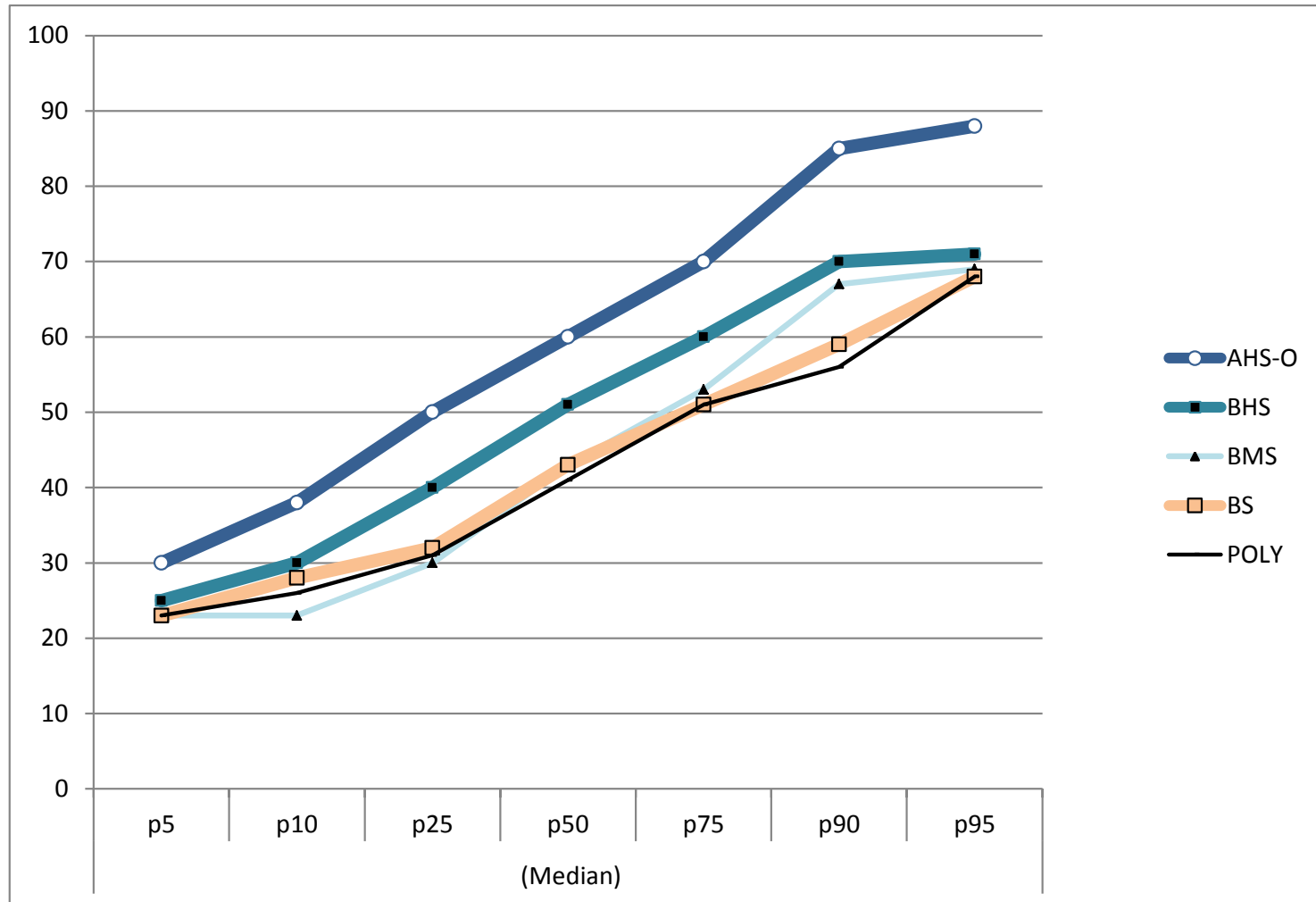


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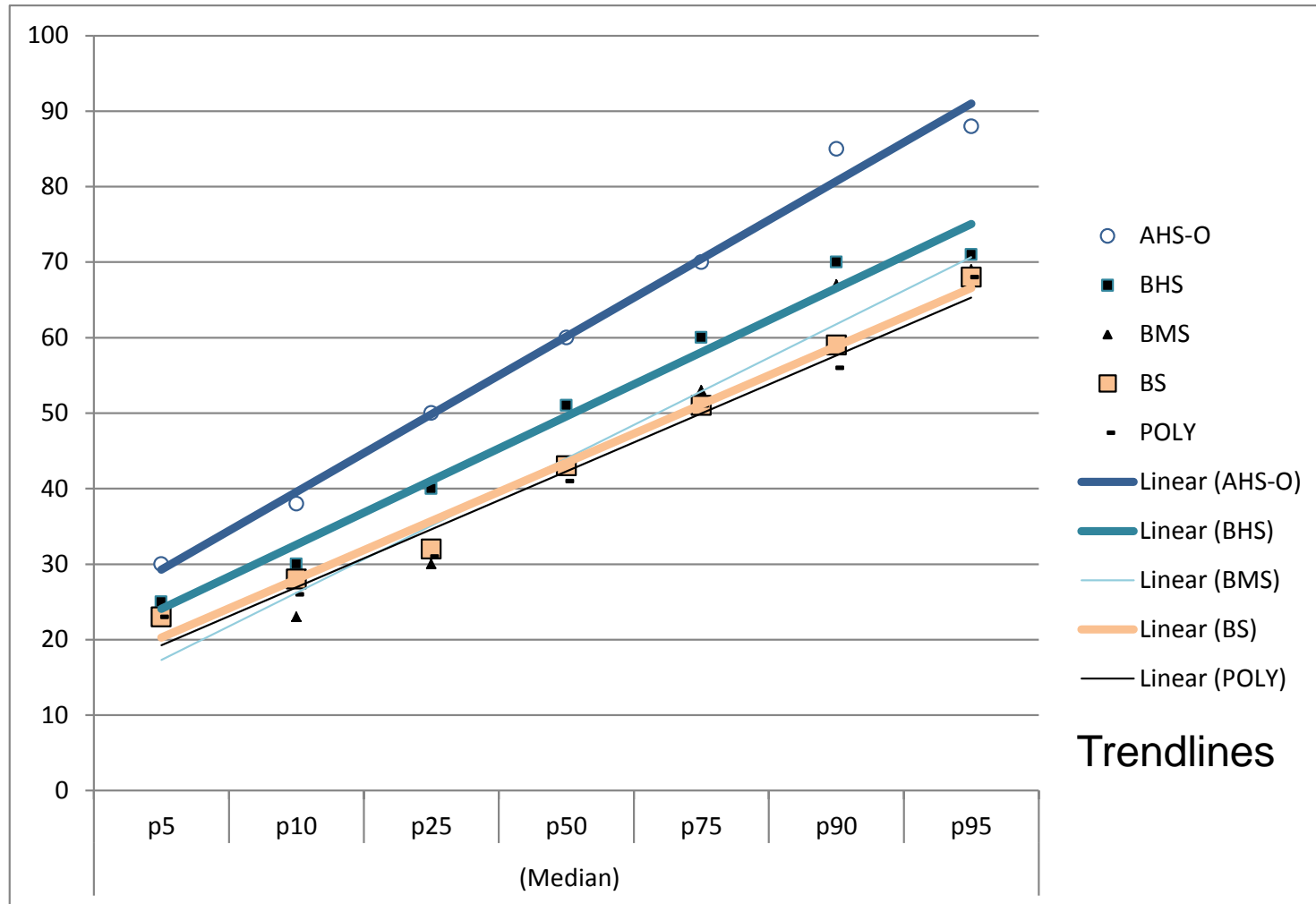
social composition in VET-tracks (PISA09)

- Percentiles of parental status index of 15 year old youth in ET tracks at upper secondary level, based on PISA 2009 ISEI



