



Pathways from Vocational Training to Higher Education: Non-traditional Students in Germany

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Introduction

- (1) In the past, opening-up higher education for non-traditional students (\approx degree holders from vocational training) as a marginal topic on the higher education policy agenda in Germany
- (2) German tradition: strict institutional segmentation between vocational and higher education
- (3) New interest during the last decade \rightarrow Many new initiatives, programs and measures in the last years to open up higher education
- (4) New agreement by the Conference of the State Ministers of Education (KMK), 2009
- (5) Federal program („competition“) „Upward Mobility by Education – Open Universities“, 2011

Driving forces

- (1) European stimuli:
 - lifelong learning as a part of the Bologna process
 - permeability between vocational and higher education (Copenhagen process and EQF)
- (2) Expected demographic change → concern about a massive decline in the number of students → mobilizing new target groups as a compensatory strategy
- (3) Increasing need for a highly qualified workforce and the growing concern about a shortage of qualified labour force
- (4) The objective of more equity/equality in educational opportunities, especially at access to higher education
- (5) The diversity discourse

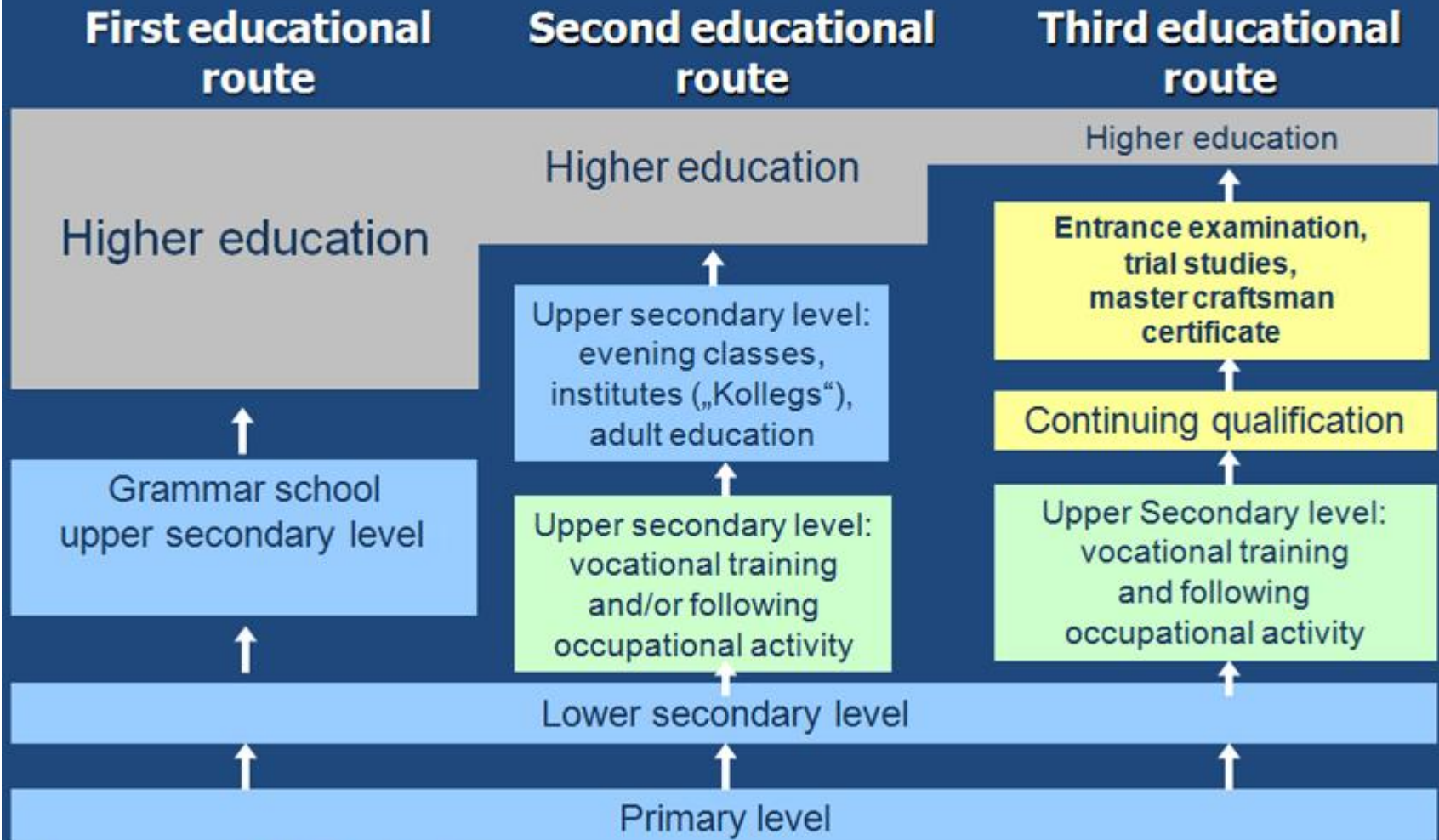
Non-traditional students: different international approaches

