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Bringing firms on board. Inclusiveness of the dual apprenticeship systems in Germany, Switzerland and Denmark

Bonoli G., Wilson A. Bringing firms on board. Inclusiveness of the dual apprenticeship systems in Germany, Switzerland and Denmark

In dual vocational education and training (VET) systems, the state and employers collaborate in order to meet a country's needs in terms of education for youth and professional skills for the labour market. These systems are considered as effective tools to lower youth unemployment. However, since firms in dual VET systems select the apprentices, not every candidate gets access to in-firm training. Consequently, governments develop measures that try to make their dual VET systems more inclusive. We present a categorisation of the different measures used to enhance inclusiveness in three dual collective skill formation countries (Switzerland, Germany and Denmark). We show that inclusiveness measures exist in each of the three countries but are limited in the extent to which firms are expected to play an active role in them. We conclude that the types of measures adopted are related to political economy traditions and the country's level of macro-corporatism.

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Key words: VET, collective skill formation, macro-corporatism, welfare state, youth policy

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Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) systems based on a combination of school-based and in-firm training, generally known as 'dual systems', have a good reputation: Apprentices learn professional skills in a real-world context, and employers' involvement in the system ensures that the skills taught reflect their needs (Ryan, 2001). These collective skill formation systems are based on a combination of a strong state commitment to vocational training and high firm involvement (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2012; Thelen & Busemeyer, 2012).

These systems, however, can be rather selective. Apprentice candidates need to find an apprenticeship position in a firm, and these are allocated by firms on a competitive basis. As a result, not everyone will obtain a training position in a firm. This selectivity can be problematic from the point of view of social policy and social cohesion. Those who cannot access vocational training are likely to lag behind the rest of society throughout their life course and possibly to be dependent on the welfare state. Consequently, countries with dual VET systems have developed side measures that aim at increasing the inclusiveness of these systems. Rather than allowing the matching between candidates and apprenticeship positions to depend on a labour market logic only (see Ianelli & Raffe, 2007), the state intervenes in order to facilitate access to the dual VET systems for disadvantaged groups by developing what we call 'inclusiveness measures'.

However, developing such measures is a difficult exercise. Dual VET systems are based on delicate equilibria among not necessarily converging interests of employers, employees and the state (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2012; Thelen, 2004). Intrusive state regulation, for example limiting companies' ability to select apprentices, may destroy the delicate equilibrium on which cooperation rests ('decentralised cooperation', see Culpepper, 2003). As a result, governments wishing to maximise the inclusiveness of their dual VET systems must find more subtle ways to intervene that do not jeopardise the whole system.

This article looks at how three countries, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, attempt to make their dual VET system inclusive for disadvantaged young people[1] by examining eight types of inclusiveness interventions. By looking at these three cases, displaying variation in welfare regime type (universalistic,

[1] By 'disadvantaged young people' we mean the target population of the inclusiveness measure, defined as individuals younger than 25 years old with weak academic records, with an immigrant background and/or from a precarious socio-economic background.

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corporatist and liberal) as well as variation in dual VET systems (Denmark being more state-driven, Germany and Switzerland being more employer-driven) (Imdorf, Helbling, & Inui, 2017; Walther, 2006), we seek to understand how different institutional configurations have implications for the way inclusiveness is promoted.

We have two main objectives. First, on an empirical level, we describe the measures and tools that have been developed to increase inclusiveness in the three countries. Second, on a more theoretical level, we attempt to account for the variation in terms of types of interventions that we can observe across our three-country sample, particularly in the extent to which firms are expected to participate in inclusiveness measures and thus fulfil a social policy function.

Theoretical framework and empirical strategy

Conceptually, we can think of an ideal typical dual VET system, where matching between training firms and apprentices takes place soley on the basis of a labour market-logic with an equilibrium reached where supply meets demand (Ianelli & Raffe, 2007). Such a system will inevitably leave some youths without an apprenticeship position. We can then expect public policy to aim at minimising the number of excluded.

Starting from the assumption that highly intrusive measures, such as limiting the ability of training firms to select candidates, are unlikely in the context of a market economy, we can think of two alternative ideal typical ways of expanding access to dual VET that differ in the extent to which firms are *expected* to contribute to this effort.

