



Equity in European Higher Education

Approach to the issue & selected findings of the EquNet project

International Workshop „Equity in European Higher Education“

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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Overview

1. Approach to equity in HE
2. Research approach
3. Equity & socio-economic background
4. Equity & immigrant background
5. Overall main findings

1) Approach to equity in HE

- Quantitative approach:
 - identify equity indicator(s)
 - quantify degree of (in)equity
 - supplement by qualitative information
- (In)equity as multidimensional phenomenon
 - applies to various social groups (e.g. migrant background, lifelong learners, ...)
 - applies to various barriers (socioeconomic barriers, formal hurdles, ...)
 - indicators kept separate & not merged into one (i.e. no ranking study)

2) Research approach

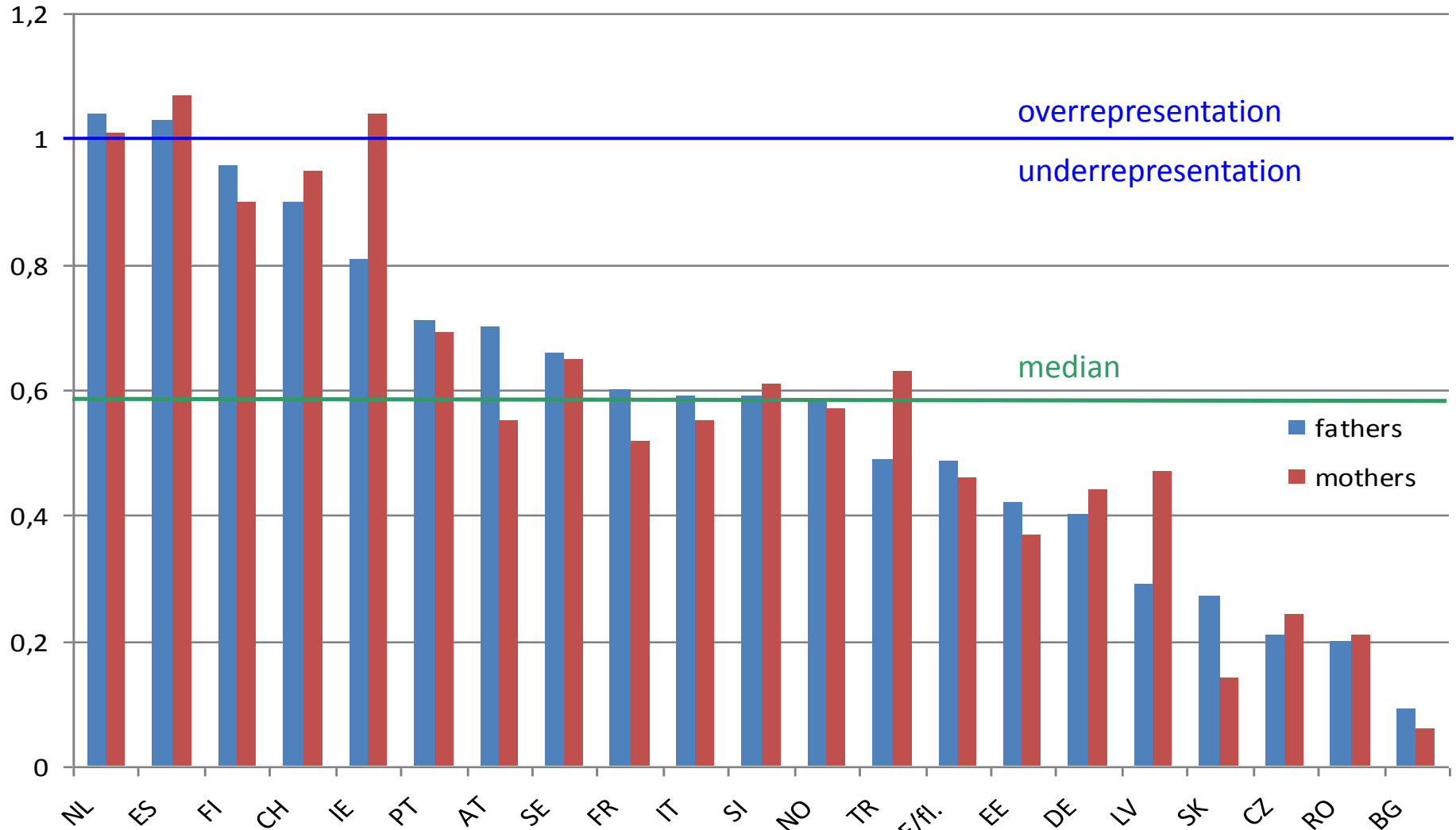
- Secondary data analysis
- Monitoring: large number of countries
- Qualitative information, good practice examples & country cases
- Main data sources: EUROSTUDENT, Eurostat, EU-LFS, ESS, REFLEX, AES
- Existing micro level data often falls short due to:
 - Small number of cases (ESS)
 - Missing background information (EU-LFS, AES)
 - Impossibility to identify academic HE (i.e. ISCED 5A; AES)

