

Introduction to the Welfare State

Education policy

rszarf.ips.uw.edu.pl/welfare-state

Chart A1.2. Population that has attained at least upper secondary education (2007)

Percentage, by age group

Some comparative data about education

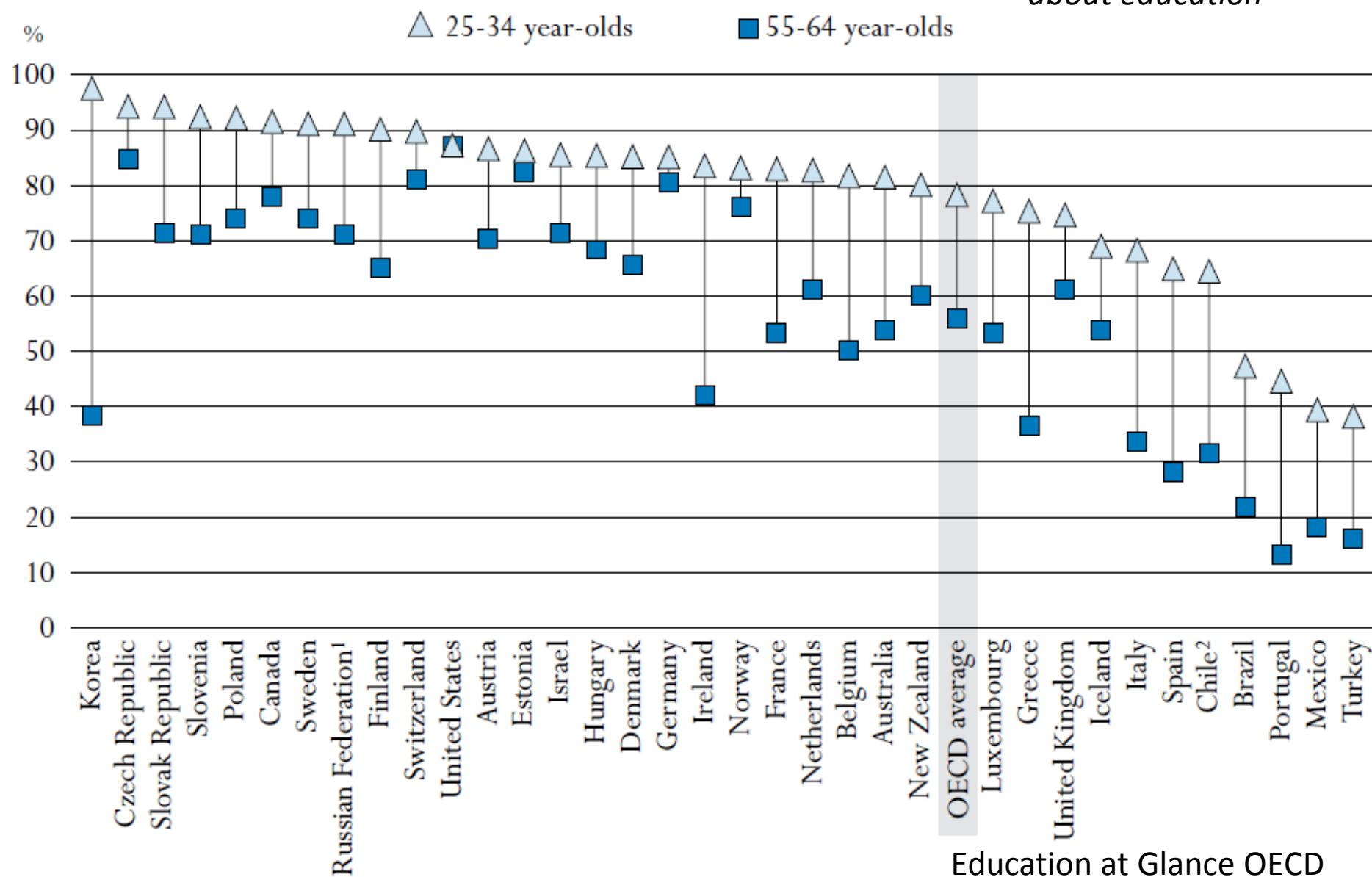
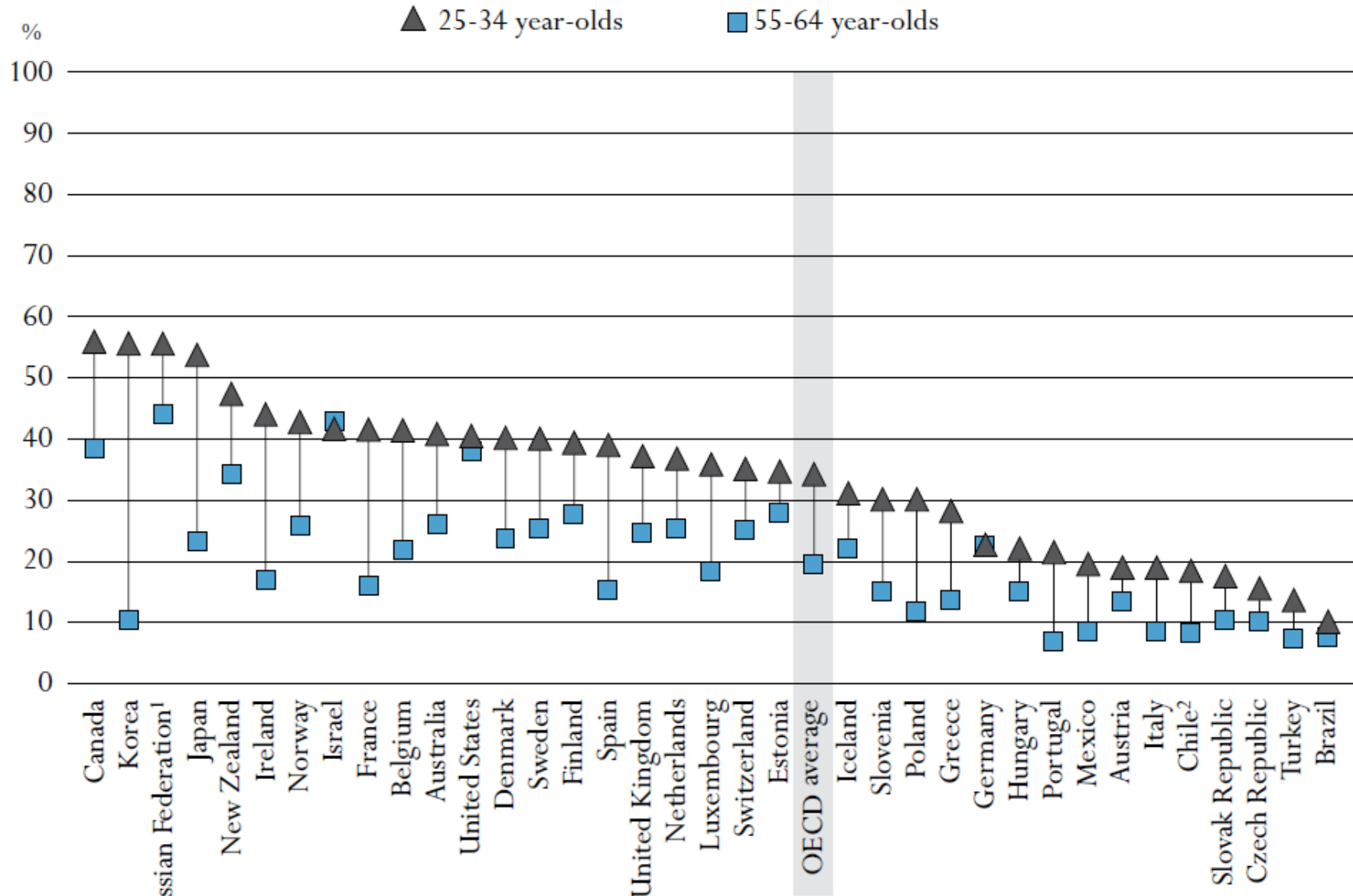
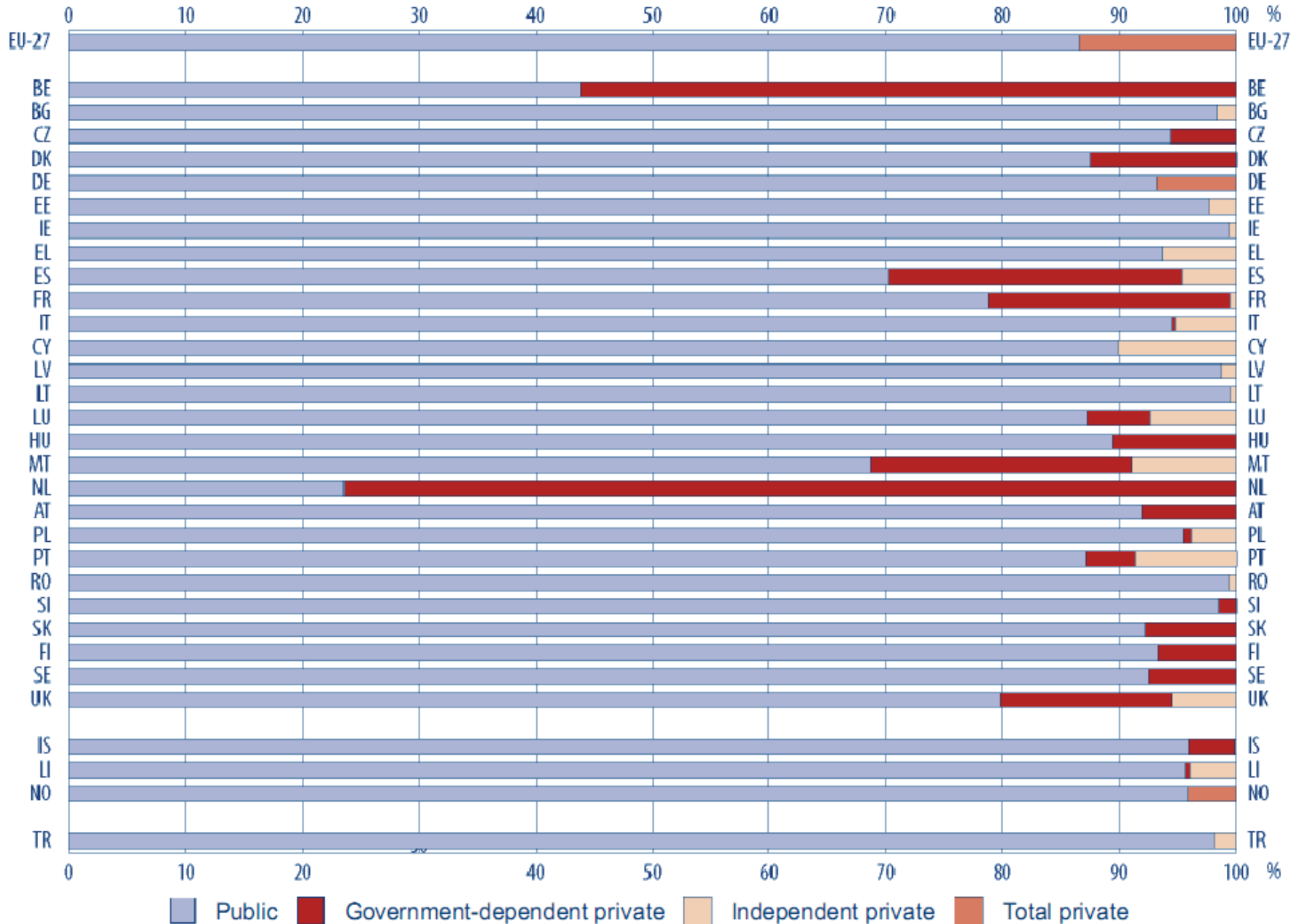


