

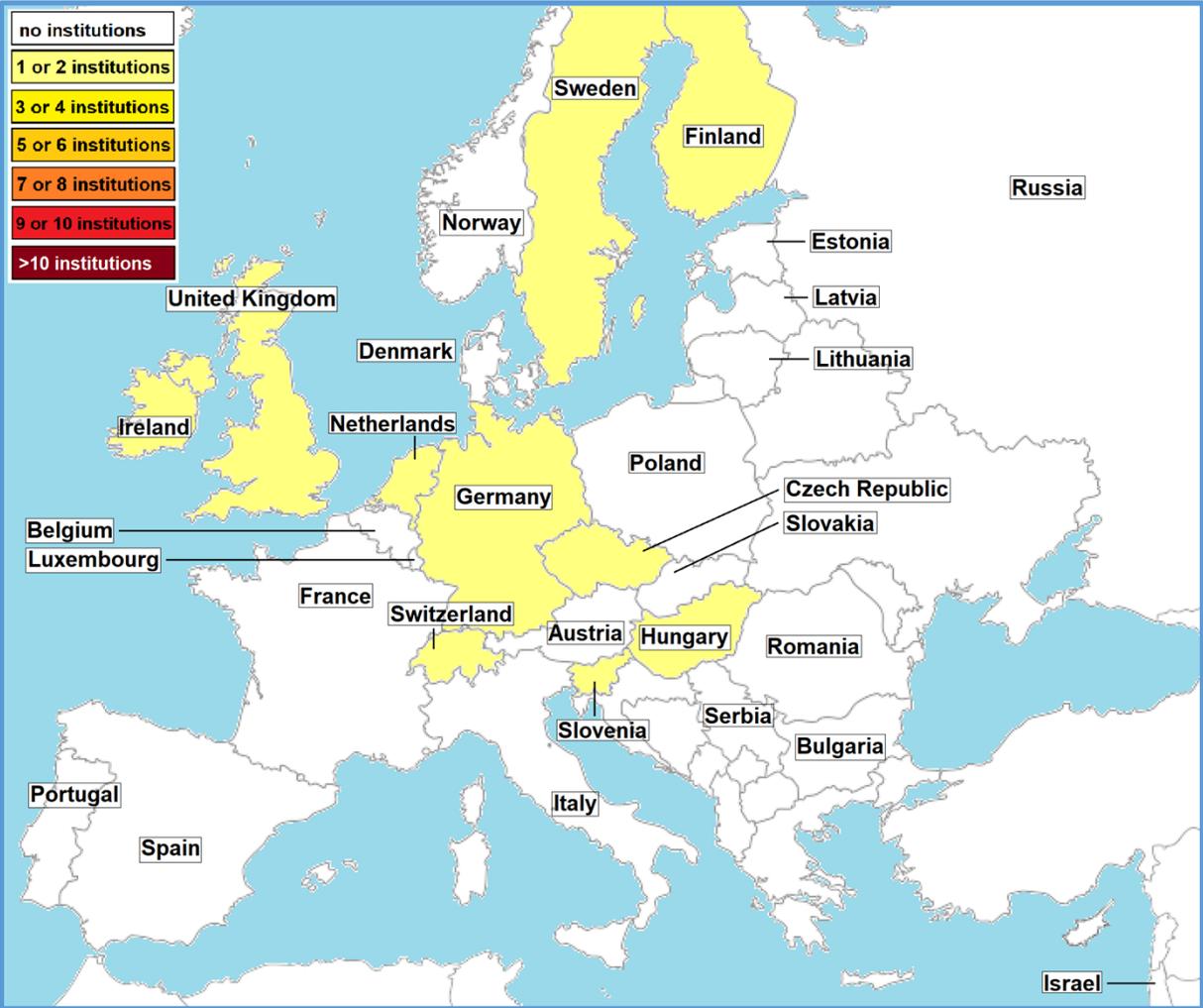


# Introducing the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR)

Dr. Irena Kogan  
Professor of sociology  
University of Mannheim, Germany  
Secretary-Treasurer of the ECSR