- (1) *Age-group* (e.g. older than 25)
- (2) *Participation*: groups underrepresented in higher education
- (3) *Life-course*: winding biographical paths to higher education, often with a vocational background
- (4) *Access and admission*: alternative often non-school routes to higher education
- (5) *Modes of studying*: e.g. part-time, distance, parallel to work

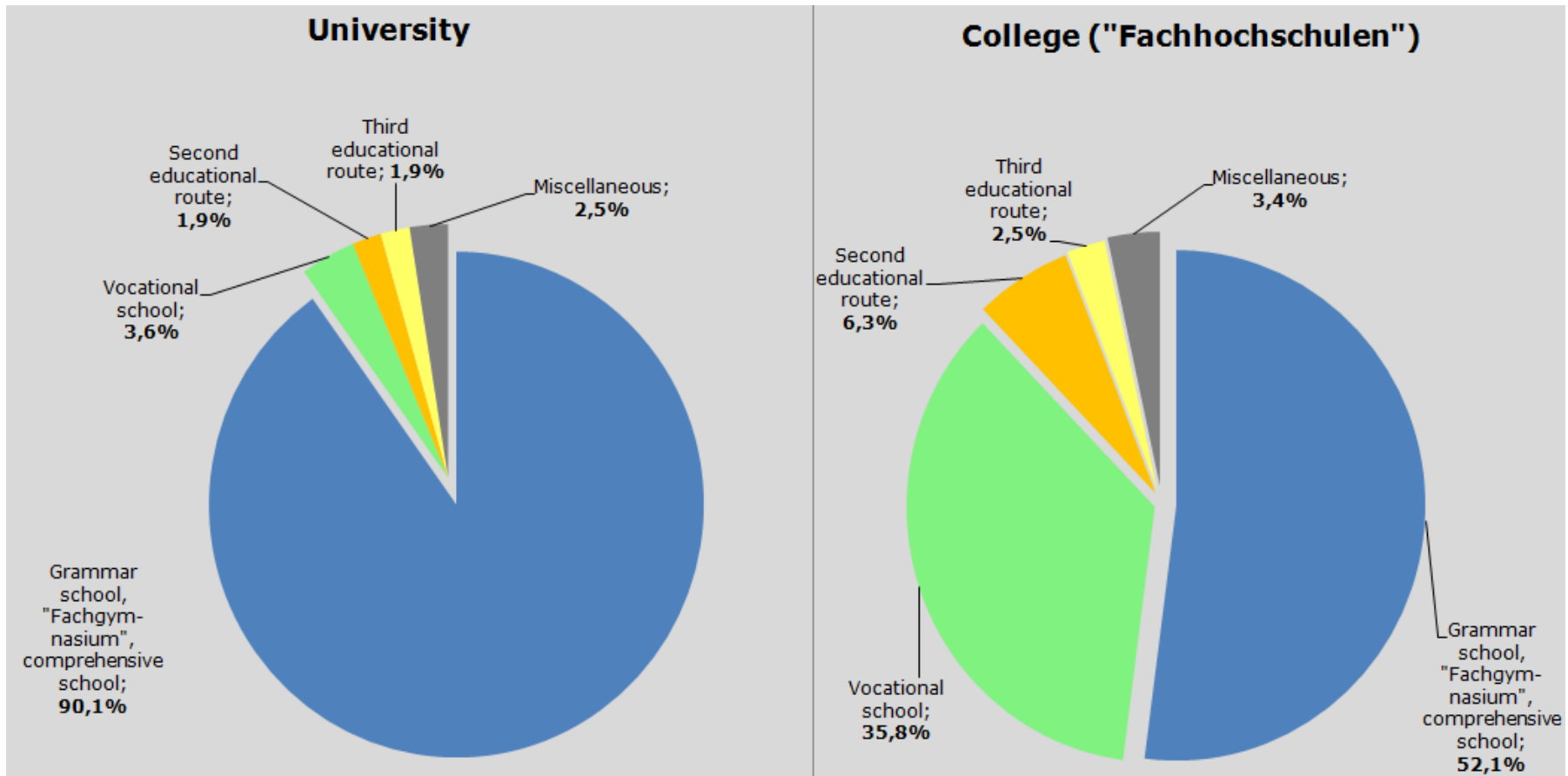
Regulations in Germany

- (1) Focus on (4) access and admission, together with (3) life-course
- (2) Four admission models:
 - admission exam/aptitude test
 - conditional admission/trial studies
 - admission after interview/consultation but without test
 - automatic granting of admission
- (3) Different regulations in the 16 German states

(Main-)routes to higher education



German first-year students at universities and colleges (ISCED 5A) in winter semester 2010/11 by type of entitlement to study (in %)