Chart A1.3. Population that has attained at least tertiary education (2007)

Percentage, by age group



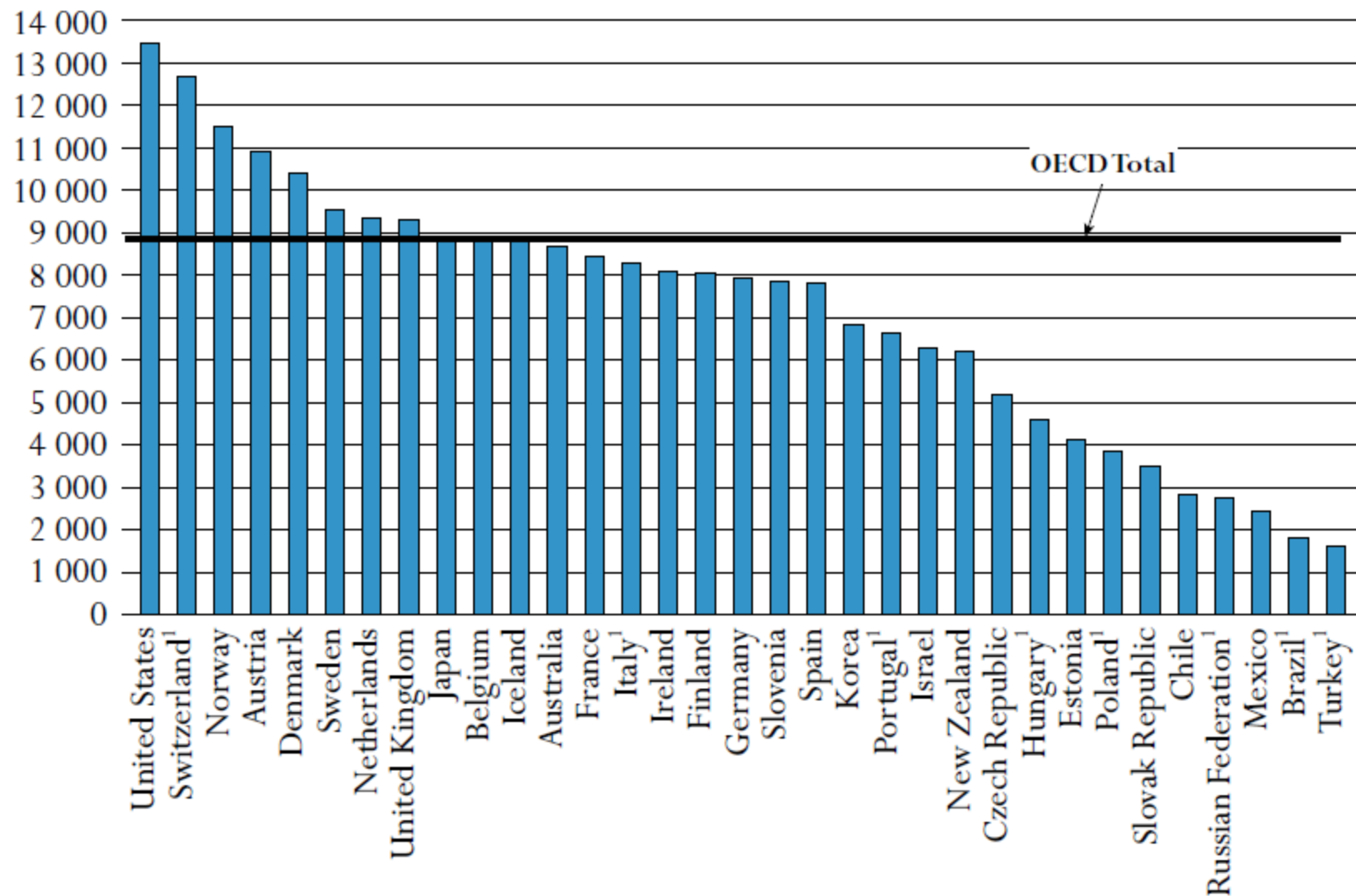
Pupils in public and private schools



Annual expenditure on educational institutions per student in primary through tertiary education (2006)

Expenditure per student

(in equivalent USD converted using PPPs)