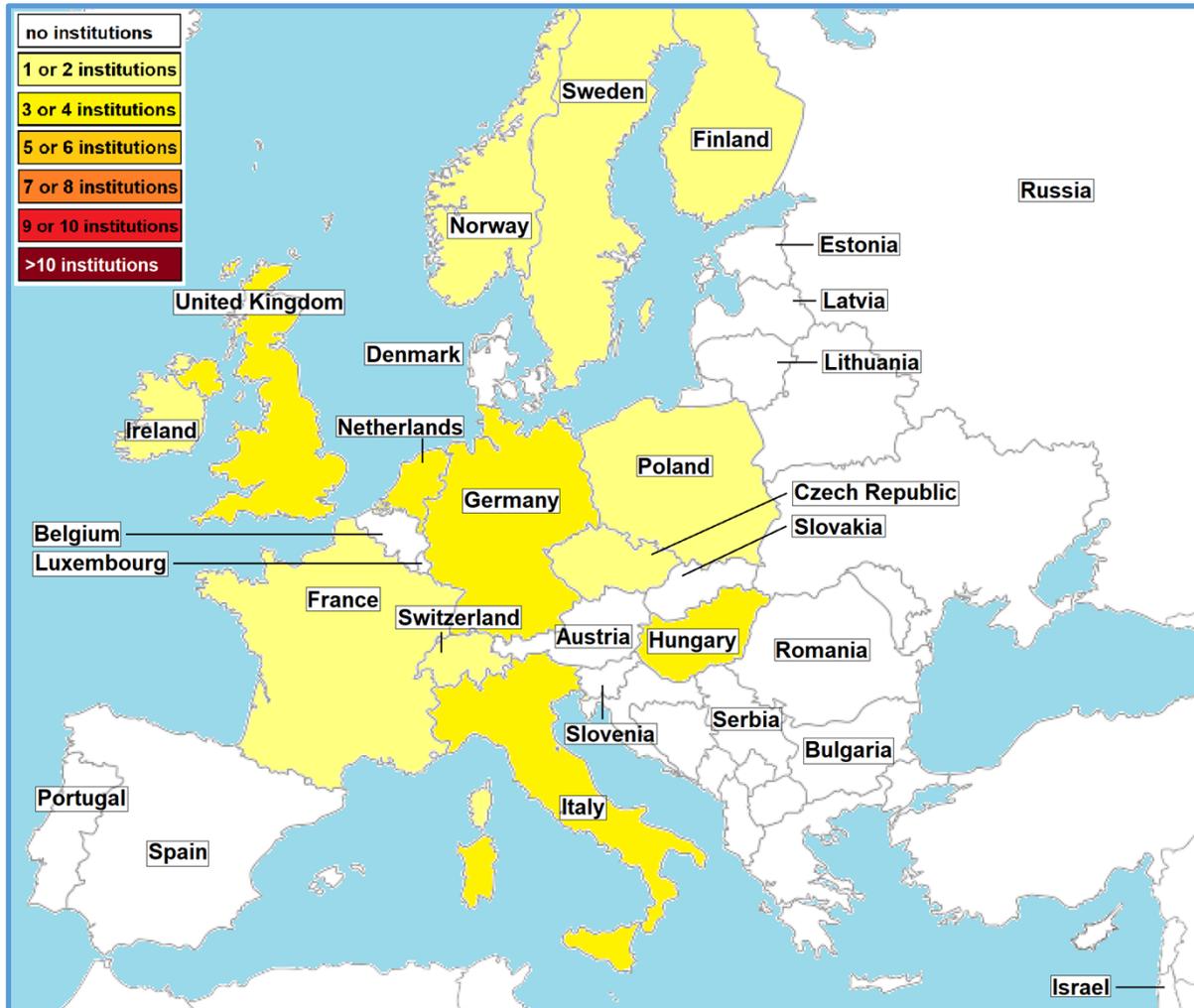
---

# First assembled in 1991



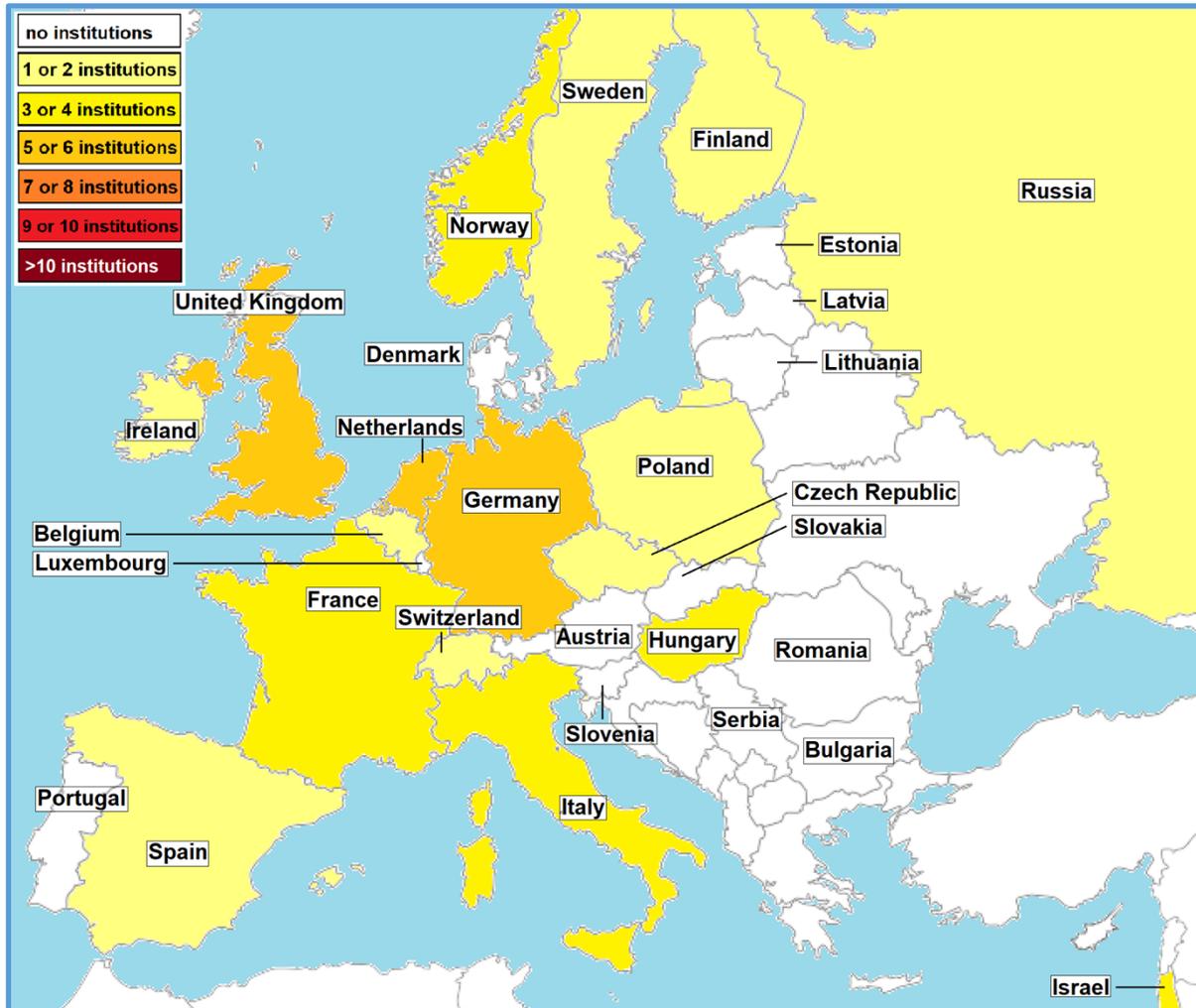
**10**  
institutions  
from  
**10** nations

# Continuingly expanding, 1996



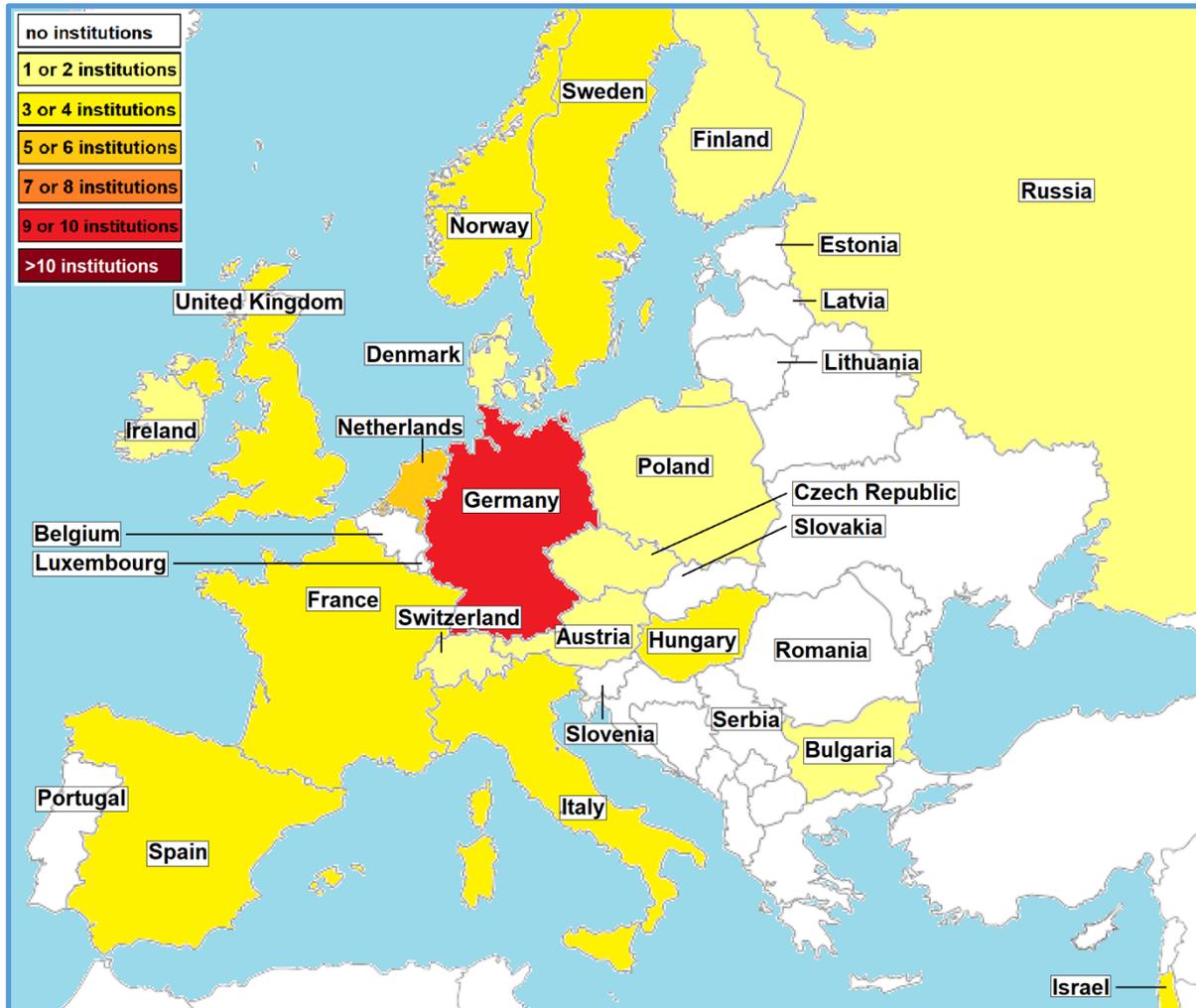
**26**  
institutions  
from  
**13** nations

# Continuingly expanding, 2000



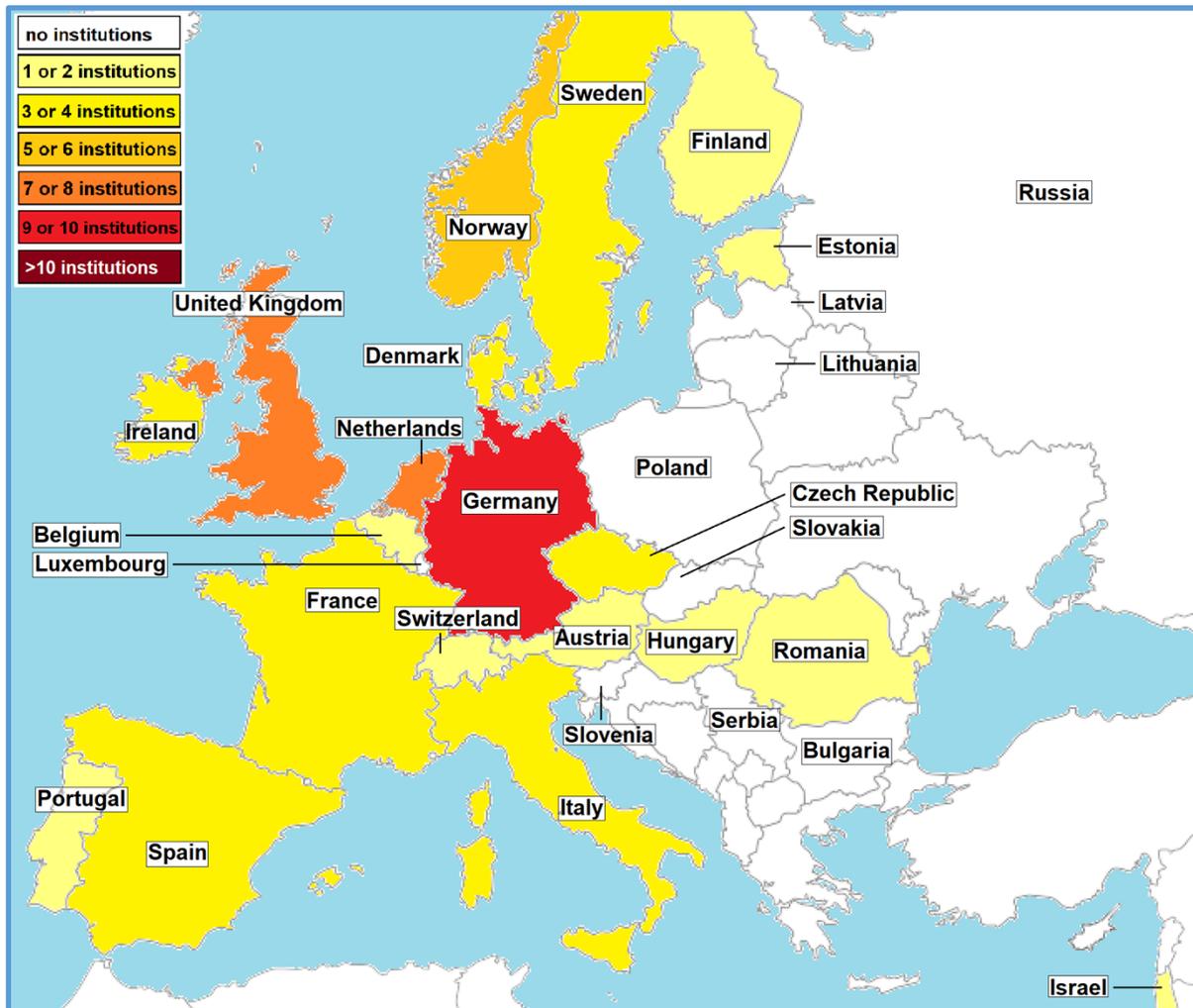
**44**  
institutions  
from  
**17** nations

