

# Crafting opportunity structures – Comparing formal adult education between societies

Günter Hefler  
3s research laboratory  
[www.3s.co.at](http://www.3s.co.at)

5. Juli 2012

3. Österreichische Berufsbildungsforschungskonferenz

3s



# Overview

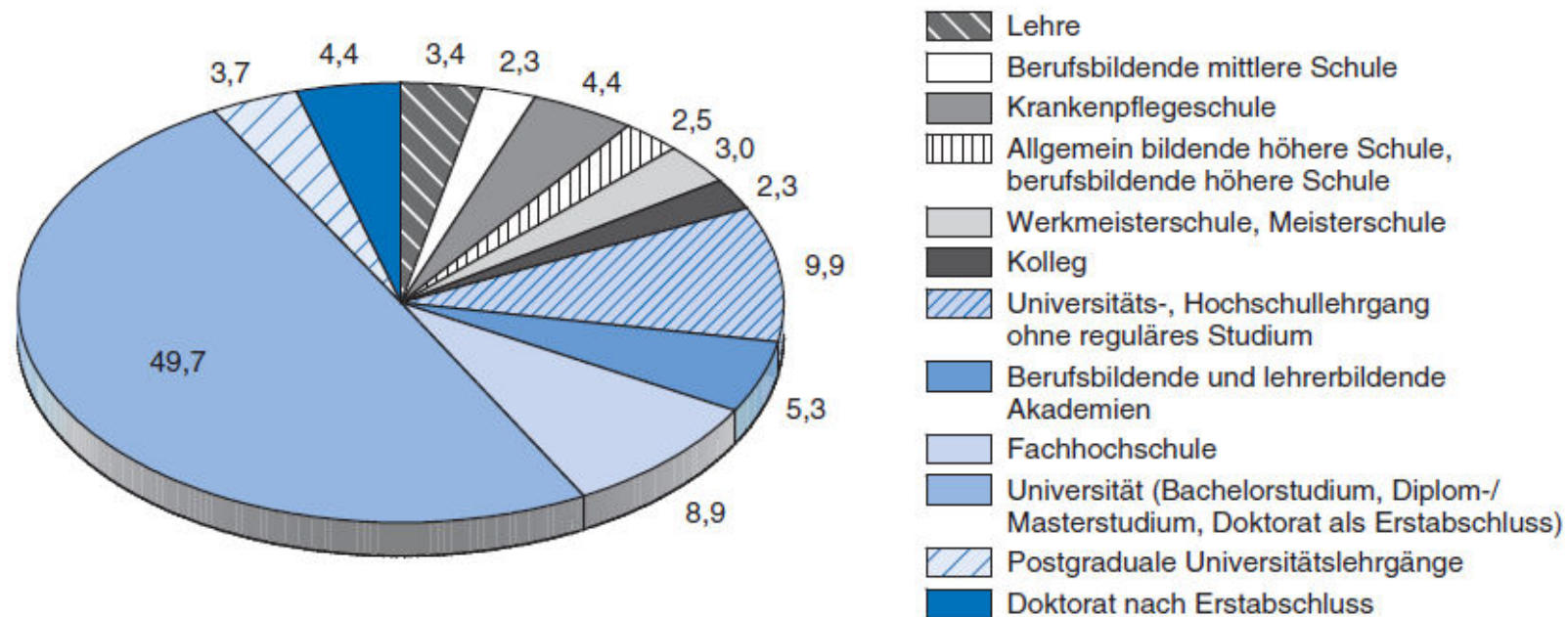
- \_\_ Introduction *formal adult education* – a world-wide used category for analysing lifelong learning (1)
- \_\_ Understanding *formal adult education* as an institution (2)
- \_\_ Comparing opportunity structures for formal adult education (3)
- \_\_ Outlook (4)

# Introduction (1) – Sufficient clarity on country level ...

Grafik 5

Formale Bildungsaktivitäten 2006/2007 der 25- bis 64-Jährigen (in Prozent)

2007: 190.000 Personen (davon 124.000 25-34) oder 4,2 % der 25-64 Jährigen



Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Erwachsenenbildungserhebung 2007 (AES).

# Introduction (1) – Sufficient clarity on country level ...

\_\_ Multiple references to *formal adult education* in the Austrian strategy LLL 2020

\_\_\_ Extension of basic skills provision and of second chance education (Hauptschule, Berufsmatura, außerordentlicher Lehrabschluss)

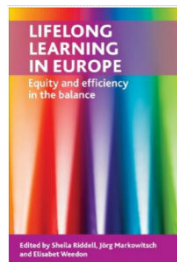
\_\_\_ In 2020, for example, 10 % of former apprentices should acquire Berufsmatura; 38 % of the 30-34 year old should hold a higher education degree (up from 19 % in 2008, requiring at least parts of today's 20-24 to acquire a higher education entrance permission)

# The Context: The LLL2010 Project



Reports and working papers [lll2010.tlu.ee](http://lll2010.tlu.ee)

Final book publications on the project



Riddell, Sheila, Markowitsch, Jörg & Weedon, Elisabet (Eds.) (2012, forthcoming) Lifelong Learning in Europe: Equity and Efficiency in the Balance, Bristol, Policy Press.