3) Equity & socio-economic background

- Various measures of the socio-economic background (e.g. occupational status of parents, educational attainment of parents, father, mother & joint status, ...)
- Often yield similar results
- But consider several indicators for reliability
- Example: Low educational background of father or mother

3) Equity & socio-economic background

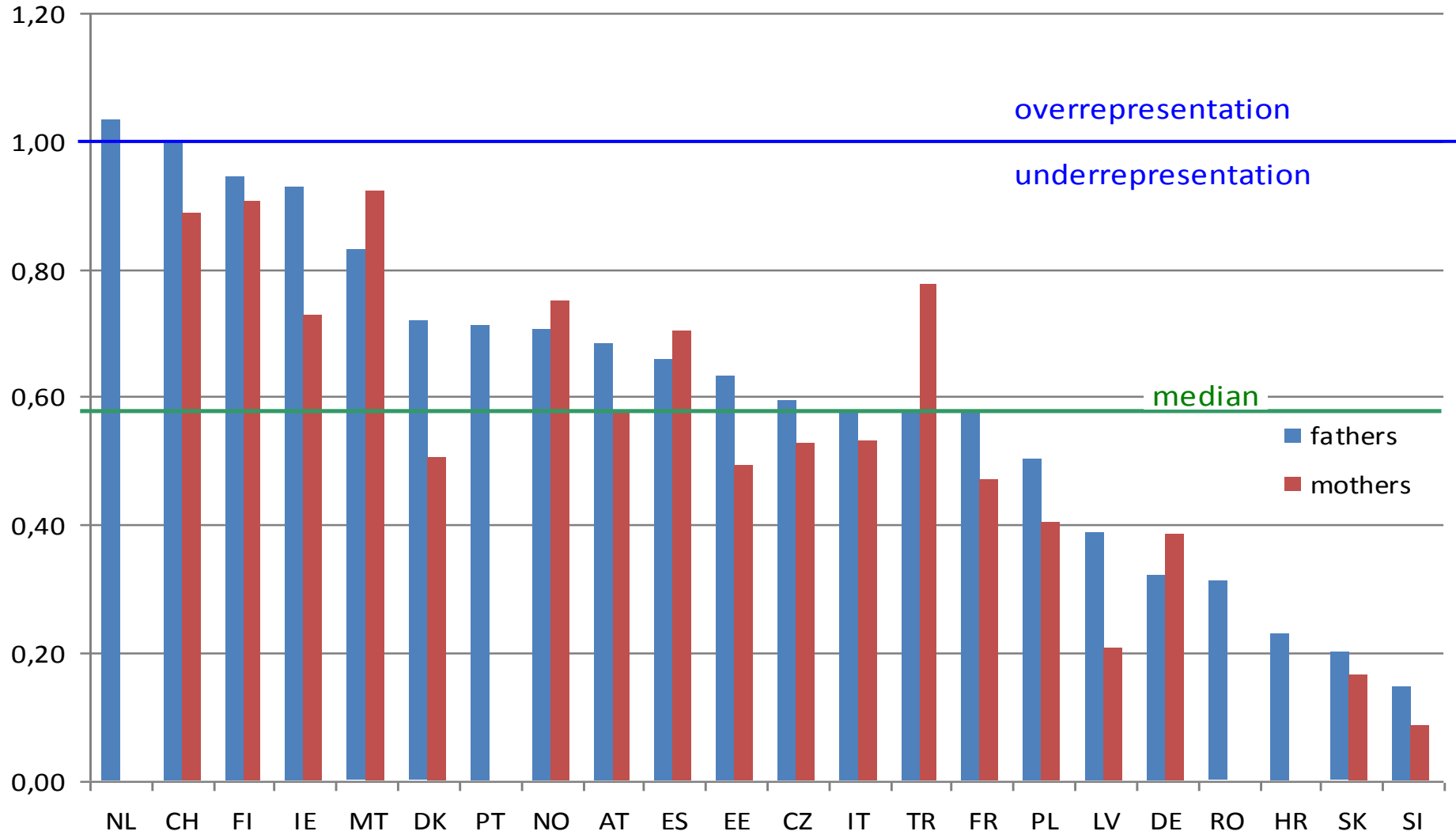
Ratio: students' parents with low education to men/women with low edu. in the general population (aged 40-60); data of EUROSTUDENT 2005