1. Public institutions only.

Spending and Achievements Measured by PISA Scores

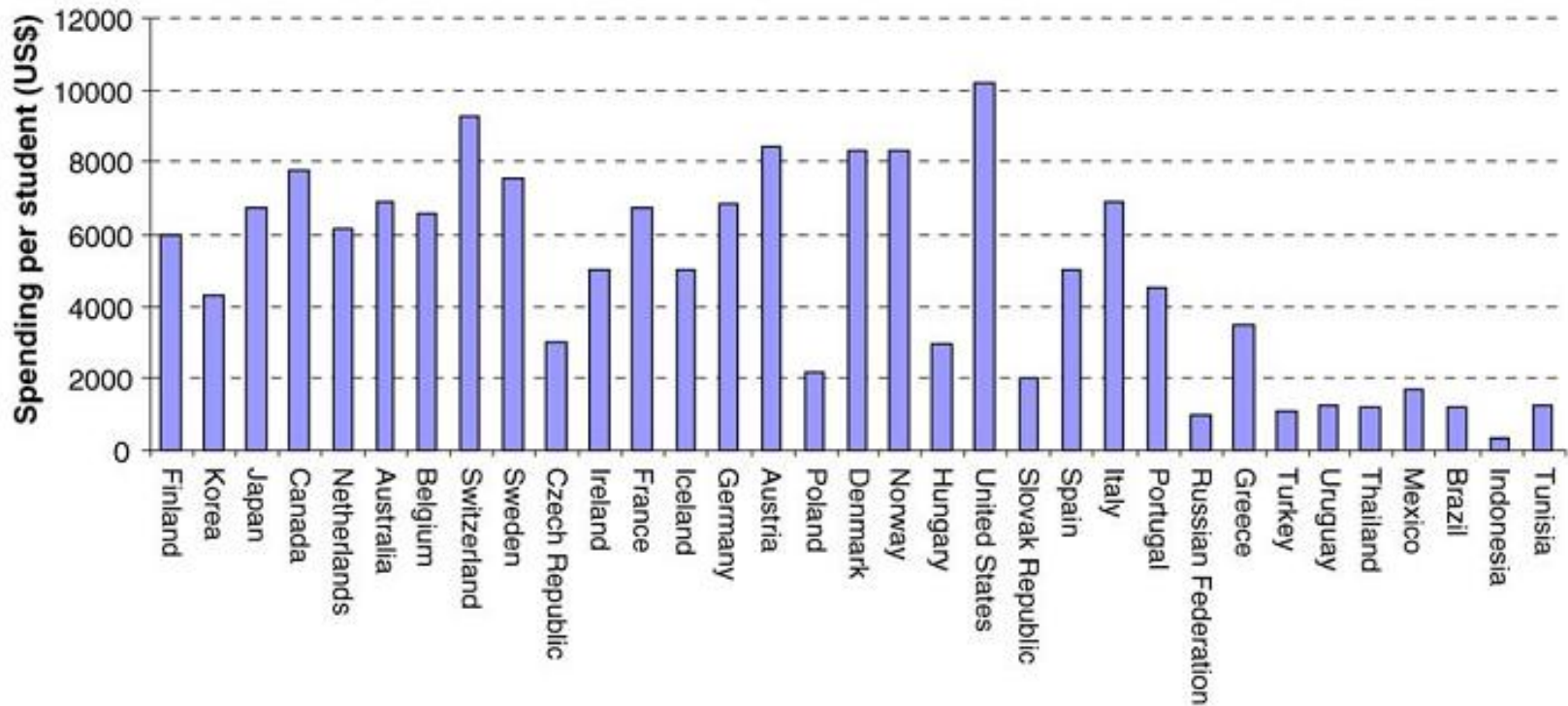
