

Access to higher education: Social impact of admission systems in comparative perspective

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Agenda

- **Research question & previous findings**
 - **Methodology**
 - **Findings**
 - **Discussion**

Agenda

- **Research question & previous findings**

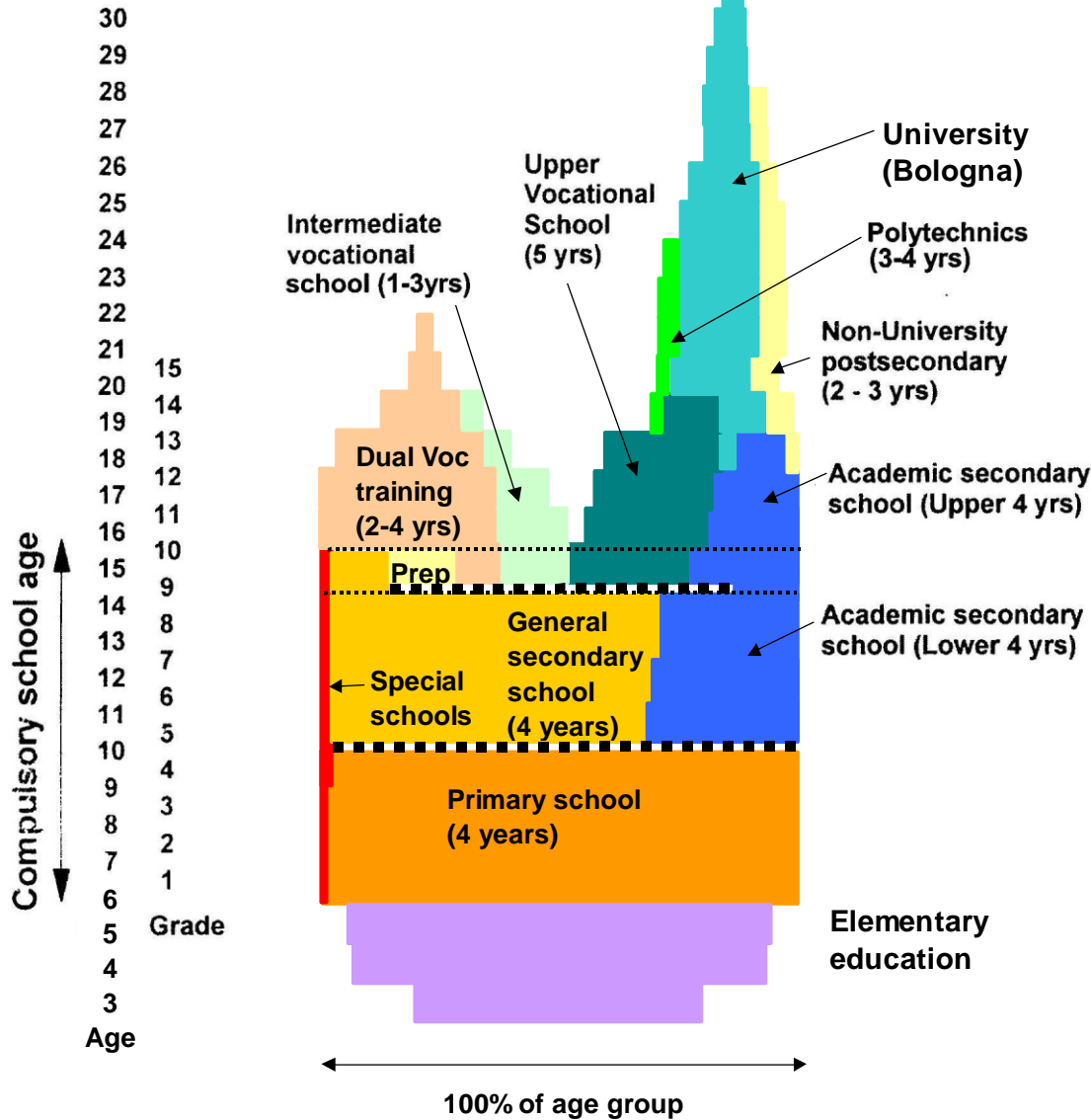
Research questions, purpose

Can we expect, that **new selection procedures at universities** -- in addition to the prevailing system of entitlements based on school completion requirements (“Matura”-examination) -- might **increase social selectivity**?

Are there **different effects** on social selectivity from **different selection/admission procedures**?

Purpose: The present Austrian system of so called “open access” is under hot discussion, and the Rectors’ Conference wanted to initiate a debate about admission procedures and the development of alternatives (commissioned project)

System of Education



Background

Weak H.E.