Saar, Ellu, Ure, Odd Bjorn, Holford, John (Eds.) (2012, forthcoming) Lifelong Learning in Europe: National Patterns and Challenges. Edward Elgar.

\_\_ Sixth Research Framework (FP6)  
– financed by the European Commission

\_\_ 2005-2011

\_\_ Lifelong Learning 2010: Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The contribution of the education system

\_\_ 13 partner countries, 80+ researchers  
Coordinated by Ellu Saar (Tallinn)

# Taking Steps - Formal Adult Education in Private and Organisaitonal Life



Günter Hefler

**Taking Steps**  
Formal adult education in  
private and organisaitonal life

Hefler, Günter (2012, forthcoming): Taking Steps - Formal Adult Education in Private and Organisaitonal Life. Wien LIT Verlag

(also: Dissertation June 2012, University of Klagenfurt)



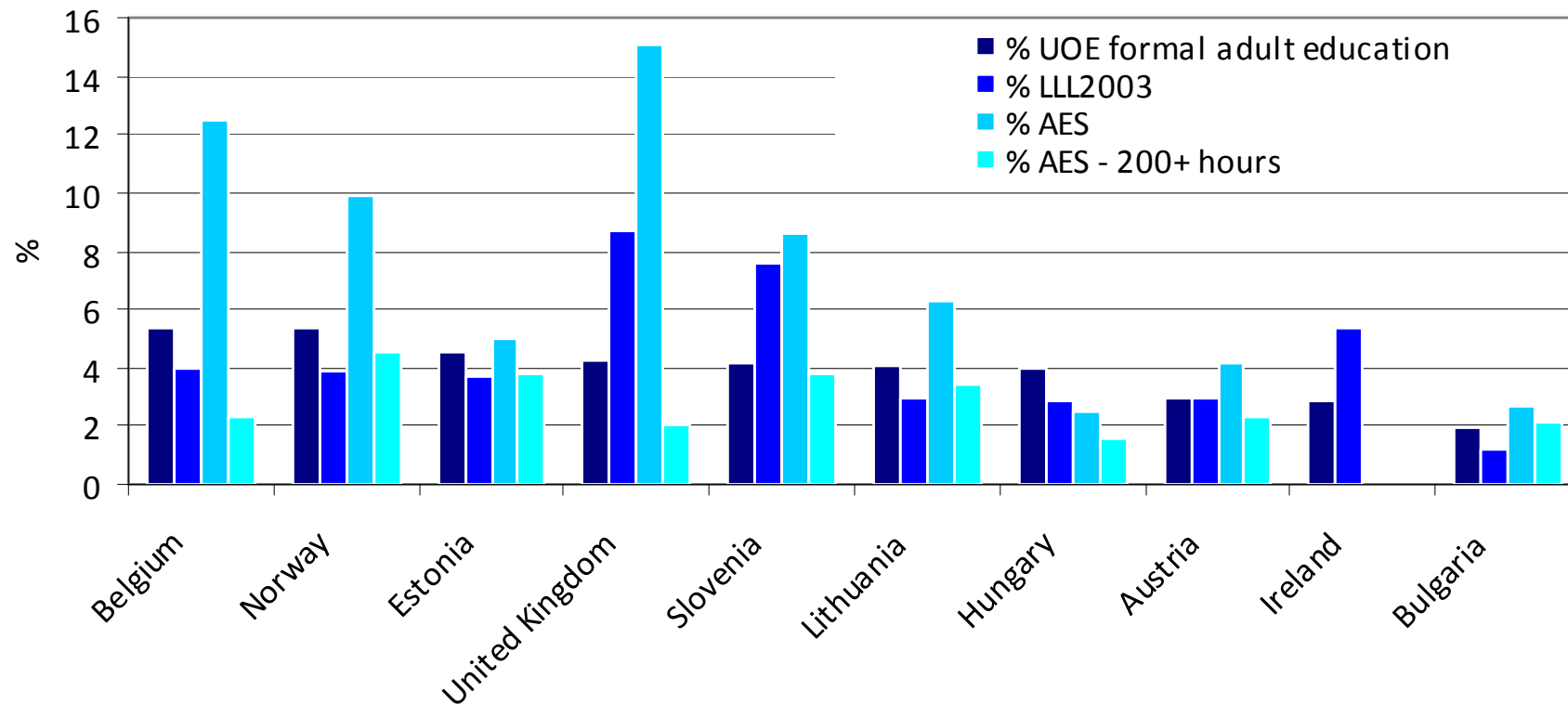
EDITED BY  
RACHEL BROOKS, ALISON FULLER  
AND JOHANNA WATERS

R