Inclusiveness measures can be located external to the dual system. For example, disadvantaged youths who fail to secure an apprenticeship position are offered remedial education or some form of coaching so that that they will be more successful in future attempts. In such a context, there are no specific expectations placed on firms.

At the opposite extreme, inclusiveness measures may be based on active firm support or participation and thus be located internal to the dual system. For example, subsidies may be paid to firms who agree to hire disadvantaged youths or to those who offer pre-apprenticeship programmes for youth who have failed to obtain a proper training position. In these cases, firms are expected to adapt their behaviour to produce a more inclusive outcome.

The political economy of inclusiveness in dual VET systems

Our dependent variable − inclusiveness measures in dual VET systems − is located at the intersection of three macro-institutions: the labour market, the welfare state and the education system. To develop hypotheses with regard to cross-national variation in inclusiveness measures, we need to consider scholarship on political economy traditions, state−market relationships and the role of organised interests, particularly employers.

In this respect, the three countries covered in this study share similarities but also display crucial differences. Switzerland, Germany and Denmark are generally considered as countries with a relatively high degree of employer coordination and are accustomed to corporatist forms of interest intermediation (see e.g., Kenworthy, 2003). In the varieties of capitalism literature, these three countries are also considered 'coordinated market economies', reflecting precisely the important role played by encompassing employer organisations and their influence in policy making (Hall & Soskice, 2001).

Looking beyond broad similarities, however, these three political economies also display some crucial differences which in our view can account for the way in which they seek to make their collective skill formation systems more inclusive. Historically, differences in the balance of political power between key parties and ideologies have produced different political economy traditions. The result is that Switzerland is a more liberal country in relation to state–market relationships than the remaining two. Germany, instead, is a country shaped more by Christian democracy, and its political economy *pendant,* that is, corporatism. Lastly, Denmark has been historically dominated by the Social democrats, hence the presence of a stronger concern for equality and acceptance of a larger role for the state.

These differences in the role played historically by key ideologies and political parties have influenced many institutions which, like our inclusiveness measures, are located at the intersection of public policy and the labour market. Most notably, this has been the case in relation to social policies in general, and it is precisely for this reason that these three countries have developed rather different welfare states. According to the best-known categorisation of welfare regimes, Switzerland belongs to the liberal cluster, Germany to the corporatist family and Denmark is an example of a Social democratic welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Even though the welfare state typology was developed for social insurance, the factors that explain cross-national divergence, that is, differences in state-market relationships, are likely to be relevant determinants of our dependent variable, that is, inclusiveness measures in collective skill formation systems.

The three countries, although they belong to the 'coordinated market economies' cluster, differ in the extent to which economic interests, particularly firms, are organised. Martin and Swank (2012), for

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example, studied this in relation to active labour market policies. The degree of business organisation, but also the place organised interests had in policy making, turned out to be crucial in explaining employers' support and role in the expansion of redistributive and equality-oriented labour market and social policy change. Among the high macro-corporatist countries, the authors place Denmark, among the medium macro-corporatist countries Germany, and among the low they place Switzerland. In Thelen's (2014, p. 22) contribution, she similarly uses the concept of the level of 'encompassingness of producer group coalitions' and state capacity to try and forecast the possibility of the state to broker deals with the employers' side.

On this basis, we constructed three ideal types with the hypothesised expectations on firms' involvement in inclusiveness in dual VET systems.

- A liberal approach. Here the VET system functions very much in accordance with a labour market logic, and the equilibrium is found where supply meets demand. The state is relatively weak and unable to impose firms' involvement in the provision of inclusiveness measures. In addition, employers are moderately well organised and peak associations are unable to make credible promises to the government with regard to their members' involvement in pro-inclusiveness efforts. Unions are comparatively weak; thus, the capacity to use the macro-corporatism avenue to produce policy change is limited. However, the state intervenes through measures external to the dual system to support youths in their search for an apprenticeship position, and there are low expectations on firms to be involved in inclusiveness measures. We expect to locate Switzerland in this ideal type.
- A corporatist approach. Here we expect the state to play a slightly more prominent role than in the liberal ideal type, but most interventions are under the responsibility of organised interests and firms. The state may support firms with subsidies, and labour market actors play a key role in making the dual VET system more inclusive. High encompassingness of producer group coalitions ensures a good reach of the inclusiveness measures developed in this context. However, given the limited extent of state involvement, the success of inclusiveness depends very much on the extent to which firms accept to play this social policy role. We expect to locate Germany in this ideal type.
- A universalistic approach. In this case, we expect to find the universalistic model in countries with a high degree of macro-corporatism and high encompassingness of producer group coalitions. Under such circumstances, state public polices can provide the type of external support that is typical of the liberal approach. In addition, however, we can expect countries in this group to rely strongly on firms' involvement, which is facilitated by the high degree of encompassingness of employer organisations and by a strong state that is able to cajole firms into the provision of a social policy function through measures located internal to the dual system. We expect to locate Denmark in this ideal type.