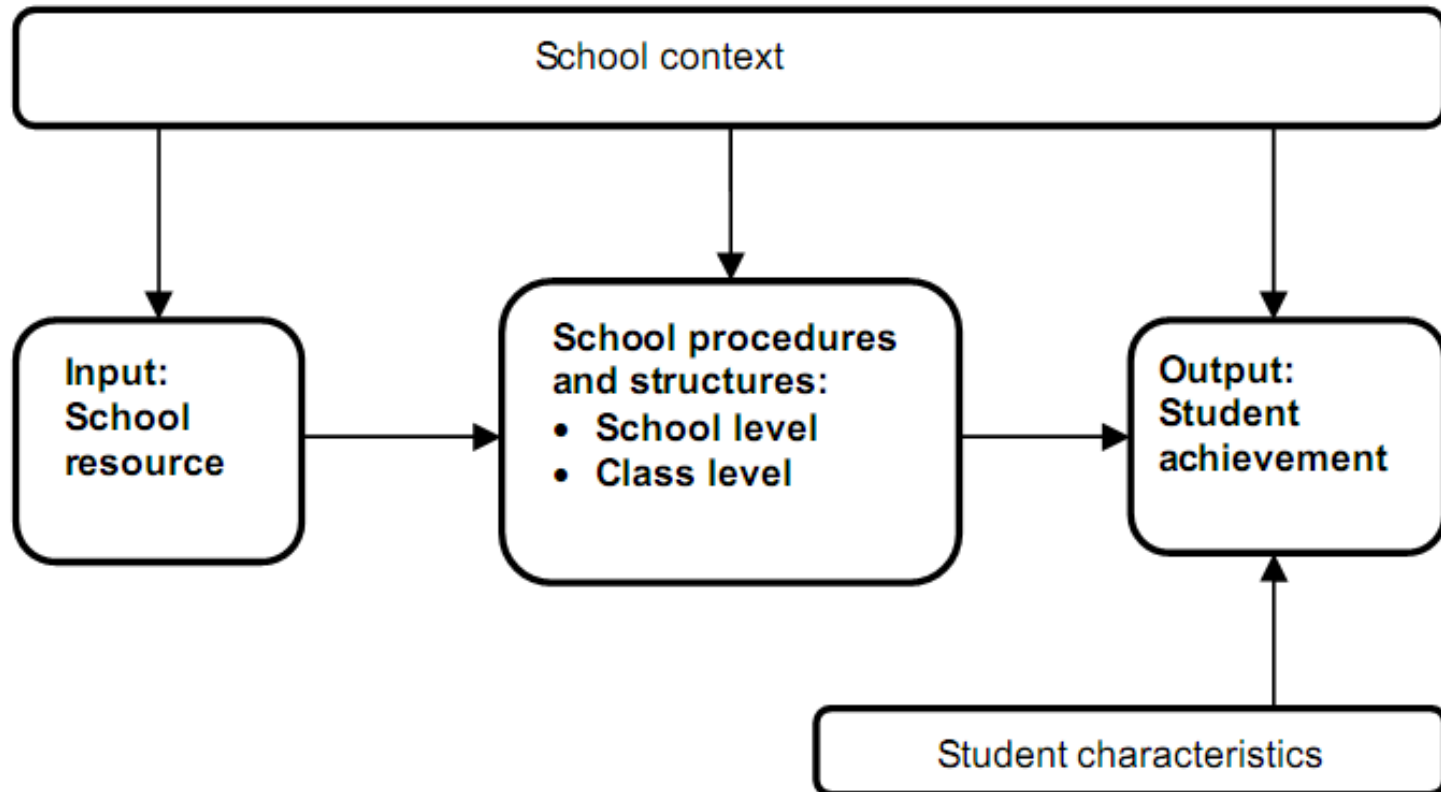
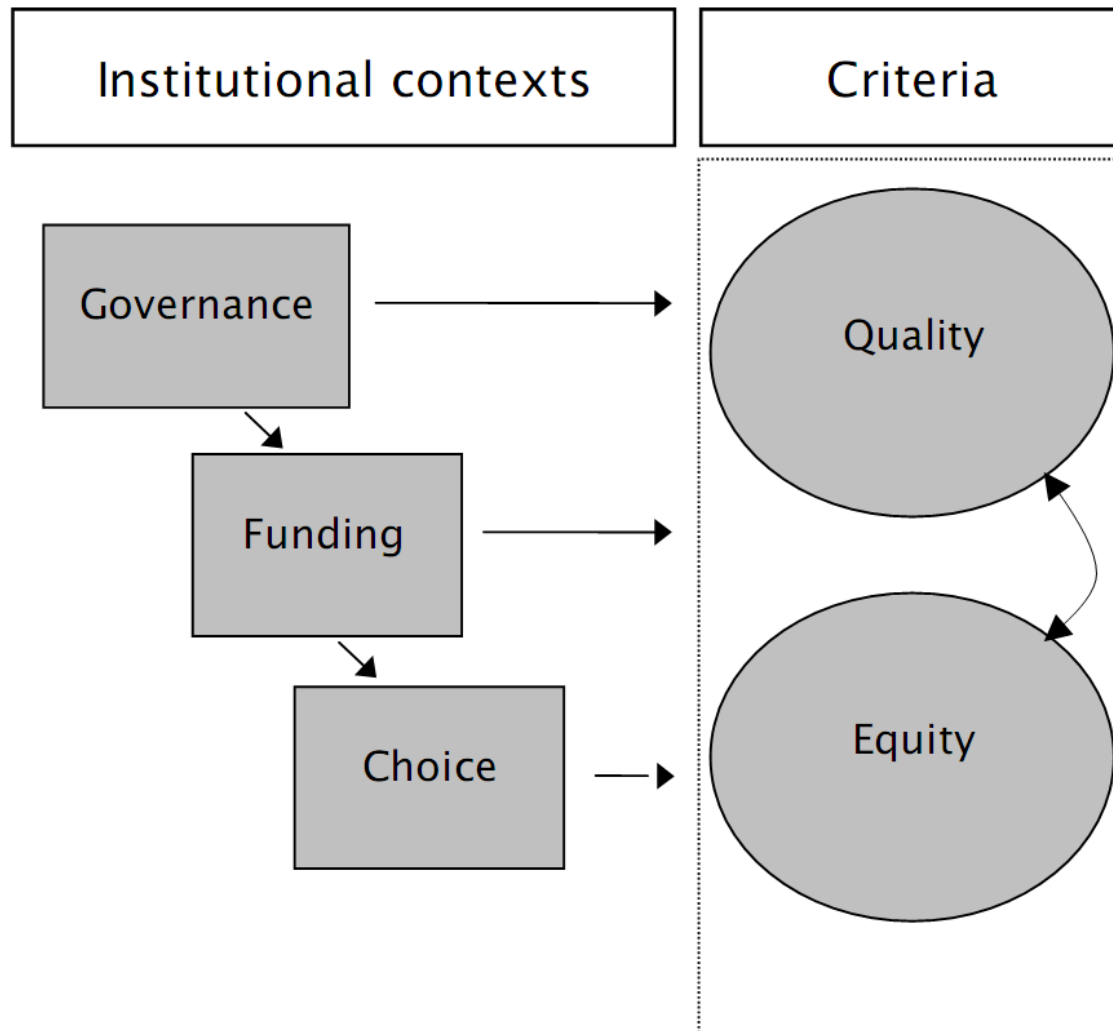