Hefler, Günter & Markowitsch, Jörg (2012) Bridging Institutional Divides: Linking education, careers and work in 'organizational space' and 'skill space' dominated employment systems. in Brooks, Rachel, Fuller, Alison & Waters, Johanna (Eds.) Changing Spaces of Education - New Perspectives on the Nature of Learning. London, Routledge, 160-181.

# Introduction (1) Three comparative statistical sources on formal adult education

Proportion of adults (25-64) participating in formal adult education



Source: LFS 2003; UOE 2007; AES 2005-7; own calculations

# Introduction (1) Current definition of formal *adult* education with the European Union

*— education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities*

*and other formal educational institutions*

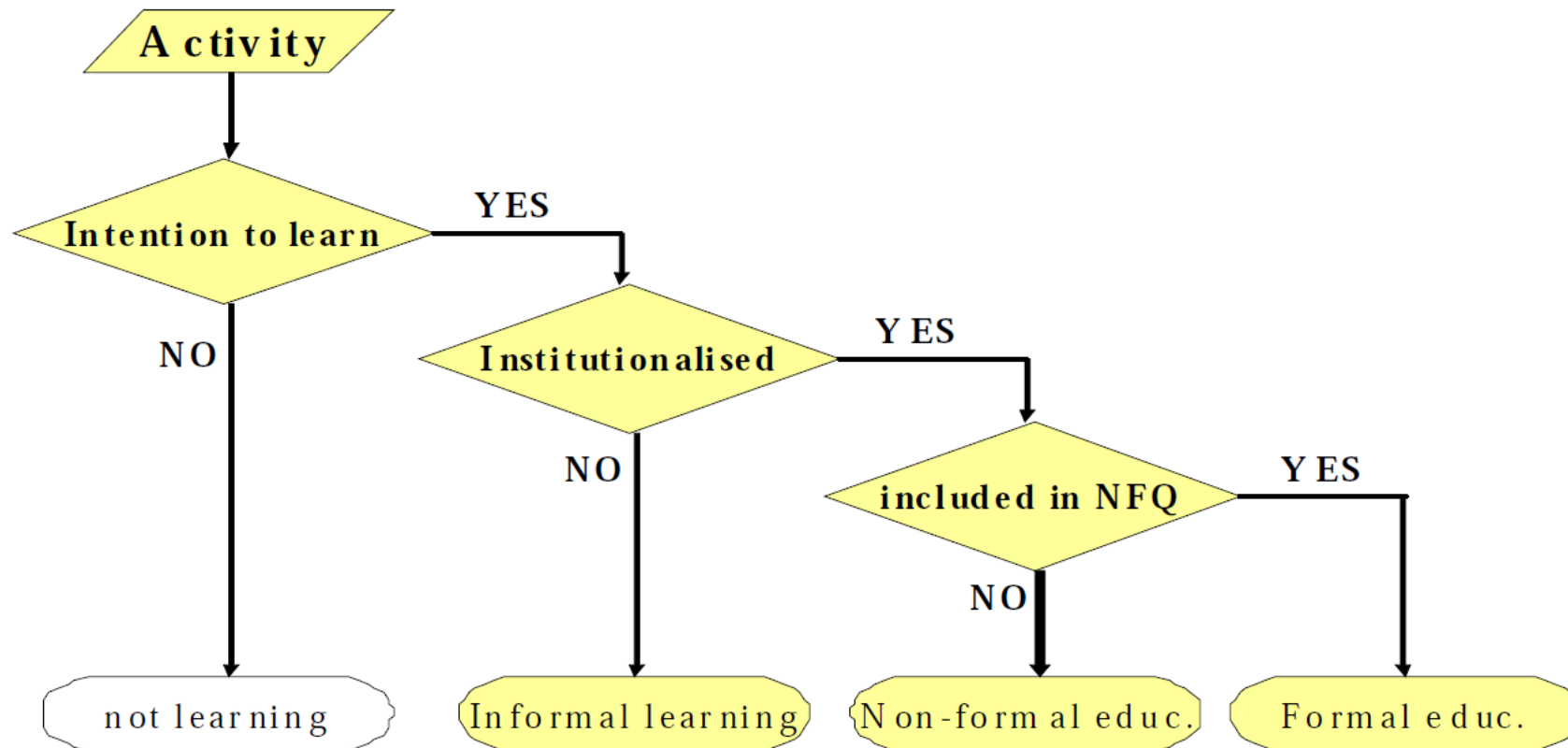
*that normally constitutes a continuous ‘ladder’ of full-time education’ (Eurostat 2006, 13)*

defining as ‘adult’ anybody 25 years or older.