# Continuingly expanding, 2003



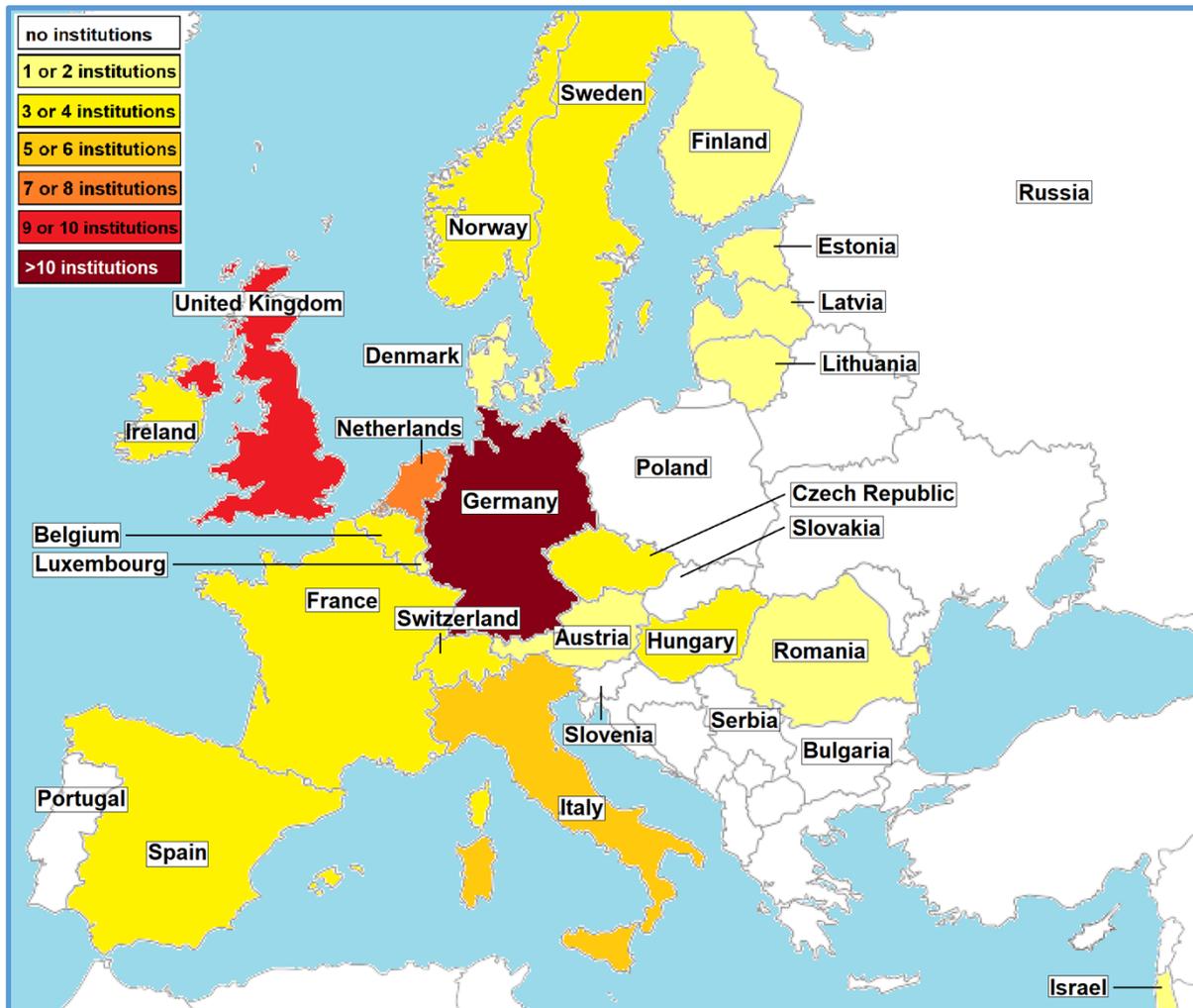
**53**  
institutions  
from  
**19** nations

# Continuingly expanding, 2012



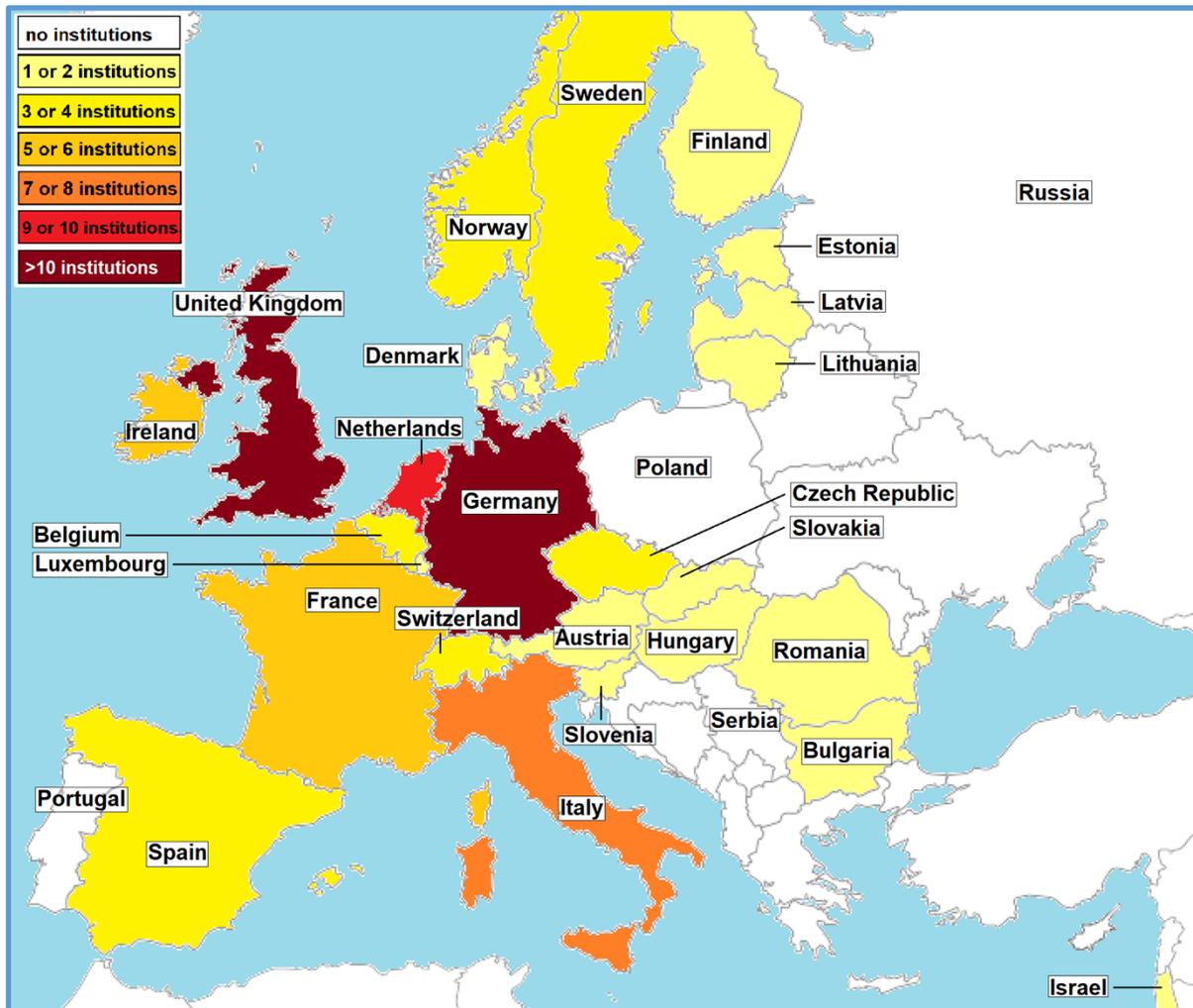
**68**  
institutions  
from  
**20** nations

# Continuingly expanding, 2015



**84**  
institutions  
from  
**22** nations

Currently, in  
2019



97  
institutions  
from  
25 nations





## Our mission

- Promote empirical sociological research
  - theory-driven
  - evidence-based
  - policy-relevant
  
- Encourage co-operation between research centres by
  - improving resources and facilities
  - increasing contacts
  - facilitating collaborative research and training

## Today's speakers

- **Dr. Fabrizio Bernardi** (Professor of Sociology at the European University Institute and Chair of the ECSR): Inequality in educational opportunities, social mobility, educational returns, family and labour market dynamics and inequality



- **Dr. Heike Solga** (Director of the Research Unit “Skill Formation and Labor Markets” at the Berlin Social Science Center and Professor of Sociology at the Free University Berlin): Education, training, skills, labour market

- **Dr. Helen Russell** (Research Professor and Deputy Head of the Social Research Division at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the Trinity College Dublin and ECSR Board Member): Employment, equality, social inclusion