These approaches are understood as ideal types: although we expect each one of the countries studied to reflect mainly one approach, we expect to find elements of each in all three countries. We should also note that this model focuses only on dedicated policy measures meant to improve the inclusiveness of a system. However, the extent to which a dual VET system is effectively inclusive will depend on many contextual variables, such as the inclusiveness of the compulsory education system or the functioning of the labour market.

The inclusiveness measures and empirical strategy

Through a compilation and empirical analysis of the existing programmes in the main dual VET countries aiming at increasing access and inclusion in dual VET systems, we have defined eight types of interventions that reflect our conceptual definition of an 'inclusiveness measure' (Table 1). We focus only on current (or recent) tools that concern dual VET, that is, where training includes some time spent in a firm. We do not cover fully school-based options that exist alongside the dual system.

The measures presented are organised according to the extent to which they entail an expectation on firms to collaborate with the state in the provision of vocational training for disadvantaged youths (low, intermediate or high).

Our empirical strategy is to identify the measures in place in the three countries through secondary material, reports, public documents and official statements from policy actors. While doing this, we pay particular attention to the explicit or implicit expectations on firms that they entail and compare them with the ideal types presented in Table 1.

The measures *10th school year*, *Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes* and *Non-firm-based workshops* are external to the system and do not expect firms to fill any significant social policy function. Regarding the *Matching services,* we argue that some cooperation between public actors and the social partners is needed in this measure, and their link to the training enterprises implies some expectations on firm involvement. *Supported apprenticeships* and *Lower ambition certificate* hinge on, and

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Table 1. Inclusiveness measures in dual VET systems.

Inclusiveness measures	Expectations on firm involvement
10th school year Additional preparatory school-year for youths who have not found an apprenticeship position at the end of compulsory school.	Low
Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes Youths who do not manage to obtain an apprenticeship position can enrol in a pre-apprenticeship programme, provided by the public or the non-profit sector, facilitating transition at a later stage.	Low
Non-firm-based workshops Non-firm-based workshops provide an opportunity to give practical training and as a result remain in the dual system. Non-firm-based workshops are subsidised, provided by public or non-profit organisations or social enterprises.	Low
Matching services (case management, PES) State-provided platforms that facilitate matching between firms that are recruiting apprentices and youths looking for training.	Intermediate
Supported apprenticeships Dual programmes where the young participant is supported by a social assistant or other pedagogical worker throughout her/his apprenticeship.	Intermediate
Lower ambition certificate Shorter (commonly 2 years), less ambitious and practical-oriented training programmes that will nonetheless lead to a nationally recognised certificate.	Intermediate
Firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes Pre-apprenticeship programmes are provided by firms to youth who failed to obtain a regular apprenticeship position, against a subsidy or un-remunerated.	High
Subsidised apprenticeships Firms that agree to hire as apprentices disadvantaged youths are entitled to a subsidy.	High

allow for, a higher degree of firm involvement − the former because it relies on firms to accept youths as apprentices or interns for the workplace-based part of their education, and the latter because the introduction of such a certificate is motivated essentially by social policy objectives. However, the main certificate − its content and value − remains unaffected, so the degree of expectations on firm involvement is considered as intermediate.

For *Firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes*, the firms are very much involved in the training of disadvantaged youths through the provision of pre-apprenticeship positions, under otherwise similar terms as the regular apprentices, only with the difference that this measure does not lead to a certificate. *Subsidised apprenticeships* are also charged with expectations on firms as they are expected to accept youths whom they would not otherwise accept for training, especially to the extent that these subsidies are nationally available for all training enterprises.