Eurostat, 2006. *Classification of learning activities - Manual*. Luxembourg

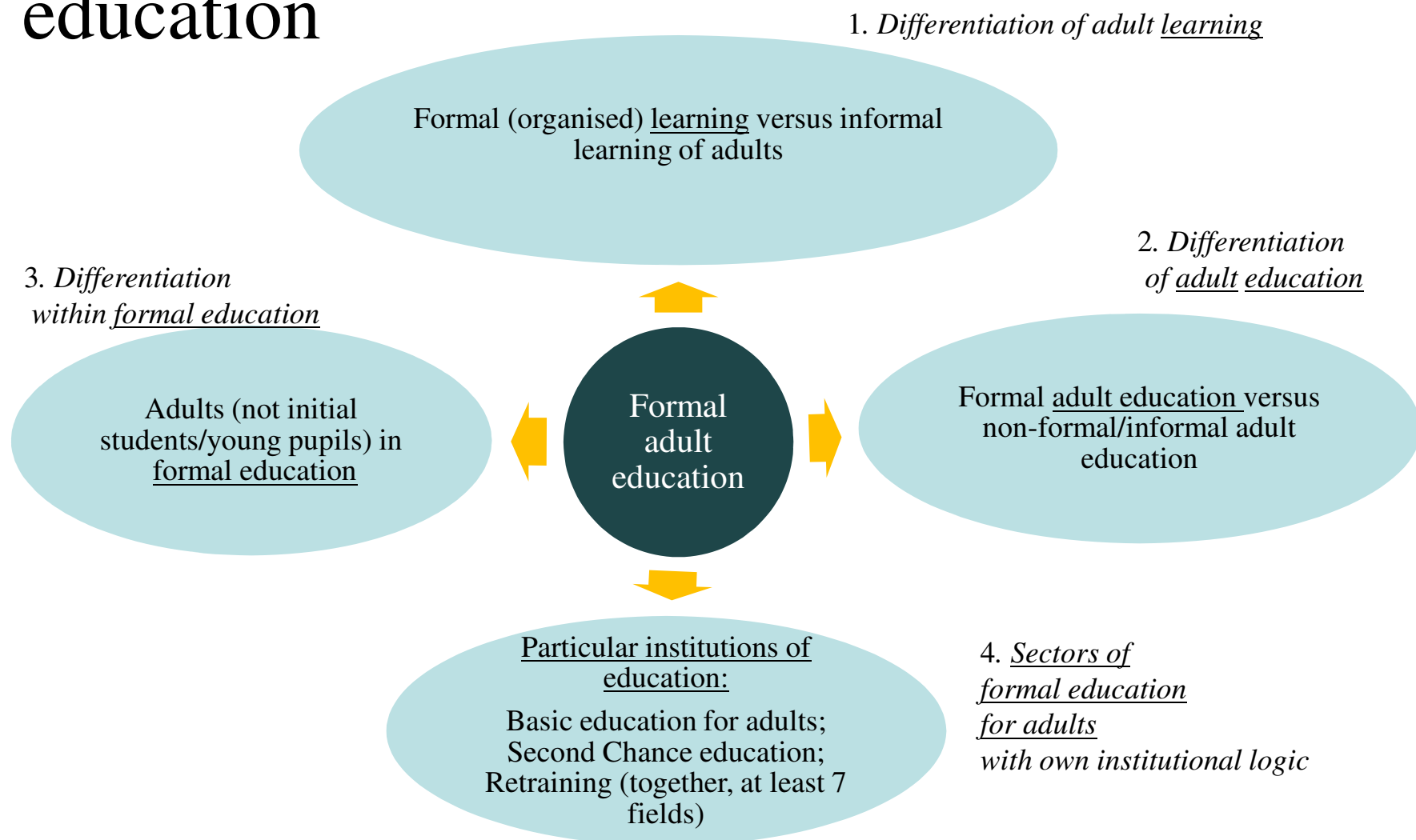


# Introduction (1) Beyond the formal/non-formal/informal triad ...

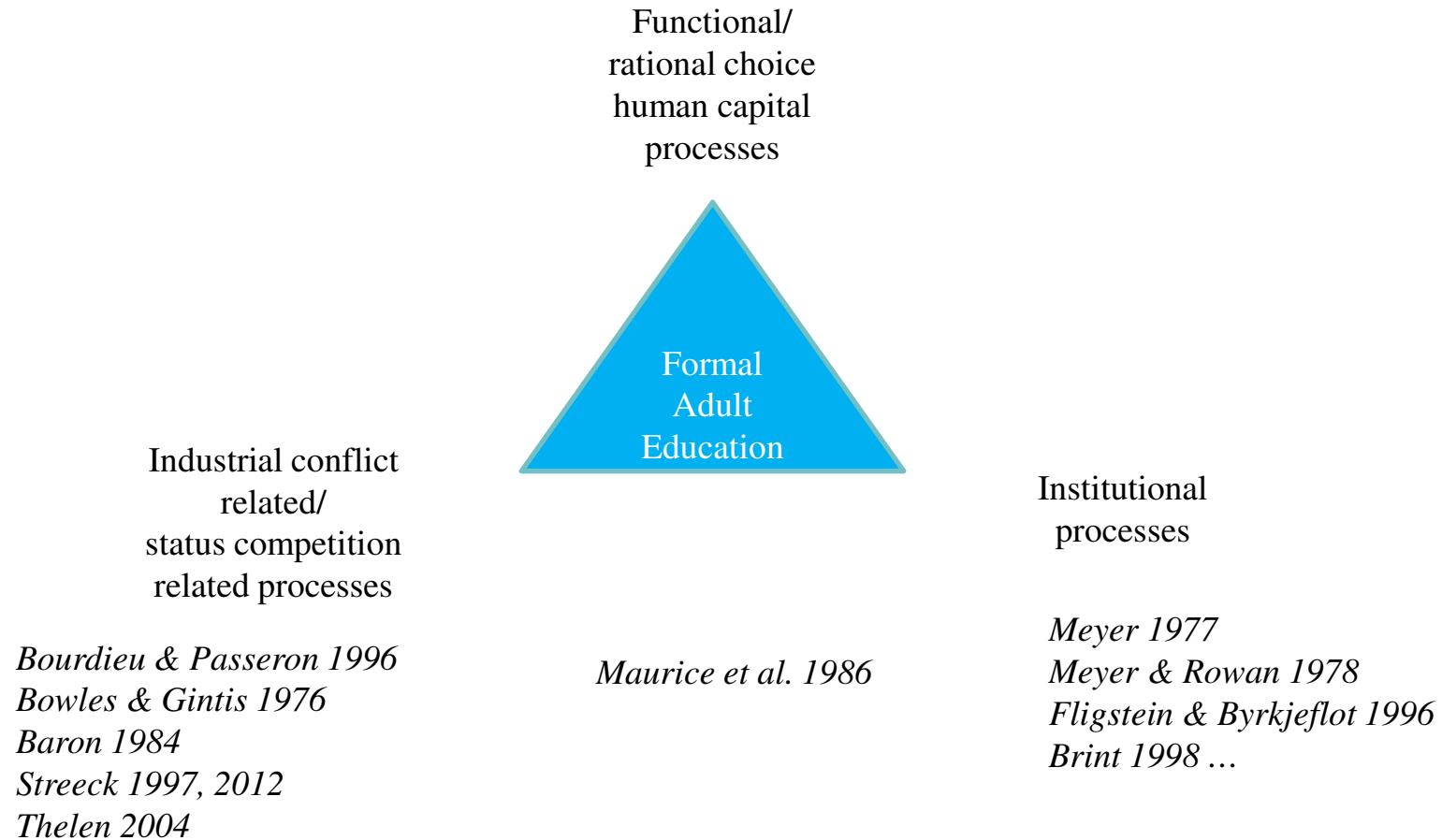


Source: Eurostat 2010

# Introduction (1) Meaning of formal adult education



## (2) Integrating frameworks of sociology of education (Fuller&Rubinson 1992)



## (2) Formal adult education as an institution



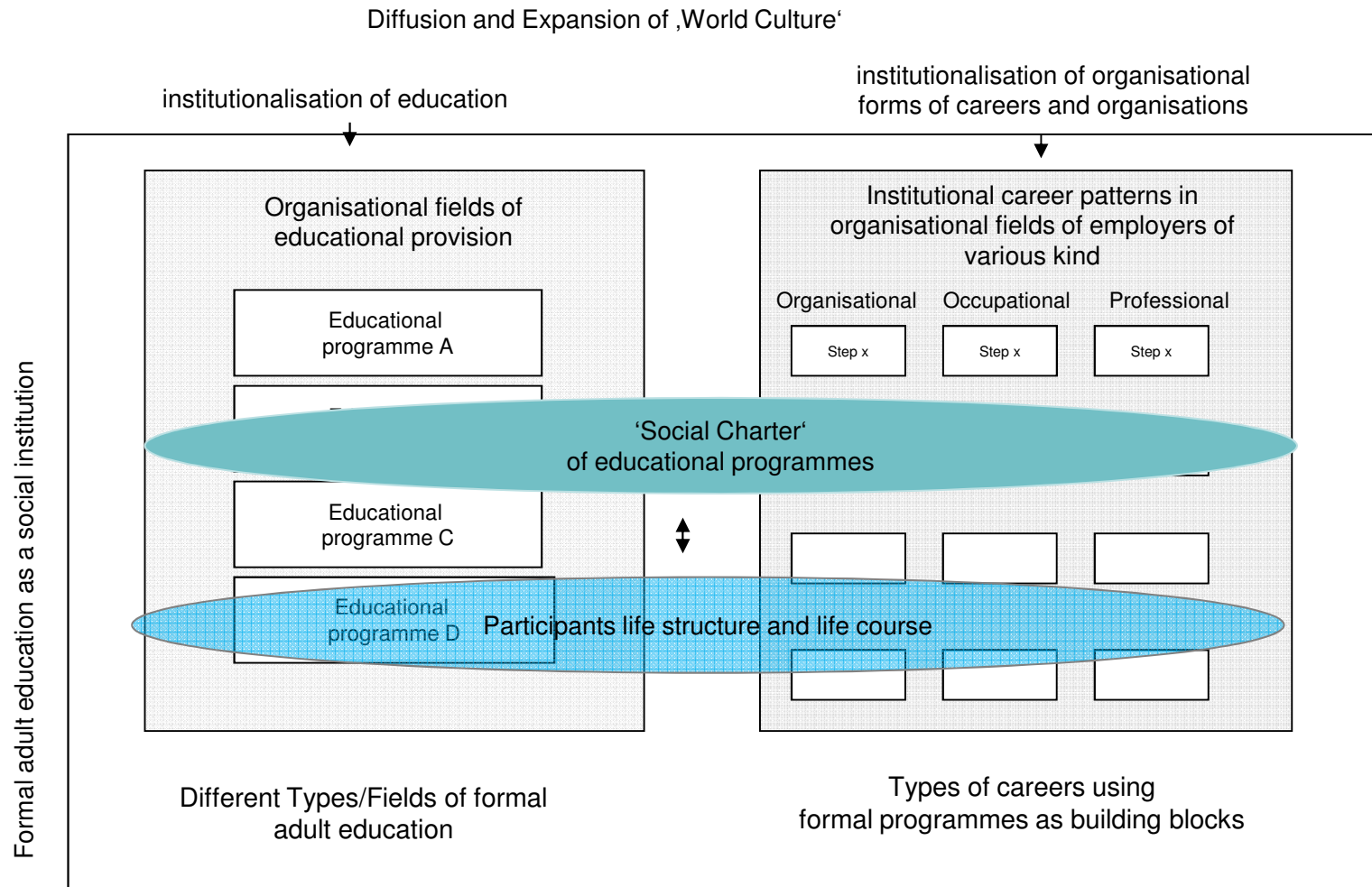
My definition (Hefler 2012)

Formal adult education, as an institution, allows for *taking steps* in adulthood within the social space, *providing eligibility* for movements *up* or *entering in established career ladders* that use *formal educational qualifications as defining criteria*.

## (2) Functions and ambivalences of formal adult education as an institution

1. Overcoming adults' limitations created by institutionalizing youth-centered formal education as the core principle for social selection and stratification – thereby, however, adding to the *inequalities* caused by the formal education system
2. Expanding the tools available within the struggles for control between 'capital' and 'labour' – 'credentials' as option for imposing a 'beneficial constraint' (Streeck 1997) on employers

