

Discussion

Learning from the Nordic Countries: what and how? An outside view

Lorenz Lassnigg

(lassnigg@ihs.ac.at; www.equi.at)

Discussion to Symposium at ECER

“The future of VET: Learning from the Nordic Countries”

Sept 8-11 2015, ECER'15 Budapest

what to learn from NC?

- Learning something new:
 - what did we learn in the past?
...that **comprehensive education** for increasing equality/equity is not only desirable but possible to be implemented, and who wants to achieve these goals would have to follow...
 - what is new?
we learn about **dilemmas** in this education policy/politics, and finding ways to solve them
- Which dilemmas?
 - improving linkage to employment/labour market vs. higher education
 - promoting inclusiveness vs. attracting ambitious students/supporters
 - simple measures/policies vs. complex problems (example: drop out)
 - deliberate aims vs. unintended consequences (current policies - past policies...)
- Approach towards solution (recognise, escape, compromise)
 - ...dilemma has no solution > rethinking the problem and its causes
 - ...hybridisation, interesting Norwegian paper question:
A hybrid system, an amalgamation or a compound

how to learn?

- ‚natural experiment‘: analysing problems and different solutions
 - share social and political traditions / developed divergent models
 - DK-S: non-academic students vs. higher education; school vs. apprenticeship*
 - FI,S-DK,NO: detracking upper secondary education by comprehensive schools vs work-based learning*
 - FI-others: voc.school + univ.applied science*
 - NO: liberal policy by social democrats*
 - > *unified VET system containing large heterogeneity, old practices persist*
- how are the problems posed? What are the concepts ‚producing‘ the dilemmas?
 - ‚parity of esteem‘
 - weaker students, non-academic youth
 - inclusion-attraction
 - logic of reforms
- other key concepts
 - path-dependency
 - ‚deconstructing systems‘? hybrid; amalgam; compound?

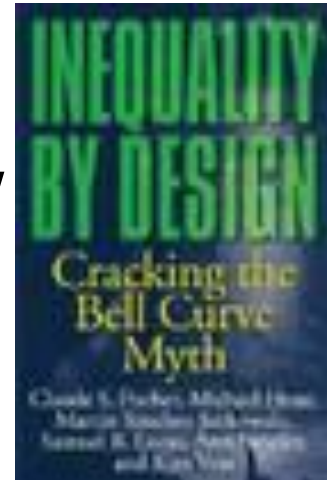
questions, discussion

- do you need to have a comprehensive structure to be able to learn from Nordic countries?
 - conservatives (might) learn that comprehensiveness does not work...
 - what occurs with inequality if universal access is reached at some level?
 - > *EMI, cooling out*
- are there hidden assumptions in the argument(s)? are there common arguments?
 - dilemmas of inclusiveness vs. attractiveness > ‚fact‘ or assumption?
 - policy shift against unintended consequences of former policies
 - ‚micro-level-agents do not want inequality‘ > is this a hidden assumption > means
- which concepts, aspects are not considered explicitly, but might shift thinking in different directions?
 - liberal vs. reproductive explanation of inequality > unintended vs. intended
 - dilemma or class struggle > Lucas EMI
 - structure/practice; micropolitics, agency
 - questioning the ‚parity of esteem‘ rhetoric > too voluntaristic, too shortcutting...

'effectively maintained inequality'