The case studies

In the following section, we examine the key inclusiveness measures provided in Switzerland, Germany and Denmark, to what extent they exist and/or are widely established and to what extent there are expectations from the state actors in VET on the firms to participate in the inclusiveness measures.

Switzerland

Promoting inclusiveness in the Swiss dual VET system is a challenge in many respects. In Switzerland, the apprenticeship system has been traditionally dominated by small- and medium-sized enterprises (Gonon & Maurer, 2012) which may be less amenable to take on social policy functions, due to lower training capacity (see Mohrenweiser, 2012) than their larger counterparts. In addition, Switzerland has a strong liberal tradition in terms of managing its political economy with a traditionally strong employer influence (see Emmenegger, Trampusch, & Graf, forthcoming; Schmitter & Streeck, 1999). Some two-thirds of Swiss youth enrol in VET after compulsory school and around 10% end up in transitional measures (CSRE, 2014).

Given the federal character of the country's political institutions, inclusiveness measures to help the transition of these youths can be found both at the national and the cantonal level. This leads to a large number of measures at either level.

10th school year. There is no standard measure that is equal to a 10th school year after compulsory school

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in Switzerland, although the 10th school year exists as an option for those who have scholar lacunae and are in need of complementary schooling before transitioning into VET (CSRE, 2014). In the canton of Vaud, for example, the transitional school OPTI (*Organisme de perfectionnement scolaire, de transition et d'Insertion*) offers vocational branches and classes with extra support for young people with academic deficits, including internships at firms (DGEP, 2014).

Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes. Following the previous section regarding the 10th school year, the non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship offers in Switzerland constitute a part of the overall 'interim solutions' for those who do not transition directly into upper secondary education (CSRE, 2014, p. 110). These pre-apprenticeship programmes may be possible in a dual scheme, under circumstances that are similar to the regular apprenticeship, but with emphasis on basic and preparatory training (DGEP, 2014). They may also take place in vocational schools and through the support of the cantonal offices which offer extra support for those youths who have difficulty transitioning into post-compulsory education.

Non-firm-based workshops. Non-firm-based workshops, that is, provided by non-profit organisations, exist in Switzerland, mostly for recipients of disability insurance. The professional associations organise inter-enterprise workshops as a (mostly) compulsory part of the regular vocational training, but it has no specific purpose to enhance inclusion (DGEP, 2014).

Matching services. The *Case management* system, partly funded and overseen by the cantons from 2011 and fully from 2016, is the primary support for the young at risk of falling between the cracks following weak educational attainment from lower secondary school (Hoffman & Schwartz, 2015; Pedró, Burns, Ananiadou, & de Navacelle, 2009). Hence, the case management system functions as a safety net for those who have not been caught up by the 10th school year or the other bridge measures. Additionally, there are efforts at the cantonal level to maintain bonds with training firms in the region in order to enhance the chances of those who are without an apprenticeship (DGEP, 2014).

Supported apprenticeships. There are no such measures at the federal level. However, some cantons have developed schemes where disadvantaged youth who obtain an apprenticeship place are then coached for the duration of the apprenticeship (see Dif-Pradalier, Rosenstein, & Bonvin, 2012; Pisoni, 2015). Other examples of cantonal efforts to support and integrate socially disadvantaged youths are inter-enterprise training networks with an integration mission (Leeman & Imdorf, 2015; Leeman, Da Rin, & Imdorf, 2016), where the public lead agency recruits the apprentices and allocates them to participating firms (who have the right to veto the apprentices, see BBT, 2008, p. 11).

Lower ambition certificate. On a broad scale, the rather recent introduction of the 'Federal VET Certificate', the less ambitious, two-year VET alternative to the three- or four-year 'Federal VET Diploma', can be seen as a programme meant as a less ambitious alternative for youths on the VET market (Dubs, 2006; Educa, 2015). The VET law from 2002 supports this type of educational enlargement which endorses increased opportunities for young students who failed to qualify to upper secondary school, through interim solutions (LFPr, 2002). Further, the two-year vocational students have the right to individualised support from a tutor if s/he risks not completing the programme.