# (2) Framework for analysing formal adult education as an institution



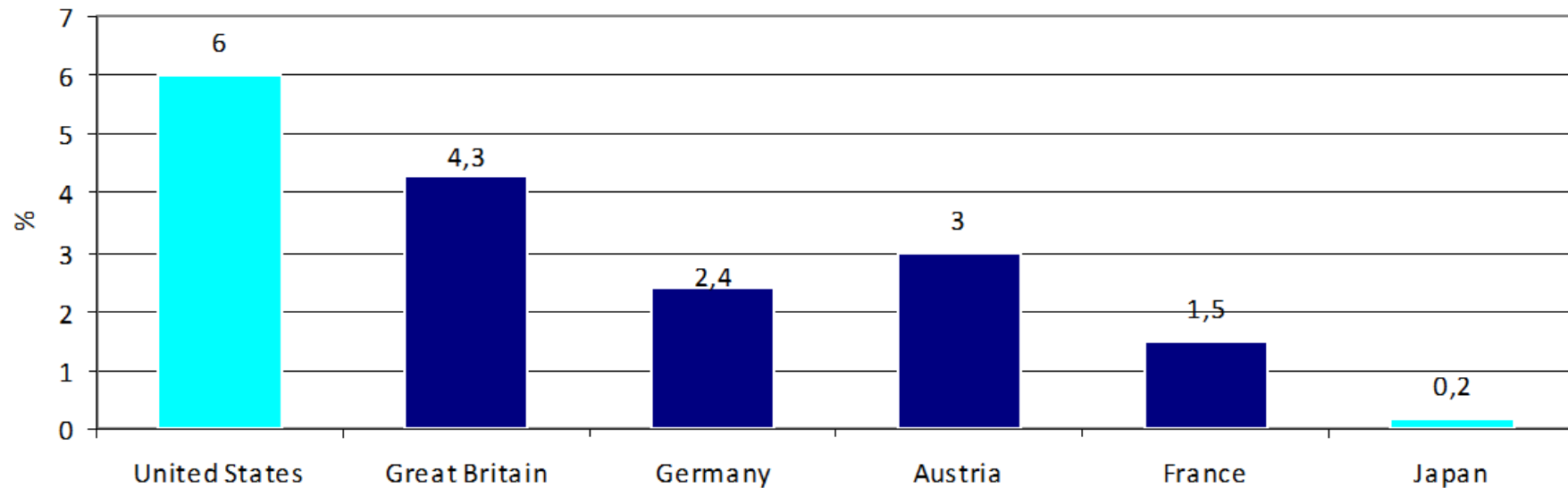
Source: Hefler 2012

Differences in country-specific patterns of interrelations  
 Different Skill formation systems



# (3) Opportunity structure for formal adult education

Proportion of adults (25-64) participating in formal adult education



Source: UOE, own calculations, Brinton 2011 for Japan, for the US own estimates for 2004/2005 based on National Centre for Education Statistics 2006

# (3) Framework

	Dimension	Guiding questions
World of education	A. Availability and Accessibility	How many programmes are available? How accessible are programmes?
	B. Rigidity and Selectivity	How high/low is the likeliness of success and failure? What is the range of performance acceptable?
	C. Public support for participation	How many resources are provided for organisations catering for adults? How many resources are provided to adults for co-financing tuition fees, leaving out costs and social-security payments?
World of work	D. Flexibility of career trajectories	How easily can an adult take a break or make a change of occupation career points? How many points of entry into organisational career pattern are foreseen?
	E. Recognition/Institutionalisation within career patterns	How are formal qualifications used within career patterns? Are there particular qualifications available by formal adult education only?
	F. Change in educational provision (intra-/intergenerational change) (Change or roles of credentials in career patterns)	Has accessibility changed within consecutive cohorts/generations?



## (3) US & Great Britain

- \_\_ Very broad range of provision within universities and on ‘sub-baccalaureate level’ by non-profit and for-profit providers
- \_\_ Highly inclusive, comprehensive higher secondary education system and higher education system (tracking ‘within’ the system, less exclusion of the system)
- \_\_ High (GB) to moderate (U.S) public support for particular types of formal adult education (typically co-financing study places)
- \_\_ Comparatively flexible, weakly age-graded career trajectories; ‘professional logic’ in para-professions/professions become dominating (at top of the logic of organisational careers)
- \_\_ Post-secondary ‘credentials’ institutionalised (‘professional logic’), however, vocational credentials on lower level weakly supported
- \_\_ (Near-to) universal higher secondary education and strong expansion of higher education for at least two consecutive generations lead to a change in the use of ‘professional credentials’ in the labour market

## (3) Germany and Austria

- \_\_ Long-time established types of closely circumscribed forms of formal adult education (e.g. evening gymnasiums, craft mastership courses), strong expansion of new forms in Austria (e.g. Berufsmatura); increase of ‘adult students’ in the higher education system ‘despite institutional neglect’
- \_\_ Segregating and strongly excluding education system on (academic) higher secondary and tertiary level – ‘Drop outs’ as a target group versus ‘low expectations’ for educational success
- \_\_ Moderate support for the most traditional types of formal adult education; however, support is increasing (as part of the reformed LLL agenda)
- \_\_ Comparatively inflexible, more strongly age-graded career trajectories; however, models for acquiring ‘formal qualification’ of particular types are partly institutionalised within career pathways
- \_\_ Vocational (secondary) qualifications are deeply institutionalised within occupational careers/labour markets
- \_\_ Delayed educational expansion; recent institutional change (strong increase of academic higher secondary and tertiary education) with unclear outcome for the ‘span of qualification’ of traditional vocational qualifications