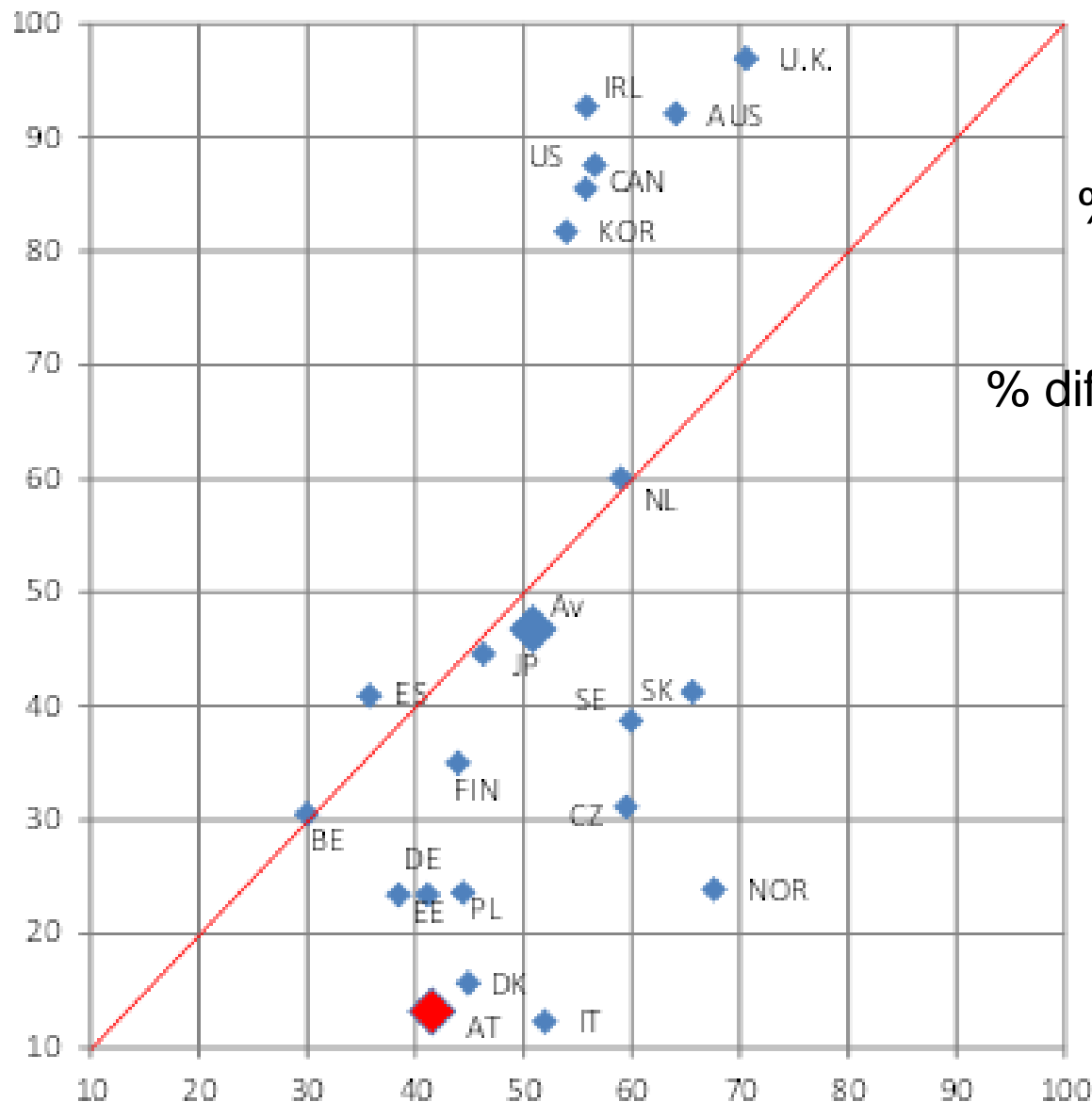
samuel r. lucas

- **question**: what happens with inequality, if universal participation is achieved? EMI says that new forms of distinctive programmes (tracking) will emerge...
- the offspring of the ,upper' strata of society (,Elites', Upper Class, ...) always draw new ,surpluses' within the (always) existing context of inequity, injustice/inequity reproduces automatically as people (must) take part in the game (Illusio)...
- if equality is (hypothetically) reached at some point in the education system, the upper strata succeed in seeking new lines of distinction, e.g. by creating distinctions within the comprehensive entity/level/institution etc.
 - 2001: **Effectively Maintained Inequality (EMI)**, Samuel R. Lucas
<http://www.samuelroundfieldlucas.com/>
 - Samuel R. Lucas: Effectively Maintained Inequality: Education Transitions, Track Mobility, and Social Background Effects. American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 106, No. 6 (May 2001), pp. 1642-1690



,tracking'-structures acc. PISA (principals answ.)

% stream differentiation within school



% differentiation within class

not visible in PISA variables

■ **vertical:**
% stream within schools

■ **horizontal:**
% differentiation within class

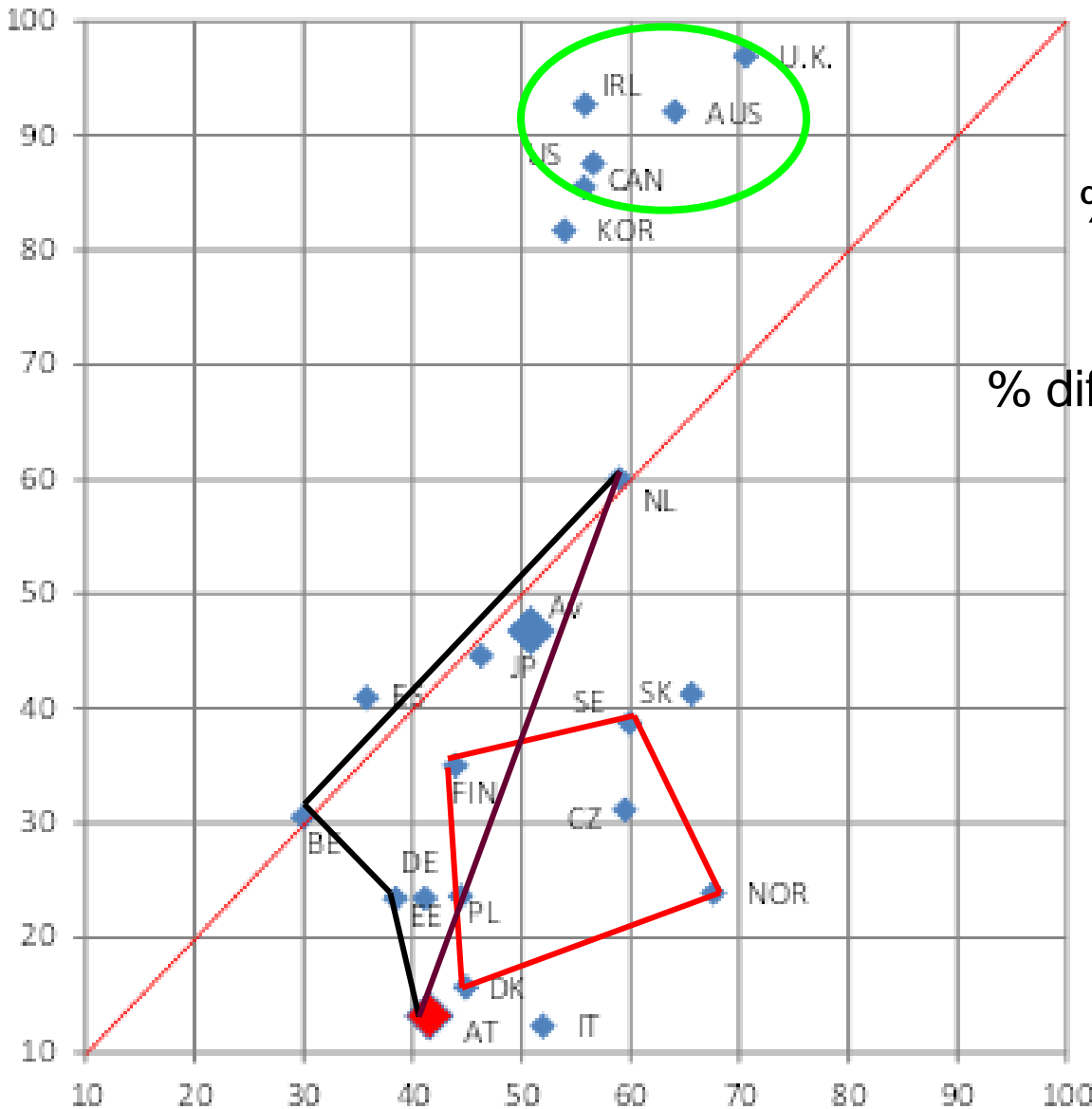
■ **,tracking'** in
comprehensive
structures
within school...
(**COVERT**)

■ ...in differentiated
structures
between different
school types
(**OPEN**)

,tracking'-structures acc. (principals answ.)