Firm-based pre-apprenticeships. In Switzerland, there is no formal pre-apprenticeship programme. However, pre-apprenticeship programmes offered by non-governmental organisations generally entail internships in firms for part of the time and several cantons offer similar measures (see, e.g., Arbeitsintegration Winterthur, 2016).

A nationwide case of firm-based pre-apprenticeships was the *Speranza foundation* which aimed at giving access to vocational training for disadvantaged youth, through coaching, networking (OFFT, 2012), and a network of enterprises (La vie économique, 2007). The social partners, on both employers' and the union's side, broadly supported the initiative which functioned as a link between the young, firms and the state (OFFT, 2012).

Subsidised apprenticeships. Compared with other countries where state subsidisation is used as a tool to motivate employers to participate in vocational training, Swiss employers, by and large, do not face such incentives. Subsidies have been made available at the cantonal level but in relation to specific programmes (see OFFT, 2012, pp. 25−32).

In addition to these measures, there are in Switzerland several private and decentralised initiatives aimed at helping disadvantaged youth to avoid unemployment, run by non-profit actors but funded by

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private companies. An example is 'Check your chance' funded by Credit Suisse, which features different partner organisations whose aims are to support these groups (Check your chance, 2016; Neuenschwander, 2014).

Summary: Switzerland. As expected, in Switzerland the bulk of the effort to make dual VET more inclusive takes place outside the VET system and places limited expectations on firms. There are no nationally institutionalised firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes, few supported apprenticeship programmes (in some cantons), and subsidies for firms who hire disadvantaged youth are rare (exist in a few specific programmes). At the same time, however, some firms are indirectly involved in the dual system by funding initiatives that help youth to find an apprenticeship position, along with the support for youths who are pursuing a two-year certificate. However, these initiatives resemble more exercises in corporate social responsibility than a commitment to dual VET.

Germany

The VET system in Germany plays a key role, with some 47% of all students being in vocational training and 40% in the dual system (OECD, 2017, p. 258). An important aspect of the governance structure in relation to social policy goals in Germany is the tripartite Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) which is an essential institution for building consensus among the various actors involved in VET (CEDEFOP A, 2014). The employers' camp as well as the trade unions have influence, and are influenced by state policies through this institution.

In Germany, there is a shortage of training slots and a large minority of German youth fail to enter tertiary education or VET (in firms or school-based) and end up on preparatory courses that do not lead to a diploma but are meant to facilitate access to VET. Collectively, these courses are called the 'transition system' (*Übergangsystem*). In 2012, some 30% of youths ended up in the transition system (Braun & Geier, 2013; Euler, 2013). While most of those in the transition system do not eventually obtain an apprenticeship (Thelen & Busemeyer, 2012, p. 77), the extent of imbalance between supply and demand risks undermining the incentives for disadvantaged pupils to work hard, as they know they will probably not get a training position (Thelen & Busemeyer, 2012).

It is also worth noting that some important differences exist between the former GDR and West Germany. With unification came an attempt to transfer the dual VET system to the new *Länder*. This proved difficult (Culpepper, 2003), so the Federal government introduced a range of subsidies. These were meant to be temporary, but dual VET remains more heavily subsidised in the East (Busemeyer, 2015, p. 107).

10th school year. The *Länder* provide a 10th school year to youths who have not found a training solution. At the federal level, the preparatory vocational year (*Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*) is meant for youths who have not completed compulsory education or those who have but with low grades. It is provided by professional schools and provides practical professionally oriented training. It lasts one year and may be used by those who have not completed compulsory education to obtain an equivalent diploma (BMBF, 2016).

Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes. Several measures are meant as a preparation for an apprenticeship. These include the basic job-training year (*Berufsgrundbildungsjahr*), which is provided by professional schools and prepares for a given profession. If the programme is completed successfully, it can be counted towards obtaining a standard apprenticeship certificate (BMBF, 2016; Schmidt, 2010).

On state levels, many similar projects have been set to sail. One project in Bavaria, for instance, offers companies favourable loans for hiring disadvantaged youths and other monetary firm support schemes.

Non-firm-based workshops. Youths who fail to obtain an apprenticeship position with a company can access dual vocational training where the practical side is provided by a subsidised entity, such as a social enterprise or a non-profit organisation. This system, known as 'External training' (*Ausserbetriebliche Berufsausbildung*), is financed and supervised by the federal employment agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit,* or BA). In 2015, some 31,000 youths profited from this opportunity. Youth can remain in the subsidised entity until the end of the apprenticeship or transition into a firm after one or two years (BMBF, 2016).