Missing data: E/W, SCO, LT.

3) Equity & socio-economic background

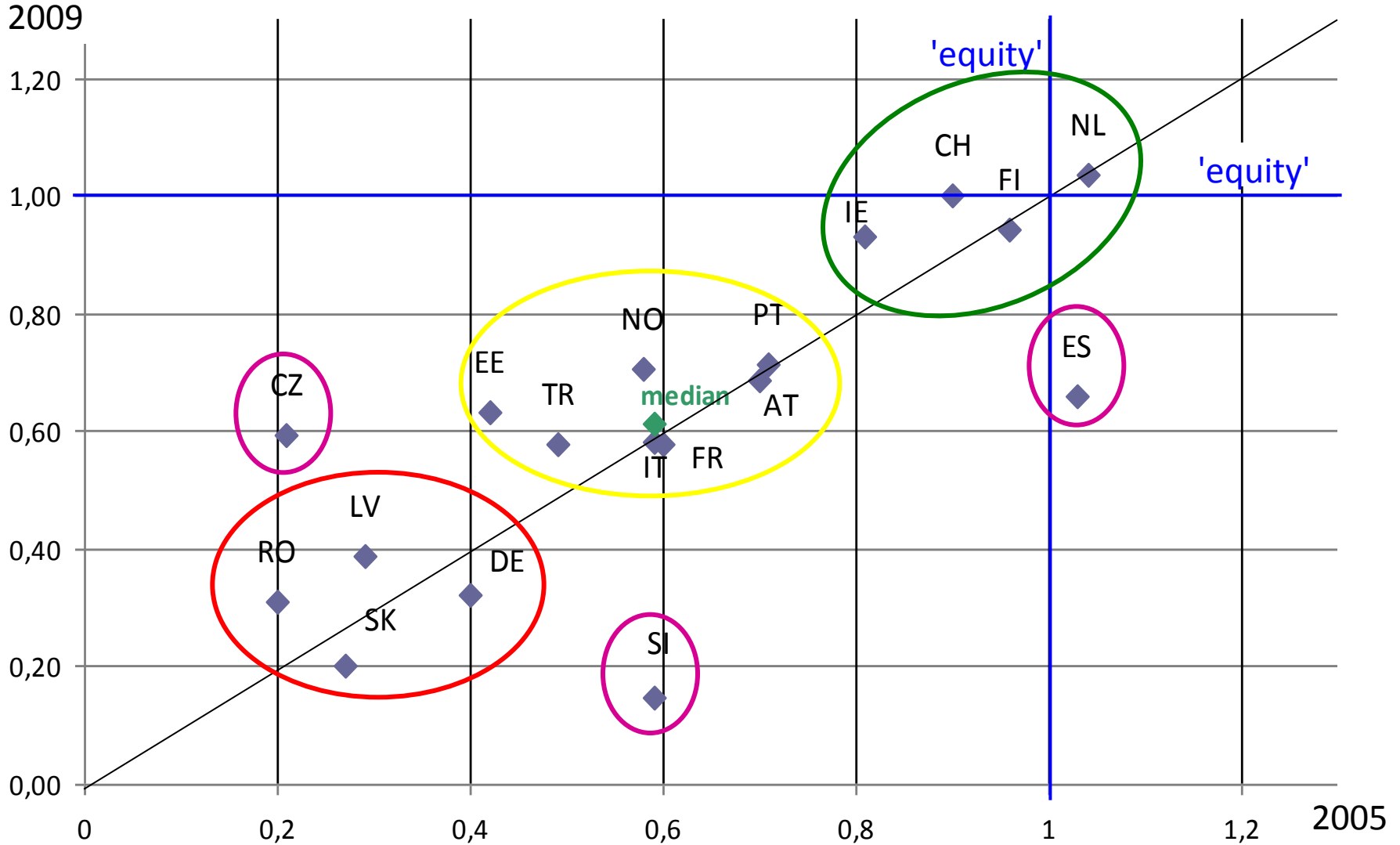
Ratio: students' parents with low education to men/women with low edu. in the general population (aged 40-60); data of EUROSTUDENT 2009



