

# A theoretical approach on the inequality concerning higher education access

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# Outline

1. The commitment to reduce social inequalities as a part of a policy of sustainability
2. Hurdles:
  1. First Hurdle: Attaining University entrance qualification
  2. Second Hurdle: the decision for a higher education as a risk management strategy against the background of different social situations
  3. Third Hurdle: lack of familiarity with open and concealed academic conditions
3. The lack of familiarity with open and concealed academic conditions: an analysis using the concept of habitus of Pierre Bourdieu
4. The analysis of the conditions of the doings and beings (Amartya Sen)
5. Ideas



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Goals

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**Reduce inequality within and among countries**

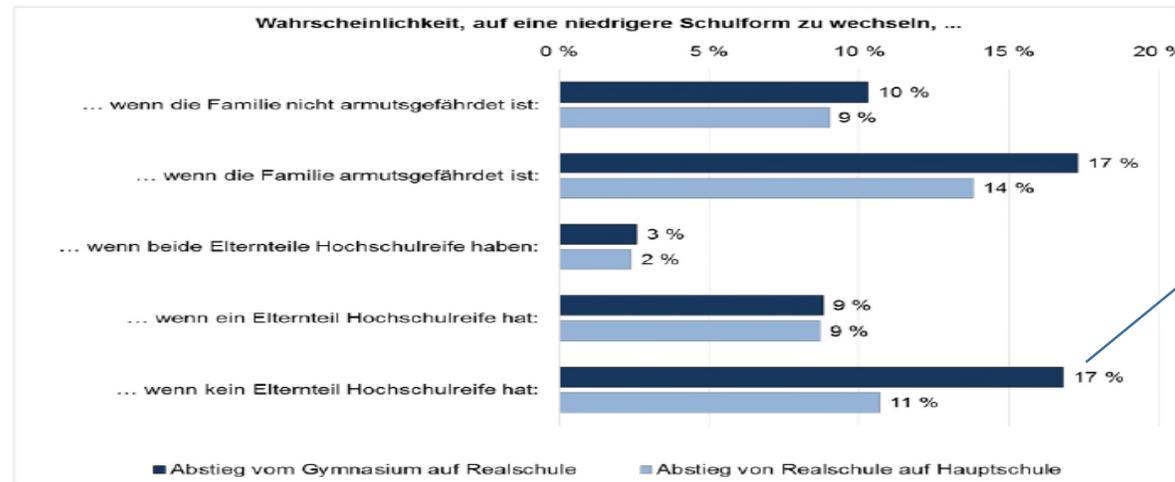
Social justice is not solely dependent on poverty reduction. Participation is also hindered through social inequalities, which is the reason why the topic of fair and equal access to higher education is a question of social justice and sustainability

# Hurdles to attaining university application qualifications

Circumstances behind downward movements within school levels

Betrachtet man die Zusammenhänge zwischen Auf- bzw. Abstiegen und dem Elternhaus (siehe Schaubild B.1.3.3), setzen sich die im vorangegangenen Kapitel geschilderten Tendenzen fort.

**Schaubild B.1.3.3:**  
**Abstiege von Gymnasium auf Realschule und von Realschule auf Hauptschule in Sekundarstufe I in Abhängigkeit des Elternhauses**



Quelle: eigene Darstellung nach IAW (2016): Abb. 3.8 und 3.11 mit den Daten des NEPS, Startkohorte 4.

So ist bemerkenswert, dass Jugendliche, deren Eltern beide eine Hochschulzugangsberechtigung haben, mit 2,4 Prozent deutlich seltener von der Realschule auf die Hauptschule bzw. mit 2,6 Prozent vom Gymnasium auf die Realschule absteigen als Schülerinnen und Schülern, deren Eltern keine Hochschulreife haben (10,7 Prozent und 16,8 Prozent). Jugendliche aus ar-

Risk of poverty as a big risk of downward movement within school levels

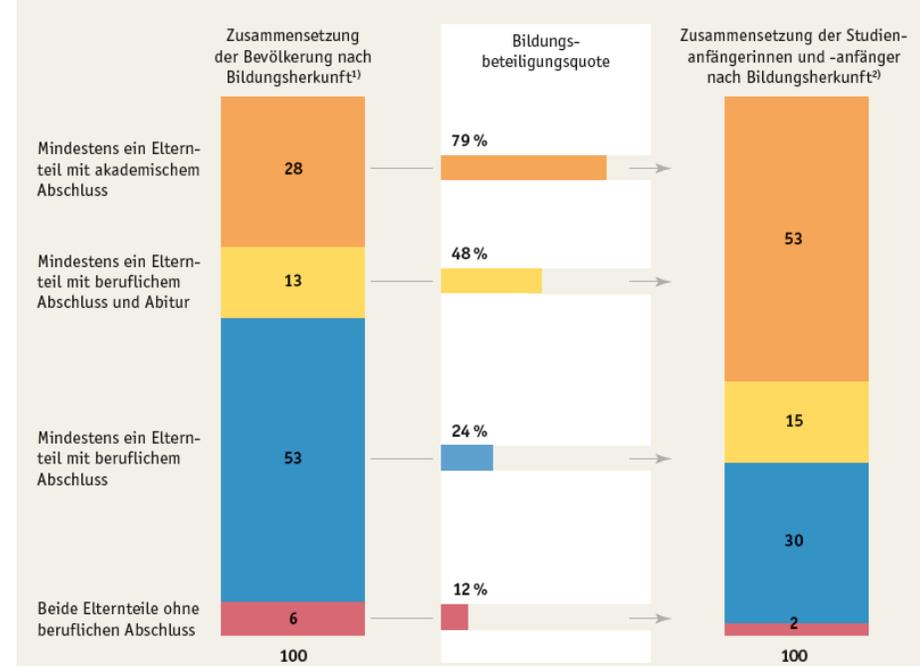
No academic background of the parents as a big risk of downward movements within school levels