Figure 3. Expenditure per student at all levels (countries ranked by combined PISA 2003 scores).

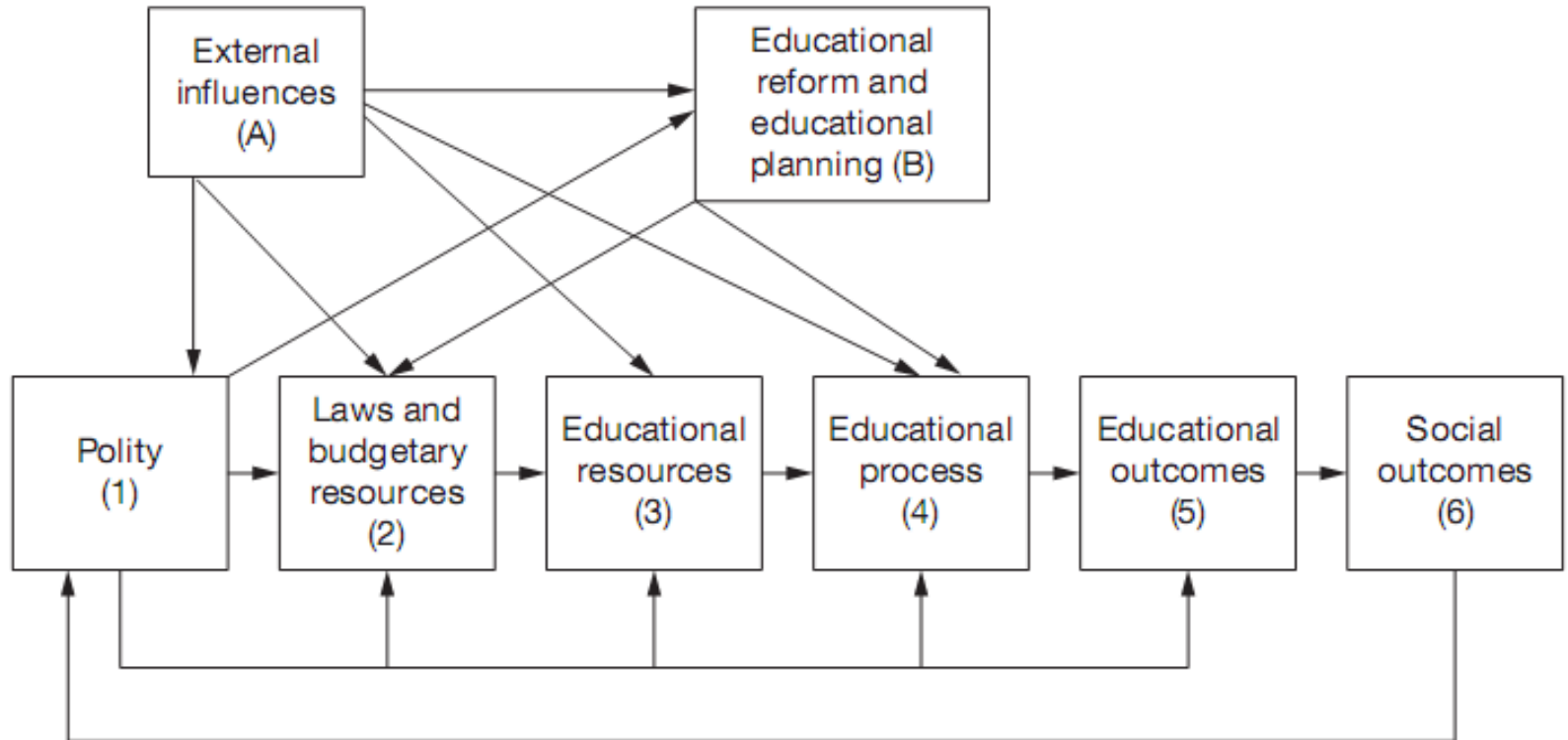
And Some Conceptual Tools – Education System Analysis



Quality and Equity of Education



Model of the education system and its context



Political
Economic
Social
Cultural
Religious
Historical

Compulsory
attendance
Curriculum
requirements
Funding

Facilities
Personnel
Materials

Organization
Curriculum
Instructional
methods

Skills
Knowledge
Values
Attitudes
Grades
Certificates

Income
Occupation
Political behavior
Child-rearing
behavior
Cultural attributes
Literacy
Alienation
Competition

Basic Distinction

- Obstacles to reduction in educational inequality
 - **Obstacles on the ‘demand’ side** of education (which can be referred to as ‘unequal opportunities’ depending on the socioeconomic environment of the pupil)
 - **Obstacles on the ‘supply’ side** (‘unequal treatment’ or ‘discrimination’ on the part of educational institutions)

Socioeconomic Background and Education

- Many dimensions
 - social class (occupation, profession)
 - parental education
 - Parental unemployment
 - family income and ‘poverty’
- Unemployment and poverty dimensions tend to be correlated with social class and parental education
- But we have also other dimensions: gender and ethnic for example

Socio-economic background and education

- **International research has indicated a consistently significant effect of social background on educational outcomes**
- Comparative studies have shown that the pattern of association between social class background and education tends to be similar, even in countries with very different educational systems
- Parental education has a similar association with children's education
- Socioeconomic background is shown to have a stronger effect at earlier stages of the educational process, declining in relative terms as students move through the system

Education expansion and educational inequality

- **In spite of the considerable expansion in educational participation there has been a remarkable consistency in the relationship between social background and inequality in educational outcomes**
- Only Sweden and the Netherlands have shown any consistent tendency towards increased equality of educational participation between the different social classes

‘Rational choice’ model

- Educational choice is regarded in terms of the (perceived) costs and benefits associated with continued participation, with variation in outcomes related to a number of factors:
 - lack of **economic resources** will limit participation if families cannot afford the direct and indirect (opportunity) costs of such participation
 - different social class groups differ in their **cultural resources**
 - the perceived benefits of educational participation may differ between class groups
 - the probabilities of success within the educational system may differ between social groups