Matching services. Career guidance is provided by the education system. In addition, the BA provides career guidance and matching services for youths looking for an apprenticeship position. Recently, dedicated programmes for youths who have difficulty finding an apprenticeship position have been developed, under such names as 'Educational Chains' (*Bildungsketten*) and 'Job Start Coaches'

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(*Berufseinstiegsbegleiter*) (CEDEFOP A, 2014).

In Germany, the government along with the social partners have committed themselves to provide an activation guarantee for young people as part of the broader EU initiative launched in the wake of the 2008 crisis (Eurofund, 2014). A common goal to strive for more apprenticeship positions, as well as preparatory apprenticeships and a more extended guidance and counselling service for inactive youths, has been established between the parts involved in VET in the wake of the 2007/2008 crisis (Eurofund, 2011, p. 19).

Supported apprenticeships. A range of programmes aim at supporting weak candidates who enter the dual system so that they will have a better chance to succeed. Youths who are at risk of failing receive social and pedagogical support from qualified professionals. This is the case, for example, with the 'Assistance during training' (*Ausbildungbegleitende Hilfen)*, a programme which benefitted some 41,000 youths in 2015 (BMBF, 2016).

Lower ambition certificate. For about a tenth of occupations, there are two-year programmes available since 2003 (Trampusch, 2009). The introduction of these new and shorter diplomas, often named 'modularisation' in broader terms, was criticised by the trade unions and small firms in Germany, whereas more influential large firms along with the state supported the change (Li & Pilz, 2017; Thelen & Busemeyer, 2008).

Firm-based pre-apprenticeships. Another measure is the 'Entry qualification' (*Einstiegsqualifizierung* or EQ), an internship programme lasting between 6 and 12 months, for youth who are without a training solution. The companies that take on these young people receive a Federal subsidy of about 200€ a month, which is not to be regarded as a full subsidy but rather an incentive to the firms to participate. In some cases, if the programme is successfully completed, it can count towards a full apprenticeship diploma.

Subsidised apprenticeships. Inclusiveness measures that rely on firm involvement can be supported by federal subsidies (see Vogler-Ludwig & Stock, 2010). For example, subsidised apprenticeships are also available for SMEs that hire youth with a migration background, known as 'Welcoming guidance' (*Willkommenslotsen)* (BMBF, 2016, p. 100) which was a part of the broader Pact on Apprenticeships established in 2004. The goals of this pact on behalf of the employers include increasing EQ positions in firms by 20,000, as a step towards improving the pathways to VET qualifications for weaker students who have difficulty making this transition themselves The pact was renewed in 2015 with the adoption of the 'Alliance for initial and further training' which brings together the main relevant actors and aims to maintain employers' involvement in VET, particularly with a view to improve inclusiveness (Vogel, 2015).

Summary: Germany. In comparison with Switzerland, the German approach is based on a bigger involvement by firms. Firms are expected to provide pre-apprenticeship places with the EQ. The existence of a supported apprenticeship programme also places clear expectations on firms, as it reiterates the primacy of firm-based solutions whenever possible. The German approach, however, remains non-intrusive despite high state involvement, as firms are under little obligation to participate in any of these programmes.

Denmark

Notwithstanding the fact that the Danish VET system is highly collective in the sense that the social partners (national and local trade committees encompassing employers, union and teacher representatives (CEDEFOP B, 2014) are broadly and deeply integrated in the governance of VET, the state is still the leading actor and, in many ways, the strongest driver of the inclusion aspects of VET policy (Albæk, 2009; Jørgensen, 2014; Juul & Jørgensen, 2011; Nelson, 2012).

The one defining characteristic of the Danish VET system is the close and multi-tier relationship between the educational institutions, the municipalities and the social partners, and the active involvement of the central government in its steering, reforming and financing of the system (Nelson, 2012). The popularity of the VET track is comparatively lower in Denmark than in Germany and Switzerland: About half of all students leaving compulsory school choose the dual track (CEDEFOP B, 2014; Jørgensen, 2014).