# Education report of the German government

Bildungsbericht der Bundesregierung 2018, S. 156

- Educational background of the parents is influencing the decision to go to the university

Abb. F2-2: Beteiligung an der Hochschulbildung nach Bildungsherkunft 2016 (in %)



Lesehilfe: 28% der 18- bis unter 25-Jährigen haben Eltern mit einem Hochschulabschluss (ein Elternteil oder beide); aus dieser Gruppe nehmen 79% ein Studium auf und stellen dann 53% der Studienanfängerinnen und -anfänger.

1) Nur deutsche Bevölkerung: Soziale Zusammensetzung der Eltern aller 18- bis unter 25-Jährigen nach höchstem Schul- und Ausbildungsabschluss beider Elternteile (Werte gerundet).

2) Studierende: Deutsche Studienanfängerinnen und -anfänger an Universitäten, Fachhochschulen, Pädagogischen und Theologischen Hochschulen sowie Kunsthochschulen (Werte gerundet).

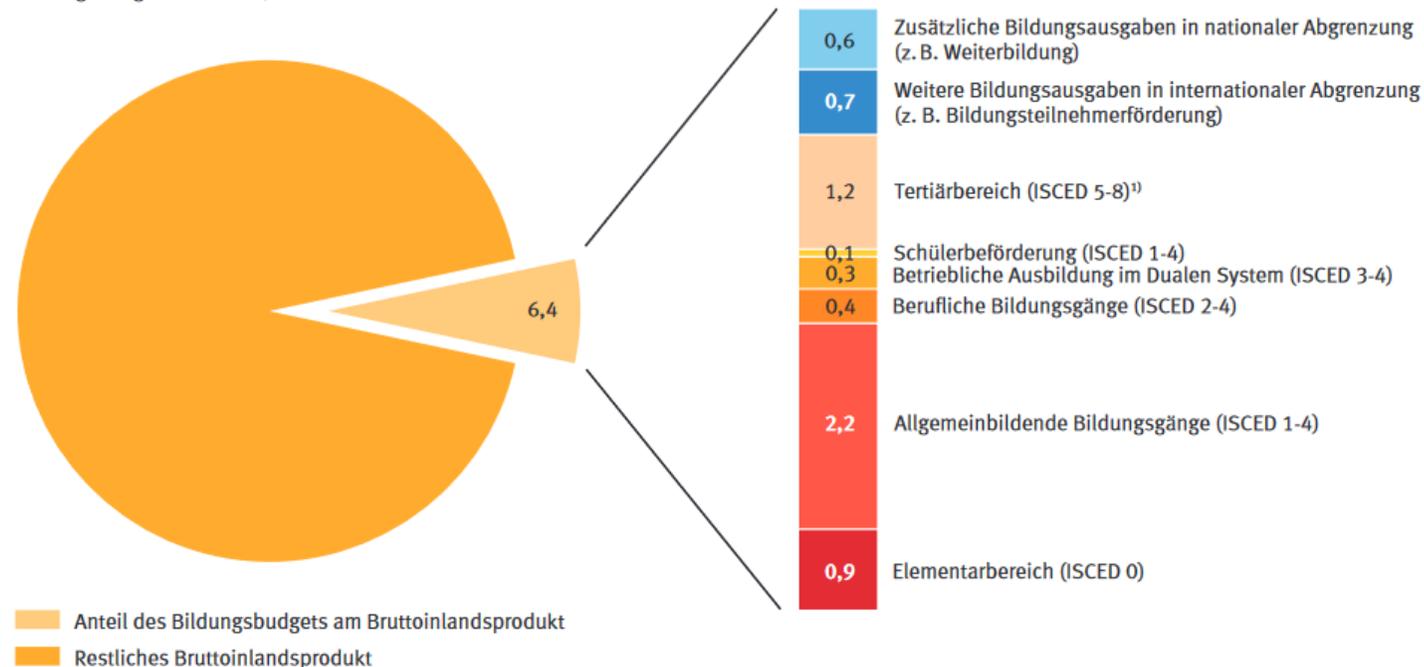
Quelle: DZHW-Bildungsbeteiligungsquoten (basierend auf Bevölkerungsstatistik, Hochschulstatistik, Mikrozensus 2011, 21. Sozialerhebung 2016; vgl. Kracke, Buck & Middendorff), 2018

# Expenditure on education at different levels in relation to gross-domestic-product (GDP)

Abbildung 2.3-1: Bildungsbudget nach Bildungsbereichen in Relation zum Bruttoinlandsprodukt 2016

in %

Bruttoinlandsprodukt 2016: 3,1 Bill. Euro  
Bildungsbudget 2016: 201,6 Mrd. Euro



1) Einschließlich Ausgaben für Forschung und Entwicklung an Hochschulen.