PISA'09

% stream differentiation within school



% differentiation within class

not visible in PISA variables

■ **vertical:**
% stream within schools

■ **horizontal:**
% differentiation within class

■ **,tracking'** in
comprehensive
structures
within school...
(**COVERT**)

■ ...in differentiated
structures
between different
school types
(**OPEN**)

personal anecdotal evidence

- IPSP programmatic formulation ,conflict': **What is factually the right formulation?**
- formulation: First, educational opportunity is **not everywhere** provided to all.

or

- alternative formulation: ... educational opportunity is **nowhere** provided to all
- eminent group of experts, **what do you think they unanimously decided?**

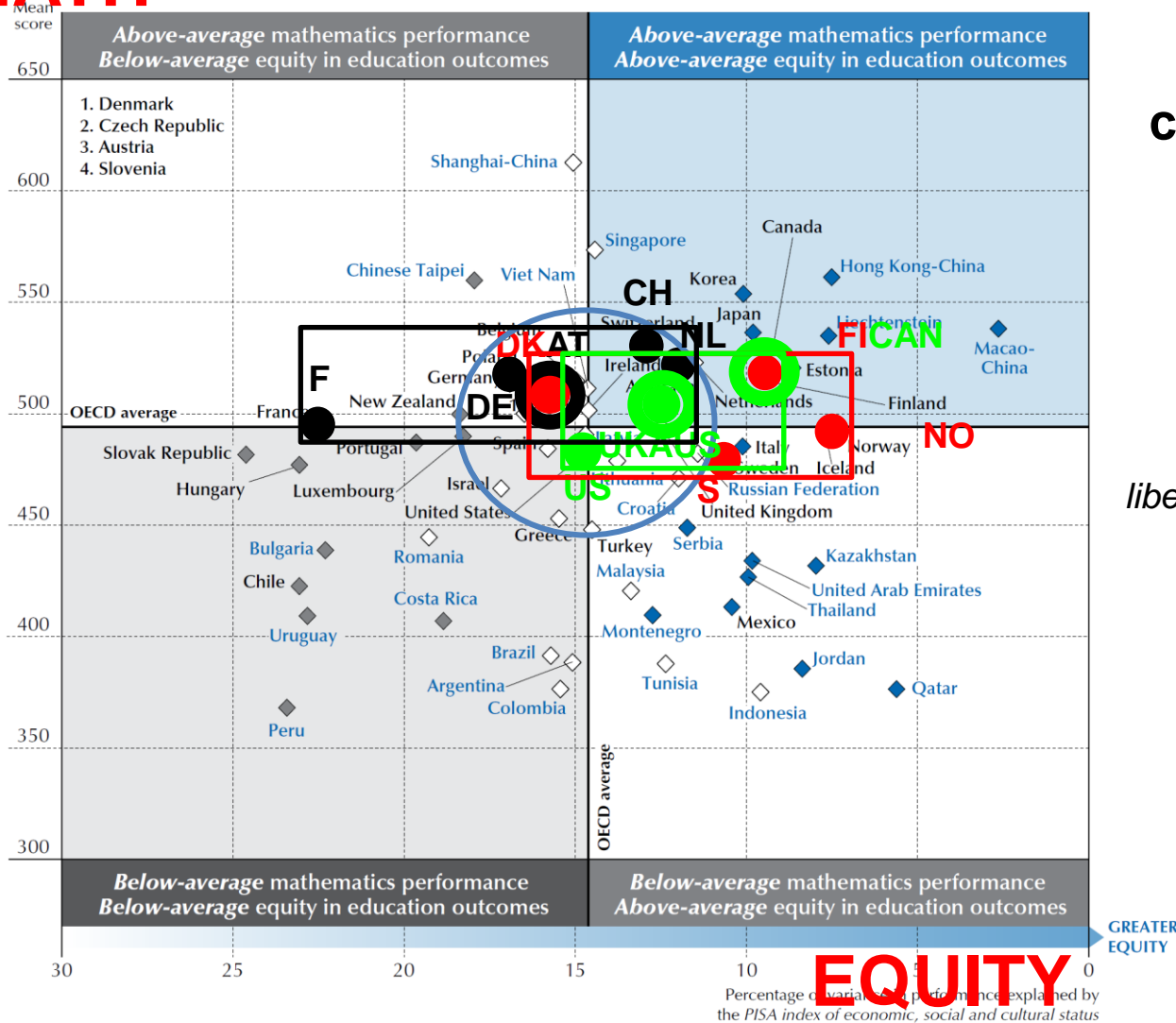
provocative points, questions

- Finland: what does it mean in terms of equity that university access is very selective > is such a sequential path a solution for the dilemmas, see old model by John Roemer...
 - up to a certain point, politically agreed of levelling the playing field,
 - then selective regime radically based on abilities (strictly meritocratic)
- differences between Nordic countries according to pisa results about equity/efficiency

MATH achievement x soc.background

MATH

- ◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is **above** the OECD average
- ◇ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is not statistically significantly different from the OECD average
- ◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is **below** the OECD average



Regimes:
social democratic
corporatist-conserv.
liberal

Positioning

– Overlaps
liberal & corp-cons, MEAN'(n.s.)
achievement small diff

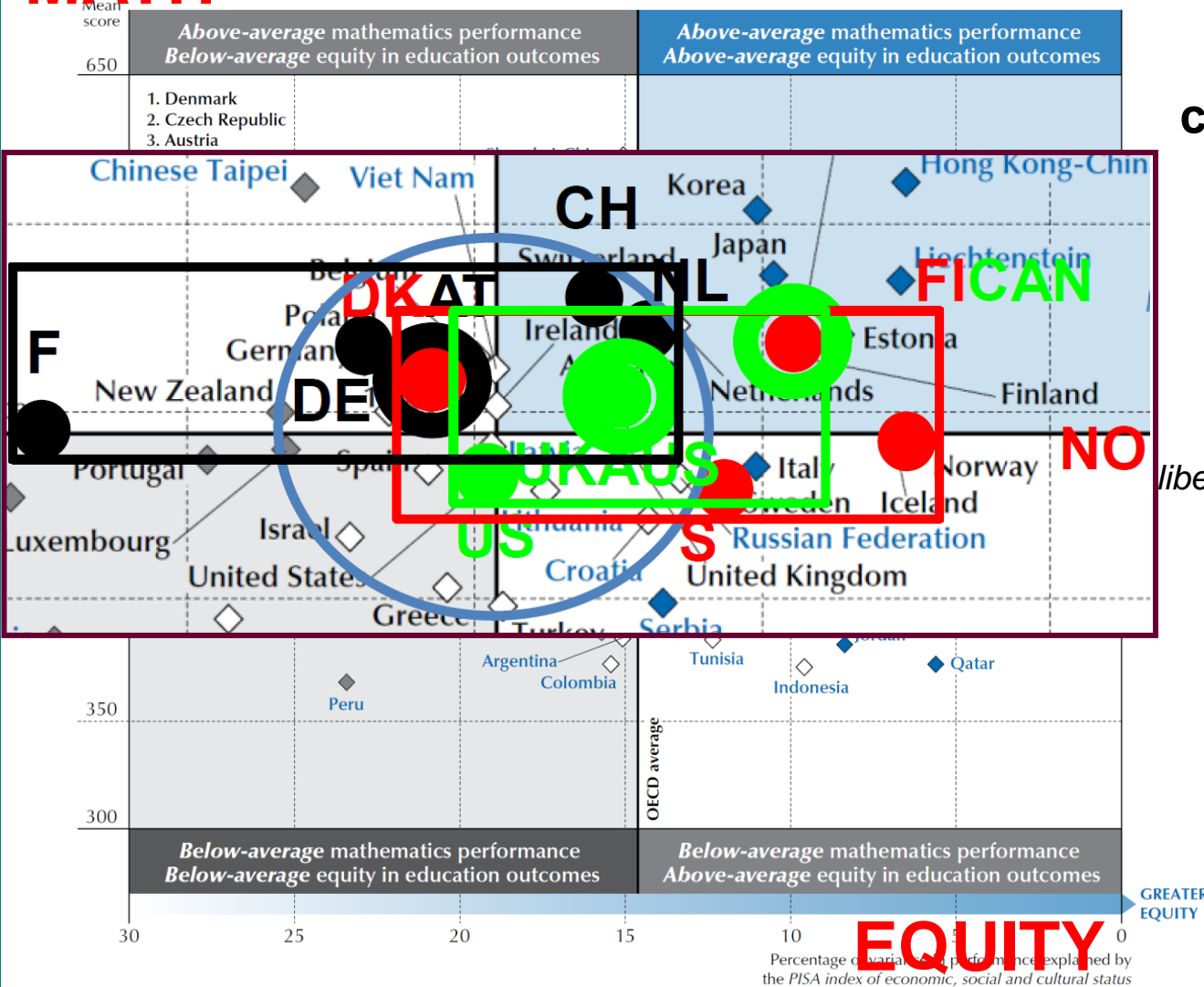
– Range equity
DK vs. others
Liberal inside soc-dem
F vs. others