The financing arrangement for the Danish VET differs from the Swiss and German examples, which are only partly government-funded and are largely financed by the training firms themselves. In Denmark, firms are obliged to contribute to the common 'Employers' reimbursement fund' (*Arbejdsgivernes Elevrefusjon,* or AER) which is then used to pay trading firms (CEDEFOP B, 2014).

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10th school year. The vocationally oriented 10th school year (*EUD10*) is a feature of the Danish education system that signifies an additional year in between the compulsory/lower secondary school and upper secondary that serves to prepare the young for post-compulsory vocational education (Carstensen & Ibsen, 2015).

As of 2015, the Danish municipalities are required to engage the graduates from the 9th year in some sort of academic or vocational activity as a part of the Youth Guarantee in order to avoid exclusion and dwindling human capital (Jørgensen, 2015). Further, all students enrolled in the 10th year are obliged to participate in a bridge programme to facilitate the transition to upper secondary education, either in a general programme or in the vocational training domain, through unpaid apprenticeships. In this measure, the social partners play a part in facilitating the communication and cooperation between municipalities and job centres, schools, and vocational trainers (private or public) (Beskæftelseministeriet, 2014; UVM, 2015).

Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes. A number of measures target young people who are considered to be vulnerable on the labour market due to both low educational performance, social background, low level of cognitive skills and other challenges. One example of a pathway for people under 25 without complete upper secondary diplomas is the 'Production schools' (*Produktionsskole*) where basic vocational training is provided and the possibility of obtaining practical experience through internships is given. This path, however, does not lead to a VET certificate per se but is rather a means for accessing other educational channels.

Non-firm-based workshops. The institutionalisation of the Training Centres (*Praktikcentre*) at the VET colleges as a complement to the dual apprenticeship won ground in the wake of the 2008 crisis, as a platform for training those youths who had not found a workplace-based apprenticeship (Carstensen & Ibsen, 2015; Jørgensen, 2015). Further, it was intended to provide a more general training complement to the content of the training allocated to the firms in as far as the workplace-based training was becoming more specialised (Jørgensen, 2015).

Matching services. Through the Youths' Education Guidance centres (*Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledningscenter,* or UU) (Beskæftigelseministeriet, 2011), the matching between placement-seeking youths and training providers (public or private) is facilitated as the staff at these centres are in contact with the vocational schools, the training-providing enterprises, as well as with trade committees, which strengthens their coordinative position. There are also the 'Youth Units' that are established on a decentralised level as a complement to the UUs for young people who have difficulty entering education or employment. Their teams consist of representatives from the UUs, the healthcare, social affairs, as well as the education sector (Beskæftigelseministeriet, 2014).

Supported apprenticeships. The apprentice instructors in training firms are strongly encouraged to keep in close contact with the counsellors at the vocational colleges, the UUs or the Youth Units, both before and during the placement and the apprenticeship period of the youths, and to use the counsellors, called 'Learning and apprenticeship position consultants' (*Lære- og praktikpladskonsulent)*, as an intermediary who can match the employer with the 'right' candidate (Metropol, 2014).

Lower ambition certificate. Basic Vocational Training (*Erhvervsgrunduddannelse*, or EGU) is a two-year vocational programme that targets young people and aims at developing both their vocational and personal skills, and thus ameliorate their chances to obtain employment. This shorter training alternative was introduced in 2004 as a way to reduce the high dropout rates and create an alternative for those youths who were not able or motivated to fulfil a longer training (Juul & Jørgensen, 2011). The social partners, however, had limited influence in the reform and the current enrolment and firm involvement is rather limited (Jørgensen, 2014).

Firm-based pre-apprenticeships. Aside from opportunities for shorter in-firm internships for students of, for example, Production schools, the 10th form or other school-based alternatives for students who have difficulty pursuing regular VET programmes, the firm-based pre-apprenticeship alternative is lacking in Denmark, to the best of our knowledge.

Subsidies for firms. Since 2016, firms that offer vocational training for refugees or for students who follow the EGU are eligible for bonuses per apprentice (Beskæftigelseministeriet, 2016). Previously, through the Youth Package of 2011, subsidised training jobs in firms for young people who had difficulty accessing in-firm vocational training were made available (Carstensen & Ibsen, 2015).

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Table 2. Summary of results: inclusiveness measures in Switzerland, Germany and Denmark.