Strong VET

APPR + FT-School

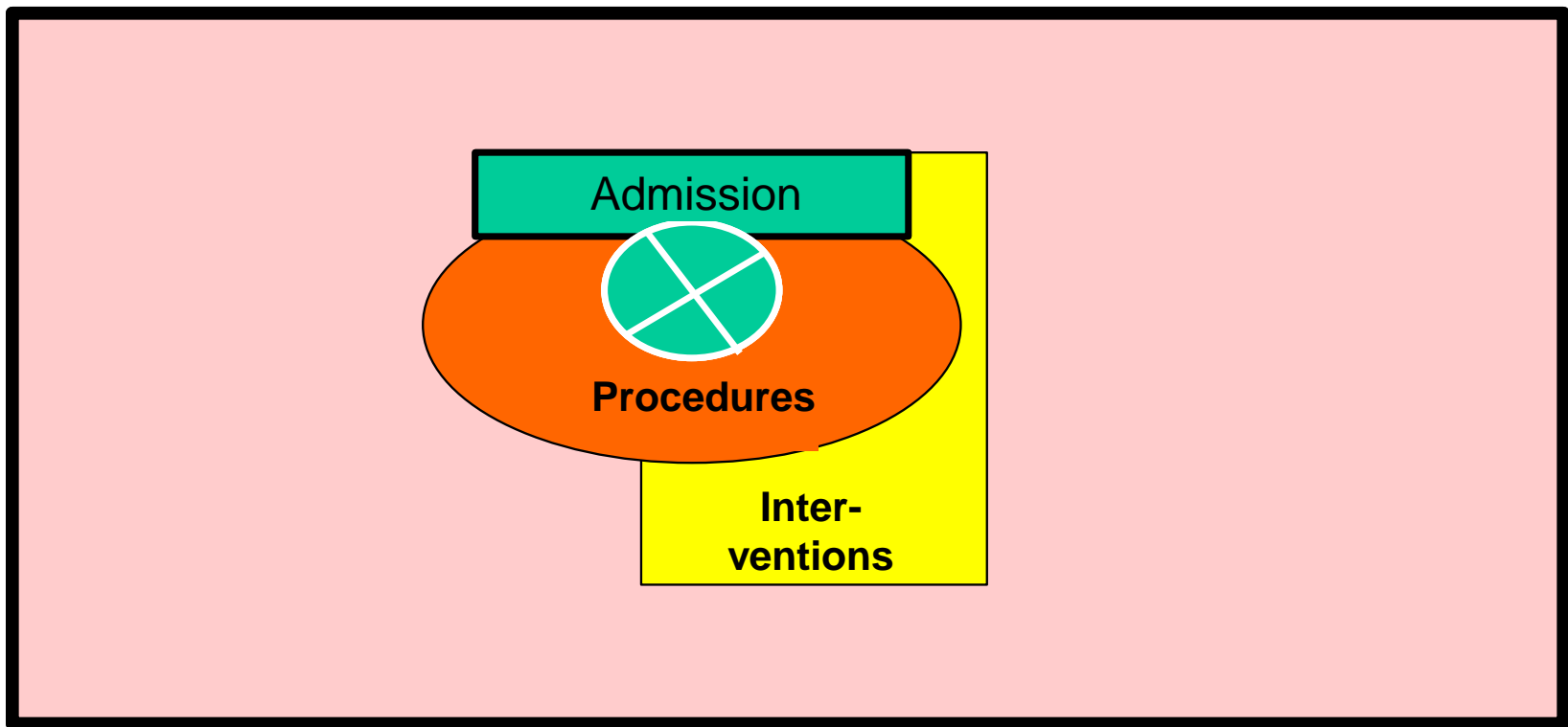
Lower - upper Level

Early Tracking

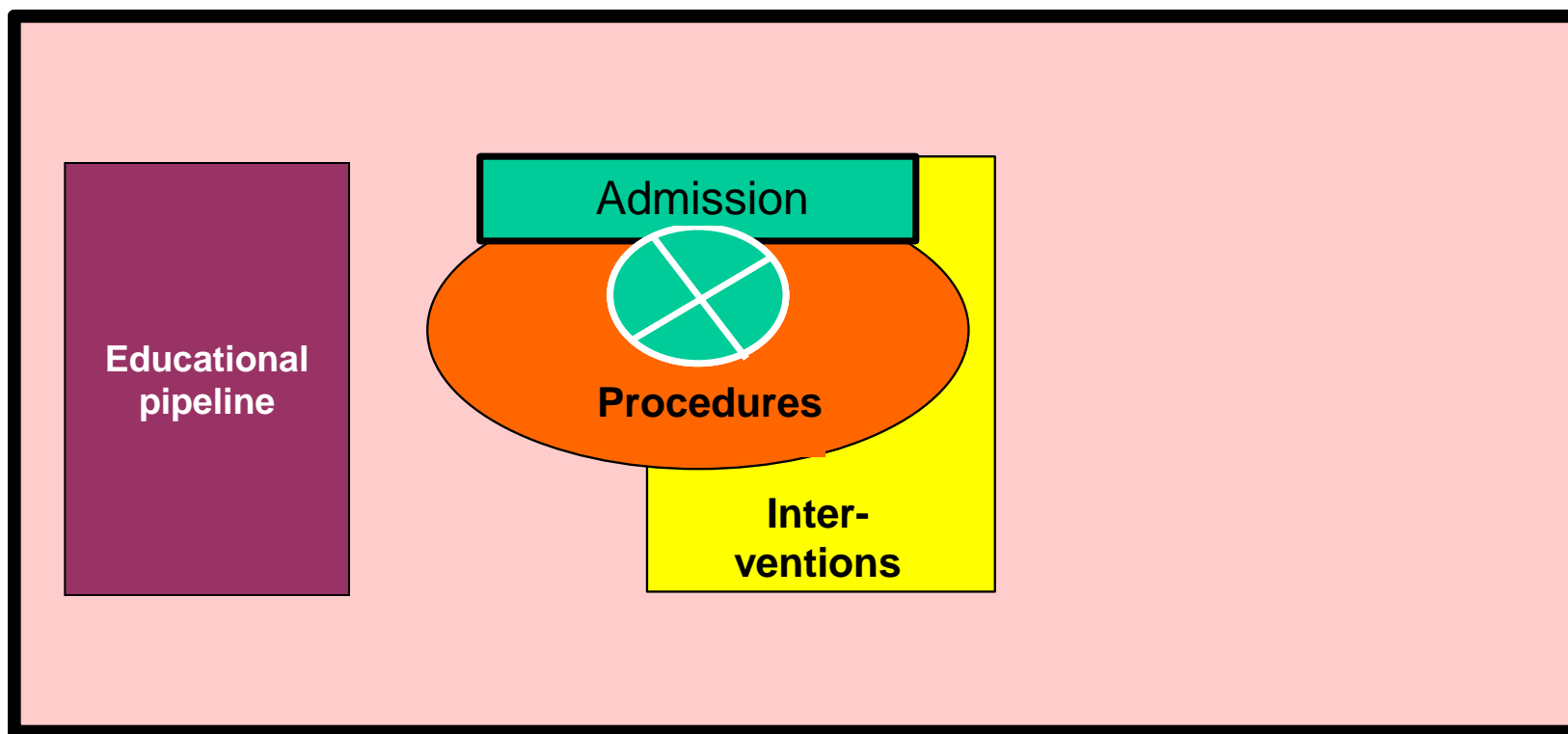
Previous findings

- **No comparative studies** found about the social impact of different selection/admission systems (this aspect more or less neglected; comparative research looks at broader characteristics of systems - *the „educational pipeline“* - only)
- Some research on **country level** available, however, not very conclusive because of differing perspectives and differing variables
- Selection/admission systems are **complex**, build up from a set of differently combined elements