Second educational routes: evening classes, institutes

Third educational routes: without traditional entitlement to study

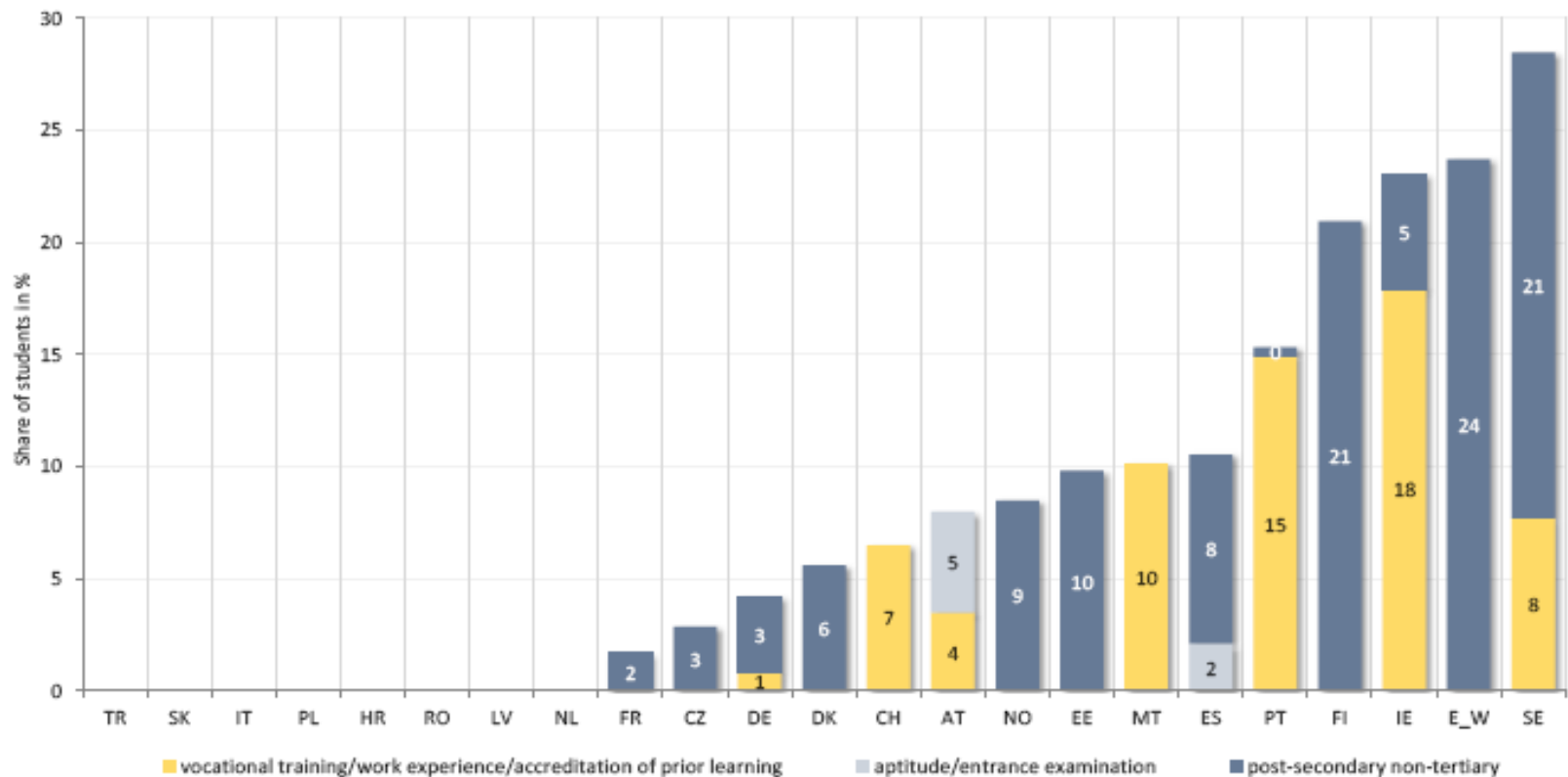
Miscellaneous: qualifying examination art/music, foreign entitlement to study, no indication

Reasons for the small proportion of non-traditional students in Germany

- (1) Lack of transparency and information concerning admission prerequisites and procedures
- (2) Resistance or disapproval by the universities (argument of individual deficits in the study proficiency)
- (3) Lack of flexibility in the organization of studies and the delivery modes
- (4) Lack of flexible admission procedures (including recognition of prior learning)

Fig. 2.3 Students entering higher education through an alternative route by type of route

a) All students (without other) by type in %



Source: EUROSTUDENT IV, B.1. No data: LT, SI. No differentiation of categories possible: DK, E/W, FI, NO.

EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 2.2 What qualification did you use for higher education entry? (List of national qualifications), 2.3 When did you get the qualification used for entering higher education?, 2.4 When did you enter higher education for the first time?, 6.1 What is the highest level of education your father and mother have obtained?

Note: The category 'other' was removed because of the inability to interpret this result in cross-country comparison. This category often includes qualifications from other HE institutions, which are not relevant for this analysis. Sums were re-calculated.

From Non-traditional Students to Lifelong Learners: Different Types

- „Second chance learners“
- „Equity groups“
- „Deferrers“
- „Recurrent learners“
- „Returners“
- „Refreshers“
- „Learners in later life“

Based on a comparative study including 14 countries
(Schuetze/Slowey 2012)

Conclusions

- (1) Widening participation in higher education as a prominent European topic
- (2) Supported by labour market demands
- (3) Opening up higher education institutions as a multi-level concept: access, studies, support, recognition
- (4) Different meanings of „opening“: social and vocational opening
- (5) High priority of the permeability objective: permeability between vocational and higher education
- (6) From NTS to an integrated strategy to implement lifelong learning structures in higher education

**Thank you very much
for
your attention!**

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