	Inclusiveness measures	Switzerland	Germany	Denmark
1	10th school year	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Non-firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Non-firm-based workshops	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Matching services (case management, PES)	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Supported apprenticeships	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Lower ambition certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Firm-based pre-apprenticeship programmes	No	Yes	No
8	Subsidised apprenticeships	No	Yes	Yes

Note: For Switzerland, some measures may exist in certain cantons only.

Summary: Denmark. Denmark stands out in our sample as the country with the clearest state commitment to extending access to VET training. Rather than relying on a multitude of local and private initiatives, in Denmark the state seems to be clearly in the driving seat in the efforts that are made to improve the inclusiveness of the system. Of course, firms' involvement is needed, but it seems to be the case that in reality the government's capacity to cajole firms into expanding access to VET is limited. In contrast, the government relies on subsidies and on an extensive system of support, where disadvantaged youths are assisted by various interlocutors and support staff throughout their apprenticeship.

Table 2 shows the summary of the country case studies.

Discussion and concluding remarks

Our comparative analysis reveals the existence of substantial similarities in what dual VET countries do to make their systems more inclusive (see Table 2). Most of the measures included in our list exist in each of the three countries. In all three countries, there is a strong presence of both externally and internally located measures, which shows that even in the more liberal and corporatist settings (Switzerland and Germany), a substantial part of the inclusiveness system as a whole is constructed as an integral part of the dual aspect of vocational training.

A more in-depth analysis, however, reveals some important differences among the three countries that go in the expected direction. In Switzerland, most of what is done is external to the system and there are limited expectations placed on firms. Typical solutions that require firms' involvement, such as firm-based pre-apprenticeships, supported apprenticeships or subsidised apprenticeships, do not exist on any significant scale. These solutions are sometimes found within single cantons or as part of (limited) public–private initiatives. However, unlike the other two countries, there are no national programmes that fulfil these functions.

The fact that some large companies, either directly or through foundations, support initiatives aimed at including disadvantaged youth in the dual system does not contradict this conclusion. In fact, these private initiatives have little to do with the logic of decentralised cooperation, but more with a corporate social responsibility objective. Some of these initiatives are more a contribution to society than an involvement in the VET system with a social policy function. They are reminiscent of Katzenstein's (1984) observation of the Swiss political economy, noticing 'a tendency to compensate privately for economic change' (p. 99), partly fulfilling functions that the weak (federal) state cannot provide.

In Germany, the state provides highly institutionalised external measures, but also puts clear expectations on firms with regard to their role. This is evident in programmes such as the EQ, a subsidised pre-apprenticeship scheme in firms, or the supported apprenticeship programme. Of course, companies are under no obligation to participate in these programmes, but they are eligible for subsidies if they do. Moreover, initiatives are adopted that put some pressure on them to participate, such as the tripartite 'Pact on Apprenticeships' or the subsequent 'Alliance for initial and further training'. As opposed to the Swiss approach and more in similarity with the Danish, however, much if not most of the expectations on firms are coupled with the provision of subsidies from the state.

Lastly, the Danish case shows a strong commitment to high levels of inclusiveness, especially in light of the strong institutionalisation of the external measures. In addition, a substantial effort is made within the social services sector. Coaching, mentoring, social pedagogy and individualised learning plans are ways to focus on the individual and his/her employability instead of raising the pressure on firms and their supply of apprenticeship positions (Jørgensen, 2015). Contrary to our expectations, we found little evidence that Denmark uses a macro-corporatist avenue to 'cajole and coerce' (Thelen, 2014, p. 22) firms into a more inclusive behaviour. Instead, the state has taken over

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more and more of the provision of training of disadvantaged youth. In line with Thelen, we found that Danish universalism depends increasingly on the state and less on the social partners, which leaves private actors free to follow a more meritocratic and selective approach (Thelen, 2014).

Overall, the picture presented in our case studies reveals less variation than we expected, and more of a gravitation towards the middle-way approach to inclusiveness, with measures located both externally and internally to the dual system and moderate expectations on firms across the board. At the same time, the very different political economy traditions of these three countries, whether in terms of welfare regime or in terms of the role of organised interests in the pursuit of public policy objectives, are shaping the solutions that have been developed to make their cherished dual VET systems more inclusive.

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