# Is schooling the great equalizer?

Fabrizio Bernardi

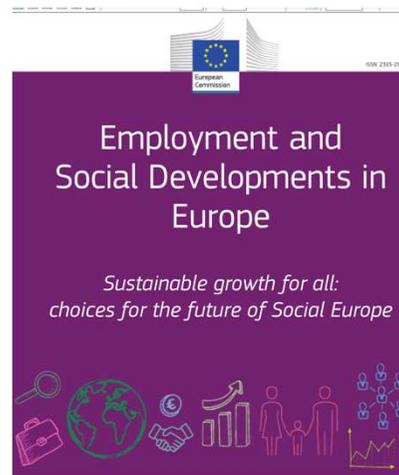
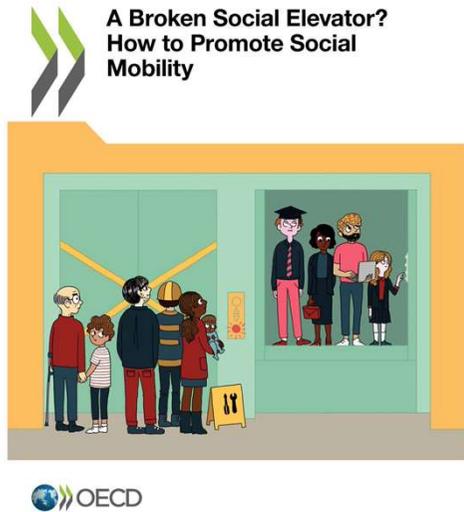
Professor in Sociology, European University Institute

Chair of the European Consortium for Sociological Research

EPRS, Policy Roundtable: Promoting social mobility and equal opportunities in Europe

European Parliament 11/11/2019

# Growing concern: low social mobility



One of the three main category of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** is equal opportunities

# Mainstream view: education as an equalizer and social elevator

“Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the **great equalizer** of the conditions of men, the **balance-wheel** of the social machinery”

Horace Mann (1848)

Education functions as **social elevator**

In order to achieve more social mobility we have to invest in education and, in particular, expand access to higher education for children from low socio-economic status families

# A (slightly) critical view: why education is not enough

I focus on three phases of the life course:

**#1** Pre-school

**#2** In school

**#3** The labour market

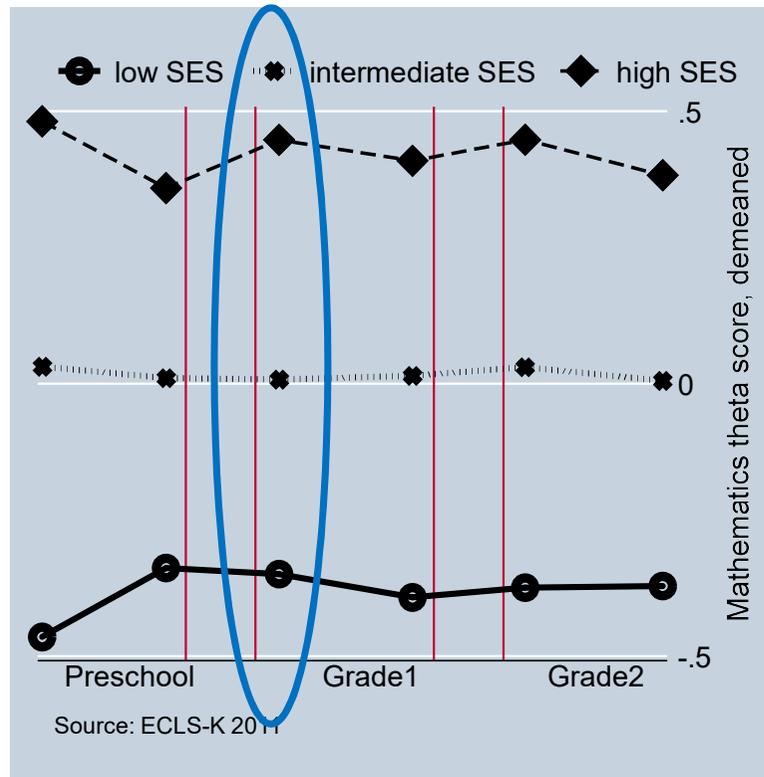
and on:

**#4** macro occupational changes

Findings based on collaborative research conducted within the European Consortium for Sociological Research on different EU countries

# #1 The preschool achievement gap

Average scores in mathematics at school entry and in the first school years by parents' socio-economic status (USA)

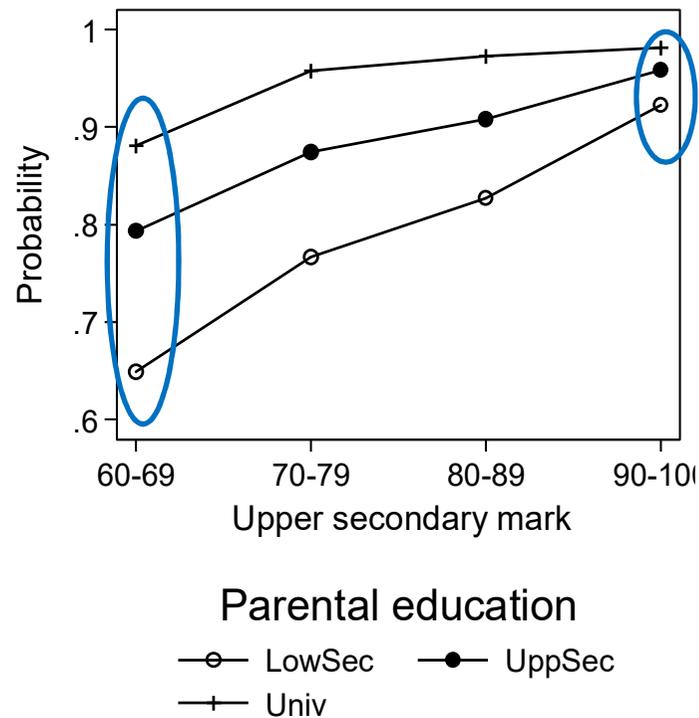


## Key finding

When school starts, there is already a large achievement gap by parental socio-economic status

## #2 Compensatory advantage in school

Probabilities of entering university by parental education and upper secondary mark (Italy)



### Key finding

**In spite of bad performance students from highly educated families still enroll (and complete) higher education**

# #3 The parental occupation premium

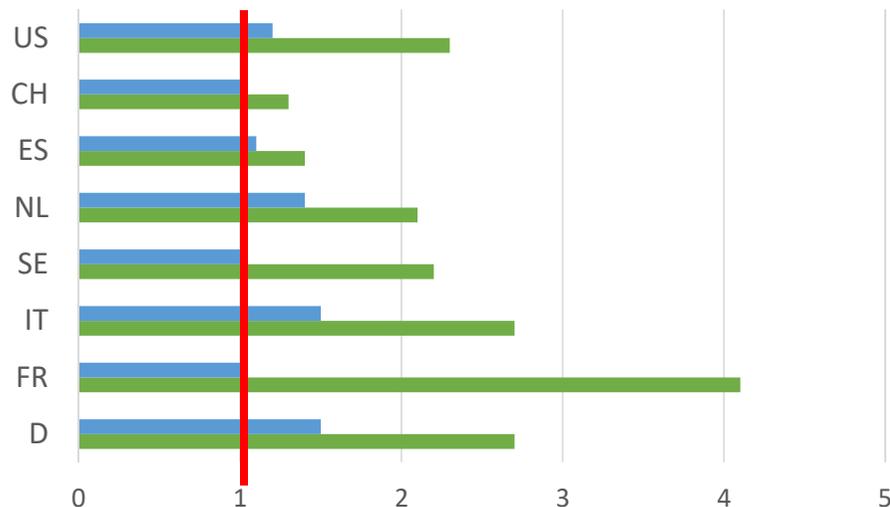
The 10 parental occupations that provide the largest. premium **in monthly net income** among those with the **same level of education** (ref. cat. = parent is a construction worker) (n=49,722; Spain)

Parental Occupation	Premium (€)
Sales, marketing and development managers	454.2
Managing directors and chief executives	428.7
University and higher education teachers	424.0
Management and organization analysts	383.7
Legal professionals (lawyers and judges)	383.5
Authors, journalists and linguists	334.6
Legislators and senior officials	329.4
Physical and engineering science technicians	325.0
Legal professionals not elsewhere classified (notary)	317.2
Sales, marketing and public relations professionals	304.9