## (3) France and Japan

- \_\_ Formal education organised as competition between youth cohorts, formally or informally excluding 'late comers'; low participation rates of adults in higher education,
- \_\_ Highly competitive and excluding education system; less competitive students' are excluded from the game; they may engage in (non-formal) education, yet, cannot revise the 'league table' crafted by formal education
- \_\_ Widely absent public support for formal education; strong for non-formal education
- \_\_ Comparatively inflexible, more strongly age-graded career trajectories with organisational careers; entrance decision for more favourable careers are strongly linked to preferable age grades and standardised educational pathways
- \_\_ Formal credentials earned in initial education decide on entrance into career trajectories and the path of progress in organisational careers; while non-formal further education is deeply institutionalised, formal further education is (nearly) absent.
- \_\_ Strong educational expansion for consecutive generations are combined with the prolongation of the use of competitive examinations for defined number of preferable 'places' at the end of formal education (secondary and tertiary level)

## (4) Outlook: Empty Promises?

- \_\_\_ Using cross-country comparative approaches for deciphering the institutional conditions of valid or empty promises of formal adult education
- \_\_\_ No reason for abandoning the concept of formal adult education and withdraw from its implicit political programme of supporting social mobility in adult life
- \_\_\_ Creating and maintaining formal adult education refers to ‘institutional promises’ – the effective enforcement of a link between further education and career opportunities – not to the provision of a particular type of training alone
- \_\_\_ Formal adult education, consequently, imply social conflicts between various social groups and ‘capital’ and ‘labour’ in particular

# Thank you very much for your attention!

Kontakt:

3s research laboratory

Dr. Günter Hefler

Wiedner Hauptstraße 18

1040 Wien

[hefler@3s.co.at](mailto:hefler@3s.co.at)

[www.3s.co.at](http://www.3s.co.at)

---

3s research laboratory, [www.3s.co.at](http://www.3s.co.at)



# Literature

- \_\_Baron, James N. (1984) Organizational perspectives on stratification. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 10, 37-69.
- \_\_Bowles, Samuel & Gintis, Herbert (1976) *Schooling in capitalist America: educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- \_\_Bourdieu, Pierre & Passeron, Jean-Claude (1996) *Reproduction in education, society and culture*, London, Sage.
- \_\_Brint, Steven (1998) *Schools and societies, Thousand Oaks ; London, Pine Forge Press*.
- \_\_Collins, Randall (1979) *The credential society: an historical sociology of education and stratification*, New York ; London, Academic Press.
- \_\_Eurostat (2006) *Classification of learning activities - Manual*. Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- \_\_Eurostat (2010) *Draft AES Manual – Annex A – Field Work*. Luxembourg.
- \_\_Fligstein, Neil & Byrkjeflot, Haldor (1996) *The Logic of Employment Systems*. in Pock, John, Baron, James N. , Grusky, David B. & Treiman, Donald J. (Eds.) *Social differentiation and social inequality: essays in honor of John Pock*. Boulder, Westview Press, 11-35.
- \_\_Fuller, Bruce & Rubinson, Richard (1992) *Does the State Expand Schooling? Review of the Evidence*. in Fuller, Bruce & Rubinson, Richard (Eds.) *The political construction of education: the state, school expansion, and economic change*. New York, London, Praeger, 1-28.
- \_\_Graf, Lukas, Lassnigg, Lorenz & Powell, Justin J. W. (2012) *Austrian Corporatism and Institutional Change in the Relationship between Apprenticeship Training and School-Based VET*. in Busemeyer, Marius R. & Trampusch, Christine (Eds.) *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 150-178.
- \_\_Maurice, Marc, Sellier, Francois & Silvestre, Jean-Jacques (1986) *The Social Foundations of Industrial Power - A comparison of France and Germany*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.
- \_\_Meyer, John W. (1977) *The Effects of Education as an Institution*. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 55-77.
- \_\_Meyer, John W. & Rowan, Brian (1978) *The Structure of Educational Organizations*. in Meyer, Marshall W. (Ed.) *Environments and organizations*. San Francisco Jossey-Bass, 78-109.
- \_\_Streeck, Wolfgang (1997) *Beneficial Constraints: On the Economic Limits of Rational Voluntarism*. in Hollingsworth, J. Rogers & Boyer, Robert (Eds.) *Contemporary Capitalism: The Embeddedness of Institutions*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 197-219.
- \_\_Streeck, Wolfgang (2012) *Skill and Politics: General and Specific*. in Busemeyer, Marius R. & Trampusch, Christine (Eds.) *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*. New York, Oxford University Press, 317-352.
- Thelen, Kathleen (2004) *How Institutions Evolve - The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.