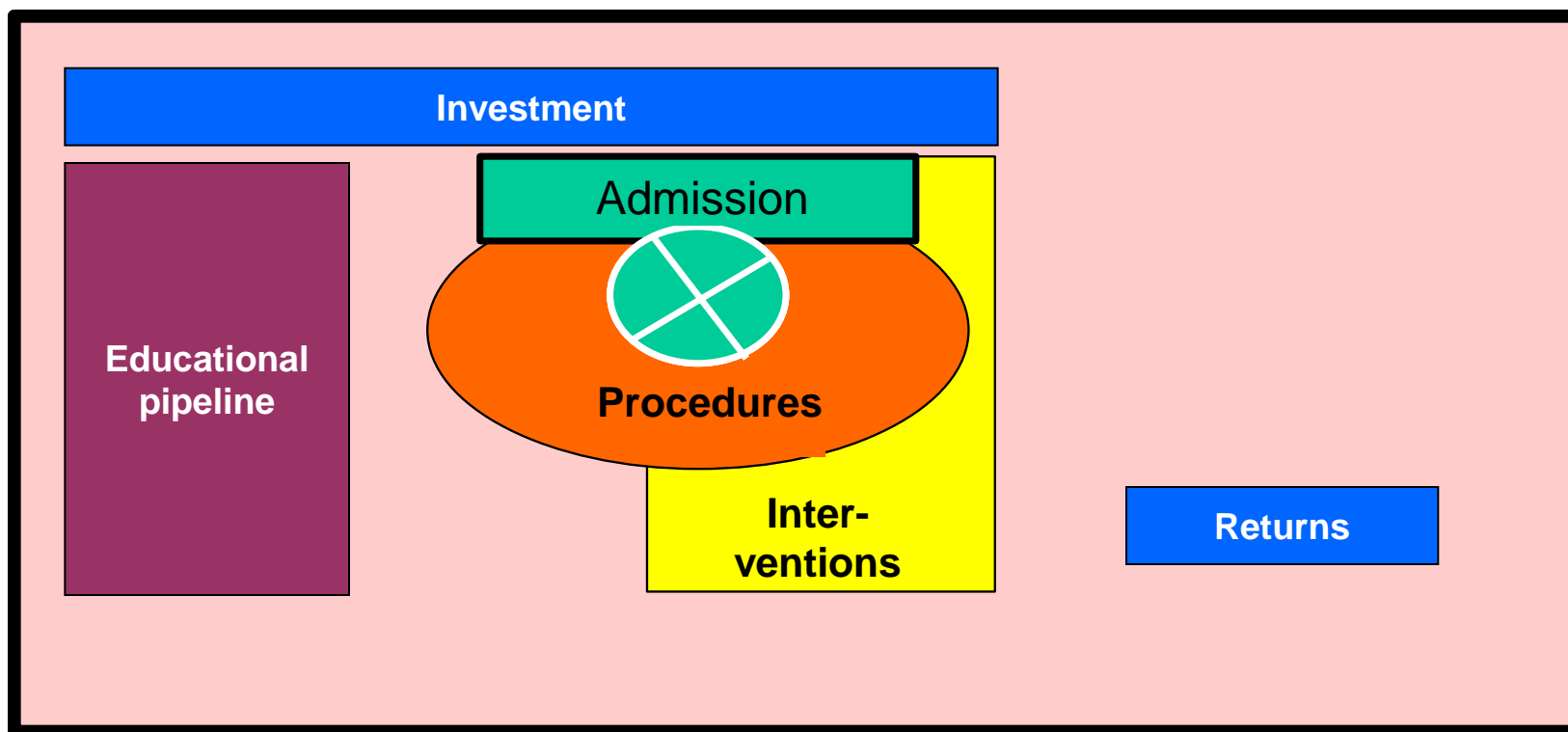
Framework of admission system



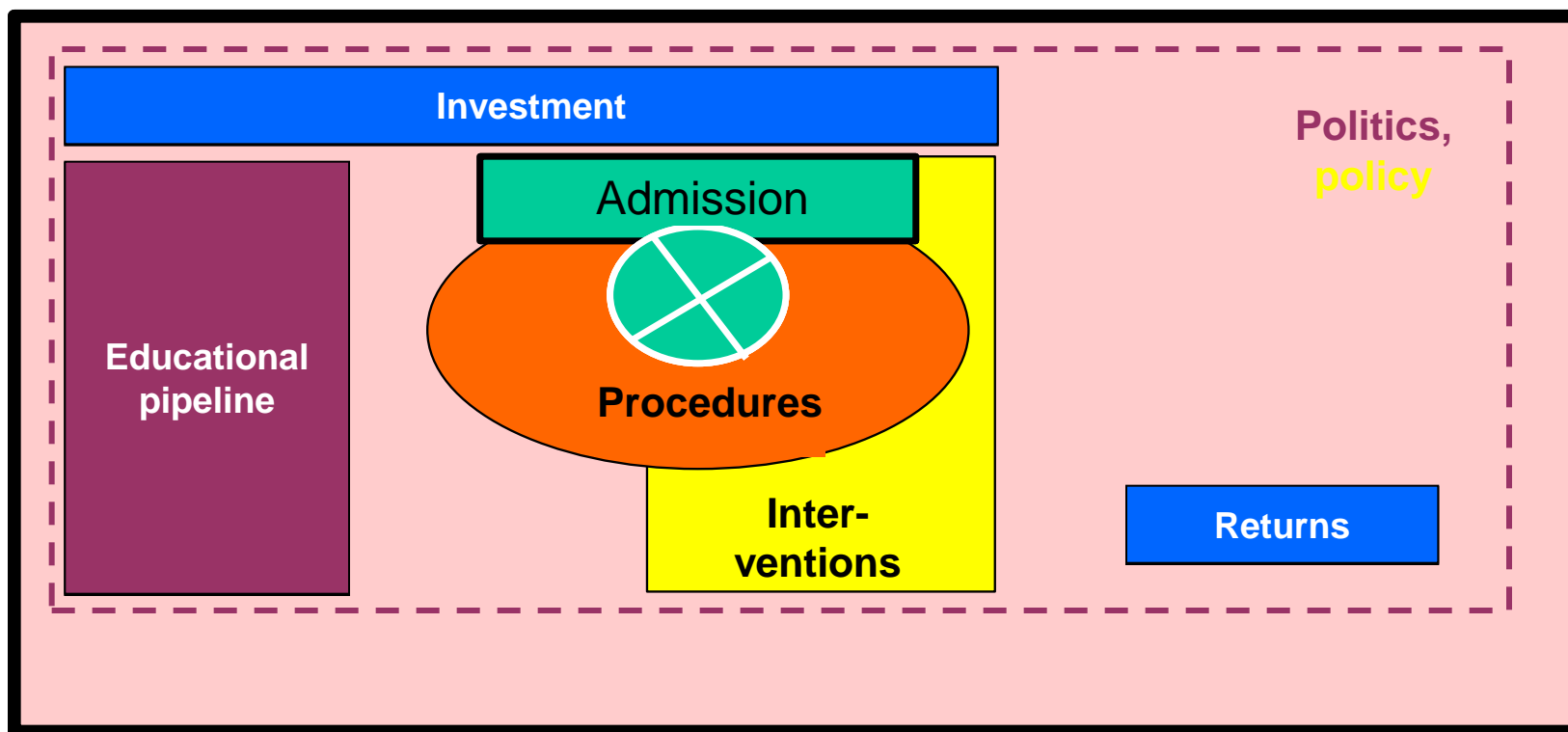
Framework of admission system



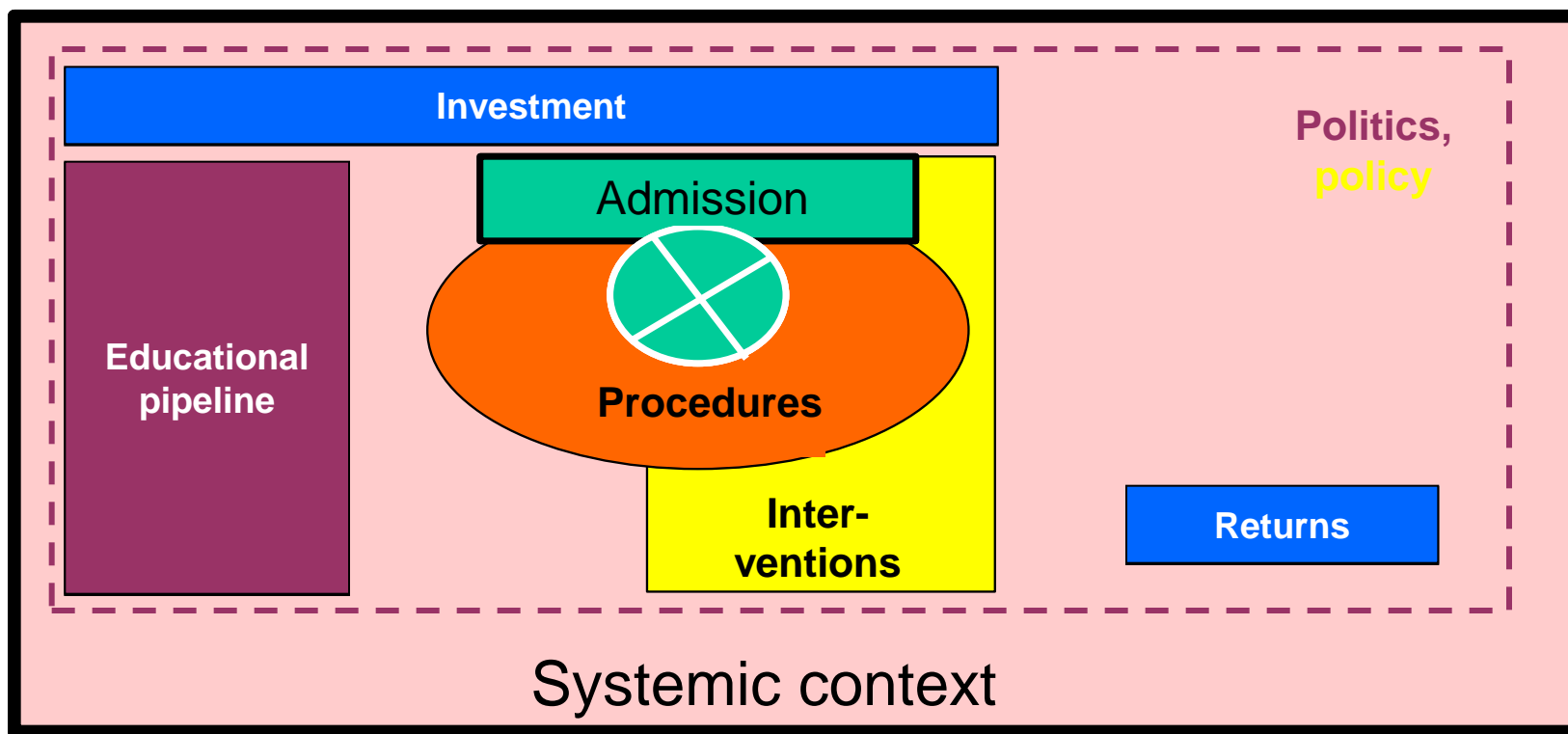
Framework of admission system



Framework of admission system



Framework of admission system