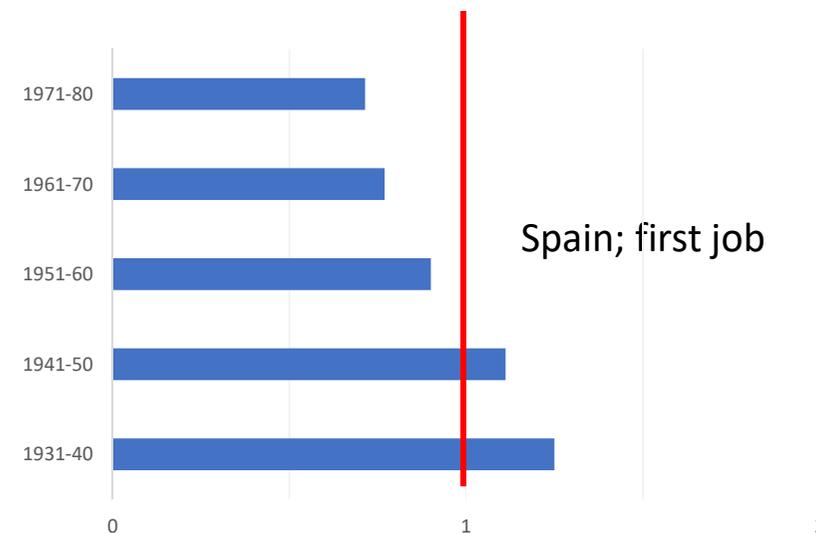
## Key finding

**Among those with the same level of education, those with parents in high level occupations earn more**

# #4 The ratio good jobs to university degrees



■ post-1964 ■ pre-1924



Spain; first job

In the past more good jobs than qualified job seekers

In all countries the ratio has now reverted

## Key finding

Further educational expansion not paralleled by a similar occupational upgrading might translate into unemployment and underqualification

# To conclude: why is schooling not enough?

#1 Achievement gap by social origins already exists **before school starts**

#2 While **in education**, low performing children from the upper class still manage to achieve higher education

#3 Once in the **labour market** there is a social origin premium among those with the same level of education

#4 **Expansion of higher education** has to be matched by an equivalent **expansion of good jobs**

# Policy Debate

# Ideas for policies to increase social mobility

- No single “silver bullet” but rather a package
- Early intervention: not only quantitative expansion of 0-3 and 3-6 public education but also **quality** (of teachers)
- Educational policies to improve achievement of children from low SES families: summer break and extra-curricular activities
- Housing policies and policies to reduce inequality in socio-economic resources among families

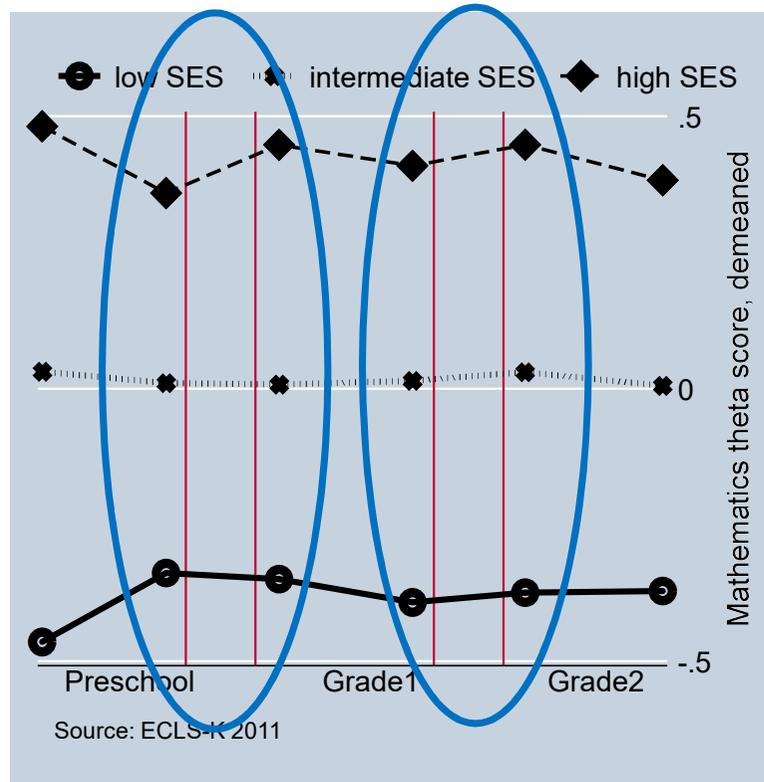
# Schooling alone can not promote social mobility and social justice

In US between 0-18 children only spend 15% of the **active life in school**;

In EU probably about **20%**

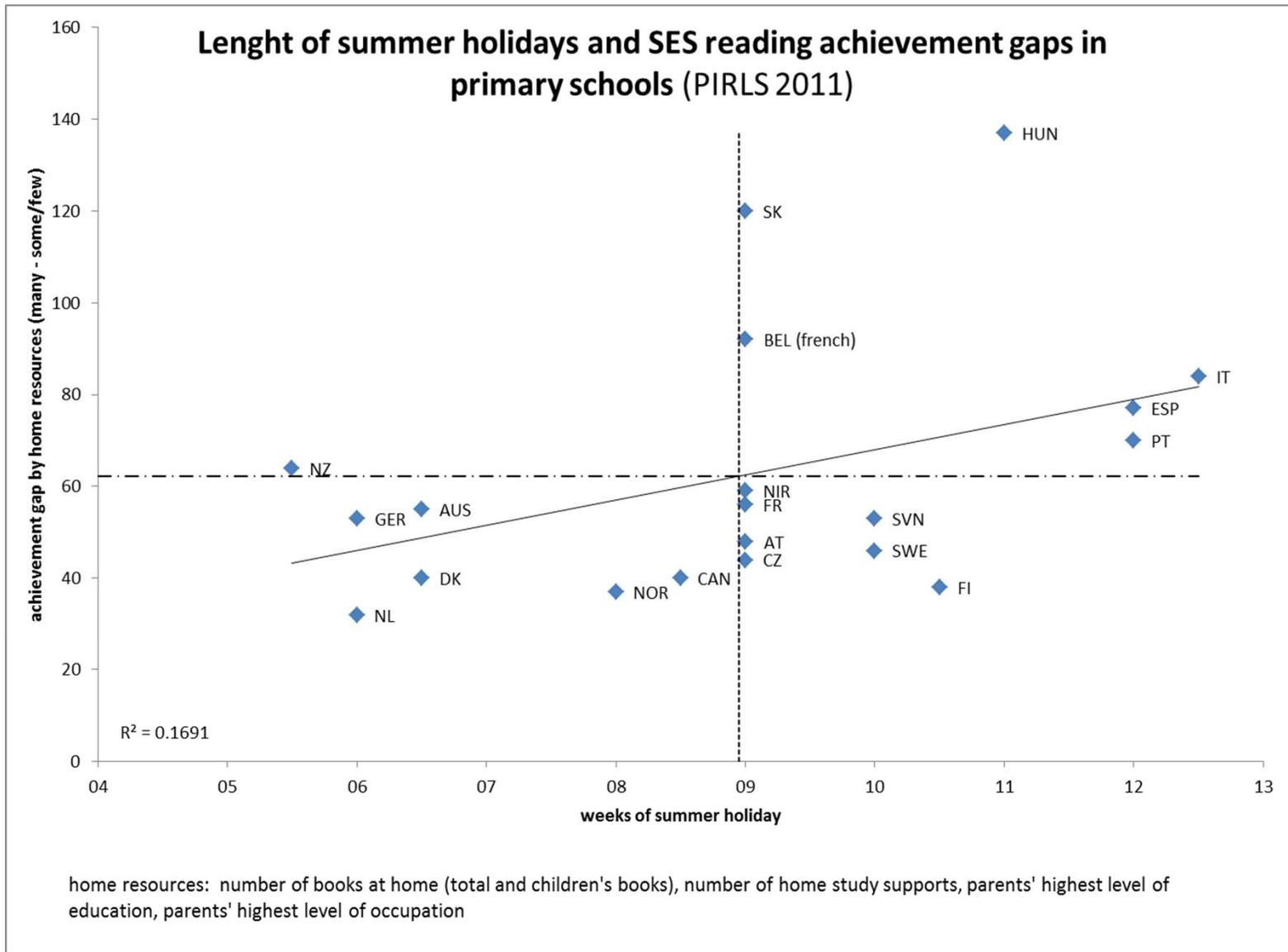
# Summer vs school year learning

Average scores in mathematics at school entry and in the first school years by parents' socio-economic status (USA)



## Key finding

achievement gap by parental socio-economic status increases during summer months and decrease during school year



# WZB

Berlin Social Science Center



## Education, skills and the labour market: What are the critical issues preventing intergenerational social mobility?

Heike Solga



European Commission, Brussels, 11/11/2019

European Commission's Report:  
Employment and social developments in Europe:  
Sustainable growth **for all** (2019)  
A new strategic agenda: 2019–2024

- Investment in people's skills and education
- Inclusive labour markets
- Social investment policies ... throughout the life course

# European Commission's Report: Employment and social developments in Europe: Sustainable growth **for all** (2019)

## A new strategic agenda: 2019–2024

- Investment in people's skills and education
- Inclusive labour markets
- Social investment policies ... throughout the life course

One of the most vulnerable groups concerning these goals are **less-educated adults**

[i.e., those less than upper secondary education]

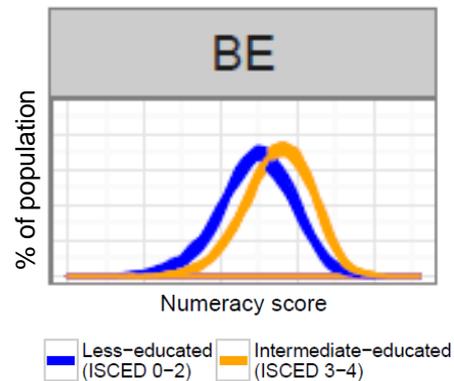
- High(er) (long-term) unemployment rates
- Lower job placements & earnings
- Lower participation rates in learning activities