Student performance and equity

MATH achievement x soc.background

- ◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is **above** the OECD average
- ◇ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is not statistically significantly different from the OECD average
- ◆ Strength of the relationship between performance and socio-economic status is **below** the OECD average

MATH



- Regimes:
social democratic
corporatist-conserv.
liberal

Positioning

- Overlaps
liberal & corp-cons, MEAN (n.s.)
achievement small diff
- Range equity
DK vs. others
Liberal inside soc-dem
F vs. others

Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database, Table II.2.1.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/88922957402>

equality of Opportunity, equity

- John Roemer <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jer39/>



- ‘With no redistribution of income, inequality in the human capital of children in different dynasties persists forever ... In a word, no guarantee exists that democracy will eliminate inequality of opportunity in the long-run.’

John E. Roemer

a simple model of equality of opportunity

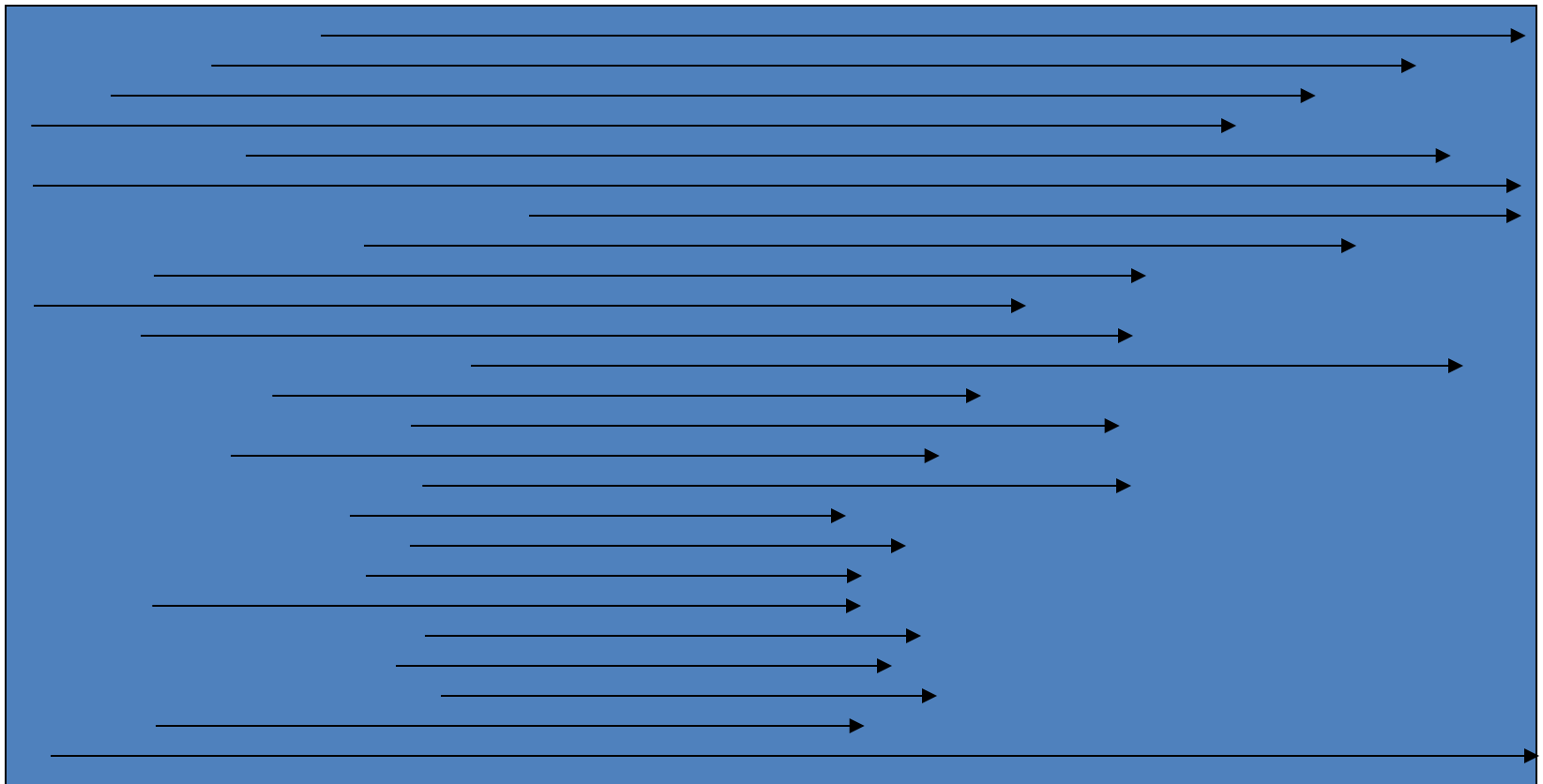
- Basis: John Roemer

- John E. Roemer (1998) *Equality of opportunity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- John E. Roemer (2000) Equality of opportunity. In: Kenneth Arrow, Samuel Bowles & Steven Durlauf (Eds.), *Meritocracy and economic inequality* (p.17-32). Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- John E. Roemer (2002) Equality of opportunity: A progress report. *Social Choice and Welfare* 19: 455–471
- John E. Roemer & Roberto Veneziani (2004) What we owe our children, they their children. *Journal of Public Economic Theory* 6 (5): 637–654.
- **Policy research example:**
Betts, Julian R. and Roemer, John E., Equalizing Educational Opportunity Through Educational Finance Reform (October 1998). UC Davis Working Paper No. 99-08. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=214135> or doi:10.2139/ssrn.214135; DOWNLOAD: <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/000225404.pdf?abstractid=214135&mirid=3>