Missing data: E/W, LT, SE.

3) Equity & socio-economic background

Relative participation of students with low educational background (fathers only); data of EUROSTUDENT 2005 & 2009



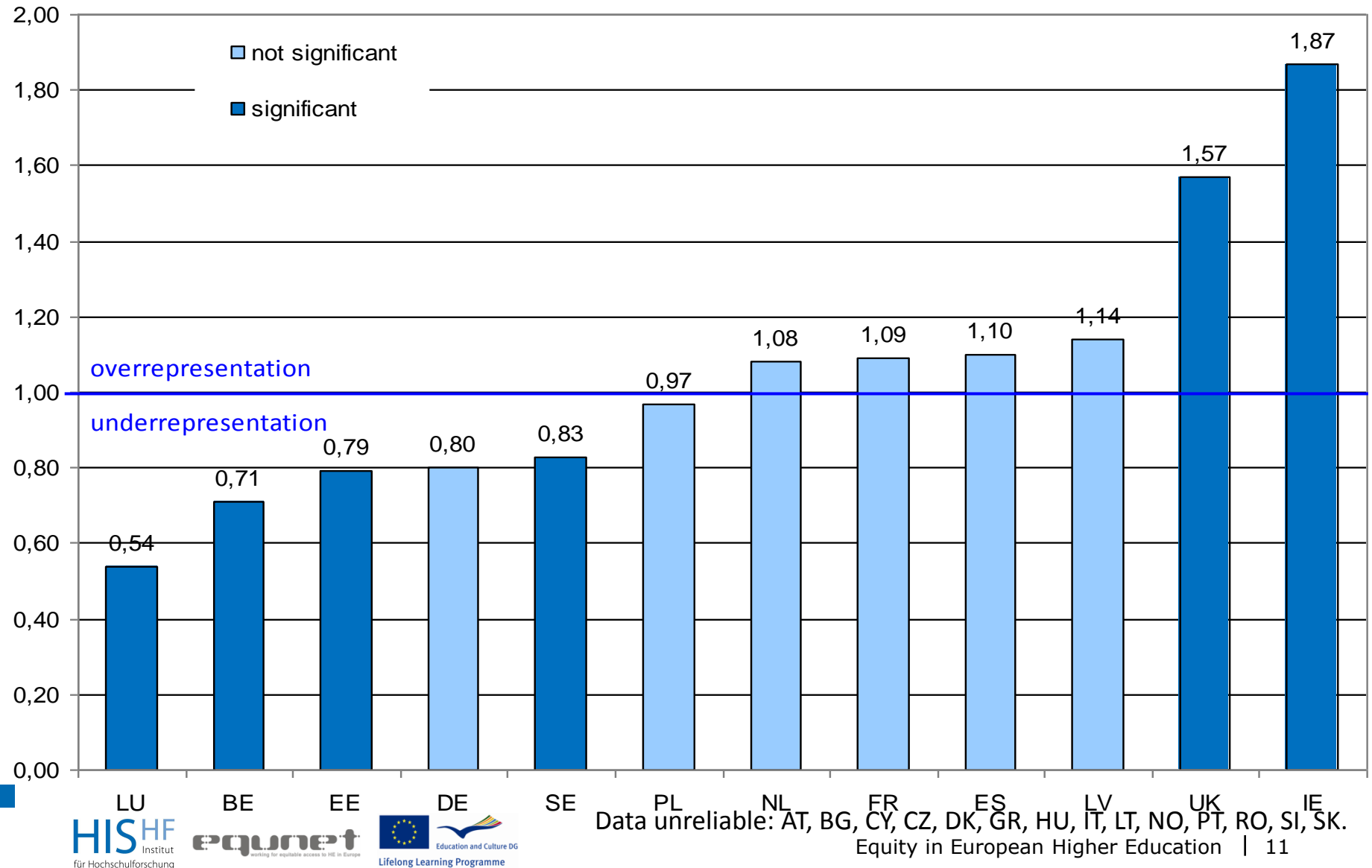
Missing data: BE/fl., BG, DK, E/W, HR, LT, MT PL, SCO, SE.
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4) Equity & immigrant background