Economic and Educational Inequality Link

- Changes over time in educational inequality in Sweden can, therefore, be seen **as a result of diminishing social class differences in economic security (through increased equality in income and living conditions)** in the context of an educational system which postpones the timing of educational selection
- ***If above is true then the role of comprehensive social policy is crucial to reduction of educational inequality***

Institutional Factors and Inequality

- Schooling system features may serve to reinforce (or reduce) existing social inequalities. These features are
 - Timing of educational selection
 - The length of various educational routes or 'tracks'
 - The size of the system
 - Principles for transferring between levels

Examples

- Academic vs vocational track choice - early or postponed:
 - In systems where educational selection into academic and vocational tracks happens very early, differences between social class and ethnic groups in the type of education they receive are likely to be more pronounced

Social Exclusion and Education

- Indicators of **socioeconomic disadvantage**: social class, parental education, family size, ethnic minority
- **Poverty-related background characteristics**: family breakdown, the placement of children in state care, poor health, parental illiteracy, mental distress, language barriers

Independent variables

- Indicators of educational success or failure in relation to social exclusion
 - Educational participation and performance
 - Grade retention (repeating)
 - Illiteracy among pupils at secondary level
 - Truancy
 - Referrals to special education

Dependent variables

First Example – Participation Levels

- It is estimated that in 1992, 89% of those from higher professional backgrounds went on to full-time higher education, compared with 13% of those from unskilled manual backgrounds
- Furthermore, the more prestigious the sector and field of study, the greater the social inequality in participation levels

Second Example - Repeating

- Children from low-income families, with unemployed fathers or mothers who have not finished primary school, show particularly high rates of repeating at lower secondary level
- Children from Belgian families living in persistent poverty illustrate this strikingly: 64% of pupils in primary and secondary schools had resat at least one year, while 30% had resat two or more years

Third Example - Underperformance

- Performance in nationally standardised examinations is significantly related to socioeconomic background
- Underperformance in these examinations is more evident among pupils from working-class backgrounds, those with parents who are unemployed, those whose parents have lower levels of education, and those who come from larger families

Fourth Example – Special Education

- Children of working-class and poor families are extremely overrepresented among pupils in special education: roughly half the children from persistently poor families spend part of their youth in an institution
- 77% of the pupils in special education are children of working-class families and marginal workers

Conclusions

- **Children from the poorest families are at great risk of failure and referral to special education from the very start of their school careers**
- **In secondary education, they are faced with persistent illiteracy, high rates of grade retention, streaming towards the least profitable study fields, demotivation and early dropout**

Conclusions cont.

- **Educational underachievement has significant consequences for subsequent life-chances**, resulting in cumulative educational deficits in adulthood, lower earnings, higher unemployment, poorer health, and increased likelihood of deviant behaviour and dependency throughout life

Remedy Strategies

- **Equal opportunity strategies**, given the multiple causes of unequal opportunities (financial, physical, cultural, social, emotional, and so on), only multifaceted responses will effectively combat this source of educational disadvantage
- **Equal treatment strategies**, they focus on the elimination of discriminatory behaviour within the education process at school
- **Equal outcomes strategies**, they are focused on outcomes rather than access, contrary to the equal treatment approach they discriminate positively in favour of disadvantaged groups

Equal Opportunity Strategies

- Extension of compulsory education
- Special measures to register and monitor school attendance, to encourage pupils and parents to comply with the measures, and to prevent dropout
- A wide range of financial assistance measures for low-income families: grants, loans, means-tested educational provision (tuition fees, transportation, meals, clothing, book grants, and so on)
- integrated services (psychological, social, cultural, medical, material, and so on) for disadvantaged pupils, often organised and delivered at the local level
- pre-school stimulation programmes for disadvantaged groups

Equal Treatment Strategies

- Curricular reforms in the sense of comprehensivisation, more relevant learning contents for everyday life, and less discriminating certification strategies
- Alternative pedagogical approaches (active and constructivist schools, accelerated schools, communities of learning, and so on)
- Teacher training can play an important role in helping teachers to recognise and understand the processes and victims of social exclusion, and to respond appropriately and effectively
- More intensive communication between schools/teachers on the one hand, and parents/local communities on the other
- Specific services being offered to groups with special needs, with a view to their integration into mainstream education

Equal Outcomes Strategies

- Educational priority policies; that is, extra funds for schools faced with a concentration of children at risk (territorial, categorical)
- Positive discrimination in favour of marginalised groups can take the form of differentiation; that is, extra learning support within schools or classes
- Alternative curricula, transition systems and second-chance schools have been developed in order to ensure maximum access to recognised qualifications for socially disadvantaged students