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- **Methodology**

Methodology

Comparative approach

Literature review, different kinds of studies:

- broad comparative studies
- studies about small selections of countries
- single countries

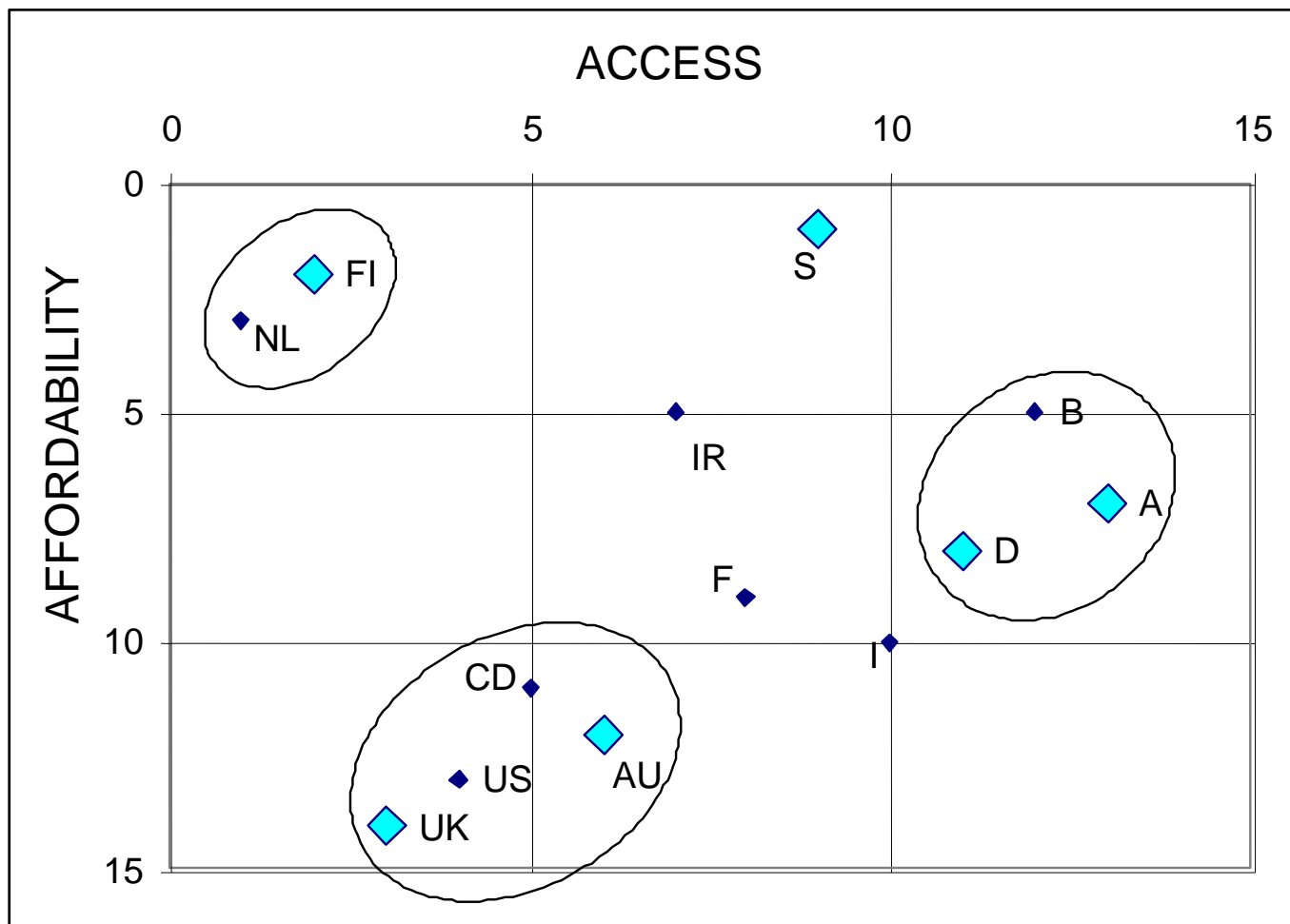
Case studies of **five countries/systems**