## #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education

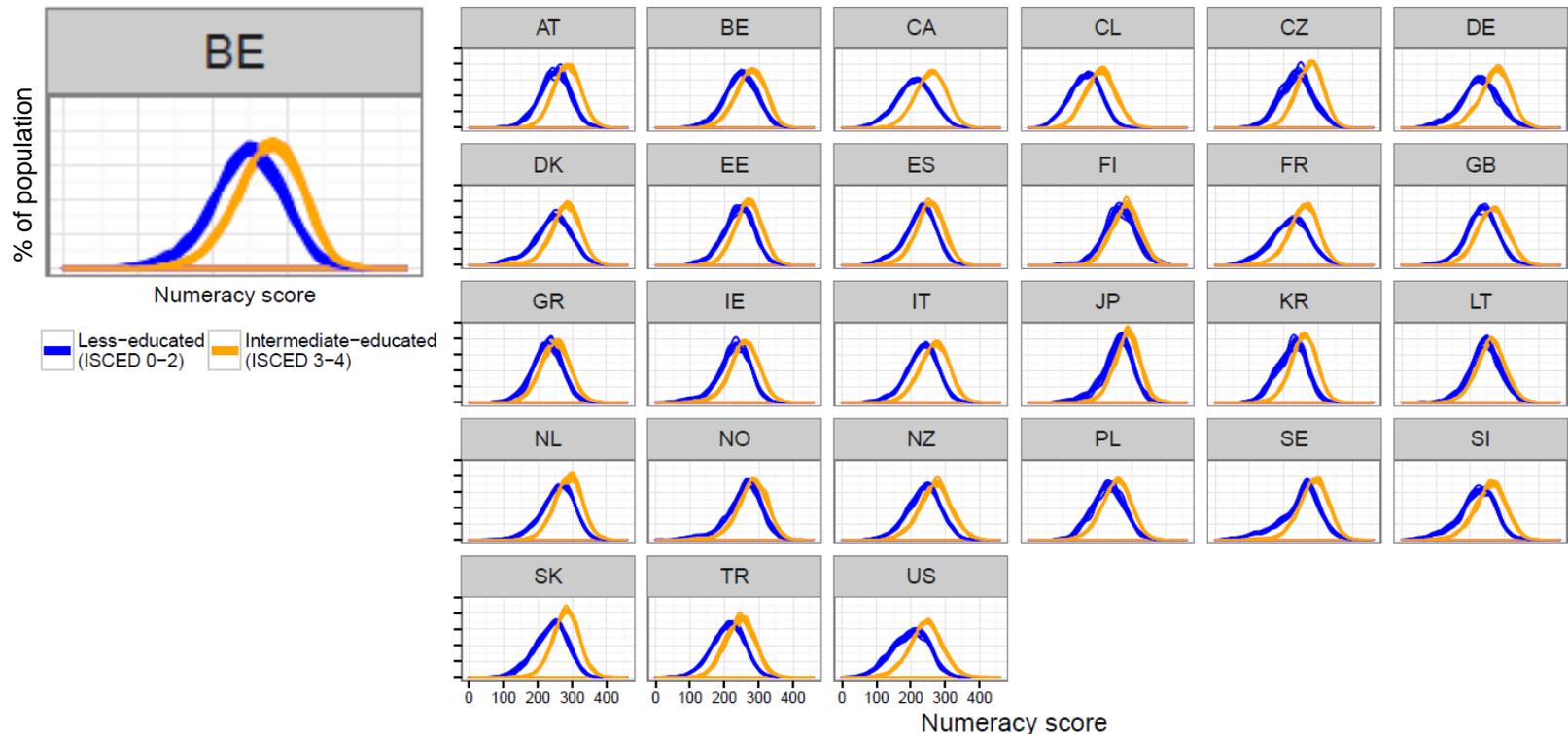
# #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education



# #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education



16-54 yrs. old. Data Source: PIAAC.

## #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education

## #2 Skills have a relatively small impact on less-educated adults' employment prospects

## #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education

## #2 Skills have a relatively small impact on less-educated adults' employment prospects

- Example: Less-educated adults' with lower and higher skills don't differ much in their occupational positions.
- For adults with upper secondary education, skills differences matter quite strongly.

## #1 Large undiscovered skills potential within the less-educated group

- Large heterogeneity within the less-educated group
- Large overlap with adults with upper secondary education

## #2 Skills have a relatively small impact on less-educated adults' employment prospects

- Example: Less-educated adults' with lower and higher skills don't differ much in their occupational positions.
- For adults with upper secondary education, skills differences matter quite strongly.
- Conclusion: Statistical discrimination of less-educated adults because of their low level of formal qualification

### #3 Social inequality in skills is lower than social inequality in educational degrees.

- Adults with lower social origin are less likely to transfer skills into higher levels of formal qualifications.
- This contributes to the large heterogeneity in skills within educational groups.

What can we do?

#4 **Non-formal** adult education and training (AET) reduces social inequality in education, whereas **formal** AET increases it.

- Well-known factors for **higher** social inequalities:
  - Tracked school systems
  - Vocational upper secondary education
  - Later re-entry into education (formal AET)
- However, **social inequality in education can also be reduced after initial education:**  
In countries which have higher shares of non-formal AET, social inequalities in skills & educational degrees are smaller.

# Policy implications

## EC goals:

- Investment in people's skills and education
- Inclusive labour markets
- Social investment policies ... throughout the life course

## Lessons learned:

- **Increasing opportunities of non-formal AET** for less-educated workers throughout the life course.
- Investment in skills is not sufficient.  
**Skills also have to be certified**, especially for less-educated adults.
  - To counteract statistical discrimination
  - Transferability of “discovered” and “newly acquired” skills across firms

# References

- Heisig, Jan Paul, Benjamin Elbers & Heike Solga (2019). Cross-national differences in social background effects on educational attainment and achievement: absolute vs. relative inequalities and the role of education systems. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, DOI: 10.1080/03057925.2019.1677455 (first online: 18.10.2019, open access).
- Heisig, Jan Paul, Maurice Gesthuizen & Heike Solga (2019). Lack of skills or formal qualifications? New evidence on cross-country differences in the labor market disadvantage of less-educated adults. *Social Science Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.06.005> (online first, 2.7.2019)
- Heisig, Jan Paul (2018). Measuring the Signaling Value of Educational Degrees. Secondary Education Systems and the Internal Homogeneity of Educational Groups. *Large-scale Assessments in Education* 6, Article 9, p. 1-35. (<https://largescaleassessmentsineducation.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40536-018-0062-1>, open access)
- Heisig, Jan Paul & Heike Solga (2015). Secondary education systems and the general skills of less- and intermediate-educated adults: A comparison of 18 countries. *Sociology of Education* 88(3): 202–225. (open access: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038040715588603>)

Thanks for your attention!



Niamh at 9 months



Niamh at 3 years



Niamh at 5 years



# Social Inequality in Cognitive Outcomes : What is the role of home- learning environment and childcare?

*Helen Russell  
ESRI, Dublin*

*European Parliament and ECSR Event  
11 November 2019*



# Motivation



- Social gradients in cognitive outcomes visible from an early age.
- Early childhood is a period of intense cognitive and socio-emotional development.
- May provide insights into processes that produce & reproduce inequalities and contribute to policy devt.
- Growing policy interest in early years.



# Irish Policy Context



- Very high childcare costs (2<sup>nd</sup> highest in OECD)
- Market model (74% private providers)
- Relatives and informal carers play a large role
  - at 3yrs: 23% relatives, 23% childminders, 54% centre-based
- Low levels of professionalization, qualifications and pay among childcare workers; high staff turnover.



# The Growing Up in Ireland Infant Cohort

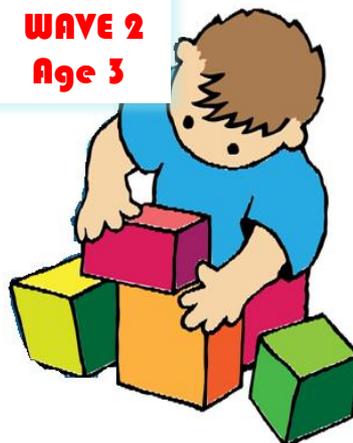
**WAVE 1**  
**Age 9m**



2008 (11,134)

Parent interview  
(face-to-face)

**WAVE 2**  
**Age 3**



2011 (9,793)

Parent interview

Child completes  
cognitive and  
physical tests

**WAVE 3**  
**Age 5**



2013 (9,001)