a simple model of equality of opportunity

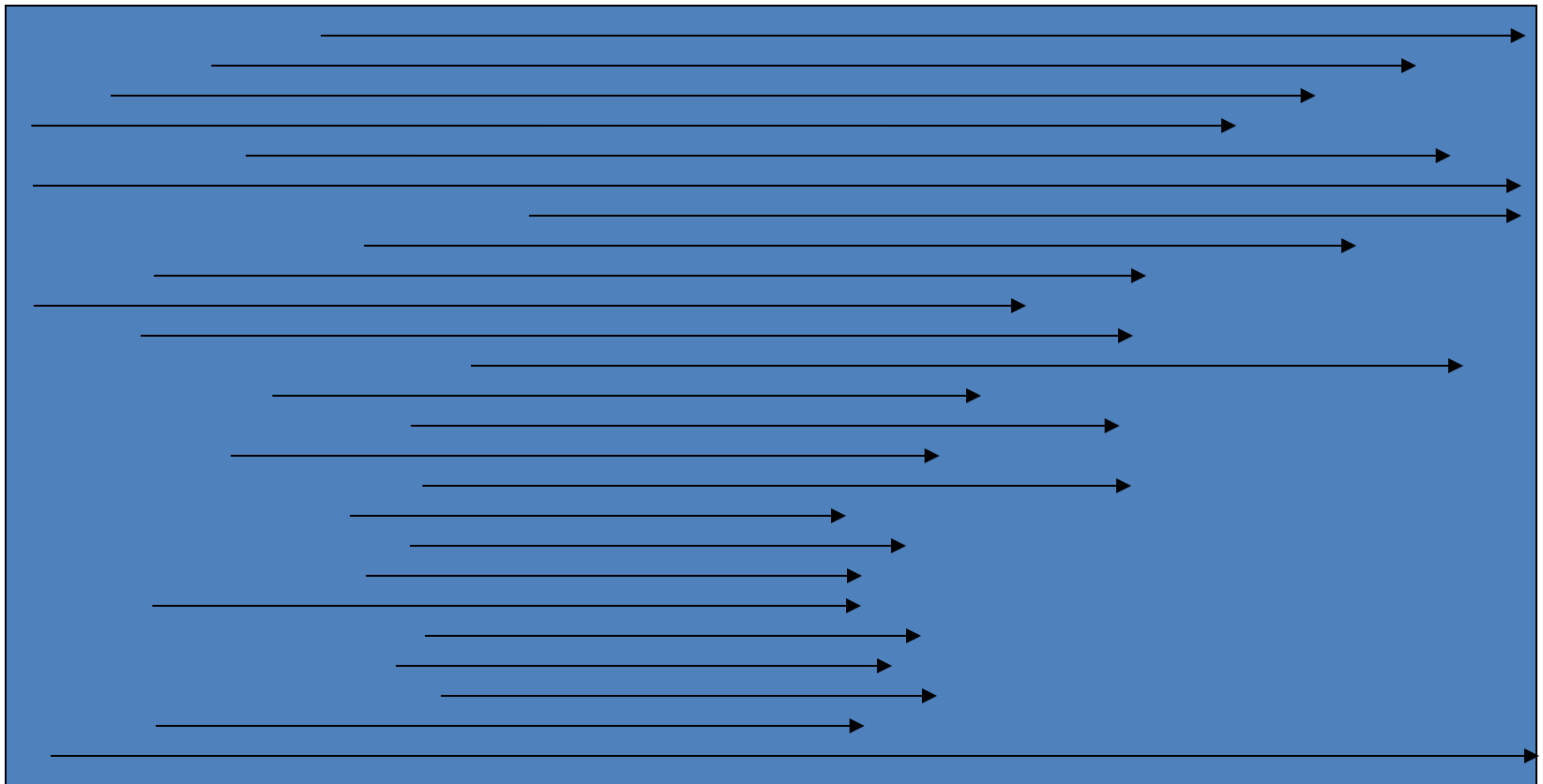
- ‘race’ through education
- 3 dimensions
 - results
 - starting points
 - effort
- 2 policies, both necessary
 - ND non discrimination (no compensation)
 - LPF levelling the playing field (compensation for different starting points)
- key policy parameter
 - point at which the shift from LPF to ND is situated (competition over compensation)
- 2 side conditions, assumptions
 - no equal results
 - no political intervention on effort