in addition to Austria, selected on the purpose of

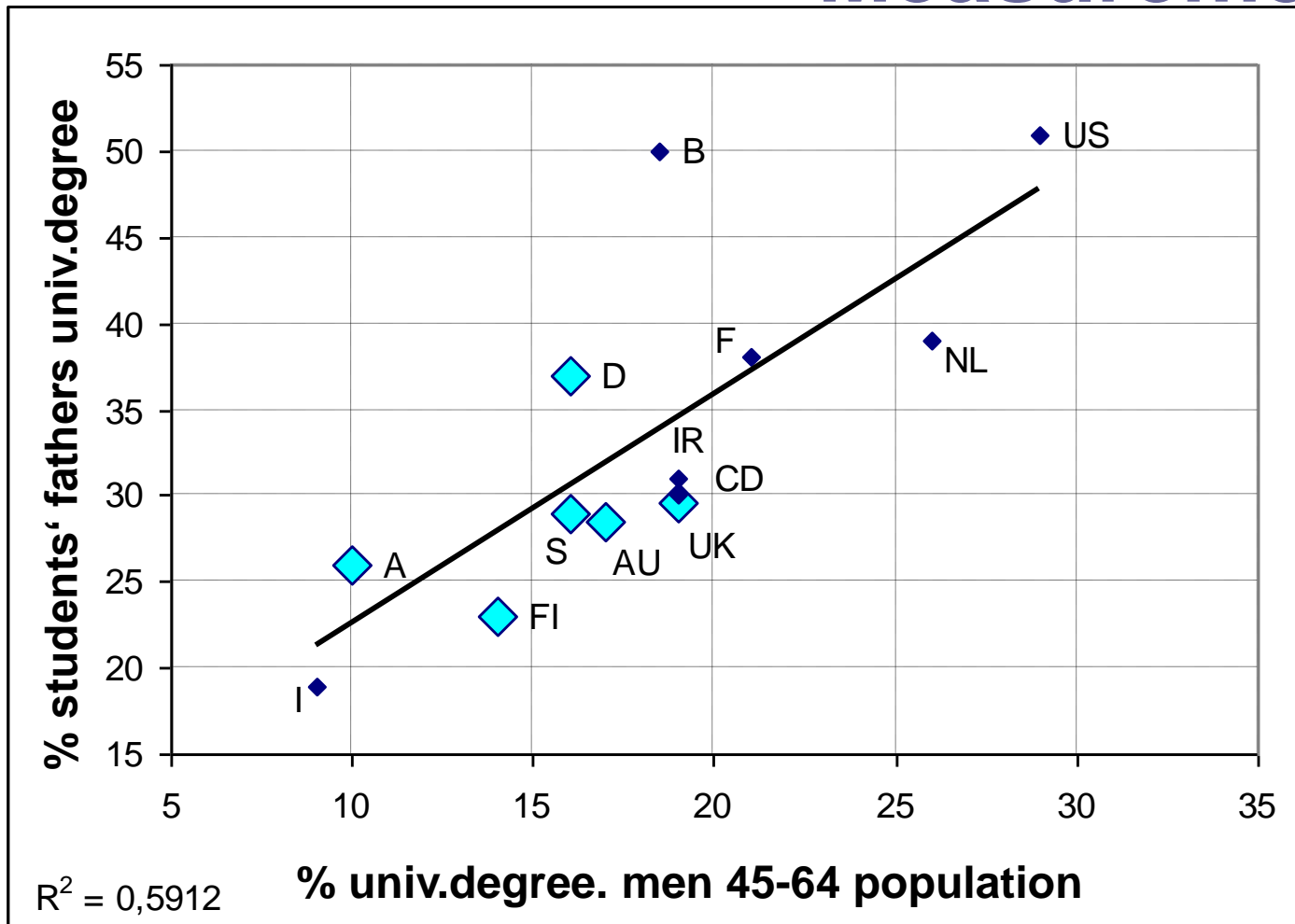
- variety of systems and
- availability of research:

Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom

Measurement



Measurement



Agenda

- Research question & previous findings
 - Methodology
 - **Findings**

Framework of admission system

INVESTMENT HE

+ fees

- no fees (S, FIN)
- part.fees (G, A)
- variable fees (U.K., AU)

+ low (A, G, U.K.) high (AU, FIN, S)

+ support

- overall support (A, G)
- grants/loans (most)
- loans (AU)

PIPELINE

+ selectivity

- tracked (A, G)
- social: low (FIN, S)
med. (A),
high (G, AU, U.K.)

+ second chance

- S, AU, U.K.

ADMISSION-PROCEDURES

+ „Pipeline“-criteria (Grades, Exam)

- sufficient (A, S, G)
- minimum (AU, U.K., FIN)

+ Central/institutional admiss.

- central (S, A)
- mixed (G)
- institutional (U.K., AU, FIN)

ACCESSIBILITY

+ high (FIN, U.K., AU)

+ low (S, G, A)

ACCESS-POLICY

+ U.K.: widening access

- multiple measures

+ AU: Loans + target gr.

+ S: support measures for adults

SYSTEMIC CONTEXT

+ elite / mass system

- elite (A, G)
- intermed. (FIN, S)
- mass (AU, U.K.)

+ gender difference Sci/Te

- high (A)
- medium (D, FIN)
- low (AU, S, U.K.)

Stylized traits of analysed systems

Austria: „open access“ (right to study, based on Matriculation exam); selection by institutions in few univ-studies, in all polytechnics (fees stop-go-policy; overall support, means-tested grants)

Germany: Some NC-studies; in several studies selection procedures; shift to institutional mechanisms (no overall fees; overall support; 50%loan)

Finland: Matriculation examination; very selective autonomous institutional selection process at universities; less selective polytechnics (no fees)

Sweden: Central admission system; mixed mechanisms: secondary school grades or tests in adult education/second chance for pupils (no fees)

United Kingdom: Selection by institutions; some minimal criteria (A-levels) + “widening access” programme (variable fees; grants & loans)

Australia: Selection by institutions (HE-rank.sc.); min.criteria (variable fees; loans)

Staat	Zugangssystem	Studiengebühren und -förderungen
Deutschland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sekundarschulabschluss (Abitur) - 6 bundesweite NC-Fächer (WS 05/06), weitere regionale und institutionelle Zulassungsbeschränkungen für viele Fächer (versch. Aufnahmeverfahren) - Shift von bundesweiten zu institutionellen Zulassungsverfahren (Studienplatzbewirtschaftung) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keine allgemeinen Studiengebühren (WS 05/06), Einführung in sechs Bundesländern in Höhe von 500 EUR beschlossen - Bundeseinheitliche Förderung nach sozialen Kriterien (zu 50% als Kredit)
Finnland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Matriculation Examination": spezielle Prüfung, die zwei Mal jährlich an Sekundarschulen abgehalten wird - Zugangsbeschränkungen in allen Studienrichtungen (Studienplatzbewirtschaftung) - unterschiedliche institutionelle Auswahlkriterien (Noten, Aufnahmetests) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keine Studiengebühren - Einheitliche Studienbeihilfen nach sozialen Kriterien - Kredite
Schweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sekundarabschluss, Abschluss Erwachsenenbildung oder Berufserfahrung - Zentrales Auswahlssystem, Mischung aus Schulnoten, externem Studierfähigkeitstest, Berufserfahrung bei Erw. - Institutionen dürfen bei der Auswahl geringfügig mitbestimmen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keine Studiengebühren - Einheitliche Studienbeihilfen nach sozialen Kriterien - Kredite
Vereinigtes Königreich/ England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionen legen ihre Aufnahmekriterien eigenständig fest - Minimalvoraussetzungen (je nach Prestige der Institution unterschiedlich) müssen erfüllt sein (v.a. GCE/VCE-A Levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studiengebühren seit 1998, ab 2006 variabel (max. 3.000 GBP/STJ. in England, max. 1.200 GBP in Wales im STJ 2006/07) - Einheitliche Studienbeihilfen nach sozialen Kriterien - Kredite (seit 1990 einkommensabhängig und rückzahlbar über das Steuersystem) - Reform des Kredit- und Förderwesens 2006
Australien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionen legen ihre Aufnahmekriterien eigenständig fest (meist aufgrund des individuellen "Higher Education Ranking"-Score basiert auf Schulnoten) - Minimalvoraussetzungen müssen erfüllt sein (Sekundarabschluss) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studiengebühren abhängig vom Status (Commonwealth-geförderter Studienplatz oder nicht) - Höhe der Gebühren können seit 2005 von den Institutionen innerhalb eines Limits festgelegt werden - Staatliches Kreditsystem (einkommensabhängig rückzahlbar über das Steuersystem)