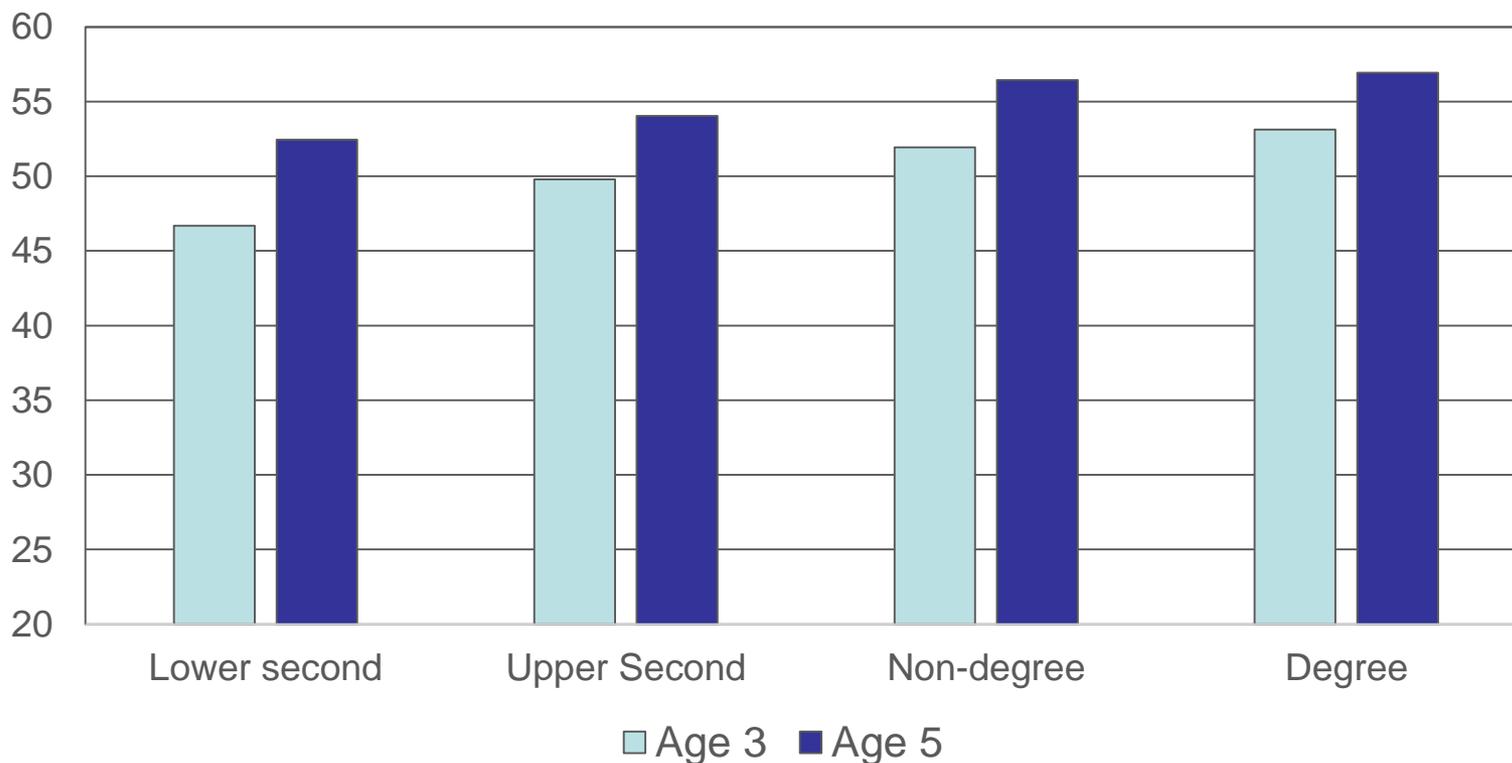
Parent interview

Child completes  
cognitive tests

Teacher evaluation of  
child's cognitive ability  
and socio-emotional  
adjustment



# Vocabulary Scores at Age 3 and Age 5 by Mothers Education



Vocab Measure = British Ability Scales, naming vocabulary



# What is the Home Learning Environment?

“Measures taken in the home to encourage children’s learning” (*Reynolds & Hesketh, 2012*)

1. Home Learning Activities: frequency of seven activities e.g. reading with child; teaching child numbers; teaching songs, nursery/rhymes; drawing/painting with child etc. (Hunt et al. 2011)



2. Measure of learning resources in the home – number of children’s books.

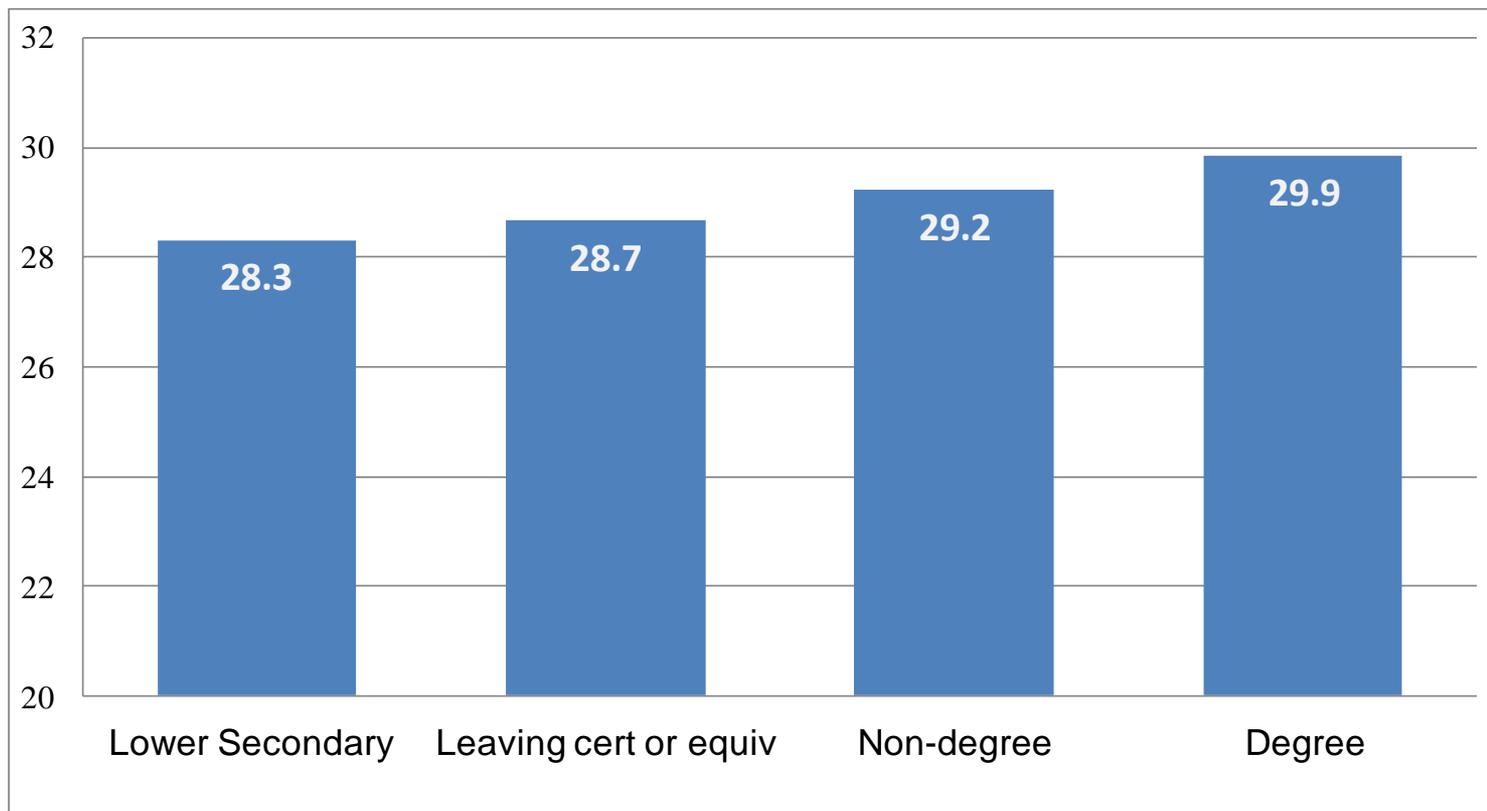


# How is HLE linked to social inequality in cognitive outcomes?

- Family Investment Model - class diffs in ed attainment due to differences in family resources and investment in educationally beneficial materials, experiences, services (Duncan et al 1998)
- Family Stress Model – poverty leads to stress which affects parenting behaviour and therefore child outcomes (Conger & Donnellan, 2007)
- Transmission of cultural capital including vocab, knowledge, accent, etc. “concerted cultivation” in middle class families (Lareau, 2003)
- Quality of HLE can mediate socio-economic influences on cognitive outcomes (Melhuish et al., 2008)