a simple model of equality of opportunity



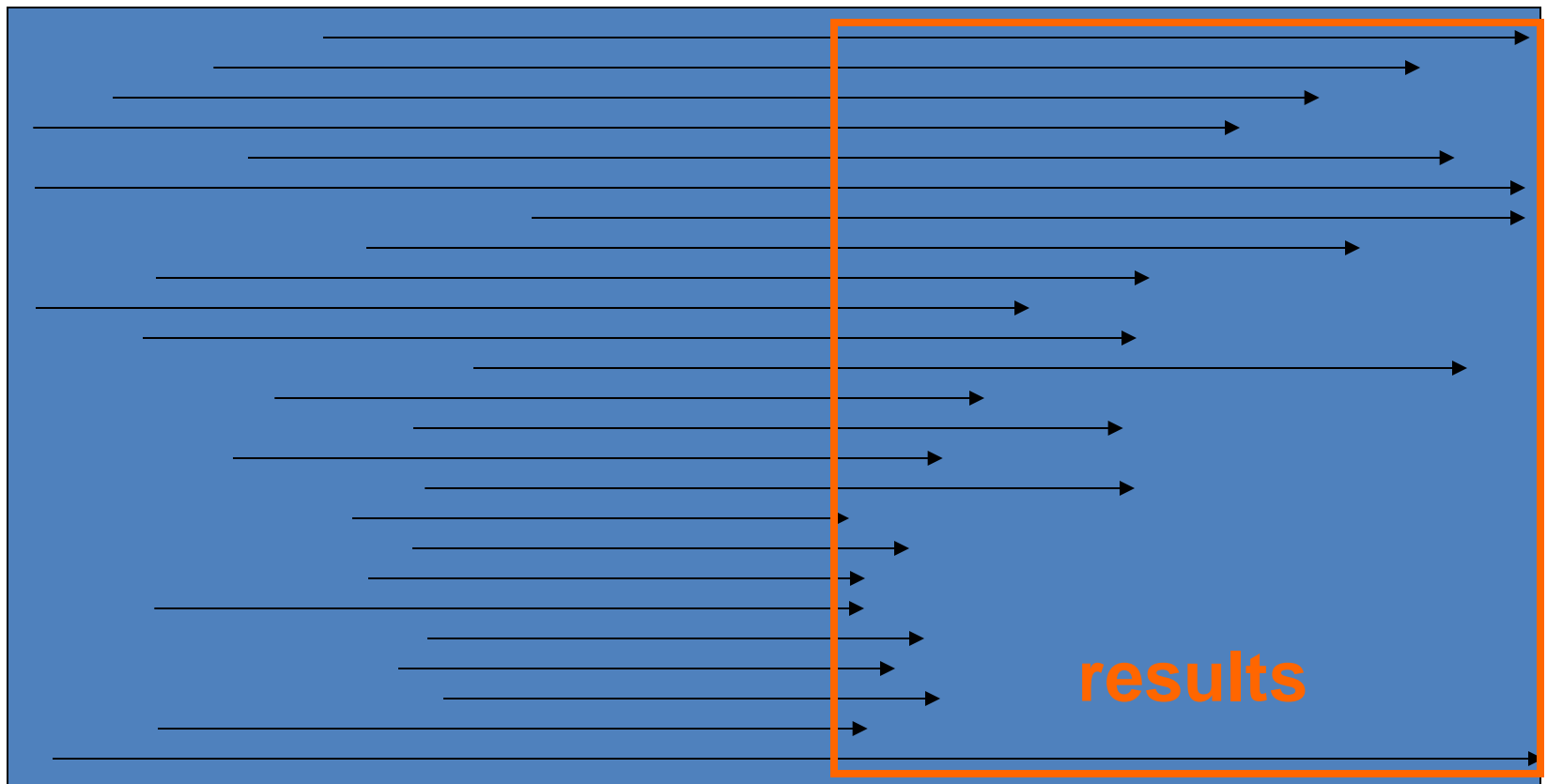
John Roemer

'race' through education system



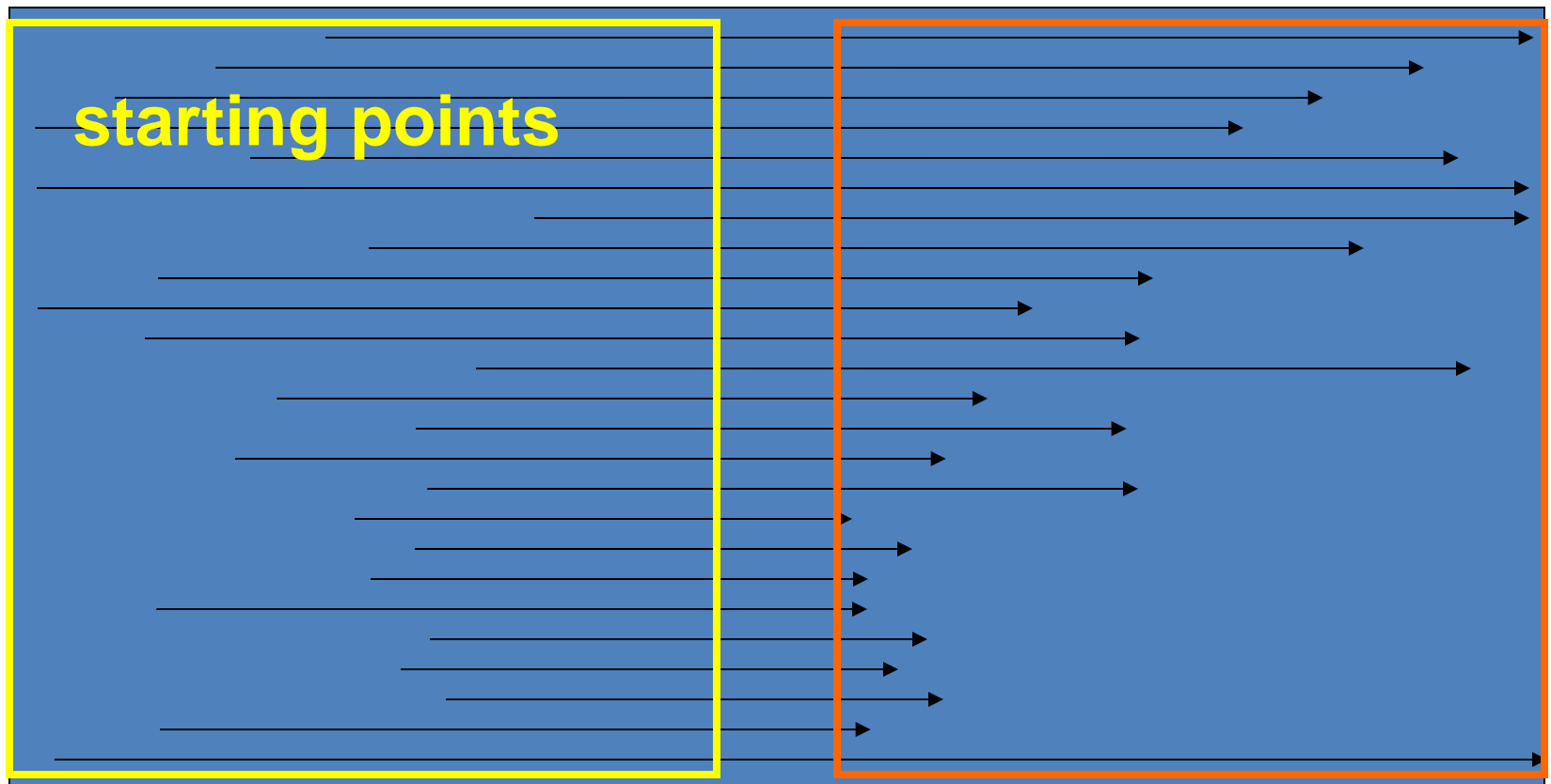
John Roemer

distribution of results

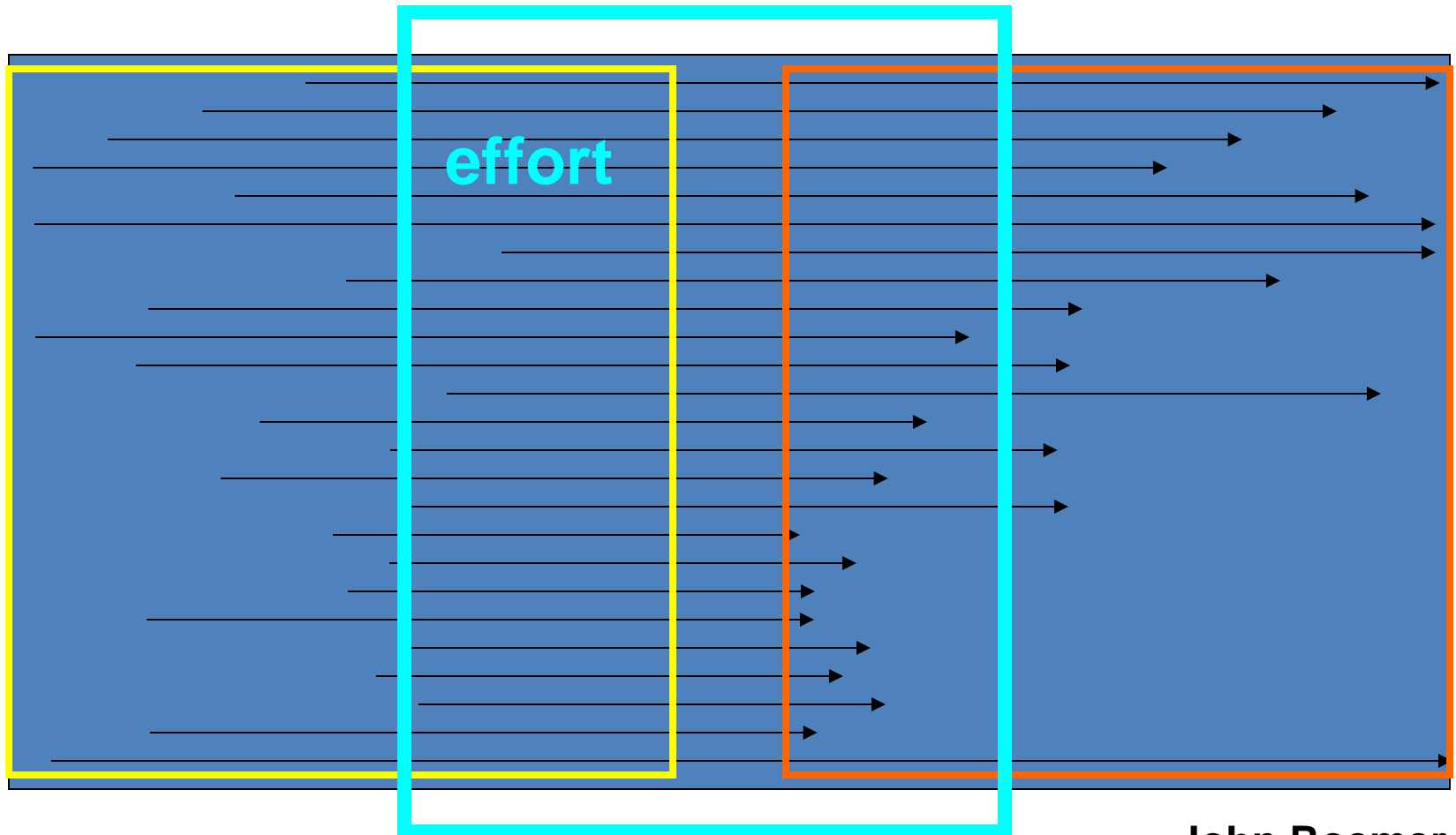


John Roemer

distribution of starting points

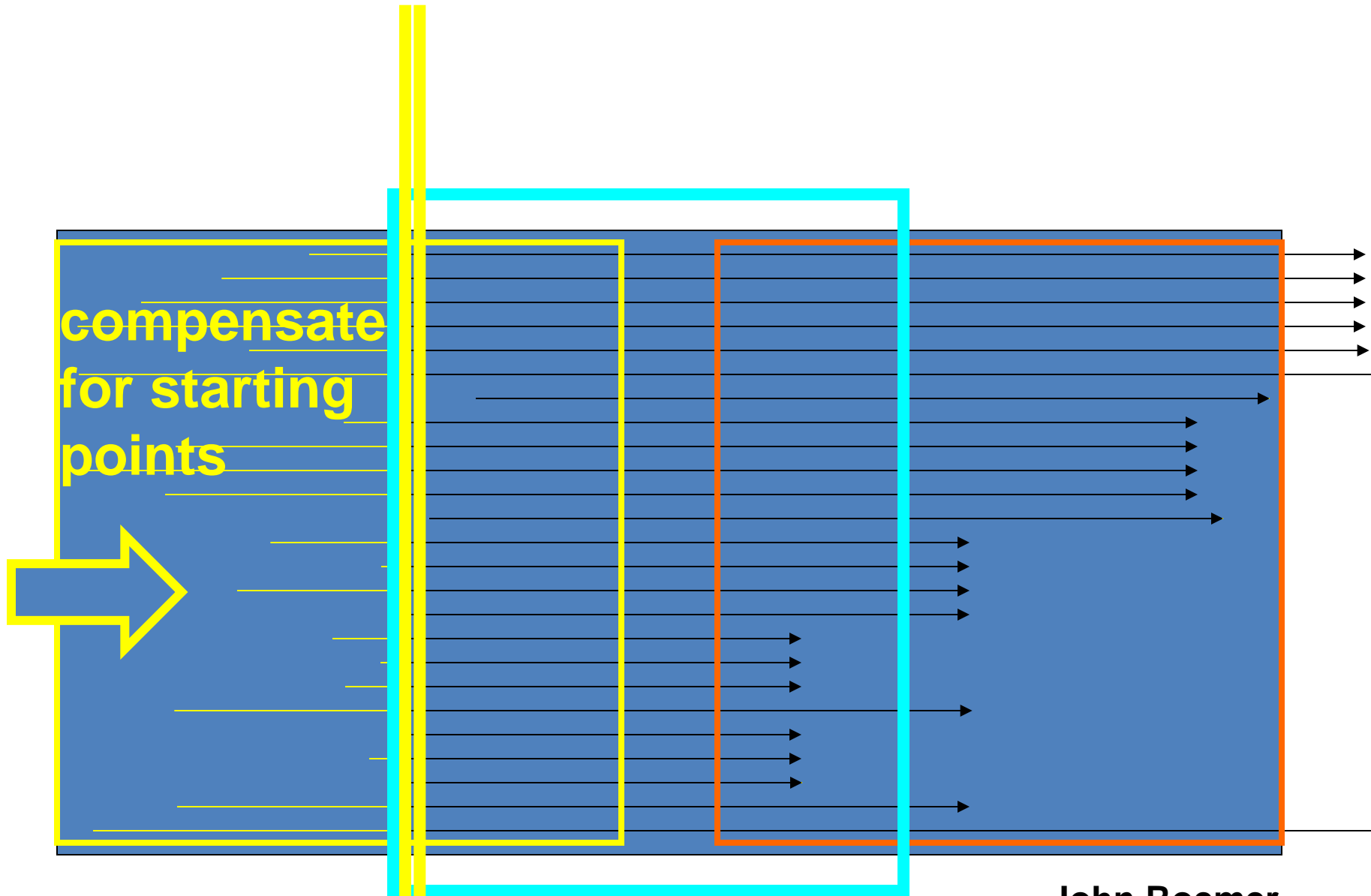


distribution of effort



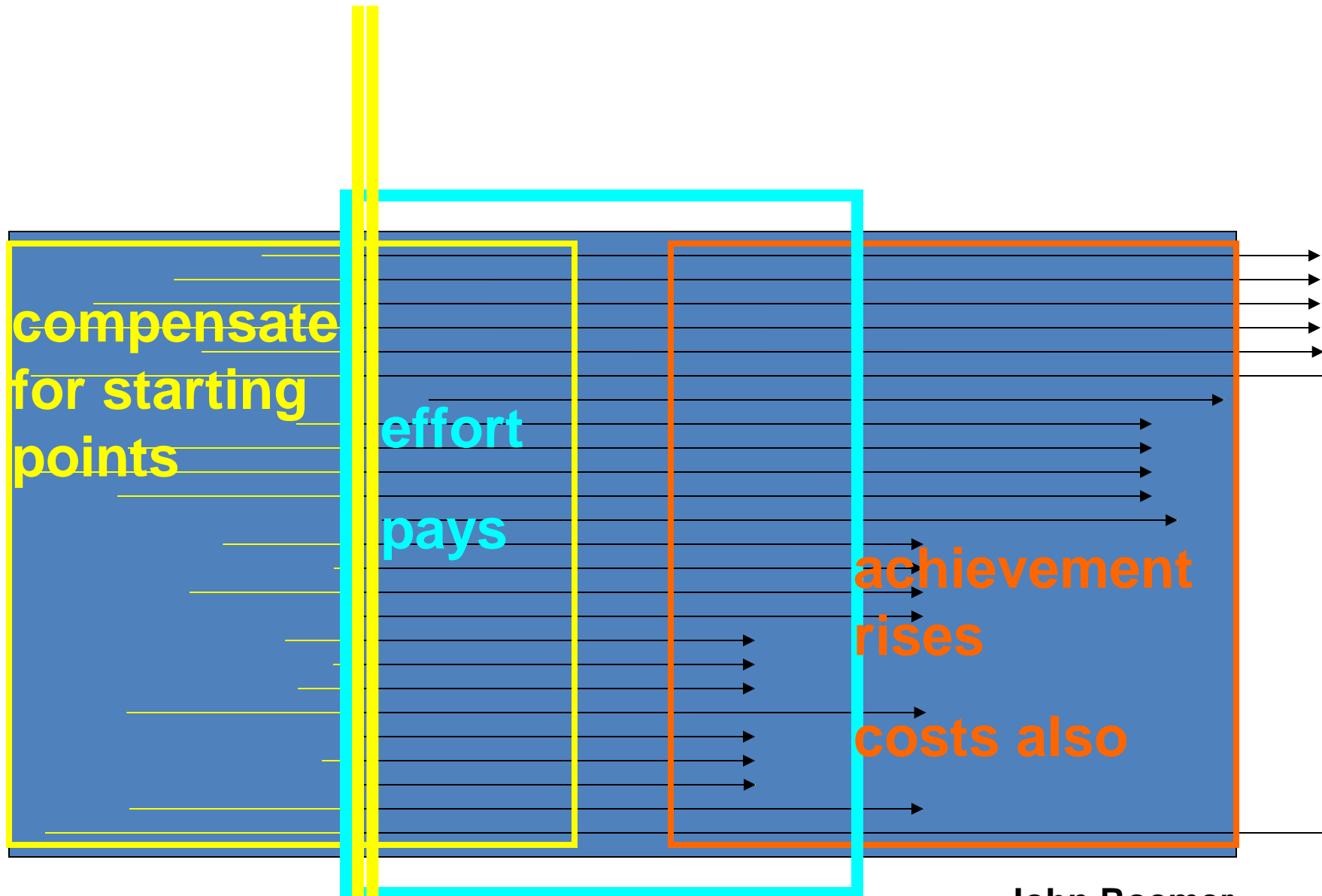
John Roemer

equality of opportunity



John Roemer

equality of opportunity



John Roemer

a simple model of equality of opportunity

- 'race' through education
- 3 dimensions
 - results
 - starting points
 - effort
- 2 policies, both necessary
 - ND non discrimination (no compensation)
 - LPF levelling the playing field (compensation for different starting points)

- key policy parameter
 - point at which the shift from LPF to ND is situated (competition over compensation)

How compensate?

- 2 side conditions, assumptions