Stylized Findings

<p>SYSTEMIC CONTEXT System-shape ST-Gender-Difference</p>	<p>„Elite“-Systems High-medium</p>	<p>„Universal“-Systems Medium-low</p>	<p>„Mass“-Systems Low</p>
<p>PIPELINE System-shape Soc.impact achievem.</p>	<p>Tracked-Systems High-medium</p>	<p>Compreh.Systems Low</p>	<p>Compreh.Systems High</p>
<p>INVESTMENT HE Level Fees Support „Affordability“</p>	<p>Low Part.fees Overall support Medium</p>	<p>High No fees Grants+loans High</p>	<p>Low/High Fees Grants-Loans Low</p>
<p>ADMISSION-PROCEDURES pipeline-Results centralisation</p>	<p>Sufficient Centralised/mixed</p>	<p>DIFFERING Sufficient / Minimum Central. / Institut.</p>	<p>Minimum Institutional</p>
<p>ACCESSIBILITY</p>	<p>LOW Austria Germany</p>	<p>LOW / HIGH Finland Sweden</p>	<p>HIGH United Kingdom Australia</p>

Stylized Findings

<p>SYSTEMIC CONTEXT System-shape ST-Gender-Difference</p>	<p>35/36%; 8/14% 3,3/2,5</p>	<p>80/73%; 24/23% 1,7/2,1</p>	<p>48/68%; 24/25% 1,5/1,7</p>
<p>PIPELINE System-shape Soc.impact achievem.</p>	<p>Tracked-Systems 14/22%</p>	<p>Compreh.Systems 11/9%</p>	<p>Compreh.Systems 19/17%</p>
<p>INVESTMENT HE Level Fees Support „Affordability“</p>	<p>Low Part.fees Overall support 6./7.</p>	<p>High No fees Grants+loans 1./2.</p>	<p>Low/High Fees Grants-Loans 13./11.</p>
<p>ADMISSION-PROCEDURES pipeline-Results centralisation</p>	<p>Sufficient Centralised/mixed</p>	<p>DIFFERING Sufficient / Minimum Central. / Institut.</p>	<p>Minimum Institutional</p>
<p>ACCESSIBILITY</p>	<p>LOW Austria (13.) Germany (11.)</p>	<p>LOW / HIGH Finland (2.) Sweden (9.)</p>	<p>HIGH Unit. Kingd. (3.) Australia (6.)</p>

Selection/admission systems

Critical design factors of admission systems:

- **Structure** of admission system
(relation to pipeline, centralisation)
- kinds of **Tests/Examinations**
- degree of **autonomy of institutions** about decision
 - norm/criterion **referencing**
 - **ranking** mechanisms/criteria
 - criteria for admission-**decision**
- **matching-mechanisms** of applicants to institutions

Effects for social selectivity

- **Tests vs. examinations:** no clear effects, multiple opportunities positive
- **Centralisation:** mixed systems positive, transparency and accountability important
 - **Criterion referencing** positive; the more norm-referencing, the more support necessary
 - **Local, school level ranking** more positive than national ranking
- Matching mechanisms important (e.g., unfilled places)

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General points

Research basically driven by **competing views about social selectivity**:

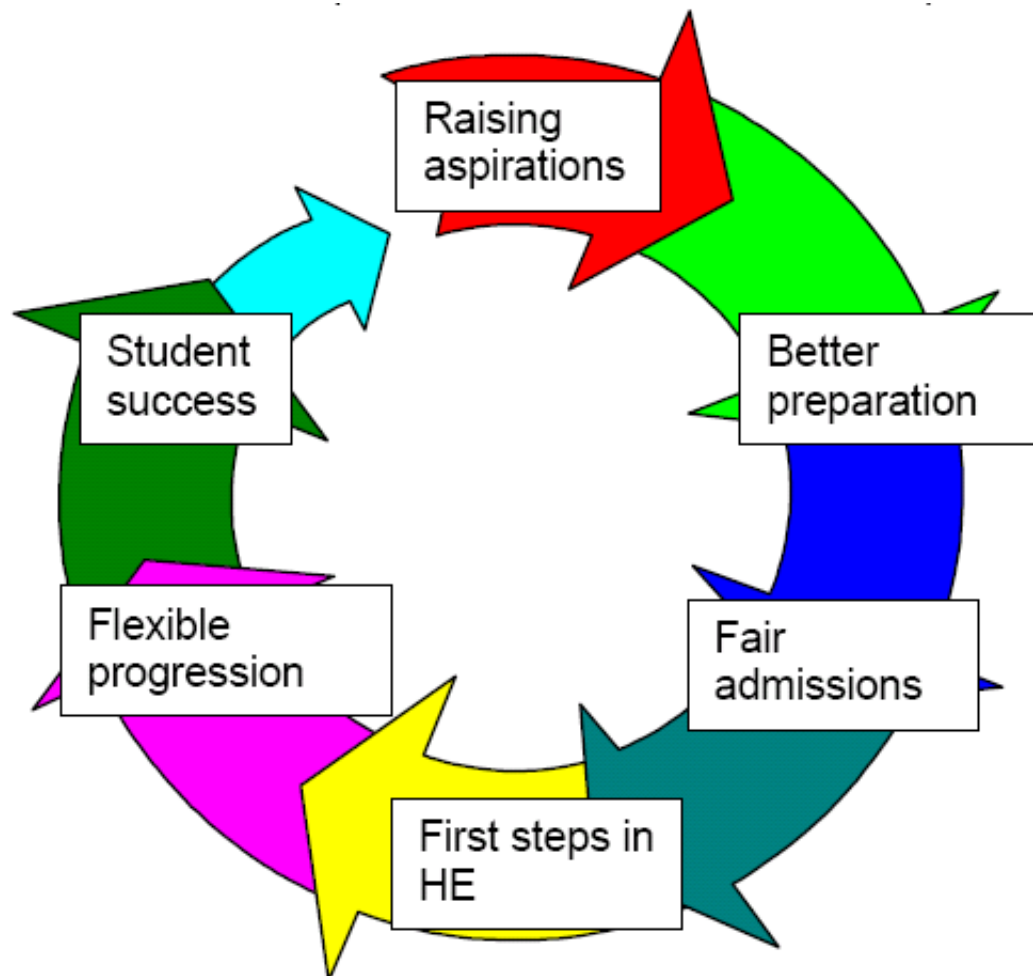
- (1) „Unexpected anomaly“ vs.
- (2) „expected status reproduction“

Kind of paradox: Social selectivity always expected to disappear, however, research always confirms its existence

Measurement covers very different aspects, and/or uses very different indicators

- comparative study, definition of affordability, accessibility
 - Sweden: Parents in population – parents of students
 - Finland: applicants from former years; accepted
 - Australia: Target groups compared to benchmarks
 - U.K.: complex view of access process

U.K. Model for widening access



U.K. policy

Schools: new curriculum

14-19

- individualised
- 4 steps
- mix vocational-academic
- portfolio documentation

General measures

- Monitoring at institution level (public)
- laws in favour of equity and against discrimination (Sex, disability, race)