- Different groups with immigrant background:
 - First-generation immigrants (born abroad)
 - Second-generation immigrants (born in country, one or both parents born abroad)
 - Citizenship (own, father, mother)
 - Very heterogenous group, e.g. differ by:
 - Time of arrival
 - Socio-economic background
 - Country/region of origin
- Differentiate groups/consider background as far as possible

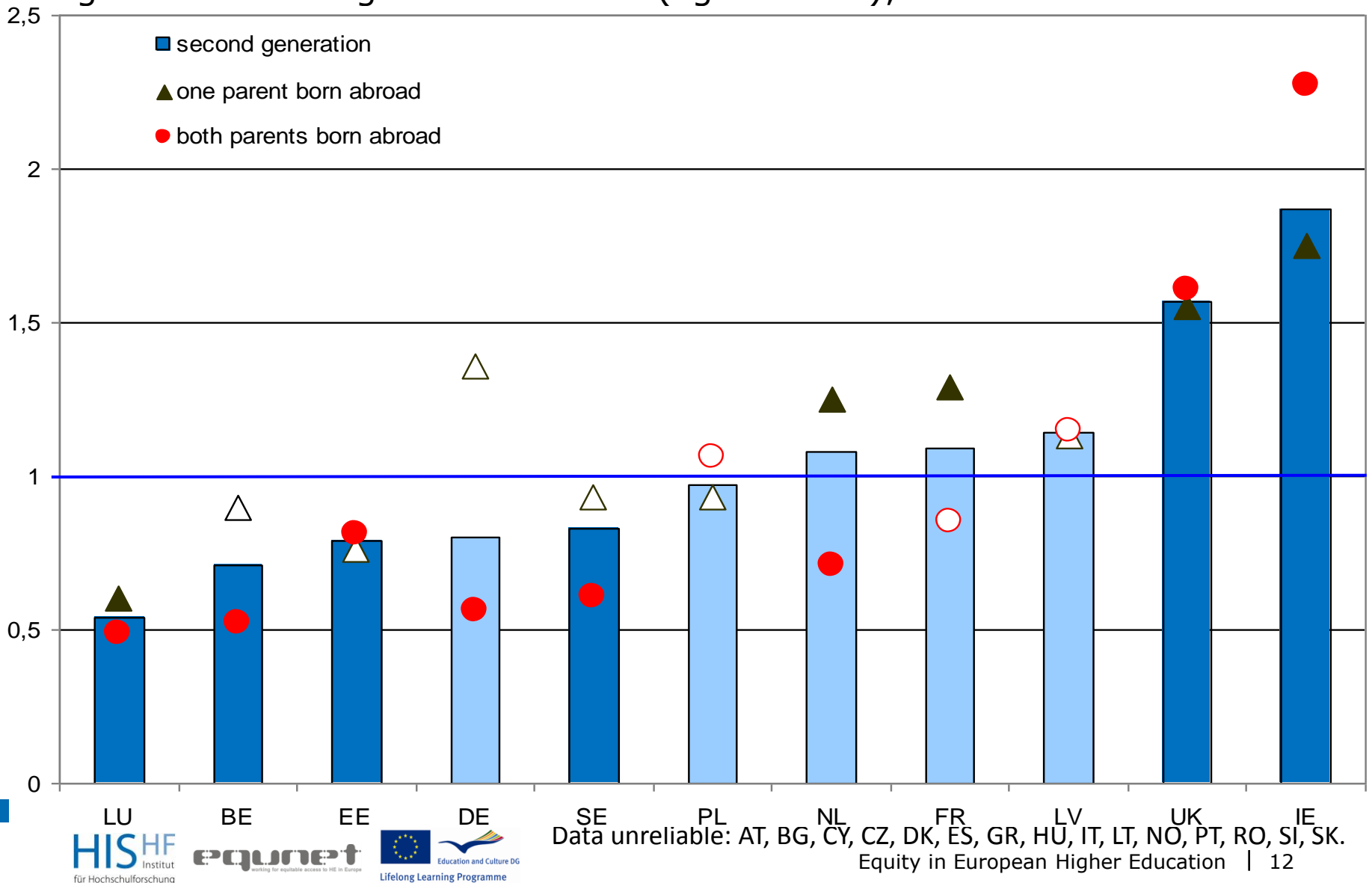
4) Equity & immigrant background

Relative chances to obtain higher education (odds ratios): second generation immigrants to natives (aged 30-54); EU-LFS 2008



4) Equity & immigrant background

Relative chances to obtain higher education (odds ratios): second generation immigrants to natives (aged 30-54); EU-LFS 2008



Overall main findings

1. Chance to attain higher education (still) heavily influenced by socioeconomic background
2. Little progress towards more equity
3. Some groups with immigrant background clearly underrepresented in HE
4. Large country variation → opportunity for peer learning
5. Data availability/quality needs to be enhanced considerably

Dealing with multidimensionality

How to deal with multidimensionality?

Three ideal type approaches:

1. High reduction: Merge various indicators into one (e.g. 'Global Higher Education Rankings 2005')
 - + clear ranking
 - disguises variability, how to weight dimensions/indicators?
2. Medium reduction: Merge indicators within one dimension but not across (e.g. Koucký et al. 2010; EQUINET 2010)
 - + ranking within dimension, variability across dimensions
 - how to combine indicators/choose best indicator?
3. Low reduction: Results are combined by use of description (e.g. BFUG 2009; EUROSTUDENT; EQUINET 2010)
 - + pictures full complexity & variability
 - message hard to grasp, no clear ranking

2) Research approach

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	number of respdts.		identify ISCED 5A		background	
	students	graduat.	students	graduat.	soc.	mig.
ESS	--	+/-	✓	✓	✓	✓
EU-LFS	+/-	++	no	✓	no*	no*
AES	+/-	++	no	no	(✓)	(✓)

*) except for ad-hoc modules.