 - no equal results
 - no political intervention on effort

a simple model of equality of opportunity

- ‘race’ through education
- 3 dimensions
 - results
 - starting points
 - effort
- 2 policies, both necessary
 - ND non discrimination (no compensation)
 - LPF levelling the playing field (compensation for different starting points)

- key policy parameter
 - point at which the shift from LPF to ND is situated (competition over compensation)

How compensate?

- 2 side conditions, assumptions
 - no equal results
 - no political intervention on effort

micropolitics, pedagogy intervention

...to underline Lucas 2001, 1680

- “Indeed, [...] universality of access may be largely irrelevant to the intensity of class conflict, as the focus of conflict may simply change once access is universal. Further, the results of this analysis, which show that social background continues to matter even in the presence of universal access, gives reason to speculate that the simple extension of universal access to institutions is unlikely to undo the effective power of social resources indexed by common indicators of social background, at least in the United States. This speculation, if true, would greatly complicate efforts to ameliorate the inheritance of social disadvantage, although it of course has no implications either way for the desirability of such efforts.”

...to underline even more Lucas 2001, 1681

- “This suggests that the effects of social background occur in at least two ways:
(1) they determine who completes a level of education if completion of that level is not nearly universal, and
(2) they determine the kind of education persons will receive within levels of education that are nearly universal.
Either way, social background advantages seem to work to effectively and continuously secure for the children of advantage advantaged locations of their own.”

The End



Material