Teaching/learning

- Higher Education Academy, profess.std., subjcentre network
- reward strategies
- Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

FE colleges:

graduate courses accredited by HEIs

- 12% der HE-Angebote,
- 160 FECs direkt finanziert, weitere indirekt über HEIs

Financing, Incentives

- „Access agreement“ in case of higher fees
- Financial means for widening access (pre-application 20%; post application 80%)
- Deferred fees
- Grants and loans

Partnerships

- outreach (Aimhigher)
- LLL-Networks for vocational Routes (HEI – FEC)
- Collaborative provision FE-HE
- Foundation degree (partnership employers)

Important issues for policies

- Quantity-quality: Quasi-objectivity by measurement
 - „Open access“ at the end of the pipeline cannot compensate for early selectivity, however, is good for mobilising in favour of status-reproduction
- Any access regime cannot outrule status reproduction, there must be deliberate policies in favour of the disadvantaged
- There are more favorable and less favourable traits of access regimes

Conclusions

- **Very little comparative knowledge about the social selectivity of admission systems**
 - **Every system still selective; predicted by hypothesis of status-reproduction**
- **If social selectivity is high at the beginning of the pipeline, it cannot be reversed through “open admission” for upper secondary graduates**
 - **Rather support programmes at each level of action necessary for reduction of social selectivity than construction of admission system**

The End

Thank you !

ANNEX

Definitions

Access

Participation rate

Attainment rate

Educational equity index

Gender parity

Affordability

Education costs as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

Total costs as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

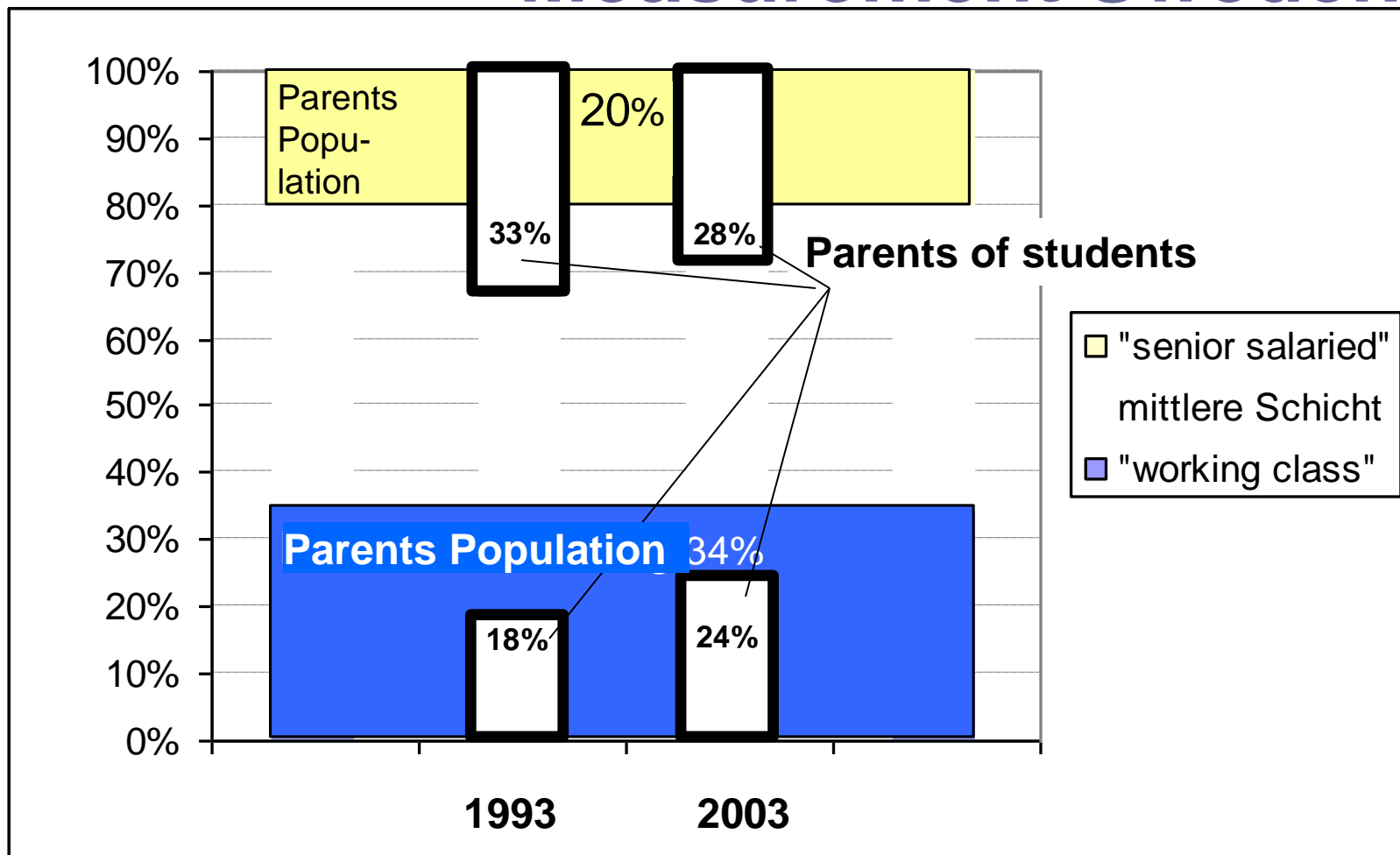
Net costs as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