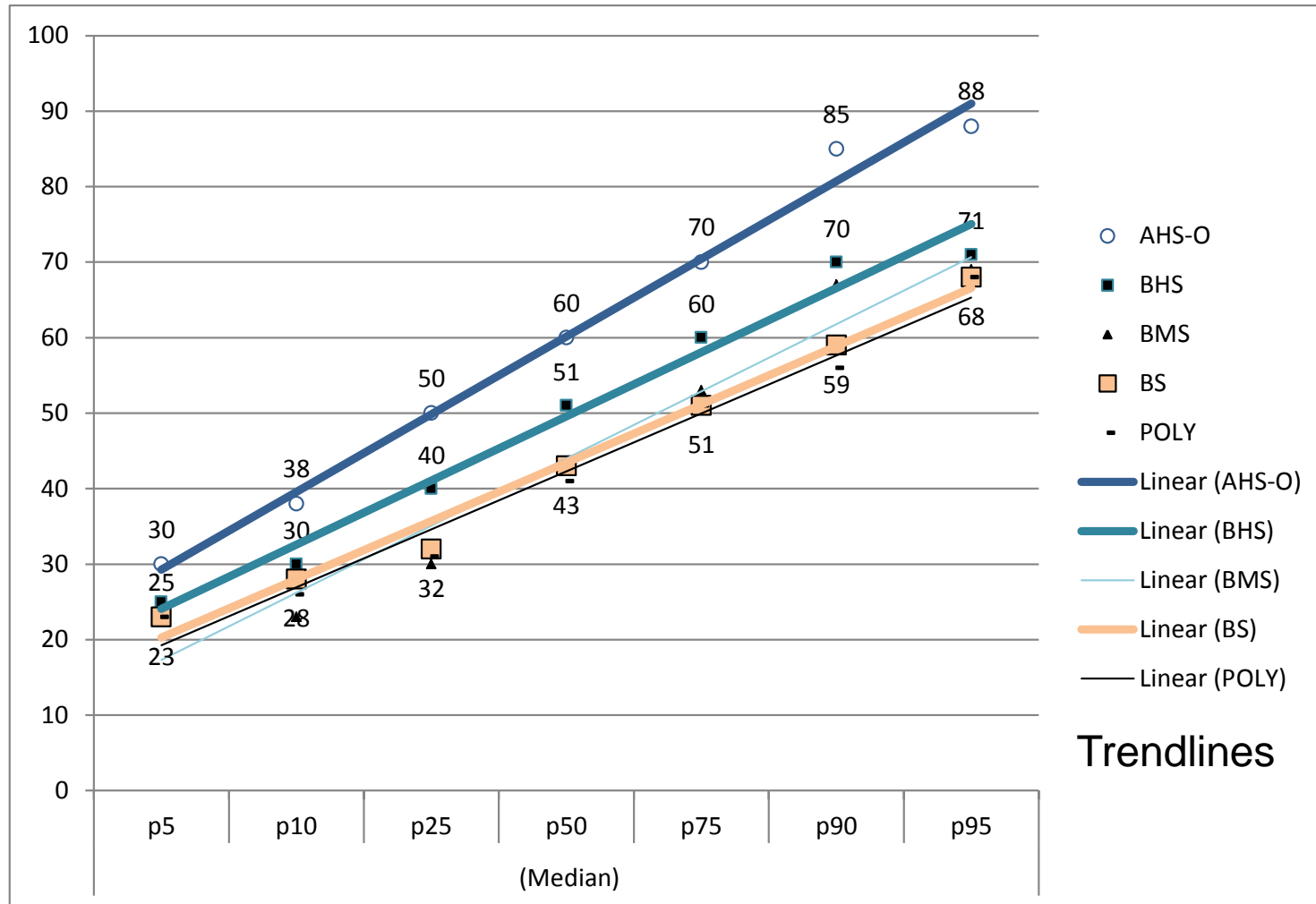
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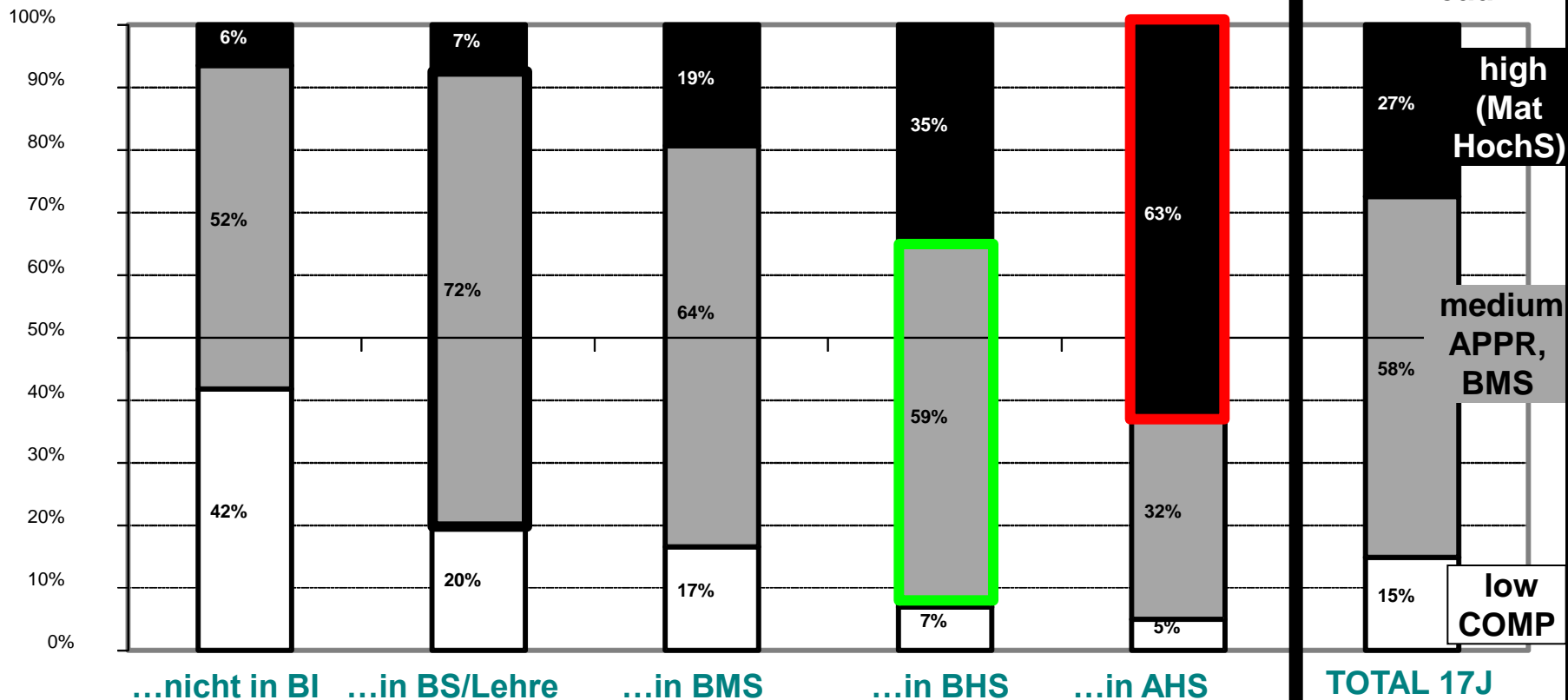
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17y in VET-tracks by education of head HH...

