

ASK seminar:
Empirical evidence of policies "what work" in
higher education
and what voters care for?

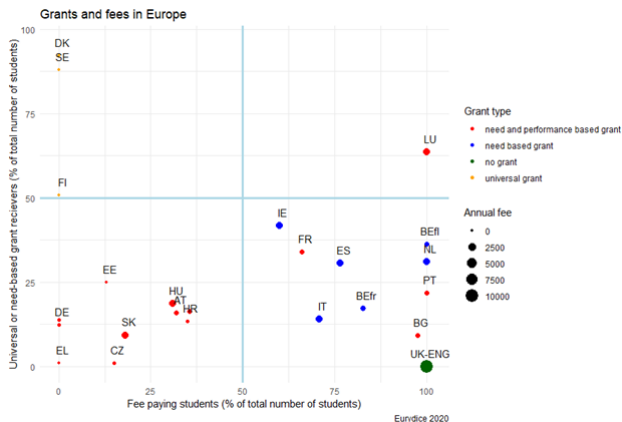
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Student financing (Garritzmann 2016):



Recent trends in higher education have generated a 'trilemma' (Ansell 2008):

- ▶ low public costs
- ▶ low private costs (tuition fees)
- ▶ mass access to higher education

Evidence shows:

- ▶ **Fees** alone have low impact on enrolment (Havranek et. al. 2018);
- ▶ **Needs-based grants** increase enrolment rates. The size of the grant and the earlier the grant starts also matters for the effectiveness of this policy. Especially applies to **disadvantaged students** (Herbaut & Geven 2019; Graziosi et al. 2020);
- ▶ There is some evidence (Smyth & McCoy, 2021) that **school social mix** has a stronger effect on aspirations of students than socioeconomic status (SES);
- ▶ **Outreach policies** are effective in increasing access for disadvantaged students when these policies include **active guidance counselling**, but not when they only provide general information on higher education (Herbaut & Geven 2019);
- ▶ Evidence from the US (Hendren & Sprung-Keyser, 2020) shows that child-related investments, including also **college subsidies**, are cost-effective.

But what "voters" want?

"Education is special" (Wilensky 1976)

- ▶ **Self-interest:** Differently from compensatory social policy where high SES prefer lean state, in education they prefer generous public financing
- ▶ **Ideology:** Left-leaners prefer more state involvement in education, conservatives more private provision
- ▶ **Existing institutions matter - policy feedback effects:** positive (self-reinforcing) and negative (self-undermining)
 - ▶ **Resources matter**, i.e. there are winners and losers of existing policies that bolster status quo (Busemeyer 2013, 2014; Ansell 2008)
 - ▶ **Interpretation matters**, i.e. existing policies legitimise themselves ("Robin Hood Paradox")
 - ▶ **Baseline matters**, i.e. people want change at specific moments (i.e. spending exceeds or below critical level, Wlezien and Soroka 2012)
 - ▶ **Context matters**, i.e. preferences depend on access: restricted access makes high SES to support more public involvement (Ansell and Gingrich 2015)

Education preferences

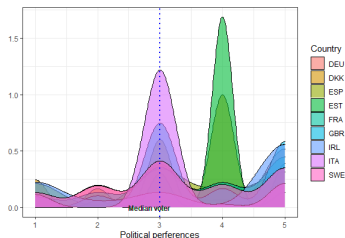
Do you agree? 1 - strongly disagree ... 5 - strongly agree

- ▶ *AGREE_PRIVATESC*: Private schools play an important role in the education system of ...
- ▶ *AGREE_PRIVATEHE*: Private universities should play an important role in the education system of ...
- ▶ *GOV_PUBFUNDPRIV*: The government should provide public funding to private schools
- ▶ *AGREE_CHOICE*: Families should be able to choose freely between public and private schools independent of income and place residence

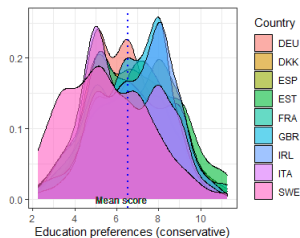
Data ISSP INVEDUC data (2019). Exploratory factor analysis to operationalise education preferences

Education and political preferences

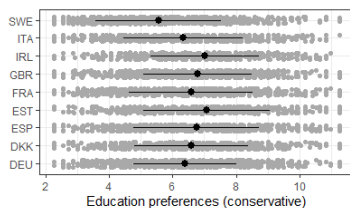
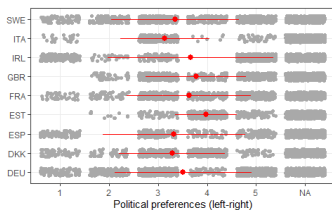
Political preferences



Education preferences

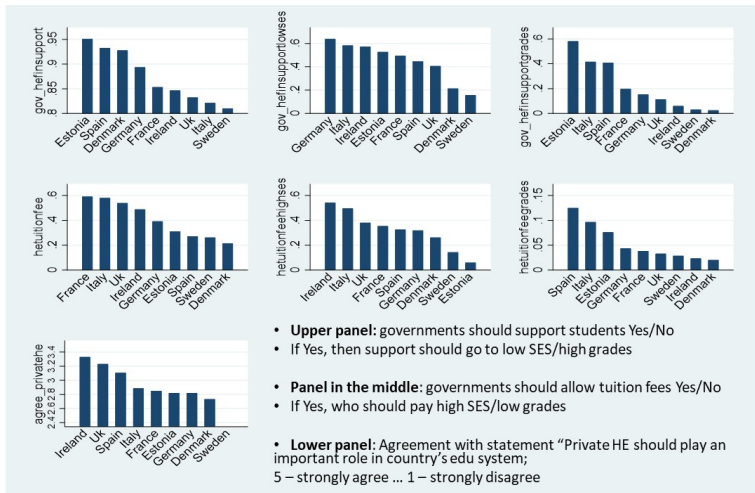


Distribution by countries



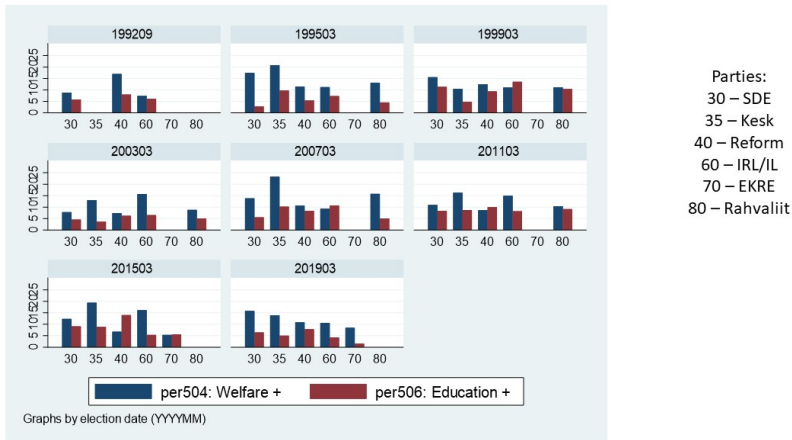
Mean scores

Preferences for higher education funding



- **Upper panel:** governments should support students Yes/No
- If Yes, then support should go to low SES/high grades
- **Panel in the middle:** governments should allow tuition fees Yes/No
- If Yes, who should pay high SES/low grades
- **Lower panel:** Agreement with statement "Private HE should play an important role in country's edu system"; 5 – strongly agree ... 1 – strongly disagree

What parties want? Positive mentions of education and welfare policies in party manifestos



Source: Manifesto Project Database