Net costs after tax as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

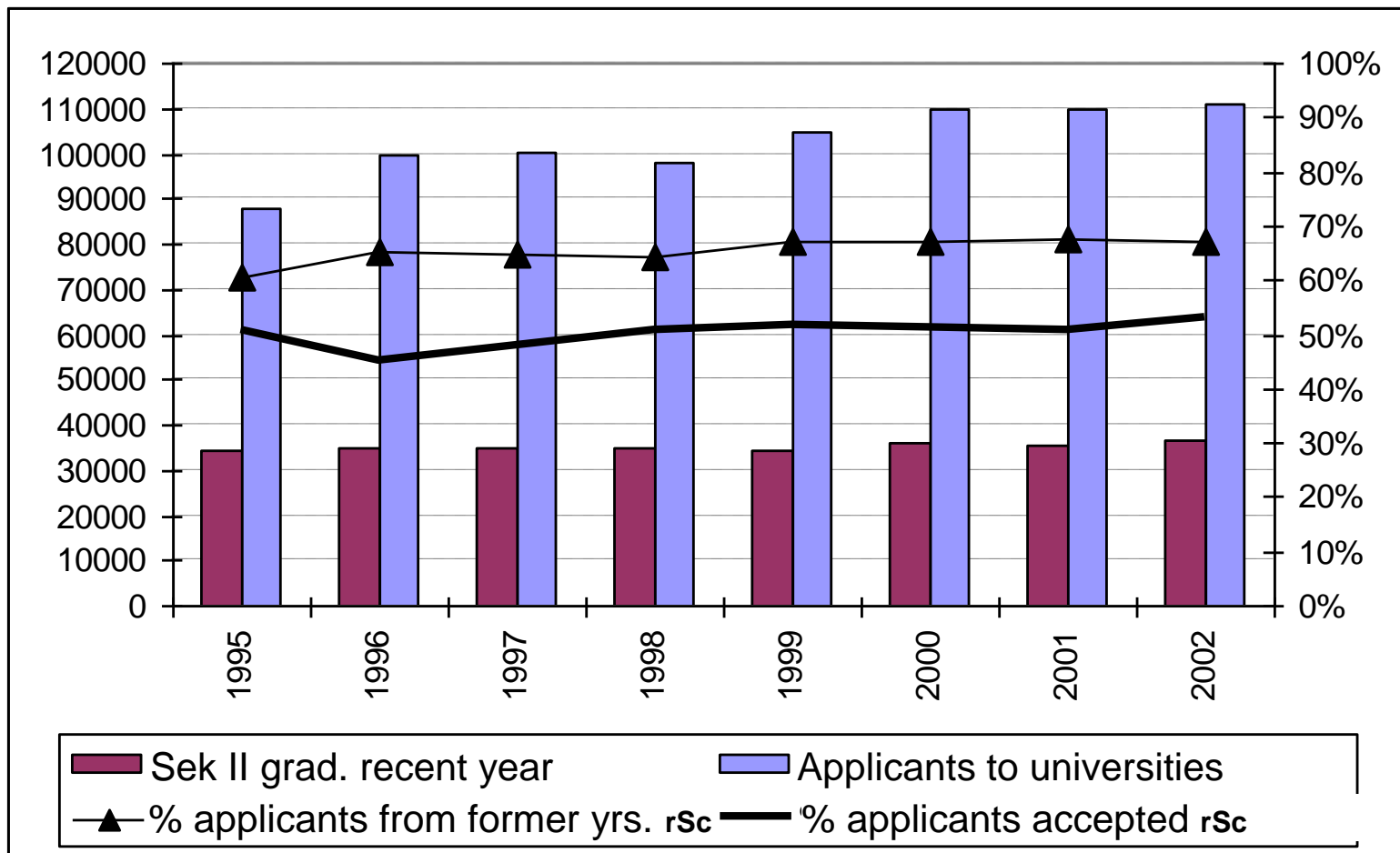
Out-of-pocket cost as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

Out-of-pocket cost after tax as % of ability to pay (GDP/capita)

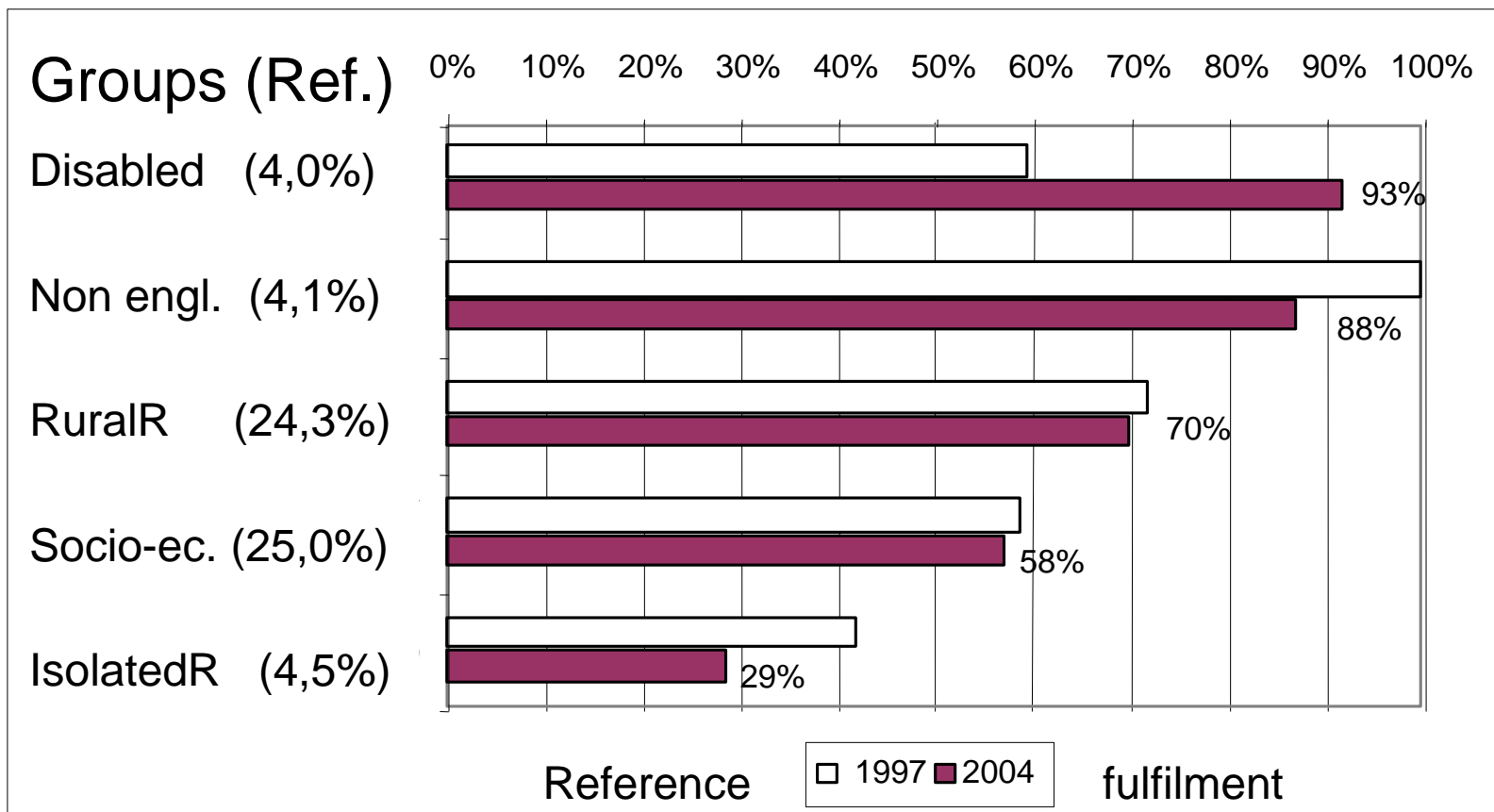
Measurement Sweden



Measurement Finland



Measurement Australia



Austrian perspectives

- Selective admission „hot potato“ - European pressure
 - no open debate
- Selection procedures at individual universities in place as „demonstration projects“, will be evaluated
 - Rationality (comprehensive solution) vs. political opportunism (selection by individual universities)
- The „hot-potato“-effect might lead to a worse solution because of political laissez-faire

Material

Usher A./ Cervenán A. (2005): Global Higher Education Rankings 2005. Toronto, ON: Educational Policy Institute, Internet:
<http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/Global2005.pdf#search=%22Global%20Higher%20Education%20Rankings%202005%22>

Lassnigg L., Unger M., Vogtenhuber S., Erkinger M. (2006): Soziale Aspekte des Hochschulzugangs und Durchlässigkeit des Bildungssystems, IHS-Research report, Vienna: IHS,
Internet: <http://www.equi.at/pdf/ihs-hochschulzugang.pdf>

Lassnigg, L., Unger, M., Vogtenhuber, S., Erkinger, M. (2007) Soziale Aspekte des Hochschulzuganges und Durchlässigkeit des Bildungssystems. In: Badelt C., Wegscheider, W., Wulz, H., Hg., Hochschulzugang in Österreich. Graz: Leykam, 361-477.

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