2009-11 LFS-own calculation IHS-equi



**APPR: reprd. med
~3/4**

- tend. increase
- males stronger

**BHS: upward
~2/3**

- stagnant
- females stronger

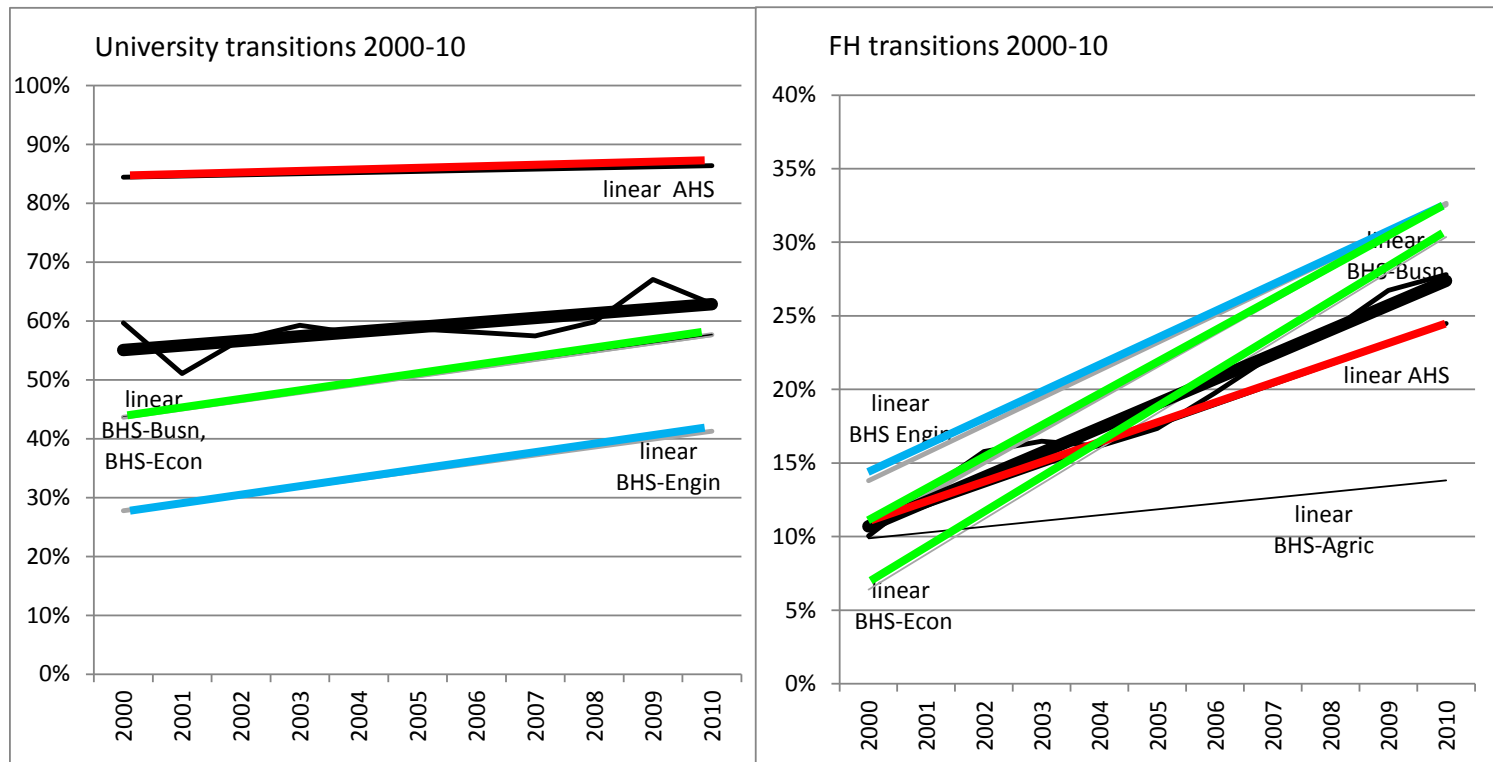
**AHS: reproduction ups
60% - 2/3**

- tend. increase
- males stronger

Source own

relation VET – higher education

- basically access to HE through pre-selection, with some shift from previous institutions (AHS, BHS) to entrance selection (FH, many studies at university)...
- ...transition from VET colleges to HE is a realistic option ...



relation VET – higher education

- basically access to HE through pre-selection, with some shift from previous institutions (AHS, BHS) to entrance selection (FH, many studies at university)...
- ...transition from VET colleges to HE is a realistic option ...
- ...however, subsequently, also a complex mixture of mechanisms exists, with a high amount of drop out, which might be attributed
 - to some extent to **open failure** and
 - to some extent also to **cooling out**
 - how far the new Bologna-structure might be attributed to **streaming** and/or **upstream-movement of selection**

concluding remarks

- ...from the interpretive application of the approach the ,heating up' – ,cooling out' dynamic appears as a very general concept that seems widely applicable...
- ...one question could be if it is too widely applicable, and thus would not contribute so much to understanding as it seems...
- ...another question is which data and methodology would be necessary to ,prove' the approach by better evidence...
- ...institutional devices are always difficult to prove, as they could work behind the purposes of the actors, and also without their knowledge...
- ...so the analysed mechanisms in Austria were not deliberately chosen, and it seems that the advocates of counselling today are not aware about being a key element in the cooling out process

The End



Material