# Riskmanagement: Factors influencing the decision for or against an academic career

Bildungsbericht S. 154 155

- A fifth of those who have suitable qualifications to go to university, decide against this route. These people are often more strongly rooted in their home community, and expect very good employment chances from completing a job training qualification. Financial aspects also play a significant role in the decision on whether to study. A further factor is also the educational background of the parents
- In European comparison, Germany is one of the countries, in which a particularly small number of students come from households with a non-academic background.

# The process to attaining university entrance qualifications starts very early

- A certain amount of familiarity with higher education is a significant influential factor on the success or failure of children in schools
- Poverty is equally important. Not only higher education but also the income-situation of families influences to a very high extent the success or failure of children in school.
- So, before entrance to higher education, in many cases the die has been cast
- Universities which commit to the target of not cementing existing social inequalities, have to analyze the situation of students whose families have a low income and/or who are the first generation to experience higher education.

# The reproduction of unfair access to higher education – a understanding with Pierre Bourdieu

- Central for his theory is the term „Habitus“, with this term he analyzes the mentalities, dispositions, motivations, tastes, perceptions, personal experiences and life-styles as a reciprocal connection with social environments and their structures which people live in. The habitus is a scheme that tends to reproduce the situations, to which you are accustomed.
- The position in social space is framed for every person by different sorts of capital:

# Sorts of capital and their influence on higher education

- Economic capital means income and property
- Higher education is a big investment in the future. And the question, if it pays off depends on the starting position. In a situation with a bigger scarcity or even shortage, people make other decisions than in situations of less scarcity or in wealthy situations

# Cultural capital

Cultural capital is defined by three sorts of capital

1. The objective status marks the availability of material things like books, paintings, monuments, musical instruments, etc.
2. Incorporated capital is the results of internalization. It is an individual process of mental and physical appropriation
3. Institutional capital is the sum of educational qualifications, degrees, titles and job titles, which people attain

# Social capital

- Is a sort of permanent network of relationships, where people are known and acknowledged.

# What does this concept show us

- It shows us the understanding of what Amartya Sen calls „real freedom“. To analyze „real freedom“ is to understand people`s „doings and beings“.

# The expansion of capabilities of persons depends on their instrumental freedoms

## Instrumental freedoms

- Transparency guarantees
- Political freedom
- Economic facilities
- Social opportunities
- Protective security

# The housing situation

- The importance of the housing situation for students should be acknowledged by those responsible. Affordable housing plays a big role in productive conditions for higher education

# Diversities and Heterogenities

(Amartya Sen 2001, S. 70-71)

Not only incomes and commodities are influencing our well-being. There are circumstances which can influence well-being and can equally be sources of disadvantage

1. **Personal heterogeneities:** endowments with health and talents
2. **Environmental diversities:** climate circumstances, the presence of infectious disease
3. **Variations in social climate:** public educational arrangements, the prevalence or absence of crime and violence, the presence or absence of community relationships
4. **Differences in relational perspectives:** the loss of possibility to take part in the life of a rich community if you are relatively poor. The standard of clothing and other visible consumptions you have to have to seem „respectable“
5. **Distribution within the family:** The use of the family income for the interests and objectives of different family-members can be unequal (related i.e. to gender or age or perceived needs).

# To do

- Schools should connect pupils with everything the world has to offer. (Mafalaani, S. 16)
- Unfamiliarity with academic life – The need for people of trust
- Strengthen the applied aspects of higher education
- Transparency in the range of titles and the possibilities they include: what counts in this system?
- No hidden agendas – realistic and transparent disclosure of academic regulations and also of ethics
- Should we unquestionable idealize an abstract educational ideal?
- Declare the use, i.e. the long-term benefits of an academic career
- Study course planners must be aware that time is a scarce commodity for students
- Part-time offers give a transparent possibility to enable the combination of studying with family obligations or income generation,
- Institutionalizing peer-to-peer services to strengthen the peer-based socialization
- Awareness that internationalization is an additional hurdle for pioneers of higher education, for example for people with migration history, who must learn another language and who have to invest in stays abroad (the success of higher education should not depend only on mobility, there should be different ways for achieving recognition)

# Aim

The institutions of higher education should have the aim to dismantle inequalities. Guarantees of transparency, a social climate of reciprocal support should be established. There should be persons of trust in the education institutions. There should be an endeavour to dismantle unfamiliarity for pioneers of higher education, without labelling them in any way. The institutions of higher education should be aware, where the process of internationalization is hindering the social mobility of the population.

# Literature

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