## Home learning activity score (age 3) by primary caregiver's education level

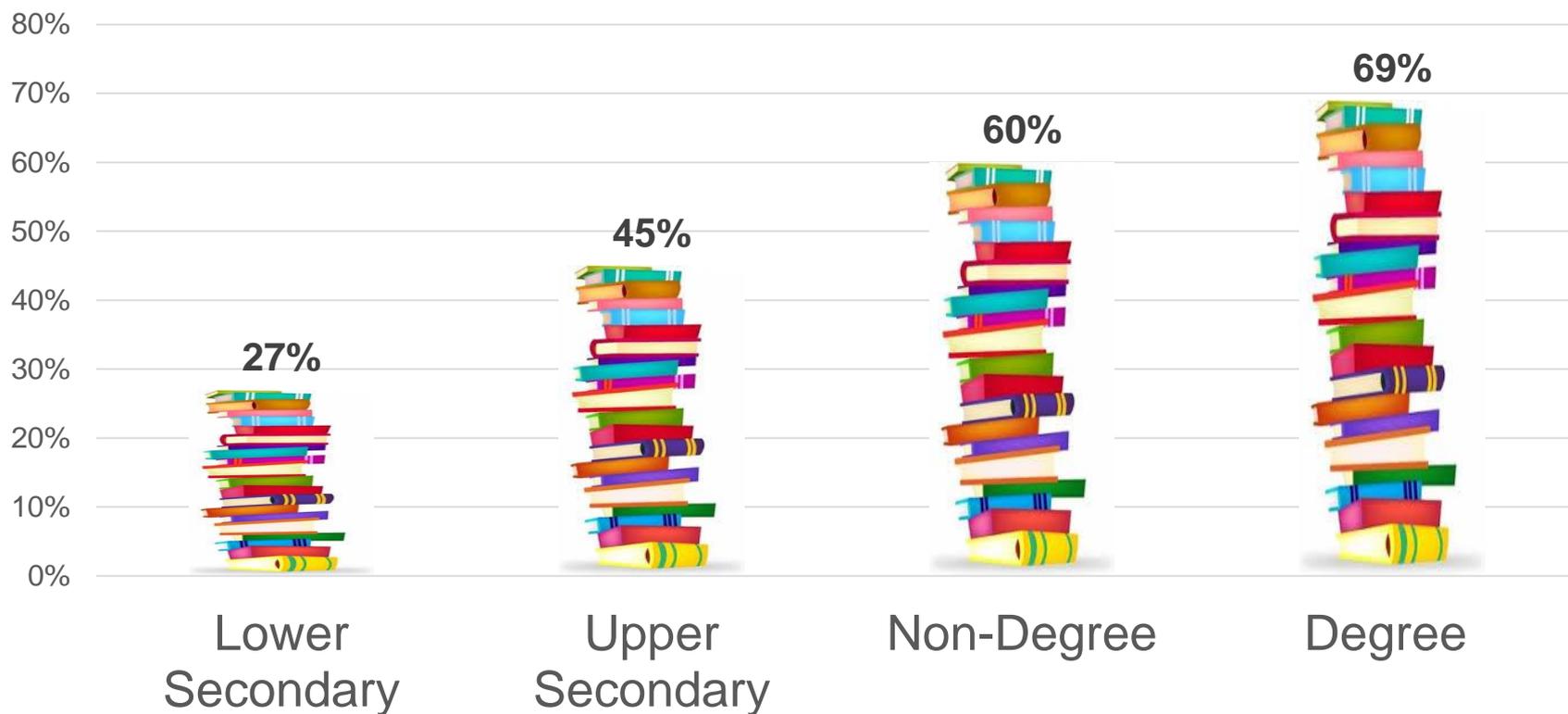


Activities not strongly influenced by income but affected by maternal depression



# Children's Books in Home (age 3) by Mothers Education

>30 Books in household



Strongly associated with HH income



# Home Learning Environment & Vocabulary: Results

- HLE has a strong positive association with vocab at 5yrs and on vocab development between 3 and 5 yrs.
- Children in hh with <10 books score 5 points lower on vocabulary scale (holding child and family characteristics constant)
- Those with the lowest HLA scores, bottom 20%, have score 2.5 points lower than those in the top 20%
- HLE (activities and books) can explain about half the difference in vocab scores for mums with degrees v lower second level educ.
- Books in home is partly due to economic resources.
- Positive effect of HLE greater for low income families – potential compensating effect.



# Role of Child Care & Early Ed in Mitigating Social Inequalities

- Strong evidence of benefits of quality preschool education for cognitive outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children (Sammons et al., 2004; Sylva et al., 2004; Melhuish et al., 2006; Ruhm & Waldfogel 2012; Waldfogel 2019).
- Earlier studies were on intensive, highly targeted interventions but latest review shows benefits found for mainstream programmes in DK, France, Norway with larger effects for disadvantaged children and Spain, Germany for children of immigrants. (Waldfogel 2019)
- Childcare setting may compensate for poor home environment. (Anders . et. al. 2012).



# Childcare & Vocabulary outcomes (Ireland)

- Small positive net effect of relative care (grandparents) compared to full-time parental care
- Centre-based care has little effect *but we lack information on quality*

## Does childcare help compensate for disadvantage?

- Children living in hhs with lowest HLA benefit more from formal childcare than those in high HLA
- Children from a migrant background benefit more from centre-based care for vocab scores
- Nevertheless substantial gaps persist by parental educ/class



# Policy Implications

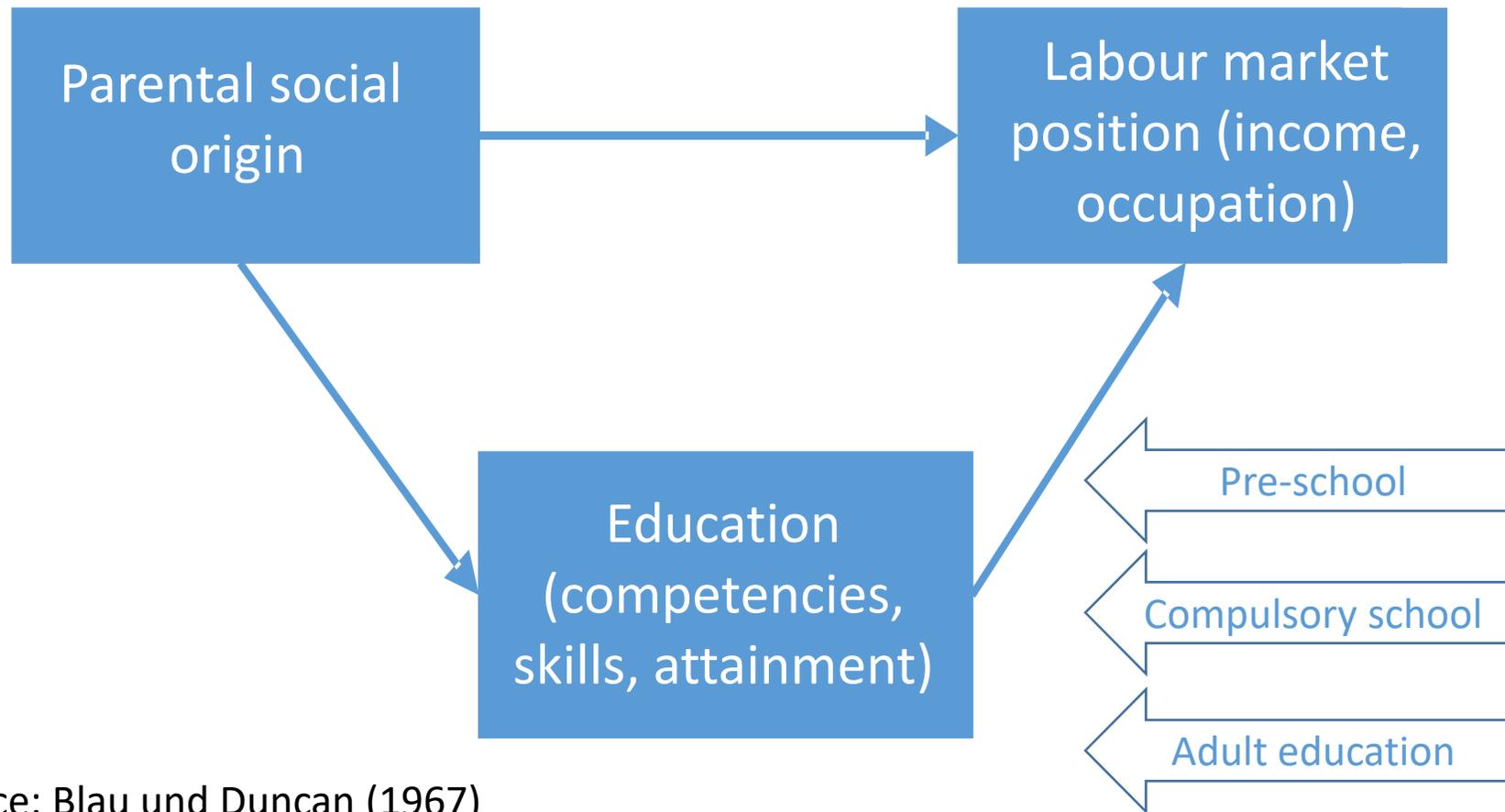
- HLE is one mechanism that reproduces social inequalities
- Supports for parents important but need to recognise structural inequalities
- Books in home steeper social gradient than home learning activity and more amenable to **income supports**
- Many lower ed. parents carrying out learning activities. Addressing family stress important here.
- Childcare can help compensate for poor HLE in cognitive development. Benefits likely to be greater in high quality care.
- Considerable scope for improved quality and subsidy for Early Ed and childcare in IRL

# What have we learned today?

Dr. Irena Kogan  
University of Mannheim, Germany



# Status attainment process



Source: Blau und Duncan (1967)

# The role of home learning environment and childcare



## Take-home messages

- Social reproduction in cognitive outcomes partly through home learning environment (HLE)
- Formal childcare compensates somewhat for impact of poor HLE on cognitive outcomes
- Childcare effect is smaller when there is unequal access and mixed quality



## Policy implications

- Increase support to parents in home learning activities and resources
- Improve quality of early childcare
- Subsidy for early education and childcare

# Schooling as the great equalizer



## Take-home messages

- Inequality by social origin already before compulsory schooling
- Upper class students attain higher level of education even with low performance/grades
- Upper class graduates avoid un-/low-skilled occupations even with insufficient education



## Policy implications

- Introduce early interventions before school start
- Shorten summer breaks in those countries where they are exceptionally long
- Facilitate industrial/post-industrial policies to create adequate employment demand

# Education and skills among adult population



## Take-home messages

- Undiscovered skill potential among the less-educated
- Social inequality in skills lower than social inequality in educational degrees
- Social inequalities in skills and educational degrees are lower in countries with higher share of non-formal adult education and training



## Policy implications

- Increase opportunities for non-formal adult education and training
- Certify skills among less-educated



## Currently also on the ECSR agenda

- Migration, Social Stratification and Inequality



- Refugee Migration and Integration  
Revisited: Lessons from the Recent Past

- Wealth, Inequality and Mobility





**Thank you!**

